



Combined Joint Task Force

Operation Inherent Resolve
APO AE 09306

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Build Partner Capacity strengthens bonds, armies

Sgt. Deja Borden, 20th Public Affairs Detachment, CJTF-OIR Public Affairs

BESMAYA RANGE COMPLEX, Iraq – The build partner capacity mission in Iraq is at the forefront of the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Its purpose: build the military capacity within the ranks of Iraqi Security Forces.

According to remarks made by Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter during a visit to the region last month, a regional solution is needed to ensure a “lasting defeat” of ISIL.

“It’s going to require the building of the capacity of local forces, because ultimately they must take the lead and take responsibility, because if we’re to have a defeat of ISIL, which we must and will, it must be a lasting defeat,” he said.

The 1st Infantry Division from Fort Riley, Kansas is currently leading the Coalition Land Force Command in Iraq, which oversees the training of Iraqi Security Forces at four separate build partner capacity sites in Iraq.

Members of the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div., work alongside Iraqi army soldiers of the 15th and 16th divisions to aid in the fight against ISIL.

“The mission of BPC (in Taji, Iraq) is to create a partnership with the (Iraqi army’s) 15th and 16th divisions, to facilitate a training doctrine, as well as increase the overall performance of the Iraqi soldiers,” said Staff Sgt. Caleb E. Turnbough, combat engineer attached to Company A, 2-505th PIR.

For additional information contact:

CJTF-OIRmedia@mail.mil

COM: U.S. 1-803-885-8265 or in Southwest Asia

COM: 00-965-2221-6340, then dial 430-6419# or 430-5129#

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Turnbough works directly with Iraqi soldiers as a primary instructor, training them in numerous infantry tactics and engineering procedures.

The exercise began with Company D, 2-505 PIR, in the first week of February. Three-week iterations of training were conducted, cycling through groups from the IA's 15th and 16th divisions.

The lessons varied from the basics of individual movement techniques to larger types of assaults. Subject matter experts from an array of combat specialties - like explosive ordnance disposal, mortars and infantry - taught Iraqi soldiers the best ways to successfully conduct battle.

“(The Iraqi soldiers) seem to pick things up pretty fast,” said Spc. Ryan Bussell, infantryman with Company B, 2-505th PIR. “We’ve covered breaching obstacles from the most basic parts of a squad breach to a company breach.”

Bussell led his own team of Iraqi infantrymen from the 16th Division in a number of exercises. He, along with Sgt. Cody Sorrell, a forward observer with Company A, 2-505th PIR, taught the Iraqi soldiers standard tactics, techniques and procedures of combat.

“I just want (the Iraqi soldiers) to have confidence in the training that we’re giving them,” said Sorrell. “They have their own tactics and standard operating procedures, but I just want them to have confidence going into battle.”

For the BPC instructors the workdays went well, but did not lack in challenges.

“(The Iraqi soldiers) motivation is high, they just need to be focused in on the task,” Sorrell said.

Sorrell admitted at times training could get hectic and confusing, and the language barrier made it difficult to communicate. Over the weeks, even with speaking two completely different languages, the forces began to better understand one another. At times the instructors would have to use hand gestures to communicate with the soldiers, but Bussell used the experience as an opportunity to learn Arabic.

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Working side by side for days gave the two forces a chance to not only teach one another combat techniques, but learn about one another's culture.

Some days, members of the 2-505th PIR would conduct physical training with the Iraqi soldiers and members of the Spanish Legion, another force of the coalition participating in the BPC. Through friendly competitions, the forces simultaneously conducted physical training and strengthened their relationship.

Turnbough believes coalition activities and exercises at the BPC are necessary to help the partnership, between the coalition and Iraq grow.

"Having a good relationship is always a good thing," Turnbough said.

Regardless of how hard the days were with extreme weather conditions, and even with limited rest days, the Soldiers of 2-505th PIR are proud to be a part of the advise and assist and BPC mission.

"I just want them to be successful," Bussell said.

He said this deployment gives him peace of mind and this mission holds a greater value to him.

"Building a relationship to help (Iraq) support themselves and build up their own country changes the mind frame and the way of thinking. So I believe this mission is more important than the last time I was (here in Iraq in 2009)."

Aside from the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Spain have announced participation in the BPC program.

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Iraqi soldiers with the 92nd Brigade, 16th Division, receive a lesson on basic rifle marksmanship from Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division at Besmaya Range Complex, Iraq, March 26, 2015. Soldiers with the 2-505 PIR are training Iraqi soldiers on a variety of skills during a six-week training course at the complex. The 2-505 PIR are part of the Combined Joint Task Force to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant by building the military capacity of Iraqi Security Forces, an effort that has produced more than 6,000 newly trained Soldiers, with another 5,000 currently in training. (Sgt. Deja Borden, CJTF–OIR Public Affairs)



A soldier of the Iraqi army's 16th Division kicks in a door of a building during a training exercise at Besmaya Range Complex, Iraq March 21, 2015. U.S.

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Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division and the Spanish Army's Spanish Legion are advising the training to strengthen the Iraqi army's ability to fight enemy forces in their country. (Sgt. Deja Borden, CJTF-OIR)



An Iraqi army soldier with the 72nd Brigade, 15th Division, fires on a target during a close-quarters marksmanship range with 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division advisers at Camp Taji, Iraq, April 6, 2015. Iraqi soldiers participated in the range to become members of a personal security detail for high-ranking Iraqi officers. The U.S. Army advisers are part of the Combined Joint Task Force to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant by building the military capacity of Iraqi Security Forces, an effort that has produced more than 6,000 newly-trained Soldiers, with another 5,000 currently in training (Sgt. Cody Quinn, CJTF-OIR Public Affairs)

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An Iraqi army soldier with 73rd Brigade, 15th Iraqi Army Division, uses a hand signal to direct the soldiers behind him into the proper formation during a training event at Camp Taji, Iraq, Tuesday, March 24, 2015. Hand signals are used to silently communicate with other soldiers and quickly change between different formations. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cody Quinn, CJTF - OIR Public Affairs)

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