

The Daily Roar

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Sheiks, MND-B Soldiers take first steps

by Pfc. April Campbell

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

FAHAMA, Iraq — Before, taking steps to solve a problem, it is beneficial to find out exactly what the problem is.

It is no different in Iraq where people in some areas face many similar day-to-day struggles. For Coalition Soldiers to better work with the Iraqis, listening and communicating with each other is a common first step.

Sheiks and other leaders from villages in Fahama, a region north of Baghdad, voiced their concerns during a meeting with Soldiers from both, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, 360th Civil Affairs Brigade, at Baghdad Island, a former amusement park in the region, Jan. 12.

The meeting was the first step in a show of good faith by Coalition Forces who had not been in this area in approximately two years, said Maj. Wesley Stewart, team leader for Civil Affairs Team 2, Company B, 422nd CA Bn., 360th CA Bde.

The Iraqis in attendance seemed interested in working with Coalition Forces to better their situation. They were not hesitant to contribute their thoughts to the topics at hand.

“They were receptive because they were here and they

want to see what we can bring to the table and what we can offer them,” said Stewart, a Virginia Beach, Va., native.

Capt. Enardo Collazo, Commander of Headquarters and

Headquarters Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., is charged with keeping Fahama secure. Collazo stated the meeting was a chance to let the area leaders know that the Soldiers want to help them overcome regional struggles.

“The purpose of the meeting was to submit my economic and security plans for the area and establish a committee between the sheiks and the local council in order to start the program,” said Collazo, a Salinas, Puerto Rico, native.

Collazo’s plan involves four phases. The first of which is to create working groups to help identify the basic needs of the local people. In the subsequent phases, the needs previously identified will be submitted to the civil affairs team who will assess the needs and design projects to be executed, he said.

During the meeting, leaders brought up several

issues the people in their villages are currently struggling with. Their concerns concentrated on essential services



by Pfc. April Campbell Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

Capt. Enardo Collazo speaks with a sheik and another leader during a break in a meeting between Soldiers and village leaders held in Fahama, a region north of Baghdad, Jan. 12.

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The Player of the Day Award is presented to Spc. Kevin Harrelson for diligent service as an administration clerk, driver, and photographer in the Ironhorse Visitor's Bureau. His daily routine encompasses the monitoring of numerous theater clearance requests and the production of a one source document which includes all the Distinguished Visitors within the MND-B area. His dedication to duty and attention to detail make him Jan. 18 4th Inf. Div. Player of the Day.



The Player of the Day Award is presented to Capt. Rob Beckwith for outstanding performance as a G2 Intel Officer. Beckwith's quick action and attention to detail resulted in two rockets being spotted on a rooftop Jan. 16. His intel reports have also aided in the discovery of several IEDs, possibly saving the lives of Soldiers and innocent civilians. He is the example of a staff officer who is engaged "on the field", and for that he is Jan. 18 4th Inf. Div. Player of the Day.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

Saturday
Clear
HI: 57F/14C
LO: 33F/1C



Sunday
Partly cloudy
HI: 57F/14C
LO: 37F/3C



Monday
Clear
HI: 59F/15C
LO: 35F/2C



The Daily Roar

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Meeting gives outlet to Fahama leaders

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such as electric power, fuel (mainly propane), clean water and water to irrigate agricultural areas.

“Some villages said they only have one or two hours (of electricity) per day,” Collazo said. “In Baghdad, some areas are getting eight hours (per day).”

Without electricity, these Iraqis rely largely on propane for cooking and heating. They must travel out of their area, however, to acquire their propane.

In addition to these essential services the leaders also spoke about their struggle with unemployment and the need for security.

Initializing a concerned local citizens program, a volunteer force made up of the people of Fahama, would help provide jobs and improve the region’s security, said Collazo.

While some of the sheiks tend to focus on the individual needs of the families in their villages, it is likely they will begin to branch out as those needs are met, Stewart said.

“They’ll see that Coalition Forces are here to help them,” he added, “(to) put them back on their feet and to empower them.”

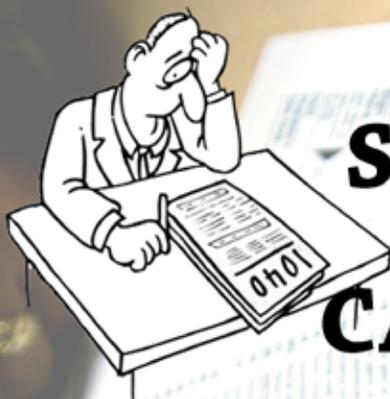
The meeting left him with a sense that he and his fellow Soldiers would be able to do a great deal to assist those of Fahama and give them a chance to improve their living situation, said Collazo.

“It’s a special feeling,” he added, “sitting with these people, hearing their concerns.”



by Pfc. April Campbell Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

Capt. Enardo Collazo and a local sheik take notes during a meeting between Soldiers and the leaders in Fahama, a region north of Baghdad Jan. 12. The two groups met to discuss the problems facing the Iraqi people in that area. Collazo is a Salinas, Puerto Rico, native.



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Silver Lions learn needs through communication

by Sgt. Zach Mott

3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div. PAO

ISTAQLAL, Iraq -- Heated exchanges between opposing sides of an argument are often how foreign governments are thought to operate by some Americans.

In this fertile region of Iraq, that process remains much more docile. Tribal leaders and other members of the Kada (think county) Council gathered at Sheik Mohan Sager al-Fayadh's compound to discuss topics ranging from irrigation to building schools Jan. 14.

Also in attendance at this meeting were commanders from the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and senior members of the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team -- a U.S. State Department-run organization designed to help establish a functioning provincial government in this war-torn country.

Lt. Col. Michael Pappal, commander of the 1st CAB, 68th AR, is on his third tour in Baghdad. He's held positions as an operations officer and executive officer prior to this tour where he's serving as a battalion commander.

During this cold January day, Pappal mostly listened as the Iraqi members of the meeting sorted through the agenda.

"A lot of times in the meeting an issue is brought up it's already been discussed offline," the Indiana, Penn., native said. "It's basically a decision made on consensus and the chair here really gets the final vote."

In other regions in Iraq, ePRTs have led to the provincial government earning numerous internal projects and an easier flow of money to help that region prosper. The Iraqi leaders at this meeting knew this and were eager to

discuss what can be done in this mainly agricultural area in the Tigris River valley.

"Those kinds of things they see as the potential for progress," Pappal said.

Pappal called this influence, possessed by both the ePRT and, more importantly Sheik Mohan, *wasita*. He said it loosely translates to someone with the ability to put others in contact with those that can provide services or assistance.

"People come to see him because he can get them to people because he knows them and can give them an introduction," Pappal said.

While many needs and wants were hashed over in the

nearly three hour meeting, unemployment was at the forefront of the commander's mind when the talk turned to what the Americans can do to help.

When planning projects, Pappal said he tries to consider what is best for the people of that region.

"We want max participation short term and long term," he said.

He added that for projects requiring maintenance, it's important to work that into the contract to be absorbed by the Iraqi government.

There is much to accomplish in the coming months for Pappal and the Silver Lions he commands. But today marked a first step toward the prosperity he hopes will help this region thrive. He's trained his troops to be ready for diplomacy as well as combat in this ever-evolving battlefield.

"They know that there's a lot of help we can provide and they also know that there's some people that need to be killed," he said. "I trained them to be able to be lethal and also to be able to (be diplomats here.)"



by Sgt. Zach Mott 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div. PAO

Lt. Col. Michael Pappal talks with Sheik Mohan Sager al-Fayadh inside the Sheik's home Jan. 13. Pappal, an Indiana, Penn., native, meets with the head of the Istaqlal council regularly to assess the needs of the region.