

Hammer Times

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3rd BCT moves into Iraq

“Sledgehammer” brigade arrives ready for Operation Hammer Freedom 3.2

Story and photos by Spc. Natalie Loucks
3rd BCT PAO

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division arrived safely Wednesday to Forward Operating Base Warhorse by way of C-130 Hercules and ground vehicle convoys.

One 37 vehicle convoy, with vehicles and personnel from Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 3rd BCT and the Brigade Troops Battalion, set out the evening of February 5, from Camp Buehring, Kuwait en route to the FOB.

The trip took 36 hours said Master Sgt. Ray Daniels, the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the 3rd BCT's S-2.

The convoy took a two-hour break to give the drivers rest and allow the Soldiers of the convoy time to eat chow and make any necessary maintenance adjustments, Daniels said.

During a second, seven-hour break, the Soldiers had time to sleep in their vehicles while others provided security to the area, Daniels said.

Spc. Margaretta Bryant, a mechanic for 3rd BCT, explained the hardest part of the trip was trying to stay awake.

“For the convoy home I will try to get more sleep before we go,”



Vehicles and equipment of the 3rd BCT leave Camp Buehring, Kuwait on February 5. The Soldiers endured 36-hours of convoy operations to move their equipment into Iraq.

Bryant said.

Bryant said her maintenance section prayed for safe travel before and during the trip. “When we finally arrived we thanked God no one got hurt,” she said.

According to Daniels, there was no enemy contact during the convoy.

Problems were minimal, but there were a few flat tires and some vehicles had engine trouble, Daniels said.

Approximately 200 personnel from the brigade took off on four different flights by way of C-130 Hercules' from Camp Buehring February 7.

The 90 minute flight landed safely at Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Iraq, where the Soldiers rested for two nights while waiting for transportation said Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Mallory, the 3rd BCT

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Good to go

Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, from Fort Riley, Kan., test fire their M2 machine gun at Udairi Range in Kuwait. The 2-34 Armor is attached to the 3rd BCT at Forward Operating Base Gabe.



3rd BCT convoys arrive without incident

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S-6 Chief.

Spc. Rita Flores, a signal system support specialist with the 3rd BCT, who had never flown in a C-130 before, said the flight was enjoyable aside from the pressure on her ears from the plane's rapid decent.

On February 9, two separate ground vehicle convoys transported Soldiers from FSA Anaconda to Warhorse.

The first convoy took approximately 90 minutes with no maintenance problems and no enemy contact, Mallory said.

"It's a shame something like (war) can happen to such beautiful land," said Flores, who traveled with the first convoy.

Flores said she was amazed at both the negative and positive reactions of the locals who would crowd the streets as the vehicles passed.



Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Mallory, the 3rd BCT Commo Chief, conducted roll call during manifest for the flight to FSA Anaconda in Iraq.

According to Mallory, the second convoy took approximately five hours. The vehicles encountered a convoy separate from their own, that had problems with the weight of their track vehicles on the bridge crossing the Tigris River.

"I'm tall and being packed up in that (light multi-terrain vehicle) for such a long time was extremely uncomfortable," Mallory said.

Approximately 100 vehicles from different convoys were caught in the traffic jam, Mallory said.

The situation was soon corrected and the 3rd BCT vehicles were able to continue on with the movement, arriving at FOB Warhorse late Wednesday night.

The 3rd BCT is currently adjusting to their new station and is prepared to take over responsibility for the region

as 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division begins their movement back to Villsek, Germany. 

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MWR, AAFES help bring sights, sounds of home to those abroad

Story and photos by
Spc. Natalie Loucks

3rd BCT PAO

Deploying to a new place is never easy. The question on every new Soldier's mind is "what is there to do here?"

Morale, Welfare and Recreation and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service provides more than enough entertainment to keep up morale.

The MWR organization gives the occupants of Forward Operating Base Warhorse the opportunity for downtime by providing many recreational activities.

Telephone services and internet allow Soldiers and contractors to stay connected to their loved ones.

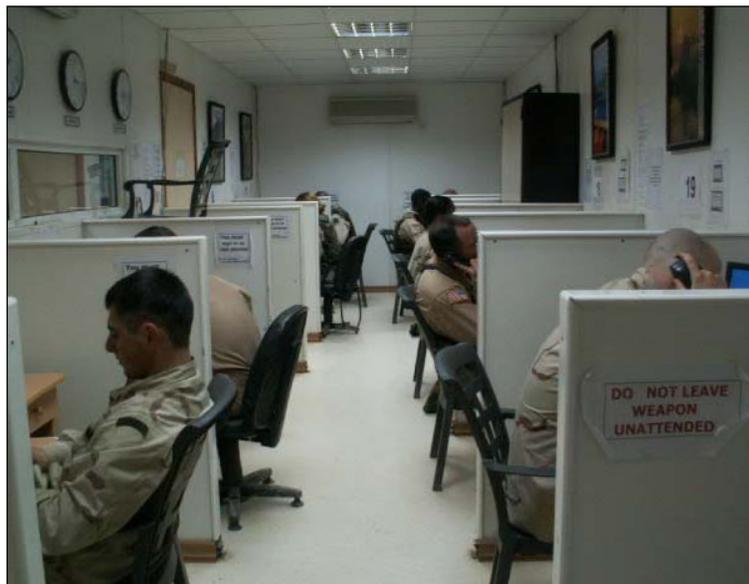
The telephones operate on the open band system where callers can purchase phone time from the internet using a credit card. According to Alex Paucar, an MWR coordinator on FOB Warhorse, the cost is low compared to typical calling cards.

Users of the internet center sign up and are allowed 30 minutes of free computer time.

Both services are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are located in the Norquist MWR facility.

Also in the Norquist MWR facility building Soldiers and contractors can utilize the Sony Playstation center. The center allows for in-house play as well as rentals.

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Warhorse Soldiers use the open band telephone system at the Norquist MWR facility.

Reenlistment benefits deployed Soldiers

By Spc. Natalie Loucks

3rd BCT PAO

Reenlistment numbers for 3rd Brigade Combat Team are extremely high. Only a few short weeks into the deployment and already several Soldiers have raised their right hand for a second, third or even fourth time, according to 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews.

Andrews said approximately 60 to 70 Soldiers are ready to reenlist, but are waiting until their arrival in Iraq.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Robert Stevens, the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment Career Counselor and acting 3rd Brigade Career Counselor, Soldiers reenlist primarily for the bonuses.

Compared to reenlisting while back in the United States, the amount of the bonuses offered while deployed are greater, said Stevens. The conditions under which these bonuses are granted are more moderate as well, he said.

A Soldier can reenlist any time while on deployment as long as they have the minimum of 17 months time in service, regardless of how many years they have before their end time in service date, Stevens said. They will still get the bonus, he added.

According to Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Lucas, the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment Career Counselor, everyone who enlists receives a bonus. Stateside, the amount of money, if any received, is based on the Soldier's military occupational specialty.

The bonuses are categorized into three groups. The first group, "First term enlistees," are classified as "Alpha Zone." These Soldiers have anywhere from 17 months to six years time in service, explained Stevens.

The amount of money an Alpha Zone Soldier will receive is the amount of their base pay, specific to their rank, multiplied by 1.5.

Bravo Zone Soldiers, six years and one day to 10 years time in service will receive, the amount of their base pay times 1 as a bonus.

Soldiers in the Charlie Zone who have time in service of 10 years, one day to 14 years, receive as their bonus, half of their base pay, or .5.

The base pay of the Soldier is then multiplied by 1.5, 1 or .5, then again by the number of months re-enlisted for. The result is the amount of the bonus.

The maximum bonus is \$15,000 and every bonus is tax free in the theatre, Lucas said. The maximum time allowed in service to be eligible, is 16 years. Reenlistment bonuses in the states are taxed and the maximum amount is \$10,000.

"Most people jump at the chance to reenlist while they are deployed," Lucas said. "They may never get a chance like this again."

Stevens said pay is based on additional obligated services.

To reenlist, a Soldier must visit the Career Counselor assigned to their battalion. There, they will be reviewed by the counselor and discuss options, Stevens said. It is also mandatory for the re-enlistee to be counseled by their company commander and the reserve component counselor.

Another difference reenlisting while on deployment as opposed to in the U.S. is stop loss, said Stevens. On deployment, Career Counselors do not receive missions. Stop loss can hold a Soldier in the Army at least until the deployment is complete.

"Stop loss does not prevent Soldiers from taking it upon themselves to come see us though," Stevens said.

"Everyone says they are going to get out when the deployment is over," Stevens said. "But when it comes down to four or five months until their ETS date and they have to make a decision, (most) stick with the job, the pay and benefits they already have or find another job. They usually reenlist."

While in Iraq, Career Counselors are looking into holding reenlistment ceremonies at the site where Saddam Hussein was captured.

For information regarding reenlistment options locate your battalion Career Counselor. [\[Link\]](#)

New 5th Brigade delayed

By Mick Walsh

Columbus Ledger-Enquirer

The expected mid-October arrival of a new light infantry brigade at Fort Benning has been delayed 11 months.

Basically, it came down to the availability of money.

Or lack thereof.

Housing a 3,400-soldier brigade, including barracks, offices, motor pools, clinics and other facilities needed for a combat team that large will cost \$135 million, funds currently tied up in President Bush's supplemental budget.

To meet the original deadline of Oct. 16, 2005, construction at Harmony Church would need to start by March 1, said garrison commander Col. Rick Riera on Tuesday. "We understand the

money won't become available until a June-July time frame. We'd already done much of the prep work but we can't award a construction contract until the funds become available."

The news of a delay may have come as a blessing.

"The previous schedule would really have pushed us," said John Mitchell, chairman of the Fort Benning Futures Committee. "The delay is really a benefit for us. It will give us more time to concentrate on the two areas which will affect us the most — off-post housing and public education."

Another benefit?

"It will allow us to build new facilities for the Soldiers prior to their arrival and thus minimize the challenges of activating a unit

from the ground up," Riera said.

That's right — "from the ground up."

As of today, there is no 5th Brigade in the 25th Infantry Division. But there will be in 2006.

Construction of facilities for a new brigade would be like re-creating Kelley Hill, the home of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

"All the essential facilities will be built, including barracks for 1,362 soldiers," Riera said.

At one time there was a consideration that the new brigade could use existing facilities on Kelley Hill, since the 3rd Brigade is not expected to return from deployment until early next year. But that was quickly discounted.

"We didn't want the soldiers to arrive, settle them in at Kelley

Hill, then move everything and everybody to Harmony Church."

The Harmony Church area of Fort Benning was once home to basic training and before that hosted the 2nd Infantry Division.

The modular brigades, as they are being called, will be staffed by Soldiers from throughout the Army.

The first troops are expected to arrive by January 2006, with more than 2,700 on post by mid-October of next year. Riera said the brigade will eventually grow to between 3,220 and 3,400 troops. And all will be quartered and trained in new facilities.

While the new brigade will call Hawaii headquarters — that's where the 25th ID is based — it will be designed to deploy as an independent unit in support of a joint force. 

MWR facilities work hard to provide support

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A sitting room is complete with a library and living room style seating around a big screen television. Occupants can view their own movies as well as movies provided.

MWR also provides a sports bar where Soldiers and contractors can watch American

sports while snacking with friends.

Physical training doesn't stop during a deployment and the MWR provides Soldiers and contractors with many ways to stay in shape.

Cardio workouts and weight training are available as well as sports leagues such as basketball and volleyball.

For late night entertainment or a mid-day break, the Fulkenburg Theater shows two recent releases twice daily. Show times are 12:30 p.m., 3 p.m., 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Movie titles and times are posted throughout FOB Warhorse.

AAFES aids Soldiers and contractors stationed at FOB Warhorse as well.

The Post Exchange is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. Items such as souvenirs, food, small appliances, bedding, hygiene items, DVDs, CDs and more are available for purchase, said Joan Klenk, PX Store Manager.

The PX accepts cash, credit, Military Star Card and checks that can be written for up to \$20.00 cash back. Debit will eventually be accepted as well, but is not available at this time, said Klenk.

AAFES also provides a barber shop, an alterations shop and supports the AT&T telephone center.

AAFES sponsors concessions selling jewelry, gifts, DVDs and more that are run by local nationals. These markets are open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week.

Klenk said a Green Beans Coffee shop is expected to open early to mid March.

Soldiers and contractors who are away from their loved ones should have no problem in finding entertainment. AAFES and the MWR work hard to provide every Warhorse resident a chance to get relief from the stresses of deployment. 



Georgian Army soldiers stationed at FOB Warhorse play games on PS2's at the Norquist facility.