

The North Star

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



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3rd Div.'s defining battle goes to sea

Army tugboat, Champagne-Marne, gets facelift

By Spc. Michael Adams
TF Marne PAO

In the summer of 1918, the 3rd Division was fighting in northern France, in a battle that would become a turning point for World War I and the division's reputation.

In the French Province of Champagne, along the banks of the Marne River, American forces were fighting off a strong German attack that may have given the German's key strategic strongholds against the Allies.

While other units were retreating all around the newly organized division, 3rd Division maintained its position along the Marne River, against some of the heaviest fighting seen during the war.

The division stood fast, dashing Germany's hope of gaining any further foothold in France and effectively putting Germany on the defensive. For this, the division earned the nickname "Rock of the Marne."

General John "Blackjack" Pershing, commander of the American forces in Europe at that time, said 3rd Division's performance was one of the most brilliant in the history of the United States Army.

This turning point for World War I and the turning point in America's military history lives on in a tugboat named Champagne-Marne, for the battle fought that summer.

In a small ceremony at Kuwait Naval Base, a former 3rd Infantry Division commander, Lt. Gen. William Web-

ster was on hand to help put the new nameplates on the tugboat in a small ceremony, May 6. Lieutenant General Webster, now commander of 3rd Army/U.S. Army Central Command, still remembers with pride his years commanding the unit and its history.

Lieutenant General Webster commanded 3rd ID from 2003 to 2006. While he was commander, he was charged with reshaping the division into the Army's first modular division.

Every vessel in the Army's inventory is named after a Medal of Honor recipient or a famous military battle in American history, including this tugboat that made 3rd Div. one of the most feared in the Army.

Second Battalion, 401st Army Field

Support Brigade, based out of Kuwait, maintains the vessel.

"Lieutenant General Webster relished the opportunity to get the opportunity to get back to the Marne," said Lt. Col Michael Wright, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 401st Army Field Support Brigade. "He liked that it was still being so well-maintained."

The new signs displayed on the boat show the Marne patch on either side of the vessel's name.

"The vessel is in excellent condition for being over 50 years old," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Proffitt, of Virginia Beach, Va., who serves as a marine maintenance officer with 2/401st AFSB. "The new boards were a fitting touch."

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Courtesy Photo

The Champagne-Marne received new nameplates that displays the Marne Patch, May 6, at Kuwait Naval Base.

Soldiers train Iraqis on marksmanship

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

If marksmanship is a main staple of the U.S.



Photo by Spc. Dustin Gautney,
2HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

Major Stephen Bert (right), STT, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, teaches an IA officer proper kneeling techniques while firing the M16 rifle at IA base Al-Kisik, May 23.

military, then the marksmanship trainer is the key to that success.

During a three-day class held at Iraqi Army base Al-Kisik, the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Stability and Transition Team, conducted a class to train Iraqi Army instructors on teaching marksmanship techniques throughout their ranks, May 23.

The training focused primarily on the M16 rifle, a standard weapon for the U.S. military, but new to the Iraqi Army.

U.S. Soldiers also covered firing positions with the rifle, as well as logistical setup and implementation of a rifle range.

"During the first day we teach the Iraqi instructors familiarity with the M16 rifle, covering the shooting positions used in the Iraqi

Army rifle qualifications," said Maj. Stephen Bert, STT, 2nd HBCT, and the officer in charge of the class. "On the second and third day, we covered zeroing techniques and how to identify problems the instructors might come across while training their units. Finally, the instructors learned how to plan a range themselves."

The goal was to have the Iraqi training officers instruct the Iraqi Army noncommissioned officers, who will then instruct the individual soldiers within their units. Previously, the training centered on the Iraqi Army's standard AK-47 rifle. However, with the introduction of the M16 rifle, new marksmanship techniques were needed to be implemented within the Iraqi Army ranks, said Maj. Bert.

"Often the Iraqi Army

soldiers were taught more 'shoot from the hip' techniques with the AK-47 rifle. However with the M16 rifle, that's not possible and more marksmanship trainers were needed throughout the Iraqi Army," said Maj. Bert.

The final day's training concluded with the Iraqi Army training officers planning their own qualification range, which included learning how to plan and implement range courses and ammunition use.

"Ultimately as a Stability and Transition Team if we do not pass on the knowledge to the Iraqi Army officers to successfully train their own soldiers before the transition to stability operations in Iraq, then we haven't done our job as U.S. Soldiers here," said Staff Sgt. Williams, with the Stability and Transition Team and Swainsboro, Ga., native.

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The vessel's ability is obvious to more than just one Soldier.

"The tugboat is an all-purpose thing," said Lt. Col Wright. "It can bring barges into pier, pull boats and push boats."

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Proffitt appreciated that he was there to see the ship and appreciates the unit's work.

"It isn't often that those of us within the Army watercraft community have the opportunity to make an impression on leaders outside of the field," he said. "Although vessels are built to design specification, they are unique, each and everyone in its function and traits, almost like a living organism."

For the Soldiers who serve on the ship, it becomes more than a place of duty.

"When underway, the crew not only

works aboard, but they live, eat and rest there too," Chief Warrant Officer 3 Proffitt said. "It is essentially home to the Soldiers for the duration of their assignment. You can go weeks at a time without personal contact with the outside world or even see land. The fact that someone can connect to a vessel on a personal level brings a depth of understanding and interest that you usually only get from the mariners that sail them."

Even though it is not in use, it could be manned and ready for action in a matter of days.

The Champagne-Marne was commissioned more than 50 years ago and is one of only two remaining 100-foot tugboats still used by the Army. The vessel played a part in preventing Iraqi sabotage, participating in opera-

tions which required complex and integrated joint operations with Special Operations, Navy, Coast Guard, and Army forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Courtesy Photo

(Left) Lieutenant General William Webster, commander of 3rd Army/U.S. Army Central Command, poses with Soldiers and maintainers of the Champagne-Marne, May 6 at Kuwait Naval Base

Visit the Task Force Marne Web site at
www.stewart.army.mil/tfm/homepage/default.asp

American flag silent but powerful statement



By Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts
25CAB, 25th Inf. Div PAO

As a boy, I stood at the foot of a wooden ladder at sunrise as my dad, with a farmer's weathered hands, hung an American flag from the corner of our shingled roof. It was just another early Memorial Day morning in southern California.

So consistent was this annual May event that now, looking back over the years, I have no varied or more elaborate recollection. There was no fanfare or ceremony to it. In my mind's eye, I'm always the small boy. My dad is always strong and resolute in his movements. The flag, faded and removed only twice a year from its home in the family garage, always hung silent.

Ritual, if truly consistent over time, has a way of melding memories into a single snapshot image.

Back then, now a quarter century ago, I hardly understood the signifi-

cance of my dad's patriotic routine, being repeated countless times at countless homes around the country every May. I would learn, years later, that three uncles -- my Dad's older brothers -- each served in the Army during World War II. Two of the three experienced combat -- one in the Philippines, and other areas of Southeast Asia, and the other over the skies of Western Europe.

World War II was the deadliest military conflict in modern history. Though estimates vary somewhat, no fewer than 40 million people were killed. Among those were more than 400,000 American servicemembers who lost their lives in service to our country. I'm sure both Uncle Bernard and Uncle Francis, now deceased, lost friends.

My Dad's war was Korea. As an 18 year-old sailor, he served ship duty. By July 1953, the "police action," as it was officially referred to, owing to a lack of a declaration of war by the U.S. Congress, concluded. More than 30,000 of my Dad's comrades-in-arms sacrificed their lives in service to our country over that four-year span.

As a man, my awareness of my Family's service and sacrifice expanded. So too did my appreciation of my dad's commitment to fly our American flag each Memorial Day. He flew, and continues to fly, our flag yearly for the same, simple reason. The same reason Union Army Gen. John A. Logan offered when he instituted the holiday

(then known as Decoration Day) after the Civil War back on May 30, 1868 -- to simply remember and honor those brave Americans who served, sacrificed and died in service to our great nation.

More than 50 years after my dad's naval service ended, mine began. Iraq and Afghanistan are now my generation's wars. U.S. servicemember casualties in Iraq are approaching 4,400. In Afghanistan, more than 1,000 U.S. servicemembers have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Now on my second combat tour to Iraq and as Memorial Day approaches, I will remember friends like Staff Sgt. Daniel Isshak killed near Tikrit, Iraq, October 3, 2006, and Spc. Farid Elaz-zouzi killed near Kirkuk, Iraq, June 14, 2007.

As an American, Soldier and Veteran, Dan and Farid have earned my attention, respect and a solemn moment of silent reflection for their sacrifice. My private memories of both friends are frozen in time like that of my dad hanging our flag every Memorial Day morning.

But, it's not just Dan and Farid who I will quietly honor and reflect on this Memorial Day. I will also remember the hundreds of thousands of servicemembers who pledged themselves to a cause and died in service to the United States of America. My private moment of silence is also without fanfare or ceremony, and will always be my simple, sacred Memorial Day ritual.

You are invited

Run for the Warriors Marathon

Where: COB Speicher Stadium
When: May 30, registration
is from 5 - 5:35 a.m.

5K walk begins at 6 a.m.,
10K run begins at 6:30 a.m.

To register early, e-mail
woundedwarrior10K4hope@yahoo.
com

Early registration is recommended.

Wrangler National Patriot Tour

Where: FOB Marez, May 30,
FOB McHenry, FOB Warrior,
May 31

FOB Cobra, FOB Warhorse, June 1
COB Speicher, June 2

Army Medical Department 4 Mile Walk and 8 Mile Run

When: June 26, registration at 4:45

a.m., start time is at 5:30 a.m.
Where: The run begins at LSA 16.

New Orleans Saints Cheerleaders

Where: June 5, COB Speicher
June 6, FOB Sykes, FOB Marez
June 7, FOB Warrior, FOB McHenry
June 8, FOB Cobra, FOB Warhorse-
When: Time TBD

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Javier Coromac, of Glendale, Calif., is with 209th Aviation Support Battalion, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. He was commended by the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence Branch Safety Office for having a well organized, cataloged, and above the standard petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL) storage point. The lead inspector stated, "It is the best POL storage point that I have ever inspected." After six years of units moving in and out the area, the POL storage area was a task no one wanted to tackle. However, Spc. Coromac volunteered to clean and organize the area. He immediately took charge of the problem and worked diligently for 60 days to bring the site to a high standard of organization. Specialist Coromac knows what looks right and his untiring efforts to maintain high standards and a professional work environment have set the example for others to follow. He is, without a doubt, most deserving of being recognized as today's Task force Marne Hero of the North.



Private First Class Tristin Murphy, of Denver, is with 3rd Battalion, 73rd U.S. Cavalry, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. His platoon was patrolling along the Syria/Iraq border while simultaneously conducting a key leader engagement. An element from his platoon observed two men crawling toward the border and moved to interdict them. After securing one individual, the element held him in place. While awaiting link up from the rest of the platoon, the detainee attacked two Soldiers and broke free from their grasp. The element leader performed proper escalation of force measures and then wounded the detainee as he continued attempting to escape. Private First Class Murphy, a combat medic, arrived at the site and treated the detainee, stabilizing him and placing him onto a litter for evacuation. Feedback from medical staff at the combat support hospital stated Pfc. Murphy's actions saved the detainee's life. His actions and attention to detail make him most deserving of the title of today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

On this day, May 28, in history ...

www.history.com

1754 - Lieutenant Colonel George Washington with the Virginia Militia, successfully defeated a party of French and Indian scouts in southwestern Pennsylvania. This action led to the start of the Seven Years War and first military action for America's first commander in chief.

1902 - Owen Wister published "The Virginian," a novel which told the story of a tall, lean cowhand. The novel was credited with popularizing the cowboy and establishing the mythical old west in international culture.

1937 - The Government of Germany, under the control of Adolph Hitler, formed Volkswagen, a state-owned automobile manufacturer. World War II halted production of the vehicle, but it would become the focus of revitalizing the German economy in the post-war years.

1998 - Television and movie comedian Phil Hartman was killed by his wife, Brynn. Hartman was mainly known for his work on the variety show "Saturday Night Live," and would later become known as a voice actor on "The Simpsons."

Sudoku

Answers will be printed in Monday's North Star

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				5			8	
		5	8	7				1
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REGIONAL HEADLINES

Washington man earns place in tow-truck hall of fame

South Whidbey Record

SOUTH WHIDBEY, Wash. - He's towed everything from Beetles to bulldozers, school buses to fire trucks, but one job alone would probably put Gordon Simmons of Clinton in the tow-truck hall of fame.

Then there was the horse in the septic tank.

"That was something else," Simmons said this week of the incident about 10 years ago down by Cultus Bay. "It was an old tank with a wooden cover. The horse walked across it and fell through. The stuff was clear over his back."

Simmons hooked the horse to his tow truck and gently lifted the odorous animal out of the tank without injury. "We put him down in a hurry," Simmons chuckled. "That horse started eating the minute we got him out of there."

Simmons, 79, a South Whidbey native like his father before him, was reflecting on the 63-year career in the towing business that has earned him a place in the coveted International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame.

"How I ever got to get one of those spots, I'll never know," he said. "I guess AAA likes me."

Since 1986, the towing organization has been honoring a small group of operators each year who have contributed to the image and success of the industry.

"This year's inductees share a dedication to their state and local towing organizations as well as the national towing and recovery community," said Rolfe Johnson, president of the hall of fame and museum.

"They share common strengths which have led to their nomination," he said.

The International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum opened in 1995.

Simmons and his six employees currently operate the business — actually two businesses. Simmons also owns AA Towing across the street from the garage.

Simmons' son-in-law, Gary Peterson, is now his "Number 2," and has taken over most of the middle-of-the-night calls, although Simmons himself still responds off-hours from time to time.

Simmons' wife, Shirley, helps out with the phones, day or night.

Simmons said that through the years, almost every one of his customers has been pleasant to deal with, despite their distress.

"Once in a while, you get some ornery ones," he said.

Besides the horse in the septic tank, he has assisted other animals that have gone down holes or become stuck in the mud.

"There have been some cows, but mostly it's horses that get themselves in trouble," he said.

The hall-of-fame nomination isn't

his first honor. This past year, he was named one of the Record's Hometown Heroes for his contributions to his neighbors and his community.

Despite his age, Simmons plans to keep on doing what he's doing, climbing in one of his trucks and rumbling to the aid of someone or something in trouble.

"It's been a good business," he said. "This is a bad time to try to sell, so I'm going to be here for a while longer. I hope."

Burglary suspect jumps from moving squad car

The Wichita Eagle

KAUFMAN COUNTY, Texas - A burglary suspect was hospitalized after he jumped out of a moving police car while handcuffed, Kaufman County authorities said.

Keith Bernard Offord, 21, of Crandall, had been arrested on a charge of burglarizing a vehicle. While he was being transported to the Kaufman County Law Enforcement Center on Sunday night, he unbuckled his seat belt, unlocked the door and jumped out, a spokesperson for the Kaufman County sheriff's office said.

The spokesperson said she didn't know how fast the car was going. The speed limit on that stretch of U.S. 175 is 65.

Offord was treated for scrapes and other minor injuries.

He is expected to be charged with attempted escape.

THE

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

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
2nd Infantry Division
1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
1st Armored Division

25th Combat Aviation Brigade,
25th Infantry Division
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