

# The North Star

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



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## Twenty-six Soldiers inducted into NCO Corps

By Sgt. Chad Nelson  
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Twenty-six Task Force Marne Soldiers were inducted into the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers in a ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, April 16.

The Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony is a time-honored ceremony that recognizes newly-promoted sergeants, welcoming them to the corps of NCOs and presenting them with words of wisdom from all ranks of NCOs.

"It shows who has become the backbone of the Army," said Command Sgt. Maj. Byron O. Loyd, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division command sergeant major.

The ceremony began with a powerful performance of four NCOs, from sergeant to first sergeant, who stated the inherent duties of their rank and the pride they have in their service.

Junior enlisted Soldiers, wearing all their gear for battle, turned to face an NCO and requested to receive all

the training, care and attention they need and deserve from their non-commissioned officers in order to attain the rank of an NCO.

Following this request, three candles – one red, one white and one blue – were lit in honor of the inductees. The red candle symbolized everything that has been sacrificed by the corps through America's conflicts.

White represented the color of the corps' pure spirit, and blue signified the strength and mettle of the corps.

Command Sergeant Major Wayne L. Durham, command sergeant major



Photo by Sgt. Chad Nelson, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

**Specialist Paul Williams, a joint node network operator with 3rd Signal, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, performs a Soldier's request at an NCO Induction Ceremony, April 15.**

of the 37th Engineer Battalion, spoke to the inductees. He challenged them by saying, "Be an NCO, not a stripe-

**See INDUCTION, Page 2** —

## Education is cornerstone for foundation of Iraqi legal structure

By Sgt. 1st Class  
Jake Newman  
4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

When constructing a building, a good foundation is the key to a stable structure.

The legal team of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan., is seeing the results of the foundation they have built

with the Salah ad-Din legal community since the brigade deployed to the province last fall.

Rather than building physical structures, the "Dragon" Brigade legal team has been building a partnership with the University of Tikrit Law School to help educate all parties on the rule of law and better understand some of

the differences between the U.S. and Iraq legal systems.

"Since the Dragons have been here, we have worked to maintain an already existing relationship with the University of Tikrit Law School," said Maj. Wade Faulkner, Brigade Judge Advocate, who also noted that both Iraqi and American legal professionals learn

from each other. "Dean Ahmer has been an excellent source of straightforward legal opinions on questions of Iraqi Law."

The opinions and knowledge the dean has shared with the brigade has helped the brigade legal team with their mission of advising and

**See LEGAL, Page 3**

# Recon to counter IDF

## BG Donahue conducts battlefield circulation in Salah ad-Din

By Spc. Cassandra Monroe  
135th Mobile PA Det.

Brigadier General Patrick Donahue II, the Task Force Marne deputy commanding general maneuver, toured areas and villages throughout Salah ad-Din province with 1st Platoon, Security Detachment, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

The purpose of the tour was to observe areas of concern in the security detachment's area of responsibility.

"The mission was also a counter indirect-fire mission," said Brig. Gen. Donahue. "We went to the sites where traditionally rockets and mortars have been fired onto Contingency Operating Base Speicher, so by going out there, we were denying the enemy the opportunity to set up and fire at us."

With members of the security detachment providing security, Brig. Gen. Donahue first toured the village of Al Mahazem, where he discussed Iraqi citizens' concerns with the area. He also gathered information about the water plant and ensured that everything was working in the area.

Following a small patrol through fields of tall grass along the Tigris River, the team mounted their trucks and drove to an area overlooking the Tigris River. An area security detachment personnel suspect is being used for enemy activities.

"When we moved to higher ground, he got a view of what we go out and do," said Sgt. Raymond Irizarry, an infantryman with the security detachment.

"We looked across the river for any potential en-

emies in the area."

The group inspected holes suspected of being used as a source of indirect fire toward COB Speicher.

The focus shifted from enemy activity to education, when the patrol took an opportunity to stop by a small school.

Brigadier General Donahue spoke with Iraqi citizens about the school's construction process and how they can receive both financial and construction aid.

"We followed up on the school, making sure the money that is being put out to fund projects is being used properly to get these schools fixed for these kids out here," said Sgt. Irizarry.

At the end of the day, the general had a new view of the area and his Soldiers had a new view of their general.

"It went very well, I gained an appreciation for the terrain," said Brig. Gen. Donahue. "I've flown over the terrain many times, and it's the first time I actually walked over it, and I saw how difficult it was, with the valleys and draws, and places to hide that I have not seen from the air. It was good to get out there."

For Sgt. Irizarry, it was an experience that was greatly appreciated.

"It's good that the general got to go out there and see what we have to do and become familiar with the area," said Sgt. Irizarry. "Now, he's 'boots on ground' and can picture the area we're talking about every time we send up reports."

It's good that he came out there with us because it brings even more information out."

Continued from INDUCTION, Page 2



Photo by Sgt. Chad Nelson, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Sergeant Edwin Allen, HHSC, DSTB, 3rd ID, raises his right hand while reciting the Oath of the United States Army Noncommissioned Officers during an NCO induction ceremony at COB Speicher, April 16.

wearer."

He challenged them to uphold and maintain all the standards and challenges of being an NCO as they continue in their careers.

"No mission is too small for our nation, and I believe a noncommissioned officer takes those tasks and makes sure they are accomplished to world-class standards," he said. "We're the backbone of the Army. We make it happen – [the] battle-hardened troops on the ground."

The ceremony effectively honored newly-inducted NCOs and welcomed them to the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers.

"It definitely added more feeling for me being inducted into the NCO corps," said Sgt. Daniel Merwin, 3rd Infantry Division Band, 3rd ID and DSTB NCO of the quarter.

"We are the ones that really make the work happen, especially when it comes to success. It's because of us," he said.



# 3SBCT Soldiers keep their base fed

By Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
3SBCT, 2nd Inf Div PAO

The U.S. Army will feed a Soldier wherever he or she may go; this could be a dining facility capable of feeding thousands, or a Meal Ready-to-Eat for one. At Kirkush Military Training Base Diyala, more than Soldiers and 20 contracted civilians assisting the Iraqi Army there, get their food from three Army cooks, doing what they can to ensure Soldiers have a hot meal.

Sergeant Anthony Harrington, from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, leads a team of Army cooks who are making sure U.S. forces at KMTB are well fed.

"We are the frontline support of food services," said Sgt. Harrington, who works with Spc. Scott Suther, of Dayton, Ohio, and Spc. Michael Banks, of Fort Worth, Texas.

Since there is no dining facility, the Soldiers and civilians stationed at KMTB dine at picnic tables under an awning while Sgt. Harrington and his crew cook and serve their food from a kitchen trailer.

"We usually see 45 to 60 people a night, but we have the resources to feed up to 75 people each meal," said Sgt. Harrington.

Most of their food is similar to menu items of dining facilities on U.S. bases. For

breakfast, they serve eggs with bacon and sausage, and sometimes a specialty item such as a breakfast burrito or breakfast sandwiches.

"A lot of what we make is 'heat and serve' food, but we add a little love to it," said Sgt. Harrington.

For dinner they serve main course items such as turkey or beef, with side items like mashed potatoes, or macaroni and cheese.

"Some stuff we even make from scratch," said

Sgt. Harrington. "When we make steak and lobster, that's all us; we like to do special things such as have a 'Surf and Turf' night."

Before coming out to KMTB two months ago, Sgt. Harrington's team served Soldiers at Forward Operating Post Cobra until a renovated dining facility, to be run by contracted civilian cooks was built.

They hope to spend the remainder of 296th BSB's deployment feeding U.S. forces at KMTB, or wherever they may be as long as Soldiers need a hot meal.

"We'll be out here until the mission is complete," said Sgt. Harrington. As the Soldiers and civilians at KMTB get to feel more at home with two hot meals a day, Sgt. Harrington and his team feel they are just doing simply what they joined the Army to do — cook food.

"We just do our job," said Sgt. Harrington.

"People show appreciation for what we do, and it's very rewarding."



Photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe, 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

**Specialist Michael Banks, of Fort Worth, Texas, and a food service specialist from HHC, 296th BSB, 3rd SBCT, 2nd ID, serves a Soldier at Kirkush Military Training Base, April 14.**

## Continued from LEGAL, Page 1

assisting the local legal entities in the area from criminal law to legal assistance, and handling claims for damage to persons or property within the brigade's operating area.

Major Faulkner and his team also work hand-in-hand with the provincial reconstruction team on various initiatives designed to improve the current Iraq legal system as well.

However, the partnership extends well beyond the borders of Iraq. Recently, a video teleconference was conducted between the University of Tikrit Law School and the International Law Society at the University of Baltimore in Maryland.

"The PRT and [4IBCT] worked together on this project coordinating the VTC from both ends," Maj. Faulkner

said. "We worked with our counterparts at [Tikrit] University and with the University of Baltimore personnel to get the parties together," he continued.

The VTC was a year in the making, according to Maj. Faulkner. It was started by a former PRT Rule of Law advisor who had ties to the University of Baltimore.

After several challenges along the way, the two schools finally got together and spent several hours discussing the two countries' legal systems. Each answered questions while building a partnership going beyond international borders to create professional bonds by opening doors to new ideas for Iraq legal professionals.

"I don't know what this will do for the Iraqi legal system, but the VTC

was the start of an important relationship between the two law schools," said Maj. Faulkner, as he stressed the importance of education being the foundation for a strong legal system. "As most professional educators will tell you, partnerships with universities in other countries are an important part of a university.

It facilitates the exchange of ideas from different parts of the world and expands the perspective of both professors and students," he added.

The 'Dragon' Brigade legal team helped to lay the foundation for the two universities to build upon. The schools have agreed to work more together and continue a partnership that the students can take with them as they move beyond school and into their respective legal communities.

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant Jesse Ritchey, of Roseburg, Ore., is with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. He is assigned as a Company Operations and Intelligence Support Team sergeant, a position well outside of his normal scope of responsibility as an infantryman. Sergeant Ritchey wrote and implemented a comprehensive standard operating procedure for company-level intelligence operations. Sergeant Ritchey also established briefing and debriefing standards for the company that were recognized by the command as being both efficient and expedient, allowing for a significantly more fluid operations tempo. Sergeant Ritchey brings a keen perception and a unique perspective to the intelligence support cell, providing information that greatly aids the commander. His efforts and diligence are a vital contribution to the daily success of his unit and an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Private First Class Justin Randolph, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, is with 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. He serves as a field artillery meteorological crewmember assigned to the meteorological section at Forward Operating Base Warhorse. He processes more than 100 messages a week in support of battalion counter-fire missions and base defense, and assists the section in processing more than 1,200 messages every month. He is currently responsible for system maintenance and ensuring control of messages. His efforts are crucial to mission success by ensuring that the necessary data is constantly updated, thus ensuring excellent accuracy of the battalion's fire missions. Private First Class Randolph goes above and beyond the call of duty by volunteering his extra time to assist the battalion's radar teams in their operations and maintenance. Private First Class Randolph exceeds the standard on a daily basis operating behind the scenes and is deserving of selection as today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

# Kirkuk selected as this year's cultural capital

## Cultural Tidbit Special to the North Star

People from all over Iraq celebrated Kirkuk being selected as the year's culture capital for Iraq.

Kirkuk is known for its oil fields, but it's cultural and ethnic diversity distinguishes itself culturally as the

most significant of Iraq's 18 provinces this year.

People from all over Iraq travelled to Kirkuk to see the festivities.

The celebration included Kurdish dances, Arab music, and Turkmen dances.

These events reflected the city's di-

versities that bring the nation together. It is this culture and this celebration of Iraqi culture and heritage that many hope will bring the nation and the people together for national unity.

*Editor's note: Nagim Jadou, a translator with Task Force Marne, contributed to this tidbit.*

## Safety Thought of the Week: Vehicle load plans

- > Load vehicles IAW the operator's manual and unit SOP.
- > Maximize use of storage racks and boxes.
- > Place larger and heavier items on the bottom.
- > Secure and strap all loose equipment.
- > During the course of a mission, secure gear after use.
- > Ensure room for the turret gunner to drop down in case of a rollover.
- > Rehearse rollover drills before each mission.
- > Vehicle commanders must know what will happen to each piece of equipment if the vehicle rolls over.



## REGIONAL HEADLINES

### Tiny town sold to couple for \$360,000

Seattle Times

WAUCONDA, Wash. - This town has a gas pump, a restaurant, a small store, a four-bedroom house and its own ZIP code, 98859.

And in a few weeks — after being listed for sale on eBay — it'll have new owners. It's a story of the travails of selling property on the site, the winning bidder backing out and finally a couple stepping up who had previously fallen in love with the town.

It takes an unusual person to try to flip a town on an auction Web site. It takes unusual people, too, to buy this isolated place that's surrounded by cattle ranches, vast stretches of evergreens, grazing land and the occasion-

al sagebrush rolling along Highway 20. On this highway, Wauconda is a pit stop at elevation 3,600 feet, a windy 25 miles east of Tonasket, and 12 miles west of Republic, the nearest towns with actual city streets.

But sell it did on April 12.

Daphne Fletcher, 42 — who once was homeless — sold the place for \$360,000. She bought the 4-acre property in 2007 for \$180,810. Maddie and Neal Love, respectively 48 and 50, of Bothell, put down 5 percent earnest money last Monday.

The Loves are both unemployed and are selling their home and all their possessions to buy the town and move there. The deal is expected to close in six weeks.

It's not like Fletcher will walk away with a huge profit. After all the im-

provements to the property, paid for in part by a loan from her mom, Fletcher figures she'll walk away with about \$40,000 for all those hours of labor.

Still, the sale will enable Fletcher to pursue her latest dream, and for the Loves, as they explain, "to come off one mountain, cross the bridge and walk up that other mountain."

### Kudos to Kids

Post a message and your photo to your kids in the Fort Stewart April 29 Frontline and the Savannah April 30 Coastal Courier!

Use an MWR commercial computer or your personal computer to visit [www.connectstewarthunter.com/kudosForKids](http://www.connectstewarthunter.com/kudosForKids) for more information about the program.

Imagine the surprise on your kids face! Give them something they can cut out and keep for a lifetime!

### MARNE-A-PALOOZA: 3 live-bands to rock COB

The Army and Air Force Exchange, Morale Welfare and Recreation and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Band present a base-wide live rock festival at Speicher Stadium at 6 p.m., April 24.

Free performances by Night Shift Brass Band, Sasquatch, and the 4 Horsemen of the Arockalypse!

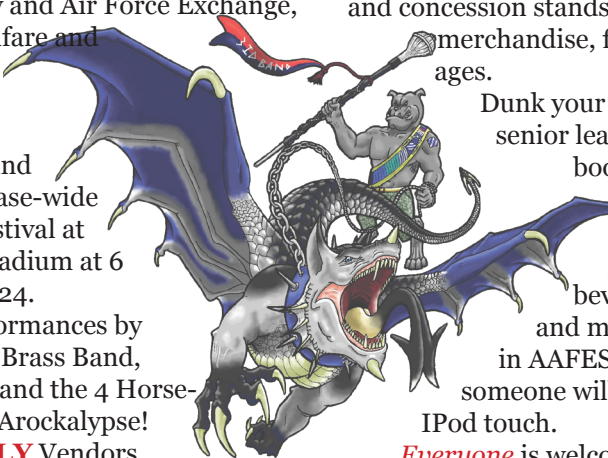
Cash **ONLY** Vendors

and concession stands will be selling merchandise, food and beverages.

Dunk your command and senior leaders in the dunk booth!

MWR and AAFES are also giving away **free** beverages, T-shirts and more than \$500 in AAFES gift cards and someone will win an Apple iPod touch.

**Everyone** is welcome to Rock out!



### Anti-Kidnapping tip:

Ensure every patrol safety brief includes counter-kidnapping procedures, audible and visual warnings of every approach and a set communications check-in schedule. Identify rally points if separated and safe patrolling distances within crowded areas or during instances of civil unrests or protests.

### THE North Star

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### TASK FORCE MARNE

Commanding General - Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo

Command Sergeant Major - Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews Jr.

#### Task Force Marne Public Affairs Staff

TF Marne PAO - Maj. Jeff Allen

TF Marne PA NCOIC - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs

TF Marne Writer- Sgt. Johnathon Jobson

#### Editorial Staff

Managing Editor - Sgt. 1st Class Kelly McCargo

Editor- Spc. Michael Adams

4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team,  
1st Infantry Division  
2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,  
3rd Infantry Division

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,  
2nd Infantry Division  
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