

The North Star

Serving Task Force Marne
U. S. Division- North, Iraq



Volume 1, Issue 31

January 13, 2010

Iraqi bazaars spur employment

By Spc. Shantelle Campbell
4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

As U.S. forces continue to responsibly withdraw out of Iraq, more facilities run by the U.S. are being turned over to Iraqi residents.

Members of the Sons of Iraq and local sheiks gathered inside a conference room with the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan., to sign a number of contracts that will produce Iraqi employment, Jan. 7 on Joint Base Balad.

A variety of the contracts that were signed were for the bazaars that are ran on the Al Bakr Airfield, also known as Joint Base Balad, said Capt. Paul Thomas, of Baltimore, Md., commander of Company D, 1/28 Inf.

"This is an opportunity to continue the outreach from the base to the people of the community," Capt. Thomas said. "(It will) give them the opportunity to have employment on the base, along with the positive influence and economic benefits of having this large base in their area."

The signing was in conjunction with Al Bakr Airfield's Good Neighbor Campaign Plan. The campaign provides working contracts to the local people in the surrounding communities.

"In the near term, this helps to employ local nationals; but, the money that spreads out in the community by going through a variety of local sheiks, directly benefits security and the gen-



Photo by Spc. Shantelle Campbell, 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

Local sheiks and members of the Sons of Iraq sign contracts for bazaars located on Al Bakr Airfield, Jan. 7 in Balad. The signing, overseen by the 1/28th Inf., 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., out of Fort Riley, Kan., was in conjunction with the Al Bakr Airfield Good Neighbor Campaign Plan.

eral social situation," Capt. Thomas said. "(It will) help spread the word that we are not here as occupiers but as partners for Iraq's future."

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Eric Timmerman, "Black Lions" battalion commander, talked about the unit's plan to continue to work with its Iraqi partners in improving employment opportunities in Balad.

"Since my task force has come here, we have worked very closely with General Franklin and members of Al Bakr

Airfield's [senior staff] to identify over 40 separate projects and initiatives that employ local Iraqis for the betterment of the local populace," Lt. Col. Timmerman said.

Along with the bazaar retail initiative, Timmerman added that through outreach programs within the local medical community, many Iraqi medical personnel and administrators have worked with local clinics in Balad and that plans to extend the outreach program to Samarra are ongoing.

Soldier meets favorite coach on leave

By Staff Sgt. Melanie Trollinger
130th Eng. Bde. PAO

For one Soldier home on leave from Iraq, the chance to meet his favorite football team's head coach never crossed his mind.

Private first class Sean Hearn, of Pflugerville, Texas, was excited though, when he got the opportunity for an unexpected meeting in November.

Glad to be home for a few weeks from Iraq, where he is deployed with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 130th Engineer Brigade, the first thing he did was catch the Texas-Central Florida game on T.V.

His long-time friend, Longhorns starting fullback Antwaan Cobb, called him after the game.

The two friends met up, watched some football at home and made plans to meet up at the University of Texas football stadium later in the week.

"We toured the entire 40-acre complex: the stadium, locker room, film room, practice facility, everything. My friend asked if I wanted to find Coach Mack Brown.

He wasn't there, but when his secretary called him and told him there was a Soldier home from Iraq on leave, he was there within 10 minutes," Pfc. Hearn said.

Coach Brown, whom Pfc. Hearn said spent eight days in Iraq this summer meeting servicemembers and offering support, talked about Iraq, football and family. They also talked

about Pfc. Hearn's younger brother, who was killed in Iraq on Memorial Day in 2007.

Coach Brown gave Pfc. Hearn a tour of his office, which the Soldier described as a small museum filled with pictures, signed footballs, trophies and Longhorns memorabilia.

He told Pfc. Hearn he understands the sacrifices the men and women in uniform make and tries to instill in his football players to be grateful for what they have because he knows the sacrifices servicemembers are making for them.

"The one thing that stands out to me is how much Coach Brown cares about Soldiers," said Pfc. Hearn.

"He's a hero to every Texas Longhorns fan," he added. "But here he is talking about how much he appreciates us. I'd say he was just as interested in me as I was in him."

At the time of Pfc. Hearn's visit home, he said the Longhorns were two games away from going to the National championships.

Meeting not only the coach, but all the players as well, Hearn said, was amazing, especially since Texas football is the one thing he looks forward to every year.

"I can't even tell you how much meeting [Coach Brown] meant to me. That was probably one of the best days of my life," Pfc. Hearn said.

Private First Class Hearn, an electrician with the 130th Eng. Bde., is currently working with the brigade's Combat Security Team.



Courtesy photo

Private First Class Sean Hearn holds Earl Campbell's original Heisman Trophy during a visit with University of Texas Longhorns head coach, Mack Brown. Private First Class Hearn, of Pflugerville, Texas, was home on leave from Iraq in November.

Editor's Note: This article first ran in the "The North Star" Nov. 30. We're printing it again to encourage Soldiers to spend their R&R sightseeing and visiting Family Members to take full advantage of their combat-free vacation. Soldiers should not isolate themselves, and on the other side of the spectrum, servicemembers should not spend out of control, eat out of control, and not get enough sleep.

Make realistic plans for R&R

Special to the North Star

"Rest and Recuperation" during a deployment is looked forward to with great anticipation. R&R is a happy time for couples, children, extended Family, and servicemembers. It's normal to have fantasies about what time together will be like.

But don't try to plan everything down to the exact minute. Let things happen naturally.

The best way to ensure R&R doesn't become stressful and counter its pur-

pose is to plan and communicate with Family and friends ahead of schedule.

Use phone calls, e-mails, or letters to share ideas and plan to use the time appropriately.

However, don't overschedule yourself. Most servicemembers appreciate just being home with Family at this time.

Resist the temptation to do too much. Instead of late-night partying, focus on relaxation, downtime, and spending time with your loved ones.

Take advantage of the services and

programs available to you through the military.

Check out militaryonesource.com for traveling tips.

If you live on or near a military installation, consider using one of the many support services available, including the installation chaplain or Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

Then record the special moments by taking lots of pictures of your vacation to bring back to Iraq and share with your comrades.

If you did anything interesting, share it with your Public Affairs Office, so we all can read about it in the "North Star".

Soldiers able to file taxes while in Iraq

By Capt. Todd Chard
Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

Tax season is here! It is true that as a deployed servicemember you are entitled to an automatic filing extension that allows you to delay filing past April 15. This is, however, not necessarily a benefit to the majority of us expecting a refund.

If you are due a refund, consider filing earlier rather than later. Put the stress and anxiety of filing behind you now so you don't have to worry about it after redeployment, and remember, money now is always better than money later. Here are a couple of ways to accomplish filing, even from your deployed location:

1) The IRS offers a "free file" program for taxpayers with an adjusted gross income of \$54,000 or less. Many military members will meet this

required income threshold because of the combat tax exclusion. Beginning Jan. 15, simply go to www.irs.gov and click "freefile" to take advantage of this mechanism. Other on-line preparers such as "Turbo Tax" also offer discounts to deployed servicemembers when using their site, but be careful – free preparation does not always mean free filing.

2) Many military installations provide tax centers on post where trained personnel assist with preparing returns and electronic filing, free of charge to military ID cardholders. If you know a military ID cardholder you trust and who can travel to an installation offering this service, designate that person to file your taxes on post by giving them a special power of attorney. Installations vary the scope of tax services they provide annually, so

please contact our office or your installation of choice to determine what tax services are available per location.

3) Military One Source (www.militaryonesource.com or 800-730-3802) is also available for free consultation (24/7, available in Spanish) on preparing returns, and servicemembers can file directly through the company's contracted commercial tax preparer.

The TF Marne Client Services Office stands ready to provide general guidance on tax matters. We are temporarily located at Conner Hall, Building 3001 (Corner of Stars & Stripes Blvd. and Screaming Eagle Way, a block from the Main PX). Contact Capt. Todd Chard via email (todd.chard@us.army.mil), telephone (DSN: 849-0069), or stop in any time Monday through Saturday 8:30 a.m.- 8 p.m.

First U.S., Iraqi patrol conducted in Hawijah

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs,
1BCT, 1st AD PAO

Hawijah Iraqi Police Station 3, Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 46th Iraqi Army Brigade along with their partners from the Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor of the Ready First Combat Team, also known at the "Bandits" of Fort Bliss, Texas, worked together for the first time in a combined dismounted patrol in the city of Hawijah, Iraq, Jan. 4.

"This mission was a small part of a larger mission that ISF and the Bandits will continue to work on together throughout their time here," said 1st Sgt. Frederick Nash, a native of Colfax, La., and the first sergeant for HHC.

"The main mission between the ISF and their Bandit partners is gaining the trust of the people in Hawijah and denying the violent extremist networks a safehaven here," 1st Sgt. Nash said. "Together, ISF and the Bandits successfully completed the mission today, but it was just a small step."

According to 1st Sgt. Nash, the partnership was able to provide more than 150 bags of food and other household



Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1BCT, 1st AD PAO
Lieutenant Colonel Geoffery Catlett, the commander of 1/37th AR, 1BCT, 1st AD, talks to Major Hatam Nzli Knln, Iraqi police chief for Hawijah Station 3, after completing a joint patrol between the Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army and U.S. Forces in Hawijah, Iraq, Jan. 4.

goods to families in need throughout the area.

"The ISF and Bandits were able to show the neighborhood they are here to help them, and they care for the people in the city," said Maj. Hatam Nzli Knln, police chief for Hawijah Station 3.

"We also opened up the lines of

communication by giving out numbers for the citizens to call to report any trouble," Maj. Hatam said. "In the end, we formed a better relationship with the citizens of Hawijah by doing this patrol.

They know we are here to support them and will do anything to keep the extremists out of their city."

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Jonathan Hughes, of Seattle, Wash., is with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 130th Engineer Brigade. He recently transitioned from the day shift to the night shift and handles his night-shift duties with no supervision. He performs an extensive amount of intelligence research from multiple sources, effectively fusing the data into a usable product. Specialist Hughes excels at molding threat reporting into an outstanding and highly accurate picture of the battlefield. His attention to detail and analytical skills excel for a Soldier of his rank and experience and have increased the situational awareness of the brigade staff and adjacent units throughout United States Division - North's area of operations. Specialist Hughes also analyzes significant actions reports to create special products displaying threats to the various projects the brigade oversees. His professionalism and dedication to duty make him a most deserving choice for Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Staff Sergeant Tahni Wilder, of Apple Valley, Calif., is with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 130th Engineer Brigade. She is in engineer equipment noncommissioned officer in charge and squad leader for the Commander's Security Team platoon. Staff Sergeant Wilder has distinguished herself by her detailed and all-encompassing mission planning, keen understanding of counterinsurgency tactics and thorough security during mounted and dismounted patrols. She volunteers her extra time to mentor Soldiers within the platoon for upcoming Soldier and promotion boards and exhibits the "Be, Know, Do" characteristics of an NCO, setting the example for all Soldiers and NCOs to follow. Staff Sergeant Wilder's dedication to the mission and team exemplifies the Army values of duty, loyalty, respect and honor and have earned her the honor of being selected as today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

Arba'een commemorates martyrdom 40 days after Ashura

Cultural Tidbit

Special to the North Star

In many Islamic cultures, the length of mourning is 40 days.

This happened because Imam Muhammad al-Baqir stated the heavens wept for 40 mornings over the death of Imam Husayn, and Muslims should mourn his death for that period of time.

To Shi'ia Muslims, Arba'een happens 40 days after Ashura, when Husayn was killed by Yazid I of the Umayyad Caliphate.

One of the central figures in telling Muslims of this day's meaning is Imam Zain-ul-Abideen, who devoted his life to this cause after being too ill to fight at the Battle of Karbala, where Husayn was beheaded.

The occasion reminds the faithful what Husayn's martyrdom was for: establishing justice and fighting injustice, no matter what form it takes.

The first Arba'een was held in 62 A.D. by Jamir ibn Abdullah, a companion of the prophet.

He made the pilgrimage to

Husayn's burial site in Karbala, which is the third holy place of Shi'ia Islam because this city is where Husayn was executed.

During this time many crawl through the streets while others fall on their hands and knees as they approach the shrine to show humility.

Public observances of Arba'een were banned under Saddam Hussein. Since then, the observance in Karbala has been broadcast worldwide, and attended by more Muslims every year.

Violent clashes have been common since Shi'ias have been allowed to publicly demonstrate during Arba'een. In 2008, more than 39,000 troops and policemen provided security to stop any potential violence. However, in the last few years, public demonstrations on this day have become more peaceful.

With the advent of peaceful Ashura demonstrations alongside peaceful Arba'een demonstrations, this signals Shi'ias are able to practice their religions freely in Iraq now.

The number 40 is important in

Muslim culture. Muslims believe if someone performs good deeds constantly for 40 days, they will be blessed by Allah.

Arba'een literally translates to 40 in English. In the Persian language, the day is called Chehlum. There are many Muslims, especially in Iran, a predominantly Shi'ia nation, who speak Persian.

In that country, Arba'een protests were credited with the beginning of the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in the late 1970s.

In 2009, it is estimated that 14 million made the pilgrimage to Karbala. This year, that number is expected to rise. Pilgrims come from all over the world, including pilgrims from Europe and central Asia.

Because the Muslim calendar and Gregorian calendar are different, Arba'een happens at a different time every year. According to the Muslim calendar, it will fall on the 20th day of the month Safar. According to the Gregorian calendar, the event will happen sometime in early February.

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Arkansas City woman outlives birthplace

United Press International

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan.- Ask soon-to-be 100-year-old Wanda Henderson what the secret of long life is and she'll tell you she doesn't know.

She just knows what works for her: Keeping active and trusting in God.

"I think that has a lot to do with it for me," responded Henderson, an Arkansas City resident, in a Traveler interview Jan. 7. She was asked to give her advice to younger people for living a long, healthy life.

Today, Henderson will turn 100. She will be honored at the Presbyterian Manor, where she has an apartment. Later, on Jan. 16, her family will honor her at a come-and-go reception from at the Arkansas City Church of Christ.

Henderson is a native of Hewins, a village near Cedar Vale that no longer exists. Born there in 1910, she grew up poor and had to pitch in to help support her family.

Cats spent 5 1/2 days trapped in wall

www.11alive.com

AUSTIN, Texas- A Texas woman said her three cats spent 5 1/2 days trapped in the walls of her apartment after maintenance workers performed repairs.

Jackie Tucker said maintenance crews removed mold from her closet

wall while she was out of town and she returned to her Austin apartment to find her cats, Luna, Harley and Mustang, were trapped inside the walls, KXAN-TV, Austin, reported Jan. 7.

Tucker said workers returned and removed a few inches of the wall and the cats eventually wandered out once they felt comfortable enough to emerge.

However, Tucker's cats are facing further problems as Ranier Property Management officials told her she did not have permission to have the felines in her apartment.

Tucker said she does not want to remain in her apartment, as the workers freeing the cats uncovered more mold in her walls.

"In the way, the cats getting in there is kind of a blessing," she said.

Prints on teeth lead to burglary suspect

United Press International

SEATTLE- Seattle police said fingerprints on human teeth discovered in a bag on a sidewalk led to a suspect in a string of dental clinic and laboratory burglaries.

King County Deputy Prosecutor Maurice Classen said investigators found fingerprints belonging to

Shane Carlson, 26, on human teeth discovered in a bag left on a North Seattle sidewalk in October, The Seattle Times reported Jan. 7.

Police said Carlson, who has

numerous previous convictions for home, office and car burglaries, is now a suspect in at least 35 burglaries.

Authorities in Seattle have filed charges against Carlson including two counts of second-degree burglary, possession of stolen property, possession of OxyContin and possession of methamphetamine.

Name the Caption



Courtesy photo

A photo is worth a thousand words. It's worth even more with a snappy cutline. Submit a creative caption and get it published in next week's "North Star." There are multifarious reasons this cute little kitty is chuckling. Give us one. E-mail marcia.triggs@3id.army.mil.

THE North Star

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2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

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2nd Infantry Division
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