

The North Star

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



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Iraqi EOD training improves with U.S. support

By Sgt. Jessica Rohr
135th Mobile PA Det.

With help from the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy, the 4th Iraqi Army Bomb Disposal Company, out of Tikrit, Iraq, culminated their training with an explosive ordnance disposal exercise on the training range at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, July 8.

With this exercise, 4th IA BDC used all the training they received in the past months from their U.S. Navy training counterpart, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 2, out of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va.

“In addition to our EOD schooling, we have gotten great training support with the coalition forces, U.S. Navy,” said 1st Lt. Jabbar Jasem Mohammed, the commander of 4th IA BDC, out of Tikrit, Iraq. “We have improved with their support ... I graduated from EOD school in 2006. Since then a lot of information has changed, improvements have been made, insurgents have found new ways to [find their explosives]. Therefore, this training helps us learn new things and new ways to dispose of [improvised explosive devices].”

The training began with the 4th IA BDC reacting to a phone call about a possible IED at a nearby check point. Without hesitation, Haitham Wahab Mohammed, a bomb disposal soldier with the 4th IA BDC, took down all the pertinent information and passed it on to his commander, who gave the order for his team to move out.

Prior to departing for the check point, 1st Lt. Mohammed gave his soldiers a quick, but thorough brief, on the possible situation.

Once on scene, Iraqi soldiers set up a security check point and sent out a

robot to check out the disabled vehicle and deceased driver. After reviewing the situation, the 4th IA BDC became aware of a suicide vest on the driver and an IED in the vehicle.

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

Haitham Wahab Mohammed, a bomb disposal soldier with the 4th IA BDC, out of Tikrit, Iraq, heads toward an improvised explosive device with a charge to set off the IED safely during a training exercise. The exercise was recorded to make a video for the 4th IA BDC's leadership to demonstrate their capabilities after being trained by the Navy EOD team, on COB Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, July 8.

Deployment interrupts life, spurs growth for IRR Troops

**Article and Photos by
Spc. Cassandra Monroe
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.**

After a military contract is completed, there is a feeling of freedom.

Soldiers who complete their contract with the National Guard or Reserves may feel a sense of relief and embark on a new journey. Some start a new job, most continue on in their former professions; some may travel the world, while others pursue schooling or decide to start a family.

However, these contracts carry an additional obligation. Soldiers are put into what is called an Individual Ready Reserve status; this poses a chance that these former Soldiers will get deployed if personnel strengths are low and their assistance is needed. Some Soldiers, they may think that an unexpected deployment will never happen to them.

That is, until a package arrives at the door with a document titled 'Operation Iraqi Freedom.' Three IRR Soldiers currently serving with the 313th Medical Company out of Lincoln, Neb., received this package and thought nothing of it at first, thinking it was just an ordinary package filled with normally expected documents.

"I thought it was a joke ... a mis-

take," said Sgt. Donna Juliano, a medic currently deployed with the 313th Med. Co. Sergeant Juliano took an early leave after serving in active duty for 14 years. Her contract required her to serve 28 years in the IRR. After being called back to service 16 years later, Sgt. Juliano was told that she would have to re-class for a new job because of her long break in service.

"I have 30 years medical experience and I am a registered nurse, so I didn't see the point in re-classing. I [fought] a battle, but I was able to get the training required before deploying so that I could keep my medic status."

For Sgt. Michael O'Rourke, also a combat medic with the 313th Med. Co., his orders arrived at his door step after coming home from work.

"I opened it up and it had my orders," he said. "It was a shock. I had just gotten out of the reserves four months prior, and I hadn't deployed at all. It was just surprising."

Specialist Shawn Bishop, another combat medic with the 313th Med. Co. says that he first thought the package, with a military return address, was his medical documents. His first reactions were very angry and upset, but then he came to reality with what was about to happen.

"I had mixed emotions, but I felt

like I did owe myself a deployment too," he said.

Keeping a positive attitude and enjoying the humorous side of life is the next step when dealing with the surprise of these activations and struggles of a sudden change in life. Each Soldier has their own way of dealing with a sudden, unexpected deployment.

"I kept my sense of humor," said Sgt. Juliano, a Catskill, N.Y. native. "In the Army, if you have a sense of humor, it can get you very far in difficult times."

"If you're going to be here, you might as well make the most of it," said Sgt. O'Rourke, a Christiansburg, Va. native. "Having a bad attitude and blaming everything will only make your time here worse. Make the most of it and time will go by quickly, that's the attitude that I've had and it's gone by quick."

In this deployment, these Soldiers were a part of a larger picture with the 313th Med. Co. They were brought into the unit to fill an important support role, where they assisted and contributed their skills to combat logistics patrols, emergency evacuation missions and medical clinic shifts.

With their contributions and good

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Sergeant Donna Juliano, a Catskill, N.Y., native, is a medic with 313th Med. Co., Nebraska National Guard, and is currently stationed at COB Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq.



Sergeant Michael O'Rourke, a Christiansburg, Va., native, is a medic with 313th Med. Co., Nebraska National Guard, and is currently stationed at COB Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq.



Specialist Shawn Bishop, a Rochester, N.Y., native, is a medic with 313th Med. Co., Nebraska National Guard, and is currently stationed at COB Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq.

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

Sergeant Reinaldo Lopez, a broadcast noncommissioned officer with HHOC, 3rd ID, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., records Qaed Farhan Raheem, a bomb disposal soldier who is removing pieces of the IED after it was safely detonated. The video is for the 4th IA BDC to demonstrate the unit's capabilities to its leadership after the training received from the Navy EOD team, on COB Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, July 8.

Haitham Wahab Mohammed put on a bomb suit and diffused the vest, removed the body, and safely disabled the IED in the vehicle using a charge.

Once the charge was set off, Qaed

Farhan Raheem, a bomb disposal soldier with 4th IA BDC, removed pieces of the detonated IED, deemed the area clear, making the exercise a success.

"We have a huge region to take care

of, and so far with the training, we have not faced any difficulty," said 1st Lt. Mohammed. "We try to come [to the EOD training lane] at least twice a week to do training along with demolition."

In order to demonstrate the 4th IA BDC's capabilities to its leadership, 1st Lt. Mohammed also recorded the exercise with EOD Mobile Unit 2, and broadcast noncommissioned officer, Sgt. Reinaldo Lopez, with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Support, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga.

"As we go forward, it is the U.S. Navy support that is taking us forward with the information and training they provide us," said 1st Lt. Mohammed.

"Our whole goal here is to get the Iraqi bomb disposal unit to a point where we can withdraw and they can take over and continue the mission," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Kevin A. Borkowski, a native of Baltimore, Md., the leading chief petty officer with EOD Mobile Unit 2. "And right now they are doing a great job defeating the devices."

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attitude, these Soldiers have been a force multiplier to the Nebraska guard unit they serve with.

The Soldiers came from several parts of the country and quickly integrated with our unit, said 1st Lt. Franklin Annis, a health services administrative officer with the 313th Med. Co. and Omaha, Neb. native. They were fired up and all had positive attitudes. The unit is lucky to have these Soldiers because they are all extremely educated in the medical field and brought a wealth of experience to the unit.

For the three servicemembers, this sudden deployment has turned out to be a good experience, with each Soldier taking away something about themselves or their coworkers.

"Even though the Soldiers might not see that action that they antici-

pated or wanted, they are still serving a purpose and are needed here," said Sgt. Juliano.

"This is something you train for the

“I always liked the military, and I knew I was going to miss it, so it gives me like a second chance to say I did something.”

-Sgt. Michael O'Rourke, a combat medic with the 313th Med. Co.

whole time you're in the military," said Sgt. O'Rourke. "With getting to implement our skills and meeting all these new people, I feel like I am a part of

their unit and part of a bigger family.

"I always liked the military, and I knew I was going to miss it, so it gives me like a second chance to say I did something," he added.

As for Spc. Bishop, a Rochester, N.Y. native, this deployment has turned a positive page in his book of life.

"It's allowed me to learn a lot of things about myself, in terms of spirituality," said Spc. Bishop. "It's tested me; it's spurred much growth within myself from adversities as well as things that have happened."

These unexpected changes have happened all because of a simple package laying on a doorstep, waiting for its owner to open it. For these Soldiers, the surprise deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom has been beneficial.

See the Iraqi EOD Video Story at www.youtube.com/TFMarnePAO

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North

"DOG FACE HERO"



Staff Sergeant Kimbo and Sgt. Jessica Lech, a Fort Bragg, N.C., native, with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, were selected for their outstanding performance as a Patrol Explosive Detector Dog Team. They continue to be a valuable team player as they support operations in 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division's operating environment. Together they have conducted over 100 combat and force protection missions in support of the Spartans. Those missions include providing support to quick reaction forces, cordon search operations, cache searches, air assaults, building searches, and security at access control points. Staff Sergeant Kimbo and Sgt. Lech have been instrumental in building a strong relationship between U.S. and Iraqi Police Service Canine Handlers, increasing their overall effectiveness and teamwork. When not on mission, Staff Sgt. Kimbo enjoys a good back rub and relaxing in Sgt. Lech's room. In order to recognize these accomplishments, they have been selected as a Task Force Marne "Dog Face" Hero of the North.



Specialist Holly Dumont, a Warner Robins, Ga., native, is the personification of the pride and standard of excellence maintained in the 1st Regiment, 64th Armored Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. As the non-commissioned officer of the communications and electronics section, she ensures the highest level of maintenance is exacted on the battalion's communication and sight equipment. With only two Soldiers in her section, Spc. Dumont has conducted over 322 services on sights and 73 on communications equipment. While picking up equipment in March, Spc. Dumont discovered a high density thermal sight didn't have recent updates. She personally gathered the items and applied the updates to the 90 thermal sights. At the battalion-level board, she lead a study group of fellow Soldiers. As a result, every Soldier in her company that went to the board was accepted, and Spc. Dumont achieved a perfect 150 for her performance. She then won the brigade-level competition and will represent the Renegades, Desert Rogues, and Spartans at the division level. Her commitment to excellence makes her an obvious choice for Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

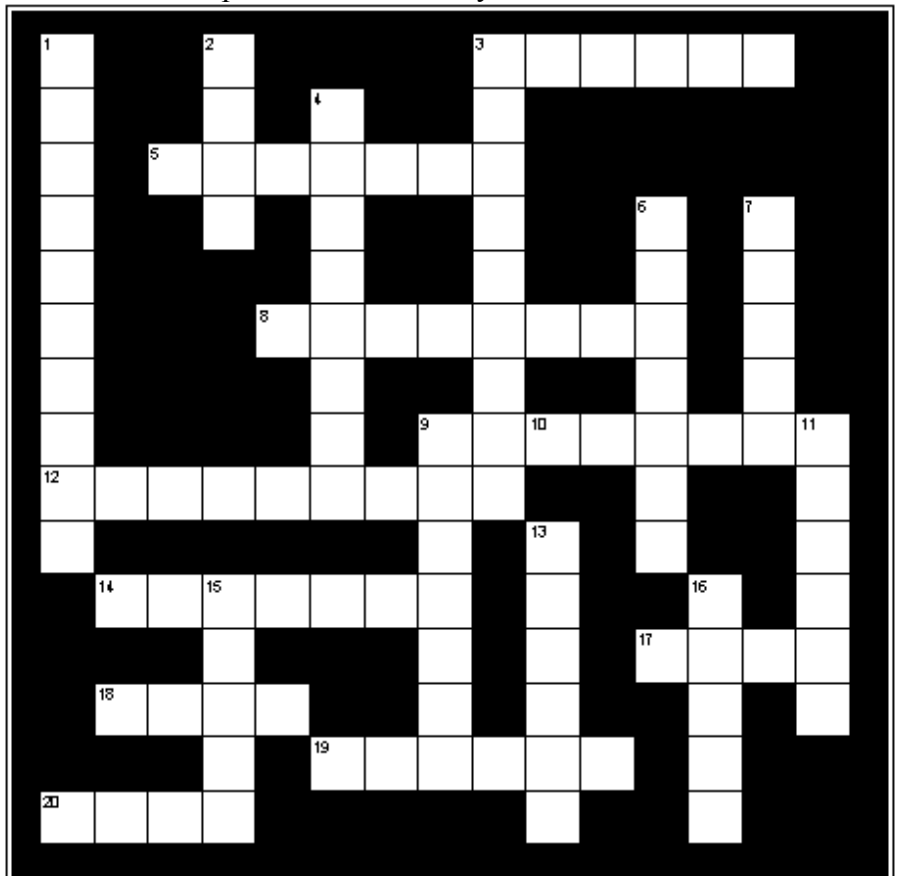
Across

3. First manager to be ejected from a World Series game
5. First to hit .400 vs. Major League pitching
8. First Rookie of the Year
10. First player to hold out for more money
12. First batter to get 100 hits from each side of the plate
14. First team to wear double-knit uniforms
17. First batter to hit 4 HRs in one game
18. First to sign a million dollar contract
19. First Commissioner of Baseball
20. First to hit 500 HRs

Down

1. First major league night game was in
2. First umpire to use a chest protector
3. First pitcher to strike out 20 in a game
4. First Cy Young Award winner
6. First to hit 40 HRs and have 40 SBs
7. First to steal 100 bases in a season
9. First ballpark with synthetic turf was in
11. First catcher to use a Turkey Neck
13. First batter to reach 175 RBIs in a season
15. First paid professional ballplayer
16. First manager to use cut-off plays

Answers will be posted in Wednesday's North Star.



REGIONAL HEADLINES

Corpse flower becomes big business

Click2Houston.com

HOUSTON, Texas - It seems as if everyone is talking about the corpse flower named Lois, which stands 6 feet tall. Hundreds of people gather each day at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, waiting for the flower to fully bloom and give off its unique smell that has been compared to a dead body.

"Lois is so beautiful. I can't wait until she blooms, plus I want to see what she smells like," said museum volunteer Julia Fenelon.

Museum attendance has risen 370 percent since the smelly flower has been on display. The museum is now selling Lois paraphernalia, which include buttons and T-shirts.

"We started making buttons July 14, and by the end of the day, we sold out," said Fenelon.

The museum's horticulturist has seen his popularity increase as well.

"I'm trying to keep a level head, but I'm just riding on the coattails of this beautiful flower," said Zach Stayton. "Everybody wants to know when it will bloom, and it could happen any

day now." The corpse flower has only bloomed 28 times in the United States.

DNA tester casts doubts on latest chupacabra scare

AOL News

HOOD COUNTY, Texas - For some residents of north Texas, the legend of the chupacabra (sometimes spelled "chupacabras") just grew a tad more fearsome. But for a Texas State University biologist who has tested alleged chupacabra DNA, the latest sightings of the mythical monsters is just more proof that "people are strange."

Mike Forstner has seen it all before. In 2007, he was called in to test the DNA of what had been termed the Cuero chupacabra, an odd carcass found out in the brush that had stirred fears of real-life monsters prowling the desert.

"Turned out to be a coyote," Forstner told Surge Desk. "Just like the tests on these new animals will find."

The new claims of chupacabra (the name roughly translates as "goat-sucker") in our midst come from Hood County, Texas, where two caninelike

animals were killed this week and have been sent to a lab for DNA testing.

As reported by WOAI news, the physical appearance of the animals is enough to stir rumors of monsters.

"All I know is, it wasn't normal," Animal Control Officer Frank Hackett, who shot one of the animals in a local rancher's barn, told WOAI. "It was ugly, real ugly. I'm not going to lie on that one."

While Forstner doesn't argue with the aesthetic description of the animals shot in Hood County, his explanation is decidedly less mystical than some residents.

"We're either going to find out that they're a Mexican hairless dog species, and may have been someone's pet, or that they're coyotes," Forstner said.

According to Forstner, claims of chupacabra sightings are not uncommon in rural Texas, where poaching coyote and dog species are a part of daily life.

"There are people who are emotionally involved in these animals being something that they aren't, for whatever reason," Forstner said. "Jim Morrison had it right: People are strange."

You are invited

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.

University of Maryland University College Europe Celebrates 60 years

Where: Education Center,

COB Speicher

When: Aug. 6, noon - 5:00 p.m.

THE

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

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

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