

The North Star

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



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Strykers field new vehicle, technology

By Pvt. Zachary Zuber
3SBCT, 2nd Inf Div PAO

Modes of transportation and the transfer of information, have evolved over the past 10 years. Today, Soldiers, now have non-lethal capabilities to respond to demonstrations and



Photo by Pvt. Zachary Zuber, 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

Soldiers of 3rd Plt., 66th MP Co., learn to calibrate the .50 caliber machine gun with its control system in the new full-spectrum effects package Stryker.

protests without leaving their vehicles.

The 3rd Platoon, 66th Military Police Company, attached to 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, is employing two new Strykers, which will change the way they do their jobs every day.

“The Strykers have a full-spectrum effects package (FSEP),” said James Yeiser, field service representative for the FSEP. “It is an escalation-of-force defense system designed to keep Soldiers out of harm’s way.”

This will be especially helpful during the upcoming elections where security is a primary concern for the MPs. Each FSEP Stryker is operated by four Soldiers, each having their own television screen with real-time video feed streaming from cameras located outside the vehicle.

“These are good for a lot of things, even outside the MP world,” said Sgt. Blake Jones, a vehicle commander for 3rd Plt., 66th MP Co. “My favorite feature is the 360 degree cameras that allow the vehicle commander to see everything that’s going on.”

Through this system, the vehicle commander is also able to identify

potential threats and designate targets to his team members, depending on his desired response.

“If someone shoots at you, the commander can send that target to the gunner, but if a target requires non-lethal force, you can assign it to the LRAD [Long Range Acoustic Device] controller,” said Sgt. Jones.

The LRAD is a long-range “hailing and warning, directed acoustic device that concentrates an audio signal into a 15-to-30 degree beam” and can accurately transmit a signal to an individual, or group of people, at a considerable distance, according the Defense Update online magazine.

LRAD can issue a verbal challenge with instructions in excess of 500 meters and has the capability of following up with a warning tone to influence behavior or determine intent.

The “hailing and warning” application for commercial shipping is similar to the successful LRAD deployments by the U.S. Navy on patrol craft in and around the port of Basra, Iraq. It was used to communicate with vessels in

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Conference helps FOB mayors prepare for base closures

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson
TF Marne PAO

Brigade S-4 representatives and mayors from throughout the U.S. Division - North area of operations attended a base closure conference held by the Task Force Marne G-4 section, Jan. 29-30 at Contingency Operating

Base Speicher.

The conference focused on the issues and policies surrounding base closures stemming from the responsible drawdown of forces (RDOF.)

Currently, there are approximately 14 major forward operating bases in the USD-N footprint, and the goal is to

drawdown many of the bases between now and August, said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christopher Ferguson, the Logistics Civilian Augmentation Program officer-in-charge for TF Marne, G-4 and the primary planner for the

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3ID bands jam out at roadshow

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

After a long day of missions in the desert, the sound of live rock music drew a very curious crowd to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent, "Clamrina," at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Jan. 23.

To the surprise of Soldiers, upon entering the building, Army bands the Four Horsemen of the Arockalypse and Sasquatch, from 3rd Infantry Division, were on stage rocking out.

The two bands are unique, not only because they are Army rock bands, but also because of their ability to cater to the musical needs of all Soldiers, according to Staff Sgt. Kevin Jahn, a Valley City, N.D., native Sasquatch drummer.

One of the bands, "Sasquatch," covers country, pop and soft rock while the other "The Four Horsemen of the Arockalypse," a band made-up of junior-enlisted Soldiers, covers all aspects of rock and hard-rock.

Because of the wide variety of music bands play, during a concert Soldiers will hear music from the Zac Brown Band, Big & Rich, Billy Idol, Weezer, and more, according to Staff Sgt. Jahn.

"At first I didn't know what to expect from an Army rock band," said Pfc. Curtis Hutton, an infantryman with Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. "I am so glad I came though; there is no better way to end a work day than to see Soldiers from the 3rd ID jam like that."

It is not only the Soldiers that enjoy an awesome experience, but the band members also.



Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1BCT, 1st AD PAO
Sergeant Ralph Gaskin, singer with "Sasquatch," a rock band from the 3rd Inf. Div., performs for Soldiers at FOB Warrior, Jan. 23.

"I have been in a band performing since I can remember and performing for fellow Joes is way more rewarding than playing a random show back in the states," said Spc. Stephen Haaker, a Paradise, Calif., native and drummer for the Four Horsemen.

The rock bands will be getting a full-year of these rewarding experiences. These Soldiers are deployed to Contingency Operating Base Speicher, with a mission of traveling to the various bases in northern Iraq entertaining the Task Force Marne Soldiers.

Even though they get the opportunity to travel to almost all the bases in northern Iraq, the band members agreed that they cannot wait to do another performance here.

The atmosphere was perfect, according to Spc. Haaker. They had the lights going, we were on a great stage with amazing sound and we had plenty of Soldiers rocking out to our music. The bands are scheduled to return in the spring and will have plenty of fans ready to rock at their next showing.

"I am definitely coming to the next performance and bringing every Soldier I can find that likes to jam," said Pfc. Hutton.

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conference.

The primary speakers were personnel from the U.S. Forces – Iraq, who had information on logistics, base and facilities and budget.

"They gave us progress reports for their individual sections on how RDOF is working," said CW4 Ferguson. "The RDOF end state is to be down to 50,000 troops in theater as of Aug. 31."

During the conference, the J-4 outlined how units are to turn in containers and rolling-stock, as well as troop re-deployment. The J-7 primarily focused on which FOBs would become the "hubs," primary logistical centers, and which would be "spokes," outlying FOBs to receive support from the "hubs".

The J-8 briefed on the funding of RDOF operations and the constraints regarding how units can spend money

that is set aside for RDOF as the draw-down occurs, CW4 Ferguson added. One constraint involves new construction on bases.

Any new construction must be in support of RDOF or to correct a life, health or safety concern, and should have a completion date no later than July 31. Conference attendees also heard information from the 15th Sustainment Brigade regarding changes to logistics support.

The COB Speicher Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office personnel spoke about the proper methods to turn-in and draw equipment at DRMO.

Task Force Safe concluded the primary conference briefings with an overview of electrical safety and how to make sure that facilities are in proper condition for turn over to the Iraqi government.

The conference was even helpful to personnel who are stationed at bases that are not part of the initial RDOF base closures.

"I thought the conference was very helpful," said Maj. Travis Delk, the director of logistics for the 166th Regional Support Group out of Puerto Rico, which runs the COB Speicher garrison command and mayor's cell.

"Even though we are not talking about COB Speicher closing by Aug. 31, the information that was relayed will impact COB Speicher due to possible influx of Soldiers as other bases close."

After the conference, the attendees returned to their respective bases armed with additional knowledge to help them complete one of their final missions of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the drawdown of forces and their return home.

I-BIZ, Iraqis near completion of new school

By Sgt. Chad Nelson
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

With the support of U.S. Army-operated Iraq-Based Industrial Zone, the local village of Al Khanik, is nearing its construction of a new school, a project that demonstrates both cooperation and communication between U.S. forces and Iraqi leadership.

Before construction began, Chairman Arif, the chairman of the Tikrit City Council, made sure the Iraq Ministry of Education agreed with the construction of a new school and figured out where it would be placed, said Capt. Calvin Fisher, the I-BIZ officer in charge.

"We find the contractors, work out the price and make sure deadlines are being met," said Capt. Fisher, who said construction began in November of 2009, when the 3rd Infantry Division took over operations of I-BIZ.

In order to ensure construction stays on schedule, and quality work is being done, Capt. Fisher receives daily photos of the project and visits the site once a week.

During a site visit, Capt. Fisher saw the small construction team laying mortar and cement blocks in an effort to finish on schedule.

According to Ali A. Latif, the foreman for Brother Group Construction and Services, the crew has been working six days a week in order to meet the construction deadline and some workers even sleep in an unfinished room of the school to cut down on travel time between their village and the work site.

Under the watchful eye of Capt. Fisher, the school is scheduled to be

finished sometime this February.

Villagers are overjoyed that the 150-student school is nearing its grand opening. This school, which will accommodate 6 to 12 year olds, will replace an older, smaller school with only three classrooms that could only accommodate 6 to 8 year olds.

"This is going to be our pride in the area," said village sheik Mokhtar Hishaam Ibrahim.

He went on to say all the children from the old school would be attending the new school, and even more children would be attending.

"This is going to be the gem and the foundation of the community," said Lt. Col. Nora Marcos, battalion commander of the Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

Even the children are getting excited about attending the new school.

"We have two classes in one room in the old school," said one local child. He went on to say he's looking forward to bigger rooms with fewer children in each class.

The children are really focused on the one thing small children across the world focus on when they think of school.

"The playground will be a lot nicer," said the child before running off with his friends to play with a new soccer ball.

Most importantly, there is the hope that this school will bring a sense of normalcy and stability to this small Iraqi village.

Most people believe that investing in a child's future is the best way to ensure a better country. With the construction of this school, and many

more that are currently being built across Iraq, the children of Iraq will be better able to improve their country.

No one understands the importance of schools as well as Lt. Col. Marcos, whose parents are both educators.

"More important than building schools is educating children," she said. "Anything we can do to give them the facilities and the means will give them a leg up. [The children] need to be educated here and contribute to the growth and success of this country."



Photo by Sgt. Chad Nelson, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.
A worker with Brother Group Construction and Services gathers concrete to lay on the façade of a new school being built in Al Khanag village.

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shipping lanes and around oil terminals, where the device was reported to be effective even at a distance of 1,000 meters, according to the Defense Update online magazine.

"The LRAD is equipped with a 'Phraselator' which allows Soldiers and interpreters to take certain English phrases and translate them into Arabic before a mission," said Yeiser.

It will also play loud, annoying

tones, intended to cause unruly crowds to disperse without any violence, he added.

If none of this provides the desired effect, a mounted shotgun is capable to fire non-lethal rubber buckshot to diffuse any serious situations. One final feature helps Soldiers react to hostile actions without leaving the vehicle.

"There are four microphones tuned to detect bangs and provide an on-

screen target for people in the vehicle," said Yeiser. "This lets them see what the target is and react accordingly."

As a complete package, this will change the way Sgt. Jones and others in his platoon resolve situations with a non-lethal force.

"This gives me a better visualization of what's going on both inside the vehicle and outside and keeps us safer," said Sgt. Jones

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sukhwinder Singh, Sawranjit Singh, and Jasmer Singh, of India, run Laundry Facility #3 on Contingency Operating Base Speicher. They have made an important difference in the morale of Soldiers and Civilians on COB Speicher by their friendly, engaging manner. Primarily responsible for the processing and handling of laundry for more than 400 individuals daily, they make each person feel special with quick service and a smile. Because of their positive attitudes and personal touch, their facility has a customer satisfaction rate of more than 98 percent. Because of their commitment to see past the customer to the person, and their outstanding proficiency, dedication and positive attitude, they are most deserving Task Force Marne Service Providers of the Week.



Corporal Jordan Hunter, of Liberty, Ind., is with Troop B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. He serves as a cavalry scout and high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle gunner. He recently demonstrated his superior cavalry scout skills during Operation Rogue Sentinel. On Jan. 7, Cpl. Hunter positively identified four insurgents walking along a main supply route while he was providing continuous observation of two targeted areas of interest. His positive identification of four improvised explosive device cell members ended in their destruction and disrupted an IED emplacement that could have caused U.S. or Iraqi Security Forces casualties. Corporal Hunter has performed flawlessly during all previous missions and was an outstanding asset for his platoon during two other operations and the unit's relief in place upon arrival. Corporal Hunter is a credit to the U.S. Army and is selected as today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

President's Day Trivia Win a four-day pass!

If you know the answers to the questions below call, 318-849-0264. Then be ready to answer three more secret questions.

- 1) *Who was the only President to also serve as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?* A) Franklin Pierce B) Rutherford B. Hayes C) William McKinley D) William Howard Taft
- 2) *How many and which future Presidents signed the Declaration of Independence?* A) Two B) Four C) Six D) None
- 3) *What day does the President traditionally deliver a weekly radio address?*
- 4) *Which President was not an American citizen when he died?*
- 5) *Who is the only President to have survived two assassination attempts by women?*

The first four callers who answers all of the questions correctly will receive a four-day pass to Freedom Rest.

Sudoku Answers will be printed in Monday's edition of the North Star

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REGIONAL HEADLINES

Peacocks elude capture in Washington

United Press International

SULTAN, Wash. - Officials in a Washington state town said a wildlife specialist hired to trap a group of nine peacocks is having trouble with the final two birds.

Sultan officials said they hired the specialist after residents complained about the peacocks and peahens roosting on porches, leaving their droppings on sidewalks and attempting to fight with reflective cars, The Seattle Times reported, Feb. 2.

"They're like deer," City Administrator Deborah Knight said of the final two elusive peafowl. "When you try to hunt them, you can't find them. When you're not hunting, you see them everywhere around."

Local man Ed Boucher said the peafowl are believed to be descended from a mated pair he purchased 30 years ago. He said a wild dog broke the cage holding the ancestors of the birds five years ago and set several of them free.

China seeks language tutor for US-born panda

Atlanta Journal Constitution

ATLANTA - Ni hao — hello — Mei Lan! Chinese zookeepers are advertising for a tutor to teach Chinese to an American-born giant panda arriving this week in her parents' homeland.

The language lessons, a special

diet and even blind dates are also part of the red-carpet welcome being rolled out for 3-year-old Mei Lan, or Beautiful Orchid, by Chinese caretakers ahead of her arrival Jan. 29. Also on the special FedEx flight from the U.S. will be 4-year-old Tai Shan, a male panda born in Washington D.C.'s National Zoo.

Under a deal between China and the U.S., all giant pandas originally from China are only lent out to foreign zoos for scientific study for several years. They and any cubs they produce must all return to China eventually.

Determined to help Mei Lan adapt more quickly to her new life, the caretakers at her new home, the Chengdu Panda Breeding Research Center in the southwestern province of Sichuan, are recruiting a language teacher via the Internet.

Mei Lan has lived at a zoo in Atlanta, Georgia, since her birth in 2006.

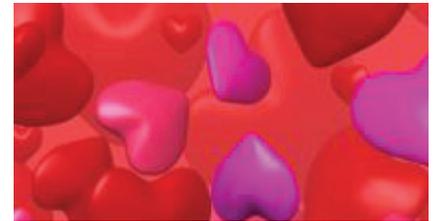
"Mei Lan has been living in the United States since she was born, and she must be unfamiliar with Chinese," Huang Xiangming, director of the center's animal management department, told the official Xinhua News Agency.

The center has set up a Web site on the popular Internet portal Sina.com for Mei Lan, detailing the qualifications for a volunteer teacher: a bachelor's degree or higher, no history of infectious disease and good command of both English and Chinese.

"She will be taught Chinese with a Sichuan dialect, because people here all speak Sichuan dialect. She will become familiar with some simple phrases," Cui Kai, a staffer at the panda research center, told The Associated Press. "For example, she will be taught the phrases for going back to the cage or coming out from the dormitory."

Mei Lan will also have to gradually get used to her new Chinese diet. "We have asked the American zookeepers to bring Mei Lan's favorite biscuits, but we will gradually use Chinese 'wotou' (steamed bread made of corn and sorghum) and fresh bamboo to replace biscuits," Huang said.

Valentine's Day Greetings



Everyone who recorded a Valentine's day greeting can see the message at www.dvidshub.net. On the right side of the screen, click the Valentine's Day Greetings tab. Next, scroll down and type your name in the search window. Once you see your video, there is an option to send an E-card.

THE North Star

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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

25th Combat Aviation Brigade,
25th Infantry Division
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