

# United States Forces -Iraq CHRONICLE

Volume 2, Issue 2

February 2011



***XVIII Airborne Corps  
returns to Iraq***

*Page 18*



Lt. Gen. Bob Cone and Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick shake hands during a transfer of authority ceremony in the Al Faw Palace, Feb 8. The XVIII Airborne Corps, out of Fort Bragg, N.C., became the core component of USF-I, and took control of day-to-day operations from III Corps, from Fort Hood, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Lee Craker)



page 4

New system provides sunny outlook on Iraqi weather



page 6

Iraqi, U.S. forces search for extremists in Mosul



page 16

Tadreeb Al Shamil includes live-fire exercise

**Editor's Note: This will be the last printed edition of this publication. Effective 1 Mar 11, the USF-I Chronicle will only be available in electronic format.**

# USF-I CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of  
United States Forces – Iraq

February 2011  
Volume 2, Issue 2

USF-I Commander  
Gen. Lloyd J. Austin, III

USF-I Deputy Commander (Operations)  
Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick

Public Affairs Officer  
Col. Kevin V. Arata

Public Affairs Sergeant Major  
Sgt. Maj. Sharon K. Opeka

Editor/Layout and Design  
Ms. Renea L. Everage

Questions, comments and concerns about the USF-I Chronicle can be addressed via email at [usfichroniclegroupmailbox@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:usfichroniclegroupmailbox@iraq.centcom.mil). Submissions of articles, photos and letters are also welcome. The Chronicle reserves the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, clarity and space. Archived issues are available at <http://www.dvidshub.net>. Electronic versions of current issues can be found at [www.usf-i.com](http://www.usf-i.com).

The USF-I Chronicle is an authorized monthly publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of this monthly publication are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office of the United States Forces-Iraq.

## Departments

Feature up Front

page 1

Freedom's Focal Point

page 10

Photo Feature

page 18

In Memoriam

page 21



# U.S. Soldiers train Iraq's first SWAT team

FEATURE UP FRONT



**Sgt. Nicholas Laganas**, a military police officer with 94th Military Police Company, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, USD-C, and a Lowell, Mass., native, leads a formation of Iraqi Police officers, Jan. 3, in physical training during Special Weapons and Tactics training in Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kimberly Johnson)



Story and photos by  
Sgt. Kimberly Johnson  
USD-C Public Affairs

**Iraqi police officers** conduct a room clearing exercise, Jan. 3 during Special Weapons and Tactics training in Baghdad.



In an act of terrorism, a church is bombed. Its people held hostage - those who are not already dead from the blasts and gunshots - and the police are called. They perform to the extent of their training - cordon off the area and pull security. But with no knowledge of what is happening inside? The need for a Special Weapons and Tactics team in Baghdad is realized.

Soldiers with the 94th Military Police Company, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center began training select members of the first Iraqi police SWAT team, in response to that incident during the fall of 2010 in Baghdad, which, according to Associated Press, left 58 Iraqi Christians dead and 78 wounded.

“After the incident that happened at the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance,” said Maj. Gen. Sabah al-Shably, head of Baghdad patrolling police, “we realized Iraq needed a

SWAT team to deal with that kind of situation - a hostage situation. What’s going on here in Iraq—what has happened before, with the church or other terrorist attacks—can happen again. The best way to deal with a situation like that, has to be a SWAT team that is high-tech and always ready.”

Sgt. Nicholas Laganas, a military police officer with the 94th MP Co., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. and a Lowell, Mass., native, said during the hostage situation at the church, there were Iraqi police officers all around, but they did not know what to do. They did not have the training needed to handle the hostage situation.

“That was a perfect opportunity for the Baghdad Police Advisory Team to establish a SWAT team,” Laganas said. “With the help of Maj. Gen. Sabah, here at the police headquarters, and the whole BPAT, we’ve been working with select SWAT trainees for the past month. Little by little, we’re getting there.”

Spc. Albert Barnes, a military police officer with the 94th MP Co., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. and an Oxford, Conn., native, said the purpose of a SWAT team is to conduct operations necessary for capturing people who pose a threat to the security of Iraq and to diffuse hostage situations.

Laganas said the significance of training the selected Iraqi police officers as a SWAT team, versus training the Iraqi Army, is that the IA is trained in heavy weaponry and the IP officers eventually will be the ones patrolling the streets.

“If we can get the Iraqi police to start working as a SWAT team to take care of the hostage (rescue) situations, that’s what we need to do,” Laganas said, “because the future of Iraq lies within the Iraqi police force.”

The American Soldiers pooled their experience and created a training program that includes physical fitness, classroom learning and practical exercises.

“Every morning we start the day

with physical training,” Laganas said. “Then, we work our way into classroom learning and into practical exercises using the crawl, walk and run stages of learning. We try to drive into the trainees that slow is smooth and smooth is fast.”

Barnes said the SWAT trainees are highly motivated for the training and are proud of being the first SWAT team ever in Iraq.

“The Iraqis are very eager to learn,” Laganas said. “Every day they come out screaming our names, ready to (work). They don’t go through the extensive training like Americans do in the (United) States as police officers, so we all do our best to teach them everything we know.”

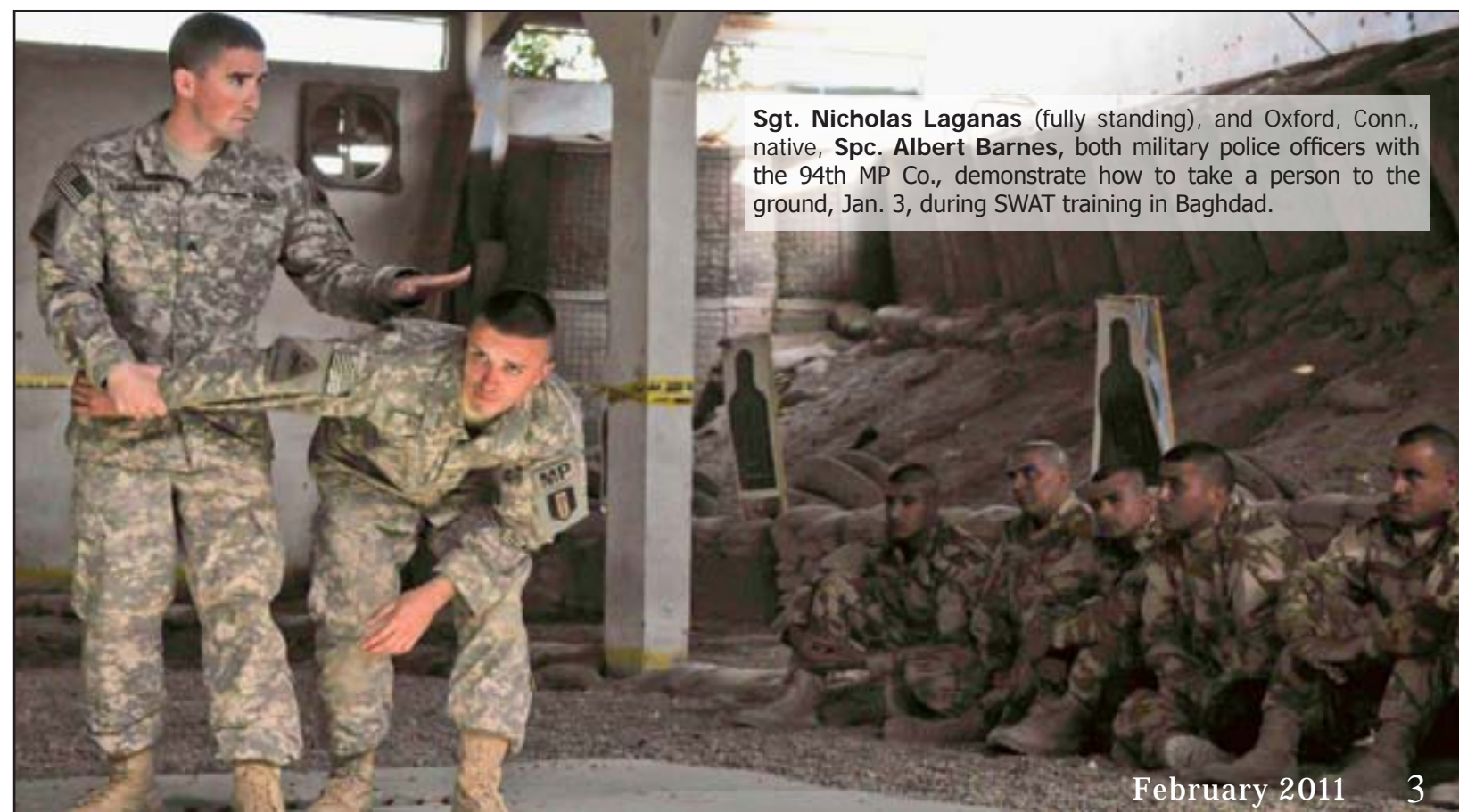
The training is scheduled for at least three times per week for about two months, and every minute counts.

Once the American forces withdraw from Iraq, the responsibility for continuing SWAT training will be the Iraqi police force, alone.

“The BPAT has a lot of stock in this SWAT team, because they’re going to be patrolling the streets right away,” Laganas said. “We need to make sure we train them the best we can, because lives are at stake.”



**Iraqi police officers** prepare to conduct a room clearing exercise Jan. 3 during Special Weapons and Tactics training in Baghdad.



**Sgt. Nicholas Laganas** (fully standing), and Oxford, Conn., native, **Spc. Albert Barnes**, both military police officers with the 94th MP Co., demonstrate how to take a person to the ground, Jan. 3, during SWAT training in Baghdad.



# Outlook sunny on Iraqi weather



**U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Stephen Hale**, 22nd Expeditionary Weather Squadron advisor and trainer for Iraqi air operators, trains Iraqi airmen to systems check a TMQ-53 automated weather observation system at the Iraqi Air Operations Center, Baghdad, Jan. 13. Recent upgrades and training for the weather systems at the IAOC are part of an ongoing process to get the Iraq air force to a self-sufficient state. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Levi Riendeau)

*Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Levi Riendeau  
321st AEW Public Affairs*

**T**he Iraqi Air Force took one more step toward self-sufficiency with the recent acquisition of a European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellite (EUMETSAT) weather data reception and visualization system.

The new system was installed this month at the Iraqi Air Operations Center in Baghdad, Iraq. Training on the new system is being conducted by IPS MeteoStar, the contractor who sold the equipment.

The receiver pulls weather data from EUMETSAT into the computer systems installed by IPS MeteoStar. There it allows the Iraqi weather officers to manipulate the data to generate weather maps for use in various products, from flight briefings to local weather forecasts.

“This system provides real-time aviation weather information as the basis for decision support for all meteorological support activities spanning Iraq. The Iraqi air force weather officers will have the tool set they need to integrate important operational weather decision-making products directly into existing and future Iraqi weather systems,” said Maj. James Bono, Iraqi Training and Advisory Missions senior weather advisor deployed from Sagamore Hill Solar Observatory a geographically separate unit

of Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.

The purchase is part of an ongoing plan to provide the Iraqi air force airmen with the tools and skills to run their own weather forecast center.

“Right now they’re relying on our data,” explained Bono

With more training from U.S. Air Force Airmen, Bono said the Iraqis should be self-sufficient with their own equipment.

“They will support their own mission, their own aircraft, and provide protection for their airfields,” he said.

The process started last October with the purchase of four Ellason Weather Radar 600s.

The first of these radars was installed at the Baghdad Iraqi Air Operations Center where the Iraqis have been training on that system ever since.

“It’s the first Iraqi weather radar system in the country,” said Bono, “It gives them the ability to track and observe rain showers and thunderstorms.”

But the Ellason Weather Radar 600 isn’t the only system to provide real-time weather data.

The Iraqi air force currently uses a TMQ-53 Weather Observation System on loan from the U.S. Air Force, but recently purchased eight new units to be set up throughout Iraq. Once the new systems are in place, the only thing missing for the Iraqis to run their own weather operation will be training.

That’s where Tech. Sgt. Stephen Hale of the 22nd Expeditionary Weather Squadron advising weather trainer for Iraqi air operations comes in.

The 16-year Air Force veteran from

Fort Riley, Kan. makes sure Iraqi officers receive the training they need to run their own operations.

“Their meteorology background is different from ours,” he said. “Over these last five months we’ve tried to bridge the gap from the training they’ve received previously to what the capabilities are on the U.S side.”

Once the Iraqis are trained, Hale will work with his Iraqi partners to ensure they can produce all the weather products they need for their mission.

“This is a whole new side for me getting to teach meteorology,” he said. “I get to teach these young Iraqi weather officers to integrate the information they have into planning and executing missions,” said Hale, “It takes it to a whole new level when you’re helping a department stand up from nothing.”



**U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Stephen Hale**, 22nd Expeditionary Weather Squadron advisor and trainer for Iraqi air operators, trains Iraqi airmen train on newly installed equipment at the Iraq Air Operations Center, Victory Base Camp, Baghdad, Jan. 13. Recent upgrades and training to the weather systems at the IAOC are part of an ongoing process to get the Iraq air force to a self-sufficient state.



# U.S., Iraqi forces search for extremists in Mosul

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Shawn Miller  
USD-N Public Affairs

**MOSUL, Iraq** – Soldiers from the Stability Transition Team of Task Force Spear, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, partnered with troops of 6th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, to search for indicators of extremist activity in western Mosul, Jan. 19.

Partnered together, the combined force pursued leads and information provided by residents near the al-Harmat neighborhood of the city. Iraqi soldiers took the lead for the operation, establishing a security cordon and knocking on doors with U.S. forces serving in an advisory role.

U.S. Army Maj. Jason Carter, executive officer of Task Force Spear, said the decreasing role of U.S. forces in such operations is a testament to the Iraqi soldiers' increasing ability to act alone.

"Today was a great example of them demonstrating their capability to conduct these operations autonomously," said Carter, a native of Panama City, Fla. "It reduced the amount of safe havens that the enemy may think that they have in western Mosul."

With U.S. forces change of responsibilities in support of Operation New Dawn, security operations in northern Iraq transitioned to Iraqi security forces.

During the patrol, Soldiers of Task Force Spear, 4th AAB observed their ISF counterparts as part of ongoing efforts to bolster security for the people of Ninewa Province.

"We continue to assist them with everything we have," said 1st Sgt. Jose Rosario, senior enlisted leader, Task Force Spear, and native of San Juan, Puerto Rico. "We're looking forward to the next few months to continue to enhance their capabilities."

Acting on information collected from local residents, the Iraqi army and U.S. Soldiers searched several abandoned buildings suspected of being insurgent hideouts.

In a display of security presence, senior Iraqi leaders greeted local Iraqis and provided contact information in the event the citizens witnessed any unusual activity in their neighborhood.

"It shows that they care," said Carter. "Not only does it force the enemy out, but it also encourages the populace and lets them know that the Iraqi Security Forces are here for them."

The information paid off as several Iraqi soldiers discovered coils of wire and possible bomb-making materials, as well as a crawl space in an abandoned house at the edge of the city.

The 6th Bde., 3rd IA Div., soldiers demonstrated that they are fully adept at carrying out missions in their own areas with minimal or no help from U.S. forces, said Carter.

Soldiers of Task Force Spear and 4th AAB remain responsible for building ISF capabilities U.S. Division-

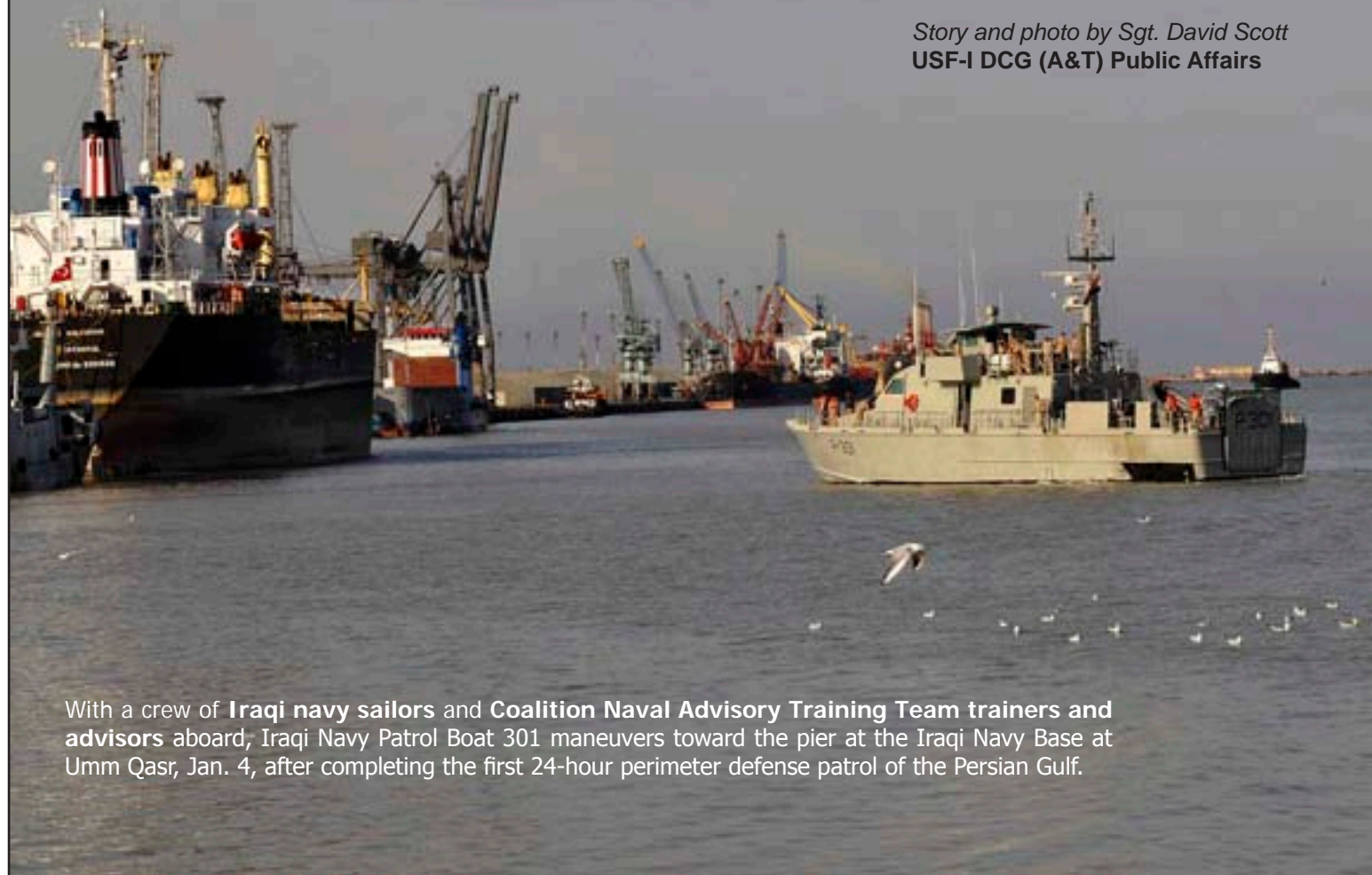
North as much as possible, as aggressively as possible, he said.

**U.S. Army Maj. Jason Carter**, executive officer of Task Force Spear, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, examines possible bomb-making material with Iraqi Staff Col. Ali Yousif, 6th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, during a partnered cordon and search mission in western Mosul, Jan. 19. The IA soldiers led the search mission with assistance from the U.S. Stability Transition Team of Task Force Spear following tips from local residents about possible insurgent activity.



## *Iraqi navy completes first 24-hour patrol on Iraqi Armed Forces Day*

Story and photo by Sgt. David Scott  
USF-I DCG (A&T) Public Affairs



With a crew of **Iraqi navy sailors** and **Coalition Naval Advisory Training Team trainers and advisors** aboard, Iraqi Navy Patrol Boat 301 maneuvers toward the pier at the Iraqi Navy Base at Umm Qasr, Jan. 4, after completing the first 24-hour perimeter defense patrol of the Persian Gulf.

**I**raq's maritime security forces recorded another first recently with the completion of a 24-hour patrol in the Persian Gulf aboard its newest patrol boat.

Iraqi Navy Patrol Boat 301 departed Umm Qasr, Jan. 6, and returned the following afternoon coinciding with the celebration of the Iraqi Armed Forces Day.

Iraqi navy Lt. Abdul, captain of PB301, said the historic patrol marks a great moment in the development of the Iraqi navy.

"It was a significant day, especially since the patrol was a part of Iraqi Armed Forces Day," he said.

The patrol was the first-ever 24-hour perimeter defense patrol

of the Al Basrah Oil Terminal conducted by the Iraqi navy since the Coalition Naval Advisory Training Team initiated operations, said United Kingdom Royal Navy Lt. Richard Hurman, a CNATT training officer. The patrol was planned and conducted entirely by the Iraqi navy, and was the result of several months of effort.

"The crew has been conducting training since September," said Hurman. "Once cleared for operations by the Iraqi navy, PB301 went out on patrol."

Two additional Iraqi navy swift-class patrol boats are scheduled for delivery to the Iraqi navy and expected to reach operational

readiness in the near future. Additionally, the remaining swift-class patrol boats are scheduled for delivery over the next 18 months.

Swift-class patrol boats will eventually provide the entire perimeter defense of Iraq's maritime oil infrastructure, Hurman said.

"I am very proud for the Iraqi navy to be able to take Patrol Boat 301 out on operations, under (its) control, with minimal coalition participation," said CNATT Director Rear Adm. Kelvin N. Dixon. "This is a huge step towards the Iraqi navy taking over the security responsibility for (its) territorial waters"



# U.S. military turns over critical new facilities to Iraqi Aviation Command

From left to right, a Gazelle, Huey and OH-58 Kiowa helicopter are showcased inside the \$9.8 million MI-17 hangar which, along with the \$1.5 million operations building, took approximately 22 months to complete at Taji Air Base.

Story and photos by  
Michael Beeman  
GRD Public Affairs

Touqmachi, director of ALMCO UIC, the contractor that built the facilities.

The USACE's Gulf Region District facilitated the ceremony and has been managing the construction of the two buildings for USF-I. The 118,400 square foot hangar includes two cargo bays, 20 offices and 88,800 square feet of hangar bay maintenance space.

"Perhaps its most-notable feature of the hangar is the 360-foot free span design, making this the largest free-span building in the Middle East," commented Capt. Ross May, project engineer. "The facility is slightly more than 50 feet tall in the maintenance bay area."

The \$9.8 million hangar and \$1.5 million operations building took approximately 22 months to complete. The training simulator is to be delivered in the near future and will be installed under a separate contract.

"Completion of this facility marks

an important milestone in the history of the Taji Airfield," said Maj. Jonathan Stover, officer-in-charge of the Taji Project Office. "The completion of the MI-17 hangar and the squadron operations building across the street, will provide the Iraqi Army Aviation Command with the facilities to conduct maintenance on (its) rotary wing aircraft, protected from the harsh weather environment of Iraq, and will provide them with needed office space and a simulator room in which to train (its) pilots."

There are presently five additional projects in various phases of construction at Camp Taji being managed by GRD. The projects and their contract costs are: \$7.5 million air traffic control tower, \$22.6 million power generation station, \$22 million for four warehouses to store repair parts, \$3 million bulk fuel storage complex and \$3.5 million to construct a Logistics Affairs Training Institute.

The training institute work includes construction of nine new buildings and the rehabilitation of 42 other facilities. All are scheduled for delivery between now and the end of March.

When all these facilities are completed, Taji will not only have the largest free-span building in the Middle East, it will also be home to the tallest and largest buildings in its local area.

"There are few more potent symbols of hope and progress on Camp Taji than the completion of these new facilities. New construction signals confidence in the future, and is the key element in the revitalization of the Iraqi army," said Stover. "Without well constructed buildings to work from, the job of the Iraqi army, (which) has been hard at work maintaining stability in this region, would be much more difficult."



**Brig. Gen. Anthony Rock** (left), director, Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission – Air Force and 321st Air Expeditionary Wing commander, and **Brig. Gen. Nadhom Laffta Zabon**, deputy commander, Iraqi Army Aviation Command, sign the project transfer document.

**TAJI, Iraq** - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has turned over two critical construction projects at Camp Taji in support of the U.S. Forces - Iraq reconstruction efforts. Recently, a huge helicopter maintenance facility and a squadron operations building were turned over to the Iraqi Army Aviation Command during a formal ribbon cutting for the facilities.

The hangar, which can hold up to six large Russian-made MI-17 helicopters during maintenance, is the largest clear span structure in the Middle East. The adjacent operations building will house classrooms and a state-of-the-art MI-17 training simulator used to train Iraqi helicopter pilots.

Included in the ceremony was a signing activity to formally turn over the buildings to the Iraqi Army Aviation Command. Participating in the signing activity was Brig. Gen. Anthony J. Rock, director, Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission – Air Force, USF-I, U.S. Central Command, and commander, 321st Air Expeditionary Wing, Baghdad; Brig. Gen. Nadhom Laffta Zabon, deputy commander, Iraqi Army Aviation Command; and Hider Al-



U.S. and Iraqi service members join in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new maintenance facility and squadron operations building.





Hypnotist **Chuck Milligan** addresses his audience with a chuckle as his hypnotized volunteers topple over like a row of dominoes in a relaxed, hypnotized state during a performance at the North Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Jan. 17. Milligan's performance lasted nearly two hours and kept the audience engaged with laughter and role-play. The performance tour across Iraq is Milligan's third since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "It is all about the audience," said Milligan. "The more engaged they are, the more fun they are having—the better the performance is." (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Strayer)



A **U.S. Soldier** assigned to 4th "Black Jack" Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, shows how to adjust sights on the M16A2 Rifle to **Iraqi soldiers** assigned to the 7th Iraqi Army Division at Camp Al Asad, Iraq, Jan. 4. The 7th IAD conducted soldier familiarization training with the assistance of 4-10 CAV in support of Operation New Dawn. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Gary Silverman)

Below: **Chap. (Maj) Wayne Mays**, a Houston native with the 36th Infantry Division, prays with **Spc. Elizabeth Downs**, who was recovering from injuries at an Army military treatment facility in Basra, Jan. 4. Downs, a gunner with the 422nd Military Police Company out of Bakersfield, Ca., sustained the injuries during an improvised explosive device attack in Basra, Jan. 3. The Fresno, Ca., native was presented with the Purple Heart Medal by Maj. Gen. Eddy M. Spurgin, commanding general for the United States Division-South and 36th ID. (Photo by Sgt. Raymond T. Quintanilla)



Above: A **Hamdiah area Iraqi police officer** and **2nd Lt. Wendel Friedl**, with the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, unload bags of rice and lentils, Jan. 8, during a humanitarian assistance mission to Hamdiah, Iraq. Food, blankets, cooking oil, space heaters and stuffed animals were distributed to displaced Iraqi families who now reside in Hamdiah and to the family members of fallen Iraqi police officers. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



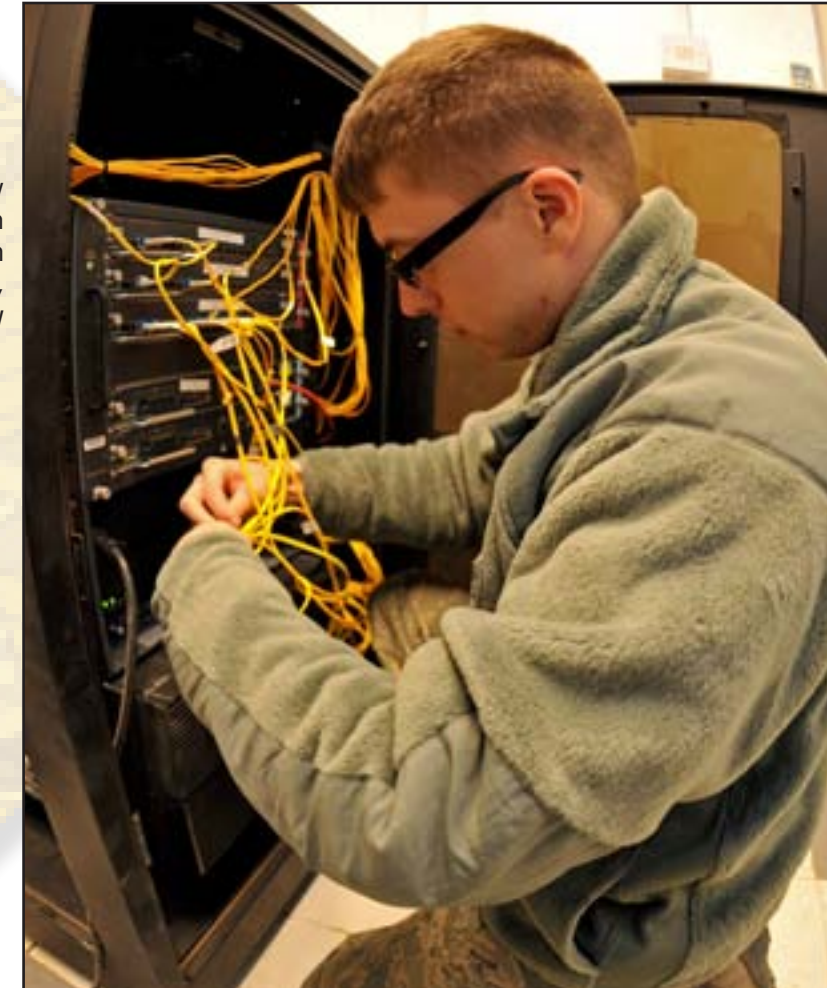
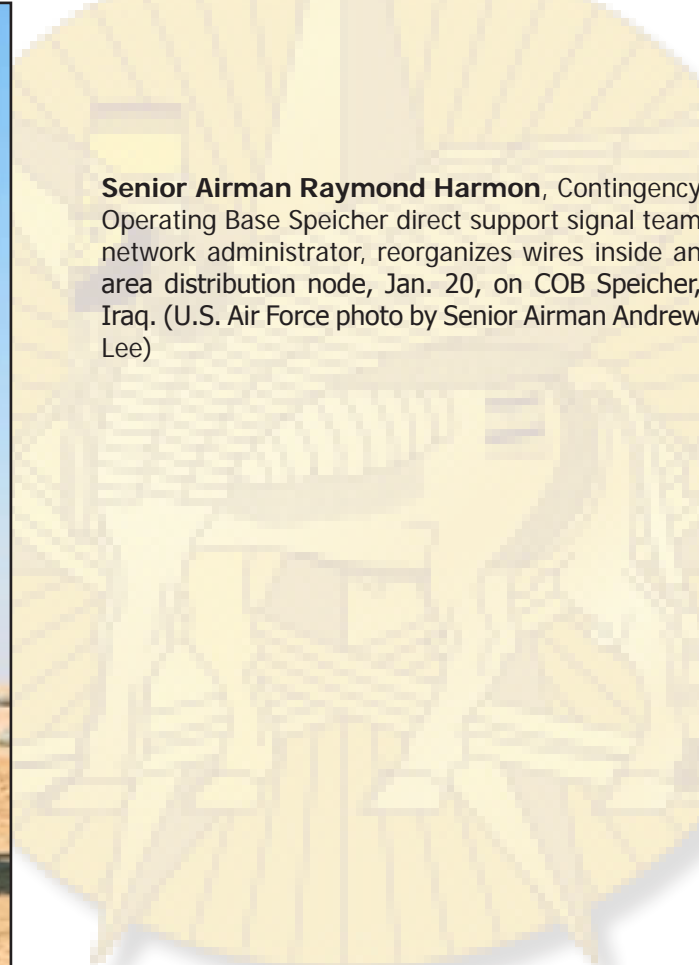
**Spc. Jose Martinez** motivates and instructs an Iraqi army soldier during a grenade range obstacle course. A cavalry scout from Temecula, Calif., Martinez is assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. His squadron is currently tasked with creating an all-encompassing Iraqi training course. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Johnson)



**U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Hjuler**, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, USD-C, teaches an Iraqi army counterpart how to align the sights on an Iraqi 60 mm mortar system, Jan. 17, during a training exercise at Camp Mejid. Iraqi army soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 28th IA Brigade, 7th IA Div. are honing basic soldier skills during an ongoing training mission at Al Asad, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



**Senior Airman Raymond Harmon**, Contingency Operating Base Speicher direct support signal team network administrator, reorganizes wires inside an area distribution node, Jan. 20, on COB Speicher, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Andrew Lee)



**Air Force Capt. David Ritter**, a cyber officer with the Air Component Coordination Element – Iraq, USF-I, and a Red Wing, Minn., native, shows off dance moves, Jan. 22, for a Cincinnati Bengals cheerleader before a crowd of troops at Camp Liberty, Iraq. The cheerleaders performed for the troops and brought them on stage to participate in various events. (U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Daniel Eddy)





**Sen. Carl Levin** speaks with Michigan National Guard Black Hawk helicopter crew members from B Company, 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, during a trip to Iraq, Jan. 19. The crews flew Levin and two other congressmen to Baghdad International Airport, where they shut down for a few moments to talk with the senator before he continued his trip. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Roland Hale)



**Capt. Amy Rezak**, a surgeon with the 402nd Forward Surgical Team, 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, USD-C, teaches radiology and ultrasounds, Jan. 27, during a two-day trauma care training course at Camp Ali, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Tanya Thomas)



**An Iraqi soldier** of 3rd Battalion, 21st Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, raises **Spc. Justin Inman**, team leader, Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, during a pre-graduation celebration at Kirkush Military Training Base, Jan. 27. Company A Soldiers advised and assisted Iraqi soldiers during 25 days of training at KMTB, part of an Iraqi directive to modernize Iraq's Army into a self-sustaining warfighting force capable of providing stability and security to Iraq after the departure of U.S. forces at the conclusion of Operation New Dawn. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Coltin Heller)



# U.S., IRAQI ARMY SOLDIERS CONDUCT LIVE-FIRE EXERCISE AT IRAQI BASE

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Coltin Heller  
USD-N Public Affairs

**Staff Sgt. Nicholas Cademartori**, a native of Hanover, Mass., and first squad leader assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, instructs Iraqi soldiers with 1st Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, to lock and clear their weapons after reaching the limit of advance during a squad live-fire exercise at Kirkush Military Training Base, Jan. 16. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Coltin Heller)

**KIRKUSH MILITARY TRAINING BASE, Iraq** – The rain fell steadily as squads of Iraqi soldiers from 1st Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, conducted a training exercise at Kirkush Military Training Base, Jan 16.

The live-fire exercise took place after two weeks of training during a 25-day rotation of Tadreeb Al Shamil, Arabic for all-inclusive training, at KMTB, where Iraqi soldiers developed multiple infantry squad-level techniques and battle drills.

“This was a culmination event using squad movement and squad react-to-contact techniques,” said Sgt. 1st Class Franklyn Rosario, platoon sergeant, Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment., 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. “We oversee squad training and train the Iraqi leadership to be more involved.”

Soldiers of Company A instructed Iraqi soldiers on several basic individual and collective infantry skills and tasks prior to the squad live-fire exercise.

“We are teaching them formations and techniques we use, then how to adapt it to their own (techniques, tactics and procedures),” said Rosario, who hails from

Providence, RI.

U.S. Division-North Soldiers taught Iraqi units squad movement techniques, how to perform direct and suppressive fire and how squad elements maneuver under fire.

“It’s all put together out here,” said Sgt. Travis Herman, an instructor and team leader assigned to Company A.

“The training starts with dry runs for familiarization, and then moves on to live-fire,” he said.

Squads from the company began each exercise in wedge formation, their feet squelching as the unit moved forward. Simulated enemy machine gun fire signaled the Iraqi squads to react to contact. Without hesitation, the Iraqi soldiers found cover and concealment, or dropped prone in the muck.

Under direction of the squad leader, the lead team provided suppressive fire as a supporting team flanked the objective. Once both teams established their positions, they bounded through the objective neutralizing the opposition forces.

In addition to movement and fire techniques, Iraqi soldiers learned to effectively communicate as teams

and squads. The units coordinated their actions using verbal commands, hand and arms signals and throwing brightly colored flags.

“Communication between units is vital at all levels,” said Rosario. “Nothing gets done without talking. We stressed its importance with each aspect of the training.”

In addition to fire and movement techniques, the 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., “Gator,” Soldiers stressed the leadership of noncommissioned officers, facilitating the IA soldiers’ understanding of the role and command of an NCO within the squad.

“We showed the NCOs how to take charge and plan a mission,” said 1st Lt. Philip Kautz, a native of Melbeta, Neb., and platoon leader assigned to Company A, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt. “After we did that, we stepped back and let them run the training.”

U.S. Soldiers operated in an advise and assist capacity, monitoring range safety while letting the Iraqi NCOs conduct the actual training.

“This training is very good for the soldiers,” said 2nd Lt. Mahmoud, platoon leader, 4th Company, 4th Bn., 21st Bde. “Thanks to our friends, the U.S. Soldiers, we are all learning valuable skills.”

The exercise provided Iraqi soldiers crucial skills, improving their capabilities overall, said Mahmoud.

Kautz, who works closely with Iraqi units at KMTB, said the Iraqi soldiers of 4th Bn., 5th IA Div., impressed him compared to other units that have come through the training site.

“They had more of an individual mindset at first,” said Kautz. “This training fostered esprit de corps and a team concept.”

Despite the rain, driving wind and at times ankle deep mud, the Iraqi soldiers maintained discipline and a positive attitude.

“Morale was higher than expected,” said Rosario, with his boots caked in mud. “This is good training as (the Iraqis) must be prepared to operate and adapt in any condition.”

“Gator” Soldiers instructed the Iraqi soldiers to take this training at KTMB back to their units to maintain the standard and continue to improve.

Rosario said he is confident in the skills of Iraqi units trained at KMTB to provide external security for Iraq.

“Good progress was made here to ensure they can protect their country and themselves,” he said.



# Fort Bragg's Sky Dragons return to Iraq for third rotation

Story by Sgt. Joseph Vine  
USF-I Public Affairs

The XVIII Airborne Corps, from Fort Bragg, N.C., become the core component of United States Forces – Iraq and took control of day-to-day operations from III Corps, of Fort Hood, Texas, in a transfer of authority ceremony in the Al Faw Palace, Feb. 8.

As Fort Bragg's Sky Dragons begin their deployment, Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, USF-I deputy commanding general for operations, and XVIII Airborne Corps commanding general, said they are ready to join the USF-I team and accomplish the mission before them.

"During this next year, we will partner with the Iraqi security forces to ensure we continue to build the capacity, credibility and professional

character of the Iraqi security forces," Helmick said, "so that they remain the standard by which soldiers and police are measured throughout the region.

"The Iraqi security forces will continue to strengthen as they mature their planning, training, intelligence and logistical capabilities," he said.

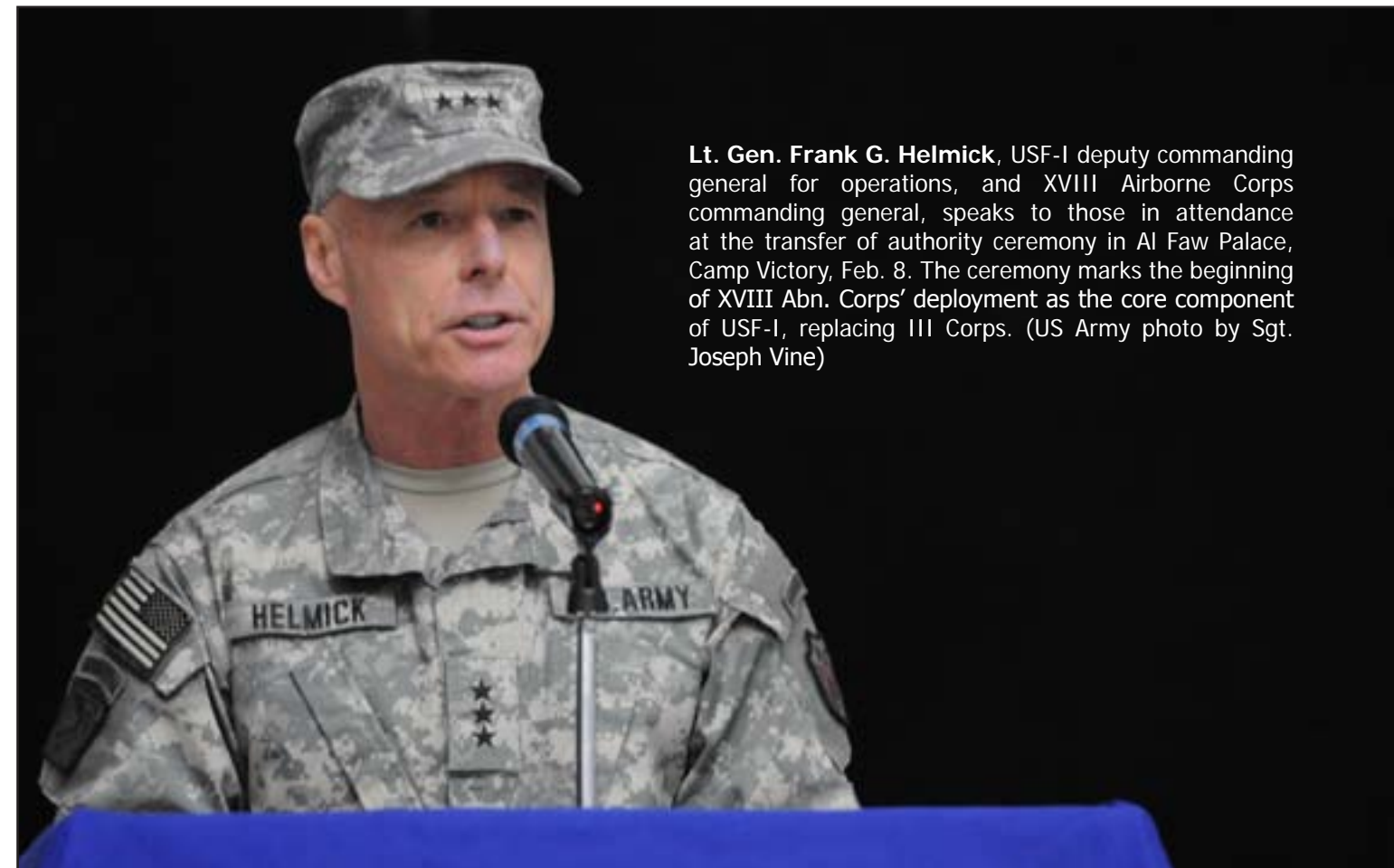
Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USF-I commanding general, said that Helmick, Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice, the senior enlisted advisor to USF-I deputy commanding general for operations and XVIII Abn. Corps, and the Sky Dragon Soldiers will have their work cut out for them as they bring closure to a decade-long war and continue to advise, assist and train Iraqi forces for the coming



months.

"Our time is limited, our work is demanding, and our troops are still very much engaged in the mission," said Austin, "and as we continue to strengthen the Iraqi security forces, we must also closely partner with the embassy as we transform our mission over the next several months.

"The XVIII Airborne Corps is joining our team at an extremely



Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, USF-I deputy commanding general for operations, and XVIII Airborne Corps commanding general, speaks to those in attendance at the transfer of authority ceremony in Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Feb. 8. The ceremony marks the beginning of XVIII Abn. Corps' deployment as the core component of USF-I, replacing III Corps. (US Army photo by Sgt. Joseph Vine)

important time in Iraq's history," he said. "What you do over the next several months will have an enormous impact on Iraq and the region for years to come."

During the ceremony, Helmick also addressed Iraqi leaders, reassuring them the United States' commitment to the Iraqi people will continue and will not falter.

"This is a historic time in Iraq," said Helmick. "I want to thank the Iraqi leaders for your continued commitment; that security of the

Iraqi people and our security remains a top priority, and for your dedication to support Iraq's continued development as a sovereign, stable and reliable partner with the United States.

"I look forward to continuing the personal relationships with my Iraqi brothers that we have developed over the years," he said. "My commitment to all of you is that we will do our very best to make a difference for this great country as we move through 2011.



Lt. Gen. Bob Cone, III Corps commanding general, and outgoing USF-I deputy commanding general for operations, thanked those under his command for a job well-done and bid farewell during the transfer of authority ceremony held in Al Faw palace, Feb. 8. (U.S. Army photo by Lee Craker)



Gen. Lloyd T. Austin III, commanding general, United States Forces – Iraq, speaks to attendees during the transfer of authority ceremony in Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Feb. 8. The ceremony marks the beginning of XVIII Abn. Corps' replacement of III Corps as the core component of USF-I. (US Army photo by Sgt. Joseph Vine)



(US Army photo by Sgt. Joseph Vine)



# Explosive ordnance brigade takes historic step for Navy



Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Edward Daileg  
USF-I Public Affairs

Navy Capt. Edward W. Eidson, commander of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1, salutes as he exits the transfer of authority ceremony. Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1 is the first Navy component to command Task Force Troy.

**A**n explosive ordnance brigade made history by becoming the first Navy component to take command of Joint Task Force Troy, Jan. 14.

During a transfer of authority ceremony at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, the San Diego based Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1 assumed command and control of Task Force Troy from the 111th Ordnance Group.

Colonel Jose R. Atencio, commander of the 111th Ord. Grp., described the hand over between both units as “very smooth” because of the similar training and work ethics of EOD units throughout the armed forces.

“When they came in they understood the mission, and we understood what we needed to give them to have a smooth transition,” said Atencio.

During his speech, Navy Capt. Edward W. Eidson, commander of EODGRU-1 applauded the efforts of the 111th Ord. Grp. for its preparation of the turnover and its hospitality upon EODGRU-1’s arrival.

EODGRU-1 will command the joint task force that specializes in counterimprovised explosive device operations to assist the Iraqi government in eliminating IED threats across the country. Its operations include C-IED training, conducting weapons technical intelligence collections and exploitations to eliminate IED

networks.

Eidson said he looks forward to keep the ongoing mission that previous units of Task Force Troy established.

“Our mission is to continue and improve what is already in place,” said Eidson. “Our job here is to develop the Iraqi’s ability to counter IEDs, to ensure they are able to maintain a secure and forces depart,” he said.

Eidson also said the joint task force plays a key role in providing force protection for all service members in the Iraq joint operations area.

“We are assisting the Iraqis in fighting an insurgency in which U.S. forces are the primary targets. As the task force that provides EOD capabilities, we are the first line of defense against the enemy’s weapon of choice,” said Eidson.

“As we proceed through Operation New Dawn, risk throughout our forces remain and we must ensure we posture the Iraqis to be successful in their continued fight against terrorists,” he said.

Eidson concluded by telling the crowd how grateful he is to be part of TF Troy.

“It is honor and privilege to be afforded the opportunity to command such an exceptional and diverse organization as Combined Joint Task Force Troy,” he said.



# IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND  
JANUARY 31, 2011 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION NEW DAWN

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

*JOHN 15:13*

**January 2**

***Sgt. Jose M. Cintron Rosado, 38***  
***Spc. Jose A. Delgado Arroyo, 41***

**January 15**

***Sgt. Michael P. Bartley, 23***  
***Spc. Martin J. Lamar, 43***  
***Spc. Jose A. Torre, Jr., 21***

**January 17**

***Maj. Michael S. Evarts, 41***



**An Iraqi soldier** with 2nd Battalion, 28th Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division waves a flag to indicate successful completion of a mission, Jan. 24, during the final exercise of a month-long familiarization training course facilitated by Soldiers with 4th Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, USD-C at Al Asad, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Danielle Hendrix)

