

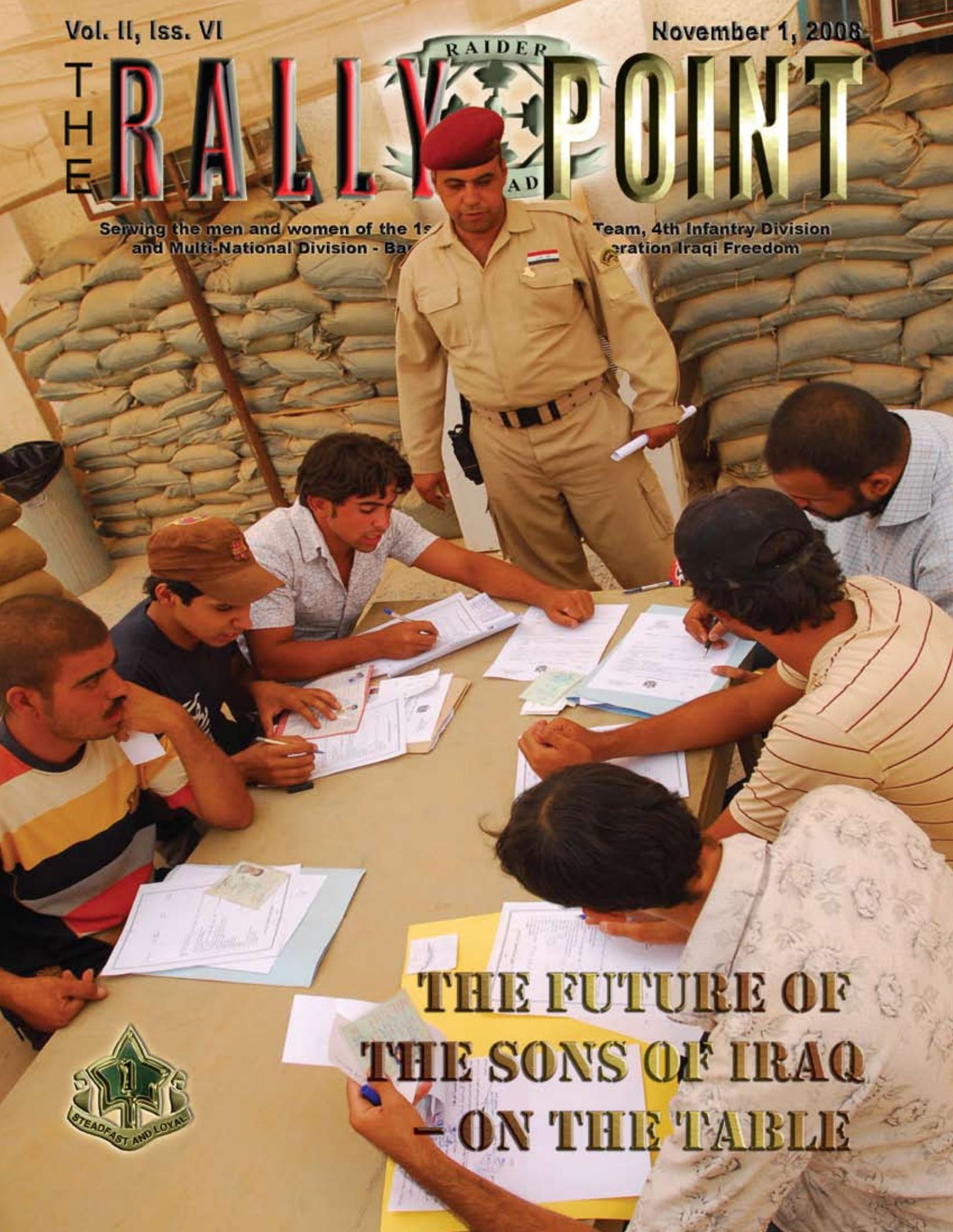
Vol. II, Iss. VI

November 1, 2008

THE RALLY POINT

Serving the men and women of the 1st
and Multi-National Division - Baghdad

Team, 4th Infantry Division
Operation Iraqi Freedom



**THE FUTURE OF
THE SONS OF IRAQ
— ON THE TABLE**



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THE RALLY POINT

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond
4th Infantry Division Commander
Multi-National Division - Baghdad

Col. Ted Martin
1st BCT Commander

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb
1st BCT Command Sergeant Major

Maj. David Olson
1st BCT Public Affairs Officer

Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams
1st BCT Public Affairs NCOIC

Sgt. David Hodge
Staff Writer

Staff Sgt. Vin Stevens
Broadcast NCO



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To contribute to Raider Brigade's *The Rally Point*, contact the 1st BCT Public Affairs Office or send stories, photos and information to david.j.olson1@us.army.mil or brent.michael.williams@us.army.mil.

Significant contributors to RP Vol. II, Iss. VI include: Capt. Brett Walker, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division; Capt. Jeffrey Tounge, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Division; and Capt. Mark Miller, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

LEADER'S BOOK

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team – welcome to the latest edition of The Raider Brigade Rally Point!

The division commander often says that “Soldiers are our credentials,” because they truly are. Our Soldiers ask for so little, and they do so much for our Army and for the nation. As Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, former Army chief of staff, once said, “People are not in the Army; people are the Army.”

Our Soldiers have maintained a warrior mind set while serving in harm’s way. Resilience and the Warrior Ethos sometimes apply in more situations than those requiring physical courage. An essential part of the warrior mind set is discipline. Discipline holds a team together, while resilience, the Warrior Ethos, competence and confidence motivate Soldiers to continue the mission against all odds.

As part of our “Raider Bayonet” training, which is training designed to retrain platoons on critical wartime skills and culminating with a personal “talk to” by me, I always ask junior officers and noncommissioned officers to define what leaders do, the most common response is, “Taking care of Soldiers.” Yet I still find Soldiers in patrols throughout Baghdad not wearing seat belts, gunners not wearing their restraints, and Soldiers not wearing their complete Personal Protective Equipment.

So what does it really mean to “Take care of Soldiers?” I say to them; it means holding Soldiers to high standards so they can



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Michael Bobb**

wives that you will do everything within your ability to bring them back home safe.

In the end, it’s about character and leading by example, it’s about putting the unit and your Soldiers above personal self-interest, career, and comfort. For our leaders, it requires you to put the lives of our Soldiers above your personal desire for self-preservation. The three attributes of a leader - character, presence, and intellectual capacity - can be applied as your mental checklist to check on the welfare and readiness of your Soldiers.

Our nation needs us more than ever. Our actions everyday - while on duty, while deployed to Iraq, working in a combat zone - are a direct reflection of our values and our commitment to excellence. As Soldiers, our actions characterize the very nature of the Army’s strengths and its attributes.

As the Brigade Command Sergeant Major, I challenge all leaders, NCOs and Soldiers of this brigade to ensure everyone within your unit maintains situational awareness and remains focused on the mission.

Soldiers of the 1st BCT, *RAIDER SAFE! RAIDER STRONG!
RAIDER 9 Out.*



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Capt. Sean Tennimon, a native of Mobile, Ala., and commander of Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, clears Spc. Neil Brinson, a cavalry scout from Methuen, Mass., Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., Oct. 13 at the clearing barrels on Forward Operating Base Falcon, after a security patrol in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

*A true leader has the confidence to stand alone,
the courage to make tough decisions, and the
compassion to listen to the needs of others. He
does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one
by the equality of his actions and the integrity of
his intent.*

Gen. Douglas McArthur

MND-B Soldiers, local leaders allay Sons of Iraq fears of dissolving security program

Story by Capt. Brett Walker
2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Anxiety is evident throughout the neighborhood of Doura regarding the transition for the responsibility of the Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq) security program from the control of Coalition Forces to the Government of Iraq.

At a Neighborhood Council meeting in Doura Sep. 25, several Sons of Iraq leaders offered a boisterous protest to the Iraqi National Police taking full control of their program scheduled to occur in October.

"The National Police do not respect us," explained Muthaser Thaer Mehdi, the appointed leader of a Sons of Iraq team, one of ten in the Doura community, located next to the Tigris River in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. "If you let them take control of the Sons of Iraq program, they will fire all of us and then arrest us all."

Led by Muthaser, a former general in the Saddam-era Iraqi Army, the local SoI leaders accused the National Police of unfair targeting and blatant attempts at humiliating the Sons of Iraq.

Hashem Mahmoud, the deputy district chairman for the Rashid district, which is comprised of 1.6 million Iraqis, including Doura, responded to the complaints.

"You are focused on the wrong thing," he replied. "It is true that some members of the Sons of Iraq have been detained by the National Police but far more of them have established

positive relationships with the National Police in which they share information and assist each other in providing security."

Hashem, a well-respected member of the Jabouri tribe with strong connections in the Government of Iraq, silenced all in attendance.

The Soldiers and leaders of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, assigned responsibility for the Doura area, continue to focus their efforts in the transition of the SoI program to the control of the Iraqi Security Forces.

Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, battalion commander of the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., said that he conducts frequent meetings with various influential members of the Iraqi government, ISF and SoI representatives on the matter of transitioning the concerned local citizens program to Iraqi National Police supervision.

"I have great confidence that the 7th Brigade of the 2nd National Police Division will manage the transition properly," Watson said. "If current members want to seek alternative employment, we have had considerable success arranging follow-on opportunities."

The Fire and Effects Cell of the 2nd Bn., 4th

Inf. Regt., managed the Sons of Iraq program in Doura for the past eleven months.

Spc. Kristopher Prusac, a forward observer, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., elaborated on the registration and transfer of SoI members for the transition scheduled to take place in October.

Prusac, a native of Largo, Fla., explained that during the most recent SoI payday in Doura, approximately 100 members of the program resigned for various reasons and some of the SoI volunteers exceeding 50 years of age retired because their excessive age prohibited them from providing capable service in the security realm.

Prusac's records also indicate that many SoI are voluntarily leaving the program in favor of private business ventures.

According to Watson, that process is being encouraged by microgrant offers wherein former Sons of Iraq members are eligible for the equivalent of up to \$5,000 U.S. to start their own business.

In the last month alone, said Prusac, 55 members of the Doura Sons of Iraq program left to explore alternative

employment options.

Additional accommodations have been made for members of the Abna al-Iraq who have not been successful in finding other jobs or are only interested in working in security-related positions, explained Watson.

Sgt. 1st Class Jason Scorpio of Bosque Farms, N.M., who serves as the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.'s FECC noncommissioned officer-in-charge, assisted in the establishment of a program that leverages some of the most respected and connected citizens of the Doura area to provide job placement assistance for its residents.

Employment assistance managers can be contacted by members of the Sons of Iraq program, recently released detainees, or any other resident of Doura seeking legitimate employment, he said, adding that the EAMs were especially selected by the battalion commander and are paid through the U.S. Army.

Another step of progression towards Iraqi self-governance, the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., has transitioned the responsibility of paying the Sons of Iraq to the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., stationed in Doura.

In administering their first round of payments to the Abna al-Iraq, the National Police identified a few discrepancies

After a hard four days' work at joint security stations and combat outposts in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, the Sons of Iraq were successfully transferred to Iraqi Security Forces' control, which occurred Oct. 1. The Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, worked diligently with Iraqi National Police from the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division to ensure all Sons of Iraq are accounted for and properly transitioned.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

in previous payments. They noted that some of the members of the Doura Sons of Iraq program were already members of the Iraqi National Police or the Iraqi Army.

Others were full-time government representatives, and still others were collecting government retirement benefits. Policies regarding the Sons of Iraq program prohibit its participants from drawing two pay checks for government service.

The violators were released from service with the local SoI.

Capt. Parsana Deoki, of Queens, New York, who is the commander of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., works very closely with the Sons of Iraq as well as the National Police and Iraqi civilians.

In describing the contributions that the SoI continue to make in Doura, Deoki said "the SoI do a good job of policing the muhallahs. They are the first responders to most incidences in the muhallahs and they are the first trusted sources the residents look to for security."

The transition of the SoI to NP supervision and the specter of possible future termination of the program may evoke scrutiny of the entire SoI program, but such criticisms are not shared by the U.S. Soldiers participating in its implementation.

"The (Sons of Iraq) is the one group that is most likely to spot anyone who does not belong or is not from their neighborhood," said Capt. Ryan Edwards of Neoga, Ill., commander of Co. B, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.

Some skeptics have also suggested that termination of the Sons of Iraq program will result in many of its former members resorting to terrorism.

Deoki scoffed at the notion of large-scale migration to illicit activity.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge

Two members of the Abna al-Iraq, Sons of Iraq, embrace each other outside their headquarters July 31 in the Jaza'ir community of southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

"The National Police have a detailed dossier on all of them," he said, referencing the paper work required to gain admittance to the Sons of Iraq program.

"We have their names, photos, addresses, and finger prints on file, among other things," explained Watson. "Besides, there are minimal traces of organized militias remaining in Doura."

Fear of capture aside, Deoki said that there is a more wholesome rationale for the former members of the Sons of Iraq to remain productive members of the new Iraqi society.

"They have an understanding of what effect their former activity has on their country," he explained. "They can see the effect that stabilization has on their homes."

"Their family and friends see them everyday protecting their muhallahs and working an honest job. They have little incentive to give all that up."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge

Members of the Abna al-Iraq, or Sons of Iraq, gather on a southern Baghdad street as Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers conduct a cordon and knock operation inside their muhallah. Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, routinely conduct "soft" operations instead of raids, searches, and clearances.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Capt. Yousif Ibrahim, a Sons of Iraq leader and neighborhood councilman greets Capt. Emiliano Tellado, commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, before the opening of a local school July 31 in the Jaza'ir community of southern Baghdad's Rashid district while Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, commander of the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., "Warriors," awaits to introduce himself.

Raider Soldiers transition SoI into job-focused skills training at Civil Services Department

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Acceptance letters in hand, nearly 450 Sons of Iraq left their AK-47 rifles at home to register for job-focused training Oct. 6-10 at the Civil Services Department located in the Jihad community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

The vocational classes, scheduled to begin Oct. 18, is the newest initiative by Coalition Forces to assist the members of the Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq) find alternative employment after the security program's recent transition to the control of the Government of Iraq, said Capt. Ryan Gavin, commander of Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

"The Jihad Civil Service Department started as a civil works project meant to create a work force of about 400 locally trained Iraqis that would repair and improve services throughout the area," said Gavin, an armor officer from Kingston, N.Y.

The students participating in the Job Training Focus Program can choose from medical training, clerical and administration training, telecommunications, civil and mechanical engineering, vehicle maintenance and commercial driving, as well as other vocational courses, explained Gavin.

"The program is very important to Rashid," he said. "It has the potential to create a more skilled work force that will then be able to improve services throughout the district.

"It is also important in the transition of Sons of Iraq, as it provides the opportunity to reduce the number of SoIs by transitioning them into the workforce."

Under Gavin's command, the Soldiers of Co. C helped to secure the work site and supervised the construction and renovation of the CSD building

and classrooms.

The company also worked with the local community council members to place local Iraqi residents and Sons of Iraq into the training program.

"We have been working with the local councils to try and get the word out that we have these employment opportunities," said 1st Lt. Adam Maxwell, an artillery officer assigned to Co. C, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Gainful employment within the communities is an important aspect to ensuring that security in the muhallahs continues to improve in southern Baghdad's Rashid district, said Maxwell, who hails from Santa Maria, Calif.

"We are trying to get a lot of these guys trained so that they can stay gainfully employed in the future," he said. "The local SoI are attending this class to begin working toward finding employment in other fields and stay off the streets."

Employment initiatives offered in programs such as the CSD will help to keep unemployed Iraqis from falling under the influence of criminal elements and gangs in Baghdad, he explained.

"Regulars" Soldiers of the 22nd Inf. Regt. are also charged with providing local security for the registration process and the first day of the vocational classes, said 1st Lt. Jonathan Muir, an infantry platoon leader from Pittsburgh, assigned to Co. C, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

The Soldiers continue to monitor the SoI involved in the program, ensuring that those registering in the fledgling program are searched and escorted to their classes without incident, explained Muir.

"There's a lot of pessimism among the Iraqi people about the validity of the program," Muir said. "Overall though, the end result is the Sons of Iraq have achieved a lot of security and stability in the country."

When Abna al Iraq Wussam

arrived at the CSD in Jihad to register for his classes scheduled to begin later in the week, he said that he was unsure of exactly what the results of the three-month program will yield.

"We will receive vocational training to help prepare the security guards for job opportunities outside the Iraqi Security (Forces)," Wussam said. "If there are no jobs, then I want to stay in the SoI."

Wussam explained that when he volunteered for the schooling, he did not care about the increase of money he stands to make in the vocational training, where he will be paid \$326 dollars per month to attend the vocational classes.

"We just want to make this country better and this area safer," he added.

Wussam also said that he is happy about the CSD program and hopes that more Sons of Iraq in the area will have the opportunity to participate in the training.

"The SoI program was never meant to be a permanent thing," said Capt. Ryan Garling, commander of Co. E, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

Established more than 18 months ago, the Sons of Iraq, a Coalition Forces-sponsored program involving more than 99,000 concerned Iraqi citizens charged to provide security for their neighborhoods and communities throughout Baghdad and Iraq, transferred to the control of the Iraqi Government Oct. 1 and will eventually be dissolved.

"We are taking care of the Sons of Iraq, who are here right



Staff Sgt. Gregory Savvas, a squad leader and combat engineer from Killeen, Texas, assigned to Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, searches a student of the Job Focus Training Program during the first day of registration Oct. 15.

now, and when they need a job later on in life, right after their three-month training course, we give them a job where they will begin making more money than they did in the SoI,” he explained.

Coalition Forces began working with the SoI contractors in West Rashid, distributing school applications with job descriptions for the different skill sets taught at the CSD, explained Garling, whose unit provides security and over watch for two muhallahs, or neighborhoods, in the Hayy Jihad-area.

Upon completion of the registration process, the students are dropped from the SoI program and enrolled in the vocational training at the CSD receiving approximately \$326 per month during the three-month course, said Garling, who supervised the enrollment of more than 190 SoI into the CSD program.

The Government of Iraq is paying for the classes, added Garling, who also said that approximately 20 percent of the remaining SoI members employed by the ISF will only make approximately \$250 per month.

“The classes they have here were specifically selected as jobs needed in the Rashid area,” he added. “These jobs are actually needed to rebuild the area.”

Based on the program’s success, other CSD programs will be created for the Rashid district and Baghdad, he added.

“Rashid has always been an area of doing prototype work, making something happen and then hopefully letting the rest of Iraq benefit from it,” Garling said. “Hopefully they will see success here, and it will continue to East and West Rashid and then eventually head up North.”



An instructor at the Jihad Civil Services Department in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, leads an orientation briefing to arriving vocational students seeking job-focused training in marketable skill sets for future employment in Iraq’s workplace. The students enrolled in the training program will begin classes Oct. 18 for marketable job skills.



1st Lt. Casey Staker, a native of Cincinnati and executive officer of Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, checks acceptance letters for the Jihad Civil Services Department Job Training Focus Program, Oct. 5, against a list of names compiled from 450 applicants from the Sons of Iraq in the West Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

REGULARS SOLDIERS MAINTAIN WEST RASHID

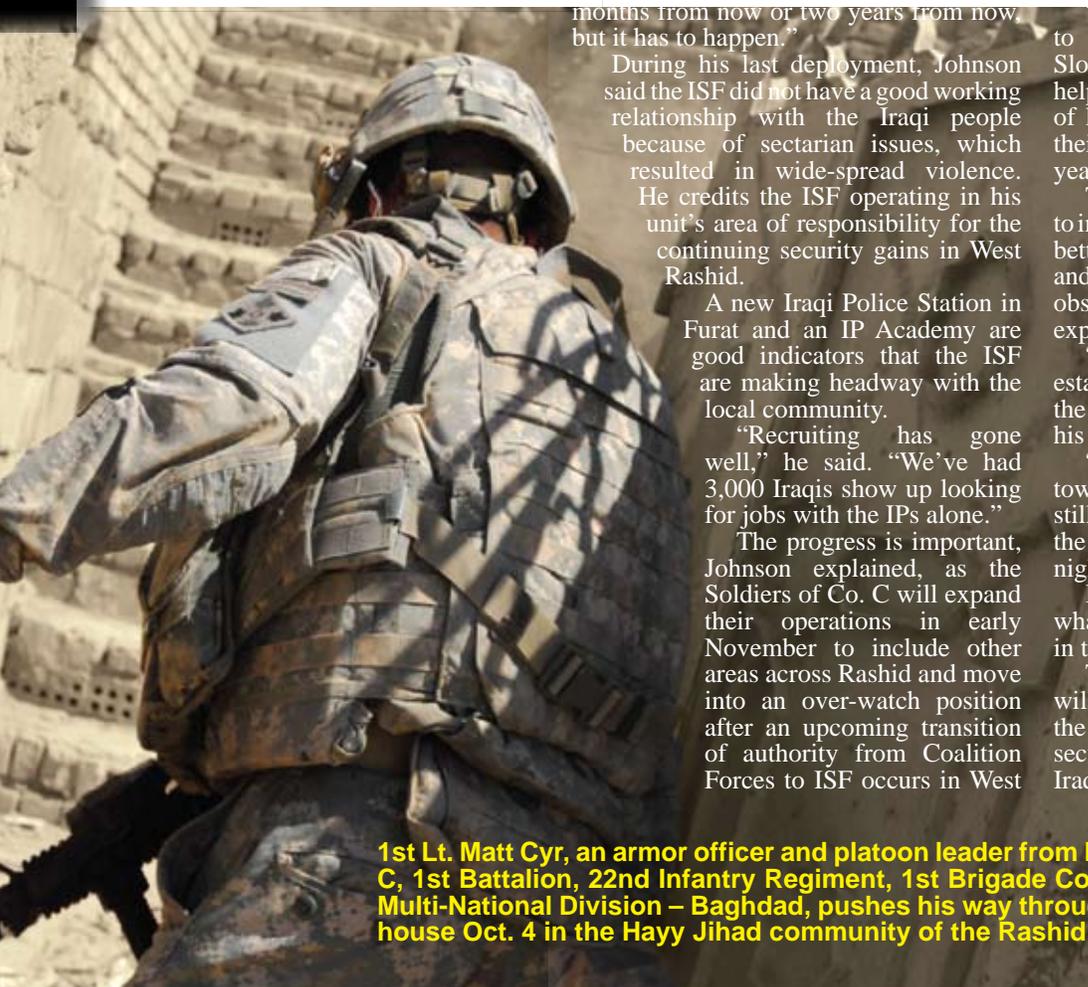
Staff Sgt. Bryan Stewart, an armor crewmember from Rock Island, Ill., assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, checks a weapons permit for a former Sons of Iraq member Oct. 4 in the Hayy Jihad community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



Sgt. Kyle Lobdell, an armor crewmember assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad walks the streets of Hayy Furat during a dismounted security patrol Oct. 4 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. The Soldiers of Co. C operate out of a combat outpost in West Rashid to maintain direct contact with the Iraqi people in the local communities and neighborhoods.

T



months from now or two years from now, but it has to happen.”

During his last deployment, Johnson said the ISF did not have a good working relationship with the Iraqi people because of sectarian issues, which resulted in wide-spread violence. He credits the ISF operating in his unit’s area of responsibility for the continuing security gains in West Rashid.

A new Iraqi Police Station in Furat and an IP Academy are good indicators that the ISF are making headway with the local community.

“Recruiting has gone well,” he said. “We’ve had 3,000 Iraqis show up looking for jobs with the IPs alone.”

The progress is important, Johnson explained, as the Soldiers of Co. C will expand their operations in early November to include other areas across Rashid and move into an over-watch position after an upcoming transition of authority from Coalition Forces to ISF occurs in West

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1st Lt. Matt Cyr, an armor officer and platoon leader from Dover, N.H., assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, pushes his way through a locked gate of an abandoned house Oct. 4 in the Hayy Jihad community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

Rashid SoI's transition to the Government of Iraq

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

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers officially recognized the transition of responsibility for the Sons of Iraq to the Government of Iraq during multiple ceremonies throughout October, signifying the latest milestone in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division relinquished authority of the Coalition Forces-funded neighborhood watch program, which marked the beginning of change for the Rashid district's more than 7,000 Iraqi Abna al-Iraq (SoI).

"We look at this transition with enthusiasm in the Rashid district," said Gen. Wadji, the Iraqi Army's Karkh Operations Commander. "We have worked hard for the last eight months getting ready for this transition and we are grateful and thankful for it."

In West Rashid, the Iraqi Security Forces adopted approximately 4,000 SoI members into its forces, said Wadji.

"We are not going to leave anybody contracted by the Coalition Forces left behind," Wadji said to leaders attending the ceremony at the 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Headquarters in the Saydiyah community of Rashid.

Many of the former SoI personnel will join forces with the ISF or be employed by the government, added Wadji.

Staff Gen. Abud, the Baghdad Operations Center Commander, said the SoI will work alongside their ISF

brothers after the transition is complete.

"The Sons of Iraq are like family," Abud said. "We are finding a place for them in our house."

Abud also said that he believes this transfer of responsibility exemplifies the advancement of security made in the Rashid district.

"This progress would not have happened without the efforts of the SoI," he explained. "We will continue to work around the clock with the GoI and SoI. We have no differences; we are all Iraqis."

The Saydiyah community SoI leader, Abraham Ahmed Hassim, shared the same mind set while speaking to his comrades during a ceremony in West Rashid.

"It's time to work hand-in-hand under the Iraqi flag," Hassim explained. "We will work together in the area of operations to maintain

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, takes an Iraqi flag from a member of the Sons of Iraq Oct. 6 during a ceremony signifying the transition of responsibility from Coalition Forces to the 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division, at a joint security station in the Saydiyah community of southern Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B security."

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team,

4th Infantry Division, MND-B, said the Abna al-Iraq's service was a major factor in the return of security to Rashid.

"It was great to be in the presence of warriors — some wearing the uniforms of the ISF, and others wearing the uniforms of Coalition Forces," said Martin, a native of Jacksonville Beach, Fla. "But today, we honor those who don't wear uniforms — the Sons of Iraq. I want to thank you for fighting alongside my Soldiers."

Soldiers from the 1st "Raider" Brigade continue to transition primary security responsibilities for the neighborhoods and communities of the Rashid district to the ISF and GoI, who are increasingly taking the lead in an Iraqi-led fight.

Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT Public Affairs Officer, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, was a significant contributor for this article.



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, passes a folded Iraqi flag to Brig. Gen. Karim, commander of the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division during a ceremony Oct. 5 in the Doura community of southern Baghdad. The ceremony marked the transition of responsibility of the area's Sons of Iraq members from the Coalition Forces to the Government of Iraq. More than 7,000 members of the Iraqi neighborhood watch group in the Rashid district will be integrated into the GoI.

4-42 FA Soldiers hold final payday for Yarmouk Sons of Iraq

Lt. Col. Doug Kirby, a native of Louisville, Ky., and commander of 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, attached to 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad, presents a certificate of appreciation to a member of the Yarmouk Sons of Iraq for a job well done on the final payday by the U.S. to the Sol in Yarmouk Oct. 2.

Story and photos by Sgt. Whitney Houston, MND-B PAO

Sons of Iraq from the Yarmouk neighborhood in central Baghdad were given their final pay day from U.S. forces at Joint Security Station Yarmouk Oct. 2.

As of Oct. 1, the Sol were technically already transitioned over to the care of the Government of Iraq which is now responsible for the well-being of these front-line patriots. This pay day of 35 members of the Yarmouk Sol was the last task to accomplish for Coalition Forces in the area to finalize the transition.

“These guys are fully transitioned to the Government of Iraq right now,” said Capt. James Spofford, a native of Berwyn, Pa., who serves with Battery B, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, attached to 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad. “We’re conducting a final pay day to clear our books. They’ll still get paid by the Government of Iraq, but these guys are no longer on our balance sheets as of today.”

The Sol transition has gone smoothly so far due to the good working relationship between Coalition Forces and the Iraqi government, and it appears that the GoI will take the necessary means needed to ensure these servicemen are given continued employment as a recompense for their vital role played in the current security of Iraq, explained Lt. Col. Doug Kirby, a native of Louisville, Ky., who serves as commander of 4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Some of the Sol have already been transitioned into the Iraqi Army or the Iraqi Police, and these 35 were the remainder from Yarmouk who hadn’t been transitioned into to the IA or IP. They will continue to be Sol until the Government of Iraq helps them find a job, whether in the Iraqi Security Forces or one of the ministries of government or in some civilian capacity.

“We’ve known that these guys were going to go over to Iraqi control for a long time,” Spofford said. “We originally started out with more Sol than the 35 we have now. Some of them have transitioned over to the IA, some have gone over to the IP, and some have taken jobs as contractors in the local area. But most of these guys will still work as Sol and secure the streets of Yarmouk until the Government of Iraq is fully capable of taking them on.”

Although the path is clear and the transition must happen, there has been concern among some Sol about the potential outcome and promises from the Iraqi Government.

“When I first heard about the transition, I’ll have to be honest with you, I was a little scared,” said Yassin Mahmoud, the Sol commander in Yarmouk. “Some are frightened for the transition.”

All concerns considered, the Iraqi government is committed to a successful transition and Coalition commanders feel confident in its eventual success and see the transition a necessary step for the Government of Iraq to take.

“This shows that they are becoming more autonomous because they’re taking care of their own security forces instead of relying on us to do everything for them,” Spofford said. “They’re taking a huge step forward by supporting these guys, by paying them, and putting them on their books.”

Although a little risk may exist in this transition as in every important operation or step forward, there are many who are working hard and remaining confident in the successful transition for these Sons of Iraq in Yarmouk and those across all of Iraq.



Yarmouk Sons of Iraq commander, Yassin Mahmoud, hands a paycheck to one of his men at Joint Security Station Yarmouk in Baghdad Oct. 2. The payday marks the end of a U.S. contract that pays the Sol in Baghdad.

Prominent community leader provides fresh beef to poor Iraqi families for Eid al Fitr

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

A prominent community leader from southern Baghdad's Rashid district provided fresh beef for poor Iraqi families Oct. 1 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Dr. Muayad Hamed, a philanthropist responsible for many community events in Rashid, donated live cows to feed needy families during the beginning of the Eid al Fitr, the festivities after the month of Ramadan.

Partnering with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit from Fort Dix, N.J., attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Muayad donated the livestock to three different communities in eastern Rashid: Abu T'shir, Saha and Mechanik.

"We found that we would be able to give many poor families a good meal during Eid," said Muayad.

Originally, Muayad provided three cows, but once he arrived at one of the locales and noticed the overwhelming number of Iraqis, he immediately doubled the amount of meat.

"Since there are so many people, I spoke to my people to see if they have more cows and we doubled the quantity – six cows – two at each location," Muayad explained.

"The cost for fresh meat is about \$10 per kilogram. As you see, there are a lot of people here so we think we will make everyone happy," said Muayad, surveying the crowd at the Abu T'shir locale.

It is an Iraqi tradition for the cows to be killed in front of the people, said Capt. Neville McKenzie, Civil Affairs Team, Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 1st Special Troops Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"It's a tradition the animal is slaughtered in front of them because they

Butchers chop sections of beef after slaughtering a cow Oct. 1 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Dr. Muayad Hamed, a prominent community leader, donated a total of six cows to needy Iraqi families.



know the meat is fresh and they trust it," McKenzie said.

The civil affairs team coordinated between Muayad, the Iraqi National Police in each area, and Soldiers from the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., to ensure all aspects of the humanitarian assistance drop went according to plan, said McKenzie, a native of Wappingers Falls, N.Y.

"It was the second day of the Eid al Fitr celebration and a good time to donate to the poor families," stated McKenzie, a team leader in charge of three civil affairs Soldiers.

"It was a great contribution by Muayad, and it showed he cares about the Iraqi people," he explained. "It also showed the support from the NPs and neighborhood council members who helped distribute the meat."

Muayad said he believes Iraq will grow to be a good place, not with the army or the government alone, but it will build with the people in the communities. He insisted that providing for the members of his community who cannot provide for themselves is not a form of generosity.

"It is not generosity, it's my duty," Muayad explained.

Iraqi National Policemen from the Rashid district of southern Baghdad maintain order during the distribution of fresh beef Oct. 1 during the Eid al Fitr, or festivity marking the end of the religious month of Ramadan in the Hadar community.



Butchers prepare to slaughter a cow Oct. 1 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Dr. Muayad Hamed, a prominent community leader, donated the meat of six cows to needy families so they could have a "good meal" for the Eid al Fitr, or festivity after the religious month of Ramadan.



An Iraqi National Policeman from the 1st Battalion, 6th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, stands guard Oct. 1 while INP leaders discuss an ongoing community event in the Abu T'shir community of southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Dr. Muayad Hamed, a prominent community leader in Rashid, donated freshly slaughtered beef to needy Iraqi families for the Eid al Fitr, a meal that represents the end of the religious month of Ramadan.



Dr. Muayad Hamed, a philanthropist and community leader, holds up two fingers indicating his intentions of doubling the amount of beef to give to needy Iraqi families Oct. 1 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Muayad donated six cows for slaughter and butchering for needy families in three separate locations of east Rashid to mark the Eid al Fitr.

Al Doura's Dr. Muayad, 1BCT Soldiers celebrate Ramadan with Iftar dinner

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

A prominent community leader from southern Baghdad's Rashid district gathered with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers Sep. 27 at Forward Operating Base Falcon to celebrate a night of Ramadan.

Dr. Muayad Hamed, a philanthropist who has organized many community events in Rashid, served a traditional Iraqi feast to more than 400 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B Soldiers to mark the Iftar, or breaking of the day's fast.

"On this day of Ramadan it is an honor to join with Soldiers," said Muayad to a large group of Soldiers at Falcon's Raider Café Dining Facility. "This dinner tonight is the end result of work between Iraqis and Coalition Forces. This is how it should always be."

Hamed coordinated and hosted several Iftar dinners for 1st "Raider" BCT Soldiers during the month-long Muslim holiday of Ramadan.

"This is the first time (my people) have joined with Soldiers in celebration," he said.

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the Raider BCT, said he believes hospitality is very

prevalent across the Rashid district during Ramadan.

"Iraqis are the most gracious hosts anyone will ever meet," said Martin, who hails from Jacksonville Beach, Fla. "Being invited to the dinners throughout Rashid is a big honor for me and also my Soldiers."

Traditionally during the month of Ramadan, levels of violence against Coalition Forces in Rashid peaks and security is heightened, but this year, there has been a decrease in attacks and violence in Rashid due to the progress of the last year, said Martin.

"I really think breaking the fast with our Iraqi brethren speaks about how well things are going in the Rashid district," he said.

Muayad selected a food called gus, more commonly referred to around the world as gyros, to serve to Raider Soldiers from the 4th Support Battalion and 1st Special Troops Battalion.

Spc. Silvia Olvera, a water treatment specialist assigned to Company A, 4th Supt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, said she liked the food Hamed brought to the dining facility and will definitely try to eat

Dr. Muayad Hamed, a philanthropist and prominent community leader in southern Baghdad's Rashid district, speaks with Lt. Col. David Hill, commander of the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, during an Iftar dinner Sep. 27 at the Raider Café Dining Facility on Forward Operating Base Falcon. Hamed catered to more than 400 Soldiers of the 1st BCT, "Raider" Brigade, to celebrate the Muslim holiday of Ramadan.



Iraqi food again.

"It's good," stated Olvera, a native of San Bernardino, Calif. "I have never had it before – it's something new."

When Hamed approached Martin a few weeks ago with the idea of feeding Soldiers for Iftar, Martin had no idea how many people Hamed had in

mind.

"I was thinking we would include about 15 to 20 Soldiers, but when I asked Dr. Muayad what we should plan for he said 400 to 500," Martin stated.

"It was very thoughtful to incorporate the Soldiers into the meal," 1st Lt. Rendy Yuhistira, executive officer for Co. C, 4th Supt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. "They get to see the people and culture they are affecting."

Many Soldiers are stuck on the FOB and they don't get a chance to see how their work is affecting the country, said Yuhistira, a Washington-native.

"I think this dinner showed our Soldiers that many Iraqis are very appreciative of what we have done," he added.

"This was a fantastic night," Martin said. "We are really grateful to Dr. Muayad. They are showing their happiness and thanks toward us. It's was a really special event."

Local Iraqis prepare a traditional Iftar dinner for Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, Sep. 27 at Forward Operating Base Falcon located in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Dr. Muayad Hamed, a philanthropist and prominent community leader, catered to more than 400 Soldiers during the evening, which was part of the Muslim holiday of Ramadan.



Comanche Troop Soldiers take MRAP Microgrant Station on road

Simple mobile office makes leg-work easier for Soldiers to help Iraqi business owners stimulate local economy

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers never imagined they could transform their Mine Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle into a mobile field desk that would set a standard for future stability and support operations for their unit operating in the nation’s capitol.

A little ingenuity, elbow grease and thinking “inside the box” helped Soldiers of Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, maximize their ongoing efforts to sustain a lasting state of security in the Rashid district’s Abu T’shir community, located in southeastern Baghdad.



Soldiers of Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, enroll microgrant applicants on Abu T’shir’s Market Street Aug. 9 from the back of a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle.

During recent weeks, Comanche Troop transformed a heavily armored hull of a vehicle, known as an MRAP, into a platform for administrative field work used to process microgrants, said Capt. Kris Howell, commander of Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

A microgrant is a small one-time contribution, funded by Coalition Forces commanders, intended for local Iraqi business owners to help revitalize commerce and foster ties within their communities, said Howell, a cavalry officer from Aurora, Ill.

“The brigade gave us guidance to make (microgrants) our primary effort,” he explained. “Microgrants stimulate the economy, and that is a good thing.”

The majority of the people will make improvements to their shops and business, but most of the businessmen said that they will use the grants to hire employees, said Howell.

“The process begins when Soldiers conduct assessments, meeting with local business owners and inspecting their shops,” he explained.

Iraqi businessmen in the Abu T’shir community can now apply for a microgrant loan in one easy step — without having to travel from their shops and business places to a combat outpost or joint security station in Baghdad, said Howell.

“It’s just a matter of forward thinking,” Howell said. “It used to be forward, backwards, forward, backwards, traveling COP to sector, COP to sector. Now we’ve got a way to enroll all the applicants where they live and work.”

To reduce the timely process and to maximize the troop’s performance, Howell ordered his mechanics to build a desk in the troop-carrying back of an

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Yaudas, a platoon sergeant, who hails from Fort Hood, Texas, assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, completes a microgrant application for a local Iraqi businessman from the back of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle Aug. 2 in the Abu T’shir community of Baghdad’s Rashid district.



MRAP.

“Instead of having to wait to get it done, now the team on the ground can do it all at once,” he explained.

“It was actually built like a factory-made desk,” said Sgt. 1st Class Carmen Centennial, platoon sergeant, 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

The mechanic built a workstation for the paperwork complete with a slide out drawer for the laptop computer and camera that was designed and built around the existing seats and systems so that the MRAP could carry its full compliment of Soldiers, explained Centennial.

“The MRAP with the office in the back is a great idea,” he said. “Every unit that has set up the microgrant should use that as the standard.”

The MRAP provides mobility and security while making the job easier and speeds up the process, said Centennial, who hails from San Antonio.

“We take a lot of pride in how many microgrants we can do in a day,” he explained. The highest number was 21 in one day; we could have done more than 20 per day, but we set the (limit) to 20 per day.”

Working from the back of an MRAP also allows Soldiers to interact with the local community and become directly involved in the microgrant application process, said Centennial.

Developing relationships in Abu T’shir is key to successfully maintaining stability in the predominately Shia community that is home to approximately 75,000 Iraqis, he explained.

Sheik Talib Kwali, head of the Jihad Reconciliation Council, and Capt. Michael Garling, a native of Albany, N.Y. and commander of Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, were amongst key community leaders and government representatives to attend the Jihad Resettlement ceremony Aug. 23 in the Hayy Jihad area of Rashid district in southern Baghdad.



Iraqi leaders, MND-B Soldiers welcome 250 families back to Jihad community in Rashid

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers joined representatives from the Government of Iraq, the Hayy Jihad Neighborhood Advisory Council and Iraqi Security Forces leaders to welcome approximately 250 families back to their communities and neighborhoods in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Soldiers and leaders of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, joined the Jihad Reconciliation Council and Iraqi Army soldiers Aug. 23 to mark the relocation of Iraqi citizens of the Shishaan neighborhood.

The event was a

special opportunity to highlight the many accomplishments made by ISF in establishing security in the Jihad community, said Tom Lynch, Provincial Reconstruction Team leader embedded with the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

The resettlement of Iraqis into their homes in Baghdad's Rashid district is also a testament to the Iraqi people, who are working to rebuild their lives, said Lynch.

"This is your achievement – the achievement of the people of Jihad," said Lynch, who hails from Fairfax, Va.

Resettlements in Rashid happen every

day, but a ceremony celebrating the return of more than 250 families is a unique event, said Capt. Michael Garling, commander of Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT.

"This is all Iraqi-led, Iraqi-driven; and Iraqis put this together under the reconciliation council," he said, adding that he thinks the ceremony is a good news story that illustrates the people working with their local leadership and the government of Iraq to take ownership of their communities and rebuild their neighborhoods.

Garling said his engineer company works with the Iraqi soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 53rd Brigade, 14th Iraqi Army Division, to provide security and stability to the area, which enables the Iraqi citizens to return to a sense of normalcy after years of violence and strife.

"(These families) have been scattered far and wide across Iraq, and now they can finally move back in their houses because the security is strong enough ... in the Shishaan area, for them to feel safe," said Garling, a native of Albany, N.Y.

Speaking at the ceremony, Staff Col. Ali Abood, the commander of the

1st Bn., 53rd Bde., 14th IA Div., asked the Iraqi citizens returning to their homes and neighborhoods to call if there is a lack of security in their communities.

Ali said his soldiers are working under the Iraqi government's instructions and reminded those in attendance that "there will be no safety without the return of displaced families."

"We made the preparation for you to return safe and secure to your area and your homes," Ali said. "Our hearts are open for you as well as our eyes securing you."

Sheik Talib Kwali, head of the Jihad Reconciliation Council, welcomed the displaced

families to return to the Hayy Jihad community and said he hopes that security will be maintained in Rashid.

Kwali also addressed the lack of essential services in some of the neighborhoods in the Jihad community and asked the Government of Iraq to assist the Iraqi people to fix the problems.

"People of Shishaan are still concerned that in the area there are no services, such as sewer, water and electricity, but Coalition, ISF and the people (in the muhallahs) are working together to help bring back those services," Garling said. "There are a couple of projects in the works right now that should help them out."



Approximately 200 citizens, sheiks, leaders and community representatives joined Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces at a resettlement ceremony celebrating the return of more than 250 displaced Iraqi families to their homes and communities in the Shishaan area of Hayy Jihad in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



Sheik Talib Kwali, head chairman of the Jihad Reconciliation Council, welcomes 250 displaced families to resettle in their homes and communities of the Shishaan area of Hayy Jihad Aug. 23 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

ISF assist resident Iraqi family returning from Syria to resettle in Risalah

Story and photos by Capt. Mark Miller
4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

As Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers dismounted their vehicles for a security patrol in the Rashid district, a family waited alongside a road in the Risalah neighborhood.

A displaced family, returning from Syria with all of their worldly belongings, sat anxiously on the road in southern Baghdad looking for someone to help them get back to the home they left two years earlier.

On the morning of Sept. 15, National Policemen from the 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division saw the family in need and readily assisted.

Upon seeing the dismounted patrol of NPs and U.S. Soldiers, Hatim Muhammed Suod, the father of the family jumped from the curb and greeted Staff Brig. Gen. Bahaa, commander of the 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div.

The Iraqi man quickly explained his situation and requested assistance.

“We left two years ago when our family was receiving death threats,” Suod explained. “It wasn’t safe here.”

When Bahaa asked if the man was returning to his community as a result of the reduced violence, Suod replied, “Yes, the situation is better here now, and I feel it is safe to bring my family back to our home.”

Bahaa responded quickly, ordering his NPs to bring a truck up to the side of the road and assist the family loading up their belongings.

The assistance provided by Iraqi National Police seemed second

nature to them as they helped the Iraqi family load their belongings in the back of their patrol truck.

“We always help returning families when they come to us for help,” said Bahaa. “This helps build trust among the people.”

As Suod moved to load the last of his family’s things into the trucks, the INP opened the door for his wife and sister.

The children quickly followed, and the whole family was on their way back to their own home. They were happy to be returning home, and showed their gratitude for the assistance they received with warm smiles and handshakes.

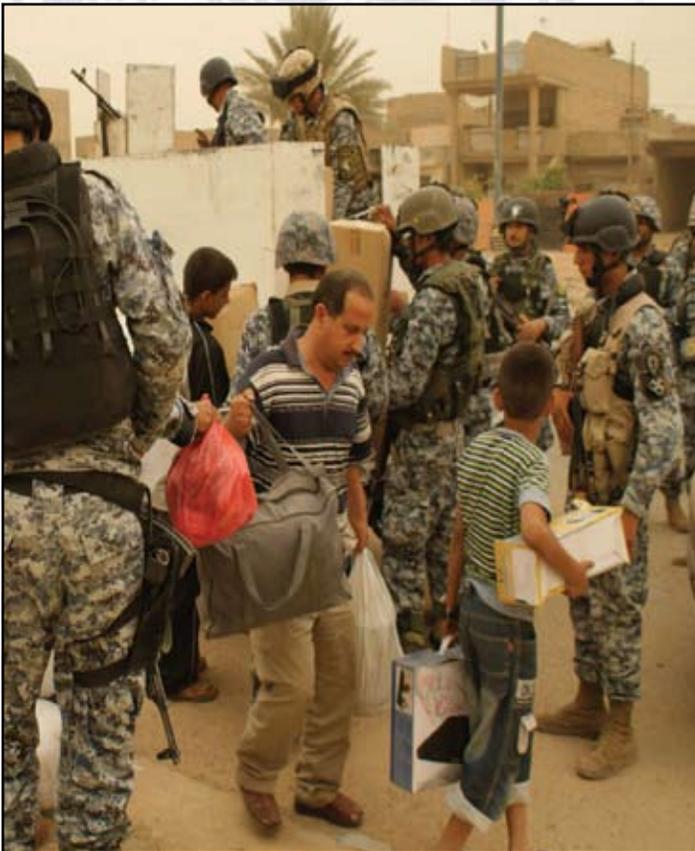
“Some of the families have the resources to move back on their own, but Iraqi Security Forces are always willing to help,” added Lt. Col. Johnnie Johnson, commander of the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

This returning family is one of hundreds resettling to neighborhoods in the West Rashid area of Southern Baghdad throughout the course of the past year, said Johnson, who was the senior Coalition Forces officer on the patrol.

Families have been displaced not only to other neighboring countries, but also to other regions of Iraq, he explained.

As families return in response to reduced violence and return to normalcy, the resettlement efforts are assisted by local neighborhood councils and support councils in addition to the assistance provided by ISF.

“All of the Iraqi Security Forces are willing to provide assistance like this,” Bahaa explained, referring to the cooperative relationship the Iraqi National Police have with the Iraqi Army as well as security volunteers. “We have to work together and help these people as one force.”



Policemen of the 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, help a local Iraqi family returning to their home in the Risalah community of the Rashid district Sept. 15 in southern Baghdad. The NPs saw the family needed assistance in transporting their household goods to the house the family left nearly two years ago. “We have to work together and help these people as one force,” said Staff Brig. Gen. Baaha, commander of the 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div., referring to the cooperative relationship the NPs have with the Iraqi Army and security volunteers.

Rashid's displaced citizens return for home ISF, MND-B Soldiers deliver security

Story by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

An Iraqi family stands in the doorjamb of the empty house, where once they lived before the specter of sectarian violence overwhelmed their lives. The residence once used by insurgents as part of a network of anti-Iraqi forces' safe houses now stands empty in a suburban muhallah of closely-knit houses characteristic of the Rashid district's Hadar community — but not for long.

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division are working with Iraqi Security Forces commanders, local community leaders and Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq) in southern Baghdad to return Iraq's displaced families home.

The fact that nearly 6,000 Iraqi families have returned to their communities and neighborhoods in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad since April, when the "Raider" Brigade assumed responsibility for the mixed Shia, Sunni and Christian area, is a good indicator that security is improving for the area that is home to approximately 1.6 million Iraqi citizens, said Capt. Dave Lombardo, commander of Troop B, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

When the Soldiers of "Bulldog" Troop began patrolling the streets of the predominately Sunni community in southeastern Baghdad, Hadar was like a "ghost town," said Lombardo, with only approximately 15 percent of its houses and buildings occupied.

That is changing now that Rashid's displaced Iraqi citizens are returning by the hundreds, explained Lombardo,

who estimated nearly 50 percent of Hadar's structures to be occupied.

The troop's current mission to support Iraqi Security Forces with offensive operations and secure the Iraqi people keeps the enemy out of the Hadar community, said Lombardo, who hails from Kennesaw, Ga.

"We are security plain and simple," said Lombardo. "We keep the people safe, set the conditions to be able to perform civil affairs projects, and at the same time transition the ISF to the lead."

The Soldiers of 'Bulldog' Troop ensure that the displaced Iraqi citizens can move back to their homes safely, and work to ensure there is a good representation of security forces in the communities, which will allow returning Iraqis to rebuild their lives and return to a sense of normalcy, said 2nd Lt. Jon Byrd, a platoon leader from Gulf Port, Miss., assigned to Troop B, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"The ISF and the Coalition Forces are doing a good job securing the area, and it's a good time to move back, that plus the microgrants are making the economy a lot stronger, so jobs are getting better," Byrd said.

A once displaced Iraqi family returns to their home Sept. 18 in the Hadar community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. Iraqi National Police of the 1st Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd NP Division, working with Troop B, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, conduct combined security operations and patrols to enable the conditions permitting resettlement of Iraq's displaced families in Baghdad's Rashid district.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

patrols with Iraqi National Police of the 1st Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., and Sons of Iraq, a citizens-led security program that assists ISF in securing the district, said Staff Sgt. Jesus Villareal, a cavalry scout from Chico, Calif., and section sergeant assigned to Troop B, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.

"The area is a lot safer now," Villareal said. "The ISF are doing their part, so that these families can return home."

Villareal said that the collective efforts between ISF and CF, circulating throughout the community, handing out flyers and talking with the Iraqi residents, recruits the support of the local citizens, who continue to report weapons caches, special groups criminals and intimidation attacks in Hadar.

The Soldiers of 'Bulldog' Troop patrol the streets of Hadar daily conducting combined

Abna al-Iraq (Sons of Iraq) security volunteers helps a relocated family move furniture into their home Aug. 19 in the Hayy Jihad of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The event was a symbolic gesture to welcome the Iraqis back into a community that had once been marred by sectarian violence and strife. Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, helped facilitate the historic event as members of Iraqi Security Forces and the Jihad Reconciliation Council welcomed back 20 families.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

"We have been saturating the area," said Sgt. 1st Class Joaquim Garcia, a platoon sergeant from Converse, Texas, assigned to Troop B, 7th Squadron, 10th Cav. Regt. "We constantly visit the families that are moving in, so we have constant eyes on the people in the area. There are small intimidation cells that are trying to stop these movements and they will get caught."

Their mission is still the same but the situation has changed, said Garcia, who is serving his third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and seventh deployment, since entering active service more than 16 years ago.

Most of the Soldiers, leaders and noncommissioned officers in the platoon have two and three tours to Iraq, explained Garcia.

"The NPs and all the Sons of Iraq have cleaned up the city," Garcia said. "We all know what it was like, and we all see the major change and how security is now.

"Doing small operations like this right here to help resettlement and help bring the people back to their home — that makes us happy, because we know that our mission is almost complete."

The key to reinforcing security during the resettlement phase is working with the ISF and maintaining contact with the people in the communities, said Garcia.

The Iraqi National Police of the 1st Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div. conduct educational classes with the Iraqi citizens of the community that is part of the Doura area in Rashid, said 2nd Lt. Hassan, an Iraqi NP, who works to secure Hadar with his forces.

"The National Reconciliation in our country under the leadership of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki has played an effective role in returning safety and security to all Iraq and especially in the Doura area," Hassan explained.

The curfew has been canceled, and ISF commanders are using community leaders, Iraqi media and word of mouth to ask Iraq's displaced families to return to their homes in Hadar, he explained.

"Today, in a secure Doura, we see cars moving freely, displaced families start to return, as well as shops are staying open for late hours, all confirming the security improvement in Doura," he said.

The security and stability in Hadar and surrounding areas has prompted more than 1,000 families to return to southeastern Baghdad, said Lt. Col. Troy Smith, commander of the 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"It's a huge difference," said Smith, who hails from Culpepper, Va. "People are moving in where people are, and the resettlement just keeps spreading. As more families move in, the place gets more populated; therefore, it's even more secure, and as resettlement comes back, more resettlement picks up because the security gets better."

Displaced Iraqi citizens are returning with their families and goods to local communities and muhallaqs in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. During 2008, more than 7,700 families have resettled in their homes and neighborhoods after leaving due to the sectarian violence and intimidation of previous years. Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, are working with Iraqi Security Forces to ensure that the Iraqi families return home to security and a sense of normalcy.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Iraqi National Policeman Brig. Gen. Karim, commander of the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, tours ongoing resettlement efforts Sept. 18 with Sons of Iraq supervisor Ayad Rashed in the Hadar community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. ISF commanders are using Iraqi media, community leaders and word of mouth to ask Iraq's displaced families to return to their homes in Hadar and throughout the Rashid district, which is home to approximately 1.6 million Iraqis.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Soldiers, ISF react to enemy attack, act to quell riots in Abu T'shir

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

An explosion on South Market Street served as a bitter reminder for the Iraqis of Abu T'shir that there is still a faceless enemy willing to kill and punish innocent people to legitimize its existence.

That same enemy tried to assert its control when a car bomb detonated Oct. 10 in the market place that is home to several shops and vendors, killing several Iraqis and destroying a cornerstone in a row of businesses.

"Shortly after the event, the people on Market Street began to throw rocks at the National Police," said Capt. Sean Tennimon, commander of Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. "People in the crowd were inciting the citizens to protest and eventually riot."

Whether special groups criminals or extremists initiated the attack, the enemy intended to discredit Iraqi Security Forces, forcing the citizens of Abu T'shir to question their confidence in the Iraqi NPs, said Tennimon, an armor officer who hails from Mobile, Ala.

"Comanche" Troop's primary mission is to supervise security operations in Abu T'shir and assist with the Iraqi Police and NPs' ongoing security efforts to serve and protect the citizens of the Rashid district.

The troop maintains a 24-hour presence in the community to accomplish this mission, said Tennimon, so when the enemy attacked, U.S. Soldiers were amongst the Iraqi first responders in the area.

On patrol in Abu T'shir, a section of cavalry scouts from 1st Platoon, Troop

C, responded to the attack within minutes and multiple elements from the "Ghost" Squadron and the 1st BCT arrived on the scene to help quell further acts of violence, explained Tennimon.

"After about an hour, the streets were mostly empty and the ISF had regained control of Market Street," he said.

The Soldiers of Troop C responded to the attack in a "text book" manner, said Tennimon, who is serving his second deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The Soldiers were confident and maintained their composure despite being outnumbered by hundreds of rioters that were throwing rocks and attacking the National Police in close proximity to Coalition Forces," he said.

The following morning, Lt. Col. Troy Smith, commander of 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., called for a meeting with sheiks, community and tribal leaders, and ISF commanders in Abu T'shir.

"This event was not caused by Shurta Wadaniya (National Police) or the local Iraqi Police or other ISF in Abu T'shir," Smith said. "It was caused by terrorists."

ISF and CF will not allow special groups criminals, militias or terrorists to return to Abu T'shir, stressed Smith to the leaders gathered at the IP Station on Market Street.

"Abu T'shir is making great strides, and I will not stand by and let this neighborhood be taken back by terrorists," said Smith, who hails from Culpepper, Va.

"What I need is for the leaders to get the word out that the people need to abide by the Rule of Law, and I will hold the leaders

responsible for their people not supporting the ISF in Abu T'shir," he said.

Iraqi Brig.
Gen. Karim
Abud Kahdem
Hoseinee,
commander

of the 7th Brigade, 2nd NP Div., also addressed the sheiks about Baghdad's Rule of Law, imploring local leaders to explain to their people the role of the ISF and how to restore peace in the communities.

"Everybody is equal in the eyes of the law," Karim said.

Karim also asked community leaders to remind their people what would have happened if a secondary bomb exploded at the site of the attack, killing first responders and Iraqis who had gathered to protest the attack.

In the hours that followed, the Ghost Squadron and Comanche Troop met with their Iraqi counterparts and detailed a plan to maintain security, working with the Abu T'shir IPs and National Police of the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aburisha Brigade, attached to the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div.

The ISF leaders, under the orders of the 7th Bde. NP Commander, immediately emplaced a curfew in Abu T'shir to protect the people and prevent further rioting.

The enemy temporarily achieved a short-lived effect when ISF leaders were forced to emplace the curfew in Abu T'shir, said 1st Lt. Isaac Hedtke, a platoon leader assigned to Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.

Coalition Forces directed the ISF on the ground to counter the threat with a quick and professional response throughout the muhallahs, said Hedtke, who was amongst the first to arrive at the scene of the attack.

As the situation on the ground improved, orders were changed and the curfew was modified and later lifted to meet the needs of the people in Abu T'shir.

"The people are back to their lives; the stores are open, and things are back to normal," said the armor officer from Monticello, Minn. "The Iraqi Police are here; the National Police are here. The streets are open; the businesses are open.

"The enemy did not accomplish their goal," he explained. "The people still trust the CF and the ISF."

The platoons quickly employed the IPs and NPs patrolling the streets to conduct

1st Lt. Isaac Hedtke, a native of Monticello, Minn., and platoon leader assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, calls up to his Troop Command Post from his humvee, seeking guidance for lifting a temporary curfew, Oct. 11, emplaced by Coalition Forces and the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division the day after a car bomb detonated on the Abu T'shir South Market Street.



loudspeaker operations to inform the Iraqi people of the attack and assure the community that the ISF are in the lead.

The troop also helped the National Policemen of the 3rd Bn., 3rd Aburisha Bde., the Iraqi Ministry of Interior's newest "Feather," or light NP unit, provide security for the citizens of East Rashid.

Working side-by-side, ISF and CF maintained check points and created hasty traffic control points to search vehicles entering and exiting Abu T'shir.

The Soldiers of Comanche Troop further reinforced the security gains by visiting Iraqis in their homes and businesses to address the attack and answer questions.

Staff Sgt. Jason Hellums told one such Iraqi resident, "The bad guys are losing their pull, and they are desperate."

"This area has been stable for quite some time — look at Market Street and look at all the improvements that have been made," explained the platoon sergeant from Fort Hood, Texas, assigned to Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Regt.

"Yes, the enemy punched us, but we're still winning," he said.

Rumors spread as fast as fire in a community that relies heavily on word of mouth for its information, said Hellums.

The face-to-face meetings help to inform the people, and provide the citizens of Abu T'shir the opportunity for feedback, he

explained.

Several of the Iraqi citizens said that word on the street is the old militias are returning to the area and conducted the attack to intimidate the people and renew support for the special groups criminals.

"The attack is a throwback to old tactics," said Ali, a resident of Abu T'shir and a former translator, who worked with the United States Marines Corps in Fallujah. "The attack was on the people because they are acting like they don't need the militia anymore; however, it doesn't work. It will not achieve the same effect as the ISF are better integrated into their roles."

Some of the Iraqi people think that they are being punished for cooperating with the ISF and the CF, said Sgt. Michael Larson, a section leader assigned to Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.

However, the troop's day-to-day conversations with the people of Abu T'shir indicate that CF and ISF are restoring the people's confidence in the ISF, said Larson, a cavalry scout from Madison, S.D.

Larson said that attacks against the people will only unify the Iraqi citizens in their efforts to rid their neighborhoods and muhallahs of special groups

Spc. Neil Brinson, a cavalry scout from Methuen, Mass., Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, gets a view of Baghdad's Abu T'shir from the gunner's seat of an M1151 Humvee while providing line of sight security for the Soldiers of his platoon during a combined patrol Oct. 12 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



2nd Lt. Greg Bassett, from Notre Dame, Ind., 1st Platoon Leader, Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Iraqi National Police from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., question local residents Oct. 11 about a car bomb attack that occurred the day before, killing several Iraqi citizens on the Abu T'shir Market Street.

criminals and militia.

The local community leaders must take a more active role in informing the people, said Saieed, a resident of Abu T'shir.

"The riot was the result of the ignorance of the people, or their lack of awareness of what's going on," he said. "The local leadership needs to take a more active role in talking to the people."

When the leadership involves the people in the process, the people are more likely to take ownership for their neighborhoods, said Staff Sgt. Jessie Rickey, a cavalry scout from Walnut Ridge, Ark.

"We find it easier that the more we involve the people, the more the people want to change," said Rickey, a section leader assigned to Troop C, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. "Security becomes something that they created not just something that was given to them."

In the days that followed the attack, the Soldiers of Comanche Troop increased their presence in the neighborhoods, conducting multiple combined operations to reinforce security and assist the ISF maintaining order in the community that is home to an estimated 75,000 Iraqis.



Raider Soldiers honor service of fallen Iraqi NP commander

Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Asberry, platoon sergeant of the personal security detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, renders a salute after presenting folded colors, Sept. 26, to Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, at an Iraqi Security Forces combat outpost in the Rashid district in Baghdad.

Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Asberry, surrounded by Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team Personal Security Detachment, (from left to right) Spc. Christian Schmidt, infantryman; Spc. Joseph Lopez, cavalry scout; Spc. Arturo Nelms, armor crewmember; and Pfc. Eric Kemple, cavalry scout, escort the folded colors Sept. 26 to honor the service of a fallen Iraqi comrade.

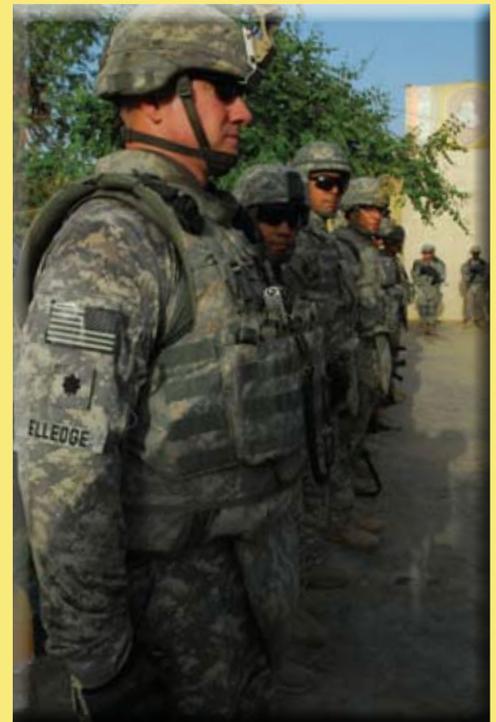


Col. Ted Martin, a native of Jacksonville Beach, Fla., and commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, offers his condolences to local community leaders Sept. 26 during the funeral of an Iraqi battalion commander killed in an ambush in Diyala at a ceremony in the Aamel community of southern Baghdad.



U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, presents the colors to the brother of a fallen Iraqi officer, Sept. 26, to honor the service of Lt. Col. Ra'ad Sahaar Moyan Juda al-Hussaini, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Mechanized National Police Brigade, who was slain in an ambush during security operations in the Diyala province.



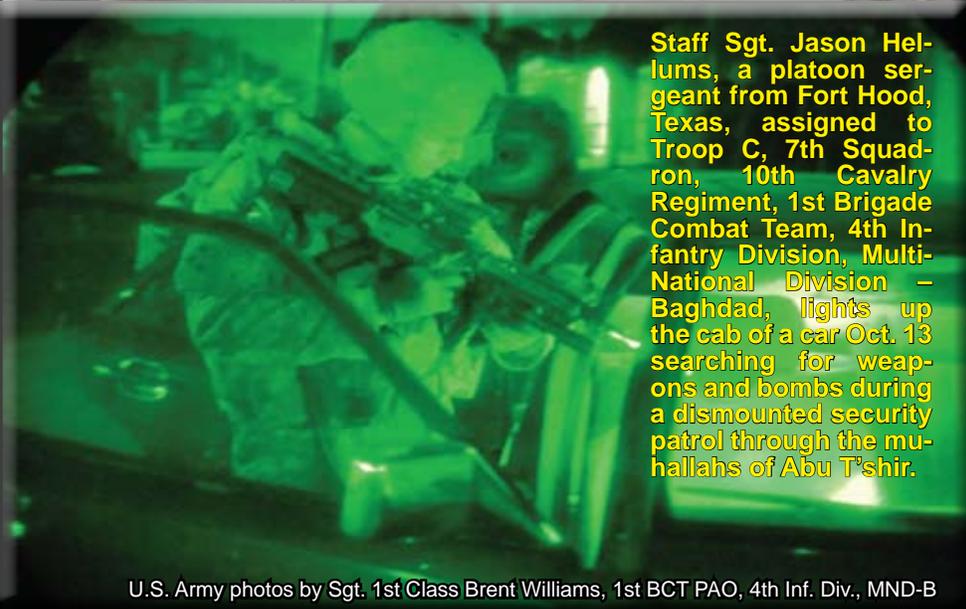
Lt. Col. Matthew Elledge, commander of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, leads a rank of Soldiers Sept. 26 during a flag presentation ceremony at a combat outpost in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Elledge is a native of Dexter, Mo.



Platoon Sergeant, Staff Sgt. Jason Hellums, who hails from Fort Hood, Texas, and Section Leader, Staff Sgt. Jessie Rickey, a native of Walnut Ridge, Ark., assigned to 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, move concrete and debris Oct. 13 to create improvised barriers for road blocks closing side entrances into the Abu T'shir Market Street.



Staff Sgt. Jessie Rickey, a native of Walnut Ridge, Ark., and cavalry scout section sergeant assigned to 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, searches under a vehicle for bombs, Oct. 13, during a dismounted security patrol to secure the Abu T'shir Market Street.



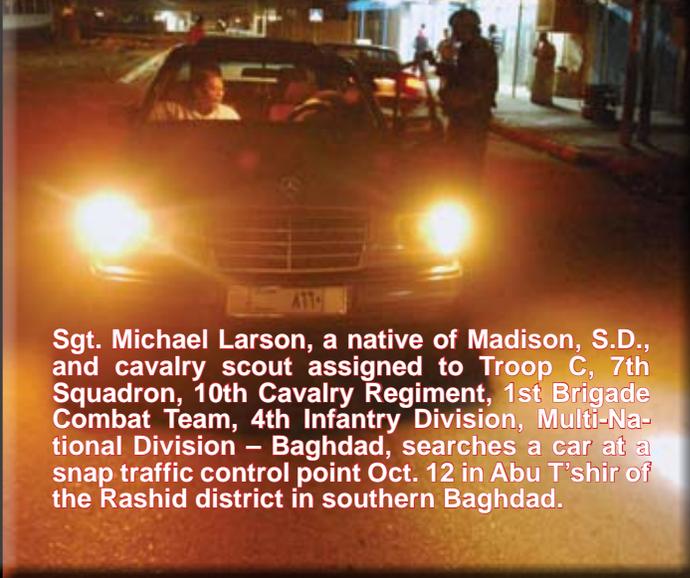
Staff Sgt. Jason Hellums, a platoon sergeant from Fort Hood, Texas, assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, lights up the cab of a car Oct. 13 searching for weapons and bombs during a dismounted security patrol through the muhallahs of Abu T'shir.

U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

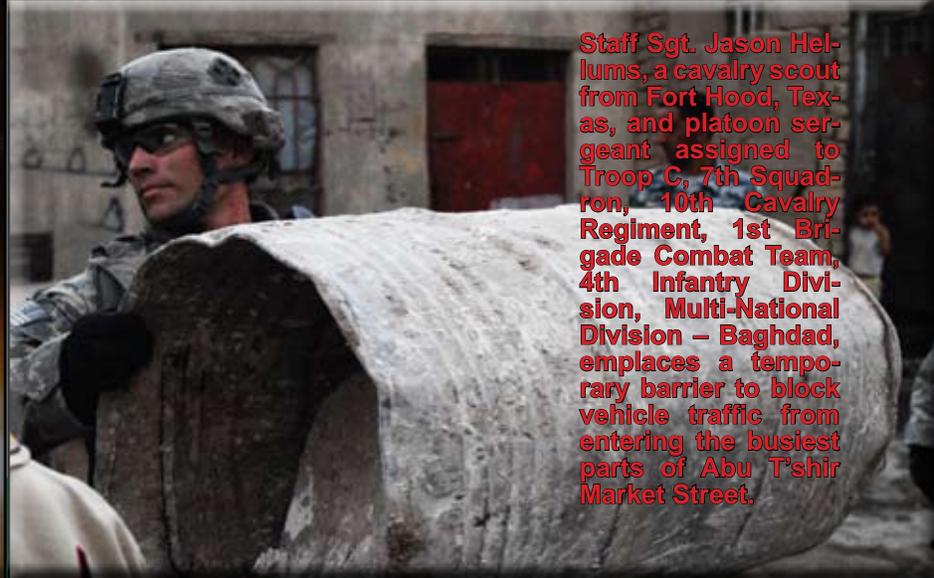


Sgt. Morgan Mitchell, a native of Salt Lake City, and cavalry scout assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, searches a car at a hasty traffic control point looking for weapons and explosives after a car bomb attack Oct. 12 in Abu T'shir of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

Comanche Troop Soldiers man snap TCPs to thwart enemy attacks

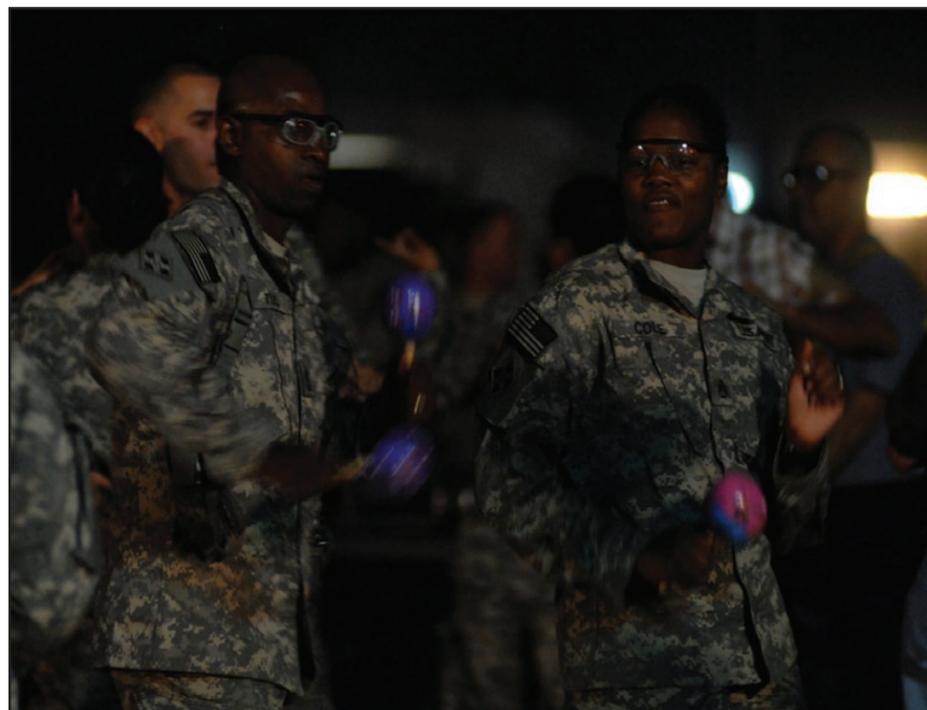


Sgt. Michael Larson, a native of Madison, S.D., and cavalry scout assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, searches a car at a snap traffic control point Oct. 12 in Abu T'shir of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.



Staff Sgt. Jason Hellums, a cavalry scout from Fort Hood, Texas, and platoon sergeant assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, emplaces a temporary barrier to block vehicle traffic from entering the busiest parts of Abu T'shir Market Street.

Front Sight Post



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

1st Sgt. Reuben Tull and Staff Sgt. Bikiesa Cole, both assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, dance to salsa music during a Hispanic Heritage celebration dance Oct. 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. The 4th Inf. Div. Salsa Band visited Falcon to play live music for "Raider" Brigade Soldiers.



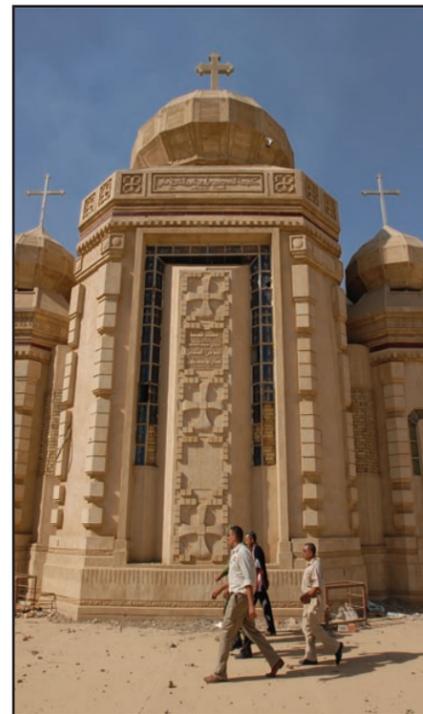
U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

A Soldier assigned to the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, pulls security outside the Ishtar School Oct. 14 in the Risalah community of southern Baghdad. Soldiers and National Policemen from the 5th Brigade, 2nd NP Division, distributed school supplies to approximately 1,000 children at the school.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge

Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen (Center), Multi-National Corps – Iraq's top enlisted leader, patrols the Doura Market Complex Oct. 15 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Allen patrolled the market with Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, top enlisted leader for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Command Sgt. Maj. Brendan McIntyre, top enlisted leader for the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Dave Olson

Local Sons of Iraq leaders tour the Mar Banham Catholic Church in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad Oct. 2 with leaders of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Iraqi Security Forces during a tour of Christian churches. Two of the four churches visited were abandoned and looted. Leaders visited the sites to assess the damages and estimate repairs to the buildings.

Capt. Katherine Fenton, an intelligence officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, approaches the finish line during the Falcon 10-Mile Fun Run, which coincides with the Army's 10-Mile run in Washington D.C., Oct. 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Fenton finished in second place in the women's category with a time of 85 minutes, 55 seconds.



Photo by Phyllis Ward, MWR



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Section Leader, Staff Sgt. Jessie Rickey, a native of Walnut Ridge, Ark., assigned to 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, scans his sector, Oct. 11, during a combined operation to clear the Abu T'shir Market Street of vehicle traffic, part of a temporary curfew emplaced by the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division and Coalition Forces, to secure the muhallahs and protect the Iraqi citizens from enemy attack. The Soldiers helped Iraqi Security Forces provide security for the approximately 75,000 citizens of Abu T'shir after extremists detonated a car bomb the day before in the local business place, killing innocent Iraqis.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, and National Policemen from the 7th Brigade, 2nd NP Division, gather at a joint security station in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, Sept. 23, to celebrate the Iftar dinner on the Night of Power, a holiday during the religious month of Ramadan.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge

Spc. Christopher McDonald, an infantryman assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, holds an armful of backpacks during a school supply distribution Oct. 14 at the Ishtar School in the Risalah community of southern Baghdad. McDonald, who hails from Hickory, N.C., is attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, serving a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers and National Policemen from the 5th Brigade, 2nd NP Division, distributed school supplies to approximately 1,000 children at the school throughout the day.



Soldiers of Company C and the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, removed multiple strands of concertina wire from the streets of neighborhoods of southern Baghdad's western Rashid district during the month of September and October to improve the quality of life for Iraqi residents in the Jihad and Furat communities. The arduous process involved cutting the nest of multiple strands tangled together into smaller controllable portions, folding and bending the C-wire into a clump that can be transported by the Soldiers to a collection point for eventual disposal.



Iraqi Police officers assigned to the Furat Iraqi Police Academy joined Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, to collect concertina wire Oct. 5 for disposal.



U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Spc. Leonard Waters, a combat medic from Asheville, N.C., pushes a roll of tangled concertina wire into the back of a trailer, where Pvt. Jose Gomez, an infantryman from Santa Anna, Calif., collects the wire for transportation to a collection point. Both Soldiers, assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, spent several days and nights every week in the month of September and into October to help collect and dispose of the abandoned wire from the streets and neighborhoods of the Jihad and Furat communities in West Rashid during ongoing efforts to clean-up the areas and improve the quality of life for the residents of southern Baghdad's Rashid district.



Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, collect concertina wire from the streets of the Furat community during the early morning hours of Oct. 5 in ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for Iraqi residents in the West Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

**'Regulars' Charlie Co. Soldiers
remove C-Wire from
Furat community West Rashid**

Phoenix Soldiers take eyes to skies, keep Aerostat flying high above Rashid

Story by the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers operate an unmanned aerial platform in the shape of a blimp that hovers above Forward Operating Base Falcon, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

“Phoenix” Soldiers of the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, employ sophisticated camera technology inside the helium balloon, known as the Aerostat, to provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance for the Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Early in the deployment, the Aerostat successfully assisted the 1st BCT in capturing some of the brigade’s most wanted criminals and terrorists, said Staff Sgt. Marvin Ward, a tactical unmanned aerial vehicle operator, assigned to Company A, 1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

“This was a tremendous coordinated effort and achievement by the Raider Brigade Soldiers,” said Ward, a native of Chicago.

The crew of Aerostat operators is comprised of Soldiers from the Phoenix Bn.’s three companies. They are responsible for the Aerostat site, working various positions to ensure that the device remains aloft in the skies above southern Baghdad.

The noncommissioned officers, who operate the surveillance platform, serve as Aerostat flight directors. Overall, safety is their main objective, he explained.

The nose line operator is responsible for keeping the hull, or front of the Aerostat, steady while two Soldiers balance the port and starboard sides of the Aerostat with confluence lines that attach to winches.

“Then there are two Soldiers who keep the rear of the Aerostat steady; they are called the snubber line operators,” Ward explained.

The site has a senior flight director, who is responsible for ground and air safety, explained Ward. The SFD ensures accurate reporting information for higher headquarters, supervises maintenance and is the senior instructor for training.

The Aerostat has both day and night capabilities and provides Soldiers with 360-degree visibility of the battlefield from several miles out, he said.

“When the Aerostat is safely airborne in accordance with all pre/post flight procedures, the Soldiers take up positions in the Ground Base System to operate the camera and watch the actions of the Aerostat,” said Ward.

Since assuming the Aerostat detail April 9, 2008, the team has flown more than 675 flight hours without incident, said Sgt. Kathia Pierre, a human resources specialist and the Aerostat flight director, assigned to HHC, 1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Pierre said that her first and foremost priority is the safety of the Soldiers responsible for the Aerostat, and takes the responsibility seriously. She also said that she enjoys training and mentoring her crew on the system and provides quarterly proficiency exams to keep her Soldiers trained to standard.

“It is paramount that my crew know their tasks,” stated Pierre, who hails from Miami and is currently serving her third deployment in support of OIF.

Maintaining an unmanned aerial vehicle is not typically part of her military occupational skill, noted Pierre, who said she never thought she would have such an experience.

“It is definitely different and challenging – one that I will never forget!” she exclaimed.

The blimp requires a great amount of attention to detail and knowledge to run the aerial system and all the positions at

the Aerostat site, said Pfc. Matthew Rivera, a signal support system specialist, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st STB,

Pfc. Bradley Bryan, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle system maintainer from Houston assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, throws a guideline from the Aerostat to the ground shortly after launching the helium-filled balloon July 1 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge

1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

“The Aerostat is an excellent tool for my professional progression,” added Rivera, who has worked in every position related to the Aerostat platform, adding that the duty provides him with a tremendous amount of responsibility but is a new and exciting experience.

“I was scared being a Flight Director because I was the lowest ranking Soldier making crucial decisions,” said Rivera, who hails from Bronx, N.Y. Rivera is the newest member of the Aerostat team, enjoys the work and also enjoys watching the camera videos at night.

The Soldiers of the 1st STB, 4th Inf. Div., are currently deployed to the Rashid district in southern Baghdad for a 15-month tour in support of MND-B and OIF.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 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 Pfc. Matthew Rivera, a signal support systems specialist from Bronx, N.Y., 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.

Raider Bayonet training lanes

Reinforcing Soldier skills in a combat zone

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



Sgt. 1st Class Steven Gudiel, indirect fire infantryman assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, exits an upside down vehicle Oct. 4 during Humvee Egress Assistance Training at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Gudiel, a Los Angeles-native, participated in the "Raider" Bayonet training exercise, which the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, assembled as a refresher course in some basic Soldier skills. Gudiel is currently serving a 15-month deployment in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Operation Iraqi Freedom.





Spc. Juan Soto, an indirect fire infantryman assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, uses a pen to triangulate his shot group Oct. 4 during a weapons qualification range at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Soto, a Miami-native, is currently serving a 15-month deployment with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

begin Humvee Egress Assistance Training, marksmanship training and enhance their situational awareness with the Engagement Skills Trainer, stated Tull.

"They are given a safety brief with (pre-combat checks and inspections); then the leaders go through and make sure the Soldiers are ready for training as well as in the proper uniform," said Tull, a native of Fayetteville, N.C.

HEAT training provides a realistic scenario of a vehicle rollover by turning a simulated truck upside down while Soldiers inside the simulator navigate their way out.

Staff Sgt. Bill Springs, a HEAT instructor and safety officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, said the training is good and he thinks the Soldiers are learning a lot from the opportunity to return to base and focus on the new training.

"It's a reality check once the Soldiers get into the vehicle," said Springs, a Los Angeles native. "Most of them have never experienced a rollover, so they find out the seatbelts really do save lives."

Soldiers attack the range to zero and qualify with their weapons, which can be many different models used by Soldiers in Iraq, such as the M-9 pistol, M-4 rifle and M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon, explained Springs.

Raider Bayonet is for the Soldiers, said Staff Sgt. Andrew Tillery, a range safety officer and information technology specialist assigned to Company B, 1st STB.

The Soldiers are the ones pounding their feet on the pavement every day, he added.

"The Soldiers come in, zero and

qualify to make sure their weapons are right before they go back out in sector," stated Tillery, a 7-year Army veteran who hails from Washington, D.C.

Tillery said being a range safety officer for the Raider Bayonet training event gives him a feeling of accomplishment.

"It feels good to be picked for a position like this," Tillery explained. "It shows me being here is for a reason."

The last exercise on the range is reflexive fire, where Soldiers react to a threat and quickly raise their weapon to fire downrange.

"The course has been good so far," said Pfc. Blake Herron, an indirect fire infantryman, assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT. "We are learning useful skills we need to know. Since we roll out all the time, we need to make sure our weapons are zeroed."

Herron said he believes it is imperative to keep the skills taught in Raider Bayonet fresh in the Soldiers' minds.

"It was good to get a refresher on the HEAT trainer, and I am sure reflexive fire with our weapons will be the best," stated Herron, who hails from Adger, Ala.

The final training event of Raider Bayonet is the Engagement Skills Trainer, which is similar to a video game. The Soldiers are faced with different scenarios on a large screen and learn to identify threats in those scenarios, explained Tillery.

The EST hones the Soldiers skills and reinforces their proficiency by increasing awareness, said Tillery, adding that he believes the Soldiers looked sharp and are operating proficiently.

"The NCOs are showing them how to do it the right way, and it shows out here," Tillery said.

All Soldiers of the Raider Brigade and its attached units are required to attend the training at some point throughout the two months, said Springs.

In addition to accomplishing its combat mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, has made time to conduct a mandatory lanes-training exercise for Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers to sharpen their marksmanship skills while reinforcing basic Soldiering skills essential to today's battlefield.

"The Raider Bayonet" is a command-directed training event that provides Raider Brigade Soldiers the opportunity to reconfirm their battlefield zero and qualify on their individual weapons at Forward Operating Base Falcon in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

"The training is centered on Soldiers that go in and out of the gate on a daily basis," said 1st Sgt. Reuben Tull Jr., Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "As we have heard about complacency, the training is to keep them on edge and to think about what they're doing on and off the mission."

Soldiers arrive early in the morning to



Sgt. Alfredo Moreno, a petroleum supply specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, leads a safety briefing prior to conducting Humvee Egress Assistance Training Oct. 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Moreno, a native of Cotulla, Texas, is currently serving a 15-month deployment with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

MND-B Soldiers reinforce Baghdad stability during Ramadan

Combined operations empower Iraqi populace

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

The information flyer reads: the Iraqi is wanted for crimes committed against the Iraqi people. The award for arresting this terrorist, \$10,000, will be paid immediately if the information provided leads to the arrest of the suspect, a reputed special groups cell leader known to operate in southern Baghdad.

The Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, working with Iraqi Security Forces, continue to distribute information flyers and posters that encourage Iraqi citizens to join in the fight against special groups criminals and terrorists.

The National Police of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div., attribute a large portion of their success in detaining Baghdad's most wanted criminals to the information dissemination campaign, said 1st Lt. Ben Hartig, a platoon leader from Concord, Calif., assigned to the 4th Bn, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"They really get on board with it," said Hartig, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of 2006.

"The NPs are big fans of the (information distribution), and credit their success in detaining bad guys to getting pictures of (enemy) faces out to the public, and having the tip line phone numbers on those handbills."

During the Muslim observance of the month of Ramadan, the platoon of U.S. Soldiers uses a different approach during combined operations and security patrols in the Bayaa and Aamel

communities of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad, he explained.

Conducting more night patrols and focused area patrols around the busiest parts of the day, morning and night, the unit has modified its patrol schedule to accommodate for the Iraqi people practicing the customs of Ramadan, said Sgt. 1st Class Marcus Brister, a platoon sergeant from Baton Rouge, La., assigned to Co. D, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt.

"During Ramadan, since the Iraqis pray and fast during the day, we observe, and try to respect their religion here, pushing our operations out through the night, when they are going to be most active," Brister said.

"If we come out at night, people are more apt to greet and talk to us, because they have eaten a meal once the sun has set," he explained. "It helps out with us doing our information (dissemination); let's the people know that we really care about them."

The unit's basic under-

standing of language, culture and customs helps to build relations with the Iraqi people, said Sgt. Julio Tirado, an infantry team leader from Catalina, Puerto Rico.

"We have to understand first that this country has different customs than us, especially in the religion," explained Tirado, who is assigned to Co. D, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt. "It is so different; it is very traditional."

The platoon continues to conduct patrols and joint patrols with National Police to ensure that Al Qaeda in Iraq and militia elements stay out of Rashid, said Tirado.

The Soldiers regularly inspect checkpoints and assist local Iraqi Security Forces leaders in the training and professional development of their troops, he explained.

Brister said that he agrees it is a calculated risk to change standard operating procedures for Ramadan, but the fact is that there is still a combined presence of ISF and Coalition Forces in the neighborhoods.

The support of the Iraqi



Sgt. Julio Tirado, an infantry team leader from Catalina, Puerto Rico, assigned to Company D, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Bn., 22nd Infantry Regt., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, clears an Iraqi citizen's AK-47 rifle with the help of an Iraqi National Policeman from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, Sept. 6, while Spc. Brandon Josey, an infantryman from Denver, N.C., Co. D., 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., hands out information flyers during a combined patrol in the Bayaa community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

Sgt. 1st Class Marcus Brister, platoon sergeant from Baton Rouge, La., stands point during a combined patrol Sept. 6 with Iraqi National Police of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd NP Division. Brister, who is assigned to Company D, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., attached to the 1st Bn., 22nd Infantry Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conducts daily combined patrols and operations with Iraqi Security Forces to ensure that ongoing security and stability efforts are maintained throughout the Rashid district of Baghdad.

residents in the Rashid district also helps to reinforce the stability that the district, home to approximately 1.6 million Iraqis, currently enjoys, said Brister.

“We’re to the point here now, where we have developed a pretty substantial source network between our local national sources and the National Police here, and we get a ‘heads-up’ whenever anything moves,” he explained.

Iraqi NP patrol leader, 2nd Lt. Adel, says that the Iraqi people in his sector appreciate the work of the 2nd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div.

Adel also said that handing out flyers and handbills helps keep the people informed of the current situation in their community.

The Soldiers of Co. D, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., have been distributing flyers, hanging posters and working with the National Police for the last three weeks, said Spc. Brandon Josey, from Denver, N.C.

The NPs continue to distribute the information products and keep stacks of flyers to hand to drivers who pass through their checkpoints.

“Handbills are important, helps the community in our area know about what we’re doing; and what’s going on with the insurgency here,” said Josey, deployed for his first time in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It will be one year in October, since the company first deployed to Baghdad, he said, and since that time, the unit has worked throughout the Rashid district and Baghdad, said Josey, who serves as an M2 Bradley gunner and infantry dismount.

During the past 11 months, the Soldiers have served in some of the most volatile areas of the city, patrolling in the Saydiyah community of Rashid and Baghdad’s Sadr City, he explained.

“We’ve watched the security with the Iraqis evolve from a little to a lot,” Josey said.

“In Saydiyah, we made a huge impact,” he added. “When we first got there, there were (significant activities) everyday, and now the Iraqi Army’s in Saydiyah, and is pretty much running the place.”

Working in areas, like Doura, where there primary mission was to train ISF, helped to introduce the Soldier to his Iraqi counterparts.

“Overall, I think they do a really good job for what little they have,” he said.

The company’s current mission is to help the communities, explained Josey.



Spc. Brandon Josey, an infantryman from Denver, N.C., assigned to Company D, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Bn., 22nd Infantry Regt., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, distributes information handbills Sept. 6 to residents of the Bayaa neighborhood of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

They have been accomplishing this task by issuing microgrants to local business owners, keeping the community informed and interacting with the people.

The 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., is part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, stationed out of Fort Stewart, Ga. The “Tuskers” Bn. is currently deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., in support of OIF and MND-B.

The 2nd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div., took to the streets and neighborhoods of the Bayaa community to meet with local Iraqi residents, distributing handbills and reminding the local populous to keep their eyes open for special groups criminals and terrorists returning to the area during the month of Ramadan.

“The National Police have developed a rapport with the community of Aamel and Bayaa making information sharing more effective,” said Capt. Joe Rousse, assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

“The more the residents interact with Iraqi Security Forces, the harder it is for criminals to grow roots in these communities,” said Rousse, who calls Chicago home.

The National Police engaged the residents of Aamel and Bayaa to distribute information and wanted poster with names and pictures of local criminals operating in these neighborhoods.

“The security situation is good, and we thank God for our situation now,” said Policeman A’alaa Jabar, an INP assigned to 2nd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div. “The people feel more comfortable and are able to go walking and shopping. Ramadan this year is better than last.”

The Soldiers of Company D, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., worked with the National Police, knocking on doors, meeting with Iraqis and distributing handbills to families.

The 1st BCT Soldiers assisted the operation, accompanying the NPs who just broke their fast in observance of Ramadan, before beginning the mission of providing security and engaging the local populace.

“The residents of Aamel and Bayaa will ensure that Coalition Forces and ISF remove these dangerous individuals from their neighborhoods. They continue to support the Iraqi National Police by providing useful information to capture difficult targets. It would be virtually impossible without the help of the local community and information from the residents,” said Maj. Mark Thompson, operations officer of the 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.



Iraqi men in the Bayaa community take a break from backgammon and cards to read an information handbill about Baghdad’s most wanted criminals Sept. 6 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

SCHOOL RENOVATIONS PROVIDE IRAQI CHILDREN NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN RASHID DISTRICT

Sheik Ayad cuts the ribbon to signify the opening of a school Sept. 25, as Sgt. 1st Class Eric McCoy of Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, looks on. Soldiers of the 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, worked with local community leaders and Civil Affairs Soldiers to complete several renovation projects for Iraqi schoolhouses in the rural community of central Radwaniyah located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



Story and photos by Capt. Mark Miller
4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

At the beginning of their school year, the kids of the Halwan School in Jari Village and Malaly School in Radwaniyah are not returning to the same schoolhouse they left before the summer break in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, partnered with Civil Affairs Soldiers and local Iraqi community leaders, worked to complete required renovations in time to re-open the schools, Sept. 25, as scheduled.

"The whole project had to be completed in less than six weeks," explained Sgt. 1st Class Eric McCoy, Noncommissioned Officer-in-Charge of the Civil Affairs team, assigned to

the 404th Civil Affairs Bn., stationed at Fort Dix, N.J.

"The buildings have been re-faced, all of the electrical wires re-ran; a new generator has been installed, and the bathrooms were completely renovated as well," added McCoy, who hails from Middletown, N.J.

At the first ribbon-cutting ceremony in Jari Village, a neighborhood in the Radwaniyah community, eager students and their satisfied teachers found newly renovated buildings with fresh paint, new desks, new roofing and three additional classrooms.

"The community now has better resources thanks to the hard work of the Coalition Forces and Iraqi contractors," said Sheik Ayad, a local leader of the Radwaniyah district.

Less than one hour later, a re-opening ceremony began

for the Malaly School in the Radwaniyah community of Rashid.

Capt. Christopher Johnson, a native of Topsfield, Mass., and the executive officer for HHC, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., spoke to the crowd of students, teachers, and local leaders.

"This is the future of Iraq; it begins here with the children," Johnson reflected about the memories he had of the school when he first saw it only months ago.

"We all remember when the roof here was falling in, and it was a dangerous environment for the kids," he said. "This is a better environment for the students and teachers to focus on education now."

After a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the second school, Sheik Ayad led Johnson and McCoy through the different classrooms to speak with the students in smaller groups.

McCoy and

Johnson visited the students, asking if the children liked their new classrooms.

The leaders also spoke to the students about their favorite subjects and what they like to do for fun, when not in school.

"I always enjoy talking with the kids," McCoy said with a smile on his face after leaving one of the classrooms. "They're a lot of fun to interact with, and they deserve the best chance they can get."

Circulating through the classrooms, the local leaders and Coalition Forces left the students to their classes for the day.

There was little need for interpreters upon saying goodbye as everyone understood without words that the kids would be in better schools for years to come because of their ability to work together, said Johnson.

Smiles and handshakes were exchanged between the Iraqi sheiks and Coalition Forces upon parting ways.



Iraqi children applaud the opening of their newly remodeled school, Sept. 25, during a ribbon cutting ceremony signifying the start of a new school year in the central Radwaniyah community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, partnered with Civil Affairs Soldiers and local Iraqi community leaders, worked to complete required renovations to Radwaniyah's Halwan School in Jari Village and al-Tahreer and Malaly Schools in time to re-open the schoolhouses as scheduled.

Staff Lt. Col. Sabah Mohammed Zgheir, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aburisha Brigade, (National Police), distributes backpacks loaded with school supplies to boys and girls of the Um Al-Bahananh, Al Tahdi, Al Sedjad and Anbad Al Rahman Schools Oct. 12 in the Abu T'shir community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

Iraqi NPs distribute backpacks, smiles Ghost Squadron Soldiers, Civil Affairs Team coordinate community event

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, community leaders and Iraqi Security Forces conducted a backpack and school supply hand-out to boys and girls of the Um Al-Bahananh, Al Tahdi, Al Sedjad and Anbad Al Rahman Schools Oct. 12 in the Abu T'shir community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

The event was one of four school supply distributions conducted Oct. 12-16 in the Abu T'shir, Saha, Mechanics and Five Farms areas, located in southeastern Rashid, said Capt. Neville McKenzie, a detachment team leader from Wappingers Falls, N.Y., assigned to Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion.

"This is an opportunity for the National Police and the Neighborhood Advisory Council to provide school bags for the (students) here in Abu T'shir," said McKenzie, who is attached to the 1st Special Troops Bn., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. "This is a good opportunity for them to show the community that they are working for them and that they support them, and a good chance for the community to see the good that they can do for them as well."

The 404th CA Detachment, stationed at Fort Dix, N.J., provided the school bags collected from MND-B at Camp Liberty to distribute to schools throughout the East Rashid community, said McKenzie.

Leaders from the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf.

Div., stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, and deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in the Rashid district, worked with National Police Training Teams and local community leaders from the Neighborhood Advisory Council to coordinate for ISF participation in the separate events, said McKenzie.

Community events, such as the backpack and school supply distributions, help to build the relationship of the local ISF and legitimize the Iraqi government in the eyes of the Iraqi people, he added.

"It shows that the ISF are here to provide security and are looking out for the well-being of the people of Abu T'shir," said Maj. Robert Burgess, NPTT advisor, assigned to the 6010 NPTT, 1st Infantry Division, stationed at Fort Riley, Kan., and deployed to Baghdad to train and mentor Shurta Wadaniya, or NPs, in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"It's a fairly new battalion, but they're main role in all of this is to provide security for the people of Abu T'shir," said Burgess, referring to the new 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aburisha Brigade (National Police), the Iraqi Ministry of Interior's newest "Feather" or light NP unit, charged with providing security for Baghdad and the citizens of East Rashid.

The Iraqi NPs of the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., working with the Aburisha Shurta Wadaniya, distributed more than 900 school bags and school supplies to the students at

four schools serving seven neighborhoods in Rashid.

The district



council supported by the Coalition Forces, distributed this morning school bags for all students in the elementary First Grade," said Najim Abdallah Hussein, the principle of 560 students at Al-Masafee Takmeliya School located in eastern Baghdad. "The girls got girly-style bags and boys got boyish-style bags, and that was done with the help of the CF."

Najim also said that he would like to see the CF and ISF distribute bags to the other grade-school children attending the elementary schools.

Capt. Ryan Burcham, commander of Troop A, 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., said that like the squadron's other troop commanders, he works very closely with the local leadership council in his operating area, to meet the needs of the entire community, which includes neighborhood school projects.

The school supply distribution provides Soldiers the chance to relax and the opportunity to help the local leadership in showing the people that U.S. Soldiers are working with the ISF to support the people.

"This is great," said Burcham, a native of San Diego, Calif. "Just these little things that are really easy for us to do, go a long way with reaching out to the community and building a relationship with the local community."

Sgt. Jeremy Brown, a cavalry scout from Fort Hood, Texas, assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, provides security for the school children of the Um Al-Bahananh, Al Tahdi, Al Sedjad and Anbad Al Rahman Schools Oct. 12 in the Abu T'shir community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The event was coordinated by Soldiers of the 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., and Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.



Raider BCT commemorates closing of Rashid Olympics with championship match

Story by the Raider Public Affairs Team
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

The Rashid Olympics in southern Baghdad came to an end as more than 330 teams from 14 neighborhoods competed in friendly soccer games spanning the course of the summer.

The Rashid District Sports and Youth Committee hosted the championship soccer match and closing ceremony Sept. 9 at the Jaza'ir Oil Refinery Soccer Field to pit the champions of the East and West Rashid areas against each other in the contest to crown a winner and relish the success of the district's first sports program since the war began.

A team from eastern Rashid Abu T'shir earned a hard-fought 3-1 victory over the team from Risalah in a spirited match during the championship

game that represented the zenith of more than four months of youth soccer throughout the summer.

Hard work from volunteers, coaches and all the neighborhoods in the district took care of thousands of kids competing throughout the tournament, said Lt. Col. Dave Hill, commander, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Events like these are the cornerstone of Iraq's future, said Maj. Joe Berthelotte, brigade information officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"The people of Rashid are returning to a sense of normalcy," said Berthelotte, who hails from Nashua, N.H. "Children are afforded the enjoyment of a

childhood – uninterrupted by the violence that was once prevalent in southern Baghdad. Events such as these are the cornerstone of Iraq's future."

Capt. Thao Reed worked as the special projects manager for the Rashid Olympics and served in an advisory capacity for the project, which engaged approximately 10,000 Iraqi boys and girls. Reed is the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Reed, who is a native of Fort Worth, Texas, said she believes the project empowered the local Iraqi governance to help return a sense of normalcy to the neighborhoods and communities of Baghdad.

"When children are playing sports, there is an implied situation that means security is present – the reality of kids playing, letting our kids play on the ground, play on the streets – provides the youth and the Iraqi family a sense of normalcy," said Reed.

Reed worked closely with Mr. Habeeb Lefta, the Rashid District Youth and Sports Program director, who ensured the Rashid Olympics occurred as planned. He coordinated several sporting events, including the soccer, table tennis, fencing, basketball and volleyball.

"It takes a lot of coordination, a lot of planning, a lot of teamwork from the local government, neighborhood and

community leadership and Coalition Forces," said Reed, who is a graduate of The Illinois Institute of Technology, with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering. "Coalition Forces served in a supporting role. We are in the leadership business and can provide courses of action to resolve issues and provide them options. They make the decision which course of action they choose to decide."

The Rashid Olympics served a two-fold purpose: to engage the youth, and to get the local governance involved with the Iraqi people to provide a viable, sustainable community service provided by the local government, explained Reed.

Coalition Forces,



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

An Iraqi soccer player from the community of Abu T'shir tries to maneuver past a defender from the Risalah community during the championship soccer match for the Rashid Olympics Sept. 9 at the Jaza'ir Oil Refinery Soccer Field in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

SCOREBOARD

3 Abu T'shir
1 Risalah

Iraqi youth soccer players observe the final soccer match of the Rashid Olympics Sept. 9 at the Jaza'ir Oil Refinery Soccer Field in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Two soccer players from the Rashid district of southern Baghdad chase for the ball during the final match of the Rashid Olympics Sept. 9 at the Jaza'ir Oil Refinery Soccer Field.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

The final two teams in the Rashid Olympics shake hands before the start of the championship match Sept. 9 at the Jaza'ir Oil Refinery Soccer Field in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Capt. Thao Reed, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, attends the final Rashid Olympic soccer game Sept. 9 at the Jaza'ir Oil Refinery in southern Baghdad.

The winner of the Rashid Olympics Soccer Tournament, the community of Abu T'shir, proudly raise their 1st Place Trophy Sept. 9 at the Jaza'ir Oil Refinery Soccer Field located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

working with the U.S. State Department, also provided some resources to make the soccer tournament a success, said Reed, such as providing the uniforms and soccer balls for the ongoing program to help encourage youth participation in the community program.

U.S. Engineers renovated 14 soccer fields and are constructing two gymnasiums in Rashid, added Reed.

A notable milestone is the start of the Girls Youth Sports

Program in Rashid.

"We did get the girls involved for the first time ever in the Rashid Security District," Reed said. "That was a struggle because of the Iraqi culture. For the girls to be involved, we had to get the approval of the Ministry of Education."

Working with community leaders, Reed helped to ensure the girls were included. They competed in both volleyball and basketball tournaments. Reed also worked with families, who

were concerned about their girls' safety and security.

"That was a big issue, so we had to involve the teachers, the school administration and the MOE," Reed explained. "It was a very intensive program, even though there were only about 100 girls participating this summer; it was an enormous step."

Due to the success of the program, the local governance planstoexpandthegirls'program to include approximately 2,000

participants from across the Rashid district, Reed explained. The bottom line for the summer youth sports program is the security.

A little more than a year ago, it would have been very difficult to get Iraqis from East and West Rashid to come together to play each other in a friendly Soccer game, she concluded.

Raider Brigade CSMs join Iraqi counterparts for NCOPD

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

In the expose, "The Sergeant is the Army," Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower wrote that throughout man's history, militaries have been led by officers, but run by noncommissioned officers, "warriors promoted from the ranks to lead, guide, train, inspire, push, intimidate and

keep their charges alive."

"Within the combat unit, the NCO passes on his specific knowledge and experiences unique to him, which in any small way can make his peers' lives easier, their combat safer, their relationships up and down the chain of command smoother," he wrote.

More than one month ago, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division's seniorenlisted leader, challenged Iraqi Security Forces' senior noncommissioned officers to create a presentation on the history of the Iraqi NCO Corps.

Those same ISF command sergeants answered Bobb's challenge, inviting the "Raider" Brigade's most senior enlisted leaders to attend a Combined Forces Senior Enlisted Conference Aug. 29 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

Led by ISF command sergeants major of the Rashid district, the block of NCO professional development began with a brief explanation of the Corps of the Iraqi NCO, tracing the development of the Iraqi Army, created in the 1920s and modeled after the British Army.

"They were grateful to have the opportunity to express this to us," said Bobb, a U.S. Army veteran of more than 27 years. "They believe in what they are doing. They believe in defending their country."



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, addresses Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces senior noncommissioned officers during a Senior Enlisted Conference Aug. 29 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Bobb, a U.S. Army veteran of more than 27 years' experience, provides guidance for more than 4,500 Soldiers and many Iraqi forces.

Command Sgt. Maj. Muhammad Ja'afar Kadom, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, answers questions of his senior enlisted leaders during a Combined Forces Senior Enlisted Conference Aug. 29 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Kadom took the opportunity to instruct ISF leaders on the importance of maintaining standards and taking care of soldiers during the noncommissioned officer professional development conference hosted by the Iraqi Security Forces for the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

Bobb said that he believes compared to what American forces were required to accomplish for the advancement of their NCO Corps, the ISF NCOs are developing quickly.

"These National Police, Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army soldiers are willing to die for their people, for their country," said Bobb, who hails from Trinidad, West Indies. "We must respect them for that."

The ISF senior leaders also explained the Iraqi Army's rank structure and promotion system, and used the event as an opportunity to address standard operating procedures for checkpoints, pre-combat checks, inspections and professional development of IA soldiers.

"I should use my experience and my training to make sure that my men are ready to fight," said Iraqi Policeman Command Sgt. Maj. Muhammad Ja'afar Kadom, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, to the ISF senior enlisted in the room.

While everyone is not happy with the way the ISF systems are working, the bottom line for ISF leaders should take care of their Soldiers, explained Kadom.

After each block of instruction, the ISF enlisted leaders fielded questions from the Raider Brigade's senior

enlisted Soldiers.

"I think it's important in reference to building and strengthening our military professional relationships," said Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Seaman, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "Every time we do something together we learn from each other in a positive way through getting to know each other, sharing ideas, and understanding each other's customs, courtesies, values and culture."

The ISF continue to rebuild and restructure its organization, said Seaman, a native of Beckley, W. Va. They accomplish this task by evaluating the U.S. Army systems to determine what works best for their operations.

Every time a joint conference is convened, both forces learn something new, explained Seaman, who said that he actively participates in the conferences out of respect and professional courtesy for his Iraqi counterparts.

"I am proud of our Army, and I know that despite all the challenges they face - the Iraqi noncommissioned officers have already overcome many. They are proud of that fact and proud of their service and army," he said.





New bookbags for Risalah children



WARRIORS watch over NPs

2nd Lt. Kyle Fitchner, a platoon leader from Broken Arrow, Okla., assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, and attached to the 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, touches base with 1st Lt. Allaa, a National Police Platoon Leader assigned to 2nd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div., before a combined security patrol Oct. 7 in the Aamel community of southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

Spc. Derrick Murphy, an infantryman from Piper City, Ill., assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, and attached to the 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, provides security for 2nd Bn., 5th Bde., 2nd National Police Div. in Aamel.

U.S. Army photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Iraqi National Police of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, buy Jouraak, cookie-like biscuits covered in cheese, sugar or spice, from a local Iraqi Ferin, or bakery Oct. 7 in the Aamel community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

Iraqi National Policemen from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, search through the trunk of a car during a random house search Oct. 7 in the Hayy Aamel community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The NPs conduct daily combined patrols with Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, to reinforce ongoing security efforts in the neighborhoods and communities in Baghdad.

Raiders make voting 'a snap' at FOB Falcon

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Two Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers streamlined the voting process for hundreds of service members and civilians Oct. 3-5 at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

Sgt.'s Asa Rubman and Rachel Littenberg, both paralegal specialists assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, noticed an overwhelming number of Soldiers uninterested in voting in the November general elections and decided to spearhead a voting drive for Soldiers.

"It started out with me being annoyed with the system," said Rubman, a native of Watertown, Conn. "I registered and tried to get my ballot in May and it never came, so I started putting up flyers in case other people didn't get theirs."

The flyers posted throughout the brigade headquarters building enticed Soldiers to stop by the legal office and spend approximately ten minutes to exercise their right to vote.

Even after posting flyers, the two decided they were not reaching out to enough Soldiers and decided to take the advice of Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, the brigade's senior enlisted leader, and set up a table inside the dining facility.

"People normally have a block of time set

"I think it is amazing that Soldiers can have the chance to vote while deployed, especially while we are encouraging democracy in Iraq."

Sgt. Asa Rubman

aside when they go to chow, so it is easier for them to register to vote then and just eat their grilled cheese a little faster," Rubman said.

The duo provided Soldiers the opportunity to vote in the dining facility for three days, spending six hours a day there while work piled up back at the office.

They also provided the necessary paperwork, envelopes and useful information regarding each state's voting regulations.

In all, the effort assisted more than 550 service members and civilians throughout the three-day drive, said Littenberg.

"Everybody was really into it," said Littenberg, who hails from Huntington, N.Y. "I watched a major and a specialist have a twenty minute conversation while they were completing their ballots about who was a better choice for president."

Setting up in the dining facility was great, and it motivated many Soldiers to vote, said Staff Sgt. Devon Pierce, an infantryman assigned to the brigade personnel security detachment, HHD, 1st BCT.

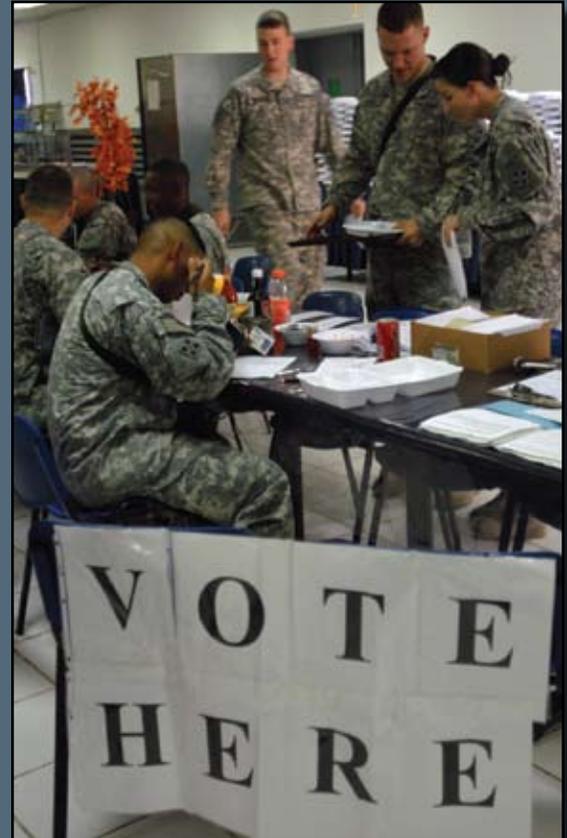
Pierce, who is on his third deployment, said this is the first one in which he has found the time to vote.

"I was glad to see the legal office took the initiative to put up flyers and set up a table in the dining facility," said Pierce, a native of Mobile, Ala.

Both Rubman and Littenberg feel they have changed people's opinions by encouraging service members and civilians to vote.

"I think it is amazing that Soldiers can have the chance to vote while deployed, especially while we are encouraging democracy in Iraq," Rubman stated. "I think it is one of the most amazing things in the world."

Sgt.'s Asa Rubman and Rachel Littenberg, both paralegal specialists assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, assist Soldiers and civilians while they register to vote Oct. 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Iraq.



Sgt. Robert Hooper (right), a wheeled vehicle mechanic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, seals an envelope containing his voter registration and ballot Oct. 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

MNF-I LEADERS VISIT RAIDER SOLDIERS



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Multi-National Forces – Iraq Commander Gen. David Petraeus applauds the leaders and Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, during a coin presentation Aug. 30 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Petraeus began the event by breaking formation and offering all 1st “Raider” Brigade Soldiers who have deployed for more than 24 months in support of the Global War on Terrorism an MNF-I Commanding General Coin.

Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, the top enlisted leader for Multi-National Forces – Iraq, engages Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, before recognizing ten high-speed Soldiers for their hard work and dedication with a coin presentation Aug. 30 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad. Hill spent the day visiting with Soldiers of the “Raider” BCT during a battlefield circulation in southeastern Baghdad and FOB Falcon.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Multi-National Forces – Iraq Commander Gen. David Petraeus, presents Spc. Jayna Bryant, a human resources specialist from Thomasville, N.C., a coin Aug. 30 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad’s Rashid district. Petraeus commended Bryant, who is assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, for processing more than 100 promotions and 300 leave packets for six companies during the first five months of the deployment.



Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, command sergeant major for Multi-National Forces – Iraq, addresses Soldiers of the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad during a battlefield circulation Aug. 30 in the Abu T’shir community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The “Raider” BCT Soldiers accompanied MNF-I’s top enlisted leader during a walk through Abu T’shir’s Market Street, neighborhoods and business places.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Vin Stevens

Branch Manager briefs 4th Inf. Div., MND-B senior NCOs on HRC initiatives

As the Soldiers were seated in the auditorium, they listened in rapt attention, some perhaps with a bit of apprehension, as the senior noncommissioned officer from the Army's Human Resources Command began her briefing.

Initially there wasn't a whisper as she began telling the Soldiers about the pending changes for the management of their career field – and for those who would follow their footsteps in the future.

This crowd was a little bit different than those normally found at briefings such as this. In fact, in this particular group, a majority of the participants wore the same stars in the middle of their ranks, some encircled by wreaths, upon the chests of their Army combat uniforms.

Such was the scene Sept. 25 as Sgt. Maj. Gabriella Russum, the sergeants major branch assignment manager, briefed her fellow senior enlisted leaders on changes to the sergeant major/command sergeant major management system.

Prior to kicking off her visit at Forward Operating Base Falcon and Camp Taji, she met with Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, the senior enlisted leader for the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and provided him an in-brief. Gioia then escorted her as they shared their insights with their fellow Soldiers.

As he introduced her to her peers at FOB Falcon, his message was simple but clear: "Sergeants major represent three percent of the total Army strength, and command sergeants major represent one percent. With that said, you no longer serve for yourselves – You serve the Soldiers of your units.

"You can ask your questions – but at the end of the day, remember: 'I will always place the mission first!'"

With that, he handed over the reins to Russum, who told the gathered leaders that the sergeants major management branch in undergoing a metamorphosis to meet the changing and demanding needs of the Army. Her visit, she added, provided her the opportunity to share some insight on the future management of the Army's senior enlisted leaders.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Hill invited us to come here to Iraq and share our knowledge on the future initiatives of sergeant major branch with our sergeants major and command sergeants major," said Russum, referring to Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, the senior enlisted leader for Multi-National Forces – Iraq.

Along with her team, which consisted of Master Sgt. Percina Laster and Master Sgt. Garvin Walcott, she was in the midst of a seven-day visit to Iraq that also featured stops at MND-North, MND-Central, Multi-National Corps – Iraq and MNF-I.

The reception during her briefings were somewhat varied, with some senior enlisted leaders hearing what they wanted and others, perhaps, not so much.

One of the biggest initiatives future sergeant major selectees will undergo is a fundamental change in philosophy pertaining to the promotion system itself. In the past, the promotion board specifically selected the senior NCOs for promotion in addition to identifying select master sergeants or first sergeants to attend the Sergeants Major Academy as alternates even though they had not necessarily been selected for promotion.

Under the approved initiative of Select – Train – Promote, she explained, the noncommissioned officers are now selected to undergo training at the academy. Once they successfully complete the training and graduate, at that point, they become promotable, which is a fundamental shift from the previous promotion mind set.

Another fundamental change to the promotion process is that all master sergeants and first sergeants selected to attend the academy will now undergo a thorough background screening process prior to their admission to the course. Those who do not pass the screening process will not be able to attend the academy and subsequently not be promoted. Although this process has been in place historically for those selected for appointment to command sergeants major, it has been expanded to include all sergeant major selectees.

"My question is, why doesn't the Army promote all of those who previously graduated from the academy but have not been selected for promotion yet?" asked one of the assembled sergeants major, who cited the perceived inequities in the system that if these Soldiers were selected to attend the academy in the first place, then the Army should go ahead and promote them.

Russum said the new initiatives are intended to address challenges such as this "head on" since starting in Class 60 at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, only those selected for promotion will attend the course. The challenge for some of those who previously attended the course before being selected for promotion, she explained, was that while they were undergoing the training, their peers were out in those hard jobs and gaining operational experience.

Thus, when subsequent promotion boards were conducted, the selection process came down to "Who do you promote? The Soldier with the training experience? Or the Soldier with the operational experience?" The new system, she explained, helps to address that challenge.

"What do you think should be added to the promotion board?" she asked, looking for their feedback as she explained that the career branch managers provide guidance to the promotion board and she was interested in hearing their feedback.

Another important facet of her visit was the opportunity to sit down with the Soldiers and discuss their future potential assignments and career maps.

"We are working the assignment

process," she explained. "But one thing everyone has to realize is that there is an expectation that the division will retain a certain percentage of its experience following the deployment."

This also is a subject that tends to illicit strong emotional responses as she explained the Army is committed to ensuring the division is set up for success as it resets and prepares for its pending move to Fort Carson and projected follow-on deployment. This perhaps struck home for some of those in attendance in that they may not have the ability to move on to another assignment following the current 15-month deployment.

As the questions circulated throughout the room, Gioia took center stage and addressed the issue directly.

"I sat down with Sgt. Maj. Russum and shared my observations with her on the future assignments of our sergeants major and command sergeants major," said Gioia. "Let me be clear on this. I am responsible for making sure the division is prepared for onward movement to Fort Carson and a future projected deployment. If HRC has not identified a replacement for a specific position, the current sergeant major will stay with the division."

Another initiative briefed by Russum focused on selections for appointment as a command sergeant major. Under the current selection system, NCOs serving as first sergeant can be selected for appointment to command sergeant major upon promotion.

The new initiative, she explained, is to establish a minimum goal of five years experience from the time a Soldier is promoted from master sergeant to the rank of sergeant major before being appointed to the rank of command sergeant major. This is achieved through the process of Select – Train – Promote, she said, as she walked them through the process.

The new initiatives can be somewhat touchy at times, she said.

The important factor of her trip, she said, is that it provides her and her team the opportunity to meet with the senior leaders face to face, which "alleviates us from doing it over the phone or through emails and trying to guess what the sergeant majors preferences are."

During her day-long visit, she met with more than 120 senior NCOs at Camp Taji and FOB Falcon.

"Overall, we touched more than 400 master sergeants, first sergeants, sergeants major and command sergeants major during our visit," she said. "I think it was very successful. When I leave, I'm confident that I leave them with the understanding that they have more options than they were aware of.

"The future management of sergeants major and command sergeants major is changing. It is our mission to educate the force on what the changes will look like and how it will affect them in the future."

By Sgt. Maj. Eric Lobsinger, MND-B PAO

Maddawg Soldiers keep combat vehicles rolling

Metal workers fabricate parts to accomplish any mission

Story by Sgt. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Thanks to the intuitive efforts of a team of Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, combat vehicles undergo a few structural changes while deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in Baghdad's Rashid district.

Soldiers of Company B, 4th Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, are often faced with the demands of fixing many types of combat vehicles without an excess of available parts or the manufacturer's training manual.

"In our fabrication shop, it is always quicker to manufacture an item, which can get done in a day or so compared to ordering items from the states, which may take from one week to six months to get here," said Chief Warrant Officer Mark Davis, brigade allied trades technician assigned to Co. B "Maddawgs," 4th Supt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

It is important to have a quick turnaround when vehicles break down because they are used every day by Soldiers securing the 1st "Raider" Brigade operating environment, said Davis, who hails from Wilburton, Okla.

"The Soldiers need to be able to utilize as many vehicles as necessary to minimize attacks against us and our allies," Davis explained. "If our presence is perceived as being lax, there may be a spike in activity

which could show us as being weak. We don't want that."

The Service and Recovery Section of Co. B fabricates replacement parts on armored vehicles, such as the Mine Resistant and Ambush Protected family of vehicles and humvees, said Davis.

The rear steps on one model of MRAP vehicle present a reoccurring problem, said Spc. Thomas Beaty, a wheeled-vehicle mechanic assigned to Maddawg Co. The ramps often break because the length of the vehicle causes the rear end to hit the ground while crossing a deep rut.

A collaborative effort between a small team of Soldiers and a Field Service Representative, which is typically an engineer or mechanic sent by the manufacturer of each vehicle, determines the method of repair when faced with either a broken part or manufacturing defect, said Davis.

Other improvements and repairs include door handles on humvees and the sway bar on the MRAP vehicles, an anti-roll device that stabilizes the vehicle during cornering.

"The (non-commissioned officers) and Soldiers work with each other to solve any problems," said Beaty, a native of Moreno Valley, Calif. "There is a lot of mechanical knowledge between all the Soldiers."

The FSRs are also very knowledgeable

and a big help when addressing technical aspects of the vehicles," said Beaty, who worked on farm and marine equipment before enlisting into the U.S. Army.

"My job is great," Beaty stated. "I fix the vehicles, which keep the Soldiers on mission safer."

"The FSRs, welders and I look at a problem and work out the best

way to fix or upgrade the part to bring the vehicle back to its fully mission capable status," Davis added.

The Soldiers of Co. B, 4th Supt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.,

are currently serving a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Justin Carmack, 1st BCT PAO

(Left) Spc. Larissa Reed, a metal worker assigned to Company B, 4th Support Battalion, cuts a piece of steel plate at the battalion motorpool Oct. 12 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Reed, a native of Vacaville, Calif., is currently deployed with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge

(Right) Spc. Thomas Beaty, a wheeled-vehicle mechanic assigned to Company B, 4th Support Battalion, welds a bracket onto a trailer support Oct. 12 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Beaty, a native of Moreno Valley, Calif., is currently deployed with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

RAIDER SOLDIERS CONDUCT RAVEN TRAINING



A Soldier assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, launches an RQ-11B Raven, a small Unmanned Aerial System, which provides intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance Aug. 25 at a joint security station in southern Baghdad.



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan E. Kretschmer, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan E. Kretschmer



Cpl. Taylor Jewett, an infantry mortarman from Harwinton, Conn., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, trains on the RQ-11B Raven, a small unmanned aerial system that provides surveillance for Soldiers in Baghdad Aug. 25.

Staff Sgt. Tahir Hasan, an aviation operations noncommissioned officer from Los Angeles, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, instructs Cpl. Billy McCoy, an infantry mortarman assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, on the RQ-11B Raven, a small unmanned aerial system, Aug. 25. The Raven is used for reconnaissance and to gather intelligence.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Kelvin T. Surgener, 1st BCT



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kelvin T. Surgener

U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kelvin T. Surgener

Cpl. Billy McCoy, infantry mortarman, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, trains on the RQ-11B small unmanned aerial system, Aug. 25, while instructor, Staff Sgt. Tahir Hasan, an aviation operations noncommissioned officer from Los Angeles, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, keeps the aircraft steady. The Raven is used for reconnaissance and to gather intelligence.

FORMER U.S. ARMY SHOOTING TEAM-MEMBER CALLS RAIDER BRIGADE HOME

Story by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

At the age of ten, Karyn could shoot a rifle better than the local high school boys from her hometown of Livonia, Mich.

Thanks to her mother's hobby and her own interest in the sport, Karyn set the tone for a memorable shooting career at the collegiate and U.S. Army levels.

Capt. Karyn Manges proudly displays her President's Hundred Tab, which is one of four tabs authorized by the U.S. Army for permanent display on the uniform.

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Multi-National Division – Baghdad in southern Baghdad's Rashid district, sometimes question its meaning, mistaking the tab for some form of Secret Service organization or an indicator of the Old Guard.

The four-and-a-half-inch marksmanship identifier worn on the left shoulder is a lasting testament to her ability in competitive shooting.

"I grew up around shooting ranges, so I would always bug my mother to teach me," Manges stated.

Karyn continued practicing the sport throughout high school and used her talent to land both a rifle team and educational scholarship from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

"When I was at Xavier, I was an All-American shooter for four years, and I was the NCAA Champion in 1998," Manges

stated.

A year after graduating college Manges, decided to join the U.S. Army Shooting Team at Fort Benning, Ga., to pay her student loans.

"The Army Shooting Team recruiters were always trying to get me to enlist," explained Manges, who at the time was among the top collegiate shooters in the country.

She enlisted as a medic in October 2000 and immediately became a part of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, a unit that is

dedicated to representing the Army at shooting events.

The years with the Army Shooting Team brought many memorable competitions and experiences, explained Karyn.

"I competed in international competitions for three years visiting places throughout Europe and Asia," Manges explained. "The goal of the unit was to shoot, compete and represent the Army."

At the competitions, Manges fired the M-16, which is considered part of the Service Rifle Category. Other rifles that fall into the category are the M-1 Garand and AR-15.

While Manges was not competing in shooting matches, she developed Soldiers throughout the Army in both basic and advanced marksmanship skills.

"When I was not shooting, I

was training other Soldiers in the Army," Manges said. "I went out to train drill sergeants, snipers, Special Forces, Rangers and squad-designated marksmen."

"I was the only female, and I was a specialist, so everyone got a kick out of being trained by me," added Manges.

Manges said that she believes women typically do very well in the sport of shooting.

"For me, shooting the M-16 wasn't very technical," she said. "It was like — get down, align the sights, and pull the trigger."

The method seemed to work

for her during her last year of competitive Army shooting.

"Over the course of the year, I shot the M-16 at 1,000 yards and won some national titles," Manges explained. "When people ask me how far I can shoot, I tell them at least 1,000 yards."

Karyn also made a trip to Camp Perry, Ohio., during her last year on the team to participate in the President's Hundred Match, which is a nationwide competition sponsored by the National Rifle Association, recognizing the top 100 marksmen in the country.

Approximately 2,000 service members and civilians compete each year in both the Service Rifle and Service Pistol category to win a coveted President's Hundred Tab.

"Basically, I went out there and didn't have any spotters or warm-up runs, so the weapon had to be zeroed, ready to go," Karyn explained.

The competition consists of 40 shots throughout the day, including various shooting positions, so it ends up being a long day, she added.

The day of the contest was windy and overcast, Karyn stated.

It's a situation where

even good shooters struggle because of the conditions, she explained.

Manges said that she does not recall exactly which place she finished in the competition, but she earned a Distinguished Rifleman's Badge along with her President's Hundred Tab for her efforts.

"I think the tab is neat because anyone can get one," Manges explained. "You just have to go to Camp Perry and try."

In 2005, Manges finished her stint with the Army Shooting Team and received her commission into the Medical Corps to become a physician's assistant and now serves with the 4th Support Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"I miss the dirt; I miss the smell. I miss cleaning my weapon, and I miss all that stuff because I am a competitive person," said Manges, who is currently a captain and works in the Forward Operating Base Falcon Troop Medical Clinic.

Manges said she will never shoot for the Army as a full-time job again because she enjoys helping Soldiers as a physician's assistant.

"In addition to being technically proficient at her job, she is also devoted to training medics," said Capt. Jim Silverstrim, commander of Company C "Cobra," 4th Supt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

In her time at the Cobra Clinic, Manges developed a medical training program for the Soldiers, said Silverstrim, who calls San Antonio his home. The program focuses on medical conditions and procedures commonly seen in theater.

Manges also organized the Trauma Jump Team, a quick response medical team that can operate outside the FOB in emergency situations, added Silverstrim.

"For me, I only wanted to compete for a few years ... I wouldn't make it a career," Manges explained. "I didn't want to look back later in life and wish I would've tried to do it."

Capt. Karyn Manges, physician's assistant assigned to the 4th Support Battalion, shoots her M-16 on a range during her four-year tenure on the U.S. Army Shooting Team from 2000 – 2004.



Photo courtesy of Capt. Karyn Manges

NCO builds new internet café for Raider MWR

Story by Sgt. David Hodge

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers have a new place to “surf the net” and call Family and friends at home thanks to the individual efforts of a 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division noncommissioned officer deployed to Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad’s Rashid district.

The “Raider” Brigade’s Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Gonzalez, the communications NCO in charge for the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., unveiled 20 desktop computers, eight phones and five webcams at the Falcon Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility Sept. 16.

With only two small internet cafes on the forward operating base, there were enough Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors to warrant another, said Gonzalez.

Before the 1st BCT began its current mission to support the security and stability of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad, the previous unit began construction of wooden cubicles for the internet and phones but was unable to complete the café before redeploying, stated Gonzalez.

Due to the number of units who operate from FOB Falcon, Gonzalez said he immediately recognized the need for an additional internet café upon his arrival and spearheaded the effort after initial operations began to slow down.

“I did not have the opportunity to



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Gonzalez, a San Antonio-native assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, proudly shows off the internet café he built Sept. 16 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Iraq.

begin work on the internet café upon arriving in Baghdad,” said Gonzalez, a San Antonio native. “Finally, in July, we started work on it.”

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

Gonzalez coordinated a convoy across southern Baghdad to pick up the equipment at another FOB and then returned to the Falcon MWR to set it up.

Since the civilian workers at the MWR cannot be held accountable, Gonzalez said he decided to take full responsibility for the \$35,000 of equipment. Signing for the expensive equipment also provides him ample reason to regularly visit the café.

“Every day I see more and more Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors utilizing the free internet,” Gonzalez explained. “It’s good to finally see it up and running.”

The internet café allows the Soldiers to keep in touch with their Families, said Phyllis Ward, Falcon MWR supervisor.

“We like to offer many things for the Soldiers,” explained Ward, who hails from Waynesville, Mo. “When Soldiers are away from home, they like to be able to know what is going on in their Family’s life.”

Since the MWR has opened, the internet café has assisted more than 300 service members, said Ward.

“This internet café is very convenient,” said Pfc. John Beckett, a multichannel transmission systems operator from Buffalo, N.Y., assigned to Company B, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. “I don’t have a computer, so I visit two or three times each week.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Pfc. John Beckett, assigned to Company B, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, “surfs the net” Sept. 24 inside a new internet café at the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facility on Forward Operating Base Falcon, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge

People from Forward Operating Base Falcon enjoy the new internet and phone services available at the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facility Sept. 24 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. The addition of the third internet café on the FOB keeps Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, busy while enjoying their time off duty.

Raider Soldiers compete in FOB Falcon's first Body for Life fitness challenge

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Sixteen Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers recently finished the first Falcon Body for Life fitness challenge Sept. 23 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad.

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, entered the nationwide contest, a 12-week-long workout routine and diet, in June to introduce a positive life-style change.

The program acts as an awakening for Soldiers, said Phyllis Ward, the Falcon Morale, Welfare and Recreation supervisor. It shows Soldiers what a step in the right direction can do for them.

The program outlines a fast-paced exercise routine that combines upper and lower body workouts with cardio fitness training and a six meal-per-day portion-controlled diet, said Ward.

Ward, who has been involved with helping Soldiers achieve their fitness goals since 1999, said she believes the Soldiers see a positive difference in the first four weeks after starting the program, and it is a big morale booster for them.

"If people feel better about themselves, they can be more productive and feel better while

doing it," said Ward, who hails from Waynesville, Mo. "I think the program is very empowering."

At the beginning and end of the program, each participant has photographs taken to be used as a comparison, said Ward.

"They feel like they have accomplished something good in a short amount of time," added Ward, who is a certified personal trainer, fitness coach and author.

Several Soldiers experienced 20-pound reductions in weight and double-digit decreases in body fat during the 12 weeks, said Ward.

"This challenge helped me tremendously," said Master Sgt. Alfredo Pacheco, the brigade linguist manager, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "It is the easiest way for me to lose body fat."

Pacheco, who hails from Ponce, Puerto Rico, recorded a four percent reduction in body fat, which brought his total to 11 percent.

"It was difficult, but I wanted to look and feel better," he added.

Many of the program's participants entered to reduce their overall body weight.

"I was trying to gain weight while at the

same time lose body fat," said Sgt. Benjamin Buskill, assistant personnel services noncommissioned officer, assigned to HHD, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Buskill was curious to see what the program could do for him, so he decided to try it out.

"I went to the orientation and saw the before and after photos and thought to myself - they did that in only 12 weeks," explained Buskill, a native of Culpepper, Va.

Buskill added 10 pounds while losing 3.5 percent of his body fat during the challenge.

"I am happy with the results of the program," he stated. "I have a Soldier who is going to enter it next time, and I am going to do it again to motivate them."

A ceremony to congratulate the finishers and recognize the Soldiers with the most significant progress is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 28.

Phyllis Ward, the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Supervisor for Forward Operating Base Falcon checks a Soldier's leg for a body fat percentage Sept. 22 in southern Baghdad. Sixteen Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team recently finished a 12-week-long fitness challenge to introduce a positive lifestyle change.



Master Sgt. Alfredo Pacheco, brigade linguist manager from Ponce, Puerto Rico, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, curls a dumbbell while 1st Sgt. Scott Guillory, top enlisted leader for Company B, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, awaits the final weigh in during the Body for Life fitness challenge Sept. 23 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

RAIDER SAFE

A fundamental component of the Army Safety Program is Composite Risk Management.

The principles that the process is built around are:

1. CRM will be integrated into the planning process at an early stage.
2. No unnecessary risk will be accepted.
3. Risk decisions must be made at the appropriate level of command.
4. Risk is acceptable only if the benefits outweigh the costs.

This easy to perform five-step process has been designed to assist Army leaders and Soldiers avoid

accidents, not merely react to them. CRM must be a continuous process that becomes as natural to perform as any routine task.

At all levels leaders should be:

1. Identifying hazards.
2. Analyzing those hazards.
3. Developing controls and making decisions;
4. Implementing controls;
5. Supervising and evaluating.

This process is not something that is done one time and forgotten, but it is an informal framework which logically minimizes risk.

Once a hazard is identified the process begins in earnest. Asking the probability of the accident occurring and how severe an accident can potentially be is essential to deciding how much effort will be invested in altering the situation.

When developing controls we should initially expand our thought process in order to be creative in developing new solutions. Then the potential controls are narrowed to those which are feasible in our current situation. A decision is made and controls are implemented. Finally leaders supervise and evaluate in an effort to improve the process. An in-depth After Action Review is essential in order

to continuously improve the risk management process and reduce wasted effort.

At times it is easy to view CRM as a requirement and not a useful tool that can save lives. Only through a thorough understanding of the CRM process and repetitive practical application will Soldiers become proficient enough to make CRM a habit that they perform instinctively. Once they reach that level of proficiency the CRM process will pay dividends by reducing accidents and making their daily lives easier.

Bob Topolewski is the 1st BCT Safety Officer.

For God and Country

BECOMING STONEWALLS

Chaplain Capt. Michael Fisher
2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.
1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

When Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was asked how it was he was able to display such extraordinary calm in the face of battle, he answered, "My religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God knows the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that but to be always ready, no matter where it may overtake me." He added, "That is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave."¹

Do you feel as safe in battle as you do in bed, as safe on patrol as you do on base, as dismounted as mounted, as safe in Baghdad as you do back home? Or are you right now living in a heightened state of anxiety preparing yourself for the worst?

Stonewall Jackson was able to display such extraordinary courage because he embraced an extraordinary faith. I am both

intrigued and challenged by the idea of becoming a Stonewall. In truth, my safety is not dependent upon my geographical location but rather upon the location of my faith. My life and death are not in the hands of insurgents or militias but rather in the hands of the God who formed me for His own purposes. Our Warriors zero their weapons so their aim will prove true; we need to likewise zero our faith so we can see the promises of God manifested in our lives.

Stonewall Jackson chose to trust God. This choice remains available to you and me as well.

King David sang:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of life; of whom shall I be afraid?

... Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may arise against me, in this I will be confident (Psalm 27:1-3)."

Both Warriors placed their trust in the

same Source, a Strength greater than themselves. Though both Men were tactically proficient, it was not their tactics alone that secured them the victory but rather their faith. In fact, the Apostle John writes, "Faith is the victory (John 5:4)."

Our faith can and should be inflicted upon the various crises we face while being deployed. Instead of allowing our circumstances and emotions to dictate our thoughts and actions, we can, if we so choose, allow our faith to determine our response. That response will in turn affect the outcome.

Stonewall was an appropriate name for this man of faith *and* action. My prayer and sincere hope is for you too to place your trust in the living God so that we together might be able to say, "I'm as comfortable in combat as I am back in the Rear lying in my bed."

The burden to be God is on God; the burden to believe God; however, is on you and me. Let's believe Him for something more. Let's become Stonewalls!

God bless you, Warriors!

¹Tuley, Terry. *Battlefields and Blessings: Stories of Faith and Courage from the Civil War*, p. 12.

On Point with

Combat Camera

Iraqi Policemen of the 1st Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, provide security Oct. 2 for a rejuvenated market area in the Hadar community of the Rashid district. Soldiers of the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the Iraqi NP conducted an information flyer dissemination operation in the community in southern Baghdad.

An Iraqi medic assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division checks the systolic blood pressure of an Iraqi woman during a medical screening Aug. 28 at a free health clinic at a joint security station in the Doura community of the Rashid district. Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Iraqi National Police of the 7th Brigade, 2nd NP Division conducted a combined medical event for local Iraqi families Aug. 27-29. Both U.S. and Iraqi doctors were on site administering health care.



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kelvin Surgener



An Iraqi doctor screens a young Iraqi girl during a free medical screening at a joint security station Aug. 28 in the Doura community of the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan Kretschmer



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan Kretschmer



Joan Kretschmer

An Iraqi medic assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, checks a young Iraqi child's temperature during a medical screening Aug. 28 at a free health clinic at a joint security station in the Doura community of the Rashid district. Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Iraqi National Police of the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Division conducted a combined medical event for local Iraqi families Aug. 27-29.



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan Kretschmer

A father and son wait outside a Iraqi Security Forces medical clinic for a free medical screening at a joint security station Aug. 28 in the Doura community of the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, to receive a free medical screening. Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Iraqi National Police of the 7th Brigade, 2nd NP Division conducted a combined medical event for local Iraqi families Aug. 27-29. Both U.S. and Iraqi doctors were on site administering healthcare.