

Crossed Sabers

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"Telling the First Team's Story"

Friday, July 7, 2006



(Photo by Pfc. Jeffery Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Heave-Ho!

Soldiers from Company B, right, pull with all their might during a game of tug-o-war with their fellow 1st Cavalry Division's 15th Brigade Special Troops Battalion buddies from Company A at Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area during their brigade's organizational day July 5. Company A walked away with the win. The brigade, which received deployment orders in November, cased its colors on Cooper's Field today in preparation for departure to Iraq later this year.

Deputy CG Says Goodbye to First Team

By Sgt. Nicole Kojetin
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Soldiers from every unit within the 1st Cavalry Division stood tall on the division's parade field on Fort Hood to bid farewell to their deputy division commander for support in a ceremony June 28.

After slightly more than a year of serving the First Team, Brig. Gen William Troy is moving to Fort Lewis, Wash., to serve as the I Corps deputy commanding general.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., the commanding general of the division, said that Troy was a great help to the division in the last year.

"Bill Troy is one of the Army's pre-



(Photo by Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Brig. Gen. William Troy, the former 1st Cavalry Division's deputy commander for support, during his farewell ceremony on Cooper Field outside the June 28.

mier war-fighters, and in his capacity as

the deputy division commander for support, he's been instrumental in preparing this organization for what lies before us - a return to Iraq in the fight for freedom," Fil said. "He has been a valuable member of this division's command team for more than a year, and invaluable to me since I've assumed command of this division just seven short months ago."

Troy said that he enjoyed his time serving the division.

"The 1st Cavalry Division has such a distinguished heritage, such a tremendous record of service to our country," Troy said. "To be any part of it, from a private

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Man on the Street

What were your first thoughts when you found out about your official deployment orders?

**Photos by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**



**Warrant Officer
Curtis Johnson**
Headquarters
Company, 15th
Sustainment Brigade

"My initial thought was 'Again?' This is my third deployment.... Preparing for this one is easier because I know what to pack, but it's still as hard to leave your family the third time as it was the first."

"We kind of already knew we were going for a long time, and finally it's certain that we're going, it's a relief. Now we're just waiting on the 'when.'"



Pfc. Robert Ledford
3rd Bn., 8th Cavalry
Regiment, 2nd
Brigade Combat Team

"I expected (the deployment orders). I joined during a time of war, and they were no surprise to me. I'm actually volunteering to take part in a Quick Reaction Force and go over earlier."



Pvt. Anthony Yates
1st Bn., 12th Cavalry
Regiment, 3rd
Brigade Combat Team

Soldier, Family Readiness Key to Deployment Success

**By Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow
1st Cav. Div. Command Sergeant Major**

Late last month, two more 1st Cavalry Division brigades and the Division headquarters element received their official deployment orders to Iraq. For most of us, this came as no surprise. We've known for quite some time that our time would come to rejoin the fight for freedom in Iraq. And we've been leaning forward in the foxhole in preparation for that day.

Knowing something will happen eventually and actually doing it are two different things, though. Deployments are difficult. They are difficult for the troops in the field and they are difficult for the families left behind. No one is immune to the stresses that come with a long separation and the time spent in harm's way.

The demands of a deployment can tax even the best of us. Preparing for deployment goes far beyond conducting training exercises in the field. It should also include preparing your family for the day when you will say good-bye.

For Soldiers, there are obvious things to work on, individually and collectively, as we ramp up to leave. Weapons proficiency ranks high on that list, as does heightening your physical fitness level. All of our troops should be on the top of their game and in the best condition of their lives as they roll out to meet the enemies of freedom. I urge leaders at all levels to challenge their troops to reach new heights in physical fitness, which will serve them well under the harsh conditions we'll encounter.

It's time, too, to ensure that our

Soldiers are prepared and cleared for deployment medically, dentally and have their personal effects in order - like wills and power of attorney. As leaders, we'll ensure that our Soldiers are ready. And as leaders, we also need to ensure that our Soldiers' families are ready as well.

First and foremost, take a look at your own Family Readiness Group. Are the people and the processes in place to take of our families in the event of an emergency? Do you know the family members of the Soldiers who work for you and do they know how to reach out to the rear detachment leadership?

I believe that every unit within the First Team has taken the necessary steps to make sure that our families will be cared for while we are away, but now is the time to check and re-check our people, programs and be proactive in our FRGs.

Finally, I'd like to remind all of you to spend quality time with your families as each day brings you closer to your departure date.

We've conducted the lane training, the field training, the mission rehearsal exercises and the live-fires. We're trained and ready for the task at hand. With that in mind, find time for your loved ones. In the days ahead, we'll ask that you put your First Team family ahead of all else. In the meantime, don't short-change your own.

This division has a long, illustrious legacy and a rich tradition of superior service to our Army and our nation. I am proud to be your command sergeant major, and we should all be proud to bear the standards of this great division.

Live the legend! First Team!

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America's First Team Set to Deploy

By Sgt. Colby Hauser
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Like wildfire, the news that the Department of Defense had announced the deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters element, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team to Iraq spread throughout the division's War Fighter site.

Since their return from a year long deployment in March of last year, the First Team went through many changes and faced its share of challenges. Humanitarian missions from the hurricane ravaged New Orleans, to earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan, kept the division busy. While facing these challenges, the division has transformed to the Army's new modularity concept where individual headquarters and combat brigades can receive orders to deploy.

"The First Team has been preparing for this announcement and is ready to answer our nation's call," said Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr., Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division. "They are the best trained, the best equipped, and they are supported by the best people, their loved ones and the



(Photo by Sgt. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, addresses his Troops during a ceremony on the First Team's Cooper Field.

good people of Central Texas."

For many troops, this is their second deployment to Iraq, and what concerns or worries they had the first time are replaced by experience.

"I was worried the first time I deployed," said Spc. Courtney Yeargin, a signals intelligence analyst with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. "I'm more comfortable with it the second time around because I know what to expect and I guess that makes it not as

stressful."

"This is going to be my second time in Iraq and the one thing I look forward to is seeing the progress that has been made there," said Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, the Public Affairs Officer for the 1st Cavalry Division.

For others, this deployment offers the opportunity to serve their country in its time of need.

"I was fully aware before I joined the Army there was a possibility of being deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan," said Spc.

Micheal Townsend, a human intelligence specialist with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. "I joined during a time of war and I understood that. I came in to do something not many Americans get a chance to do.

"My family members have served and told their stories and I feel like it's my turn," he said.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, located at Fort Hood, Texas, and 4th Brigade Combat Team, from Fort Bliss, Texas, was not included in the announcement.

"The 1st and 4th Brigades will continue to train and prepare themselves to deploy should they be ordered to do so," Fil said. The 1st Air Cavalry Brigade and the 15th Support Brigade received orders to deploy last November and are also scheduled to depart for Iraq later this year.

Now with their marching orders, an air of confidence surrounds the Cav, as the men and women of Americas First Team draw closer to deployment.

"I am really excited because that's what being in the Army is about, being deployed and serving your country," Yeargin said.

Cav Says Farewell to Deputy CG for Support

Troy

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Soldier to a general officer, I think, is a huge honor, and then to be here as a general is more than I could have imagined. It means that the Army thinks that you're good enough to serve with America's First Team. It has just been a tremendous honor and I have loved every minute of it."He

said that one of the highlights of his experiences here was watching Soldiers go to the Joint Readiness Training Center and the National Training Center and succeed after the division's transformation.

"To see them go out there and to perform so well in both those places has been an extremely gratifying experience," Troy said. "We really had to take this division and build it all back up ...and it has proved to be a powerful fighting force. To see that

makes me confident in what the division will do in the future and proud of what all we have accomplished."

He said that pride will stay with him as he makes his way northwest.

"It is time now to take this patch off my arm, but it will always be in my heart," Troy said

Troy is being replaced by Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, the former chief of U.S. Army Public Affairs.

News of First Team Deployment Orders Followed by Stop Loss

By Spc. Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Close on the heels of the Department of Defense's announcement that most units from the 1st Cavalry Division would be deploying to Iraq later this year came the notification that several of those units would now fall under the Stop Loss Program.

The division's 15th Sustainment Brigade and 1st Air Cavalry Brigade have both been under Stop Loss for several months, while 2nd Brigade Combat Team and the 1st Cavalry Division's headquarters company have just received stop loss notification.

"Stop Loss turns off separation and allows commanders to retain combat power," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Richard Little, chief of enlisted management and personnel readiness for the division's personnel section.

Stop Loss lasts for the 12-month deployment as well as 90 days before the deployment and 90 days after the deployment, Little said.

"Stop loss affects everyone except the people the Army can't use in their current medical condition or people the Army needs somewhere else," Little said.

Soldiers aren't without recourse if they think they have a situation that should let them remain unaffected by Stop Loss.

"Soldiers are always authorized to request an exemption to policy from their

"Stop Loss affects everyone except the people the Army can't use in their current medical condition or people the Army needs somewhere else."

*Chief Warrant Officer 4 Richard Little
Chief of Enlisted Management and
Personnel Readiness*

S-1," Little said. "It's not going to be recommended for approval unless they have a really good reason."

Stop Loss is something Staff Sgt. Joseph Wilson, a human resources noncommissioned officer with 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, has already had first-hand experience. He was planning to leave the Army until his unit fell under Stop Loss during the first Operation Enduring Freedom rotation to Afghanistan.

"I felt like the Army did what they did because they

really needed us," Wilson said. "I wasn't happy about it, but I wasn't mad."

Being unable to leave the Army turned out to be a good thing for Wilson.

"I realized the Army needed Soldiers," he said. "It afforded me the opportunity to step up to the plate."

Wilson decided to reenlist and stay in the Army. His current enlistment runs through 2010. Stop Loss not only prevents Soldiers from getting out of the Army, it also keeps Soldiers from moving to a new unit or duty station until after the deployment ends, Little

said. Retaining Soldiers lets units stay at full strength without having to introduce new Soldiers into the unit right as they deploy, and keeps the unit together throughout the deployment.

"It allows experienced Soldiers to train newer Soldiers instead of replacing them with new Soldiers," Wilson said.

"It's not personal," Little said. "It's a strategic option that commanders need to fill combat operations."

Spc. Terrance Frye an administration specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Sustainment Brigade, is one of the Soldiers whose plans have changed because of Stop Loss.

"I'm not able to change my (military occupational specialty)," Frye said. "To be able to change, I have to go to school, and I don't have the luxury of

See Stop Loss Page 25



(Photo by Spc. Joshua McPhie, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's headquarters company stand in formation as they prepare to go on a run. The company is one of the units recently added to the division's Stop Loss list. The list also includes the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 2nd and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams.



(Photo by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

A column of noncommissioned officers recite the NCO oath during the Division's Special Troops Battalion induction ceremony into the NCO Corps at the Ironhorse Fitness Center on Fort Hood June 29.

First Team's DSTB Hosts Massive NCO Induction

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Ordinarily there are only ten to 15 inductees in a noncommissioned officer induction ceremony, said 1st Sgt. Rodney Cooper of the Command Post Detachment, Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. However, this one was slightly different.

Sixty-seven sergeants were officially welcomed into the Noncommissioned Officer Corps at ceremony in the Ironhorse Fitness Center on Fort Hood June 29.

Cooper explained that because of past deployments, the battalion had many sergeants that needed to be recognized for their desire and ability to lead. Some of these Soldiers have been sergeants for more than a year without being officially inducted.

"These noncommissioned officers are here to cross the line and be recognized as the new members of the corps," Cooper said. "They are no longer just a Soldier, but a leader of Soldiers."

Cooper, the coordinator of the ceremo-

ny, added that tradition is a huge part of the induction ceremony.

In upholding the long-lived traditions of the corps, Soldiers, specialists and below, sat on one side of the gymnasium and noncommissioned officers on the other.

According to Cooper, the physical division between the two is to make NCOs understand that they are no longer just a Soldier, but a role model with responsibilities. Cooper said that the significance of the separation of the NCOs and the lower enlisted is not only to recognize Soldiers who have proven ready to transition into the corps, but motivate the lower ranking Soldiers to do so themselves.

The guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Joseph advised members of the corps to continue to live the NCO creed and be aware that they are always being watched and followed by the Soldiers they lead.

"I understand that all my Soldiers look up to me, and that everything I do is being watched and has its effects," said Sgt. Jennifer Butka an inductee with the 1st Cavalry Division Band. "If my Soldiers see me continuously trying to do some-

thing good, they will strive to do good and vice versa. As an NCO, I set the example, and I have to live by that each and every day."

She added that consequently Soldiers are a reflection of their leaders.

Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffery Moses said that watching new Soldiers step up to become leaders reminds makes him proud to be an NCO.

"It makes me think about the leaders who mentored me and each of the Soldiers I have lead in my career, and it leaves me feeling great to be a part of that passing down of knowledge and pride," Moses said.

Cooper said that the responsibility to transfer knowledge starts as soon as a Soldier pins on the rank of sergeant, and this event was a celebration of what it took to get to that point.

At the end of the ceremony, tradition continued as flocks of fellow NCOs and future NCOs congratulated the new inductees for proving themselves worthy of becoming a part of the time honored corps, "The Backbone of the Army."

Iraqi Teaches Cav Soldiers Common Courtesies

By Spc. L.B. Edgar
7th MPAD Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. - The Soldiers of Forward Support Company F, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are in a class, which might just save their lives one day. However, it does not cover squad tactics, use of their weapons systems or first aid. Rather it focuses on the culture of Iraq. The lesson: cultural awareness, the classroom: the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La., and their teacher: Ismat Al-Shimmmary, a former Iraqi citizen now living in the U.S.

Bridging the cultural gap between Iraqis and Americans is all in a day's work for Al-Shimmmary, he said.

"When there is distance (misunderstanding) between Iraqis and Americans, it means they don't understand each other. We have to find a way to make them close together," Al-Shimmmary said.

Al-Shimmmary, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1993 from the Iraqi town of Cut and now resides in Michigan, is proud of teaching Soldiers and translating for them. So much so, he travels 24 hours by bus each month to do so, he said.

"I feel like I'm doing something good for both sides," Al-Shimmmary said. "I'm doing something for my country and for America."

Cultural awareness training is important for Cav Soldiers because the mission they faced last time around is not the same mission they may face this time down range, said Capt. Jason Kahne, company commander, FSC F, 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.

"We're going to have to be a little more sensitive to the changes that have taken place in the year-and-a-half since we've been there," Kahne said.

The changes in Iraq directly affect units' approaches to accomplishing the mission, said 1st Sgt. Joseph Cannon, FSC F, and 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.

"The first time we went over there it was more battle driven," Cannon said. "This time we have to be a little smarter. Even though we are still at war, it is part humanitarian... It is part of our job to win the trust and confidence of Iraqi civilians."

Earning the trust and confidence of the



(Photo by Spc. L. B. Edgar, 7th MPAD Public Affairs)

Ismat Al-Shimmmary, a cultural advisor and translator, and Capt. Jason Kahne, company commander of the Forward Support Company F, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment go over the next day's route for the combat convoy operations lane at Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

Iraqi people "starts with just being polite - showing them they matter and they're people too, instead of just looking at them as everyone being an enemy," Cannon said. "We've got to use words like please and words you would use in everyday language with anyone without being pushy. Just being courteous and talking to them will help a lot."

Cultural awareness training dispels the stereotypes Soldiers may have acquired by letting them see a living, breathing Iraqi, who is not the enemy, but rather an ally.

One part of the cultural awareness training is language based. Al-Shimmmary encourages Soldiers to use what he calls "magic words," When Soldiers speak words like hello, please and thank you, in Arabic, they improve cultural understanding between Iraqis and Americans. Saying words, like excuse me, can change the mind of the Iraqi people, Al-Shimmmary said.

Al-Shimmmary shares information on the culture of Iraq with the Soldiers, said Kahne.

"The exposure to the culture, to know that certain things are taboo or things are different from our culture... (is) what will help us when we're actually in those scenarios in Iraq," Kahne said. "Being able to understand

where the people, who we are interacting with, are coming from and understanding, that the way we conduct ourselves may change the situation for the better or for the worse (is important). To understand that (aids the mission), so when we find ourselves in those situations we can do the right things."

Cultural awareness is one area where Soldiers can exercise sensitivity to Iraqis through respect of their customs and courtesies, Al-Shimmmary said.

Other common courtesies include not chewing gum during meetings, taking off sunglasses to let the listener see one's eyes and taking food when offered by a host, even if one does not intend to eat it, Al-Shimmmary said.

The task for the unit commander is to foster good relations toward coalition forces, without making any guarantees to the sheikh or mayor, Al-Shimmmary said.

"Having interpreters here is a huge benefit. Dealing with someone in a foreign language and making the deliberate speech, sentence and question structure to properly convey what you need across to someone of another language; actually using an interpreter helps with that," Kahne said.

Walk the Line

Troops Practice Close Quarters Combat

By Spc. L.B. Edgar
7th MPAD Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. - The wall stands firm even though you lean heavily against it. It holds your entire stack up. You feel your stack leader in front of you move. Without thinking you follow, your whole team moving as one into the room.

Each member scans their appropriate sector of fire for threats, ready to react to the unknown waiting inside.

Proficient stack teams practice tirelessly, so when the time comes to move as one, they are all on the same page, said Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Griffon, platoon sergeant, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. Stacks are all about being coordinated with the man in front of you, knowing when he is going to move and not, he said.

"We always stay on stacks," when entering a building, Griffon said.

To develop the necessary skills for missions requiring stack movements, 2nd Platoon executes a line drill. A piece of string spread straight across the ground serves as a line.

"The line represents the wall and the stack team patrols down the wall," Spc. Sly Blackbird, platoon member, 2nd Plt., Co. C, 2-5 Cav., said.

The drill simultaneously develops hand and eye coordination while using the M-4 rifle, which is critical for close quarters combat, Griffon said.

The line drill is also an exercise in muzzle awareness.



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th MPAD Public Affairs)

Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Griffon, center, platoon sergeant, Spc. Josh Kirby, platoon member, and Spc. William Lane, platoon member, all with 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment practice the line drill, moving as a stack along a simulated wall on Forward Operating Base Anvil, Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

The drill trains Soldiers not to point or pass a weapon over other Soldiers.

"It makes us stay alert and also stresses muzzle awareness," Blackbird said.

Muzzle awareness is important because of the extreme close quarters of clearing rooms, Griffon said.

Since the space in close quarters combat is so limited, it is essential that Soldiers know their sectors of fire. The line drill helps define sectors of fire.

"It teaches us what our sectors of fire are," Blackbird said.

The first Soldier in the stack scans the front because he is the first to be engaged. The second Soldier covers 45 degrees to the side of the first Soldier.

The third Soldier scans high and the fourth man scans to the rear of the stack team,

Griffon said.

"It makes us work as a team and makes sure we have team chemistry," Blackbird said. "I'm a lot more comfortable because we work as a team. It gives me more comfort, knowing I can trust the guy behind me and they can count on me."

The purpose of the line drill for 2nd Platoon is improved infantry skills, since they are all trained as tankers, not infantrymen. Since tankers were thrown into an infantry role, they are trying their best to speed up their infantry skills to become more effective on the battlefield in close quarter settings, Griffon said. Normally the tankers ride in an M1A1 or M1A2 Abrams tank, now 2nd Platoon's Soldiers ride in Humvees, not tanks and fire M-4s, not the Abrams' main canon, Blackbird said.

"We're normally tankers. This is a big transition for us, learning these dismounted tactics," Blackbird said.

Blackbird said.

Two-man stacks are used for small rooms and three and four-man stacks are used for larger rooms. No more than four Soldiers ever compose a stack. One-man stacks are only used in training, as a warm-up,



Preventing POV Accidents



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Fatigue,
Alcohol, and
non-use of
seatbelts are
killers.

Think...
Arrive alive!!



Texan Cultural Advisor Shows Cav Troops the Reality in Role-Playing

By Spc. Sheena Reyes
1st BCT Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. - Some 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division troopers occasionally thought of home while they trained at the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La., but they probably did not know that there was a little taste of Texas in Barzan Saeed. This proud Dallas Texan took his job as a cultural advisor and interpreter at JRTC seriously.

As those Ironhorse troops took JRTC by storm last May they came into contact with role-players just like Saeed added some authenticity to high speed training.

"As a role-player I can serve as an interpreter that aids units as they enter towns and villages," Saeed said. "I can also play a civilian that lives in a village, the mayor of a village or an insurgent."

When units took their convoys to villages, they could request an interpreter to communicate their mission to the village's mayor and people.

As villagers, these advisors could give up information to units based on how

they are treated during the scenario.

By playing insurgent's they made trouble for Soldiers by distracting them from their mission.

Nizar Salih from Atlanta, Ga., one of the 11 role-players, understands how important his job is to the Army's mission in Iraq.

"If you are going to a different country you have to understand the culture there or else the people there might misunderstand your intentions," Salih said. "I love my job because I know that my efforts are helping these Soldiers come back home safely."

Though the job had its challenges restricting the advisors to the training site 20 days at a time throughout each rotation, Saeed explained why he enjoyed making his contribution.

"You meet thousands of people and we've made a lot of friends not only in the other role players that work here but with the Soldiers that we're helping," Saeed said, while pulling a Soldier's business card out of his pocket which he received last rotation.

Saeed's dedication to helping U.S.

forces has spanned into years of hard work, a countless number of tests and months of instruction which is not uncommon among these advisors.

"In 1996 the U.S. brought hundreds of Kurdish and Arabic people to Guam and then to America so that they could serve as interpreters for the military," Saeed said. "I was one of those people and I had to take several language tests and English classes as well as undergo various medical exams and background checks."

Saeed was not accepted due to medical reasons and went back to Iraq but his efforts did not stop there.

During the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom Saeed decided to take a more direct approach.

"One day I went to the gate of one of the U.S. bases in Iraq and I asked if I could be an interpreter. The guard first asked me where I was from and I told him Dallas, TX," Saeed said with a laugh. "He asked me why I was so far away from home and I explained everything to him and soon I was an interpreter for the Air Force and the Army's Special Forces."

Despite some cultural differences, Saeed understands all too well the concept of sacrifice for one's country and the heartbreak of being far from home.

While he helps prepare Soldiers for an ordeal that will take them farther away from their families then they may ever be, he himself serves the U.S. just as far away from his own family.

"I have a wife and a daughter that I have not seen in six months," Saeed said. "They are in Iran with the rest of my family, but I remember when I first told my father about getting this job. He was so happy. He told me that I should work hard to help the Americans, because they had done so much for us and so many other families in Iraq. I will continue working here as long as they need me because I will never take having this freedom in America lightly."



Eyes and Ears of the Battlefield: The Cav Scout

By Pfc. William Hatton
7th MPAD Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - Just imagine sitting in the hot sun for hours, maybe even days. The wind is blowing hard in your face. All you can taste in your water and in your food is sand. Your mission is to pull reconnaissance in an unfamiliar land. You strain your mind trying to stay focused on the mission at hand, but the elements make it difficult.

After watching the enemy for days, the observations you sent forward save the lives of hundreds that pass through the terrain you scouted. Those lives equal a job well done for the cavalry scouts in the 4th Regiment, 9th Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

"Cav Scouts are the eyes and ears of the battlefield," said Pfc. Joshua D. Olson, a scout with Troop C, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment. "We have to see everything on the battlefield, and not to be seen at the same time."

He said to be able to do this, a Soldier needs to be focused, strong, and be able to hunt, hide, and track the enemy. "Cav Scouts are the closest thing to being a

superhero," said Olson.

"To be a Cav Scout you need to be flexible and ready for anything," said Pvt. Sherman W. Fort, Troop C, 4-9 Cav.

"A Cav Scout is a jack of all trades," said 1st Lt. Jesse G. Prince, Troop C, 4-9 Cav. "He has to have knowledge in so many areas to be able to complete the mission."

Fort said that he tries to keep his mind clear and focused on the mission at hand, adding that if he keeps his mind focused he is confident that everything will be alright and safe.

"One of the most important things is to pay attention," said Olson. "It's the little things that really make the difference."

"If you're not paying attention, it will get you in the end," he said.

Just as it's important to be aware of what's going on around you, it's important to prepare for the fight.

"One of the most important things about my job is making sure all my Soldiers are trained and ready to fight," Prince said. "This is so that everyone can come home safely."

Prince said even though some of the things Cav Scouts do is hard, one thing he's



Pfc. Brian Ellis, from Troop C, 4th Regiment, 9th Cavalry Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team searches for improvised explosives devices at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

learned is that all soldiers are trainable.

Teamwork is an important aspect of the job. "It's definitely a team effort out there," said Sgt. Shawn Vadenik, Company C, 4-9 Cav "If the driver isn't doing well, then I'm not going to be able to get a good firing position."

During missions it's important to rely on your battle buddies, Fort said. "It's not just me I have to worry about when I'm out here. My buddies are relying on me for help," Fort added.

"I really love the brotherhood and fellowship. Everyone just bonds together while we're out here," said Olson. "You really see it throughout the chain of command. You see it from the lowest private to the commander, and you just know we're all working together," Olson added.

The connection between Soldiers and leaders is important to the scouts. "I'll follow my leaders anywhere because I have a lot of faith in their leadership. They've taught me the things I need to know to survive," Fort said.

"Charley Company, 4-9 Cav is like a second family to me," Fort said.

So the next time you go out on a convoy, just know that somewhere in the training area, the cavalry scouts of 4-9 Cav might be watching you.



(Photos by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th MPAD Public Affairs)

Spc. Steven Martinson, Troop C, 4th Regiment, 9th Cavalry Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team pulls security for his team during a raid on a mock town at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Spartan MPs Take Out Target During Raid

By Staff Sgt. Kap Kim
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - Deprived of sleep, hungry and dirty from a previous mission, the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division's military policemen showed little restraint as they entered their last mission in the town of Ain Ghar in a room-to-room search for a high-value target, June 9.

The MP platoon took a team of approximately 50 soldiers and about 10 vehicles into the small, simulated town. As the teams stormed into the National Training Center's mock town to find insurgent leader Mohammad Rasheed and his security team, the radio traffic told the story of a swift operation of door-kicking and quick shooting.

The road leading into the town was rough and was sprinkled with grapefruit-sized stones. In a plan laid out by the platoon

leader, 2nd Lt. Erin Brantley, the vehicles slowly crept up to the first set of buildings. Two gun trucks, armed with larger caliber machine guns, provided cover for the two dismounted, room-clearing teams. The two separate teams took on a bounding over-watch-type of clearing. On either side of the town, a few other teams supplied support with their gun trucks.

The teams cleared all the buildings in town until they entered the room with Rasheed, a dummy-target. A few shots to his chest ended his life. Afterward, the MPs left the town in the same fashion as they entered, and with no friendly casualties.

In their first after-action review, Capt. Jason Marquiss, the senior MP trainer, told the MPs that they were using Special Reaction Team tactics during their mission, and that maybe they should use urban



Sgt. Ray Payne (second from the left) and Spc. Kristy Schiavonne (third) scan the room as their military police team from the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, prepares to leave the building. The MPs were going through training June 9, at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.

operations tactics learned from current Iraqi theater operations.

"Approximately 80 to 90 percent of their Soldiers have completed Special Reactions Team training. So we are trying to create the environment for them to continue to practice

those skills as an MP platoon and build unit cohesion," he said. "What we are experiencing is their SRT training is not completely mirroring up with what we would consider a standard urban operation event. So our observations are focusing more on the differences in their specialized training and a standard urban operation training event."

Having been an MP company commander during Operation Iraqi Freedom II, Marquiss added some of his personal deployment experience to the MPs.

"Our job, here at the NTC, is to set the conditions in the scenario and to meet the mission objectives," Marquiss said, "We do that with doctrine, TTPs along with deployment experience."

After their first iteration's after-action review, the MPs regrouped and rehearsed a new plan which incorporated Marquiss' input. Their new plan proved to be more efficient and met their mission objective of identifying their target and



(Photos by Staff Sgt. Kap Kim, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

A military police team from the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, prepares to rush into a building during training at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., June 9.

Soldiers Take Part in Boxing Challenge

By Spc. Robert Yde
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif - After wrapping up their month-long exercise at the National Training Center, the Fort Irwin's Boxing Challenge June 13 gave 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers a chance to unwind while they waited for their return flights to Fort Hood.

"It's a good way to end the rotation," said Lt. Col. Patrick Matlock, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment commander, as he watched while 11 of his Soldiers jumped into the ring.

Organized by Fort Irwin's Morale, Welfare and Recreation office, the boxing challenge showcased ten, three-round fights and drew a large audience, as Soldiers filled the bleachers to watch their fellow Soldiers slug it out.

"I really like boxing, so its fun to see Soldiers in the ring," said Pfc. Lorenzo Byrd, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic with 4-9 Cav.

Evidently, Byrd was not the only person who liked boxing, as there were few empty seats left in the fitness center.

"Look up there," said Command Sgt. Major James Daniels, 4-9 Cav's top non-commissioned officer, pointing to the crowd, "The majority of our troops are here to support them."

The first match of the night featured Pfc. Tyler Burdette and Pfc. Jordan Wilmes, both from Troop C, 4-9 Cav.

"It just sounded fun," said Burdette, a Humvee gunner, explaining why he chose to fight.

Burdette said the fight was a chance to release a little aggression, and he just happened to be fighting his friend Wilmes, also a Humvee gunner, because the boxers were matched up by weight.

Wilmes was declared the winner of the first bout, but according to Daniels, all of the participants were winners.

"We had a lot of winners and really no losers, because the guys gave their heart and their all-and-all," Daniels said.

Daniels added that Troop C. is the most aggressive unit in the brigade, and



(Photo by Spc. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Pvt. Nicholas Wansten, (right) a cavalry scout with 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team is the recipient of a fierce blow to the face during Fort Irwin's Boxing Challenge June 13. The event featured ten bouts, and helped "Black Jack" Soldiers, who both participated and attended, unwind before returning to Fort Hood from their month-long National Training Center rotation.

that his Soldiers were very eager to participate in the fights.

"Our guys were motivated when they heard about the boxing match," Daniels explained. "They all wanted to get in it."

Staff Sgt. Damien Crawford, a cavalry scout with Troop C, 4-9 Cav. agreed with Daniels assessment.

"This is just how we are," Crawford said. "We're scouts, we love to do hooah stuff and here we are."

For Crawford, who began boxing in Kuwait in 1998, the event offered him a chance to do what he loves.

"I stepped in the ring and fell in love with it," the Orlando, Fla. native said. "Once I returned to Fort Hood, I tried out for the boxing team and made it, and it's been a love of mine ever since."

At one time, Crawford harbored ambitions of turning his hobby into a career, even spending a year training at a pro-camp.

Although his career never material-

ized, his love of the sport has not diminished.

"A lot of guys have never done it before and I encouraged them to give it a try," Crawford said, "It's a wonderful sport."

While Crawford had little difficulty with his opponent, other Soldiers were not so fortunate.

"I got pummeled," Pvt. Nicholas Wansten said after his match.

Wansten, another scout, was on the losing end of what was the night's bloodiest fight.

"I think maybe he had a little more experience," Wansten said. "I don't know - I don't have much."

And while the outcome of the fight was not what he had hoped for, Wansten said he had fun, and was especially pleased with the turnout.

"Sport events help bring the community together and make Soldiers more motivated," Wansten said.

Training Inspires Troops to Mass Reenlist

By Spc. Robert Yde
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - After nearly a month of battling heat, fatigue and opposing forces at the National Training Center, 14 Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division took part in a mass reenlistment ceremony June 11, officiated by "Black Jack" commander Col. Bryan Roberts.

"It's a great day," Roberts told his Soldiers. "The only thing that could have made it better was if your families could have been here."

"We appreciate the opportunity to do this with you as your second family," he added.

The mass reenlistment ceremony was part of a package of reenlistment incentives offered by the brigade's retention office. Soldiers were also given a choice between taking a day-trip to Las Vegas or receiving a seat on the first flight back to Fort Hood.

The idea for the incentives package was borrowed from the 25th Infantry Division, which was rotating out of the NTC when the "Black Jack" Brigade arrived, and had success with a similar package.

"It helps the command make its mission and gives something back to the Soldiers," explained Master Sgt. Randy Kuhnau, the brigade's senior career counselor.

While the Soldiers acknowledged that they appreciate the incentives, each of them had their own reasons for reenlisting.

"My brother kind of pushed me to reenlist," said Pfc. Michael Zimmerman, a combat engineer with Company E, 1st Battalion, 5th



(Photo by Spc. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Col. Bryan Roberts, commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, states the oath of reenlistment to fourteen 2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., June 11.

Cavalry Regiment.

The Martinez, Calif. native added, "He says it's good for me to spend a couple more years in the Army; see what I can do - I might enjoy it and stay."

For other Soldiers, like

Spc. Derek Tucker, a track vehicle mechanic with Co. E, 1-5 Cav., family obligations were the main motivation to reenlist.

Tucker, who is originally from Gary, Ind., and has two

children and a monthly mortgage, said that staying in the Army was in his family's best interest. Some Soldiers just like the Army lifestyle.

"I enjoy what I do," explained Sgt. Jermaine Wisdom, the unit supply sergeant for Co. E, 1-5 Cav. "I enjoy the military."

The native of Opelika, Ala. has spent 12 years in the military - six in the Army and six in the Marine Corps, and said that he is "going to stick with it until the end."

A Soldier's decision to reenlist is not only a reflection of his beliefs, but also a reflection of his respective unit and its leadership, according to Roberts.

"What its saying is that the unit is doing the right thing," Roberts said. "That it's doing the right thing for you and for your family and that you want to stay a part of it. It's a great day for the Army."



(Photo by Spc. Robert Yde, 2nd Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs)

Welcome Home on Daddy's Day

Family, friends and even pets welcome home Soldiers with the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team on Father's Day, June 18, after a month-long deployment to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Don't Forget, Safety First**Safe Brigade Recognized by NTC**

**By Spc. Alexis Harrison
2nd BCT Public Affairs**

After a month-long stay in the dusty desert of Fort Irwin, Calif., the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division arrived home to high praises of its performance.

Recently, the "Black Jack" Brigade was awarded high honors for its successful tour at the National Training Center. The brigade's rotation through NTC was not only a huge success; it has also been called the safest rotation in the last decade.

"The Operations Group Safety Manager at Ft. Irwin said it was the safest rotation through NTC he'd seen in 10 years," said Wendell Moore, the 2nd BCT safety manager. "When leaders actively engage in safety and risk management, accidents don't happen. Without leadership involvement, the outcome of this rotation could've been very different."

But it wasn't.

The brigade suffered a below-average amount of minor injuries, and almost no serious injuries, but most importantly, no lives were lost during any of the operations before, during and after the rotation through NTC.

"Whether they were killing the bad guys or uploading trains, our guys were motivated to do the right thing," said Maj. Lance Moore, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment's executive officer.

The 1-8 Cav. "Mustangs" were tasked with the uploading and downloading all of the brigade's equipment at the

Marine Corps Logistic Base's Yermo Annex in Barstow, Calif.

Maj. Moore said the operations were completed with almost 100% accuracy and safety, and the 1-8 Cav. "Mustangs" were incredibly proud of the daunting task they had accomplished.

During operations, everyone from the brigade commander down to the junior-enlisted Soldiers was under the close watch of observer/controllers.

The OC's looked at things like operations during convoy movements, performance on improvised explosive device training lanes, and over-all performance. They gauged performance by looking at the standards expected and how well the Soldiers perform according to those standards.

Mr. Moore said the OC's praised the brigade's convoy



(Photos by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

With a little civilian supervision, a Soldier from the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team guides a massive M-1 Abrams tank onto a railcar headed for the National Training Center at Fort. Irwin, Calif. The "Black Jack" Brigade was given a safety award for its operations during the safest NTC rotation in the last decade.

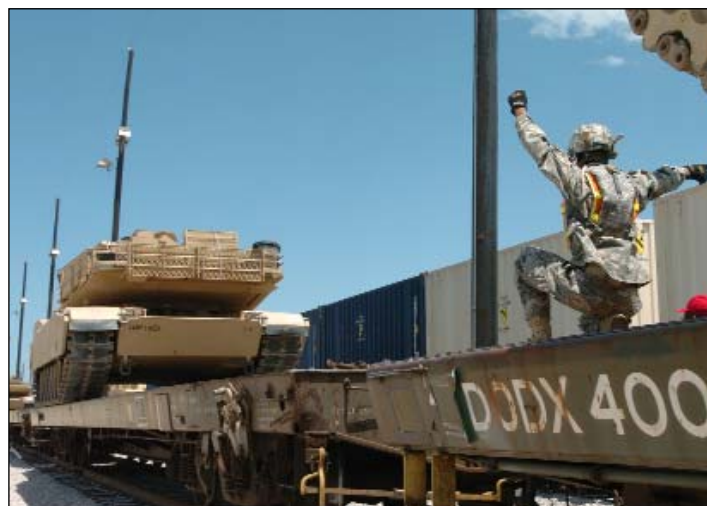
briefs, good use of risk assessments and range operations. They saw how well the Soldiers were focused and were very impressed.

"The Observer Controllers or OC's gave lots of compliments on our performance," said Mr. Moore. "They could see how well focused this group of Soldiers was."

Keeping Soldiers focused is one of the keys to success, according to Mr. Moore.

"This training develops a positive habit transfer for when we do the real thing," Mr. Moore said. "Things like buckling your seat belt, wearing your flak vest, carrying your weapon properly are all part of knowing the standard. It's about keeping the Soldiers' heads in the game."

With the Department of Defense announcing "Black Jack's" upcoming deployment overseas Maj. Moore said that success in training operations can translate into confidence when the brigade goes to do the real thing later this year.



A Soldier from the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team finishes securing an M-1 Abrams tank to a railcar headed for the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, Calif. The "Black Jack" Brigade was given a safety award for its operations during its NTC rotation.

Volunteers Self-Sacrifice Rewarded by the Division

By Spc. Robert Yde
2nd BCT Public Affairs

"Her service is invaluable to the families of this company," said Capt. David Price, explaining the role that Simone DePrater, his company's Family Readiness Group Leader has played.

"She does great work," added Price, commander of Company B, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. "She gives up a whole lot of her time for the company."

For all of the time and effort that she has dedicated to Company B's FRG, DePrater was recognized at the First Team's monthly Distinguished Service and Welcome ceremony, which was held on the division parade field June 27.

One Soldier or family member from each of the division's battalions received a plaque recognizing them as that battalion's volunteer of the month.

Representing the "Black Jack" Brigade along with Deprater were Capt. John Gilliam from 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, Dawn Golden from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, Jennifer Gaspard from 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artilley, Becci Rindahl from 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment and Samantha Roberts from the 15th Brigade Support Battalion.

Like DePrater, most of volunteers who were recognized are involved in their spouses' unit FRG.

Golden, the FRG leader for Company A, 1-8 Cav., organized a successful fundraiser during the brigade's final days of preparation for its National Training Center rotation.

While "Black Jack" Soldiers spent days prepping and loading their vehicles and equipment at Fort Hood's railhead, Golden and other members of Company A's FRG were there to sell cold drinks and food.

Events such as this are what the FRGs are all about, according to Golden.

"We just want to take care of our Soldiers and their families," she said.

With the brigade recently receiving deployment orders for later this year, taking care of Soldiers' families will be more



(Photos by Spc. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Samantha Roberts shakes hands with the 1st Cavalry Division's deputy commanding general for maneuver, Brig. Gen. John Campbell, after being presented with a plaque recognizing her as volunteer of the month for 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team. Roberts, the FRG leader for Co. A., was just one of several Black Jack Brigade volunteers recognized during the division's monthly award ceremony on Cooper Field.

important than ever.

Over the course of the next year, the role of FRG's are going to be critical, said Roberts, FRG leader for Company A., 15th BSB.

Roberts said she feels well qualified to act as the FRG leader having already been through two deployments to Iraq.

"I've been through it and know what to expect," explained Roberts. "Right now, one of the main focuses will be to make sure everyone is legally squared away at home, so there are no problems while they're [the Soldiers] over there."

Both Golden and Roberts acknowledged that "Black Jack" Soldiers can focus their attention on the mission before them, assured that their families are being taken care of.

"I don't do this for awards," Golden said. "I do it because I care about these families."



Dawn Golden, the Family Readiness Group leader for Company A, 1-8 Cav., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, poses with the 1st Cavalry Division's deputy commanding general for maneuver, Brig. Gen. John Campbell.

Mock Terrorist Stomped by Troops

**By Pvt. Tiffany Mercer
7th MPAD Public Affairs**

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - The mission: capture or kill a terrorist leader known for his foul treatment of the local residents and planting improvised explosive devices against coalition forces. His two bodyguards should be with him and are also wanted.

The plan is to move in and accomplish the objective with as little disruption to the

local population as possible. During their training at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., the Soldiers with Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, were given this situation May 30 as a way to prepare them for the realities of Iraq.

Battery A convoyed out to a location in the middle of the Mojave Desert and reviewed their plan briefing before enter-

ing the town. While carrying out their mission, the troops encountered many different scenarios. A cast of "Iraqi" citizens were set up in the town to add to the realism. At times they were cooperative, while other times they became hostile.

"We try to train them everyday to think, not just to react," said 1st Lt. Daniel Gomez, the battery's executive officer. "And that's just what they did."

"When they were fired upon, they returned fire; when they were close to a civilian that was unarmed, they responded in the right way," Gomez said. "They used escalation of force properly."

Feeling confident about the job and personal reactions is a key factor to completing the mission.

"I personally think I reacted well, because I had no hesitation," said Pvt. Joseph A. Riqueros, a Soldier with 1st Platoon, Battery A, 3-82 FA.

"All the training we did leading up to this just adds on, it's just a build up so that when you finally get to where you're going to be, which is over there (Iraq), you know exactly what you're doing to a tee," said Riqueros.

Gomez said the scenarios at NTC helped the troops better understand what might happen while down range. He said having Arabic interpreters and Iraqi citizens in a town makes the training more realistic. "It's the best training I've ever received," Gomez added.



(Photo by Pvt. Tiffany Mercer, 7th MPAD Public Affairs)

Two Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, litter-carry away an injured ally of the Iraqi Army during lane training at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Hand-Launched UAV Keeps Soldiers Informed

**By Spc. Beatrice
Freeman-Florescu
7th MPAD Public Affairs**

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - A group of 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers participated in training and integration for the Raven Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle while deployed to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

The Raven SUAV is a hand-launched reconnaissance

and surveillance tool, transmitting live airborne video images, compass headings, and location information to a ground control unit and remote video terminal for remote reconnaissance and surveillance, force protection, convoy security, target acquisition, and battle damage assessment, according to its operator's manual.

Pfc. Edward Bielefeldt, a field exercise mission commander with Headquarters

Troop, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team said the Raven's capabilities enable operators to navigate, search for targets, recognize terrain, and record information for analysis.

Joe O'Dell, a senior training and development specialist with Raytheon, said the systems are used to provide information to battalion-level units. Down range their mission is to find the "bad guys" without

putting anybody in harms way.

The Raven's silent approach on the enemy allows for surveillance without the enemy's knowledge, explained Pfc. John Hamill, Company C, 4-9 Cav who launched and piloted a Raven system during the flight part of the training.

Philip Owen, a UAV Integration Trainer with Raytheon, said the Raven systems in Iraq have proven to be extremely effective in saving lives.

Vehicle Maintainers Break Record at NTC

By Pfc. William Hatton
7th MPAD Public Affairs

FORT IRWIN, Calif. - Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division broke the "Regen" Day Five record while training at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., in June.

The "Regen" Day Five is a record of time it takes to return 500 or less vehicles drawn from the NTC.

"Soldiers drew vehicles from rail operations, used them during training and then returned the vehicles to rail operations within the five day timeframe," said Maj. Dale Farrand, executive officer, 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT.

"Black Jack" Soldiers took out 321 vehicles from the NTC and returned 99.38 percent of the vehicles in the five days designated, Farrand said.

"Soldiers worked around the clock preparing the vehicles for various inspec-



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th MPAD Public Affairs)

Soldiers and leaders from the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team responsible for setting the Regen Day Five record at the National Training Center with a turn-in percentage of 99.38 percent.

tions," said 1st Lt. Ebony Thomas, 15th BSB.

"Each vehicle had to be thoroughly inspected and sent out on a road test before giving a final approval to be turned in. If anything was found wrong with a vehicle, they were sent to the mechanics to repair them," Thomas said.

One of the steps in the process of turning in the vehicles was returning the training equipment used during the exercise.

"The second we got back from training, our Soldiers went straight to the M.I.L.E.S., Multiple Intergraded Laser Engagement System, return," Thomas said.

"For as much that needed to be done and the amount of hard work that went into it all, things went pretty smooth during the turn in," Thomas said.

"The record was broken because of the hard work soldiers put in during the exercise, great teamwork and dedicated leadership during the return," Farrand said.

The record was held previously by 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cav Div., and was set in March of 2003. The previous record was 99.03 percent.

"One of the reasons the vehicles were returned so well was because of the great maintenance the soldiers kept on all the vehicles while at the NTC," said Lt. Col. Jeffery Vieira, commander, 15th BSB.

Military Police Take Out High Value Insurgents in Raid

Raid

From Page 10

killing him.

"In the first time around, it wasn't a success - it was a crawl phase," Sgt. LaVan Dawson, an MP team leader said. "As we progressed in the second and third iteration, we stepped it up. In the third iteration, I can honestly say that I was impressed."

Dawson said he uses his deployment experience to help his Soldiers better understand the importance of missions like this one.

"I tell them my experiences, tell them what to expect and let them know it's all right to mess up here because practice makes perfect," he said. "What you do here is what you'll do down range. So, as long as you continue to put in a good effort - 110



(By Staff Sgt. Kap Kim, 2BCT Public Affairs)

A military police team from the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, keeps their eyes open for the enemy as they leave town. The MPs were training at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., June 9.

percent, they'll succeed."

Overall, Dawson said the training event at the NTC was crucial to their platoon since this is one of the first times they have all been together. Back at Fort Hood they are split up between

different missions.

According to Brantley, their mission of entering buildings can be tough for many of their Soldiers because of situations where they have to quickly determine the difference of combatants and noncombatants.

"Sometimes, when we enter homes in Iraq, everyone is calm and respectful to us and very cooperative, and sometime they are not," she said. "So, this training helps us identify civilians, those who are caught up in the mix and don't know really what is going on, and we can train on how to deal with those as well as encountering someone who is a combatant - how to deal with them - how to separate who is civilian and who is a combatant and how to engage."

According to Brantley, their MPs have recently been identified to serve as the urban strike

force. She said that that type of mission will require her MPs to be both mentally and physically conditioned to prepare for that task.

She said training at the NTC was really important and that most of all, it went really well. Yet, she added, there are some things they will work on to improve.

"Of course, there are things we need to do to improve, but other than that, there was good communications, good control within the squad leaders," Brantley said.

As Brantley and her Soldiers prepare to depart from the NTC, they will take the many lessons learned over the past two weeks and continue to build upon them at Fort Hood.

"I know that I learned a lot," Dawson added. "So I know my Soldiers learned a lot."



(Photos by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

Spc. Elijah Majak, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, (center) shows his certificate of naturalization to Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Felt, 3rd BCT's top NCO, (left) and Col. David Sutherland, the brigade's commander, after his naturalization ceremony June 23.

(Left) Spc. Elijah Majak, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, prepares to become an American citizen in a ceremony at Howze Theater, June 23. Majak was born in Sudan and arrived in America in June 2001.

Troop Now Naturalized American

**By Pfc. Ben Fox
3rd BCT Public Affairs**

A young man's dream came true when he learned he would leave his war-torn nation to live in the United States in June 2001. Four years later, a second dream of his came true when he was accepted into the United States Army.

Spc. Elijah Majak, a linguist in Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division achieved yet another goal when he was naturalized along with 31 of his peers in a ceremony at Howze Theater on Fort Hood, June 23.

Majak was born in Sudan and raised in the middle of a religious war that has consumed the country for decades, he said.

"When we were very young we knew our enemy was coming to kill us," he said.

As he was growing up, Majak said he saw America through the media and learned about it in school, which ignited his dream to some day live in the United States. Even though Majak desired to leave Sudan, his dream seemed unattainable.

"It looked impossible because you see the ocean over there. It's a deep ocean to

cross and come here," he said. "Being in America is like a dream to people in other worlds."

Majak was able to attain his dream when a "good Samaritan" from America talked to Sudan's government in 1999 and was granted permission to fly him and 4 other Sudan citizens to America, he said, making them a part of a group of refugees known as the "Lost Boys of Sudan."

Majak said he didn't believe he was actually leaving until he saw the airplane that would take him away. This was the end of almost two years of frustration and endless paperwork.

Finally, Majak made it to America.

When Majak arrived in Minnesota, he was given food stamps, a little money and papers from the government stating he was legal to work in the United States.

Immediately, the five "Lost Boys" started working to pay rent for the apartment they were sharing. Majak began to attend a church and became involved in volunteer work, such as teaching children about the destructive power of tobacco and drugs.

Despite his great new life, Majak still dreamed of more. He wanted to be a Soldier. His father had been a Soldier in Sudan's

army and died in combat, he said.

He wanted to join the United States Army for the sense of family and wanted to do his part in serving the new nation he had come to love, he said. At the time, though, the Army would not accept him because he did not have a green card, said Majak.

However, since the need for linguists increased, the Army created a new program four years later that enabled Majak to join the armed forces, he said.

After joining the Army, Majak started the process to become a citizen, which took him almost seven months.

He wanted to be naturalized because even though he was part of the Army community, he didn't feel entirely part of the family, he said. He was a foreigner serving in a foreign armed force. Many people would ask him why he served in the American Army even though he was not a citizen, he said. He told them he wanted to help the country that helped him so much. After his naturalization ceremony, he said he felt part of not just the Army family, but the American family as well, since he can now obtain the rights other citizens share.

"Being an American is like a dream," Majak said.

New Company Trains for Detainee Ops

By Sgt. Paula Taylor
4th BCT Public Affairs

FORT BLISS, Texas - Voices could be heard throughout the camp from atop the guard tower like whispers in church.

When simulated mortar rounds began exploding all around them, that whisper turned into a yell.

In an instant, the Soldiers began moving into position.

Poised high above the compound, the tower guard grabbed his weapon and took cover.

The loud-speaker crackled, and the prison yard was locked down as the troops from Company C, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, trained in proper procedures of detainee operations during their mission rehearsal exercise at McGregor Range June 24.

"The mission of (Company C) is the operation of a secure facility on the battlefield," said Capt. Anthony Dean, commander of Company C. "(The 4th BCT commander) saw a need for a dedicated force for detainee operations in theatre and created (Company C) to handle that mission," Dean explained.

In order to create the new company, Dean said each battalion in the 4th BCT was tasked to provide a certain number of troops in a specific rank structure.

"We have taken various [military occupational specialties] throughout the battalions and are teaching them detainee operations," Dean said.

The mock prison detainee camp at McGregor Range, complete with razor wire and guard towers, is operated primarily by Soldiers of the 91st Division, Dean said.

"The Soldiers here are a contingent that was certified to teach detainee operations through the U.S. Army Military Police School," Dean said. "USAMPS offered a train the trainer course in response to the abuse allegations from Abu Ghraib prison."

Several members of the U.S. Army Reserves' 647th Area Support Group and the 1st Brigade, 85th Division were also on hand to assist the 91st Division with train-



(Photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4th BCT Public Affairs)

Team members of Company C, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, handcuff an unruly detainee in the special housing unit during a forced cell move at a mock prison detainee facility at McGregor Range at Fort Bliss, Texas, June 12. The cell move is used as a last resort when a detainee is acting aggressively and cannot be controlled using any lesser means of force. The company was created specifically for detainee operations.

ing Company C.

The training included 29 classes, a two-day situational training exercise and a mission rehearsal exercise, said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Kalabsa, operations sergeant, 1st Brigade, 85th Training Support Division.

The purpose of the training was to teach Soldiers everything they would need to know about operating a secure facility from the time the detainee enters the compound to day-to-day operations, Kalabsa explained.

Some of the classes and hands-on training the troops learned were legal principles, communication techniques, accountability procedures, unarmed self defense, non-lethal weapons, report writing, restraint procedures and contraband control procedures, Kalabsa said.

"It's been a shock," said Pfc. Michael Crowe, Bradley fighting vehicle system maintainer. "I had a different picture of what it would be like. There are very thor-

ough procedures to follow for every type of situation."

Sgt. John Dorer, petroleum supply specialist said he liked the hand-to-hand combat training the most.

"We learned how to take down prisoners with the minimal amount of force needed to avoid injury to us and the detainees," Dorer said. "We also learned how to counter attacks. It was an eye-opener. The training is about giving confidence and knowledge on how to do the job properly."

He was not the only one to enjoy the training.

"I like it a lot," said Crowe. "The training has been hands-on and helpful. I have learned a ton. Having a full mock prison helps a lot."

With four years experience as a correctional officer, and later, a correctional sergeant for the state of Alabama prior to coming back on active duty, Dean felt confident his troops would be ready to handle their mission professionally and properly.

1-9 Cav First to Fire at Doña Ana

By Sgt. Paula Taylor
4th BCT Public Affairs

FORT BLISS, Texas - A blast echoed against the mountain range as Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, fired mortar rounds at Doña Ana Range June 1.

The goal of the mortar range was to train until the process becomes second nature to the crew members so they can perform under pressure.

"The 1-9 CAV is the first to live-fire mortar rounds here in about 15 years," said Sgt. 1st Class Mike Martinez, mortar platoon sergeant, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment.

"We're field testing our new equipment," Martinez said. "That way, if anything goes wrong, we can work on it before we get to the National Training Center.

"We're getting these new crews working with the forward observers for the first



(Photos by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4th BCT Public Affairs)

Pvt. Zachary Tucker, indirect fire infantryman assistant gunner, drops the 120-mm mortar round into the smooth-bore barrel during new systems training at Doña Ana Range.

time," he added.

As a forward observer watched the enemy and called for fire, his mortar crew

received the call then processed the call by going through a series of drills to set up their gun.

"The gunner uses a display to match up the numbers, and says to the squad leader, 'gun up,' and then the command to fire is given," he said.

Martinez said before the crew could go to the range, they had to take a gunners exam to identify the best gunners.

"The squad leader administers the test and based on the results, he will identify who is the strongest, who is the weakest and who we need to work with," he said. "Once they get out here, they have to show us that everything they learned from the gunner's exam they can apply to real life."

"A lot of these guys are straight out of basic training

and [advanced individual training] so they didn't have an opportunity to do a live-fire exercise," said Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm McKinney, mortar section leader, Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment. "This is definitely going to enhance their skills and gain them confidence in performing their wartime mission."

McKinney said that by the end of their training period, the platoon sergeants were confident their crews will be able to successfully accomplish each type of mission they could be called to support and will be an important asset to the squadron.

"Since they've been practicing, they will be confident in their ability to do their mission and process a call for fire," he said.



Pvt. Zachary Tucker and Spc. Robert Hurtado take cover after loading a mortar round into the barrel before the round is fired. The mortar crew uses a series of commands to communicate during the loading and firing process to avoid dangerous accidents.

New Shadow Sweepes the New Mexico Desert

By Sgt. Paula Taylor
4th BCT Public Affairs

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, N.M. - The engines wound and kicked up a storm of dust. Over the noise through the headset, the crew chief heard the command, "Five, four, three, two, one, LAUNCH, LAUNCH, LAUNCH." He pushed the button and watched as his unmanned aerial vehicle was catapulted into the air at nine gravitational forces. In less than a minute, his aircraft disappeared over the mountain range.

This flight was one of several the UAV Platoon, Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, launched during new systems training May 18 thru June 16.

The TUAV, a Shadow 200, is a light-weight, rapidly deployable, reconnaissance system designed to give commander's a day and night, multi-sensor collection system, said Warrant Officer Randall Wise, UAV technician, new systems integration



(Photos by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4th BCT Public Affairs)

Sgt. Luis Cortese pushes the tactical unmanned aerial vehical back to the maintenance area after the landing for a post-flight inspection while his instructor observes his procedures during new systems training on May 18.

and testing office, Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

"We're the eyes over the battlefield," said Spc. Jacob Vaughn, UAV operator. "If we have a group Soldiers in danger, we can recon the area faster, more effectively than troops on the ground. We can see over hills and around buildings - things that Soldiers on the ground would have to put themselves in danger in order to effectively complete their mission."

Some of the system components are the Shadow 200 TUAV and payload, a ground control station, a tactical automated landing system, a launcher, arresting gear, and a remote video terminal. At just over 11 feet long with nearly a 13-foot wingspan, the Shadow 200 carries the POP 200 payload, its main surveillance and reconnaissance system.

The person responsible for operating the POP 200 is the mission payload operator. The MPO sits inside a ground control station with the pilot to let him know whether to slow down, speed up or climb to a higher altitude, explained 2nd Lt. Malukah Johnson, TUAV platoon leader.

Inside the ground control station the pilot and MPO work together to keep each other informed about what's going on with the UAV.

Before the Shadow 200 can launch, several preflight checks have to be completed by the crew chief, maintainers and

the operator-pilot.

"We go through preflight checks and once we've completed our portion, the operators come out to the launcher and do their checks on the bird," McConaughy said.

Once the aircraft takes flight, the air vehicle operator/pilot steers the plane to its targets.

"We can tap into the tactical operations center and create real-time video for battle captains so they can see what's going on the battlefield," Vaughn said. "We can call for fire and work with any kind of air support whether it is Air Force F-16s, bombers or helicopters."

When the Shadow 200 is ready to land and the mission is complete, the system uses a tactical automated landing system to land the plane.

"We joke that the TALS is the best pilot we have," laughed Johnson. "It's fool-proof and has never crashed."

By the day's end, the UAV Platoon had successfully launched and landed five birds, each on a different training mission. This was quite an impressive feat, Johnson said, because of their lack of experience with UAVs.

"This is something the company should be proud of and especially these Soldiers because this isn't something they've been doing their whole Army careers," Johnson said.



Pfc. Kevin Mihelich, military intelligence systems maintainer and integrator, takes a fuel sample from the Shadow200, unmanned aerial vehicle, as part of the preventive maintenance checks that are required for each aircraft. The checks are conducted daily and between flights before the plane can be flown.



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th MPAD Public Affairs)

Sgt. Travis Zielinski, a crew chief with 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, checks the rear blades of a helicopter for any defect such as dents, cracks or scratches. The flight crew is responsible for ensuring that every part of every aircraft is in working order each day.

Crew Chiefs Keep Birds in the Sky

**By Pfc. William Hatton
7th MPAD Public Affairs**

In the Army, many significant jobs involve vital skills towards achieving success during missions. One such job is that of crew chief for Apache and Blackhawk helicopters.

For crew chiefs in the 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, many problems can arise, like dealing with mechanical deficiencies, poor communication, or having everyone on the same page.

When recognizing the value of crew chiefs, it is helpful to understand what helicopters are used for. Sgt. Travis Zielinski, Company B, 4-227 Cav, said helicopters are used for everything from supportive fire to supply runs.

"As far as logistics go, a helicopter goes a whole lot faster than a truck," Zielinski said. Helicopters can be used in great capacity when shipping supplies from one place to another, he added.

"Getting a bird in the air can be very complex. There are so many little things that

need to be checked and rechecked that you never know what can go wrong," said Sgt. Isidro Alanso, Company B, 4-227th ATK.

Zielinski said most of what a crew chiefs job consists of is preparing a helicopter for flight.

"We are responsible for checking the helicopter from front to back," he said. "Crew chiefs also make sure the bolts are tight, check the blades for chips or dents, and make sure the different wires and fuel lines are intact," Zielinski added.

"One of the biggest problems we face is having everyone involved on the same page. If one person is off it becomes a problem," Zielinski said. "When communication is down or when we receive operation orders late, things can get a little hectic. It's when everyone is working together that we run a lot more smoothly."

"You can't just go to your pilot and tell him you've checked something when you never did. His life is in your hands, and if you aren't working hard at inspecting or any other preflight check, then bad things could happen," Alanso said.

"One of the best parts of my job is

being able to come across new problems and be able to learn from them. Whether it's from getting help from more experienced Soldiers, or just working through and finding the solution on my own, I love just being able to overcome," Zielinski said.

"One of the greatest things I have ever been apart of was when my unit was able to provide support for an MP unit that was under attack during a convoy," Alanso said. "We worked quickly to get the birds in the air, and because of it they were able to help."

"The MPs we helped later came and found us and thanked us for what we did. When they thanked us it really hit me that we were doing something important," Alanso said. "It was a really great feeling."

When different problems arise like, mechanical deficiencies, poor communication, or when chaos breaks loose, the crew chiefs of 4-227th ATK work hard and overcome to put helicopters in the air.

"When everything goes well and a helicopter is in the air, it's good to know that we've accomplished something," Alanso said.

First Pitch for Seasoned Cav NCO

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Texas - The first pitch was high and outside, but luckily for the Major League Baseball team, the Texas Rangers, the current pitcher wouldn't throw anymore for the duration of the game.

Sgt. Daniel F. Feldman, a radio transmission specialist for Company C, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, was picked to throw the first pitch of the game between the Chicago White Sox and the Texas Rangers on the Army's birthday, June 14.

Feldman, picked to throw the first pitch on account of his performance in the 1st ACB Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter Board, was able to get the ball to the plate with no embarrassments.

Also, before the game started, the Army's elite parachute team, The Black Knights, jumped into the stadium and 30 recruits cited the Oath of Enlistment, said Feldman.

"It was a great way to celebrate the Army's birthday by throwing the first pitch of a Rangers game here in the great state of Texas," said Feldman.

Becoming NCO of the quarter was not something that Feldman woke up the day of and decided to do. He had to win two other boards before he was considered eligible for the brigade level board: the battalion NCO of the month and quarter boards, said Feldman.

The brigade board was not as stressful as Feldman had imagined because his competition didn't make it past the uniform inspection, said Feldman.

"Although the sergeants



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Sgt. Daniel Feldman from Company C, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, receives his ball back, signed, after throwing the first pitch at the Texas Rangers game June 14.

major already knew I won, they still gave me a hard time. They had me in there for 45 minutes," said Feldman.

"At the brigade level, [Command Sgt. Maj. Donald] Sanders is more technical. He wants you to actually get into the [technical manuals] and [field manuals] and not just study from the study guides. He wants you to know AR 670-1 like the back of your hand," Feldman said.

After winning Brigade NCO of the Quarter, Feldman tried his luck in the Fort Hood NCO of the Quarter Board. He

had some tough competition though and ended up not winning, but still gained some valuable experience from it, said Feldman.

Feldman knows that boards can be intimidating.

"I know a lot of soldiers and NCOs are kind of timid and don't really want to go to the board - it's too much effort and work, but it pays off dividends," said Feldman.

Although winning the boards and getting to throw that first pitch are both accomplishments to be proud of, Feldman shows more love and pride for

his family.

"I am very fortunate to be married to my wife Michelle Feldman and have three kids, Vadiana, Makye, and Cristiano. It's a blessing to have them here. When I go home after a long day, working 12 hour shifts, it's really comforting to know that I'm doing it for them."

Feldman enjoys some high-tech hobbies and is a self-proclaimed nerd.

With an associates degree in computer technology nearly complete, Feldman will add that to his CompTIA A+ Certification (a computer technician certification), and his CompTIA Network+ Certification (a computer networking technician certification). He is also working on a certification as a Microsoft Certified System Administrator.

Although Feldman was supposed to end his enlistment come the 24th of August he, like many other Soldiers, was affected by stop loss, but he has a positive outlook on the situation.

Being deployed previously for Operation Iraqi Freedom II, Feldman knows that many were down trodden on the thought of being deployed again and so soon, said Feldman.

"If everyone says, 'Well somebody has to defend us, but it's not me,' then nobody will go. After being over there and coming back to see my kids and enjoying the freedoms that they have [after] seeing the freedoms that the Iraqis don't have, it really reinforces that we are doing the right thing - it helps me get through my job a whole lot easier," said Feldman.



(Photo by Sgt. Robert Strain, 1st ACB Public Affairs)

Spc. Josh Brewer, a Black Hawk helicopter crew chief with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, demonstrates hand-and-arm signals to land a Black Hawk during the Non-rated Crewmember Instructor Course here at Fort Hood. During the NCIC class, Brewer and five other crew chiefs from the battalion learn how to be instructors and evaluators for the rest of the crew chiefs in the battalion.

Air Cav Crews Get Training as Instructors

**By Sgt. Robert Strain
1st ACB Public Affairs**

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter races next to the trees, only 30 feet above the ground. Not able to stay hidden behind the trees forever, the right side is exposed to the enemy. Almost immediately the helicopter starts taking small arms fire but before it's able to return fire, one of the engines is hit.

If you are this helicopter's crew chief, what do you do next?

For six crew chiefs of the 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, going through the Non-rated Crewmember Instructor Course, or NCIC, this was just one of many situations they are teaching to the new crew chiefs.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul McCormick, the lead NCIC instructor, said the NCIC class, normally taught at Fort Rucker, Ala., consists of almost five weeks of intense training, both classroom instruction and in-

flight, hands-on training.

He said, as a new battalion, the 3-227th needed to train several crew chiefs to be flight instructors or standardization instructors before their upcoming rotation to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., in July, as well as the brigade's deployment to Iraq later this year.

So the course was compressed to 21 days and brought to Fort Hood at the request of the 3-227th.

McCormick explained that although the course has been compressed, the standards the Soldiers must achieve are the same as they would be if the course was taught at Fort Rucker.

Staff Sgt. Lonnie Cook, an NCIC instructor, said that with the course compressed more material is thrown at the students faster, with less time for the material to sink in.

Cook said, normally students at Fort Rucker have the weekends off to unwind, study and let the material sink in, but with the compressed course schedule, the 3-

227th students have class everyday for 21 days.

The students have to know how to perform, and teach others how to perform, many of the tasks conducted before and during every flight.

"You're great crew chiefs, but you're not here to be crew chiefs - you're here to be instructors and evaluators," Cook said.

Sgt. Jon Dillenberg, a NCIC student with the 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, said that crew chiefs are responsible for maintaining avoidance of traffic and obstacles by keeping the pilots informed. They are also responsible for the safety and security of the helicopter's passengers and equipment, he added.

McCormick said when the students finish the course, which started June 12 and runs thru July 2, they will be certified as flight instructors, able to train and evaluate the current crew chiefs as well as crew chiefs fresh from advanced individual training.

Training at Joint Readiness Training Center Reminds Pilots to Think Before They Fire

**By Sgt. Robert Strain
1st ACB Public Affairs**

Soldiers from "First Attack," the 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, returned to Fort Hood recently after a month-long training exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

The rotation to JRTC gave the First Attack Soldiers the opportunity to fully exercise their "go-to-war tasks" in a battlefield environment that is very similar to the combat environment of Iraq, said Lt. Col. Christopher Walach, the commander of the 1-227th.

From battle staff procedures and air-to-ground integration to convoy training missions and joint air-to-air inte-

gration missions with the U.S. Air Force, this exercise was a critical training and team building opportunity for the Soldiers, said Walach.

To add to the realism, the unit's pilots and crews were flying missions and hours comparable to Longbow helicopter units currently serving in Iraq, according to Walach.

Walach explained that this rotation also focused more on the rules of engagement and how the individual pilot must think twice before pulling the trigger.

The pilots had to think about what else, such as civilians or other friendly forces, might be affected by their decision to fire their weapons.

"It causes the pilots really to look a lot closer at pulling the trigger," said Walach. "[As

a pilot,] you are the last person in the chain of events that can make a strategic level decision, good or bad, before pulling the trigger."

As a result, the pilots were asking more questions about what they could and could not do, said Walach. The training at the JRTC has changed over the years to adapt to the environment experienced in Iraq.

The senior noncommissioned officer for Company B of the 1-227 1st Sgt. Joseph Wilgeroth said the last time he was at the Joint Readiness Training Center they had to occupy a site, dig foxholes and set up their tents before going to work.

"That's not how we fight," said Wilgeroth.

Now the living conditions and work environment are

more tailored to Iraq and the established FOBs, or forward operating bases.

Now they just get the aircraft flying to support the ground brigades, said Wilgeroth. "A true 'train as you fight' mission."

Spc. Charles Baggett, an armament and electrical systems technician with D Company, has been to Iraq with the battalion before, but not to JRTC, until now.

He said the training was close to what he experienced in Iraq the first time, and although he is unsure of the conditions there now, he feels more prepared for the upcoming deployment.

First Attack and the rest of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade are scheduled to deploy to Iraq sometime in late summer.



(Photo by 1st Lt. Laura Parunak, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment)

Aircraft crew chiefs from the 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, conduct maintenance while preparing their aircraft at Forward Operating Base Forge in support of the First Team's 3rd Brigade Combat Team at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

Cav Newborns Receive Warm Welcome

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

"Sometimes there are only two, some days we have eight or ten and it all depends on who is ready to come into this world on each particular day at Darnell," said Staff Sgt. Wallace Taylor with the headquarters company of the Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

Through the Layette program Soldiers gain a sense of pride in the First Team by having their newborn babies officially welcomed into the 1st Cavalry Division with a gift bag.

Included in the gift bag are a junior trooper gown, a yellow cap and a set of matching booties, a lullaby audio cassette, a letter of congratulations from the division commander and a variety of pamphlets from helpful organizations related to infants and child care.

And for some lucky families the division's commanding general or command sergeant major themselves make an



(Photo by Pfc. Jeffery Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

The Layette program welcomes newborns of 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers with a gift bag full useful baby items.

appearance.

"In all my years of service I've never seen something like this," Taylor said. "For a general to take time out of his busy schedule to get up close and personal with not only the Soldiers but the family members behind the Soldiers is something extremely rare."

Taylor said that even after he tells the new parents that the division's commanding general or command sergeant major is

going to be visiting them, they still end up shocked with that 'deer caught in the headlights' look plastered onto their faces when he walks through their hospital room door.

"We call this the 'First Team,' but we really are a family," said the division's Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow. "My wife Vickie and I enjoy going to see the new babies. It's important that we share in the good times and be

there for each other in the bad times."

Taylor said when he escorts the general into the hospital rooms to meet with the new parents and their new addition to the First Team he feels like Santa Claus on Christmas day delivering gifts.

"New parents really get excited when they find out the command sergeant major or commanding general is on his way I can almost smell the sense of pride in being 1st Cav build up," Taylor said.

Taylor explained it's because no one expects a general to get so involved in their Soldiers' personal lives.

And when people so busy and high in rank take time to meet with their Soldiers it can only trickle down to the chain of command, setting an example for all leaders in the command, he said.

"I don't go there to visit troops in the hospital as the division command sergeant major," Johndrow said. "I go there as someone who cares, a friend."

1st Cavalry Division Stop Losses

Stop Loss

From Page 4

that because of Stop Loss."

Frye, who wants to be an electrical technician, said he first found out he fell under Stop Loss in March.

"When I first heard, I didn't think anything, because I was still finding out what it meant to be on Stop Loss," he said. "I didn't really know what Stop Loss was until I went to a briefing and found out I was Stop Losses. It affected me when I found out that I had to wait to go to school until I came back from Iraq."

When he first found out, he wasn't happy, but now Fry said he has come to

terms with Stop Loss.

"I've gotten used to it now, and I'm just waiting until I get back so I can get a chance to go to school," Frye said. "Going to school and changing my MOS is important to me because then I will have a skill to use if I decide to get out of the military. I still want to try again when we get back from Iraq."

When Wilson first heard about the newest round of Stop Loss orders, he was concerned about how it would affect the Soldiers he knew who were close to getting out of the Army.

"I thought that a lot of Soldiers caught up in Stop Loss would be disappointed," Wilson said. "Stop Loss won't last forever. Soldiers should drive on."

