

COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 4, Issue 2 February 2009

Iraq's Provincial Elections in Pictures

Navy Explosive
Ordnance
Disposal Unit
Trains Army

Minnesota
Hockey Day
in Iraq





An Iraqi Police Officer provides security at the front door of a polling site in Samarra, Iraq, during the voting process on Jan. 31 (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kani Ronningen)

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Marine Regimental Combat Team completes third Iraq tour.



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Minnesota National Guardsmen come together to play a game of floor hockey on Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



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Local Iraqis walk to the election polls in the city of al Musharra, Iraq.

COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of
Multi-National Corps – Iraq

February 2009
Volume 4, Issue 2

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Regimental Combat Team 1 Completes Third Iraq Tour

FEATURE UP FRONT

Capt. James R. Berard, assistant air officer, Regimental Combat Team 1 and **Capt. Jeremy E. Reinfeld**, air officer, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, survey aircraft engaging targets during a tactical air control party training exercise, Nov. 13, in al Anbar Province, Iraq. Berard and Reinfeld served as forward air controllers coordinating simultaneous attacks including mortars, helicopters and fighter jets. (U.S. Marine Corps. photo by Cpl. Nicholas J. Lienemann)

by Staff Sgt. Joshua Higgins
Regimental Combat Team 1



Navy Lt. Mickey Deel, medical officer with Task Force 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, examines an Iraqi woman's eyes during a Cooperative Medical Engagement, Nov. 18. Using a slit lamp – a high-intensity light source which provides a magnified view of different parts of the human eye – Deel was able to diagnose problems with the frontal structures and posterior segments of the patient's eye. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Scott Schmidt)

RAMADI, Iraq – Marines with Regimental Combat Team 1 turned another page in the history books, completing the regiment's third tour in Iraq in only four years, Jan. 20.

RCT-1 was the first Marine Corps unit to take command in the eastern region of al Anbar province, a mostly Sunni tribal area that includes such vital cities as Fallujah, Saqlawiyah and Karmah.

It is also one of the Corps' only units to participate in the march up through Baghdad in 2003 and in both Operation Vigilant Resolve and Operation al Fajr in Fallujah in 2004, where they saw some of the heaviest combat of the war in Iraq.

The Marines have seen a lot of positive change since they started their tour. When they arrived the Anbar Awakening had reached its pinnacle, the troop surge was still in effect and al-Qaida was beginning its decline.

Security in al Anbar province and throughout Iraq had improved enough by early summer to begin drawing down coalition forces.

In March, the regiment had taken over security in Ramadi, a city of nearly 1.2 million people, and its area of operations grew 5,200 square miles, twice its original size. Since then, its number of forces was reduced from approximately 8,600 early in the deploy-

ment to only about 3,800 today.

On Sept. 1, the regiment handed over control of security in the region to the government of Iraq following the notable Provincial Iraqi Control ceremony in Ramadi, Aug. 26, during which local Iraqi leaders signed a Command and Control Memorandum of Understanding.

The success the regiment is having on the battlefield today is the result of five years of coalition forces' sacrifices, but a lot of credit should also go to Iraqi security forces and the military training teams who trained them.

Iraq's army and police units have grown from a "fledgling police and military force to a fully capable and operational counterinsurgency force in an amazingly short amount of time," according to Maj. Tony Barrett, the RCT-1 intelligence officer.

"Al Anbar has not had this good of an outlook in the millennia-long history of its people," said Barrett. "There are constantly improving essential services, increasing political rivalries that are not turning violent, multiple internal and foreign investment firms looking to invest in al Anbar and a sustained reduction in violence that is making this all possible."

To support reconstruction efforts in al Anbar, RCT-1 has spent over \$50 million in aid spanning a range of projects from repairing battle-damaged buildings to purchasing school supplies.

Capt. Emily Grant, the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team liaison officer with RCT-1, said money the regiment put into the local economy has spurred the economic recovery eastern al Anbar is experiencing today.

"This economic recovery is evident to anyone driving down a city street," said Grant. "Construction companies are rebuilding privately-

"I think great hope exists in the upcoming (provincial) elections and next year's national elections."

Maj. Tony Barrett
Intelligence Officer
Regimental Combat Team 1

owned buildings, restaurants are opening daily, auto-repair shops are doing brisk business and billboards are advertising all sorts of goods for sale. The economy has really taken off."

Some of the money, she said, has also supported small business owners who often face significant financial difficulties. The regiment has provided \$90 thousand in grants to supplement business loans when traditional banks have been unwilling to lend.

To solve the loan problem, RCT-1 worked closely with the United States Agency for International Development to expand branches of the Al Takadum micro-finance agency into Fallujah and Ramadi.

But the aid RCT-1 and other coalition forces have provided was not handed over without holding the Iraqi government accountable.

Marines have been meeting twice weekly with essential services managers at al Anbar's provincial government center, and USAID has provided training programs, technical expertise and budgeting software to improve their budget planning and spending.

"Budget planning and budget execution is, in my opinion, the key to

Iraq's future," said Grant.

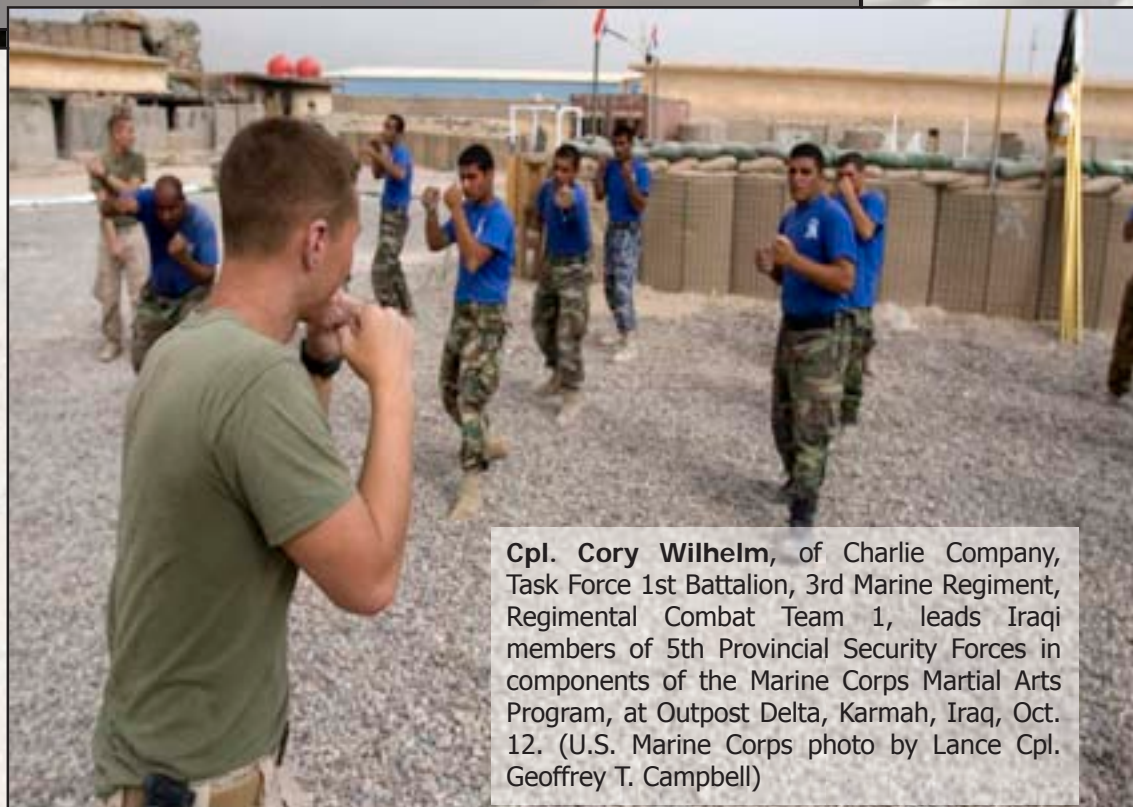
There is hope that upcoming elections throughout Iraq will help to solve some of the budget problems.

"I think great hope exists in the upcoming (provincial) elections and next year's national elections," said Barrett.

Iraq's provincial elections are scheduled to take place Jan. 31, a short time after Marines with RCT-1 have made their way home to reunite with friends and family in the U.S.

Though they are leaving Iraq behind, possibly for the last time, their efforts and sacrifices will live on.

"While this deployment may be closing the Iraq chapter in RCT-1's illustrious history there is much we can look back on and be proud of," said Barrett. "We continue to mourn the loss of our brothers and sisters we have lost on the battlefields and we can honestly say that they did not die in vain; the Marines and sailors of RCT-1 served their memory well and there are literally hundreds of thousands of Iraqis that have their sacrifice to thank as they look towards a bright and prosperous future."



Cpl. Cory Wilhelm, of Charlie Company, Task Force 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, leads Iraqi members of 5th Provincial Security Forces in components of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, at Outpost Delta, Karmah, Iraq, Oct. 12. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Geoffrey T. Campbell)



Navy Lt. Chris Hussey, a platoon officer with Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Mobiet 1, explains how to sweep a door sill to Pfc. David Levitre, 2nd Platoon, 87th Engineers Company, 5-55th Engineer Brigade, during a training exercise while at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, in Diyala, Iraq, Jan. 9.

Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit Trains Soldiers on House-borne Improvised Explosive Devices

Story and photos by Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment



Spc. Jake Morgan, 1st Lt. Joel Groves and Pfc. Travis Christensen, all with 2nd Platoon, 87th Engineers Company, 5-55th Engineer Brigade, prepare to breach a house to clear it of any possible improvised explosive devices during a training exercise while at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, located in Diyala, Iraq, Jan. 9.

Okay stop, says Navy Lt. Chris Hussey, a platoon officer with Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Mobiet 1, based out of San Diego, Calif., as he walks through a set of t-wall barriers, which compose the entrance of a House-Borne Improvised Explosive Device training site. “What did you guys do wrong?” Hussey asks a group of Soldiers he’s training.

Hussey looks around and smiles seeing no one raising a hand to answer his question. Slowly he crouches down on one knee, “You see this?” he points to what looks like an ant trail but to the Soldiers surprise, a wire protrudes at the end of the trail. “These are the kind of mistakes that get people killed and that is why I am going to train you guys on what to look for and how to clear a house properly.”

“Now line back up and let’s try this again, step by step,” Hussey grins.

And just as quickly as the command is given, the Soldiers quickly set back up behind the barriers to start the Level 1 class on HBIEDs while at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Jan. 9.

“Typically we train coalition forces here at Warhorse or within our area of operation,” said Hussey. “But we

have been starting to integrate the Iraqi army into our training as well.”

“HBIEDs and booby trapped buildings have been a pretty decent threat out here; we’ve had a few casualties,” Hussey stated. “We’ve created this training to give some safe tools to the Soldiers so that they can stay safe and be confident in what they’ve learned.”

The HBIED training site is composed of a wood house and several CONEXs converted into buildings. Each room is booby trapped with different scenarios which are realistic to what a Soldier might see when out in the field, according to Hussey.

“We try to keep things pretty realistic to the devices that are found in our AO,” Hussey explained while pointing out different places where IEDs could be hidden in the walls of the house at the training site. “Simple things like victim-operated devices such as crush wire, IEDs, trip wires in doorways, anti-personnel landmines and command wire IEDs. They are all pretty basic and things the Soldiers can identify and learn proper safety procedures to work around them,” Hussey stated.

“They are devices we’ve recovered from the field; things we’ve built up

that are simulations of devices that are actually out there,” Hussey said, walking toward the next training station.

“Make sure you guys communicate with each other. There’s no since in trying to clear something by yourself.

You have to work together as a team,” Hussey shouts to the Soldiers.

Hiding himself inside a room of one of the houses, Hussey continued to explain, “Prior to even touching a house, do a 360 degree reconnaissance around the outside. Get any type of information you can gather on the house by looking inside windows, looking outside and around the house, look

above the house, look for anything that may look suspicious, anything out of the ordinary like piles of brush in the doorway, command wire routed along the ground and through windows, entry and exit access to the house; these are all key factors

to look for,” Hussey stated.

“Seeing inside those windows is really important to see if you can identify any type of hazards inside or any type of unknown materials that you can check out once you enter the house,” Hussey said. “But if you identify these threats prior to entering the house, you’ve mitigated an extensive amount of risk prior to entering it.”



Soldiers with 2nd Platoon, 87th Engineers Company, 5-55th Engineer Brigade, evaluate a house before clearing it of any possible improvised explosive devices during a training exercise at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Diyala, Iraq, Jan. 9.

“Shhhh, here they come,” Hussey grinned as he crouched lower in his hiding spot.

After about ten minutes of waiting, Hussey finally popped out of his hiding position. “Now, if I were an insurgent, you guys would be done,” Hussey looks at the Soldiers. “You must ensure to check everything, even if it’s something as simple as knocking on wood,” Hussey tapped on the wall with his hand.

Even though Navy EOD offers two levels of HBIED classes, Hussey integrates techniques from both classes into his training to better prepare the Soldiers.

“We teach two levels; level one is simple recognition of the threats and going through techniques to teach the Soldiers to be safe. Level two is more identifying the threats as soon as possible and taking appropriate measures like knowing when to call EOD for help,” Hussey said leaving the training site. “Also, knowing what things you can identify and clear without our help.”

Hussey continued his class outside the barriers, “There’s a lot of trash in these houses, well, in Iraq in general. We want to help give you guys the confidence to interrogate those threats and the potential unknowns;

clearing something and identifying something or if it is what it is, garbage.”

Ending the class with time for questions, Hussey thanked the Soldiers for coming out and talked for a minute about some of his own personal experiences.

“We conduct route clearance operations all throughout the surrounding areas,” said 1st Lt. Joel Groves with 2nd Platoon, 87th Engineers Company, 5-55th Engineer Brigade, also known as “Triple Nickel.”

Taking a minute to check on his Soldiers trying to clear a room in a booby-trapped house, Groves continued, “I felt it would be beneficial for both my platoon and for our engineer company to take this class. It will help us to gain the situational awareness of some of the HBIEDs in our area of operations and allow my Soldiers to see firsthand, the threat that surrounds them and give them an idea of the types of IEDs that are not just on the roads.”

“I really appreciate the EOD guys here,” Groves stated. “They’ve taught a great deal on HBIEDs and this is some really great hands on training they offer us here.”

Many of today's Soldiers are recent immigrants from nations in Africa, and their diverse backgrounds and skills greatly contribute to the strength of our nation.

In perhaps the most patriotic contribution possible, five Soldiers in the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) came directly from African countries to serve their new nation as U.S. Army Soldiers. Alongside their native-born American brethren, they are currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In Iraq, the 46th Engineer Battalion is attached to the 926th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Pfc. Lucky Ekupke, earthmoving platoon, 46th ECB (H), a native of Lagos, Nigeria, is in his third year of service as a heavy equipment operator. A former student at New York's City Technical College, he lived in the South Bronx for 10 years before enlisting in the Army.

"I was inspired by my father's time in the Boy Scouts and became interested in the opportunities in military service," said Ekupke. "Since joining I have taken part in crater repair, route sanitation, and barrier emplacement missions while in Iraq."

Pfc. Jacoba Vermeulen, combat medic, 46th ECB (H), a native of Kimberley, South Africa, is in her second year of Army service and first tour in Iraq where she rolls out as convoy medic in support of missions all over Baghdad. Her family, now resides in Phoenix, Ariz., illustrates the diversity of the people of Africa, being of Afrikaaner, or European lineage.

"My father served as a signal officer in the South African army for 18 years. I wanted to follow in his footsteps so I joined the U.S. Army," said Pfc. Vermeulen. "I hope to get accepted in the nursing



ARMY ENGINEERS CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

by 1st. Lt. Stephen Clements
46th ECB (H), 926th Eng. Bde
MND-B

program and become a commissioned officer in the future."

Pfc. Asteroids Lomotey, carpentry/masonry specialist, a native of Accra, Ghana, has served over four years in the 46th ECB (H). While in Accra, he attended the Mfantsipim College, the alma mater of Kofi Annan, former secretary general of the United Nations.

Lomotey came to the United States at the age of 26, when he was awarded a visa through the State Department's Diversity Visa Program Lottery. Since joining the military he has contributed to the construction of special-use buildings, Soldier's quarters and a desert outpost.

"I've always had aspirations for military service since I was a cadet in high school, and so joined the U.S. Army less than a year after coming to the States," said Lomotey. "This is my second tour in Iraq."

Sgt. Kalaluka Nyumbu, combat medic, 46th ECB (H), a native of Lusaka, Zambia, now residing in South Bend, Ind., has served in the Army for more than three years. Nyumbu, airborne-qualified, was declared a Soldier of the Month, Quarter and Year for the 46th ECB (H). He serves as the medic for a special task force in Baghdad, and has been awarded the Expert Medical Field Badge.

Capt. Sean Heenan (left), commander, Company A, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), congratulates Pvt. Lucky Ekupke (right), heavy equipment operator, a native of Lagos, Nigeria, during his promotion ceremony, Oct. 1, 2008. (Photo by 1st Lt. Jordan Davis, 46th ECB (H) PAO, (926th Eng. Bde., MND-B)

Pfc. Asteroids Lomotey, a native of Accra, Ghana, who serves as a carpentry and masonry specialist, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), conducts a check of his vehicle before heading out on a convoy, Jan. 13. Lomotey is currently serving his second tour to Iraq. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jasper Stallworth, 46th ECB (H), 926th Eng. Bde., MND-B)



Nyumbu a Copper Belt University alumni, also won the State Department's Diversity Visa Lottery, and moved to the United States.

"I joined the U.S. Army soon after arriving stateside, both for the opportunity to integrate into American society and to become a part of the greatest Army in the world," said Nyumbu.

Sgt. Edgar Gufwoli, nuclear/biological/chemical noncommissioned officer, was born in Boston, Mass., and raised in Kisumu, Kenya, near Lake Victoria. Gufwoli lived in Kenya until he turned 17.

Gufwoli returned to the United States to attend the University of California-Davis, where he earned his Bachelor's of Science in Biochemistry.

"I worked for years in pharmaceutical research, but wanted to join the Army after seeing the sacrifices the Soldiers were making to fight terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11," he said.

Gufwoli has been contributing to the fight against terrorism for the last two and a half years, most recently as a member of a convoy security team for the 46th ECB (H).

Each of these Soldiers experiences the teamwork of Army service and they and their new country benefits from their commitment to serving the cause of freedom.



Sgt. Kalaluka Nyumbu, medic, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), a native of Zambia, joined the U.S. Army to serve in the "greatest Army in the world." In Iraq, the 46th Engineer Battalion is attached to the 926th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. (Photo by 1st Lt. Janeene Yarber, 46th ECB (H) PAO, 926th Eng. Bde., MND-B)

Pfc. Aletta Vermeulen (standing), medic, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), a Kimberley, South Africa native, demonstrates the proper way to insert an intra-venous needle during a combat life-savers recertification course, in September. Her father's service in the military inspired her to follow in his footsteps. (Photo by Sgt. Micheal L'Italien, 46th ECB (H), 926th Eng. Bde., MND-B)

Long Knives, Romanians Share Training at Range

by Pfc. Terence Ewings
4th Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs



Above: **Spc. Justin Dreyer** (right) from the Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, is instructed how to fire the weapon by a soldier in the 341st Romanian Infantry Battalion.

Left: **Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team**, 1st Cavalry Division, exchange a 'pound' as they watch a soldier from the 341st Romanian Infantry Battalion demonstrate how to fire a rocket-propelled grenade launcher. Both occurred during a cross-training event at the Bardia Firing Range near Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, Jan. 3. (U.S. Army photos by Pfc. Terence Ewings)



The sounds of artillery rounds and various exploding projectiles could be heard miles away from the Bardia firing range, Jan. 3.

Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division "Long Knives" and the Romanian 341st Infantry Battalion "Whites Sharks" lit up the southern Iraqi sky while the two units crosstrained one another on their different military weapon systems.

"This cross training was an enjoyable familiarization exercise that allowed the American Soldiers to shoot weapons that they would never be able to fire [otherwise]," said Sgt. 1st Class Bogdan Marius, a Romanian soldier who taught the Americans how to use his military's

weapons. "Both forces took the time to learn valuable techniques that could later be used in combat."

During the past six months, the Long Knives have worked alongside Romanians and Iraqi security forces in various operations to provide stability in the tri-province area of Muthanna, Dhi Qar and Maysan.

"It was a different type of mission that brought all the guys closer together," said Staff Sgt. Chris Toledo, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the joint-firing range. "Usually we just observe and assist the Romanians on operations and missions. This time we had the chance of a lifetime to fire weapons that we normally wouldn't have the opportunity to [fire]."

The Long Knives operated the

Romanian weapon systems, to include the rocket-propelled grenade launcher and the AK-47 assault rifle. Additionally, the White Sharks were given a chance to fire the Americans' M-4 carbines, M203 grenade launchers and M2 50-caliber machine gun.

After the last rocket was fired and the assault rifle magazines were emptied, the troops cleared the range and discussed the positive aspects of the training event.

Looking forward to the next mission, the Long Knives took their newfound skills and headed back to their operating base to continue preparing for their next mission. Toledo said the weapons training created a stronger bond with their Romanian counterparts.

Iraqi Police, Marines Working Together in Lahib

Photos by Lance Cpl.
Geoffrey T. Campbell
Marine Corps Base Hawaii



Iraqi police along with Marines from 2nd Platoon, Company W, Task Force 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, conducted a 13-hour weapons cache sweep in Lahib and Karmah, Jan. 10. During the IP coordinated cache sweep Iraqi police searched a mosque while Marines provided security outside and discovered hundreds of pounds of explosives, blasting caps, pressure switches, and detonating devices. Marines have since left Karmah's main police station, which is now solely operated by the IP. The cache discovery near the center of Karmah, demonstrates the Iraqi police's increasing proficiency and self-sustaining security capabilities as Marines continue transitioning to an overwatch position.

An Iraqi police officer removes radios, tactical gear, and other electronics found buried in the yard of a mosque in Lahib, northeast Karmah, Jan. 10.



Battalion Cuscatlán XI honor guard soldiers prepare to fire the gun salute in honor of fallen soldiers. Five Cuscatlán Battalion soldiers were killed in Iraq and 20 wounded in action since they deployed to Iraq in 2003.



Cuscatlán Battalion Closes Out Iraq Mission

*Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Brigade*



Col. Cesar Acosta, Cuscatlán Battalion XI commander, summarizes the achievements of the Cuscatlán Battalion during their mission in Iraq as he spoke to the attendees at their end-of-mission ceremony Jan. 22. The battalion completed 319 reconstruction and humanitarian assistance missions, benefiting over 7 million Iraqis, since 2003.

The Salvadoran flag lowered for the last time in Iraq as Cuscatlán Battalion XI held its end-of-mission ceremony, here Jan. 22.

"The biggest accomplishment that the Cuscatlán Battalion had was the development of 319 reconstruction and humanitarian assistance projects," said Col. Cesar Acosta, Cuscatlán Battalion XI commander.

Salvadoran Soldiers have been deployed to Iraq since September 2003. The first two rotations were deployed to Najaf; the third through the fifth rotations were at Camp Charlie in Hilla; and the sixth rotation through this final one served the people of Wasit province while deployed to Forward Operating Base Delta.

"This rotation lived in different conditions than previous ones," said Acosta, after their final humanitarian aid mission Dec. 31. "Transition of the province to Provincial Iraqi Control, the passage of the Security Agreement ... all marked a new age in the situation here.

"Those situations take away our job, though," he continued. "Our job is to support all progress here, and I believe our part of the mission was fulfilled in the last four months, as we worked hard with other coalition forces."

Marine Maj. Gen. Paul Lefebvre, Multi-National Corps – Iraq deputy commanding general, thanked the Salvadorans for all they had done for the people of Iraq.

"They have provided first class support to Opera-

tion Iraqi Freedom in the areas of construction, reconstruction and civil-military cooperation. Their contributions have been many and have had a profound effect on the great nation of Iraq," said Lefebvre to the crowd.

Lefebvre commended Acosta and Sgt. Maj. Eduardo Argueta, Cuscatlán Battalion XI senior enlisted advisor, for their dedication to their mission and the more than 2,000 Salvadoran soldiers who have served in Iraq.

"You have both shouldered an extreme responsibility while you have been here, and you have done a fantastic job. You led your troops with confidence and competency, the goals of any great leader. Their successes are a reflection of their great leadership," Lefebvre said.

Salvadoran President Elias Antonio Saca announced in a speech Dec. 23, the eleventh rotation would be the final mission for the Cuscatlán Battalion.

Throughout the ceremony, the Salvadoran soldiers shouted "Cuscatlán" when brought to the position of attention by the commander of troops and sang along with the Cuscatlán Battalion Anthem at the end of the ceremony.

"Never forget what you have accomplished here. Years from now, you will be able to look back and know that you were part of something great, something that shaped the world for future generations," Lefebvre said.



Cuscatlán Battalion soldiers stand in formation for the Salvadoran end-of-mission ceremony Jan. 22. Eleven rotations of Salvadoran soldiers have deployed to Iraq since September 2003.



U.S. Army Sgt. Aaron Creasman along with U.S. Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division and Iraqi Army soldiers conduct a market cordon and search Jan. 20 in Baghdad, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Edwin M. Bridges)

Iraqi children greet coalition forces during a cooperative medical visit in a village in Harwan Jan. 15. Medical, dental and veterinarian services were offered. An additional visit is planned for the future. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jennifer B. Poole)



Iraqi children on their way home from school run to say hello to U.S. Soldiers in Haswah, Iraq Jan. 4. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Wendy Wyman)



An Iraqi boy from Balad, Iraq, poses for a picture during a meeting with the Sheiks and City Council Members of Balad Jan 08. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kani Ronningen)

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Joseph Perry of the Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron loads a 155mm illumination round into a paladin mechanized howitzer. Perry cross-trains with B Battery 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery attached to 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry on forward Operating Base Hunter, in Maysan Province Iraq. Jan. 27. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff. Sgt. Brendan Stephens)



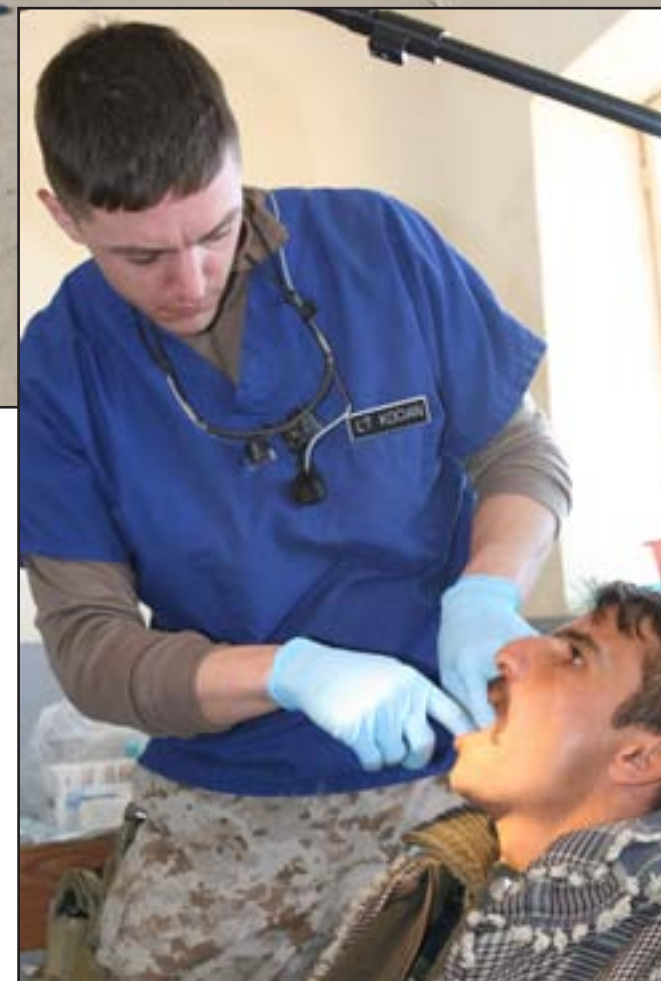
Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, prepare to evacuate a patient from Camp Liberty to the 10th Combat Support Hospital Jan. 10. Soldiers from the company have one mission - save lives on the battlefield. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt)



Master Sgt. Joel Little watches Iraqi air force warrant officer, Omar Saaed bend a piece of metal tubing during the fabrication portion of the aircraft structural maintenance course at Al-Taji Air Base, Iraq, Jan. 5. Little is deployed with the 821st Air Expeditionary Training Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Paul Villanueva II)



An Iraqi Army "Ninja" pulls security at the Water Treatment Facility that he is assigned to outside of the city of Saab al Boor, Iraq, Jan. 10. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jacob H. Smith)



Lt. Paul E. Kocian examines an Iraqi man's teeth and gums during a cooperative medical engagement in Harwan Jan. 15. Kocian is a dental surgeon with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 1st Marine Logistics Battalion. The visit was made to give medical, dental and veterinarian services to residents. (U.S. MarineCorps photo by Cpl. Jennifer B. Poole)

Minnesota Hockey Day in Iraq

The game was held in conjunction with Fox Sports Net North's Minnesota Hockey Day coverage Jan 17. The 834th Aviation Support Battalion "Skaters" and the 148th Fighter Wing "Bulldogs" are Minnesota National Guard units currently deployed to Joint Base Balad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photos courtesy of Task Force 34



Head coach of the game-winning 148 Fighter Wing "Bulldogs," Master Sgt. John Keller of Coon Rapids, Minn., gets a cold shower after the Jan. 17 Minnesota Hockey Day in Iraq game. The "Bulldogs" defeated the 834 Aviation Support Battalion "Skaters" with a score of 4-2.



148 Fighter Wing "Bulldog" Technical Sergeant Jeremy Harala of Duluth, Minn., successfully blocks a goal attempt by 834 Aviation Support Battalion "Skaters" during the Jan. 17th Minnesota Hockey Day in Iraq game.



U.S. Army medics remove bandages, exposing the mock minor burns on the forearms of a simulated patient being treated at the Golby Medical Clinic on Victory Base, Baghdad, Iraq, Jan. 29. The Officers and Soldiers of the 520th Medical Company (Area Support), Multi-national Corps - Iraq, conducted a simulated mass casualty exercise to practice the skills and procedures necessary to save lives during a real emergency. (U.S. Army Photo by Master Sgt. Mark D. Woelzlein)



Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Mahde is briefed on the current operations by U.S. Army Capt. Anthony Gentilia, commander, 520th Medical Company (Area Support), Multinational Corps - Iraq. 1st Lt. Corrie Brisson, clinic officer in charge, is standing by to answer questions as they observe the controlled chaos that is the treatment room of the clinic during the exercise. (U.S. Army Photo by Master Sgt. Mark D. Woelzlein)



Senior Airman Daniel Shaub, 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron air surveillance technician, concentrates on a screen depicting Iraqi air space in the Control Response Center Jan. 29. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Elizabeth Rissmiller)



These next-generation voters proudly display their ink stained fingers during the Iraqi provincial election in Kadhimiya, Iraq, Jan. 31. In order to vote during the Iraqi provincial election, voters must be at least 18 years of age. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Robert J. Whelan)

A National Police officer and an Iraqi Police officer giving a "peace" sign, show off their ink-stained fingers after leaving a polling station Jan. 28 in the New Baghdad district of eastern Baghdad. (U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea)



The U. S. Army 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, works along side Iraqi soldiers to increase security during the Iraqi provincial elections in Kadhimiya, Iraq, Jan. 31. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Robert Whelan)



Iraqi men proudly display proof that they have voted outside a polling site in Jabella, Iraq, during the provincial elections in Babil province Jan. 31. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Wendy Wyman)

IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND JANUARY 31, 2009 WHILE SERVING IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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

JOHN 15:13

January 3

Lance Cpl. Chadwick A. Gilliam, 29

January 6

Staff Sgt. Anthony D. Davis, 29

January 10

Staff Sgt. Justin L. Bauer, 24

January 11

Pvt. Sean P. McCune, 20
Sgt. Marquis R. Porter, 28

January 16

Pfc. Ricky L. Turner, 20

January 17

Senior Airman Omar J. McKnight, 22

January 18

Staff Sgt. Roberto Andrade Jr., 26

January 22

Spc. Matthew M. Pollini, 21

January 24

Pvt. Grant A. Cotting, 19
Sgt. Kyle J. Harrington, 24

January 26

Chief Warrant Officer
Philip E. Windorski, Jr., 35
Chief Warrant Officer
Matthew G. Kelley, 30
Chief Warrant Officer
Joshua M. Tillery, 31
Chief Warrant Officer
Benjamin H. Todd, 29

A British coalition soldier provides force protection while his squad patrols the al Kawaz community in Basrah, Iraq, on Jan. 25. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Andre N. McIntyre)

