



81st BCT Command Information Newsletter

Boots on the ground: the 81st arrives

By Maj. James S. Taylor
81st BCT Public Affairs

Approximately 3,200 members of the 81st Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard arrived at bases recently throughout Iraq and have either begun or are preparing to begin missions that include convoy security, base defense and sustainment operations.

Most servicemembers endured long trips from Kuwait to Iraq and traveled by airplane and wheeled vehicles to their destinations in order to begin participating in Operation

Iraqi Freedom.

Prior to their arrival in Iraq, the 81st had a mandatory stop in Kuwait where they had the opportunity to conduct refinement training on activities such as operating military vehicles and weapon systems.

Besides their military skills, the citizen Soldiers of the 81st bring with them a multitude of highly diverse skill sets and expertise, which they gained from their various civilian occupations. While not in uniform, Soldiers of the 81st work as carpenters, lawyers, nurses, teachers,

See ARRIVAL pg. 2



81st BCT commander, Col. Ronald Kapral, and 81st BCT command sergeant major, Command Sergeant Major Robert Sweeney, uncased the brigade colors during a ceremony in Ramadi Nov. 7 (Photo by Maj. James S. Taylor)

Message from 81st BCT Commander

By Col. Ronald Kapral
81st BCT Commander

By now units have uncased or are preparing to uncasing their colors. The colors are a symbol of the unit. The present policies and practices for their use date back to the Revolutionary War when Gen. George Washington issued an order on Feb. 20, 1776 regarding their use by units. It not only represents the unit but the sacrifice of the Soldiers and their families who serve under those colors. The time has come for our colors to once again fly in Iraq. It is also time for the Soldiers of the 81st to step up and shine and show the world what we can do. I am confident that we will succeed.

Our training is complete and the time has come for us to assume our mission. Training is the foundation for everything we do. The challenge for all of us will be



sustaining our high levels of proficiency in our skills through continued training. Develop yourself by learning something new every day. Perfect your skills and improve your operation each and every day. Challenge yourself by setting goals and staying engaged. The enemy has one focus and

he is patient. Never let your guard down. Always protect yourself and your battle buddy.

You are the finest Soldiers I have ever had the honor to serve with. Be sure to obey all lawful orders and regulations. We set high standards for our people and we won't tolerate those who fall short of those standards. Do not let a stupid mistake ruin your career. We came to do one thing and that is to complete our mission. I am sure the legacy of the 81st will never be forgotten. Be vigilant and stay safe.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 2 ~ 81st arrives in Iraq
Cmd. Sgt. Maj. comments
- Page 3 ~ Vehicle training in Kuwait
- Page 4 ~ Training photos from Kuwait
- Page 5 ~ Chaplain's corner
Health corner
Family support
IG information
- Page 6 ~ Native American heritage
SARC information
- Page 7 ~ Raven gallery
- Page 8 ~ Raven gallery
- Page 9 ~ YMCA supports troops
Retention information
PAO information

HELP US MAKE THE DESERT RAVEN BETTER!

With the 81st BCT spread out across Iraq, it is difficult to cover everyone. We want to share your stories. Please send your photo and story submissions to emily.suhr@us.army.mil by the 10th of each month.



ARRIVAL (Continued from Page 1)

police officers, pilots and nurses, to name just a few. This quality, which is unique to the Guard and Reserve, is proving to be quite valuable to the members of the 81st and the base residents where they are assuming responsibility for improving quality of life, force protection and sustainment operations.

A day in the life of an 81st BCT Soldier will be anything but typical. Soldiers will operate military vehicles mounted with weapons in order to protect other Soldiers and civilians on bases as well as provide security for vehicles transporting supplies to bases. Others will oversee day-to-day activities on bases such as making sure Soldiers are safely provided with essential services like housing and food.

Headquarters, 81st BCT conducted an uncasing of the colors ceremony at Camp Ramadi Nov. 7. This was done following a casing of the colors ceremony which took place at Fort McCoy, Wis. in October prior to the



Soldiers from HQ Co., 81st BCT arrive at Camp Ramadi after dark Oct. 26. The rest of the brigade arrived safely at camps around Iraq, including Al-Asad, Q-West, Camp Anaconda and Al-Taqaddum (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)

brigade leaving the United States.

Col. Ronald Kapral, 81st BCT commander, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom II, has stated that his mission will have been an overall success if he brings everyone who traveled to Iraq with the brigade back home safely.

Kapral stated that he and his

Soldiers are quite fortunate in the support they have received from family members, friends, employers and communities thus far and that they remain focused and dedicated to successfully carrying out the brigade's mission and returning home safely upon its completion. 

Message from 81st BCT Command Sergeant Major

By Command Sgt. Maj.
Robert Sweeney
81st BCT Command Sgt. Maj.

As we begin the next chapter of this deployment and our lives, I want each of us to take the time and reflect on the all things we have been through since July. When I step back and look at the brigade, I am most proud of how we came as individuals and now enter into this mission as a team, a team focused on accomplishing the mission and most importantly taking care of each other. I know at the end of the day, or the mission, I can turn and see our team supporting each other and making a difference no matter what the mission is. That is a true mark of great Soldiers and a great Team! Keep up the good work!

Soon we will be celebrating



Thanksgiving, a holiday tradition first celebrated on our lands by the pilgrims. This holiday was reserved as a way to express gratitude for God's blessings upon them. Over time this holiday has changed and it now has many different meanings to us all. As

we break bread on Thanksgiving, I want you to take the time to thank your families, friends and employers who are also making sacrifices for us while we are here. Then I want you to thank your team members for their support of you and your team. Take care and we'll be out to see you all soon. 





New Vehicles for 81st BCT Soldiers

By Sgt. Amanda Gauthier
81st BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers of the 2-146th Field Artillery Squadron, 81st Brigade Combat team, participated in vehicle and convoy training Oct. 23 at Camp Buering, Kuwait with 3rd Expeditionary Support Command Soldiers who have recently been on missions in Iraq.

This kind of training enables 81st Soldiers to hear about the conditions as they really are. They trained on the Guardian M-1117 Armored Security Vehicle and Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. The vehicles are designed to provide maximum survivability and fire power in one package.

"The intent and the core of the whole training program is to partner up Soldiers who have been up range for the last 10 to 11 months executing the mission that the 81st is going to fall in on," said Maj. Alexander Greenwich, from the 3rd ESC. The 3rd ESC is in charge of logistics for Iraq and will be working closely with the 81st BCT while they are in Iraq.

"We are looking at the face-to-face

dialogue for Soldiers to provide the TTPs, the tactics, techniques and procedures and the lessons learned over the last 10 or 11 months up range," he said.

81st BCT Soldiers spent time in the classroom learning about the vehicles before hands-on training. They crawled around the vehicles, becoming familiar with the vehicle and its unique characteristics. The Soldiers are taught hand signals, the steering system, how to back up the vehicle, all the switches and how to operate all the different systems in the vehicle.

"We realized early on, talking with the 81st leadership, most Soldiers had not had the opportunity to actually crawl around and get familiar with the MRAP. It is a very unique vehicle, it has very top heavy characteristics; the armor in it, getting in, getting out, and some of the features that it provides. It is brand new to most of the Soldiers so the other core tenant of our training plan down here is to get them on the equipment and familiar with it," said Greenwich.

After the class room and hands-on training, the Soldiers are taken outside the wire for convoy operations training.

"In the third phase, the instructors are actually going to take them out of the wire and drive out in Kuwait for a little while under a convoy-type scenario to get them to understand what it is like to drive it at normal operating speed," stated Greenwich.

Now in Iraq, the majority of 81st BCT Soldiers are in the process of learning their jobs by doing them. They are gaining knowledge and experience about the missions they are to perform. Having learned about the MRAP and ASV in Kuwait allows them to focus on other areas of training.

"When they go up North and they begin the relief-in-place and the transfer of authority requirements, and actually get on the road and execute missions, they will already have that training behind them, so they can focus on learning the requirements of their missions on the road. They are learning the routes, they are learning where the threats are and they are learning how to execute combat logistics patrols. Then the leadership doesn't have to worry if they know how to operate the vehicle," stated Greenwich about the benefits of training in Kuwait. 📷



Soldiers of 2-146th FA train on MRAP vehicles Oct. 23 at Camp Buering, Kuwait (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



Soldiers from H Trp., 1-303rd Cav. sprint to their simulated casualties at the Medical Training Simulation Center at Camp Buering, Kuwait Oct. 22 (photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



Spc. Mike Manuel and Spc. Tisha Fravel, both from H Trp., 1-303rd Cav., bandage their simulated casualty Oct. 22 at Camp Buering, Kuwait. The MEDI dummies breathed, blinked, bled, produced a pulse and were monitored throughout the exercise by a computer (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



81st BCT Soldiers test fire their weapons just outside Camp Buering, Kuwait Oct. 21 (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)

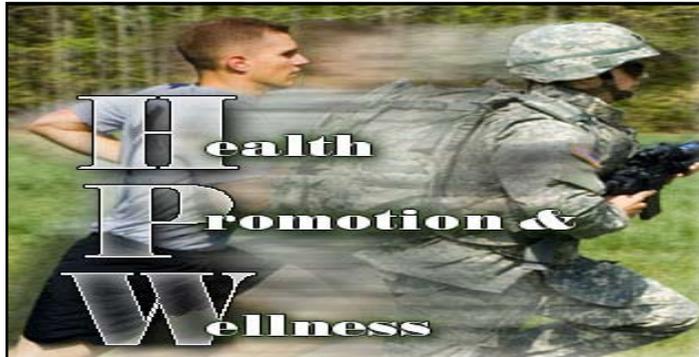


Soldiers from B Co., 1-184th Inf. Bn. inspect an MRAP vehicle during training Oct. 21 at Camp Buering, Kuwait (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By Lt. Col. Carl Steele
81st BCT Chaplain

It's good to be settling into our home away from home, finding out what our roles will be and getting down to work. Finding your place here is a lot like learning to ride a bike. During the transition it is nice to have a set of training wheels. It's good to have someone to show you what they have been doing and how things work. Once they leave, you are on your own. You may wobble a bit, but you will find your balance. The key to the rest of your deployment is keeping your balance, doing your job, working together as a team, finding time to relax, eating right and getting the right amount of sleep. Find ways to stay spiritually balanced as well. Your camp has opportunities for Bible study and worship. Find a place to serve. 📖



By Lt. Col. Stephen Anderson
81st BCT Surgeon Cell

Most of the 81st BCT has arrived in Iraq. With a new climate and environment, unfortunately comes a whole new batch of cold and flu virus. A number of us have already caught the "Iraqi Crud."

Our number one goal is to prevent infection, or if already ill, to prevent spreading the virus. The single most important thing we can do to break the infection chain is to wash our hands. Good hand washing includes warm water, soap and at least one to two minutes of good scrubbing between fingers, front and back of hands and around and under rings. When done washing, if possible, dry your hands, then use the towel to turn off the water. If you use your dirty hands to turn on the water, touching the faucets after cleaning your hands, can re-infect your clean hands. Also, use the waterless hand cleaner frequently during the day, especially after using the rest room and always before eating any kind of finger food, gum, etc. Following these simple guidelines will dramatically reduce the spread of colds and flu. 📖

Helping our families cope back home

By Tom Riggs
WANG J-1, Deployment Cycle Support

In each of our pre-mobilization training events, we emphasized that our communities stand firmly behind our deployed men and women, ready to assist families when they ask. Recently, we were asked and we were able to keep the promise through community partners.

Monique Lunn, a mother of two, contacted us to ask for help with a pending move. Lunn is the wife of Spc. Joshua Lunn from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-303rd Cavalry currently serving in Al Taqaddum Airbase.

Garey Siegerman, Family Assistance Center Coordinator for Everett, handled coordination efforts. Jim Broe from The American Legion stepped in to rent a truck and equipment to make the move easier. Kim Flannagan, the director for Help on the Homefront, the outreach arm of the Patriot Guard Riders, volunteered to provide labor. Monique, of course, worked shoulder to shoulder with the volunteers and "pulled an all-nighter" the night before to pack and be ready when the time came.

"She's sacrificing right now by not having her husband home so that he can go and defend us. The reason I did it was just simply to help," said a volunteer from the Patriot Guard Riders who drove more than 120 miles to help.

Here is a video link from Channel 5 News on the result:

<http://www.king5.com/video/news-index.html?nvid=298588&she=1>

It is important to note that many other agencies stood in the wings ready to lend a hand. The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, Combat Veterans International, Boy Scouts and Disabled American Veterans were all committed to assist if given a chance.

We are completely committed to keeping our promise to you, our Soldiers and families. Regardless of your family's need, don't hesitate to contact us for help. There are volunteers in every community in Washington standing by. The easiest way to connect to these resources is to call the State Family Assistance Hotline at 1-800-364-7492. 📖



Inspector General

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November is Native American Indian Heritage Month

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Sheletha D. Quillin
81st BCT Equal Opportunity Advisor

The Native-Americans of North America are a people of diverse cultures and customs.

The Department of Defense defines Native Americans as persons having origins in the original peoples of North America, and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition. The Bureau of Indian Affairs defines a Native American as one who has a minimum of one-fourth to one-half Native American blood, lives on or near trust lands/reservations, is on a tribal roll recognized by the federal government, has traced ancestry back three generations and has been approved by BIA officials.

Population estimates state that there are over 2 million Native Americans in the U.S. By the year 2050 there will be approximately 4.3 million. That is less than 10 percent of the total population.

There are 500 federally recognized tribes and at least 250 languages. Individual tribes have their own ways of establishing identity, implementing social and political structure, and using various forms of communication. They also have different stories about the creation and origins of man.

Not all Native-Americans look the way they are portrayed in the media. Some are light-skinned with blonde hair and green-eyes. Others are extremely dark-skinned.

Native-Americans recognize the importance of relationships between all living creatures and their



Apache Scout William Major with an officer of the 25th Infantry in the 1930s. American military leaders recognized the need for American Indians in the military as early as the 18th century. (Photo courtesy of www.defenselink.mil)

environment. This is a central theme throughout their culture, including their religious practices. They believe the earth generates life, sustains life and that eventually everyone will return to the earth.

Native Americans' legacy is a celebration of diversity and community among nations. Their distinctive values, spiritual foundation, warrior tradition and oneness with the earth create a very interesting and rich culture. ☐

Quick Facts

- ~ were granted citizenship via the Snyder Act in 1924
- ~ provided over 2,000 English words from their languages
- ~ originated over 60 known medicines, such as aspirin
- ~ Awarded 71 Air Medals, 51 Silver Stars, 47 Bronze Stars, 34 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 2 Medals of Honor during WWI
- ~ more than 44,000 served during WWII
- ~ Private 1st Class Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian, was one of the men who raised the flag at Iwo Jima
- ~ the Navajo Code Talkers served in signal units during WWII to send code in their own language, it was the only code never deciphered
- ~ more than 41,500 served in Vietnam
- ~ possess the highest record of service per capita when compared to other ethnic groups

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

By Master Sgt. CathyJo Wings
81st BCT SARC

If you have been sexually assaulted or if someone has attempted to sexually assault you, report it to your SARC, Unit Victim Advocate, Chaplain or medical personnel. Any one of these four areas can take your restricted report and get you the medical attention or counseling that you might need. A restricted report will remain confidential.

If you choose to tell anyone else about the assault, including your chain of command, battle buddy, etc., it will result in an unrestricted report which gives you the added measure of safety with the involvement of CID, NCIS or MPs. ☐

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THE RAVEN GALLERY



Spc. Thomas Rovik, a JNN technician with 81st BCT, begins the process of laying down cables for AFN Nov. 1 in Ramadi (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



1st Lt. Eric Virgin, from HQ, 81st BCT, dives for the ball during a game of flag football Nov. 5. The 81st BCT Ravens beat the Task Force Ramadi team 28-20 (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Spc. August Wilson and Pfc. Vireak Sok, both from HQ, 81st BCT, conduct maintenance on an M-1151 Nov. 4 in Ramadi (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Sgt. Jonathan Mott and the rest of B Batt., 2-146th FA load up Oct. 29 for their flight to COS Marez (Photo by Sgt. Virgil Akins).



Members of HQ, 81st BCT navigate around the wet Ground Oct. 27, a day after arriving in Ramadi (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



THE RAVEN GALLERY



Col. Ronald Kapral, the 81st BCT commander, discusses plans to heighten base security with Iraqi Brig. Gen. Addal. In their first meeting, Addal, who commands approximately 500 Iraqi Soldiers on a separate section of Camp Ramadi, said, "Anything for the security of the camp, I'm with you." (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Spc. Eric Taunt and Spc. David Johnson of HHB, 2-146th FA (Task Force Scorpion) run cable for AFN to CHUs as one of their first missions as COS Marez's Mayor Cell S-6 (Photo by Sgt. Virgil Akins).

Spc. Tamara Brown, Staff Sgt. Ian Bamman and Lt. Col. Stephen Anderson, all from HQ, 81st BCT, play around in Ramadi Oct. 27 (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Jim Haggengruber interviews 1st Lt. Joseph Cluever of HQ, 81st BCT in Ramadi for a Spokane magazine Nov. 4 (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Col. Ronald Kapral, the 81st BCT commander, gives a pep talk to The Ravens flag football team Nov. 5 during half time (Photo by Sgt. Emily Suhr)



YMCA opens its doors to deployed Soldiers' family members

The Department of Defense announced Oct. 1 that families of deployed members of the National Guard and Reserve, active duty servicemembers on independent duty and their families, and active duty servicemembers and their families assigned to selected bases would be eligible for free family memberships at participating YMCAs in their local community.

The free YMCA memberships for Guard and Reserve families will be available while the servicemember is deployed for a minimum of six months. The deploying servicemember will also be eligible for a three month pre- and post-deployment membership to help promote family participation.

Memberships will be issued on a first come, first served basis with 300 to 450 family memberships available per joint base location.

Additionally, 32 hours a month of free respite child care will be available for families of deployed National Guard and Reserve and geographically dispersed active duty servicemembers in 10 states, including Washington and Montana, with YMCA child care pro-

grams pre-approved by DoD. DoD is working with the Armed Services YMCA on ways to expand the number of YMCA child care programs eligible to offer respite care in order to meet this critical need.

Participating YMCAs have agreed to cap their monthly fees and waive all joining fees so there is no cost for servicemembers and their families for membership. Some classes may have fees associated with them and if so, the servicemember will be responsible for those costs.

"Since the Civil War, the Armed Services YMCA has been committed to supporting our troops and improving their quality of life," said Executive Director of the Armed Services YMCA, retired Navy Rear Adm. Frank Gallo. "This new initiative will go a long way to help America's military families live healthy lives."

Signing up for the program requires a YMCA/DoD eligibility form. The YMCA/DoD eligibility form is available at <http://www.militaryonesource.com>. A completed eligibility form, a copy of deployment orders (where applicable) and the military ID are all that are needed for the local YMCA to process memberships. 

81st BCT Retention Team

Soldiers of the 81st Brigade Combat Team, it is that time to think about your future. As the retention noncommissioned officer for the 81st BCT, I can tell you we want you to stay in and finish your career with the BCT. It is time to think of what we can do for you. We can help put some money in your pocket and help with your education. Currently the bonuses are \$15,000 for six years and \$7,500 for three years. We can also help out with many education programs, such as student loan repayment programs. The bonuses are TAX FREE while you are deployed. You need to be with in one year of your ETS or less to qualify. Please contact your unit retention NCO, myself, Sgt. 1st Class Frazier, or Staff Sgt. Wysock.

If you have questions about benefits, enlistment and bonus possibilities, contact:

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