



THE TRIPLE T

Too Tough Times



Vol. 1 Issue 9

"Telling the story of the 18th Military Police Brigade"

August 2008

PTT Moving Forward...



Sgt. Cruz Munoz, 3rd platoon squad leader, 164th Military Police Company, 728th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade and native of Chicago, Ill., leads a patrol of Iraqi Police and CF military police through the streets of Yethrib, Iraq. Months ago, terrorist would not have allowed a patrol of this sort to happen. As part of the partnership between CF, IP, and Yethrib citizens the efforts assisted and deterred violence in the Yethrib area; violence has gone down 90% in recent months. The recent decrease in violence demonstrates that the IP capability continues to improve as they strive to take control of the rule of law while protecting the citizens of Yethrib.

Photo by Spc. Michael Behlin

More Work Ahead.....

This past month the Brigade Headquarters completed its move to our new location on Liberty, and I can't tell you how impressed I was by the sense of teamwork and commitment to ensure that the move was conducted on time - on target, and with no interruption in operational tempo.

Admittedly, I wasn't much of a help as my schedule precluded me from pitching in with much of the heavy lifting ☐! I simply gave the mission and intent and the great leaders in this headquarters and they took it from there.

I remember telling someone that I'm not sure how to describe the end state - but "*I'll know it when I see it*". Well I saw it, and this is it - the headquarters organization and design could not be better. Well done, and many thanks!

This month we also completed our Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS) with the 8th MP Brigade who will be replacing us in early December. I received numerous compliments from their command team and staff about how hospitable, helpful, and forthright you were during this 6 day recon. It will be important that we continue the dialogue with our counterparts to ensure they are capable

of assuming the mission in full stride.

It's time to begin thinking and planning seriously for the redeployment. We need to stay focused on the mission at hand, but many redeployment tasks need to be started to ensure we redeploy and reintegrate back into USAREUR with the same precision in which we left. Keeping mission focused, preparing our replacements to

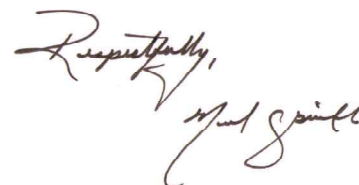
take the baton, and planning for the redeployment are the three glass balls we are juggling - and none can fail. So I guess I'm asking you to do more heavy lifting in less time - and when you're understandably pretty tired. But no doubt you will succeed, you always have.

Let's continue to take care of

each other and prepare ourselves and sections for the tremendous work load that lies ahead. I have no doubts - absolutely none - that you can accomplish our mission on time - on target.

Don't forget to call and thank your family [over and over again] for their great love and support!

Ever Vigilant!

Respectfully,




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Too Tough Times welcomes columns, commentaries, articles and letters from our readers. Send submissions and comments to daniel.blottenberger@mnd-b.army.mil. The PAO staff reserves the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, policy and clarity and space.

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'Ever Vigilant'

Balancing time and mission

It's August already and as I look back over last month's events, the first things that come to mind is my Rest and Recuperation period taken with my family in Germany, I was able to witness, via television news (AFN), the largest reenlistment ceremony in the history of the Armed Forces. A total of 1,215 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines were administered the Oath of Enlistment by General Petraeus; which took place at MNF-I Headquarters, Camp Victory, Iraq, in which, over twenty-five 18th MP Bde Soldiers reenlisted.

I returned from R & R in time enough to conduct the Brigade NCO/Soldier of the Quarter Boards (3rd Qtr). This event was followed up the very next day by the Sergeants Audie Murphy Award and Morales Board.

The boards were held at our new Brigade Headquarters. Our Sergeants Major assigned to the Brigade sat as board members for these immense events. Congratulations and a job well done goes out to: Staff Sgt. Wallize, 164 MP Co., 728th MP Bn as he was selected as the Bde NCO of the Quarter and a shout out to Spc. Anderson, HHD 716th MP Bn was selected as the Brigade Soldier of the Quarter.

Both received Bde Coins of Excellence and Army Achievement Medals for outstanding performance. In addition to these two fine Soldiers, the following NCOs were selected to be inducted into the prestigious Audie Murphy Club: SFC Limata, 59th MP Co; SFC Pendergass, 59th MP Co; SFC Hardy, 59th MP Co; SFC Bombard, 59th MP Co; SGT Williams, 59th MP Co, SSG Reyes-Ortiz, Jose S., 59th MP Co; SSG WoGomon, 164th MP Co; SSG Wallize, 164th MP Co; SFC Tracy, 164th MP Co; and SFC Duncan, 164th MP Co.

My rest and recuperation leave (R & R) went very well. I was again reminded that R & R is not solely for the Soldier, but for the family as well.

The first thing I found out while home on leave was just how tired I really was. The fatigue factor was enormous. I released myself from time by throwing my wrist watch aside. I spent the majority of my time local and with my family. I did not want to lose valuable

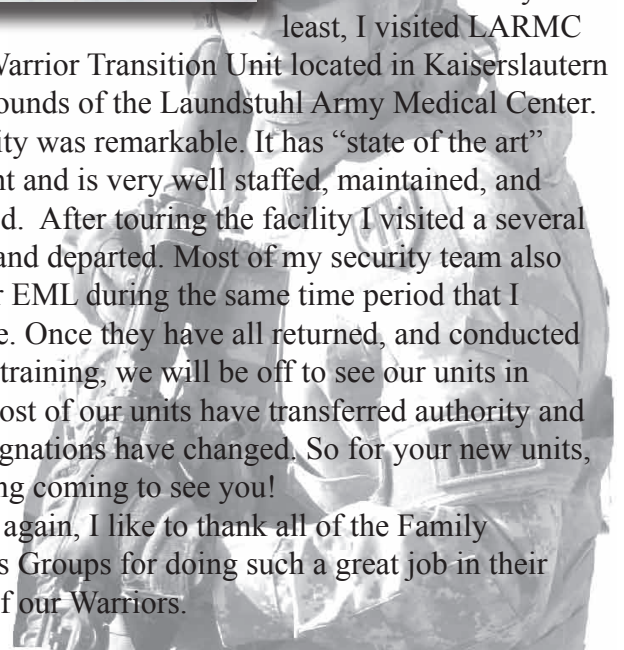
family time traveling. We: folks-marched, walked, visited our favorite Greek and Italian restaurants, gasthaus, or biergarten. Since the Golf course was only 5 minutes from my Quarters, I took full advantage of it.

Although it took a few rounds to groove my swing, it all finally came together...two days before I left, (smile); just like a golf swing uh!

Last but certainly not least, I visited LARMC

and the Warrior Transition Unit located in Kaiserslautern on the grounds of the Laundstuhl Army Medical Center. The facility was remarkable. It has "state of the art" equipment and is very well staffed, maintained, and supervised. After touring the facility I visited a several Soldiers and departed. Most of my security team also took their EML during the same time period that I took mine. Once they have all returned, and conducted remedial training, we will be off to see our units in sector. Most of our units have transferred authority and their designations have changed. So for your new units, we'll be coming to see you!

Once again, I like to thank all of the Family Readiness Groups for doing such a great job in their support of our Warriors.

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IP station opens in Hurriyah

By:
Staff Sgt. Scott Wolfe
MND-B, PAO

BAGHDAD – A new Iraqi Police Station opened in the Hurriyah neighborhood in the Kadamiyah district of Baghdad during a ceremony July 16.

Maj. Gen. Ali Hadi Hussein al-Yaseri, the commander of all Iraqi patrol police in the Baghdad province, spoke at the ceremony and said this new location will enable the police to expand their presence to more remote areas of the city. He thanked all those who helped put the facility together, and the local sheiks, Coalition forces, and all the police who had given their lives to bring law and order to Iraq.

“Do not let their lost lives be in vain.”

The newly opened station is a satellite of the local police precinct in Hurriyah.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Reinsburrow, a team leader with the 18th Military Police Brigade explained that the local station is temporary and will only last until a permanent structure



*Staff Sgt. Scott Wolfe
Maj. Gen. Ali Hadi Hussein al-Yaseri, the commander of all Iraqi patrol police in the Baghdad province and Lt. Col. Darryl Johnson, commander of the 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, listen to the city commissioner of Hurriyah during the dedication ceremony of the city's new police precinct in the Hurriyah neighborhood in the Kadamiyah district of Baghdad July 16.*

can be built.

“The new station was needed to help the areas that are not around the Hurriyah neighborhood precinct,” said Reinsburrow. “It’s a big place and they needed to be out around the people more, with patrols and

checkpoints.”

The Iraqi Police are doing much more now than in the beginning of this rotation to Iraq, said Reinsburrow.

IP stations: a symbol of success in Baghdad

By:
Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger
18th MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – A Police Transition Team from the 64th Military Police Company, deployed from Fort Hood, Texas, have been working with the Iraqi Police in Hurriyah for 12 months now.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Reinsburrow is the lead Soldier, that ensures that security and resources are present in the Hurriyah neighborhood.

For those 12 months Reinsburrow, a native of Towanda, Pa., has seen the IP force and people of Hurriyah go from citizens once torn by sectarian violence to a people that want more IP providing protection and rule

of law in the Baghdad neighborhood.

In the winter months of 2007 Reinsburrow and his squad of military Police Transition Team Soldiers were tasked to oversee the production of an expedient IP station built in Hurriyah.

“The need for a patrol station in Hurriyah has always been there,” said Reinsburrow. “Hurriyah has been pretty violent place.”

The need for a new station comes from the fact that Hurriyah, one of the largest areas in the Iraqi capital, had only one local station with 180 IP to cover the area, said Reinsburrow.

“It is such a huge area in Baghdad for such a small number of IP,” said Reinsburrow.

Once the need for an IP station is determined it was up to the Neighborhood Advisory Councils partnered with the IP and Coalition Forces to determine the best place for the new station to be placed.

“Between the CF’s Brigade Combat Teams, PTT and IP they determine where they want to put a station to increase security in a certain area,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brian Leary, 18th MP Bde., PTT operations noncommissioned officer, and native of Blue Springs, Mo.

Once the location of the station was decided the Iraqi government decided on a contractor to start the construction process.

When the contractor was first approached

(see Hurriyah pg. 5)

Hurriyah, from PG. 4

about building an IP station in the predominately Shia area he refused, said Reinsburrow, stating that the contractor feared to go into the area and work.

The PTT promised the contractor that the IP and CF would provide the necessary security to see that the builders can complete the station without being harmed.

The contractor agreed and the production of the station began without incident.

After several months of construction, Hurriyah welcomed a new IP station July 16 to its already growing force in the opening of Hurriyah Patrol Station.

"The new patrol station will now allow the local police to concentrate more on community policing," said Reinsburrow. "While allowing the patrol police to concentrate on providing overall security by patrolling and conducting checkpoints in Hurriyah."

The new police station is part of Multi-National Division – Baghdad's

larger plan to expand the IP force.

The increase in police force is intended to strengthen the overall security of Baghdad and is aimed at training more than 25,000 IP recruits by 2008 while integrating the IP into the overall Iraqi Security Forces.

Officials say more than 22,000 police have already been on the job in the Iraqi capital as part of the first phase of expansion.

As part of the IP expansion program, the IP need to have a location to work from; the Hurriyah station was the twenty-first station since November 2007 that the 18th Military Police Brigade PTT have helped establish in Baghdad.

"When there is heightened violence and militia in a certain area, there becomes a need for more IP in the area," said Leary.

"Iraqi community councils feel more

comfortable with having IP closer to them," said Leary. "So community leaders request new stations in their area."

In Hurriyah this was exactly the case, the Neighborhood Advisory Council felt the need for a new IP station and they picked a spot where they thought it would be best located, said Reinsburrow.

"We feared some people would find out we were building an IP station there and they wouldn't like the idea," said Reinsburrow.

Reinsburrow recalled during the construction phase when the contractor said, to him, he was surprised at how safe the area was to work in; after the building was

came through one of their checkpoints," said Reinsburrow.

Although this event was a minor setback IP continue to perform their duties to prevent future setbacks, with the threat of violence returning to Hurriyah and the increase in the IP force the situation can only get better, said Leary.

"Reports are always positive of new police stations have helped detour violence in areas where they are established," said Leary. "It is always better when a station is put up in an area where it is wanted and needed."

The new station in Hurriyah will be manned by all new IP who are fresh out of basic recruit training and on the job training at a neighboring community's station.

"The IP are very inexperienced, but they are asking for more training and they are willing to do the training, which is a step in the right direction," said Reinsburrow.

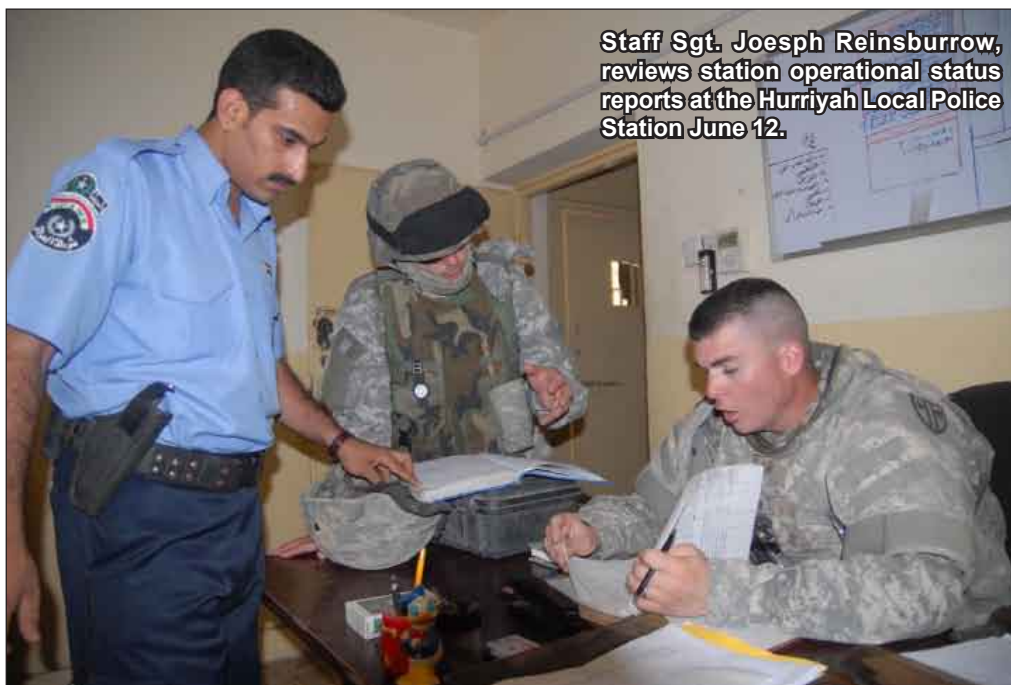
He has seen improvement in the self reliance of the IP in Hurriyah.

"Twelve months ago IP did not do a lot on their own," said Reinsburrow. "Now the Hurriyah local IP Station runs pretty well on its own. We

are hoping the patrol station will be the same way."

Reinsburrow believes that IP expansion is working in Baghdad and soon the IP will provide enough security themselves that CF will no longer be needed except to provide over watch.

"As long as they are hiring IP that want to go out there and do their job and not just hang out and collect a pay check and are able to get out there and do their jobs I think the situation will continue to improve in Hurriyah," said Reinsburrow. "A lot of areas in the city need more police and a lot of people are happy there are more police in the area or they have the idea that more IP are coming into the area will continue to improve the security problems."



Staff Sgt. Joseph Reinsburrow, reviews station operational status reports at the Hurriyah Local Police Station June 12.

complete.

"In the last three to four months security has really improved in Hurriyah," said Reinsburrow.

"For the most part the IP are doing their jobs," said Reinsburrow. "They are doing their jobs and they are getting better at doing it. They are more professional and in the last 12 months, they have been through quite a lot with the attacks in March during the criminal uprisings in Baghdad and the truck bomb that killed more than 60 people a month ago in Hurriyah."

Reinsburrow mentioned that during all these attacks the IP remained at their posts providing security for the citizens of Hurriyah.

"The truck bomb a month ago, opened up the IP eyes knowing that the vehicle probably

IP enforce rule of law in former 'Triangle of Death'

By:
Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger
18th MP Bde. PAO

MAHMUDIYAH – As criminals began uprising in Iraq in March of 2008 Coalition Forces feared that in areas like the former 'Triangle of Death' Iraqi Security Forces would be unable to maintain rule of law in their communities.

The 'Triangle of Death' was the name Coalition Forces gave to the predominately Sunni area in central Iraq, which consisted of the cities of Yusuifiyah, Mahmudiyah, Iskandariyah, and Latifiyah, where the most intense fighting was seen in 2003 through 2004.

"We got word that special group members were going to be coming down from Baghdad into Mahmudiyah and planning on resupplying criminal groups in our area," said Staff Sgt. Phillip McGrew, a Police Transition Team squad leader with the 65th Military Police Company, who conducts PTT operations with IP in the Mahmudiyah District.

McGrew, a native of Baton Rouge, La., conducts daily PTT operations at the Rasheed Local Police Station, the most northern IP station in the Mahmudiyah District.

During the uprising the IP at the Rasheed station let CF know what was going on in the community, said McGrew.

"All we had to do was increase security at the station," said McGrew. "We just let the IP know that we were side by side with them. We let them know nothing bad was going to happen to the station,"

Throughout the uprising

sources on the ground reported that criminals were scouting out the station and possibly planning an attack.

"Special group members scouted out the station and saw what was going on and realized it wasn't worth it," said McGrew. "They realized they stood no chance against the forces providing security at the station."

However, during the uprising, the Mahmudiyah District Headquarters was not as lucky, special groups targeted the Headquarters and tried to overrun the IP there.

"We had a platoon element occupy the district headquarters for four days during the uprisings, the CF and ISF received small arms attacks and sporadic sniper fire during the four days," said Capt. Jessica Donckers, commander, 65th MP Co., and native of Marquette, Mich.



Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

Staff Sgt. Phillip McGrew, (left), a Police Transition Team squad leader with the 65th Military Police Company and native of Baton Rouge, La., discusses station operations with Iraqi police leaders at the Mustafa Local Police Station in Mahmudiyah District of Iraq, July 24.

The MP platoon and IP held the station and did not allow it to fall into enemy hands.

Meanwhile, IA forces and Soldiers of the 320th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Rakkasans, 101st Airborne Division hunted down special groups in the area and eliminated the threat on the stations.

The uprising ended in Basra and Baghdad and the former 'Triangle of Death' was able to maintain security through the Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces combined

partnership.

"The most important part of this is that the IP knew their success," said McGrew, referring to the IP ability to deter attacks by sheer show of force at their station. "On the surface, the outside looking in, really not much happened, but the leadership at the station knew it was something they took great pride in."

"It was something we will tell our grandchildren one day," said the commander, Rasheed Iraqi Police Station.

Now that the citizens of Mahmudiyah have seen the success of the IP force they are focusing on not letting further criminal activities take place in their district.

"We are at a very critical time in Mahmudiyah, IP are starting to catch on to things and they are continuing down the right path," said Donckers, who oversees PTT operations in the entire Mahmudiyah District. "The Iraqi people are now taking ownership in the communities and not allowing criminals to come back in."

McGrew says the IP leadership is the key to future success in the once volatile area.

(see Mahmudiyah pg. 7)



Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

Soldiers of the 65th Military Police Company Police Transition Team go through a mission brief prior to leaving the Rasheed Local Police Station in the Mahmudiyah District of Iraq, July 24.

Mahmudiyah, from PG. 6

“At my station I see a lot of positive things,” said McGrew. “The interaction that I have with the officers is important, we have a real good relationship with the majority of them; as long as they continue to strive and work for the government of Iraq, and not for any special groups or even their own tribe, they will continue to succeed. If the IP leaders work for the government the rest of the IP will feed off that.”

Good leadership in Rasheed is the reason that sectarian violence has seen a huge decline in recent months.

Nine months ago the Rasheed area of Mahmudiyah was torn apart by two different tribes fighting constantly and using the IP as a way to help imprison the other tribe.

Most of the IP are not from Rasheed and because of that the citizens of Rasheed are not afraid to come to the IP to resolve issues between tribes.

Fighting between the two tribes was going back and forth, killing each other, making complaints to the IP about each other, while trying to incriminate the other tribe, said McGrew.

“This tribal conflict had been going on for ages in Rasheed,” said McGrew.

Finally, one of the Shieks, from one of the tribes, came into the IP station and spoke with the station commander.

“The Shiek expressed how he was trying to work things out amongst the two tribes and how he wanted to end the violence,” said McGrew.

The station commander then brought both of the tribes together

at the IP station to talk things out in front of the IP, so they had a mutual place for them to talk and have a mediator as the IP.

“It was awesome to watch,” said McGrew, about the tribes meeting at the station in April of 2008. “During the meeting I just sat back and watched; there was really no point where I needed to step in.”



Staff Sgt. Phillip McGrew, (right), discusses (through an interpreter) station operations with the Mustafa Local Police Station Commander, July 24, in Mahmudiyah District of Iraq.

“Since then tribal conflicts ended in Rasheed, the area has seen a significant decrease in violence,” said the IP station commander.

The PTT also credits the unbiased IP leadership in helping decrease sectarian violence in Rasheed.

“When the IP come in and put on that uniform they see the leadership is not biased toward any tribe when the case work comes in,” said McGrew, who has been working with the Rasheed IP for eight months now.

“When we conduct route patrolling with the IP we meet and greet everyone that we pass, it does not matter what tribe they are from,” said McGrew, referring to one of the many community policing techniques the CF and IP use.

McGrew said, that through

the continuous community policing efforts the citizens of Rasheed have come to realize that the IP are here to support the community now and not a particular tribe.

Not only is the PTT conducting community policing efforts with the IP they are also conducting daily checks on the different areas of the IP station.

Areas such as: arms room, administration section, detention cell and force protection are just some of the areas the PTT checks during their station visits.

“Each member of my squad works with a different section at the IP station,” said McGrew. “This gives the members of my squad a sense of purpose and something to take pride in. It also shows the IP that we are not just there for show we are there to help them out.”

“Each member of the squad has their own relationship with their IP counterpart at the station and that system has been working out well for us both,” said McGrew.

Since arriving from Fort Bragg eight months ago, McGrew feels his squad has had a huge impact on the Mahmudiyah police force especially in Rasheed.

“When we got here Rasheed was short numbered on IP, they didn’t have all the supplies they needed and the officers did not have control of their police force,” said McGrew.

McGrew and his squad of military police Soldiers spent the next eight months mentoring and training the officers at the station on how to be successful leaders.

“It took a lot of sit down one-on-one time starting with the station commander,” said McGrew. “Once we gave him the confidence he needed through support, letting him know we supported him in his decisions. As long as he was doing the right thing then he had no worries.”

After the station in Rasheed was seen as a growing success McGrew and his squad were tasked with further adding to the already growing IP force in Mahmudiyah, by helping set up another station in the district.

“The Mustafa Local Police Station just got off the ground three weeks ago,” said McGrew in an interview July 25.

“One thing that is really working well in Mustafa, is that the whole Mahmudiyah community is coming together,” said McGrew. “IP, Iraqi Army, different tribes and the Sons of Iraq are meeting on a regular basis to discuss issues in the area.”

The council meetings are seen as a huge success because it brings added cohesion to the Mustafa community.

“Now the IP are involved in the community,” said McGrew. “It’s awesome because if there are any issues out in the community the entire town brings it out in the open at the meetings.

(see Mahmudiyah pg. 8)

Mahmudiyah, from PG. 7

It makes it so that everyone in the community is on the same page and makes it so that everyone in the community is involved for the better good."

McGrew said, that since arriving in Iraq the IP force is better and they continue to show progress in doing things on their own.

"A lot of times I have to sit back and not do anything," said McGrew. "We are in a transition phase now with the IP, and they cannot totally rely on CF all the time."

"When we first got here we had to show them you can't just hold your hand out when you need something," said McGrew. "We would ask them, what have you done to solve the problem."

"Now they are solving problems on their own," said McGrew.

As IP expansion and their partnership with CF in Mahmudiyah continue to develop the violence in the former 'Triangle of Death' continues to decrease brining promise for a better future for the people in Iraq.

"We are at a tipping point," said Donckers, who is currently serving on her forth deployment. "We will either continue to have success in the ISF and CF partnership or we will fall back to where we were."

Donckers feels that as long as ISF and CF can hold their security gains some of the programs that the government has put into place

will be allowed to succeed thus furthering the success of the Iraqi people.

"The security situation as it is today allows us to further improve the programs in areas like: the economy and agriculture, which the government had put into place to better the lives of the Iraqi people."

"The reason these programs have become successful is because the Iraqi people are now taking ownership in these programs," said Donckers.

The IP took initiative recently in setting up there own Emergency Response Unit in Mahmudiyah. The IP force set up a 750 man unit a month ago to provide emergency response services to the people of Mahmudiyah.

"IP not only took the initiative to set up the ERU, but they also took the initiative to take a building that was once trashed and built it up into a serviceable building for the use of the ERU," said Donckers.

The PTT teams in Mahmudiyah are now at a pivotal point where they must continue to monitor the success of the IP and ensure that they continue to be successful.

"We have had a lot of success with the IP in Mahmudiyah," said Donckers. "We must continue to monitor that success and capitalize on the success that we have already made."

The 65th MP Co., is deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C., and is currently assigned to the 793rd Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Center.

IPs awarded for excellence



Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

Mr. Mike Williams, an International Police Advisor, and native of South Port, N.C., shows the badge he wears, while conducting operations with the IP in Mahmudiyah. Smaller versions of the badge are awarded to Iraqi policemen who show excellence while conducting daily operations in their communities. IPA are partnered with Coalition Forces military police units with the mission to train Iraqi police as they continue to take control of community police activities in their assigned areas.



Iraqi Females at checkpoints

By:
Pfc. Amanda Tucker
3rd Sustainment Command PAO

BALAD – Checkpoints have become common place here in Iraq in efforts to provide security and to detect crime or terrorist type activity.

At a recent checkpoint in the Balad region of Iraq, a Soldier stopped a car to conduct a vehicle inspection. As the vehicle inspection continued, the Soldier asked the male driver to step out so he would be able to conduct a thorough inspection. As the Soldier walked around the vehicle and he ID'd a woman sitting in the back seat wearing the standard black clothing, her eyes and hands were the only parts visible.

She looked nine months pregnant, so he doesn't think she needed to get out into the over 115 degree heat to be searched. The Soldier allows the vehicle to pass through; then it happens! A thunderous boom with shrapnel flying and screams reverberate throughout the checkpoint.

One act of a Soldier's "compassion" was his last!

Female suicide bombers are becoming more common, and some insurgents are taking advantage of Soldiers who are reluctant to search females due to cultural respects. Some men are even using tactics and are dressing as women to get through checkpoints.

Now, Iraqi females are stepping forward to be trained on how to search women in order to help solve the problem at variety of checkpoints.

"Having the females searching Iraqis is a good thing," said Col. Hussein Al-Aalan, the Balad District Director of Police. "She can search females; that is something males can't do."

Manar Abdul Mutaleb, the only female member of the Balad City Council, started inquiring to the council about using Iraqi females after seeing a story on the television about a female suicide bomber blowing herself up in a market.

"My mission (is) to find the females a job and work because right now, in my association, I have more than 950 without any job(s)," said Mutaleb.

Mutaleb fulfilled her mission with more than 50 Iraqi females volunteering to take the job of helping at the Balad checkpoints. The city council chose females who had lost their Iraqi Police husbands to insurgents as a priority in order to help these people feed their families.

"We have 10 females in Balad that are actually able to search females coming into Balad," said Staff Sgt. Iris Munoz, a Phoenix native and a squad leader for the 164th Military Police Company, based out of Fort Richardson, Alaska.

"We went over all of the search methods and we provided hands on training with them on how to search to make sure their checking everything," said Cpl. Jamie Brown, a military police team Leader with the 164th MP Co. and Colorado Springs, Colo., native.

Soldiers in the 164th MP Co. organized and conducted an eight hour class at a local police station to teach the female Iraqis how to properly search another female.



Pfc. Amanda Tucker
Fatma Mohammed Abdurassol, (left) an Iraqi female volunteer trained by the CF military police Soldiers from the 164th Military Police Company, 728th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade and Iraqi Police conducts a personal search of female persons at a local checkpoints. Female volunteers have teamed up with local IP as they want to help their communities reduce the violence as they try to return their neighborhoods to normalcy. Abdurassol, pats down an Iraq female at a checkpoint in Balad July 24.

"They were really eager to learn and they always had a lot of questions to ask about what to do in certain situations at checkpoints," said Pfc. Leilani Carroll, a gunner for the 164th MP Co. and native from San Antonio. "Having the females out there searching keeps Balad safe. They actually go out there and do everyday work."

"Sgt. Munoz and her squad really have bent over backwards to get these women trained, to get them out on the checkpoint and feel like they're part of the team," said Capt. Matthew Norris, commander, 164th MP Co., and Phoenix native. "They freely talk to her, they call her by her first name; that right there shows the trust and how they feel about what we're doing here."

The training is going to be a continuous process, said Munoz. Teaching them this one class was just the beginning.

With the ongoing threat of female insurgents, Iraqi females' continuous training is important to the Iraqi Army; who are currently manning the checkpoints, by helping male Soldiers to maintain their public relations without compromising security or disrespecting Iraqi culture.

As the program of volunteers grows, so will the training classes hosted by the 164th MP Co. The training of the Iraqi females will continue as long as the mission dictates.

The 164th MP Co. is currently assigned to the 728th MP Battalion deployed in Iraq. While in Iraq both MP units are supporting the security efforts to train Iraqi Police under the command and control of the 18th MP Brigade and Multi-National Division-North.

Operation moveout: Victory to Liberty



The Brigade Headquarters was tasked to move its headquarters from Camp Victory across to Camp Liberty in July 2008. The Brigade Commander's intent is that we have uninterrupted service to our higher and subordinate HQs throughout the move. This move is to enable units to relocate for further security operations to support Iraqi Security Forces in the area.





Photo courtesy of U.S. Army
A group photo of the 164th Military Police Company instructors: Staff Sgt. Munoz, Pfc. Carroll, Cpl. Brown, and Spc. Prieto; with the Balad females who will conduct searches out at check points.

Barriers broke in Balad

Story courtesy of:
164th Military Police Company,
728th Military Police Battalion

On July 16, 2008, Punishers of 2nd Platoon, 164th Military Police Company broke new ground in Balad, Salah ah Din, holding training for 10 female Iraqi Police hopefuls.

In response to the constant threat of suicide bombers the City Council hired these 10 women to increase the force protection efforts within the area.

"The women were just a handful chosen from a group of over 50 females in Balad who have high hopes of not only helping security efforts, but becoming part of the first female Iraqi Police in the province," said Capt. Matthew Norris, commander 164th MP Co.

The females will be working hand in hand with the Iraqi Police through the district, with their primary focus on searching females moving through their checkpoints.

Recent insurgent activities have proven time and time again that terrorism is not limited to male suspects, but also

women or children.

The female "volunteer IP," will be positioned at several of the more populated checkpoints and will work from 0700 to 1400, but are not authorized any special uniform.

The Police Transition Team is working to develop some sort of easily identifiable article of clothing, like a reflective vest, in order to give them distinction.

Most are stationed in pairs; however, several will work alone. They have small rooms, tents or enclosed shelters where they remain until a search is needed, at that time, the women are sorted into the shelter and conduct the search in privacy.

The culture norm is that males do not touch or handle females that are not their wife, making a personnel search next to impossible.

The training was the first of its kind in and around the Balad Districts, using a progressionary training process and



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army
Female Iraqis practice searching each other during the training conducted at the Al Sharkia Local Police Station in Balad, Iraq.

practical exercises.

Training was conducted by female Non Commissioned Officers and Soldiers led by PTT Squad Leader Staff Sgt. Iris Munoz, in charge of the district's Checkpoint Headquarters that maintains oversight for 15 checkpoints.

Topics like identifying suspicious behavior, conducting a proper personnel search (especially females in native dress), and searching personnel with a vehicle.

Norris commented, "Once all male Soldiers and interpreters left the room, the women conducted searches on each

(see Balad pg. 13)

Balad, from PG. 12

other while getting tips and helpful hints from the female instructors.”

At the conclusion of the training, the PTT sat down one last time to share in some Iraqi food and discuss questions and concerns of the women.

The number one issue brought up by

almost every female was the ambition to be an actual Iraqi Police officer and not work strictly at checkpoints for approximately \$200. Some of these women will work at locations that do not have shelter or a partner, and want some type of tent or other shelter placed at the checkpoints.

An increase in the number of women

would also allow rotations in the shifts, because there are no more than two females per check point, breaks are not possible.

CF MPs and IP team up to patrol Yethrib



Spc. Michael Behlin

Sgt. Cruz Munoz, a 3rd platoon squad leader, 164th Military Police Company, 728th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade and native of Chicago, Ill., discusses police procedures with an Iraqi Policeman during his squad's recent patrol of Yethrib, Iraq. As part of the partnership between CF and IP, his unit's efforts assisted and deterred violence in the Yethrib area; violence has gone down 90% in recent months. The recent decrease in violence demonstrates that the IP capability continues to improve as they strive to take control of the rule of law while protecting the citizens of Yethrib.



Spc. Michael Behlin

Sgt. Cruz Munoz, a 3rd platoon squad leader, 164th Military Police Company, 728th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade and native of Chicago, Ill., takes a few moments to speak and mingle with Iraqi children prior to conducting a community policing patrol through the streets of Yethrib. A combined effort between Coalition Forces, Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army has drastically decreased the violence in the city.



Sgt. Tamekia Henderson, a military police Soldier with 164th Military Police Company, 728th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade shares a few laughs with Iraqi children and Iraqi Police during a recent patrol through the streets of Yethrib. Months ago, cooperation between the two services would not have been possible due to terrorist activity in the area. However, the recent decrease in violence demonstrates that the IP capability continues to improve as they strive to take control of the rule of law while protecting the citizens of Yethrib while reducing the terrorist footprints in the area.

Spc. Michael Behlin



Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

Pfc. Victor Diaz, native of Houston, Texas and member of the 65th Military Police Company removes a tray of food from an oven at the Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah Dining Facility July 27. The 65th MP Co., is deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C., and is currently assigned to the 793rd Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Center.

Cooks: Making it happen 24/7

By:
Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger
18th MP Bde. PAO

Mahmudiyah – A hot day in Iraq makes for an even hotter day in the kitchens of Iraq military cooks.

Coalition Forces sponsored dining facilities prepare hot meals for thousands of Soldiers seven days a week, who come to enjoy food that gives them the needed energy to continue with their daily missions.

Places like, Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, is one of the few FOBs in Iraq that still have Soldiers ‘doing it all’ in the dining facility as far as food preparation, maintaining the cleanliness of the facility and keeping the facility equipment up to standard in order to operate successfully.

“The cooks here do it all,” said Sgt. 1st Class Walter Edwards, a member of the 65th Military Police Company and the assistant noncommissioned officer in charge of the Mahmudiyah dining facility.

Edwards, a native of Charlotte, N.C., wakes up as early as



Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

The Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah Dining Facility staff pose for a photo July 27 in the kitchen prior to preparing dinner for their Soldiers.



Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger

Pfc. Dominique Wilson, native of Baltimore, Md. and cook with the 65th Military Police Company prepares food in the kitchen at the Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah Dining Facility July 27.

2:50 a.m., every morning seven days a week to make sure that the over 1300 Soldiers that come to the facility daily receive a hot meal.

“It is constant work, overlooking everything and making sure everything runs smoothly,” said Edwards. “When we first got here 8 months ago we had to feed about 300 Soldiers a day now it us up to over 1300 Soldiers a day.”

Edwards and Sgt. 1st Class Emma Grau, a member of Gulf Company, 320th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Rakkasans, 101st Airborne Division and noncommissioned officer in charge of the dining facility arrived at Mahmudiyah and found that the facility was in great need of some changes.

“When we first got here we had to prepare food in a tent,” said Edwards. “Now the facility is a 110 percent better.”

Some of the additions that the unit brought in were: new

(see *Cooks* pg. 15)

Cooks, from PG. 14

kitchen equipment, televisions to entertain Soldiers while eating. A new grill for the kitchen was purchased to provide home style barbequed meals for the troops.

Unlike some of the larger camps in Iraq; using contracted support, the facility in Mahmudiyah has to be self sufficient.

"Sometimes shipments don't come in on time and sometimes we have to wait a long time for equipment to be prepared when it breaks," said Staff Sgt. Krystle McGrath, a native of Columbus, Ohio and member of the 65th MP Co.

When equipment breaks down and shipments don't come in the members of the dining facility still have to keep the Soldiers of the FOB fed.

"When the resupply is inconsistent we still have to keep Soldiers fed," said McGrath.

"When something breaks we have to improvise," said Edwards. "Once we had to serve Pop Tarts because the power went out."

The dining facility Soldiers are constantly making new improvements on the facility to better serve the Soldiers on the FOB.

"We are working (on) getting another generator and some better air conditioning for the kitchen," said Edwards, while walking through the sweltering hot kitchen during dinner preparations.

"It is hot and sometimes miserable," said McGrath. "The hardest part of the job is keeping my Soldiers morale up."

The noncommissioned officers used tactics like: rotating the Soldiers through a cycle giving them time off certain days, allowing the Soldiers to listen to music while preparing meals and simple things like putting up a Slip in Slide for the Soldiers during the Fourth of July holiday to cool off in.

"We try to make the working environment in the kitchen

as relaxed as possible," said Edwards. "These Soldiers are continuously cooking and cleaning all day."

Edwards continued to say without his Soldiers things would not get done.

"You can't do it by yourself, it's a team effort if one of us falls behind we all fall behind," said Edwards.

Ninety percent of the Soldiers in the facility are on their first deployment straight out of job training school.

"We have a very tight schedule between ordering food, preparing the food and conducting physical training, that is where experience comes in," said Edwards referring to his five combat tours.

Not only does the dining facility feed the Soldiers of the FOB they also support smaller Joint Security Stations in the area by ordering them food and needed supplies to support the Soldiers out on the JSS.

For morale on the small FOB in Mahmudiyah the Soldiers have the Morale Welfare and Recreation Center and the dining facility.

"For morale here all Soldiers have is the MWR and the dining facility," said Edwards. "The facility is open 24 hours for Soldiers to come in and watch a movie if they want."

Even though the work seems never ending at times Edwards says he loves his job.

"This is never ending work there is always something going on," said Edwards. "I love coming to work though, soon as I walk in the door I forget all my problems from the day before and I just work because that is what I love to do."

The 65th MP Co., is deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C., and is currently assigned to the 793rd Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Center.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan Kretschmer

AF Police Transition Team trains IPs

Air Force Airmen with the 716th Military Police Battalion, Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conduct police transition training with the local Iraqi police in Abu T'shir, Baghdad July 31. Airmen train IP on building search techniques. The techniques will assist IP on how to enter a facility of some type when performing community policing in Baghdad.

Voter Registration Occurs Safely as a Result of IP Over-Watch

Story courtesy of:
340th Military Police Company
728th Military Police Battalion

TIKRIT– The often overlooked Voter Registration process that began July 15 2008, is a critical precursor for the Provincial Elections to take place in October. By July 20, 2008 nearly 1000 people had registered in Al Alam, Ad Dawr and Tikrit combined.

“This is especially impressive since the voter registration process in Salah al Din (SaD) is passive. Meaning only persons, just turning 18, not receiving food subsidies, or are new to the area, have to register for the upcoming elections. Everyone else is registered automatically,” said 1st Lt. Suzanne Russell, 320th Military Police Company, 728th MP Bn.

The Tikrit voter registration site on July 19, 2008 had made obvious signs of progress, with clearly marked signs, new registration material, and informational materials. As a result of the experience by registration supervisors and the professionalism of the



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army
Commander 320th Military Police Company Michael Pangia, stands with voter registration officials who proudly display their signs.

Iraqi Police (IP). Mazen Hammed Soltan and Najee Sammey, two of the directors present, have both worked with the election committee since 2004, and with 14 eager registration assistants; the conditions were set for success.

Russell stated, “Out front 7 IPs provided by Tikrit Patrol guarded the site for 24 hours a day during the 30 day registration process, making it completely Iraqi run.” Inside IPs from Facilities Protection Services (F.P.S.), provided the security arm for governmental process of the ISF. Six stations were arranged to check IDs and guide personnel

through the process. The registration materials gathered here are first sent to the local Tikrit office of the election committee, then consolidated in Baghdad, and finally sent to a joint Iraqi–United Nations election commission in Dubai, UAE for processing.

“SAD voter registration will be a model for the provincial elections to follow. The Iraqis were successful from start to finish, with the absence of Coalition Forces,” said Russell.

The sheer turn-out of people was proof enough that the system is working.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Joan Kretschmer

AF Police Transition Team trains IPs

Local Iraqi policemen run through training drills instructed by the U.S. Air Force 716th Military Police Battalion Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, at a local police station in Abu T'shir in southern Baghdad July 31. The added training benefits IP capabilities in order for the police to take over primary security operations in Baghdad.

MP brigades complete mission recon

By:
Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger
18th MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD—Multi-National Division—Baghdad units go through months of training and preparation prior to deploying to ensure they are mission ready as their unit prepares themselves to take on the challenges of a combat mission.

In late July, the 8th Military Police Brigade, home stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, deployed to Iraq to complete its two-week Pre-Deployment Site Survey in support of its upcoming deployment.

The 18th Military Police Brigade, from Mannheim, Germany, was the 8th MP Bde.'s PDSS host. The 18th MP Bde. is currently here in Iraq and is coming toward the end of its 15-month deployment in the upcoming months.

"A PDSS is a good chance for the incoming unit to get out there and get eyes on and learn more about what the mission entails so they can go back and see what they need to do or readjust within their planning sessions to get ready for their deployment," said Lt. Col. Thomas Lombardo, operations officer, 18th MP Bde., who is a native of Buffalo, N.Y.

During the PDSS, staff sections from the 18th MP Bde.'s command group, operations and logistics met with each other from the respective brigades and discussed how their counterparts managed their operations during the deployment. In the staff cross talks, staff officers explained how they performed their mission support, what areas within their expertise went well and defined areas that could use additional resources to support the units.

The PDSS gave the 8th MP Bde. an idea of what to expect in each brigade's staff sections for their future deployment.

"The PDSS also helps the incoming brigade finalize their plans once they get eyes on the battlefield," said Lombardo. "It helps



Maj. Michael Indovina

Soldiers of the 18th and 8th Military Police Brigades gather together July 21 at the 18th MP Bde. headquarters on Camp Liberty to discuss Police Transition Team operations and the mission of the brigade headquarters during the 8th MP Bde.'s Pre-Deployment Site Survey. The two-week visit on the ground partnered the current headquarters performing the mission and the incoming brigade as they worked through the mission set prior to the new brigade's deployment to the Iraq theater. The 18th MP Bde., Multi-National Division—Baghdad, is deployed from Mannheim, Germany, and is in the final months of its 15-month deployment to the Iraq capital. The 8th MP Bde. is currently stationed in Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

them visualize and allows the commander and the operations section to figure out what they are going to do."

Maj. Joe Decosta, the operations officer for the 8th MP Bde. and a native of Boston, said it helped him fill in the gaps so he can become more prepared to take on his role in the combat environment.

"Our PDSS will help us fill in gaps when during our analysis from what we see here," said Decosta. "When we came here now, we can now visualize what the battlefield set is like so now when we go back (to Hawaii), we know what to adjust and what to replicate in training with what it looks like here in Iraq.

We will adjust what we are doing so we can fight the war when we deploy here," added Decosta.

A unique aspect that was learned through this site visit was giving the current unit an opportunity to provide the incoming unit guidance on what they thought worked well for them and what they thought did not work so well.

"This will be an opportunity for us to share what went well and what did not go well for us during our deployment for our incoming counterparts," said Col. Mark Spindler, commander, 18th MP Bde., and a native of St. Louis.

The 18th MP Bde. command group section members said they felt the PDSS was

a good experience to prepare the incoming brigade to come back and be ready to take command of the brigade's headquarters MP mission while continuing Iraqi Police development.

"We are happy to be here," said Col. Byron Freeman, commander, 8th MP Bde. "We need this so we are ready to come back and take over when we hit the ground."

The 18th MP Bde. mission in Iraq is to provide command and control capabilities over military Police Transition Teams assigned to the Multi-National Corps—Iraq. The brigade headquarters consists of approximately 100 Soldiers who perform their missions in Iraq that commands more than 5,000 MP Soldiers in theater.

A successful PDSS will lead to a successful transfer of authority of the MP mission in Iraq as the mission continues to move forward with providing Police Transition Team operations to the Iraqi police.

"This PDSS will set the conditions for a successful transfer of authority," said Lombardo. "What we don't want to do is give the mission to the 8th MP Bde. and for it to go backwards a couple steps during the transition."

"We want the 8th MP Bde. to continue with where we left off and continue to build on what we accomplished here," added

(see PDSS pg. 18)

PDSS, from PG. 17

Lombardo. "We are moving the Iraqi Police forward to primacy with regards to security through law enforcement."

Part of the PTT mission in Iraq is to work alongside the IP in order to provide the citizens of Iraq with a better sense of security through the rule of law that the IP provide.

"We want to know how to do the job when we get on the job in Iraq," said Freeman, referring to the preparations that his brigade must go through prior to their

Iraq deployment.

The two brigades have been corresponding for months now in order to lay out the operational tempo for the incoming brigade so it is better prepared for what lies ahead. The PDSS now has provided them a visual of what has been begin discussed in earlier staff coordination opportunities.

"We had a good operational background on the mission before we arrived because we have been corresponding with the 18th MP Bde. for the past five months now," said Decosta.

After the two weeks survey, the 8th MP Bde. Soldiers returned home to Hawaii with the additional data collected and learned.

"We got everything we needed and more from the PDSS," said Freeman. "Now we will go back and prepare our Soldiers for their future mission by integrating the data collected during the PDSS and integrate the lessons learned into our upcoming training venues."

Emergency Response Unit cadets conduct PT with CF MP



191st military police partner with ISF

By:
Pfc. Glenn Manor
191st Military Police Company

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from the 191st Military Police Company, 95th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, recently conducted checkpoint operations with Iraqi Security Forces in the Sadr City Area of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

The North Dakota National Guard military police company is currently conducting Police Transition Team activities on Camp Liberty, Iraq, since early April with the primary mission to assess, assist, train and mentor Iraqi Police and ISF in order for the security forces to take responsibility for security in their country.

Iraq has seen a steady drop in criminal and terrorist activities in recent months and much can be accredited to the ISF taking on more responsibility of the streets of Iraq more and more.

During a recent joint patrolling operation between ISF and the 191st MP Co., random checks were made on vehicles at a traffic control point near the Sadr City district of Baghdad.

The searches and apprehensions were made by the Iraqi Army with assistance from the 191st Soldiers whom provided their Iraqi colleagues with advice on how to search vehicles during check point operations.

Check point operations throughout the city assist in securing areas and help deter criminals from taking actions that can hurt the rule of law. The CPs also



In early July 2008, Sgt. Dane Severinson, a military police Soldier from 3rd platoon, 191st Military Police Company, 95th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and native of Grand Forks, N.D., observes the hand cuff techniques used by an Iraqi Army soldier on a detainee as he applies zip cuffs on the person being apprehended at a joint security checkpoint near the Sadr City district in Baghdad.

provides local citizens a face of the ISF. If a citizen has information on criminal activities or needs assistance in other areas, the ISFs provide the people a person to report it too.

Several tips provided by the U.S. Soldiers, were to guide the ISF to look for hidden items, ways of detecting secret compartments, how to tell if a person is giving the perception or indications of not telling the truth and handcuffing techniques. Although most of the ISF have been trained in these techniques prior to taking to the streets, the U.S. MPs are here to help refine their skills learned during certification training while performing their duties.

By training the Iraqi Army so that they have better skills allows them to take over more of the security of their own

country sooner.

Since April, the 191st has seen a developed partnership with its counterparts within the ISFs. The MPs are working closely with the IP and IA soldiers to ensure cultural respect are considered when working together.

The 191st MPs are still in the early stages of their deployment and continue to look forward to joint operations as they continue to partner with their ISF counterparts with the end objective to hand over full responsibility to the Iraqis so they too can live in peace and enjoy the freedoms of democracy.

U.S. Soldiers entrust their lives to Iraqi citizens:

When they go without protective armor to play soccer in Kirkuk City

By:
Spc. Jason Jordan
1st BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. Pao

Two men race side by side – breathing heavily as they struggle to gain control of a ball that is rolling across the ground before them – which they will attempt to kick into a goalie-guarded net in order to score a match point for their respective teams.

Although this might sound like a normal soccer match, you would have had to ‘see it to believe it’ to know that a particular match that occurred in the Kirkuk Province of northeastern Iraq on July 15 – was far from ordinary.

In the middle of Kirkuk City, with armored vehicles positioned all around the field as a ring of security, U.S. Soldiers with the 212th Military Police Company from Wiesbaden, Germany stepped out of their protective body armor to play a soccer match against a group of Iraqi Police members.

Iraqi citizens present to witness the event were delighted to see their fellow country men square off against the Coalition Forces – whom they consider an elite symbol of power.

“This game is the most memorable event I have witnessed in years,” said Kirkuk citizen Abdhalla – who walked more than two miles in order to see the game. “Two groups of warriors, both of whom are fighting against a violent insurgency, have made time to have fun together, despite the violence around them.”

The 212th MP Soldiers were also enthusiastic about the game, some stating that it was the last thing they would have expected in combat zone.

“Before deploying, the only news I had seen regarding Iraq were negative ones that depicted a violent and frightening war,” said Spc. Morgan Birdwell. “Who would have guessed that I would be here playing a game of soccer, making friends and having fun with some of the same people that would have tried to kill me under the country’s old regime?”

“The fact that we were able to interact within the city wearing no body armor is solid proof that security in this area of the country has vastly improved,”

***Capt. Jay Cash,
commander, 212th MP Company***

Although the match was conducted in friendly fun, it symbolized very important steps toward the stabilization of the country; also representing a shift in operations that will focus on a return to normalcy, rather than combat.

The event was made possible due in large part to the efforts of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division; a unit that has experienced phenomenal success since they arrived to the area in September.

“The fact that we were able to interact within the city wearing no body armor is solid proof that security in this area of

the country has vastly improved,” said Capt. Jay Cash, Commander of the 212th MP Company. “It also showed the Iraqi people that believe in them, and that we trust them enough to expose ourselves to possible danger as we participate in normal activities and a pastime that is popular in their culture.”

Although the 212th MP Soldiers greatly enjoyed themselves, they hardly stood a chance against an IP team that is considered one of the best throughout the city.

“Many of these guys have been playing soccer their entire lives, and it was amazing to witness how skillfully they played,” said Staff Sgt. Daniel Crouch, 212th MP squad leader. “Although they were completely good-natured about it, it was obvious that they thoroughly enjoyed ‘schooling’ the Americans.”

Those in attendance were impressed at how graciously the Soldiers conducted themselves.

“Today you proved to our people that your intent in this country goes far beyond just fighting the insurgency. You entrusted your lives to the Iraqi people and displayed a genuine effort that indicates you truly care for our people,” said Major General Jamal, who is the Commander of Iraqi Police forces in the area. “Thank you for being here today and proving your resolve as you help us guide this country forward.” The shirts worn by the players of the 212th MP Company read “We’re all Iraqi’s,” a sentiment used to seal the bond of cooperation in this province.

Guardians transfer authority to Scorpions

By:
Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger
18th MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from the 64th Military Police Company transferred authority over to the 978th Military Police Company during a ceremony held July 23 on Camp Liberty.

For the Soldiers of the 64th MP Co., known as Guardians, out of Fort Hood, Texas, this concluded their third tour in Iraq since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

During their recent deployment the Guardians conducted Police Transition Team operations in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and prior to coming to Baghdad in August of 2008 they conducted

route security missions near Talil, Iraq.

In their place now, the 978th MP Co., known as Scorpions, from Fort Bliss, Texas, will continue with the PTT missions of training the IP forces in the Khadamiyah and Saliyah areas of Baghdad.

During his speech, Capt. John Templer, a native of Pflugerville, Texas, and commander of the 64th MP Co., talked about the various operations his unit went through during the ‘Surge Operations’ in Iraq.

“We arrived here 15 months ago at the height of the ‘Surge Operations’,” said Templer. “Your efforts in providing supervision and oversight to the Iraqi police in Khadamiyah have been crucial in further posturing the IP’s ability to sustain, develop and provide legitimate policing services and public order for it’s citizens.”

Templer continued to talk about the lasting impression his Soldiers will have on the IP force and the Iraqi people.

“Know that your hard work, sacrifice and selfless service here in Iraq have made a lasting impact on both the future of the Iraqi police force and ultimately the future success in the security of Iraq,” said Templer, to his Guardian Soldiers.

The Guardians mission while in Iraq left them completing over 1,800 combat

patrols in support of the company’s police partnership missions in the Khadamiyah and Saliyah Police Districts and in support of the 92nd and 716th Military Police Battalions command group’s battle field circulation.

During the deployment the Guardians operated under the 92nd and 716th MP Bns., 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

While in Talil, the unit conducted 120 plus route clearance missions executed along some of the most dangerous supply routes and alternate supply routes in Iraq and more than 50 convoy security missions executed in support of the theater logistics convoys to ten different forward operating bases.

In conclusion, Lt. Col. Johnson, native of, commander of the 716th MP Bn., told the Soldiers because of their hard work and selfless service they have earned the right to go home proud to their families.

“I want you to hear what I’m saying right now,” said Johnson, to the Guardian Soldiers. “You have made a difference; you’ve done your part for your country and your comrades. Now go home proud and loudly tell your war stories in the local Veterans of Foreign Wars because you have made Iraq a better place and you have made history.”



Staff Sgt. Liston Ballard

Petraeus awards troops

Pfc. Andrew Campbell, a mechanic, 58th Military Police Company, 728th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade is presented a coin of excellence from Gen. David Petraeus, commander, Multi-National Forces-Iraq during a visit on July 26 to the units area of operations on Forward Operating Base Normandy, near Muqdadiyah, Iraq. Campbell was presented the coin for his outstanding efforts while providing constant maintenance support vital to the unit's mobility to military police transition team Soldiers. Four other Soldiers from the 58th MP Co. were also presented coins for excellence for their efforts from Gen. Petraeus.

Soldiers sing praises at FOB Rustamiyah

By:
Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger
18th MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – As night falls on Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah silence and darkness covers the FOB. This assists the FOB to remain tactically quiet and unseen throughout the night.

However, if you listen closely through the constant running of generator motors and air conditioning units you can hear a melodic sound off in the distance.

No, it is not the daily religious prayers that are broadcasted on loud speakers throughout Baghdad; which can be heard very distinctly at FOB Rustamiyah, but is the sound of a five Soldier band that sings religious songs three days a week at the FOB to provide Soldiers with a religious release from their daily stresses a combat environment may bring.

The band consists of five Soldiers, four are military police Soldiers with Multi-National Division – Baghdad's 95th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade. The participant is a company commander with Company B., 94th Base Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light), MND-B.

The five-person band practices two nights a week and plays during the religious services at the FOB's chapel weekly.

The band says the reason they sing is for their fellow Soldiers of the FOB.

"We do it to support the Soldiers," said Capt. Barrett Banks, a New Baltimore, Mich., native, who is a vocalist with the band, and serves as the personnel officer for the 95th MP Bn.

The Soldiers of the band say singing in the band is a great way to provide for the spiritual needs of the Soldiers at the FOB.

"We are providing a religious service to the Soldiers," said Capt. Mark Folkerts, the Chicago native, who plays the drums and guitar for the band, and serves as the commander for Company B., 94th BSB. "It is a proven fact that more Soldiers come out of combat more religiously aware; spiritual well being is more important than both physical and mental well-being here."

The band prides itself in trying to sing songs that reach out and meet the Soldiers' spiritual needs every week and that they can relate to for a younger crowd.

"We pick songs that are uplifting to the Soldiers," said Sgt. Hannah Sparks, a vocalist for the band and native of Golden,

unwind after a mission.

"It is some great downtime coming off mission and then coming here to practice our songs," said Sparks, who spends her days training Iraqi police at a near by IP station. "The band is a sense of peace in such a hectic time."

Not only do the Soldiers find that being in the band is a sense of peace during their deployment they also found that the band has grown to be a support group for them to turn to when the need arises.

"Everyone in the group is well adjusted to the environment," said Banks referring to the FOB located in Baghdad. "We have become a great support group to one another outside of work. We can lean on each other and we are here for each other 24/7."

Besides being a support group and getting a chance to unwind from the daily stresses of the combat theater in Iraq can bring, some of the band members just do it because they love praising God.

"Praising the Lord is the reason I do it," said Folkerts. "The Lord has given me this talent and I use it to praise him."

All of the band members agreed that throughout their time spent with each other they have gotten better at their musical skills.

"I've gotten pretty good playing the guitar here," said Pfc. Christopher Nunley, a Tulsa, Okla., native and band guitarist and drummer. "I've gotten a lot better instrumentally."

"Now after playing the guitar here, I'm not afraid to play in front of people," said Folkerts, referring to his ability from playing the guitar when he first got to Iraq and now.

The Soldiers spend all week listening and downloading new songs to learn prior to performing the weekly services.

"I download songs I don't know during the week," said Sparks. "Then I listen to the songs constantly and sing them all throughout the day to learn them."

Though the band had a few hiccups throughout the practice, once they began to play as a team and everyone got their individual parts down the music sounded very inviting to all; 'on the not so silent Baghdad FOB.'



Colo., who serves as a military police Soldier with the 59th Military Police Company. "We like to play songs that speak to the Soldiers as well."

The Soldiers definitely add to the worship services, said Capt. Christopher Dickey, a native of Houston, Texas, who serves as the 95th MP Bn., chaplain. The Sunday services used to have music off of CDs but now the band adds to the service by bringing live music to the over thirty Soldiers, who attend the service weekly.

"It is an incredible investment that the band brings every week to the Soldiers," said Dickey, referring to the time the band spends after mission and work three times a week to provide for the spiritual needs of the Soldiers of the FOB.

"These Soldiers come off mission, work hard to learn songs and prepare for the weekly worship services," said Dickey. "The band adds so much to the service just having live music enhances are ability to praise God."

One band member says it is a great way to