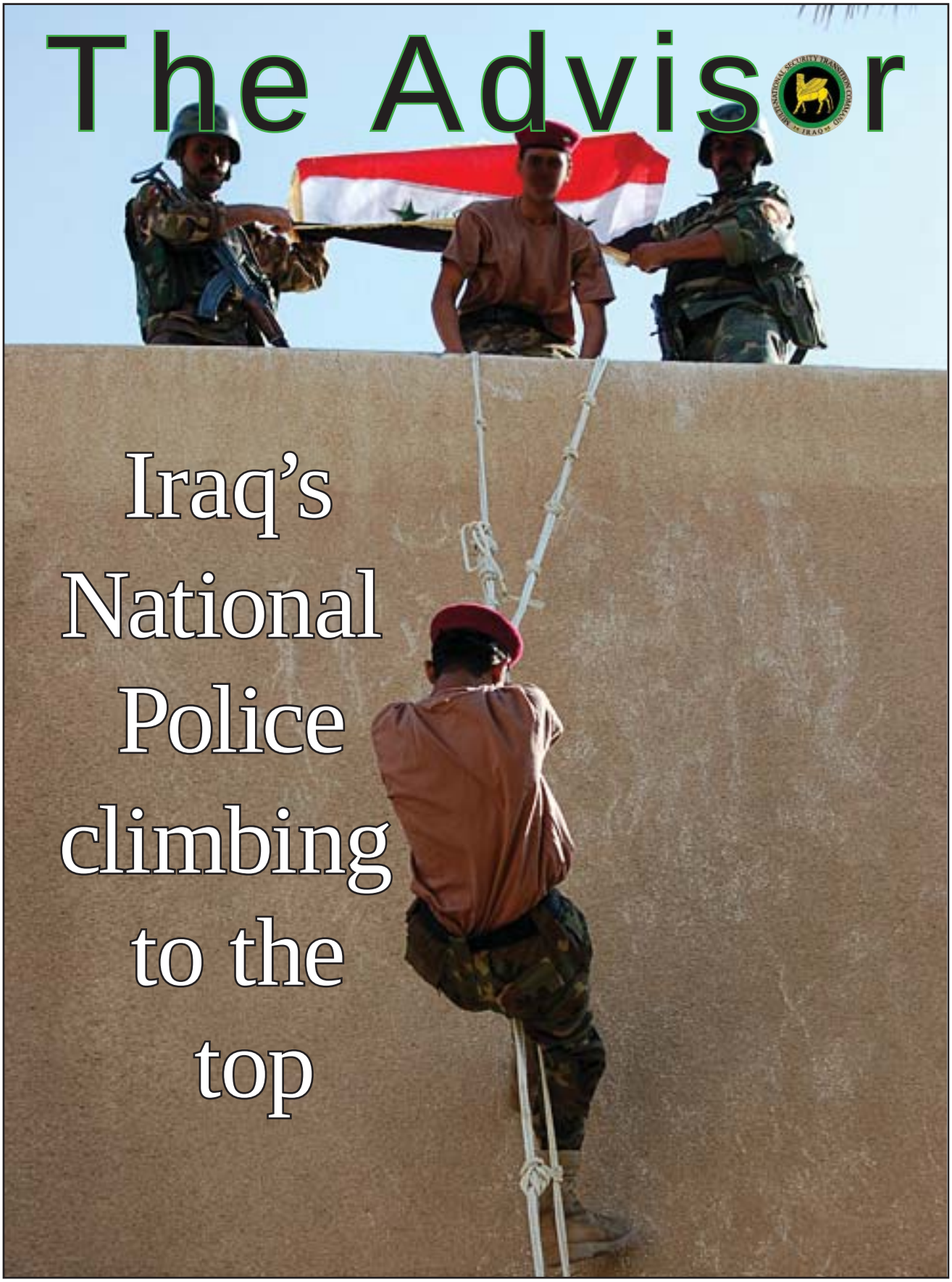
The Advisor



Iraq's National Police climbing to the top

Official Weekly Report for the Multi-National Security Transition Command — Iraq

THE ADVISOR

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Some faces of Iraqi soldiers and police have been altered to protect their identities.

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ON THE COVER

An Iraqi National Police officer repelles down a wall while three other officers cheer him on during a "Quick Look" inspection in Karada Aug. 16.

Photo by Ann Bertucci

Violence decreasing in Iraq

American Forces Press Service
Washington Office

WASHINGTON — Violence in Baghdad has decreased over the past five weeks, and the Iraqi government is committed to reconciliation, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Iraq's Deputy President Adil al-Mahdi said in Washington Aug. 25.

Following a meeting at the Pentagon, Rumsfeld and al-Mahdi spoke about progress in Iraq with reporters. The secretary praised the work of Iraqi Security Forces, which he said now number more than 267,000. He said there has been a reduction in the levels of violence and in the numbers of attacks, particularly in areas Coalition and Iraqi forces have been able to clear.

While Coalition and Iraqi forces together have made progress in reducing violence in Baghdad, Rumsfeld stressed that the Iraqi people and their government hold the key to long-term stability and security.

"The important thing is for the Iraqi government to achieve success with respect to their reconciliation process," he said. "This is not purely a military problem, and it is not going to be solved purely by military forces."

Rumsfeld said the Iraqi government is committed to achieving reconciliation among various groups.

"Admittedly, it is a lot easier to talk about it than to do it," he said. "It's been done in other countries. I believe it can be achieved here. They're going to have to work very hard on it, and it's going to take some time, but it is a process, not an event."

Al-Mahdi said the process is taking place. The national unity government of Iraq has both a working reconciliation plan and a good plan to secure Baghdad, two steps that counter those who would push Iraq toward a civil war, he said.

Photo by R. D. Ward

U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, escorts Iraqi Deputy President Adil Abd al-Mahdi past an an honor guard at the Pentagon in Washington Aug. 25.

"At least 20 of the groups are dialoguing now with the government," he said. "We have to see the results. We have to see the impact of this. We are optimistic."

The Iraqi government is open to proposals from those willing to put their arms aside and find a solution, al-Mahdi said, but government forces will continue to put pressure on insurgents and terrorists.

"The government is stronger than ever," he said. "Our armed forces are getting much better than before in number, in quality, in operations. They are leading operations now."

Al-Mahdi said 70 percent of Iraq is now stable and secure, which makes the Iraqi people "fully optimistic" about their future.

"The Iraqi people think that there is no other issue but victory in Iraq," he said. "The Iraqi people can't leave the country. There is no withdrawal for the Iraqi people. The MNF (Multi-National Force) are supporting Iraqi people and will continue to support and have the sympathy of Iraqis."

> *"The Iraqi people think that there is no other issue but victory in Iraq. The Iraqi people can't leave the country. There is no withdrawal for the Iraqi people."*
>
> **Adi Abd al-Mahdi**
> **Iraq Deputy President**

National Police unveil “Quick Look” plan

By Ann Bertucci
CPATT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, **Iraq** — As the country of Iraq moves from military security to civil security and self-reliance, the National Police will provide a para-military presence skilled in bridging the gap between the military and police services. The use of para-military forces is common to many countries. Known in France as Gendarmerie and in Italy as Caribinieri, these forces have been widely used in peacekeeping operations throughout the world. These types of forces were used in Haiti during the rebellion of 2004 when brutal armed gangs took over much of the country.

Iraq’s National Police play an important role in re-establishing law and order in areas of conflict, a task well suited to their purpose, training and capabilities. To ensure that the National Police are well prepared for the transition, the Iraqi Minister of Interior launched the National Police Transformation Plan.

The three-phased transformation plan is designed to shape the National Police into a para-military force capable of maintaining public order and providing civil protection to citizens in accordance with the rule of law and international standards of human rights.

Referred to as “Quick Look,” the first phase of the transformation plan involves unit inspections and leader assessments. Quick Look provides an opportunity for units to take an operational pause to focus on fundamentals of good order, discipline and basic police skills.

Iraqi-led teams consisting of Ministry of Interior and Coalition technical experts conduct inspections and assess a wide array of issues including personnel, accountability, equipment readiness, detainee control procedures, battalion facilities, overall unit discipline and current combat capabilities as well as physical fitness and vehicle maintenance.

Important aspects of “Quick Look” include a command climate survey and key leader assessment processes. Leader assessments evaluate performance and competence of battalion and brigade commanders while the surveys provide a view of the overall perception of unit readiness. Results of the assessments are ultimately provided to the Minister of Interior for review and action.

U.S. Army Col. Jim Bartran, deputy commander of MNSTC - I’s Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, has accompanied assessment teams to several of the unit inspections. “Every unit is different,” he says, “but overall, the leaders I’ve met are patriots for the country of Iraq and dedicated to improving readiness and reputations of their command.”

As part of the inspection and assessment process, the Ministry of Interior’s oath of office is administered to National Police personnel during which they pledge their allegiance to the country of Iraq and its constitution.

Bartran points to the importance of patience in the process of transforming the National Police. “If done properly, this plan will help develop a police force that will have an enduring and national level impact on Iraq’s ability to maintain a safe and secure environment,” he said.

Photo by Ann Bertucci

An Iraqi National Police officer leads a group of fellow officers in the Ministry of Interior’s oath of office during a “Quick Loook” inspection in Karada Aug. 16. During the oath the police pledge their allegiance to Iraq and its constitution.

The inspections are currently underway and will continue through Oct. 2006. According to Bartan, written summaries of each inspection will be completed by inspection teams. This process is expected to be completed by the end of September.

According to an announcement by Iraq’s Interior Minister Jawad al-Bulani, the National Police will be provided with new uniforms that are hard to imitate and all of the MOI vehicles will be painted with special features. The new uniform will replace the woodland green camouflage uniform currently being worn by most National Police personnel. The new uniform is a bluish-gray, digital pattern with the Iraqi flag embedded into the pattern making it very distinctive and difficult to duplicate.

In conjunction with the issuance of new uniforms, vehicles used by the National Police will be standardized in color schemes and marking systems. According to Bartan, these are important steps designed to improve the professional image of the National Police and deter anti-Iraqi forces from disguising themselves as police.

Bartan said that phase two of the plan provides a keystone opportunity to concentrate on training required to fulfill the vision of the National Police. Units will be taken out of counter insurgency operations, one brigade at a time, and will undergo a three-week training course focused on civil policing skills at both individual and small unit levels of training.

The third phase of the plan is an enduring professional development system and establishment of a National Police Training Center of Excellence. Although still in the development stages, the facility is designed to train and evaluate National Police battalions on combat skills as well as civil policing skills. The goal is that battalions will be recycled through the process on a regular basis in order to continually assess and recertify them in their mission essential tasks.

“The most exciting thing about this transformation plan is that it is truly an Iraqi-led endeavor,” Bartan said. “They *want* to do better.”

Iraqi soldiers get new stripes and brass

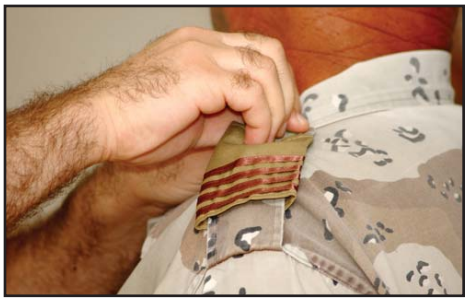
By U.S. Army
Sgt. 1st Class Rick Brown
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

KIRKUK, Iraq — Walk around without rank insignia and you automatically become the lowest rank – a Private, E-1 – or what some might call an "E-Nothing."

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division were, until recently, all E-Nothings. But with help from their U.S. counterparts from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division – in the form of logistical funding – these Iraqi soldiers are now sporting their proper rank insignia.

Soldiers from both sides participated in a special rank pinning ceremony Aug. 5 – Coalition Soldiers being the pin-ers and the Iraqi troops being the pin-ees – in which some soldiers were promoted, some merely received their current ranks and some received ranks that they lost with the fall of the former regime.

Iraqi Army 1st Lt. Wahil said it's a matter of pride to wear the proper rank in front of his soldiers. "I'm happy and I know that my soldiers can recognize me and each other by rank and that they can show the proper respect," he said through an interpreter. "Now, when an order is given, they know who is giving the order because of the rank."



An Iraqi soldier receives his Sergeant 1st Class stripes during a pinning ceremony Aug. 5 in Kirkuk. Every soldier of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division received their insignia, most for the first time since the fall of the former regime.

Photos by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Rick Brown

An Iraqi soldier receives his warrant officer rank insignia during a pinning ceremony Aug. 5 in Kirkuk. Every soldier of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division received their insignia, most for the first time since the fall of the former regime.

For Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia Vimoto, the command sergeant major for 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment of the 1st BCT, this was the first time he has pinned rank on an Iraqi soldier. He said pinning new rank on any soldier is a proud moment for him, but for this occasion – being asked to pin Iraqi NCO's – it means a little more.

"It's a way ahead…there's progress being made here for the (Iraqi) NCO corps," Vimoto said, "something we've been working on ever since we got here, trying to encourage an NCO corps, trying to build an NCO corps."

Vimoto said the newly pinned Iraqi NCO's now need to understand that there's so much more attached to their rank insignia. "Now what we've got to work on is not so much wearing the rank, but also holding the duties and responsibilities that come along with the rank," he said. "I think that's our biggest challenge."

Vimoto's counterpart, Sgt. Maj. Mohammed, the Iraqi 2nd Battalion sergeant major, said it's important for Iraqi citizens to understand the importance of this ceremony. "This is something important in the army, because they've got to know each other by their ranks," he said. "The soldiers now know the rank of each other and can show the proper respects and courtesies – it's a matter of pride for my soldiers."

Mohammed believes that the simple act of pinning the rank on his soldiers has made his battalion the best in the brigade. They walk taller now, he said, and when he looks at his soldiers, he knows if he's looking at a sergeant or a lieutenant.

With that, Wahil smiled and joked, "I want to go order someone to do something now and they can just look at my rank and know they have to do it."

Communication key to cohesive Iraqi military

By U.S. Air Force
Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

HABBANIYAH, Iraq — A key element in any strong organization is communication – even more so when that organization is the military that is defending and protecting the rights of its nation's citizens. Now with the vast progression in technology, computers are making communication a little bit easier.

With the help of Coalition funding, fifty-five Iraqi Armed Forces units at 24 different bases will be able to keep in constant communication with the Ministry of Defense.

The Iraqi Defense Network is the command and control and data communications network exclusive to the Iraqi Armed Forces. IDN allows the Iraqi Armed Forces to send secure data without going through a commercial internet provider, according to U.S. Air Force Capt. Karen Zoebisch, MNSTC-I Communications IDN program manager.

"This capability will give them their own private network," Zoebisch said. "The network is the Iraqi equivalent to the Non-secure Internet Protocol Router Network, or NIPRNet, on the U.S. military side. For the Iraqi military, this will be their first command and control data communication network."

Photos by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman

Two Iraqi contractors and U.S. Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jose Torres, MNSTC-I communications program manager, prepare to run cable lines through different offices in the building that will soon be the 1st Iraqi Army division. Habbaniyah is the 12th location for Iraqi Armed Forces to receive the Iraqi Defense Network.

An Iraqi soldier seals the trenches that contain the fiber optics of the IDN communication lines that were installed in Habbaniyah Aug 21.

Before the IDN was introduced, Iraqi military forces used generic methods to convey secure and non-secure material.

"They were using unprotected, commercial services to communicate," Zoebisch said. "They were using something like DSL or cable modem service – a commercially available internet link – to access a commercial account, and using that account to communicate."

According to Iraqi Army Capt. Alaa, 1st Iraqi Army Division communications officer, this limited the effectiveness of their communication.

"We were using yahoo web to get messages throughout our military," Alaa said with the help of an interpreter. "It was a lot slower and less secure."

Alaa said if they had to send something classified, that meant using very old methods. "We would use coded messages that consisted of letters and numbers," Alaa said.

"By using IDN we protect that stream of communications," Zoebisch said. "We put them behind that stream of firewall which prevents people from coming in."

The system will also include enterprise e-mail accounts and anti-virus protection for IDN users, bringing users away from using yahoo or hotmail for their official communications.

Currently, IDN is only available to division headquarters, service headquarters and select schools. Zoebisch said eventually, the plan is for IDN to be available throughout the entire army.

See MILITARY, Page 7

Iraqi brigade takes security control in two Baghdad areas

Photos by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Lucia Newman

Soldiers from the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division "capture insurgents" during a demonstration of their cordon and search skills during the division's transfer of authority ceremony in Mahmudiyah, Aug 14.

Mahmudiyah — In a transfer of authority ceremony, the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division took control of security operations in the Mahmudiyah and Lutufiyah areas of Baghdad Aug. 14.

This transition gives the brigade full responsibility to be in the forefront of security operations in the area, changing Coalition forces' position to a support role. The ceremony included a demonstration of the unit's ability to perform various tasks.

The brigade was established in April 2005. "In less then 16 months, they have demonstrated their strength and capability to take on this responsibility," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Eric Conrad, chief of the Military Transition Team advising the Iraqi brigade. "It's remarkable what they've been able to accomplish."

The brigade is considered to be a model for other Iraqi brigades to follow, being called the most developed units, according to Iraqi Army and Coalition leaders.

Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Kevin Lovel

An Iraqi policeman passes out copies of the "Baghdad Now" newspaper to children from the Ghazaliyah neighborhood of Baghdad Aug. 21 during a cordon and search operation conducted by Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces.

Push of a button: new technology brings Iraqi military together

From MILITARY, Page 5

"We've broken down our involvement into three phases," Zoebisch said. "These phases will determine what sites will receive IDN first. The plan has been to start the data communications flow at the top."

The first phase will be to install IDN at all division headquarters, select Regional Support Units, and service headquarters. The second phase will be to provide the service to the motorized transport regiments and the regional support units as well as military training schools.

According to Zoebisch the Coalition will continue to assist the Iraqi's with the funding during phase one and two but then they will take full control during phase three.

"Phase three will be completely and totally Iraqi funded and prioritized," Zoebisch said. "And that will hit a lot of the brigades, batallions and other smaller units."

The IDN service will be maintained at the Network Operations Center. The center includes a help desk to assist areas experiencing network problems.

"The vast majority of the bases do not have a local help desk, so all calls are routed through our center, and everything is handled from here," explained Steven Lawless, IDN administrator. "If hands-on attention is needed, we will coordinate with a local Information Management Officer to visit the site for repairs."

Although the IDN and the installations have been handled by the Coalition and contactors, the plan is to train the Iraqis to take full control of the network, equipment and maintenance.

Iraqi Army program managers will complete a series of courses, which include on the job training, structured classroom training taught by certified instructors and network lab training.

"Becoming a good systems or network administrator takes years of experience," said U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Brian Lafaountain, IDN program senior NCOIC. "We have that expertise in the military and in our contracted staff, and we are sharing that expertise with them so they are able to learn the ins and outs of the IDN.

Although the IDN has brought many positives to the Iraqi Army, it also brought a few challenges.

"We've built networks in the western world, so we do everything in English for example," Lafountain said. "So when we tell a user you have to have a password that includes lower and upper case letters, special characters and a number, that does not translate into Arabic. There are no differences between capital and lower-case letters or numbers in Arabic," he continued. "So we've come across those types of challenges that we make up for as we go along."

Lafountain said other major challenges have been caused by lack of power and fuel availability. However, the challenges have not stopped progress. Since January Coalition forces and Iraqi contractors, have installed IDN to about 12 Iraqi military sites.

The newest of these sites to receive the IDN capabilities is the Iraqi Army site in Habbaniyah, Iraq. The remaining 12 sites are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

"I really think this will take them into modern communications technology from where they used to be," said Zoebisch. "Just as the U.S. military has evolved over the last 30 years with the use of computers and information technology, I think that you'll see that growth in Iraq as well."

Iraqi Security Forces / in brief

Terrorist attack foiled in Mosul

MOSUL — Iraqi Police and Coalition forces thwarted a terrorist attack against a Mosul police station Aug. 23.

A terrorist, dressed as a police officer, approached the gate to the police station and detonated his suicide vest, killing himself and wounding six police officers.

Immediately following the explosion, two other masked terrorists attempted to attack the station with small arms fire.

Iraqi Police and Coalition Soldiers identified and engaged the gunmen, killing both.

The wounded police officers were transported to a nearby medical facility.

— Multi-National Division- North Public Affairs Office

Iraqi Security Forces provide humanitarian aid

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi government officials and Coalition forces implemented its "consequence management" plan to provide humanitarian aid to displaced citizens in Zafaraniya Aug. 22. The plan was in response to the recent bombing and gas explosions in the area.

To accomplish this, the joint forces provided rice, beans, cooking oil, canned fish, blankets, vegetables, assorted condiments, cooking utensils and stoves for Iraqis affected by the bombings.

The items were distributed at the Zafaraniya Government Center. Coalition Soldiers were aided by policemen from 2nd Battalion, 1st Iraqi National Police Division, Neighborhood Advisory Council and tribal leaders, who assisted with the download and distribution of the items to the local citizens.

— 4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office

Iraqi forces disarm 7 explosive devices

BAGHDAD — Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers destroyed seven improvised explosive devices in and around Baghdad Aug. 21.

The seven devices were found in various parts of the city. The joint forces found the devices while participating in operations designed to enhance the security of Baghdad for its citizens

Operations have taken place in the Doura, Shula, Nur, Ghazaliyah and Ameriyah areas of Baghdad from Aug. 7-22. To date, Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police and Coalition forces have cleared approximately 31,000 buildings including 25 mosques, detained 70 suspected terrorists, seized 529 weapons, registered 341 weapons, found 19 weapons and munitions caches and removed 1,570 tons of trash.

There were no injuries or damage to property in any of the incidents.

— Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs Office

Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Kevin Lovel

An Iraqi army soldier adroitly maneuvers his way through an air-conditioning grate during a cordon and search operation Aug. 21 in the Ghazaliyah neighborhood. The operation was a joint effort by Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces.

Iraqi Security Forces / in brief

Iraqi forces search an Office of the Martyr Sadr

BAGHDAD — Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, entered the Office of the Martyr Sadr building in northwest Baghdad's Nur neighborhood to search for illegal weapons Aug. 20.

Seized were one 120 mm mortar, one 60 mm mortar, three 57 mm rockets, one of which was rigged as an improvised-explosive device, four AK-47 assault rifles, 11 fully loaded magazines of 7.62 mm ammunition, 45 14.7 mm rounds, three sets of Kevlar blankets, one bomb suit, one pair of handcuffs, 30 zip ties and various bomb making materials.

— Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs Office

Iraqi forces capture key insurgent leaders

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Security Forces conducted simultaneous raids on three objectives in Baghdad on Aug. 20, capturing two key insurgent leaders.

Both men are believed to exercise control over death squad cells in the Al Dora, Al Sahha and Abu D'Shair districts in Baghdad. One of the suspected insurgents allegedly controls a Baghdad "husayniyah" where he tortured and killed Iraqi citizens.

In addition, four other suspected insurgents were detained during the operation.

The insurgents were captured without incident.

Photo by Polli Keller

A veiw of Tal Afar from the ramparts of an Ottoman Empire castle. Nestled safely behind the walls of this castle is the Tal Afar Joint Communications Center where Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces work together to monitor the city's police frequencies as well as their power and utilities systems.

Iraqi and Coalition forces rescue 4

BAGHDAD — Iraqi soldiers from 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division rescued a kidnap victim during a raid in Baghdad's Adhamiyah neighborhood Aug. 21.

A concerned Iraqi citizen led the soldiers to a house where the victims and a weapons cache were located.

Uncovered during the search of the house were two rocket-propelled grenade launchers, 20 rocket-propelled grenades, nine rocket-propelled grenade propellant charges, one AK-47 rifle, two sniper rifles and 12 hand grenades.

Two suspected terrorists were detained in connection with the kidnapping.

In a separate incident, Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers rescued three kidnap victims after receiving a tip from an Iraqi citizen southeast of Baghdad.

The soldiers were approached by a young man who informed an interpreter there were kidnap victims inside a nearby house.

A search of the house revealed three victims tied up, blindfolded and lying on the floor with a kidnapper guarding them.

The victims were released and the kidnapper detained.

— Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs Office

Iraqi army soldiers rescue kidnapped women

KARKH — Soldiers from 5th Battalion, 6th Iraqi Army Division rescued a kidnapped woman from a house in Karkh Aug. 20.

A woman who claimed she had been kidnapped entered the division's office and led the soldiers to a nearby house, where she said another kidnapped woman was inside.

The soldiers raided the house and found another woman and two kidnappers.

The soldiers arrested the kidnappers and the women were released unharmed.

— Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs Office

Iraqi soldiers detain 5 suspected terrorists

BAGHDAD — Iraqi soldiers from the 5th Special Troops Company, 9th Iraqi Army Division, detained five suspected terrorists and seized weapons and munitions during a permissive entry of the Al Fadly Mosque north of Baghdad Aug. 20.

A tip from a concerned citizen led the soldiers to the weapons, which included seven AK-47 assault rifles, two PKC machine guns, two pistols, 20 fully-loaded magazines of 7.62 mm ammunition, three handheld radios rigged as bomb detonators and a set of body armor.

In a separate incident, Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers discovered a munitions cache while on a dismounted patrol northwest of Baghdad.

The cache consisted of 20 120 mm rounds and one 155 mm round.

An explosive ordnance disposal team performed a controlled detonation of the munitions.

— Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs Office