



Battalion Helps Iraqis Reclaim Freedom, Security, Stability

By Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
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BAGHDAD, April 10, 2008 – The Raider Brigade Combat Team has a new ally in its mission to help the Iraqi government and Multinational Division Baghdad soldiers build upon the predominately Sunni community of Doura in Baghdad's Rashid district.



Army Sgt. Keith Fosmire, a team leader assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team, takes point April 5, 2008, during a combined patrol with the 3rd Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division. The Iraqi and coalition forces patrolled Doura's industrial commercial 5th Street and surrounding areas as part of efforts to provide stability and security for the 1.2 million people in southern Baghdad's Rashid district. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multinational Division Baghdad

The 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, "Warriors" will be attached to the 4th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team next week as part of its mission to help the government and the Iraqi people.

"It is our intent to create a safe and stable living environment for the people of the Doura district," said Army Lt. Col. Timothy Watson, commander of 2-4th Infantry Regiment, part of the 10th Mountain Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team, based at Fort Polk, La.

The battalion's current mission is to work with Iraqi security forces and the local district councils responsible for the community, which is home to the Doura Market, a social, cultural and economic center in southern Baghdad, Watson explained.

"This area has all the potential to flourish economically and contribute to the proud cultural heritage of the Iraqi nation," Watson said. "Much of our time and effort has been devoted to facilitating the growth of the market complex while providing a nonintrusive, yet highly effective, security presence."

The units of the 2-4th Infantry Regiment have partnered with the local Iraqi army police forces, as well as the “Sons of Iraq” citizen security group, to better secure the Doura neighborhoods from criminal and terrorist activity.

Soldiers maintain a presence in Doura 24 hours a day to help Iraqi security forces protect the 5,000 homes in the local community, Army 2nd Lt. Jay Parsons, a platoon leader assigned to Company B, 2-4th Infantry Regiment, said.

Units conduct joint and platoon-sized operations with their Iraqi counterparts every day, operating out of combat outposts and joint security stations in Doura, he explained.

“I try to ensure that we conduct some type of combat operation every day,” said Parsons, who calls Wichita, Kan., his home. “Be it cordon and search or dismounted and mounted patrols, it’s a constant thing. There are still a small group of criminal elements within the district that we are weeding out, but I do not see a major threat.”

Security is not the platoon’s only function, said Parsons, a graduate of Wichita State University with a bachelor’s degree in history and criminal justice. He said his soldiers also conduct daily “atmospherics” meetings with the Doura residents and visit local community businesses.

“There is still a lot of potential for growth in there,” Parsons said. “There is a need for community services, and there are definitely capable people within the district to run all that.”

The regiment’s company commanders also are working to stimulate the local economy and assist local business owners with small-business loans to help revitalize areas such as the Doura Market, he added.

Army Sgt. Keith Fosmire, a native of Cloversfield, N.Y., and a team leader in Parsons’ platoon, said that, in the short time since his unit began working with the Doura residents, he has seen an improvement in the quality of life and an increase in the people’s respect for their community.

“We had a big problem with garbage,” said Fosmire, who describes himself as being devoted to the military and the mission. “Now we’re actually seeing the guys in the yellow jump suits and garbage trucks going around picking up the trash. And we’re seeing more jobs and more activity in the area than before.”

Fosmire, who is on the fifth deployment of his 11-year career, said he credits the unit’s success to the “squared-away and dedicated” soldiers of 2-4th Infantry Regiment, as well to as the extensive training the battalion conducted last year, prior to its deployment.

He also attributed Doura's progress to the cooperation between the Iraqi people and coalition forces, as well as work accomplished by previous units, such as the 4th Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, from Fort Carson, Colo.

The Warrior Battalion arrived in Baghdad in December to become part of the 1st Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team. The 2-4th Infantry Regiment will attach to the 4th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team as the Raider BCT bids farewell to the outgoing unit and assumes responsibility for the Rashid district.

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