

May 21, 2009

34th Infantry Division assumes control of MND-S

By Pfc. J.P. Lawrence
MND-S



COB Basra – The 34th Red Bull Infantry Division assumed control of Multi-National Division – South from the 10th Mountain Division in a transfer of authority ceremony here May 20.

The Red Bulls now support Iraqi security forces throughout nine provinces in southern Iraq. This is the first time since World War II the 34th Inf. Div. has established its headquarters in a combat zone.

General Ray Odierno, Multi-National Force – Iraq commanding general, Lt.Gen. Charles Jacoby, Multi-National Corps – Iraq commanding general, government of Iraq officials and Iraqi security force leaders were on-hand to witness the historic transfer.

“This is an exciting time in Iraq,” said Maj. Gen. Richard Nash, 34th Inf. Div. commanding general. “On behalf of the 34th Inf. Div., we are privileged to be invited by the government of Iraq to be a partner in improving the future of the people of this great Iraqi nation.”

“Over the last year, the Iraqi Army and police have taken responsibility for the protection of the Iraqi people,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Oates, 10th Mtn. Div. commanding general. “The 10th Mountain Division was proud to be their partners in this success.”

While the Red Bulls are ready to take hold of the reins, Nash stressed that the job in Iraq is still not done.

“My Soldiers will be in a supporting partnership role,” said Nash. “Our major partnership focus will be with the Iraqi police and the Department of Border Enforcement in order to



Photo by Spc. Pfc. Tyler Maulding

Maj. Gen. Rick Nash, MND-S commanding general, 34th ID, and Command Sgt. Maj. Doug Julin, MND-S command sergeant major, 34th ID, uncase their division colors during a transfer of authority ceremony at COB Basra, May 20.

assist them as they secure the people of southern Iraq. We are highly impressed with the professionalism and capability of the Iraqi Army.”

Iraqi officials in attendance ex-

pressed both their gratitude to the departing 10th Mountain and their anticipation of working with the Red

 [Click here to view TOA Ceremony Video](#)

MND-S
Page 2

MND-S

Page 1

Bulls.

“The 10th Mountain Division did a great, great job as an ISF partner during a crucial time in Iraq’s history,” said Capt. Hayder Adannan, an engineer and liaison officer for Coalition forces in Wasit province. “The 34th . . . I’ve already met with their commander. They already know me, and I look forward to working with them.”

Col. Auyid Ibrahim, chief civil affairs officer for the Iraqi Army 10th Division, said “We’re going to lose some friends, but we’re going to have new friends.”

The Red Bulls objectives in Basra include helping with economic development and governance, increasing security for the Iraqi people and assisting with the training of ISF.

For all of Pfc. Lawrence’s stories, go to: www.TheRedBulls.org/Lawrence



Photo by Pfc. Tyler Maulding
Gen. Ray Odierno, MNF-I commanding general, bows his head during the benediction that took place in a transfer of authority ceremony held on COB Basra May 20.

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34th Red Bull Infantry Division.

THE RED BULL REPORT

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Special Troops Battalion, 34th Inf. Div.
Task Force 28

Media Queries please contact 34th Inf. Div. Public Affairs Office at MND-S_PAO@iraq.centcom.mil

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Basra Idol showcases stars in uniform



Photos by Pfc. J.P. Lawrence

(Above) The contestants of Basra Idol, a music contest held in Basra May 16, anxiously wait to see who moves on during the multi-week talent competition. (Bottom right) Sgt. LaFena Washington, a native of St. Louis, Mo., runs through a bluesy version of "Harlem Blues," written by Brandford Marsalis.

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COB BASRA – The lights were up. The stage was set. The crowd was ready to cheer. Backstage, the contestants waited for their turn in the spotlight. All they had was five minutes and a song to impress the judges and move on in the contest.

Out front, the master of ceremonies hammed it up for the crowd.

The contest was set up much like a certain primetime American television show: three judges, nine contestants, a lot of talent, a big prize at the end and a self-deprecating master of ceremonies.

"If you were expecting Ryan Seacrest, I'm sorry. I'm not him," Staff Sgt. James Cookman, the night's master of ceremonies, told the crowd of Soldiers.

This wasn't American Idol. This was Basra Idol, a music contest held May 16 on Contingency Operating Base Basra.

"It's a local contest, basically, showing off the talents of some of the fellow soldiers," said Warrant Officer Robert Meeks, the mastermind behind the proceedings.

The three judges, Betty Asbuzy, a reports analyst from **Glen Burnie, Md.**, Maj.

Bryan Green, an officer in the air shop, from Birmingham, Ala., and Staff Sgt. Seth Martell from Bemidji, Minn., judged the contestants on a 60-point scale based on overall performance, audience participation, stage presence, personality and originality.

In reality, however, the objective was simple.

"You win the crowd, you win the judges," said Green. "I'm looking for a connection."

While the judges said they were amazed at the level of talent displayed, unfortunately, not all contestants could advance to the next round.

"You've all done a great job and have shown a lot of courage by just getting on stage tonight," said Cookman.

The singers advancing to next week's competition are: Weathers, Washington, Dudley, Verley, Thornton, Gordon, and Roos.

Round Two starts May 23 at 6:00 p.m. at the stage next to Dining Facility 1.

For all of Pfc. Lawrence's stories, go to:
www.TheRedBulls.org/Lawrence

For more photos, visit:
www.TheRedBulls.org/Photos



Round 1 Participants



Master Sgt. Scott Weathers:
Song: "Wanted Dead or Alive," by Bon Jovi
Style: Rock

Sgt. LeFena Washington:
Song: Harlem Blues, by Brandford Marsalis.
Style: Jazzy blues

Spc. Russell Devon Dudley:
Song: "I Gotta Go," by Trey Songz
Style: R&B

Sgt. Verley Troy:
"Song: "You'll Think of Me," by Keith Urban.
Style: Country

Pfc. William Gordon:
Song: "Gone," by N'Sync
Style: Pop

Cpl. Sara Thornton:
Song: "Down"
Style: Folk rock

Sgt. Joe Roos:
Song: "I'm the Best," by Joe Roos, and "High and Tight," by Joe Roos
Style: Rap

Stephan Pullum:
Song: Love
Style: A capella

Spc. Cleon Shack:
Song: "I Need You to be My Midnight Lover"
Style: Impromptu soul



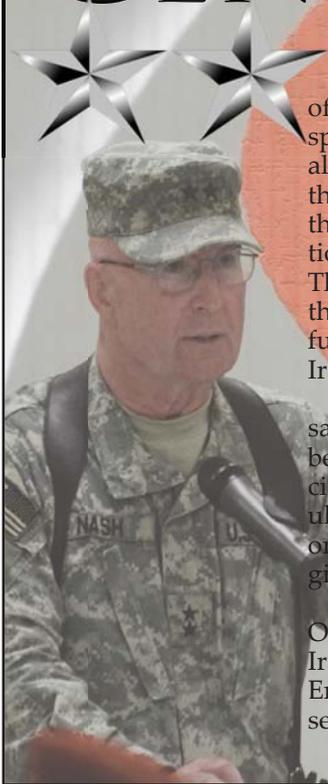
HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHT

Both guitarist Frank Zappa and R&B singer Toni Braxton have called Glen Burnie, Md., home.



GENERALLY SPEAKING

A WORD FROM THE COMMANDER OF MND-S



It is indeed an honor to assume command of Multi-National Division South. I have spent the better part of a month traveling all over southern Iraq meeting those of you that make up our Red Bull Team. I want to thank Gen. Michael Oates and all the exceptional Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division. They have contributed to advancing peace throughout the past year, and we are grateful for their hard work and dedication to the Iraqi people.

We should all honor the hard work and sacrifice of the Coalition forces that have come before the 34th Division. We should especially honor those heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of their nation in order to enable the Iraqi people to have the gift of freedom.

Soldiers, we are here in a supporting role. Our major partnership focus will be with the Iraqi Police and the Department of Border Enforcement in order to assist them as they secure the people of southern Iraq. I have

been impressed with the professionalism and capability of the Iraqi Army. The Iraqi Security Forces are fully responsible for the security of the Iraqi people throughout the nine provinces that comprise our area, and we will continue to work by with and through the ISF and assist, train and advise our partners at their request.

I have full faith in the ability and talents of each one of you. Many of you have temporarily left your civilian jobs in order to participate in this historic time of partnership in Iraq. I know that you will draw from your civilian skills as well as your military skills in order to assist with the professionalization of the ISF and the continued improvement of security and quality of life for the Iraqi People.

Again, it is an honor to command Multi-National Division South, and I look forward to the progress that we will make together. Attack!

For more of Maj. Gen. Nash's comments, or to leave comments of your own, visit www.TheRedBulls.org/GenerallySpeaking

The Red Bulls can be found on a cell phone.

(Tell family and friends.)

mobile.TheRedBulls.org



Around the world in 34 seconds

World News:

Sri Lanka's army chief said Tamil Tiger leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran's body was found on May 19, and Sri Lankan TV stations aired video of what appeared to be his corpse, with the top of its head blown off. The army's commander, General Sarath Fonseka, moments earlier had gone on state TV and radio to announce that the body had been found and positively identified. Fonseka's announcement came after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made a statement on a pro-rebel web site saying Prabhakaran, 54, was still alive. Sri Lankan troops finished off the last of the LTTE resistance on May 18, wrapping up a three-year offensive to destroy the separatists and win a 25-year civil war.

U.S. News:

President Barack Obama announced May 19 that automakers must meet average U.S. fuel economy standards of 35.5 miles per gallon by 2016, four years sooner than previously planned, a senior administration official said. The plan adopts a nationwide standard proposed by California, setting the first-ever U.S. limit on greenhouse-gas pollution from vehicles. Auto companies and California have signed off on the proposal, ending their feud over the state's proposed rules. "It launches a new beginning," said David McCurdy, president of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, in a statement.

Sports News:

Quarterback Brett Favre is expected to have surgery to repair a partially torn biceps tendon in his throwing shoulder, clearing the way to sign with the Minnesota Vikings, the St. Paul Pioneer Press said on its website May 18. Favre talked with Vikings coach Brad Childress earlier this month about coming out of retirement to play a 19th season, ESPN reported. Favre said he had no plans to return to the NFL after announcing his retirement following one season with the New York Jets.

Odd News:

Voters in the heart of the Swiss Alps have banned naked hiking after dozens of mostly German nudists started rambling through the picturesque region. Citizens in the tiny canton of Appenzell Inner Rhodes voted overwhelmingly at their traditional open-air assembly to impose a fine on offenders. Only a scattering of people opposed the ban on the back-to-nature activity that took off last autumn when naked hikers started showing up in eastern Switzerland. The local government recommended the ban after people objected to encountering walkers wearing nothing but hiking boots and socks. "The reactions of the population have shown that such appearances over a large area are perceived as thoroughly disturbing and irritating," it said in a statement.

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The Basra Beat

MWR Stage

Basra Idol - Round 2

May 23 @ 6 p.m.

Catchpenny (from Minnesota)

May 25 @ 8 p.m.

Eagle Cash Kiosks

Located at:

Division Main Building

Finance Office

New Location @ PX!

Finance

Monday-Saturday

Open: 9 - 11:30 a.m., 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday

Open: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Barber Shop

Open: 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.

DFAC 1 Worship

Sunday

Roman Catholic Mass

UK-led @ 9:30 a.m.

General Protestant @ 11 a.m.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter

Day Saints @ 2 p.m.

General Protestant @ 6:30 p.m.

DFAC 3 Worship

Sunday

Gospel Worship @ 2 p.m.

DFAC 4 Worship

Monday - Saturday

Daily Mass @ 8 p.m.

Sunday

Protestant Contemporary Worship @ 10 a.m.

Holy communion, Protestant UK-led @ 11:30 a.m.

Roman Catholic Mass, UK - Led @ 8:30 p.m.

Camp Alpha Gym

Open: 24 hours

Camp Charlie Gym

Open: 24 hours