Trading places
6th Division takes charge
Iraqi Security Forces trainer says police on right path

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Iraqi National Police Commando Division is on track to replicate other elite national police units, the division’s American training commander said during a briefing from Iraq Feb. 3.

“We think that the future is to take them to a true national police force, to where they’re badge-carrying and qualified officers enforcing the Iraqi rule of law,” said U.S. Army Col. Jeffrey Buchanan, commander of the 2nd Brigade, 75th Division, likening the force to the Italy’s Carabiniere or France’s Gendarmerie. “That’s the future. That’s not where we are right now.”

To date, the division has been operating as urban light infantry rather than police, said Buchanan, who serves as commander of the Special Police Transition Teams for the National Police Commando Division and 1st Mechanized Police Brigade of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior.

The division, however, is a long way from where it started Buchanan said.

The Iraqi commando division began as one battalion in August 2004 with no coalition assistance, Buchanan said. It now numbers four brigades of up to 2,600 men per brigade. The total authorized end-strength for the division is 11,000, and the current total force strength is about 8,900, he said.

“They’re really searching for quality rather than quantity,” the colonel explained. “They recruit only through word of mouth. We don’t have recruiting centers set up in a mall or something like that. And basically every guy that comes in is known to some of his fellow comrades, which is a way that they have of cutting down potential infiltration.”

Throughout Iraq, the commandos are responsible for conducting counterinsurgency operations, gathering intelligence and establishing a secure environment for other security forces.

“The commandos typically accomplish that mission by conducting raids, cordon-and-search operations (and) reconnais-
Iraqi Army assumes more battle space responsibilities

By U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Mark Woodbury
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, assumed control of Forward Operating Base Honor from the 4th Infantry Division’s 4th Brigade Combat Team Jan. 31 during a transfer of authority ceremony.

The 5th brigade is now responsible for protecting the Iraqi government buildings and personnel in the International Zone.

The hand over indicates the increasing ability of Iraqi Security Forces to assume greater responsibility and security for Iraq.

“The turnover of FOB Honor demonstrates the increased capability of Col. Mohammed’s brigade to assume greater responsibility and security of Baghdad,” said Col. Michael Beech, commander 4th BCT, 4th Infantry Division. “The 5th Brigade has earned a reputation of being a tough, well-trained and well-led unit.”

Iraqi leadership says it is excited for the new responsibility and is prepared to handle its ongoing mission.

“We [the Iraqi brigades] will work day and night to achieve our mission for the new government of Iraq,” said Iraqi Col. Mohammad Wasif, 5th Brigade commander, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

The Iraqi troops seemed equally optimistic in achieving their responsibilities, and were excited to see their units taking over more battle space in Iraq.

“This is a great day for both Iraq and the Iraqi Army,” said Sergeant Hakim, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division soldier. “Today’s ceremony shows the people of Iraq the army is getting closer to providing security for the entire country.”

The transition of authority of FOB Honor to the Iraqi Army was a step forward in furthering the army’s goal in defending the country against terrorism.

“We are committed to the citizens of this country and this army,” said Iraqi Maj. Gen. Mubdar Hatim Hazya Al-Duleimi, commanding general, 6th Iraqi Army Division. “We will defend our homes from the threats of the terrorists as we bring freedom back to this country.”

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq — The Hilla Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics team is taking steps to control local neighborhoods.

The job is dangerous, but the team trains for every possible scenario, said Iraqi Lt. Husham Azeez, SWAT leader.

“If there are terrorists hiding in buildings, we’re going after them,” said Azeez. “We train with all sorts of explosives and weapons and know how to take control of buildings.”

But no operation goes without first having good intelligence, said Iraqi Lt. A’ayed Abdal Muhssein, SWAT intelligence officer.

“It is very difficult to obtain intelligence, but we need this to be successful and to keep our SWAT team members safe,” Muhssein said.

When this team takes on a target building, they cordon off the area, quickly surround the structure and attack it from all sides.

The complex operation has many moving pieces at different locations, so it requires careful coordination to make it work, Muhssein said.

“Daily training ensures these operations run effectively,” he said.

“We learn many good things from the Coalition forces,” Azeez added. “They are always improving our skills and pushing us forward.”

Initially, the Coalition forces took a major role in training the Hilla SWAT team, but the Iraqis are now at a point where they are able to train themselves. Hilla SWAT conducts most real-life missions independently.

They have succeeded in capturing scores of terrorists in the region and have rescued many hostages.

“We have made a lot of progress,” Muhssein said.

They measure that progress by the confidence they gain and by the growing number of terrorists they detain, he said.

“The area is definitely becoming safer for our people,” Azeez said. “We are making it harder for the terrorists to operate and that’s why I like this job – despite the danger.”
Iraqi Joint Headquarters public affairs officer laid to rest

By U.S. Navy Journalist 2nd Class John J. Pistone
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

Iraqi Lt. Col. Maytham Abdul Rahman, Deputy Public Affairs Officer for the Joint Headquarters, was killed by insurgents January 29.

Rahman was a highly respected Iraqi Army officer who served as a liaison between the Joint Headquarters and the Ministry of Defense. He was considered integral to the efforts to restore Iraq.

Iraqi Army General Babaker Zebari, the commanding general of the Iraqi Joint Forces, joined with several dozen Iraqi and Coalition soldiers and civilians to mourn the loss Monday morning.

Those who knew Rahman said he was dedicated to his job, unafraid of the risks, and completely dedicated to rebuilding the nation of Iraq.

MNSTC-I Cultural Advisor, Dr. M. Murtada remembered him as a committed public servant who traveled throughout the country without concerns for his personal safety in order to gain a better understanding of the progress that was being made by his fellow countrymen.

“He was fearless,” said Murtada. “He cared more for his duty than for his comfort.”

As the second highest ranking public affairs official at Joint Headquarters, Rahman’s primary mission was to prepare the chain of command for interaction with the media. He was also responsible for instructing Iraqi soldiers on all aspects of public affairs and media relations.

According to Lt. Col. Fred Wellman, MNSTC-I Public Affairs Officer and advisor to JHQ, Rahman was committed to excellence in everything he did and was a superior public affairs officer.

Rahman graduated with degrees in language and public affairs and media operations from two universities in Baghdad.

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Iraqi Army takes on IZ battle space responsibilities

Beech was enthusiastic about the Iraqi Army’s capabilities and the future of Iraq.

“With the seating of the new government and the increased capability of Iraqi security forces, I’m very optimistic,” said Beech. “I think 2006 is going to be a great year for Iraq.”

FOB Honor is located in the palace district in central Baghdad and was the headquarters of the Baathist regime prior to the war. Prior to the arrival of Coalition Forces, U.S. air strikes destroyed five of the twenty buildings.

(Some information provided by the Multi-National Division - Baghdad Public Affairs Office)

Recent transfers of authority

- Jan. 28 — Near Mosul, the 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division took command of an area stretching from west of the Tigris River to the Mosul-Baghdad highway and between the villages of Aitha and Munirah.
- Jan. 5 — In the northern Sallah-Dihn Province, the “Cobra” 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division assumed responsibility of Forward Operating Base Bernstein.
- Dec. 27 — The 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division assumed control of about 4,000 square kilometers at a ceremony in Makhmūr.
HABBANIYAH, Iraq — Ninety days ago the base at Habbaniyah was receiving indirect fire two to five times per week. Insurgent sniper fire and improvised explosive devices were a constant threat. That is no longer the case.

“Due to the aggressive patrolling, active perimeter security, excellent intelligence and civil affairs in surrounding villages and effective counter-fire work performed by the Iraqi Army, the attacks have subsided,” said U.S. Army Col. Richard Fink, MNSTC-I Coalition Military Advisor Transition Team chief of staff.

There has not been an indirect fire attack since Nov. 9. The base is located between Fallujah and Ramadi and immediately south of the Euphrates River, said Fink.

According to Fink, there were no Coalition or Iraqi units on the other side of the river and therefore the insurgents were within mortar range of the base.

“Since the 3rd Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Division crossed the river and started patrolling the area, the indirect fire has ceased,” Fink said.

The U.S. Army’s Task Force 1-110th Infantry, part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division in Ramadi works here, but three-fourths of the base and almost the entire surrounding area of operations are controlled by Iraqi forces.

With enhanced security, contractor services have also improved. Contractors have worked on the Regional Training Center and the Motor Transport Regiment sites. The Regional Training Center teaches squad leader, platoon sergeant, noncommissioned officer, medic and combat lifesaver courses.

The course schedule supports the 1st and 7th Iraqi Army Divisions, base support and defense units and the MTR. The squad leader course has a goal of 150 graduates per month, with 50 targeted for the platoon sergeant course.

The medical branch has three Iraqi NCO instructors and the RTC got its first 15 Iraqi instructors two weeks ago.

In the near term, the Motor Transport Regiment will move onto the base.

The conditions at Habbaniyah Base have dramatically improved. He says that it is still the least mature of the five Regional Support Units, but the right things are happening, said Fink.

“Things were very rough and dangerous in the late summer and early autumn, but the positive improvements over the past 90 days are setting conditions for a significantly improved life support for Iraqi Units in the future,” said Fink.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraqi soldiers from the 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition forces conducted joint traffic control point operations in the Abu Ghraib area in December.

“This is just one of many joint operations that are taking place across Baghdad as the Iraqi Army assumes responsibility for the safety and security of the populace,” said U.S. Army Capt. James Baker. “I was very impressed with how quickly and professionally the Iraqi forces executed the operation.”

Soldiers from both nations mingled together during the mission.

“I am always amazed at how quickly soldiers of different languages and cultures can make friends with just a cigarette and a hand shake,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James Bennett.

Although the Iraqi platoon did not discover any weapons or contraband during their searches, they considered this operation a success. Bennett said the operation was a “preventative measure that gives a sense of well-being to the citizens of the area.”

An Iraqi soldier shoots an AK-47 rifle at the Hababniyah range during troop security training for the base and surrounding area.

An Iraqi officer discusses operation details with U.S. Army Capt. James Baker Dec. 31 during joint traffic control point operations in the Abu Ghraib area of Baghdad.
Soldiers graduate from Master Trainer Program

By 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraq — Iraqi Army soldiers who graduated from a Master Trainer Program participated in a ceremony held to acknowledge their new skills Jan. 16 at K1 Iraqi Army Base.

The training program spanned two weeks. Coalition Soldiers trained the Iraqi Army enlisted leadership of the Iraqi Army on how to better teach their own enlisted troops basic skills.

“The training for the last two weeks has been a train-the-trainer program,” said U.S. Army Maj. Christopher J. Kidd, a member of the Coalition training team. “We’re trying to provide the Iraqi battalions with actual [noncommissioned officer] trainers so they don’t have to rely on Coalition forces to train them on basic skills.”

Over the course of two weeks, Coalition trainers taught two Iraqi noncommissioned officers from each company a variety of skills, including medical training, moving under contact, reacting to sniper fire, communications, convoy operations, operation security, detainee handling and other basic battle techniques.

Coalition forces not only trained the Iraqi soldiers to be proficient in these tasks, but to train them how to teach other Iraqi soldiers to be proficient as well.

“All of these soldiers were already corporals or sergeants,” Kidd said. “The idea was not to provide them with the skills, but to provide them with techniques to pass those skills on to younger soldiers.”

Forty-three Iraqi soldiers entered the program that is designed to teach their own enlisted troops basic skills. They’re doing better and better every day.”

Iraqi soldiers work with Coalition forces to become IED hunters

By U.S. Army Spc. Anna-Marie Risner
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraq — Improvised explosive devices are one of the insurgents’ deadliest methods of attack in Iraq. One group of Iraqi Army combat engineers, however, has been working with 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldiers to combat this problem.

Select soldiers of Bomb Company, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division received three weeks of training from Sapper Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, on the points of finding and tracking IEDs.

Iraqi troops learned how to recognize not only emplaced explosive devices, but materials used to make the bombs.

Soldiers were hand-selected for the mission by Iraqi Lt. Col. Fuad Jihad Reda, Bomb Co. commander and U.S. Army Capt. Jay Cook, Co. A commander, 326th Special Troops Battalion.

Many of those selected for the unit had personal experiences with IEDs and all were highly motivated to work with Coalition forces, Cook said.

According to Cook, one [Iraqi] soldier was on his day off and saw individuals planting an IED. The soldier took his weapon, chased the individuals down, disabled their vehicle and apprehended the insurgents.

Iraqi soldiers trained on basic IED awareness and vehicle operations, which will aid in counter-IED missions. Troops also practiced mounted and dismounted patrols with Coalition forces.

One concern both sides faced during training was the language barrier. However, Cook said they overcame these issues through the use of hand-and-arm signals — many of them standard, some of them created on the spot.

Another challenge was that this team of Iraqi Army soldiers hailed from several different ethnic backgrounds. Sunni and Shiite Muslims as well as Turkmen and Kurdish troops are thrown together in this northern city.

According to Cook, regardless of having different backgrounds, the soldiers worked together to complete their training missions.

“We have Turkmen, Arabs and Kurds in the unit,” he said. “But despite the different backgrounds, they all came together to form this platoon.”
Iraqi Hueys bound for the United States for modifications

By U.S. Air Force
Lt. Col. John Bukowski
MNSTC-I Coalition
Air Force Transition Team

AMMAN, Jordan — The modification of 16 Iraqi Air Force UH-1H helicopters to the Huey II configuration started Jan. 29 when six Iraqi Air Force UH-1Hs were loaded onto a U.S. Air Force C-17 aircraft and transported from Amman, Jordan to Dothan, Ala.

A second C-17 transported six more Iraqi Air Force UH-1Hs from Jordan to Dothan Jan. 31. A third mission transported the final four from Baghdad International Airport to Dothan the next week.

ARINC Engineering Systems technicians conducted simultaneous operations in Jordan and Iraq to prepare the helicopters for shipment. Preparation of the helicopters included removing several major components including the rotor blades, rotor hub, rotor mast and the tail boom on each helicopter.

ARINC technicians realized that six UH-1Hs with their tail booms removed could be loaded on a C-17. This is a non-standard load and required approval.

Coalition Air Force Transition Team personnel coordinated with U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command Directorate of Operations personnel and the U.S. Air Force Materiel Command Air Transportability Test Load Agency to gain approval to load six UH-1Hs instead of the standard load of four UH-1Hs.

Loading six helicopters per C-17 resulted in two missions instead of three and saved approximately $400,000.

The first six helicopters landed in Dothan on Jan. 30 and the second set of six helicopters landed in Dothan on Feb. 1.

The Hueys were off-loaded and transported by truck to the factory for the start of the Huey II modification. The first Iraqi Air Force Huey II helicopters will be modified by November.

Regional leadership meets to discuss security in Tigris River valley

By 101st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Q-WEST BASE COMPLEX, Iraq — Security in the Tigris River valley was the topic of interest again at the Regional Security Council Meeting Jan. 26.

“The ambition of every honest Iraqi is to live in his country in peace,” said a local religious scholar, through an interpreter. “Peace won’t be achieved until every citizen goes out to defeat these criminals, the terrorists.”

Continuing the theme of community participation, an Iraqi Army commander chided audience members for declining attendance at the security council meetings.

“I hope the reason for the decline is a good one,” he said, through an interpreter. He thanked the citizens of the local area who maintain watch and forbid terrorists to operate by reporting them.

The Iraqi Army 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division took responsibility for the area west of Qayyarah to the Mosul-Baghdad Highway in a ceremony Jan. 28.

“Security continues to be great … mostly due to the good job the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police are doing,” said U.S. Army Maj. Glenn Gambrell, Task Force Thunder executive officer.

Gambrell congratulated the attendees on the successful December elections and the recent transfer of authority between Coalition forces and the Iraqi division in Makhmur.

“If you’re east of the Tigris River, the Iraqi Army is in charge,” said Gambrell. He addressed concerns regarding the recent rise in the number of escalation-of-force incidents, urging the leaders to explain to local citizens to pull over to the side of the road when Coalition forces pass.

Brig. Gen. Khalil, Mosul chief of police, addressed a recent reduction in the Qayyarah police force. The police situation in Qayyarah is developing for the better, said Khalil and he urged the citizens to cut back on the amount of celebratory fire.

U.S. Army Capt. Charles Roberts, a physicians’ assistant from the TF Thunder 172nd Brigade Support Battalion, spoke to the assembly regarding recent incidents of avian bird influenza occurring in Turkey. Roberts explained the causes and transmission of the disease to the leaders, many of whom dwell in farming communities where the populace comes into daily contact with poultry.

The Iraqi Army commander concluded the meeting by addressing questions from various attendees regarding topics of interest to each of their communities.
Iraqi soldiers receive Soldier of the Month award from 101st

By Spc. Michael Pfaff
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraq — A ceremony held Jan. 16 at the K1 Iraqi Army base honored five Iraqi recipients with the “Soldier of the Month” award.

The 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division recipients were chosen based on how well they performed on missions ranging from traffic control to convoy operations.

“The purpose of the ceremony was to honor a soldier of the month for each one of the companies in our Iraqi Army battalion,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Ethan Richardson, the military training team’s fire support officer. “We wanted to recognize the outstanding soldiers that have performed well in the past month.”

The “Soldiers of the Month” were recognized in front of the formation and awarded a certificate of achievement, a “No Slack” 101st Airborne Division pin, and a gift from the Iraqi Army 4th Battalion commander, Col. Mohammed.

“The Soldiers of the Month” were recognized in front of the formation and awarded a certificate of achievement, a “No Slack” 101st Airborne Division pin, and a gift from the Iraqi Army 4th Battalion commander, Col. Mohammed.

Richardson said that a ceremony like this helps to recognize individual soldiers who might not get the honor they deserve for doing well. In the large picture, he said it inspires the Iraqi Army troops to continue to sustain the good things they are doing and improve on things they need to improve upon.

The Iraqi Army soldiers do not have enlistment contracts, so they don’t necessarily have to continue fighting for their country, he said. Giving them a pat on the back when it’s deserved is one way to keep them motivated.

“They realize they are making a difference and it helps inspire patriotism in them,” Richardson said. “They see what we do and see that they can do this also. And, they can take up the mission we are doing so that we can go home.”

Coalition forces helped organize this ceremony, but Mohammed said he plans to continue awarding his troops in the future without assistance.

“We want to appreciate and thank the Coalition forces for their help with the ceremony,” Mohammed said. “But, we have a plan and program to continue showing we appreciate and are grateful for our best soldier’s discipline, training and their sacrifice for the future of this battalion.”

Iraqi Army legal advisors attend legal basic course

By Air Force Capt. Trinh Warner
MNSTC-I Legal Office

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Twelve legal advisors of the Iraqi Army attended the first Legal Advisor Basic Course last month.

The two-week course is designed to get the legal advisors familiar with issues they will face when advising commanders of their available legal options. Subject matter included military justice, ethics, contract law, constitutional law and operational law with a special emphasis on human rights law and the Geneva Conventions.

Students came from different units of the Iraqi Army and were hand-selected by the General Counsel of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to attend this course. Each student was expected to take back to his unit a better understanding of the legal advisor’s role. Laws and policies studied include Coalition Provisional Authority Orders, existing Iraqi law, international law and the draft Iraqi Uniform Code of Military Justice. At times, the course also used references from the Quran.

Instructors for the first iteration of the course were MNSTC-I judge advocates and Iraqi Army legal advisors. Iraqi legal advisors will gradually assume full responsibility for teaching and administering this course and a Legal Advisor Advanced Course.

In addition to imparting valuable legal knowledge to the students, the course has enhanced the already close working relationship between the MNSTC-I Legal Office, the MOD General Counsel’s office and the Senior Legal Advisor for the Joint Headquarters. The cooperation of these offices made preparation for this first course possible in only two months.

“What impressed me the most with this whole effort is the teamwork and the fortitude shown by the Iraqi instructors and students throughout the class – especially when dealing with the challenges faced by standing up a new school in a new school house. I’m very proud of my team on both the Iraqi and Coalition side,” said Capt. Jay Fultz, an Air Force judge advocate and MNSTC-I’s course director.

A second Basic Course is scheduled to begin in February with another group of Iraqi legal advisors. The experiences learned from the first course will go a long way to make the second and future courses run even more smoothly.
Iraqi Army battalion relocates to better serve Iraq

U.S. Army Capt. Lyn Graves and Staff Sgt. Mike Winters
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraqi — Iraqi army soldiers loaded up their equipment, lined up their vehicles, prepared for relocation and departed the army base north of Kirkuk Jan. 29.

“The 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division Iraqi Army relocated from Kirkuk to Bayji in order to realign Iraqi Army forces to best conduct counter insurgency operations and to improve security for all Iraqi people,” said U.S. Army Major Steven Howell, 2nd Brigade Military Transition Team, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

“This is a well integrated, ethnically diverse battalion,” said Howell.

The 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade is composed of a multi-ethnic group of soldiers representing Kurds, Arabs and Turkomen. The brigade was intentionally formed with an ethnic diversity that mirrored the Iraqi population to prove that Iraqis of different cultural backgrounds can work together for the greater good of all Iraqis.

“Fourth Battalion was selected because of its high level of readiness and mission capability”, Howell explained. “The soldiers of 4th battalion have proven themselves extremely capable in the Kirkuk area and will take their experience and expertise to the Bayji area.”

Proving themselves capable of this move marks a transition from a local national guard unit organization to a true national Iraqi Army in support of all Iraq.

The Iraqi Army has previously been organized in a national guard concept with units from one area being responsible for the military security in that same area. This relocation demonstrates the Iraqi Army’s increased ability to provide secure force protection for greater Iraq.

Providing force protection for all of Iraq is a high priority for Iraqi Col. Muhammed, 4th Battalion Commander. He stresses the importance of going where his soldiers can best help Iraq.

“We are soldiers so we will go where we are needed,” said Azziz. “The soldiers are ready to move.”

Academy ‘terps’ break down the classroom language barrier

By U.S. Army Sgt. Rachel Brune
101ST Airborne Division (Air Assault) Public Affairs

Q-WEST BASE COMPLEX, Iraq — When an American military instructor in digital gray faces a classroom full of Iraqi Army chocolate-chip brown, there is more of a gulf between them than fashion.

Dressed in an assortment of uniforms, civilian dress shirts and slacks, the NCO Academy interpreters — “terps” — are the linguistic bridge between the English-speaking Soldiers and the trainees who speak mainly Arabic and Kurdish.

The terps range in age from 20-year-old Chuck to “Cowboy,” who calls himself the unofficial “platoon sergeant” for the interpreters who work at the academy.

“Training the Iraqi soldiers is the most important thing right now,” said Adel, an interpreter who served in the old Iraqi Army. Adel, who is from a nearby town, studied English at the University of Mosul and has been working at the academy since it formed in 2005.

Chuck has worked at the academy for about nine months. After graduating from high school, he came straight to Q-West to work as a translator for Coalition forces.

“I think the Iraqi Army will be good,” said Chuck. “America sent great instructors.”

During his time at the school, Chuck and his fellow interpreters work every day of the class cycle translating inside the classroom and outside at the ranges, such as the AK-47 range, the combatives pit and the mock traffic control point.

Some of the soldiers find the training hard at first and want to quit, but after a few days they get used to it, said Chuck. When the soldiers graduate, he thinks most come to like the training.

Some soldiers join the army for the money, while others join to keep their families and Iraq safe from the terrorists, said Adel. In the old regime, it was difficult to find a job like this which pays so well.

“Most of the men, [who] are jobless, wish and hope to join,” said Adel. The army currently pays more than the civilian sector.

Some of the men from poorer areas came to the army to support their families, said Cowboy, who claims the honor of being the first NCO Academy interpreter, hired in March 2005. During his time, he has seen many improvements at the school.

In the old Iraqi Army, the soldiers would get classes on how to sleep, or how to love Saddam, said Cowboy. Now, they get information on subjects such as how to clear buildings and how to deal with improvised explosive devices.

“Before, just officers would get classes like this,” said Cowboy. Some of the soldiers have even told him, this was the first time they had touched a weapon.
IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi Police discover weapons cache
BAQUBAH — Iraqi Police and Coalition troops discovered a cache of weapons southeast of Baqubah Jan. 30.

The cache consisted of 7 60 mm mortar rounds with fuses, wires, timers and radios.

An explosive ordnance disposal team was called in and cleared the cache.

Iraqi soldiers find three weapons caches
RAMADI — Iraqi soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition forces discovered three weapons caches Jan. 30.

The caches consisted of 25 60 mm high explosive rounds, two 60 mm white phosphorous rounds, 15 81 mm rounds, a hand grenade, four 82 mm mortar tubes, three 60 mm mortar tubes, 26 160 mm mortar rounds, two 122 mm rounds, one 152 mm round, one 120 mm mortar round, one SA-14 rocket, three 115 mm rounds, three sticks of PE-4 explosive, a radio base station with batteries, one timed fuse and detonation cord.

Coalition checkpoint stops counterfeit cops
TIKRIT — A combined Iraqi Police and Coalition Forces checkpoint in Kirkuk turned up four suspected anti-Iraqi forces members Jan. 29.

Members of the Iraqi Police and 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division established a combined surprise traffic control point early in the morning in an area of town known for insurgent activity.

Later, a vehicle was seen reversing its direction to avoid the check point. Soldiers pursued the vehicle.

The Soldiers attempted to stop the vehicle using non-lethal means, but the driver ignored the soldiers. Soldiers fired at the vehicle ending the pursuit. The engagement resulted in three male occupants killed, another male unhurt and detained.

All of the men were wearing IP uniforms, yet none had official IP identification documents. All four men tested positive for explosives residue.

A search of the vehicle yielded three AK-47 rifles, one sub-machine gun, and two pistols.

The Iraqi Police transported the detained individual to a nearby police station for further questioning. — 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division Public Affairs

One Iraqi soldier, ABC news crew injured
BAGHDAD — An Iraqi soldier, along with ABC News anchor Bob Woodruff and cameraman Doug Vogt, embedded with the 4th Infantry Division, were injured when an improvised explosive device detonated near their armored personnel carrier north of Taji Jan. 29.

The wounded were evacuated to a military hospital for further treatment. — Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs

During a Jan. 21 reconnaissance mission of the city of Al Rasheed, Coalition Soldiers noticed local teens taking steps to clean up the city. The teenagers are being paid by the Al Rasheed City Council to clean up and beautify the area. During the past few weeks, the young people have cleaned up several of the most seriously littered areas in the town, resulting in a vast improvement in the overall cleanliness and appearance of the city.

Photo by U.S. Army Lt. Charles Hill
Iraqi forces stage raids near Baqubah

TIKRIT — Iraqi soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division worked with Coalition forces to raid a terrorist cell targeting coalition bases in Baqubah Jan. 29.

The Iraqi soldiers, joined by members of 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, planned and conducted several raids to capture terrorists responsible for mortar and rocket attacks on Coalition bases.

Prior to the raids, unit leaders targeted several insurgents believed to be behind the attacks and operating in the nearby town of Septia.

The raid in Septia began just after daybreak and was completed by noon.

Three identified terrorists and 15 other suspects were detained.

The units seized a weapon, several hundred rounds of ammunition and one IED triggering device.

— 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division Public Affairs

Troops detain man with rocket

AMIRIYAH — Troops from 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division detained a man for having a rocket in the trunk of his car after his vehicle was searched at a control point Jan. 28.

The individual and rocket were turned over to authorities for further investigation.

No injuries or damages were reported.

Troops detain two men trying to place bomb

RAMADI — Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division captured two men during a patrol south of Ramadi after seeing the men place two bombs Jan. 28.

The first bomb consisted of six blocks of C4 explosive, one battery, one timer and a radio base station.

The second bomb was made from one 122 mm round, a battery, a cell phone charger and a blasting cap.

The men and the initiator devices were turned over to the authorities. The remaining bomb materials were destroyed on site by an explosive ordnance team.

Troops discover caches near Hit

HIT — Troops from the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition forces discovered two caches during patrols on Jan. 28.

The first cache, discovered northwest of Hit, consisted of one heavy machine gun, three rocket-propelled grenade launchers, four 107 mm rockets, 10 RPG rockets, seven 160 mm mortar rounds, four 82 mm mortar rounds, one 90 mm round, three 100 mm rounds, 36 14.5 mm rounds, 500 assorted small arms rounds, 40 blasting caps, 112 RPG boosters, two grenade fuses, six artillery propellant components, three RPG propellant components, 50-feet of detonation cord, 50-feet of time fuse, 49 mortar fuses, one IED initiator, six AK-47 magazines and six M16 magazines.

The second cache, discovered west of Hit, contained one sub-machine gun, one bolt-action rifle, one AK-47, 250 rounds of various small arms ammunition, two rifle grenades, 10 blank 7.62 mm rounds and one trip flare.

The contents of the caches were turned over to the authorities for disposal.

No injuries or damages were reported.

Terrorists attack civilians inside mosque

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division responded to a call stating that anti-Iraqi forces had killed several civilians inside a mosque Jan. 27.

Further reports indicated 30 to 50 terrorists were operating from within the mosque and were firing rocket-propelled grenades and small arms at Iraqi Police.

Upon arriving at the mosque, ISF patrols and supporting aviation assets restored the situation in spite of small-arms fire.

Three suspected terrorists were detained in connection with the incident.

No casualties were reported. — Multi-National Corps Public Affairs