

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



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# TF Marne says no to sexual harassment

### **Compilation of PAO articles in Task Force Marne**

Servicemembers and support personnel from across the United States Division - North area of operations gathered to raise awareness about sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention, Feb. 12.

About 700 personnel walked or ran on their respective operating bases, as part of the Army's "I. A.M. Strong" campaign

"Sexual assault is an issue that is very much on the forefront with our Army leaders right now," said Capt. Chadwick Swenson, the commander

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Photo by Sgt Johnathon Jobson, TF Marne PAO

**Soldiers on COB Speicher promote sexual assault/harassment prevention by walking or running on the base, Feb. 12. More than 700 servicemembers and civilians participated throughout Task Force Marne.**

## 130th Engineer Brigade builds obstacle at Syrian border

**By Pvt. Jennifer Lowes**  
**130th Eng. Bde. PAO**

Maintaining the security of Iraq and its borders is a priority for the Government of Iraq. U.S. forces are aiding in the process by building an anti-vehicular ditch and berm that will prevent anti-Iraqi forces from entering into western Iraq. Behind the project are members of the 1st Engineer Battalion, 130th Engineer Brigade.

“We’re building the berm to stop smuggling from Syria into Iraq,” said Capt. Sean Hill, the Forward Support Company commander.

"Whether its weapons or cigarettes, this obstacle will play a big role in stopping the smuggling," said Capt. Hill.

Soldiers are working long hours, sacrificing regular showers, rest and communicating with Families back home.

"I'm having a good time pushing dirt," said Spc. John Cunningham a bulldozer operator with 3rd platoon, 573rd Engineer Company, "I'm just excited to get a shower soon," he added.

Specialist Cunningham said he understands the importance of the anti-vehicular ditch and berm, and he is enthusiastic about being part of a historical project that will improve the country of Iraq.

"It's cold but everyone is together, and keeps a good attitude about it. These guys are working hard and I'm really proud of them," said Sgt. 1st Class Sean Mattenson the noncommis-

sioned officer in charge of the FSC.

Iraqi Security Forces designed and mapped the location of the obstacle and requested U.S. forces assist the 3rd Iraqi Army Field Engineer Regiment to build it. Many factors were taken into consideration including towns, villages, and farmland near the construction site.

Being a major wheat and barley producing area, bypassing farm fields is a must, said Sgt. 1st Class Mattenson. Relationships between the local populace and troops have been good so far. Mainly both sides keep to themselves because of the respect troops have shown the local people, said Sgt. 1st Class Mattenson.

The anti-vehicular ditch and berm will be protected by Iraqi forces.

# TF Wings handles heavy lifting in northern Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts  
25CAB, 25th Inf. Div PAO

A CH-47D Chinook helicopter can transport 30 passengers and internally load up to 15,000 pounds of cargo. It doesn't require a landing strip, and there is virtually no operating location it can't service.

So when a unit moves troops or cargo, there is no surprise the twin engine, tandem-rotor aircraft is in high demand.

In United States Division-North, that demand is being met by the "Hillclimber" Soldiers of Company B, 3-25th General Support Aviation Battalion, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division – the only heavy lift aviation asset in USD-North.

According to Capt. Robert K. Beale, commander of Co. B, 3-25th GSAB, the Hillclimbers' mission is to provide heavy-lift, air assault and air movement capabilities for Task Force Marne.

"Our air assault mission involves moving Iraqi and American troops to objectives at a set time," said Capt. Beale. "As an aviation element, we support the ground force commander by putting Soldiers where they need to be, when they need to be there. But where we really 'make our money' so-to-speak, is with our air movement capability, our transportation of cargo. You name it, and [for the most part] we move it."

"I would estimate that 95 percent of our missions in USD-North this deployment are troop and cargo movements," said Chief Warrant Officer Three Fred Hedgecock, Chinook pilot, Co. B, 3-25th GSAB, a native of Bryant, Ark.

Since operations began in Sept. 2009, the Hillclimbers have flown more than 3,200 hours, transported in excess of a 1,000,000 of cargo and moved about 10,000 military and civilian personnel. Cargo has ranged from explosive ordnance, disposal robots and dog food to military vehicles and ammunition.

The unit estimates that it will fly more than 8,000 hours, transport 1.6 million tons of cargo and move more than 40,000 Soldiers before it returns



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25CAB, 25th Inf. Div. PAO

**Soldiers of Co. B, 3-25th GSAB, 25CAB, 25th Inf. Div., conduct pre-flight inspections and maintenance before a troop and cargo movement mission at COB Speicher, Jan. 29.**

to home station at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, later this year.

"We're flying more than any previous heavy-lift unit because we're really the only 'game in town' in USD-North," said Capt. Beale. "We are also significantly involved in the [responsible drawdown] of U.S. forces, which requires us to launch more."

The only other aviation asset that can move the amount of pallets and passengers we do are [larger fixed-wing] aircraft, said Capt. Beale. But those require landing strips and can't access smaller [forward operating bases]. In that sense, the next best option would be to transport cargo and Soldiers by ground," he added.

Ground movement, however, is a less efficient and riskier alternative. For that reason, the Hillclimbers take pride in helping Soldiers avoid the heightened risks associated with ground travel.

"Helping move people by air is a mission that's more important than some people might realize," said Staff

Sgt. Christopher Caraway, squad leader, Chinook mechanic and flight engineer, Co. B, 3-25th GSAB.

"I know the Soldiers we move want to go home as much as I do. If we can help them get there by keeping them out of range of a potential improvised explosive device [or other hazard], then we're making a difference," said the nine-year veteran and native of Houston.

"Before every mission, I conduct preventative inspections and maintenance of the helicopter, and get it ready for the pilots to conduct their pre-flight," said Spc. Brandon Poe, Chinook mechanic and crew chief, Co. B, 3-25th GSAB, from Beaumont, Texas.

"I take my job of properly maintaining our helicopters very seriously," said Spc. Poe. "We all do, and the reason is pretty simple; we're the ones that must continually serve those ground troops and others that need to move around northern Iraq. And we must do it safely."



## Continued from WALK, Page 1

of Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. "It is a subject that can absolutely wreck the effectiveness and destroy the morale and esprit-de-corps of a unit."

At Contingency Operating Base Speicher the events were held early in the morning so that as many people as possible could participate.

The Soldiers with 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division hosted a 6k run/walk that morning.

Command Sergeant Major Michael S. McCoy, the 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., command sergeant major said that sexual harassment and assault have no place on the battlefield or anywhere in the Army.

"We have to live, eat, sleep together and as you know fight together in combat, and anything that distracts from good order and discipline is always going to be a hindrance," Command Sgt. Maj. McCoy said.

On Forward Operating Base War-

horse, Soldiers from 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division took part in a 5k run/walk as well.

"As of now we are brainstorming more events like this to bring people out in support of our cause," said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Ogawa, a deployed sexual assault response coordinator for 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

The "I. A.M. Strong" campaign was launched in 2008, and was developed to encourage Soldiers to "Intervene, Act, and Motivate" to prevent sexual assault before it occurs.

Top Army leaders have been very vocal that when it comes to sexual harassment and assault, the Army has a "zero tolerance" policy.



Photo by Spc. Richard Coletta, 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO  
**Soldiers with 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., participate in the Sexual Assault Prevention Run, at COB Speicher Feb. 12**



Photo by Master Sgt. Duff McFadden, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.  
**Colonel Charles E.A. Sexton, 2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., commander, leads the Sexual Assault Prevention Walk at FOB Marez, Feb 12.**

# COB Speicher education center goes mobile

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson  
TF Marne PAO

With the drawdown of forces beginning in Iraq, reduction of services is expected. Education centers at multiple installations have begun to close. However, to ensure that Soldiers who needed to take the Armed Forces Classification Test to raise their General Technical (GT) scores, the Contingency Operating Base Speicher Education Center sent a mobile testing team to Forward Operating Base Warrior to proctor the tests, Feb. 1.

FOB Warrior's Education Center closed near the beginning of the year due to the relocation of the Air Force personnel who were staffing the center.

"In December we visited FOB Warrior and did a walk through with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, senior retention counselor and the other retention counselors from the brigade," said Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Halford, the Task Force Marne Retention Operations noncom-

missioned officer. "It was brought to our attention that the education center there was closing because the Air Force personnel were moving from FOB Warrior to Joint Base Balad."

We were informed that there were a large number of Soldiers that needed to take the AFCT to raise their scores for reclassification and re-enlistment purposes. We began working to find a solution, he added.

Sergeant 1st Class Gloria Powell, a human resources noncommissioned officer with the 166th Regional Support Group out of Puerto Rico and education officer for the COB Speicher Ed. Center, traveled to FOB Warrior with Sgt. 1st Class Halford to administer the AFCT to 11 Soldiers.

While this first testing session was somewhat impromptu, Sgt. 1st Class Powell said that the mobile testing program will continue as long as Soldiers at remote FOBs without education centers have testing needs.

"Many Soldiers are wanting to raise their scores and right now we are short on testing personnel due to Soldiers

redeploying or being gone for R&R or missions, explained Sgt. 1st Class Powell. "Based on the requirements of the other FOBs we will be doing mobile testing as necessary."

We have a tentative test session planned for FOB Marez in March, if there are enough Soldiers that need to take the AFCT at that time, Sgt. 1st Class Halford said.

While education centers are closing and troops are preparing to redeploy, have no fear, Soldiers needing to take the AFCT to improve their GT scores will still be afforded the opportunity to take the tests.

If a mobile testing team is not available, Soldiers may be required to travel to FOBs where the education centers are still open to take any necessary tests.

For more information regarding re-enlistment or reclassification, Soldiers should contact their company or battalion retention counselor. Those Soldiers wanting to take the AFCT or other tests should contact their nearest Education Center.

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant Richard Lowther, of Clarksburg, W. Va., is with the 115th Engineer Company, 779th Engineer Battalion. He is serving his 2nd deployment in Iraq and is his company's supply sergeant. Sergeant Lowther not only performs his primary duties - in a staff sergeant's position - in an exemplary manner, he also serves as a trainer for the company's Warrior Task Training and gunnery exercises. Sergeant Lowther recently played a critical role in saving another Soldier's life. After receiving an e-mail from a friend in the United States, Sergeant Lowther's rapid application of the appropriate Ask, Care, Escort principals of suicide intervention ensured the Soldier survived. Sergeant Lowther gives 110 percent effort in everything he does and is instrumental to the overall success of his unit. Sergeant Lowther's outstanding abilities and character reflect great credit upon himself, and his unit, making him a clear choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Staff Sergeant Jason Booth, of Chicago, is with Company D, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He placed his personal safety at risk, Jan. 29, when he extinguished a fire in an Iraqi house. His platoon was conducting a dismounted patrol near a market and were en route to a water treatment facility with a Civil Affairs team when four women appeared, frantically waving their hands and yelling for help. The platoon confirmed security at the site, and discovered a small electrical fire. Staff Sergeant Booth grabbed a nearby burlap sack and attempted to smother the fire just before the flames were touching the wall and roof. Because of his quick action, he extinguished the flames after about only 20 seconds, preventing it from destroying the house. Staff Sergeant Booth successfully won the hearts and minds of several Iraqi citizens, positively impacting future U.S./Iraqi relations. His quick thinking under pressure and rapid, decisive action make him a perfect choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

## On this day, Feb 15, in history ...

[www.history.com](http://www.history.com)

**1902** - Automotive company Oldsmobile ran it's first advertisement in the Saturday Evening Post. This, in part, led to a record 5,000 Oldsmobile Runabouts being sold in 1904.

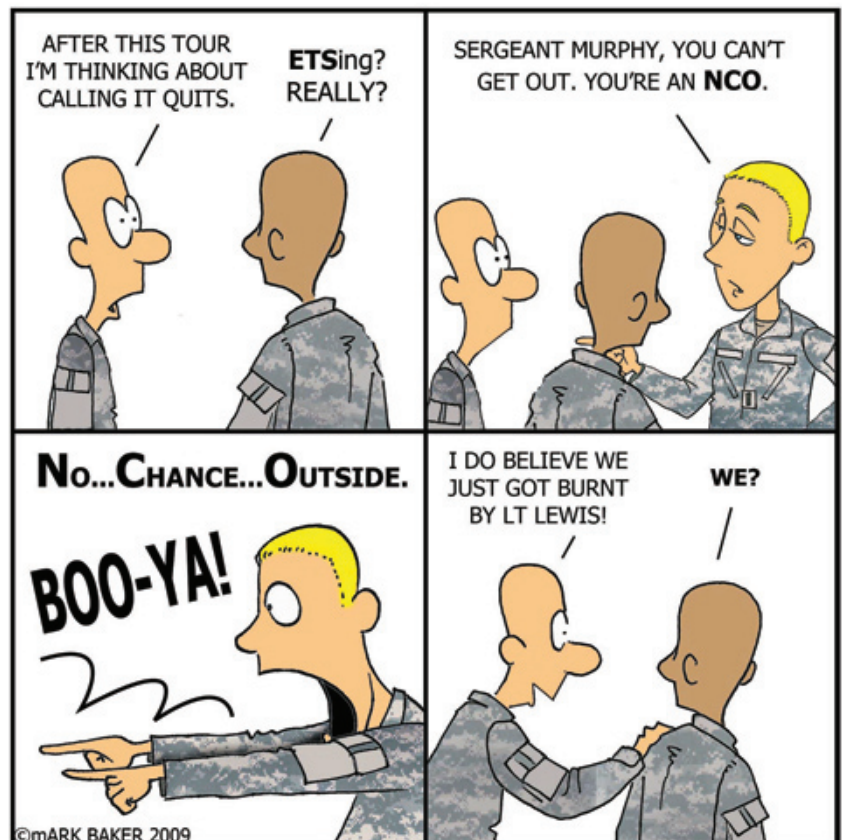
**1968** - President Franklin Delano Roosevelt survives an assassination attempt by an angry, unemployed bricklayer, Giuseppe Zangara. While Roosevelt survived, Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak received a fatal shot to the stomach.

**1942** - Singapore, a strategic island stronghold for British forces during World War II, fell to the Japanese Empire. 62,000 allied Soldiers were taken prisoner, eventually, more than half died as prisoners of war.

**1965** - Canadian parliament adopted the Maple Leaf flag as it's national colors. The flag had been in the planning stages for more than 40 years.

### OPSEC Reminder

When convoy information is disclosed, that convoy is placed at significant risk. Careless e-mails only help to complete one more piece of the puzzle that our adversary is seeking to ultimately reveal. E-mails that contain Essential Elements of Friendly Information should always be sent via secure internet protocol. If that is not available, encrypted non-secure internet protocol is acceptable. Remember OPSEC!





# OLYMPIC NEWS



## Soldiers compete as Olympians

By Capt. Joy Williams  
Task Force Marne

The Winter Olympics has begun in Vancouver, Canada, and there are six Soldiers competing on the U.S. Bobsled Team and one on the U.S. Biathlon Team.

In support of these Soldiers competing, Task Force Marne will host a Biathlon at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Feb. 27. The two events are running and shooting. The competition will start and end at the main gym. Competitors will run 3.6 miles to Short Stop Range; shoot 10 rounds at a 25 meter target using an M4/M16 rifle; and run another 3.6 miles back to the start/finish line to complete the course.

A maximum of 60 Soldiers can participate and each brigade and separate battalion are guaranteed one team. The uniform for the run is the Army Combat Uniform with boots, weapon; Improved Outer Tactical Vests, Army Combat Helmet, with goggles, gloves and ear plugs. Interested Soldiers should contact their units no later than Feb. 16.

Come out and test your mettle against TF Marne's best!



Sgt. Mike Kohn,  
Bobsled



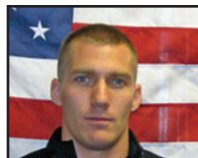
Sgt. John Napier,  
Bobsled



Sgt. Shauna  
Rohbock, Bobsled



Sgt. William  
Tavares, Bobsled



1st Lt. Christopher  
Fogt, Bobsled



Steve Holcomb,  
former Soldier



Sgt. Jeremy Teela,  
Biathlon

## Vancouver Schedule

(All times listed are local Iraq time)

- Feb. 14, 10:15 p.m.: Men's Biathlon 10km Sprint
- Feb. 16, 11:45 p.m.: Men's Biathlon 12.5km Pursuit
- Feb. 19, 12 a.m.: Men's Biathlon 20km Individual
- Feb. 21, 4 a.m.: Men's Two-Man Bobsled - Heat 1
- Feb. 21, 5:30 a.m.: Men's Two-Man Bobsled - Heat 2
- Feb. 21, 9:45 p.m.: Men's Biathlon 15km Mass Start
- Feb. 22, 12:30 a.m.: Men's Two-Man Bobsled - Heat 3
- Feb. 22, 1:45 a.m.: Men's Two-Man Bobsled - Heat 4
- Feb. 24, 4 a.m.: Women's Bobsled - Heat 1
- Feb. 24, 5 a.m.: Women's Bobsled - Heat 2
- Feb. 25, 4 a.m.: Women's Bobsled - Heat 3
- Feb. 25, 5 a.m.: Women's Bobsled - Heat 4
- Feb. 26, 10:30 p.m.: Men's Biathlon 4x7.5km Relay
- Feb. 27, 12 a.m.: Men's Four-Man Bobsled - Heat 1
- Feb. 27, 1:30 a.m.: Men's Four-Man Bobsled, Heat 2
- Feb. 28, 12 a.m.: Men's Four-Man Bobsled, Heat 3
- Feb. 28, 1:15 a.m.: Men's Four-Man Bobsled - Heat 4

## 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

25th Combat Aviation Brigade,  
25th Infantry Division  
130th Engineer Brigade  
135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

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