

The North Star

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



Volume 1, Issue 51

March 3, 2010

25th CAB dominates biathlon

By Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Marshall
25CAB, 25th Inf. Div PAO

There are those that choose to accept what is the basic norm, and those that decide to challenge themselves, pushing their bodies to the limit.

Forty-two of the toughest Soldiers Task Force Marne has to offer competed in a grueling test of wills as they participated in the task force's first biathlon held at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, Feb. 27.

These select Soldiers were hand-picked by their respective chains of command to represent their unit in the biathlon, essentially pitting their Soldiers against the other elite biathletes from across the task force.

The 42 Soldiers involved in the biathlon were representative of each unit across United States Division-North. The categories were broken down to first through third place for male and female competitors. There was also a category for overall male and female with the most points.

The scoring system was a combination of the Soldiers' efficiency at the range combined with their run times after negotiating the muddy, wet 7.4-plus mile, round trip run.

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Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Marshall, 25CAB, 25th Inf. Div. PAO

First Lieutenant Valerie Aquino, executive officer, HHC, 209th ASB, TF Wings, puts on her personal protective equipment at Short Stop Range during TF Marne's first biathlon competition held at COB Speicher near Tikrit, Iraq, Feb. 27. First Lieutenant Aquino outperformed 41 competitors during the course of the biathlon finishing first overall, and for the female category, with 185 points.

Soldiers prepare IP for non-violent demonstrations

By Spc. Dustin Gautney,
2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

"Get back, get back," chanted U.S. Military Police Soldiers as the rhythmic sound of batons striking riot shields filled the air, during riot control training for members of Mosul's Iraqi Police Force.

The class, taught by members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division's Stability and Transition Team and Military Police from the 1st Battalion, 14th Military Police Company, educated Mosul's Iraqi Police force in riot control techniques.



Photo by Spc. Dustin Gautney, 2nd BCT, 3rd ID, Public Affairs

Sergeant Will Weisenberger, 1/14th MP Co, adjusts an Iraqi Police Officers' stance during a riot control course provided to the Iraqi Police to show proper riot control techniques.

"The class is taught over the course

of three days and goes over a series of standard riot control techniques from formations to more advanced scenarios, like personal extraction and protection," said Sgt. Will Weisenberger, 1/14th MP Co, and one of the class' primary instructors.

Sergeant Weisenberger also said the Iraqi Police have learned the techniques very quickly, despite the fact this was the first time many of the IP's have had riot control training.

"It has been a great opportunity for our police to receive this training

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“It was a test of their endurance and how well they could shoot,” explained Maj. Dennis O’Reilly, deputy division surgeon, 3rd ID, breaking down the events. “They had to run over 3.7 miles to the range, put on all their protective gear that they wear in combat, fire 10 rounds at a [25-meter] target, then drop their combat gear, and run back, all done in ACUSs and boots [with rifles].”

“We had lots of help. [TF Wings ran] the range. I told Wings ‘We are going to have 42 to 60 Soldiers show up, shoot, then run off the range. Go ahead and figure that out. And they did a great job doing that. Mr. Songer, [from the ‘Ready’ Brigade, did a great job as the run coordinator].”

Ultimately, when the winners were announced, the competitors from 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Wings, led the way.

First Lieutenant Valerie Aquino, Headquarters and Support Company, 209th Aviation Support Battalion, and Spc. Douglas Long, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, both of TF Wings, led all competitors with a combined 363 points. First Lieutenant Aquino also had

the highest individual score of any competitor, scoring 185 points.

“It feels great,” said 1st Lt. Aquino, on her accomplishments. “I’m glad it’s over, but it was very exciting. My goals were to not give up, and to hopefully win. I’m very happy I had



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Marshall, 25CAB, 25th Inf. Div. PAO
Task Force Marne Soldiers fire their weapons during USD-N’s first biathlon, which was held at COB Speicher, Iraq, Feb. 27.

a chance to represent my unit.”

Most of the biathletes felt the same way. Many didn’t expect to perform as well as they did and were surprised by the outcome.

“I was surprised. I didn’t think I was going to place,” said Staff Sgt. Desiree Browning, from Co. B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd ID, who took third place

in the female category with 99 points. “I was just going to do my best and try to finish the race.”

First Lieutenant Samuel Freeman, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery Regt., 2nd BCT, 3rd ID, and second place winner for the males with 166 points, also had no expectations prior to the race.

“I wasn’t expecting to get second place at any point,” he said. “I came out here and did a lot better than I expected to do.”

Some of the biathletes had their own goals whether it was motivating their Soldiers or showing their commitment to physical fitness by finishing the event.

“This definitely raises the bar for my Soldiers,” said Staff Sgt. Browning.

Specialist Long, first place winner for all male biathletes with 178 points, also weighed in on his reason for competing.

“I think it just shows how dedicated I am to physical fitness and keeping myself healthy. Running in ACUs (Army Combat Uniform), boots and with a weapon ... it really changes the dynamics of running.”

Staff Sergeant Lawrence Smith, who won third place for the men with 161 points, shared a few of his goals in competing. He also placed in the recent Operation Iraqi Freedom Great Aloha Run, Feb. 1.

“One goal was just to finish it because it was something I’ve never done before. And the other was being one of the top runners. My goal was pretty much to come up here and have fun.”

A triumphant finisher, Spc. Long discussed his pride in being involved in the task force’s first biathlon, knowing the stiff level of competition.

“It feels pretty good,” he concluded. “All that hard work paid off. I knew it was going to be tough. Every unit was going to send their best. So [winning certainly] felt good. And knowing that you were selected to represent your entire brigade was pretty cool.”

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Photo by Spc. Dustin Gautney, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., PAO
Iraqi Police practice riot control formations and movements during a class taught by U.S. Soldiers.

from the U.S. Soldiers. This is the first time many of them have learned how to control and contain violent crowds with the use of non-lethal force, as well as protecting themselves. This new training could be invaluable in the coming days,” said Maj. Rabah Najem Abdullah, IP company commander.

Major Abdullah also said the class was informative, using different riot control techniques throughout the world, as well as how to respond and approach legal non-violent protests.

“With the Iraqi constitution allowing the right to non-violent demonstration, it creates a fine line for the protective services to determine and recognize the difference between violent, or potentially violent groups, and constitutionally protected peaceful demonstrations,” said Lt. Col. Lee Porterfield, STT, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID.

The training the Iraqi Police received will provide them with one more tool to protect the people of Iraq, said Lt. Col. Porterfield.

Career Counselors attend retention refresher

By Spc. Cassandra Monroe
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Soldiers in career counseling positions attended a retention conference Feb. 25 and 26 at the Main Dining Facility, COB Speicher, Iraq.

“We gathered Task Force Marne counselors to share knowledge on what the retention office does and to share military occupational specialty skills,” said Sergeant Maj. Luis Rivera, the Task Force Marne command career counselor. “We wanted to have all of the counselors in one place to ensure they have the skill set and strategy to accomplish the mission.”

The two-day conference included Task Force Marne units that are a part of Task Force Marne and United States Division-North. However, and a couple units who reside in the USD-N area of operations.

The conference featured distinguished guests. Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, the Task Force Marne command sergeant major, gave some motivational words to the Soldiers and took time to answer a few questions and cleared up some rumors.

“It can be a thankless job if we allow it to be,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews, addressed retention trends and re-enlistment goals for the fiscal year.

“I know that you guys and girls out there are working diligently trying to make sure this happens for your respective units,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews about reaching retention goals.

“I taught a class on the Army personnel retention database,” said Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Halford, a retention operations NCO with Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. Some of Sgt. 1st Class Halford’s duties as a retention operations NCO are maintaining retention statistics for the division and assisting the senior operations NCO and command career counselor with ceremony protocol, mass re-enlistments and command briefings.

The Army retention database is a new program the retention career counselors started using this fiscal year, said Sgt. 1st Class Halford.

“What it does is actually pull our data off our Army information systems and produce statistical reports to let us know where we are in the Army’s retention mission. It’s a statistical analysis tool,” he said.

With the retention MOS, Soldiers have to deal with different systems and databases that are always changing, said Sgt. Maj. Rivera. Because of constant program updates, a refresher class was held for the conference attendees on Microsoft programs Excel and Access.

“Microsoft Excel is one of the programs we use to do most of our spreadsheets, and it’s a perishable tool,” said Sgt. 1st Class Halford. “I showed them a few things that Excel 2007 does that previous versions couldn’t do, like more automatic features that allow Soldiers to save time, working smarter, not harder.”

“I learned a lot of neat little shortcuts to do things more effectively on the program,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jeremiah Lucas, a career counselor with 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, 3rd Infantry Division. “The Excel shortcuts I learned will help me a lot.”

Other classes given during the conference included reviewing the rules for re-enlistment bonuses, exceptions to policies, new rules, changes in retention control points as well as contracting information and purchasing retention items.

“Some other information we gave out included tools and honing skills that are important for career counselors and retention Soldiers to know because it helps fully round that Soldier and allows them to provide comprehensive support,” said Sgt. 1st Class Halford.

“We’re the guys that a lot of people go to for the answer, and if we don’t



Photo by Spc. Cassandra Monroe, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Sergeant Major Luis Rivera, the TF Marne command career counselor, speaks to retention career counselors about personal development during a conference Feb. 26, at COB Speicher.

have the answer, we should know where to find it. As career counselors, we’re the ones that assist the Soldiers. We may not be able to process the action for them, but we’re part of the breadth of knowledge and experience in the Army, so we can refer them to the right resource.”

The counselors get guidance on how to run things, but by getting everyone together in the same area, you can learn from each other, said Sgt. Maj. Rivera about holding the conference.

“As career counselors, we have to frequently brief much higher levels of command as well as other Soldiers, so what better place to hone your skills than with other career counselors that can give you pointers,” said Sgt. 1st Class Halford.

The conference attendees also took a course on personal development. The course included ways of moving up in the career counseling field, and how to become a better quality career counselor. The course also showed the NCOs where they needed to be, both military and civilian school-wise.

“Our focus is on shaping the force, and ensuring that we retain the right people in the force,” said Sgt. 1st Class Halford. You constantly have to advise Soldiers on where they need to be personally and professionally and where they are in their retention goals, and their future in the army.”

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Staff Sergeant Cynthia Juarez, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 130th Engineer Brigade, has been a consistent contributor to the overall success of the brigade's personnel section. As a Human Resource sergeant, Staff Sgt. Juarez demonstrated her ability to organize and manage the Bde. Strength Management section with minimal difficulty. Her dedication and commitment to excellence were evident in her ability to rapidly adapt to this new role. Having no prior experience in the area, she sought assistance needed to make this section her own. Taking that knowledge she immediately set about tracking and monitoring reassignments and movements of currently assigned Soldiers while tracking projected gains and losses in order to provide a comprehensive, up-to-date product at a moment's notice. Staff Sergeant Juarez' dedication and commitment to excellence set the example for all Soldiers and peers to emulate and make her a clear choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Private First Class Robert Logan, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment has been a great new asset to the Medical Platoon. He constantly and consistently is pushing himself to new heights. His initiative, motivation and military bearing are at a level seldom seen in today's new Soldiers. When given a task, he sets his sights not on the standard but always beyond it. He is always willing to work hard and take on new tasks, well beyond his skill level. Professionally he is always learning, asking the right questions and watching procedures to further enhance his skills. In the short time he has been with the Black Lion Battalion and the Bonesaw Medic Platoon, he has set himself apart as a Soldier, from whom we can continue to expect great things.

WOMEN'S HISTORY QUIZ

1. In 1955 she swam the English Channel, England to France, in 13 hours 55 minutes, a record for women and men. Who is she?
2. She was born in 1894 and died in 1937. She called herself the Empress of Blues - others called her the greatest female blues singer. Who is she?
3. She wrote about contemporary problems such as women's suffrage, temperance, prison reform and child labor. She is best known for her book, Little Women. Who is she?
4. Best known as the founder of the American Red Cross, she had a number of other careers in her life. She taught school for 18 years, then became the first, full-time clerk in the U.S. Patent Office. During the Civil War she became a legend as the "Angel of the Battlefield." Who is she?
5. In 1932 she was the first woman to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean. Five years later she disappeared while attempting what was to be an around-the-world flight. Who is she?
6. Her first novel was "Uncle Tom's Cabin." It aroused great feelings against slavery. Who is she?
7. She was the founder of Christian Science, the first woman to establish a major religion. Who is she?
8. Who was the first American woman astronaut to go into space?
9. She was appointed Secretary of Labor in 1933, the first female cabinet member. Legislation during her time included Unemployment Insurance and Social Security. Who is she?
10. Who was the first woman to qualify and drive the entire Indianapolis Speedway 500 race in 1978?

Answers will be posted in Friday's North Star

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Man, 84, awarded high school diploma

United Press International

A Texas man who missed his senior year of high school to fight in World War II said he has finally received a diploma at the age of 84.

Orange Cunningham of Fort Worth said he was drafted into the Army in 1944 and found himself too busy with family and work after returning to civilian life to finish his education, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported March 1.

Family members said Cunningham never gave up his dream of someday obtaining a diploma and he was awarded an honorary document Feb. 28 during a

ceremony at Hope of Glory Kingdom Ministries. The ceremony was co-organized by state Rep. Marc Veasey, a Fort Worth Democrat, the Buffalo School District and the Texas Education Agency.

Cunningham wore a black cap and gown with a purple and gold tassel, the colors worn by Buffalo High School, which education officials said Cunningham would attend if he were a student today. He was presented with an honorary diploma.

Veasey said Cunningham was aided by a program aimed at helping veterans obtain diplomas.

Georgia's state bird

Associated Press

An Augusta group is organizing a movement to try to change the Georgia state bird to the chicken.

The Flip the Birds Campaign aims to change the state bird to the Cornish Chicken. Group leaders say the chicken should be the state bird to honor the poultry industry which it

says contributes billions to Georgia's economy.

The campaign is gaining support.

Richard King, whose Maryland Fried Chicken restaurant sells 7,000 pieces of chicken each week, agrees the chick is better known than the current state bird, the Brown Thrasher. It was recognized as the state bird in 1928.

New 'Dancing With the Stars' cast revealed

Associated Press

A "Baywatch" babe, an astronaut and a gold medal figure skater are among those who'll compete on the upcoming spring season of "Dancing With the Stars."

Host Tom Bergeron and former finalist Melissa Rycroft revealed the cast of the ABC dance show March 1. It includes Pamela Anderson, astronaut Buzz Aldrin and reality stars Jake Pavelka and Kate Gosselin. "It's definitely one of our strongest cast lineups ever," said executive

producer Conrad Green. "Pound for pound, it should be really fascinating watching."

"Dancing With the Stars" returns March 22.

Green said the recipe for a great cast is "part hope, part luck, part skill, part research." The show's staff has been courting many of the newly announced contestants for months, he said.

The new dancers will train for three weeks before making their primetime premiere.

Green said his staff is enforcing limits on training time to avoid the spate of injuries that plagued last year's cast and caused two stars to drop out before the competition began.

FINAL 2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES MEDAL COUNT

				
 United States	9	15	13	37
 Germany	10	13	7	30
 Canada	14	7	5	26
 Norway	9	8	6	23

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
130th Engineer Brigade
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