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Kurdish Regional Guard train at Fire Base Manila



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

Spc. Andrew Ingram
USD-N Public Affairs

FIRE BASE MANILA, Iraq – A cool breeze blew through the valley below as Kurdish Regional Guard riflemen stalked down the hill, weapons at the ready.

As they approached the objective, soldiers of 1st Regional Guard Brigade began firing on the unsuspecting enemy while advancing two by two, quickly overrunning their adversaries.

“Okay, good job,” said Staff Sgt. Carlo Viqueira. “Let’s run the next squad through it.”

The Kurdish soldiers trekked back up the hill past the silhouette targets representing their defeated enemy, and watched as their comrades ran through the ambush scenario.

Viqueira and other noncommissioned officers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, are deployed

to Kirkuk province, Iraq as a part of U.S. Division-North, to mentor the Kurdish soldiers as part of their advise, train and assist mission at Fire Base Manila, near the city of Chamchamal.

“The squad and team leaders seem to have a good grasp on what they need to do,” Staff Sgt. Timothy Snyder said of the ambush drills conducted April 14. “Now we need to get the soldiers comfortable in their role as a part of a fire

Staff Sgt. Carlo Viqueira, squad leader, Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division supervises and mentors soldiers from 1st Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade as they practice ambush drills with silhouette targets at a range near Fire Base Manila in Kirkuk province, Iraq, April 14, 2011.

team and squad.”

The ambush training took place 11 days into a four-week training cycle, which includes combat drills, classroom training on map reading and land navigation, and basic medical training.

“Most of what we teach them, American Soldiers learn in basic training,” Snyder said.

Snyder said training the KRGB soldiers presents interesting challenges beyond just the language difference.

“Their culture is a lot different from ours,” he explained. “In my class of 28 there are probably 11 who cannot read or write, but they respect us and are eager to learn what we have to teach them.”

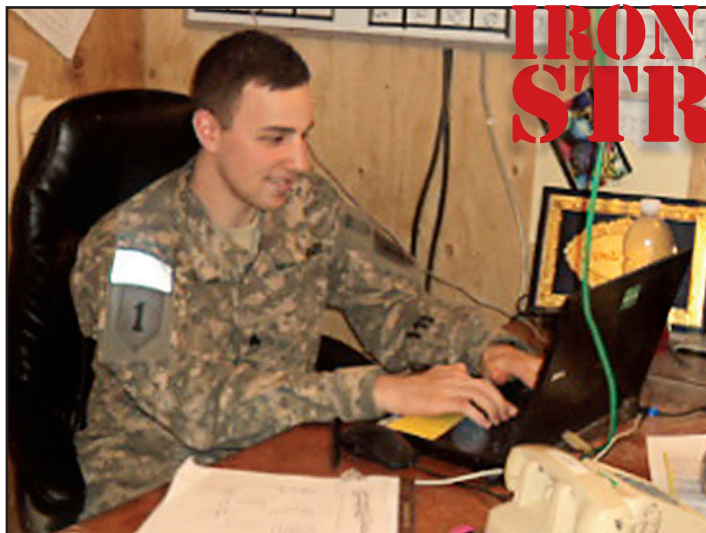
The Company B Soldiers do more than train the KRGB soldiers, they strive to set an example of what a competent and professional soldier looks

See KRG, Pg. 3

STEADFAST AND LOYAL
IRONHORSE
FIT FOR ANY TEST
DEVIL
LONGKNIFE
WARRIOR

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DEVIL
LONGKNIFE
WARRIOR





U.S. Army photo

Sgt. Andrew Lucas, a cryptologic linguist assigned to Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, earned recognition as the U.S. Division-North "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the Week for his efforts toward assisting U.S. and Iraqi forces capture a high value individual earlier this year.

The U.S. Army's analytical military occupational specialties provide intelligence support to track and capture high value individuals. A cryptologic linguist is one such specialty providing that support.

Sgt. Andrew Lucas, a cryptologic linguist assigned to Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, played an integral role in one particularly complex case.

The particular HVI crossed borders and changed names numerous times, resulting in an immense amount of information from various agencies.

"That was an intense amount of work," said Spc. Lila Scaife,

IRONHORSE STRONG: Soldier of the Week

Company A. "We had to sort through an immense amount of information backlogged since at least 2010. One (Soldier) has been tracking (the HVI) for eight months."

This amount of tedious work did not discourage people like Lucas, Scaife said. With an iron-clad work ethic and ambitious passion for his job, he drove on and accomplished the mission, working tireless hours to help his team get their man.

Scaife, a member of the signal intelligence team with Lucas, said Lucas is very passionate about language, which translates to a tenacious drive to complete the mission.

"He's dedicated. He will not go home, he will complete the mission," said 1st Sgt. Patrick Thomas, Company A, STB. "If it takes 36 hours, he'll stay 36 hours."

The difficulty level was "extreme," ranging from the national level down and involving multiple agencies, said Thomas, addressing the complexity of the mission.

Lucas diligently moved his team to success, providing the coordination and intelligence necessary to successfully capture the HVI, often working straight through other shifts.

"He took most of the shifts throughout the day," said Scaife.

Lucas is the sort of noncommissioned officer that does not require his Soldiers to do anything he wouldn't do himself, and he is definitely leading the charge in the linguist section, said Scaife.

Lucas' attitude and work ethic gains him the respect of subordinates, peers and superiors alike, and earns him the title of "Ironhorse Strong": Soldier of the Week.

Foremost in Lucas' mind is professionalism and dependability, and he would never do anything to tarnish his professionalism or paint him as unreliable, said Scaife.

'LONG KNIFE' SOLDIERS TRAIN
IA ON URBAN OPERATIONS AT
GWTC

Page 3

LIVE FIRE EXERCISE PREPARES
IRAQI ARMY SOLDIERS FOR
LION'S LEAP

Page 6

'ON TIME' BATTALION TRAINS
IA COMMANDERS ON FUTURE
PLANNING

Page 7

A WEEKEND OF 'DEFIANCE':
SOLDIERS OF 1ST BSTB
CELEBRATE MID TOUR

Page 10

THE IVY LEAF

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1st Infantry Division

2nd Advise and
Assist Brigade
25th Infantry Division

4th Advise and
Assist Brigade
1st Cavalry Division

'Long Knife' Soldiers train IA on urban operations at GWTC

1st Cavalry Division

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq – Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, moved as a platoon to execute urban operations drills learned from U.S. troopers at the Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, April 16.

Three platoons of 1st Bn. worked alongside U.S. Soldiers assigned to Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division to rehearse combat tactics as part of Tadreeb al Shamil, an Iraqi Ground Forces Command initiative designed to modernize light infantry units through fire and maneuver training.

"This urban operations training is to get the IA soldiers familiarized with how to set

See GWTC, Pg. 5



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

Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division prepare to clear a building during urban operations training at Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, April 16, 2011. U.S. Soldiers assigned to Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division trained their Iraqi counterparts on combat skills focused on increasing the Iraqi soldiers' proficiency in securing their area of responsibility.



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

Pfc. Ali, an infantryman with 1st Regional Guard Brigade, tosses a dummy grenade into a mock bunker during assault drills led by U.S. Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division at Fire Base Manila in Kirkuk province, Iraq, April 13, 2011. After mastering individual skills, the KRGB soldiers practice drills as teams and squads to build unit cohesion.

Cont'd from KRG, Pg. 1

like, said Snyder.

Snyder said he believes training the Kurdish soldiers and all the security forces in Iraq serves a vital role in the successful completion of Operation New Dawn.

"I love training Soldiers, and the mission we are doing right now is essential to the future of Iraq," said Snyder, who spent two years as a drill sergeant before joining Company B. "If we don't train the Iraqi Forces to protect their people then nothing we have done since 2003 will have mattered, so we take this job very seriously."

Soldiers of Company B did an outstanding job of showing the Kurdish troops what it means to be a good soldier, said Pfc. Juanyyoo Kayeem, a

rifleman assigned to Regional Guard Brigade.

"When we started this training, it was like when we started school," Kayeem said. "When you get to school you can't even read or write, but by the time you graduate you are an expert—working with the Americans is the same."

Kayeem said there are three major things he hopes to gain from his training with Company B.

"I want all of my fellow soldiers to show our leaders that we are real soldiers who can accomplish any mission," he said. "I also want to learn well enough to train others because when the Americans are gone, we will be the teachers. But the most important thing is that I want to serve my people and protect them well."

Ninewa Operations Command celebrates security progress

Capt. Philip Crabtree
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD-N

MOSUL, Iraq— Three years ago, Iraqi leaders in Ninewa province established the Ninewa Operations Command, and since then, efforts of Iraqi Security Forces in the region led to greater security and visible progress for residents in Mosul and throughout the province.

To announce the great strides made since 2008, the NiOC celebrated both security successes and hope for the future, April 19, by featuring a photo gallery illustrating progress seen throughout Ninewa.

“People have made the ultimate sacrifice—have given their lives—for Ninewa,” said Maj. Gen. David Perkins, com-

manding general of U.S. Division-North and 4th Infantry Division.

There has been significant, visible progress across Ninewa in recent years, Perkins added.

Perkins served as the keynote speaker for U.S. forces at the event, which included more than 300 guests, featuring tribal sheikhs, the Ninewa Police Directorate, Iraqi Army soldiers, a provincial government delegation, and U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, who partnered with the NiOC to advise, train and assist ISF in their operations.

“There has been slow progress here, but progress nonetheless,” said Lt. Col. Ra’ad, commander of 2nd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division. “Now the main streets, buildings and neighborhoods are secure.”

Speeches, poetry and performances by schoolchildren celebrated the improvements seen by residents in recent years. Throngs of proud spectators crowded the auditorium, filling all the seats and spilling into the aisles.

“This is an outstanding event which clearly communicates the strength of the Iraqi Security Forces and the provincial leadership,” said Lt. Col. John Strange, commander of Task Force Sword, 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., a stability and transition team partnered with the IA in Ninewa.

Following the formal portion of the program, attendees toured the photo gallery, which included more than 100 images showcasing the progress made since 2008.

“The Iraqi peoples’ faith is well placed in their security

forces and its leadership,” said Strange, a native of Leavenworth, Kan. “I continue to remain impressed with the NiOC and especially the leadership of its commander, staff Lt. Gen. Hassan. He continues to recognize the accomplishments of each of his Iraqi Security Forces as he fosters teamwork among them. The future of Iraq is a bright one.”

Part of the progress Ninewa has experienced came about through a strong partnership between the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, 3rd Federal Police, and the U.S. Army. Soldiers assigned to the 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., are currently partnered with 3rd IA Div. to train infantry battalions at the Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, part of an Iraqi Ground Forces Command initiative called Tadreeb al Shamil, Arabic for all-inclusive training.

During training cycles at GWTC, located south of Mosul, “Long Knife” Brigade Soldiers have trained more than 2,000 Iraqi soldiers in light infantry tactics since January.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Philip Crabtree

An Iraqi girl dances and sings with her classmates during a formal program celebrating progress in security at the Ninewa Operations Command, April 19, 2011.

The training lasts approximately one month and is designed to modernize the Iraqi units, making them a more capable force for security throughout the province.

Perkins praised the efforts of the ISF and offered an optimistic view of the future to Ninewa citizens attending the ceremony.

“Once you dedicate yourselves to owning Ninewa, there’s nothing the terrorists can do,” Perkins said. “We know progress will continue. The best days of Ninewa are yet to come.”



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Philip Crabtree

Maj. Gen. David Perkins, commanding general of U.S. Division-North and 4th Infantry Division, speaks to hundred of Iraqi residents in attendance at a program to mark security progress and a promising future for Ninewa Province. Established in 2008, the Ninewa Operations Command, which oversees Iraqi Army operations throughout the province, coordinated the event and also displayed more than 100 images depicting strides made in security over the past three years.



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Philip Crabtree, 4th AAB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-N

Iraqi residents from throughout Ninewa province tour a photo gallery exhibit hosted by the Ninewa Operations Command, April 19, 2011. During a formal ceremony prior to the exhibit, Iraqi and U.S. leaders celebrated security progress in Ninewa since 2008, when the operations center was created.



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

Spc. Arthur Moore, a cavalry scout from Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division observes Iraqi soldiers clear a room during training at Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, April 16, 2011. Moore, a native of San Diego, Calif., trained Iraqi soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division on urban operations tactics as part of Tadreeb al Shamil, Arabic for all inclusive training.

Cont'd from GWTC, Pg. 3

up inner and outer cordon searches properly while providing security," said Staff Sgt. Adam Christenson, a fire support non-commissioned officer assigned to Troop A. "Since they're mostly involved in urban operations within the cities around them, this training is perfect."



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Angel Washington, 4th AAB PAO

As long as the students retain the information and tactics learned at GWTC, they will greatly improve their army in the future, said Christenson, a native of Spirit Lake, Iowa.

Prior to each platoon's mission to assault the urban objective, platoon leaders reviewed operations orders with assistance from 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt. Soldiers.

Each squad learned how to provide security during movement and gathered information for the given target area.

As part of the urban operations training, instructors encompassed many of the drills learned in previous classes this month at GWTC.

The Iraqi jinood, Arabic for soldiers, learned proper techniques for room and building clearing and pulled security in an open field during the drills.

The jinood moved tactically through the fields, cautious not to give away their

position as platoon leaders from their units and American trainers watched the trainees move closer to their objective.

Building on knowledge gleaned from previous classes and practical exercises at GWTC, the Iraqi soldiers established a security cordon and eliminated the threat as they moved in and secured the "enemy" stronghold.

"The training we're providing is setting them up for success," said Spc. Arthur Moore, a Troop A scout from San Diego, Calif., currently on his second deployment. "They'll be able to (better) secure their country with all of the training."

"We need this training because when we go back to our area of operation, we may have to clear houses and provide inner and outer security," said 1st Lt. Farhad Mohammed, a platoon leader in the 1st Bn., 9th Bde., 3rd IA Div. "It is very good that my soldiers are receiving training from U.S. Soldiers."

The 3rd IA Div. soldiers are scheduled to conclude the Tadreeb al Shamil training course later this month with a battalion level live fire exercise at GWTC to showcase their newly learned skills before graduating and returning to their respective bases across Ninewa province.

Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, stack outside a mock house during a cordon and search class at Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, April 16, 2011. U.S. Soldiers assigned to Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, trained Iraqi soldiers on urban operations including room clearing procedures and providing inner and outer security.

Live fire exercise prepares Iraqi Army soldiers for Lion's Leap

Public Affairs Office
4th Infantry Division, U.S. Division-North

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – Leaders and soldiers of 12th Iraqi Army Division conducted a final live fire exercise in preparation for Operation Lion's Leap, April 19.

Operation Lion's Leap, a full-spectrum training demonstration showcasing the Iraqi military's combat prowess, is scheduled to take place at Mahgoor Training Site in Kirkuk province, Iraq, later this month.

The successful live fire rehearsal at Mahgoor Training Site integrated maneuver elements from 12th IA Div.'s Commando Battalion, Iraqi Special Operations Forces and fire support from 47th Brigade's 120mm mortars as well as Iraqi Air Force support from Mi-17 helicopters.

Training for the operation started months ago as several agencies within the Iraqi government brought together a plan to demonstrate the Iraqi Security Forces' independence and readiness to take full responsibility for the security mission in Iraq.

"The 1st AATF Soldiers have done an excellent job advising, training, and assisting the 12th IA," said Capt. William Viegas, maneuver planner, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division. "But this is really the 12th IA's plan and they took ownership of it right from the start."

Leaders of 12th IA Div. created a scheme of maneuver that coordinated ground, air and artillery assets to complete the simulated hostage scenario, said Viegas, a St. Louis, Mo. native.

The final exercise at Mahgoor represents the third phase in the four-tiered training operation of Lion's Leap, which incorporates multiple IA assets to demonstrate tactical expertise and maneuver capabilities while maintaining communications with and receiving instructions from commanders.

"The 12th IA is the youngest division in the Iraqi Army," said Viegas. "This exercise gives them a chance to showcase how capable of a force they really are."

Their performance at the live fire exercise was indeed impressive, he said.

Viegas said by conducting Operation Lion's Leap, Iraqi military leaders hope to prove to the Iraqi people that national security forces have the knowledge and skill to maintain the security of the country against external military threats.

The scenario for Operation Lion's Leap requires 12th IA Div. soldiers to respond to violent extremists taking over the village of Mahgoor.

Division leaders demonstrated their planning ability to observers by briefing a full operations order explaining their plan to retake the village, said Staff Brig. Gen. Ayad, chief of staff for 12th IA Div.

"During the train up for Lion's Leap, the IA has demonstrated an enduring capability," said Viegas. "I have every confidence it will be conducted safely and effectively."

Commando Bn. Troops seized a series of three objectives during the live fire rehearsal. Mortars from 47th Brigade suppressed the enemy on the first two objectives before the commandos moved in to assault.

At the final objective, commandos determined that hostages had been taken by the enemy. At that point, the commandos called to Iraqi Special Operations Forces to fly in and air assault out of Mi-17 helicopters to liberate the hostages and neutralize the enemy.

Division leaders were also required to resupply their units with ammunition and evacuate casualties off the battlefield.

During the rehearsal, Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div., advised the Iraqi units as observer-controllers, but the U.S. role in the final exercise will be more limited, said Staff Sgt. Derek Ross, squad leader, Company B.

"In the past we did a lot of hands on work with the Iraqis," said Ross who observed the Iraqi mortar men during the exercise. "Right now we are sitting back and they are taking charge of everything while we just perform safety checks."

Ross said after watching the Iraqis, he is confident the 12th IA Div. and the ISF are ready, willing and able to take responsibility for the mission of protecting the people of Iraq.

"We are ready, we have a plan, and it is a good one," said Lt. Col. Abdul-Khalic, a staff officer for 12th IA Div. as he observed the action during the live fire rehearsal. "There may be challenges, but as a unit, we are ready for this."



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Chad Ashe, USD-N PAO

Iraqi Army soldiers from 12th IA Division communicate and move while laying down suppressive fire on an objective for the multi-lateral exercise Lion's Leap at the Mahgoor Training Site, April 19, 2011. During the exercise, Iraqi Security Forces aim to display their ability to increase defense capability and security for the sovereign state of Iraq.

‘On Time’ Battalion trains IA commanders on future planning

Sgt. David Strayer
109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
U.S. Division-North Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Mobile Training Team Soldiers from 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division met with staff officers from 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division to oversee the capstone event of the IA officers’ Leadership Training Program at Joint Base Balad, April 17.

As the final exercise of the course, the MTT tasked Iraqi officers with independently developing a 12-month training outline for subordinate units to rotate through the nearby Kirkush Military Training Base.

“The whole purpose of the Leadership Training Program is to train up the IA division and brigade level staff officers to instill in them the concepts of long-term training management,” said Capt. Joe Mobbley, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div. “We often forget how great of a training doctrine that we have in the U.S. Army; we are trying to impart these concepts upon the IA staff officers so that they can take a realistic look at their units to assess what training is needed, then form an appropriate training plan to be able to execute.”

Since the initiative to train IA units in small unit tactics began in 2007, the IA has received sustained training in areas such as weapons proficiency, small unit maneuvering and counter-insurgency operations.

“This isn’t us teaching them to kick in doors, conduct building raids, or weapons training,” said Maj. Robert Paul, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Bn., 11th FA Regt. “They know those things and are proficient; they have been training those things for nearly five years. This training is for the field grade officers—to teach them ways that they can manage and plan the logistics and training for their units more effectively.”

Paul, the LTP’s senior trainer, said while the IA already had its own methods in place for training management and planning, Iraqi and U.S. leaders cooperated to streamline the process to meet new logistical demands of increased training at KMTB.

KMTB, a massive training environment in Diyala province, accommodates battalion-sized IA units in all areas of tactical training, including a battalion live fire training exercise which takes place at the end of each training cycle.

“The units that have gone through KMTB have shown nothing but proficiency in their soldiering tasks, and a desire to work harder in the areas where they needed improvement; so we knew that the actual field training was going off without a hitch,” said Paul. “What we noticed was that there would be shortages in supplies such as training rounds, uniforms, and vehicle repair parts.”

That is when MTT leaders realized that there were two sides to the coin, said Paul. Iraqi leaders excelled at tactical training, but needed improvement in planning, management and logistics.

“In response to some of the logistical deficiencies we saw, we set up the Leadership Training Program for field grade staff officers that work at the brigade or division level,” said Maj. Andrew Sherman, an LTP logistics trainer from HHB, 2nd Bn., 11th FA Regt.

“The training we provide these officers is geared toward long range training plans, how to plan for twelve months into the future, and backwards plan for training cycles and logistical needs such as ammo, food, transportation, and identifying what tasks their troops need to be trained up on,” said Sherman. “This is crucial for the success of any army.”

As the Iraqi Army continues to train during Operation New Dawn, leaders are refocusing the army’s mission toward conventional warfare and national defense, while leaving internal counterinsurgency operations to Iraq’s police forces.

“The IA Division is currently undergoing modernization, changing from a light infantry division to a modern, mechanized infantry division,” said Mobbley. “They will be shifting their mission set from the counterinsurgency and internal concerns to a mission set of a conventional army: protecting the people, the borders, and the infrastructure of Iraq; this training will greatly aid the command level with the planning and logistics that goes into such a significant transformation.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Strayer, 109th MPAD, USD-N PAO

Staff officers from 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division listen as Capt. Joe Mobbley, deputy team chief of the Leadership Training Program, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, gives a final briefing before the IA staffers begin the capstone exercise for their LTP training cycle in Diyala province, Iraq, April 17, 2011. After the staff officers trained in logistics, intelligence, and training management, class leaders tasked the officers with forming a functional 12-month training plan that will be used to prepare IA units for a future training rotation at the Kirkush Military Training Base.

'Long Knife' Soldier named USD-N Soldier of the Quarter

Spc. Terence Ewings
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ – Pfc. Nicholas Mayora, an armor crewman assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, recently earned the honor of U.S. Division-North Soldier of the Quarter.

Mayora, a resident of Dallas, bested other service members from northern Iraq during a board competition that tested the warrior's military knowledge, professionalism and U.S. Army values.

"It's great to see the future of

the Army in a young Soldier like Pfc. Mayora," said Command Sgt. Maj. Henry Griffith, senior enlisted advisor for the 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt. "His motivation and drive has gotten him there to be the division Soldier of the Quarter."

Originally from Nairobi, Kenya, Mayora assists his platoon at Patrol Base 6 by training and providing security with Iraqi soldiers assigned to 2nd Iraqi Army Division soldiers.

U.S. Soldiers at the remote installation advise, train and assist an Iraqi platoon responsible for maintaining security operations for their base and nearby checkpoints.

"Mayora is willing to go above and beyond what is ex-

pected out of the average Soldier," said Griffith, a native of Washington, D.C. "He's a great example for other Soldiers to emulate."

In preparation for the U.S. Division-North Soldier of the Quarter Board and competing against his junior enlisted peers, Mayora outwitted his fellow 4th AAB troopers in battalion and brigade Soldier of the Month boards.

With the help of his senior enlisted leaders from Company C, Mayora set out to exemplify what it means to be a U.S. Army Soldier.

"Mayora is just one of those Soldiers that you're lucky to have the opportunity to work with," said Sgt. 1st Class Dallas

Parkerson, platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon, Company C.

Parkerson helped Mayora prepare for the academic contests by testing him and conducting mock boards.

"He's a good Soldier," said Parkerson, a native of Indianola, Miss. "He's very dedicated, learns quickly and is able to perform multiple duties here at the patrol base when we need him."

In addition to his routine duties at Patrol Base 6, which include pulling guard duty in a tower or at the entry control point, Mayora also goes on mounted and dismounted patrols with Iraqi soldiers.

During his "down time," Mayora studied for the academic boards with the intent of successfully representing his unit.

"It feels good to have achieved something like this, and at the same time learn a lot about the U.S. Army," said Mayora.

In late 2009, after earning an Associate's Degree in General Science, Mayora enlisted to serve in the U.S. Army with the goal of becoming a leader.

Even though he has only been in the military for 18 months, Mayora believes attaining this kind of knowledge will help him throughout his military career.

"All of my noncommissioned officers and leaders helped me study and prepare me for this, and this is a great achievement that I'm proud of," said Mayora.

Mayora said he plans to continue his undergraduate studies in security and intelligence, attend Officer Candidate School and retire as a general officer in the U.S. Army.



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

Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dailey, senior enlisted leader of U.S. Division-North and 4th Infantry Division, congratulates Pfc. Nicholas Mayora on being named U.S. Division-North Soldier of the Quarter during a ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, March 29, 2011.



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Kyle Miller, 2nd Sqdn., 14th Cav. Regt., 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div.

COS Cobra receives aerial assets, ensures timely medical care for troops

Sgt. David Strayer
109th MPAD
U.S. Division-North Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE COBRA, Iraq – The golden hour—it is known to service members and military medical personnel as the window in which care must be provided to a wounded individual requiring urgent surgical attention.

To ensure that service members' medical needs are met at remote locations across U.S. Division-North, aviation personnel reallocated two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to Contingency Operating Site Cobra, Iraq, April 16.

Elements of 40th Combat Aviation Brigade make up the team of air crews, medics, and maintenance personnel reassigned to ensure timely medical care for injured service members.

"These assets have been moved to make sure we maintain coverage of Soldiers located at (COS) Cobra and all of the check points within the combined security mechanism in Diyala province," said Maj. Anthony Borowski, Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division.

The air assets realigned to Cobra came about as a result of the Secretary of Defense's plan to ensure critically injured service members can be transported to surgical care within a one hour timeframe from anywhere in Iraq, said Lt. Col. Mary Krueger, U.S. Division-North Surgeon.

In the past, medical personnel on the ground at the remote locations mitigated any possible time delays with on-site service for wounded personnel.

"We have medical teams, and trained combat lifesavers in numerous locations in Iraq, which helped increase the survivability for troops with care until air assets could arrive to transport them to follow-on care," said Krueger.

More than 540 U.S. service members currently occupy the operational environment in Diyala province, where COS Cobra and several CCPs are located.

In the past, if a U.S. service member's point of injury occurred in the vicinity of COS Cobra, air medical evacuation assets had to be dispatched from and return to Joint Base Balad, where the theater hospital is located.

This process took slightly longer than

A UH-60 Black Hawk MEDEVAC helicopter lands at Contingency Operating Site Cobra, Iraq, April 16, 2011. Aviation personnel reallocated two MEDEVAC helicopters to COS Cobra to ensure timely medical assets are available to service members at remote locations across U.S. Division-North.

the 'golden' one hour required for service members to receive care for injuries requiring urgent surgical attention.

"The arrival of the MEDEVAC crews greatly increases force protection for our Soldiers in northeastern Diyala province," said Lt. Col. Joel Miller, Squadron Executive Officer for 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

"This has a significant impact for the area; it provides medical care directly to the service members in Diyala province that were previously just outside the window of coverage for the golden hour," Borowski added. "Now we can quickly retrieve these patients, place them in our aircraft and provide in-route medical care all the way to Joint Base Balad until they get to the theater hospital."

Borowski, who serves as the evacuation planner for U.S. Division-North, added that having the helicopters located at COS Cobra instead of JBB is a positive situation which brings the helicopters closer to Soldiers in remote locations.

"The moving of the medical air assets to Cobra essentially cuts the amount of time it takes for an air MEDEVAC to get a casualty to a facility where they can receive appropriate medical care in half," said Sgt. 1st Class Edgardo Hernandez, the current flight operations noncommissioned officer in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd AAB, 25th Inf. Div.

The reallocation of MEDEVAC helicopters to forward bases plays a crucial role in ensuring all U.S. Division-North Soldiers remain under the one hour umbrella of coverage for air transportation to the nearest medical facility, especially at this stage of Operation New Dawn, said Borowski.

Borowski said even as bases transition to Iraqi control and U.S. Soldiers move throughout U.S. Division-North, MEDEVAC crews will always be ready to provide care.

"This move plays a pivotal role in the broader scope of things," he said. "It is a significant part of the withdrawal process from Iraq."

A weekend of 'Defiance'

Soldiers of 1st BSTB celebrate mid tour

Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – “I will never leave a fallen comrade”—it is a statement out of the Soldiers Creed, the Warrior Ethos, and a declaration Soldiers live by.

“Defiant” Soldiers of 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., demonstrated their camaraderie while competing in an event-filled weekend in celebration of 1st AATF Soldiers reaching the mid-deployment mark in support of Operation New Dawn at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, April 16-17.

Although each company strived to be crowned “Defiant’s King,” bringing the companies together played an essential role in the weekend’s events.

“It was great to get out of the office and come out with my Soldiers on this beautiful day,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Tonya Walker, senior enlisted leader of 1st BSTB.

Because BSTB is a support battalion, many Soldiers are attached to different companies or battalions, and some are stationed at completely different operating locations, Walker explained.

“I spoke with a Soldier today who said he hadn’t seen his fellow BSTB Soldiers in the last three months, and this weekend was great because he got to see and talk with his friends and leaders,” said Walker.

Soldiers started the weekend off with a 13.5 mile relay, consisting of nine-Soldier teams running 1.5 miles per Soldier.

As the final team approached the finish, a faded red flag waved in the distance.

The closer the team came to the finish line, the more vivid



1st Infantry Division

Soldiers of Company C, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division use all of their strength to pull their opponents into a pool of mud during a morale building weekend marking the halfway point of their deployment at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, April 17, 2011.

the red flag seemed.

Combat engineers of team “Chaos”, Company C, 1st BSTB, sprinted across the finish line with their flag held high, signifying the importance of never leaving a comrade behind.

In addition to individual events, all four companies of BSTB put their teamwork to the test during ultimate football, volleyball and tug-a-war.

“My favorite event was ultimate football,” said Spc. Jeren Fullmore, a military policeman from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st BSTB. “I feel like out of all the events that we have done that event used the most teamwork, and strategy, in order to win.”

Fullmore said the organized morale weekend served as a great way to get away from the daily stresses that he and other Soldiers deal with on a day-to-day basis.

“It was great to see the unity this weekend brought for all of the companies, and it was even better to see how much it united the battalion as a whole,” said Fullmore.

As the Sunday sun lowered in the sky, the weekend extravaganza closed with a grueling contest of tug-o-war—a true team challenge to end the two-

day morale-building event.

Teams of eight pulling each side of the rope dug their feet into the ground and gripped the rope, anticipating the start. A flag tied to the middle dipped into the deep pit of mud and water while the teams adjusted their positions.

When the whistle blew, instantaneous determination and strain painted the Soldiers faces and grunts grew louder as the teams pulled back and forth. The flag shifted from left to right as each team endured the ongoing battle of determination to see which of them proved stronger.

As team Chaos slid further toward the pit, one member began yelling “Heave- Ho” to motivate his teammates. In unison, the team began moving the rope forward saying, “Heave!” and then together, using all their strength, pulled the rope back yelling, “Ho!”

The rest of the BSTB Soldiers watching became inspired by the team’s efforts, and joined them in the chant. Together, team Chaos and the supporters motivating them pulled their way to victory, leaving the opposing team in a pool of mud, and the engineers crowned as “Defiant’s Kings.”



Team “Chaos,” Company C, 1st Brigade Special Troop Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, run as a team during the last leg of a 13.5 mile relay race during a weekend of organized fun at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, April 17, 2011. BSTB Soldiers used the morale building weekend to mark the half way point of their deployment in support of Operation New Dawn.



Chaplain's Corner: Reaching out for help

Chaplain (Maj.) Paul Foreman
Division Family Life Chaplain

In her book *Night Falls Fast*, psychologist Kay Redfield Jamison said, "Suicide carries in its aftermath a level of confusion and devastation that is, for the most part, beyond description."

Suicide raises heart-rending questions. Why did this happen? Why didn't we see it coming? Could we have done anything to prevent it? How can we go on?

For the suicide victim, the end has come, but for those left behind, the devastation has just begun. There may be one primary victim, but as a bomb thrown into a crowd of people, the collateral damage can be massive.

"Suicide doesn't end pain. It only lays it on the broken shoulders of the survivors," said Anne-Grace-Scheinin.

I do not claim to be an expert on the topic of suicide, but one of the reoccurring elements in many suicide attempts or completions seems to be that of relationships. Something happens relationally that throws people off kilter. Occasionally something in a person's past gets triggered in a current relationship that reveals a crack in their foundation. Sometimes unresolved traumas of childhood get revisited in the trauma of war. Relational resiliency gets tested in incredibly difficult ways causing people to lose perspective and hope.

Suicide expert Dr. Thomas Joiner proposes a theory that there are three key motivational aspects which contribute to suicide: a sense of being a burden to others, a profound sense of loneliness, alienation and isolation, and a sense of fearlessness.

All three of these motivations or preconditions must be in place before someone will attempt suicide. So long as a person remains fearful of death and the actions and consequences of the activities that will create death, the actual act of suicide is unlikely. Joiner stated that if you have to have all three conditions to have a completed suicide, it implies that if you prevent just one of the three, you can prevent a suicide from taking place.

This is an interesting theory. But notice that two out of three of his causes relate to relationships.

Let's face it, relationships are not always easy. Relationships take work. And just as no one gives you a manual on how to raise your new born baby, not many of us had relationship skills training growing up. We do what we do and learn the hard way most of the time.

Military relationships and marriages are besieged by stressors. Soldiers must cope with extended absences, uncertainty about the future, the regular threat of death, and the emotional and relational challenges of re-entering society after deployment. These factors take a toll on even the healthiest and

most resilient relationship. Certain military jobs are even more prone to the harsh realities of life. Emergency medical folks see more horrific things in a week than most of us see in a lifetime. Although they are trained professionals, they are also normal men and women, husbands and wives, who cannot help but be impacted by what they see and do.

The good news is that good leadership plays the predominant role in lowering suicide. What are some things leaders can do? Leaders can and should hold their Soldiers accountable. When you are doing your monthly or quarterly counseling, include this question in your time with them: "How are you doing?" And then ask it again... "Really, how are you doing?"

Knowing your Soldier's spouse's first name or the names of their kids says to them that you care. Knowing your Soldier's talents, interests, and passions shows you are interested in them as a person.

As leaders, we are good at finding where our Soldiers are weak, but we need to encourage their strengths as well. Leaders should continually reverse the stigma that is still out there of getting help whether it is for finances, physical, emotion, social or spiritual problems. Do not be afraid to refer your Soldier to another leader who may have more life skills than you in working on a particular problem.

Starting this Friday, we will be offering weekly training on the topics of relationships, marriage and parenting. Think of it as a PMCS for your relationships if you will. If you are interested or know someone who might be, check out the information below and come join us.

Dinner and a Video: Relationships, Marriage and Parenting

***Friday nights at 19:05 in the
North DFAC side room.***

Come join us every Friday while you eat. Explore the difficult subjects of relationships, marriage and parenting. Become empowered to respond to your wives, husbands, children, girlfriends and boyfriends with the love, compassion, and wisdom they deserve. Think about how these subjects could help you as we look forward to redeploying and reintegrating into family and civilian settings.

**For more information, contact the
Division Family Life Chaplain
Chaplain (Maj.) Paul Foreman
(SVOIP) 676-0297 (DSN) 845-6658**

29 April	Laugh your way to a better relationship (His brain... her brain)
6 May	The 5 love languages
13 May	The #1 key to incredible sex
20 May	Straight talk on parenting
27 May	Sacred marriage... What is it? Why is it important?
3 June	Making marriage last a lifetime
10 June	Love and respect (Her need and his need)
17 June	How to marry well (Choosing a mate to marry)

'The Man I Want to Be'

Country star Chris Young is inspired by Soldiers

Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD-N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – A crowd filled with Soldiers, Airmen, and civilians stood and applauded as country music star Chris Young and his band took the stage at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, April 18.

As the crowd's cheers fell quiet, Young scanned the audience from left to right, grabbed the microphone and said, "We love you and we love every-

"I came here in 2009, and I've been waiting to get the chance to come back and play for the heroes of our nation."

— Chris Young

thing you do for us and our country."

Whistles and cheers filled the night sky, when Young kicked off the show with one of his number one hit songs, "Be Gettin' You Home (The Black Dress Song)."

The country star said he was excited to return to Iraq to play for the service members deployed in support of Operation New Dawn.

"I came here in 2009, and I've been waiting to get the chance to come back and play for the heroes of our nation," said Chris. "Coming here and playing for all of you is my way of giving back and saying thank you for everything that you do."

As the concert rolled on, audience members moved from their seats to the front of the stage, singing in unison with the lyrics of his hit single, "Voices" while swaying to the beat.

"The concert was great!" said Spc. Walt Anderson, 304th

U.S. Division-North tactical product development attachment, attached to 1st Advise and Assist Task Force. "It was awesome to get away from the daily stress we endure out here. When I closed my eyes and let myself get lost in the music, for just a moment I felt like I was home."

The concert brought back vivid memories of carefree fun and laughter with his friends and family back home, noted Anderson, a Roseville, Calif. Native.

Young finished up the performance with another hit song, "The Man I Want to be," dedicating it to all service members, explaining to the crowd that he wished he could be as strong as the men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the concert came to a close, Young set aside the microphone to speak to the audience standing in front of him on a more personal level.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Alyxandra McChesney

Country star Chris Young laughs while performing his hit song "Voices" for U.S. Division-North service members deployed in support of Operation New Dawn at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq April 18, 2011.

"Words can't explain how happy I am to be here, and how much I appreciate all of the things you do. Again, I want to say thanks for everything."

Hey Doc: *What can I do about my bad breath?*

Maj. Kendall Mower
Officer in Charge
Speicher Dental Clinic

"Hey Doc: *Why is it when I speak to people, they back away from me? Can you help?*" – Signed "Sgt. Hal I. Tosis"

Dear "Sgt. Tosis,"

Although there may be many reasons people are backing away from you, one of the most common reasons is halitosis, also known as bad breath. Bad breath can be caused by the foods we eat, poor oral hygiene, smoking, obesity, or alcohol consumption.

If you are concerned about bad breath, find a trusted friend or significant other and

ask them. If they agree with your suspicion, there are a few things you can consider changing.

When you eat foods that contain strong odors such as garlic, fish or onions, the odor can stay behind even after you finish your meal. Mints, gum and mouthwash can all help conceal the odors, but you may want to give up the pickled herring before your next big date.

Poor oral hygiene is another major contributor. The mouth has over 300 different types of bacteria and other organisms that live there. Many of those produce smells that are very unpleasant. When you don't brush or floss your teeth regularly, you are encouraging them to stick around and produce their nasty smelling by-products. Be-

lieve it or not, your tongue is also a major location where bacteria live. Many of the bacteria that live on the tongue can produce some very nasty smells. Try brushing your tongue as well as your teeth—or use a tongue scraper. Your friends will thank you.

People also wonder why they get "morning breath." During the night, your mouth becomes very dry, less active, and the bacteria are exposed to less oxygen when you sleep. This allows them an optimal environment to "do their thing."

Sgt. Hal, I hope this little bit of knowledge helps you get closer to your friends.

Keep your breath fresh, Task Force Ironhorse! And keep those questions coming.