



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 20, 2004

## SOLDIERS OF V CORPS INFANTRY BATTALION HELP TRAIN MORE THAN 300 NEW IRAQI NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS

By Spc. Sean Kimmons  
25th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq** — Most were once farmers with little education from rival tribes. But on August 16, the more than 300 Iraqi National Guard Soldiers who graduated from basic training were literally striking the same note both militarily and rhythmically.

"We are ready to kill the enemy. We are ready to fight," the 202nd ING Battalion Soldiers thundered in unison in Arabic as they jubilantly hoisted their new AK-47 assault rifles in the air in celebration of their graduation.



PHOTO BY ROLAND G. WALTERS  
Iraqi National Guard soldiers from the 202nd Battalion celebrate their graduation from ING basic training and a six-day advanced training phase in the city of Tikrit, Iraq Aug 16.

The unit is the first ING battalion of its type. All its members came from Samarra, trained together and will serve together alongside American troops. Typically, ING Soldiers come from various cities and are assigned to units across the country.

The Soldiers went through a three-week basic course during which they learned basic Soldier skills, including rifle marksmanship, first aid and common task training.

At the conclusion of their first phase of training, the ING students went through an advanced six-day course with the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry of V Corps' 1st Infantry Division.

During that training, the 202nd troops learned the 1/26th's standard operating procedures and other tactics, said Staff Sgt. John Peeples, a squad leader with Alpha Company of the 1/26th.

His unit and the 202nd will go into battle together in Samarra if necessary, he said, adding that the best Soldiers from the 202nd ING were selected to form a scout platoon.

"(The graduates) are the nucleus of the 202nd Iraqi National Guard Battalion that someday will be called upon to rid the streets of Samarra of terrorists, thugs and assassins," said Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, commander of the 1st Infantry Division.

Dr. Bruska Shaways, secretary general of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, thanked Multi-National Force-Iraq and the division for training the ING and other Iraqi security forces. Additionally, he praised the troops and urged them to make sacrifices as they run terrorists out of the country.

"My dear Soldiers, you have to know that you will enter history from the widest gates ... ,"

Shaways said through an interpreter. "The Iraqi people and we at the ministry of defense are proud of you, and we will support you as much as possible."

Hussein Abdul Karim, 18, said completing the ING course is his greatest accomplishment, adding that his five brothers are also ING Soldiers.

Despite the dangers that lie ahead, he said, he's not afraid for his life because he wants to defend his country and build a new Iraq. Besides, he was well trained, he said.

After the graduation ceremony, Batiste met with Hamud Shukti, governor of the Salah Ad Din Province, where Samarra is located, and several Samarra officials.

America is ready to spend tens of millions of dollars to improve the infrastructure in Samarra -- a city with more than 200,000 people -- but "not a dime" will be spent until the streets are secured and coalition and Iraqi forces are able to operate there without interference from insurgents, Batiste said.

"We are all tired of the violence. The people of Samarra deserve better. It's a great city," Batiste said.

The general offered to form a partnership with the governor and city officials to devise a plan to rid the Samarra of insurgents. Shukti accepted, saying that he will do all he can to curb the violence.

"By this proposal, we should kick out the terrorists ... ," he said. "Let life go back to where it was."

