

# The North Star

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



Volume 1, Issue 131

Page 1 • September 24, 2010

## 'Ready First' says farewell to TF Marne CSM

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

The leadership of 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, "Ready First" 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, said farewell to the Task Force Marne Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews during a ceremony held on Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, Sept. 21.

Command Sergeant Major Andrews was recently selected as the First Army command sergeant major, headquartered out of Fort Gillem, Ga. He has been the senior enlisted noncommissioned officer for 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., since March 8, 2007.

During the ceremony Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews, who entered the military in 1980, was described as a leader who made an impact on many Soldiers.

"Command Sergeant Major Andrews' career has been one of numerous accomplishments and selfless service to establishing a legacy that has undoubtedly impacted the lives of many Soldiers," said Sgt. Kevin McCulley, the narrator of the ceremony.

Also, during the ceremony,

each of the command sergeants major of Ready First approached the podium to speak about how Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews had made an impact on their careers.

Command Sergeant Major Thomas Hitch, command sergeant major of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., spoke about how he always took the time to teach every Soldier.

"Everywhere he goes he hands out information to every Soldier to add to their kit bag; many of the things he has taught me throughout the years I use today," said Command Sgt. Maj. Hitch, who has been mentored by Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews since he was a first sergeant.

Command Sergeant Major Dana Mason Jr., command sergeant major for 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, Ready First, added that not only is Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews a leader but he genuinely cares for the Soldiers he leads.

All of the Ready First command sergeants major agreed, each of them speaking about how Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews mentored and made an impact on them and their Soldiers.



Photo by Spc. Jessica Luhrs, 1AATF, 1AD PAO

**Task Force Marne Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, is presented with a 1/1 AD jersey by Command Sgt. Maj. Dana Mason, Jr., command sergeant major for 1-1 STB, Ready First, during Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews' farewell ceremony on COS Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, Sept. 21. Command Sergeant Major Andrews was recently selected as the First Army Command Sergeant Major, headquartered out of Fort. Gillem, Ga.**

After each of the senior NCOs spoke, they presented Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews with memoirs of Ready First.

When Command Sgt. Maj. Andrews took the floor, he thanked each Soldier in

the room for getting him to his current level.

"It is because of all of you I was selected, you guys have done a phenomenal job here in Kirkuk and it was a blessing to work with Ready First," he said.

# Voting, yes – campaigning, not so much

by Capt. Daniel D'Isidoro  
TF Marne OSJA

With Election Day less than two months away, a review of ethical rules regarding political activities by military members is in order.

In 1939, Congress passed the Hatch Act to eliminate corrupt practices in national elections by significantly restricting political-campaign activities by federal employees.

Senator Carl Hatch of New Mexico sponsored the law following revelations that officials in the Works Progress Administration were using their positions to win votes.

In 1993, Congress decided to bolster the right of federal civilian employees to participate in the political process by passing the Hatch Act Reform Amendments.

The amendments sought to encourage federal employees to exercise “their right to participate or to refrain from participating in the political processes of the Nation.”

While the Hatch Act does not apply to members of the Armed Forces, DoD used it as a guide when it issued its regulation on the political activities of servicemembers.

DoD sought to encourage members of the Armed Forces to exercise their rights of citizenship while keeping with the traditional concept that members on active duty should not engage in partisan political activity.

Under DoD Directive 1344.10, an active-duty servicemember may express a personal opinion on political candidates and issues, so long as it is not done as a representative of the Armed Forces.

A servicemember may also write letters to the editor of a newspaper expressing a member's personal views on public issues or political candidates, so long as it is not part of an organized campaign or solicitation of votes for or against a political party, partisan political cause, or candidate.

If the letter identifies its author as a member of the Armed Forces, it should clearly state the views expressed are those of the individual only and not those of DoD or the respective service.

Soldiers may also display political bumper stickers on their privately owned vehicles but not large political signs, banners or posters. They may attend partisan rallies as a spectator when not in uniform and when no

inference or appearance of official endorsement can reasonably be drawn.

The regulation specifically prohibits “participation” in partisan rallies, parades, fund raising or appearances on any radio, television, or other program or group discussion as an advocate for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.

These restrictions apply whether or not the Soldier is in uniform. “Participation” is defined as “more than mere attendance as a spectator,” such as making a speech.

The regulation also prohibits Soldiers living on a military installation from displaying partisan political signs at their residences if it is visible to the public.

In an attempt to strike a balance between encouraging servicemembers to exercise their rights of citizenship and the traditional notion that active-duty military members should not engage in partisan political activities, DoD created these rules.

The DoD Directive constitutes a lawful general regulation; therefore, violations of these rules are punishable under Article 92, “Failure to Obey Order or Regulation,” -Uniform Code of Military Justice.

*Are **YOU** interested in surprising your Family upon your redeployment home? Want to get **creative**?  
Enter yourself in TLC's Surprise Homecoming Show!*

**WHO:** Any Servicemember redeploying between now and the end of October - **WHAT:** Casting call for a Surprise Homecoming show on TLC - **WHEN:** Now - **HOW:** Find a video camera and get a friend to record you answering the following questions on camera. Please keep tape to 5 minutes or less.

- State your name, age, unit, mission and when you are scheduled to come home.
- Tell us who you would like to surprise and why (be sure to explain what makes your story unique and special birth of child or proposal or long time away... anything that sets your homecoming apart.)
- Tell us about your deployment and some of the challenges you and your Family have faced while apart.
- Are you good at keeping a secret? (We need this to be a surprise.)
- Show us something that will tell us who you are (get creative.)
- Finally, spell out your e-mail address clearly so we can contact you directly.

*After you've answered these questions, make your way to nearest computer to upload your video.*

*Follow these steps :*

- Connect your camera to the computer.
- Go to: <http://dropbox.yousendit.com/homecoming>.
- You will now automatically be logged in however if you are prompted for a username & password please type the following: username: homecoming@authenticTV.com, password: upl0ad (the “o” is actually the number zero.)
- Once you see the screen that says send a file to a Dropbox please type in your e-mail address.
- In the next box marked SUBJECT, please type YOUR NAME, then the word, HOMECOMING.
- Finally, click the CHOOSE FILE tab and select the movie file you will be sending us (i.e. .mov, .avi, or .wmv are preferred file formats).

NOTE: TO SUBMIT VIA E-MAIL: answer the questions above, attach a photo of you (and your Family if you have one) and e-mail to: homecoming@authenticTV.com



## Commentary

# Building relationships through my job



Photo by Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs,  
TF Marne PAO

**Specialist Cassandra Monroe is a public affairs specialist with 135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Iowa National Guard, and a Muscatine, Iowa, native.**

As a journalist, being an outsider is something I am used to. However, I'm never one too long. As a journalist, you must be able to quickly get to know your interviewee, most often without a prior relationship.

You must be able to put strangers at ease, sometimes before a single question escapes your mouth, gain the trust of your sources and leave with information you need for your story. This can be difficult, but with the right personality, the job can be done.

Before this deployment with the 3rd Infantry Division and the entities that make up Task Force Marne, I felt that I would be an outsider as the newcomer.

As an Iowa National Guardsman deployed with a division where everyone knows each other, I thought

relationships would be hard to build.

But for me, the relationships came naturally. Although I am a guardsman from a different state and not organic to the division, I felt that my time spent here attached to 3rd ID and Task Force Marne units was a learning experience for me.

I learned about how the active-duty Army works, and I learned so much more about my job as a journalist. I also learned about myself as a person, and as a Soldier. Also, with every new story I wrote, I learned something different on how to do my job.

This deployment will yield many enjoyable memories for me, from singing the Dog Face Soldier song in front of a roaring UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, to hearing an inspiring personal experience from a UH-47 Chinook crew chief, which is still my favorite interview to this day.

Getting to know more about the people to more accurately tell the story of their accomplishments started with my love for hearing personal experiences. In this job, you sometimes find that people open up to you more than they have to others. It could be because I am an outsider looking into someone else's world.

For example, I'll never forget when I interviewed a father whose son had switched units and volunteered to deploy to Iraq with him.

During the joint father-son interview, I asked the father a question regarding his feelings about serving with his son and how he had that close-to-home support, right here in Iraq. As

he began to explain his feelings, he paused, trying to fight back tears. He tried again to explain the situation, but this time, the tears fell.

Later, after the interview, he explained to me that he had never opened up to a stranger before, but he felt comfortable with me to share such a personal experience.

When I look back on that interview, I feel proud because I was able to put that father at ease, allowing him to feel comfortable enough to let me into his life—to write his story. I think it was something he needed to do, and I hope for him, it made him feel better.

Once my stories are complete, they aren't just articles that get put in the TF Marne newsletter, The North Star, or loaded to the Internet. They give the public at home a glimpse of the lives of our Soldiers who are serving in Iraq. It gives those at home a chance to see how Soldiers are spending their days.

It allows Families to see their fathers, sons, mothers, daughters, brothers and sisters, heroes serving their country and helping others around the world.

As I reflect on the last year, I am coming to terms with the fact that I will not see a lot of the people I have served with when I redeploy home. I made great connections with the Soldiers of the 3rd ID, and am pleased that I earned the right to wear the Marne patch on my right arm.

I don't feel like a newcomer to the 3rd Infantry Division, I feel like part of the team, no matter what state I am from.

## You are invited

### Sacramento Kings Dancers & Andy Davis Tour

Where: FOB Marez/JSS India - Sept. 28

### Queensryche

Where: FOB Warrior - Oct. 1  
Where: COB Speicher - Oct. 2

### Michael Peterson

Where: FOB Cobra/Warhorse - Oct. 4

Where: Samarra/Dagger - Oct. 5

Where: McHenry/Irbil - Oct. 6

### USO Handshake Tour

Where: Edge, Cobra, Cruz Morris,  
Samarra and Dagger - Oct. 17

### Buffalo "Jills" Cheerleaders

Where: McHenry, Irbil, India, Heider,  
Nimur - Oct. 19

### Chuck Mulligan

Where: FOB Warrior - Oct. 22

Where: FOB Marez - Oct. 23

Where: FOB Warhorse - Oct. 24

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Veronica Todd, a Washington, D.C., native, is the transportation supervisor for the Contingency Operating Base Speicher Shuttle Bus Service. She retired from the U.S. Army and joined Kellogg, Brown and Root in 1998 and is continuing a lifetime of service to our nation by providing Soldiers and civilians here on COB Speicher the very best in logistical support on a daily basis. Her dedication to the COB's residents and visitors is evident in all she does and ensures reliable transportation service. Her outstanding support contributed to the success of multiple conferences hosted by Task Force Marne. Todd is a force multiplier for the COB Speicher garrison. Her professional work ethic and radiant personality make her a pleasure to work with, a valued member of the team, and a natural choice for the Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.



Sergeant Amber Scott, a Saint Petersburg, Fla., native with Company B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, serves as her company's training room noncommissioned officer, the communications security NCO, and the battalion's Facebook NCOIC. In addition to her primary duties, she spends a significant amount of time assisting with the Remember My Service digital yearbook project due to her photography skills. Her willingness to provide video support for the project's interviews has ensured both the quality and the success of the project. Similar to her work with Facebook, organizing and uploading the battalion's photographs and newsletters, she continues to dedicate her personal time in preparing the RMS videos. No matter what task at hand, she always gives her time in support of the Mighty Spartan Brigade. Sergeant Scott's ability to support the unit's efforts to tell its Soldiers' stories and her determination to succeed makes her an excellent choice for the Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

# The city called Baghdad, full of rich history

## Cultural Tidbit Special to the North Star

Baghdad was founded by the Second Abbasid Caliph Al-Mansur on July 30, 762 CE. The official name given to the city by Al-Mansur was Madinat-al-Salaam or, "City of Peace." This is the name that was on all coins, weights, and items of official usage. Within three centuries however the official name would pass into history; Baghdad it was and Baghdad it remained.

A thousand years ago, a slave-turned-writer named Yaqut al-Hamawi chronicled the great places and people of his day. Yaqut was a Greco-Syrian slave of the 12th century in Baghdad.

By the end of his life, he was no longer a slave and had written several first-hand encyclopedias that today, 900 years later, provide some of the only information we possess about the civilizations of the Near and Middle East, prior to the complete devastation wrought by the Mongol horde of Genghis Khan. His description of Baghdad conjures a lovely and elegant

city, far removed from the typical image of Medieval city life. It is amazing to read such accounts and know that they are nearly a thousand years old. Here, an excerpt:

*"... Both sides of the river were for miles fronted by the palaces, kiosks, gardens and parks of the grandees and nobles, marble steps led down to the water's edge, and the scene on the river was animated by thousands of gondolas, decked with little flags, dancing like sunbeams on the water, and carrying the pleasure-seeking Baghdad citizens from one part of the city to the other ..."*

Today, Baghdad is the second largest city in the Arab world, after Cairo. The origin of the name, "Baghdad" is disputed, with some saying it came from an Aramaic phrase that means "sheep enclosure," while others contend that the word came from Old Persian; "Bagh" meaning God, and "dad" meaning gift and therefore, the gift of God.

The name Baghdad had already existed for a very long time by the

time of the Abbasid caliphate. When Al-Mansur turned Baghdad into the commercial and political center of Madinat-al-Salaam however, it was just a prosperous village on the banks of the Tigris. Much has been written about the glories of Baghdad, it has been embroidered upon and made a prominent character in the famed tales from 1001 Arabian Nights. It would be easy to think that after 1,000 years any description of the city during the caliphate would be more fairy tale than truth, but that would be incorrect as Yaqut shows us.

There is a great and rich history to the city of Baghdad, as much as Paris or Beijing or Cairo. This is just a tiny taste that hopefully will wet your appetite to seek out more.

*Editor's note: This paper was 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.*

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## REGIONAL HEADLINES

### Kansas residents activate tornado sirens by phone

[www.hutchnews.com](http://www.hutchnews.com)

HUTCHINSON, Kan. - Kansas authorities say a phone glitch is to blame for the mistaken sounding of tornado sirens in recent weeks leading up to Sept. 21, causing confusion and even panic among some residents in and around Hutchinson.

At first, officials suspected there was water on the phone lines or perhaps insects. But The Hutchinson News reported the sirens are assigned local phone numbers and are activated when emergency workers dial those numbers.

A software glitch opened the lines to outside calls, and residents who mistakenly dialed those numbers activated the sirens.

Officials say they've fixed the problem by assigning new, secure phone numbers to the sirens.

### Georgia man wants to change his name to a Saint

[www.macontelegraph.com](http://www.macontelegraph.com)

MACON, Ga. - Shelby Marwan Heggs of Macon admits he's been a sinner, but hopes his past won't keep a judge from allowing him to become a Saint. Heggs, who has convictions for drunken driving and marijuana possession, has filed a court petition that would allow him to change his name to Saint Jody Almighty Bedrock.

Heggs, who also faces an aggravated battery charge next month, said he's rededicated his life to God, The Telegraph newspaper in Macon reported.

"I wanted a name that everybody would know when they were talking to me that they were talking to a man of God," said Heggs. "I wanted that to be expressed in my name."

The Bibb County District Attorney's Office is opposing Heggs' request on grounds he may be using it to try to hide his criminal record, prosecutor John Regan said. A name change request can be denied on that basis.

Heggs said he isn't trying to hide from anyone. He said the aggravated battery charge stems from a fight with his neighbor in which he fought back in self-defense.

A court hearing was held last week on Heggs' request, but no ruling has been made.

The prosecutor said he couldn't discuss details of Heggs' aggravated battery charge because it's still pending.

Heggs said he's already calling himself by his new name, and his friends and family already call him Saint Jody. "I wanted to start fresh," he said.

### Georgia woman accused of hoarding animals in home

[www.macontelegraph.com](http://www.macontelegraph.com)

CANTON, Ga. - Authorities said

charges are pending against a woman accused of hoarding nearly 130 cats and dogs in her rural Cherokee County home. Cherokee County Marshal Ray Waters said Shari Cahill was scheduled for a hearing Thursday, Sept. 16, after police rescued 113 cats and 14 dogs from her home this week. Authorities said many of the animals were dehydrated and showed other signs of neglect.

The animals were found after neighbors called police to complain about the smell coming from Cahill's home. Authorities wearing biohazard suits also found the carcasses of 23 cats and one dog.

Authorities said the house was filled with mounds of animal waste and rooms of garbage.

Cahill did not answer a phone listed in her name.

### Answers from last newsletter's Die-Hard Fan Contest:

1. 1
2. Florida Marlins
3. St. Louis Cardinals
4. Gaylord Perry
5. Chone Figgins
6. Craig Biggio, Garret Anderson
7. Phil Niekro
8. Satchel Paige
9. Dave Tremblay
10. Joe Gordon
11. Rangers, Marlins, Rays

### THE North Star

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2nd Advise and  
Assist Brigade,  
25th Infantry Division

1st Advise and  
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