

The North Star

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



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TF Wings case colors, head for home

By Spc. Cassandra Monroe
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.



Photo by Spc. Cassandra Monroe, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

(Left) The 25th CAB, 25th ID Commander, Colonel Michael Lundy, and 25th CAB, 25th ID Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Jesus Ruiz, prepare to case the 25th CAB colors during a Color Casing ceremony, July 24, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq.

After nearly a year of supplying combat aviation support to operations in northern Iraq, Soldiers in the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, cased their colors, July 24, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq, -- signifying the end of their deployment.

"[Task Force Wings] came together from bases from Tennessee, Europe, Hawaii, and flew as one," said U.S. Division-North Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo. "You left an indelible mark on this task force, and you showed them what a combat aviation brigade can do. You set the bar high for all of the aviation outfits. But, you especially left a mark on the 3rd Infantry Division."

In all, Task Force Wings supported close to 22,000 air mission requests, more than 141,000 mission hours, and moved 105,000 passengers and seven million pounds of cargo.

"One thing I firmly believe is that this combat aviation brigade exists for

only one reason, and that is to support the Soldiers on the ground," said 25th CAB Commander, Col. Michael Lundy. "Keeping those soldiers off the roads when they don't have to be there; protecting them when they do; and always being ready to ensure that he can accomplish his mission is always our focus."

Protecting Soldiers and making history is exactly what this task force did during its 11 months in Iraq. The brigade supported Task Force Marne's efforts to maintain security and operations during the March 7 Iraqi elections.

The 25th CAB continued to support Task Force Marne by facilitating transportation of personnel and equipment during the transition to stability operations.

"It's embodied in our Hawaiian motto of the 25th, 'Leele Makou No Na Pouali,' which means, 'we fly for the troops,'" said Col. Lundy. "I'm very proud that the Soldiers of Task Force Wings have lived this motto

See CASING, Page 3

Big vision for small village

3ID team provides resources for new school

By Capt. Tim Mills
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The security detachment compound was bustling. Soldiers walked back and forth, engaged in conversations and smiling. Their mission was a little different from their normal security patrols.

Even the cargo for this mission wasn't – soccer balls, toys and clothes were loaded into their heavily-armored Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. The construction of the Al Haneen primary school was recently completed and the Soldiers were on a mission to give back to the local Iraqi community.

"The school is the biggest thing in Albu Hamaad," said Capt. David Bright, commander for the Division Special Troops Battalion Personal Security Detachment, 3rd Infantry Division, and the patrol leader. "There are only seven or eight other structures in the town."

As Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division rolled into the small village, it looked like the ceremony was for

them. A crowd of more than 60 people was in the school's courtyard, including 28 school-aged children, who lined up against one of the school's walls and patiently waited for the ceremony to start.

As the Iraqi flag was raised, seven Iraqi children lined up in the center of the courtyard near the flagpole, while Mohammad Fahad, an eighth grader, saluted. Fahad held his salute as the 3rd Infantry Division Band played the Iraqi National Anthem.

Fahad said he likes his new school. "It's a new school and it's a big school."

The primary school will provide education for children up to the age of 14, and will serve the village of Albu Hamaad and two other surrounding villages.

According to Capt. Bright, approximately 200 children will attend the school and some students will walk as far as six kilometers from nearby villages.

The Village Sheik, Dawood Salman Rabia, is happy the school was built and believes it will benefit the lives of

the local children.

"It's a very good project for the village and especially for the children," said Sheik Rabia. "Thank you, everyone, for building this school," he said.

According to Capt. Calvin Fisher, officer in charge of the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone, which contracted the project, construction began in November and was finished in June.

"The project started because the village needed an adequate school. The previous building was never designed to be a school. It lacked adequate classrooms and was a health and safety concern."

Additionally, Capt. Fisher said, "The new school has increased from two classrooms to six with larger classroom space, larger restroom accommodations and office and lounge space for the administrators and teachers."

Captain Bright has patrolled this small community for the last eight months.

"Because of projects like this, we have a good relationship with the community," he said.

And, soon, that relationship will grow even stronger. The Commander's Emergency Response Program has planned to provide clean drinking water for the local community.

"The water distillation unit will provide clean drinking water for the school, the village and the surrounding area," said Capt. Fisher, who expects the project to start as early as next month.

But, for now, the local citizens are happy to celebrate the opening of their new school. After the formal ceremony, the 3ID band continued to play and members of the community gathered around tables to eat and then toured the new school.

For this small village community and especially the students, the Al Haneen primary school provides hope for the future.

Raghda Zari, a third grader, says she will be attending school here and she hopes to one day be a teacher.



Photo by Capt. Tim Mills, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Iraqi children from the Albu Hamaad village and surrounding area gather for the grand opening of the Al Haneen primary school held in Albu Hamaad, July 19.

'Golden Dragons' begin meeting with local leaders

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

Meeting with the local leaders is very important especially for a new unit, which is why "Golden Dragon" leadership of 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2nd Stryker Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, immediately began meeting with local leaders after arriving to Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

First Lieutenant Matthew Clark, a "Golden Dragon" platoon leader with Company B, met with the Schawn City Council for the first time, July 21, and said meetings like these will give him and his Soldiers a better idea of the area.

During the meeting, 1st Lt. Clark joined the leader he is replacing, Staff Sgt. Jerome Lyles, platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, and discussed how local leadership plans to facilitate irrigation, security and schools in the area, according to 1st Lt. Clark.

"These are some of the biggest issues we have in the village," said Rizgar Abdullah Latif, the mayor of Schawn. "The wells are dry, pipes are broken and many of the schools need to be rebuilt."

However, instead of requesting that U.S. forces fix their problems the mayor said he reported all of the issues to the Government of Iraq and many

of the issues are already scheduled to be fixed.

"They have offered to assist us in rebuilding two of the schools and the wells; they even said they would assist us in building a park for our children," said the mayor.

According to Staff Sgt. Lyles this is why they started holding these combined meetings.

"We have representatives from the Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade, Iraqi police, the local schools, and leadership; so everyone has an oppor-

tunity to voice any issues and it will be heard," he said.

The 3rd platoon said they plan on continuing to attend these meeting.

"We plan on having many different meetings with the leaders in the area," said 1st Lt. Clark. "It lets us know what is going on in the communities and we can ensure the needs of the people are being met."

"Golden Dragon" Soldiers arrived in the area earlier this month and will be replacing the "Ready First" Soldiers who've been there since November.



Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1st BCT, 1st AD PAO

(Middle) First Lieutenant Matthew Clark, a "Golden Dragon" platoon leader with Co. B, 1/14th Inf., 2nd SAAB, 25th ID, out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, and Staff Sgt. Jerome Lyles, platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon, Battery B, 2/3rd FA, 1st BCT, 1st AD, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, talk to Rizgar Abdullah Latif, the mayor of Schawn following 1st Lt. Clark's first meeting with the Schawn City Council, near Kirkuk, Iraq, July 21.

Continued from CASING, Page 1

every day in support of our brothers and sisters on the ground. Daily, I've been amazed by their dedication, their selflessness, their ingenuity, and their courage.

"They're truly an exceptional bunch of aggressive aviation professionals that will always place the mission first and always try to go over, around, and under or through any challenge to provide maximum support to the ground maneuver units."

This deployment might have been a long time away from home, but for some Soldiers, it was one they can

walk away from with a sense of accomplishment.

"Overall, I'd say that our task force was successful," said Warrant Officer Scott Turvey, the standardizing pilot for Task Force Diamondhead, with 2nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 25th CAB. "We've implemented a number of techniques, tactics and procedures we utilized over the course of time here. The time was well spent for us, and the time spent on Soldiers was good too."

In addition to 25th CAB's four organic aviation battalions, it was able

to accomplish its missions with the support of: Task Force 1-230th Air Cavalry Squadron, and Task Force 2-159 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, "Gunslinger," both out of Tennessee; the 164th Expeditionary Air Squadron, "Skulls," which was the first time that an Army combat aviation brigade had direct responsibility for planning and utilization of Air Force C-130 assets. The task force conducted attack, reconnaissance and security missions and provided general support and medical evacuation throughout northern Iraq.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Mr. Brad Banker, a New Orleans, La., native, has worked on and off in Iraq since 2005 on jobs from base construction, outside the wire police stations and now as the site manager at the Hazardous Waste Treatment Center. During the past year he oversaw over 15 million pounds of material pass through the Contingency Operating Base Speicher HWTC, and as a chemist, it was an exciting time. His work is truly a case of leaving something better than when he found it. Brad also recently played an important role in the USF-I J9 media trip to COB Speicher where Iraqi and American reporters saw first-hand the environmental work being done in Iraq. His dedication to the mission and to leaving a cleaner environment for the Iraqi people will have positive implications for strategic relations between Iraq and the United States. His actions reflect great credit upon him and the URS Corporation and make him a natural choice for this week's Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.



Sergeant First Class Milo and Staff Sgt. Craig Chambers, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, and a Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., native, are selected for their outstanding performance as Kennel Master and Specialized Search Dog Team. Sergeant First Class Milo is on his first deployment while Staff Sgt. Chambers has supported operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Their ability to work in any environment make them a valuable asset to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. As the Kennel Master, Staff Sgt. Chambers leads by example never turning down an opportunity to assist his fellow Soldiers. Together they have conducted over 200 combat and force protection missions that included cache searches, cordon and search operations, and open area searches. When not on mission, Sgt. 1st Class Milo enjoys watching his favorite movie, "The Adventures of Milo and Otis", a story featuring "Milo" the cat and his canine pal "Otis." In order to recognize these accomplishments, they have been selected as this week's Task Force Marne "Dog Face" Heroes of the North.

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' online inbox goes live

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

A new online inbox that enables servicemembers and their families to comment anonymously about the impact of a possible repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law has gone live.

The inbox will enable service-members and Families to offer their thoughts about how a repeal of the law that prohibits gays and lesbians from openly serving in the military might affect military readiness, military effectiveness and unit cohesion, recruiting and retention, and family readi-

ness, a defense official explained.

Army officials are encouraging all soldiers and Army family members to provide input to this process, said Army Col. Thomas Languirand, chief of the command policy and programs division for the Army's deputy chief of staff for personnel. "We want to hear directly from them as we continue the review of the issues regarding 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,'" he said.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates created an intradepartment, interservice working group to conduct a fair, objective, comprehensive and dispassionate review of these issues, the official said.

The online inbox is one method the group will use to systematically engage with the force and their families.

A non-Defense Department contractor will monitor comments made through the inbox and eliminate any identifiable information inadvertently submitted to ensure anonymity, the official said.

The inbox is posted at <http://www.defense.gov/dadt>. Respondents must possess an official CAC Card to provide input.

You are invited

Paul Wall, Big Boi and DJ

IMan

Where: FOB Warrior

When: August 5

Nathan Lee

Where: FOB Marex

When: August 6

Where: FOB Warhorse

When: August 7

University of Maryland
University College Europe
Celebrates 60 years

Where: Education Center,
COB Speicher

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

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Ceremonial weapon missing since 1907

Baxley News-Banner

BAXLEY COUNTY, Ga.

-- This time, it's a ceremonial sword from the War of 1812, awarded by the Georgia Legislature to native son Daniel Appling, a national hero of that conflict. Appling County is named after him. The sword had been missing since 1907.

Just three years ago, Georgia's long-lost state copy of the Declaration of Independence was found by an archivist digging into old records. "Two major finds like this in such a short period is amazing," said Georgia Archives Director David Carmicheal.

The sword was spotted by a former archivist while thumbing through an Antique magazine in a barbershop.

"He came upon a full-page, full-color advertisement offering the sword for sale," Carmicheal said. "We know it's the Appling sword because the ad had the inscription that matches exactly what the Legislature had etched on it."

He contacted the owner and began negotiations, thinking the sword might legally belong to the state. But after consulting the state attorney general's office, it was determined the owner had no obligation to return it.

The owner, who Carmicheal says can't be named, wanted \$250,000, "and in these hard times for the state we knew we couldn't ask the Legislature for the money."

The dealer has agreed to sell it for \$100,000 and take a tax write-off for the rest, Carmicheal said.

A nonprofit group, the Friends of Georgia Archives and History, offered to help, and so far has raised more than \$30,000.

Carmicheal said the friends group is asking for tax-deductible donations, which can be sent to the Georgia Archives, 5800 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, GA 30260-1101 or made online at www.fogah.org.

"Without this effort we could never return the sword to Georgia," he said.

Today, the friends and other groups, including the United States Daughters of 1812, plan "an all-out effort, calling potential donors, to ask for help," said friends vice chair Dianne Cannestra of Sandy Springs.

"This is an astonishingly important piece of our past," Cannestra said.

"Eighteen people on our friends committee will be making calls on the Fourth, kind of a telethon, to potential donors. We are quite confident."

"We're hoping to have it back to put in the Hall of Valor on the first floor of the Capitol with our collection of historic flags in time for the 1812 bicentennial" in two years, Carmicheal said.

"This is a one-of-a kind artifact that rightly belongs to the state of Georgia," said Gordon L. Jones, senior military historian at the Atlanta History Center.

James Cobb, a history professor at the University of Georgia, said the

sword "is certainly a major find by anybody's standards."

Born in 1787 in Columbia County near Augusta, Appling joined the army in 1808, and at the May 29, 1814, Battle of Sandy Creek in New York led a small group of riflemen that defeated a much larger British force.

Later that year, his 110 riflemen delayed 8,200 British troops at Plattsburgh, N.Y., in what Carmicheal said "is considered the most decisive battle of the War of 1812 because it ... strengthened the Americans' hand at the bargaining table."

Appling, a lieutenant colonel, was honored in October 1814 by the Georgia General Assembly, which voted to present him with "an elegant sword, suitable for an officer of his grade," for "his cool and deliberate valor" in action.

But Appling died before he got the sword, which then, by act of the Legislature, became state property. It was loaned out in 1907 for inclusion in Georgia's exhibit at the 300th anniversary celebration of the founding of Jamestown and disappeared.

"We don't know if it was returned to Georgia, or returned and lost, or given away," Carmicheal said.

The sword, like Georgia's original copy of the Declaration, has "rich historical and symbolic value," Carmicheal said.

Cannestra said, "It's a symbol of who we are and what we are, and it should be at the Capitol for all to see."

THE

North Star

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

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1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
1st Armored Division

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