

DISPATCH

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Task Force Liberty Soldiers provide guidance to Iraqi forces



1st Lt. Barry Humphrey, a 3/69 Armor fire direction officer, shows a POB officer how to work his radio in Samarra.

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BRASSFIELD-MORA, SAMARRA, Iraq - All over Iraq, Coalition Forces are working with Iraqi forces to rebuild the country's infrastructure. This effort includes training and employing police, public order battalions and Ministry of Interior commandos.

Along with security forces, local Iraqis are also at work rebuilding their towns and cities. The POB helps this by providing security.

The POB is an element assigned to the Ministry of Interior. They are trained like police, but they receive a little additional training. Their primary focus is to establish control and stabilization in areas where the normal Iraqi police haven't been able to; response to large civil disturbances.

"The POB's tactics for establishing order are different from a regular police unit. They take more of a military approach to their work", said Staff Sgt. Brian Little, a U.S. Army National Guard Soldier working as POB liaison with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor.

POB operations include cordon and search tactics, vehicle and pedestrian checkpoints and other missions that Coalition Forces are currently doing to establish security in Iraq, said Little, who is a police officer from Staten Island, New York.

The POB receives the same training as other Coalition elements before going

on patrols. Prior to joining the POB, individuals go through a Joint Forces Academy with Australian and U.S. forces, as well as a police academy. From there international police advisors and U.S. forces trained them in close-quarter battle, clearing rooms, cordon and search operations and short-range marksmanship.

While the POB is in charge of its own missions, Coalition Forces help when on patrol. "When we work with the POB, we try to help them plan and execute their missions," Little said. "They take most of their mission tasking from their own chain of command, with a little additional mission tasking from (us). We try to meld the two together so we can work as effectively as possible."

In some cases, Coalition Forces' help is needed, but in missions involving humanitarian aid, intelligence gathering and investigations the POB is more effective than any other element.

The POB has been very successful in establishing a rapport with local citizens. "The reputation gained from helping people leads to bigger and better things, such as capturing known insurgents in certain areas", Little said.

"On occasion we have been informed where improvised explosive devices

were located, who planted the IEDs and where that person was," Little said. "We were able to go to the house and make a detention. I don't think that many forces are able to do that as effectively as the POBs are. They bring a degree of trust to the neighborhood that the people there don't necessarily have with the Iraqi or U.S. Army. When they see their own people on the ground in a policing role as opposed to a military role, mentally they're more comfortable with that."

One of the most important aspects the POB uses to gain peoples' trust is open dialogue and communication. "We have taught them to use courtesy and respect when dealing with the people, but at the same time be able to respond aggressively when engaged. They've been successful so far. The people respond well," said Little.

The POB uses presence patrols to get in touch with local Iraqis. These patrols are important because people get to meet and interact with them and are essential to the bond the POB makes with the local people.

"We went on a meet-and-greet mission," Little said. "The POB was able to talk with people, go into stores and spend some of the money they have been making. This helps us in the community because

the people get to the point where they appreciate us coming there for the security we provide and also for the boost to the economy."

The relationship the POB develops with the Iraqis is one that needs to be consistent. Once the trust is built, it is important to continue that relationship as often as possible to make the counter-insurgency missions more successful.

"Once you develop that rapport, you continue to nurture it and foster it," Little said. "Next time you ride in there they might tell you where a cache or an IED builder is. The wealth of information these guys get is phenomenal."

The main aspect of having the Coalition work with the POB is to prepare it to one day be responsible for its own security.

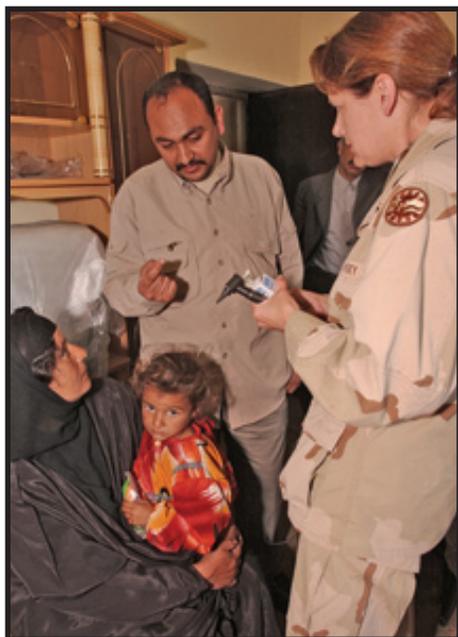
Although the U.S. is providing oversight and guidance, the police and other forces are taking back Iraq for the betterment of the country and its people. Once the Iraqi forces are totally proficient in their duties, the liaisons feel confident their job in Iraq will be finished.

"We need to focus on turning more and more missions like this over," Little said. "It's definitely going to be the key to the eventual handover to the Iraqi Security Forces. The quicker we do that, the quicker we can all go home."



Sgt. Eric David, a POB liaison NCO attached to 3/69 Armor, attempts to overcome the language barrier with POB officers in Samarra

Task Force Liberty's 116 BCT Soldiers provide medical assistance to Iraqi village



Capt. Heidi Monroe, physician's assistant, 145th Support Battalion, Task Force Liberty, describes the medicinal dosage for a young child to a translator. The translator in turn tells the child's mother how to administer the medicine.

By Army Sgt. Matthew Acosta
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MCHENRY, Iraq - Army medics in a combat zone are not only a vital necessity for Soldiers, but in many ways can benefit the surrounding communities and the local civilians.

Medical personnel from Company C, 145th Support Battalion, assisted with the medical treatment of local villagers during a visit to the village of Saadina, Iraq, in mid March.

Medical supplies, six medics and three physician's assistants were escorted to the village medical clinic where the Soldiers set up a make-shift pharmacy and utilized the examination rooms for the medical treatment of the villagers.

Many people came from surrounding villages and lined up outside the clinic walls waiting to enter the facility for treatment by the "magical healers."

"The whole point of the (medical assistance visit) was to get quality medical care to those who otherwise won't be able to get the attention they need," said Capt. Heidi Monroe, physician's assistant. "This is a 'hearts and minds' mission; it's all about care."

Monroe said soon after they started seeing and treating patients, the word that the Army medics are in town manages to spread quickly and Iraqi families start arriving and waiting in line for their turn.

"The Iraqi people have so much faith in the American medicine, they think we can cure everything," said Monroe. "The truth is that most of the sicknesses we see can be treated with a little preventive medicine."

Due to the poor living conditions, many of the villagers shared the same sicknesses, requiring similar treatment, she said.

"The poor air quality accounted for most of the asthma; the dirty water used for drinking, cooking and bathing is probably what attributed to the amount of urinary tract infections, diarrhea and skin conditions as well as many other sicknesses," Monroe said.

After the patients were examined by physician's assistants, they were given written prescriptions to take outside to the pharmacist's counter where they were given medicines for their illnesses.

Although the medicines were being distributed to the Iraqi people by Coalition Soldiers, the medicines were

donated by American health institutions and were not purchased by the U.S. government, she said.

"(The medicines were donated) to treat those who cannot afford or access proper (health) treatment," she added.

The medical visit was projected to last five hours but due to the turn-out of patients, the visit was extended.

"We were supposed to wrap things up at 2 p.m., but because of the amount of people who showed up, we extended the patient treatment for an additional hour," said Sgt. 1st Class Albert Williams, civil affairs projects liaison, 116th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Liberty.

Williams said more than 150 patients were treated during the visit.

Spc. Kara Wortley, medic, said they were able to treat many medical conditions such as colds or skin rashes but for those who need continuing health care for chronic conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes, they would have to seek care from local Iraqi medical clinics.

"Although we cannot treat or cure everyone," Monroe said, "providing medical care for the Iraqi people is showing them we care and are here to help in any way we can."

Wortley said she was proud to help the Iraqi people.

"Helping out the communities in this way, aside from your job here, makes you feel like you are serving more of a purpose other than just cleaning your rifle every day," she said. "It makes you feel really good inside."

Monroe said the unit plans to continue to conduct future medical assistance visits with local villages and even plans to incorporate preventive medicine measures to help educate the villagers.

Plans include conducting tests and possibly treatment of the water supplies of villages as well as conducting sanitation awareness clinics said Monroe.

Task Force Liberty Soldier creates home away from home

Story and photo by Sgt. Jennifer J. Eidson
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BRASSFIELD MORA, Iraq - While some deployed to Iraq live in palaces, previously owned by former dictator Saddam Hussein, others are making tents home for the next year.

Spc. Christopher E. Azevedo, a long range surveillance Soldier with the 173rd Infantry Detachment (Airborne), doesn't see living in a tent as a set back, for him the poncho liner and flag walls, which separate him from the other Soldiers in his unit, were just the foundation of what is now his home away from home.

The room contains Azevedo's cot, a desk and chair, as well as storage for books, clothes, food and entertainment items, but Azevedo didn't go to the local store to buy these luxuries. He took his carpentry skills and transformed his eight by nine and a half foot area into his own personal condominium.

With supplies like cardboard boxes, mosquito net poles, left over cot pieces, tape, rope and small pieces of plywood in hand, Azevedo took eight hours to build a getaway in the middle of a combat zone.

He said no matter how long they stay in the tents, for now it is comforting to have a place

where he can put all of his stuff and hang his family photos.

"I'm use to having my own space," Azevedo said. "It helps to have my area to come back to. It is just nice to have a place to go back and reflect on things."

Azevedo, who is 34 years old and a native of New Bedford, Mass., started his military career in the Navy and said he learned how to maximize his space while onboard a ship.

"Two junior Navy officers would share this amount of space," said Azevedo about the size of his room.

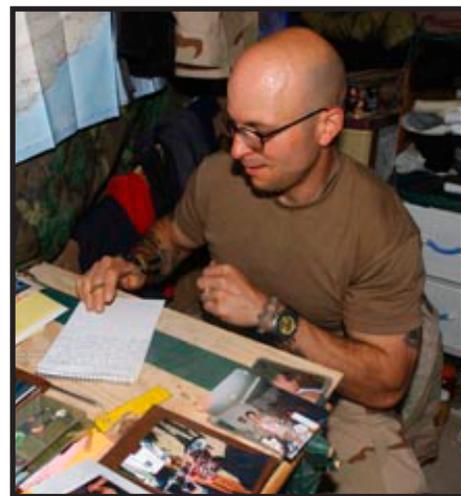
Azevedo's room maybe small in the eyes of some, but it keeps his moral high and is inspiring other Soldiers like Spc. John Leonard to think about making some modifications to his living space.

"It is pretty ingenious," Leonard said. "He has so much stuff. He calls it his tactical operations center," Leonard said. "It is neat and organized. He has an inventive mind."

Leonard said that Azevedo has not only improved his living space but strives to improve everything.

"He is always trying to improve anything he does," Leonard said. "He likes to make things a little bit more comfortable."

While in Iraq, Azevedo's unit's mission is to



Spc. Christopher E. Azevedo writes a letter home from his room constructed out of cardboard boxes, mosquito net poles, small pieces of plywood and other supplies.

gather intelligence through operations in which the unit's Soldiers blend into their target area and watch for any terrorist activity by anti-Iraqi forces. The Soldiers then report any information they gather and if they need to they take the necessary actions to stop the insurgents.