

The North Star

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



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TF Marne celebrates Chaldo-Assyrian New Year



Photo by Spc. Michael Adams, TF Marne PAO
Angel Hermiz, the linguist for the TF Marne commanding general, speaks at a culture-fest held at COB Speicher, March 31. The event commemorated the Chaldo-Assyrian New Year, which is every April 1.

**By Spc. Michael Adams
TF Marne PAO**

Task Force Marne Celebrated the Chaldo-Assyrian New Year with a cultural-fair held at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, March 31.

The Chaldo-Assyrian culture was founded in the Ninewa Plain, an area within Ninewa province, in modern-day Iraq. That culture is a direct descendant from such civilizations as the Babylonians and the Mesopotamians.

Samah Youssef, the division cultural advisor and linguists working for TF Marne organized the event as both a celebration of Iraqi heritage and as a way to educate Soldiers on the culture of the country they were in.

"I think every linguist and cultural advisor serving in Iraq, it is their job to bring the ideas of the culture to the fellow Soldiers they work with," said Angel Hermiz, the commanding general's personal linguist. "We have to explain to them that Iraq is mainly an Arabic country but there are many Christians here that speak Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke."

Hermiz added that persecution has displaced many Christians in Iraq, leaving many without homes and looking for help from international organizations.

During the event, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, commander of TF Marne, spoke about the honored culture and the importance of all

cultures coming together. Command Sergeant Major Jesse Andrews, TF Marne command sergeant major, attended the event.

"Speicher inside the fence is like a little corner of America," Maj. Gen. Cucolo said. "The wonderful thing about American society is that we value diversity. We value diverse cultures, diverse opinions, to us that is strength. We learned the hard way--with much pain and suffering--inclusion and acceptance of other cultures, other opinions, other ideas does in fact ... make us stronger. It's been a long road over the past 200 plus years."

Major General Cucolo spoke about the importance

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Soldiers keep in touch with 'battle buddies'

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

Most children's rooms will have one thing in common: whether it's Batman themed pajama's strewn across their bed or Disney Princess posters hanging above their desks, each child finds an idol of their own to display across their room.

As the month of April begins, so does the Month of the Military Child,

and Soldiers must not forget about their 'battle buddies' serving with them from home.

With Soldiers and their younger siblings or children separated by a deployment, it is important for them to find ways to stay connected and let each other know that they care.

"They can talk, write and read to them," said Capt. Arek Ochalek, the battalion chaplain with the Division

Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. "Sending gifts and technology helps a lot too."

Specialist Terry Dixon finds many ways to stay connected with her 11-year-old, saxophone-playing, karate-practicing son, Emmanuel Battle.

"To get through this deployment, you need to have that familiarity, that

See FAMILY, Page 3

LNOs take care of Soldiers during travels

Submitted by
Anonymous Marne Traveler

I recently had the pleasure – that’s right – the pleasure of needing the assistance of our liaison officer in Kuwait and Bagdad. Though they helped in different ways, the LNO’s representing 3rd Infantry Division continue to represent the Dog Faced Soldier proudly.

While traveling through Ali A-Saleem, Kuwait outbound to the U.S. for Rest and Relaxation leave, I called upon the night LNO for assistance ... at 3 a.m.

I was exhausted from being laid-over in Joint Base Balad for four days, and stiff from napping on the cold floor of the terminal. Sergeant Daniel Fallaw greeted me with a smile and a warm hand-shake. With his bounding, positive disposition, he expertly answered all of my questions and put my mind at ease. Sergeant Fallaw corrected my documents and set me up with billeting.

He wished me good night, and set me off for a good-night’s sleep.

Then, just prior to my flight out, I was again in dire need of help. The flight information for my outbound flight was incorrect. I called the day LNO, Staff Sgt. Fredrick Reese in a panic. Staff Sergeant Reese immediately identified the problem and created the appropriate documents, and hand-walked them through to ensure that they were processed. Staff Sergeant Reese got me on the right flight back home, taking the appropriate action very quickly.

Sergeant Fallaw and Staff Sgt. Reese saved the day, and I am certain it was not the first time. They made me feel welcome, and they made me feel like my priorities were their priorities.

These noncommissioned officers were courteous and knowledgeable; I couldn’t imagine two better Dog Faced Soldiers to represent Task Force Marne.

I recently had to coordinate a three-

day trip to Baghdad for my boss. I contacted Maj. Malcolm Wise and Sgt. 1st Class Charles Hall to ask for assistance in coordinating our visit.

Major Wise and Sgt. 1st Class Hall bent over backwards to ensure that all coordination was complete - transportation, lodging, and a liaison to meet us at the airport.

He answered all of my questions quickly, letting me know that we were important. Both made coordination for the trip remarkably easier, and that made my boss happy.

These LNOs, and others, work crazy hours and deal with insurmountable obstacles with grace and professionalism. They address our crises as an integral part of their daily duties, and do it with a smile. The TF Marne LNOs truly deserve recognition for caring for the Dog Faced Soldier every single day, and making sure that we are always taken care of. The next time you see a TF Marne LNO, make sure you shake his or her hand, and say, “Thanks!”

FOB Cobra dedicates dining facility to fallen Soldier

By Pfc. Adrian Muehe
3SBCT, 2nd Inf Div PAO

The Dining facility at Forward Operating Base Cobra, Iraq, re-opened its doors after a month of reconstruction at a dedication ceremony, April 3.

The facility was renamed the Private First Class Erin L. McLyman Dining facility in honor of Pfc. McLyman who was killed during a mortar attack at FOB Cobra, March 13.

The renovated dining facility is part of an expansion of FOB Cobra to make living conditions here better for Soldiers.

“To say that we inherited a neglected outpost would be an understatement,” said Lt. Col. Joseph Davidson, commander of 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade

Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. “For many of the Soldiers here, nothing was more important than the arrival of contracted cooks and a renovated dining facility.”

As the long awaited day for a better dining facility arrived, it was also met with sorrow with the dedication to Pfc. McLyman.

“I didn’t get a chance to know Pfc. McLyman, but I knew about her,” Lt. Col. Davidson said. “She was a tenacious, fun-loving Soldier. She simply was what we want, and what we expect, from all of our Soldiers. The decision to dedicate this dining facility to Pfc. McLyman was an easy one.”

Present for the dedication were her friends and comrades from Company

B, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd SBCT, 2nd ID, including Spc. Crystal Newman, a mechanic from Sacramento, Calif., who was Pfc. McLyman’s best friend in the Army.

“Honestly, I didn’t expect this to happen,” Spc. Newman said. “On my FOB, (FOB Warhorse,) there are gyms dedicated. Our helicopter pad is dedicated to someone, and I’m really glad they did this. I’m honored to be here, and if she were here, she would be honored as well.”

After the dedication ceremony, the dining facility served its first meal, and as the Soldiers of FOB Cobra celebrated the opening of the newly renovated building, they took time to remember their fallen comrade.



Photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe, 3SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Davidson, commander of 1/14th Cavalry Regt., 3SBCT, 2nd ID, and Lt. Col. H. Haydn Hungerford III, commander of 296th BSB, 3rd SBCT, 2nd ID, remove the cover for the plaque dedicating the dining facility at FOB Cobra, to Pfc. Erin McLyman. Private First Class McLyman was killed during an attack on FOB Cobra

“We are sad with the passing of Pfc. McLyman, and we are honored that we get the chance to dedicate this to her,” Lt. Col. Davidson said.

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of the cultural advisors and linguists, who he called multi-cultural advisors and multi-linguists due to the fact they know many cultures and many languages.

"I learn so much every day serving with my multi-lingual cultural advisors. I would ask all of you today who serve with Task Force Marne please continue to share your knowledge and your thoughts," he said. "We need to hear what you have to tell us about the culture of the land in which we are serving. The sharing of your thoughts is so incredibly valuable to us."

To show those who attended the his-

tory of the culture, the event featured a documentary and a slide show.

Both featured different aspect of the culture and what it contributed to modern societies around the world, including architecture such as the hanging gardens of Babylon, and mudbricks, which are still used in construction in some parts of the world today, and the first known written legal code.

The event also had Chaldo-Assyrian Folk Dancers who performed two traditional dances for the crowd.

Staff Sergeant George Rutledge, of Fairbanks, Alaska, is a battle noncommissioned officer with TF Marne. He

appreciated the event and the history it taught him, but he appreciated the live-entertainment the most.

"I thought the dancers were excellent," he said. "I really enjoyed seeing something different. I liked the costumes and the colorfulness of the dance."

Primarily, the Chaldo-Assyrian people are in Ninewa Plain in Ninewa province, Iraq. They celebrated their 6,760th New Year, April 1.

For more information on Chaldo-Assyrian culture or cultural issues in Iraq, contact Samah R. Youssef at NIPR: 849-0043 or SIPR: 670-2115.

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support system," said Spc. Terry Dixon, a signal support specialist with the 3rd Signal Company, DSTB, 3rd ID. "I know if I call home, he's there.

"I send him little gifts, like a picture of him with his karate gear on that was made into a magazine cover," said Spc. Dixon. "I also got him Chuck Norris DVDs because he is into karate now."

Soldiers can also take advantage of cultural gifts the local shops have to offer, since they are in deployed to a part of the world not everyone gets a chance to visit.

"I just sent him a booklet full of Iraqi money and coins because he likes coins from different countries," Spc. Dixon added. "He's got an old soul, and he likes the Temptations so I'll go online and get him Temptation DVDs."

For Sgt. Josuan Rodriguez, a communications specialist and training non-commissioned officer for 3rd Sig. Co., DSTB, 3rd ID., the communication hits closer to home through postcards from his 7-year-old sister, Anisha Marie.

"There's one postcard she sent me while I was in Korea for Christmas," Sgt. Rodriguez said. "The postcard was of a little girl lying on the ground with an umbrella, and my first reaction to the card was, 'Aww.'"

"When I opened the card, that's exactly what she wrote. My heart stopped and the tears came down my eyes. I don't know if it's our chemistry, but almost every little thing about each other is the same. Two bodies, one soul."

Another way that Sgt. Rodriguez connects with his sister is by spending their birthdays together each year, no matter what part of the world he is in. Sergeant Rodriguez and Anisha Marie are two days and 20 years apart, but share the month of June.

They've managed to spend their birthdays together the last three years in a row, and this June, Sgt. Rodriguez plans on continuing the trend and seeing his sister for his 28th and her

eighth birthday.

"She's my heart, there aren't words to explain," said Sgt. Rodriguez of Anisha Marie. "I just want the best for her, more than what I have. I would do anything in this world for that little girl. If I never have kids, that doesn't matter, because I'll have her."

Although Spc. Dixon and Sgt. Rodriguez are not children, they still manage to get in touch with their child-like side, something they can attribute to both Emmanuel and Anisha Marie.

"I call her my Super Girl, and I'm her Superman," said Sgt. Rodriguez of his baby sister. "I'm called Superman because that's my favorite cartoon hero."

"On my bed, I have Emmanuel's Pokémon sheets, and before I left [for deployment] he said, 'Mom, you can take my Pokémon sheets,'" said Spc. Dixon. "It's a way for me to stay connected with him. It's a constant reminder for me. He's the reason why I'm doing what I do. He always says 'Mama, I'm proud of you,' and I say I'm proud of him too."



Photo Courtesy of Sgt. Josuan Rodriguez

Sergeant Josuan Rodriguez stands with his parents, niece and sister, Anisha Marie, during a military event.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Sergeant Peter Mettias, of Victorville, Calif., is with 2nd Battalion, 6th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. He serves as an OH-58 crew chief and has made strong contributions to the Ghostriders' maintenance team, positively impacting troop operations. Over the last seven days, he facilitated the launch of more than 20 combat missions resulting in more than 280 flight hours. He completed five preventive maintenance services, supervised the completion of six preventive phase maintenance tasks, and contributed directly to the completion of a tail rotor system dynamic balancing, four main rotor flight control adjustments and numerous hours of troubleshooting to keep the Ghostriders postured to support combat operations. In addition, he is directly responsible for coordinating the calibration of the troop's test, measurement and diagnostic equipment, items that are essential to the completion of critical maintenance tasks. Sergeant Mettias' technical expertise and leadership have earned him the title of today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Zena Bamerni, of Nashville, is one of the few linguists capable of translating English to written Kurdish in Task Force Marne. Bamerni is often tasked with short-notice requirements to translate lengthy, technical documents for crucial meetings. Due to the limitations of the available equipment, this has resulted in many late nights as she painstakingly "types" the document using a virtual keyboard with a mouse. Additionally, Zena is a valued member of the United States Division - North's plans section; she translates a wide range of documents quickly and efficiently between English, Arabic, and Kurdish. Whatever the task, she always attacks the chore with professionalism, without complaint, and with a smile on her face. Therefore, Bamerni is an excellent choice for this week's Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.

You are invited

Easter Sunrise Service

Where: Main Gym Stadium,
COB Speicher
When: April 4

Chuck Mulligan (Hypnotist)

Where: COB Speicher, FOB Normandy,
FOB Warhorse, COL Cobra, FOB Grizzly,
COL Bernstein
When: April 4-8, Time TBD

Twista

Where: FOB Q-West
When: April 14, Time TBD

Zac Brown Band

Where: FOB Warrior, Mosul
When: April 16-17, Time TBD

Darryl Worley

Where: COB Speicher
When: April 30, Time TBD

UFC Tour

Where: TBD
When: May 3-6, Time TBD

Lonewolf Comedians

Where: TBD
When: May 11-14, Time TBD

Phil Vandel

Where: TBD
When: May 18-22, Time TBD

Task Force Marne Kid Hero of the North



Connor Phillips, 8, excelled in school and sports over the last few weeks resulting in several accomplishments.

First, he was chosen as the Student of the week over forty other students in his Chong Nhu Karate class, which resulted in him leading the class Dragon Run.

He received three As and one B on his report card resulting in a 3.75 grade point average on his first report card since starting a new school due to his parent's deployment. Connor also finished his second Harry Potter book this month. Finally, Connor led his baseball team to victory by driving in four runs including the winning three-run homerun.

As Connor's karate instructor stated, "Connor sets the example for all other students to follow," but more importantly, he is a great example for his younger siblings. Connor is an all-around great kid and is a well deserving Task Force Marne Kid Hero of the Week!

REGIONAL HEADLINES

Companies donate to save Seattle fireworks

United Press International

SEATTLE - Company officials with Starbucks and Microsoft said they are making donations to help preserve a traditional July Fourth fireworks show in Seattle.

Dave Ross, a disc jockey with KIRO-FM, Seattle, said he began taking pledges to save the Lake Union Fourth of July fireworks show April 1 after One Reel, the company that produces the event, announced it needed half a million dollars by next week to be able to put on a display this year, KING-TV, Seattle, reported April 2.

Ross, who personally pledged \$1,000 to the cause, said Tom Douglas, a restaurateur and One Reel board member, was the first to pledge a donation with a promise of \$5,000.

He said many more donations from local businesses followed, culminating in Starbucks and Microsoft announcing plans to donate \$125,000 each.

"I think we can guarantee this thing," the Seattle Times quoted Ross as saying after the corporate donations.

Man plans to run his 409th marathon in Abilene

Abilene Reflector-Chronicle

ABILENE, Kan. -Having run a marathon in every state and DC

nearly seven times, Eugene DeFronzo, Cheshire, Conn., plans to run his 409th marathon in Abilene, April 10, wearing bib #29.

DeFronzo has also run in Kenya, Antarctica, Berlin, London and all 13 Canadian provinces twice.

"I am looking forward to doing the Eisenhower Marathon as I have heard many nice things about it," DeFronzo said.

DeFronzo, who is 74, said that 20 years ago he was out of shape, and one of his friends advised him to take up running.

"I should have started running a lot earlier," DeFronzo said. "I ran my first marathon at age 54. "The training is rigorous, and the last six miles seem to last forever, but when you pass the finish line, the thrill is worth all the hard work."

DeFronzo hopes to finish his seventh round of running a marathon in every state, and needs to run marathons in only six more states to do so.

Name prank irks Texas district clerk

United Press International

FORT WORTH, Texas - The district clerk of Texas' Tarrant County said he and his staff were not amused by an early April Fools' Day prank by Texas Motor Speedway officials.

Tarrant County District Clerk Tom Wilder said and his staff spent three hours Wednesday dealing

with media attention from Texas Motor Speedway President Eddie Gossage's announcement that radio host Terry Dorsey accepted a \$100,000 offer to change his name to TexasMotorSpeedway.com, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported April 1.

The announcement, sent out in a news release, was later revealed to be a prank.

"I have a sense of humor, but this just was not funny," Wilder said Wednesday. "My staff and myself both wasted about three hours today because where you file to change names is in the family law building.

We couldn't just let all these unbridled film crews into this place where people are standing in lines with their lives falling apart and children all around crying," he said. "How am I supposed to let all these TV people film this? I have got to be careful about that, and everyone needs to get appropriate permissions to do so.

I'm not laughing. Let's put it that way. It was just a great inconvenience and, apparently, Mr. Gossage and Mr. Dorsey have a lot of time on their hands so maybe they can help us with our 30,000 cases and the overload we have on a daily basis.

Anti-Kidnapping tip:

Don't let your guard down. Keep a close eye on your battle buddy and check accountability regularly

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

TASK FORCE MARNE

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TF Marne PAO - Maj. Jeff Allen
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Editorial Staff

Managing Editor - Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
Editor- Spc. Michael Adams

25th Combat Aviation Brigade,
25th Infantry Division
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