

The North Star

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



Volume 1, Issue 106

July 9, 2010

Training synchronizes air, ground forces

By Sgt. 1st Class
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25CAB, 25th Inf. Div. PAO

As a ground force convoy travels to its destination it receives enemy fire. This complex attack threatens the mission, and aviation assets are called in for a close combat attack.

An attack weapons team, consisting of two AH-64D Apache attack helicopters, responds, and through a series of radio calls between air and ground forces, quickly zeroes in on the enemy and effectively eliminates the threat. This coordinated action requires precise communication.

That effective communication is the cornerstone for successful air ground integration.

It is critical to all commanders, both air and ground. Units often train tirelessly to perfect it to effectively synchronize aviation operations into the ground scheme of maneuver.

The pilots of Company C, "Whiskey," 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, Task Force Gunslinger, conducted air ground integration training with the engineers of Co. E "Dawg," 1st Bn., 64th Armor Regt., TF



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Marshall, 25th CAB, 25th Inf. Div. PAO
Captain Christopher Zotter (center), commander, Co. C, 2/159th Avn. Regt., TF Gunslinger, discusses how the Hellfire missile operates. Engineer Soldiers from Co. E, 1st Bn., 64th Armor Regt., 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, look on during air ground integration training at COS Diamondback, June 6.

Rogue, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, June 6.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Aaron Clarke, an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter pilot with Co. C, 2-159th Avn. Regt., TF Gunslinger, assisted in training the engineer Soldiers. This training sustains proficiency and enables air and ground synchroniza-

tion during missions.

"Today's air ground integration training was to help train the ground units that we support. And to assist them in understanding how they can better employ our Apaches and how we can be of more assistance to them during missions."

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Clarke, of Chugiak, Alaska,

believes the training and rehearsals will pay dividends as the units continue to operate together in combat.

"The best reason to conduct this training is if there are troops in a contact situation, and they are practiced and are well rehearsed, we can perform better and ex-

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Conference helps leaders plan rebuilding of Iraq

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson
TF Marne PAO

Task Force Marne senior commanders and members of the Provincial Reconstruction teams from around U.S. Division - North met on Contingency Operating Base Speicher for the second quarterly PRT conference this year, June 30 – July 1. Also in attendance were senior Department of State personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, to include Alcy Frelick, the director of the Office of Provincial Affairs.

The purpose of the conference was to make sure that future plans and actions of military units and the PRTs were moving in the same direction as the plans and actions of the U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID will be the organization that takes over the mission of helping rebuild Iraq's infrastructure in the coming years as the military steps down from that mission.

"The purpose was to assess the operating environment in order to improve the effectiveness and promote civil capacity across northern Iraq within context of the transition to stability operations," said Lt. Col. Frederick Little, the G-9, civil-military operations chief for TF Marne. "We want to make sure everyone is on the same page so that our efforts from Sept. 1 on in stability operations are consistent, giving the PRTs an opportunity to see what our [military] plan is and to make sure it is synced with their efforts."

TF Marne Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, hosted the event and during his opening remarks spoke about his goals for the conference, one of the primary being updating the Unified Common Plan if necessary. The UCP is a living agreement between the PRTs, brigades and



Photo by Sgt. Johnathon Jobson, TF Marne PAO

(center) Commander of TF Marne, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, TF Marne command sergeant major, and Alcy Frelick, (between Maj. Gen. Cucolo and Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews) the director of the Office of Provincial Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, pose with Task Force Marne brigade commanders and Provincial Reconstruction team leaders during the USD - N PRT Conference held, June 30 – July 1, at COB Speicher.

division leadership that outlined basic responsibilities for each group in the rebuilding of Iraq.

The first day of the conference was focused on the overview of the current and future plans for rebuilding northern Iraq. Starting with a security briefing from the TF Marne intelligence officer and transitioning to briefings from embassy officials and USAID representatives.

The day ended with the senior officials from the embassy and Brig. Gen. John Ranck, the chief of strategic effects from U.S. Forces-Iraq J-9, answering questions on topics such as rule of law and oil issues.

The second day of the conference started with small breakout sessions to further discuss the issues of rule of law, agriculture, health and oil. A senior PRT member who specialized in each particular field, along with a military subject matter expert in the field, headed each breakout session.

Following the breakout sessions, one final group session was held to

share the information discussed in the breakouts.

According to Peter Thompson, a Department of State employee assigned as the foreign policy advisor to Maj. Gen. Cucolo, the conference was a success and will help both Task Force Marne personnel and the PRTs to properly plan their actions to move both their own missions as well as those of USAID forward for the betterment of Iraq.

"We had three new PRT leaders and new PRT staff members at the conference," said Thompson, a Connecticut native. "It gave everyone a great chance to network and learn more about the other provinces. We also had very robust participation from the embassy in Baghdad. So they had an opportunity to witness the level of collaboration we have [between the military and units and PRTs]. The comments I have received about the conference were very positive. We plan to use the feedback to drive the next conference in October."

You are invited

Tops in Blue

Where: FOB Warrior
When: July 9
Where: COB Speicher
When: July 10

Ja Rule

Where: FOB Warrior
When: July 19
Where: COB Speicher
When: July 20

Sergeant Audie Murphy Club Induction &

MG Aubrey "Red" Newman

Award Ceremony

Where: North MWR,
COB Speicher
When: July 22, 11:30 a.m.

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Photo by Sgt. Johnathon Jobson, TF Marne PAO

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Aaron Clarke, AH-64D Apache Attack helicopter pilot, Co. C, 2/159th Avn. Regt., TF Gunslinger, explains some systems of the Apache during air ground integration training with Soldiers from Co. E, 1/64th Armor, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, at COS Diamondback, June 6.

ecute our mission more precisely," he said.

The ultimate goal of air ground integration is to enable ground and air elements to effectively eliminate the threat of violent extremists while protecting the populace. This provides safe roads and protection for civilians and aids U.S. and Iraq Security Forces, creating stability.

Captain Christopher Zotter, of Holbrook, N.Y., who commands Whiskey Company, briefly discussed another benefit to conducting AGI training with units.

"The Army is always evolving so you always have new people coming in. As we draw down and do fewer operations, Soldiers have less chances to actually experience some things first hand. So we have to draw on previous experiences to make sure we are not forgetting lessons learned."

These critical lessons learned can be the difference in saving a Soldier's life, cap-

turing a high value target, or avoiding collateral damage and fratricide while calling in a close combat attack.

This particular training was split into a briefing and a walk around of the AH-64D Apache Attack helicopter, the flagship aircraft of TF Gunslinger.

"The Soldiers really enjoyed seeing the Apache up close," said Capt. Benjamin Maher, TF Rogues' fire support officer, of Portland, Ore. "It reminds me of when my dad would take me to air shows when I was little. Platoon leaders on down to the riflemen's faces light up when they get [into] the cockpit of one the Army's most lethal instruments.

"This training will help us streamline how we do business. By seeing things from their perspective, it makes it much easier to plan, synch, and execute our targeting process," he continued.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Clarke led the walk around of the aircraft explaining the

systems and capabilities of the Apache.

"A lot of Soldiers don't understand how we can help. So we show them videos to demonstrate 'this is what we actually see.' When the Soldiers physically see the aircraft's capabilities, they begin to understand how they can leverage what the Apache can do in combat," he said.

The AH-64D Apache attack helicopter contains many advanced capabilities such as the Modernized Target Acquisition Designation Sight/Pilot Night Vision Sensor, which provides a clear image of potential targets and enables location.

It uses an advanced image processing techniques to enhance visibility so pilots have the best possible resolution with a three-field of view picture during night time and low-level flights.

The AH-64D also is equipped with a 30mm automatic M230 chain gun, located under its fuselage,

which has a rate of fire of 625 rounds per minute. The aircraft can carry up to 1,200 rounds of ammunition. This compliments its air-to-surface Hellfire missiles and 2.75-inch rockets.

Other capabilities include an Infrared zoom pointer used for target marking and an Infrared strobe which assists in identifying friendly forces to avoid fratricide.

Captain Zotter and his pilots constantly conduct AGI training, and that he believes it was very beneficial to both Whiskey and Dawg Soldiers.

"I think the ground unit learned a lot from the training. I could see a few eyes lighting up in the brief. Even if just one or two of them walk away with something that helps us better support them or they're able to clearly express to us what they want done, the training has been successful."

The TF Marne PAO thanks Sgt. 1st Class Marshall for his journalistic contributions.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Charles Burrow, of Dayton, Ohio, is with 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He has distinguished himself while serving as a radar repairer for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery for his battalion. His competence, technical knowledge and commitment to excellence has been invaluable to his unit and Task Force Marne. While displaying his high level of military occupational specialty proficiency, he repaired a mission critical division sensor asset with limited resources while simultaneously conducting mandatory reset of three mission-essential organic systems. Throughout the deployment, Spc. Burrow has continued to seek tough tasks and levels of greater responsibility. Through challenging times and conditions where we demand more out of our Soldiers than ever before, his “no mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great” attitude has made him a Soldier to emulate. Specialist Burrow is a truly outstanding choice for today’s Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Angie Avery is a common ground station field software engineer for Task Force Marne. She is the subject matter expert for all CGS software, to include operation and configuration of the CGS’s architecture throughout northern Iraq. Angie is often found at her desk outside her normal shift hours - a credit to her dedication to TF Marne’s intelligence mission and drive to ensure mission success. She not only provides the G-2 Analysis Control Element with direct support, but willingly travels to outlying units in support of their ever-emergent mission requirements. She truly embodies selfless service, providing direct support for intelligence electronic warfare sub systems and general automation assistance without hesitation. Her consistent effort, commitment to excellence, and dedication to TF Marne Soldiers and their mission make her a most worthy selection as this week’s Task Force North Service Provider of the Week.

Archeological sites make up rich history in northern Iraq

Cultural Tidbit Special to the North Star

Iraq was once known as Mesopotamia, which is considered to be the cradle of civilization. Recorded history of mankind started here with the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians.

Iraq’s northern provinces – Ninewa, Kirkuk, Salah ad-Din and Diyala – have their share of history, as the area contained the capitol city of the Assyrian Empire, which had its beginnings around 1810 B.C.

The Assyrians were Semitic people living in the northern reaches of Mesopotamia. They have a long history, but they were subjugated to the more powerful kingdoms and peoples of the south. In its infancy, Assyria developed around its four main cities – Ashur Arbela, Calah and Ninewa – all of which were fed by the waters of the Tigris. In fact, the city of Ashur was named after the god, Ashur. This same name is the basis for Assyria.

In Ashur, the earliest kings in history made their home. Exposure to the extreme heat of the desert and the

attack by neighboring Babylonia led Ashur’s rulers to build a secondary capitol in Ninewa around 1080 B.C.

In the Al Jazirah region of Ninewa, is the ruined city of El Hadr, which is 180 miles northwest of Baghdad and 68 miles southwest of Mosul. It was probably founded in the 3rd or 2nd century B.C., under the Selucid Kingdom.

It rose to prominence as the capitol of Araba, a small, semi-autonomous state under Parthian influence. It flourished during the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. as a religious and trading center of the Parthian Empire. The city survived several invasions before being razed in 241 A.D. It remains an important archaeological site with well-preserved ruins.

Another important city in ancient Assyria was Calah, which is located 21 miles south of Mosul. The modern-day name for Calah is Nimrud. Excavation of this city was conducted from 1845-51 A.D., and, in 1980, three royal

tombs were discovered, each containing various treasures.

Calah was the second capitol of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser in the 13th century B.C. The city contains three statues of winged bulls and the ruins of the palace of King Ashour Nasirpal, II.

The most important site in this city, though, is Kirkuk Castle (Qalat Kirkuk). Located in the center of the old city, the castle traces back to the Assyrian era. The castle was built by the Assyrian King Ashur Nasir Pal, II, between 884 and 850 B.C.

There are many Christian and Muslim shrines inside the castle, such as the shrines of the prophets Hanyin and Aziz and the Red Church, which is one of the oldest monuments in the castle. The castle also includes several mosques.

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

REGIONAL HEADLINES

City of Seattle considers banning roosters

Seattle Times

Seattle - Like a lot of activists who appear before the Seattle City Council, Birdie came with an instinct to crow and strut and peck. But last month, he let his gentle, wattled demeanor -- and his owner -- do the talking instead.

"Our neighbors all love him, he protects our hens ... he's been at many local farmers markets, and held and petted by kids," said Terrie Abrahamson on the city's website, before she brought Birdie, a mixed-breed cochin rooster, into Council chambers to make the same point. Why the rooster defensiveness?

Because Birdie and his male colleagues are feeling some heat from City Hall. In their plan to promote veggie growing, egg laying and other urban farming practices, city officials have proposed allowing more hens into Seattle.

But roosters need not apply. Under an urban-farming proposal announced last month, roosters would be banished.

That has caused a lot of wing-flapping, both from people annoyed by the boisterous birds in the densely populated city, and from people who say noise ordinances already keep a lid on fervent cock-a-doodle-dooing.

"Roosters are no more obtrusive than barking dogs, lawnmowers, or other neighborhood sounds,"

Charmaine Slaven wrote on the Department of Planning and Development's forum on urban farming.

"And, the best thing about them is they are always quiet at sunset and don't make a peep until sun-up." Don Jordan, executive director of the Seattle Animal Shelter, would disagree.

He estimated his agency gets roughly 75 complaints a year about raucous fowl.

"In the last decade, (roosters) are becoming more popular and what goes along with that are the noise complaints," he said.

Where do homeless roosters go? Noise gripes aside, the bigger problem when it comes to urban chickens is the issue of accidental roosters.

Many backyard farmers inadvertently end up with a rooster in their flock, because chicken "sexing," the practice of determining a chick's gender, is often inaccurate.

Some people choose to keep a surprise rooster as a pet, saying it helps guard the hens from predators and keeps the ladies in line. Others worry about annoying the neighbors and want to get rid of a rooster. But how to ditch an urban rooster has proven to be no easy task.

If the city passes a ban on roosters -- while allowing the number of chickens to increase from three to eight per house -- the angst in dealing with unwanted roosters is likely to grow.

Passenger steers out-of-control bus

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Atlanta - Lorraine Gobert was a few minutes into her daily commute from Hiram to Atlanta, June 6, when she looked up from her seat in the front of an Xpress bus to find the driver passed out at the wheel--and the bus careening down the road.

Gobert, 59, told the AJC that she had just finished reading her electronic Bible and "was saying my prayer when I felt something. I looked up and I saw greenery, then I looked at the bus driver and his eyes were closed, and by the time I said, 'Vic!' the bus went sideways, throwing me over on top of him."

"Vic" was driver Victor Dewhart, 50, of Austell, who Powder Springs police spokesman Matt Boyd said had passed out at the wheel shortly after 5:30 a.m. on C.H. James Parkway.

"I just grabbed the steering wheel and tried to find something to make the bus stop," said Gobert. "I saw a little tree so I steered the corner of the bus and hit the tree to make the bus stop."

When the bus finally came to rest off the highway just west of Hill Road, a tree blocked the door from opening. Some of the 22 passengers climbed out windows of the bus, and emergency crews used the "jaws of life" to cut open the door and remove passengers.

Dewhart, Gobert and two others were treated at for minor injuries.

THE North Star

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2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
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