

The North Star

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



Volume 1, Issue 119

August 13, 2010

Task Force Troy delivers vital gear to Iraqi Police

By Sgt. Chad Nelson
135th Mobile PA Det.

During Ramadan, the Salah ad-Din province police force's explosive ordnance disposal unit is concerned about local security. In the past few days, they have seen an increase in violence in the streets of Tikrit.

Bomb calls for these police previously occurred as little as once a month. However in just one day, they went out six times, according to Lt. Ahmed Salah, a team leader with the Salah ad-Din IPs.

On their missions, the Iraqis use only bomb suits to disarm improvised explosive devices. Though bulky and clumsy, the bomb suit is safer than nothing, but it isn't as effective as a bomb-disposal robot.

On Aug. 7, the U.S. Navy's Task Force Troy – North, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Two, out of Little Creek, Va., trained the local IPs on the use of an Andros HD-1 Bomb Disposal Robot.

This was the first training session of about 15 – 20 sessions, all of which are designed to evaluate the IP's competency on EOD equip-



Photos by Sgt. Chad Nelson,
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Specialist Mustafa Gazwan, an EOD technician and robot driver with the IP, tries to grab a cell phone from a shelf during an IP/ Navy EOD bomb-disposal robot training session, Aug. 7.

ment. During the sessions, the EODMU will evaluate the Iraqis and determine whether they are ready to receive new pieces of EOD equipment.

Along with robots, the IPs will receive bomb suits, hook and line kits, an X-ray generator, a bomb trailer, explosive magazines, metal detectors, small hand tools, and knives. Instead of giving the IPs all of this equipment all at once, the EODMU first wants to guarantee the IPs

See EOD, Page 2 —



Explosive Ordnance Disposal 2 Rashid Graham, the senior bomb technician with EODMU Two, and Spc. Mustafa Gazwan, an EOD technician and robot driver with the IP, replace the battery of an Andros HD-1 robot during a training exercise, Aug. 7.

Scout's honor



Photo by Sgt. Joseph McAtee, TF Marne PAO

(Left) Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Little, 3rd Infantry Division civil affairs officer, and Task Force Marne 3rd ID Commander Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, hold two patches from the Coastal Empire Chapter of the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 2101 from Ft. Stewart, Ga., on COB Speicher, Iraq, Aug. 7. The scout troop, based at 3rd ID's home station, included the division's logo onto their patches, which were used at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree, commemorating the Boy Scouts' 100th Anniversary. The Coastal Empire Council of the BSA sent a representative contingent to the Jamboree held at Fort A.P. Hill, Va. Participants included several boys related to the 3rd ID leaders: David Little, Trey Correa, Christopher Williams, Cody "Zeke" Smith and Jake Lartigue. As part of their Jamboree, the scouts prepared a 'shout out' video to 3rd ID, sent a group photo of them and one with Secretary of Veterans Affairs (ret.) Gen. Eric Shinseki, and two council patches for presentation to the division.

Continued from EOD, Page 1

are capable of maintaining and operating the equipment.

"We don't want them to get it and then have it break on them," said Navy Lt. j.g. Bruce Batteson, Salah ad-Din Province Commander, EODMU Two.

The EODMU Two has trained its Iraqi counterparts on the use of various pieces of EOD equipment for the last five months.

The IPs and Navy EOD team focused on the new robot during Aug. 7's training session.

"We [were] trying to work out the kinks with the new equipment," said EOD2 Rashid Graham, senior bomb technician with the EODMU Two.

There were a few kinks at the beginning of the training, Aug. 7. Some antennas needed switching around, and the battery needed replacing. As soon as these problems were troubleshooted and remedied, the robot and the IP team worked together perfectly.

The driver of the robot was an extremely capable operator, according to Lt. j.g. Batteson.

"The robot driver is the key to this," said EOD2 Graham. "The driver will either make the team leader's job easy or difficult. A good robot driver can take each individual [bomb] piece apart, making the job much easier."

At one point during the training, the

driver controlled the robot into pulling the blasting cap out of an IED training aid, rendering the explosive ineffective.

After watching them run a gamut of real-world scenarios, such as picking up cell phones, placing them in a safe container and then responding to a report of an unexploded ordnance on the side of the road, Lt. j.g. Batteson and his team were comfortable giving the robot to the IPs.

"The objective is to have them operate completely independent," said Lt. j.g. Batteson. "They should be fully mission capable by the time we leave."

The training proved to be invaluable to the IPs.

"Without the training and equipment, we wouldn't be where we are today," IA Lt. Saleh said. "It has been a real confidence boost, and we're capable of [completing the mission] now."

The robot is the first piece of equipment in a series of pieces that the Navy EOD team will give to the Iraqis.

"We'll issue the highest qual-



Photo by Sgt. Chad Nelson, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal 2 Rashid Graham, the senior bomb technician with EODMU Two, explains a real-world bomb scenario to Iraqi Police officers, Aug. 7.

ity equipment first, which is also the equipment they're most familiar with," Lt. j.g. Batteson said.

The robot was first on the list, because it is the single most important piece of equipment that saves EOD's lives, he added, though there are other pieces of equipment needed to complete the job.

Thanks to the training and the donation, the IPs have a new, powerful tool in the efforts to quell needless deaths and injuries caused by explosives. And, with Ramadan taking place, the IPs needed this robot now more than ever. "It's an absolutely necessary tool," Lt. j.g. Batteson said.

RDOF Team says goodbye to Command Post-South

By Capt. Timothy Nash
CP South Public Affairs

The Soldiers of Command Post - South at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Diyala province said goodbye to approximately one third of their team, Aug. 7. The departing Soldiers were part of the responsible drawdown of forces, which will reduce the number of troops in Iraq to 50,000 by Sept. 1.

The night before the team began their trip home, Task Force Marne Deputy Commanding General Maneuver, Brig. Gen. Patrick Donahue, held a small awards ceremony for the departing team, during which he presented awards, offered congratulations and thanked the Soldiers for all their hard work.

"This group of Soldiers reflects the whole of Task Force Marne," Brig. Gen. Donahue said. "Out of the five who are leaving us, three Soldiers are on their first deployment, and they

didn't want to leave the team. The other two were on their second and third deployments, and they offered to give up their seats so they could stay. This commitment is what Task Force Marne is all about, a blending of the old and new Soldiers to form an unbreakable bond."

CP-South consists of a small team of officers, noncommissioned officers and junior enlisted personnel who act as a remote command team. They track significant events, information and coordinate missions for Brig. Gen. Donahue.

After the awards ceremony, all of the Soldiers received a certificate of appreciation from the CP-South team, followed by a round of slaps on the back, handshakes and hugs.

"I am excited. I'm going to miss everybody here," said Pfc. Joshua Mashburn of 3rd Signal Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. "CP-South was a great place

to be stationed. If I ever had any issues or problems, the Family here would always be willing to help me out."

Early Saturday morning, the team had their gear staged in front of the CP-South tactical operations center; they exchanged goodbyes and a few words of encouragement with the remaining CP South team. They loaded up a truck with the usual rucksacks, duffel bags and assault packs, piled themselves in and headed to the passenger terminal. After a brief delay due to dust storms, they left FOB Warhorse on a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter for the last time.

"They were definitely an asset while they were here," said Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Thompson, the CP-South non-commissioned officer in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, DSTB, 3rd ID. "The remaining personnel will step up to fill the void. I have every confidence that they will be able to continue the mission."

Soldier's glory



Photo by Sgt. Ry Norris, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Command Sergeant Major Arthur L. Coleman, the command sergeant major of III Corps and Fort Hood, presents Pfc. Eferoghene Oghre, a medic with Task Force Odin, with a coin at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, Aug. 10. Private First Class Oghre scored 402 on his Army physical fitness test, on the extended scale. Also, his quick reaction helped sustain a Soldier with a head injury until the Soldier could be transported to a medical facility. Earlier that day, Command Sgt. Maj. Coleman met with Task Force Marne sergeants major in the area. He gave words of encouragement for the units to continue excelling at their missions. "This division has helped [the Army] take out 32 of 40 Al Qaeda members, including the number one financier. We started with 500 Forward Operating Bases and bases. We're down to 94 today.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Private First Class Cristian Santana, of St. Louis, is with Troop C, 3rd Battalion, 73rd Cavalry, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. He serves as a radio telegraph operator, overseeing the operation and maintenance of all his squad's communication equipment. Throughout the deployment, he kept his squad's equipment at a 100 percent mission capable rate. Private First Class Santana is also the primary driver for his squad's tactical vehicle and is responsible for ensuring all maintenance is performed to standard and the vehicle is fully operational prior to each mission. During trilateral checkpoint operations in his area of operations, Pfc. Santana advises and assists the Iraqi Army and Peshmerga forces in the checkpoint search areas by providing guidance and motivation during search operations. While at his checkpoint, Pfc. Santana leads his peers in rigorous physical fitness training to prepare them for schools following redeployment and plans to attend Ranger School during the next available class. His motivation and desire to excel make him an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Sergeant Natasha Green, of Carrollton, Texas, is with Company A, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. She has excelled as the company orderly room noncommissioned officer. She flawlessly handled finance and personnel actions for 178 Soldiers with no late transactions. She in-processed 16 incoming Soldiers and completed all of the unit's promotion board packets with no discrepancies. Everything Sgt. Green works on is done right the first time, every time. She can be counted on to complete any task quickly and professionally and completely reorganized the orderly room to increase its functionality and professional appearance. More recently, she tracked and corrected her company's end of tour awards, ensuring each award was done correctly. She directly mentored a Soldier to be fully cross trained outside their military occupational specialty, increasing the orderly room's effectiveness by 100 percent. Sergeant Green has turned in an exceptional performance as the orderly room noncommissioned officer in charge, making her a most worthy selection for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

Safety Thought of the Week: Identified Electrical Hazards

- Task Force Safe has been operating for two years and has expended millions of dollars inspecting more than 160,000 facilities throughout Iraq with more than 56,000 life health and safety issues identified and more than 43,000 faults repaired.
- Task Force Safe has an inspection report on every building you own with a list of faults - Priority one, called "flashes," and priority two "faults." Both are serious, "flashes" can be deadly.
- Go to the Mayor's Cell, TF Safe team, chain of command, or unit safety officer for information on dealing with hazards in the workplace and living areas.

Remember: Safety is leadership in action!

You are invited

Black Violin

Where: COB Speicher
When: Aug. 15

Kidnap Kings

Where: FOB Marez
When: Aug. 22

932nd/402nd Forward

Surgical Team Transfer of Authority

Where: COB Speicher
North MWR
When: Aug. 15,
2 p.m.

Women's Equality Day

Where: Task Force Marne
Headquarters Foyer
When: Aug. 27,
11:30 a.m.

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Old name in cotton closing after 142 years

Atlanta Journal Constitution

AUGUSTA, Ga. - Two centuries after his name became synonymous with cotton, Barry Whitney is getting out of the family business.

Whitney -- a nephew several times removed of cotton gin inventor Eli Whitney -- found there is less use for businesses like his in the place where cotton was once king.

Whitney's great-grandfather, his grandfather and his father were in the cotton business of marketing cotton for the farmers who grew it.

But now, 142-years after S.M. Whitney Co. opened in Augusta, it is closing.

The marketing is now done by large organizations or cooperatives, and this no need for the smaller "commission merchants" like S.M. Whitney.

"I'd hoped to leave it to my step-son but we're just not handling enough cotton to stay in business," said Whitney, 82. "We used to have fifty thousand, sixty-thousand, seventy-thousand bales of cotton a year. The past few years it's been around 12,000. "We're going to shut down at the end of August."

A call to the office Aug. 10, was answered on the second ring by Whitney, president of S.M. Whitney Co. He had plenty of time to talk, he said

"Right now, we're real short of people," Whitney said. "We have cut

down to three in office and four in the warehouse."

But there was a time when the Whitney name was at the center of business in Augusta and in the Georgia cotton economy.

"It's a company that was very well respected, and they did a lot for the cotton industry in this country," said Richey Seaton, executive director of the Georgia Cotton Commission.

"He's a victim of the times. It's just one of those things."

Just a few years ago, more than two dozen people worked at Whitney, which served as the middle man between farmers and the mills that bought the cotton.

And there was a time when Augusta was key to trading the commodity internationally. In its prime, S.M. Whitney was one of eight businesses just in Augusta that marketed cotton after the crop was picked, ginned and baled.

They marketed cotton from farmers as much as 200 miles away but now they are little more than 50. Cotton grows on about 1 million acres in South Georgia.

"They all faded out except us," Whitney said.

Once 12.5 million bales of cotton were consumed and spun nationally, but that has dropped to 3 million bales, Seaton said. And now about 80 percent of cotton grown in this country is sold internationally. Texas grows half the cotton in the U.S.

China and Thailand grow more cotton than the U.S. and Pakistan is close behind in fourth place.

"We're fading out because of a lack of cotton. We're the only ones" left in Augusta, Whitney said.

Once S.M. Whitney closes, there "won't be any cotton in Augusta."

Whitney said it took him three to four months to shut down a business with the name analogous to cotton.

"We were just losing money and there was no hope of any increase in cotton in this area," Whitney said. "We're losing farmers ... It's a sad experience. It really is. But with the lack of cotton being planted, we can't stay in business."

So Whitney, at 82, said he will find another line of work.

"My father worked until he was 95 so I've got a ways to go," Whitney said. "I'll find something else to do."

Train Now

Task Force Marne will conduct a 10-miler, Oct. 10. Find out from your Life Support Office when 5k and 10k runs will be held in your area.

Fail to train properly, and you not only risk failing to complete the race, you also risk seriously injuring yourself.

THE

North Star

The North Star is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of *The North Star* are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 3rd Infantry Division. All editorial content of *The North Star* is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Task Force Marne Public Affairs Office.

TASK FORCE MARNE

Commanding General - Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo

Command Sergeant Major - Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews Jr.

Task Force Marne Public Affairs Staff

TF Marne PAO - Maj. Jeff Allen

TF Marne PA NCOIC - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs

TF Marne Writer - Sgt. Johnathon Jobson

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs

Editor - Spc. Michael Adams

2nd Heavy Brigade
Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

2nd Stryker Advise and
Assist Brigade,
25th Infantry Division

1st Heavy Brigade
Combat Team,
1st Armored Division

135th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment