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RELEASE #2009-04-07-1

2009: THE YEAR OF THE NCO

April 7, 2009

Leadership of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division hosts farewell to Iraqi colleagues

By Sgt. Daniel Nichols

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- The Mada'in Qada is an area southeast of Baghdad that had seen more than its fair share of violence in the past years.



SGT DANIEL NICHOLS

Brig. Gen. Emad Abd Ali, commander of the 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division (center), Col. Ehsan Ali Jassim, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st NP Division (to Ali's right) and Qais Shathir Khemis Al-Jabouri, a sheik from the Mada'in Qada (left) arrive at the Freedom Rest recreation area in Baghdad, Iraq for a farewell luncheon hosted by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, April 1.

During 2007 and 2008 the region was the front line of the fight for Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, who, Multi-National Division - Baghdad officials say, successfully quelled fighting between criminal groups, insurgents and al-Qaida in Iraq forces by the end of their tour in May 2008.

When the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division arrived in the Mada'in Qada as 3rd Brigade's replacement, most of the

fighting had ended and a time for rebuilding had begun. Throughout its deployment, "Iron Brigade" officials said, the brigade has helped the local leaders of the Mada'in communities and local Iraqi security forces to secure, rebuild and rejuvenate the area.

This week responsibility for the coalition mission in the Mada'in was passed on again, this time to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. Hand in hand with that transition, "Iron Brigade" leaders hosted a formal farewell to the Iraqi leaders in the Mada'in with whom they have worked for the past 11 months, including military and police leaders, sheiks and other area representatives.

The luncheon at the coalition's "Freedom Rest" recreation area April 1, served as a way to say goodbye while introducing the leadership of the 3rd BCT to Mada'in community and ISF leaders, "Iron Brigade" officials said.

"As I look around this room right now ... what I see, are Iraqi heroes who have given much to achieve security in the Mada'in," 2nd BCT commander Col. Pat White at the farewell luncheon.

"I think that everyone in this room understands that one of the constants in Iraq over the last six years has been change," White added. "The reason I asked you all to come is because there has been a change in leadership in the Mada'in Qada and I want to make sure that we have given a proper farewell to you."

"I am looking forward to seeing the rest of the Mada'in and to continue to work with the leadership there," added Col. Timothy McGuire, commander of the 3rd BCT.

"As much as we cooperated and were close with Colonel White and his brigade in the past, we have to do the same thing with Colonel McGuire and his brigade as well," said Maj. Gen. Qassim Jassem Nazal, commander of the 9th Iraqi Army Division.

"That is because the only goal of the troops of the coalition forces is to provide security and services and help the people of the Mada'in."

(Sgt. Daniel Nichols of the U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office is currently on duty in Iraq with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.)



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