



The Freedom Ring

Published for Task Force Freedom Soldiers Serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom III

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Reflecting on a Historical Year of Building



Members of Task Force Olympia gather for an end of rotation photograph after a Casing of the Colors ceremony on January 26, 2005

Story by Spc. David Nunn, photo by Sgt. Richard Way

After leading the U.S. Army presence in the northern Ninawa province of Iraq, Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company I Corps Forward Task Force Olympia (TFO), of Fort Lewis, WA, reflect upon a successful year long mission, as they depart for home.

During their deployment, members of TFO were able to be a part of history, as they were key in the United States mission to transfer authority of this country to the Iraqi people earlier last year, for the first time since the Saddam Hussein's take over in June of 1979.

"I think the biggest success our forces have done was allowing the Iraqi's to take charge of their country on January 24th, 2004. Mosul is better off after this year with our involvement," said Brig. General Carter Ham,

Commander of TFO. "They have a tough fight in front of them, but for the first time in many of their lives, they are starting to feel safe."

The United States presence here has led the way in aiding the people of this region and rebuilding their country and tempering their security into a strong body that enforces an environment of safety and order that many Iraqi's have never known.

"We have done some amazing things with aiding the government in rebuilding their security forces, with funding and special training, they have been doing a great job maintaining order here in Mosul," said Ham. "Now in Ninawa Province there are two Brigades of Security Forces, and four Battalions of the Iraqi Regular Army. We are helping keep this area safe for the good people of this country."

According to Ham, Army

Stryker units have completed over 100,000 successful raids, and have aided in the fortifying of the Syrian border. TFO has also been instrumental in building hundreds of schools throughout the area and installing Police Stations, not only in Mosul, but many of the surrounding towns.

"I think this summer was when the insurgents recognized where Mosul was headed, that the elections were going to take place and the infrastructure was growing stronger every day," said Ham. "They decided that they needed to stop this from happening, and since then, we have seen attacks from the insurgents increase. It is going to be a tough fight, especially for the Iraqi people."

Task Force Freedom, out of Fort Irwin, CA, have been preparing for this transfer of authority for the

See TFO page 6

NCO awarded the Bronze Star with Valor

Story and Photo by Spc. David Nunn

Staff Sgt. Jason Moyer, Military Police Officer with the 293rd Military Police Company, was presented with the Bronze Star Medal on January 21, 2005. He was recognized for repeated acts of meritorious service above and beyond the call of duty while serving as the Task Force Olympia Liaison Officer to the Iraqi 3rd Special Police Commando Battalion, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

According to Lt. General David H. Petraeus, Commanding General of the Multi-National Security Transition Command, the number of Coalition casualties would likely have been much higher had it not been for Staff Sgt. Moyer's heroic actions under fire. Moyer remained calm under pressure as he aided Iraqi forces in killing over 25 insurgents and wounding many more. He was able to direct Commandos, radio for air strikes, and engage the enemy, all while under fire. Petraeus said that his valorous actions under fire, not only brought distinction upon himself, but his entire unit.

"Moyer accepted responsibility and acted in the manner well beyond his current rank or skill. His bravery and expertise were key in saving the lives of Iraqi civilians and fellow Coalition Forces," said Petraeus.

"He is the quintessential citizen-soldier and a credit to the Army and the Military Police Corps."

A soldier becomes eligible for the Bronze Star Medal by distinguishing him or herself while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force. It is considered the wartime equivalent of the Meritorious Service Medal. Moyer earned the Bronze Star Medal for heroic action and was also awarded the medal with a "V" device for Valor.

Cheers followed the heartfelt award ceremony as members of Moyer's Company took turns congratulating him.

Soldiers of the 293rd Military Police Company of Fort Lewis, WA, give their congratulations to Staff Sgt. Moyer during an award ceremony on January 21 on Forward Operating Base Diamond Back, Iraq.



Lt. General David H. Petraeus, Commanding General of the Multi-National Security Transition Command, presents the Bronze Star Medal, with a "V" device for Valor, to Staff Sgt. Jason Moyer in January.

The Freedom Ring Staff

366 MPAD Commander

Maj. David G. Cruse

Print OIC

Cpt. Mark H. Walter

Task Force Freedom PAO

Lt. Col. Andre Hance

Editor/Print NCOIC

Staff Sgt. Michele A. Uitermarkt

Staff Journalists

Sgt. Richard Way

Sgt. Daniel Lucas

Spc. David Nunn

Spc. Ashley Mitchell

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First Sappers to Receive New Tab in Combat

Story and photo by Spc. David Nunn

14, 1985.

Eighteen soldiers from the 73rd Engineer Company of Fort Lewis, WA, were the first to be awarded the long awaited Sapper Tab in a ceremony held here on January 11, 2005.

Army Chief of Staff General Peter Schoomaker granted the wear of the tab last June to Sappers who have completed the 28-day Sapper Leadership Course, as part of the U.S. Army Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, MO.

"It's been a battle since the course was made to get recognition for the strenuous activity and leadership challenges that exist in that course," said Col. Robert Brown, Commander of the Lancer Brigade Combat Team and Reviewing Officer during the ceremony. "These Soldiers are the first Sapper graduates to be awarded the Tab officially in combat."

The Sapper Leadership course is a fast paced 28-day course designed to take a company's leadership and give the commander an assessment of how the leaders of the company perform in leadership skills, small unit and war fighter tactics as part of a combined arms team in a unique and stressful operating environment, according to Army Knowledge Online.

The Sapper Tab, worn above the unit patch on the left shoulder, joins only three other tabs that are authorized for wear on the Army uniform; The Ranger, Special Forces, and the Airborne Tabs.

"The long awaited activation of the Sapper Tab will finally bring the recognition these Soldiers who have preformed and succeeded in that very rigorous course deserve," said Brown.

The Course is open to enlisted soldiers in the grade of Specialist and above and Engineer Officers Captain and below. The Sapper Tab is retroactive back to graduates of the first Sapper Leadership Course on June

Soldiers of the 73rd Engineer Company of Fort Lewis, WA., give their congratulations to eighteen of their fellow Soldiers, during an award ceremony on January 11 on Forward Operating Base Merez, Iraq. They were the first to officially receive the tab during combat.

The following soldiers were awarded the wear of the sapper tab: Cpt. Kevin R. Golinghorst, First Lt. Ernest M. Urquieta, Sgt. 1st Class Thomas D. Williams, Sgt. First Class DeVardy L. Arnold, Sgt. 1st Class Paul E. McCaslin, Staff Sgt. Jesse R. Grandinetti, Staff Sgt. Daniel J. Morak, Staff Sgt. Zachary R. Plummer, Staff Sgt. Chester D. Wall, Staff Sgt. Ronald K. Kroetsch, Staff Sgt. Richard J. Crain, Sgt. Sabastian J. Chrzanowski, Sgt. Jeffrey M. Griffins, Sgt. Justin L. Pierce, Sgt. Ryan J. Troy. Also awarded the patch were three soldiers recovering at Ft. Lewis: Sgt 1st Class Christopher A. Watson, Sgt. 1st Class John A. Pavlick, and Staff Sgt. Thomas J. Kirkwood.



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FARP Fuels the Fight

Story and photo by Sgt. Dan Lucas

A thundering war machine lands in the middle of the night, a team of soldiers rush out in the darkness to meet the waiting helicopter. Refueling and rearming it for another mission, all the while ducking the spinning blades, mere feet above their heads. This is a typical day in the life of a Forward Armament Refueling Point (FARP) crew member from Headquarters Headquarters Company (HHC) Task Force 1/151 Ghost riders.

During combat operations, a FARP increases time-on-station, allowing more time to apply continuous pressure on the enemy. It provides fuel and ammunition for aviation units in combat and is flexible enough to be self-deployed or inserted by air, according to Field Manual 4-30.13. Day to day operations are anything but textbook.

“The first thing the pilots do is give us a call on the radio, before they arrive, requesting fuel or ammunition or both,” said Sgt. Travarus Halsey, FARP crew member. “Sometimes they don’t call, but we still go out there and make sure they are taken care of.”

When the helicopter lands, soldiers hurry out to quickly refuel and reload the aircraft as fast as possible.

“We send two people to do it, it is faster, safer, and easier that way,” said Spc. Jonathan Morris, FARP crew member, HHC 1/151. “After they refuel the helicopter, if they need rearmament we do so.”

A FARP includes: an ammunition specialist to receive and transport Class V munitions from the supply point to the rearm pads; an aircraft armament and missile systems repairer to repair aircraft fire control systems and to load and arm attack craft; an AH-64 Apache armament and electrical systems repairer to repair fire control systems and to load and arm Apache helicopters; and a petroleum supply specialist to transport Class III and refuel aircraft.

“The first couple times I refueled aircraft was really scary. When its dark outside, the helicopters want complete darkness, not even white glow sticks because it would screw with their night vision equipment,” said Pvt. Andre Evans, FARP crew member, HHC 1/151. “Now everything is second nature, its like riding a bike or washing your hands.”

There are three FARPs in northern Iraq manned by less than three dozen people,” said Capt. Berry H. Duncan, HHC commander, 1/151. They work seven days a week for the whole year so they don’t get the advantage of downtime like other soldiers.”

He also said these soldiers were on a “fireman’s schedule”.

“Even if the weather is too poor for helicopters to come in, the FARP crews are still out there ready in case the weather changes or some fixed wing aircraft come in,” said Duncan.

Mission success depends on the ability of FARP personnel to setup and provide rapid and responsive arming and refueling services, according to FM 4-30.13

“There are a lot of new personnel doing the FARP sites,” said Chief Warrant Officer Scott Carnes, Apache pilot, B Co, 1/151. “It has taken a little while to get at a comfortable level where we feel we can come in any time. Now they are doing a really great job loading us up with what we need.”

A FARP doesn’t just cater to army helicopters; they also service other friendly helicopters and fixed wing aircraft that need their services.

“These troops are doing an outstanding job,” said Duncan. “When it comes to refueling us and pushing bullets, they are the best,” said Mr. Carnes.



Spc. Charles Potts, electronics, avionics and weapons system Mechanic, load a 2.75 inch rocket into an AH-64 (Apache) at Forward Operating Base Endurance in Northern Iraq.

Mechanics Keep Blades Turning

Story and photo by Sgt. Daniel Lucas

The sounds of helicopters are heard by soldier and civilian alike, thundering across the skies, bringing the feeling of comfort to the soldiers and instilling fear in the insurgents. But the wrenches of the mechanics of Task Force 1/151 Ghost riders are what bring comfort to the pilots they support on FOB Endurance.

“The pilots fly; we handle the rest,” said Spc. William R. Stockton Blackhawk mechanic 1/151. “We handle general maintenance, like daily Preventative Maintenance, Checks and Services, (PMCS), and if the helicopter needs more, we get it fixed.”

“A helicopter doesn’t fly, it beats the air into submission,” said Sgt. 1st Class Byron, acting first sergeant, D Co, 1/151.

“Because of the way a helicopter flies, there is a lot of vibration,” said Sgt. Samuel Wilds, avionics, weapon systems, and electronics mechanic, D Co, 1/151. “The systems are mechanically sound, but they require a lot of maintenance.”

“If the weapons aren’t bore sighted, and the other systems harmonized or don’t function right on the helicopter, there would be no point to flying it,” added Spc. Bobby Camera, avionics, weapon systems, and electronics mechanic, D Co, 1/151.

“My soldiers are working 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” said Sgt. 1st Class Loveless, “if they have to work all night that’s what they do.”

“I couldn’t go to sleep at night knowing there is a maintenance issue that wasn’t done,” said Sgt. Jay Burkins, air frame and sheet metal mechanic, D Co, 1/151. “A job that is done right means saving peoples lives.”

“Sgt. Timothy McMickell worked straight through the night to prepare a new engine to be put into one of the Apaches,” said Sgt. Burkins.

“The engine just came out of a 250 hour check to test the health of the engine,” said Sgt. McMickell. “The engine was about to lose a lot of performance, so we had to change it. A new engine doesn’t come with all the extra parts, so we have to change all the parts from the older engine to the new one.” He sat the two engines side by side with a technical inspector

beside him and worked on the engine from four in the afternoon till nine the next morning.

“We have to watch our soldiers or they will work themselves into fatigue,” said Chief Warrant Officer, Tactical Operations officer, 1/151. “We have a very fast paced Operation Tempo.”

When the helicopter is serviced and ready to fly, it brings great satisfaction to the mechanics who worked around the clock to get the mission accomplished.

“When the helicopter flies around and everything goes off without a hitch, it’s very satisfying,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Crossan, engine mechanic, D Co, 1/151. “If I didn’t like what I was doing I would have quit 25 years ago.

“The more they fly, the more maintenance they need,” said Spc. Charles Potts, avionics, weapon systems, and electronics mechanic, D co, 1/151. “We have a lot of experienced, pilots and awesome crews who have trust in us and can push the helicopters further because they know it can handle it.”

“When flying the Apache in the city, they are usually shot at,” said Chief Warrant Officer Scott Carnes. “Every single aircraft that gets shot always make it back because the mechanics take such good care of the helicopters. Kudos to them”



Sgt. Timothy McMickell and Sgt. Richard Crossan replace the engine of an AH-64 at Forward Operating Base Endurance in Northern Iraq.

TFO (from page 1)

last six months, through battle drills and direct communication with TFO.

"They are a great group of guys, they are tailor trained for this mission and they know what they are getting into," said Ham. "They will do a fantastic job."

From the start, TFO fell into an environment with some unique problems; they replaced a brigade command normally staffed with over 300, with a team of 80 individuals.

"This group is great at finding creative ways to solve unique problems," said Col. Carl L. Chappell, Chief of Staff for TFO. "Out of all my experiences here in Iraq, I will miss working with them the most, they are absolutely a blast to work with."

According to Ham, much of the work done this past year was directly due to do the efforts of the Iraqi people, many of whom have lost loved ones and colleagues during the struggle for a free Iraq.

"Iraqi's do more without our presence everyday, sometimes one of the hardest things was to sit back and let them do it their own way," said Ham. "At the end of all of this, credit goes to those brave Iraqi's that are willing to step up and bravely lead their country."

Task Force Olympia is returning to their active duty post of Fort Lewis, WA, after a year long deployment to Mosul, Iraq. Task Force Freedom, of Fort Irwin, CA, takes over command in February of 2005.

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Super Bowl as it Happened

All the key moments from the New England/Philadelphia show down in Super Bowl XXXIX at the Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville, Florida (Eastern Standard Time)

Build-up: Defending champions, New England start as favorites to claim a third Super Bowl title in four years - a feat that would elevate them to NFL 'dynasty' status.

First quarter:

1735: Philadelphia kick off after winning the toss, and wide receiver Terrell Owens, is among their starters despite his injury problems.

1740: New England sacks Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, but Philadelphia successfully query the turnover and retain possession.

1749: Patriots quarterback, Tom Brady's, 50-yard pass to David Patten just misses its target, with two Eagles pressuring the wide receiver.

1755: Owens seems to be moving freely and with no obvious discomfort, taking two passes from McNabb in the first six minutes.

1806: Philadelphia enjoy their best spell of possession, with Owens making 30 yards from a McNabb pass before a penalty is called against the Eagles.

1812: An illegal contact call against the Patriots rescues the Eagles after McNabb's latest pass goes well astray. On the next play, Rodney Harrison's fine interception just outside the endzone sees New England regain the ball.

1820: The Patriots' defense moves up a gear, winning back possession in a promising field position with another turnover.

1823: The first quarter ends scoreless for the second successive Super Bowl, and the sixth time overall.

Second quarter:

1828: The Eagles make a good start as McNabb finds wide receiver, Todd Pinkston, with two superb passes, with the second caught in a spectacular fashion on the Patriots' 17-yard line.

1834 - TOUCHDOWN: Philadelphia open the scoring, with LJ Smith finding his way past three Patriots and into the endzone to meet McNabb's pass.

1844: New England successfully challenges a fumble decision, and running back, Corey Dillon, takes the ball to within 15 yards of the Eagles endzone on the resulting play.

1900 - TOUCHDOWN: Wide receiver, David Givens, makes the TD catch for New England as the cool-headed Brady takes his time weighing up his options before going wide right.

1946: Brady and running back, Kevin Faulk, make a hash of a simple handover play in a threatening position, allowing the Eagles to regain possession.

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Super Bowl as it Happened (continued from page 6)

1908: A defense-dominated first half ends with the scores level, and the spectacular half-time show, featuring Sir Paul McCartney, gets under way.

Third quarter:

1946 - TOUCHDOWN: New England makes a strong start as Brady finds tight end, Deion Branch, with two passes to close within two yards of the Eagles endzone. Linebacker, Mike Vrabel, plays tight end, and juggles with the TD pass before holding on.

1955: McNabb suffers his first legitimate sack as the Patriots start to exert more control over the contest.

2010 - TOUCHDOWN: Philadelphia pulls themselves back into the game with a touchdown from running back, Brian Westbrook, whose good work in the build-up reaps its reward.

2020:The penultimate period of a see-saw encounter sees the teams on level terms once again, and it remains anybody's game.

Fourth quarter:

2023 - TOUCHDOWN: New England goes ahead again, with Dillon pulling over from three yards after a hand-off from Brady.

2035: New England's Branch takes his 11th catch of the game, tying with two other players for the most in a Super Bowl. He also took 10 in last year's game.

2042: New England's Adam Vinatieri succeeds with the first field goal attempt of the game to stretch the Patriot lead.

2103 - TOUCHDOWN: The Eagles soar back into contention with a 30-yard bullet pass to Greg Lewis who connects superbly with the ball in the Patriots endzone.

2114 The Eagles need to get into field goal range but New England keep things tight as the clock runs down.

Philadelphia 21-24 New England. New England seals their third Super Bowl win in four years and confirm their status as the NFL's team of the 21st century so far. Deion Branch named MVP.

Headlines From the Other Side of the World

DURANGO, Colorado (AP) -- Two teenage girls who surprised their neighbors with homemade cookies late one night were ordered to pay nearly \$900 in medical bills for a woman who says she was so startled that she had to go to the hospital.

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) -- An inmate who was left brain-dead after being shot by a prison guard nearly three weeks ago lay in a hospital bed Friday, guarded around the clock at a cost of more than \$1,000 a day, in a situation family members and a lawmaker called absurd.

LOS ANGELES, California (Hollywood Reporter) -- The 21st James Bond film has a title: "Casino Royale," which also was the title of Ian Fleming's first James Bond novel, published in 1953.

Emmitt Smith, the league's all-time rushing leader, retires after an illustrious NFL career.

SAN DIEGO (Feb. 4, 2005) -- Rob Chudzinski was hired as tight ends coach of the San Diego Chargers after spending last season in the same job with the Cleveland Browns.

The Weather Forecast

Monday 2/7

Day
Chilly with periods of sun
High 50° F
Winds ENE at 1 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 1%

Night
Some clouds, then snow late
Low 27° F
Winds N at 4 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 0%

Tuesday 2/8

Day
Rain, mixed with snow early
High 43° F
Winds NE at 3 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 2%

Night
Very cold with snow
Low 23° F
Winds N at 2 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 0%

Wednesday 2/9

Day
Chilly with sun and clouds
High 47° F
Winds N at 2 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 5%

Night
Partly cloudy and cold
Low 26° F
Winds N/A
Thunderstorm Probability 0%

Thursday 2/10

Day
Times of clouds and sun
High 46° F
Winds E at 1 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 5%

Night
Some clouds and cold
Low 25° F
Winds N/A
Thunderstorm Probability 0%

Friday 2/11

Day
Periods of clouds and sunshine
High 44° F
Winds ENE at 1 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 2%

Night
Patchy clouds and cold
Low 24° F
Winds N at 4 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 0

Saturday 2/12

Day
Periods of clouds and sunshine
High 44° F
Winds ENE at 1 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 2%

Night
Patchy clouds and cold
Low 24° F
Winds N at 4 mph
Thunderstorm Probability 0%