

# Victory Times



***Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story***

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## U.S. Soldiers teach Iraqi signal forces basic electronics

Story and photo by Spc. Paul Holston  
USF-I Public Affairs

As the Iraqi Ground Forces Command further increases its ability to conduct operations, understanding the electronic fundamentals in the communications and signal field is a crucial part of mission readiness.

To help broaden Iraqi soldiers' knowledge of electronics and electricity, United States Forces - Iraq service members are teaching them basic electronics in a two-week course.

The 40th Expeditionary Signal Battalion and their Iraqi counterparts held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the basic electronics course, Mar. 7, at Camp Iraqi Hero.

"The basic electronic course will teach the fundamentals of electricity and different types of currents," said Capt. Trinity Peterson, from Ogden, Utah, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th ESB. "We'll teach the basic components, how they work together and how they can build on those fundamentals to better maintain their own equipment."

The course covers the definition of electricity, how it's created as well as the many types of circuitry.

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*alHmed Taha, head Iraqi instructor of the Iraqi Language and Culture Course, assists students with a question during an 'Iraqi Jeopardy' game at the Stability Academy on Camp Victory, Iraq.*

## Soldiers learn Iraqi culture, language

Story and photos by Spc. Paul Holston  
USF-I Public Affairs

Many U.S. service members deployed to Iraq may have a language and cultural barrier when it comes to interacting with their Iraqi counterparts and Iraqi citizens.

In order to overcome this challenge, the Stability Academy on Camp Victory offers the Iraqi Language and Culture Course that gives service members the opportunity to learn basic fundamentals

of Iraq's culture and the Arabic language.

"This class allows them to better interact with their counterparts," said Jimmy Vaughn, a culture instructor at the academy. "Having them learn the culture and language will help them get over those cultural bridges."

The ILCC is an eight-day course where students learn the basics of reading and writing Arabic and get an

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# Chaplain's Corner

## Transforming Spiritual Resiliency

By Chaplain (Col.) Chester "Chet" Egert  
USF-I Command Chaplain

Much has been written in the last six months about Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. Each of the five domains within the program are uniquely important. The one that is probably least understood is spiritual resiliency.

Resiliency refers to the ability to restore something to its original shape or strength after it has been tested, stretched or broken. Spiritual resiliency, then, is to restore spiritual strength to the individual after testing and struggle.

What does spiritual strength look like? What is spiritual fitness?

I find my personal understanding of spiritual fitness in the Bible where Paul tells his protégé, Timothy, that physical fitness is important for some things, but spiritual fitness is important for everything. Spiritual fitness sets the contours and boundaries for every other area of life.

Here's what I think is meant by this: If the spirit and soul are healthy - then I will have the sustaining power to face challenges of every type, such as deployment, combat, sickness, loss and hardship. But, if my spirit is broken—not resilient—then I will not have the sustaining power to bounce back and go the distance.

Spiritual fitness is not mental toughness. It is not

emotional contentment or cheerfulness - it is much more than either of these. It is a choice to do something, and a decision to become someone other than the person you are now.

Paul stresses the importance of disciplining yourself for spiritual fitness. In the original language of the New Testament, the phrase spiritual fitness means godliness. Godliness translates in New Testament Greek to having a healthy reverence for God and honoring God in all that you do.

When I honor God in all that I do, my life is transformed because I begin to think of God's interests. And God commands me to think about the interest of others. So my focus shifts from my life - where I only live for my needs and wants - to the interests of God and the people around me.

With this understanding of spiritual fitness, I choose to give up my self-centered, egocentric, what's-in-it-for-me attitude and think about the needs of others and more lasting values. This is one personal aspect of this resiliency.

Not only do I honor God and honor others, but I also show respect for the life God gave me. I take care of the one life I have. I understand that my life is God's gift to me. What I do with my life is my gift to God and others.

Honoring God, honoring others and honoring my life — this is transforming spiritual resiliency.

## SAPR Spotlight



### Do you know your reporting options?

An unrestricted report is made when a victim wants to participate in the military justice process, or when the chain of command or law enforcement becomes involved. A victim advocate is assigned, command and law enforcement are notified, and medical care is provided. Active duty victims have the option of making a restricted report. Restricted reports are kept confidential, and command and law enforcement aren't notified. The victim can access care and services without participating in the military justice system.

**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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*Sgt. Adam Herbert, a radio and communications security repairer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, and primary instructor for the basic electronics course held at Camp Iraqi Hero, goes over the basic fundamentals of electricity with Iraqi soldiers from the Iraqi Ground Forces Command signal regiment.*

## Electronics, from page 1

"In this course we go over what electricity is, where it comes from and how it's generated," said Sgt. Adam Herbert, from Boston, Mass., a radio and communications security repairer also with HHC, 40th ESB, and the primary instructor for the course. "We go over different types of circuits, the components that go into making a circuit and then go into Ohm's Law."

Ohm's Law is the relationship between power, voltage, current and resistance. It is a basic theorem in the study of all things electrical and electronic.

"My Soldiers are teaching them the basic understanding of electronics to get the groundwork at the baseline," said Lt. Col. Troy Douglas, from Springfield, Tenn., battalion commander for 40th ESB. "By planting that seed, we're showing them how to be more self dependent. We hope, in the future, to teach them even more with an advanced course."

Not only does the course benefit the Iraqi soldiers in acquiring knowledge, it also continues to strengthen the cohesion between U.S. and Iraqi forces.

"The class will benefit the Iraqis by providing a foundation that they can expand on," said Peterson. "It benefits all of us together by continuing to develop that partnership, letting both

(U.S.) Soldiers and Iraqis know that we don't need to be afraid of each other, we can work together and together we can do great things."

"The soldiers are even more aware now about electronic circuits, they get along very well with the instructors and understand them," said Lt. Col. Abdulkerim Shaker, commander of communications for the IGFC signal regiment. "We're very thankful for the U.S. in assisting and teaching us these skills."

Shaker added that he believes that the skills and knowledge gained from this course can be passed on from this generation of soldiers to the next. "I'm thinking of putting some of the students as instructors themselves in the future," he said.

This training provides Iraqi soldiers with not only a sense of the importance of electronic components, but of the need to maintain them as well.

"Maintenance is very important, we're giving them a foundation," said Herbert. "We're starting with the very basics that will build them up in time, as we give them the ability to troubleshoot and fix their own equipment when it breaks."

The 40th ESB plans to continue mentoring the Iraqi soldiers at IGFC in basic electronics until the end of its deployment. The success of this course has led to the possibility of advance classes in the future.

insight to the culture, including the history and current politics of Iraq.

The training includes language basics such as the Arabic alphabet and social phrases including greetings, courtesies and goodbyes. The course provides a great opportunity to learn another language as well as getting more of an insider's view into the Iraqi culture.

"We want you to learn the first five minutes of the conversation, the last two minutes of a conversation and the alphabet," said Vaughan. "With those building blocks, service members will be able to go back to their units, work with their translators and continue to build on what they have learned."

"Building blocks" explains how Pfc. Marcos Rios, a signal support systems specialist and audio and video system specialist for J-6 communications with Co. C, Task Force Dragon, is using the training.

He voluntarily forfeited two four-day weekend passes to be able to attend the class, and hopes to use his new skills to take

his military career in a new direction.

"I want to learn the fundamentals of Arabic, so I can actually take a Defense Language [Proficiency] Test for it, and maybe 'reclass' into a linguist," said Rios.

By the end of the course, service members will leave knowing enough to continue learning on their own, and have a greater appreciation for the local language and culture and a better understanding of Iraqi customs.

Another benefit of the training is that it lets the Iraqi people see that U.S. service members are trying to embrace their language and culture.

"The fact that we are trying to learn their language, even if it's the basic social skills, they will feel that that we also care about their country," said Staff Sgt. Ricky Sanchez, an infantryman and administration noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Stability Transition Team from Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. "Although we're leaving soon, I think it's good that we try to leave with a good impression."



*Students from the Iraqi Language and Culture Course discuss topics such as basic greetings and pronunciations with aHmed Taha, head Iraqi instructor of the course, during an 'Iraqi Jeopardy' game at the Stability Academy on Camp Victory, Iraq. The eight-day course provides an opportunity to learn the basics of the Arabic language as well as getting an inside view into the Iraqi culture.*



# Courses teach nutrition and supplement basics

Story by Sgt. TJ Moller  
USF-I Public Affairs

Every military branch gages their member's physical ability through tests. Physical training sessions help service members train for those tests, but is not the only aspect contributing to their performance. Diet plays a large role in the body's performance. Being educated on nutrition can steer service members to make better eating choices, in turn, greatly improving their physical fitness.

There is a weight control class, and a sports nutrition/supplement education class offered at Sather Air Base to inform service members and civilians about the importance of nutrition. The classes are held on Tuesdays across the street from the 86th Combat Support Hospital.

"There is plenty of room for improvement in most Americans eating habits," said Capt. Ryan P. Koelsch, class instructor and chief of nutrition care division with 86th CSH, United States Forces-Iraq.

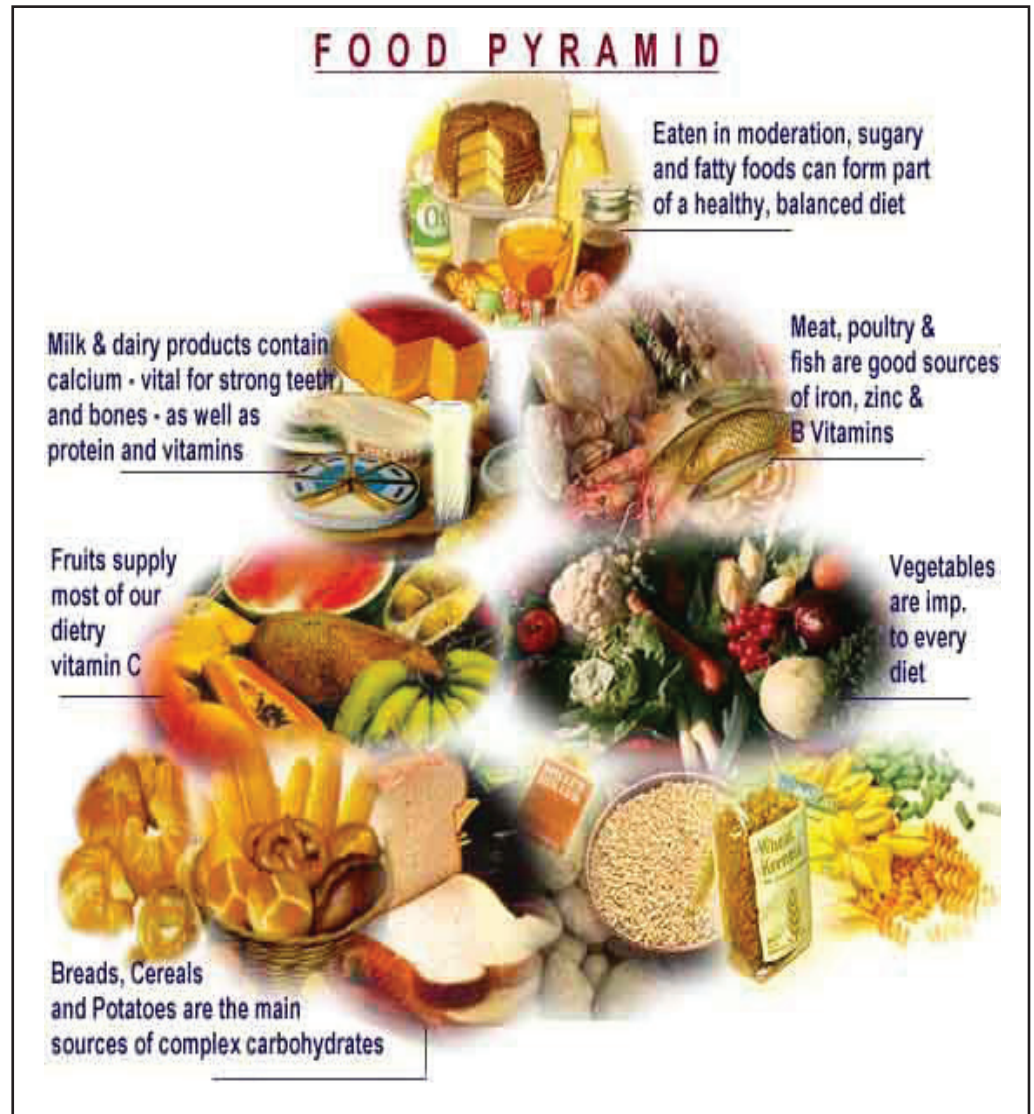
The hour-long weight control class aims at balancing and changing an individual's overall lifestyle to have lasting success with weight control. Whereas, the 90-minute sports nutrition class stresses the importance of carbohydrates in an athlete's diet and touches on supplement use.

"The weight control class is to keep everyone in line with Army standards, and the sports nutrition class is more about fueling for exercise," said Koelsch, who is a registered dietitian.

Koelsch started the classes at the end of October and has had a number of participants, with the greater percentage made up by those who are interested, rather than those who are mandated to be there.

"People can always make some new and different diet plan that sounds better," said Koelsch. "There is a lot of information that is less than optimal, but it's a lot flashier and sounds a lot better than the old standby of less calories in and more exercise."

Koelsch aims at educating people to maximize their gains



Courtesy image

from training and diet.

Even while deployed, there are plenty of service members who deal with the issue of weight control, said Koelsch. There is no shortage of food at the dining facility, and not all service members are active throughout the day.

Meal timing, fluid intake and ways of reducing calories are covered in the classes. Anyone who is eligible for care at the hospital is encouraged to attend.

Every service member has a physical fitness and athletic portion to their job, said Koelsch. Being physically fit is part of being in the military.

"Educating someone to make their own good decisions is always going to be important because they are going to be the one who puts the food on their tray," said Koelsch. "Nutrition and physical fitness really do go hand in hand and to make the most out of anyone's training I think there's some nutrition education people could use."

# UNSUNG HERO



Spc. James Loftis is recognized as this week's Unsung Hero and received a certificate of achievement from Brig. Gen. Michael X. Garrett, deputy chief of staff, United States Forces - Iraq, at Al Faw Palace, Mar. 11.

Loftis received the certificate for his exemplary performance as an intelligence analyst for Joint Intelligence Directorate (J2), Analysis and Production Division.

## VICTORY VOICES

As part of Woman's History Month, who has significantly influenced your life?



*"Jacque Daniels, she's been a woman of faith, prayer partner and someone who listens and helps."*

**Lt. Col.  
Nancy Griego**

*Liaison Officer  
Center for Army Lessons Learned*



*"My mom, because she's been my caretaker and has supported me the whole time I was here."*

**2nd Lt.  
Aphichart Gingsumrong**

*Foreign Disclosure Officer  
49th Operations Support Squadron*



*"My mother, I admire her accomplishments and her drive for me to be better than she was."*

**Chief Warrant Officer 2  
Ramona Campbell**

*Human Resources Technician  
Command Group, USF-I*



*"My mother, because she raised me and my brother by herself and continues to support me during my deployment."*

**Staff Sgt.  
Joy Lewis**

*Administration Clerk  
Secretary of Joint Staff, USF-I*



# The USF-I Equal Opportunity/ Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office presents “Ask the EO”

The United States Forces-Iraq Equal Opportunity team will conduct its Women's History Month observance at the Camp Victory main stage on March 24. Its goal is to recognize and celebrate the achievements of American women.

The purpose of the observance is to educate Soldiers, civilians and the VBC community about the countless contributions military women have made to maintain combat readiness and help shape the nation that we are today.

Women have willingly responded to our country's call in times of war and peace. Many contributions are characterized by individual and collective acts of self-sacrifice, patriotism, dedication, and personal heroism.

A static display honoring current and former women of the military can be observed in the Al Faw Palace rotunda throughout the month. At times, volunteers will staff the display.

Service members have the opportunity to nominate and pay tribute to female service members or leaders who have demonstrated superb qualities or who have been influential in their lives.

There will also be a commemorative 4-mile run, March 20 at 6 a.m., starting in front of the Camp Victory main stage.

**For more information contact Master Sgt. Ronnie E. Blount Jr., USF-I Equal Opportunity office, at 318-435-2235, or email: [ronnie.blount@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:ronnie.blount@iraq.centcom.mil).**

## 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**  
Mon. Wed. Thur. Fri.  
8:30 - 10:30 & 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.  
Tues. and Sat. 830 - 1030  
Sunday - emergency only

**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

## Atheletes bring Action Sports to Iraq



Photo by Spc. Paul Holston

Colin Mackay, professional bicycle motocross or BMX rider, “bunny hops” over five service members successfully in front of an audience as part of the Action Sports tour held on Camp Liberty, Mar. 4. Professional BMX riders, as well as professional skateboarders, performed for over 300 service members, allowing some to participate in the event.

## Websites

Check it out:

**USF-I Web pages**  
[www.usf-iraq.com](http://www.usf-iraq.com)  
[www.flickr.com/photos/mnfiraq](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mnfiraq)  
[www.twitter.com/USF\\_Iraq](http://www.twitter.com/USF_Iraq)

**Facebook -**  
United States Forces-Iraq  
U.S. Army  
XVIII Airborne Corps  
Fort Bragg

# Freedom Rest: Iraq's 'Get Away'

Story and photo by Spc. Paul Holston  
USF-I Public Affairs

'Rest and Relaxation' is a phrase that brings positive thoughts to most service members serving their country, especially while deployed thousands of miles away from home.

Working long hours seven days a week can be tiring and stressful, but fortunately there's a place on Victory Base Complex where service members can rest and relax during a four-day pass. Freedom Rest, located in Building 58A on Camp Victory, can be the destination of choice for winding down and escaping the tense deployment environment. It was created for just that purpose.

"The primary mission is to offer troops a place to relax for four days away from their units, the stress, the computers, the telephones, their weapons and to kind of recharge themselves before they go back," said Cpt. Stephen Kaminsky, from Boise, ID, the Freedom Rest officer-in-charge and Camp Victory Deputy Mayor from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team.

The complex is divided into two buildings; one is a three story guest hotel that can accommodate about 36 guests on a 96-hour pass. The other building, a former boathouse, houses many of the activities that keep service

members entertained and occupied during their stay.

"Freedom Rest is a good place because it allows soldiers to relax and unwind," said Pfc. Kristopher Daggett, from Petersburg, Va., a combat medic from Company C, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, 1st Infantry Division. "While there are many activities, they are all optional, depending on what the individual Soldier wants to do."

For entertainment, many amenities are open to guests, including a billiards room with two pool tables, a fully equipped gym with a beautiful view of the lake, furnished patios with free Wi-Fi, a large movie theatre with comfortable, leather couches, an internet café and a video game room with an assortment of gaming systems.

If guests desire to take a dip, there is an outdoor swimming pool where they can hang out and enjoy themselves with no time restrictions.

Freedom Rest was first opened on March 30, 2010, and since then, its primary focus has changed a bit. Although the complex is currently available to all service members, priority of reservations was once based on those who worked away from the larger main bases.

"Originally it was designed for Soldiers in combat units to come over here and relieve

stress," said Kaminsky. "Now that it's for everyone, it offers a unique opportunity for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines to get away from their units and enjoy their time here."

Kaminsky said he believes that when the service members go back to their units, they will be able to perform at a higher level feeling refreshed.

"The best thing about Freedom Rest is when you come here you don't have to carry a weapon and you are allowed to wear civilian clothes," said Kaminsky. "The ability to be able to take off the uniform, relax and be like a civilian for a couple days is always nice, especially here. I believe many others would agree."

Daggett apparently agrees. He said that he would recommend it for his fellow Soldiers because it's a good chance for them to have some good downtime with no real set schedule and with no real worries about their job or supervisors.

For more information about Freedom Rest, including contacts, standard operating procedures, reservation request forms and DA Form 31 Leave Request, visit the United States Forces - Iraq intranet portal at <https://forces.iraq.centcom.mil/pages/default.aspx> and click the Freedom Rest icon on the lower left side of the homepage.



*An outdoor swimming pool is one of the many amenities open to service members during their stay at Freedom Rest on Camp Victory. Guests are accommodated at the three story guest hotel, which also offers many enjoyment options such as a big-screen television, video games, fishing poles, laundry room and an on-demand travel van to points of interest around the base.*