

MAGAZINE OF TASK FORCE MARNE

FROM THE FRONT

WINTER 2009 - 2010

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COMMANDING GENERAL

Rock of the Marne



While this magazine might be read far and wide on the web by folks outside our organization, I'd like to direct my few words here to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians of Task Force Marne/US Division North.

If you flew high over Northern Iraq and looked down to see yourself, you would see more than 22,000 Americans, spread across the entire 50,000 square mile battlespace. You would see small units of our advisors with Iraqi Border Force partners in the difficult terrain on the Syrian and Iranian borders. You would see our larger formations at over 40 bases inside the seven northernmost provinces, operating day and night with Iraqi Army and Police units from north of Baghdad to the border with Turkey. You would see a variety of uniforms as well as some civilian clothes: we have nearly one hundred great Airmen, doing what they do best – coordinating close air support, reconnaissance, airlift and even weather reporting; almost another hundred incredible Sailors risking their lives leading bomb disposal action and training of similar Iraqi units; a handful of Marines and over five hundred selfless civilians, from the US Department of State, Department of the Army, other groups and agencies and contractors of every type helping us in every way imaginable.

But what would dominate your vision as you looked at yourself (squinting through the four types of helicopters darting across the sky, piloted by some of the finest Army Aviators ever to wear nomex and who want some of your attention) would be the unmistakable outlines of tired but resolute American men and women in body armor, advanced combat helmets, foliage green digital patterns and carrying black rifles — who make up the vast majority of our formation: US Army Soldiers. We come from 14 different major Army units, from 14 different places ranging from Hawaii to Puerto Rico. That's 14 different patches, unit colors, and mottos, all pulling together as one. This team that is Task Force Marne is like the modular Army that generated, trained, and deployed us: we are the sum of all parts. We're in this one together, no matter what the uniform, patch or unit motto. We're in a combat zone and in a combat zone our ethos is in override – placing the mission first, never quitting, never accepting defeat, and NEVER leaving a fallen comrade. Maybe before the 3rd of November 2009 we did not know each other, but now we will give our lives for each other.

Our mission here sounds simple in concept: help the Iraqi people solve Iraq's problems within the Iraqi system and lay the foundation for a long-term strategic partnership between the United States and Iraq. But like all simple concepts in our business, on the ground it is a different matter. This is a complex,

difficult and dangerous undertaking.

There are still plenty of low-level but sharp fights every week with extremist group cells who have not yet stood down, been killed or been captured. Indirect fire still lands on our fixed positions and bases. By my count there are at least fifteen different organized groups operating in our patch of ground here who want to kill us, take credit for “chasing us out of Iraq” as we eventually draw down, and disrupt the formation of the first real democracy in the Arab world. We also have our share of criminals and opportunists here in the north, individuals and groups who wish to advance their own selfish interests for money, position, and power in this oil-and-gas-rich nation. They do this at the expense of the Iraqi population who only want what we would want: to raise their families in a safe and secure environment and have hope for the future. There is no doubt Iraq is moving cautiously from fragile state to stable state and with our continued help, this will continue and hopefully they will be a strategic partner.

What does all this mean to us? We are in Iraq at a critical moment in their history, when they have a chance to decide for themselves what kind of nation they will be on March 4th and 7th – a choice they have not had for at least two generations. Though it is completely their choice, we do have a role to play. Task Force Marne is the last American combat force in northern Iraq. We have the capability to partner with the Iraqi security forces and help them be successful in protecting the population, allowing all Iraqis to make their decisions freely, without threats or intimidation. And we have the capability to help, as well as be an apolitical example to those same Iraqi security forces, as they support a peaceful transition of power to a new government. This all happens on our watch.

You know what a “closer” is, don't you? Arguably the most important player on a baseball team – the pitcher you send in when the game is on the line and the lead has to be protected. Satchel Paige said it best: “Anyone can be a closer...so long as they have a thick skin, a short memory, and at least one great pitch.” A thick skin – can take the catcalls and yelling from spectators; a short memory – doesn't let any setback affect your delivery; and one great pitch – well, that's your job as a closer; throw it straight down the middle, every time.

Teammates, we're the closers for northern Iraq. It is the bottom of the ninth, we're on the mound and we're facing the top of the order. To secure a successful and honorable completion of the US mission in our part of Iraq, it's on us. So, be very proud of whom you are and what you are doing at this time, in this place; what you are doing matters to Iraq and the United States. “Throw our best pitch” every day.

It is an honor to serve with you.

TONY CUCOLO

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MAJOR GENERAL, US ARMY

COMMANDER, TASK FORCE MARNE

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

NCOs Lead the Way



It's been a little more than 90 days since Task Force Marne took the lead in U.S. Division – North. However, I must say that our achievements and successes are immeasurable compared to our days on the ground. Our entire team is performing remarkably, and I would like to state up front that no member is expendable. You all possess skills and talents that contribute to our lethality.

A testament to the caliber of our team members is our Task Force Marne Heroes of the North. Six days a week we recognize two individuals, either service member or civilian, for going well beyond what was asked of them. An example of awe inspiring dedication is Senior Airman Evan Barnhart and Staff Sgt. Brad Perkins, who were monitoring aerial video when they spotted violent extremist transporting material to a remote location. The next night, the two Airmen embedded with a ground forces element and guided the Soldiers to the weapons cache.

Then there's Spc. Devin Colon, who repairs construction equipment. She also visits Iraqi bases and trains them on the safe operation and maintenance of construction equipment. Specialist Colon is just one of many, who demonstrate trail-blazing capability. Rounding out our team are our civilians. Mr. Erik Nelson is one of our technical experts, and he ensures that our war-fighting computer systems are operating. He provides vital trouble-shooting assistance, and also trains both Soldiers and civilians on how to efficiently use the complex software.

Regardless of your branch of service, job specialty, rank, age or gender, my battle buddy, Maj. Gen. Cucolo, and I see that you are proficient professionals, who are not afraid to take risks to reach maximum effectiveness. It especially makes us extremely proud to see junior Soldiers demonstrating initiative and taking on levels of increased responsibility. The hard work is all toward the successful completion of our mission here in Iraq, but there is still much work to do.

This is a new Iraq, and in some ways our mission now is more complex and challenging than ever before. I can honestly say that attacks in most areas are down. The Iraqi Army and Police are taking the lead in providing security for their country. However, our job is not done yet. There are still very vicious, violent extremist networks, that want to remain relevant. Our responsibility to our Iraqi, Kurdish and Peshmerga brethren is to give them vital training and counsel, so they can develop their own practices and become more capable in securing their land and protecting their people without us.

Democratic elections will take place here March 7, and the Iraqi Security Forces will be the strong, powerful and visible force the Iraqi people need. They will patrol the streets and polling sites to give their countrymen the courage to exercise their

right to vote. Expect the enemy to increase their attacks. Don't let them catch you off guard. Don't fall victim to complacency.

If you leave the confines of your area for a joint patrol, humanitarian mission or to meet with local sheiks, remember there are people who don't want you to make it back to your loved ones alive. Watch your buddies back, and check your equipment prior to each mission and focus your attention on your environment.

Remember I stated earlier that no one is expendable, so don't let bad decisions take you out of the fight. Do a risk assessment before you play a sport, get in any vehicle, and leave work at night. I'm not trying to be rudimentary, but accidents are preventable when troops use good judgment and enforce and abide by the standards.

Leaders don't walk by and ignore someone violating safety, uniform standards or General Order Number One. As we responsibly draw down our forces and hand land over to the Iraqis, more troops will be sharing less space. Therefore, we need to work harder and think smarter to prevent carelessness and negligent mistakes. If you see where Soldiers have idle time, as a leader it's your responsibility to counsel them on ways to enhance their career progression or encourage them to take college courses.

All Soldiers and NCOs should've deployed with a goal in mind. There's no reason why you can't work toward professional development if you properly manage your time. Personal and career goals could include reading a nonfiction book, taking correspondence courses, reviewing Army regulations, or studying for NCO and Soldier boards.

This leads me to my conclusion, where I congratulate two outstanding Soldiers for earning the distinguished titles of Task Force Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Quarter. Sergeant Steve Rea and Spc. Jason Ratliff are both from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

The competition was fierce, but these two Soldiers were knowledgeable, professional and self-confident. What's most important to note in this competition, is that everyone who competed are better Soldiers from it. The information they garnered from studying for the board will make them better leaders. I don't say this because they have memorized passages to regulations. Those Soldiers demonstrated that they know how to apply the regulations to reality. They also have an increased awareness of Army programs to provide vital advice to young Soldiers who need strong mentorship.

Again, great job everyone, and Keep Up Your Dukes.

JESSE ANDREWS
MARNE 7
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR, U.S. ARMY
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR,
TASK FORCE MARNE



Civil Affairs helps to bring self-reliance to Mosul

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PVT. JENNIFER LOWES,
130TH ENGINEER BRIGADE, PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ – The Mosul Reconstruction Cell on Contingency Operating Site Marez is working with the Government of Iraq to provide residents with clean water, trash control, and sewer systems. Company D, 401st Civil Affairs Battalion "Team 5" is also part of the effort.

"Civil affairs is our link to the public," said Capt. Matthew Chase, the MRC operations officer. The CA team helps assess Mosul neighborhoods and reports to the MRC. The informa-

tion gathered aids and assists the GOI on improving the city of Mosul. The MRC coordinates with GOI for work in lasting and sustainable projects, said Capt. Chase.

"We determine where there is a critical need," said 1st Lt. Nathan Neuman, the team leader for Civil Affairs "Team 5." The civil affairs team does routine checks on ongoing projects throughout the city along with project procurement officers from the MRC and gathers information for future projects, he added.

On a recent mission to the city of Mosul, the team checked progress on a water distribution project. They talked to residents in the neighborhood about the development of the project and checked on water pipelines that funnel water to outlying neighborhoods of the city. The team also checked on a former MRC project, the Barka Market. The market provides jobs for neighborhood residents and gives the people an option to shop closer to home.

The MRC's goal is to help the GOI with sustainable systems that residents can manage themselves to make the city of Mosul an independent one, said Capt. Chase.



First Lieutenant Nathan Neuman the Company D, 401st Civil Affairs "Team 5" leader discusses progress on a water distribution project with an Iraqi Army soldier. On a recent mission to Mosul, the civil affairs team checked several Mosul Reconstruction Cell projects.



First Lieutenant Nathan Neuman, the D, 401st Civil Affairs "Team 5" leader, discusses his mission with an Iraqi Army soldier.

3rd ID returns for new mission

STORY AND PHOTO BY SGT. JOHNATHON JOBSON
TASK FORCE MARNE PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER - During a ceremony held at COB Speicher, Iraq, Nov. 3, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, Task Force Marne commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, the task force command sergeant major, uncased the 3rd Infantry Division colors to signify the official transfer of authority from the 25th Infantry Division, out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

During Operations Iraqi Freedom I, III and V, 3rd Infantry Division transformed itself into Task Force Marne to command and control combat operations in its given portion of Iraq. In 2006 the division hit the ground in Baghdad as part of the Surge. Now for a fourth time the division once again becomes TF Marne, this time assigned to U.S. Division - North.

"Today, our uncased colors symbolize a deep commitment by a group of professionals to give our absolute best effort in support of our Iraqi partners and to build on the progress already made," said Maj. Gen. Cucolo. "And most importantly our commitment to perform our duties in a manner worthy of the great sacrifices of those Americans and Iraqis who have gone before us."

During this deployment, TF Marne has scaled back its combat role, and will provide more advisory support and assistance to Iraqi forces.

"For an American Soldier, I would not want to be anywhere else in Iraq," Maj. Gen. Cucolo expressed. "The partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces has been outstanding, and the efforts of the civilian leadership in this part of Iraq have been superb. I just look forward to continuing that progress."

Major General Robert L. Caslen, Jr., commander of Task Force Lightning and out-going USD-N (formerly Multi-National Division - North) commander, had nothing but positive comments about Maj. Gen. Cucolo and Task Force Marne, and their upcoming mission.

"There is no one in the entire United States Army, I trust more to take this mission with all its complexity than Tony Cucolo," Maj. Gen. Caslen stated. "I guarantee there will be no gaps in service support or mission accomplishment."

As the command element of USD-N, Task Force Marne will have a presence in numerous cities and villages, to include: Mosul and Tal Afar in the Ninewah province; Kirkuk City and Hawija in the Kirkuk province; Tikrit and Balad in the Salah ad-Din province

and Baqubah in the Diyala province.

Task Force Marne commands six brigades: 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, out of Fort Riley, Kan.; 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga.; 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas; 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, out of Fort Lewis, Wash.; 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii; and the 130th Engineer Brigade, from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Since Maj. Gen. Cucolo has hit the ground he's heard how each of the brigades routinely work with their ISF counterparts to conduct air assaults, patrols and reconstruction projects. Interface between the troops and the IA has changed from just combat to discussions and practices to improve life for the Iraqi people.

Editors Note: Two brigades have already departed the area. They served primarily under TF Lightning: 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.



Major General Tony Cucolo, commander Task Force Marne, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, Task Force Marne command sergeant major, uncased the 3rd Inf. Div. colors during a transfer of authority ceremony, Nov. 3. The ceremony marked the fourth time 3rd Inf. Div. has uncased its colors in Iraq.

Marne Division Celebrates 92 Years

STORY BY SGT. JOHNATHON JOBSON
TASK FORCE MARNE PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER - Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division honored its 92 years of service to the nation by recognizing combat service through a traditional "Patch Ceremony", Nov. 21 on Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

Combat Veterans along with first-time deployers were the honorees during the ceremony. The Marne patch was even affixed to the right sleeve of Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, with his 30 years of service, along with deputy commanding generals Brig. Gen. Patrick Donohue and Brig. Gen. Tom Vandal.

The wearing of patches, officially known as Shoulder Sleeve Insignia - Former Wartime Service, is to recognize Soldiers who have participated in combat operations. It dates back to World War I, when it was worn to boost unit morale and show pride in a Soldier's unit.

"It's not just a patch; it's not just covering the fuzz on your right shoulder," expressed Maj. Gen. Cucolo, the 3rd ID and Task Force Marne commanding general. "It is the 3rd Infantry Division patch, and you ought to be proud you get to wear it. Sure you deserve it, but you need to feel honored and proud you get to wear one."

Sitting in the audience waiting for their part to take place were Soldiers who arrived in Iraq to take out a dictator and have returned for a fourth time to hand over operations to the Iraqis. Four-time, 3rd ID deployers affixed the Marne patch on the sleeves of first-time deployers.

"It was the first time I have ever patched someone," said Warrant officer Robert Streeper, the Air Movement Request officer-in-charge with the TF Marne G3 Air section. "It felt good to be recognized, especially by people who have not been over here before, and to be out in front of my peers while doing it."

During World War I a small group came up with the Marne patch idea -- three white lines on a blue field.

"We had completed our stand on the Marne River, earning our nickname; had two Medal of Honor recipients; participated in three major campaigns; lost over 3,500 killed and more than 12,000 wounded," explained Maj. Gen. Cucolo. "A symbol for that effort and sacrifice was important."

The three lines stand for the major operations in which the division participated in during World War I, and the blue field symbolizes "American valor - the same as the blue field on the American flag; instead of stars, three stripes," Maj. Gen. Cucolo explained.

For the first-time deployers, receiving the combat patch was a very humbling experience.

"I am excited to be with the 3rd Infantry Division, my dad served with them in Germany before I was born, so it's pretty cool



Photo by Spc. Daniel Nelson
Sergeant Major Tyrhonda Franklin, sergeant major for Command Post-North, Task Force Marne (far left); Pfc. Chez Vang, information systems operator for CP-North (left); 1st Lt. Pete Frischholz, aide-de-camp at CP-North (right), and Brig. Gen. Tom Vandal, deputy commanding general (support), Multi-National Division-North (far right), cut a cake to celebrate the 92nd birthday for the 3rd Inf. Div. Nov. 22, following a combat patch ceremony on CP-North.

to continue our Family legacy a little bit," said Spc. Abigail Wal-drop, a broadcaster for TF Marne Public Affairs. "The 3rd Infantry Division has accomplished so much in its history, to be a part of its mission now is really an honor and I'm proud to be able to wear the Marne patch."

By the Numbers

MEDALS OF HONOR
EARNED 5

NUMBER OF CAMPAIGNS
IN IRAQ 4

NUMBER OF CAMPAIGNS
IN WWI 3

MOST HIGHLY
DECORATED
SOLDIERS 2



Fort Lewis MPs teach Iraqis importance of police dogs

Captain Erin M. Long, the veterinarian treatment facility commanding officer at FOB Warhorse, prepares the next portion of the veterinarian training by putting on medical gloves, Jan. 5. Captain Long stresses to the Iraqi policemen the cleanliness of medical equipment to avoid infection.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. RY NORRIS,
3RD STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM,
2ND INFANTRY DIVISION PAO

DIYALA – Iraqis mainly use dogs to protect their houses or sheep.

“We do not feed them. We do not care for them. When we are praying and a dog’s saliva touches us, we have to go take a shower. Dogs are considered unclean. The Koran says so,” said Emad Matlum, an interpreter with the Provincial Police Transition Team.

This cultural sentiment demonstrates the progress of the Iraqi Police and their willingness to accept combat multipliers and adapt to measures that will assist them in maintaining security in Iraq.

The Diyala Provincial Canine Unit trains weekly at the canine compound at Forward Operating Base Warhorse to fully maximize the effectiveness of their working dogs.

The compound is located outdoors surrounded by HESCO barriers. The front entrance has a sign marked “Danger: Military Dog Area.” The ground is covered by smooth, golf-ball sized rocks. Positioned at the far end of the canine compound is a wooden picnic table where Iraqi Police Master Sgt. Duraid Aziz and two of his fellow soldiers sat Jan. 5, ready to take notes. They were joined by two U.S. military instructors and six assistants.

U.S. Army Capt. Erin M. Long, the Veterinary Treatment Facility officer in charge at FOB Warhorse, with the 51st Medical Detachment, demonstrated step-by-step techniques of how to treat soft tissue wounds and stabilize a distal limb fracture by practicing on Sgt. 1st Class Bengo, a black German Shepherd with the 51st Military Police Detachment, from Fort Lewis, Wash. The two-hour training also included recognizing shock and providing first aid for shock.

“We want to assist the Iraqis in understanding why they should provide proper medical care for their dogs,” said Capt. Long, an Alton, Ill., native whose detachment serves under the leadership of the 248th Medical Detachment Veterinary Services, located at Fort Bragg, N.C. “The health of the working dog must be optimized in order to protect their investment.”

Captain Long said her unit has been working with the Iraqi Police canine units since August 2009.

When it was time for the hands-on portion, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jodi F. Stone, a canine handler with the 51st MP Det., kept Sgt. 1st Class Bengo calm as he lay patiently on the picnic table getting his mock leg injury wrapped by one of the Iraqi policemen.



Captain Erin M. Long, the Veterinarian Treatment Facility commanding officer at FOB Warhorse, assists the Diyala Provincial Canine Unit in applying a splint on Sgt. 1st Class Bengo, Jan. 5. The hands-on portion of the training allows the PCU to put into practice what they have learned.

Staff Sergeant Stone, a native of Stanwood, Wash., coordinates logistics and provides assistance for the weekly training. She’s been working with the Diyala Provincial Canine Unit since September.

“You can see their dedication and determination. Each time we train with them, they remember the things we’ve taught them. They may not have the same supplies as we do, but they work with what they have,” said Staff Sgt. Stone.

The training contains a lot of useful information.



Sergeant Brandi N. Devasier, a canine handler with the 51st Military Police Detachment, settles Sgt. 1st Class Bengo as Capt. Erin M. Long, the veterinarian treatment facility commanding officer at FOB Warhorse, answers questions from the Iraqi Police, Jan. 5. Captain Long trains the IPs on how to give medical assistance to the canines monthly.

“I’ve never learned how to give first aid to a dog in the 20 years I’ve worked with them,” said Master Sgt. Duraid. “Whenever a dog was hurt, we would clean it up and slap a band-aid on it.”

Unlike Master Sgt. Duraid, Iraqi Policeman Thafir Dajem Abod has worked with his military working dog, Dara, for a year. “I have a very good relationship with Dara. I treat her like one of my own kids,” Thafir said.

Since working with Dara, Thafir is aware of her capabilities and understands why she is an asset to the unit. He said that with Dara’s help, he was able to find an explosives cache while out on mission.

The Diyala Provincial Canine Unit was created in August 2008 to help target insurgents and caches of drugs and explosives. Although the canine unit is brand new, they have excelled in their training and applied the training to their daily missions, according to the trainers with the 51st MP Det.

Members of the military police detachment at FOB Warhorse continue to mentor the canine unit weekly. Master Sergeant Duraid said that he wished there was some way he could thank everyone for the guidance and knowledge they have passed on to him and his fellow troops.



16 Iraqi Security Personnel Graduate Training Program

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PFC. CRYSTAL M. O'NEAL,
2ND HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ – Task Force Marne Soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base Sykes in northern Iraq hosted a graduation ceremony for Iraqi police officers who completed the Police Essentials Course at the Iraqi Special Forces Continuing Education Center, Jan. 7.

The graduates, all security personnel with the Iraqi Police, the Iraqi Border Patrol and the Iraqi Emergency Response Battalion learned investigative and security techniques, as well as police skills already familiar to them.

The graduates, from Tal Afar and Sinjar, performed well during the training, despite their different backgrounds, said Spc. Velvet Conklin, from the 855th Military Police Troop, an Arizona National Guard unit.

“Although the students were from different branches of the ISF, as well as different places, such as Sinjar and Tal Afar, they were extremely professional and worked very well together,” said Spc. Conklin.

Lieutenant Colonel Howard Hunt, the Iraqi Special Forces Continuing Forces Continuing Education Center commandant, said the training was very similar to the periodic training U.S. police and security forces receive.

“The basis of what we do is continuing education for the Iraqi Police, Iraqi Border Police, and Iraqi Army in our area of operations,” said Lt. Col. Hunt, who is from Fort Richardson, Alaska, but assigned to 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. “Like programs in the U.S., we bring Iraqis back to a school-house environment to refresh old skills, learn new skills and foster a spirit of cooperation between the various Iraqi Security Forces.”

The instructors at ISFCEC, according to Lt. Col. Hunt, are highly trained and skilled.

“Our instructors [at ISFCEC] come from various security fields and provide subject matter expertise on the latest trends in security training. We have career law enforcement professionals from basic police work, to investigation, to border enforcement,” said Lt. Col. Hunt. “Here at ISFCEC, we are truly dedicated to train, advise and assist.”

The 16 graduates received diplomas and were congratulated by Col. Ali, Tal Afar District Headquarters top police chief, during the ceremony.

“I would like to congratulate all the students today on this great accomplishment. This is a great program and we want to continue to do things like this to strengthen our forces,” said Col. Ali.

The colonel also expressed thanks to the U.S. Army for their efforts and continued support of the ISF.

Lieutenant Colonel Hunt said Task Force Marne’s main focus is to assist, as well as support, the ISF and the Iraqi people in any possible way.

“Our Motto, ‘Strength through knowledge – Security through unity’ says it all,” said Lt. Col. Hunt. “We are posturing the Iraqi Security Forces to be able to sustain themselves in the future by providing advance-level training, train-the-trainer classes and adding depth to their knowledge base in order to push forward the principles of rule of law and police primacy.”

There are several similar ISFCEC courses scheduled in the near future.



تدريب
الشرطة
العراقية



Task Force 296 Provides Security at Iraq's Border

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. ANTHONY JONES,
145TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

DIYALA – Task Force 296 conducts a vast array of missions across Iraq's Diyala province to keep its parent unit, the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, in operational readiness.

The battalion completes missions covering every aspect of operations, from providing combat repair teams to each battalion under the brigade to conducting the daily combat logistics patrols and moving troops and vital supplies throughout the province.

One of the least known tasks Soldiers of the 296th Brigade

Support Battalion perform is providing protection to the Soldiers of border transition team 4130 and the civilian contractors living and working at Forward Operating Base Edge. The FOB is located on the grounds of the Muntheria Port of Entry, a landlocked border crossing between Iraq and Iran in northeast Diyala province.

"Most of the Soldiers provided by the 3rd Stryker Brigade are here for force protection.," said Lt. Col. David Sigmund, commander of Border Transition Team 4130 and FOB Edge.



Private First Class Victor Lucero, 334th Signal Co., 296th BSB, 3rd Stryker BCT, 2nd Inf. Div., scans an elderly man's eye before he can pass through a checkpoint manned by U.S. civilian contractors at the Muntheria Port of Entry along the Iraq - Iran Border in Diyala Province, Iraq, Dec. 15

The Soldiers of the guard force are critical to supporting the mission of the Border Transition Team, said Lt. Col. Sigmund.

"It is absolutely essential to have the guard force Soldiers here. We as a team could not possibly provide all the force protection, secure the FOB or complete our advise and assist mission," said Lt. Col. Sigmund.

The guard force provides security for the BTT and civilian contractors in various ways. One way the Soldiers work to minimize risk to personnel at the Port of Entry is by operating the PEIR system, a scanner which scans the eye of persons passing through the port. The Soldiers then compare the image to those stored in a database before the person can pass and be screened by U.S. civilian contractors.

If a person of interest passes through the port, Soldiers will know immediately and will pass control of the person to their Iraqi counterparts. If the person scanned has no criminal record or outstanding warrants they are free to pass and move on to another checkpoint manned by the civilian contractors.

"It's amazing to see how many people pass through the port. Iraqis, Iranians, Pakistanis and many others," said Pfc. Victor Lucero, a member of Task Force 296's 334th Signal Company. "It's great keeping people safe, whether they're U.S., Iraqi or Iranian. Doing this job here really makes me feel like I'm doing good."

Private First Class Lucero, a member of the guard force, is one of the Soldiers assigned to FOB Edge and operates the PEIRs system.

Working with the PEIRs operator are two noncommissioned officers who assist in the flow of foot traffic in the large building where the processing takes place. Also in the processing building are other guard force Soldiers who guard contractors working the outbound lanes processing persons passing from Iraq into Iran.

"Working here with the guard force gives Soldiers an experience most units don't see," said Staff Sgt. Patrick Foard, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the guard force, also known as sergeant of the guard. "It took a while to get used to the mission. Things really picked up once we got out here and everyone meshed. We are able to incorporate aspects of everyone's occupational specialty in what we do every day."

In addition to protecting the military and civilian personnel at the processing building, the guard force operates the entry control point to FOB Edge and provides guards around the FOB at night.



A man entering Iraq from Iran has his thumbs scanned as part of a biometrics background check conducted by U.S. civilian contractors at the Muntheria Port of Entry, Dec. 15.



Travelers pass through a secure area on their way from the Iraq - Iran border into a large processing building manned by Iraqi government officials, U.S. Soldiers and U.S. civilian contractors at the Muntheria Port of Entry, Dec. 15.



Fallen Soldier Inducted into Time-Honored Corps

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. SHANTELE J. CAMPBELL,
4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION PAO

TIKRIT – As the sun began to set behind the clouds in Iraq’s northern sky, Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan., gathered to see 11 “Proud Americans” get inducted into the noncommissioned officer corps during a 2/32 FAR NCO Induction Ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 31.

Among the Soldiers being inducted into the time-honored corps was Cpl. Tony Carrasco, Jr., of El Paso, Texas, who gave his life for his country while serving in Salah ad-Din Province, Iraq, Nov. 4.

During the ceremony, Cpl. Carrasco was remembered as being an outstanding individual and Soldier who not only inspired but brought out the best in his subordinates. He was someone for younger Soldiers to look up to and constantly set himself apart from others.

Corporal Carrasco was remembered as being someone who was determined and had the innate ability to build teams. He lived the warrior ethos by never quitting on his Soldiers and was always ready to perform well beyond his duties.

Command Sgt. Maj. Taylor Poindexter, the top non-commissioned officer of the “Proud Americans,” remembers his Soldier as someone who was the embodiment of loyalty and said that the ceremony was special in that it was the last ceremony of the year and provided an opportunity to honor an extraordinary Soldier.

“[Corporal Carrasco’s] best quality was his loyalty,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Poindexter. “Everything that we want an NCO to be is what he held close to him naturally.”

“I’m proud to have [Cpl. Carrasco] inducted [into the NCO Corps],” said Sgt. Shedrick Franklin, of Baton Rouge, La., an NCO inductee and a signal retrans NCO for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2-32 FAR. “[The induction] is very special to me because he was a fellow Soldier in our battalion ... It really means a lot to me.”



Left - A picture of Cpl. Tony Carrasco, Jr., of El Paso, Texas, a Soldier with Battery B, 2/32 FAR, 4th Inf. BCT, 1st Inf. Div. out of Fort Riley, Kan., stands on stage for the “Proud Americans” NCO Induction ceremony, Dec. 31. Corporal Carrasco, who gave his life for his country while serving in the Salah ad-Din province, Iraq, Nov. 4, was inducted into the NCO Corps.

Below - Eleven Soldiers of the 2/32 FAR, 4th Inf. BCT, 1st Inf. Div. out of Fort Riley, Kan., were officially inducted into the NCO Corps during the “Proud Americans” NCO Induction Ceremony, Dec. 31 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher. Among the Soldiers who were inducted into the corps was Cpl. Tony Carrasco, Jr., Battery B, 2/32 FAR, who gave his life for his country while serving in Salah ad-Din province, Iraq Nov. 4.





Iraqi Special Ops train with 2/6th Cav

STORY AND PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS TYRONE C. MARSHALL, JR.
TASK FORCE WINGS PAO

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SGT. CHAD D. NELSON

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR – Iraqi Security Forces and United States Special Forces operators continue to integrate combat air support into their joint partnership efforts to provide safety and security for the populace in Kirkuk province.

The 12th Iraqi Army Special Operations Company, and Operational Detachment - Alpha 1216, conducted close combat attacks with members from 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment flying OH-58D Kiowa

Warrior helicopters near Hawijah, Iraq, Dec. 26.

“The objective was to go out to the range and teach these guys how to control the scout weapons team, the Kiowas,” said Chance, a joint terminal attack controller with the ODA team. “And to be able to talk them onto a target and engage it effectively and safely.” Operational Detachment - Alpha 1216 soldiers do not release their full names in order to protect operational security while working with Iraqi Security Forces.

In addition to the close combat attacks, the partnered training involved instruction and hands-on training on the AT-4 anti-tank weapon system, M-74 Grenade Launcher and the Rocket-Propelled Grenade Launcher.

Members of ODA 1216 regularly advise and assist the 12th IA SOC in Kirkuk province, and have also received support from TF Lightning Horse for past missions.

“We work with them a lot,” said Mike, a leader within the ODA team. Lightning Horse executes a lot of missions with the ODA, but this is the first time they’ve done a training mission together. The SWTs showed everything: route reconnaissance, area reconnaissance on an objective, looking for squinters and providing security.

“The squadron provides really good support for us. We live right next door and we talk all the time,” said Mike.

Chance explained the need for the close combat attack training especially with the ISF expanding their capabilities as they enable the Government of Iraq to maintain a stable and secure environment for the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi Air Force is training their pilots now and they already have their own aircraft. Eventually, Iraqi Army soldiers are going to have to learn to control the aircraft themselves, said Chance. The training focus with 12th IA soldiers has been on the importance of being able to effectively communicate and coordinate the movement of the aircraft for safe and successful engagements.

Chief Warrant Officer Three Stephen Beech, one of four OH-58D Kiowa Warrior pilots from TF Lightning Horse who flew in support of this particular mission, agreed with the concept of building capacity by teach-

ing ISF to effectively use aviation assets.

The demonstration and introduction to U.S. tactics, techniques and procedures using scout and attack aircraft for security, reconnaissance and close attack support to ground forces gives Iraqi Army leadership and commanders a clear understanding of the need, effectiveness and correct application of aviation assets, said CW3 Beech

Iraqi Army Sgt. Maj. Sadir, the senior enlisted leader for 12th IA SOC, valued the time spent conducting close combat attacks.

This was the first time we’ve done close combat attacks, he said. It was good; we benefited from Soldiers’ experience, and the support we had was great. It was very, very good for us. Our U.S. partners taught us how to contact the pilots and how to destroy the enemy when we have reconnaissance and attack aircraft available for support, said Sgt. Maj. Sadir

As the 12th IA SOC continue to improve their capacity to provide security in Kirkuk Province, U.S. Forces such as ODA 1216 and TF Lightning Horse continue to advise and assist.

The demonstration of scout reconnaissance aircraft for close combat attacks and limited attack missions is a valuable and worthwhile effort, both for our units, and to help the Iraqi armed forces develop, said Chief Beech.

The 12th IA SOC sergeant major recognizes this critical necessity.

“We need that for the future,” concluded Sgt. Maj. Sadir. “Everybody needs air support.”

Pilots flying an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter from 2/6th Cav., Task Force Lightning Horse, make a low pass during close combat attacks as part of a partnered training event with 12th Iraqi Army Special Operations Company and Operational Detachment-Alpha 1216, near Hawijah, Iraq, Dec. 26.





‘Ready First’ leaders discuss election security with Iraqi Police

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PFC. JESSICA LUHRS
1ST HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 1ST ARMORED DIVISION PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR – Colonel Larry Swift, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, of the 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, met with Col. Adnan Hameed Saala, chief for the Adallah Iraqi Police Station, to discuss security in the area for the elections.

During the meeting and patrol of the district, Col. Swift’s main concern was the level of safety for the people in the area with the upcoming elections scheduled in March.

“When I first came to the area, five years ago, there were

many cells. Adallah was a terrorist haven,” said Col. Adnan. “But through hard work from the IP, with assistance from the U.S. forces, we are in control of the area.”

Even the citizens of Adallah agree that the area is much safer.

During the leaders walk-through of Adallah, Col. Swift, Col. Adnan, and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniels stopped and talked to people in the market about their views of the security in Adallah.

One man talked about the area being safe enough for his young son to grow-up in and others told the leaders that they felt

better about the upcoming elections and would be voting.

The security of the people in the Kirkuk province during the elections is the main concern of the 1st BCT and Iraqi Security Forces, said Col. Swift.

Because of this concern for the population, the Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team will be assisting the Iraqi Police in the area by doing more joint patrols and assisting with checkpoint operations to prevent violence on election day.

Right - Command Sergeant Major James Daniels, command sergeant major of 1st HBCT, 1st AD, passes out soccer balls during a patrol in Adallah.

Below - Colonel Adnan Hameed Saala, chief for the Adallah Iraqi Police Station with Col. Larry Swift, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, command sergeant major of 1st HBCT, 1st AD, conducts a patrol in the Adallah district



Colonel Larry Swift, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, command sergeant major of 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, also known as the ‘Ready First Combat Team’ out of Fort Bliss, Texas, talk to a citizen of Adallah about the upcoming elections, during a patrol, Jan. 14.



Physical Therapy Clinic an Integral Part of Troop Medical Readiness

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. JOHNATHON JOBSON,
TASK FORCE MARNE PUBLIC AFFAIRS
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SGT. CHAD D. NELSON

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER – With deployments come an increased chance of Soldiers getting injured. Twisting an ankle while running, pulling a muscle while lifting equipment, repetitive-motion injuries from typing or turning wrenches, and a multitude of other musculoskeletal injuries. Regardless of how it happens, the Soldiers at the 47th Combat Support Hospital Physical and Orthopedic Therapy Clinic know how to assist the Soldiers in returning to maximum capacity following an injury.

Using many of the latest techniques in physical and occupational therapy the Soldiers who work in the clinic help their comrades restore their range of motion and strength to the injured part of their bodies.

After going to a troop medical clinic or emergency room for an injury and being referred to the physical therapy clinic, the road to recovery begins.

“They come in and are evaluated by the therapist or orthopedic doctor and receive their treatment plan,” explained Staff Sgt. Maria Morris, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the PT/Ortho Clinic. “After that we begin treatment and the Soldiers have follow-up appointments with the therapist or orthopedic doctors until it is decided that the treatments have worked and the Soldier can return to duty or that the Soldier needs to be referred to the next higher level of care.”

Once the Soldier has been given a treatment plan, Staff Sgt. Morris and the other Soldiers assigned to the clinic begin helping the Soldier through the recovery process for their injuries.

“We offer electrical stimulation, ultra-sound, heat and ice therapy, and exercises to assist in the recovery process,” said Maj. Kevin Houck, the chief of Physical Therapy for the 47th Combat Support Hospital out of Fort Lewis, Wash. We do manual therapy, such as massage and manipulation of injured joints, and joint immobilizations with braces, he added.

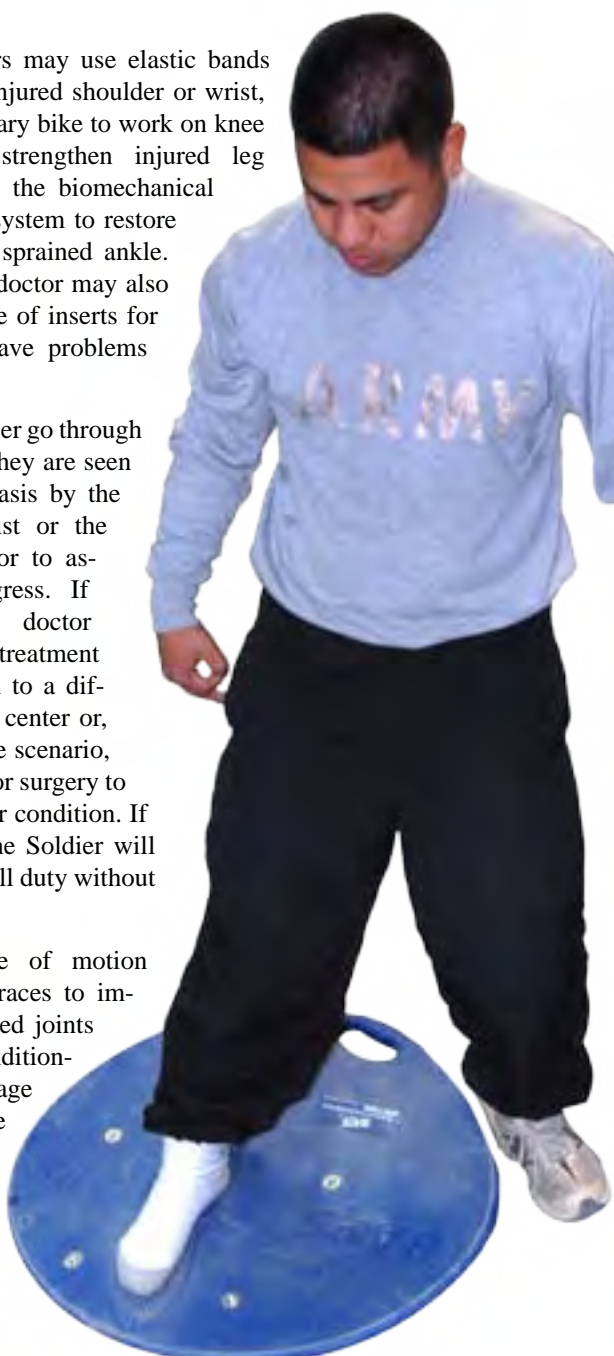


Captain Brian Gregg, an occupational therapist from the 212th Combat Stress Center, measures range of motion in the hand of Sgt. Rodney Harris, from the 1083rd Transportation Company, after an injury.

The Soldiers may use elastic bands to build up an injured shoulder or wrist, ride on a stationary bike to work on knee movement or strengthen injured leg muscles, or use the biomechanical ankle platform system to restore movement to a sprained ankle. The orthopedic doctor may also prescribe the use of inserts for Soldiers who have problems with their feet.

As the Soldier go through their treatment they are seen on a periodic basis by the physical therapist or the orthopedic doctor to assess their progress. If necessary, the doctor will adjust their treatment plan, refer them to a different treatment center or, in the worst-case scenario, schedule them for surgery to help correct their condition. If all goes well, the Soldier will be returned to full duty without restriction.

From range of motion exercises and braces to immobilizing injured joints to strength conditioning and massage therapy, the clinic’s four-Soldier team uses all their knowledge and available equipment to assist TF Marne personnel with a speedy recovery and return to full duty.



Specialist Luis Mendoza, with the 418th Medical Logistics Company, uses a biomechanical ankle platform system at the 47th CSH Physical and Orthopedic Therapy Clinic. The BAPS is used to help restore range of motion after an ankle injury such as a sprain.

Star Struck



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Shantelle J. Campbell



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Douglas



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chad D. Nelson

Photo A: The World Famous Harlem Globetrotters perform for Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, Dec. 13.

Photo B: Singer Kid Rock performs “Rock and Roll Jesus” during a concert for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, Dec. 2.

Photo C: Sergeant 1st Class Juan F. Cruz, a career counselor with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan., poses with World Wrestling Entertainment superstar, Ray Mysterio, during the WWE’s visit to Forward Operating Base Paliwoda, Dec. 3.

Photo D: Task Force Marne Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division Band pose for a photo with the Houston Texans’ Cheerleaders on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq in the early hours of Feb. 8.

Happy Holidays



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall, Jr.

Chaplain (Maj.) Linda Norlien, Task Force Wings, provides the benediction for the Thanksgiving meal, as a majority of the task force's command teams pray at the South Dining Facility on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikirt, Iraq, Nov. 26. Each command team also continued the tradition of serving the Thanksgiving meal to their Soldiers.



Photo by Sgt. Joseph McAtee

Sasquatch, a band formed from Soldiers in Task Force Marne, entertains a crowd during New Years Eve celebrations on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Dec. 31



Photo by Spc. Daniel Nelson

First Lieutenant Susan Downing, engagement officer for Command Post-North, Task Force Marne (left), and 2nd Lt. Amarilis Yen, communications officer-in-charge for CP-North, show their Christmas spirit with some reindeer antlers during a Christmas celebration on FOB Marez, Mosul, Iraq, on Dec. 24.



Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher

Noncommissioned officers and officers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment compete in their annual Thanksgiving Toilet Bowl. The game held at Forward Operating Base Normandy ended with the NCOs once again defeating their officers for the rights not to have the coveted toilet seat.



Photo by Spc. Michael Adams

Specialist Amie McClintic, a helpdesk technician with TF Marne, puts up Christmas decorations while Pfc. Edna Raynor, also a helpdesk technician helps Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Rodriguez, the anti-terrorism force protection noncommissioned officer for the TF Marne Provost Marshal Dec. 12 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

Reflections



A CHANCE TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE.

SPC. TONY CARRASCO
2-32nd FA
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div.

PFC. JAICIAE PAULEY
1-30th Inf. Regt.
2nd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

SPC. JONATHON SYLVESTRE
1-10th FA
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

SGT. BRIAND WILLIAMS
1-10th FA
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

STAFF SGT. RYAN ZORN
14th IA Bde. MiTT
3rd HBCT, 1st Cav. Div.

STAFF SGT. AMY TIRADOR
1-14th Cav. Regt.
3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER MATHEW HEFFELFINGER
2-6th Cav. Regt.
25th CAB, 25th Inf. Div.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICE EARL SCOTT
2-6th Cav Regt.
25th CAB, 25th Inf. Div.

PFC. MICHAEL JARRET
2-59th ARB
25th CAB, 25th Inf. Div.

The above listed Soldiers died between Oct. 10, 2009 and Jan. 10, 2010 and were part of Task Force Marne or the 3rd Infantry Division.