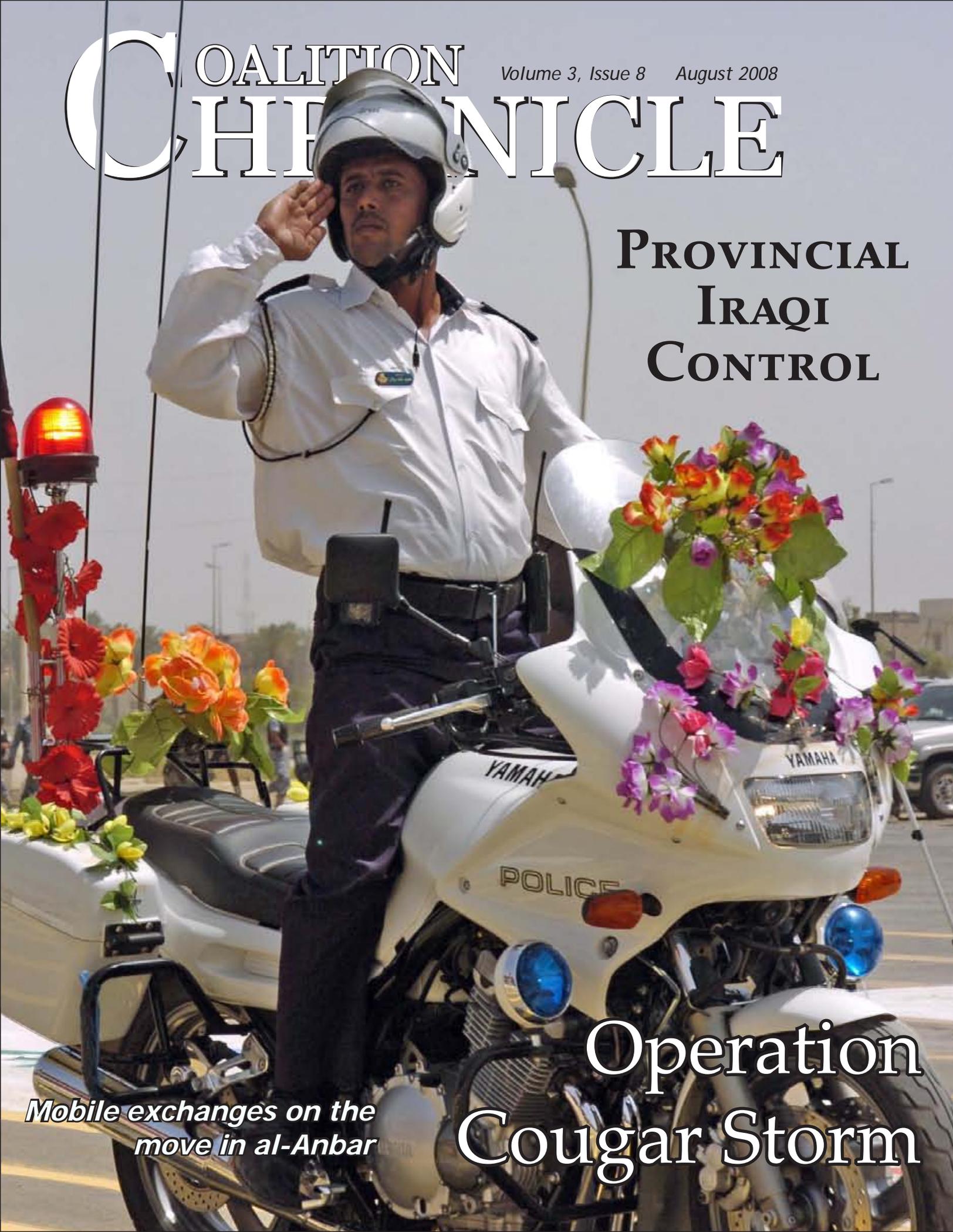


# COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 3, Issue 8 August 2008

## PROVINCIAL IRAQI CONTROL



*Mobile exchanges on the  
move in al-Anbar*

# Operation Cougar Storm



An Iraqi policeman salutes the reviewing stand during a parade to celebrate the transfer of security responsibility of Qadasiyah Province from coalition forces to the Government of Iraq in a ceremony July 16 in Diwaniya, Iraq. (Photo by Army Sgt. David Turner)



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A C-130 Hercules crash landing brings out the demolition team in order to get it back to base.



page 7

A recycling center at Joint Base Balad opens; helping both coalition forces and Iraqi business by turning 'trash to treasure.'



page 18

Soldiers across Iraq celebrate America's Independence day with style: explosions, cold water and even robots get in on the action.

# COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of  
Multi-National Corps – Iraq

August 2008  
Volume 3, Issue 8

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**An Iraq police officer** pulls security during a static display at the security responsibilities hand over for Qadisiyah Province at a ceremony held July 16 in Diwaniya, Iraq. Qadisiyah is the 10th of 18 Iraqi provinces to turn over governmental control to the Government of Iraq since 2006. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Jason R. Krawczyk.)



# Qadisiyah Province returns to Iraqi control



**Iraqi children celebrate** the transfer of security responsibility to Qadasiyah Province from coalition forces to the Government of Iraq in a parade during a ceremony in Di-waniya, Iraq, July 16. (Photo by Army Sgt. Jason Turner.)

Story by Army Staff Sgt.  
Jason R. Krawczyk

MNC-I PAO

**DIWANIYA, Iraq** – Little Iraqi girls waving flowers and Iraqi boys in uniforms walked through the streets of Diwaniya chanting. They were followed by platoons of polished and professional Iraqi police officers and Iraqi army soldiers.

This parade marked the beginning of festivities celebrating the return of Qadisiyah Province to the Iraqi people July 16, as coalition forces handed the security responsibilities for the province, located in southern Iraq, over to the Government of Iraq.

“This is a triumphant day for Iraq, as yet another province assumes the lead for its own security and governance,” said Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general, Multi-National Corps – Iraq. “And yet another demonstration by the democratic Government of Iraq that it is making progress toward providing for all its people.”

Qadisiyah is the 10th of Iraq’s 18 provinces to be turned back over to Iraqi control since 2006. The



**Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III**, commanding general, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, and the governor of Qadisiyah Province, Governor Hamed al-Khoudari, sign the official agreement that hands security responsibilities of Qadisiyah Province over to the Iraqis during a ceremony July 16 in Diwaniya, Iraq. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Jason R. Krawczyk.)

ceremony was delayed from late last month when severe sandstorms grounded travel in Baghdad.

The ceremony was well attended, bringing together Polish, American and Iraqi servicemembers and many local and national GoI leaders.

“There are a lot of servicemembers and people that are responsible for this,” said Col. David Matakas, Polish advisor, Multi-National Division – Center South. “I hope when they see this they will know they had a

**big part in creating a free and safe environment in Qadisiyah Province.”**

An excited crowd gathered around a small table where Qadisiyah governor Hamed Al Khoudari and Austin officially signed the paperwork returning the province to the GoI.

“Multi-National Corps – Iraq will continue to support Qadisiyah and the Government of Iraq in maintaining security and increasing prosperity,” Austin said.

## Qadisiyah fact sheet

- Iraqi security forces in the province number approximately 17,000.
  - Iraqi police make up around 11,770.
- The Iraqi army’s 8th Infantry Division is headquartered in the province’s capital, Diwaniya, and number more than 3,200 soldiers.
  - Diwaniya has an approximate population of 420,000, nearly half the province’s total population.



# Operation Cougar Storm

*Story, photos by Army Spc. Ryan Elliott*  
14th Public Affairs Detachment

**Sgt. Arthur Dupont** of Company E, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment helps secure a building June 23 during Operation Cougar Storm, a joint operation between coalition forces, the Iraqi army and the Sons of Iraq.

**BAQUBAH, Iraq** – Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, labored away alongside members of the Iraqi army and Sons of Iraq – sweeping suspected al-Qaida forces out of two separate villages south of Baqubah during Operation Cougar Storm, June 23.

The operation was designed to deny al-Qaida forces a place to stage improvised explosive device attacks along key routes that coalition forces and Iraqi civilians use, as well as establish an Iraqi army presence in the area, said 1st Lt. Fernando Pelayo, a platoon leader with 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

The 2nd Squadron Soldiers, along with Iraqi forces, were successful in their mission of securing Mullaid and Naquib, two small Iraqi towns just south of Baqubah.

“[We] cleared Mullaid and Naquib in order to protect the population and reestablish Iraqi security forces and the Government of Iraq,” said Capt. Daniel Eickstedt, fire support officer, 2nd Squadron, 2nd SCR.

The success of Operation Cougar Storm was an important step in expanding the GOIs legitimacy and authority in the area, Eickstedt said.

“The operation was a success,” he said. “In addition to clearing the villages of al-Qaida and expanding GOI authority to the south, [more than] 10 improvised explosive devices were found and safely detonated on Route Lime. This will give coalition forces and Iraqi security forces greater freedom of maneuver in the area.”

Another measure in which the operation was a success was how the Iraqi army and the Sons of Iraq took the lead in both clearing and securing the Iraqi villages.

“The Iraqi forces performed very well. They were very eager to get into it,” Pelayo said.



**A sniper team with Company E, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, scans a river bed adjacent to two Iraqi villages being cleared during Operation Cougar Storm, June 23. The goal of the mission was to sweep out Al-Qaida and establish an Iraqi army presence in the areas of the Mullaid and Naquib villages.**

“It was their operation entirely. We were in an overwatch position for the most part.”

“One IA soldier lost his life to a house-borne IED, but the Iraqi army soldiers were not deterred,” Eickstedt added. “Their country should be proud of their efforts.”

While the efforts of the IA were noted, those of the coalition forces were deemed a success as well, as they completed the mission at hand: providing support and leadership to the Iraqi security forces.

“As always, coalition forces performed above and beyond what was expected of them,” Pelayo said. “They were dedicated, motivated and kept their minds focused on the mission at hand.”

Coalition forces were able to conduct a truly combined operation using multiple assets and enablers to achieve success, Eickstedt said.

“Step one is complete. The next step will be to hold and encourage the population to return,” Eickstedt said.



**Spc. Joseph Hadfield** of Company E, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, pulls security during Operation Cougar Storm, south of Baqubah, June 23.

Story courtesy 447th Air Expeditionary Group PAO  
Photos by Air Force Tech Sgt. Jeffrey Allen



# *C-130 dismantled: unconventionally*

**Maintenance and explosive ordnance disposal personnel** from the 447th Air Expeditionary Group prepare to place explosive charges on the wings of a C-130 Hercules aircraft July 7 in Baghdad.

**BAGHDAD**—Airmen used explosives to dismantle a C-130 Hercules stuck in a barren field northeast of Baghdad International Airport, July 7.

The transport aircraft has been there since June 27, when its crew was forced to perform an emergency landing. The aircraft was deemed a security concern and it was decided that it would be easier to transport if it were dismantled.

Senior Master Sgt. Pervis King, 447th Air Expeditionary Group explosive ordnance disposal superintendent said his team was fired up to perform such a unique mission.

“My team was kind of excited about going out there and explosively cutting up the aircraft,” he said. “They were ready to make it happen.”

In fact, it was something in which he had never seen in his career.

“I personally haven’t had a chance to cut up an aircraft,” he said.

“I’ve been out on many aircraft crashes. Most times they just kind of... don’t land as nicely as this one did in the field.”

The team of maintainers, EOD,

coalition and Iraqi forces and civilians worked in high gear. After securing the perimeter, they set up the aircraft for final review and conducted the first controlled detonation.

King said a prime concern of his was to perform the mission safely. In addition to using the explosives correctly, there was the possibility of an attack by insurgents. A perimeter was established to ensure the plane

disposal mission was not interrupted.

After three more detonations, the charred metal of the C-130 was removed.

Lt. Col. Robert Brisson, the on-scene commander, said the mission was a success because of the contributions of many different people.

“The whole effort today was to make sure we did everything safely and effectively,” he said.



**An explosive ordnance disposal team** from the 447th Air Expeditionary Group detonates explosives attached to a C-130 Hercules aircraft in Baghdad, July 7.

# TRASH TO TREASURE

## *Recycling center opens at Joint Base Balad*

*Story, photo by Army Sgt. Robert G. Cooper III*  
**76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team**

**A** war can be messy, literally; from daily trash collections conducted by roving garbage trucks, to amassing scrap metals born from the aftermath of battle, waste management is a serious business for U.S. Forces in Iraq.

And that business is about to become worthwhile for Iraqi people and further consolidate security gains made by the Iraqi government and security forces. During a ribbon-cutting ceremony, July 10, U.S. forces, contractors and Iraqi business leaders commemorated the opening of a recycling center designed to turn the military's trash into Iraq's economic treasure.

Contracted through Iraqi-owned Almandhour United Company, the center is designed to spur green practices among Joint Base Balad's waste management operations by creating a hub for recyclables to be collected and shipped to recycling plants throughout Iraq. In the past, recyclables that were collected were either burned in incinerators or stockpiled throughout various holding areas on post. With the new recycling center, large amounts of aluminum, glass, plastics, cardboard and steel products are instead packed up and shipped to recycling centers near Baghdad and sold on the Iraqi market.

Neseb Saad Hasan Altememy, general manager, Almandhour United, said his company plans to profit most from the large amounts of aluminum thrown away on JBB. According to U.S. Army figures, more than 90,000 aluminum soda cans are thrown away daily on post. Altememy said the center will be able to export more than a ton of aluminum each day, which goes for about \$750 on the Iraqi market.

"This is a great day for Joint Base Balad, because we've solved a problem that's been present here for a long time, and it's a great day because we have yet another opportunity to help the local economy," said Brig. Gen. Brian Bishop, installation commander.

"With the addition of this center, Joint Base Balad looks to reduce its trash volume by literally tons a day," said Col. Kenneth Newlin, deputy commander of the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. "The center will also have the ability to drive new industries here and allow us



**Neseb Saad Hasan Altememy**, the general manager for Almandhour United Co., holds up a can of future profits for his recycling center site, July 7, at a refuse collection site at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The recycling center, which will provide jobs to local Iraqis, will assist current efforts to sort through daily garbage collection on post for recyclables. The recyclables will then be shipped off post and sold for profit on the Iraqi market.

to aggressively seek a new market for plastics recycling locally."

Besides providing a green approach to bolstering the Iraqi economy, the center will also offer jobs to local Iraqis. Joint Contracting Command – Iraq crafted the contract, while hiring and negotiations were headed up by members of the 76th IBCT, Indiana Army National Guard, and their work with the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone initiative. Because both departments have strict hiring standards written into the contracts, the Iraqi people have first pick when it comes to these jobs.

"The I-BIZ program does an excellent job because it allows the U.S. government to share these kinds of contracts more often with the Iraqi people, rather than with larger contractors who are here from other countries," Altememy said. "We feel like we have developed trust from the U.S., and so now better jobs are available to us."

Better jobs equal better security measures, said Capt. Lynn Thompson, Joint Base Balad's waste management officer.

"We give them a safe job, so they don't need a dangerous one like shooting at American Soldiers or planting IEDs," said Thompson.

In addition to making money for its host nation, U.S. forces plan to benefit from the contract in the form of cost savings. Originally, a contract with non-Iraqi contractors was envisioned, with a price tag of about \$1.5 million per year. Because Almandhour United will profit from the recyclables alone, no bidding costs were incurred through contracting agreements.

# Peaceful board game reflects declining violence in Iraq



**Lt. Col. Christopher Vanek**, commander, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, plays a game of checkers with Hawijah's Sons of Iraq leader Khalaf Ibrahim Ali in a downtown market recently. The game was meant to help convince local Iraqis the time is right to start leading normal lives again.

*Story, photo by  
Army Staff Sgt. Margaret C. Nelson*  
**115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

**HAWIJAH**, Iraq – Two middle-aged men enjoyed a friendly afternoon game of checkers in a busy marketplace, while shoppers and foot traffic passed by.

A similar scene wouldn't warrant a double-take in any town in the United States, but this game stood out for who was playing and where. It was Lt. Col. Christopher Vanek, commander, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry and Sons of Iraq leader Khalaf Ibrahim Ali across the board from each other – neither in body armor – sitting in an area once nicknamed "the Anbar of the North."

While the two concentrated on their game, onlookers admired their competing strategies, while unknowingly participating in their mutual strategy in Hawijah – the game was as much a leisure activity between comrades as it was a public performance to help convince local Iraqis the time is right to start leading normal lives again.

"This is a statement to the enemy, to the peace-loving people of Hawijah, and to the provincial government," Vanek said. "Enduring security gains have been established here, representative government is working well, Iraqi security forces are responsible for security, the economy is booming and it is time for the provincial government to step forward and serve all districts."

Vanek said now is an incredible period in the development of a democratic, representative form of government in the district of Hawijah. That he and a comrade can safely play checkers in an open market – that represents success in Iraq.

Both Vanek and Ali credit the change to an increased confidence in the ISF, coalition tactics which target only suspected terrorists and the empowerment of local citizens to reclaim their streets through the Sons of Iraq

The efforts have nearly eliminated the presence of al-Qaeda here, Ali said.

"They disguise themselves, like thieves in the night now," Ali said. "Now, during the day, they disguise themselves by changing their eye color, cutting their hair, changing their appearance. They are not wanted here. They have brought us nothing but violence, destruction, fear and lies."

Ali also said the insurgents are getting the message that the citizens of Hawijah will not assist their efforts.

Close to 8,000 members of Sons of Iraq have been positioned throughout Hawijah since the inception of the reconciliation program here in December.

"We were able to offer a choice to fathers who were trying to feed their families and men who were trying to begin families – eliminating a huge recruiting pool for the insurgents here," Vanek said.

Sons of Iraq also provided an avenue for coalition forces and Iraqis to interface.

"Before Sons of Iraq, the coalition force would be too busy fighting the enemy to get to know the people around them," Ali said.

Now, coalition forces and Iraqi men who are part of Sons of Iraq are able to interact and form relationships such as the bond Vanek and Ali have developed.

"We are not so different," Ali said of his friend. "We all want peace and a place where our children and grandchildren can live and prosper without fear and violence."

As to who won the checker game, Vanek smiled and said, "considering Ali and I are here together; me – without body-armor, in an area where commerce has returned, and the citizens can reap the benefits without fear or reprisals, in an area once thought lost to the insurgency – we're both winners. More importantly the citizens of the district are the true winners."



**FALLUJAH**, Iraq – Fallujah community members can look outside each morning and see signs of change in their neighborhoods. Small, but significant beacons of hope are brought on by new construction projects appearing all over the city.

To aid a city rising from the ashes of war, Marines with Detachment 3, Civil Affairs Group 3, Regimental Combat Team 1, met with Iraqi contractors and construction workers July 5 to continue to help facilitate the laborers' efforts in building a new school for the children in the Abu Saleh area of Fallujah.

The new school will replace the older one that was falling apart due to weather and collateral damage inflicted during battles between insurgents and coalition forces.

The detachment oversees reconstruction projects such as this one, in hopes that the children in Fallujah can return to school and lead normal lives.

"The old building was

falling apart, and students couldn't go to school when it rained because the teachers were afraid that the roof would collapse on them," said Lance Cpl. Greg W. Holt, a 19-year-old civil affairs operations assistant from Auburn, Calif.

The school will include two floors and 12 new classrooms, and house up to 350 students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Marines with the civil affairs group have been coordinating for months with the school headmasters and the Iraqi Administration of Education to ensure the new building will be a success for the students.

The detachment also took the time to meet with "Brothers for Building," a company that works hand-in-hand with Marines from RCT-1 and the Iraqi Administration of Education.

"We have started working really closely with the Iraqi government so eventually [it] can take over future projects such as this one," said 2nd

**"The old building was falling apart ..."**

said Lance Cpl. Greg W. Holt, a 19-year-old operations assistant from Auburn, Calif., with Detachment 3, Civil Affairs Group 3, Regimental Combat Team 1, of the old school he and his unit are helping Fallujah citizens replace. Holt, seen here, talks to local Iraqi children from the Abu Saleh area of Fallujah, Iraq, July 5.

Lt. Michael B. Robison, Det. 3's team leader from Sierra Madre, Calif. "This project is an example of a patronage project where a tribal leader spearheads an activity to help a community."

A sheik and tribal leader known by coalition members as "Dark," owns the building company and has worked with Marines in previous years to help with several similar projects.

The Fallujah City Council votes on building plans and takes bids from trusted contractors. The Marine Corps has worked with the Iraqi government, ensuring workers are up to standards.

Now, Marines are hoping the torch will be passed, and that the Iraqi government will take charge of future projects.

"We hope to get the local people less focused on the Marines helping them, and look to the Iraqi government for support for the community," said Robison.

The school's construction is scheduled to be finished Aug. 20.

**Marine Brig. Gen. Richard P. Mills**, commander, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Forward, Ground Combat Element, Multi-National Force – West, talks to Marines with 4th Tanks Battalion during a battlefield circulation July 4 with 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Task Force Mech, MNF-W, GCE, in the Jazeerah Desert, Iraq. TF Mech is conducting disruption operations in part of Operation Defeat al-Qaeda in the North to deny enemy sanctuary and prevent foreign fighter entry into the area. Mills was on board an M1A1 Abrams tank (pictured right) with Company A, 4th Tanks Bn., as it rolled through the desert the same day. (Photos by Marine Sgt. Jason W. Fudge.)





# FREEDOM'S FOCAL POINT



**Lance Cpl. David "Ozzy" Osborne**, Squadron A, 9th/12th Royal Lancers, gets boxing lessons from a local schoolboy at the opening ceremony of the new **Abi Ferras School** in Umm Qasr, Iraq. (Photo by Royal Navy Leading Photographer Jannine B. Hartmann.)



**Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Williams** with 2nd Platoon, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, is greeted happily by an Iraqi policemen at a police station in Mussayib, Iraq, June 27. (Photo by Army Spc. Tiffany Dusterhoft.)

**T**he development of special weapons and tactics teams began in the United States in 1967, with the Los Angeles Police Department SWAT team being the first in the nation.



**Members of the Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics** team run through water July 7 at Lake Quadsyah in Haditha, Iraq. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Seth Maggard.)

Sgt. Daniel Unger shows local kids what a "wheelie" is during a population engagement mission July 9 in the Shula district of Baghdad. Unger is with 1st Platoon, Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. (Photo by Army Spc. Charles W. Gill.)





**Staff Sgt. Frank Lugo**, (left) with the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, and Sgt. Dajuan Turner, with 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, share a joke while providing security in the Sadr City district of Baghdad, July 7. (Photo by Air Force Tech Sgt. Cohen A. Young.)



**Lance Cpl. Daniel Coxon**, tank crewman, Company A, 4th Tank Battalion, Task Force Mech, Multi-National Force – West, Ground Combat Element, pulls the guidelines to lift up a radio antenna June 26 in the Jazeerah Desert. (Photo by Marine Sgt. Jason W. Fudge.)



**Sgt. Adam Storey**, Marine scout sniper, Team 4, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, observes a cement factory June 3 through an M-40 sniper rifle near Bahkit, Iraq. U.S. (Photo by Marine Cpl. William J. Faffler.)





**An Iraqi soldier** pulls security while U.S and Iraqi soldiers exit a home during a combined population engagement mission July 14 in northern Adl, Iraq. (Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Manuel J. Martinez.)



**A U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon** aircraft sits on a trim pad before an engine run up at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, July 16. (Photo by Air Force Senior Airman Julianne Showalter.)

# Mobile exchange brings the goods

When Marines are busy with the mission at hand, visits to the exchanges take a back seat to mission accomplishment.

Story, photos by Marine Lance Cpl. Cindy G. Alejandrez  
1st Marine Logistics Group



**Sgt. Wesley A. Laney**, Company K, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, looks at the movie selection aboard the exchange truck, July 7. The mobile exchange is a trailer stocked from top-to-bottom with a bit of everything a Marine may need during his deployment.

## al-Anbar Province

To alleviate this, the mobile exchange brings the goods to them, so no matter where they are they can get the items they desire.

The mobile exchange is a trailer stocked from top-to-bottom with just about anything a Marine may need. Everything from hygiene products, magazines, movies, tools, knives, snacks and drinks can be found in the convenient mobile exchange.

There are four locations in al-Anbar province that send out mobile exchanges to the Marines in the more remote areas, and the exchange has its own security element, so it can operate independently and reach more Marines.

Staff Sgt. Ric A. Anikanov, Western Exchange Services team leader, Headquarters and Service Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, is in charge of one of the many trailers. He makes sure Marines have the opportunity to

get what they need despite risks that come with being outside the wire.

He is assisted by his driver who strives to keep both of them out of harm's way.

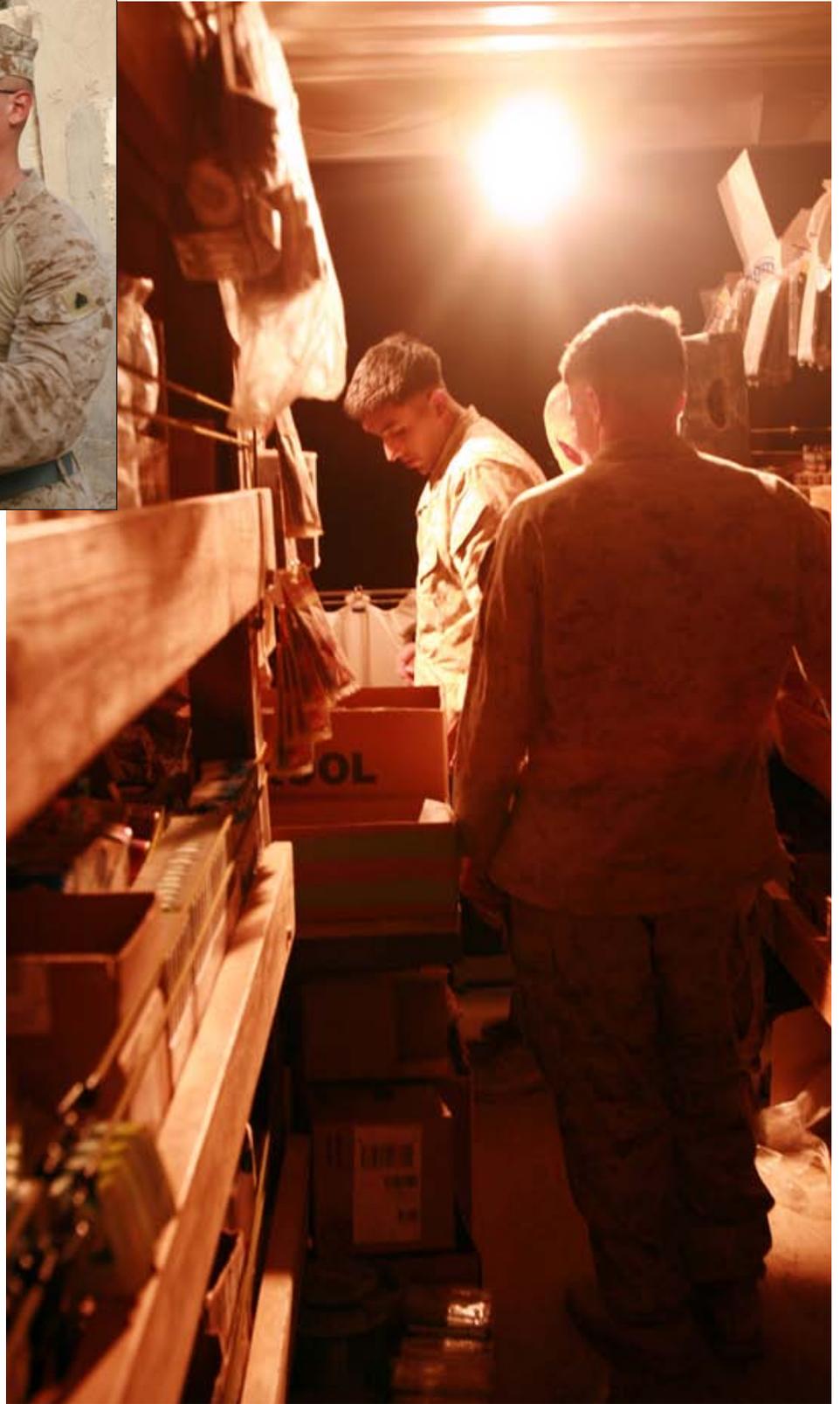
"My job as the driver is to place him (Anikanov) where he is as safe as possible," said Sgt. Eliezer Perez, a 22-year-old mobile exchange driver and line noncommissioned officer, Motor Transport Company, CLB-1.

Perez, from Vineland, N.J., stressed the importance of making sure everybody can get in and out of the exchange trailer while staying in a safe environment.

"(Having a mobile exchange come to us) is easier with all the work we're doing out here," said Sgt. Edward J. Mitchell, a 35-year-old squad leader with 1st squad, 3rd platoon, Company K, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. "To get the Marines up [to Fallujah] to get what they need would be a logistical nightmare."



**Sgt. Eliezer Perez**, mobile exchange driver and line non-commissioned officer, Motor Transport Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, pushes up a ladder for Marines to climb into the exchange truck after a trip to Observation Point Burgess, July 7.



**M**itchell said his Marines purchase snacks and microwavable food to add variety to their diets.

“It’s just a break from the monotony of the same food,” he said.

“A lot of these guys get energy drinks because of the hours they work - some of them need it,” said Staff Sgt. Alan E. Nichols, 27, from Toombsboro, Ga., platoon sergeant, 1st Platoon, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Reg., 1st Marine Div.

Many Marines also purchase movies and speakers so they can enjoy some entertainment during their down time, Nichols said.

Marines in Combat Outpost Blackhawk asked for blankets, a rarity for Iraq, and Anikanov was happy to oblige - making things a little easier for the servicemembers at the COP.

Nichols added that when they bring a disbursing Marine with the exchange trucks, it makes things a lot more convenient. That way, Marines can have access to their funds and deal with their allotments.

“I’m here for one purpose, and that’s for every Marine to get through this truck,” Anikanov said.

**Marines at Combat Outpost Reaper** shop from the mobile exchange truck July 7. Because not all Marines have the opportunity to go to an exchange, the truck makes it to them with hygiene supplies, snacks, drinks and movies, among other items they may need throughout their deployment.



To celebrate the 4th of July, Soldiers from an explosive ordnance disposal team assigned to 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, detonate mortars and ammunition that have been recovered in caches and raids outside the walls of Joint Security Station Sadr City in Baghdad, July 4. (Photo by Air Force Tech Sgt. Cohen A. Young.)



A group of U.S. Soldiers gather together while having ice-cold water competition during 4th of July activities on Contingency Operating Base, July 4. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Micky M. Bazaldua.)

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Micky M. Bazaldua.

**S**ervicemembers across Iraq celebrated the United State's Independence Day in a variety of ways.

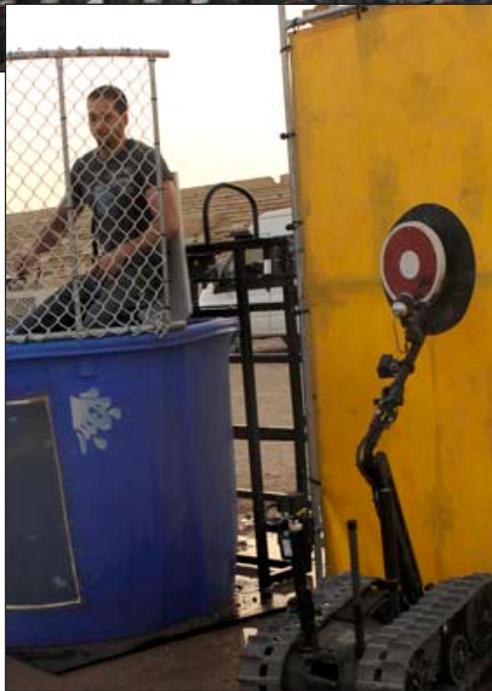
An explosive ordnance disposal team with the 4th Infantry Division improvised a fireworks display by detonating confiscated mortars and ammunition in Baghdad in honor of the 4th of July.

More than 1,200 Soldiers, Sailors, Airman and Marines reenlisted at the Al - Faw Palace in Baghdad, as Multi-National Force – Iraq commander, Gen. David Petraeus administered the reenlistment oath.

Meanwhile, troops on Contingency Operating Base Speicher had a myriad of activities to bide their celebration time, including an EOD robot assisting at the dunk tank.



^ **More than 1,200 Soldiers**, Sailors, Airman and Marines gather in the rotunda of the Al - Faw Palace July 4 at Camp Victory, Baghdad, as they prepare to be reenlisted by Multi - National Force – Iraq Commanding General, Gen. David Petraeus. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Jason R. Krawczyk.)



< **An explosive ordnance disposal robot** gets in on the fun at the dunk tank during 4th of July activities on Contingency Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq, July 4. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Micky M. Bazaldua.)

er thrown on them at a  
e Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq,

# Zawra Park's pool reopens

Story, photos by Army Sgt. Jason Thompson  
Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

Summer days in Baghdad often rival some of the hottest days from across the globe; and until recently, many residents of central Baghdad's Karkh District did not have a place where they could visit to escape from the heat.

Not until Zawra Park officials, working closely with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, reopened the park's public swimming pool July 5.

"This is a great day for the citizens of Baghdad," said Salah Abou El Lail, park director, Zawra Park. "This pool will be a great and enjoyable destination for many Baghdad families. Families already enjoy visiting the park and the zoo here, and the pool will be fun for everyone."

The project to refurbish the swimming pool complex began more than four months ago and cost less than \$500,000 to complete.

For the Soldiers who patrol the streets in central Baghdad, the pool is a welcome scene which will help the people they're here to protect.

"This makes me proud," said Lt. Col. Fred Wintrich, a Union City, Texas, native, and executive officer, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. "Everyone worked hard together to reopen this pool for the Iraqi citizens.

"This is a good example of what cooperation between the local officials, Iraqi security forces and U.S. forces can accomplish," Wintrich said. "We've helped to improve the security of the region so that the local residents could enjoy a more peaceful community to raise their families."

During the opening day's festivities, children and young adults alike swam and splashed around in the water with large smiles, knowing that the pool signified more than just a new recreational activity in the already popular Zawra Park.



Three Iraqi children splash around in a shallow pool during the festivities for the opening of Zawra Park's public pool in central Baghdad, July 5.

# IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN JUNE 16  
AND JULY 15, 2008 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

**GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS: THAT A MAN LAY  
DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.**

*JOHN 15:13*

**June 16**

*Spc. Jason N. Cox, 21.*

**June 20**

*Staff Sgt. Du Hai Tran, 30.*

**June 23**

*SPfc. Bryan M. Thomas, 22.  
Capt. Gregory T. Dalessio, 30.*

**June 24**

*Chief Warrant Officer  
Robert C. Hammett, 39.  
Maj. Dwayne M. Kelley, 48.*

**June 25**

*Spc. Joshua L. Plocica, 20.  
Sgt. Alejandro A. Dominguez, 24.  
Spc. Joel A. Taylor, 20.  
Spc. James M. Yohn, 25.*

**June 26**

*Lt. Col. Max A. Galeai, 42.  
Capt. Philip J. Dykeman, 38.  
Cpl. Marcus W. Preudhomme, 23.*

**July 5**

*Sgt. 1st Class Anthony L. Woodham, 37.*

**July 8**

*Spc. William L. McMillan III, 22.*

**July 9**

*Sgt. 1st Class Steven J. Chevalier, 35.*

On July 10, the Armed Forces Medical Examiner positively identified human remains recovered in Iraq July 9 to be those of two Soldiers who had been previously listed as "Missing-Captured."

*Sgt. Alex R. Jimenez, 25.*

*Pfc. Byron J. Fouty, 19.*

**July 13**

*Lance Cpl. Jeffery S. Stevenson, 20.*

**July 14**

*Aviation Boatswain Mate Third Class  
Petty Officer Daniel R. Verbeke, 25.*

**July 15**

*Staff Sgt. Danny P. Dupre, 28.  
Staff Sgt. Jeremy D. Vrooman, 28.  
Staff Sgt. David W. Textor, 27.*

**Sgt. 1st Class Heejoon Chung**, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, interacts with local Iraqi youths in Asiriyah Village, Iraq, after making security checks, July 12. (Photo by Army Spc. Daniel Herrera.)

