

Master Sgt. Jeremiah Inman is back in basic training. This time though there are no fancy weapon training systems, no training bandages, no gas masks to train with and no physical fitness training uniforms.

In fact, there are no barracks, no dining facilities, certainly no medical treatment facilities and no vehicles. There are no radios, no helmets and no load bearing equipment and there are no recreational facilities and no pull-up bars.

Actually, there's not much of anything.

There are weapons, one uniform per person and 180,000 rounds of ammunition.

"The only things they had when I got there were uniforms and boots," Inman said. "I managed to get them some office supplies, some butcher block paper for use when they gave their classes, 550 cord and 100 mph tape."

Inman, of the 173d Airborne Brigade, is a big guy. Broad across the chest with a tight ranger haircut, he can look stern and serious. But he's good-natured, full of humor with an infectious smile. On matters of size alone though one might think twice before crossing him.

And he's got his hands full here in Iraq; he's the Coalition Forces liaison with the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. ICDC is an organization being built from the ground up with the mission of helping to restore peace and stability to Iraq.

"They're in a unique position," he said. "They're not soldiers and they're not police. They can't legally arrest people. They're basically there to help with the checkpoints, to help with weapon's searches. That helps us because instead of having to provide an American platoon to man a checkpoint we can use just send a squad."

"We started out with 974 people and ended up with 782," Inman said about the three week training course all ICDC must complete. "They are quite a mix. I have some guys that were born in the early 40s and have probably 20 guys that are 16 years old. So there is quite a mixture of experience and knowledge."

Such a mixture that even the unit's Executive Officer spent time in a Kuwaiti Prison after the first gulf war. And of course, like all things in Kirkuk, the group is made up of an ethnically diverse population. Kurds, Arabs, Turkomen and Assyrians all make up the ICDC.

"It's strange," Inman said. "For instance we decided to let them decide who would be the officers, who would be the non-commissioned officers and who would be the soldiers. We didn't want to micromanage them, we want to help them, not control them."

"The military advisory council, made up of some old retired Iraqi generals, determined who would be best suited to be the officers and who would fill which positions," he continued.

One of the ICDC's first area's of responsibility, which will lessen the load carried by the Americans, is the security of Kirkuk's government building.

"We only have three companies right now but we're looking at putting one of them at the government building, under American supervision, to help with the security situation there."

"We're also looking at sending another company to Al Hawija," Inman said.

Hawija is another of this province's many hot spots, known for improvised explosive device attacks, RPG attacks and mortar fire.

"The idea is to have a company down there that is comprised of members from that area," Inman said. "It's not going to be perfect but we will try to a good mix of people in the right areas."

But even after having graduated their first class there are still problems with the program, so many that Inman shakes he head and laughs out loud as he recalls them.

"They train about 8 hours a day," Inman said. "Starting with Physical Training followed by a bit of recovery time and that's followed by about 6 hours of training. All of them live at home and they travel to the camp every morning."

When, at the start of this story the items that were lacking were listed it really doesn't drive home the point until Inman starts to describe it.

"A lot of the area out there has been looted so badly that it's just easier to bulldoze them and start again," Inman said. "Some of the structures have squatters living in them. All of the buildings have had the plumbing ripped out and the electrical wiring was pulled literally right out of the walls."

The training area, being located in a remote area away from the city itself, offered looters the chance to loot at relaxed, leisurely pace. This resulted in an almost systematic-like pattern of yanking anything of value that wasn't nailed down. Then they took what was nailed down and finally came back and took the nail too.

"We gave them some General Purpose Medium Tents," Inman said. "Everything of value had been looted or destroyed. The latrines are broken beyond repair and there are squatters everywhere."

Inman goes on to relate a story about the unit's preparation for a rifle range. When the leadership briefed him on their plan they explained each soldier would get 4 rounds. He, thinking he had misheard and that they must have meant 4 magazines, asked for clarification. Again the answer comes back, 4 rounds. With ammunition and rifles being one of the few things that Inman could get and get in quantity he expressed his concern to those in charge.

"I told them look we have almost 200,000 rounds and I can get more," Inman explained. "Let's use the one thing I can get us as much as we can."

The ICDC leadership responded accordingly.

"When they briefed me next time they proudly told me everyone would be firing eight rounds," he laughed shaking his head a bit.

One of the few things they do have is a pay scale and a pay system.

"The system is kinda funny," Inman said before realizing that most things in Iraq are kinda funny. "It's not like the American system at all, they work things officer's and soldiers. The officer make about \$150 a month and the soldiers make \$70. If someone does something bad they take away some money. They have a kind of United States Code of Military Justice that outlines which what amounts are taken for various offenses."

While there are plans to increase the ICDC from a battalion to a brigade Inman is going to take it as it comes. With the budget that was just approved ICDC should become something that is better funded and thus better trained. He's optimistic but for now Inman is still scrounging for everything and anything.