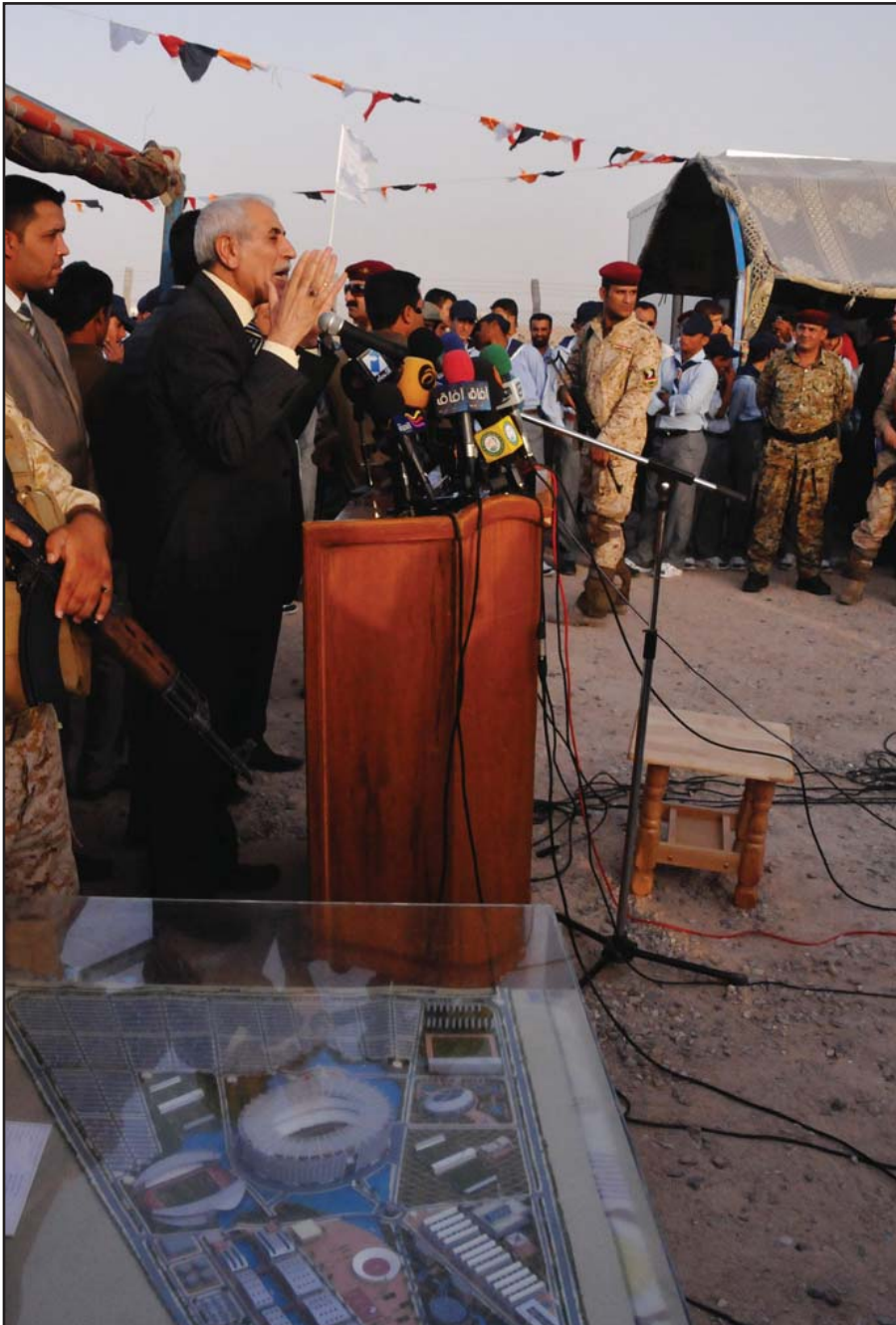




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July 27, 2009

Basra hosts groundbreaking ceremony for new Sport City complex



By Staff Sgt. Rodney Foliente
2nd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.



COB BASRA – The provincial government hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the Basra Sports City complex recently.

The megalithic project is slated to be completed in 2013 in time for the city to host the 21st Gulf Cup, an eight-country soccer tournament.

“I am proud that the stadium is being built and the Gulf Cup will be here. I can’t wait!” exclaimed Mohammad, a 14-year-old soccer player.

The Basra Sports City complex will also be used by the youth of Iraq as a training

“This place will be added to the landmarks of Basra and we should be proud of this great symbol.”

– Gov. Sheltag About al-Mayah
Governor of Basra

facility for future Olympians and world competitors of every scope. The display model showed training halls and fields for various sports, a main stadium with a capacity for 60,000 to 85,000 seats, an additional stadium, various courts and youth housing. The complex will also have a shopping mall, amusement park, playgrounds, museum and mosque.

One day, Mohammad said he aspires to play in the main stadium with the national team and win the World Cup and Olympics. His companions, who represented a wide range of different sports, responded with laughter and bravado as they jibed each other.

But beneath the laughs, there seemed to be an excitement and hope as their dreams

Basra Gov. Sheltag About al-Mayah speaks during the Basra Sports City groundbreaking ceremony recently. In the foreground sits a model of Sports City, which is scheduled for completion in 2013 in time for the city to host the 21st Gulf Cup, an eight-country soccer tournament.

GROUND BREAKING

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GROUND BREAKING

played out in their minds' eyes.

A fellow athlete, Jaffer, piped in and boasted with 12-year-old seriousness that he would be "a professional boxer, the world champion! I will be like Mohammed Ali."

One of the children's coaches said during the ceremony the project represents a great future for Iraqi sports and Sports City will benefit the city and country as a whole.

"There is a significant challenge before us before we can enjoy the benefits of Sports City," said Basra Gov. Sheltag Aboud al-Mayah. "But, we will do our best to bring about its completion, on which we will celebrate that glorious day."

"This place will be added to the landmarks of Basra and we should be proud of this great symbol," the governor continued. "The city of Basra is known as the Sea City, the Palm City, the Border Gates and the capital of Iraqi culture. We wish to see it also as the capital of Iraq's economy and as our country's sporting capital."

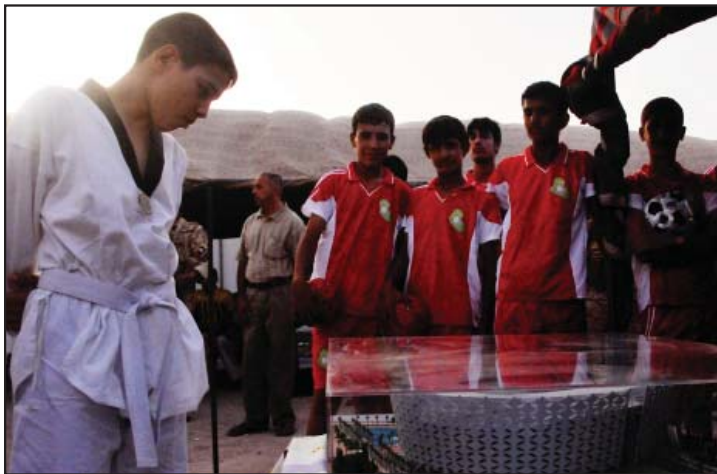
For more of Staff Sgt. Foliente's stories, visit:
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Photos by Staff Sgt. Rodney Foliente

(Above) Young Iraqi boxers give a demonstration for their peers during the Basra Sports City groundbreaking ceremony. In addition to hosting games and competitions, Sports City will also be a training facility for Olympians and world-class competitors, giving these children hopes and dreams to one day represent their country.

(Left) Young Iraqi athletes gaze at a model of the main stadium of the Basra Sports City complex during its groundbreaking ceremony recently.



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Wasit Intel Conference discusses new capabilities

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st FB



FOB DELTA – Members of the Wasit intelligence community met July 20 at the Iraqi Police Provincial Headquarters for the Iraqi Security Forces Intelligence Conference and discussed innovations in professional development available through their own intelligence community.

Iraqi Air Force 1st Lt. Thimir Hamid briefed the group of intelligence professionals including members of 41st Fires Brigade; 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment; 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade; Iraqi Police; Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement; National Information and Investigations Agency; Director General for Intelligence and Security and other intelligence agencies that would benefit from the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities the Iraqi Air Force can offer.

“I briefed today on the King Air aircraft’s capabilities for reconnaissance targets provided by the Iraqi Air Force, to include different kinds of products and targeting capabilities the customer might want,” explained Thimir.

The Iraqi Air Force’s King Air aircraft is similar to the U.S. Air Force’s MC-12 Liberty aircraft, which provide aerial intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support to the ground force commanders for their respective countries.

The added capability of imagery intelligence, combined with human intelligence, paints a better picture for the Iraqi intelligence community, according to Maj. Jennifer Finch, 41st Fires Bde., intelligence officer.

“What the (Iraqi) Air Force brought in was another intelligence discipline which they can use for imagery intelligence to cross-queue with human intelligence to fortify collection, said Finch, who hails from **Goose Creek, S.C.** “It gives the Iraqis another capability that they don’t have to rely on any other forces for.”

Finch said the ability to have self-sustaining imagery intelligence is a huge step for the Wasit intelligence community.



Courtesy photo of the Iraqi Air Force

The King Air aircraft is used by the Iraqi Air Force for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in support of intelligence missions in Wasit Province and throughout Iraq.

“What’s monumental about it is that this is now an Iraqi system that they will use by processing the request and reporting through Iraqis, by Iraqis and solely for Iraqis,” said Finch.

The intelligence fusion group has grown from the agencies not even talking to each other 14 months ago to nine different Iraqi intelligence agencies meeting weekly to share information, said Finch, who said she is glad to have been a part of this historical evolution.

Other service members had a hand in assisting the Iraqis with this new development as well.

“I feel really good to be able to participate in this historic event, working with the Iraqi Air Force and the Wasit intelligence community,” said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Paul Valenzuela, advisor to the Iraqi Air Force on Forward Operating Base Delta, from Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

Valenzuela’s coordination between the Iraqi Air Force, 41st Fires Bde. intelligence section and the Wasit Intel Fusion Group made the presentation possible and provided the opportunity for future joint operations between the Iraqi military and security forces, said Finch.

The Wasit intelligence community still has plenty of room for improvement Finch added, but through the hard work of Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, she hopes to see the Iraqi intelligence community continue to evolve under the leadership of the Wasit Province Director of National Investigations and Information Agency.

For more of Sgt. 1st Class Thompson’s stories, visit:
www.TheRedBulls.org/Thompson

HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHT

Naval Nuclear Power School, Nuclear Power Training Unit Charleston, and SPAWAR are located in Goose Creek. Nuclear submarines and submarine tenders were based at the Naval Weapons Station (NWS) in Goose Creek until the early 1990’s.

Finding the path to a peaceful, prosperous Iraq: Army battalion adapts to new role

By Capt. John Landry
4th BCT, 1st Armd. Div.



COB ADDER — For many field artillery units in Iraq, non-standard missions have become a way of life. The traditional role for field artillerymen has been less in demand as progress has changed the nature of U.S. operations in Iraq.

The 2nd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery, Task Force Pathfinder, embarked on a new mission on its deployment. As part of the Army's first Advise and Assist Brigade, the Pathfinders provide military support to developing civil capacity across three provinces in southern Iraq.

Working closely with Provincial Reconstruction Teams—U.S. State Department teams composed of a range of experts in governance, agriculture and similar fields—the task force cooperates with Iraqi partners to develop local economies, reinforce stable and responsive local government and provide essential services.

Lt. Col. Mike Eastman, Task Force Pathfinder commander, said he believes this is critical to the long-term success of Iraq.

"We must focus our efforts on projects and programs that are sustainable, not only after this task force departs, but after all Coalition forces depart from Iraq," said Eastman. "The PRTs are in the lead."

This task force supports their efforts at many levels, providing everything from security and movement to coordinating literally hundreds of projects designed to improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people. Our efforts are not oriented on the months that we will be here. They are focused on the years after we depart."

The Pathfinders created a unique organizational structure, including additional lawyers, engineers, health professionals and a variety of technical experts, all working to



Photo by Maj. Myles Caggins

Christopher R. Hill, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, speaks to Iraqi media at Camp Mitica recently. Hill visited the Italian provincial reconstruction teams and discussed the role of 2nd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment Task Force Pathfinder's support to the PRTs.

assist Department of State and Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs counterparts.

On the ground, this support includes movement teams allowing Coalition forces to get out and interact with local Iraqis. In addition, the task force provides logistical support and secure basing for the Department of State PRT personnel.

"The task force's subject matter experts and strategic approach to our goals could be a huge enabler for us," said Ethan Bond, director of Project Compass, a part of the Dhi Qar PRT.

The Pathfinders are also responsible for the Commander's Emergency Response Program. These funds are allocated to specific projects and programs to address emergency needs across Dhi Qar, Maysan and Muthanna provinces.

CERP funds have brought clean water and power to numerous cities and villages while bringing Iraqis into the process to ensure these projects will be sustained by local governments.

Members of the task force are not necessarily subject matter experts on governance and economic development, but that has not impeded the mission.

"Our Soldiers have adapted and shown the ability to positively impact any mission," said Command Sgt. Maj. Hector Font, Task Force Pathfinder senior enlisted leader. "These great young Americans have stepped up to the plate and are truly (valuable) to this mission."

Many of the Pathfinders prepared for this new role by

ROLE

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ROLE

receiving training on subjects ranging from basic Arabic to project management.

Within thirty days of their arrival in Iraq, Task Force Pathfinder Soldiers began to impact the way the military interacts with PRTs.

"The new job shows me a whole new side of what we are capable of and all the things we can accomplish for the people of Iraq and that makes me proud," said Pfc. Marcus Moser from Tucson, Ariz., assistant resource manager for civil military operations. "It's a complete 180 from what we are trained to do coming out of basic training or in artillery."

Both Task Force Pathfinder and the PRTs share the goal of a stable, self-sustaining and prosperous Iraq. While in its early stages, this partnership has already brought rapid improvements to the Iraqi people's quality of life.

"You might think that Soldiers would not be excited about rebuilding a country, that they were not trained for this mission," said Eastman. "We are finding the exact opposite. This gives our Soldiers the chance to impact hundreds of lives each day. The Iraqi people want the same thing each of us desire: a safe place to live, access to basic needs like water and power and the chance for a brighter future for their children."

For more of Capt. Landry's storie's, visit:
www.TheRedBulls.org/Landry



Photo by Maj. Myles Caggins

Christopher R. Hill, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, arrives at 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division Headquarters at Contingency Operating Base Adder near Nasiriyah recently. Hill visited to discuss the role of 2nd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment Task Force Pathfinder's support to provincial reconstruction teams with Lt. Col. Michael Eastman, task force commander and deputy commander for civil capacity.

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Around the world in 34 seconds



THE HAGUE, Netherlands - The descendants of an African chief who was hanged and decapitated by a Dutch general 171 years ago reluctantly accepted the return of his severed head July 23, still angry even as the Dutch tried to right a historic wrong. The head of King Badu Bonsu II was discovered last year in a jar of formaldehyde in the anatomical collection of the Leiden University Medical Center. The Dutch government, embarrassed by its discovery, agreed to Ghanaian demands that the relic be returned. Descendants of the chief said they were not consoled. Tribal elders said they were angry because they were sent by their current chief to identify the head, not retrieve it. Taking it back without first reporting to the chief would be a breach of protocol, they said. "We, the Ahanta, are not happy at all," said Nana Etsin Kofi II.



FRESNO, Calif. - Federal and state agents arrested 83 people accused of growing more than \$1.2 billion worth of marijuana in a crackdown on illegal pot gardens in California's Sierra Nevada range. Local officials said several Mexican marijuana-growing cartels helped set up the grow sites scattered throughout rocky mountainsides of eastern Fresno County, and warned more arrests were likely. More than 318,000 marijuana plants were destroyed in the operation, which also netted nearly \$41,000 in cash and 25 weapons, Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims said July 23. "We found it planted on hillsides and gullies, and some of the plants had grown to be eight feet tall," said Mims. While the bust was large enough to merit a visit from Gil Kerlikowske, director of the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy, it accounts for a small percentage of the pot typically seized in California each year.



CHICAGO - The 105th pitch of Mark Buehrle's day broke in toward Gabe Kapler, who connected. Buehrle knew his perfect game was in jeopardy. Chicago White Sox center fielder DeWayne Wise sprinted toward the fence in left-center. What happened next would be either a moment of baseball magic or the end of Buehrle's bid for perfection against the Tampa Bay Rays. Wise jumped and extended his arm above the top of the 8-foot wall. The ball landed in his glove's webbing but then popped out for a split second as he was stumbling on the warning track. Wise grabbed it with his bare left hand, fell to the ground and rolled. He bounced up, proudly displaying the ball for the crowd. A home run turned into an out. His biggest threat behind him, Buehrle coolly closed out the 18th perfect game in major league history, a 5-0 victory July 23. It was the 16th perfect game since the modern era began in 1900 and the first since Randy Johnson's for the Diamondbacks May 18, 2004.



ARVADA, Colo. - A land mine found in a suburban Denver Goodwill donation box forced the evacuation of a strip mall. The rectangular, olive-green box with the words "Front Toward Enemy" raised the suspicions of Goodwill workers July 21. Arvada police say the Claymore land mine didn't go off in the donation box and no one was hurt. A bomb squad disposed of the device. Police Sgt. Jeff Monzingo says it's unclear whether the device was operational or where it came from. No suspects have been identified. Claymore mines were widely used during the Vietnam war.