



The Mountain View

www.taskforcemountain.com

January 9, 2009



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

A parade of IPs march during the Babil PIC Ceremony in al-Hillah Oct. 23. This hand-over of authority has been a gradual process throughout MND-C and continues to move forward.

SPC. JUSTIN SNYDER
MND-C



BAGHDAD - Over the next three years, Coalition forces will continue to work with the Iraqi Army and Police to help set conditions for the Dec. 31, 2011 deadline for removal of U.S. forces from Iraq.

The Strategic Framework Agreement and the Security Agreement build on the gains made in the last year and help define the rules for U.S. forces' presence in Iraq during the remaining time here.

"These deadlines and the agreement are a very good thing for the Iraqis," said Maj. Scott Cline, Multi-National Division - Center strategic plans officer. "It allows them to have a sense of accomplishment, and it allows us to

continue to help make them better."

The hand-over is a gradual process, which began in November 2008.

"The first step was the PIC (Provincial Iraqi Control) transfers," said Cline, a native of Spartanburg, S.C., referring to the official assumption of responsibility for security in various provinces by the Government of Iraq.

"Those were big steps for the Iraqi people, but it was all part of the plan. Eventually, when their strength reaches a pinnacle, they will take over everything.

"(The Iraqi Security Forces) have demonstrated (their skills) by leading missions," added Cline. "The more they learn, the better they get."

British troops in Basra have also been working with the Iraqi Army and believe the Iraqi Security Forces are

making huge strides.

So much progress has been made that British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced in early December that British forces in Basra will wrap up their mission in Iraq in May, returning all troops to Britain by the end of July.

Also heading home in the near future are forces from El Salvador, Bosnia and Romania.

Each of these countries established goals for their membership in the Coalition and committed to the mission until their goals were achieved. For the British, it meant partnering with Iraqi Army forces and training them to meet a pre-determined level of proficiency.

"We came over here with certain goals to meet, and once they were met,

See PROGRESS, page 3

63rd Ordnance looks to a safer future in Iraq

SGT. DAVID TURNER
MND-C



CAMP VICTORY – The unofficial motto for Soldiers who work in explosive ordnance disposal is “Initial success or total failure.”

After all, they are the ones tasked with destroying explosives and defeating improvised explosive devices before they have the chance to kill. In their mission in Iraq so far, Soldiers of the 63rd Ordnance Battalion have seen not only initial success; they have seen the area south of Baghdad become safer and the Iraqi Security Forces partnering with them become better at destroying the threat of IEDs.

With IED attacks declining in the past year, Soldiers of the 63rd, who head Task Force Troy, have shifted their focus to training the ISF in explosive ordnance disposal in Multi-National Division – Center.

“We have a direct relationship (with the Iraqi Army bomb disposal companies); we have a team assigned as their full-time mission to be a partner of the 8th Iraqi Army Division’s bomb disposal company, setting up training, evaluating where they are stand, and doing continual training with them to bring their skills up to the point where we think they can handle the battle space entirely on their own,” said Lt. Col. Marty Muchow, commander of TF Troy.

In training the IA’s bomb disposal units, TF Troy Soldiers bring both expertise and high technology to the fight, including the newest generation of EOD robots and specialized vehicles. Much of the IA’s bomb disposal expertise was lost with the disbanding of the



Photo by Spc. Tiffany Evans

Members of the 63rd Ordnance Battalion pose next to a Joint EOD Rapid Response Vehicle at Camp Victory Jan. 3. JERRVs are the newest generation of vehicles designed to help defeat IEDs.

army in 2003, but Muchow said more IA Soldiers are now being certified in the demanding job. That is important, he said, because there are still more threats than just IEDs for the IA to handle in the future.

“There is a huge land mine issue between the Iraq and Iranian border,” he said, referring to the remaining unexploded ordnance left over from Iraq’s 8-year war with Iran.

“That has been worked on in the past by non-governmental organizations, but just recently, within the last couple of weeks, the Iraqi government decided to no longer support the NGO contracts because they want Iraqi Security Forces to start de-mining their own areas.”

Muchow said he hopes his IA part-

ners will be able to keep their focus on defeating IEDs. Although attacks have diminished overall, he said, bomb-makers have become more sophisticated.

“For a while, they were pretty well supplied with (explosively formed penetrators), but over the last three months, that supply has dwindled,” said Muchow. Recently, he said, caches including thousands of plates for making EFPs have been captured by the IA and Coalition forces.

“There are fewer IEDs on the battlefield right now, but the ones that are out there have been more lethal.”

Despite more sophisticated and

See EOD, page 3

THE Mountain View

The Mountain View is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of The Mountain View are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 10th Mountain Division. All editorial content of The Mountain View is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Task Force Mountain Public Affairs Office.

TASK FORCE MOUNTAIN PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Commanding General - MAJ. GEN. MICHAEL L. OATES

Command Sergeant Major - COMMAND SGT. MAJ. JAMES W. REDMORE

Editorial Staff

TF Mountain PAO — Lt. Col. Paul Swiergosz
OIC, Command Information — 1st Lt. Julie Glaubach
NCOIC — Master Sgt. Stephen Opet
Managing Editor — Staff Sgt. Amber Emery
Assignment Editor — Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret
Copy Editor — Spc. Josh LeCappelain
Editors/Design — Spc. Sophia Lopez,
Spc. Justin Snyder
Staff Writers — Spc. Tiffany Evans, Sgt. David Turner

Contributing Units

172nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team
2nd BCT, 4th Infantry Division
4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division
7th Sustainment Brigade
41st Fires Brigade
354th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
793rd Military Police Battalion
Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mtn. Div.
Task Force 449

Media queries please contact TF Mountain Public Affairs at MND-Center_PAO@iraq.centcom.mil



Photo by Sgt. Rodney Foliente

The Polish honor guard stands ready during the Polish end-of-mission ceremony at Camp Echo Oct. 4. Coalition forces have been gradually completing their mission and handing over battle space to either the IA or other members of the Coalition.

PROGRESS

From page 1

we would leave,” said Major Chris Hall, British liaison officer for Multi-National Division – South East. “We had to ensure that the Iraqi Army could conduct their own conventional operations; and lastly, we had to hand back the Basra Airport.”

Coalition forces officially transferred authority of the Basra Airport to the Iraqis in a ceremony Jan. 2. Hall believes the hand-over is a symbol that the Iraqi’s are almost ready.

“Iraq has always had control of the airspace, but now they physically are in control of the airport rather than us,” said Hall, a native of Plymouth, in southwest England. “Things have been changing for months now, but the airport is something that can be seen from the naked eye.

“It’s a large establishment, and I think giving it back to them shows how far they really have come. From a U.K. perspective, they are where they need to be, and we are confident we have done all that we can. As we leave, the U.S. will continue to get them to the point where they can do everything on their own,” added Hall.

There are a few more stops on that road to independence. One of the major projects is building the Iraqi Police.

“One of the things we are going to keep doing is to gradually move the Iraqi Army out of the large cities and move the Iraqi Police in,” said Cline. “The violence has been brought down to a level where we can do that and let the Army focus (outside of the cities).

“However, we know that anything could happen in the blink of an eye. That’s why we can’t just get up and leave,” he added.

To cover the ground that will be left vacant by the British departure, MND-C headquarters anticipates moving to Basra. Throughout the process, the ISF continue to increase their capabilities and rely on Coalition forces less and less.

“The Iraqi people are...excited for their future,” said Cline. “Though, they understand fully that they need us to finish what we started. In the end, we just want to do what’s best for their country.”

Hall echoed Cline’s thoughts and believes the Iraqi people and government are in the driver’s seat.

“We know they are ready; the new Security Agreement showed us that,” said Hall. “The most important thing about that is they are the ones pushing the process, as opposed to where the U.S. used to be in the lead. I’m confident that Iraq will be a very strong country for a long time to come.”

EOD

From previous page

deadlier IEDs, the Soldiers of TF Troy have maintained a good safety record so far. That’s partly due to the new generation of armored vehicles, such as the Cougar and JERRV, the Joint EOD Rapid Response Vehicle. TF Troy Soldiers have sustained four IED strikes in JERRVs with no serious injuries. Since they took over the area in May, they

have found and destroyed 173 IEDs.

As the 63rd Ordnance Battalion Soldiers look ahead to their return to Fort Drum with the rest of the 10th Mountain Division, they hope to take some of the lessons learned with them for the future. Barely a year before this tour in Iraq, they were coming home from Afghanistan. In the meantime, they are constantly sharing the newest information they gather on IED tactics to help Soldiers overseas and those getting

ready to deploy.

“We share (information) between the two theaters, but it also goes back to the (Combat Training Centers) and training sites, back into our EOD training, and not only just for EOD,” said TF Troy Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Cushing. As combat brigades prepare for deployments, they will learn from TF Troy’s experiences and lessons learned, he said. “They’re getting the latest and greatest of the trends and analysis.”

**Looking for back issues you might have missed?
Here are two easy ways to retrieve them.**

~NIPR~

Visit: www.taskforcemountain.com
Click on “The Mountain View” icon on the right-hand column, then click on: “View more Mountain View Newsletters”

~SIPR~

Visit the TF Mountain portal:
<http://mountainportal.main.10mtn.army.smil.mil>
Hover over “News Links” bar and click on “The Mountain View”



Staff Section Round-up

Inspector General Corner: “Got Gloves?”

I guess it was the day a noncommissioned officer saluted me with one hand in her pocket I started to pay attention. I ask myself, “Am I correcting an NCO who is correcting the privates?”

Back in the day, when the only cold weather gear we were issued was a field jacket, gloves were required with wear of the jacket.

It has been cold the last few days, but it certainly hasn't been Fort Drum cold. Now, here's what I have trouble with, if it is cold enough the black or green fleece jacket is worn,

why wouldn't Soldiers think they need gloves? I've seen Soldiers going to physical training in a jacket, long pants and no hat or gloves... that's never made much sense to me. Therefore, their only option is to walk around with hands in sleeves and face as far down in the collar of the jacket as they can go – looking much like our Rakkasan turtles.

Army Regulation 670-1, Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms states, “While in uniform, personnel will not place their hands in

their pockets, except momentarily to place or retrieve objects. Soldiers will keep uniforms buttoned, zipped and snapped.” It is our responsibility to ensure we are enforcing the standards.

If you are guilty of hands in pockets of the black or green fleece jacket, PT jacket, PT pants or even Army Combat Uniform pants pockets while out walking around, I hope this friendly reminder helps.

Thanks,
Your IG Team



Earn college credits while deployed

Seminars will be offered in the G-3 conference room:

Terrorism in the Middle East

Jan. 12-19 from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Jan. 20-27 from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.



If you are interested in attending college classes through Central Texas College, please contact Chief Warrant Officer Robert Meeks by email at robert.meeks@iraq.centcom.mil or call (SVOIP) 674-2027.



The Mountain View staff is eager to please our readers – that's you! Now, all we need is your input in order to make this the most informative and entertaining electronic newsletter hitting your inboxes.

Would movie reviews or more sports commentaries pique your interest? Do you need information about Family Readiness resources or career planning both within and after your military service?

Do you like pictures, puzzles...pretty people?

Please, send us your ideas, and we'll do our best to continue improving our publication to meet your needs.

Contact:

MSG Stephen Opet:
Stephen.opet@iraq.centcom.mil

SPC Sophia Lopez:
Sophia.lopez@iraq.centcom.mil



Headline Round-up

U.S. News:

The soaring level of violence in Mexico resulting from the drug wars there has led the United States to develop plans for a “surge” of civilian and perhaps even military law enforcement should the bloodshed spread across the border, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said Wednesday. Mr. Chertoff said the criminal activity in Mexico, which has caused more than 5,300 deaths in the last year, had long troubled American authorities. But it reached a point last summer, he said, where he ordered specific plans to confront in this country the kind of shootouts and other mayhem that in Mexico have killed members of warring drug cartels, law enforcement officials and bystanders, often not far from the border.

Sports News:

On Jan. 7, the Dallas Cowboys sent troubled cornerback Adam “Pacman” Jones on his way ending a season marred by controversy, injuries and a six-game suspension. Trouble seemed to follow him to Dallas, especially after NFL commissioner Roger Goodell suspended him following an alcohol-related incident with one of his bodyguards at a Dallas hotel.

Entertainment:

Grammy-winning rapper Ludacris and platinum-selling artist Jesse McCartney collaborated on the remix of McCartney’s single “How Do You Sleep?” People.com has a sampling of the track which describes the struggles faced a year after the split from first love.

Odd News:

A New York doctor either wants \$1.5 million from his estranged wife or his kidney back after she cheated on him with a physical therapist. In 2001, Richard Batista, 49, gave the gift of life to his wife; but in 2003, Dawnell Batista had an affair with her therapist whom she was seeing to help recover from a knee injury due to Karate.

Quote of the Day

“Whether sixty or sixteen, there is in every human being’s heart the lure of wonder, the unfailing child-like appetite of what’s next, and the joy of the game of living.” – Samuel Ullman

S	1			2			3		6
u	9					7	4	2	
d		7							1
o						4	5		7
k		1			9		6		
u	2	4	5			8			
		5	8	7	3	2			
		6						3	
				9					4

For the answer to today’s puzzle, go to:



www.taskforcemountain.com

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH YOUR TAX RETURN?



Photo by Spc. Tiffany Evans

“I am going to buy a ‘91 Chevy 1500, which will cost \$3,000, and the money left over I will use on a big TV,” said Sgt. Shawn Acker, of Brandon, Miss., Multi-National Division-Center information operations noncommissioned officer.



Photo by Spc. Tiffany Evans

“I am going to buy a new digital camera,” said Sgt. Daniel West, of Missoula, Mont., 41st Fires Brigade public affairs noncommissioned officer.