

U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

contact: paoci@eur.army.mil
phone: 49-6221-57-5815 / DSN 370-5815
fax: 49-6221-57-6376 / DSN 370-6376



RELEASE #2008-03-17-01

Mar. 17, 2008

MORE THAN 1,300 IRAQIS GRADUATE FROM BASIC COURSE AT 18TH MILITARY POLICE BRIGADE-SUPPORTED ACADEMY

By Pfc. Samantha Schutz

Multi-National Division - Baghdad Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- More than 1,300 Iraqi Police recruits completed the initial phase of their preparations to begin patrolling the streets of Baghdad after graduation from Al Furat Police Training Academy March 13.

The new IP officers are the latest of more than 2,400 academy graduates this month, said Maj. Mike Indovina, public affairs officer for the 18th Military Police Brigade, which supports Multi-National Division – Baghdad. The basic two-week training course at the academy is conducted by Iraqi security forces, with assistance and oversight from coalition forces.



PFC SAMANTHA SCHUTZ

During the two-week program, recruits learn the initial skills of being police officers. The graduation marks the end of their initial training, after which they move on to police stations throughout Baghdad to undergo on-the-job training.

Iraqi Police recruits pass a guidon during a graduation ceremony at the Al Furat Police Training Academy in Baghdad March 13. The ceremony marked the largest graduation to date from a two-week basic police training program, with more than 1,300 recruits moving on to undergo on-the-job training at police stations throughout Baghdad.

“Eventually, they will all come back for the eight-week certification course,” Indovina said.

While coalition forces are there to assist, the 18th's plan is to ultimately turn the training entirely over to the Iraqis.

“The Iraqi Police are the lead training element for the Al Furat Training Academy,” said Indovina. “(The 18th MP Brigade has) a noncommissioned officer-in-charge and an officer-in-charge to ensure the standards and make sure the program is being followed.”

“This is the Ministry of Interior’s academy,” said Brig. Gen. Bill Grimsley, deputy commanding general for the 4th Infantry Division and MND-B, adding that “coalition forces are just here to support ... this endeavor.”

Staff Sgt. Stephen Horn of the 18th's Headquarters and Headquarters Company serves as the NCO-in-charge of the facility. He said his primary role is to observe training activities as the IP recruits cycle through the program.

“The goal is for (the Iraqi Police) to take off and run with the program on their own,” he explained.

The 18th MP Brigade is a U.S. Army Europe unit headquartered in Mannheim, Germany.



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