



The Old Ironsides Report



Tuesday, November 04, 2003

Iraqis, U.S. troops dedicate new Al Rashid District Advisory Council Hall



Al Rashid District Advisory Council members unveil the memorial created to honor the cooperation and friendship between paratroopers of the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment and the citizens of the Al Rashid district of Baghdad on Oct. 31. The monument commemorates the relationship and the hard work of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, which is part of Task Force 1st Armored Division for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo by Spc. Jason B. Baker, 49th Public Affairs Detachment (Airborne)

Story by Sgt. Brent M. Williams, 49th Public Affairs Detachment (Airborne), 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division BAGHDAD, Iraq—Local Iraqi community leaders and neighborhood representatives met with leaders of the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team to dedicate the grand opening of their new town hall, the first district advisory council (DAC) building in Baghdad.

Distinguished guests and visitors from across Al Rashid, coalition forces and representatives of the Coalition Provisional Authority marked the grand opening of the Al Rashid District Advisory Council Hall Oct 31.

The council hall is a monument to the spirit of brotherhood between the coalition and the Iraqi people, said 2nd Brigade commander Col. Kurt Fuller.

"It is a testament to just how far we have come in a very short time," Fuller said to those in attendance. "Together, the advisory councils, this airborne regiment and the many citizens of Al Rashid have worked not only to fix all of these problems, but to put in place the processes and institutions that will allow the improvements to continue."

The building, which was formerly a hunting club frequented by Uday Hussein, is a memorial for the soldiers and the citizens who gave their lives in the fight to liberate Iraq, he explained.

The Al Rashid District Advisory Council was the first of the nine non-judicial interim councils created under guidance provided by the CPA. Task Force Falcon, the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, began working with local leaders to create the council in early May.

The council provides the approximately 1.5 million people in Al Rashid, a district in south Baghdad, the opportunity to address and resolve problems within their communities, said Sgt. 1st Class Ronald P. McGraw, noncommissioned officer-in-charge, 411th Civil Affairs Battalion. The 411th is an Army Reserve unit based in Danbury, Conn.

The 15-room building, housing the advisory council and the Al Rashid General Information Offices, will be a place where the citizens of Al Rashid can voice their opinions and their desires for the new Iraqi government.

McGraw, the Governance Actions Officer for the council, is coaching and mentoring the chairman, vice chairman and staff of the advisory council to assist the district leaders in the creation of the new democratic government.

Although the district advisory council is an interim council, the format for their leadership is based upon a democratic government, said McGraw. Upon finishing the Iraqi Constitution, voter registration and a census, the Iraqi people will be ready to hold democratic elections, which will make the council truly representative of the people.

Working under coalition guidance, leaders of the Al Rashid district have spent a considerable amount of time and money working to clean the streets of trash and sewage and to repair their power plant, oil refinery, medical care facilities and schools within the communities, said Dr. Sami Ahmed, former council chairman and guest speaker at the dedication.

"Following the collapse of the old regime...the citizens of our district dedicated themselves to saving their people, defying all difficulties to facilitate the birth of this council for the new and early stages of democracy and the new Iraq," Ahmed said.

To the citizens of Al Rashid, their new town hall stands as a symbol for the emerging democracy in Iraq, a testament to what can be accomplished in the spirit of brotherhood and humanity, said Ahmed.

"We seize this opportunity to thank the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment for their valuable assistance in making this building to be the meeting hall for the Al Rashid District Advisory Council," he said.

A race to show progress in Iraq

With U.S. public unlikely to back an indefinite occupation, timetable on training Iraqis is key

WASHINGTON – (Christian Science Monitor) In a way, it may now be a race against time: U.S. officials are moving as fast as they can to hand over responsibility for Iraq's security to the Iraqis themselves.

A spate of deadly attacks by nameless insurgents has only increased the pressure on the Bush administration to pursue its Iraqification strategy. Many experts warn that the U.S. public is unlikely to support indefinitely the U.S. occupation in the face of continued steady American casualties.

Putting more Iraqi policemen on the street would give an appearance of forward movement, at the least. That's key, say some: If it seems to Americans that the White House has no viable plan for improving security, support for U.S. policy in Iraq may quickly erode.

"As long as they have a plan in place that shows light at the end of the tunnel, the support will be there to stay the course, in my view," says Robert Pfaltzgraff, a Tufts University security expert.

That the administration's plan is to slog forward and gradually hand security tasks over to Iraqis has become increasingly apparent in recent weeks.

Safety Tip

Electrical fire safety

Overloaded outlets or faulty wires can cause fires. Be sure to use a power strip when connecting electrical items.

Spot problems before they cause fire or shock.

Look out for these common situations:

Recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers.

Feeling a tingle when you touch an electrical appliance.

Discoloration of wall outlets.

A burning smell or unusual odor coming from an appliance or wiring.

Sizzling sound at wall switches or outlets.

Flickering lights.

Always have an operational fire extinguisher available – a least a 10-pound size.

Chaplain's thought for the day

Thy Will

"Our Lord and our God, be it done unto us according to Thy will." Simple acceptance of God's will in whatever happens is the key to abundant living.

We must continue to pray. "Not my will, but Thy will be done."

It may not turn out the way you want it to, but it will be the best way in the long run, because it is God's way.

If you decide to accept whatever happens as God's will for yourself, whatever it may be, your burdens will be lighter.

Try to see in all things some fulfillment of the Divine Intent.

Oddly Enough

British explorers finish seven straight marathons in seven days

NEW YORK (Reuters) - British explorers Ranulph Fiennes and Mike Stroud finished their seventh marathon in seven days on Sunday, a global adventure that began in the wilds of South America and finished in New York's concrete jungle.

Fiennes, 59, and Stroud, 48, crossed the New York marathon finish line in Central Park together Sunday in the official time of five hours, 25 minutes and 46 seconds. Fiennes finished 28,362nd and Stroud 28,364th in a field of 35,000 runners.

It was the slowest time for Fiennes in the 26.2-mile courses the pair ran, flying from venue to venue. The men ran in the Patagonia region of Chile, the Falkland Islands, Sydney, Singapore, London and Cairo before New York -- the only organized marathon of their challenge.

The duo intended to begin their adventure in Antarctica, but bad weather forced them to run one of the marathons in the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic. The two men struggled to complete the fourth marathon in the searing heat of Singapore on Thursday.

The New York Marathon was won by Kenyan Martin Lel. His compatriot Margaret Okayo won the women's race. Lel clocked two hours, 10 minutes and 30 seconds and Okayo two hours, 22 minutes and 31 seconds.

In 1982, Fiennes became one of the first men to reach both the North Pole and the South Pole on his Trans-Globe Expedition. Eleven years later, he and Stroud, a doctor, became the first men to cross the Antarctic unsupported on foot.

This Day in History

Nov. 4, 1942

Rommel begins the "Great Retreat"

From HistoryChannel.com

On Nov. 4, 1942, after losing the final and most famous battle at El Alamein, Egypt, German Gen. Field Marshall Erwin Rommel disobeyed Hitler's orders and began his five-month retreat.

The grueling 12-day battle had been a tragicomedy of errors for the Axis powers. In fact, when the battle began, Rommel was at a mountain resort in Austria, recovering from liver and blood-pressure problems. He arrived two days late, only to find his panzer army out-manned almost two-to-one by British Gen. Bernard L. Montgomery's crew of 195,000 soldiers.

Rommel also realized that food was running short and only seven issues of gasoline remained to supply his hundreds of vehicles. Weakened by constant British air attacks and a dearth of supplies, Rommel radioed Hitler of his intention to retreat on Nov. 3.

Hitler denied him with this rather unrealistic response: "It would not be the first time in history that the stronger will has triumphed over the enemy's strong battalions. You can show your troops no other road than to victory or death."

Rommel was stunned. While the British army continued pummeling his troops, he fumed. He finally ordered a retreat in mid-afternoon of the next day, without Hitler's approval. But the damage of delaying retreat had been costly. Rommel later admitted that his obedience to Hitler's "victory or death" order was his one mistake of the battle.