

M A G A Z I N E O F T A S K F O R C E M A R N E

FROM THE FRONT

FALL 2010

IRAQIS RECEIVE OPD TRAINING

EOD provides training
and equipment to Iraqis

GOING HOME

FROM THE FRONT

-TASK FORCE MARNE-

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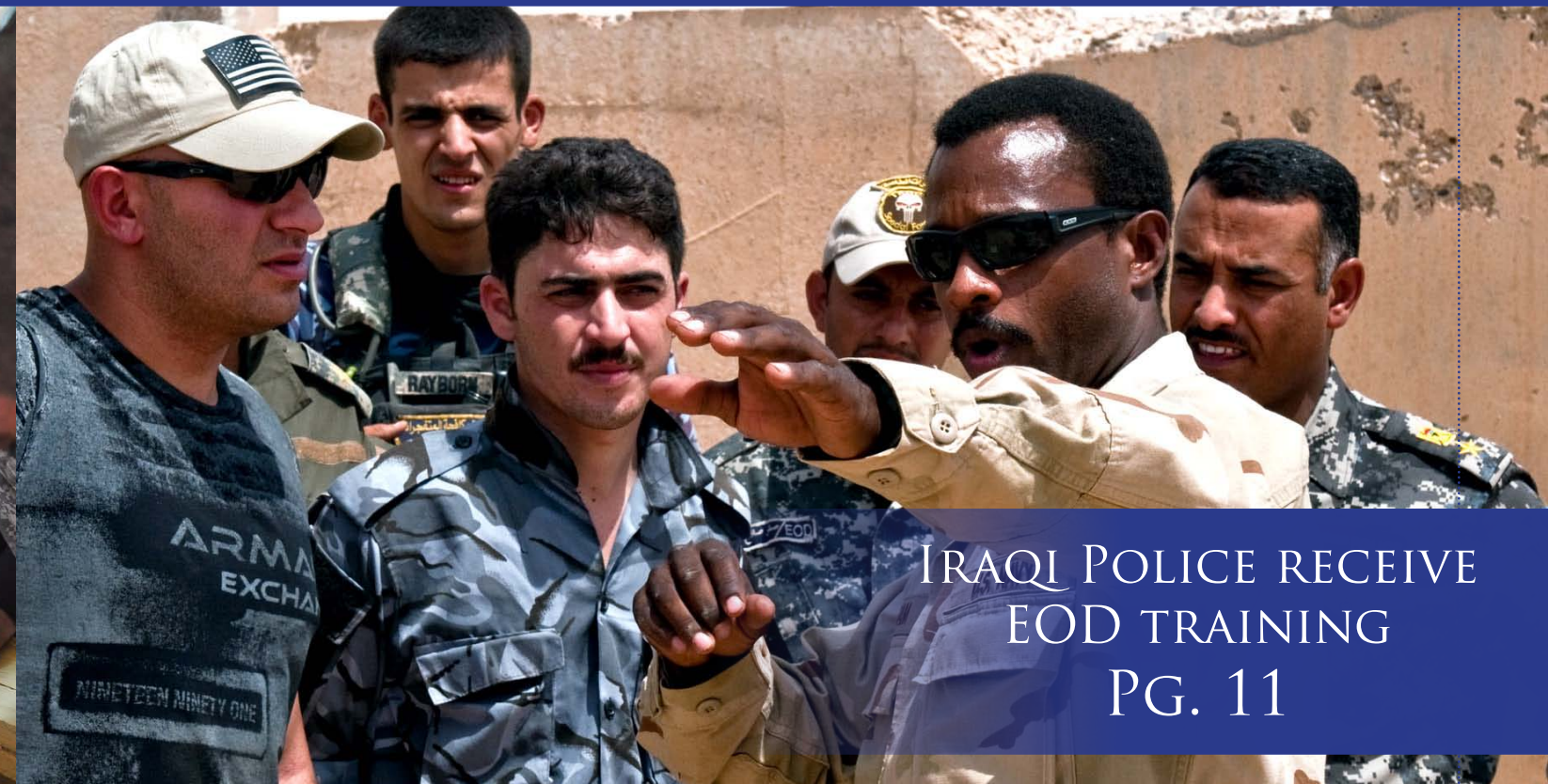


On the Cover
Colonel Malcolm B. Frost, the brigade commander for 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, surveys one of five vehicle inspection checkpoints from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flying over the Diyala province, Aug. 23. (Photo by Pfc. Robert M. England)

On the Back Cover
Task Force Marne remembers its fallen heroes



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IRAQI POLICE RECEIVE
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COMMANDING GENERAL

Change of Mission? No problem for Task Force Marne



After noting that Iraq was ignored in the western press after the national elections here last March, I welcomed the surge of coverage during the last two weeks of August. It is important that people at home hear what Soldiers are doing over here – even if half the story gets out, I’m pleased, because it is one heck of a story; our Soldiers are amazing. When the media blitz hit, I sensed some confusion, among my Army Families, with the public discussion of “the departure of the last combat brigade” and “the end of combat operations.” Many Families asked: “I hear it’s over and everyone is coming home. When are YOU coming home?” Although mistaken, this is a very understandable assumption.

We received a change of mission. During Operation Iraqi Freedom we could do the full spectrum of military operations – including block and tackle, offense and defense types of operations that come with a war. Operation New Dawn changes our mission to what is known as Stability Operations. Within Stability Operations, our main role is Civil Security – we help Iraq protect their population. Another needed activity in this type of operation is called Security Force Assistance: help a host nation’s security force improve their capabilities to defend themselves, defend their people and defend their territory against credible threats by advising, training and assisting that security force.

Frankly, this mission change is not significant for us. First and foremost, we’re professional Soldiers – we train “change of mission” in our major exercises. In fact, we have been doing Stability Operations

and Security Force Assistance to a significant degree since March’s Iraqi national elections. Additionally, the violent extremist networks here have been reeling from a series of blows they’ve been receiving from the Iraqi and U.S. Special Forces and Iraqi and U.S. conventional forces for some time now: their leadership has been captured, killed, or is routinely on the run looking over their shoulders; their financial support has been clipped to the point of desperation among some of the groups. Though attacks are executed in some number each week, more than half of those attacks are ineffective – meaning no one was hurt. In summary, the level of violence here is such that there is no doubt in my mind the Iraqi Security Forces can handle the situation.

However, because the Iraqi Army has been concentrating on their counterinsurgency fight, they have not yet been able to train those skills needed to defend their nation. This means we need to work even harder on police primacy in the cities and villages so we can get the army out of civil security and to the right type of training with the right equipment. When you hear the term, “Advise, Train and Assist,” you can understand why our efforts will become more focused on “train.”

Many of our Family Members were concerned that we would not be able to defend ourselves because of some new rule. This could not be further from the truth. The mission has changed but the lethality of our organization has not. Though our planning and execution of combat operations has ended, we know the enemy gets a vote on that – and fighting has not. It is still a part of all our agreements with the Government of Iraq that we can defend ourselves, and we most certainly will. We remain a combat capable and lethal organization and you can bet that if we are threatened, we take all measures necessary to ensure we dominate whatever threat is coming our way.

To me, the big story is not the change of mission, it is the drawdown. What an amazing feat of logistics by incredible staff officers, young leaders and never-quit aviators and transportation professionals. These folks accomplished a Herculean task without a hitch, allowing units to maintain

a high tempo of operations against the enemies of the people of Iraq (and us) while fighting brutal summer heat and waves of dust storms passing through our area. Our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, our handful of Marines, the small but indispensable contingent of Coast Guard customs guardians, and some of the most dedicated civilians and contractors anywhere in the world as they all worked together to accomplish the impossible: Move 15,000 Soldiers out of Iraq and bring 3,700 into Iraq between May 1st and August 20th – from 21,000 to 9,600 Soldiers; ship over 3,000 vehicles, and 3,400 shipping containers to the U.S., Afghanistan, or American forces elsewhere; return nearly \$1 billion in equipment to the Army supply system; close or return to Iraqi control 26 operating bases; formally transfer \$20 million of equipment to the Government of Iraq.

No doubt, an accomplishment for which we can be justifiably proud. But I must end this note telling you there is also a bit of quiet pride over here among Third Infantry Division troops. It is only fitting that Marne Soldiers play such a significant role in the conclusion of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the start of Operation New Dawn. After all, it was the Dog Face Soldier who led the charge up the Euphrates River Valley in 2003, culminating in the “Thunder Runs” into Baghdad that toppled the regime of a brutal dictator. Now it is rewarding to know that after the Division’s three tough deployments here, this fourth deployment allows us to help our former adversaries work toward becoming an effective and apolitical armed force for a civilian-led democracy in the Middle East. And for our Army Families, there is no doubt in my mind your continued unconditional love and support of your Soldier over the past seven years has allowed us to be successful – and continue to be successful -- in this mission and any mission assigned. Rock of the Marne!

TONY CUCOLO
MARNE 6
MAJOR GENERAL, U.S. ARMY
COMMANDING GENERAL,
TASK FORCE MARNE

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

Marne team adds to 30-year Veteran’s life experiences



As troops we willingly accept change and embrace added responsibility. The time has come for me to do both. For those who may not know, my tenure as the Task Force Marne and 3rd Infantry Division command sergeant major ends in October, and I will assume responsibilities as the First Army command sergeant major at Fort Gillem, Ga.

It has been an enormous privilege to meet so many skillful, talented and brave individuals who serve in this task force. I have seen firsthand how the mentorship and discipline of our forces have strengthened the Iraqi Security Forces and given Iraqi civilians hope for their future.

Like so many others, I have seen Iraq without police primacy and rule of law. I have empathized with its citizens, held hostage in their own neighborhoods by insurgents and extremists who feared or hated the idea of democracy. However, I have also witnessed the capabilities of a modular Army.

During the Surge in 2007-08, Task Force Marne provided command and control to leaders and Soldiers from across the Army. During a violent, ugly and tumultuous time in central Baghdad, brigade combat teams combined their lethality to dismantle terror networks. U.S. non-commissioned officers took the time and patience they devote to their Soldiers and empowered men ready to control their

own livelihood.

Before Task Force Marne left Iraq in 2008, I witnessed U.S. congressmen walk through a market in Salman Pak without body armor, talking to local Iraqi citizens and gazing at their fresh fruits and vegetables. Salman Pak is southeast of Baghdad, and was once a lawless city.

Now we are back in Iraq, and I could not be any prouder of this great team. Like I stated earlier, the men and women who make up this task force are from areas such as Washington, Texas, Kansas, Hawaii, Georgia, and Germany --- just to name a few places.

Your accomplishments include training Iraqi Security Forces on everything from emergency medical techniques, counter explosives, transportation maintenance to stability operations. Impressively, you have not focused solely on security forces. You have helped to build schools, uplift women in the community and partnered with members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team to improve the economic plight of Iraqi citizens. The extension of support to the Iraqi citizens came from Task Force Marne Family Members and friends who collected toys, clothes and school supplies. American generosity was poured onto the Iraqis due to the love and appreciation individuals hold dear for you.

What is most fascinating about the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians who are part of Task Force Marne is that you are not robotic clones, void of emotion. You miss your Family, get tired and angry. But when your alarm clock goes off at 4:30 a.m. you wake up and run four to five miles or hit the gym to refuel your body and mind. Fortitude and pride drive you throughout the exhausting 12- to 15-hour days. But you do it every day, because it has to be done.

There is not a job we conduct in Iraq that does not involve a vigilant eye, caution, and above all else, standards and discipline. Regardless of your job and departure date from theater, you have to keep your dukes up and fight complacency.

The fight against complacency is being won. This quarter, accidents and injuries are down. Battle buddies are looking out for one another. Iraq is a dangerous place, and we all need to understand that no one has been benched. Everyone is in the game. Both servicemembers and civilians who serve under Task Force Marne have shown me that it does not just take brute strength and the world’s best weapon systems to win wars and assist in building a country. Proficiency, agility, moral and ethical codes are attributes that will continuously propel us into mission accomplishment.

“Training to standard” is not an Army top-10 catch phrase. It is the reason junior NCOs and Soldiers are able to instruct Iraqis, Kurdish and Peshmerga on the basics of combat, maneuver, and sustainability. Simultaneously, the behind-the-scenes operations never ceased. Supplies and equipment were ordered, communications kept everyone connected, awards were processed, and no one passed through our security gates if they weren’t invited.

It was almost 30 years ago that I committed to being a servant for my nation, and every day since then I have learned something new or have been humbled by the great deeds or innovative actions of troops. Twenty-nine men and women have given their lives since Task Force Marne has taken command. Losing comrades has been the hardest part of this operation and the liberation of the Iraqi civilians from tyranny. The accomplishments and sacrifices of our brothers- and sisters-in-arms will never be forgotten.

JESSE ANDREWS
MARNE 7
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR,
U.S. ARMY
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR,
TASK FORCE MARNE

ROCK OF THE MARNE!

SOLDIER SAVES BATTLE BUDDY'S LIFE WITH A.C.E.

STORY BY SGT JOHNATHON JOBSON
[TASK FORCE MARNE PAO](#)

■ Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. Army. The Army's primary suicide prevention program is known as A.C.E. It stands for ask, care, escort. The program encourages Soldiers to be vigilant against signs that another Soldier may be contemplating suicide.

"The 'Ask' portion encourages Soldiers to ask the tough question, 'are you thinking about killing yourself?' If they notice a Soldier who is showing signs of possible suicidal thoughts," explained Chaplain (Maj.) Terry Romine, a Family Life chaplain for the Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. "Some people are scared to ask that question for two reasons.

"One, they are afraid of giving the person the idea of suicide. If you are seeing the signs, they have already thought of it. Research shows that when we ask, it shows that we care enough, and that by itself is enough to keep someone alive very frequently. The other reason is that they are afraid they will get the answer 'yes.' They don't know what they will do if they get that answer."

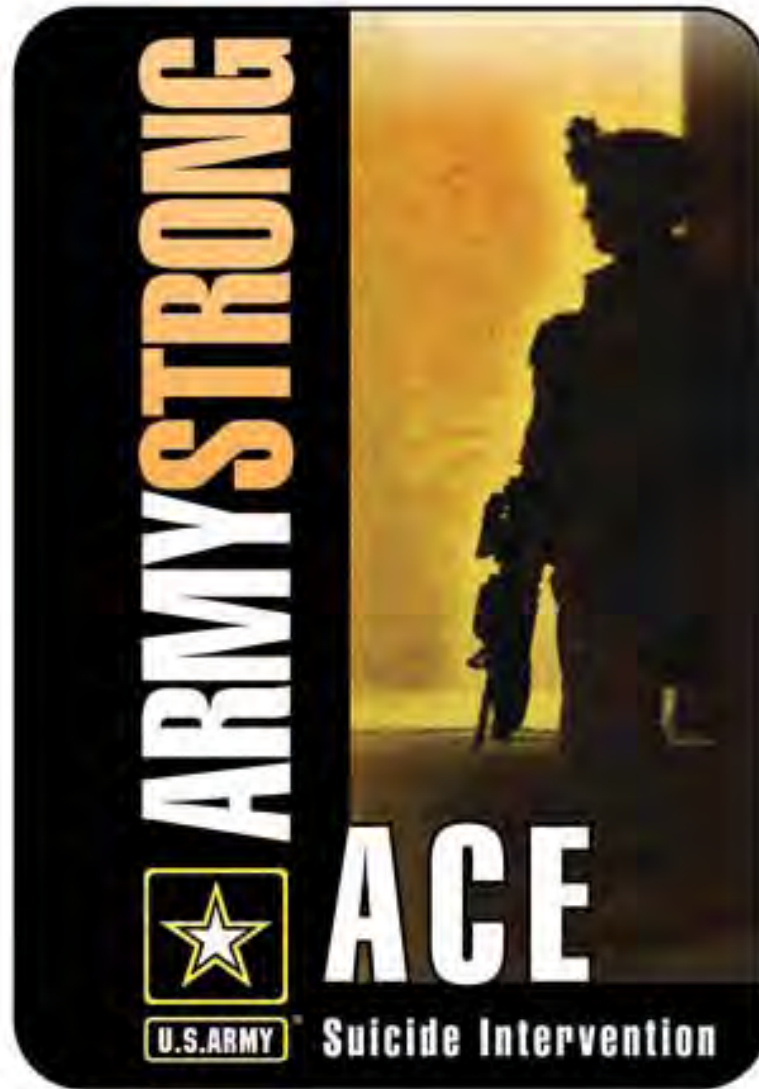
By noticing differences in actions and listening to what another Soldier was saying, Spc. Amie McClintic, an information systems specialist with 3rd Signal Company, DSTB, 3rd ID, was able to recognize the signs and help prevent that Soldier from possibly committing suicide.

"There was a Soldier who was making comments about how today was the day he was going to kill himself," Spc. McClintic explained. "The Soldier was always joking around, even about serious issues. At first, I just took it as he was making jokes again.

"When he made the comment again later, I let him know that it was not a funny topic, and he shouldn't be joking about it. He responded, 'how do you know I am joking?' At that point, I was not sure if he was still joking or being serious."

Care is the second part of the A.C.E. process and explains what Soldiers should do if they find that someone is thinking about committing suicide.

"Care gives you the 'what to do' if they say yes,"



If a Soldier sees or hears a battle buddy do or say something that may indicate they're having thoughts of suicide, they can use the A.C.E. card to determine the correct course of action.

Chaplain Romine said. "We can reduce the fear of asking that question if we know what care means.

"Care means you are not going to leave them alone, and you are probably going to call or send for more help. You are going to stay with them and listen. Even if they are giving you their reason to die, it is really important to listen to that, because in their reasons to die, they will also give you their reasons to live. For example, they may say, 'my daughter would be better off if I were dead,' but having a daughter is a better reason to live.



"Care also involves removing any means they may have to commit suicide. Without using force, you may want to take their weapon, any medications they may have if they had planned to use them to commit suicide, and things of that nature," he added.

Specialist McClintic cared enough for her fellow Soldier to not only continue to get him to communicate, but to open up herself about suicides that had happened in her life.

"Later, I noticed that the Soldier was visibly upset as if something was wrong and I asked him if he wanted

to talk about it," she said. "He told me that talking does not help. I then reminded him that if he needed help, there are people that he can talk to, and that I did not think any differently about him because suicide is a subject that is very real in my Family and in my life."

Suicide is a familiar topic for Spc. McClintic, as she has recently had to cope with the effects.

"I have had two people who were very close to me attempt suicide in the past year," Spc. McClintic said. "One was successful, and the other ended up in the intensive care unit but recovered. I know how much that has impacted my Family and me, and I did not want him or his Family to go through that."

Getting a person who is contemplating suicide to get help on his or her own is not always the easiest task; sometimes it has to be done for them. This is where the escort portion of A.C.E. comes in to play.

"You do not want to send, but take the Soldier to see a behavioral health specialist," Chaplain Romine said. "This could mean taking him or her to a combat stress clinic or the emergency room if the clinic is closed.

"A common question at this point is, 'what if they refuse?' If that happens, you need to stay with them and send for help. If you have to intervene at that point and call the MPs or an ambulance, you have to care enough to go against their wishes to get them help."

"I initially informed the mental health specialist for our company," Spc. McClintic said. "When the Soldier was unwilling to talk to her, I informed our first sergeant, because this was not an issue where we could wait to see if the Soldier would seek help on his own."

The Soldier was taken to medical authorities for further evaluation and subsequently released back to duty.

"I am just glad that he is still here," Spc. McClintic said. "We don't know what the outcome would have been, but that is what we are here for. We are supposed to watch out for our battle buddies and have their back in every situation, even if it may put you in an unfavorable position with them."

DESERT ROGUES

CONDUCT FIRST OPD COURSE IN NORTHERN IRAQ

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC DUSTIN GAUTNEY

[2ND ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE,](#)
[3RD ID PAO](#)

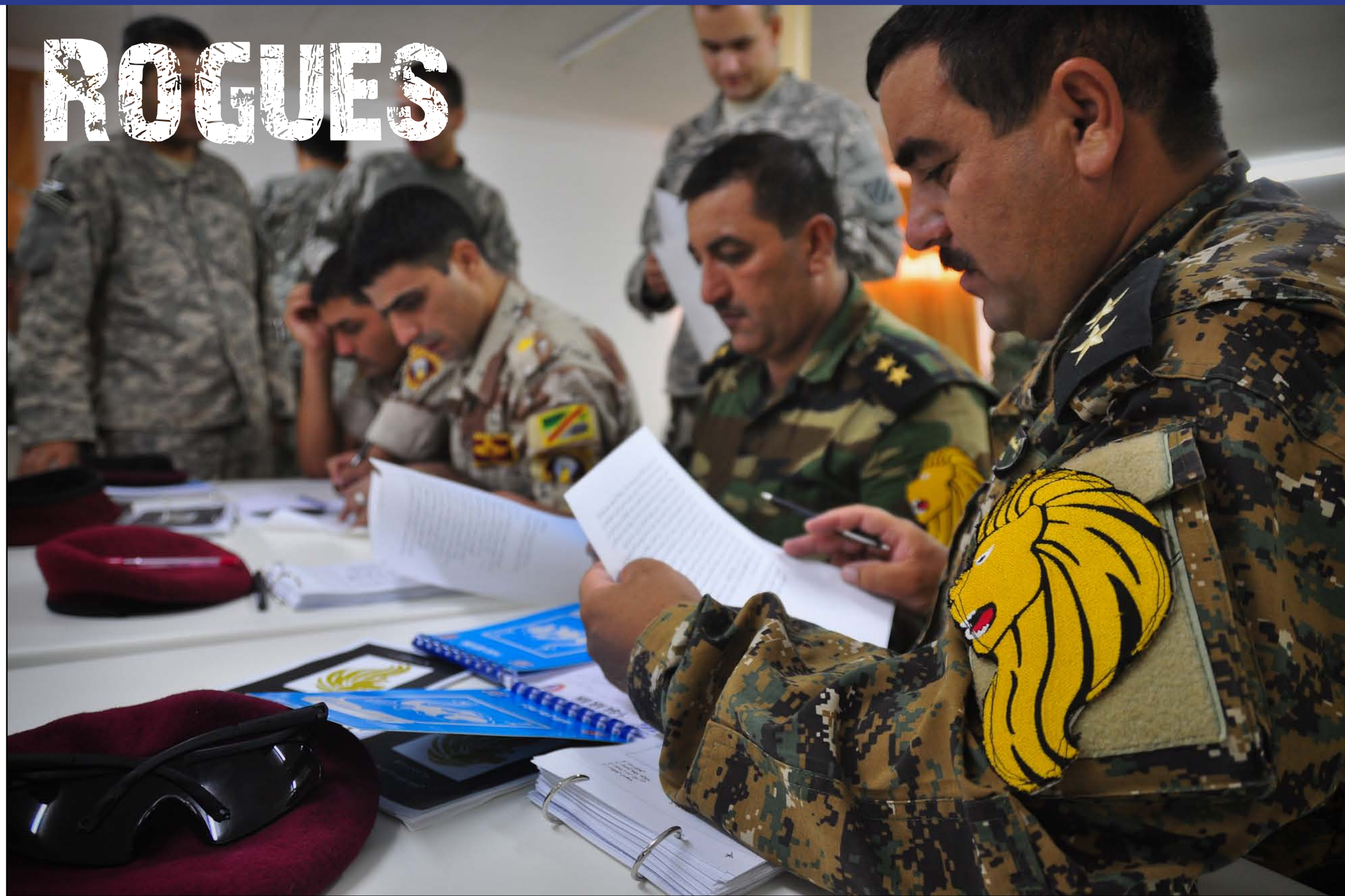
▀ Officers from the Iraqi Security Forces, Regional Guard Brigade, and U.S. Army assigned to combined check points gathered at Joint Security Station India for the first Officer Professional Development course held in Ninewa province, Aug. 19.

Taught by 1st Battalion, 64th Combined Arms Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, the course covered a wide variety of subjects, from troop leading procedures and vehicle searches to escalation of force and discipline standards. The class also featured team-based skill building activities, as each checkpoint's officers competed against one another.

"Many of the skills and topics we covered in the course were being done by the checkpoint officers on their own. However, with all of us coming together to learn or review the training, we can all be on the same page," said Capt. Jared Graham, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1/64th CAB, and coordinator for the course.

The Officer Professional Development course is used by the U.S. military to train junior officers on the full spectrum of leadership skills. Many of the skills taught in this course are the same skills taught in Officer Candidate School or West Point, said Capt. Graham.

"The team building consisted of three lanes: assess a casualty, soccer penalty kick contest, and memory test," said Capt. Graham. "The team contest allowed each checkpoint's officers, both ISF and U.S., to work together to compete against other checkpoints."



Officers from combined check points throughout Ninewa province, in northern Iraq, participate in a joint Officer Professional Development course held at Joint Security Station India, Aug. 19.

The course, which was the first of its kind in Ninewa province, will continue to be held monthly by 1/64th CAB, according to Lt. Col. Ross Coffman, commander of the 1/64th "Desert Rogues" CAB.

"I am humbled and honored to stand among the ISF, RGB, and U.S. officers chosen for the special mission of leading troops at the combined check points," said Lt. Col. Coffman. "To be a professional military it starts with the officer, and the goal of this course is for these young officers to take this knowledge and teach the skills learned here

to their Soldiers.

The importance of the Officer Professional Development course will be measured in time, according to Lt. Col. Coffman. Teaching young officers the skills in troop leading and planning is key for the future.

"These lieutenants and captains are the future generals for Iraq, that is why teaching them now will lay the foundation for the country's military," Lt. Col. Coffman said.

**"THE GOAL OF THIS COURSE IS FOR
THESE YOUNG OFFICERS TO TAKE THIS
KNOWLEDGE AND TEACH THE SKILLS
LEARNED HERE TO THEIR SOLDIERS."
-LT. COL. COFFMAN,
"DESERT ROGUES" COMMANDER**

Hawaii Soldiers build confidence in partners



Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade soldiers demonstrate clearing a house before receiving a certificate of completion for cordon and search training, at the KRGB headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 11.

STORY AND PHOTO BY PFC JESSICA LUHRS
[1ST ADVISE AND ASSIST TASK FORCE.](#)
[1ST ID PAO](#)

Just after completing a weeklong cordon and search course, senior noncommissioned officers with the Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade began the land navigation and map reading portion of a three-month infantry course with U.S. forces at their headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 11.

The training is being facilitated by Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, currently deployed to Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Kirkuk.

After the 50 KRGB senior NCOs complete this portion of the course they will be able to plan missions more effectively, said Sgt. Benjamin Sparkman, a St. Louis, Mo., native and trainer from Co. B.

"They will be able to plan a mission using terrain features and map reading instead of going into an area blind," Sgt. Sparkman said. "This is why it is very important they understand this training."

Sergeant Sparkman's platoon sergeant agreed with him.

"While the KRGB soldiers are learning these fundamentals they are also learning a very important skill; teaching others," said the Los Angeles, Calif., native, Staff Sgt. Eric Gonzalez.

"The trainers have the KRGB [NCOs] stand up in front of the class and teach - knocking out two birds with one stone," said Staff Sgt. Gonzalez. "When they get up there to teach it builds their confidence and tells us they have a good understanding of what is being taught."

The Soldiers of Co. B hope this confidence will assist their partners in training their own soldiers after the course is complete.

"These senior leaders came to us to learn the fundamentals of being a soldier so they can share the fundamentals with their soldiers; in the end we expect all the KRGB to be on the same level," said Staff Sgt. Gonzalez.

Kansas combat aviation brigade provides expeditious medical support to U.S. Division - North

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC CASSANDRA MONROE,
[135TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT, 3RD ID PAO](#)

► Our mission here is to pick up the wounded, said Company C, 1st Sgt. Robert Simmons, 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. "Any soldier that is wounded out on the battlefield we will pick up."

First Sergeant Simmons, a St. Louis, native and a flight medic, is a member of the Company C, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st CAB, 1st ID, out of Fort Riley, Kan.

The team sports a patch above their name tapes on their uniforms, featuring a kangaroo medic holding a wounded kangaroo in its pouch. The pride behind this patch and the unit's mission ensures that all personnel in the area are supported medically by this team.

"Charlie Company is the medical evacuation support for the United States Division-North region," said Maj. Samuel Fricks, the company commander for Co. C. "We provide medical evacuation coverage and point of injury coverage to not only U.S. and allied Soldiers, but also to [Iraqi residents] in this area, as well as Department of Defense civilian contractors and enemy prisoners of war."

The company is made up of four forward support medical teams stationed throughout the USD-N area, to include Forward Operating Base Sykes, near Tal Afar; FOB Diamondback, near Mosul; FOB Warrior, near Kirkuk; and Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, where the company headquarters is also stationed.

At COB Speicher, the evacuation team is co-habited with the company's headquarters.

"Everyone stays close, and we're attached to a radio," said Maj. Fricks, a Morrow, Ga., native. "We've never had a



Specialist Thomas Godbee, a UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief with the FSMT, Company C, 2/1 AR, 1st CAB, 1st ID, peeks out of his window as his helicopter departs the runway, Aug. 26, at COB Speicher. Specialist Godbee works with a team of two pilots and a flight medic on a helicopter reserved for medical evacuation assistance to Soldiers, civilians and Iraqi residents in the USD-N region.

problem with the crew members not hearing the radio or being out here in time when a mission does go off. These guys are professionals and know how to do their job. We take it very seriously."

When missions arise, they are at the ready. The standard time for the helicopters to pick up patients and get them to the nearest hospital is approximately one hour. The team's goal is to be 'wheels up' and taking off within 15 minutes of a request, but because of their experience in these missions, they have managed to get their time down to seven minutes.

"It's a deliberate planning process," said Maj. Fricks. "Every team member has their own setup, but overall, it's grab-and-go. Throughout the day, we're always updating ourselves on different missions. We keep up on the latest weather and ground tactical plans so when we do get a mission, we know what's going on. We're able to launch quickly."

The team has seen less battlefield injuries and more hospital transfers for medical conditions, such as cardiac issues or kidney failure, which means less people are getting hurt on the battlefield, accord-

ing to Maj. Fricks.

However, most times after the patients are admitted, this is the last time that the flight medics will see them. But the efforts made on their parts don't go unnoticed by the wounded victims' units.

"You get a team that will come by later, specifically ask for the crew that assisted in the evacuation, and they'll shake your hand and say, 'Thank you, you saved my guy,' and ... that's it. That right there, is worth its weight in gold," said Spc. Rueben Ryan, a flight medic with the FSMT and a Dallas native.

"We're a special breed," said 1st Sgt. Simmons. "Not everyone can fly with a medical evacuation team. We look for experience, mental strength, professionalism and discipline."

Although being a part of a medical evacuation team requires these attributes, the personnel with this company feel that the job offers a rewarding mission.

"I think this mission here is one of the most important ones the Army has because our mission is to save lives," said Chief Warrant Officer Jeremy Cruz, a pilot in command with the FSMT, and a Haci-

enda Heights, Calif., native. "We go out and pick them up so we can get them the care they need. It's satisfying knowing you played a part in saving someone's life."

After different life experiences and seeing recovering patients, Maj. Fricks agrees that playing a positive part in patients' lives is satisfying.

"I've been to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and have seen the Soldiers there, and just the fact that their Family didn't have to go through that grief of losing them, to me, is the most fulfilling feeling you could ever ask for."

"The Soldiers in this unit are all dedicated to this mission," Maj. Fricks continued. "We just want to get the job done and get who needs to get to the hospital as soon as possible. It goes beyond the evacuation crew, though; you have the supply personnel that gives us what we need to keep us running and you have the maintenance crew behind the scenes to help keep the aircrafts maintained. Also, the operations staff receives the missions. It's a team, a company effort. We all have a place and it's a well-oiled machine when we all interlace together."



UH-60 Black Hawk pilots, Chief Warrant Officer Taylor Galvin, right, and Chief Warrant Officer Jeremy Cruz, both with Co. C, 2/1 AR, 1st CAB, 1st ID, prepare to start the helicopter's engine. The helicopter, and its large red cross, is specifically reserved for medical evacuation assistance in USD-N.

TASK FORCE TROY DELIVERS VITAL GEAR TO IRAQI POLICE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT CHAD D. NELSON AND PFC JESSICA LUHRS,
[135TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT, 3RD ID PAO &
1ST ADVISE AND ASSIST TASK FORCE, 1ST AD PAO](#)

■ As the start of the Iraqi holiday of Ramadan approached, the Salah ad-Din province police force's explosive ordnance disposal unit was concerned about local security. In the days leading up to the Iraqi holiday, they had seen an increase in violence in the streets of Tikrit. Bomb calls for these police can occur as little as once a month, but, on average, the IPs went out five times a week. However, one day in the week before Ramadan, they went out six times, according to Lt. Ahmed Salah, a team leader with the Salah ad-Din IPs.

On their missions, the Iraqis go low tech, using only bomb suits to disarm bombs and improvised explosive devices. A bulky and clumsy suit to wear, the bomb suit is safer than nothing, but it isn't as effective as a bomb-disposal robot. The local police had a robot at one time, but the Iraqi government took it away from them, according to Spc. Mustafa Gazwan, an IP EOD technician and robot driver.

On Aug. 7, the U.S. Navy's Task Force Troy - North, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Two, out of Little Creek, Va., trained the local IPs on the use of an Andros HD-1 bomb disposal robot, which they later gave to the IPs.

The EODMU has trained their Iraqi counterparts on the use of various pieces of EOD equipment over the last five months. The equipment used in the training was that used by the U.S. military, not the Iraqis. The training on April 7 focused on the new robot the Iraqis would use.

"We [were] trying to work out the kinks with the new equipment," said EOD2 Rashid Graham, Senior Bomb Technician with the EODMU.

And there were a few kinks in the beginning. Some antennas needed switching around and the battery needed replacing. As soon as these problems were trouble-shot and remedied, the robot and the Iraqi Police team worked together perfectly.

The driver of the robot was an extreme-

ly capable operator, according to Lt. j.g. Bruce Batteson, Salah ad-Din province Commander, EODMU Two.

"The robot driver is the key to this," said EOD2 Graham. "The driver will either make the team leader's job easy or difficult. A good robot driver can take each individual [bomb] piece apart, making the job much easier." At one point during the training.

After watching them run through a gamut of real-world scenarios, such as picking up cell phones, placing them in a safe container and then responding to a report of an unexploded ordnance on the side of the road, Lt. j.g. Batteson and his team were comfortable giving the robot to the IPs.

"The objective is to have them operate completely independently. They should be fully mission capable by the time we leave," said Lt. j.g. Batteson.

The training proved to be invaluable to the IPs.

"Without the training and equipment, we wouldn't be where we are today," said Lt. Saleh. "It has been a real confidence boost, and we're capable of [completing the mission] now."

The robot is the first piece of equipment in a series of pieces that the Navy EOD team will give to the Iraqis.

"We'll issue the highest-quality equipment first, which is also the equipment they're most familiar with," said Lt. j.g. Batteson. The robot was first on the list, because it is the single most important piece of equipment that saves EOD's lives, he said.

But there is a world of equipment needed to complete the job. Along with robots, the IPs will receive bomb suits, hook and line kits, an x-ray generator, a bomb trailer, explosive magazines, metal detectors, small hand tools and knives.

Instead of giving the IPs all this equipment all at once, the EODMU first wants

to guarantee the IPs are capable of maintaining and operating the equipment.

"We don't want them to get it and then have it break on them," said Lt. j.g. Batteson.

In order to ensure the IPs know how to use the equipment, the Navy team will conduct 15-20 more training sessions over the course of the next few weeks. Each training session will focus on another piece of equipment. If, after each training session, the Navy feels the Iraqis know how to use that session's equipment, they will give it to them.

After the training Aug. 7, the IPs have a new, powerful tool in the efforts to quell needless deaths and injuries caused by explosives.

Further north, 10 members of the Kirkuk Iraqi Police Counter Explosives Team also received new pieces of EOD equipment after they completed a seven-day-long familiarization program, which began Aug. 25.

The IPs were trained by the Airmen of the 506th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron and Soldiers with the 38th Ordnance Company, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., who are currently assigned to TF Troy - North.

The equipment was provided by the Iraq Ministry of the Interior, and consisted of bomb disposal suits, a disruptor, an exploder, an x-ray unit, bomb trailer and three Andros HD-1 robots.

Like their Tikrit counterparts, the Kirkuk IPs were very competent with and knowledgeable of the equipment used in the training session, said Tech. Sgt. Jason A. Luckenbach, an EOD team leader.

He continued by saying he is confident the new equipment and training the IPCET received will save many lives.

"These tools and this training will give the IPCET the capability to disarm IEDs and do so safely, saving many lives," said Tech Sgt. Luckenbach.



An EOD Airman with the 506th EOD Squadron assists an IP with the Kirkuk IP Counter Explosives Team during familiarization training on the HD-1 Andros robot. (Photo by PFC Jessica Luhrs)



Across United States Division - North, brigades have redeployed after a year of hard work and determination in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, helping Task Force Marne complete its mission.

Going Home

Wings of Lightning case colors

25TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE, 25TH ID

STORY AND PHOTO BY

SPC CASSANDRA MONROE

135TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT, 3RD ID PAO



■ After nearly a year of supplying combat aviation support to operations in northern Iraq, Soldiers in the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, cased their colors, July 24, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq, -- signifying the end of their deployment.

"[Task Force Wings] came together from bases from Tennessee, Europe, Hawaii, and flew as one," said Division-North Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo. "You left an indelible mark on this task force, and you showed them what a combat aviation brigade can do. You set the bar high for all of the aviation outfits. But, you especially left a mark on the 3rd Infantry Division."

In all, Task Force Wings supported close to 22,000 air mission requests, more than 141,000 mission hours, and moved 105,000 passengers and seven million pounds of cargo.

"One thing I firmly believe is that this combat aviation brigade exists for only one reason, and that is to support the Soldiers on the ground," said 25th CAB Commander, Col. Michael Lundy. "Keeping those soldiers off the roads when they don't have to be there; protecting them when they do; and always being ready to ensure that he can accomplish his mission is always our focus."

Protecting Soldiers and making history is exactly what this task force did during its 11 months in Iraq. The brigade supported Task Force Marne's efforts to maintain security and operations during the March 7 Iraqi elections.

The 25th CAB continued to support Task Force Marne by facilitating transportation of personnel and equipment during the transition to stability operations.

"It's embodied in our Hawaiian motto of the 25th, 'Leele Makou No Na Pouali,' which means, 'we fly for the troops,'" said Col. Lundy. "I'm very proud that the Soldiers of Task Force Wings have lived this motto every day in support of our brothers and sisters on the ground. Daily, I've been amazed by their dedication, their selflessness, their ingenuity, and their courage. They're truly an exceptional bunch of aggressive aviation professionals that will always place the mission first and always try to go over, around and under or through any challenge to provide maximum support to the ground maneuver units."

This deployment might have been a long time away from home, but for some Soldiers, it was one they can walk away from with a sense of accomplishment.

"Overall, I'd say that our task force was successful," said Warrant Officer Scott Turvey, the standardizing pilot for Task Force Diamondhead, with 2nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 25th CAB. "We've implemented a number of techniques, tactics and procedures we've utilized over the course of time here. The time was well spent for us, and the time spent on Soldiers was good too."

In addition to 25th CAB's four organic aviation battalions, it was able to accomplish its missions with the support of: Task Force 1-230th Air Cavalry Squadron, and Task Force 2-159 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, "Gunslinger," both out of Tennessee; and the 164th Expeditionary Air Squadron, "Skulls," which was the first time that an Army combat aviation brigade had direct responsibility for planning and utilization of Air Force C-130 assets. The task force conducted attack, reconnaissance and security missions and provided general support and medical evacuation.



‘Dragon Brigade’ ends historical mission in Iraq

4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 1ST ID

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT SHANTELE J. CAMPBELL
[4TH IBCT, 1ST ID PAO](#)

■ Inside of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s headquarters building at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Col. Hank Arnold and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael S. McCoy, the commander and top noncommissioned officer of the ‘Dragon’ brigade, cased their unit’s colors during a ceremony, July 15.

During the ceremony, the Task Force Marne Commander, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo thanked the ‘Dragon’ brigade for a job well done.

“In this amazing and important area of Iraq, Hank, you and Command Sgt. Maj. McCoy and the brigade operated with great success,” Maj. Gen. Cucolo said during his speech.

“Any attempt by me to describe your success would be weak and fall short; so, let me just say congratulations on a duty well performed,” he continued. “You took a tough battle space with incredible promise and proved to our Iraqi brothers and sisters and our Army how adaptable the American Soldier can be.”

“Warriors you bring a fresh look, tremendous energy and a wealth of experience to Salah ad-Din,” Maj. Gen. Cucolo concluded as he welcomed the 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. The Hawaii-based unit will be replacing the ‘Dragon’ brigade in Salah ad-Din and Diyala provinces.

“You will do great, and Task Force Marne is honored to have you in our formation,” added Maj. Gen. Cucolo.

Since deploying to the Salah ad-Din province, last fall, the ‘Dragon’ brigade oversaw a successful parliamentary election in March and returned 12 of 18 military bases to the Iraqi government.

The brigade also worked hand-in-hand with the U.S. State Department Provincial Reconstruction team to complete several projects aimed to better the economy and provide a better quality of life for the people of Salah ad-Din.



Colonel Hank Arnold and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael S. McCoy, the commander and top noncommissioned officer of the 4th IBCT, 1st ID, out of Fort Riley, Kan., case their unit’s colors during a ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, July 15.

This was the second time the ‘Dragon’ brigade deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2007 the brigade deployed to Baghdad during the surge where they conducted full-spectrum combat operations. This deployment they performed a completely different mission as part of the historic transition to stability operations and transition of U.S. forces out of Iraq.

“We took over an operating environment that was already moving forward, and we continued to improve upon that operating environment and made it better than what it was,” said Col. Arnold. “We had extremely successful results with improving the capability of the security forces and extremely successful results with improving the capability of the governance. We had direct impact on improving the economic condition of the people here in Salah ad-Din.”

“We accomplished our mission, and we get to finish this mission with honor and go home knowing that we participated in a very important part in the history of Iraq and in the Iraqi people,” concluded Col. Arnold. “By being here, this year, serving the Iraqi people, we have served our Nation.”

With the ceremony officially signifying the end of a successful mission in Iraq, units of the ‘Dragon’ brigade have already begun to redeploy to Fort Riley, Kan. The rest of the brigade is expected to return to Fort Riley by the end of the summer.

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Frontline Entertainment



Allen Maier, Kidnap Kings' drummer, performs for the Soldiers from 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, during a concert held at Contingency Operating Site Marez, Iraq, Aug. 22. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dustin Gautney)



Hip hop star Ja Rule performs for hundreds of Servicemembers deployed to Forward Operating Base Warrior, near Kirkuk, Iraq, during a two-week long USO/Armed Forces Entertainment sponsored tour in Iraq, July 19. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs)



(Above): Soldiers from 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, were treated to a special performance by Nathan Lee, a rock pianist from Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 6, at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq. The band sported their 25th ID hats during an encore performance, a gift from the Warrior brigade to commemorate the band's show at FOB Warhorse. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Robert M. England)

(Left): Comedian Scott Kennedy hands out patches and signs autographs during his 38th comedy tour to Iraq as part of the Lone Wolf Comedy tour held at Contingency Operating Site Marez/Diamondback, July 24 (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dustin Gautney)

Raising Marne Morale



Staff Sergeant Tammy Patch, a spectrum management non-commissioned officer with the Task Force Marne G-6 Network Operations section, plays Alice Paul and reminds members of TF Marne of the hardships that women endured in an effort to achieve equality during the Women's Equality Day observance, Aug. 27. (Photo by Army Sgt. Johnathon Jobson.)



The pit area begins to fill up, as competitors arrive for another Saturday night of racing at the Red Legs Raceway at Contingency Operating Site Marez. The five-turn, 300-foot track, built as a labor of love by Soldiers of the 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, provides a welcome respite from daily missions in Mosul, Iraq. (Photo by Army Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden)

Staff Sergeant Raymond O'stil, a Hayward, Calif., native and paralegal non-commissioned officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, samples sounds on a sampling and drum machine, Aug. 30, in the studio he created in his housing unit at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Diyala province, Iraq. O'stil produces beats and records songs with other Soldiers in his spare time despite being deployed. (Photo by Army Pfc. Robert M. England)



The Air Force band "Tops in Blue" performs for servicemembers on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, July 9. (Photo by Army Pfc. Jessica Luhrs.)

REFLECTIONS

A CHANCE TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE.

PRIVATE 2ND CLASS FRANCIS GUARDADO-RAMIREZ,
BATTERY A, 1ST BATTALION, 41ST FIELD ARTILLERY,
1ST ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE,
3RD INFANTRY DIVISION

SERGEANT JOHNNY LUMPKIN,
HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS BATTERY,
1ST BATTALION, 41ST FIELD ARTILLERY,
1ST ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE,
3RD INFANTRY DIVISION

FIRST LIEUTENANT MICHAEL L. RUNYAN,
COMPANY B, 52ND INFANTRY ANTI TANK,
2ND ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE,
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION

SERGEANT JAMAL M. RHETT,
COMPANY C, 1ST BATTALION,
21ST INFANTRY REGIMENT,
2ND ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE,
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION

SPECIALIST JAMES F. MCCLAMROCK,
HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS COMPANY,
1ST BATTALION, 27TH INFANTRY REGIMENT,
2ND ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE,
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION

STAFF SERGEANT PHILLIP JENKINS,
HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS COMPANY,
1ST BATTALION, 27TH INFANTRY REGIMENT,
2ND ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE,
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The above listed Soldiers died between July 1, 2010 and September 26, 2010 and were part of Task Force Marne or the 3rd Infantry Division.