

The North Star

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



Volume 1, Issue 129

Page 1 • September 17, 2010

Naturalized citizens use freedoms to uplift in Iraq

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

Constitution Day, Sept. 17, often goes unrecognized but the freedoms it brings to U.S. citizens are never forgotten and are desired by many. This week, two Task Force Marne naturalized citizens reflect on their journey toward U.S. citizenship and what brought them back to the Middle East to help rebuild Iraq.

Sameh Youssef, the senior analyst and cultural advisor to U.S. Division-North, first decided he wanted to move to the U.S. after graduating college and completing mandatory military service in his original country of Alexandria, Egypt.

"Our country was going through a bad time economically, so I decided to find myself a new home," he said. "I looked for an opportunity to have a future so I decided to come to the United States."

Youssef became a citizen of the United States shortly after, lived in Clearwater, Fla., and owned an electronic security business, until he felt a higher calling to do something more.

"At that time in my life, I needed to have a change," said Youssef. "I needed to do something different. I had my own business, but I was tired of it, and needed to do something unique."

It was after Sept. 11, 2001, when Youssef looked at the current situation of the country and wanted to help in any way he could. Then, he heard about an opportunity to work for the government in Iraq as a translator.

"I decided to give it a shot and come



Photos by Spc. Cassandra Monroe

(Left) Angel Hermiz, a linguist, and (Right) Sameh Youssef, the senior analyst and cultural advisor, both work for USD-N at COB Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq. Hermiz is a Clinton Township, Mich., native, but is originally from Kirkuk, Iraq, while Youssef is a Clearwater, Fla., native, originally from Alexandria, Egypt.

over here [Iraq]," said Youssef. "I've been here since 2004, at the same base."

As the commanding general's cultural advisor, Youssef gives him guidance on how to communicate with Iraqis based on their traditions and background.

"I try to be an influential part in [the decision] making," said Youssef.

He added that being an essential member of USD-N has been a worthwhile cause because he has been able to see the way the country of Iraq has grown over the last seven years he has worked here.

"I think that the country has grown dramatically," said Youssef. "When I first came here, the Iraqi Army only had about two Iraqi battalions in the whole USD-N area of operations. Right now, we have many divisions, plus very good Iraqi police forces. We're working very hard to assist our Iraqi partners to give them primacy to give them control in the cities and give them the opportunity to go outside and do Army work."

He also finds the partnership between the U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers

See CITIZEN, page 5

Iraqi civil affairs officer makes Iraq better place

**By Spc. Jessica Luhrs,
1AATF, 1 AD PAO**

Even though only two soldiers work in the 46th Iraqi Army Brigade Civil Affairs Office they are committed to working hard toward building prosperity in Hawijah near Kirkuk, Iraq.

During a meeting with Soldiers with Stability Transition Team, Company A, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, Sept. 8, the 46th IA CA team told the STT about their plans for providing aid to the Iraqi citizens.

"I plan on first visiting the leadership of the 1,000 villages in my area of operation to find out which village needs the most assistance," said Lt. Col. Ali Adal Ali, the 46th IA Bde CA officer. "Then with the help of our battalions we will begin delivering food and medical supplies to the villages."

According to Lt. Col. Ali, he learned this technique during a Civil Affairs course on Contingency Op-

erating Site Warrior, Kirkuk, in early 2010.

"Before I became a CA officer I took a class on Warrior to help prepare me for the job," he said. "The class taught me a lot about what it takes to be a CA officer and helped me do my job right."

Lieutenant Colonel Ali said the course even taught him how to train his CA team.

Major Chris Choi, of the 46th IA STT, said he is very impressed with what Lt. Col. Ali is doing and that he is using what he has learned.

"You are doing a very good job in the area and by focusing on the people you are assisting greatly in stopping the insurgents," Major Choi said to Lt. Col. Ali.

He continued by telling Lt. Col. Ali that he holds the key to the most important thing in counterinsurgency – the people.

Lieutenant Colonel Ali agreed with his partner and said he would start visiting the leadership immediately.

"We will begin tomorrow visiting with the leadership and come up with plans to build infrastructure, provide food, clothes and medical attention," he said.



Photo by Spc. Jessica Luhrs, 1AATF, 1AD PAO
Lieutenant Colonel Ali Adal Ali, (left) the 46th Iraqi Army Brigade Civil Affairs Officer, and Maj. Chris Choi, (right) a member of the 46th IA STT, 1/14th Inf., 2nd AAB, 25th ID, pose for a photo following their meeting at the 46th IA Bde Headquarters in Hawijah near Kirkuk, Iraq, Sept. 8.

***Happy 63rd Birthday,
U.S. Air Force
Sept. 18, 1947***



3ID officer to share historic Family ties

Hispanic Heritage Ceremony to be informative, entertaining

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson
TF Marne PAO

Lieutenant Colonel Jose Berrios, the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear operations and Force Protection officer for Task Force Marne, was chosen to speak at the upcoming Hispanic Heritage Month Ceremony, Sept. 25, because of his heritage and Family history with 3rd Infantry Division. Multiple members of his Family have served with 3rd ID since World War II.

According to Lt. Col. Shatrece Buchanan, the Task Force Marne chief of Equal Opportunity, his Family ties were what the 3rd ID Equal Opportunity Office was looking for in the speaker for the ceremony.

"We specifically chose [Lt. Col. Berrios] because his uncle was a major general who served in a unit that was affiliated with 3rd ID," said Lt. Col. Buchanan. "We wanted to be able to highlight the 3rd ID heritage and history and then tie it to one of our current members."

During World War II, Lt. Col. Berrios's uncle served in the 3rd Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment, which was attached to 3rd ID.

"My uncle, then Lt. Col. Juan Cesar Cordero Davila, was a battalion commander during World War II with the 65th Infantry Regiment," Lt. Col.

Berrios said.

That was not the end of Lt. Col. Cordero Davila's service with 3rd ID. He served with them again in Korea.

"During the Korean War, the 65th Infantry Regiment, where my uncle was then the regimental commander was again assigned to the 3rd ID," said Lt. Col. Berrios, a native of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The 65th Inf. Regt. was an entirely Hispanic regiment because the Army was not yet integrated at the time. It was organized as the Puerto Rican Provisional Regiment of Infantry, June 30, 1901. In 1908, an Act of Congress approved the regiment to be reorganized as part of the regular Army. Because the native Puerto Rican officers were Puerto Rican citizens, they were required to take the Oath of U.S. Citizenship prior to reciting the Army officers Oath of Office. The regiment did not become officially known as the 65th Inf. Regt. until June 4, 1920.

Following the Korean War, the 65th Inf. Regt. underwent a change that no other unit had done before and none have done since. The unit was released from active duty and assigned to the Puerto Rico National Guard.

Following the unit's release from active duty, his uncle became the adjutant general for the Puerto Rico National Guard where he served until his death in 1965, said Lt. Col. Berrios.

By that time he had achieved the rank of major general, he added.

The 3rd ID ties to Lt. Col. Berrios's Family do not end there, during this deployment, he and all three of his brothers, who are all lieutenant colonels also, have either directly served in or in direct support of TF Marne.

Lieutenant Colonel Berrios is happy that he was chosen to speak at the Hispanic Heritage Month Ceremony and to share the story of his Family.

"It is an honor to be asked to do something like this," said Lt. Col. Berrios. "I am a very Catholic individual. We have an old saying, 'the guy upstairs has a plan and everything happens for a reason.' Maybe this is the reason I am assigned to 3rd ID. So that other Soldiers and officers can see, not just me as a person, but that in the Army, if you work hard you can achieve any rank you wish."

Hispanic Heritage Month is Sept. 15 – Oct 15, and celebrates the achievements and contributions of Hispanic cultures in American history. President Ronald Reagan chose Sept. 15 as the start date in 1988 because it is the Independence Day of five of the Latin American countries.

This year's Hispanic Heritage Month Ceremony will be held at noon, Sept. 25, at the North Dining Facility on Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

Historical Hispanic Heritage Tidbit



The **65th Infantry Regiment**, comprised primarily of Puerto Ricans, began as a volunteer regiment in 1899 and participated in World War I and WWII. It was during the Korean War that they made their mark and saw extensive combat.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Pete Weisbrod is the close access target reconnaissance field service rep for the G-3 special programs section. He has spent countless hours helping Task Force Marne units to incorporate the use of technical capabilities into their operations, often providing hands on support no matter where needed in the United States Division – North operating environment. With an attitude that screams, “No task is too difficult,” and a willingness to get out in the field at a moment’s notice to support the troops, his actions are a testimony to his desire to accomplish the mission. Mr. Weisbrod is another fine example of a Soldier that retired the uniform, but did not retire his commitment of service to his Country. His actions make him a key member of the USD-N team and make him a natural choice for the Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.



Sergeant Carrie Wali, a Pittsburgh, Pa., native with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, is the geospatial engineer section’s non-commissioned officer in charge and currently serves in a sergeant first class position. Her outstanding leadership skills enabled the team to provide essential geospatial services to not only the division headquarters, but also to subordinate units and the division’s higher headquarters. Her team is responsible for disseminating data updates to the many digital battle command platforms so heavily utilized by Task Force Marne. Additionally, Sgt. Wali has circulated throughout northern Iraq, training units on production techniques used for the suite of programs today’s terrain teams use to produce mapping products. Sergeant Wali’s highly effective leadership and expert knowledge of the section’s digital systems have proven vital to enabling successful operations in northern Iraq and make her a great choice for the Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

Roma, Gypsies in Iraq, few and far between

Cultural Tidbit Special to the North Star

The Iraqi concept of Roma or “gypsies” is similar to the prejudice in Europe and many parts of the world. The word “gypsy” is a derogatory term for the people who are Roma.

Roma origins are debated, with many scholars believing them to share roots in certain regions of India, but historians place their roots with the ancient civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Turkey and the Roman Empire. The history of Roma persecution throughout Europe is well documented, though the history of Roma in Iraq is not.

The common name for Roma in Iraq is Kawiliyah, a word with potential roots in the Sumerian language meaning, “the friend,” which could be a potential reference to the ritual position held in society by the Roma, a population used and spurned for the amusements in which they specialize. Despite being Muslims, the Kawiliyah are seen as outcasts.

For centuries Roma have been

associated with entertainment and a nomadic lifestyle, whether by choice or circumstances forced upon them is unknown. The men were professional singers or musicians and the women were invited to dance at feasts, weddings and parties in Iraq.

In the 1970s socialism and the Soviet bloc changed their nomadic habits and they were forced to inhabit defined ghettos. Iraq followed the example of Ceausescu’s Romania with isolated villages and Iraqi citizenship.

Roma populations in Iraq are sparse and dwindling, since being forced to abandon their nomadic ways they have spread throughout Iraq and have adopted local dialects including the dialects of Mosul, of the south, and Baghdad.

Rumor and superstition still surround the Roma, a common one being their use of a secret Roma language used only when communicating with each other. There is no evidence of this being true in Iraq.

The Roma in Iraq refer to themselves as the people of the wind, who

will never settle in one place. Over the centuries Roma have made many contributions to the arts in Iraq yet have never been acknowledged by society or included in the cultural history of the country.

The music scene in Basra is heavily influenced by Roma technique and tradition. Exclusion is the theme of Roma existence, more so than nearly any other ethnic and cultural group.

Even though Roma have been included in the Iraqi population since the 1957 census, Iraqi Roma have not had acknowledgement from other Iraqis as a social segment with their own distinct cultural elements.

The Roma are a rich thread in the cultural and ethnic tapestry of the country of Iraq, one that hopefully will continue to add to the diversity of the nation.

Editor’s note: This paper created with research from the Task Force Marne Human Terrain Research Cell, Oyster Pt. Va., and the Human Terrain Analysis Team at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.
POC: Florinda.lucero@3id.army.mil

LIFE LIBERTY CONSTITUTION DAY FREEDOM PROSPERITY

Continued from, CITIZEN, Page 1

inspiring.

"I see the hard work that our Soldiers have done with our Iraqi partners," he said. "It's tremendous and it's refreshing. If I leave right now, I feel like I have participated and done something small to help [the U.S.] in the long run to help the Iraqi people to become a prosperous country.

Another critical member of Task Force Marne, Angel Hermiz, contributes her skills as a linguist to the USD-N command team, specifically for the USD-N Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, and also believes that her time spent advising American Soldiers has been beneficial..

"Knowing the culture very well is what motivated me mostly to do the job, because I felt like I could be a great help to all of the Soldiers," said Hermiz. "When I would watch the television from 2003 to 2007, I heard many negative things, and most of it was related to mistranslation, or misadvised cultural issues. I felt like I could help with advising and I feel like I speak good English and Arabic. I feel like I do my best in both advising in the culture and the language."

Hermiz is a Clinton Township, Mich., native, but is originally from Kirkuk, Iraq. Her and her Family spent some time in Baghdad before making the decision to finally move to the United States.

"My Family and I came to the states

in 1992," she said. "We lived in two wars growing up in Iraq, one between Iran and Iraq, and the other being the first Gulf War. The economic sanction affected my parents and their savings, so we pretty much lost everything. We had a great opportunity to leave Iraq and start somewhere else. So we made it to the U.S. and have been in Michigan since."

Hermiz worked many jobs at the beginning of her stay in the States, due to the language barrier. She went to college to learn more about English, and landed a job at a civil engineering firm as an administrative assistant before becoming a linguist. The job of a linguist was being advertised everywhere, especially because there is a high number of Arab or Middle Eastern communities in Michigan. When Hermiz saw the ads on television and in grocery stores, she knew what she wanted to apply for.

"When my firm started downsizing, unfortunately, I lost my job, so I was unemployed," Hermiz said. "At first, I took this job for a financial reason. The pay was good and I speak both languages, but when I got here in Iraq, it was totally different. I look at it as a great mission and I am proud to be here. As a linguist, the kinds of jobs we do are key leader engagements with the high-level personnel in Iraq, like high commanding generals."

For Hermiz, the time she has spent

and lived in country since beginning her job in 2008 has been enough to notice positive differences within the country and people of Iraq.

"I've noticed good things happening in Iraq since I was last here," said Hermiz. "When I was living here, it was during Saddam's regime. The people of Iraq didn't have that much freedom of speech, becoming who they want to be. Everything back then was in the name of the government. Right now, I see the people becoming more and more like themselves."

For Hermiz and Youssef, both find the greatest value in their jobs through their services to Task Force Marne.

"My favorite thing about my job is that I am able to help," said Youssef. "I try to bring something new with my briefs that I do. It's my job for my colleagues to understand how the people here think; I believe my services will help tremendously."

"It's a great opportunity, I am thankful to be able to do this level of work because I get to work with unique individuals. It's a great honor to work for a major general in the U.S. Army. For America, it's the least I could give to the country that gave me and my Family freedom. The freedom to choose our way of living, freedom to practice our religion with no fear, freedom to speak our opinion with no fear and finally for the country that gave peace," said Hermiz.

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 - Lt. Col. 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. Cassandra Monroe

2nd Advise and
Assist Brigade,
3rd Infantry Division

2nd Advise and
Assist Brigade,
25th Infantry Division

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

135th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment