

The Arrowhead Brigade

ON POINT



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NOTES FROM ARROWHEAD 6 AND 7

Dear Family and Friends of the Arrowhead Brigade,

Happy Thanksgiving from the Diyala Province of Iraq! We hope this update finds you all enjoying the blessings of the holiday season. While our normal operations keep us very busy, we have managed this week to carry on with some traditional Thanksgiving festivities. As of this writing, Arrowhead Soldiers all across Diyala are engaged upon the fields of friendly strife, playing in annual Turkey Bowl flag football contests. As always, the competition is fierce, and many of us wind up with both our bodies and egos bruised and battered (right, Chuck?). But win or lose, everyone walks/limps away with a smile, secure in the knowledge we have managed to bring just a small piece of Americana here to Iraq. We also manage to feast on the best turkey and stuffing the local mess halls can provide. We are always amazed at the quality of food our cooks, Soldiers and contractors alike, manage to put together this time of year.

A quick weather report: Iraq has cooled off. We had more rain the past few weeks, and the result was lots of mud, greener fields, more mud, low-lying fog in the mornings, even more mud, and cooler temperatures. By the way, did we mention mud? Days are now reaching the high 60s to low 70s; nights are dipping into the high 40s. There were a few mornings this past week when we swore we were back in Washington. The hidden blessing behind all this is the increase in water for the citizens of Diyala. And speaking

of the civil matters, let's get to the focus of this month's update.

Last month we told you about the incredible partnership successes the combat-arms and forward support battalions are having with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). This month highlights the Red Lions of TF 1-37 in their role as the Governance



Col. David Funk

and Civil Capacity (GCC) Task Force. Supporting the development of the Iraqi Government and its institutions is one of our major efforts here. One could argue it is *the* major effort since no democracy can long survive, no matter how well-defended, without a thriving civil capacity. We knew coming in that this would be a significant task but we weren't sure of the best way to get after it. Something finally clicked while we were attending a conference in Taji shortly after arriving in country. We decided anything worth doing right deserved the efforts of a green tab commander, his staff, and all of his Soldiers. We also knew it would take a group

of Soldiers who regularly excel at non-standard missions. So, much to the surprise of the Red Lions, we re-tasked them - literally just weeks before we assumed responsibility here and even before Red Lion 6 had arrived in country - to provide full-time support to Governance and Civil Capacity.

To understand the Red Lion mission, you must know a little about this thing called the PRT - Provincial Reconstruction Team. This group of civilians works for the Department of State and represents the US Ambassador to Iraq for all GCC matters. They bring a wealth of technical knowledge to their respective areas of expertise. Among them are lawyers, city managers, engineers, agricultural experts, bankers, and many others who have volunteered to come to Iraq and assist in reconstruction. Many of them left behind lucrative careers in private industry. The PRT brings a level of technical expertise to the Iraq that the Army has never had. What they do not bring are guns (security), so they cannot move around the battlefield on their own. Also, because of their diverse backgrounds and lack of time together, they don't always have the organizational rigor needed to plan operations or to see how each of their individual efforts fits holistically into all the others.

This is where the Red Lions make a world of difference. In the world of interagency operations there are supported and supporting agencies. For GCC matters, the military is the supporting agency to the PRT. The Red Lions support the PRT

first by getting them anywhere they need to go on the battlefield at any time. They literally drive thousands of miles each month escorting various PRT members to key leader engagements, government meetings, project assessments, and business grand openings. The PRT members are thrilled, as they have never had this freedom of movement here in Diyala. Of course, spending so much time on the road is not without its hazards. There are still violent groups out there who can't stand the fact that Iraq is becoming a productive and functioning democracy. They have purposefully targeted the PRT several times. Your Soldiers have reacted well, relied on their training, and protected themselves and the PRT members every time.

Meanwhile the Red Lion staff has helped the PRT develop a campaign plan - something that ties all the individual initiatives together and prioritizes their efforts here in Diyala. It's one thing to spend millions of dollars aimlessly on rebuilding a country. It is another to develop a coherent and integrated plan that allows each success to build on the previous one. Because we in the military spend a lot of time thinking about complex and multi-faceted problems, we help the PRT see the linkages between each line of effort. It is no stretch to say that thanks to the Red Lions, Governance and Civil Capacity in Diyala has already advanced light years from where it was when we arrived.

By the way, the Red Lion firing batteries are doing the same work

in direct support of the maneuver battalions and their "Satellite PRTs." This allows the battalions to plan and execute coherent GCC efforts in the individual neighborhoods at their level. While this mission is a long way from providing lethal artillery fires in support of the brigade fight, it is a critical effort that the batteries



Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Bjerke

have embraced. As our Infantry and Cavalry commanders will attest, the payoff for the maneuver battalions has been immense. This is PhD-level work your Soldiers are doing here every day. As evidence of their profound accomplishments, you should know that the Red Lion model of PRT support is being touted at Department of State levels as *the* model for future civil-military operations. The Red Lions are truly living up to their motto - On the Minute! We couldn't be prouder.

While non-standard missions like this are becoming more common in our Army, we are confident no one does them better than your Arrowhead Soldiers. Across the

entire operating area, we see daily displays of the disciplined initiative and innovative problem solving that have become the Arrowhead trademarks. What an awesome sight to behold!

Our joy at watching the amazing accomplishments of the Arrowhead Team is tempered this month by the loss of one of our own. On November 4th, we suffered the tragic loss of SSG Amy Tirador to non-combat related injuries. Amy was a great Soldier and leader who positively influenced everyone with whom she worked. We will miss her, but we take solace in the fact that her important work will carry on. May you rest in peace, Amy.

As we close this month's update, it is fitting to engage in some reflection. Though we are far away from our friends and families for yet another holiday season, we are still mindful that we have much for which to be thankful. We have the love and support of our Families back at home; we have the respect and admiration of a grateful nation; and we have each other, our fellow brothers and sisters in arms. Know that the Arrowhead Team is strong and that we are making a profound and positive difference here every day. Thanks for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers...and keep writing and sending those packages. Until next month we are humbly...

Arrowhead 6 and 7

ARROWHEAD

SECOND TO NONE

AMERICA'S CORPS!

Sgt. Benjamin Block, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division pulls security with fellow Soldiers as contractors from Kellogg, Brown and Root work to erect a concrete tower at the 3rd Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division headquarters, Nov. 14. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anthony Jones, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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ON THE COVER



Spc. Mathew Thomson from Stillwater, Okla., assigned to Troop D, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, attached to the 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3/2 SBCT, wears a protective chemical suit during a joint chemical training exercise on FOB Warhorse, Nov. 25. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anderson Savoy, 55th Signal Company (Combat Camera))

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BOGUS CHEMICAL THREAT PROMPTS JOINT EXERCISE

Story by Spc. Christopher Bruce
145th MPAD

Photos by Spc. Anderson Savoy
55th Signal Company (Combat
Camera)

An explosive ordnance disposal team donned their chemical masks and entered into a small compound to clear a building of any hostile threat. They secured it so a newly trained team of chemical Soldiers could identify the potential toxins. The training was set up on Forward Operating Base Warhorse for the members of Platoon F, Troop D, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, attached to Task Force 296 on November 25.

Twelve Soldiers participated in an 80-hour training course that taught them about chemical, biological and nuclear attacks leading up to the exercise. The course was called TICPDE or Toxic Industrial Chemical Protection and Detection Equipment and was broken down into several phases over a two-week period. The phases included detection of hazards, testing and monitoring, decontaminating and how to collect evidence of the attack which is also called sampling operations.

Jose Melendez has taught the TICPDE course since 2004 and said that the course was designed to familiarize the Soldiers with the equipment and to make sure they could



Spc. Grath Williams from Boumount TX. assigned to Troop D, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, gives a thumbs up sign to say his air tank is ok.

conduct a mission collectively using all the proper techniques.

“Since we are dealing more with industrial hazards and industrial chemicals, we have to teach them more of the civilian side of the house not

the normal WMD [weapons of mass destruction] type of equipment that they have,” said Melendez.

The mock scenario had four unknown substances that could have possibly been hazardous.



Sergeant Emmanuel Batiz from Sacramento, Calif., assigned to Troop D 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment. gets his chemical detection system ready. Troop D is participating in a hazmat exercise, Nov. 25 on Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

Those chemicals would have needed to be removed and the entire area would need to be cordoned off.

“The basic scenario is set up where there are two on entry, two on backup and two

on decontamination,” said Karen Kirkpatrick, a course instructor. “Those have to be set up before anyone can go down range.”

Sergeant Emmanuel Batiz from Sacramento, Calif.,

was one of the first to go in. His job was to test for both biological and radioactive hazards around and in the site where the unknown substances were located.

“We clear it for the other teams that will be going in and checking the samples and exiling the samples to be tested by a lab,” Sgt. Batiz said.

After Sgt. Batiz was done with his portion of the mission, he went into the decontamination area where Spc. Melody Moss from Hinesville, Ga., stepped in. Her job was to ensure that the Soldiers do not spread any contamination by directing to them to wash and remove their equipment. Before Sgt. Batiz is allowed to leave the area, Spc. Moss confirms that he is clean with a chemical agent monitor.

“You don’t want them to take whatever chemicals they’ve touched or any biological matter that they have touched with them into a clean environment because then it could make somebody else sick,” Spc. Moss said.

The training mission was a success according to the instructors. All the potential hazardous substances in the field were gathered so that they could be taken to a lab for an official analysis. This wouldn’t be necessary today because the powdered matter was already known to the instructors. It was actually a protein milkshake mix.

PREPARING FOR ELECTIONS IN DIYALA PROVINCE

Story and Photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

For the second time since the fall of Saddam Hussien's regime, the people of Iraq are preparing to go to the polls and cast their vote for the future of Iraq.

To help the election process run smoother, U.S. Forces are working with Iraqi Security Forces across the Diyala to

prepare and secure the many polling sites.

"We are being proactive," said 2nd Lt. Brent Kurutz, a platoon leader with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division's 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment.

2nd Lt. Kurutz was speaking of his platoon's drive-by reconnaissance of several potential polling sites around the city of Khanaqin in Diyala Province in, Iraq, Nov. 10,

in preparation for upcoming elections.

He said the purpose of the inspections would be to assess each sites' serviceability, accessibility and security.

"We are thinking mostly in terms of defensive things," said 2nd Lt. Kurutz. "Things like Hesco barriers, jersey barriers and blast walls. The security assets which will keep people secure on the day of the election."

As with all operations in

Spc. Thunder Harris, Bronco Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division provides security from the rear of a Stryker Vehicle during a passive reconnaissance of polling sites near Khanaqin in Diyala Province Iraq, Nov. 10.



2nd Lt. Brent Kurutz, Bronco Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, speaks with Col. Halmad, commander, 1st Battalion, 34th Peshmurga, about the location of several potential polling sites around the city of Khanaqin in Diyala Province, Iraq, Nov. 10.

Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces are to be in the lead with U.S. Forces providing a mentor and advisory role.

"We have to allow them to lead from the front and help facilitate their requests," said 1st Lt. Czajka, assistant brigade civil affairs officer, 3/2 SBCT. "If they need barriers or T-walls for their polling sites, we can help facilitate that by providing the machinery or the actual supplies."

1st Lt. Czajka said one unique problem in Diyala is the sheer number of polling sites needed to be inspected.

"In each area of operation there are eighty to one hundred polling sites," 1st Lt. Czajka added. "We are trying to find out what our Iraqi counterparts

have, what they need and what they need from us."

Another problem facing Iraqi

An U.S. Soldier applies bandages to an Iraqi man at the 1st Battalion, 34th Peshmurga's headquarters in Khanaqin in Diyala Province, Iraq, Nov. 10.



and U.S. leaders in Diyala is the dispersion of the population, where people live. Diyala has varied population centers such as Baqubah and Khanaqin and a large number of citizens living in small farming villages across the province.

1st Lt. Czajka said this becomes a problem when it comes to getting those citizens from the villages to polling sites.

"The Iraqi Security Forces want to keep less than three hundred vehicles on the road in the entire province," said 1st Lt. Czajka. "What has been proposed is bussing people to polling sites."

As the January elections approach, Iraqi and U.S. Forces like 2nd Lt. Kurutz and Col. Halmad, will continue to work together to better prepare and secure the people of Iraq.

FIELD ARTILLERY SHOWS THEY ARE MORE THAN JUST BIG GUNS

Story by Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
145th MPAD
Photos provided by 1/37th FA

With the ever-changing situation in Iraq, many Soldiers find themselves performing jobs outside of their skill set. For the 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division unconventional is the norm. The only artillery battalion in the 3/2 SBCT, 1/37th FA, has found themselves during their deployment to Diyala province working with unusual partners to accomplish the goals of the province. The change from patrolling battle space to assisting in civil capacities came after a review of the successes other Brigades

had begun to have in Iraq. Maj. Rory Crooks, 1/37th FA executive officer, said that from the beginning they knew that whatever tasks they were asked to take on, it wouldn't be just putting howitzer fire down range. "Field Artillery Battalions have always played an unconventional role under Stryker Brigades," said Maj. Crooks, "Most of the times they are asked to be land owners. Owing battle space is what we initially planned for, but it didn't turn out to be." Instead the Battalion was asked to accomplish many different tasks in a variety of sectors. Along with their platoon of Soldiers that man two howitzer guns, Soldiers have been broken off into tasks such as assisting the Diyala Provincial

Reconstruction Team (PRT) and working on establishing civil service programs. In their assistance with the PRT the Battalion has taken a new approach. Previously, the Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ePRT) that work in each of the five Qadas or "counties" in the province have had to rely on the, "battle space owner," the Battalion who controlled the region for movement and security to events and meetings. Instead, an element of Soldiers from 1/37th FA is assigned to each ePRT to allow for a more free moving organization that can customize their schedules to best facilitate the needs of their region. This movement assistance also extends to the provincial level of the PRT where Soldiers run daily routes to government and public works buildings to allow for extended communications for both the Department of State and the Brigade. Additionally one officer and one non-commissioned officer are assigned to assist the PRT in their Lines of Action; governance, infrastructure, economics, agriculture and rule of law.

Soldiers of the 1/37th FA work with members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team and a local man during a mission in Diyala Province.



The special assistants add invaluable skills of analysis along with their ability to aid their State Department counterparts in other areas according to Maj. Crooks. He added that a large difference between what the 1/37th FA has under taken is that they are reorganized specifically to support the efforts of the PRT at all levels. Another large undertaking by the Battalion has been the work on civilian works programs. The Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) is designed to financially support local commanders in Iraq with providing both humanitarian

relief and reconstruction efforts. The programs deliver essential services such as trash removal, water, and assistance in agriculture. Capt. Patrick Biggs, the Battalion CERP Program Manager said that the Battalion has undertaken many major projects with the assistance of engineers and civil affairs teams in the Brigade. "What we are trying to do is mirror what the Iraqi Provincial Government's goals are," said Capt. Biggs. "We are currently working to set up programs that meet these goals and can continue even after U.S. Forces leave."

These goals include an arduous renovation of the canal systems in the Diyala project and an information outreach to the local farmers meant to teach them how to best use their land and the water supply in the region. The utilization of the 1/37th FA may look to some as an odd use for artillerymen, but not for them. "Though we came into this not trained for the mission ahead, we've adapted and overcome obstacles. It is a great testament to all of the Soldiers here that we have been able to get behind this one goal and achieve so much," said Maj. Crooks.



Soldiers of the 1/37th FA provide both escort and special assistance to members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team as part of their Battalion's unconventional mission in Diyala Province.

Arrowhead Brigade has their 'Eye in the Sky'

Story by Spc. Christopher Bruce
145th MPAD

Photos by Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
145th MPAD

In modern warfare, seeing the battlefield before sending in Soldiers can be very beneficial. Enlisted Soldiers work hard every day to act as "the eye in the sky" for the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division stationed at Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

These Soldiers work for the brigade's Unmanned Ariel System or UAS. They control unmanned aircraft with advanced camera systems to survey and search for insurgents, caches and anything else that could help their brethren in the field.

"They may not know who I am, but they always know there is someone watching their

back when they leave the FOB," said Staff Sgt. Edward Powell who is a mission planner and UAS operator.

The Arrowhead brigade's UAV's are called the Shadow and can fly up to 15,000 feet and still be able to view small objects on the ground. The aerial



Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Warhorse prepare a "Shadow" unmanned aerial vehicle for launch.

vehicles are sent out to soar over areas of interest and while it's flying, provide real-time video feed to the Soldiers.

Sgt. Scott Moore, from Springfield, Missouri, is a UAS operator and knows the importance of his job to the overall mission for his brigade. Certain situations are

possible where Sgt. Moore can save lives. One situation that is not too far from reality is finding insurgents and forewarning Soldiers.

"We get on the horn and are like, 'hey man! Don't go into that building'," Sgt. Moore said. "There were two guys that just walked in with RPG's.

As long as I can do my part and get them the word, I'm happy."

There is more to just pushing buttons for the UAS operator. While the Air Vehicle Operator (AVO) can type

in grid coordinates and the computer system will fly the aircraft automatically, "you [AVO] have to be the one watching the indicators and making sure nothing is going awry," said Sgt. Moore. "It's not just point and click and it goes where you tell it to, there are also things to do while you're en route

to your target."

A UAS operator must take six to seven months of training before they can fly the unmanned aircraft. Their training includes Federal Aviation Administration rules, identifying targets, packing and unloading the system and actual flying of the aircraft. Like all pilots would train, the UAS training included flight simulators of the worst emergency situations possible.

The UAS operators

aren't the only ones involved. Sgt. Jonathon Somers is a Shadow Maintainer. He is responsible for getting the aircraft on the launch pad and ready to fly. He performs all maintenances and daily checks on the system. Another important part of his job is making sure the aircraft lands safely. After the unmanned vehicle touches down on the runway, it runs into a system of cables that slows it down. If the aircraft misses the

cable, it will run into a backup net. That could cause damage to the aircraft according to Sgt. Somers.

"Basically all it does is knock off some antennas," said Sgt. Somers. "Usually it only takes about two or three hours to repair the aircraft to make it flyable again."

Luckily for Sgt. Somers, he hasn't had a UAV miss the first set of cables yet.

An Unmanned aerial vehicle launches off in support of operations for the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.



Preventing Smuggling along Diyala's Borders

Story and Photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

Under a starry night near the Iraq – Iran border a group of Iraqi Border Commandoes lie in wait, silently observing the long open border while U.S. Soldiers provide an over watch using advanced thermal cameras, Nov. 23 to 24.

The focus of their observation; search for smugglers crossing the border.

“There is suspected smuggling going on across the border,” said 1st Lt. Hugh Ra, platoon leader, 3rd Platoon, Company C, 52nd Infantry, attached to 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. “We’re there to observe and interdict that smuggling.”

Before sundown the evening of Nov. 23, the U.S. Soldiers met with the executive officer of the 2nd Battalion, Quick Reaction Force, Border Commandoes, a special unit funded by the Department of Border Enforcement, to plan the operation.



2nd Lt. Andrew Murray (LEFT) and Spc. Nathan Mitchell (RIGHT), 3rd Platoon, Company C, 52nd Infantry Regiment, attached to 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, watch a monitor looking for heat signatures and signs of smuggling across the Iraq - Iran border, Nov. 23.

During the meeting the Iraqi officer suggested a plan placing his men close to the border while the U.S. forces maintained an over watch position to observe activity along the border and radio the Iraqi Border Commandoes if they saw anything.

“Our original intent was to be with them. However ... It was a greater concern to them for us to appear that we were assisting at a traffic control point, and I believe it was a good decision on their part,” said Sgt. 1st Class

Jason Hughes, platoon sergeant.

To observe the border and assist the Border Commandoes the U.S. Soldiers used two different types of thermal imaging systems and individual night vision equipment.

Using the thermal cameras, Soldiers watched each system for heat signatures moving across the desert. When a Soldier saw something on the screen he would point it out to others and they would discuss what it could be.

No smuggling activity

was spotted during the night. “There was little foot traffic or vehicles. Which doesn’t disappoint me, our main purpose is to be there for our Iraqi partners,” said 1st Lt. Ra.

“Right now it’s important for our counterparts to know we are here and here to help them. There is suspected smuggling, but we haven’t seen it and from what they have

told us they haven’t seen it either,” said Sgt. 1st Class Hughes, adding 1st Lt. Ra’s comments. “I think it’s about building a rapport with these gentlemen to see what they do, how they react and how we can help them.”

Sergeant 1st Class Hughes said his unit has shifted from simply training with the Border Commandoes to working

on these overnight observation missions.

“Our mission is to help the Iraqi’s to stand on their own two feet, we are becoming less important to them, we are just advisors at this point,” said Sgt. 1st Class Hughes, “These are the best guy’s I’ve seen. They are seventy five percent on their own and the missions are one hundred percent theirs.”

U.S. Soldiers joke with an Iraqi Soldier while waiting to move to an overnight observation post to observe possible smuggling activity, Nov. 23.



Playing in the...



...Joilet Bowl

Iraqi Police Learn Why K9s Are 'Man's Best Friend'

Story and Photo by
Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
145th MPAD

The danger of working a check point in Iraq has been a reality many have faced in years past. With enemy combatants working to easily blend into the civilian population, the check point too often becomes an easy target for insurgents.

For Iraqi Police in the Diyala province a new class being offered on Forward Operating Base Warhorse is working to make these volatile situations safer for all.

The nine day class which focuses solely on operating check points came out of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior's request to strengthen areas of security that are already currently in place.

"All of these students have previously graduated from the basic course to become an officer. This is continuing education for them," said Police Advisor Lindrix Cooper, a lead instructor for the course.

The 18 Iraqi Police which recently attended the fourth class held on FOB Warhorse received training in many different aspects and an array of scenarios.

One of the most important classes taught in the course is the use of military working dogs and the benefits they bring to a situation like a check point.

"There are many tools we are trying to give them during this



A Soldier demonstrates the abilities of a military working dog during an Iraqi Police check point course held best the 287th Military Police on Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

training. This [working dogs] is a useful tool we want them to be comfortable with," said Sgt. 1st Class Troy Shaffer, 287th Military Police lead instructor.

The first scenario held by the U.S. working dog was hidden explosives in a vehicle. For this a small amount of explosive material was hidden in the cracks of a large Sports Utility Vehicle. Out of sight and with very little scent the working dog was able to pick up the exact location of the explosives and alert the handler.

The IPs watched and were explained the process the working dog was going through so that they too could understand the situation and see how the dog searched, identified and alerted.

The next step was demonstrating

the effectiveness of the dog in personnel searches. The working dog acted as a guard for the handler as he searched the suspect. At the slightest sign of aggression the sprung and subdued the suspect.

For the final demonstration the working dog showed its discipline by attacking and retreating upon a single command.

Though the IPs watching and learning are not dog handlers themselves, with a strong infusion of more working dogs soon arriving in Diyala, these officers were there to learn how a working dog could help to keep themselves and the population safer.

"Officer safety is what we really try to hammer home. That is what this training is all about, keeping them safe," said Cooper.

Building Better Security in Diyala

Story and Photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

With a big yellow crane and a little sweat, the Iraqi Army with the help of U.S. Soldiers and contractors placed two large concrete towers and several concrete blast walls near the village of al Sada, Diyala Province, Nov. 14.

“The towers will go along way in helping the Iraqi Army to be able to assist and provide better security for the Iraqi citizens,” said 1st Lt. Jacob Magill, a platoon leader with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

The first of the two towers to be placed was erected near the village of al Sada, where according to Lt. Haider Maher Ali, executive officer, 3rd Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, al Qaeda has been moving through the village.

“We are placing these towers here in order to control the northern sector and deter al Qaeda movement in the area,” said Lt. Haider, who added he joined the IA to help build a better Iraq and make it a peaceful area.

The tower which is made in five separate sections and must be erected on site was



Workers of Kellogg, Brown and Root work with an Iraqi contractor to erect the first of two towers in the 3rd Company, 3rd Battalion, 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division area of operations, Nov. 14.

delivered and constructed by civilian contractors from Kellogg, Brown and Root with the aid of an Iraqi contractor and a large crane to lift the heavy sections of tower and the multiple blast walls placed around the tower.

“Working with the Iraqi contractor and IA shows our commitment to the security agreement and working by, with and through the Iraqi’s,” 1st Lt. Magill said. “It was also good for the Iraqi citizens to see the Iraqi civilian crane operator working with the Iraqi Army working with the U.S. Forces; showing a good, combined operation on all fronts.”

After the first tower and blast walls were in place, Lt. Haider, who personally led the placement of the tower and accompanying walls,



Contractors of Kellogg, Brown and Root assist the Iraqi crane operator place the first of several blast walls alongside the tower placed near al Sada village, Nov. 14.

ensured his soldiers would be able to utilize the tower for its intended purpose.

Once the first tower was placed the U.S. Forces escorted the contractors through the desert to the

second site, the 3rd Company Headquarters, and placed another tower where it could observe the area and offer over watch of the headquarters building and the Iraqi Army soldiers inside.

“We will work with U.S. Forces as one team, one hand to help make this area safe and to secure the people from the bad people whether it be al Qaeda or any terrorist organization as we build a new Iraq,” said Lt. Haider.

After being constructed by contractors of Kellogg, Brown and Root and an Iraqi contractor, the completed observation station stands as a imposing warning to al Qaeda or any anti-Iraqi forces.



Strengthening the Iraqi Army's Backbone

Story and Photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

It is commonly said that the non-commissioned officer is the backbone of the Army, responsible for discipline and training of the soldiers in their units.

Non-commissioned officers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division recently spent five days training NCOs from the 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division at Forward Operating Grizzly in Diyala Province, Iraq.

"We are trying to instill in the Iraqi non-commissioned officers what it means to be an NCO," said Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Slagle, platoon sergeant, Mortar Platoon, HHC, 1/23 Inf. "It means the job doesn't just end at the end of the day, it keeps going. You need to know your soldiers and their lives."

Twenty three Iraqi Army NCOs attended the second iteration of the course which began on Nov. 15th and ended with the students graduating on Nov. 20. During the course, U.S. NCOs instructed their counterparts on subjects varying from formations to



An Iraqi Army non-commissioned officer practices first aid on a fellow IA NCO during the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment's train the trainer course, Nov. 20.

rifle marksmanship.

"Our 'Train the Trainer' program is designed to teach the Iraqi NCOs how to teach, enabling them to train their soldiers after they leave here," said Sgt. 1st Class George Castro, platoon sergeant, Recon Platoon, HHC, 1/23 Inf.

Also taking part in the class, were two IA NCOs who graduated from the first training program earlier this year and returned to help instruct their fellow Soldiers.

The focus of the course was to teach the duties and responsibilities of NCOs, Army values, different styles of leadership, priorities of work and how to train

soldiers.

Each day consisted of classroom instruction with practical exercises in the subject. On the last day of training, the IA NCOs took their new teaching methods and attempted to apply them in a training that was both familiar and new.

The Iraqi Soldiers after receiving instructions on operation and care of the M-16 rifle were able to move to the range and in one afternoon, calibrated their sights and qualify by hitting 23 out of 40 targets.

"The IA NCOs did very well with the M-16's," said Sgt. 1st Class Slagle. "With one day on instruction, to be able to help each other to

zero and qualify in one day is amazing."

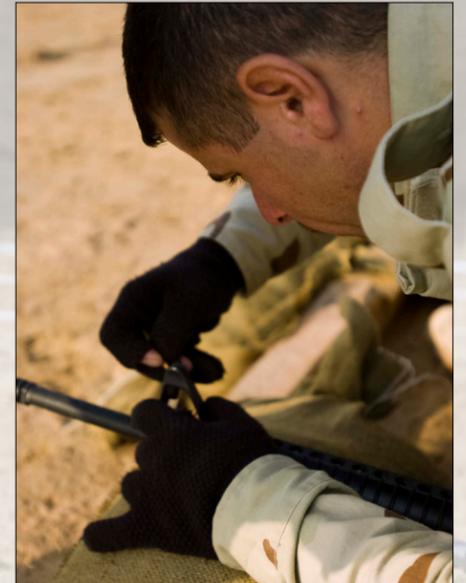
"These NCOs want to teach their soldiers," said Sgt. 1st Class Castro. "As sergeants it our job to train the soldiers and the IA NCOs are ready to accept that."

During the course the instructors made it clear that the way they taught was one way and each NCO could develop their own method to better suit their soldiers and units.

"We always want them to

An Iraqi Army non-commissioned officer makes adjustments to a fellow IA NCOs M-16 Rifle during the zeroing process of the weapons qualification portion of the train the trainer program on Forward Operating Grizzly, Nov. 19.

know this is their army," said Sgt. 1st Class Slagle. "We can teach them our way and help them develop their own training plan, but it is up to them."



Staff Sgt. Sean McCartan scores an Iraqi Army non-commissioned officer's rifle qualification card during the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment's train the trainer program, Nov. 19.



55th Medical Company (Combat Stress Control)

Officer-In-Charge
Capt. Amy Spears
773-0115



Anger Management Class
Every Monday 1000 and 1400

Home Front Issues
Every Wednesday
1000 and 14000

Be A Better Battle Buddy
Communication
Every Friday 1400

Sleep and Relaxation
Every Sunday 1000 and 1400

Life Skills
Resiliency, Coping Skills
Every Saturday 1000 and 1400

Combat Stress Control is located at the Troop Medical Center on FOB Warhorse and can be reached at 773-0115. All classes are available upon request, anytime or anywhere. The 55th makes trips to each major FOB in Diyala once a month.

Chaplain's Corner

With Our Courage Will Come Our Song

As we approach this Christmas Season and we sing songs of shepherds watching their flocks at night and of a birth in the little town of Bethlehem, I am reminded of another who came from the same town whose lineage our Savior came from.

As a youth, King David spent many years watching over his father's flocks in the mountainous terrains surrounding Bethlehem. It was in that rough, but beautiful schoolhouse of nature that he learned *responsibility*. And it was there that he was tested in the anxious moments of life and death, protecting his sheep from the claw of the bear and the fang of the lion!

Responsibility, when **rightly** accepted, **demand**s and **build**s **courage!**

That courage is often required when there's no one around to notice. We can imagine David performing many unreported acts of courage to protect his flock. Sometimes obscurity becomes the proving grounds for an effective witness that will, one day, manifest to the world!

But while we may be invisible to the world, our God, the Chief Shepherd who was also born in

Bethlehem, sees us! Because God watches over us, we can trust in His guidance and His protection!

This realization must have filled the heart of David with worship regarding the God of Israel, his Protector! How many hours did David sing of God's love and deliverance to the sheep grazing under his vigilant watch? There's little doubt that his voice soothed their fears! Much like the Cowboys did in the old west on the cattle drives, they sang songs to sooth the cattle at night to keep them clam.

Christ said that sheep know and trust in *their shepherd's voice*. They *will not* follow a stranger!

There's a difference between the shepherd who loves his flock, and the hireling who simply works for monetary gain. The shepherd will know and defend his flock, sometimes with his own life. The hireling remains distant and will abandon his charge with exact calculation especially when times become tough.

When Israel's first King, Saul, departed from *the Way* of God, he could no longer lead God's people with the *spiritual courage* and *integrity* demanded by his office. Thus the Lord *searched* all of Israel,



CHAPLAIN (MAJ.)
PATRICK BASAL

in order to anoint the *new king* of Israel! And *found* the shepherd who wrestled with wild beasts while defending his lambs because David placed his *full trust* in the Lord.

Like David, we're also called to display *a courage that answers the roar* of that *proving lion* who seeks to devour souls! And *with our courage will come our song* of praise for the *Great Shepherd*, Who delivers all who trust in Him!

So as we sing our Christmas Carols this Holiday Season, remember that the reason for the season is to give praise and glory to our deliverer the *Great Shepherd* because we trust in Him.

PAX DOMINE

MAY THOSE FALLEN NEVER BE FORGOTTEN

Staff Sgt. Todd W. Selge
Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th
Infantry Regiment
June 22, 1984 ~ September 3, 2009

Sgt. Jordan M. Shay
Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th
Infantry Regiment
April 3, 1987 ~ September 3, 2009

Staff Sgt. Amy C. Tirador
209th Military Intelligence
Company
July 18, 1980 - November 04, 2009

3RD STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM
2ND INFANTRY DIVISION
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