THE IRAQ WAR

2003 - 2011

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Genocide

Kurdish Massacres

"Highway of Death" Operation Desert Storm

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Weapons of Mass Destruction

Global Terror

UN Inspectors

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At war with Iraq

"My fellow citizens, at this hour American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger."

President George W. Bush
March 19, 2003/10:15pm EST

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LIBERATION OF IRAQ

19 March - 1 May 2003

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Preparing for deployment

to a Combat Zone

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Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC)

Coalition Forces Land Component Command was established under Lt. Gen. David McKiernan, commander of U.S. Army Forces Central Command, to direct the two U.S. corps-sized formations (I Marine Expeditionary Force and V Corps) involved in the initial liberation of Iraq in March 2003.

The term coalition, or sometimes 'combined,' denotes the involvement of armed services from different countries. CFLCC is a multi-national land force, usually operating as part of a U.S. combatant command, though it could theoretically be applied by other western and U.S. allied nations.

From March until June 2003, CFLCC was joined by 1st Armored Division, 4th Infantry Division, and 2nd and 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiments. CFLCC was replaced by Combined Joint Task Force 7 on June 14, 2003 under Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez.

After its replacement by CJTF-7 as the operational headquarters for all ground units in the CENTCOM theater, CFLCC became the primary logistics hub for the theater.

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March 20, 2003 - U.S. launches Operation Iraqi Freedom with a "decapitation attack," the initial air strike of the war attempting to target Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders in Baghdad.

"Shock ...

The U.S. launches a second round of air strikes against Baghdad and ground troops enter the country for the first time, crossing into southern Iraq from Kuwait. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld claims that the initial phase of the war is mild compared to what is to come:

"What will follow will not be a repeat of any other conflict. It will be of a force and a scope and a scale that has been beyond what we have seen before."

The campaign publicized as an overwhelming barrage meant to instill "shock and awe" was in actuality more restrained.

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and Awe"

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Coalition of Liberators

The number of U.S. service members in the initial phase of the war was approximately 150,000.

The United Kingdom contributed 2,000 members of its forces to the U.S.-led liberation of Iraq.

Australia provided Navy ships, special forces soldiers, and various aircraft, to include fighter planes.

Poland sent 200 troops from the primary special forces unit of their armed forces, forming the third largest coalition contribution to the Iraq liberation effort.

GROM - Grupa Reagowania Operacyjno-Manewrowego
(Operational Mobile Reaction Group)

Kurdish fighters (Peshmerga) fought with coalition forces during the Liberation of Iraq, driving against Iraqi forces from the north.

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U.S. Marines from Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, Twentynine Palms, Calif., cover each other with M16A2 assault rifles, as they prepare to enter one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Baghdad.

Her Majesty's Australian Ship Anzac, of the Royal Australian Navy, fires its five-inch (127-mm) gun after a call for fire support from the ground during hostilities with Iraq.

Engineering Aide 1st Class Scott Lyerla, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1-5, maintains security for his convoy with an M-60 machine gun while driving through Al Hillah, Iraq.

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Royal Australian Air Force technicians and the F/A-18 contingent which forms part of Operation Falconer, the Australian contribution to the coalition to remove weapons of mass destruction from Iraq.

British forces in an FV107 Scimitar of the Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) or CVR(T) vehicle family are on the move, displaying the Union Jack.

Two Airmen, from among nearly 100 experts with the Combined Weapons Effectiveness Assessment Team, assess the damage from a precision-guided munition at one of Saddam Hussein's presidential palaces. The team visited sites to determine how well coalition weapons achieved their intended effects.

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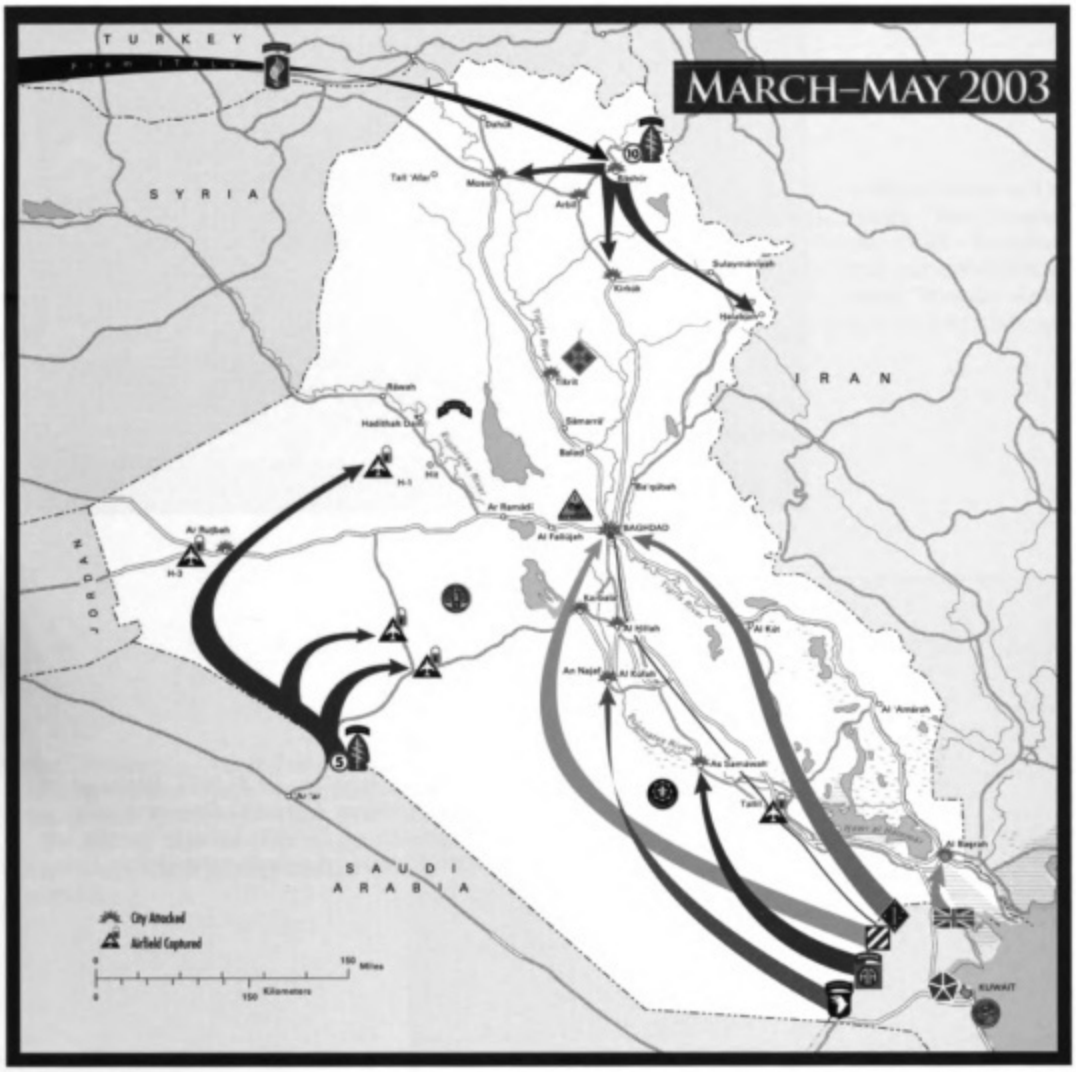

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Battle Road to the Fall of Baghdad...

The **Battle of Umm Qasr** was the first military confrontation in the Iraq War. One of the first objectives, the port of Umm Qasr, was captured by coalition forces on **March 21, 2003**.

The assault on the port was spearheaded by Royal Marines of the British 3 Commando Brigade, and supplemented by U.S. Marines of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Polish special forces troops.

On **March 25, 2003**, the port was declared safe and reopened.

A Marine Corps M1A1 Abrams battle tank fires its 120mm main gun during fighting between insurgents and coalition forces near Umm Qasr, Iraq.

Members of the Polish Special Operations Forces Grupa Reagowania Operacyjno Mobilnego, or Operational Mobile Response Group, secure a section of the port of Umm Qasr, Iraq. The GROM participated in the efforts of coalition naval forces to clear southern Iraqi waterways of mines and rogue vessels to make way for the arrival of humanitarian relief shipments.

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Battle of Nasiriyah - Heavy fighting took place in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah between Iraqi forces and U.S. Marines over control of key bridges over the Euphrates River and the Saddam Canal.

Early on **March 23, 2003**, the 507th Maintenance Company, based at Fort Bliss, Texas, took a wrong turn into the city and was ambushed. Eleven soldiers were killed and six soldiers were captured.

The remaining able-bodied 507th members protected the wounded and fought off Iraqi attacks. They were rescued and evacuated from the area by the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade enroute to the battle.

USMC amphibious assault vehicle destroyed near Nasiriyah, Iraq.

The Marine unit, under the call sign Task Force Tarawa, continued north into the city seizing two major bridges along what was known as "Ambush Alley." Eighteen Marines were killed in what has been described as one of the bloodiest days of operations for Marines.

Shoshana Johnson

Jessica Lynch (in still frame from combat camera video footage of rescue)

Lori Ann Piestewa

On **April 1, 2003**, U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force launched a nighttime raid on the Saddam Hospital in Nasiriyah, successfully retrieving Pfc. Jessica Lynch and the bodies of eight other American soldiers. This was reported to be the first successful rescue of an American POW since World War II, and the first ever of a woman.

Other historical firsts were experienced by two other female Soldiers in the maintenance company.

Pfc. Lori Ann Piestewa, became the first woman (of the U.S.-led coalition) killed in the Iraq War and the first Native American woman killed on foreign soil in an American war.

Spc. Shoshana Johnson, who was captured in the same ambush as Lynch and later rescued, became the first African American female prisoner of war in the military history of the U.S.

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Battle of Najaf: U.S. airborne and armored units with British air support fought a fierce battle with Iraqi regulars, Republican Guard units, and paramilitary forces.

After 36 hours of combat at the bridge at Najaf, the Iraqis were defeated and the key bridge was secured isolating Najaf from the north. After several days of heavy fighting and with air support, coalition forces were able to defeat the Iraqi forces slowly securing the city by **April 4, 2003**.

Destroyed Iraqi T-72 tank on Highway 9 outside Najaf

Mural of Saddam Hussein in Karbala

Battle of Karbala: The Karbala Gap is an approximately 25-mile wide strip of land with the Euphrates River to the east and Lake Razazah to the west. This strip of land was recognized by Iraqi commanders as a key approach to Baghdad, and was defended by some of the best units of the Iraqi Republican Guard.

U.S. troops rushed through the gap and reached the Euphrates River at the town of Musayib, April 2, 2003. They crossed the river and seized the vital al-Kaed Bridge after Iraqi demolitions teams had failed to destroy it in time.

On **April 5, 2003**, the 101st Airborne began its push to clear Karbala with airstrikes hitting several targets around the city. This was followed by a helicopter assault in which 23 UH-60 Blackhawk and 5 CH-47 Chinook helicopters ferried three battalions of infantry from the 502nd Infantry Regiment to their designated landing zones.

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Paul Ray Smith - Medal of Honor

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith
(September 24, 1969 – April 4, 2003)

Smith was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions while serving with Company B, 11th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

On April 4, 2003, while working near the Baghdad International Airport, his team was attacked by a company-sized group of Iraqi fighters. Smith distinguished himself by rescuing three wounded Soldiers while holding off the enemy attack, before being killed in the firefight. For his actions he was recommended for the Medal of Honor.

Two years later his medal, along with the newly approved Medal of Honor flag, was presented to Smith's family at a White House ceremony hosted by President George W. Bush.

Smith is buried in Arlington National Cemetery (section D, lot 67). He is survived by his wife Birgit, son David, and stepdaughter Jessica.

Accepting the award from President Bush were Smith's daughter Jessica, his widow Birgit and his son David.

The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government. It is bestowed by the United States Congress on members of the United States armed forces who distinguish themselves through "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States."

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Birgit Smith caresses the headstone of her late husband, Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith, after it was unveiled at Arlington Cemetery, April 5, 2005.

The road on Camp Victory, leading to the entry control point near the battle site where Smith was killed, was named in his honor.

On April 10, 2008, the fitness center on Camp Victory, Baghdad, was named in honor of Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith. Brig. Gen. William Grimsley observes as Staff Sgt. Steven Holloway helps unveil the dedication sign during the dedication ceremony. At the time of Smith's death, Grimsley was the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division commander. Later, as the deputy commander of the 4th Infantry Division, Grimsley recommended Smith for the Medal of Honor. Holloway, a 3rd Infantry Division engineer, was a member of Smith's platoon and a personal friend. Holloway was engaged in fighting about 100 yards from Smith at the time Smith was mortally wounded by enemy fire.

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Three weeks into the war, U.S.-led coalition forces moved into Baghdad after armored units south of the city destroyed most of the Republican Guard's assets and occupied routes in the area. On **April 5, 2003**, Task Force 1-64 Armor of the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade, executed a raid, later called the "Thunder Run," to test remaining Iraqi defenses.

Battle of Debecka Pass - On **April 6, 2003**, U.S. Army special forces launched a successful operation to secure Debecka Pass (sometimes known as the Battle of Debecka Ridge or Debecka Crossroads), a strategically important junction between Mosul and Kirkuk, near the village of Debecka.

This battle was notable for its use of the FGM-148 Javelin. The fire-and-forget missile, with lock-on before launch and automatic self-guidance options, demonstrated the lethal and crucial aspects of technology in determining the outcome of conflicts.

An outnumbered light U.S. and Peshmerga force defeated Iraqi mechanized infantry and tanks with a combination of air-to-ground strikes, superior maneuvering, and the use of the Javelin missiles.

U.S. Soldiers fire a Javelin anti-tank missile in Iraq.

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The Fall of Baghdad

On **April 9, 2003**, Baghdad was formally occupied by coalition forces. Much of the city remained unsecured and fighting continued within the city and its outskirts well into the first phase of the war.

Saddam had vanished, and his whereabouts were unknown.

That same day, a large statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad's Firdos Square, was toppled by U.S. Marines from the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines Regiment, using a M88 tank recovery vehicle. They were surrounded by dozens of celebrating Iraqis, who had unsuccessfully attempted to pull down the statue earlier.

The event came to symbolize the fall of Baghdad and was widely publicized around the world. In the U.S., Fox News played video footage of the toppling every 4.4 minutes. On CNN, it was aired every 7.5 minutes.

Allegations that the event had been staged began to surface and were soon published. Marines present at the time, maintain that the scene was not staged other than the assistance they provided.

Saddam Hussein, walking in an area of Baghdad, reportedly on the same day of the fall of the statue in Firdos Square.

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On **May 1, 2003**, President George W.Bush, wearing a military flight suit, arrived at the USS Abraham Lincoln in Navy One, a S-3B Viking jet. Operating a few miles west of San Diego, Calif., the aircraft carrier, which had just returned from combat operations in the Persian Gulf, served as the stage for the president's address to the nation. Under a huge "Mission Accomplished" banner, Bush gave a speech announcing the end of major combat operations in the Iraq War.

The image of Bush under the banner was criticized as premature, especially after the guerrilla warfare in Iraq increased after the president's "victory" speech. The banner was reportedly requested by and meant for the USS Abraham Lincoln crew, who were returning from the longest carrier deployment since the Vietnam War.

A convoy of U.S. Army armored vehicles kick up dust as they cross the flightline at Baghdad Interational Airport on April 14, 2003. The airport served as the primary base of operations for U.S. troops, cargo and humanitarian airlift for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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TRANSITION OF IRAQ

2 May 2003 - 28 June 2004

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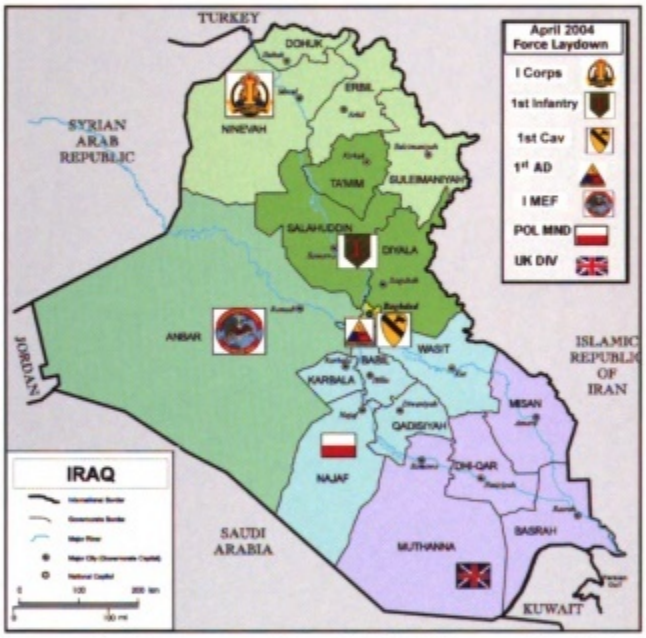
Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF-7)



Though originally overseen by the commander of ARCENT, once Coalition Joint Task Force 7 replaced CFLCC (June 14, 2003), it began reporting directly to the CENTCOM combatant commander, Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace, V Corps commanding general, who initially took over until he was replaced by Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez in July 2003.

CJTF-7 had operational control of all forces within Iraq, including multi-national forces of service members from England, Spain, Australia and other countries.

The deactivation of CJTF-7 came just 11 months after its creation. CJTF-7 conducted offensive operations to neutralize and secure the area for the establishment of government for the Coalition Provisional Authority. CJTF-7 was also responsible for organizing, training and certifying the Iraqi armed forces. With more than 130,000 troops from more than 36 countries around the world, CJTF-7 had led an international effort in Iraq.

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In order to isolate and defeat pockets of resistance seeking to delay Iraq's transition to peace and stability, CJTF-7 conducted **Operation Desert Scorpion** from **June 15 to June 29, 2003**.

This operation was designed to identify and defeat selected Ba'ath party loyalists, terrorist organizations, and criminal elements while simultaneously delivering humanitarian aid.

Combat operations were followed by synchronized stability and humanitarian operations designed to assist a transition to Iraqi self-rule. These included initiatives to repair damaged infrastructure, support the growth of police forces and local government, and improve the lives of Iraq's citizens.

The goal of the operation was to help establish a permissive and secure environment and to facilitate a rapid transition to Iraqi self-sufficiency.

In the central region near Tikrit and Kirkuk, coalition forces conducted 36 raids and detained 215 individuals in the first days of the operation.

Operation Desert Scorpion also resulted in the seizure of 8 million in U.S. currency.

By **July 17, 2003**, U.S. combat deaths in Iraq reached 147, the same number of Soldiers who died from hostile fire in the first Gulf War.

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Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division and U.S. special forces (Task Force 20) watch as a TOW missile strikes the side of a house occupied by Uday and Qusay Hussein in Mosul, **July 22, 2003**.

Following the announcement that Saddam Hussein's two sons were killed in a firefight with U.S. troops in Iraq, White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan issued the following statement:

"We were pleased to learn from the Department of Defense of today's action against Uday and Qusay Hussein. Over the period of many years, these two individuals were responsible for countless atrocities committed against the Iraqi people and they can no longer cast a shadow of hate on Iraq. U.S. military forces and our intelligence community, working with an Iraqi citizen, deserve credit for today's successful action. While there is still much work to do in Iraq, the Iraqi people can see progress each day toward a better and more prosperous future for their country."

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New Iraqi Army's First Graduation

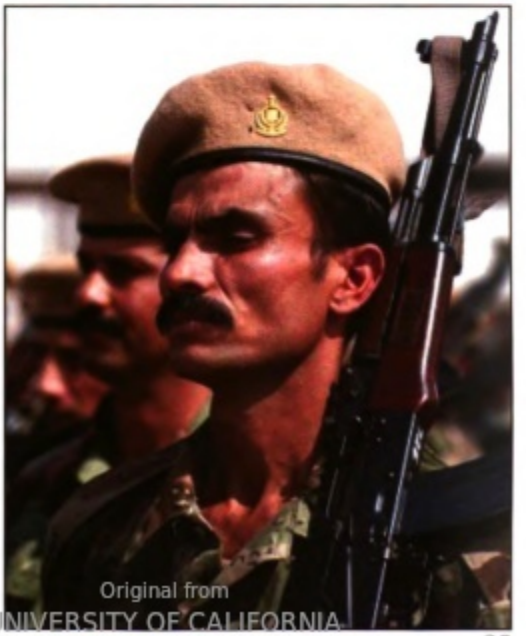
Coalition Provisional Authority Administrator L. Paul Bremer and Iraqi Governing Council President, Dr. Ayad Allawi, review the first battalion of New Iraqi Army soldiers in Kirkush, Iraq, during their graduation ceremony at the Iraqi army training center, Oct. 4, 2003.

Following the liberation of Iraq and the overthrowing of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the decision was made to establish a professional Iraqi army. This New Iraqi Army, as it was initially known, would replace the old regime with a professional force for maintaining peace and stability.

Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 22, Creation of a New Iraqi Army, dated Aug. 7, 2003, established a military force for the national self-defense of a future, free Iraq. The U.S. administration in Iraq envisioned the new army to be purely for defense and wholly separate from the civil police force, unlike during the Hussein regime. The NIA was rebuilt along U.S. lines and tasked with responsibility for all Iraqi land-based military operations.

The Coalition Military Assistance Training Team was set up by the U.S. military under the Office of Security Transition - Iraq, commanded by Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton. Its mission was to train and develop the new army. The first battalion of NIA recruits graduated on **Oct. 4, 2003**, after a nine-week course at a training base in Kirkush.

In June 2004, the OST-I was dissolved - its responsibilities were passed on to the Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq.



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Multi-National Division - Baghdad

Multi-National Division-Baghdad is also known as Task Force Baghdad. The division's area of responsibility was the city of Baghdad. Between 2003 and 2010, MND-B was headquartered by 1st Armored Division, 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Infantry Division, and 4th Infantry Division.

1st Armored Division
"Old Ironsides"
2003-2004

3rd Infantry Division
"Marne Division"
2005-2006

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1st Cavalry Division
"First Team"
2004-2005

4th Infantry Division
"Ivy Division"
2006

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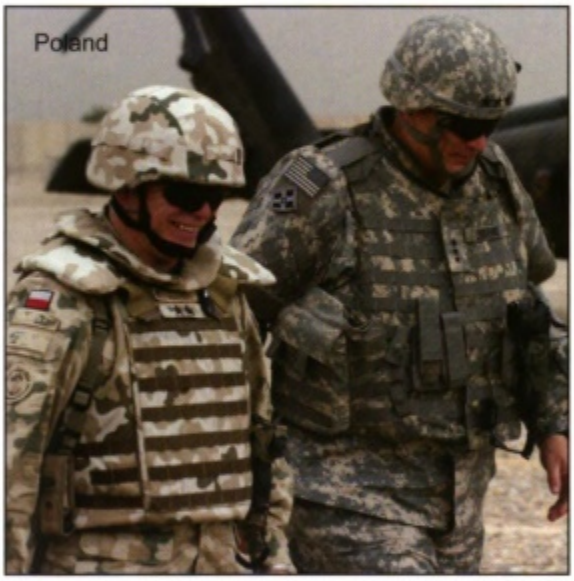
Multi-National Division - Central South

Multi-National Division-Central South, created in September 2003 and supported by NATO, was a part of the Multi-National Force Iraq. Headquartered in Camp Echo, it was under **Polish-led command** until October 2008 when the last of Poland's troops were withdrawn. The Polish contingent was its largest. Other participants included Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Denmark, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Romania, El Salvador, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine and the United States of America. As of December 2008, Armenian, Bosnian, Danish, Latvian, Kazakh, Lithuanian, Mongolian, Spanish and Slovakian forces had been fully withdrawn.

The South Central zone, formerly the Upper South zone, also known as the Polish zone, covered the area south of Baghdad: Al-Qādisiyyah Governorate, Karbala Governorate, Babil Governorate and the Wasit Governorate, all of which had been transferred to the Iraqi government. The region has a population of about 5 million. Major cities in the area include Diwaniyah, Kut, Hillah, and Karbala and Najaf.

In October 2008, MND-CS was disestablished and its area absorbed by Multi-National Division - Center.


Poland

Bosnia

Mongolia

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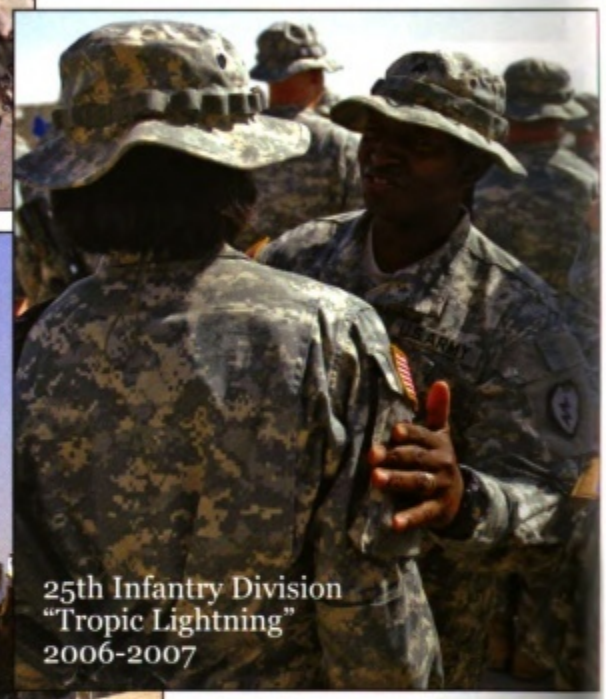
Multi-National Division - North

101st Airborne Division
"Screaming Eagles"
2003-2004

Task Force Olympia
2004-2005



25th Infantry Division
"Tropic Lightning"
2006-2007

11th Armored Cavalry Regiment
"Black Horse Regiment"
2005

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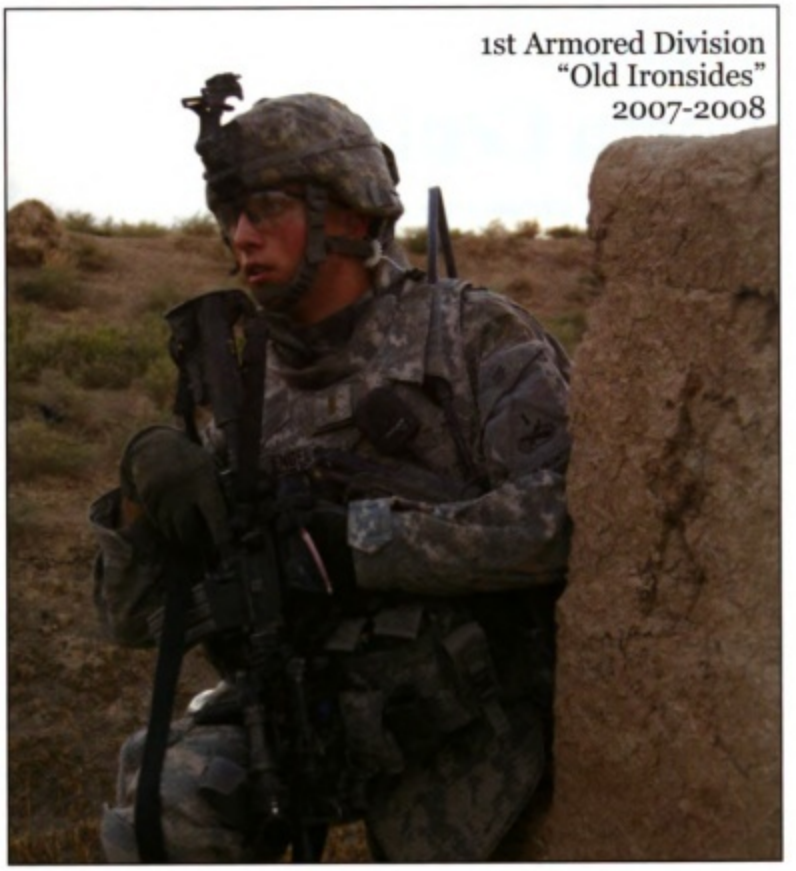
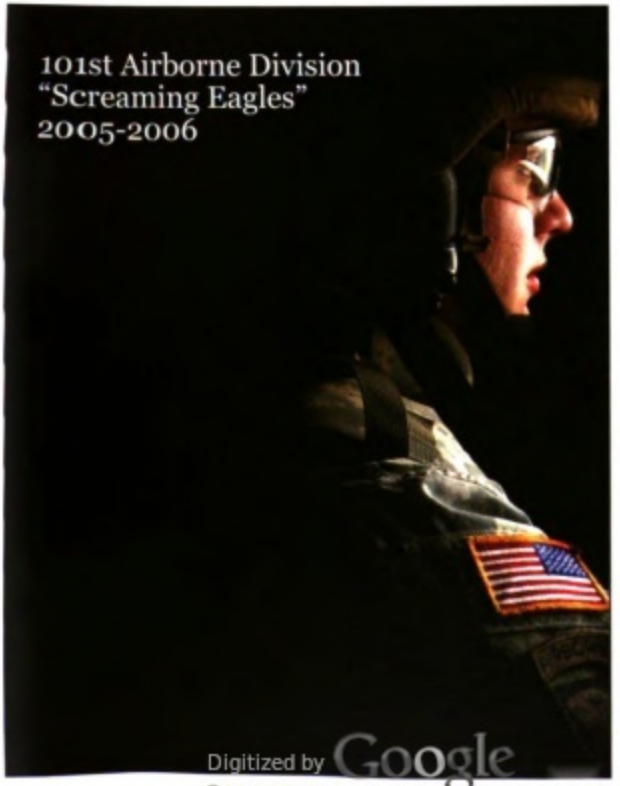
Multi-National Division - North was responsible for the 47,000 square-mile region from north of Baghdad to the Syrian, Turkish and Iranian borders. This area included the six provinces of Diyala, Salahuddin, Ninewah, Sulimaniyah, Dohuk and Kirkuk.

Units under MND-N conducted combat operations against insurgents, trained and equipped almost 50,000 Iraqi soldiers and police, and upgraded the operational capability of the Iraqi army. They also implemented reconstruction projects that included building schools, medical facilities, water and sewage projects, and increasing oil pipeline capacity.

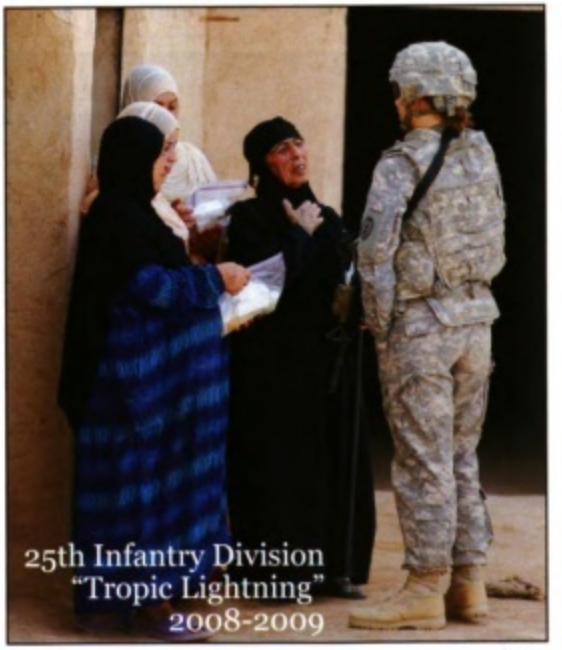
The combat aviation brigades assigned to MND-N logged countless flying hours transporting troops and cargo on tens of thousands of missions.



1st Armored Division
"Old Ironsides"
2007-2008



101st Airborne Division
"Screaming Eagles"
2005-2006



25th Infantry Division
"Tropic Lightning"
2008-2009

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Multi-National Division - North Central

Multi-National Division-North Central conducted stability operations while transitioning responsibility for counterinsurgency operations to Iraqi security forces and provincial and local governments throughout the Salah al Din Province. The province is north of Baghdad and covers most of what is known as the "Sunni Triangle."

The MND-NC area of operations extended more than 150 miles along the Main Supply Route Tampa (also known as Highway 1) and the Tigris River and included the population centers of Bayji, Tikrit, Samarra and Balad.

1st Infantry Division
"Big Red One"
2004-2005

42nd Infantry Division
"Rainbow Division"
2005

101st Airborne Division
"Screaming Eagles"
2005-2006

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Multi-National Division - West

3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment
"Brave Rifles"
2003-2004

Between April 2003 and March 2004, three major commands had a significant presence in Al Anbar Province. It was the largest single operational area of any unit in Iraq - covering one third of the country.

3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment was tasked to perform an economy of force mission to secure and stabilize the region in mid-April 2003.

During the summer of 2003, after making the much publicized "Thunder Run" into downtown Baghdad, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, was redeployed to Fallujah. Their mission included training the Fallujah Police Department to operate on its own, and letting the local population know they were there to help.

In September 2003, The 82nd Airborne Division took responsibility for the Al Anbar area, under its new designation, Multi-National Division – West. Their three-pronged mission was to eliminate threats from former regime elements, extremists, foreign fighters and criminals throughout the area of operations; create jobs to employ military-age males in productive employment; and make the vast amounts of leftover weapons and ammunition from Saddam's military machine unavailable to the enemy.

On March 14, 2004, authority for MND-W was officially transferred to the U.S. Marine Corps. In the months that followed, the Al Anbar area of operations was redesignated as Multi-National Force – West.

82nd Airborne Division
"All American"
2003-2004

3rd Infantry Division
"Rock of the Marne"
2003

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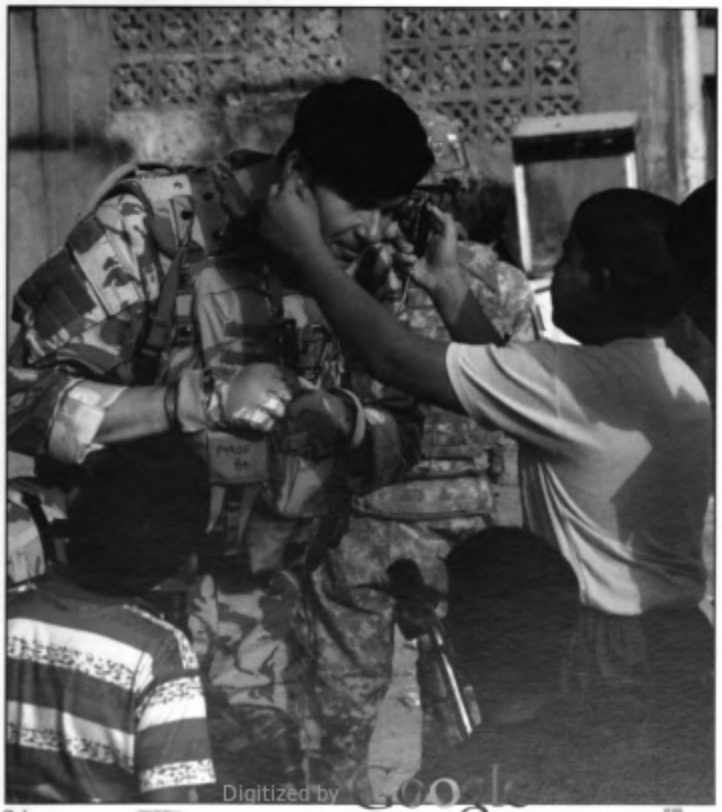
Multi-National Division - South East



Denmark

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Multi-National Division - Southeast, a subordinate of MNC-I, was commanded by the **United Kingdom** and responsible for security in the southeast of Iraq from 2003 to 2009. It made its headquarters at Basra Airport and was initially responsible for the city of Basra, as well as the governorates of Al Muthanna, Maysan, and Dhi Qar.

In aftermath of the 2003 liberation of Iraq, codename 'Operation Telic' by the British, the U.K's 1st Armoured Division and 3rd Mechanised Division were successively responsible for the command and control of the occupation forces in southeast Iraq. After 3rd Mechanised Division's tour of duty came to an end, it was replaced by the composite headquarters of MND-SE. Since then the division was made up primarily of British units with other nations in support.

In the months following the end of the liberation, MND-SE expanded to include Italian, Japanese, Australian, Romanian, Danish, Portuguese, Czech and Lithuanian troops.

On March 31, 2009, when MND-SE was disestablished, it was the last of the non-US subordinate commands. Its area of operations was merged with that of Multi-National Division - Center and renamed Multi-National Division - South.

Czech Republic

Lithuania

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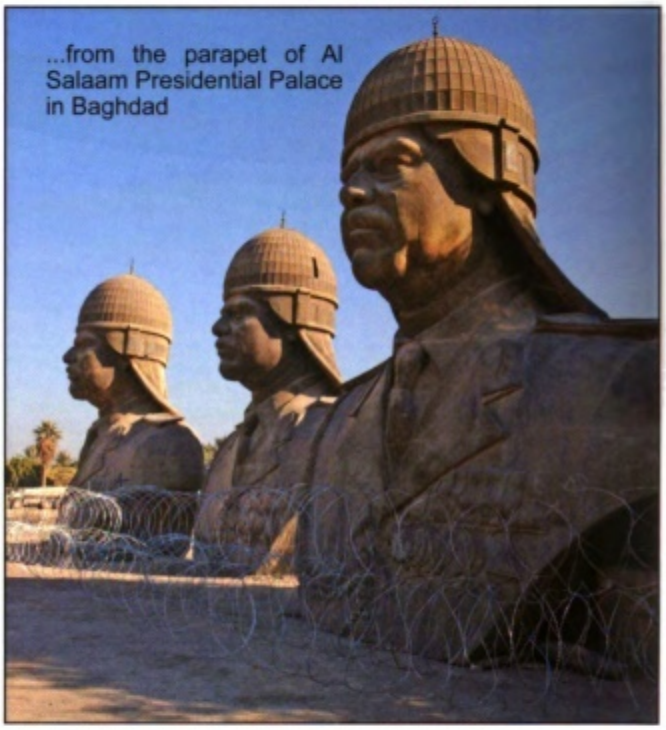
Saddam Hussein's initials are found on surfaces throughout Al Faw Palace.

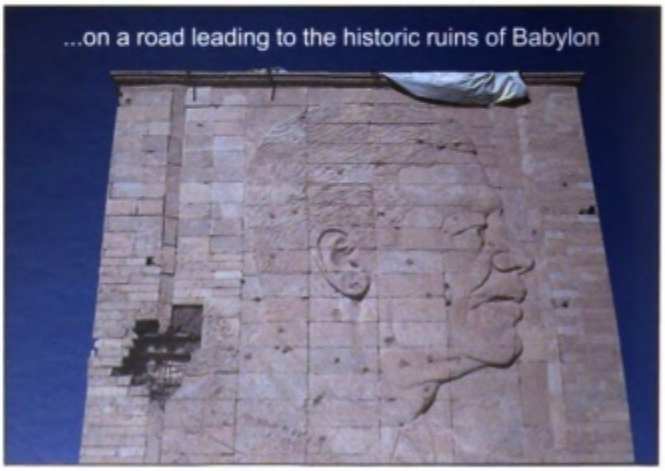
Cult of personality - usually associated with dictatorships, arises when an individual uses mass media, propaganda, or other methods to create an idealized and heroic public image.

Over the course of Saddam Hussein's reign, thousands of portraits, posters, statues and murals were erected in his honor all over Iraq. His face could be seen on the sides of office buildings, schools, airports, and shops, as well as on Iraqi currency. Very few images remain intact today.



...from the parapet of Al Salaam Presidential Palace in Baghdad

...in Baghdad beside the twin-decked July 14 Bridge across the Tigris River



...on a road leading to the historic ruins of Babylon

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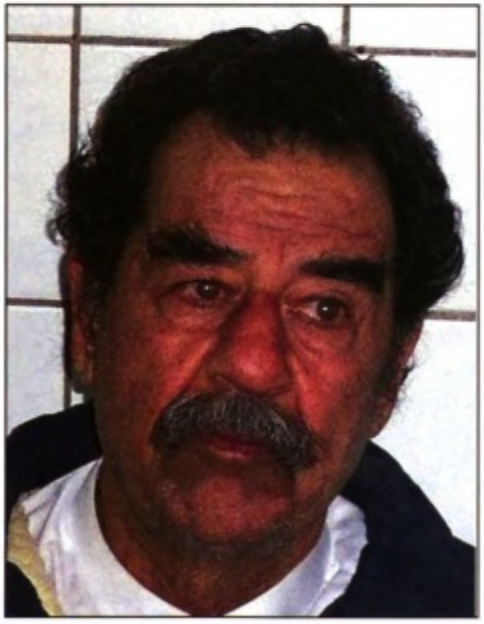
SADDAM CAPTURED!

"He was a tired man, and also a man resigned to his fate."

Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez
Commander, CJTF-7



Acting on intelligence garnered from the questioning of Saddam Hussein's former bodyguards and family members, **Operation Red Dawn** was conducted on **Dec. 13, 2003** in the town of ad-Dawr, Iraq, near the former leader's hometown of Tikrit.

The mission to capture the deposed Iraqi president was given to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, commanded by Maj. Gen Raymond T. Odierno and led by Col. James Hickey.

Hussein was found at the bottom of a narrow, dark hole beneath a two-room mud shack on a sheep farm. Only a styrofoam square, dirt and a rug covering the "spider hole" entrance to his hiding place separated Hussein from the U.S. forces. Despite having weapons in his possession, he offered no resistance and was initially described as being talkative and cooperative.

After a physical examination which included taking DNA samples to verify his identity, Hussein's beard was shaved - revealing a more familiar image.

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Operation Vigilant Resolve

First Battle of Fallujah

On **March 31, 2004**, four Blackwater private military contractors were guarding food shipments for a U.S. base on the outskirts of Fallujah when they took a wrong turn and entered the city. They were killed by machine gun fire and a grenade thrown through a window of their SUV. A mob then set their bodies ablaze, and their corpses were dragged through the streets before being hung over a bridge crossing the Euphrates. Photos of the event were released to news agencies worldwide, causing outrage in the United States, and prompting the announcement of a campaign to re-establish American control over the city.

In response to the killings and intense political pressure, the U.S. Marines commenced the First Battle of Fallujah, codenamed **Operation Vigilant Resolve**. They surrounded the city with the intent of capturing the individuals responsible for the killings, as well as others in the region who might have been involved in the insurgency or terrorist activities. Heavy fighting lasted until April 9, 2004, when, again under enormous public pressure, the unsuccessful offensive was called off because of great civilian losses. At that point, the Marines had only managed to gain control of a fraction of the city.

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The 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, use tactical vehicles to secure part of Highway 1 in Fallujah, and cut off traffic to the city in an attempt to isolate and root out terrorist forces responsible for recent attacks on coalition forces.

Twenty-seven American servicemen were killed in and around Fallujah during the battle, as well as hundreds of Iraqis, both civilians and insurgents.

Many of the Iraqis killed were buried inside the city's former football stadium, which became known as the Martyrs' Cemetery.

The 1st Marine Regiment in position during the battle.

Marines with Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, peer over a building top to fix in enemy targets in Al Fallujah, Iraq April 7, 2004.

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Jason L. Dunham - Medal of Honor

Cpl. Jason Lee Dunham
(November 10, 1981 – April 22, 2004)

On April 14, 2004, Cpl. Dunham of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, was on a reconnaissance misssion in Karabilah, Iraq. He and his squad heard gunfire a short distance from their location, and were proceeding on foot when an insurgent leapt from his car and attacked Dunham. A scuffle ensued as two Marines approached to help, Dunham reportedly shouted his last words, "No, No. Watch his hands." When the insurgent dropped a grenade, Dunham deliberately threw himself upon it, attempting to use his helmet to shield himself and others from the explosion.

The blast knocked out and seriously wounded all 3 Marines. Eight days later, Dunham died at Bethesda Naval Hospital from wounds he received in the incident. He was 22.

Dunham is survived by his parents, two brothers and a sister.

Dunham shared his Nov. 10 birthday with the U.S. Marine Corps. He is the first Marine to receive the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War. Dunham has also received other honors, including being the namesake of a United States Navy destroyer, a post office, and Marine Corps barracks.

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President George W. Bush presents the Medal of Honor to Cpl. Dunham's family during a White House ceremony Jan. 11, 2007. "By his selflessness, Cpl. Dunham saved the lives of two of his men, and showed the world what it means to be a Marine," said Bush.

Sgt. Mark Dean (right), one of Dunham's close friends, and Maj. Trent A. Gibson, Dunham's former company commander, sort through the pieces of the Kevlar helmet Dunham used to help absorb the blast of the grenade that mortally wounded him. The pair delivered the helmet to the National Museum of the Marine Corps to be preserved and displayed.

Cpl. Dunham's dress blue uniform is displayed on the quarterdeck of the USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109). The Navy's newest guided-missile destroyer was commissioned at Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale, November 13, 2010.

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Abu Ghraib Prison

On **April 30, 2004**, the U.S. military made public photographs depicting prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib Prison by Army personnel.

Physical, psychological, and sexual abuse including torture, rape, sodomy, and homicide of prisoners held in the Abu Ghraib prison were alleged. Service members were shown systematically abusing detainees using a variety of unauthorized interrogation techniques.

One prisoner died after being interrogated and tortured by a CIA agent and private contactor using physical violence and strappado hanging, whereby the victim is hung from the wrists with the hands tied behind the back.

Seventeen Soldiers and officers were removed from duty. Eleven were charged with dereliction of duty, maltreatment, aggravated assault and battery. Between May 2004 and March 2006, the 11, including eight from the 372nd Military Police Company, were found guilty in courts martial, sentenced to military prison and dishonorably discharged.

One member of the 372nd was awarded the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for exposing the abuse.

Coalition Provisional Authority

L. Paul Bremer (second from left) and four members of the Iraqi Governing Council.

On **June 28, 2004**, L. Paul Bremer, U.S. presidential envoy to Iraq and administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, officially handed over sovereignty to the interim Iraqi government.

The CPA was established as a transitional government following the liberation of Iraq by the U.S. and its allies (members of the Multi-National Force – Iraq), which was formed to oust the government of Saddam Hussein. Citing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483, and the laws of war, the CPA vested itself with executive, legislative, and judicial authority over the Iraqi government from the period of the CPA's inception on April 21, 2003, until its dissolution.

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Multi-National Force - Iraq (MNF-I)
Multi-National Corps - Iraq (MNC-I)

Combined Joint Task Force - 7 was redesignated as Multi-National Force - Iraq, May 15, 2004, under the command of Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez. Multi-National Corps - Iraq, commanded by Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz, was established as a subordinate headquarters. MNF-I and MNC-I were created by essentially splitting the staff of CJTF-7. The intent was to stand up a strategic-level headquarters to support the June 28 handover of authority to the Iraqi interim government.

MNF-I, a four-star multi-national command, was established to handle strategic level issues while MNC-I, a three-star headquarters, directed the tactical battle. Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. succeeded Sanchez as MNF-I commanding general on July 1, 2004.

The changes were made amid concerns that the headquarters CJTF-7 was not sufficient to handle the range of military operations in Iraq including peace support, civil military operations, and at the same time conduct strategic engagements such as talking to the sheiks and political authorities. Those are typically functions that are performed by two different headquarters.

MNF-I objectives were outlined by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell in a letter to the UN Security Council:

> ***"The MNF under unified command is prepared to continue to contribute to the maintenance of security in Iraq, including by preventing and deterring terrorism and protecting the territory of Iraq. The goal of the MNF will be to help the Iraqi people to complete the political transition and will permit the United Nations and the international community to work to facilitate Iraq's reconstruction."***

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Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq (MNSTC-I)

On June 28, 2004, Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq was activated with Lt. Gen. David H. Petreaus in command. MNSTC-I, the successor to the Office of Security Transition under the Coalition Provisional Office, assumed responsibility for training, mentoring, and equipping the Iraqi security forces. The goal was to allow the Iraqi security forces to increasingly assume responsibility for population protection and to develop Iraqi security institutions capable of sustaining security with reduced coalition involvement.

The three main sections of MNSTC-I were the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, or CPATT, which organized, trained, and equipped the Iraqi police; the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, or CMATT, which organized, trained, and equipped the Iraqi army; and the Joint Headquarters Advisory Support Team, which assisted the joint headquarters of the Iraqi army in developing a command and control system. The JHQAST also assisted in operational planning and gave strategic advice to the Iraqi government.

The commander of MNSTC-I was "dual-hatted" as the commander of NATO Training Mission - Iraq. The NTM-I was established at the request of the Iraqi interim government to assist in the development of Iraqi security forces training structures and institutions so that Iraq could build an effective and sustainable capability that addressed the needs of the nation.

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IRAQI GOVERNANCE

29 June 2004 - 15 December 2005

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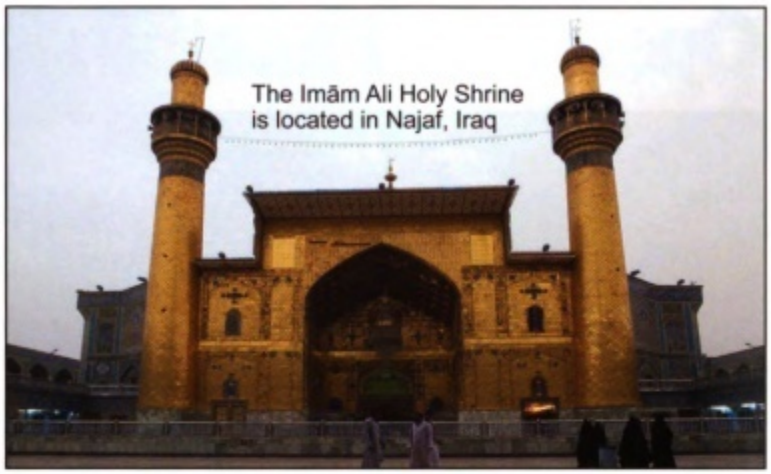
Battle of Najaf 2


The Imām Ali Holy Shrine is located in Najaf, Iraq

The second **Battle of Najaf** was fought between U.S. Marines, Soldiers, and Iraqi national guard troops on one side and Muqtada al-Sadr's Islamist Mahdi army on the other, in the Iraqi city of Najaf in **August 2004**.

Major conflict began on Aug. 5, 2004, when the Mahdi army attacked an Iraqi police station. At the request of the governor of Najaf, a quick reaction force from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit was dispatched and came under heavy machine gun and mortar fire from the Mahdi Army.

The battle was mostly centered around the Wadi-us-Salaam, the largest cemetery in the Muslim world. After several days, the fighting shifted to the environs of the Imam Ali Mosque, one of the holiest of all Shiite shrines, when the Mahdi army took refuge there. Marines from the 11th MEU encircled the complex and began a siege.

On August 26, 2004, two U.S. jetfighters dropped four 2000-pound bombs on two hotels near the shrine. The successful airstrike dealt a devastating blow to Sadr and led to a hasty settlement with Grand Ayatollah Sistani the following morning.

The battle ended on August 27, 2004 with a ceasefire: both U.S. forces and Mahdi army agreed to withdraw from the city; Mahdi army fighters surrendered their weapons before leaving and the Iraqi police took control of the security in the city.

A Soldier with 1st Cavalry Division's Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, looks through binoculars at smoke rising near the Wadi-us-Salaam cemetery.

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Operation Phantom Fury

Second Battle of Fallujah

U.S. Marines fight in the city of Fallujah during Operation Phantom Fury/Operation Al Fajr in November 2004.

The Second Battle of Fallujah — code-named Operation Al-Fajr (Arabic for "the dawn") and Operation Phantom Fury — was a U.S.-Iraqi -British offensive that took place in **November and December 2004**.

Operation Phantom Fury was the bloodiest battle of the Iraq War. It was led by the U.S. Marine Corps against the Iraqi insurgency stronghold in the city of Fallujah and was authorized by the U.S.-appointed Iraqi interim government.

In the months since the first Fallujah battle, Operation Vigilant Resolve, insurgent strength and control grew exponentially. A senior U.S. official said that catching Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, said to be in Fallujah, was now "the highest priority," and estimated his troops at 5,000 men of mostly non-Iraqis.

The six battalions of Army, Marine and Iraqi forces, moving under the cover of darkness, began the assault in the early hours of Nov. 8, 2004, prepared by an intense artillery barrage and air attack. Most of the fighting subsided by Nov. 16, 2004,

Marines continued to face determined, isolated resistance from insurgents hidden throughout the city. Sporadic fighting continued until Dec. 23, 2004, when the last pockets of resistance were neutralized.

A U.S. Army M-109A6 Howitzer sends a round down range during combat operations in Fallujah.

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A U.S. Marine Corps M-198 155mm Howitzer gun crew of 4th Battalion, 14th Marines, Mike Battery, Gun 4, at Camp Fallujah, Iraq, engages enemy targets in support of Operation Phantom Fury.

A confirmed insurgent stronghold goes up in smoke after a strategic aerial strike during Operation Al Fajr, an offensive meant to eradicate enemy insurgents in Fallujah, Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division prepare to enter and clear a building during fighting in Fallujah, November 2004.

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2004 Coalition Force Departures

NEW ZEALAND
TROOPS: 61
DEPLOYED:
September 2003
DEPARTED:
September 2004

PHILIPPINES
TROOPS: 51
DEPLOYED:
July 2003
DEPARTED:
July 2004

ICELAND
TROOPS: 3
DEPLOYED:
May 2003
DEPARTED:
August 2004

HONDURAS
TROOPS: 368
DEPLOYED:
August 2003
WITHDRAWN:
May 2004

NICARAGUA
TROOPS: 230
DEPLOYED:
September 2003
DEPARTED:
February 2004

SPAIN
TROOPS: 1300
DEPLOYED:
April 2003
DEPARTED:
April 2004

THAILAND
TROOPS: 423
DEPLOYED:
August 2003
DEPARTED:
September 2004

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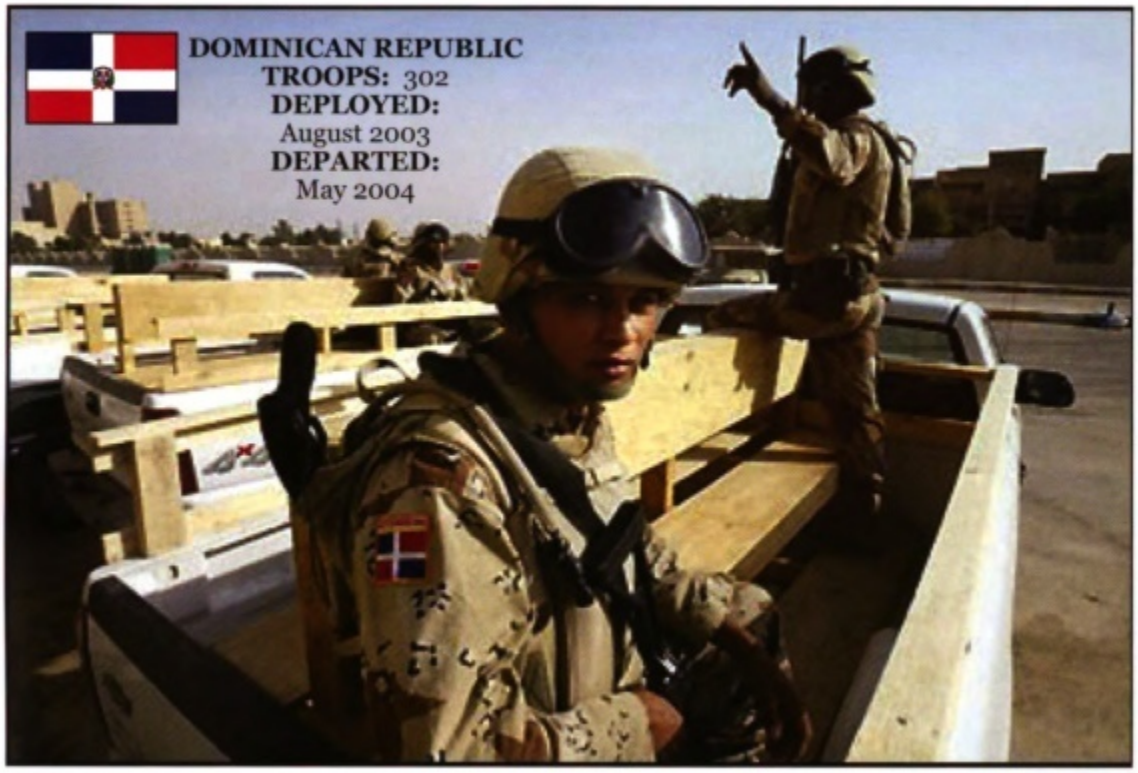

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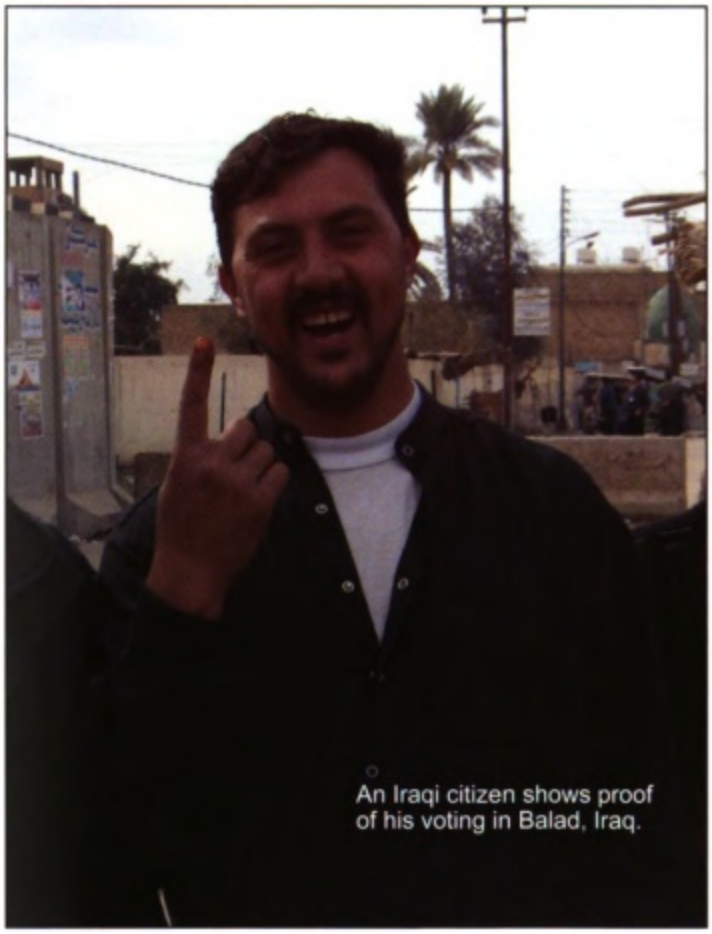
Iraq Elections: Phase 1

On **Jan. 30, 2005**, Iraq held the first competitive election in 50 years. A total of 8.5 million people voted - about 58% of those Iraqis eligible to do so.

Violence accompanied the voting, with 260 attacks taking place on election day - the most since the start of the war.

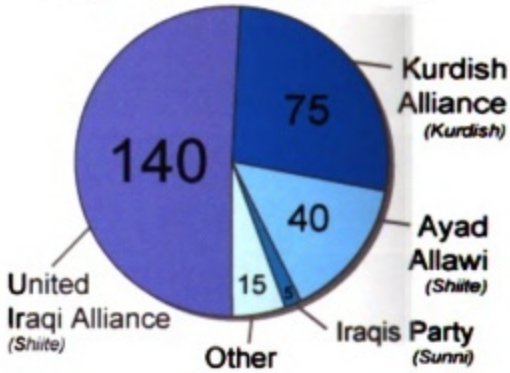
The United Iraq Alliance, a coalition of Shiites, received 48% of the vote and Kurdish parties received 26%. Due to a boycott called by Sunni leaders, the Sunnis garnered only 2%of the vote.

The newly elected transitional assembly was given a mandate to write the new and permanent constitution of Iraq and exercised legislative functions until the new constitution came into effect, and resulted in the formation of the Iraqi Transitional Government.



An Iraqi citizen shows proof of his voting in Balad, Iraq.

Iraqi National Assembly



A ban on driving cars is no deterrent to hundreds of residents of the Al Mansour district of Baghdad, Iraq, as they walk along a freeway to head to the polls to cast their ballots during the first free Iraqi election, Jan. 30, 2005. Millions of Iraqis throughout the country are participating in Iraq's first free election in over 50 years.

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Abdul Aziz al-Hakim casts his vote at a polling station in Baghdad. His United Iraqi Alliance won the most seats in this election.

An Iraqi man at a polling station in Tikrit, Iraq, undergoes the initial steps to cast his vote in the Jan. 30, 2005, election.

Soldiers from Company A, 3/21 Infantry, 25th Infantry Division and Iraqi army soldiers move tactically down a street, providing security during the Iraqi elections in Mosul, Iraq on Jan. 30, 2005.

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High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HUMMWV or Humvee)

Feb. 12, 2005 - Multi-National Force - Iraq issues an order prohibiting unarmored U.S. military tactical vehicles from operation off foward operating bases.

2005 Coalition Force Departures

PORTUGAL
TROOPS: 128
DEPLOYED:
November 2003
DEPARTED:
February 2005

NETHERLANDS
TROOPS: 1345
DEPLOYED:
July 2003
DEPARTED:
March 2005

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Leigh Ann Hester - Silver Star

Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester

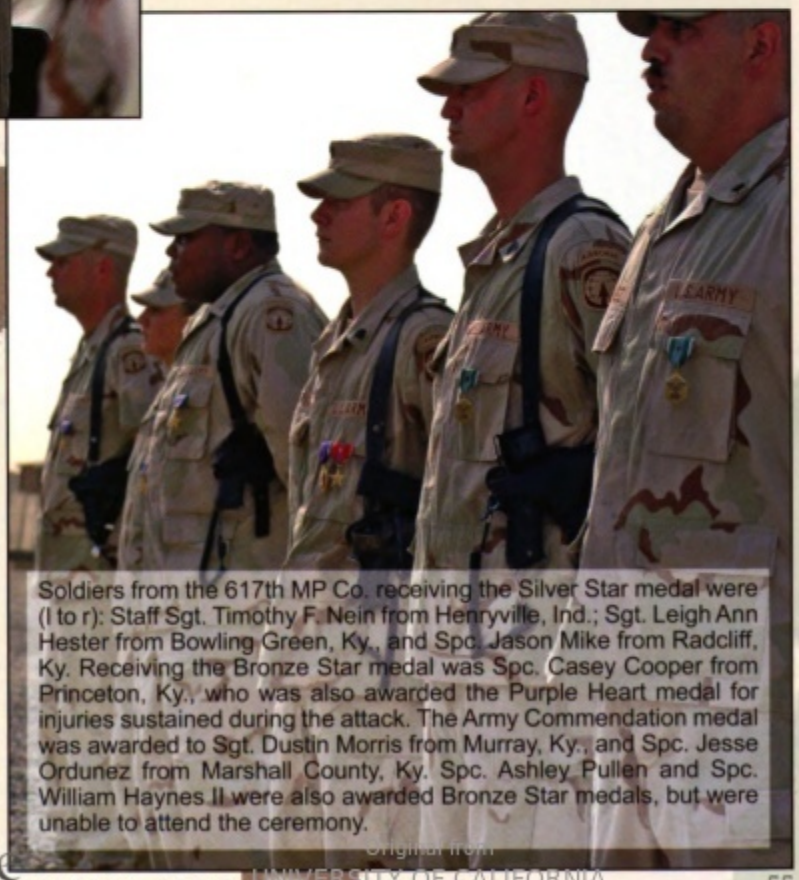
As a member of the 617th Military Police Company, a National Guard unit out of Richmond, Ky., Hester became the first female soldier to receive the Silver Star for exceptional valor since World War II and the first ever to receive the medal for direct actions against an enemy force.

On **March 20, 2005**, the 617th MP Co. was following a supply convoy near the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, when they were ambushed by insurgents.

The squad quickly moved into position, cutting off the enemy's escape route. Hester led her team through a "kill zone" and into a flanking position, and then began an assault on a trench line. Hester and her squad leader, Staff Sgt. Timothy F. Nein, successfully assaulted and cleared two trenches.

When the battle was over, 27 insurgents were dead, six were wounded, and one captured. For their actions, Hester, Nein and Spc. Jason Mike, a medic with the unit, were awarded the Silver Star. Nein's award was later upgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross.

On Feb. 17, 2007, Nein received the **Distinguished Service Cross** from Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau.



Soldiers from the 617th MP Co. receiving the Silver Star medal were (l to r): Staff Sgt. Timothy F. Nein from Henryville, Ind.; Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester from Bowling Green, Ky., and Spc. Jason Mike from Radcliff, Ky. Receiving the Bronze Star medal was Spc. Casey Cooper from Princeton, Ky., who was also awarded the Purple Heart medal for injuries sustained during the attack. The Army Commendation medal was awarded to Sgt. Dustin Morris from Murray, Ky., and Spc. Jesse Ordunez from Marshall County, Ky. Spc. Ashley Pullen and Spc. William Haynes II were also awarded Bronze Star medals, but were unable to attend the ceremony.

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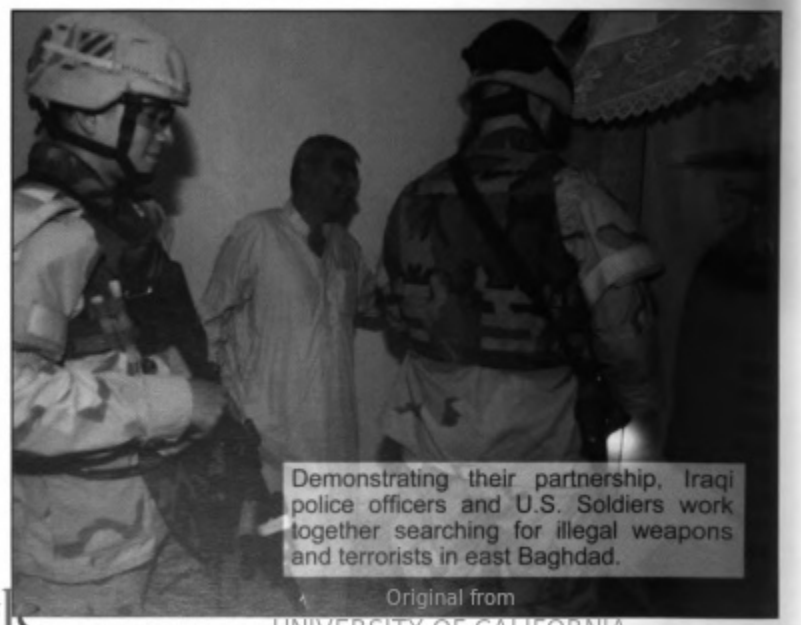
April, 22, 2005 - Police Partnership Program Implementation started with a goal of building up the capacity of Iraqi police service.

An Iraqi police officer reassures a young child during a search for terrorists in east Baghdad during operations involving U.S. Soldiers and the Iraqi police.



Demonstrating their partnership, Iraqi police officers and U.S. Soldiers work together searching for illegal weapons and terrorists in east Baghdad.

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Spc. Nicole Renfro of the 940th Military Police Co., instructs local Iraqi women on the fundamental operations of a hand gun. This type of training is provided to help develop the female integration into the Iraqi police forces, providing the unique services needed for crimes against women and children.

Iraqi children study grammar as members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team from Tupelo, Miss., deliver school supplies to Al Mutnba Primary school located near Camp Kalsu. The plan included connecting them with a U.S. school to help with supplies and start a pen pal program.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafaari address members of the press about the improvements and new plans for deployed service members and the Iraqi people at the Iraqi government building in the International Zone of Baghdad, Iraq. Rice made a surprise visit to service members and civilians in Iraq, May 15, 2005. The one-day trip was her first visit to Iraq as the top diplomat in the U.S.

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Coalition forces participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom peaked at more than 40 nations.

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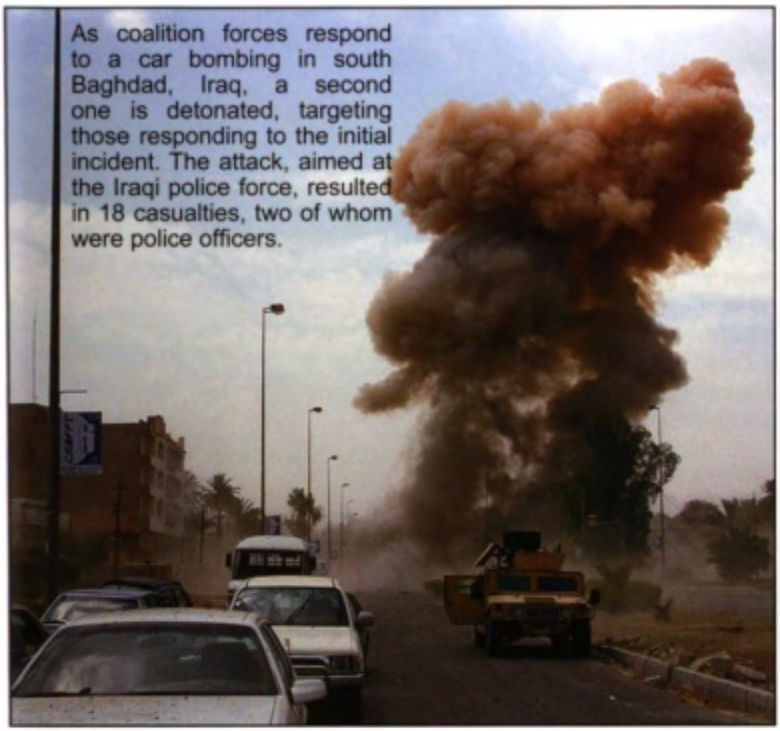

As coalition forces respond to a car bombing in south Baghdad, Iraq, a second one is detonated, targeting those responding to the initial incident. The attack, aimed at the Iraqi police force, resulted in 18 casualties, two of whom were police officers.

On **June 3, 2005**, it was reported that May 2005 was estimated to have had the highest number of incidents involving vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices or VBIEDs. There were 142 attacks in a 32-day period.

VBIEDs are improvised explosive devices placed in cars or other vehicles and then detonated. They are commonly used as weapons of assassination, terrorism, or guerrilla warfare to kill the occupants of the vehicles and people near the blast sites, or to damage buildings or other property. VBIEDs act as their own delivery mechanisms and can carry relatively large amount of explosives without attracting suspicion. They can be activated in various ways from manually operating the vehicle's mechanisms to using remote detonations.

U.S. Army Humvee burns after a VBIED attack in Baghdad, Iraq.

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New Iraqi Constitution Ratified

The national assembly elected in January 2005, drafted a new constitution to be ratified in a national referendum on **Oct. 15, 2005**. For ratification, the constitution required a majority national vote, but could be blocked by a two-thirds "no" vote in at least three of the 18 provinces.

In the actual vote, 79% of the voters voted in favor, and there was a two-thirds "no" vote in only two mostly Sunni Arab governates. Despite their substantially greater turnout than for the January elections, the Sunnis were unable to garner a third province to defeat the constitution.

Elections were held under the new constitution on Dec. 15, 2005 for a new Iraqi national assembly.

A yes-or-no ballot from the Kurdish Military Training Base asks voters "Do you agree with the new constitution?"

At a Baghdad polling station, an Iraqi soldier keeps a watchful eye out for suspicious activity while his comrade searches voters in the background, Oct. 15, 2005.

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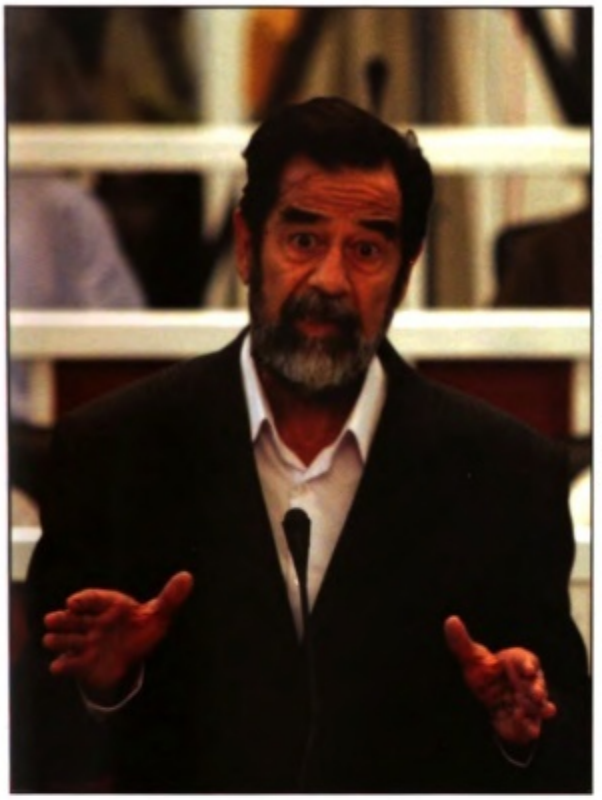

Trial Of Saddam Hussein

On **Oct. 19, 2005**, the trial of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein began. The Iraqi Special Tribunal, consisting of five Iraqi judges, had been created to try Hussein and his aides for charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

In his defense, Saddam asserted that he had been unlawfully overthrown and was still the president of Iraq.

Hussein was found guilty on charges of crimes against humanity. On Nov. 5, 2006, he was sentenced to death by hanging. He appealed, but on Dec. 26, the appeal was rejected and the death sentence upheld.

"I don't answer this so-called court, with all due respect. And I reserve my constitutional right as the president of the country of Iraq, I will not go along...

I don't acknowledge either the entity that authorizes you, nor the aggression because everything based on falsehood is falsehood..."

Saddam Hussein
Former President of Iraq

Saddam Hussein sits before an Iraqi judge at a courthouse in Baghdad, Iraq, where he has his initial interview to inform him of his charges and legal rights.

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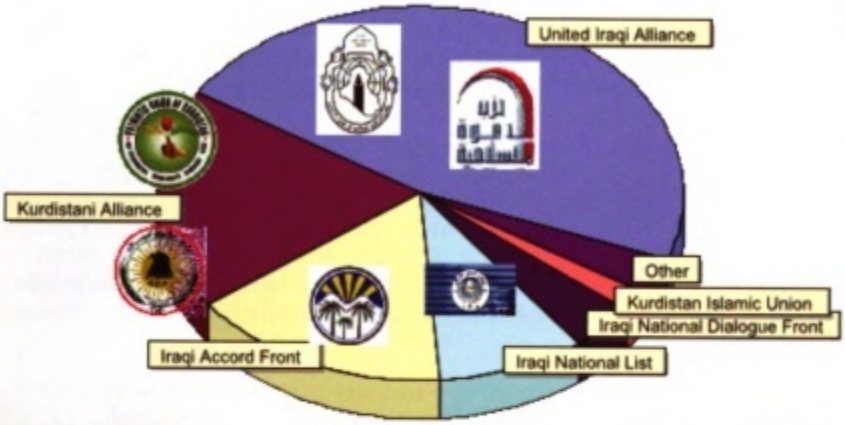
Iraq Elections: Phase 2

December 15, 2005

United Iraqi Alliance	128
Kurdistani Alliance	53
Iraqi Accord Front	44
Iraqi National List	25
Iraqi National Dialogue Front	11
Kurdistan Islamic Union	5
Other	9



Following the ratification of the constitution of Iraq on Oct. 15, 2005, a general election was held on **Dec. 15**, to elect a permanent 275-member Iraqi council of representatives.

Turnout was high, at 79.6 percent. The elections took place under a list system - voters chose from a list of parties and coalitions. Eighteen Iraqi governorates divided 230 seats based on the number of registered voters in each as of the January 2005 elections, including 59 seats for Baghdad Governorate.

After six months of negotiations a "government of national unity" was agreed on between the various parties, under the leadership of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

Tariq Al-Hashimi, Vice President of Iraq, Iraqi Accord Front

Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq, United Iraqi Alliance

A group of Iraqi citizens show their purple fingers, signifying they voted in their country's first parliamentary election.

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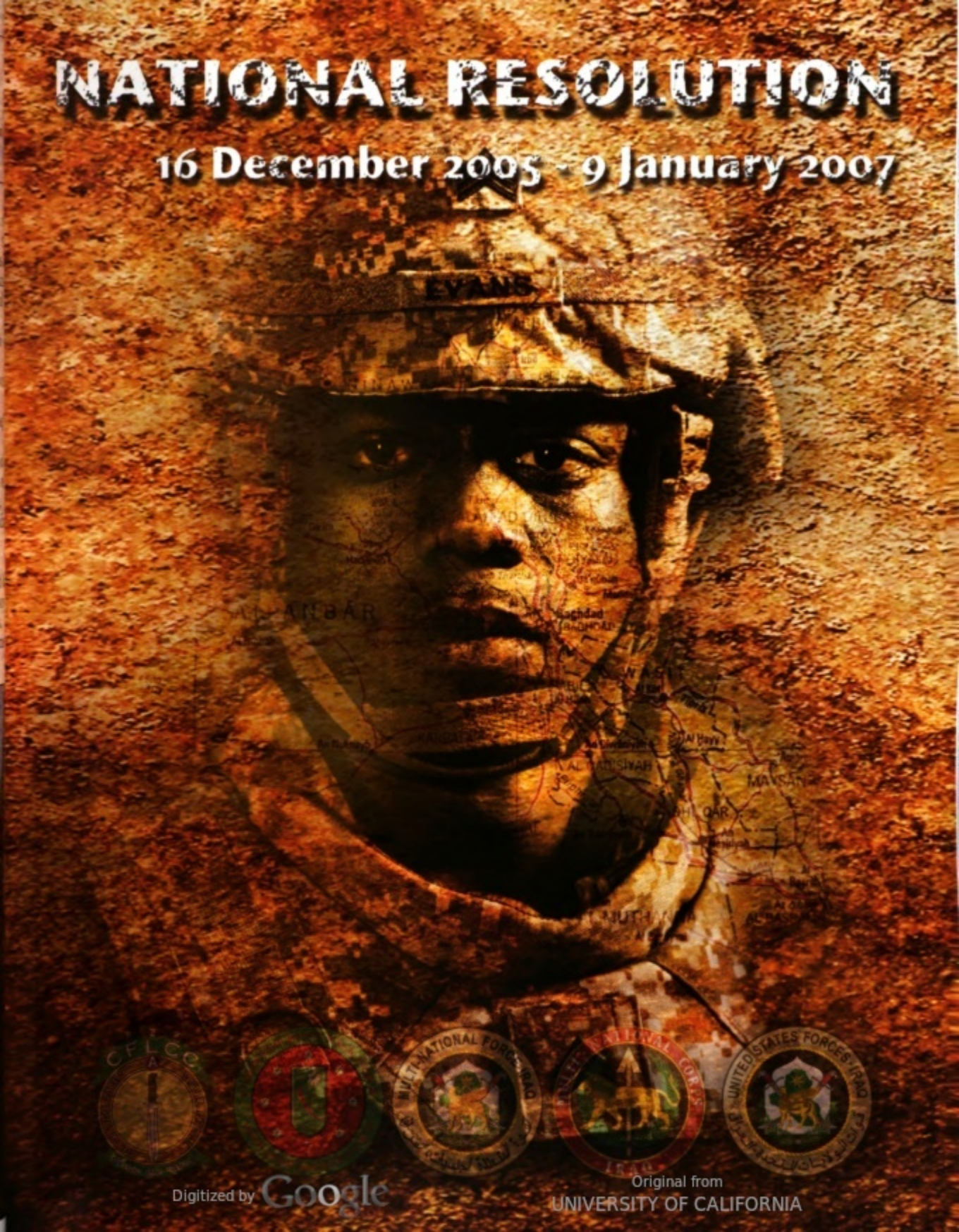
NATIONAL RESOLUTION

16 December 2005 - 9 January 2007



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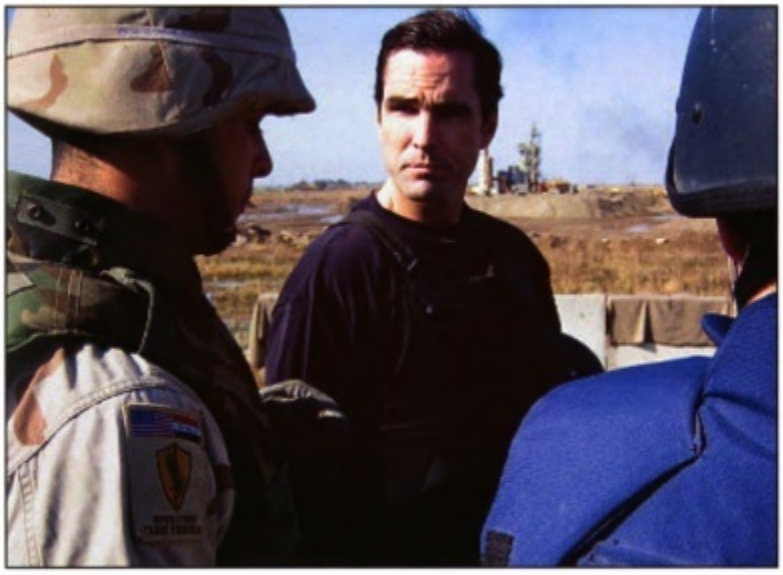

On **Jan.29, 2006**, while embedded with the 4th Infantry Division, Bob Woodruff and Canadian cameraman Doug Vogt were seriously injured in an improvised explosive device incident near Taji, Iraq, north of Baghdad.

At the time of the attack, they were travelling in an Iraqi MT-LB and wearing body armor and protective helmets. Woodruff sustained shrapnel wounds; Vogt was struck by shrapnel in the head and suffered a broken shoulder. At the U.S. Air Force hospital south of Balad, a joint Army and Air Force neurosurgical team performed surgery on both men for head injuries. Tom Brokaw reported on the Today show that a portion of Woodruff's skull had to be removed to reduce the damage from brain swelling.

Woodruff and Vogt were evacuated to the U.S. Army Medical Command hospital at Landstuhl, Germany. After leaving Germany, Woodruff was treated for weeks at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md., where he was kept in a medically induced coma for 36 days to assist his recovery. Woodruff returned to Iraq in July 2009 to visit the Soldiers with whom he was traveling at the time of his injury.

May 20, 2006

The first permanent government of Iraq since 2003 takes office when the Council of Representatives approves Prime Minister al-Maliki's cabinet - ending the Iraqi Transitional Government.

Inside of the Baghdad Convention Center, meeting place of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

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In **July 2006**, the trained and equipped Iraqi security force totalled 269,642. MNF-I reported that the total number of Iraqi army and national police had quadrupled over the past year.

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MNF-I reports that July 2006 had the highest number of total casualties on record. Civilians accounted for 74% of all casualties.

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Iraqi Ground Forces Command

On the **Sep. 7, 2006**, Multi-National Force – Iraq commander, Gen. George Casey, officiated the stand-up ceremony of the Iraqi Ground Forces Command.

The IGFC serves as the operational fighting headquarters for the Iraqi army and is the equivalent to a U.S. corps-level command center. The IGFC's mission is to exercise command and control of assigned Iraqi army forces and, upon assuming operational control of Iraqi army formations, to plan and direct operations to defeat the terrorist and insurgent threat and preserve Iraq as a sovereign, democratic nation.

The Joint Headquarters Advisory Support Team, a subordinate element of MNSTC-I, was tasked to mentor and assist the IGFC in becoming capable of exercising effective national command and control of the Iraqi armed forces, contributing to the capability development process, and contributing to improving the internal security situation within Iraq in partnership with coalition forces.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, takes a pen from top U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. George Casey, after signing a document which put the Iraqi prime minister in direct control of the country's military, at a ceremony, in Baghdad, Iraq, Sept. 7, 2006. Coalition forces handed over control of Iraq's armed forces command to the government, a move U.S. officials have hailed as a crucial milestone on the country's difficult road to independence.

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Michael Monsoor - Medal of Honor

Petty Officer Second Class
Michael Anthony Monsoor
(April 5, 1981 – September 29, 2006)

On September 29, 2006 an insurgent threw a grenade onto a rooftop where Monsoor and several other members of his SEAL Team 3 and some Iraqi soldiers were positioned.

Of the three SEALs on that rooftop corner, he had the only avenue of escape away from the blast, and if he had so chosen, he could have easily escaped. Instead, Monsoor chose to protect his comrades by sacrificing his own life.

Monsoor quickly smothered the grenade with his body, absorbing the resulting explosion and saving his comrades from serious injury or death. He died 30 minutes later from serious wounds caused by the grenade explosion.

Monsoor is survived by his parents, two brothers, a sister, nieces and nephews.

Monsoor became the fourth American service member and second Navy SEAL — killed in the line of duty — to receive the United States' highest military award during the War on Terror. He was also awarded the Silver Star for his actions on May 9, 2006, when he ran into a street while under continuous insurgent gunfire to rescue an injured comrade.

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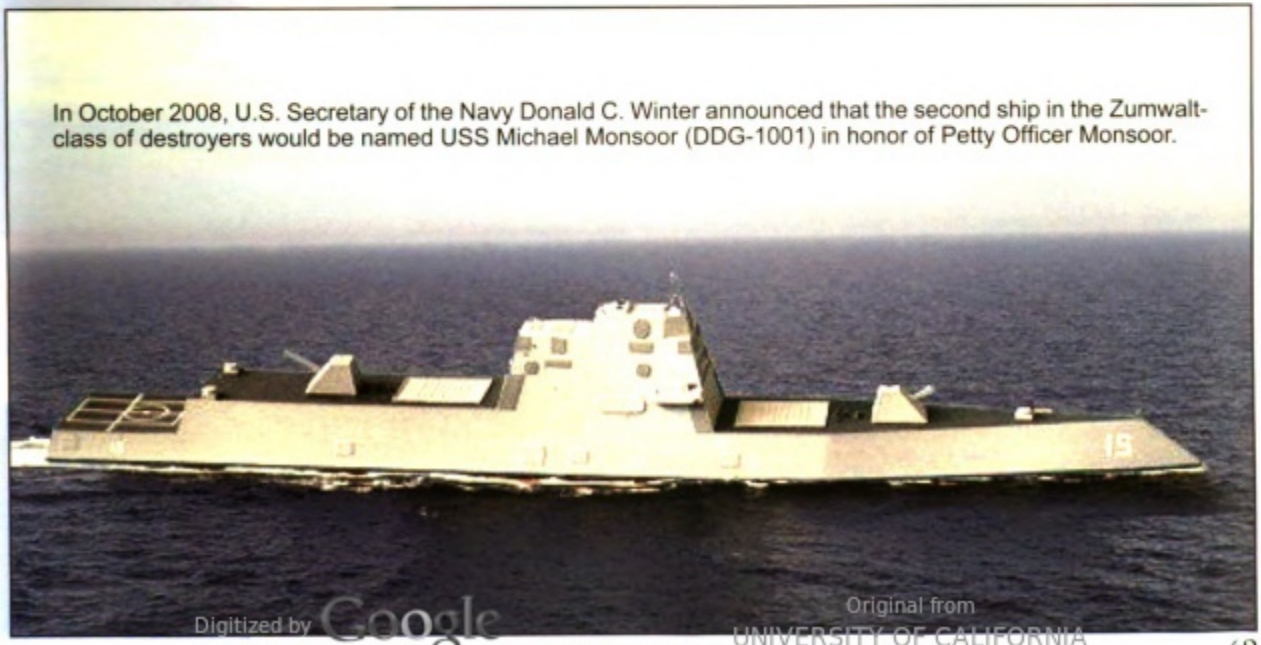
George and Sally Monsoor look at the Medal of Honor presented to them in honor of their son by President George W. Bush, April 8, 2008, during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House.

Monsoor and members of his SEAL team during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In October 2008, U.S. Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter announced that the second ship in the Zumwalt-class of destroyers would be named USS Michael Monsoor (DDG-1001) in honor of Petty Officer Monsoor.



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Operations Together Forward I & II

By the beginning of **November 2006**, Operation Together Forward was considered a failure and abandoned.

In response to the increased sectarian violence, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki announced a plan to institute new measures to increase security conditions in Baghdad. OTF was planned to be led primarily by Iraqis, but with coalition support.

New measures of the operation included curfews, increased checkpoints and patrols, and greater restrictions on carrying weapons. Iraqi and coalition troops also raided terrorist cells to disrupt insurgent activities through active missions against suspected insurgent locations.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment, seek information from an Iraqi woman in Baghdad.

Soldiers from Multi-National Division - Baghdad and Iraqi security forces killed or captured suspected insurgents, conducted combat patrols, and seized weapons and ammunition caches.

Operation Together Forward II, the second phase of the Iraqi-led operation, was to capitilize on gains made during Phase I. MND-B soldiers and the Iraqi sercurity forces worked together again, but OTF II was to give Iraqi forces the chance to operate with more autonomy.

Under OTF II, U.S. and Iraqi forces moved into neighborhoods, clearing the area of extremist elements, holding cleared areas securely, and building up essential services and infrastructure. Unfortunately, more emphasis was placed on the pace of clearing operations, rather than holding and rebuilding cleared neighborhoods.

Ultimately, neither the Iraqis nor the coalition had the numbers or capabilities to hold neighborhoods that had been cleared. As a result, enemy elements were able to reinfiltrate these neighborhoods.

Resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

On **Nov. 1, 2006**, President George W. Bush stated that despite calls for Donald Rumsfeld's resignation, he would stand by his defense secretary for the length of his term as president. Rumsfeld wrote a resignation letter dated Nov. 6, which, according to the stamp on the letter, Bush saw on Election Day, Nov. 7. In the elections, the House and the Senate shifted to Democratic control.

On Nov. 8, Bush announced Rumsfeld would resign his position as Secretary of Defense. Many Republicans were reportedly unhappy with the delay, believing they would have won more votes if voters had known Rumsfeld was resigning.

Dr. Roberts Gates was selected as Rumsfeld's replacement.

President George W. Bush shakes the hand of outgoing Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, after the announcement of the Secretary's resignation.

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2006 Coalition Force Departures

JAPAN
TROOPS: 600
DEPLOYED:
January 2004
DEPARTED:
July 2006

NORWAY
TROOPS: 150
DEPLOYED:
July 2003
DEPARTED:
August 2006

ITALY
TROOPS: 3200
DEPLOYED:
July 2003
DEPARTED:
November 2006

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Ross A. McGinnis - Medal of Honor

Spc. Ross Andrew McGinnis
(June 14, 1987 – December 4, 2006)

McGinnis was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions while serving with Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 2nd "Dagger" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

On Dec. 4, 2006, while on mounted patrol in Adhamiyah, a grenade was thrown into his vehicle. McGinnis alerted the other four passengers and could have jumped out of the gunner's hatch - but chose not to. Instead, he threw himself over the grenade, absorbing the bulk of the blast. McGinnis saved the lives of his friends, and sacrificed his own life in the process.

McGinnis is buried in Arlington National Cemetery (section 60, lot 8544). He is survived by his parents and two sisters.

McGinnis knew he wanted to be a Soldier at a very young age. In kindergarten, he drew an "Army man" when asked to show what he wanted to be when he grew up. In addition to the Medal of Honor he also received a posthumous promotion to specialist, and earned the Silver Star, Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

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President George W. Bush leads the applause in honor of McGinnis, after presenting the Medal of Honor to his parents, Tom and Romayne McGinnis, of Knox, Penn., during ceremonies, June 2, 2008, at the White House.

While at Arlington Cemetery to give Veterans Day remarks on Nov. 11, 2009, President Barack Obama leaves a presidential coin at McGinnis's gravesite.

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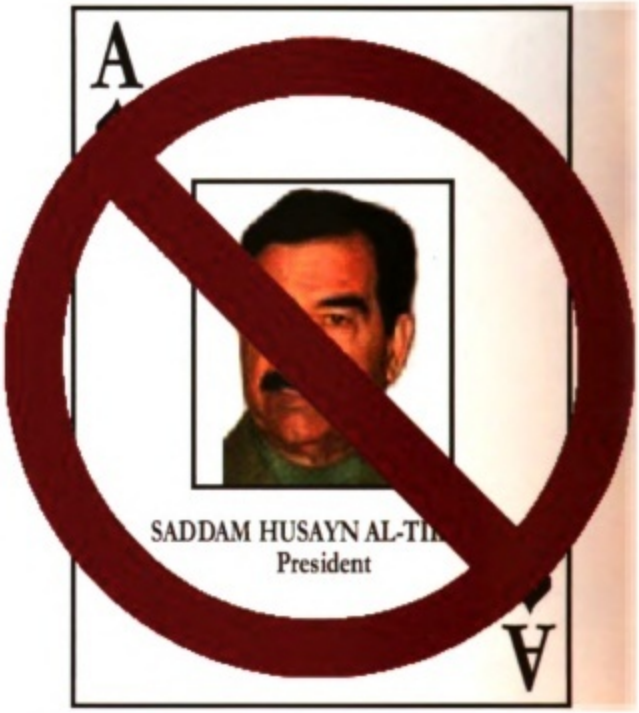
Execution Of Saddam Hussein

The execution of Saddam Hussein took place on **Dec. 30, 2006**. He was sentenced to death by hanging, after being convicted of crimes against humanity by the Iraqi Special Tribunal for the murder of 148 Iraqi Shi'ite in the town of Dujail in 1982, in retaliation for an assassination attempt against him.

The execution took place at the joint Iraqi-American military base Camp Justice, located in Kadhimiya, a north-eastern suburb of Baghdad. Camp Justice was previously used by Saddam as his military intelligence headquarters, then known as Camp Banzai, where Iraqi civilians were taken to be tortured and executed on the same gallows.

Saddam's body was buried in his birthplace of Al-Awja in Tikrit, Iraq, near family members, including his two sons Uday and Qusay Hussein, on Dec. 31, 2006.



This video image, released by Iraqi state television, shows guards wearing ski masks placing a noose around Saddam Hussein's neck moments before his execution. Clutching a Quran and refusing a hood, Hussein went to the gallows before sunrise, Dec. 30, 2006.

A mourner is provided assistance when he is emotionally overcome at the grave of Saddam Hussein.

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IRAQI SURGE

10 January 2007 - 31 December 2008

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New Way Forward In Iraq

"America will change our strategy to help the Iraqis carry out their campaign to put down sectarian violence and bring security to the people of Baghdad. This will require increasing American force levels. So I've committed more than 20,000 additional American troops to Iraq. The vast majority of them- five brigades- will be deployed to Baghdad."

President George W. Bush
Jan. 10, 2007

In the "Fact Sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq " issued by the White House, the president's new Iraq strategy was rooted in six fundamental elements, as follow:

Let the Iraqis lead
Help Iraqis protect the population
Isolate extremists
Create space for political progress
Diversify political and economic efforts
Situate the strategy in a regional approach

The fact sheet further divided the proposal into four elements of the new approach: security, political, economic, and regional. Each contained subcomponent responsibilities for three categories: Iraqis only, coalition only, and combined Iraqi and coalition.

The five U.S. Army brigades committed to Iraq as part of the surge:

2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Infantry): 3,447 troops.
Deployed to Baghdad, Jan. 2007

4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (Infantry): 3,447 troops.
Deployed to Baghdad, Feb. 2007

3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division (Heavy): 3,784 troops.
Deployed to southern Baghdad Belts, March 2007

4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker): 3,921 troops.
Deployed to Diyala province, April 2007

2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division (Heavy): 3,784 troops.
Deployed to the southeast of Baghdad, May 2007

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Gen. David H. Petraeus, new MNF-I commander, receives the colors from Gen. John P. Abizaid, commander, U. S. Central Command, during the change-of-command ceremony at Al Faw Palace.

On Feb. 10, 2007, Gen. David H. Petraeus assumed command of Multi-National Force-Iraq from Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., at a change of command ceremony at Al Faw Palace, Baghdad. Petraeus was also promoted shortly before the ceremony.

Casey, who served as MNF-I comander since June 2004, went on to replace Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, and become the 37th Army chief of staff. Before deploying to Iraq to assume command of the coalition, Casey had served as Schoomaker's vice chief of staff.

This was Petraeus's third tour in Iraq, having previously served as commanding general of 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) from 2003-2004 and commander of Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq from 2004-2005.

After taking command of MNF-I, Petraeus inspected U.S. and Iraqi units all over Iraq, visiting outposts in greater Baghdad, Tikrit, Baquba, Ramadi, Mosul, Kirkuk, Bayji, Samarra, Basrah and as far west as al-Hit and Al Qaim.

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Operation Law and Order

Operation Law and Order, also known as Operation Imposing Law, Operation Fardh al-Qanoon or Baghdad Security Plan, was a joint coalition-Iraqi security operation conducted throughout Baghdad. It began on **Feb. 14, 2007**, in an attempt to take back the capital city, which had come more than 70 percent under insurgent control.

Law and Order became part of Operation Phantom Thunder when the latter started in mid-June, and during that period 311 insurgents, including 26 bombers, were killed in fighting in Baghdad.

Baghdad was divided into nine security districts. Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers worked side-by-side to clear each sector of Shiite militias and Sunni insurgents, and establish joint security stations so that reconstruction programs could begin in safety.

An Iraqi national police officer pulls security alongside a Soldier from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division during raid targeting illegal weapons in Al Doura, Baghdad. The graffiti on the wall reads "God is great" in Arabic.

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This new security plan involved three basic parts: clear, control and retain.

- **CLEAR** out extremist elements neighborhood by neighborhood
- **CONTROL** by maintaining a full-time presence on the streets by building and maintaining joint security stations throughout the city.
- **RETAIN** -- when the Iraqi security forces are fully responsible for the day-to-day security mission, coalition forces begin to move out of the neighborhood and into locations where they can respond to requests for assistance as needed.

During these three phrases, efforts spearheaded by neighborhood advisory councils, district advisory councils and the government of Iraq, were ongoing. The goal was to stimulate local economies by creating employment opportunities, initiating reconstruction projects and improving the infrastructure.

U.S. Soldier checks a seized weapons cache in March 2007.

U.S. Soldiers from Company C, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, take cover during a firefight with insurgents in the Al Doura section of Baghdad March 7, 2007.

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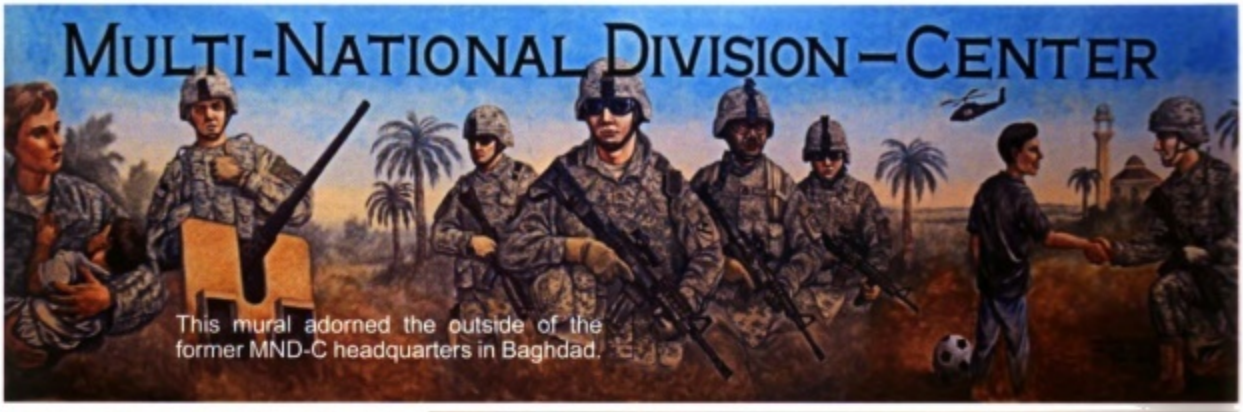
Multi-National Division – Center



This mural adorned the outside of the former MND-C headquarters in Baghdad.

On **April 1, 2007**, the 3rd Infantry Division unfurled its colors on Iraqi soil for the third time in four years and stood up Multi-National Division – Center.

With "The Surge," coalition planners determined that securing the population of Baghdad was the best way to end Iraq's cycle of spiraling sectarian violence. The southern belts around Baghdad were being used by extremists as sanctuaries to support their operations inside the city.

Multi-National Division - Center's mission was to control those belts – the Mahmudiyah and Mada'in Qadas – and the four southern provinces of Babil, Karbala, Najaf, and Wasit.

To accomplish that, MND-C took on a series of operations to clear the southern belts of Baghdad of both Sunni and Shi'a extremists from June 2007. These operations methodically pushed out from the areas closest to Baghdad, taking pains to ensure that coalition forces would not overextend themselves by clearing more territory than they could hold.

As a result, coalition operations in MND-C slowly dismantled insurgent networks in both the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys, securing those populations and helping ensure that the population in Baghdad would not face the same horrific levels of sectarian violence that previously marked so much of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On June 1, 2008, the 3rd Inf. Div. transferred authority for MND-C to the 10th Mtn. Div.

In October 2008, when Multi-National Division - Central South was disestablished, its area was absorbed by MND-C.

The successes of MND-C, aided by a grassroots movement among Iraqis rejecting the various extremist groups, resulted in more than 27,000 volunteers for Concerned Local Citizens groups (later known as the Awakening Councils, then the Sons of Iraq).

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The first shipments of MRAP vehicles arrived at Camp Liberty in western Baghdad and were fielded to units which operated in areas with the highest threat levels.

MINE RESISTANT AMBUSH PROTECTED

In the **spring of 2007**, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made the acquisition of Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles the Department of Defense's highest priority.

Prompted by U.S. deaths in Iraq, MRAPs - a design of armored fighting vehicles, initially caught the attention the U.S. Marine Corps. They were subsequently used by the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and special operations forces in Iraq with the goal of surviving IED attacks and ambushes.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, then commander of Multi-National Division - Central in Baghdad, told USA Today the 14-ton MRAPs have forced insurgents to build bigger, more sophisticated bombs to knock out the vehicles. Those bombs take more time and resources to build and set up, which gives U.S. forces a better chance of catching the insurgents in the act and then attacking them.

U.S. military has ordered the production of about 10,000 MRAPs at a cost of over $500,000 each.

This MRAP Cougar was hit in Al Anbar, Iraq by a directed-charge IED approximately 300-500 lbs in size. All crew members survived the blast.

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– The Surge –

The Surge increased the number of U.S. Army brigades in Iraq from 15 to 20. Most of the 150,000 Army personnel also had their 12-month tours extended to 15 months.

Additionally, 4,000 Marines had their 7-month tours extended by 45 to 90 days.

In **mid-June 2007**, with the full deployment of 28,000 additional U.S. troops, major counter-insurgency efforts got under way.

Operation Phantom Thunder was launched throughout Iraq with a number of subordinate operations targeting insurgents in Diyala Province, Anbar Province and the southern Baghdad belts.

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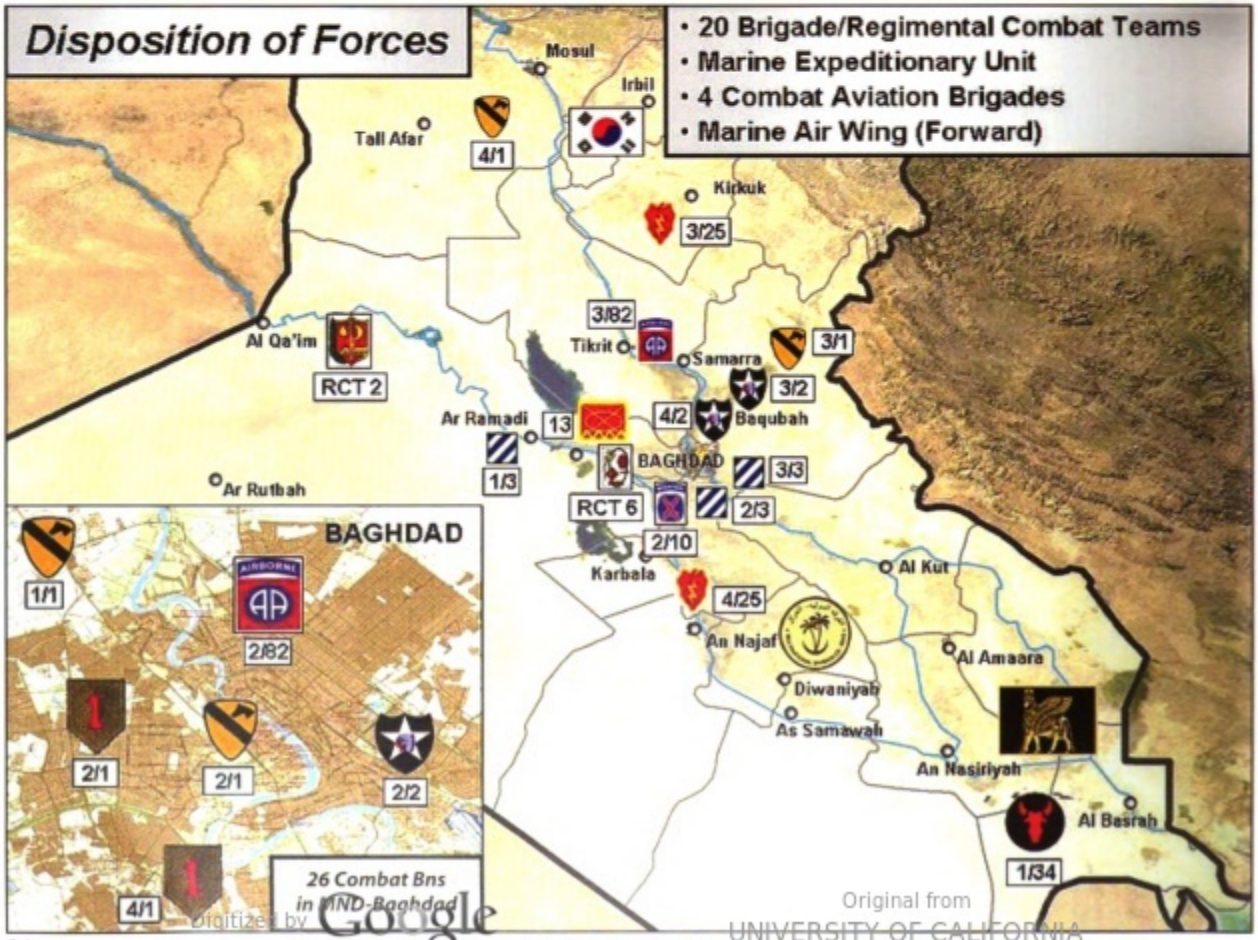
Operation Phantom Thunder

A cloud of smoke and dust envelopes U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael Mullahy seconds after he fired an AT-4 rocket launcher at an insurgent position during a firefight in Baghdad's Adhamiyah neighborhood

On **June 16, 2007**, Multi-National Force - Iraq launched major offensive operations against al-Qaeda and other extremist terrorists operating throughout Iraq. Under Operation Phantom Thunder, a corps-level operation, simultaneous clearing operations were executed in Diyala Province, Babil Province, Baghdad, Anbar Province, and actions were taken against the Mahdi army in southern Iraq.

Phantom Thunder was one of the biggest military operations in Iraq since the 2003 liberation and took advantage of the additional "Surge" troops to open the concerted attacks.



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Operation Marne Torch
began on **June 16, 2007**, conducted by MND-C (2500 coalition and Iraqi forces)
- to clear elements of the al-Qaeda in Iraq from the agricultural areas along the Tigris River southeast of Baghdad, particularly in the Arab Jabour region
- cleared 1,152 structures, killed 83 insurgents and detained 278, found 51 weapons caches, destroyed 51 boats and entered 872 citizens into the biometric identification system

Operation Arrowhead Ripper
began on **June 18, 2007**, conducted by MND-N (nearly 10,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops)
- to clear al-Qaeda from Baqubah, and secure the city
- defeated al-Qaeda in Baqubah; killed al-Qaeda emir of Baqubah and more than 100 other insurgents, detained 424 suspected insurgents, captured or destroyed 129 weapons caches, and found and reduced 250 improvised explosive devices, including 38 house-borne IEDs and 12 vehicle-borne IEDs

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Operation Commando Eagle
began on **June 21, 2007**, conducted by MND-C (coalition and Iraqi forces)
- to curb terrorist activity southwest of Baghdad through a mix of helicopter-borne air assaults and Humvee-mounted ground movements
- detained more than 30 suspected insurgents and seized multiple large caches of weapons and bomb-making materials

Operation Alljah
began in **June 2007**; conducted by MNF-W (coalition forces - mainly U.S. Marines)
- to secure the neighborhoods of Fallujah while targeting insurgents in the nearby town of Karma
- attacked insurgent supply lines and weapons caches; killed a known Libyan al-Qaeda fighter, six al-Qaeda members, five suspected insurgents, a senior al-Qaeda leader, and an al-Qaeda in Iraq battalion commander

On Aug. 14, 2007, Marines in Fallujah formally handed over full responsibility for the security of Fallujah to local police. On the same day the overall operation, Phantom Thunder, ended.

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A poster of Muqtada al Sadr in a window of an Iraqi electric plant building in Sadr City, Iraq.

On the evening of **Aug. 27, 2007**, fighting erupted near the Imam Ali shrine in Karbala between members of the Jaysh al Mehdi (the militia loyal to radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr) and the shrine guards affiliated with the Badr Organization (a group of Iraqi security forces that supported Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki). The streets were filled with pilgrims celebrating the Shi'a festival of Shabaniyah near the shrine. As the fighting escalated and continued into the next day, these worshipers were caught up in the machine gun, mortar, and grenade fire. More than 50 civilians were killed and hundreds wounded in the firefight.

The next day, Sadr issued a statement declaring a six-month suspension of all militia activities. The statement also included a ban on attacking coalition forces.

On **Sept. 10, 2007**, Gen. David H. Petraeus, Multi-National Force - Iraq commander, told members of the House Foreign Affairs and Armed Services committees that "the military objectives of 'The Surge' are, in large measure, being met."

During his highly anticipated testimony, he also said the number of troops in Iraq could be reduced from 20 brigades to 15, or from 160,000 troops to 130,000, beginning in July 2008.

Petraeus rejected suggestions that the U.S. shift from a counterinsurgency operation to training Iraqi forces and fighting terrorists. Instead, he said, the U.S. must continue all three missions.

Sept. 25, 2007
USCENTCOM reports a six-month low on attacks against coalition forces.

Oct. 1, 2007
USCENTCOM initiates the reposturing of forces in Iraq from 20 to 15 brigades starting in Dec. 2007 and finishing in July 2008.

Oct. 22, 2007
USCENTCOM announces troop buildup in Iraq at 179,867.

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2007 Coalition Force Withdrawals

DENMARK
TROOPS: 454
DEPLOYED:
April 2003
WITHDRAWN:
December 2007

SLOVAKIA
TROOPS: 110
DEPLOYED:
August 2003
WITHDRAWN:
December 2007

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U.S. and Iraqi Forces of Freedom

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Multi-National Division – South East commander Maj. Gen. Graham Binns and Basra Provincial Gov. Muhammad Al-Wa'ili sign a memorandum of understanding, formally marking the handover of control of the Basra Province, ***Dec. 16, 2007***.

In **January 2008**, the Doura Market in Baghdad's Rashid district, one of the city's most dangerous areas, was considered revitalized. Since June 2007, the number of new shops increased from 15 to 451.

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"As violence has come down in the last few months and stayed down, we're now seeing a political environment develop in which the kinds of compromises, the kinds of tradeoffs across the sectarian and ethnic divides that were unthinkable when you were here a year ago are now not only possible but, as we saw yesterday, achievable."

Ryan Crocker
U.S. Ambassador to Iraq
on progress in Iraq
Feb. 14, 2008

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to Iraq on **March 4, 2008**, made him the first Iranian president to do so since the Iran/Iraq War in the 1980s.

Ahmadinejad called for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraqi soil, stating that U.S. presence was the root of Iraq's instability and violence.

March 19, 2008

On the fifth anniversary of the U.S.-led war in Iraq, President George W. Bush, speaking before troops, officers and defense officials at the Pentagon, acknowledged that the costs of the war, in lives and money, had been higher and longer-lasting than he had anticipated. But he continued his insistence that the liberation of Iraq, had made the world better and the United States safer.

"Five years into this battle, there is an understandable debate over whether the war was worth fighting, whether the fight is worth winning, and whether we can win it," he said. "The answers are clear to me. Removing Saddam Hussein from power was the right decision, and this is a fight that America can and must win."

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Operation Charge of the Knights

The Battle of Basra began in late **March 2008**. The operation, called Saulat al-Fursan (Charge of the Knights), was a significant event in the Iraq campaign. It was designed to push Maqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi army out of Basra, the third largest city in Iraq. It was the first major operation planned and executed by the Iraqi security forces. The outcome of the operation was initially in question, but with the assistance of U.S. forces, specifically command and control, intelligence and fires support, the ISF was able to defeat the Mahdi army in Basra. Sadr opened a second front in Baghdad by ordering elements in Sadr City to begin a rocket campaign against the Green Zone. After many tense days, U.S. forces, assisted by the Iraqis, defeated this threat as well.

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Charge of the Knights resulted in an increase of support for the Iraqi government. The Iraqi army benefitted when more than 3,000 men came out to a recruiting drive in the Hayyaniyah district where only 1,000 positions were available.

Charge of the Knights also focused on increasing the availability of health care and the continued normality of life. With Iraqi soldiers helping provide security for the crowd, medical engagements were possible. The delivery of medical supplies also made the engagements possible.

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Keith Matthew Maupin - POW/MIA

March 20-30, 2008
(remains located/confirmed)

Staff Sgt. Keith Matthew "Matt" Maupin
(July 13, 1983 - c. 2004)

Maupin was a private first class when he was captured by Iraqi insurgents on April 9, 2004, after his convoy came under attack by rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire near the Baghdad International Airport.

When remnants of the convoy reached a safe area, it was learned that a Soldier and a civilian had been killed, several were wounded and nine people were unaccounted for – seven civilians and two Soldiers.

On April 16, 2004, a Soldier identifying himself as Maupin, appeared on a videotape that was broadcast by the Arabic-language television network, Al Jazeera. The tape, reportedly delivered to the U.S. embassy in Doha, Qatar, raised hopes that Maupin was still alive.

On June 28, 2004, Al Jazeera, aired a low-quality video supposedly depicting Maupin's execution. The video was deemed "totally inconclusive" by an Army spokesman.

Nearly four years later, on March 20, 2008, human remains and part of a U.S. military uniform were found buried in an isolated agricultural area about 25 miles northwest of Baghdad by members of Company B, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment "Gimlet," 2nd Striker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and 2nd Platoon, 84th Engineer Company, 2nd Striker Cavalry Regiment. Ten days later, the remains were forensically confirmed to be Maupin.

A plaque was dedicated to Maupin recognizing him as an honorary Gimlet with 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Reg., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., the unit that found his remains.

A gimlet is a tool with a grooved shank and screw point used by stone masons to bore holes into rock. These holes were filled with explosives to blast the rock apart; thus, cutting away sides of entire mountains to make room for railroad tracks or roadways.

The Gimlet Stick, carried by all members of the regiment who have been inducted into the Regiment's Royal Clan, is a visual reminder of the all around toughness presented by Soldiers of the Gimlet Regiment.

Three computer labs in Iraq, were dedicated in honor of Maupin. His parents, Keith and Carolyn Maupin, donated 90 computers with web cams to help deployed troops stay in touch with loved ones.

Maupin was promoted three times after being declared missing in action, taking him from the rank of private first class to staff sergeant.

The Matt Maupin Welcome Pavilion was built in his honor at the finish line of the rowing race course on Harsha Lake Beach, East Fork State Park, Bethel, Ohio. It was completed on March 15, 2008.

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On **April 29, 2008**, Tareq Aziz, the international face of Saddam Hussein's regime, went on trial with seven other defendants including Ali Hassan al-Majid--better known as Chemical Ali, on charges of executing 42 Baghdad businessmen in 1992.

Ali Hassan al-Majid, Hussein's cousin, was already on death row after being convicted of genocide for his part in the killing of tens of thousands of Kurdish civilians in the late 1980s.

In October 2010, Aziz was sentenced to death for 'crimes against humanity' by an Iraqi court. The following month, it was reported that Iraqi President Jalal Talabani had declared that he would not sign Aziz's execution order.

At the time of his death, Al-Majid had earned four death sentences from Iraqi courts. He was hanged on Jan. 25, 2010.

June 6, 2008

Operation Lion's Hunt, a joint operation began in Ninewah province between three Iraqi army elements. It was the first unilateral Iraqi-led aerial operation of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The operation was an unqualified success, netting eight suspected al-Qaeda in Iraq operators and pulling the village of Markab al Tair from the grip of the insurgency.

On **June 22–25, 2008**, John J. Sullivan, deputy secretary of commerce, led the first official U.S. government trade mission to Iraq in 10 years. Participants from nine U.S. companies visited Erbil in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The companies represented a broad range of sectors, including agribusiness, franchising, financial services, health care, construction, logistics, and engineering.

June 23, 2008

A quarterly report on Iraq was sent to Congress. It showed that all major indicators of violence in the country had dropped by between 40 and 80 percent since February 2007 when President George W. Bush committed an additional 30,000 troops.

The report noted that the military, political and economic gains made remained "fragile, reversible and uneven," and that Islamic jihadists loyal to al-Qaeda in Iraq remained capable of high-profile attacks. The report added that civilian deaths had dropped from a peak of nearly 4,000 a month in January 2007 to about 500 a month as of May 2008. U.S. troop deaths had dropped from 126 in May 2007 to an all-time low of 19 in May 2008.

The report cited the emergence of the **Sons of Iraq** as a major reason for the downturn in civilian-oriented violence and deaths.

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Abna'a al Iraq (Sons of Iraq)

SOI applicants wait to register in Diwaniyah.

Members of SOI congratulated during the establishment of a new checkpoint for the group in the Rashid district of Baghdad.

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The origin of the Abna'a al Iraq (Sons of Iraq) can be traced back to the Sahawa or "Awakening" in the fall of 2006 and early 2007 in Anbar Province. Amidst a vacuum of viable provincial security and political structures, the Sahawa agreed to establish and support security forces in the province and pursue the fight against al-Qaeda in Iraq.

The Anbar community found they shared a goal with the coalition: taking back the neighborhoods from radical insurgent groups. With Iraqi security forces and the coalition, these local tribal-organized security forces provided critical infrastructure security throughout Anbar. The popular movement soon caught on with other local leaders and spread to other provinces. In February 2008, the name Sons of Iraq was adopted.

For almost two years, these volunteers helped protect their neighborhoods and secure key infrastructure and roads, often locating extremists and weapons caches.

Transition of the Sons of Iraq from community watch programs into the Iraqi security force and job-training programs continued.

As of **June 27, 2008**, 104,217 Sons of Iraq were on the coalition force payroll. More than 17,119 had transitioned into the Iraqi security forces and another 2,529 to non-security jobs.

Sixty SOI members salute the Iraqi flag during a validation ceremony in the Southern Rashaad district.

SOI await their monthly pay in Baghdad, Iraq.

Kirkuk Police Academy recruits, former SOI, after graduating in Hawijah District.

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On **July 4, 2008**, service members from all over Iraq gathered in the Al Faw Palace rotunda at Camp Victory, Baghdad, to participate in **Operation Freedom Strong**, a mass reenlistment and celebration of Independence Day. All 50 U.S. states were represented by the 1,215 reenlisting service members. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commanding general, Multi-National Force – Iraq, presided over the ceremony and led the Airmen, Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers in their oath to continue defending their country.

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July 15, 2008

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, the last of the surge brigades to depart Iraq, conducted its end-of-mission ceremony. Its subsequent redeployment without a backfill, marked a return to pre-surge brigade levels for the first time since early 2007. Based on assessments, "The Surge" accomplished its objectives: dealt a crushing blow to al-Qaeda in Iraq, rendered the Mahdi army ineffective, and enabled the government of Iraq, in conjunction with the Iraqi security forces, to deal with the issues from a position of strength.

MNF-I chart showing the focus of Operation Phantom Phoenix

On **July 28, 2008**, **Operation Phantom Phoenix** ended. It began on Jan. 8, with the goal of providing security for the nine major cities in Iraq, with an emphasis on securing Baghdad. Coalition forces lost more than 60 service members; the Iraqi security forces and Awakening Councils suffered more than 770 dead and more than a dozen missing or captured. The insurgents suffered almost 900 dead and more than 2,500 were captured. Diyala Province had been almost entirely cleared of insurgent forces.

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On July 21, 2008, Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., right, makes a point during a U.S. Congressional delegation briefing in Baghdad with Gen. David H. Petraeus, second from left, and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker, second from right, on the situation in Iraq. The delegation included Democratic presidential candidate, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., center, and Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., left.

Iraqi police colleagues converse during a combined arms rehearsal for Operation Glad Tidings of Benevolence.

August 2008

Operation Glad Tidings of Benevolence was an Iraqi operation carried out in tandem with coalition forces' Operation Iron Pursuit. It focused on insurgents, namely al-Qaeda in Iraq, in rural areas of Diyala Province. The operation also targeted criminal elements. As a secondary goal, the operation was designed to allay the fears of residents of Diyala Province regarding the dangers posed to them by insurgents.

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On **Aug. 19, 2008**, William F. "Buck" Kernan, retired general serving as senior mentor to the MNC-I commander, arrived in Iraq for a five-day visit. The purpose of the visit was to advise on the way ahead for the 2009 operational environment as well as preparing the command for future transitions such as the arrival of I Corps and MNF-I and MNC-I headquarters command and control transformation.

(l-r) U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, Gen. David H. Petraeus and Gen. Raymond T. Odierno talk prior to the Multi-National Force - Iraq change of command on Camp Victory, Iraq, **Sept. 16, 2008**.

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Multi-National Force - West hands over control of Al Anbar Province to the Iraqis on **Sept. 1, 2008**. Al Anbar, the largest of Iraq's 18 provinces, was the 11th one to switch from coalition to Iraqi control.

Maj. Gen. John F. Kelly, commanding general, MNF-W, and Gov. Ma'amoon Sami Rashim Alawi, of al-Anbar, sign the formal agreement turning security responsibilities of al-Anbar province to the government of Iraq, at the ceremony in Ramadi.

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In **October 2008**, control of the 54,000 Sons of Iraq fighters in districts throughout the Baghdad region were nominally handed over to the government of Iraq by the coalition.

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On **Nov. 4, 2008**, Barack Obama was elected as the 44th president of the United States.

Multi-National Division - North held the last graduation ceremony of the Regional Training Center at Foward Operating Base Grizzly as a coalition base on **Nov. 6, 2008**. The ceremony also marked the transition of authority from coalition forces control to Iraqi control. During its run under coalition control, the center held seven graduation ceremonies with more than 3,000 graduates including 53 women.

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Multi-National Division - North East

The **Republic of Korea** was the third largest contributor of forces to the coalition, and was instrumental in strengthening the overall security environment in the Irbil Province. They largely focused on combined security operations with the Iraqi army, reconstruction support, regional transitional government support, training and equipping the Iraqi security forces and police, main and alternate supply route security, and force protection support for the Irbil airport.

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Multi-National Division - North East was disestablished and on **Nov. 8, 2008**, its area was absorbed by Multi-National Division - North.

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2008 Coalition Force Departures

ALBANIA
TROOPS: 240
DEPLOYED:
April 2003
DEPARTED:
December 2008

LATVIA
TROOPS: 136
DEPLOYED:
May 2003
DEPARTED:
November 2008

CZECH REPUBLIC
TROOPS: 300
DEPLOYED:
December 2003
DEPARTED:
December 2008

UKRAINE
TROOPS: 1650
DEPLOYED:
August 2003
DEPARTED:
December 2008

BULGARIA
TROOPS: 485
DEPLOYED:
May 2003
DEPARTED:
December 2008

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ARMENIA
TROOPS: 46
DEPLOYED:
January 2005
DEPARTED:
December 2008

GEORGIA
TROOPS: 2000
DEPLOYED:
August 2003
DEPARTED:
August 2008

KAZAKHSTAN
TROOPS: 29
DEPLOYED:
September 2003
DEPARTED:
October 2008

AZERBAIJAN
TROOPS: 250
DEPLOYED:
August 2003
DEPARTED:
December 2008

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BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA
TROOPS: 85
DEPLOYED: June 2003
DEPARTED: November 2008

MOLDOVA
TROOPS: 24
DEPLOYED: September 2003
DEPARTED: December 2008

MONGOLIA
TROOPS: 180
DEPLOYED: August 2003
DEPARTED: September 2008

POLAND
TROOPS: 2500
DEPLOYED: March 2003
DEPARTED: October 2008

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SINGAPORE
TROOPS: 175
DEPLOYED:
December 2003
DEPARTED:
December 2008

MACEDONIA
TROOPS: 77
DEPLOYED:
July 2003
DEPARTED:
November 2008

LITHUANIA
TROOPS: 120
DEPLOYED:
June 2003
DEPARTED:
August 2008

TONGA
TROOPS: 100
DEPLOYED:
June 2004
DEPARTED:
December 2008

SOUTH KOREA
TROOPS: 3600
DEPLOYED:
May 2003
DEPARTED:
December 2008

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Flags of Iraq

2008 – Present
On Jan. 21, 2008, a new flag was confirmed by the Iraqi parliament. In this current version, the three stars were removed, while the Takbir was left written in green Kufic script. This is currently the flag representing the Republic of Iraq.

2004 – 2008
From June 28, 2004 until 2008, a new flag was similar to the one adopted in 1991, but the text was changed from Hussein's alleged handwriting to traditional stylized Kufic script.

1991 – 2004
On Jan. 13, 1991, the flag was changed again when Saddam Hussein decreed to place the Takbir (the words Allaahu Akbar or God is Great) between the stars. The text was reportedly in Hussein's own handwriting.

1963 – 1991
The green stars were originally placed there for the proposed, but never-consummated union of Iraq with Egypt and Syria (United Arab Republic). In 1986, the meaning of the three stars was officially changed to be a representation of the three tenets of the Ba'ath party motto, Wahda, Hurriyah, Ishtirakiyah (Unity, Freedom, Socialism).This flag was used under Saddam Hussein's rule.

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IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY

1 January 2009 - 31 August 2010

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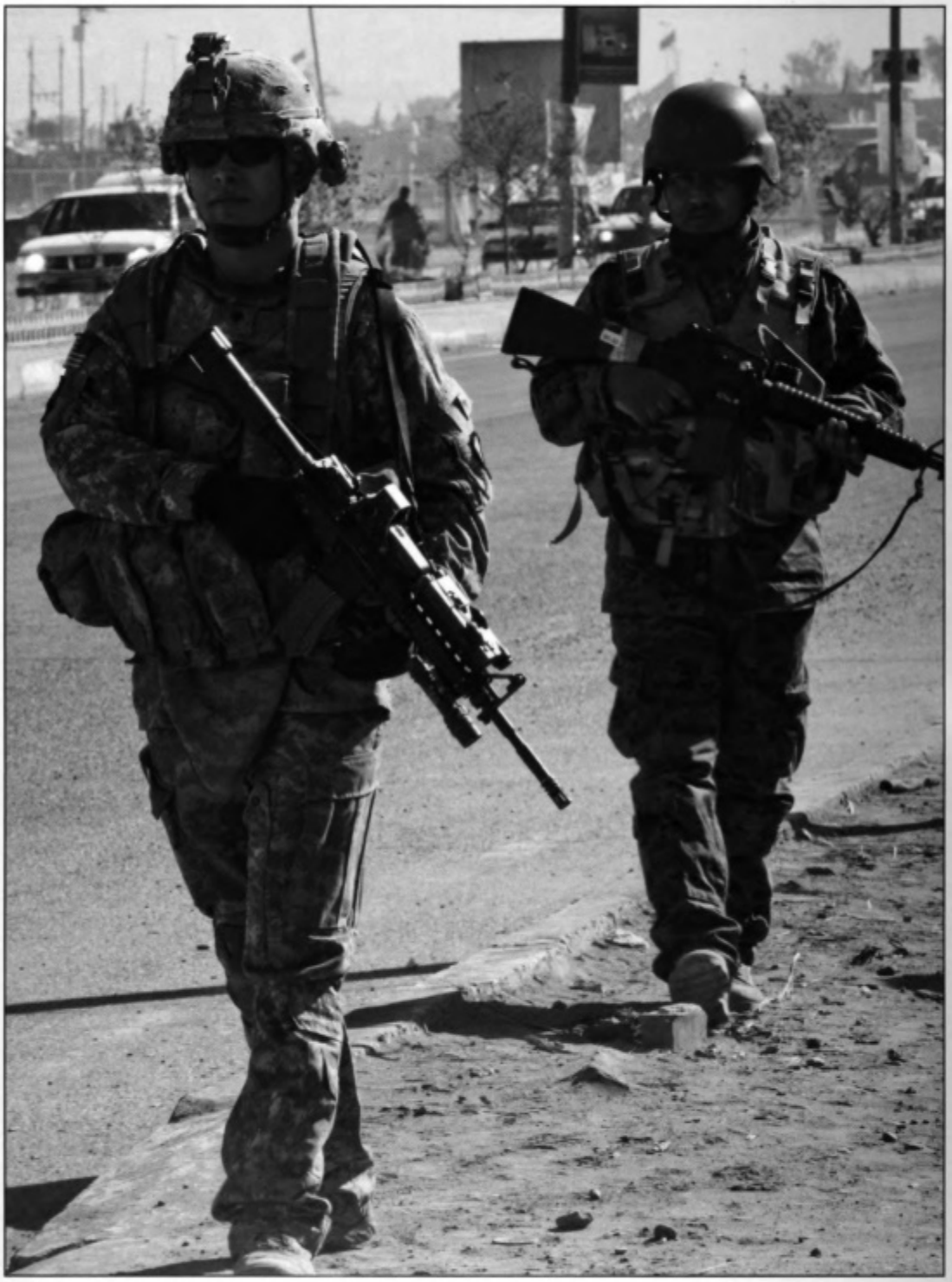

A U.S. Soldier patrols the streets of Sadr City with an Iraqi army counterpart. Under the new security agreement, coalition forces operate directly with the IA operatives during any kind of military operation.

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Jan. 1, 2009 - The *Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities During Their Temporary Presence in Iraq*, more commonly known as the **Security Agreement**, went into effect. It established Dec. 31, 2011 as the final withdrawal date for all U.S. combat forces from Iraq. It also outlined the working relationship between U.S. and Iraqi forces, and provided guidance for the legal handling of prisoners, U.S. civilian contractors working for U.S. forces, and U.S. forces while off-duty and off-base.

The Iraqi government also approved a **Strategic Framework Agreement** with the U.S. aimed at ensuring international cooperation including minority ethnicity, gender, and belief interests and other constitutional rights; threat deterrence; exchange students; education; and cooperation in the areas of energy development, environmental hygiene, health care, information technology, communications, and law enforcement.

The coalition handed over control of the **Green Zone** (also known as the International Zone or "IZ") and Saddam Hussein's presidential palace to Iraqi authorities. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said he will propose January 1 be declared a national holiday to commemorate what he called "Sovereignty Day" — the day Iraq took the lead in security away from U.S. forces, regained control of its airspace and reclaimed a wide swath of Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone.

Staff Gen. Emmad Yassir Saed Salman Al-Zuhiri, Baghdad Brigade commander, left, shakes hands with Col. Steven Ferrari, Joint Area Support Group - Central commander, during the ceremony to mark the turnover of security for Baghdad's IZ to Iraqis.

Jan. 5, 2009

At the dedication of the new $700 million United States embassy in Baghdad, U.S. Marines raise the American flag over the 21 adobe-colored buildings, which sits on a 104-acre site and has space for 1,000 employees. At more than 10 times the size of any other, it the largest American embassy in the world.

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On **Jan. 5, 2009**, Vice President-elect Joe Biden met with Prime Minister al-Maliki. The focus of the talks centered on President-elect Barack Obama's commitment to withdrawing American troops from Iraq in a manner that does not risk recent security gains.

Jan. 17, 2009 - Of the candidates running council seats in the upcoming provincial elections, the government of Iraq's election commission said it was investigating allegations that nearly 60 candidates had submitted fraudulent certificates for their educational degrees. Commission chief Faraj al-Haidari said his commission would like the Ministries of Education and Higher Education to verify their degrees. Thirty candidates were disqualified for submitting forged documents, being former Ba'athists, or being members of the security forces.

On **Jan. 26, 2009**, the government of Iraq's Ministry of Interior graduated a class of 490 women to join the ranks of Iraq's police officers. It was the first and largest fully female class to graduate since the fledgling force was built.

Iraq held the first nationwide elections in more than three years on **Jan. 31, 2009**. More than 14,400 candidates, approximately 3,900 of them women, competed for 444 seats on ruling councils in 14 of the country's 18 provinces. The candidates came from over 400 parties - 75% of which were newly formed.

Iraqi citizens show up at the polling station to vote in the elections in Samarra, Iraq.

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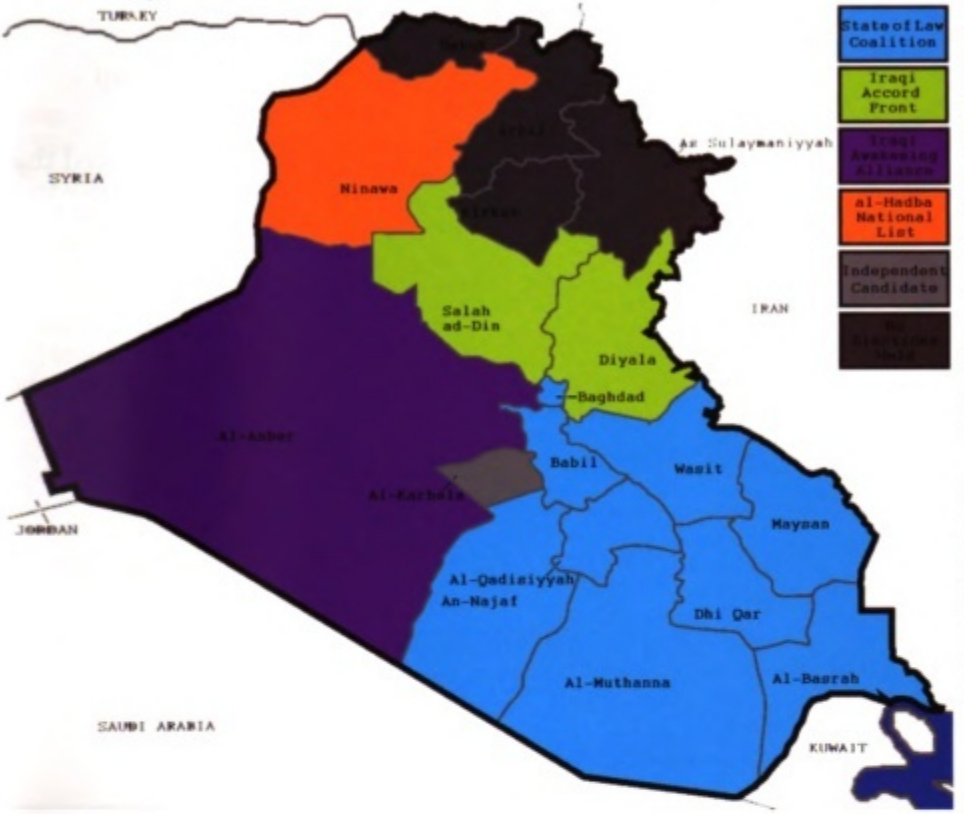
Iraqi Official Election Results



On **Feb. 19, 2009**, the final results of the elections showed that Prime Minister al-Maliki's State of Law coalition won Basra and Baghdad and came first in every Shiite-dominated governorate except Karbala (where the independent Yusuf al-Hububi won). The party won eight seats, the most of any party, in the somewhat mixed-sect Babil Province.

The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq suffered losses across the country. From a position of dominance in most governorates south of Baghdad, it fell to a status of a 10 percent party or less in most places.

Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission estimated voter turnout at 51 percent.

A blanket ban on media coverage of returning military members killed in war was put in place in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm. The ruling became a political issue in 2004 when unauthorized photos of caskets appeared on the internet. In **February 2009**, the Obama administration lifted the 18-year ban and allowed families of the fallen the right to decide whether the news media could photograph the flag-covered caskets.

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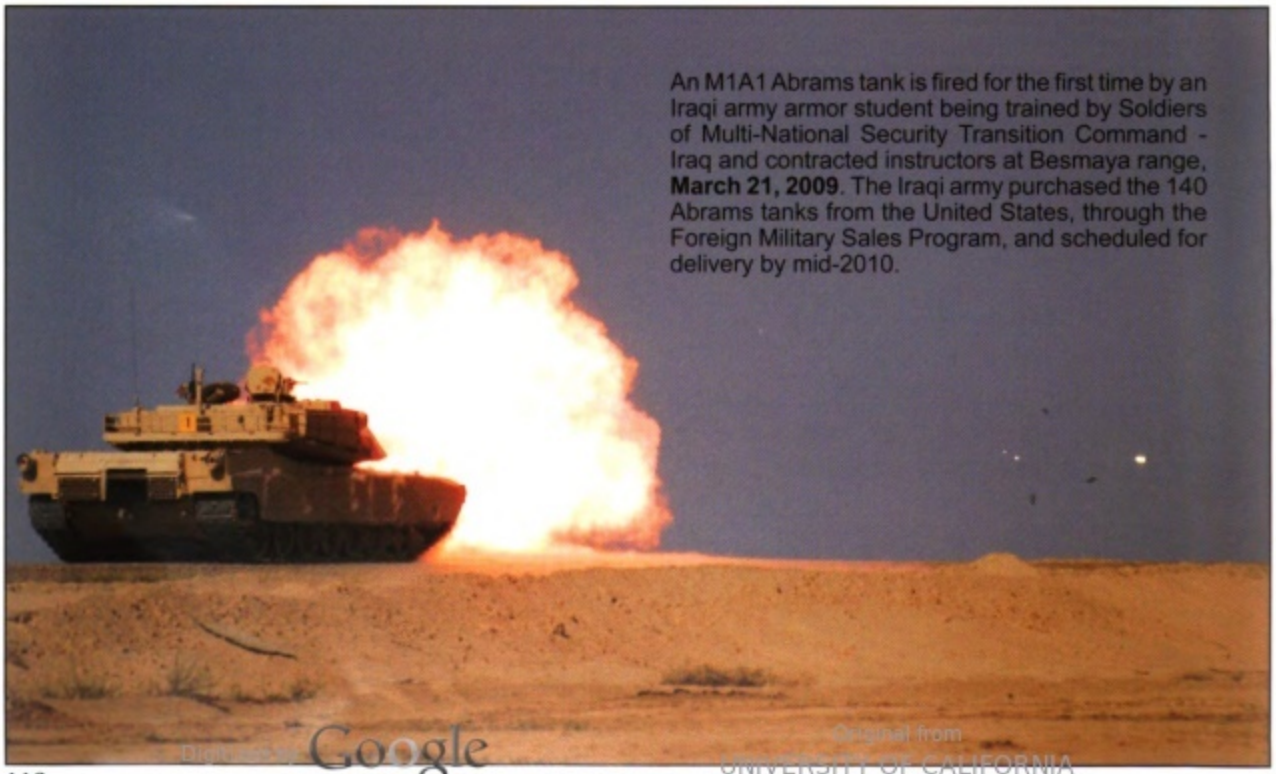
Former detainees from the Camp Cropper Detention Facility in Baghdad, were released to their sheiks and family members at a reconciliation ceremony at Joint Security Station Doura. Iraqi national police and U.S. Soldiers released and processed the former detainees who pledged to abide by Iraqi laws.

March 3, 2009

A U.S. military statement announced that the number of detainees held by U.S. forces in Iraq had dropped to 13,832 from a peak of 26,000 in 2007. The phased release program had been releasing an average of 50 detainees a day, or roughly 1,500 per month.

On **March 8, 2009**, the U.S. military said it would reduce troop strength by 12,000 over the next six months by not replacing two departing brigades.

On **March 18, 2009**, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced that the U.S. Army would effectively end within two years the "stop loss" provision, which forced Soldiers to continue serving beyond their enlistment end date.



An M1A1 Abrams tank is fired for the first time by an Iraqi army armor student being trained by Soldiers of Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq and contracted instructors at Besmaya range, **March 21, 2009**. The Iraqi army purchased the 140 Abrams tanks from the United States, through the Foreign Military Sales Program, and scheduled for delivery by mid-2010.

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Multi-National Division - South

On June 1, 2008, the 3rd Infantry Division transferred authority for Multi-National Division - Center to the 10th Mountain Division. On March 31, 2009, the areas south of Baghdad, previously organized into MND-Center, and MND - South East, commanded by the British military, were merged into MND-South with 10th Mountain Division as the command element.

In May 2009, 34th Infantry Division 'Red Bulls' assumed command and control of MND-S, also known as Task Force Mountain. They assisted Iraqi security forces with security and stability missions in the area south of Baghdad ranging from Najaf to Wasit provinces extending to Basra.

MND-South became United States Division – South in January 2010, when Multi-National Force – Iraq transitioned into United States Forces – Iraq.

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President Barack Obama

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April 7, 2009

President Barack Obama and Iraqi President Jalal Talabani discuss the success of the U.S.-Iraq security agreement and the growing diplomatic ties between the two countries.

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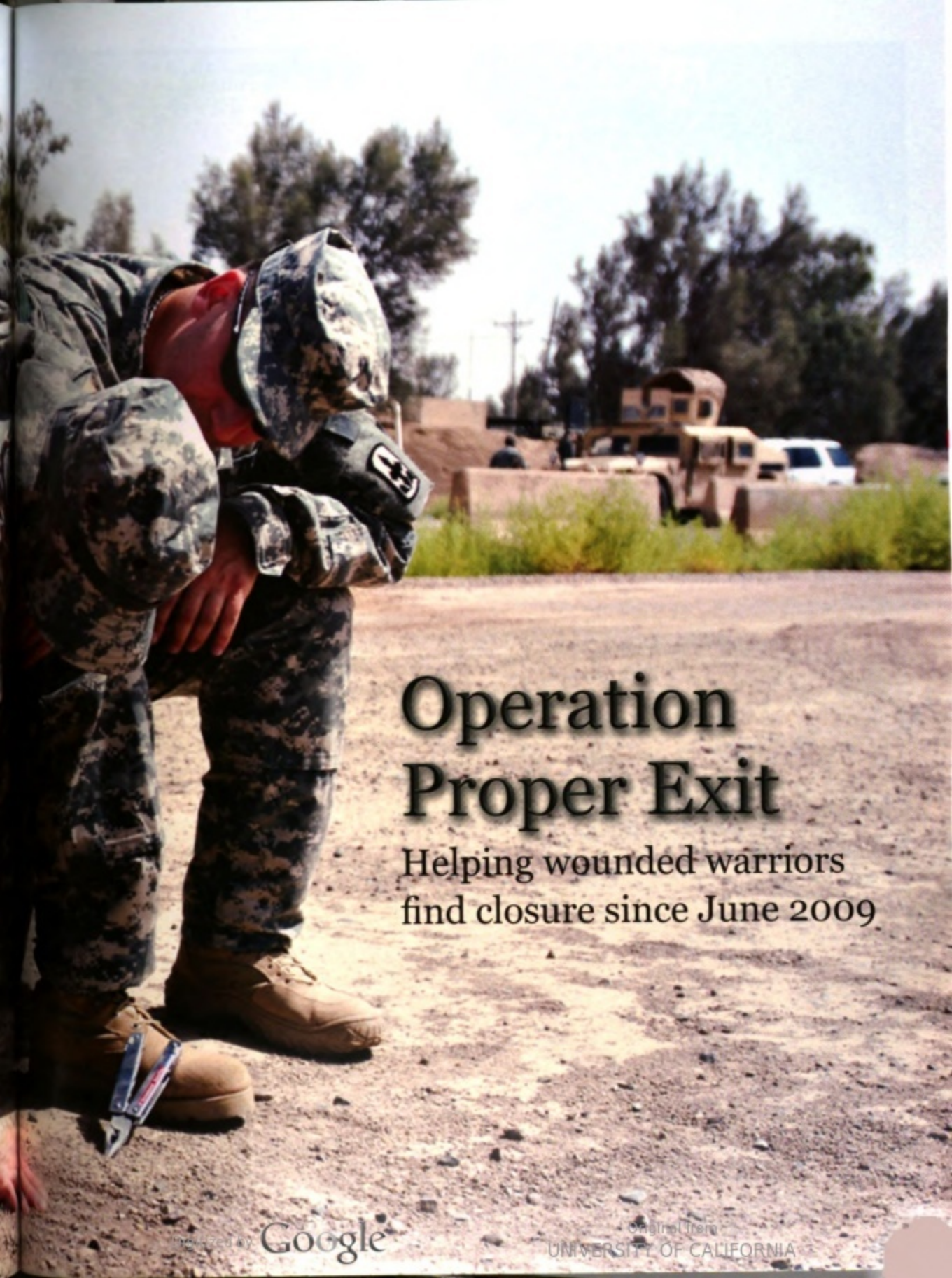

Operation Proper Exit

Helping wounded warriors find closure since June 2009

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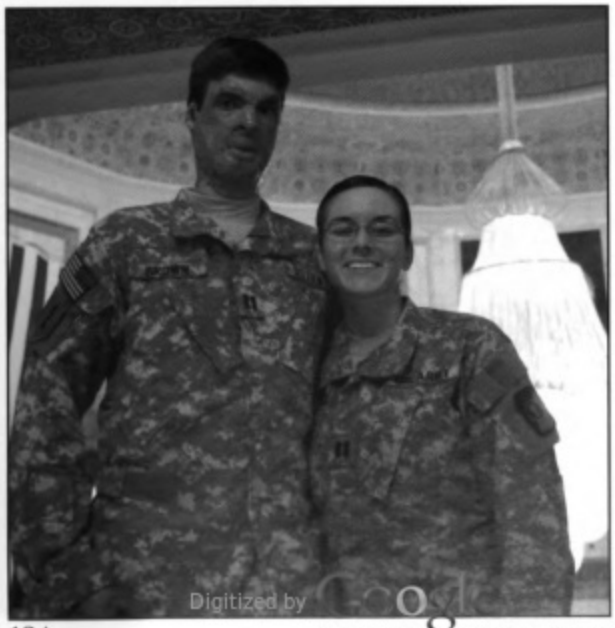
Operation Proper Exit - a warrior care initiative started in **June 2009** to provide an opportunity for wounded service members to revisit the places they once served in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For troops injured in battle, this initiative provides the opportunity to make a "proper exit" - on their own terms - as they walk to the aircraft and climb the ramp rather than being medically evacuated.

Between June 2009 and June 2011, Operation Proper Exit returned to Iraq 10 times for week-long rotations with groups of wounded warriors.



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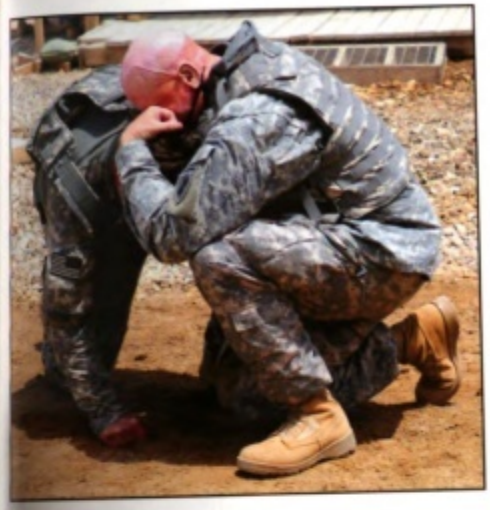

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Iraqi Assistance Group

The IAG was a U.S. military command under Multi-National Corps - Iraq that coordinated military transition teams assigned to the Iraqi security forces including the Iraqi army, federal police, Department of Border Enforcement, Ports of Entry Directorate and provincial police.

These teams provide partnership, mentoring and training to assist their ISF partners in achieving full operational effectiveness and facilitating the transition of internal security to Iraqi control. The IAG was a joint command formed from the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division and was composed mostly of Soldiers. It also included a sizable contingent of Sailors, Airmen, Marines and members of foreign militaries.

The IAG and the transition teams it supported, played a pivotal role in the success of the coalition strategy in Iraq which has made possible the planned redeployment of all U.S. forces in Iraq in accordance with the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement.

As the security situation in Iraq improved along with the capabilities of the ISF, the primary focus of coalition forces shifted from combat operations to partnership and mentoring. As a result, on **June 3, 2009**, the Iraqi Assistance Group cased its colors; its functions and personnel were merged into MNC-I.

Members of the Iraqi Assistance Group and Multi-National Corps - Iraq render the final salute to the IAG colors during the casing of the colors and patch ceremony held at the Joint Visitors Bureau, Camp Victory.

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"Out of Cities"

A U.S. Army officer and an Iraqi officer, hug after lowering the front gate of the Old States Building in Basra, indicating the return of control of the facility and Combat Outpost Perry, two key bases, to the Iraqi army, June 28, 2009.

As a signal of the U.S.'s diminishing role in Iraq, and in compliance with the Security Agreement between the U.S. and Iraq, U.S. troops completed their withdrawal from Iraqi cities (including Baghdad) on **June 30, 2009**. The responsibility of securing the cities was transferred to Iraq security forces. The embedding of U.S. troops continued.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki proclaims June 30 as "National Sovereignty Day" and declares it a public holiday.

An honor guard presents arms during a ceremony for Iraq's National Sovereignty Day, at a defunct sugar factory near Majaar Al Kabir in the Maysan province. Iraqi soldiers now occupy the base vacated by U.S. Soldiers.

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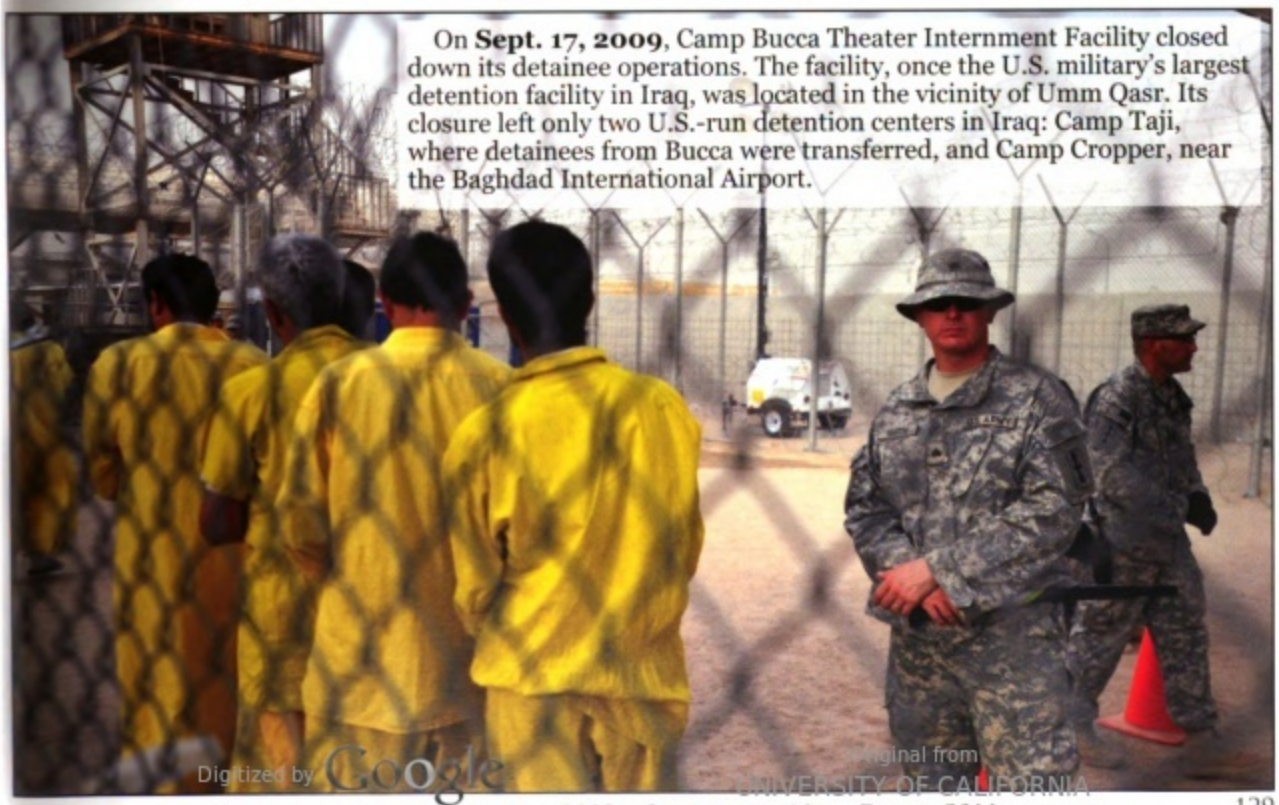
July 4, 2009

Vice President Joe Biden met with U.S. and Iraq leaders to oversee the implementation of the U.S-Iraq Security Agreement.

During the **July 22, 2009** meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, President Barack Obama noted that substantial progress had been made since Maliki's first visit to Washington in 2006. This meeting came three weeks after all U.S. troops withdrew from Iraqi cities, and transferred power to Iraq's security forces.

Obama also praised the sacrifices of both Iraqis and Americans on behalf of a better future, and thanked the troops for doing an outstanding job. He reaffirmed that he is working to end the war, and will have all American troops out of Iraq by the end of 2011.



On **Sept. 17, 2009**, Camp Bucca Theater Internment Facility closed down its detainee operations. The facility, once the U.S. military's largest detention facility in Iraq, was located in the vicinity of Umm Qasr. Its closure left only two U.S.-run detention centers in Iraq: Camp Taji, where detainees from Bucca were transferred, and Camp Cropper, near the Baghdad International Airport.

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Oct. 25, 2009 - In one of the worst attacks in two years, two car bomb blasts tore through Baghdad killing 155 and injuring more than 500. The bombers appeared to have targeted the Ministry Of Justice and the Baghdad Provincial Council.

As with previous high-profile attacks, al-Qaeda in Iraq claimed responsibility. With the amount of loss of lives and property, these attacks demonstrated that al-Qaeda in Iraq could still project attacks into the heart of Baghdad, despite increased security within the districts.

2009 Coalition Force Departures

EL SALVADOR
TROOPS: 380
DEPLOYED:
June 2005
DEPARTED:
January 2009

AUSTRALIA
TROOPS: 2000
DEPLOYED:
September 2003
DEPARTED:
July 2009

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ESTONIA
TROOPS: 40
DEPLOYED:
June 2005
DEPARTED:
January 2009

ROMANIA
TROOPS: 730
DEPLOYED:
July 2003
DEPARTED:
July 2009

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USF-I Stands Up

January 1, 2010

"Though we are activating a new headquarters today, the support we give our Iraqi partners will be no different than they received under MNF-I."

Gen. Raymond T. Odierno
Commander, U.S. Forces - Iraq

"This ceremony marks another significant transition here in Iraq. It represents another important milestone in the continued drawdown of American forces."

Gen. David H. Petraeus
Commander, U.S. Central Command

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United States Forces - Iraq (USF-I)

On **Jan. 1, 2010**, the three major commands (Multi-National Force – Iraq, Multi-National Corps – Iraq and Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq) merged to become **United States Forces – Iraq**.

Under this new unified command, the total number of staff positions was reduced. In accordance with the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement, the Iraqi government took on full responsibility, through its security ministries, for maintaining and providing security and rule of law for its people. The withdrawal of all non-US forces in Iraq was complete by July 31, 2009.

A change in the mission for the remaining U.S. forces in Iraq - from combat operations to a purely advise, train and assist role - was initiated with a completion date of Sept. 1, 2010. This shift in focus was accompanied by planned major troop reductions. The plan was to take the military population from 115,000 to zero between Dec. 15, 2009 and Dec. 31, 2011.

The new USF–I was organized into three divisions: United States Division - North was responsible for seven provinces: Dahuk, Ninewa, Irbil, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Solahad Din and Dyala. USD-Center, operating out of Victory Base Complex, was responsible for Baghdad and Al Anbar provinces. USD-South assisted Iraqi security forces with security and stability missions in nine provinces south of Baghdad: Najaf, Wasit, Basrah, Karbala, Babil, Qadisiyah, Dhi Qar, Maysan and Muthanna.

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Multi-National Force - West

MNF-W was headquartered by I and II Marine Expeditionary Force (on a rotating basis) between March 2004 and January 2010. The division was part of Multi-National Forces - Iraq and its area of responsibility was western Iraq, including Al Anbar governorate and the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, the area where Iraq's Sunni insurgency was at its strongest. MNF-W was headquartered first at Camp Fallujah and then at Al Asad Airbase.

Among the smaller multi-national units operating within MNF-W was a platoon from the Azerbaijani armed forces.

On **Jan. 23, 2010**, USF-I reduced its divisions from four to three with the end of the participation of the Marines in MNF-W.

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British Lt. Gen. Chris Brown, MNF-I deputy commanding general and Maj. Gen. R.T. Tryon, MNF-W commanding general.

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Feb. 11, 2010

The Independent High Electoral Commission for Iraq published its candidate list of 6,172 qualified individuals. Less than five percent (357) were disqualified for improper educational qualifications, membership in the Iraqi security forces, or criminal or Ba'athist backgrounds. IHEC is a professional, governmental, independent and neutral body supervised by the Council of Representatives. It is exclusively responsible for organizing, implementing and supervising all kinds of elections and referenda.

In **late February 2010**, Iraqi Ministry of Defense officials drafted a letter of request seeking 18 Block 50/52 global configuration F-16. The contract was approved for a foreign military sale in September of 2011.

The final results of the **March 7, 2010** election gave the Iraqi National Movement, led by former prime minister Ayad Allawi, 91 seats in Parliament out of 325. The State of Law alliance, headed by Prime Minister Maliki came in a close second with 89 seats. Both fell far short of the 163 seats needed to form a majority in Parliament. A Shia religious movement, including followers of radical cleric Moktada al-Sadr, won 70. The two main Kurdish parties together received 43 seats. Maliki challenged the results, and a recount of votes in the Baghdad region confirmed Allawi's slim lead. During the recount process, Maliki formed an alliance with another Shiite bloc, which put him close to a majority of seats. Many members of the alliance, however, did not support giving Maliki a second term as prime minister, and electing a compromise candidate seemed imminent.

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On **March 15, 2010**, Maj. Gen. David E. Quantock, deputy commanding general for detainee operations, USF-I, and Dara Nour al-Deen, minister of justice director general, sign the ceremonial certificate symbolizing the transfer of the Taji Theater Internment Facility Center from U.S. control to the government of Iraq.

Iraqi SOF soldiers are posted and ready to engage enemy during a hostage rescue operation exercise.

An ISOF soldier carries his comrade during a simulated "down-soldier" drill during an ISOF Convoy Security Course graduation.

March 24, 2010 - Iraqi special operations forces captured four major al-Qaeda in Iraq leaders and killed three others. Those detained included the Islamic State of Iraq Minister of Oil and his deputy, the Oil Extortion Emir, and the brother-in-law of Abu Umar al Baghdadi - Islamic State of Iraq Emir. The Detainee Affairs Emir, the Northern Iraq Economic Security Emir and the Wali of Mosul were killed.

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On **April 16, 2010**, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki signed a letter recognizing four Kurdish Peshmerga Regional Guard Brigades as agents of the Iraqi government while operating in the combined security areas. This recognition permitted the U.S. to train and equip the RGBs with the goal of integrating them into the Iraqi security forces.

Iraqi and Peshmerga soldiers man a checkpoint

Peshmerga, Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers train on reacting to a grenade at a checkpoint.

First day of basic infantry training

Peshmerga Combat Life Savers course graduates

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April 12-25, 2010

U.S. and Iraqi forces killed or captured a dozen key al-Qaeda in Iraq leaders, while the Iraqi Office of Security and Information had captured another 10, including five emirs and a minister of information. At the end of April 2010, senior Iraqi and American officials stated that over the past three months, 32 of the 42 highest-ranking al-Qaeda in Iraq leaders had been captured or killed.

On **May 6, 2010**, an the Iraqi Minister of the Interior Jawad al-Bulani, Kurdish Regional Guard Interior Minister Karim Sinjari, and Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, USF-I deputy commanding general for advising and training, signed an agreement recognizing Kurdish Zerevani police forces as agents of the Iraqi government responsible for security in the Kurdish region. This allowed USF-I to legally provide equipment, training and related assistance to the Zerevani as a first step in integrating them into the Iraqi federal police.

At the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory in Baghdad, 79 deployed service members became the first to participate in a U.S. college graduation ceremony in Iraq, **May 17, 2010**. The students represented 21 different schools and various degrees.

Iraq's New Council of Representatives

Iraq's new parliament was seated and began its first session on **June 14, 2010**. The national elections were held March 7; on June 1, the Federal Supreme Court certified the results.

After swearing in the new members, the session is adjourned to allow more time for negotiations over the formation of the government.

Months later, on Nov. 11, an agreement was reached - Talabani would continue as president, Al-Maliki would stay on as prime minister and Allawi would head a new security council.

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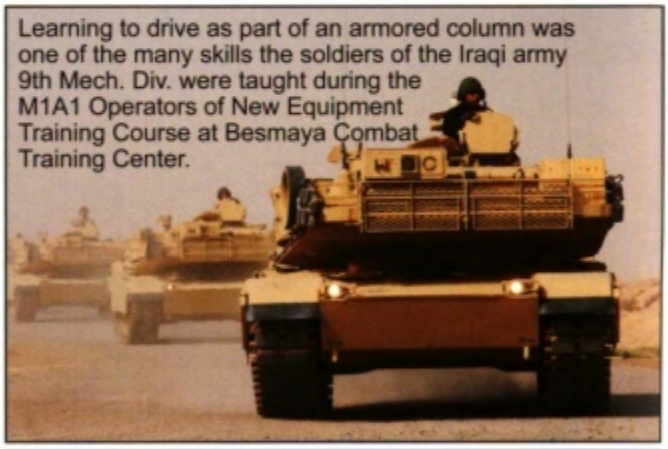
On **July 15, 2010**, Camp Cropper Theater Internment Facility, the last major U.S. run detention facility in Iraq, was officially transferred to the government of Iraq. At the time, it housed approximately 1,500 detainees being held on GoI arrest warrants, detention orders or convictions. U.S. forces had used the facility, which could hold up to 4,000 prisoners, for the care and custody of detainees since April 2003.

The Cropper facility was the third and final major detention facility to be transferred from U.S. to Iraqi control or closed.

A U.S. Soldier, assigned to the immediate reaction force at the Cropper TIF, advises his Iraqi counterpart on proper perimeter checks during an action plan drill.

On **Aug, 10, 2010**, the first 11 of 140 M1A1 Abrams tanks, earmarked for the Besmaya Combat Training Center, arrived at the port of Umm Qasr, Iraq. The tanks would become the backbone of Iraq's 9th Mechanized Division.

Port of Umm Qasr



Learning to drive as part of an armored column was one of the many skills the soldiers of the Iraqi army 9th Mech. Div. were taught during the M1A1 Operators of New Equipment Training Course at Besmaya Combat Training Center.

Iraqi soldiers with the 9th Mech. Div. run to formation during an M1A1 demonstration at Camp Iraqi Hero.

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On **Aug. 19, 2010**, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division completed its movement from Baghdad to Camp Virginia, Kuwait, marking what media trumpeted as the departure of the "last combat brigade from Iraq."

The remaining USF-I elements in Iraq consisted of six advise and assist brigades, one advise and assist task force, and enabling forces.

Aug, 24, 2010 - USF-I announced that, in accordance with President Obama's mandate from February 2009, U.S. forces in Iraq are below 50,000. Since last June, more than 90,000 troops and 1.5 million items of equipment were retrograded from theater, and the number of bases where U.S. forces were present was reduced to just 92.

Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett, USF-I chief of staff, welcomes Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III back to Iraq **Aug. 30, 2010**. Austin assumed command of USF-I on Sept. 1, 2010.

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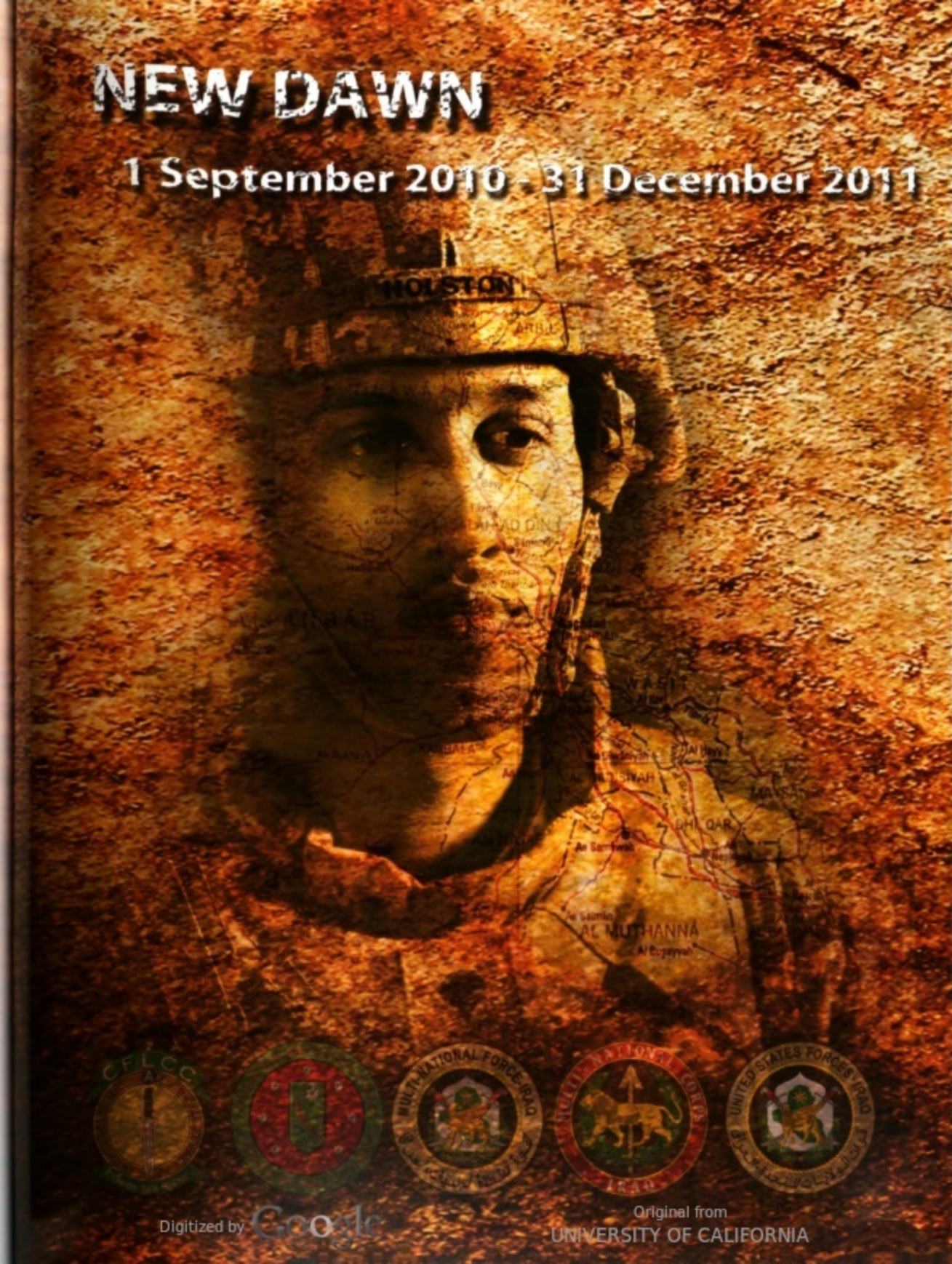
NEW DAWN

1 September 2010 - 31 December 2011



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New Mission Under New Leadership

On **Sept. 1, 2010**, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno relinquished leadership of USF-I to Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III in the rotunda of Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Iraq. Vice President Joseph Biden, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. James Mattis, commander of U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James F. Jeffrey were also in attendance for the historic change of command ceremony that also ushered in a new mission in Iraq under Operation New Dawn.

Under the new campaign, USF-I focused on a new mission of advising and assisting the Iraqi security forces, protecting and supporting the efforts of civilian, military and non-governmental agencies to build the civil capacity of Iraq, and in partnering with the Iraqi military in operations aimed at maintaining pressure on terrorist networks.

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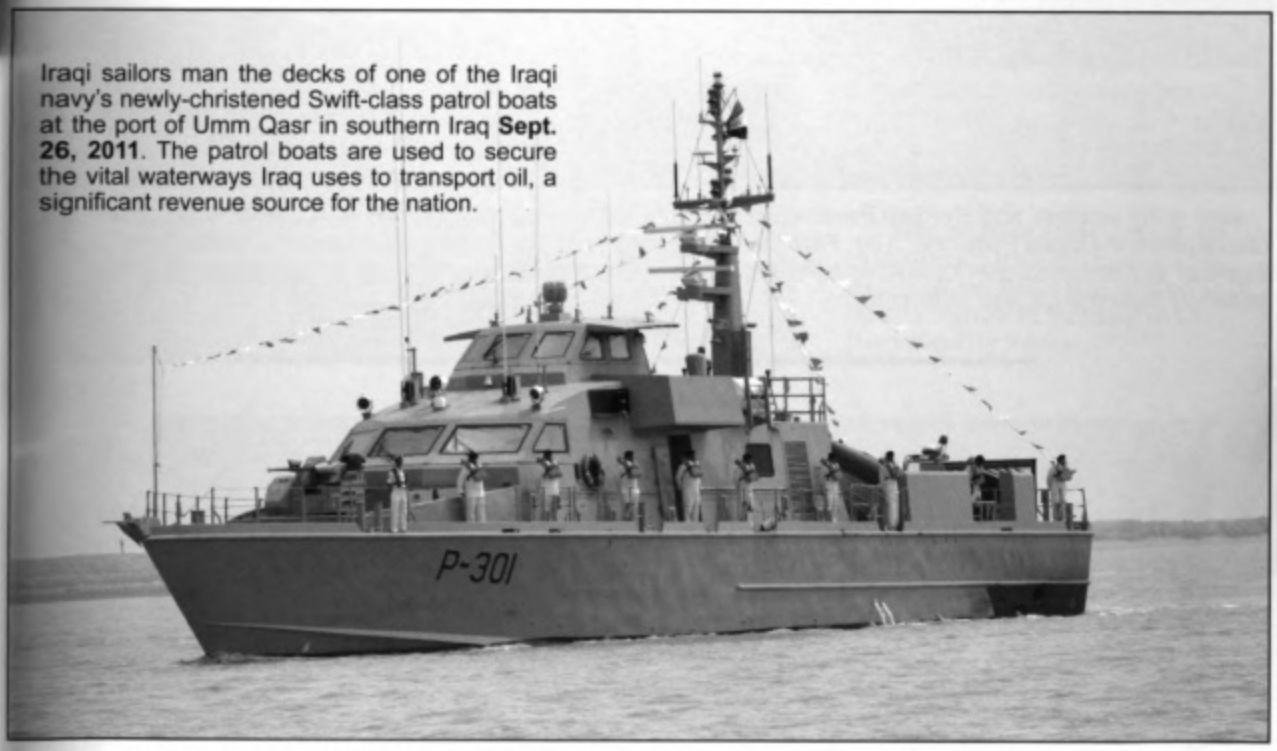
Modeled after the U.S. Air Force Academy, the new Iraqi Air Force College at Tikrit Air Base took in its first class of 157 cadets, **Sept. 1, 2010**. They started a 3-year program that lays the foundation for the future of self-sufficient air power in Iraq with studies in airmanship, English, avionics, and the theory of aviation. The college had been training air force officers since 1972 but had completely shut down by the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The **Battle of the Palms** took place in Diyala Province, northeast of Baghdad, against at most 25 fighters dug into a palm orchard **Sept. 11-13, 2010**. The fighters were responsible for planting improvised explosive devices in the area. The fight escaplated into a three-day battle leaving 111 Iraqi soldiers dead and 22 wounded. On the third day, Iraqi forces called for help from an U.S. Army brigade that sent special forces troops, Apache attack helicopters, as well as U.S. Air Force fighters jets, which dropped two 500-pound bombs. Iraqi soldiers moved in on the morning of Sept. 13 and arrested more than 50 people.



Iraqi sailors man the decks of one of the Iraqi navy's newly-christened Swift-class patrol boats at the port of Umm Qasr in southern Iraq **Sept. 26, 2011**. The patrol boats are used to secure the vital waterways Iraq uses to transport oil, a significant revenue source for the nation.

Fifty-eight Iraqi Christians died and 98 were wounded inside a church in downtown Baghdad that was attacked by al-Qaeda in Iraq **Oct. 31, 2010**. The persecution against Iraqi Christians still occurs at the hands of terrorist groups. The Obama administration praised the Iraqi government for its handling of the investigation, although many critics disagreed, claiming the Iraqi government failed to protect Christians from attacks across Iraq.

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The whistle-blowing website, **Wikileaks**, published 250,000 classified diplomatic cables **Nov. 28, 2010**. The majority of the cables had been written in Iraq between 2005-2010. Over the course of the next year, the site would continue to publish documents that contained information which could place those mentioned in the reports in danger.

On **Dec 21, 2010**, the Iraqi Council of Representatives approved Prime Minister-designate Maliki's slate of cabinet ministers, completing the government formation process almost 10 months after the March 7 election. Several key ministries, including defense, interior, and the minister of state/national security advisor were not named at the time.

Iraqi army soldiers and Kurdish Peshmerga security forces inspect a vehicle at a **combined security checkpoint** in Diyala Province, Iraq, **Feb. 23, 2011.** Iraqi soldiers, Peshmerga and U.S. forces work together at combined checkpoints in northern Iraq to ensure security in the region and show solidarity between Peshmerga and IA forces.

Prime Minister Maliki ordered the Iraqi army to replace the Iraqi oil police in protecting the Baiji oil refinery. This move was in response to the **Feb. 26, 2011** attack that destroyed key units and crippled the refinery.

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Al-Tadreeb Al-Shamil, or collective training, provides experience for Iraqi army commanders in training their units in defense against external military threats, as well as developing a foundational competency at the company level.

This all-encompassing training enabled Iraqi battalion commanders to train on individual and unit-level tasks and assess the unit's strengths and weaknesses. The course culminated with a company or battalion-level exercise, where leaders coordinated multiple weapon systems and complex movement techniques.

These types of exercises served to jumpstart training focused on conventional tasks and helped to build a culture of training in the Iraqi security forces.

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Exercise Lion's Leap was a capstone Iraqi security forces live-fire training event. The Iraqi army, in coordination with the other branches of the Iraqi military, conducted this exercise in **Spring 2011** to demonstrate its increasing capability to defend the nation. The exercise utilized a joint-service approach, integrating the Iraqi army, air force, navy and special operations forces elements, including the 9th, 12th, and 14th Iraqi army divisions, the 1st and the 2nd Iraqi special operations forces brigades, and select elements from the air force and navy.

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May 18, 2011 - The Ministry of Electricity announced that it had contracted for 25 power stations with the Korean STX Corporation. The stations, which will run from Basra to the south of Baghdad, will each generate 100 megawatts.

May 22, 2011 - When British military forces ended their hands-on mission in Iraq, 81 Royal Navy sailors turned over the task of patroling the waters of Umm Qasr to the Iraqi navy and marine corps.

2011 Coalition Force Departure

UNITED KINGDOM
TROOPS: 46,000
DEPLOYED:
March 2003
DEPARTED:
May 2011

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On **June 2, 2011**, Iraq security forces raided the Trade Bank of Iraq, the country's premiere financial instituion, in what the government of Iraq stated was a move against corruption. The bank's director, Hussein al-Uzri, fled to Lebanon. Uzri is the nephew of controversial Iraqi politician, Ahmed Chalabi.

Staff Sgt. Dan Leclerc, assigned to the Babil Provincial Recontruction Team, hands out toys to local children at the villiage of Al Shurtaa, in Babil Province **June 11, 2011**.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams were first established in Iraq in 2007 and ended 2011 during Operation New Dawn. The purpose of PRTs was to build civil capacity and empower local governments to govern their constituents more effectively. Each team was led by a civilian, who reported to the U.S. Department of State, and a deputy team leader who was a military officer, with functional areas that include: rule of law, reconstruction and development, agriculture, and governance.

On **June 21, 2011**, in a unanimous vote, the U.S. Senate confirmed Leon Panetta as the next U.S. Secretary of Defense and he assumed the office on July 1.

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National quality mark of Iraq

On **June 23, 2011**, a senior Iraq Central Bank advisor, Mudhhir Muhammad Salih, said the government of Iraqi had adopted a two-pronged plan to restructure the national currency in order to facilitate large transactions and make government accounts more efficient.

June 30, 2011 - The Department of Defense announced that an additional campaign star is authorized for wear on the Iraq Campaign Medal. The new star recognizes service in Iraq after Sept. 1, 2010 under Operation New Dawn.

Iraqi army officials sign transition paperwork as they assume responsibility of COS Sykes.

On **July 14, 2011**, United States Division - North reported that the transition of Contingency Operating Site Sykes in Ninewah Province to the government of Iraq was complete. COS Sykes was the first of the large bases to be returned to the Iraqis.

July 20, 2011 - A report by Dunia Frontier Consultants indicated that foreign investment in Iraq was on track to double this year with $45.6 billion in foreign investments for the first half of this year already.

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Transition

1st Lt. Arcadio Avalos, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry, watches an Iraqi police officer sign documentation to transition military checkpoints from American responsibility to Iraqi control in the Kirkuk Province **July 28, 2011**.

Sgt. Emanuel C. King, a paratrooper with Task Force Dragon, United States Forces - Iraq, and Eduardo Calvo, a heavy equipment operator, load containers onto flatbed trucks at Camp Victory, Iraq, **Aug. 1, 2011**.

On **Aug. 21, 2011**, leaders of the Iraqi political blocks agreed to form a ministerial committee to implement the terms of the **Erbil Agreement**. The Erbil Agreement, signed in November 2010, ended an eight-month deadlock after none of the Iraqi parties were able to win a majority in their March 2010 elections. Some of the issues agreed upon in the agreement included abiding by the Iraqi constitution, protection of Iraq's federal democratic system, a coalition government in which all major Iraqi components participate, and an introduction of checks and balances in all ministries and institutions of state.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division move a power generator as they prepare to transfer the last remaining supplies back home to Fort Hood, Texas, from Contingency Operating Base Warhorse **Sept. 21, 2011.**

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1st Lt. Jon Chandler, executive officer, Company D, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division - Center and Iraqi army Col. Hussien (far right), division supply officer, 17th Iraqi Army Division, go over a list of property, while conducting a joint inventory at Joint Security Station Deason **Sept. 22, 2011**.

President Barack Obama announced **Oct. 21, 2011**, that the United States would not extend its troop presence in Iraq past the Dec. 31, 2011 deadline, thus honoring the commitment agreed upon in the Security Agreement of 2008.

On **Oct. 22, 2011**, leaders from the U.S. Division - North transitioned the trilateral combined checkpoints manned by U.S., Iraqi and Peshmerga forces across Ninewa, Tamin and Diyala provinces to a bilateral checkpoint manned only by Iraqi and Peshmerga forces. As a result of this important transition, Iraq's security grew in areas of effectiveness and capability, establishing a foundation for successful security missions and increased stability for the country's citizens.

An F-16 takes off from the runway at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, **Oct. 28, 2011**. The 125th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, from Tulsa, Okla., arrived in Iraq mid-September to provide close air support for U.S. forces as they transition personnel and equipment out of Iraq as part of U.S. reposturization efforts.

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The End of the Iraq War

Staff Sgt. Michael Bernquist, a paratrooper with the XVIII Airborne Corps, holds his arms out for his daughter after returning home to Fort Bragg, N.C., **Nov. 4, 2011**, from his 12-month tour in Iraq. Paratroopers from the XVIII Airborne Corps were part of the headquarters element, closing up final operations in the Iraqi theater.

"For all of the challenges that our nation faces, you remind us that there's nothing that we Americans can't do when we stick together...and that is why the United States military is the most respected institution in our land...that is why you, the 9-11 generation have earned your place in history."

-President Barack Obama

On **Dec. 14, 2011**, the President and First Lady traveled to Fort Bragg, N.C., to recognize service members for their contributions and patriotism in support of Operation New Dawn, which officially ended the nine-year war in Iraq.

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Gen. Lloyd J. Austin, III, commander, United States Forces - Iraq and Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, his senior enlisted advisor, case the USF-I flag during a ceremony marking the end of Operation New Dawn, at Sather Air Base **Dec. 15, 2011**.

The last remaining U.S. military forces in Iraq depart across the border into Kuwait **Dec. 18, 2011.**

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THE IRAQ WAR

2003 - 2011

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