

Korean hospital hits landmark • Iraqi medics graduate

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Courage under fire
Transition teams, Iraqi police work together to secure Baghdad

What's Inside

THE COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of
Multi-National Corps-Iraq

February 2007
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MNC-I Commander
Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno

MNC-I Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Col. James Hutton

MNC-I Command Information Chief
Sgt. 1st Class Terrence Hayes

Editor
Sgt. Jacob Boyer

Staff Writers
Spc. Laura M. Bigenho
Spc. D. A. Dickinson
Spc. Abel Trevino
Cpl. Jess Kent

Courage Under Fire



Coalition transition teams work side-by-side with Iraqi national police to ensure security in Baghdad

Page 4



Milestone Patient

Irbil's Zaytun Hospital serves its 50,000th patient

Page 7

Tear it Down

Denying insurgent safehouses

Page 22

Healing Hands

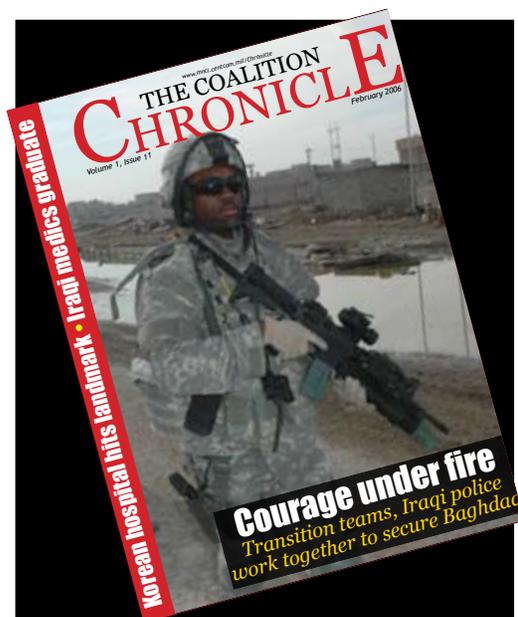
Iraqi soldiers finish medics' course

Page 24

Taking Aim

Anbar Marines train Iraqi police

Page 26



This month's covers

Up front: Capt. Geoffrey Cole, assistant team chief, 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Division National Police Transition Team, patrols a street in Baghdad during a mission with Iraqi National Police. Photo by Marine Cpl. Jessica Kent.

On the back: An Iraqi soldier provides security in a stairwell at an Iraqi Army compound in Baqubah. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall.

Departments

Commander's Voice
Page 1

CSM's Corner
Page 2

In Remembrance
Page 28

Coalition News Briefs
Page 3

Freedom's Focal Point
Page 8

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Questions, comments and concerns about The Coalition Chronicle can be addressed via email at jacob.boyer@iraq.centcom.mil. The Chronicle accepts articles, photos and letters for submission. Send submissions to terrence.hayes@iraq.centcom.mil. The Chronicle reserves the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, clarity and space.

COMMANDER'S VOICE

Soldiers never cease to amaze me. For over 30 years now, I've had the pleasure of commanding America's finest young men and women. Your professionalism and dedication are beyond reproach and I am truly humbled by how much you are willing to sacrifice.



Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno
MNC-I Commander

Life for a Soldier isn't always what you see in the recruiting posters. What separates the true professionals from the rest, however, is how they carry out the missions that no one wants. On a recent trip to Balad, I presented commander's coins to a group of Soldiers who had demonstrated their true professionalism by carrying out just such a mission. Early last month there was a plane crash in which 34 civilian contractors were killed. The Soldiers from the 134th Brigade Combat Team carried out the mission of clearing the crash site quickly and efficiently. It was a thankless job and they went about their business like the true professional soldiers they are. After all these years, I should be used to stories like this, but Soldiers always find new ways to impress me.

One of the most rewarding aspects of being the commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq is the opportunity to work with soldiers from our coalition partners. On Jan. 24, I attended the transition of authority of the Polish 16th Mechanized Division, Multi-National Division-Central-South. Under the leadership of Maj. Gen. Bronislaw Kwiatkowski, service men and women from 13 different nations have worked in close partnership with the 8th Iraqi Army Division

and helped to set the conditions which will see the move to provincial Iraqi control in Qadisiyah and Wasit Provinces.

Working in partnership with others is what MNC-I is all about.

Across Iraq, we have thousands of service men and women embedded with Iraqi

security forces in military, national police and border transition teams. They are working shoulder-to-shoulder with their Iraqi counterparts, sharing their experience and helping to build capacity. I urge all of you involved in this critical work to invest in building relationships with your Iraqi colleagues. Treat them with dignity and respect. Be patient and allow them to make mistakes. It is about them doing things for their country. Learn from them and discover more about their culture and way of life. Some of you may form bonds that will last a lifetime.

Our support for the Iraqi security forces is making a difference. This month, an ISF patrol came into contact with a hostile group. The patrol called in ISF re-enforcements. Then, realizing they were outnumbered, ISF called for coalition support. In the past, ISF units fled at the signs of stiff resistance. That is not the case today. The ISF battled for more than 18 hours against a dug-in, heavily-armed foe. They had confidence in their own training and abilities, as well

as in the knowledge that we would come to their aid if requested.

I know that you are all aware of the debates and discussions on Iraq not only in the United States but around the world. However, I ask you all to remain focused on the mission we were sent here to achieve.

Our strategy for 2007 is focused on helping set the conditions to give the government of Iraq the opportunity to show itself as a just, competent and effective government for all Iraqis.

At the request of the govern-

ment of Iraq, we are focusing on Baghdad, where 80 percent of the current violence takes place within 30 miles of the capital. The intent is that through the Baghdad Secu-

rity Plan, the government of Iraq will show itself as an effective non-sectarian government, providing security to the Iraqi people.

The Baghdad Security Plan will be led by the ISF, supported by multi-national forces. In order to provide the necessary support, we are increasing our capacity with the addition of 20,000 U.S. troops. We will support the ISF to clear, control and retain Baghdad.

The Baghdad Security Plan will provide evidence to the Iraqi people of the government's intent and capacity to function as a just, non-sectarian government. It will provide the government with the breathing space to reach out to this country's different groups and, through a process of national reconciliation, ensure them all a stake in the new Iraq.

See **COMMANDER**, page 2

I ask you all to remain focused on the mission that we were sent here to achieve.

CSM's CORNER

Editor's Note: This commentary continues one started last month by Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola.

So here we are, pleasant-ries complete. Let's talk about being a leader or an excuse. Which are you? Regardless of rank or service, we are always subject to the scrutiny of our subordinates.

Is it you who told me at the dining facility that having your hands stuffed in your pockets is your one bad habit? Was that you out there the other night without headgear? Was that you who thought it too hard to clean the windshield on your tactical vehicle and NTV? Was that you speeding on the FOB? Was that you who showed a total disregard for the well-being of everyone alongside the road? Where were you rushing to?

Was that you I went on patrol with who did not wear a seatbelt? Was that you who did not see the use in the combat lock or the gunners' restraint? Was that your vehicle with the gunner standing in the hatch? Was that you who snapped your neck when the vehicle rolled or were you the one who was supposed to tell him to use his seatbelt?

Was that you who did not see the IED because your windows were caked with dirt and mud? Was that you I saw riding high in the turret of an M1114 the other day out on MSRs Predators, Dover and Tampa? Was that you in the IZ the other day orienting your crew-served weapon at another American? Were you the Soldier without the ballistic eyewear who was manning a road block yesterday while your engineer element cleared IED debris from the road? Was that you manning the ECP wearing the synthetic "Mechanix" gloves? You know — the ones with the white

COMMANDER, from page 1

In addition, the government will have the opportunity to improve its reputation by delivering public services to all regardless of sect or ethnicity and providing sustainable economic opportunities for all.

I am working closely with my counterpart, Lt. Gen. Abud al-Maliki, to ensure the success of the Baghdad Security Plan. Together



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Neil Ciotola
MNC-I Command
Sergeant Major**

we attend weekly meetings with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and his key ministers to examine all aspects of the plan and ensure the necessary political and economic support.

I am also working with Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan to help the Iraqi Ground Forces Command be an effective Iraqi Army headquarters.

These are times of transition. As

lettering we're not authorized to wear? Was that you manning ECP 13 the other night who didn't think it important to wear your gloves?

It is funny — in a perverse sort of way — the number who hold themselves and their subordinates accountable to the standard only if it suits them.

Were you the one who I told to hook up his seat belt the other day at the refueling point? You know — the one who asked me if I didn't have anything better to do. Are you that guy? Or are you the one who wonders why on Earth we have to be so anal in holding everyone accountable? Are you the one who has never visited Lanstuhl Army Medical Center?

Have you ever visited Walter Reed, Brook Army Medical Center, or one of the dozens of other medical treatment facilities where our injured or wounded service members receive care? Are you that leader who cannot see the relationship between what we do or fail to do on the FOB as it relates to how we fight on the streets, in the fields and in the hills? Are you the one who contemplates assaulting our women?

Do I have anything better to do? Sure, I'd prefer to be out visiting and accompanying troopers who take the fight to the enemy every darn day. I'd rather be in headquarters reviewing all the awards for valor and merit our service members and civilians deserve. I'd rather be in a motor pool turning a wrench with a mechanic.

Sure I have better things to do — but since some do not believe in individual accountability and others never bother to consider the horrible example we at times set for our civilian and military personnel, a select few of us must always be out.

This is serious business and we all have a role to play. We, as members of our respective services, are leading a multi-national effort to bring peace to a region that has not known it for two millennia. No matter how you cut it, we're here to lead. Save the excuses for another time and place. ☪

part of that transition, we must say farewell to Multi-National Forces-Iraq Commander Gen. George W. Casey, and welcome his successor, Gen. David H. Petraeus. We all look forward to working together in the future.

I want to thank you all for all that you are doing. And I want to thank your families and friends for all their support. Stay safe! ☪

N COALITION NEWS BRIEFS S



First surge brigade arrives in theater

BAGHDAD — Iraq added a U.S. brigade to assist Iraqi Security Forces in and around the capital city.

The 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, is deployed in and around the city of Baghdad.

The brigade's mission will be to assist Iraqi Security Forces to clear, control and retain key areas of the capital city to reduce violence and to set the conditions for a transition to full Iraqi control of security in the city.

"Soldiers from the 82nd come to us ready to engage in a wide variety of operations, in support of the Iraqi Baghdad Security Plan," said Army Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq. "The brigade adds operational flexibility that will assist in securing the population."

The brigade includes about 3,200 Soldiers.

"We are continuing to assist the government of Iraq in building a stronger, more self-reliant Iraq," Odierno said. "Securing the population of Baghdad is imperative in achieving that end. The effort represents the first of several planned troop movements that will assist Iraqi Security Forces in reducing violence and protecting Iraqi citizens."



Sheiks form council to prioritize rebuilding

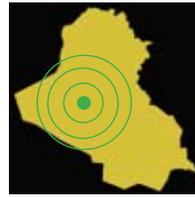
AR RAMADI — A gathering of more than two dozen sheiks and Iraqi leaders formed a municipal council Jan. 25 in order to streamline and prioritize building projects in the Zangora area west of Ramadi.

Coalition force members, who will act as facilitators for project funding, were present to answer questions from visiting dignitaries and present rebuilding rules.

Sheik Ahmed Bezia Ftaykan, one of the leaders of a group of sheiks who are fighting against Anti-Iraqi Forces, encouraged community leaders to work with the coalition to rebuild.

"It is a good start to reactivate the friendship between the Americans and the Al Anbar people," he said afterwards through a translator. "(The sheiks) accepted it with an open heart."

Sheik Ahmed, who led the meeting, said the fight against terrorism and improvements in security in the province encouraged many to come to the meeting.



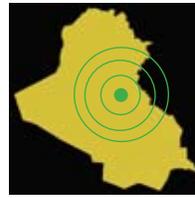
Marines discover 14 caches in Al Anbar

FALLUJAH — Marines from 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, uncovered 14 large caches during Operation Northern Venture in Al Anbar Province Jan. 21.

"The discovery of such caches is extremely important as it provides the Iraqi civilians a better sense of security," said Marine Lt. Col. Kenneth M. DeTreu, battalion commander. "When we take these weapons away, we lessen the ability of the enemy to terrorize and intimidate civilians."

While conducting patrols north of Fallujah, Marines discovered seven heavy machine guns, one small machine gun, six AK-47 assault rifles, one bolt-action rifle and two Iranian assault rifles. The cache also included 23 82mm high explosive mortars, five 60mm high explosive mortar rounds, one 120mm high explosive mortar round, 4,263 rounds of 14.5mm ammunition, 2,427 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 87 rounds of 9mm ammunition, 110 rounds of Z3 precision munitions, 131 Soviet rocket fuses, two hand grenade bodies, 12 hand grenade fuses, three gas masks with filters and a large assortment of weapons related equipment.

"The caches that we found were a mix of all sorts of ordnance from mortars to heavy machine guns," said Marine Maj. Sean M. Riordan, battalion executive officer. "There's no doubt that the rural areas in Iraq contain numerous weapons caches, and the things we took away from the insurgency help to chip away at their tactical capabilities."



Coalition forces destroy terrorist safehouse

BAQUBAH — Coalition forces killed 14 terrorists, detained two suspected terrorists and destroyed a known safehouse during a raid Jan. 27.

Intelligence reports indicated that a foreign fighter facilitator responsible for conducting multiple attacks on Iraqi and coalition forces was operating in the area.

As ground forces approached the objective building, several terrorists began to flee the targeted and surrounding buildings. Others were observed maneuvering against the coalition forces.

Ground forces called for close air support, resulting in 14 enemy fighters killed during the air strikes.

Courage under fire

U.S. Forces, Iraqi National Police fight together for freedom

Story, photos by
Marine Cpl. Jess Kent
MNC-I PAO

Iraqi national policemen, with guidance from National Police Transition Teams, brave war-torn streets daily to safeguard Iraqi citizens.

In addition to dangers on the streets, they face several other challenges. In the past, coalition forces supplied uniforms, ammunition, vehicles and fuel to the police force. When Iraq's Ministry of Interior took the lead, transition left many policemen wondering where supplies would come from. Electricity was also a problem, with about two hours provided during the night and little throughout the day.

The challenges didn't end there.

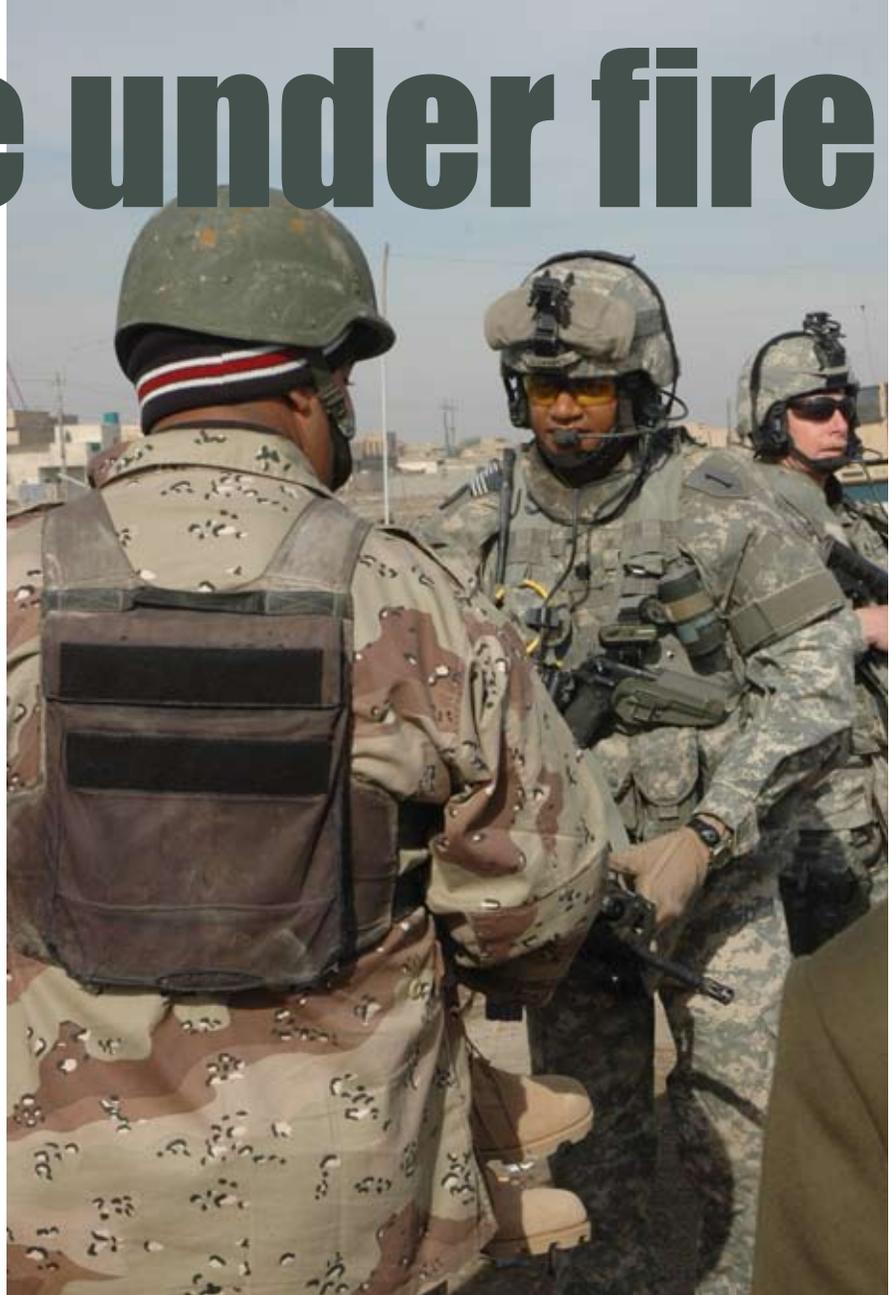
Many policemen sleep in houses that were deserted by families fleeing violence. While most go through basic training, some have little training and few uniform items such as armor and boots. Thick, warm clothing is as scarce as kerosene to keep their heaters in operation.

Something that is not scarce, however, is courage. A shurta, or junior policeman, said courage will help win safety for the Iraqi people.

"We are always under attack from snipers and mortars," the policeman said through an interpreter, while manning a checkpoint in Baghdad. "But it's my country. If I don't defend my country, who else would do that?"

For many of the policemen, protecting Baghdad is a job that feeds their families. Others see this service as more than a job; it's an honor to safeguard their people.

"In order for Iraq to be stable we must get rid of the filthy militias and insurgents here,"



Army Lt. Col. Anthony Cornett, team chief, 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Division National Police Transition Team, speaks with an Iraqi national policeman about ongoing operations in a Baghdad neighborhood.

said a young shurta, whose four brothers also serve as policemen. "Militias are now making Iraq move backward instead of forward."

Instead of uniting Iraqis for freedom, the policeman said insurgents and militias try to segregate Iraq and ruin the country's economy for their own gain.

"We are all Iraqis. It's people outside the border trying to create a sectarian divide," the policeman said. "Many Sunni families marry Shiite, and we have lived for a long time together with no problems. It's foreign fighters who come here pretending to have this problem. We need a comprehensive plan to control the borders and get rid of them."

In order to do this, the shurta said he will continue to work as a counterpart to coalition forces. Just as many of his friends have paid the ultimate sacrifice, he is willing to do the same for freedom in Iraq.



Maj. Ryan King, logistics trainer, 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Division National Police Transition Team, is backed up by a humvee during a recent patrol with Iraqi national policemen in Baghdad.

“The National Police want Iraqis to have better lives,” said an officer with the Iraqi National Police. “We need weapons, more ammunition and support from coalition forces because now we’re moving forward very fast. They’re telling Iraqis to step up security faster. Courage will make us win this war and the Soldiers will bring Iraq forward. If they have more support on the equipment side, there will be more security and trust for the National Police and Iraqi Army.”

The officer stated that the 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Division National Police Transition Team, with the Iraq Assistance Group, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, has given tremendous support to unite Iraqis against a weak terrorist effort.

“I could not say enough about the team,” the officer added. “The proof is that any time they are contacted, they are always there for us. I know they came here to help the Iraqi people. The timing is short for terrorism. Iraqi soldiers spent their childhood here and believe that we are the owners of this land.”

Army Capt. Hunter Bevis, intelligence officer, 3rd Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd Div. NPTT, said the actions of the Iraqis haven’t just helped Iraqis, but may have also saved many coalition lives.

Others see this service as more than a job; it’s an honor to help their people.

“There was a gunfight on the road and (an intelligence officer) warned us about it, so we took a different route,” he said. “He helps us as well as informs us of other events that are going on when coalition forces aren’t present, and we’re able to pass that information to battlespace owners. Intelligence officers like (these) are the key to the coalition winning the insurgency in Iraq. They speak the language, know the lay of the land and go places where Americans can’t.”

Intelligence officers specifically perform difficult duties, analyzing and collecting information in neighborhoods where insurgents know they work for the National Police.

“In my little sphere of the intelligence section, we’ve come a long way,” Bevis said. “When the new intelligence officer came aboard, he learned how to use (various systems) to a great effect, which has led us to be able to create valid targets. A lot of them take pride in being part of the National Police. It’s a family – the same way we’re a family in our military.”

“The people in America and Iraq are not so different because they all have basic needs,” he added. “The difference between U.S. Soldiers and Iraqi de-



Iraqi national policemen prepare to patrol some of Baghdad's rougher neighborhoods.

fenders is that when U.S. Soldiers go home, Iraqis stay in their homeland to face machine guns and bombs every day until the insurgency is stopped.”

“They help give us good intelligence and a good perspective on what’s going on in the neighborhood to increase security in the suburbs of Baghdad,” said Army Capt. Geoffrey Cole, assistant team chief, 3rd Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd Div. NPTT. “They’re the ones who can protect their communities, not the American forces.”

While transition teams support the Iraqi National Police, they teach that success can be attained if personal, religious and tribal differences are set aside.

Army Staff Sgt. Erick Gordon, gunner and trainer, 3rd Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd Div. NPTT, said he sees the progress the Iraqi National Police are making.

“When we conducted a raid operation, they took the initiative,” he said. “Some of them are well trained, which goes back to good leaders, and some were conducting the operation to a tee — covering rooftops and moving fluidly through rooms. They were doing everything they needed to do, so the ca-

pability is here.”

Army Lt. Col. Anthony Cornett, team chief, 3rd Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd Div. NPTT, said that one of the tactics transition team members use to build that capability was a comprehensive training program, which will continue for the duration of their tour.

“We built confidence in the battalion that started at the shurta-level and moved up to battalion leadership,” he said. “Since then, none of their checkpoints have been unmanned or even under fire. We have clearly articulated that if you have a certain amount of confident, competent shurta, then they will take care of the battalion.”

Although a transfer of responsibilities from U.S. Forces to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior left a period of transition, Army Maj. Ryan King, logistics trainer, 3rd Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd Div. NPTT, said the policemen are ready and willing to fight for freedom.

“They’re getting shot at every day but they still continue to work even though sometimes they don’t get paid for months,” he said. “Most of them believe in what they’re doing for their neighborhoods and homes.” ©

“They’re the ones who can protect their communities, not the American forces.”

Army Capt. Geoffrey Cole
assistant team chief



A Korean doctor performs surgery on 6-year-old Amanj Arsalan at Zaytun Hospital in Irbil. Arsalan was the 50,000th patient served by the hospital, which is run by the Republic of Korea's Zaytun Division.

Korean hospital reaches landmark Zaytun treats 50,000th patient

Story, photos courtesy of Multi-National Division-Northeast

The Republic of Korea's Zaytun Hospital treated 6-year-old Amanj Arsalan as its 50,000th patient Jan. 10.

In celebration, he and 10 other patients were given bouquets and other gifts as well as prayers for a quick recovery.

"Amanj's ears were damaged in a car accident three years ago," Arsalan's mother said. "However, my family is poor, so we can't afford any treatment. We heard that Zaytun Hospital is widely known as the best hospital in the area and provides free medical service, so we came here today. I am so glad that my son will be able to get free surgery and was warmly wel-

comed as the 50,000th patient at Zaytun Hospital."

Multi-National Division-Northeast, also known as the Zaytun Division, was activated in September 2004 for Iraqi peace and reconstruction. Zaytun Hospital opened Nov. 17 of that year.

The hospital has a professional medical team of 20 doctors and 15 nurses in 14 departments including internal medicine, orthopedic surgery and others. It consists of two operating rooms with high-tech medical equipment, which offer treatment 24 hours a day to the local people.

Zaytun Hospital has treated an average of 150 local patients per

day with a variety of ailments such as strabismus, hernias, gastritis, dental problems and burns.

"Zaytun Hospital is widely known as the best hospital in the area, so the locals call the soldiers there Irbil's Angels," said Halima Rasul. "Today, it took me four hours to come here from Sulaymaniyah and the kindness and advanced medical skill of Zaytun's soldiers touched my heart. I am also going to call them Irbil's Angels."

Zaytun Hospital's medical team appreciates the local people who call them Irbil's Angels and are determined to give them the best treatment possible. ☺



Amanj Arsalan, accompanied by his mother and a member of Multi-National Division-Northeast, smiles for a picture after a surgery to correct hearing problems suffered in a car accident three years ago.

Freedom's Focal Point



Freedom's Focal Point



Iraqi Army Emergency Services Unit members conduct an air assault mission to the Mrbat Garhat Village near Kirkuk during Operation Eagle Claw XI Jan. 23. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Andy Dunaway.

Freedom's Focal Point



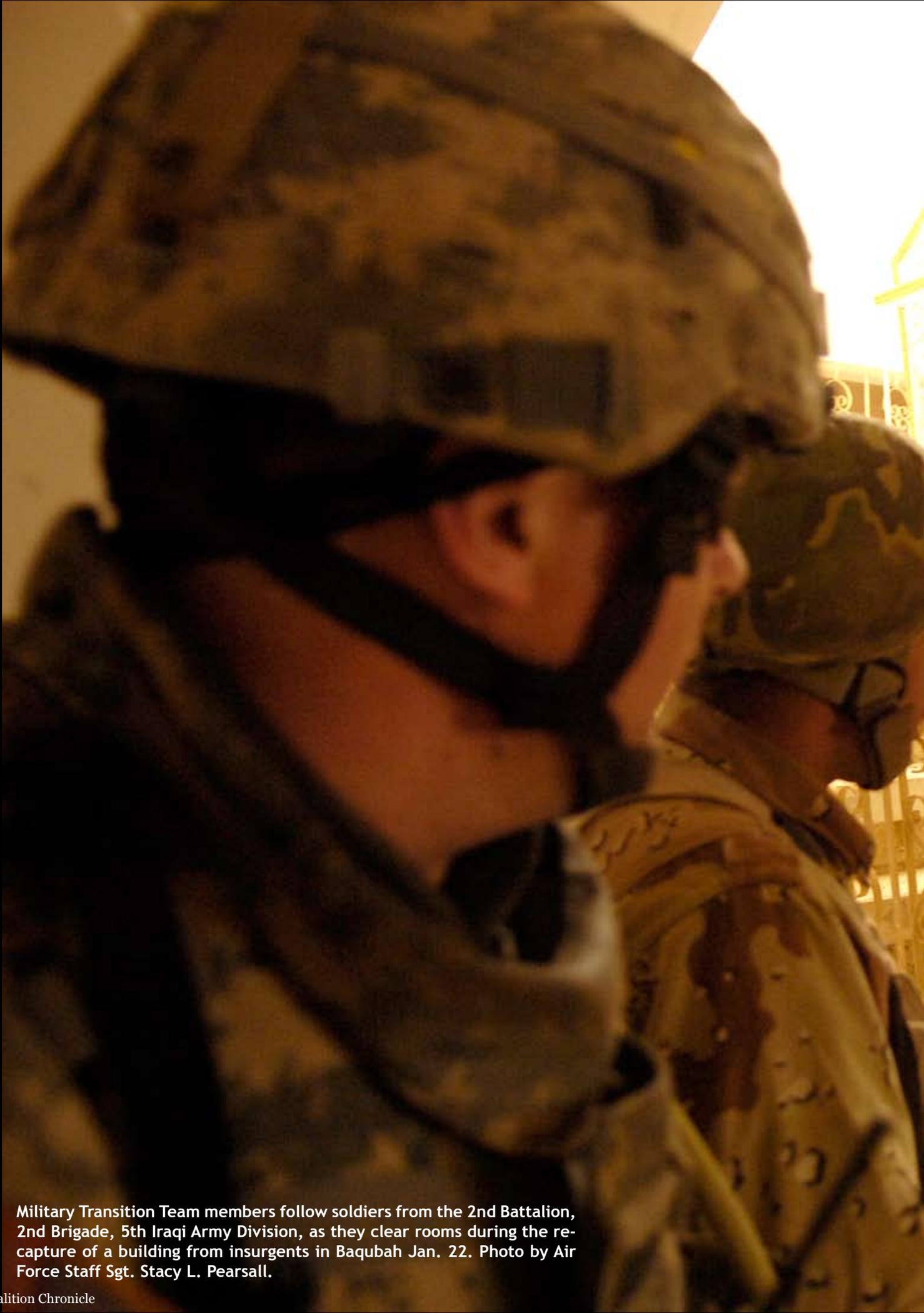


Far left: Marine Cpl. Steve Batista, Personal Security Detachment, Regimental Combat Team 2, fires at the battle zero range. All Marines must complete the so they can exit the base for operations. Photo by Marine Sgt James R. Richardson.

Top right: Marine Sgt. A.C. Wilson, 4th Civil Affairs Group, uses a retinal scanner to identify a member of the Baghdadi City Council at a meeting with local tribal figure heads, sheiks, community leaders and U.S. service members with Regimental Combat Team 7 Jan. 10. Photo by Marine Gunnery Sgt. Michael Q. Retana.

Bottom right: Members of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division clear rooms during the recapturing of a building from insurgents in Baqubah Jan. 22. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall.

Freedom's Focal Point



Military Transition Team members follow soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, as they clear rooms during the re-capture of a building from insurgents in Baqubah Jan. 22. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall.



Freedom's Focal Point

Freedom's Focal Point





Top left: Army Sgt. 1st Class Doug Grothen, Company C, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, makes friends with an Iraqi child during a combined mission with Iraqi National Police in Saydiyah Jan 23. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Martin K. Newton.

Top right: An Iraqi Army soldier guides traffic at a traffic control point near Husayniyah Jan. 23. Photo by Army Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander.

Bottom right: A Soldier with 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, relays messages to his unit during Operation Turki Bowl II Jan. 8 in Balaruz. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. DeNoris A. Mickle.

Bottom left: Members of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, march during the pass and review portion of their change of command ceremony Jan. 9. Photo by Marine Sgt. Chad Simon.

Freedom's Focal Point



Freedom's Focal Point



Marines from Battery L, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, fire a high-explosive round from an M198 Medium Howitzer near Baghdadi Dec. 21, 2006. The battalion is deployed with Regimental Combat Team 7, I Marine Expeditionary Force, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Al Anbar Province. Photo by Marine Gunnery Sgt. Michael Q. Retana.

Freedom's Focal Point



Top left: Army Spc. Josh Wolfe, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, hands an Iraqi child a sandbag during construction of a new combat outpost in Ghazaliya Jan. 18. Photo by Army Sgt. Martin K. Newton.

Top middle: A Marine from Dam Security Unit III pulls security while on a recon mission on Lake Habbaniyah Jan. 10 in Anbar Province. Photo by Army Sgt. Edward A. Reagan.

Top right: Iraqi Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, practice crew evacuation and rollover drills during the tank driving portion of a round-robin exercise at Camp Taji Jan. 24. Photo by Army Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander.

Bottom right: An Iraqi Soldier with the Emergency Services Unit delivers soccer balls to children during a dismounted patrol through Maghdad, Kirkuk Province, Jan. 1. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet.





Freedom's Focal Point

Freedom's Focal Point



A Soldier from Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, uses what light he has to read while on a break at the Iraqi Police Emergency Response Force building in Baqubah Jan. 22. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall

Freedom's Focal Point





Engineers with the 92nd Engineer Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division (Mech.), knock down the walls of an abandoned building with a backhoe Jan. 30 in Husayniyah as part of a joint operation with the Iraqi Army. Several buildings which terrorists had stored weapons caches in and used as bases of operations were torn down to prevent their further use by insurgents.

TEAR IT DOWN

IRAQI, U.S. FORCES DEMOLISH ABANDONED BUILDINGS TO DENY USE TO INSURGENTS

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division PAO

Iraqi Army troops from the 5th Special Troops Company, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mech.), Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and engineers from 92nd Engineer Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division (Mech.) tore down remnants of Husayniyah's past to pave way for its future during a joint operation Jan. 30.

During the operation, Iraqi Army and U.S. Soldiers conducted a cordon and search, then tore down several abandoned buildings from which terrorists conducted operations and executed improvised explosive device attacks. They also used them as weapons caches. The buildings were destroyed to prevent their further use by insurgent forces.

After Iraqi soldiers and artillerymen from Battery A, 1/37 FA cleared the area of civilians near the

abandoned buildings, 92nd Eng. Soldiers used heavy equipment — bulldozers and backhoes — to knock the walls of the buildings down.

"This is a great event for the Iraqi security forces and the people of Husayniyah," said Army Maj. John Haubert, an operations officer with 1/37 FA. "Any time we can help improve the security of the Iraqi people, it's a good event.

"The people here want to see a safer Husayniyah



Army Sgt. Adam DeLorey, an engineer with the 92nd Engineer Battalion, prepares to bulldoze an abandoned building.



Army Staff Sgt. James Malcolm (center), an artilleryman with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, talks to an Iraqi man about recent insurgent activity in the area that had been conducted from abandoned buildings which were being demolished as they spoke.

and a safer Iraq,” he continued. “They don’t support insurgents using abandoned buildings in their town to harm Iraqi civilians, Iraqi security forces or coalition forces.”

Haubert, a native of Fort Lewis, Wash., added that building up the security of the area will also help Iraqi and coalition forces as they continue bringing future projects into the city. Working with the Iraqis, U.S.

civil affairs units and others, the Soldiers of 1/37 FA have already helped bring in several projects aimed at improving the quality of life for the people of Husayniyah.

These ongoing projects have included providing gravel for roads, rewiring the city’s power lines, a new Husayniyah fire station,

a new city council building, sewage systems and providing area schools with supplies, heaters, air conditioners and water purification systems.

“Any time we can help improve the security of the Iraqi people, it’s a good event.”

**Army Maj. John Haubert
operations officer**

look into the faces of the children and see them happy, it makes you see how important and worthwhile the things are that we do here,” said Thompson, a Grand Island, Neb., native “Protecting them is protecting Iraq’s future and what we did today gives the terrorists one less place to hide — one less

place from which they can harm someone — especially these children who are out here playing everyday.”

Lynchburg, Ohio native Pfc. Daniel Shepherd, another artilleryman in Battery A, echoed his sentiments.

“This is a just cause, and gives us the chance to work with the Iraqis to rid them of terrorist threats,” Shepherd said.

Thompson added that, as with the day’s joint operation, he always looks forward to working with the IA troops and hopes to continue building bridges of cooperation with them.

“The Iraqi Army is alright, and they’re very squared away,” Thompson said. “You can tell they get better at what they’re doing every day.

“What I’m taking away from the experience is an understanding of another country — their people, ways of life and customs — and a better understanding of myself,” he said. 



Soldiers with the 7th Iraqi Army Division load a comrade into the back of an ambulance during a mock mass casualty exercise at Camp Phoenix, an Iraqi Army compound in Al Qa'im. Twenty-five Iraqis graduated from a medical training course there Jan. 23.

Healing Hands

Iraqi Soldiers finish medics' course

Story, photos by
Marine Cpl. Michael S. Cifuentes
MND-W PAO

Iraqi soldiers with the 7th Iraqi Army Division graduated from a five-week medical training course and returned to home units Jan. 23 in Al Qa'im.

The course took place in an Iraqi Army compound dubbed Camp Phoenix co-located with a Marine base.

The course was established to train Iraqi soldiers how to become medics, said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Enrique D. Romero, a corpsman with the Military Transition Team here who helped train the Iraqi soldiers.

The MiTT is made up of U.S. Marine and Army teams that embed with and train the Iraqi army. They are tasked with advising the Iraqi Army on intelligence, communications, fire support, logistics and

infantry tactics. Their goal is to make the unit they train tactically, operationally and logistically self-reliant, ensuring the battalion is prepared to take over responsibility for its own battlespace.

This is the third basic medical training course the MiTT has conducted under the command of Regimental Combat Team 7, said Romero, a Kalamazoo, Mich., native.

"This is now their (military occupational specialty)," he said. "They'll be returning to their units with knowledge of basic medical training under their belt, which makes them a significant asset to their unit."

Romero said the course is a crucial step in getting the Iraqi Army to become a better force, relying less on Marines, Sailors and Soldiers here.

Additionally, the Iraqi medics will have an aid station located on each Iraqi base or compound, he said.

"With the medical training these soldiers received, their fellow soldiers will now have a place to heal

when they're wounded — versus going home," Romero said.

The course was very successful, said Hussien Jaber Sahar Khlaeef, a warrant officer with 2nd Brigade, 3rd Battalion, 7th Iraqi Army Division, who was the lead instructor of the course.

"Everyone scored really well," said Khlaeef through an interpreter. "No one scored less than an 80 percent average in the course."

During the course, Iraqi soldiers learned basic skills such as treating open wounds, splinting, treating for shock, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other ways to tend to common wounds or sicknesses soldiers could suffer in training or combat operations.

"I am very glad I have this training now," said Thaeer Salman Shamke Jaber, the highest-scoring student in the course. "I'm confident I will be able to apply this whenever the time comes."

Jaber, who's been a soldier for nearly two years, said he tended to and helped treat two wounded U.S. Soldiers and one Iraqi soldier after a convoy they were in was struck by an improvised explosive device last year.

"Medical training is important for all soldiers — whether Iraqi or American," said Jaber through an interpreter. "Now I know I can treat my soldiers or anyone else properly if they get wounded or hurt."

Having their own aid station is a great way to keep Iraqi soldiers in the army, Romero said.

"Just like the U.S. armed forces,

the medical treatment the Iraqi soldiers receive here will be free," he said. "It also promotes recruiting for more soldiers."

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Roger D. Barnett, a corpsman with RCT-2,

also helped with supplies and shared his field experiences.

"All the men here were self-sufficient with the course," said Bar-

nett, a Waynesboro, Miss., native. "They taught each other and helped each other excel in this course."

"They're now a step closer toward independence from coalition force assistance," he said. 

"Now I know I can treat my Soldiers or anyone else properly if they get wounded or hurt."

**Thaeer Salman Shamke Jaber
an Iraqi soldier**



Iraqis raise their hands to answer questions during an exam review.



An Iraqi treats a comrade for wounds on his arm during a mock mass casualty exercise.



Taking Aim

Marines train police force in Rawah and Anah to secure Iraq's future

Story, photo by
Marine Lance Cpl. Nathaniel Sipp
2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance
Battalion PAO

Screaming together in Arabic, a long line of Iraqi police raise their pistols and take aim. A team of U.S. Marines assigned to develop Iraqi police walk behind the line, checking the officers' firing stance and grip. The police officers point their pistols at the targets, and wait for the command of "Fire!" from Marine Gunnery Sgt. Robert Porter.

At Porter's command, the officers unleash a hail of bullets, trying to hit the center of paper targets in front of them.

Following the firing drill, Marine Lance Cpl. Michael Watkins praises one policeman, slapping him on the back for a job well done. The man smiles, shrugs and looks down at his pistol. Even though the man can't understand Watkins' English, the comments are understood and well-received by the officer, who put his first shot dead-center of the target's black center.

Watkins and Porter are members of the police transition team,

Iraqi policemen fire handguns during marksmanship training at Combat Outpost Rawah, Iraq. When the 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion began its deployment, there were just 16 Iraqi police officers in Rawah, and none in Anah. Now, more than 100 trained Iraqi policemen patrol the area.

which is responsible for developing and mentoring Rawah and Anah's growing police forces. Teams of Marines here spend their days training and conducting patrols with the budding Iraqi police force to give them the experience they need to eventually take the lead in security operations from U.S. forces.

The training is crucial, as American military leaders say it will ultimately be the responsibility of Iraqi Security Forces to keep the peace in the war-torn country after U.S. military forces withdraw.

"The language barrier is probably the hardest thing to work around," said Watkins, a Monrovia, Md., native. "We find ways though. They mostly learn by watching us do it."

In the nearby cities of Rawah and Anah, Iraqi men wielding guns would most likely provoke a severe response from the Camp Lejeune, N.C.-based 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, the U.S. military unit responsible for providing security to the two cities.

But here, the Iraqi men are no threat. They're training to become Iraqi police officers.

With the help of the Marines, these Iraqi policemen are working to ensure a positive future for their country, said Porter, the police transition team's chief. As they train with, and serve alongside Coalition forces, Iraqi policemen are getting the experience they need in order to safely and effectively replace Marines here, according to the transition team here.

While the Iraqi policemen received their formal instruction elsewhere, Marines here provide additional training for the new recruits before they're moved into Rawah and Anah, two cities of roughly 20,000 people about 150 miles northwest of Baghdad, said Porter, an Albany, N.Y., native.

This particular group of new policemen is nearly twice the number of actual officers who were serving in Rawah and Anah when Porter arrived in Iraq in August, he said.

"That was a time of increased insurgent activity," Porter said. "There were a lot of threats on (Iraqi policemen's) families, and due to that we lost a lot of guys who left the job."

When 2nd LAR arrived in September, there were even fewer Iraqi police on the force – just 16. Now, the number of Iraqi policemen numbers more than 100.

Still, Marines, Iraqi soldiers and the handful of Iraqi police on the job in September cracked down on insurgent activity by working to gain the trust of the

local people.

In the past several months, the Marines and Iraqi security forces have apprehended nearly 150 suspected insurgents and turned up about 50 improvised explosive devices and more than 30 weapons caches in the area.

"The more insurgents we take down, the more people will help build the local area," Porter said.

While security in the area is a primary concern, Marines here also measure their success by how they're helping local people, said Marine Maj. Jeffrey Stivers, a civil affairs officer from Fountain, Colo.

Just weeks ago, local school officials met with Marines and Iraqi policemen for the first time to discuss how they could help rebuild the community.

In Anah, a city that was described by many as the "wild west" a few months ago, there is still sporadic insurgent activity, according to Porter. Still, local leaders hold regular town council meetings as locals begin to work with the new influx of Iraqi policemen.

The police transition team continues to cycle Iraqis through their training to make sure new police officers are fully confident in their abilities before they start working the streets.

While the new class of police seems meager – with less than half the number of the previous class – the new recruits more than make up for it with their determination and attitude, Watkins said.

"They all volunteered to go to Anah, where we needed them the most," said Watkins. "One of the things we're focused on is building a police station down there, and they wanted to help."

In Anah, U.S. and Iraqi forces continue to face insurgent activity, despite recent progress with local civic leaders. Just days previous, Marines, Iraqi soldiers and local policemen were attacked by insurgent small arms fire.

Still, the U.S. military says Anbar residents' determination to improve their communities is a reflection of the larger changes happening throughout western Iraq.

In eastern Al Anbar Province, which includes Falujah and Ramadi, 1,115 Iraqi men volunteered to join police forces there last month. There are now more than 8,000 Iraqi police officers on the job in Anbar, according to a U.S. military press release. The press release stated that the goal is to have 11,330 Iraqi policemen in Anbar by next April. 

The training is crucial, as American military leaders say it will ultimately be their responsibility to keep the peace.

IN MEM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEMBERS
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM BETWEEN

Dec. 16, 2006

Spc. Matthew J. Stanley, 22
1/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Staff Sgt. David R. Staats, 30
1/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Lance Cpl. Nicklas J. Palmer, 19
1st Combat Eng. Bn., 1st Marine Div., 1st MEF
Pfc. Joe L. Baines, 19
1/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Dec. 18, 2006

Staff Sgt. Brian L. Mintzlaff, 34
2/8 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Capt. Kevin L. Kryst, 27
MAG 29, 3rd MAW, 1st MEF

Dec. 19, 2006

Cpl. Joshua D. Pickard, 20
2nd Assault Amph. Bn., 2nd Marine Div., 2nd MEF
Spc. Andrew P. Daul, 21
1/37 AR, 1st Bde., 1st AD

Dec. 20, 2006

Spc. Robert J. Volker, 21
1/5 Cav., 2nd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Lance Cpl. Myles C. Sebastian, 21
1/6 Mar. Regt., 2nd Mar. Div., 2nd MEF
Staff Sgt. Jacob D. McMillan, 25
1/501 PIR, 4th Brigade, 25th Inf. Div.
Spc. Scott D. Dykman, 27
1/501 PIR, 4th Brigade, 25th Inf. Div.

Dec. 21, 2006

Lance Cpl. Fernando S. Tamayo, 19
3/4 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF
Hospitalman Kyle A. Nolen, 21
3/4 Mar. Regt., RCT 7, 1st MEF
Lance Cpl. Ryan L. Mayhan, 25
3/4 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF
Lance Cpl. Ryan J. Burgess, 21
3/4 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF

Dec. 22, 2006

Spc. Joshua D. Sheppard, 22
7th Eng. Bn., 10th Mountain Div.

Dec. 23, 2006

Spc. Chad J. Vollmer, 24
1/125 Inf., Michigan Army Natl. Guard
Sgt. Curtis L. Norris, 28
210th BSB, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Div.
Pvt. Bobby Mejia II, 20
1/125 Inf., Michigan Army Natl. Guard
Spc. Elias Elias, 27
3/61 Cav., 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Michael J. Crutchfield, 21
3/4 ADA

Spc. John Barta, 25
1/12 Cav., 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Pfc. Wilson A. Algrim, 21
1/125 Inf., Michigan Army Natl. Guard

Dec. 24, 2006

Lance Cpl. Stephen L. Morris, 21
2/3 Mar. Regt., 3rd Mar. Div., 3rd MEF
Pvt. Evan A. Bixler, 21
1/6 Inf., 2nd Bde., 1st Inf. Div.

Dec. 25, 2006

Pfc. Eric R. Wilkus, 20
8th MP Bde.
Sgt. 1st Class Dexter E. Wheelous, 37
842nd MiTT, 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Spc. Aaron L. Preston, 29
9th Eng. Bn., 2nd Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Andrew H. Nelson, 19
9th Eng. Bn., 2nd Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Sgt. Jae S. Moon, 21
2/12 Inf., 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Sgt. Jason C. Denfrund, 24
2/14 Inf., 2nd Bde., 10th Mountain Div.
Capt. Hayes Clayton, 29
842nd MiTT, 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Sgt. John T. Bubeck, 25
9th Eng. Bn., 2nd Bde., 1st Inf. Div.

Dec. 26, 2006

Spc. Douglas L. Tinsley, 21
3/509 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.
Spc. Joseph A. Strong, 21
3/509 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.
Cpl. Joshua M. Schmitz, 21
3/2 Mar. Regt., 2nd Mar. Div., 2nd MEF

Dec. 27, 2006

Pfc. Vitalijs Vasilijevs, 24
Latvian Armed Forces
Sgt. Edward W. Shaffer, 23
1/36 Inf., 1st Bde., 1st AD
Sgt. Christopher P. Messer, 28
4/31 Inf., 2nd Bde., 10th Mountain Div.
Pvt. Clinton T. McCormick, 20
2nd BSB, 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Lance Cpl. William C. Koprince Jr., 24
3/2 Mar. Regt., 2nd Mar. Div., 2nd MEF
Pfc. Nathaniel A. Given, 21
4/31 Inf., 2nd Bde., 10th Mountain Div.
Pfc. Gints Bleija, 25
Latvian Armed Forces

MORIAM

MEMBERS WHO DIED WHILE SERVING IN
IN DEC. 16, 2006 AND JAN. 15, 2007

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

JOHN 15:13

Dec. 28, 2006

Lance Cpl. William D. Spencer, 20
3/24 Mar. Regt., 4th Mar. Div., Mar. Forces Reserve
Lance Cpl. Nicholas A. Miller, 20
3/24 Mar. Regt., 4th Mar. Div., Mar. Forces Reserve
Sgt. Graham Hesketh, 35
2nd Bn., The Duke of Lancaster's Regt.
Cpl. Christopher E. Eskelson, 22
3/24 Mar. Regt., 4th Mar. Div., Mar. Forces Reserve
Spc. Dustin R. Donica, 22
3/509 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.
Sgt. Aron C. Blum, 22
MAG 11, 3rd MAW, 1st MEF
Spc. Luis G. Ayala, 21
2/8 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Dec. 29, 2006

Pfc. William R. Newgard, 20
1/26 Inf., 2nd Bde., 1st AD
Pvt. David E. Dietrich, 21
1/1 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st AD
Sgt. Lawrence J. Carter, 25
1/18 Inf., 2nd Bde., 1st AD

Dec. 30, 2006

Sgt. John M. Sullivan, 22
2/17 FA, 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Dec. 31, 2006

Spc. Richard A. Smith, 20
215th BSB, 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Cpl. Jonathan E. Schiiler, 20
215th BSB, 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Seaman Sandra S. Grant, 23
USS Eisenhower
Pfc. Alan R. Bloom, 21
425th STB, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

Jan. 1, 2007

Sgt. Thomas E. Vandling, 26
303rd PsyOps Co., Army Reserve

Jan. 4, 2007

Staff Sgt. Charles D. Allen, 28
296th BSB, 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Jan. 5, 2007

Maj. Michael L. Mundell, 47
1st Bde., 108th Div. (Institutional Training)

Jan. 6, 2007

Spc. Raymond N. Mitchell III, 21
2/14 Inf., 2nd Bde., 10th Mountain Div.
Cpl. Jeremiah J. Johnson, 23
3/509 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

Jan. 7, 2007

Tech Sgt. Timothy R. Weiner, 35
775th Civil Eng. Squadron
Sgt. Wayne Rees, 36
The Queen's Royal Lancers, 19th Light Bde.
Cpl. Stephen J. Radersdorf, 21
3/8 Cav., 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Senior Airman Daniel D. Miller Jr., 24
775th Civil Eng. Squadron
Senior Airman Elizabeth A. Loncki, 23
775th Civil Eng. Squadron
Spc. Eric T. Caldwell, 22
2/18 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Jan. 9, 2007

Sgt. James M. Wosika Jr., 24
2nd CAB, 136th Inf., 1st Bde., 34th Inf. Div.
Pfc. Ming Sun, 20
1/9 Inf., 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Ryan R. Berg, 19
1/12 Cav., 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Jan. 13, 2007

Sgt. Gregory A. Wright, 28
1st Eng. Bn., 1st Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Kingsman Alex Green, 21
2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regt.

Jan. 14, 2007

Sgt. Paul T. Sanchez, 32
91st MP Bn., 10th Sustainment Bde., 10th Mountain Div.
Spc. James D. Riekema, 22
145th BSB

Jan. 15, 2007

Spc. Matthew T. Grimm, 21
2/7 Cav., 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
2nd Lt. Mark J. Daily, 23
2/7 Cav., 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. Jason J. Corbett, 23
1/501 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.
Sgt. John E. Cooper, 29
2/7 Cav., 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Sgt. Ian C. Anderson, 22
2/7 Cav., 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

