

The Daily Roar

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A Christmas Story

By Staff Sgt. Mike Pryor

2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. PAO

BAGHDAD – It was a bitterly cold night, and the heater in Spc. Adam Van Winkle’s humvee was no match for the frozen air blowing in through the open turret. Van Winkle was sitting behind the wheel as the humvee idled in the darkness beneath a highway overpass, providing the security escort for a team of engineers. The night was no different than a hundred other nights just like it. Except for one thing . . .

“Hey, what’s today?” Van Winkle suddenly wondered.

“Today is Monday, Dec. 24 – also known as Christmas-freakin’-Eve!” shouted his gunner.

“Oh yeah,” Van Winkle said.

It’s easy to see how he could have forgotten. For Van Winkle’s platoon of mechanics-turned-infantrymen from Company B., 407th Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, the mission tempo is pretty much 24 hours a day, seven days a week - holidays included. Most of the 3rd Platoon members weren’t hoping for anything more than a good night’s rest for Christmas.

But thanks to a friend from the local community, they got much more than that.

Sheikh Ali Mijbil, a local businessman who has become a friend of the platoon since it began operating in his East Baghdad neighborhood almost a year ago, was determined to give his paratrooper friends an opportunity to

enjoy the holiday in style.

On Christmas Eve, the Sheikh hosted 3rd platoon at his house for a feast to celebrate the holiday.

“We invited the Soldiers because we know that Christmas is an important holiday for them,” Sheikh Ali said. “It makes me happy to give them a place to eat on a special night when they are away from their families.”

The plan was developed several days earlier, when the Sheikh approached platoon leader 1st Lt. William Lord, of Foxboro, Mass., about having a special dinner at his house on Christmas Eve. Lord happily ac-

cepted. At the agreed time, though, the platoon got stuck with a last-minute escort mission. They were a few hours late when they finally showed up at the Sheikh’s house.

He was waiting for them. Sheikh Ali greeted the paratroopers at his front gate and ushered them into the house. As they stepped inside, the platoon members were met with a blaze of light. The Sheikh’s living room was covered by a gold-colored carpet and gold-trimmed drapes and couches, all lit by a crystal chandelier hanging

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photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division PAO

Foxboro, Mass. native 1st Lt. William Lord (right), a platoon leader with B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, and his platoon members enjoy Christmas Eve feast at the home of Sheikh Ali Mijbil.



by Spc. Nathaniel Smith, 4th IBCT PAO

‘Warriors’ Replace ‘Warriors’

BAGHDAD - Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, resident of Fort Polk, La., and commander of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Montour, the senior noncommissioned officer of 2-4 Inf. who calls San Diego and Amarillo, Texas home, unfurl their battalion's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Dec. 24.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

Thursday
Sunny
 HI: 59F/15C
 LO: 37F/3C



Friday
Partly Cloudy
 HI: 59F/15C
 LO: 35F/2C



Saturday
Partly Cloudy
 HI: 59F/15C
 LO: 41F/5C




The Daily Roar

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Field Artillery troops train volunteers

By Sgt. James P. Hunter
2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. PAO

BAGHDAD— When one thinks of a police force, he may think of a two-man team, patrolling through a neighborhood in their white-Chevy Monte Carlo, with blue and red lights, and the word “Police” written on the side.

They move throughout talking with local citizens at the diner, coffee shop, or on the streets corners. No matter what community, country or religious sect, policemen are there to “protect and serve.”

Take away the type of vehicle, rewrite it in Arabic, from right to left, and an average policemen in Iraq is no different.

One of the biggest areas of focus in northwest Baghdad, which has been seen widespread, is the volunteers stepping up throughout the various muhallahs, giving way to freedom and democracy.

In Ameriyah, Kahdra, Jamia, and Adil, men are volunteering their ef-

forts. Now, in Hateen, there are Iraqi Police Auxiliary forces, focused on maintaining a stable, secure neighborhood.

In the Strike area of operations alone, units have been very successful with establishing volunteer forces, said Capt. Brian McCall, commander and native of Junction, City, Kan., with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regt. If they apply and adapt too what they have learned from other units in dealing with volunteers, they too will be successful.

Just two weeks ago, U.S. troops with both Battery A and B of the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, began volunteer recruitment drives in the Hateen and Yarmouk muhallahs, the Mansour District

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by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT, 101st abn PAO

Iraqi Police Auxiliary students train on patrolling in Hateen, Dec. 17. IPA forces will provide over watch and security in Hateen a muhallah in the Mansour District of Baghdad..

Sheikh hosts Soldiers at his house for feast to celebrate the holiday

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from the ceiling.

“This is the nicest house I’ve been to in Iraq,” one of the paratroopers said.

“In Iraq? I don’t know anybody who lives this nice in the states,” said Sgt. Daniel Lizanne, a team leader from Washington, D.C.

As the paratroopers got comfortable, Ali sat talking with Lord on the couch while children brought in plates of chicken and lamb. When the tables were completely covered with plates of food, Ali told them to eat, and everybody dug in.

Lord looked happily over at his men as they wolfed down kabob sandwiches.

“This made a huge difference. It’s a big morale boost for the guys,” Lord said.

Other than Lord, none of the platoon members had been aware that Ali was going to be throwing them a party. They were impressed by the gesture.

“It’s very generous of him to offer up his house. I definitely appreciate it and I know the other guys do too,” said Sgt. Daniel Lizanne.

Lizanne said the dinner proved that people don’t have to

let their differences separate them.

“It shows that it doesn’t matter if you are a Christian or a Muslim – you can still get together and have some food and have fun together,” said Lizanne.

The fact that an Iraqi would be willing to have a Christmas party for American Soldiers in his own house is a testament to how far U.S. forces have come in earning the trust of the local people, said Spc. Richard Cordova, of Bakersfield, Calif.

“Now that we’ve been here (almost a year), we’ve got to know people well enough that they will invite us into their houses with no problem,” Cordova said.

As they stood around happily munching on kabobs and cracking jokes on each other, the platoon members had to admit that it was a much better Christmas Eve than they had expected.

Cordova, who was spending his first Christmas apart from his family, said the dinner at the Sheikh’s house made him forget about what he was missing and appreciate what he has.

“Of course you still miss your family back home, but all these guys you’re here with, they become your family in a way. So I’m just glad we are all together tonight,” he said.

Volunteers step up to secure neighborhood

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of Baghdad.

From 300 men, they were able to, through background checks and various means of investigation, narrow the field to 150 volunteers.

At the Operation Ace Academy in Hateen, the Iraqi Police Auxiliary began their training, Dec. 17. Twenty-five volunteers will train over a four-day period for the next four weeks, until all volunteers are trained. Also, in Yarmouk, Battery B troops are training auxiliary forces.

These men will patrol their homelands, almost acting as a neighborhood watch, until called up to begin training at the Baghdad Police Academy where they will officially become Iraqi policemen.

In the meantime, troops with Battery A, 2nd Bn., 32nd FA, are training these men on basic military and policing skills, said Sgt. Anthony Williams, instructor and native of Fresno, Calif., with 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 2nd Bn., 32nd FA. They are training on everything from weapons and countering-improvised explosive devices, to proper police ethics and values training.

For every two Soldiers there were seven Iraqis at the training grounds in Hateen.

Through interpreters they were able to convey their message of training and the importance of their role.

Their goal, during the course, is to ensure these men are fully capable of patrolling and maintaining ethics policemen live by, said Williams.

"We are trying to instill certain core values..." said 1st Lt. Douglas McDonough, platoon leader and native of Bonham, Texas, with 2nd Platoon, Battery A. They are tailoring

their training to the Iraqi society, but ensuring they instill the basic skills and situational awareness each policeman must be keen on.

Even Iraqi army commanders in the area came to talk with these men on their importance; for their job is important to the future of Hateen and the future of Iraq.

Everyone knows military forces are used for aggressive actions against a known enemy force. Pushing police forces out into the muhallahs allows Iraqi military troops the opportunity to focus on training and military operations.

It also gives the Hateen IPA a sense of ownership for their homeland, said McCall. These men want to help their neighborhood, and in doing so, it puts more jobs into the community and gives them a sense of pride for security in their neighborhood.

"(Being a volunteer) is very important to these people," said Williams. "These guys want to save their neighborhoods."

With their will to save their neighborhoods, they should have an immediate impact in the area.

"I think initially the people will see friendly faces in their neighborhood; guys they have known all their lives there working to protect them," McCall said. "... if a guy they know and trust is patrolling the streets in front of their house (should) make them feel a lot better."

In the area, with a population of 30,000 Iraqis, McCall is eager to see how the good initiative of the Iraqi volunteers will play out.

"I think it can be a turning point for this community," he said.



by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Division PAO

Sgt. Anthony Williams, instructor and native of Fresno, Calif., and Sgt. Danil Ramirez, native of Miami, Fla., both with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, teaches Iraqi Police Auxiliary students patrolling techniques.