

The Daily Roar

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ISV's back in the game in Saydiyah

by **Spc. Nathaniel Smith**
4th IBCT PAO

Iraqi Security Forces began manning checkpoints in Saydiyah, a neighborhood in southwest Baghdad in the province of Rashid, in an effort to bring security and stability to a troubled area of Baghdad Dec. 12.

"The residents of Saydiyah have said security was best when the ISV checkpoints were manned. Evidence of this was the robust market activity during that period. We hope to return to that type of activity soon, but it's going to take some time for this effort to bear some fruit," said Lt. Col. Johnnie Johnson, commander of 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment, 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. "As of today, Iraqi Security Forces, Coalition Forces, and local leaders in Saydiyah have all joined together to ensure that the reinstatement of the ISV is fair and equitable and that the ISV who man the checkpoints are actually residents of Saydiyah. Everyone involved has expressed sincere hope that the plan improves security to previous levels in order to allow other essential services and government functions to take hold in Saydiyah."

Johnson, a native of Tampa, Fla., said the ISV's are an essential part of the solution in the region in the near term.

"Eventually, we want these ISV's to be included in the permanent security apparatus of Saydiyah so we see this as a very good step," Johnson said. "This is definitely the way ahead and a positive step for the future of Saydiyah."

The ISVs serve two purposes in the area. They provide extra security in a hotly contested area of the Iraqi capital. The second is to provide employment where there would be none.

"By having these individuals earning a paycheck, there's less chance of them joining ranks with extremist actors with aims to destabilize Iraq," Johnson said. "That's one of the important factors of having the ISV's: Not only for the

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Lt. Col. Johnnie Johnson
commander of 4-64 3rd
Infantry Division



by Spc. Nathaniel Smith, 4th IBCT PAO

An Iraqi Security Volunteer vehicle patrols the streets of southern Baghdad's Saydiyah neighborhood, Dec. 12. Vehicles such as this one are going to become a more common sight since the ISV's have been reinstated at checkpoints in Saydiyah.

security piece, but to provide jobs to working age males who might otherwise not have jobs to go to."

The volunteers, who are paid by Coalition Forces, are comparable to a neighborhood watch in the United States except they are allowed to bear arms. Additionally, they only protect an area they are from, which not only means they know the area they're guarding, but they also have more reason to succeed in the performance of their duties.

"When you have people from a town or city that are responsible for protecting the people that live there, they have a vested interest in providing the best security possible," Johnson said. "In Saydiyah, it is very important that we are able to put these ISV's on checkpoints to stem the recent increase in violence and the criminal activity there."

To ensure the volunteers were capable and trustworthy to guard the neighborhood, each individual went through a vetting process where they were interviewed by leaders

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Signs of progress throughout Baghdad

ISF from pg. 1

of the Iraqi Security Forces, and local leaders and required to show proof that they were from Saydiyah.

Once the 200 guards, half Sunni and half Shia, met the screening criteria, they underwent a short training period with the Iraqi Army and will eventually be inspected by a Senior Iraqi Military Leader before assuming their duties at checkpoints.

Task Force 4-64 Armor has been operating in West Rashid for only a month, Johnson said they are looking to build on the successes of the Vanguard Battalion, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, which was responsible for the area before the arrival of the "Tusker Battalion."

"The Vanguard Battalion made a lot of progress prior to us getting here. As a result of their efforts and the continued reconciliation process, we do see hope in the future for Baghdad

and for Iraq, but there's still a lot of work to be done. The ISV's in Saydiyah are a part of that," Johnson said. "There are other areas of Baghdad that have similar problems and have also employed ISV to increase their levels of security. We are moving forward with this plan in Saydiyah and we believe it will be successful.

"I think we'll see over time peace and stability taking root. There are already clear signs of progress throughout Baghdad and other areas of Iraq. We hope to see the same progress in Saydiyah soon."



by Spc. Nathaniel Smith, 4th IBCT PAO

An Iraqi Security Volunteer is interviewed by Iraqi Security Force commanders and leaders from Saydiyah at Joint Security Station Vanguard in southern Baghdad, Dec. 11. The interviewing was part of the process to ensure the volunteers manning checkpoints in the neighborhood were from the area and were fit for duty.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

SATURDAY
Clear
HI: 53F/12C
LO: 35F/2C



SUNDAY
Clear
HI: 55F/13C
LO: 37F/3C



MONDAY
Clear
HI: 57F/14C
LO: 37F/3C



The Daily Roar

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Soldiers light up holiday season

By **Spc. Nathaniel Smith**
4th IBCT PAO

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in southern Baghdad.

That's because Soldiers of Company A, 450th Civil Affairs Battalion restored electricity to the Assyrian Church in the capital's Hadar neighborhood, Dec. 9.

The company supports the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, which is currently deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon from Fort Riley, Kan.

Sgt. Martin Brown, a prime power production specialist with Co. A, 450th CA, which is based in Riverdale, Md., said the mission was one of the more satisfying he has participated in.

"It was a good mission; I think everybody felt good about it," the Lorton, Va., native said. "It felt nice just to go in and get something done for the people."

Brown was given the task of inspecting five generators within 200 meters of the church and finding which would be most easily repaired to restore power in time for Christmas church services.

Sgt. 1st Class Pedro Medina, the battalion mort sergeant for the 450th CA attached to Co. A from Rochester, N.Y., was the mechanic who primarily worked on the generator.

"We did a risk assessment and made sure it wasn't booby-trapped. After that, we started opening and checking fluid," he said. "We noticed the fuel tank was watered down. We didn't drain it so we just poured more diesel in and fired it up; as it went through the oil filter, it operated very well."

While the operation may seem simple, Staff Sgt. Christopher Ifill, a civil affairs team sergeant from Co. A, 450th CA that supports 2-2 SCR, said there were challenges that were not so apparent initially.

"First of all, time second of all, materials cost a lot. We needed different types of equipment that you can't typically find in a military inventory. That



By Spc. Nathaniel Smith 4th IBCT PAO

Sgt. Martin Brown, a prime production power specialist with Company A, 450th Civil Affairs Battalion from Lorton, Md., hooks up wiring to provide electricity to the Assyrian Church in the Hadar region of southern Baghdad's Rashid District, Dec. 9. Brown was assisted by Soldiers of Company E, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment who operates in the area.

was definitely a major challenge right there," the Philadelphia native said. "We came up with a list and we just went around the whole base trying to get whatever we could; we went to every motor pool and all the civilian companies."

Medina said that the troops' ability to adapt to the circumstances and accomplish their mission was impressive.

"They were given a short period of time to prepare, then they gathered me and some mechanics to help out with the engine in the generator," Medina added. "The time they gave all of us to prepare was quite amazing. That's exciting. We covered a lot of material at no cost to the government."

The make-do attitude of the Soldiers created a solution that will provide the Assyrian Church with about three months of power.

Brown said with more time and proper materials, they could produce

a more permanent fix, but the priority was for them to have the church ready for Christmas.

"It was more of the field expedient, 'Hey, we've got to get this done yesterday,'" Brown said.

"We didn't really have the proper material so we gathered whatever we could gather and we made it happen," Medina added. "It's a miracle."

This Week in History

1945 GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON DIED AT AGE 60 IN GERMANY OF INJURIES SUFFERED IN A CAR ACCIDENT.

1991 ELEVEN OF THE 12 FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS PROCLAIMED THE BIRTH OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES.

1995 THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM PASSED FROM ISRAELI TO PALESTINIAN CONTROL.