

The North Star

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



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Strykers move to advise, assist role

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

The morning of May 28 proved to be a sweltering one throughout all of Diyala province. This was especially true for the palm groves, as Gen. Khalis, an Iraqi Police commander for Abu Sayda, led his men on the hunt for weapon caches.

Advising and assisting Gen. Khalis and his men was Company C, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, along with military working dogs, an explosive ordnance disposal team, and scout weapon teams from the U.S. forces.

"We were there because history has shown us that Abu Sayda and the surrounding areas are littered with caches," said Capt. Preston Aaron, commander of Company C, 5/20 Inf.

According to Capt. Aaron, three weeks prior to this mission, a wild fire devastated the palm groves in the area. As the fire spread, three weapon caches exploded, contributing to the rapidly growing flames as they went on to destroy crops, homes, and personal property of Iraqi civilians.



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

General Khalis (center), an IP commander in Abu Sayda, plans out movement of troops, as Capt. Preston Aaron (right), commander of Co. C, 5/20th Inf. Regt., 3rd SBCT, 2nd ID, listens during a clearing operation through the palm groves of Abu Sayda, May 28.

This, along with a rise in improvised explosive device attacks in the area prompted Capt. Aaron to do a clearing operation in the area.

"I brought up the idea to Gen. Khalis," said Capt. Aaron.

"He was very energetic about the idea and wanted to do it right away. We did it literally two days after initial planning."

The movement plan through the groves and how to utilize assets was done by Gen. Khalis. Everywhere he went Capt. Aaron was two steps away, there by his side

to give him advice or assistance if needed.

"We're really starting to transition to an advise and assist role with them," said Capt. Aaron. "We're stepping back, seeing how they want to do these missions, and coaching, teaching and mentoring them. So far, it's working well."

No weapon caches were found in the palm groves they searched, but Capt. Aaron does not view this as a failure because he believes this has helped to strengthen his partnership with the policemen.

"It was a huge step in the right direction," said Capt. Aaron.

"It was a success because our number one task of continuing intelligence driven missions in the area was achieved."

As U.S. forces move into this advise and assist role, many Iraqi Security Forces in the area are going a step further and operating completely independently during unilateral operations.

"Many of the units in this area are doing so many missions, so many raids, that unless we keep up with them on a daily basis, we lose track of what they're doing," said Capt. Aaron. "They're starting to get ahead of us."

The Sykes Regulars of Co. C plan on assisting Gen. Khalis and his men with missions coming up to make Abu Sayda a safer place.

Even though there is more work to be done to rid the area of weapons and criminals, Gen. Khalis has seen what the work done in the past has done for this place.

"The situation here is very good, it has improved greatly in the past months," said Gen. Khalis. "I credit this not only to us, but to our strong relationship with U.S. forces."

Speicher runs for wounded warriors

By Sgt. Jessica Rohr
135th Mobile PA Det.

In support of wounded warriors, Garrison Command, 166th Regional Support Group, out of Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, organized a 5K fun run and walk, and a competitive 10K run at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, May 30.

More than 600 individuals participated in the run to heighten awareness of wounded warriors. The 166th RSG handed out T-shirts and complimentary bags filled with information about wounded warrior programs after the race.

This event was intended to inform individuals that there are ways to support the military's wound warriors.

"They can volunteer their time," said Capt. Ivy J. Harris, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 166th RSG. "They can volunteer their money - anything to show support for those that are wounded in combat."

The run reminded participants to remember not only their fallen comrades during Memorial Day weekend, but also the suffering and struggles wounded warriors have endured for freedom.

"This event brings awareness and really makes you think ... about what is going on and what people have sacrificed," said Steve M. Burton, a resident of Grand Ledge, Mich., and a mail clerk for Kellogg, Brown and Root at COB Speicher.

The U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2), the official Army program that aids severely wounded, ill, and injured Soldiers, Veterans and their Families by providing Army wounded warriors an advocate that will help both Soldiers and their Family Members with their careers, education, insurance, finance issues, retirement, transition and healthcare.

According to its Web site, the AW2 Program is committed to ensuring that the unique population of AW2 Soldiers and their Families are given the best possible care and successfully return to duty or transition to civilian life.



Along with military programs, civilian, non-profit organizations contribute to wounded warriors and their Families.

One such program, Hope for the Warriors, makes an effort to ensure that the sacrifices of wounded warriors, their Families, and their needs are never forgotten.

This is done by enhancing the quality of life for servicemembers and their Families that have been affected by combat injuries through the Immediate Need Program.

The program allows servicemembers to seek financial help for unexpected expenses related to the servicemembers' injuries. Some of the immediate needs that are covered are transportation, rental cars, lodging assistance, child care, groceries, and gas.

Another program that helps enhance servicemembers' quality of life is Warrior's Wishes, which is provided by Hope for the Warriors. With the help of sponsors and donors servicemembers

have been able to regain enjoyment and a purpose in life, according to testimonials on the Web site.

The knowledge that wishes can come true directly impacts the spirit of the warrior in addition to the Families and communities that support them, according to the Hope for the Warriors Web site.

The Wounded Warrior Project is another organization making an effort to help injured servicemembers.

Its mission is to honor and empower wounded warriors through provided programs. They also offer counseling about available benefits, which help warriors navigate between government programs and civilian agencies.

More than 30,000 troops have been injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, many of them suffering traumatic brain injuries, amputations, and severe burns, according to the Wounded Warrior Project.

"Throughout history we have done our best to take care of our own," said Capt. Harris.

"Although these are wounded warriors, they are fallen heroes - they are also our comrades. They are our brothers and sisters in arms. If we don't take care of them, who can we expect to take care of them? We feel like it is our responsibility, again because they are our brothers and sisters. These are people we have served with and they are also potentially going to be people we serve with now."



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

Servicemembers and civilians start running a 10K competitive race in support of wounded warriors organized by Garrison Command, 166th RSG, out of Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, at COB Speicher, Iraq, May 30.

Marriage retreat offers advice to Soldiers

By Sgt. Chad Nelson
135th Mobile PA Det.

Eleven married, female Soldiers gathered at Freedom Rest North for a married women's retreat, May 26 – 29.

The retreat allowed these 11 Soldiers to relax and focus on some of the challenges placed on marriages interrupted by a deployment. The 3rd Infantry Division chaplaincy, in turn, offered these Soldiers techniques and advice to overcome these challenges, as well as ways to keep their marriages strong and healthy.

"Families always pay for [deployments]," said Chaplain (Capt.) Arek Ochalek, West River, Md., and Task Force Legion chaplain. The distance and lack of communication can wear down on any relationship, he said.

The best piece of advice Chaplain Ochalek has for Soldiers: "Keep talking and listening. Connect, connect, connect and reconnect if you have to."

Chaplain (Maj.) Terry Romine, of Hoxie, Ark., and family life chaplain for Task Force Marne, agrees, that is a the unique challenge when communicating with a spouse who is thousands of miles away. Communicating through e-mail, telephone and even Skype, often causes misunderstandings, he said.

"You get words and maybe tone of voice ... but other parts of communication are missed," he said. The most notable aspect of communication that is lost is body language. In the absence of body language, Chaplain

Romine offers the following advice:

"Remember you married a 'goodwill person' and give them the benefit of the doubt," he said. "It's easy to misunderstand, but instead of assuming the worst ... just ask about it."

Perhaps most importantly, Chaplain Romine urges these Soldiers to recognize the differences between what men and women need to hear.

"Recognize the differences between [you] and [your] husband," he said. "A man is told to love a wife, and a wife is told to respect her husband." This is easier said than done, according to Chaplain Romine.

Men naturally show respect and women naturally show love, according to Chaplain Romine. The goal is to "share the needs each other has. She needs to be loved and shown love, and he needs to be respected and shown respect," he said.

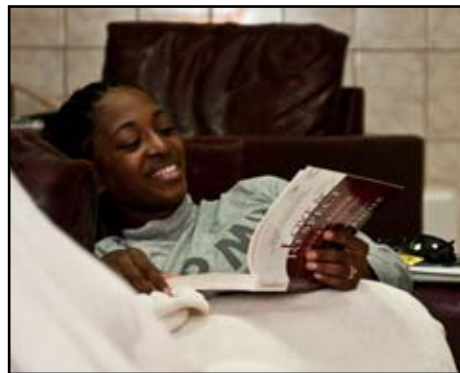


Photo by Sgt. Chad Nelson, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det. **Specialist Jane Searcy, an awards and actions clerk with TF Marne, reads from "Love & Respect," while participating in a married women's retreat from May 26 - 29 on COB Speicher.**

The married women in this retreat are taking this lesson, and many others, to heart. It has helped some of them remember the importance of their marriage and it will make the remainder of the deployment easier, as it reminds them they have something to look forward to.

"Not only am I looking forward to spending time with kids, but spending time with [my husband], also," said Sgt. Tammy Patch, of Porterville, Alab., a frequency manager with G-6, 3rd Signal Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd ID.

Sergeant Patch is eager to apply to her marriage some of the lessons she has learned in this retreat.

"Me being here helps me understand what I need to do as the spouse, and put aside my Soldier life," she said. As a sergeant, she realizes that she is the one in charge from day to day. As a wife, she realizes that she has a partner in her husband and she has to let him in on the household decisionmaking.

"Reality hits: 'yeah, you're a Soldier, but you're also a wife,'" she said about herself.

This is the third retreat put on by the chaplaincy. A dual-deployed marriage retreat, welcoming married couples who are simultaneously deployed to Iraq was held in February and a singles retreat was held last month.

The chaplaincy has two more retreats planned: a married men's retreat and a divorced Soldier's retreat.

Remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice



Visit: <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/war.casualties/index.html?hpt=C2>

Do you know someone who lost their life in service to their country?

CNN is giving Soldiers, Family Members and friends the chance to view all fallen troops from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Fallen from all nations are listed on the Web site.

People who visit the Web site will also have the chance to write memories of their comrades on the following Web site. Visitors to the site can also post pictures of the servicemembers as well.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Private First Class Irving Soto, of Carbondale, Pa., is with Company A, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. He serves as a heavy vehicle operator who arrived two months into the unit's deployment. He quickly proved himself a committed, hard working and knowledgeable Soldier. Whether it's figuring out the best method to tie down a palletized loading system for transport, or how to back a fuel tanker onto a tractor trailer, Spc. Soto has a rapid and appropriate solution. When you need a Soldier who can drive a tractor trailer, and also operate the forklift on the back of it, Spc. Soto is the Soldier of choice. Since his arrival, he's participated in 28 missions providing direct logistical support to units across northern Iraq. He's even transported new non-tactical vehicles to the Iraqi Police. Specialist Soto doesn't care where he's headed, when, or what he's delivering. He just cares about helping the unit to succeed. He's an invaluable asset to his platoon and his exceptional motivation and dedication make him an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Ronald Williams, of Killeen, Texas, provided staff assistance for the Battle Command Sustainment Support System in northern Iraq and the U.S. Division - North area from May 2008 - May 2010. He provided BCS3 area support for connectivity, repairs, software upgrades and troubleshooting to both the 25th Infantry Division and 3rd Infantry Division and their supported units. He actively maintained connectivity between a myriad of systems and locations, including three Data Forwarding Gateways, three Local Access Portals, and more than 25 BCS3 systems. Williams served more than 21 years with the U.S. Army and is a retired sergeant major. His willingness to continue serving and his sustained contributions across the USD-N area of operations reflect great credit upon him and the Tapestry Solutions team and make him a natural choice for this week's Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.

Shia, Sunnis have historic differences

Cultural Tidbit
Special to the North Star

Before the invasion of Iraq, there were news reports that mentioned Sunni and Shia. What the news reports didn't say is what are the Shia and Sunni? Yes, they're both Muslims, but what's the difference between them? Like Christians, Muslims are united by their common beliefs, but divided by certain details. The major division among Muslims is between the Shia, the followers of Ali, and the Sunni, the traditionalists.

The division began right after the death of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. Right away, the question had to be addressed: who would be Muhammad's successor? Who would lead the Muslim Nation?

A leading candidate was Ali ibn Abe Talib. Ali was related to Muhammad in two ways. He was Muhammad's cousin, as well as his son in law. Right after Muhammad died Abu Baker (Muhammad's closest friend)

was elected caliph by a small group of his associates. Missing from the group were any of Muhammad's immediate family.

Another difference between the Shia and Sunnis is this, the Sunni figure the caliph to be a temporal leader, not a divine ruler. How could Muhammad, the last of all the prophets, have a divine successor? This made no sense to Sunnis. But it made good sense to the Shia. To them, there always was, and there always will be, the Imam: the divinely appointed leader of the faithful.

Yet, Abu Baker became first caliph, not Ali. The split between the Shia and the Sunni had begun, and so had the strife and the hatred. Feuding over who would be or should be caliph continued for many years. When the third caliph was assassinated, Imam Ali became caliph. But he was assassinated just five years later, and Ali's rival for the caliphate – Muawiyah – became caliph. Muawiyah made this arrangement with Ali's sons: if they didn't

challenge him, then either one of them could succeed him as caliph.

The Shia holds that Ali's sons honored the arrangement but Muawiyah reneged; he declared his son, Yazid, to be his successor. Ali's son – Hussein – would have to fight for the position that was rightfully his. There would be yet another battle for the caliphate, the Battle of Karbala, where Hussein and all of his male followers of fighting age were killed.

The largest sect of the Shia, called The Twelvers, believe there were twelve Imams after Muhammad and that the last, Imam Mahdi, still lives, but he cannot be seen, not until Allah determines it is time to prepare the faithful for Judgment Day.

The Twelvers believe that Imam Mahdi will return to lead the forces of righteousness against the forces of evil in a final, apocalyptic battle.

Editor's note: The Task Force Marne Human Terrain Analyst Team contributed to this cultural tidbit.

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Italian sends Texan's lost tags home six decades later

Austin American-Statesman

AUSTIN, Texas - Last month, Steve Glomb got a message on his answering machine at his Buda home. The caller spoke in a thick Italian accent, but Glomb could make out the words "metal detector ... dog tags ... Oscar Glomb."

The message, he would learn, held the answer to a 66-year-old family mystery.

His father, Oscar F. Glomb, had served with the 36th Infantry Division — which today is a Camp Mabry-based Texas National Guard unit — and landed at the Bay of Salerno in 1943.

In June 1944, in a battle near Gavorrano, Italy, shrapnel from an artillery shell tore through Oscar Glomb's neck, pierced his arms and legs, and left him close to death.

But another Texas soldier refused to give up on him and insisted that Oscar Glomb be carried off the hill. At some point during that bloody June day, the dog tags that the young Texan wore around his neck fell to the forest floor. Glomb eventually recovered from his wounds, returned to Shiner, got married and fathered four children.

But Steve Glomb, a senior commercial underwriter for Farmers Insurance Group, said his father never forgot about his missing dog tags.

"You just don't separate a Soldier from his dog tag," said Steve Glomb, 60. "He always talked about them.

He'd say, 'I need to go back and find those dog tags.' "

After he was wounded, Oscar Glomb was evacuated from the European theater and sent to a military hospital in Longview.

That's where he met Dorothy Owens. She worked at the hospital, passing out newspapers and cigarettes to wounded Soldiers to lift their spirits.

They fell in love while Glomb recuperated, then married and moved to his native Shiner, where they raised two girls and two boys.

Glomb worked as an appliance repairman, television antenna installer and part-time rural mail carrier — he finally got the job full-time when he was 69, Steve Glomb said.

"He lived a great life," Steve Glomb said. "He never had any wants. They were the epitome of the greatest generation in my mind."

Steve Glomb heard his father's stories about Italy, about how he was wounded and earned a Bronze Star.

"Dad was just a plain old farm boy, plucked off the farm and stuck in the middle of the war," he said.

A few days before he was wounded, Oscar Glomb, who manned a Browning automatic rifle, killed 12 German soldiers and wounded several others, according to the U.S. military.

His actions protected his fellow Soldiers and helped his platoon advance.

In 1990, he and his father journeyed

from Central Texas to Italy together to retrace the steps of his father's unit. Father and son drove a rental car from Rome to the town of Paestum, where a monument marks the 36th Infantry Division's landing. They made their way north, following the general path of the troops. They didn't make it all the way to Gavorrano.

Oscar Glomb died in 1998.

After the phone message from Italy last month, followed by a few excited e-mails aided by an online translation service, Steve Glomb learned that a retired Italian police inspector had found his father's dog tags, along with other objects, including his ring and a medallion, on the old battlefield.

Daniele Bianchini, who had recently taken up metal detecting as a hobby, had done some research and tracked down Steve Glomb, with hopes of returning his father's belongings. In an e-mail, Bianchini wrote that he was thrilled to learn that Oscar Glomb had survived the battle.

"This will be ... above all a gesture of thanks to (Oscar Glomb) and all the American Soldiers during World War II who fought in Italy in order to crush a dictatorship and give us longed-for freedom," Bianchini wrote.

Bianchini asked to keep one of the dog tags and sent the rest of the items to Steve Glomb's home. They arrived April 23.

"It was like it fell out of the sky," Steve Glomb said. "What are the odds? How many stars are there in the universe?"

THE North Star

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