

# The North Star

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



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## Campaign to assist others begins

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson  
TF Marne PAO

The Warrior Ethos ends with the line, "I will never leave a fallen comrade," in keeping with this mantra, this year's Army Emergency Relief contribution campaign kicked off March 1 and ends May 15. The AER motto is "Helping the Army take care of it's own."

AER is a non-profit organization that offers emergency financial assistance to Soldiers and their Family Members in times of need.

"AER can provide an interest-free loan or grant to cover emergency expenses such as car repair, medicine or dental costs or funeral expenses," said Sgt. 1st Class Jack Cleff, the Task Force Marne G1 Human Resources noncommissioned officer in charge

and AER NCOIC.

Assistance through AER is available to all active-duty Soldiers; National Guardsmen and Reservists after 30 days of continuous active-duty service, retired Soldiers and the Family Members of Soldiers who fall in to these categories. Widows (ers) and orphans of Soldiers who died on active-duty or after retiring are also eligible.

While there is no dollar limit on the assistance that AER can provide to a Soldier, there are stipulations on what assistance can be provided. AER funds cannot be used to finance vacations, pay fines or legal expenses, purchase or lease a vehicle, or liquidate or consolidate debt.

To request of AER assistance, Soldiers must go through their chain of command.

"The Soldier has to go through their

commander first to make sure that the chain of command is aware of the situation," said Capt. Toni Brown, the Task Force Marne G1 Human Resources officer in charge. "Then they talk to an AER representative to fill out the required paperwork to request a loan or grant."

With AER being a non-profit organization, they rely on donations to provide the services that they do.

There are three ways to donate to AER.

"Soldiers can donate by allotment, and they can choose how much [will be taken out of their pay] and how often," said Sgt. 1st Class Cleff. "They can also donate via one-time cash payment or check."

For more information contact your battalion AER officer, or visit <https://www.aerhq.org/>.

## Marne Jazz Combo plays concert at COB Speicher



Photo by Spc. Jessica Rohr, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The Marne Jazz Combo from the 3rd ID Band gives a free concert to Soldiers, March 14, at COB Speicher

By Spc. Jessica Rohr  
135th Mobile PA Det.

Melodic notes seductively filled the air as jazz music made its way through the shopping complex on the porch of the Green Beans Coffee shop at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, March 14.

Evening temperatures have warmed up and the 3rd Infantry Division Jazz Combo has returned to its bi-weekly schedule.

The twice-a-month performances provide a break from the daily grind.

"Pleasant surprise," stated Sgt. Paul B. Kelley, 2025th Transportation Company, 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, as he enjoyed his dinner. "It's a really good thing. It shows that they love their music and want to share it with other people."

**See JAZZ, Page 3**

## 'Tank' takes charge

# 3rd ID MP keeps security in check

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

"They call me the tank," said the military police sergeant.

Those words piercing just as much as her hard as steel glance from behind the dark shades, or as she describes it, her 'game face'.

Sergeant Andrea Thompson is the noncommissioned officer in charge of security for the Combined Command Center for Ninewa province, in Northern Iraq. She said every day she has to be prepared for any situation she and her Soldiers might face.

The center serves as the center for the combined command of Peshmerga, Iraqi Police, and Iraqi Army and would be a high value target for those wishing to disrupt operations within Northern Iraq.

However, Sgt. Thompson and the Soldiers she trains perform as the centers gatekeepers; deterring any form of security breach of the center.

"The 'game face' is just the start," said Sgt. Thompson, "it sets the mood for all of those who come into the center and lets them know that if someone comes to the center to cause a problem that they will not be successful."

Arriving to the CCC in January, the Long Beach, Calif., native was tasked to train an ever rotating collection of Soldiers from various military occupations ranging from cooks to mechanics to become the centers security. Originally tasked to create the standard oper-

ating procedures and train Soldiers for the CCC for 30 days, Sgt. Thompson elected to stay with the center through the elections, nearly three months later.

"When I first arrived to the CCC, I was told I was in charge of developing the security for the center," said the six-year Army Veteran. "Since the Soldiers that made up the security detachment were not MP's

they had to be instructed on how to properly search individuals and vehicles, react to direct and indirect fire, and how to respond to incidents such as suicide bombings."

Prior to joining the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division for her second deployment to Iraq, Sgt. Thompson's was stationed in Germany, where she met her husband;

a fellow MP, to West Point honor guard. However Sgt. Thompson said being appointed the CCC's security NCOIC was her best opportunity to shine as an NCO.

Lieutenant Colonel Max Dietrich, the CCC officer in charge, agreed that Sgt. Thompson has taken the leadership opportunity and excelled upon arriving to the center.

"As soon as Sgt. Thompson arrived she performed her duties at an extremely high standard, whether it is in her daily duties or training new guards, she is a consonant professional," said Lt. Col. Dietrich. "Sgt. Thompson was given an immense amount of latitude with how she was going to develop the centers security; something that she has more than rose to occasion for as a leader."

Although this is Sgt. Thompson's second deployment to Iraq this was her first time interacting with Iraqi officials.

"In my first deployment I was tasked with detainee operations, basically escorting prisoners. Now I interact with Iraqi military leaders; so I had to learn how to deal with the local nationals in a completely different way than from my first deployment," said Sgt. Thompson.

"They are treated with the upmost respect, however many people believe the stigma that Iraqi's will not listen to women," said Sgt. Thompson, as a faint smile broke from her steel glare, "but I make sure they listen to me."



Photo by Spc. Dustin Gautney, 2HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO  
**Sergeant Andrea Thompson, 2-3 BTB, 2nd BCT, 3rd ID, and the security NCOIC for the CCC for Ninewa province, in northern Iraq, displays her 'game face'.**

# EOD Sailors receive awards for service



Photo by Spc. Ry Norris, CP South Public Affairs

**Task Force Marne Deputy Commanding General for Maneuvers Brig. Gen. Patrick Donohue, II, pins a Bronze Star Medal with "V" on Chief Petty Officer Jonah Toy, a platoon chief with EOD MU 12, Co 1, Plt 2, during a ceremony after a dinner banquet at FOB Warhorse, March 13.**

By Spc. Ry Norris  
CP South Public Affairs

Three Sailors with "The Dirty Dozen" Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 12, Company 1, Platoon 2, were presented awards by Task Force Marne Deputy Commanding General Manuever Brig. Gen. Patrick J. Donohue II, during a ceremony after a dinner banquet at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, March 13.

Chief Petty Officer Jonah T. Toy, a platoon chief, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for the valor he displayed during a time sensitive mission in Baghdad, Iraq, Apr. 27, 2008.

A cache containing improvised explo-

sive device materials and more than 200 pounds of explosives was found.

During the investigation of the discovery his team came under enemy fire.

Chief Petty Officer Toy moved all personnel to safety surveying the area for possible IED threats.

"Any EOD tech would have done the same thing. I was only doing my job," said Chief Petty Officer Toy, a Little Creek, Va., native.

Petty Officer First Class Richard D. Colclough, a Niceville, Fla., native, and Bryan C. Walton, a Staunton, Va., native, received a Letter of Commendation and Sailor of the Quarter award, respectively.

## Continued from JAZZ, Page 1

The Task Force Marne Jazz Combo played a variety of jazz music throughout the evening ranging from "Blue Bossa" to "My little Suede Shoes."

As combat boots tapped to the music, the Jazz Combo enjoyed what they do best - performing for Soldiers.

"Jazz allows me to be a little more artistic than usual. With jazz you are given more freedom to do whatever, as opposed to playing a rock tune in a cover band. I get to be a little bit more

artistic and free with what I want to do," passionately expressed Staff Sgt. Jahn, a drummer.

The Jazz Combo, part of the Task Force Marne 3rd ID Band, kicked off the night with five band members: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jonathon D. Ward - trumpet/ flugelhorn, 1st Sgt. Lester McKinney - keyboard, Staff Sgt. Kevin L. Jahn - drums, Sgt. Juan M. Hinojosa, and Spc. Avery Cody - bass guitar.

Despite the variety in rank, the Jazz Combo has a

relationship forged by talent and a love for performing music.

"We have a unique opportunity as a musician to showcase our skills in a way that the Soldiers don't get to see in other units like the Cavalry," stated 3rd ID Band commander, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ward. "An infantry commander or platoon leader won't go out and qualify and show off his infantry skills to their Soldiers the way we do.

It offers the Soldiers an opportunity to see us [leadership] doing what they do every day.

It also gives us an opportunity to play together. For us it is team building at its highest form."

"The Task Force Marne Band is the best Army Band in the world," said Task Force Marne Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, who came out to show his support for the band. "The band is a combat multiplier ... they are just as lethal with their instruments as our most qualified infantrymen out there with the tip of

their spear in our operating environment.

"The band is another added level of motivation and energy for the Soldiers.

When they see these guys on smaller locations who have lesser amenities and commodities ... it makes them feel that they are worth it and important enough that the band came and brought them motivation."

Whether it's motivation or a little relaxation, the band has got a little something for everyone.

The 3rd ID Band's diverse musical groups include ceremonial, marching, concert, stage, and show bands, along with brass and woodwind quintets, and the Jazz Combo.

Even the musicians have a preference in what kind of music they play.

"I like the way Jazz music makes me feel," said Spc. Cody. "When I hear good music, I get chills in my body.

It can easily uplift someone, make them move the way they move ... I like to contribute to that."



Photo by Capt. Tim Mills, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

**First Sergeant Lester McKinney, 3rd ID Band First Sergeant, plays the keyboard, March 14, during a Marne Jazz Combo concert at COB Speicher.**

**Task Force Marne Heroes of the North**



Specialist Brent Harris, of Springfield, Ill., is with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. He has been an outstanding platoon radio telephone operator since his unit's deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Specialist Harris always performs his duties flawlessly and surpasses any and all standards given to him. He has conducted more than 150 mounted combat patrols, countless joint dismounted palm grove clearance operations with Iraqi counterparts, and numerous training events. He meticulously maintains and improves all communications equipment and capabilities within his platoon. Specialist Harris' abilities to multi-task and operate at a level far above his current pay grade have not only enabled his platoon's success, but the success of the company and his Iraqi counterparts as well. Specialist Harris is not only an indispensable member of his platoon, but of the company as a whole and is a true Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

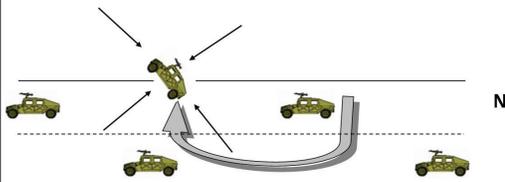


Specialist Troy Wilkerson, of Augusta, Mich., is with 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat, 2nd Infantry Division. He works as his battery's supply clerk. Specialist Wilkerson has ordered \$21,900 of replacement uniform equipment to sustain the battery and its attached Soldiers. Specialist Wilkerson is also responsible for submitting, maintaining and monitoring all hand receipts, sensitive item reports, cyclic reports and property books for both organizational and temporary property equipment valued at more than \$45 million dollars. His vast knowledge and attention to detail resulted in the overall success of the battery supply team. Specialist Wilkerson's superb performance and untiring dedication to excellence has made him a model for Soldiers to emulate and a great choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

**Safety Thought of the Week:**  
**Tactical Accident**  
**Information Requirements**

- Take at least four digital pictures, as indicated by the arrows. Take more if time allows or if there is something specific that needs to be identified. Do not include other personnel in the photos if possible.
- Any photos of deceased personnel must be provided to the safety officer then removed from all other sources.
- Draw a rough sketch of the area.
- When possible, secure the scene until released by the accident investigation board president.

*Remember: First and foremost is the safety and security of forces.*



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

				6	4	8	1	
	4			5			6	2
		9		1		3		
		3		4		6		7
		8	1		7	5		
7		4		3		1		
		6		7		2		
4	3			8			9	
	1	7	3	9				

# REGIONAL HEADLINES

## Woman in bust hid nearly \$26,000 in bra

Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. - A fraud bust, indeed: Spokane County sheriff's deputies said a woman was hiding nearly \$26,000 in her bra when she was booked into jail for investigation of theft.

Lukeisha A. Harris was one of three Seattle-area residents arrested March 12 as part of an alleged fraud ring.

Sheriff's spokesman Dave Reagan said the three were arrested after a worker at one bank reported that they tried to obtain money using a stolen credit card.

Reagan said that during a search at the Spokane County Jail, guards found that the 24-year-old Harris - who is 6 feet tall and 400 pounds - had the cash hidden in her bra, along with bank receipts.

## Monopoly money and drug deal gone stupid.

Allvoices.com

WICHITA, Kan. - You know you are really stupid when you play with your life --- and drugs. Drugs are stupid anyway, but to risk your life paying for the mess with play money, wow.

Police in Wichita, Kansas are investigating a crime that involves drugs, assault and Monopoly money.

It started as a routine traffic stop in a Wichita neighborhood March 12.

When police pulled over the car they found a 33-year-old man bleeding

from the head and telling an unusual story.

The victim said a couple of weeks ago he bought several hundred dollars of crack-cocaine with Monopoly money and now the dealer was ready for pay back.

"The man from whom he had bought the drugs was upset and invited him over to his house and upon arrival struck him in the head several times with a handgun and other people jumped into the fray," said Gordon Bassham with the Wichita Police Department.

The victim was able to get away and escape serious injury.

## Texas college has course on finding love

United Press International

DENTON, Texas - A University of North Texas professor says she is trying to help young people learn about love and romance through her Romantic Relationships course.

Professor Jennifer Acker said her course at the college in Denton, Texas, focuses on educating students in areas such as dating, attraction and friendship outside of keg parties and casual hook-ups, the Dallas Morning News said March 14.

"When you're at that young college age, you're still trying to figure yourself out and yet you're trying to figure out how to have a relationship," the UNT College of Education professor said.

"In our minds, we have this perfect expectation and picture of what this man is going to do for us on Valentine's Day, yet we never say it out loud," she told her students ahead of Sunday's holiday.

## Two Men Sail Across Pacific In Raft Made Of Water Bottles

Associated Press

HAWAII - Two men have successfully sailed from California to Hawaii in a raft made of plastic bottles and Cessna airplane parts.

Dr. Marcus Eriksen and Joel Paschal built their raft, which they named "Junk," out of 15,000 plastic bottles and a Cessna 310 fuselage. The purpose of their journey was to bring attention to the massive amount of plastic floating at sea.

The Northern Pacific Gyre, which has been getting some alternative media attention this year, is an area twice the size of Britain that swirls with tons of plastics used for water bottles, food containers, and various other one-time purposes.

Eriksen and Paschal described to reporters instances during their 2,600 mile journey when they caught a fish to eat, only to find plastic in its stomach when they cut it open.

During the 87 day journey, the two men saw first hand that "plastic is forever, and it's everywhere," as yahctpals.com reported Eriksen wrote in his journal at the end of the trip.

### 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  
135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

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