

Vol. II, Iss. IX

February 4

THE RALLY POINT

Serving the men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team
and Multi-National Division - Baghdad in support of

ISF
take the lead



RAIDERS' Mission
remains the same

The Rucksack

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Iraqi Security Forces took the lead for security operations across Baghdad and Iraq January 1, 2009, and the mission for the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, remains the same. The Soldiers of the "Raider" Brigade are dedicated to the support of the ISF in their ongoing mission to provide a secure and stable environment for the Iraqi people.

(U.S. Army graphic by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO)



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Feb. 1,
2009
VOL. II
ISS. IX



The Rally Point is published monthly in the interest of the Families and Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines of the Armed Forces deployed in support of Multi-National Division - Baghdad and the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The Rally Point is a U.S. Army funded publication authorized for the members of the Armed Forces, under the provision of AR 360-1.

The views in The Rally Point are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army.

To contribute to Raider Brigade's The Rally Point, contact the 1st BCT Public Affairs Office or send stories, photos and information to david.j.olson@1bct4id.army.mil or brent.michael.williams@us.army.mil.

Sgt. David Hodge, our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. Stay safe and stay strong. We'll see you soon enough.

LEADER'S BOOK



Col. Ted Martin

Soldiers of the Raider Brigade,

As we begin our eleventh month in Iraq, I want to thank the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Department of Defense Civilians deployed to the Rashid district in southern Baghdad for your hard work and steadfast dedication to the accomplishment of Raider Brigade's mission. You are doing a fantastic job.

The Raider Brigade remains committed to assisting the Iraqi Security Forces in promoting

security in the Rashid district; enforcing Baghdad's Rule of Law, while building the capabilities of the local governance and working to improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people.

We have seen major changes in Iraq since the signing of the Security Agreement and its implementation January 1st. It is a new beginning for Iraq, made possible because of the sacrifices of the Soldiers of the Raider Brigade and Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

We have achieved much during the past 60 days demonstrating that the Soldiers of this brigade are up to any challenge.

As our ISF counterparts transitioned into the lead, this brigade moved into warrant based targeting, working with the Baghdad Operations Command and Criminal Investigation Division to actively target and detain criminals and insurgents. We have strengthened our partnership with these agencies conducting investigations and combined raids to keep the thugs and terrorists off the streets of Baghdad.

The importance of this mission cannot be understated. We know from our operations in Iraq that a thorough reconnaissance combined with taking the initiative away from the enemy maintains the current levels of security in our area of operations.

This brigade continues to experience significant success in the removal of accelerants — rockets, bomb, rifles and equipment used by insurgents, terrorists and criminals against the people of Iraq. We have taken a tremendous amount of enemy munitions off the battlefield, and Coalition Forces, partnered with the ISF to conduct combined operations; sweeping the country side, conducting house-to-house searches, continues to be the key to our success.

We see growth in the capability of the ISF, such as the development of their route clearance assets, and we continue to train and mentor Iraq's soldiers, national police and policemen to support them in their ongoing mission to secure the approximately 1.6 million people of Rashid.

Coalition Forces and ISF are winning the support of the Iraqi people, showing them that they can live a life free from the threat of violence and intimidation; and the many accomplishments of this brigade during this deployment helped to create conditions for another milestone event in the history of the Iraqi nation, the provincial elections Jan. 31.

Our main effort during the month leading up to the election proved to be assisting the Iraqi Security Forces in ensuring that all 221 of the polling sites in the Rashid district were secured providing the Iraqi people the opportunity to exercise their right to vote. It wasn't just the efforts of the infantry Soldiers, tankers and scouts who made this happen. Everybody got into this fight. This brigade pushed our support Soldiers from the 4th Support Battalion and 1st Special Troops Battalion, our cooks, mechanics and technicians, to name a few — forward to the joint security stations and patrol bases to make this happen. This allowed us to push more combat Soldiers onto the battlefield to assist the ISF counter indirect fire and provide site security for the polling stations.

It's been tough, as we have been pushing hard during the past month as part of this incredible tactical operation that was executed flawlessly by the Soldiers of this brigade as we worked alongside our ISF counterparts. But our work is far from over.

During the month of February we will be actively engaged in supporting MND-B during the transition of authority from the 4th Infantry Division Headquarters to the 1st Cavalry Division. In the days that will follow, we will also see the seating of the next provincial council and finally the Islamic holiday Arbaeen, the celebration of the ending of the 40 days of mourning.

Bottom line is that I could not be prouder of the Soldiers of this brigade. You have and continue to do an outstanding job, and I have come to expect nothing less, so let's keep our heads in the game and accomplish the mission.

RAIDER6

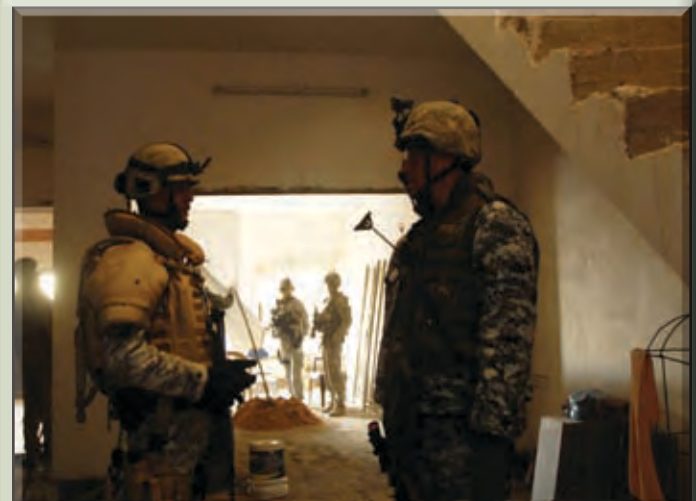


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Iraqi National Policemen from 1st Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, search an Iraqi residence for weapons, Jan. 8, during combined cordon and knock operations with Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad, in the Saydiyah community of southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

MISSION REMAINS THE SAME FOR RAIDERS AS ISF TAKE THE LEAD

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

When the patrol leader arrived at the Iraqi Army command post to link up with his Iraqi Security Forces counterparts, he found only one junior officer awaiting his arrival; there would be no security patrol this particular morning he was informed.

There were no IA soldiers available for the daily patrol because unbeknownst to the Soldiers assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, the ISF were conducting a battalion-level cordon and search operation at the order of the Baghdad Operations Center — without Coalition Forces.

1st Lt. Robert Ganim, a platoon leader assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd

Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., said the predicament was the first time since the implementation of Iraq's Security Forces Agreement that he did not know what to do.

Ganim, a native of Cleveland, wondered if he could still patrol without his ISF counterparts, and called his company commander for guidance.

Eventually, the IA soldiers did both, providing a truck to accompany the Soldiers of "Bear" Company to assess security needs for potential polling sites to be used in the upcoming provincial elections.

ISF still need the help of the Americans with the critical things, the "extreme" things, said Capt. Monqaith, 4th Co., 1st Bn., 24th Bde., 6th IA

Div., but for the Iraqi units that have taken increasingly more control for Baghdad's security operations, there is very little change.

"We have more control of our country now," he said, "and we have our friends, the Americans; they cannot go out on patrol without us."

The Iraqi Army soldiers in his unit feel that they are independent and in control, he said, stating that compared to last year the ISF could not do anything without the support of Coalition Forces.

The passing of the SA is an important step in building the Iraqi people's confidence in the ISF and the Government of Iraq, said Monqaith.

It shows the Iraqi people that Iraqis are in charge of the security, he added.

Mission priorities have changed many times for the mechanized infantry company assigned to the "Regulars" Bn., which was assigned to six different battalions and part of two brigades since the 1st "Raider" Brigade deployed to the Rashid district in southern Baghdad, said Capt. Ed Kennedy, commander of Co. B, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

However, the mission remains the same for the Soldiers, who, after Jan. 1, officially transitioned into a supporting role for the ISF's ongoing mission to provide security and stability for the people of Baghdad and Iraq, explained Kennedy, a 2006 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy.

"It's not really how we accomplish the mission that has changed; I am still getting rid of insurgents, building the economy and building on the local governance," said

Kennedy, a native of Danbury, Conn. "We are still detaining insurgents; we're still doing the projects; we're still working with the Neighborhood Advisory Council and support councils."

The unit is accustomed to operating in a position of providing over watch for ISF operations, conducting combined patrols and warrant-based targeting from its previous missions in northwestern Baghdad and around Sadr City, he said.

The biggest difference now is that Coalition Forces will not operate independently of ISF, explained Kennedy. All patrols and operations will be 100 percent partnered with the Iraqi Army, National Police or Iraqi Police.

Recently collocated at a joint security station in the Saydiyah community with NP from the 5th Bde., 2nd NP Div., and the "Regulars" Battalion's NP Transition Team further facilitates Co. B in its mission to not only support but teach and train the ISF, said Kennedy, who is serving his second tour in support of OIF.

The NPTT training is as critical a mission in support of the ISF and their efforts to take control of their nation's security, than ever before, said Spc. Francisco Medina-Cardona, a combat medic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"The change has not been too big, because we have always been working with the ISF," he said. "They have really taken control of the situation, taken the initiative and are working harder so that we can actually start to give them their jobs back."

Staff Sgt. Andre Allen, an infantry squad leader (left) from Fort Hood, Texas, and Sgt. Chad Smith, an infantry team leader from Washington, both assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, walk through a potential polling site, a primary school in the Saydiyah community of the Rashid district, Jan. 9, to conduct an assessment of the hard site where Iraqi citizens will cast their vote during the nation's upcoming provincial elections.



Admitting that he was once a Soldier who bought into the stereotype that the Iraqis did not want to take ownership for their country, Medina said that he now sees the ISF taking pride in their service to the Iraqi people and the nation.

"From my perspective, from the first time I saw an Iraqi team perform a search to the last one, an hour ago, the difference is astronomical," he said. "They are being as they should be; aggressive in nature, controlling, searching every person, searching everywhere, taking responsibility."

Medina also said that he believes that ISF will continue to need CF for support and guidance, but have made a huge step in the right direction to establishing the nation's sovereignty with the new security agreement.

In accordance with the SFA, the implementation of probably the biggest change for combined operations in the Rashid district, warrant-based targeting requires that U.S. Forces work with the Iraqi Judicial System and the BOC to acquire a warrant before detaining suspected criminals and terrorists, a system resembling the American law enforcement model, said 1st Lt. Sean Supon, an infantry scout platoon leader, assigned to HHC, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Warrant-based targeting is a more efficient model for conducting security operations and pushing suspects and criminals through the Iraqi Judicial System, added Supon, who recently completed a five-day training exercise with the Iraqi NP on sensitive site exploitation, crime scene investigations and time-sensitive raids.

"I think it is a drastic change," said Supon, a native of Kauai, Hawaii. "Look at the reports at the end of the week ... it is not just the CF who are catching bad guys or finding weapons caches anymore. Almost the majority of the missions that are successful now are combined or exclusively run by the Iraqis."

The Security Agreement has not affected the mission, whatsoever, reinforced Supon, who also said that the ISF

are now at the forefront of all combined operations and will eventually no longer need support or direction.

"As we watch in the following months, we will see the Iraqis taking more and more of the control," he said.

The Iraqi Army worked hard to earn the trust of the Iraqi people by getting the terrorists and criminals out of the communities and neighborhoods, said Pfc. Lucas Haeefe, a fire support specialist attached to Co. B, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"Iraqi informants working with the ISF are a lot more reliable than our informants, and in my opinion, trust the Iraqi Army a little more than they do us," said Haeefe, who hails from Argyle, Texas.

ISF have already taken the lead in operations, said Haeefe, and will be ready when the enemy tries to test Baghdad's gains in security.

"We're still kind of like their big brothers," he added. "They look up to us still and we kind of guide them. They are good people; they come out to talk to us, everybody, and if they don't speak a lick of English they still try to talk to us."

The camaraderie with the ISF helps the Soldiers during security patrols and operations, said Haeefe, who volunteered to join the "Regulars" Bn. fresh out of his Advanced Individual Training in Jan. 2008.

"The Iraqis don't play 'Us versus Them,'" he said. "I notice small things about them, characteristics, personality traits. It helps to build trust to know what they are more likely to do on the battlefield."

The implementation of the Security Agreement may fundamentally change the way that the line units operate, but it doesn't make the mission more difficult, said Sgt. 1st Class Johnny Monds, platoon sergeant, Co. B, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"We're basically used to the way we are running now," said Monds, who calls Hazel, Texas home. "The most major change, warrant-based targeting — witnesses and evidence — makes us get a little more involved in our aspect of it.

The U.S. Army has learned from previous conflicts, such as Vietnam, where once it was important to know the territory taken over, OIF proved that it is the people that the Soldiers must know to win the battle, said Monds, who jumped into Panama with the 75th Ranger Regiment during Operation Just Cause.

"The ISF, they are great," he said. "They are learning every day a little bit more. We are getting their techniques a little more detailed. Like a Soldier coming out of basic training has a general perspective of everything he is doing, we are just fine tuning the details."

The work has just begun for the Iraqis, and the ISF are the "brunt of the workforce," but it is the next step in helping the nation grow and become more independent, starting with the laws and the rulings, said Monds.



1st Lt. Robert Ganim, a platoon leader from Cleveland, assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, discusses the plan of action for early morning combined cordon and search operations with 2nd Lt. Hamed, 1st Bn., 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, Jan. 8 in the Saydiyah community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad.

Iraqi National Police Lt. Col. Hamad Abud, deputy commander of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Aburisha, or "Feather" Brigade, attached to the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Division, clears an AK-47 assault rifle Dec. 30 during combined cordon and search operations in the Abu T'shir community of the Rashid district. The NP went house-to-house in the predominately Shia community in southern Baghdad looking for Iraqi citizens with rifles and munitions. Under the Government of Iraq's "Weapons Free" Policy for citizens of Baghdad, Iraqis are no longer allowed to keep a rifle or pistol in their residencies without a permit. The Iraqi Security Forces partnered with Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who were responsible for searching abandoned houses and adjacent lots for caches.



National Police: Mission-ready in Abu T'shir

Story and photos Sgt. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, partnered with Iraqi Security Forces, conducted a cordon and knock operation Dec. 30 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Soldiers from Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, inspected vacant properties and provided over watch for Iraqi National Police during combined cordon and search operations to enforce the Government of Iraq's Weapons-Free Policy, clearing an entire neighborhood, or muhallah, in the Abu T'shir community.

"We are conducting a muhallah clearance in Abu T'shir in response to an (improvised-explosive device) attack a couple of days ago," said Capt. Sean Tennimon, commander of Troop C "Comanche," 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "We are looking for weapons, explosives-making materials, and the NP are collecting AK-47 rifles, which are not authorized in Baghdad without a permit."

"Comanche" Troop

Soldiers provided over watch for the ISF during the hours-long mission, frequently stopping to search and clear abandoned and unoccupied houses.

Officers and leaders of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Aburisha Brigade, attached to the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., led the NP patrolmen down the streets sending small teams to the next gated entrance of houses in the southern Baghdad community.

Labeled the Aburisha Brigade, which translates into Feather Brigade, the NP, or Shurta Wadaniya, originated from Ramadi, said Tennimon, who hails from Mobile, Ala.

"The majority of them are Sunni," explained Tennimon, who went on to say the security forces have won the support of the area's predominantly Shia populace. "The people are happy with them. I think they are ready to take over security for Abu T'shir."

Only days before Iraq's Security Agreement begins to take shape, Tennimon said he believes Comanche's mission will not change

during the transition of responsibility to the Iraqis.

"All of our patrols are combined now, so it will not be a big change for us," Tennimon stated. "We will still secure the people and do the things we normally do."

During the clearance operation, Lt. Col. Hamad Abud, deputy commander of the 1st Bn., Aburisha, enforced

the weapons-free policy by confiscating AK-47 rifles from residents.

Before Baghdad's Weapons-Free Policy began, each household was authorized one AK-47 rifle and one magazine.

To legally possess the weapon, residents must obtain a permit, explained Abud.

Abud exchanged the resident's weapon

for a slip of paper that contained weapon information and directions to the battalion's headquarters. He said the people will register their weapons at the headquarters, and he believes cooperation of Abu T'shir's people is vital to their mission's success.

"We cannot operate solely without the support of the citizens,"



An Iraqi National Policeman from the 1st Battalion, 3rd Aburisha Brigade, attached to the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, searches for hidden weapons and munitions as part of a cordon and search operation Dec. 30 in the Abu T'shir community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. The Iraqi National Police of the "Feather" Brigade work with Soldiers of the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, to provide a secure and stable environment for the people of eastern Rashid.

Spc. Travis Isaacs, cavalry scout assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, searches a vehicle in southern Baghdad's Abu T'shir neighborhood Dec. 30. The Soldiers provided over watch for the 1st Battalion, 3rd Aburisha Brigade, attached to the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, during a combined cordon and search operation to find weapons and munitions, as part of ongoing efforts to enforce Baghdad's Fardh al Qanoon, or Rule of Law. Under the Government of Iraq's "Weapons Free" Policy, Iraqi citizens may only have one rifle or pistol, if they have a weapons permit.



Sgt. Craig Walker, military dog handler from Kelso, Wash., part of the K-9 Team, assigned to the 40th Military Police Detachment, attached to the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, leads his partner, a Belgian Malinois dog named Carla, through an abandoned house Dec. 30 during combined operations in the Abu T'shir community in the Rashid district.

Comanche Soldiers provide over watch, inspect vacant properties

Abud stated.

In the past few months, the Aburisha led the ISF during similar clearance operations, said Sgt. Jeremy Brown, cavalry scout assigned to Comanche Troop.

"Having the lead shows the citizens that the ISF are trying to better the community," Brown stated. "It's really good to see the ISF and the local citizens working out the issues on the ground."

When the Aburisha arrived in the Rashid district from Ramadi, Brown said Comanche Soldiers gave the NP an initial push to get the Iraqis started, and have since out-performed the previous NP unit by far.

"The ISF in the area have done really well ... so we let them do their job," explained Brown, a native of Killeen, Texas.

Two days before the clearance operation, terrorists detonated a homemade bomb on a street in the muhallah, which severely injured a 14-year-old Iraqi boy while he walked along the road with his

mother, stated Brown, who has more than four years of service and two combat deployments to Iraq.

Brown's platoon responded to the scene and assisted Iraqi emergency response personnel. He worked with ISF in Ramadi and said he believes the NP improved significantly since 2006.

"Combined operations are like day and night compared to Ramadi," stated Brown. "They will actually go into the house and look around instead of just ask questions at the front door. I think the ISF really understand we are not going to be here forever."

According to U.S. reports, 12 AK-47 rifles were confiscated during the combined clearance mission and there were no injuries to personnel.

The Soldiers of Comanche Troop deployed with the 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., from Fort Hood, Texas, in March 2008, and are currently serving a combat deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sgt. Arto Brown, a cavalry scout from Fort Meyers, Fla., assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, gives an Iraqi child some candy Dec. 30 during a combined cordon and search operation in the Abu T'shir community of the Rashid district.



Rashid district opens Doura Public Library with a little help from 'Raider' Brigade

By Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Iraqi Security Forces joined local civic leaders Jan. 21 to commemorate the opening of the Doura Public Library in the Rashid district, christening a cultural and educational landmark for the Iraqi citizens of southern Baghdad.

The public library, capable of housing approximately 10,000 books and a score of personal computers for use by Iraqi citizens and school children is an indicator of Iraq's growing emphasis on education and civilization, said Zahra Hussein, media supervisor for the Doura Library.

Zahra, an active volunteer for schools in the area, said that she hopes the Doura Library will serve as one of many educational institutions created to foster the spirit of civilization and intellectualism in Baghdad and Iraq.

"... The library has been opened today with the support and all of the good efforts (of the people) in order to promote the idea of re-opening public libraries in Baghdad ...," she said.

"We all remember how this library was destroyed due to the violent acts, and books were scattered all over the floor," said Hashim Dahash, Rashid District Council deputy chairman.

In conjunction of the opening of the Doura Public Library, Hashim said that he hopes Jan. 22 will become the Rashid district's official "Reading Day" for

future generations of Iraqis.

"This (library) is considered as proof of security and stability, helping the people to return to their lives normally, especially the educational life," he said.

Rashid DC Chairman Yaqoub al Bakhaty said local leaders asked Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, for help with a project for a new cultural center in the Rashid district, starting with the renovation of the local community building and the restoration of books and services in Doura.

"Iraq is developing everyday and this library is part of this civilization's development as a result of security provided by the Iraqi (Security) Forces supported by

the Americans," said Yaqoub. "This accomplishment is a result of neighborhood stability combined with the efforts of the Doura residents."

Staff Sgt. Aja Andreu, civil affairs team leader assigned to Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), deployed out of Fort Dix, N.J., served as the project manager, conducting the initial assessment on the renovation necessary to restore the building's educational services.

According to regulation, the brigade commander can only use military funds to renovate the structural parts of the building, and could not buy the books or restore the services of the educational center, said Andreu, who is attached to the

1st Special Troops Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Working with the 1st BCT Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, the U.S. Department of State, and a nongovernmental organization, Friends of the Library, Andreu hired a local Iraqi contractor to refurbish the building, acquired furniture from a local carpenter, and restored a children's room and a computer room with 15 personal computers with desktop monitors, and internet service.

She also acquired a generator for the Doura Library, which is open to the general public Sunday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Andreu said she used the NGO to procure the library's educational materials for public use, and that nearly 1,000 children books and more than 150 adult education books are on back order to complete the project started in September of 2008.

"I would like to thank everybody who helped make this happen," said Andreu. "It is a special day for me."

"This has been a very hard project, and it has taken a lot of work by both the military and the residents of Doura," Andreu said.

Andreu, who hails from North Plainfield, N.J., said that she hopes the library will soon become a public institution for the benefit of all of Rashid's citizens.



U.S. Army Photo by Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Sabeeh Radyi, Rashid District Council Education Committee chairman, treats Iraqi school children from the Doura community in the Rashid district to story time as part of the commemoration of the re-opening of the Doura Public Library Jan. 21 in southern Baghdad. Citizens of the Doura community joined local leaders from the Rashid DC and Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad to celebrate the re-opening of the Doura Public Library.

REGULARS JOES HELP JIHAD LEADERS BETTER COMMUNITIES

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers witnessed Iraqi orphans from schools throughout western Rashid perform patriotic folk songs and skits for local community leaders and Iraqi Security Forces as a show of support and celebration for Iraq's growing independence and as part of an observation of the Islamic holiday of Ashura, at the Jihad Neighborhood Advisory Council Building Jan. 3.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, attended the special event hosted by local governance leaders and Iraqi Security Forces, and brought a little morale of their own to the orphans gathered at the Jihad NAC Hall in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

The Soldiers of Company C “Copperhead” hope that events such as the celebration will eventually build a rapport between the Iraqi people, the local governance and the ISF, said 1st Lt. Jason Behler, an armor platoon leader from Houston.

“It is part of the transition of security responsibilities,” said Behler, assigned to Company C, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt. “It’s a transition to get the Iraqi people to not only trust their local government, because this is a joint operation between the Iraqi Army and local governance, as they give to the kids, care for their own people.”

The recent assumption of responsibility for security operations in Iraq with the implementation of the Security Agreement Jan. 1 also means providing stability and support for the Iraqi people, Behler explained.

Taking care of Iraq's citizens will prove to be beneficial to the ISF over time, as Iraq's soldiers and police officers build upon the security gains made during the last year, he said.

“The experience, they have to learn on their own; it is going to be new and different for some of them,” he said. “... but they are going to learn, and become comfortable in their new roles.”

2nd Lt. Yasir, a platoon leader from Mosul, assigned to the 1st Bn., 53rd Bde., 14th IA Div., said that events like the celebration is another step toward the ISF taking real responsibility for their country and its people.

“Very soon, you will see us going to the people and interacting with them,” Yasir explained.

The transformation will take time, said Yasir, but the Coalition Forces will see good results as the ISF work to endear themselves to the Iraqi people.

“What we went through and what the Iraqi children and women have gone



Jihad Neighborhood Advisory Council security representative, Fatheel, hands out brightly colored coats to Iraqi school children and orphans at the Jihad Neighborhood Advisory Council Building.

through during the war has really devastated them – and almost destroyed us,” he said. “This is what we see here: the very first steps to rehabilitate everyone. We are in the right place, and these are the first steps in a very long journey.”

The IA soldiers will do everything possible to show the citizens of Rashid and Baghdad that the ISF are human beings capable of caring and serving the Iraqi people, said Yasir.

The situation in Iraq has changed dramatically during the past couple years, which has changed the role of the combat-arms Soldiers, said Sgt. William Thomas, III, who hails from Orange County, Va., and is assigned to 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

“We set up local governance meetings, talk about problems

and fix problems, and we do this together with the IA, the Iraqi Police and the Sons of Iraq to get everything unified and bring the country together,” said Thomas, who is currently on his third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

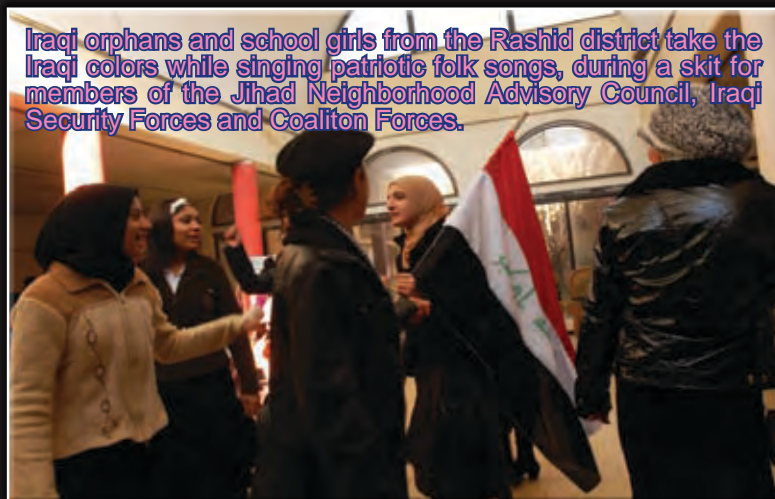
Combat units and company commanders are taking more of a lead role in civil military engagements and are making an impact within the Iraqi communities, said Staff Sgt. James Ossipov, civil affairs team leader, part of CAT 15, attached to the 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

CA Teams working at the company and platoon-levels enabled the maneuver units to be more proactive in getting the ISF to take more responsibility within their communities, said Ossipov, who also said that he is more optimistic about Iraq today than his previous deployment in 2005.

Events such as the makeshift celebration at the Jihad NAC Hall is an excellent opportunity for the NAC leaders to provide for their people, build morale for the children and offer a helping hand to the schools and their teachers, he explained.

“It’s a feel-good kind of mission,” said Ossipov. “We’re obviously not going to solve any problems today, but since we have the capabilities to do something nice, we do what we can.”

The CA Team of specialists, part of Company D, 404th CA Bn. (Abn.), a U.S. Army Reserve unit, stationed out of Fort Dix, N.J., gathered the school bags and supplies, toys and foodstuffs for the armor company to give to the Jihad NAC and Iraqi Army soldiers of the 1st Bn., 53rd Bde., 14th IA Div.



Iraqi orphans and school girls from the Rashid district take the Iraqi colors while singing patriotic folk songs, during a skit for members of the Jihad Neighborhood Advisory Council, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

1st BCT leaders envision Farmer's Co-op Building

Stories and photos by Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

For thousands of years, farmers in Ma Baynaa Al-Nahreen, the Land Between the Two Rivers,



A worker assembles the frame for the first greenhouse prior to the Radwaniyah farmer's cooperation association's greenhouse ground-breaking ceremony in southwestern Baghdad Jan. 22.

worked the soil to produce crops for their livelihood and sustain their existence.

Now in the 21st Century, new

technology and agriculture practices can increase the farmer's crop yields to make the harvest more productive and to earn the farmers more money for their produce.

Senior leaders from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, attended the Radwaniyah Farmer's Co-op Building "ground-breaking" ceremony with their Iraqi Security Forces partners Jan. 14 to mark the beginning of the building project designed to assist the local farmers with new technologies in the modern age in southwestern Baghdad.

Raad Hanna, the 1st BCT embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team's agricultural advisor, said the benefits of a farmer's cooperation association will affect the future of this area.

The association is working to bring 100 greenhouses and 20 tractors plus farm implements to assist the farmers in Radwaniyah and the surrounding area, explained Raad.

"It'll make a difference in the whole area," he added. "There will be training for the farmers to learn how to use the greenhouses and make them productive."

Sheik Hussein Ali Alash, the chairman of the Ma Baynaa Al-Nahreen Farmer's Cooperation Association, explained that 750 farmers in the Radwaniyah area of southwestern Baghdad joined the organization.

The farmers, who collectively own more than 14,000 donams or

approximately 8,645 acres, joined the association to pool their resources and improve their ability to produce more crops, so they can sell more agriculture products to the citizens of Baghdad in the various market places, benefitting all of the farmers as they enjoy more profits from their labor, Hussein explained.

During the ceremony, Brig. Gen. Faiswl Malikmhsen al-Talall, commander, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, thanked everyone for coming to the ceremony.

"Thank you for your attendance" to see the construction of Iraq, Faiswl announced. "We thank Coalition Forces for their contribution to this project."

The building of Iraq began after the security situation improved in the area due to the cooperation of everybody, said Faiswl.

After the ceremony, Sheik Ayad Alawi al-Jabour, the Tribal Support Council Chairman, told senior MND-B leaders about the plaque he erected.

"I put Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond's name on the plaque to show the people how much the Americans have done to help us," Ayad said.

Col. Ted Martin, commander, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, spoke with Ayad and several sheiks after the ceremony.

"(You) stood by us in the bad days; we'll stand by you now," said Martin, who hails from Jacksonville Beach, Fla. "The Americans are not going anywhere anytime soon. We're a team here - 4th Infantry Division and Radwaniyah."



A worker takes a break from building the cement forms for the foundation of the Radwaniyah Farmer's Cooperation Building Jan. 14 prior to the "ground breaking" ceremony attended by 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, Iraqi Security Forces and community leaders in southwestern Baghdad. When the building is complete the Farmer's Co-op Bldg. will serve as the hub for renting farm machinery such as tractors and other implements, buying seed and fertilizer, and training farmers on techniques how to be more productive growing their various crops.

Sheik Ayad Alawi al-Jabour, the Radwaniyah Tribal Support Council Chairman, describes the plan for another civil affairs project with 1st Lt. David Lisovich, the executive officer for Troop B, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Sgt. 1st Class Eric McCoy, the civil affairs team leader assigned to Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), attached to 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. Lisovich hails from Slippery Rock, Pa., and McCoy is a native of Middletown, N.J.



Community leaders and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers conducted a ground-breaking ceremony for the Radwaniyah greenhouse project in southwestern Baghdad Jan. 22.

Leaders from Troop B, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, witnessed the Radwaniyah greenhouse ground-breaking ceremony with their Iraqi Security Forces partners as the Radwaniyah farmer's cooperation association erected the first of 100 greenhouses.

Raad Hanna, the 1st BCT embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team's agricultural advisor, said the benefits of the greenhouses will impact the future of this area.

The new agriculture practices of using greenhouses will increase the farmer's vegetable crop yields to make

the harvest more productive and earn the farmers more money when they sell their products in Baghdad's market places, Raad explained.

The first 20 greenhouses are being built on Sheik Hussein Ali Alash's property, said Kareem al-Kinani, the agricultural engineer. The rest of the 100 greenhouses will be built at nine other locations owned by fellow co-op members.

"The farmer's co-op owns these greenhouses," Kareem said.

The greenhouses will feature an irrigation system that drips water onto the plants, Kareem explained. The water comes from canals that branch from the Tigris River. A water pump with a filtering system draws the water from the canals and a storage tank holds the water for the irrigation system.

"The profits from the vegetables go to the farmer's co-op," Raad said.

The seeds and fertilizer to stimulate plant growth will be furnished by the farmer's organization for use in the greenhouses, he added. The farmers will receive training to teach them new techniques designed to boost their crop production with new technologies.

The farmers plan to grow tomatoes, cucumbers, melons, watermelons, potatoes, eggplants,

peppers, okra, beans and other vegetables in the greenhouses, explained Hussein, who is the chairman of the Ma Baynaa Al-Nahreen, or The Land Between the Two Rivers, Farmer's Co-op Association.

There are 750 members in the organization and the members collectively own approximately 8,645 acres or 14,000 donams, Hussein said.

During the ceremony, Sheik Ayad Alawi al-Jabour, the Radwaniyah Tribal Support Council Chairman, thanked MND-B leaders for attending.

"We thank the Coalition Forces for their help," Ayad said. "Day after day we work together on construction to improve Iraq for the sons of Radwaniyah. We're building the greenhouses to help the farmers of Radwaniyah support their families."

"(The greenhouse project) is a great thing for the Radwaniyah people," Sgt. 1st Class Eric McCoy said during the ceremony. "It shows what the farmer's co-op association can accomplish."

McCoy is the civil affairs team leader assigned to Company D, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) stationed at Fort Dix, N.J., and hails from Middletown, N.J. The Co. D, 404th CA Bn. is attached to 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B and works with the brigade's 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.



Lt. Col. Troy Smith, commander, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, shakes hands with Col. Hasan, Radwaniyah Iraqi Police Chief, before the Radwaniyah Farmer's Co-operation Building "ground breaking" ceremony begins Jan. 14. Smith hails from Culpepper, Va. Col. Ted Martin, commander, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., stands in the background and calls Jacksonville Beach, Fla., home.

Farmer's Association builds greenhouses in Radwaniyah



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO

Staff Sgt. Arto Brown, a squad leader from Fort Meyers, Fla., assigned to Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, provides security Jan. 17 for Iraqi citizens participating in local community projects to rid their neighborhoods and communities of trash and debris in the Saha community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad. Iraqi neighborhood council and community leaders hired Iraqi citizens to beautify their neighborhoods and communities, painting and repairing streets and picking up trash and debris during the month of January.

Spc. Deante Pinkney, an infantry dismount from Bolingbrook, Ill., and Staff Sgt. Mynor Rivera-Valladares, an infantry squad leader from Burbank, Va., both assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conduct a dismounted patrol en route to a potential polling site in the Saydiyah community of the Rashid district in southern Baghdad Jan. 9. The Soldiers joined their Iraqi Army counterparts to identify potential threats and assist the Iraqi Security Forces to develop security measures in preparation for the provincial elections scheduled for January 31.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

1st Lt. Jessie Sheehan, an infantry platoon leader from Knoxville, Tenn. (center), assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, meets with a Sons of Iraq security force leader at an Iraqi checkpoint during early morning checkpoint inspections with his Iraqi translator, Daniel, Dec. 26 in the Karb De Gla community of the Rashid district. The Soldiers of 1st “Panther” Bn., 505th Parachute Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, visited Iraqi Security Forces manning checkpoints in southern Baghdad to help enforce Fardh al Qua Non, Iraq’s Rule of Law and provide security for the approximately 1.6 million citizens of the Rashid district.



Photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Iraqi Maj. Gen. Kadhum Hameed Al-Mihimidawry, the Provincial Directorate of Police in Baghdad, officially opens the Arab Jabour Iraqi Police Station Jan. 11 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, partnered with the Iraqi Security Forces provided security and over watch during the event.

Photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



Col. Ted Martin and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, command team for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, present the 1st “Raider” Brigade “Early Bird” Award to Lt. Col. Darren Werner, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Ronny Martinez, top enlisted leader, for the 4th Support Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, Jan. 7 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad’s Rashid district. The Early Bird Award is presented to the first battalion to reach its retention goals for the fiscal year. Martin (far left) is from Jacksonville Beach, Fla., and Bobb (second from left) hails from the Isles of Trinidad, West Indies. Werner (right) hails from Mayville, Mich., and Martinez calls Salinas, Calif., his home.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO

Spc. Keith Jennings, a metal worker assigned to Company B, 4th Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, welds a joint for a new grip Jan. 14 at Forward Operating Base Falcon. Jennings works in the Service and Recovery Section of the “Maddawgs” forward support unit. Jennings, a native of Tassel County, Va., left the U.S. Army National Guard in 2001 for active duty-service in support of the Global War on Terror. He is in his third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving with the “Ivy” Division since January 2005. Jennings said that he enjoys his job, and especially enjoys making a difference and making other people’s lives easier. “I feel that my mission is very important, but it is not just me, myself; there is a team supporting service and recovery. I help them out, and they help me out.”



1st Bn., 505th Parachute Inf. Regt. Prepares for New Mission

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Soldiers, noncommissioned officers, leaders and officers of the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, joined the 2nd "Warriors" Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., to get hands-on training and familiarize their units to the Rashid district in southern Baghdad before beginning their mission in January.

The paratroopers' mission is to secure the Iraqi population and assist the Iraqi Security Forces enforcing Baghdad's Rule of Law, said 1st Lt. Jessie Sheehan, an infantry platoon leader assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 505th PIR, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div., Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

The Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 505th PIR, part of the 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, deployed to Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, will assume responsibility for eastern Rashid, to include the Doura, Masafee, Jazeera, Hadar, Jaza'ir and Karb de Gla communities during the first weeks of the new year.

While the new Security Agreement between Coalition Forces and the Government of Iraq changes operating protocols for MND-B Soldiers partnered with the ISF, the mission to secure the people of Iraq remains the same, said Sheehan, a native of Knoxville, Tenn.

"It's not going to affect us at all because we are pretty much in a tactical over-watch scenario," Sheehan explained. "We have been working with the ISF for years now, and they are ready to take over."

The "Warriors" of the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., spent the final days of 2008 introducing the incoming troops to the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, National Police and Sons of Iraq security guards operating in the many muhallahs and checkpoints in southern Baghdad, said 1st Lt. Kyle Fitchner, Co. B, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

There will be little change to how MND-B accomplishes the mission once the ISF takes responsibility for ongoing security operations in southern Baghdad, said Fitchner, who hails from Broken Arrow, Okla.

"It won't affect us in really anyway, shape or form," Fitchner said. "They'll just continue to do what they are doing day to day, and we'll continue to support the Iraqi Security Forces in their mission to protect their own people."

As in past months, said Fitchner, the NP and IP operating in eastern Rashid will continue to be extremely successful in their efforts to transition into the lead and provide a secure environment for the people of Doura and surrounding muhallahs.

"In this area, the ISF leadership, the (Iraqi Army) soldiers are outstanding as well as the Sol program," he said. "The increased responsibility will cause the ISF to step up to the challenge and take more control."

Staff Sgt. Omar Jackson, an infantry squad leader from Newark, N.J., said the situation on the ground changed drastically since the last time he deployed to Iraq in 2003 with the United States Marine Corps.

Due to the gains made in the local security around Baghdad, the emphasis for operations shifted from kinetic and lethal operations to non-kinetic operations and a counterinsurgency fight, said Jackson, assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

That doesn't mean there won't be more challenges to both forces as MND-B Soldiers serve in more of a tactical over-watch position and ISF takes the lead in conducting patrols, cordon and search operations and serving warrants, he added.

"There is going to be some learning and what not; and

as eager and as aggressive as the ISF are going to be, we're going to be there to back them up," explained Jackson, who added that being in the Army after the USMC is the "same walk, different talk."

The airborne infantry paratroopers in his company are prepared for the kinetic fight, but many are new to the idea of providing stability and support for the Iraqi people, said Staff Sgt. Thomas Gillespie, an infantry squad leader, assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"This battle is going to be won with brains not brawn," said Gillespie, who calls Bloomington, Ill., home. "Brawn plays a role because we have to use it, but whoever can adapt the quickest to the situation on the ground — whether it is us or the enemy — is going to come out the winner."

The Soldiers are more than capable of adapting to the non-kinetic fight, especially as operations transition into the sustainment phase of counterinsurgency operations, he said.

Conducting combined operations and patrols with the ISF, and using warrants to detain criminals, thugs and terrorists, while transitioning into a non-kinetic fight are big missions for the unit as it prepares to replace the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., he explained.

"We have to make sure that we think quick and we act quick — and we do it in a way that stands up the IP and the NP," Gillespie said.

Ordinary tasks for the Soldiers of the "Warriors" Bn., now at the end of a 14-month deployment, will be a new state of affairs for the incoming airborne infantry paratroopers out of Fort Bragg, N.C., said 2nd Lt. James Joslyn, an infantry platoon leader, assigned to Co. B, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.

As a result, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.'s relief-in-place with the 1st "Panthers" Bn., 505th

PIR, will be very important to maintain the gains in security and progress made during the past year, he said.

The new Soldiers may be hesitant to accept the changing situation in the streets once renowned as a stronghold for the insurgency because of a more elusive enemy than in previous years, said Joslyn, a native of Bedford, Va.

"The enemy here is not visible and, these days, extremely hard to find," he explained. "He only shows his head when the circumstances benefit him and when he sees the opportunity to do damage without being caught or injured."

It will be important for the incoming unit to work with the ISF and to spend time in the neighborhoods and communities to learn the very different operating environment, he explained.

The Panthers will face the more typical tasks of building ISF capacity, working with the NPs on a day-to-day basis, and stimulating the local economy with the microgrant program, while improving quality of life for Iraqis with programs such as microgeneration, Joslyn said.

"The (2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.) has done an outstanding job of setting up that situation for us to come into so we're not tossed right in the middle of a horrible story our first weeks into the mission," said 1st Lt. Christopher Timmerman, platoon leader, Company C, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

The 1st "Panther" Soldiers, many on their second and third deployments to Iraq, are very used to "knocking down doors and the kinetic fight" experienced in previous years, said Timmerman, a native of Russia, Ohio.

While many of the veterans and their younger Soldiers may be surprised at the progress made, the change is good, he said.

Panthers assume eastern Rashid district

Warriors end 13-month in Rashid

Story and photo by
Sgt. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO
4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers bid farewell to the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, and welcomed the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony Jan. 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad.

The 1st “Panther” Bn., 505th PIR, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, assumed control of communities in the eastern Rashid district from the 2nd “Warriors” Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., in front of Soldiers, leaders, and Iraqi Security Forces partners.

“The Soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt. have soldiered hard these past 13 months,” said Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “Their battlefield record is second to none, and their partnership with the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division serves as a model for all other battalions to emulate.”

The 1st “Raider” Brigade salutes the Warriors, said Martin, who hails from Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

“I want to welcome the Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 505th PIR,” explained Martin, an armor officer and graduate from the U.S. Military Academy. “Their outstanding battle reputation precedes them, and we have high hopes for continued success in East Rashid.”

Part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, stationed at Fort Polk, La., the Warriors arrived in Iraq’s capitol city in December 2007 to immediately begin patrolling the Doura community, an area once stricken with violence, but now



stable due to improved security over the last year.

“2008 was a great year for the Doura community,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, commander of the 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “We have seen a transition from combat operations to the restoration of essential services.”

Over the 13-month deployment, the Warriors discovered approximately 50 roadside bombs and 90 weapons caches; and detained dozens of criminals, explained Watson.

The Warriors also expanded essential services by improving electricity, paving roads, fixing sewers and refurbishing schools, added Watson.

Watson credits much of Doura’s success to local leaders within the communities and combat support from the ISF.

“The 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., have proved themselves to be a disciplined and professional force that the people of Doura can trust,” explained Watson, who hails from Atkinson, N.H.

Brig. Gen. Karim Hoseinee, commander of the 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div., congratulated the

Lt. Col. Dave Bair, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Severino, senior enlisted leader, for the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, uncases the 1st “Panther” Bn. standard during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony Jan. 4 at Forward Operating Base Falcon. The Panther Bn. deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C. in December 2008, to join forces with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Warriors for a job well done and welcomed the new battalion.

“We could not establish and enforce the security in the community without the sacrifices from U.S. Soldiers and the ISF,” said Karim. “I give my thanks to all the brave Soldiers who put their lives at risk to secure Rashid.”

To demonstrate his appreciation, Karim presented small decorative throw rugs to U.S. leaders during the ceremony.

“We are excited and honored to serve alongside the ISF leadership and community leaders,” said Lt. Col. Dave Bair, commander, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “These brave men are heroes to their people and are strong leaders who will triumphantly lead Doura back to greatness. We will support the ISF every step of the way.”

Since 2001, the Panthers deployed five times: three deployments to Iraq and two tours to Afghanistan in support of the Global War on Terror, said Bair.

“This day is special for the paratroopers of this battalion because it marks the beginning of another chapter in our storied history,” he added.

The Panther Bn., is part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, stationed out of Fort Bragg, N.C., currently scheduled for a 12-month deployment in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

RAIDER SOLDIERS PUT RUBBER ROUNDS DOWN RANGE, TRAIN NON-LETHAL ACTIONS

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers conducted familiarization training with non-lethal munitions Jan. 9 - 10 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

Approximately 492 Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, visited the Falcon Range to increase their awareness and determine appropriate actions when faced with enemy threats and Escalation of Force incidents.

"The Soldiers can use the training to understand that a non-lethal round does not feel like a lethal round when fired," said Capt. Andrea Leaman, provost marshal for the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Leaman, who hails from Casper, Wyo., said she issued certificates to Soldiers as proof they received training on a variety of non-lethal munitions currently used by the U.S. Army in Iraq.

The two-day training event focused on seven different munitions, which are fired from the M203 grenade launcher and M1014 12-gauge combat shotgun, said Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Quinn, provost marshal noncommissioned officer-in-

Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Quinn, a military policeman assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conducts a safety brief before the start of non-lethal weapons training Jan. 9 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. The Soldiers fired 12-gauge shotguns and 40mm anti-personnel rounds at paper targets during the training. Quinn hails from Montpelier, Idaho.



practice EOF and use the graduated measures authorized in their Rules of Engagement.

"It was interesting training," said Spc. Nandor Bank about his first experience with non-lethal munitions. "I would have liked to spend more time with the munitions."

Earlier in the deployment, a terrorist attack on innocent Iraqi civilians sparked a protest, recalled Bank, a cavalry scout assigned to HHQ, 1st

BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

A car bomb exploded near our convoy while on mission one day, and a crowd of Iraqi citizens massed in the hundreds, explained Bank, who was the lead gunner in the convoy.

"The crowd was coming straight at us," explained Bank, a Los Angeles-native. "The non-lethal munitions would have come in handy that day to disperse the crowd."

Bank and another fellow gunner quickly reacted with other non-lethal methods and neither Soldier fired a single shot from their weapon.

Serving a combat tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 1st "Raider" Brigade, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, supports Iraqi Security Forces and the Government of Iraq to provide a secure and stable environment for the approximately 1.6 million Iraqi citizens in Baghdad's Rashid district.

charge assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, adding that he assembled all materials and training aids for the class on short notice.

"The training went great," stated Quinn, who hails from Montpelier, Idaho. "We had enough ammunition and training aids for both days of training."

Quinn briefed Soldiers prior to entering the range and demonstrated the minimum safe distance for the munitions by facing two groups of Soldiers 10 meters apart.

The non-lethal rounds are effective because of blunt-force trauma; it is not supposed to penetrate, said Leaman.


"That is why we teach the minimum safe distance," she added.

On the range, Leaman instructed the Soldiers to properly



Cpl. Thomas Atkinson, an infantryman from Henderson, Nev., assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, fires a non-lethal M203 round Jan. 9 during non-lethal weapons training at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Soldiers of the 1st "Raider" Brigade conducted training on non-lethal weapons, Rules of Engagement, and Escalation of Force.

RAIDER SOLDIERS TRAIN WITH RAVEN MODIFICATIONS

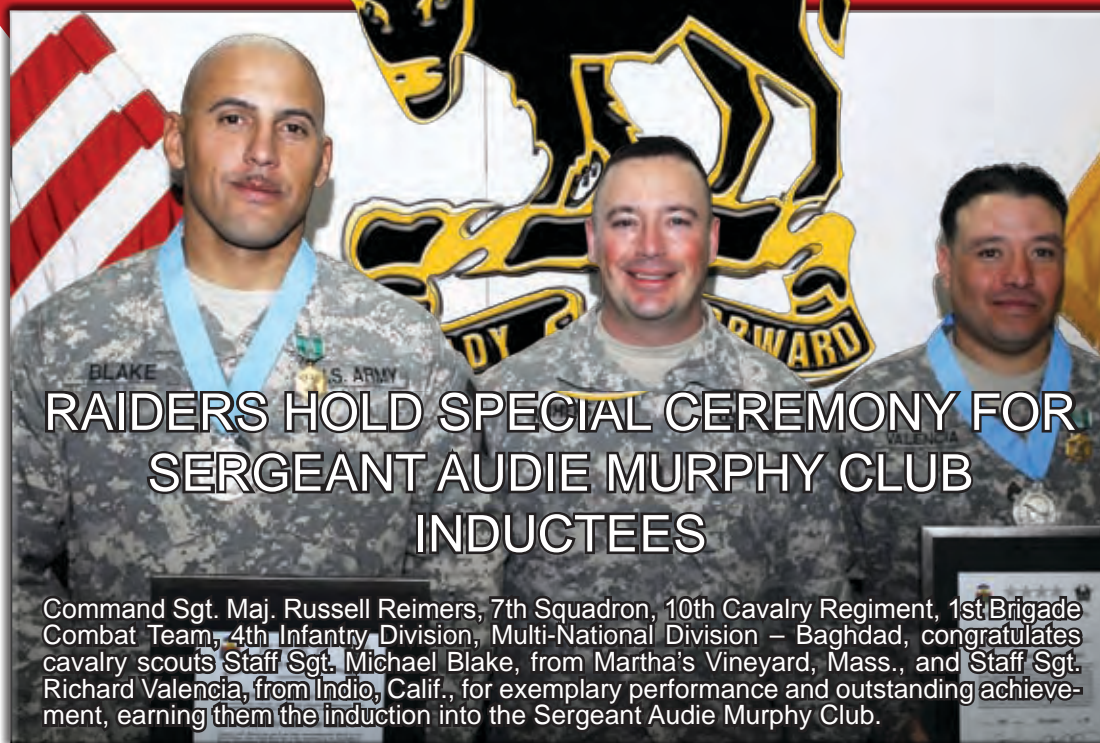


1st Lt. Hunter Wakeland, platoon leader, personnel security detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, launches an RQ11-B Raven Unmanned Aerial Vehicle during training Jan. 8 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad. Wakeland hails from Kennebunkport, Maine.

Sgt. 1st Class Tahir Hasan, aviation operations specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, attaches a nose piece to the body of an RQ11-B Raven Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Jan. 8 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad. Hasan hails from Los Angeles.

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Sgt. 1st Class Tahir Hasan, aviation operations specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, complete a pre-flight inspection of an RQ11-B Raven Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Jan. 8 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Martin hails from Jacksonville Beach, Fla., and Hasan calls Los Angeles his home.

Photos by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B



RAIDERS HOLD SPECIAL CEREMONY FOR SERGEANT AUDIE MURPHY CLUB INDUCTEES

Command Sgt. Maj. Russell Reimers, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, congratulates cavalry scouts Staff Sgt. Michael Blake, from Martha's Vineyard, Mass., and Staff Sgt. Richard Valencia, from Indio, Calif., for exemplary performance and outstanding achievement, earning them the induction into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, took a break from ongoing security operations to recognize the induction of two of their noncommissioned officers into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club during a formal ceremony Jan. 13 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad.

Staff Sgt. Michael Blake, a cavalry scout from Martha's Vineyard, Mass., assigned to Troop A, and Staff Sgt. Richard Valencia, a cavalry scout from Indio, Calif., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., were presented the prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Medallion and a U.S. Army Commendation Medal for exemplifying the highest standards and characteristics of leadership.

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bobb, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., presented the medallions and medals to the "Ghost" Squadron Soldiers, personally recognizing the Soldiers who were unable to attend MND-B's official induction ceremony Dec. 18 at Freedom Rest in Baghdad's International Zone.

Two of four NCOs selected from 20 "Raider" Brigade candidates, both Blake and Valencia possessed the knowledge that shapes and defines character: "The eternal and defining qualities that make up the ability of a leader and what a leader must be," said Bobb, a combat veteran with more than 26 years service.

"The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club is reserved for a selected few, a special few noncommissioned officers who not only influence Soldiers daily, but they inspire and motivate Soldiers both inside and

outside this chain of command to procure actions, shape thinking and shape decision for the greater good of the organization," said Bobb, who hails from the Islands of Trinidad.

The induction of the NCOs, who were unable to attend the ceremony in December due to mission requirements, recognizes the continued commitment of Blake and Valencia to live up to the "Be, Know, and Do," characteristics inherent in all leadership, said Bobb.

"What leaders do, or a leader's actions are directly related to the influence they have on others and what they have done," Bobb said. "Staff Sgt. Blake and Staff Sgt. Valencia placed the unit and their Soldiers above personal self interests and comfort; they placed the lives of others above personal desire for self-preservation, just like Sgt. Audie Murphy."

Staff Sgt. Michael Blake, a section leader deployed with "Assassin" Troop at a joint security station in the Rashid district, said this recognition would not have been possible without the support of his Soldiers, who deserve all of the credit for his success.

When approached by his troop first sergeant, Blake said he jumped at the opportunity to compete for one of the U.S. Army's most highly esteemed honors, spending hours studying for the numerous brigade and division-level boards in between daily security operations and duties of an NCO in a combat zone.

"I like to set high standards and goals for myself because I believe that if I do that, it is an example for my Soldiers," said Blake, a veteran of 12 years service and three deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "If I sit around and accept

mediocrity and settle for the status quo or the norm, then my Soldiers will do the same thing."

Staff Sgt. Richard Valencia, a combat veteran of more than 12 years' service, said he is thankful for the opportunity to accomplish his personal goal, and also attributed his success to his Soldiers.

"As a leader, I've come to know my Soldiers and have seen them grow and promoted to become leaders of Soldiers," Valencia said.

Valencia said he works to teach his Soldiers through his experiences, leading by example, and he takes personal and professional pride in his Soldiers as they follow his leadership, implementing his style and characteristics into their own ethos.

"The Soldiers have been outstanding," said Valencia, who comes from a family with more than three generations of military

service.

Valencia said he feels like a father as he has known many of his Soldiers since they arrived to the unit, training, learning and transitioning from privates in a garrison environment to Warriors in a combat zone.

He also said he is in awe of being selected by his Soldiers and his troop for the honor to compete for the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

"The only thing I can do is try to guide them and help them: whether they are getting out or whether staying in, is try to guide them as best as possible, so that they can make the right decisions and do the best they can."

Humility and character are the two things both NCOs possess, said Lt. Col. Troy Smith, commander of the 7th "Ghost" Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"That is what makes these two sergeants a cut above the rest," said Smith, who hails from Culpepper, Va. "They should be very proud and very honored to be wearing that medallion."

Audie Leon Murphy became the most decorated U.S. Soldier in combat during World War II, earning 33 awards and decorations during his three years of service, to include the Congressional Medal of Honor at the age of 19.

According to "The History of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club," at <http://www.armystudyguide.com>, the club, which began at Fort Hood, Texas, as an installation club, became a U.S. Army-wide honor for military leaders, to include the U.S. Army Reserves and the National Guard, at a Sergeant Major of the Army conference in 1994.

RAIDER BRIGADE PRESENTS 'A CELEBRATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'

By Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

A Proclamation by the former President of the United States George W. Bush declared Jan. 19, 2009, a federal holiday to "recognize one of history's most consequential advocates for equality and civil rights."

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hosted a special luncheon event: "A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," Jan. 22, to remember, celebrate and act in the memory of a man who proved to be one of the Nation's greatest civil rights leaders during a time when all men were viewed as created equal yet many were treated less than men.

Any individual who embraces freedom regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin or religion, embraces the dream King envisioned for America, said Capt. Tyndall Franklin, commander of Forward Support Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"This is not just an African American holiday nor is it just an American Holiday: it is a people's holiday," said Franklin, who hails from Shreveport, La.

The birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is observed in more than 100 nations to commemorate a man whose life and legacy shared values very similar to the Army Values of Soldiers today, said Franklin, who served as the master of ceremonies for the celebration.

Sgt. Lisa Lee, chaplain's assistant for the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., chaplain, who hails from Lemoore, Calif., and is assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., sang "Precious Lord" to an attentive audience before the introduction of the guest speaker in the Fallen Heroes Room at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

The event was coordinated by Sgt. 1st Class Sonya Walls, who hails from Apopka, Fla., and serves as the brigade equal opportunity advisor, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. She played an excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous speech, "I Have a Dream," which was delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington Aug. 28, 1963.

"When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of 'The Constitution and The Declaration of Independence,' they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir," said King, who was born in Atlanta. "This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the

inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Maj. Thomas Perry, brigade adjutant, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., a member of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s alma mater, both of whom are graduates of Morehouse College, served as the guest speaker at the commemoration and recognized King's legacy and challenging Soldiers to rises above the status quo.

"A creed is defined as a system of beliefs, principles or opinions, or the compilation of a belief or an opinion," said Perry, who hails from Monticello, Ga. "As I stand here, I am sure that most of you in this room have taken creeds: the Soldier's Creed, the (Noncommissioned Officer) creed, the Drill Sergeant Creed, the Boy Scout's Prayer for those of you who were Boy Scouts."

Perry challenged Soldiers to live up to the Army Values, not just when certain people are nearby — but all the time. He told the gathered Soldiers it is important for them to remain vigilant against the mistreatment or harassment of others because of gender, race or national origin.

Those who sit idly by in the face of discrimination and bigotry are not living up to their creed, explained Perry.

"The Army has set a high standard: a code of conduct for each of us; we have all been inculcated and clearly affirmed these rights when we first came into the military," he said. "All of us Soldiers have a creed that we are supposed to live, and they're called the Army Values. The question I pose of you today is: 'Are you living your creed?'"

Perry implored the Soldiers in attendance to possess the same personal courage that King displayed during his fight for civil rights.

Col. Ted Martin, commander of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, concluded the ceremony with a moment of silence in remembrance of King, who was killed by an assassin's bullet at the age of 39.

Martin reminded the Soldiers in attendance to celebrate the victory King achieved but asked them to also remember the sacrifices of all those involved, especially the King Family, who suffered alongside their civic leader.

"We enjoy a lot of freedoms that were purchased by the sacrifices of people



like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," said Martin, who calls Jacksonville Beach, Fla., home. "We can't begin to imagine all the trouble that took place during the civil rights movement, but yet everybody in this room ... has reaped the fruits of this sacrifice."



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT

Maj. Thomas Perry, brigade adjutant, who hails from Monticello, Ga., assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, speaks to Soldiers and friends, Jan. 22, during the 1st BCT Presentation, "A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," in the Fallen Heroes Room at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

PACKHORSE Father and SON Reunite in Baghdad

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Watching his father return from work donned in a pressed Battle Dress Uniform and polished combat boots left a lasting impression on Pfc. Derek Almen, one that would influence him in his decision to follow in the footsteps of his father, enlisting in the U.S. Army.

A military intelligence analyst, with little more than two years service, Pfc. Almen, waived a chance to take a four-day pass at Freedom Rest in the International Zone, to visit his father, Sgt. 1st Class Robson Almen, stationed at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

It was the first time the two had seen each other since Sgt. 1st Class Almen, personnel noncommissioned officer-in-charge, 4th Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, deployed to Iraq in late March 2008.

Derek said his father played a strong role in his decision to join the military, when he enlisted out of high school, while his father was assigned to Hawaii.

"It's a good thing," Pfc. Almen said. "The Army has been our Family, so service in the Army is just another extension of the Family."

Pfc. Almen, deployed to Baghdad for more than two months now, completed his military training at Fort Meade, Md., and was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., the storied "Big Red One," out of Fort Riley, Kan.

While spending nearly two decades traveling the continental U.S. and Europe in service to the U.S. Army, this is the first time that Robson and Derek, who hail from the Marshall Islands in Micronesia, served together, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Working from his brigade's tactical operations center, Pfc. Almen said that he thanks his chain of command

and credits the security situation in Iraq for the opportunity to visit his father on the FOB located in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

"My chain of command was very supportive," Derek said, "and when my first sergeant approached me with the opportunity to take the pass, I jumped on it."

"I think the security situation is good," he added. "We are actually helping Iraq to take care of its own nation." Sgt. 1st Class Almen admitted that he planned to take a convoy up to visit his son, but was elated when he found out Derek would fly to visit him at FOB Falcon Jan. 7-10.

Pfc. Almen said, he didn't think he would have the opportunity to visit with his father because the mission would require most of his time, but since things "have been quiet" in Baghdad, it seemed like a good opportunity.

Having a son in the military motivates Robson to want to stay in the military, he admitted.

"It is a big inspiration to have my son doing the same thing that I am doing and being deployed here to Iraq with me right now," said Robson about his son, the second-born of his three children.

Being in the service at the same time as his son is a unique experience, said the senior NCO, who serves as a father and a mentor for Derek.

"I was very proud when he made Distinguished Honor Graduate during his (Advanced Individual Training); I was very proud," Robson gleamed. "I will be walking on my toes when my son puts on the sergeant's 'stripes.' I will be very proud."

The two Soldiers said they try to spend time

together, communicating via email and the occasional phone call, but admitted it can be challenging at times due to mission requirements and long hours in the office.

"Every now and then Derek will call and I'll be kind of busy," Robson said. "I will have something going on, or I will call him and he will have something going on; so we try to make time."

"Then there is always afterhours when we jump on the computers to communicate," his son replied.

Pfc. Almen said he has no problem calling his dad whenever he needs help or is generally stressed out.

"If I have a pretty stressful day, I will call him about it, just because he is my dad and I am pretty sure that he will help me out."

Lack of sleep, long days and odd hours made for a trying initiation into OIF, said Derek, adding that his father helped to prepare him for the deployment to Baghdad.

"My pop told me my first 90 days were key and after that it would be no time before we were ready to redeploy," said Derek, adding that he expected to find desert and smoke upon arriving in Iraq.

Sgt. 1st Class Almen first deployed to Port au Prince, Haiti, as part of a peacekeeping

force in support of Operation Uphold Democracy.

The experience was totally different than his current deployment, which is more of a "reconstruction mission," Almen explained, but it helped prepare him for the challenges of the year-long deployment to Iraq.

Robson attributed the success of the Family to his wife, Derek's mother, who kept the home fires burning during his more than 19 years of service, and still managed to find time for the Army's Family Readiness Groups and the United Service Organizations.

"My wife has been there for me during this military life; I don't have to rush home because she keeps it together," he testified.

Both Soldiers said they are happy in their chosen career fields and service and look forward to the opportunity to serve in the U.S. Army for years to come.

"I don't know if I will ever be on the same post or in the same unit, but I wouldn't mind serving in the same unit as my father," Derek said.

Visits became sparse during the past two years with intensive training schedules and deployments, said Derek, however, the father and son said they plan on seeing each other again before Robson redeploy later this year, taking advantage of their time together.



Pfc. Derek Almen visits his father Sgt. 1st Class Robson Almen at Forward Operating Base Falcon in Baghdad.

PHILIPPINE-NATIVE SERVES SECOND COUNTRY WITH HONOR

Story by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

When Spc. Joaquin Jucaban was a young boy, he looked up to his uncle, a member of the military. Growing up in Iloilo, Panay, in the Republic of the Philippines, Jucaban insists joining the Philippine National Police was not a Family tradition but a matter of pride.

Assigned to the 1st "Raider" Brigade's Personnel Section at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad, Jucaban now spends his work days assisting Soldiers with administrative needs and identification card issues.

"I served in the Philippines with intentions of serving my country because it was where I was born, and it is patriotic," explained Jucaban, a human resource specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. "People get to give a part of themselves back to their country."

To accommodate the Soldiers from the joint security stations, Jucaban set up work hours to fit the Soldiers' schedule, explained Jucaban, who operates the ID card machine from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. most days of the week.

Due to a slow-moving ID card printing system, Jucaban sets appointments every 30 minutes and processes an average of 15 cards per day.

Soldiers request new ID cards for many different reasons during a deployment, ranging from damage, promotion and expiration, stated Jucaban.

Jucaban serves more than 3,000 Soldiers

and civilians from five different battalion-sized units and other detachments in southern Baghdad, said Sgt. Frank Crisafulli, human resources noncommissioned officer, HHD, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"Spc. Jucaban is an outstanding Soldier, and he takes his job very seriously," said Crisafulli, a veteran of more than four years and two combat deployments to Iraq. "He has executed his job flawlessly since he arrived in the unit."

Crisafulli, who hails from Fredericksburg, Va., said Jucaban's professionalism and military bearing were among the first things he noticed about the Soldier when he arrived at the unit.

"I think my job is important because every Soldier needs an ID card," explained Jucaban, a veteran of more than two years in the U.S. Army and seven years in the Philippine National Police. "It is an important piece of identification and is considered a sensitive item."

Jucaban, a former first lieutenant and platoon leader for the Philippine National Police, said being an enlisted Soldier gives him another perspective, or overview, of how the Army works.

Since deploying to southern Baghdad's Rashid district in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Jucaban worked as a clerk in the brigade's official mail room and a liaison officer for the 1st "Raider" Brigade at Baghdad's International Airport, a hub for many U.S. Soldiers coming in and out of the Iraqi capitol.

Before traveling to the United States in 2006, Jucaban earned two degrees in the Philippines: a Nursing Degree from Saint Paul University in Iloilo, and a Public Safety Degree from the Philippine National Police Academy, a three-year academy, which he said is modeled after the U.S. Military Academy.

After graduating from the National Police Academy in 2002, Jucaban served four years at his first assignment, the Philippine National Police Special Actions Force, which is considered to be an elite counter-terrorism/counter-insurgency unit.

Jucaban and his Family relocated to England in search of better employment for his wife, who is also a registered nurse.

Soon after, Jucaban's wife sought another job as a nurse in the United States, and the couple and

their children moved to Columbia, S.C.

"After arriving in the U.S., I started looking for work at just a regular job," said Jucaban, who has been married for five years and has two boys: ages 4 and 5. "I looked online for a job and applied for the Army."

Jucaban said he feels moving to the U.S. and becoming a Soldier is still quite surreal because both he and his Family never dreamt of living in America.

"Even before I came, I believed in what America was fighting for," Jucaban stated. "The reason is freedom and democracy, and providing it to other people who cannot fight for it themselves."

Based on that concept, it was like a dream come true.

"Back in college," he said, "I wrote a recruiter in the U.S. to enlist in the Army. That was back in 1998."

Recently, Jucaban was selected to attend Officer Candidate School, a seven-month course at Fort Benning, Ga. He said he is excited about the opportunity to become a commissioned officer again and feels the training will be similar to the National Police Academy in the Philippines.

"The Philippine National Police Academy patterns many things, such as training and doctrine, after that of the U.S.," Jucaban explained. "I foresee the experience as challenging."

When away from work, Jucaban enjoys spending his time reading books, talking with Family by phone and attending church. He said he plans to take his Family back to the Philippines between OCS and his next assignment to visit their relatives and introduce his children to their native land.

"If I serve 20 years in the Army, maybe I will retire back home," he said. "In the Philippines, there is a tradition that residents who lived there return to die there as well."

Jucaban is tentatively scheduled to attend OCS in March 2009.



Photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO

Spc. Joaquin Jucaban, a human resource specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, processes identification cards for the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.



Spc. Joaquin Jucaban as a graduate of the Philippine National Police Academy in 2002. Jucaban serves as a human resource specialist for Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

By Chaplain Capt. Jesus Perez
7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.
1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

When I was asked to write an article for this edition, I was asking myself, "What I could write about to my Soldiers and their Families that will bring them a new perspective in life?"

During the course of the day I asked a Soldier how he was doing and he responded, "Ah, the same old, same old."

I thought about those words. Then I said to myself the worst kind of life one can have is a life without purpose, stuck in the same old routine.

I thought about our everyday life here on Forward Operating Base Falcon, and I realized that for some, it is another day getting out of the same old bed and going to the same old bathroom to look at the same old face in the same old mirror.

Some go to the same old duffel bag or wall locker to choose from the same old Army Combat Uniforms. Then they sit at the same old Dining Facility for breakfast to eat the same old breakfast. Then they go to the same old Humvee to head down that same old road to that same old job. Some just walk the same old path.

Some work all day for that same old paycheck for that same old supervisor and old co-workers. Then at the end of what seems to be the same old day, they jump in the same old Humvee to get

back to the same old road and back to their same old Compartmentalized Housing Unit, barracks room on the FOB, joint security station or patrol base.

Once they are in what now is the sanctity of their home, they sit in the same old chair to play the same old video games or watch the same old programs in that same old television or computer. At the end of the day they go back to that same old bed and sleep in the same old position, so they can get up the next morning and start all over again.

The same routine; the same old, same old.

God didn't create you to live a purposeless existence. That should be good news, because that tells me that even if you're searching to find your purpose — there's something out there to search for.

The things we see here in our everyday life are not the only things out there. There is someone worthy to be searched for.

God has a customized plan just for you. Your life can be rich in Him who has called you for a better living and for a purpose beyond believe.

Seek Him, find Him, and live in Him to the fullest. Your life will be changed forever!

RAIDER SAFE

By Bob Topolewski
1st BCT Safety Officer, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

As the Raider Brigade starts its transition from combat operations in Iraq to garrison operations at Ft Hood, the goal is to successfully complete the last leg of our deployment accident free.

Redeployment means movement of vehicles, equipment and Soldiers, which involves the normal hazards associated with too many moving pieces within a small crowded area.

The first step in the redeployment process is loading equipment at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

Organization and a slow, steady pace are the keys to success. Vehicle drivers must maintain eye contact with ground guides and follow directions. Ground guides must use proper signals and never place themselves in a precarious position. Loading faster will not get anyone home sooner.

Operations in Kuwait include the wash rack and the port. Trip, slip and fall accidents and horseplay are the historical problems at the wash rack. At the wash rack it is easy to trip over hoses and slip on wet surfaces. The slow, steady pace must be maintained. The temptation of horseplay is great at the wash rack; high pressure hoses bring out the child in all of us. Leaders must ensure this is minimized.

At the port most of the driving will be done by civilians. Soldiers must be aware that the confined space within the ship hold exposes them to potential pinch accidents which can prove fatal. Situational awareness and using the battle buddy system are critical.

The actual movement of Soldiers from Iraq to the United States is a slow and often tiresome process. Cooperation, patience and following instructions will make the movement as painless as possible. The battle buddy system will again pay dividends if used properly.

The Raider Brigade has enjoyed a safe and successful year in Iraq. It will require focus and cooperation at all levels in order to finish on a positive note, and ultimately it will be the last portion of the deployment that Soldiers remember with the most clarity.



Photo by Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Soldiers of the Personal Security Detachment, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion conduct a patrol brief Jan. 21.

ON POINT:

Iraqi sheiks and local tribal leaders from the Radwaniyah community attend the official opening of the Arab Jabour Iraqi Police Station, Jan. 11, in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Daniel Owen, 1st BCT

Iraqi students walk to class near Al Rashid Public Library in the Doura community during the morning of Jan. 14 in southern Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gustavo Olgiati, 1st BCT COMCAM



Photo by Senior Airman Daniel Owen, 1st BCT

Brig. Gen. Karim Hoseinee, commander of the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, raises an Iraqi flag Jan. 5 at a joint security station in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Daniel Owen, 1st BCT COMCAM

Iraqi National Policeman Ala Sherati, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, passes out handbills to a street vendor at a market in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad Jan. 6. The NP hand out informational pamphlets to locals to educate Iraqis about terrorist threats.

An Iraqi National Policeman from the 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, poses from the turret of his armored vehicle Jan. 6 while pulling security for his comrades in a nearby market in Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Daniel Owen, 1st BCT COMCAM

COMBAT CAMERA