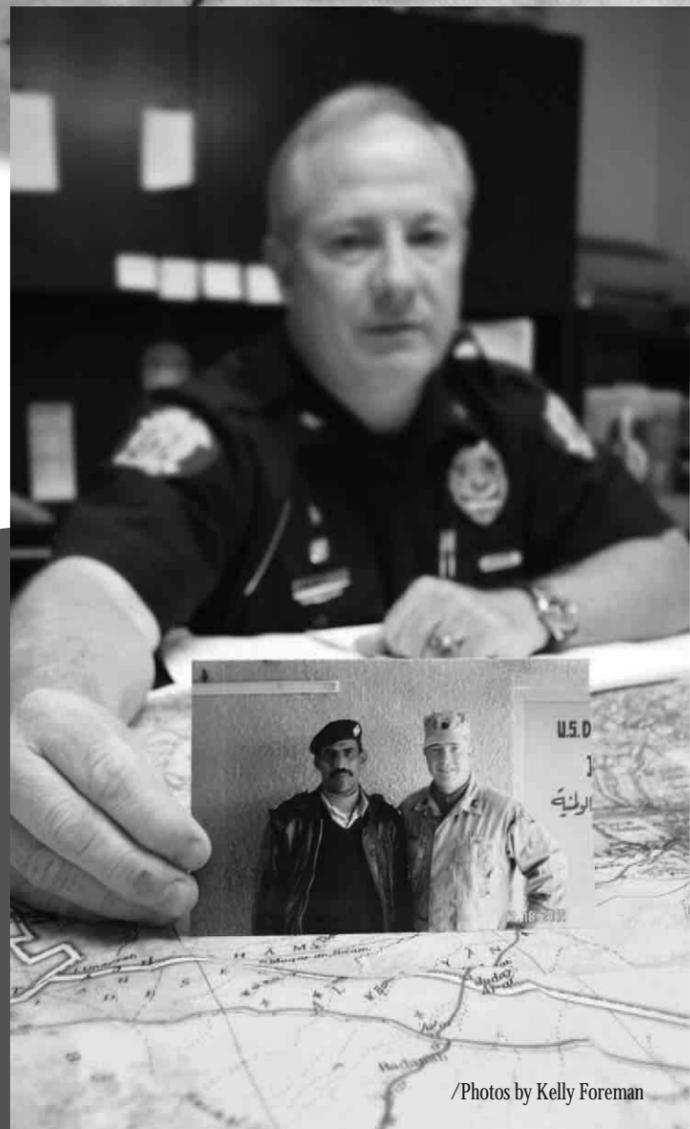




► Ludlow Police Chief Wayne Turner holds a photo of himself and a friend taken during his time in Iraq. Above, Turner displays a coin made during Saddam Hussein's reign and a cloth map of Iraq that he brought home as souvenirs.



# TO IRAQ AND BACK

Kelly Foreman, Public Information Officer

**W**ith the commanding 4-star general of the United States Army by his side, Ludlow Police Chief Wayne Turner built one of the first Regional Police Academies in war-torn Iraq amidst mortar attacks, political corruption and democratic barriers.

Now, Turner is using his Iraqi experiences and education to help the people of Ludlow take back their neighborhoods from crime, drugs and decline.

"I used some of the same tactics I used in Iraq, at a lower scale obviously," Turner said of his early work to rejuvenate the northern city of Ludlow, home to about 5,000 people. "You don't

have the supporting fire power and collateral damage, but the same principals apply when you go in and you take it back one house at a time. One house, one neighborhood."

Turner, 46, joined the United States Marine Corps in 1980 while still in high school because he wanted to fly Harrier jets. After briefly serving the marines, Turner transferred his branch of service to the Army to attend officer selection. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant and quickly climbed the ranks to serve in the highly competitive

military intelligence branch.

But he still couldn't settle on a career path.

"I never could make up my mind whether I wanted a career in law enforcement or the military," Turner said. "So I chose both."

Turner began work toward his bachelor's degree at Thomas More College, which he completed after joining the Fort Thomas Police Department in 1986. He later graduated from >>

>> the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Just as in the military, Turner rose in the ranks of Fort Thomas, starting as a patrolman, but ultimately serving as a firearms instructor, hostage negotiator, detective, sergeant and lieutenant.

Following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Turner was called to active duty in Iraq. He served with a National Guard unit out of Kentucky attached to the 16th Military Police brigade out of Fort Bragg.

“Where we actually went was to the ancient city of Babylon that I remembered reading about from the Bible,” Turner said. “It was really kind of fascinating because you are in an area that was once inhabited by King Nebuchadnezzar and King Hammurabi of Babylon. If you study criminal justice, you know that the laws we currently use in law enforcement, they have their beginning back there. This set of laws, called Hammurabi’s Code, was one of the first written codes of law in recorded history.

“That’s why it was so neat to me,” he said. “Here you are in the cradle of really Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization, and here we are bringing – partly

because of our fault – we were trying to bring stability and security back into this historical region that gave the world the foundation for law and order – the Code of Hammurabi, considered by scholars to be the first codification of law.”

**Chaos**

Clicking through a slideshow of pictures from his service in Iraq, Turner paused on a photo of a fire raging far above the tops of Iraqi palm trees.

“That’s what we rolled into,” Turner said. “... You think you’re coming in to get police academies up and running, things go bad, the insurgency rose up and you go into combat operations.”

Turner served several missions in Iraq, including combat operations, which led to defeating the Iraqi insurgents. However, once the dust of defeat settled, Turner and the other troops realized they had destroyed the country’s only security and stability forces, he said.

As a result, Turner and his men were tasked with re-stabiliz-

ing Saddam Hussein’s forces by teaching them to police democratically without batons, cattle prods or senseless killings.

“We were assigned to a multi-national division, which was all of our coalition partners,” he said. “It was kind of unique because they really didn’t understand what a democratic society was like in a lot of cases. We found ourselves working in this case with Polish special forces, Ukrainians and former Soviet Union troops that really didn’t understand democracy, but yet were trying – because that was their area – to bring stability to it.

“Their way wasn’t working,” Turner said. “The bottom line was that people were dying, children were starving, medical resources weren’t being made available to people who needed them and they were in need of security and stability. Failure for us was not an option.”

The job of re-establishing the New Iraqi Security Forces fell to then-Maj. Gen. David Petraeus, Turner said.

“I was honored to have been able to

work for him,” Turner said. “He was the right man in the right place at the right time.”

Turner was sent to Al Kut, Iraq, a major smuggling route for arms, ammunition and terrorists who were coming into the country from Iran, he said.

“That was why it was so important for Gen. Petraeus to have stability in this region,” Turner said. “We had to stand up a viable, new Iraqi street force, different from what Saddam had done. Petraeus wanted a senior U.S. military person on the ground overseeing those efforts. I was that person who just happened to have been a police officer prior to being called on to active duty.”

Attempts to build academies in other parts of Iraq had struggled, and Turner said Petraeus began sending him resources from academies that were not making the grade.

“Gen. Petraeus gave me a tremendous amount of support to plan, organize and build the first fully-operational Iraqi Security Forces Training Academy outside of Baghdad,” Turner said.

But it wasn’t easy.

“It was extremely intimidating because there was no manual for it,” he said. “There was no procedure. Nobody had done it before.”

Turner started by finding common ground with the Iraqis, identifying the corrupt politicians and policemen, getting rid of them and utilizing the warriors, he said. If the Iraqis were successful, so were Turner and his team.

“... If you put the Christian/Islamic thing aside, what I always challenged every Iraqi and what we got common ground on was, ‘Do you want your children to grow up and experience what

you experienced under Saddam?’”

Turner said. “And they would look at you and it was like instantly, the light came on.

“Do you want to be a lamb or do you want to be a lion?” he would ask. “What happens to the flock if you are a lamb? They get slaughtered. I am giving you the tools to be a lion.”

By the time Turner was ready to return home, what had begun as an open field across from the Tigris River had developed into a successful and sustainable academy.

“I’m really proud that of the regional police academies, this one will serve for years to come,” Turner said. “Not many people can say that. Following us leaving Iraq, the U.S. Office of the Special Inspector General went around and basically inspected every facility that was built. This one passed with flying colors. I can’t say that for all of them. It is still in existence and it is still in operation.”

After earning a bronze star conducting combat operations and serving in Iraq for nearly 14 months, Turner returned home to Fort Thomas in April 2005. The same year he retired both from the Army and Fort Thomas Police Department.

He briefly pursued other endeavors, but Turner said after being out of the policing business for just a short time he realized it still was in his blood.

**‘I love doing this’**

“I kept coming back to this,” Turner said of law enforcement. “I learned a long time ago in life that if you find a vocation centered around something you love, you never have to work again. And I love doing this every day.”

In December 2006, Turner interviewed with the Ludlow Police Department and was hired two months later.

The new chief was met with the community’s desire to re-establish a Mayberry-esque atmosphere in a town where obstacles to meet that goal rivaled those of much larger cities.

“Ludlow is a small city, but it is a small city with big city problems,” Turner said. “We are

bordering Cincinnati and West Covington – there’s just a street that separates us. There are no walls, there are no rivers. Cincinnati and West Covington are high crime areas and it’s going to filter into Ludlow if left unchecked.”

When Covington and Newport began to develop river-front properties, Turner said a lot of government subsidized housing was torn down, pushing those people into smaller cities like Ludlow.

“So in essence what that did was it made an influx of low income rental units, where established neighborhoods and old Victorians that had been in families for years ... had either died off or moved off. Speculators came in and bought them up cheap, carved them into two, three and four family (apartments) and they’re getting rents of \$400, \$500 and \$600 a month. Well, you know what that’s going to bring with it – crime, drugs.”

To combat what Turner described as a “staggering” crime and drug problem, the new chief applied author Malcolm Gladwell’s theories from the book, “The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference,” which were used in the 1980s and 1990s to combat crime in New York City.

“It’s the theory of broken windows in a community,” he said. “Basically what it says is that when communities allow properties to deteriorate, they are not going to correct themselves. If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge. Soon, more windows will be broken, and the sense of anarchy will spread from the building to the street on which it faces, sending a signal that anything goes.

“Generally what happens is when one house deteriorates, that deterioration will spread to multiple houses,” Turner continued. “The next thing you know, the block is gone. This is an over-simplistic theory of two criminologists based upon the notion that, if the block goes, so goes the city. It’s kind of the same thing as in Iraq, going house by house. That’s how you take



◀ Ludlow Police Chief Wayne Turner, left, talks with then-Maj. Gen. David Petraeus during his time in Iraq. Turner and Petraeus worked together to build a Regional Police Academy in Al Kut, Iraq.

/Photo submitted



a neighborhood. House by house. That's how you make things positive here, house by house."

Using that concept, Turner reignited a dormant neighborhood watch program, enlisting community members to help the police help the community.

"A community that works together that establishes the term community and educates its citizens about what it means to have a community and why, gets people thinking outside of their own residence, taking pride in their neighborhoods – finding out who the problem people are, working with the police to identify where the drug activity is, where the drug houses are, where the crime is – and that is one of the processes with neighborhood watch," Turner said.

Each month, Turner leads the neighborhood watch meetings, covering special topics ranging from how to burglar-proof a home to what neighborhood watch is all about, emphasizing that it is not "vigilante justice."

"I don't want you out there at night with batons bringing me criminals and tossing them through my front door saying, 'Here, chief, I caught one,'" Turner said he tells citizens.

With a staff of only 10 officers – including Turner – using the community's eyes and ears is a crucial part of reaching that utopian Mayberry goal, he said. Next on the agenda is getting those citizens who already are involved to step up into leadership roles and become block-watch captains, starting their own meetings and spreading further into new neighborhoods.

"It works because we empower our citizens from within the community, within neighborhoods, to band together for a common purpose – not vigilante justice – but a common purpose of making the neighborhoods better, reducing crime, making streets safe for their families and kids, and that's just kind of how we started marketing it," he said.

#### Community responsibility

Additionally, Turner, together with the city manager and other officials, has worked to put into place and enforce a city ordinance placing the responsibility for crime inside those low-rent rental units on their landlords – an effort Turner said has been tried, tested and found successful.

"We couldn't evict people," he said. "But what we could do was establish codes and ordinances that would hold property owners accountable for things that happened at their units, basically making them maintain an orderly premise. We're telling you (the landlords) up front that this person is involved in drug trafficking. Here is where we arrested them, they are your tenant. Now we are telling you that you don't have to evict them, but you have 45 days to come up with a plan of how you're going to deal with this. If you chose not to evict them, the second time we have an encounter with them, we are going to fine you \$100 a day for criminal activity, criminal nuisance in that unit.

"The idea is that if I've got people dealing drugs out of a building and if I'm constantly running to that building, it is taking resources that are in short supply and taking those away from people who need it. And you (the landlord) are operating a business enterprise. If you are going to continue to do that, it is going to get expensive."

The city has had less than a dozen cases to progress to "phase two," Turner said. So far it not only has been successful, but also Turner said the community has been pleased with the progress.

"They are actually glad to see something being done about it," he said.

City Council Member Ken Wynn said he has been thrilled with Turner's progress and the changes he – and other community members –

have seen in Ludlow.

"I really think, through his actions and when he's on the job, that he cares about this town," said Wynn, a four-year councilman and lifelong Ludlow resident. "He has really been putting the effort in, trying to make a difference with the image of the police department, and I think he does a great job with motivating our officers. I really do believe we have a good staff as far as officers go, and that is due to leadership, if anything."

Ludlow assistant chief and Turner's friend of more than 20 years, Benny Johnson, agreed.

"He has come in with more of a community mind," Johnson said. "He wanted to come in and try to get a good feel for the community and see exactly which way he wanted to go. He has pretty much worked with the principals of COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) and he is starting programs that have been dormant for quite some time."

Turner said some of his officers have really stepped up and participated in an effort to reach out to the community, but getting everyone on the same page to achieve the same goal still is a work in progress.

"Being new here, there is still some old policing [styles] and some of the guys are a little resistant to it," he said. "But we've got to overcome that. It is not us versus them (the community). They are us. We are here because of them. Without them, they don't need us." J

◀ Wayne Turner has served as Ludlow's police chief since early 2007 and is acutely interested in working toward the community's desired "utopian" atmosphere.

I learned a long time ago in life that if you find a vocation centered around something you love, you never have to work again. And I love doing this every day.

– Wayne Turner, police chief

/Photo by Kell Foreman