

The North Star

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



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ISF, Spartans disrupt enemy

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

"Today we will disrupt the enemy," said an Emergency Services Unit leader to his troops before conducting a search in the Aruba District with the purpose of capturing persons of interest and confiscating contraband material, Feb. 8.

Disruption of the enemy is exactly what happened due to the partnership between 2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade

Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., and the Kirkuk ESU 'Lions', according to 2nd Lt. Oleg Green, 2nd Plt. leader and a native of Jacksonville, N.C.

During the searches, the ESU captured one person of interest and impounded two cars that were not properly registered in the city. Not only did these partners disrupt the enemy but they



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

Second Lieutenant Oleg Green (right), leader of 2nd Plt., Co. D, 1/30th Inf., 2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., discusses the operation with leadership of the Kirkuk ESU, Feb. 8.

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Deployments bitter, sweet for dual military

By Capt. Rebecca Walsh
4BCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

Even though he's deployed, Sgt. Brian Schwentner wakes up on a twin-sized bed next to his wife, Cpl. Heather Schwentner every morning.

What began as a friendship blossomed into romance during the couple's last deployment to Baghdad with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division during the "surge."

For Valentine's Day in 2008, Brian gave Heather seven origami lilies and a homemade card. Heather, a Honolulu native, gave Brian a ring and asked "So, will you marry me?"

The couple celebrated their engagement by dancing on the rooftop of a building on Forward Operating Base Falcon while the songs "Tender Surrender" and "Best I'll Ever Be" played

from an iPod.

Two years later the Schwentner's are in Iraq with the "Dragon" brigade again. They consider themselves fortunate to be deployed together.

"I don't have to worry about her, I know she's safe," said Brian, who works in the brigade's aviation operations office from Orlando, Fla.

"It's awesome, the fact that we get to see each other every night and have someone to talk to, who we don't work with all day ... it's worth it," said Heather.

The Schwentner's are just one of more than three dozen dual military couples in the "Dragon" brigade.

Being deployed and dual military presents both benefits and challenges as couples balance their marriages with their careers and strive to maintain normalcy in their relationship.

"I don't associate the military with my marriage," said Spc. Kenyetta Boyd, from Mobile, Ala., "My husband and I work together like any couple does, we just happen to have the same boss (Uncle Sam), and wear the same uniform to work."

Some "Dragon" brigade couples are co-located on the same base as their spouses while others live on separate camps. Others can spend years apart on opposite deployment cycles with one spouse deployed and the other at home. Some are deployed to Iraq while their spouses serve in Afghanistan. For those deployed to different locations, communication is the key to remaining close and keeping their marriage strong.

"We miss each other so much. We

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were also able to show the population of Kirkuk that the ESU are self-reliant security forces, according to Capt. Jeremiah Fritz, the commander of Co. D.

This was proven because the operation was completely run by the ESU, with U.S. forces simply observing what they had taught their partners. They witnessed the 'Lions' properly patrolling an area, clearing multiple objec-

tives and interacting with the population.

Through interaction with the population, the combined forces were able to find out that the people of Aruba feel very safe in the area and plan on participating in the upcoming elections, according to 2nd Lt. Green.

One man said, he is confident with the security of the area thanks to the

Iraqi and U.S. forces according to 2nd Lt. Green. He added he is looking forward to the elections and will be taking his daughter to vote with him.

It is clear that the population understands who is in control of the area and who is here to help them no matter the situation; the ESU, an extremely self-reliant security force, according to 2nd Lt. Green.

Army Family extends giving season to Iraqis

By Pfc. Adrian Muehe
3SBCT, 2nd Inf Div PAO

The holiday season in the United States is a popular time for donating and reaching out to less fortunate families. However, for U.S. Soldiers stationed in Iraq, the giving season extends all year round.

It is very rare to find a Soldier in 4th Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, without candy or pens in their cargo pocket to hand out to the children that follow along during combined Iraqi and U.S. civil affairs projects.

While working with their Iraqi Police partners in Wasit, Sgt. 1st Class Bruce Wolaver, platoon sergeant for 4th Plt., Covington, Ohio, native, repeatedly noticed a child playing on the same street corner with no clothes. Being his second deployment, Sgt. 1st Class Wolaver has interacted with many Iraqi children before, but that was the first time he had ever seen one run around nude.

Knowing he wouldn't want see a child of his own like that Sgt. 1st Class Wolaver decided that he had to help.

"I have a soft spot for kids," Sgt. 1st Class Wolaver said. "I called my wife and my mother-in-law and asked them to send me some clothes for a two-

year-old boy."

A couple weeks later, Sgt. 1st Class Wolaver received two packages in the mail that included jeans and shirts for toddlers, along with small toys. This wasn't the first time this Family has helped Iraqi children. On a previous deployment, his wife sent him soccer balls and school supplies to give to Iraqi families.

Having no idea where the child lived, Sgt. 1st Class Wolaver, set out with a few Soldiers to find the family of this little boy. Having no available interpreters, they asked residents where this family lived using the little Arabic they knew and basic hand signals.

One of the children who spoke English overheard the Soldiers speaking and led them to the home.

The mother of these children spoke a little English, and with the help of the boy who escorted the Soldiers, they were able to give her the gifts. The children were exuberant to be given new things and have their picture taken.

With a few of the children being able to speak some English, Sgt. 1st Class Wolaver was able to carry on conversations, asking them how they were doing and asking a small girl who received the toy giraffe about the Arabic word for giraffe is.

"Being a father, I hate seeing kids live like that," Sgt. 1st Class Wolaver said.

The platoon sergeant's Family is sending more clothes and toys for him to give to other Iraqi children.



Photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe, 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

Sergeant First Class Bruce Wolaver (right), 4th Plt., Co. A, 2/3rd Inf. Regt., 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., asks an Iraqi girl what the Arabic word for giraffe is after giving her a toy giraffe in Wasit, Feb. 1.

HEY DOC!



By Capt. Adam Resnick
Division Pharmacist

Feeling Sleepy yet?

Look at the four people closest to you. According to a sleep study one of them has insomnia every day or every other day. In addition, between you and your battle buddy, one has occasional insomnia. This is shocking

when you think about the importance of staying alert in a combat zone. So the question is what can you do?

It is important to sleep consistently so that you can remain alert and recharged every day. The average adult needs anywhere between 6 to 8 hours of sleep to function effectively. So let's take a look at some options that are available.

First, is to establish good sleeping habits. Reading, eating, or watching TV while in bed does not set a good environment for falling asleep. These activities keep the mind active and don't allow the mind to drift to sleep as easily.

Second, maintain consistent habits. Doing the same thing every night can help improve the chances of falling asleep. This is because doing the same thing every night gives the body a

signal to get ready for sleep. This can be a big key and is one of the biggest things that people can do when having problems sleeping.

Third is to maintain a healthy diet. Caffeine or other stimulating foods or beverages can reduce the likelihood of falling asleep for most people. To prevent this you should test your diet and see if you consume anything that causes your insomnia. This will take some time to do but can really pay off.

If these methods do not work for you, then sleeping aids are an option.

See a medical provider for advice. There are medications that will help you fall asleep quickly, or just keep you asleep. Whatever you need, whether it be a carton of milk or medication remember that sleep is important for you to be at your best. Go catch some Z's!

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Courtesy Photo

Captain Rikki Opperman
(left) and her husband Capt.
Ronald Opperman are both
serving in Iraq with the 4BCT,
1st Inf. Div.

don't get to see each other at all, being on different FOBs," said Sgt. Megan Ford, a Ft. Lauderdale native who lives on a different base than

her husband, Spc. Brian Ford. "We e-mail, and call each other. I send my husband an e-mail every day."

According to Spc. Lashaundalyn Smith who is deployed with her husband Staff Sgt. Charles Smith, being

dual military has its advantages.

"It's great, you have someone that understands almost every aspect of what you do as a Soldier," she said.

Oklahoma City native, Capt. Ronald Opperman, and his wife, Capt. Rikki Opperman, left their two small children with Family so they could deploy at the same time.

"We have a great support system back at home who are 100 percent behind us and more than willing to care for our children while we are gone," said Rikki.

While it's not easy leaving children at home, and deploying to different bases, the Opperman's are optimistic.

"Some of our best moments and fondest memories in our marriage have come from some of the hardest and difficult times," added Ronald. Deployment has also strengthened

Spc. Boyd's marriage.

"I feel like this experience has made our relationship stronger and we have realized as a couple that we can make it through anything," said Spc. Boyd. "Being deployed and being dual military wears heavily on your relationship but if you can make it through, you will see that it's not the yearlong tour and money that kept you going; it is the love and dedication from your spouse and supporting Family Members that make what we do well worth it."

Soldiers will continue to fall in love, dance on rooftops, get married and enter the dual military family. Some will deploy and wake up in the morning next to their spouse, others will wake up next to a picture of their spouse, but both husband and wife will know what it feels like to serve.

Safety Thought of the Week: **Vehicle Commanders**

- Are responsible for safe vehicle operation and enforcement of standards.
- Ensure the driver is licensed on the vehicle to be operated.
- Ensure vehicle occupants use restraint devices and personal protective equipment.
- Ensure the driver maintains a safe operating speed according to terrain, weather and threat conditions.
- Assist the driver in identifying road hazards and ensure obstacle clearance at all times.
- Ensure rollover, fire and emergency egress drills are rehearsed prior to each mission.



Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant Jason Michael Robb, of Billings, Mont., is a mortarman with 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. He leads his Soldiers on many dismounted patrols throughout some of the most dangerous areas of his assigned area of operations. During his three months in Iraq, Sgt. Robb has been the target of three improvised grenade attacks. On Jan. 7, Sgt. Robb and his platoon were attacked with a grenade and small arms fire. Sergeant Robb led two of his Soldiers down an alley to capture and detain two of the insurgents who participated in the attack, and found a grenade still on one of the detainees. He sets an example for his Soldiers and takes initiative by volunteering to serve as the platoon's maintenance noncommissioned officer. He sacrificed his personal needs by volunteering to extend his contract in order to deploy with his Soldiers to bring them home safely. Sergeant Robb's tactical expertise, combined with his selfless service, make him a most deserving choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Private Matthew Wall, of Grevette, Ariz., is a combat medic currently attached to Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Throughout the deployment, Pvt. Wall has exemplified the very definition of "selfless service." Though the medical section was short-staffed, Pvt. Wall provided medical support for more than 80 convoys. In addition, he participated in several monthly outreach missions, providing much-needed health care assessments and medical treatment to the local Iraqi population. In addition to these duties, Pvt. Wall continues to serve as the primary line medic for other maneuver elements within the battalion on an as-needed basis. When the time came for the draw-down of all organic and Class Eight material, Pvt. Wall took charge and completed that mission all while maintaining 100 percent accountability of the sensitive items belonging to the aid station. For these reasons, Pvt. Wall is a clear choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

Answers to the President's Day Trivia Contest

- 1) Who was the only President to also serve as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court? William Howard Taft
- 2) How many and which future Presidents signed the Declaration of Independence? Two, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams
- 3) What day does the President traditionally deliver a weekly radio address? Saturday
- 4) Which President was not an American citizen when he died? President John Tyler
- 5) Who is the only President to have survived two assassination attempts by women? Gerald Ford

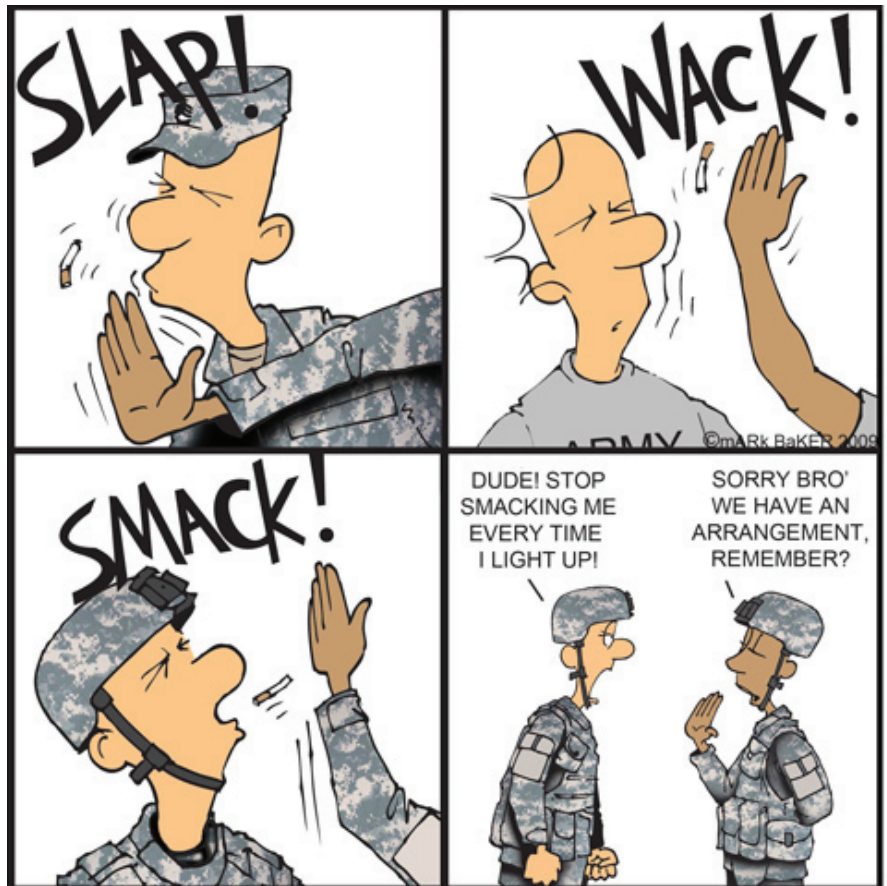
Contest Winners:

Warrant Officer James Boggs,
25CAB, 25th Inf. Div.

Sergeant 1st Class Jerald Phippen,
3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

Sergeant 1st Class Casey Gregg,
DSTB, 3rd Inf. Div.

Private first Class Adrian Muehe,
3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.



REGIONAL HEADLINES

Quartets ready to deliver Valentunes

www.kdhnews.com

Killeen, Texas - Valentine's Day is rolling around again.

It means it's that time for delivery of a special gift created for this special occasion.

It's a Singing Valentine, and recipients have responded in many ways: with tears, laughter, total embarrassment, awes, hugs for the delivering quartet and overwhelming joy. That's mainly how women respond.

Men who receive one from their sweethearts are slightly more embarrassed, a little skeptical at first and are beyond words when it comes to describing the song especially when the quartet kicks off the musical set with "Heart of my Heart."

"It's a kick to sing to ladies. You know, it's that emotional thing," Bob Massey, Texas Country Gentlemen spokesperson, said.

"It's fun to sing to guys, as well. They're just a little more shocked by the element of surprise. You just have to look for a way of escape if you begin to get a threatening look while you're singing."

This year, quartets will be available in the Waco, Temple and the Killeen-Fort Hood area to deliver Valentunes.

Valentunes can be ordered in two ways: either for delivery at anytime of the day or a specific one-hour window of time.

Macy's Robbers Hid At Waffle House

The Associated Press

ATLANTA - Police have arrested six people suspected of smashing a car into a department store, causing thousands of dollars in damage before pulling out with a load of stolen clothing. Four of them were captured at a nearby Waffle House.

Morrow police said about \$10,000 in clothing items stolen from the Macy's in Southlake Mall, Feb. 7, were recovered from a van.

Police Lt. K. Sutton told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that the thieves did more than \$100,000 in damages after driving a Dodge Intrepid through doors at the back of the store at about 2:30 a.m.

"They drove the Intrepid through the door and left it at that location," Sutton told the newspaper. "They loaded up the van and took off in the van."

Police initially arrested five suspects, including four who were found hiding in a Jonesboro Waffle House and another who was caught trying to escape through the woods at about 4:45 a.m. The sixth then turned himself in.

Two of the suspects were hiding in the restaurant's bathroom while two more were sitting at a table.

Officers attempted to stop the van after spotting it driving with its lights off, Sutton said. The driver fled into Jonesboro, where the suspects

abandoned the vehicle.

Sutton said officers responding to an alarm at the mall found a vehicle smashing into the store. Surveillance cameras captured men ransacking the store and taking clothes.

You're invited

Sexual Assault Prevention

Awareness 6k Run

When: Feb. 12

Registration at 5:45 a.m.

Walkers start at 6:15 a.m.

Runners start at 6:30 a.m.

Where: Morale, Welfare and Recreation North Gym

Charlie Wilson and

the Gap Band

When: Feb. 22

Where: COB Speicher

Saving Abel

When: Feb. 23-26

Where: TBD

Five Finger Death Punch

When: March 4-8

Where: TBD

Bad Company

When: March 13-15

Where: TBD

THE North Star

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4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team,
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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