

The North Star

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U.S. Soldiers train Iraqi snipers



Photo by Spc. Gregory Gieske, 2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

A sniper team from HHC, 1/36th Inf., 2HBCT, 3rd ID, crawls through grass and brush toward their target during a two-week training school where U.S. Soldiers trained IA Special Forces at the Al Kindi IA base in Mosul, Iraq.

By Master Sgt.
Duff McFadden
2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

While “one shot, one kill,” may be the sniper axiom, it doesn’t begin to describe the sniper experience.

Not only must snipers be excellent shooters, they must also be disciplined and patient.

They must have expert field skills, including concealment and camouflage, in order to infiltrate, detect and stalk a target through all types of terrain and distances — before firing their shot.

It was exactly those concepts that snipers from 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, taught to 22

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NCOs Army experiences mold his life

By Spc. Richard Coletta
4BCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

Sergeant Jared Gilmore a mortarman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division had a quick decision to make and only a split second to make it.

As a live-grenade landed near him

and other Soldiers defending a small patrol base, he picked it up and threw it back.

Sergeant Gilmore, a 27 year-old native of Ruston, La., is currently deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Prior to deploying to Iraq, he did two tours of duty in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“It was a completely different kind of war over there,” Sgt. Gilmore said. “It was an incredibly mountainous terrain. You’d wake up to do your patrol and it isn’t like doing patrols through a city. It was (throwing) on your rucksack and all your gear and (walking) up and down mountains at six thousand feet.”

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Artwork keeps Soldiers' morale on high

By Spc. Jessica Zullig
135th Mobile PA Det.

In the offices at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, the walls are covered with maps and memos.

Every now and then, however, the walls have a couple pieces of artwork that were sent to them by members of their Family as well.

Master Sergeant Richard Montgomery, the garrison directorate of logistics noncommissioned officer in charge for the 166th Regional Support Group, 1st Mission Support Group, 81st Regional Readiness Group out of Puerto Rico, says he

displays a poster he received from his family because it reminds him of how special he is to them.

"I display it to remind myself of how much my Family cares about me and loves me," he said about the "#1 Daddy," hand- and foot-printed poster with pictures of his daughters, Ariela, 4, and Makayla, 5 mos., attached.

"Things like this," he said, pointing to the poster, "say, 'even though you're gone, we're with you – you're not forgotten, you're loved.' It is the key to our environment and morale."

Captain Greg Coats,

the base closure chief for Headquarter and Headquarters Operations Company, Division Special Troops



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

Major John C. Mostellar, the fire and effects officer for HHC, DSTB, 3rd ID, displays his children's painting at COB Speicher, April 2.

Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., said he was anxious to display the painting by his daughter, Laney, 10.

"It was a school project," he said, describing how the painting of a green-nosed, blue-faced girl was created. "She was in a class where they were exploring different types of art.

"She wanted to fold it up and put it in an envelope," said Capt. Coats about his daughter's painting. "I said, 'No. I want it framed and up on my wall.' If something is stressful at work, I can look at it and have good thoughts."

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During Sgt. Gilmore's last deployment to Afghanistan with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team his unit was establishing a vehicle patrol base in a town called Wanat when they were ambushed by more than 150 Taliban fighters.

After throwing back an enemy hand grenade, saving his life and most likely the lives of nearby fellow Soldiers, Sgt. Gilmore grabbed an M240 machine gun and set up "a support by fire" position to repel the attackers and provide suppressive fire for fellow Soldiers.

"I was pretty exposed the whole time," he said.

With his quick thinking, and the



Photo by Spc. Richard Coletta, 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

Sergeant Jared Gilmore with HHC, 2/16th Inf. Regt., 4IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. says his experiences in the Army have been life changing.

actions of other brave Soldiers in his unit, they were able to successfully repel the enemy. For his actions, Sgt. Gilmore was awarded the Silver Star.

He says his experiences really changed him as a person.

"Before I joined the Army, I didn't really think about conflicts in other places and how it would affect the people, the population and the American Soldiers over there fighting.

"I guess it was more of a wake-up call. This is the real world. This is how things really work. It's not all nice and tidy. It's a chaotic world," Sgt. Gilmore said.

Now Sgt. Gilmore works at the Bayji Oil Refinery in Iraq where instead of loading mortar tubes his unit has been conducting talks and engagements with local Iraqi leaders on a regular basis.

"They've got a lot of projects going on right now, and they're trying to get a lot of these facilities back up and running because they're not producing as much as they should be right now," he said.

"The refinery produces over sixty percent of the income here in Iraq, so this is a major facilitator of their income. (We're) just here to make sure it's running smoothly."

Sergeant Gilmore said being involved with the draw-down of U.S. forces in Iraq has been a learning experience. He also says he has learned a lot overall while serving in the U.S. Army.

"It has taught me a lot of things I never would have learned if I had just been a civilian. It's helped me grow as a man too," he said.

He says his family has been very encouraging throughout his Army career.

"They've always supported me and they've always been proud of me," he said.

Sergeant Gilmore, whose unit is preparing to redeploy back to the U.S., said he's eager to get back home to his wife and their six month-old son.

He and his family are also preparing to move to Fort Benning, Ga. in December to be an instructor at Mortar Square, training new Soldiers to be indirect-fire infantrymen.

"I'm ready to move on to something new, and I think teaching would be a really great job," Sgt. Gilmore said.

Looking back at all his experiences so far, he has been proud to serve and said it has been worth it.

"I definitely wouldn't be who I am today if I hadn't joined the Army," he said.

Continued from TRAIN, Page 1

Iraqi Army Special Forces soldiers during a recent sniper course held at the Al Kindi Iraqi Army base.

The Iraqis learned basic sniper techniques, stalking and detecting targets, and then spent days firing at the range.

"A sniper is a combat multiplier for a battalion," said "Bob" the 1/36 Inf. sniper section leader and sniper course instructor.

"Their first mission is to provide long-range precision fire, anywhere from six-hundred yards to over one thousand yards. Our second mission is to observe and report what we see on the battlefield to the commander. If the target presents itself, we then engage and get rid of it."

The instructor Bob did not want to give his actual name due to security concerns. Bob has served as the unit's sniper section leader for the past two years since joining the unit at Fort Bliss, Texas.

"The reward comes from the interaction with my teams and being able to mold them into great snipers," he said. "Just seeing them engage targets at those distances, where most Soldiers only hit targets at three hundred yards, is awesome. We not only consistently hit at three hundred yards, but we triple that distance."

As a Stability Transition Team advisor to the 7th IA Brigade, 2nd IA Division, it's Lt. Col. Michael Haber's job to

train, advise and assist his Iraqi counterparts. The Iraqis identified sniper training as a battlefield weakness, he said, which they wanted to correct.

Just watching the Jundis, or lower enlisted Soldiers, interact with the U.S. Soldiers on a day-to-day basis has been impressive, he said.

"The Iraqis are doing very well," Lt. Col. Haber said. "They had a lower baseline than most U.S. Soldiers, so there were some things we had to do to get them up to a functional level before we could teach some of the higher-end, specialty characteristics of being a sniper."

According to Capt. David Fierner, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1/36 Inf., his Soldiers provided a definitive, hands-on education based upon their practical knowledge and experience.

"Our snipers trained the Iraqis in all the proper basics of sniper training, so we can eventually take them out on mission, and they can start covering their own sectors," he said. "We're training them on all the fundamentals – from stalking, shooting, target detection, gathering dope on their weapons and firing at longer ranges than they normally would."

"I think it's great for our Soldiers to actually interact with the Iraqi soldiers," Capt. Fierner added. "I also think it's great for the Iraqi Soldiers to see that

our enlisted Soldiers can train them; that they have the proper skills and can broaden their spectrum."

"At first, it was somewhat of a culture shock for the Iraqis, going from their everyday army life to living the life of a sniper," Bob said. "They're finally starting to understand that, as a sniper, you won't always have ideal conditions, or even ones you'll like. You have to make do with what you have."

Once the classroom portion ended, Iraqi soldiers began building their own ghillie suits from burlap bags and camouflage material.

The ghillie is a camouflaged suit used to conceal an individual as they're stalking. The term came from Scottish gamekeepers, known as "ghillies," who developed a suit which allowed them to blend into the scenery in search of poachers.

Using two-man teams of a shooter and a spotter, the Iraqis got the opportunity to stalk targets in the vegetation of the Al Kindi Iraqi Army base.

"We started out with a preparation phase of about five hundred meters," the sniper leader said. "A sniper can stalk anywhere from two hundred to three thousand meters before settling into their final firing position. From there, they engaged their presented target."

The course concluded with the Iraqis shooting at the firing range at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul. Beginning at 50 meters, they fired a variety of U.S. weapons as well as their own Army-issued MK76 Yugoslavian sniper rifles, ultimately reaching the 400-meter-limit of the range.

"The Jundis out here today are definitely building confidence and acquiring new skills in shooting," Capt. Fierner said. "They've definitely grown, and we've built up their confidence. We'll continue to push them and improve their skills."

"U.S. forces have learned a tremendous amount of skills working with the Iraqis, such as how they learn and how they function as a unit."

We're building friendships, and we're building partnerships. That's something that was unexpected, but it's definitely a gain for us," added Capt. Fierner.



Photo by Spc. Gregory Gieske, 2BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

A Soldier from HHC, 1/36th Inf., 2HBCT, 3rd ID, sets up his shot using the "buddy-supported" firing position, taking aim with his M110 Sniper Rifle.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Specialist Mark Berberette of Lakeland, Fla., is with 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. He serves as a petroleum supply specialist who has directly contributed to the fight by transporting more than 9,000 gallons of Class III bulk petroleum and assisting in the delivery of mail to various bases in northern Iraq. He has dispensed more than 7,500 gallons of JP-8, DF-2, and fuel in support of the stand-alone life support equipment on his base. He has been instrumental in the success of the battalion. Specialist Berberette has demonstrated exceptional character while here in theater in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom by accomplishing missions with strict attention to detail and high standards, and he has set the example for other Soldiers to emulate. Specialist Berberette's accomplishments reflect great credit upon himself and his unit, and makes him a clear choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of The North.



Sergeant Teresa Iguin, of The Philippines, is with 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Sergeant Iguin is assigned as a team leader in Company A's transportation platoon. Sergeant Iguin is an excellent model of a noncommissioned officer. Sergeant Iguin constantly volunteers for missions, ensuring other Soldiers in the platoon have proper time to refit and train prior to their missions. She personally drove more than 150 incident free miles and conducted more than six combat logistics patrol missions in the last two weeks. Sergeant Iguin is an excellent NCO who epitomizes the meaning of duty and selfless service. She conducts physical training for her Squad and conducts remedial physical training on her off duty time for the platoon, allowing her to score a 300 on her last Army Physical Fitness Test. Sergeant Iguin is currently enrolled in her third online college course and maintains a 3.75 GPA. Her dedication to duty and desire to excel make her an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

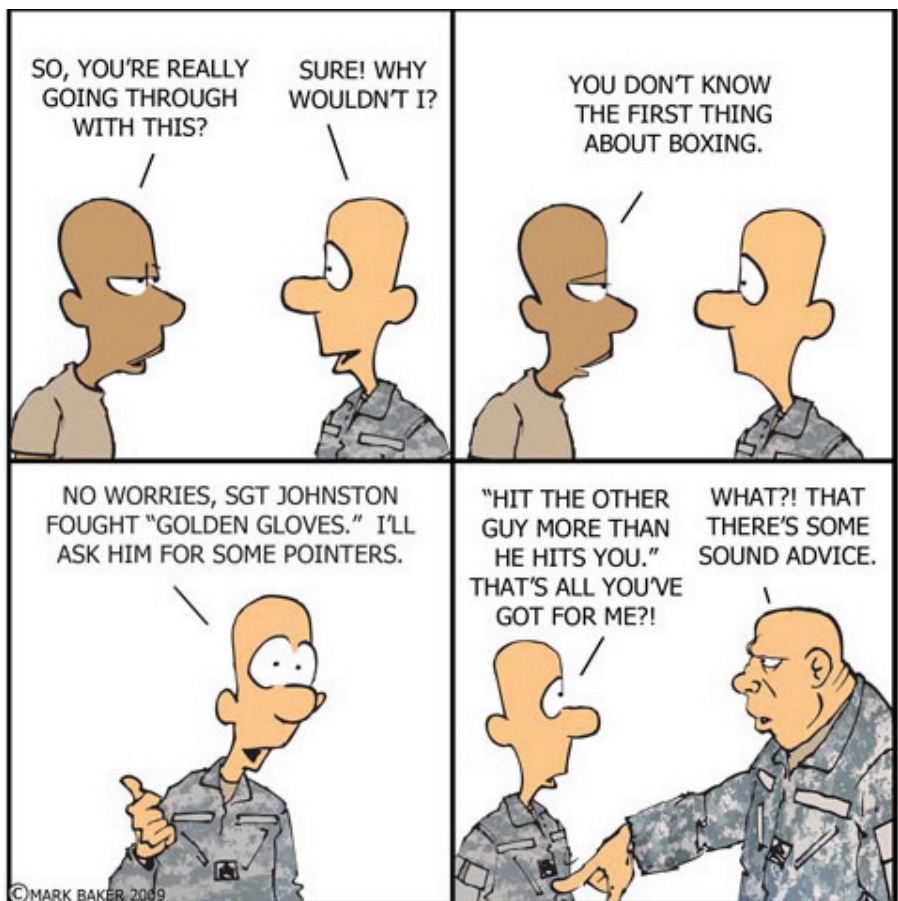
On this day, April 9, in history ... www.history.com

1918 - German troops launch Operation Georgette, the last-ditch operation against the Allies along the Lys River as the war came to a close.

1939 - Internationally renowned singer Marian Anderson, an African-American woman, sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to an audience of 75,000 and a radio audience of millions; one of the first times an African-American reached such a large audience in America.

1942 - Major General Edward King surrenders at Bataan, against the orders of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, beginning the Bataan Death March.

1959 - The National Aeronautics and Space Administration introduces America's first astronauts to the press: Scott Carpenter, Gordon Cooper, Walter Schirra, Alan Shepard, John Glenn, Virgil "Gus" Grissom and Donald Slayton.



REGIONAL HEADLINES

Google pulls April Fools' prank on Kansas town

United Press International

TOPEKA, Kan. - The Google name change a few days ago may confuse visitors at first.

But check the date.

Google has a long history of April Fools' Day pranks. From upside-down YouTube clips and replacing videos with text to partnering with Virgin to create the Mars expedition team Virgle; Google has pulled more gags than the MIT frats to which many of its employees once belonged.

However today's spoof has a touch of real-world consequence. Last month, Topeka jokingly changed its name to Google, Kansas. This earlier renaming stunt, pulled well before April 1, tried to grab Google's attention.

The company has offered to test a super-high-speed broadband network – 20 times faster than current commercial options – in one U.S. city. This promise, which comes with plenty of publicity and probably new jobs, sent cities across the country into a lighthearted bidding war.

In an April Fools' press release today, Google CEO Eric Schmidt explained the company's new name.

"We didn't reach this decision lightly; after all, we had a fair amount of brand equity tied up in our old name," he writes. "But the more we surfed around (the former) Topeka's municipal website, the more kinship

we felt with this fine city at the edge of the Great Plains. In fact, Topeka Google Mayor Bill Bunten expressed it best: 'Don't be fooled. Even Google recognizes that all roads lead to Kansas, not just yellow brick ones.'"

Chicken coop tour a popular draw in Texas

United Press International

AUSTIN, Texas - People flocked during the weekend to the second annual Funky Chicken Coop Tour in Austin, Texas, organizers say.

The April 3 event, sponsored by Mobile Chicken Coops and the non-profit Sustainable Food Center, drew hundreds of people looking to take a gander at 17 backyard chicken coops, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

Ashley O'Brian, a tour committee member, attributes the popularity of the relatively new event to the growing interest in organic food that has fueled interest in raising chickens.

"People are interested in it by seeing live-action and seeing what other owners have done," she said.

The first year 500 people showed up to see her coop and last year about 800 came by. The interest appeared just as strong this year, possibly even more so, she said.

Holly Vandiver, 26, of Temple told the American-Statesman she showed up to see if she could gather some fresh ideas. She said she started raising chickens about three years ago

and not only likes the eggs better but finds it fun watching the birds.

"It's like Chicken TV," she said.

Big-mouth drug smuggler gets 10-year prison sentence

Seattle Times

SEATTLE - A Canadian drug smuggler who bragged to undercover agents that he had a hidden compartment built into his pickup for border crossings was sentenced April 5 in the U.S. District Court in Seattle to 10 years in prison.

Bradley K. Bourque, 35, of Langley, B.C., was arrested Oct. 20 after he delivered about 200,000 ecstasy pills (weighing more than 113 pounds) to undercover agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

He reportedly bragged to the undercover officers about his smuggling, and the special secret compartment he had built into his GMC pickup, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The secret compartment contained another 24 pounds of ecstasy pills and more than 13 pounds of ecstasy powder. Border crossing records show Bourque had crossed from Canada into the U.S. five times in 2009 before his arrest.

Anti-Kidnapping tip:

Memorize primary unit phone numbers and frequencies

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

25th Combat Aviation Brigade,
25th Infantry Division
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