

EYE ON IRAQ

December 23, 2005

The Iraqi people, with help from coalition nations, continue to succeed in reconstruction, economic development and fighting terrorism



8th Iraqi Army Division certified

Coalition Forces certify the 8th Iraqi Army Division staff Dec. 20. The certification culminates months of staff training and enables the 8th IA staff to begin planning and conducting combat operations with minimal Coalition support. Six battalions and two brigades of the 8th IA were certified earlier this year.

The 8th IA will continue to develop its capability to command and control Iraq forces as well as coordinate with local and central administration concerning operations in Central Iraq.

In the coming months, Coalition forces will transfer battle space in Central Iraq to the 8th IA.

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Army donates \$4 million in equipment for Iraqi essential services



Task Force Baghdad Soldiers assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team were on hand in Baghdad today at the Karrada District Council to donate \$4 million worth of construction equipment Dec. 13.

The equipment includes 33 trucks, excavators, bucket loaders and dump trucks that will greatly increase Baghdad's capability to repair its essential services.

"It is far more expensive for the Iraqis to rent or use contractors," said Lt. Col. Vince Quarles, 4th Brigade Troops Battalion commander. "With this equipment they can save time and money, and they don't need us to help."



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Major IED manufacturing

cache discovered

A large cache of IED components was discovered by Soldiers from Task Force Band of Brothers, Dec. 15 near Hawijah.

A pair of scout helicopters from the 101st Airborne Division spotted several individuals behaving suspiciously and the pilots radioed the location to a nearby patrol from the Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team.

The pilots' instincts were confirmed when the patrol found a cache buried nearby in several 55 gallon drums.

The cache consisted of 414 two way radios, 48 circuit boards and more than 100 timing devices, all used as components in IED manufacturing. The cache also included small amounts of AK-47 ammunition, detonation cord, batteries and several bomb making manuals.

This is the second time in less than a month that 1st BCT has uncovered a major cache in its area. Soldiers discovered more than 4,200 mortar rounds in a single cache Nov. 27 near Kirkuk.



Gifts come early in Mosul

Soldiers from Task Force Freedom distributed more than 40 large boxes of gifts to Iraqi children at St. George's Church in the Bartella neighborhood Dec. 14. About 300 kids were seen smiling with hands full of new clothes, toys, soccer balls, basketballs, and numerous other treasures.



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