

MPs, Dogs Sniff out Explosives in Mosul, Deny Enemy of Supplies

Wednesday, 27 February 2008



Sgt. Angela Mathern and her bomb-sniffing dog Vinny, both of the 51st Military Police Detachment, based out of Ft. Lewis, Wash., inspect a cart carrying propane tanks in downtown Mosul during a search of random vehicles for weapons and bomb-making materials, Feb. 14. Soldiers from the 552nd Military Police Company, based out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, pull security. Photo by Sgt. Patrick Lair, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

MOSUL — U.S. military police in northern Iraq are developing new tactics in an attempt to counter insurgent violence in the Ninewah provincial capital city of Mosul.

In February, the 552nd Military Police Company, based out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, working with military canine handlers, began conducting a series of random traffic searches in downtown Mosul for vehicles transporting explosives.

“If we get detection dogs and start actively seeking them out, it denies the enemy the capability of bringing them out,” said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Ford, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, speaking of the explosive materials often used by insurgents to create improvised bombs in houses and roadways.

On Jan. 24, the issue was brought to a head when an estimated 20,000 tons of insurgent explosives detonated in a three-story building in downtown Mosul, resulting in death and injury to multiple Iraqi civilians.

“The goal here is to deny the enemy that availability of supplies,” said Ford, now on his third combat deployment to the city.

On a recent outing, Sgt. Angela Mathern, a canine handler with the 501st Military Police Detachment, based out of Fort Lewis, Wash., accompanied Vinnie, an explosives dog, in his search of vehicles at downtown intersections.

“I let Vinnie do his thing. He’s the expert on it all,” she said of the three-year-old black lab she’s trained with for nearly a year. “I’m the expert on handling him. My eyes are always on my dog.”

Both Mathern and Ford said the searches are just another way Coalition troops are working to bring security to the city of nearly 1.7 million residents.

“This is just something else we can do to help out in our area,” Ford said.

“Our basic mission here is to save lives,” Mathern said. “Whenever people ask me why I do this job, I tell them I’m saving lives every time I go out.”

(Story by Sgt. Patrick Lair, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

In Other Recent Developments Here:

TIKRIT — Multi-National Division – North Soldiers killed seven terrorists during a firefight east of Khan Bani Sa’ad in the early morning hours of Feb. 25.

BAGHDAD — Coalition forces captured four suspected al-Qaeda in Iraq leaders in Baghdad, Feb 24.