

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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Partnership training prepares for detainee transfer

By Sgt. TJ Moller
USF-I Public Affairs

In anticipation of the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Iraq, buildings and equipment are just some of the things being transferred to the people of this nation. Detainees are also being transferred – in this case, more than 150.

Detainee operations in Iraq have been a prioritized mission since the beginning of the war. Over the course of that time, transfers of facilities and detainees has been ongoing. At this time, the remaining prisoners are considered “high-profile.”

“We started out with thousands of detainees and multiple facilities,” said Maj. Gen. Nelson J. Cannon, deputy

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Courtesy Photo

Iraqi correction officers learn restraining techniques as part of detainee operations training. This is one of the many training scenarios that these officers undergo before being able to handle the detainee population.

USF-I personnel participate in scouting program

By Sgt. TJ Moller
USF-I Public Affairs

During deployment, service members rarely have the opportunity to interact with the Iraqi population or experience the local culture first-hand.

The Victory Base council Iraqi scouting program, also known as Kashafa, affords service members and affiliated civilians the chance to interact with children on a weekly basis while on tour

here at Victory Base Complex.

Kashafa was established in 2008 with a goal of starting and supporting scouting with Iraqi children here on VBC. Service member and civilian volunteers plan for activities during weekly council meetings. Then they get to play games with the scouts and participate in activities like making crafts.

The scouting events not only allow for service members and Iraqi children to interact, it also allows for the two

cultures to intertwine.

“I enjoy helping out,” said Sue Alnarraie, a linguist for the 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Victory Base Defense Operations Center. “I help out to bridge the cultures, to bring them together.”

“This is a good cultural experience for me,” said first-time volunteer, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Crystal Alvarez, an intelligence analyst with the Explosive

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Chaplain's Corner

Bumps in the Road

By Chaplain (Capt.) Kevin G. White
1st Battalion, 174th Air Defense Artillery Brigade Chaplain

When I was a little boy one of my favorite things to do was to go for a ride with my dad. If it was just dad and me, he would take the back roads to wherever he needed to go because they were bumpy. It was so much fun! Those were special moments.

Usually, however, hitting bumps in the road is not fun, nor is it something we do on purpose.

Here in Iraq, bumps in the road are numerous and practically unavoidable. On a convoy from the Victory Base Compound to the International Zone one time, we hit a bump so hard I thought all my teeth were going to fall out! Life presents us with all kinds of bumps; how we handle those bumps determines our level of success and serenity.

For example, as the religious support team for a task force that is spread throughout the Iraq, my assistant and I travel frequently around the country. On a recent trip to a small base, we were bumped from a flight which extended our time away from VBC by three days! We had to choose whether to let that frustration be an irritant or look for opportunity in the midst of the situation. We both complained a little, but then we took advantage of the fact

that we were stuck. I got much of the work for an online course I'm taking finished that week.

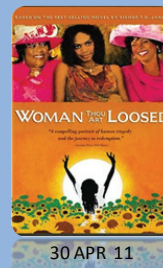
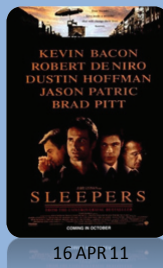
I currently have a few physical bumps and bruises from going to Army combatives classes. I enjoy the classes because it is good exercise and I have been a fan of martial arts for a very long time, but even more important is the camaraderie with the rest of the class. Sharing a leisure activity with friends is great way to build resilience for the emotional and spiritual bumps that we all encounter from time to time.

One emotional bump that we all experience as part of deployment is being away from family and friends, which is especially bumpy on special days and holidays. Today, April 4th is my birthday. In an ideal world, I would be home surrounded by family, but the reality is I am here.

Sometimes there is no way to avoid bumps, so we just prepare ourselves by tending to all areas of fitness (physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual) in order to maintain a healthy level of resilience. For me, as I travel over life's bumpy road, I find hope in the Bible verse John 16:33, Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

-PRO DEO ET PATRIA-
(For God and Country)

Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Movie Nights



Showing at 1900 hrs. in the Al Faw Palace Ballroom

(No badge required to enter Palace in order to view movies.)

Contact SFC Michael L. Christian for more information at michael.christian@iraq.centcom.mil

Movies are of graphic nature and mature content - viewer discretion advised



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Detainee, from page 1

commanding general for detention operations and provost marshal general, United States Forces - Iraq. "This is a relatively small population, but it is a very violent and dangerous population."

The priority is getting ready for the turnover of the remaining detainees to the government of Iraq, said Lt. Col. LaDonna M. Howell, plans officer, Provost Marshal Office, USF-I.

"We are getting ready for this transition in July when we are going to give [the Iraqi Correction Service] not only some facilities, but the prisoners," said Cannon. Because of the threat level that the current detainees represent, selecting the right guard force and giving them special maximum security training are just two of the many steps being taken to get the ICS on track to take over the detainee operations mission.

"The specialty training is important so they know how to deal with the detainees," said Howell. The corrections officers will learn how and when to use tear gas, handcuffs, and when to segregate the detainees from the main population.

The training team is built with corrections specialists, said Cannon. "They come from the U.S. Army

Disciplinary Barracks out of Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and they know this stuff inside and out. Who better to teach the Iraqis?"

"The most important thing that the Soldiers from the 40th [military police battalion] are going to do is impart all their wisdom, experience and knowledge on the ICS," said Cannon.

"We want to make sure we are setting them up for success," said Cannon. Not only by providing good facilities, but good techniques, procedures, training, and leadership, he said.

"We created a thing they never had before," said Cannon. "We have talked them into developing a noncommissioned officer corps. They will have middle managers who will always be there."

The NCO is not only there to set the standard, but to provide leadership and mentorship, said Cannon.

"We have got a serious mission out here," said Howell. The Soldiers are constantly reminded of how important this is to the government of Iraq.

Dealing with detainees requires a special skill set.

"The detainees are not always cooperative," said Cannon. There is no one else doing this. No one else is dealing with terrorists every day."

The Soldiers bring the right attitude

and professionalism, said Cannon.

Training and discipline have garnered positive results under Cannon. Since taking charge last December, without exception, there is not one detainee who has complained about mistreatment, he said.

The specialty training of the NCOs and staff is just part of the plan. A plan is in the works for about a dozen officials from different branches of the government of Iraq to tour various detention facilities in the U.S. The tour will include the United States Disciplinary Barracks, two maximum security prisons, a county jail and a city jail.

"It's to get them to have this picture about what right looks like," said Cannon. "Maximum security is not just a name, it's a way of doing business."

The plan to transfer the detainees to the government of Iraq is in place and with proper execution, will set the Iraqis up for success.

"What no one wants to have in the end is regrets. We are doing everything possible and we did everything we could do," said Cannon. "We want to be able to say that we gave them the best training, we gave them the best ideas, we gave them a rock-solid facility, and that we showed them the way."

Warrant Officers hold professional development seminar



Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michelle Woodard, a mobility officer with the joint planning integration cell, United States Forces-Iraq, and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jacque Nixon, executive officer in the joint personnel and administration section, USF-I, converse while on break during Warrant Officer Professional Development held at Camp Victory, March 25. More than 85 warrant officers participated in the first USF-I WOPD since the arrival of XVIII Airborne Corps. The WOPD covered topics of progressive military training and is scheduled to be a monthly event, with the next one scheduled for April 22.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Barrieau

Service members laugh as they play with the children during an Iraqi Boy and Girl scout event on Victory Base Complex. The Victory Base council Iraqi scouting program, also known as Kashafa, affords service members and affiliated civilians the chance to interact with children on a weekly basis while on tour here at Victory Base Complex.



Photo by Sgt. TJ Moller

Scouting, from page 1

Ordnance Disposal Group One, Joint Task Force-Troy, United States Forces-Iraq. "It seems like the kids are having a good time and having fun."

"Most of these kids remind the volunteers of their own kids back home," said 1st Lt. Erinn L. Woodside, cable officer-in-charge, Direct Signal Support Team, 151st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, who has been the scout's co-chair since December 2010.

It's great for the community and the volunteers love it because it's fun, she said.

"I actually started doing this because of my daughter," said Sgt. 1st Class Shane D. Devera-Wade operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 160th Signal Brigade, United States Division – Central. "She is a girl scout and one of her projects was to learn geocaching."

Geocaching is a high tech scavenger hunt using the GPS, he explained. "It's something fun for the kids to do and they get to learn about leadership and teamwork."

"A lot of people don't realize this, but you may go six months without even seeing a kid," co-chair Timothy Norwood, systems administrator with CACI. "Luckily, some commanders realize how beneficial it is for the morale of the troops to play with kids, and allow soldiers to attend."

"Being around these scouts gives me the sense of being back at home," said Devera-Wade.

Having fun, learning, and interacting with people from different cultures is what Kashafa is all about. The program has had over 400 volunteers and the current volunteers are taking steps to ensure that it can continue running after December 2011.

"I think we get as much out of it as the kids do," said Woodside.



U.S., Iraq combine efforts on aquacultural wetlands project

By Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs

Since 2007, the U.S. military and State Department have been working with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and farmers to revitalize the fishing industry in Iraq. An organized project known as the Development and Spawning of Rare Fish was established to increase the population of rare species of fish in the marshes and wetlands in southern Iraq.

The weakened and drained marshes are the direct result of Saddam Hussein's directive. During Hussein's reign, huge networks of dams were built to dry the marshes as a punishment to Shiite rebels who hid in those areas after staging an uprising against his regime.

Over the years since the conflict, the marshes' inhabitants were displaced, said Col. Charles Heatherly, chief, civil-military operations, United States Forces – Iraq. But the rehabilitation process of the marsh areas is progressing as this project continues.

"This is a joint-cooperative effort," he said. "We want to assist the Iraqi MoA to re-energize this portion of their economy by rebuilding the marshes."

The process is quite extensive in nature and very tedious, said Mansoor Hussein, senior agriculture advisor, civil-military operations, USF-I. "The individuals participating in this project, which consists of 17 fishermen and three MoA employees, are well-experienced and skilled for this task."

During the past weeks, the fishermen were fully engaged with boats and fishing nets, focusing on the lakes around

Victory Base Complex such as the Al Faw Palace Lake, Z Lake, Camp Slayer Lake and Lost Lake.

The lakes that surround Saddam's former palaces are home to rare, high-grade species of fish, Heatherly said. "The fish here are big and healthy because they are constantly fed."

Iraqis are particularly inclined to four types of fish: shabbout, gattan, binni and bizz. "These species are usually found in the Tigris, which make them very rare out here," said Hussein.

Revitalizing the fish population in Iraq is about just moving them from one location to another.

"This project is closely monitored, so we are out there watching them work the process," he said. "The catches are limited by the amount of females and males per species."

After the catches are evaluated, they are sent to two different laboratories in southern Iraq. These labs specialize in the spawning process and house and observe the catches as they grow from fingerlings to mature-aged fish.

Millions of carp fingerlings will soon be distributed to fish farms across central and southern Iraq. Because there is a very high demand for fish in this part of the world, the combined efforts of MoA, fish farmers, and the U.S. are working to satisfy that demand.

This project provides the potential to build a foundation for an enduring economic opportunity in the future for our counterpart well after U.S. Forces leave Iraq, Heatherly said. Because Iraq has great potential to regain its fresh water fisheries, they may be commercially well-developed by the end of this mission.



Photo by Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola

Fishermen displayed their catch at the Al Faw Palace Lake, Camp Victory, March 29. The fishermen are working as part of the Development and Spawning of Rare Fish project sponsored by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and the United States.

UNSUNG HERO



Pfc. Gaynor Smith 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, Apr. 1.

Smith received the certificate for her outstanding performance as a unit supply specialist for Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Dragon, USF-I.

VICTORY VOICES

Do you think NCODP is effective in today's military? Why or why not?



"I believe its very effective when it's actually being done. I think it should happen more often."

**Sgt.
Jasmine Bailey**

Human Resource Sergeant
HSC, TF Dragon



"Yes, because I believe every NCO still needs to develop as a leader."

**Sgt.
Christopher Holmstadt**

Senior Mechanic
HSC, TF Dragon



"Yes, its great to have NCOs get information from top-level NCOs as they take the time to talk to us about it."

**Staff Sgt.
Keisha Archer**

Chaplain Assistant/Operations NCO
Ops Co., TF Dragon



"Yes, because the Army is ever-changing and NCOs need to know the new policies and ways to execute the mission."

**Staff Sgt.
Jonathan Morris**

Training NCO
Ops Co., TF Dragon

Safety matters

By Jesse Martin
USF-I Safety Office

Many Soldiers have suffered permanent eye damage due to illumination and direct eye contact from a laser. These Soldiers, performing important tasks in our ongoing efforts, became a loss to their unit, thus degrading their unit's ability to execute its mission.

Lasers must be treated with the same respect as any weapon issued to our service members. Many people are unaware of the potentially harmful effects of pointing a laser into someone's eyes. Lasers are a valuable force protection tool when used as designed. They are not toys and can cause permanent visual loss if used inappropriately.

Lasers issued for escalation of force as a non-lethal means of response, can be an effective tool in preventing unnecessary injury to USF-I personnel, our ISF partners and civilians. But, we must execute an immediate fundamental shift in our mindset regarding lasers. Safe usage is always the priority.

Leaders at all levels must ensure that we enforce the standards for the safe use of lasers. Conduct composite risk management and formal training on their proper use, and include it unit SOPs.

Prevention of laser dazzling of friendly forces boils down to discipline. All laser incidents must be reported regardless of injury. The circumstances surrounding the incident, the findings of the investigation and the actions taken to prevent occurrences will be reported to the USF-I Safety Office.

Our mission is very serious and we need everyone to accomplish it. Loss of personnel due to lapses in laser discipline is unacceptable. We must develop a culture within our organizations to ensure that all personnel make the right decisions.

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.

SFC 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 a.m. & 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Tues. and Sat. 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
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

The USF-I Equal Opportunity and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office: Ask the EO

"What is an organization climate survey and why do we have to do it?"

The first reason is that is required by regulation. All company commanders or equivalents are required to conduct a climate survey within 90 days of assuming command and annually thereafter.

The purpose of the survey is to provide unit leadership with a picture of the unit. Service members are surveyed on their perception of their unit, leadership and peers.

That data is analyzed and processed; trends are noted, recommendations are made and a course of action is developed that will address the issues that were brought to light via the survey. It may take a unit 15-30 days to complete the survey and will take some time for the EO office to produce the survey's summary and brief the commander.

Lastly, the commander must find a time to brief the entire unit.

Contact the USF-I EO team if you want to know more about this topic or any other EO-related issue.

Websites

Check it out:

USF-I Web pages

www.usf-iraq.com

www.flickr.com/photos/mnfiraq

www.twitter.com/USForcesIraq

www.youtube.com/USFIraq

Facebook

United States Forces-Iraq

U.S. Army

XVIII Airborne Corps

Fort Bragg

Dogs play vital role in search missions

By Spc. Paul Holston
USF-I Public Affairs

Some dogs are known for being uncooperative, disobedient and naturally lazy. Other dogs are rambunctious, playful and energetic. However, here in Baghdad, Iraq, along with those many traits, canines have a hard-working role in finding explosive devices and human remains.

The Camp Victory K-9 military unit and civilian handlers are responsible for training these skilled canines in these specialties in order to contribute to the many military operations that require their assistance.

"Dogs have a more sensitive nose than humans do, so with their sense of smell a lot stronger than our own, they are able to sniff out and discover a lot more," said Byron Snyder, from Milledgeville, Ga., a human remains detection handler.

Some specialized search dogs are used to detect substances such as drugs or explosives that might be carried on a person or placed in a specific area. Military and civilian handlers train them on a regular basis to assure that they are

keeping their skills sharp.

"We try to do at least six hours of detection training a week, so it varies from day to day on how much training we do," said Spc. Pamela Collen, from Angels Camp, Calif., a military police officer with the 163rd MP Detachment based out of Fort Campbell, Ky. "With dogs, almost any time you spend with them is training, such as walks that help with obedience and spending time with them that improves the bond."

Collen trains with an explosive ordnance disposal dog named Astra, a 6-year-old Belgian Malinois. She says dogs like Astra are important when it comes to contributing to the fight.

"Dogs like mine bring an important element to the battlefield, and so far nothing has been able to replace them," Collen said. "Humans can't smell out explosives the way dogs do, and until something else comes along that can successfully do what dogs do...dogs in the military will always have an important role in the fight."

Cadaver dogs are another type of specialized search canines. They are utilized in detecting the odor of decomposing human remains.

Catherine Schiltz, from Ashlyn, Miss., also a human remains detection handler, trains with a cadaver dog named Gabe, a 16-month-old Labrador retriever. She says that when handlers try to choose dogs for this job, they look for dogs that have a really high toy drive because wanting the toy is going to make them want to find things, as well as being easier to train because they want something.

"These dogs are very self-serving, as long as you reward them for the job that they do, they will do their very best in



Photo by Spc. Paul Holston

Spc. Pamela Collen, a military police officer with the 163rd Military Police Det. based out of Fort Campbell, Ky., rewards her search dog, Astra, a 6-year-old Belgian Malinois, with bonding and a ball as the canine finished searching for explosive devices as part of training, March 19, on Camp Victory, Iraq.

getting the job done," she said.

Breeds such as German shepherds, Labrador retrievers, and Belgian Malinois are breeds of choice for K-9 handlers based on how each dog will be specialized.

It can be quite rewarding when trainers teach their canines the skills that hone their keen senses and provide accurate results.

"I think the most rewarding part of being a handler is being able to help protect Soldiers," said Collen.

The mission for specialized canines and their handlers can be as dangerous as it is rewarding.

Collen relayed a story from a previous deployment when danger hit very close to home. An explosives sniffing dog, Jock was killed by a house-borne improvised explosive device. His handler and an escort were also severely wounded.

"As sad as this was, Jock made the ultimate sacrifice and saved a squad from going into that house that day. It was tragic and amazing at the same time," said Collen.

While these dogs in Iraq are rambunctious, playful, and energetic, they are also skilled, hardworking, specialized and self-sacrificing.



Photo by Spc. Paul Holston

Catherine Schiltz, a human remains detection dog handler, trains with cadaver dog Gabe, a 16-month-old Labrador retriever, March 19, on Camp Victory, Iraq.