

Romanian eyes over Al Kut • Detainees released

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THE COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 2, Issue 11

November 2007



In It Together

*Concerned local citizens stand up
and join the fight for Iraq's future*

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THE COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of
Multi-National Corps-Iraq

November 2007
Volume 2, Issue 11

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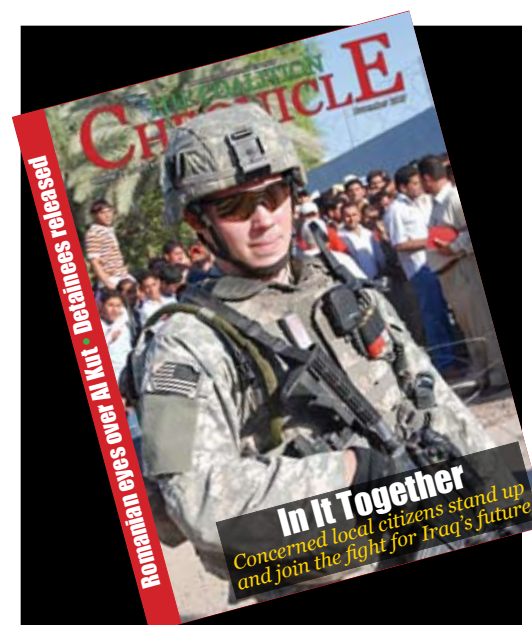
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This month's covers

Up front: Sgt. Patrick Donlan, Co. B, 2/325 PIR, 2nd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div., provides security at a concerned local citizens screening process in Baghdad's Sha'ab neighborhood Sept. 27. Photo by Army Sgt. Mike Pryor.

On the back: An Iraqi policeman provides security during a parade in Ramadi Oct. 23. Photo by Army Spc. Kieran Cuddihy.

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COMMANDER'S VOICE

This fall a number of new units, such as the 1st Armored Division headquarters, transitioned into theater.

These units arrived to find a very different country than did their predecessors. Last year, Iraq was a nation immersed in a virulent cycle of extremist violence and sectarian killings.

However, this year the security environment is significantly improved and the people are taking a more active role in shaping the future of their country. Momentum is beginning to build towards that better future, but it is not yet irreversible. Our charter is to keep Iraq headed in the right direction: toward achieving that irreversible momentum. We have learned that protection of the population is key to security and continued progress. I am quite confident that the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines of the Coalition will continue the steady gains we have achieved over the past year.

The encouraging trends we began to see as Ramadan approached only became more dramatic as the Islamic holy season came to a close. This year's Eid al-Fitr holiday marking the end of Ramadan was more cause to celebrate than breaking the fast of the Islamic holy month. Attacks continued their steady downward trend, reaching their lowest level in nearly two years. IED attacks, the extremists' weapon of choice, have also dropped significantly, falling more than 60 percent in the past four months with greatly reduced lethality.

The proof is not just in the numbers, it is evident in the people as well. Citizens throughout Iraq have approached and told me of the improved security in their neighborhood. They can walk through their markets without fear of attack. Their neighborhoods are regaining a sense of normalcy that has been lost for far too long. The confidence of the populace is clearly the most important metric in a counterinsurgency and it is steadily turning in our favor, thanks to the tireless efforts of our men and women in uniform and their Iraqi partners.

The Jihad area has long been one of Baghdad's most contentious neighborhoods. With a healthy mix of Sunni and Shia residents following the bombing of the Golden Mosque, Jihad became a flashpoint for sectarian conflict that has been



Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno
MNC-I Commander

a border war of sorts between the two ethnic groups fighting for influence.

However, a reconciliation agreement was recently reached by the leaders of Jihad. More importantly, five short days after they reached this agreement to improve services in the area, I accompanied a delegation of Jihad's leadership, several Iraqi ministers, Baghdad's deputy mayor and members of the Provincial Council to inspect the projects designated by the reconciliation agreement for improvement.

This is a small but important step as high level officials from the government of Iraq came together to identify and remedy a situation that affected a significant number of its citizens. They committed to making the Furat hospital functional again, improving oil deliveries, rebuilding mosques, and returning the local sewage system to working order. These are the type of improvements that are needed to sustain the progress we have made to this point. They are also improvements that are possible because of the increased security we helped to provide in Jihad and throughout Iraq.

Clearly Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have played a significant role in improving the security in Iraq. You and your Iraqi partners have aggressively taken the fight to the enemy while earning the trust and confidence of the Iraqi people. Much of the credit for the dramatically different security environment in Iraq can also be traced back to the groundswell of popular opinion against extremism.

Citizens across Iraq are taking their communities back. Concerned citizens

have greatly enhanced our ability to secure their neighborhoods through a variety of means. They are providing us with valuable information, seizing caches, and detaining extremists on their own to protect their homes and families.

Extremist spheres of influence have also greatly diminished. Al-Qaida in Iraq is clearly on the run, with public sentiment increasingly growing against them. A movement that began as a largely Sunni uprising has spread over to predominantly Shia areas as well.

With Shia religious and tribal leaders coming forward in steadily growing numbers, Shia extremist groups are also beginning to see their popular support disappear. With security improving, many former militia members have simply turned to intimidating, extorting, and even murdering the very citizens they once claimed to protect.

The citizens of Iraq are fed up with the violence and fear that have permeated their neighborhoods. In ever-increasing numbers they are turning to the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces for help to secure their communities. A perfect example came last month, when the relative of a JAM special groups member turned over a sizable cache recently delivered from Iran which contained almost 300 components or fully-assembled explosively formed projectiles among dozens of other items.

We are working hard, together, to make Iraq a better place. Whether by building schools, eradicating extremist influence or empowering the government of Iraq, we are setting the conditions for further and more sustainable progress. As many of the service members in theater begin either returning home or preparing to do so, I ask you to take a moment to reflect on exactly how far we have all come together.

Much of what we have accomplished over the last year was almost unthinkable a year ago, yet here we stand. Through your hard work, determination and effort, we have given the people of Iraq a unique opportunity to control their own destiny, free of oppression, terrorism from fear. Thank you for all you do every day.

Phantom Warriors! 

CSM's CORNER

This is for Spc. Snow, a young infantryman I quickly developed an appreciation and respect for over the course of two days with his infantry company. Spc. Snow caught my attention during the course of a cordon and search conducted in the city of Baqubah late one evening during which he proceeded to tell an Iraqi how much he hated him, his country and his (Snow's) present predicament. I pulled the young man aside after the exchange and told him I seriously doubted he hated anyone, let alone an Iraqi. More to the point; he was the one who chose his lot in life (at that moment). He voted with his head, heart and right hand. He was the one who volunteered, by a willful act of subordination to be precisely where he found himself. He joined an Army that was at war, and given he was already in his twenties, he knew what he was getting in to.

I'm not dedicating this to Snow on account of his loose tongue. I'm dedicating it to him because of the insightful man I assessed him to be. Over the course of the following day, I had occasion to talk to the young Soldier a number of times and was struck by the depth of his intellect, his character, the fact that he was well read, his ability to articulate his positions and perspectives, and the fact that he was not afraid to ask a question. I dedicate this to Spc. Snow because he was sincere. I dedicate this to that young man, for he is one of the many gifts we are fortunate to have with us in our Army. Spc. Snow, you know you're going to catch some !@#\$ over this, but I dare say you can handle it.

On my trip back to Victory Base Complex in my humvee, I found my mind wondering, thinking of all the gifts we've been afforded, all that has been given to the Coalition and the Iraqis. I thought of the fast-approaching holiday season: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah to name but a few. I thought of all the Marines, Sailors, Airmen, Soldiers and Civilians who have committed themselves to our efforts here in Iraq. I thought of all the family and friends we have



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Neil Ciotola
MNC-I Command
Sergeant Major**

***Once more in the
history of humanity,
brave men and
women will stand
watch over those
less fortunate.***

waiting for us back home. I thought of the windfall of support we reap back home every day in the form of foodstuffs, sundries, toys and school supplies for the Iraqi children. I thought of all these things and a whole lot more. After all, you can only go so fast and do so safely, so I had lots of time on my hands while I scanned my sector of responsibility. In thinking of all we have to be thankful for, the one image that played over and over again in my mind was the map of Iraq; the one with all the unit symbols on it. I thought of all those formations, past and present, who have stood watch over those who lacked the capacity to do so for themselves. Good Lord we have reason to give thanks.

I've spent countless hours and miles on the roads of Iraq visiting most of the units and agencies throughout the country. Each one has performed admirably, selflessly and professionally. I continue to marvel at the determination and resolve

exhibited by most, if not all, of the units listed. This has been a long and protracted affair that would have long ago sucked the life from lesser institutions.

There are some in theater, and even some back home, who have called this "the Army's fight." That could not be further from the truth. This is the Global War on Terror, not merely America's fight, nor the American Army's fight for that matter. I will not

debate what got us here. Have we erred in some respects? I dare say so. But with all that said our intentions are and always have been honorable.,

Finally, I want to ensure all that I count each and every one of our Coalition partners a gift as well. It seems like everywhere we go to confront evil our British and Australian allies are always there standing alongside us. We have also seen the emergence of other nations committed to efforts in not only Iraq, but other parts of the globe. The Koreans, Poles, Romanians, Georgians, Japanese, Estonians and many others have all contributed to the cause.

This holiday season will once again find Marines, Sailors, Airmen and Soldiers from 27 nations committed to a fight far from home. Once more in the history of humanity, brave men and women will stand watch over those less fortunate, brave troopers determined to provide a brief respite and a chance at a brighter future. I count each and every one of them as a gift. ©

N COALITION NEWS BRIEFS S



IPs capture triggerman who wounded children

TUZ — Iraqi Police captured an improvised explosive device triggerman after he initiated an attack that killed and wounded several Iraqi civilians, including 10 children Oct. 12.

“This cowardly act, including the targeting of young children, demonstrates a lack of respect for the faiths and livelihoods of the Iraqi people,” said Lt. Col. Michael O. Donnelly, Multi-National Division-North spokesman. “This thoughtless act of terrorism is barbaric and the people will continue to reject the ways of these extremists.”

The triggerman detonated the IED, which was hidden in a donkey cart laden with explosives, killing one civilian and wounding 10 children. The triggerman was also injured in the attack.

Iraqi Police responded to the site of the attack, detaining the wounded triggerman, and treating and transporting the wounded to Tuz Hospital. ☞



IP EOD commander disarms large VBIED

QAYYARAH — Iraqi Police from southern Nivenah Province stopped a large vehicle-borne improvised explosive device before its driver had a chance to detonate it Oct. 25.

Local police received a tip from a citizen about the suspected large fuel truck that was rigged as a VBIED. Moving in to investigate, they learned the driver had parked the device on the Qayyarah Bridge, told a local national on the ground that he was going to blow up the bridge, then jumped into the water below.

Iraqi explosive ordnance disposal specialists, led by Lt. Col. Kahlid, arrived at the site. Kahlid personally moved to the vehicle and disarmed the VBIED. “This is an incredible act of selflessness on the part of Lt. Kahlid,” said Army Lt. Col. Robert McLaughlin, 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division commander. ☞



72-year-old man stops suicide bomber

ARAB JABOUR — A 72-year-old man stopped a suspected suicide bomber from detonating himself at a checkpoint Oct. 14.

The man approached the checkpoint where Mudhehr Fayadh Baresh was standing guard, but did not make it very far.

Baresh, a tribal commissioner and member of the Arab Jabour Concerned Citizens Program, said he ordered the man to lift his shirt — using training received from Coalition Forces — when he did not recognize him as a local villager.

The suspect refused to lift his shirt. Baresh repeated the command again, and the suspect exposed his suicide vest, running toward the checkpoint.

Baresh opened fire, which caused the vest to detonate and kill the suspect.

“I did it for the honor of my family and the honor of my country,” Baresh said.

Army Lt. Col. Keneth Adgie, commander of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, presented Mudher with a battalion coin for his valor Oct. 16. ☞



1st Armored Division begins Iraq mission

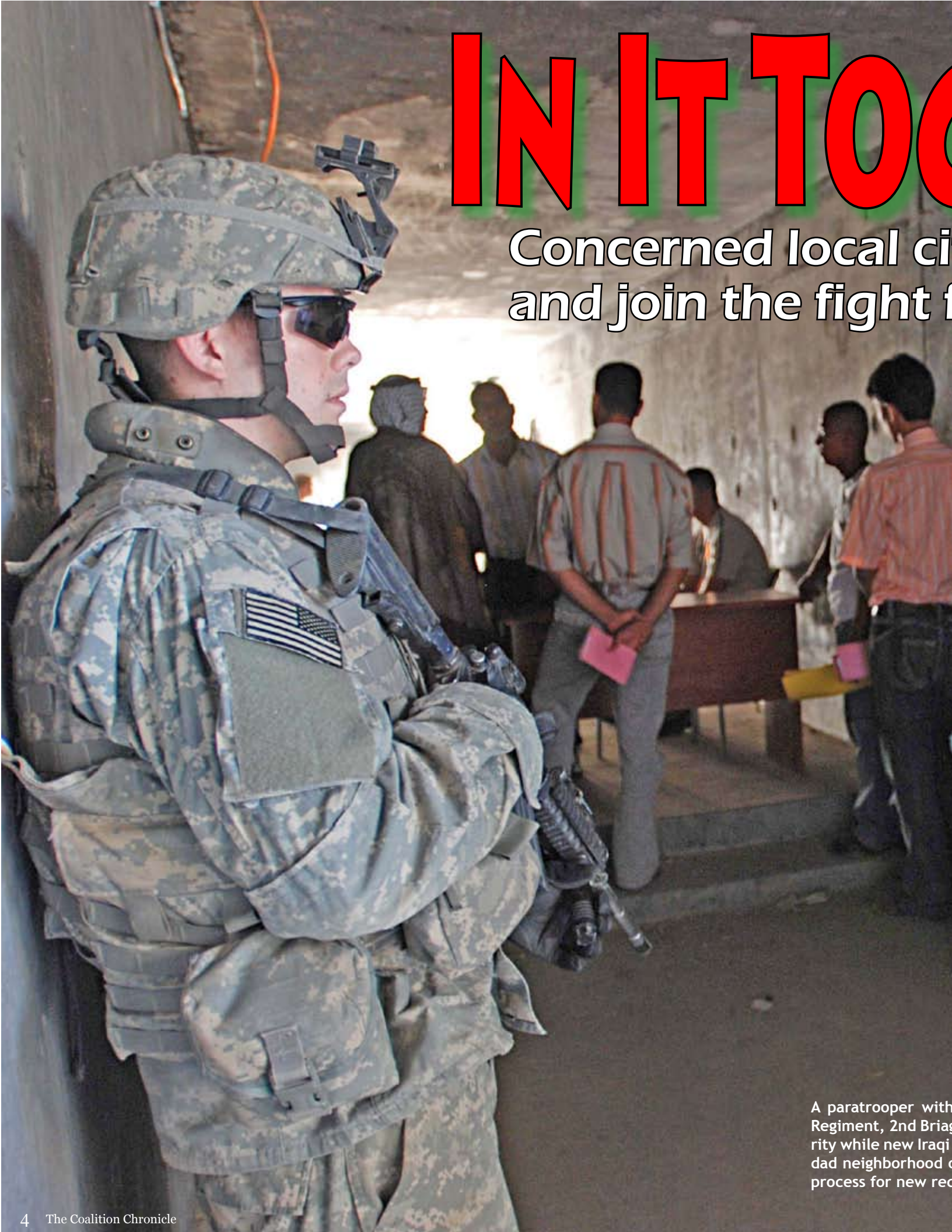
TIKRIT — The 1st Armored Division, out of Wiesbaden, Germany, officially assumed control of Multi-National Division-North at a transfer of authority ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher Oct. 28. Army Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling, 1st Armor Div. commanding general, assumed responsibility from Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, 25th Infantry Division commanding general.

“The Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division headquarters have performed magnificently here in Iraq through the past 14 months, Mixon said of his Soldiers, who are based out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

The 1st AD’s 1,200 Soldiers will provide command and control capabilities to MND-N. ☞

IN IT TOO

Concerned local citizens
and join the fight for



A paratrooper with the 1st Airborne
Regiment, 2nd Brigade
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process for new rec



GETHER

citizens stand up
for Iraq's future

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. Mike Pryor
MND-B PAO

Inside a stuffy conference room in a makeshift recruiting station, a dozen men from eastern Baghdad's Sha'ab neighborhood stood with their right hands raised. The men were all different sizes and shapes, some in their teens, some with grey hair, some in oxford shirts and dress shoes, others in sports jerseys and flip-flops.

In front of each man was a piece of paper with a statement of loyalty to the Iraqi government printed on it. Haltingly at first and then louder as their voices joined together, the men recited the words on the paper, pledging to serve the government and obey the law.

With that, the men officially went from being average citizens to protectors of their community.

Over the last week, almost 600 men have applied to join Sha'ab's new volunteer security force, a government-authorized, U.S.-funded community police force which will guard important local infrastructure sites like offices, schools, and markets. The total force will eventually number more than 1,200 people.

"These guys are going to work in partnership with the Iraqi Police and the Iraqi National Police to secure their own neighborhoods and streets and markets," said Hinckley, Ohio, native, Capt. Dennis Marshall, commander of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. The White Falcons have backed the creation of the new force with funding and assistance screening applicants.

While Sha'ab's volunteer security force program comes in the wake of several other well-publicized community police programs in other parts of Baghdad, Marshall said it wasn't a case of jumping on the bandwagon.

"This is something the sheiks have been asking for since I first got here," he said. "It's about local solutions to local problems."

The allure of the program is that it gives area residents a greater role in securing their own neighborhood, while also providing much-needed jobs, said Hamood Hassem, a political figure known as the mayor of Adhamiyah, and one of the key organizers of the program.

"We want to give people a chance to work and we want to protect our area," Hassem said.

Hassem played a central role in creating the program, working with local sheiks, elders, Imams (Muslim clerics), and community leaders to build

2nd Battalion, 325th Parachute Infantry
Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, provides secu-
rity volunteers from the eastern Bagh-
dad of Sha'ab wait to go through the screening
process Sep. 27.



New Iraqi security volunteers from the eastern Baghdad neighborhood of Sha'ab have their fingerprints entered into a database by Pfc. Jeremy Mendoza and Staff Sgt. Thedros Poinsette from 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, during the screening process for new recruits Sep. 27.

support for the idea and select the members of the new force.

Each applicant had to be “sponsored,” or vouched for, by a local leader, which ensured that militia members, criminals, and terrorists were kept out, Hassem said.

The depth of support the program has generated was evident during a screening for recruits that took place at Hassem’s office in Sha’ab on Sept. 27. By 9 a.m., hundreds of men had gathered out in the street for the chance to join.

Hassem strode up and down, a gaggle of sheiks and officials around him, haggling and bartering about which men to let in.

Inside the building, paratroop-

ers had a series of stations set up, where the applicants filled out paperwork, had fingerprints and retina scans taken, and received medical inspections. The last step in the process was to swear the oath of loyalty.


As the day wore on, the crowd still left outside started trying to push their way in. Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Taylor, outside working crowd control, told a group of men who were surging on the building

to step back. Only one of them, a teenager with floppy, too-big shoes and a mop of hair, obeyed promptly. When the crowd was under

control, Taylor plucked the good-lister out and escorted him inside, and then made sure he was seen quickly at every one of the stations.

“It’s about local solutions to local problems.”

*Army Capt. Dennis Marshall
HHC, 2/325th PIR commander*

“He was doing the right thing. You take care of people who play by the rules. That’s what this is all about,” Taylor said. 

Joint Protection

Sustainers add armor upgrades to Polish humvees

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. 1st Class Felix A. Figueroa
82nd Sustainment Brigade PAO

Polish soldiers and 82nd Sustainment Brigade troops stationed at Camp Echo recently flew to LSA Adder in a former Soviet Mi-8 helicopter to pick up tactical enhancement devices for Polish ground vehicles.

According to Maj. Richard A. Hall, 82nd Sustainment Brigade liaison officer, the Rhino I system is being installed on Polish humvees in order to provide an increased level of protection and freedom of movement as Polish soldiers conduct operations in the Al Quadisiyah Province.

"These guys are pretty receptive, open minded and willing to try new ideas," Hall said. "I'm confident these Rhino systems will serve them well."

Polish troops seemed excited to receive and try out American ingenuity on their equipment.

"I'm a brand-new graduate of the Polish flight school and what we learned about Iraq before deploying, is very different than our current experience here," said Capt. Sylvester Kanadys, Polish Landing Forces pilot. "Being deployed alongside the Americans has forced us to seriously look at and modify our tactics in order to keep up."

In an asymmetric environment where the frontlines are primarily the highways, the enemy is constantly changing attack methods. In order to counter and mitigate terrorist's threats, American Forces are consistently upgrading their equipment with various technologically based advancements.

"Since we work together with the U.S., (securing borders and patrolling streets) I feel it's a good idea to put on our vehicles what they use on theirs," Kanadys said. "I've seen it work and I know it will be successful for us in future operations."

The Polish contingent is assigned to Multi-National Division-Central South and was deployed to provide overwatch assistance to Iraqi Security Forces in an effort to establish a safe and secure living environment. ©



A Polish Mi-8 helicopter crew member guides a forklift full of enhanced vehicle security attachments.



Polish Army Capt. Sylvester Kanadys ensures the exact number of enhanced vehicle security attachments are being delivered with Army Chief Warrant Officer William Studivant.

Freedom's Focal Point





Top left: An Iraqi Soldier with 1st Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division, practices his prone firing position while 1-7 IA Military Transition Team advisors supervise his progress Oct. 1 at Camp Ali in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. Photo by Marine Sgt. Andrew D. Pendracki.

Top right: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, talks with Army Lt. Col. John Kolasheski, commander of 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, during a visit to Patrol Base Assassin Oct. 5. Photo by Army Sgt. Timothy Kingston.

Bottom right: An F/A-18 Hornet prepares to land on the flight line at 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing's Al Asad Air Base Oct. 18. Photo by Marine Staff Sgt. Michael Kropiewnicki.

Bottom left: Two Polish Soldiers stand back to back for security during a patrol in the Al Nahda District of Ad Diwaniyah Oct. 6. Photo by Army Spc. Gabriel Reza.



Freedom's Focal Point



Freedom's Focal Point



An Iraqi Soldier with 1st Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division performs first aid during a competition at Camp Ali, Camp Ramadi, Oct. 4. 1-7 IA Military Transition Team conducted a competition involving accuracy on the firing range, physical training, land navigation and first aid. Photo by Army Spc. Alan Moos.



Top left: Marine Lance Cpls. Ivan Gonzalez and Randy Ames prepare to weld the frame of an armor kit to a TRAM at Al Asad Air Base Oct. 10. Photo by Marine Lance Cpl. Abby Burtner.



Top right: Spc. Colin Gwilliam, an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter crew chief with Company A, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, pressure washes an Apache on the flight line at Camp Taji Oct. 24. Photo by Army Cpl. Nathan Hoskins.

Bottom right: A Soldier with Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, climbs a stairway leading to the rooftop during a cordon and search at a medical clinic in Narhwan Oct. 16. Photo by Army Sgt. Timothy Kingston.



Bottom left: Iraqi army soldiers attached to 3-1-1 Military Transition Team, 3rd Infantry Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, find a weapons cache in a hidden boat during a dismounted foot patrol in Tharthar Oct. 7. Photo by Army Spc. Kieran Cuddihy.

Freedom's Focal Point



Marine Cpl. Mike Praises, Marine Light Attack Squadron 369, 2nd Marine Air Wing, engages targets on the aerial gunnery range at Camp Taqaddum Oct. 3. Photo by Marine Lance Cpl. Robert S. Morgan.



Freedom's Focal Point







Far left: An Iraqi soldier checks the charge of a radio battery at Camp Habbaniyah Oct. 8. Photo by Marine Cpl. Neill A. Sevelius.

Top right: Army Spc. Anthony Register, Company H, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, breaches an unoccupied house using his M-203 grenade launcher in the East Rashid District of Baghdad. Oct. 9. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew M. Rodier.

Bottom right: Soldiers with Company A., 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, patrol a neighborhood in Khatoon Oct. 19. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Shawn Weismiller.

Bottom left: A Soldier assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, provides security in a field during a mission in Arab Jabour Oct. 4. Photo by Army Spc. Adam Sanders.



Iraqi army soldiers of 2nd Mechanized Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, arrive in Hawr Rajab Oct. 27.



Sgt. Carlos Guerrero and Spc. Walter Epert, insurgents during an attack on a checkpoint

FUTURE PRESENT

***Hawr Rajab citizens repulse
terrorist attack before being
reinforced by Iraqi tanks***

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
MND-B PAO

Coalition Forces saw a possible glimpse of the future in Hawr Rajab Oct. 27 when they observed concerned local citizens at a checkpoint come under attack from insurgents, defend themselves and receive reinforcements from Iraqi army troops.

Paratroopers of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, observed the event from a rooftop.

Everything kicked off with a bang.



scouts with 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, position themselves on a rooftop to engage in Hawr Rajab Oct. 27.

Paratroopers were en route to the concerned citizens' southernmost checkpoint just outside of Hawr Rajab, when their casual conversations were shattered by the thunderous sound of a mortar landing nearby.

The Paratroopers moved into a building to avoid any potential threats.

From inside, Paratroopers began to hear bursts of small arms fire coming from the south.

"Get to the roof, go, go," one Paratrooper shouted.

In a flurry of movement, they ascended the stairs to the second floor and in seconds they were on top of the action, weapons drawn

and at the ready.

The momentary confusion of the gunfight cleared up as soon as communication was established with the checkpoint.

Initial reports from concerned citizens indicated the insurgents were attacking from a position behind a canal, approximately 400 meters from the checkpoint.

As 1/40 Cav. Regt. troops saw the events unfold, 1st Lt. Daniel L. Doverspike, a platoon leader for Troop A, contacted the Iraqi army troop commanders in the area. He asked IA commanders to move the tanks belonging to the newly arrived IA mechanized company into

position and assist the concerned citizens at the checkpoint.

When the tanks arrived, they engaged the enemy forces, alongside their concerned citizen counterparts.

Soon an Apache attack helicopter air weapons team from 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, arrived on site and scoured the nearby canals for enemy forces.

The insurgents retreated after a 45-minute 'cat and mouse' game with IA and concerned citizens, which resulted in no injuries.

The determination and team work of the IA and concerned citizens showed Paratroopers that



An Iraqi army soldier with the 2nd Mechanized Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, awaits orders in his tank after arriving in Hawr Rajab.

both groups could work together effectively.

Spc. Charley Stetson, an infantryman with 1-40th Cav. Regt. said he felt his unit had done a good job of rooting out insurgents in the area around Entry Control Point 20, but the addition of concerned citizens and now the Iraqi army has helped the security situation.

Their actions during the insurgent attack gave insight into the growing relationship between the two groups.

Stetson, a native of Falmouth, Maine, said the IA's resources add much to the concerned citizens' capabilities and the concerned citizens add much to the IA's knowl-

edge of the area.

"It's like the best of both worlds," he said.

Capt. Frederick B. Giles, effects coordinator for the military transition team assigned to the 5th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division said the concerned citizens were happy about the Iraqi troops moving into the area and assisting with security.

"I haven't sensed any tension between the CLC leadership and the IA leadership," said Giles, a native of Honolulu.

The good relationships developing between the concerned citizens, the IA and Coalition Forces in the urban farming community of Hawr Rajab may signal the

beginning of a community with a secure future. ☺

Initial reports from concerned citizens indicated the insurgents were attacking from a position behind a canal.

Eyes on The Enemy

Romanians provide eyes
in the sky over Al Kut

A Shadow 600 unmanned aerial vehicle used by a Romanian Army crew awaits takeoff from Camp Delta. The UAV has two cameras to capture detailed images of human silhouettes on the ground and has an operating range of 200 kilometers.

Story, photos by
Army Spc. Beatrice Florescu
MNC-I PAO

Romanian Army soldiers operate in Al Kut with a military intelligence team handling unmanned aerial vehicle recording activity over a radius of up to 200 km, said Romanian Cmdr. Isache Liviu.

"The team members' identity cannot be disclosed publicly for reasons of personal security," Liviu said. "Their dedication and commitment is our legacy and they continue to serve voluntarily even if it is hard to keep everything running with no parts or support from the manufacturer."

The current UAV is the Shadow 600 unit, Liviu said. Maintenance is performed by Romanian technicians. Even the major repairs, including those done on the engines, are done locally in Al Kut.

"This unit is out of production and parts are not even provided anymore by the manufacturer," Liviu said. "The team has to be inventive and creative to either repair the broken parts or recreate them out of other parts in

order to maintain the capability active."

The Romanian Army started using the Shadow 600 in 1998, Liviu said. Since 2003, it has been used in theater in Al Kut only. The Shadow 600 covers a radius of 200 km. The Romanian crew works with troops from the Ukraine, Poland, and the United States and continues to execute multiple missions, Liviu said.

More than 70 missions have been completed since 2003 and were exclusively conducted by the Roman-

nian element. There is availability for real time imagery on computers, Isache said.

"This service can be implemented, although it has not been requested yet," Liviu said. "The communication can be continuous day or night regardless of weather conditions. We can actually provide accurate data in real time, helping to prevent attacks on the base or patrols, flights and convoys."

The crew is composed of 13 mechanics, technicians, electronic technicians, payload operators for incoming information, internal and external pilots, analysts, and navigator-airmen.

"We operate often in the dark and many missions are night missions for obvious



An electronic technician with Romanian Army Military Intelligence performs preflight checks on a Shadow 600 unmanned aerial vehicle prior to launching it.

security and intelligence purposes,” said Dan, an electronic technician. “It is a beautiful job and every time we have obtained information pertaining to positions, potential equipment and weapons, it gives us a sense of accomplishment. Each mission saves lives and that is our job.”

Preflight checks and testing are performed to verify communication between the base station and the UAV to execute commands and confirm execution. The Shadow has two cameras, one for day and/or night and a second forward looking infrared TV/per FLIR. There are two stations that communicate and exchange information continuously, the grand central station and the grand data terminal.

“You can see everything on the ground, even distinguish people’s silhouettes,” Liviu said. “The Shadow can identify anything for a variety of missions, such as rescue, evacuation, convoy, patrols, and anything else as needed.”

Two UAVs have been lost in the field due to engine

failure, Liviu said. There are always two UAVs ready at all times. The crew is on call for urgent missions that can last for 24 hours.

The Romanian crew built a modular orthodox church that can be dismantled and taken away upon redeployment, Dan said. They also built a dayroom outside where they sometimes cook and invite anyone to share and taste some traditional Romanian food.

“We enjoy cooking for one and it also gives a reason to get together and celebrate birthdays, holidays, and most of all help each other through the difficult moments of being away from our families,” he said.

They keep in touch with the families over the Internet and sometimes telephone calls. For some this is the first mission, while for others this is the fifth mission, Isache said.

“I have been here before and will come back for as many times as needed,” Liviu said. “I know that what we do is important and we want to participate and contribute, and help the Iraqi people build their own future. ☺

“You can see everything on the ground, even distinguish people’s silhouettes.”

**Romanian Army
Cmdr. Isache Liviu**



A Shadow 600 UAV flies a mission to provide real-time images and feedback to Romanian operators on ground.

HEADING HOME

Detainees released in observance of Ramadan

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. J.H. French
MND-C PAO

Paratroopers released 20 detainees from the detention facility at Forward Operating Base Kalsu to observe the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Paratroopers from the 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, released the men to leaders from the local community in order to observe and celebrate Eid al-Fitr.

"The end of Ramadan is called Eid al-Fitr. It is a time to overcome differences and show forgiveness and mercy," said Maj. Rick Williams, the information operations officer for the brigade. "It was in keeping with this tradition that we released these men."

The men had been convicted of crimes ranging from planting roadside bombs to constructing suicide car bombs.

Traditionally, Iraq conducts prisoner releases during this time; the custom predates the former regime.

"This is a very important religious occasion for us. It is one of our honored traditions. It signals the end of bad blood between tribes. Everyone begins to put their differences aside," said Sheik Mahdi Nasr Al Faisal Al Johaishi. "This is the time we begin working together for a better future. With this prisoner release, Coalition Forces are sharing in our traditions and our time of happiness."

Johaishi was one of a handful of men on hand at FOB Kalsu to accept the detainees and escort them back home to their families. In addition to being one of the local tribal leaders, Johaishi is one of North Babil's tribal leaders and head of the Tribal Security Council.

"After many years, the Coalition Forces are finally working with the sheiks to help establish security,"

Johaishi continued. "They should definitely do more of this. If one of the men in my tribe is conducting illegal activities tell me and it will stop. I will take you to the men doing bad things and make sure no one else in my tribe follows in their footsteps."

The other tribal representative on hand for the release agreed with Johaishi.

"Coalition Forces need to work directly with the tribes more often. The first level of any type of government is the tribes," said Hadi Ali Husein Al Dolaimi. "No one wants a unified government more than us."

Dolaimi was present at the detainee release on behalf of several different tribes in the North Babil region. He was the representative for not only several Shia tribes but also numerous Sunni tribes as well.

"We are against dividing Iraq," Dolaimi continued. "We are fighting the Iranian influence in our areas. We want to work with everyone, all the tribes of North Babil, to achieve peace."

Sheik Ali Omran Al Shimari, was also at the detainee release. Wearing a three-piece suit, the sheik stood out not only because of his attire, but for the respect he garnered from the other sheiks in attendance. Along with Johaishi, Sheik Shimari is one of the most influential and respected men in North Babil.

"I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to the Coalition for this detainee release. Eid is always a time of happiness and celebration, but the happiness will be double this year," said Shimari. "Not only will families celebrate Eid al-Fitr, but this year they can celebrate their sons' return home."

"It is very respectful of the Coalition Forces," he continued. "We appreciate their efforts to understand our religion and show respect for our customs. This only solidifies the relationship we have built together over the past year."

"It is a time to show forgiveness. It was in keeping with that tradition that we released these men."

***Army Maj. Rick Williams
information operations officer***



Soldiers in Company G, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, begin clearing a street in the East Rashid district of Baghdad.

Step by Step

Stryker battalion works to clear al-Qaida in Iraq remnants in East Rashid

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. Mark B. Matthews
MND-B PAO

The sun begins to peak over the Baghdad horizon as the Soldiers slowly creep into the neighborhood. All of their weapons are loaded and all of their minds are focused on the day's objective. Everything is eerily quiet and not a soul is seen on the trash-ridden streets, but they still keep a close watch on every corner, window and rooftop.

Soldiers with the Company G, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cav-



Oct. 11.

alry Regiment, conducted clearing operations in neighborhoods of the East Rashid District in Baghdad.

The purpose of the operations were to clear the area of al-Qaida in Iraq forces in the area, search for bombs and bomb-making materials, uncover weapons caches and counteract any improvised explosive devices.

"We have been taking out one of the last al-Qaida enclaves and basically clearing the area, which is going home-to-home and street-to-street and trying to get rid of all the weapon caches and al-Qaida members in the area," said 1st Lt.

Jonathan Peterson, from Tacoma, Wash., a platoon leader with the Ghost Riders. "The biggest initial challenge is getting a foothold in the area so we can begin talking with the people to get intelligence on where IEDs and al-Qaida members are."

Upon arrival in an area the Soldiers begin searching houses. This is done one street at a time while one unit provides over watch security and another searches houses.

Many times houses need- ing to be searched are abandoned. More precau- tions must be taken in order to safely enter the homes.

Ghost Rider Com- pany is not alone during these clearing missions. They have the support of other companies in the regiment, explosive detection dogs and explosive ordnance disposal teams who assist in detecting IEDs and house-borne explosive devices before they become deadly.

Soldiers said operations are proving to be going very well in East Rashid. When operations first began in the area, Soldiers in the unit were receiving gun fire every- day. Now, they go days without seeing any, Peterson said.

Aside from securing the area, this mission has been a learning ex- perience for many of the Soldiers, and they are able to pass what they have learned to help other units with similar missions fund success.

"When we first got into sector, the procedure of clearing a house was to get in quickly, clear the home of any explosives and dis- able any weapons. Now, due to the threat of (house-borne explo-

sive devices), we use many more precautions," said Spc. Dustin Cason, a Longview, Texas native and squad designated marksmen for Ghost Rider's 1st Platoon. "We were one of the first to counteract house born explosive devices."

As the Soldiers continue to clear and make more and more areas of East Rashid safe for residents, they hope more and more people will begin giving information to Coali- tion Forces.

This information can then be

used not only to provide bet- ter security in the area, saving U.S. and Iraqi lives.

Opera- tions in the East Rashid District have proved to

be successful, but not without loss. However, Soldiers of Ghost Rider Company continue to face the streets of Baghdad every day with a mission-first mind set.

"We are all trained professionals who know how to react to certain things," Cason said. "It's difficult to lose a Soldier, but when you're out there you can't play the re- venge game. The man to your left and right are who you look out for, and not personal vendettas."

The Ghost Riders, whose home base is in Vilseck, Germany, have only been in country since Septem- ber, but they have already made great strides in providing stability and security to East Rashid, Peter- son said.

"We have a lot of great Soldiers here who love the tough missions. They live for them," Peterson said. "All of the Soldiers want to be the tip of the spear and serve their country in the best way they know how."

"The challenge is getting a foothold so we can begin talking with the people."

***Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Peterson
platoon leader***

Time to Rebuild

Decrease in violence allows Anbar Marines to improve Karmah's infrastructure

Story, photos by
Marine Cpl. Andrew Kalwitz
MNF-W PAO

Just outside of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment's fortified outpost near Karmah, more than 100 acres of farmland were flooded and the dirt bridge leading to the outpost was in danger of sliding into waters that washed away an adjacent abutment.

While other concerns might have taken top priority a year ago, problems like these are now frequently addressed. Once a favorite haven for insurgents due to its location just north of Fallujah, Karmah saw an increase in troop presence when U.S. forces deployed an additional 5,000 personnel to Anbar province. The troop surge, along with a partnership between coalition forces and tribal leadership, determined to protect Iraqis, has led to a decline in attacks and changing uses for engineer units.

Now, units such as Engineer Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), are able to focus their attention on projects that not only improve outpost security, but local infrastructure as well.

"We provide a service. They ask for it, we give it," said Capt. Dev Spradlin, the Engineer Company commander. "When we go to a place like this, we try to



Marines with Engineer Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), build a new abutment by dumping loads of dirt and chunks of concrete along the edge of a stream. The Marines also emplaced a new culvert to drain the area's flooded farmland.

do as much as we can while we're there so they can get a little more bang for their buck."

Spradlin, a Hogansville, Ga., native, expected to repair the bridge during a deployment earlier this year. Instead, the operation was adjourned.

Adding to the problem, two truck bombs have since launched an attack on the outpost inflicting damage to a culvert, causing the flood. Spradlin described the blast.

"It was so big, there was no evidence of a culvert ever being here," he said. "We're helping the farmers out here by draining their fields."

The Marines did so by digging 50 cubic yards of dirt to insert a new culvert. After driving machinery



Marines with Engineer Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), replace a culvert ruptured by a suicide truck bomb. The damages caused flooding to more than 100 acres of farm land. Water continued to pour through the culvert for at least 12 hours as the Marines moved on to repair a bridge abutment.

atop the buried culvert to compress the dirt, the engineers spent more than 12 hours working to repair the bridge abutment. This required long periods of moving dirt and more than 20 cubic yards of concrete.

The engineers also dumped approximately 800 cubic yards of gravel at the outpost to prepare the Marines, and the outpost's future occupants, for the winter months when the weather can complicate maneuverability.

"The gravel is to improve the quality of life for the Marines out at this outpost. This place gets very, very muddy in the rainy season," said Spradlin. "If we

"We try to do as much as we can while we're there so they get more bang for their buck."

***Marine Capt. Dev Spradlin
commander, Eng. Co., CLB 8***

move out of this place, the Iraqi Police will probably move in and they'll use it.

"Right now, they're taking ownership of their neighborhoods. They don't allow folks to stay if they don't belong."

A motor transportation mechanic with the company said the area's decrease in violence is promoted by returning a favor to the area's civilians for their support against violence.

"It reinsures our safety," said Cpl. John R. Hoppe, a Lincoln Park, Mich., native. "The people out here are kind of helping us out by taking a stand because some of the operations we've done are making their lives better." ☞

IN MEM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEM
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM BETWEEN S

September 16, 2007

Staff Sgt. Michael L. Townes, 29
4/227 Avn., 1st CAB, 1st Cav. Div.

September 18, 2007

Spc. Matthew J. Emerson, 20
2/7 Cav., 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Spc. Joseph N. Landry, 23
2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Nicholas P. Olson, 22
2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Donald E. Valentine III, 21
2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Aaron J. Walker, 23
3/2 Cav. Regt.

September 19, 2007

Sgt. Edmund J. Jeffers, 23
1/9 Inf., 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Cpl. Graham M. McMahon, 22
4/9 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Pfc. Christian M. Neff, 19
1/64 AR, 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

September 20, 2007

Capt. Roselle M. Hoffmaster, 32
HHC, 1st Bde., 10th Mountain Div.

Pfc. Luigi Marciante Jr., 25
2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

September 21, 2007

Sgt. Mark Stansfield, 32
32nd Close Support Squadron, UK Log. Bn.

Spc. John J. Young, 24
2/14 Inf., 2nd Bde., 10th Mountain Div.

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

JOHN 15:13

September 22, 2007

Command Sgt. Maj.
Jonathan M. Lankford, 42
79th Ord. Bn.

Spc. Joshua H. Reeves, 26
2/16 Inf., 4th Bde., 1st Inf. Div.

Spc. David L. Watson, 29
2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

September 24, 2007

Cpl. Anthony K. Bento, 23
1/505 PIR, 3rd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div.

September 25, 2007

Staff Sgt. Kevin R. Brown, 38
6/9 Cav., 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Staff Sgt. Zachary B. Tomczak, 24
2/325 PIR, 2nd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div.

September 27, 2007

Sgt. 1st Class Randy L. Johnson, 34
2/2 Cav. Regt.

September 29, 2007

Sgt. Robert T. Ayres III, 23
3/2 Cav. Regt.
Staff Sgt. Donnie D. Dixon, 37
HHC, 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

MORIAM

MEMBERS WHO DIED WHILE SERVING IN
SEPTEMBER 16 AND OCTOBER 15, 2007

Sgt. 1st Class James D. Doster, 37
2/16 Inf., 4th Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Spc. Chirasak Vidhyarkorn, 32
2/142 FA

September 30, 2007

Sgt. Randell Olguin, 24
1/2 Cav. Regt.

October 1, 2007

Gunnery Sgt. Herman J. Murkerson Jr., 35
MWHS 2, 2nd MAW, 2nd MEF
Seaman Apprentice Shayna Ann Schnell, 19
NSF Bahrain, Jebel Ali Det.

October 4, 2007

Spc. Vincent G. Kamka, 23
1/505 PIR, 3rd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div.
Spc. Avealalo Milo, 23
2/2 Cav. Regt.
Sgt. Ricardo X. Rodriguez, 23
2/325 PIR, 2nd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div.

October 5, 2007

Spc. Rachael L. Hugo, 24
97th MP Bn., 89th MP Bde.
Spc. Jason N. Marchand, 26
3/2 Cav. Regt.
Sgt. Joseph B. Milledge, 23
3/2 Cav. Regt.

October 6, 2007

Cpl. Gilberto A. Meza, 21
3/2 Cav. Regt.

October 7, 2007

Cpl. Benjamin C. Dillon, 22
3/75 Ranger Regt.

October 8, 2007

Lance Cpl. Jeremy W. Burris, 22
1/4 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF

October 10, 2007

Spc. Frank L. Cady III, 20
4th STB, 4th Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Staff Sgt. Eric T. Duckworth, 26
759th MP Bn., 89th MP Bde.
Sgt. Jason M. Lantieri, 25
725th BSB, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

October 11, 2007

Staff Sgt. Lillian Clamens, 35
1st Postal Plt., 834th AG Co.
Staff Sgt. Donald L. Munn II, 25
STB, 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. Samuel F. Pearson, 28
376th Fin. Co., 88th RRC

October 12, 2007

Pvt. Nathan Z. Thacker, 18
2/22 Inf., 1st Bde., 10th Mountain Div.

October 14, 2007

Lance Cpl. Sarah Holmes, 26
80th P & C Sqd., 29th Regt., RLC Wantage
Pfc. Kenneth J. Iwasinski, 22
2/12 Inf., 2nd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Spc. Jason B. Koutroubas, 21
STB, 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
1st Lt. Thomas M. Martin, 27
1/40 Cav., 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.
Sgt. 1st Class Justin S. Monschke, 28
2nd Bn., 3rd SF Group

