



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command  
16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade  
Public Affairs Office**

Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq  
DSN (NIPR) 318-827-6101  
DSN (SIPR) 302-243-5104  
[keith.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:keith.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
3rd ESC Release #090730-8  
August 4, 2009

## **Mississippi Guardsmen recover stolen merchandise at Q-West**

By Capt. Murray Shugars  
2-198<sup>th</sup> Combined Arms Battalion

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Military Police officers with the 2-198th Combined Arms Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, detained five Sri Lankan contract workers here July 23, and recovered about \$11,000 in stolen merchandise.

The Mississippi MPs initially took custody of three “third-country nationals,” the military term for personnel not from Iraq or Coalition nations, and, after a swift investigation, apprehended another two, all of whom were fired and returned to their home country.

“This is the largest recovery of stolen goods I have seen in five years in Iraq,” said Michael R. Reyana, a contractor security manager from Houston, Texas. “The MPs did an outstanding job of tracking down the stolen items and uncovering what we believe was a theft-ring that had operated here for a few months.”

Staff Sgt. Jonathan E. Williams, a native of Grenada, Miss., said he was flagged down by a salesman from Katar Plaza, one of the Turkish-operated shopping facilities on base, during a routine patrol, who told him that three TCNs had stolen from his store.

-more-

THIEVES/2-2-2

The alleged shoplifters were caught, though, when they tried to enter a secure facility.

“I saw them running from the Katar Plaza salesman,” said Edgar Mugabi, an EOD-T security specialist from Kampala, Uganda. “When they would enter our compound, I stopped them with my weapon.”

MPs found missing merchandise on the men.

“We searched the TCNs and found a backpack full of watches, shoes, women’s clothing, t-shirts, pants, cologne, perfume, and other stuff from Katar Plaza,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kenneth E. Guess, a native of Nettleton, Miss. “When we expanded our investigation to their living area, that’s when we realized this was more than just a few guys shoplifting.”

The MPs recovered hundreds of retail items, many still hung with price tags from Katar Plaza. The two additional TCNs were at work during the search, but the MPs coordinated with the contractor security team to apprehend them.

“We have not had problems like this before. When we noticed the shelves getting empty over the last days, we were so happy that business was good. Then we saw the thieves,” said Abit Basak, supervisor of Katar Plaza.

The Turkish civilians operating Katar Plaza, akin to a small strip mall, appreciated the help from the MPs.

“The MPs helped us a lot,” said salesman Asalan Kasim, of Sanliurfa, Turkey. “We are very grateful.”

The Soldiers of the 2-198<sup>th</sup> CAB take their role seriously.

-more-

THIEVES/3-3-3

“We just want to show the community that we’re here for their well-being,” said Capt. Demetrius Q. Wilson, provost marshal, and native of Crawford, Miss. “Also, we want to show anyone thinking about committing a crime that we mean business.”



Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth E. Guess (left), and Staff Sgt. Jonathan E. Williams, newly arrived Military Police, inventory stolen merchandise they helped recover from a theft ring involving at least five contractors at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, July 23. The MPs estimate the worth of the stolen items at more than \$10,000. Guess, of Nettleton, Miss., and Williams, of Grenada, Miss., arrived at Q-West recently with the 2-

198<sup>th</sup> Combined Arms Battalion, headquartered in Senatobia, Miss. “This is the largest theft bust that I have experienced in 27 years as an MP,” said Guess. (Photos by Capt. Murray Shugars)



A Soldier shops in Katar Plaza, a Turkish-operated retail store at Contingency Operating Base Q-West. Katar Plaza was the target of a theft-ring busted by MPs with the 2-198<sup>th</sup> Combined Arms Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, headquartered in Senatobia.