



# DISPATCH

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## Task Force Liberty Sees Progress in North Central Iraq



Salah ad Din Province Assistant Governor for Administration Kasim Majeed Mahmoud cuts the ribbon to the new Provincial Joint Coordination Center as the PJCC Director Gen. Eissa Abid Mohmood and 1st Brigade Combat Team commander Col. Mark McKnight look on in Tikrit.

Story and photo by Specialist Jimmy D. Lane Jr.  
1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

SALAH AD DIN, Iraq - Leaders of Salah ad Din Province and the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team attended a ceremony for the opening of the new Provincial Joint Coordination Center in Tikrit July 11.

The new building will be a center for provincial government operations in Salah ad Din Province, such as maintaining communications about current operations with numerous state institutions and supporting Joint Coordination Centers, said PJCC director Gen. Eissa Abid Mohmood.

"Our center coordinates with humanitarian organizations and health companies to help the damaged areas of Bayji and Samarra," Mohmood said. "Also, the most important duty of the center is connecting with the national center in Baghdad, which is considered the supervisor of all JCCs in Iraq. It coordinates between Coalition Forces and government agencies in the province to establish security in our

nation."

The contractor responsible for the building's completion expressed pride in having taken part in the construction of the project.

"When we started working on this building, which was the old Al-Hummayat Hospital, much effort was needed because there was much debris and the building's body presented a bad situation," said contractor Ziad Ibrahim Jasim. "Much hard work was needed for us to complete the request to finish the building in such a limited time. Most days there were up to 100 workers, but impossible things can be done by men who want it done."

The opening of the new center is not only seen in a practical sense; this center is a symbol for good things to come and the fruit of joint efforts between the Iraqis and the Coalition Forces.

"It shows that there is a successful project completed by the Iraqis with little assistance from Coalition Forces," said Capt. Zach Szilagyi, assistant Iraqi political liaison officer attached to Headquarters and

Headquarters Company 1<sup>st</sup> BCT. "It also shows the Iraqis have the will and the spirit to make their country whole and successful. This project is the perfect example of overall how those philosophies can come together and create quantifiable product of the efforts of the Coalition and the Iraqis working together."

The center was attacked recently by a vehicle borne improvised explosive device which halted construction. After rallying the workers to the importance of the project, Coalition Forces and the Iraqi provincial government were able to get the project back on track.

"Due to the security situation and the attack of the compound, the contractor had to stall on the construction because there where many workers who were afraid for their lives and their families' lives," Szilagyi said. "It put our construction timeline two months behind schedule. I as well as General Eissa felt the need to pressure the contractor to get the project done as soon as possible as a morale booster to show the province that despite the killings and violence, there are stories of success throughout the province for the people."

## Task Force Liberty keeps Supply Routes safe while training Iraqi Army



SSG Brian M. VanNote, (center), 3rd squad Leader, 2nd Platoon, Troop K, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, briefs a squad leader from 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Division of the Iraqi Army on their days mission. Troop K conducts joint combat patrols daily with soldiers from the Iraqi army, preparing them to take on the responsibility of performing security operations in Iraq.

Story and photos by Sgt. Daniel W. Bailey  
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE O'RYAN, BALAD, Iraq – Convoys roll through Iraq daily never knowing what surprise might lie ahead or be around the next corner.

For the Task Force Liberty Soldiers of Troop K, Task Force 1-128, creating a safe passage along the main supply routes and alternate supply routes while training soldiers of the Iraqi army in and around Balad, Iraq, is an everyday mission.

"We're part of the battalion's main effort doing MSR and ASR clearance of Tampa and Milton," said Staff Sgt. Forrest Bradford, 1st Squad Leader, 2nd Platoon, Troop K, 3rd Battalion, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment. "We go up and down the MSR looking for anything out of the ordinary, making sure the route is clear as possible in this

area."

Troop K is part of 3rd Battalion, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, from the Tennessee Army National Guard, but is attached to 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, from the Wisconsin Army National Guard, during Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

The Soldiers know that maintaining a safe roadway is a long and tedious process that requires dedication and man-hours.

"We run no less than five missions a day at a minimum of four hours each," said Capt. Paul W. Shannon, commander, Troop K. "We are on the road 16 to 22 hours a day, so there are usually only two hours a day we don't have someone outside the wire patrolling the MSRs and ASRs."

From the end of December until May, Troop K alone has logged over 288,000 miles in over 815 combat patrols, conducted 40 raids and had no serious vehicular

accidents, added Shannon, a Clarksville Tenn. native.

In addition to patrolling the supply routes in the area Troop K, is also training soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Division, of the Iraqi army and providing security for the southern border of Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

"We really have three missions," said Shannon. "Our primary mission is route clearance and security of MSRs and ASRs, our second mission is to protect the southern boundaries of LSA Anaconda from mortar attacks, rocket attacks and provide general security, and our third is to train the Iraqi army and Iraqi Security Forces so that they can take over and we can go home."

K Troop has actually been conducting joint patrols with Iraqi army soldiers since December, but just started working with the 4th Battalion in May.

"About 90 percent of the patrols we've conducted have been joint patrols where we take out an Iraqi army team," said Staff Sgt. Brian M. VanNote, 3rd Squad Leader, 2nd Platoon, Troop K. "We are seeing with the new unit that the level of discipline is better. We've had some really outstanding squads that have run with us."

The Iraqi soldiers have been learning how to conduct mounted and foot patrols as well as how to set up traffic control points, where they search vehicles and passengers and talk to locals to gather information.

"They are very limited due to resources right now, communication equipment and vehicles, things you really need to have to conduct patrols correctly," said Shannon. "So what we have done is integrated the vehicles they do have, so my patrols will take one to two vehicles of five to 10 soldiers, incorporating them in the patrol."

Even though they lack some resources, the Iraqi soldiers are beginning to conduct some aspects of the patrols on their own.

"We're trying to get hands off during the TCPs. Eventually we'll be there to just provide them security while they conduct the TCPs," said VanNote. "They also help out getting the message across to locals as they have an easier time communicating."

Soon after they receive the necessary equipment the Iraqi soldiers will begin to take over patrols on their own for K Troop, providing a secure area for the Iraqi people.

"When they take over, if they have the presence in the area like we've had, there will be no problems," said Bradford.

## Task Force Liberty Medics making the rounds

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta  
42nd Infantry Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Iraq – In their own version of house calls, medical personnel here are making the rounds to make sure Iraqi and Task Force Liberty Soldiers protecting the base stay healthy.

It's called the "tower run," after the towers that ring Forward Operating Base Danger. While Soldiers man the towers and guard posts to secure the base, base medical personnel visit them daily with supplies like cold water, Gatorade, snacks and medical supplies.

"We check the Soldiers because they do our security," said Staff Sgt. Greg Martin, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Forward Operating Base Danger Consolidated Aid Station. "We want to make sure they're being taken care of medically." The base is guarded by Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry and 3rd Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery.

Hydration is the major concern, Martin said. Between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., the temperature can soar to 132 degrees, so the medical personnel don their body armor and helmets, grab their aid bags and visit each tower and guard post. Though the Soldiers have cold water, the

medical personnel ensure they're drinking it, and remind them to vary their work-load based on temperature and stand in the shade when they can. They've had no heat casualties, Martin said, which he attributed to the sergeants of the guard, the tower runs and the Soldiers themselves.

"The SOGs know, and the Soldiers know, to stay hydrated," he said.

The Soldiers' tight guard schedule makes sick call visits inconvenient, so the tower runs also give medical personnel a chance to treat Soldiers' minor injuries, follow up on their past injuries and answer their medical questions, Martin said.

"Any medical issues, they have, they ask about," Martin said.

Martin, a 42nd Infantry Division healthcare specialist from Halfmoon N.Y., said the FOB Danger Consolidated Aid Station is made up of medical personnel from the 42nd Infantry Division, 3rd Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery, Company E, 50th Main Support Battalion, 373rd Medical Company and the 86th Combat Stress Detachment. The medical personnel also have civilian experience. The aid station counts emergency room technicians, emergency room physicians and physician assistants among its staff.



Capt. Terry Meltz, a physician assistant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 42nd Infantry Division, hands a packet of gatorade to an Iraqi army soldier. Along with Task Force Liberty units, the Iraqi soldiers are manning Forward Operating Base Danger's guard posts. The medics visit the guard posts at the base daily, checking troops' health and welfare.