

Serving the 1st Infantry Division

Spring 2006

Duty **1** First

2BCT preps for Iraq



1SG Carey Immamura of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, fire Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, Feb. 17.

On the cover

Soldiers from Task Force 1-26 Infantry pull security while conducting a cordon and search at a Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain site at Hohenfels, Germany, March 1.



Photo by SPC Joe Alger

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Photo by Senior Airman Richard Rose

s an M4 rifle at a target on Range 126 while zeroing his weapon at

In this issue

4th IBCT Activates.....5

New brigade formed as part of Army transformation

1st ID Transforms....6-7

DIVARTY, DIVENG inactivate

Transition Teams.....10

Dreadnaughts learn MiTT job 'on the fly'

Sling Load.....11

Big Red One Soldiers get lesson in safety

MOUT Training.....16

TF 1-26 trains at Hohenfels, prepares for Iraq

Convoy Ops.....18-19

299th FSB conducts combat logistics patrol training

Lightning Strikes.20-21

1-7 FA conducts live-fire training at Grafenwoehr

Live Fire.....22-24

1-18 Inf. Soldiers react to enemy contact with live rounds

Battlefield View.....25

101st MI Bn. TUAV teams support 2BCT 'in the box'

Scouts Out.....27

1-4 CAV transforms from heavy to light airborne recon

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Exciting times ahead for 1st ID

As you all know, the Big Red One continues to be incredibly busy. The last quarter has been filled with great training, changes in our formation, and preparations for the Division's return to Fort Riley. Each and every one of you has been critical in accomplishing these complex missions.



We continue to aggressively train and prepare our Soldiers for future missions. The 2nd Brigade Combat Team recently completed a very intense gunnery and maneuver density at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels. The Dagger Brigade validated their training with a culminating Mission Rehearsal Exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in March. This training was truly world-class and incorporated the realities of war into the scenarios. As the Dagger Brigade prepares to move its troops and equipment into theatre and take on a new mission, I can tell you that they are ready to carry on the legacy of this great Division in combat. They are trained, ready and disciplined!

As one brigade combat team prepares for combat, the rest of the Division continues towards transformation and rebasing. Our Division Artillery and Division Engineer Brigades recently inactivated as part of this plan. It is a bittersweet feeling to see these great units and others case their colors and take their place in yet another chapter of our Division's history, but it is also very exciting to be part of the transformation of our Army. Over the next few months, several other units will also see significant changes. The 1-4 Cavalry, 1-33 Field Artillery and the 82nd Engineers are all going through a conversion process that will result in a RSTA Squadron; Fires Battalion; and Brigade Troops Battalion all becoming part of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

It is certainly an exciting time to be in the 1st Infantry Division and it won't be long before we return to Fort Riley, Kansas and take on a new mission. Please continue to take care of your Soldiers and your families and enjoy Germany while you can. I appreciate all that you do, each and every day, to make this the greatest Division in the United States Army. **Duty First!**

*MG Ken Hunzeker
Danger 6*

Think safety during transformation

First, I would like to thank all the Big Red One Soldiers, family members, and civilians for their continued support and commitment to this great Division and the incredible effort put forth to accomplish our many missions. During this season, the 1st Infantry Division continues to reorganize in accordance with the Army transformation plan and global rebasing.



Many units, including the Division Artillery Brigade and the Division Engineer Brigade, will inactivate. The 1st Battalion, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment and other units in Bamberg will re-flag and join the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team will move to the 1st Armored Division to continue their preparation for deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Additionally, the Division headquarters and subordinate units will shift their focus to preparation for deployment to the continental United States.

As the weather warms and the new season takes shape, many of you will take this opportunity to travel and enjoy Europe. With this in mind, I ask each of you to keep safety at the forefront of your activities.

U.S. Army Europe has recently launched two very important safety campaigns, which we as leaders, need to implement, monitor, and enforce.

♦ *The Army in Europe Summer 2006 Lifesaving Campaign* has been expanded beyond the scope of previous summer safety campaigns to target a broader range of issues our Soldiers face. In addition to traditional safety subjects, it includes Soldier wellness

issues, such as high-risk drinking and suicide.

♦ *The Army in Europe Motorcycle Safety Campaign* targets motorcycle-related deaths and injuries. It also emphasizes the dangers of riding motorcycles and implements a composite risk management approach to managing these dangers.

More information on these campaigns can be found by logging into the USAREUR Safety Website at www.hqusareur.army.mil or by contacting 1st ID Safety Office at 350-6311.

Additionally, many of our Soldiers will be involved in ISA operations to support the Division's many deployments and missions. Ensure we conduct the proper training and have appropriate safety equipment on hand.

It is our charter as leaders at all levels to protect our greatest assets, and we can do this by ensuring safety in everything we do.

It is truly an important time for the Big Red One, and we must continue to work together and take care of each other.

As the Division prepares to return to Fort Riley, deploy, and transform, please take the extra steps to ensure safety remains at the forefront of everything we do.

I want to thank our Soldiers, civilians, and their family members for their continued support and commitment. With your help, the 1st Infantry Division continues to embrace the future of Army transformation and solidify our reputation as one of the Army's premier fighting divisions.

Be proud of what you do. Continue to hold our colors high. No mission too difficult. No sacrifice too great. **Duty First!**

*CSM John Fourhman
Danger 7*

4th IBCT activates

*Story and photos by
Amanda Kim Stairrett
Fort Riley Post*

FORT RILEY, Kansas - This is a big year of change, MG Dennis Hardy, commanding general, 24th Infantry Division (Mech) and Fort Riley, announced Jan. 12 at the 1st Infantry Division's 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team activation ceremony.

Formations representing the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry; 2nd Squadron, 4th Cavalry; 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery; 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion; and 610th Brigade Support Battalion, participated in the ceremony, which signified the transfer of the brigade from inactive to active status.

The 4th IBCT began its lineage as an aviation brigade at Fort Riley in April 1986.

COL Ricky Gibbs commands the 4th IBCT and CSM Jim Champagne serves as brigade command sergeant major.

Hardy said the stand up of the "Dragon Brigade" was a step in the transformation to widen the Army's capabilities. The brigade will be able to operate at the low end of the military spectrum, including humanitarian relief efforts, to the high end, such as high intensity combat missions.



MG Dennis Hardy, commanding general, 24th Infantry Division (Mech) and Fort Riley, passes the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team flag to COL Ricky Gibbs during the Jan. 12 activation ceremony. Gibbs assumed command of the 4th IBCT, which is standing up at Fort Riley.



Soldiers of the 2nd Bn., 16th Infantry; 1st Bn., 28th Infantry; 2nd Squadron, 4th Cavalry; 2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery; 4th Bde. Special Troops Bn., and 610th Bde. Support Bn. stand at attention during the 4th Infantry Bde. Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division activation ceremony Jan. 12.

"It's an organization that can operate in complex terrains, be it cities or mountains or forests or jungles," he said. "It can operate dismounted. In fact, it's trained, organized and equipped to operate dismounted, or we can motorize it and send the truck and make it mobile or we can provide helicopters and we can air assault it. Truthfully, by the time Ricky Gibbs gets done with it, we might even be able to airborne it."

The 4th IBCT is unique in that it is self-sustaining because of its support battalion and because it has its own reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition unit, the 2nd Squadron, 4th Cavalry. Hardy said brigades in the past 20 years didn't have their own reconnaissance teams and had to reach into battalions and steal their scout platoons.

Hardy said the brigade would be combat ready in 12 months. He reminded his lieutenant colonels and their command sergeants major to take care of the Soldiers and their families.

Gibbs said nearly 1,000 Soldiers of the 4th IBCT have arrived at Fort Riley.

Hardy said the 4th IBCT would not be the only brigade to stand up at Fort Riley this year. Another 3,400 Soldiers will come to Fort Riley this summer as part of a combat action brigade, he said.

To many, the activation of the 4th IBCT is the first step in bringing the Big Red One back to Fort Riley, Hardy said. MG Kenneth Hunzeker, commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, and the 1st ID Band traveled from Germany to take part in the activation ceremony.

When the brigade is fully functioning, 3,500 Soldiers and 1,700 family members are expected to call Fort Riley home.

Serving with the 4th IBCT will probably be a three-year tour for everyone in the battalion, Hardy said, urging families to sink their roots and "get happy."

"You're looking not only at a new year, but you are looking in the face of a new start. You're looking in the face of a new organization ... America is moving forward and America's Army is moving forward," he said. "And I think that is pretty powerful."

1st ID continues to train

Inactivation marks end of history for DIVENG, DIVARTY

*Story by SPC Stephen Baack
Editor, 1st ID PAO*

During one of the largest transformations in the history of the Big Red One, two centralized units – 1st Infantry Division Artillery and the 1st ID Engineer Brigade – have inactivated on the heels of the Division’s move from Germany to Fort Riley, Kan.

The nearly century-old DIVARTY, and the relatively new DIVENG, inactivated during ceremonies at Warner Barracks in Bamberg, Germany, Feb. 16 and March 31, respectively, after both having been at the post since 1996. Though DIVENG formally activated in 1993, the engineer battalions within the brigade were considerably older.

While many of both units’ Soldiers will move on to different formations throughout the Army, DIVARTY’s 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, along with DIVENG’s 9th Engineer Battalion, are slated to support 1st ID’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team during its scheduled deployment to Iraq within the coming months, while a portion of DIVENG’s personnel will head to the 173rd Infantry Brigade Special Troop Battalion. In addition, DIVARTY’s 1st Battalion, 33rd Field Artillery Regiment will become the Airborne Artillery Battalion, providing support to the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy – but will remain at Warner Barracks for the time being.

Originally constituted as the 1st Field Artillery Brigade in 1917, DIVARTY participated in multiple campaigns and operations during World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War, and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Since its move to Germany, elements from DIVARTY have also participated in operations in Kosovo and Bosnia, as well as Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

Providing remarks during the DIVARTY inactivation was COL Walter Gilliam, DIVARTY commander, who gave a heartfelt goodbye to the unit and his troops. Gilliam is slated to assist in the Division’s return to Fort Riley later this year.

“It’s one of the toughest things I’ve ever done in the almost 25 years I’ve been serving,” said Gilliam. “I’ve been part of other organizations that, for one reason or another, were disbanded or reflagged, but this has clearly been the toughest thing I’ve ever done. We’ve got tremendous Soldiers here in the organization, and the good thing about that is these great talents will be going to other units throughout the Army and continue to do great things. We just won’t have a DIVARTY Headquarters.”

As DIVARTY’s 63rd and last commander, Gilliam led the unit through a comprehensive reorganization after its Soldiers redeployed from Iraq last year, which was a high point for him.



COL Walter Gilliam, DIVARTY commander, joined by MG Kenneth Hunzeker, 1st ID commanding general, furl the DIVARTY colors during the unit’s inactivation ceremony at Warner Barracks Feb. 15.

The former commander, COL Richard Longo, is the last one to have led the unit into war.

“There is a bit of sadness for me because I think of the legacy that these Soldiers have left over the past 89 years – but their performance in Operation Iraqi Freedom, if it is the last thing that they do, then it’s a great legacy they will have left,” said Longo. “The only consolation I can take out of this is that little pieces of DIVARTY now will be spread out all over the Army and will contribute to other units that carry with them the spirit of the Drumfire Team.”

Officially activated Sept. 2, 1993, DIVENG has participated in civil relief operations and supported 1st ID training at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., before moving to Warner Barracks in 1996.

While based in Germany, the unit’s 9th Engineer Battalion deployed to Bosnia in support of Operation Joint Guardian, and was soon replaced by the



COL Walter Gilliam, 1st Infantry Division Artillery Brigade commander, gives a heartfelt farewell to his troops and the unit during the DIVARTY Inactivation Ceremony.

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brigade's 82nd Engineer Battalion. Also, the brigade took control of Peace Shield '98 in Ukraine and Operation Swift Crossing.

The brigade was instrumental in the construction of Camp Bondsteel and Camp Monteith during Operation Joint Guardian – this time in Kosovo.

“We’re all a little excited to get ready to get it done; we’re kind of apprehensive as the 82nd (Engineer Battalion) was here the longest in Bamberg,” said CPT Burke S. Honzel, battalion personnel officer, adding that the personnel and equipment actions required for the transition has been a year in the making.

“Rather than mourning the ‘end of an era,’ this moment is, to the contrary, a moment for celebration — the celebration of a job well done and the celebration of an opportunity to be part of the transformation of our entire service,” said MG Kenneth Hunzeker,



Soldiers of the 1st ID Engineer Brigade stand in formation for the last time.

1st ID commanding general, who provided the opening remarks at the DIVARTY inactivation ceremony.

“This is transformation right before your eyes,” said Hunzeker. “The Big Red One is changing its structure to meet new challenges, but we are committed to holding the legacy of the entire Division close to our hearts.”

Remembering our fallen Soldiers...



CSM John D. Fourhman, 1st Infantry Division command sergeant major, and MG Kenneth W. Hunzeker, 1st ID commanding general, pay respects to PFC Dave Robbins at the Larson Barracks Chapel in Kitzingen, Germany, Feb. 3.



Paying his final respects, Milton Figueroa, Schweinfurt mailroom director, grasps the dog-tags of SSG Miguel Santiago Jr. during his memorial service March 2 at Larson Barracks Chapel.



SPC Carlos Luna, a 1st Infantry Division automated logistics specialist, fires a German 9mm pistol while trying to earn his German Schutzenschnur in Bruck, Germany, Feb. 1.

Schutzenschnur

1st ID Soldiers earn German marksmanship badge

*Story and photos by
SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO*

Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Infantry Division and the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion braved cold, icy conditions to earn the Schutzenschnur German marksmanship badge in Bruck, Germany, Feb. 1.

The Schutzenschnur medal is awarded for qualifying on two German weapons — usually a pistol and machine gun. Soldiers can earn the Schutzenschnur award in bronze, silver and gold. The award can be worn by Soldiers on the dress uniforms.

SSG Larry Gormley, 1st ID noncommissioned officer in charge of civil military operations, said the 22 Soldiers who made the trip to Bruck to qualify for the Schutzenschnur was the best turnout he's seen yet.

"We usually only have about 10 Soldiers come out for this," Gormley said. "It's a great event for Soldiers, and it's an award that looks great on their uniforms that they can wear and be proud of."

Since HHC, 1st ID is scheduled to move to Fort Riley, Kansas, this summer, this was the last opportunity for many of the Soldiers to earn the award. Because of this, Gormley said the 13th Panzer Division did everything

possible to ensure maximum participation.

"Usually, we share the range with the German Soldiers, but this time out our partnership unit reserved the range for us for the entire day," Gormley said.

Luckily for the Soldiers participating in the event, they had plenty of time to fire because qualifying on the German weapons, especially the MG-3 machine gun, proved to be a difficult experience.

"I've never fired a weapon that puts rounds downrange so quickly," said SGT David Pierce, 1st ID intelligence analyst. "If you don't learn how to maintain trigger discipline and put your full body weight behind the weapon, you will never qualify."

Pierce said it was also difficult to get used to maintaining focus on the target when firing the German-made machine gun, but it's important not to give up after the first try.

"The German Sergeant Major told us it takes a great deal of training and discipline to learn how to effectively fire that weapon system," Pierce said.

In addition to learning how to fire German weapons, Gormley said the event also gives Soldiers the chance to interact with their German counterparts.

"They get to live with German Soldiers in their barracks and see how they live and train," Gormley said. "We get to see that they (the German Soldiers) don't really do things much differently than we do."

The Soldiers said they enjoyed the overall event and hope it isn't the last one.

"I thought the event was a lot of fun," Pierce said. "Later on down the road there will be very few Soldiers who will get to have this experience. I think anyone who gets this opportunity should definitely participate."



Soldiers from the 13th Panzer Division and the 1st Infantry Division warm up next to a fire during a German Schutzenschnur qualification range in Bruck, Germany, Feb. 1.



With German soldiers there to help coach and assist, Soldiers from HHC, 1st Infantry Division fire the MG-3 machine gun at a Schutzenschnur qualification range in Bruck, Germany, Feb. 1.

Dreadnaughts learn MiTT job ‘on the fly’

*Story by Mike Herronemus
Fort Riley Post*

FORT RILEY, Kansas – The “Dreadnaughts” learned first-hand about Military Transition Teams, commonly referred to as MiTTs, shortly after arriving in Iraq in February 2005. Higher headquarters ordered the battalion to assemble a MiTT and help the local Iraqis assume more responsibility for security in Baqubah.

While they conducted military security and patrol missions common in Iraq, members of the “Dreadnaught” battalion partnered with the 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Division, to train the Iraqis in the full spectrum combat operations taking place in their area of responsibility.

The past military experience that 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment Commander LTC Oscar Hall IV possessed appeared to be a plus for the new mission, one traditionally the responsibility of U.S. Special Forces units but more and more a mission undertaken by a variety of U.S. military units. Hall had served as a U.S. military advisor to a Saudi brigade, helping them to train and to field equipment.

While in Iraq, “We had to take this new MiTT out of hide,” Hall said. He had no extra manpower to use for the new mission, so he assigned 10 of his key staff members to dual responsibilities. “By day they were my staff. By night they were the MiTT leaders,” he said.

The MiTT commitment didn’t remain a “night” operation. Training and equipping the Iraqi forces while simultaneously fighting combat operations was continuous. “It was like building a plane while it is in flight,” he said.

At first, the MiTT conducted training in a classroom environment, he said, teaching such things as planning for operations, the military decision-making process, how to organize information so the commander can make rapid decisions, battle tracking (keeping track of all the unit’s forces, disposition and capabilities) and even detainee operations, said MAJ Randy Judd, MiTT leader.

After the classroom training, the MiTT began including the Iraqis in U.S. military operations.

At first, platoon-sized Iraqi units were added to U.S. company-sized operations, Judd said. That was to give the Iraqis a chance to see how operations should look.

Later operations included an Iraqi company with a U.S. company. Finally, the Iraqis assumed the major role in operations while the U.S. forces’ presence was minimal, Judd said.

Early combined operations usually were cordon and search operations, he said.

Some of the training took place at checkpoints the Iraqi battalion manned, Hall said. “It was like going from a classroom to running,” he said, “because it was a real situation.”

Before that training, insurgents often got the best of the Iraqis; at best, the Iraqis held their own, Hall said. Not long after training with the MiTT, the Iraqis began beating the insurgents, he continued. “We went from arriving with body bags for dead Iraqis to counting the number of dead insurgents,” he said.



Courtesy photo

LTC Oscar Hall IV, 2-34 Armor commander, MAJ Randy Judd, MiTT leader in Iraq, and MAJ Khalid, 4th Iraqi Army Bn. executive officer, inspect security at the Baqubah Govt. Center.

1st ID to develop foreign security force training teams

WASHINGTON – The Army is innovating its approach to developing foreign security forces, in response to a mission support request from United States Central Command, with small unit transition teams by assigning this mission to one specific division, the 1st Infantry Division, at Fort Riley, Kan.

Rapidly enhancing the capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces and the Afghan National Army to enable them to assume the leading role in counterinsurgency and security missions is a vital element in CENTCOM’s strategy for success in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 1st Brigade, 1st ID, assisted by the 3rd Brigade, 1st AD until its modular conversion, will temporarily reorganize for this mission. Together, the two brigades will have a permanent force of 800 Soldiers who will annually organize, train and deploy approximately 3,500 to 4,000 Soldiers over the course of a year to serve on transition teams.

The size of each deployed team will vary based on its specific mission; however, they are generally composed of approximately 10-15 personnel. When the transition teams have completed their pre-deployment preparations, they will deploy and help develop Iraqi and Afghan forces under the command of the coalition headquarters for each country.

The 1st ID headquarters, which is preparing to relocate from Germany to Fort Riley, will oversee the training and deployment of the transition teams. The Division will continue to transform to its ultimate end state as a modular, full spectrum formation.

Consolidating this transition team mission at Fort Riley under a single commander enhances the care of Soldiers and their families, better supports Army personnel management, and provides highly trained, fully manned, fully equipped, and cohesive teams.

Sling Load

1st ID Sling Load inspectors get lesson in safety

Story and photo by SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO

When a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter swoops in and drops an essential piece of military equipment or a cargo net full of re-supplies onto a battlefield, most people don't realize what goes into a mission such as this.

But recently, 26 Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division learned just what it takes when they attended a Sling Load Inspector Certification Course at Camp Robertson in Schweinfurt, Germany, Feb. 7-10.

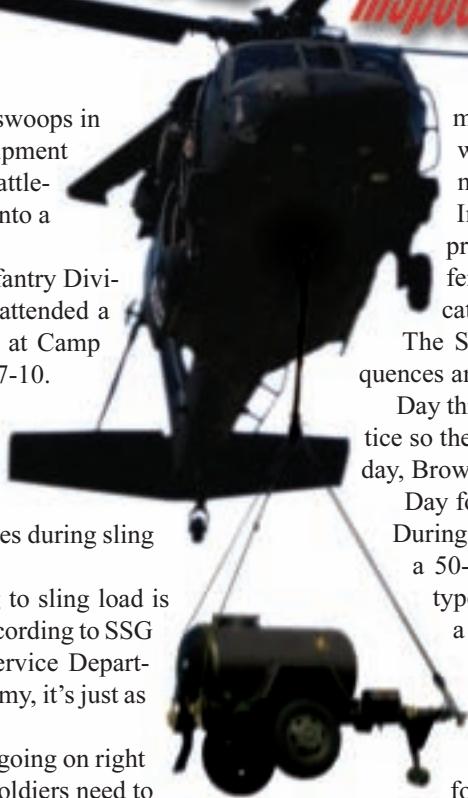
During the SLIC course, students learned to prepare, rig and inspect supplies and equipment for sling load under rotary wing aircraft. They also learned to select, prepare and control pickup and landing zones during sling load operations.

"While Soldiers may not think learning to sling load is as exciting as airborne or sniper school," according to SSG Jason Brown, an Aerial Delivery Field Service Department SLIC course instructor, "in today's Army, it's just as important."

"There are a lot of sling load operations going on right now with the war in Iraq," Brown said. "Soldiers need to be able to get cargo or vehicles to a destination as quickly and safely as possible."

During the SLIC course, the Soldiers learned how to do that and much more.

According to Brown, the first two days of the course consisted



mainly of classroom instruction in the morning where the Soldiers learned about the terms, equipment and forms needed for a sling load operation. In the afternoon, the Soldiers were taught the proper way to "rig" the equipment and the 16 different hand-and-arm signals needed to communicate with the crew of an aircraft.

The Soldiers were also taught proper inspection sequences and what a correct sling load looks like.

Day three of the course involved mostly hands-on practice so the Soldiers are prepared for day four, which is test day, Brown said.

Day four, the final day of the course, is "mission day." During this day, the Soldiers were required to complete a 50-question written test and inspect four different types of sling loads, searching for deficiencies with a strict five minute time limit.

Once the Soldiers complete these tasks and display their applied knowledge, "They'll be sling load inspector certified (and they'll each) receive an inspector certified card that's good for life," said Brown, who travels around the world with a team of six SLIC instructors.

While the class conducted at Camp Robertson lasted for only four days, Brown said the class is normally five days long.

"We had to cut it short by one day, but there's no less information. The days are just a little bit longer," he added.

Soldiers participating in the course, like SFC Timothy C. Crutchfield, a medical sergeant with 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, felt the course would be a good way to expand their units' capabilities and combat-readiness.

"The 1-4 CAV is transitioning to a light airborne cavalry unit, so with airborne operations, there'll probably be opportunities for our equipment to be sling loaded," Crutchfield said. "Any Soldier could benefit from this course. With the diversity of our missions, a Soldier may never know when he'll be employed in a different capacity."

SSG Christian Orellano, a treatment platoon sergeant with C Company, 299th Forward Support Battalion, said he is looking forward to not only having an opportunity to display his new knowledge, but also to teach others.

"The sling load class teaches you to teach others how to properly do the operations. I plan to pass it on to my Soldiers during sergeant's time training to make the unit more effective and broaden our mobility," Orellano said.

For these reasons and others, Brown thinks the SLIC course is one that should be taught to every Soldier.

"The more Soldiers we get involved, the more we lower the risk of injury and reduce damage to government equipment," he said.



SSG Jason Brown (wearing a red rigger's hat), an Aerial Delivery Field Service Department Sling Load Inspector Certification Course instructor, gives a class on the sling load inspection sequence for a Humvee during the SLIC course at Camp Robertson in Schweinfurt, Germany.

Artillerymen go Infantry

1-7 FA Soldiers train for Iraq deployment

*Story and photos by
SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO*

Drill sergeants teach new recruits in Basic Training that every Soldier in the Army is an infantryman first. And apparently that holds true for artillery Soldiers, as well.

To prepare for an upcoming deployment to Iraq, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment conducted three days of infantry training at Hammelburg German army Kaserne beginning Jan. 10.

The training consisted of several dif-

ferent basic infantryman tactics such as clearing a building, proper operation of a vehicle security check point, dismounted foot patrols, and Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain.

According to CPT Scott Emmel, B Battery, 1-7 FA commander, it's important for artillery Soldiers to be proficient in infantry tactics because once they're deployed there's no telling when they may need those skills.

"We're responsible for shooting artillery rounds," Emmel said, "but if the mission changes when we go to Iraq, we have to be prepared to fill an infantry role so we're starting to train on

those tasks."

While the 1-7 FA Soldiers had been training on their artillery tasks in previous months at Grafenwoehr and Wildflecken Training areas, this is the first time many of them have had a chance to practice basic infantry skills in some time.

"We trained on artillery tasks right up until block leave, and when we got back we started with the infantry training. Essentially, it's like starting at ground zero," Emmel said. "We're starting with low-level tasks like movement (techniques) and reacting to fire."



(Above) Infantry tactics, such as Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain, were taught to Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment Jan. 10-12. Pictured here, artillery Soldiers enter and clear a room at Hammelburg German army Kaserne.

(Left) Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment conduct a dismounted foot patrol inside Hammelburg German army Kaserne's MOUT site.

And the infantry tactics were not something the 1-7 FA Soldiers were able to learn overnight.

"It's a lot different than what we're used to," said PFC Samuel Emard, B Btry., 1-7 FA.

One of the biggest differences between infantry and artillery is the communication, Emard added.

"Using hand signals is a little hard to get used to, especially for the guys who have been (in the artillery field) for a long time," he said.

Despite the learning curve, Emard said he is confident the training will help "keep them alive," once they deploy.

Since infantrymen operate in a mostly urban environment in Iraq, the MOUT training was an especially important aspect of the training.

"We're trying to maximize the use of the training site here in Hammelburg. "It's a very good MOUT site," Emmel said. "It gives the Soldiers a good idea of what it's like to walk around in an urban environment. That's hard to get in Schweinfurt."

While the infantry training gives the 1-7 FA Soldiers an added dimension to their Soldiering skills, they haven't forgotten they're primary role as artillery Soldiers.

"At the end of the month we're going to Grafenwoehr for more training, and we'll have to be prepared to do both artillery and infantry tasks there," Emmel said. "There's a wide range of tasks we need to execute."



Operating vehicle security check points was one of several infantry tactics taught to 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment Soldiers at Hammelburg German army Kaserne.



Snapshot from within *'The Box'*



Photo by Air Force SA Richard Rose

(Above) PV2 Alex Gurley and CPL Eric Gonzalez from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment fire a 50-caliber machine gun at a target on Range 301 at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 17.

(Right) Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment clear a building as part of their Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Hohenfels Feb. 27.

(Far Right) PVT Jared Guzman and SPC Thomas Reep, Service Battery, 1-7 Field Artillery, react to an ambush during a combat logistics patrol at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 18.



Photo by PFC Ethan Anderson



Photo by Navy PO1 Richard Brunson

PVT Thomas Lincoln, HHC, 1-18th Inf., prepares to reload a MK19 grenade launcher.

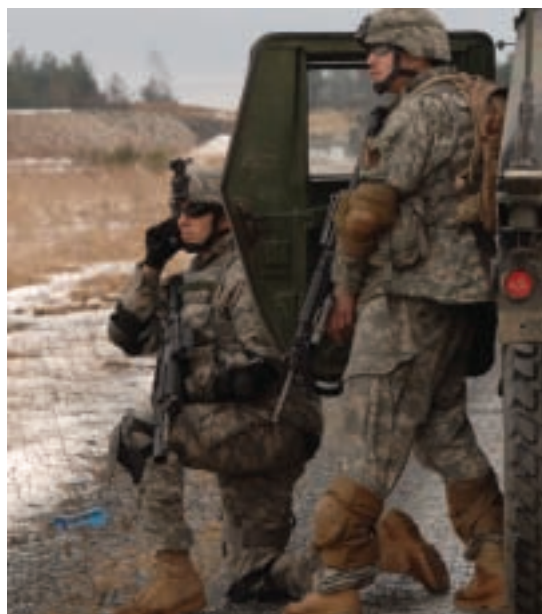


Photo by CPL Bertha Whipkey



Photo by Air Force SA Richard Rose

SGT Ianclaire Mallari from C Company, 1-77 Armor, applies a bandage to a patient who was hit by simulated sniper fire during an exercise on Range 118 at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 24.

Task Force 1-26 prepares for Iraq

Story and photo by
SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division's Task Force 1-26 Infantry prepared for their upcoming deployment to Iraq by conducting cordon and search training in Hohenfels, Germany, March 1.

According to CPT Jared Purcell, TF 1-26 fire support officer, the training was conducted by "Team Alpha," which consists of a mix between mechanized infantry and a tank platoon.

There are Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment's A and C companies and Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment participating in the training, Purcell said.

The training began when the TF 1-26 Soldiers received intelligence that a high-value target was inside one of the buildings in the fictitious city of "Tikrit," one of several Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain sites set up to resemble Iraqi villages in the Hohenfels Training Area.

Once the Soldiers arrived in the city, they set up an outer cordon with their M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles to seal in the city and then conducted a cordon and search on foot to locate the high-value target.

Once the high-value target was located, they checked the rest of the town for a possible second high-value target by conducting house-to-house searches, Purcell said.

PVT Ryan Owens, a squad automatic machine gunner with Team Alpha, TF 1-26, was one Soldier involved in the raid and helped capture one of the targets.

"After we cleared the first floor, we moved down to the basement. There was a guy down there with a weapon under a couch. We captured him and pulled security on him while the other team went upstairs and cleared the rest of the house," Owens said.

The cordon and search training is the culmination of



Task Force 1-26 Infantry Soldiers enter a house while searching for a high-value target during training at Hohenfels, Germany, March 1.



weeks of platoon-level training and is the final training mission the TF 1-26 Soldiers needed to complete before the start of their Mission Rehearsal Exercise, which completed March 12.

"That was the first company-level mission they've done," Purcell said. "We started small in Grafenwoehr, working on squad, crew, and individual weapons training and building up to the squad- and platoon-level training, which we've done the last two days."

Purcell said the Soldiers did a fine job considering it was their first time conducting training at this level.

"It went really well," Purcell said. "They captured the high-value target with limited casualties on our side. Overall it was a very good experience."

For CPT Adam Wojack, Team Alpha commander, the training brought back memories of the last time he was in Iraq.

While in Iraq, Wojack said he conducted daily missions with the Iraqi security forces such as patrols and raids.

"There's nothing more fun than a raid and a cordon and search," Wojack said.



PVT Eric Herrera, a 9th Engineer Battalion gunner, scans his sector during a route clearance mission in Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, March 8.

Engineers conduct route recon training Battalion practices protecting supply, fuel convoys

*Story and photo by SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO*

One of the tactics used by insurgents in Iraq is attacking supply and fuel convoys with improvised explosive devices and roadside bombs. Because of this, the job of engineer Soldiers who patrol the streets every day searching for these devices is very important.

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division's 9th Engineer Battalion prepared for this task in March by conducting route clearance missions in Hohenfels Training Area in support of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team during its Mission Rehearsal Exercise.

"This training is getting us ready to clear routes, basically the same way we'll be doing in Iraq," said 1LT Andrew Maxa, 1st Platoon leader, A Company, 9th Engineer Battalion. "The mission of route clearance is to get out there before fuel trucks and other personnel get on the road so we find

IEDs that are laid overnight prior to them getting on the route."

According to Maxa, during the route clearance training, the Soldiers are trained on everything from scanning their sectors for IEDs, searching cars, interacting with Iraqi people, dealing with casualty evacuation if necessary, and any other situation that could present itself over the course of a route clearance mission.

Maxa said since many of his Soldiers are new to this, they were a "little rusty" at first, but have been improving vastly each day they conduct the missions.

One example of their new-found proficiency was the discovery of two different IEDs along their route, while on patrol.

"We found an IED, and they knew exactly what to do," Maxa said.

Once an IED is discovered, according to PVT Benjamin Baum, a 1st Platoon IED spotter, the Soldiers must cordon off the

road and determine what class of IED they are dealing with.

If it is a "class one" or "class two" IED, the engineers can destroy it in place and continue on with their mission. If it is a "class three" IED, which Baum said can be identified by protruding wires, they must put in a call to explosive ordnance disposal personnel, who are specially trained in disposing of such devices.

Finding the IED in the first place is often the difficult part, but Baum said there are several telltale signs to look for when scanning a sector.

If an IED is placed in the ground, Baum said it can be identified by the dead vegetation around the area because of the chemicals from the IED. Also, when looking for roadside bombs, Baum said he checks for areas where the dirt is a little bit higher than other areas or places where fresh

see Engineers, page 24

Support train on Soldiers convoy operations



As part of their combat logistics patrol training at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 22, Soldiers from the 299th Forward Support Battalion use teamwork to safely remove a casualty from the kill zone.

*Story and photos by
SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO*

Most Soldiers are taught, no matter what their job specialty, they're an infantryman first. With deployments to Iraq becoming a fairly common occurrence for many Soldiers, that saying certainly holds true. With those thoughts in mind, Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division's 299th Forward Support Battalion conducted combat logistics patrol training at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 22.

Over the course of the training, the 299th FSB Soldiers were given first-hand experience on a situation they could very well encounter in Iraq in the near future.

"The scenario involves the platoon getting a mission to deliver supplies," said LTC Keith Sledd, 299th FSB commander. "They go along their prescribed route and encounter a complex attack involving improvised explosive devices and small arms fire from multiple locations."

Over the course of this engagement, the Soldiers are faced with several different incidents they must overcome.

"As part of the scenario, the IED will cause a vehicle to break down, and we will also incur a casualty," Sledd said. "This forces the convoy commander to react to the situation."

The reaction, Sledd said, involves suppressing the enemy attack and then arranging the convoy vehicles in a "box formation," which allows them to put security around the disabled vehicle and injured personnel.

While the Soldiers negotiated these obstacles, there was also additional assistance available for them if the situation warranted it.

"We had coordinated to have AH-64 Apache helicopters available if the convoy requested it," Sledd said. "In both scenarios, the convoy commander requested air support, and we had two Apaches fly in and engage the far targets."

Certain elements of the scenario were dif-



Soldiers from the 299th Forward Support Battalion return fire while being engaged by enemy small arms fire during combat logistics patrol training at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 22.

ferent each time the Soldiers went through in order to keep them on their toes.

“In the first convoy, we blew off the front of a vehicle and forced them to use a wrecker. In the second one, we destroyed a 5-ton, which forced them to use a heavier vehicle to tow it,” Sledd said.

Soldiers involved in the ambush had several things to keep in mind, according to SGT Gary Butler, B Company, 299th FSB personal security detachment.

“The main thing is making sure I go for cover first,” he said. “Also, 360 degree security is very important and watching my flanks making sure nobody gets in my line of sight.”

In addition to that, Butler said he was charged with the mission of ensuring each Soldier had sufficient ammunition to return fire.

Butler knows firsthand that this type of training is not to be taken lightly.

“I’ve already done a tour over there (Iraq), and I can tell you from experience it’s no joke, so this training needs to be as realistic as possible and the Soldiers need to take it very seriously,” he said.

Despite not being a “combat unit,” Sledd said the 299th FSB Soldiers have to be prepared for combat as much as anybody else.

“The greatest threat in Iraq is attacks on combat logistics patrols that move along the

various main support roads,” he said. “Last year when we were there, we experienced a significant number of attacks.”

Sledd went on to say that enemy insurgents tend to single out combat logistics patrols because they seem to think they are weaker targets. With this training, Sledd hopes to prove them wrong.

“What this kind of training does is rein-

force to our Soldiers that they have the ability to engage the targets, defeat the enemy and repel the attack. Also, it builds the Soldiers’ confidence in their abilities as they prepare to deploy,” Sledd said.

Following the conclusion of their training at Grafenwoehr, the 299th FSB continued preparing for its future deployment during its Mission Rehearsal Exercise in Hohenfels.



Soldiers from the 299th FSB conduct realistic training in preparation for their training in Hohenfels and their upcoming deployment with 2nd Brigade Combat Team to Iraq later this year.



Photo by SGT John Queen

Smoke billows out of the M109A6 Paladin's gun muzzle after sending a 155 mm high explosive round on express flight to its target.

1-7 FA conducts live fire

*Story by SGT John Queen
69th ADA Public Affairs*

Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment only need two words to make the winter weather at the Grafenwoehr Training Area seem like a trivial thing – FIRE MISSION!

A quick yank of a lanyard and the business end of a 155 mm Paladin erupts like a bolt of lightning as it launches more than 90 pounds of hot steel down range.

"That's what it's all about," said SGT Alexander Morales, a cannoneer from the battalion's D Battery. "You can't deny the thrill of shooting rounds."

Nicknamed "First Lightning Battalion," the unit rolled into the cold muddy training area in early December and conducted a two-week live fire exercise designed to prepare its Soldiers for upcoming missions, primarily a return to Iraq this year. This was also the first time the entire battalion has fired



Photo by SGT John Queen

From his observation post overlooking the impact area, 2LT John Moriarty, a fire control officer with 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, calls in the position of his targets. Within minutes the target area will be unearthed as a volley of projectiles rip into the frozen ground.

together since before its deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom II, nearly two years ago.

“We’ve done individual battery exercises,” said CPT James Starling, the battalion’s intelligence officer. “But this is the first time the battalion as a whole has done a live fire in a long time.”

Starling explained the unit was prepping for whatever mission may come, whether it’s a traditional artilleryman’s role or one of the many other tasks they could be called upon in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

“We want our Soldiers to be ready to deploy with their guns (Paladins),” he said. “During OIF II, the unit only deployed with half its guns. While half the Soldiers served in firing batteries, the other half (conducted infantry tactics).”

Much of training the battalion was doing involved an elaborate force-on-force scenario between two fictitious countries. As part of this mock conflict they conducted counter-insurgency operations with the threat of a high intensity conflict.

According to SSG Chris Windle, a non-commissioned officer with one of the battalion’s four-man fire support teams, this scenario was excellent training for them.



Photo by CPL Bertha A. Whipkey

A 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment Soldier fires his M16A2 rifle after expelling all of his .50-caliber machine gun rounds during a combat logistics patrol at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 18.

“We could set up in an observation post any day and shoot artillery,” Windle said as he looked out over the training area’s frozen impact area. “But here the maneuver element is moving so we have to move with them. We’re tracking their forward line of troops at the same time they’re requesting fire missions.”

Windle explained that this exercise was also a great opportunity for each Soldier to work at honing his individual skills at every level - such as making sure his equipment works properly, quickly and accurately ac-

quiring targets, and reading a map with a protractor.

“We need to make sure everything works and that we know how to work it,” he said.

PVT Robert Young, one of Windle’s crewmen, agrees.

“There are a lot of things you need to prep before you go downrange,” Young said. “There are things you definitely need to know in case you do come into a situation – combat wise. We need to be able to engage the enemy, suppress the enemy fire and destroy the enemy.”

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Vanguard Soldiers *live-fire*



Three Soldiers of C Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment move out to a new objective after securing a house during training.

Conduct exercise



*Story and photos by SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO*

Conducting infantry training is one thing, but doing it with live rounds in your weapon is another situation entirely. While Soldiers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment may have felt differently training with live rounds at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 21, there was no difference in the efficiency and expertise in which they conducted their mission.

That mission, according to MAJ Scott Nelson, 1-18 Inf. operations officer, was to react to enemy contact, which included simulated small arms fire, rocket propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices, and develop the situation into a hasty attack, resulting in the capture of a high-value target and rescue of a hostage.

During the mission each Soldier had safety in mind at all times due to the live rounds they had in their weapons. PVT Tyler Fillion, an infantryman with C Co., 1-18 Inf., who provided cover fire with his 50 caliber machine gun while other 1-18 Inf. Soldiers cleared a house, was one such Soldier.

“There were people in the building at my 11 o’clock so I had to make sure I concentrated on where I was firing and on keeping the weapon on safe when I wasn’t firing,” he said. Other than that, Fillion said, it was as simple as “get in, get the hostage and get out.”

Nelson was pleased with the speed and efficiency in which the 1-18 Inf. Soldiers conducted the mission. “In my opinion, they did it very well,” he said. “Once they dismounted off their M998s, they were on and off the objective in about 10 minutes, having completed their mission.”

The 1-18 Inf. Soldiers have conducted missions similar to this in several different scenarios in order to become proficient with different vehicles and weapons systems.

“We run several iterations on this objective,” Nelson said. “We run them through with M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles so they have core competency of all their organic equipment including TOW antitank guns, 25 mm main guns and 7.62 mm coax machine guns. They also execute a light infantry/dismounted movement, using their M16A2 and M-4 rifles, and the M-249 squad automatic weapon.”

Next, Nelson said, the 1-18 Inf. Soldiers run through the same scenario while driving their M998 Humvees with M240B and 50 caliber machine guns mounted on top, similar to how they would conduct missions while deployed.

Nelson hopes this mission, and the added element of realism, will help prepare the 1-18 Inf. Soldiers for their scheduled deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

“When they get to Iraq, or wherever they might be deployed around the world, it won’t be the first time they’ve done something like this,” he said.

While some of the 1-18 Inf. Soldiers have had experience conducting missions like this in a combat environment, many of them are new, lower enlisted Soldiers who have arrived at the unit over the last three months.

Fortunately, Soldiers such as SPC Nathan Maez, a C Co., 1-18 Inf. team

ing at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 21, as part of a live-fire exercise.

leader, have taken it upon themselves to prepare the new Soldiers for anything.

Maez said he tries to make sure all the Soldiers in his team take all the training seriously because when they get to a combat zone “it’s not like the movies.” Maez said it’s important for him to “exude confidence” at all times so the other Soldiers will follow his lead and also have confidence in themselves and the leadership.

Fillion, who is one of the newer 1-18 Inf. Soldiers, thinks the training they have been conducting is paying off.

“A lot of our platoon is new, but we’ve become pretty tight since we started training here at Graf,” he said.

Nelson said the new Soldiers have been doing a good job of listening to their leadership and taking the training seriously.

“They’re taking it very seriously, and they’ve been very receptive to their leadership, based on the fact that in a matter of months, they could be doing this for real,” he said.



Soldiers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment “stack up” outside of a house during live-fire training at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 21. The 1-18 Inf. Soldiers were conducting training on raiding a house and capturing a high-value enemy target.

Engineers, from page 17



Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division’s 9th Engineer Battalion search a person for contraband during the battalion’s route clearance mission in Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, March 8.

concrete has been laid. These sometimes indicate a bomb has recently been buried.

According to Maxa, once a route clearance has been conducted, the road is classified as “green” for the next two hours. This lets the support personnel know that the avenue is “freer of IEDs than one that hasn’t been cleared,” he said.

Even when a route clearance has been conducted, there is still no way of knowing for sure that everything has been discovered.

“You can never say it’s 100 percent certain that we found everything,” Maxa said. But, he added, people traveling down a road we’ve cleared know there’s a much better chance of traveling the road safely.



CPL Jonathan Williams and SPC Robert Hartung of the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion perform pre-flight maintenance checks on a Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle at Vilseck Army Airfield Feb. 16.

Intel Soldiers provide view of battlefield

*Story and photo by
SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO*

While infantry and armor Soldiers conducted maneuvers and exercises at Grafenwoehr Training Area in February, Soldiers from the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion hoped to lend a hand from Vilseck with the aid of their Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

A TUAV is an unmanned aircraft designed to support tactical commanders with near real-time images and videos of a battlefield.

“It’s the only imagery intelligence system a brigade commander has direct control of,” said CPT Jimmy Gaw, C Company commander, 101st MI Bn. “He’s the one who decides where he wants it to go. It’s the most responsive intelligence system he has.”

“Our brigade commander wanted to make sure we flew (the TUAV) in support of live-fire ranges by providing footage of the objectives,” Gaw said. “The TUAV is supposed to provide real-time footage of the battlefield to the battalion (and brigade intelligence officers), and enable them to give intelligence for the situation.”

Unfortunately, harsh weather conditions prevented the TUAV from taking off on this particular day.

“When this particular model was fielded, it came straight from Fort Huachuca, Ariz., to Iraq, so this is the first time it’s been used in a cold environment,” Gaw said.

According to SPC Robert Hartung, C Co., 101st MI Bn. TUAV maintenance specialist, the cold conditions can cause several problems for this model of TUAV.

“It’s not made for extreme cold,” he said. “The carburetor freezes, and it can’t fly in a lot of rain because the propeller spins so fast, even rain can chip it.”

Fortunately, these issues will be a thing of the past once 101st MI Bn. receives a new model of TUAV in late March.

“The new model will have significant upgrades, allowing it to fly in more extreme weather conditions,” Gaw said. In addition to that upgrade, Gaw said the new model will have new capabilities well beyond that of providing pictures and videos of the battlefield, thanks to a laser range finder.

Once the TUAV flies over an area, the laser range finder works by pointing at a specific object or point and providing very accurate grid coordinates to the commander.

Despite not being able to fly the TUAV,

Gaw has confidence in his crew of TUAV operators and maintenance technicians due to their vast amount of experience.

“Every single one of these Soldiers went to OIF II,” Gaw said. “We’re the most experienced TUAV platoon in Europe.”

Hartung is one such Soldier who gained valuable experience working with TUAVs in OIF II at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Baqubah. “We did about four flights a day,” he said.

Hartung’s responsibilities as a maintenance specialist during that time, according to him, included recovering the aircraft when it landed and doing everything from changing spark plugs to replacing the entire engine.

While they can only hope for the weather to change in the near future, the 101st MI Bn. Soldiers still stayed sharp on their respective jobs by doing simulated runs with the TUAV and performing all their usual pre-flight checks and maintenance before making sure it was running effectively by putting it on the launcher and running the engine. They will also continue to attempt to fly the TUAV every chance they get.

“We’ll try every day,” Gaw said. “It’s a continuous mission.”



M1A1 Abrams tanks from 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, move to their respective lanes during tank tables at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 16.

Tankers complete tank tables in Grafenwoehr

*Story and photo by SPC Joe Alger
Staff writer, 1st ID PAO*

They say “train like you fight,” and Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment tried to create an environment similar to the one they expect to face in Iraq, aside from the weather, of course. The 1-77 AR Soldiers conducted tank tables at Grafenwoehr Training Area Feb. 16, the final step in preparation for their upcoming Mission Rehearsal Exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels.

“We developed a six-month training program of tank tables to get to where we are today,” said SSG James Meckley, B Company, 1-77 AR master gunner. “We started with the first few tank tables in Schweinfurt and now we’ve been here at Graf for two weeks finishing up.”

During this exercise, the 1-77 AR Soldiers tested the abilities of their M1A1 Abrams tanks and the Soldiers operating them.

According to SSG Kevin Jackson, B Co., 1-77 AR 3rd Platoon sergeant, the operation begins with a platoon of tanks getting set in a defensive position and being briefed by the commander about the enemy situation.

Once that takes place, the tanks move forward into contact and are engaged by a series of pop-up targets – some of which are friendly.

“The key to fire accuracy is lowering the amount of collateral damage,” said LTC Miciotto Johnson, 1-77 AR commander. “Target discrimination is very important.”

The 1-77 AR Soldiers also learn another lesson about target discrimination when one of their targets on the range appears as a police vehicle. Jackson said this is to simulate a situation in which an insurgent has stolen a police vehicle in order to get closer to them, a situation which has happened on several occasions in Iraq.

As the 1-77 AR Soldiers continue to engage their targets, they are also confronted with a realistic situation if they miss targets.

“The targets that you don’t hit pop up and continue to get closer to you,” Jackson said. “So you don’t want to miss too much, or you’ll get overrun.”

Despite these small details that make the range more realistic, it still cannot provide a perfect picture for the Soldiers of what to expect in a combat zone, which is why Soldiers like Meckley are at the range to share their knowledge and experience.

Meckley, who had previously deployed as a tank commander, completed master gunner school and now works with the 1-77 AR Soldiers in a different capacity.

“I get to work with a lot of different crews and help with their fire control systems and assist with some of the maintenance issues we have,” Meckley said.

One of the issues 1-77 AR Soldiers have had to work through is their almost 60 percent turnover rate since their last deployment, which is why Jackson believes getting the new Soldiers in the right mindset is one of the most important missions of the training.

“The key thing if for the young Soldiers to take this training seriously so when we deploy, they’ll be ready,” he said.

So far, the new Soldiers have been up to the task, and Johnson was pleased with what he had seen from them.

“I think they’re up to the challenge, and they’re doing a great job,” Johnson said of the new Soldiers. “When I was out at the range, I was very impressed by some of the privates I saw doing the tables.”

Meckley also believes with the training 1-77 AR has been conducting, they are being set up for success in future missions.

Airborne 1-4 CAV squadron transforms from heavy to light recon unit

*Story and photo by SPC Stephen Baack
Editor, 1st ID PAO*

The last day of February marked the first time since World War II that one 1st Infantry Division cavalry unit was without armored vehicles, moving them closer to being the only airborne reconnaissance squadron in U.S. Army Europe.

As their last M1A1 Abrams tanks rolled onto the Conn Barracks railhead in Schweinfurt, Germany, Feb. 28, the 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment took one step closer to moving from heavy to light and joining the 173rd Airborne Brigade based at Vicenza, Italy.

“It’s a big day for this unit to transition away from the track vehicles and get ready to go airborne,” said CPT Daniel Baldi, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop commander. “The big, significant thing is, in line with the Army’s transformation, to get all of these track vehicles and heavy vehicles out of the squadron. It really paves the way for us to get ready to accept the new (Modified Table of Organization and Equipment) and be ready to take on the new mission.”

More than six months ago, the squadron began to change its training in anticipation of the impending shift to light reconnaissance by increasingly focusing on dismounted operations training for not only the squadron’s scouts, but also the tankers.

“This is a humungous change,” said Baldi. “You go away from the track vehicles and the huge logistics footprint that comes along with that. Now with the airborne (characteristic), it’s lighter, it’s faster, it’s more mobile and easier to deploy. So it’s a complete change from the standard that we’ve seen over the last few years with the heavier equipment.”

“I can’t imagine a more complex set of tasks than what this squadron’s been asked to do,” said LTC Christopher Kolenda, 1-4 CAV commander.

During the shift in training, the squadron

has had to reconstitute all of its personnel and heavy equipment from their deployment during Operation Iraqi Freedom II. The unit immediately thereafter managed about 40 percent of the unit’s redeploying Soldiers for permanent changes of station, while processing incoming Soldiers. Leadership meanwhile has also been working to energize their Soldiers to cooperate in changing the identity and culture of this heavy cavalry unit. Squadron members have been gearing up for airborne school, working to change the tactics, techniques and procedures, and even creating new unit songs and mottos.

“It’s certainly a bitter-sweet day,” said Kolenda. “These (M1A1 Abrams tanks and M3A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles) have been to Bosnia; they’ve been to Macedonia; they’ve been to Iraq. There’s a lot of emotional attachment to these vehicles ... so to see them get on a train and depart, on the one hand it’s a significant emotional event for all of us; on the other hand, it’s another very important step to the future as we turn in all of our heavy vehicles.”

The Soldiers are excited about the transition, said CSM John Fortune, 1-4 CAV command sergeant major.

“A lot of these 19K tankers have decided they want to jump out of planes and be light reconnaissance squadron members,” said Fortune. “We’ve got 17 guys at Fort Knox right now becoming 19D scouts from the Armor force, and they’re all looking forward to jumping out of planes – that’s for sure.”

“It’s truly a unique opportunity in the Army,” said Kolenda. “We are on the cutting edge of Army transformation. And you see a lot of that happening right here. There are a lot of Soldiers very, very excited about this transformation. The reenlistment rates are through the roof, and people are really looking forward to the new mission, to the opportunity to be in an airborne unit and at the same time maintaining the spirit of the cavalry.”



A row of M1A1 Abrams tanks awaits shipment from the Conn Barracks railhead in Schweinfurt, Germany, Feb.28. The tanks are the final armored vehicles to leave the possession of 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, which is transitioning from a heavy to a light airborne reconnaissance squadron.



1st ID Medal of Honor recipient PSG Matthew Leonard

Serving as a platoon sergeant in B Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, PSG Leonard and his Soldiers were attacked Feb. 28, 1967, by a large enemy force. Leonard rallied his men to counter initial enemy assaults, after which he organized a defensive perimeter and inspired his comrades with forceful leadership and words of encouragement. Leonard was able to direct the fire of his men and save an injured comrade despite a shattered left hand. With his platoon threatened by a well-positioned enemy machine gun, he charged the gun and destroyed the hostile crew despite being hit several times. Leonard continued to engage the enemy until he succumbed to his many wounds. His fighting spirit, heroic leadership and valiant acts inspired the remaining members of his platoon to hold back the enemy until assistance arrived.