

The North Star

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



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U.S. ground, air forces join IA for live fire exercise

By Spc. Dustin Gautney,
2nd HBCT Public Affairs

A thunderous boom is heard from miles away. Seconds later the explosive impact slams into the side of a nearby hill. The Paladin hits its mark from miles away. The impact triggers over a dozen Iraqi Army 50-cal. mounted trucks into action, and they converge on the Paladin's target, all while the target is flanked by U.S. Army Kiowa Warrior helicopters.

The scene is what one would expect from a blockbuster movie production; however, for the Soldiers involved it was a rare opportunity to participate in a combined arms live fire exercise held in Ninewa province, in northern Iraq, July 24.

The CALFEX was one of a handful ever conducted in Iraq, and it allowed U.S. Soldiers from Contingency Operating Site Marez to work alongside the Iraqi Army soldiers, not as trainers but as equals, to converge and eliminate a target, said Capt. Jamar White, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and coordinator for the exercise.

"The whole exercise is something that is a rare opportunity for not only the Iraqi Army soldiers but for U.S. Soldiers as well," said Capt. White.

The exercise took three months to plan and execute, and required the combined efforts of the 2nd HBCT; 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, 2nd Stryker Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division; and 2-12th Iraqi Army, Capt. White said.

"The exercise consisted of having long range artillery provided by 1-9 FA, followed by air support by 2-25 [SAAB] with the Kiowa Warrior helicopters and ground troops from 2-12 IA, all attack and converge on a single target," said Capt. White. "When we approached each unit on the idea of the CALFEX everyone was excited to have this opportunity."

"None were more excited than the Iraqi Army soldiers," Capt. White said.

Staff Brigadier General Mahdi Abdul Aziz Hamid said the exercise was a great opportunity for his soldiers.

"The chance for all of us to work together and work with field artillery and air has been a great experience," Staff Brig. Gen.

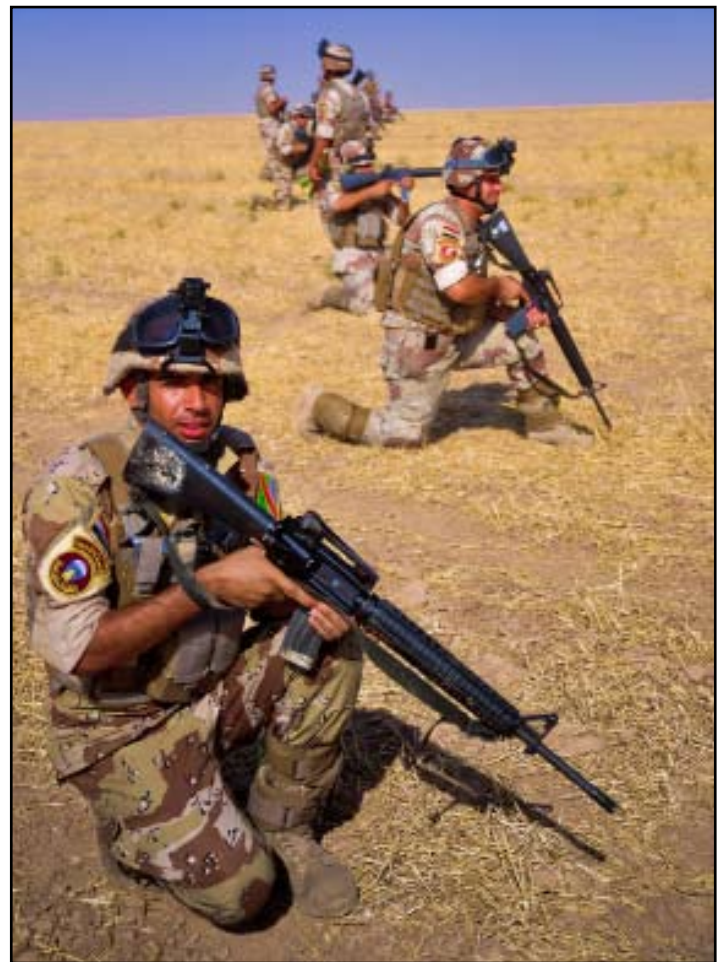


Photo by Spc. Dustin Gautney, 2HBCT Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 2-12th Iraqi Army await orders during a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise with U.S. Soldiers from 2HBCT, 3ID, and 2/25 Avn., 2SAAB, 25th ID, in Ninewa province, northern Iraq, July 24.

Hamid said.

Staff Brigadier General Hamid said that he hoped for more training like the CALFEX will continue between the 2-12 IA and the 2HBCT in the near future.

"On behalf of all the

Soldiers we cannot thank the Spartan Brigade enough for this great training, and I hope we will continue to grow and expand this training as both forces work as brothers," said Staff Brig. Gen. Hamid.

26th BSB provides an eyes in the sky

By 2nd Lt. Ryan S. Dudley
26BSB, 2nd HBCT, PAO

In modern combat, aerostats have proved to be a worthy asset for the Spartan Brigade. The 26th Brigade Support Battalion was called to provide the operators and maintainers for the aerial piece of equipment.

In addition to helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles, aerostats have become a familiar sight above operating posts and bases. Each is equipped with capabilities that enhance force protection of bases, and they have the advantage of being able to stay in the air considerably longer than helicopters or UAVs, due to its non-dependency on fuel.

Prior to deployment, the BSB Soldiers were trained how to operate the aerostat. The Soldiers attended a month-long training course, where they learned the history



Photo Courtesy of Google Images

and science of the system, launching and mooring procedures, technology packages and controls, and routine maintenance. Each Soldier plays a specific role during normal operations, but they were trained to perform every task.

"You get familiar with the area, spotting things that weren't there before," said Spc. Jimmy Deras, 26th BSB, aerostat operator. "This is where the Sol-

diers' experience, diligence and inquisitive nature come into play in spotting potential threats. If they observe anything unusual, they notify the brigade and base defense for further investigation."

The system's potential has yet to be reached, as it continues to be used in innovative ways. Its diverse suite of capabilities and ease of adaptability provide a distinct advantage

to U.S. personnel in support of full-spectrum operations. Convoys may be monitored, while suspicious activity can be observed and detected from a safe distance.

It also serves as an active deterrent for those that intend ill will toward friendly forces or local civilians. It was recently used to record units conducting training exercises, so they can review the exercise and evaluate their performance.

Hawaii Strykers build relationships in Iraq

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

To strengthen the partnership between the "Golden Dragons" of 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2nd Stryker Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, and the leadership of Qarah Anyar, near Kirkuk, Iraq, multiple key leader engagements were held, July 27.

"We held these meetings to gain a better understanding of the priorities of the village and discuss upcoming projects they have planned," said Capt. Patrick Stauffer, commander of Co. B, 1/14th Inf.

Captain Stauffer, a Jaredsville, Md., native, and his Soldiers met with the

mayor, district council, Iraqi Security Forces and leadership of the local hospital.

During each of the meetings the Qarah Anyar leadership expressed how they are looking forward to building a friendship with the new unit and how they hope to have more projects in the area.

"The U.S. forces have always helped us and we are happy to welcome the new Soldiers," said the village Mayor, who goes by Evesta.

The local police chief agreed the Iraqi police in the area look forward to working with the "Golden Dragons."

"We are sad to see our partners (Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion,

3rd Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division) go but are very happy they will be with their Families and look forward to building a friendship with the new unit," said Col. Osman Abdullah Hanameen, Qarah Anyar Iraqi police chief. "Anything you need we are here for you."

According to Capt. Stauffer, the leadership of the village is not the only ones looking forward to the partnership.

"My men and I are looking forward to picking-up where Bravo Battery left off and continuing their good work," he said. "We plan on working very closely with the Provincial Reconstruction Team to bring more projects to the area."

French horn player works behind scenes

By Sgt. Jessica Rohr
135th Mobile PA Det.

Staff Sergeant Shawn D. Cupp, a native of Monroe, Mich., has been in the Army almost five years and is going on his second deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq. Staff Sergeant Cupp is the senior operations noncommissioned officer and a French horn player with the Task Force Marne Band, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga.

During middle school Staff Sgt. Cupp transitioned from the trumpet to the French horn.

"My Grandmother went to school for music when she was younger," said Staff Sgt. Cupp. "She advised me, even though I was a really good trumpet player, to switch to the French horn. She told me that there are a million great trumpet players in the world that will be lining up around the corner to get a job, and there's really not that many great French horn players out there."

"I hated it until ninth grade, when I was taught by Linda Deatricks," said Staff Sgt. Cupp, as he spoke about his high school horn section instructor. "She was really eccentric and very spontaneous."

He would have to do these long tone exercises that are normally boring, but she made it fun for him somehow, shared Staff Sgt. Cupp.

Prior to enlisting into the Army, Staff Sgt. Cupp performed with the Southfield Symphony, Croswell Opera House, Monroe Community College Band, Macomb Symphony Orchestra,

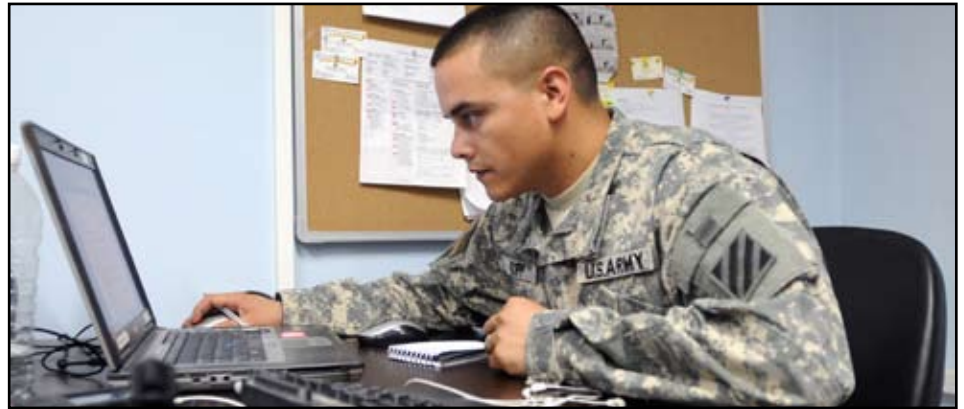


Photo by Sgt. Jessica Rohr, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Staff Sergeant Shawn D. Cupp, a native of Monroe, Mich., the senior operations noncommissioned officer and a French horn player with the 3rd ID Band, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., works on his computer to manage operational missions for the band while deployed to Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, July 3.

Adrian Symphony orchestra, and the Southern Great Lakes Symphony.

After completing basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C., Nov. 2005, he graduated from the U.S. Army School of Music at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, Norfolk, Va., as a bandsperson with an emphasis in French horn and an instructor qualification in music theory, April 2006.

"My college instructor was a former [United States Army Band] "Pershing's Own" performer and told me all about Army bands," shared Staff Sgt. Cupp.

"I wanted full time employment that would help pay off my student loans and allow me to play [music] more than I already was," said Staff Sgt. Cupp.

At first Staff Sgt. Cupp tried out for special bands in the Navy. After being accepted into the Army band with 3rd ID, Staff Sgt. Cupp decided he liked it and stayed. He plans to pursue a warrant officer career in the near future.

During his deployment with Task Force Marne, Staff Sgt. Cupp has been taking care of operational missions for the band.

He ensures that band groups such as "4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse" and "Sasquatch" are able to entertain armed forces throughout United States Division – North, by coordinating and planning transportation of equipment and personnel, facilities, overnight billeting if needed and more. Staff Sergeant Cupp considers himself to be the military equivalent of a band manager.

The son of Sheila and Al Bussell of Monroe, Mich., Staff Sgt. Cupp is a 1998 graduate of Jefferson High School. He attended Eastern Michigan University from 1998 to 2002. Currently, Staff Sgt. Cupp is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in music at Central Michigan University. Staff Sergeant and his wife, Brandie Cupp, have two sons, Joshua, 1, and Caleb, 5. His family currently resides in Taylor, Mich.

You are invited

Paul Wall, Big Boi and DJ

IMan

Where: FOB Warrior

When: Aug. 5

Candlebox

Where: COB Speicher

When: Aug. 12

University of Maryland University College Europe

Celebrates 60 years

Where: Education Center,

COB Speicher

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

Changes to North Star Newsletter:

Beginning Tuesday,
Aug. 3, the *North Star*
will be printed every
Tuesday and Friday.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant Cristi A. Pettit, a Stevens Point, Wis., native, is a light wheel mechanic with Co. A, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and is currently executing duties outside her formal military training as a vehicle commander and squad leader. Sergeant Pettit has shown exceptional tactical ability while conducting sustainment convoys. She was the first person to respond when another vehicle in her convoy experienced a rollover on Route Tampa. Sergeant Pettit climbed into the downed vehicle and supervised the extraction of personnel injured in the incident. Sergeant Pettit remained on ground to help provide security for the recovery of all sensitive items and the vehicle. Sergeant Pettit makes herself available 24/7 to help all Soldiers and she is known as an approachable leader who will help with problems while instilling discipline and a solid work ethic in anyone she has under her command. Sergeant Pettit exemplifies the Noncommissioned Officer's Creed with her dedication to Soldiers and the unit mission. It is for these qualities that she is selected as Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Specialist Nicholas J. Dueno, a Delray Beach, Fl., native, is a member of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry's Medical Platoon, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and was an integral part of the effort to render aid to the victims of a suicide attack on the citizens of Tal Afar May 14. Specialist Dueno volunteered to join a combined team from two separate squadrons that responded to a request for assistance at the Tal Afar Hospital. During his time in the hospital, Specialist Dueno calmly assisted Iraqi medical authorities with the treatment of a 14-year-old teenager who received multiple shrapnel injuries. He also provided security for the squadron surgeon, the squadron physician's assistant, and other medics as they moved from patient to patient performing their duties amid the chaos within the hospital following the mass casualty event. Specialist Dueno's actions are the mark of a true professional, reflect great credit upon himself, the Raider Squadron, and the Spartan Brigade, and make him a most deserving Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

The history behind Mohammad al-Mahdi (the 12th Imam)

Cultural Tidbit Special to the North Star

Mohammad al-Mahdi is the individual believed by Twelver Shi'a Muslims to be the Mahdi, an ultimate savior of mankind and the final Imam of the Twelve Imams. Twelver Shi'a believe that al-Mahdi was born in 869 AD, and did not die but rather was hidden by God, and will later appear with Jesus in order to fulfill their mission of bringing peace and justice to the world. He assumed the Imamate at five years of age.

Twelver Shi'as believe that Mahdi was born in 869AD as Abdul Qasim Muhammad ibn Hasan bin Ali. His mother was believed to be Narjis, who was a Byzantine Princess who pretended to be a slave so that she could travel from her kingdom to Arabia. His father is Hasan al-Askari (the 11th Imam). Shi'a believe that his birth was kept a secret due to the persecution that the Shi'as were facing during that time at the hands of al-

Mu'atamid, the Abbasid Caliph.

The eleventh Imam Hasan al-Askari died on January 874AD, and since that day his son Mahdi is believed by Shi'as to be the Imam, appointed by Allah, to lead the believers of the era. The most popular account of al-Mahdi in Shi'a literature is taken from his father's funeral. It is reported that as the funeral prayer was about to begin, al-Mahdi's uncle, Jafar ibn Ali approached to lead the prayers. However, al-Mahdi approached and commanded, "Move aside, Uncle; only an Imam can lead the funeral prayer of an Imam." Jafar moved aside, and the five-year-old child led the funeral prayer of his father. It is reported that it was at this very moment that al-Mahdi disappeared and went into occultation.

The period of occultation is divided into two parts: the Minor Occultation (874-941), consists of the first few decades after the Imam's disappearance when maintained through deputies

of the Imam. The Major Occultation began 941 and is believed to continue until a time decided by God, when the Mahdi will reappear to bring absolute justice to the world.

Shi'as believe that Imam al-Mahdi will reappear when the world has fallen into chaos, and civil war emerges between the human races for no reason. Shi'as believe that Jesus will also come, after Imam Mahdi's reappearance and al-Mahdi will follow him, and both will destroy oppression and deception, and bring justice and peace to the world.



A picture of the 12 Imams

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Dance class helps Parkinson's patients use movement as a strategy

Seattle Times

KIRKLAND, Wash. -- At this dance class in Kirkland, the students walk in slowly, some rigidly or with a bit of a tremor. They take their places, not at a ballet barre or on the dance floor, but sitting in chairs.

As the live music starts, they flutter their fingers like hummingbird wings, point their toes along the ground. Limbs loosen and start to flow. And perhaps something even more important happens: Smiles emerge and laughter erupts.

An unusual dance class is taking place: one taught by professional dancers and offered free of charge for people with Parkinson's disease and their caregivers. It's one of a small but growing number of such classes worldwide.

The class is called Dance for Parkinson's, based on the Dance for PD program created in 2001 by the Brooklyn-based Mark Morris Dance Group and the Brooklyn Parkinson Group. Seattle and Spokane are among some 40 communities worldwide that have replicated the model.

The idea is that dance helps ease the symptoms — and some hope might even slow the progression — of Parkinson's disease, a disorder of the brain that leads to rigid muscles, shaking, impaired balance and

difficulty with walking, movement and coordination.

It's long been accepted that exercise and movement are important for those with Parkinson's. In addition to physical therapy, there are yoga and tai chi groups for people with Parkinson's, for instance.

But the idea of dance as beneficial for those with Parkinson's is fairly new. While there hasn't been much research yet that shows the benefits of dance for those with Parkinson's, one recent study did find that at least one form of dance — the tango — helps improve balance and mobility in such patients.

Dr. Monique Giroux, medical director of the Booth Gardner Parkinson's Care Center at Evergreen Hospital Medical Center in Kirkland, says that, in many ways, dance is ideal for those with Parkinson's.

Research is showing that exercises that are more creative and engaging may help the brain enhance its nerve connections and improve how the brain works, she said.

But just as important, the dance class is an opportunity for joy, creative expression and socializing — an antidote to the depression and isolation that can come with Parkinson's.

"Putting someone on a treadmill and just asking them to walk more — that's a challenging task for someone who already has movement problems," Giroux said. But "tapping into an

exercise that's fun and engaging — that's going to work."

At a recent class at the Peter Kirk Community Center in Kirkland, where the Dance for Parkinson's sessions are held, the teachers led the students in movements inspired by birds.

They learned the steps first while sitting in chairs, then standing up, then moving across the floor, building on each movement until they had an entire routine: swooping like herons, lumbering like owls, fluttering like tropical birds.

A musician, improvising on an electric violin, accompanied throughout.

"The joy is wonderful," said Jenny Getchell, 46, of Sammamish, who has had Parkinson's since she was 8. Plus, "I feel real comfortable around people with Parkinson's because they know what it's like."

When someone has Parkinson's, the nerve cells in the brain that produce the chemical dopamine are slowly destroyed. Dopamine facilitates movement, so when there's a lack of dopamine, it's hard for a patient to initiate and control movements, unless she or he consciously thinks about and directs them.

As a result, that will make movements like walking unpredictable for those with Parkinson's. They may end up shuffling. But when they focus on where they put their feet, things go more smoothly.

THE

North Star

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

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

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