

# The North Star

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



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## Greenhouses grow crops all year

By Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
3SBCT, 2nd Inf Div PAO

Growing and selling crops is a vital part of the agrarian culture in Diyala province, Iraq.

What was once one of the most fertile regions in the Middle East is now a difficult place for farmers to cultivate their land.

As a significantly lower amount of rainfall descends on the farmlands of Iraq, Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, provide an innovative solution to nurture plant growth.

With the construction of almost 40 new greenhouses in the Wajihya district of Diyala province, the Soldiers hope to not only mitigate the effects of the drought but



Photo by Pvt. Zachary Zuber, 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

**Soldiers from HHC, 2/3 Infantry Regt., 3rd SBCT, 2nd ID, explain the drip-irrigation system used in greenhouses to Iraqi farmers in Diyala, April 15**

infuse life in the agriculture sector for the area.

“The biggest challenge that these farmers face is the

water shortage, and these greenhouses can solve that problem,” said Capt. Samuel McDowell, the lead officer

on the project for 2/3 Inf. “Almost 80 percent of the people in this area are farmers, and half of them are unemployed due to the current conditions,” he added.

For farmers in the area, the new buildings represent an opportunity that they have never seen before.

The greenhouses take advantage of a modern method of drip irrigation to water crops in which a slow flow of water trickles on individual plants from a specific pipe thus requiring less water for nourishment.

“The buildings let us grow crops during the colder months, by protecting them from the weather,” said Abdullah Halif al Khalim, a muqtar in the Wajihya district. “Now we can grow tomatoes, cucumbers and

**See CROPS, Page 2**

## Speicher Soldiers learn advanced lifesaving skills

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson  
TF Marne PAO

Six Task Force Marne medics trained more than 100 Soldiers about advanced critical combat lifesaving skills during a series of three, four-day classes on Contingency Operating Base

Speicher, from March 29 to April 15.

Medics from the 3rd Infantry Division Special Troops Battalion; 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry “Dragons” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division; and the

25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry “Tropic Lightning” Division, worked together to train Soldiers from the 1083rd and 2101st Transportation Companies, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion with a secondary duty, combat

lifesaver. Combat lifesaver training allows Soldiers to augment medics in emergency situations.

The combat lifesaver course builds on basic first aid classes that all Soldiers

**See CLASS, Page 2**

**Continued from CROPS, Page 1**

other important crops all year.”

These types of produce are important to the local farmers because they are a staple of Iraqi cuisine. By growing tomatoes, or other crops even during the cold months, the citizens will have food for their families, and colorful produce will continue to line the streets in the local market.

“They can also open up many more opportunities for farmers to increase their growing and earning capacity,” said Capt. McDowell. “When we looked at what we could do to provide the most effective solution for the \$5,000 micro-grant limit, greenhouses seemed like the best idea.”

One of the essential components for success with this project is education. The Highlander Soldiers led training sessions for all the recipients, instructing them on how the greenhouse operates and its’ capabilities.

The greenhouses can be built by local contractors, and farmers may even use their micro-grant funds to purchase fertilizer and seeds.

“Some of these people have no idea what a greenhouse even is, and so we have to teach them all the reasons to use it as well as how to maximize its potential,” said Capt. McDowell.

“The key to all of this is to make sure that we can get the farmers excited

about this project and what it can do for them.”

The Highlanders have already seen examples of the citizens’ excitement when touring Wajihya to find candidates to receive the new greenhouses. During one mission they visited a farmer who, after hearing about the idea, had used his own resources to construct a greenhouse and begin planting in it.

“It was great for us to see someone already jumping on this idea,” said Capt. McDowell.

“This one place can provide an example for neighboring farmers to follow and help convince them to work toward the same goal.”

**Continued from CLASS, Page 1**

receive, and teaches more advanced topics for sustaining wounded Soldiers until medics arrive, according to medics.

“The three important things that they learn are bleeding control, how to relieve a tension pneumothorax (a ruptured lung), and open and manage an airway,” said Sgt. Brian Evans, the DSTB medical training noncommissioned officer-in-charge. “Those three things are the top ideas that combat lifesavers need to learn to save lives on the battlefield.”

The 40-hour class consists of standard classroom training, hands-on testing, and the “big event,” the final lanes evaluation. The trainers tailor the evaluation lanes to the duties of the Soldiers in the class.

“We try to setup the lanes in a scenario that the Soldiers might find themselves in during real world missions. These Soldiers were truck drivers, so we set it up as a convoy scenario,” Sgt. Evans explained.

“Their ‘convoy’ was hit by an improvised explosive device, and the Soldiers that were in the trucks that were



Photo by Sgt. Johnathon Jobson, TF Marne PAO

**Staff Sergeant Willie Oliver, a mechanic with the 2101st Trans. Co., 541st CSSB, helps Sgt. Emmanuel Cabahug, a chemical operations specialist with DSTB, 3rd ID and simulated casualty, out of a truck during the final evaluation portion of the combat lifesaver class, April 15.**

not affected by the attack, had to provide aid to the ‘wounded’ Soldiers.”

“The training scenario was better than when I went through the class in the

seem much more realistic.”

Duties as a combat lifesaver, are secondary, they do not become the Soldiers primary mission in an emergency situation.

“The CLS Soldiers are not medics, they are trained to help the medics,” said Sgt. Evans. “Their primary mission is what ever their assigned duties are. If they are a truck driver, their primary mission is to drive that truck. If they are a gunner, their primary objective is to start putting rounds down-range.

Once they get to a point where they can safely remove themselves from that task, then they can begin assisting the medics and saving lives.”

As with any class there were Soldiers who struggled with some of the training, but in the end they all completed the training.

“The Soldiers did really well. Some struggled a bit with the theory in the classroom, but once they got to the hands-on training and the evaluation lanes it all came together for them,” Sgt. Evans explained. “I feel that that is the biggest thing to have in the program.”

U.S.,” said Sgt. Courtney Perry, a truck driver with the 1803rd Trans. Co. “Having the vehicles and a situation that we could end up in while on mission made it

## NCO sets, achieves goal

# Health care provider inducted into SAMC

By Spc. Shantelle Campbell  
4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

On April 10, Sgt. Holly Burke, a health care non-commissioned officer and squad leader with Company C, 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan., was recognized for her exemplary leadership and dedication to duty when she became an official member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club is an organization

of NCOs whose performance and leadership qualities mirror those of Sergeant Audie Murphy, the most decorated Soldier in American history.

"It's surreal. It hasn't hit me yet," said the Columbus, Neb., native, of her achievement. "It's like you want to expect something, but you don't want to be disappointed in it.

I was telling myself that I'm going to take the time, and if I don't get it then I don't get it. But, I will keep going back."

First Sergeant David P.

Dixon of Wakefield, Kan., the top noncommissioned officer of Co. C, 701st BSB, said he is exceptionally proud of his Soldier and her accomplishment.

"I had no doubt at all that Sergeant Burke would be able to accomplish what she was going to do," he said.

"She has a way about her that always projects confidence and the things that NCOs are supposed to be. Going to the board was just a step process for her."

Since the start of her military career, Sgt. Burke has deployed three times to Iraq and said that one of the most fulfilling aspects of being in the military is growing up.

"We're in a time of war and as much as people don't like deployments, I've learned a lot from them, and I know that I'm helping my Family by coming over here and I'm serving my country," she added.

As a leader, Sgt. Burke said that she values the time she spends with her Soldiers

and hopes that her examples are ones they will one day choose to follow.

"When I came back, they were all out in the hallway cheering me on," she said, as she recalled the reception upon her return from the Sergeant Audie Murphy Board.

"As a young specialist, I didn't understand what being a member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Board meant, but I think by me talking about it, studying and showing the dedication of staying until midnight at work; I know they knew that it was important to me, and I think that they see that it's very fulfilling and rewarding. So, I hope that some of them will try it in the future," she said.

The future looks promising for Sgt. Burke who plans to retire from the military and become a registered nurse. When asked about the rank she would like to retire with, she smiled and replied, "The highest that I can."



Photo by Spc. Shantelle Campbell, 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

**Sergeant Holly Burke (right), a health care noncommissioned officer and squad leader with Co. C, 701st BSB, 4th IBCT, 1st ID, became a member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, April 10.**



Photo by Spc. Shantelle Campbell, 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

**Sergeant Holly Burke, a health care noncommissioned officer and squad leader with Co. C, 701st BSB, 4th IBCT, 1st ID, introduces her Soldier during the battalion's NCO Induction ceremony at COB Speicher, March 31.**

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Jordan Bierce, of Missouri Valley, Iowa is with 130th Engineer Brigade. He has been a workhorse of the Brigade Current Operations Section since his arrival in Iraq. As the primary radio/telephone and Command Post of the Future operator, Spec. Bierce has demonstrated an unrivaled ability to organize, post, and manage all significant activities, construction projects, and an average of 30 route clearance and security escort patrols per week with minimal difficulty. His efforts are a significant reason the brigade commander is kept abreast of all battlefield operations in United States Division-North, and throughout Iraq. Specialist Bierce's extraordinary ability to adapt and overcome was recently demonstrated when due to his supervisor's emergency leave, Spec. Bierce served as the shift noncommissioned officer in the tactical operation center normally staffed by a sergeant first class. Not only did he excel at running all operations in the operation center, he simultaneously trained an additional Soldier to assume his duties and assisted with the integration of a newly arrived battle captain as well. Specialist Bierce's positive attitude and unremitting can-do spirit in any given situation make him an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Specialist Jacques Dandridge of Memphis, is with Company C, 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He is a cable system installer in 1st platoon. He has been performing the duties of a noncommissioned officer outside of his military occupational specialty as a Network Node Team Chief for six months. And as a platoon sergeant position for three weeks. Specialist Dandridge has ensured that vital voice and data communications remained operational for the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, allowing the flow of mission critical information. He routinely demonstrates dedication, technical competence, and responsibility these qualities makes him an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

## HEY DOC!



**By Capt. Adam Resnick**  
**Division Pharmacist**

### Tricare Mail Order Pharmacy

**Question:** Hey, Doc!! I've been in country for a couple of months now, and I'm running low on my birth control pills.

Before I deployed someone talked about getting my med refills mailed to me. What's that all about?

**Answer:** You should have deployed with 180 days of medication, and your refill prescriptions should be listed on your profile with the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy administered by Express-Scripts. Express-Scripts is designed to provide prescription medication services to patients who are on long-term

or continuous medication therapy, like birth control or blood pressure medications taken on a daily basis.

Medications such as pain medication or antibiotics that are designed to be used for an acute illness or for a short period of time should be obtained from your local military treatment facility .

Go to [www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE](http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE) and verify your account. At least one month before your current medication supply runs out, you should log on to the Express-Scripts website to ensure your refill prescriptions are on your profile, and to verify your current shipping address here in country.

**Registration/Account Creation** in Express-Scripts.

If you have not created an account with Express-Scripts, simply log on to the Express-Scripts website, and click on the TMOP Program hyperlink available at: [http://www.express-scripts.com/custom/dod/ben\\_message/](http://www.express-scripts.com/custom/dod/ben_message/).

Then, click on the Activate Your Online Account hyperlink. After that, fill in the required information by following the prompts.

If you are having problems with this, it might be the computer or

connection speed.

If you have issues changing your address to your Theater/Unit address, contact your primary care provider (battalion surgeon or physicians assistant), and have them submit address changes for you through the Pharmacoeconomic Center TMOP system.

Express-Scripts can also be contacted through commercial telephone at 1-866-DoD TMOP (1-866-363-8667) CONUS or 1-866-ASK 4PEC (1-866-275-4732) OCONUS.

Refill a Prescription. Log on to the Express-Scripts website. Ensure you have registered/created an account, and your address is up to date. Choose the TMOP Program hyperlink.

Then choose the Log On Now hyperlink. Enter your user name and password. Select the My Prescriptions hyperlink. Select the Order Refills hyperlink. Then follow the prompts, selecting the medication(s) that you wish to refill.

*Remember, it is very important to be proactive with your Express-Scripts account to ensure there is no gap in your medication therapy.*

Mail takes approximately two weeks to arrive at your location from CONUS. Thanks for your question!

# REGIONAL HEADLINES

## Buckhead therapist arrested after fleeing state

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

BUCKHEAD, Ga. -The Buckhead therapist who skipped town after allegedly pocketing tens of thousands of dollars from friends and clients has been arrested.

Colleen Higgins was taken into custody by a fugitive task force April 20 at a Super 8 motel in Carter Lake, Iowa, according to the Associated Press. She was booked into the Pottawattamie County jail on multiple counts of theft by deception on a warrant issued in Georgia, the AP reported.

Higgins disappeared last year after supposedly talking people who trusted her into loaning her money.

Then, a board that oversees Georgia therapists and social workers asked a judge to revoke her license on the grounds of unprofessional conduct and ethics violations.

People who describe themselves as her victims say she took advantage of them by gaining their trust and then persuading them to hand over huge sums of money.

When she didn't repay, some of them sued and went to the police.

Four of Higgins former clients testified on behalf of the board that revoked her license, each detailing how Higgins gained their trust to borrow anywhere from \$2,500 to \$60,000 from them before cutting off all contact

The Atlanta Police Department investigated, and in January a detective filed eight warrants for Higgins' arrest, all on counts of theft by deception.

## Student suspended for Longhorn hairdo

United Press International

EL PASO, Texas - A Texas father says it was "unfair" for school officials to suspend his son for a haircut featuring a University of Texas-inspired design.

Carlos Robles of El Paso said his son, who plays for the East Side Longhorns Minor League Football Team, was suspended and placed in an isolated classroom for getting a haircut featuring the Texas Longhorn logo on the back of his head, KFOX-TV, El Paso, Texas, reported April 20.

"We just think it's unfair," Robles said. "We just want him to finish his school year."

"(But) if he were to shave it off ... it would be a lot worse for him to go with a bald head," he said.

Socorro Independent School District Spokesman Daniel Escobar said the punishment is within the district's policy.

"Hairstyles that lead to the disruption of members of campus may not be permitted," he said.

However, Robles said other members of the team also have the same haircut and attend schools in the Socorro school district as well, KFOX-TV reported.

## You are invited

### Darryl Worley

Where: COB Speicher  
When: April 30, Time TBD

### UFC Tour

Where: COB Speicher, May 4,  
FOB Normandy and  
FOB Grizzly, May 5  
FOB Cobra and  
FOB Warhorse, May 6  
FOB Gabe/Cruz-Morris  
and Q-West, May 7  
When: Time TBD

## 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!

## Anti-Kidnapping tip:

Eliminate predictable routines or patterns for the enemy to exploit

## THE

## North Star

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4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team,  
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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