

The North Star

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



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Operation lets insurgents know there is no safe place

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs,
1BCT, 1st AD PAO

Iraqi soldiers with the 4th and 12th IA Division attacked three separate objectives in the villages of Ifkahka, Ghayda and Tal Al Farah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, simultaneously to disrupt insurgent activities along the boundaries of



Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1st BCT, 1st AD PAO
During Operation Enforce the Law IV, a Soldier with 1st BCT, 1st AD, and an IA soldier pull security, near Kirkuk, June 16.

the 4th and 12th Div., by conducting cordon and searches looking for war-ranted individuals and weapons caches in the areas, June 16.

The IA did not capture anyone or find anything illegal during the operation, known as Operation Enforce the Law IV, but they still impressed their 1st Brigade Combat Team, "Ready First" 1st Armored Division, partners who were observing the operation.

"During the operation, the IA demonstrated a good understanding of conducting offensive operations, without any U.S. involvement," said Capt. Dennis Maher, an El Paso, Texas, native and commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, "Ready First." During the operation Capt. Maher had the responsibility of observing the U.S. enablers.

He continued in saying, "since we have been here the insurgents have been attempting to use the IA boundaries as safe havens.

"This operation sends a message to the insurgent networks that there is no safe place to conduct illegal activity in this operating environment," said Capt. Maher.

Colonel Larry Swift, commander of "Ready First," conducted a battlefield

circulation during the operation. He agreed this operation confirmed the abilities of the IA.

"I think the operation went very well," he said. "It showed the ability of the IA to operate unilaterally and independently within their battle space."

He continued in saying it also showed the cohesiveness of the different divisions within the area of operation.

"This operation showed a new skill because the different IA divisions worked together to search the villages," said Col. Swift.

Throughout the entire operation the IA soldiers communicated with the opposite division to check their status and traded officers to act as liaisons.

Iraqi Army leadership agreed that working side-by-side with other divisions is the key to success.

If the IA does not work together the insurgents will not fear us and the IA will not have success, said Iraqi Lt. Col. Ahmed Mahmood, commander of the 46th IA Brigade, 12th Div.

The Iraqi Army and "Ready First" leadership both agreed more of these operations will be done until they capture everyone participating in insurgent activities.

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Challenge coins: more than just metal

By Spc. Cassandra Monroe
135th Mobile PA Det.

Aristotle once said, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

Excelling at a job or task is something that Soldiers continually strive to achieve in the military. Many try their hardest to go the extra mile or give it their all when given a task. Hard work is expected out of Soldiers, and efficiency and productivity are noticed.

Leaders and peers notice the extra effort of Soldiers. There are ways of distinguishing and honoring them from certificates of appreciation to a verbal “thank you.” One way leaders show gratitude and appreciation, is a unique way that will not expire or easily be replaced.

That unique way often comes in different shapes, sizes, colors and is often personalized. That way of showing appreciation is through a medallion, a coin that is earned through hard work and dedication to the job or mission at hand.

“To me, a coin is like an Army Achievement Medal or award,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Byron Loyd, the command sergeant major for Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. “There are two types of coins I give: the regular battalion coin that represents the battalion, and then my personal coin that has my name and rank on it. It symbolizes something solid from me as a senior leader. It’s my way of saying thank you for the hard work I see you do.”

“When I was a young Soldier, my first coin was given to me as a private by



Photo by Spc. Cassandra Monroe, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.
Corporal Eric Gillson, a chaplain assistant, currently assigned to 3rd ID, holds up one of his favorite coins earned during his deployment at COB Speicher, Iraq.

then Maj. Gen. Colin Powell. I said to myself, ‘Wow. This is a trinket to have.’ That is when I found out more about the coin challenge and the background behind military coins.”

Generally, those in command positions have personalized coins. However, one doesn’t always have to be senior ranking to show his or her appreciation through a coin. For example, a Soldier can buy a coin from the Post Exchange and award their fellow Soldiers with it for doing good deeds. Many would agree though, that the more unique the coin, the more value it has for them.

For Cpl. Eric Gillson, a chaplain assistant, currently assigned to 3rd ID, receiving

coins from distinguished individuals makes his job worthwhile.

One coin, a circular medallion, its edges encrusted with a gold plate and the center filled with white paint and a Navy master chief’s rank, is one of his favorites. It is special because it came from someone that is not in his direct chain of command, but sees him often. Corporal Gillson was charged with maintaining the Chaplain’s Corner, a small office where servicemembers would go to get their morning coffee, socialize and read the daily quotes and riddles on the board. The master chief would come in daily and Cpl. Gillson’s hard work paid off.

“He said to me, ‘I like your style, and I see the hard work you’re doing here,’ and it meant a lot to me,” said Cpl. Gillson, a St. Paul, Minn. native. “I felt good, because I felt like I received a coin for just being me, just being who I am on a day-to-day basis.”

Another one of Cpl. Gillson’s favorite coins is one that he earned when he was a private first class.

“I had arrived early to a spiritual retreat, and they needed help setting things up, so I helped them out, and continued to for the rest of the four days I was there,” he said. “At the end of it, I was coined by Maj. Gen. Douglas Carver, who is the U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains. Getting your first coin from a major general as a private first class was really cool.”

Although there are many different legends contributing to the origin of military inspired coins, one of the most well known is that of a World War II pilot.

On one particular night during the World War II era, a pilot was handed a token of appreciation – a solid, bronze medallion encrypted with his squadron’s insignia.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Loyd, the medallion was given to him by a fellow pilot in his squadron. The pilot had never owned anything as valuable as this coin, so he placed it in a leather pouch and hung it around his neck.

Shortly thereafter, the pilot’s aircraft was damaged by the enemy during a mission, requiring him to land behind enemy lines.

See COIN, Page 3 —

HEY DOC!



By Capt. Kevin Taylor
Division Preventive Medicine Officer

Prevent Kidney Stones

What are common causes of kidney stones? What can I do to prevent them?

Both genetic and dietary factors contribute to the formation of kidney stones. Individuals with a family history of kidney stone disease may be at higher risk. In addition, those diagnosed with kidney stones are very likely to develop new stones at some point in the future (50 percent in 5 years, 80 percent in 20 years). High levels of dietary salt and animal protein are thought to contribute to the formation of kidney stones.

Foods and beverages high in oxalate, such as spinach, chocolate, green tea, may also increase the risk of stones. Perhaps the greatest contributor to kidney stone formation is low urine volume and dehydration.

Therefore, adequate fluid intake is the best way to prevent kidney stones. Fluid intake of at least 2 liters per day is recommended for normal climates; however, significantly higher fluid intake, three plus liters per day, may be necessary in hotter climates when fluid loss from sweating is greater.

A coworker of mine was diagnosed with kidney stones. Is this a common disease?

Kidney stones are a fairly common ailment, both in the deployed setting and in garrison. An estimated 10 percent of all people will develop a kidney stone at some time in their life. Since November 2009, 18 cases of kidney stones requiring hospital admission have been reported among TF Marne Soldiers. Five of these cases have required medevac for further evaluation and treatment. Several more cases have been treated as outpatients. Historical data suggests cases will increase during the hotter months and peak in the mid- to late-summer.

I've heard that minerals and tannins in water can cause kidney stones. Is this true?

The mineral content of drinking water is not associated with the development of kidney stones. In fact, higher levels of dietary calcium from food and water may help prevent stone formation.

Tannins are a substance found in many beverages such as tea, coffee, cola, wine, and are thought by some to contribute to the development of kidney stones.

Trace tannins are removed from drinking water during the filtering/purification process. The medical literature does not support a strong relationship between tannin consumption and kidney stones. Nevertheless, many physicians still recommend limited consumption of tannin-containing beverages in order to prevent formation of kidney stones.

Does the bottled water we're issued in Iraq cause kidney stones?

Rather than increasing kidney stone risk, drinking bottled water regularly can decrease the risk of kidney stone formation.

The reverse osmosis process used to produce water for consumption in the combat zone results in very low levels of dissolved solutes such as salt and minerals.

In addition, bottled water routinely undergoes rigorous testing for a wide variety of potential disease-causing agents.

Therefore, Soldiers should feel safe when drinking the approved bottled water provided to them in theater and can prevent kidney stone disease by drinking adequate amounts of bottled water regularly.

Continued from COIN, Page 2

German soldiers captured the pilot, confiscating his personal belongings from his pockets. However, they missed one item, his leather pouch that contained the treasured coin.

En route to a prisoner of war camp, the Germans and the pilot made an overnight stop in a German-held French village. British troops then bombarded the area, which drew confusion and chaos and allowed for the pilot to escape.

Eventually, he was caught by French soldiers who mistook the American

pilot as a German citizen. Because he was stripped of all identification, the pilot was desperate and seeking for some way to prove he was American to his French allies. Once he presented his coin to the Frenchmen, they recognized the Allied American and brought him back to his squadron.

Today, a coin can represent a token of appreciation, or be used as a challenge to a fellow Soldier.

If Soldiers are out together and one has a coin, he can challenge the others to present a coin on the

spot, said Command Sgt. Maj. Loyd. For those who fail to produce a coin, they are required to buy drinks for the table.

For some Soldiers, a coin means more than a pat on the back or a certificate of appreciation; receiving a coin from a distinguished leader brings a boost of morale for the Soldiers. Hopefully, Soldiers who see their peers doing the right thing and getting rewarded for it will be encouraged to excel in their work, duties and personal goals.

Coins seem like great

compliments. However, some Soldiers feel that they lose their appeal after receiving so many during their military career.

"Soldiers who downplay the coin just shouldn't," said Command Sgt. Maj. Loyd. "It's a sense of pride; it's an on-the-spot impact award. As a command sergeant major who has been in for 25 years, I still value all of my coins, and I love to receive coins and give them to Soldiers for the good things that they do. It's something a Soldier can remember me by."

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Richard McMillan, of Virginia City, Nev., is with 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. He serves an electronic warfare systems maintainer. He is the only trained maintainer stationed on Forward Operating Base Warhorse and has proven himself to be a crucial asset in the sustainment of the brigade Signals Intelligence cell and its analysis in support of the brigade's mission. He worked tirelessly for more than 60 hours within an 80 hour period in order to restore the Brigade's TROJAN System connectivity after it was recently disrupted by a violent rain and windstorm. The TROJAN system is the sole link between the brigade and national SI Enterprise assets. He toiled over the system, virtually tearing it apart in order to resolve the issue. Without his outstanding dedication, the Arrowhead Brigade would have lost valuable and time-sensitive intelligence. Specialist McMillan is a superb Soldier and an outstanding role model of selfless service, making him an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Lori Ann Riley, of Liberty Hill, Texas, is the Contingency Operating Base Speicher military billeting customer service coordinator and oversees living quarters for 692 military customers and civilian contractors. She is a committed and dedicated professional quality auditor for several locations in Iraq and ensures only the best service is provided to her organization's customers. Her outstanding leadership and technical expertise resulted in her selection as a team lead for the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program safety committee. In that role, she actively addresses her customers' concerns and rapidly resolves problems. In addition, Riley dedicates her free time to volunteer in support of Morale, Welfare and Recreation special events and Soldier programs. Her dedication and commitment to the well being of those serving on COB Speicher reflect great credit upon her and the military billeting office and make her a natural choice for this week's Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.

You are invited

Vertical Horizon

Where: COB Speicher
When: July 4, Main Gym;
July 7, South Speicher,
Where: FOB Marez
When: July 5
Where: FOB Warrior
When: July 6

July 4 Correction

There will not be hot dogs and hamburgers served at the stadium prior to the concert. Snacks and beverages will be on site for attendees to enjoy at the Speicher Soccer Stadium during concert.



REGIONAL HEADLINES

Neighbors unhappy with historic orange house

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ATLANTA - It happened without warning, residents of the historic and tony Peachtree Heights West neighborhood say. They woke up one day and there it was, the old Henry B. Tompkins House looking like a University of Florida Gators football helmet.

Built in 1922, the stucco home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as "one of the most complete remaining examples of a Reid villa," referring to famed Atlanta neoclassical architect Neel Reid.

And, for 88 years, the Buckhead house was the picture of refinement with its grayish exterior. Then just like that, it was bright orange with a blue door, shining like a beacon among its sedate neighbors.

Last weekend, Wright Mitchell, who lives across the street and happens to be president of the Buckhead Heritage Society, ambled across West Wesley Road and knocked on his neighbor's door.

T. Ruben Jones, the 80-year-old new owner, greeted his guest.

"He asked, 'Why'd you paint it that color?'" recalled Jones, who, by the way, had no intention of paying homage to the Florida Gators. "I said, 'Because I like it.'"

Jones smiled, thinking of the encounter.

"I knew it would shock some

people," he said. The grumbling of neighbors "doesn't bother me. I understand because it is different.

Through life, you'll always have raised eyebrows."

There are plenty of those.

Robert Hays, the chairman of the high-powered King and Spalding law firm, lives directly across the street, as does Archbishop Wilton Gregory. "A lot of people are upset over it," Hays said.

"The neighborhood is in an uproar because it destroys the historic character of the whole block," said Mitchell, himself a lawyer.

"This raises an interesting question that a lot of communities struggle with — where do you draw the lines between private property and the good of the neighborhood?"

Do owners of historic homes "have a duty to the community to maintain them in a fashion that is not offensive to the community?"

Those questions split the community five years ago when neighbors debated creating a historic district. At the time, the economy roared, and people were bulldozing older homes to erect 7,500-square-foot behemoths.

"We were trying to keep houses from being torn down and then something not being built to scale," said Joel Hughey, the civic association president then.

The debate was "intense," he recalled. Residents voted 117-116 against seeking the special

designation.

"There's a number of successful, opinionated people in the neighborhood," Hughey said. "The opponents owned some of the most beautiful homes. But there was a hesitance to give up autonomy. It goes back to the Southern agrarian roots of 'Don't tread on me.'"

But even if the measure had passed, he said, "It wouldn't have regulated paint colors on the grounds that you can't legislate good taste."

Police: Man stabs himself, says he was attacked

Associated Press

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. — Authorities said a man intentionally stabbed himself in the abdomen and then filed a police report claiming he was attacked by a stranger.

The man, 20, told officers he was riding his bike when he got into an argument with another person on a sidewalk.

He said he'd gone to a gas station June 22 to inflate his tires when the person came back, stabbed him and fled with his wallet.

The man was taken to the hospital, where police said he confessed to stabbing himself and said no one else was involved.

WEAU-TV reported that officers recovered the knife but aren't saying why the man stabbed himself. Police recommend the man be charged with filing a false complaint.

THE

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3rd Infantry Division

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
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