

## **SIAP helps secure air, ground safety**

By Chief Warrant Officer Sam Ngaropo, MNC-I Joint Interface Control Officer

Thanks to the first Joint Air Space Interoperability Conference hosted by Multi-National Corps Iraq in May 2009, technical solutions were refined to create the first Single Integrated Air Picture for Iraq in almost six years.

The main topics of discussion at the conference, which brought together more than 50 Joint servicemembers and civilians, were how to improve air space deconfliction, air space sense and warning, plus being able to employ and improve Air Force digital close air support by linking all radar systems operating in Iraq into one joint service communications center.

“For many years in Iraq, units have operated on different networks or software versions, creating system incompatibilities,” said Lt. Col. Jim Houlahan, Chief of Multinational Corps Iraq - Air Missile Defense. “In addition, lack of a SIAP was an inherently joint problem set which necessitated a joint solution.”

During the conference, the Air Force recommended their new battlefield command and control system at Joint Base Balad as the communications hub for the SIAP.

Additionally, the counter rocket artillery and mortar program office out of Huntsville, Ala., made the biggest contribution to the Army Integrated Air Picture by introducing system upgrades for counter rocket, artillery and mortar and air defense air space management systems, enabling all Army sentinel radars to share low flying radar data.

“More importantly, this integrated air picture has given me enhanced situational awareness to make more informed decisions on the most effective distribution of CAS assets in this demanding theater,” said Air Force Col. Vinnie Savino, Commander 368th EASOG, MNC-I air liaison officer.

Navy 3rd Fleet Data Fusion Center also uses the new SIAP. "It's awesome to participate with the forces in Iraq because this first-ever SIAP gives my boss, Vice Admiral Rich Hunt, situational awareness on critical assets being protected by sailors manning the Navy Land Phalanx Weapon Systems defending bases throughout Iraq" said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Scott Sanders, 3rd Fleet joint interface control officer. Overall, this feat will benefit every branch of the U.S. military.

"This is a great achievement and the lessons learned from this success will be shared with follow-on units in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Army Brig. Gen. Heidi Brown Multi-National Corps Iraq, Deputy Commanding General for Sustainment. "I am proud of this accomplishment and thank those service members and civilians who finally made SIAP a reality."



(Picture by Tech. Sgt. Johnny Saldivar )

COL Vinnie Savino MNC-I Air Liaison Officer (ALO), Lt Col Mike McMmanus 24 EASOS Commander, Chief Warrant Officer Tom Washington, Task Force 3-3 Air Defense Artillery Command and Control Technician and Mr. Dave Stamm, Counter Rocket and Mortar (C-RAM) Director watch as Air Force Staff Sergeant Stephen Hayes, MNC-I ASOC Track Manager forwards data from his Joint Range Extension (JRE) to his military ruggedized tablet (MRT) providing Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACS) in the field the first-ever single integrated air picture of Iraq.