

The North Star

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



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Iraqi Army takes the lead with help from U.S. forces

By Spc. Jessica Zullig
135th Mobile PA Det.

Iraqi soldiers from the 4th Field Engineer Regiment visited two schools in the village of Al Waa to deliver cloth and school supplies, while Soldiers from 1st Platoon, 573rd Clearance Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, provided security for the event.

Children in the schools were thrilled by the donation.

"I am happy and glad to receive these gifts," said Rusol Nory, a student at one of the schools. "I'm going to start to learn how to sew so that I can use the cloth."

Major Abin, the media officer for the 4th FER, said that donating the school supplies allows the IA to bond with the kids.

"I feel we get closer with kids and they are not afraid of the Iraqi Army – it helps patch the rift between the kids and the Army," he said. "In the future when they see the Army in the streets, they can feel secure."

Donating school supplies isn't a usual thing for Sgt. 1st Class John Warnock, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, 573rd Clearance Co.,

1st Eng. Bn.

"Partnership missions so far have been route clearance, training missions, but this is something for the Iraqi people – not the Iraqi military," he said. "It's great to do these things for the kids."

The kids don't have anything to do with what's going on here, but they are the future of what's going to go on here.

We should make them more prepared for the future by giving them the things they need for school.

"The good thing about having the IA give the supplies is that it puts them in a good light with their own people," he continued. "They have improved quite a bit since we've been here. They're doing well on policing the cities, and they're starting to get involved in the reconstruction. They are serious about what they are doing and take pride in it."

Second Lieutenant Stephen Simmons, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Eng. Bn., said missions like these get the U.S. closer to coming home.

Seeing the IA get out there and take charge is a



Photo by Spc. Jessica Zullig, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Specialist Andrew Westerman from 573rd Clearance Co., 1st Eng. Bn., and an Iraqi soldier from the 4th Field Engineer Regiment load a truck at COL Spider, Iraq, for a donation drop of school supplies and cloth for schools in Al Waa, March 25.

great step. It confirms down the road everything can be handed over to them, said 2nd Lt. Simmons, the officer in charge of the engineer

military transition team for the 4th FER. "The kids were excited, and seeing all of those smiling faces was worth the hard work."

Team provides critical aid through drawdown

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

As American forces prepare to depart from Iraq, there will be a few individuals staying until the end.

The individuals included in the stay are a part of the critical care air transport team, or CCATT, stationed with the 332nd Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Flight out of Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The CCATT is capable of providing an equal amount of intensive care and treatment a patient would receive in a regular hospital during aerospace transit to installations that can provide better intensive care to the patient.

The concept of CCATT has been around for a number of years and was originally developed in the early 1990s, with teams first deployed by 1995, said Air Force Col. James King, the CCATT theater medical director at Al Udeid Airbase, Qatar. Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are where the CCATT has really proven its value. As the years have passed and more experience has been gained within the CCATT community, the level of critical care in the air has improved.

"The advances we've made with aeromedical evacuation, in part to the use of CCATTs, has helped support that effort to provide the best medical care for our war fighters when they get injured," added Col. King, who is stationed at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"Back in the 80s, the thought of



Courtesy Photo

Air Force Capt. Theodore J. SzerSzenski, a registered nurse with the JB Balad CCATT, checks his equipment.

treating patients was, 'let's build a big hospital downrange, and we can treat patients as they come off the battlefield,'" said Air Force Capt. Napoleon Roux, the Joint Base Balad CCATT medical director with the 332nd EAEF. "Patients would spend weeks in the theater hospital before they'd make their way back to the states.

Now, it's switched to, 'let's get them out of here fast, let's get them to Germany or even better, to the States where there is a lot of specialty care, like burn units.'"

These CCATTs are comprised of physicians, nurses and respiratory specialists, all trained in critical care, and usually travel in a C-130 or C-17 Air Force aircraft. However, the skills of a CCATT are not limited and also include doctors that specialize in emergency medicine, pulmonary critical care, surgical care, cardiology and anesthesiology.

After a patient movement request has been made at the patient's location, a team at Al Udeid Airbase, Qatar, will fly the plane to Joint Base Balad where the CCATT will spring into action.

A typical day for the CCATTs start with a ring from their pocket -- their paging device.

"Within 30 minutes of getting

alerted, we need to be at the office getting equipment ready to go," said Capt. Roux, who is stationed at Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

After packing their mission-essential equipment and attending an intelligence briefing, the team makes their way to the patient to meet with other medical specialists. Because the CCATT is not a typical emergency care team and can sometimes deal with more intensive injuries and illnesses, they must gather background information on the patients prior to the mission in order to assess what types of medications and equipment to bring.

"The whole process takes about four hours," said Capt. Roux. "Typically, before we even get alerted, we know about the patient. We make daily stops over to the hospital and learn about the patients, so it's no surprise [after getting alerted]. Nonetheless, with transport time, we're talking a 12-to-16-hour day. In the Air Medical Evacuation realm, we maintain that pace for five days straight before we get some rest."

"Most of our missions have been to Germany," said Capt. Roux. "It's a five-to-six-hour flight. During that whole time, we're adjusting medication and



Courtesy Photo

From left to right, the Joint Base Balad Critical Care Air Transport Team is comprised of Air Force Capt. Napoleon Roux, anesthesiologist and medical director; Senior Airman Joshua Powell, RT; and Air Force Capt. Theodore J. SzerSzenski, RN.

See CCATT, Page 3

Iraqi Soldiers, Police graduate CSI course

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

The first combined Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army class graduated from the Crime Scene Investigations Course, March 22.

After three months of hard work, four Iraqi Police investigating officers and an Iraqi Army officer earned certificates of completion from instructors at the Joint Expeditionary Forensics Facility 4.

According to graduate Lt. Col. Ibrahim with the 4th Iraqi Army Division, the combined class was the first step to further joint forensic and evidence collection efforts between the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police.

"Always big goals start with small steps. The biggest step here is cooperation with Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police to work together and complete what we wanted to complete," he said. Major Donald R. Meeks, officer in charge of the JEFF lab has overseen the graduation of three classes.

For him, the class was not just about teaching forensics capabilities but also about mentoring and sharing.

"As I wrap up my year here in Iraq, I think about all the friendships and partnerships I've developed," he told the graduates "we've learned that



Photo by Capt Rebecca Walsh, 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

Graduates from Advanced Forensic Training along with instructors from the JEF Facility lab celebrate course completion during a ceremony, March 23 on COB Speicher.

grilled fish can be very good and we also learned that Americans can make chai ... this is the partnership that we have developed."

During the course, Iraqi criminal investigators were taught how to exploit biometric and forensic evidence to support evidence based investigations.

The training was conducted in the JEFF lab, one of three remaining U.S. facilities in Iraq with the capability to analyze DNA and examine latent fingerprints and firearm residue from

crime scenes.

"These are the experts in the field," said Maj. Vic Baezan, advisor to the provincial chief of police deployed to northern Iraq with the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

"With God's permission there will be more and more classes ... we have the equipment and training, now we can go on and do our work," said one graduate, confident that with his new knowledge he can assist the investigation process.

Continued from CCATT, Page 2

giving blood products as needed. We're essentially providing intensive care mid-flight."

Often times, the type of missions the team supports include transporting a patient from one forward operating base to another.

Regardless the flight time, it's the treatment that the team is allowed to administer mid-flight to ensure the patient survives that makes a difference.

"I feel like we have a small piece of the puzzle that helps these guys survive their traumatic and devastating injuries," said Capt.

Roux. "We are taking care of someone's father, someone's brother, wife, or daughter. We try to treat patients as if they were our own family members because a lot of these folks who are getting hurt are those outside the wire, and they are doing a great service to our country by putting their lives at risk. It's extremely rewarding knowing that we have a part in getting them home to see their loved ones."

"If it wasn't for the CCATTs, our people wouldn't have made it without the specialty care that they provide," said

Army Capt. Joy Williams, the chief patient tracking administrator with Headquarters, Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division out of Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

Although the number of battle injuries in Iraq is decreasing, mild to severe illnesses still exist. Throughout the drawdown process, it is rest assured that those who find themselves dealing with an illness or injury these illnesses are safe in the CCATT's hands.

There is still going to be

a requirement for that high level of medical assistance that the CCATT offers, said Col. King.

The servicemembers and civilians still out in country can count on high quality medical and surgical care to get them safely back to the United States. The CCATT system will continue to provide that high level of care.

"As long as there is one coalition or American Soldier in theater, there needs to be access to a CCATT," said Capt. Roux. "It's my opinion that we will be here until the very last boot takes off."

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant Eddie Franklin, of Baton Rouge, La., is with the 130th Engineer Brigade. He serves as a combat engineer, assigned to the Combat Security Team as a Mine Resisted Ambush Protected Vehicle .50 caliber gunner for the brigade commander. Recently, Sgt. Franklin participated in five mission off the forward operating base in seven days, providing security and overwatch for the entire patrol as they maneuvered through the city of Mosul and United States Division - North. In his off time, Sgt. Franklin mentors his junior Soldiers through professional and personal development. He has taken great pride in preparing his junior Soldiers for the company Soldier of the month boards. Sergeant Franklin also aids in the maintenance and repair of the facilities in the brigade area when not on mission. He has positively affected all Soldiers in the brigade area through these repairs. Sergeant Franklin is a noncommissioned officer to emulate, whose strength of character, commitment to the mission, candor and competence greatly enhance the effectiveness of the CST Platoon. These qualities make Sgt. Franklin an obvious choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Dave Gregg of Sugar Hill, Ga., is one of two field service representatives that support critical communications terminals throughout the United States Division – North area of operations. Mr. Gregg services 54 terminals and is a true professional who readily trains Soldiers as necessary to help them more proficiently accomplish their mission. Mr. Gregg makes himself available 24 hours a day and frequently travels to remote locations on extremely short notice. He was a critical member of the satellite migration team during Operation Killborne, with his technical expertise being one of the key reasons for a successful transition. His complete dedication to mission success and his unwavering commitment to excellence in all things reflect great credit upon him and the TCS team and make him a natural choice for this week's Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.

On this day, Feb 1, in history ...

www.history.com

1889 - The Eiffel Tower is dedicated in Paris in a ceremony presided over by Gustave Eiffel, the tower's designer, and attended by French Prime Minister Pierre Tirard, a handful of other dignitaries, and 200 construction workers.

1790 - German auxiliary cruiser Atlantis sets off on a mission to catch and sink Allied merchant ships. It sank a total of 22 merchant ships (146,000 tons in all) and proved a terror to the British Royal Navy.

1943 - Broadway musical "Oklahoma" appears on Broadway. Despite many fears it would fail the musical was an immediate hit.

1973 - The Mississippi River reaches its peak level in St. Louis during a record 77-day flood. During the extended flood, 33 people died and more than \$1 billion in damages were incurred.

1991 - The Warsaw Pact- the military alliance between the Soviet Union and its eastern European satellites- comes to an end after 35 years of existence. The action was yet another sign that the Soviet Union was losing control over its former allies and that the Cold War was falling apart.

1995 - Major League Baseball players are sent back to work after the longest strike in baseball history ends on this day in 1995. Because of the strike, the 1994 World Series was cancelled; it was the first time baseball did not crown a champion in 89 years.

Safety Thought of the Week: Unexploded Ordnance Awareness

- During Operation Desert Storm the U.S. Air Force dropped over 40,000 Cluster Bombs containing more than 9 million bomblets. The average dud rate was 5 percent leaving over 700,000 potential UXOs.
- Picking up UXOs can cost a person their hand or their life. UXOs can explode at any time, especially if handled, moved or kicked.
- UXOs can be unstable. Remember the Rule of 3 – recognize, retreat and report.
- UXOs are hazards, whether they are on the battlefield or in designated work or living areas. Personnel can lessen the danger of UXO hazards by being able to recognize the hazard and strictly follow basic safety guidelines.
- See FM 21-16: Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Procedures.



REGIONAL HEADLINES

Girl Scout delivers 850 books to Texas elementary students

Austin American-Statesman

ROUND ROCK, Texas — A book drive that started in September with a Bluebonnet Elementary teacher's desire for students to have books of their own ended March 29 when a Girl Scout and her family arrived at the school from Memphis, Tenn.

They came in a van packed with nine boxes filled with more than 850 donated books enough for each of the school's 600 students to take one home.

The teacher, Memphis native Christie Rodgers, was in her first year at the school last fall when she said she discovered that students needed books. When Principal Lucy McVey talked to teachers at the beginning of the year, "She said that a lot of kids did not own books at home, so it was up to us to help them become passionate for literature by using the school library and our own personal libraries," Rodgers said.

So she sent e-mails to her Tennessee friends in September asking for help. One of her friends forwarded it to Memphis Girl Scout Lily Mastron because the friend belonged to the same church as Mastron and knew that the Mastrons had a large library.

"I grew up with a lot of books," Lily Mastron, 15, said. Her mother, Annette Mastron, said she once bought 3,000 children's books from a

community library that was closing. Rodgers, who has since moved back to Memphis because the house that she and her husband owned there wouldn't sell, said her friends donated almost 3,000 books in October. The school also bought used books with money donated from the Round Rock area, Rodgers said. It was enough for each child to take home five books, she said.

By then, Lily Mastron had started a book drive for the school as a Girl Scout project. On March 29, she got to deliver the books to Round Rock during her spring break and to speak to the students.

"It felt really good to deliver the books," she said.

The appreciation was mutual.

"It felt good to know we were younger than her and had inspired her to do something great," fifth-grader Kalea Caggen said.

Area 51 vets break silence: Sorry, but no space aliens.

Seattle Times

VANCOUVER, Wash. — After nearly five decades, guys like James Noce, of Vancouver finally get to tell their stories about Area 51.

Yes, that Area 51.

The one that gets brought up when people talk about secret Air Force projects, crashed UFOs, alien bodies and, of course, conspiracies.

The secrets, some of them, have been declassified.

Noce, 72, and his fellow Area 51 veterans around the country now are free to talk about doing contract work for the CIA in the 1960s and '70s at the arid, isolated Southern Nevada government testing site.

Their stories shed some light on a site shrouded in mystery; classified projects still are going on there. It's not a big leap from warding off the curious 40 or 50 years ago, to warding off the curious who now make the drive to Area 51.

The veterans' stories provide a glimpse of real-life government covert operations, with their everyday routines and moments of excitement. Noce didn't seek out publicity. But when contacted, he was glad to tell what it was like.

"I was sworn to secrecy for 47 years. I couldn't talk about it," he says.

In the 1960s, Area 51 was the test site for the A-12 and its successor, the SR-71 Blackbird, a secret spy plane that broke records at documented speeds that still have been unmatched. The CIA says it reached Mach 3.29 (about 2,200 mph) at 90,000 feet.

But after September 2007, when the CIA displayed an A-12 in front of its Langley, Va., headquarters as part of the agency's 60th birthday, much of the secrecy of those days at Area 51 fell away.

Although Noce and other Area 51 vets say they saw plenty of secret stuff, none make claims about aliens.

THE North Star

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2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

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