

THE EAGLE & CRESCENT

WITH THE MARINES IN IRAQ

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Iraq's Army assumes control of forces near Fallujah



Gunnery Sgt. Mark Oliva

An Iraqi soldier receives the colors for the 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division in a ceremony at Nasser Wa Salaam, Iraq, Oct. 1. The ceremony marked the brigade's transfer to Iraqi authority, the second such transfer in as many months. The transfer from U.S. to Iraqi authority was a planned measure to increase Iraqi responsibility in fighting terrorism in Al Anbar Province.

Gunnery Sgt. Mark Oliva

Regimental Combat Team 5

NASSER WA SALAAM, Iraq - Iraq's army took a leap forward for greater independent responsibility today when the 1st Iraqi Army Division assumed operational control of another brigade.

Marines and soldiers of Regimental Combat Team 5, based in Fallujah, turned over operational control of Iraqi soldiers assigned to 4th Brigade to the 1st Iraqi Army Division in a ceremony marking the transfer of authority.

Iraqi soldiers serving in the brigade operate in joint and independent battlespaces ranging from this small city west of Abu Ghraib to regions north of Fallujah.

"On behalf of the 5,000 Marines, sailors and soldiers of Regimental Combat Team 5, I want to say how special and important today is," said Col. Larry D. Nicholson, commanding

officer of RCT-5.

This was the second such ceremony in as many months. In September, Iraq's 1st Division assumed authority over 3rd Brigade, based in Habbaniyah.

The transfer is part of a planned turnover of forces and independent battlespace to Iraqi Security Forces, who will assume increasing responsibility for fighting terrorism in Al Anbar Province. Iraqi soldiers of 4th Brigade have

been fighting alongside Marines in the region battling terrorists. Now, they will continue to work with Marines, but on a more independent basis.

"In July 2004, I walked this ground and imagined what might occur here one day," Nicholson told the gathering of Iraqi commanders and soldiers.

"That dream today has been fully realized. It's a dream realized through the hard work of the men of 4th Brigade; men on duty and on the job."

Nicholson said Iraqi soldiers proved their mettle in the past months by fighting insurgents alongside Marines, sharing in the risks and the victories over terrorism.

Both Marines and Iraqi soldiers, he said, learned to trust and rely upon one another because of the fortitude displayed by Iraqi soldiers - or jundi - on the battlefield.

"Last week, jundi, Marines and police

patrolled the streets of Gharmah," he explained. "That couldn't have been imagined two years ago. Marine and jundi have fought together, died together and bled together."

Nicholson said Iraqi soldiers' courage was displayed in April when insurgents attacked U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces in Gharmah, a small city north of Fallujah.

"Jundi were down to their last magazine," he said. "They kept fighting and did not stop. That bravery has affected me tremendously."

Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Abdullah Abdul Satter Abdul Kareem, commander of 4th Brigade, said the transfer from U.S. to Iraqi command was a historic occasion for the brigade, stating his Iraqi soldiers "honor the men of our country."

"This is an indicator of the level of training of the jundi of 4th Brigade," Abdullah said. "We are dedicated to building a free Iraq to defeat terrorism."

Abdullah lauded the soldiers of his brigade, reminding them of the security they have already brought to the region. Iraqi soldiers from 4th Brigade fought battles in Fallujah, Gharmah and Karbala, he said. They also distributed medical assistance to local residences and assisted in rebuilding Fallujah following the battle in 2004. Additionally, they protected electoral candidates from assassination attempts prior to Iraq's first free elections last year.

Iraqi soldiers and Marines will share battlespace and coordinate joint and bilateral operations in the coming months, even as Iraqi Security Forces take charge of greater swaths of territory from Marines in the region.

Gunnery Sgt. Mark Oliva is a combat correspondent serving with Regimental Combat Team 5 in the Al Anbar Province. For information, e-mail him at mark.oliva@gcemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil.

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- YOU START PICTURING YOUR WIFE IN TRADITIONAL ARAB DRESS
- THE TEMP DROPS DOWN TO 102 DEGREES AND YOU SHIVER WHILE REACHING FOR YOUR GORTEX JACKET
- WHEN YOU END EVERY PHONE CONVERSATION WITH "OUT"

Commanding General's Message to Families

It's almost hard to believe that it's the middle of October already – the days seem to pass more and more quickly each month – reinforcing the one thing we know for sure – time does not stand still. The fact that I MEF (Forward) is three quarters of the way through our yearlong deployment is good for morale. As a whole, we have done a lot of work and have executed our mission with dedication and professionalism. As we move into the last quarter, there are numerous events that will grant us a few moments of reprieve from the rigors of deployment – the Marine Corps Birthday, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years.

Before we get to those bright spots on the horizon, our focus is on bringing our new units online and maintaining our strong relationships with our Iraqi Army counterparts. Each day, the burden of responsibility carried by I MEF (Forward) is shifting to the capable hands of the Iraqis. We hold weekly meetings with the local leaders to develop the best methods of combining our abilities and strengths. Improvements are being made in and around the cities. Your Marines,



Maj. Gen. Richard C. Zilmer
Commanding General
Multi-National Forces-West

sailors, soldiers, and airmen are making it happen through dedication and hard work.

We were paid a visit by Billy Blanks – the creator of the Total Body Fitness System – TAE BO Oct. 3. On Oct. 13, we celebrated the 231st birthday of the United States Navy with a ceremony and cake-cutting celebration. On behalf of all service members in I MEF (Forward), I'd like to say Happy Birthday to our Navy counterparts, and thank them for their dedicated service. In addition to the handful of Navy personnel assigned to each Marine unit, we are honored to have the 3rd Naval Construction Regiment as a strong member of our Navy and Marine Corps Team.

For all of the family and friends supporting us on the home front – thanks for your love and dedication. As the leaves begin to turn on the East Coast and the weather cools down on the West Coast, please keep us in your prayers and help your service members to stay focused on the mission at hand by letting them know they have strong supporters at home.

Take care on the home front and Semper Fidelis.



**POOR SAFETY
IS
POOR PLANNING
PRACTICE ORM!**

THINK SAFE



STAY SAFE

Send your videotaped holiday greeting

Service members and civilians can send a videotaped greeting this holiday season to their loved ones and hometown media organizations. If interested, please come to the waterfall rock formation inside the Rotunda building complex on Wednesdays, Nov. 1, 8 and 15 anytime between 1500 and 1700. If you have any questions, please contact Staff Sgt. Amy Forsythe via-email or at 3404-876.

Dietary Supplements can cause dehydration

Dietary supplements are often associated with dehydration. Avoid dietary supplements containing high levels of caffeine or other stimulants (i.e. Yohimbine, Ginseng). Individuals taking supplements should reduce their risk by drinking plenty of water. Ensure that your health-care provider is aware that you are taking dietary supplements when seen for an appointment. Additional information can be found at the following websites: <http://chppm-www.apgea.mil/dhpw> or <http://www-nchc.med.navy.mil>

Camp Fallujah

MWR events

Open Mic/Jam Night	Mon.	2000
Trivial Pursuit	Tue.	2000
Rummy Night	Wed.	2000
Arm Wrestling	Thurs.	2000
Texas Hold'em/	Fri.	0900
Dominoes Tourney	Fri.	2000
Ladies Spa Night	Sat.	2130

*Movie Night: MWR facility daily at 2000.

A Message to our readers

The Eagle & Crescent is a publication produced for Multi-National Forces-West service members and their families and friends. We appreciate your interest, prayers and patriotic support.

Semper Fidelis, MNF-W PAO

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Correspondents from throughout the military contribute to this publication. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense. This publication is for information only and is not considered directive in nature.

Chapel of Hope Service Schedule

Friday - Jewish Sabbath Service	
(1st & 3rd Friday)	1830
Saturday - Catholic Confessions	1700
Catholic Vigil Mass	1800
Sunday - Catholic Mass	0800
Protestant Communion Service	0915
Protestant Contemporary Service	1030
Gospel Service	1300
Lutheran Services	1830
Monday - Friday	
Catholic Confessions	1700
Catholic Daily Mass	1800
(Blessed Sacrament Chapel)	

The Chaplain's Corner

Storms of life can test, grow faith



Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr. USN)

Russell B. Keyes

I MEF Headquarters Group

Faith untried may be true faith, but it is sure to be little faith. ... Faith never prospers so well as when all things are against her. ... When a calm reigns on the sea, spread the sails as you will, the ship moves not to its harbour; for on a slumbering ocean the keel sleeps too. Let the winds rush howling forth, and let the

waters lift up themselves, then, though the vessel may rock, and her deck may be washed with waves, and her mast may creak under the pressure of the full and swelling sail, it is then that she makes headway towards her desired have.

C.H. Spurgeon, a famed preacher of 19th century England penned these words many long years ago, but the truth that they express remains just as real and relevant today.

Are you a person of faith? Do you live by the faith you claim? If so, then the challenge before you is to weather the storms of adversity that inevitably will come, and watch your faith grow as a result.

Many an individual is content to sit back and rest in the comfort of the calm waters, only to be shocked to wakening when the strong winds come and the big waves threaten the placid state they have begun to enjoy. Yet, for all who place their faith in One greater than themselves, the reality is that the very energy that is represented by these waves of adversity and winds of discomfort, these very elements become the Master's hand, picking us up and moving us along to that place that we should be going.

Perhaps you are experiencing some of these waves today. Maybe the wind is whipping at your sail a little harder than you might like. The question to ask is "God, where might you be directing me in this hour? What might your plan for me be, at this time?" Then batten down the hatches, stand by for heavy rolls, and prepare yourself for the next adventure!



Sgt. Roe F. Seigle

AL ASAD, Iraq - Marines from different battalions assigned to the Regimental Combat Team 7 here, reenlisted under the hand of the commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Michael W. Hagee, and Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps, John L. Estrada. The Marines who reenlisted made a good choice to reenlist at the beginning of the fiscal year, which began Oct. 1., said Staff Sgt. Daniel Aldridge, 34, the regimental career retention specialist assigned to Regimental Combat Team 7 in Al Asad. At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Marine Corps had a little more than 6,000 slots for reenlistment. Half of the slots were filled by the first day of the fiscal year, he said. Many of the Marines reenlisted because they were allowed to choose their next duty station and the majority of the Marines were given cash bonuses, some of more than \$30,000, which is tax-free in a combat zone, said Aldridge, a native of Longmont, Colo. The Marine Corps' goal is to reenlist 25 percent of the Marines who are on their first enlistment. The deployed battalions assigned to RCT-7 achieved that goal before many of the battalions that are not deployed to a combat zone, said Aldridge. He added that many job fields in the Marine Corps were offering cash bonuses for reenlistment that do not usually offer one.

Passing the torch In Ramadi, 1/6 takes over A0

Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.
1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment

RAMADI, Iraq - In the complex and dangerous city of Ar Ramadi, Iraq, local knowledge and first-hand experience are valuable tools, and the Marines of 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment are looking to gain those tools early.

As part of the "Relief in Place" process of 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, the Marines of 1/6 are taking every opportunity available to learn the ins-and-outs of the city from their departing brothers.

"We are acting like a sponge," said Master Gunnery Sgt. Luis H. Hernandez, 48-year-old operations chief for the battalion.

"We're gleaned as much knowledge from our counterpart as we can," said Hernandez.

As soon as the Marines' boots hit the sand at Camp Ramadi, they begin classes concerning intelligence and operations in their new area of responsibility.

The Marines are informed of the more dangerous areas in the city, the range of enemy tactics, historical trends in enemy activity, the latest advances in enemy armaments and various other necessary tactical advantages.

Each brief is given by an officer from 3/8's operational and intelligence sections.

"We could not have asked for a more thorough and professional turnover from 3/8," said Lt. Col. William M. Jurney, 42-year-old commanding officer of the battalion.

As the Marines of 1/6 complete their classes, the companies are placed alongside their counterparts in the city where they begin the next step of the turnover.

Line companies, watch officers, guard forces and every other element of the battalion begin working alongside the Marines of 3/8 in Ramadi.

For the initial portion of the training, 3/8 Marines lead the way as 1/6 Marines observe the tactics and procedures refined through seven months of combat operations.

Though 1/6 is a veteran battalion on its



Cpl. Paul Robbins, Jr.

Lance Cpl. Carl R. Hensley, 19-year-old mortarman with the Hurricane Point guard force, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, stands behind an M249 squad automatic weapon while Lance Cpl. Allen R. Achey, 23-year-old rifleman with the Hurricane Point guard force, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, observes the traffic in front of their post. Now in the lead of operations for downtown Ramadi, the Marines of 1/6 operate without the guidance of 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment.

third deployment in support of the war on terror, the experiences of 3/8 offer a different look at situations in the city, according to Hernandez, a resident of Coral Gables, Fla.

"A set of eyes that has been here for seven months will see things a little differently," Hernandez said.

As the Marines adapt to the city and become more comfortable with their posts, the veterans of 3/8 will step aside and observe as 1/6 Marines take the lead.

The "left seat, right seat" training provides the oncoming Marines with tools that cannot be taught in a training environment, according to Hernandez.

"Day in and day out we're seeing the Marines of 3/8 passing along vital information and experience to the Marines of 1/6," said Jurney, a resident of Statesville, N.C.

"It's truly reflective of 'Marines taking care of Marines,'" said Jurney.

During their tour the Marines of 3/8 killed and captured hundreds of anti-Iraqi forces, created an Iraqi police station in Western Ramadi, turned over one of their forward operating bases to the Iraqi Army, and financially disrupted the insurgency, according to Lt. Col. Stephen M. Neary,

commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment.

Despite their many successes, Neary is confident that 1/6 can take the city even further.

"(1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment) is an experienced and disciplined unit," said Neary, a resident of Boston, Mass.

"They will make this city better and take the fight to the insurgency," he said.

The primary mission of 1/6 during its stay in Ramadi will be to support and assist the development of the Iraqi government in any way possible, according to Jurney.

However, the Marines of 1/6 "Hard" are poised and ready to carry out the true purpose of a Marine battalion, alongside their Iraqi brethren.

"Our Marines and sailors will continue to work side by side with the Iraqi Security Forces as we hunt down those terrorist and criminal elements that choose to try and harm us, the ISF, and the good people of Ramadi," said Jurney.

Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr. is a combat correspondent serving with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment in the Al Anbar Province. For information, e-mail him at RobbinsPA@gcemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil.

Marines become big brothers to Iraqi children



Lance Cpl. Ray Lewis

Navy Seaman Samuel L. Blanco, a hospital corpsman, snuggles with Iraqi children during a combat patrol Sept. 23. He and the Marines of Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment paused the patrol to spend time with the kids. Blanco is a 25-year-old from Justin, Texas, and serves under Regimental Combat Team 5 and will be conducting operations in the Habbaniyah area for seven months.

Lance Cpl. Ray Lewis

3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment

HUSAYBA, Iraq -- Marines with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment paused a combat patrol through a neighborhood here to spend time with local Iraqi children Sept. 22.

"They'll grow up, see Americans and say, 'I remember this one guy that was nice to me, so I'll be nice to them,'" said Navy Seaman Samuel L. Blanco, a hospital corpsman with Weapons Company.

Blanco said it shows a different side of them.

"We got all that gear on, so I'm sure were intimidating," he said. "It shows them that we're human and not machines."

As soon as the Marines put boots on the ground, kids were eager to meet them.

"Even though we were patrolling, they wanted to play and talk to us," said Pfc. Ryan L. Ward, a mortarman with Weapons Company.

The Marines kept moving, but some kids still tried to join the patrol. They were particularly drawn to the Marines' corpsman.

"They always like him a lot," said Lance Cpl. Matthew M. Woody, a 19-year-old from Indianapolis, Ind., who is a mortarman with Weapons Company.

Woody thinks it is Blanco's calm demeanor.

The kids greeted Blanco with open arms, hugging and snuggling the surprised sailor. Blanco said the experience was unique.

"Usually they're stand-offish," he said. "That was the first time they were like all over me. That time made me feel like they trusted me."

Even the parents were surprised. Even they couldn't help but to crack a smile. Many of the Marines were convinced that both parties left with a different perception of each other.

"I think it's good that they finally have someone to talk to and take care of their needs as a father figure," Woody said.

Blanco thinks interaction with the kids is one of the most important things Marines and sailors do in Iraq.

"It's gratifying," he said. "I got a nephew back home about their age, and I know if their current situation was reversed I'd want somebody to show compassion towards me."

Ward agreed.

"In the long run it'll slow insurgency because they'll see that were trying to help," he said.

Lance Cpl. Ray Lewis is a combat correspondent serving with 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment in the Al Anbar province. For information, e-mail him at raymond.lewis@gcemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil.



-Cpl. Thomas D. Martinez

6173/6177

CREW CHIEF/

MARINE AIR WEAPONS AND
TACTICS INSTRUCTOR

RANK/NAME: Cpl. Thomas D. Martinez

AGE: 22 **HOMETOWN:** Durango, Colo.

MARITAL STATUS: Single **KIDS:** N/A

UNIT/UNIT HOME/DEPLOYED TO: HMH-463

MCBH Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii/ Al Asad

MOS/JOB: 6173/6177-Crew Chief/ Marine

Air Weapons and Tactics Instructor

FIRST STEPPED ON YELLOW FOOTPRINTS:

June 2, 2002

HOW MANY DEPLOYMENTS: 2

HOBBIES: Wakeboarding, camping, skiing,
hiking, hanging out with friends

LAST SONG/MOVIE DOWNLOADED:

80's hits/Dave Matthew's Band-

Live at Red Rocks

FAVORITE HANGOUT: Lower downtown
Denver

FAVORITE MRE: Chicken Tettrazzini

FAVORITE PIECE OF GEAR WITH YOU:

Aviator sunglasses

WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED DURING

DEPLOYMENT: Different cultures

WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER MOST: The

people I work with and the flights

WHAT YOU ARE DOING WHEN YOU

REDEPLOY: I'd like to check out Australia

WORST PART ABOUT DEPLOYMENT: Being
away from friends and family

WHAT YOUR FAMILY THINKS ABOUT YOUR

DEPLOYMENT: They're extremely proud of
me, but at the same time they are worried
and miss me.

BEST MEMORY OF MARINE CORPS: Best-
Getting stuck in Malaysia.

Worst-When one of our helos crashed in
Okinawa.

FAVORITE DUTY STATION: Kaneohe Bay, HI

WHAT YOU WILL BE DOING IN 5 YEARS:

Employed as a helicopter pilot in Colorado

ADVICE FOR OTHERS HERE: Do everything
right the first time. Concentrate on what you
are doing. That way, you will only have to do
it once.

FAVORITE COMEDIAN: Dane Cook

Cpl. James B. Hoke

Marines, civilians deploy recovered weapons

Lance Cpl. Ben Eberle

1 Marine Logistics Group

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq - Since March 2003, coalition forces have seized thousands of unauthorized small arms through security patrols and urban search operations.

Marines and civilians with Ammunition Platoon, Supply Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), are redeploying these weapon systems into the Iraqi Army, turning insurgent resources into coalition assets.

"We need to arm our allies," said Warrant Officer Robert P. Smith, officer-in-charge of Camp Taqaddum's Ammunition Supply Point (ASP). "We not only need to train them on our tactics, we need to arm them with what they need to fight the insurgents."

Thousands of weapons, mostly AK-47 assault rifles, have been brought to the ASP where a team of specialists inspects the recovered items to determine which are still operational.

"As units conduct patrols, they come up with unauthorized weapons that eventually come to one of these collection points," said Gunnery Sgt. Mark W. Scarlata, electro-optics maintenance chief for Maintenance Company. "Our primary function is to sort the serviceable and unserviceable, authorized and unauthorized (for use by the Iraqi Security Forces)."

To determine which weapons are operational, the team forms an assembly line with each individual conducting a separate function check. The team can make basic repairs on location, such as changing a pair of hand guards or replacing a bolt assembly, said Scarlata, a 38-year-old from Lakeland, Fla.

Some of the weapons coming to the ASP are unsalvageable. Faulty trigger mechanisms, for example, commonly keep weapons from redeploying. Some weapons never have a chance for redeployment. Homemade mortar tubes and rocket-propelled grenade launchers are destroyed along with the assault rifles, shotguns and pistols that are beyond repair.

"We've got a good crew here; everyone's playing their part," added Scarlata. He refers to his team as a "hodge-podge" of Marines, some of whom have military

occupational specialties as motor transportation operators, administration specialists and legal clerks.

"We give them the rundown of what to look for, and with the seven (small-arms repairmen) we have here, we're not running into any problems," said Scarlata.

Three of the seven specialists are civilian contractors with prior military service.

"I never expected to be here, but I decided to come out because I knew I had something to contribute," said Chris Piepgrass, a 50-year-old from Springfield, Ore., who retired after 22 years in the Air

shotguns and, at a glance, described their features - even where they were manufactured.

"I've seen Egyptian, German and Czechoslovakian Mausers," said Garner, referring to some of the rifles he's seen since the weapons started coming in. "Some of these (AK-47s) are more than 30 years old. They're fairly indestructible," he said as he gestured toward the assembly line.

Camp Taqaddum is not the only base contributing to the redeployment of seized weapons. The Marine Corps has also



Lance Cpl. Ben Eberle

Lance Cpl. Nicholas W. Fitzanko, a 21-year-old from Wauconda, Ill., inspects an AK-47 assault rifle at Camp Taqaddum's Ammunition Supply Point. Fitzanko, an ammunition technician with Ammunition Platoon, Supply Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), is part of a team that conducts limited technical inspections on recovered weapons before redeploying them to the Iraqi Army.

Force. "It feels good to be a part of this."

One of the small arms repairmen is a former Marine who is getting his first taste of a deployment to Iraq.

"I'm just doing my part to help out, turning some of these guns around and getting them into the right hands," said Adam G. Garner, a Robbins, N.C., native. He served in the Marine Corps from 2001 to 2005.

What Garner might lack in deployment experience he makes up for in his knowledge of small arms.

He rummaged through a bin of weapons and randomly pulled out pistols and

established collection points in Al Asad and Fallujah.

"This is going to help arm the Iraqi Army with what is authorized, giving them more of a starting point than they already have," said Scarlata. He added that once the IA is properly trained, they can assume responsibility for the security of Iraq.

Lance Cpl. Ben Eberle is a combat correspondent serving with 1 Marine Logistics Group in the Al Anbar province. For information, e-mail him at ben.eberle@cssemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil

Baghdadi police chief: Securing Al Anbar key to safer Iraq



Sgt. Roe F. Seigle

Despite being wounded during an insurgent attack earlier this month, the prominent Iraqi police chief, Col. Shabban Barzan al-Ubaidi, chief of police for Baghdad, Iraq, has vowed to continue his "fight" to keep Iraq's western Al Anbar Province safe. Baghdad is a town of about 30,000 people located just miles south of Haditha along the Euphrates River.

Sgt. Roe F. Seigle
Regimental Combat Team 7

AL ASAD, Iraq – Despite being wounded during an insurgent attack earlier this month, a prominent Iraqi police chief has vowed to continue his "fight" to keep Iraq's western Al Anbar Province safe.

Col. Shabban Barzan al-Ubaidi of the Baghdad Police Force says the fact that he survived the attack is "proof the enemy cannot take (his) life away, only God can, and God is not on the enemy's side."

Despite the attack, his police forces remain undeterred and Iraqis in the Al Anbar Province are still willing to join Ubaidi's police forces, he said.

Baghdadi is a town of about 30,000 people located just miles south of Haditha along the Euphrates River.

Last month, another 200 Iraqi men were recruited to join the police forces in western Anbar and were sent to police academies in Baghdad or Jordan.

In August, U.S. military forces recruited more than 500 Iraqis for service in police forces in western Anbar. Marines here deemed it as the "most successful recruiting drive to date" in the region.

Lt. Col. David Little, the Marine in charge of the various U.S. police transition teams in western Anbar, says Ubaidi played a crucial role in

recruiting efforts by organizing police recruiting events throughout the Hadithah Triad and Baghdad.

"Col. Shabban is a person who looks past ethnic, tribal and clan divisions," said Little, 43, a native of Rocklin, Calif. "He is a nationalist; he wants Iraq for Iraqis and he wants security in the Al Anbar Province."

Currently, there are more than 2,000 police officers, who are a mixture of Sunnis and Shiites, in Baghdad and surrounding cities, which is located in the heart of the Sunni-dominated Al Anbar Province, where Coalition and Iraqi forces have faced arguably the fiercest fighting in Iraq in recent years.

Along with a steady flow of recruits, Iraqi police officers have received much-needed gear in recent months, to include handcuffs, uniforms, batons and police cars to fight crime, oftentimes with Coalition Forces at their side.

Ubaidi said he is anxious to get back to Baghdad and continue fighting insurgents with Coalition Forces. He was wounded after insurgents fired at his police vehicle in a neighboring village, just minutes after giving chase to insurgents who previously lobbed several mortars at a housing complex in Baghdad Oct. 3, 2006.

One police officer was killed in the small-arms-fire ambush. Ubaidi was shot with an unknown caliber of weapon. Insurgents were going to

See Chief Page 9

set fire to his vehicle believing they had killed him, but Ubaidi said he managed to grab a machine gun and open fire on the insurgents, who fled after additional police arrived on scene and engaged the insurgents.

Ubaidi says he killed an unknown number of insurgents, and that several more were arrested by his police force.

Rumors and errant press reports quickly surfaced throughout the region that Ubaidi was killed, but Ubaidi said he squashed those rumors when two of his officers visited him at Al Asad. He instructed them to pass news that he was going to survive and continue his fight against insurgents while continuing to build and train his police force.

Ubaidi, while recuperating at the U.S. military base here, also wrote a letter to his policemen to boost their morale. He wrote that he was "just another Iraqi" and "even if I die, keep fighting the enemy."

"Every time I look at these wounds, I thank God for them," said Ubaidi, through a translator. "These wounds are an honor for (my) tribe and the Iraqi people. I built the Iraqi police in Baghdadi with every cell in my blood. No one is going to take it away from me."

Ubaidi said even though there are still insurgents in the Haditha and Baghdadi areas, residents have become much more supportive of Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

He cites the fact that children used to throw rocks at military vehicles and residents would not speak to Marines or Iraqi soldiers and police.

Now, local children greet and shake hands with Marines, Iraqi soldiers and police, and many residents are taking oaths to fight the insurgents by volunteering to become policemen – a "180" from just a few months ago.

However, these changes come with a large price tag.

"I am trying to save people from insurgents," said Ubaidi. "My wounds are an honor. I do not regret it."

This summer, more than a dozen police recruits were assassinated in a drive-by shooting in front of a police station in the Al Anbar Province and more than 20 police officers from the Baghdadi region have been killed sporadically in the past year.

One of Ubaidi's brothers, also a police officer, was killed in March by a vehicle-born suicide bomb in the Al Anbar Province, said Ubaidi.

Ubaidi said when he took the job as police chief last December that he knew he was "playing with fire" and would one day face the enemy.

"We took an oath to eradicate (insurgents)," said Ubaidi. "We will not accept any reason for the enemy to attack us or civilians and police."

Every insurgent attack will be treated as a criminal act, he added.

Ubaidi said he will soon be back on his feet and will continue to try to achieve his dream, which is to have a police force throughout the Al Anbar Province that is "strong, thriving and victorious."

Sgt. Roe F. Seigle is a combat correspondent serving with Regimental Combat Team 7 in the Al Anbar Province. For information, e-mail him at SeigleMF@gcemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil

Marine mechanic devotes self to job despite conditions

Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq - It's a dirty, hot job, but someone has to do it. The often filthy profession of a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter mechanic has been ably performed by many dedicated Marines for the past seven months at Al Asad, Iraq.

Cpl. James B. Cheek, known affectionately as "Cheeks" around the flight line maintenance section of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), is one of those Marines.

"I've worked with him for three and a half years, and Cheek is a fine representation of a flight line mechanic," said Sgt. Tyler A. Bereziuk, the flight line day-shift supervisor. "If you put him side by side with any other person, you'd know which he is, because he would be the one black from the arms down, looking like he is covered in grease or has been rolling around in the dirt."

According to Bereziuk, that state of general griminess is exactly what you want in a flight line shop -- a Marine who is always out on the line working hard and getting dirty.

"He never gets to fly, never gets a thanks and is always covered in grease, but he never complains," said Bereziuk, a Petoskey, Mich., native. "That's why everybody likes him. It's funny when he runs at night, his arms are black



Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

Cpl. James B. Cheek grabs a wrench from a toolbox during the maintenance of a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter at Al Asad, Iraq, Sept. 21. Cheek is a CH-53E helicopter mechanic working in the flight line section of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward). He is a Fort Worth, Texas, native.

and his legs are pale white."

There is more to Cheek than a veneer of grease and dirt. The 24-year-old Fort Worth, Texas, native is a veteran of two deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and a Marine who has his own outlook on his labor-

intensified job.

"Do the job right the first time. If you don't, then you're going to end up doing it again or hurting somebody," said Cheek. "With this job, a lot of it is personal integrity. One time, another corporal and I were washing windows and a rag blew away. We couldn't find it, so I ran and told someone. We had to shut down flights until we found it."

A piece of cotton cloth is considered foreign object debris, because it has the ability to damage a running aircraft.

"Things like that make the difference in squadrons. Last time out here, we lost four Marines and I don't want to go through that again," said Cheek. "My friends fly these birds. I work on them and don't want to be responsible for anyone dying. I want my friends, the grunts and the passengers to come back. I know that what I do can hurt or help that plane, so I do my best."

Cheek has a simple recommendation for new Marines joining the business of being a flight line mechanic.

"The biggest thing is speaking up. When you don't know, mess up, see something wrong or have a different idea on how to do things, say something," Cheek concluded.

Cpl. Jonathan F. Teslevich is a combat correspondent serving with the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing in the Al Anbar Province. For information, e-mail him at jonathan.teslevich@acemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil

1/25 rids area of insurgents

Fallujans cooperate, show hospitality to Marines during mission



Cpl. Brian Reimers

An Iraqi man opens his front door after 1st Lt. Christopher L. Doggett and Sgt. Flavio D. Mendes knocked on it. The Marines, with 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, swept the Andaloos District of Fallujah during Operation Matador. The battalion was confirming that no anti-Iraqi forces were operating in the area and searched hundreds of houses looking for signs enemy forces.

Cpl. Brian Reimers

1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment

FALLUJAH, Iraq - Little moonlight shined onto the Marines making their way toward the Andaloos District deep into the city. Only night vision goggles led the way to the first building to be searched.

Marines from C Company and the Personnel Security Detachment, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, cleared and searched hundreds of houses and buildings in their designated section during Operation Matador Sept. 13.

The operation was conducted to disrupt insurgents operating in the area.

Armed Marines on the prowl for unaware insurgents lined up outside doors before the sun could begin to appear over the horizon.

"One, two, three ... Go! Go! Go!" ordered Sgt. Flavio D. Mendes, a

fire team leader with the PSD, from Milford, Mass.

Marines entered the building with quick force, ready for whatever lied in their path. Most of the buildings were occupied by local Fallujans who weren't expecting guests, much less Marines searching for weapons or signs of enemy activity.

But Marines knew they had to act fast and catch the Iraqis off guard if they wanted to capture anybody who had something to hide. The area they were operating in had been a dangerous one in recent months and they didn't want to take any chances.

"Sorry to wake you, but we need to conduct a search of your place and then we will be out of your way," said 25-year-old Mendes to the occupants.

"Are there any weapons in the building or anything that we need to be aware of right now?" he asked.

Every building, room and rooftop was searched as Marines swept through several blocks in their zone of responsibility.

Hours of searching continued without any friction from people in the area.

After many had woken to see the operating forces, they started to trickle out into the streets.

"They were very cooperative, and many of them let us right in to their houses," said Lance Cpl. Youngjun Choi, from North Babylon, N.Y. "They knew what our intent was, and they understood why we were there."

"The people were so friendly that I had to keep reminding myself that we were in an area where Marines had been attacked before," Mendes said.

Adults and children alike stood at the fronts of their homes and watched as the Marines carried out their mission. When the Marines stopped to speak with the homeowners and families, many were offered food and drinks.

"At one house I actually met an Iraqi Policeman and we discussed politics with one another," said Cpl. Craig A. Washington, a 23-year-old infantryman with C Company, from Springfield, Mass.

Marines didn't find large weapons caches or enemy personnel fighting against them. What they found instead were Iraqi people interested in their mission and eager to watch their progress.

C Company searched its last group of buildings when they stumbled upon a box of ammunition used in AK-47 assault rifles, a common weapon used by insurgents.

"We were waiting for a few Marines to link up with us when started poking around and found the ammo," Washington said.

Other than the rounds, the C Company and PSD Marines reported no major concerns or insurgent activity in their area.

They spent the rest of their time handing out candy and talking with locals, reassured that the enemy wasn't operating there today.

Cpl. Brian Reimers is a combat correspondent who served with 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment in the Al Anbar Province. For information, e-mail him at brian.reimers@usmc.mil 1/25 has redeployed recently and was been replaced by 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment.

Warriors' Words

What does the term Leadership mean to you?

"Knowing your troops more than you know yourself."

Cpl. Zachary A. Snyder
Supply Clerk
Police Transition Team



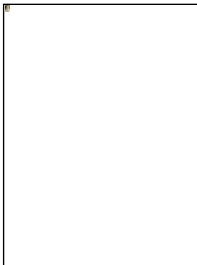
"Being an example to others."

Sgt. Jolonda N. Jackson
Communications Technician
Combat Logistics Battalion 5



"Leadership is being a good role model, telling and doing the right things."

Cpl. Luong T. Phan
Disbursing Pay Agent
Combat Logistics Battalion 5



"Leadership to me has always been holding subordinates accountable."

Maj. Stephen K. Van Riper
Operations Planner
I MHG



"A combination of troop welfare and mission completion."

HM3 Patrick M. Lindamood
Hospital Corpsman
I MHG Aid Station



Photo illustration by Cpl. Lynn Murillo

Special Agent shoots himself in foot

Dennis Fahey

MNF-W Director of Safety

There's this Federal Agent. He is cocky! He is brash! He knows exactly what he is talking about! His audience: a group of elementary school children. Special Agent Foot, he is lecturing on the dangers of drugs and then he shifts his focus to guns. He is cocky and has the attention of his audience. He draws his handgun and states in a loud, authoritative booming voice, "I am the only one in this room with the proper training to handle this weapon." Agent Foot with all his professional training, all his cockiness, and all his expertise proceeds to shoot himself in the foot! Unbelievably, and obviously in pain he continues and uses his accident to illustrate that with all the professional training in the world you can still get hurt. Agent Foot continues to lecture grabbing an even bigger weapon, an automatic rifle! As this point the children are obviously worried and some yell at him, "Put it away, put it away!" Finally someone with some sanity escorts the children from the room.

I'm sure Agent Foot made his way to a medical treatment facility and hopefully to an in-depth weapons handling course.

Sounds funny! Sounds unlikely! Well, here in Iraq service members make similarly dangerous mistakes. Since late February, there

have been countless negligent discharges in Al Anbar Province. Often, incidents go unreported when there are no injuries. Of the reported negligent discharges from February 28, 2006, to present there have been 15 injuries. Out of these 15 incidents, 10, just like Special Agent Foot, were lower leg or foot wounds. Some had injuries too severe to be treated in theatre and required further evacuation. In addition to these injuries, MNF-W has had one death caused when one Marine had a negligent discharge with his M-16 striking and killing a fellow Marine. All these preventable mishaps reduced the effectiveness of their units to carry out their day-to-day missions.

As members of Multi-National Force – West handle weapons on a daily basis. It becomes easy to get complacent about the fact that we are all armed. Situational awareness is a must for all of us! We cannot forget the basics of weapons handling as Special Agent Foot did.

Remember:

- Treat every weapon as if it were loaded.
- Never point your weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot. (Like your foot.)
- Keep your weapon on safe until you are ready to fire.
- Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until you intend to fire.

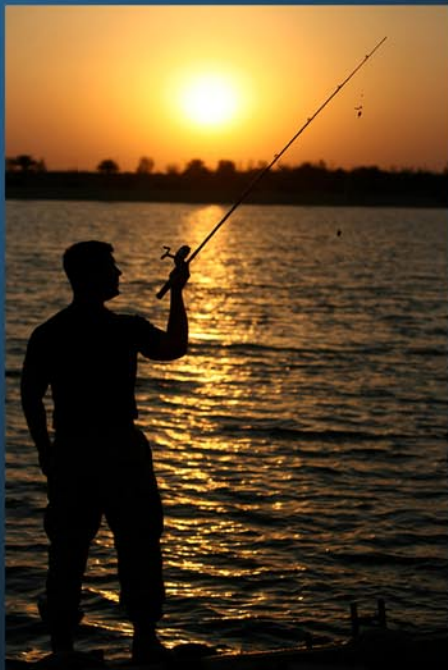
Mission first, safety always.

SWAP shots

From the Front



FALLUJAH, Iraq - Staff Sgt. Michael J. Maschmeier gets into the groove of the tunes he's strumming on his ukulele. Marines from Regimental Combat Team 5's Headquarters Company, including Marines of the 1st Marine Division band strumming their ukuleles, perform their rendition of 'Brown-eyed Girl' for the of RCT 5 staff recently.



Cpl. Brian Reimers

FALLUJAH, Iraq - Lance Cpl. Eric T. Shaw, a supply administration clerk assigned to 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, casts bait into the lake at Camp Baharia, Iraq. A group of Marines here fish frequently as a way to escape the daily stresses of being deployed. Shaw, 22, is from Leicester, Mass.



Lance Cpl. Andrew D. Young

ALUCHE, Iraq -An Iraqi child tries on a Kevlar helmet in the town of Aluche July 23.



Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

AL ASAD, Iraq - Cpl. Christopher D. Bland instructs Lance Cpl. Joseph C. Williams on how to do a post-flight inspection of an EA-6B Prowler belonging to Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 2, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), at Al Asad, Iraq, June 18.



Lance Cpl. Ray Lewis

HABBANIYAH, Iraq - Pfc. Robert G. Jewell, 19, stands security while other members of Jump Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment meet local Iraqis near Mudiq, Iraq Aug. 11.