



Victory Times

Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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Vets teach troops important lesson

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

When eight combat veterans volunteered to return to Iraq, they knew they would be interacting with troops, answering questions about their injuries, their experiences and their new lives as wounded warriors. They were ready.

From Baghdad to Taji to Balad, Soldiers on the ground seemed to have the same question — what was the most frustrating part after they sustained their injuries. The answer was unanimous among the vets. Stay in contact with those who have been injured.

“As Soldiers, we have such a bond. Whether we’ve been together for six months or five years, it’s a brotherhood. Whether we’ve spilled blood together or not,” said retired Capt. Ferris Butler, one of the wounded veterans who participated in Operation Proper Exit IV from Jan. 31 through Feb. 6. “You have to follow up with those who have been injured. Follow up as friends, and keep that camaraderie.”

Butler said that he and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Schlitz, who returned for a second trip to Iraq as a military mentor, were lucky because their unit had someone there for them throughout every step. Butler and Schlitz were serving with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division when they were injured.

“When I got evacuated to Germany, there was a 10th Mountain liaison waiting for me. When I landed in the states, I had another liaison there,” Butler said. “When Mike got hit, I knew about it right away. (Tenth) Mountain did a great job.”

However, not all injured Soldiers have been so lucky.

Sgt. Omar Avila, now retired, was struck by a deeply-buried improvised explosive device in 2007. His best friend, Staff Sgt. Juan Campos, was also injured in the blast.

“Before we got evacuated, I looked over at him and said ‘see you when we wake up, brother,’” Avila said.



The eight injured combat veterans participating in Operation Proper Exit IV arrive at Joint Security Station SUJ, located on the northeastern edge of Baghdad, Feb. 2. The Soldiers toured the JSS and spent time talking with Soldiers stationed there.

Sadly, Campos passed away because of his injuries. No one informed Avila. It was a few weeks later, in the hospital, that Avila found out about his best friend.

“My friend had a tattoo with the initials ‘J.C.’ and I asked him why he had them on his arm, and that’s when he told me Juan had died. I literally cried for hours,” Avila said.

Although some Soldiers fear telling their injured and recovering buddies about other Soldiers in their unit who were

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Winning the fight is done side by side

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Thomas Killgore
Chaplain Chief of Staff

It's awards time back in the states. The Grammy's were last week and next is the Oscar's. Each event celebrates the greatest achievements by the various artists in their fields. The winners run up on stage and launch into thanking every person they can think of in a span of 45 seconds. When they go too long the music begins and off the stage they go. a winner.

As a small kid I was invited to play on a nine and under football team. They needed people to fill the team and I was an available tackling dummy. I was hesitant until I heard

that at the end of the season there would be a party and I would get a trophy. My eyes lit up. I could see myself walking across the stage with the

thunderous applause and hearing, "The Most Valuable Player this year is Tom (the bomb) Killgore!"

Winning for each of us means different things. As a young minster, an old man gave me some advice about winning. He

said: "If you love the people they will love you through your mistakes." He also said, "Love people and use things, never use people and love things." Those two bits of advice have taken me through a career as a chaplain.

It all boils down to caring for your fellow Servicemember. Everyone is important and special in God's eyes and should be in our own eyes too. When we truly care for another we will not abuse them or use them. Rather, we will respect them and treat them as a person of worth. If any one of our team mates loses we lose and when we treat them with respect we all win.

I encourage everyone to think about how they want to live and leave here. My goal for us is that we will all see

each other as the special people God created us to be. People are worth loving and they are worth protecting. During this tour we have come a very long way toward reaching this goal.

Just like the awards show, I can hear the music playing and the hook is pulling me off the stage. But, as I leave, please remember to care for your team mate and treat them with respect. Blessings be upon you.



Courtesy Photo

Sgt. 1st Class Blake Simms and Sgt. 1st Class Chad Stackpole of the 4th Ranger Training Battalion, won the 2009 Best Ranger Competition in May at Fort Benning, Ga.



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Sharing knowledge can be a win-win for students, teachers

Story and Photos by Spc. Rick Frost
114th Public Affairs Detachment

In the late hours of the evening, two Soldiers sat side-by-side in a quiet, sparsely-decorated back room of the education center. There was little there to distract them from the task they were so intently-focused on: deciding how much fuel a truck would consume if it got 20 miles per gallon and travelled a distance of 380 miles.

Lt. Col. Howard Schaffer, economic development officer, 364th Civil Affairs Brigade, spent much of his free time here at Camp Victory, assisting Soldiers who are seeking to improve themselves through extra-curricular mathematic tutoring.

"Some are taking college math courses and seeking assistance, some are seeking to improve their GT scores, so that they may qualify for a different job assignment in the military," Schaffer said. "Some also want to go to Officer Candidate School or Warrant Officer School."

But the students aren't the only ones seeking to improve themselves. Schaffer himself aspires to become a math teacher upon his return to the U.S., and is using this opportunity to gain some practical experience.

"I'm considering becoming a math teacher as a second career," Schaffer said. "This tutoring is also helping me relearn some of the things I learned a long time ago."

As the economic development officer here, Schaffer is using some of his skills in math to mentor Iraqis in their business endeavors.

Schaffer has had at least four students since he began his



Lt. Col Howard Schaffer, economic development officer, 364th Civil Affairs Brigade, United States Forces-Iraq, demonstrates some creative problem-solving techniques to a student he is mentoring in his free time at Camp Victory.

tutoring. He has seen improvement in all of them. He has seen students succeed at grasping the concepts and they are progressing well through their modules.

"I love math, but somewhere down the line I began to struggle with arithmetic reasoning," said Sgt. Angela Brown, a student of Schaffer's. "I couldn't grasp the concept on how to solve the problems quickly. Lt. Col. Schaffer sat with me and showed me methods to solve questions on a test correctly and with speed."

The students stay in touch with Schaffer via e-mail, as well as weekly tutoring sessions they have with him at the education center, so the tutoring itself is of minimal inconvenience, he said.

Schaffer offered these words of advice to anyone looking to further their education or improve themselves in any scholastic area.

"Come visit the education center and ask the staff here for assistance. There are others here that are volunteering their time to tutor and they will help connect the students with the tutors."



Lt. Col Howard Schaffer, economic development officer, 364th Civil Affairs Brigade, points out some important details in a problem posed to a student during a tutoring session at the education center on Camp Victory.

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wounded or killed in action, believing it will hinder the recovery process, Butler said that isn't the case.

"It's a double-edge sword. They will find out eventually. It is better to find out now, rather than later. There is nothing gained by not keeping their injured buddies informed. In fact, if they know another guy got injured then they can prepare to see them in the hospital," said Butler.

That was also the case for Avila, who was reunited in the hospital with Sgt. Jay Fain, another Soldier in his unit, 1st Infantry Division "Big Red One", who was struck by an explosively formed penetrator about one month after Avila was hit.

To this day, the two remain very close because they helped one another through their recovery processes, Avila said.

"It's that guy next to you that's going to pick you up," said Schlitz. "I'm a big advocate of peer and unit support



Sgt. Jay Fain (left hand) grips the hand of a fellow Soldier as he departs the landing pad at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

because it really makes a difference."

At every town hall meeting with Soldiers, Schlitz stressed the importance of keeping contact with those who have been injured.

"If you don't call them, if you don't e-mail them, if you don't write or visit them, I will tell you now...it hurts," Schlitz said.

Butler added that it is as simple as finding buddies using the Army's e-mail service, Army Knowledge Online.

"We want to still be in the fight," Avila said. "We can't be right next to our Soldiers, but we are still in the fight. Don't count us out just because we got injured. We are still, and will always be, a family."



Soldiers and Airman line up Feb. 3 at Forward Operating Base Prosperity, in the International Zone, to meet eight wounded combat veterans who returned to Iraq to find emotional closure after being severely injured here.

Holistic healing offers new alternative to medicine

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

Since the Army introduced the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program in October 2009, there has been much focus on a holistic approach to physical, emotional, social, spiritual and family well-being.

But what is holistic healing exactly? According to Lt. Col. Erica Clarkson, a United States Forces-Iraq physical therapist, holistic healing is an approach that uses natural methods to improve health, without using drugs or surgery to correct problems.

Clarkson, a Palm Springs, Calif. native, has been practicing holistic healing for 17 years, and has continued to treat Servicemembers in Iraq at the Courage Clinic, located in the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory.

Some of Clarkson's Holistic modalities include acupuncture, manual therapy, relaxation techniques and prescribed exercises specific to each patient's physical ailment.

"There are no significant adverse side effects like there are with using drugs to treat problems," she said. "Different medicines have been linked to ulcers and other gastrointestinal irritations, and even death."

For Lt. Col. Chad Sundem and Maj. Dorothy de Leon, the holistic healing approach has proved very beneficial in recovering from injuries they sustained.

Sundem, the aide-de-camp for I Corps Commanding General Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., was suffering from calf strains, a pinched nerve and arm numbness when he began seeing Clarkson. The Moorhead, Minn., native received weekly acupuncture treatments for the problems.

The treatment has been tremendous in helping his condition, he said.

"I didn't have to resort to any other methods of treatment. Acupuncture healed the problems quickly. In my case, it brought semi-instant pain relief and a more rapid recovery overall," he said.

De Leon was suffering from plantar fasciitis in her left foot and tendonitis

in her right elbow before seeking acupuncture treatments with Clarkson. Although the USF-I Red Team officer had to use anti-inflammatory medication in addition to the acupuncture, she also performed prescribed stretching exercises.

"Before this deployment, I'd always wanted to try acupuncture for other pains, but never had the opportunity. I'm completely sold on the treatment," de Leon said.

Ice, rest and massage have also contributed to de Leon's successful treatment, all of which she did on her own time.

For those who are not able receive the acupuncture portion of holistic healing, Clarkson recommends doing internet research for things that can be done during someone's down time.

"You will get the most benefit from this when you do the prescribed exercises on your own time, which is much preferred," Clarkson said. "The internet is a great resource. Without acupuncture, you can still research and find your acupressure points."

Each point is linked to a different part of the body, Clarkson said. For example, acupressure points in the right hand are linked to the left foot.

By applying pressure to acupressure points in the body, pain can sometimes be relieved.

The holistic approach to treatment is also offered at stateside military hospitals, and has become a growing skill set.

"You can't give a pill for everything. You have to get to the root of the problem," said Clarkson.

Clarkson said the new holistic approach the Army has taken is a step in the right direction and is gaining popularity throughout the service.

"It has taken the Army a long time to get to this point," she added. "(The Army) is opening up and seeing the benefits. It's really a great thing."



Lt. Col. Erica Clarkson, United States Forces-Iraq physical therapist, adjusts needles on Staff Sgt. Jennifer Cigler, USF-I staff judge advocate, during an acupuncture treatment at Camp Victory's courage clinic. Other techniques Clarkson includes are relaxation techniques and prescribed exercises.

New York comedians bring laughter to deployed troops in Iraq

Story and photos by Spc. Britney Bodner
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

From “New York’s Freshest Batch of Mixed Nuts,” five comedians joined Soldiers at Camp Liberty’s Morale, Welfare, and Recreation building Feb. 3 for a night of laughter during the second day of their six day tour.

Carole Montgomery, Leighann Lord, Felicia Michaels, Stephen Kruiser and Mark Riccadonna traveled Iraq to provide entertainment for Soldiers here, said Jud Joyce, the MWR Entertainment Director.

According to Col. Edward Shock, Chief of Armed Forces Entertainment, the process for bringing comedians to Victory Complex Base was quite different than the usual methods of finding entertainment for troops.

Shock said entertainers who want to perform for deployed Servicemembers usually come to AFE to apply for the chance.

“That is changing. We are beginning to scout for our entertainers and becoming proactive,” Shock said.

AFE went to the New York Underground Comedy Festival to look for potential comedians. There they met Montgomery.

“After asking her to gather a small group of comedians to go entertain the troops she got excited and couldn’t wait to come,” Shock said.

“I only chose people who really wanted to come and that support the troops,” said Montgomery.

“It makes me feel proud that I am bringing good quality



Stephen Kruiser, a comedian from New York, stands before an audience of Servicemembers deployed to Victory Base Complex during a tour across Iraq to visit troops with four other comedians for one week.

entertainment over here and to have a group of civilians that want to come and give their time and give their talent by entertaining the Soldiers,” said Shock.

Except for Lord, this was the first trip these comedians have made to perform for deployed troops. The group agreed they didn’t know what to expect as far as entertaining troops in a combat zone.

Shock said that their first night was a huge success and the troops were very welcoming.

“Being able to come entertain the troops gives me such a feeling of patriotism and pride. It is an honor to be able to come to the Middle East after all they sacrifice for our freedoms,” Riccadonna said.

“Troops are hands-down the best audience,” said Lord, who visited Soldiers in Afghanistan during 2002.

“Despite the tough situation they may be in they are always warm and welcoming,” she continued.

“The show was hilarious,” said Army Spc. Kyle Tillerson, a member of 387th Human Resource Company and local from Tulsa, Okla., “I had a great time.”

“We would love to come back,” said Montgomery, “Let us know when you want us back because we have had the best time.”

The five comedians will continue their tour to forward operating bases over the next six days before returning to the United States.



Spc. Kyle Scurlock, a paralegal specialist with the 16th Engineers Brigade, laughs during a skit by New York comedian Mark Riccadonna at the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center on Camp Liberty.

Fort Bliss unit marks end of tour with run



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Hamilton Byrd
16th Psychological Operations

Runners from Company E, 5th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery, 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, attend their farewell run Feb. 7. The run was 3.3 miles in honor of their task force name, 3-3 ADA (C-RAM).

The race started at 7 a.m. when the Counter Rocket, Artillery and Mortar system went off, signalling more than 300 Servicemembers and civilians to begin the race.

Based in Fort Bliss, Texas, the task force, composed of Soldiers, Sailors, and civilianas, has spent the past 12 months providing sense-warn and intercept capabilities to the Iraq theater of operations under United States Forces-Iraq.



You can help someone who is abused or who has been assaulted by listening and offering comfort. Go with her or him to the police, the hospital, or to counseling. Reinforce the message that she or he is not at fault and that it is natural to feel angry and ashamed. 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 DSARC; 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 or DSN 318 485-2867 to schedule training for a representative from your unit.

Our U. S. Military Presidents

Page design and story by Senior Airman Luis Loza Gutierrez
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

February 15 marks this year's Presidents Day, a federal holiday designated to give tribute to all those who have served in our nation's highest political office.

In observance of that special day, we present the following facts about the men who were once fellow brothers-in-arms before they ever held the title of Commander in Chief of the U.S. armed forces.

Thirty-two out of 43 of our American presidents have served in the military. Twelve of the presidents have been general officers.

The three presidents to hold the highest military ranks are: Presidents George Washington, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Ulysses S. Grant, respectively.

Washington held the rank of lieutenant general when he died, but in 1976, then president and former Naval Reserve lieutenant commander, Gerald R. Ford posthumously appointed him to General of the Armies of the United States. The only other person to hold the grade of General of the Armies of the United States was Gen. John J. Pershing. Although both Washington and Pershing may have received the same appointment, Washington is considered the higher-ranking officer as Ford specified that Washington would rank higher than all officers past, present and future.

President Eisenhower achieved the second highest rank among our military presidents. He wore an insignia of five silver stars as the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during World War II (1942-1945).

President Grant served as a lieutenant general until congress enacted legislation authorizing the grade of General of the Army on July 25, 1866, and on that date the new grade was conferred on him. Although the title General of the Army is associated with the five-star insignia, President Grant held the position as a four-star general. President Grant saw combat in both the Mexican-American War and the Civil War.

In addition to those who went on to achieve general officer ranks, ten of the presidents obtained the rank of colonel.

Two of those colonels were also two of our nation's founding fathers: Thomas Jefferson (third president) and James Madison (fourth president). Both were

militiamen. Another president who served as an Army colonel was Theodore Roosevelt (26th president). During the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt helped organized and command the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, which was better known as the Rough Riders. As a former president, Roosevelt volunteered for service in World War I, however, then current president, Woodrow Wilson, declined Roosevelt's offer. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2001.

Two of the presidents reached the rank of Lt. Col. One of them was our 36th president, former Navy Cmdr. Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson served during World War II and was awarded a Silver Star medal by Gen. Douglas MacArthur for his role during a B-26 bomber mission.

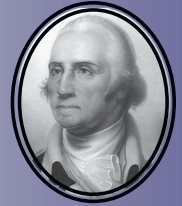
Two other presidents who had notable military service in the Navy were John F.

Kennedy and George H. W. Bush, our 35th and 41st presidents respectively. Both men achieved the rank of lieutenant and both served during World War II. JFK earned the Purple Heart and the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for heroism.

President George Herman Walker Bush, to this date remains the youngest person to become an aviator in the U.S. Navy. The former Sailor also earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions during a flying mission against Japanese military forces. He completed his mission despite his aircraft catching fire and ultimately crashing.

President Bush's son George Walker Bush became our nation's 43rd president, but not before serving as a pilot in the Texas and Alabama Air National Guards. He is currently the only president to have served in the U.S. Air Force.

James Buchanan, our 15th president, held the lowest military rank among the U.S. military presidents. He was a private in the Army, and the only president who enlisted without becoming an officer. He saw combat during the War of 1812. Buchanan's successor, President Abraham Lincoln, was a private in the Illinois State Militia and rose to the rank of captain by the end of his military service. *(Information for this article was compiled from various public, educational and government sources and websites.)*



George Washington



Dwight D. Eisenhower



Theodore Roosevelt



John F. Kennedy



George H. W. Bush

