

The North Star

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New incinerators limit use of burn pits in Kirkuk

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

Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, "Ready First" 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, are doing their part to clean up the air at Forward Operating Base Warrior, near Kirkuk, Iraq, by opening three incinerators and a recycling center which will limit the use of burn pits.

A ribbon cutting ceremony, Aug. 4, marked the opening of the center. In at-

tendance were: Task Force Marne Deputy Commanding General Maneuver, Brigadier General Patrick J. Donahue, II; Col. Patricia Sellers, commander of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, Ready First; civilian and local contractors; and Ready First Soldiers involved in the project.

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, the senior leadership received a tour of the area.

"The incinerators burn six tons of trash per day and will reduce the amount of pol-

lutants released into the air around Kirkuk," said Capt. Elizabeth Ortiz, the Ready First Brigade environmental science engineer officer.

Captain Ortiz also said reducing the amount of pollution made her push for the project to be completed quickly.

"We finished quickly because it was the right thing to do," she said.

She continued by saying this project protects the people of Kirkuk and the Soldiers on FOB Warrior from

becoming sick from the burn pits, which releases dangerous smoke into the air.

During the tour, Brig. Gen. Donahue and Col. Sellers were able to see the area where the recycling center will be located.

John Sasso, a civilian contractor overseeing the project, said the recycling center will reduce pollution even more, when it opens in September.

"By recycling wood, aluminum, cardboard and plastic, the amount of waste that reaches the incinerators is greatly reduced," he said.

Sasso added the recycled materials will also stimulate the local economy.

"Local contractors and companies who purchase the recycled materials can then make new products from the materials," he said.

Captain Ortiz added their ultimate goal with the two projects is to eliminate the use of burn pits on FOB Warrior.

At the end of the tour and ceremony, Brig. Gen. Donahue thanked the contractors and Soldiers for all of their hard work.

"I am very impressed by the project," he said. "Thank you for all that each of you did."



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

(Left to right) Captain Elizabeth Ortiz, the 1st BCT environmental science engineer officer; TF Marne DCG - Maneuver, Brig. Gen. Patrick J. Donahue, II; Col. Patricia Sellers, commander of 1-1 STB, 1st BCT; "Ready First" leadership and civilian contractors cut the ribbon marking the opening of three incinerators at FOB Warrior, Aug. 4.

Spiritual needs met through Baptism

By Spc. Michael Adams
TF Marne PAO

While separated from Family in a foreign country, Soldiers often look to chaplains for spiritual and personal guidance.

July 31 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Spc. Ivan Aguirre, a Soldier with Task Force Marne, was able to gain peace through one of the many services chaplains provide by getting baptized.

This was the first baptism on COB Speicher during this deployment

"Once you're raised out of the water, it's indescribable," said the Bayamon, Puerto Rico, native. "The best way I could put it is ... let's say you had a big rucksack full of stuff in the bag and it just came that moment it came off your back and you felt that relief ... just letting go and being a new person without your rucksack."

Specialist Aguirre also said he had created a stronger bond with his wife, Sgt. 1st Class Shwon Aguirre, the Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, career counselor, from Sylvania, Ga. The couple will be married a year Aug. 21.

"It's only the beginning of a stronger more fruitful marriage," he said.

"I love my wife unconditionally. I'm only looking forward to spending the rest of my life with her, growing old and having more children."

For Spc. Aguirre, being baptized in Iraq was significant for him as well.

"It's been a privilege and a blessing to be somewhere overseas, especially in Iraq, and have the opportunity, not only to be here with my wife, but also to be able to go to church and grow spiritually more towards God in our

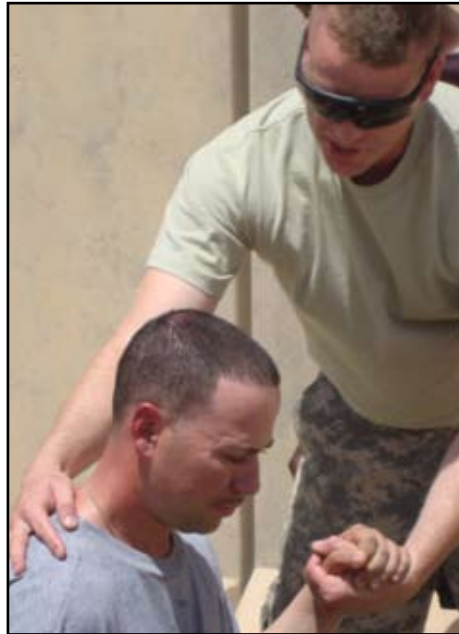


Photo by Chaplain (Maj.) Terry Romine, TF Marne Specialist Ivan Aguirre, a Soldier with TF Marne, prepares himself to be baptized by Chaplain (Capt.) Charles Lowman, a chaplain with 1/27th Inf. Regt., 2nd SAAB, 25th ID, July 31, at COB Speicher.

marriage, he added.

"It has been a real gift from God and a real blessing and I am eternally grateful for that."

Chaplain (Major) Terry Romine serves as the Family Life Chaplain for Task Force Marne. The Hoxie, Ark., native said chaplains provide religious accommodations first.

"Our role is to make sure we meet the religious needs of Soldiers," he said. "We offer worship services in a number of different traditions."

He added that chaplains in northern Iraq have offered services in languages other than English as one of many ways to meet Soldiers' spiritual needs.

Chaplains also offer pastoral and personal counseling. Unit chaplains

can also serve as mediators in unit conflicts.

But for Chaplain Romine, being a spiritual leader for Soldiers is something he takes great pride in.

"If somebody is going to be in a combat zone that means they're going to be working in harm's way at some level or another," he said. "They're subject to enemy action, they're subject to the possibility of death. I don't believe anybody should go through combat without having their spiritual relationship right with God."

Chaplain Romine said there are three basic values that govern his job.

"We nurture the living, we care for the wounded and dying, and we honor the dead," he said. "Everything we do falls into one of those three things. That's what we do, all of it."

Chaplains provide a range of services to meet Soldiers' spiritual needs. They travel throughout U.S. Division – North to provide services such as Catholicism, Lutheran and Judaism.

Specialist Aguirre's baptism is just an example of how USD-N meets a Soldiers' spiritual needs.

Like Spc. Aguirre, Chaplain Romine views baptism as a very strong and deep commitment.

"For me personally, it's a fellowship, a brotherhood," he said. "We're Christians walking together now, ... That's what that faith community is about, each other helping each other. Two are stronger than one. When somebody helps somebody, both are stronger."

The Aguirres are going to be taking advantage of the chapel's baptism services again. In September, the couple is planning to get baptized together.

Pennsylvanian Pianist adds twist to rock in Middle East

By Pfc. Robert England
2SAAB, 25th ID PAO

The notes sang through the speakers as the pianist's hands whizzed up and down the keyboard, his voice penetrated the arid evening air. Two guitars wailed on

both sides of the musician on the keyboard, a drummer pounded away behind them all. With a climactic finish, the pianist turned to address the crowd.

"It is an honor to be here with you this evening," said Nathan Lee, a rock pianist

and lead vocalist from Bangor, Penn. "We came here with a great deal of respect in our hearts for what you do for us."

The musician and his band from Nashville, Tenn., played a show for Soldiers from 2nd Stryker Advise

and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Aug. 6, at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq. Soldiers gathered around the main stage to hear the bandmembers crank out songs from

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Photos by Pfc. Robert England, 2SAAB, 25th ID PAO

(Above) Members of the band Nathan Lee pose for a group photo before a show at FOB Warhorse, Aug. 6.

(Right) A member of the band Nathan Lee signs a copy of the bands' new album, Aug. 6, at FOB Warhorse.

their album titled, "Risk Everything."

Nathan Lee possesses a unique sound, blending electric and bass guitars, drums, and piano to produce melodic ballads like "Bring Down the Fire," and upbeat, edgier tracks like "High Speed Low Drag." "It's piano pop-rock," Lee said. "I always call it Jersey rock, because then it kind of dials it in for people."

This Jersey rocker has been rolling along for more than 20 years, adapting and perfecting his style, drawing from life experiences to fuel his creative fire.

Hard times, including living out of his car, have served to make Lee a stronger person and an artist that performs with conviction.

"I've been playing since I was 11, and decided to really go after it when I was 16, and I'm 35 now so it's been a long road," he said. "I take from life, it depends on the day. For me, a lot of it is about the hard times. I'm definitely in that category that writes about the hard times and getting through it."

Though the basis for the unique sound is centered around the piano and Lee's vocals, it simply wouldn't

be possible without his bandmates' artistic talents on their respective instruments.

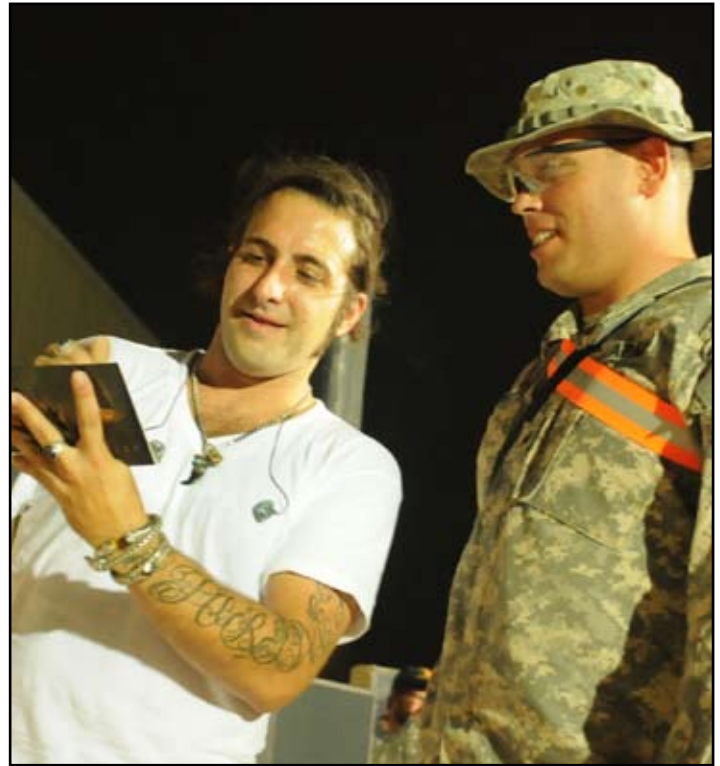
Joey Sanchez shreds the drums while Gregory Everett takes his cue on the electric guitar.

Josiah Holland demonstrates his expertise on the bass guitar and lends backup vocals.

"We have been playing together for about a year and a half, and Greg jumped in because our other guitarist heard about the Blackhawk ride and said 'No way!'" Lee laughed. "So we made a little switch and Greg jumped in to play with us."

Though the band has been playing together for a year and a half and Lee has been playing for more than 20 years, this is the first time any of them have been able to play for troops overseas, something the leading man has been trying to coordinate for almost a decade.

"For nine years, I've wanted to come out and play for troops, and it never worked until now," Lee said. "And the way it all came together is Joey works with a company called Ultimate Ears, and they were our



sponsor for this run.

"Ultimate Ears actually sponsored us and gave us 1,000 sets of earphones and copies of our album to give out to the troops," said Joey Sanchez, the percussions specialist for the band.

The trip began in Minneapolis, where the band rehearsed their performance and tuned their instruments. Nathan Lee and company then boarded a flight and ultimately ended up at Camp Buehring, in Kuwait, where their Middle East tour began.

"I think it's a total of a two-week run," Lee said. "We started in Minneapolis to dial in the sound, then into Kuwait where we played a show for the troops there, and then it was about three days of 'hurry up and wait.' We've had about six hours of sleep in the last four days, but we couldn't be more excited to be here."

As the band prepared to pack their gear and head to Mosul, Iraq, for their next show, Lt. Col. Scott Murray,

the battalion commander for 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2SAAB, 25th ID, presented each member of the band with 25th ID hats and certificates of appreciation to commemorate the band's performance at FOB Warhorse and to express the unit's gratitude.

"On behalf of the Soldiers, I'd like to express my personal appreciation for you guys coming out here," Lt. Col. Scott Murray said. "It says a lot about who you are and what you represent, and I'm truly honored to stand up here with you."

Following the presentation of the certificates and an encore performance by the band, Nathan Lee autographed copies of their album containing all the songs they played throughout the evening, and reiterated his own gratitude for soldiers deployed in Iraq.

"We're so grateful to be here playing for the Soldiers. It means so much to us what you're doing over," he said.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant Jeffrey Salsedo, of Honolulu, Hawaii, is with 2nd Stryker Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. He worked tirelessly with his small team of Soldiers to ensure the implementation of the Warrior Salah ad-Din Network Node on Contingency Operating Base Speicher. His leadership and dedicated effort provides seamless communication for the unit leadership as he conducts mission-critical business throughout his brigade's two-province area of operations. He demonstrated great maturity by validating all required nodal equipment prior to executing the mission, greatly reducing the amount of time required to engage the Command Post Nodal System. Sergeant Salsedo simply does whatever it takes to accomplish any given mission. He is a fine example to all Soldiers, embodies the spirit of the Noncommissioned Officer Creed, and is an outstanding choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



First Lieutenant Amir Ezzeddine, of Springfield, Va., is with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. He served as the officer in charge of Operation Material Advantage on two different sites during March and April. He led a team that conducted a thorough sweep of both installations, identifying buildings in need of renovations, excess equipment for turn-in, and containers for use in future equipment retrogrades. The team identified abandoned equipment valued in excess of \$6 million and their crews removed more than 86 truckloads of trash during the course of the operation. First Lieutenant Ezzeddine's leadership and detailed reporting made the operation run smoothly and allowed the team to finish the task ahead of schedule. His desire to do any job well and his ability to pull diverse individuals together as a team to accomplish the mission make him an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

Tips for Soldiers during Ramadan

Facts about Ramadan:

- Ramadan begins Aug. 11, and will continue until about Sept. 9.
- Ramadan is considered the most venerated and blessed month of the Islamic year. Prayers, fasting, charity and self-accountability are especially stressed at this time; religious observances associated with Ramadan are kept throughout the month.
- The Night of Power, according to Muslim tradition, is the night that the first revelation of the Qur'an was sent to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims are instructed to 'seek' the Night of Power during the last 10 days of Ramadan, particularly on odd-numbered nights (21st, 23rd, 25th, etc.)
- During Ramadan, Muslims will fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food, water, smoking and sexual activity.

- Fasting is meant to help Muslims experience hunger and thirst to sympathize with those who are starving.

Things to do during Ramadan:

- Avoid eating or drinking during the day when in view of practicing Muslims.
- Expect that business and government schedules will change dramatically. Also, expect officials and community leaders to keep different hours.
- Expect that planning meetings will be difficult.
- Show additional constraint when interacting with local Muslims during this period; the rigors of this month will often leave them short-tempered and irritable.
- Be aware of increased local activity in the evening as locals will

visit neighbors and relatives, visit parks, local markets and Mosques

- Be sensitive to reduced working hours for Muslims when scheduling engagements.
- Remember that normal governmental processes will become slower; be extra patient.
- Be aware of an increased possibility of violence. Muslims believe that if they die during Ramadan, they will automatically be sent to heaven. Because of this belief, insurgent activity increases against Soldiers during this month.

Things to avoid during Ramadan:

- Do not eat, drink or chew gum in front of practicing Muslims during daylight hours.
- Do not offer food, drinks, cigarettes, or gum to practicing Muslims during daylight hours.

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Sea lions, dolphins work for Navy at Kings Bay

Atlanta Journal Constitution

KINGS BAY, Ga. - Ships with intimidating displays of weapons patrol the waters at the port at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base.

But if underwater intruders elude a patrol boat's sophisticated electronic surveillance, something else waits in the depths that Navy officials say cannot be fooled.

For five years, 10 California sea lions and four Atlantic bottlenose dolphins have provided underwater security for Ohio-class submarines ported at Kings Bay as part of the Swimmer Interdiction Security System.

Dolphins are trained to use their sophisticated sonar to detect unusual underwater activity and report it to their handlers. A dolphin is sent back to the area with a lighted beacon that it releases near the intruder to alert Navy security forces.

"Their primary mission is finding an intruder and marking the target," project manager Steve Huguely said. "These guys are really good about using sonar to find targets. They work at it every day."

Sea lions are trained to carry a special cuff in their mouths that they can quickly clamp around an intruder's leg.

"It's like a handcuff; it can only get tighter," Huguely said.

The intruder is reeled in by base security by a rope attached to the cuff, which can only be removed with a special key.

"I think for bases who have these high-value assets, it's really a first line of defense for protection against underwater intruders," he said.

Kings Bay is home to eight \$2 billion Ohio-class submarines. Six of the boats carry ballistic nuclear missiles, while two were recently converted to carry cruise missiles.

While the work is serious, the trainers and marine mammals in the program interact much like their counterparts at a tourist attraction such as SeaWorld.

The animals are rewarded with a fish when they perform a task properly.

One of the dolphins spun in the water with excitement when a trainer offered him a fish.

During free time, connecting doors to pens are often opened so the animals can socialize with each other, Huguely said.

While trainers said teaching the animals is fun, the mission is serious. The marine mammal program, in existence since 1960, provided port security during the Vietnam War, protected the Third Fleet flagship overseeing Navy vessels that escorted Kuwaiti oil tankers in 1987 and performed port security in the Persian Gulf from 2003 to 2005.

"It's the longest deployment

elsewhere of any marine mammals, ever," said Tom LaPuzza, a spokesman for the Navy Marine Mammal Program.

Though they are not native to the East Coast, environmental studies show sea lions have no adverse environmental impact at Kings Bay.

The one concern before they arrived was how they would interact with manatees, but it appears the two species are indifferent to each other, Huguely said.

It takes about 18 months to train the animals in San Diego, where the Navy's marine mammal program is based, Huguely said.

"They actually take a test to make sure they know all the procedures," he said.

LaPuzza said 80 bottlenose dolphins and 28 sea lions are available to perform underwater security at locations across the world. Currently they are only working at Kings Bay, but will soon be working at a Navy base in Bangor, Wash.

"We saw they were easily trainable and reliable," LaPuzza said. "These animals can do a lot of things. A whole bunch of them do object recovery and mine hunting."

Luckily, the marine mammals have only trained and have never had to respond to a threat on base, Huguely said. Only dolphins bred in captivity and sea lions purchased from breeding programs at SeaWorld are used in the program.

THE

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