

The North Star

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



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Operation New Dawn begins for U.S. forces in Iraq

Today, Operation Iraqi Freedom ends and Operation New Dawn begins. This transition represents a significant milestone and a huge accomplishment for the men and women of the United States Army. Our congratulations go to Gen. Ray Odierno, to the USF- I Team, and to the nearly 800,000 Soldiers who served in Iraq and contributed to this success. While we reflect on our accomplishments, it is important to remember that our mission there is not yet complete.


In cooperation with the Government of Iraq, we will continue to advise and assist the Iraqi Security Forces, support

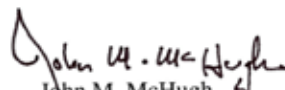
Iraqi troops in targeted counterterrorism missions, and protect our civilians who are moving into the lead to support Iraq. We will complete these missions with the same focus, determination, and professionalism that have seen us through the last seven years.

Our Soldiers have been the key to our successes in Iraq. They have adapted to a new form of war - accomplishing the near-impossible every day; and led the way in providing the 28 million people of Iraq with the opportunity for a better future. This success has come at a cost - more than 3,200 American Soldiers have given their lives, and over 22,000

have been wounded. We should use today as an opportunity to pause and remember them, and to renew our commitment to never forget them or their Families.

We could not be prouder of our Army on this historic day. You remain the Strength of this Nation. Army Strong!


George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff


John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army

New Beginnings



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

United States Forces-Iraq Commanding General, General Lloyd Austin III, places the rank of sergeant onto the chest of Sgt. John McNeely, a mail clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, Sept. 3, at the Division Headquarters, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq.



Photo by Pfc. Robert England, 2nd AAB, 25th ID PAO

Staff Sergeant Raymond O'stil, a Hayward, Calif., native and paralegal noncommissioned officer for HHC., 2nd AAB, 25th ID, samples sounds on a music sampling and drum machine, Aug. 30, in the studio he created in his housing unit at FOB Warhorse, Diyala province, Iraq.

Paralegal mixes beats, pursues passion

**By Pfc. Robert England,
2nd AAB, 25th ID PAO**

The term "recording studio" spawns mental images of small, dimly lit rooms. One blanketed in an eerie silence with a lone microphone in the center, the other sustaining a control panel littered with myriad dials and sliding adjusters. Staff Sergeant Raymond O'stil has configured a version based on his environment.

Staff Sergeant O'stil, a Hayward, Calif., native and paralegal noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, is a music producer and recording artist who brought his talent and tools with him to Iraq.

Being deployed was not going to stop Staff Sgt. O'stil from indulging his creative passion.

"I knew I wanted to bring my studio because it was just sitting in my house, and I wanted to do something creative with this stuff," Staff Sgt. O'stil said.

This studio consisted of professional-quality recording tools that help him capture, place and edit audio in a digital format.

The set-up has a complex appearance with enough buttons and dials to intimidate novice producers, but with some formal training on how to utilize

the equipment effectively, Staff Sgt. O'stil said that anyone can master the art of producing music digitally.

The editing equipment used is of no consequence if the producer lacks the creative mind to put it to good use. Fortunately, Staff Sgt. O'stil does not fall into this category. He draws from his own experiences as well as the expertise of his peers to move his music, striving to constantly improve as an artist as well as a producer.

"I'm inspired by life, but I'm influenced by other musicians," he said. "It doesn't even matter what kind of music they play."

"I just like to be surrounded by talent," Staff Sgt. O'stil said. "If the people I record with are good, it makes me want to be better as an artist, too."

After he fine-tunes an audio file, Staff Sgt. O'stil stockpiles his beats, raps over them and offers them to vocalists who need background music.

"I play my samples for other people so they can rap to them, too," he said.

Staff Sergeant O'stil has worked with a number of Soldiers in 2nd AAB, 25th ID, providing beats and even recording with them. Major Matthew Vinton, a Burke, Va. native and the officer-in-charge of the Legal Office for 2nd AAB, 25th ID, collaborated with O'stil on a few songs.

"It just so happens I play bass gui-

tar, and I have since high school," Maj. Vinton said. "We decided to merge our creative efforts and throw together a couple songs with Hawaiian-themed background music."

One of the qualities that sets Staff Sgt. O'stil apart from most modern artists is the intrinsic message in his music. It's not about money or fame; his songs, inspired by his own challenges, tell stories with deeper meanings than those that can be dismissed at face value.

"Anyone can go out and get the equipment, but at the end of the day, are you putting out a message?" he questioned rhetorically. "Are you saying something to somebody or do you just want people to hear your voice?"

Staff Sergeant O'stil has no specific audience in mind when he writes and produces his music, but he said certain songs will strike a chord in people who can relate to the meaning of his lyrics.

"I have a song called 'Looking For Soul' where I'm mostly talking to my son who is five years old, and I guarantee you, there's another kid out there who is like 13 years old in California or Missouri that can relate to it," he said.

There is glorification in being able to touch a wide audience through an alternative form of communication, Staff Sgt. O'stil said.

Infantryman lives out childhood dreams

By Capt. Heather Lee Guck
TF Marne Public Affairs

Sergeant First Class White, a 30-year-old Infantryman, who's currently serving with the 3rd Infantry Division in northern Iraq, grew up playing with G.I. Joes as a boy and knew he was destined to be a living, breathing G.I. Joe himself.

He joined the military in 2000. Ten years later, Sgt. 1st Class White stands as a seasoned Soldier and Family man, who continues to serve his nation proudly.

Sergeant First Class White has the challenging job of being a personal security officer to the Commanding General of Task Force Marne and 3rd ID, Major General Tony Cucolo, whom he commonly refers to as "the boss." His job is to keep Maj. Gen. Cucolo safe at all times so that he may accomplish his mission statement while in Iraq.

Major General Cucolo proudly said of Sgt. 1st Class White, "I'm blessed to have him as my personal security officer running my personal security detachment ... when you look at him in all full combat gear you just see a lethal human weapons system. He's 110 percent Soldier the complete package, when you get to know him, he's a regular guy, he's just a fine human being, a dedicated husband and father who wants to serve his country."

Sergeant First Class White loves the dynamics of his current job. He can be in Baghdad escorting the boss to a high level meeting and then fly out to Diyala and see Soldiers on a check point later in the day.

His additional duties encompass planning, coordinating missions, route recons, special projects. In his 'free time,' he takes on-line college courses.

"It makes for some late nights and early mornings," said Sgt. 1st Class White.

He is on his fourth deployment. His first deployment was to Kosovo in 2002, and he hasn't slowed down yet. His next two deployments were in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2004 and then again from 2006 to 2007. Now he is serving in Iraq from 2009 to 2010.

He agrees that his successful career and many accomplishments have been



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

(Left) Sergeant First Class Garry White stands next to Task Force Marne Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, while posing with the CG's personal flight crew.

made possible due to the loving support of his wife, Linda. They recently celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary.

Sergeant First Class White said of his wife, "I just love her, she's a great woman. I take care of my mission [in Iraq] and she takes care of hers - which is the house and the Family ... I don't have to worry about anything while I'm gone."

They have two children, a 7-year-old son, Trajan (named after the second greatest Roman Emperor to ever live) and an 11-month-old girl, Mia, who was only 2 months old when Sgt. 1st Class White deployed to Iraq.

"Family time is family time ... I give them my undivided attention when I'm home. We take a lot of trips. I'm really dedicated to them," said Sgt. 1st Class White, with a reminiscing smile.

With his Family in mind, he continues to forge forward without entertaining any thoughts of 'taking a knee' anytime soon.

Sergeant First Class White's near term plans might be what many would consider being lifetime goals. Upon redeployment back to his home, Sgt. 1st Class White plans to complete his Bachelor of Science in Business at

Troy University, attend the six-week long Senior Leaders Course, and attend Ranger School for two months.

There's no doubt this Purple Heart and Army Commendation with Valor device recipient will do nothing less than impact the lives of those Soldiers around him.

"Sergeant First Class White is actually one of the finest NCOs I have ever worked with. He exemplifies what the modern day noncommissioned officer is supposed to be and he's the example of technical and tactical expertise. He's an example for me," said Capt. Rick Turner, Maj. Gen. Cucolo's personal aide-de-camp.

But when it's all said and done at the end of the day, Sgt. 1st Class White's most honorable duty was when he had the privilege of conducting eight military funerals. He was the firing squad noncommissioned officer in charge, United States flag folder, and pallbearer.

"Being able to provide that opportunity, and pay your respects to the Soldiers and their Families is outstanding. It's sad that I had to conduct eight military funerals, but it had to be done," said Sgt. 1st Class White.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant First Class Bengo and Staff Sgt. Jodi Stone, a Ft. Lewis, Wash., native with Headquarters Headquarters Operations Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, are selected for their outstanding performance as a kennel master and patrol explosive detector dog team. Sergeant First Class Bengo and Staff Sgt. Stone were responsible for establishing the Iraqi Police Service Dog partnership program at the Warhorse Kennels. Due to their success, Sgt. 1st Class Bengo and Staff Sgt. Stone are now at Contingency Operating Base Speicher serving as the Kennel Master for Salah Ad-din province. Sergeant First Class Bengo and Staff Sgt. Stone have earned the confidence and respect of all units they have supported through their tactical proficiency, competence, and ability to perform in any environment. When not on mission, Sgt. 1st Class Bengo enjoys curling up at Staff Sgt. Stone's feet and getting lots of affection. In order to recognize these accomplishments they have been selected as the Task Force Marne "Dog Face" Heroes of the North.



Sergeant Andrew Krueger, a Storm Lake, Iowa, native with Troop D, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, is one of four Unmanned Aerial Vehicle instructor/operators in his unit. His technical expertise was critical on the morning of Aug. 3, during a UAV's post-launch climb to mission altitude. Sergeant Krueger performed a thorough 360-degree inspection of the flight gears with the onboard camera. During his inspection, he noticed that the parachute cover had vibrated loose and realized the urgency to recover the UAV as soon as possible. He informed both the UAV operator and the mission commander of the situation, ensuring the UAV was quickly approved for an emergency recovery. Sergeant Krueger's alertness and attention to detail was the key factor in preventing the potential loss of a limited asset. The unit added additional steps to their preflight and flight checklists by capitalizing on his dedication and professionalism, qualities for which he is a most deserving selection as a Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

Muslims celebrate Eid ul-Fitr after Ramadan

Eid (عيد) is the Arabic word for feast. **Eid ul-Fitr** (عيد الفطر) is the holiday celebrating the end of Ramadan, a time which is marked by fasting from sunrise to sunset. Though abstinence from food and drink during the day are prominent features of Ramadan there are special dishes and food traditions associated with this period, as we noted in this column at the start of Ramadan. This year Ramadan will end around mid-September and now that we are approaching the end of Ramadan, let's look at the festivities that mark the closing of the holy month.

Eid al-Fitr

Once the crescent moon is sighted, the month of Ramadan comes to a close and is marked with celebration. Eid-ul-Fitr means to "break the fast". Eid al-Fitr is a joyous time, a time meant to spread good will and love. If possible, Muslims participating in Eid al-Fitr may wear new clothes and attend special prayer ceremonies such as the Khutba which is held out of doors

and led by a person referred to as the Khatheeb.

"Eid Mubarak" is the common greeting during Eid al-Fitr which means, "Happy/Merry Eid!" Eid al-Fitr celebrations, which can extend three days, are marked not only by prayer and ceremony but by the exchange of gifts and well wishes. There are of course special meals that are associated with this time, just as the turkey is linked with Thanksgiving in the United States.

Seviyan

Ingredients

2 Cups of milk
2 tbsp. of Rice
3 tbsp. of Sugar
1/4th cup of blanched almonds (sliced)
1 tsp. of Green cardamom (crushed)
1/2 tsp of Kewra essence
Silver or gold foil paper (varak)

Preparation:

Soak rice in water for few hours, after removing water, grind rice into a smooth paste. In a non-stick saucepan bring milk. Over a moderate low

heat add rice, sugar and cardamom and stir constantly till milk turns thick. Now add almonds and put in serving bowl and chill. Garnish with silver or gold foil paper (varak) and serve.

Ma'mounia (Wheat Pudding)

Ingredients

3 cups water
2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/2 cup butter, unsalted
1 cup wheat flour
Whipped cream
Cinnamon

Ingredients:

Combine water and sugar in a large saucepan. Over low heat, stir constantly until sugar dissolves. Increase heat slowly to bring mixture to a boil (mixture will look like syrup). Add lemon juice. Reduce heat and simmer until syrup thickens, about 10 minutes. Set aside. In another saucepan, melt butter and add flour. Stir until lightly browned. Add the syrup from the other pan. Simmer mixture about 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and let cool 20 minutes. Spoon ma'mounia into bowls and top with whipped cream and cinnamon.

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Vacationer sees home robbed on iPhone

www.myfoxaustin.com

A Texas man watched a burglary occur at his own home while he was on vacation in Connecticut 1,500 miles away, using a simple iPhone app, ABC News reported Wednesday, Aug. 25.

Vince Hunter said the \$4.99 iPhone app, called iCam, notified him and his wife via text message that the motion detectors had been activated in his house.

Then, using his cell phone, he was able to watch a live feed from the webcams he had installed around his home after a previous break-in.

"I check the footage, and see in real time guys in this area, and they're kind of hunched over. They'd just broken the glass. I said 'holy cow, I gotta call 911,'" he said.

Hunter's wife also notified the security company.

"I go back to the footage, sure enough, they're in the backyard checking things out. They're throwing bricks ... at the tempered glass and they can't break it three times," he said.

"Finally, it appears they wind up and kind of go back in that area, and they just hurl this brick through the glass and ... this brick ends up in our living room."

Police arrived a few minutes later, with guns drawn, but the bandits had

already been spooked by the home's alarm system.

"You know, it was surreal. It really was. The first thing I couldn't believe is that we could do this on our cell phone. Really? A cell phone?" Hunter said.

Hunter said police were reviewing the footage captured by his iPhone in an attempt to catch the attempted burglars, who are suspected of robbing his neighbor's home moments earlier.

Flying fish knocks Houstonian out of race

www.chron.com

COLUMBIA, Mo. — A fish out of water sent a Texas kayaker onto dry land instead of the finish line at an annual Missouri River endurance race.

Houston resident Brad Pennington was considered one of the favorites among men's solo racers in the Missouri River 340, a canoe and kayak race that began the morning of Tuesday, Aug. 24 morning in Kansas City, Kan. At least until a 30-pound Asian silver carp jumped from the water and hit him in the head. The fish are known to panic and jump in response to passing vessels.

"It felt like a brick hit me," Pennington said Wednesday.

The 43-year-old lawyer already was having trouble steering his boat, a streamlined model built for speed but not necessarily sturdy enough

to withstand a river known for commercial transport. The fish flew as Pennington was trying to return to shore to repair his kayak, assisted by a competing three-man team.

Pennington said he had to withdraw just hours into the 340-mile race because of a "pounding, pounding headache that kept getting worse." A nurse suggested further medical treatment, but he declined.

"It's definitely a risk of being out on the river," said Tracy Hill, a project leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's local fisheries office. "It's extremely serious. Those things can kill you."

Hill spent Wednesday volunteering at the race's Huntsdale checkpoint near Columbia. One day earlier, while conducting tests on the river, he was hit several times by flying carp.

Hill and his colleagues already wear construction hard hats while on the job. He suggested — with a straight face — that an upgrade to hockey helmets and protective netting might be in order.

Asian carp can eat up to 40 percent of their weight a day in plankton and were imported in the 1970s as a way to control algae and plankton in fish ponds. But the fish made their way into the wild and have infested waterways including parts of the Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri rivers. Work continues to prevent the voracious fish from slipping into the

Time is ticking to train up for Task Force Marne's Top of Iraq 10K, Sept. 24!

THE

North Star

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Assist Brigade,
3rd Infantry Division

2nd Advise and
Assist Brigade,
25th Infantry Division

1st Advise and
Assist Task Force,
1st Armored Division

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