

United States Forces -Iraq CHRONICLE

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Strengthening communities,
building partnerships

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*USF-I CSM Joseph R. Allen
offers advice to troops*

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Flanked by children and leaders of Husayniyah, Lt. Col. Vince Rice, deputy team leader of the Karbala Provincial Reconstruction Team, cuts a ribbon to mark the official re-opening of the Husayniyah Youth Center, Oct. 31. The center's basketball court, boxing ring and soccer field received makeovers. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Garrett Ralston)



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Provisional training site deals with surge in Iraqi Army recruits



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Uniting through Scouting



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U.S. Soldier train Iraqi trainers

USF-I CHRONICLE

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Leadership is key to success...

FEATURE UP FRONT



Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, United States Forces-Iraq command sergeant major, stands with Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, Sept. 21, during a visit to JSS Loyalty. Allen accompanied Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USF-I commanding general, to speak with the battalion leadership and to recognize Soldiers for their job performance. (U.S. Army Photo Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey)



USF-I's top NCO offers advice on mission, troop welfare

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

Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, USF-I command sergeant major, talks to the first sergeants of 1st Bn., 41st FA Regt., 1st AAB, Sept. 21, during a visit to JSS Loyalty. Allen accompanied Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USF-I commanding general, to speak with the battalion leadership and to recognize Soldiers for their job performance.

Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, the United States Forces-Iraq command sergeant major, has seen just about everything during his 35 years as a Soldier, and during his time as a noncommissioned officer, he said the one thing that has remained a constant is the expectations Soldiers have of their NCOs.

"If you ask any Soldier out there, they'll probably tell you they expect their noncommissioned officers to get them to the right place at the right time, with the right equipment to do whatever mission they're given," Allen said. "They expect noncommissioned officers, more than any other leader, to protect them from all the stuff that rolls down hill, to provide them with good leadership, and they expect noncommissioned officers to take care of their families. They expect that of you, and if you're not providing that, then shame on you, you're not doing what we're paying you to do."

Allen has worked hard to live up to those expectations, and has stood up for Soldiers and fought for what he thought was right.

As a brigade command sergeant major, he once appeared before a court-martial as a character witness for a Soldier his leadership had recommended for

punishment. It's Allen's willingness to go out on a limb and fight for Soldiers that has earned him the respect of the troops he has led throughout his career. He said to this day, he still hears from Soldiers that he's served with and mentored.

Without a doubt, Allen believes leaders want to do the right thing and for the most part they get it right, but you have to keep working to make sure nothing falls through the cracks.

"I have to make the system work," he said. "We've got a great system, but sometimes you've got to tweak it. I'll always make sure Soldiers are getting a fair shake and that leaders are looking out for the Soldier. I've done it all my life and it's all I know how to do."

Allen said he recently caught a group of Soldiers off guard by telling them something they weren't used to hearing from such a senior NCO.

"I work for you," he told them. "If there's something I need to do, you need to tell me."

While taking action is a big part of being an NCO, Allen said the simple act of listening is a powerful tool for leaders, and it's a big part of his approach to dealing with service members.

"Sometimes they just need an ear," he said. "They just need somebody to listen to their problem."

And with the stresses of deployment and the military's high operational tempo, service members' problems can't be overlooked by NCOs.

During a recent trip to Joint Security Station Loyalty with Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USF-I commanding general, Allen talked to the senior NCOs of the 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and drove home the importance of listening to junior service members.

While Austin later spoke with troops preparing for a mission, Allen pulled the first sergeants aside for a huddle.

He shared with them his certainty that everyone has something significant going on in their lives that might affect their performance and encouraged them to bear that in mind as they deal with their subordinates.

He also shared some wisdom from Winston Churchill, which he often passes along to service members who are having a difficult time.

"The bottom line is, when you think it's hell that you're going through, keep going man, just keep going," he told them. "You only get in trouble when you stop. Keep going, talk to somebody, but keep going. Don't stop whatever you do."

Five combat tours and three and half decades in the Army have taught Allen a lot about service members and leaders. One thing he feels strongly about is that to truly be effective as a leader and taking care of your troops, you have to take care of yourself.

He says that when you start to feel stress overtake your mind and body, you've got to get away from the situation, regroup and come back ready to take it on.

"Go get your 'me-time' in and get yourself back together," he said. "That's what it takes most of the time, even if it's a walk somewhere. My whole attitude will change just because I went on a walk."

As the U.S. military mission in Iraq continues to move forward, Allen said his job is to make sure the troops are performing at their best and that the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines understand that although the mission has changed, Iraq can still be a dangerous place, and that it's imperative that everyone stay committed and focused.

"We still partner with the Iraqi Security Forces, Border Patrols and the Iraqi Police," Allen said. "Yes, we have a new mission set ... but the fact of the matter is any time a Soldier goes outside the gate they're in the same posture that they were at the height of this war. I mean full (personal protective equipment), ready to defend themselves and their fellow Soldiers each and every day."

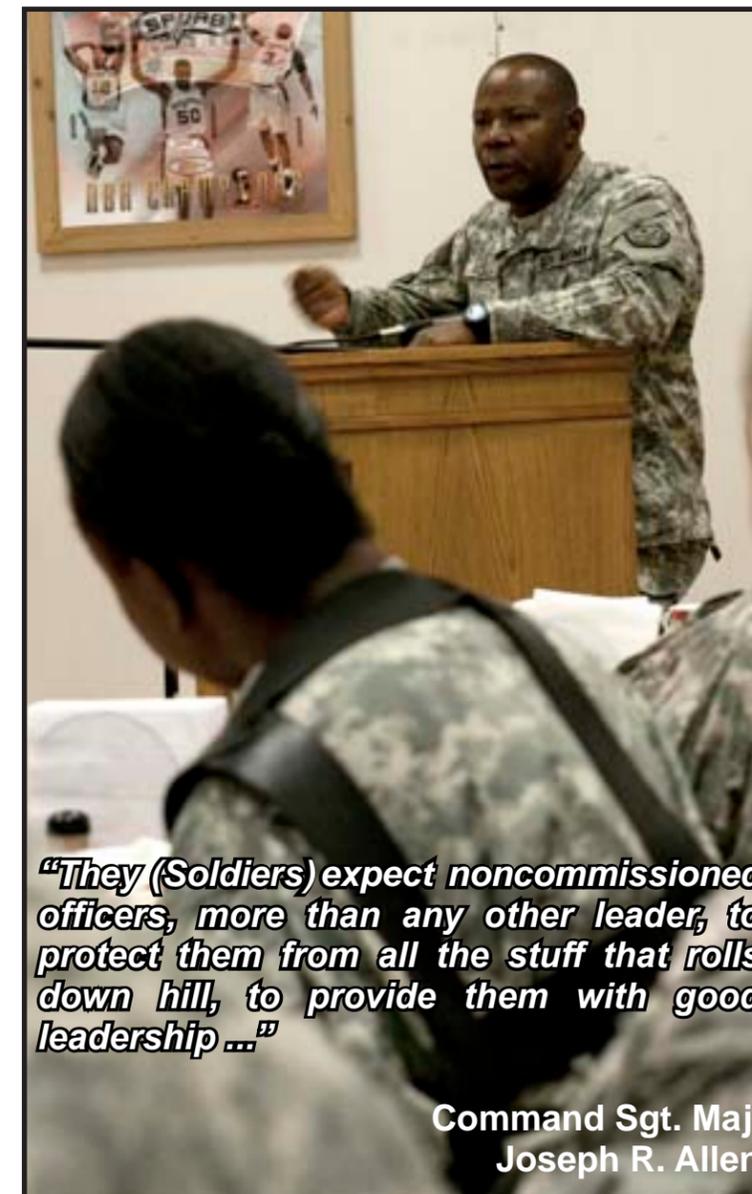
While the mission may still be challenging, Allen is confident that, thanks to today's leadership culture, Soldiers are up to the task. He now sees junior NCOs entrusted with life-or-death decisions on a daily basis because they understand the commander's intent and the

rules of engagement.

"Those young guys and gals out there, give 'em basic focusing guidance and let them go get at it. We empower them to use their own decision making process to execute their mission. I see that a lot now," he said.

According to Allen, a big part of the success in Iraq is due to the dedication and commitment of young service members and junior leaders.

And now, with the Iraqi Security Forces in the lead and



"They (Soldiers) expect noncommissioned officers, more than any other leader, to protect them from all the stuff that rolls down hill, to provide them with good leadership ..."

Command Sgt. Maj.
Joseph R. Allen

U.S. forces advising, assisting and training, he said young leaders are still just as critical to the mission.

"We've come a long way but we've still got work to do. Our continued success will, in large part, depend on the conduct and professionalism of our force. I'm confident that our young men and women will keep doing the right thing and will stay focused and committed to the mission. Got to do it, that's the job, and we need to work together to be effective."

Thirty five years of soldiering and leading has taught him that.

A helicopter with the 2515th Naval Air Ambulance Detachment approaches a landing zone during a training exercise to recover mock casualties. The training was part of a proficiency exercise for the unit, which maintains a 24-hour alert status for medical evacuation at the U.S. Army base in Basra.

Sailors take to the skies to save lives



Story and photos by
Spc. Raymond T. Quintanilla
USD-S Public Affairs



Corpsmen with the 2515th Naval Air Ambulance Detachment treat a mock casualty during a training exercise in Basra, Sept. 29.

BASRA, Iraq – In what appears to be the middle of nowhere, mid-afternoon desert heat breaches the body armor of a downed Soldier injured in an improvised explosive device attack. The sound of a helicopter closing in, blades chopping, brings a sense of hope.

“This is a drill,” the tactical operations officer on battle watch duty repeated over loudspeakers announcing a simulated nine-line medical evacuation request.

Sailors deployed from Guam and Fallon, Nev., assigned to the 2515th Naval Air Ambulance Detachment-North in southern Iraq provide around-the-clock medical evacuation coverage in southern Iraq and parts of Kuwait.

“As long as we maintain an alert status, it allows for other units to go out,” said Lt. Chris Robinson, a native of Denver serving as the operations officer for 2515th NAAD-North. “If any sort of casualty happens, we’re going to be there to take them to safety.”

“Our primary mission is to save lives,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Kelly, a native of Salcha, Alaska, serving as a hospital corpsman with the 2515th NAAD-North. “It could be the matter between life or death.”

“If somebody gets an injury here that can’t be treated locally,” Kelly said, “we have to get them where they need to go and the best route of doing that is through MEDEVAC. That would be the fastest and the most efficient way.”

These Sailors appear almost modest to their heroic operations and attribute their confidence to the training and ground support they receive.

“If we have to go into a hot landing zone, we’ll do our best to have ground forces suppress any enemies in the area,” Robinson said. “We do our best to make it a clandestine maneuver into a hot LZ and get out quickly. We feel safe because of our training and the intelligence we receive when we go out.”

“The patient is really the only thing

Members of the 2515th Naval Air Ambulance Detachment at the Basra International Airport recover mock patients injured from a simulated improvised explosive device.



that matters,” Kelly said, “so getting to our patients as fast as we can, getting them off the ground, and to where they need to go is our only concern.”

Kelly said he could not remember to the 2515th NAAD-North, but every patient remains in his thoughts.

“I can’t tell you of any time the 2515th has lost a patient,” Kelly said, “but you never forget any of the patients. Any time you get a call, you are always pumped and you are always heading out the door. Every last one of them sticks with you.”

Although MEDEVAC coverage is their primary mission, the training and experience of these Sailors extend farther and include joint function missions.

“We’re all trained in search and rescue,” Robinson said. “Our sister squadron 2515th NAAD-South in

Kuwait does most of the off-shore rescues and MEDEVACs from different ship platforms.”

“Out of the 15,000 corpsmen in the Navy, there are less than a hundred who do this job, flying MEDEVACs and search and rescue,” Kelly said. “We’re augmented by the U.S. Air Force. We integrate very well with their pararescuemen, who are very knowledgeable and have definitely been helpful to the mission.”

“Everyone here is a hero,” Robinson said. “From even the most junior enlisted to our officer in charge, everybody is extremely professional and takes their job very seriously. It’s a very rewarding job being able to pick up someone that has been injured, come back home, get them back on the battlefield, back to work.”

“Most importantly get those folks back to their Family.”

Iraqi Army recruit numbers surge

Provisional Combat Training Center sites help accommodate increase

Story and photos by
Sgt. Chad Menegay
DCG A&T Public Affairs

An Iraqi Army jundi turns the corner after weaving through a confidence course obstacle as part of an IA Basic Combat Training course at the Besmaya Combat Training Center, Oct. 10. The Bomb Disposal School at the BCTC is hosting the course and providing resources to meet a surge of new Iraqi Army recruits.



“Half of my personality goes into that platoon, just like DNA....”

I have to give them my knowledge, because these guys will become noncommissioned officers and sergeants major.”

2nd Lt. Amer Natiq Raheem
Iraqi Army BCT Course Officer

Iraqi Army 2nd Lt. Amer Natiq Raheem, an engineer and Basic Combat Training course officer, instructs jundis on how to successfully navigate a confidence-course wall as part of a Basic Combat Training course at the Besmaya Combat Training Center, Oct. 10.

A great number of young men in Iraq are risking their lives just to apply for admission into the Iraqi Army.

So many eligible recruits have applied, that the Ministry of Defense has accommodated by opening provisional sites for Basic Combat Training and pulled personnel from across Iraq to train the surge of recruits.

At the Besmaya Combat Training Center, the Bomb Disposal School played host to a Basic Combat Training in October, and coordinated with BCTC leadership for resources to facilitate the training.

“Instead of turning recruits away, MoD brought them here to be trained,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jose Rodriguez-Barajas, the Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission-Army senior enlisted advisor to the BDS. This was all coordinated by the Iraqi Army, independent of American support, Rodriguez-Barajas said. The Basic Combat Training course here is a one-time thing, to facilitate the large number of recruits. The Besmaya course consists of 375 jundis (or soldiers), all engineers.

After basic training they will move on to vocational-related training at Engineer School before they take their places in their assigned units within Iraq’s Army.

Iraqi Army recruits endure a standard eight-week basic training course that includes basic soldiering skills, weapons marksmanship and individual tactics. The jundis are issued AK-47s and uniforms. Among other military

skills, they work on physical training, study army values, practice first aid, pull guard shifts, and how to march. They are led by a noncommissioned officer who calls cadence and makes on-the-spot corrections to those out of step.

“Drill and ceremony is the first step in establishing discipline,” said Rodriguez-Barajas, a former drill sergeant, and native of Moorpark, Calif.

We prepare them for further training and their military careers, said Iraqi Army 2nd Lt. Amer Natiq Raheem, a drill instructor and officer for the Basic Combat Training course.

“We turn them from civilian into military personnel,” Amer said. “Before they used to do whatever they wanted, but now they have to be ready for training on-time in a certain uniform. They have to be engaged, they need to know how to salute, how to talk.”

We train the Soldier according to the training we received at the military academy, Amer said, adding that he is more than just an officer to the jundis in training.

“I’m like a brother, like a friend, a security guy, a medic,” Amer said. “Every time something happens, they knock on my door, but it’s no problem.

“Half of my personality goes into that platoon, just like DNA,” Amer said. “I have to give them my knowledge, because these guys will become noncommissioned officers and sergeants major.”

Uniting through Scouting - a Partnership of Fun

Story and photos by
Sgt. Tresa L. Allemang
USD-C Public Affairs



1st Lt. Jessica R. Plummer teaches an Iraqi Boy Scout how to hit a ball during a scout meeting at the scouting grounds in Baghdad. Plummer, a platoon leader for Company B, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Special Troops Battalion, volunteers while deployed with the 199th Garrison Command, USD-C.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — “When I see the children, and see how much their faces light up when they see us, I think, ‘This is why we’re here.’”

Those words from 1st Sgt. Gwen Haliburton, with the 199th Garrison Command, United States Division – Center, and a Leesville, La., native, describe not only her Operation New Dawn deployment, but why she volunteers her downtime to work with the Iraqi Boy and Girl Scouts.

“We’re here so these children have a chance at a future,” she said.

Children of Iraqi Special Forces members gather every Saturday, along with U.S. and Iraqi troops, with one common goal - to build a better tomorrow.

Designed to mirror the program in the U.S., the Iraqi scouts learn skills and self-discipline, and are awarded badges for their achievements.

First Lt. Jessica R. Plummer, a platoon leader with Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 256th

Infantry Brigade Combat, 199th Garrison Command, and a volunteer with the program, said the scout program empowers the youth to support and influence their club and community.

“The program gets young people involved in activities that provide the opportunities for personal expression, leadership, community involvement, volunteerism, planning and decision making,” she said.

Plummer said the children learn to sustain meaningful relationships with others while developing a positive self-image.

“Just a few hours of our time each week can have such a positive impact on the children,” she said.

“Being there for them can help build courage, confidence and character.”

Though the program is designed to help the Iraqi children, the American volunteers say the benefit is mutual.

Plummer, a Baton Rouge, La., native, said it fosters a cultural understanding and acceptance for everyone involved.

“I can look back years from now

and say that I’ve had a chance to interact with a culture unlike my own.”

Maj. Jacques D. Walker, an access control director for Victory Base Complex with the 256th IBCT, and a New Orleans native, said his involvement with the program has become his personal fulfillment while deployed.

“I do my job every day, and I know it’s important,” he said, “but to see the



An Iraqi Boy Scout takes a break from coloring during a scout meeting in Baghdad.

look of thanks in their eyes when we help them in a scouting activity makes it all worthwhile. You don’t need an interpreter to figure that out.”

Though the troops are deployed for up to a year at a time, many,

including Haliburton, have pledged to continue the partnership even after returning home.

The leading founder, Eric B. Fretz, a Navy lieutenant commander and Ann Arbor, Mich., native, who started the program in June 2008, said significant progress was made after his redeployment thanks to the volunteers and donations.

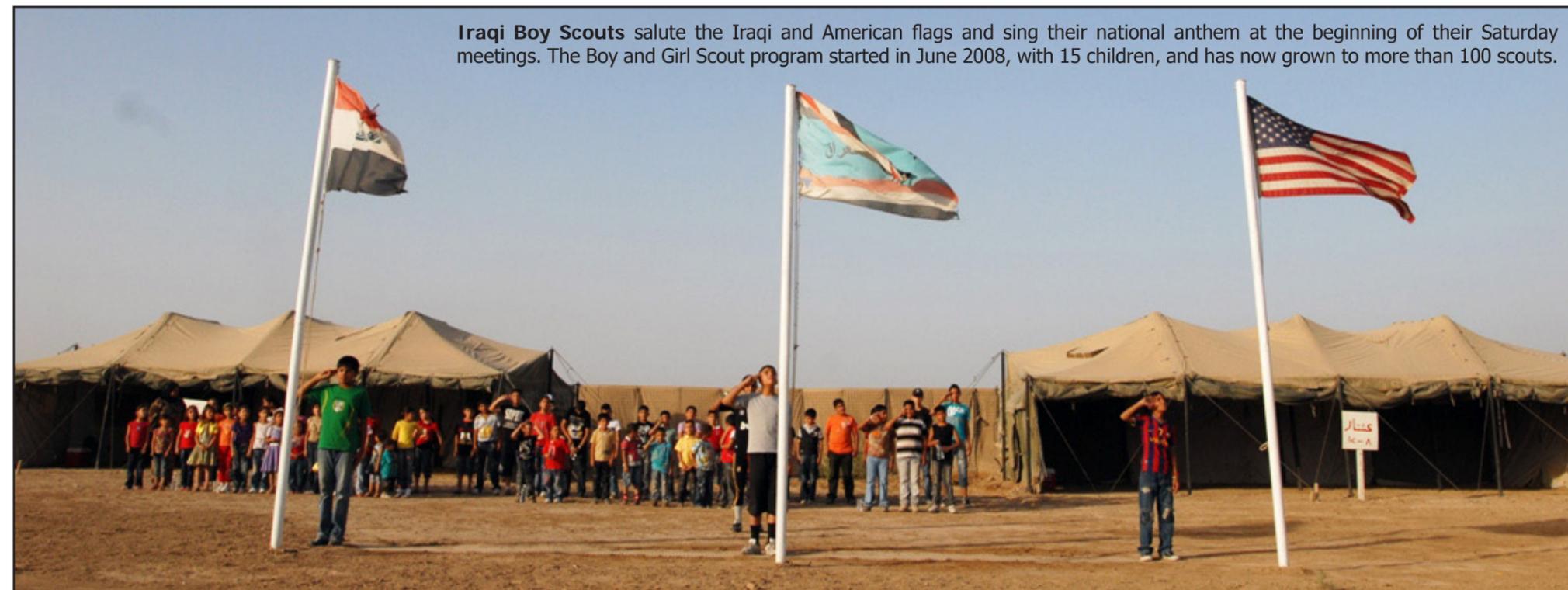
“During the first meeting, goats were running around us, a sandstorm was blowing and there were piles of trash and tires everywhere,” he said.

Today, there is a volleyball court, basketball court, baseball field with grass and even a playground on the grounds for the scouts.

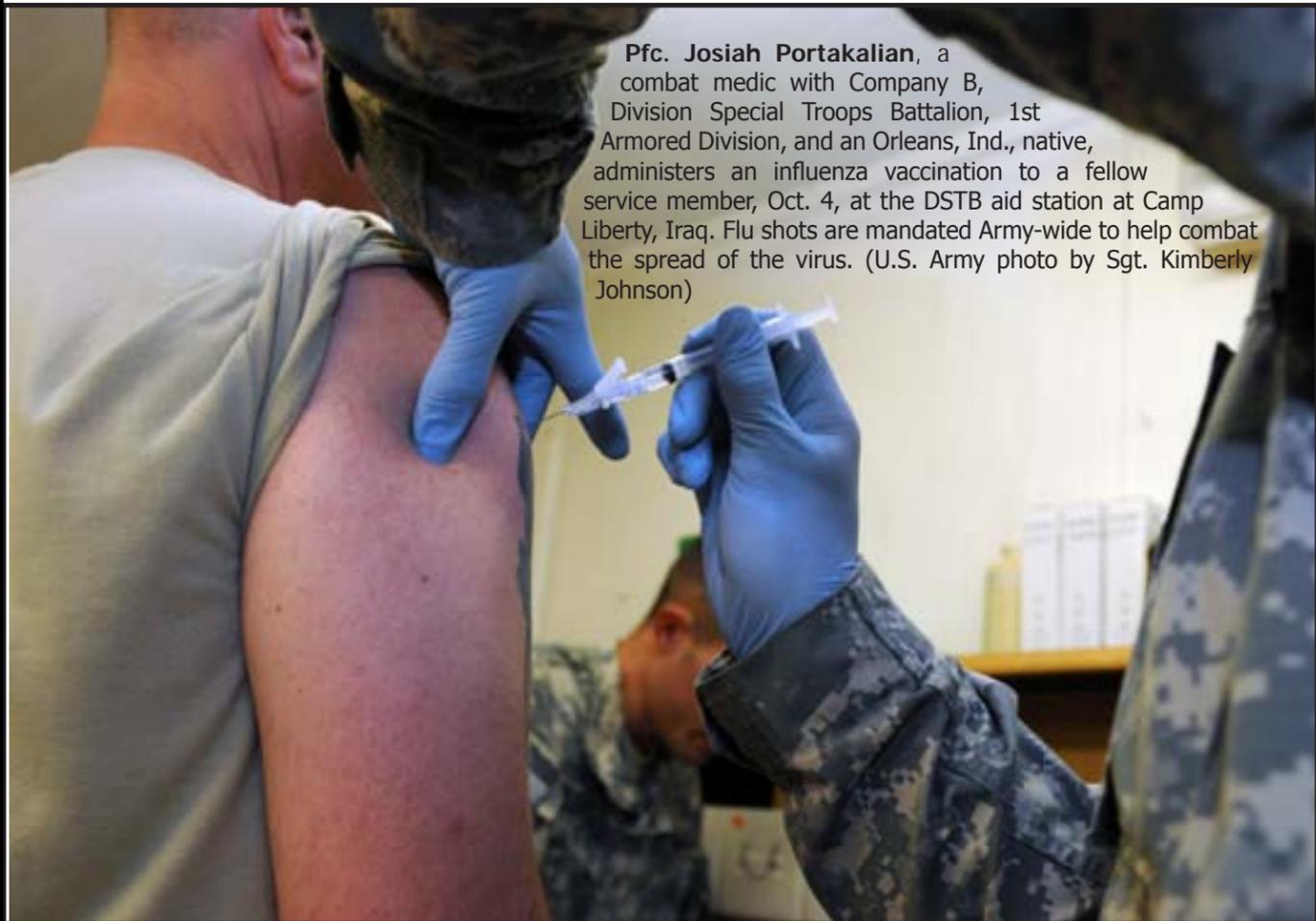
What started with a group of 15 bashful scouts has now worked its way up to about 100 anxious Saturday attendants, who range in age from 4 to 17.

“Such a change ...” Fretz proudly remarked.

Fretz, a Boy Scout troop leader in Ann Arbor who has since retired from the Navy, said the ultimate goal is that the Iraqis fully take over and continue the program.

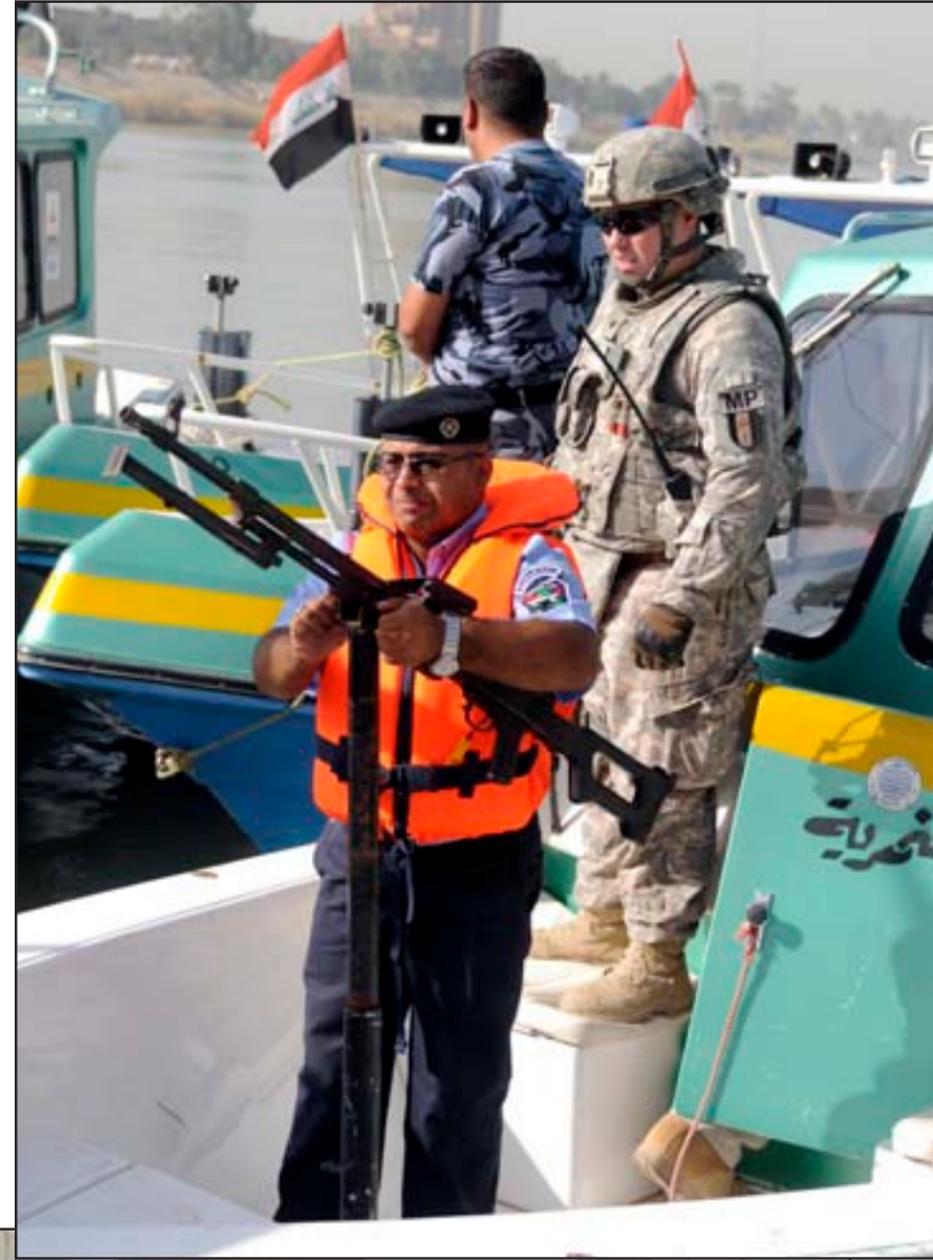


Iraqi Boy Scouts salute the Iraqi and American flags and sing their national anthem at the beginning of their Saturday meetings. The Boy and Girl Scout program started in June 2008, with 15 children, and has now grown to more than 100 scouts.



Pfc. Josiah Portakalian, a combat medic with Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, and an Orleans, Ind., native, administers an influenza vaccination to a fellow service member, Oct. 4, at the DSTB aid station at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Flu shots are mandated Army-wide to help combat the spread of the virus. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kimberly Johnson)

An Iraqi Police officer with the Baghdad River Patrol prepares his weapon at the bow of his patrol boat, Oct. 17, prior to a joint mission on the Tigris River with Soldiers of the 94th Military Police Company, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Menger)



Below: Spc. Carlos Castillo (left, on top), a cannon crewmember and level three combatives instructor with 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and a Dalton, Ga., native, demonstrates the proper way to execute a grappling technique for 1st Iraqi National Police Division officers, Oct. 4, during early morning combatives training at Joint Security Station Loyalty. The units have been working together throughout the deployment, and combatives is one of many skills Soldiers with 1st Bn., 41st FA Regt., are teaching the 1st Iraqi NP Div. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Emily Knitter)

Col. Jon Christensen, commander of the Gulf Region District, hands a coloring book and crayons to a student of Sheikh Amir Primary School. Volunteers from district offices distributed more than 700 pounds of materials to two schools near Taji, Iraq. (GRD photo by Mike Beeman)





Sgt. John Dimick, an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, USD-C, meets with Sen. Mark Udall, D-Colo., Oct. 12, at Camp Ramadi Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



Left: Staff Sgt. Delroy Barnett, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the medical section with Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, and a Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., native, flexes his muscles before winning his weight class and the overall Hardbody Competition, hosted by Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Camp Liberty Field House, Oct. 26. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kimberly Johnson)



Students pose for a quick photo with 1st Lt. Daniel R. Hutson, platoon leader, Troop L, originally from Draper, UT, Oct. 21. Hutson's platoon provided security for a ribbon cutting ceremony held at the Sudayr Maisalon and As Safaat Girls Primary School. (US Army photo by Staff Sgt. Garrett Ralston)



(From left to right) Master Chief David Lofton, Rear Adm. Kevin Kovacich, Capt Michael Berry, Rear Adm. David Simpson, Rear Adm. Kelvin Dixon, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Michelle Darrington prepare to cut the Navy birthday cake at Al Faw Palace, Oct. 13.



Aviators from the Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and the 2nd Squadron, Taji Wing, pose for a photo on Camp Taji, before a partnership flight, Oct. 10. The two units regularly conduct missions together in the Baghdad area. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Roland Hale)

Lt. Col. Lane Turner, commander of Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, and an Atlanta native, speaks to the more than 100 Iraqi Police cadets who completed their mid-course curriculum, Oct. 14, at the Criminal Justice Center in Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kimberly Johnson)



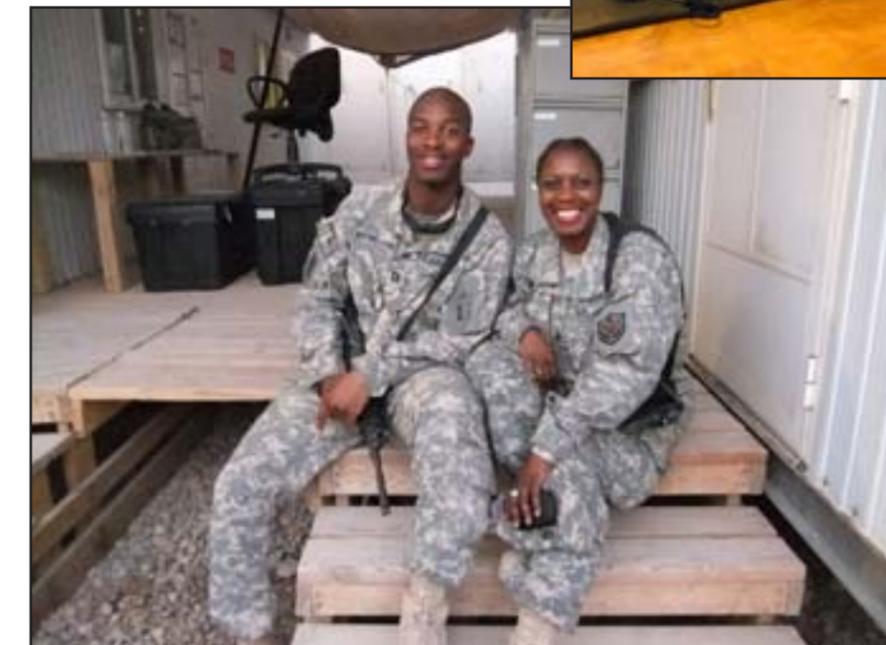
Staff Sgt. Ryan Watts, 447th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron weather technician, explains the functions of the TMQ-53 Tactical Weather Equipment to two Iraqi Air Force weather officers. The Iraqi Air Force began partnering with the 447th EOSS this past July to get some hands-on experience in data collection and weather forecasting for airfield operations. This partnering initiative is designed to further expand the Iraqi Air Force's operational capabilities. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike Edwards)



Right: SpC. Sara Lenzo, a Waterbury, Conn., native, and a combat medic with Company C, Task Force 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, demonstrates procedures for locating a fracture during an advanced medical course for Iraqi Army medics at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Diyala province, Oct. 4. (U.S. Army photo by SpC. Robert M. England)

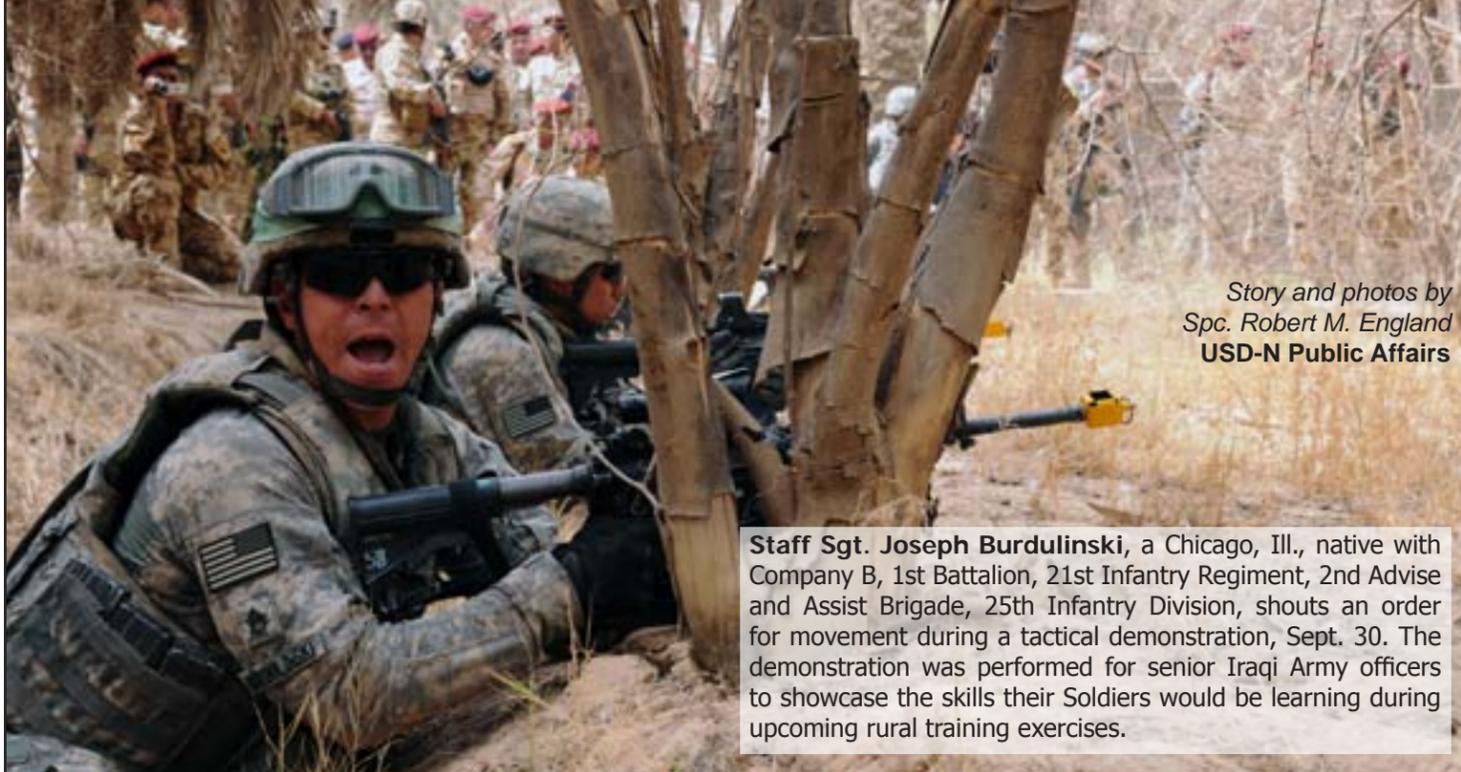


Warrant Officer Ibraheem Abd Al Razaq with the 9th Iraqi Army Division, demonstrates the features of the Russian BTR-80 Armored Personnel Carrier to SpC. Matthew Aren, an infantryman with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and a Detroit native, at Contingency Operating Base Taji. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mary S. Katzenberger)



Command Sgt. Maj. Rue Mayweather and Capt. Kenieth Mayweather, a mother and son pair deployed to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn, pose for a photo on Camp Adder, Oct. 7, after Rue promoted Kenieth to the rank of captain. Rue works at a critical thinking cell of U.S. Forces-Iraq, and Kenieth is an Apache pilot assigned to the Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Efreem Gibson)

U.S. SHOWS IRAQI ARMY OFFICERS NEW TACTICAL OPTIONS



Story and photos by
Spc. Robert M. England
USD-N Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Joseph Burdulinski, a Chicago, Ill., native with Company B, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, shouts an order for movement during a tactical demonstration, Sept. 30. The demonstration was performed for senior Iraqi Army officers to showcase the skills their Soldiers would be learning during upcoming rural training exercises.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, Iraq – Clouds of thick green smoke billowed skyward and expanded across the thicket, completely obstructing the view through the densely vegetated forest. Commands were shouted back and forth across the palm grove as four U.S. Soldiers emerged through the wall of concealment in full sprint to their next covered position in a trench dug between two rows of palm trees.

The Soldiers took up their ready positions and provided cover fire, allowing the next team to advance toward the objective.

Aside from the crowd of Iraqi Army officers and Soldiers observing from a footpath beside the rows of trees and trenches, blank firing adapters were the only indication that the event unfolding before their eyes was a training demonstration.

Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment “Gimlets,” 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division,

provided a demonstration of platoon movement techniques in a woodland environment Sept. 30 at the request of senior ranking IA officers in Diyala province.

The purpose of the demonstration was to show the IA officers in attendance the training their Soldiers would be receiving in the following month of October.

“We’re conducting a demonstration of some infantry platoon maneuvers in a densely vegetated environment,” said Capt. Rustin Jessup, a Benton, Ark., native, and the company commander for Company B, 1-21 Inf. Regt. “The purpose of the demonstration is to give our IA counterparts an introduction into what training we’ll be providing them in the next month, specifically the 5th IA Commando Battalion.”

The demonstration began with an introduction by Jessup as to what the IA commanders should expect to see immediately following the briefing. A field expedient terrain

model was constructed from bricks and other natural elements to depict a rudimentary map of the palm grove and surrounding landmarks. Plastic, color-coded toy soldiers were used to illustrate U.S. and Iraqi troop locations in relation to simulated enemy forces. The mission was assault the enemy stronghold within the densely vegetated orchard.

“We’re showing the IA commanders how to effectively conduct an operation order using a terrain model as a graphic structure,” said Sgt. 1st Class Randy Robertson, a Sacramento, Calif., native, and a platoon sergeant for Company B, 1-21 Inf. Regt. “We’re actually doing a clearing operation that turns into a react-to-contact drill.”

“The senior Iraqi officers will be standing off to the side while we do it,” he said. “We have several interpreters who will interpret the actions that are taking place during the event.”

The core of the training will consist

of basic military fundamentals such as the importance of constant situational awareness, communication, and how to maintain individual sectors of fire. These simple skills are imperative in mastering the more advanced tactical movements that will also be taught.

“Once we make contact we’ll do a basic react to contact drill,” Robertson said. “We’ll send one squad in to support by fire while another squad flanks across the objective. The support-by-fire squad will then sweep toward the objective, completing the exercise.”

The Gimlet platoon hopes to instill in their IA counterparts the confidence that each Soldier will perform his duties as required when he is called upon to do so. An admirable quality possessed by U.S. Army Soldiers that may be taken for granted at times is the dedication to ensuring no Soldier is left behind, another underlying theme that will be stressed during the training cycle.

“We’re going to incorporate a couple simulated casualties as well to teach them to take care of their wounded and not just leave them on the battlefield,” Robertson said.

The training site that will be used is an abandoned palm grove farm near Ba’qubah in Diyala province, provided by the IA for training purposes.

The orchard will be transformed into a simulated battlefield to assist in the IA’s next step toward self-reliance in full-spectrum security operations.

“The IA has been conducting palm grove clearance operations the whole month of September,” Robertson said. “They believe insurgents or al-Qaida in Iraq have set up operations inside the palm groves.”

The necessity for training on clearance operations in a rural environment spawned from a recent IA clearance mission in a palm grove in which IA Soldiers suffered the losses of several officers while assaulting a smaller force of insurgents. The operation spanned six days and caused IA commanders to reassess their approach as the

IA focus shifts from urban to rural environments.

This is not to say that the past seven years of U.S. and Iraqi joint security missions, and the countless days spent training, have been for nothing. This new training is necessitated by a drastic change in environment. The IA troops have recently pushed the majority of insurgent forces beyond city boundaries, causing them to take refuge in secluded wooded areas like the palm groves.

Iraqi Army soldiers have proven that they can operate tactically in urban locales, and this training will

give them the tools to effectively conduct missions in rural environments as well. The end result will be an Iraqi Army fully capable of defending its country from enemy forces in any situation.

“This training contributes a lot to the independence of Iraq because most of the fights now have come out of the cities and into smaller villages and palm groves like these,” said Spc. Owen Sablan, a Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, native, and a radio-telephone operator with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-21 Inf. Regt.



Pfc. Matthew Becerra, a West Covina, Calif., native with Company B, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Reg., 2nd AAB, 25th ID, advances toward an objective during a tactical demonstration performed for senior Iraqi Army officers, at a palm grove in Diyala Province.

Training the Trainers: U.S. Soldiers teach Iraqis to teach fellow Iraqis

Story and photos by
Cpl. Daniel Eddy
USD-C Public Affairs

Murnyack said he knew the Iraqi commandos' tactics were effective, but he wanted to see their ability to plan, execute and conduct a solid after action review. Afterward, he had full confidence in the commandos' ability to train fellow Iraqi Soldiers.

One of the classes the Iraqis were taught, and will teach in the future, is a crime scene investigation class on the proper ways to handle, bag and document evidence. The instructors find these classes to be advantageous to both Iraqis and Americans.

"I think it's great," said Sgt. Jason Hutchinson, a gunner and a CSI instructor with Co. D, 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., and an Elizabethtown, Ky., native. "We are working ourselves out of a job; the more we do now, the less we have to do later. So I am all about getting these guys trained."

Hutchinson said the Iraqis' improvement is not always obvious. Instead, he looks at the details to see their progress. One sign of improvement is that the Iraqis have started using rubber gloves, whereas before, the practice was much more

foreign to them. Wearing the rubber gloves will help prevent the contamination of evidence and likely result in more convictions.

Because of the lead that Iraqis have taken, ensuring they are confident with the lessons taught is vital.

Murnyack said for the next iteration, the Iraqi commandos who have completed the class will be the primary instructors and the American Soldiers will be the assistant instructors. For the third iteration of the class the primary instructors will remain the same, but the assistants will be the students from the second iteration—with no Americans present.

The Iraqis are continually progressing and by teaching their own, they are making independent efforts to build a more secure, stable and sovereign Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Jerry Asrat, a platoon sergeant with Co. D, 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., and a Sioux Falls, S.D., native, shows an Iraqi Army Soldier how to handle a detainee properly as Spc. Matthew Driggers plays the role of a detainee, Oct. 12, at Joint Security Station Deason.

"In terms of sovereignty (the Iraqis) certainly are on a level where they haven't been before," Hutchinson said. "One of our missions is to support (explosive ordinance disposal) and (quick reaction force) and we have done very few missions lately compared to when we were first assigned that task. So just the decrease in those sorts of missions makes it obvious there is progress."

A new area of emphasis the Iraqis will pass on to fellow Soldiers are the Geneva Conventions and the proper handling of a detainee.

"You can see from the IA Soldiers how they were interested," said Staff Sgt. Jerry Asrat, an instructor and platoon sergeant with Co. D, 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., and a Sioux Falls, S.D., native. "It is totally new from their day-to-day life. They are aware of some of the detainee treatment procedures, but they are not fully experienced



about the whole international detainee law."

Reyadsaed Hameed, an Iraqi Army Soldier who attended the classes and will be training Iraqi Soldiers, said the detainee class increased his knowledge greatly.

"The biggest thing that I learned today was the international law and talking about human rights," he said. "I have to imagine myself as the detainee and I want to treat them as I would like to be treated."

Hameed said he is proud to help rebuild Iraq's Army by training fellow Soldiers.

Murnyack said the pride and willingness of the IA Soldiers to learn and grow is enabling them to improve rapidly and continue to grow stronger as a military.

"I have been here in 2003, 2005, 2007 and now," Asrat said. "I remember in '03, '05, '07 the (Iraqi) Soldiers did not have any kind of coordination when it comes to certain procedures. Now I see totally different (Iraqi) Soldiers. Right now they have learned so many things, getting educated by the different training programs."

Co. D's three-week course is just one piece in orchestrating a firm partnership with Iraq.

"I think our partnership is stronger than ever," Murnyack said. "I think part of that is because the Iraqis like to be in the lead; it is their country, and they take a lot of responsibility and a lot of pride in the security here."



Sgt. Jason Hutchinson, crime scene instructor with Company Co. D, 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., 1st AAB, 3rd ID, 1st AD, USD-C, and an Elizabethtown, Ky., native, shows an Iraqi Army Soldier how to photograph a weapon properly.

An Iraqi Army Soldier searches Spc. Matthew Driggers, a tanker with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, 1st Armored Division, USD-C, and a Satellite Beach, Fla., native, Oct. 12, as part of a class on handling detainees, in accordance with the Geneva Convention, at Joint Security Station Deason, Iraq.

As a group of Iraqi Army Soldiers conducted a simulated raid Oct. 13, a capstone event for a three week course, it was training they knew well.

This course, conducted by Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division at Joint Security Station Deason, Iraq, didn't focus on the tasks, but rather to show the IA Soldiers how to train others; a train the trainer course.

"We had a lieutenant and noncommissioned officers from the commandos go through training on individual tasks, squad phase, and platoon phase," said Capt. Kevin Murnyack, commander of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., and a Mentor, Ohio, native. "The goal for (this) training wasn't to actually teach them (tactics), because it's stuff they already know. It's to show them what a good training program might look like, to teach it to their own guys."

Game On!

Youth Center gets upgrade, reopens doors



Iraqi children play a game of basketball before the ribbon-cutting ceremony that marked the official re-opening of the Husayniyah Youth Center, Oct. 31. The children received shoes and shirts from Soldiers of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, immediately after the ceremony.

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Garrett Ralston
USD-S Public Affairs

HUSAYNIYAH, Iraq – The Karbala Provincial Reconstruction Team assisted by Troop A, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, celebrated the completion of a renovation project on the Husayniyah Youth Center, Oct. 31.

The Youth Center is one of 11 Good Neighbor projects the PRT has finished in recent months and provides local Iraqi children with a place to enjoy their favorite sporting activities. Many neighborhood children were present for the ceremony which was held on the basketball court.

“The condition of the center when we first came to look it over was pretty poor,” said Lt. Col. Vince Rice, deputy team leader of the PRT. “We came at the request of the mayor to see what could be done to make it better for the kids.”

After visiting the center, the PRT walked away with plans for the project that would result in an almost completely restored facility. The basketball court received a fresh coat of paint and netting for the hoops. The center’s boxing ring was replaced and the ceiling above the ring was torn out and rebuilt.

Before the ceremony began, children were finishing a game of soccer on the field which was also part of the renovation. The upgraded field featured new goals and the once bare concrete is now covered with a bright green artificial turf.

After the ribbon cutting, the kids and members of Troop A moved inside the center where a large donation of shoes was handed out. Apache Troop supports the PRT’s mission primarily by providing escort and security duties. They often participate directly in the functions of the PRT to show their appreciation of the Iraqi people.

“Apache Troop is directly involved with the local PRT’s Good Neighbor Initiatives,” said Capt James Reilly, Troop A commander. “These initiatives are great ways to make a contribution to the local community.”

All the children present received shoes and shirts before moving back outside to resume their soccer game, while others began a game of basketball.

“We are extremely pleased with all the work that has been done here,” said Isam Al Masoudi, the youth center director. “The children are very happy and thankful for all you have done for them.”

“The PRT has been proactive in trying to get this project done and it’s gone very smoothly,” said Rice. “We do our best to provide these things for the children because in the end they are the future of Iraq.”



Capt. James Reilly, of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, passes out shoes to children after the re-opening ceremony of the Husayniyah Youth Center, Oct. 31.

IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN OCTOBER 1 AND
OCTOBER 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.**

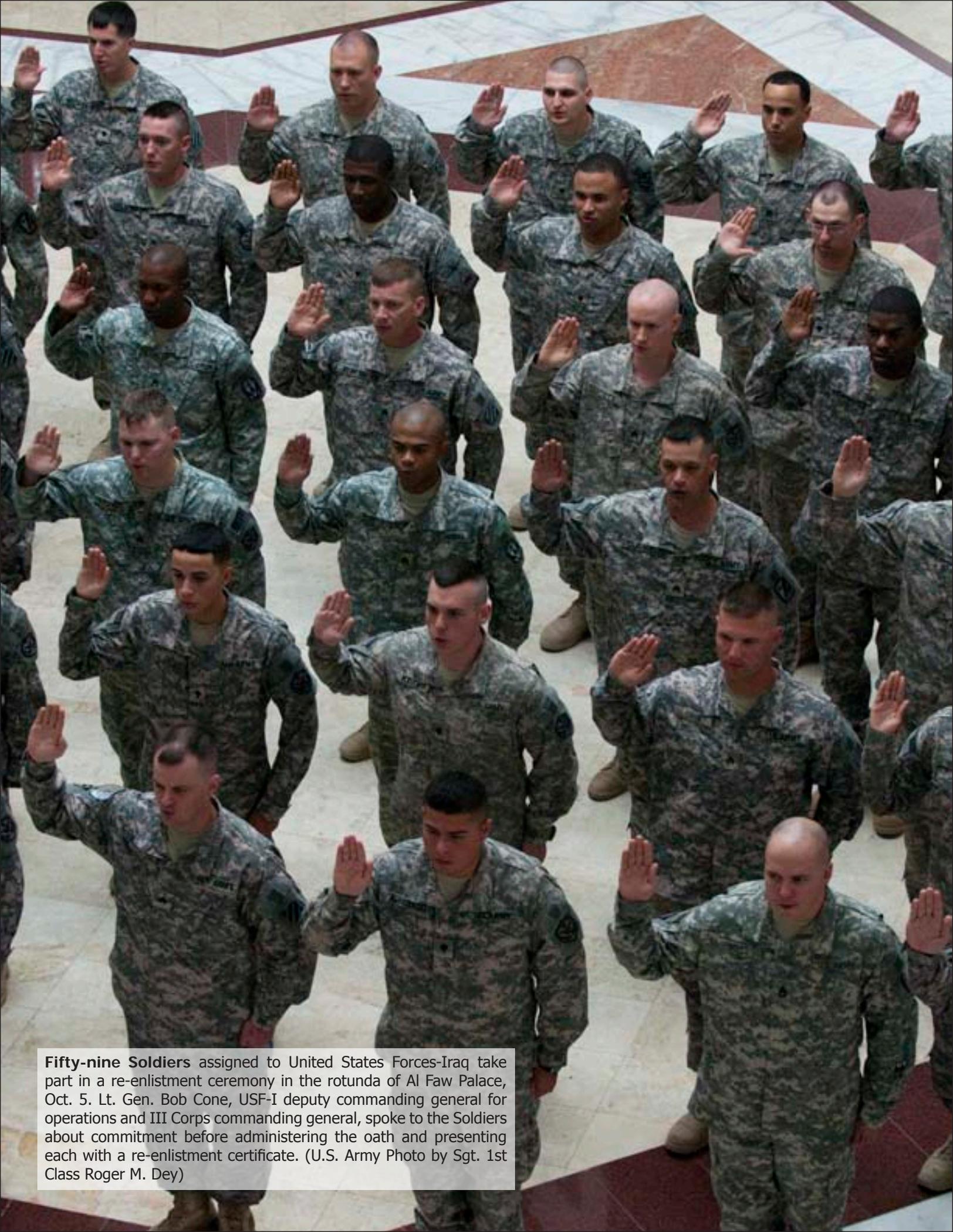
JOHN 15:13

October 16

Pfc. Dylan T. Reid, 24

October 24

Pfc. David R. Jones Jr., 21



Fifty-nine Soldiers assigned to United States Forces-Iraq take part in a re-enlistment ceremony in the rotunda of Al Faw Palace, Oct. 5. Lt. Gen. Bob Cone, USF-I deputy commanding general for operations and III Corps commanding general, spoke to the Soldiers about commitment before administering the oath and presenting each with a re-enlistment certificate. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger M. Dey)