

Finance transitions to Iraqi currency

By Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD — “Can I get fifty bucks in Iraqi dinar?” That may sound like an odd request from an American Soldier at a finance office in Baghdad, but in the next few months it will be as natural as buying DVDs or energy drinks from the Iraqi shops here.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

“When we initially got here, we didn’t get any [requests for the Iraqi dinar], but recently we’ve gotten a lot more.” said Spc. Christopher Cuomo, from Harrisburg, Pa., assigned to the Pa. National Guard 828th Financial Management Det., 208th Finance Co., 10th SBTB, 10th Sust. Bde., seen here assisting a Soldier at the Camp Liberty Finance Office, July 15.

However, the Army and Air Force Exchange Services run shops and the military postal services will still only accept U.S. dollars, explained Maj. Timothy Lancaster, the commander of the 208th Finance Company, 10th Sustainment Brigade Troops Battalion.

“The goal is to migrate from using primarily U.S. dollars to primarily Iraqi dinar by Oct. 1, 2009,” said Lancaster. He stressed that October isn’t a deadline, but a reasonable goal.

Lancaster, from Mannheim, Germany, is in charge of six finance detachments from all over the world that support finance in Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

“Iraq is their own country and sovereign,” Lancaster added. “Their currency is the Iraqi Dinar, so we need to respect that and start adopting what we can to support them.”

As Coalition forces have left the cities and Iraqi Security Forces have taken over security, Army finance is trying to transition the economy back to the shoulders of Iraqis using the Dinar to lessen CF visibility here, according to Lancaster.

“The advantage of switching over is we inject their economy and that makes the Dinar stronger,” said Capt. Jason Hempstead, the 828th Financial Management Detachment commander, 208th Financial Co. The Pennsylvania National Guard Soldiers

from the 828th run the Camp Liberty Finance Office.

“It helps us accomplish our mission and it helps Iraqis become more economically stable,” added Hempstead, who hails from Richmond, Va.

In theory, the goal to lessen the CF footprint, help stabilize the Iraqi economy and spend more local currency in markets in Baghdad should be easy, but that isn’t the case, said Lancaster.

“The switch from the dollar to the dinar has been harder than expected because it’s been so ingrained in Iraqi vendors,” explained Lancaster. “Vendors are so used to seeing cash and U.S. dollars, there has to be a mental shift.”

That shift is already starting to take place around bases in Baghdad as more and more local shop owners don’t bat an eye when asked if they take dinar, said Lancaster.

“It shouldn’t be a problem, the vendors usually accept local currency,” added Hempstead.

Though many Soldiers come in to request money from their Eagle Cash card, the need for U.S. currency is mostly coming from paying agents that pay their contractors, added Hempstead.

“We issued about four million U.S. dollars from this office last month,” said 1st Lt. Donald Warren, a disbursing agent from Indiana, Pa., assigned to the 828th Financial Management Detachment.

“But for every day operations, we have both types of currency to fulfill the need for the mission.”

In the market, the price of the Iraqi dinar fluctuates daily, but for the past seven months the military exchange rate has held at 1,170 Iraqi dinars to one U.S. dollar, explained Lancaster. Differences in on base and off base exchange rates can lead to black market currency prices and fear of counterfeit currency coming into circulation.

“We have guaranteed currency from trusted sources, like the National Bank of Iraq, so it’s safe to get your dinar from our finance offices,” said Lancaster. There are also security measures that Lancaster’s offices take that check for watermarks among other things.

Using the dinar will also cut out steep costs of transitioning cash from the United States to Iraq with Soldiers carrying it every step of the way, added Lancaster.

“Is it a simple flip of a switch? No, it really isn’t,” said Lancaster. “We will always be here for the Soldiers, but we want the banks here to do the banking for the Iraqis.”

As word spreads and more Soldiers start to take advantage of the dinar, the easier it will be to transition out of Iraq when the time comes, the easier it will be to get a better deal on those DVDs and energy drinks at the markets.

Supply meets needs, improves projects



Photo by Spc. Ruth McClary, 30th HBCT PAO

Staff Sgt. Frederick Murray, of Rose Hill N.C., and Staff Sgt. Vernon Hayes, of Lexington, N.C., mark measurements to cut support braces for a desk in the logistics office on Forward Operating Base Falcon, July 13. Murray, the headquarters supply sergeant of 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, helps Soldiers with projects when he isn't ordering, picking up supplies or completing daily reports.

By Spc. Ruth McClary
30th HBCT PAO

BAGHDAD — Soldiers of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team's Headquarters and Headquarters Company may not have the convenience of a large department store in Iraq, but the supply section on Forward Operating Base Falcon covers their basic needs.

The supply section is responsible for inventory of all equipment issued to Soldiers, including weapons, uniforms and boots, according to Company supply sergeant Staff Sgt. Frederick Murray.

"Each Soldier is issued up to \$5,000 worth of equipment and clothing for deployment," said Murray, of Rose Hill, N.C. "We keep records on everything issued to them."

Soldiers also receive a \$125 monthly clothing allowance to replace worn out items, and Murray has to approve each request.

Murray also stocks everyday items such as sunscreen, foot powder, hand sanitizer and office supplies for the company's nearly 260 Soldiers, many of whom come to the office for things other than supplies.

On a recent day, Staff Sgt. Vernon Hayes, of Lexington, N.C., entered the supply office carrying a wood two-by-four, looking for an electric saw. Murray helped him cut the wood to the correct measurements and completed the project when Hayes left to go out on a mission.

"I don't mind helping people with projects," said Murray. "I attached the wooden pieces to the base of the desk. It took about 30-minutes to knock it out."

Helping with projects is not on the duty roster in supply; Murray does that out of the kindness of his heart. That attitude led to an

addition to his team.

"I had to get something from supply and he (Murray) was a nice guy so I asked to work with him," said supply clerk Sgt. Mariano Rosa, of Medellin, Colombia.

Rosa does several tasks for the brigade, apart from his regular duties of transporting supplies and securing weapons.

"I feel like the brigade's horse," said Rosa. "It's okay though, I don't mind doing what I can for others."

The brigade's supply sergeant left in June 2008 and Murray, who received a full-time North Carolina Army National Guard supply sergeant's position a month later, was the obvious replacement.

"I knew this position would be challenging, but I enjoy it," said Murray. "I'm learning a lot, and the other brigade supply sergeants help guide me along."

Spc. Julia Clark, of Fayetteville, N.C., was a supply specialist on active duty for nine years and Murray said she is the backbone of the section.

"There is a new adventure in supply every day," said Clark.



Photo by Spc. Ruth McClary, 30th HBCT PAO

Staff Sgt. Frederick Murray, Spc. Julia Clark, of Fayetteville, N.C.; and Spc. Mariano Rosa, of Medellin, Colombia, make up the headquarters supply section of 30th HBCT.

Medics hone skills while training

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class, Alex Licea, 3rd BCT PAO



BAGHDAD — Sgt. Jay Councill, of Franklin, Va., a medic assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, applies a tourniquet on a role-playing wounded Soldier during a trauma lane training exercise. Several airborne medics conducted the exercise in order to hone their skills on how to when react to a serious, potentially life-ending injury.



Sgt. Jay Councill checks for any additional bleeding on a role-playing wounded Soldier during a trauma lane training exercise July 16 on Joint Security Station Loyalty, located on the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Several airborne medics conducted the exercise in order to keep their skills sharp in the event of a medical emergency during a combat operation.



Spc. Darryl Pierce, of Vineland, N.J., a medic assigned to the 2nd Bn., 505th PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., applies a bandage after a role-playing wounded Soldier suffers second-degree burns on his arm and shoulder.



Sgt. Braden Kotlarz, of Rockford, Ill., a medic assigned to the 2nd Bn., 505th PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., applies a trauma wound dressing on a role-playing wounded Soldier.

On This Day In Military History

1870 - A drunken brawl turns deadly when “Wild Bill” Hickok shoots two soldiers in self-defense, mortally wounding one of them.

William Hickok had earned his reputation as a gunslinger a decade earlier after shooting three men in a gunfight in Nebraska. He parlayed his standing as a sure-shooting gunman into a haphazard career in law enforcement. In 1869, he was elected interim sheriff of Ellis County, Kansas.



Wild Bill Hickok

Hays City, the county seat, was a rough-and-tumble frontier town, and the citizens hoped Hickok could bring order to the chaos. Unfortunately, after Hickok had killed two men in the line of duty after just five weeks, they concluded that he was too wild for their tastes and they elected his deputy to replace him in November. Unemployed, Hickok passed his time gambling, drinking, and occasionally working as a hunting guide. He quickly became bored and was considering taking work at the nearby Fort Hays as an army scout. On this day in 1870, Hickok had been drinking hard at Drum’s Saloon in Hays City. Five soldiers from the 7th Cavalry stationed at Fort Hays were also at the bar. They were drunk and began to exchange words with the notoriously prickly “Wild Bill.” A brawl broke out, and the soldiers threw Hickok to the floor. One trooper tried to shoot Hickok, but the gun misfired. Hickok quickly pulled his own pistols and opened fire. He wounded one private in the knee and wrist, and another in the torso. The three remaining soldiers backed off, and Hickok exited the saloon and immediately left town.

MND-B Pic of the day!



Photo by 1st Lt. Scott Lewis, 1st BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Los Angeles native, Spc. Hershell Brown from the 1st “Black Knight” Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., attached to the 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. completes 100 pull ups during the “Black Knight” 1000 Competition at JSS Shield, east of Baghdad, July 12. The competition consisted of seven partner-based events.

FAMOUS FEATS OF CHUCK NORRIS



DID YOU KNOW?

Little known medical fact: Chuck Norris invented the Caesarean section when he roundhouse-kicked his way out of his Mother’s womb.

Represent Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

POC:
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Need Volunteers
 willing to share
 dancing, singing,
 cooking, and
 creative skills for
 the upcoming
 Hispanic Heritage
 Month.

Quote For Today

“Where the stakes are the highest, in the war on terror, we cannot possibly succeed without extraordinary international cooperation. Effective international police actions require the highest degree of intelligence sharing, planning and collaborative enforcement.”

— Barack Obama, 1961-44th President of the United States

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today
109° F | 87° F



Tomorrow
111° F | 87° F



Sunday
113° F | 89° F

TRIVIA TIME!!

What type of aircraft was used to drop bombs in the first German air raids on London in 1915?

Last Issue's Answer: Switzerland

Cav Round-Up radio newscast available

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD — The Cav Round-Up is a three-minute radio newscast from Baghdad covering military units and events across Multi-National Division — Baghdad.

Today's Cav Round-Up # 112 was produced by Sgt Erik Fardette, MND-B Public Affairs Office.

The July 16 newscast includes the following two stories:

1. U.S. Military Police maintain a

healthy relationship with their Iraqi counterparts.

Soldiers of the 591st MP unit are checking in with their Iraqi colleagues daily.

For the most part, there is only small interaction among the IP and MPs, but with the addition of a new building, the interaction has increased and the IP is looking for more suggestions on how to configure their offices.

2. Dagger Brigade soldiers help to improve a hospital in Abu Gharaib.

They have provided hospital equipment, installed power lines, and given an ultra-sound, as well as organized emergency care and pediatric care.

NIPR LINK: Cav Round-Up

SIPR LINK: Cav Round-Up

Check out more news at the 1st Cavalry Division's homepage:

www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv/

Trigger's Teasers

6				7		3
	4		3	9	2	1
	8	1	2		4	
5	6		2		3	
	7		1	5		8
		8		4		2
		6		1	9	4
	2	9	5	6		3
4			9			5

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow: **Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.**

Every Sudoku game begins with a number of squares already filled in, and the difficulty of each game is largely a function of how many squares are filled in. The more squares that are known, the easier it is to figure out which numbers go in the open squares. As you fill in squares correctly, options for the remaining squares are narrowed and it becomes easier to fill them in.

Yesterday's Answers

9	7	8	2	3	1	5	4	6
3	5	2	4	6	7	9	8	1
4	1	6	9	5	8	3	7	2
8	4	3	5	1	2	7	6	9
5	9	1	7	4	6	2	3	8
2	6	7	3	8	9	4	1	5
1	3	4	8	9	5	6	2	7
7	8	5	6	2	3	1	9	4
6	2	9	1	7	4	8	5	3



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