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ESTABLISHED IN 1917 TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE



AUGUST 12, 2011



MP sharpens tactical skills

Staff Sgt. Robert DeDeaux
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD - N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – Kneeling next to the exit ramp, Spc. Luz Natalia Gonzalez readied her M249 Squad Automatic Weapon. As the vehicle halted on a crowded street in Kirkuk, Iraq, Gonzalez emerged and scanned the area before signaling other personnel to exit the vehicle and move into a nearby police station.

Due to the demanding operational tempo of her military police platoon, Gonzalez, assigned to the “Punishers,” Provincial Police Transition Team, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, mastered the tactical skills required of her while on her first deployment in support of Operation New Dawn.

“As a Soldier, being a Punisher has made me who I am today,” said Gonzalez, who hails from Providence, R.I. “I never thought I would be this good this early, and I know I owe that to the experiences I’ve had being in this platoon.”

Gonzalez progressed quickly through the MP ranks despite having less than two years of service.

Conducting multiple missions into the city each week, Gonzalez said the missions she performs in the Punisher platoon develop her as a Soldier.

“She was a little timid a first,” said Pfc. Renee Cummings, a fellow Punisher and gunner from the Bay Area, Calif. “She came off as shy, but as the missions continued, she really showed her aggressive side.”

Staff Sergeant Richard Medina, an MP squad leader, said he saw potential in Gonzalez.

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U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Robert DeDeaux, 1st AATF PAO

Specialist Luz Natalia Gonzalez, a military police Soldier from Providence, R.I., assigned to “Punishers” Provincial Police Transition Team, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, enters a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle after conducting security operations outside of the Domies Police Station in Kirkuk City, Iraq, July 31, 2011.

STEADFAST AND LOYAL
IRONHORSE
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DEVIL
LONGKNIFE
BLACK JACK

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IRONHORSE STRONG:

Soldier of the Week

Private Frank Corey,
HHC, 2nd AAB, 1st Cav. Div.

One "Black Jack" Soldier recently used skills learned, while serving in support of Operation New Dawn, to stand out during a live-fire exercise.

Private Frank Corey, a mortarman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, successfully led the way for his mortar platoon during a three-day, live-fire training event in July.

Corey, from Geneva, Ohio, held the highest standard during the recertification portion of the event, said 1st Lt. Adam Coste, mortar platoon leader for HHC, 1st Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. He completed a practical and written examination, earning the top score for his platoon.

"Corey scored a 97 out of 100 possible points on the 120mm mortar recertification," explained Coste.

His efforts and dedication as a gunner ensured the accuracy of 24 high-explosive rounds on target during the event, he added.

Deployed for the first time, Corey said he is grateful for the opportunity to use his skills, show the accuracy of a mortar, and provide security for Soldiers and civilians in the area.

Providing security is another aspect to Corey's work, said Coste. When not involved with mortars, Corey is a gunner with the battalion's Quick Reaction Force.

In addition to his strong work ethic, Coste said Corey is a team player who is always trying to better himself, and a positive influence on his peers.

Corey's dedication and selflessness is credit to himself, his unit and the Army, earning him the title of "Ironhorse Strong" Soldier of the week.

WHAT IS IRONHORSE STRONG?

- EXEMPLIFY THE ARMY VALUES
- STAND OUT AMONG THE RANK AND FILE
- EXCEED THE STANDARD
- REMAIN TACTICALLY AND TECHNICALLY PROFICIENT
- STAY COOL UNDER FIRE
- COMPLETE EVERY MISSION TO STANDARD
- SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS
- SHOW INITIATIVE

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AT VICTORY RANGE

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THE IVY LEAF

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Assist Task Force
1st Infantry Division

2nd Advise and
Assist Brigade
1st Cavalry Division

4th Advise and
Assist Brigade
1st Cavalry Division

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"When she came to my squad, I made her my driver," Medina said. "It's a big responsibility, but I knew she could handle it."

When on the ground, Gonzalez must handle communications between Medina, the platoon, the gunner and the rest of the convoy.

Several months ago, Medina said he got to see for himself that Gonzalez was ready for any challenge.

"On a routine visit, we came upon an (improvised explosive device) on one of the routes," said Medina. "There was a lot of confusion between civilians and the Iraqi Security Forces already present, so I dismounted to assess the situation, leaving Gonzalez to relay the communications."

"She had to keep me informed as to what the gunner saw and update everyone else on what was going on, all while ensuring the convoy was moved to a safe distance," Medina continued. "She was calm and clear, she kept a level head. I knew then she was a Soldier that could be trusted with greater responsibility."

On a weekly basis, Punishers conduct

training seminars, crime scene investigation classes, provide guidance and assistance to their Iraqi counterparts, and conduct meetings with police chiefs and other law enforcement individuals.

With military police being her first military occupation specialty, Gonzalez said she goes out, conducts patrols and deals with the same dangers as infantry.

"I'm just like any and every other Punisher," said Gonzalez. "Despite the difficulties of the mission at hand, I know I have to do my part so everyone else can do theirs."

"I'm impressed with my MPs," said Lt. Col. Stephen Hughes, chief of the Provincial Police Transition Team. "They have all of the Soldier skills you would find in an infantry unit, but they also have law enforcement training and are prepared to fight like infantrymen."

Despite the rigorous time restriction and daily mission requirements, Gonzalez said she is grateful for everything she learned during this deployment.

"I always knew I would come into the Army," Gonzalez said with a smile, "and I'm glad my first experience was as a Punisher."



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Robert DeDeaux, 1st AATF PAO

Specialist Luz Natalia Gonzalez, a military police Soldier assigned to "Punishers" Provincial Police Transition Team, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, conducts a walking security patrol outside of the Domies Police Headquarters in Kirkuk City, Iraq, July 31, 2011.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Robert DeDeaux, 1st AATF PAO

Specialist Luz Natalia Gonzalez, far left, and Staff Sgt. Richard Medina, far right, both military police Soldiers assigned to "Punishers" Provincial Police Transition Team, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, conduct a pre-mission brief at their vehicle motorpool on Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, July 31, 2011. With military police being her first military occupation specialty, Gonzalez said she goes out, conducts patrols and deals with the same dangers as infantry.

'Thunderhorse' Battalion cases colors

Sgt. Kandi Huggins
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD - N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, cased their colors, transferring the authority of their mission to the expanded Combined Security Force, Aug. 6.

"Thunderhorse" Battalion culminated its yearlong mission of enhancing the tactical and technical prowess of "Golden Lions," eCSF in Kirkuk, with a Transfer of Authority Ceremony on Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq.

Established in late 2009 as a protection and peace keeping force for the elections, the eCSF, comprised of Kurdish Regional Guard, Iraqi Army

and Iraqi Police, partnered with U.S. Forces to secure the city of Kirkuk and the Combined Security Area.

After the Thunderhorse Battalion arrived in 2010, the eCSF began taking a more security-based posture and executing operations to increase security and stability in Kirkuk Province.

"This transition ceremony, today, where you have a U.S. battalion and a combined battalion of our Iraqi Security Forces arranged side by side is no small feat," said Lt. Col. Joseph Holland, Thunderhorse commander. "This is indeed a monumental occasion of which everyone here should be proud."

Holland said the audience was witnessing the culmination of many months of training, resulting in the Golden Lion Battalion, under the command

Col. Salah, competently assuming the mission of the Thunderhorse Battalion.

Under the guidance and advisement of Thunderhorse Soldiers, the Golden Lions, which started as a company-sized element, grew to a battalion-sized element able to train and supervise its own soldiers.

"The Thunderhorses have been an integral part of developing and growing this battalion from a company that relied upon them to a battalion that can stand alone," said Col. Michael Pappal, commander, 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div.

Pappal said the eCSF always represented a symbol of unity for the people of Iraq.

"You are not only a symbol

between the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police and Kurdish Regional Guards," said Pappal, a Creekside, Pa., native, "but you're also a symbol for every different ethnic segment of diverse population of Kirkuk because that population is what you are beholden to protect."

As Thunderhorse Soldiers retired their colors and responsibilities in Kirkuk, Holland said they trust the eCSF will remain steadfast and diligent in their progression.

"While there is still work to be done, I wish the very best for Col. Salah and the leaders of our Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army and KRG in Kirkuk who will support the fine men of the Golden Lions," said Holland.



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

Above: Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Holland, left, and Command Sgt. Maj. William May, command team, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, case their battalion colors during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, Aug. 6, 2011.

Right: A color guard comprised of U.S. Soldiers and members of the expanded Combined Security Force presented both the U.S. and Iraq flags during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, Aug. 6, 2011, between the eCSF and the "Thunderhorse," 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division. "While there is still work to be done, I wish the very best for Col. Salah and the leaders of our Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army and Peshmerga in Kirkuk who will support the fine men of the 'Golden Lions,'" said Lt. Col. Joseph Holland, commander, 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Regt.



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

1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div.

Multi-deployment veteran passes on knowledge

Sgt. Justin Naylor
2nd AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD - N

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – It's not uncommon to meet Soldiers serving on their second or third deployment, but finding a Soldier on a seventh tour is a little more difficult.

Sergeant 1st Class Peter Dees, a motor sergeant with 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, "Red Dragons," 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, has deployed all over the world, and now he passes his experience on to Soldiers who work for him at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Dees started his military career like many other Soldiers, in the Army Reserve. After four years in the Reserve, he enlisted for active duty service as a vehicle mechanic.

Only a few years later, in 1998, Dees went on his first deployment as part of a rapid response force deployed to Kuwait when Saddam Hussein disallowed weapons inspectors into Iraq.

After stressful months in Kuwait, Dees returned to the U.S., only to be deployed soon afterward to Kosovo, where he and his Soldiers maintained vehicles for the peacekeeping force there.

Following that mission, Dees enjoyed a brief break until his unit was called on to take part in the invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

"It was scary," said Dees, an Elkhart, Ind., native. Neither he nor his fellow Soldiers knew what to expect.

As combat units pushed their way to Baghdad, Dees, then a sergeant, was part of a team of track vehicle recovery operators supporting them.

"We were very busy," Dees said. "All kinds of stuff broke."

After finishing his third deployment, Dees returned to the States briefly. He then returned to Iraq after a little more than a year, to conditions that hadn't improved as much as he had hoped.

"We didn't have much set up then," he said, adding that he and his mechanics fixed vehicles and constructed armor out of an abandoned factory for his unit.

"It's been a huge increase since then," Dees said about vehicle armor.

We went from making our own armor to it coming standard on these vehicles. They just keep getting safer every year, he explained.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Justin Naylor, 2nd AAB PAO

Sergeant 1st Class Peter Dees, left, an Elkhart, Ind., native and a motor sergeant with 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, checks on vehicle maintenance at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, July 21, 2011. Dees has deployed all over the world, and now he passes his experience on to Soldiers who work for him.

Dees has since returned three more times to Iraq, each time in different locations, conducting vehicle maintenance.

Dees, now on his seventh deployment and fifth to Iraq, is working at one of the largest bases in the country.

Dees said this is his best deployment so far because Soldiers now stay in regular rooms. They now have an unprecedented level of access to communication tools that allow them to stay in contact with Families back home.

Dees, a senior leader now, uses his experiences to help his Soldiers, many of whom are on their first deployment.

"One of the big benefits of being deployed so many times was being able to anticipate how things would go here," said Dees.

Before they left the States, Dees helped prepare his Soldiers mentally for the stresses and hardships they would encounter on deployment. Soldiers benefit from having numerous leaders with deployment experience, said Dees.

"Back in (Operation Iraqi Freedom I), we had very few leaders that had deployment-type experience," he said. "Soldiers (now) are very confident that their leaders can lead them through anything we do."

Dees said one of his goals before coming back to Iraq was to make sure his Sol-

diers had a good idea of what to expect when they arrived.

"As soon as I got a Soldier in, I was upfront with them," he said.

Dees said he told Soldiers when the unit expected to deploy and gave them as much information about the upcoming deployment as he could.

"He told us what to expect when we first got here," said Pfc. Nicholas Denton, a field artillery mechanic from Houston, with the Red Dragons. "He also told us to expect the unexpected."

Before deploying, Dees also hosted several section cookouts for his Soldiers and their spouses. During the cookouts, he introduced his wife, Beverly, who has been married to him through all of his deployments.

Beverly, a former Soldier with deployment experience herself, is the head of the unit's Family Readiness Group, and she uses her experience to help Families of deployed Soldiers.

"If they have any issues, they can call her," said Dees. "She's been incredibly supportive."

With his wife in charge of the unit's FRG in the States, Dees said he is free to focus on working with his Soldiers.

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2nd AAB, 1st Cav. Div.

'Black Dragon' Soldiers earn cavalry spurs in Iraq

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq - Approximately 50 "Black Dragon" Soldiers assigned to 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, challenged one another to complete a cavalry "Spur Ride" at Contingency Operating Site Marez, Iraq, Aug. 2-4.

The Soldiers tested their mental and physical abilities while participating in the cavalry tradition to earn the privilege of wearing silver spurs and being inducted into the Order of the Spur.

"Even though we're deployed in Iraq, we're giving our Soldiers a chance to earn their spurs and be a part of this 1st

Cav. Div. tradition," said Master Sgt. Keith Hemingway, battalion operations sergeant and noncommissioned officer in charge of the Spur Ride. "This gives Soldiers the opportunity to excel above their peers and be inducted into the Order of the Spur."

The Order of the Spur is a cavalry tradition within the U.S. Army stemming from the days when horse-mounted cavalry troopers performed their duties during westward U.S. expansion, and in America's wars, as late as World War I.

Unlike gold spurs, which are awarded upon completion of a deployment to a combat theater with a cavalry unit, silver spurs are awarded to troopers who successfully complete a Spur Ride.

"This is definitely a team-building experience that adds



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Terence Ewings, 4th AAB PAO

Captain Sean Frankum, executive officer for Battery B, 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, reads map coordinates during a land navigation skills test at Contingency Operating Site Marez, Iraq, Aug. 3, 2011. As part of the battalion's "Spur Ride", Frankum, a native of Dahlonega, Ga., and other 'Black Dragon' Soldiers ruck-marched to various checkpoints during the skills test to earn the right to wear silver spurs.

to the overall unit cohesion and camaraderie," said Hemingway. "It's somewhat like going to a Soldier of the Month or promotion board. The Soldiers are pushing each other to complete the tasks and perform at their best."

In order to earn their spurs, the Soldiers successfully completed a land navigation, combat lifesaver, automations, communications, and weapons skills test.

In addition to being tested on individual soldiering skills, the Black Dragon troopers adhered to prerequisite standards prior to competing in the Spur Ride. The requirements included scoring above average

on an Army physical fitness test, being in accordance with Army regulation height/weight standards and receiving a letter of recommendation from their chain of command.

"These Soldiers have, without a doubt, earned the honor of wearing these spurs," said Lt. Col. Robert Magee, a native of Corsicana, Texas, and commander of Black Dragon Battalion.

The Black Dragon Soldiers finished the three-day Spur Ride with an Order of the Spur induction ceremony honoring the participants who successfully completed the challenge.

At the ceremony, Magee and other battalion leaders shook hands with each of the spur inductees and welcomed them into the elite cavalry organization.

"I had fun and gained a lot of knowledge here," said Spc. Justine McCoy, a chemical specialist assigned to Company G, 5th Bn., 82nd Fa. Regt. "I'm definitely living the legend right now. I got to partake in this event, and prove to myself and my peers that I can do this. I earned my spurs."



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Terence Ewings, 4th AAB PAO

CSH Soldiers share expertise with Iraqi providers

Spc. Andrew Ingram
USD - N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – When health care providers from the 256th Combat Support Hospital arrived at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, in December 2010, their mission was clear: provide outstanding medical care to Soldiers deployed to U.S. Division – North.

Soldiers of 256th CSH adapted to the mission naturally and quickly learned their tasks, said Capt. Ralph Pauley, registered nurse, Company B, 256th CSH.

After learning their duties, they began looking for ways to enhance their mission in support of Operation New Dawn.

“When we first got here we wanted to work with the Iraqis and see what we could help them with as far as their medical capabilities, so we got involved with developing the Iraqi Combat Lifesaver Course,” said Pauley, who hails from Chesterville, Ohio. “We took the Army CLS course, tweaked it a little bit and translated it into Arabic. Then, we worked with some of the U.S. Air Force already working with the Iraqi providers to implement the class.”

In the following months, U.S. service members certified approximately 125 Iraqi Security Forces personnel and trained nine additional Iraqi healthcare providers. Iraqis continued the training without the need for



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

Captain Ralph Pauley, registered nurse, Company B, 256th Combat Support Hospital, gives 1st Lt. Ayyub, a nurse assigned to the Iraqi Air Force Academy Clinic, medical equipment for his clinic at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Aug. 9, 2011.

the American oversight or translators, said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Carl Van Over, a flight medic with Detachment 5, 321st Expeditionary Mission Support Advisory Group, who mentors and trains Iraqi medical personnel.

“We had pretty much a blank canvas

when we got here,” said Van Over. “We started putting together the CLS classes, and Capt. Pauley and the 256th cash were very generous when it came to sourcing additional trainers. We have accomplished a lot together and now the Iraqis are running the classes themselves, which I see as a pretty big accomplishment.”

While supervising the CLS training, the American troops gauged their Iraqi counterparts’ clinic procedures and worked out a plan to make their day-to-day operations more efficient, said Pauley.

“I spoke with my commander and we thought it would be interesting if we could teach them how to function more efficiently,” he said. “So now we bring an Iraqi provider over here to the CSH every week and shadow our physicians so (Iraqis) can see how efficiently they can operate.”

Pauley is no stranger to training others. As a member of the Army Reserves, he works as a critical care nurse at the Ohio State University Medical Center – a teaching hospital where he often assists in the training of aspiring healthcare professionals.

“It being a teaching hospital, we always have senior nursing students coming through the intensive care unit,” Pauley said. “Since I’ve been there close to nine years, I’m called on a lot to guide them through things and show them what critical care is all about.”



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

Captain Rodney Saunders, head emergency room nurse, 256th Combat Support Hospital, explains CSH trauma room procedures to 1st Lt. Ayyub, a nurse assigned to the Iraqi Air Force Academy Clinic at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Aug. 9, 2011.

See CSH, Pg. 11

'Black Knight' troops deliver accuracy on range

Cavalry tanks, Bradleys prepare for patrols



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Quentin Johnson, 2nd AAB PAO

An M1A2 Abrams tank sits before zeroing the 120mm main gun on Memorial Range near Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, July 27, 2011.

Sgt. Quentin Johnson
2nd AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD - N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, completed live-fire exercises with newly acquired vehicles at Memorial Range near Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, July 27-30.

“Black Jack” Brigade troops conducted a live fire accuracy screening test using the M1A2 Abrams main battle tank, zeroed M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle weapon systems and conducted transition fire from Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected vehicles.

Soldiers of Company D, 1st Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., kicked off the four-day exercise by conducting transition fire, a method of weapons training where Soldiers switch between a crew-served weapon, such as the M240B machine gun, and their personal weapon within a matter of seconds, said 2nd Lt. Jake Donaldson, Company D intelligence support team officer in charge.

Donaldson said transition fire is important for Soldiers who assume the role of gunner on an MRAP when on patrol or as part of a convoy. This type of training is essential to current U.S. force protection measures, as increased threats against patrols and convoys remain present, he added.

Gunners learn to switch from a distant threat to close-quarter threat – such as an individual attempting to attack a patrol by walking up on it – simply by transitioning from a crew-served to personal weapon, explained Donaldson from Gettysburg, Pa.

“(Personal weapons) go where crew-served weapons cannot,” he said. Another important fire element for a cavalry Soldier is the main gun aboard a tank or a Bradley, Donaldson added.

Company D troops spent weeks preparing for the exercise after acquiring the equipment from 4th AAB, 1st Cav. Div., said Donaldson.

Preparation included conducting routine maintenance, adjusting the main guns’ bore sights and ensuring proper configuration of the tanks’ computer systems.

Essentially, anytime equipment is received, new or used, or moved to a new environment, it must be maintained and the weapons checked, Donaldson explained.

“In a brand new environment, the equipment’s system data must be checked to ensure it works,” added Sgt. John Martinez a tanker from San Antonio with Company D.

The Bradley Fighting Vehicle also spent a week undergoing the same process of maintenance and zeroing of their weapons as the tanks did, said 1st Lt. Cameron Arndt, executive officer for Company

B, who calls Madison, Wis., home.

Crews tested both vehicle types at the range, with each of the teams taking turns zeroing their main guns using stationary targets.

Each process, although very similar, had differences, said Donaldson. Unlike a Bradley, the tank systems need to be adjusted to the current environment, he added.

“(A tank) takes longer to zero than a Bradley because of the parameters of the targeting system,” he said.

Besides zeroing weapons systems, the range afforded training for the crews and ensured the vehicles are operationally ready, said Donaldson.

Specialist Troy Pressley,

currently on his second deployment, said as a Bradley crew gunner for Company B, the exercise was a success.

The exercise went very well with no problems, added Pressley, who calls Lawton, Okla., home.

Pressley said he has been to the Bradley range three times since last year and works with the vehicles on a regular basis. He said that gives him the confidence he needs to patrol the area with the Bradley the mission requires it.

He added that using the Bradley would increase security for Soldiers and civilians in and around COB Speicher by adding an extra line of defense.

“I am confident it will do some good,” he said.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Quentin Johnson, 2nd AAB PAO

Infantrymen from 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, drive their M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle off of Memorial Range after zeroing weapons systems during a live fire exercise in support of Operation New Dawn near Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, July 29, 2011.

'Prime Power' specialist lights up base

SpC. Crystal Hudson
29th MPAD
USD - N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Everyday items such as computers, air conditioners, MP3 players, hair dryers, coffee pots, shredders, lights and alarm clocks require constant, reliable power. Stateside, electric companies provide and maintain our power needs. In theater however, Soldiers provide and maintain our power needs.

Sergeant Michael Leal, a prime power specialist with Company B, 249th Engineer Battalion, is part of a two-Soldier team that oversees the power supply on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

On call 24/7, Leal is part of a team that maintains and runs generators, and a power plant with enough power to light up a small city.

Leal's company falls under Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, and he ensures the United States Division – North footprint at COB Speicher has the power it needs.

"Whenever power goes out, we are the first ones they call," Leal said. "We find the fastest way to bring the power back up."

Recently, the "Prime Power" team was called to respond to an

emergency at division headquarters where an electrical switch malfunctioned and caught fire.

After firefighters put out the fire, prime power and electrical contractors got to work to restore the main power to the headquarters building.

"We worked all day to get the power in headquarters back up," Leal said. "It took a lot of planning and a lot of coordination to fix."

Fifteen hours later the power was restored.

The prime power specialists respond to emergencies and also have a full-time job that includes planning, maintaining and servicing the electrical and power needs on base.

Leal is deployed out of Fort Bragg, N.C., as part of a platoon-sized detachment tasked with maintaining power throughout Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn.

"We act as a link between the government and the contractors that are hired to run the power plants in theater," Leal said.

This is Leal's second deployment with the 4th Inf. Div. His first tour occurred in 2005-2006. This is, however, his first deployment as a prime power specialist.

Leal decided to try something new after spending six years as an Apache helicopter electrician.



U.S. Army photo by SpC. Crystal Hudson, 29th MPAD

Sergeant Michael Leal, a prime power specialist assigned to Bravo Company, 249th Engineer Battalion, observes operations of the power plant at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Aug. 9, 2011.

"I wanted something a little bit more challenging," said Leal, from San Antonio. "I was looking for the most schooling."

Prime power is an application-only Military Occupational Specialty open to the ranks of specialist and higher. Once accepted to attend the 12-month course, Soldiers learn their trade in a college environment.

The Soldiers are equipped with the same knowledge as a journeyman and an overhead lineman in the civilian world.

Leal plans to stay in the Army until retirement, and use what he has learned to transition to a highly technical civilian career.

Leal's work ethic is what sets

him apart as a noncommissioned officer.

"He is a sharp NCO," said Staff Sgt. James Buensucos, prime power NCOIC from Poway, Calif. "He takes initiative no matter what time of day it is."

Leal received a coin from battalion commander Lt. Col. Matthew Tedesco in recognition of being chosen as the DSTB "Hero of the Week" August 8.

"It felt pretty good. I was surprised," Leal said. "Since our main supervisor and platoon sergeant are at different locations, it is nice to have something to send back to them to show them that we are doing the right thing here."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Justin Naylor, 2nd AAB PAO

VETERAN, Cont'd from Pg. 8

"That's all I'm here for is the Soldiers, to teach and train them so they can take my place one day," he said.

For the Soldiers that work for Dees, he is a nearly-endless source of information they depend on regularly.

Sergeant 1st Class Peter Dees, left, an Elkhart, Ind., native and motor sergeant with 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, checks with Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Solfano, right, an Opp, Ala., native and a platoon sergeant with the Red Dragons, to see if there are any mechanical issues with his artillery vehicles at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, July 21, 2011. Dees, currently serving on his seventh deployment uses his experiences to train and mentor the next generation of Soldiers.

"Sometimes I have questions...I go to him and he shows me what to do," said Denton.

Dees later quizzes Soldiers on the information to make sure they retained it correctly, he continued.

"It gives me a lot of confidence," said Denton. "This is my first deployment... knowing that he has deployed seven times, he knows what he is talking about."

Although Dees is ready for a break after this deployment, he said he is prepared to go again.

Regardless of where Dees ends up in the Army, he said, the knowledge gained from numerous deployments will enable him to prepare young mechanics for their own future missions.

Knight of the New Dawn

'Devil Brigade' NCO receives Order of St. George

Sgt. Kandi Huggins
1st AATF Public Affairs
1st Inf. Div., USD - N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE WARRIOR, Iraq – With one knee on the ground and his eyes closed, Sgt. 1st Class Eric Cogdell knelt before Col. Michael Pappal, the 'Devil Brigade' commander, as a future knight before a king to be recognized for his superior work of valor and honor.

Cogdell, a tanker who served in support of Operation New Dawn as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the 12th Iraqi Army Stability Transition Team, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, knelt before Pappal to be inducted into the Order of St. George.

Awarded only to officers and senior noncommissioned officers, the Order of St. George is given to recognize individual armor and cavalry leaders who have excelled in leadership and made a lasting effect on the armor community, according to Maj. Lane Bomar, a member of the Order of

St. George, and the operations, plans and training advisor for 12th IA STT.

"An armored Soldier is a master of mounted warfare," said Bomar, a San Francisco native. "But nowadays, an armored Soldier must be flexible enough to maneuver not only tanks, but Bradleys, Humvees, and Strykers, and still be able to conduct dismounted patrols and battle drills."

Although this is his first time working with Cogdell, Bomar said his first impression was that he was very professional and always willing to share whatever experience and knowledge he could. It was easy to see why Cogdell was selected to be a member of the STT and the NCOIC who worked with the 12th IA sergeant major, said Bomar.

"During this deployment, I was the NCOIC of the STT, the advisor to the 12th IA Div. sergeant major, the operations NCOIC, linguist manager and compound mayor," said Cogdell. "Before the deployment, I didn't really have a clue as to what I would be doing. I just fell into the job and the more I did, the more responsibility they gave me, to show they were confident in my abilities to do the job."

Bomar said Cogdell's work ethic is one reason he was selected for the Order of St. George.

"If he is not the guy who is leading, he is always willing to help make sure the guy who is leading is properly set for success," Bomar said. "And that is why I felt honored to nominate him for the Order of St. George."

Cogdell, a tanker throughout his time in the Army, said being recognized was a huge accomplishment in his career. Having seen the caliber of armor NCOs knighted into the Order of St. George, Cogdell said he aspired to attain the award because it is such a prestigious award for leadership.

"My parents always taught me to be in the front, to not be a follower, but a leader," said Cogdell, a Granite Falls, N.C., native. "I'm a very outgoing and open person, but have a quiet, down-to-earth type of leadership style."

"I don't see the need to yell or curse at people, however, I will speak my mind and tell you exactly what I think, and how it should be no matter what your rank is, because rank means nothing when it comes to somebody's life or training the proper way."

Cogdell said although he has worked



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

Sergeant 1st Class Eric Cogdell, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 12th Iraqi Army Stability Transition Team, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, gives a "Thank You" speech after being inducted into the Order of St. George at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, Aug. 4, 2011.

'The more I did, the more responsibility they gave me, to show they were confident in my abilities to do the job.'

**-Sgt. 1st Class Eric Cogdell
101st BSB, 1st AATF**



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

Colonel Michael Pappal, commander, 1st Advise and Assist Task Force, 1st Infantry Division, presents a medal of the Order of St. George to Sgt. 1st Class Eric Cogdell, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 12th Iraqi Army Stability Transition Team, 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div., during Cogdell's induction ceremony at Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Iraq, Aug. 4, 2011.

with great NCO and officer leaders, the biggest inspiration for his career has been his wife.

"I felt honored to (be) the one he dedicated his award to," said Rena Bartlett, Cogdell's wife. "I am happy that the work I do at home has allowed him the peace of mind and focus he needs to push himself forward to be the best Soldier he can be. I am truly honored to be a part of his success."

Married for 13 years, Bartlett said being the wife of a Soldier can be similar to being a single person, if one considers the deployments, training, and times in the field, but since meeting during his first enlistment, they made the choice to make the Army Cogdell's career.

"I support my husband 110 percent by doing the best I can to keep our foundation solid so he can focus on his career," she said. "He takes his responsibilities very seriously and even uses his down time for continuing education to help him become a better leader."

'Black Dragon' Soldiers join time-honored NCO Corps

SpC. Angel Turner
4th AAB Public Affairs
1st Cav. Div., USD - N

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE MAREZ, Iraq –As leaders in the United States Army, noncommissioned officers have a responsibility to provide outstanding leadership to the troops they lead.

Nine Soldiers assigned to 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery



U.S. Army photo by SpC. Angel Turner, 4th AAB PAO

Soldiers assigned to 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, recite the Oath of the United States Army Noncommissioned Officer during an induction ceremony on Contingency Operating Site Marez, Iraq, Aug. 5.

Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, joined the corps of noncommissioned officers, acknowledging that responsibility, during an NCO induction ceremony on Contingency Operating Site Marez, Iraq, Aug. 5.

"These Soldiers will be walking proudly across this stage to become part of one of the world's most prestigious and time honored organizations, the United States Army's Noncommissioned Officer Corps – the backbone of our Army and the envy of every other," said Command Sgt. Major Daniel Dailey, senior enlisted Soldier, 4th Infantry Division and U.S. Division – North.

During the ceremony, newly inducted Soldiers reflected on what it means to be a noncommissioned officer.

"Black Dragon" Soldiers of 5th Bn., 82nd FA Regt., reenacted the "Four Watches" of an NCO, representing the method of entering their ranks, and symbolizing the induction of their fellow junior noncommissioned officers.

"The NCO induction represents the great heritage of a noncommissioned officer," said Command Sgt. Maj. Calvin Coler, senior enlisted Soldier assigned to 5th Bn., 82nd FA Regt., and a native of New Orleans. "The epitome of being enlisted is over into the NCO ranks. This is the rite of passage, a visible sign that everyone is aware of them becoming noncommissioned officers."

As an NCO, Soldiers train and lead other Soldiers, making them better and preparing them to become leaders in the U.S. Army.

"I believe a major aspect of being an NCO is that you are a leader," said Sgt. Oriola Owokoya, a medic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, and native of Houston. "This is another step forward in my Army career. It is a great opportunity to take part in this, and I'm very proud to be inducted into the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers."

CSH, Cont'd from Pg. 7

Something as simple as keeping records of symptoms and prescribed medicine could drastically improve the Iraqi clinics' efficiency, and help the providers gauge patterns in the health and welfare of the troops they serve, said Capt. Heath Blaire, nurse practitioner, 256th CSH.

"These guys are really attentive – they want to see everything. So we have had a great opportunity to streamline the way they work," said Blaire, who calls Jupiter, Fla., home.

Blaire said, in addition an improved organization system, he would like to see the Iraqi providers begin to look at their patients as a whole, taking all of their vitals into account before zeroing in on one specific problem.

"These guys are pretty good at what they do, but most of the time when somebody comes in with a complaint, they just give

them medicine and send them on their way," Blair said. "We want to show them that they can get a better sense of a patient by being more thorough."

1st Lt. Ayyub, a nurse assigned to the Iraqi Air Force Academy Clinic, said he and his comrades have learned a great deal under the American providers' guidance.

"The Americans, especially Master Sgt. Van Over, have given us so much," Ayyub said, after shadowing the 256th CSH team. "We have learned more than just medicine from them; even today I have learned so much about what a good hospital should look like. We have already made so many improvements, but I think we can make more so that our clinic is just as good as the CSH. We owe that to the people we serve. Our patients deserve the best care we can give them."

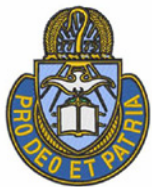
That goal unifies the Iraqi and U.S. healthcare providers.



U.S. Army photo

Lieutenant Colonel Randy Rizor, anesthesiologist, 256th Combat Support Hospital, performs a lumbar epidural steroid injection, with fluoroscopy, while Iraqi Air Force Capt. Mahmood Mohammad, a doctor assigned to the Iraqi Air Force Academy, observes at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, July 27, 2011. Every week, a medical care provider from the Iraqi Air Force Academy visits the CSH to observe their American counterparts' operating procedures.

"Whether you are a doctor in Iraq or a doctor in the United States, you still have one common goal: to treat patients; to provide the best care possible," Pauley said. "It really has been an honor to work with the providers from the Iraqi clinic."



Chaplain's Corner:

When things get in the way

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Keith N. Goode
USD-N Chaplain

It was a dark and stormy night.... Well, it was not, but that is how all the great, shadowy stories of the past began once upon a time. It was actually a very clear night, which is a good thing, because back on June 15, something happened that does not happen often: there was a total lunar eclipse over Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

The lunar eclipse is unique because it requires the earth to move between the moon and the sun, and the window on earth where this can be seen is very small. In other words, you have to be in the right place at the right time to see it. But what a sight! The moon can only reflect what it gets from our nearest friendly star. When those sun beams are interrupted, the man-in-the-moon begins to present a rather distorted face to us earth-bound folk.

It was an incredible progression to watch the normally bright, round moon be slowly eaten by the darkness. First, the brightness faded like someone was turning down the dimmer switch. Then the moon itself began to melt away as though someone was pouring water over the side of a sand castle. After that, I was reminded of one of those old Christmas tree lights we would put under our silver aluminum tree. If you're not old enough to remember, it is a lamp with a revolving disk on the front that slowly orbits, bathing the tree in blue, green, red, and yellow. This eclipse only had one color though, and the whiteness of the moonlight faded into an eerie, pale orange – the kind of orange that you saw on a dreamcicle ice cream bar as a kid.

What happened next made me think more about donuts. As the earth continued its slow movement, the shadow eventually created what could only be described like this – a soggy, orange-glazed donut that looked like it had been dipped in coffee. This was what the moon looked like at the

height of the eclipse.

Over the next half hour the process reversed itself and the shadow continued to slide across the lunar surface, taking away the soggy, restoring its full-bodied figure, and wiping the orange glaze off the man-in-the-moon's face to reveal, once again, the ghost light we know and love.

I enjoyed looking at the moon, which was transformed from a bright night light that normally guides the way on my nocturnal trips to the latrine. It made me think, "How often do our lives really reflect this eclipse?"

Each day we walk along enjoying the bright light of life, when slowly, progressively the darkness begins to cover us. Our joy fades. Our hope falters. We don't turn orange, we turn blue. What has happened? Like an eclipse, something has gotten into the way of our light.

As humans, we create no light on our own, but can only reflect the light and love we receive from God. When our lives are lived clearly in His path, we receive His light. It is a light of love that warms us, causes us to grow, makes us a blessing to others, and gives us hope. But through poor choices, or perhaps unplanned tragedy, we are eclipsed when something moves inexorably into our path and cuts off the source of our light.

In that darkness, our faces change and we become gloomy and grim. Where there was once brightness, we see only a pathetic, soggy mess. It is in this peak period that we are often faced with our greatest fears. This is when we tend to make our worst decisions. What are we to do when we find ourselves in this eclipse?

It's simple – wait. Shadows always flee and light always returns. Do not be dismayed and defeated by what is only a temporary situation. Dark difficulties are most often like the earth's steady movement through the heavens. It soon moved out of the way and the moon returned to normal. You, too, will be able to move your way

through this difficult darkness and return to the light. What is your eclipse? Relationships? Money? Supervisors? Future? Whatever it is, relax, enjoy the challenge, admire the strength of the shadow, but do not give in to the thought that this eclipse is permanent. It is not. Instead, look forward to the hour when the love of God shines on you again and there in the glory of His goodness you can reflect His light.

Then, you will be able to help others in their darkness and encourage them, reminding them of the time when your own life was just as theirs – a big, orange soggy donut.

USD-N Social Media

To read more stories and see the photos that go with them, as well as some videos, check out the links below. Read and share what you see and pass along the Soldiers' stories.

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