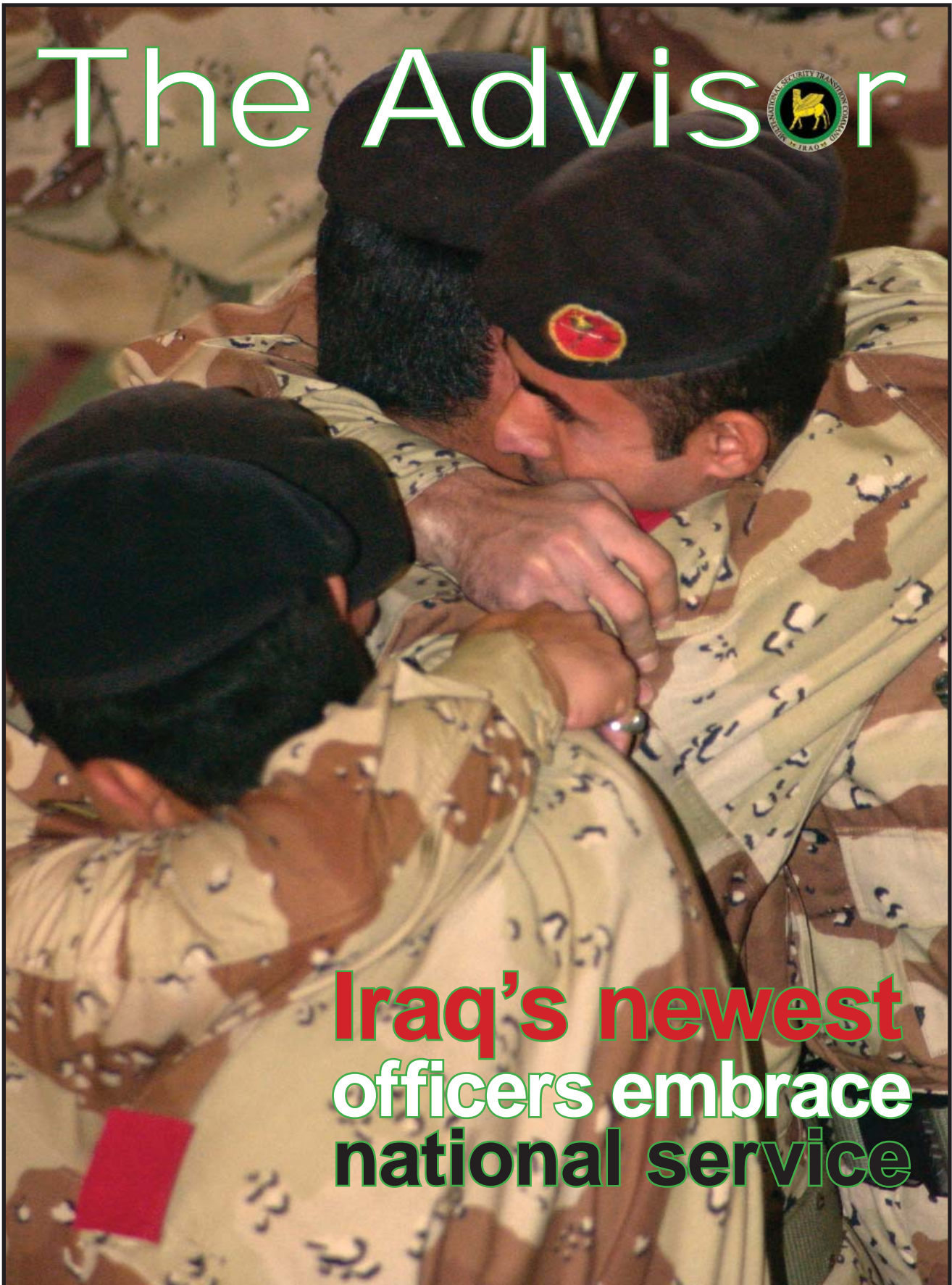


The Advisor



**Iraq's newest
officers embrace
national service**

THE ADVISOR

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

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ON THE COVER

Recently-graduated officers from the Iraqi Military Academy Al Rustamiyah embrace Dec. 28.

Photo by U.S. Air Force
Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson

Bush notes progress on Iraq plan, praises troops, families

By Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — After a three-hour meeting with his national security team Dec. 28, U.S. President George W. Bush noted progress in defining the way forward in Iraq and praised servicemembers and their families for their sacrifices.

Bush said input provided by Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace are important parts in his deliberations in making a new strategy for Iraq.

Gates and Pace, the U.S. military's most senior civilian and military officials, respectively, traveled together during a recent trip to Iraq and provided their impressions to the president last weekend.

"They reported firsthand what they saw, what they found," Bush said. "It's an important part of coming to closure on a way forward in Iraq that'll help us achieve our objective, which is a country that can gov-

ern itself, sustain itself and defend itself."

Other members of the National Security Council who attended the meeting in Crawford, Texas, included Vice President Richard Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley.

Bush told reporters that he had more consultations to make before he announces his decision on a new strategy for Iraq sometime in January. The president also said he'll continue to work with the Iraqi government, noting the key to success in Iraq is for that government to be willing to confront extremists that want to tear it down.

"The key to success in Iraq is to have a government that's willing to deal with the elements there that are trying to prevent this young democracy from succeeding," he said.

The president said he'd also consult on Iraq with both sides of the aisle in the U.S. Congress.

See BUSH, Page 5

President Bush's statement on Saddam Hussein's execution

Today, Saddam Hussein was executed after receiving a fair trial – the kind of justice he denied the victims of his brutal regime.

Fair trials were unimaginable under Saddam Hussein's tyrannical rule. It is a testament to the Iraqi people's resolve to move forward after decades of repression that, despite his terrible crimes against his own people, Saddam Hussein received a fair trial. This would not have been possible without the Iraqi people's determination to create a society governed by the rule of law.

Saddam Hussein's execution comes at the end of a difficult year for the Iraqi people and for our troops. Bringing Saddam Hussein to justice will not end the violence in Iraq, but it is an important milestone on Iraq's course to becoming a democracy that can govern, sustain and defend itself, and be an ally in the War on Terror.

We are reminded today of how far the Iraqi people have come since the end of Saddam Hussein's rule – and that the progress they have made would not have been possible without the continued service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform.

Many difficult choices and further sacrifices lie ahead. Yet the safety and security of the American people require that we not relent in ensuring that Iraq's young democracy continues to progress.

New officers graduate from Iraqi academy

By U.S. Air Force
Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

AL RUSTAMIYAH, Iraq — More than 200 cadets were promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in a graduation ceremony Dec. 28 at the Iraqi Military Academy Al Rustamiyah.

The new officers completed a year-long military leadership development course based on the United Kingdom Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, which focuses on building command, leadership and advanced military skills that the graduates will implement at their units throughout the Iraqi Army, according to IMAR's NATO advisors.

"I am glad today because I will become an officer, but I am sad that I will be leaving my friends," said Iraqi Army 2nd Lt. Munir. "I can say our relationship has been more like brothers. We spent so much time together."

The year-long officer leadership course was broken into three stages. In the first stage, the cadets went through basic training and developed basic command and leadership skills. In the second stage, they continued the development of their command and leadership skills and introduced advanced military skills. The third and



Photos by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson

Iraqi Army cadets demonstrate drill maneuvers during their graduation ceremony Dec. 28 at the Iraqi Military Academy Rustimayah.

final stage focused on refining all the skills taught, as well as learning more advanced military skills.

"When I saw my cadets take the rank and become officers, I was very proud," said Iraqi Army Sgt. Maj. Muhammad, who served as an instructor for the new lieutenants. "In every term I saw the changes as they learned more and gained more knowledge. I know that they will lead using what they learned here."

Mohammed explained that the IMAR instructors, who come from battle-tested combat units in the field, have all graduated from special NATO training courses designed to prepare them to become instructors. Additionally, he said that he goes into the field frequently to learn about new tactics and strategies that the Iraqi Army, as well as the terrorists and insurgents, are using. He then brings those lessons back to the classroom to ensure the cadets receive the best training possible.

The course, which used to be three years in length under the former regime, was shortened to just one year in order to align it more closely with the British program, a NATO advisor said.

"The training here is very good," said Iraqi Army Capt. Fa'aiz, the academy's public affairs officer who also served as the assistant chief instructor before becoming a spokesman for the organization. "In one year, we have many activities and teach many skills to make a professional army, and the quality of our cadets is very good. Overall, the training is the best training in all of Iraq," he said.

IMAR graduates more than 600 Iraqi Army officers every year and its leaders are confident that the lessons taught in the classroom will have an immediate impact on the battlefields of Iraq.

"We are like a (university); we have a good academic program," Muhammad said.



Members of the senior cadet formation stand at attention during their graduation ceremony Dec. 28.

See IMAR, Page 5

River police train new officers

By U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Some of Iraq's most highly trained police are preparing Iraq's future police officers to safeguard the Tigris River. The policemen, who recently returned from river patrol training at the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School in the United States, will teach their new-found skills to the next generation of police officers.

The 16 policemen who trained in the U.S. are assigned to a river patrol station situated along the banks of the Tigris River in Baghdad. They have already begun training some of the 250-plus policemen, straight out of Iraq's police academy, who will man the various river patrol stations throughout the country. The five-week training program is designed to teach the rookies river policing methods so they can protect Iraq's inland waterways.

"This river patrol station is important to Iraq because it is the only station that provides this training to its police officers," said Iraqi Police Capt. Hassam, one of the men who attended the training at the John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. "And these men will go on to train other Iraqi policemen how to man patrol stations up and down the river."

According to Darren Slover, senior



Photos by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

A policeman manning the patrol boat's forward machine gun keeps an eye out as his boat approaches the shore during a river exercise on the Tigris river in Baghdad. The river policemen regularly conduct river security operations.

Civilian Police Assistance Training Team advisor to the Iraqi Police River Patrol, the new policemen will complete training in four basic operations: patrolling the river for insurgent activity; investigating criminal activity;

recovery operations; and performing rescue operations.

Manuel Santos, another CPATT advisor, also helps train the river patrol policemen. He said he has high hopes for the team's future on the Iraqi rivers. "This will be the main hub for training river patrolmen and as the program evolves it will be up to the Iraqis to expand its training to other locations," he said.

The policemen working at the river patrol station face many challenges. One is the daily struggle of being a police officer in a war zone and getting to work everyday. Another challenge is the need for tactical flotation devices the policemen can wear over their body armor. But in spite of these obstacles, Santos said there has been a huge improvement in morale and discipline over the program's development at the Baghdad station.



A river patrol boat heads home to its dock at the river patrol police station following river patrol exercises on the Tigris river in Baghdad.

See RIVER, Page 7

Iraqi Army's future leaders ready for next level



Photos by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson

Iraq Army senior-term cadets march during the graduation ceremony at the Iraqi Military Academy Al Rustamiyah Dec. 28. The cadets completed the year-long course and received commissions after graduation.

From IMAR, Page 3

“We have classroom lessons like math, mitigation, planning, battle-techniques – but the important thing that we (do) is to make our cadets build friendships, regardless of religions. They are one. They come (here) to become officers – to be in the Iraqi Army and to help each other.”

As the ceremony concluded, the cadets rushed to the stands to greet family members and friends who came to witness their momentous accomplishments, but some of the cadets were more excited to move on to the next stage in their lives.

“I am so happy,” said Iraqi Army 2nd Lt. Bilad. “I can see the result of my hard work from the whole year. It’s great, it’s very amazing. The next job will require me to remove the theory side (of the classroom teachings) and implement the practical side (on the battlefields),” he explained. “I hope that God will give me the chance to protect my country and my unit and to fight terrorism.”

One of Bilad’s classmates agreed. “I am very happy because we finished this hard course, however we are sad because we will leave our friends and our days here,” said 2nd Lt. Suleiman. “However, we want to help re-build the Iraqi Army and fight the terrorists.”

Though the new officers had not yet received their new assignments following the graduation, they expressed an eagerness to get to their units and put their training to use.

“I am very excited to learn about my troops and my unit,” said 2nd Lt. Ghilan. “I hope to teach them what I have learned here – how to fight the terrorists. I believe that all of the skills and knowledge I have learned here will help me to be a good officer to lead my troops into battle against the terrorists.”

President continues to go forward on new Iraq plan

From BUSH, Page 2

“Not only will I continue to reach out to Congress, but members of my team will do so as well,” Bush said. “I fully understand it’s important to have both Republicans and Democrats understanding the importance of this mission.”

It’s important that Americans know that success in Iraq is vital to the nation’s security interests, Bush said.

“If we were to not succeed in Iraq, the enemy, the extremists, the radicals would have safe haven from which to launch further attacks,” he said. “They would be emboldened. They would be in a position to threaten the United States of America.”

Iraq, therefore, “is an important part of

the war on terror,” the president said.

Bush said he’s making good progress formulating a new strategy that will help the United States and its allies achieve desired goals in Iraq.

The commander in chief praised the thousands of men and women who are deployed far from home during the holidays.

“There’s nobody more important in this global war on terror than the men and women who wear the uniform, and their families,” Bush said. “As we head into a new year, my thoughts are with them. My thoughts are with the families who have just gone through a holiday season with their loved ones overseas.”

The troops’ welfare is always on his mind, the president said. And the safety

of U.S. servicemembers and success in Iraq, he said, are among his wishes for the coming year.

“My thoughts are with the troops as we head into 2007,” Bush said, noting his New Year’s resolution “is that they’ll be safe and that we’ll come closer to our objective, that we’ll be able to help this young democracy survive and thrive, and therefore we’ll be writing a chapter of peace.”

“I can’t thank our families enough for supporting their loved one who wears the uniform,” Bush said, adding he also can’t thank enough the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coastguardsmen who wear the uniform.

“May God continue to bless them,” Bush said.

The hajj at a glance

For centuries, countless millions of Muslims, men and women from all over the world, have made the annual hajj pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Beginning in mid-December, Muslims began traveling by vehicle to Saudi Arabia, where they then spent another five to six days traveling by foot between the holy sites of Mecca, Arafat, Muzdalifa and Mina. The completion of this trek is marked with the four-day festival of “Eid Al Adha” – the Feast of the Sacrifice – which began today.

In Arabic, “hajj” literally means “to set out for a place.” In the Islamic world, hajj refers more specifically to the pilgrimage that all physically and financially-able Muslims aspire to complete at least once in their lifetime. The hajj allows Muslims to perform religious rites prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad.

The hajj is considered one of the Pillars of Islam – the rituals and duties that are woven into the daily lives of all Muslims. The other pillars include: Shahadah – a declaration of faith; Zakat – charitable giving; Sawm – fasting; and Ramadan – a period of abstinence and prayer.

The hajj pilgrimage occurs between the eighth and thirteenth days of the last month of the Islamic calendar – Dhu’l-Hijjah – of each year.

The sacred “Kaaba,” or “House of Allah,” at the very heart of the pilgrimage was built in Mecca by the Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ishmael more than 5,000 years ago. Ibrahim was born in the city of Ur in the Kingdom of Babylon – now Iraq – and according to religious writings, was drawn to Mecca and commanded by God to build a house of worship and proclaim faith in the One God, Allah.

Ibrahim spoke of rejecting the worship of numerous false gods – the practices of idolatry and paganism common in his time. He gathered followers as his word spread across Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Palestine during his travels through the region. He began making the pilgrimage back to the Kaaba to worship regularly as an expression of his reverence for Allah. Many followers began following his pilgrimage as an act of faith.

Over the centuries after Ibrahim’s death, the Holy Kaaba

gradually became desecrated as people reverted to placing false idols around it. Following centuries of increasingly pagan worship at the hajj, the Prophet Muhammed was born and eventually began to spread the word of monotheism, meaning there is only one true God. He smashed the idols in the Kaaba and reinstated all the rites of hajj that were established in the time of Prophet Ibrahim. He eliminated all the false rites which had become rampant in the pre-Islamic period. All indecent and shameful acts were strictly banned and in the Quran he stated specifically what was expected from all Muslims.

During the hajj, pilgrims are forbidden to:

- * Engage in marital relations
- * Shave or cut their nails
- * Use cologne or scented oils
- * Kill or hunt anything
- * Fight or argue
- * Women must not cover their faces, even if they would do so in their home country
- * Men may not wear clothes with stitching

Once in Mecca, pilgrims making the hajj enter the Great Mosque and walk seven times around the Kaaba in a counter-clockwise direction. This is known as “Tawaf” and demonstrates the unity of the pilgrims in worshiping the One God.



Courtesy photo

Millions of muslim faithful flock to the holy city of Mecca and the “Kaaba,” or “House of Allah,” in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia every year for the hajj pilgrimage. Physically and financially-abled Muslims aspire to make the hajj at least once during their lifetime.

Pilgrims also run seven times along a passageway in the Great Mosque, commemorating a search for water by Hajar, the wife of the Prophet Ibrahim.

They will also take part in a stoning ritual, throwing small stones or pebbles at three pillars representing the devil. This ceremony symbolizes the willingness to ward off temptation.

Today in Iraq, eligible Muslims aspiring to complete the hajj apply to receive official hajj visas through a lottery process run by the Hajj Committee in the Department of Religious Affairs. The number of visas available to Iraq is determined by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and this year, that number was approximately 30,000.

(Information courtesy of Lt. Cmdr. Jane Tuppen, Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs and Dr. Abu Miriam, Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq Public Affairs.)

Iraqi officers police the rivers of Baghdad

From RIVER, Page 4

“Early on,” he said, “the (Iraqi) leadership made the commitment to turn (the Baghdad station) into a professional-level training station.” He added that care and concern shows through in the quality of the policemen’s work.

Santos said the station has undergone a complete transformation since its humble beginning, both in its physical state and also in the demeanor of its policemen. “In the beginning, they would wear ragtag civilian clothing, but now they all wear their uniforms,” he explained.

The Baghdad station now also boasts a fleet of six river boats, each operated by a four to five-man team. A team consists of a lead navigator, his assistant and two gunners – one in the front of the boat and one in the rear – who man 7.62 mm machine guns. Another policeman can also be onboard and, if the mission requires it, a diver.

According to the unit’s captain, this has helped improve attitudes. “The men are ... more professional,” Hassam said. “You can see it in their uniform and in their level of confidence.”

According to Santos, part of this new found pride can also be attributed to the training experienced by the 16 men who traveled to Stennis. “You can tell they are more unified,” he said. “Each member of the boat team knows his role and is conscious of (everyone’s) safety.”

That training along Mississippi’s waterways helped the 16 men combine their basic policing knowledge with their river operations knowledge. One of the new techniques the team learned was entry and exit strategy.

“We learned ... how to drop off a team member at a location on the river bank to conduct an operation,” Hassam explained, “and then later he can be picked up by a different boat team at a pre-determined time and place once the operation has been completed.”

Another CPATT advisor said that as a result of what the Iraqi policemen learned in the U.S., they can now conduct tactical entry and extrications, counter-ambushes



Photo by U.S. Navy MC2 Elisandro Diaz

A boat operator directs navigation of a boat around shallow waters during patrol exercises on the Tigris river in Baghdad.

and they can safely guard their posts.

In addition to their U.S. training and experience, they have also brought back a new outlook on life.

“These guys met and befriended people from other countries and they wound up playing a friendly in-house soccer tournament, which they won,” said Slover, “and maybe they can say ‘if I won a soccer game, I could also win a gunfight.’ It was a big boost to their self-confidence,” he added. “They discovered that there’s a

whole world of people – friendly people – out there.”

Hassam, as well, has high hopes for the program, but knows that eventually, its success may rest on his shoulders. “The experience was great and has given me self-confidence in myself to face insurgents. I wish for the program to continue where our policemen travel to the U.S. for this training. But whether they do or not, I will continue to train my men with the knowledge I have.”

“The men are ... more professional. You can see it in their uniform and in their level of confidence.”

**Iraqi Police Capt. Hassam
Chief, Baghdad River Patrol Station**

Iraqi Police graduate 8,708 from basic training courses

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The Iraq Police Service graduated 8,708 police recruits from basic training courses held in Baghdad, Basrah, Hamman Al Alil, Hillah, Irbil, Kut, Mosul, Najaf, Sulaymaniyah and Jordan during the month of December.

Basic police training prepares students for a career with the Iraqi Police Service. The extensive and highly professional training program includes formal law enforcement studies and tactical operational policing skills. General policing topics cover the fundamentals of policing to include democratic policing skills based on international human rights standards, communications, human dignity and the police, lawful use of force, stress management and police ethics.

The course of instruction also provides a strong emphasis on scenario-based training that involves instruction on the appropriate methods to respond to suspected explosive devices, conducting traffic control points, patrolling techniques, searching buildings and suspects, and other critical street survival skills.

Police officers with prior experience attend a 3-week course – the Transitional Integration Program – instead of the 10-week basic training



Iraqi police stand at attention during a graduation ceremony in Najaf.

course. TIP includes training on human rights, defensive tactics, democratic policing, first aid, patrolling procedures, firearms handling and anti-terrorism.

Graduation numbers for the 10-week basic training course for December include: 1,056 from the Baghdad Police College; 442 from Basrah; 917 from Hillah; 294 from Najaf; and 3,537 from the Jordan International Police Training

Center. An additional 2,462 police students completed the 3-week TIP course at various locations.

Virtually all basic training is conducted by Iraqi police instructors who have completed train-the-trainer courses. By training Iraqi instructors, the Coalition has created a sustainable institutional capability that will continue to develop and grow as Iraq's police training academies are turned over to the Iraqi government, which will assume operational and administrative responsibility for the sites by the end of January 2007.

To date, more than 151,000 Iraqi policemen have completed basic training courses. Additionally, nearly 30,000 Department of Border Enforcement and more than 26,000 National Police have completed initial training.

The newly-trained police will return to their respective police stations where they are provided mentoring, coaching and follow-on training by the Police Transition Teams assigned throughout Iraq.

— *Compiled by Ann Bertucci, Civilian Police Assistance Training Team Public Affairs.*



Iraqi police demonstrate defensive tactics during a recent graduation ceremony in Najaf.

Photos by Ann Bertucci

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

National Police capture two insurgent leaders

BAGHDAD — National Police forces, with Coalition advisors, captured two suspected insurgent cell leaders during operations Dec. 29 in Bahbahani near Al Iskandariyah. The suspected insurgents were allegedly responsible for the kidnapping and murder of Iraqi civilians in the area.

The insurgent cell leaders, who are tied to al-Qaida in Iraq, were also implicated in numerous improvised explosive device attacks against Iraqi and Coalition forces in the Babil and Karbala Provinces.

There was minimal damage and no civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Iraqi Army finds weapons cache in Salman Pak

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Special Operations Forces detained 13 suspects in Salman Pak, southeast of Baghdad, Dec. 29 during operations to capture an illegal armed group leader allegedly responsible for sectarian violence and attacks against Iraqi civilians in the area.

The Iraqi-led operation, with Coalition advisors, involved entry into the Salman Pak mosque. The mosque was reportedly used as a base of operations for planning and conducting attacks, kidnappings and murder. Credible intelligence also indicated the mosque was being used by illegal armed groups as a place to store and traffic weapons.

Iraqi forces entered the mosque and confiscated a large weap-

ons cache consisting of 21 armored vests, two rocket-propelled grenade launchers, three machine guns, 10 assault rifles and 12 grenades. Twenty RPG rounds were also found, but destroyed near the objective after explosive ordnance disposal team personnel determined that the condition of the rounds prevented transport. The rounds were destroyed in a location that minimized any damage to the mosque.

No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Iraqi Army detains 3 suspected insurgents

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from the 7th Iraqi Army Division, with Coalition advisors, detained three suspected insurgents during operations against an insurgent group near Ta'meem Dec. 28. The group was believed to be responsible for multiple improvised explosive device and car bomb attacks against Iraqi civilians and Iraqi Security Forces.

The insurgent group is tied to al-Qaida in Iraq and was allegedly responsible for a car bomb attack against Coalition forces in June.

They were also suspected of providing support to foreign fighters operating against Iraqi and Coalition forces.

Iraqi forces confiscated numerous components used in manufacturing IEDs.

There was minimal damage and no civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael J. Carden

Iraqi Police provide support

Iraqi police provide overwatch security Dec. 14 on the outskirts of Saniyah, Iraq. Iraqi and Coalition forces conducted a three-week operation searching for terrorists in the city.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi soldiers target terrorist training camp

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Division raided a suspected terrorist training camp and detained 13 suspected insurgents Dec. 28 near Baqubah.

The group was allegedly responsible for small-arms and improvised explosive device attacks on Iraqi civilians, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition troops. The group is suspected of using the training camp as a weapons storage location.

Iraqi forces confiscated two machine guns, two sniper rifles and ammunition.

No civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Iraqi Army kills cell leader during operations

BAGHDAD — 8th Iraqi Army Division soldiers, with Coalition advisors, killed a suspected cell leader and user of improvised explosive devices during operations Dec. 27 in Abu Sukhayr, near An Najaf. The person was implicated in an October 2006 IED attack on a police chief in An Najaf.

The suspect allegedly provided several IEDs to his cell for an attack that he directed against Iraqi and Coalition forces in the An Najaf area recently.

There was minimal damage and no Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Jon Cupp

Clearing the way for security

An Iraqi Army instructor prepares his trainees from the 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) to storm a building “mock-up” during training at Camp Taji, Iraq.

Iraqi Army captures al-Qaida terrorist cell leader

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Special Operations Forces, with Coalition advisors, captured an al-Qaida in Iraq terrorist cell leader Dec. 26 in Al Yousifiyah, south of Baghdad. The terrorist was allegedly responsible for the kidnapping of two U.S. Soldiers from a checkpoint in Yousifiyah in June. The Soldiers were later found tortured and murdered.

The suspect recently commented on the kidnapping during the showing of a video at a Yousifiyah mosque. The video reportedly showed the kidnapping of the U.S. Soldiers. The terrorist is also suspected of perpetrating numerous kidnappings, murders and other violent crimes within the Yousifiyah area.

Iraqi forces conducted an air-assault operation and quickly captured the terrorist without incident. One other person detained was later released.

There was minimal damage and no civilian, Iraqi or Coalition Forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Iraqi troops detain 30 suspects in Baghdad

MAHMUDIYAH — Soldiers from the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division detained 30 suspected insurgents during operations southwest of Mahmudiyah, Dec. 26.

Of the 30 men detained, 14 matched descriptions of wanted terrorists in the area.

The operation was planned to deny safe haven for al-Qaida members by detaining sympathizers, planners and facilitators in the targeted area. The operation also included the clearing of an area suspected as being an al-Qaida training ground.

The detainees were held for questioning by the 4th Brigade.

— *Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs*

National Police capture five insurgents

BAGHDAD — National Police forces, with Coalition advisors, detained five suspected insurgents southeast of Mosul Dec. 24 during operations to capture members of an insurgent cell responsible for attacks against Iraqi Security Forces in the area.

There was minimal damage and no civilian, Iraqi or Coalition forces casualties were reported.

— *Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs*

Police find weapons and explosives cache

AVGANI — Iraqi police from the Ninawa city of Avgani discovered a cache of weapons and explosives in a pickup truck near the Iraq/Syria border Dec. 23.

The cache contained a machine gun, more than a dozen rocket-propelled grenades, several assault rifles, hand grenades, several sticks of explosives and an unknown amount of home-made explosive powder.

The explosives and truck were removed from the scene for further investigation.

— *Multi-National Division – North Public Affairs*