

# PARAGLIDE

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Telling the Fort Bragg Story

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## Corps support group helps improve quality of life for deployed troops

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CAMP TAJI, Iraq — As with any installation in Iraq, change comes over time. However, the Soldiers of the 46th Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command, wasted no time in making Camp Taji a home.

Since arriving here in December 2004, the CSG has already made significant improvements to the main post dining facility, gymnasium, Freedom Call Center and to a Morale, Welfare and Recreation building that had been, for the most part, left unused.

“The building (left by 593rd Corps Support Group, 3rd COSCOM) was used for the same thing (in the past), but we enhanced it by adding cardio and weight equipment,” said 1st Sgt. Kenneth McKoy, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 46th CSG’s first sergeant.

Before deploying, the company purchased weight and cardio training equipment, including treadmills and stair climbers from the Fort Bragg MWR, said McKoy. However physical training isn’t the only use for the newly renovated building.

The MWR also houses a stereo system for DJs, a dance floor and seating area for games. It also doubles as an aerobics room.

“We used (the MWR) area for a Super Bowl party, a Christmas party, and I’m going to use it (in the future) for our Soldier-of-the-Month boards,” said McKoy.

“There are other facilities on post, but by having this one right here, it enables our Soldiers to set out and seek some of their physical goals and let off their steam while being close to the company,” he said.

Also improved upon was the Freedom Call Center, which allows troops to call anywhere for 30 minutes at no charge.

Unlike other call centers at the camp, this one gives the Soldiers in line something to do they wait.

The Freedom Call Center has a waiting room that seats 28 Soldiers and features a large-screen television.

There are overall plans to expand the facility with an additional 800 square feet, which will include adding 20 more telephones and about 30 computers for Internet use.

The facility now runs 24-hour operations, with 46th CSG Soldiers available to provide Internet and telephone technical support.

It also has video-teleconferencing capability which was recently used to allow an Army National Guard unit from New Mexico to participate in a Native American powwow. "The group on the distant end conducted the powwow dressed up in their traditional Native American clothing, while Soldiers on this end watched, danced and sang along," said Chief Warrant Officer Barry Jefferson, information systems technician, CSSAMO, 46th CSG. The VTC is also used for the command's Family Readiness Group program.

"We schedule time for the families back at home to talk with Soldiers here," Jefferson said. "One time we surprised a Soldier with seeing his newborn (baby) for the first time."

Currently the center provides VTCs, seven phones, six video-conferencing stations, four video e-mail stations, and 32 computers with Internet access for deployed Soldiers — all free of charge.

In addition to these new and upgraded facilities, the Soldiers of the 46th CSG also ensured positive changes to the DFAC.

Improvements made to the DFAC include decorations and improvement in food such as nutritional facts, said Pfc. Juan Ruiz, a member of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, DFAC council.

"There is a significant difference and improvement in the food since (the 46th CSG) took over," said Master Sgt. Alice F. Walton, 46th CSG Food Advisor. "We encourage the contractors to taste the food when seasoning it and to use military (recipe) food cards when preparing it." And the Soldiers don't mind giving their opinions.

"We get mostly positive feedback (from the Soldiers). They don't really complain, but they always have ideas to make it better," Ruiz said.