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Public Affairs Office**

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## **NCO paints to relax**

By Sgt. Keith M. Anderson  
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CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — When Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert Tackett, medical platoon sergeant, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 185<sup>th</sup> Armor, isn't training his medics to save lives, he trains to inflict injury on his enemies, under a form of fighting he calls Bujinkan Ninjutsu.

But Tackett branched out to Ninjutsu artist this deployment, when he painted a mural on an old card table to present to his sensei (teacher), 8<sup>th</sup> Shodan Ryan Lowe.

“I recognized the potential immediately and began to turn this discarded table top into something much more,” Tackett said. He said painting the table with elements of the fighting discipline were a way to relax during his down time in Iraq, and a way to remind himself of the important concepts of Bujinkan Ninjutsu.

“I think that it is very important for me to be reminded of these elements which represent more spiritual concepts such as Balance, Adapting, Instincts, Tenacity and Perseverance,” Tackett said.

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TACKETT/2-2-2

It took Tackett more than a month to paint the four-foot mural of his martial arts system on the card table. It is a six-sided hexagon, with three layers of bright enamel white, two layers of bright blood-red and two traces of sharp midnight black as the main focus.

The mural brings the spirit of this martial arts system to life, he said.

“Well, as you can see, it is one big circle in the middle with six smaller circles surrounding it at the edges,” Tackett said. “The large, center kanji translates to ‘Bujikan Ninjutsu,’ which is the name of my style of martial arts. The six smaller circles starting from the top and progressing in a clockwise manner translate to ‘Earth,’ ‘Water,’ ‘Emptiness,’ ‘Scorpion,’ ‘Fire’ and ‘Air.’”

The Scorpion kanji represents his sensei. Tackett plans on sending this mural to his wife back in California, who will then present it to Sensei Lowe in person.



Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert Tackett, medical platoon sergeant, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 185<sup>th</sup> Armor, stands next to the mural he painted on an old card table as a gift to his sensei (teacher), 8<sup>th</sup> Shodan Ryan Lowe, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher March 29. The mural brings the spirit of this martial arts system to life, he said. “Well, as you can see, it is one big circle in the middle with six smaller circles surrounding it at the edges,” Tackett said. “The large, center kanji translates to ‘Bujikan Ninjutsu,’ which is the name of my style of martial arts. The six smaller circles starting from the top and progressing in a clockwise

manner translate to 'Earth,' 'Water,' 'Emptiness,' 'Scorpion,' 'Fire' and 'Air.'" The Scorpion kanji represents his sensei. Tackett plans on sending this mural to his wife back in California, who will then present it to Sensei Lowe in person. (Photo by Capt. Renato Rossignoli)