

# Crossed Sabers

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"Telling the First Team's Story"

Tuesday, Aug. 8, 2006

## Wagonmasters Lead Off Cav Deployment

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

Since the 15th Sustainment Brigade's official deployment orders were announced in November, clocks began counting down. The bell is now ringing for the 'Wagonmasters' to answer their nation's call to be the first main element of the 1st Cavalry Division to place their boots on the ground in Iraq.

Approximately 70 Soldiers from the brigade said their goodbyes to their friends and families at the Ironhorse Fitness Center on Fort Hood Aug. 3.

The rest of the brigade headquarters departed Aug. 7.

"It's exciting; we're proud to be the first representation of the 1st Cavalry Division to enter into combat," said Col. Aundre Piggee the brigade commander. "We're ready to ship."

Piggee said that the plan is to execute the mission and come home in about a year's time.

However, for some troopers, deployments and Army life are still new to them.

"Initially, I didn't think I was ready, but I knew I had to

go," said Pfc. Christopher Bazhaw with Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops Battalion.

Bazhaw arrived at Fort Hood in February straight from advanced individual training.

The information technology specialist said when he first discovered that his unit was to deploy in roughly six months, he was worried because he didn't know what to expect, what deploying actually entailed.

"(Today) I'm still scared; it's my very first deployment, but I feel more prepared than I ever thought I could be," Bazhaw said. "I got a lot of help in getting ready from my NCOs."

Being prepared, though, does not stop the hardship of being separated from loved ones.

"Being away from my friends and family for an entire year is not going to be easy for me, but honestly I'm more worried about how they are going to deal with me being deployed," Bazhaw said.

In order to put his family a little more at ease, Bazhaw said, he plans on emailing his family every day while in



(Photo by Steve Traynor, Killeen Daily Herald)

**Tanya Garza wanted one last kiss from her husband, Spc. Pomaikai Garza, after a ceremony at Ironhorse Gym Aug. 3 before he departed with the 15th Sustainment Brigade for a year-long tour in Iraq.**

country.

Unlike Bazhaw, many of [See Farewell Page 3](#)

## Final Two Brigades Get Their Deployment Orders

By Maj. Randall Baucom  
1st BCT Public Affairs Officer

As the year-long deployment to Iraq slowly comes to an end for 4th Infantry Division, the Soldiers of 1st Cavalry

Division's 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team received orders last week to replace their brothers in arms. The division's 4th "Long Knife" Brigade Combat Team based at Fort Bliss, Texas also received their deployment order.

The deployment orders for Iron Horse and Long Knife puts the entire 1st Cavalry Division on the road to Iraq this year.

Every day Soldiers train for combat -

[See Orders Page 11](#)

## Army Life, Stepping Stone to Law Enforcement

By Spc. Alexis Harrison  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

Toward the end of the "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team's rotation through the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, Calif., all six battalions in the brigade selected several of its Soldiers to be honored as "Heroes of Battle." One of these heroes accepted this prestigious award with remarkable modesty.

Pfc. Tyrone Morton, a cavalry scout from Troop C, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, said he was grateful to be honored in such a fashion, but he insisted that he was only doing his job.

"I was doing what I was trained to do," Morton said. "I was surprised when I got the ["Hero of Battle"] award. I thought there were other guys who deserved it more than I did. I was hoping some of my buddies would get it."

Morton credits his peers with helping him learn and become a better Soldier. He says that he learns something new about life, the Army and his job everyday.

The Colorado Springs native says for his first "real" job, he thinks he has a good start on his future.

"This job is awesome," said Morton.

"I love being a cav scout. I like watching people without them knowing you're there and clearing houses. I want to be a S.W.A.T. officer when I get out, and my recruiter told me this would help."

Though Morton looks forward to having a future in law enforcement, he says he enjoys the Army life so much that he's not sure if he wants to get out after his three-year enlistment.

Morton said a lot hinges on his upcoming deployment to Iraq.

"I want to see how things go in Iraq," said Morton. "When I joined, I knew I'd deploy eventually, but I knew people need help and there's nothing wrong with me trying to help."

Morton said his family was concerned about him joining during a time of war, but they gave him nothing but support since he made the decision.

Morton's father is a retired Air Force master sergeant. He said his father has always been an inspiration for him to join the military.

"My mom and dad thought I should wait, but they knew I was strong enough to handle anything that came up," he said. "Being raised in a military family got me closer to know I could do it. After basic



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

**Pfc. Tyrone Morton, cavalry scout with 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, was recently honored as a "Hero of Battle" during his unit's recent rotation to the National Training Center.**

[training], they were really proud of me."

Morton said the announcement that the 2nd Brigade was going to deploy later this year initially came as a shock, but he's confident in his troop.

"I'm here in a good troop," Morton said. "We've trained very hard for this deployment, and I think we're ready to go."

## 'Ironhorse' Soldier's Son to Compete in Junior Olympics

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT Public Affairs

The son of a 1st Cavalry Division Soldier is addicted to speed. Running really fast, that is.

With a "need for speed" and "desire to win," track and field athlete Derwin Graham, Jr., a 13-year old junior high school student will compete in

the Junior Olympics Aug. 1 in Norfolk, Va. He is the son of Sgt. 1st Class Sheirice Graham who serves as the 1st Brigade Combat Team's non-commissioned officer-in-charge of human resources and 1st Sgt. Derwin Graham, Sr., first sergeant for Company A, 57th Signal Battalion.

Derwin, Jr. is no stranger to the Junior Olympics, having

gone once before and placing 8th overall in last year's event, which was held in New Orleans, La.

"I've been before and it feels the same as the other times, but each time, I can't believe I've made it," said Derwin, Jr. "It's really exciting."

The Junior Olympics encompasses the best child ath-

letes in the nation in the six to 18 year-old age ranges.

Ever since his interest in track and field and cross-country running began more than four years ago, he has won numerous awards in local, district, state and national competitions.

According to his mother,

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

Spc. Jose Rodriguez with Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division ascends a flight of stairs and steps into a plane Aug. 3., which will take him to his destination, Iraq. He has been in the Army for six years and this is his third time deploying to Iraq.

## 'Wagonmasters' Say Farewell, For Now

### Farewell

From Page 1

the Wagonmasters already have a combat patch on their shoulder and know what it is like.

For Capt. Caesar Alvarez, an intelligence officer also with Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, his deployment to Iraq is a familiar affair.

He proudly deployed with the 4th Infantry Division in

2003.

"Now I get to be with the Cav and experience its sense of history. I consider myself lucky to have gotten to see the view from both sides of the post," Alvarez said.

As these Soldiers, one behind the other, climbed up a flight of stairs to the plane, a new clock has begun ticking once again.

This one winds down for the day these troopers step off an airplane and fall back into the arms of central Texas.



Sgt. Robert Romangonzalez, a signal support systems specialist with Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade holds onto his son Xainder, 3 years old, waiting for final call to form up and head out at the Ironhorse Gym Aug. 3.

## Purple Heart Monument to Grace Cavalry Grounds

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

The oldest military award, dating back to 1782, the Purple Heart Medal will have its own monument at the 1st Cavalry Division Museum on Fort Hood next month. The museum chose Aug. 7, "Purple Heart Day," to announce the new monument coming to its grounds.

In its 85-year history, thousands of First Team troops have earned the Army's oldest medal. Nearly 2,000 Purple Hearts were awarded during the division's last rotation to Iraq.

The monument, to be constructed out of marble and placed near the center of the museum grounds, is slated to be dedicated during a ceremony Sept. 13 which will also mark the 85th anniversary for the division and the 35th anniversary for the museum. The monument is a donation to the division from Phipps Memorial, the company who built the division's Operation Iraqi Freedom memorial, located on the east end of Cooper Field.

"This monument on the



(Graphic by Philipps Memorial Co., Waco, Texas)

**This graphic shows the layout for the planned Purple Heart Memorial that the 1st Cavalry Division Museum will be constructing on its grounds at Fort Hood. Below the Purple Heart will be the engraving, "Honoring all 1st Cavalry Division Troopers wounded or killed in combat waging war against the enemies of the United States of America."**

museum grounds will give units a nice, shaded area to hold ceremonies," said Carrie Cutchens a museum staff member and collection specialist. "It's special to have a place like that, in a park-like setting, especially to conduct Purple Heart ceremonies."

The original Purple Heart award was instituted by George Washington in 1782, rewarding troops for "unusual gallantry" and "extraordinary fidelity and essential service." Called the "Badge for Military Merit," the award was a purple cloth heart

edged in silver braid to be worn over the left breast on the uniform.

The Purple Heart, as we know it today, was reestablished in 1932 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the birth of America's first president. The original criteria for award of the Purple Heart as published in the War Department Circular No. 6 of Feb. 22, 1932, stating that the medal be awarded to anyone serving in the Army who had received combat-related injuries or had received the

Army Expeditionary Force's Meritorious Service Citation Certificate during World War I.

The marble monument to be dedicated at the cavalry museum's grounds will be approximately eight feet tall a one-foot by six-foot base, with holes in it to hold up to six flags or guidons.

"Sept. 13 we celebrate the division's 85th birthday in support of the nation and 35 years of the museum's support to the division," said Steven Draper, the museum director. "We plan on dedicating the Purple Heart monument that morning."

Draper said he also plans to unveil some renovations to the museum's main galleries Sept. 13, including upgrading photographs and graphics. The main galleries cover the history of division units from 1855 to its deployment to Bosnia in 1998.

He said a small area is being set up for revolving exhibits.

"We're making the best attempt we can to incorporate so much history in a very small area," Draper noted. "We're hoping that in the future we'll see a larger facility to house it all."

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First Team



# Soldier's Son Dashes for Jr. Olympic Gold

## Olympic

From Page 2

Derwin, Jr. has run times that would make some Soldiers blush. Slow is definitely not a word in the child's vocabulary.

His best time for one mile is 4:46. His best two-mile time is 10:17. In a 30-minute run, Derwin, Jr. gets in slightly more than six miles.

"He's dominated district, cross country, track and field and all the long distance events he's been in at his junior high," Sheirice said. "When he started doing distance running, I looked at the times and said, 'Oh, he can run a lot better than me!'"

Her son's track and field experience didn't start out well, though.

"When he first started competing, he thought he was a sprinter, but he really wasn't much of a sprinter," said Sheirice. "But when he started doing long distance, we started looking at his times, as he started winning, and compared his times to other kids online to see what kids in other areas of the country were doing. That's when we said, 'Wow! He can really be good at this!'"

As far as coaching goes, Derwin, Jr. does not have to look too far from home. His father, Derwin, Sr. ran track and field during his college days. He serves as both mentor and coach.

"I've really seen him improve each year," said the proud father. "Every year, his times have dropped and this year he's doing a lot better than I expected."

Sheirice said having her husband coach her son hasn't



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

**Track and field athlete Derwin Graham, Jr. completes a practice run as his father, 1st Sgt. Derwin Graham, Sr., first sergeant for Company A, 57th Signal Battalion times him. Derwin, Jr. will compete at this year's Junior Olympics to be held in Norfolk, Va. Aug. 1.**

caused any friction on the home front.

"Coaches know how to separate being fathers and being coaches," said Sheirice. "Derwin (Jr.) knows how to accept his father in both roles - the coach part and the dad part.

"He never says, 'Dad's mistreating me,'" she added. "Instead he does the best to be a winner, and I'm really proud of him"

For the past two years, Derwin, Sr. actually coached a local Killeen team of about 80 kids, including his own son. This year, though, he had to give up the team for another mission.

"I was on tap to go to Iraq," Derwin, Sr. said. "So, this year I just decided to coach

my two sons."

"We thought at first that Derwin (Jr.) would be hindered by not practicing with his other teammates, but he actually did better," Sheirice said. In fact, according to his parents, Derwin, Jr. actually began far surpassing children his own age and began practicing with senior high school students.

As Derwin, Sr. faces deployment to Iraq, Sheirice says she hopes to maintain her son's interest in track and field, even stepping up as his coach, if necessary.

"I'm always around when he's training, and I see what he can do," she said. "I'll be head coach, but I'll need to call on my husband to send me the training regiment, because I still want to ensure that my son

stays competitive."

Derwin, Jr. said he attributes his success in track and field and cross country running to his "hard training" regiment which includes a lot of sprinting.

On some days, he will run eight 400-meter sprints, while also adding on a 20 or 30-minute run. On other days, he does what is known as "surge" training, which consists of running two sets of 600-meter sprints, a set of two 1,000-meter sprints and a final set of two 600-meter sprints.

"With surge training, I'll have him pick up a faster pace between sprints and then he takes it back down to his own pace," said Derwin, Sr. "This helps him with his endurance."

Derwin, Sr. said he does not want his sons to limit themselves to just track and field, but to do whatever they're interested in doing. Derwin, Jr. and his younger brother have taken that advice to heart. They also enjoy playing football and basketball in their spare time.

"We didn't force our children into sports," their father said. "We let them do what they chose to do, and whatever they want to focus on is for them to decide."

When looking toward the future, Derwin, Jr. said he hopes one day to be a college basketball player and eventually make it to the professional level.

"If that doesn't work out, I'd like to do track and field and cross country," he said, explaining that he has not ruled out shooting for the regular Olympics in track and field events.

He's hoping to be in the running in 2012.

# Soldier Lost Three Bones, Gained Purple Heart, Yet Stands Willing, Ready to Head Back to Iraq

By Pfc. Ryan Stroud  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

While visiting Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division July 20, Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston awarded the Purple Heart to Sgt. Ernest Chainey, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

Chainey was awarded the Purple Heart for his combat-related injuries while he was deployed to Iraq in 2004 supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

On Dec. 28, 2004, Chainey and two of his battle buddies were preparing for a night mission. As they were walking to a vehicle to get some equipment, a rocket launched toward them, landing about 15 meters from their vehicle.

"Just from the blast and the explosion, I was thrown to the ground, and I shattered my right hand," he said.

"If one of my battle buddies hadn't stopped us to speak about something, we would have been on the other side of the truck," Chainey said. "To this day, I still think he saved our lives."

Immediately after the fall, Chainey said he thought he lost his arm because he could not feel it. After two relocations, and having the fear that he may never be able to move his hand again, Chainey was sent home to be evaluated by a new team of doctors. After undergoing two surgeries, his hand was repaired.

"The doctors removed three bones from my hand, so I am unable to maneuver my wrist and hand properly to certain points," said Chainey. "I have lost only some flexibility."

Almost two years after the attack, Chainey proudly stood in front of his wife, kids and peers as Preston, the highest ranking noncommissioned officer in the Army, awarded him his Purple Heart.

"It was a real pleasure and honor to give Sgt. Chainey his Purple Heart," Preston said.

We are all volunteers and we serve the



(Photo by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

**Sgt. Ernest Chainey, Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, receives his Purple Heart from Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston at the Fort Hood Community Events Center July 20. "It was a real pleasure and honor to give Sgt. Chainey his Purple Heart," said Preston, who spent the day visiting with division troops. Two-thirds of the division, including Chainey, is on orders to return to Iraq later this year.**

people of this country every day. That is why it is important to honor Soldiers who have fought and been injured while in battle," he added.

Though he said it will be hard to leave his wife and kids for a second time, Chainey says he's ready to go back to Iraq.

"My biggest struggle is leaving my wife and kids again. Other than that, I am ready to go," he said. "I don't hate Iraq and

I don't hate the Iraqi people for what happened to me. I'm ready to help again."

"Our number one mission is fighting the war on terror, and we are still fighting every day," said Preston.

"The Soldiers overseas are standing up to the challenge of the fight, just like Sgt. Chainey did," he continued. "They are all heroes and we need to remember and honor their service to our nation."

# 'He Went Above and Beyond'

By Sgt. Cheryl Ransford  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Being in the sweltering Texas sun for hours on end in the middle of summer is not something most people would volunteer for, but that is exactly what Spc. David Webber of Headquarters Troop, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, volunteered for during the month of June.

To recognize his hard work and the sacrifices Webber made to better the 1st Brigade Combat Team building and surrounding area, he was presented with the Commander's Award for Excellence during the Distinguished Service and Welcome Ceremony held July 25 in front of 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters on Copper Field.

"While Spc. Webber was assigned to the rear detachment his main duties were to act as the armorer and deal with Soldier issues relating to the arms room," said 1st Sgt. Steven Burke, 1st BCT rear detachment sergeant major. "However, with missions and tasking being left undone due to limited manning, Spc. Webber volunteered for jobs outside his primary duties."

One of the many missions Webber took on was the painting of the brigade building. Initially the task was to paint the front entrance to the building. But Webber thought it needed much more and went on to paint the entire outside of the building - after pressure washing the old paint off - as well as paint the stairwell inside the building.

Once the building was painted, Webber noticed a few

other things that would improve the look of the building.

Webber then cleaned the floors, carpets and windows of each office on all three floors of the building.

"He went above and beyond," said Burke. "Webber didn't have to do any of the things he did during that month. He could have sat in the arms room waiting for someone to need his assistance, but he didn't. He was constantly asking what he could do and what needed to be done."

Everyday Soldiers are given orders and tasks to complete, but some of those Soldiers go above and beyond, and do more than expected because they see the bigger picture.

"This was just everyday work," said Webber. "I didn't see what I did as anything special. I just wanted to do the best job possible."

While he doesn't see how his work for the unit is worthy of an award, his wife is happy to see that his hard work is being recognized by those above him.

"He does a lot for the unit," said Abigail Webber. "This is really great. Even though he looked at what he did as normal work, I could see how hard he worked when he came home at night. I'm really glad that others saw it also."

"When it came time to recommend someone for the volunteer-of-the-month award, I couldn't think of a better way to recognize his hard work and sacrifice," Burke explained.

During the ceremony Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell, 1st Cav. Div. deputy commanding

general for maneuvers, expressed his appreciation for a job well done to all the volunteers.

"Just like family members, Soldiers are very busy," Campbell explained. "But some take the little extra time they have to help others and in a way that the impact can hardly be measured."

But the recognition went beyond a few kind words. Each

of the volunteers received a Commander's Award for Excellence.

"Anytime you can recognize a Soldier for their hard work, we need to take the opportunity to do so," said Campbell. "We are all busy and getting ready to deploy, and yet these fine men and women are taking time to think about others, service and doing the greater good."



(Photo by Sgt. Cheryl Ransford, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

**Spc. David Webber, Headquarters Troop, 1st Brigade Combat Team, receives a Commander's Award for Excellence from Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell, the 1st Cavalry Division deputy commanding general for maneuvers, during a Distinguished Service and welcome ceremony July 25th for his hard work dedication to while his fellow Soldiers were conducting training at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.**

***Just Back from Iraq*****New Deputy CG Gets First Team Welcome**

By Spc. L.B. Edgar  
7th MPAD

The 1st Cavalry Division came one step closer to deploying by welcoming its new deputy commanding general for support, who returned to Fort Hood for his official welcome to the division following a reconnaissance mission to Iraq.

Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks was honored by America's First Team with an official welcome ceremony on the division's parade field July 27. Less than 48 hours earlier, the general observed the 4th Infantry Division in action. Brooks' trip to Iraq will help prepare the First Team for a successful deployment to Iraq this fall, he said.

"I think the best successes for us will be measured, first, by a successful deployment... easily transitioning with the 4th Infantry Division, so they can return home, then taking over the Baghdad area and then conducting our operations in a way that continues to advance a positive future for Iraq," Brooks said after the ceremony.

As the deputy commanding general for support, Brooks' focus will rest heavily on logistics. His first big job is moving the First Team from central Texas to Iraq.

According to Brooks, deploying a division is like moving a small city, equipment and citizens included, to another country in a very short period of time.

The weight of this extraordinary task rests on the shoulders of the Cav's diligent Soldiers, professional non-commissioned officers and visionary leaders, he said.

"The undertaking is a massive one that is too much for anyone but pros to be able to handle," Brooks said. "It's just about right for the First Team."

Once in Iraq, the general said the division's day-to-day operations will be similar to what the 4th Inf. Div. is currently doing.

"They're getting it done and that is just truly making a difference. It's the best example I can think of our Army's theme for this year, which is 'call to duty, boots



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

**Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., (left), commanding general, 1st Cavalry Division, and Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, deputy commanding general for support, salute the national colors during the official welcome ceremony for Brooks on Cooper Field July 27.**

on the ground," Brooks said. "It's the presence of great Soldiers and leaders, who are committed to trying to make a difference. They just let the best of themselves come out. It's dangerous, it's high risk, but it's worth it and I saw that firsthand, just within the last few days."

He said the mission of 1st Cav. Div. in Iraq will be two-fold: providing security and building infrastructure.

"There are a number of things we will be focused on, certainly the two areas of developing Iraq, so that there is a hope for the future and also delivering security," Brooks noted. "The two of them are related, and we will be busy in affecting both areas."

For now, Brooks is leading Soldiers on Fort Hood. He got a chance to see some of them in action during the ceremony. Brooks, accompanied by Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., commanding general, 1st Cav. Div., reviewed the troops from horseback,

received a 1st Cav. Div. Salute Battery rendering of honors and witnessed a cavalry charge by the division's Horse Cavalry Detachment to conclude the ceremony.

However, none of this is new to Brooks, who served with division as its senior plans officer, and as the operations officer for 2nd Battalion, 5th Cav. Regiment and the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade.

"It's just great to be back in the Cav," Brooks beamed. "It was a great unit when I was here. It's an even greater unit now. The Soldiers are better than ever and the leadership is superb. So, I'm just excited about being a part of the great First Team once again."

Being a member of the First Team also means support from the people of the central Texas community, he said.

"They're supportive. They know who we are," Brooks said. "They're part of who we are and they make a difference for us and our families every day."

# 'Stay Cav' Retention Award Changes Hands at 3rd Quarter Ceremony, 'Ironhorse' on Top

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

The 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team took home the "Stay Cav" trophy during the 1st Cavalry Division's Quarterly Retention Excellence Award ceremony July 27.

Besides taking the top brigade honor for achieving the highest rate of stabilization reenlistments during the 3rd quarter, Ironhorse's 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment also took home the Retention Excellence Award as the top battalion in the First Team over the past three months.

The Ironhorse Brigade's top noncommissioned officer said esprit de corps can be a driving force in the effort to retain good Soldiers.

"Soldiers stay in the division for numerous reasons, most predominantly because they enjoy serving in a legendary unit like the Cav," said Command Sgt. Maj. Stanley Small. "Also, during these uncertain times, we give them a measure of predictability. We know what our destiny is."

The 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team relinquished their hold on the Stay Cav trophy, but retained their hold on the brigade-level Retention Excellence Award. Grey Wolf also won the "First Team First Strike" award, given to the brigade that completes all assigned retention objectives prior to the 15th day of the final month of the quarter.

The 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team's 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment won the Stay Cav battalion trophy.

Sgt. Maj. Derek Dahlke, the division's retention sergeant major, said he likes seeing friendly retention competition between the brigades and battalions, but added that total command involvement is what really makes retention work within the division.

"It's really a total team involvement, from that brigade commander all the way down to the squad leader," Dahlke said. "The focus is really about taking care of Soldiers. If they are well informed about



(Photo by Master Sgt. Dave Larsen, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr. (left), commanding general, 1st Cavalry Division, presents the "Stay Cav" trophy to the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team's commander, Col. Paul Funk, and top noncommissioned officer, Command Sgt. Maj. Stanley Small. The Ironhorse Brigade reenlisted the most troops for the stabilization option during the past three months.**

their options, they can plan for their futures. What we offer is pretty good."

Four battalions were recognized for meeting their yearly retention goals at the ceremony: 6-9 Cavalry, 2-82 Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion and 1-9 Cavalry.

The "Commander's Cup," given to the most influential leadership supporting retention efforts was given to the following units: Company A, 2-5 Cavalry, Battery B, 3-82 Field Artillery, Battery B, 2-82 Field Artillery, Troop B, 1-9 Cavalry, Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division and the 15th Sustainment Brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Personnel Services Battalion.

Dahlke said the division, overall, is meeting its retention goals through this fiscal year. Even with a deployment looming for many Soldiers, and the potential for tax-free reenlistment bonuses in Iraq, the division has reenlisted 1,607 troops to date this fiscal year. He said bonuses are avail-

able to many Soldiers here in central Texas, and many opt to get their bonuses now instead of waiting.

"Here in Texas, of course the bonuses are taxed, but often a Soldier will get much of that money back when they file their income taxes next year," Dahlke said.

The division is doing well reenlisting first-term troops, Dahlke said, though he said it's sometimes a tougher sell for mid-career Soldiers.

"Our operational tempo does have an impact on Army families, and a Soldier's decision whether to stay or not," Dahlke said. "But what I like to tell our Soldiers is that what we're doing is defending freedom. If we weren't deploying overseas to take on terrorists, one day we may find ourselves doing it right here."

Besides appealing to Soldiers' patriotism, Dahlke said it's important for them to know all the options open to them before making any decision about their Army career. He said unit career counselors have a wealth of information to assist Soldiers make an informed decision.

# Army's Top NCO Visits First Team

By Spc. Alexis Harrison  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

Before the sun was up, the highest ranking noncommissioned officer in the Army had his boots strapped on to visit a place he used to call home.

Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston, took time to visit members of the 1st Cavalry Division July 20. He visited each of the division's three Fort Hood-based brigades to address Soldiers' questions and concerns regarding things like upcoming deployments, uniform changes and other issues surrounding the Army.

"I'm glad to be back," Preston said. "If the Army would let me, I'd go back to the 'Grey Wolf Brigade.'" The 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade is where Preston was once the battalion command sergeant major.

After beginning the day with a horseback ride, Preston went on to the main post to get in touch with Soldiers. While visiting the Operation Iraqi Freedom Memorial, he ran into the division color guard on the parade field practicing with their sabers. The Soldiers took the opportunity to ask Preston about their new uniforms.

Preston explained to the curious troopers why the Army decided on the new Army Combat Uniform and the advantages they have, such as more accessible pockets and the ease of changing from one unit patch to another.

An even more pressing issue confronting First Team Soldiers and many others in the Army is the new life-cycle management program. The

Army's top NCO said the new life-cycle system allows Soldiers to stay at one duty station for a longer period of time, form tighter teams and create more stability for Army families.

"The life-cycle management is going to be one of those venues for Soldiers and their families to have more predictability and more stability," Preston said. "Keeping Soldiers in one place for a longer amount of time gives the opportunity for spouses to have a career ... instead of a job."

In June, the Department of Defense announced the deployments of two of the Cav's brigade-sized combat teams. Preston said he's impressed with the high level of training Soldiers are getting to gear up for their pending trip to the Middle East.

He said that new Soldiers coming into the Army are being trained with new principals. He said new recruits get much more field training than in years past, because of what the Army has learned from the global war on terror.

After a quick lunch with troops at the 3rd Brigade Combat Teams' Operation Iraqi Freedom II Memorial Dining Facility, Preston met a huge group of Soldiers at the Community Events Center. There, he opened up a forum for Soldiers to ask about things on their minds.

"He was really straight-up about things," said Spc. Garry Cadet, a combat engineer with the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team. "This was the second time I've met him. I've always looked up to him, and hope to be an inspiration to



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

**Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston, took a ride with the members of the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment while visiting the Fort Hood July 20. Preston came to the home of the Cav to talk to Soldiers about pressing issues like uniform changes, upcoming deployments and family concerns.**



**Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston gives coins to 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers following their recitation of the "Soldier's Creed" in front of an audience of more 500 1st Cavalry Division troops at the Fort Hood Community Events Center July 20.**

people, just like he is."

With two-thirds of the division deploying later this year, Preston extended his thanks to the troops and their families.

He said during a period where training takes up most of the Soldiers time, the families have been outstanding.

In the coming year, Preston said, he would like to see families support not only their troops, but each other.

"The First Team has a legacy for every mission it's deployed on," he said. "I have no doubt the First Team will continue to be a success beyond their future mission."

# Rear Detachment Focused on Family

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div Public Affairs

There was no massing of troops on Cooper Field, or a traditional cavalry charge to conclude a ceremony marking the establishment of the 1st Cavalry Division's Rear Detachment command. Col. Lawrence Phelps and his staff simply went to work Tuesday (Aug. 1) with the mission in mind: taking care of First Team families left behind as its Soldiers begin going off to war.

"We are totally focused on the families of our troopers," Phelps said, hours after officially assuming the mantle of command of the division's rear detachment. "We're committed to providing the best support possible, no matter what the situation."

The rear detachment's primary concern is the care and well-being of the families of Soldiers left behind. Phelps served with the division during its last rotation to Iraq, spending a year in Baghdad as the division's chief of logistics. After graduation from the Army War College, Phelps returned to the division with an eagle on his collar.

Having 'Been there and done that,' made Phelps' selection as the rear detachment commander an easy one for the division's commanding general.

"Larry Phelps is a proven warrior, who knows this division inside and out," said



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

**Col. Lawrence Phelps is the newly-appointed commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's Rear Detachment. The division's rear detachment officially began operations Aug. 1.**

Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., commander of the First Team. "He has proven throughout his career that he's someone who gets things done. He also understands the need to reach out to our families and keep the lines of communication open throughout our formations."

Phelps said the division's rear detachment efforts to reach out to families will include a variety of avenues, including a 'rumor button' on the division's website, informal town hall meetings on the base where he can meet families face-to-face and through military and local commercial

media outlets. He said keeping families informed about what is going on in Iraq is also an important part of the mission ahead.

"When our families know what's happening (over there), they won't need to worry as much," Phelps said. "One of the reasons I wanted to start the 'rumor control' button on the webpage is that it gives families direct access to me and my staff. If they hear something that's troubling, they can shoot me an e-mail and I can address it for them quickly."

Probably the hardest mission looming for Phelps and the rear detachment staff is casualty notification.

"I hope we never have to use it, of course, but all of our key people are trained and ready to assist families in their greatest time of need," Phelps said. "Our Family Readiness Groups, likewise, are prepared to render assistance to families who suffer tragedy during this deployment."

Phelps started his day Tuesday much like he has for the past several weeks, with an in-progress review briefing from his rear detachment staff. That daily attention to detail has enabled the division's rear detachment to stand up its mission capabilities ahead of the major division troop movements to Iraq, even if they stood up quietly.

"We don't need any fanfare," Phelps said. "We just need to be good at what we do."

## Entire 1st Cavalry Division Now Has Deployment Orders

### Orders

From Page 1

improving their skills and bettering those around them. But now, the time will come for the Soldiers of 1st BCT to put those skills to the test.

The brigade's deployment order came as no surprise to most of its Soldiers.

"I knew when I came back from OIF II that there was a

good chance of going back to Iraq before my time in the Army was complete," said Spc. Jacob Petion, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment.

While there are many Soldiers in the brigade that have already been to Iraq, there are a lot of new troops who don't know what to expect once they are on the ground in a combat zone.

One Soldier who is not

sure what to expect from his first combat tour is Spc. Brian Singer, also of from 1-82 FA's Battery B.

"Right now, I am expecting to have no idea what I'm doing," he said. "I will be looking to Soldiers who may have less time in the military than me, but have combat experience to show me the ropes and help me get my bearing."

Despite being the last brigade to receive orders, the

unit has been preparing itself to support Operation Iraqi Freedom again. Their commander is confident in his troops' readiness.

"We have spent the last year preparing for deployment to whichever theater the senior leadership of our nation deemed appropriate," said Col. Paul Funk II, brigade commander.

"We are ready and will prevail," he added.

# 15th Sustainment Leads the Way to Iraq

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

Standing tall on Cooper Field, Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 15th Sustainment Brigade knew they will be the first division troops headed to Iraq. A ceremony July 7 made it official.

"And I guess this means we're really going" quipped Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr., commanding general of the division, during the "Wagonmasters" color casing ceremony. "This brigade, these troopers on the field today, leads the way to Iraq for the First Team, and I couldn't be more proud."

Fil said the ceremony marked the departure of the first of four brigade-sized elements from the division on orders to support Operation Iraqi Freedom since the entire division returned home from its last Iraqi deployment in March of last year.

For many of the Soldiers and family members in the stands, the casing of the colors added a sense of finality to the deployment order the brigade received in November.

"For me, that (casing the colors) is the actual realization that we are getting ready to deploy," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph, the 15th Sustainment Brigade command sergeant major. "We won't uncasing our colors until we're back in Baghdad."

Joseph said that over the last several months the Soldiers in his brigade have



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

**Col. Aundre F. Piggee, commander of the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Command Sgt. Maj. Philip F. Johndrow, the 1st Cavalry Division's senior noncommissioned officer, and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph, the 15th Sustainment Brigade's command sergeant major, perform a mounted inspection of the brigade during its color casing ceremony July 7 on Cooper Field. The unit is the first brigade-sized element to deploy from the division and is slated to depart Fort Hood in late summer.**

proven themselves through various individual and unit training evolutions, culminating in the division's war fighter exercise.

Still, the Wagonmasters' command staff understands the challenges that lie ahead. Their commander said the brigade is highly motivated and prepared to deploy

and accomplish their mission.

"These are the world's greatest Soldiers," said Col. Aundre F. Piggee, the brigade commander. "They are the best trained, best equipped and they support the best people -- their loved ones and the great people of central Texas."

Piggee, who served as the division's rear detachment commander during the last deployment, also said he feels confident in his unit's ability to focus on their mission in Iraq knowing that they have the support of the local community while they're gone.

"The support we get is truly overwhelming," he said. "This division, this installation, could not do what it does on a daily basis for our Soldiers and for our family members without the outstanding support of our local central Texas community."

Following the ceremony, brigade troops began a two-week period of block leave, enabling them to spend time with their families prior to their year-long deployment. The unit will depart Fort Hood later this summer.



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

**Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr., (left) commanding general, 1st Cavalry Division, Col. Aundre F. Piggee, commander, 15th Sustainment Brigade, and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph, the command sergeant major of 15th Sustainment Brigade case the brigade's colors during a ceremony on the division's Cooper Field July 7. The colors will not be uncased until the unit arrives in country later this year.**

# First of the 15th Say Final Farewell

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

More than three dozen troops said their last good-byes to loved ones July 29 at the Kieschnick Fitness Center. More than half of those departing central Texas for a chartered flight to Kuwait were the first 19 Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division to leave in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom this year. All 19 troops are members of the 15th Sustainment Brigade's Brigade Troop Battalion.

Families and friends sat and waited in the gymnasium bleachers, counting not days, not hours, but minutes until their Soldier walked onto a bus headed to the Robert Gray Army Airfield. Other troops leaving on a 3 a.m. flight July 30 were from the 89th Military Police Brigade and the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)'s 49th Transportation Battalion.

Capt. Travis Brown, the chief logistics officer for the BTB, was chosen as the troop commander for the First Team's advance party. His family, too, waited with all the others.

"This time, it's a little harder," said Amy Brown, who will celebrate the couple's three-year wedding anniversary without Travis in December. "Last time, all we had was an apartment. It was a lot easier to pack up."

Capt. Brown's mom and dad, as well as Amy's mom, were on hand for the farewell ceremony in the gym. After putting most of the couple's household goods in storage and renting out their house in central Texas, Amy will head back home to Tennessee while



(Photo by Master Sgt. Dave Larsen, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Pfc. Amanda Yanta, 49th Transportation Battalion, tearfully says one last good-bye to her husband, Timothy, and their four-year-old son, Tay. Timothy, who resides in Karnes City, Texas, said the deployment to Iraq will be Tay's longest separation from his mom.**

Travis is in Iraq. She knows she's probably an exception now, rather than the rule for Army families these days.

"A lot of people stay (in the Fort Hood area)," Capt. Brown said. "But we don't have kids and no close ties here in the area and I feel better knowing that she's with her parents."

Before boarding the bus to the military passenger terminal, the commander of the 15th Sustainment Brigade addressed the assembled troops and their loved ones. His first thought

was to reassure the families.

"I know this is a tough night for family members who are losing their Soldiers to this deployment," he said, "but you should be well assured that we've trained hard, we are fully prepared and we're ready to execute this mission."

This isn't the first year-long deployment for the Brown family. Travis was a member of the division's 27th Main Support Battalion during the last deployment to Iraq and spent a year just north of the Iraqi capital, in Taji, Iraq. He

said he expects things to be better on the base camp when he gets there.

His main mission when he gets to Kuwait is to help pave the way for the rest of his brigade headquarters to follow. His battalion commander, Lt. Col. Vic Garcia, said most of the troops heading out first volunteered for the mission.

"I'm very confident in the people we have on this mission," Garcia said, noting that many of his Soldiers were anxious to get started with this deployment. "We've been waiting for this ever since we activated in July 2005."

Still, the colonel noted many sad faces in the crowd and some tear-stained cheeks. He, too, was giving reassurances to the families of his troops.

"You can't imagine what a privilege, what an honor and what a responsibility it is to lead a unit into combat," Garcia said. "I don't take that responsibility lightly. When I talk to the families, they all ask me to 'Bring back my Soldier.' I'll bring them back."

As the departure time drew nearer, the 1st Cavalry Division Band broke into their final number for the night, the cavalry's signature tune, "Garryowen." Tears flowed freely among the families and Soldiers as final hugs were given and received.

Even though the final moments together were difficult, Amy said she didn't want to miss it.

"I had this sinking feeling in my gut as we walked across the parking lot (to the gym)," said the native of White Bluff, Tenn. "Still, it's very important (to be here)."

# 'Lobos' Leap off to BLORA for a Fun Break

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins  
1st ACB Public Affairs

It may have been hot, but the heat is more bearable since it wasn't an airfield in Pakistan or the Louisiana woods. Nope, Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area was a much more enjoyable outing for the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division as they enjoyed some fun and relaxation on a unit recreational day July 13.

This year has been very busy for the "Lobos." They recently returned from the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La. Before that, they were in Pakistan helping out with the earthquake relief mission, said Capt. Marc Dalziel, Company B commander.

"I think everyone really deserves a rest," he said. "The company has worked really hard over the last year. Doing some fun things like [organizational days] and block leave are really important as well as a chance to rest and recover before we deploy again."

Lobo families were running around

and enjoying the food, music, friends and the lake. Footballs flew in a fast-paced game of flag football and spikes were being driven home in a volleyball match. There were also a lot of Soldiers jetting across the water on boats, tubes and jet skis.

Spc. Jonathon Sisson, the mail clerk for Company D, was enjoying the festivities with his wife, Amber, and their two daughters, 3-month-old Jade and 2-year-old Juliana.

"[The Soldiers] are getting ready to spend a year away from their families and friends and [the recreational day] is kind of a way to let them get together all at once before they go spend a year playing in Iraq," Sisson said.

Amber knows that Iraq is dangerous, but is put at ease knowing that her husband's job puts him in less danger than others, she said.

Along with the day in the sun, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion start their last block of leave the very next week before the brigade deploys to Iraq later this year, said Sisson.

"Almost everyone is going on leave

and if they didn't have leave then they were given passes. [The command] wants everyone to get out of there and go visit family and friends," said Sisson.

With no real work to deal with until after the organizational day and block leave, the Lobos will head back to Fort Hood and prepare for the deployment to Iraq, said Dalziel.

"We are going to start packing in August and from there it is the beginnings of the deployment sequence. [The organizational day] and block leave are our last chances for a little down time before it's go-time," said Dalziel.

And when the time comes, 2nd Battalion, along with the rest of 1st Air Cavalry Brigade will go to Iraq to help support the war against terror.



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

Enjoying the recreation day at the Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area July 13, Creedance Weiss stands ready to catch the throw made by his father, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Rodney Weiss, a pilot from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade.



1st Sgt. Terrance O'Neal, the top noncommissioned officer for Company B, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, (right), helps Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Brack, grill hot dogs and burgers for the Lobo Soldiers on a recreation day at the Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area July 13. After deployments to Pakistan and the Joint Readiness Training Center, the Soldiers take in some much-needed fun and relaxation before heading to Iraq later this year.

## Rusty's 'Backyard BBQ' Sends Aviators Off to NTC

By Sgt. Robert Strain  
1st ACB Public Affairs

The essential elements for a good barbecue were all coming together - food, music, friends, tables, chairs ... horses and a news crew.

Wait a minute - horses and a news crew?

For 1st Sgt. Gary Smith, the senior noncommissioned officer for Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, and his wife Carrol, those were exactly the elements needed for their backyard cook out July 7.

The couple was selected by the Waco, Texas CBS affiliate KWTX-TV as winner's of local weatherman Rusty Garrett's 'Backyard BBQ' contest.

The contest, sponsored by the TV station and a central Texas sausage company, invited viewers to tell the station why they would like Garrett to do the 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. weather live from their backyard, according to Virgil Teter, the station's vice-president for



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

**KWTX weatherman Rusty Garrett interviews Carrol Smith and her husband, 1st Sgt. Gary Smith, July 7 at a barbecue in the backyard of the couple's Fort Hood home. The Smith family won a free barbecue for members of Smith's unit, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. The Smith's barbecue, sponsored by KWTX and a central Texas sausage company, was the second of five Rusty's Backyard BBQs and served as a going away party for Co. B as they prepared to depart the next morning to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., for a month-long training exercise.**

news.

In order to enter the contest, viewers had to go to the KWTX website and submit an idea for a Backyard BBQ theme, and, if selected, invite up to 20 of their friends to the barbecue, Garrett said.

The Smith's barbecue was

the second of five Rusty's Backyard BBQs put on every Friday in July by KWTX and is the only one featuring a family from Fort Hood.

Carrol Smith said she has entered similar contests before, including ones at previous units, but has never won

anything.

"I did this as a fluke, and I won," she said. She said she wanted to do this for her husband as well as his unit.

For 1st Sgt. Smith and the other members of Company B, the barbecue also served as a going away party as the 3-227th prepared to deploy the next morning to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., for a month-long training exercise.

"I know they've been working so hard," Carrol said. "This would a great way to send them off to go to NTC."

Garrett said they were glad to be able to come out to Fort Hood and show that there is more to the post than Soldiers training.

"Coming on post is a humbling experience for someone who is not military, and being with you guys is a treat for all of us at Channel 10, Garrett said. "We consider it a great honor."

Shortly after returning from Fort Irwin, the 3-227th will prepare to deploy for a year-long tour in Iraq with the rest of its brigade.

## Soldier Knocks Down Targets, Leaves Training Fired Up!

**Pvt. Jerrica Maikranz, a unit supply clerk for Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, fires at "enemy" pop-up targets during a live-fire convoy training exercise July 11. The "First Attack" Battalion has been training almost non-stop for months, but this exercise marks the end of major training events before they and the rest of 1st Air Cavalry Brigade head to Iraq later this year.**



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

# Care Teams to Help 1st Brigade Troops

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT Public Affairs

In the military, unexpected loss or hardships oftentimes comes in the form of the death or severe injury of an immediate family member. Grieving Army families may find it difficult to cope, juggling daily routine tasks while trying to handle their grief.

However, for the families of Soldiers with the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, the support they need will come in the form of care teams sponsored by the brigade's Family Readiness Group (FRG).

Care teams are made up of two to three volunteers, within the brigade's battalions, who assist family members with such things as cooking, cleaning, childcare, transportation, grocery shopping and many other immediate physical needs.

"One of the ways this came about is that the Army recognized that when a family member experiences loss, they may not always have someone there for support," said Wendy Edwards, the brigade's FRG deployment assistant.

"We want to give the spouse of a deceased or severely injured Soldier, for example, the critical support system she may need---someone to lean on," Edwards added. "We try to take on as many of the physical needs of the family as possible, without them having to worry about that, so they can start the grieving process."

Having other family members, from the same unit and with the same life experiences

**"We try to take on as many of the physical needs of the family as possible, without them having to worry about that, so they can start the grieving process."**

*Wendy Edwards  
Deployment Assistant  
1st Brigade Family Readiness Group*



helps, Edwards said.

"Many of the people who volunteer for this have a common bond with the families, because they live the same lives and have many of the same fears," she said.

"They have family members in the military or have been in the military themselves. Since they share that commonality, they can empathize with these grieving families."

Once a loved one passes or has been severely injured, the care teams go into action, but only if the family requests it, Edwards said. She said these teams stay with the families only up to 72 hours, or until another support system arrives such as family members from out of town.

Units, according to Edwards, can set up one to two teams per company or may have a large pool of people from which to draw on when the need for a care team arises.

Edwards also said the units may have teams handling specific tasks, for instance, one team for food preparation and another team for childcare or other tasks.

Training of the teams consists of a five-hour session which includes classes from the Fort Hood's Casualty

Assistance Office and Army Community Service Center. Volunteers for the teams will also speak with a care team panel made up of gold star family members of deceased soldiers; a rear detachment commander who has dealt with having to comfort grieving families and family members of someone who has been severely injured.

During the sessions, a chaplain from the brigade speaks on how to deal with grief.

Care team members work with resources provided by Fort Hood's Army Community Service Center, including the Casualty Assistance Office and the Gold Star Bereavement Center.

Edwards said if a family member has questions concerning such things as death benefits or funeral arrangements, care teams can forward those questions to the Casualty Assistance Office for answers.

According to Cherie Cain, an ACS rear detachment liaison who works supporting the care teams as well as grieving families, care team members sometimes go through the grieving process along with the families they are helping.

"Many times care team

members may get stressed out, it can be very emotional for them as it hits very close to home," Cain said. "So we also offer help and counseling to the care team members as well through various resources such as the Gold Star Center."

Edwards said supporting families in their time of need is a worthwhile pursuit.

"I love this job," she said. "It's incredibly important to help commanders with their Soldier's families. My job is to make families' lives easier and I feel that we've been successful in that mission."

"Army families take care of Army families and that's the way it's always been," Cain added. "We're here to support each other. It boils down to the saying 'dignity first and compassion always.' It's wonderful to help these families and to let them know they're not alone."

Care team training for the brigade starts Aug. 1 with a make-up class slated for Aug. 4. Edwards said for those interested in working on a care team, they should first speak with their unit's FRG leaders or steering advisory committee.

For more information contact Wendy Edwards at 254-286-5623 or e-mail [wendy.edwards@hood.army.mil](mailto:wendy.edwards@hood.army.mil).

# 1st Brigade's STB Celebrates its First Year

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT Public Affairs

A battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team commemorated its first birthday in an event which brought families and troopers together for outdoor recreational activities.

The 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion (1st BSTB) marked the occasion of its formation on June 12, 2005 by holding the first-ever "Centurion" organizational day at the Belton Lake Outdoor

Recreational Area July 22.

The day began for Centurion Soldiers and their families with a pancake breakfast spearheaded by the battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Prior to families partaking in games and activities such as volleyball, swimming and water balloon fights, they took time to reflect on the past year's events within the battalion.

"We've had many great successes and a lot of things to be thankful for over the year--namely no DWIs, no privately-

owned vehicle fatalities and no loss of life," said Lt. Col. Mike Dillard, 1st BSTB commander. "We're hoping our second year of existence will be even better than the first."

In one of the battalion's first major actions, it sent a detachment of Soldiers and officers to Fort Bliss, Texas in July last year to train troops assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery Regiment as they prepared for deployment to Operation Bright Star in Egypt.

By September of last year, the battalion had attached 21 of its Soldiers with a divisional sister unit, the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, to support humanitarian relief efforts for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

During October and November, 1st BSTB's Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (TUAV) platoon became the first platoon within the division to fly its own organic equipment on Fort Hood since redeploying from Iraq.

In February, 1st BSTB's reconnaissance platoon partici-

pated in an exercise which examined the capabilities of the Army's new amphibious vehicle, the M93A1P1 Fox.

The Fox vehicles assigned to 1st BSTB successfully crossed Belton Lake during the event.

The battalion also faced milestones during two major events-- April's Ironhorse Rampage training event and the June deployment to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, La.

"The battalion was very successful during JRTC and was able to employ many of its assets and systems for the first time in a battlefield-type atmosphere," said Dillard.

Some of the battalion's assets and systems which demonstrated utility during JRTC 06-08 included TUAVs, FOX vehicles and intelligence equipment.

"All of those examples are just a few of the things that we accomplished during JRTC...and in the months

See **Birthday** Page 19



(Photos by Sgt. John Cupp, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

Children of Soldiers with the 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion played games to include a water balloon toss during the battalion's first organizational day July 22 at the Belton Lake Outdoor Recreational Area.



Soldiers from the various units within the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion shared in some camaraderie during a water balloon fight at the battalion's first-ever organizational day at Belton Lake Outdoor Recreational Area July 22.



(Photo by Sgt. Cheryl Ransford, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team operate a board that controls scenarios M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle crews face in the Bradley Advanced Training System, an advanced simulator that mimics the inner workings of the vehicle, including its various weapons systems. While these operators control the scenario, Bradley crews sit inside a mock-up of the track, conducting their simulated mission.

## Troops Prep for Bradley Gunnery Ranges

By Sgt. Cheryl Ransford  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Sitting in the cramped space of an M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle turret, Soldiers engage simulated vehicle and troop targets using the Bradley Advanced Training System.

While many Soldiers from 1st Cavalry Division prepare for an upcoming deployment to Iraq, Soldiers from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team continue to hone their combat skills and qualify on their many weapons systems.

As some units go to the field to qualify on the Bradley during gunnery, others visit the BATS simulator in preparation for their turn in the field.

While in the simulator, Soldiers must complete a series

of 12 exercises with a score of at least 4-out-of-5 in each to qualify to go to gunnery.

When the Soldiers first get in the simulator, the two main weapons systems must be zeroed before the exercises can begin.

"BATS is a digital computer system that runs on an analog system," said Staff Sgt. Allan Johns, a master gunner with Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment. "Because the system runs on analog, the switches are slower and it's harder for the crew to talk during the training."

Even with slower communication, the simulator is an important part of Bradley training for every crew member.

"The simulator is more sensitive and more complicat-

ed," said Spc. Josh Fisher, Headquarters Troop, 1st Brigade Combat Team. "The actual thing is smoother and it's easier to move when engaging the targets. But being familiar with the controls is an important step before there are live rounds flying down range."

Being able to hit the targets is the key to BATS, but the main purpose is to get familiarized with the inner workings of the vehicle while firing in a safe environment.

"Once the Soldiers understand the controls inside the turret, the crew can work on their coordination," Johns said. "The driver, gunner and commander should be able to know what the others are thinking without saying a word."

After the crews complete each exercise, a print-out is

made so the teams and their chain of command can see how they did during the training.

After a year-and-a-half as a Bradley commander, Staff Sgt. Jarrod Woeller from Headquarters Troop, 1st Brigade Combat Team, looks forward to BATS and going to his first gunnery.

"I have never been in this version of BATS, but in the past I have found that the system trains you on everything you need to know for gunnery and deployment," he said.

Just like many things in life - practice makes perfect.

"If you can master BATS, you will have no problem with the inner workings of the actual Bradley during gunnery," Fisher said. "The more experience and practice you have, the better you will be."

# Troopers Kick Up Security

By Spc. Sheena Reyes  
1st BCT Public Affairs

FORT POLK, La. - With the Louisiana heat scouring the mock village of Suliyah, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, helped role-players portraying Iraqi Army troops June 12 by providing some extra security to their efforts during a scenario involving an Iraqi Army recruiting drive.

Sgt. Bryan Connerly, the squad leader for 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, Headquarters Company, explained why it's so important for Ironhorse Soldiers to train at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

"I've been to Iraq and this was a great example of what Soldiers will really be doing over there," said Connerly. "The setup is also very realistic as well as the role-players."

Along with highly trained role-players and realistic scenarios, units were under the watchful eyes of several Observer Controllers. These individuals were responsible for making sure that units follow the rules of engagement. They also create more obstacles for units to heighten the difficulty of scenarios making for good training.

"Battle drills are important to have memorized to minimize friendly casualties and make future real world missions that much easier," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Smith, OC from the 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Fort Riley, Kan. "These scenarios are setup to be as real as possible so that Soldiers will be prepared for the real deal."

As the training exercise began, Capt. Jerome Barbour, the commander for Co. D, 2-8 Cav. Rgt., arranged a meeting with the mayor of the town. After permission was granted, Ironhorse Troopers secured the municipal building of the town where the Iraqi Army role-players set up their



(Photo by Spc. Sheena Reyes, 1st BCT Public Affairs)

**A role-player (right) portraying a potential Iraqi recruit shows his identification badge to an "Iraqi Army" Soldier to receive more information on how to join the Iraqi Army while Soldiers from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, provide security during a simulated Iraqi Army recruiting drive June 12.**

recruiting kiosk.

"This training was a great refresher course for vets who have already been to Iraq," said Connerly. "It also gave us the opportunity to train our brand new Soldiers and gave them hands-on examples of what to do in certain situations."

After a low turn out at the recruiting station, things began to pick up after role-players finished their morning prayers.

A big turn out was soon followed by small arms fire which prompted these Ironhorse Troopers to kick it up a notch.

They engaged snipers posted in various buildings in the village while taking several casualties, but a minimum number of Soldiers killed in action.

"I feel good that we were able to have this chance to come to JRTC," said Connerly. "This is probably the most realistic training that a Soldier can get before a deployment to Iraq. They gave us the worse case scenario and we have to run with it and that's what good training is all about."

## BSTB a Year Older

### Birthday

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ahead we will continue to add to our history as we prepare for deployment and wait to get our call," said Dillard. "We stand ready to train and respond to domestic and international crises as part of the Ironhorse Brigade Combat Team."

Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Green, the battalion's new top noncommissioned officer, said he has been quite impressed with the battalion so far.

"This is the first time I've ever been in a brand new organization," said Green, "but to see some of the strides and accomplishments they've made here in just one year are amazing. Getting to be part of an organization like this is a high for me, and I can't ask for a better organization to be coming into."

Along with remembrances, the Centurion organizational day also provided an opportunity for the battalion to further efforts to expand its Family Readiness Group. According to battalion officials, the group has been growing thanks to events like the battalion's Centurion Winter Ball in December and the first Centurion Family Day in April.

"The first Centurion family day was an opportunity for our family and friends to see how their Soldiers work and live in the field. Today's event is just another brick in the foundation and we've been building it from the ground up," Dillard said.

"It includes everyone from moms, dads, wives, husbands, children and other friends and family members," he added.

Facing a deployment to Iraq, Soldiers and family members said the event was quite meaningful to them.

"It's been a great opportunity to meet everyone we're going to be in Iraq with and to get to know all the families who will be here (on the home front)," said Pfc. Christy Hartley, a 1st BSTB medic.

"I love these types of events, it's helpful for me when they have all the units getting together, so I can meet other people who are family members like me," said Rebecca Millett, whose husband, Pvt. Patrick Millett, serves as a military policeman with the battalion.

# Cav Leaders Pave Way for Deployment

By Maj. J.P. Smith  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait - A hot blast of wind blows on your face as soon as you walk off the plane. There is a brown haze as dust rises from the ground. These are the first images 1st Cavalry Division troopers will see as they walk off the plane in Kuwait in later this year.

These images were also what several division brigade and battalion commanders and staff saw as they walked off the plane for a first-hand look of the area the division may be taking over later this year during a leader's reconnaissance July 15 through July 26.

The division's 2nd, 3rd and Air Cavalry brigade commanders, along with division staff, including Brig. Gen. Vince Brooks, the newly-arrived deputy commanding general for support, spent ten days in Kuwait and Iraq receiving briefings from members of the Coalition Forces

Land Component Command and 4th Infantry Division on training requirements and the current missions the First Team expects to take on.

"The biggest thing we want to accomplish here is to see what they are doing on a day-to-day basis. We want to view their meetings -- their reactions to events," said Maj. Scott Downey, 2nd BCT's intelligence officer. "As we arrive in theater and assume responsibility for this sector. We don't want to change anything right away. They have a rhythm with their units and with the people of Iraq they are dealing with on a day-to-day basis. It has to be a seamless transition."

During their stay in Kuwait, the staging ground for all forces coming into theater, the fact-finding party witnessed some new training designed to prepare Soldiers to enter Iraq.

One of the new training requirements is a humvee rollover trainer. The system places Soldiers inside of a rotating humvee

and teaches them to evacuate the vehicle while it is upside down or on its side.

"What we need to do here is make sure we are getting the right training in Kuwait prior to moving into Iraq," said Col. Toby Green, the division's operations officer. "We also want to make sure we do not waste Soldiers' time while in Kuwait."

According to Maj. Tom Cipolla, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's operations officer, locking in a timeline for training requirements is a necessity, due to the limited time units have on the ground in Kuwait.

"Getting a feel for the ground is what every commander needs, in order to properly plan for the future operation," said

The second part of the trip included a four-day reconnaissance of Iraq.

Each BCT's commander and staff visited their counterparts.

Each member received an Intelligence brief and witnessed the daily tasks each unit conducted.

"The best take-away from this trip is allowing me to start giving my Soldiers some predictability for the mission we will assume," said Col. David Sutherland, commander of the 3rd BCT.

The four days spent in Iraq were relatively peaceful. It was quiet for 4th BCT, 4th Infantry Division in the last few months, and the recon mission was no exception.

"This was a very positive experience for me and the commanders to meet Colonel [Michael] Beech [4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. commander] and their separate counterparts," said Col. Bryan Roberts, commander of 2nd BCT. "We were treated very well and we look forward to assume the mission."

The fact-finding team accompanied two fallen comrades during the return-flight from the Baghdad International Airport to Kuwait, and according to Lt. Col. Patrick Matlock, commander of 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, that flight home made everything seem real.

"The reality is [that] the enemy is real and this nation is still at war," Matlock said. "The road is long and 1st Cavalry is dedicated to seeing the mission through."



(Photo by Maj. J. P. Smith, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

**Senior leaders from the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team observe a demonstration of escalation of force during lane training in Kuwait. Additional training for 1st Cavalry Division troops will be conducted in Kuwait, further preparing them for their missions in Iraq.**

# 4-9 Cav Gets Friendly with M-500 Shotguns

By Spc. Alexis Harrison,  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

The Army has many long-range weapons at its disposal, however, some 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers got to work with some weapons that are intended for more up close and personal use.

Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment spent the day at the Blackwell shotgun range July 7, to get more familiar with their Mossberg M-500 shotguns.

Four Soldiers at a time came up to the firing line and began preparing for their turns at firing the subdued black, tactical weapons. They then moved downrange to set up fresh targets to dismantle with thousands of tiny, steel pellets.

"After doing paperwork all week, it's good to get out here and put some rounds downrange," said Pfc. Mercedes Frank, a cavalry scout with 4-9's Troop A.

After setting up targets, the troops took their fighting stances and practiced firing the short-range weapons they had. The first three rounds were to get the



**Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, take a look at the damage inflicted by the Mossberg M-500 shotguns following a training session July 7. Troops got familiar with the weapons they'll be using when they deploy to Iraq later this year.**

Soldiers familiar with the heavy kick of the M-500 they were using.

"A lot of these guys have experience with these types of weapons," said Staff Sgt. Shane Bidwell, a section sergeant with the Apache Troop. "We also have a lot of new Soldiers who aren't used to the kick from these guns. That's why the first three shots are just to get accustomed to the

weapon."

"The kick is a lot different from the M-16's we use," Frank noted. "You have to kind of reorganize yourself after you fire."

The three practice rounds reached their intended targets. Afterward, the Soldiers took up tactical fighting stances to use the rest of the rounds. The next 10 rounds of ammunition were used in the free-standing, crouching, prone, strong-arm and window positions.

Bidwell said shotguns are getting used more in Iraq because of the close-quarter fighting environments Soldiers may find themselves in.

"They make it easier to clear buildings or to bust open a locked door," said Bidwell. "They're also more lethal in close quarters."

"It helps to have shotguns," Frank said.

"They can be used as a breach weapon for quick, easy access into some tight spots."

The troops from 4-9 cycled through the range without any major problems. They ignored the hot sun for a while to get their turns at pumping rounds into the paper targets.

Frank, a Baton Rouge, La. native, said training like this will help them when he and his comrades go to Iraq later this year.

It was officially announced last month that 4-9, along with the rest of the "Black Jack" Brigade will go to Iraq later this year.



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

**A Soldier from the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team's 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, reels from the kick from a Mossberg M-500 shotgun. Troops from 4-9 spent the day at the Blackwell shotgun range July 7, getting familiar with the short-range weapons.**

# Soldiers Go Over Bradley Gunnery Basics

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 1st "Black Knights" Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, prepared for their upcoming Bradley gunnery range by going back to the basics. The battalion conducted Bradley Gunnery Skills Testing at their motor pool July 5-7.

"These are the basic skills a gunner and a BC (Bradley commander) should know before they get out to a live range," said Sgt. Margarito Ramirez, from Company A.

Within their line of Bradleys, they set up testing stations where more than 30 crewmembers, most of them newly formed, received a chance to sharpen their skills in a myriad of tasks such as disassembling and assembling each weapon system, loading the different ammunition and many other tasks.

According to Staff Sgt. Roberto Flores, a Bradley mas-

ter gunner assigned to Company A, this type of training is important to the crews for a few reasons.

First, he said crews can't even go to the firing line if they do not test on the different crew tasks. Additionally, the different set of tasks teaches everyone in the Bradley on each task that each crewmember has to perform on the track. Lastly, he said, the training is good sustainment training for some of the older crews.

Their upcoming range is a make-up gunnery for newly formed crewmembers who didn't have an opportunity to qualify in April. Through the last couple of weeks, the crews also went through simulation fire using the Bradley Advanced Training System.

Ramirez added that each of the tasks are set up with conditions that include time and safety constraints.

"If you don't do it to standard, you could hurt yourself or damage the gun, and you could

be liable," he said. "If you don't know something, something bad can happen."

For 1st Lt. Jay Ireland, Company A's executive officer, most of the tasks were new for him as he has an armor background. Going through the different tasks as a Bradley commander now, he said, wasn't difficult, but they were different from what he is used to on the Abrams tank.

"For the new Soldiers, it's actually really important," Ireland said. "This training

gives NCOs an opportunity to teach them skills to pass the test."

Spc. Joseph Miller, an infantryman with Company B, served as an Infantry dismount two weeks ago, but is now a Bradley gunner. The testing is new to him, too.

"I've learned so much out here," Miller said.

"I know a lot more than I did before I got out here. If you don't know, they are good about teaching you the tasks and conditions."



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

1st Lt. Jay Ireland, executive officer with Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment loads up 25-mm ammunition during his battalion's Bradley Gunnery Skills Testing in their motor pool.



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

## Come and Get It!

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team reopened the doors to their award-winning Sgt. John Noble Holcomb Dining Facility July 6. The facility had closed down in March. Col. Bryan Roberts, brigade commander, and Sgt. 1st Class Denise Worsley, facility manager, heralded the reopening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and a barbecue-style lunch for troops of the brigade.

# Troopers Learn to Combat Unseen Enemies

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

Soldiers deployed to the Middle East face a myriad of weapons like rocket propelled grenades, improvised explosive devices, small arms fire and more. Unfortunately, not all of these weapons can be seen with the naked eye.

Some weapons troops face, like landmines, are hidden beneath the surface of the earth, waiting quietly. Landmines can take off a leg or kill a person when detonated. Soldiers from Company E, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, learned how to combat these unseen terrors

during a week-long course on mine detection at the Clear Creek Multi-Range Complex July 10.

The Soldiers from the "Black Knight" Battalion started the week learning about the latest technology the Army employs and how to use it, proper searching techniques and more.

After a long day in the classroom, the Soldiers went outside to get familiar with the PSS-14 Mine Detectors they'd spend the rest of the week learning to use.

"Your arm can get really tired if you don't know how to support [the detector] with your frame," said Spc. Derrick Flowers, a combat engineer

with Company E. "It's supposed to be the best mine-detection equipment available. We're here to learn everything we can about it."

Flowers said that the equipment they use is so advanced it can detect subtle differences between a piece of metal in the ground and an actual mine. The newest piece of technology the Army uses for mine detection is the PSS-14 mine sweeper. It resembles the hobby-style metal detectors you can buy just about anywhere; however it's built for rigorous use in a combat environment.

"It talks to you," said Flowers. "The voice lets you know defaults, how to reboot,

what to adjust and how to continue the mission. It's very unique."

While outdoors at the range, the Soldiers started at one end of a mine-riddled lane and proceeded slowly toward the other end, marking anything they found along the way. They used all the techniques they learned the day prior and paid close attention to the voice coming from the detector.

"You have to sweep the lane at a certain speed and distance from the ground," said Pfc. Joseph McLemore, also a combat engineer with Company E. "If you go too fast or get too close to the ground, the voice lets you know how to adjust, so you can keep moving down your lane."

Flowers said he began moving slowly down his lane, sweeping back and forth hoping to detect something. It wasn't long until something in the ground made his detector blip. He then used the fundamental techniques he was taught in class to mark his find and determine just what it was.

"We have to determine what's down in the soil," said Flowers.

The mine detection course is 40 hours long. At the end of the week, these Soldiers took a final test on their knowledge of the equipment, techniques and then proved they can use it with a practical exercise.

"It's always good to learn new stuff," said Sgt. Bernard Teich, a Bradley commander with Company E. "These Soldiers are motivated. We want to stay on top of technology. If needed, they'll know of to use [the equipment]... though we hope we never have to."



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

**Pfc. Joseph McLemore scans his lane for possible mines using his new PSS-14 landmine detector while Spc. Derrick Flowers watches his technique. Soldiers from Company E, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, took part in a mine detecting course at the Clear Creek Multi-Range Complex July 11.**

# Explosives Tested by Brigade Engineers

By Spc. Robert Yde  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

In preparation for their upcoming deployment to Iraq, combat engineers from Company E., 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division focused their training on what 1st Lt. Brent Kinney called unconventional methods for creating explosive devices at the Curry Demolition Range July 17 and 18.

"We're doing a lot of stuff these Soldiers have never done before - stuff that is essential as combat engineers," explained Kinney, a platoon leader with the company

The two-day training event highlighted methods for creating field expedient demolitions and demolitions for dynamic breaching.

The purpose, explained Kinney, is to show the Soldiers how to create these devices if the regular materials are not available.

Classes on military principles of demolitions and the different types of components that make up various explosives were conducted during the first day of training.

According to Spc. Marc Krenzke, a combat engineer with Company E, both of the instructors, Kinney and 1st Lt. Ben Brown, also a platoon leader, recently completed Sapper school earlier this year and had much to share with their Soldiers.

"The classes were good. There was a lot of good information," Krenzke said.

After completing the classes the Soldiers began priming C-4 explosives and constructing various demoli-



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

**Pfc. Joseph McLemore, a combat engineer with Company E., 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, ties a branch line attached to a block of C-4 explosives to a main line detonation cord at Curry Demolition Range July 18.**

tion devices that they would use the next day.

Once the prep work was finished, the engineers set up a line main, the first of several demolition systems that they would cover.

A line main is comprised of a detonation cord with branches that have C-4 connected to their ends running out from the main cord and staggered along the entire length of the main cord. This type of demolition system could be used to clear a foot path in a mine field, according to Brown.

Facing possible small-arms fire, artillery and land mines, Kinney said that breaching a minefield is one of the hardest battle drills that a combat engineer could have to per-

form.

After completing the first explosion, which was deemed a "confidence blast," the engineers set up several different types of charges that would be used to breach walls or locked doors. One such device is a flex linear charge.

Very basic in its construction, the flex linear charge is merely several wraps of detonation cord wrapped in 100-mile-an-hour tape. The charge is then placed on top of the hinges of a door.

Once the hinges have been blown off, the door can be kicked in, and the Soldiers can carry on with their mission, explained Pfc. Joseph McLemore, a combat engineer with the company.

Kinney also showed his

Soldiers how to create a field expedient claymore out of an empty vegetable can. After punching a hole in the bottom of the can and running detonation cord through the hole, a one-to-two-inch layer of C-4 is placed inside the can and then any type of projectile that is available is placed on top of the C-4.

In this case, the Soldiers used rocks because they were readily available.

"It's a directional device that will make a really big explosion and could really hurt somebody if they were in front of it," Kinney explained.

The day's largest explosion was produced by a device

See **Explode** Page 26

# Lifesaving Skills Learned by Cav Soldiers

By Spc. Robert Yde  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

In combat, there is a one hour window, known as the "Golden Hour," in which a casualty with life-threatening injuries must be treated. After this initial hour the chances of survival decrease significantly.

Trained medics are not always on hand immediately, and that is where the crucial role of a combat lifesaver can come into play. A CLS-qualified Soldier can provide lifesaving measures and act as an assistant in providing care for casualties during combat.

"If the guy next to you knows CLS and the guy behind you knows CLS, before I get there at least they can do something," said Sgt. John Firneno, a combat medic with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

Firneno said CLS-qualified troops have played a major role in providing medical assistance during the Global War on Terrorism, and as part of the Black Jack Brigade's preparation to return to Iraq later this year, Firneno and his Soldiers are conducting weekly CLS classes.

"The policy is that everyone, before they deploy, will be as close to 100 percent CLS qualified as possible," Firneno explained.

The material and the way that the class is taught has drastically changed over the past couple of years, Firneno said, and because of this, the range of care that a combat lifesaver can provide has increased.

One of the newest modifications to the course is that Soldiers are now taught how to perform a needle chest decompression, which involves inserting a large bore needle into the chest of a casualty who is suffering from a penetrating chest wound and is having trouble breathing.

Soldiers are also taught how to use the new pressure dressings known as "Freedom Bandages" and the combat action tourniquet, as well as the basics such as airway management and filling out field medical cards.

"The course seems to be pretty tailored to what we might possibly



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

**Soldiers with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion perform an IV stick during combat life saver training July 20. The CLS course is part of the Black Jack Brigade's preparation for its deployment to Iraq later this year.**

encounter," said Spc. Donald Edging, an interrogator with Company A., 2nd BSTB and a student in the CLS class. Edging said that after completing the course he believes he will have no problems if he is called upon to provide care or assist a medic during combat.

"It pays off," said Spc. Cynthia White, a combat medic with 2nd BSTB. "CLS works."

White, who is one of the instructors of the CLS class, deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II with the 1st Infantry Division, and said she had a lot of interaction with CLS-qualified Soldiers while in theater. She wasn't the only one.

"On a mission, if I have more people than I can take care of alone, then the CLS will act as an assistant and help get them out of the danger zone," explained Pfc. Roxanne Nissen, a combat medic with 2nd BSTB.

Nissen, who has been with the unit for just six months, has just recently begun assisting with the instruction of the CLS classes, and is teaching what is probably the most infamous block of the course: the IV stick.

For some Soldiers, this is easier said than done.

"I have yet to have a class where

someone didn't pass out when they saw the blood," Firneno said of the IV stick.

While this part of the class can be nerve-wracking, the medics take each Soldier through the process step-by-step.

"A lot of them are really nervous to do an IV," White said. "But we're right there with them, next to them, watching them making sure that everything is safe."

The medics agree that even though the IV stick may be the one event that sticks out in the minds of most of the Soldiers, it is not the most important lesson being taught in the class.

"To me, the IV is not the biggest thing," Firneno said. "Knowing how to use the bandages and knowing how to do a chest needle decompression is so much more important than doing an IV."

For all of the skills learned in the CLS course, though, Firneno said that constant practice on a regular basis is crucial.

"If you don't do this stuff, you'll forget it," he said.

It is crucial, Firneno said, that Soldiers are comfortable and proficient at performing their CLS duties.

"We have to get rid of that old mentality of 'He got hurt, yell for the medic,' and don't do anything," he added.

**Happy Birthday!****Spartans' First Year Together a Busy One**

By Spc. Robert Yde  
2nd BCT Public Affairs

The Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion celebrated their battalion's first anniversary July 7.

"We've done a lot in the past year -you should be proud of what you have accomplished," Lt. Col. Kenneth Crawford said addressing his battalion just before cutting a birthday cake with the assistance of his senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Major Michael Cooke.

Crawford recounted the past year, which included deployments to New Orleans in support of Joint Task Force Katrina a rotation to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., as well as a month-long field exercise at Fort Hood in February.

When the battalion stood up last summer, just 200 Soldiers comprised its ranks. Today the "Spartan" battalion has more than 500.

"This battalion is different because there are so many different elements," explained Sgt. 1st Class Michael Ross, the



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

**Lt. Col. Kenneth Crawford and Command Sgt. Major Michael Cooke, the leadership for the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, cut a birthday cake in honor of their battalion's first anniversary July 7.**

battalion's food service sergeant.

Ross, who joined the unit in October, said that this assignment is unique because of the day-to-day interaction of so many Soldiers with various military occupational specialties.

As the battalion continues to train and make preparations for the "Black Jack"

Brigade Combat Team's upcoming deployment to Iraq, Crawford urged his Soldiers to continue to maintain their high standards.

"You guys do a very good job of continuing to excel everyday," Crawford said, "You guys are the best STB in this division."

**Engineers Go Through Explosive Demo Training****Explode**

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called a bangalore.

This demolition system is used to breach wire obstacles and is made by packing two metal fence pickets with C-4 and placing them on top of one another.

Due to the metal and the amount of C-4 that can be packed into it, the bangalore is the most destructive demolition system that the Soldiers trained with, said Staff Sgt. Lameric James.

According to James, it is important to demonstrate each type of explosive device so that

the Soldiers will be familiar with the damage that each type of charge can cause.

All of these Soldiers are familiar with the basics of demolition systems, and for some of the more experienced troops, this type of training is just a refresher, but a the opportunity to train on a demolition range is a rare opportunity for these combat engineers.

"This is a lucky thing that we got this demo range and got to come out here," Brown said. He added that the two-day event would be their only training opportunity like this before deploying later this year.

Kinney said that while it is doubtful that the Soldiers in his

platoon will have to use any of these devices for dynamic breaching while in Iraq, it is important training to have, just in case.

"If anybody is going to have to do it, it's going to be combat engineers," Kinney said.

If a time comes when his Soldiers are called upon to construct and utilize one of these demolition systems, Kinney said he is confident in their ability.

"Everybody has taken the initiative with this training," Kinney said.

"They have all jumped in and learned as much as they can."



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

**Combat engineers with Company E., 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, construct a bangalore at the Curry Demolition Range July 18.**

# Avoiding Financial Pitfalls While Deployed

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim  
2nd Brigade Combat Team

Deployments have become synonymous with extra money, and in some cases, Soldiers have come back home from them with enough to buy the major purchase of their dreams.

Yet, Sgt. 1st Class Blaine Dowell, a command financial specialist with 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division said there are things you have to put into place if one expects to come back with a good nest egg.

According to Dowell, although it is true that all the new entitlements associated with deployments are substantial, the one thing in his unit that became something of a trend during his last deployment was the Soldier returning to find that there was little to no money in their bank account.

Contrary to popular believe, he didn't attribute it to a vindictive spouse but merely a lack in pre-deployment communication and proper planning.

"The biggest financial situation is two people living on the same paycheck with spending done in Iraq and here without one telling the other," Dowell said. "It's harder for a married Soldier because they have to maintain two households."

For Soldiers like Spc. Bobby Stabler, a cannon crewmember with Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, that wasn't a problem during his deployment to Iraq.

"My finances were good because I was well prepared," Stabler said. "I had a good chief; he took care of me by telling me to get my finances straight, and it definitely helped."

Stabler and his wife then, sat down at the kitchen table and set up a quick budget of how they would pay their bills and how much each would spend during their separation.

That's exactly what Dowell suggests that each Soldier should consider doing in soon.

"Everyone should have a budget," he said.

As a CFS, Dowell provides financial



counseling, budgets, processes Army Emergency Relief applications among a slew of other things.

According to Dowell, financial counseling is really important because it can negatively affect a Soldier's job performance.

"The more a Soldier can focus on the mission the better," he said. "All your concentration has to be on the mission, on your safety, on everyone else's safety ... It's just one less thing the Soldier has to think about."

Most of Dowell's counseling is providing an accurate scenario of a deployment.

In his story, a Soldier is deployed and has spouse is back home getting used to the raise in pay. Invariably, after paying bills and buying the essentials, they start to spend more than they used to because of the raise. Yet, the deployed Soldier is taking casual pay out every month for a period of three months before Defense Finance and Accounting System catches up with it three months later and takes it out all at once - something the spouse was not expecting.

That's when things get bad.

Through this story, Dowell tries to

make Soldiers understand that they need to do, just as Stabler and his wife did, and figure out what their plans would be.

"When I was deployed, I communicated with my wife on how much money I took out," he said. "I didn't put her in a financial bind because she accounted for it."

Dowell suggests Soldiers schedule an appointment with their battalions CFS, and if they are married, suggested they take their spouse with them.

Spouses can also go to the CFS when their service member is deployed since CFS do not deploy and are a part of the rear detachment.

He goes on to say that although all CFS are qualified to help create budgets, they are not qualified in helping people stick to them.

"Setting up a budget - that's the easiest part; the hardest part is following it," he said. "Every CFS knows how to set up a budget. It takes the discipline of the individual. I have found that when people make and follow a budget, they save money."

According to Dowell, saving money has taken on some new and exciting avenues due to deployments. Soldiers have the option of putting money away in a savings program called the Savings Deposit Program. The program allows a deployed Soldier to invest any amount up to \$10,000 and get a return of a guaranteed 10 percent annually - something rare within investments.

Staff Sgt. Steven Kelley, a tank commander assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., said he and his wife have already set up a firm plan. With the birth of the first child expected next month, they are going to use the money they've saved to visit family members before his unit deploys.

With deployments creeping up on Soldiers, Dowell urges Soldiers to consider the advice that their CFSs provide them, and if you do all these things, Dowell said there is no reason why someone shouldn't come out of a deployment a financial success and possibly make that major purchase ... without payments.

# Sailor Gives Reenlistment Oath to Soldier Son

By Pfc. Ben Fox  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

A motivated "Grey Wolf" Soldier raised his right hand and spoke the familiar words of the oath of reenlistment in front of his unit, July 31. However, the re-enlistment officer wasn't his company or battalion commander. The oath was given by a Navy captain (the equivalent of an Army colonel) ... his father.

Navy Capt. David Wright with the Military Sealift Command reenlisted his son, Spc. Brian Wright, a medic with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division at the 1st Cavalry Division Museum.

Capt. Wright, who, like his son, was an enlisted medic in the Army before he joined the Navy, said it was an honor to re-enlist his son and that he was proud of him.

"He has already fulfilled my expectations. He is a good



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

**Spc. Brian Wright, a medic with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, takes the oath of reenlistment. Wright's father, Navy Capt. David Wright with the Military Sealift Command, gave the oath of re-enlistment to his son at a ceremony at the 1st Cavalry Division Museum on Fort Hood July 31.**

son, father, husband and American," said Capt. Wright.

Spc. Wright said he could-

n't think of anyone else he would rather have perform the ceremony.

"He is and has always been my role model," said Spc. Wright, who looked up to his father for examples of military excellence, life lessons and parenting skills for his own son.

Even though he looks up to his father, Spc. Wright doesn't have all of the same aspirations his father did.

"I plan on staying in the medical field as a physician's assistant or a doctor," he said.

Spc. Wright said it was important for him to re-enlist and continue to provide for his family, serve his country and be an example to his children and other young people.

Wright said it is important for others to re-enlist because there is a lot of work to be done

overseas, noting that those who re-enlist have valuable experience that will increase more Soldiers' chances of coming home from deployment safely.

Wright's re-enlistment was one of the many which have led the "Grey Wolf" Brigade to have the greatest success retaining Soldiers within the division. The unit recently received a division-level quarterly retention award for keeping the most troops in the Army during this year's third quarter. The brigade was also the first in the division to reach its annual retention goal, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Helmes, the brigade's career counselor.

"This shows me we have the best chain of command, career counselors and overall retention team in the division," said Helmes.



**Spc. Brian Wright, a medic with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, shakes hands with his father, Navy Capt. David Wright with the Military Sealift Command, after his reenlistment July 31.**

# Troop Makes Top Three in Competition

By Pfc. Ryan Stroud  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

After competing with Soldiers throughout the United States Army, a "Grey Wolf" Soldier from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, placed in the top three during the Army Chemical Soldier of the Year Competition at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., June 24 to 28.

Pfc. Samuel Arredondo, Medical Company C, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, advanced to the Army-wide competition as a representative of the "Grey Wolf" Brigade and the 1st Cavalry Division after winning the 1st Cav. Div. Chemical Soldier of the Year competition.

The division competition was Arredondo's first Army competition and his first board appearance.

"I first won the Division Chemical Soldier of the Year competition," said Arredondo. "Then I moved on to the Army Chemical Soldier of the Year Competition at Fort Leonard Wood."

After winning the division competition, Arredondo received an Army Achievement Medal for his efforts and hard work.

He then packed up his things and made the trip to Fort Leonard Wood, ready to give his all as he represented the 1st Cavalry Division.

The four-day competition was fast paced from the start, testing Arredondo and his fellow chemical Soldiers from other Army installations with many challenging events.

"The competition consisted of land navigation, hands-on evaluations, written assess-



(Photo by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

**Pfc. Samuel Arredondo, Medical Company C, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, inspects a mask to ensure it meets Army standards. Arredondo represented the 1st Cav. Div. in the Army Chemical Soldier of the Year competition held at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., June 24 to 28.**

ments, [physical fitness] test, weapons qualification and an oral board," said Arredondo.

The first day of the competition consisted of hands-on evaluations, testing the Soldiers common military tasks and chemical-specific tasks, Arredondo said.

Tasks included first-aid, maintaining the biological mask, maintaining vehicles and taking weapons apart.

The competitors were

observed by Soldiers in training who were helping at the test site."

"They watched us and learned from what we were being tested on," he added.

The oral board and written assessment focused on the proper use of equipment and maintaining standards when using chemical equipment, he said. The competition posed tough moments for Arredondo, he said, testing his strength

through pain and even testing him in events he has never participated in, during his short military career.

During the second day of the competition, Arredondo was physically tested with a six-mile road march, leading him and the other competitors to the range where they qualified with their weapons.

"On one of the days we had a big regimental run with all the Soldiers who are still in training," he added. "After the run, we prepared for the board."

Though he is still new to boards and military competitions, Arredondo said he did well.

"I know I missed a couple of questions but I know I did really well at the board," he said. "I was prepared."

After the board was finished, Arredondo and his competition regrouped, making their way to the Green Dragon Regimental Ball where they announced the winner of the competition. Arredondo did not win, but was in second place before his final event at the board.

Still, going back to Fort Leonard Wood was a good experience for this young Soldier.

"I went back to my old unit to talk to the up and coming Soldiers there," Arredondo said. "They asked me questions [such as] what it was like to be in the 'real' Army, and other issues pertaining to our jobs."

"It felt really good to go back and see my old Drill Sergeants who used me as an



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

## All Secure!

Pvt. Cody Edlin, a tanker with Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, tightens the chains securing his tank to a railcar at the Fort Hood railhead July 26. Edlin and the "Grey Wolf" Brigade Soldiers are loading their equipment to prepare for deployment later this year.

# Cav Soldier Competes at Army-Wide Competition

## Chemical

From Page 29

example saying, "This could be you. This Soldier is representing his unit and the Chemical Corps in an Army-wide competition," he said. "It was a nice feeling."

"I'm very proud of him and what he has done," said Staff Sgt. Desmond Watson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

"As a young chemical Soldier, he is one of the most squared away guys I have ever seen," added Watson. "He is always a

few steps ahead of the game. He should be wearing sergeant stripes."

Watson worked with Arredondo before the competition, helping him improve Soldier skills and guiding him throughout training.

"He is one of the hardest working individuals I have ever met," said Watson. "He is so squared away -- definitely a good role model for lower enlisted [Soldiers] to look up to. Even the higher enlisted can learn a thing or two. He's really paving the way for himself towards a great career in the Army."

Though he didn't win the Army-wide competition, this acting non commissioned

officer in charge for his unit's Chemical, Biological, Radial, and Nuclear section says he enjoys teaching others about "chemical" and wants to eventually head back to another competition or board.

"It feels good to be in my position and get to teach others about 'chemical,'" Arredondo said. "And now that I have the experience of going to boards, I want to go back to more. I like learning and competing."

"Getting to represent my unit with the Division board and then represent the whole 1st Cavalry Division at the Army wide-competition -- that was great. I'm very proud of myself," he added.

## One Step Closer...

# Deployment Preparation Ongoing for Troops

By Pfc. Ryan Stroud  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

When the Soldiers of the 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division arrived at Raider Gym July 19, they were prepared -- medical records and paperwork in hand -- for the long lines awaiting them at the Soldier Readiness Check.

The SRC consists of a system of stations such as immunizations, dental and vision, which maintains Soldiers' physical readiness to deploy.

Kraig Kvalevog, from the Department of Community and Family Medicine at Darnell Army Medical Center, saw it as a chance to give the Soldiers of 3rd BCT "piece of mind" about deployment.

"When the Soldiers come for SRC, they are getting prepared for deployment and making sure their records are straight," he said. "The most important thing we do for Soldiers when they come to see us is to give them piece of mind that they are medically fit to deploy. We want to make sure every question and concern a Soldier has before deployment gets answered."

When Soldiers go through SRC, they first get briefed about how the SRC process works, along with medical precautions they should take while deployed, Kvalevog said.

"They move from station to station seeing legal, personnel and finance along with other stations to sort out their records," he added.

"SRC was a good event to help us, as a brigade, prepare for our deployment," said 1st



(Photos by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

**Staff Sgt. Yolanda Moore, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division, draws blood from Pfc. Jaime Galvan, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, during a brigade-wide Soldier Readiness Check at Fort Hood's Raider Gym July 19.**

Sgt. Jerome Nichols from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd BCT. "It is critical in every aspect."

Besides reviewing records and answering questions, immunizations are also updated during the SRC process.

"If we hadn't had a shot that we need for deployment, they made sure we got it," Nichols said.

"The Soldiers and staff working here are diligently working to get the Soldiers up to date in the systems," Kvalevog said.

"Once everything is up to date, the Soldiers are on the right track to having a successful deployment."

SRC is not only about the Soldiers making sure their pay

is straight or their shots records are on track. It is also about Soldier's physical and mental state of mind.

"My job here at the SRC is to medically evaluate the Soldiers, to brief the Soldiers of the trials and tribulations associated with deployment and the return home," Kvalevog said. "I am also addressing any medical concerns the Soldiers may have."

The evaluations at the SRC can also uncover problems, and begin the process of addressing it.

"When evaluating a Soldier, sometimes we find out the Soldier cannot deploy," said Kvalevog. "We are fine with the decision to hold them back because it is important to get

the Soldier as ready as possible for deployment. We will not send them out there if they are not mentally and physically fit."

Just like a football player gets ready for the Super Bowl by making sure they are in the best mental and physical shape they can be in, Nichols feels the same about his Soldiers. He said they need to be ready for deployment and SRC is the first wake-up call.

"SRC puts the Soldiers on alert to let them know the time for deploying is near -- the Super Bowl of deploying is about to happen," Nichols said. "It's time to start getting into the right frame of mind. [We need to] get ready and to be prepared."

# Cooks Sweep Fort Hood Quarterly Awards

By Pfc. Ben Fox  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

Pfc. Rich Smith and Sgt. Jose DeLeon, cooks with 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's Operation Iraqi Freedom Dining Facility, won Cook and Non-commissioned Officer Cook of the Quarter for III Corps July 11.

For a regular Soldier of the Quarter board, Soldiers are challenged on their military knowledge, confidence, appearance and discipline by answering questions on many tactical-related topics. While the Cook of the Quarter board is similar to an average Soldier of the Quarter board, one thing set the competition apart from others - questions about cooking.

Also, instead of judging appearance of a Soldiers' Class A dress uniform, cooks were judged on their appearance in cook whites, DeLeon said. To advance to the III Corps level, the Soldiers had to compete in brigade and division-level

boards, Smith said.

The next step for these two Soldiers is the Cook of the Year board in September, for which they will have to report in Class A's.

As the level of competition progresses, not only do the competitors offer more of a challenge, but the board itself is more challenging.

DeLeon said to prepare for the next board he studies after work every day, often with Smith.

DeLeon is not a stranger to this type of competition. He won Cook of the Quarter while stationed in Korea, and has learned many lessons from his previous experiences.

"You have to prioritize everything," said DeLeon, who has worked in 3rd BCT's DFAC for a year.

Smith, with many supporters and positive influences, said he is confident he will win the next board.

"I'm going to study so much it will be a breeze," he said. Smith said that without the support of his wife, Amber,



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

**Pfc. Rich Smith (right), a cook with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's Operation Iraqi Freedom Dining Facility, receives a coin from Col. Tori Bruzese, the Fort Hood garrison commander July 12 for winning Cook of the Quarter for III Corps.**

winning wouldn't have been possible.

"She helps me study when Sgt. DeLeon can't, and [she]...helps me manage work at home," Smith said.

He added that the non-commissioned officers he works under have also provided the motivation and inspiration he needs to do his best and continue improving himself professionally.

"My NCOs influenced me to better myself," Smith said. "I

want to be the best I can be."

"We are surrounded by nothing but competent NCOs," said DeLeon, who Smith considers one of his role models.

For now, the two Soldiers continue to study so they can advance to the next level in their occupational specialty.

"They don't give (Cook of the Quarter) to you," Smith said. "You have to be motivated to even go to the first board."

While winning boards helps Soldiers' reputations and their military careers, DeLeon said the most important outcome is showing how much hard work and dedication truly pays off.

Besides winning the board, which the two cooks were confident they will do, Smith and DeLeon said they are also concentrating on their Soldier skills.

"I am preparing my mind and my family for deployment," Smith said.

DeLeon, while praying for his fellow Soldiers safe deployment and return home, said he is ready to deploy and serve his country as a cook, but more importantly, as a Soldier first.



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

## Cookin' Up the Competition

Cooks from 3rd Brigade Combat Team's Operation Iraqi Freedom Dining Facility show off their Fort Hood 2007 Phillip A. Connelly Award July 14. The post-wide competition, was conducted Feb. 28.

## Soldiers Helping Soldiers

# Food, Clothes Collected for Needy

By Pfc. Ben Fox  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

The 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division was the first to kick-off the division's Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers food and clothing drive July 7.

The division's other brigades will be participating in the coming weeks.

The brigade set a high benchmark by donating more than 500 cans of food and \$2,000 worth of clothes, said Spc. Jonte Scott, the division BOSS representative.

The donated food was inspected by food inspectors from the South Plains District Veterinary Command, who said they were surprised at the amount and variety of the food collected.

The food was donated to Army Community Service, an organization for Soldiers in need, and Families in Crisis, an organization for abused women and children, said Scott.

The clothes were sent to Families in



**Sgt. Charlotte Howard, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers representative carries clothes donated by the brigade's Soldiers so they can be picked up by Families in Crisis, an organization for abused women and children.**



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

**Spc. Jonte Scott (left), the 1st Cavalry Division's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers representative, Sgt. Charlotte Howard (center), the 3rd Brigade Combat Team BOSS representative and Mary Fitzgibbon with Army Community Service, sort cans from the Brigade's clothing and food drive , July 7.**

Crisis.

The idea for a clothing drive came to Scott when she was cleaning out her closet.

"I had three trash bags full of clothes, some with tags on them that I hadn't even worn yet," she said.

At a BOSS meeting, Scott suggested a clothing drive and Sgt. Charlotte Howard, the 3rd Brigade BOSS representative, suggested they add a food drive and get ACS involved, Scott said.

The BOSS program focuses on three pillars: well-being, community service, and recreation and leisure.

The community service aspect of BOSS often gets overlooked, said Command Sgt. Maj. Donald R. Felt, the Grey Wolf Brigade command sergeant major.

"I commend the Soldiers of BOSS and the Soldiers who donated food and clothing for their efforts," he said. "The food and clothing drive, in conjunction with the blood drive the brigade did, is a powerful demonstration of the care and concern these Soldiers show for other Soldiers and

the community."

"We can take care of our own Soldiers without them having to go to Killeen, Copperas Cove or Temple to their food banks," said Howard. "They can stay on post and know that other Soldiers are helping them out."

Howard said she felt it was important to host a food drive during the summer months since school is out and the ACS food pantries run low. ACS has an abundance of canned food during the holidays, she said.

"Everyone (falls) on hard times once in a while," Scott said. "Those programs (ACS and FIC) are there to support us, but if we don't support them ...we aren't even supporting ourselves."

The BOSS Soldiers chose to donate the food and clothes to both organizations so they could reach the community outside of Fort Hood, too, Scott said.

"You have to support the people who support you," she said.

The BOSS program plans to host a drive each month until units deploy, Howard said.



(Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs)

## Brigade Retention Over the Top

Col. David Sutherland, commander of the 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, ties a retention award ribbon to the Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery's guidon for achieving 300 percent of their quarterly retention mission in a brigade retention ceremony July 11.

# Soldiers Adapt, Overcome Training Obstacle

By Pfc. Ben Fox  
3rd BCT Public Affairs

Under the blazing Texas sun, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team "Chargers" from 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment set out to practice reflexive fire and close quarter combat drills at the North Fort Hood Close Quarters Combat Range July 19.

Unfortunately for the Soldiers of Company A, their original plans were cancelled due to six cease fires caused by range fires earlier that day.

Instead of packing up, the company decided to continue training on marksmanship, said Sgt. Stephen Laxamana.

They worked on breathing



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

**Spc. Will Atkinson (middle), a medic with Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, watches over Spc. Philip Oliver as he practices inserting a intravenous needle into 2nd Lt. Jason Brinkley's arm July 19 at North Fort Hood.**

and trigger squeeze, the most common problems Soldiers have when firing M16A2 rifles,

he said.

"The company didn't say 'Okay, [we] can't shoot. Pack

it up," said Pfc. Jeremy Crocker. "For being here as short of a time as we have, we've had a lot of training."

Spc. Will Atkinson, a medic with the company, decided to teach a brief class on training, Conley said.

Laxamana said the ability to adapt is essential for the Soldiers to learn.

"The battlefield can change at anytime," he said.

"The kind of training we are going through makes a better all round Soldiers, he added. moment," he said.

The company focused more on the individual Soldiers' training in every team so each Soldier would have the experience, he added.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brian Sipp, 4th BCT Public Affairs)

**Capt. J. Casey Doss, 377th commander, (left of flag), and 1st Sgt. Rito G. Vallez, 377th 1st Sgt., (right of flag) unfurl the guidon and establish the 377th Transportation Company's (Heavy Truck) new home at Fort Bliss on Friday.**

## Transportation Company Finds Home at Bliss

**Sgt. 1st Class Brian Sipp  
4th BCT Public Affairs**

Under clear skies and the ever-present El Paso early morning sun, Soldiers from the 377th Transportation Company (Heavy Truck) were welcomed to Fort Bliss during a relocation ceremony held at Memorial Circle on Friday.

The company, stationed in Germany for 49 years since 1957, and formerly tasked with providing transportation support to U.S. forces holding the line against communist expansion throughout the Cold War, uncased their guidon and began a new chapter in their storied history, said Capt. J. Casey Doss, 377th commander.

"Change is never easy, of course, but just as a defining attribute of our Army over its 230 year existence has been adaptability - the capability to thrive and succeed while adjusting to difficult and changing circumstances, so too has the 377th proven adaptable throughout its history," added Doss.

"First deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the company participated in the initial liberation of Iraq as well as follow-on stability operations,

completing a 12 month tour. A mere 11 months later, the company was back in Iraq again, providing heavy lift transport in support of the reconstruction of Iraq for another year-long tour. Now, seven months after completing its second tour in Iraq, the company has relocated to Fort Bliss," said Doss.

"The 377th Transportation Company dates back to 1942 and has participated in almost every major campaign, to include WWII, the Korean War, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and most recently, Operation Iraqi Freedom," said Lt. Col. David O. Whitaker, commander, 27th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

"While in Iraq, this company set the standard for the movement of heavy and oversized equipment, accumulating over one million miles over the treacherous Iraqi roadways. As with most units, this came with sacrifice," added Whitaker.

"Throughout both deployments, there were numerous casualties and difficulties due to countless improvised explosive devices and small arms fire attacks; yet throughout it all, the company excelled.

The success of this company is a direct reflection of its Soldiers, NCOs, and officers, and their dedication to the mission and unit. This dedication to duty was typified by Sgt. Carlos Gil, who paid the ultimate sacrifice for his country during the company's past tour in Iraq," Doss explained.

The 377th is currently a FORSCOM unit which is to be merged into the new 1st Armored Division Sustainment Brigade that will be forming at Fort Bliss as the 1st AD begins to arrive, said Brian Carter, site lead with the Modularity Coordination Cell.

"Now this great company finds itself reorganizing at Fort Bliss, Texas and once again begins to train Soldiers for combat. They are led by the formidable team of Capt. J. Casey Doss and 1st Sgt. Rito G. Vallez. Both of these men are seasoned veterans and absolutely the right team to stand up this unit.

They've already impressed the Team Bliss community with their maturity and professionalism. I think they both have already figured out that Team Bliss is not just a logo here, it's a reality," concluded Whitaker.