

# CIC Soldiers Work Behind Scene to Protect Coalition Forces

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**Sgt. Michael Polston, a native of Danville, Ky., who serves as a battle non-commissioned officer with the 138th Fires Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, analyzes an acquisition on the radar, March 13, to determine whether or not it is a threat to MND-B forces here. He said he continuously tells himself and his Soldiers, during the long hours on duty, to stay on point, because the success of the mission depends on it. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans.**

**CAMP LIBERTY** — Soldiers working in the Multi-National Division – Baghdad’s Command Information Center at the division headquarters may not perform their duties in the limelight, yet their efforts have proven paramount to force protection efforts.

Soldiers from the fires and effects cell in the CIC continuously monitor the skies and provide a level of protection against indirect-fire attacks on the bases and outposts in and around Baghdad.

“It’s my job to determine if something the radar picks up is a threat or not,” said Pfc. Rusty Williams, a native of Antlers, Okla. “If we conduct a counter-fire mission, it is my job to call for the air space to be cleared before we return fire at the point of origin of the indirect-fire attack.”

Williams serves as an automated field artillery tactical data system operator, with Battery D, 1st Battalion, 14th Field Artillery, attached to 4th Infantry Division, MND-B. Battery D is a target acquisition battery based out of Fort Sill, Okla.

Williams said he received extensive training on the radar systems before he deployed to Iraq to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“The system we use is fairly complex, but it immediately tells us where the attack came from and where the round is going,” he said.

Sgt. Michael Polston, a native of Danville, Ky., said it is his job to ensure each target acquisition is properly processed. Polston serves as the battle non-commissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 138th Fires Brigade, which is a national guard unit based out of Lexington, Ky.

“Without processing the acquisition properly, we wouldn’t be able to quickly send a response unit to the attack’s point of origin,” he said.

The Soldiers said the mission gets stressful at times because of the high demands of their job.

“You can’t just leave whenever you want to,” said Polston. “Someone has to always be monitoring the computers in case something happens.”

Part of the stress the Soldiers feel while working in the cell is due to the long hours they sit in front of the computers.

“It’s easy to get complacent sitting here,” said Polston. “However, I just continuously tell myself, and my Soldiers, to stay on point because the success of the mission depends on it.

“On this shift, we are good at getting the acquisition and quickly getting it out, giving the brigades more time to respond to an attack.”

When the Soldiers are not working, they have different ways of unwinding from the day.

“I kick box or play video games when I’m not working,” said Williams. “I will also be starting some online courses and working on correspondence courses.”

Polston said he spends his free time working out or communicating with his wife and 2-year-old daughter back home.

For their continuous efforts, Polston said he and his fellow Soldiers have learned to operate without much in return.

“It’s mostly a thankless job, aside from the occasional ‘good job’ we get from our leadership,” he said. “But we don’t need to be thanked. Our reward will be returning to our homes after our deployment.”