



Dragon staff learns from Black Jacks

Story, photo by MAJ Kirk Luedeke
4th IBCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, IRAQ -- The Dragon Brigade began its mission in Iraq by conducting a relief in place with the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division "Black Jacks" in Iraq's capital city.

Key members of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team staff arrived in Baghdad last week and met with counterparts while also receiving a series of briefings which shared the 2nd Brigade's most important lessons learned since arriving in theater from Fort Hood, Texas in Nov.

"We're extremely fortunate to have the kind of professional assistance we received from the Black Jacks," Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, 4th IBCT commander said. "Col. (Bryan) Roberts and his staff went above and beyond to help make sure we're ready to tackle the challenges that lie ahead."

As part of the Multi-National Division-Baghdad, the Dragon Brigade will play an important role in the Baghdad Security Plan, which has been in effect since about the middle of the month and has met with early success.

The Black Jacks have played an integral role in the plan and its supporting operations. With the arrival of the Dragons from Fort Riley, the 2nd Brigade can now hand off a part of the area they've been operating in, and narrow their focus to the locations in Baghdad closest to their forward operating base.

"We've gotten an excellent feel for the area of operations and what the Black Jacks have done well in their tour here," Col. Gibbs said. "The entire brigade staff has been outstanding, and has set the conditions for success."

Now, it's time for the Dragon Brigade to take the key tactics, techniques and procedures, and apply them to their own imminent operations in Baghdad.

Dragon 6 Sends...

Greetings from Iraq to the families and friends of the Dragon Brigade! By now, nearly all of the brigade's Soldiers have arrived in Baghdad from Kuwait, and we are drawing ever closer to initiating operations here in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom V.

I am proud of what I have seen from the Dragons so far. Soldiers and leaders are working extremely hard to settle into our forward operating base and prepare for future operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism.



Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, right, commander of the 4th IBCT, 1st Infantry Division, and Col. Bryan T. Roberts, left, commander of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, in Baghdad Feb. 26.

I want to thank all of the families for their tremendous support during the deployment and ask that you continue to provide that same kind of encouragement in the days, weeks and months to follow.

We are at an important crossroads in our Nation's history, and it is my distinct honor to lead the great men and women of this brigade as we work to make not only Baghdad but all of Iraq safe and secure for its citizens.- Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, commanding. DRAGONS FIRST!



The 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's key leadership attend COIN training in Baghdad. From left: LTC Pat Frank, commander, 1-28 IN, LTC Rob Weaver, commander 610 BSB, LTC James Crider, commander 1-4 CAV, COL Ricky D. Gibbs, commander, 4th IBCT, LTC Gregory Gadson, commander, 2-32 FA, LTC Ralph Kauzlarich, commander, 2-16 IN, LTC Joe Birchmeier, commander 4-1 BSTB

Dragon leaders conduct counterinsurgency training

By MAJ Kirk Luedeke
4th IBCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, IRAQ -- The Dragon Brigade's key leaders recently conducted a five-day counterinsurgency training program designed to help the unit complete its mission to reduce the violence in war-torn Iraq.

The Brigade Commander and select members of his staff, along with Battalion and company commanders and key members of their staffs, attended the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Academy, where they learned everything from the history of Iraq, to the fundamentals of an insurgency and methods for waging a successful counterinsurgency.

The training schedule packed a lot of information into a relatively short period of time, allowing officers to share experiences and discuss concepts in an open forum, tailored to the kinds of challenges that 4th Brigade will face in the current environment in Baghdad.

"Most of the course was an invaluable training tool and positive experience for us,"

said Maj. Craig J. Manville, the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment's operations officer. "It was great to talk to some of the units already on the ground because it gave us a feel for what's out there and let us hear from the guys who are conducting counterinsurgency operations right now."

Maj. Rob Picht, the brigade Fire Support Coordinator, felt that the program's emphasis on Iraqi history, culture and values in the context of the current situation was bonus.

"The cross-cultural and intelligence training provided new insights which we did not discuss at home station," the Soldier from Bergenfield, N.J., said. "The group discussions provided a lot of positive feedback with this training."

With each day dedicated to classes conducted by a series of guest speakers and subject matter experts all in attendance were able to focus on the training and get the most out of what was presented.

"It provided a good starting point for everyone there," said Lt. Col. Jay Pitz, brigade executive officer. "Now, those lessons have to be taught to Soldiers and applied by all."

