



# LIGHTNING STRIKES



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UNITED STATES DIVISION - CENTER

MAY 24, 2011

# Fallen Hero Run



**PAGE 10**

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD

## 2011 MEMORIAL DAY PROCLAMATION

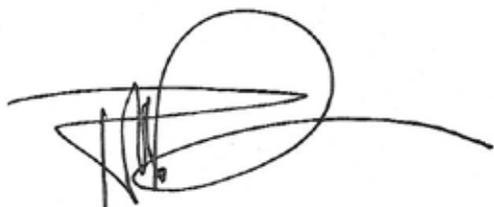
For the past six years, four battle hardened warriors vigilantly stand watch outside the 25th Infantry Division's Headquarters, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. They have and will remain on duty year after year. Cast in bronze, four Soldiers, each representing a different war the Division was called to fight, they are the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Memorial. Reverently honoring our fallen, this memorial has an aura of conspicuous humility.

As we celebrate Memorial Day, we reflect on the strength, courage, and selfless service that inspired our Soldiers to dedicate the last full measure of devotion to our great Country. These heroes unflinchingly placed the needs of others above their own in a way that is truly humbling. Rare are those who not only hear their country's call, but will also willingly give their lives in answer. These brave Americans left their families, livelihoods, and friends, all in simple obedience to duty.

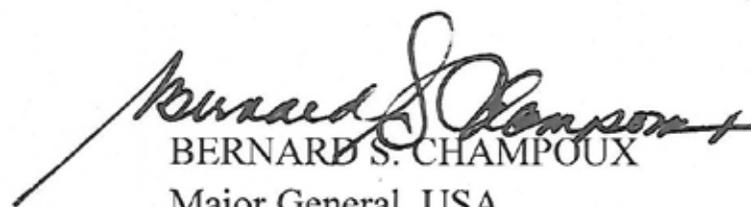
We are proud of who we are, from where we have come, and so very proud of those that came before us. It falls to us, those currently serving, to honor those who gave everything to protect our way of life and who represent the strength of our Nation. Through our service we honor their legacy, personal commitment, and with great humility, graciously accept ownership of their sacrifices.

On this day we reflect with pride and will never forget all those who have gone before us. May their spirit stand with us, inspiring and guiding us toward and through our next challenge....and may we respond with the same courage, determination and dedication.

*Lightning in the New Dawn!*



RAY A. DEVENS  
Command Sergeant Major, USA  
Division Command Sergeant Major



BERNARD S. CHAMPOUX  
Major General, USA  
Commanding



### REMEMBERING HEROES

The sacrifices of the heroes who fought for America are honored through the many memorials around the world. At Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, the 25th Infantry Division has paid tribute to the Division's Soldiers who served during the wars and conflicts of yesterday with "The Tropic Lightning Memorial." The memorial also pays homage to the undeniable influence and impact their service has had on today's Tropic Lightning Soldiers.



The memorial inside the headquarters building of United States Division-Center stands as a testament and reminder of those USD-C service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD)



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Soldiers with the 9th Iraqi Army Division drive a Heavy Equipment Transport Trailer during training at Camp Taji. The training was part of a nine-day "train-the-trainer" course intended to leave an enduring capability for transporting heavy equipment with the Iraqi Army. (Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven Alexander, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



# Heavy Haulers

'Lifeline' Battalion Soldiers work with IA on moving oversized equipment safely

Story by  
Sgt. 1st Class Alan Moore  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C

Soldiers with the 299th "Lifeline" Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center conducted training on the Heavy Equipment Transport Trailer with members of the 9th Iraqi Army Division at Camp Taji.

Iraqi Soldiers of various ranks attended the class—which was designed as a "train-the-trainer" course, meaning that the students of this course would be expected to be able to pass on their knowledge to other Iraqi Soldiers.

The experiences and knowledge base of the students was diverse, with some of them having more than 20 years of driving experience, while others only had a few months of experience.

The first day of training covered

the basics, such as the characteristics of the HETT and how it operates. The Lifeline Battalion instructors provided a hands-on demonstration, identifying the vehicle's components and showing how to perform proper preventative maintenance checks and services. Additionally, they reviewed the procedures of how to change tires, lower and raise the spare tire and couple and uncouple the trailer.

With the basics out of the way, the training over the following days consisted of lectures followed by hands-on exercises. The 9th IA Div. Soldiers received instructions on how to operate the auxiliary pump unit, use the controls to raise and lower the trailer and manually steer the wheels.

Under the supervision of Staff Sgt. Brandon Curtis, a master driver with the 299th BSB and an Omaha, Neb., native, the students drove with the trailer on improved and unimproved roads, navigating a course during both day and night hours.

"When it came to hands-on and

driving portions, it showed that they were paying attention in class," Curtis said. "They were great students. It's too bad all of them could not receive an award for 'top student' because they all are deserving of it."

Throughout all of the training, the instructors emphasized safety while operating the HETTs. They addressed the hazards related to speed and practiced escape procedures in the event of a rollover accident. The students learned to operate the vehicle in different terrain, such as loose sand.

The final day of training involved the loading and unloading of an M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank onto the HETT. Students conducted tie-down procedures and winching operations, successfully completing various scenarios including one that covered moving a disabled tank.

Lt. Col. Dale Farrand and Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin Jordan, the commander and command sergeant major of the 299th BSB and natives

of Billings, Mont., and Alapaha, Ga., respectively, attended the graduation on April 20.

"Receiving this training on HETTs is a giant step towards the modernization of the Iraqi Army," Farrand said. "Coupled with the training they received on the M1A2 Abrams, they now have the ability to not only employ, but relocate and recover tanks on the battlefield."

Farrand paid tribute to the work ethic and discipline of the 9th IA Div. Soldiers who took the course.

"We look forward to the next opportunity to train this group of professionals on a complex piece of equipment," he said. "They are great students, eager to learn."

Curtis was sure the students would be capable in their role as teachers.

"I have full confidence that they will do great things when it comes to teaching their soldiers on the HETT system," he said. "If asked to teach (another group of IA Soldiers), I would."



Sgt. 1st Class Alan Moore instructs Soldiers with the 9th Iraqi Army Division on the procedures for loading a tank onto a Heavy Equipment Transport Trailer during training at Camp, Taji, Iraq. (Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven Alexander, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



Moore watches from the atop an M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank as Soldiers with the 9th Iraqi Army take care of loading the tank onto a Heavy Equipment Transport Trailer during training at Camp, Taji. (Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven Alexander, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

# Ropin' up the IA's best mechanics

## Maintenance 'rodeo' puts mechanics' skills to the test

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas  
4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C

**W**renches turned quickly and so did the second hand on the clock as Iraqi Army Soldiers showcased their vehicle maintenance skills while competing for their chance at the 'Best Mechanic Team' in Anbar, Iraq. The competition—held April 25-27 and known as a maintenance rodeo—was orchestrated as a culminating event for Soldiers of the 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division who have advised and assisted these IA mechanics for the past 10 months.

The event was held at the Al Asad Air Base medium workshop and invited four teams of five mechanics from the 1st and 7th Iraqi Army Divisions and from the 9th Regional Commando Battalion (Iraqi Special Operations Forces).

"The purpose of the maintenance rodeo was to establish a subject matter expert in maintenance for each of the four Iraqi maintenance workshops," said Capt. Missy McNeill, officer in charge of the Sustainment Partnership Operations Center, 703rd BSB. "They will be the sustainment 'go-to' guys when the U.S. forces leave (Iraq)."

The three-day competition included a written test and then the mechanics were tested on their ability to identify maintenance faults on a Humvee, order replacement parts and repair the faults. Additionally, the teams had to rotate all four of

the 80-pound tires—manually. The first team to complete all actions to standard was the winner.

The ISOF finished first and the other teams closely followed. A ceremony was held in their honor April 28 and the top three teams received trophies, a new tool kit, certificates and skill identifier patches.

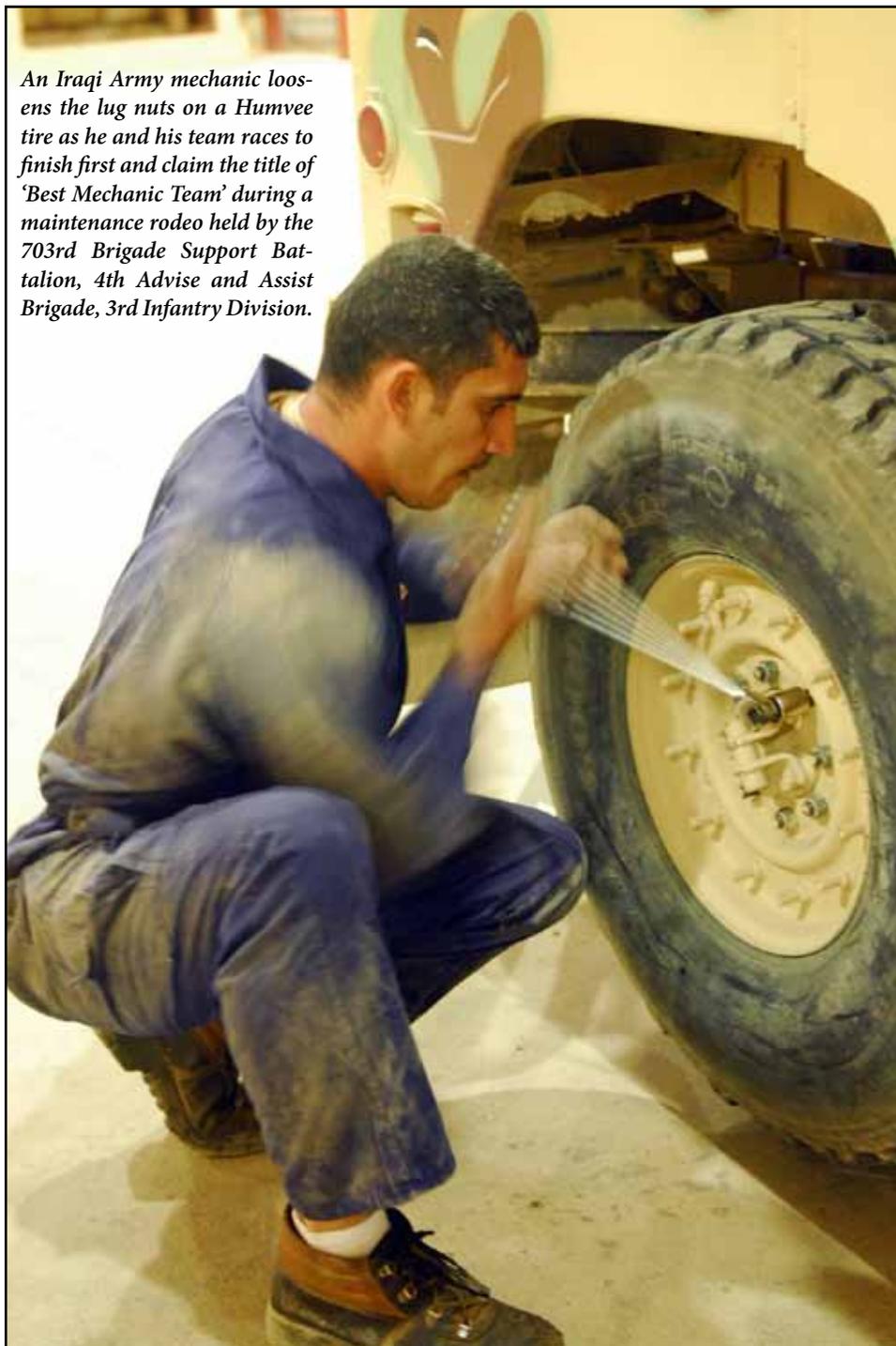
"This is an incentive to give and exert more effort to serve our brave army," said one of the Iraqi Army commanders during the ceremony.

Sgt. Michael Blanchard, with B Company, 703rd BSB and noncommissioned officer in charge of the rodeo, said he and his comrades took pride in knowing they had a major hand in helping progress their Iraqi Army counterparts.

"At first, they would just fix a broken part, but now we've taught them how to troubleshoot, how to use a technical manual and how to save time, manpower and money," Blanchard said about teaching vehicle maintenance tactics to the IA during his deployment. "But really, we learned a lot from them, just as they've learned a lot from us. It's been a great experience."

McNeill said she is proud of the overall success of the event.

"What I'd like to see is the IA replicating this event in the future, and make this maintenance rodeo an annual event," she said.



*An Iraqi Army mechanic loosens the lug nuts on a Humvee tire as he and his team races to finish first and claim the title of 'Best Mechanic Team' during a maintenance rodeo held by the 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.*



*An Iraqi Army Soldier fixes a tail light on a Humvee during a maintenance rodeo competition at Al Asad Air Base.*

Soldiers with United States Division-Center load a simulated casualty into a waiting ambulance during a mass casualty training exercise at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD)



# Practice makes Perfect

**USD-C runs mass casualty training exercise, honing response in case of an emergency**

Story by  
Sgt. Jennifer Sardam, 29th MPAD

Night had settled over Camp Liberty, Iraq, and many Soldiers were just beginning to unwind from their day. The shrill sound of an alarm shattered the silence and a booming voice from a loud speaker announced, “Incoming, incoming, incoming.” A blast and a fiery flash pierced the air and thick, pungent smoke rapidly engulfed the area. Each minute was critical. Shortly after the attack, a number of Soldiers searched the chaotic scene, pounding feverishly on doors and calling out, “We need help over here!” as they found casualties.

The attack was simulated and the “wounded” were Soldiers role-playing the part, complete with wounds made up with stage makeup. It was all part of a mass casualty exercise held recently to test the response and coordination capabilities of a number of different military and civilian agencies on Camp Liberty.

Entities to include the military police, fire and emergency services, explosive ordnance technicians, medical and force protection personnel and a number of other support elements worked together on the scene to react as they would during a real-world situation.

Some of the scenario was designed using lessons learned from past training, but also from real indirect fire attacks, which can include rockets and mortars.

“In the last three months, we’ve not had a monthly exercise, because we’ve had multiple real-world incidences, and we pull the group together and do AARs (after-action reviews) after each one of those,” said Lt. Col. Stephen Inananen, deputy surgeon with 25th Infantry Division, United States Division-Center.

As IDF remains an ongoing threat to U.S. bases in Iraq, training like this is critical to readiness.

“It’s important so that we know that we can react for real when IDF really does come in, and we take casualties,” said Inananen. “This is to



(ABOVE) Soldiers with USD-C prepare to move a simulated casualty to a central treatment location during a mass casualty training exercise at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, USD-C)



(LEFT) Soldiers with USD-C carry a simulated casualty to a waiting ambulance during a mass casualty training exercise at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD)

(RIGHT) Capt. Stacy Bixler, the aide-de-camp to the political advisor of the commanding general of United States Division-Center, tends to a Soldier playing the role of a casualty as she waits for an ambulance during a mass casualty training exercise at Camp Liberty. The exercise tested the response capabilities of USD-C personnel should an actual mass casualty event take place. The event saw not only medical, military police and other elements responding, but also Soldiers who happened to be in the vicinity of the "attack" many of which were the initial ones to locate and treat "casualties." (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD)



(BELOW) Soldiers with USD-C carry a simulated casualty to a central treatment location during a mass casualty training exercise at Camp Liberty. The exercise, whose scenario included Soldiers roleplaying casualties injured in a rocket attack, was designed to be as realistic as possible. As part of the realism, those in the role of casualties had special effects make up applied to simulate wounds. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD)



practice and to exercise our standard operating procedures and response to IDF."

A good way to ensure Soldiers are ready to react quickly to these types of incidents is to challenge them to think on their feet.

"Allow your Soldiers to come out and perform as they would in a real situation," said Sgt. Maj. Robert Rembert, sergeant major with the division surgeon's office, 25th Inf. Div., USD-C. "Don't announce it, because when you announce it, it doesn't prepare the Soldier."

Later, some of the Soldiers involved in the exercise said not knowing what to expect was a definite challenge to the training.

"We just thought it would be one of those accountability exercises," said Spc. Kelly Johnson, an information technology specialist with Headquarters Support Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 25th Inf. Div. "We didn't know what was going on until a medic told us there was wounded."

Having no lead-time meant Soldiers had to go with what they already knew, with no time for preparation.

"It was still a little bit hard seeing someone on the ground right there and trying to figure out what to do to help them out," said Johnson, who is Combat Lifesaver-certified.

During a real mass casualty event, Soldiers like Johnson could be called upon to perform any number of functions on the spot to keep the process moving, despite the nature of their full-time duties.

"For instance tonight, a Soldier that lives in this (area) may have a responsibility to be a litter bearer," said Innanen.

A few Soldiers had already experienced real-life situations in combat and saw value in the simulated training.

"I've been involved in several real mass casualties," said Master Sgt. Gene Houston, a civil affairs noncommissioned officer with Operations Company, HHBN, 25th Inf. Div., and a former Ranger medic. "It's more like to train up for whatever happens. Everybody knows how to do the bandages, how to treat sucking chest wounds, abdominal injuries (and) bleeding. So when it does happen, it won't be the first time."

The success of this exercise is more about value-added training than perfection.

"Everything is a learning tool here," said Rembert. "There is no mistake. Yeah, we look at things and say right and wrong. But, no, there's no right and wrong. This is a big learning curve for everyone out here, so that's why it will be a success."



Soldiers with USD-C search for "casualties" while responding to a simulated rocket attack as part of a mass casualty training exercise at Camp Liberty. The exercise scenario included not only Soldiers roleplaying as casualties, but also incorporated a number of other elements such as triaging, providing medical care and responding to unexploded ordnance. (Photo by Sgt. Isolda McClelland, 29th MPAD)



Spc. Natuitosina Touia performs during celebrations in honor of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month at Camp Liberty. The event featured a variety of traditional dances from throughout the Pacific Island region, explanations on the significance of each dance and a celebration of prominent aspects of Asian and Pacific Islander culture. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy)

# Celebrating Asian-Pacific Heritage Month



(ABOVE) Members of the Fijian Dance Group sing the Fiji national anthem at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy)

(RIGHT) Soldiers with USD-C watch performance by other USD-C Soldiers that highlights different aspects of Pacific Island culture. (Photo by Sgt. Isolda McClelland, 29th MPAD)



Story by  
Sgt. Jennifer Sardam,  
29th MPAD, USD-C

Service members from throughout United States Division-Center recently commemorated Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month at Camp Liberty, Iraq, with a guest speaker and a performance of a variety of cultural dances.

The purpose of the program was to educate service members about various cultures and ethnicities.

“We really want to educate on some of the things that have happened in the culture,” said Sgt. 1st Class Marliiser Ferguson, the 25th Infantry Division equal opportunity adviser and the primary organizer of events tied to official observances in USD-C.

Ferguson added that, in this case, the event focused on what those from Asian and Pacific Island heritage have contributed to the nation

“It’s their time to be highlighted on what they have done. They have done a lot, and they still continue to do a lot,” she said.

Ferguson said that service members can learn much from that cultural history.

“You never know who it might touch,” she said. “If one person that shows up to this observance learns something about this culture—maybe why they dance the way they do, or why they speak the way they do, or maybe

why they dance like the waves—it will give them a totally different outlook on them, on the culture (and) on life.”

The event encompassed a number of styles of Asian and Pacific Islander dance, from the “haka,” a war dance of the Maori tribesmen of New Zealand, to a dance from Saipan, which was traditionally performed by women as part of a welcome home ceremony for men returning from battle.

Although the dancers entertained the audience through their colorful native dress and carefully honed performances, each movement conveyed a deeper meaning.

This was something that Cpl. Theresa Faoa, a promotions noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 25th Inf. Div., who grew up dancing in Samoa, said she strongly emphasized to the performers during the rehearsals preceding the event.

“In our (Samoa) culture, you may not understand what the song may be, because it may be in a native language or whatever, but our hands and our eyes tell the story,” said Faoa.

The various forms of dance seen on stage had originated in lands far removed from the desert environment of Iraq, but to some service members the scenes were familiar and delivered a touch of home.

Many Soldiers from the 25th Inf. Div. recognized a mix of the same cultural influences found in Hawaii, the

Soldiers from USD-C perform a “haka,” or war dance, during celebrations in honor of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy)



division’s home state, where nuances of Tahitian, Japanese, Samoan, Fijian and other cultures can be found.

“I think a lot of people want to feel real close to something,” said Ferguson. “For us (25th Inf. Div.), that’s home. When we leave here, that’s where we go back to, and that’s home. That’s where our families are.”

Sgt. Mose Matautia of Headquarters Support Company, HHBN, 25th Inf. Div., who grew up in Samoa, said he was honored to showcase some of his own cultural roots through dances like the “fa’ataupati,” a traditional Samoan men’s dance also known as a “slap dance.”

“I take pride in where I come from and I want to show everybody else where we come from, how we live (and) our culture,” he said.

Even as a Samoan performing in the event, Matautia was still challenged to experience and learn about a culture different from his own, as he took to the stage to lead the Maori haka.

Understanding those differences is important, said Matautia.

“You understand them more, and I think that’s the main reason why I wanted to partake in the event,” he said.

The combination of different experience levels among participants called for patience during the two months of dance rehearsals.

“The most challenging thing this year is that we have five non-islanders, so it’s a lot more challenging and it required a lot more patience and a lot more practices,” said Faoa. “But it’s coming together. They’re worth

our patience, because they’re actually embracing our culture and what we have to teach them. So hopefully they’ll take that experience with them forever.”

And having enough time to prepare every detail was critical.

“I think the hardest part was trying to get everybody to practice together,” said Faoa. “Everybody has different schedules, so that was the most difficult part.”

Although the event centered on recognizing the significant achievements of those of Asian and Pacific Island descent, it was an exercise in teamwork that benefited all.

“Yes, you see us on stage, but you see different races. You see Hispanic... and you see African-Americans up there, so it’s not just about being Asian or Pacific Islander,” said Faoa. “It’s just coming together as a group, and through our diversity we’re able to just mesh as one. That’s how the military is, period, so you see that on the stage, but then we also see that in uniform too.”



Soldiers with USD-C applaud at the conclusion of a performance that was part of celebrations of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. Isolda McClelland, 29th MPAD)



Soldiers from USD-C perform a Tahitian dance during celebration of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD)



(ABOVE) Soldiers from USD-C perform a dance that welcomes home warriors from battle during celebrations in honor of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month. In addition to performances of traditional dances from throughout the Pacific Islands region, the event also featured informational presentations on other cultural aspects and important historic events associated with the overall culture. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy)

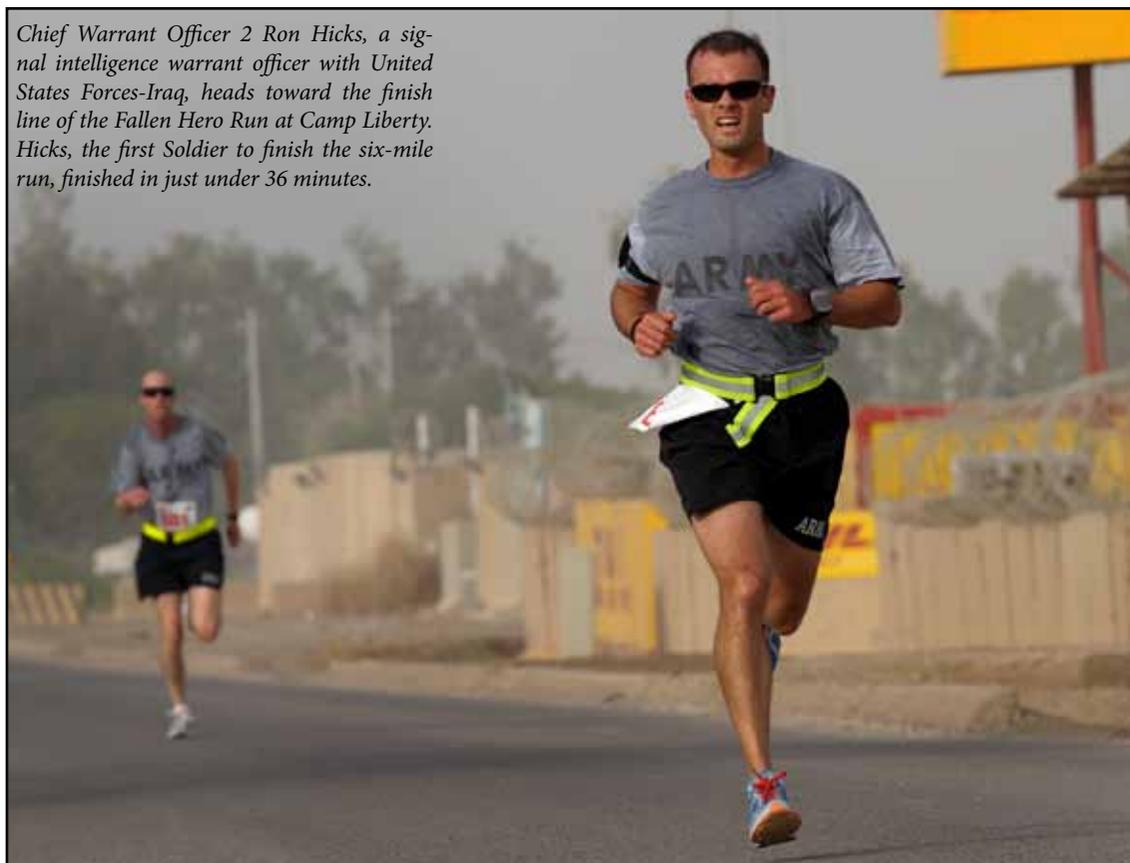
(LEFT) Soldiers with USD-C wait for their performance to start during at Camp Liberty. (Photo by Sgt. Isolda McClelland, 29th MPAD)

# Fallen Hero 6 mile Run home

Participants in the Fallen Hero Run at Camp Liberty jockey for position as they head out from the starting line. Part of Memorial Day celebrations, each participant ran in remembrance of a specific fallen service member.



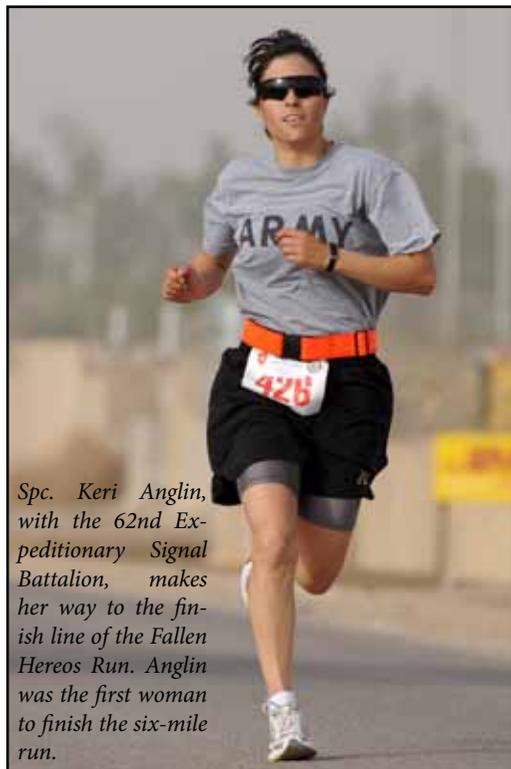
Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ron Hicks, a signal intelligence warrant officer with United States Forces-Iraq, heads toward the finish line of the Fallen Hero Run at Camp Liberty. Hicks, the first Soldier to finish the six-mile run, finished in just under 36 minutes.



Participants in the Fallen Hero Run head down the run's course at Camp Liberty.



# Honors those who gave all



*Spc. Keri Anglin, with the 62nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, makes her way to the finish line of the Fallen Heroes Run. Anglin was the first woman to finish the six-mile run.*



*Participants in the Fallen Hero Run make their way along the run's course at Camp Liberty.*

Story by Sgt. Jennifer Sardam, 29th MPAD, USD-C  
Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy, 29th MPAD, USD-C

**A**s part of Memorial Day celebrations, hundreds of service members and civilians took part in the Fallen Hero Run, at Camp Liberty, Iraq, May 22, to honor the memories of U.S. service members who died while serving their country. Before the event, runners picked up their assigned numbers alongside a label that identified each “fallen hero” that they would represent across the six-mile run route.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ron Hicks, a signal intelligence warrant officer with United States Forces–Iraq, was the first Soldier to cross the finish line, with a time of a little less than 36 minutes.

“It was an honor to be out here today running for Spc. (Clint) Matthews on this Fallen Hero Run,” said Hicks. “I’ve never run for anyone before, and it really, really was an honor today. I know that this person gave the ultimate sacrifice.”

Matthews was killed in 2004, while serving with the 1st Armored Division.

Although Hicks had never met the Soldier he represented, he felt a personal connection to the event, adding that a Soldier in his unit had passed away while serving in Afghanistan.

The first female Soldier to cross the finish line was Spc. Kari Anglin, an electronics maintenance shop foreman with the 62nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, and a Silver City, N.M., native.

“I got fortunate enough to represent Pfc. Thomas Leemhuis on the Fallen Hero Run,” said Anglin, referring to the 1st Armd. Div. Soldier who was killed in 2007.

Anglin said that running while reflecting on Leemhuis and other fallen service members kept her from falling behind.

“It’s a great privilege to honor those (fallen heroes), because every time you hit a mental block, or you get tired...I was able to look down and be like you can continue to go on and persevere,” said Anglin.

Maj. Gen. Bernard S. Champoux, commander of the 25th Infantry Division and United States Division-Center, ran in honor of 1st Lt. Nainoa Hoe, a 25th Inf. Div. Soldier who was killed in 2005.

He emphasized the importance of remembering those like Hoe, who gave – referring to President Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address – “the last full measure of devotion.”

“In each of our souls, we carry someone dear, someone we know personally, but our ethos kind of embraces those that served before us,” said Champoux. “We own their legacy and their sacrifice, so it’s a good time to come together and think about that.”

Although many of the runners didn’t personally know the Soldiers they represented, there was an air of kinship shared among those participating.

“At the finish, I really was taking in everyone around me, and looking at faces, just being part of it (and) being in the moment,” said Champoux. “It was really pretty powerful and pretty great.”



*(ABOVE) Maj. Gladys Fernas makes her way along the course of the Fallen Hero run at Camp Liberty.*

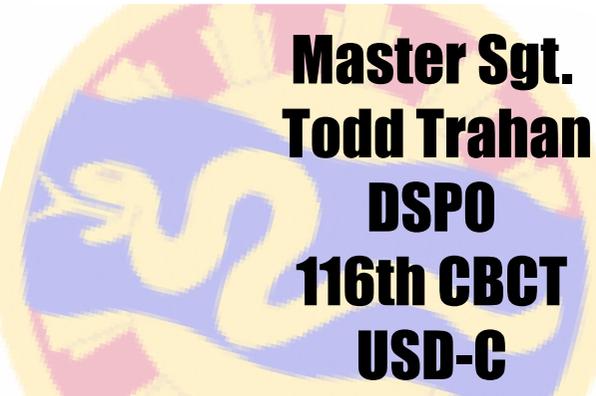
*(LEFT) U.S. Air Force Maj. Kristin Pazenhagen, with United States Forces-Iraq, stretches prior to taking part in the Fallen Heroes Run at Camp Liberty. The six-mile was part of Memorial Day celebrations.*

# WHAT MAKES

USD-C Soldiers reflect on what Memorial Day means to them

I am humbled by the honor of serving in the shadow of all the generations of Soldiers that came before me. On Memorial Day **I am constantly reminded of the sacrifice of others through their memorials around VBC: Peter Tashiobya Range, Paul Smith gym, ect. Running past Audie Murphy LSA reminds me of the Soldier and leader I want to be.** My father served as a Marine during the Vietnam era, and the thought of continuing his stride with my own contributions makes me stronger every day that we are over here.

**Sgt. 1st Class Leah Leavitt  
116th CBCT, USD-C**



**Master Sgt.  
Todd Trahan  
DSPO  
116th CBCT  
USD-C**

With my Father serving for almost 30 years of military service, a brother serving over 22 years of military service and my own service of 29 years, and **knowing that less than 1 percent of the population serves in the military, makes me proud of my family's service to this great country.** Thinking about all the sacrifices that have been made by my fellow warriors in the last two deployments, makes me proud and makes me strong.

I had the opportunity to lay wreaths at the Ardennes, Henri-Chapelle and Flanders Field American Cemeteries in Belgium. It was at that moment that I realized the sacrifices and pain that many before me had made. **Every Soldier that gave their life for the freedom of our country was someone's mother, father, son or daughter.** The many choices that these Soldiers made will forever remind me that freedom does not come free. That's what makes me strong during Memorial Day weekend.

**Command Sgt. Maj.  
Frank Sykes  
RAOC CSM  
1st Bn,  
148th FA Regt.,  
116th CBCT,  
USD-C**

**Sgt. Devan S. McIntosh  
Contracting  
Assistant NCOIC  
HHBN, 1st Bn, 7th FA  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.  
USD-C**

What makes me strong this Memorial Day? Knowing that there were females who had to sacrifice, and make every effort to pave the way for the women amongst our ranks today makes me strong. **Because of their efforts, I will continue to set the tone and live above the standards set before me.** My strength comes from my two daughters, knowing that all my hard work and determination will make them proud of me. I strive to let my daughters know that they, as well as my Soldiers, can succeed at anything they put their heart and mind to. Knowing I have the ability to make a difference with the support of my family, friends and the unit makes me strong.

# ME STRONG

m and how it provides the strength to complete the mission.

What makes me strong when I think of Memorial Day is remembering the work that I did with the mortuary affairs team on my last deployment and the fallen comrade ceremonies. I will say that though I wish that I never had to do that job, it was an honor to be a part of it. I think that sometimes we may forget the sacrifices that have been made not only during the Global War on Terrorism, but in wars and conflicts in our history. I told my Soldiers when they received their combat patch something similar to the following: **“Congratulations you are now a veteran. The military represents less than 1 percent of the American population. The Army less than that, and those that can call themselves veterans even fewer. As you now wear this patch, remember what it stands for - those that have gone before and did not make it home. Those that go again and those that will go. Never forget that.”** I will never forget the caskets that I helped to load onto the vehicles and planes, or the flags that I folded for my brother and sisters in arms for their last flight home. I would hope that we all take a break during Memorial Day, to remember that what we have

**Staff Sgt. Adrian C. Young**

**OSJA, 25th Infantry Division**

**Sgt. Eric Teufel**  
**Fire Support Sergeant**  
**HHC 4th AAB,**  
**3rd Inf. Div.**  
**USD-C**

What makes me strong is carrying on my Grandfathers' legacies as it pertains to the service of our country and who they were every day of their lives. One served in the Marines and the other in the Army. **Their service originally inspired me to join and by their achievements, I am motivated to live up to them every day in or out of the uniform.** They have aided every success I have achieved thus far by the morals and values they taught me. I feel as though if I can be half the men they were, my life will be a success.

Memorial Day is the most respected holiday in American society. It is the day that we look back and remember all of those great American citizens who became Soldiers and made the ultimate sacrifice for the United States of America and paid the ultimate price for our freedom. It is almost wrong to mourn the death of a Soldier, but instead thank God such men lived. **The greatest thing that makes me strong is that if it so happens that I pay the ultimate sacrifice I will never be forgotten.** It gives the families of those lost the hope to drive on in life. So remember, that if your day isn't going well, you are an American and it will give you motivation and morale to drive on.

**Spc. Kyle Kovacik**  
**Truck Gunner**  
**5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt.,**  
**2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.**  
**USD-C**

**Spc. Lawrence Lewis**  
**Fire Support Specialist**  
**HHC 4th AAB, 3rd Inf Div.**  
**USD-C**

What makes me strong, is remembering the sacrifice of the men and women we have lost in wars past and honoring them by doing the best I can in my military career. **It's hard to imagine what it was like for the veterans of WWI, WWII, Vietnam, Korea, and Desert Storm and what they went through to give us the freedoms we all share today.** I am proud to wear the same uniform as those Americans and their legacies give me strength throughout my day when I am deployed.



(ABOVE) An Iraqi Army Soldier runs through an obstacle course during the trauma lane portion of testing for the Iraqi Field Medical Badge at Al Asad Air Base.



(RIGHT) Iraqi Army Soldiers look on as Spc. Diamond Madison, with C Company, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division goes over the performance steps of giving a patient an intravenous injection, as part of testing for the IFMB.

# Pushing through the Pain

**IA medics negotiate numerous physical, mental challenges to earn the IFMB showing they're the best**

Story and Photos by  
Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas,  
4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C

**M**ore than 30 Iraqi Army Soldiers showcased their medic skills and took a stab at completing Iraq's first Field Medical Badge competition, May 2-4, at Al Asad Air Base.

The three-day competition was a culminating exercise modeled after the requirements to earn the U.S. Army's Expert Field Medical Badge. It also highlighted the successes and lessons learned from U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

"The IFMB is much like the (U.S. Army's) Expert Field Medical Badge competition," said Sgt. Kenneth Stover, a medic assigned to C Company, 703rd BSB. "They (IA soldiers) were held to the same standard as us. It took

me three times to earn my EFMB; it's not an easy badge to get. Competing for the IFMB is a chance for the Iraqi Army medics to prove themselves amongst their peers."

The competitors consisted of medics from the 1st and 7th Iraqi Army Divisions and Iraqi Special Operations Forces who arrived at 4 a.m. on Day 1 for a physical fitness test. Dressed in their military uniform and combat boots, the medics kicked off the competition with one minute of push-ups, one minute of sit-ups, and a one-mile run. After the physical fitness test, they switched gears and were challenged with a comprehensive written exam.

The competition intensified on the second day as each Soldier navigated through a trauma lane, treating simulated combat casualties at seven separate stations. The event concluded on Day 3 with a six-mile forced road march.

"It was real hard work. This is the

toughest thing I've ever had to do, physically and mentally," said Cpl. Ha-meed Firas, of the 1st IA Div.

Firas credited training with the U.S. Soldiers to his overall success.

"All of the training in Fallujah has paid off," he said. "Due to all the practice, I was able to do very well here."

Several of Firas' competitors also did well during the event and stayed motivated despite the grueling tasks at hand.

"We've never experienced this type of event," said Sgt. Baha Salman Hasan, with the 7th IA Div., "but our love for our jobs as medics and the encouragement of the American Soldiers has kept us strong until the end."

The IFMB competition marked a major milestone for Iraq, and as one U.S. Soldier said, it was a true test of the advise-and-assist mission's effectiveness.

"It's a great feeling to see how much the whole group accomplished," said

Sgt. 1st Class Erendira Cortez, assigned to C Company, 703rd BSB. "It was especially great to actually see them perform the medical skills with little or no guidance from our medics. It was like they showed us, 'This is what you taught me; look what I can do now.'"

Spc. Joseph Chaffin, a Company A, 703rd BSB Soldier, shared similar sentiments.

"This was beyond everything I've ever seen," said Chaffin after completing the road march alongside one IA Soldier. "The Iraqi Army has such a drive to learn and such a drive to succeed. They want to be the best at what they do. I've earned a lot of respect for them; this was an eye-opening experience."

Though there could only be one top finisher at the end of the IFMB competition, many agreed that the event itself was an overall win for the country of Iraq and the 'Maintain Battalion' Soldiers who trained them.



(FAR LEFT) Iraqi Army Soldiers rush a simulated casualty to an ambulance during the casualty evacuation portion of testing for the Iraqi Field Medical Badge at Al Asad Air Base, May 2. The casualty evacuation event was one portion of the competition, which also included a six-mile ruck march and training lanes where competitors had to evaluate and treat the wounds of simulated casualties. The competition was based largely on the requirements for the U.S. Army's Expert Field Medical Badge.

(LEFT) An Iraqi Army Soldier navigates under concertina wire during the trauma lane portion of testing for the IFMB.

# 'Vanguard' Bn. Celebrates 150th Birthday

Story by  
Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan S. DeLong  
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.

Soldiers with the 1st 'Vanguard' Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center gathered to celebrate the 150-year anniversary of the regiment's founding May 3 at Camp Taji, Iraq, with an organizational day designed to build cohesion and resiliency throughout the formation.

The 18th Inf. Regt., constituted May 3, 1861 to serve during the Civil War, has fought in numerous campaigns in support of the defense of the United States.

And, 150 years later while deployed in support of Operation New Dawn, Vanguard Battalion Soldiers paused to remember the history and heritage of their unit.

"I believe all Soldiers who have served with this fine organization and stood in our formations would be nothing short of humbled as to where the 'Vanguard Nation' is today," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Evans, senior enlisted advisor with 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. and a Columbia, S.C., native. "The future of this team is solely based off of their efforts so long ago."

The activities of the day included a battalion run that started at dawn, football, basketball, volleyball, and tug-of-war competitions between the companies in the battalion.

Additionally, there were multiple squad-level competitions in physical fitness events that promoted teamwork and unit pride. A trophy was presented to the best squad in the battalion.

"The best squad competition was a strenuous set of tasks for us collectively," said Staff Sgt. Nathan Haag, targeting noncommissioned officer with the Vanguard Battalion and a Sparta, Wis., native. "Fortunately, I had a great group of guys who wanted to be the best and truly pushed themselves to the absolute limit so we could walk away with the trophy."

At the close of ceremonies, the Vanguard Battalion commander and command sergeant major presented the best company trophy to Company B for having the highest overall score from the events.

Following that, the youngest Vanguard Battalion Soldier and officer, bearers of the regiment's 'last round,' recited its history in front of the formation.

The history of the 'last round' stems from the Civil War and how a young noncommissioned officer vowed to carry the unit's colors until his last round was spent.

The Soldiers then passed the round to the new youngest Soldier and officer within the battalion, entrusting in them the responsibility to safeguard and keep it inspection-ready at all times until next year.

"The Vanguards of today are able to stand and execute our missions because of those who have served in the regiment before us," said Lt. Col. John Cross, commander with 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. and an Elk City, Okla., native. "The first members of the regiment, led by Col. Carrington, laid the foundation during the Battle of Murfreesborough, during the Civil War and each successive generation of Vanguards have continued to build upon that solid foundation."



Lt. Col John Cross, far left, commander of 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Evans, far right, senior enlisted advisor with the battalion cut the battalion birthday cakes alongside the youngest Soldier and officer in the battalion. (Photo by Spc. William K. Ermatinger, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



Soldiers with D Company, 1st "Vanguard" Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center compete in a tug-of-war competition during an organizational day May 3 at Camp Taji, Iraq. The organizational day celebrated the 150-year anniversary of the battalion's formation and allowed Soldiers from the unit to reflect on the battalion's history. (Photo by Spc. William K. Ermatinger 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



Soldiers with The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center begin a battalion run during an organizational day May 3 at Camp Taji. The battalion, formed on May 3, 1861, has seen service in the Civil War, World Wars I and II as well as in Iraq. (Photo by Spc. William K. Ermatinger, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

Spc. Thomas Goheen, with D Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, and an Iraqi Police officer take video of a simulated crime scene during a training exercise at Camp Kahlid April 18. (Photo by Pfc. Brian Chaney, 55th Signal Company (Combat Camera), 4th AAB, 3rd Inf. Div.)



# USD-C at a glance



(LEFT) Lt. Col. Cameron Cantlon, commander of 6th "Saber" Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division - Center and an Ettrick, Wis., native, pins the Combat Action Badge on 1st Lt. Sean Buchanan, an armor officer with A Troop during a ceremony April 29 at Camp Liberty (Photo by 2nd Lt. Daniel Elmlad, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

(BELOW) Col. Paul Calvert, commander of the 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, congratulates Cpl. Luis Pelayo, of the 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., after Pelayo received the Army Commendation Medal with Valor. Pelayo received the award for displaying courage and selfless service following a complex enemy attack in January. (Photo by Spc. Rebecca Whitlatch, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)





(ABOVE) An Iraqi girl take turns asking questions with a student from Morris Hill Elementary at Fort Riley, Kan., at Joint Security Station Loyalty, Iraq during a May 3 video teleconference between the two. The teleconference was set up so children of 1st Iraqi Federal Police Division police officers could talk with the American elementary school children about the weather, sports, food, and school work that they are involved in. (Photo by Capt. Christopher Miles, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



(RIGHT) Spc. Timothy O'Donnell, with A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 116th Cavalry Regiment, 116th Garrison Command, scans his surroundings while pulling tower guard duty at Camp Victory. One of the duties of the 2nd Sqdrn, 116th Cav Regt. is to provide security throughout Victory Base Complex. (Photo by Spc. Jamie Morris, A Troop, 2nd Sqdrn., 116th Cav. Regt., 116th Garrison Cmd.)

# USD-C at a glance



Sgt. Luke Kilhullen, a Personal Security Detachment team leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division - Center, inspects Spc. Kristopher Mancha, an infantryman with the PSD prior to a mission. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Daniel Elmblad, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

Engineers with C Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, detonate a silhouette charge to breach a door during training at Camp Taji. The Soldiers spent the day running through the scenario multiple times as dry fire and live fire exercises, implementing different charges each time.



# Training that blows the doors off

## Engineers, infantry together breach obstacles, secure buildings



Staff Sgt. Joe Grant, an engineer squad leader with C Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a Charleston, Ill., native, secures the door that his team breached with a silhouette charge during training at a range at Camp Taji

Story and photos by  
Spc. William K. Ermatinger,  
2AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C

Engineer Soldiers with C Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and infantrymen with Company A, 1st “Vanguard” Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div, USD-C trained together April 20 during a simulated raid to secure a compound at Camp Taji, Iraq.

The purpose of the training was to ensure new Soldiers within the formation, along with the more experienced veterans, maintain proficiency in traversing a concertina wire obstacle, conducting a kinetic breach of a door and securing the inside of a building.

Securing the perimeter was the first objective. The infantrymen set up an outer-security cordon and provided supporting fire while the rest of the teams moved into position. This allowed the teams an opportunity to practice rapidly getting into place and suppressing enemy security forces.

After the enemy security forces were defeated, the engineers in the team carried a pre-assembled deto-

nation charge to the door of the target building. Within moments, the charge was fixed in position and the team moved away for detonation.

“We got to experiment and show the infantry how to build, emplace and calculate the safe standoff distance with our breaches, and how breaches would be beneficial to them when they do an urban breach on a house or something of that effect,” said Staff Sgt. Keith Hursman, a platoon sergeant with C Company and an Elgin, Okla., native.

After the breach charge blew, Soldiers ran through the doorway, suppressing the enemy with shots, followed by an echo of “room clear,” confirming the room was secure.

The Soldiers ran through the scenario multiple times as a dry fire and live fire exercise, implementing different charges for each run to demonstrate both the capabilities of the engineers, and to learn which charges are appropriate for different situations.

“There is a little more freedom being in theater to conduct realistic combat scenarios, and this was a great opportunity for the infantry and engineers to do combined training,” said Hursman.



# USD-C PHYSICAL FITNESS FORUM (PFF)

[www.25idl.army.mil/fitness](http://www.25idl.army.mil/fitness)

## Lightning Strong

Fitness is the foundation for everything we do. Mental and physical toughness are keys to success in life, both on and off the battlefield. We are trying to change not only how we think about it, but how we train.

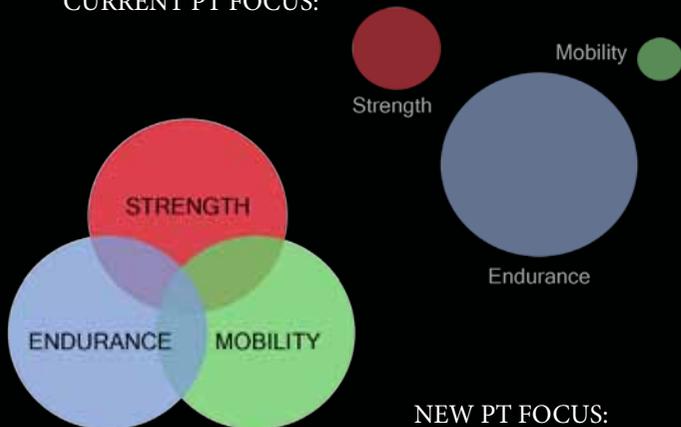
We recently launched the Tropic Lightning Physical Fitness Forum on the Division web page to help discuss physical training, equipment, and share new techniques with ALL Soldiers.

We invite you to learn more at [www.25idl.army.mil/fitness](http://www.25idl.army.mil/fitness)

## A NEW APPROACH

With the Army's current fitness test, Soldiers can be seen to be training with the goal of scoring well on the APFT rather than focusing on total fitness for health and combat-oriented environments. For this reason, the Army Physical Readiness Training Program (PRT) was created.

CURRENT PT FOCUS:



## BATTLE FOCUSED TRAINING

The general focus of the Physical Readiness Training Program is to create a training program which better balances the three areas of a Soldier's physical performance ability. By equally emphasizing performance in strength, endurance and mobility Soldiers will be better suited for meeting the challenges of any mission.

BUILDING THE SOLDIER ATHLETE

# Myth Busters

### MYTH

*It is best to stretch before exercise - it helps you loosen up before you begin working out.*

### FACT

It is best to stretch dynamically before exercising and statically after exercising. Dynamic stretching exercises and warms up muscles and body tissues by moving the body through the full available range of motion. Dynamic stretching can enhance power when performed before exercise. An example of a dynamic stretch would be "The Bend and Reach." Stretching muscles statically (holding for more than 15 seconds) before exercise can actually decrease performance during power and agility activities. Current research recommends static stretching after exercise to help decrease risk for muscular injuries.

## Principles of Physical Readiness Training

Army PRT is guided by eight overarching principles. These principles ensure that all PRT sessions, activities, drills, and exercises are performed correctly within the appropriate intensity and duration for optimal conditioning and injury control.

**PRECISION:** Precision implies that the quality of movement is just as important as the weight lifted or repetitions performed. It improves physical skills and abilities and can decrease the likelihood of injury due to faulty movement. Precise execution standards in all PRT activities ensure proper development of fundamental movement skills.

**PROGRESSION:** Progression is the systematic increase in the intensity and duration of PRT activities. The proper progression allows the body to positively adapt to the stresses of training. If progression in intensity and/or duration is too rapid, the Soldier cannot adapt to the demands of training or recovery. This process leads to over-training or injury. Phased training ensures appropriate progression.

**INTEGRATION:** Integration uses multiple training activities to achieve balance and recovery between activities in the PRT program. Warrior tasks often require a blend of strength, endurance and mobility, and PRT activities are designed to challenge all three components in the integrated manner. For example, conditioning and climbing drills develop the strength, mobility, and physical skills to negotiate obstacles. Movement drills are designed to improve running form, movement under direct and indirect fire, and casualty evacuation. The drills and activities in PRT integrate essential Soldier tasks serving as a critical link in the chain of overall Soldier readiness.

**OVERLOAD:** To achieve muscle development, it is necessary to exceed the normal demands on the body. This is not exercising to "muscle failure." Muscle failure implies using a muscle until it no longer works and then relying on ligaments, tendons or cartilage to complete the exercise. These structures may then be injured. Muscle fatigue is a more appropriate term and condition. Once your muscle fatigues you must modify the exercise to protect the other structures. For example, after performing multiple push-ups, move to your knees to continue with proper form.

**VARIETY:** Adding variety to an exercise program helps avoid injuries while providing challenging training. Vary the type of exercise to include muscular strength, muscular endurance, aerobic endurance, anaerobic endurance, flexibility, and mobility.

**RECOVERY:** Recovery is the single most violated principle of exercise and is absolutely essential to minimize overuse injuries. You can follow a hard workout day with a rest day or an easy day or you can exercise a different body region the day after.

**BALANCE:** Balance all of the principles of fitness to avoid poor training or risk of injury.

**SPECIFICITY:** Soldiers are athletes and their sport is combat. To improve in combat it is important to incorporate these Soldier skills into every physical training session, and PRT helps to achieve this goal.

Information provided in this segment is gathered from the U.S. Army's "Building the Soldier Athlete" informational guide. For detailed information on these facts check the guide at [www.25idl.army.mil/fitness](http://www.25idl.army.mil/fitness).

# To those who have made the ultimate sacrifice...



# ...You are not forgotten.

During this Memorial Day we pay tribute, as we do each day, to your strength and courage. Your deeds, your words and your actions have made a difference and will always be with us. Your character and your selfless service will not be forgotten. We honor and salute you, our fallen brothers and sisters in arms. Warriors, heroes.

