

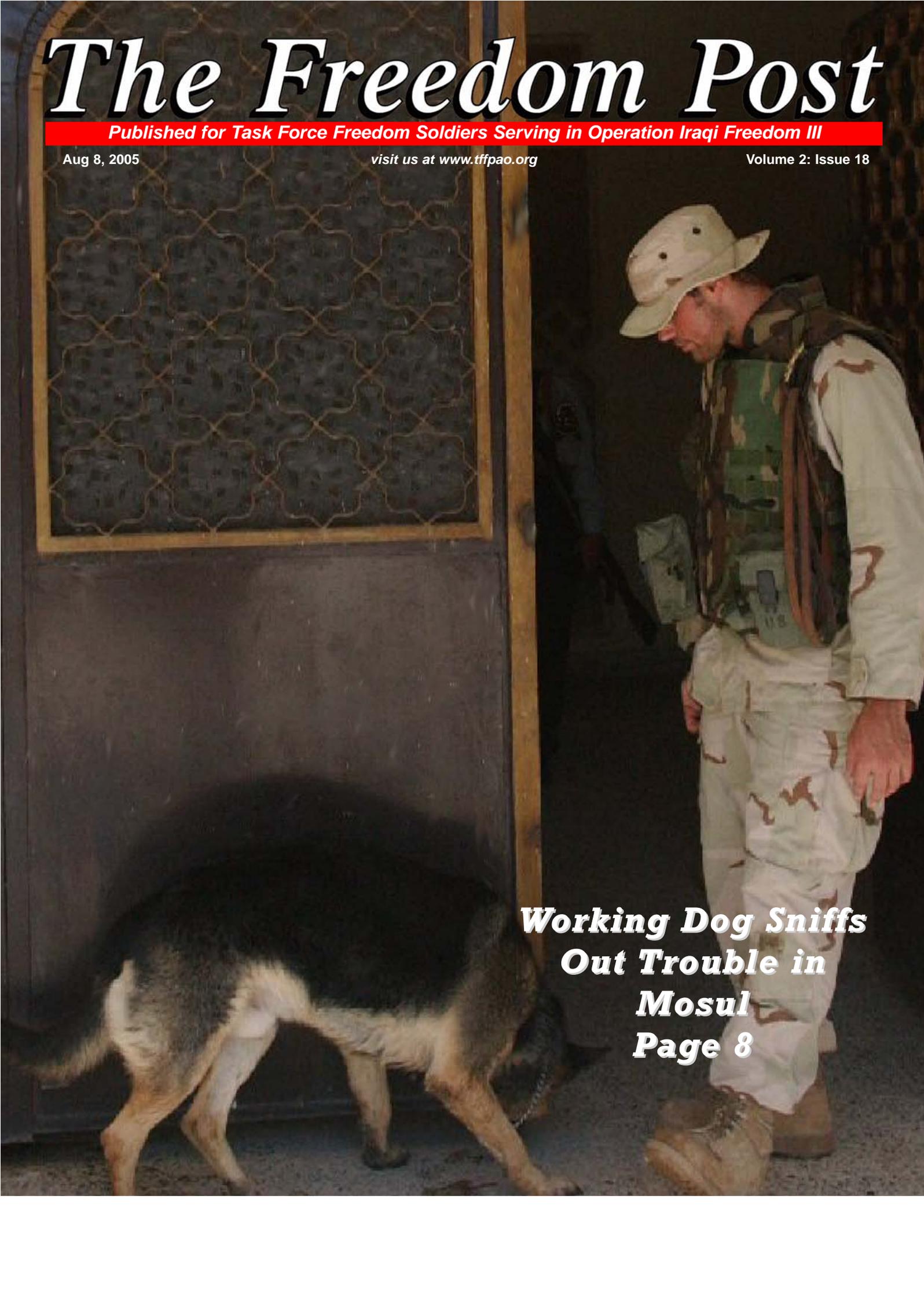
The Freedom Post

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Soldiers Earn Citizenship Serving in Iraq

Story and Photos by Sgt. Daniel W. Lucas

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - In the heart of one of Saddam Hussein's palaces, patriotic music from the 3rd Infantry Division band resounded off the marble walls as 40 Soldiers from Task Force Freedom made up for almost a third of all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who gained their American citizenship while serving in Iraq. This was the second Nationalization Ceremony held overseas.

"These men and women are so dedicated, that before they became citizens, they fought for America, risked all and spent time away from home to make sure it was safe," said Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, Multi-National Corps-Iraq commander. "Now they will become citizens in a palace far from home. I welcome them as American citizens."

For some, it has taken years of waiting, paperwork, more paperwork, hard work, and determination to gain their citizenship. For Pvt. 1st Class Pablo Perez, a Soldier from the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, it has been five years of trying to gain citizenship. "I think [the ceremony] is outstanding," said the 23-year-old Soldier from Managua, Nicaragua. "I think every Soldier here feels like they're being taken care of by the military. It's a good thing for us."

For all of the Soldiers who managed over the



All of the new American citizens put their hands over their hearts to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

obstacles, there was one more before the final ceremony; the interview. "They asked me a lot of general questions," said Sgt. Diego Ramos, a Soldier from 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. "They asked us how government works and about the history of the U.S."

With the successful conclusion of the interview, it was one final wait before they raised their right hands and became the newest citizens of the U.S.

Over half of the 143 Soldiers, from over 40 different countries, that became citizens that day joined the armed services after the tragic incident of 9/11.

"They new they might be expected to deploy or put in harms way," said Vines. "They are great examples of Americans."

After the remarks from Vines and presiding U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officer Karen Landsness, and a recorded message from President George W. Bush Jr., America's newest citizens were given certificates of citizenship from Vines and Landsness and an American flag from Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey, Multi-National Corps-Iraq's command sergeant major.

"Including Landsness, three USCIS officers had been on hand since [July 21] to interview the new citizens-to-be," said Linda Dougherty, a member USCIS team who also participated in a similar ceremony in Bagram, Afghanistan, in October. "I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the people willing to serve the U.S. before it was their own country."

"And with a single oath, America wasn't just your home, it was your country," said Bush.



TFF Soldiers stood tall as they were sworn in.

Security Council Meets at Q-West Base Complex

Story and Photos by 1st Lt. Dana Scott, 2-8 FA

Q-WEST BASE COMPLEX, Iraq – “I would first like to have a moment of silence for the men recently killed in action,” said Brig. Gen. Ali Atala Malowh, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army (IA) Battalion commander, at this month’s Regional Security Council meeting.

The meeting took place on July 26, gathering together over 400 key leaders of Ninewa Province and Mosul.

Ali and Lt. Col. Bradley A. Becker, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery commander, handed-out folded Iraqi flags to the families of eight Iraqi Police officers and IA soldiers who recently lost their lives in the fight against terrorism. One of the most touching moments was when a family member kissed the flag and touched it to his forehead.

A short video was played showing some of the progress Coalition and Iraqi Forces have made in the area. The video touched upon the March Against Terror, water projects, medical visits, meetings, and IA operations. It also mentioned the upcoming elections.

“The few things we’ll discuss this month include schools, gas prices and security, as well as the upcoming elections,” said Becker. “Following the meeting we will have tables set up to discuss detainees, proj-



Local leaders were given the opportunity to ask questions during the meeting.

ects, and weapons cards on an individual basis.”

There were several distinguished speakers to include Mr. Khalid from the Iraqi Elections Council, Mr. Zubari to discuss fuel distribution, and Mohammad Suleiman from the Provincial Council Sports and Education Committee.

“I want to thank the families of the gentlemen who lost their lives in defense of a free Iraq. Both our security forces and civilians live under one flag. We must not forget we are one nation,” said Maj. Gen. Khalif Ahmed Al Juburri, the Mosul chief of police. “The second topic I want to discuss is the elections. They will be on October 15 and we must encourage all to become involved.”

Each month’s Regional Security Council meeting welcomes more key leaders of the area than the last. It is an opportunity for the local sheiks and mukhtars to come together and discuss concerns of their villages. The meeting also serves as a chance for Coalition and Iraqi forces to learn about what needs attention in their area of operation.



Lt. Col. Becker hands out Iraqi flags to families whose sons sacrificed their lives for a free Iraq.

Iraqi Soldiers Get Second Chance to Walk

Story and Photos by Spc. Ashly E. Mitchell

FOB COURAGE, Iraq - Two Iraqi Army (IA) Soldiers will be offered a new chance to walk after being severely injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) during a convoy. One had both of his legs amputated mid-thigh level and the other had his lower left leg amputated just below the knee.

Both IA Soldiers were flown to Baghdad to an Iraqi Rehabilitation Prosthetics Center. "This center, which caters to Iraqi military and civilians, will provide them with prosthetic limbs, rehabilitation and other medical treatment as needed," said Maj. Michael Rossman, brigade surgeon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. "This center is great because it's Iraqis taking care of Iraqis."

According to Rossman, the travel was coordinated with Iraqi Security Forces to get them from Al Kindi to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Courage. They were then airlifted by Coalition Forces to Baghdad.

"I'm very proud of everyone I work with. We're a big team, but we're also a big family," said Capt. Jake Roberts, Officer in Charge of FOB Courage Aid Station. "We weren't the only people involved when it comes to saving these Soldiers."

After the IED strike, the two IA Soldiers were treated on the scene of the incident by Soldiers of the

1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Stryker Brigade Combat Team, and then they were transported to the aid station. The IA Soldiers were treated with tourniquets so they could be evacuated by helicopter to the 228th Combat Support Hospital on Logistics Support Area Diamondback.

"These two Soldiers have somewhat of a happy ending," said Roberts. "This is a wonderful program to help these Soldiers get prosthetics."



Left: An Iraqi Soldier who is a bi-lateral amputee is carried into the FOB Courage Aid Station to await transport to Baghdad.

Above: An Iraqi Soldier who had his lower left leg amputated after having his vehicle hit by an IED, will receive rehabilitation in Baghdad.

Soldiers Take Force Protection

Story and Photos by Sgt. David J. Nunn

Q-WEST BASE COMPLEX, Iraq - Members of the Battalion Support Battery (BSB) attached to the Task Force Automatic, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Command located at the Q-West Base Complex, have taken an unique view to one of their assigned duties as a counter-rocket patrol for the base.

In addition to their normal duties, they have broken new ground in their proactive approach to preventing attacks on the base.

What began as a presence patrol of the approximately 37 villages, has turned into a mission that places the members of the battery inside the homes of these Iraqis, doing whatever they can to improve their way of life. This friendship has tempered such cooperation that these villages frequently aid their U.S. allies in valuable intelligence against the insurgency.

“Once we started doing these patrols we noticed there were so many of these villages that we never entered, and they are our neighbors. So I started going into these towns, one by one,” said Staff Sgt. Dale Horn, Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in charge of the BSB. “I started developing a line of communication between the village leaders and I, it was about 2-3 months into it that I met Dr. Mohammad. He has been the hub between all my meetings and everything I do here in this area.”

Dr. Mohammad, a doctor of medicine for the Iraqi people of his area, has worked with the Coalition forces for the past three years to better the living conditions for his people, according to Horn.

“The people of this village and those of the Tigris River communities have



worked hard to solve the problems in this country with our Coalition Forces friends,” said Mohammad. “We reinforce the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police. We aid the government and because of our efforts, we are able to invite our friends into our villages as part of our family, safe and secure.”

The joint forces have provided their area with power lines, water, schools, and medical clinics. The support they have received has improved the life of each family, according to Mohammad.

“We are just trying to give these people some relief, it is a war-torn country, they have been doing this for about 35 years now,” said Horn. “The smile on their faces lets you know you are doing the right thing and they appreciate it.”

According to Horn, when he writes back home people are really surprised

to New Heights



Two Soldiers from 2-8 BSB walk with children in a village just outside of Q-West.

by the positive things that have been wrought from the partnership between the two forces. Apparently 90% of the Iraqi people in the area want nothing to do with the war; they just want to live in peace. Most are sheep herders and farmers, with a simple life. They just want education for their children so they can seek better lives.

This unique take on a traditional force protection mission, is spearheaded by a NCO who is making history in his own right. Handling the contracts for many of the services the Coalition Forces have provided for these people, Horn conducts his meetings with the local sheikes and muhktars as one of their own.

“Once we started doing the larger meetings with more of the local

leaders, the Iraqi people here said that since I handle all of the problems of the people, they must make me a sheik,” said Horn. “The people of this area are usually shocked at first when I wear this. It’s the first time an American has attempted to understand their culture, and put themselves within it to help them. They now feel that I am here to help them and that I am not here to be the beast that we are made out on their television. We do have hearts, and we are human, just as they are.”

Such actions help the Iraqi people to better understand that our two countries can work together, building trust as we reinforce our partnership. We are all neighbors here and we are in Iraq for a purpose, and that is to free them, and that is exactly what we are doing with missions like these.

“This is the first step. Security of their homes and families are always number one in their minds, just like us,” said Horn. “Our friendship has earned us their trust to the point of receiving intelligence from them; better intelligence than I often receive from my military sources. They enable us to provide better security for both our people.”



Staff Sgt. Dale “Muhktar” Horn dines on some of the local cuisine during the luncheon.



Searching for Explosives is a “Ruff” Job

Story and Photos by Sgt. Rick W. Way

Brit puts his keen sense of smell to work searching for explosives.

MOSUL, Iraq - A few hours prior to an important conference in Mosul, Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Jordan, Naval Military Police, Task Force Freedom, and his faithful friend, Brit, a military canine, are on the job. Jordan and Brit start at the entrance gates to the compound and work their way through the parking lot, carefully checking out vehicles, buildings, and grounds.

While in Iraq, Jordan and Brit have made a valuable contribution to Operation Iraqi Freedom III. On one occasion, the duo uncovered a weapons cache buried underground. Jordan believes the cache was a valuable one.

“In March, while on a job, he showed interest in an area and just kept sniffing around,” said Jordan. “We dug and found a cache buried under about three-feet of dirt. As far as I know, this is the only buried cache in Iraq that a dog has responded to.”

Brit is a four-year-old, 63 pound, pure-bred German Shepard that was purchased in Germany by the U.S. Navy at the cost of around \$50,000. After the purchase, Jordan said the Navy invested another \$30,000 in advanced training. Brit is dual-certified in Patrol Area Operations and Explosives Detection. Training can take up to nine months.

Jordan and Brit have been doing this kind of work



THE STALLION

R ★ E ★ P ★ O ★ R ★ T

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in Iraq for five months. The team works with Soldiers of Task Force Freedom, seeking out explosives and insurgents. When they're not sniffing out explosives and clearing buildings, they're training for the next job. "It takes about a hundred trials to train a dog a new trick," said Jordan.

Jordan and Brit have a total of 14 months living and working as a team in various locations. Over that period of time, he has grown attached to the working dog. "Oh yeah, you get attached, but you also have to know that they're just a tool, you have to try not to get too attached to them. A dog handler and his dog usually spend about two years together or until you go to your next duty station, where you get a new dog," said Jordan.

On another mission Jordan credits Brit for possibly saving his life and the lives of the Soldiers with him.

"It was really dark and we couldn't see anything, Brit showed interest on something in the darkness,

then three terrorist started shooting at us," said Jordan. "Had we not been alerted by Brit we couldn't have taken cover as quickly as we did."

While doing building searches, Brit has "flushed out" seven terrorist who provided information leading to the location of multiple weapons cache sites around the area, according to Jordan.

Jordan has about two years left in the Navy, and may not spend the next two years with Brit as he said he wishes to attend schools to become an instructor for dog handling and dog training. Brit will continue to work for the military for up to 12 years service.

"When Brit retires from military service, one of his handlers may to adopt him to keep as a permanent companion," said Jordan.



Brit receives his reward for a job well done.



After finding decoy explosive during their training, Brit eagerly awaits his treat.

**Collect evidence;
not souvenirs.**



0086

IEDs KILL

Lancer Exchange Makes Soldiers Lives Easier

Story by Staff Sgt. Ray P. Calef, Photo by Sgt. Rick W. Way



L to R: Sgt. 1st Class White and Sgt. 1st Class Walton help out a customer during an average day of business.

FOB COURAGE, Iraq - When a new shipment for the Lancer Exchange arrives, Soldiers start lining up to see what new merchandise has come in. As the line builds, new stock is priced and put out on the shelves, but it won't stay there long.

"It's unbelievable," said Sgt. 1st Class Terry White, Assistant Manager of the Lancer Exchange, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Regiment. "The Soldiers will definitely get their items."

"Our busiest days are when we receive new inventory," said Sgt. 1st Class Lilly Walton, Lancer Exchange Manager, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. "We average about \$2,000 in sales a day. Our restock days are especially high, our highest was over \$17,000."

According to Walton, the Soldiers are very appreciative of the service they provide. That service was not afforded to FOB Courage residents until a year ago, when the exchange first opened.

"When the shop first opened, there were plenty of

long days and nights," said White. "We did a lot of coming in early, making sure everything was stocked-up, staying late, and night convoys."

Those night convoys took them to Logistics Support Area Diamondback, their nearest supply outlet. Then it was back to Courage to price items and restock. Currently, they will still make runs two to three times a week for new inventory. On resupply days, that means a busy schedule.

"They'll come in for a bag of chips or a bar of soap," said White. "It has really boosted morale for a lot of Soldiers and civilians. They like the convenience."

That convenience is about to go away with the imminent departure of the 1-25. White hopes that doesn't happen. "We're hoping someone steps up and takes over for us."

Unless someone "picks-up the ball" the Soldiers will have to depend on care packages, travel to other FOBs or try to purchase some of the items at the local national shops on the FOB.

Largest Weapons Cache In Mosul Found

Story by Maj. Jim Street, Photos courtesy of TFF

MOSUL, Iraq - Members of the Iraqi Police (IP) and Soldiers from A Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Division conducted a raid in Mosul's industrial district, Al Sina'a, July 18. During the raid, the IP discovered one of the largest weapons caches ever found in the Mosul area. The successful raid also yielded four insurgents who have been attacking both Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces.

"The [IPs] did all the work in finding this cache," said 1st Lt. Raub Nash, platoon leader, A Company, 3-21. "The [IPs] found a truck loaded with a mortar system, explosives and small arms. When the [IPs] went into the house, they arrested four insurgents."

One of the men confessed to the locations of several weapons caches within Mosul and gave the IPs the necessary information to recover the munitions. According to Nash, the IPs called right away because they wanted the additional security. The IPs and Strykers went to the largest of the sites.

Inside of a couch at the site, the combined force found an assortment of automatic weapons, munitions, rockets, mortars, and several Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The IPs moved around back to the courtyard and discovered a two-foot square "spider hole" leading to a secret bunker containing most of the weapons cache.

One of the most unusual discoveries at the site was 26 70 mm Soviet surface-to-air missiles in pristine condition. "Usually items like these missiles are not in their launching tubes and should be very rusty considering where they were," said Nash. "Also there was a pile of gravel with several IEDs and shape charges buried inside."

The IPs also discovered an IED production facility in the bunker. "The site contained cement molds that simulate the curbs on the sides of the roads," said Capt. Mohammad Talal Sheet, interrogation chief, 1st Battalion Iraqi Police Force. "They would even paint them white and yellow to more closely resemble the curbs."

The significance of the find shows the growing ability of the IPs to successfully perform raids and

track down insurgents and the weapons they are hiding. Using the information gathered from the insurgent, the combined force discovered: 26 70 mm Soviet surface-to-air missiles, two 120 mm mortar systems, 400 mortar rounds, 23 60 mm mortar systems, 325 60 mm mortar rounds, six 155 mm artillery rounds encased in concrete, 150 155 mm artillery rounds, 100 90 mm rounds, 150 57 mm rockets, one 122 mm long-range nine-foot "Katyusha" rocket (with a range of 10 miles), 26 rocket-propelled grenade launchers with 450 rounds, 16 anti-personnel/anti-tank mines improvised mines converted to "Birthday Cake" mines and wireless Walkie Talkies used to remotely detonate them, 33 assorted rifles and machine guns with 10,000 rounds of ammunition, 250 hand grenades, 1,500 blasting caps, three vehicles, numerous license plates, rolls of detonation cord, time fuses, small steel fragments used as shrapnel, IED production materials, and various mortars and rounds of different sizes.

Soldiers from the 62nd Explosive Ordnance Company (EOD) used a five-ton truck to remove the stable munitions away from the site to be destroyed. "We blew the buildings and the bunker at the first site with many of the mortars inside," said Sgt. 1st Class Donald Perry, member of the 62nd EOD Company. "Many of the bombs were very unstable to move and we did not want to allow that place to be used again as a refuge for the insurgents."

The insurgent led the force to two additional caches the following day which were also destroyed.





Front and back cover photos by Sgt. David J. Nunn