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Ready In Need Gazette

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## TF Twister, Iraqi Soldiers partner to fill dry VBC lakes

By Staff Sgt. Karl Johnson

It can't be overstated how important water is in this region of the world. When Soldiers from Task Force Twister got the opportunity to partner with Iraqi military forces to rehabilitate a series of dry lakes on Victory Base Complex, they knew it would be a success.

"Soldiers from DPW [Directorate of Public Works] oversaw Iraqi Soldiers as they repaired a series of gates and valves that feed the Radwaniya Lakes on VBC," said 1st Lt. Joshua Kinne, DPW utilities chief. "As a result of this project, the lakes in the area have been filled and we are now providing large quantities of irrigation water to the farmers south of VBC."

Allowing the Iraqi forces to take the lead was an important part of the project for Kinne.

"Engaging the Iraqi military on these projects give them a sense of ownership in these areas," Kinne explained. "It's also important for them to understand the dynamics of the water system on the base, because eventually we will be handing control over to them."

After the gates and valves were repaired, U.S. and Iraqi military members gathered to see the project's completion.

Iraqi Soldiers opened the valves as



photo by Staff Sgt. Karl Johnson  
Iraqi Soldiers work to open a gate, allowing water to flow into a series of dry lakes on Victory Base Complex. The project to rehabilitate the dry lakes was a joint effort between Iraqi and Task Force Twister Soldiers.

onlookers watched a rush of water flow into the dry lake beds. The Lakes now feed several canals that support the surrounding area.

"Many of the Iraqi Soldiers are from this area, and they know how important water is to the people," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Schell, DPW Utilities NCO. "As one of the Iraqi leaders told me, 'water is life.'"

The rehabilitation of the Radwaniya

Lakes was undoubtedly positive for the local Iraqi people, but for the TF Twister Soldiers involved it was an opportunity to see what effect their work has on the people of the area.

"As an engineer, I get a lot of satisfaction out of fixing things for people," said Kinne. "This project has been far more rewarding than most I've worked on because I got to see the

- See Water Pg. 3

### Spotlight On: Capt. Steve Gruenewald

In the Army everything is counted and measured; from the bullets on the battlefield to the bullets on your annual evaluation form. And even with all that counting, the numbers probably can't give you the true measure of a Soldier, but it can point you in the right direction.

Capt. Steve Gruenewald and his 24 years of military service, three

university degrees, four children and wife of 20 years is a perfect example of this.

He entered the service on active duty in 1985, and even then the numbers were an important factor in his decision to join.

"I needed a pay check," Gruenewald said quite simply.



He got his paycheck and, after 24 years, a lot more than that.

"In my career I've had the opportunity to meet with every member of my chain of command except the president," Gruenewald said with pride.

That's due to some of the unique duty assignments he's had including two years as

a member of the Old Guard which Gruenewald said was "an experience you can't really describe in words."

"The Old Guard is so completely different than anything else in the Army," explained Gruenewald. "Everything I did during that time has helped me during the

- See Gruenewald Pg. 3

## The Ministry Message

### Happy Groundhog Day, Again

By CH (Lt. Col.) Leonard Higgins,  
Garrison Command Chaplain

Have you ever seen the movie Groundhog Day with Bill Murray? In the movie, actor Bill Murray plays Phil, an arrogant, Scrooge-like weather forecaster who spends the night in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, where he is to do a broadcast the next day about the annual ritual of the coming out of the groundhog. He wakes up the next morning, does his story and is annoyed to discover that he is trapped in Punxsutawney for a second night because of a snowstorm that comes in after the groundhog ceremony.

When he wakes up in his room the next morning, to his amazement, it is the morning of the day before all over again. Everything that happened to him the previous day -- it all happens



Courtesy Photo

again. This goes on day after day with the same events repeating themselves like a broken record.

If he does nothing different, events will repeat themselves as they were on the original day. But if he changes his behavior, people will respond to his new actions, opening up all kinds of possibilities for playing with the unfolding of events. Either way, with each "new" day, he alone remembers what happened in previous editions of the same day.

The movie shows us a personality who is like the worst in ourselves. Murray's character is arrogant and sarcastic, absorbed in his own discomforts, without hope, and cut off from other people. Like us, he finds himself in a perplexing situation - a plaything of fate. But, unlike us, he gets the bonus of being stuck in the same day until he gets it right.

In telling this story, the movie hits on a message that expresses an important truth. When we get beyond denial and resentment over the conditions of our life, and accept our situation, it tells us - life ceases to be a problem and we can become authentic and compassionate.

When you wake up tomorrow - think before your feet hit the floor: *what lessons have the monotony of each day taught me, and how can I apply those lessons to this day.*

## EO, why it's important for all of us

By Warrant Officer Terry Taylor  
Equal Opportunity Advisor

Why is the Equal Opportunity program important for everyone? Why is it important to the Army? And finally, why is it important to the 561st Regional Support Group?

Anyone associated with the military recognizes there are regulations that cover everything. EO is no exception. AR 600-20 is the governing regulation. This regulation's definition of the purpose of the EO program is to formulate, direct, and sustain a comprehensive effort to maximize human potential and to ensure fair treatment

for all persons...

The answer to the first question, "Why is the EO program important for everyone?" is because the Army program is for military personnel and Family members. The goals of the EO program are to create and sustain effective units by eliminating discriminatory behaviors or practices that undermine teamwork, mutual respect, loyalty, and shared sacrifice of the men and women of America's Army. Family concerns are a readiness concern, a retention concern, and a basic morale concern for every commander.

The next question, "Why is EO important to the Army?" The Army is a value-based institution. Something that is bigger than all of us. Commanders must ensure that both individual and organizational climates are beyond reproach. The EO program is a tool to stop discrimination, that is any action that unlawfully or unjustly results in unequal treatment of persons or groups based on race, color, gender, national origin, or religion.

And the last question, "Why is EO important to the 561st RSG?" By virtue of how the 561st deployed, this unit represents the epitome of a posi-

tive EO environment and diversity. Even though we are all individuals, every Soldier, Family member, and Rear Detachment member has a vital role to the success of this unit's mission; whether that is while deployed or at our units in one of the twenty-four states we come from.

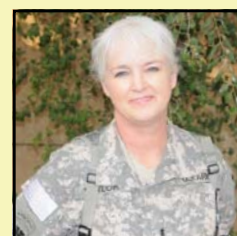
To wrap this up in an EO nutshell and relate it to the deployed theater, I'll leave you all with this thought; "If we are all here to help improve the basic freedom and rights of the Iraqi people, then shouldn't the basic Equal Opportunity for freedom and rights begin within the 561st itself?"



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**DEBLIECK'S PICKS**

GAMES 12/5	PICKS
Florida vs. Alabama	Florida
Oregon St. vs. Oregon	Oregon
Texas vs. Nebraska	Texas
Cincinnati vs. Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh

DeBlieck's Picks YTD: 29-23

**Gruenewald:**

rest of my career. I know what it looks like when a team is truly committed to the mission."

Gruenewald also worked for two years on the team that created the doctrine that guides the Army on how to work with Soldiers during redeployment.

He said some of the highlights of that mission were working with the Soldiers returning from combat and having the opportunity to testify to the House of Representative's Armed Services Committee about his work.

Throughout his career, the one constant has been his effort to continue his education. Just this November, Gruenewald completed his PhD in health education.

"I can't believe it's actually done," said Gruenewald, who isn't sure what he's going to do now that his PhD is completed, but is considering going into teaching when he gets home to El Paso, Texas.

Until then Gruenewald said he will use his variety of experiences

and education to help him make the decisions he makes every day as the Terrain Manager at Camp Striker.

When asked about being a Soldier and having a PhD, he said with a wry smile, "it's not for everybody."

And that's where the numbers game comes back into play. There are just over 308 million people in the United States, and less than three percent of them have finished a doctoral degree. That's certainly an impressive group to be a part of, but not as impressive as the less than one percent of Americans who serve in the armed services.

So when Gruenewald says "it's not for everybody," it's not anything close to a boast. It's simply the fact that the work, sacrifice and dedication required to be a Soldier and to attain an advanced graduate degree are not something everyone is willing to do.

So, do the numbers give you the measure of Capt. Gruenewald? Probably not, but it does point you in the right direction.

**Water:**

satisfaction and smiles on the faces of the children and families that live in the area.

"The best reaction from the whole project came when an Iraqi general found water starting to fill the canal outside his house. He immediately ran out with a shovel and personally broke open the dam that had been holding in the little water he'd managed to pump into the lake behind

his house. His men said they'd never seen the general so excited."

"This project has created a bond between the Garrison, the Iraqi military and the local people that can be used to better support them in the future," added Schell.

Coordination is currently in progress for several other projects that will make use of that bond in the near future.



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The Ready In Need Gazette welcomes commentary from our readers and is always looking for ways to better serve Task Force Twister. If you have questions, comments or story ideas, send them to the editorial staff at [karl.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:karl.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil). The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, policy, clarity and space.

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**Caption Contest**

What is making CSM Ploeger so happy? Submit your best guess to the RING staff at [karl.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:karl.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil) by Dec. 20, 2009. The Soldier with the best caption will win an amazing prize and be recognized in the next issue of the RING.

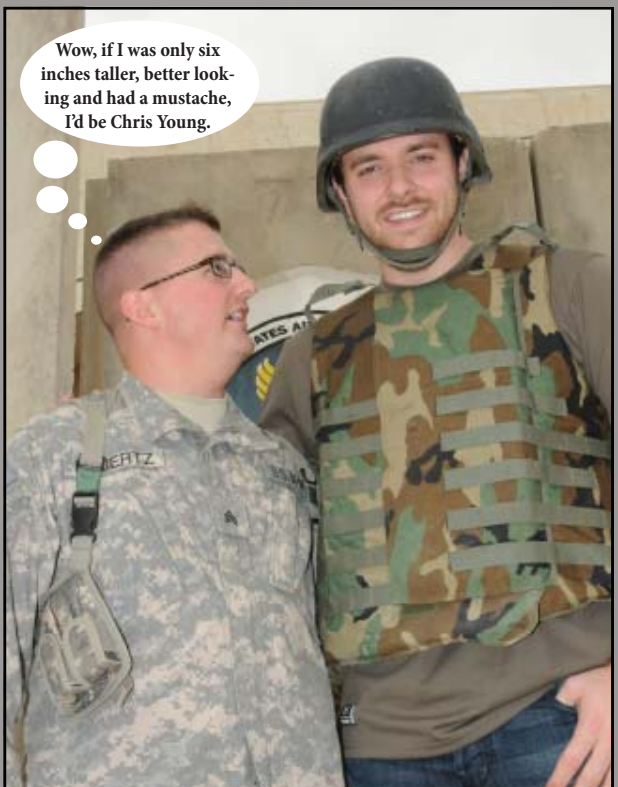




**Top Left:** Spc. Agnew is a Taurus. He enjoys long walks on the beach, small T-shirts and the feel of cool mud between his toes. **Top Right:** The water flows and the partnership grows. **Bottom Right:** A hearty PAO thank you goes out to Maj. Ross for being creatively mean-spirited enough to win the first edition of the caption contest. **Bottom Left:** Speaking in hushed voices, Tom Watson and the "Operation Fore the Troops" team explain how 'golf' is not just the 7th letter of the phoenetic alphabet, but apparently some sort of game too. **Middle Left:** Sgt. Pitkiewicz explains the finer points of chicken wings and e-mail etiquette to the ladies from "Hooters". He went on to tell them how he doesn't waste precious hormones on silly stuff like growing hair.



## Twister Pics





# The Fridge

A Task Force Community Bulletin



have something for the fridge? send it to [karl.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:karl.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil)