

# The North Star

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



Volume 1, Issue 50

February 26, 2010

## Mississippi Guard rolls out on final missions

By Sgt. Chad D. Nelson  
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Soldiers of Mississippi National Guard's 1st squadron, 98th Cavalry Regiment, ran one of their final escort missions across northern Iraq, safeguarding vital supplies for servicemembers and civilians, Feb. 20. The Tennessee National Guard's 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment is scheduled to take over operations sometime next week.

Serving under the 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, this cavalry regiment was a key element to the operations and survival of U.S. Division-North.

"We're the ones who supply all the classes of supply for the battle space owners," said Lt. Col. John Nipp, squadron commander of the 1/98th Cav. Regt. "Without sustainment, we couldn't be over here."

Escort missions were a change of pace when the regiment first arrived in



Photo by Sgt. Chad D. Nelson, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

**Specialist Timothy West, a driver with Troop C, 1/98th Cav. Regt., Mississippi National Guard, attaches the barrel on a Browning .50-caliber machine gun to an MRAP gun turret.**

2009, but they quickly adapted.

"Our mission as a traditional cav. squadron is to be the eyes and ears of

the brigade. We go out forward of the

**See GUARD, Page 2** —

## Spartans recognize African-American warriors: past and present

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

A man, armed with a musket and gunpowder wades through the swamps of South Carolina. Looking right, then left, he sees his comrades positioned as he is; poised and ready to defend against the approaching enemy.

Knees bent, shoulders

squared, and weapon at the ready, he notices the sea of faces surrounding him. Although they're not all of the same hue, they still hold that same look of determination, that look when fighting for something you strongly believe in – freedom.

Approaching voices ring out and the sounds of men and horses sloshing through the swamp can be heard. He

tightly clenches his rifle. His mind relaxes, as he prepares to fight to the death.

This Revolutionary War Soldier smiles, not allowing the threat of death to lower his spirits. He knows he won't actually fight to the death; he has to survive.

"After all," he thinks happily, "my master says after we win this war, I am my own man."

With this joyful thought, he pushes forward, determined to fight, to survive, and to become free.

From the battle for America's independence against the English, to the present Operation Iraqi Freedom, black Soldiers have ably proven themselves as American

**See WARRIOR, Page 3** —

# U.S. Soldiers teach Iraqis humvee maintenance

By 1st Lt. Harry Rogers  
4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

The 14th Iraqi Army Brigade's primary method of transportation is the up-armored humvee, and to keep their fellow Soldiers rolling on the battlefield, 13 Iraqi soldiers from the 14th IA Bde., recently attended a course in humvee maintenance that was developed and taught by two "Dragon" Brigade Soldiers, from 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

The course was a one-day, entry-level course that taught the Iraqi soldiers some basic skills necessary to keep their vehicles operational.

Until a few years ago, Iraqi soldiers used old, Soviet era vehicles from the Saddam regime while conducting patrols and moving their Soldiers around Salah ad-Din province. More recently, the 14th IA Bde., has placed an emphasis on resources for training their

**See HUMVEE,  
Page 3**

**continued from GUARD, Page 1**

brigade and do the reconnaissance ... and report back to the brigade," said Lt. Col. Nipp. "There are some things that carry over as scouts because we're providing security out on the road, but we're also pushing forward so we can identify any IEDs (improvised explosive device) or any ambush sites or anything out on the road prior to the convoy coming through. Those skills as scouts have allowed us to transition into this a little better."

"It gives you a better perspective of the job, because you see it from a different side," said Staff Sgt. Eddie Taylor, truck commander for Trp. C, 1/98th Cav. Regt.

After a year, the Mississippi Soldiers are adept at successfully accomplishing these new types of missions.

The 1/98th Cav. Regt. has rolled out on more than 590 missions logging more than 888,000 miles, according to 1st Lt. Roger Pate, the Future Operations officer with the 1/98th Cav. Regt. All of this was accomplished by 12 teams, with 24 Soldiers on each team.

These Soldiers protected countless



Photo by 1st Lt. Harry Rogers

**Specialist Michael Siebert, a mechanic with Co. F, 701st BSB, 4th IBCT, 1st ID, teaches mechanics from the 14th IA Bde., transmission and turbocharger maintenance, as well as how to manage fluid levels, diagnose electrical system problems, conduct inspections and replace brake pads during a one-day class designed to help the Iraqi soldiers better maintain their humvees.**

numbers of supplies being delivered to bases across northern Iraq. Everything from water and food to construction equipment delivered to Forward Operating Bases Marez, Warhorse, Warrior and Joint Base Balad.

"I wouldn't go without them," said Garry Swisher, bobtail driver and assistant convoy commander for Kellogg, Brown and Root. "They're our only security, our saving grace."

After all these miles, these missions are anything but routine. Driving for hours at a time, often in the dead of

night, exposes the convoy to any number of attacks from the enemy. But these guardsmen are undaunted.

"We're in some of the best vehicles the military has to offer," said Spc. William Turner, a gunner with Trp. C, 1/98th Cav. Regt. Specialist Turner experienced an IED explosion during a mission. The explosion punched holes in the armor of his vehicle, but the explosion wasn't powerful enough to completely penetrate, he said.

To date, the 1/98th Cav. Regt., has experienced 33 small-arms attacks, 15 IEDs, two rocket propelled grenade attacks, 14 escalation of force attacks and found six IEDs, some simply by the slight glint of copper wire caught in the headlights of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle.

For the 1/98th Cav. Regt., their deployment and exposure to these threats is coming to an end. Everyone is ready for their last mission in Iraq — one more convoy — from their Headquarters in the shadow of a bombed soccer stadium to COB Speicher's airport with a new destination: home.



Photo by Sgt. Chad D. Nelson, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det. **Staff Sergeant Eddie Taylor, a truck commander with Trp. C, 1/98th Cav. Regt., Mississippi National Guard, holds copper wire used to trigger roadside IEDs.**



## continued from WARRIOR, Page 1

Soldiers, defending the American flag in every major war fought by the United States, as well as several minor conflicts.

Many of these servicemembers served honorably, giving their lives in battle, while enduring racial discrimination.

Despite the way they were treated, blacks continued to serve in the Armed Forces, in segregated units, with inadequate supplies and uniforms, performing menial jobs thought to take little brain power to perform.

Historical military inroads were made by units, such as the Buffalo Soldiers, the first peacetime, all-black regiment in the regular U.S. Army, formed in 1866; and the Tuskegee Airmen, America's first black military airmen, who battled in the skies of World War II.

President Harry S. Truman desegregated all of U.S. Armed Forces on July 26, 1948, via Executive Order 9981, making it illegal, by military law, to make a racist remark against any servicemember.

Thanks to former President Truman's order and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, black servicemembers today are guaranteed, by law, military and civilian, equal and just treatment while on- and off-duty.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, Task Force Marne command sergeant major, currently deployed to northern Iraq in conjunction with Operation Iraqi Freedom, the present-day strides taken to ensure all Soldiers in the Armed Forces receive

fair treatment are immeasurable.

"I am elated by the leaps and bounds that have been made to ensure all Soldiers are being treated fairly regardless of their race," said the command sergeant major.

"I am glad African-Americans in the military are finally being truly acknowledged and recognized for all the talents and hard work we bring to the military. Things have definitely come a long way, though there are still things we can work on as Soldiers and leaders, fighting for one common cause – our nation."

**"We must always, always remember the many that came before us. The struggles and injustices they suffered, so we can fight as we do today - one team, one fight."**

COMMAND SGT. MAJ.  
VALMOND A. MARTIN - SPARTAN  
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

This Task Force Marne leader said he hopes he serves as a role model, not only for black Soldiers, but for all Task Force Marne Soldiers.

"I always try to set a good example. I know my Soldiers look up to me, and I strive to be a positive role model for them at all times; I want them to believe they can achieve anything in this world. If they just stay grounded, re-

member the discipline instilled in them from their upbringing, as well as the Army standards, and they won't go wrong."

Sergeant First Class Nicolette Shields, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Equal Opportunity advisor, said ethnic observances programs such as EO guarantee equality among the ranks.

"In this program, we educate the Soldiers on each other's differences. We recognize several cultural observances, including but not limited to Black History Month, Asian-Pacific Week, and Hispanic Heritage Month," Sgt. 1st Class Nicolette said.

"By teaching the Soldiers why another Soldier may do things differently because of his culture, upbringing or background, we rid them of ignorance and they gain a sense of respect for each other. The Soldiers always appreciate this training; they say it helps them to know their battle buddies better."

Spartan command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Valmond A. Martin, said he challenges all his Soldiers, regardless of race, creed or ethnicity, to remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous dream: To judge people by the content of their character, instead of by the color of their skin.

"As an Army of one, we must always, always remember the many that came before us," said Command Sgt. Maj. Martin. "The struggles and injustices they suffered, so we can stand and fight as we do today, one team, one fight."

"We must not forget. We must not take it for granted. It is our duty to make sure everyone, every single one of our Soldiers are treated as they should be."

## continued from HUMVEE, Page 2

Soldiers and mechanics on the proper maintenance of their newer, safer humvees.

Specialist Denton Clowser and Spc. Michael Siebert with Company F, 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th IBCT, 1st ID, designed a class to help their Iraqi Army counterparts learn fieldtested methods and "tricks of the trade" to help them repair damaged or non-mission ca-

pable humvees.

During the class, Iraqi mechanics learned transmission and turbocharger maintenance, as well as how to manage fluid levels, diagnose electrical system problems, conduct inspections and replace brake pads.

"This is the best group of Iraqi mechanics that I have ever worked with," Spc. Clowser said. "They were

asking in-depth questions about issues that a more experienced mechanic deals with."

At the conclusion of the class, Iraqi soldiers were given two copies of the U.S. Army humvee manual that had been translated into Arabic.

According to Capt. Hatten, the 14th IA Bde.'s Motor Pool Officer, the class

empowers his unit with the knowledge they need to keep their vehicles operational.

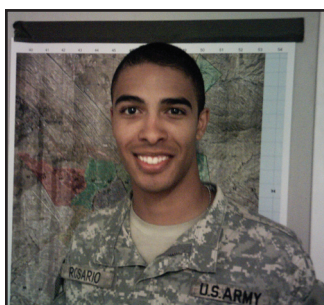
"I really think our mechanics benefited from both the instruction and the Arabic manuals we received. I am eternally grateful for the training," he said.

More classes are planned for the future as Co. F continues their partnership with the Iraqi Army.

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Corporal Jermain Murphy is an invaluable member of Headquarters and Headquarter Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, attached to the 130th Engineering Brigade. His determined efforts have provided the unit and section a smooth and streamlined transition from home station operations to Iraq. He has anticipated needs and provided critical assets to establish operations in the combat zone and can always be counted on to provide timely and accurate support. From assisting the 65th Engineer Battalion's redeployment to his efforts in the Responsible Drawdown of Forces from Iraq, Cpl. Murphy has been vital to the battalion's success. He is a key contributor to the battalion's turn-in of excess items and storage container retrograde and his efforts in support of the personal security detachment directly led to a fully capable and effective team. Corporal Murphy is a vital member of the operations team in all aspects, whether handling a logistical issue, mentoring younger Soldiers or setting the standards for all to emulate. His efforts make him a clear choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Private Alexander Rosario, Company C, 1st Brigade, 30th Infantry, and his situational awareness and discipline prevented a catastrophic friendly-fire incident in Kirkuk, Jan. 4. While conducting a dismounted patrol, Pvt. Rosario's platoon received one round of small-arms fire. Through his night vision optic, Pvt. Rosario observed four Peshmerga soldiers standing near a house with their weapons at their side. After a brief stand-off, the Peshmerga explained they did not have night vision and only observed a large group of men with weapons walking toward a house they were ordered to protect. Private Rosario's restraint allowed for the situation to be resolved via nonviolent means, preventing the loss of life on either side. Had Pvt. Rosario not possessed the discipline to wait until he gained positive identification to return fire, the event could have had strategic consequences. Exercising maturity and tactical patience well above his pay grade, Pvt. Rosario is truly deserving of today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

## 82nd Annual Academy Awards Best Picture nominees are ...

AVATAR

THE BLIND SIDE

DISTRICT 9

AN EDUCATION

THE HURT LOCKER

INGLORIOUS BASTERDS

PRECIOUS

A SERIOUS MAN

UP

UP IN THE AIR



## Sudoku

from [www.puzzlechoice.com](http://www.puzzlechoice.com)  
(Answers will be listed in  
Monday's newsletter)

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

# REGIONAL HEADLINES

## Whale drags trainer off platform in fatal attack

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. -- A veteran Sea-World trainer was leisurely rubbing a killer whale from a poolside platform when the 12,000-pound creature reached up, grabbed her with its mouth and dragged her underwater. Despite workers rushing to help, the trainer was killed.

Horrified visitors who had stuck around after a noontime show watched the animal charge through the pool with the trainer in its jaws. Workers used nets as an alarm sounded, but it was too late. Dawn Brancheau had drowned.

This attack marked the third time the animal had been involved in a human death.

## Suit: Mascot threw hot dog, caused eye injury

United Press International

KANSAS CITY, Mo -- A Kansas, Mo., man's lawsuit against the Kansas City Royals alleges he suffered an eye injury from a hot dog thrown by team mascot Sluggerrr.

John Coomer filed a suit in Jackson County Circuit Court alleging he suffered a detached retina and cataracts after he was struck in the eye by a hot dog tossed by the mascot during a Sept. 8, 2009, home game at Kauffman Stadium, The Kansas City Star reported, Feb. 24.

"(Sluggerrr) attempted to throw a hot dog into the stands with a throw behind his back," the suit states. "Instead of throwing the hot dog at an arch high into the stands, (Sluggerrr) lost control of his throw, or was reckless with his throw, and threw the hot dog directly into the plaintiff, who was sitting a few feet away."

A Royals spokesman declined to comment on the lawsuit, which is scheduled for mediation June 1.



Courtesy Photo

Sluggerrr, Kansas City Royals' Mascot.

## Vancouver Schedule

(All times listed are local Iraq time)

-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	7	9	12	28
 Germany	7	10	7	24
 Norway	6	6	6	18
 Canada	7	6	2	15

## THE North Star

*The North Star* is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of *The North Star* are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 3rd Infantry Division. All editorial content of *The North Star* is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Task Force Marne Public Affairs Office.

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

## TASK FORCE MARNE

Commanding General - Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo  
Command Sergeant Major - Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews Jr.

### Task Force Marne Public Affairs Staff

TF Marne PAO - Maj. Jeff Allen  
TF Marne PA NCOIC - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs  
TF Marne Writer- Sgt. Johnathon Jobson

### Editorial Staff

Managing Editor - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs  
Acting Editor- Sgt. Chad D. Nelson

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