



Vol. III, Issue 4  
April 2010



*In The*  
**Zone**

## —Table of Contents—

Pg 3	JASG-C Commander-From the Top
Pg 5	Life on the FOB-Know Where to Go
Pg 6	Chaplain's Corner
Pg 7	Crime Scene Investigation
Pg10	IZ Education Day
Pg 12	Aggie Muster
Pg 14	News You Can Use
Pg 17	FOB Phoenix Turnover
Pg 18	DANCON March
Pg 20	IG Topic: Complacency
Pg 22	Quenching Iraq's Thirst- Oasis Water Bottling Plant
Pg 24	JAG Topic: Power of Attorney
Pg 28	Lt. Commander Proper Receives Texas Admiralship
Pg 29	Army Values- Selfless Service



Runners line up to begin the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon on Victory Base April 25th to commemorate the tragedy that claimed so many lives. Photo by Texas Army National Guard Pfc. Jennifer Taylor

### On the Cover:

**Iraqi Federal Police during a riot demonstration April 5th.** Photo by Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw

# in the ZONE



*Produced by the Joint Area  
Support Group-Central Public  
Affairs Office*

**JASG-C Commander:**  
Col. Mark Campsey

**JASG-C CSM:**  
Command Sgt. Maj. Alfred Cordova

**JASG-C Public Affairs Officer:**  
1st Lt. Darryl Frost

**In The Zone editor:**  
Sgt. Melissa Shaw

### Headshots contributed by PAO Staff

#### Content Contributors

1st Lt. Darryl Frost  
Sgt. Melissa Shaw  
1st Lt. Olivia Cobiskey  
Maj. August Murray  
Pfc. Jennifer Taylor  
Sam Freeman  
Staff Sgt. Nondice Powell

**Graphic Contributor:**  
Staff Sgt. Marcus Taylor

*In The Zone is published monthly as an electronic news magazine under provisions in the AR 360-1, para 3-6 by the Command Directorate's (JASG-C) Command for all military personnel serving as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the International Zone. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy or the Marine Corps, or the National Guard Bureau.*



# From the Top JASG-C Commander

Since the last report, IZ forces have worked hard and realized many successes in supporting our Iraqi Security Force (ISF) partners during the elections. We will maintain our support to the political process and simultaneously prepare to support the responsible drawdown of forces.

Our partnership with Iraq military and government officials has been extremely beneficial and enabled our continued transition to the 50,000-troop goal for September. Continue to foster these positive relationships. You are helping them build a better future.

Return home better than you came. Plan now for you and your family's future, as well as for your military or civilian career. You owe it to the people in your life to return an improved person.

Start today by looking for ways to support your short and long-term goals. There are many venues to support these efforts. Don't refocus your attention from the mission, but make good use your off-duty time.

Locally, our leaders are engaging their subordinates with professional development programs and resources like the Soldier's Toolbox. As I see service members with high morale each day, I believe much of this positive attitude is a direct outcome of leader and peer efforts to focus on personal improvement. Keep up the good work.

Leaders must be aware of our Soldiers' diverse needs in attaining their goals and constantly look for ways that enable their success. There's no one-size-fits-all solution. Supporting Soldiers' goals is a duty for leaders and a challenge we should all desire to face.

For Texas soldiers in the Joint Area Support Group (JASG), March marked an unofficial tipping point. We're now past our half-way point and should expect the tempo to increase as we prepare to complete the transition of the JASG and the IZ.



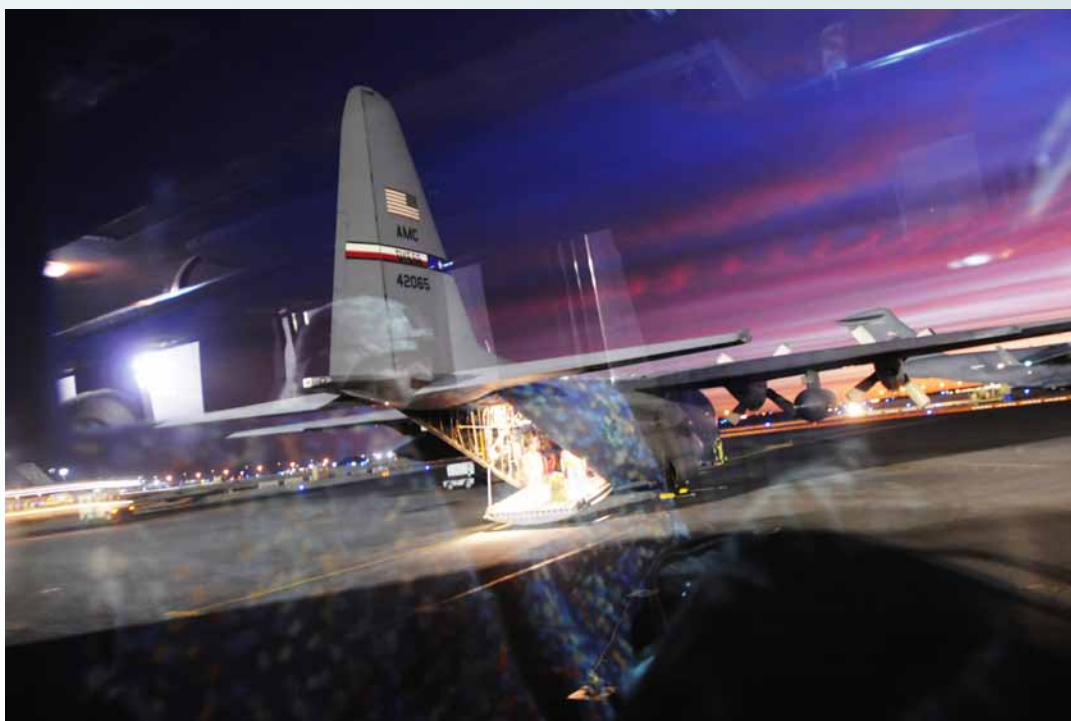
**Col. Mark Campsey**  
Joint Area Support Group  
Commander

It is critically important that we remain focused and flexible. We know where we are going, but I can assure you that the path that gets us there will change more than once.

I'm confident that you will continue to make Texas proud. Keep up the great work, watch your battle buddy and return with honor.

**ANZIO!**

COL Campsey



**Airplane from  
Dyess Air Force  
Base, Texas on  
runway at sunset in  
Kuwait.**

*Photo by Texas Army  
National Guard Sgt.  
Melissa Shaw*

# JASG-C Command Sergeant Major

I recently read a quote from one of our 72nd IBCT soldiers about how he feels about the Army Value 'Duty' and what he's doing here that struck a chord in me.

I believe it went something like this: "Duty is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are gonna get." It seemed to sum up our expectations and the reality that we often find ourselves in.

All too often in the military, we cannot always control the missions to which we are assigned, but we can control how well we do them and how we react to them.

As Soldiers, we must always be prepared to rise to the occasion and live up to our full potential.

While we may not see the impact now, history will reveal the importance of our time and our mission and our roles here in Iraq in the midst of the military drawdown. You will remember your actions here for the rest of your life.

That being said, May and June are a time of renewal, a time for growth. Use it to re-evaluate your goals and see if you are accomplishing the tasks you set out for yourself at the beginning of the deployment or if you need to refocus and get back on target.

Use the many seminars and workshops that have been set up to get information on everything from furthering your education to how to do a family budget.

Sit down with your NCOIC or OIC and determine the next level of military education you need and develop a plan to achieve it upon redeployment.

Have your counselings been keeping up with your accomplishments?

Remember that talking with your NCOIC is the fastest way to succeed; it is only when you know what they want that you can produce it.

Maintain both your personal and professional development. Keep talking with your family, find out what their expectations are for your return. Keep your goals and theirs aligned and you

will achieve more in the time you have together.

Make your mentorship programs a priority, attend the social events and widen your circle of friends. Walk by the notice boards for the latest information on MWR events and make it a point to talk with your directorate representatives.

Taking into account that statistics show the last months of a deployment are the most deadly, stay watchful for changes in your buddy's demeanor.

For example, are they more depressed or less interested in participating in group activities?

As we get closer to the end, anger, depression and anxiety are emotions that may come to the forefront for many.

Keeping our actions and emotions in check will go a long way to ensuring the successful completion of our mission.

In addition to service members juggling the stress put on them by their daily duties in a combat zone and expectations from those back home, the hot season is fast approaching and as temperatures rise so do tempers.

It only takes a split second to make the wrong decision, remember to

**Texas flag waving in the early morning outside a building in Baghdad is a reminder of the proud state heritage shared by a significant percentage of soldiers stationed in Iraq.**

*Photo by Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw*



**Command Sgt. Maj. Alfred Cordova, Joint Area Support Group-Central CSM**  
always think before you speak and act.

Situational and self-awareness are for more than land mines and snipers.

And getting back on numbers, statistically speaking, more Article 15's are issued in the last three months than in the first six.

For those of you that may be unaware, walking with a battle buddy while on Camp Prosperity is not a suggestion; it is the standard operating procedure.

Be sure to set the example and encourage those around you to maintain their situational awareness at all times.

Remember, it is up to you to determine the kind of deployment you have. Make sure your actions here allow you to return home with Honor.

**"Return with Honor"**  
**ANZIO 9**



# FOB Prosperity 411

## Common Access Cards

The IZ Common Access Card (CAC) office is in Room 110 on the first floor of the Palace (Bldg. 100) at FOB Prosperity, Monday through Saturday from 0800 to 1700. For questions, call DSN 312-239-1765 or e-mail: [jasg-chrm@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:jasg-chrm@iraq.centcom.mil)

## TMC

Those eligible for care at Troop Medical Clinics include active-duty U.S. and Coalition Forces, retired U.S. military and Department of Defense federal government employees.

Routine immunizations and Post Deployment Health Assessments are available for individuals during sick-call hours. For groups of 10 or more and immunizations call the TMC to schedule an appointment.

Ortiz Consolidated Medical Clinic is located in Bldg. 87, behind the fuel point. Sick-call hours for walk-ins are Monday through Friday from 0800 to 1000 and 1300 to 1500. Medical staff is present 24/7 in case of emergency. The clinic is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. Services now available include primary care, dental, combat stress control, laboratory, radiology and pharmacy.

The Union III TMC relocated to the west side of Bldg. 5. Sick-call hours for walk-ins are Monday through Friday from 0800 to 1045 and 1300 to 1500, 0800 to 1045 Saturdays.

Audiology services are now located at Phipps TMC in Balad; optometry and dermatology are located at Camp Liberty's Witmer TMC.

## Dining facility

The Prosperity dining facility across from the Palace (Bldg. 100) offers four meals a day with Grab-n-go options between meal hours. Meal hours are:

Breakfast: 0600 to 0830

Grab-n-go: 0830 to 1100

Lunch: 1130 to 1330

Grab-n-go: 1330 to 1700

Dinner: 1730 to 2000

Grab-n-go: 2000 to 2230

Midnight Meal: 2230 to 0100

Grab-n-go: 0100 to 0530

The Union III DFAC across from the Bldg. 1 parking lot offers four meals a day. Meal hours are:

Breakfast: 0530 to 0800

Lunch: 1130 to 1330

Dinner: 1730 to 2000

Midnight meal: 2330 to 0100

## Gym/MWR

The Prosperity gym is located on the first floor of the Palace and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The MWR center, in rooms 122, 125 and 127, are also open 24/7 and offer a large-screen television, DVDs, books, boardgames, and other fun activities.

The Union III gym is located in Bldg. 5 and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The MWR center, next to the gym, is also open 24/7 and offers a large-screen television, DVDs, books, boardgames, Xbox, and other fun activities.

## Post office

Free mail, limited to 13 ounces, still exists for the letter home. If you are mailing pictures, a small souvenir in an envelope or packages, then you must go to the post office. Packages will be inspected and limited to three items per visit. A military ID card is required for the transaction. Civilians need two forms of identification to conduct postal transactions.

Items forbidden to be shipped include weapons items, drugs, alcohol, and perishable material. For a complete list of items, consult CENTCOM AR 25-200 or HRSC Policy 07-26.

FOB Prosperity: Located at the west entrance of the Palace. The hours are **0900 to 1700 Monday through Friday**.

FOB Union III: A mailbox is located in front of Bldg. 6. The post office is located in Bldg. 5. The hours are 0800 to 1730 daily.

## Laundry

Since dirty laundry is serious business, FOB Prosperity now has two drop-off points.

Locations and Hours:

A-Pod Trailer-

7 days a week 0700-2000

Facility in front of DFAC

7 days a week 24-hours a day

Things to Remember

- Pick it up where you drop it off.
- Both locations have a limit of 20 pieces per laundry bag.
- Blankets and comforters must be separated from clothing or uniform items.



## Finance

Finance operations include check cashing, Eagle Cash Card transactions, military pay issues, collection and review of travel vouchers and other military pay-related documents, and more.

Eagle Cash Card (ECC) applications are available. The service member must provide a current bank statement or LES to verify bank routing and account numbers. As a reminder, you can load up to \$350 per day to your card. You can get cash back up to \$200 per month. Checks can also be cashed for up to \$200 per month.

Prosperity finance operations are in Room 108 on the first floor of the Palace. Hours are from 0900 to 1600 Saturday through Thursday.

Union III finance operations are in Bldg. 6, A-Wing, room 2A from 0900 to 1600 Saturday through Thursday.



# Enriching the soul in a barren land

## Chaplain's Corner



By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Laing  
JASG Chaplain

**A**t this point, the 72<sup>nd</sup> has been deployed approximately seven months, and has been in Iraq about four. It is typical for soldiers to begin to feel more comfortable in their positions and environment after they have been "in country" for a few months, have learned the "ins" and "outs" of their jobs and have developed a "battle rhythm". As the level of comfort rises, commanders worry complacency can creep in.

**T**he routine nature of seemingly everything lends itself well to at least a measure of apathy and/or complacency. Those in leadership positions endeavor to remind their charges of the dangers of such an attitude: our guards are down, giving the enemy an opportunity, and our focus is not what it should be, placing our productivity (and mission accomplishment) at risk. Those at home can also become complacent in their endeavors, whether it be managing the household or maintaining the civilian job.

**I**n addition to the dangers already mentioned, when we get in a rut, we are susceptible to depression as well. The 1980's movie *Joe vs. the Volcano* depicted this danger quite well in Tom Hanks' character, who mindlessly went through the paces, trudging along throughout the day, existing in a black-and-white world (as opposed to one which is filled with life and vibrant colors). Complacency at home can lead to even greater dangers than those while deployed—taking one another for granted, feeling like the daily tasks are not important, etc.

**S**imilar dangers exist in our spiritual lives. We can become spiritually complacent; we can fall into something of a spiritual rut, and the dangers are just as serious. When we

become spiritually complacent, our spiritual defenses are down and the Enemy is given an opportunity. The Bible describes Satan as a "roaring lion" who prowls around looking for someone he can destroy (1 Peter 5:8).

*"...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart"  
(Hebrews 12:1b-3)*

**S**atan would like nothing more than to turn us away from our faith and dependence upon God. He does so by a variety of methods, from standard physical temptation, to misapplication of God's Word (see, for example, the temptation of Jesus: Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4).

**O**ne of the most interesting books speculating on the schemes/plans of attack of Satan is C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*. It is written as a series of letters from a higher ranking demon to a

lower devil, and they are strategizing how to keep people from faith and how to turn the faithful from loving God and others. One of the key approaches they identify is spiritual complacency and lethargy.

**T**he fix for this sort of problem is spiritual vigilance. We have to fine-tune our spiritual radars to recognize the dangers so they don't sneak up on us. Most religious leaders agree that the key to this fine-tuning is putting spiritual disciplines into practice: prayer, reading/studying God's Word, meditation, fasting, fellowship, worship, celebration, etc. One of the most popular and helpful books on the topic is Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*. It offers some particularly insightful discussion of each, with a lot of practical application as well.

**S**ome advice from the book of Hebrews is in order here: "...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12:1b-3). Our faith in God, our dedication to His Way and our dependence upon Him and what He has done for us in salvation is what gives us the strength to go on and remain vigilant. Let us remain vigilant, whether in our daily activities, or in our spiritual lives until we are all home and together once again.

# American Forces Hold Crime Scene Investigation Seminar for Iraqi Civil Defense

By Staff Sgt. Nondice Powell  
209th Broadcast Operations Detachment

Bringing a fire under control and saving the lives of anyone trapped is always of the utmost importance of any firefighter. This usually means using the fire-hose and water supply to their utmost potential. But what if the fire was intentional?

If firefighters are not properly trained, important evidence may be unintentionally washed away in the heat of the moment.

To prevent this, firefighters with the Iraqi Civil Defense Department are teaming up with American subject matter experts to learn more about the importance of helping to preserve evidence for crime scene investigation.

Recently, Lieutenant Col. Gary Esson, 414<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, coordinated for Soldiers from the 49th Military Police Brigade from the California National Guard, to spend two days training firefighters at the Joint Fire Training Academy in Baghdad on the balance between creating a safe environment and crime scene forensics.

"This is the very first time we've been blessed to put this together," said Esson. "One of the things that we really want to do is bring the criminals to justice [using the evidence from the scene]. It can be a small finger print that might be left somewhere, a cigarette butt with saliva on it, or a blood dropping that is able to bring criminals to justice."

As a part of the Provincial Reconstruction Team – Baghdad, Esson, a Reserve Soldier from Joplin, Mo., strives to create an environment where the Iraqis are the ones leading the way,

He has been coordinating classes at the Joint Fire Academy and helping bring Iraqi Firefighters to the point where they

are the ones teaching the classes. When he started the mission almost nine months ago, there were only two classes taught by the Iraqis. Things have progressed so far that now four of the six classes at the academy are taught by the Iraqis.

"If you want to help people and save people's lives, it is so important," said Brig. Gen. Laith Abbas, Baghdad Fire Chief. "[We need to know] how we can control and how we can use our equipment in a correctly suitable time."

The seminar was given with a top-down approach. Instructors started with those in leadership positions throughout Iraq in the Iraqi Civil Defense Department. The goal was to make sure the leadership understood how valuable the instruction would be for their firefighters.

"It is a course that we find very

important with all the turmoil that has happened in Baghdad and in Iraq country-wide," said Esson. "One of our focuses here is how to set up a crime scene and how to secure it with the purposes of gathering the evidence, not destroying the evidence, for studying that to bring the violators to justice."

The firefighters appreciate the instruction they have received and are looking forward to more.

"I trust them [the American subject matter experts]," said Abbas. "I've worked with them for five years now and we know about their experience and they are good. [The instruction] is very useful."

Abbas thanked the Soldiers for all the instruction they have provided the Iraqi firefighters.

"Thank you for everything," said Abbas. "Thank you for your help, the experience."



Col. Mark Campsey, Joint Area Support Group-Central commander (left), Brig. Gen. Laith Abbas, Baghdad Fire Chief (middle) Col. Gary Esson, (right). Photos by Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw

Vehicle used for fire rescue demonstration February 2010.

Photo by Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw



# Iraqi Federal Police Host Parade and Demonstrations



The Iraqi Federal Police held a parade April 5, 2010, for close to 300 spectators in honor of the completion of a long awaited road-way project on their headquarters compound in Baghdad.

The audience included high-ranking military officials, civilians and several guests of honor. Included in their ranks was Col. Mark Campsey, Joint Area Support Group-Central commander, who currently oversees the military operations running out of neighboring Camp Prosperity.

After the parade, the crowd was treated to a martial arts display and an EOD robot demonstration. This was followed by a mock riot, complete with a shouting crowd throwing rocks and water bottles.

*Photos by Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw*



# Iraqi Federal Police Host Parade and Demonstrations

Parade audience members made up a small throng of "rioters" throwing rocks and bottles at a group of police wearing riot gear before being hosed down with a water truck.

*Photos by Texas Army National Guard  
Sgt. Melissa Shaw*



# JASG-C Hosts IZ Education Day

By Maj. August Murray, JASG-C Education Officer

The Joint Area Support Group-Central (JASG-C) hosted an International Zone Education Day, which drew a crowd of over 60 soldiers to FOB Prosperity on 30 April.

The event was planned and organized by Master Sgt. Quentin Heyward, the FOB Union III education non-commissioned officer (NCO), and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Paula Daigle-Hutchins, forward operating base Prosperity education NCO.

"This was the most informative benefits briefing I believe I have ever received in my career," said Col. Mark Campsey, JASG-C commander.

The Texas Army National Guard Education Office, Central Texas College and University of Maryland University College provided education materials and items for the event.

Soldiers received education materials and literature on military and Veterans education benefits, in addition to a very informative Post-9/11 GI Bill briefing conducted by

Robena Tomlinson, Camp Victory education services specialist.

"Military and Veteran's benefits have paid for my entire education costs—one bachelor's degree and two master's degrees," said Tomlinson.

Tomlinson, a career DA civilian and retired U.S. Army 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt., first deployed as a 17-year-old Medic for back-to-back tours in Vietnam.



Following the briefing, active-duty Soldiers, Army National Guard and Army Reserve units deployed in Baghdad had the opportunity to ask questions about the GI Bill.

Col. Campsey recognized Tomlinson in front of an audience consisting of Soldiers from more than 12 units serving in the International Zone, Baghdad.

Maj. Daniel Garcia, JASG-C safety officer, hosted an Army Reserve Officers Training

Corps (ROTC) table. Several soldiers expressed interest in the Army ROTC Green-to-Gold and Simultaneous Membership (SMP) commissioning programs.

When not deployed, Maj. Garcia serves as a full-time ROTC faculty member and military science college instructor.

For more information about veteran benefits, transfer of benefits and steps to qualify for the GI Bill, visit: [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov). For more information about Army ROTC, visit: [www.armyrotc.com](http://www.armyrotc.com).



(top) Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Paula Daigle Hutchins (left) Robena Tomlinson (middle), Master Sgt. Quentin Heyward (right)



(left) IZ Education Day brings out many interested in pursuing their higher education April 30. Photos by Texas Army National Guard Pfc. Taylor

Camp Prosperity  
Maj. August Murray  
Education Officer  
Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Daigle-Hutchins  
Education NCO

University of  
Maryland University  
College  
Field Representative  
318-485-6027

Camp Victory  
Education Office  
Guidance Counselor  
318-485-5318

If you have questions about your personal eligibility or need more assistance, please call the VA at 1-888-GIBILL-1 or visit the VA's GI Bill Web site at [www.GIBILL.VA.gov](http://www.GIBILL.VA.gov).



# Military Occupational Specialty Corner

## Health Care Specialist

### 68W Army/ HM-0000 Navy/ 4N Air Force



Combat medics are the unit's best assets when it comes to identifying dangerous blisters and spider bites both in the field and in garrison.



Medics are Soldiers too and go where we go, ruck when we fight, fight when we fight. They are an important part of medical readiness whether they are Active Duty or Reserve Component.



Combat medics also take on the role of teacher during the annual combat-life saver recertification classes required for all Texas Army National Guard Soldiers.



*The Health Care Specialist is primarily responsible for providing emergency medical treatment, limited primary care and health protection and evacuation from a point of injury or illness.*

*Health Care Specialists are often called "combat medics" in the Army, because some Soldiers in this MOS are assigned to deploy with Army combat units, and provide emergency medical treatment directly on the battlefield.*

*Other Health Care Specialists are assigned to military hospitals and clinics to assist doctors and nurses with the health care needs of patients.*

#### Basic Job Description

- Administer emergency medical treatment to battlefield casualties.
- Assist with outpatient and inpatient care and treatment.
- Interview patients and record their medical histories. Take patients' temperature, pulse and blood pressure.
- Prepare blood samples for laboratory analysis.
- Keep health records and clinical files up-to-date.
- Give shots and medicines to patients.
- Prepare patients, operating rooms, equipment and supplies for surgery.

Health Care Specialists can also receive advanced medical training to "specialize" in one of several areas. Following completion of the additional skills training, they are awarded an ASI (Additional Skill Identifier), as follows:

- M3 - Dialysis (skill level 1-4 only)
- M6 - Practical/Vocational Nurse (skill level 1-4 only)
- N1 - Aircraft Crewmember Standardization Instruction (skill level 2-3)
- N3 - Occupational Therapy (skill level 1-4 only)
- N9 - Physical Therapy (skill level 1-4 only)
- P1 - Orthopedics (skill level 1-4 only)
- P2 - Ear, Nose, and Throat and Hearing Readiness (skill level 1-4 only)
- P3 - Optometry/Ophthalmology (skill level 1-4 only)
- W1 - Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCOM) (skill level 1-4 only)
- W2 - Civil Affairs Medical SGT (skill level 1-4 only)
- W4 - Civil Affairs Trauma Medical SGT (skill level 2-4 only)
- Y6 - Cardiovascular (skill level 1-4 only)
- Y8 - Immunization/Allergy

# Proud Texas A&M Tradition Continues Inspite of Combat Location: Aggie Muster Ceremony in the International Zone

By 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Darryl Frost

On April 21, over 30 Aggies, former Texas A&M University students, gathered at FOB Prosperity Chapel in the International Zone in Baghdad for Aggie Muster, a time to remember those fallen from their ranks and to enjoy camaraderie with fellow university classmates.

In the past, Aggie Musters have been held in the trenches during WW1, the beaches of Anzio, the island of Corregidor and in the jungles of Vietnam.

The Muster ceremony honors the memories of Texas A&M University men and women whose deaths prevent them from answering roll call. The roll call is a roster compiled of all former and current students who have died over the past year.

As each name is called, a member will answer "Here!" symbolizing that their memory lives on. The 2010 Aggie Muster key note speaker was

Col. Wesley N. Osburn, a senior advisor to the deputy Chief of Staff of training for the Iraqi Security Forces.

Osburn's speech focused on trying to define the Texas Aggie Spirit. A member of the 1981 Aggie graduating class, he used a definition he found that stated the Aggie Spirit was something that, from the outside, you can't understand it and, from the inside, you can't explain it.

He then provided examples of



Former Texas A&M students hold a candlelight vigil during the Muster at As Salaam Palace Chapel, Baghdad, April 21, 2010. Photos by Texas Army National Guard 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Darryl Frost

extraordinary Aggies whose actions, either in the civilian or military service – did the right thing – for others rather than themselves. These Aggies – E. King Gill, James Earl Rudder and the Aggies at Corregidor – personified the Aggie Spirit by their actions.

Public Works, Joint Area Support Group-Central, Baghdad.

"We kept with the traditions, but [we] had to improvise. You do the best you can."

*Perhaps the best explanation of the Aggie Spirit is that it indeed is a "Spirit that that can ne'er be told" said Osburn.*

Perhaps the best explanation of the Aggie Spirit is that it indeed is a "Spirit that that can ne'er be told" said Osburn.

Osburn also spoke about the purpose statement and six core

values of Texas A&M University that serves as the foundation of the Aggie Spirit.

A tradition that spans more than a century, Aggie Muster is celebrated in more than 400 locations worldwide. However, the biggest ceremony is held in College Station, Texas each year on April 21.

"We're can't replace the super bowl [of Aggie Musters] in College Station," said class of 1998 graduate Cpt. Mark C. Grahmann, officer in charge, Department of

Background compiled from online sources



Several Texas A&M former students climb to the top of As Salaam Palace, Baghdad, April 2010. From left to right, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Chris Mersinger, Maj. Sean Ibarguen, Lt. Col. David Farr, Capt. Mark Grahmann, Maj. Jonathan Lee, Maj. Kevin Smith, Maj. Cory Matthews, Capt. Jesse Jones. Photos by Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw

# Union III Holocaust Remembrance Luncheon:

with Guest Speaker Lt. Olivia Cobiskey

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Olivia Cobiskey, featured in the top right photo, did more than remind us of the atrocities that occurred decades ago while speaking in the Dining Facility on Union III during the International Zone's Holocaust Remembrance Day Luncheon April 11th.

She spoke of the many preventable events that continue every minute of every day; from the sex slave trade in Taiwan to the genocide in Darfur and encouraged each attendee to do their part to change history for the better.

Prior to her speaking, luncheon participants held a moment of silence for the lives lost to the Holocaust represented by the lit candles at the front of the room.

It has been more than 60 years since the Holocaust occurred. For its survivors, the memory of its horror is ever present.

However, for the younger generations, six decades can feel more like ancient history.

In the 1950's, a day was chosen to remind the people of the world of the horrors of the Holocaust.

The date would remind them of the cost of genocide and allow people to explore the questions: What happened? How did it happen? How could it happen? Could it happen again?

It would also serve as an opportunity to fight against ignorance. It would encourage challenges against the disbelief that the horrific event took place with proof.

It would serve as a reminder for those that suffered, those that fought and those that died – millions and millions of people – Jews, intellectuals, homosexuals, Jehovah Witnesses or anyone deemed undesirable by the Nazis.

On April 12, 1951, the Knesset, Israel's parliament, proclaimed Nissen 27th, Yom Hashoah U'Mered HaGetaot (Holocaust and Ghetto Revolt Remembrance Day).

The name later became known as Yom Hashoah Ve Hagevurah (Devastation and Heroism Day) and even later simplified to Yom Hashoah.

The 27th of Nissan (April or May on the Roman calendar) was chosen, which comes after Passover, but within the time span of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Many Orthodox Jews still do not like this date because it was a day of mourning within the traditionally happy month of Nissan.

*Next year Yom Hashoah will fall on Thursday, April 19, 2011.*



# News you can use

## Troops Take Advantage of New GI Bill Transferability

By John J. Kruzel  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 21, 2010 - More than 100,000 requests from troops desiring to transfer their unused education benefits to family members have been approved under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, a defense official said today.

Signed into law in June 2008, the new GI Bill is a Department of Veteran Affairs-sponsored program that provides the most comprehensive educational benefit package for veterans since the original GI Bill -- the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 -- was authorized toward the end of World War II.

A provision in the new bill, which permits service members to transfer their unused educational entitlement to a spouse or child, has transferred "months of benefit eligibility to over 240,000 family members," Robert E. Clark, assistant director of accession policy for the office of the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told lawmakers today.

"To date, over 105,000 requests from career service members have been approved," Clark said in a prepared statement to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, "transferring months

of benefit eligibility to over 240,000 family members."

Clark said the Defense Department plays two main roles in the joint effort with the Department of Veterans Affairs in addition to allowing for transferability.

"The department's first role in the successful implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is the sharing of service data with VA," he said. "We recognize the road to becoming a veteran always entails passage through service in the military. Accurate reporting of that service is vital to the determination of eligibility for all post-service education benefits."

The other role, he said, centers on the ability to offer supplemental educational benefits, commonly called "kickers." But while kickers are authorized under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the statute as written does not allow the department to use them, Clark noted, so officials have

asked for an amendment to rectify the situation.

"To allow the services to use Post-9/11 GI Bill kickers, we requested a technical amendment in our 2011 legislative proposal package for the [fiscal] 2011 National Defense Authorization Bill to allow the service to make deposits into the [Education Benefits Fund]," he said, "and for VA to draw reimbursement from the EBF for kickers associated with the Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits."

Clark said the Defense Department recognizes its duty to staff the all-volunteer military with high-quality, motivated and well-trained men and women.

"As we move through the 21st century," he said, "we must continue to build upon the remarkable legacy of the visionaries who crafted the original and preceding versions and improvements to the GI Bill."

Speaking about the GI Bill last year, President Barack Obama said it was designed "to renew our commitment

to ensure that the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America get the opportunities that they have earned."

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, Obama said in August, is as important as the original, and likewise recognizes service members for their wartime service and represents "an investment in our own country."



**Maj. August Murray, education officer for the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, tosses out t-shirts to individuals who attended the International Zone Education Day briefing April 30 for the men and women serving on Camp Prosperity, Baghdad. Demand for information on how to use all the options presented by the new GI Bill, including transferability, is at an all time in the National Guard. Photos by Texas Army National Guard Pfc. Jennifer Taylor**

# News you can use afterdeployment(.org): who knew it could be a Web site too?

**afterdeployment.org** is a wellness resource for the military community.

The Web site's mission is to help service members, their families, and veterans overcome common adjustment problems following a deployment.

The resources and exercises on **afterdeployment.org** address post-deployment challenges, including: post-traumatic stress and triggers.

These include conflict at work; re-connecting with family and friends; depression; anger; sleep problems; substance abuse; stress management; kids and deployment; spiritual guidance; living with physical injuries; health and wellness; and much more.

The developers have strived to build a media-rich, fully interactive Web site.

There are assessments,

testimonials, forums, blogs and workshops.

The content on **afterdeployment.org** is directed at service members, their families, veterans and health care providers.

However, the Web site is available to anyone with a computer and access to the Internet.

Users who sign up can take full advantage of the interactive workshops, save their work, track their progress and participate in community forums.

Signing up is easy and can be done *anonymously*.

They understand that maintaining your privacy is extremely important.

When you sign up, you will not be asked for personally identifiable information such as your name or social security number.

The information, tools and exercises on **afterdeployment.org** are not intended to substitute for in-person consultation or advice from a health care professional.

The voluntary self-assessments serve only as guides to help users better understand their concerns.

**Can I use afterdeployment.org if I'm also working with a health care provider?**

Yes. You can tell your health care provider that you're using **afterdeployment.org's** self-guided resources and invite your provider to visit the Web site.

Future updates will include new content areas focusing on traumatic brain injury, warrior resilience, veterans' issues, military sexual trauma, anxiety, family and partner issues and smoking cessation.

The screenshot shows the homepage of afterdeployment.org in a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The URL bar shows 'http://www.afterdeployment.org/web/guest/home'. The website has a blue header with navigation links: 'Service Members', 'Veterans', 'Families', and 'Providers'. Below the header is a search bar and contact information for the Outreach Center (866-966-1020) and National Suicide Hotline (800-273-TALK). The main content area features a grid of 18 icons representing various topics: Post-Traumatic Stress, Depression, Anger, Sleep, Families & Friendships, Anxiety, Alcohol & Drugs, Tobacco, Physical Injury, Mild Traumatic Brain Injury, Life Stress, Stigma, Resilience, Military Sexual Trauma, Health & Wellness, Families with Kids, Spirituality, and Work Adjustment. Below the grid is a banner for 'Real Strength in Action' with a video player. At the bottom, there are sections for 'Assess Yourself' (with links to various assessments), a 'Poll' titled 'Which quote do you like best?' with three options, and a 'Daily Quote' by Charles Lamb.

# Say Soldier, Do You Know... ...Why You Say Hooah!!???

In the U.S. Army, which has so many acronyms, expressions and opaque phrases that it seems to deserve its own language, there is one word that is quite possibly uttered more than any other.

That word is 'Hooah.' Pronounced HOO-ah, it can be spelled any number of ways including spelled hua and huah.

Just don't try to define it. And definitely don't try to figure out where it comes from.

Some believe it came from hurrah and just evolved to mean everything from yes to yes, sir, from I understand to that's great.

It's one of those multipurpose phrases - when in doubt, say 'Hooah.'

We shout 'Hooah' to get motivated, and whisper it to concur. Hooah is also considered the proper reply when someone says "thank you." On the other hand, it may also be used to say "thank you."

Hooah is a catchall phrase that will get you out of any situation, particularly when receiving a scolding from a higher-ranking officer.

As with any good word, the origins of hooah are highly disputed.

Some claim it derives from the military acronym HUA - Heard, Understood and Acknowledged.

Another tale has it originating from when Army Rangers landed at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944.

Apparently a sergeant ordered them to scale the cliffs looming above them and neutralize the German pillboxes perched on top.

One soldier, aghast at the idea, responded with "Who, us?" But because of the sound of the pounding surf and the incoming mortar fire the shouted question turned into the now oft uttered phrase of hooah in agreement.

The Soldiers ended up following the order in what became one of the most celebrated acts of World War II.

Then there's the theory that hooah comes from hurrah and hooray, themselves believed to be bastardizations of the sailor's cry 'huzzah' which dates back to the 16th century.

With the Internet widening the forum for debate, blog entries suggesting definitions of hooah have been met with dozens upon dozens of comments from those who think they know better.

With all the derivations that exist, a few souls have tried to come up with an official meaning.

One such half-serious, half-humorous definition, listed by the Urban Dictionary, reads in part: "U.S. Army slang. Referring to or meaning anything and everything except 'no.'"

Generally speaking and rank notwithstanding, Hooah is the best possible one-word answer a Soldier could say when at a loss for words after being asked a question he either can't or won't answer.

## A Taste of Army Slang

Shamming/Sham Shield-	Getting out of work/rank of Specialist
Butter Bar-	2nd Lieutenant
OFP-	Own Failed Program
Ate up -	Not up to Regs
Squared Away-	Always up to Regs
High Speed Soldier-	Motivated
WETSU-	We Eat This Stuff Up
Watch your '6-	Make sure you are watching your back

Two soldiers with the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team help a buddy complete a warrior task training obstacle course during premobilization training while on Camp Swift in Texas.



# FOB Phoenix : Rising From The Ashes To A New Life



**Col. David Madden and Mr. Sameer Al-Haddad sign the official transfer documents for forward operating base Phoenix. Photos by Texas Army National Guard 1st Lt. Darryl Frost**

*By Texas Army National Guard 1st Lt. Darryl Frost*

On April 15, United States Forces-Iraq formally transferred Forward Operating Base Phoenix, located in the International Zone, back to Iraq's Ministry of Defense.

"The transfer of responsibility from the U.S. army to the Iraqi ministry came after an agreement between the two sides a few months ago after the approval of the council of ministers," Deputy Chief of Staff, General Hussein Jassem said, noting that the transfer is part of the U.S. withdrawal agreement signed between the two governments.

Prior to the ceremony, Mr. Sameer Al-Haddad, secretariat of the Committee for Receiving Real Properties and Camps Office of the Prime Minister, and Colonel David Madden, deputy commander for the Joint Area Support Group-Central (JASG-C), met and formalized the property transfer to the Iraqi government by completing the necessary paperwork.

For members of the JASG-C International Zone transition team, the Phoenix transfer represents over two months of working through all 91 steps in the USF-I Base Closure Policy, which ensures each property is turned over in good condition in line with the security agreement.

Over the years, Phoenix Base has served a lot of purposes. Most recently, it served as the headquarters for the U.S.'s Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, or MNSTCI.

Until recently, MNSTCI was responsible for developing, training and equipping Iraq's military and police. A lot of great collaborative efforts for Iraq's security infrastructure were started on Forward Operating Base Phoenix.

In the future, Iraqis will move portions of its National Defense University to Phoenix Base. When the move is complete, the National Defense University on FOB Phoenix will serve as a center of excellence for Iraq's Armed Forces Officer Corps.

Higher-level academic training and strategic studies will be offered to enhance the Iraqi Officers at all stages in their military careers at the National Defense University.

Having worked on this transfer from the beginning, 1st Lt. Sean Trobaugh, the officer in charge of the International Zone Transfer and Transition Team, was ready for this day to come.

"This is a transfer rich in symbolism. We are turning over what was once one of the key operational centers for American Forces in Iraq. Moving forward it will be used as a training center for Iraq's Armed Forces," said Trobaugh after the ceremony.



**Keys to the many doors on FOB Phoenix are handed over to Mr. Sameer and General Hussein during an official ceremony April 15.**

# DANCON March: 13-miles of Camraderie and Blisters

By 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Olivia Cobiskey 318<sup>th</sup> PAOC

When the Gnome heard about the DANCON march, of course, he had to do it.

A veteran of Afghanistan and an avid runner, he begged his friend, Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Jerrod Roth, the J6 superintendent with the NATO Training Mission-Iraq, to take him along.

"I carry the Gnome with me just about everywhere I go. When I have to take a picture for work, the Gnome [has] found his way into the frame. When it snowed, I had pictures of the Gnome's "pointy hat high" in it," said Roth, of his deployment in 2008 to Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan.

"In our small communications flight (unit) about 30 personnel supporting more than 800 - the Gnome became a little diversion for our folks when we were just crazy busy or when we needed a reminder not to take ourselves or the things going on around us, too seriously."

The two-inch Gnome just smiled and shrugged as the team speed up and disappeared around a corner.

Lt. Col. T. Drew Bayliss, the Liaison Officer to USAID in Baghdad, agreed camaraderie is important, but for him participating in the march with "Flat Stanletta," also was about building connections to his six-year-old daughter, Aenea, in Virginia.



"She's very independent," Bayliss said of his daughter, pointing to Stanletta as proof.

Usually "Flat Stanley" is a boy; however, Aenea, not one to limit herself, wrote in a letter to her father. "You might get confused that it is a girl."

Bayliss understands that independence and tries to take photos of Stanletta with female service members.



"I told him that he would have to carry his own gear. He agreed," said Roth. "We completed the march on time. A little tired, feet a little blistered, but we completed it."

The Gnome and Roth weren't the only unique team. Col. Lars Seibaek, the Danish senior military representative in Iraq, welcomed Friday morning. More than 300 individuals participated in the DANCON March on FOB Prosperity, April 16, in honor of Denmark's Queen Margaret II 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Curious George, various stuffed animals and the world famous "Flat Stanley" flew across the pre-dawn starting line with their required 22 pounds hoping to complete the 13-mile march in the allotted five hours.

The fact the march was started to build camaraderie between the various nations serving in Cyprus during the 1960s, is something Roth can appreciate, he said.



Stanletta was hard to miss on the march, with her red-curly locks and tailored uniform created by David Steele, an information officer with USAID. She is as unique as his daughter, Bayliss said.

"I think it's important for my daughters to know that their opportunities are limited only by their desire and their ability to work hard," said Bayliss as Stanletta sat next to him.

Each march has its own medal and certificate for participants who finish the march in the required five-hour deadline. April's march was the first since the Danish Army withdrew its soldiers from Basra and was arranged by the Danish Army Protection Teams at the Royal Danish Embassy.

"They have done a great job," said Col. Lars Seibaek, the Danish senior military representative in Iraq.

Started in 1960 in Cyprus, the DANCON March has become a tradition wherever the Danish Army has served. The marches, open to soldiers and civilians working in support of the Danish armed forces, presently are also held in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan's Kabul International Airport and Lebanon.

# 72nd IBCT Soldiers Celebrate Earth Day by Cleaning Up IZ park

*Story and photos by Texas Army National Guard  
Pfc. Jennifer Taylor*

Everyone has a different story to tell, but there is one thing every living creature shares on this planet and that is a home. Like any home, the Earth requires maintenance and renewal to ensure those residing in it live long, healthy lives.

Created in 1970, Earth Day has gone from a day of environmental education to a day of environmental action, and for one Baghdad neighborhood in the International Zone (IZ), the action from members of the IZ Council, along with volunteers from the IZ area, is beginning to pay off for the community.

National Guard soldiers of the Houston, Texas-based 72<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), operating in Baghdad as part of the Joint Area Support Group- Central, volunteered to help clean up a local campground in the IZ. The volunteers started early.

Armed with black trash bags and gloves, they combed the designated campground site for the Iraq Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, picking up debris.

For forty years, Earth Day has inspired people to take time out of their day to care for the world they live in.

"It is the responsibility of people nationwide to take care of the Earth," said Sgt 1st Class Paula Daigle-Hutchins, executive administrative assistant of 72<sup>nd</sup> Joint Area Support Group- Central.

"By doing our part now we make things better for the next generation that follows us."

The IZ Council is coordinating an event for the Iraq Boy Scouts and Girl Guides this spring season.

In support of their mission, they picked up trash throughout the park and organized the set up for the event.

The IZ Council will continue to improve the scout camp area for the future of the Scouting Program in Iraq.

Like Earth Day itself, it's a reminder of how big changes can grow from little efforts.



**Celebrating the spring season, Sgt. 1st Class Paula Daigle-Hutchins, worked alongside community members to clear the campground from garbage.**



**No stranger to community projects, Sgt. Nadia Vallejo, a Director of Information Management help desk team leader, with the 72<sup>nd</sup> JASG, joins in helping to pick up the park.**

Clean up volunteers of 72<sup>nd</sup> Joint Area Support Group- Central carry benches to put in place at the designated site on the campground in the International Zone to help in preparation for the IZ Council Boy Scout and Girl Guides event.





# Maj Sean P. Ibargüen

## JASG-C Inspector General

### April Topic: Leader-Soldier Complacency

*Complacency. This word is thrown around in discussions amongst unit leaders and Soldiers alike. It is mentioned during OPORD briefs and right before mission execution, but what does it really mean? As defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary: com-pla-cen-cy (noun) 1: self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies. 2: an instance of complacency.*

The First 100 Days (CALL Document 07-27 dtd JUL07 located at <https://call2.army.mil/docs/doc3081/07-27.pdf>) states the following: Complacency is cited most often as the primary factor contributing to Soldier casualties in Iraq. The following descriptions help to illustrate complacency:

- Being unaware of surroundings (lack of situational awareness)
- Underestimated or did not have respect for the enemy
- Failure to follow established standards or procedures
- **Got too comfortable with surroundings**
- Did not have head in the game
- Lack of attention to detail
- Did not bring "A" game
- Lost battlefield focus
- Lack of discipline
- Carelessness

Listed below are more examples of complacency at the Soldier and unit leader level. Not an all inclusive list. Some are obvious while others may not be so apparent. All can have a negative impact on mission success.

#### Soldier:

Inability to keep focus during a decreased combat OPTEMPO and/or a perceived decreased daily threat.  
Failure to closely monitor your Buddy right *before* and right *after* leave IOT ensure he or she keeps mission focus.  
Failure to properly clear your individual and crew served weapons.  
Failure to follow established vehicle load plans.  
Executing improper weapons, equipment and personal maintenance.  
Not doing the "right thing" always. Especially when no one is watching.

#### Leader:

Taking shortcuts during mission planning, preparation and execution.  
Failure to conduct written and timely counseling.  
Allowing improper relationships.  
Not checking your Soldiers' Master Military Pay Accounts and the Unit Commander's Pay Management Report IOT ensure pay and allowances are in correct order.  
Lack of risk mitigation  
Taking the "*easier wrong versus the harder right*" involving disciplinary and UCMJ actions.  
Not recognizing and/or properly addressing Soldier issues before the issue is elevated.

*The key element to combating complacency is proper Soldier attitude, which is shaped by unit leadership. Soldiers cannot be complacent, and leaders must recognize complacency in Soldiers and take immediate corrective action.*

Applying proper mission focus, Soldier welfare, sound leadership and common sense can overcome the aforementioned aspects of complacency.

***"Fighting complacency has been our biggest challenge. We do this same mission, 3 times a day, 7 days a week. With each mission, we have to remain vigilant in ensuring that we did all our mission briefings, safety checks, followed our Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the like. That also means as leaders, keeping troops motivated, trained on daily maintenance of vehicles, being situationally aware, going through various counter-measures and so on..."*** -Platoon Leader, Iraq, 11 July 2009

For more information, contact the IG, MAJ Sean P. Ibargüen, on FOB Prosperity at Building 78. He may also be reached at [sean.ibarguen@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:sean.ibarguen@iraq.centcom.mil) or at 318-239-7902.



-1

Before he left for combat,  
he took care of everything:  
someone to plow the driveway,  
cut the grass.

And the letter he wrote me,  
just in case, sealed  
somewhere, in a drawer;  
can't be opened,  
must be opened  
if he doesn't return.

I feel for my keys,  
hear his voice:  
"Less is better."

Late for work,  
still I linger  
at the window of the Century  
Florist, a bowl of peonies,  
my face among the tulips.

# Letters

By: Frances Richey, New York City.



خطابات

1-

وقال قبل مغادر للقتال ،  
تولى عناية من كل شيء :  
شخص ما لحرث الارض ،  
قطع العشب .

وهذه الرسالة كتب لي ، اذا لم يعد ، مختومة  
في مكان ما ، في جوار ؛  
لا يمكن فتح ،  
يجب فتح

إذا كان لا يرجع .  
احس بمفاتيحي ،  
نسمع صوته :

"الأقل هو أفضل." في وقت متأخر  
للعمل ، لا يزال  
أنا ما زالت قائمة

في متجر بائع الزهور ، وعاء من الزهور ،  
وجهي بين الازهار .

2-

في يوم الام في السنة الماضية ، وعندما  
كان بمعزل عن العالم الخارجي ،  
جاء شيء . بعد ثلاثة أيام ، رسالة

في صندوق البريد ورد وهو مغلق  
خرجت من البيت ، وضربت قبضة يدي على  
عندما اعطيت لي ، ضربت

على صدري ، كالوئحش  
ثم اتحدث لأحد ،  
ثم اعتذر . ثم اهتم للهدية .

فقط اردت هذه الرسالة  
العرق من يده ، كلماته

-2

Last Mother's Day, when  
he was incommunicado,  
nothing came.  
Three days later, a message  
in my box; a package,  
the mail room closed.  
I went out into the lobby,  
banged my fist against  
the desk. When they  
gave it to me, I clutched it  
to my chest, sobbing  
like an animal.  
I spoke to no one,  
did not apologize.  
I didn't care about the gift.  
It was the note I wanted,  
the salt from his hand,  
the words.

Background on the Poem: The author wrote this for her son, Ben. His letters were usually consistent when he was gone for any length of time. When he was deployed to Iraq, Mother's Day rolled around only to find him incommunicado. He had always sent gifts for Mother's Day, and so when nothing arrived his Mom was terrified. In fact, though, a gift was sitting in the mail room, but nobody had given her the slip to tell her.

# Quenching Iraq's Thirst: Oasis International Waters Bottling Plant



Bottles travel down a conveyor belt after being plastic wrapped at the Oasis International Waters Bottling Plant on VBC.

*Photos and Story by Texas Army National Guard  
Sgt. Melissa Shaw*

BAGHDAD – Bottles, bottles everywhere, as much as I can drink. As every service-member knows, maintaining proper hydration is the key to staying healthy and can make the difference between completing the mission or becoming a heat casualty, especially in dry environments like, oh I don't know, Iraq.

When the stack in the corner or the bottles hogging up space in the fridge dwindles down to nothing, it doesn't take much to replenish our supply. The delivery system in place makes sure a pallet of these carriers of life- sustaining liquid office is usually just a short walk away in almost any direction of travel. But, how did they get there and where, pray tell, do they come from?

For the people on the forward operating bases surrounding Baghdad, such as Camp Prosperity, both the bottle and water are processed at the Victory Base Complex Oasis Water Bottling Plant (OWBP), a 52,000-square-foot facility, located by "Z" Lake.

## The Bottles

The bottles themselves hold one liter of water in a clear and uniquely shiny, label free plastic shell. OWBP turns out several hundred thousand of these lightweight, impact resistant and portable bottles of water each day.

"At full capacity, the plant produces 450,000 one-liter bottles a day, which equates to 37,500 cases and 625 pallets of water. A 45-foot trailer typically used to transport the water holds 22 pallets," said Darren Woodruff, regional site project manager for Oasis International Waters (OIW).

It takes about two-minutes to turn 28-grams of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) resin pellets into one of these bottles using a proprietary method and an absolutely



(above) The one-liter bottles used by American Forces for water consumption in Iraq are made in a three step process. Raw pellets are heated to form the plug. The plug is then shaped using hot air and a mold in a CIPA blow mold. The bottle is then allowed to cool until needed for filling. The entire process can be completed in approximately two minutes. The 28-grams of PET pellets needed to make one bottle are visible inside the 'plug' which will become a one-liter bottle.

(middle and below) Bags of PET pellets are lifted by forklift to fill the hopper attached to the form maker. Each bag will hold enough pellets to manufacture 30,000 bottles and depending on the needs of the government the Oasis can use up to 12 bags in one day.



huge machine. The machine is an injection/blow molder. The PET pellets are melted and then injected into mold cavities that produce a preform, basically a test tube shaped cylinder with threads for applying the bottle cap. The preform is transferred to the bottle mold cavities where it is stretched and high pressure air is used to form the bottle.

Once they are created, the bottles take a short trip by conveyor belt to a massive hopper where they wait until needed for filling.

"The one thing we don't do is make the caps for them here, we purchase them already made," explained Woodruff.

Nor do the bottles sport labels, although, the plant is set up to do so.

"Our contract with the USG does not call for the product to be labeled. For the amount of bottles we produce each year for the government, adding a label would increase the cost substantially," explains Woodruff.

"Instead, we laser code them with a lot number and date and distinguish them with a palm tree logo, the symbol for Oasis International Waters," said Woodruff.

### The Water Inside

Coursing throughout the countryside and bringing life to the dry, dusty desert, the Tigris River is a major

player in the landscape of Iraq. Pump stations bring its waters to the "Z" Lake reservoir and, in turn, the OWBP.

Then, the water is pumped from the lake into a storage bag, where it is treated with chlorine to kill naturally occurring microorganisms. Its pH level -- the amount of acidity or alkalinity it contains -- is lowered to allow the chlorine to work more effectively.

Immediately following, the water goes through a 7-step purification process, making the final product comparable to any bottled water produced by top commercial water companies.

"In fact, our water is chemically more pure than Aqua-Fina and the bottled water purchased at the PX," said Bruce McDougal, the regional quality assurance manager for OIW. "The water is carefully tested during every step of the production process, from lake to bottle."

"The water then passes through a filtration unit which can filter out particles as small as 0.1 micron. The smallest bacteria are approximately 2.0 micron," McDougal explained.

The water is stored again before making two trips through a reverse osmosis filtration process. Reverse osmosis filtration occurs at the ionic level of 0.001 micron and is able to filter out any viral and chemical components.

After its second round of reverse osmosis, the water is passed through

an activated carbon filter, ultraviolet disinfection and 0.2 micron filtration. Shortly after, the water travels to a stainless steel contact tank where it gets "ozonated" -- ozone is diffused through the water to kill any possible bacteria and contaminants.

"That means there is three additional barriers of protection against any contaminant that might remain in the water after it goes through the (reverse osmosis). The ozone is there to kill anything or everything," McDougal said. The finished product of the purification system is water which meets the FDA and United States Pharmacopeia Standards for purity.

### How It Gets To Camp Prosperity

Water distribution points set up across local forward operating bases are serviced by the OWBP, with deliveries made by flat bed trucks almost on a 24/7 basis, or as determined by the current needs of the government.

"We make and deliver what the government wants us to, as much and how soon," said Woodruff.

"For example, when the surge happened in 2007, we almost doubled our distribution to meet the needs of the increase of service-members."

### How the Drawdown Will Affect Production

"It won't," said McDougal. "As the military reduces the number of service-members in the area, we are able to turn our attentions to commerce with the people of Iraq. However, our primary mission has always been and will continue to be providing the US Military with the safest water of the highest quality."

With no small amount of laughter he added, "And all along people thought the Americans were here to make money in oil."



(left) The PET pellets are almost constantly on the move after delivery to the Oases Bottling plant. From palletized two-ton bags to the hopper to the machine used to make the preform for the 1-liter water bottles.

(right) Bruce McDougal (left) and Darren Woodruff (right) stand beside the Reverse Osmosis Filter membrane system inside the Oasis International Waters Bottling Plant on VBC.



# Taking Care of Responsibilities by Empowering Families with Powers of Attorney (POAs)

By 1st Lt. Dana Collins 72nd JASG-C JAG

One of the most important steps you can do to help your family while deployed and to give you the peace of mind needed to complete your mission is completely free to service members: a power of attorney.

A power of attorney (POA) is a great way to allow someone to take care of your affairs while you are deployed, whether it is for operating your vehicle or purchasing a house in your name.

## Power of Attorney

A special or specific power of attorney (SPOA) grants another person—your “agent”—the ability to act on your behalf regarding a specific power or area (e.g. the power to obtain a military ID card).

A general power of attorney (GPOA) allows your agent to act or do anything that you could legally do. The difference between a special power of attorney and a general power of attorney can be great.

Unfortunately, many soldiers find themselves in difficult situations after they give a GPOA to a new spouse or a family member who has difficulty managing money.

Many soldiers return from deployment expecting to have saved a large amount of money, only to find bank accounts emptied and credit cards and loans unknowingly opened by the person they trusted with a GPOA.

Another disadvantage to GPOAs is the law does not require an institution to honor a power of attorney. Many institutions will not honor a GPOA because they feel it is too broad. They are much more likely to honor an SPOA, which speaks to the specific power given to your agent.

A power of attorney often includes an expiration date; otherwise, it will continue as long as the person granting the power of attorney is alive.

Many clients think they need a power of attorney for someone to take care of their affairs in the event of death, but that is provided in a Will, not a POA. Revoking a POA can be difficult, but your local Legal Assistance Office can create a revocation

## Fast Facts about Texas POAs

- Institutions legally do not have to honor a POA.
- Unrevoked POAs could be honored for years after the expiration date.
- POAs can save you thousands in legal fees if your family ever needs to establish a guardianship for your estate.
- Copies of POAs are accepted for most transactions.



document and help you serve it on the appropriate parties.

Another form of POA is called a springing power of attorney. This form of POA activates or “springs” into effect when a person becomes incapacitated or MIA.

A medical power of attorney is a form of springing power of attorney. A medical power of attorney allows your agent to make medical decisions for you while you are incapacitated.

For example, when a hospital needs permission to conduct a serious operation on a person in a coma, a medical power of attorney can be required.

The Army trains you to plan and prepare for every situation. Likewise, these documents can help you and your family to be prepared for any situation.

If you have any questions about the legal documents needed for your situation, contact your local Legal Assistance Office.

**The legal assistance office for the International Zone is located in building 78 on FOB Prosperity. For information, contact 1LT Dana Collins at [usf-ijasg.legal.assistance@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:usf-ijasg.legal.assistance@iraq.centcom.mil) or 318-239-1708**

# The Reapers: Keeping Soldiers Safe and Death at Bay With Meticulous Vehicle Repair

By Senior Airman Jarrod Chavana ACCE Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – When the “Reapers” convoy out to conduct Police Transition Team missions, they transit dangerous combat areas. Their Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and 1151 Humvee’s are their mode of transportation to and from 20 local police stations covering an operating environment of 1,117 square kilometers. Worrying if their vehicles are going to operate properly during a mission should be the last thing on their minds.

The 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Detachment 2, also known as the “Reapers,” depend heavily on their tactical vehicles to protect them from the perils of combat.

“Everything we do for our missions revolve around our vehicles,” said Staff Sgt. Jason Evans, 732nd ESFS Det 2 squad leader, deployed from Barksdale Air Force Base, La. “Our missions vary and without our vehicles we couldn’t do them; so they are a huge part of what we do.”

The MRAPs are designed to survive blasts from improvised explosive devices and small arms fire, which contributes to the high demand for this vehicle that has life-saving protection.

The Reapers have five embedded vehicle maintainers to assist with the inspections and monitor weekly maintenance as well as take care of major maintenance and repair issues.

“Each fire team is responsible for their vehicle and it takes about 30 minutes to an hour to get everything checked,” said Senior Airman Jonathan Warnock, 732 ESFS Det 2 Truck Commander.

*“If a vehicle goes down while on a mission, we have procedures in place to get the vehicle and Airmen out of the area,” said Airman Warnock, deployed from Dyess AFB, TX. “The more time we sit idle the longer we are exposed to a possible attack. For the safety of our team, it is important that these vehicles run correctly before we go outside the wire.”*

To enter this life-saving vehicle, Manning has to place one knee on the MRAPs steps to hoist her weight upward to climb the remainder of the way into the driver’s cab. Despite a stature of just 5 feet 2 ½ inches, she possess the power, control, and confidence of someone twice her size



Air Force Senior Airman Kayla Manning, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, Detachment 2, sits at the wheel of her Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle before heading out on a mission, Camp Stryker, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photos/Master Sgt. Trish Bunting/Released)

Before each inspection, the “Reapers” go through a vehicle inspection checklist. Most Security Forces personnel are not mechanics, so the qualified vehicle maintainers stand ready to assist if there are issues that need to be immediately addressed.

“We teach them how to do all the operator maintenance checks,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Smith, 732 ESFS Det 2 Vehicle Maintainer, deployed from McConnell AFB, KS. “The trucks are worked hard and if they didn’t have these inspections they would get run down because small problems can quickly become big problems.”

During an inspection on March 23, a four-inch piece of metal was discovered in the rear truck commander side tire of an MRAP. Because an MRAP weighs more than 20 tons, the Airman had to use a hydraulic jack to lift the rear axle. What should have taken only 30 minutes took nearly an hour because one of the studs was stripped.

Being a Security Forces Airman and performing operator maintenance may be a nuisance for some but for this detachment it is possibly a lifesaving procedure.



# HHC 72nd IBCT Change of Command

By Texas Army National Guard Pfc. Jennifer Taylor

Soldiers of the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) looked on as Cpt. Jeremy Prado assumed command from Cpt. Benjamin Gonzales, the outgoing commanding officer of the Texas Army National Guard 72nd IBCT HHC, during a change of command ceremony outside the Al Salaam Palace on Forward Operating Base Prosperity in Baghdad.

This is Prado's first opportunity to command. He arrived in country only days before the ceremony. Just as the commanding officer has changed,

so has the company's mission as members continue in the process of the U.S. military's responsible drawdown.

Cpt. Prado said he was very thankful that Cpt. Gonzales made this transition easy and was also humbled by the opportunity to take command of HHC. "I'm looking forward to finishing this deployment and getting everybody home," said Prado.

*Transitions  
around  
Iraq*



## COB Adder Garrison Transfer of Authority

By Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw

Leadership and responsibility for Iraq's most Southern enduring military base, Contingency Operating Base (COB) Adder, changed hands from the Special Troops Battalion (STB) 4th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Armored Division, to the 3-141st Infantry Battalion, 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, during a transfer of authority (TOA) ceremony April 1.

"We have a challenge in front of us to build on the accomplishments of the 4th AD of the 1st STB and [we'll] continue to provide quality of life programs while being responsible stewards of limited resources" said Lt. Col. Joachim Strenk incoming commander for the 3-141st.

The men and women on COB Adder perform a wide variety of missions. These run the gamut of everyday Army administrative activities, such as finance and legal. Soldiers on the post also interact with the local population, providing force security protection and performing regular servicing and maintenance on the water pump stations that serve the COB.



# 8 Helpful and Effective Coping Strategies for Stress



1. Laugh more! Learn to laugh at yourself and your situation.
2. Spend time with people who offer support, positivity and comfort.
3. Eat right and exercise to improve your mood. Don't think about it, just do it.
4. Engage in some form of creativity (singing, playing an instrument, origami or painting)
5. Approach life with optimism and a positive attitude. Choose to be happier.
6. Take perspective: Life goes on. Time heals. Pain doesn't last forever.
7. Set short & long-term goals. Take small, but progressive steps to accomplish them.
8. Practice spirituality. A belief in a higher power provides hope and healing.

# Texas Gov. Rick Perry Bestows Texas Navy Admiralship to Lt. Com. Ethan Proper

By Texas Army National Guard Sgt.  
Melissa Shaw

Baghdad— Lt. Commander Ethan Proper, engineering planning officer (EPO) for the Camp Prosperity Department of Public Works (DPW), received a commission into the Texas Navy by order of Governor Rick Perry and was presented the formal document by Joint Area Support Group (JASG) Commander Col. Mark Campsey, 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) during a short outdoor ceremony here, Thursday, April 2nd, on the grounds of the As Salaam Palace.

Proper, an individual augmentee to the Army from the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) in Washington D.C., came to Baghdad in October of 2009 to work with the JASG, commanded at that time by the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Wisconsin National Guard.

As the EPO for Camp Prosperity, Proper was entrusted to provide engineering services, technical evaluations, repair and replacement cost estimates, work with local contractors and oversee a variety of other related tasks.

When the 72nd IBCT arrived two months later, Proper was able to share the knowledge he had gained during the short time he spent with the 32nd to make the transition from the Wisconsin DPW team to the Texas folks easier and set the tone for continuing in a successful mission.

"It was his dedication to the continuity of the team and his commitment to the

mission that inspired me," said Master Sgt. Dwayne Reeves, of Irving, Texas.

Reeves had used the nick-name 'Admiral' on Proper since day one in the office, sure that the Lt. Cmdr. would attain that rank in the near future, so it came as a surprise that when Proper told Reeves he would be retiring upon returning to the states.

"He has just done such a good job working with us and I couldn't stand the thought that he wouldn't make Admiral before retirement," said Reeves. "It's the least we could do to thank him for the tremendous amount of work he accomplished."

"So I wrote a letter to the office of Congressman Leo Berman in search of something to honor Proper at the end of his mission."

"Once we did that, a request was sent to Gov. Perry's office and the next thing you know, we have a beautiful certificate to present and a legal commission into the Texas Navy as an Honorary Admiral," said Reeves, JASG DPW project manager non-commissioned officer in charge, 72nd IBCT.

Many challenges marked Proper's time in Iraq, from getting used to the dust storms that would blot out the sun for days to overcoming the language barriers necessary to describe the exact electrical component that would be needed to make vital repairs to indispensable equipment.

But the success in the role of EPO means that very few people will ever know about the crisis you averted or the headaches the most recent project has created, but they will enjoy the benefits of the end result.

"In early February, we were



**Lt. Cmdr. Ethan Proper (right) receives commission into the Texas Navy at the rank of Honorary Admiral by order of Rick Perry, the Governor of Texas. The Admiralship was presented to him at Camp Prosperity by the Joint Area Support Group commander, Col. Mark Campsey (left), 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, April 2nd during a short out-door ceremony.**

Photo by Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Melissa Shaw

experiencing a water shortage due to unforeseen circumstances with our primary water supply. Within hours, we were able to work with KBR to perform a site survey on the backup water line and get a repair team working.

Water was restored within a day and we got out of a potential emergency," said Proper

In addition to being in the back ground, coming up with SOPs that suit the environment and make life easier are part and parcel to getting things accomplished in a timely manner.

"When I got here, it was not unusual to take 50 to 60 days to get repair work started in the International Zone, due to a combination of the funding process and the contracting process. In March, we put an innovative contract in place that allows us to work directly with a single local company for general repairs.

It's cut down the response time to 5 to 10 days and is making a big impact on our ability to quickly respond to issues on the FOB," he continued.

"To receive this honor, it fills me with pride that a senior NCO in my office took the time to notice and recognize the hardwork the members of his team do every day, I just want them to know how much I appreciate this," said Proper

"Lt. Commander Ethan Proper will be missed when he returns to Washington D.C., but the 72nd IBCT JASG DPW team is better for the time and guidance he was able to share," said Reeves.



# Army Values: A Soldier's Point of View

Personal Courage

Honor

Loyalty

Integrity

Respect

Duty

## Self-less Service:

Put the welfare of the nation, the Army and your subordinates before your own.



*"Truthfully, every soldier cannot be the G.I everyone sees on the television standing in a heated battle dodging bullets trying to stay alive when face to face with the enemy."*

*Continued on pg 30*

Spc. Cardrell Sumner,  
Camp Prosperity,  
Dining Facility Rep.  
HHC 72nd IBCT,  
Houston, TX

*"Selfless service means I am up early and I stay late, I inspire my fellow Soldiers to keep physically fit with my PT classes even when I am sore to the bone and I actively participate in community events."*

Spc. Tliza Garcia,  
Camp Adder,  
Legal Specialist  
3/141 Infantry,  
Houston, TX



*"I take Selfless Service to mean making sure the task at hand is done right no matter what it takes."*

Spc. Joe Delgado,  
Camp Adder,  
Administrative Technician,  
3/141 Infantry,  
Lyford, TX



# Living the Army Values:

## Peer Recognition and Additional Comments

By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Meraz

I want to tell you about two Soldiers on deployment with the 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Spc Jackson and Sgt. Yeverino, who, in my opinion, have gone above and beyond to answer the call of duty.

Jackson, from Dallas, Texas, is assigned to the mayor cell support team on Camp Prosperity with Yeverino.

His duties vary throughout the day, but can include running the help-desk and submitting multiple repair service requests throughout Prosperity in support of all its occupants, civilian and service members alike.

He is also actively involved with the FOB firing range; giving the safety briefing once a month. After identifying the need to continue replenishing the wood used for targets on the range, he worked with local contractors to use their scrap wood to manufacture new ones.

It was the hours spent improving the conditions of the range that gave him the chance to notice how the roof was about to collapse. Within just a few short hours he made the location safe again using the same contractors.

As an extra bonus during the repairs, they were able to add extra acoustic barriers to reduce the noise pollution created by the range, further improving the quality of life for those around him.

Yeverino, of Sugarland Texas, is the Support non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) for the mayor cell and her task list looks much like Spc. Jackson's, but at the supervisor level.

The mayor cell has been charged with keeping accountability of all local Iraqi business vendors who work on the FOB.

Thanks to an idea of Spc. Yeverino's, the Mayoral Cell was able to create and maintain records for each of the



local vendors currently employed on Prosperity.

That equates to over 100 records containing the information needed to track their identification badging progress.

This complicated process consists of background checks, verification of badge expirations dates and the status of ongoing and previous security interviews.

The data collecting is ongoing, but will promise better service for Iraqi businesses vendors and consumers, as well as a significantly reduced work load for the Mayor Cell staff.

*Continued from Pg 29*

**B**ut it isn't the pull of a trigger, or the room clearing that defines the overall heroism of being a soldier, actually it is the value of selfless service that plays a part in measuring the character of soldiers and civilians alike.

**L**ets face it, fatigue rolls around every day in the military world; you just got off a mission, you are dirty, sweaty, carrying a weapon, wearing a bullet proof vest and on top of your head sits an Army Combat Helmet (ACH); your feet are hurting from the boots and you are extremely hot from the blazing sun.

**W**hile walking to your room you notice another soldier trying to carry their new mini refrigerator to replace the broken

one to their living quarters. You look into his or her eyes and you can sense the frustration rising, trying to juggle the weight of the refrigerator.

**Y**ou look down at their feet and can see the drunken walk as this person attempts not to fall on the loose gravel. As fatigued as you are, you take a deep breath and say, "whoa, whoa, let me help you with that". As you grab an edge of the refrigerator you notice a sigh, then in a faint tone he/she says, "thank you so much".

**T**he act of putting aside our own issues to assist someone else could make or break one's day. When it comes to considering the feelings, thoughts, ideas, or state of mind of someone besides your own, the task isn't easy because we have to set aside our own passions, needs and

wants to understand the importance of someone else's.

**B**ravery comes in many forms and fashion, depending on whatever it is that you are doing at the time, but to take a moment of your long and busy day, look someone in the eye and understand their situation takes a certain kind of personal emotional overtime.

**D**oing for someone else when it is not necessarily convenient or when there is no gift in return, makes you the true hero, makes you a complete soldier.



# Iraq Culture Corner

## The Ziggurat of Ur



Do you know...  
what exactly a Ziggurat is

There are 32 ziggurats known at, and near, Mesopotamia. Twenty-eight of them are in Iraq.

**The word 'Ziggurat' basically means** "to build on a raised area". There were a number of these massive monuments built in the ancient Mesopotamian valley and western Iranian plateau, having the form of a terraced step pyramid of successively receding stories or levels.

The **Ziggurat at Ur** (Right outside Camp Adder), is a massive stepped pyramid about 210 by 150 feet in size, is the most well-preserved monument from the remote age of the Sumerians.

The ziggurat was part of a temple complex that served as an administrative center for the city,

and it was also thought to be the place on earth where the moon god Nanna, the patron deity of Ur, had chosen to dwell. Some also believe the Ziggurats were used as observatories for the passing of heavenly bodies through the night sky.

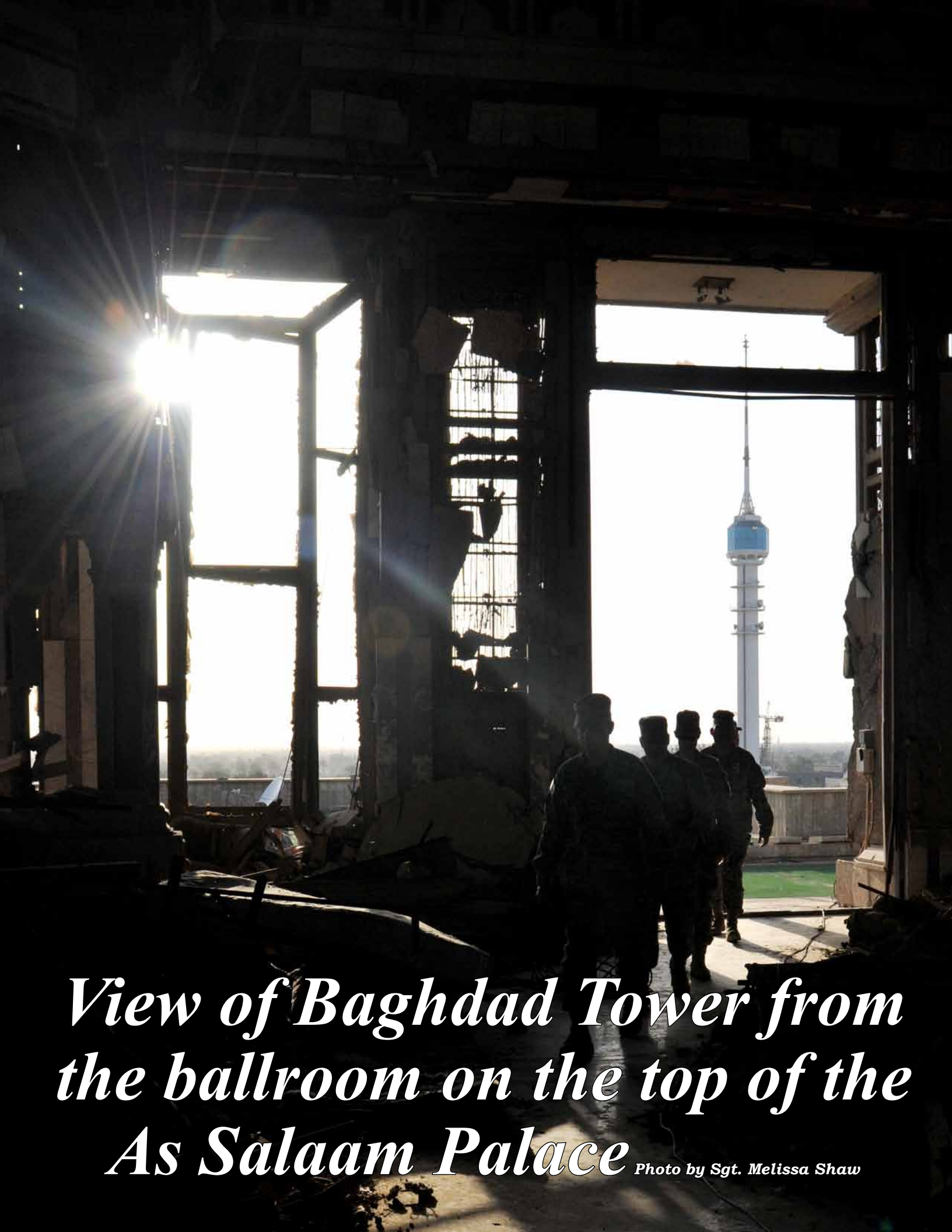
## Arabic Phrases for Ordering Food



What do you want to order?  
I want Rani (awesome fruit juice)  
I want chicken  
I want meat  
Do you have bread  
Some Water

Shtit lub  
Ani areed Rani  
Ani areed Dijaj  
Ani areed Lahem  
Shinoo Khubuz  
Shway Mai





*View of Baghdad Tower from  
the ballroom on the top of the  
As Salaam Palace*

Photo by Sgt. Melissa Shaw