



VICTORY TIMES



Vol. II, Issue 69

Telling the Multi-National Corps - Iraq story

September 8, 2008



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Photo by Spc. Christopher M. Gaylord, 13th Public Affairs Detachment

More than 190 servicemembers from across Iraq raised their right hands together Sept. 1, becoming U.S. citizens during a Multi-National Corps - Iraq United States Citizenship Ceremony at Al Faw Palace.

Bronze Star may be losing its way in Army

Story by Sgt. Michael J. Biermann
13th Public Affairs Detachment

The Bronze Star has lost its way. Somewhere over the past few years, this highly regarded award has been reduced to nothing more than a shiny coin from the commanding general or a slap on the back. It is a sad day in the military when a mid-grade officer that sits in an air-conditioned office with his television tuned to AFN is being awarded the same medal for meritorious service as the 19-year-old who travels Iraq's dangerous roads every day and has made the ultimate sacrifice.

A few weeks ago at the Phoenix

Academy on Camp Taji, I noticed an entire wall of photos of Soldiers who have died in Iraq. Under each picture was a brief story about the Soldier and the date he was killed. Also included were the medals awarded posthumously. I was not surprised to see that every Soldier was given a Bronze Star. I am, however, surprised to see almost every senior noncommissioned officer and field grade officer receive the Bronze Star for spending an entire deployment behind a desk.

I am not saying that the only way Soldiers should be able to earn Bronze Stars is to die for their country, but I think it's safe to say that the sacrifices and hardships endured working in Al Faw Palace are not the same as those

outside the safety of Camp Victory.

At first glance, it now appears that awards are given based on a Soldier's rank and not his individual actions and service. Operating this way not only destroys the integrity of the awards system, but it has destroyed the reputation of certain medals.

It is time for us to correct this problem. It's probably not as hard to fix as you may think. It comes down to one of the seven Army Values: integrity. If you are being recommended for an award that you did not earn, speak up.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the intended purpose of the Bronze Star, it is to be awarded

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Chaplain's Corner

Patriotism is feeling, idea, not just words

By Chaplain Pat Hash
MNC-I Command Chaplain

The American Heritage Dictionary defines patriotism as "love of and devotion to one's country." I see it as something more.

I was sitting in a classroom at the U.S. Army War College located at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., when I first heard a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. I thought it had to be a hoax, and hoped it was, but on my first break from class, my fears were confirmed. Two planes had

flown into the World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon and a fourth into a field in western Pennsylvania. My heart skipped a beat. Who would've guessed that on that September day, our lives would change forever? We were sent home early from classes, and as I watched the events unfold on television it all seemed so surreal, tragic and unreal.

The news was tragic in the days that followed. In the ashes, more than 3,000 people were dead or missing. Two thousand children lost parents. At one business at the

World Trade Center, more than 50 pregnant widows were left behind.

Everyone was in a state of fear because we felt that nothing could happen on American soil. America was too great and too powerful for anything to happen, but the attack on our soil shook our sense of security at its core. Anger toward and hatred of those who harmed our great nation could be seen and felt everywhere.

The 9/11 attacks caused me to ponder the meaning of patriotism.

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Week encourages suicide prevention among troops

Story by Spc.
Samuel J. Phillips

MNC-I PAO

The Army remains committed to the safety and wellbeing of its Soldiers, civilians and families by joining the nation and the Department of Defense in observing National Suicide Prevention Week Sept. 7-13, and the World Suicide Prevention Day Sept. 10. The Army's theme this year is "Shoulder-to-shoulder, no Soldier stands alone."

According to a message sent out by the Pentagon Telecommunications Center on behalf of the Department of the Army, this theme conveys the idea that Soldiers are stronger together. It reminds Soldiers that "sometimes the toughest moments are off the field, when the guns are quiet, but doubt

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still rings in their ears, when the rucksacks are set down, but they still feel the weight of the world."

The theme also conveys the message that "when Soldiers are stumbling, on or off the field, others should reach out to share their strength as an Army family. Together, Soldiers will make it through."

"Suicide prevention is a very, very important topic that continues to be at the top of the list for the military," said Chaplain Lane Stockeland, Victory Chapel chaplain, Multi-National Corps – Iraq. "If something doesn't smell right, feel right or sound right, it probably isn't right. No matter what it could be we have to be able to intervene and ask enough questions."

According to MNC-I C-1, suicide rates among active duty Soldiers have risen

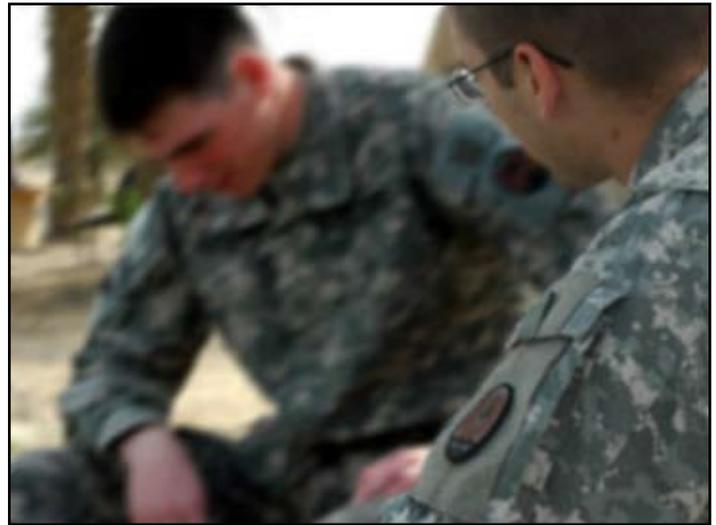


Photo illustration by Pfc. Eric J. Martinez, 13th Public Affairs Detachment

from 87 in 2005 to 101 in 2007. It is up to everyone, leaders and Soldiers, to ensure that those numbers come back down for 2008.

As part of National Suicide Prevention Week, leaders must plan, coordinate and execute suicide prevention education, awareness and training programs and continue them throughout the year. The DA challenges and empowers all leaders

to make their units, installations and communities suicide prevention-aware environments.

One of the local tools available for use is the MNC-I Suicide Prevention Program. "The program is designed to help servicemembers and their leaders by equipping them with the right tools to prevent,

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The meaning I read in the dictionary didn't seem to express it fully. I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was, but I knew there was something more to it. The attacks were intended to bring down this idea of patriotism – this great devotion to one's nation. In bringing down the buildings, the terrorists succeeded. However, in bringing down patriotism, they failed miserably, because after the initial shock of it all, Americans began the mourning process.

Once the mourning pro-

cess began, the footage on television was inspiring.

A white American mourning beside a Hispanic and a Middle Eastern American, an Asian American as well as an African American – all grieving together, coming together, united against future attackers. In one video clip, we saw brave firemen rushing into the collapsing buildings, risking their lives to save their fellow citizens, their neighbors, their brothers and sisters, regardless of color, race or creed.

September 11 reminds us that

patriotism cannot be described with words because patriotism is so much more than just words. It is an idea, a feeling, a way of life. Remembering the lives of the fallen year after year is patriotism. Coming together to support one another during a time of need and overcoming the wounds together is patriotism. You could say patriotism is a love of one's country, but 9/11 reminds us that patriotism is a love for one another. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" [John 15:13].

Servicemembers receive



Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general, Multi-National Corps – Iraq presents a Certificate of Naturalization to Private 1st Class Khalid Al Abaidi Sept. 1 during an MNC-I United States Citizenship Ceremony at Al Faw Palace.

Story and photos by Spc. Christopher M. Gaylord
13th Public Affairs Detachment

One-hundred ninety-two servicemembers from 54 different countries became U.S. citizens Sept. 1 during a Multi-National Corps – Iraq United States Citizenship Ceremony at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Baghdad.

Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general, MNC-I presided over the ceremony and, along with Lori Pietropaoli, Deputy District Director, United States Citizenship and Immigration services, presented a Certificate of Naturalization to each new citizen. This ceremony was the twelfth of its kind in Iraq.

“I am extremely honored

to preside over such an important event for these great men and women,” Austin said. “Today, we have the opportunity to welcome 192 of our fellow brothers and sisters in arms into our American family.”

Austin took time to individually recognize two troops, Marine Corps Sgt. Sidney King III and Spc. Alan Wyrwa, who both overcame numerous challenges to become U.S. citizens.

Wyrwa lived in communist-controlled East Germany until he and his mother risked their lives escaping to West Germany when he was 5 years old.



Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, command sergeant major, MNC-I receiving his Certificate of Naturalization during an MNC-I United S

King arrived to the United States in 1988 and spent his first five years separated from his parents. He worked tirelessly to obtain a visitor’s visa and later a green card to stay in the U.S. For the last nine years, he has served in the United States Marine Corps, working toward his citizenship. After 20 years, he is finally

a citizen.

For many, the event was the highlight of a lifetime and the beginning of many new opportunities.

“I can’t describe my feelings,” said Spc. Steven Chol, interpreter, command sergeant major’s personal security detachment, MNC-I and originally from Sudan. “I’m so happy for

e U.S. citizenship in Iraq



C-I, presents a servicemember with an American flag Sept. 1 just after states Citizenship Ceremony at Al Faw Palace.

what happened today, becoming a U.S. citizen.

“I’m proud to be an American,” said Spc. Dodji Kuwonu, cannon crewmember, 10th Mountain Division and originally from Togo. “I’ve got a lot of opportunities now. A lot of doors are open for me.”

“Each of you has opened a door of opportunity

through your own hard work, and through the support of your families and loved ones,” Austin said. “Today, each of you has achieved a significant goal, and I know it wasn’t easy, but the great news is that you aren’t at the end of your journey – you are at the beginning of a new one.”



More than 192 servicemembers stand together Sept. 1 after receiving American citizenship during an MNC-I United States Citizenship Ceremony at Al Faw Palace.



One-hundred ninety-two troops receive U.S. citizenship Sept. 1 during an MNC-I United States Citizenship Ceremony at Al Faw Palace.

FEATURES



Buckling up can save your life



By Jesse Martin

Corps Safety Office

The most painful part of my job as the director of Multi-National Corps - Iraq safety office is knowing a death or serious injury could have been prevented with the use of seatbelts or vehicle restraints.

Seatbelts make a huge difference in all injuries suffered in car collisions. Unrestrained drivers and passengers often have a combination of very serious injuries to the head, face, neck, chest, abdomen, hips, knees and ankles.

Most people do not consider any vehicle accident their fault, but not

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to Soldiers who have distinguished themselves by heroic or meritorious achievement or service in connection with military operations against an armed enemy.

Commanders can help by tak-

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identify and assist in the treatment of behavioral issues experienced by their teammates," said Maj. Steve Wright, C-1 plans and programs, MNC-I.

The message sent out by DA also gives commanders access to other tools that can help in the education servicemembers. One of these tools is the "ACE" (ask, care, escort) card, which can be ordered (GTA 12-01-003 MAY 2008) for use during suicide prevention training and other awareness events throughout

being at fault won't keep you from being injured or killed in an accident.

In every motor vehicle accident there are two collisions. The first one happens when a car impacts another solid object. The second occurs when any unrestrained occupants continue to travel at their original speed of movement. After the vehicle comes to a stop, anyone not wearing a seatbelt slams into the steering wheel, windshield or other parts of the interior.

In one particular case, a passenger made fun of his friend's inexperience and jokingly put his seatbelt on saying "just in case." As it happens, they crashed and the car caught fire. The passenger had minor injuries from flying glass. He looked over at his friend,

ing responsibility for their units' awards program and taking the time to evaluate Soldiers and their actions so the proper medal can be awarded. We need to save the Bronze Star from becoming a

the year.

Another is the Army G1 Suicide Prevention Website (<http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/default.asp>). This site contains many helpful resources to include the "Commanders' Toolkit," which contains a prevention guide for installations and units, program checklists, awareness tip cards, training aids and posters to increase awareness and reduce the stigma of seeking mental health care.

The shame of seeking help is one

who was unconscious. The passenger unbuckled his seatbelt, broke out the window on his side and pulled his friend to safety. The lesson is in order to survive a fire or a submersion, you need to be awake. If you hit your head in the crash and are unconscious or confused, you will die unless someone else is around to save you.

A collision at 30 mph is equivalent to falling from a three-story building. At 55 mph, a backseat passenger of average weight not wearing a seat belt will fly forward with a force of 3,000 pounds.

Troops at all levels must understand that everyone who doesn't buckle up is putting themselves, those around them and the mission in danger.

cheap piece of cloth and metal. It's not too late to ensure the Bronze Star is pinned on the chest of the right people: the Soldiers who make sure I sleep safely at night.

of the major issues in suicide prevention. "We are trying to get rid of the stigma for someone who needs help," Wright said. "Culturally, in the Army, it's not something people feel comfortable doing."

Help is available for Soldiers and it is the responsibility of their commanders to ensure that they know where to find it. The tools are there, all leaders have to do is utilize them. Knowledge is power and educating Soldiers on suicide prevention awareness can save lives.

Announcements

Legal Services

Cooley Law School is offering service-members free legal consultations via video-conference with an attorney regarding answers to civilian legal matters from 8-11 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month. For more information contact Kathryn D. Hudacek at khudacek@freedomcalls.org or (973) 290-7886

Degree for logistics personnel

Logistics personnel can become certified in the field of Property and Asset Management from the National Property Management Association completely online and receive 10% off the tuition by being a member of the NPMA. Contact Monty A. Spicer, 256-217-2291 for more information.

Story ideas for Victory Times

Do you know of a good story on Camp

Victory that you think should be covered for the Victory Times? Please submit your ideas to Staff. Sgt.. Joy Pariente at joy.pariante@iraq.centcom.mil. Please include any interesting facts about the topic and point of contact information.

R&R Briefings

Reunion and Suicide Intervention Briefings are at the Victory Chapel, Monday at 3 p.m., Wednesday at 9:30 a.m., Saturday at 3 p.m. All servicemembers who are going on leave or redeploying must attend this briefing.

Toastmasters

Improve your public speaking skills while having fun with creative – goal oriented people. No speaking experience necessary. Capt. Armin Reyes 318-822-7627 Armin.reyes@iraq.centcom.mil.

The Corps Report

The “Corps Report” is a 15 minute monthly television newscast highlighting the stories and events happening in the Multi-National Corps-Iraq area of operations. The program airs Sunday at 8:15 pm and Monday at 11:15 a.m. on the Pentagon Channel here in Baghdad. The August edition of the newscast will feature stories on Hope Chapel at Camp Victory, Logistics Training Advisory Teams at Taji and the Guam Liberation Celebration Day at Camp Victory to name just a few. Be sure and catch the latest edition of “The Corps Report” and contact the broadcast team here at MNC-I if you have a story idea. (822-8719).

AFN Freedom Radio

Al Asad 107.3	Fallujah 105.1	Taji 107.3
Ali Base 107.3	Kirkuk..... 107.3	Tal Afar..... 107.3
Ar Ramadi.. 107.3	Kirkush..... 107.3	Taqquadum.. 107.3
Baghdad 107.3	Mosul..... 105.1	Tikrit..... 100.1
Balad 107.3	Q-West 93.3	All stations are FM

Camp Victory Bible Studies

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Women's Bible Study 7 p.m. Bldg 24F; Gospel Protestant Bible Study 7 p.m. Hope Chapel	Women's Bible Study 7 p.m. Bldg 24F 7:30 p.m. Purpose Driven Life Bible Study (Victory Mayor's Cell, Black Forge Conference Room)	Young Adult Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Hope Chapel	Men's Bible Study 7 p.m. Victory Chapel; Spanish Bible Study 7 p.m. Bldg 24F 7:30 Book of Matthew Bible Study (Victory Mayor's Cell, Black Forge Conference Room)	Foundations Bible Study, Mini Chapel 6:30 p.m.	SeventhDay Adventist 10 a.m. Victory Chapel	

Do you have an announcement about an event of interest to the Camp Victory community? Contact Spc. Samuel J. Phillips at samuel.phillips1@iraq.centcom.mil with the information. Information for community announcements needs to be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event to allow for timely publication.

Operating Hours

Coalition Cafe Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m. Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Dinner 5 - 8 p.m. Midnight Dining 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.
Sports Oasis Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m. Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Dinner 5 - 9 p.m.
Education Center 8 a.m.-midnight
Camp Liberty Post Exchange 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Fitness Center Open 24 Hours
Victory Main Post Office Monday-Sunday 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
MNC-I STB Mailroom 9 a.m. - noon 5 - 7 p.m.
Al Faw Palace Post Office Wednesday and Sunday 1-6 p.m.
Golby Troop Medical Clinic Sick Call Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon
Dental Sick Call Monday - Friday 7:30 - 10:30 a.m. Saturday 9 - 10:30 a.m.
Mental Health Clinic Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m. - noon
Post-Deployment Health Briefings Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1 p.m. Pharmacy Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon; 1 - 4:30 p.m. Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon Legal Assistance/Claims Saturday-Monday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Worship Hours

Victory Chapel (Bldg. 31) Thursday 7:30 p.m..... Latter Day Saints Seminary
Friday 6:30 p.m.....Jewish Shabbat Service
Saturday 11 a.m.....Seventh Day Adventist Service 8 p.m. Catholic Mass
Sunday 7 a.m..... Liturgical Protestant Service 2 p.m..... Latter Day Saints Service 4 p.m..... Episcopal/Lutheran Service
Mini Chapel (Bldg. 24F) Tuesday 7:30 p.m..... Latter Day Saints Service
Wednesday 7 p.m.....Men's Fellowship Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 11:30 p.m..... Roman Catholic Mass
Friday 1 p.m..... Muslim Prayer Service 8 p.m..... Women's Fellowship
Sunday 8 a.m..... Eastern Orthodox Service 10 a.m..... Protestant Sunday School 3 p.m..... Church of Christ Service 7:30 p.m..... Latter Day Saints Service
Hope Chapel (Bldg 24B) Monday 12 p.m..... Charismatic Prayer Meeting
Sunday 8:30 a.m..... Collective Protestant Service 10 a.m..... Roman Catholic Mass 12 p.m..... Gospel Service 6:30 p.m..... Contemporary Protestant Service
Warrior Chapel (Camp Liberty) Friday 6:30 p.m..... Victory Base Open Circle

MNC-I Chaplain's Office:
822-7358

VBC Bash hits Victory Stage full force



The Victory Base Complex Salsa Dance Team heats up the night during a performance on Victory Stage as part of the VBC Bash Aug. 31.

**Story and photo by
Spc. Samuel J. Phillips
MNC-1 PAO**

Servicemembers and civilians gathered from all over Victory Base Complex at Victory Stage Aug. 31 to cut loose and relax during the VBC Bash.

The bash showcased local performers such as the 10th Mountain Division Band, the VBC Salsa Dance Team and many others.

Master Sgt. Isaac Alexis, noncommissioned officer in charge of Team Hunter, Task Force Vigilant, came up with the idea of showcasing local performers.

“There is a lot of local talent here, so we have decided to entertain ourselves,” Alexis said.

Seeing all the ability that was around him, Alexis decided to bring everyone together for one big

performance. This would give the audience a variety of music and performances so everyone could find something to enjoy.

So working with the Mayor’s Cell, MWR, 10th Mtn. Div. Band and other performers, Alexis was able to breathe life into the first VBC Bash.

With the lights blazing, the speakers buzzing and the crowd waiting in anticipation, it was time for the fun to begin.

To kick it off, Alexis himself gave the first performance, a rap about the hardships that servicemembers experience while deployed.

With a vigorous round of applause from the crowd the bash had truly started.

As the night went on, the crowd fed off of the salsa heat, the electricity of the 10th Mtn. Div. Band, the rhythmic beats of rappers

and hip-hop artists and the soulful words of poets. With each performance the applause grew louder and more enthusiastic.

One of the more memorable performances of the night was given by Walt “Baby Love” Horton, a civilian contractor. Horton’s voice carried over the crowd as he dedicated his performance to all of the servicemembers serving

here in Iraq. “This song goes out to all the Soldiers on VBC especially the ones who find themselves on the other side of the wire on a daily basis,” Horton said.

Overall the bash was a tremendous success, Alexis said. More than 425 people came out to show their support. “I’m grateful for everyone that came out and supported our performers.”



The 10th Mountain Division Band electrified the crowd as they rocked out on Victory Stage as part of the Victory Base Complex Bash Aug 31.