

Sunburst FORWARD



Chaplains train to support deployed service members

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Army and Air Force chaplains and their assistants, from Joint Base Balad, Iraq, attended a monthly career-development course to better ready themselves to aid as spiritual counselors, March 5 at Provider Chapel at JBB.

The training focused on pastoral counseling and was led by guest speaker Maj. Terry Romine, the family-life chaplain with the 3rd Infantry Division headquartered at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, and one of three family-life chaplains currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Pastoral counseling is an integration of pastoral training with behavioral health, said Romine, a Hoxie, Ark., native. The idea is to give chaplains what they need to help Soldiers find the type of help they are seeking, he said.

The training is designed to enhance their knowledge and to teach them new techniques for assisting Soldiers seek-

ing help in the deployed environment, said Lt. Col. Garry Losey, deputy command chaplain with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Chicago native.

who are not family-life qualified, to give them better skill sets in how to counsel, how to work with clients ... we want to better meet the needs of our Soldiers," he said. "They are bringing their knowl-



Master Sgt. Michael Bair, a chaplains assistant with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), instructs other chaplains assistants during monthly career-development course to better ready themselves to aid as spiritual counselors March 5 at Provider Chapel here at JBB.

Family life is a specialized career field, which requires a master's degree in education, said Losey. The chaplain-to-chaplain training expands their understanding using skills from the family-life focus, which emphasizes the full spectrum of the Soldiers' life and well-being, he said.

"We're training our chaplains

edge, their education ... so that we may be better equipped to help."

Romine said research has shown that Soldiers prefer to consult with chaplains as their first source of professional help, due to the security of the chaplain corps' strict confidentiality policy.

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What do you miss most about home?



Sgt. 1st Class Fernando Flores, operations NCOIC, HHC, 13th ESC, Laredo, Texas, native.

"Taking a shower by myself in my own bathroom!"

Sgt. Daniel Olsen, judge advocate general NCOIC, HHC, 13th ESC, Pittsburgh, Pa., native.

"Spending time with my wife and daughter."

Sgt. Steven Perez, head-quarters operations NCO, HHC, 13th ESC, West Palm Beach, Fla., native.

"My family, Miami Beach, and a real weekend!"

Pfc. Cory Allen, a clerk in the Property Book Office, HHC, 13th ESC, Bluffton, Ind., native.

"I miss riding my motorcycle with my wife."

Chaplains (continued)

"We want chaplains to be able to have the skills that can help Soldiers work through personal problems," he said.

These problems may arise from issues at work, sadness, depression, anger, grief, marital or relationship stress, or any other major factor that affects them negatively, said Romine.

"Often it's a path," he said. "They see the chaplain if they're having some issues, and the chaplain can recommend they see behavioral health."

Romine said Soldiers can be hesitant to seek help, which is why it is important for chaplains to always remain capable of understanding their clients and provide a confidential means to express their worries and concerns.

"We want to relate to the Soldier," he said. "We want to con-

nect, we want to attend and we want to pay attention to what they're feeling and saying, so they will feel comfortable and safe talking to us."

Romine said there is a major concern among chaplains, of the heightened stress factors facing Soldiers separated from family and loved ones in a combat environment.

"We want to be able to offer a place for Soldiers to deal with that and have a place to talk about it. That helps to reduce their stress, or find coping mechanisms to deal with stress."

The chaplain corps has made it their mission to aid service members overseas with counseling and training, as well as spiritual and moral support, said Losey.

Both Army and Air Force chap-

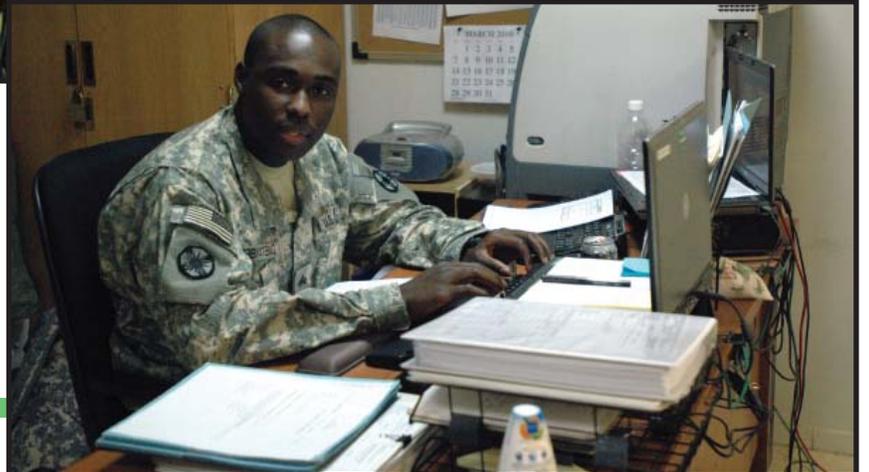
lains from units around JBB regularly attend the monthly training, to better serve their respective branches.

"This is really a joint event between the Army and the Air Force, where we get training on how to touch the lives of Soldiers and Airmen," he said.

Losey said the 13th ESC has dedicated its chaplain corps to the mental and spiritual support of service members deployed in Iraq.

"They will have the best (counseling) we can give them to help them through their time here," he said, "to get them back home not only physically safe, but emotionally and mentally prepared."

Photos from Iraq



Get to know your 13th ESC Soldier: HHC executive officer

1st Lt. Timothy Forkl: First Lt. Timothy Forkl, the executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th ESC, was born in Murray, Kentucky. He moved to South Wales, New York with his family as a child, but his father soon joined the Air Force and the family relocated to Texas before settling in Snowhill, North Carolina.

Forkl says he never thought about joining the military until a Marine recruiter talked to his mother who encouraged him to become a "Devil Dog."

"The biggest influence in joining the military for me was my mom," said Forkl.

After four years as an Active Duty Marine, Forkl left the service and went back to school at East Carolina University.

He left school two years later to become a Sheriff's deputy in his adopted hometown of Snowhill. During his tenure in the Sheriff's department, Forkl was promoted to detective, however he had other plans for his career.

"My ultimate goal was to get back in the military as an officer," said Forkl. "All my life, I've been in service to something bigger than myself, from the Marines to the Sheriff's department. So, I felt like I still had something to offer."

Through night school at Mount Olive University, Forkl saw that ultimate goal come to fruition.

He graduated with a bachelor's in business administration and went to Officer Candidate School in November 2007 where he became a U.S. Army Transportation Corps officer.

"There's an ineffable quality to service," said Forkl. "The camaraderie between Soldiers is unlike other jobs. There's no civilian equivalent to the camaraderie between Soldiers who have served together."

Forkl said he volunteered to join the 13th on this deployment in order to gain the experience to help further himself professionally.

"After being in a unit as unique as HHC, 13th, I feel like I could be in almost any unit," said Forkl.

As he looks toward the future, Forkl is optimistic.

"I want a company command," said Forkl. "That's my goal right now."



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