

2-12 Infantry brings hope for Al Doura people

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BAGHDAD, Iraq - In recent weeks, the Al Doura District has been a hotbed of activity. It's been the epicenter of a power struggle between coalition forces and terrorists. Commanders from the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and their counterparts from Fort Carson, Colo., have stressed the importance of securing the district for the sake of the people who live there.

Lt. Col. Stephen Michael, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, said this area is of the utmost importance to not only himself but to the commander of the 2nd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, Col. Bryan Roberts and the 1st Cavalry Division Commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil Jr.

Michael said his troops have been busy patrolling the streets of the district with hopes of bringing a little more freedom to the locals who want to see peace in their neighborhood.

"There's a simple mantra to battalion," Michael said. "We're here for the Iraqi people and are against anyone whom is against the Iraqi people."

The troops from 2-12 have been in the area for only a few weeks. They replaced the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment (Air Assault) out of Fort Campbell, Ky., who was attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. The 2-506th recently handed operations over to the 2-12, and the "Warriors" from Colorado wasted no time in taking over.

Troops from 3rd Platoon, Company A, 2-12 were on for the first shift of the morning. Before the sun was up, they had their briefings done, their gear on, and their trucks ready to roll out.

They first went to pick up their Iraqi counterparts from the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade of the National Police department before continuing into the sector.

The troops were greeted like family by the NP. Though the language barrier wasn't easy to overcome, the troops conversed about their wives, children and American life to the curious policemen.

With quick order, the conversations ended and the mission was set to begin. It was all business from here out.

Early into their shift through the sector, the troops began what they called a "block party." After cordoning off a small section of houses, the troops would make random checks on houses to make sure their presence was felt.

Keeping an eye on things from a rooftop was Sgt. Daniel Salazar from Los Angeles and Sgt. Derek Geringer from Mesa, Ariz. Salazar said they didn't have the most action-filled position during the operation, but they knew the importance of just keeping watch over their fellow Soldiers.

Salazar told of how insurgents would sometimes see troops come into the neighborhood and begin assaults from rooftops. Salazar and Geringer were there on the roof to make sure their friends were protected while they completed the mission.

Staff Sgt. Nelson Grizales, a married father of two kids from Hollywood, Fla., noted how the Iraqi people seemed to be thankful to the troops who kept their neighborhood safer.

“We want to bring a sense of security for the people of Dora,” Grizales said. “The more the locals see us, they’ll see we’re here to help. We want to let the insurgents know we’re here, and we’re not scared.”

As the Soldiers moved through the community, Iraqi children would come up to say “hello” and ask for chocolate. The children waved and smiled as the Humvees rumbled down their street.

Staff Sgt. David Brown, a 14-year Infantry veteran from Albuquerque, N.M., says locals have been receptive to not only his troops but the policemen that accompanied them.

Brown emphasized the importance of having the police ride with his troops.

“It’s not about the tribe, it’s about the entire community working together,” Brown remarked about the interactions between the locals and the police.

After a few random checks and searches, the troops began their rounds through the crowded streets. After a short time, a group of locals caught the attention of the convoy. A man frantically explained to the Soldiers that a group of men were at a nearby school, shooting and creating havoc.

Immediately, the troops made a game plan and were ready for a confrontation. As quickly as word had reached them, the platoon found a few local girls from the school were able to talk about what really happened.

“They told us a man came to their school, fired a few rounds into the air and ordered them to go home,” Grizales said. “No one was hurt. No one was killed. It sounded like someone just wanted to scare the locals.”

The platoon continued to patrol for a few more hours until the policemen needed an escort back to their base. Salazar remarked about how nice it was to have an uneventful day.

“I was two-for-two up until now,” he said. “The last couple times I’ve been out, we got RPG’d and shot at a few times. Sometimes boring is nice.”

Cutlines:



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Pfc. David Fielder, a Meridian, Miss., native, mans the gunner's turret during a trip through the Al Doura District of Baghdad Nov. 20. Fielder and the rest of his fellow troops from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division have been patrolling the dangerous section of the capital city in hopes of bringing security to the local populous. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)



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Sgt. Daniel Salazar originally from Los Angeles keeps watch from atop a roof during morning patrols through Baghdad Nov. 20. Troops from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division have been patrolling the Al Doura District of the capital city in hopes of curtailing the surging violence in the area. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)



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A legless man watches as a convoy of up-armored Humvees drives through the neighborhood. Troops from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division have been patrolling the streets of the notoriously dangerous Al Doura District since they took over battle space from the 101st Airborne Division.(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)