

The Advisor



March 2009



...r ballot at a polling site in the Shiite enclave of Sadr City in Baghdad on Saturday. No major violence was reported during the pro... elections, considered a crucial test of the nation's stability as U.S. officials consider the pace of troop withdrawals.

Iraq vote free of major violence

...of nation's stability

The Advisor

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>> ON THE COVER

Graphics by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Winn



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Wolfe

Sgt. Mishal Ghanim, from Comando Co. of the 38th Iraqi Army Brigade, calls in a coordinate during a live-fire exercise while Ali Shani observes for accuracy in Amarah, Iraq Feb 16.

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Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Bill Addison
Air Force Staff Sgt. Steve Bauman
of the International Zone Police
checks a local man's credentials

Iraqis enjoy Election Day peace

By U.S. Army Sgt. Bill Addison

JASG-C Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - Routine badge checks on the 14th of July Bridge, one minor escort violation, and teenagers hanging out on the causeway at dusk and stopping to play with some children - no major incidences of violence, no indirect fire, not even a minor traffic accident.

For the International Zone Police, it was a typical day with one exception - It was Election Day.

"It really wasn't all that different. We saw a lot more Iraqi army and Iraqi police out on the streets, and a lot less of the public was out as well. Other than that, it really hadn't changed all that much," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Steven Baumann, IZ Police officer from the U.S. Forces Police Squadron in Vogelweh, Germany.

But it could have easily gone the other way. While Iraqi citizens in Baghdad celebrated the day as a holiday, inside the IZ heightened security and restricted travel was the theme, anticipating the worst possible scenarios.

"We didn't quite know what the expectations were for today. We knew there might be a little bit of hostile activity in the area, possibly some indirect fire attacks. So we were kind of expecting that. But it's been pretty routine throughout the day, pretty uneventful,"

said IZ Police officer Tech Sgt. Brandon Wolfgang.

In fact, the only real difference was the purple index fingers of the Iraqis who the police stopped to talk to. Dipping their finger into purple ink is the last step in the voting process and a badge of honor for the citizens who voted.

"I asked them about their finger and they looked at me with a big smile and said, 'I voted.' That's just a special thing," said Airman 1st Class Ryan Patrick Meehan. This is the Airman's first deployment to Iraq, and he said it's one he will remember fondly.

"It's one of the best things to know that Iraqis can vote without consequences and elect who they want to office," he said. "It's something I'm going to remember for the rest of my life and my kids are going to learn about in their history classes. I can help them on their school reports tell them what it was like over here."

Meehan said that he identifies with the people of Iraq. The 19-year-old Airman participated in his first U.S. presidential election in the last year, albeit absentee.

"Voting, to me, is one of the best things you can do as an American citizen. Vote for who you want in office and who you want to represent your country. We gave Iraq the freedom to vote for who they want in office and that's just a special feeling," he said.

The elections marked another success

story in the overall picture of Iraqi independence since the implementation of the Security Agreement Jan. 1, where control of securing the International Zone was transitioned to the Iraqis.

For Wolfgang, it's another sign that Iraqis are eager to take full control of their country, a scene he sees played out almost daily in his interaction with the Iraqi Police.

"We're already transitioning. When they are riding with us, we let them take the lead on any incidents that involve the Iraqi people and the local nationals in the area," said Wolfgang.

While he said he can't speak for the Iraqi Police in other parts of the country, he feels confident that the IZ will be in good hands under the watch of the Iraqi Police.

"They take the International Zone being a safe zone very seriously," he said. "I think it shows how seriously they are taking this. They've shown a lot of force in the area and they've done a really good job of actually securing the International Zone for the elections."

As for the day's events, Meehan summed it up nicely.

"The people in Iraq have been shown that they have a voice and they can vote. I knew that it would be a special day for Iraq and their history. I expected a little more chaos for us, but it's been a pretty good day," he said.

U.S. Airmen aid in Iraqi election ballot transport



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Tim Beckham

Master Sgt. Louis Carter, 321st Air Expeditionary Airlift Squadron combat aviation advisor, performs a pre-flight inspection on an Iraqi C-130E here Feb. 2. The C-130 was one of two aircraft on its way to pick up Iraqi election ballot boxes.

By U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Tim Beckham

USAFCENT Baghdad Media Outreach Team

SATHER AIR BASE, Iraq— Three members from the 321st Air Expeditionary Airlift Squadron played a key role in assisting the Government of Iraq in the election process during a historic mission on Feb. 2.

While many servicemembers were watching the final moments of Super Bowl XLIII, Maj. Scott Volk, Capt. Chris Dickens, both C-130 evaluation pilots and aviation advisors for the Iraqi air force, and Master Sgt. Louis Carter, 321st AEAS combat aviation advisor, were preparing to board an Iraqi C-130E on its way to Mosul to pick-up election ballot boxes from Iraq's recent elections.

"We all volunteered for this mission; we all knew it was a part of history," said Dickens, deployed here from the 62nd Airlift Squadron at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. "Today we will be on the airplane actively advising the Iraqi Air Force crew in case they have any issues that come up."

As advisors, these aircrew members play a significant role in helping Iraq become an independent air force. "Our primary role first and foremost is to train the Iraqi C-130 pilots, we also upgrade other crew positions," added Dickens. "We upgraded a couple of

Iraqi crewmembers to instructors. We also help them with their squadron programs. For example, we advise them on flight safety, standardization and evaluations and training."

These Airmen, already deployed here for several months, said today was extra special because they were directly involved in the process of Iraq becoming a democracy.

"It feels like we are actually making a difference today. This goes towards us maybe getting home sooner," said Carter, who is deployed from the 550th Special Operations Squadron at Kirtland AFB, N.M.

"We are all very proud to be a part of this," said Dickens. "The fact that we are gradually getting the Iraqi C-130 aircrews closer and closer to becoming independent and able to operate on their own is a pretty big achievement, not only for us but for them as well."

The 321st AEAS falls under the 321st Air Expeditionary Wing, responsible to the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, the entity charged with standing-up the Iraqi Air Force through its Coalition Air Force Training Team here.

The 321st and MNSTC-I's efforts with the Iraqi Air Force highlight the commitment between the governments of the United States and Iraq in improving the infrastructure and capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of a secure and stable Iraq.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Tim Beckham

Master Sgt. Louis Carter, 321st Air Expeditionary Airlift Squadron combat aviation advisor, stands on the steps of an Iraqi C-130E after completing a pre-flight inspection here Feb.2. The C-130 was one of two aircraft used to pick-up Iraqi election ballot boxes.

Iraqi Army officers attend ethics training at West Point

By U.S. Army Lt. Col. Leanne Meyer

MNSTC-I JHAATT

BAGHDAD - Three officers from the Iraqi Army's Training Directorate traveled to the United States recently for focused discussions on military ethics training and character development. Iraqi Army Maj. Gen. Abbas Fezaa, Chief of the Iraqi National Defense University; Brig. Gen. Mohan S. Reyah, Director of the Center for Military Values, Principles, and Leadership Development; and Maj. Gen. Sarteab Taher, Commandant of the Iraqi Military Academy at Qualachulon, attended ethics training events in San Diego, Calif. and West Point, N.Y. from Jan. 29 through Feb. 05.

At the International Society of Military Ethics Symposium in San Diego, the officers engaged presenters from all branches of the U.S. military, as well as Canada and Australia, in discussions on character development programs within their respective services. A key message of the conference was summed up in a statement made by a Canadian Defense Force chaplain who said, "Ethics instruction is always a leadership issue. The best person to teach ethics is the

commander. It is always leadership and ethics, together."

Mohan explained to the group that Iraqi people are guided by three types of principles: family principles, societal principles, and governmental principles. The development of an ethics education program for the Iraqi Army within the identified principles created significant discussion. During an impromptu dinner address, Abbas told the audience the Iraqi Army now serves the Iraqi people and the country is now more secure than ever.

At the United States Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., the Iraqi delegation worked closely with members of both the Academy and the Army Ethic Centers to gain an understanding of how the U.S. Army approaches character development. The Simon Center for Professional Military Ethic presented a comprehensive overview of the character development and 'officership' programs for the 4,400 member Corps of Cadets. The four traits essential to officership were discussed in detail: Warrior, Leader of Character, Servant of the Nation, and Member of a Profession.

The Iraqi delegation also brainstormed possible approaches to values training in the Iraqi Army with members of

the Army Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethic. The workshop identified competence and character as two equal requirements in U.S. Army Soldier development, and explored what it means to be a member of a profession of arms.

Mohan articulated the challenges of developing ethics in soldiers and leaders who either do not understand military values or do not want to accept them as a result of 35 years of repression under the old Saddam regime.

While at West Point, the delegation learned about the U.S. Army's Officer Career Progression and met with the only Iraqi cadet at West Point, now in his third year. The trip culminated with discussions with U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Franklin Hagenbeck, the Academy Superintendent, and Brig. Gen. Michael Linnington, the Commandant of Cadets.

As a result of relationships formed during the visit and insights gained from the ethics panels, Fezaa stated he would "incorporate ethics more deeply into the Iraqi Army officer education programs and engage the Iraqi Army brigade commanders to ensure that values and principles are delivered to all Soldiers and leaders."



Photo by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Leanne Meyer

The Iraqi Army delegation learns how the U.S. Military Academy develops cadets as ethical leaders and professional Army officers at the Simon Center for Professional Military Ethics earlier this month.

Iraqi and Coalition leaders conduct financial management review of Foreign Military Sales program

By Van Williams

MNSTC-I PAO

BAGHDAD – The Government of Iraq is taking tremendous steps to rebuild and strengthen the Iraqi Security Forces and bolster the nation's self-sufficiency during the transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of the Security Agreement between Iraq and the United States.

To this end, the Government of Iraq has committed over \$5 billion of its own dollars to buy military equipment, supplies and training from the U.S. through the Foreign Military Sales program.

The Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq's Security Assistance Office hosted representatives from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, U.S. Army Security Assistance Command, Navy International Program Office, and the Iraqi Ministries of Defense and Interior for a financial management review of the Iraqi FMS program.

"We've been trying for three years to make this happen and this is the first time that we all have been able to meet," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Joe Lontos, DSCA, Iraq Country Program Manager. "During this five-day review, we looked at FMS cases with the Iraqi Financial Managers so they can see how things are progressing. It also gives the Iraqis a chance to voice their concerns and make changes to their program if they need to."

About 20 members of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, representing the Iraqi Army, Navy and Air Force programs and budgeting offices, as well as representatives of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior took part in the financial review. "The process is going great...very well," added

Lontos. "The Iraqis are fully engaged in this review."

According to U.S. Army Lt. Col. Kimberly Enderle, SAO chief of transportation logistics and accountability, the Iraqi Security Forces have already received approximately \$1.5 billion in services, vehicles, aircraft parts, small arms, uniforms, and training through the FMS program and have made commitments for an additional \$3.5 billion in FMS purchases. "The strategic partnership between the U.S. and Iraq is growing," said Enderle.

John Moseley, regional duty for Middle East, South Asia Division, DSCA, also sees the FMS program as a way to strengthen the ties between the U.S. and Iraq. "When a country buys billions of dollars worth of equipment from you,

it signals a commitment to a long-term relationship," he said. "This relationship is good for both nations and helps to bring stability to the region."

Brigadier General Charles Luckey, MNSTC-I's deputy commanding general for Security Assistance, summed it up by saying, "The close partnership between Iraq and the United States will, in large measure, be etched into the future through a collaborative approach to fielding and sustaining major systems and in focusing on the critical training associated with that equipment. The interoperability between U.S. and Iraqi equipment will, in the long run, give each nation a wide variety of combined training opportunities. This conference is a long stride on the road we walk together."



Photos by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class William Lovelady

Members of the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Defense, representing the Iraqi Army, Navy and Air Force programs, meet for a Financial Management Review of their Foreign Military Sales program. The Government of Iraq has invested over \$5 billion of its own dollars to strengthen its Security Force by purchasing services, vehicles, aircraft parts, small arms, uniforms and training.

MNSTC-I constructs more than 1,000 facilities worth \$5.4 billion

By U.S. Navy Cmdr. Gary Ulrich

MNSTC-I J7 (Engineering)

BAGHDAD- On February 18th, Col. Sameer of the Iraqi National Police accepted the keys for his fully renovated Technical Center from Shawn Rockenbaugh of ALMCO Limited. ALMCO is under contract with the Army Corps of Engineers to perform over \$10M of renovation and new construction at the National Police Headquarters in Baghdad using MNSTC-I reconstruction funds. While the like-new Technical Center will mark a dramatic improvement in how the Iraqis can do their job and enhance their quality of life, this is just another routine day in the MNSTC-I construction program.

Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) directly receives all Iraqi Security Forces Funds appropriated by Congress to use them for the benefit of Iraq's police and military forces, ultimately benefiting the people of Iraq by a more secure environment.

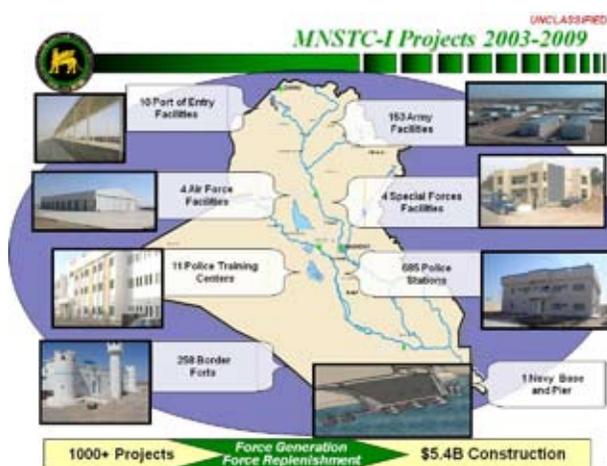
Since 2003 MNSTC-I has constructed over 1000 facilities worth \$5.4B. These facilities span the spectrum from small projects like remote Border Fort Outposts for four personnel to complete bases for Iraqi Army brigades numbering over 3,000. The MNSTC-I construction program has benefited every major Iraqi Security Forces group: Army, Air Force, Navy, Intelligence, Special Forces, National Police, Police, and Border Enforcement.

The MNSTC-I construction team includes many players. MNSTC-I J7 Engineering takes construction requests from project sponsors (e.g. "I need a facility to train 400 Oil Police personnel"), and translates this into specific terms that can be contracted (e.g. "Provide two barracks of 2 story design for 400 enlisted personnel, 80 instructors, dining facility to seat 240 and feed 480 per meal, ..."). Cost estimates and contract documents are developed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Site visits are made

possible by MNSTC-I J3 Rough Riders. Three contract agencies have been used for Coalition construction in Iraq to spread the incredible volume of work: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Joint Contracting Command – Iraq, and the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment. Various Coalition

Transition Teams (police, military, border, etc.) in the field provide the needed liaison with the Iraqi end users who will receive the facilities.

MNSTC-I J7 personnel manage significantly more construction than their counterparts in the United States, both in number of projects assigned and in total dollar value. It is not uncommon for the last departing bus at 2300 to have more J7 personnel than any other code. But when asked if the hard work and long hours are worth it, U.S. Air Force Capt. Adam Roberts response is typical, "We work crazy hours, but I'm hopeful that this country has a real chance to establish the kind of freedoms we so often take for granted in the United States."



Courtesy Photo

On February 18th, Col. Sameer of the Iraqi National Police accepted the keys for his fully renovated Technical Center from Shawn Rockenbaugh of ALMCO Limited. ALMCO is under contract with the Army Corps of Engineers to perform over \$10M of renovation and new construction at the National Police Headquarters in Baghdad using MNSTC-I reconstruction funds.

National Police complete advanced unit training



By **U.S. Army Lt. Col. Gary Kolb**

MNSTC-I PAO

BAGHDAD – The Iraqi National Police held a graduation ceremony Feb. 12 at Camp Dublin to commemorate the completion of advanced unit training for 533 members of the 1st Battalion, 6th Brigade, 2nd Division.

The ceremony is the culmination of nine weeks of specialized police training conducted by Italian Carabinieri under the auspices of NATO Training Mission – Iraq. Some of the skills taught during the course include operational planning, police procedures, police intelligence, counter-insurgency skills, weapons, combat skills, first aid and basic logistics. In addition, the course puts special emphasis on police ethics and human rights. This was the seventh class to complete the training.

Minister of Interior, Jawad al-Bolani was the keynote speaker at the graduation. “These National Police graduates start a new stage in building capabilities that will be used to protect the people of Iraq,” said Bolani.

Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, Commanding General, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq and NATO Training Mission- Iraq congratulated the graduating class and its leaders by saying, “The National Police is recognized as the police force of choice for Iraq. It is a security force made up of Iraqis working for and providing security for all of Iraq.”

The National Police recently conducted successful operations in Fallujah, Ramadi, Basra and Mosul. Iraqi Lt. Gen. Hussein al-Awadi, commander of the Iraqi National Police, gave tribute to those National Police members who made sacrifices for the

Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Thomas Avilucea

security of Iraq and challenged these current members to take the experience they have learned and transfer that expertise to other units.

The specialized training the National Police receive is a key element in the implementation of the Security Agreement that will allow the Iraqi Security Forces to continue to be self-sufficient in exercising security operations throughout Iraq.

The next unit of Iraqi National Police to undergo Carabinieri training at Camp Dublin will be nearly double in size. Col. Paolo Coletta, Italian Carabinieri Commander said, “The next class will start in one week and will have 900 trainees.”



Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Thomas Avilucea

Iraqi Navy prepares to protect key oil platform

By Van Williams

MNSTC-I PAO

BAGHDAD – The leadership of the Iraqi Navy and their Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq partners met here at the Blackhawk Conference Center in the International Zone Feb. 17 to go over plans for the orderly transition of the offshore Khwar Al Amaya Oil Terminal to Iraqi control.

KAAOT and the nearby Al Basra Oil Terminal are critical to Iraq's future since 75 percent of the nation's oil is exported through these terminals. The oil platforms are key targets for those who want to harm Iraq and its future. On Apr. 24, 2004, a terrorist attack on the ABOT was repelled by coalition forces.

Rear Adm. Muaffaq, Deputy Head of the Iraqi Navy, and Commodore Adele, Chief of Staff, represented the Iraqi navy at the meeting. "We are aware of the region and our neighbors," said Muaffaq. "We look forward to protecting our nation once again."

Royal Navy Capt. Richard Ingram, commander of MNSTC-I's Coalition Naval Training Team - Umm Qasr, briefed the group on the transition plans. Royal Navy Capt. Nick Hine, CNATT director, said to the Iraqis, "Obviously, you were doing the job long before we got here. If we are suggesting something that you know will not work, please tell us. We're here to help you prepare for the transition."

Today, Iraqi Navy and coalition forces are working together to protect the platforms from harm. By Dec. 2009, the Iraqi Navy will take full responsibility for the Khwar Al Amaya Oil Terminal and the security of a proportion of the nation's oil wealth.

This is a vital step towards ensuring Iraq's self-sufficiency during the critical transition from coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of the Security Agreement between Iraq and the United States.

The Iraqi Navy is also preparing to take the lead by taking delivery of new fast attack boats, patrol vessels and building a new \$45 million pier and seawall at Umm Qasr.



Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Winn

Members of the Iraqi Navy and Coalition forces work together over maps as they plan the orderly transition of responsibility of the Khwar Al Amaya Oil Terminal to Iraqi control. KAAOT and nearby Al Basra Oil Terminal are critical to Iraq's future since 75 percent of the nation's oil is exported through these terminals.



Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Winn

Iraqi Rear Adm. Muaffaq (center) speaks with Capt. Nick Hine, RN (right) and Capt. Richard Ingram, RN (left) through an interpreter. The group met Feb. 17 to go over plans to transition control of the Khwar Al Amaya Oil Terminal from a joint Iraqi-Coalition force to an Iraqi force.

MNSTC-I launches new “School of the Advisor”



Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Amie Lambert

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, MNSTC-I commanding general, addresses attendees of the new School of the Advisor.

By Capt. Amie Lambert, USAF

MoD Advisory Team

BAGHDAD - The mission of Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq is to develop Iraqi institutional capability in the security ministries and to generate and sustain Iraqi Security Forces. One of the tools required to achieve success in this mission is the placement of knowledgeable, dedicated, adaptable, tactful and diplomatic individuals known as ministerial-level advisors.

One of the critical challenges faced by ministerial-level advisors is identifying and placing the right advisors with the right skills in the right place at the right time. At present, there are more than 250 MNSTC-I advisors working with key Government of Iraq leaders throughout the Ministries of Defense and Interior and the Counter-Terrorism Bureau in support of the MNSTC-I mission.

To be successful, leaders must provide the resources and training for those in their command. Training our military to be advisors at the strategic and operational level is something MNSTC-I did not have the training or foresight to focus on in the past. Now that it possess these capabilities, MNSTC-I can provide

their advisors specific training to help them be successful. Beginning in the fall of 2008, MNSTC-I intensified its efforts to identify, recruit and place experienced individuals with critically-needed skills from the United States, Great Britain, Australia and other Coalition countries as ministerial-level advisors.

As a response to the requirement for getting these advisors quickly up-to-speed for their critical role, the School of the Advisor was created. The curriculum at the school helps newly-assigned advisors adjust to their role as the Coalition's public face at the highest levels of the Iraqi Government by training them on the tremendous challenges associated with relating to Iraqi senior staff, being respectful of host-nation culture and customs, and strategies for influencing those they advise.

Practical experience shared with the new advisors by experienced and currently-serving advisors is a critical part of getting the newcomers up to speed. A good relationship with their Iraqi counterpart is the foundation for being a successful advisor. The training MNSTC-I provides focus on building rapport, establishing credibility, maintaining flexibility, the efficient use of assigned translators/linguists and

a synopsis of various Arabic customs. For newly-assigned advisors, these are mandatory skills required for developing a strong relationship with their Iraqi principal.

The School of the Advisor is critical for the collective reputation and effectiveness of MNSTC-I. They have observed immediate benefits as evidenced in the development of an Iraqi counterpart 'Partner School' designed to assist in the development of the Iraqi officials' understanding of coalition customs and culture. A separate Iraqi cooperative training venture is underway allowing Coalition and Iraq female officials to work together to gain a broader understanding of women's issues in the workplace.

At the end of the day, MNSTC-I views advisor education as being just as important as the military hardware purchased, and will have a long-lasting impact on the security of Iraq. The training and mentoring of our Iraqi counterparts represents a vital step towards ensuring Iraq's self-sufficiency during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations. The School of the Advisor is a critical part of that effort.

Ministry of Interior graduates 91 from Inspector General course

James Coles

MNSTC-I DoIA

BAGHDAD – Graduation day is always special, but for the 91 members of the Iraqi Minister of Interior Inspector General Basic Course, this event marks the beginning of a new professional life. According to Col. Khalid Abbas, Dean of the Inspector General Directorate Training Center, the class that graduated Feb. 19 was markedly different from the previous three.

“We began these courses in October 2008. The previous three classes contained older, more experienced officers. This class was a mix of newly-hired IGs and more experienced inspectors. Having the two groups in the same class added depth for the new IGs,” said Abbas.

Abbas explained the IG training programs have matured in recent years because of the support and experience of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq advisors.

“Before 2003, the Interior Ministry IG was a specialized system with little authority. Essentially, there was an IG for each division or occupation group, but the role then was mostly advisory. What we have developed is a comprehensive Inspector General system that not only performs evaluations, but has the authority to enforce laws and rules and monitor performance through formal inspections.”

“Our mission is to find corruption in the administrative and financial systems, as well as to protect human rights, discover and eliminate misuse of authority and office, and assure all Iraqi people that government funds are used wisely,” Abbas added.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Benny Landfair, the Ministry of Interior Transition Team mentor to the Interior Ministry IG, noted the materials in the course are not only new to the students, but represent a major change in the way the IG conducts business.

“The materials in the basic course are derived from the U.S. federal inspector general systems, including the Federal

Bureau of Investigation and Department of Defense inspector general training materials, and are then specifically adapted to meet Iraqi Ministry of Interior needs,” said Landfair.

“We worked on building the curriculum for nearly two months to create an overview course that acquaints the students with the U.S. system and the emerging MoI Inspector General system. The course is designed to demonstrate best practices and help these new IGs develop a picture of what their program should look like.”

In addition to introducing new ways of doing business, the teaching-learning methods were also new to the students. Traditionally, an instructor would stand in front of the class and read from a book or present a lecture. “We incorporated modern audio-visual methods and practical exercises. We challenged the students to ask questions and become involved in active learning, which generally does not happen in traditional Iraqi training situations,” Landfair added.

“Feedback from current and former students and their managers has been very positive. When students leave this course, they know the material and they have a whole new attitude about the IG’s mission,” said Landfair.

Col. Mohammed Mustafa, Director of Inspections, agreed the course is having an impact on the organization. “With each course, the quality of the inspectors and of inspections improves. We have learned much from the American advisors and are trying to incorporate applicable parts of their experience into our processes,” said Mustafa.

Landfair emphasized the rapid growth of the IG training program. He said this training is part of the MoI Inspector General ‘5000 Plan’. The goal is to increase the IG workforce to 5,000 people, including administrative and support personnel, during a three-year time frame. This will allow the Iraqis to build the infrastructure they need to train and support a force of 5,000 IG employees.

The goal is to have all IG personnel attend this course, so MoI will continue to hire new employees as training is available. Thus far, nearly 500 IG inspectors have completed the course.

There are currently advanced courses in Inspections, Investigations and Evaluations. There are plans to expand the school, develop additional courses and other advanced topics, and eventually build a career professional development system. As the number of courses expands, the program aims to link up with other Iraqi government organizations to utilize skilled instructors in areas such as finance, law, technology and administration.

“Our plan is to develop a centralized school system that emphasizes decentralized execution of IG responsibilities. This way, the IG system can be migrated to each of the provinces, with each office staffed by experienced and school-trained professional inspectors,” said Abbas.

“The goal of all this training,” he added, “is to teach proper use of authority and a sense of duty so the inspectors will know what their duty to MoI and the country is and fulfill that duty. We’re trying to make our program the best it can be so that all in the MoI can meet our Minister’s goals for the Interior Ministry.”

“We are going to make the Ministry of Interior transparent and accountable so that when we find bad or improper conduct, we can show the people the right way—or we will show them the door,” added Abbas.

MNSTC-I’s crucial assistance in the development of this training program for the Iraqi IG Directorate is a key step forward in professionalizing the Iraqi ministries. This is a vital step towards ensuring Iraq’s self-sufficiency during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of the Security Agreement between the Government of Iraq and the United States.

MNSTC-I/NAVCENT conduct undersea diving medicine course

By U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jeff Plummer

MNSTC-I Health Affairs

UMM QASR, Iraq – Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq’s Health Affairs directorate hosted some very specialized training for the medical staff at the Iraqi Navy’s Umm Qasr medical clinic Feb. 3. In cooperation with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, Health Affairs sponsored a course in Undersea and Diving Medicine for the sole Iraqi physician and 10 of his medical staff at this strategic and developing naval base. With a growing diver force, the unique requirements for providing health care to an undersea force demand a very specialized skill.

Maj. Gen. Samir, Ministry of Defense Joint Forces Surgeon General, and U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jeff Plummer, Deputy Director, MNSTC-Health Affairs, traveled

to Umm Qasr for the 3-day site visit, linking up with the NAVCENT instructor enroute. U.S. Navy Capt. Dale Molé, NAVCENT and 5th Fleet Surgeon, is an Undersea Medicine instructor and certified U.S. Navy diver.

Molé agreed to travel to Umm Qasr to conduct the diving medicine course at the request of the Iraqi Surgeon General. Further, this allowed NAVCENT to pre-screen the Iraqi Navy physician, Capt. (Dr.) Muayed Mansour, in advance of his nomination to attend the Undersea Medicine 9-week dive course in Panama City, Florida, later this year.

Samir’s presence for the course was vital, as he provided medically-relevant English to Arabic translation. With only one physician in the class, Samir

often had to expand the training with explanations of medical concepts and anatomy for the medics and divers in the room. Samir reflected, “Although often a difficult translation, today’s experience allowed me to break my mind from our everyday challenges at the MoD and return to my calling. I enjoy discussing and teaching medical concepts.”



Courtesy Photo

Iraqi Surgeon General, Maj. Gen. Samir (seated, center) and NAVCENT Surgeon U.S. Navy Capt. Dale Mole (seated, 3rd from the left) with the Umm Qasr Clinic Staff.

Basic Trainees moving out of tents and into barracks

By U.S. Army Maj. Tom Heinold

MNSTC-I J7 (Engineering)

TAJI, Iraq – Iraqi Army basic trainees at the Taji Regional Training Center will be moving into barracks for the first time this spring. After living in tents, the quality-of-life for new recruits will be drastically improved.

The Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq is constructing not only new barracks, but also new dining, administration, latrine and laundry facilities to support as many as 2,300 trainees at a time.

U.S. Army Maj. Tom Heinold, assigned to MNSTC-I’s J7 (Engineer), is leading the TRTC’s \$10.5 million effort to construct the new basic training facilities. “The dining facility is state-of-the-art, designed to feed three sittings of 800 Soldiers at each meal. With additional sittings, its capacity is expandable based on the future of the basic training mission.”

All the facilities are designed with future expansion in mind. The Coalition-funded project will give the Iraqis the facilities they need to maintain sufficient throughput of basic trainees and keep the new Soldiers healthy and safe. The new barracks are laid out and the utilities are sized in a manner that allows the Iraqi

Ministry of Defense to add-on to the facilities and double the school’s capacity in the future. There are also plans to add to the existing electrical power generation to support new facilities.

As the Iraqi Army continues to train and equip its Soldiers, and becomes ever more capable of maintaining security in Iraq, the popularity of military service is expected to increase to a point where Iraq’s standing Army is able to sustain itself without any assistance from its Coalition partners.

“Part of attracting new recruits to serve their country and establish peace and security in Iraq is having a high quality-of-life at the basic training facilities. Word of mouth travels fast here, and when basic training graduates go home and tell their families that they are living in hard barracks rather than run-down tents, their brothers and friends will be more likely to sign up,” said Heinold. “We’re giving our Iraqi friends every chance at success by putting the infrastructure on the ground that they need to generate forces and take on the security mission.”

The TRTC also encompasses a Noncommissioned Officer school and a Sergeant Major training academy, both of which benefited from renovations and

new facilities funded by MNSTC-I.

MNSTC-I’s efforts at the TRTC highlight the commitment between the governments of the United States and Iraq in improving the infrastructure and capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of a secure and stable Iraq.



Courtesy Photo

New open-bay barracks with air-conditioning under construction at Taji’s Regional Training Center.

NIIA graduates 20 from Counter-Threat Finance Course

By Mr. Mike Gorton

MNSTC-I Intel-TT

BAGHDAD – Twenty employees from the Ministry of Interior's National Information and Investigation Agency completed the first Counter-Threat Finance Training course here on Feb. 11. The training took place at the NIIA's new Baghdad Information Bureau Headquarters located in Baghdad's Karada District. The course provided NIIA investigators advanced training in tracking criminals and preventing crimes.

The course brought together students from various departments within the NIIA, including the new Internet Crimes Unit, the Baghdad Information Bureau and the General Director for Counter-Terrorism. During the course, students learned investigative techniques involving money laundering, cash smuggling, and sources of terrorist financing.

Instructors were criminal justice experts from the Intelligence Staff of Multi-National Force-Iraq and a special agent from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The curriculum is the product of a partnership between the NIIA, MNF-I and Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq's Intelligence Transition Team. Lt. Col. Charles Linville, INTEL-TT deputy senior advisor to the NIIA, said, "This course was the first of many for the NIIA. The material presented will develop the skills required by NIIA investigators to 'follow the money' used for criminal purposes by criminals and terrorists."

In the past three years, the NIIA had grown from 3,500 employees in 2006 to more than 10,000 today. With responsibilities similar to those of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, the NIIA is becoming the premier national law enforcement agency in Iraq. It conducts criminal intelligence and investigative operations throughout Iraq to defeat domestic criminal activities that threaten Iraq's national security.

MNSTC-I's assistance in the development of this and other training programs for the various Iraqi ministries represents a vital step towards ensuring Iraq's self-sufficiency during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led

Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers conduct combined air-assault

MND-N PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq – In the early morning hours of Feb. 15, several hundred Soldiers from the 4th Iraqi Army Division supported by Coalition forces conducted a combined air-assault to clear and secure the Bichigan peninsula near Balad.

The A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division and the 14th Iraqi Army Brigade Military Transition Team supported the operation which began with a series of U-H 60 Black Hawk training rehearsals on the flight line of a Forward Operating Base Feb. 14.

"The Iraqi Army initiated the idea for the operation," said Maj. Darren Buss, operation officer, 14th Iraqi Army Bde MiTT. "As a MiTT, our primary objective was to advise the 14th brigade commander and his staff of the planning procedures that had to be in place before the operation could be executed."

"The IA is conducting various security operations that will be continued daily as well as creating new routes to reduce congestion in the city -- all measures to secure and protect the people of this region," Buss added.

"Our role in the Iraqi Army's operation has been to help enable them to step

forward and spear-head their own operations. We have done this by building their confidence and showing that they can continue to perform effectively before and during their operations," said Sgt. 1st Class Travus Brandon, platoon sergeant, 3rd plt., A Trp., 3rd Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt., 25th Inf. Div.

"We are building upon their experience level by including the air-assault element to the operation, showing the Iraqi Army that they can handle a complex operation with an air-assault asset available. The end result will help combined Coalition missions because they will bring their knowledge and training to the table for the completion of successful operations in Iraq," he continued.

During the mission the IA captured two wanted criminals and found several small caches in the densely wooded orchards of the region.

"With continued combined operations between Iraqi Army and Coalition forces such as this, the Iraqi Security Forces will continue to progress as a more effective fighting force able to secure their towns and provide a safer environment for the people of Iraq," said 1st Lt. Steven Swan, a plt. leader in A Trp.

New water reservoir opens to 60,000 Iraqis

MNS-SE PAO

SAFWAN, Iraq – Nearly 60,000 southern Iraq residents will have access to twice their normal amount of water thanks to a new U.S. funded reservoir that opened here Feb. 18.

The new tank will save residents money by reducing the amount of bottled water they need to purchase for home use other than drinking.

"As long as we are elected by the people, we will continue to work for the people," said Basrah Provincial Councilman

Khalof Alsharaa. "We appreciate this project and look forward to more in the future."

In addition to Asharaa, the dedication was attended by Safwan Mayor Sabah Mohammad, members of Safwan's town council, Iraqi Police and Coalition project managers.

Previously, the city and its outlying areas relied on two old water towers and well water to meet its residential and farming needs. One of the towers was destroyed in the war and the second will remain operational,

supplementing the new tank.

The new facility cost \$242,000 and will bring 900 cubic meters of "wash water" into the system, which will be loaded into trucks and delivered to people's homes.

The water will be good for bathing, cooking, and drinking if treated, but is not potable by western standards. The plumbing systems in Safwan are substandard with leaks and rust, which can contaminate the water.

Outlying areas of the city will continue to use well water.

Iraqi Army 120mm mortar live fire in Amarah

By **U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Wolf**

MND-C PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE GARRY OWEN, Iraq – After nearly two months of intense training, 48 Soldiers, from the 38th Iraqi Army Brigade accurately called in a target and fired a 120mm-mortar system on Forward Operating Base Garry Owen, Feb 16.

“The instruction that we received gives us a specialty, something that (most other Iraqi) Soldiers don’t have training on.” said Sgt. Mishal Ghanim, of the 38th IA’s mortar battery.

The 38th IA Bde. became one of the first units in southern Iraq to conduct a live fire exercise with IA mortar crews and forward observers executing indirect fire missions. The Iraqis received assistance from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

“Things such as map reading and observing indirect fire doubles our combat effectiveness; we are now Forward Observers and are of much greater use to our unit,” said Pvt. Ali Shani, assigned to the 38th IA Bde.

His unit’s training with the 4th BCT Soldiers consisted of instruction on map reading, observing and adjusting mortar fire and firing the 120mm mortar system.

The partnership between the 38th Bde. and 4th BCT has continuously strengthened since the American Soldiers first arrived last summer.

The Maysan Province is becoming more stable every day, thanks in large part to the increasing capabilities of the IA.



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Wolf

An Iraqi Soldier loads a 120-mm mortar round during a live-fire exercise in Amarah.

Fort Benning team trains Iraqi Army mortar cadre at Besmaya Range Complex

By **U.S. Army Maj. Adrian Hennigan**

MNSTC-I JHAATT

BESMAYA, Iraq - Three members of the Fort Benning, Ga. based Infantry Mortar Leaders Course recently deployed to Besmaya Range Complex to train the initial cadre for the Light Artillery Wing of the Iraqi Army Artillery School.

The Mortar Training Team brought more than 23 years of combined experience in the training and use of U.S. mortar systems, including training foreign national Soldiers in the proper methods of emplacing mortars and utilization of the most modern methods for fire direction and control. U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Kevin Burnette, one of the MTT members said, “The course provides the Iraqi Army with an excellent learning opportunity and the skills to utilize their mortar systems in the most effective manner.”

Burnette, Sgt. 1st Class Richard Toms, Jr. and Sgt. John Bennett arrived in Besmaya in mid-January to conduct a Train-the-Trainer course for Iraqi Army cadre, Coalition advisors, and contract instructors to enhance their expertise in

the latest fire control and fire observation procedures.

Upon completion of the initial training of the advisors and contract instructors, the three MTT instructors transitioned to an ‘overwatch’ of the ten advisors and instructors as they taught the same program of instruction to the 15 Iraqi mortar cadre. When all classroom and hands-on training is complete, all coalition and Iraqi personnel will conduct a mortar live fire under the MTT cadre supervision.

Once trained in these skills, combined with the mortar direct-lay skills already learned during training in Serbia, the 15 Iraqi Army cadre will form the core of the Light Artillery Wing of the Iraqi Army Artillery School.

Iraqi Army Capt. Osamma Mohammed Joad, the senior Iraqi cadre member, stated, “The training in Serbia was good on the [mortar] systems, but I feel more confident in my fire direction and fire observation skills from the training we are receiving now. The training pace here has been much better, allowing us the time to understand the procedures.” With

assistance from the Coalition advisors and contract instructors, the Light Artillery Wing will train future Iraqi mortarmen when the Iraqi Army begins fielding their operational 81mm and 120mm mortars in Jun. 2009.

In addition to this tour in support of Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq training requirements, Toms is a veteran of three combat tours in Iraq and one to Afghanistan. Burnette is a veteran of two each combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. Bennett has one each combat tour in Afghanistan and Iraq. All three NCOs trained Afghan National Army and Police personnel, as well as Iraqi Army personnel, in basic mortar skills.

The MTT’s crucial assistance in the development of this training program for the Iraqi Army is a key step forward in professionalizing the Iraqi military. This is a vital step towards ensuring Iraq’s self-sufficiency during the critical transition from coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of the Security Agreement between the Government of Iraq and the United States.

Historic class graduates from Iraq Fire Academy

By Van Williams

MNSTC-I PAO

BAGHDAD – A major milestone was reached in rebuilding Iraqi infrastructure.

The first class of firefighter managers graduated from the Iraq Joint National Fire Academy Feb. 5

The class was made up of 10 Civil Defense Corps and seven Iraqi Air Force firefighters from all over Iraq. This course, along with basic fire and rescue training, will produce a professional firefighting force to serve the people of Iraq.

First Lieutenant Rad Badr with Civil Defense Corps is the manager of the Fire Academy. "The Iraqi Air Force was founded two and a half years ago and their firefighters are inexperienced. So with their training it's like starting from zero," he said. "Civil Defense Corps firefighters, as an organization, have been around longer and have more practical experience because they deal with fire emergencies more often. Training together is very helpful. The Civil Defense Corps firemen can help their brothers in the Air Force to better understand the process."

There was plenty of cross-agency help to go around. U.S. Air Force TSgt's Brain Partido and Jay Winfield serve as the Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT) Fire and Rescue Advisors to the academy. "The Iraqis are trying to set a national standard for their Civil Defense, Air Force and Army," Winfield said. The

10 day course focused on three areas, leadership theory, controlling the fire scene and fire department management. According to Partido, the goal of the program is to help the Iraqi Air Force become a well trained force. "They've been given the information. Now we step back and watch them run with it," he said.

CAFTT is part of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) who's mission is to assist the

Iraq Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense and the Counter-Terrorism Bureau, generates and replenishes Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and improve the quality of the ISF and institutional performance in the process, in order to increase ISF capability to increasingly assume responsibility for population protection and develop Iraqi security institutions capable of sustaining security with reduced Coalition involvement.



Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Winn
Maj. Gen Jafar, Civil Defense Corps training director hands out certificates to recent firefighting management course graduates.

MNSTC-I conducts diesel generator training for MoI personnel

By U.S. Navy Cdr. Gary Ulrich

MNSTC-I J7

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Security Transition Command Iraq's J7 (Engineering) directorate has installed hundreds of diesel generators across Iraq, but on Feb. 09 they did something new – they provided customer-requested diesel generator "refresher training" for the maintenance staff at the Iraqi Ministry of Interior Weapons Identification Card Facility here.

The three-day training event, led by Versar, a MNSTC-I J7 contractor, included both classroom and hands-on training. Key points covered were generator theory, daily maintenance checks, electrical safety, and the importance of routine

maintenance such as oil changes.

The four Iraqi MoI maintenance personnel attending the training received basic tools necessary for proper maintenance, a set of work coveralls, log sheets to document engine operation, and an Arabic translation of key portions of the maintenance manual. Upon completion of the course, the technicians received a certificate of training.

While it is standard practice for MNSTC-I construction contracts to require operator training when construction is complete, experience has shown there is often a need for refresher training within 6 months of project completion. Determining factors include: maintenance staff not yet identified at project completion, personnel turnover,

and unfamiliarity with the equipment.

The MoI Weapons Identification Card Facility was completed in June 2008. The MNSTC-I investment in Iraqi maintenance training will help keep the facility in good working condition for the foreseeable future. J7's goal is to develop this infrastructure maintenance expertise within the Iraqi ministries, allowing Iraqis to train Iraqis in the near future.

MNSTC-I J7's work with the MoI highlights the commitment between the governments of the United States and Iraq in improving the infrastructure and capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of a secure and stable Iraq.

Iraqi Counterinsurgency School hosts Civil-Military Operations Course

By Lt. Col. F. Cale, USMC

MNSTC-I JHAATT

TAJI, Iraq – Iraqi Army Col. Ahmed Jassim Saleem, Commandant, Iraqi Counterinsurgency School at Camp Taji, Iraq recently announced the successful completion of the latest Iraqi Civil Military Operations Course. The course was held at the ICS headquarters at Phoenix Academy, an installation within the greater Camp Taji Iraqi Army Training Base. The course took place Jan. 18-22, and is the fifth such course to be conducted.

The ICMOC is a result of an ongoing partnership between the Iraqi COIN School and successively-deployed Civil Affairs Brigades from Multi-National Corps - Iraq. Civil Affairs and Civil Military Operations are an integral part of the spectrum of counterinsurgency operations, capitalizing on the populace as the 'Center of Gravity' in the fight against insurgent elements.

The current CA partner is the 304th Civil Affairs Brigade. The 304th CA team, led by U.S. Army Maj. Anderson, closely engaged with action officers

from the ICS on all stages of planning and execution of the course. Iraqi and Coalition planners and instructors worked together to determine the learning objectives, develop a plan of instruction and certify Iraqi instructors for various classes and practical application periods.

ICS and 304th CA instructors, with linguist support, shared the podium throughout the course. Course participants were Iraqi Army and Iraqi National police officers. Thirty seven participants from many different locations in Iraq, with ranks from second lieutenant and colonel, attended the course.

The course included introduction to Civil Military Operations, Techniques Tactics and Procedures and best practices in the Iraqi theater-of-operations, and Capacity Assessment procedures. A series of practical exercises rounded out the course. These PEs involved scenarios constructed around real-time issues aboard the Taji base, such as the water plant and electrical power distribution, and

scenario-driven coordination with base Public Works personnel as actors.

Course attendees enthusiastically participated in discussions and even presented blocks of instruction based on their expertise and experience. The new course design, coupled with the highest attendance ever, made this the most successful CA and ICMOC to date.

By the end of the course, the quickly-fading old perception in the Iraqi Army, that Civil Affairs was only about distributing favors to the population, was further diminished. After taking the course, the idea that Military and Civil authorities can work together for the best interests of the population was unanimously embraced by the attending officers.

Coalition efforts at the ICS highlight the commitment between the governments of the United States and Iraq in improving the infrastructure and capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of a secure and stable Iraq.

Prime Minister speaks at Commander's Conference

By Van Williams

MNSTC-I PAO

BAGHDAD – In a step towards rebuilding the Iraqi Army into a strong professional force, the Iraqi Chief of Staff, Gen Babeker Zebari, held a Commander's Conference at the Ministry of Defense Feb. 8.

All of Iraq's Division Commanders attended the event, where they listened to presentations on ethics, logistics and force generation. The leadership also discussed how to train their soldiers better and turning them into a more effective fighting force. Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, opened the conference and spoke about the recent election. He talked about the role of the army in protecting the elections and the importance of integrating the army

to protect all Iraqis and protect Iraq's borders. Malaki said "before, companies did not dare to come to Iraq. Now they are rushing to get contracts to build in Iraq. All this was because of the Iraqi army and we will keep building and compensating the Iraqi people for what they lost."

Iraq Minister of Defense, Abd al Qadir also addressed the group and mentioned how law and order is finding its way into the army. He also told his commanders to look into recent acts of terrorism against the Iraqi people and to continue to do large operations to stop the attacks.

The conference is held twice a year with the next one scheduled for July.



Iraqi Navy to have state-of-the-art pier facility; construction begins in March

By Nicole Dalrymple

Gulf Region Division

BAGHDAD – The Iraqi Navy recently gave the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division approval to initiate construction of the \$53 million Umm Qasr Pier and Seawall project in al-Basra province.

This is the first Foreign Military Sales project between Iraq and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. FMS is a program where the host country pays the U.S. government for construction and supplies related to its military.

“FMS is a new process for us,” said Rear Adm. Jawad Kadhum, head of the Iraqi Navy. “We are satisfied with the project design, and ready for construction to begin. A trust has been built between the Iraqi Navy, Ministry of Defense and GRD. This is a very important project for us and will help build a strong Navy for Iraq.”

Maj. Gen. Michael R. Eyre, commanding general of the Gulf Region Division, said, “This is an excellent example of the Iraqis taking the lead and the dramatic transition taking place in Iraq right now. In this case, the government of Iraq is providing project funding, and we are supporting them with contract and construction management.”

Since October 2008, staff from GRD and the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I) have been working alongside Iraq’s Ministry of Defense and Navy to establish expectations for the project, conceptual designs and timelines.

“I have enjoyed doing this specialized work for the Iraqi Navy,” said Brig. Gen. Alaa Jafar, Director of Works for Iraq’s Ministry of Defense – Infrastructure. “The contractor has incorporated our ideas into the project, which will provide greater capabilities to the Iraqi Navy and provide for our future security. I look forward to seeing our vision become a reality on the ground.”

Eyre, Kadhum, Jafar and Brig. Gen. Charles D. Luckey, MNSTC-I deputy commander, Security Assistance Office, signed a certificate of agreement Feb. 12 at the Gulf Region Division’s headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq. The signatories pledged their “full commitment” to the project and agreed “to work together until the facility is fully operational.”

The Pier and Seawall project will provide a state-of-the-art berthing facility for the Iraqi Navy and will support patrol vessels charged with securing the vital port infrastructure and seaways in Iraq’s territorial waters.

“This project is of strategic

importance in protecting Iraq’s oil platforms, and it is also important to MoD and all of Iraq,” Kadhum added. “It will also help the people of Basra, specifically Umm Qasr, as construction will bring jobs and business to the local area. This project shows that the Coalition Forces did not just come to liberate Iraq, but came to help build Iraq.”

The project design is 99 percent complete, according to Bill Gunderson, vice president of PND Engineers, Inc., the contractor responsible for design work. The remaining one percent provides flexibility and adaptability in the design to make on-the-ground adjustments based on site conditions, Gunderson explained.

CCI Inc., the prime contractor, and Poly Earth Construction International, the subcontractor, are responsible for the construction portion of the project. Construction will begin in March and is expected to be complete in September 2009.

The Gulf Region Division will be providing construction management out of the Gulf Region South District, which oversees construction in Iraq’s nine southern provinces.

“This project has strategic implications for the government of Iraq,” said Col. Jack Drolet, commander Gulf Region South district. “This state-of-the-art facility is incorporating the latest marine technology and will serve the Iraqi Navy for years to come. It will also support the fleet that will be charged with protecting Iraq’s oil infrastructure, critical to the nation’s economic growth and development.”



Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Winn

A rendering of the soon-to-be constructed Umm Qasr pier and seawall project in Basra province. The \$53 million project will provide a state-of-the-art facility, using the latest marine technology, for the Iraqi Navy, and is being funded through the Foreign Military Sales program, using Iraqi funds.

USMC teaches martial arts to Iraqi Marines

UMM QASR, Iraq – Hand-to-hand combat training is now a reality for Iraqi Marines training here as they continue to become well-rounded in all aspects of combat.

The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program developed here teaches the Iraqi Marines various armed and unarmed martial arts techniques, both lethal and non-lethal.

“The reason this class exists is to ensure the Iraqi Marines performing their missions are well-trained in all aspects of combat,” said Staff Sgt. Jose Esquivel, USMC advisor/trainer with Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq.

The month-long curriculum consists of training that runs all day and includes an obstacle course purposely designed with a high degree of difficulty. Through attrition, far fewer Iraqi Marines actually reach graduation. “The first course started out with 21 Iraqi Marines, but graduated with nine,” said Esquivel.

The Iraqi Marines must be able to physically withstand the rigors of combat. “The integration of martial arts training into a realistic and challenging fitness program is essential to develop combat fitness,” Esquivel continued. “This concept not only develops a more physically fit Iraqi Marine, it also develops an individual who is mentally tough and confident.”

The first Iraqi Marines to graduate the course are now instructing, with U.S. Marine Cpl. Shelby and Sgt. Santana serving as advisors and mentors. This train-the-trainer concept is vital as the Iraqi Marines move towards self-sufficiency during the critical transition from Coalition to Iraqi-led operations in support of a secure and stable Iraq.

Taji Vocational Institute graduation

TAJI, Iraq - The Taji Vocational Institute graduated 18 new tracked

vehicle mechanics and nine forklift operators at a ceremony held here Feb. 11. The TVI provides a two-week basic training course followed by a four-week skills-specific course. The Soldiers then progress to the next phase of training, known as On-the-Job training, where they spend six months in a maintenance facility learning the hands-on portion of their trade. The culminating event is low-rate production where the Soldiers collectively produce end-items for the Iraqi Army.

The continuing need to increase the strategic logistical base for the Iraqi Army provides an ongoing task for the TVI to train and educate Soldiers qualified to rebuild wheeled and tracked vehicles at the Taji National Maintenance Depot. The TVI has been active in educating Soldiers since its doors opened on 17 March 2008 and has since graduated 685 soldiers in 34 different depot-level maintenance and supply skills.

The Taji National Maintenance Depot is a joint venture between the Army Materiel Command which manages the contract for the Depot Integrator, AGS/AECOM. The program is monitored on a daily basis by the Multi-National Security Transition Command’s J4 Program Management Office, currently under the leadership of Lt. Col. William Donovan. Donovan said, “The Taji Vocational Institute is the foundation of the Maintenance Depot enterprise because it educates soldiers in the theory and principles of skills critical to depot operations.”

Mr. Vince Sabatino, the Program Manager for AGS/AECOM, added, “The Taji Vocational Institute is the first step in a four-phased training approach which guarantees a safe and efficient production facility”.

The TVI has graduated 48 classes with a total of 685 students to date.

Coalition detainee population drops to about 14,500

BAGHDAD — Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and the Government of Iraq (GOI) reached another milestone Feb. 14 when the total population of detainees in Coalition custody dropped to about 14,500.

This month, Task Force 134 Detainee

Operations began releasing an average 50 detainees a day in accordance with the Security Agreement. The signed agreement between the U.S. and the GOI requires all detainees to be released in a safe and orderly manner or transferred to Iraqi custody pursuant to a judicial order.

Those being released this month represent the first group of case files that were reviewed by Iraqi authorities under the Security Agreement.

Joint Staff College hosts opening ceremonies at Ar Rustamiyah Military Academy

BAGHDAD - The Iraqi Joint Staff College course started their academic year with 98 new students with an opening ceremony at Ar Rustamiyah Military Academy on Jan. 25.

The 11-month course offers classes on human rights and international law, military leadership, staff procedures, international relations and security cooperation. The students, captains and majors, represent the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Navy and the Ministry of Interior. The course teaches military doctrine at tactical levels and concepts concerning National Policy and Security while instilling the values and standards required of the future leaders of the Iraqi military.

Addressing the students, NATO Training Mission Iraq Brig. Gen. Pasquale Martinello stated, “Honor and respect can only grow in courses like this one, one in which officers can understand what their real roles in the organization are and how they can support the Iraqi Security Forces and their country.”

The Head NTM-I Forward Commander at Ar Rustamiyah, Italian Naval Capt. Mario Billardello, was pleased that the enrollment of 98 students in the new class represented an increase of 25 over the last graduating class.

The Joint Staff College was re-opened in 2005 as a joint effort between NATO and the Iraqi Ministry of Defence. Officers of NTM-I provide mentoring and advice to the Joint Staff College in order to assist the Iraqi Security Forces in securing an environment of sustained peace. NATO remains committed to supporting the Government of Iraq resume its important place in the international community.

Bridge groundbreaking spurs economic development in Basra

BASRA, Iraq – Provincial government officials and Coalition partners laid the first batch of cement for a new bridge crossing the Shatt al Arab River in Basra Feb. 7.

The new At Tannumah Bridge will link Downtown Basra with its eastern neighborhood of At Tannumah.

“This will open a huge gate into the economy of Basra,” said Sayeed Najem Mutarif, the Provincial Council Community Reconstruction Chairman. “It will help increase trade into Basra and all of Iraq.”

In addition to Mutarif, on hand for the ceremony was Basra Governor Mohamad El Wa’eli, Multinational Division-Southeast Commander Maj. Gen. Andy Salmon, various Basra city officials, U.S. Military civil affairs representatives, Baghdad government officials, senior officers from Iraqi Police and Army, local residents and members of the Iraqi press.

“Every time I pass the old bridges, it hurts me to see them in the state they are in,” said Wa’eli. “A country like Iraq with its capabilities deserves more. This bridge provides a great opportunity for everyone here in Basra.”

Currently there are two dilapidated, single-lane pontoon bridges crossing the river. The new bridge will increase the amount of residential and commercial traffic, boosting the local economy.

The Iraqi-engineered bridge, which is scheduled to be completed next year, has increased safety features. Iraqi based Ibn Majid Construction is expected to employ nearly 1,000 people to complete the \$11.6 million project.

A section of the bridge has been designed to rise in the middle to permit shipping access to Al Maqil Port, enabling future investment in the area.

Iraqi Army provides security for road improvement project

ALBU HASSAN, Iraq – Iraqi Army Soldiers provided security while Soldiers of A Company, 9th Engineer Battalion, performed much needed maintenance on an Iraqi road outside of Albu Hassan Feb. 3.

The road is a shortcut for Iraqi citizens to travel from various villages to bigger cities like al-Hillah and Karbala.

The 9th Eng. Bn. coordinated the project and contacted the IA to provide security for U.S. Soldiers on the ground.

IA Soldiers secured the surrounding area while Cpl. Bracy L. Bahm, a heavy construction equipment operator from Company A, filled in holes, graded mud and smoothed out the road with a D7 Dozer.

“The IA know what they are doing, and they are always monitoring their sectors,” said Bahm. “This is my second mission with the IA, and I trust them to protect me while I am working out here.”

The road is located next to a heavily-used railroad track, which is potentially dangerous for the citizens who travel along the route.

“Many of the bad areas on the road forced local nationals to walk around leading them close to the dangerous rail road tracks,” said Bahm. “The Iraqi citizens are now able to walk back and forth to the villages and cities while they maintain a safe

distance from the railroad tracks.”

The road also provides an easier route to the various markets within the province, which encourages economic activity.

“Citizens can bring their goods to the markets using this road, rather than taking the long drive around other cities and towns,” said Sheik Abas Sabur al-Sultani, a student at the Democratic Religious University in al-Hillah. “Approximately two million Shiite citizens will also utilize this route for the upcoming Arba’een pilgrimage.”

The improvements were completed and all the Soldiers safely left the area. Iraqi pedestrians and motorists started using the freshly graded road to travel between the towns and cities immediately.

“It may not seem like much,” said Bahm, “but we fixed three miles on this road and provided an easier means of travel for the Iraqi citizens.”

Sa’ad High School refurbishment part of Operation Iron Gator

BAGHDAD – In a further sign of municipal progress in Salman Pak, local leaders came together to dedicate the beginning of construction and refurbishment of the Sa’ad High School Feb. 3.

The refurbishment was another ground breaking project of Operation Iron Gator to improve the infrastructure of Salman Pak with more than \$2 million (U.S.) budgeted to remodel schools, expand the Bawi Canal and provide micro-grants to small businesses.

Those in attendance included educators, contractors, council members, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 45th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division and a team of Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

“The time is right for this project, the members of this community made a choice to renounce the insurgency and step away from violence,” said Maj. Jason Joose, executive officer, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div. “When they did that, we made a decision, after consultation with our GoI partners, to move forward with large scale projects in our zone.”

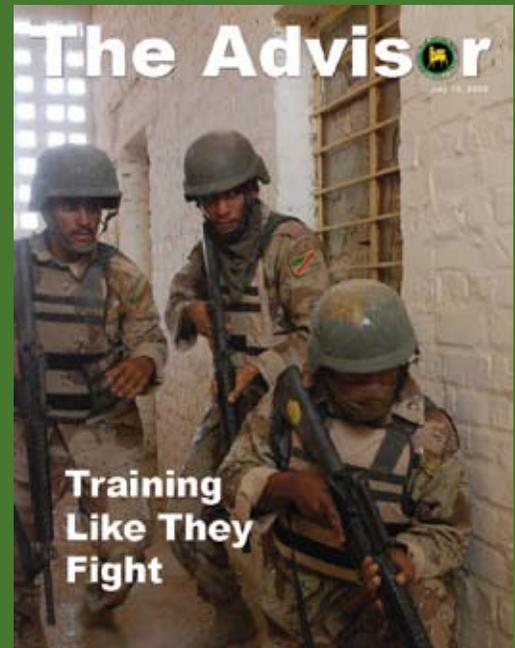
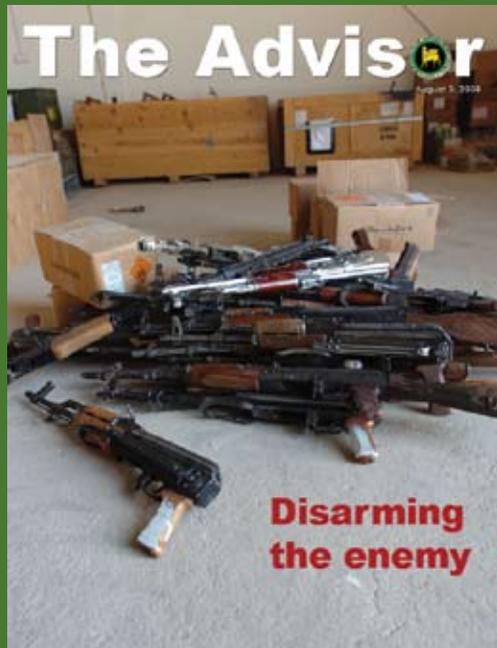
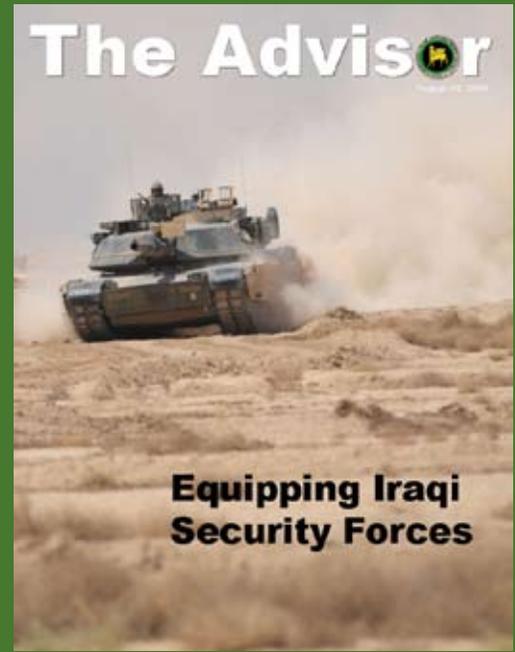
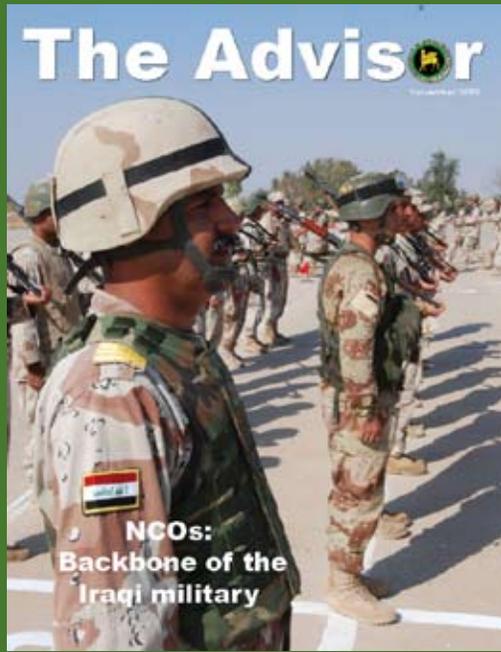
The school will provide a higher quality of education for high school boys in the Salman Pak area. The refurbishment equips the school with energy efficient windows and door insulation. The biggest benefit is the new air conditioning units in each classroom which will assist in keeping the temperatures cool during the oppressive summer heat.

“The school will accommodate 1,200 students in 23 classrooms with 25 faculty members, with space for boys from the third through ninth grade,” said Muhameed Saleh, head contractor on the project.

The Commanders Emergency Relief Program provided the total \$320,000 (U.S.) for the refurbishment.

“In the last four years, the security situation would not have permitted a project like this, but now with the improving security on this neighborhood I can start a 90 day project and employ 25-30 (workers) from the community. I feel that we can be safe and complete the work,” said Abraham Kazem, engineer on the project. “I hope with the improved security I can be involved on many more projects like this in the future. I believe the success of the last elections will help.”

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