



# Victory Times

*Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story*

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## They're back: New group of wounded vets return to Iraq

Story and Photos by Sgt. Lyn Bradford  
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

Rick Kell, executive director of the Troops First Foundation, has done it again. Six wounded warriors stepped off a C-130 Hercules in Baghdad, Jan. 31, and took their first steps in Iraq after being severely wounded the last time they were here.

This is the fourth time Kell has returned wounded Servicemembers to Iraq as part of Operation Proper Exit, a program aimed at helping the warriors find emotional closure after being injured.

Although this is the fourth trip, this set of Soldiers differs from previous groups; all six Soldiers are retired.

Capt. Ferris Butler was serving with 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division in Yusufiyah, Iraq, when he was struck by an improvised explosive device Dec. 21, 2006. Butler, a Port Tobacco, Md. native, suffered a bi-lateral amputation below the knee. Currently, Butler works as the executive assistant for Ekistics Development Firm based out of Baltimore, Md. He is on the board of advisors for Kell's Troops First Foundation and is an Amputee Coalition of America peer mentor. He is a ninth generation Servicemember and has a brother serving in Afghanistan.

While serving in Ramadi, Iraq, with the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Capt. Lonnie Moore was struck by a rocket propelled grenade. Moore underwent an above-the-knee amputation after the April 6, 2004, attack. A program analyst for the Army Warrior Transition Command, the Chula Vista, Calif., native is also a board member on the National Council on Disability and a chairman for Operation Homefront — Southern California.

The 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, was deployed to Ramadi in 2005 when Master Sgt. Tom Carpenter was injured in an explosion. The "First Rock" Soldier



(left to right) Sgt. Jay Fain, Sgt. Omar Avila and Cpl. Charles Dominguez pose in front of a UH-60 Black Hawk, Feb. 1, in Baghdad before flying to Al Asad. The three Soldiers are participating in the weeklong program, Operation Proper Exit, in hopes of gaining emotional closure after being severely injured in Iraq.

suffered an above-the-knee amputation, in addition to a left foot amputation. Carpenter was originally scheduled to join Soldiers on Operation Proper Exit III, but severe weather in his hometown of Hastings, Mich., prevented him from leaving. Carpenter is enrolled in school and hoping to finish college in

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# When I get home I'm going to...

Photos by Spc. Karin Leach  
114th Public Affairs Detachment



*I deployed a week after we were married so our first year of marriage has been through Skype. I'm definitely looking forward to seeing my wife.*  
-Capt. Robert Rodriguez,



*I'm looking forward to doing some hiking and watching TV without any AFN commercials.*  
-Staff Sgt. Alfred Landry, command group personal security detail, USF-I

*I can't wait to go home and eat the food! I miss my wife, my family, my friends, my church, I miss everything!*  
-Samuel Muhumuza



*Both Spc. Petrina George and Spc. Robin Johnson, medics, USF-I, want to get makeovers, get their hair done and have a spa day.*



*I'm excited to hangout with my little sister and get my new car.*  
-Spc. Sean Poole, command group personal security detail, USF-I



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## Iraqi Federal Police blow away Counter IED Course

Photos by Sgt. Kat Briere  
114th Public Affairs Detachment



*Iraqi Army Cpt. Aqeel Bashar Laftah looks through a pair of binoculars on an improvised explosive device training lane, Camp Slayer, Iraq Jan. 25. Laftah is one of four men attending the three-day Counter IED course held by USF-I Task Force Troy. The course is designed to provide students with the most current threats in Iraq to include IED, mines and unexploded ordinance. Here Laftah scans a mock road for possible IEDs.*



*Laftah discusses the placement of one of his team's IEDs. He and his partner, Ali set up the IED lane for the other Federal Police students and during the drive through, the FP team noticed the device after it would have had a chance to detonate, theoretically killing the squad.*



*Laftah and Iraqi Army Lt. Firas Muneer Ali fasten a Passive Infra Red Detector IED to a sign post on the IED training lane. In this phase of training, the IA team, are setting up the lane for the other two students, Iraqi Federal Policemen.*



# If you can't stand the heat...

## Soldiers, civilians cook off in Baghdad 'Iron Chef' competition

Story and Photos by Sgt. Lyn Bradford  
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

Ready. Set. Cook.

With only an hour to prepare, cook and display a top-notch meal, four teams of Soldiers and Kellogg Brown & Root employees from Victory Base Complex raced around the kitchen at the Sports Oasis dining facility on Camp Victory in Baghdad Jan. 30. The teams were participating in the fourth Iron Chef competition, which began here in June 2009.

Not only does the competition give the participants a chance to show their creative side, but also serves as a way to enhance their culinary skills, said Staff Sgt. Deneva Payne, food service specialist and administration noncommissioned officer with Headquarters Support Company, I Corps.

“For the Soldiers, it’s about owning their skills and maintaining teamwork. Since KBR is contracted to run our dining facilities, it

gives the Soldiers a chance to express their creativity,” said Payne, the competition’s organizer, who hails from Memphis, Tenn.

Composed of five Soldiers and KBR employees, each team was given a tray of ingredients, but were not required to use every ingredient.

“They had to at least use one meat,” Payne said. “It’s better if they use all of them, so there is more of a variety but it didn’t count against them if they had some things left over.”

Ingredients included ham, chicken, salmon, bell peppers, potatoes, cheese and spices.

At the mention of the word “GO”, madness overtook the kitchen; each team raced their trays back to the preparing tables to see what they had to work with.

“We had everything available to us. I was happy with all the ingredients, but we just couldn’t figure out how to use the spaghetti noodles,” said I Corps Soldier Sgt. Shelvin Jackson, Jr., a food service specialist representing the Sports Oasis DFAC.



Sgt. 1st Class Daryl Burnett of 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, watches as Sgt. Shelvin Jackson, Jr., Headquarters Support Company, I Corps (background), prepares a meal of ham and pineapple Jan. 30 during the Iron Chef competition at Camp Victory in Baghdad. Four teams from camps throughout Victory Base Complex competed in the event.

This is the first Iron Chef Jackson, a Port Arthur, Texas native, has participated in.

Once teams started chopping vegetables, peeling potatoes and boiling their water, the kitchen’s temperature began to rise.

Then, without warning, the kitchen lost power. The cooks stayed on track, keeping their pace while still maintaining safety around dimly lit work areas.

“I think the hardest part has been keeping everyone focused,” Jackson said. “No matter what happened, we had to keep working as a team.”

Teamwork was evident throughout the competition, one of the goals Payne had hoped for in the planning phases of the event.

“We had the teamwork there. Everyone has their own ideas, but you have to come together as a team and do what works best,” Jackson said.



Sgt. Shelvin Jackson, Jr., Headquarters Support Company, I Corps food service specialist slices bell peppers while preparing a meal during the Iron Chef competition Jan. 30. Jackson’s team placed second overall, placing behind fellow Fort Lewis unit 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division’s team.



A slice of strawberry-topped cheesecake waits to be tasted and judged during the Iron Chef competition Jan. 30 at Camp Victory in Baghdad.

throughout the kitchen. By this time, the kitchen had filled with steam, sounds of sizzling vegetables and the distinct smell of a home-cooked meal.

As time ticked away, senior leaders from each Soldier’s respective unit paced up and down the aisles, feverishly writing down notes on their judging papers.

“THIRTEEN MINUTES REMAINING!”

Looks of panic had spread across the participants faces as time came to a close. Each team had to have their plates presented to the judges before the close of the hour. Although all teams made the hour deadline, it was a close call for some.

With dishes of baked chicken, rice, salmon laid out, teams were asked to leave the area while the judges tasted their meals. Each team broke off and the self-critiquing began. “We should have done this…” or “I think we did great with…”

It was up to the judges now.

First Sgt. Donald Robertson, I Corps’ HSC first sergeant and judge, said he couldn’t stay away from the grilled salmon and the fried cheesecake, a trademark of fellow Fort Lewis unit 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry’s DFAC, the Raider Inn.

“This was a great way for the Soldiers to show their culinary art skills and operate in a different environment that what they are use to,” Robertson, of Monroe, Ga., said.

After anxiously waiting for the judge’s tallies, the teams were brought forward to hear the winner.

Taking the title and trophy away from the I Corps team, Camp Liberty’s Raider Inn DFAC took the title.

Although this is the last competition for the I Corps DFAC team, the competition will carry on when they redeploy in the upcoming weeks.

“We have really appreciated the support, and we are glad that this can continue on for other Soldiers when we leave here,” Payne said.



# Servicemembers have options after military tours

Story by Spc. Karin Leach  
114th Public Affairs Detachment

Many Servicemembers are at a loss at what to do after serving in the military. A simple Google search offers many websites designed for Servicemembers looking to transfer their military experience to civilian experience.

Every Army post has an Army Career and Alumni Program center to assist Soldiers in their preparations for life after the Army. There are more than 250 companies that have partnered with the Army to pave the way for an easy transition to the civilian life.

There is also the Troops to Teachers program. The program helps sort out the certification requirements and employment opportunities.



## Interview Tips:

- Be prepared to answer these questions: Why are you here, what can you do for us, what kind of person are you and what distinguishes you from other applicants
- Do research on the job and the company
- Organize key qualities about yourself you want conveyed during the interview
- Dress appropriately to make a good first impression
- Don't be late. Just like in the military, it's unacceptable to be late.
- Have some questions to ask the interviewer
- Write a thank-you note right after the interview. The note should thank the interviewer for their time. Being polite goes a long way as well as it will set you apart from other applicants.



## Resume Tips:

- Build up your qualities to highlight yourself
- No military jargon
- No pictures of yourself. The company may be biased toward a certain age group
- You don't need to list every job you've had, just the ones that apply to the one you want
- Describe some aspirations you have
- Avoid negativity
- Describe the benefits of your skills for the company
- List your achievements instead of your past responsibilities to show growth
- Put the most important information up top
- Have someone proof read it

## Some helpful websites:

pr@moaa.org  
militaryexists.com  
<http://www.militaryjobzone.com/>



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the future, while enjoying the company of his children and grandchildren.

Sgt. Omar Avila, a Brownsville, Texas, native, was serving in Adhamiyah, Iraq, when he was injured May 14, 2007, by a deeply-buried, 200-pound IED. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Soldier sustained burns to 75 percent of his body and a foot amputation. Since retiring, Avila has started college again, coaches a basketball team for young children and speaks at local schools in the area.

About one month later, on June 26, 2007, fellow 1-26 Inf. Soldier Sgt. Jay Fain was struck by an explosively formed penetrator on the side of the road. In addition to sustaining internal injuries and burns and scars to his body, Fain, of Columbia, S.C., suffered a right leg amputation. He is currently an active member of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association.

Cpl. Charles Dominguez was serving with the 501st Military Police Company, Special Troops Battalion, with the 1st Armored Division, when he was attacked by a suicide bomber Aug. 22, 2006, in Ramadi. Dominguez sustained second and third degree burns to his face, back and hands. The Ontario, Calif. Native is currently the building manager of the Warrior and Family Support Center at Brooke Army Medical Center, which houses the Army's Burn Unit.

Returning in the role of military mentors are Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Olson and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Schlitz. This is the third Operation Proper Exit trip for Olson, who had his entire right leg amputated in 2006 after



*Wounded warriors participating in the fourth installment of Operation Proper Exit walk into Al Faw Palace in Baghdad Jan. 31. For six Soldiers, this is their first time returning to Iraq since they were severely injured. Two military mentors, and prior Operation Proper Exit participants, joined them on the trip.*

being struck by a RPG. Schlitz, on his second Operation Proper Exit tour, sustained burns to 85 percent of his body and lost both hands when his vehicle hit an IED in 2007.

The Soldiers traveled throughout Iraq this week with Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, United States Forces-Iraq command sergeant major. Wilson has worked with Kell for nearly a year to continue to bring troops back to the places that had changed their lives forever.

"We welcome these warriors. This is going to be a great trip for these guys, and we thank everyone for their support in getting them to his point," he told a crowd of Servicemembers gathered to welcome them.



**Do you know your reporting options?** An unrestricted report is made when a victim wants to participate in the military justice process, or when the chain of command or law enforcement becomes involved. A victim advocate is assigned, command and law enforcement are notified, and medical care is provided. Active duty victims have the option of making a Restricted Report. Restricted Reports are kept confidential, and command and law enforcement aren't notified. The victim can access care and services without participating in the military justice system. Call the USF-I Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at 485-5085 or 435-2235 for help. Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or D-SARC (Deployed SARC); you may also call 485-5085 or 435-2235 for assistance.

## Operating Hours

### Coalition Cafe DFAC

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.  
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Dinner 5 - 9 p.m.  
Midnight Dining 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.

### Sports Oasis DFAC

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.  
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Dinner 5 - 9 p.m.

### Education Center

8 a.m.-8 p.m.

### Camp Liberty Post Exchange

8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

### Fitness Center

Open 24 Hours

### Victory Main Post Office

Monday-Sunday 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
Saturday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Sunday 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

### MNF/C-I Unit Mail Room

Customer Services/Mail Call:  
3-6 p.m.

### Al Faw Palace Post Office

Wednesday and Sunday  
12:30-5:30 p.m.

### Golby TMC Sick Call

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

### Dental Sick Call

Monday - Friday 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.  
Saturday 9 - 10:30 a.m.

### Mental Health Clinic

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

### Pharmacy

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon;  
1 - 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

## NOTICE

Container management and IBS-CMM system training is available every Monday at 1430 on Camp Victory, Building 18 conference room.

Contact SSG Castaneda at [Francisco.castaneda@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:Francisco.castaneda@iraq.centcom.mil) or DSN 318 485-2867 to schedule training for a representative from your unit.



# NCO on point with Triple Threat

Story and Photos by Pfc. Courtney Selig  
114th Public Affairs Detachment

With 3 minutes, 14 seconds left on the clock for the first half of the game, Triple Threat, the blue and silver, “old school” team (as the crowd referred to them), was up 24-10 against the red and white Hoopstars. Antoine M. Butler, Triple Threat’s point guard, had his hands spread wide and his knees bent in a defensive stance. His quick hands stripped the ball from his opponent. Butler sprinted down the court with defenders behind him and his teammate at an angle in front of him for a pass to make the lay-up.

Triple Threat won with a final score of 49-42. Communication, teamwork and skill among Triple Threat players were seen throughout the game.

“I’m the point guard, which makes me like the team general,” said Butler, Chicago, Ill., personal security officer for the deputy commanding general of sustainment, United States Forces - Iraq. Butler is also the team captain. “I make sure everyone is where they’re supposed to be on the court, in the right offensive and defensive positions and make sure we’re focused on the game.”

The job of the point guard is to see the entire basketball court and all of the players. They have to be unselfish players, willing to make sacrifices for the team. He or she must be able to get the ball to the right player at the right time, controlling the tempo of the game. A team’s success rides primarily on the production of the point guard.



*Antoine M. Butler, personal security officer for the deputy commanding general of sustainment, USF-I, takes a practice lay-up during warm-ups before the game.*



*Antoine M. Butler, personal security officer for the deputy commanding general of sustainment, USF-I, brings the ball down the court, looking for a member of his team to be open, while his opponent guards him.*

“He always puts in a 100 percent, and never backs down no matter who we play against. He carries himself to his own high standard and I think any junior enlisted under him would learn a lot by his leadership abilities,” said Robert D. Price, Osborn, Mo., combat camera information management technician, USF-I. “If he comes out running, we are going to run with him.”

Butler said that he continues to stay motivated despite their losses earlier in this season. Before each game, he and his teammates huddle up for a ‘pep talk’ and a loud chant that echoes through the gym.

“It’s always motivating when you have a senior NCO playing and he sees you as an equal on the court,” Price said. “It’s a respect thing our whole team has.”

The largest lead held by Triple Threat in the second half was 12 points. Butler continuously pushed up the court to find his open man and did so without error.

“The atmosphere is fast. Sergeant Butler wants to go to work early in the game and make it a point to be known that the court is ours in the first few minutes. But when things go wrong in the game, it doesn’t matter. He never stops, he keeps pushing the ball,” said Price.