

The Advisor



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On the cover:
An Iraqi girl mimics her father as he displays his ink-stained finger after voting in the first Iraqi election since the 2003 invasion.
(courtesy photo)



USF-I, DCG (Advising and Training) Facebook page:

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March

Iraqis Train to Protect Democracy

During this historic election season, the government of Iraq is depending heavily on its security forces to ensure the voters can go to the polling stations safely. In preparation for this challenge the ISF is training throughout the country. Many of these training exercises are joint efforts between the Iraqi police and the Iraqi army, and most are facilitated by Iraqis, with advisors and trainers taking a support role.

A few examples of this training include polling-center security training in Nasir Wa Salam (page 3), the K-9 bomb detection teams at the Baghdad Police College (page 4) and Iraqi female soldiers at basic combat training in Al Muthana (page 6).

Democracy functions best in a secure environment. This was the main point made recently by USF-I commander, Gen. Ray Odierno. "What we have to do is protect the democratic process; and to me, that's the most important," he said. "We need the Iraqi people to feel that the democratic process served them, without hindrance from outside influences."

Although U.S. forces are scheduled to leave Iraq by 2011, the partnerships they have formed with the Iraq Security Forces will continue and expand.

"It needs to be a long-term commitment," said Odierno. The commitment just changes from one based on mutual security and cooperation, to one that spans the wide spectrum of governmental support -- economic, diplomatic, security, environmental and educational.

U.S. forces will remain partnered with Iraq Security Forces throughout this transitional period. No one expects the transition to be easy or fast but this is true of most tasks that produce lasting and worthwhile results.

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Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police Train Together for Election Security

The future of Iraq will be decided when Iraqi voters head to the polls March 7 and the Iraqi Security Forces are training to ensure those polling stations are safe.

The 24th Brigade, 6th Division Military Transition Team, along with Soldiers from Company B, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, with direction from Iraq Training and Advisory Mission - Ministry of Defense, conducted polling-center security training in Nasir Wa Salam for members of the Iraqi army and police.

"This training is important because the safety of the voters and the voting centers is our number one priority," said Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Mattherly, the transition team noncommissioned officer in charge of training.

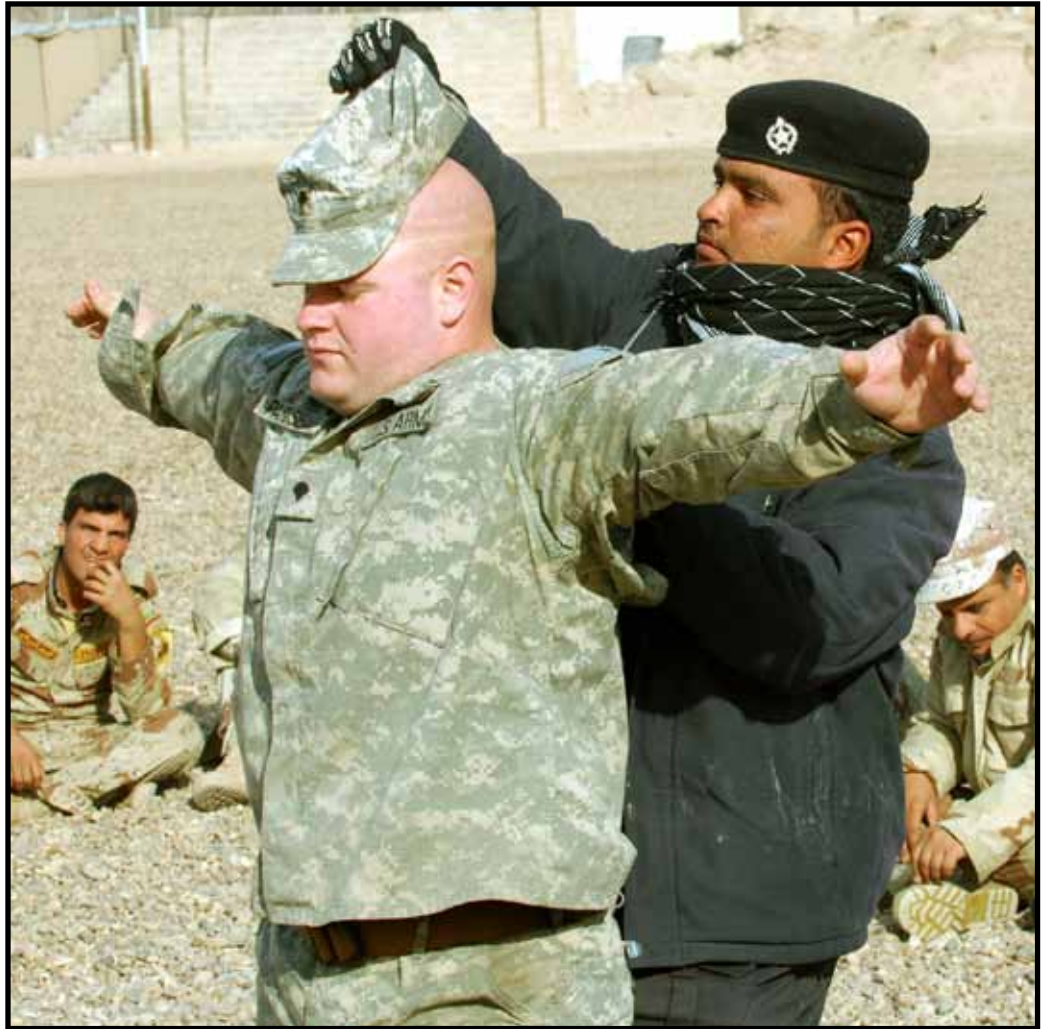
The three-day training brought together members of the Iraqi army and police and instructed them on ethics while working the polling site, searching vehicles and people. The personnel searches included special considerations when searching female voters.

"First, the ethics portion of the training addressed situations that we hope never occurs at the voting sites, but we still had to discuss them," said Mattherly. "We talked (about) how not to bribe the voters, accept bribes, and the consequences of those actions."

Many of the soldiers and police officers gained a better comprehension of the moral obligations they have to the Iraqi citizens.

"The ethics training was very important for our people," said Iraqi army Sgt. Hider. "I learned a lot, and it was just as important as searching people and vehicles."

At some polling sites, roads that lead up to voting centers may be closed to add an extra level of security during



voting, but the training still covered the proper procedures on searching a vehicle.

"I knew how to search vehicles before this, so this was a refresher for me," said Muhammad Siad, an Iraqi policeman.

To simulate how voters will be searched and how the day should flow, a mock voting center was created for the training, with Soldiers playing the role of eager voters.

"Before the 'voters' could go inside the area to vote, the Iraqi soldiers and police officers searched them for possible hidden weapons," said Mattherly. "Most of the voters that went through the checkpoint were clean, but we planted a weapon on one voter to see

if they would find it, and they did."

The U.S. training team said all-in-all they were extremely confident in their Iraqi counterparts' abilities to protect voters on election day.

"The Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police came together, took this training," said Mattherly, "and ran with it."

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Photo:
Muhammad Siad, an Iraqi Policeman, leaves no stone or hat unturned as he searches Spc. Anthony Pariseau, an infantryman with Company B, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, for hidden weapons during polling-station security training.



Newly Arrived Bomb Detection Dogs

Although Leo, a German Shepherd, and Madea, his handler, have only been training together for a few months, they are ready to join the Iraqi K-9 bomb detection teams who will be providing security during the election season.

K-9 teams have experienced measurable successes in Baghdad and surrounding provinces, but Iraq does not have enough teams to meet the staggering need for their services here.

Iraqi officials have asked the U.S. for 145 more trained dogs, and the first shipment of 25 arrived Feb. 5, in time to provide election security. The additional 120 dogs are slated for delivery over the next 12 months.

Advisors have worked hard to overcome cultural and training obstacles to get more K-9 teams formed. Iraqi security forces are generally inexperienced with the animals as they

were not widely used before 2003.

Baghdad Police College currently has 67 dog teams, with 47 dedicated to Baghdad alone. The remaining 20, used in surrounding provinces, consist of 12 bomb detection teams and eight narcotic detection teams.

"We have more requests than we have dogs and handlers," said Brig. Gen. Mohammad Mesheb Hajea, director of the BPC K-9 Training Unit. But, as



Play Vital Role in Iraqi Voting Security

many as 1,000 dogs will be needed in the future, he added. This number will allow increased opportunities for the dog teams to work in more public venues.

Hajea and his team have made great strides to break down the cultural and psychological barriers that exist between man and canine in Iraq. "The handlers are encouraged to pet and hug their dog every day to develop a rapport," said Hajea, who is also a

veterinarian with more than 20 years of experience with dogs. "The public can trust that the dogs are not ferocious and are there to complete a job."

Handlers on the K-9 teams, all volunteers, must spend at least 45 days working and training with their dogs exclusively to form the necessary bond to form a team.

"If handler and dog do not develop a rapport," Hajea stated, "the handler

will be assigned to another dog so that a rapport can be developed."

Once a K-9 team has been established it remains together for the duration of each member's career.

Story by Capt. Shannon Frank and Staff Sgt. Amy E. McLaughlin

Iraqi K-9 teams prove their abilities at a training demonstration at the Baghdad Police College. (Photos by Capt. Keli Chevalier)

Iraqi Women Answer Call of Duty



A small, but determined group of Iraqi women from across the country started army basic combat training late January in Al Muthana to learn fundamental military skills needed to be a soldier.

These 65 women are just the third group of trainees ever to participate in the 45-day course, which begins the same way it does for their male counterparts, with lots of paperwork, lots of new equipment and lots of marching.

Although some in the group had security concerns about revealing their identity, others were so proud of their service in the Iraqi Army, they wanted to tell their stories despite the risks. "I lost my husband and my son in an explosion," said one female soldier. "I have no one to take



care of me and this gives me a job.”

Unemployment is a major issue in Iraq and opportunities for women are few. It is still not easy to find a job in the Iraqi Army, but the opportunity is there for those who are persistent. “There is a long list of people who want to get jobs in the army,” said one of the youngest soldiers.

During his welcome speech to the new class, Staff Maj. Gen. Samir Al Basha, who heads the Iraqi Army Tactical Training Directorate, said he hopes every student will complete the challenging training. “If any of you need anything at all, I am here to help,” he said.

“Most of these soldiers have been through one of the previous rotations of training and returned to receive an update to army procedures and weapons training,” said Lt. Col. Raad Hashim Mohammed, officer

“They will be responsible for searching females at check points as well,” said Samir.

“The goal down the road is total integration of the female soldier in the Iraqi Army,” said Col. Otis Brown II,

Since the first course was conducted in June, 2009, 125 females have completed the training.

Story by Capt. Keli Chevalier

Photos:

A group of female recruits practice marching. (facing page)

As their shadows stretch across the pavement in the early morning light, the newest female Iraqi recruits listen intently to the instructor during drill and ceremony training. (below left)

A recruit stands ready for the next command from her instructors. (below right)

(Photos by Capt. Shannon Frank)

“The goal down the road is total integration of the female soldier in the Iraqi Army.”

-- Col. Otis Brown II

in charge of training.

Although many currently hold administrative and personnel positions in the army these women will also help provide security in the upcoming elections.

senior advisor Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission – Army. “We are encouraged by the tremendous progress that we’ve seen thus far and we look forward to seeing the next steps the Iraqi Army will take.”



Iraqi Police Train for 'Most Important Time in Iraq'

Iraqi law enforcement personnel proved that they will be ready to provide security for the upcoming elections as they tested their skills through training scenarios simulating situations they are likely to face come election day.

The 217th Military Police Company, 49th Military Police Brigade, Alabama National Guard, runs a training academy that provides Iraqi law enforcement and emergency response agencies the opportunity to come together for one day to focus specifically on providing security during election time.

As with much military training, the day started out in the classroom with classroom instruction designed to give the students basic knowledge on how to conduct election security. The action started after lunch as the students received hands on training in a practical exercise.

The students tested their skills setting up and maintaining security at a polling station. Role-players then came through to cast their vote; some were hostile and others friendly.

"We've set up ways to search people as they come into the election site. They check their identification, check them for any contraband, and then they are allowed to go into the next secure area before casting their vote," said Capt. David Worthy, commander of the 217th. "The mission is to safely get people in and out of the voting building."

The Criminal Justice Center holds two training courses, a one week and a three-week course. The one week class is a "train-the-trainer" based curriculum. The intent is to teach police officers proper techniques for conducting classes, so they can go back to their respective stations and instruct their fellow officers. The three week class teaches officers advanced police techniques that they can take to the

field. On this day both classes came together to train.

Worthy explained that the election security aspect of the training is nothing new to the academy. "It's something that has been in every curriculum that we have. It is now receiving more attention with the upcoming elections," he said.

The long term goal is not just to train the Iraqi law enforcement but to turn over the facility and academy to them. "We are well on track to be able to turn this over to them," Worthy said. "We already have an Iraqi commandant and 12 Iraqi former students working as instructors today."

Providing security for the upcoming elections plays a big part in proving that Iraqi forces are ready to take full control of their country. Election season is the most important time in Iraq. U.S. forces trained us in a lot of areas, from crime scene preservation to securing an election station. These are basic skills that our forces need, said Lt. Col Moshtiq Tileb Abed, Baghdad director of Police.

Lt. Col. Abed looks forward to the near future when Iraqi law enforcement will completely take over the internal security of the country. He appreciates everything the U.S. has done for them. "U.S. Forces helped us train to the point where our forces are ready now. We are completely ready," he said I want to thank U.S. Forces and the American Soldiers for providing security in Iraq."

**Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Yarnall,
103rd Public Affairs Detachment**

Photo:

Iraqi policemen participate in an elections security operations training scenario.





◀ Iraqi Navy swimmers, nicknamed “frogmen,” swim through the waters of the Umm Qasr port as part of the ceremony.

▼ Iraqi sailors aboard the P-201 sail their boat in the parade of celebration of the newest additions to the Iraqi navy fleet.



Iraqi Navy Gains New Patrol Ships



As part of the effort by the government of Iraq to increase the security and international standing of the country, the Iraqi Navy officially welcomed two new vessels to its fleet during a ceremony along the country's southern coast Feb. 14.

In 2008, Iraq was the world's 13th-largest oil producer, with 75 percent of the nation's gross domestic product and 86 percent of the government's revenue coming from oil exports.

Eighty-five percent of Iraqi oil exports go through the ports of Umm Qasr and Basrah, making their security vital to the economic and overall stability of the nation.

The primary mission of these vessels will be improving the security of the two key ports.

In the ceremony, complete with a demonstration by Iraqi divers, the Majed 703 and Shomokh 704, both patrol ships purchased from Italy, were christened in the Umm Qasr port before assuming their roles protecting Iraq's ports and coastline.

Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, the United States Forces-Iraq deputy commanding general for advising and training, said the boats are

another step in the right direction for Iraqi stability and for the ports to meet international standards for security.

"This is a great day for the Iraqi Navy; this will help them operate and secure their own oil platforms," Barbero said. "This is another step toward allowing them to be self-sufficient, another step for them to assume their rightful role here."

Even though Iraq only has 35 miles of coastline, Barbero added the direction the nation goes hinges on what happens in its port cities.

"This is the lifeblood of Iraq. It is absolutely essential to the future of this country."

Up next for the vessels and their crews is a trip across the Atlantic Ocean to Louisiana for additional training and familiarization in preparation for their heavy responsibility.

The Iraqi Navy was almost completely destroyed during the 1991 Gulf War. Nineteen ships were sunk and six were damaged. The Navy was not rebuilt during the 1990s and played no role during the 2003 invasion.

Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. Nathaniel Smith, USD-S Public Affairs



▲ *Iraqi girls present flowers as part of the christening ceremony for the Majed 703 and Shomokh 704 at the Umm Qasr port in southern Iraq Feb. 14.*

◀ *Iraqi sailors aboard the Majed 703 sail their patrol vessel in a parade before they assume their roles securing the ports and coastline of southern Iraq at the Umm Qasr port in southern Iraq Feb. 14.*

Iraq Rebuilds with Alternative Energy



Iraq is blessed

with one of the world's largest reserves of crude oil, but the country has little or no refining capability. The lack of petroleum products makes it difficult to run generators and other equipment that produce reliable electricity.

Consequently, every day, major cities and towns in Iraq suffer through prolonged power outages. This presents critical problems for high-security facilities, like border-crossing points, that need uninterrupted power but are so remote that they cannot be connected to the national power grid.

The engineering arm (J-7) of the United States Forces – Iraq, Deputy

Commanding General (Advising and Training), in partnership with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, is funding and building alternative energy systems for these more remote locations.

In particular, the USF-I, DCG (A&T) J-7 team has designed a unique, rugged system leveraging both solar panels and a large wind turbine—affectionately referred to as “energy in a box”—at one border-crossing location.

There, the combination system will be connected to the appropriate switch gear, allowing either power source, or both, to generate electricity, depending on the environmental conditions.

The wind turbine will be capable of

generating 500 kilowatt hours of electricity at a wind speed of only 12 miles an hour. Additionally, 24 solar panels are being installed that can provide more than 5,000 watts of peak power.

Fortunately, Iraq has plenty of sunshine during the summer season when temperatures reach 135 degrees Fahrenheit. During the evening, there is also a surprising amount of wind blowing across the border between Iraq and Iran that can drive wind turbines.

The Iraqi border enforcement teams will run the systems. The J-7 team, with contracted support, will provide in-depth training to the Iraqis on how to operate and maintain the facilities.

Costs vary greatly, depending on the

amount of electricity needed to power the facility and whether solar panels, wind turbines, or a combination is used.

Much of the equipment is covered by multiyear warranties, and the material is designed to last for a long time if properly maintained.

In addition, the costs are actually less over the long term, compared with the expense of transporting fuel to large generators every week.

Presently, there are two sites where solar panels are being used. The first site has a solar-panel array that powers a water-well pump. The second site employs not only a full array of solar panels but also a large wind turbine.

The alternative energy strategy is a test case that will be used to accumulate data so the Iraqis can evaluate the feasibility of establishing similar sites across the country.

Joint forces from USF-I, DCG (A&T) will record the wind and solar data and determine the success of both systems. The engineers can then determine the right mix of solar and wind solutions for other locations in Iraq.

In Nov. 2009, this test facility became

the first fully operational endeavor of its kind in Iraq. The J-7 team is evaluating various other locations in Iraq, and through these efforts, the trainers and advisors from USF-I, DCG (A&T) are helping Iraqis build capacity and increase capability for their power infrastructure.

With the movement out of cities, towns and villages by U.S. combat forces, Soldiers have adapted to providing critical, noncombat support, such as training Iraqis to operate and maintain basic services.

Even as USF-I turns Iraq's infrastructure over to local government agencies, the J-7 will continue to assist with new alternative energy solutions throughout the country.

This is just one example of the many projects that the J-7 team is overseeing. Iraq's infrastructure is being rebuilt and restored. New bridges, highways, electrical lines and buildings are being erected. These provide the Iraqi people with the essential infrastructure they require to not only survive but also to prosper.

Throughout Iraq, facilities have been

restored to more normal conditions. Where there was no electricity available, new power lines from a national grid are being installed.

In places that had no basic sewer and sanitation, new septic systems are being built and waste-water treatment plants are being repaired and upgraded.

Even in a country situated above expanses of oil, alternative energy programs featuring combined solar panels and wind turbines could be the answer to producing reliable electricity.

Through these and other efforts, the trainers and advisors from USF-I, DCG (A&T) are helping to build the capacity of the Iraqi infrastructure.

Later this year, the Badrah facility will become the first fully operational endeavor of its kind in Iraq. Additional solar-wind facilities will be complete at various times throughout 2010.

Depending on the need, J7 can build dozens more. For instance, the J7 team is evaluating various locations on the Iraq border with Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia, at major points of access.

As Iraqis begin to shoulder more of the responsibility for operating and maintaining their facilities, their dependence on the coalition for assistance will diminish.

Story by U.S. Army Capt. Robert T. Moore, recently assigned to the United States Forces – Iraq, Deputy Commanding General (Advising and Training)

Photos:

Solar panels and a wind turbine power the remote border enforcement outpost southeast of Baghdad. (facing page)

The smaller solar array powers a pump that forces water from a local well into an elevated holding tank, providing fresh drinking water day and night. (left)
(Photos by Navy Lt. Ryan Schumacher)



Iraqi Army Educates, Empowers



Although it seems unrealistic for an Army to be comprised of Soldiers who are unable to read, it was one problem facing the Iraq Ground Forces Command and the Iraq Training and Advisory Mission-Army as they attempted to develop and implement a structured noncommissioned officer education system for Iraq's soldiers.

Carlos Legoas was asked by the coalition and Iraqi Army to come up with a strategy to develop the Iraqi NCO corps October 2007. Legoas, a retired U.S. Army command sergeant major, was selected for the position because of his wealth of experience as an NCO, to include holding the position of United States Southern Command senior enlisted advisor.

Once in Iraq, Legoas quickly realized the challenges ahead of him and the ITAM-Army team. In a little more than two years, the IGFC and ITAM-Army, with support from other directorates,

turned those challenges into successes.

Not only did reports from the field indicate that a large number of the NCOs were illiterate, but they were being used for menial tasks such as gardening and upkeep of headquarters buildings, Legoas said. In addition, there was a shortage of 32,000 NCOs in the IA.

"Officers did not empower their NCOs. NCOs were perceived by soldiers as 'spies' for officers," Legoas said.

Roughly one year ago, in an effort to combat the high illiteracy rate, recruits were required to pass a literacy test before joining the IA, said Master Sgt. Ramon Valadez, ITAM-Army Iraqi NCOES advisor. While a shortage of NCOs remains, they are now being used more proficiently, Valadez said.

"Iraqi officers are beginning to under-

stand the positive impact an NCO will have to a unit if used effectively. Iraqi NCOs are the primary instructors at all the training centers and schools," Valadez added.

A breakdown in communication two years ago presented another challenge to developing an education system.

"The Basic Tactical Training Directorate, equivalent to the schoolhouse, and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command, where the majority of the students come from, were not talking. There were coalition-run NCO academies throughout Iraq, sponsored by some Iraqi divisions. Some of these were very efficient. However, there was no (program of instruction) standardization among the academies, meaning that Iraqi divisions were not synchronized with the BTDD," Legoas said.

Since the "ad-hoc" academies did not have authorization documents to

NCO Corps



support personnel resources, training equipment, classrooms and other infrastructure, Legoas said the instruction wasn't standardized and did not last.

Now the focus was on how to develop enduring schools for the Iraqi forces.

With the approval of a leadership doctrine for the Iraqi Joint Forces, and support from Coalition Forces and Gen. Babakir Baderkhan Alzibari, chief of staff for the Iraqi Joint Forces, the old NCO academies were disbanded.

Legoas said since the start of the development process, Babaker supported the effort and directed the formation of work groups and an executive committee to facilitate the process to build new ones. Other Iraqi generals had planned a system for the Iraqi NCOs but it was unrealistic and incomplete.

The system proposed two levels of courses for the Iraqi NCO: first, a six-

month course for the Naeb-Aareef (squad leader), Aareef (platoon sergeant) and Aareff-Awwal (first sergeant); and second, another six-month course for the Wakeel-Awwal (equivalent to a sergeant major).

"This was unrealistic because division commanders were not going to release their NCOs for six months and the courseware was not developed," said Legoas.

In response, two courses were developed and put into operation. The master instructor course was established in April 2008, to prepare NCOs to efficiently and effectively deliver military instruction. In March 2009 the Drill Instructor Course began, aimed at preparing NCOs to train new recruits at the basic training level, said Valadez.

Aso, a three-month senior NCO course, with mentorship from NATO Training Mission-Iraq and Coalition Forces, was created and run entirely by Iraqi cadre and instructors.

One success was the creation of the three month comprehensive program of instruction that reflects combat experience, military values and common core subject material for NCOs, said Legoas.

There are seven training centers throughout Iraq teaching the three month courses: Al Kasik, Habbaniyah, Tallil, Shaibah, An Numinayah, Kirkush and Kirkuk. Taji is the only location instructing the senior NCO course.

Valadez said IGFC commanders are starting to realize the importance of the NCOES and now encourage their soldiers to attend. Iraqi leaders also reviewed a former promotion policy, concurring that promotions should be linked to NCOES attendance.

On Jan. 18, the Iraqi Noncommissioned Officer Academy began its fifth Senior NCO Course at the training center in Taji. The Senior NCO Course is 45 days of training, including introduction, qualification and certification classes.

"This is a big step for the academy. It will be the first time the students have published doctrine ("The Art of Leadership") to use throughout the course," said Sgt. Maj. Ahmed, senior enlisted Iraqi NCO for the academy.

Iraqi Col. Alaa, commander of the Noncommissioned Office Academy,

said as the staff and instructors at the academy continue to improve the course, it will soon be one of the premiere training courses in the Iraqi Army.

Throughout the process, coalition and, most recently, U.S. Forces had received support from Lt. Gen. Hussein, commander of the Iraqi Training Directorate Command.

Legoas said Hussein is a strategic thinker who supported the Iraqi NCOES program. His support has been invaluable for the continuity of effort throughout the NCOES development and approval process. "He understood and was instrumental to articulate the value of professionalizing the NCOs to the IA Chief of Staff and the Minister of Defense."

Hussein continued to push the program forward even when it met resistance by the other directorates within Iraq's Ministry of Defense in early 2009, Valadez added.

After much hard work and partnership, the Iraqi NCO education system came to fruition. It is consistent; encompasses all branches and specialty schools; is doctrinally based and linked to promotions.

The biggest benefit for the Iraqis, according to Col. Hardee Green, will be the value of having professional NCOs that will strengthen the IGFC across all ranks.

Green, training division chief for ITAM-Army, believes the Iraqis will continue to be successful in their roles as cadre at the training centers.

"It's left up to the Iraqis to move forward," Green said. "They are capable -- if the leadership is willing to continue to invest in the program."

To date, the chief of staff has approved the curriculum and all directorates have agreed to the NCOES policy, and it will be up for final review and approval at the Defense Council in the near future.

Story by Sgt. Lindsey Bradford, United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs Office

Photo:

An Iraqi Army NCO instructs his troops in weapons cleaning and maintenance.

(Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Dominic Huerta, NCOIC, ITAM-Army Training)

Iraqi Boy Scouts Visit VBC



Iraqi Boy Scouts patch

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

This creed is recited and followed by Boy Scouts around the world and is no

different here in Iraq.

A troop of 10 Iraqi Boy Scouts had the opportunity to interact with Air Force and Army personnel while observing equipment used to survey weather patterns during a visit to the Victory Base Complex.

"This is a great opportunity to build the U.S. military and Iraqi relationships," said 1st Lt. Jeff Aiello, who organized the event, deployed from Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. "The kids enjoyed the tour at the Iraq Meteorology Organization

and would like to come back again."

U.S. Forces like to use these kinds of opportunities to build long-lasting bonds with the people of Iraq.

"This was really fun," said Ali, one of the Scouts. "I am going to tell my friends at school so they come next time."

The Boy Scouts program in Iraq has been active for half a century. It is run by the Ministry of Education and has nearly 100,000 members, according to the Victory Base council

website.

"This is a great program for the Iraqi children and a great opportunity for the American forces to continue a special relationship with the Iraqis," said Master Sgt. Mario Viray, Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission-Air Force weather instructor, deployed from Nellis AFB, Nev. "We were also able to learn a little bit more about the culture and traditions of the great Iraqi people."

Story courtesy of U.S. Forces Central, Baghdad Media Outreach Team



The Iraqi Boy Scouts from Baghdad give a boy scout salute to both the U.S. and Iraqi Boy Scout flag. These Boy Scouts also visited the Camp Victory Complex weather station while visiting with U.S. Air Force and Army personnel. (Photo by Senior Airman Jarrod Chavana, U.S. Air Forces Central, Baghdad Media Outreach Team)

Landmark Course Enhances Careers, Lives



Iraqi students of the English language course at the Ministerial Training and Development Center in the Ministry of Defense Compound listen intently as the instructor gives the lesson of the day. (Photo by Umer Norry, Ministry of Defense photographer)

They defy the odds

One is an officer; one is enlisted. They pass through the IZ checkpoints every morning. They are rarely late. They are rarely absent. They study English diligently. It will be, they believe, their path to a better future.

They are two of the 398 women currently serving in the Iraq army, and they bonded the first morning of class. The only two women in a class with eight men, they sat together at first, to offer each other support.

Now, they own their classroom. They sit where they chose, as they are comfortable anywhere. They raise their hands or shout out the answers. They ask questions; they argue a point.

They are independent and unafraid. They are a force, and a hopeful sign of the future for Iraq.

The second lieutenant and master sergeant study for six hours a day, Sunday through Thursday, in the Intermediate Level English Language Course at the new International Iraqi Academy. They are learning English in a rigorous academic program using Lackland Air Force Base Defense Language Institute (DLI) materials with both a DLI trained American instructor and a DLI Iraqi instructor.

This pilot English language program is the first offering of the Academy, and will soon be supplemented by courses in strategic studies and professional development. Until the Academy's official opening in summer 2011, adjacent to the IZ, English language classes for Iraq's military and police are being held at the Ministerial Training and Development

Center in the Ministry of Defense Compound.

"The men in the course- they are like my brothers and they help me to learn," the 2nd Lieutenant says. "I love this English language," she continues. "It is the first language of the world, and I need to know how to speak it to continue with my education and get my Master's degree."

"These classes are helping me to develop new skills, and my father '[a general] is very proud that I study,'" said the master sergeant. "He brings me in his car each day, and then he waits until I am finished and again comes to take me home."

Not to be outdone, the Lieutenant interjects that her husband "even takes care of our children so that I can study and do my homework each evening."

The men in the class, all officers, are unanimous in their support of these two women. The highest ranking, a brigadier general, said, "I asked them to call me Uncle; they are like my own daughters. These classes are helping Iraq to change. Imagine, a man like me, a general, living in the darkness of Saddam for so many years." He noted, "I've never been on a plane, never been to another country. Now I can get culture, get knowledge, and so can these two women and so can my daughters, both at university studying science. Why not?" he asks, "Why shouldn't there be women in this program?"

The students in the beginner course, eleven male officers, are equally enthusiastic about both the classes and the participation of women.

"I came because I love learning the language of America ... If I have to walk, then I walk."

-- Iraqi student

A police first lieutenant who walked five miles to get to his class when protests shut all the streets in Baghdad, said, "I came because I love learning the language of America, and I made a commitment to study. If I have to walk, then I walk."

He added that when he first saw women in uniform, he was surprised, but now he says, "It's normal."

These 21 students and their American and Iraqi teachers will continue to learn and to bond over the next weeks, until the graduation ceremony scheduled for March 28. Some of them will return to their jobs; others will continue their English language studies.

All of them, and perhaps especially the 19 men, will remember that the women in their midst were just two more colleagues, two more classmates, two more friends. And nothing, really, was exceptional about their being there.

Story by Marjorie Friedman, USFI, DCG (A&T), ITAM- MoD, English as a Foreign Language Consultant, Iraqi International Academy



Iraqi Army Opens New

A new Iraqi army post built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and coordinated by Iraq Training and Advisory Mission - Logistics officially opened its doors Feb. 9, following a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Tikrit. Construction on the facility, aptly named "Location Command," began in an open field near Tikrit in June of 2008.

Today, the sprawling facility can easily accommodate an entire battalion of Iraqi soldiers. More than 1,000 Iraqi of them will soon occupy new officer and enlisted barracks, with easy access to a new dining facility, a fuel point and other support structures needed to sustain a full battalion.

"This project is one of the most im-

portant projects ever completed in Tikrit and Salah Ad Din Province, and will be a real asset for all of our units in the northern region," said Kassim Al Timimee, representing the Iraqi Department of Defense. "It will undoubtedly contribute directly to security and stability in the province and the region. We appreciate and thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for their



Facility

efforts in the building of this important camp.”

The new military facility will provide a base from which Iraqi soldiers can operate to ensure the future the security of Iraq. The compound includes 75 buildings: officer, enlisted and noncommissioned officer barracks; a dining facility, fire station and medical clinic; fuel

The new Iraqi Army facility includes 75 buildings: dining facility, officer and enlisted barracks, fire station, medical clinic, fuel storage and distribution facility, and its own power distribution facility. (Left)

Ahmed Al Samarrayee, governor of Salah Ad Din, cuts the ribbon officially opening Location Command during a ceremony held at the new Iraqi Army facility in Tikrit Feb. 9. (Below)



storage and distribution and its own power distribution facilities.

“The success of this project was due in large part to the efforts of Abkarr Corporation, the military advisory team members, our Iraqi partners, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers” said Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox, director of U.S. Forces-Iraq J7. “It is indicative of the continuing effort to ensure partnering between our two countries and symbolizes the commitment to build a future of excellence.”

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by Ahmed Al Samarrayee, governor of Salah Ad Din, Brig. Gen. Ali Jassim, commander of the Iraqi Army’s 4th Brigade, 6th Army Division, Ahmed Al Salloum, director of Abkarr Corporation, Kassim Al Timimee, representing the Iraqi Department of Defense, Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox, director of U.S. Forces - Iraq J7, Col. Dan Anninos, commander

of the USACE Gulf Region District and Brig. Gen. Tariq Al Joubori, commander of the new facility.

Total contract value for the project was \$38 million, funded by the Iraq Security Forces Fund. The contractor for the project was Abkarr Corporation, with a workforce that was 100 percent Iraqi from start to finish.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the U.S. Government and the Government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed 5,257 projects throughout Iraq valued at more than \$9.1 billion, and has more than 350 projects ongoing. The overall reconstruction effort in Iraq currently provides jobs for more than 20,000 Iraqis.

Story and photos by Scott Harris, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region District



A U.S. Army Soldier serves as a demonstrator for a class of Iraqi soldiers and policemen as a student thoroughly searches him during security training for local elections.

(Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Luisito Brooks, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs)

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