

## U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

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### ENGINEERS UPGRADE LIVING QUARTERS FOR MILITARY POLICE SOLDIERS ON DUTY IN BAGHDAD

By Sgt. Henry Bauer

769th Engineer Battalion, 35th Engineer Brigade

**COMBAT OUTPOST OLD MOD, Iraq** -- Securing downtown Baghdad is a demanding mission for the Soldiers of the 108th Military Police Company. For these MPs from Fort Bragg, N.C., personal space and comfortable living conditions help to lessen the stress of that critical task.

When the 108th first arrived here, the living conditions were neither personal nor private. The open bay quarters the Soldiers occupied were large, open rooms accommodating up to 30 Soldiers with bunk beds and not much else.

“There was just no privacy, no air circulation. It was generally, 'Live where you can fit in,' with no personal space whatsoever. This being the second, third, and in some cases like mine, the fourth tour to the Middle East since 9/11, to get better living conditions is well deserved,” said 1st Sgt. Christopher Brown of the 108th, which is serving here with the 95th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade.

Brown explored options for improving the living conditions with the help of the 35th Engineer Brigade of the Missouri Army National Guard and the 769th Engineer Battalion from the Louisiana Army National Guard.

Once plans were drawn up, the 851st Vertical Engineer Company, a Minnesota Army National Guard unit, took on the mission of



PHOTO COURTESY 108TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY  
1st Lt. Russell Smith works in his new living area at Combat Outpost Old Mod, Iraq Feb. 9, after engineers from the 851st Vertical Engineer Company, Minnesota Army National Guard, made improvements to the quarters of the 108th Military Police Company.

making improvements. The Soldiers of the 851st took a few days to prepare for the mission by gathering the necessary building materials before heading out to the construction site, where they set to work immediately, setting up their construction equipment, unloading material, and addressing concerns about the project.

“The Soldiers of the 851st are like professional contractors; they are all about the 'customer is first' type attitude,” Brown said.

Once the first large room was converted into a two-story, apartment-style area, it was determined that each room would take about seven days to complete, and the 851st has made steady progress.

Brown said the new rooms will accommodate his entire company, rather than just a small number of his Soldiers at any given time, and also provide the capability for increased maintenance of their equipment.

“Everyone from generals to privates marvel (at) their work,” said Brown. “As for the morale and motivation of my Soldiers, it has definitely made a difference. Just being able to come back in from being out in sector all day and having a place of your own to reflect has done wonders for them.”

The 95th MP Battalion and 18th MP Brigade are U.S. Army Europe units headquartered in Mannheim, Germany.



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