



COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 4, Issue 9 September 2009

Families
Deployed
Together

US, GOI PARTNER
TO RESTORE
ECONOMIC FLOW
IN SAMARRA

Iraqi Police Center
of Excellence -
Professionalism
Through Partnership



An Iraqi boy walks with a U.S. Soldier attached to Bravo Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat team, 25th Infantry Division, to the Al Lewa Primary School opening ceremony, at Al Alam, Iraq, Aug. 6. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Steven King)



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Mass casualty response drill held at Al Asad Air Base



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Partnership in Samarra to improve economic flow



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Baghdad hotel transferred back to Iraqi government

COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of
Multi-National Corps – Iraq

September 2009
Volume 4, Issue 9

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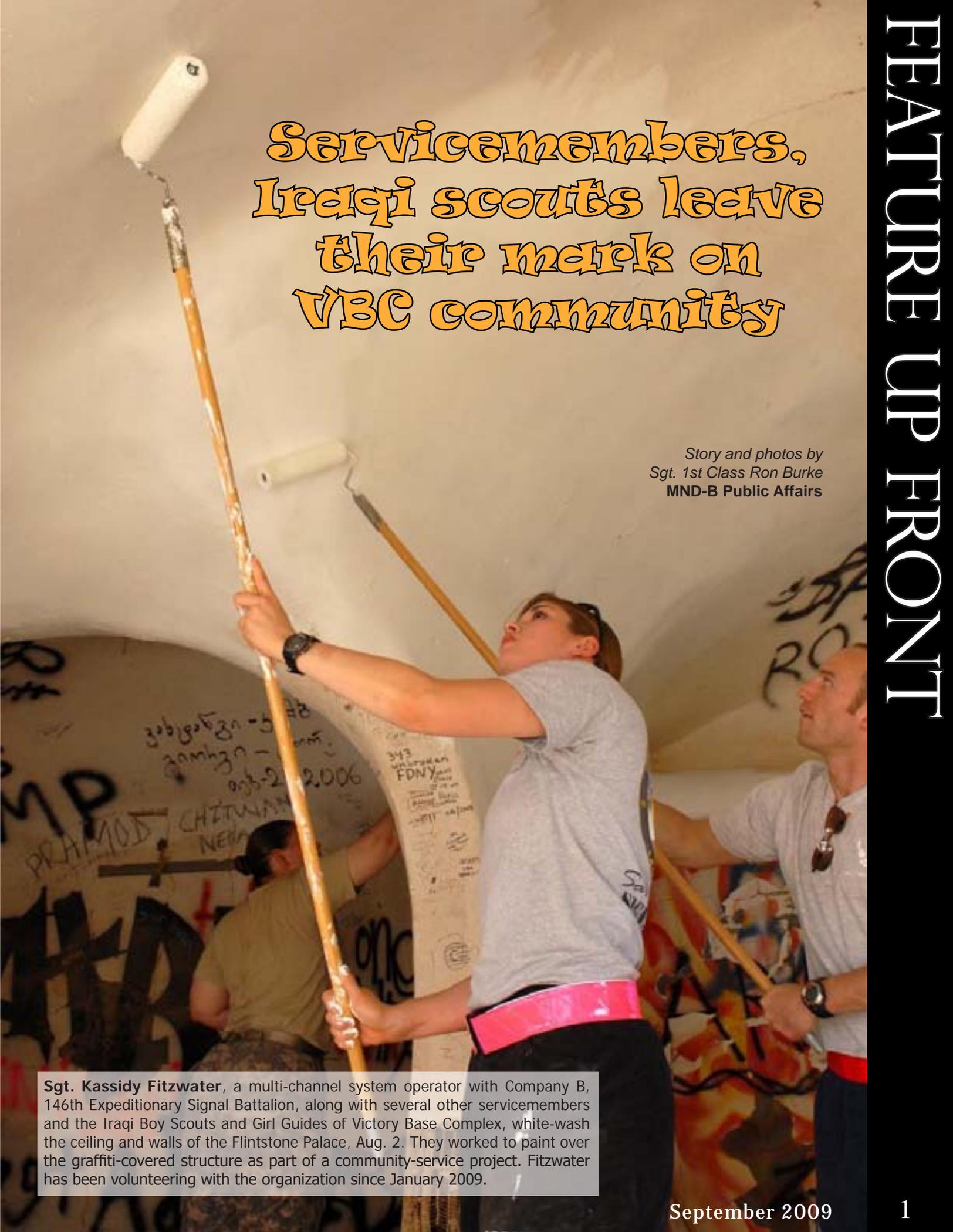
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Servicemembers, Iraqi scouts leave their mark on VBC community

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Ron Burke
MND-B Public Affairs



Sgt. Cassidy Fitzwater, a multi-channel system operator with Company B, 146th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, along with several other servicemembers and the Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides of Victory Base Complex, white-wash the ceiling and walls of the Flintstone Palace, Aug. 2. They worked to paint over the graffiti-covered structure as part of a community-service project. Fitzwater has been volunteering with the organization since January 2009.

Twenty five children lined up outside the entrance to Saddam Hussein's old Flintstone Palace, on Camp Slayer, Aug. 2. The boys and girls formed two groups, each led by a volunteer servicemember.

Maj. Gary Farley, an Iraqi Ground Forces Command Military Transition Team advisor for Multi-National Corps - Iraq, led one of the groups up the winding path to the entrance of the main structure while the other group was led around the palace to the edge of a man-made lake.

Maj. Raheem Falah, a member of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces, and Farley worked together for several months organizing events for the children. During the outing, the Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides of Victory Base Complex began a community service project and learned a little about fishing.

"Maj. Raheem wanted to do something off-site," said Farley. "We wanted to show the kids that



After painting the Flintstone Palace, Lt. Col. Don Summers, team chief of the Rapid Equipping Force, MNC-I, gets help affixing a sign to an outside wall, which reads: "Restoring one place at a time. The Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides worked to improve this site. Please keep Iraq beautiful. The future of Iraq thanks you."

this place is part of their history and that community service begins by connecting ideas and bringing people together to accomplish a mission." The Flintstone Palace was commissioned by Saddam Hussein for his grandchildren and modeled after the neighborhood in the Hanna-Barbera cartoon. Over the

years, the unused structure has fallen into disrepair in some areas and became covered with graffiti.

Inside the main structure of the palace, Farley led as the children looked around, wide-eyed, at the spray painting that accumulated over the years. A linguist explained the day's mission to the children: beautify the building after learning its history and take a break by fishing from the back porch.

The youngsters wasted no time grabbing paintbrushes and paint. With VBC servicemembers by their sides, they began white-washing the lower walls of the palace as other servicemembers took care of the higher areas with rollers.

On the porch outside,

small groups of scouts and servicemembers huddled over fishing poles, showing the children how to bait the hooks, swing the poles and cast the lines. Once the children understood what to do, they began casting lines out, disturbing the water's smooth surface with each baited hook.

Spc. David Hughes, an ammunition specialist with 2nd Platoon, 664th Ordinance Company, 10th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and 13-year-old, Mohammad picked their spot and baited their line.

"I've got a 2-year-old back home and I'd like someone to do this with my daughter if the opportunity came up," said Hughes.

On the edge of the balcony-like structure, Falah blew a whistle, signaling time for the groups to switch places. Children who were fishing eagerly entered the rounded doorway and taking up painting the graffiti-covered walls where their fellow scouts left off.

The new fishing group now stood at the water's edge, picking at the dried paint on their hands, with their eyes fixed on a linguist who explained how to set up their poles.

Back inside the main building, 1st Lt. Jacqueline Zuluaga, an ambulance platoon leader with the 256th Area Support Medical

Company, 421st Multifunctional Medical Battalion, 1st Medical Command, seemed to be everywhere at once. The Florida National Guard Soldier, and one of the event's main planners, was shoving water bottles into the icy depths of a big cooler.

"We wanted the children to paint the palace and clean up the graffiti here," she said. "It's more for them than for us. Scouting is all about giving back to the community and here they're doing that and establishing a new footprint. This can empower them to take ownership of their community," she said.

As the children moved from room to room, they stopped to marvel at the explosion of color on one large wall where artist Abdul Sajad, was hard at work painting a mural depicting a summer landscape with flowers and birds in flight.

Both groups painted and tried their hands at the new-found skill at fishing, before lining up outside the rear entrance of the building. Each child then dipped their palms in colorful paint, and left little handprints on the wall.

"The kids need to learn about giving back," said 1st Lt. Jessica Burton, 644th Ordinance Detachment, 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sus. Bde., 1st Cav. Div. "They can learn to take pride in their work and in their community. These kids weren't even allowed here in Saddam's time," said Burton, an officer in charge of an ammunition supply point.

"The handprints signify them leaving their mark and when they come back they can say 'Hey that's my hand,'" said Farley, as he watched the smiling children pressing their painted palms on the walls. "I hope this artwork deters any future graffiti," he added.



On the back porch of the Flintstone Palace, Sgt. Joshua Martin, from Task Force 1st Medical Brigade, shows Ali how to hold the fishing pole to turn the spool and reel in the line.

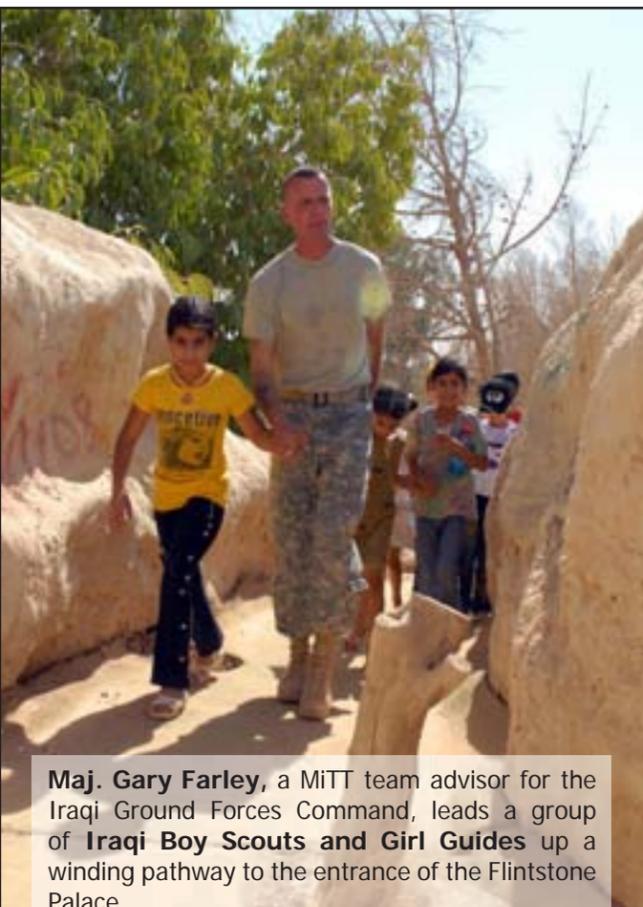
Outside the main entrance, the high-pitched squeal of a power drill attracted the scouts. A sign was being affixed to the wall. In Arabic and English, it read: "Restoring one place at a time. The Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides worked to improve this site. Please keep Iraq beautiful.

The future of Iraq thanks you."

The organization recently celebrated its one-year anniversary after establishing a scout camp and community to teach valuable scouting lessons and implement new sporting activities for the area's youth. Over 100 servicemembers have taken time from their schedules to meet with the children each Saturday.

"Another group of kids will come next month to continue the painting until it's finished," said Farley. Thanks to dedicated servicemembers and the youth of Iraq, the eyesore at the edge of Camp Slayer can be a place of pride for the community that surrounds it.

After Iraq embraced the scouting movement during the British occupation in 1921, its Boy Scout and Girl Guide program became a certified member of the World Organization Scouting Movement. Due to war and instability, it has been decertified twice. After its one-year mark this past April, the program is only growing stronger.



Maj. Gary Farley, a MiTT team advisor for the Iraqi Ground Forces Command, leads a group of Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides up a winding pathway to the entrance of the Flintstone Palace.

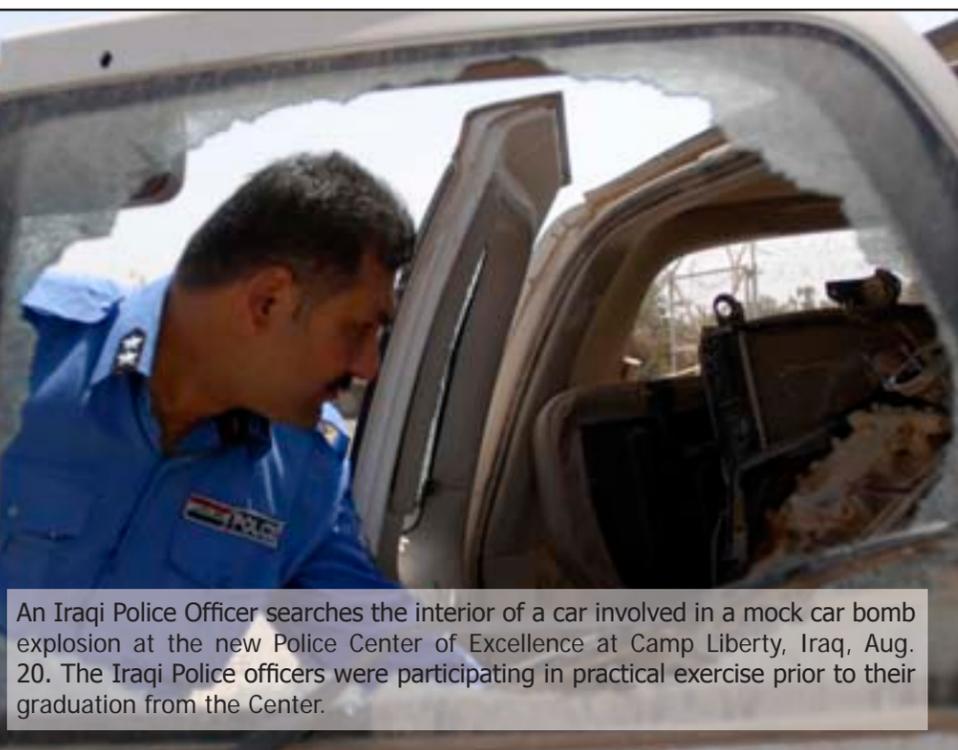


As part of a community service project, 1st Lt. Jessica Burton and 9-year-old Zaina, place yellow and blue palm prints on the newly white-washed interior walls of the Flintstone Palace, Aug. 2.

Iraqi Police Center of Excellence...

Promoting Professionalism through Partnership

An Iraqi police officer searches a mock suspect removed from the secured scene of a mock car bomb explosion at the new Police Center of Excellence located on Camp Liberty, Iraq. The suspects are played by Staff Sgt. Jerald H. Craft III, 39th MP Co., and a Center instructor.



An Iraqi Police Officer searches the interior of a car involved in a mock car bomb explosion at the new Police Center of Excellence at Camp Liberty, Iraq, Aug. 20. The Iraqi Police officers were participating in practical exercise prior to their graduation from the Center.

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Attila S. Fazekas
MNC-I Public Affairs

Shaded by an awning from the scorching afternoon sun, the first class of seasoned Iraqi Police officers graduated from a 40-hour course on basic forensics offered by the new Police Center of Excellence located on Camp Liberty, Iraq, Aug. 20.

The isolated building, which was once a hunting lodge of Saddam Hussein and most recently, the initial reception area of alleged terrorist detainees, was renovated over the past few months. Multi-National Corps-Iraq Soldiers of the 39th Military Police Company, 91st Military Police Battalion, refurbished the structure to become the home of the police center,

where advanced crime scene and investigative techniques are taught to Iraqi police.

"These guys are already police officers," said 1st. Lt. Larry T. Brink, commander, 39th MP Co., 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, MNC-I, and commandant of the center. "This is an advanced academy that offers 40-hour training blocks under the concept of in-service training."

In-service training offers refresher or additional training only to police officers. "We offer four weeks of training with specific topics covered each week. At the end of each 40-hour week, the officers receive a certificate of training with a larger certificate given to those officers that complete all four weeks," Brink added.



Iraqi Police Brig. Gen. Hussain Abdulwahid, commander of the Parole and Police Stations of Rusafa District addresses the first graduating class of the new Police Center of Excellence located on Camp Liberty, Iraq. The center teaches Iraqi Police enhanced skills in evidence gathering and documentation.



An Iraqi police officer removes a mock suspect, Staff Sgt. Jerald H. Craft III, 39th MP Co., from the secured scene of a mock car bomb explosion at the new Police Center of Excellence located on Camp Liberty, Iraq.

The police officers were taught post incident of a vehicle-born explosive device, what is considered evidence and what is not. They studied what to look for in a murder scenario and an apparent suicide, and how to secure a crime scene.

During the first week, the instructors explained how to preserve a crime scene and why overcoming some cultural aspects is necessary to preserve evidence. This was achieved with training through partnership.

"A crime scene would be destroyed due to cultural aspects like quickly removing the body or washing the blood out of the street," said Brink. "We teach them not to clean a crime scene prior to the investigation."

In the west, Americans do things a certain way; here, the Iraqis have been doing things a certain way, acknowledged Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Booker, 39th MP Co. "When you meet, the most important thing is, you want to meet on a good foundation

so you have a friend in the long-run, as opposed to making an insurgent."

"It is a partnership with the Iraqi police to train them on basic policing skills," Booker said. "We're taking all of our experience and giving them the best quality experience that's (available) anywhere in theater right now."

Prior to graduation, the Iraqi police officers were given all three crime scene scenarios to work. Staff Sgt. Jerald H. Croft III, 39th MP Co., and role player in a scenario, was caught by surprise.

"These are the same guys we trained to become police officers," Croft said. "When they saw I had an improvised explosive device trigger in my hand, they grabbed my thumb and cranked on it."

"At first it made me mad," Croft added. "But then I realized that they were doing what they were supposed to do, what we taught them to do. I thought for sure he was going to rip my thumb off."

Al Asad Air Base Tests Mass Casualty Response

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jayson Price
MNF-W Public Affairs

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Marines wearing torn, discarded Army camouflage uniforms helped each other apply imitation blood and severed limbs as they were briefed on a scenario they were expected to bring to life.

It was 4 a.m. for the Marines of 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group (Forward), and the day was just getting started.

All 52 Marines took busses to the airfield, where a mass casualty exercise would draw mass cooperation from multiple units at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Aug. 21.

A towering KC-130J military transport aircraft marked the spot where exercise coordinators directed the mock casualties to place themselves - in and around the aircraft. Some were even scattered more than 100 meters away, hiding in the sand behind slabs of concrete to make the job of rescue personnel a little harder and a little more realistic.

Just as the sun began to rise, a call went out to emergency response crews that a plane had crashed with passengers scattered and thrown from its fiery wreckage, thus beginning the exercise.

In the distance, lights of fire trucks and rescue vehicles began to tear across the horizon as first responders rushed to the scene.

“The casualties that the first responders experienced were anywhere from psychological trauma down to significant burns resulting in more than 70 percent of the body,” said Navy Lt. Payton G. Fennell, the medical officer for II MHG (Fwd). “I think that adding the level of realism is very important because a lot of times you will have injuries that look bad, however, a life threatening injury could be something that is more subtle.”

But, in this case, there were no subtleties.

Some simulated injuries included plastic body parts,

such as exposed bone, torn flesh and even severed limbs that shot dark red liquid at unsuspecting rescue personnel.

Before the exercise, each Marine received written instructions that included the type of injury they were expected to simulate. Some walked around in a daze, some screamed for help and some pretended to go crazy - going so far as to jump behind the steering wheels of parked fire trucks.

“The Army Combat Support Hospital came up with scenarios based on information gathered from past aircraft crashes,” said Fennell. “We made sure the Marines who were acting as passengers and patients understood how they would truly be acting. That way, we could further assess the medical capabilities of the responders.”

“It was truly a team effort of all of the emergency responders and medical personnel aboard base,” said Maj. Matthew Mestemaker, the anti-terrorism force protection officer for Al Asad. “The base hospital reworked their mass casualty response procedures recently and wanted to put them to the test.”

Some firemen lugged fire hoses across desert sands and went through procedures to control the imaginary fire. Others joined medical personnel and carried survivors away from the aircraft so they could be triaged and sent to the closest medical facility capable of treating their specific injury.

“The overall goals of the exercise were to ensure emergency response procedures are in place for a mass casualty, ensure emergency responders react correctly, and ensure emergency responders and the base hospital can handle an overflow of casualties,” said Mestemaker.

“As far as mass casualties go, having a scenario like this is the way to train,” said Fennell. “You never truly know what you have and what you need unless you do something like this.”

Although this mass casualty exercise involved a mock plane crash, the tactics, techniques and procedures applied by rescue personnel can be used in a wide variety of disaster scenarios involving a large number of people.

Marines wearing discarded Army uniforms, pretend to be casualties as emergency responders and medical personnel at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, respond to a simulated aircraft crash during a mass casualty exercise Aug. 21. The exercise was a team effort by emergency responders and medical personnel aboard Al Asad.



A firefighter heads toward a simulated burning aircraft during a mass casualty exercise at Asad Air Base, Iraq, Aug. 21.



A Marine “patient” pretends to be unconscious during a mass casualty exercise at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Aug. 21.

US, GOI PARTNERSHIP WORKS TO RESTORE ECONOMIC FLOW IN SAMARRA



Story and photos by Spc. Jazz Burney
MND-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – The Soldiers of the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, and 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division joined by Samarra Mayor Mahmood Khalaf Ahmed, gave \$2.5 million in financial aid to more than 900 local storeowners, Aug. 3-5.

The Government of Iraq gave micro-grants to storeowners whose businesses plummeted or shut down completely due to the placement of protective wall barriers around the city. The barriers, commonly referred to as T-walls, were put in place following the bombing of the Al Askari Mosque in February 2006.

More than 900 storeowners, whose businesses suffered from the attack, were placed on a massive list by the Samarra government. The list gave in-depth information about the business and the amount of money that each store would need. The list was also given to the mayor of Samarra and U.S. forces to put together a scheduled plan for payments.

“The U.S. forces and the mayor of Samarra provided these micro-grants right on time. This city will benefit from the reopening of many of the stores here, and cause a circular flow of funds to restore Samarra,” explained Bashar Abd Al Razzaq Khalaf, a local Samarra clothing store owner.

Soldiers sat down with individual storeowners and marveled at the strides the two nations have made.

“Seeing that we were able to come to a government center in Iraq, sit down with the Iraqi people and conduct these payments in a safe and peaceful manner ... shows how far we have come,” said Maj. Wendy Weinell of Pennsylvania, 490th Civil Affairs team leader.

Lt. Col. Sam Whitehurst, commander of 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Regt., spoke to a crowd of local storeowners prior to the payments to acknowledge the sacrifices citizens of Samarra have made.

“We have only been able to serve the people of the city due to our close

relationship to the local government in Samarra. I had the pleasure of speaking to many citizens in Samarra and have grown to know the sacrifices that they have made ... we want to recognize their sacrifices with our efforts to rebuild Samarra,” he said.

Over the course of the three-day event, the storeowners received various amounts in micro-grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

“The closure of the stores around the Golden Mosque truly hurt the economy of Samarra; many of the visitors to the city would come and shop and provide the much-needed money for the city,” said Mahmood. “With these micro-grants, we will be able to return (to) being the strong economic city that we were in previous years,” he added.

“The U.S. forces and the Samarra government have been operating in partnership and have identified that unemployment is a big issue in Samarra,” said Weinell. “If we can start to grow the businesses even a little at a time, this will lead to more jobs and drop the unemployment rate in the city,” she continued.

On the final day of payments, Soldiers walked with Mahmood down Bank Street, a busy commercial street leading up to the Golden Mosque, showing the populace their willingness to look toward the future and continue the partnering efforts of restoring the economy of Samarra.



Above: **A local Samarra storeowner** shakes the hands of Maj. Wendy Weinell of Pennsylvania, civil affairs team leader, after receiving a micro-grant payment on Bank Street in Samarra, Aug. 6.

Sgt. Cassie Stephens of Elkhart, Ind., a civil affairs noncommissioned officer, helps a local Samarra storeowner through the process of receiving a micro-grant payment at Samarra Mayor Mahmood Khalaf Ahmed's center during three days of payments, Aug. 3-5. The payments were designed to boost the economy of the city by paying storeowners whose businesses suffered following the bombing of the Al Askari Mosque in February 2006.



Staff Sgt. Eric Hinson, of Lawton Okla., pay agent and operations noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and an Arabic linguist are all smiles as a Samarran storeowner receives a micro-grant payment during three days of payments at the Samarra Mayor's Center, Aug. 3-5.

Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, commanding general of Multi-National Corps – Iraq, speaks with an Iraqi army brigadier general during a visit to the Arch of Ctesiphon, Aug. 13, in Salman Pak, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Pvt. Albino Mendoza III)



Iraqi soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Transportation Division, read from a manual during a basic Humvee maintenance course given by U.S. Soldiers from the 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, on Forward Operating Base Warhorse, near Baqouba, Iraq, Aug. 4. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Ali E. Flisek)

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Gary Roughead, visits the Iraqi Navy patrol ship Fetah (701) with Iraqi Navy Rear Adm. Ahmed Jasim, commanding officer of Umm Qasr Naval Base, Aug. 22. Roughead was in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility to meet with senior leadership and visit with Sailors and Marines. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Tiffini Jones Vanderwyst)



A Ugandan Department of Defense security contractor walks to a post to relieve his counterpart, at Forward Operating Base Diamondback, in Mosul, Iraq, Aug. 15. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Carmichael Yopez)



A Soldier from Alpha Battery 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, greets a member of the Iraqi Army during the official opening of the Municipal Courthouse, in Al Hay, Iraq, Aug. 13. The courthouse was built in cooperation with the Wasit Provincial Reconstruction Team from Forward Operating Base Delta, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brien Vorhees)



Above: An Iraqi dog handler shows his dog which direction to go during a K9 training class, at Forward Operating Base Marez, in Mosul, Iraq, Aug. 8. The Iraqi dog handlers are part of the first K9 unit in Mosul. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Carmichael Yepez)



Warrant Officer Donnie Gray, of Houston, helps Maj. Gen. Abd al-Karim, commander of Rusafa Area Command, put on welder gloves before demonstrating how to weld armor to a pickup truck to be used by Iraqi National Police. Gray is an allied trades technician with Company B, Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles)



Firefighters from downtown Kirkuk prepare to enter a burnhouse, during a training exercise conducted by firefighters from the U.S. Air Force's 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron, on Forward Operating Base Warrior, near Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 12. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Canaan Radcliffe)



U.S. Army Capt. John Turner, of Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, exchanges smiles with an Iraqi child after he and six other Iraqi children received wheelchairs, from "Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids," a U.S. charity. The wheelchairs were adjusted to fit each child with help from the U.S. Soldiers from 2/8 FA, at Forward Operating Base Lion, near Baqouba, Iraq, Aug 19. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kirk Worley)

Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Ray Mabus addresses Sailors and Marines during a tour of Al Asad Air Base, Aug. 6. Mabus thanked them for their dedicated service and their significant role in preserving security and stability in the region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin S. O'Brien)



As another UH-60 Black Hawk rides the horizon, **Spc. Kevin Hood**, Black Hawk crew chief in Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, mans a M240B machinegun as he scans the terrain for possible hazards, Aug. 18. Hood, his aircraft and its sister aircraft are headed to a training area near Baghdad, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt Travis Zielinski)



Below: (left to right) **Iraqi Air Force Lt. Ali Huessien**, assigned to the 70th Iraqi Air Force Squadron, a translator and U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. William Iuliano, from Boise, Idaho, assigned to the 84th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron, conduct a radio check before training at Contingency Operations Base, Basra, Iraq, Aug. 6. The U.S. Air Force's 84th EASOS and the U.S. Army's Echo Company, 45th Task Force C-RAM, conduct training with the 70th Iraqi Air Force Squadron, to increase the capabilities of the Iraqi Air Force, by conducting operations with ground forces, resulting in a operational capability to support Iraqi security Forces from the air. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Chrissy Best)



Spc. Anthony T. Crawford Sr., of Topeka, Kan., an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter crew chief, Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, stands as a silent sentinel while holding the American flag for fellow Soldiers who chose to reenlist during their first deployment, here. Soldiers who reenlist make a dedication to their Nation to serve another term in the Army on top of their previous enlistment. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Seandale Jackson)



Families That Deploy Together....



Capt. Marlow Taylor and 2nd Lt. LaVerne Taylor recently celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Michael Cirillo and 1st Lt. Jenny Cirillo enjoy a couple hours of fun together at the engineer's Sapper Call.

Story and photos by
1st Lt. Janeene Yarber
MND-B Public Affairs

In today's Army, 'Family First' is a main focus for Soldiers and leaders, and many families are able to deploy together, with the help of their chains of command.

Four sets of deployed family members of the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, based in Fort Polk, La., found comfort in heading downrange with relatives.

Capt. Marlow Taylor is the first to brief the command teams and staff of the 46th ECB (H) during weekly staff meetings. As an intelligence officer, his job is to identify any possible threats to the engineers working in and around Baghdad. 2nd Lt. LaVerne Taylor, Capt. Taylor's wife is responsible for briefing the administrative details of the battalion.

The couple met while in Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston in 1991, but this is their first deployment together. They recently celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary in a combat zone, and said the only challenge they face while deployed together is maintaining their small publishing company in Louisiana.

"I am grateful that I am able to share my first deployment experience with my best friend," stated 1st Lt. Taylor, who calls Houston, Texas, home.

The Cirillos met at Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga., and have celebrated their first two wedding anniversaries in Iraq. Although they face the challenge of scheduling time to see each other, they consider themselves quite lucky.

"Most families are separated during deployments," remarked 1st Lt. Michael Cirillo, executive officer, A Company, 46th ECB (H), from Baltimore, Md. "We are humble in the fact that we got to see each other daily and work together."

Santa Rosa, Calif. native, 1st

Lt. Jenny Cirillo, 46th ECB (H) assistant supply officer in charge, said it's hard knowing her husband could be in harm's way, but she's comforted by understanding what he does first-hand.

"This experience now will make all the difference later," she said, speaking of future deployments he may have. "I know I will be okay with it because I was here with him and understand."

Sgt. Christina Bowie and Sgt. 1st Class Xavier Bowie found out they would both be deploying to Iraq, but to different camps, with their separate units based at Fort Polk, La. They would also have to leave their daughter, Za'Niyah, at home while they were serving in combat.

For the husband and wife to stay together, they had to do some planning.

After doing research, the Bowies approached their chains of command and Sgt. Bowie was switched to the 258th Military Police Company, a unit deploying to the same area as her husband.

"My wife has a wonderful chain of command that promotes 'Family First,' even in a time of war," said Sgt. 1st Class Bowie, operations NCO, 46th ECB (H), of Belle Glade, Fla.

While Sgt. 1st Class Bowie works at Camp Liberty with the 46th Engineers, his wife is the supply sergeant on Camp Cropper, about a 15 minute drive across the base.

"I had a really hard time leaving my daughter, so seeing him honestly took a lot of the heartache off of my shoulders," reflected Sgt. Bowie, a native of Cleveland, Ohio. "I am so thankful we deployed together."

Specialists John and Adam Pearce have served side by side since the beginning, having joined the Army at 20 and 18-years old, respectively. The brothers say even though they are two years apart, people always assume they are twins.

They both graduated from basic training at Fort Benning and then attended AIT together. They then



Sgt. 1st Class Xavier Bowie and Sgt. Christina Bowie have been together for seven years.

decided to try to get assigned to the same first duty station.

We didn't care what base we went to as long as we were stationed together," stated Adam, the youngest.

They were assigned to the 46th ECB (H) at Fort Polk, La., as signal support specialists and deployed in June 2008.

Though they don't currently work together in the same shop, the brothers are thankful to have each other during their first deployment.

"We both miss our

family, but we rely on each other when times get hard," said older brother, John. "Having family (here) really helps."



Specialists Adam and John Pearce are often mistaken for twins.

Col. Franck T. Trainor, 364th Civil Affairs Brigade functional specialty team chief, signed a memorandum of agreement with Iraq Civil Aviation Authority assistant director, Gen. Samer Kuba, turning over control of the Caravan Hotel at Baghdad International Airport to the ICAA, Aug. 19.

Distinguished guest, Maj. Gen. James P. Hunt, Multi-National Corps - Iraq deputy commanding general, and Dr. Adnan Al Obaidy, Iraq Department of Transportation, attended the ceremony transferring the hotel to the government of Iraq.

"This event is much more than a simple transition of a building or facility," Trainor said. "This is a transition that validates the process that we have emplaced to ensure long-term sustainability and success in this venture."

The hotel was started as a Commanders Emergency Response Program project in October 2007, and completed in August 2008. The Caravan has 100 rooms; 86 are double bedrooms and 14 are single. In addition there is a gift shop, beauty salon, tourist agency, gym

and smoking café.

The hotel is part of a three facility system to jump start economic development of the BIAP area. The other two projects are an office tower and convention center.

Since it's opening in September 2008, the occupancy has continued to grow, averaging about 40-50 percent, and going as high as 90 percent when events are being held.

The official party and guest arrived at the hotel at approximately 2 p.m. Following the playing of the U.S. and Iraq national anthems, Sigma Group International manager, Hadeer Al Omary, signed the paperwork along with Trainor and Kuba.

"Sigma is an Iraqi company contracted to maintain the hotel staffing," explained Lt. Col. Schaeffer, 364th CA Brigade economic development officer. "The ICAA will ensure that their contract is continued to be honored now that the government of Iraq has taken over."

"This event will help the process for all ambassadors, important guest and businessmen to come to Iraq," Kuba said at the closing of the ceremony.

Control of Baghdad Hotel Transferred to Government of Iraq

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish
MNC-I Public Affairs

"This is a transition that validates the process that we have emplaced to ensure long-term sustainability and success in this venture."

Col. Franck T. Trainor
364th CA Brigade



Left: U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. James P. Hunt, Multi-National Corps-Iraq deputy commanding general and Col. Franck Trainor, functional speciality team leader, 364th Civil Affairs Brigade, are joined by Sabeeh Al Sheebany for refreshments before the ceremony handing over the Baghdad International Airport Hotel to the government of Iraq, Aug 19.

Jeffrey Dunn

(left) and Brian Bishop pose next to the sandbox they played in at Mather Air Force Base, Calif., in the spring of 1963. (Courtesy photo)



Childhood friends journey from one sandbox... to another

Story by Maj. Elizabeth Ortiz
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

"We've both had such long and interesting careers that share similarities, only we've experienced them from different perspectives."

"This is a perfect example of what the Air Force family is," said Bishop. "We grew up together in the Air Force, and now, the Air Force brings us back together."

Since their boyhood days, Dunn and Bishop have seen each other on several occasions over the years. The last time was in 1998, when the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, which Bishop commanded, performed at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., where Dunn was stationed.

"I was quite nervous about seeing him, as a lot of time had passed and this time was on a different footing - he was an officer and I was enlisted," said Dunn, now deployed from that same air base. "It turned out my worries were unfounded and he was the same guy I knew before."

Being reunited in Iraq has been interesting for them both. "I think it's very apropos since we have both devoted so much of our life to military service and this is where we get to apply that collective knowledge," responded Dunn, who is on his fourth deployment in the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility. "I was apprehensive after 10 years to see if the pressures of leadership had changed him. I was glad to see how natural and sincere he was while he addressed everyone as the wing commander."

"I am truly proud to serve under him," he added, "especially in this environment."

Recently at Ali Base, Bishop, who is deployed here from Headquarters Air Force, the Pentagon, presented Dunn with the Society of American Military Engineers Goddard Medal for the active-duty component - an annual Air Force-level civil engineering award.

"Being deployed, I could not attend the banquet," the sergeant said. "Gen. Bishop presenting it over here was a great alternative and, of course, meant a lot personally!"

Not surprisingly, being deployed together has led to a "flurry of e-mails bouncing around between our parents," said Dunn.

"I know our folks are also happy about us serving together and I'm sure it will make this year's Christmas newsletter," he continued. "We are still their 'little boys.'"

Set to redeploy in July, the childhood buddies have come a long way since their original sandbox days. No doubt, there's another reunion or two in store for them.

"You never know who you're going to run into or work with," said Bishop. "And it's like you've been connected the whole time."

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq — Growing up at Mather Air Force Base, Calif., in the early 1960s, Tonka trucks, road graders and scoop shovels were Jeffrey Dunn's favorite toys. Four houses away, his best friend, Brian Bishop, preferred airplanes. Building roads and constructing runways in a sandbox Jeff's dad built behind the Dunn house, the boys played together nearly every day.

Over the years, these childhood adventures led Jeff and Brian to pursue careers in the Air Force. One of them became a "dirtboy," the other a fighter pilot. By and large, they kept in touch through the "parent grapevine."

Today, Jeff is Master Sgt. Jeff Dunn, 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron horizontal section chief at Ali Base, Iraq. Brian is now Brig. Gen. Brian Bishop, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. Forty-six years later, the two childhood buddies are reunited in another "sandbox" ... Iraq.

Since Dunn's higher headquarters, the 407th Air Expeditionary Group, organizationally falls under the 332nd AEW, he and Bishop have had a chance to catch up.

When they saw each other again for the first time, Bishop held out his hand and said, "Look at you!" In response, Dunn rubbed the star on the general's collar and said, "Look at you!"

"Meeting a childhood friend when he is now a brigadier general and your boss could be a little intimidating," Dunn said later.



Brig. Gen. Brian Bishop, 332nd AEW, commander, and Master Sgt. Jeffrey Dunn, 407th ECES horizontal section chief, pose in an Iraqi "sandbox," this January.

IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF SERVICEMEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN AUGUST 1 AND
AUGUST 31, 2009 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

**GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS: THAT A MAN LAY
DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.**

JOHN 15:13

August 4

Pvt. Keiffer P. Wilhelm, 19

August 10

Spc. Richard A. Walters Jr., 41

August 17

Spc. Matthew D. Hastings, 23

August 19

Pfc. William Z. VanOsdol, 23

August 23

2nd Lt. Joseph D. Fortin, 22

August 23

Sgt. Earl D. Werner, 38

Pvt. Taylor D. Marks, 19

August 28

Sgt. Earl D. Werner, 38

Pvt. Taylor D. Marks, 19



Two CR-34 patrol boats approach the Al Basrah Oil Terminal, Aug. 18, after patrolling the waters surrounding the terminal and performing maritime security operations. The ABOT is an Iraqi-run oil facility in which U.S. maritime security forces have been invited to help defend Iraq's oil distribution. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joseph M. Buliavac)