

The North Star

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



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Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1BCT, 1st AD PAO

Punisher Soldiers from 3rd Plt., Co. D, 1/37th AR, 1HBCT, 1st AD, and their partners from 46th Bde., 12th IA Div. train on loading and unloading a Blackhawk for an air assault at their shared compound, PB Gaines-Mills, Jan. 20.

Soldiers train, live with IA partners

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

A single blue door separates the 46th Brigade, 12th Iraqi Army Division and the “Punisher” Soldiers of 3rd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, at their shared compound, Patrol Base Gaines-Mills. And the Soldiers here wouldn’t have it any other way.

The Punishers have more training opportunities than other elements in Kirkuk, according to Pfc. Michael Crownover, a Colorado Springs, Colo., native and a gunner for the Punishers.

“Since we live with our partners we can train or go on missions anytime the IA wants to; within minutes.”

This is a true advantage for the Punishers and their IA partners; the numbers can prove it. Together they have been on more than 45 missions, discovered nine separate caches and captured many insurgents that were involved in planting improvised explosive devices, since they arrived here nearly two months ago.

Living together not only gives the partnership an advantage with missions, but also allows the training of IA soldiers to be more in depth and personable.

“I think they respect us more because we live with them,” said Pfc. Crownover. “It allows us to assist them anytime they need it.”

Assisting their IA partners is exactly what these Soldiers do on a daily basis.

At Gaines-Mills the infantry Soldiers are able to train the IA Commando Company in everything from basic weaponry to how to conduct air assaults. The leadership for the Punishers is able to provide assistance to their IA counterparts and mechanics are able to give hands-on training to the IA mechanics.

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3ID Soldier uses honesty to foster relationships

By Capt. Tim Mills
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Saying “No,” is difficult. Many work tirelessly to avoid it. So what’s it like to have a job where you can’t say, “Yes?”

Staff Sergeant Keshon Henry is the platoon leader for the 1st Personal Security Detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. Part of his job is to meet weekly with key leaders in the Salah ad-Din province.

This week the room is full. The audience listens as a local sheik expresses his discontent with a contractor from a different tribe working in their area. His frustration is that the contractor is renting construction equipment and hauling sand and gravel from a different tribe’s area rather than “buying locally.”

“If he needs more shovels, he’s going back to his city and renting ten more shovels,” said Mukhtar Salam Salaman Hamad, the Sons of Iraq Leader of the Al Douri Tribe. “Let’s say at the same time he needs gravel. He goes back to his area and gets that gravel from his area. We even offered him a cheaper price from our area.”

To sit in the midst of discontent and not agree, pick a side or make a promise is a challenging task, but for Staff Sgt. Henry it’s business as usual. Taking these chal-

lenges head on and focusing the dialogue on what will assist Iraqi leaders in moving Iraq forward is what makes Staff Sgt. Henry the right person for the job.

“We can’t assure them anything,” said Staff Sgt. Henry. “We need to focus on the elections. We don’t approve projects as the security detachment.”

Finding a break in the conversation, Staff Sgt. Henry brought the meeting back on track and discussed security preparations for the elections.

As the meeting closed, Staff Sgt. Henry was notified of another situation.

In a nearby room, a mother sat on a couch with three young girls. The woman came to the local police station seeking care for her husband’s hearing problem.

She was told that if she acquired a letter from U.S. forces her husband

could have an operation to fix his hearing.

Staff Sergeant Henry knew there was nothing he could do because it wasn’t a life-threatening injury.

Lieutenant Colonel Ghazi Hamed Goma’a, station commander of the Al Aswar Iraqi Police Station in Al Sequor, offered to relay the message to the family, but Staff Sgt. Henry very deliberately said that he would go and talk to her.

“I want her to hear it straight from me,” said Staff Sgt. Henry, who doesn’t want the Iraqi Army or Police to have to speak on behalf of United States Division – North. “I’d rather they hear it from me.”

After meeting the mother, she handed Staff Sgt. Henry a packet written in English. He read through it, and explained that there was nothing he could do.

The disheartened woman nodded with understanding, picked up her family and left the room.

“I wish I could help them,” said Staff Sgt. Henry. “I wish I could say, ‘Yes.’ It kind of sucks to tell people, ‘no.’ You want to put them in your truck, bring them back to base and say, ‘What can you do for this person?’ but you can’t.”

However, Staff Sgt. Henry admits that by telling it like it is allows a person to pursue a different approach rather than place hope in a failed direction.

“I don’t give people the run around,” said Staff Sgt. Henry. “I’m not that type of person, so I’m not going to do that to them.”



Photo by Capt. Tim Mills, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Staff Sergeant Keshon Henry, (right) with HHSC, DSTB, 3rd ID, listens as an Iraqi woman requests medical assistance for her husband, Jan. 21, at the Al Aswar Iraqi Police Station in Al Sequor. As a platoon leader, Staff Sgt. Henry meets with the local sheiks and Iraqi Police commander to discuss security.

Battlefield promotions allow faster growth for paramount Soldiers

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson
TF Marne PAO

For Soldiers in the rank of sergeant or below, who are deemed to be of the utmost caliber by their brigade commander and brigade command sergeant major, certain requirements to earn the rank of sergeant or staff sergeant can be waived under the

battlefield promotion program.

Battlefield promotions remove many of the standard requirements for promotions and instead impose their own specific requirements and restrictions.

“The biggest difference [between regular and battle field promotions] is that some of the regulatory guidance does not apply,” explained Sgt. 1st

Class Jack Cleff, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Task Force Marne G-1 Human Resources Section. “For example, time-in-grade and time-in-service don’t apply.

Soldiers don’t have to be in a promotable status; they don’t have to appear before a promotion board and

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Captain Muhammad Husan, the Commando co. commander spoke very highly of the training that the Punishers hold for his soldiers.

"The class that is being held today is on the last day," said Capt. Muhammad. "I am very confident that they have been trained so well that they will be able to come back and teach other Soldiers in the company what they have learned."

These are the results the Punishers are looking for; they want the IA to be able to stand on their own and because we train, work and live together this mission will be accomplished at a different level than other elements in the area, according to Sgt. Rodney Owens, a Long Beach, Calif., native, and a gunner for the Punishers.



Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1BCT, 1st AD PAO
A Punisher Soldier of 3rd Plt., Co. D, 1/37th AR, 1HBCT, 1st AD, and his partner from 46th Bde., 12th IA Div. train on loading a Blackhawk at their shared compound, PB Gaines-Mills, Jan. 20.

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[promotion point] cutoff scores are out the window."

However, battlefield promotions are not handed out like candy. They are regulated at the U. S. Forces - Iraq level and each division is only allowed a specific amount of battlefield promotions.

"Every quarter we get allocations from USF-I as far as how many promotions we can give to certain rank," said Sgt. 1st. Class Cleff. "We break them down per brigade based on unit strength and the number of Soldiers in that specific rank. Promotions to private two and private first class are unlimited, so a brigade could literally promote every private in the brigade. The majority of the battlefield promotion packets we see are for private first class to specialist and specialist to sergeant, but those allocations are limited and change every quarter."

To be considered for a battlefield

promotion, Soldiers must display exceptional leadership and performance that clearly distinguish them from their peers and is expected of a higher rank.

One of the most important things that go into a battlefield promotion packet is the letter of recommendation from the brigade commander and brigade command sergeant major, showing that the Soldier is excelling while working in a grade position above the one they currently hold, said Capt. Toni Brown, the TF Marne G-1 Human Resources Section officer in charge.

The only other documents required are the Department of the Army form 4187 requesting the promotion, DA form 4187-1-R endorsed by the Soldier's NCO support channel (from first sergeant through the brigade command sergeant major) and the enlisted record brief. Promotion to staff sergeant is conditional for any Soldier

who has not completed the Warrior Leader Course.

Non-WLC graduates promoted to staff sergeant under the provisions of the battlefield promotion program must complete WLC within 270 days of their redeployment. Failure to complete WLC will result in an administrative reduction to sergeant unless an extension is approved. The approval authority for the extension request for Soldiers who are beyond the 270 days Noncommissioned Officer Education System requirement is Department of the Army G-1.

All Soldiers should always strive for excellence and never accept anything less than the best quality of work from themselves. For Soldiers who are consistently performing at higher than expected levels and who show leadership qualities that surpass their rank, battlefield promotions give credit where it is due.

Support ground ATHP and turn in all amnesty for drawdown retrograde

The ground ammo transfer and holding point, located behind the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Building on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, will be conducting an Am-

nesty day every first day of the month, Jan. 1st- April 1st.

This will give Speicher units the chance to clean up their AO of all unneeded ammunition.

No appointments necessary, walk-ins will be seen.

ATHP hours for the Amnesty day will be 7 a.m- 3 p.m.

The ATHP Personnel are all Profes-

sional Ammunition Specialist and fully support and uphold the Amnesty program and policy. No questions asked.

They just want your Junk ammo.

Keep safety first if you have an amnesty box with something that looks unsafe. Inform the personnel at the ATHP and arrangements will be made for pick-up.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Devin Colon, of Mills, Wyo., is a construction equipment repairer for Forward Support Company, 1st Engineer Battalion. She goes above and beyond her daily duties by stepping up to be a driver in the combat logistic patrol (CLP). In just over a month, Spc. Colon has driven on 14 missions totalling more than 2,800 kilometers. She also trained Iraqis on safe operation and maintenance of construction equipment and other new vehicles in the Iraqi rolling fleet at four separate Iraqi bases. Specialist Colon provides daily maintenance expertise for the CLP vehicles, helping to ensure that the patrol's fleet is maintained and properly serviced to accomplish its mission. These qualities and her outstanding commitment to mission success, make her a clear choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Specialist Stephan Stothers, of Oxford, Mich., is with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat team, 2nd Infantry Division. He is a mortar gunner who performed admirably during a recent training event in support of the 2nd Battalion, 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division. Specialist Stothers instructed the Iraqi soldiers in numerous mortar gunnery drills, including placing the mortar in and out of action and direct laying the mortar. By the end of the training event, the 2/19th soldiers were placing and recovering their 60mm mortar and spotting their poles for direct lay without assistance or guidance. Specialist Stothers showed extensive knowledge and motivation while training the IA on mortar operation and has shown time and time again that he is a valuable to his mortar section. His professionalism, competence and can-do attitude make him an easy choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

You're invited

Thund-Her-Struck

"The Ultimate all-girl tribute to AC/DC"

When: Jan. 25, 8 p.m.

Where: COB Speicher Main Gym

Mass Re-enlistment

When: Jan. 27, 2 p.m.

Where: COB Speicher
Soccer Stadium

The Great Aloha Run

When: Feb. 1, 8:10 a.m.

Registration is from 6:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. at the South Dining Facility

Where: South Morale, Welfare and Recreation

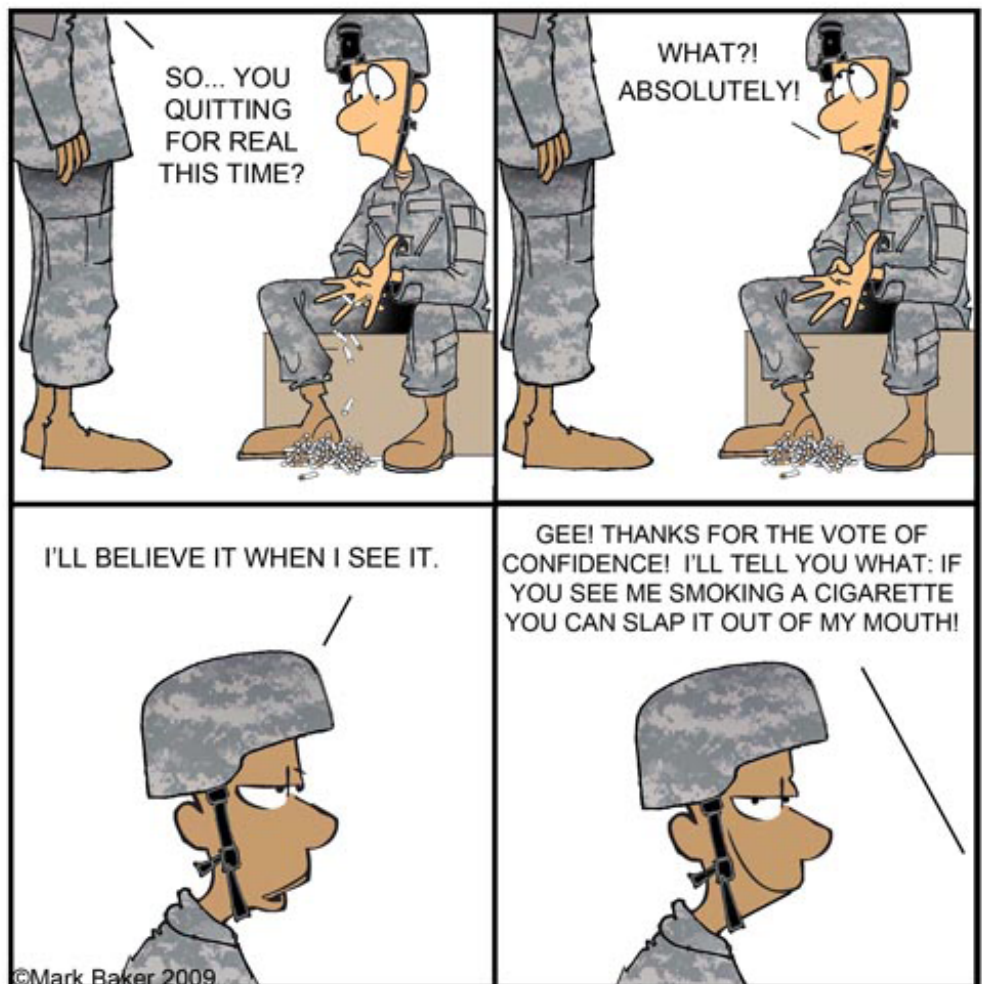
Houston Cheerleaders

When: Feb 5-8

Where: To be determined

Passport Info

The office of the Staff Judge Advocate will not be processing passport applications from Jan. 26 - Feb. 12



REGIONAL HEADLINES

Cash-strapped county defends wallpaper

United Press International

DECATUR, Ga.- Officials in a Georgia county facing a \$50 million deficit said a \$101,000 wallpapering project is a necessary measure to repair damaged facilities.

DeKalb County Commissioner Connie Stokes, chairwoman of the budget committee, said the contract approved last week for wallpapering and painting county buildings was a necessary measure despite the \$50 million deficit in next year's budget from a decline in tax revenue, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported, Jan. 21.

"I had the same concern too about why are we doing wallpapering. But they told us it's all for replacement for flood or water-damaged wallpaper," Stokes said Jan. 19. "They're not decorating and adding new wallpaper."

Angela Walton, a county spokeswoman, said officials chose the lowest of 12 bids for the year-long contract.

She said Southern Perfection Painting Inc. in Snellville, Ga., will be responsible for wallpapering and painting at several county buildings.

"This does not pertain to any individual's office, but to the needs of the county on an as needed basis," Walton said. "This is regular maintenance and has been an existing contract with the county for several years."

Missing Tiger Found in Van Zandt County

NBCDFW.com

VAN ZANDT COUNTY, Texas- A tiger reported missing in Van Zandt County has been found and secured.

The 400-pound female tiger was reported to be on the run after escaping its enclosure during a storm, Jan. 20. A Van Zandt Sheriff's Department deputy said he thought he spotted the tiger the same day.

The tiger was found the afternoon of Jan. 21 and secured. It is now in the possession of Texas Game Wardens.

There have been no reported injuries in connection with the tiger's escape.

The ownership of exotic wild animals (such as tigers, lions and jaguars) in Texas is allowed by law with a license. The animal also must be registered with the state, according to BornFreeUSA.org.

Taser use on woman was constitutional, court rules

Honoluluadvertiser.com

MAUI, Hawaii- Reversing a lower court's ruling, a federal appeals court said a Maui woman's constitutional rights were not violated when police officers used a Taser on her in 2006 at her home, the Maui News reported.

In an opinion for publication filed Jan. 12, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said that the force used against Jayzel Mattos was "reasonable," viewing the facts in

the light most favorable to her and her husband, Troy Mattos.

The appeals court judges "found it wasn't excessive force," said Maui Deputy Corporation Counsel Moana Lutey. "That's important to us, because it's the first decision in our state on this particular level of force. Under similar circumstances, this use of force would not be unconstitutional."

Honolulu attorney Eric Seitz, representing the Mattoses, said he would ask the entire court to review the opinion issued by a three-judge panel of the court.

"In my view, the decision in our case was patently dishonest and lacks integrity," Seitz said.

Police officers went to the couple's home in Wailuku in response to a 911 call reporting a domestic disturbance on Aug. 23, 2006. Troy and Jayzel Mattos were charged with harassment, but the charges were later dismissed.

Answer to Friday's Sudoku

8	6	5	1	2	9	4	7	3
7	2	9	5	3	4	8	1	6
1	4	3	8	7	6	2	5	9
4	5	1	9	8	3	7	6	2
9	3	6	7	1	2	5	8	4
2	8	7	6	4	5	3	9	1
6	7	4	3	5	1	9	2	8
5	1	2	4	9	8	6	3	7
3	9	8	2	6	7	1	4	5

THE North Star

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1st Infantry Division
2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
2nd Infantry Division
1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
1st Armored Division

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