

# The North Star

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



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## *Iraqi led mission nets small munitions cache*

**By Sgt. Ricardo Branch  
2nd AAB Public Affairs  
25th Inf. Div., USD-N**

BALAD, Iraq — A U.S. Soldier walked through the field, scanning left and right as he tread through the tall underbrush. Occasionally, he stopped for a second to check a spot before moving on his way. To the Soldier's left and right were Balad Iraqi Policemen armed with shovels, and together they searched ... for buried treasures.

Their objective was not gold or silver however, but something far more valuable; finding buried munitions before they could be used to harm Iraqi and U.S. forces during a cache clearance operation near the town of Juvezzat, Oct. 16.

For the Soldiers of Headquarters Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment, and police officers from the Balad Federal Police "Justice Battalion," joint-operations are commonplace, and these operations are becoming more Iraqi-led as U.S. Forces draw down and hand over more security to the local forces.

"It is nice to see them in the lead," said Capt. Eric Harrison, as he wiped sweat

from his brow. "The Iraqi Police here are the ones who received a lot of information that something's been going on at this farm, so we are here to assist them in searching the area."

Captain Harrison, from Rochester, N.Y., serves as the battery commander for, HSB, 2nd Bn., 11th FA Regt. and is one of many leaders tasked to advise, assist, and train Iraqi Security Forces.

"For this operation, we have our brigade's police platoon helping advise the Iraqi Police and that partnership is proving very useful," he said. "We have been working with these guys for three months now, and it has been pretty good — we fell in on a good team."

During the mission, Iraqi Police and U.S. Soldiers secured a house on the property then spread out into the surrounding area to conduct the cache search.

**Iraqi Federal Police and Soldiers from the Headquarters Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, U.S. Division-North, uncover a 105mm artillery round, two flare guns and 18 propellant cartridges during a cache clearance operation near the town of Juvezzat, Oct. 16.**



Photos by Sgt. Ricardo Branch, 2nd AAB PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

**Iraqi Federal Police from the Balad Federal Police "Justice Battalion" search the inside of a house during a cache clearance operation near the town of Juvezzat, Oct. 16.**



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# Medics teach Iraqi public servants quick response, stabilization methods

By Spc. Andrew Ingram  
USD-N PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Fourteen Iraqi public servants from the Salah Ad Din Province graduated from a U.S. Army sponsored emergency medical technician training course at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Oct. 24.

During the five-week intensive course, medics from the 21st Combat Support

Hospital; 402nd Field Surgical Team; 3rd Battalion, 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, taught Iraqi Civil Defense Directorate workers and police officers the skills to save lives and minimize permanent physical damage through classroom lectures and hours of practical exercises.

Colonel Edward Michaud, surgeon, Task Force Marne and 3rd Infantry Division,

said the “hands-on” approach of the training has prepared the students to act swiftly and proficiently in the service of the people of Salah Ad Din.

“These students have a sense of pride knowing that they have worked hard to prepare to respond and effectively evaluate, stabilize and treat severely injured citizens,” Col. Michaud said. “We hope the people of Tikrit and Salah Ad Din are also proud of their brave and ef-

fective first responders.”

Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, commanding general, Task Force Marne and the 3rd Inf. Div., commended the graduates for their bravery and dedication.

“You serve the people of Tikrit and the people of greater Salah Ad Din,” he said. “Unfortunately, because you serve the people you are also a target for the enemy.

“Violent extremists want to target you because you represent hope,” he continued. “While I applauded your courage for what you do, I hope you feel the great responsibility that comes with your jobs.”

Lieutenant Colonel Mary Krueger, surgeon, 4th Infantry Division, commended the Task Force Marne medics for their outstanding work in the region.

Lieutenant Colonel Krueger said as the 4th Inf. Div. assumes responsibility for U.S. Division-North, she plans to continue the strong working relationship the “Dog Faced” Soldiers of the 3rd Inf. Div. have shared with the people of Salah Ad Din.

“We hope some of you will become instructors for future courses,” she told the graduates.

Lieutenant Colonel Krueger said the training will continue under the 4th Inf. Div. with a new iteration beginning in November.

Major General Tony Cucolo presents a certificate to honor graduate Muhammad Kalil Aaboud, Salah Ad Din Emergency Response Team, during a graduation ceremony for Emergency Medical Technician training at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Oct. 24.

Photos by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO





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"What makes this mission unique is that the Iraqis are in the lead for this mission," Capt. Harrison said. "It proves what people always suspected: that Iraqis are capable of planning and executing missions on their own."

Little was uncovered during the first five hours of the search, but as hopes started to drop, an Iraqi police officer yelled, "Look over there!"

The police officer spotted a small hole visible under some logs, which concealed a 105mm artillery round along with flare guns. Initiators were also found on the site.

"This wasn't a real big find but it confirmed that our partners are ready," Harrison said. "They conducted a lot of the things we are not able to do very well, such as question the locals, who are more comfortable talking to

their police force over U.S. troops."

Captain Abdel Mahsion Makdi Salih, an Iraqi police officer with the Justice Battalion, echoed the words of Harrison, calling the mission a good opportunity to showcase the Iraqi-U.S. partnership, as well as Iraqi dedication to providing security to their people.

"What the Iraqi Police did here with the U.S. Soldiers was show the local people that although we are both from separate countries ... we can work well together as one team because both (Americans and Iraqis) have the same goal in mind for the people of Iraq," Salih said.

He added, "For us, the people in our area are like an extended family, so the Iraqi Police will continue to work hard to make sure they can lead safe, good lives, and realize that everyone, regard-



**Iraqi Federal Police from the Balad Federal Police "Justice Battalion" search the inside of a house during a cache clearance operation near the town of Juvezzat, Oct. 16.**

less of tribe, or religion is able to enjoy in that life."

Although the cache was small, it reaffirms the comment that Iraqi Security Forces are becoming better prepared each day to safeguard their own country.

As the sun began to set in the sky, both Iraqi and U.S. Forces shared in the success of the find.

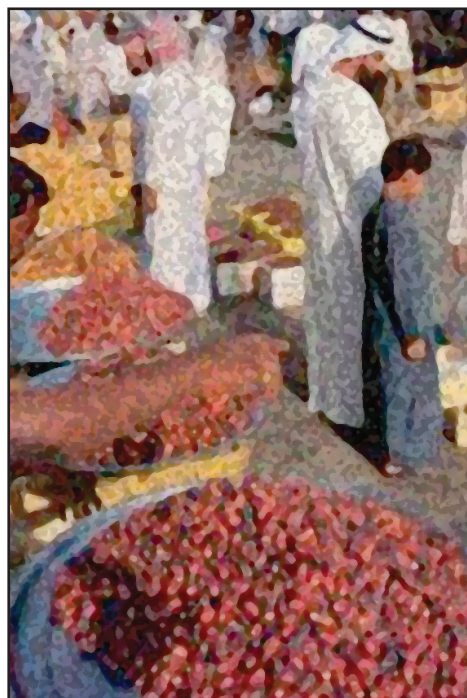
"When you're on an operation like a cache sweep, you feel like you're on a scavenger hunt or searching for buried treasure," said Pfc. Jeff Gruidl, 23, from Payette, Idaho. "It's usually hot, and you're getting real sweaty by the end of it, but when you find something, deep down you know, you've just saved someone's life."

## Cultural Corner: The significance of the Date Palm

**By Florinda Lucero**  
**Human Terrain Analysis Team**  
**USD-N COB Speicher**

The term, "date palm" refers to hundreds of varieties of dates; with different names, sweet, not sweet, long lasting, highly perishable, and so forth. In a harsh climate that makes perishable foods perish all the faster, the driest dates provide long lasting sustenance and nourishment.

Date palm cultivation has been in existence for thousands of years; wild date palm seeds dating back 50,000 years have been found in the Shanidar Cave of northern Iraq. The date provided a staple diet for these early cave dwellers and would have been essential to their well being in many ways. The leaves, or fronds, of the palm provided shade from the sun and shelter from dust storms. Thousands of years later the Moors brought dates to Spain from North Africa where they



**Iraq at one point grew up to 80 percent of the world's dates, and that history has long been featured on their coins, stamps and bills.**

still grow today in Alicante, providing considerable economic benefit to the region – the "Deglet Noor" is one of the most popular varieties.

The date palm is likely one of the world's oldest cultivated food producing plants. A native of what is now Iraq, the *Phoenix dactylifera*, or date palm, is a member of the Palm family – a group of trees with no branches, topped by a large crown of leaves, with each leaf from 10 to 20 feet in length.

It is a cousin of the lily, the orchid and various grasses. Each of these very different plants rise by first putting out a single leaf from its seed. Growing rapidly, as much as one foot per year, and as high as 80 to 100 feet, the date palm appreciates water and sun simultaneously and thrive naturally in the oases of Iraq with their dry warm climate and underground water supply.

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## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant First Class Titan and Staff Sergeant Shane Kanady, Fort Hood, Texas-natives, with the 178th Military Police Detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, are selected for their outstanding performance as a Patrol Explosive Detector Dog Team. Sergeant First Class Titan and SSG Kanady flawlessly performed more than 100 Combat Support and Force Protection missions including: support to quick reaction forces, cache and open area searches, raids and cordon and search. Sergeant First Class Titan and SSG Kanady have been the primary trainers for numerous Iraqi K9 health classes, and assisted the Iraqi Police Dog Handlers in proper maintenance and care of their Working Dogs. In order to recognize these accomplishments, they have been selected as Task Force Marne "Dog Face" Heroes of the North.



Staff Sergeant Trina Perkins, a native of Yazoo City, Miss., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion, is a highly motivated noncommissioned officer on her third deployment. Her work ethic and performance as the operations NCO for the maintenance section has been awe-inspiring. She leads from the front in everything she does, makes time to mentor her Soldiers and continually gives of her free time. She has supported six battalions over the past 12 months and trained countless Soldiers on the intricacies of the equipment's operations. Staff Sergeant Perkins devoted countless hours to both battalion and brigade efforts and is the major reason that her unit's combat power is accurately reported every day. She has supervised and worked in her unit support operations section in multiple duty positions. She is a true logistics warrior and an excellent choice for Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

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The date palm grows in both male and female varieties, and in the wild is pollinated only by the wind; without human involvement it gives out little fruit. Early people learned to place male flowers amongst the female, thus insuring the transfer of pollen. By 5000 BCE, the Sumerians were cultivating the date palm; this was one of the earliest efforts by human beings to deliberately create a reliable human-controlled food source.

The date palm provided the Sumerians with food, shade, building materials, animal feed, tools and rope. It became the core of one of the first human cultures to become a "civilization" as we know it; the Sumerians developed writing, a codified system of laws, and were the first to use the wheel for transportation.

With all that the date palm gave to the rise of civilization, it is no wonder then that the date palm, symbolizing peace, justice and supply, was pictured in the earliest sculptures deemed sacred to the Sumerians, as well as to the Babylonians and Assyrians who fol-

lowed them. Egyptians, too, honored the date, and later the date palm was important to three of the world's major religious groups: the Jews, the Muslims and the Christians.

One ancient Muslim tale describes the date palm as the chief food created by God to nourish Adam in the Garden of Eden. The palm was also said to have been the building material for Mohammed's home. The founder of Islam urged his followers to "cherish your father's sister, the palm tree." Dates were supposedly Mohammed's favorite fruit and there are roughly 26 references to them in the Koran. Muslims also break their Ramadan or New Year's fast each night by eating a date.

At one point Iraq grew up to 80 percent of the world's dates, and that history has long been featured on their coins, stamps and bills. Saudi Arabia is another principal producer of dates and their national symbol includes the date palm above crossed swords. The North African countries of Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria also honor the date on their stamps and currency.



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## REGIONAL HEADLINES

### College hosts PTSD seminar

www.krdo.com

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — A recent study shows that one out of five Soldiers returns from Iraq or Afghanistan with post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

On Saturday, Oct. 24, the University of Phoenix held a workshop teaching counseling professionals how to diagnose and treat local Soldiers who have this condition.

“Military personnel are returning to Colorado Springs with their families, and they’re abusing drugs,” said Jody Tomberlin, licensed clinical social worker. “When Soldiers return from the Middle East, they often have angry outbursts, resulting in bar fights, domestic violence, and difficulty holding jobs.”

Counselors attending this workshop said that a military town like Colorado Springs, PTSD can run rampant.

University of Phoenix faculty members said symptoms include:

Re-experiencing the traumatic event. -Anger issues -Difficulty driving -Avoidance of every day activities like showering or brushing your teeth. The disorder also affects women.

“It’s important that counselors learn how to deal with PTSD,” said Tomberlin. “We have such a large number of Soldiers in Colorado Springs, and we have seen this disorder is affecting them and their families and their children.”

Seminar participants will receive continuing education certificates.

### Hiker in serious condition after breaking both legs

seattletimes.nwsources.com

LEAVENWORTH, Wash. — A hiker who fell and fractured both of his legs while ascending Aasgard Pass Thursday, Oct. 21, was in serious condition Saturday morning, Oct. 23, at Central Washington Hospital.

A helicopter crew from Fairchild Air Force Base rescued Kwang R. Jang, 64, of Lacey, shortly before 10 a.m., said Chelan County Sheriff’s Chief of Administration Jerry Moore.

He was leading a day hike with a party of 10 people. Three of them, including Jang, left Colchuck Lake to hike up Aasgard Pass, Moore said.

“There’s a section where there’s just a huge boulder field, and you’re literally jumping from boulder to boulder the size of VWs and SUVs,” Moore said. Jang didn’t gauge one of his jumps correctly and fell off the boulder into standing water below, Moore said. He severely fractured both of his legs below the knee.

After he fell, the two women who had hiked up with him got word to the group at the lake, and that group hiked out and reported the fall to emergency dispatchers, Moore said.

The two women stayed with Jang through the night until a deputy and

several volunteers — including two medics and two EMTs — arrived at about 10 p.m. They determined his condition was serious, Moore said.

Moore said the Sheriff’s Office strongly encourages people who regularly hike in the back country to invest in a SPOT locator device, which when activated, sends a signal to a satellite and then to a control center, which notifies the nearest emergency department.

“What it does is gives the person who’s lost or injured a better chance of survival,” he said.

Information was still sketchy and incomplete Friday morning, when it was reported that the two women left Jang was alone. That was not the case, Moore said.

### Prescott woman named Army soldier of year

The Daily Courier

PRESCOTT, Ariz. — Sergeant Sherri Jo Gallagher, who grew up in Prescott and graduated from Prescott Christian High School in 2002, won the U.S. Army’s Best Warrior Competition and was named Army Soldier of the Year on Monday, Oct. 25, at the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Gallagher, 26, currently an instructor/shooter with the Army’s Marksmanship Unit, is the first woman to win the competition.

#### THE

### North Star

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