

“Operation New Dawn does not change the level of U.S. commitment to Iraq. It changes the nature of our commitment: (from) one that is military-dominated to a civilian-led commitment.”

Gen. Raymond T. Odierno
United States Forces-Iraq
Commanding General

(Front cover image by Mike Browning)



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CHRONICLE

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OPERATION NEW DAWN

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During an air assault training operation, a U.S. Soldier assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, waits for pick up outside the town of Rawah with a soldier from Commando Bn., 7th Iraqi Army Div. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Phillip Valentine)



U.S., Iraqi forces make transition

Story by
Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey
USF-I Public Affairs



U.S. Army Sgt. Caleb Holloway, from Sacramento, Calif., assigned to 2nd Platoon, 4th Squadron, Charlie Troop, 10th Cavalry Regiment, teaches a class to Iraqi border enforcement officers with 210th Department of Border Enforcement Detachment in Maysan Province, July 14. U.S. Soldiers with 4th Sqdn. conduct regular training, joint operations, and advise and assist Iraqi border enforcement officials. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Lukas McWhorter)

History will record that Operation Iraqi Freedom lasted seven years, five months and 11 days. The operation, which began with the March 20, 2003 invasion of Iraq, will end on Sept. 1 as Operation New Dawn begins, marking the formal transition from combat to stability operations.

“Operation New Dawn does not change the level of U.S. commitment to Iraq,” Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, United States Forces-Iraq commanding general, said at a July 21 Pentagon press briefing. “It changes the nature of our commitment: (from) one that is military-dominated to a civilian-led commitment.”

“As we transition to stability operations, U.S. forces will continue to train, advise, assist and equip Iraqi Security Forces and carry on with our partnered counterterrorism operations,” he said. “We’ll support the U.S. Embassy, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, United Nations and other nongovernmental organizations dedicated to building Iraqi civil capacity.”

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced the name change from OIF in a Feb. 17 memo to Gen. David Petraeus, then the commander of United States Central Command.

“Aligning the name change with the change of mission sends a strong signal that Operation Iraqi Freedom has ended and our forces are operating under a new mission,” he wrote, adding that it will reinforce the U.S. commitment to honor the 2008 Security Agreement and recognize the evolving relationship between the U.S. and Iraqi governments.

Because the situation in Iraq has improved, the U.S. military partnership role with the ISF and Iraqi government has also changed. The ISF is taking the lead in security operations and the U.S. forces now focus their partnership primarily on honing the skills of the ISF through training and advising.

Throughout the past seven years, most U.S. military service members would compare the path of our partnership with the ISF to that of its standard three-phase model for training; crawl, walk, run.

When the ISF first started building its forces, the U.S. partnership was focused on showing them what right looks like. As the ISF grew in numbers and skill, the U.S. conducted joint missions and began to move back and let them take the lead. Now, the ISF is a capable, professional security force so the U.S. military partnership transitions into its new mission to train, advise, and assist, letting ISF take charge of securing the nation, which is comparable to the run phase.

At the outset of Operation New Dawn, the change of mission may not be immediately evident to the 50,000 service members on the ground in Iraq. According to Wilson, U.S. forces have been conducting stability operations in Iraq since 2004.

“If you really asked them ... they’re doing stability operations now,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence K. Wilson, USF-I command sergeant major. “So it’s not a kinetic piece anymore, it’s civil capacity ... a strategic enduring partnership with Iraq,” he said.

Despite the shift away from kinetic missions,

U.S. forces will continue to take part in Iraqi-led counterterrorism operations against terrorist networks and, in accordance with the Security Agreement, will use all means necessary to protect themselves if attacked.

As part of the transformation from combat to stability operations, the structure of the U.S. brigades also changed to realign their personnel and equipment to perform the changing missions.

Beginning in the fall of 2009, brigade combat teams began to transition with advise and assist brigades. On Sept. 1, the official start of Operation New Dawn, six AABs will be in place and conducting stability operations. The AABs make up the backbone of U.S. forces’ support to ISF as they continue to increase their capabilities and support the Rule of Law.

To ensure they are providing the best support to the ISF and the government of Iraq, AABs are tailored to the unique operations environment where they operate. The units are augmented with as many as 24 specialty teams such as engineering, transportation, investigative and forensic specialists, counter explosives and counterterrorism and training.

By tailoring the makeup of the AABs, based on location and need, USF-I ensures the ISF and local governments are getting the right support they require to protect the local residents and grow civil capacity.

Another major role for the AABs during Operation New Dawn will be the continued support of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

The AABs will provide the PRTs with security, and when requested, the expertise of their specialty teams. Joint military and PRT efforts are an essential component of stability operations and Operation New Dawn and U.S. forces will continue to provide security and materiel to the PRTs, as well as the expertise of the AAB specialty teams, when requested.

The U.S. forces will also continue to work with nongovernmental agencies like the United States Aid for International Development, or USAID, and the United Nations as they work to build Iraq’s civil capacity.

As the country regains its economic and political footing and the ISF take control of the country’s security, Odierno said the people of Iraq have shown patience and determination.

“Over the past seven-and-a-half years, the Iraqi people have proven to be extremely resilient and courageous,” Odierno said. “They want to move forward and make their country better than it was before.”

“Political and economic progress is more important now than ever. That’s why we believe this new stage in our relationship will help ensure that Iraq remains on a path to develop security, diplomatic, and economic depth that will ultimately contribute to peace and stability in the region.”

Public confidence grows as ISF takes control

As the security, economic, and political situations continue to improve, confidence in the Iraqi Security Forces is growing as well.

According to recent research data, more than 80 percent of the people in Iraq have confidence in the ISF’s ability to protect them.

The increase in confidence is a result of the success the ISF has had in partnering with U.S. forces to fight insurgency and the transition to Operation New Dawn is a result of their steady progress.

Since the U.S. began drawing down troops after the surge peaked in 2007, the ISF have steadily increased in numbers and stand ready to secure their nation.

Today there are about 660,000 ISF personnel and at any given time, thousands are going through their training programs and educational systems.

The Iraqi Army has 11 training centers and developed an institutional school system, which includes a noncommissioned officer education system. Since June, more than 5,300 Iraqi Army rejoiners have completed training. In March, 65 women graduated from the female basic training course. To date, there are about 400 women serving in the Iraqi Army.

There are 36 police training centers throughout Iraq. During a recent six week period, more than 14,400 police officers at all levels completed courses ranging from basic recruit training to specialized criminal investigations courses.

The Iraqi Air Force has command and control of about 350 sorties a week and are steadily increasing the number of pilots. By the end of 2010, there will be about 7,200 airmen in the ISF, and they will have more than 100 aircraft. More than 135 pilots are currently in training.

The Iraqi Navy has about 2,600 personnel and can recruit about 700 more personnel this year. They are on track to assume full responsibility for the protection of Iraqi territorial waters and critical oil export infrastructure by the end of 2011. By comparison, in 2003, they did not have a navy.

The result of their increased numbers and training is a drastic reduction in the number of attacks conducted against the people of Iraq and the security forces.

Since the surge, IED incidents have decreased by more than 85 percent across Iraq, and attacks on civilians have decrease nationwide by about 80 percent.

U.S. military, Iraqi Security Forces open refurbished school in Taji

Committed to assisting local community



Story and photos by
Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
USD-C Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Benjamin Forshey, a platoon sergeant with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, holds a pencil as a mass of hands spring toward him during a school opening in Malahma July 24. Local children no longer have to walk nearly six miles to get to school because of the efforts of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, Iraqi Security Forces and local contractors.

TAJI, Iraq – Nearly three years ago, one of the largest operations in Iraq, “The Surge,” took place as coalition forces launched Operation Phantom Thunder against insurgents operating throughout the country.

However, on June 17, 2007, one day after the operation began, insurgents struck back against coalition forces, the government of Iraq and the people of Taji, sending a message of violence and destroying more than a year of hard work spent improving the educational facilities in the area.

Just days before its grand opening, insurgents set off explosives inside the walls of a newly built school in Malahma, leveling much of the building, that had been under construction since 2006.

The destroyed school remained abandoned over the next few years due to high levels of insurgent activity around the area and need elsewhere for the services of the coalition forces.

Recently, a decrease in violence, brought on by a partnership between U.S. forces and a strengthened Iraqi Security Force, has allowed the school to be refurbished.

The project was passed on to 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment leaders by their predecessors and work on the school began almost immediately to give local children a safe way to obtain an education.

Prior to the project’s completion, children had to walk nearly more than six miles to get to the nearest school, taking chances traveling along a busy highway.



Iraqi media set up cameras during the opening of a school in Malahma July 24. The school, which was blown up by insurgents in 2007, opened with the help of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Iraqi Security Forces, and the Government of Iraq.

Although the Malahma School was closer, the environment was not conducive to learning, said 1st Lt. Eric Richards, an assistant fire-support officer with 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt.

Richards recalled walking through the school for the first time before reconstruction began and was how he was struck by its state of disrepair.

“It looked horrible,” said Richards, a Lacey, Wash., native. “The whole middle portion was gone. [The contractors] actually built about 50 percent of the structure as it stands right now,” he said.

In an effort to boost the local economy, local contractors were hired to refurbish the school, a project totaling \$500,000. Reconstruction began in mid-April and concluded recently. The grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on July 24.

Lieutenant Col. Mike Lawrence, commander of 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt., assisted in cutting the ceremonial ribbon for the new school and spoke during the ceremony.

“This structure shares a long history from origination of local concerns for the area, insurgent activity resulting in its destruction, and the perseverance of the Iraqi people to see the project to completion,” said Lawrence.

For Soldiers with 2nd Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt., 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, who are slated to be the last combat brigade in Iraq, the school’s opening is an indication that major improvements have been made over the past few years and the commitment of the U.S. military to work with the GoI and ISF.

“It’s a good capstone for the deployment,” said Richards. “We’re leaving soon, and this has been the best project that we’ve had thus far.”

Below: **Sgt. Charles Snyder**, a squad leader with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, hands out pencils to Iraqi children counting in English inside a newly opened school.



PRT provides advice, assistance to local community, GoI

Story by Sgt. Chad D. Nelson
USD-N Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – After decades of tyrannical rule followed by a seven-year war, some of Iraq’s cities have fallen into disrepair. Clinics, schools, hospitals, factories, homes – none of these were immune from the effects of the last three decades.

For some of the smaller villages, the effects were worse, as they depend on a single clinic or school to serve hundreds of families.

This is the case with al Naml, a clinic about 35 kilometers north of Baji. It is the sole clinic for 300 families and built in the 1980s. Since that time, the building has deteriorated to nothing but a collection of gray brick walls, broken windows and a single sink in the corner of a room.

The Government of Iraq recently took notice of the condition of the clinic and the need for renovation. Maj. Gen. Hammed, the head of Salah ad-Din Province’s police, noted the poor condition of his home village’s clinic and the desire to have it brought up to standard. His lamentations fell on the ears of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which sometimes operates in the village. They, in turn, informed the Provincial Reconstruction Team

stationed on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, that they wanted to help the village by donating supplies to the clinic.

The PRT’s sole purpose is to interact with the GoI, acting as a check and balance. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers often receives requests for assistance from towns and villages like al Naml. Before they offer their assistance by donating supplies, they check with the PRT to make sure the GoI is not scheduled to deliver the same supplies.

By checking with the Iraqi government before acting on their own, the U.S. military and PRT are helping to legitimize the GoI.

“It’s their government and their land,” said Katherine Dennison, the senior public health advisor with the PRT. “They need to do the planning, budgeting and coordinating. They need to legitimize the process.”

The PRT consists of five sections: public diplomacy, health, governance, economics and the rule of law. Each of these sections has a senior advisor who has connections to their counterparts in the GoI. In this case, Dennison has a relationship with the Iraqi director general of health. Dennison inquired about the clinic and discovered the

GoI was already planning a renovation, but the clinic was in need of medical supplies. The GoI funds these types of projects, but the U.S. Army does offer goodwill gifts when it can.

“We just bring them things they can use,” said Maj. Russell Smith, civil liaison team leader, 358th Civil Affairs Brigade, out of Riverside, Calif.

“Everything is built with provincial money and labor. The PRT brought attention to the clinic.”

The PRT planned a mission to visit the village of al Naml and drop off medical and school supplies. When the PRT, escorted by USACE, arrived, July 29, they found that the Iraqi-funded renovation project had already begun, and had shown

tremendous progress, according to Sgt. Rick G. Ampil, the civil liaison team noncommissioned officer, 358th CA Bde. The walls were painted and they were preparing the electrical wiring and the plumbing connections. Officials believe the project will be completed in August.

In addition to the medical supplies for this clinic, the USACE will also donate a generator. The village currently averages only three hours of electricity a day, but the generator will be a dedicated power source to the clinic and neighboring school.

When the generator is delivered, the Iraqis will assume operation and maintenance of the equipment. In its effort to provide sustainable assistance, the PRT ensures the Iraqis are able to maintain the equipment they receive.

In the past, the PRT conducted demonstrations and training, ensuring Iraqis know exactly how to operate and maintain equipment. These precautionary measures guarantee the equipment donated to the Iraqis does not fall into disrepair and that all the planning and work to improve the lives of Iraqi citizens is a worthwhile and long-lasting investment.

Right: **Dr. Mohammed** (right) of al Naml, Salah ad-Din Province, inspects a box of medical supplies donated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Government of Iraq recently began the renovation of a clinic in the village, and the U.S. military donated extra supplies as a goodwill gesture. (Courtesy Photo)



Maj. Gen. Khatam, Muthanna chief of police, and **Col. James E. Rainey**, commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, shake hands before a luncheon at Contingency Operating Base Adder, July 17. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Lynn Friant)



Spc. Greg Jackson with 341st Psychological Operation Company, speaks with civilians in the Dhi Qar Province. U.S. Soldiers with Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 29 Field Artillery Regiment and Provincial Reconstruction Teams conducted reconnaissance missions to assess progress on the Al Termah School project. (Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Lynn Friant)

Adjusting sight picture: BCTs address changing needs as AABs

Story by Sgt. Benjamin Kibbey
USD-S Public Affairs

BABIL, Iraq – As threats against U.S. forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom have changed and the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces have improved, the missions and structure of American units have continued to evolve to best support the situation on the ground.

The latest adaptation, turning brigade combat teams into advise and assist brigades, reflects tremendous developments in the Iraqi Security Forces and a major change in emphasis for U.S. Soldiers in Iraq.

When U.S. forces transition from combat to stability operations at the start of Operation New Dawn, the AABs will conduct several missions sparingly done by the BCTs they replaced.

The AABs will focus on advising and training the ISF, providing them logistical support, and assisting with governmental and private initiatives through mentorship and funding.

As the ISF have taken up the responsibility of securing their country, U.S. forces began to take on more of an advisory and training role with the ISF. To accomplish this, AABs have organic stabilization transition teams that will work directly with ISF leadership at different levels, similar to the Military Transition and Border Transition Teams that U.S. forces previously used to work with the ISF, said Maj. Gary Bantad, 3rd AAB, 3rd Infantry Division, civil affairs officer.

It may sound like a small change, but Capt. Michael Washburn, commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd AAB, who worked as a member of a BTT in 2005, said the impact has been noticeable.



Staff Sgt. Thomas Cheek, a native of Hayesville, N.C., and a section sergeant from A Troop, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, shares an observation with Cpl. Muhammad, from 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Federal Police Division, during a patrol in Doura. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Emily Knitter)

Washburn, a Yorktown, Va., native, said having this type of organic asset in the brigades is a great benefit to conduct stability operations. The proximity to the brigade leadership and resources a brigade can provide will enable the teams to be a much more effective in their mission.

In his current role advising the Iraqi Army's 2nd Bn., 31st Bde., Washburn has a front-row seat to

changes in the ISF.

"... they're doing a lot more patrols on their own, which is a sign of them being able to run their area of operation without [U.S.] support," he said.

Captain Matt Hunter, commander of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 69th Armor Regt., and on his third Iraq deployment, said, "We've really been able to step back and allow the IA to take the

lead."

"From where they were in 2005 to where they are now is leaps and bounds ahead. Our 'advise and assist' is really just checking in with them and making sure that they have all the support they need to conduct the operations.

"They've gotten that system down (to) where they train their own and they're very competent and independent, and they've got a lot more pride in themselves as an organization," Hunter said. "As Iraqi Army units, they're very proud of what they do."

Colonel Pete Jones, commander, 3rd AAB, said the development of the ISF has been key to the transition to stability operations and AABs.

"The Iraqi Security Forces have truly taken the lead, demonstrated by the (lack of violence during) national elections and religious holidays, and most recently Sha'baniya, where they provided security for over three million religious pilgrims to Karbala,"

he said.

In addition to training and advising the ISF, AABs also assist Provincial Reconstruction Teams with their efforts to improve Iraq.

In the past, PRTs worked with U.S. Army civil affairs units and had little direct contact with brigades, said Bob Wong, the public diplomacy officer for the Babil PRT and a native of Eustis, Fla.

Wong now works directly with the 3rd AAB, which is responsible for working with the ISF in Babil and four neighboring provinces.

Lieutenant Col. Greg Politowicz, deputy team leader for the Babil PRT, has spent the past seven years in Army civil affairs and has previously deployed to Iraq in that capacity.

He said the Army Soldiers working in the AABs are well-trained for this mission.

"They know what to do; they've been educated," Politowicz, a native of Fayetteville, N.C. said. "It's civil affairs teams out there, except they

happen to be called 'companies' and 'AAB,'" he said.

As the ISF continues to increase their capabilities and take full control of the security mission, the people they are protecting are noticing the change and growing increasingly confident in their security forces.

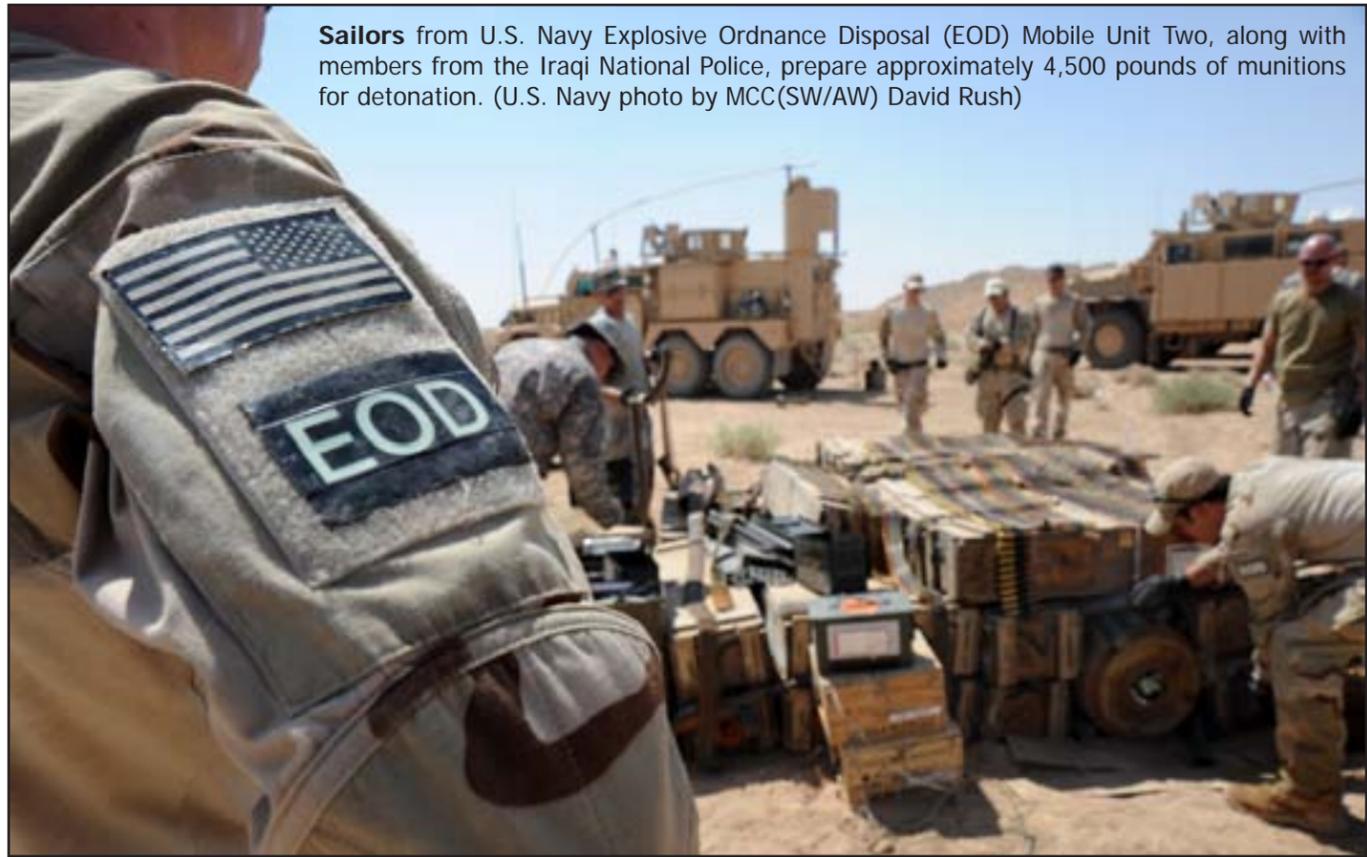
The Iraqi people have confidence in Iraq's future, said Tanya Thompson, team leader for the Human Terrain Assessment Team in Babil, which is responsible for gauging the public's attitude on issues.

Since the U.S. military began transitioning to the AABs this year, recent polling efforts showed that this adjustment is working.

"The response was pretty unanimous that they feel that security has increased under the Advise and Assist Brigade, rather than under combat operations," said Thompson, a Saddle Brook, N.J., native. "All the way up and down, I think that the feeling is that they're really ready to take over; they're ready for us to go."



Sp. Michael Rogers of the 354th Military Police Company, teaches riot control techniques to members of the Iraqi Army at Contingency Operating Base Basra, July 15. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Amanda Kobernick)



Sailors from U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Mobile Unit Two, along with members from the Iraqi National Police, prepare approximately 4,500 pounds of munitions for detonation. (U.S. Navy photo by MCC(SW/AW) David Rush)



Task Force Marne Commanding General, **Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo**, presents a 3rd Infantry Division pendant to the child of one of two fallen Peshmerga from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Brigade, Peshmerga Army, July 18, at Camp Zaytun, Erbil, Iraq. The Peshmerga, who were part of the Kurdish fighting forces, were killed in action, May 10, when they attempted to prevent a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device from entering a combined checkpoint. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cassandra Monroe)



Left: **Sgt. Gerard Tate** teaches an Iraqi boy how to do the fist bump during a humanitarian aid drop conducted by Soldiers of Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. Fifty bags of food, along with bottled water and toys, were distributed to the population living on the outskirts of Baghdad just outside of Contingency Operating Station Falcon. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mary Katzenberger)



Left: **Pfc. Josia Potukalian**, a medic at the 1st Armored Division Special Troops Battalion Aid Station, applies an iodine solution to a laceration on a pig's foot during a training exercise at Camp Liberty, July 11. The Salem, Ind., native used the iodine to properly sanitize the area prior to suturing the cut. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Teri Hansen)

Staff Sgt. Robert Burnett, a native of Pickens County, S.C., assigned to 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, listens to an Iraqi Soldier assigned to Commando Bn., 7th Iraqi Army Div. describing how the Iraqi squad performed on the last training exercise at Camp Kassum June 22. United States and Iraqi forces later conducted an air assault mission near the town of Rawah in search of explosive production facilities. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Phillip Valentine)



Capt. Ryan Pless, commander of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, a native of Plant City, Fla., and **Lt. Col. Chris Kennedy**, commander of 3rd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt., 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., of Fort Benning, Ga., pass on a symbolic wooden key to Contingency Operating Post Zulu to **Mr. Samir al-Haddad**, receivership secretariat for the Government of Iraq, and **Brig. Gen. Ab'd**, 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division commander, July 25.

Sgt. Anthony Ciofalo, a tank crewman assigned to Company D, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Brigade, stresses the importance of checking fluids on the M1A1 Abrams tank to Iraqi Army Soldiers. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mary S. Katzenberger)



Capt. Tisha Bridge, 1st Infantry Division physician assistant, instructs an Iraqi physician on the proper position of a bag valve mask during emergency neonatal ventilation. The medical professionals came together for a two-day course in Basra, July 31 and Aug.1. "Every opportunity to teach medicine is also an opportunity for the instructor to learn the material better," Bridge said. (Army Photo by Sgt. Jason Kemp)

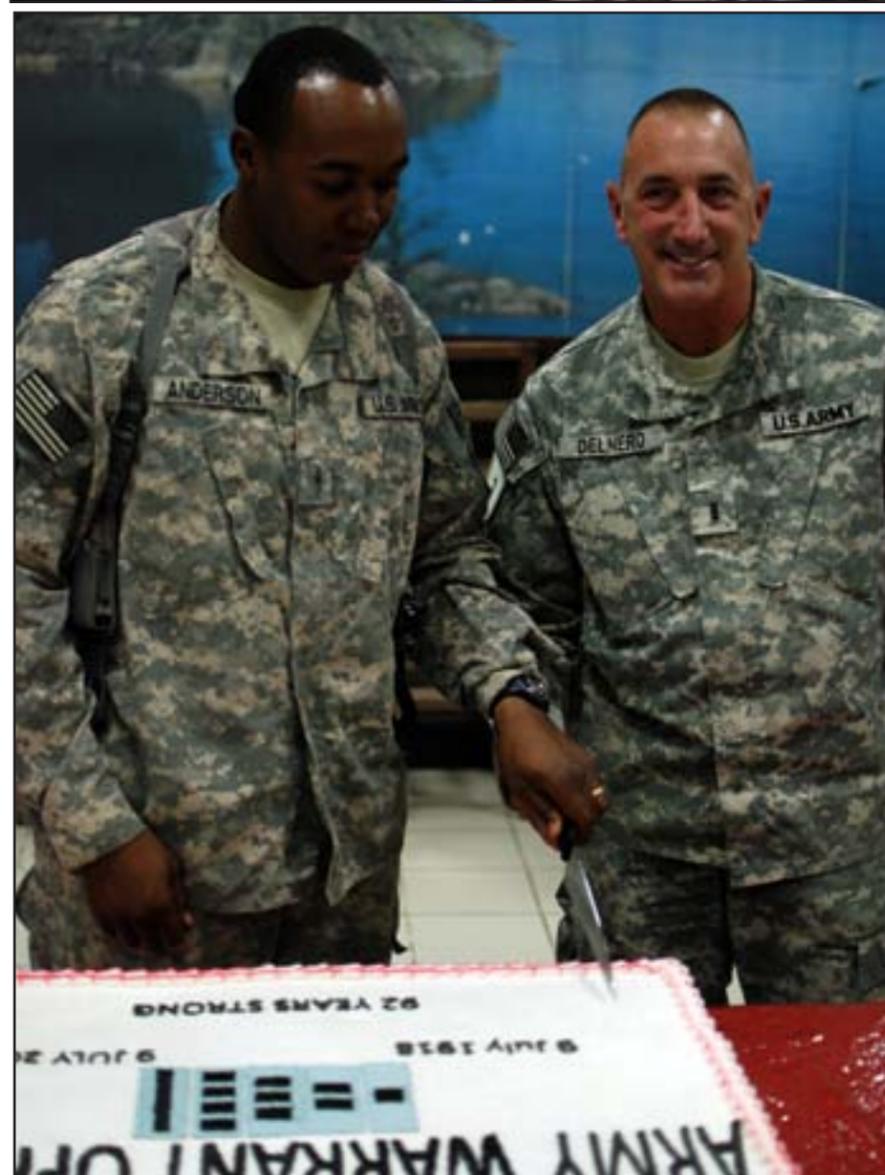


Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, congratulate a U.S. service member after becoming an American citizen. During a naturalization ceremony July 4 in Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory, Iraq, 156 service members from 56 countries became U.S. citizens. Lori Scialabba, associate director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, administered the Oath of Citizenship. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USF-I commander, gave each new citizen his USF-I commanding general's coin, and his senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, presented a U.S. flag to each service member. (U.S. Army photo by Lee Craker)

After treating the audience of service members and civilians to songs, medleys and musical sketches, members of the **U.S. Air Forces's Tops in Blue**, based out of Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, wrap up their show, July 13, at Contingency Operating Base Basra, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Benjamin R. Kibbey)



Above: **First Lt. Jessica Larson**, a physician assistant with 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, treats the child of a local Iraqi woman during a one-day, combined U.S. – Iraqi medical clinic June 6, in Kubaysah, Iraq. Larson, who originally wanted to practice international medicine in areas without access to health care, is delighted that her position in the Army allows her to care for America's warriors and accomplish a personal goal. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Katie Summerhill)



Warrant Officer Jahmal Anderson (left) and **Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nicholas Delnero**, respectively the youngest and oldest warrant officers attending a luncheon celebrating the 92rd birthday of the Army Warrant Officer Corps on Camp Taji, July 9, cut a celebratory "warrant-cake." Making up about one percent of their branch's service, warrant officers are defined by Army regulation as "self-aware and adaptive technical leaders." (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Roland Hale)

USACE GRD, GoI working together to rebuild nation

Courtesy story

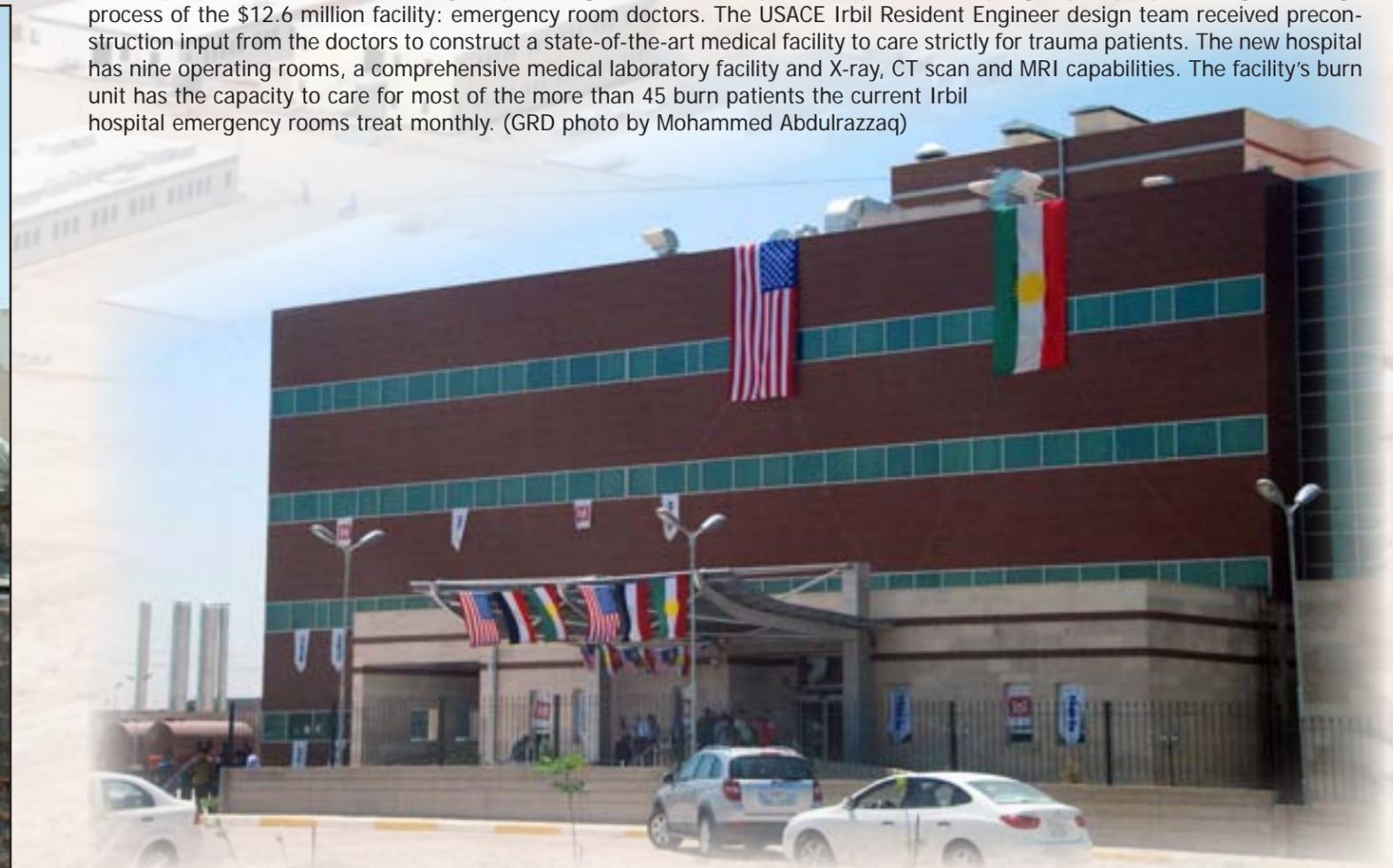
The motto of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is "Building Strong." The Gulf Region District is one of the key agencies executing the reconstruction mission in Iraq. GRD is a joint team comprised of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, civilians, contractors and Iraqis. GRD projects are helping establish a more stable infrastructure and bringing essential services to the people of Iraq.

In Iraq, the GRD has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the U.S. Government and the Government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed more than 4,800 projects throughout Iraq valued at more than \$7.7 billion, and has more than 250 projects ongoing. The overall reconstruction effort in Iraq currently provides jobs for more than 20,000 Iraqis.

Left (top): The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** is managing a \$944,000 Signal Company Maintenance and Storage Platoon facility at Al Kindi Iraqi Army Base located in Mosul. The facility, due to be completed this fall, will be used as storage for the Iraqi Army's communication equipment and vehicle maintenance. "Without this facility, IA Divisions will be limited in maintenance and sustainment ability which could adversely impact the Iraqi Security Forces' ability to conduct independent operations," said Al-Jawaree, senior deputy resident engineer at the GRD Mosul resident office. "So our goal is to definitely complete the project on time." (GRD photo by LaDonna Davis)

Left (bottom): **Col. Dionysios Anninos**, former USACE Commander, (bottom of ladder) inspects progress at Iraq's National Police Sustainment Brigade complex in the Salman Pak district during a site visit. The 124-acre complex will be a self-sustained police headquarters, which will include a vehicle fueling station, laundry units, sanitation and sewer system, an explosive storage bunker, covered parking and a dining facility. The \$64 million complex, scheduled for completion this summer, will support 4,050 Iraqi employees and police officers. (GRD photo by LaDonna Davis)

Below: **U.S. and Kurdish flags** on the exterior of Irbil Emergency Hospital demonstrate the partnership between the U.S. and the Iraqi Government. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers formed a partnership with a unique group of people during the design process of the \$12.6 million facility: emergency room doctors. The USACE Irbil Resident Engineer design team received preconstruction input from the doctors to construct a state-of-the-art medical facility to care strictly for trauma patients. The new hospital has nine operating rooms, a comprehensive medical laboratory facility and X-ray, CT scan and MRI capabilities. The facility's burn unit has the capacity to care for most of the more than 45 burn patients the current Irbil hospital emergency rooms treat monthly. (GRD photo by Mohammed Abdulrazzaq)



Military Police train Iraqis in IED detection, convoy operations

Story and photos by
Sgt. Phillip Valentine
USD-C Public Affairs



Above: **Iraqi Soldiers** assigned to 6th Iraqi Army Division participate in an improvised explosive device identification class at Contingency Operating Location Constitution July 26. Members of 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Div., instructed the training, provided guidance and shared past experiences with the students.

Soldiers from 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Div., trained members of 6th Iraqi Army Div., on reacting to improvised explosive devices at Contingency Operating Location Constitution, July 26.

The four-day training event, which included convoy operations, involved IED detection while on foot and while operating vehicles.

The Iraqi Soldiers in attendance had training like this before and have been out on the roads for quite some time. This instruction was meant to reinforce their knowledge on the topics and to gain insight from the MPs who travel the roads of Baghdad on a regular basis.

But not all of the instruction was U.S. driven; the Iraqis shared their practical knowledge as well.

“We both share the same experiences,” said Spc. Jeromey Abbott, a San Antonio native and gunner assigned to 501st



Right: **Staff Sgt. Joshua Dowell**, a Spring Hill, Fla., native, and squad leader assigned to 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Div., points out a hidden, simulated improvised explosive device to members of 6th Iraqi Army Div., during a training exercise held at Contingency Operating Location Constitution, July 26. The goal of the training was to help the Iraqi soldiers recognize signs of an emplaced IED.

MP Co. “There are a lot of IEDs out there, so it helps to share stories and experiences. We learn a lot from each other.”

The training exercise began with a class displaying various simulated IEDs: showing what they look like, how they may be placed, and what they are capable of doing, both to personnel and vehicles. During the class, the Iraqi Soldiers showed their interest and tested their understanding by asking several questions and inspecting the fake IEDs as they were passed around.

“They come here enthused for their training,” said Abbott. “Whatever we teach them, I hope it sticks as they head off into the field.”

Several Iraqi Soldiers agreed that they always expect to find something. As a result, they check everything on the ground and above; anything could be an IED.

After the IED identification class was complete, the Iraqi Soldiers were split into two groups. One group was led to a road with simulated IEDs hidden along the route. The other group loaded into vehicles and discussed actions upon contact while operating a vehicle in a convoy.

The primary instructor for the IED identification lane, Staff Sgt. Joshua Dowell, a Spring Hill, Fla., native, and squad leader assigned to 501st MP Co., discussed the

intent of the training.

“We are trying to get them to look for devices or anything out of the ordinary, to get them into the mindset so they can operate,” said Dowell. “Their goal is to find everything they are looking for and our goal is to help prevent them from getting hurt or killed in future missions.”

He also said he felt working with the Iraqi Security Forces is helping create a better, safer Iraq, which helps U.S. Soldiers get back to their families safely.

As part of the convoy training, the Iraqis learned what to do if they encounter an IED out on a mounted patrol.

“Much of their convoy training is about prevention,” said 1st Lt. Charles Stevens, a New York City native and platoon leader assigned to 501st MP Co. “The few hours a day we put into training the Iraqi Soldiers equals numerous hours of continuous safety to the citizens of Iraq.”

After a successful day of training, Stevens said he was impressed with the Iraqi Soldiers and the progress they have made.

“It’s nice to see how far they have come in the last couple of years,” he said. “We are not here to train them in something completely new, but to help them go farther in their mission to secure Iraq.”



Spc. Rupert Sanchez, a Houston native and gunner assigned to 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Div., monitors a training exercise at Contingency Operating Location Constitution July 26. The 501st trained soldiers assigned to 6th Iraqi Army Div., on proper procedures for finding and reacting to improvised explosive devices.

Muslims begin Ramadan observance

Story by Spc. Britney Bodner
Courtesy photo
USF-I Public Affairs

Crescent moon ushers in holiest month on Islamic calendar

Faith, prayer, charity, and fasting. These are four of the main pillars of Islam, the foundation of Muslim life, and they play a significant part in Ramadan.

Projected to start Aug. 11, the Islamic month follows the lunar calendar, and when the new crescent moon is spotted, the holiday begins.

Ramadan is about sacrifice, said Chief Warrant Officer Fatuma Salim-Shirazy, human resources technician, III Corps Special Troops Battalion.

“We give up food and water and sacrifice things we indulge in every day from sunrise to sunset,” said Salim, a Muslim originally from Kenya. “It shows perseverance and is a chance to take that extra time I have to read or pray.”

“This does not mean I am starving myself,” she said. “If I feel like I am going to faint or get sick, I can drink water or have something to eat and make up for it on another day that I am physically able to do it.”

Each day, those observing Ramadan are allowed two meals, said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ira Houck, United States Forces-Iraq world religions chaplain.

The first meal, Iftar, follows a call to prayer after sunset, and the second meal is Suhur, and takes place shortly before sunrise

“It is not uncommon to take Iftar with company every night where huge amounts of food and drink are consumed,” Houck said.

Though she may not be celebrating with a large amount of food every evening, Salim said she is happy with a meal from the dining facility.

“For me and how I was raised, Ramadan is a chance for us to reflect

and relate to those who are less fortunate than we are,” she said.

The holiest days for the month of Ramadan are the last 10, when Muslims take more time, as long as all night, to pray.

Laylat al-Qadr, or the Night of Power, is one of these nights, said Houck. The night is significant because it is believed to be the night that portions of the Qu’ran were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, any prayer offered this night is greater than a thousand prayers any other night of the year.

The exact date is unclear between Shiite and Sunni Muslims. The Shiites observe Laylat al-Qadr on the 23rd day of Ramadan, and the Sunnis on the 27th day.

The month ends with the sighting of a new crescent moon and kicks off the three-day celebration known as Id-al-Fitr.

Houck said that these three days celebrate the breaking of the fast of Ramadan. Many Muslims view it as an opportunity to dress in their finest clothes, visit family and friends, and exchange gifts. This is also another time to give to the poor.

Houck said service members should be considerate during this time. Eating, drinking or smoking in front of Muslims could be taken as a sign of disrespect.

Perception about Muslims is a very important thing during this time of the month, Salim said.

“This is a time for us to sacrifice our indulgences during the day and spend it praying and showing our faith,” she said. “Ramadan makes me appreciate life more and gives me time to reflect on what I have.”

IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN JULY 1 AND
JULY 31, 2010 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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

JOHN 15:13

July 2

Spc. Morganne M. McBeth, 38

Sgt. Johnny W. Lumpkin, 38

Sgt. Jordan E. Tuttle, 22

July 21

1st Lt. Michael L. Runyan, 24



An aerial view of Safwan Hill, an outpost situated just north of the Kuwaiti border, and one of the properties returned to Iraqi control, July 4. Atop the only hill for miles around, the location was a prime choice for a communications and observation post. Its closure involved the removal of all property, including force protection barriers, housing units, and generators. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Carney)