

# The North Star

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



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## SOI families receive medical attention

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

The line of widows, wives, children, mothers and sisters of soldiers of the Sons of Iraq reached from their headquarters building in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, all the way to the end of the road and each of them had a huge smile on their face.

Women and children gathered at the SOI headquarters, March 24, to receive much needed clothes, shoes, food and medical attention from Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

"We did this to show our appreciation to the SOI, they have assisted us greatly since arriving and their families have made many sacrifices," said Capt. Scott Wares, of Orange County, Calif., and commander of HHC, 1-37th AR, who did a project much like this one during his last deployment.

"These women and children are very happy to receive the medical attention and supplies they need, in

a secure environment," said Khalaf Ibrahim Ali, known as Abu Adnan and the SOI contractor in Hawijah.

Abu Adnan went on to explain that many of the families cannot afford to go to the doctor or buy medicine for minor pains, like colds or respiratory problems.

"That is exactly what we are here to help with; basic medical care," said 1st Lt. Jason Hrdina, the battalion physician assistant for 1-37th AR.

First Lieutenant Hrdina brought along four of his medics, one of them a female medic to assist the women. The medics, who accompanied 1st Lt. Hrdina, assisted more than 300 people.

"It is very important to these women that a female medic is present so they get the care they need, many of them probably would not have seen a medic if we didn't have one here," said Sgt. Lisa Moore, a San Antonio, Texas, native and female medic for 1-37th AR.

After being looked at by the medics, the families then went to another room where the children were able to pick out brand new shoes; clothing and the

women received food and jackets.

One of the women's husbands was injured fighting. She was particularly happy to see the Soldiers and receive the assistance.

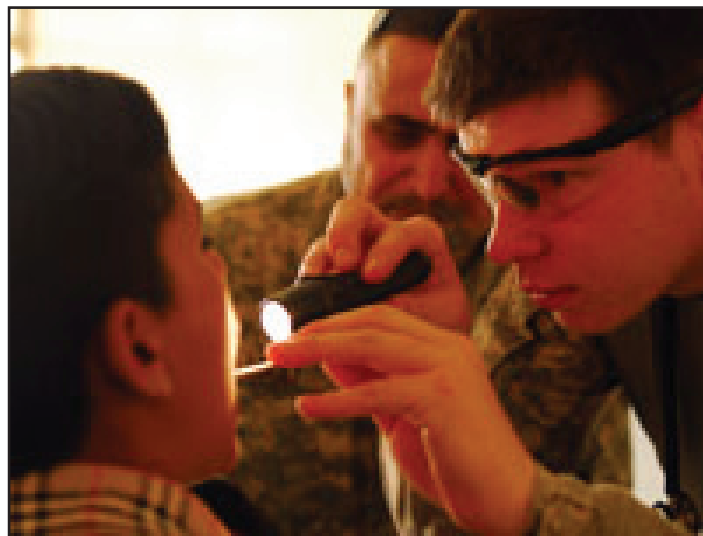
"Thank you so much," she said through an interpreter. "My husband cannot work anymore so to receive food and clothing makes my family so happy."

After receiving the clothing and food, the children were able to stop by and see the 1-37th AR Chaplain (Capt.) Abrahamyoung Ki Kim, to receive candy and beanie babies.



Photos by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs,  
1BCT, 1st AD PAO

**A Soldier with HHC, 1/37th AR., 1BCT, 1st A.D. out of Fort Bliss, Texas, helps a wife of a Sons of Iraq member find clothing for her child, during a humanitarian and medical-aid mission at the Sol Headquarters in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, March 24.**



**Private First Class Jason Waleert, a medic with HHC, 1/37th AR, examines a child of a Sons of Iraq member, during a humanitarian and medical-aid mission at the Sol Headquarters in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, March 24. During this mission the medics of 1/37th AR gave basic medical attention to more than 300 families of the Sol.**

# 3ID officer implements efficiency

## *New system simplifies job at Air-Movement Desk*

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

When most people submit their Air Movement Requests to move from base to base, they just e-mail it and patiently wait for a response.

Very seldom does anyone think of the journey the requests take.

In the past, this process was a lengthy ordeal.

A clerk would open AMR e-mails and conduct a quality control to see if a flight was possible.

If a flight was possible, the clerk logged the AMR, assigned a tracking number, archived the AMR into a shared drive folder, printed the AMR and sent a confirmation e-mail to the requestor.

All of this took more than nine minutes per AMR. Then quality control stepped in and created the lift tracker, which is the flight schedule for missions. With upwards of 140 AMRs submitted every day, the time-consuming process was performed 24 hours per day.

This was a problem for the incoming G-3 Air with 3rd Infantry Division, who had fewer Soldiers in the section than its predecessors.

"[The op tempo] required four more people than we have," said Maj. Dana L. Smith, deputy G-3 Air, 3rd Infantry Division.

Major Smith, a firm believer in "work smarter, not harder," found that he had just the idea that would reduce the personnel requirements and save large amounts of time – an automated system that would compile the data, which was previously compiled by the AMR clerk.

By using the visual basic interface in Microsoft Excel, Maj. Smith was able to program everything needed to submit AMRs and compile the lift tracker.

By creating countless conditional statements in the program, such as having the program not search for flights on days other than the requested date, the program was slowly developed to what is being used today.

Vast amounts of information had to

be input into the program for it to run.

Approximate flight times, how much time a helicopter can be in the air before needing to refuel, how many people and how much equipment a helicopter can hold and many more facts were researched and programmed.

The program took approximately three months from concept to implementation.

Now the G-3 Air is able to run at 40 percent strength and with one-third the staff as compared to their predecessors due to the program, according to Maj. Smith.

The three months used to create this program has saved hundreds of man hours since the G-3 Air deployed to Iraq in October.

With the automated system, full missions can be built in three hours, with individual flights being built in seconds.

The old system could take up to 10 hours, as missions were created by printing out AMRs, laying them out, taking notes and creating each flight mission by hand, said Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Leblanc, III, future ops non-commissioned officer in charge, G-3 Air, 3rd ID.

"Everything was on this table," said Sgt. 1st Class Leblanc, pointing to a

massive, eight-foot-long table.

"Everything to my left was the north [of Iraq]; everything to my right was the south. It was a stack of papers. If I had Speicher to Kirkuk, that was one stack," said Sgt. 1st Class Leblanc. With an average of 60 flight legs per day, the stacks were substantial.

Proud of the hard work he was doing with the old, manual process, it took Sgt. 1st Class Leblanc some time to get used to the reduced work load involved with the automated process.

The table, now empty, sits in a corner.

Sergeant First Class Leblanc took great pride in the hard work he committed to the old process, and embracing the automated process has taken time.

"I didn't like it at first. Once you learn something and you think you're good at something, change isn't always embraced.

But, this system makes my job so much easier," said Sgt. 1st Class Leblanc.

The automatic process, while faster, also ensures no mistakes are made in the process.

"Everything is going to match up," said the sergeant first class. "There are less complaints, a lot less complaints."



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

**Major Dana L. Smith, Deputy G-3 Air, 3rd ID, works on the AMR program he created to ease the personnel requirements needed to run the process. The program has saved hundreds of man-hours and prevented mistakes caused by human error**



## New Year's in Spring



Photo by Spc. Michael Adams, TF Marne PAO  
**Assyrian folk dancers perform at the celebration of the Assyrian/Chaldean New Year, March 31 at COB Speicher. The Assyrian/Chaldean culture is considered to be the beginning of modern civilizations and spread the Christian religion as well. For the full story, see Monday's North Star.**

# Spartan Soldier strives for excellence

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

For many American children, parents are often their first role models. As early as the age of two, little girls stick their toddler-sized feet into their mother's over-sized heels and lots of dads find their large baseball caps swallowing their sons' little heads, revealing only tiny smiles.

These acts of kids imitating their parents are often the spark to something more.

For Pfc. Walter Jones III, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and namesake of his father and grandfather, imitating the men in his family, walking around in combat boots, and wearing a U.S. Army uniform was not just in imitation; it was the continuance of a legacy.

"My father and my grandfather, as well as one of my uncles, are Veterans; my grandfather served in

the Korean War and my father and uncle served in Desert Storm. I've always looked up to them," he said.

The private first class said although being a part of a "military family" was enough to make his decision to join the Army concrete, having a little one of his own hurried the decision.

"I was in college playing football and studying to be a teacher when I found out



Courtesy Photo  
**Private First Class Walter Jones III, HHC, 2BCT, 3ID, stands at attention while being pinned by Spartan Commander, Col. Charles E. A. Sexton, with an Army Commendation Medal.**

my first daughter, Kaylee, was going to be born. I had given a lot of thought to joining the Army before, but at that moment, I knew it definitely was my next big step. I knew it was a solid man's decision and my Family would definitely be proud," he said.

Private First Class Jones left Montgomery, Ala., his home town, for basic combat training at Ft. Knox, Ky., and advanced individual training at Fort Jackson, S.C. He later became a part of the Spartan paralegal team at Fort Stewart, Ga., in January 2009.

About 10 months later, he received the news he was deploying "I had known we were going to be deployed for quite awhile, so I began to prepare myself mentally for a long time before we left. As I got on the plane, I remember thinking that I probably would miss my daughter's birth, but I knew I would stay strong to make sure she was definitely taken care of after she got

here," he said.

Worried about the home front or not, according to Sgt. 1st Class Michael Kolb, HHC, 2nd HBCT, 3rd ID, Pfc. Jones has been very focused and is doing an extraordinary job.

"He's a very good Soldier. You can give him a task and with little supervision, and he'll make it happen," said the sergeant first class. "He also made the effort of assisting all the other Soldiers in the section with signing up to take college courses while we're deployed. He made sure everything was squared away."

While he enjoys being a Soldier, Pfc. Jones says his heart is still focused on teaching.

"My recruiter told me about the Troops-to-Teachers program, and I was intrigued," he said. "I knew it would give me a chance to serve my country and prepare myself to teach. I love helping people and both careers, in that sense, are very fulfilling."

## Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Gustavo Peralta, of New York, is with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. He served as a member of a personal security detail responsible for safeguarding the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. He established and maintained communication between his maneuver commander and two Apache helicopters. During dismounted operations in a rural village in Mujadeed he identified suspected threats and provided situation reports to the maneuver commander. His actions contributed to the effective emplacement of personnel and vehicles maximizing security throughout the operation. He utilized superb escalation of force progression, avoiding a negative reaction from the citizens of the village. His actions decreased possible risks and enabled successful mission accomplishment. His efforts enabled the U.S. ambassador to assess projects that will increase the quality of life for the civilians of the village and make him a great choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Staff Sergeant Cody Hoefer, of Billings, Mont., is with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. His quick thinking and cool actions under intense pressure fueled by a local demonstration, helped protect the Ninewa governor and his team. During a recent brigade commander's personal security detachment mission, Staff Sgt. Hoefer took action, by way of non-lethal force, when the peaceful demonstration escalated to high tensions. He directed his team to step between the crowd, offering protection to the governor with intent to de-escalate the situation. Following failed talks, Staff Sgt. Hoefer safely led the PSD through the heightened tensions of the crowd despite objects thrown and shots fired. He executed smartly, calmly, and put his knowledge and training to use for non-lethal means of de-escalation. With tensions high, any wrong move by security forces could have been a trigger for a devastating event. Staff Sergeant Hoefer is a true embodiment of the Spartan motto: "Send Me."

## Saddam's Salah ad-Din palaces to become tourist attractions

### Cultural Tidbit Special to the North Star

When former governor Mutashar Elaiwi heard about Saddam Hussein's palaces along the Tigris River, which flows beside Tikrit city (Saddam's tribe stronghold), he didn't imagine what he would inherit after he became governor to the city, and lived in one of the palaces.

Elaiwi said there are 167 palaces in Salah ad-Din province all belonging to Saddam, his family, and some of his relatives. He stressed that members of the local government and some key security leaders in the province and official departments use these palaces.

He added being the governor of Salah-ad Din allowed him to see most of these palaces from inside and witness the elaborate construction.

Jawhar Al-Fahal, director of investment in Salah ad-Din, said his department made an offer to companies in an attempt by the provincial council to

use these palaces as tourist attractions. People around the world are still curious how the former ruler of Iraq lived.

Elaiwi added, one of these palaces "Dho-Alfaqr palace" is about about 10 acres in area, it has many palm groves, and deer grazing areas. Dear was a favorite dish of the Husseins.

"People in Tikrit knew Saddam's kitchens were full of food, waiting for his guests, if the guest didn't show up all the food will be trashed, while there is hundreds of Iraqi starving," said Elaiwi

Elaiwi added that in the past many Iraqis were afraid to look at the palaces as they walked by.

He believes opening these palaces will help to increase the number of tourists in Iraq.

Hussein built six palaces in Al ouja village alone, where he was born, and the Tikrit palace complex, close to his home is one of his largest.

According to Reuters news agency,

Army data shows, there are 136 buildings in the complex. The area boasts artificial lakes and palm groves, and covers an area of more than 1,000 acres. The Army occupied the palaces as bases, until they were turned over to the Iraqi authorities in November 2005. Now many of these sandy-colored buildings with its domes and towers covered by marble from inside, seem severely damaged, when Saddam was toppled.

Saddam's palaces in Tikrit would not be the first palaces to become tourist attractions. Babylon Palace, a palace about 100 miles south of Baghdad, has been turned into a honeymoon resort. There are 160 total palaces in central and southern Iraq, 60 of them in Baghdad alone.

Tikrit resident Abdallah Mahmoud is encouraged by the future.

"I believe, Salah ad-Din ready for this project. We are optimistic about the future".



## REGIONAL HEADLINES

### Basketball legend's golf course in foreclosure

Atlanta Journal Constitution

ATLANTA- Basketball great Julius Erving was pursuing a dream when he purchased an Atlanta area golf course in 2007.

Erving wanted to invest, so when a long-time friend told him about the Heritage Golf Club, it sounded like the perfect opportunity. Erving's partner handled all of the details, his attorney Dorna Taylor said.

Now the course is up for foreclosure "From day one, the business could not support the expenses," attorney Taylor said.

What Erving didn't know was that the previous owner's mortgage on the property was in default, Taylor said.

The golf course, which Erving renamed Celebrity Golf Club International was not worth the \$11 million loan Ervin assumed, Taylor said. Even worse, Erving's former friend knew the property wouldn't appraise for the loan amount, she said. "The numbers were misrepresented,"

Erving moved to Atlanta in 2008 and went to work trying to turn things around the golf course, Taylor said. But the monthly mortgage of \$75,000 was just too steep, she said. He's now out about \$5 million. The property is worth about \$2 million, Taylor said. "Mr. Erving never took a salary," Taylor said. "He never recouped any of his investment."

Although there is still a chance the

bank and Erving could work out a deal, Taylor doesn't think that's likely. Instead, the entire episode will serve as a learning experience.

"He has a plan to develop seven courses throughout the world," Taylor said. "He's definitely not quitting."

### Man gets ticket for parking in own driveway

NBCDFW.com

FORT WORTH, Texas - Mike Ware parked his cars on his front driveway the same way for more than 40 years -- until he got a ticket from Fort Worth police.

Ware parked two cars in his driveway, but the bumper of the second car hung out blocking a part of the sidewalk, a violation of city code, according to Fort Worth police.

Officer Sharron Neal said wheelchair-users can't get down the sidewalk if parked cars are blocking it.

Police said they got a complaint from a nearby resident about people blocking the neighborhood's sidewalks. Officers responded to the call and found several violations, including Ware's.

"I'm on a fixed income. I'm retired. I can't afford to pay for tickets for parking in my own driveway," Ware said.

Police said residents should park one car on the street and one in their driveway if the vehicles don't fit on the driveway without blocking a part of

the sidewalk.

Resident Bob Allen said he and his neighbors feel safer parking in their driveways because there have been car break-ins.

"Even our Fairmont neighborhood paper tells us to park in our own driveway, but if we're getting tickets at ridiculous hours, it's just not right," he said.

### Bobcat removed from Washington home

United Press International

PORT LUDLOW, Wash. - Authorities in Washington state said a 35-pound bobcat that wandered into a residence was subdued with a tranquilizer gun and removed.

Washington Fish and Wildlife Officer Win Miller said the homeowner told authorities the bobcat wandered into the Port Ludlow house through the open front door and climbed over a big screen TV, leaping into the house's loft, KING-TV, Seattle, reported March 31.

"It did hunker down. It was calm, it didn't have any place to go and it felt safe upstairs," Miller said.

The bobcat was tranquilized and released into the wild.

### Anti-Kidnapping tip:

The use of deadly force is authorized if necessary to prevent yourself or others from being kidnapped.

### THE North Star

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