

The North Star

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U. S. Division- North, Iraq



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Navy EOD departs after training IA to counter IEDs

By Capt. Tim Nash
CP-South Public Affairs

The Sailors of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, Mobile Unit 2, Company 2, at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, began the long road home to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Va., Sept. 12.

Company 2 spent their deployment in Iraq's Diyala province, working to defeat violent extremist networks emplacing improvised explosive devices that were endangering the people of Iraq, as well as U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces. During their six months in Diyala province, the team responded to more than 180 incidents.

According to the Mobile Unit 2's

company commander, Navy Lt. John G. Taylor, the largest part of their mission was not responding to reported IEDs, but rather training the ISF in Diyala to take over counter-IED operations. This involved developing a dependable working relationship with the ISF and conducting weekly training sessions, both on FOB Warhorse and on Iraqi Army and police compounds.

"We would train on EOD-specific tactics, techniques and procedures. We tried to focus the training on what they wanted," said Lt. Taylor. "What kind of threats they're seeing in town, what skill sets they felt they were weak at and that we could help them get better at."

One of the biggest obstacles the EOD team faced was building a working relationship with the local Iraqi police leadership, who at first seemed unwilling to work with U.S. forces.

"They [ISF] know you're here for six months, so they don't want to get too close. They know you're going to do your best, but they know within a few months, they're going to have a new face to deal with," said Lt. Taylor. "So for us to get out there and within two to three months have a solid working relationship, and to have that whole team of Diyala IP guys feel comfortable to come out here or host us at their headquarters in Baquba, was a huge success for us."

A few months into Company 2's deployment, U.S. forces in Iraq identified the need for Iraqi police to have the same capabilities as deployed U.S. EOD teams.

"As U.S. forces leave theatre, we take our EOD capability with us. That same capability had to be present within the Iraqi Security Forces," said Lt. Col. John B. Shattuck, the Diyala Police Transition Team Chief.

As a result, new counter-IED equipment, including IED-Resistant bomb suits and HD-1 robots designed to search, identify and disrupt IEDs, were distributed to Iraqi police counter-IED teams throughout the country. In Diyala it was Company 2's job to train them on how to use the new equipment.

The training resulted in a Diyala Iraqi Police counter-IED team that can work independently from U.S. forces

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Photo by Sgt. Brandon Bolick

Sailors from Navy EOD Mobile Unit 2 and Iraqi police help an Iraqi police officer into a bomb suit the Iraqi police counter-IED unit received from U.S. forces in Iraq. Throughout their six months in Diyala province, Mobile Team 2 responded to more than 180 IED incidents.

Mechanic supports missions with repair skills

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

Confucius once said, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

Specialist Arlana Crabb, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter repairer, shows love for her job by taking pride in her performance, and assuming responsibility for the aircraft she works on.

"I take great pride in all our aircraft and I've always felt responsible for them," she said. "I enjoy being a mechanic because you get more hands-on work. I get to do what I love, which is fixing things."

Specialist Crabb serves with Company D, 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Her team maintains the helicopters for the whole battalion.

"My job is to maintain the aircraft mechanically, and when the aircraft go out and fly, they have certain inspections that need to be done on a regular basis," she said. "We're here to provide that support."

A typical 14-hour work day for Spc. Crabb begins with doing pre-flight checks to the aircraft. First on the list is an overall inspection of the aircraft, ensuring there are no cracks, leaks, bent parts or holes. Other important items to check for are seats, seat belts, and the cleanliness of the windows so that pilots can see.

"Everything we do is safety oriented," said Spc. Crabb, a Colorado Springs, Colo., native. "We'll have two or three people looking at the same thing over and over because you don't want these aircraft breaking."

After the general in-

spection, the team does a walk-around from the top to the bottom of the aircraft, making sure that there are no objects that will stop the flight controls from working. Once their inspection is done, the aircraft is turned over to the pilots and crew chief, and the mechanic team won't see the aircraft again until the flight mission is done. Once the aircraft returns, the team then goes through the same process to check the aircraft, this time, inspecting the log books to look for future scheduled maintenance times, which are to be completed by Spc. Crabb and her team, or civilian support services.

Part of her mechanical support also includes two types of aircraft maintenances: scheduled and unscheduled. All of the scheduled maintenances are tracked by the hour, and are required to be performed within so many hours, whereas the unscheduled maintenances are unexpected, and happen with the normal wear-and-tear of the aircraft.

With both maintenances, Spc. Crabb inspects the aircraft and finds the problem, then replaces the parts and attempts to fix the problem so the aircraft can continue their missions.

Some parts are harder than others to fix, and Spc. Crabb's biggest accomplishment is taking apart a Black Hawk engine.

"The engines take forever," she said. "It's a sense of accomplishment when you get it. Just to know that you've got it back together and it's right, that's an awesome feeling. It's like putting a big puzzle together



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

Specialist Arlana Crabb is a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter repairer with Co. D, 3rd AHB, 1st ARB, 1st CAB, 1st ID.

-- a big, 30 foot, million dollar puzzle."

Sergeant James Newsom, a maintenance supervisor also with Company D, works with Spc. Crabb on a daily basis, said she greatly contributes to the team.

"She brings lots of motivation and character, but she's also a hard worker," said Sgt. Newsom, a Shreveport, La., native.

One aspect of Spc. Crabb's job that is special to her is the opportunity to take a test flight on helicopters after she's repaired them.

"It not only keeps you honest, but you get to experience what you do and how it makes a difference. Going out on test flights and making sure your work is good, the work of your co-workers -- it's most rewarding."

"It makes you realize that you have to take everything slow, because you don't want anything breaking at the wrong moment. It makes certain that you're following the book and doing the maintenance like how you're supposed to be doing it, and not cutting corners and doing shortcuts."

Specialist Crabb's attention-to-detail method and slow but accurate performance can be attributed to

a lesson she learned during her previous deployment to Iraq.

"When I was a young mechanic last deployment, [I was told to work faster]," Spc. Crabb said. "When you're doing [tasks] quickly, you tend to take shortcuts. Mine happened to be that I over torched some bolts, which started a new maintenance procedure."

"After that, I began to take my time and read over the task multiple times before doing the task," she added. "If you don't take the time to think about what you're doing, you're going to mess something up. You don't want the possibilities of what could happen on your conscious, so you need to think about what you're doing."

Specialist Crabb's hard work isn't something that is new though; For as long as Sgt. Newsom has known her, she has been nothing but a positive addition to the team.

"I've known her for three or four years, and she's always been in charge of something," said Sgt. Newsom. "She has a lot of knowledge to bring to everyone around here. She never gives up, and always keeps trying, no matter how hard the task is."

Chilean gets unexpected life in states

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson
TF Marne PAO

Moving to the U.S. was a childhood dream for one Task Force Marne warrant officer -- becoming a Soldier was not.

However, after Chief Warrant Officer 4 Sergio Diaz saw how the Army changed his brother, he changed his mind. Now 20 years later the field artillery intelligence officer is the senior warrant officer in his field within the task force. He is also the task force's senior targeting officer and in charge of creating "wanted" rewards for violent extremists in northern Iraq.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Diaz was born in Santiago, Chile, and lived there until his late 20's before moving to the United States.

His grandmother raised him after his mother passed away, and his father left the country when it came under communist rule in the 1970's.

"My father lived in the U.S. since 1971 when the communist regime came to Chile," explained CW4 Diaz, who now calls Miami his home. "I maintained communication with my father over the phone and sometimes through the mail. He was not really good at communicating, but every time I talked to him, he would say great things about the U.S. and how free he felt. Ever since he left, the only thing on my mind was wanting to go to the U.S. and live with my dad, it became an obsession."

After graduating college, CW4 Diaz began to set his roots. He got married, had a daughter, a good job with a software company and things were going well.



Courtesy Photo

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Sergio Diaz, the field artillery intelligence officer for TF Marne, with his wife Maria (left) and children Paula and Felipe pose for a photo during dinner with the ship's captain while on a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea.

Unexpectedly one day, he received a call from his father in Florida asking him if he wanted to move to the U.S. That meant leaving behind his job, all of his friends and his family still living in Chile.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Diaz said that after his father asked him to move to the U.S. he accepted, but wanted to make sure that all the proper paperwork was completed. He wanted to be able to reside in the U.S. legally.

"When I came to the U.S. in 1988, we moved to Daytona, but the jobs weren't really good there and I did not speak any English except for the little bit I had learned in school," CW4 Diaz said. "So, we moved to Miami. I worked several jobs there and ended up with a great job at the international airport."

After seeing his younger brother join the Army and return from basic training a changed man, CW4 Diaz spoke with him about the Army and soon after found himself sitting in the

recruiter's office.

"My brother, Victor, joined the Army," said CW4 Diaz. "When he came back from basic training he was completely different. He had been tiny; when he came back he was huge. We sat down and he talked to me about the Army, how great he thought it was, and all the good things he had done. He sold me on it. Right after he left for his assignment to Germany, I went to see the recruiter and joined."

"I originally did not want anything to do with the military. In Chile the military is completely different, but because I went to college I didn't have to join [the Chilean military]. When I came to the U.S. the last thing I wanted to do was be a Soldier, but when I saw my brother and the way he changed, I just made the decision one day. I talked to a recruiter, who also sold me on the Army and the job of cannon crewmember," CW4 Diaz added.

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and will continue to do so long after the U.S. departs Iraq.

Toward the end of their deployment, Lt. Taylor and his team witnessed the Diyala Police counter-IED team disarm a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in downtown Baqubah.

"You could see them utilizing the training they

received, and they were remarkably successful. We were proud more than anything," said Lt. Taylor. "It was extremely satisfying to see that we taught them how to do that and now they're employing it out on the streets and they saved countless lives in disarming that VBIED."

Early Sunday morning,

Sept. 12, Mobile Unit 2, Company 2 handed their mission over to Mobile Unit 6, Company 1, who will follow in the footsteps of their predecessors.

In another year-and-a-half, the Diyala ISF will not have U.S. forces to depend on for counter-IED support. Lieutenant Taylor doesn't believe they need it now.

"Right now they're running all of their missions unilaterally; we're not involved in it," said Lt. Taylor. "Iraq is still a dangerous place. There are IEDs found and reported every single day, but there are much fewer casualties. That means the IP teams are doing their job, and they're doing it right."

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Anise Uhter, an Edmond, Okla., native, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Armored Division, is the backbone behind all of her company's orderly room operations. She is responsible for 118 personnel files, six daily reports to battalion, mail organization and distribution throughout the battalion, her company's Nuclear, Biological, Chemical equipment accountability and maintenance, and countless other support operation missions. Specialist Uhter is relentless in her constant search for self improvement in all areas, including physical training, her military and civilian education, and just life in general. Her positive attitude and customer service persona has a significant positive effect on everyone she works with. She's always smiling, even when she's having a hard day. In addition to her unit responsibilities, she's attending Columbia Southern University Online to earn an associates degree. For her professionalism under stress and dogged desire to improve herself, Spc. Uhter is an outstanding choice for the Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Operations Specialist Second Class (OS2) Scott Tyson, a Raleigh, N.C., native, is Joint Task Force Troy-North's (JTFT-N's) automated battlefield command and control systems subject matter expert. He processed and documented all explosive ordnance disposal mission data to include 50,250 kilometers cleared by route clearance missions, 1,322 spot reports and 252 event storyboards. Operations Specialist Second Class Tyson reviewed and entered this information into battlefield information tracking systems, enabling a common operational picture for all war-fighters throughout the Iraqi theater of operations and improving situational awareness. Operations Specialist Second Class Tyson submitted all security investigation applications for JTFT-N personnel and supervised secret and compartmented program information. Additionally, OS2 Tyson qualified as an enlisted expeditionary warfare specialist and completed three college classes. For his outstanding contributions to information dominance and his constant desire to improve himself, he is selected as the Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

Safety thought of the week:

Every decision has consequences

- The driver of the vehicle below was ejected because he was not wearing his seat belt. He sustained multiple spine and pelvis fractures.
- The gunner was wearing the gunner's restraint harness, but it was not connected to the floor anchor. As a result, he was also ejected and sustained serious injuries:
 - Multiple fractures to both arms and both legs
 - A fractured skull
 - Amputated middle finger, ring finger and index finger on his left hand
 - Pending right arm removal below the elbow
- The truck commander was wearing his seat belt and he remained inside the vehicle throughout the rollover sequence. He was treated for minor injuries and returned to duty the same day.

Remember - Restraint devices only work if we wear them. It takes less than five seconds to buckle up. The physical and mental scars from an accident like this one can last a life time.

Safety is Leadership in Action! BUCKLEUP—It's the Right Decision!



LIFE LIBERTY CONSTITUTION DAY FREEDOM PROSPERITY

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After achieving the rank of sergeant in three years, CW4 Diaz realized that he might want to stay in the Army past his first eight years. To do so, Army regulation required that he become a U.S. citizen. That requirement was rescinded in 2002. He wanted to become a U.S. citizen, but not just to stay in the Army.

"I had intended to do my four years active and then four years in the Reserve to complete my enlistment," said CW4 Diaz. "I did really well in my first three years and really liked what I was doing. One reason I stayed in was because in that time I had one of the best NCOs in my career. I decided that I would do another four years instead of going to the Reserve - maybe more.

"I was only a resident in the U.S., and I knew that to do more than eight years in the Army, I would have to become a citizen. I didn't want to go through the Army to do it though. I

wanted to be a citizen, but because it was my choice, not because of the Army. I did all the paperwork for my Family and myself as a civilian. I sent it all in myself and I paid the fees. I can say that it was my own decision; it was not based on staying in the Army.

"I have been in the Army for 20 years because I love this, not because I had to do it to get my citizenship," he concluded.

During his career CW4 Diaz has served in many places and met many people. During an assignment to Fort Carson, Colo., he met a fellow warrant officer with whom he now serves with in TF Marne. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Houston Burke, the division targeting officer for TF Marne, views CW4 Diaz as a mentor and friend.

"He is very professional, the best mentor I have had as a warrant officer," said CW3 Burke. "He greatly loves his work, but he also places his

love and care for his Family above that. That is one of the things I admire about him."

According to CW4 Diaz, the U.S. offers many things that people who are born here do not notice, freedoms and rights that are not realized unless you have not had them before.

"It has been a great 20 years wearing the uniform," said CW4 Diaz. "I think some people born in the United States don't realize how much they have. Especially compared to those of us that come from different countries and become U.S. citizens. It is a blessing to honestly understand that the United States is a blessed country.

Remember that Task Force Marne is celebrating Constitution Day by encouraging you to write an essay on "What it means to be a U.S. citizen." Submit a 500-600 word essay to louisa.jones@us.army.mil by Sept. 17. The winner will be published in the North Star, the Frontline and on the TF Marne Web page.

You are invited

NFL Kickoff

Arizona Cardinals Cheerleaders

Where: FOBs Sykes/Marez

When: Sept. 18

Filter

Where: COB Speicher

When: Sept. 20

Galaxy

Where: FOB Sykes

When: Sept. 24

USA Express

(Army Touring Show Band)

Where: FOB Warhorse - Sept. 21

Where: COS Warrior - Sept. 22

Are you ready to run???

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

THE

North Star

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