

# The North Star

Serving Task Force Marne  
U. S. Division- North, Iraq



Volume 1, Issue 39

February, 1 2010

## TF Marne NCO, Soldier of the Qtr. selected

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson  
TF Marne PAO

After a long day of competition and waiting, two Stryker Brigade Soldiers walked away with a large weight lifted from their shoulders and a miniature statue of the Task Force Marne mascot, Rocky, in their hands. The TF Marne NCO and Soldier of the Quarter were announced, Jan. 26 on COB Speicher.

Sergeant Steven Rea, an infantryman from Reconnaissance Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, was named NCO of the Quarter.

"It's outstanding, I am happy to take this [TF Marne NCO of the Quarter trophy] back to my unit," expressed Sgt. Rea. To come here to 3rd Infantry Division with its storied history, and be honored as one of their best is incredible, he added.

Sergeant Rea is a Davis, Calif., native and he said one of his most notable accomplishments was earning the Expert Infantryman's Badge with the "True Blue" distinction, which

means he passed all 40 tasks without receiving a 'no go.'

Sergeant Rea was not only happy about the fact that he was named NCO of the Quarter. His Soldier and fellow infantryman, Spc. Jason Ratliff, a Lancaster, Ohio, native, was named the TF Marne Soldier of the Quarter.

Since arriving to 3SBCT, Spc. Ratliff has served as a driver, scout, observer, radio telephone operator, senior scout observer, and team leader.

The two Soldiers studied together for their company's Soldier and NCO of the Month boards and won, afterward, Sgt. Rea and Spc. Ratliff continued studying together for each of the other boards, building upon the information they already gained.

The board president was Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, the TF Marne command sergeant major.

"I take time out to sit on these professional development boards to show that even at my level in the Army, there's always time to teach, coach and mentor Soldiers," said Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews. "Some people tend to

**See Soldier, Page 2** —



Photo by Sgt Johnathon Jobson, TF Marne PAO  
*TF Marne NCO and Soldier of the Quarter, Sgt. Steven Rea (left) and Spc. Jason Ratliff (right), both from HHC, 1/23rd Inf. Regt., 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., pose for a photo with Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews (center), TF Marne command sergeant major and president of the NCO/Soldier of the Quarters boards.*

## Iraqi Army learning to trust their 'backbone'

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs,  
1BCT, 1st AD PAO

One of the reasons the U.S. Army is so successful is because they view their noncommissioned officers as the "backbone."

Senior advisors of the Kirkuk

Training Center (K1), Iraq, are in the process of getting the 12th and 4th Divisions of the Iraqi Army to view their noncommissioned officers in the same light.

To do this, the advisors at K1 have expanded their focus from the training of IA soldiers to training and enabling

Iraqi noncommissioned officers to be leaders.

Wherever you go on K1, NCOs are already in the lead by training their soldiers in combat lifesaving, basic combat training, mortar platoon

**See Backbone, Page 3** —

# Speicher well to nurture plants, economy

By Spc. Michael Adams  
TF Marne PAO

Progress toward an economically viable Iraq was once again made when the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone signed a contract with an Iraqi company to build a well on land leased by Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Jan. 18.

"The Al-Wissam company wanted to build a well to expand their business and growth of their company," said Capt. Calvin Fisher, of Durham, N.C., the officer in charge of I-BIZ. "We facilitated an agreement with Task Force Marne Office of the Staff Judge Advocate and the business."

The U.S. government does not own the land, they are the lease-holders of COB Speicher, but the contract was arranged and signed under the I-BIZ program. I-BIZ works with Iraqi businesses to allow economic opportunities on the base and in the local communities.

The well will be on a piece of land close to COB Speicher.

There are currently egg plants and green beans on the land, and this well will reduce the costs of importing water. Iraqi farmers will be hired by the company to nurture and grow more crops as well.

The Al-Wissam group has other facilities around the Province.

The company has

gone to farmers in the area to show them new technologies and irrigation techniques grow crops more efficiently.

They also plan to rejuvenate natural areas on the COB by planting plants and trees on the base, and they have been working with I-BIZ to make that goal a reality. The Al-Wissam group will also be contributing to science with their crops. The land will be used to grow Jojoba plants.

The plants will be used in a study by Tikrit University to study oils from the plant that people apply to their skin for cleansing purposes.

The study will examine different facets of the plant including how much sunlight it needs, how much water it

will require and other important information on how to grow the plant.

Captain Todd Chard and Lt. Col. Perry Wadsworth, both with the Task Force Marne Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, oversaw the contract to make sure it adhered to the rules pertaining to the base.

Lieutenant Colonel Wadsworth feels the agreement will be beneficial for everyone involved.

"This contract is a good way of showing how Iraqis can help themselves," he said. "It will build their own capacity for agriculture. They can do it rather than have outside experts do it or purchase material from other places in the country."

Construction of the well will begin in the immediate future, but no specific date has been set.

I-BIZ brings in companies to participate in projects for the economic viability and sustainability of the base, to include recycling and construction projects.

The services the companies provide will be important for the economic development on the base when Iraq takes control of it.

The contract is part of a larger effort to help COB Speicher and the surrounding areas be self-sufficient after American forces leave.



Photo by Spc. Michael Adams, TF Marne PAO

**Captain Calvin Fisher (left), I-BIZ OIC and Lt. Col. Nora Marcos, commander of DSTB, 3rd ID, celebrate the beginning of a well construction project with members from the Al-Wissam Group, outside COB Speicher, Jan. 18.**

## Continued from Soldier, Page 1

think that attending boards is a way to check the block for promotion, but those are the ones who haven't sacrificed the time it takes to study - not memorize - and comprehend the Army's regulations and processes."

Sergeant Rea and Spc. Ratliff competed against NCOs and Soldiers re-

spectively from the other six brigades of TF Marne to earn their titles.

All of the NCOs and Soldiers who are named NCO or Soldier of the Quarter will compete against each other for the title of NCO or Soldier of the Year.

For Soldiers wanting to compete

for the Soldier of the Month/Quarter boards, Spc. Ratliff has the following advice.

"Study hard and find a battle buddy who is also planning to go to the board," he said. "That way they are just as committed to studying as you are. Don't forget about the basics either."



# Iraqi Army opens 'command and control' center

By Spc. Ry Norris  
3SBCT, 2nd Inf Div PAO

For some, gone are the days of beginning work at 4 a.m. or working during extreme weather conditions. After months of sweat and hard work, a team of 62 individuals can rest. The Combined Operations and Intelligence Center is complete.

The grand opening of the COIC took place, Jan. 10 at Forward Operating Base Kameesh. A team comprised of 10 Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Field Engineer Regiment, 50 Soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters, 37th Engineer Battalion, Vertical Construction Platoon, and two Iraqi interpreters, were responsible for the construction of the COIC.

"The Soldiers worked together and conducted cross-training on carpentry and masonry skills during construction of the 30-by-70 foot concrete, masonry block building," said Sgt. 1st Class Brian A. Money, the platoon sergeant and Denver, Colo., native.

The engineers worked quickly to build the COIC from the ground up, as U.S. Soldiers demonstrated to the

Iraqis how to reinforce the masonry blocks.

The engineers used careful planning and made precise cuts to preserve structural integrity. Two battalion inspectors from the 37th Engineer Battalion periodically inspected the quality of the building.

During the construction of the COIC, a bond was forged between the engineers and Iraqis as they worked side by side each day. The U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers had lunch and chai tea together every day. They exchanged laughs and stories.

"The biggest impact the partnership had on all the paratroopers was the ability to convey to the Iraqi soldiers the American standard for concrete construction," said Sgt. 1st Class Money.



Photo by Spc. Rye Norris, 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

**Staff Major General Tariq Abd Al-Wahb Jasim Mahdi Al-Azzawi, from the DOC, Staff Maj. Gen. Khalid Jawael Kahdim Muhsin Al-Rabai, from the 5th IA, and Col. Dave E. Funk (right), 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., commander, sits down in the COIC, Jan. 10, at FOB Kameesh.**

Now that the COIC is complete, it can be used for its intended purpose. "The main objective of the COIC is to assist the Iraqi Army in establishing enduring systems that will enable them to command and control and maintain situational awareness in their areas of operation," said Maj. David Szymanski, the 5th Iraqi Army Division COIC team chief with the military intelligence team.

## Continued from Backbone, Page 1



Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1BCT, 1st AD PAO

**An Iraqi Army NCO from the Kirkuk Training Center (K1) teaches a combat lifesaving class outside of Kirkuk, Jan. 25.**

training and more, under the observation of U.S. forces.

However, they are not being used to their full potential as NCOs, according to Master Sgt. Eric Fies, military transition team, senior enlisted advisor at K1.

In order to fully enable junior Iraqi NCOs, senior NCOs and officers at K1 they are holding various platoon sergeant courses and allowing junior NCOs to lead various classes.

This curriculum closely resembles the Warrior Leader Course the U.S. Army offers their junior NCOs in conducting physical training, refreshing basic soldier skills and building their confidence as leaders.

To add to that confidence, senior NCOs are having the junior NCOs teach each other and their soldiers.

By building their confidence as leaders, they will reach their full potential and be able to train and manage their soldiers more efficiently, according to Master Sgt. Fies.

"It is a long road, completely empowering the Iraqi NCO's, but so far we have a good start to getting to the end of it," Master Sgt. Fies said.

## You're invited

### Houston Cheerleaders

When: Feb. 5-8

Where: See your M.W.R.

### Super Bowl Party

When: Feb. 7, Festivities begin at 11:30 p.m. Super Bowl begins at 4 a.m.

Where: Main Dining Facility

### Lone Wolf Comedians

When: Feb. 14-16

Where: To be determined

### Charlie Wilson and the Gap Band

When: Feb. 21

Where: COB Speicher

### Saving Abel

When: Feb. 23-26

Where: To be determined

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Corporal Sergio Williams, of Lebanon, Tenn., is assigned to Company C, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. On Jan. 20, pictures from aerial reconnaissance indicated a possible cache east of the unit's patrol base. Upon arriving at the cache, Cpl. Williams immediately took control and employed his extensive training on preserving evidence for possible convictions. He guided his team as they started to uncover the cache, thoroughly documenting the cache's contents. Corporal Williams and his team dug in the cache for three hours and photographed all items. The items had a significant amount of rust and Cpl. Williams was unable to collect any finger prints. When the cache exploitation was complete, the items were turned over to the Iraqi Army for destruction. Corporal Williams' actions, attention to detail and confidence helped to disrupt enemy plans to attack coalition forces, making him a deserving choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Private First Class Miguel Uribe, of Brownsville, Texas, is with Headquarters and Headquarters Command, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He assumed duties of supply sergeant following the medical evacuation of his first-line supervisor and rose to the challenge with the determination and diligence to support whatever challenges arose. His knowledge, dedication and enthusiasm on matters related to property accountability, supply transactions and maintenance enabled his company to effectively support the battalion mission. He worked tirelessly to ensure the battalion's relief in place with the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry was successful. Private First Class Uribe's commitment to the mission and his company are in keeping with the best traditions of the United States Army and Soldiers deployed worldwide and make him a most deserving Task Force Marne Hero of the North

## On this day, Feb 1, in history ...

[www.history.com](http://www.history.com)

**1790** - First session of the United States Supreme Court was held in New York City. Chief Justice John Jay presided.

**1884** - The first volume of the Oxford English Dictionary was published. The dictionary had been planned since 1857.

**1898** - The Traveler's Insurance Company, of Hartford, Conn., issued the first automobile insurance company to Dr. Truman Martin of Buffalo, N.Y.

**1960** - Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair Jr. and David Richmond sat at the Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., to protest the store's segregation policy. This began a series of sit-ins around the south that ended the policy.

**1968** - President Richard Nixon announced his candidacy for president. He went on to defeat Hubert Humphrey to become 37th president of the United States.

**1982** - Late Night with David Letterman premiered after the legendary Tonight Show with Johnny Carson.





# REGIONAL HEADLINES

## MBA celebrates 100th anniversary

The Seattle Times

SEATTLE- Members of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties set out to celebrate the group's centennial anniversary with a towering challenge: Tackling 100 community-service projects in a year.

"You know, when I first heard about that as an idea, my reaction was 'Wow, can we do that?'" said Jay Schupack, executive director of the Master Builders Care Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the MBA.

The answer was a resounding yes as members of the country's oldest and largest building group dipped paintbrushes, swung hammers, hoisted lumber and performed other tasks over the past year to help meet the challenge, known as "100 for 100."

The charitable punch list included shelter for homeless families using the formula designed by HomeAid, a national effort that builds temporary housing for homeless families with volunteer labor and donated goods from construction crews, suppliers and other partners, the MBA is helping bring two new multiunit housing shelters to the area.

On Dec. 9, crews broke ground on a new duplex in Issaquah for Compassion House, which provides transitional housing, life coaching, job development and other social services for homeless families.

With two three-bedroom apartments, the duplex has a market value of about \$400,000 and is scheduled to open in about six months, according to John Day, owner of John Day Homes in North Bend. His company is the lead contractor, known as the builder captain, for the project.

"Everybody basically donates all of their overhead and profit and as much labor as possible," said Day, who served as the 2009 MBA president. "The care provider doesn't have to go out and raise an inordinate amount of money to build these facilities. They can basically build it for half price."

Last May, crews built 33 free wheelchair ramps for people with disabilities and low-income homeowners in King and Snohomish counties, as part of the its annual Rampathon.

Over the past 16 years, the association has built about 275 ramps for disabled residents who can't afford the average \$5,000 price tag of a custom-built ramp for their homes. With 465 volunteers, the 2009 Rampathon was the largest to date.

## North Georgians take German, for VW

Associated Press

RINGGOLD, Ga. - Some North Georgians are now singing their way to what they hope will be a familiarity with German. Along the way they hope to learn just enough of the language so when Volkswagen and

other German companies arrive in the area, they'll be able to provide a proper welcome. Instructor Karen Claypool uses children's rhymes in the class teaching the basics in an easy way and encourages participants to speak without inhibitions.

"Don't be afraid to make a mistake; you have to make at least 10,000 mistakes so you might as well make them now" she said.

Through a series of interactive songs, approximately 25 people from the business and civic areas began learning German last week in Ringgold, Ga. The one-month class offered by the Catoosa County Chamber of Commerce held Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. is one way the Chamber is preparing for Volkswagen's emergence locally, officials said.

## Answers to Friday's crossword puzzle

A	P	P	L	E		G	R	O	C	E	R	
P		A				R		V				T
R	I	S	O	T	T	O		E	A	T		A
I		T		O		U	N		O		R	
C	R	A	Y	F	I	S	H		S	A	L	T
O				F		E		P		S		
T	A	S	T	E	D		M	O	R	T	A	R
		U		E		P		T				I
S	A	G	E		M	O	L	A	S	S	E	S
T		A		B		T		T		K		S
E		R	Y	E		A	V	O	C	A	D	O
W					A		G			T		L
	S	P	O	N	G	E			C	R	E	P

## THE North Star

*The North Star* is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of *The North Star* are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 3rd Infantry Division. All editorial content of *The North Star* is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Task Force Marne Public Affairs Office.

4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team,  
1st Infantry Division  
2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,  
3rd Infantry Division

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,  
2nd Infantry Division  
1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team,  
1st Armored Division

## TASK FORCE MARNE

Commanding General - Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo  
Command Sergeant Major - Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews Jr.

### Task Force Marne Public Affairs Staff

TF Marne PAO - Maj. Jeff Allen  
TF Marne PA NCOIC - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs  
TF Marne Writer- Sgt. Johnathon Jobson

### Editorial Staff

Managing Editor - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs  
Editor- Spc. Michael Adams

25th Combat Aviation Brigade,  
25th Infantry Division  
130th Engineer Brigade  
135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment