

The North Star

Serving Task Force Marne
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'Extreme Makeover' for Iraqi school

By Pvt. Zachary Zuber
3SBCT, 2nd Inf Div PAO

Classrooms in the Khalis Secondary School have been bustling during the first two weeks of February. The traffic is not from what most people would expect for the school, but rather a dedicated team of about 40 Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

Members of 1/23 Inf., Tomahawks, have been working with great fervor to perform a makeover modeled after the Extreme Makeover: Home Edition television program, that is popular among

many American families. The project, deemed the Extreme Tomahawk School Makeover, was created to refurbish a school, that has lived through its share of strife during the past few years, and to provide hope and opportunity to children of the community.

Soldiers worked for at least nine hours a day, with the final stretch carrying through the night, to complete the overhaul of every foot of the school. They assembled new desks, painted walls, installed windows and air conditioners, and provided new textbooks and bags to the students.

"This was a huge challenge for us to get done on time," said Spc. William

Chanda of Bridgeton, Maine, a forward observer for 1/23 Inf. "I am still catching up on sleep from the last push, but it was definitely worth it."

Lack of sleep wasn't the only difficulty the Tomahawks had to overcome. They did not have all the equipment and tools they wanted; nevertheless, through perseverance the job was completed.

"We had to make do with the few tools we had available," Spc. Chanda said. "There weren't enough hammers to go around, but everyone just passed stuff around to work with."

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Photo by Pvt. Zachary Zuber, 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

Soldiers of the 1/23rd Inf., 3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., place a new sign atop the entrance of the Khalis Secondary School. The sign was one of the final pieces put in place as part of the Extreme Makeover project.

Junior Soldiers translate training into Security

By 1st Lt. Samuel Gladney,
2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

Alpha Company, 'Gators' 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, is currently training the Combined Security Force for future missions in the city of Kirkuk.

In addition to members of Alpha Company, the CSF consists of Peshmerga, and Iraqi soldiers, and the Iraqi Police. In such an important and challenging mission, the life of a Soldier in Alpha Company is never dull.

"It's not like anything I've done before," said Spc. Glenn Hallford, of 1/30th Inf.

On the morning of Jan. 28, Spc. Glenn Hallford woke up to make final preparations for his day of CSF instruction.



Photo by 1st Lt. Samuel Gladney, 2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

Specialist Glenn Hallford trains with Iraqi Police, and Iraqi and Peshmerga soldiers at FOB Warrior, Iraq.

Specialist Hallford's task for the day was to instruct members of the CSF on improvised explosive device awareness. Specifically, this included what to do in a mounted convoy when a vehicle identifies an IED, and conducting security checks when dismounting a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle.

Such instruction would be difficult even under normal circumstances, but training the CSF poses unique challenges. All CSF instruction and training aides have to be translated into both the Arabic and Kurdish languages.

"It means you always need to be well prepared ahead of time. You really have to do your homework," said Spc. Hallford.

Before any instruction can begin, the instructor needs to ensure that the interpreters understand the subject matter and have translated all handouts and slides into two additional languages.

In addition, an instructor such as Spc. Hallford, must take into account differences in culture when he plans his class. He needs to understand how to coordinate through Peshmerga, and Iraqi Army, and Iraqi Police chains of command. This includes accounting for variations in tactics and differing levels of military experience.

If all of the variables are accounted for, then training will be successful. The process of turning four different

forces into one cohesive unit is one that takes months of preparation.

Every member of Alpha Company plays a vital role in ensuring that the new CSF is ready to conduct missions.

The chain of command plans, resources and supervises all of the training.

The supply system ensures the CSF living area is ready, resources ammunition for ranges, and even sifts through MRE's to ensure they don't contain any pork, which is forbidden in the Islam faith.

The company's platoons conduct the training and build the relationships between our partners.

The days usually begin early, with breakfast and the final preparation of training aides. After breakfast, the entire CSF holds a morning formation where the final plan for the day is briefed to all CSF Soldiers. From there, the CSF moves to the training area, located adjacent to their living quarters. Once at the training site, the CSF platoons begin rotating through their training. At each site, they receive a structured task, condition, and standard based training. After a break for lunch, training commences in a similar fashion in the afternoon.

This process of planning, resourcing, executing, and building relationships in the CSF involves every member of Alpha Company.

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Although many of the Tomahawks, who are trained in combat arms specialties, did not have much experience in the construction of buildings, those that did stepped up to play vital roles.

"I have done framing all my life, working construction," said Pfc. Wesley Loria, an anti-sniper specialist and Frisco, Texas, native. "With my experience, I was put in charge of all the framing in the building."

According to Pfc. Loria, another challenge was the degeneration of the existing foundations. Along with general construction, Soldiers were able to provide some basic amenities for students and teachers such as rewiring the school's electricity and providing air conditioning to keep comfortable dur-

ing the extremely hot times of the year.

As the school was unveiled to community members by driving back one of the Tomahawk Strykers from in front of the school, students rushed in to see all of the new improvements.

"My favorite part of this is the desks and the new air conditioning," said Ausama Adel, a 15-year-old student here. "With all these new things, it will be much easier to perform our studies."

His sentiments about the improvements seemed to radiate from his classmates through their smiles.

The school's headmaster saw it as a wonderful display of the opportunities opened for the future.

"Every part of this school was com-

pletely damaged before the Soldiers started working here," said Qasem Mohammed Al-Qasi, school headmaster. "With all these improvements, we can really push toward hard work and a better future for our students."

Their goals are now that much closer to being achieved, and the students of the Khalis Secondary School have a fresh set of possibilities for their future. Even though this project is finished, there are still more that the Tomahawks have in their sights.

"This is the first of several schools that we are planning to overhaul," Spc. Chanda said. "Never in a million years did I think this is what I would be doing in the Army, but it really felt good to make a difference in these kids' lives."

Key teams offer safety, protection for senior personnel

130th Engineers CST drives on

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

The command security team for the 130th Engineer Brigade exemplifies the phrase, "Soldier first," by providing security for Col. Fabian Mendoza, 130th Eng. Bde., brigade commander, and Command Sgt. Major Dale Moran., 130th Eng. Bde., brigade senior enlisted advisor.

Made up of engineers, medics, maintenance personnel and Soldiers with many other jobs, the team checks all vehicles, loads trucks, straps everything down and tests communication systems before mission.

On a recent mission, the CST stopped at Contingency Operating Base Speicher for

a night enroute to Forward Operating Base Warrior. The team's main mission was the safe transport of Command Sgt. Maj. Moran for a battlefield circulation and to check on the construction of engineering projects.

The three-hour drive to COB Speicher demands attention to detail.

"I'm accountable not only for myself, but for the protection of the whole convoy," said Sgt. Anthony Tolentino, a gunner for the CST and carpenter with the 130th Eng. Bde. "Take your eyes off the road for a second and that's it – you just cost the whole convoy."

Gunners are the eyes of a truck, and can see everything the rest of the crew can't. They scan their sectors for enemy threats, including improvised explosive devices.

Staying alert, remembering routes and watching the

reactions of locals when rolling through certain areas is necessary for the team to battle complacency. Every time the team leaves the protection of Contingency Operating Site Marez, there is a certain amount of risk involved, Sgt. Tolentino said.

"It's okay to be a little scared," said Sgt. Tolentino. "It keeps you standing, awake, and alert."

Upon arrival at COB Speicher, the CST refuels their trucks at the fuel point and themselves at the chow hall. After getting settled into temporary housing, the Soldiers have time to work out and rest before starting their process again the next day on their way to FOB Warrior.

At FOB Warrior the team

continues to provide security for Command Sgt. Maj. Moran while he checks on the 115th Engineering Company's projects and sites.

"It's a reality check for leaders, and grounding to see what your Soldiers are going through out there in the field on their missions," said Command Sgt. Maj. Moran.

Many missions could not be accomplished without the CST, said Command Sgt. Maj. Moran.



Photo by Pfc. Jennifer Lowes, 130th Eng. Bde. PAO
Sergeant Anthony Tolentino prepares his turret before a mission. Sergeant Tolentino is the gunner for the 130th Eng. Bde. CST at COB Marez.

'The Chosen Ones' deliver

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

A team of approximately 15 hand-picked Soldiers has supported the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division as the battalion commander's personal security detachment since May of 2009. The Soldiers were selected from different companies in the 1/64th Armor to be a part of the PSD.



Photo by Spc. Cassandra Monroe, 135th Mobile Public Affairs
Specialist Timothy Charles Anderson, an infantryman with the PSD for 1/64th Arm., 2 HBCT, 3rd ID, scans his sector on mission in Ninewa province, Feb. 8

"We pulled tankers, infantrymen, drivers, a line medic, communication specialist and mechanic from the different companies," said Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Taylor, the platoon sergeant for the PSD. "They are the enablers that help us and help everyone in the battalion accomplish the mission whenever assistance is needed."

A team like the PSD is not built overnight, though. Part of the initial training the Soldiers went through after being selected included establishing internal standard operating procedures, sharpening their tactical soldiering skills, convoy training, and rifle and gunnery marksmanship as well as going through a series of extensive exercises back at their home station.

"Kuwait is where we sealed the deal," Sgt. 1st Class Taylor said. "The team went through PSD-specific lanes, executing the procedures they had learned months prior to this deployment."

The PSD's primary responsibility is ensuring that Lt. Col. Richard Coffman, battalion commander, and Command

Sgt. Major Thumhart, battalion command sergeant major, have the ability to arrive anywhere in their area of operations safely and have the freedom of movement to accomplish any mission, Sgt. 1st Class Taylor said. The PSD is not limited to these taskings, though.

"They are the asset that gives the battalion assistance to get certain personnel, such as the battalion chaplain or a subject matter expert, to the right place at the right time, securely," Lt. Col. Coffman said.

Their job involves more than the safe transport of people. If supplies need to be delivered to certain remote checkpoints or bases, the PSD is that link to getting those missions accomplished. Other missions that the PSD supports include traveling to different checkpoints and working on company, battalion and brigade-level combined operations with Iraqi forces, as well as route security missions.

"The PSD has traveled over 7,900 miles – a great number of miles to have accomplished," Lt. Col. Coffman said.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Carlos Warfield distinguished himself by competently establishing a company newsletter for the Soldiers and the Family Members of Charlie Company, 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. Specialist Warfield's initiative enabled Charlie Company Families to be informed of special activities and events. The newsletter covered birthdays, new Soldiers, company events, stories and pictures. Specialist Warfield also coordinated a fun run for the Company. His commitment to excellence in physical training and his ability to motivate all the Soldiers of Charlie Company served not only as a sterling example for all to emulate but embodies the definition of leadership. Specialist Warfield distinguished himself well above his peers with each task he is assigned or takes the initiative to accomplish. He is the epitome of the core Army Values and for this reason is selected as today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Technical Sergeant Rudo and Staff Sgt. Franklin Walton of Headquarters and Headquarters Operation Command, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, are selected for their outstanding performance as a Patrol Explosive Detector Dog Team (PEDD). Staff Sergeant Walton's ability to coordinate with units to establish excellent pre-mission rehearsals ensures the security team and Military Working Dog team worked as one unit. Their dedication to training paid off on Jan. 31, 2010, while conducting a raid on a house with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Division. Technical Sergeant Rudo and Staff Sgt. Walton searched the house and found three loaded AK-47 magazines inside a freezer. Technical Sergeant Rudo and Staff Sgt. Walton have conducted more than 45 combat missions and more than 60 force protection missions. When not on a mission, Tech. Sgt. Rudo enjoys running thru the obedience course and getting his belly rubbed. In order to recognize these accomplishments, they have been selected as this week's Task Force Marne "Dog Face" Heroes of the North.

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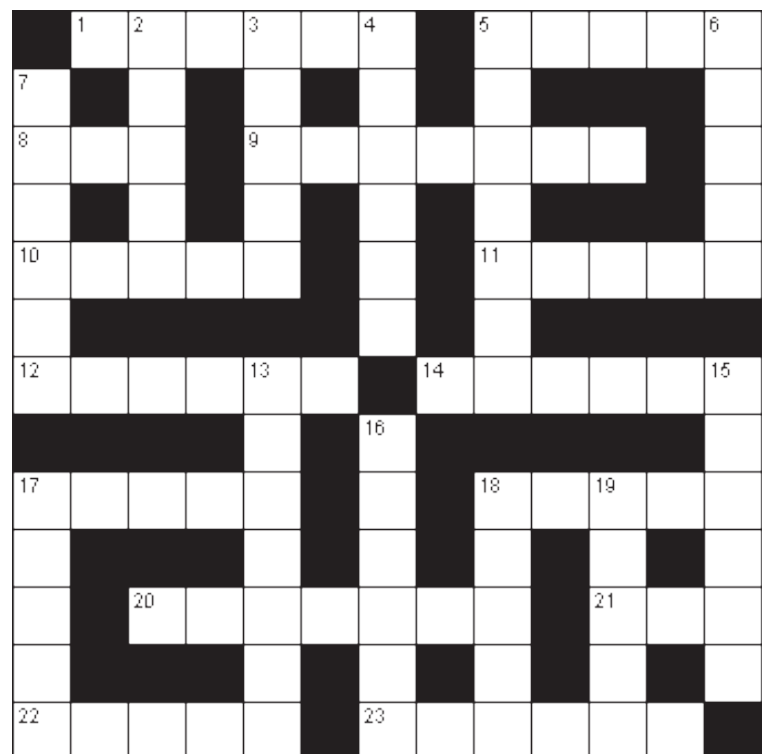
Across

1. Large American feline
5. Freshwater carnivorous mammal
8. Snakelike fish
9. Edible marine crustacean
10. Lepidopterous insects
11. Adult insect after metamorphosis
12. Sweet liquid attractive to bees
14. Carnivorous marine predators
17. Large group of insects
18. Dromedary
20. Large anthropoid ape
21. Star sign represented by a lion
22. Low animal sound
23. Bloodsucking African fly

Down

2. Young nocturnal bird
3. Aquatic birds
4. Leporid mammal
5. African flightless bird
6. Massive odd-toed ungulate, in short
7. Animal or insect pests
13. Butterfly, Red ____
15. Large food and game fish
16. Nocturnal wildcat of Central America and South America
17. Insect bite
18. Large long-necked wading bird
19. Hybrid offspring of male donkeys and female horses

Answers will be posted in Monday's edition of the North Star



REGIONAL HEADLINES

S.C. Politician wants to ban U.S. currency

UPI

Columbia, S.C. - A lawmaker who introduced a bill to ban the use of Federal Reserve Notes in South Carolina says he doubts colleagues have the "intestinal fortitude" to pass it.

The measure, introduced this month by Republican state Rep. Mike Pitts, would ban what Pitts called "the unconstitutional substitution of Federal Reserve notes for silver and gold coin" in his state. Pitts said the idea is to allow the state a "base of currency" if the economy collapses.

One expert, whose name was not reported, said gold and silver coins cannot be used as currency anyway.

"You can say a gold coin is worth \$50 but it would actually be worth whatever the market says it's worth, based on supply and demand," the expert said.

Man who was slapped by bear is slapped by fine

UPI

LONGWOOD, Fla. - A Florida man whose face was cut by a slap from a bear outside his door pleaded no contest to a charge of feeding wildlife.

Ernest Stamm, 49, of the Longwood area, put out food for feral cats that attracted the bear to his front door Dec. 10 and led to him getting slapped across the face by the adult female animal when he opened the door to investigate the noise, the Orlando Sentinel reported Feb. 17.

Stamm, who was treated for cuts to his face at an Altamonte Springs hospital, was issued a ticket for feeding wildlife.

Stamm pleaded no contest to the charge Feb. 16 and was sentenced to six months probation and a \$200 fine.

The bear was euthanized.

Vancouver Schedule

(All times listed are local Iraq time)

-Feb. 19, 12 a.m.: Men's Biathlon 20km Individual

-Feb. 21, 4 a.m.: Mens 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

2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES MEDAL COUNT

				
 United States	5	3	6	14
 Germany	3	4	3	10
 France	2	1	4	7
 Canada	2	3	1	6

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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