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BRITISH SOLDIERS ARREST RPG TEAM AND SAVE BABY IN BASRAH

Soldiers from 1st Battalion The Queen's Lancashire Regiment saved the life of a baby when they seized a cache of weapons and arrested five armed men in a house in Basrah on Friday (15 August).

The patrol - a platoon from Anzio Company - had gone to check security at the city's water treatment plant in the Al Jubaylah area in response to reports of looting. The patrol confronted and gave chase to several armed men who ran to a nearby house.

Lieutenant Craig Rodgers led the patrol which forced entry to the house, where they arrested the armed men. During the search, a large white bag was discovered containing a large number of Iraqi dinars and a padlocked metal box.

Private Damien Kenny and Private Jonathon Hunt opened the box. They were surprised to find what appeared to be the body of a small baby girl wrapped in blankets.

The Lancashire pair immediately initiated first aid, and were rewarded for their efforts when the baby began breathing and grasped Private Kenny's finger. He said: "We were expecting to find weapons hidden in the box. We couldn't believe it when we saw it was a baby girl and we had to try something. We thought she would not recover until I felt her squeeze my finger."

After the baby was successfully revived, the mother identified herself. The baby was rushed to the hospital, and she is now safe and well. It is unclear why the child had been placed in the locked container, although it has been established that the baby had been born prematurely. The soldiers have named her 'Rose' and will be keeping in touch to monitor her progress.

A large quantity of weapons including several Kalashnikov rifles and Rocket Propelled anti-tank weapons were seized as a result of the search. The Commanding Officer of The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, Lt Colonel Jorge Mendonça, praised his soldiers' success: "The arrest of this well-armed RPG team, as a result of routine daily patrolling, shows the effectiveness of our operations."

The Officer Commanding Anzio Company, Major Paul Davies, also commended his men. Major Davies said: "I think it's clear that the intervention of my soldiers saved this baby's life. It is testament to the professionalism and adaptability of my men that they dealt with this situation so effectively. I hope this young girl will have a happier future."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Foot and vehicle patrols are carried out daily in the city of Basrah.

2. The weapons seized included:

- 2 x RPG launchers
- 8 x RPG warheads
- 6 x RPG stabiliser boosters
- 3 x AK47s
- 1 x Lee Enfield Rifle
- 15 x 7.62mm magazines
- 1 x large box of ammo
- 10 x knives
- 2 x bayonets
- 4 x chest rig webbing
- Approximately 1 million Iraqi dinar

3. The soldiers involved were:

- Lieutenant Craig Rodgers, aged 25, is from Darlington
- Private Damien Kenny, aged 18, is from Wigan
- Private Jonathon Hunt, aged 21, is from Blackpool
- Major Paul Davies, aged 35 is from Herefordshire

ENDS

Sqn Ldr Lynda Sawers