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1ST MILITARY POLICE COMPANY OF V CORPS' 1ST ARMORED DIVISION OPENS NEW IRAQ DETENTION FACILITY

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1st Military Police Company, 1st Infantry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE REMAGEN, Iraq — Military Police from V Corps' 1st Infantry Division recently opened a new detention facility here.

The 1st MP Company is in charge of all the division's detention facilities. That mission includes manning the division central collection point at FOB Danger and two brigade central collection points, here and at FOB Ironhorse.

This base is home to Task Force 9E, named for the division's 9th Engineer Battalion, which had oversight of the construction of the facility. The battalion's Lt. Col. Anneliese M. Steele, 1st Sgt. Mark S. Wasson and Staff Sgt. Efrain Y. Acevedo headed the project.

The construction of the facility was done in three phases, beginning in mid-June with initial improvements designed to create a functional facility.

The first of three detention buildings and an operations building are complete, with the remaining two structures expected to be finished by mid-August. The new

facility is equipped with individual cells capable of holding up to three detainees each, with a maximum overall capacity of more than 200.

The facility also boasts an aid station manned 24 hours a day by a dedicated medical evacuation crew; a recreation yard; latrine and shower pods, and air conditioning.

Detainees at the brigade central collection point get a full medical physical upon arrival at the facility, shower daily, are fed three times a day with special Halal meals and an accessory pack, spend one hour per day in the recreation yard and are visited weekly by a local Muslim Imam.

"These were issues identified early on in the project development that needed attention," said Steele, battalion executive officer for Task Force 9E. "We just wanted to put the effort into a facility the brigade and division could be proud of."

The facility is operated and supervised by the 2nd platoon of the division's 1st Military Police Company.

"Each and every soldier in the platoon rotated down to Baghdad to receive four days of extensive training on military police corrections operations, from first aid and detainee evacuation to detainee rights and grievance policies the detainees can use to voice their concerns," said Sgt. William Gano, one of the facility's NCOs.

"The training we received was great. I learned a lot about the entire process of detainee operations from the capturing unit all the way to the corps level," added Spc. Jeff Anson, the platoon's armorer and a guard at the facility.

The facility addresses other issues by making an Arabic version of the Geneva Convention available to all detainees; having fresh bottled water on site in freezers to battle the heat and a cooled water faucet system in the recreation yard to refill bottles. The facility is also inspected monthly by a field sanitation team to ensure compliance with removal of human waste and general cleanliness.

Additional plans for the facility include a local phone line to notify next of kin, a local police officer to assist in detainee releases and visits by the Red Cross and local Red Crescent.

With all the international attention focused on detainee operations, the facility's staff is determined to send a positive message regarding its treatment of detainees.

"We have always treated detainees with the dignity and respect they deserve. Now we have the facility to match what we were doing operationally," says Sgt. Travis Donnell, night shift sergeant of the guard at the detention facility.

