

The Advisor



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Responding to danger...

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in neighborhoods of Baghdad

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Iraqi Civil Defense training center opens in Baghdad

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MNSTC-I Public Affairs



BAGHDAD, Iraq – The Iraqi Civil Defense Directorate opened its doors to Iraq's first Civil Defense training center in Baghdad's

International Zone Aug. 25.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, working with the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team and the Government of Iraq, acted as the construction agent for the facility. The facility will provide the people of Iraq with a national training center to develop the capabilities of civil defense at both basic and advanced levels.

"This is the first, and so far the only fire training facility in Iraq right now," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Johnny Wolfe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division security and justice program manager. "Basic firefighter training can be conducted at a local level, using fire leaders and instructors trained at this center."

Plans for the construction of the training ground encompassed two separate projects. The first project was for a live-fire training tower, which began construction in September 2006. The training tower provides live-fire training, hose evolutions, confined space rescue, ventilation operations, hose lays and pump operations, elevated rescues and the use of sprinklers and standpipes.

The second project was the construction of the classroom and barracks, which began in November 2006. The classroom and barracks building houses 40 students and 10 training staff. It also includes a dining room, complete kitchen for meal preparation, bathrooms and showers, five classrooms, and a library and computer room for the cadets.

"It is nice to have classrooms for training and a library where we can relax or catch up on our studies," said Maheed, a training academy cadet.

This training facility's current class is a 14-day educational course where cadets learn basic firefighting skills such as application of portable extinguishers, full personal protective equipment, forcible entry tools and techniques, search and rescue operations and victim removal.



Photos by U.S. Navy MC1(SW) Anthony J. Koch

An Iraqi fire training cadet adjusts his Self Contained Breathing Apparatus mask to ensure a proper fit before participating in a live-fire training exercise.

The cadets are able to take more from the training at this facility by applying the material in a practical setting.

From this training facility the students go back to their home town or province to integrate with their local fire station. "We will go back and be able to apply what we have learned here and understand why we are doing it a certain way," said Maheed. "We won't be trying to respond to an emergency with no formal training."

In addition to the training facility, this location will also act as a fire response station for all Iraqi emergencies within the International Zone.

"The facility has been built using experience and knowledge gained worldwide to guarantee the future safety of the Iraqi people. The students trained here, in a safe working environment, will become part of a worldwide fraternity of firefighters," said Wolfe. "They will face the same dangers, but using this training and their own courage, they will ensure that the people of Iraq are safe and protected in times of emergency."



Iraqi fire training cadets respond to a fire in the live-fire tower during an exercise at the Iraqi Civil Defense training center in Baghdad, Iraq, Aug. 25.