

THE RALLY POINT

RAIDER
BRIGADE

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Serving the Men and Women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division
and Multi-National Division - Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom



Regulars
Stand
Their
Ground

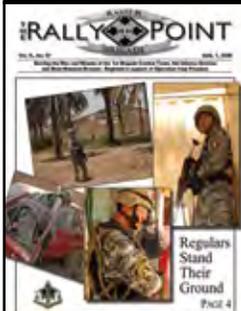
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The Rucksack

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Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, act on information provided by concerned Iraqi citizens July 26 in the Aamel community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The Soldiers of "Gator Alpha" Co. maintain a 24-hour presence in the predominately Shia community to assist Iraqi Security Forces maintain security for the community and its neighborhoods.



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Significant contributors to the Aug. 1, 2008 edition include: Capt. Mark Miller, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment; as well as the men and women serving in support of the Global War on Terror. Thank you!

LEADER'S BOOK



Col. Ted Martin

Soldiers of the Raider Brigade Combat Team!

We have been in Iraq, deployed to the Rashid district in southern Baghdad for more than four months now, and I want to take the opportunity to tell the Soldiers, sailors, and airmen how much I appreciate their service.

I've got the best job in the Army, and it's because of the men and women of the Raider Brigade deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in support of Multi-National Division - Baghdad and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For those that don't know, this is my third tour of duty in Iraq. I was with the 4th Infantry Division during the initial invasion in 2003 and returned again in 2005 as a member of the Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Task Force; and let me say, I've seen phenomenal progress in that time.

I want to remind everyone; the mission of this brigade is to protect the population. We accomplish this by standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our Iraqi Security Forces, defending the approximately 1.5 million people of Rashid. To put that into perspective that is an area the size of Orlando, Fla. with the population of Dallas, Texas.

The battalions of the 1st BCT conduct relentless offensive operations designed to kill, capture or drive from Rashid anyone who threatens the safety and security of the people we have sworn to protect. This is a straightforward mission and it translates into hours of backbreaking work in challenging, sometimes miserable, conditions, while we work and live alongside our Iraqi counterparts to defeat anti-government forces. There are 15 Combat Outposts and Joint Security Stations with more than 60 percent of the Raider Brigade forward-deployed to a small company-sized outpost. And really, that's what makes this brigade so successful, our connection with the people.

Our hard work and sacrifices have paid off. There's been a measurable improvement in the security in the Rashid district since our arrival here in March. When we arrived in our battlespace there was an average of five attacks per day. By the end of July, we've reduced that average to 1.5 attacks per day. As a reference point, one year ago in the same security district, there were 824 attacks in July 2007 with a daily average of 27 attacks, making Rashid one of the most dangerous places in Iraq.

It is my belief that this reduction in violence is a direct result of the conditions set by the success of the surge in forces and combat power. The officers, noncommissioned officers and Soldiers of this brigade have built on this success and have seen a dramatic reduction in violence in the past four months.

For example, we have reduced the number of attacks from 122 in April to 48 in July. This represents a 61 percent reduction. The daily attack average was four in April and has been reduced to 1.5 in July. Additionally, there were 18 rocket and mortar attacks in April and only three in July of 2008. This represents an 83 percent decrease. Regarding the IED, there were 69 attacks in April and 37 in July, and this is a 46 percent decrease. When we look at direct-fire attacks, we saw 30 in April and five in July. This represents an

83 percent decrease.

It is my firm belief that the decisive defeat of the special group criminals and militias in May and June of this year has opened a window of opportunity for us to make substantial and lasting improvements in the Rashid district.

I would like to talk for just a moment about my ISF counterparts. I've seen substantial improvement in the performance of the ISF. They are well-equipped, well-led and very aggressive. They performed exceptionally well during offensive operations against the militias. During this tour, for the first time, I've seen ISF that can plan, prepare and execute first-class offensive operations. I've also seen a high level of trust and respect by the people of Rashid for their own army and police forces. The fact is, the Iraqi Security Forces are increasingly carrying the load in southern Baghdad.

In partnership with the ISF, our forces have detained 56 al Qaeda in Iraq operatives in the past four months. We continue to pursue them relentlessly. We have captured more than 170 special group criminals. Intelligence reporting indicates that these criminals have received support from elements in Iran.

Soldiers of the Raider Brigade have done great work. They've defeated both AQI and special group criminal militias in Rashid district, and we're exploiting those victories by improving the quality of life for the people of Baghdad. Our task now is to prevent the enemies of Iraq from returning to make life miserable for the good people of Rashid.

Seizing on the improved security conditions, we are pursuing reconstruction projects to improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people. To date, we have completed 22 projects valued at more than \$5 million. Currently, this brigade is managing 78 active projects valued at more than \$45 million. We've also proposed an additional 117 projects valued at more than \$26 million. Each project is coordinated with the Rashid District Council leadership to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the people.

The ISF are working with the Government of Iraq. The people trust the ISF. I'm very proud of the work my Soldiers have done, working hand-in-hand with the community leaders of the Rashid District Council, and the Rashid District Council's one of the best in Baghdad. I have a great relationship with the District Council Chairman and the ISF brigade commanders, of which there are three in this area.

I've never seen anything like that in my time deployed here. As a result, there is a blanket of security, the hard-fought and hard-won blanket of security that's been provided in the Rashid district. And I'll be honest; a lot of that success is because of the quality of the ISF that we're seeing.

Again, it's a real honor for me to serve as the commander of the Raider Brigade Combat Team, and I want to acknowledge the dedication, hard work and sacrifices made by the Raider Soldiers.

In closing, I'd like to thank the American public for their support. There's a lot of Families back home that are away from their loved ones over here, and the sacrifices that they're making - they're on our mind every day. We receive care packages from Family, friends and caring and patriotic people that we've never met from all across America, from an elementary classroom in Frankfort, Kentucky; Cub Scout Pack 773 in Houston, Texas; volunteers of Operation Gratitude from Encino, California, and many others. So, I'd like to give a special *Thank You* to our Families and friends back home at Fort Hood, Texas. Your love, support and understanding is all we need to make it through each day. So thank you very much, and God bless you all.

-RAIDERS!

'Gators' defeat SGC in Aamel

BY STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

As the security situation across Baghdad continues to show signs of significant improvement, Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment "Regulars," 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, are reaping the benefits from more than three months of concentrated efforts to create a lasting security in the Aamel community, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

In the first three months since assuming its mission in early April, the Soldiers of Company A, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., have detained 56 criminals and terrorists, to include 17 of Baghdad's most wanted individuals, and seizing approximately 26 weapons caches comprised of automatic rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, improvised explosive devices and mortar rounds.

Since July, the company has captured neither criminal, terrorist, nor weapon, but not from lack of trying, said Capt. Drew Conover, commander, Company A, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Conover said that in his opinion the enemy is beaten.

"In terms of the special groups criminals, they are beat," he explained. "I think they are absolutely beaten, and the reason I don't think they can come back is because of the Iraqi Security Forces."

Special groups criminals pull their power from the perception that they are strong and in control, said Conover, who graduated from the Virginia Military Institute as an infantry officer.

"Because the insurgency's presence was so prevalent throughout the population, the people were definitely being controlled by special groups," he said. "The people were not in control of their own lives."

The ISF, working with the support of the Government of Iraq, remain very effective in dealing with special groups and Al Qaeda in Iraq, due to the fact that they know Iraqis and know the population, explained Conover, who hails from Marshall, Va.

"The ISF are actively targeting special groups, and there is nothing that is stopping them from doing that," he explained.

Another indicator of the end of special groups' influence in the predominately Shia community is the influx of lower level fighters who are turning to coalition and ISF for help, said Conover, who is currently on his third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"They're done fighting, done running, tired of sleeping outside their houses and running the streets, and they still don't have a job or any money," he said. "It became very apparent in April and May, when we began targeting them, and they began to quit."

Identifying local community leaders, who are willing to take an active role in

achieving a lasting change, said Conover.

"Security and stability will remain, I am convinced of it," Conover said. "I am convinced that as a whole Aamel will remain stable and secure. Then the Iraqis can start building for economic success, political success."

The Soldiers are currently working to establish a direct affiliation with the people in the Aamel community and help transition the Iraqi National Forces, so that they will be able to take the lead for the security of their country, said 1st Sgt. Bryan Bandy, senior enlisted leader of Co. A, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

"Our biggest concern is just finding local support," said Bandy, a native of Charleston, W.Va. "It must be a collective effort as communities begin to regenerate. Take the bad element out and it makes it better for the individual, their family and the community."

The Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces operating in southern Baghdad have better

intelligence at their disposal, because the Iraqi people support their ongoing efforts to secure their neighborhoods and communities, explained Bandy.

"The Iraqi people are more behind us now," he said. "They are helping to give us the information we need to remove the bad elements from their communities."

The Iraqi people see the ISF and Soldiers playing a more active role in the communities and are becoming more apt to help the security forces, said Bandy.

"There is a lot more activity in Aamel and Bayaa. A bigger security presence in the sector has increased

overall security," Bandy said. "It's going to get safer and safer."

Bandy, who has served in a multitude of combat operations from Just Cause to Desert Storm, from Bosnia to Iraq, said that he has also seen a lot of improvements in the ISF



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Capt. Drew Conover, commander, Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, checks-in at an Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq) checkpoint, July 26, in the Aamel community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. Conover, who hails from Marshall, Va., credits much of the current security situation in Aamel due to the ongoing efforts of the Iraqi National Forces, to include the Sol, an Iraqi-led Neighborhood Watch program.

providing security for their community, such as the Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq), an Iraqi-led neighborhood watch program, and Iraqi citizens who are willing to take an active role in securing their communities from special groups, is the most important step toward



Regulars stand their ground

STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

1st Lt. Justin Crawford, a platoon leader from Santa Barbara, Calif., assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, says hello to a group of young Iraqis, July 26, in the Amel community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The Soldiers of "Alpha Gator" Company conduct daily patrols and assessments within the neighborhoods of the community to assess the security situation in the area that was once plagued with special groups criminals and terrorist activity.

and the significant changes have made the deployment worthwhile.

"The ISF have more equipment, more discipline, more motivation than they did back then," he explained. "The Iraqis are more involved, and I think that in the long term it is going to be successful."

The Soldiers of Co. A, "Gators," will not rest on the significant successes achieved in the last three months, but must continue to maintain their presence in the neighborhoods and communities, said Bandy.

"Gator Co. has good leaders, a good cadre of noncommissioned officers that can shoot, move and communicate together," he said. "Our Soldiers are motivated, are generally focused, pretty well-disciplined, and they are always maintaining a positive attitude. They are going on patrols, maintaining and getting ready for the next mission."

"We're not going to give ground," Bandy said. "If we were to stop what we are doing, it would allow whoever's working to be a disruption, the chance to move in and start all over again."

For Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Davis, a platoon sergeant from Stockton, Calif., assigned to Co. A, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., the company's mission is very important in securing the area and making the people feel safer.

"One of the MND-B (commanding general's) big things is securing the people where they sleep, and that

is exactly what we're doing working at the ground level," said Davis.

While the violence in the Amel community has quieted down substantially in the last five weeks, Davis said that his Soldiers refuse to let their guard down and will continue to aggressively pursue the enemy.

"If we go through the rest of our tour, and it's just like this, that's fine by me," Davis added.



An Iraqi citizen from the Amel Community in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, reads about the Iraqi Tip Hotline July 26 on a card distributed by Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad. Concerned Iraqi citizens use the Iraqi Tip Hotline to report criminal or terrorist activity in their communities and their neighborhoods.

Creek Co. teaches importance of hydration

By SPC. DAVID HODGE

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

With temperatures reaching 100 degrees by mid-morning, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers and the Iraqi Security Forces experience the heat first hand during patrols throughout the neighborhoods and palm groves of the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

The Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, along with the Iraqi National Police and Iraqi Police, have witnessed the effects of dehydration and exposure to the sun first hand during their daily combined patrols within the Jaza'ir community.

"The last couple of days we have seen two ISF members go down because of the heat," said Sgt. James Murray, an infantryman and team leader, assigned to 3rd Platoon, "Creek" Co., 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

One of those, a member of the Iraqi Police, was badly dehydrated when the platoon reached the police station.

"The other day, we walked into the station and a policeman was lying on the ground unconscious," said Spc. Joshua Smith, a combat medic assigned to 3rd Plt., Co. C, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.

With the ISF, many cases of dehydration stem from smoking cigarettes and drinking tea without drinking enough water to maintain a balance, explained Smith.

"I gave him an (intravenous fluid) bag and some bottled water, and he was fine afterwards," said Smith, who hails from Twin Lake, Mich. "He told me thanks, and I suggested that his unit still take him to the hospital for further treatment. In my opinion, he would have died of a heat stroke within 30 minutes."

Because of the near loss of a policeman and the fact the weather is only going to get hotter, the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt. "Warriors" Soldiers, saw the immediate need and trained the policemen on heat casualty prevention and the importance of hydration at the local police stations before starting patrols.

"I taught them how to recognize and treat heat casualties and to prevent them as well," Smith stated.

After the heat casualty prevention class, the Soldiers and policemen mounted up in their vehicles to conduct a combined presence patrol through neighborhoods.

"The training went really well," Murray stated, a native of Alexander, N.Y. "The ISF like training and enjoy any opportunity to learn. We carry out combined patrols with the ISF every day. Working with the

ISF is enjoyable, and I personally like interacting with the locals."

The patrol of police and Soldiers marched through the neighborhoods and spoke with the Jaza'ir citizens.

"We conducted a dismounted patrol with Coalition Forces and stopped to talk to people to see if there was any trouble," said Arshet Sa'ad Gharta, a sergeant, or Areef, and team leader for the 3rd Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division. "In the neighborhoods, I feel proud – and I trust my guys and unit."

Gharta said his men do a good job out in the streets and learn a lot from the MND-B forces, adding that he also hopes more combined patrols will take place in the future.

Creek Soldiers continue to mentor and train the police in Jaza'ir to the utmost of their ability while maintaining standards on

A policeman from the 3rd Co., 2nd Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., takes a knee while on patrol June 20 in the Jaza'ir community of southern Baghdad while Pfc. James King, an infantryman assigned to Co. C, 2nd Bn, 4th Inf. Regt., watches his back.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

the battlefield.

"Our Soldiers are out there every day with the ISF – setting the example," Murray stated. "They keep accomplishing the mission no matter how hot it is or how bad the conditions. They keep going forward and making progress every day."



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Pfc. James King, an infantryman from Pawling, N.Y., assigned to 3rd Plt., Co. C, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, MND-B, patrols the streets of the Jaza'ir community with members of the Iraqi National Police June 20 during a combined patrol.



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO

Sgt. Benjamin Jackson, an infantryman from Dallas, assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, currently attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad walks Iraqi National Policemen from the 7th Brigade, 2nd NP Div., through close quarters marksmanship drills July 14 at a NP station in the Doura community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO

1st Lt. Wendell Jenkins, platoon leader, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad listens to his Iraqi counter-part from the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, during a combined patrol July 14 in the northern Doura community of the Rashid district in Baghdad.

“Warriors” return emphasis to training ISF, provide overwatch and security

BY STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Acts of violence in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad are down to little more than one per day and the security situation in Iraq continues to improve, Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, are re-focusing their efforts training Iraqi Security Forces to provide a safe and secure community for the people of Iraq.

“Creek” Company has a two-fold mission to provide security for the citizens of Al Doura in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad and training the Iraqi Police, National Police and Sons of Iraq to

take over the security posture and security of East Rashid, said 1st Sgt. Brian Hester, an infantry first sergeant assigned to Co. C, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

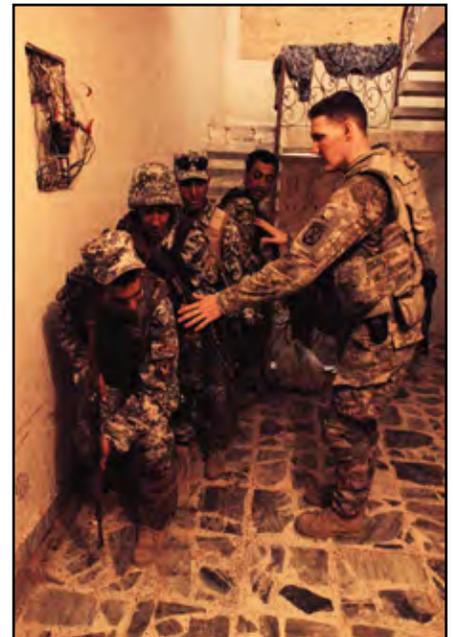
“The emphasis right now is training the ISF, getting them ready to go,” said Hester, an 18-year Army Ranger, who hails from Mount Sterling, Ill. “We are getting them ready to take over, while we go into a tactical overwatch and transition the bulk of the security operations for our operating environment to the Iraqis.”

The unit has a regimen of training and patrolling, conducting classroom instruction on basic infantry skills and combined security operations in the predominately Sunni community that is home to approximately 12,000 Iraqi citizens, said Hester.

“We conduct classes on numerous things, everything from First Aid to collective battle drills,” he said. “Once the training part or the classroom environment is over, we take them out on patrol to show them what right looks like.”

Creek Co. is comprised of a variety of veterans who have served in divisions across the Army and motivated Soldiers who understand the mission and what needs to be accomplished, transitioning the ISF from the academies to operations, said Hester.

“The company has a solid (Noncommissioned Officer) Corps,” said 1st Lt. Wendell Jenkins, a platoon leader from Myrtle Beach, S.C., assigned to Co. C, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.,



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO

Spec. Jack Pryor, an infantryman from Wichita Falls, Texas, assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, which is currently attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, instructs Iraqi National Police from the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division on room entering and clearing procedures during close quarters combat training July 14 at an NP station in the Doura community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

attached to 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “They go above and beyond everyday.”

Jenkins explained that his squads meet with the ISF to lead training events, give instruction, and take notes for improvements to teach the security forces the skills necessary to defend themselves.

“I am amazed more and more everyday how good these guys are,” said Jenkins, who majored in political science and sociology while at Jenkins Coastal Carolina University.

The Soldiers are working to transition all of the area to the National Police, but want to ensure that the security forces are competent and capable of holding the terrain they have achieved, said Jenkins.

“It is a large goal for us, but achievable nonetheless,” he

SEE TRAINING ON PAGE 15

ASSASSIN TROOP: improving quality of life, security for the citizens of southeast Rashid

By SPC. DAVID HODGE
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

In the farmlands of southeastern Baghdad a joint security station sits nestled away from the hustle and bustle of the urbanized Baghdad area. The Five

Farms area is the center of agriculture for many Iraqi citizens and the center of operations for some Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers.

The Soldiers of Troop A, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, take on the mission to further the development of local governances and transition the security

in the area into tactical over watch by ensuring the Iraqi Security Forces are a capable fighting force.

“We focus mainly on projects, governance, and ISF partnership,” said Capt. Todd Poindexter, the commander of Troop

A, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “My Soldiers have maintained security, lowered enemy activity, and successfully mapped out the civilian population throughout our area in the few months we have been here.”

“Assassin” Troop has been successful in eliminating the cultural barriers between the population, Soldiers, and ISF so far in this deployment, said Poindexter.

“We have been to almost every house in our area,” he said. “In a couple of months, we will have completed that. It has been a great help to our mission.”

In some of the houses the Soldiers visit, the homeowners say it is the first time they have met an American Soldier, added Poindexter.

Capt. Todd Poindexter, the commander of Troop A, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, listens to local Iraqi leaders discuss completed and future projects July 13 at a joint security station in the Rashid district of Baghdad. Troop A Soldiers conduct full-spectrum operations throughout the Five Farms area with plans to turn it over to the Iraqi Security Forces and provide only tactical over watch, said Poindexter, who hails from Eden, N.C.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Staff Sgt. Ricardo Chavez, an indirect fire infantryman from Los Angeles, attached to Troop A, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, takes notes while questioning a local Iraqi girl July 14 during close encounter population engagements in the Hadar community of southern Baghdad.

Seeking agricultural stability for Five Farms residents



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

With the decrease in violence in the Rashid district, Soldiers of Troop A work in conjunction with the Iraqi Army to deter the criminal activity in the area and restore essential services to the Iraqi people every day, said Poindexter, who hails from Eden, N.C.

The Soldiers focus on population engagements and community projects, he added.

“We concentrate much of our efforts on population control, or keeping in touch with the people,” explained Poindexter, a veteran of three combat tours to Iraq. “We may not bring in the big caches, or high-value individuals, but we do many projects for the residents. They see the forward momentum through the projects and services and tend to keep their neighborhood clean of criminals.”

Poindexter attends meetings regularly with IA, local leaders and neighborhood council members to discuss contract information, the return of displaced families, and the status of future projects.

Both Assassin Troop, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., and their IA counterparts have completed many projects, which include the removal of road debris, route paving, canal dredging, and electrical transformer installation, said Poindexter.

Ongoing projects in their operating environments include the continuing effort to bring steady power to more places and introducing a processing facility for one of Iraq’s popular exports, the fruit taken from the date palm tree.

“The things I deal with in the meetings are the issues my Soldiers deal with every day,” Poindexter said. “They didn’t go to basic training to learn that kind of stuff.”

On the ground, inside a small portion of the urban community within the troop’s area of operation, Soldiers from the mortar platoon, known as “Thunder,” meet with soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 43rd Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division to conduct close encounter engagements during a combined patrol.

“We do combined patrols with the IA so they can get to know the local people,” said Staff Sgt. Ricardo Chavez, an indirect fire infantryman and section sergeant for Thunder Plt., attached to Troop A, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

“Together we conduct close encounter population engagements

Spc. Daniel Holt, an indirect fire infantryman attached to Troop A, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, exits a house with his Iraqi counterpart after conducting close encounter population engagements July 14 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

to ensure micro grants and contracts are being used in the correct capacity, and to check on the Sons of Iraq members,” added Chavez, a native of Los Angeles.

The SoI are a volunteer-based Neighborhood Watch Program that maintains a 24-hour watch in the communities across Iraq.

At night, a dismounted patrol of Soldiers bounds along a road in darkness inspecting SoI checkpoints and talking with citizens.

“Operating like this makes our job easier because the enemy knows we may always be watching them,” said Pfc. Dietrick Ramey, a combat medic assigned to 1st Plt., Troop A, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “It’s important for the safety of the people that we make sure there is no suspicious activity.”

Criminals sometimes occupy vacant houses and use the locations to watch CF or ISF movements, he said.

“There are families that want to move back into those vacant houses in the area so it’s vital to check them for squatters,” said Ramey, who hails from Toledo, Ohio.

Dismounted patrols show the citizens in the area that the Soldiers do care and want to make their presence as friendly as possible, he explained.

“I feel we have gained the people’s trust,” Ramey said. “It also shows the population we respect them as much as they respect us.”

The Soldiers of the 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, are currently deployed from their home station of Fort Hood, Texas and serving a 15-month-long tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Spc. Timothy Dawson, a cavalry scout assigned to 1st Platoon, Troop A, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, searches an Iraqi citizen’s car after finding it stranded on the side of a thoroughfare July 14 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. The Soldiers of Troop A, “Assassins,” conduct daily patrols in the eastern Rashid area to deter any enemy presence and assist the local governance in supporting the Iraqi citizens.

Raiders operate with sister-service support

U.S. Air Force, Navy work closely to accomplish mission in southern Baghdad

By SPC. DAVID HODGE

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

At Forward Operating Base Falcon in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, many U.S. Army Soldiers see other service members at the gym or chow hall, but most do not work closely with them.

For the U.S. Navy Sailors and U.S. Air Force Airmen working with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, their role in the "Raider" Brigade's fight are equally important while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The biggest lesson I have learned here is nobody can do it alone – they just can't – there are too many people that can provide so much information to help you out," explained Navy Cmdr. Hunter Haltom, an electronic warfare officer from Texarkana, Texas, assigned to the Joint CREW Composite Squadron 1 based out of Camp Victory, Baghdad. "With this brigade everybody is really supportive. They ask me 'how can I help you do your job better?'"

Every Raider Soldier that has traveled outside the wire in a ground-based vehicle has benefitted from part of Haltom's work.

"As a EWO we provide (counter radio controlled improvised explosive device electronic warfare) systems for all vehicles, install them on the trucks, teach the Soldiers how to use it, and conduct maintenance and repair," stated Haltom, a Navy veteran of more than 18 years.

Haltom previously served as the executive officer for the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at Texas A&M University, where he taught naval science and military courtesy classes to freshmen students seeking to become commissioned officers.

After a year of teaching, the Navy temporarily reassigned Haltom to Iraq due to his rank and security clearance to be an EWO.

From his teaching job, Haltom travelled to Norfolk, Va., for CREW training with other officers chosen to deploy.

"We worked together before at Norfolk," said Haltom, a veteran of four Mediterranean-area deployments with 15 years of experience flying a Navy CH46-D Sea Knight helicopter. "That builds a helpful, working relationship."

Since deploying to Iraq, Haltom and his EWO comrades have taken over electronic warfare operations of different areas throughout Iraq.

The relationship with the EWOs enables Haltom to learn the enemy's tactics in other parts of the country by just a phone call or e-mail.

"Something happens here every day to make this job challenging," Haltom explained. "There is always something challenging. It's not always easy; if it were, it would be boring."

Last year, during the week of the Army versus Navy football game, Haltom recalled shouting down the hall during the one-sided game to another EWO from an attached unit, whose office was nearby.

"The inter-service rivalry is always great," said Haltom, pointing to a bright, yellow pin above his desk that says 'Beat Army.' "We were saying down the hall to each other – what else is on."

Haltom said he believes other services are not treated any differently in the mostly Army environment of FOB Falcon, and that gives him the opportunity to meet new people and learn how other forces contribute to the fight.

"When the Soldiers see an O-5 working on their CREW system in the back of their truck or climbing off their (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle) they

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Tim McCarty, a joint terminal attack controller from Troy, Mich., assigned to the Tactical Air Control Party, 11th Air Support Operations Squadron from Fort Hood, Texas, speaks to a pilot by radio from the brigade tactical operations center at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad, July 10. Air Force air liaison officers and JTACs work closely with one another on air support missions for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Cordell Thornton, a liaison to the police transition team operating in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, assigned to Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Force Squadron, finishes a 5 km Fun Run July 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad. Thornton works closely with the Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad each day and his home station in the U.S. is at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

SEE SISTER SUPPORT ON PAGE 19



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Raider BCT logistics leaders rally ISF, Iraqi officers to assess supply systems

By STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Maintenance and supply requisitioning, distribution, supply economy and accountability are just a few of the mission-essential dynamics that keep forces in any army combat ready.

Iraqi Security Forces met with logistics leaders of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, at a premier ISF Logistics Conference July 20. The event was hosted by the Raider Brigade's 4th Support Battalion as part of a professional development program at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

"The role of the 4th Supt. Bn. is to partner with the Iraqi Security Forces and provide them assessments of their capabilities, develop their capabilities, and facilitate improvement in their logistics systems," said Lt. Col. Darren Werner, commander, 4th Supt. Bn.

"The purpose of the meeting is to bring together the key ISF logistics leaders to discuss a specific logistics system, in this case the fuel system," Werner explained.

The Packhorse Battalion provides specialized technical training; oversees professional development programs, such as the ISF Logistics Conference; and conducts formal Logistics System Reviews, said Werner, a native of Mayville, Mich.

The event, which dealt primarily with ISF fuel operations, was presided over by Col. Hassim, the operations officer for 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division.

"Col. Hassim was able to provide an excellent summary of the challenges that

7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., has with their fuel allocation, fuel distribution and storage, and their methods that they use to eliminate corruption," Werner said.

The pretense for the conference opened up the floor for professional discussion in search of solutions to common problems.

The ISF logisticians brainstormed issues that ranged from fuel requirements, reporting and distribution procedures, storage and evaporation of fuel, and corruption.

"I am going to tell you the truth and be honest here, and that there is not one officer, here, who is going to sign for an amount that he is not going to get," said an Iraqi NP officer from the 2nd NP Div. to the ISF officers and their coalition counterparts at the meeting.

For nearly four hours, Iraqi logisticians summarized several tests they currently face and proposed solutions, challenging each other to take a candid look at their operations.

"This was the first meeting we held with the Iraqis at FOB Falcon to discuss logistics," said Capt. Christiana Cioffi, support operations plans officer for the 4th Supt. Bn. "We first brought the training teams together to discuss the 'way ahead' and how to best address issues and concerns."

The leaders of 4th Supt. Bn. and 1st BCT hope to conduct future meetings focused on medical, maintenance and transportations operations, said Cioffi, a West Point graduate from Scarsdale, N.Y.

"From what we have seen, most of the NP units have some of the same issues and concerns," Cioffi said. "This forum is a great

Lt. Col. Darren Werner, commander, 4th Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, meets with Iraqi National Police Col. Hassim, operations officer, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, before the Iraqi Security Forces Logistics Conference July 20 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Logistics leaders, as well as members of Military and National Police Transition Teams, attended the conference that was hosted by Werner, a native of Mayville, Mich. The intent of the conference is to provide ISF leaders and their coalition counterparts the opportunity to hold a forum to better their supply systems.

way to bring them together to identify how to best correct the problems and continue to make progress in sustainment operations."

"The conference is successful in that each battalion and brigade element gets to see each other, face to face, and make their issues and concerns known," said Capt. Wesley Smith, Military Transition Team officer-in-charge, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

The Military and National Police Training Teams bring observations and recommend solutions for the collective group, said Smith, who hails from Richmond, Va.

Problems with supplies directly affect the ability of any unit to accomplish its mission, he added.

"Bottom line: the more capable the ISF unit, the less reliant they become on coalition forces assistance and further move towards taking over primary responsibility for security in Iraq," Smith said.

The NPTT and MiTT, who are responsible for coaching, teaching and mentoring the ISF, also provide guidance and encourage the Iraqi logisticians officers to openly deal with the real problems they face, said Smith.

"The ISF Logistics Systems have made measurable improvements, but they are challenged by the still developing National or Strategic Level of Logistics," said Werner. "As (Iraq's) government ministries establish business agreements and contracts for repair parts, fuel products and other supplies and services, the Iraqi Security Forces will become even more effective."



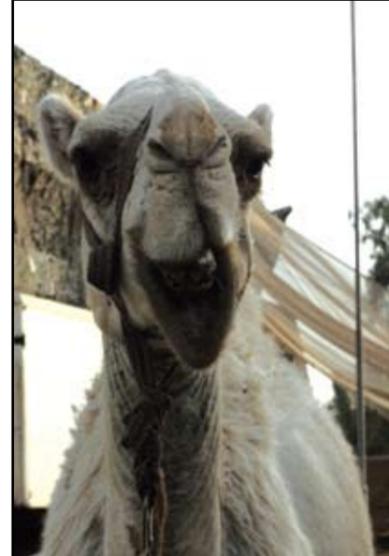
FRONT SIGHT POST:
SNAPSHOTS



Sgt. Christopher Trejo, a native of San Antonio, pitches a horseshoe during a tournament at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad July 4.



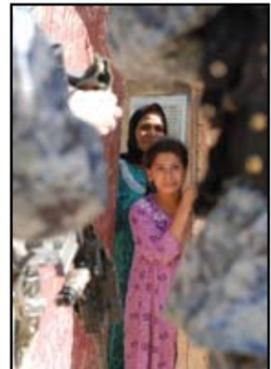
The Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment guidon is lowered in a salute with 1st Sgt. Reuben Tull, leading the way July 26 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad.



A friendly camel shows its smile July 13, at a joint security station in southern Baghdad.



Staff Sgt. Loyra Folmar, who hails from Houston, awaits the start of the Falcon 5 km Fun Run July 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad. Folmar, finished first in the women's category with a time 23 minutes, 47 seconds.



Leaders break new ground in Baghdad

Renovation project to beautify capital city's gateway

By SPC. DAVID HODGE

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Leaders from Multi-National Division – Baghdad, the Iraqi Security Forces and the Government of Iraq broke new ground July 5 in the median of a major thoroughfare in Baghdad.

Prominent Iraqi leaders manned three honorary shovels each to move a small piece of Earth that signaled the start of a large revitalization effort for a stretch of highway leading from the Baghdad International Airport east into the heart of the city.

"Today on Airport Road, we had the ground breaking ceremony, which the mayor of Baghdad presided over," said Col. Ted Martin, the commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team,

4th Infantry Division. "It was a great day for all of Iraq. I am proud to say that I stand beside my Iraqi brothers on this great day."

When people fly into the airport and come to visit Baghdad, they will drive down Airport Road and see the best Iraq has to offer, added Martin, who hails from Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

"Airport Road is the new beginning for southern Baghdad," Martin explained. "With the ISF standing side-by-side with the mayor of Baghdad, we are able to have this ceremony."

Many ISF, Rashid District Council, local and GoI leaders used the event to celebrate the large reconstruction project and to thank MND-B for its help with

security in the Iraqi capital.

"Progress starts from here," said Dr. Moayad Hamed, the lead contractor in charge of constructing the area the ceremony was held. "This is a positive step forward in the building of Iraq. I hope the government understands the hard work of Coalition Forces and moves only forward from here."

Hamed, who was in charge of the groundwork for the ceremony, said the many hours of labor paid off.

"I created a nice setting for the ceremony – in only took four days, with many workers out here 24-hours each day," Hamed said. "I hope it showed the people in attendance how nice Iraq could look with enough effort and security."

One of the adornments, a decorative-art sailboat, displayed both the Iraqi flag and 4th Inf. Div. patch.

"The ship represents the country of Iraq, and the sail represents

Staff Gen. Aboud Kanber, the Baghdad Operations Commander, carries a shovel loaded with dirt at a ground breaking ceremony marking the beginning of the Airport Road revitalization effort July 5 in southern Baghdad. "It was a great day for all of Iraq," said Col. Ted Martin, the commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Coalition Forces," explained Hamed. "The sail (CF) helps the boat (the country of Iraq) move forward."

A trademark of many Iraqi ceremonies, a man recited a prayer from the Quran.

Othman al Haythm

Karim said he enjoyed his opportunity to be a part of Iraq's history.

"I was excited to read from the Quran at the ceremony because the book comes from God," said Othman. "This construction project marks a good



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Dr. Saber al-Esawi, the mayor of Baghdad, speaks with reporters from many Iraqi media channels during the ground breaking ceremony for the Airport Road revitalization effort July 5 in southern Baghdad. The stretch of road reconstruction spans from the Baghdad International Airport for approximately nine miles. Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, worked with leaders from the Iraqi Security Forces and Rashid District Council to make the large construction project happen.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commander of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad thanks Dr. Moayad Hamed, the lead contractor in charge of the ceremony, July 5 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

An Iraqi National Police honor guard salutes the raising of his national flag at a ground breaking ceremony signifying the Airport Road revitalization project July 5 in southern Baghdad. The Iraqi NPs provided security for the ceremony and did a wonderful, professional job, said Col. Ted Martin, the commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.



day for Iraq.”

Dr. Saber al-Esawi, the mayor of Baghdad and the event’s guest speaker, spoke about the importance of Airport Road and how the ISF plays a vital part in allowing events like these to take place.

“The (ISF) played a huge role in chasing out the terrorists,” Esawi stated. “They lost many soldiers in the process. The residents took notice and know that without that support, they would have no projects.”

Over the past two months, the security situation has changed for the better, stated Martin, with many of the special-groups criminal cells and militia leaders departing the area.

“Due to the security of the Rashid district, we are now able to shift our efforts from full-spectrum combat operations toward helping rebuild and make life better for the people of Baghdad,” explained Martin. “That is victory my friends!”

Reconstruction projects similar to the Airport Road revitalization will continue to happen at many locations in the Rashid district, said Martin, adding that the people have decided that with the terrorists and criminals there is no future for Iraq.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

A member of the Iraqi National Police stands behind three gold-painted shovels during a ground breaking ceremony to mark the beginning of the Airport Road revitalization effort July 5 in southern Baghdad. Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, worked with leaders from Rashid District Council to make the large construction project happen.

TRAINING, FROM PAGE 7

said.

The NPs remain busy patrolling the communities and surrounding areas, looking for criminals smuggling contraband into Doura, and are successful in maintaining the current security on the ground, explained Jenkins.

“The 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div. is a good group of guys that are interacting with the population everyday,” Jenkins said. “Without that trust from the people, then we are not going to be able to police up this area.”

Additionally, Jenkins said that he believes the secret to the ISF establishing a lasting change lies in the Iraqi people and their commitment to bettering their neighborhoods and their communities.

The ISF are working confidently with the tribal sheiks and local leaders in

Doura to ensure that crime and national security issues are dealt with in a judicial process, said Capt. Parsana Deoki, commander, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., attached to 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

“The big picture: it is pretty quiet right now, but in the micro-picture, we see events everyday, like finding unexploded ordnance or improvised explosive devices down in the muhallahs, ... that’s when the NPs step in,” Deoki said.

Creek Company reinforces the ISF policing techniques and tactics, said Deoki, and the Iraqi NPs are eager to learn as they have adapted a “follow us and do-as-we-do approach” to dealing with criminals and terrorists.

The 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div. has accomplished much since assuming responsibility for the area in September 2007,

said Deoki, who said that the violence in the area is the lowest it has been in years.

“For us, it’s definitely a transition as we are pulling back and giving Iraqis more leeway to execute,” said Deoki, a graduate of New York University, who is looking forward to earning a pilot’s license upon redeploying. “The NPs are very confident and know what to do; they are professional soldiers, who know their job.”

Deoki’s company also attends weekly security meetings between the NPs and the volunteer neighborhood watch program Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq) to discuss security issues and problems in the Doura community.

“That has helped a lot because now the SOI and the NPs will actually go on patrols together and man joint checkpoints, whereas, initially

we had a problem convincing them to work together,” said Deoki, who hails from Queens, N.Y.

Deoki also said that in upcoming weeks, he looks forward to completing recent scopes of work for schools in his area of responsibility and is currently working several projects to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Doura, including plans for a new Neighborhood Advisory Center, for community leaders and citizens to meet.

The 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., is part of the 4th BCT, 10th Mountain Division, stationed at Fort Polk, La. The “Warriors” Bn. is currently deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in Baghdad, Iraq for a 15-month mission in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Iranian munitions seized by MND-B Soldiers in Rashid

**95% Brand New...
100% Confiscated**



Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers discovered a significant weapons cache July 15 during Operation Raider Nor’easter in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Soldiers from Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, discovered a large weapons cache while conducting a security operation in the Abu T’shir neighborhood.

The cache consisted of 45 107mm Iranian rockets, 152 81mm Iranian mortar rounds, 139 60mm Iranian mortar rounds, 25 120mm mortar rounds, one 60mm mortar tube with base plate, one 120mm mortar tube with base plate, 27 brand new AK-47 assault rifles, 12 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, approximately 10,000 rounds of new 7.62mm ammunition stamped March 2008, 20 rocket fuses, 10 RPG sights, and eight RPG tubes. An explosive

ordnance disposal unit responded to assess the cache.

While assessing the contents of the cache, Soldiers from Trp. C, or “Comanche,” arrested the two individuals responsible for the cache. The patrol hauled the cache and suspects to a nearby CF base for processing.

“The 1st ‘Raider’ Brigade continues their relentless pursuit of the enemy during Operation Raider Nor’easter producing this large cache discovery and the capture of these criminals,” said Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT Spokesman, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “The ‘Raider’ Soldiers are outside the wire every day providing a safe and secure environment for the Iraqi citizens and successfully reduced the daily attack levels from five to one in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad in four months.”

School refurbishment opens new doors in Doura community

By SPC. DAVID HODGE
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

In two months the refurbishment of a small compound in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad became a new home for more than 1,000 Iraqi boys and girls.

When the next school year resumes many young Iraqis from the Jaza'ir community, children ages 7 – 12, may not be able to recognize their school thanks to the efforts of Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers and local community leaders.

Abdul Karim Ali, the principal of Harat, said he believes the improved environment will enable the kids to concentrate better on their studies.

"The school looks very good; it is like a new house for the students," said Ali, who has served as the school principal for 25 years. "Now that we have a new-looking school it will allow the students to work harder and better."

A new generator supplies electricity to the school and new air conditioners hang in the windows of the classrooms providing cool air and light for the students and teachers, said Ali.

Among the other refurbishments are new doors, freshly painted interior and exterior, and chalkboards.

The funds for the project came from the Government of Iraq, said Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, the commander of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

Schools are a priority for funding from the GoI, added Watson, who hails from San Diego.

"This is one of the first schools to be refurbished in this area," Watson explained. "We hope to work our way through all the schools. We also realize a school can never be fixed once. It is used daily during the school year."

Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., "Warriors" Battalion, patrol Jaza'ir daily bringing stability and security to the citizens, said Capt. Parsana Deoki, the commander of Co. C, "Creek" Company.

"This school refurbishment is a testament to the level of care for the neighborhood," Deoki stated. "My Soldiers have taken the time to ensure work is done correctly and according to the scheduled scope of work."

A volunteer-based neighborhood security watch program, the Sons of Iraq, mans checkpoints throughout the area.

Capt. Yousif Ibrahim, the community Sons of Iraq leader and neighborhood councilman provided security for the school and neighborhood, explained Deoki, a native of Queens, N.Y.

"With the help of both Coalition Forces and the District Council, this place has become a school again," Ibrahim stated. "On behalf of our neighborhood, principal, and teachers we give a special thanks for giving



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Hashem Mahmood, the Deputy District Chairman for the Rashid district in southern Baghdad marks the reopening of the al-Harat Elementary School July 31 in the Jaza'ir community. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, provided over watch during the refurbishment efforts, which lasted two months.

us the security to make it happen."

Ibrahim said efforts to improve security in his neighborhood have had recent success and he hopes that success will lead to further improvements in his area.

"We have to give more attention to essential services and take the weapons and fighting away from here," Ibrahim said.

With members of the Neighborhood and District Council and 60 teachers on his side, the school principal has plans to add five new classrooms with hope of giving the children the best opportunity to learn.

An exterior view of the al-Harat Elementary School in the Jaza'ir community of southern Baghdad showcases some of the refurbishment efforts to the school July 31 in the Rashid district. The school houses approximately 60 teachers and 1,100 students. Among the improvements to the school were interior and exterior paint, new doors, air conditioners, and a generator to supply electricity.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Iraqi high school for girls adds new sports facilities

A young Iraqi girl practices her basketball shot while her team watches from behind her July 16 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. During the ceremony, the El-Manhal High School for Girls marked three new additions to their campus; an indoor volleyball court, a generator to supply power for the school, and outdoor basketball court.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO

An Iraqi girl serves a volleyball at an exhibition game during a ribbon cutting ceremony at the El-Manhal High School for Girls July 16 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

By SPC. DAVID HODGE

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

An all-girls high school held an event to celebrate the grand opening of several sports facilities and a new generator July 16 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

The El-Manhal High School for

A team of young Iraqi girls prepare for a serve during an exhibition game July 16 at the El-Manhal High School for Girls in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO

Girls christened the additions with an exhibition volleyball game and luncheon in the Shurta community of northwest Rashid.

"I am very happy today," said Maida Ismail Majwed, the principal of the school. "This event means a lot for the girls, and I believe it made them happy. Also, this is an important event for all the women of Iraq."

The renovation effort stemmed from a partnership with the Rashid District Council, the Ministry of Education, and Coalition Forces.

Capt. Thao Reed, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, worked closely with both parties to facilitate the improvements to the school.

Reed encouraged the Karkh II Sports Director of the Education District, Ahmed Abdullah, to establish a girls' sports program across Rashid, and advised the school board to renovate the school.

The ceremony showcased new additions to the school. The additions are an indoor volleyball court, an outdoor basketball and volleyball court, and a generator to supply the school with electricity.

"I am thankful for everything and will keep my experiences here today with me for the rest of my life," said Alia Ahmed, a student at the school and avid athlete.

Ahmed participated in the exhibition volleyball game and said she enjoys the chance to have fun and represent her country by participating in sports.

"I hope the sports stay in operation here and continue to develop for all female sports," Ahmed said.

"Each female has their own interests but sports are something that everybody likes," she added.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO

Ahmed, whose mother is a sports teacher, likes to play sports, but says Iraqi traditions shun against female sports.

Majwed said she believes women are also oppressed and living in darkness.

"I hope we are someday equal to women from other cultures," Majwed stated. "We have a lot of ambition. We just haven't had a chance to show our abilities."

"I hope this is the first step towards a glorious future," she added.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Ahmed Abdullah, the Karkh II Sports Director of the Education District cuts a ribbon marking the addition of a generator for the school during a ceremony at the El-Manhal High School for Girls July 16 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

New Saydiyah playground

putting smiles on children's faces

By CAPT. MARK MILLER
4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt.

As daylight's last remaining hours set over the horizon June 23, and the summertime heat of Baghdad's Rashid district lost the spike of its intensity; a crowd could be seen forming even from a distance.

It was a special day for the gathering of citizens and children from Saydiyah, a community located in the southern part of the Iraqi capital, as they gathered for the long-awaited official opening of a new playground in their neighborhood.

"I think the children will really enjoy this, and I am honored to be here at the official opening," said Maj. Peter Sicoli, the executive officer for the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

The Saydiyah Support Council Chairman, Ali Abu Nebid, alongside others in attendance cut the ceremonial ribbon to officially open the playground.

Ali Abu Nebid, the Saydiyah Support Council Chairman, celebrates the official opening of a playground June 23 in the Saydiyah neighborhood of southern Baghdad. "These kids are great," said Capt. Drew Betson, the commander of Company A, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. "They deserve a place like this to enjoy just being kids."

Ali Abu Nebid, the Saydiyah Support Council Chairman, rides a merry-go-round with children after the opening of a playground June 23 in the Saydiyah neighborhood of Baghdad's Rashid district. "I think the children will really enjoy this, and I am honored to be here at the official opening," said Maj. Peter Sicoli, the executive officer for the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

While the children played on the newest addition to their community, Nebid made it a point to thank Coalition Forces.

"The people appreciate you being here, and I appreciate all the help from the Americans," Nebid stated. "Not only with the logistics of helping to build this park, but for their assistance with the Iraqi Security Forces to make this area safe enough for a park."

While many played on the swings and teeter-totter, Nebid hopped on the merry-go-round with a group of playful children.

Capt. Drew Betson, the commander of Company A, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., is responsible for the Saydiyah area and has worked with the local support council as well as ISF to turn the playground idea into a reality.

Betson, who hails from Midway, Ga., was glad to see the day when children were actually playing in the park.

"These kids are great," said Betson, as a crowd of children surrounded him speaking familiar English phrases. "They deserve a place like this to enjoy just being kids."

The families enjoyed the cooling effects of the covered benches while watching their children play.

This is not the first improvement that has occurred in recent months in Saydiyah. The 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., "Tuskers" Battalion, working in conjunction with Nebid and their ISF counterparts, have recently provided generated power for Saydiyah's Tejara Street. More projects are tentatively scheduled to open in the future.

The Tuskers are a part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, stationed out of Fort Stewart, Ga., and are currently serving a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

SISTER SUPPORT, PAGE 10

look at me and ask if it is good to go," explained Haltom, a happily married man of 17 years with four children. "I say it is, and they trust me."

The other military service fighting alongside the Raider Brigade, the U.S. Air Force, works closely with both the Navy EWO and the Soldiers.

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Joel McCullough, a joint terminal attack controller assigned to the Tactical Air Control Party, 11th Air Support Operations Squadron from Fort Hood, Texas, works in the brigade tactical operations center coordinating airspace between different missions throughout the operating environment and counter indirect fire missions.

"Working with the Army is pretty much all I know," McCullough stated.

This is McCullough's first deployment in his two years of service, and he is currently receiving on-the-job-training to move from brigade to a combat-arms battalion.

"Being a JTAC is what I wanted to do," explained McCullough, who hails from Findlay, Ohio. "Normally my job takes us down to the battalion level to go out on missions, but since security has been so good, I have been at the brigade working in the TOC."

McCullough says working daily with the Air Force liaisons in the brigade is a good experience for him.

"I work around some high-ranking people," McCullough said. "They are knowledgeable and it is an all-around good experience."

Haltom believes each service relies on the others to accomplish any mission.

"We can't do it by ourselves; there are too many capabilities each service brings to the fight," Haltom stated.



CAPT. MARK MILLER/4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt.



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STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Staff Maj. Gen. Adnon, operations officer for the Iraqi National Police, shows off an Iraqi NP mine resistant vehicle July 19 after the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad's ISF Iron Claw Academy graduation ceremony held at a combined combat outpost in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Iraqi National Police graduate 1st BCT first ISF Iron Claw Academy in July

BY STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Iraqi National Police completed another step in setting the conditions for transitioning security operations from the responsibility of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Coalition Forces to Iraqi Security Forces, completing a 10-day academic course that provides hands-on instruction and training on route clearance equipment and operations.

A select group of platoons from the Iraqi National Police of the 1st Mechanized Brigade graduated the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division's ISF Iron Claw Academy July 19 during an inaugural ceremony at a combined combat outpost in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

"It is an important day for the National Police," said Col. Marc Van Oene, team chief, 6010 National Police Transition Training Team, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. "The 1st Mech. Bde is the first unit to get this kind of equipment and the training on this kind of equipment; and, they are out there keeping the routes safe and secure for the Iraqi people and safe for the coalition forces."

The Iron Claw Academy was initially created by Coalition Forces to train combat engineers on the necessary tactics, techniques and procedures needed to identify and clear roads and highways of improvised explosive devices, said Capt. Scott Swilley, commander, Company E, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

The ISF Iron Claw Academy taught at Forward Operating Base Falcon is modeled after the five-day coalition course taught at Camp Liberty that is mandatory for route clearance teams arriving in Iraq, said Swilley.

The Soldiers of "Beast" Co. identified the need for ISF route clearing training after they began to conduct patrols and route clearing operations with the Iraqi National Police from the 1st



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Brig. Gen. Shakir (center), commander of the Iraqi National Police's 1st Mechanized Brigade awards certificates of graduation for Iraqi combat engineers July 19 during the inaugural graduation ceremony of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Iraqi Security Forces Iron Claw Academy at a combined combat outpost in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Mech. Bde., said Swilley.

"As we have partnered with the 1st Mech. Bde., we have identified a platoon of engineers within their organization and started training them with grass roots patrolling efforts," explained Swilley, a native of Amite, La. "We then began working into a dedicated 10-day program of instruction to certify the platoon in route clearance operations."

Currently assigned to the 1st Special Troops Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, Beast Co.'s combat engineers taught the Iraqi NPs how to prepare for patrols, maintain contact with other patrols, integrate explosives ordnance disposal units into their operations, and defeat IEDs, said Swilley, the lead trainer for the ISF Iron Claw Academy.

"The 1st Mech. Bde.'s performance has been spectacular," Swilley said. "They have shown great promise, and I am very optimistic at the prospect of integrating them into joint patrols and eventual independent route clearing operations."

Swilley said that he plans to continue the academy and hopes the ISF Iron Claw training will become available to other NP units working with the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., throughout the Rashid district.

"I always feel and I think that most Soldiers on patrol feel that when they have seen route clearance go by they feel a little bit better about their mission," said Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Seaman, 1st Special Troops Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

The NPs are eager and ready to begin their mission, said Seaman, a combat engineer, who resides in Harker Heights, Texas.

With the right equipment and the right training, the ISF will be ready to assume responsibility for Rashid, he said.

The Soldiers of Co. E, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., are doing an outstanding job, said Lt. Col. Dave Hill, commander, 1st Special Troops Bn., 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

The unit led the training and continues to clear major routes with the NPs everyday, preparing the newly graduated class to take responsibility for maintaining Airport Road and other major routes in the Rashid district, he explained.

"I think there is not a better place for the (NPs) to start to demonstrate that they are in the lead than right here," said Hill, who hails from Mountain Top, Pa. "It has been a great experience for us to work with the Shurta Wadaniya (national police). They are doing a very important job, and we will continue to partner out here so these roads stay safe."

MNF-I CSM visits Raider Bde. Soldiers, Rashid district, Iraqi NP checkpoints

By SPC. DAVID HODGE
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

The U.S. Army's top noncommissioned officer in Iraq visited Forward Operating Base Falcon to speak with "Raider" Brigade senior noncommissioned officers and to visit Iraqi National Police checkpoints in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad July 1.

Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, the senior enlisted leader for Multi-National Forces – Iraq, spent the day talking with Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and visiting with members of the Iraqi Security Forces at various checkpoints in the Risalah community.

"The greatest (NCO) Academy in the Army is right here in Iraq," said Hill, who hails from Memphis, Tenn. "Nowhere else can the leaders spend 24 hours – every day – with their Soldiers; nowhere can Soldiers be taught to do their job while faced with combat conditions."

After visiting a few 1st BCT "Raider" Brigade units stationed on FOB Falcon, Hill sat down at the Raider Café dining facility to answer questions from senior NCOs and presented his coin to Soldiers who were nominated for their outstanding performance since their arrival in Iraq.

"Some of these Soldiers deserve more than a coin," Hill explained to the leaders in attendance.

By the time the Soldiers return home to the United States, they will have as many medals as Audie Murphy, Hill jokingly stated. However, even the revered Audie Murphy does not have an MNF-I CSM's coin.

"These Soldiers will always be able to say the top enlisted Soldier in Iraq took time out of his busy schedule to come to my FOB and give me a coin – and they will be reflecting on the wrong



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, the top enlisted leader for Multi-National Forces – Iraq, presents a coin for excellence to Pvt. Matthew Rivera, a signal support systems specialist from Toabaja, Puerto Rico, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, July 1 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad.

thing," Hill explained. "What these Soldiers should be reflecting on are the Soldiers they work with every day. They are the ones that appreciate most what you do. It is because of those Soldiers who nominated you based on your performance."

After answering questions for the senior NCOs, Hill and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, the senior enlisted leader of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., donned their gear and set out for the Risalah neighborhood to visit the joint security station and policemen from the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division.

After a short meeting and mission brief with Iraqi Sgt. Maj. Mohammed Abu Mustafa, the senior enlisted leader of the 3rd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div., the combined patrol paid visits to different checkpoints along a major thoroughfare in the area.

"Before we started operations in the Risalah area, it was controlled by militias," said Mustafa. "By working as a team, we beat them and now have control of this area. After we got the area secure, we moved our focus to providing more services to the citizens. That has contributed to much of our success."

Upon completion of the day, Hill thanked Bobb and his Raider Brigade Soldiers for showing him how a few of the many different jobs at FOB Falcon contribute to the war effort.

"I appreciate the opportunity to come and spend some time with the Soldiers," Hill stated.

Bobb said that Hill is one of the most down-to-earth command sergeants major whom he has had the privilege to meet.

"With knowledge and experience spanning the last three decades, Hill's guidance is unparalleled," Bobb said.



SPC. DAVID HODGE/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, the top enlisted leader for Multi-National Forces – Iraq, speaks with the commander of an Iraqi National Police checkpoint during battlefield circulation July 1 in the Risalah neighborhood of Baghdad's Rashid district. Hill, who hails from Memphis, Tenn., visited the Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and conducted Iraqi checkpoint inspections.



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1ST BCT PAO

Two Iraqi Soccer Teams face off in the Rashid Olympics Masafee Hayy Championship Soccer Game July 31 in the Masafee community of Doura, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Rashid Olympics Hayy Championship Soccer Tournament underway

BY STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS
1st BCT PAO, 4th INF. DIV., MND-B

The Rashid Olympic Games are underway in southern Baghdad as 14 teams compete in a local soccer tournament for the chance to become champions.

Two teams from the Masafee Hayys, part of the Doura community in southeastern Baghdad, faced off in a championship match at a community soccer field July 31 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers played a key role in the event, working as advisors to the local community leaders and best of all observing the

games, said Capt. Thao Reed, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Reed said that her primary role is to help the Iraqi leaders from the local neighborhood councils with their initial planning and ongoing efforts to create a community program for Iraqis.

“The games are very well-organized with officials, referees, half-times and rules,” Reed said. “It shows the potential of what the Iraqi leaders have when they really want to do something.”

Local Iraqis gather to cheer for their favorite Masafee team July 31 during the Rashid Olympics Masafee Hayy Championship Game, a community-led sports program.



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Hashem Mahmood, the Deputy District Chairman for the Rashid district in southern Baghdad met with Capt. Thao Reed, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad July 31 to promote the Rashid Olympics Masafee Hayy Championship Game in Doura.

Reed said that the games provide the Iraqis a sense of normalcy, and in the long term, the people see their local leaders doing something good for the community.

“Through sports they are also building a loyalty base with the kids,” Reed said, “building pride and respect within the communities.”

Saif, a member of Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq), said that he is very happy to see the two teams play in Masafee.

“Things have changed in the last year,” Saif said. “Last year, no one could play. Everyone had to stay in their house, but now we can come together and be together.”

The Abna al-Iraq, a community directed Neighborhood Watch program, in which local Iraqis provide extra security to communities in Baghdad, provided security for the soccer match, which members of the Rashid District Council and the Director of Masafee attended, he said.

“I help to ensure security in the area,” Saif said. “I help to make this event possible for the Iraqis to come together and play soccer together.”

The Rashid Olympics Hayy Championship Soccer tournament will continue through the month of August; the Rashid District Championship game is tentatively scheduled for September.

Pray for the Prayer Warriors who pray for us

BY MAJ. TRENTON LEWIS
1st BCT Chaplain

This month's magazine marks the 1st Brigade Combat Team's fourth month since the Transfer of Authority ceremony in the current operating environment. Soldiers have experienced the loss of fellow service members. Some service members have lost loved ones in the rear.

All in all, the 1st BCT has experienced a blessing unlike many thought. Soldiers have experienced the blessing of no major losses due to an onslaught of enemy attacks on the forward operating base. While the future activity against the FOB by the enemy is uncertain, Soldiers are certain of this one thing: that the prayers of the warriors both here and back home are being answered. I encourage the prayer warriors to continue their prayers for the protection of the Soldiers, who are forward deployed, home station comrades, and Families back home. I encourage them to continue to pray for the return of the remaining forward deployed 1st BCT members.

James 5:16b states "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous [person] availeth much." Clearly James' guidance on prayer has had a significant impact upon the lives of leaders and the Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Families during this time of separation. Our prayer warriors are in the fight with us. I would like for each service member of faith and those civilians of faith supporting combat operations to return the favor. Pray for the strength and perseverance of the prayer warrior partners back home. For sure, while they don't face the austere living conditions the Soldiers currently live under, they face the ever volatile American economy, which adversely affects many prayer warriors with issues like high gas prices and the mortgage crisis. Many prayer warriors have wrapped their wounds in order to volunteer to pray and to send care packages to service members all over the world. They model Henri Nouwen's "wounded healer" concept of wrapping up their personal wounds to help treat the wounds of others and then returning to unwrap and treat their own wounds. In practicing this wounded healer concept many of our prayer warriors eventually will achieve their healings too.

I encourage all Soldiers to practice the wounded healer concept. Instead of getting stuck nursing their own issues, treat and wrap them up to free themselves to help someone else. Once they help others treat and wrap their wounds, return to their own. Doing this will eventually effect their healing and they will realize in the end that the wounds aren't as devastating as they thought.

Until next time, may God's favor continue its reign over the 1st BCT. I close this month with the words of Floyd W. Tomkins, from my *Leaves of Gold* anthology:

LITTLE THINGS

"A cup of cold water" – a little thing!
But life is made up of little things,
and he who would rise to higher
usefulness is wise if he cherishes the
loving yet seeming trifles of daily
living.

Raider Safe

BY BOB TOPOLEWSKI
1st BCT Safety Officer

The "dog days of summer" have arrived with temperatures consistently exceeding 110 degrees and often reaching 120; staying safe during the hottest months of the year takes prior planning and teamwork.

Leaders must use risk management in order to minimize the hazard that the excessive heat poses to Soldiers. Before every patrol ask the question: "How can Soldiers reduce the risk of heat injury?"

Reminding everyone to hydrate and eat on a regular basis may seem mundane, but it is the constant reminder that will help win the battle against the heat. Ensuring that a large supply of cold water is stocked should be part of every pre-mission inspection.

Each member of the combat patrol must know the signs of a Soldier becoming a heat

casualty, and we must monitor each other.

Dizziness, headache, nausea, unsteady walk, fatigue, and muscle cramps are the symptoms a person will display as they begin to succumb to the heat. Often an individual will not realize how bad they look until they are rendered combat ineffective. It is easier for an observer to spot the warning signs and help take quick action to prevent serious heat injury.

Let the chain of command know so they can replace the Soldier and allow him time to recover. If we watch out for each other the risk of heat injury will be greatly reduced.

Soldiers have several months of extreme heat to look forward to, how it is dealt with will be crucial to the overall mission success.



STAFF SGT. BRENT WILLIAMS/1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Spc. Hannah Fraser, a combat medic from Wichita, Kan., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, administrates an intravenous injection.

On Point with...



Local Iraqi Police run through training drills instructed by the U.S. Air Force Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, MND-B, at a local police station in Abu T'shir in southern Baghdad July 31.

COMBAT

U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Kelvin Surgener and Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan Kretschmer recently began serving a combat tour with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman, Jarid Warfield, Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, MND-B, enters bio-metric portfolio information into a Hand-Held Inter-Agency Identification Equipment, in Baghdad Aug. 2.



U.S. Air Force Airmen with Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, MND-B, conduct police transition training with the local Iraqi Police in Abu T'shir, Baghdad July 31.



Local Iraqi children hang out at the markets in Abu T'shir, Baghdad July 31.

CAMERA



U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Jim Howard, with Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, MND-B, performs a bench press at a local gym in Abu T'shir in southern Baghdad July 31.