

# The North Star

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



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## Soldiers help Iraqis gear up for election

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

“We will confront violence and detain trouble makers before they can act,” said 2nd Lt. Adel Zamel, a platoon leader for 3rd Company, 4th Battalion, 18th Iraqi Army Division.

The soldiers of 3rd Co. are preparing to perform security checkpoints at polling sites for the forthcoming elections in Kana-An, Iraq. They aren’t doing this alone, helping them are their partners in 1st Platoon, Company C, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

As part of this preparation, the Soldiers of 1st Plt. gave their IA partners a refresher course in how to operate a checkpoint and potential responses for

various situations they may encounter. First Lieutenant Eric Russell, 1st Plt. leader, along with other 1st Plt. Soldiers, gave a class to a group of approximately 15 IA soldiers at their compound in Kana-An.

After this quick review, Sgt. Bret Mensink, a squad leader for 1st Plt., gave a lesson on how, when, and what type of force should be used if someone appears to be a threat or acts unruly.

“We didn’t have this information last time,” said Iraqi 1st Sgt. Rathe Farhud Abos, from 3rd Co. “The [security situation] of the 2005 elections were messed up.”

When the class was complete, the IA soldiers broke into two groups. One group set up a simulated checkpoint exactly like the ones they will be oper-

ating during the elections. The other group acted as voters and lined up to be searched before being permitted to enter the polling center. First Lieutenant Russell secretly communicated with two soldiers in the second group, asking them to perform certain actions while getting searched.

One of these IA soldiers drew a pistol while being searched. The soldiers running the checkpoint reacted, and tried to safely detain the threat. The second soldier that 1st Lt. Russell talked to attempted to run the checkpoint while the others were distracted with their detainee. The runner was able to get through before being subdued.

After this scenario, 1st Platoon Soldiers reiterated that the attention of the soldiers can’t be focused on one location. So they reset and ran through another exercise. The second time was much less chaotic. Iraqi Army soldiers were more aware of their surroundings and were able to respond.

With an Army that is better trained than the IA of 2005, these soldiers have the tools to sustain these checkpoints on their own.

Until the elections occur March 7, 1st Plt. will continue to work with their IA partners at the individual polling stations. With U.S. forces providing training and constructive criticism beforehand, these Iraqi soldiers can help to secure a peaceful election day without assistance from their American counterparts.

“The IA is doing a good job,” said 1st Lt. Russell. “They care about their country and want to do well.”



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

**Sergeant Bret Mensink, squad leader for 1st Plt., Co. C, 5/20th Inf. Regt., 3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., teaches IA soldiers what to do if they encounter someone with a suicide-borne improvised explosive device during pre-election training in Kana-An, Feb. 5.**

# Soldiers hear ways to save from peers

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

Between shopping on-line and at the Post Exchange many Soldiers can come back from a deployment wondering what happened to all the extra money they earned.

On Forward Operating Base Warrior finance Soldiers from Detachment C, 24th Financial Management Company, Fort Stewart, Ga., offers advice to Soldiers on a daily basis to keep from getting into this situation.

"We hear about it every day, Soldiers spending their hard earned money on what they might consider necessities.

Given their situation this may be ok, as long as they have a budget," said Staff Sgt. Georgina Pastor, a native of San Angelo, Texas, and a noncommissioned officer with Det. C.

Staff Sergeant Pastor went on to explain that the Eagle Cash Card is

*"Say to yourself, 'I am going to only spend \$200 every month,' put that amount onto your card and stick to it."*

*-Staff Sergeant Georgina Pastor, noncommissioned officer, 24th Fin. Mgmt. Co.*

a great way to assist with keeping a monthly budget.

"Say to yourself, 'I am going to only spend \$200 every month,' put that amount onto your card and stick to it," added Staff Sgt. Pastor.

Another way to save money according to the Soldiers of the 24th Fin. Mgmt. Co. is the Savings Deposit Program.

Soldiers can stop by their S-1 or finance office to fill out an application for this program, which allows Soldiers to make monthly deposits and earn up to \$1,000 of extra money during their deployment.

"We have Soldiers come in every day about this program and they are all very eager about it, everyone likes

free money," said Staff Sgt. Pastor.

Some Soldiers in the program are looking forward to the end of the deployment when they can receive their earned SDP money.

"I am saving up to go to Vegas at the end of the deployment and this is the best way to do it. I now know I was just wasting my money," said Spc. Hugo Tirado, a driver for Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Specialist Tirado also offered his advice for Soldiers looking to save money for long-term goals.

Through MyPay, Soldiers can save money for retirement using the Thrift Savings Plan.

## Spartans recognize innovative Ninewa businesswomen

By Spc. Crystal M. O'Neal,  
2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

Spartan Soldiers recently recognized several Ninewa province women for their business endeavors during a luncheon at Forward Operating Base Marez.

These women, some of whom are widows due to insurgency attacks, have stepped up with help from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and the Provincial Reconstruction Team, to form several businesses with the intent of improving Iraq's economic status and to increase women's role in the country's financial and political development as well.

Through hands-on training, such as marketing, and mentoring from American, female entrepreneurs, these ladies have been able to establish lucrative laundries, bridal, sewing, pastry shops, and other businesses throughout the Ninewa province.

The ultimate goal, is to help create self-reliant, financially viable women's associations across the province.

The U.S. State Department, through the Quick Response Funds program, helps them to prepare sound business plans through training.

The entrepreneurs, excited by their contributions to the Iraqi economy, expressed thanks to Spartan Soldiers and the PRT.

"I would like to personally thank Colonel Sexton and his Soldiers as well as the PRT for helping us with our businesses," said the president of Faith for Widows and Orphans. "During the regime, women across Iraq, especially here in the Ninewa province, suffered a lot. The terrorists killed our husbands, our families."

"It is wonderful to be able to start businesses, make money to provide for our families, as well as giving job opportunities."

W. Patrick Murphy, PRT Ninewa team leader, said rewarding these ladies and their efforts was definitely a pleasure.

"Today is a great day for women in Iraq and women around the world. Hopefully they will take all the training they have received and use it to

train more women and members of the community, empowering themselves and Iraq simultaneously," said Murphy.

Captain Lea Lato, the commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., said what these women are doing in the community is outstanding.

"These ladies have overcome tremendous adversity, said Capt. Lato. "Being they are from a society where there are very limited roles for women to play in the economy, what they are doing is excellent and courageous."

"As a woman also in a leadership role, I was honored to be there, supporting the women's achievements and representing our brigade's involvement," Murphy said later about the luncheon.

Future plans for the brigade and PRT include training another 25 women's associations in business and strategic planning, forming a network of women's associations across Ninewa and creating sister organizations with like-minded associations in the United States.



# Military couples stay connected during deployments

By Spc. Cassandra Monroe  
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

As deployments come and go, staying connected and maintaining a strong and secure foundation is important in the success of a healthy relationship.

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, sometimes giving or receiving a gift while deployed is more special than usual.

"The Army is all about Families these days, and we want to make sure that Families are healthy," said Maj. Terry Romine, the Family Life Chaplain for Task Force Marne. "That way, Soldiers are more able to focus on their jobs, and Families are more likely to be in favor of re-enlistment if all things go well."

So what are some ways that couples and Families can stay connected during these long deployments?

"I sent my husband a little golfing care package, since he loves golf," said Capt. Heather Deters, an administrative officer with 1st Battalion, 64th Armor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. "It has little tees and golf balls, plus a lot of candy. I just went with what he liked."

Stuck and have no gift ideas? There's nothing to worry about; some turn to the Internet for helpful tools and search engines for gifts.

"Google is a wonderful thing," said Capt. Deters. "They have gift baskets for everything, from candy to wine, and from teddy bears and soap and candle sets."

Soldiers today are able to make telephone calls, use Skype and other messenger programs and e-mail each other a lot more frequently than in the past, making communication during deployments a lot more easier.

"I try to stay in contact with my wife and kids through the computer and call home as much as possible," said Spc. Donald Dasher, an infantryman with 1/64th Armor.

However, some couples and leaders may think that too much communication causes problems, such as servicemembers spending their communication time with Family by fighting and arguing about life, home and deploy-

ment concerns.

Part of Maj. Romine's Family counseling talks about communication problems with servicemembers who use this time to fight.

Instead of fighting, make a time in the conversations to tell loved ones how much they are appreciated. From there, that is how one can start building that relationship called love. If a couple is considering divorce, remember that is not always an answer, and there are programs and people available to help.

"Remember what you did when you first fell in love," said Maj. Romine. "Remember what that was like, and what you were doing that made you know you were in love. Usually, we don't divorce because we have big problems, we divorce because we lose connections. When that happens, we feel like we're not in love anymore."

For some couples on their first deployment, times can be stressful. What is important is making the communication clear and talking about each other's feelings. Sometimes, Soldiers feel like they need to keep secrets about their missions so that those at home don't worry. However, Maj. Romine said the more Soldiers can share about what is going on, the better.

For those who are dual military and are both deployed in the COB Speicher area, there are Valentine's Day events scheduled to make the day special for them.

"We do some dual military deployed retreats, and we're reminding couples that they need to be connected, because connection is all about what makes the relationship work," said Maj. Romine.

Couples who have signed up for the event will be staying at the Freedom Rest and will have time to themselves to allow them to be a couple. The mornings will be filled with training sessions and classes about the benefits and challenges of being dual military during a deployment.

"Some dual-deployed couples may have expectations of each other that they may not meet because of their duties," said Maj. Romine. "They are also



Captain Heather Deters (right) and her husband Kyle Deters

separated and still both missing their children, and may have more ways to argue. However, one big advantage is that they do get to see each other. Those will be some of the topics that we will speak about during the sessions."

Two other events around COB Speicher will be a prayer luncheon held by the Division Special Troops Battalion Chaplain titled "All You Need Is Love," which will be held Feb. 13. That same evening, the Family Life Chaplain from Fort Stewart, along with Maj. Romine, will be holding a Coin Covenant ceremony.

Spouses both at home and here in Iraq will be able to see each other on a screen and will be able to participate with each other during class sessions dealing with relationship building and staying connected.

The Coin Covenant ceremony was initially held prior to the deployment. The couples split a coin with a verse from the bible. The couples also wrote out their commitment to each other on cards, then exchanged them, along with the coin, enabling them to carry both coin and card with them throughout the deployment. They will reassess their commitment during the ceremony, Feb. 13.

No matter what your plans are for Valentine's Day, be sure not to forget your loved ones and those who support you the most. Send them a card, a gift, or any little thing that shows them you care.

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Neal Williams, of Rock Island, Ill., recently executed the portable light set contract in support of the Disputed Internal Boundaries' mission. The original quotes provided through G-4 channels was \$2.4 million and the expected delivery time set the first delivery more than 90 days after contract signing. Mr. Williams was able to purchase through GSA for \$1.7 million, a savings of \$700,000. Neal Williams' total dedication to duty and unrelenting desire to best support of the warfighter's needs makes him a natural choice for this week's Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.



Staff Sergeant Nathaniel Barnard, of Carlisle, Pa., is with Company A, Task Force Odin, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. He executes his unique and complex duties as the troop standardization instructor operator with unmatched dedication and professionalism. Immediately upon assuming duties, Staff Sgt. Barnard conducted a methodical and thorough assessment of the flight program, identified safety concerns, and implemented fundamental changes essential to flight safety. Staff Sergeant Barnard also facilitated training for 40 Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) operators, providing them the fundamental skills necessary to perform at maximum efficiency and capacity. His efforts were directly linked to the capture of 19 high value individuals. In addition to his other duties and despite his section being undermanned, his meticulous management of the flight schedule enabled the Troop to fly 2,070 flight hours of vital overwatch to U.S. and Iraqi forces. His first rate performance has contributed greatly to the success of the task force's mission and has earned him the distinction of the title of today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

## www.puzzlechoice.com Crossword Puzzle

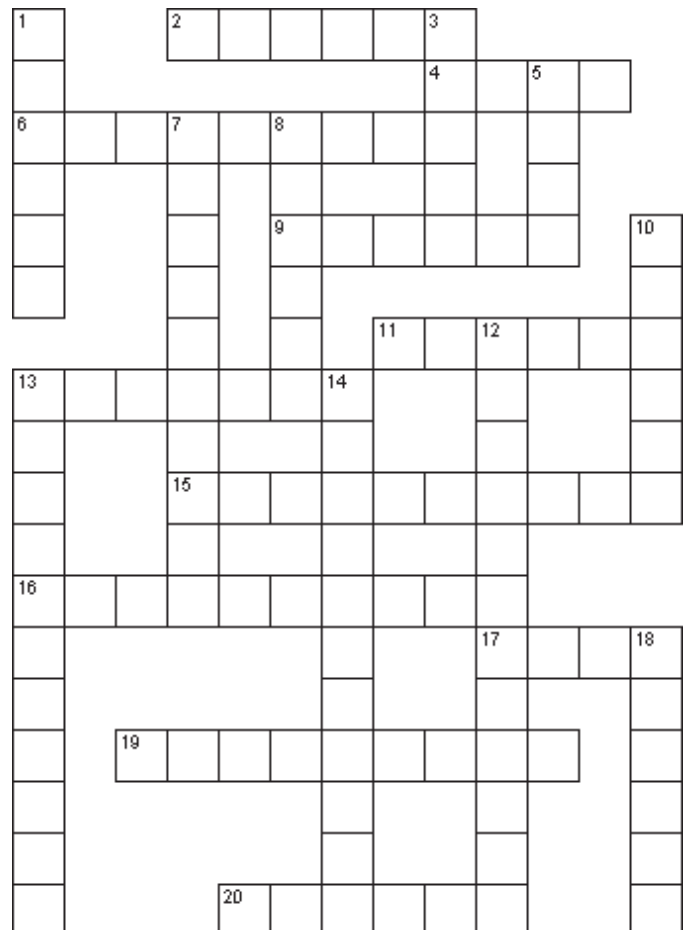
Identify the capitals to the following nations:

### Across

- 2. Turkey
- 4. The Maldives
- 6. Sweden
- 9. Austria
- 11. Portugal
- 13. Iraq
- 15. Guyana
- 16. Aruba
- 17. Norway
- 19. Mauritius
- 20. Mali

### Down

- 1. Zambia
- 3. Jordan
- 5. Peru
- 7. Denmark
- 8. Cuba
- 10. England
- 12. Dominican Republic
- 13. Argentina
- 14. Tanzania
- 18. Canada



# REGIONAL HEADLINES

## Kalama drug dog brings home the bacon

The Daily News

**KALAMA, Wash.** — Kalama police never impounded vehicles before its drug dog, Bati, joined the force three years ago. Since then, the four-year-old German shepherd has helped the department confiscate three vehicles — one of which contained \$4,000 the agency also seized, said Kalama Police Chief Bruce Hall.

Bati the police dog has become something of a cash cow.

Under state law, 10 percent of valuables police size in drug cases goes to the state. The remaining assets can be used for local drug enforcement, Hall said. The owners can appeal the seizure, but so far no one has done so in Kalama, he said.

He couldn't estimate how much Bati has generated for Kalama police. It's enough, though, to cover Bati's training and vet costs and helped pay for the 2006 police patrol car he rides in.

"If we're able to just keep the dog in service ... we're happy," said Kalama Sgt. Steve Parker, Bati's overseer. Bati costs the department \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year, Hall said.

Kalama purchased him in Dec. 2007, with a citizen's anonymous \$5,000 donation. Bati, born in The Netherlands, underwent almost a year of training with Parker before the dog could officially start work in Sept. 2008, Parker said.

Bati now weighs 62 pounds and is expected to work another four to six years.

Working with Bati is fun, said Parker, and the dog's discoveries are often impressive. Bati's nose is 100 times more keen than a human's in detecting drugs, he noted.

On Jan. 21, Bati used his sniffer to find meth, meth pipes and drug paraphernalia carefully hidden in a Woodland hotel room. Bati's work also led to the seizure of a drug dealer's run-down Cadillac with chrome wheels. Police sold the wheels on e-Bay for about \$1,000, according to Hall, and the agency donated the vehicle to firefighters for vehicle-rescue training.

"The value of that car was really the wheels," Hall said.

## Man in Wal-Mart smashes 29 TVs with bat

Atlanta Journal Constitution

**LILBURN, Ga.** -Police are investigating what may have caused a man to walk into a Wal-Mart and destroy 29 flat-screen televisions.

Police charged a 23-year-old man with 29 counts of criminal damage to property in the second degree. Just after noon Feb. 10, authorities said the suspect walked into the Wal-Mart in Lilburn.

Witnesses told police he grabbed a metal baseball bat from the sporting goods section, walked to the electronics department and destroyed

the TVs on display. He was arrested not long after.

Police said the televisions are valued at over \$22,000.

## You're invited

### Ash Wednesday Catholic Worship Schedule

When: Marne Chapel  
(Bldg. 2708), 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.  
Dragon Chapel, 8:30 a.m.,  
Wings Chapel, 11:30 a.m.

For more information, contact  
Capt. Thomas Kirchhofer, 845-6017  
Capt. Arek Ochalek, 845-6804

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

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,  
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