America's Tank Division

IRONSIDE

Winter Edition 2006

2BCT
Eyes on Iraq

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IRONSIDE MAGAZINE

In Action Series

1st Armored Division

WINTER EDITION 2006

Photo by 1LT James Collado

2BCT
in Kuwait

1st Armored Division

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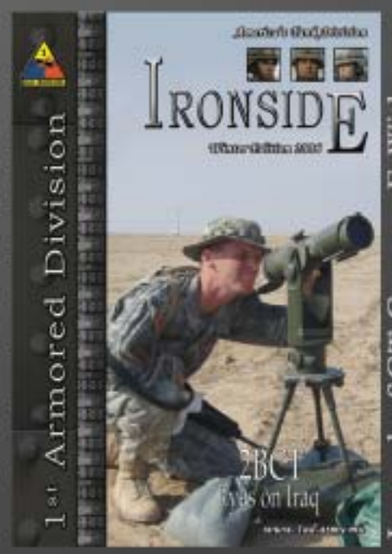

Image by SGT Gregory F. Withrow

Photo by SGT Gregory F. Withrow
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Division Commander Speaks

MG Fred D. Robinson, Jr.

Iron Soldiers. You have already made 2006 a milestone year in Old Ironsides Division history. We are deploying two brigade combat teams in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, conducting numerous gunneries, supporting disaster relief operations in Pakistan, and now preparing to say farewell to some of our proud units as we welcome new units into our team.

Division CSM Blackwood and I have been to Kuwait to see our Soldiers from the Ready First and Striker Brigade Combat Teams. I am proud to say that these Soldiers are ready for any mission they are assigned.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team is on its way into Iraq to take its place under the control of Multi-National Corps Iraq. They've offloaded their vehicles and equipment, completed their in processing and are continuing to refine their already excellent combat skills.

The Second BCT is training hard every day at Camp Buehring, Kuwait continuing to prepare to respond throughout the footprint as the theater call forward force. They are maximizing the firing ranges, honing their warrior tasks and hitting the books in Arabic language classes.

No matter what the task, these Soldiers are proud and their morale is high. And I'm telling you – these Soldiers are constantly displaying their spirit, patriotism and their devotion to duty. Their fellow Soldiers are proving to be true role models for the whole world to emulate. and their fellow Soldiers - I had the honor and privilege of administering the oath of reenlistment to more than a hundred of these fine men and women – just superb Iron Soldiers.

The tip of the Iron spear is sharp.

While our brigades are supporting U.S. Central Command operations to include Operation Iraqi Freedom, and 4th Brigade and 123rd Main Support Battalion's disaster relief efforts in Pakistan, the rest of the Division is also preparing for combat. We welcome back elements of the 7th Command Support Group and the 123rd MSB is commended while supporting the division's war on excess.

The division leadership and staff are continuing to build and train as a team during Exercise Iron Focus. Using scenarios developed by the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., the staff, all the critical separates to include 501st Military Intelligence Battalion and 141 Signal Battalion, and non-deployed major subordinate commands such as the Division Engineer Battalion, Division Support Battalion, and Division Artillery are training to fight their part of the battle. All are learning how the division's Battlefield Operating Systems work as one and becoming experts at the Military Decision Making Process and conducting effects and event based operations.

The Black Hawks from 1-1 Cavalry Regiment once again clobbered the ranges at Graf during the month-long gunnery in January and 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment showed their tremendous capability to the force. The 1st Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, in Babenhausen set the standard for Individual Replacement Training exceeding all expectations of this critical USAREUR mission.

And while we are welcoming new Soldiers daily to the Old Ironsides team we must also welcome those units from our sister division in Germany, the 1st Infantry. It is with great sadness that we bid farewell to the Soldiers of the Iron Eagle Brigade as they prepare to move to Fort Reilly, Kan., but we picked up a tremendous group of warriors in 4th BDE, 1 ID. They have already jumped on board and began training with the division.

These changes are not unexpected. They are a part of the overall Global Restationing plan that was announced last year. While the changes may realign and demand changes to our traditional way of thinking and manning the force, we must remember that our Army is transforming itself to answer the nation's call to duty during this ongoing Global War on Terrorism.

Iron Soldiers, family members and our civilian workforce, you are all making the world a safer place for our families and families around the world. I am proud to be a part of your ranks and to serve as your commanding general. I personally want to thank you for your contributions to world peace and democracy.

Iron Soldiers: making a difference every day.

Pouring Steel Rain in Grafenwhoer

1/94 FA Delivers Deep Fire

Story and photo by SGT Sam Smith

The 1st Armored Division's 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment (MLRS) launched rockets from their multiple launch rocket systems at the Grafenwoehr Training Area October 2005.

The "Deep Steel" battalion launched 54 dummy rockets, within a 48-hour time span, at the ranges.

The Soldiers only get to fire their rockets annually. According to Army officials, due to the transformation of the Army, most MLRS Soldiers are crossing over into more of an infantry mission.

"Every Soldier should be able to do infantry type skills, but our (primary military occupational specialty) is to shoot rockets and deliver deep fire for the 1st Armored Division commander," said CPT Pete Kremzar, Charlie Battery Commander.

"So, really as a field artillery Soldier and officer we need to do both missions and be able to execute any mission our nation calls on us to do."

The MLRS carries two 'pods' with six rockets each on top of an extended Bradley chassis. The weapon system is primarily for suppression and counter fire of enemy air defenses, light materie and personnel. The hi-tech launcher features an automated self-loading and self-aiming system.

Even though having a MLRS send 'steel rain' several miles away isn't being emphasized in today's Army, the launchers are still proud of their job.

"[We] take pride in everything [we're] doing especially with a launcher vehicle," said SPC Daniel Hawkins, a MLRS driver.

"You have to take pride in it and take good care of it." ◻

Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment fired off rockets from their multiple launch rocket system, or MLRS, at the Grafenwoehr Training Area Oct. 13.

123RD MSB

A HELPING HAND IN THE HIMALAYAS

Story and photo by Arthur Mcqueen, USAREUR Public Affairs

"Mighty Main" Soldiers with the 123rd Main Support Battalion fill a bladder with 3,000 gallons of water for Pakistan's earthquake victims.

The space an Army unit uses is called its footprint, and in the earthquake-battered Kashmir region of Pakistan, the available ground is well-trampled.

The 1st Armored Division's 123rd Main Support Battalion's Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit Team 1 has a small footprint. While that makes the unit popular with those pressed for space, ROWPU Team 1's product makes it essential.

U.S. Army Europe deployed Task Force 212, centered on the 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, to provide humanitarian assistance to the Pakistani people following the Oct. 8 earthquake.

Operating a surgical hospital in a remote and devastated region requires access to large amounts of clean water. ROWPU Team 1 provides that water for the hospital and for task force Soldiers.

MAJ Robert Piotrowski, 212th MASH deputy chief of clinical services, said, "The bulk water from the ROWPU team is critical for hospital operations. Without clean water, you can't sterilize instruments, or wash hands, or patients, or anything. And here, there is no clean water available without them."

Members of ROWPU Team 1 started their mission from Dexheim, Germany, traveling to the deployment hub in Ramstein AB, for their flight to Pakistan. Shortly after arrival, the team convoyed from Chaklala military base outside Islamabad to the capital of the Kashmir province, in order to provide this essential service to the relief effort.

"You feel blessed seeing all that these people have gone through; blessed at what you have," said PFC Kristie Hawkins, a water purification specialist from Dayton, Ohio.

Armed with a 30-kilowatt electrical generator and up to four 3,000-gallon bladders, the team is prepared to keep the task force supplied with water for an extended period.

The first step for the team was to locate a source of relatively clean water.

"We didn't know what we were dealing with at first," said SSG Alonza Carswell, team noncommissioned officer in charge.

"Petroleum contaminants are outside of our ability to filter, and we avoid water with extreme alkali content," said Carswell. "The preventative medicine team tested the water here, and we started with a slightly higher chemical content to kill whatever was in the water, then backed it off until we were at the right levels."

Once the water source is located, the "raw" water is pumped to the ROWPU unit.

Based on the mudiness of the water - how many biological contaminants are present – the levels of four different chemicals are determined.

First is a polymer coagulant, which attracts and binds with particulate matter in the water, where it is filtered out.

Citric acid is then added to control the acidity/baseness of the water, followed by sodium hexametaphosphate and calcium hypochlorite, to further control acidity and kill different varieties of microorganisms.

The result is clean, pure, water with a minimal amount of minerals.

Just one and a quarter hours after linking up to a source of raw water, the ROWPU unit can be filling a clean water bladder at the rate of 600 gallons per hour.

The output is checked once an hour on the hour during operation, and when a bladder is sitting full, it is checked every two hours. If several tests in a row show the same results, the testing intervals are slowly extended.

The hospital uses large quantities of water for cleaning injuries and sterilizing equipment, and the team knows their contribution is appreciated.

Iron Eagles, 123rd MSB
Continue to Aid Pakistan Through the Holidays

Story by SGT Gregory F. Withrow

Members of the Australian Defense Force team unload humanitarian assistance stores and personal kits in the town of Dhanni from an American Chinook helicopter. (courtesy photo)

From Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan to Muzaffarabad, directing mission and movement is only part of 1st Armored Division's contribution to the ongoing multinational relief mission in earthquake ravaged Pakistan.

As well as providing command and control of the battalion-plus sized task force, troops from the division's 4th Brigade are supporting the living conditions, pushing supplies forward and interfacing with multinational forces while away from their own loved ones.

Although Soldiers constantly train together for missions, getting to know the other members of their team, this is a different sort of deployment.

"This deployment was very different than what units practice during a deployment exercise," explained CPT Marshall Tway, commander HHC, 2nd Battalion, 501st Aviation Regiment and member of Task Force Eagle. "We are a task force composed of personnel drawn from all over the brigade."

Natural disasters are by nature, unpredictable, but still require quick and decisive action to overcome. Iron Soldiers made haste to respond. Deploying the Iron Soldiers began by rounding up the troops from 1AD's 4th Brigade and 123rd Main Support Battalion, and transpired in a very short time.

"It was a matter of finding the right people with the right skill sets to enable a very small brigade staff element," said Tway. "The amazing piece was the entire element was ready to go in about 48 hours from the initial notification."

Yet even with the rapid deployment and working in conjunction with multinational forces from Great Britain, Australia and Pakistan, things have gone smoothly for the Soldiers of America's Tank Division.

"Our multinational operations have been almost seamless," said Tway. "There are the minor issues that need to be worked, but those have come from variations in compatibility in the (units' standard operating procedures) and were quickly resolved."

The mentality of soldiering despite adversity is evident in the multinational personnel as well as the Americans.

"The attitude that prevails here is one of mutual cooperation to accomplish the unit and national mission," explained Tway. "We have had American Aircraft Technical Inspectors teaching RAF Airmen and Australian Soldiers, and vice versa."

The goal of international aid to a disaster area remains a top priority.

American Soldiers have a deep compassion for the children. Knowing they are here for them helps take the sting out of being away from their own loved ones said Tway.

Yet, a little inspiration for the those in need and the American Soldier can be found in the smallest of things, explained Tway.

"The most popular toy in Pakistan right now is a little Chinook Helicopter, the latest version even has an American Flag on it," said Tway. ◘

Honoring the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

1AD Welcomes Dr. George Henderson

Story and photos by PFC Tanya C. Polk

Dr. George Henderson, founder of the Human Relations Program at the University of Oklahoma shares his life experiences and educates Soldiers and civilians on the motives of Dr. Martin Luther King at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield dining facility. Henderson has received several merits and awards to include the State of Oklahoma Lifetime Achievement Award and the induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

"Let us hold fast the dream of equality," said Dr. George Henderson to the crowd of Iron Soldiers, quoting the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Henderson joined the 1st Armored Division in their celebration of Dr. King's birthday at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield's dining facility Jan. 10. A former professor and founder of the Human Relations Program at the University of Oklahoma, Henderson shared with the Soldiers and civilians his insight on Dr. King's importance.

"I must recognize the accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr." said Henderson to the crowd in the dining facility. "I want to remind myself and others how important he was."

Prior to Henderson's presentation, two students of Gen. H.H. Arnold High School read their prize winning essays they dedicated to Dr. King.

"As I listened to the two young people give their presentation, I smiled because they remind me that there is still hope," said Henderson. "When young people can be as insightful as the two that I've heard, then the rest of us should listen to them."

COL George Lockwood, 1st Armored Division's chief of staff, and SPC Negasi Tesfay, 1AD Soldier of the month cut a cake celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield dining facility, Jan 10.

Helping young people has been Henderson's motivation throughout his career. Despite his several achievements including the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Medal for the Outstanding College and University Professor, State of Oklahoma Black Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award, and his induction into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame, Henderson bases his accomplishments on the achievements of those he taught.

"I don't count my success on the academic titles, and the awards, and the induction into the Hall of Fame to be my greatest achievements," said Henderson. "My greatest achievement happens to be the behaviors and successes of the people who used to be my students."

Now standing in Dr. King's footprints, Henderson works to achieve Dr. King's goals.

"One of (Martin Luther King's) goals was to get a large number of individuals committed to helping others. He wanted all people to say 'free at last- free at last,'" said Henderson.

"We haven't achieved that yet, but we are certainly further along now then when we started."

The Army, too, has shown progression of equal opportunity.

"The military has indeed not only talked about but has done a lot to provide equal opportunity throughout the organization," said Henderson. "You can see how many individuals have moved up into the leadership ranks and are doing exceptionally well since Dr. Martin Luther King.

"What Dr. Henderson reminds everyone here is that we all have to grasp the opportunity to celebrate the meaning and the purpose of Martin Luther King's life- everyday, all day long, throughout the year," said Col. George Lockwood, 1AD chief of staff, after Henderson's inspirational speech.

"He showed us it takes but a moment of time and a minimal energy spent to pass an encouraging word to one who will be glad it's sent."

Just as Henderson has followed in the footsteps of Dr. King, he hopes that the Soldiers can continue that tradition.

"I want (the Soldiers) to do all that he or she can to make it possible for all people to feel that they are equal members of our society," said Henderson. "It's up to you now to take another generation on to that promise land of equality."

"I want to share my life experiences as an example to help others," said Henderson. "And, that's my project." ▫

Deploying 2BCT

838th Transportation, 1st ID help board 1AD cargo

Story and photo by PFC Tanya C. Polk

U.S. Army Europe transportation units ensured that the 1st Armored Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers could concentrate on getting ready for their mission.

During October, the 21st Theater Command units moved the brigade's vehicles and equipment from Baumholder to the Antwerp, Belgium seaport.

"Today we're loading the (cargo ship) Cape Douglas for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team," said COL John Hanson, commander of the 838th Transportation Battalion.

The 838th is responsible for water terminal operations in northern Europe, Hansen said.

After arriving in Antwerp, Soldiers and civilians worked as a team to offload the trains, stage and inspect the cargo, verify all dimensional data and ensure documentation is done properly, he said. Contractors drove their vehicles aboard the ship.

"The 1st Armored Division is completely focused right now on pre-deployment operations, certification of their units and the mission that has to occur once they arrive in theater on the other end," continued Hanson.

Belgian contractors assist 2BCT's deployment by loading tracked vehivles aboard the Cape Douplas in Antwerp, Belgium.

To allow them to do that, V Corps has tasked other units to assist in deploying elements of 1AD.

Soldiers with the 1st Infantry Division also joined the team supporting 2BCT's deployment.

"Our main purpose is force protection and we're also out here directing traffic and making sure that there is a clear path so the contractors can safely drive all of the track vehicles aboard," said SPC Andrew Patterson, a 1st Infantry combat engineer.

"1AD helped us when we left so it feels great to return the favor," he said.

"Soldiers, host nation support and contractors all came together here to load Cape Douglass and to deploy 1st Armored Division into combat safely, efficiently and on time," he said.

"In the past, we've requested as many as 150 to 200 "port-to-fort" activity drivers that help us drive the equipment onto the ship. They can drive pretty much anything that's in the Army inventory including M1s and engineering equipment," Hanson said. "This allows the 1st Armored Division (Soldiers) to take leave, to conduct additional training and focus on whatever they need to do at home station."

"It's like a big parking garage. It's a large vessel with several decks for the cargo," said Scott Merry, a marine transportation specialist with the Military Sealift Command Europe.

"We offloaded more than 300 pieces of redeployment cargo (returning) from Iraq and uploaded more than 800 wheeled vehicles, tanks, large containers, and other equipment," he said.

In the process of offloading and uploading 2nd BCT's cargo, the crew had to overcome a few obstacles.

"They worked all day loading the tracked vehicles, wheeled vehicles, simultaneously doing lift-on, lift-off operations with a mobile crane," said Hanson.

"It's been raining, so cargo operations have gone a little bit slower because the decks are slippery. Everybody just needs a little more time to get the operations done.

"However, the cargo is being loaded safely and without damaging it, because it is going to a combat zone," he added.

In just over 24 hours after the start of operations and more than 21 million pounds heavier, the Cape Douglass was ready to set sail.

But before the ship was undocked, a super-cargo team consisting of three 2nd BCT Soldiers climbed aboard.

"We're escorting all of our equipment from here to Kuwait," said 1LT Brandon McCarter, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment and officer in charge of the super-cargo crew.

SPC Michael Sullivan and PFC Jeffery Whitman, mechanics also with 1-35 AR accompanied McCarter.

"We take care of any possible problems with the vehicles on board," said Sullivan.

After two days of constant operations, the support crew successfully completed the mission. Cape Douglass set sail. Once it reaches a seaport in Kuwait, the Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team will link up with their equipment.

"We're here to provide first-class service to the 1st Armored Division," said Hanson. "The plan was executed to standard." □

A Farewell to Iron Brigade

Story by PFC Evan Richardson

Photo by MSG David Melancon

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team said farewell November 10, to their families and the Baumholder Community at a departure ceremony at Minnick Field.

The ceremony marked the completion of the brigade's deployment preparations. 2BCT spent much of the last year performing gunnery exercises and field training tasks in preparation for deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 05-07.

The departure ceremony began with a moving invocation by Chaplain Robert Roetzel. MG Fred D. Robinson then spoke of how well the brigade trained over the past year and how well the 2nd Brigade Combat Team was prepared for their deployment. Robinson then spoke of the determination and spirit of "Iron Soldiers" as many of them were preparing to leave Baumholder for the second time in three years. He told the Soldiers that they would have hardships placed upon them at times, but they would also see rewards in the missions they were going to perform, specifically, the smiles on children's faces that they would assist during their deployment.

COL Robert E. Scurlock Jr. spoke of the importance and relevance of the mission ahead and provided for the Soldiers and families a reason for our deployment. Additionally, he spoke of the sacrifices of those that have gone before us, and focused the assembled audience on the challenges ahead for 2BCT.

In honor of Veteran's Day, the names of the 2BCT Soldiers that paid the ultimate sacrifice in support of their country during OIF 1 were remembered during a moving tribute. Soldiers from the division salute battery, from the 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery, fired one artillery round for each fallen Soldier. Following the tribute, the individual battalions brought their colors forward to be cased by each battalion commander and command sergeant major. After all the battalion colors were cased COL Scurlock and CSM Jose Santos came forward to case the brigade colors, reinforcing the fact that the brigade was prepared for deployment.

Following the casing of the colors, the brigade conducted a pass in review. This gave MG Robinson, COL Scurlock, and the rest of the command group one last opportunity to bid farewell to the Iron Brigade Soldiers. ◻

Soldiers from the "Strike Hard" brigade present the colors during 2BCT's farewell ceremony in Baumholder, Germany.

2nd Brigade Combat Team

Right: Soldiers with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment clear a room at a Military Opperations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) site at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Photo by 1LT Timoty Connors

Above: Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment conduct weapons training at Camp Buehring. Photo by PFC Joshua Ramey

Below: SGT Devon Lomax, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment prepares to store a HEAT round in his Abrams Tank. Photo by SPC Edward Palacio

SSG Jose S. Saxtos coaches PVT Richard L. Larossa, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, as he zeros and test fires his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Photo by PFC Joshua Ramey

Uncasing the Colors at Camp Buehring

Story and photos by PFC Evan Richardson

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Armored Division, uncased their unit color at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 23.

After establishing residence and receiving their vehicles, the only thing remaining was for 2nd BCT to uncase their colors, affirming their readiness for any mission ahead of them. MG Fred D. Robinson, 1AD commanding general, addressed the deployed Soldiers on their arrival the day before Thanksgiving.

"Your most important asset is your confidence. You are trained. You are ready for the fight," said MG Robinson to the troops.

"Be confident that you can accomplish any mission that is set before you. I have complete faith and confidence that you're ready."

"You're mission here is to continue to prepare for battle, continue to prepare to get in the fight. Take every opportunity to train, train, train," MG Robinson continued.

As the ceremony came to a close, COL Robert E. Scurlock emphasized the importance of combat readiness by saying "Continue to train hard, take care of each other, and continue disciplined preparation. Maintain that fighting edge, and keep the knife edge sharp." □

COL Robert Scurlock, 2nd Brigade commander, and CSM Jose Santos, 2nd Brigade sergeant major, uncase the colors after 2BCT's arrival at Camp Buehring Kuwait, Nov. 23.

Thanksgiving in Kuwait

1AD Leaders serve deployed Soldiers

Story by SFC David Dockett Photos by PFC Evan Richardson

On Thanksgiving Day, 2005, the Iron Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, celebrated the holiday in new and very different surroundings. The brigade recently deployed to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, getting settled-in and continuing training for their part in Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.

The Soldiers are deployed and far away from home this holiday season, but they found plenty to be thankful for out in the Kuwaiti desert. As they entered the dining facility, they were greeted by their commanders and sergeants major, serving a Thanksgiving feast. The menu included many traditional Thanksgiving items.

Soldiers washed down their feast with non-alcoholic sparkling white and red wines, along with the season's first eggnog. For dessert, there was fresh fruit cake, southern style pecan pie, American apple pie, pumpkin pie and sweet potato pie. The cooks of all the units on Camp Buehring worked hard all evening to provide a meal fit for a king.

"A lot of preparation and effort went into today's meal," said SFC Donald R. Boyer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry. "We love getting the opportunity to provide a great meal for everyone that is getting ready to deploy north into Iraq."

The amount of effort was appreciated by the Soldiers, who enjoyed their meal while surrounded by orange and brown streamers, ice sculptures and large, elaborate decorated cakes. Being served by the chain of command was "icing on the cake." "Serving Soldiers on Thanksgiving is a tradition," said CSM Jose Santos, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's command sergeant major. "Their Leaders appreciate the Soldier's service and this is one way that we can show our thanks." □

2BCT Commander COL Robert E. Scurlock and LTC Robert Cheatham the 4-27 FA Commander prepare a Thanksgiving plate for one of the Iron Soldiers.

From Left: PVT Robert Mahon, SGT Reginald Clark, and PFC Alberto Peters sit down to enjoy the Thanksgiving 2005 meal in Kuwait. "It makes you actually feel Thanksgiving with all of the decorations around," said PVT Mahon.

Stay Army!

2BCT Reenlists 84 in Kuwait

Story by MSG David Melancon Photo by SFC David Dockett

MG Fred D. Robinson, 1st Armored Division commanding general, administers the oath of enlistment to 84 2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Nov. 23rd. Many of these Soldiers helped themselves and their families by taking advantage of reenlistment bonuses and other combat zone incentives offered to them while at the same time they helped the division get off to a strong start with its annual reenlistment mission.

Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team started their second deployment to southwest Asia on a high note Nov. 23 with one of the largest reenlistment ceremonies in 1st Armored Division history.

MG Fred D. Robinson, 1st Armored Division commanding general, administered the oath of reenlistment to 84 Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

According to the division's reenlistment office, last month's ceremony was the second largest in division history. The top spot was established on Memorial Day 2004 when more than 100 Soldiers from Task Force 1st Armored Division reenlisted in Iraq.

This year's mass reenlistment took place during the BCT's color uncasing ceremony.

The 2nd BCT is in the early stages of its second rotation to southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For many 2nd BCT Soldiers, this deployment marks the second tour in the U.S. Central Command's area of operation but their first face-to-face meeting with their commanding general.

"It was great to see the division commander come all the way here to where we're deployed," said SPC Oscar Laos, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment. "This is my second deployment with 2nd Brigade, I really felt secure that this unit is prepared to come back to Iraq. That's why I reenlisted to stay in 1-6."

"It was cool to meet the 1st Armored Division commander in person, and shaking his hand," said SGT Shawn Nelson, HHC 1-6 Infantry medic.

According to reenlistment office statistics, 35 first-term Soldiers signed up for their second hitch, 49 mid-career and 26 career Soldiers signed up for this reenlistment. A dozen Soldiers signed on for indefinite tours of duty.

Overall, the 2nd BCT Soldiers signed up for 490 years of continued service and $703,854 in bonuses.

"The 1st Armored Division continues to set the pace for retention within the Army," said SGM Gary Schoolfield, division retention sergeant major. "As long as we continue to fight the Global War on Terrorism, we are going to need America's finest men and women to stay with our team. The 2nd BCT has proven this to be true with this awesome pre-holiday reenlistment ceremony."

Although reenlistment boils down to an individual's decision, Schoolfield said, leadership from the commanding general and other division leaders down to the Soldier's squad leader is what helps a Soldier decide to reenlist.

"I've been thinking of reenlisting since Basic Training," said PFC Michael Torres, HHC, 1-6 Infantry. "The Army has given me and my family a stable life that we enjoy."

Reenlistment rates for the Army and Marine Corps are the highest they've been in a long time, specifically in units with high deployment tempos, military leaders told the House Armed Services Committee Nov. 3.

Reenlistment rates are highest among married soldiers and Marines, who make up the bulk of the force, the leaders said. The troops reenlist knowing they will go back to Iraq, but it doesn't change their determination, they said. The high reenlistment rate in units that have deployed multiple times can be attributed to the camaraderie that forms between soldiers who have been in combat together.

"These guys and gals are in it for the fight," said BG John F. Kelly, legislative assistant to the Marine Corps commandant. "That's where they want to be and what they want to do."□

1st Armored Division's War on Excess

Editorial by BG Michael Tucker

Photos by PFC Tanya C. Polk

Soldiers with the 501st Forward Support Battalion help move excess items at the Free Chicken turn-in site, Dexheim.

"Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!" Using a humorous phrase from an old Monty Python movie, BG Michael Tucker is exhorting 1st Armored Division units to haul out their excess property and get rid of it. Across the division area, units are doing just that, and sending their mountains of excess to Dexheim.

Shortly after taking over as 1AD's Assistant Division Commander for Support, BG Tucker declared that the division would wage a "war on excess." In spite of substantial efforts during Reconstitution, divisional units still have considerable amounts of excess property or supplies on hand. Against this backdrop, the ADC(S) began personal motorpool visits in which he made it clear that units were being granted near-total amnesty, as long as they hauled all their excess out into the open, consolidated it and began to get rid of it. As units began to "bring out their dead" in earnest, division logisticians realized the only way to tame the mountain of excess was to establish a central place to process everything, and shift most of the work to a single unit.

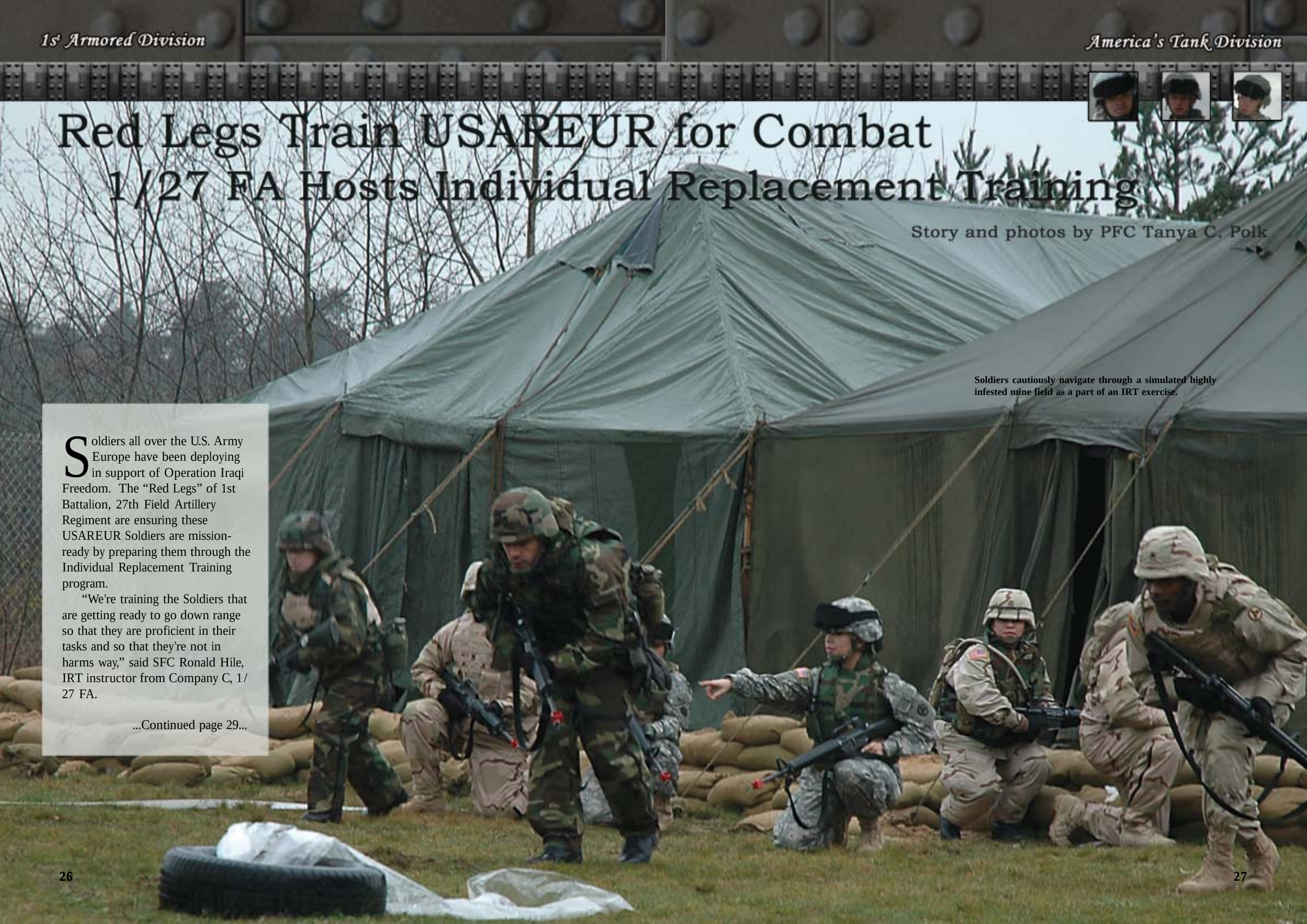
With a division footprint that extends hundreds of kilometers each direction, the location that seemed to be the best choice was Dexheim, the home of the 123rd Main Support Battalion. If a processing point were to be established in Dexheim, the 123rd MSB with its truck company of more than 30 tractors and more than 60 trailers would be able to handle the movement piece, as well as the identification, sorting and processing pieces. The division's largest battalion cleared out a motorpool, borrowed a fest tent from 21st Theater Support Command, and sent empty trailers to motorpools across Ironland.

Instead of the normal multi-week turn-in process, units would only be expected to accomplish rudimentary steps, such as separating serviceable from unserviceable items and tagging all items. Units would then load their organized excess onto the trailers pre-positioned in their area and call the 123rd for pick up. In most cases, trailers are picked up the next day.

The so-called "Free Chicken" excess processing yard in Dexheim can benefit 1AD units in two ways. It is an easy way to get rid of the excess that has accumulated in a unit's areas for years. Second, units can arrange for free issue of any one of the thousands of items on-hand in the yard. Because of a grave budgetary constraint facing the division this year, this free issue aspect of Free Chicken may turn out to have broad impacts on the division. MG Robinson, the 1AD commanding general, has said he is dead-set against having to reduce any training, because—whether the division is well-funded or not—we must continue to prepare our Soldiers and units for battle. Therein lies the potential benefit of the Dexheim operation: every serviceable item redirected to a unit that needs it represents an item that the unit didn't have to purchase. At the unit level, as well as the division level, this operation truly offers a chance to stretch our dollars and it gets items which are excess in some units to those who desperately need those items in other units.

To take advantage of this operation: Call the 123rd MSB Support Operations office at DSN 334-5557 (or civilian 06133-69-557). If you need to fill BII shortages for a truck, or discovered that you are short other MTOE items or supplies, check out the Free Chicken spreadsheet on the Iron GreenWeb. If the items are listed as being on hand, the 123rd MSB Support Operations office can arrange to hold the items for a day or so, until you pick them up. Repair parts are also available from the yard and are listed on the spreadsheet. Adjustments are being made to the division's repair parts ordering systems, so that if you order certain high-demand or high-value parts that are on hand in Dexheim, your requisition will be flagged, and you will be notified that the part is available to you for free from the 123rd.

Remember: "bring out your dead" and help 1AD stretch its dollars!



Red Legs Train USAREUR for Combat
1/27 FA Hosts Individual Replacement Training

Story and photos by PFC Tanya C. Polk

Soldiers cautiously navigate through a simulated highly infested mine field as a part of an IRT exercise.

Soldiers all over the U.S. Army Europe have been deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The "Red Legs" of 1st Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment are ensuring these USAREUR Soldiers are mission-ready by preparing them through the Individual Replacement Training program.

"We're training the Soldiers that are getting ready to go down range so that they are proficient in their tasks and so that they're not in harms way," said SFC Ronald Hile, IRT instructor from Company C, 1/27 FA.

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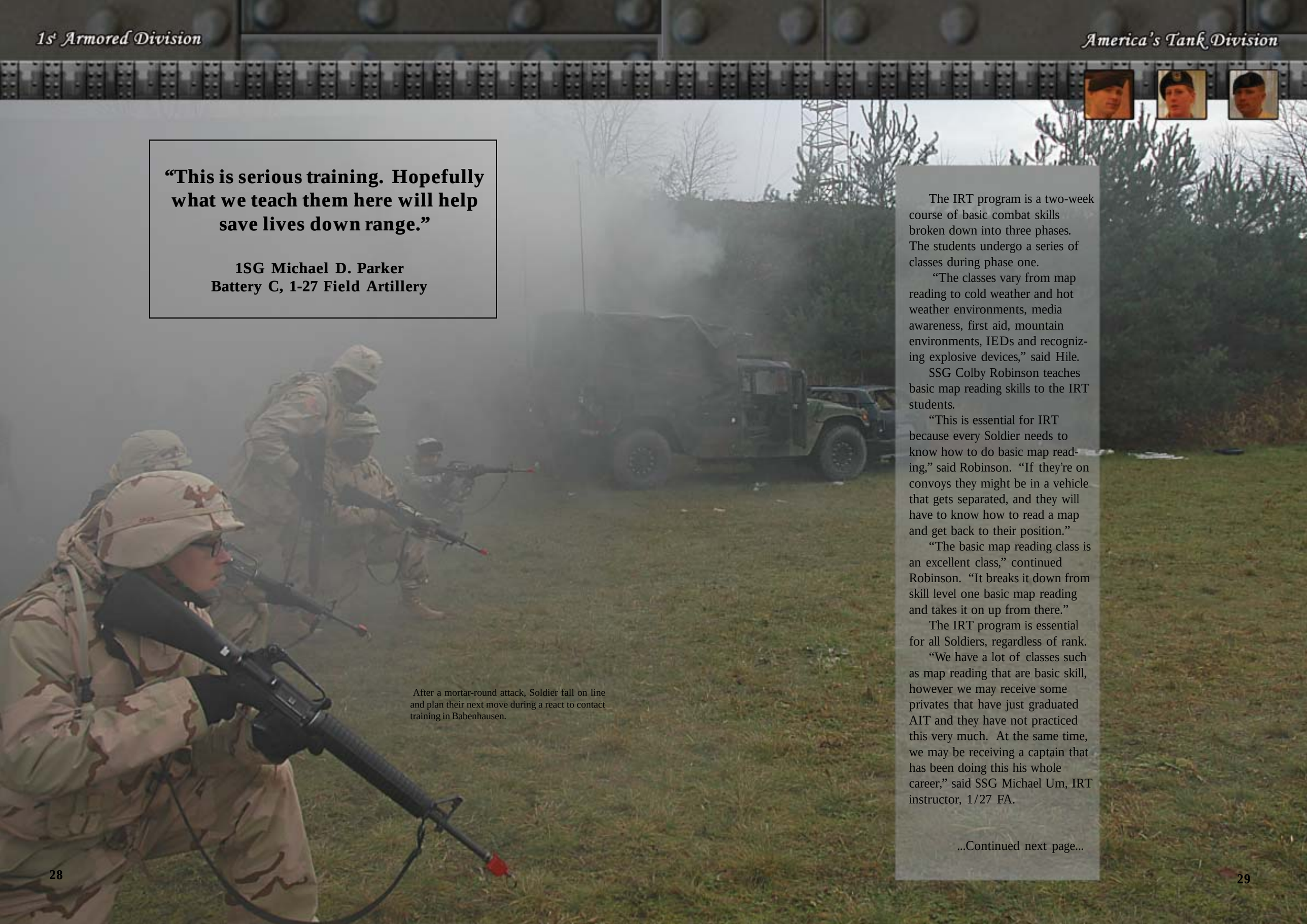

"This is serious training. Hopefully what we teach them here will help save lives down range."

1SG Michael D. Parker
Battery C, 1-27 Field Artillery

After a mortar-round attack, Soldier fall on line and plan their next move during a react to contact training in Babenhausen.

The IRT program is a two-week course of basic combat skills broken down into three phases. The students undergo a series of classes during phase one.

"The classes vary from map reading to cold weather and hot weather environments, media awareness, first aid, mountain environments, IEDs and recognizing explosive devices," said Hile.

SSG Colby Robinson teaches basic map reading skills to the IRT students.

"This is essential for IRT because every Soldier needs to know how to do basic map reading," said Robinson. "If they're on convoys they might be in a vehicle that gets separated, and they will have to know how to read a map and get back to their position."

"The basic map reading class is an excellent class," continued Robinson. "It breaks it down from skill level one basic map reading and takes it on up from there."

The IRT program is essential for all Soldiers, regardless of rank.

"We have a lot of classes such as map reading that are basic skill, however we may receive some privates that have just graduated AIT and they have not practiced this very much. At the same time, we may be receiving a captain that has been doing this his whole career," said SSG Michael Um, IRT instructor, 1/27 FA.

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Left: PVT Merri Nglracheluolu, 2LT John Thampi, and SSG Kareem Brown plot coordinates on a map during the second phase of IRT.

Right: SGT Brandon Dial, 3rd Coscom, digs through sand in search for mines in a mine awareness exercise during the second phase of IRT.

PVT Merri Nglracheluolu implies her media awareness training from phase one into the practical exercise of phase two during Individual Replacement Training.

"Meeting the needs of everybody has been the most challenging part," Um continued, "but, the classes we've build should meet everyone's requirement."

The students then move from the classroom to field in phase two where they can get hands-on experience in practical exercises to better prepare them for combat.

"Each practical exercise runs 30 minutes long," said Hile.

The field exercise includes mine awareness, reacting to contact, and recognizing improvised explosive devices (IED).

"We find out what is the most recent threat in Iraq and incorporate that into our training," said 1SG Michael D. Parker, IRT commandant. "Right now, IED's are the biggest threat that we face."

"(We teach the Soldiers) how to recognize IED's and how to call in IED's," said Parker.

By taking advantage of today's technology, the IRT instructors are able to provide their students with up-to-date information to make the training as realistic as possible.

"Most of my instructors have been down range," said Parker. "Also we have a call website that we can access. Here, we get most of our information on all the updated things that are going on down range.

"We also give the Soldiers our email addresses down range," said Parker, "They email us back and let us know the enemy's new tactics and if something has changed."

The final phase of IRT is three days of convoy live-fire training at the Grafenwhoer Training Area.

"(This training) is very effective," said Parker. "Every student that has come through here thus far has said that this has really helped them. A lot of things they have never even seen before."

"This is serious training. Hopefully what we teach them here will help save lives down range."

Ready First Combat Team on the move

More Iron Soldiers head back to Iraq

Story and photo by SGT Gregory F. Withrow

COL Sean B. MacFarland and CSM Frank L. Graham case the Ready First Combat Team's colors in Friedberg, Germany, Jan. 5, preparing to move to combat in the Global War on Terrorism in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.

Camouflage and colors swirled in the crisp morning air on the Ray Barracks Parade Field, as Iron Soldiers of 1st Armored Division's Ready First Combat Team cased their units' standards Jan. 5.

The brigade combat team is preparing to deploy to Iraq in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Returning to Iraq for the second round in GWOT, 1AD's 1st Brigade already has a reputation for excellence in combat operations, having earned the Presidential Unit Citation during a rotation that began in May 2003 and lasted 15 months.

"Defeat is not an option. We face an evil and dishonorable enemy," said Ready First Combat Team brigade commander, COL Sean B. MacFarland, comparing his troops to other renowned forces who have faced overwhelming odds and unrelenting enemies throughout the ages. "You are another link in the great chain of warriors."

MG Fred D. Robinson, Jr., the 1AD division commanding general, surveyed his troops and issued the command setting Ready First on the road to Iraq: "Case your colors and move to battle."

Soon, the units will uncase their colors in Iraq – those colors serve as a rallying points and symbolize the past accomplishments of Ready First Soldiers throughout history.

Friends and family members filled the bleachers or stood on the parade field's edge watching, bidding the farewell to Ready First.

Other, more personal farewells, will take place this month as the Soldiers board buses and planes bound for Iraq.

Although Soldiers serve in many units during their Army career, many Soldiers who deployed with Ready First in 2003 are still with the brigade for this mission. Not only do they have tactical experience learned during their first rotation, each has his own philosophy on maintaining a solid family relationship while separated from loved ones.

"The hardest part of this deployment is leaving her (my wife) again," said 1LT Erik Iliff, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment.

Although he is still with the "Gunners" of 2-3 FA, things are a bit different for Iliff this time. He said his unit has a different focus, providing training for Iraqi military and police, and he has a new job as the assistant intelligence officer for the battalion. He also has a tried and true system for keeping close ties with his wife.

"The best thing we did last time was to keep journals that we swapped about every two weeks," explained Iliff. "I felt it was easier to be honest about our feelings than by a short phone call."

But, for a Soldier married for 28 years, there is more to the process of holding things together. There is a fine line between being a Soldier and husband, or for that matter a humanitarian, said CSM Jose Dorame, 16th Engineer Battalion, "Catamounts," command sergeant major.

"You have to know when to turn it on and when to turn it off," explained Dorame about being a Soldier. Being in combat one minute and having to give someone help or even spend time with one's children the next minute can be taxing, said Dorame.

"I always spent time with my children. And my children told me that Daddy never said he was tired. They said he always had time for us," he said.

Dorame said spending time with loved ones is the key to maintaining good family relationships especially for Soldiers who are often separated from their families for lengthy periods.

"Not many people would volunteer for this kind of job, but we have some great Americans," said Dorame. ◻

1AD, 7th CSG Unit Mission Successful

240th QM wraps up deployment

Story by SGT Mitch Armbruster

Soldiers of the 240th Quartermaster Company have dealt with adversity and overcome challenges while living and working on Forward Operating Base Seitz for the last 11 months of their deployment.

"I coordinate the day-to-day business for the company. That includes administrative action, personnel action, training issues and training requirements. I also assist the commander in any enlisted issues that may arise," said 1SG Shelton Williamson, first sergeant.

Four clocks hang above the radio displaying times from all over the world. A dry erase board displays fuel farm numbers that take up most of the board's white space. In the office that is the home of the 240th, the walls are overwhelmed with bulletin boards and papers. Williamson has a University of North Carolina Tarheels sticker covering the edge of his bulletin boards next to his desk, just a small reminder of home.

"The deployment has been extremely successful, extremely positive. I'm actually pretty blessed to be with such a gifted group of Soldiers," Williamson said.

As a company, the 240th has increased their fuel farm capacity to over one million gallons. They also accomplished the task of creating a cargo transfer point (CTP) from the ground up.

Although the Soldiers of the 240th made great strides to improve the fuel farm and build the CTP, they still have responsibilities to keep their living area safe. Due to the size of FOB Seitz, the 240th has had to employ unexploded ordnance sweep teams to patrol the area when attacked with mortar fire.

The 240th CTP went from one empty lot to two lots filled with containers, pallets, and retrograde parts. 1LT Amy Kemp oversees the CTP for the 240th while juggling the task of executive officer for the company. The unit has been able to work with Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) loading trucks to move supplies out to the Soldiers in need.

"We have KBR come out because they have awesome support, and that frees up our Soldiers to do other things like force protection and other missions that only Soldiers can do," Kemp said.

The CTP yard has grown because FOB Seitz is centrally located. Kemp stated that the yard is a source of pride for her Soldiers because they were able to build it themselves.

"The Soldiers are incredible because they didn't know how to do this, and I didn't know how to do this and they started from the ground up. Now they are pros at it," Kemp said. "I can leave them out here and know that it will be taken care of and when the new unit comes and we cross-train them, I have no doubt that they will be set up for success."

"Getting the trucks in to pick up parts is the hardest part of this job. We aggressively seek out civilian and military trucks to get all of the parts out to the customers because they need these parts." SGT Saudi Plowdeniz, a supervisor and personnel administrator for the yard.

The Soldiers of the 240th have done their jobs, but they have also overcome the challenges of the deployment to succeed in the eyes of their leadership.

"It is odd that you can have so many Soldiers in one place, in one unit that do so many things well. It's as if the sun shines on us all of the time," Williamson said.

"This is a great bunch of Soldiers, a very close knit group and we have great leadership and motivation."

The company produced a Soldier and NCO of the Year for their brigade and retained 40 Soldiers by having them reenlist during the deployment.

Of all the positive strides that the Soldiers of the 240th have made, one accomplishment is most important in the eyes of CPT Courteney Abraham, the company commander.

"We all deployed together and we will all be redeploying together. We have not had any casualties that have affected us with the mission. We have had eight Purple Heart recipients thus far but all of them have rebounded well and are doing phenomenal physically and mentally," Abraham said. The Soldiers of the 240th have accomplished a great deal in their time in Iraq. They were able to make the mission a successful one, even when the jobs were unknown to them, through hard work and perseverance.□

Deployed Soldiers with 240th QM conduct weapons-training in support of Opperation Iraqi Freedom. (courtesy photo)