

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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CNO visits Sailors at Camp Victory

Story and photos by
Sgt. Joseph Vine
USF-I Public Affairs

Admiral Gary Roughead, chief of Naval operations, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West visited Camp Victory Jan. 19 to talk with Sailors and leaders from the different Naval commands of United States Forces – Iraq.

Roughead also re-enlisted seven Sailors and held a town hall meeting at the Hope Chapel on Camp Victory.

The Sailors involved said they cherished their unique re-enlistment.

“It was an honor to have the chief of naval operations re-enlist me,” said Chief Petty Officer Peter S. Sydow, leading chief petty officer for Base Command Group Al Asad. “This might be my last re-enlistment, so it was a great way to start my last leg of my Naval career.”

See CNO visit, Page 8



Adm. Gary Roughead, chief of naval operations, speaks to Sailors during a town hall meeting at the Hope Chapel on Camp Victory Jan. 19. Roughead and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West travelled throughout Iraq visiting Sailors and addressing their concerns.

Navy takes command of Task Force Troy

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg
USF-I Public Affairs

A Navy explosive ordnance brigade made history by being the first Navy component to take command of Joint Task Force Troy, Jan. 14.

During a Transfer of Authority

Ceremony at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, the San Diego based Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1 assumed command and control of Task Force Troy from the 111th Ordnance Group (EOD).

Colonel Jose R. Atencio, commander of the 111th Ord. Grp., described the

hand over between both units as “very smooth” because of the similar training and work ethics of EOD units throughout the armed forces.

“When they came in they understood the mission, and we understood what

See TFTroy, Page 5

INSIDE:



Clear visions

Page 2



Celebrating the dream
Page 3



XVIII Airborne Corps arrives
Page 6

Chaplain's Corner

Gaining serenity with visions from home

By Sgt 1st Class James Lewis
USF-I 116th Garrison Command

Is it possible to find serenity in our current military surroundings?

Long work hours, mortars or rockets striking in our area of operations, pressures from above and below our place in the chain of command, stressors from home, and many other sources collide against our psyche.

We have supervisors and co-workers whose demeanors, attitudes, habits and quirks often get under our skin. Our environment is filled with dust, excessive heat, tight living quarters and offensive odors. Our every situation is in a state of flux. We are in the middle of a draw down with the constant questions of how much and how fast what is to come.

The uncertainty of it all and what will be asked of us during these next few months weighs on our minds. The work we do seems to go on and on and never seems to reach a state of completion. It is times like these I want to go to a happier place.

I remember feeling many of these same feelings on my last deployment.

Chaplain (Col.) Worster and I received a video from some folks back home. We sat down and watched the video, which was a Public Broadcasting System video of my home

state, Idaho.

That video portrayed the lush green forest, the abundance of clear flowing rivers and the sights and sounds of the wildlife, which are common in our state.

As I sat and watched, my eyes started to weep. A strange sense of serenity slowly came over me. Those comforting sights and sounds took me away from Iraq for a few moments, and I was transported in my mind back to the heavenly places of Idaho.

I watched that video a few more times and I even showed it to a couple of Iraqis. They sat amazed, as though they were looking at heaven. I told them such sights were common where I lived. I saw some shades of doubt come across their faces. They probably could not even get their minds to believe such wonderful places really existed.

The first sight that I remember seeing upon our return from Iraq last time was Mount Rainier and the vivid green scenery around Fort Lewis, Wash. I was suffering a sensory overload after spending a year looking at the tan colors of Iraq. My time in Iraq is now counted as a blessing as it makes the time I have at home seem ten times more precious than it did before.

So, when this environment gets a little bit overwhelming, I watch the video and go to my happy place. I surely know why Idaho is so often referred to as God's Country.

SARC Smarts

Sexual Assault Affects Mission Readiness. Mission readiness is negatively impacted in three ways.



1. The alleged perpetrator is often placed on administrative hold and may not redeploy with their units.
2. Victims may not be able to fulfill their duties or may otherwise have their ability to perform the mission compromised as a result of the traumatic events.
3. The attention of the unit leadership shifts from the normal duties involved in maintaining readiness to addressing a victim's needs, investigating the alleged perpetration, and restoring the unit's cohesion and trust.

Call the USF-I Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at 485-5085 or 435-2235 for help. Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or DSARC.



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Service members observe Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day



Members of the Hope Chapel Praise Dance Team perform a praise dance in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Hope Chapel on Camp Victory, Jan. 18.

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg
USF-I Public Affairs

In 1963 the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech echoed across the Lincoln Memorial.

Forty-eight years later the same words echoed through Hope Chapel on Camp Victory, Jan. 17.

Service members celebrated the great civil rights leader's day with an observance hosted by Task Force 807th Medical Command.



Master Sgt. Donald Williams re-enacts Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech during the celebration at Hope Chapel.

The observance featured a praise dance performed by the Hope Chapel Praise Dance Team, and performances by the Believers in Christ Choral Group.

The TF 807th Med. highlighted the event with a re-enactment of King's speech performed by Master Sgt. Donald Williams, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of Future Operations, III Corps, United States Forces – Iraq.

Sergeant Maj. Colleen M. Shanklin, an equal opportunity advisor with TF 807th Med. said having a re-enactment speech was one of the best ways to capture the interest of the service members and educate them.

During his performance, Williams captivated the crowd as he delivered King's words with emotion and passion.

After his performance the service members stood and applauded, showing their appreciation for his delivery of King's speech.

"Master Sergeant Williams was the center of the observance today," said Shanklin. "His re-enactment of the speeches moved the service members in attendance."

"I felt like I was brought back in time," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Amenda Duplechan, a logistical specialist with Joint Task Force 1-174th Counter-Rocket, Artillery and Mortar.

"The re-enactment was moving and it created a different learning experience for me."

The observance provided the opportunity for service members to pause and reflect on King's vision of equality for all people, regardless of their differences.

"Doctor King was all about everyone being treated with dignity and respect," said Shanklin.

"It gave me a greater appreciation on how far Doctor King's vision has become a reality in our society," said Sgt. 1st Class Trina Tyus, senior paralegal for TF 807th Med.

Williams said the sacrifices of King mirror those that our service members are doing for the Iraqi people.

"The men and women of the armed forces have their share of sacrifices as we continue to assist the Iraqi people," he said. "They are like Doctor King; dreamers that believe that their fight and struggle would be worth something that is greater than themselves."

"As we approach some significant changes in our military, educating service members with observances like the Martin Luther King Day increases tolerances of differences and promotes dignity and respect among service members," said Shanklin.



Staff Sgt. Geczal Rivera, chaplain operations noncommissioned officer, Company. B, Special Troops Battalion, III Corps, speaks to senior enlisted NCOs about resiliency during the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness training event.

NCOs train on Comprehensive Soldier Fitness

Story and photo by Spc. Charlene Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs

Senior noncommissioned officers from the United States Forces-Iraq staff attended a Comprehensive Soldier Fitness training program held in Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Jan. 14.

During the one-day course, 36 senior noncommissioned officers engaged in group discussions surrounding the issues of deployment and ideal ways to improve their Soldiers' well-being.

"This training provides opportunities for Soldiers and families to develop concepts and techniques for a positive being," said Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Livengood, command sergeant major for Task Force Phantom, III Corps.

"It enables them to be prepared for traumatic experiences and the ability to bounce back from challenging situations," said Staff Sgt. Geczal Rivera, chaplain operations NCO, Company B, Special Troops Battalion, III Corps, United States Forces - Iraq. "This is the first time this course is offered here on Camp Victory. It is a great place to introduce this program so Soldiers can build their resiliency while undergoing their deployment stressors."

The training targets senior NCOs so they could apply what they've learned and share the knowledge and skills in coping with stress, depression and suicidal thoughts with their Soldiers.

"As leaders, it is our responsibility to be engaged and know our Soldiers in order to optimize their potential in today's Army," said Sgt. 1st Class Shantrece Hooker, supply

noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Headquarters Support Company, STB, III Corps.

Hooker said it was a great opportunity for leaders to take advantage of skills they learned during the course so they could help not only their individual Soldiers, but their unit as a whole.

"I think this training was great overall because it focused a lot on the mental perspective as a Soldier dealing with stress," said Master Sgt. Stan Tolbert, senior mortuary advisor for Co. B, STB, III Corps, USF-I Mortuary Affairs.

"Strengthening my mind with this information will allow me to reach out to my Soldiers and assist them before it's too late," he said.

"In the field of mortuary affairs, my troops are susceptible to extreme levels of stress. "I have gained a better perspective in building resiliency, which will benefit my Soldiers in times of crisis," he said.

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness is a program developed by the Army and is comprised of the Global Assessment Tool, customized self-help training modules, resilience training and master resilience trainers.

"CSF is a program that is structured to help Soldiers enhance their optimism and build resiliency," Rivera said.

"Elements of the five pillars of CSF - physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family - cover the whole mind, body, and soul aspect of the human being," said Livengood.

"The end of the rotation is the best time to conduct this training as we anticipate going home," Livengood said. "We want to help Soldiers get back into the integration mind-set and give them resiliency training for an easier transition with families and the Fort Hood community."

TF Troy, from Page 1

we needed to give them to have a smooth transition,” said Atencio.

During his speech, Navy Capt. Edward W. Eidson, commander of EODGRU-1 applauded the efforts of the 111th Ord. Grp. for their preparation of the turnover and their hospitality upon EODGRU-1’s arrival.

EODGRU-1 will command the joint task force that specializes in counter-improvised explosive device operations to assist the Iraqi government in eliminating IED threats across the country. Its operations include C-IED training, conducting weapons technical intelligence collections and exploitations to eliminate IED networks.

Eidson said he looks forward to keep the ongoing mission that previous units of Task Force Troy established.

“Our mission is to continue and improve what is already in place,” said Eidson. “Our job here is to develop the Iraqi’s ability to counter IEDs, to ensure they are able to maintain a secure and



Navy Capt. Edward W. Eidson, commander of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1 salutes as he exits the Transfer of Authority Ceremony. EODGRU-1 the first Navy component to command Task Force Troy.

sovereign Iraq after the United States forces depart,” he said.

Eidson also said the joint task force plays a key role in providing force protection for all service members in the Iraq joint operations area.

“We are assisting the Iraqis in fighting an insurgency in which U.S. forces are the primary targets. As the task force that provides EOD capabilities, we are the first line of defense

against the enemy’s weapon of choice,” said Eidson.

“As we proceed through Operation New Dawn, risk throughout our forces remain and we must ensure we posture the Iraqis to be successful in their continued fight against terrorists,” he said.

Eidson concluded by telling the crowd how grateful he is to be part of TF Troy.

“It is honor and privilege to be afforded the opportunity to command such an exceptional and diverse organization as Combined Joint Task Force Troy,” he said.



(Right) Col. Jose R. Antencio and Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald Miller case the 111th Ordnance Group’s colors at the Transfer of Authority Ceremony at Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Jan. 14.



A joint color guard posts the colors during the Transfer of Authority.

UNSUNG HERO



Spc. Timothy Owens is recognized as this week's Unsung Hero and received a Certificate of Achievement from Brig. Gen. Joseph DiSalvo, Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Forces - Iraq, at Al Faw Palace Jan. 21. Owens received the certificate for his exemplary performance as the Information Management Officer for the United States Forces-Iraq Joint Fires Cell.

XVIII Airborne Corps arrives at Camp Victory



Photos by Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg

▲ More than 250 Soldiers gather in the Hope Chapel to in-process and receive their incoming briefing on Camp Victory, Jan. 18.

◀ XVIII Airborne Corps Soldiers exit buses and prepare to unload their equipment during the early-morning hours after arriving at Camp Victory. The first main body of Soldiers arrived Jan. 18. XVIII Airborne Corps will replace III Corps on the USF-I staff.

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How do you build resiliency while deployed?

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Sgt. Brandon Wallace
Signal Intelligence Analyst
67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade
"Working out and organizing and instructing combatives."



Sgt. 1st Class Samasoni Lelea
Knowledge Management Office NCOIC
Co. A, STB, III Corps
"Hang out with friends at Greenbeans and barbecue every weekend."



Lt. Col. Rickey Fowler
J-4 JOC operations OIC
USF-I
"Attending MWR concerts and eating at Turkish restaurants."



Sgt. Chauncey M. Rodriguez
Signals Air Operator
67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade
"Going to the gym and listening to music that keeps me loving life."



Sgt. Mark E. Dowd
Signal Intelligence Analyst
67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade
"Keeping a quote book for awesome quotes that people in my unit say."



Staff Sgt. Catherine Banks
Intel Analyst
J-2, USF-I
"I talk to my family and train for a half marathon with my sister."

VBC Facility Operating Hours

Sports Oasis DFAC
Breakfast 5:00 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Dinner 5 - 8:30 p.m.
Midnight chow 11:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.
Sandwich Bar open 24 hours
Sunday brunch 7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Education Center
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Camp Liberty Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Camp Victory Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Paul Smith Gym
Open 24 Hours

Victory Main Post Office
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

USF-I Unit Mail Room
Customer Services/Mail Call:
Daily 3 - 6 p.m.

Al Faw Palace Post Office
Wednesday and Sunday
12:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Golby TMC Sick Call
Monday - Friday 7:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Saturday & Sunday 9 - 11:30 a.m.

Mental Health Clinic
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Pharmacy
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon;
1 - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Websites

Check it out:

USF-I Web pages
www.usf-iraq.com
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www.twitter.com/USF_Iraq

Facebook -
United States Forces-Iraq
U.S. Army III Corps
Phantom Battalion
III Corps Fort Hood

CNO visit, from Page 1

“This is my first re-enlistment,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Raymund Valenzuela, a secretary for Base Command Group Al Asad. “It was a neat experience and definitely ranks as a memorable event in my young career.”

Following the re-enlistment, Roughead fielded questions from the more than 100 Sailors in attendance. Questions covered topics such as the future of Naval operations in Iraq to uniform changes.

“I’ve been coming to Iraq and Afghanistan from time to time as we have a lot of Sailors here,” said Roughead. “I wanted to talk to the sailors and get a sense from them how they were doing and the nature of what they were doing. I expected things to be better than they were the last time I was here, and that’s exactly what I found.”

“It was very interesting to hear the status of the Navy from the top,” said Sydow. “He was able to answer some of my personal questions and what the



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West explains to Sailors the future of different rates in the Navy.

Navy is doing about the mental health of deployed personnel to the Central Command area of responsibility.”

Valenzuela said it was a great chance to interact with the Navy’s leaders

“Being afforded the opportunity to directly ask questions and hear solid answers from the chief of naval operations was an excellent topping to

the re-enlistment,” he said.

After talking to and fielding questions from the Sailors, Roughead said he was confident that they had the aptitude to do their job with the highest standards.

“I found our sailors to really be enthusiastic about their job,” said Roughead “They’re proud of what they are doing and really committed to just doing everything they could.

“What we’re doing here where we have young Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Marines coming together, doing the business of fighting this war, and what we have done has been really extraordinary,” he said.

Once the visit to Camp Victory was complete, Roughead travelled throughout Iraq and Afghanistan continuing to speak with Sailors and addressing their concerns.



Admiral Roughead, chief of Naval operations, re-enlists seven Sailors at the Hope Chapel on Camp Victory before a town hall meeting.