

# T-PATCH

United States Division-South Weekly Newsletter



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Contingency Operating Base Basra, Iraq

April 25, 2011

By Sgt. Thomas Kappus  
305th MPAD, USD-S PAO

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA, Iraq –** The Adjutant General of Texas, Maj. Gen. John F. Nichols, visited the 36th Inf. Div. here for a two-day visit April 14 and 15.

“My number one priority is taking care of Soldiers and Airmen,” the Adjutant General said during a breakfast at the Arrowhead Dining Facility on the first day of his visit. After the breakfast he fielded questions from the Soldiers on a variety of topics, mostly concerning what was going on back home in Texas. He assured them that the 36th Inf. Div. was doing an outstanding job carrying out their mission here in Iraq.

Nichols became the 51st Adjutant General of Texas on February 17. He is directly responsible for the readiness of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, and Texas State Guard to the Governor of Texas for state operations, and to the President for federal operations.

“I was pleased that Major General Nichols and Command Sergeant Major Broyles came to see our deployed headquarters. It’s good to see how seriously our new adjutant general takes his responsibilities as he takes on the difficult task of leading a military force that is deployed in multiple theaters of operation,” said Col. John Stasney, Effects Coordinator, 36th Inf. Div.

Nichols’ visit included a guided tour of COB Basra, a stop at the 36th Inf. Div. Special Troops Battalion Headquarters, to see how the base runs operations day to day, a visit to one of the motor pools, and a circulation through the division headquarters to shake hands with all the Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen who keep U.S. Div.-South running during Operation New Dawn.

Nichols also had an opportunity to meet and share a traditional Iraqi meal with Brig. Gen. Sami Al Tamimy, Basra Airfield Commander, at the Iraqi Air Force Dining Facility.

Accompanying the Adjutant General was former Command Sergeant Major of the Texas Army National Guard, Command Sgt. Maj. Jim L. Broyles. He found time during the visit to conduct noncommissioned officer professional development and to respond to questions from the senior NCOs.

After a whirlwind tour of office calls, coin ceremonies, promotions and awards, the Adjutant General and the command sergeant major said their farewells and started their journey back to Texas. ♥



**Adjutant General  
visits troops in  
IRAQ**

Photo by Master Sgt. Kenneth Walker

# THE REPLACEMENTS

## California Guard unit takes over medical operations

*Capt. Donald Nodora, 297th Area Support Medical Company commander, shakes hands with a Soldier from the 162nd ASMC, Texas National Guard, after a transition of authority ceremony between the 162nd and the 297th.*



Photo Illustration by Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin

**By Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin**  
305th MPAD, USD-S PAO

### CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA, Iraq

- The sky was clear and the sun was shining bright upon the Soldiers of the 162nd Area Support Medical Company, Texas Army National Guard. Their containers were sealed, duffle bags packed, and they were anxiously awaiting the moment that every deployed Soldier looks forward to: the day to redeploy home.

The commander for 297th Area Support Medical Company, a National Guard unit out of San Mateo, Calif., assumed command of the Medical Treatment Facility on Contingency Operating Base Basra from the commander of the 162nd ASMC in a Transfer of Authority ceremony held at the COB Basra Chapel, April 9.

Capt. Donald Nodora assumed responsibility of the medical facility

from Maj. Scott Valley, marking the end of a successful deployment for the Texas unit and the start of the first overseas deployment for the California Guardsmen.

In his closing remarks, Valley spoke of how the different supporting elements made their missions and overall deployment successful.

"Your guidance, assistance and training developed my medics, developed our leadership to a much higher level that we would have ever been able to do internally," Valley said as he recognized the different unit representatives in the crowd.

But through it all, it was his troops who made the deployment worthwhile, Valley said.

"Conducting split-based operations is not easy," Valley told his troops. "Without your hard work and selfless determination, the many successes we achieved would not have been possible. I know that you have performed exceptional as well at every location we have been."

"I am confident that the Basra MTF and the specialty team clinic are in great hands and you are ready to continue the mission," Valley said.

When it was time to address the crowd, Nodora, of Hayward, Calif., thanked the outgoing commander and members of his unit for the smooth, two-week transition period.

Nodora had one comment to leave the Texas Guardsmen with, "Ya'll be safe now, you here?" he said in a thick southern accent, to much laughter from the crowd.

"Your Soldiers have taught us the mission well," Nodora said to Valley. "I am absolutely confident that we are ready for what lies ahead of us. And we stand ready to take full ownership of the mission."

The California unit is scheduled to continue conducting medical operations on COB Basra as well as take part in the unique transition of handing the military base over to the State Department later this year. ▼



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# Soldier receives fire department recognition

By Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin  
305th MPAD, USD-S PAO

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA, Iraq** – A National Guard Soldier with the 162nd Area Medical Support Company based out of Camp Bullis, Texas, received an outstanding civilian award from a privately contracted fire and emergency services company on Contingency Operating Base Basra earlier this month.

Sallyport Global Holdings firefighters on COB Basra awarded 1st Lt. Earl Yevak of Hampton, Va., with the COB Basra Fire Warden award in front of the Medical Troop Facility on post, April 9, in recognition for his outstanding service and commitment to the fire department.

Yevak, a camp manager for Bradey Lines, said he deserved the award no more than any of the Soldiers in his unit.

“Everything I was doing was just what we are supposed to do as camp managers,” Yevak said, “because it is just a part of my job.”

“Those guys are really hard workers,” Yevak said. “They are always very proactive in getting stuff done. They really put all the work into it. So I didn’t feel that it was something that was for me. I was just the face of the mayor’s cell.”

Justin Relkin, a Sallyport fire inspector of Phoenix, Ariz., recalled the first time he met Yevak. Relkin said Yevak displayed qualities that made him stand out among his peers.

“He asked so many questions about the fire warden program,” said Relkin, a prior service Air Force member.

As the fire warden for his camp, Yevak was always

**“He really took it personal with his troops in keeping them safe. I could tell that all his troops could depend on him if they were looking for somebody to help lead the way.”**

- Justin Relkin,  
*Sallyport fire inspector*

prompt and diligent with his work, Relkin said.

“He has been on time with all of his USF-I checklists and his monthly inspections,” Relkin said, mentioning a few of Yevak’s many duties.

Relkin described Yevak as being very “professional”, “honest”, and “down to earth.”

“He really took it personal with his troops in keeping them safe,” Relkin added. “I could tell that all his troops could depend on him if they were looking for somebody to help lead the way.”

Clifton Hill of Dallas, Texas, another fire inspector on the COB, said the thing that made Yevak stand out was his initiative to transform the “marshmallow building”, a name some Soldiers knew for a rundown, abandoned facility, into a new living area for the 297th ASMC, the unit that would replace Yevak’s unit.

“For life safety issues, Yevak went above and beyond so that everything was good for his Soldiers,” Hill said.

This was the second time the fire department gave this award in a four-year span, said Richard Galtieri, assistant chief of operations for fire and emergency services on COB Basra.

“Yevak was very involved and put his heart into [his work],” Galtieri said.

Yevak said he plans on returning home to do social work for the active-duty military. He will miss the many Iraqi and Ugandan friends he has made during this deployment.

“I have learned a lot,” Yevak said about this deployment. “I will definitely take these experiences with me... and you know anything I do in the future, it will definitely help me.”



First Lt. Earl Yevak, a camp manager and fire warden to Sallyport Global Holdings fire department on Contingency Operating Base Basra, shakes hands with Clifton Hill, a fire inspector for Sallyport, outside the Medical Troop Facility on COB Basra, April 9, moments after receiving an outstanding fire warden award. Yevak, a Texas National Guard Soldier with the 162nd Area Support Medical Company and a native of Hampton, Va., is the second Soldier to receive this award in almost four years.

Photo by Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin



Photo by Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin

## ARMY CHAPLAINS — MEET — IRAQI BISHOP

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joe Combs, the division chaplain for U.S. Division-South, shakes hands with Monsignor Imad Aziz al-Banna, the Chaldean bishop of southern Iraq, at a chapel on Contingency Operating Base Basra, April 20. Combs, along with Bishop (Col.) Richard Spencer, a U.S. Army Reserve chaplain and a bishop to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops for the Archdiocese for the Military Service, met with Imad to discuss ways U.S. forces can assist Imad with some religious projects.

By Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin  
305th MPAD, USD-S PAO

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA, Iraq** – For the past several weeks, Roman Catholics around the world have been observing the Lenten season. With more than a billion followers, the time calls for fasting, reconciliation and prayer. Moving into Holy Week, which leads to Easter Sunday, two religious leaders from different sides of the world met for the first time on Contingency Operating Base Basra.

Bishop (Col.) Richard Spencer, a U.S. Army Reserve chaplain and a bishop to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops for the Archdiocese for the Military Service, met with Monsignor Imad Aziz al-Banna, Chaldean bishop of southern Iraq, at the Basra Chapel, April 20.

To begin his visit, Imad met with Spencer in prayer in the sacristy before going to lunch.

While at lunch, Imad talked about some of the social impacts Christians in Basrah have faced since 2003, claiming that the number of Christian families in southern Iraq went from around 1,050 in 2003 to around 400 families today, he said. Many families have left because of discrimination and fear of persecution.

Some have migrated up to northern parts of Iraq, while others have left the country in hope of finding jobs.

“We wanted to make sure that all the Christians feel safe in Basrah, especially during this holy week,” said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joe Combs, the division chaplain for U.S. Division-South.

Imad briefed the group on some of the recent progress his church has made in Basrah.

“We have started a kindergarten,” Imad said. “It is not only for Christians.”

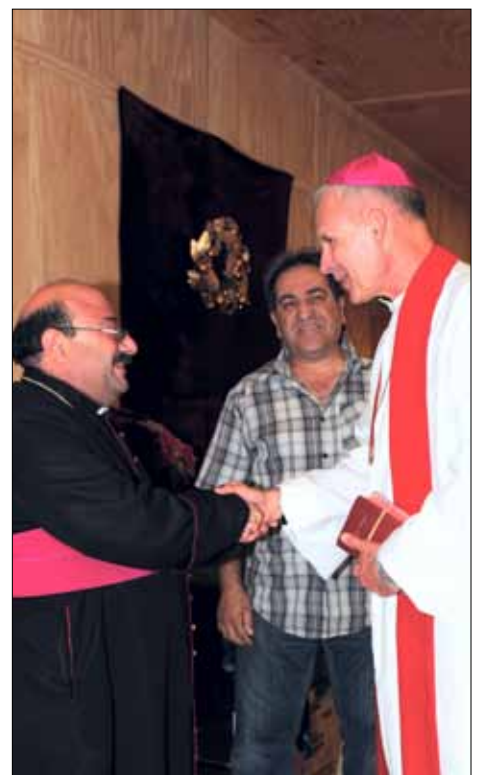
His church runs two kindergartens, which tends to about 400 children, Imad said. The students come from different religions and are between the ages of three and five. A sister church runs a school with about the same number of children and a protestant church facilitates around 170 young people.

Spencer, Combs and Imad talked about different ways of partnering to assist the four schools.

“We are trying to teach the kids how to speak English,” Imad said. “We could use some English books.”

Before departing, the Soldiers shared a few gifts with the Chaldean bishop.

“I will continue to pray for all of you [Soldiers] during this Holy Week,” Imad said. “God willing, we will meet again.”



Bishop Richard Spencer (right), a U.S. Army Reserve chaplain and a bishop to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops for the Archdiocese for the Military Service, meets with Monsignor Imad Aziz al-Banna, the Chaldean bishop of southern Iraq, for the first time at a chapel on Contingency Operating Base Basra, April 20.

Photo by Sgt. James Kennedy Benjamin



## CHOW

Midnight • 0000 - 0130

Breakfast • 0530 - 0830

Lunch • 1130 - 1400

Dinner • 1700 - 2000

**We may need YOU  
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buddy's life.**

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Clinic Lab Department.  
Call Monday to Saturday for a  
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Walk-ins welcome!

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**SIPR: 241-2426**

*"Give blood, and give the gift of life."*

## Chaplain Programs and Religious Services

### Holy Joe's Coffee

(Coffee Bar and Fellowship)

Monday - Saturday

0600 - 2200

william.culver@iraq.centcom.mil

### Ladies of the Rosary

Tuesday at 2000

COB Basra Chapel

barbara.reilly@iraq.centcom.mil

### Mid-Week Prayer with Chaplain Mays

Wednesday at 1200

COB Basra Chapel

wayne.mays@iraq.centcom.mil

### Basra Chapel Bible Studies

Thursday

1900 - New Believers Bible Study

2000 - Bible Study Classes

### Protestant Services

**Sunday**

COB Basra Chapel

1000 - Contemporary Service

1130 - Traditional Service

1400 - Gospel Service

1700 - Liturgical Protestant

### The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS)

**Sunday**

Old PX Building

0900 - Sacrament Service

### Roman Catholic

**Saturday**

COB Basra Chapel

2000 - Rosary/Vigil Service

**Sunday**

COB Basra Chapel

0830 - Catholic Service

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Having family issues  
and need to seek legal  
advice? Need a will or a  
power of attorney? The  
Legal Assistance office  
is here to help you.

Monday-Saturday, 0800-1700

\*Closed Mondays 1030-1300

Bldg #26G03

COB Basra, Iraq

*"A legal  
assistance  
attorney is the  
SOLDIER'S  
attorney; we  
represent  
YOU, not your  
command!"*



### Spc. Genevieve Plaza

Paralegal Specialist

858.4098 (VOIP)

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genevieve.plaza@iraq.centcom.mil

Need  
**Public  
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support?



Go to the home page on the  
**SIPR** computer web portal.  
Click "Effects" on the drop-down  
menu, and scroll down to Public  
Affairs. Then click on the PAO  
Asset Request button! Follow the  
directions and submit your request.

## MAIL CALL!

**Outbound certified/official mail:**

1000 - 2000

**Mail pick up hours:**

Mail handlers:

1000 - 2000

1400 - 1600

Individual pick up:

1000 - 2000

## 36th Infantry Division Equal Opportunity Advisors Cell

Sgt. 1st Class  
Joe Lawton



"Contact us if you are the victim  
of an Equal Opportunity or Sexual  
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**COB Basra  
Resiliency Campus  
858-4672**

joseph.lawton@iraq.centcom.mil

lisa.lerma@iraq.centcom.mil

Anonymous Tip Hotline on NIPR

<https://msc.forces.iraq.centcom.mil/usds/default.aspx>

Capt.  
Lisa Ann Lerma





## Photo of the Week



Photo by Sgt. Robert Traxel

Spc. Martin Perez, a human resources specialist with Headquarters, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division promoted his brother, Sgt. 1st Class Celso Pacheco, an infantryman with the 36th Infantry Division, earlier this month. Pacheco, who works as a personal security officer, requested that Perez promote him to sergeant first class but didn't tell anyone that they were brothers until moments before the ceremony. After the promotion, he said it was only appropriate for his brother to have the honor of pinning him. It was the first time the two have been together since 2003.

Think your photos are good enough for the Photo of the Week? Send them in! Just e-mail us your photo in a high-quality format, along with your full name and rank and a description of what your photo is about and when it was taken. Remember to include full name, rank and job title of each person in your photo. We look forward to seeing what you can do.

Send your photos to:  
[36idpao@gmail.com](mailto:36idpao@gmail.com)

*Want your family and friends to see just how awesome you look in full gear?*

**They can find you on the internet!**



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