

Victory Times



Telling the United States Forces - Iraq story

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An Iraqi student asks a question on psychological interviewing techniques to Sgt. John Croke (Right), Camp Liberty Clinic noncommissioned officer-in-charge and a behavioral health specialist also with the 883rd Med. Det., as part of the behavioral health course, June 11.

Iraqis learn critical behavioral health skills for care of soldiers

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

Stress is one of the many challenges most deployed service members face when going through their deployment. Whether it's caused by physical labor, being in a different environment, or even relationship problems back at home, some individuals need help to find solutions to their problems.

Fortunately, the U.S. Army, as well as other U.S. armed forces branches, have specific programs and centers able to provide help to those who seek it. Soldiers from the 883rd Medical Detachment (Combat Stress Control), 86th Combat Support Hospital,

Task Force 804th Medical Brigade, shared their knowledge with their Iraqi counterparts and conducted a behavioral health five-day course with Iraqi officer and enlisted medical representatives from the Iraqi Ground Force Command, June 11-15 on the IGFC compound.

"While there are many differences between people, countries and cultures, coming here during this week reminded me that we share many things as well," said Maj. Kevin Love, operation stress control commander with the 883rd Med. Det. based out of Boston, Mass. "For us, we're all here because we care about the Soldiers
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U.S., Iraqi senior enlisted personnel visit maintenance facility

Story and photos by Sgt. TJ Moller
USF-I Public Affairs

Sergeants major from both the Iraqi army and United States Forces-Iraq met to discuss vehicle and weapon maintenance concerns at the Joint Repair Parts Center in Taji, Iraq, June 15.

Once the senior enlisted personnel arrived in Taji, Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, senior enlisted advisor to the

deputy commanding general for operations, USF-I, briefed the group on the importance of maintenance.

As Iraq strengthens its security forces, it is also strengthening its support capabilities through its maintenance system.

The purpose of the visit was to help the Iraqi division sergeants major understand that parts are available to fix their broken equipment and to help them un-

derstand the ordering process, said Rice.

If the Iraqi sergeants major have an idea about how the ordering process works, they will know if there is a glitch and be able to fix it, said Sgt. Maj. Troy A Moore, senior enlisted advisor with Task Force 163rd Armor Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, United States Division-Center.

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Chaplain's Corner

The Power of Letting Go

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

It is the season of transitions and change. Change can be hard. It means saying goodbye to friends and family, moving to new assignments and facing the unfamiliar. Here at USF-I we are at the forefront of a huge transition for operations in Iraq. Some of the change is welcomed and some is not. It depends on who you ask.

Life, in general, is similar to this. Some people want to move on to new relationships and opportunities. Others want to keep the familiar. The familiar usually holds that which is comfortable and secure. Unfortunately, other people might make a decision which forces us into unwanted situations. Our response at those times determines whether we will sink or swim.

Letting go is a critical response in times of change. In fact, living with an attitude of relinquishment or surrender is critical to a healthy life.

When I got married 30 years ago my pastor talked to both families at the wedding rehearsal and said, "As we go through life we come to those times (i.e., marriages, moves, death of a loved one) when someone we love moves on. If we do not let go of them at that point we go neurotic trying to hold on to them. We have to let go." Parents let go of their

children. Adults let go of their aging parents. Siblings let go of each other so they can begin their own families.

In a spiritual sense, the power of letting go also involves the act of trusting. I let go but I also trust that God has my future. He indeed has my past, my present and my future in His hands. I can trust him. If I do not let go, however, of the present I cannot move into the future.

The famous Italian painter Michelangelo was visiting at a friend's home one day. As the artist and the man talked the man's little girl played with a handkerchief. Michelangelo asked her if he could borrow it. He wanted to take it home, use it as a canvas and paint a picture for the girl. But she clung to her handkerchief and would not give it up. By clinging to it, she cursed it and it remained forever a simple handkerchief.

We do the same when we refuse to let go of the present and surrender our lives and future to God.

The Gospel has one critical paradox. If I want to live, I must die. I have to die to my ambitions and myself. But once I die, I can receive God's life and the life that he wants me to have.

Are you holding on to something that you cannot keep? Let go. Trust God. He knows your future, and he will take care of you.

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that are entrusted to us for care."

The train-the-trainer course informed the Iraqis students of the importance of being proactive when dealing with behavioral issues by using a check list to track the issues and identify at-risk Soldiers.

"There were 14 Soldiers representing 14 Iraqi army divisions," said Maj. Francisco DaCunha, chief of behavioral health and theater behavioral health consultant with TF 804th Med. Bde. "They were trained by our staff so they could, in turn, train their own soldiers once they return to their units."

The classes consisted of combat stress control operations, anger and stress management, coping skills, anxiety and relaxation education and psychological interviewing techniques.

Sgt. John Croke, Camp Liberty Clinic noncommissioned officer-in-charge and a behavioral health specialist also with the 883rd Med. Det., said these type of classes are essential to overall medical operations. "The combat stress mission is a force multiplier that keeps

Soldiers in the fight," he said.

On the last day, the Iraqi students were actively engaged in the course with hands-on role-playing of psychological interviewing techniques, showing their trainers their understanding of what they had been taught.

A graduation ceremony was conducted, highlighting the students' commitment to the class concluding the course. Leaders gave their thanks and gratitude to the students and teachers for their dedication and helping each other learn these critical skills.

"It is truly an honor and a pleasure to be invited to participate in this ceremony and I want to congratulate all the individuals who will receive their certificates today," said Col. James Snyder, TF 804th Med. Bde. commander. "I wish them the best of luck and once again thank you for allowing us to be a part of your important and successful completion of this training."

By the end of the course, students would leave more knowledgeable, as well as being able to pass on the information to their fellow doctors and medics.



Iraqi students, a part of the behavioral health course held on the Iraq Ground Forces Command compound, engage in hands-on role-playing of psychological interviewing techniques, showing their U.S. trainers their understanding of what they had been taught, June 15.

SAPR Spotlight



Sexual assault has no place in our military – it's up to each of us to prevent assaults by watching out for our fellow Soldiers. Join the SHARP Team in standing up and saying "No more!" Offer your support to survivors of this crime by being informed.

Call the USF-I Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at 485-5085 or 435-2235 for help. Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or DSARC.



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(Left to Right) Mr. Zaid Muriad, a civilian interpreter, Sgt. John Croke, Camp Liberty Clinic noncommissioned officer-in-charge and a behavioral health specialist and Maj. Francisco DaCunha, chief of behavioral health and theater behavioral health consultant, both a part of TF 804th Med. Bde., role-play psychological interviewing techniques, as part of the behavioral health course, June 15.

USF-I service members commemorate, celebrate Army's 236th birthday

Story by Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs

"Our Army is older than our country," said Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general for United States Forces – Iraq, when he spoke to more than 200 attendees during the Army birthday celebration in the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, June 14. "We should be very proud of our Army heritage."

Service members, civilians and Iraqi officials gathered in the rotunda to witness the birthday celebration of the nation's oldest and largest military branch.

Stemming from a conscripted Army, Austin said this military branch has become the most professional, educated, and lethal Army in the world since its transition to an all-volunteer Army in 1973.

The overhaul of the Army doctrine, personnel and training took years to mature, but the Army has reached a level of proficiency and lethality that has never been achieved before, he said.

"Our Army is resilient," he said. "The all-volunteer Army has been essential to our success in this period of persistent conflicts and our Soldiers are what make our Army great."

The celebration included a display of unit and company guidons that are currently deployed in Iraq, a video of the Army's history, fine tunes orchestrated by the Tropic Lightning Band of the 25th Infantry Division and a cake-cutting ceremony.

The cake cutting is a tradition within the military which is performed by the oldest and the youngest ser-

vice members of the branch.

As the oldest Army service member on Victory Base Complex, Col. James Snyder, commander of 804th Medical Brigade, said he was extremely honored and privileged to be a part of the ceremony.

Also having the honors of cutting the cake, Pvt. 1st Class Aaron Johnston, the youngest Army service member on VBC and a chemical operations specialist with 145th Brigade Support Battalion, said it was a pleasure to take part in the event alongside Austin and Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, senior enlisted advisor, USF-I.

The Army is indeed evolving professionally and technologically, Snyder said resonating Austin's remarks. Throughout his 42 years of service, he has not seen the Army more sophisticated than it is today.

"For the work we have done here and what we do in the future will guarantee the safety of our country and the preservation of our freedom," Austin said.

"The very things that we learned since Vietnam that made our Army better are now being shared with our Iraqi counterparts, he said. "We look forward to our work here in Iraq and we will continue to work with the Iraqis to strengthen the Iraqi security forces until we no longer have the ability to do so."

Considering the circumstance and the environment, Snyder said the celebration was exceedingly professional and joyous.

Concluding the celebration, service members sang along as the band played the Army's song.



Photo by Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola/USF-I PAO

(Left to Right) Col. James Snyder, the oldest Army service member on VBC and commander of 804th Medical Brigade, Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general, United States Forces – Iraq, Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, senior enlisted advisor, USF-I, Pvt. 1st Class Aaron Johnston, the youngest Army service member on VBC and a chemical operations specialist with 145th Brigade Support Battalion, cut the Army birthday cake during the birthday celebration in the Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, June 14.

► Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, deputy commanding general for operations, United States Forces - Iraq and XVIII Airborne Corps commanding general, along with Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, senior enlisted advisor for the DCG-O, and XVIII Airborne Corps command sergeant major, lead the way along with personnel from the USF-I command group during a 4.4 mile run commemorating the U.S. Army's 236th Birthday on Victory Base Complex, June 14.



Photo by Spc. Paul Holston/USF-I PAO



Photo by Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola/USF-I PAO

Spc. James Loftis, an intelligence analyst with Joint Intelligence Directorate, Analysis and Production Division, USF-I had the honor of singing the National Anthem during the Army's 236th birthday celebration on Camp Victory, June 14.

► The American Flag is displayed in the Al Faw Palace as part of the United States Army's 236th Birthday Ceremony held on Camp Victory Iraq, June 14. The U.S. Army is the nation's the largest and oldest established branch of the U.S. military, with was formed on June 14, 1775.



Photo by Spc. Paul Holston/USF-I PAO

UNSUNG HERO



Sgt. Shilo Anderson is recognized as this week's Unsung Hero and received a certificate of achievement from Brig. Gen. Michael X. Garrett, deputy chief of staff, United States Forces - Iraq, at Al Faw Palace, June 17.

Anderson received the certificate for his outstanding performance as the supply sergeant for Company C, Task Force Dragon, United States Forces - Iraq.

VICTORY VOICES

As part of Father's Day (June 19), what is the most rewarding part about being a father?



"Seeing my kids have it a little bit better than I did. I just wish that they would take more of my advice!"

**Master Sgt.
Rondall E. Burt**

SJS Human Resource NCOIC
Command Group SJS, USF-I



"Blessed to have the opportunity to raise my children according to the word of God, so they may be a productive part of society and a blessing to others."

**Master Sgt.
Michael W. Johnson**

Special Actions Coordinator
Officer
Command Group SJS, USF-I



"The great feeling I get whenever I teach my children lessons in life that will make them stronger and better adults when they become older."

**Master Sgt.
Ralph Warner**

Enlisted Aide to USF-I Chief of Staff
Command Group SJS, USF-I/Chief
of Staff



"Seeing my son smile when he was born and being able to care for someone else besides myself."

**Sgt.
Alexander Baker**

Supply NCO
Command Group SJS, USF-I

Safety matters

By Jesse Martin
USF-I Safety Office

Heat and Dehydration

Heat and dehydration can cause serious injury and sometimes death. The most susceptible are non-acclimated personnel who have not had sufficient time in theater to adjust to the extreme heat. Most heat injuries are preventable, and none need to be fatal.

The Heat Casualty Prevention Campaign describes steps to take in order to fight dehydration. As the temperatures increase, everyone should drink more water. Water is the best fluid for hydration. Moreover, water deficiency compromises the body's natural cooling mechanisms. So, it is best to drink water before becoming thirsty. Frequent small drinks are better than less frequent large, drinks. Ensure that all other heat injury prevention control measures are taken to minimize risk. Additionally, tight fitting clothing is detrimental to heat loss from the body. Clothing should be loose so as not to restrict circulation or impede movement of air over the skin.

Many deployed personnel take dietary aids and muscle building or endurance enhancing supplements, particularly ephedra-based supplements. This is dangerous because the use of these substances may predispose certain individuals to experience life-threatening dehydration and heatstroke. Those can also have serious side effects on the heart and central nervous system. Be careful about the supplements we put in our bodies and realize the risk may not outweigh the potential goal.

Everyone must be personally involved to ensure individuals drink enough water, eat properly, use sunscreen and monitor each other for signs of heat injury. Ensure all your personnel know the requirements of Heat Casualty Prevention Campaign. More information and training is available on the US Army Public Health Command (Provisional) website, <http://phc.amedd.army.mil>.

What is TARP?

By Sgt. Joseph Vine
USF-I Public Affairs

The military is vulnerable to sabotage, subversion, sedition, and terrorism from within the confines of the gates on bases across Iraq. To help combat those threats the Army mandates that all Soldiers take the Threat Awareness and Reporting Program training once a year.

The Field Office Iraq offers TARP – which replaced the Subversion and Espionage Directed Against the US Army – to any individuals, sections and units deployed to Iraq.

The class informs troops and civilians about the six components of TARP which include terrorism, espionage, treason, sedition, subversion and sabotage.

An Army counter-intelligence agent with the Field Office Iraq said the training is designed to make soldiers aware of the components of TARP.

The instructors of the program use real case studies from prior incidents of subversion, sabotage and espionage to inform troops and civilians that everyone can be susceptible to such acts and it doesn't matter what rank the person is.

The program's directive is to prevent those types of events from happening again, said an Army counter-intelligence agent. The only way to do that is to inform troops that the threat is real and it's out there.

Soldiers are required to know the rules and regulations governing espionage and subversion directed against the Army, said another Army counter-intelligence agent with the Field Office Iraq.

The main reason for the program is to get troops to report suspicious activity to the local ACI office.

"Hands-down, this is one of the most important types of training you can receive in a foreign environment," he said.

For more information about TARP and to schedule individual, section or unit training contact the Field Office Iraq on Camp Liberty @ SVOIP: 243-4862, NIPR: 485-4963 or via email 4foi@s-iraq.centcom.smil.mil



Sergeants major from both the Iraqi army and United States Forces-Iraq met to discuss vehicle and weapon maintenance concerns at the Joint Repair Parts Center in Taji, Iraq, June 15. Familiarizing the senior personnel was the first step to educating the force and building a strong maintenance system.

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Col. Salah Hossain Aawwad, deputy commander of the JRPC, gave an in-brief at the maintenance facility and attendees were encouraged to ask questions and discuss concerns.

The goal is that whenever a soldier asks for a part, the sergeants major will be able to answer questions and help expedite the process, said Moore.

“We want to empower the Iraqi sergeants major and educate them on how the maintenance process works,” said Rice. “We want to be able to have them be influential in assisting their unit in improving the maintenance process.”

Vehicle and weapon maintenance is essential for any military to be successful.

“This is the hub,” said Moore, “maintenance and supply makes everything go. Without parts, a force can’t be maintained.”

Perfecting the maintenance and supply process will help the soldiers at the squad, platoon, and company level who need equipment, said Rice. Timely, accurate shipment of orders will help soldiers operate and accomplish their mission on the battlefield.

“This is why they are here,” said Moore. “To make sure they are able

to keep the combat power at a steady rate.”

Familiarizing the senior personnel is the first step to educating the force and building a strong maintenance system.

The feedback from the Iraqi and U.S. sergeants major was very positive across the board, said Rice. “It was a big eye-opener that they see that the Iraqi system really has the parts on hand and are available. If they use the system the right way, they can get the parts that they need, get their equipment fixed, and continue on with the mission.”



◀ Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, senior enlisted advisor to the deputy commanding general for operations, United States Forces-Iraq, discusses maintenance concerns with Command Sgt. Maj. Alaa al-din al Asadi, senior enlisted advisor with the 5th Iraqi Army Division, at the Joint Repair Parts Center in Taji, Iraq, June 15.

► Robert Bob, a circuit action specialist with Five Rivers Company and Lee Phillips, a systems integrator with Intecon, perform one of their spoken-word poems during a ‘Poetry Lounge’ session on Camp Liberty, Iraq. Sessions such as these were created to help build morale of service members on Victory Base Complex while deployed.



Poets use spoken word to entertain troops

Story and photo by Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs

Spoken word has been a popular form of oral art today since its inception in the 1990s; it is used as an outlet for people to share their views inspired by life experiences, religion, politics and emotions.

Typically spoken as a rhythm of ‘food for thought,’ incorporated with rhyme, but still making sense to the audience is a strategy used by most spoken word artists.

Service members and civilians on Victory Base Complex had the opportunity to share their artistic talent on stage during the Writer’s Block and Poetry Lounge sessions.

As a member of the 3rd Eye Alumni, a group of poets founded by service members, Robert Bob, also known as Scott Free, a circuit action specialist with Five Rivers Company, said he started hosting the shows on VBC back in January 2010.

Continuing the heritage left behind by the group since 2005, Bob said the purpose is to help the troops pass the time while on deployment.

Designed as an escape from reality while boosting morale for the troops, Lee Phillips, also known as Verse Lee, a spoken-word artist and a systems integrator with Intecon said, “It is also an avenue for people out here to express themselves through poetry, song and music.”

“Our poetry shows are different out here,” said Phillips who is also a show co-host.

Slam poetry, as it is also known, is more akin to a conversational dialogue and generally performed in a storytelling manner.

The topics of the poetry in this environment encompass a multitude of deployment experience including family, love and hate relationships, which allows the audience to feel the artists and their poetry.

“The very first show I attended out here was absolutely entertaining,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kelly Bonds, material readiness officer with Material Readiness Division, J4 Forward, United States Forces – Iraq. “It was certainly refreshing to sit back, relax and put all things aside for a few good laughs.”

Bonds described the show to be the single event on VBC that takes the level of entertainment from very serious to extreme laughter in minutes.

“We interact with the audience to get them involved and feel comfortable,” Phillips said.

As a host, Bob works to keep the viewers entertained throughout the show. “The energy you give is the energy you get,” he says during each event. “When I feel the liveliness from the crowd, it makes me feel good.”

Like most of the talented artists on VBC, Sylvester Hurt also known as Slezzy, started out as a spectator in the audience. The spoken-word artist and help desk administrator with Diagnostic Retrieval Systems Technologies said he was first introduced to the show by word-of-mouth through friends, and since then has been an active member.

“I enjoy writing and getting up on stage to share my talent with others,” Hurt said. “Because we are in an environment like this, I want everyone to have fun and enjoy the show like I did.”

“Poetry night is a communication outlet for me,” said Spc. Le’Stevion Harris, a new spoken-word artist and a cable systems installer with the 151st Signal Battalion. “It allows me to be honest with myself as being able to share my experiences.”

A spoken word piece can be powerful and meaningful with the right emotion behind it. Prior to the shows, artists gather for peer-to-peer critique, delivery and stage presentation, Bob said. “We have sessions like this so we can help each other out, especially for the newcomers interested in getting on stage.”

Poetry is free and stepping up to be the voice for people who don’t have one can be an ever-changing experience, he said.

Whether it’s performing on stage or listening to the artists, it would be quite an experience for anyone to attend the event for the first time.

The amount of energy throughout each event and the vibrancy of the crowd keeps the shows alive for the troops and civilians to enjoy.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joshua Cormier (Left), aviator with Company B, 207th Aviation Battalion and Capt. Todd R. Miller (Right), aviator and company commander of Company B, 207th Aviation Battalion perform flight checks on their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter before a mission.

207th Aviation supports command group

Story and photos by Sgt. TJ Moller
USF-I Public Affairs

Operations in Iraq depend on generals making decisions and Soldiers executing them. Attending scheduled and unscheduled meetings, on and off base, is a part of the leadership's decision-making process and flights are needed to support this.

The Soldiers of Company B, 207th Aviation Battalion, have the essential mission of supporting Gen. Lloyd J. Austin, commanding general, United States Forces- Iraq, Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, deputy commanding general of operations, USF-I, and Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter, deputy commanding general for advising and training.

The mission here is to support the generals and distinguished visitors and get them to where they need to go, said Capt. Todd Miller, commander of Co. B, 207th Avn. Bn.

There is no such thing as routine for this experienced, Alaska-based unit as the generals' schedules are ever changing.

Each general has a dedicated flight set, comprised of aircraft that are maintained and always ready to go.

The missions are comprised of flights not more than 30 minutes, said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joshua Cormier, an aviator with Co. B., 207th Avn. Bn. With schedule changes every day, it keeps it exciting.

The crews continue to communicate with the general's flight coordinators to

keep up to date on flight requirements, said Miller. "If there is an unscheduled flight, we try to have a less than one hour recall."

Flight operations in Iraq entail a lot more than picking up and dropping off personnel. This veteran company, known as the Arctic Cowboys, augmented in support of two maintenance sections as well as a refueling section. The unit works almost independently.

With each flight set supporting its general for 12 hours-a-day, every role is essential for a successful mission, said Cormier.

Pilots need their crew chiefs to be an extra set of eyes and man the aircraft's weapons system, while smooth flight op-
See Aviation, Page 11



A crew chief with Company B, 207th Aviation Battalion, a National Guard unit, supporting the United States Forces-Iraq command group, waits as the crew shuts down the aircraft following a short flight from Taji.

Aviation, from Page 10 — erations depend on aircraft maintenance and skilled flight operators.

Company B's two-man flight operations team has the job of maintaining itineraries, generating risk assessments, and updating flight crews on weather conditions among other duties, said Sgt. Katherine L. Ross, flight operator, Co. B., 207th Avn Bn.

"We brought everything we need to be self-sufficient," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Benjamin N. Herning, maintenance officer with Co. B., 207th Avn Bn. "We rely very little on other people. That way

if something breaks we're not waiting for someone else to fix it. We can fix it ourselves and that's probably the biggest thing we've got going."

"The maintenance is where we make our money," said Cormier. "If our aircrafts are ready to go all the time, we don't have to worry about canceling missions."

With nearly 4,000 flight hours this deployment and a constant demand on the Soldiers to be reactive, the unit has had a successful deployment so far without dropping any flights.

"With the mission like this, everybody



Staff Sgt. Rob Pike, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief, with Company B, 207th Aviation Battalion checks the aircraft's weapons system while he waits for passengers to load. Crew chiefs are often UH-60 helicopter repairers before becoming crew chiefs and are able to assist with the maintenance of the aircraft.

becomes an expert on their specialized part of the mission, and everybody knows everybody else's job," said Miller. "My unit has been together for a long time and it shows in their performance and their ability to work with limited resources and get the mission done quickly."

Weapon Safety - T.H.I.N.K.

- **T**reat every weapon as if it's loaded
- **H**andle every weapon with care
- **I**dentify the target before you fire
- **N**ever point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot
- **K**eept the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire

Remember!

Help save lives of our Soldiers!

Ministry of Interior officials observe U.S. courtroom training

Story and photos by Spc. Charlene Apatang Mendiola
USF-I Public Affairs

In an effort to improve capabilities in the establishment of a trustworthy and a more independent military rule of law, Iraqi Ministry of Interior representatives observed a courtroom 'mock trial' that involved U.S. judge advocates playing the roles of attorneys, witnesses and jurors on Camp Victory, June 15.

"The training conducted today was focused on criminal law advocacy," said Cpt. Matt Besmer, trial counsel for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade stationed on Camp Taji. "The purpose of it was to train judge advocates to be more proficient in the courtroom."

Focusing on the details, rehearsing opening and closing statements and admitting evidence were some of the elements they trained on, said Cpt. Rebecca Lipe, deputy command judge advocate with Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force Arabian Peninsula, Joint Base Balad.

The training was specific to trial practices involving presentation to panel members and judges, said Besmer, a California guardsman and a business litigation attorney with Dowling, Aaron and Keeler. This type of exercise allows him to sharpen his skills as an attorney for both the military and civilian side.

The aspect of law practice applies to any organization, he said. The challenge is to place relevant skills necessary to appropriately litigate a case.

"The benefits from this type of training while deployed better prepares me as a trial counsel," Lipe said. This also helps as we share our experiences, knowledge and tactics with our Iraqi counterparts."

"It is great to have two different cultures and legal systems come together to learn from one another," Besmer said.

Having the MOI representatives observe the training was essential to the goals of having an independent Iraqi legal system, Lipe said. "Advising them on the methods of our judicial system will allow them to incorporate that into their practices as well."

"I am glad to be here to attend this training," said Maj. Ahamed Abdulelih Alkazraji, director of appeal court of internal security forces of MOI.

This has never been done in an Iraqi courtroom before, he said. The trainings helped him understand and learn the manners and procedures in a courtroom.

Both U.S. and Iraq share similarities in the judicial system, but for Alkazraji, having a jury present in the courtroom is new to him and he would like to have that implemented in the future.

Although witness testimonies remain a very strong conviction method, Alkazraji said the MOI is using evidence even more now as part of its process and hopes to use the more advanced technology in the future.

From what he observed from this training, he said he hopes his office will allow more officials and representatives to attend training like this frequently.



U.S. staff judge advocates play the roles of witnesses, jurors and attorneys, simulating a courtroom trial as part of their training on criminal law advocacy on Camp Victory, June 15.

► Maj. Ahamed Abdulelih Alkazraji, director of appeal court of internal security forces of MOI, observes U.S. judge advocates as they performed 'mock trial' role playing during a staff judge advocate training on Camp Victory, June 15.

