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APRIL 16, 2011

Iraqi Army prepares for Operation Lion's Leap training exercise

Spc. Andrew Ingram
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – U.S. and Iraqi Army leaders began planning and rehearsal for the 12th Iraqi Army Division's capstone training exercise, Operation Lion's Leap, during a preparation meeting at Mahgoor Training Site, Kirkuk province, April 10.

Col. Michael Pappal, commander, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division,

and members of 12th IA Div. Stability Transition Team observed rehearsals as Iraqi soldiers practiced for the full spectrum live fire exercise slated to take place April 24.

Iraqi leaders plan to showcase the division's tactics and progress made during Operation New Dawn as mortar crews, forward ground troops and air assets all integrate to assault an "enemy" objective.

While U.S. forces give suggestions and support during the preparation phase, Iraqi forces

will conduct the live fire operation completely on their own, said Lt. Col. John Poppie, 12th IA Div. STT chief, 1st AATF.

"We are trying to give them some assistance now during the train-up," said Poppie, who hails from Spokane, Wash. "But when it comes to the exercise itself they will handle everything on their own."

Iraqi leaders said the goal of Lion's Leap is to build trust in Iraqi military forces and boost national pride for Iraqi citizens.

"Overall, this training is to demonstrate the capabilities of the Iraqi Army," Poppie said. "It is important for the people of Iraq to understand that they can rely on their army to keep them safe."

Iraqi soldiers also benefit from the live fire exercise because many different military assets will work together to accomplish a common objective in a realistic training environment, explained Poppie.

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U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO

Soldiers assigned to Commando Battalion, 12th Iraqi Army Division, converge on a mock hostage situation with humvees during a rehearsal for Operation Lion's Leap, at Mahgoor Training Site in Kirkuk province, Iraq, April 10, 2011. During Operation Lion's Leap, an exercise designed to showcase the Iraqi military's combat prowess, Iraqi forces plan to integrate mortars, ground troops and air assets during a live fire operation.

IRONHORSE STRONG: Soldier of the Week

Fuel and water—these two commodities are extremely important to the accomplishment of U.S. forces' mission in Iraq.

Spc. Randall McCon manages both commodities as a petroleum supply and water treatment specialist from Company B, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division.

McCon, a native of Bellevue, Neb., earned recognition as the "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the Week for his contributions to supply and logistics missions in U.S. Division-North.

"Spc. McCon is a Soldier's Soldier," said Staff Sgt. Alonzo McCracken, McCon's platoon sergeant. "His great work ethic, discipline and motivation are contagious within his section."

Company B is directly responsible for maintaining mission readiness of Contingency Operating Site Warrior and other outlying bases.

With his noted dedication to duty, McCon played a crucial role in helping his platoon safely issue more than 28,500 gallons of petroleum and 3,200 pallets of bottled water to bases across U.S. Division-North.

However, fuel and water supplies mean nothing unless Soldiers can deliver them. To transport the supplies, McCon and his unit need working vehicles—something McCon takes very seriously, unit members said.

"Spc. McCon has an outstanding work ethic and is always willing to do what it takes to accomplish the mission," said Sgt. Christopher Cragg, Company B.

McCon recognizes the importance of keeping his equipment in working order, and his vehicle is often singled out as the best in his squad, unit leaders noted.



U.S. Army photo

Spc. Randall McCon, a petroleum supply and water treatment specialist with Company B, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, conducts a resupply mission at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, January 6, 2011. McCon, a native of Bellevue, Neb., earned recognition as the "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the Week for his supply and logistical contributions to bases across U.S. Division-North during Operation New Dawn. "His great work ethic, discipline and motivation are contagious within his section," said Staff Sgt. Alonzo McCracken, McCon's platoon sergeant.

McCon also works directly with maintenance squad Soldiers to ensure broken vehicles are fixed and ready for missions.

"McCon's selection as the "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the Week is well deserved," said Capt. Jesse Thomas, commander, Company B. He is a Soldier we can call on whenever and wherever a task needs to be done."

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THE IVY LEAF

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1st Advise and
Assist Task Force
1st Infantry Division

2nd Advise and
Assist Brigade
25th Infantry Division

4th Advise and
Assist Brigade
1st Cavalry Division

Thoughts on Crossing the Line of Departure

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey
37th Army Chief of Staff

I'm honored to be your 37th Chief of Staff. I want to assure you that I'm well aware of the challenges we face but equally aware of the opportunities we will have in the next four years to do a lot of good both for the Army and for the Nation.

My transition team did a great job helping me "see" our Army, and I want to share two of their observations:

1. We are really good. We've accomplished everything that's been asked of us. Our Soldiers and their Families are proud, courageous, and resolute. Our leaders are effective, engaged, and innovative.

2. We are uncertain about the future. The missions in Iraq and Afghanistan appear to be stabilizing. The Nation's economic situation appears to be declining. Senior leaders are questioning our role.

We have been here before, and as I like to tell those who are interested in our Army, "I like the problem we have." We've never been better organized, better trained, or better equipped. Of course, that's at least in part because we've never been better resourced. As our resourcing changes, we'll change—but we'll be changing from a position of great strength. That's why I like the problem we have.

The "talk on the street" is all about how resource constraints are coming and about how we must act to ensure a "soft landing." You don't hear that from me. I didn't take the job as your 37th Chief of Staff to orchestrate a "soft landing." I took the job as the 37th to team with an incredible group of senior military and civilian leaders to make our Army smarter, better, and more capable—with the resources we are given—so that we provide the Nation with the greatest number of options for an uncertain future.

We remain an Army at war. We will provide whatever it takes to achieve our objectives in the current fights. We will keep faith with our Families and with our wounded.

One other thing you need to know about me. In my 37 years, I've been deployed several times to several different kinds of conflict. In each case, upon notification to deploy I was able to requisition nearly everything my unit needed. What I couldn't requisition was trust, discipline, and fitness. These qualities have to exist in every unit and in every Soldier of our Army all the time. When I come to visit your organization—whether a tactical formation or part of our institutional Army—I'll want to know what you're doing to develop a climate of trust, to ensure the discipline of your Soldiers, and to increase the fitness of the Force.

I'm proud to serve with you.

Secretary of the Army John McHugh swears in Gen. Martin E. Dempsey as the 37th chief of staff of the Army, at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va., Apr. 11, 2011. Dempsey succeeds Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the 36th chief of staff of the Army.



Gen. Martin E. Dempsey was sworn in as the U.S. Army's 37th chief of staff, April 11, following the retirement of Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. Dempsey began his 37-year Army career as a scout and support platoon leader with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. Dempsey graduated West Point in 1974 and earned his first master's degree in English at Duke University, and a second master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the National War College and served as an instructor at West Point. He commanded the 1st Armored Division during the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom and later served as the commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq. Most recently, Dempsey served as commander of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. "My commitment and expectation to this great Army is that we will work on strengthening the bond of trust among those with whom we work, among whom we support and among those who march with us into battle," Dempsey said. "On that foundation of trust, we will overcome any challenge that we confront in the future."



DoD photo by D. Myles Cullen

A Guardian of Soldiers

Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – Behind every mission rolling out the gate at Contingency Operating Site Warrior is a small team of Soldiers back on base who keep mission leaders safe and informed.

“My job is to ensure the Soldiers are aware and ready for whatever may come their way outside those wire fences,” said Cpl. Daniel Waller, a heavy vehicle operator from Company Intelligence Support Team, Company A, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division.

Waller, the night shift noncommissioned

officer in charge of the CoIST, said he conducts briefings and debriefings with all the convoys going out on missions and is directly responsible for informing Soldiers of necessary information to accomplish their mission safely.

“In support of Operation New Dawn, we support the security platoons in whatever mission they may have,” said Waller, a Des Moines, Iowa native.

CoIST Soldiers maintain the responsibilities of collecting intelligence on any activity happening in the city, villages, and along routes traveled by convoys to get to mission locations.

They then analyze the information collected and brief the Soldiers going out, informing them of what to be alert for while executing missions.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney, 1st AATF PAO

Cpl. Daniel Waller, noncommissioned officer in charge of Company Intelligence Support Team, Company A, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, briefs Soldiers prior to a mission at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, April 10, 2011. Waller, a Des Moines, Iowa native, informs the ‘Avalanche’ Soldiers on important intelligence his team collects and analyzes to keep mission leaders aware of current situations before conducting missions.

“Cpl. Waller is by far the best CoIST Soldier I have ever seen,” said 1st Sgt. Philip Hollifield, senior noncommissioned officer, Company A, 101st BSB. “He gets information from our battalion’s intelligence then he does his own extensive research to fully understand the situations at hand.”

Waller is a Soldier the company can count on because he can be given a mission and he will not only accomplish that mission, but give more than expected, Hollifield said.

“His level of knowledge and work effort is above and beyond most, he always does 110 percent in getting as much information as possible to inform the Soldiers of what to be aware of while on mission,” said Hollifield.

Waller is respected and admired not only by superiors, but peers as well.

“He is a great NCO who you can go to for anything. He really takes care of his Soldiers,” said Spc. Alexandre Snow, a heavy wheel vehicle operator serving with the CoIST, Company A, 101st BSB. “He knows his job, and he is great at what he does.”

Ensuring safety for friends and coworkers is the driving force behind staying organized and thorough, Waller explained.

“They are the ones going outside the wire, and I want to make sure my leaders, Soldiers and friends are comfortable and ready to leave the COS, that they are all in a good mind set when leaving the COS to go out on missions,” said Waller.

Cont’d from LION, Pg. 1 —

“Mortar teams will fire live rounds as the commandos and special forces units fulfill their objectives using live AK-47 rounds,” he said. “Iraqi soldiers, like any soldiers, love to shoot, and they are very excited about this event.”

Many Iraqi soldiers benefited from the train-up for Operation Lion’s Leap, said Warrant Officer Mubrad, Commando Battalion, 12th IA Div.

“We have been working hard to get ready for the demonstration,” said Mubrad. “Already our soldiers have learned a lot, but I believe they will learn much more during the demonstration when they have live ammunition and the mortars are

firing because it will show the soldiers how to operate in real combat.”

Iraqi and U.S. military leaders attending the demonstration will be impressed with the speed and efficiency the commandos display as they accomplish their mission, Mubrad said.

Large scale training events like Operation Lion’s Leap are

Col. Michael Pappal, commander, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, shares a meal with Brig. Gen. Monyad, chief of staff, 12th Iraqi Army Division, during a rehearsal for Operation Lion’s Leap at Mahgoor Training Site in Kirkuk province, Iraq, April 10, 2011. Operation Lion’s Leap, a training exercise designed to showcase Iraqi forces combat expertise, is scheduled to take place April 18-30.

vital to the growth of both the soldiers on the ground and the Iraqi leadership, said Pappal.

“They are doing more than just training,” he said. “They are learning how to train; knowing how to train is an integral part in the development of

a new military force.”

Iraqi soldiers are slated to begin Operation Lion’s Leap exercises April 18, and culminate the event with the live fire exercise before graduating at the end of the month.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO

Matters of the Heart



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF PAO, 1st Inf. Div., USD-N

Dr. (Capt.) Jason Saucedo, battalion surgeon, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, reviews a referral to a dermatology specialist for a Soldier at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, April 9, 2011.

Spc. Kandi Huggins
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – “You know, you work so hard for so long. It’s not the award, but being recognized amongst the whole unit,” said Dr. (Capt.) Jason Saucedo regarding the Army Commendation Medal he received during a ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, April 9.

Saucedo, battalion surgeon, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, attached to 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, received the ARCOM for the care he provides to “Thunderhorse” battalion Soldiers as well as being selected for a cardiology fellowship at Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas.

As battalion surgeon, Saucedo, a Santa Teresa, N.M. native, said his responsibilities revolve around medical readiness and identifying, diagnosing, and giving out treatment plans for Soldiers and ensuring everyone remains current on vaccinations.

“When you first meet him, it’s apparent he’s a competent and knowledgeable doctor who’s passionate about helping

Soldiers and training medics,” said 1st Lt. Jordan King, medical platoon leader, HHC. “We were fortunate to have that caliber and level of character in our platoon. I recommended him for the ARCOM and I’m definitely happy to see he got it.”

Saucedo is a committed worker with a promising future at Brooks AMC, said King, a Hudson, Ohio native.

“When I was younger my grandfather always had heart problems and that put an idea in my mind—the heart,” Saucedo said, remembering the inspiration behind his interest in cardiology. “As I grew up, I learned more in my studies in college and medical school ... and that increased my interest in cardiology.”

Saucedo said his interest in cardiology also spawned from its need for problem solving skills. As a cardiologist, he said his job requires him to listen to the heart, look at electrocardiograms, analyze X-rays and conduct special heart studies before putting

Dr. (Capt.) Jason Saucedo, battalion surgeon, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, attached to 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, reviews a prescription for a Soldier during sick call at the battalion aid station on Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, April 9, 2011.

all that information together to deliver a diagnosis.

A doctor is like a detective looking for all the clues to discover what is wrong with patients, Saucedo remarked.

Saucedo, a doctor of six years, said he is scheduled to begin his fellowship July 1. In his absence, Saucedo said he hopes his medics continue to take opportunities for self development.

Being selected for the fellowship demonstrates that medical training never stops and there is always something new to learn, Saucedo said, hoping to set an example for his comrades.

“You don’t have to stay in that one position, you can always improve yourself and obtain that higher level, and education keeps that progression going,” said Saucedo. “Sometimes a person just has to be given the chance to do something big and they won’t ever know what they can do unless they try.”

Cpl. Jose Martinez-Roque, a Bayamon, Puerto Rico native and healthcare non-commissioned officer, HHC, said Saucedo played an integral part in the battalion aid station’s success, and he hopes to follow Saucedo’s example.

Though the battalion is losing a trusted mentor, Brooks will gain an experienced teacher, said Martinez-Roque.

“Overall, he’s an awesome provider, teacher and mentor,” Martinez-Roque said. “He loves to teach and emphasizes having the medics better our skills and knowledge at the battalion aid station.”



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF PAO

Controlled burn clears path for force protection, increases Soldier safety

25th Infantry Division

Cpl. Robert England
2nd AAB Public Affairs
25th Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, Iraq—Even while concentrating a majority of their efforts on advising, training and assisting Iraqi Security Forces during Operation New Dawn, U.S. forces still focus on safety for U.S. Soldiers and Iraqi citizens living on and around military bases across Iraq.

Soldiers of 66th Engineer Company, attached to 225th Brigade Support Battalion, “Task Force 225,” 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, performed a controlled burn along a stretch of perimeter fencing, April 6, 2011, at Contingency Operating Base Warhorse in the Diyala province of northern Iraq.

“It contributes to the protection of our forces and the Iraqi people when we clear the overgrown brush causing obscuration so that the force protection barriers, the fence line and the guard towers can provide us with that protection throughout Operation New Dawn,” said 1st Lt. Andrew Schmidt, platoon leader, 66th Eng. Company.

Schmidt, from Sweet Home, Ore., said this need for a clear field of vision brought about the plan to conduct a controlled burn to clear the overgrown brush in order to better protect American troops and contractors at COB Warhorse.

“We do not have a torch or flamethrower as part of our standard-issue equipment to burn the undergrowth, so we had to acquire that from another unit,” said Schmidt.

The 66th Eng. Company Soldiers combined resources with 617th Engineer Battalion, based out of Joint Base Balad, to acquire a terra torch—a specialized flamethrower designed for clearing operations.

Schmidt said his Soldiers and noncommissioned officers immediately went to work researching the equipment and studying the training manual. Several of Schmidt’s NCOs brought clearing experience from past deployments to help train younger Soldiers, he added.

Spc. Matthew Chambers, a combat engineer from Lake Fenton, Mich., said he received a thorough training session before manning the torch.



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Robert England, 2nd AAB PAO, 25th Inf. Div., USD-N

Soldiers from the 66th Engineer Company, attached to the 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, “Warriors,” 25th Infantry Division, clear brush along a fence line during a controlled burn operation at Contingency Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, April 6, 2011. The engineer company conducted the clearing operation with the assistance of multiple tools and equipment ranging from a flamethrower to clearing bulldozers.

“My NCOs ran me through the whole process,” he said. “They taught me about the fuel mixtures and how to get the hoses set up for operation.”

In addition to the training, Schmidt explained the amount of planning and preparation that precedes a clearing operation that involves the use of a fire.

Moisture and humidity may hinder the burning process while high winds increase the risk of the fire spreading, he said.

“Before we come out to burn, the first thing we do is check the weather ahead of time,” said Schmidt. “Then we select an area to start the pre-burn process.”

Prior to starting the actual burning process, Schmidt said his engineers established fire breaks to provide a last line of defense by cutting off the flame’s fuel supply in the event that a controlled burn spreads faster than expected.

In this case, Schmidt said his Soldiers used bulldozers to clear away patches of vegetation to supplement the natural fire breaks along a creek and nearby roadways.

“This gives us a nice, confined space in which we don’t have to worry about the fire getting out of control,” Schmidt said.

The fuel mixture shot through the open flame, sending a concentrated stream of flaming fuel up to 50 feet away. Chambers

See BURN, Pg. 9

Communications specialist keeps information lines open during Operation New Dawn

Spc. Andrew Ingram
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – As thousands of Soldiers across Iraq do their part every day to accomplish the mission of Operation New Dawn, some of them stand out from the crowd.

As a network maintainer, Staff Sgt. Jonathan Battles, assigned to Company B, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, keeps lines of communication working smoothly between Soldiers at Contingency Operating Site Warrior and throughout 1st AATF's operating environment.

Without the ongoing efforts of Battles and his team, orders could not be received and troops conducting missions would get cut off from support elements.

"If anything goes wrong with the network or commu-



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Battles, network maintainer, Company B, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, attempts to find the root of a connection problem at the tactical operations center on Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, April 15, 2011.

nications at COS Warrior, my Soldiers and I are the first line of defense," said Battles, who hails from Tyler, Texas. "We troubleshoot any problems and get things running smoothly again as quickly as possible."

Battles began his military journey in 1996, a year after graduating from high school.

"I had worked a few jobs but hadn't found anything I really liked," he said. "The recruiter said the Army was a great way to see the world, I wanted to travel so I joined up."

Battles said at the time, he never would have guessed he would stay in past his initial enlistment; but 15 years, six duty stations and four deployments later, Battles said he still loves the Army.

"Originally I had two goals: see the world and make the rank of sergeant, because that was the rank my dad was before he got out," he said. "But I stayed in because the pay was pretty good and I liked what I was doing. When I hit my 10 year mark I decided I wanted to stay in for the long haul and retire when I hit 20 years."

Despite his humble nature, Battles' comrades know that being a Soldier is more than just a job for him, said Spc. Jason Nichols, network maintainer, Company B, 1st STB.

"Staff Sgt. Battles is a genuinely nice guy who does right by his Soldiers," said Nichols.

"He works to develop their skills, he fights to get them time off when they need a break and he tries to help them through their personal problems."

Battles' dedication as a noncommissioned officer and technical expertise as a Soldier makes him an invaluable asset to the 1st AATF, said Sgt. 1st Class Ronnie Adams, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 1st AATF communications shop.

"A lot of people underestimate Staff Sgt. Battles because he is such a quiet, unassuming person," Adams said. "But Staff Sgt. Battles is always there the exact moment you need him."

Adams said one of Battles' best qualities is his humility.

"He is an incredibly competent Soldier," said Adams. "He has been doing his job for a very long time and you can see the pride he has in his work. He doesn't let pride get in the way of learning. When he doesn't understand something he asks experts questions, he learns and then becomes an expert himself."



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrew Ingram, USD-N PAO

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Battles, a network maintainer assigned to Company B, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, responds to a request for technical support at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, April 11, 2011.

Stay vigilant, stay safe

Command Sgt. Maj. Keith Moore
Division Special Troops Battalion
4th Inf. Div, U.S. Division-North

Taking a look at the calendar the other day I realized that we've completed almost six months of our tour in Iraq, some units a little more, some a little less. I'd like everyone to take a few minutes and reflect on the accomplishments we've achieved in U.S. Division-North. While we should be proud of all we've done there are still many tasks to accomplish as we complete our mission and prepare to return to our home stations.

As we continue our mission I'd like to stress the importance of several areas of emphasis that will allow all of us to complete the mission.

Force protection should be everyone's priority. Soldiers of all ranks from Private to Command Sergeant Major, from Lieutenant to General Officer, should make safety part of their daily routine whether you're doing staff work in the JOC, executing resupply missions and route reconnaissance, or executing any job or task. The threats are real and should never be discounted or ignored. Comply with the buddy system, make sure someone knows where you are going at all times and maintain good situational awareness. Just because you seldom or never leave the COB or FOB doesn't mean you're not at risk. Leaders, discuss this with your Soldiers often, it's your job that they understand the importance of and comply with force protection guidance.

We've been away from home for a long time now. The days are long and the work is often difficult. Many of us are faced with challenges beyond our military tasks and can find ourselves getting discouraged. The good thing about being deployed is you are around people who care about you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you're feeling overwhelmed by what's going on in your personal or professional life, don't be afraid to reach out for some help. No one should feel afraid to reach out to one of the many resources available to help with problems. If you see someone in need, be proactive rather than reactive and make that initial contact to help a friend.

The chain of command is always a good first stop. The chaplain's office is another great resource that has helped countless people over the years. See your medical provider for other resources available. Don't be overcome by your fears, just take that first step in reaching out for help and we'll get you the help you deserve.

In addition to taking care of yourself mentally and emotionally, don't forget your physical well being. Take the time to do some physical training daily. We've got some pretty decent facilities and a lot of motivated NCOs who are running some great programs such as aerobics, martial arts, spin classes, intramural sports, and running courses. If you are serving at a checkpoint or base without such facilities, do your best with what you have and try to still conduct PT daily. Again, take advantage of this opportunity to build yourself up physically. You'll do better on your PT test and your entire outlook on life will improve. Part of physical fitness includes proper diet and nutrition. Be careful in the 'all you can eat' dining facility. The food is good, but too much good food isn't necessarily good for you. Hint: step away from the dessert

bar! Also, with warmer and soon to be all out hot weather don't forget to hydrate! Enjoy caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, and soda in moderation. Your water intake should double during the summer months.

While being deployed may be tough on you, don't forget that it can be even tougher on your Family, children, spouses and other loved ones back home. You've gotten accustomed to the conditions here and settled into your new Army "home" and routine. Your families, wherever they may be, are still dealing with your absence. Take advantage of the great resources we have and technology available to stay connected. It will be great not only for you but will also help them cope with this deployment. You might also want to go 'old school' and try writing a good old fashioned letter or two—that still works.

Oh, by the way, don't forget that Mother's Day is May 8. I'm sure that all Mothers out there would appreciate a phone call, letter, email, or even a video chat session.

I urge you all to continue to lean forward in the foxhole. For you younger Soldiers, that means keep moving forward. We still have a long way to go in completing our mission in Iraq. Don't lose track of the importance of what you do. Everyone plays an important role in getting the job done; you are part of the effort in making this mission happen.

I couldn't write this without talking about standards for a little bit. If you know the standard, live it and enforce it. If you don't know the standard, ask. I call on all NCOs to lead by example and enforce all standards. There's no room for half stepping and enforcing standards you agree with. The standards are there for safety, security, and good order and discipline. If you see a violation, correct it. NCOs make it happen! NEVER give safety and discipline a day off.

I wish all of you a very blessed and wonderful Easter. Your well-being and safety is always on my mind. Do not ever feel that you cannot approach myself or the chain of command—we are always here for you

I'm proud of the job we've done so far and I'm even prouder to serve with each of you as we close the final chapter in Iraq. Take care of yourselves and take care of your buddy and we'll all make it home safely.

Steadfast 9.



U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Carmen Daugherty, USD-N PAO

Command Sgt. Maj. Keith Moore, right, senior enlisted leader, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, discusses redeployment transition plans with Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, April 16, 2011. Moore encourages leaders to be proactive and engage Soldiers regarding morale and well-being.

Setting trends of excellence

Task Force ODIN imagery analyst wins NCO of the Quarter

Sgt. Shawn Miller
109th MPAD
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Less than one year after graduating magna cum laude from Western Michigan University in 2008, Sondra Setterington enlisted in the U.S. Army with an immediate goal in mind—to become a noncommissioned officer.

Setterington met her goal, recently being promoted to the rank of sergeant while deployed to Iraq in support of Task Force ODIN, and then took her career one step further by besting her peers to claim the title of NCO of the Quarter for U.S. Division-North, March 29.

Setterington, originally from

Charlotte, Mich., currently serves with Company C, TF ODIN, analyzing imagery to support counter-improvised explosive device operations across northern Iraq.

“Her actions and drive speak volumes on her ability to not just set the standards, but to surpass them above measure—she is truly a noncommissioned officer well above her peers,” said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Pierre, senior noncommissioned officer, Company C.

An avid runner, Setterington routinely aces her physical fitness tests and even ran with one of her Soldiers to help him pass the run—and then completed her own test directly afterward, said Staff Sgt. Jamie Nishio, Company C.

“Sgt. Setterington sets the



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Coltin Heller, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Rice, senior enlisted advisor to the U.S. Forces-Iraq deputy commanding general-operations, congratulates Sgt. Sondra Setterington during the U.S. Division-North Soldier of the Quarter competition at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, March 29, 2011.

standard for NCOs in the platoon and always gives 110 percent,” said Nishio.

Holding a bachelor’s degree in English and History, Setterington could have chosen to enter the Army as an officer, Nishio added, but she turned down the offer in order to gain experience as an enlisted Soldier first and keep her future options open.

During the question and answer session of the NCO board, Pierre said it quickly became clear who the winner would be.

Sergeants major with years

of experience presiding over the board were captivated with her display of character, professionalism and overwhelming potential to perform above her current rank, Pierre said.

“She is more than just a role model,” said Pierre. “She is a trend setter—the trend of excellence.”

Read about the Soldier of the Quarter in next week’s issue of The Ivy Leaf!

Cont’d from BURN, Pg. 6

moved slowly, allowing the flames to engulf the dry brush, ensuring not to shoot the fire stream into the wind so the controlled burn remained manageable.

Schmidt said his engineers took many precautionary measures to prevent avoidable accidents, especially in the vicinity of the fire.

“When we are operating the equipment, we have a minimum of three personnel,” he said. “We have one pump operator standing by about 50 feet away with a fire blanket, we have our medic present with all his first aid equipment, and of course the (torch) operator.”

Each Soldier’s uniform played an important role, Schmidt said. The torch operators wore flame retardant uniforms, hoods and gloves to protect them from the flames while fending off heat exhaustion.

“We wanted the operator to be protected while still maintaining mobility, and the lightweight uniform also allows for ventilation,”

he added.

After spending some time operating the torch, Chambers reflected on the importance of the lightweight protective gear.

“It was extremely hot, we’re already in the middle of the desert and on top of that I was just a few feet away from the flames,” said Chambers. “Plus, the (torch) gets really heavy after a while, so the lightest gear possible really helps to prevent heat injuries.”

All the safety precautions paid off as the 66th Eng. Company conducted the controlled burn without incident and cleared overgrown areas around the base perimeter.

Schmidt said force protection remains a critical element to the brigade’s mission to advise, train and assist the ISF while preserving safety for U.S. Soldiers and the Iraqi public, and this clearing operation served to raise that protection level.

“It’s important for us as U.S. forces to ensure not only the protection of the forces on this base, but also the Iraqi civilians around the outside of the base,” said Schmidt.

U.S. Army system specialists train IA to be proficient signal soldiers

1st Cavalry Division

Spc. Terence Ewings
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq – As Iraqi Army battalions train on infantry skills at the Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, U.S. Army signal support system specialists enhance IA signal crews' ability to effectively communicate in the field.

"Head Hunter" Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division conducted a basic communications class with their IA counterparts, April 6.

"The goal of this training is to make sure the Iraqis can operate, troubleshoot, maintain and service their equipment," said Sgt. Christopher Cisco, a communications specialist assigned to HHT, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

In the familiarization class, Head Hunter troopers taught Iraqi soldiers from 1st Bat-

talion, 9th Brigade, 3rd IA Division, how to operate a combat network radio system to keep individual units in constant communication across the battlefield.

Cisco also taught the Iraqis how to program encrypted networks, secure the channels, and contact other units using the radio system.

Throughout the communications class, the Iraqi troops build on their previous communications knowledge and become proficient in setting up and maintaining their battalion's support systems.

Cisco said another goal of the course is to guide the Iraqi soldiers to be competent, independent instructors capable of carrying on the classes.

"Along with the knowledge we teach in the class, we work with the Iraqis to enable them to use these skills and train their own guys when they return back to their unit," said Cisco, a native of Freehold, N.J.

Over the course of the month, U.S. Soldiers plan to work with their Iraqi partners to modernize 1st Bn. as part of Tadreeb al

Shamil, an Iraqi Ground Forces Command initiative designed to provide units with dedicated training time to hone their individual and collective infantry skills.

During the 25-day training cycles of Tadreeb al Shamil, Arabic for all inclusive training, IA soldiers build their tactical knowledge and skills so they are able to proficiently secure and defend the populace from external threats to Iraq's sovereignty.

"It's an honor that my leadership entrusts me with the responsibility of being the primary instructor for this class," said Cisco.

Formerly a full-time college student in New Jersey, the Head Hunter noncommissioned officer is currently serving on his second tour to Iraq supporting 4th AAB's advise, train, and assist mission near Mosul.

"Cisco was born to lead," said Sgt. 1st Class William DuBois, the senior enlisted signal support system specialist assigned to Head Hunter squadron. "He's a hard worker and the Iraqis adapt very well to classes he gives them."

"I feel very privileged to receive this good training from the Americans," said Pfc. Naiem Gelewa, a signal soldier assigned to the 1st Bn, 9th Bde, 3rd IA Div.

"It's perfect training for us, and I look forward to using this radio knowledge," said Gelewa.

Following the three-week communications class with Cisco and other Head Hunter Soldiers, the Iraqi signal crews will test their newfound communications skills as they join the rest of their battalion for a live fire exercise—the culmination of the month's training classes.

Pfc. Naiem Gelewa, a signal support systems soldier from 1st Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, trains on a combat network radio system during a basic communications class at the Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, April 6, 2011. Gelewa, a native of Nasiriyah, Iraq, trains with advisors from 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, at the training center on Contingency Operating Site Marez to become proficient in operating communication support systems on the battlefield.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Terence Ewings, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N



Chaplain's Home on Leave...

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Houston
4th Inf. Div. Chaplain
U.S. Division-North

While we are in Iraq we get to go to this briefing, and that briefing. We get warned about this, and cautioned about that. There are safety posters everywhere. My favorite safety poster is one I saw on a bulletin board in the A Co. area warning us about the many different kinds of dangerous snakes that are waiting to bite us here in Iraq.

In the good old US of A, I believe there are only 3 varieties of poisonous pit vipers that potentially slither through the grass in your back yard. But according to the safety poster, there are more than 20 deadly varieties of pit vipers here in the Middle East, all of them waiting to bite me when I walk to the DFAC.

However, after 4 tours here in Iraq, I have yet to see even one snake. But, who knows ... tomorrow might be the day!

The snake safety poster reminds me that we always try and prepare ourselves for the negative things that might happen. But, how often do we take time to prepare ourselves for the positive things that will happen?

Environmental Morale Leave is one of the great positive things that will happen to Soldiers and Families. If your Soldier is here 270 days or more, they are entitled to two weeks of free leave. Uncle Sam will even pay for the plane ticket home! Leave is a great positive event for Soldiers and Families, but it takes a little preparation and planning if you want to have a truly great leave.

Here are three simple observations and suggestions that may help you have a positive experience during leave. These come from several years of watching Soldiers and Families take mid-tour leave.

1. Soldiers are "Brain Tired". We are not in active combat, but Soldiers work incredible

hours to develop solutions to an unending string of complex problems. Your loved one has done constant mental gymnastics for months, and both bodies AND brains need a rest.

Suggestion: When your Soldier comes home for leave, please do not meet him/her at the door with a load of problems that need solutions. There are always some unavoidable problems that need solving, but keep them at a minimum. Your loved one is Brain Tired.

2. Soldiers only have two weeks with you. They simply do not have the time, or the emotional energy to reunite with extended family and friends.

Suggestion: Encourage extended family to visit at another time. EML leave is not the best time for Aunt Sally and Uncle Bill, or even Mom and Dad to come for a visit. Reserve EML for only the closest loved ones and friends. If you are married, your spouse and children deserve every moment of your leave time.

3. Soldiers do not fully re-integrate with loved ones when

they come home for leave. Unfortunately, your soldier must return to Iraq. Because of this, part of your Soldier remains in Iraq. You can feel it, it is the elephant in the room, and it is normal.

Suggestion: Expect things to feel a little disconnected, (because they are). Do not assume that something is wrong with your relationship when your loved one seems distant at some point during leave. Talk through it, encourage your Soldier. Do not fall into the dangerous trap of measuring the success or failure of your relationship solely by the events that happen in the short two weeks of leave.

Remember the snake poster? Yes, there are bad things out there, and you can spend your time obsessing about the negative things that might happen, or you can spend your time and energy preparing for the positive things that can, and (with a little preparation) will happen. Enjoy your leave!!



www.facebook.com/4thID

U.S. Division-North Social Media Sites



www.twitter/4thInfDiv



www.Slideshare.net/the4id



youtube.com/The4ID



www.flickr.com/photos/the4id

On the U.S. Division-North social media sites, you can find stories, photos and videos of U.S. Soldiers deployed in support of Operation New Dawn.

Hey Doc: “How can I best stay in touch with my kids while I’m deployed?”

Dr. (Lt. Col.) Mary Krueger
Division Surgeon
4th Inf. Div., U.S. Division-North

“Hey Doc: I’ve been here in Iraq for 7 months now and am starting to feel the strain of being away from my family, particularly my kids. I know they are working hard to “stay strong” and they don’t complain, but I am wondering if you have any advice on how I can best stay in touch while I am deployed this year. My oldest is starting to have issues at school with his grades slipping. Could this be due to the deployment and is there anything I can do to help from here? My spouse is getting frustrated and I feel helpless being so far away.” – Signed “Deployed Dad”

Dear “Dad,”

You are not alone in this quandary. There are 1.7 million American children and youth under 18 with a parent serving in the military and about 900,000 with one or

both parents deployed multiple times. Your question is very timely, since April is the month of the military child. The Month of the Military Child is an opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

The stress of deployments can affect children, just as it does adults. This may take the form of acting out toward the parent at home, siblings or friends. It may also manifest as health concerns such as headache, stomach distress and sleep disturbances. Children may also become moody, irritable, or have more dramatic reactions to minor situations, such as losing homework or missing a favorite TV show.

The best way to address these issues is to ask the children what they are thinking/feeling in these situations. This helps give them an open door to discuss their fears and frustrations, while also allowing you to see if they recognize how the deployment may be affecting them. Listen to your children and their concerns.

Children may think a lot and have worries/concerns about their parents that they find difficult to express. Acknowledging that these concerns are normal can help provide the children reassurance that they are not alone.

Parents should be mindful about how they share emotions with their children. Some parents share too much (losing control in front of their kids) or share too little (no emotion or giving the message that you can’t talk about it). Children take their cues from their parents, so strive to

find a balance of acknowledging the difficulty in being apart, while reassuring them that you love them, think of them often, and will return home as soon as duty allows.

Reassuring children about deployment and discussing what deployments involve, at an age appropriate level, can help decrease this stress. Parents should first digest information about a deployment before they talk with their children.

This allows parents to deliver the information and answer questions in a calm and reassuring manner. Many children will worry about the safety of their deployed parent. It is important to let children know that the parent is trained to do their job.

Acknowledge their fears, provide appropriate reassurance, and communicate in a way that your child will understand based on their age.

If you have concerns about your child’s school performance, work closely with his/her teachers to address these concerns. You may feel hesitant at first to draw attention to your child as “different” for having a deployed parent, but most school officials are grateful to have this information, so they can be sensitive to supporting your child through the deployment.

School counselors can be very helpful in working with children to discuss their feelings and issues as they relate to deployment. Alternatively, you can work through your primary care physician to evaluate your child for counseling services.

Hope this information helps you, “Dad,” and keep those Task Force Ironhorse questions coming!



U.S. Army photo

Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Florio, fires current operations non-commissioned officer, 4th Infantry Division, video chats online with his wife Katrina and daughter Tricity, age 6, in Colorado Springs, Colo. Currently on his fifth deployment, Florio said establishing a “battle rhythm” for talking helps his family stay connected.

Weblinks for additional information:

- <http://www.realwarriors.net/family/children/military-child.php>
- http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0411_militarychild/