

Ryder Dispatch

The Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division

Newly inducted officers sacrifice for 'big picture'

By 1st Lt. Gabe Haugland
B Co., 1-168 Infantry

Any Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine who raises their right hand and swears an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America by joining our armed forces has made an incredible sacrifice in so doing. For two young officers of the 2-34th BCT, that sacrifice also meant accelerating their military and civilian education in order to earn their officer commission and deploy to Afghanistan this fall.

2nd Lt. Joel Sage, a rifle platoon leader from HHC 1-168th Infantry Battalion and an economics major at Drake University of Des Moines Iowa, moved his graduation date up a full semester. In order to graduate in time to deploy, he had to take 20 credit hours during his last semester at Drake, as well as balance the competing roles of student, cadet, Soldier, father and husband.

Sage was up to the challenge, as he has been for most of his young adult life. After 9/11, he enlisted into the active-duty Army as an infantryman and was assigned to the Old Guard of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment at Fort Myer, Va. where he was a member of the caisson

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Annual family conference scheduled Presentations planned for all ages

By Sara Christoffel
Family Readiness Support Assistant,
2-34th BCT

The dates and location for the Annual State Family Readiness Conference and Youth Symposium have been announced: the conference will be held 21-23 May 2010, at the Polk County Convention Center, downtown Des Moines, Iowa.

The conference is a per-

fect opportunity to learn more about the military and its benefits, programs and services available to families and Soldiers. It is also a time for families and Soldiers to network with other military families in the state of Iowa. Not only are there speakers and presentations for adults, but the youth ages 6 to 18 also have their own program supervised by qualified adults.

Friday evening, take the time to check-in to the hotel and attend a town hall meeting. Saturday morning, the Adjutant General Brig. Gen. Timothy Orr and other National Guard dignitaries will be available to attendees for questions. Presentations range from Dealing with Educators, Guard 101 to Afghanistan and the USO. There are 19 different presentations for attendees to choose from on Saturday

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U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus

Soldiers attend Ravens training in Fort McCoy

Spec. Michael Mills of B Battery, 1-194th Field Artillery launches a Raven March 17, 2010 at Fort McCoy, Wis. Soldiers of all 2-34th BCT battalions attended RQ-11 Ravens training throughout March to learn how to operate the new equipment fielded. The Raven is an unmanned aircraft system used at the platoon or squad level in order to look forward of their area of operations to scout for enemy that may be ahead.



U.S. Army Photo by Capt. Adrian (Sean) Taylor

From the Editor

Hello friends and families,

Thanks for picking up another edition of the Ryder Dispatch, the official publication of the 2-34th BCT. April began a new month and brought more changes. One thing we as Soldiers and families of Soldiers need to keep in mind is the fluidity that is required by being a part of the 'big green machine,' especially while we currently move towards mobilization. In this edition, each regular columnist will discuss the importance of remaining fluid throughout this time.

We have a couple new contributors. In March, our public affairs office held the first unit public affairs representative (UPAR) training seminar. Almost every company in the brigade had a Soldier present to learn about interacting with the media, photography and writing. As

the editor of this publication, I can say that I am very excited to have these new UPARs take their training and use it to tell *your* story.

Along with my excitement of new contributors, I am also pumped about having a presence out in social media, and so is the commander! Those web addresses can be found in the box below. We will also be setting up a blog and a web site which I hope to have ready for you all soon.

Until then, keep up the great work and remember: stay fluid!

“On the Objective”

Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus
Editor-in-Chief
Public Affairs NCOIC

Iowa Red Bulls on social media!



The 2-34th BCT has made its way into the social media realm, and the following is huge! If you have not yet found the Iowa Red Bulls on your favorite social media sites, we encourage you to look us up!

You can find us at the following links:

www.facebook.com/iowaredbulls
www.twitter.com/iowaredbulls
www.flickr.com/iowaredbulls

(Participation on social media sites does not constitute endorsement of any particular social media site by the 2-34th BCT, Iowa National Guard, U.S. Army or Dept. of Defense)



Commanding Officer

Col. Thomas H. Staton

Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Craig R. Berte

Mission:

To celebrate and support the Soldiers and families of the 2-34th BCT by providing brigade members with information on what is happening around the brigade, and to keep Soldiers and families updated on current events and policies set forth by the command.

Public Affairs Office

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Non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge

Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus

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Command Sgt. Maj. Craig R. Berte
Capt. Adrian (Sean) Taylor
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Note

If you wish to submit stories, photographs or news to be considered for a future issue of the Ryder Dispatch, please contact the brigade public affairs office at:

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Ryder Command Post

2nd BCT, 34th ID Commander: Col. Thomas H. Staton

Now that we have an actual mobilization order in hand, many of you may be asking, "What does this mean? What does it mean for my unit, my family and what does it mean for me?" For most of us, the mobilization order means we are one step further along in this journey we call deployment. With the mobilization order comes additional clarity and in some cases additional questions.

Here's what we know for sure at this point: We know that we are going to mobilize approximately 2,800 Iowa National Guard Soldiers, along with about 400 from the Nebraska National Guard, for a mission to work and partner with the Afghan National Security Forces. We know that we will go on active duty toward the end of July and report to Camp Shelby, Miss. in the proceeding weeks to continue training for our mission to Afghanistan.

We will train at Camp Shelby until mid-to-late September and then move the entire brigade to Fort Irwin, Calif. where we will conduct a mission rehearsal exercise prior to departing for our Area of Operations (AO).

Based on current time lines and expectations, I believe the entire brigade will be in country by Thanksgiving, where we will spend approximately nine months conducting operations before returning home August 2011.

Broadly speaking in terms of our mission, we will be living, working and operating with Afghan National Security Forces. We will be training, teaching, mentoring and advising Afghans on how to develop their own forces.

While we know what our mission will be in broad terms, it will likely continue to change and evolve as conditions on the ground fluctuate. I know that Soldiers want to better understand their mission, where they will be located in country and specific mobilization time lines.

Living conditions could be austere, depending on where you're located. Some of you will have access to good dining facilities and access to a com-

puter. However, in some cases you will live out of your duffle bag, rucksack and vehicle, for days or possibly weeks at a time.

Based on prior experience, we know that missions and location may change. We all want to know what we're going to be doing and where we're going to be located for the next year. While it's understandable to be frustrated by this uncertainty, I ask that you refrain from getting hung up on it and remain flexible.

Regardless of our eventual mission, what we need to focus on right now are the basics: Army Warrior Tasks (AWT) and battle drills, proficiency with our individual equipment and weapons, troop leading procedures, and achieving crew and squad level proficiency.

In addition, we must continue to focus on those Theater Specific Individual Readiness Training and Theater Specific Lanes Training (TSIRT/TSLT) requirements that we are required to complete prior to moving to our mobilization station.

In June we will move to Camp Ripley, Minn. where we will focus on squad live fire exercises, platoon level proficiency battle drills and battalion and brigade staff proficiency exercises and operations.

We already have over 500 Soldiers on duty playing vital roles in preparing our units for this upcoming deployment and to support continued fielding of new equipment. Many Soldiers and leaders are also participating in critical training sessions to prepare them for working in an uncertain and challenging security environment. This includes Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace (LDESP), Counter Insurgency (COIN) Seminar and Security Force Assistance Training.

As you know and see every day, there are a lot of moving pieces that have to come together to properly prepare the 2-34th BCT for our deployment. Things will continue to change and evolve. Much of this will be out of our control. But there are a few things



Iowa National Guard photo by Justin Cato

that we can control, and one of those is communication. I am deeply committed to ensuring that we have fast, effective and open communication at every level of this organization.

We are using a communication strategy that is designed to keep Soldiers and families informed. It relies on traditional information flow through the chain of command, newsletters and command messages and leverages social media to help spread the word. Families are encouraged to participate in and get their information from Family Readiness Groups (FRG) and stay updated through social media and traditional web sites.

I have already hosted a few town hall meetings around the state to personally meet with families, employers and community members to provide information and answer questions about the deployment. These meetings have been pretty well attended and have given us an opportunity to start a dialogue that I fully intend to continue throughout our pre mobilization training and while we're in country. To do this we will rely on "virtual" town hall meetings and use available technology and social networking media to maintain two-way communication between brigade leadership and our families.

The road ahead will at times be challenging. I ask each of you to do all you can to prepare yourselves mentally and physically. Likewise, take the time now to help prepare your family members for this extended separation. This will make an important difference for you and for them as we continue along this journey.

"On the Objective!"

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Soldiers meet Iowa's first lady for coffee

First Lady, Mari Culver hosted several Iowa National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and family members for coffee and a tour of Terrance Hill recently to hear about their deployment experiences and learn more about the services and programs available during mobilizations. Pictured are Col. Tom Staton, Staff Sgt. Eric Christoffel, Spec. Tom Kennedy, 1st Sgt. Jerry Vander Pol, Lt. Col. Pat Hatting, and first lady Culver with Suzanne Orr in front.

Through the Ranks

*2nd BCT, 34th ID Command Sergeant Major:
Command Sgt. Maj. Craig R. Berte*

Soldiers of the 2-34th BCT:

Planning and preparations for our scheduled mobilization are going along smoothly thanks to the dedication and long hours of our leadership teams throughout the brigade. I would encourage everyone to stay focused and take care of the basics. Your number one priority should be getting your family prepared for your absence and pre-arranging help that will be available if needed.

We all need to stay very flexible throughout this journey we are about to embark on together. Our mission, time lines, and locations are very fluid and will be subject to change up until

we arrive in theatre at our duty stations, and even then it may change.

The 2-34th BCT is prepared to deploy worldwide to accomplish any mission assigned to us, and stand-down if ordered to do so.

I am looking forward to serving each and every member of our brigade combat team.



Iowa National Guard photo by Justin Cato

“On the Objective!”

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afternoon. The guest speaker on Sunday morning is ISU Football Coach Paul Rhoades; he will be followed by a Youth Presentation and Program.

A hotel room will be provided to each family. Attending non-military members will be put on Invitational Travel Authorizations for mileage and childcare reimbursement, the Saturday

lunch is also provided. Registrations are due by May 15, 2010.

To register for the conference contact Shalee Torrence at 1-800-294-6607 ext 4781 or email shalee.torrence@us.army.mil. Online registration is also available at www.jointservicessupport.org, but does require subscription to the web site.

Yellow Ribbon Events

Yellow Ribbon Events provide National Guard and Reserve members and their families with information, services, referrals, and proactive outreach opportunities throughout the deployment cycle.

The 2-34th BCT has the following events scheduled:

- June 6 - (1-194 FA)
Fort Dodge, Estherville
- June 9 - (1-113 Cav)
Camp Dodge
- June 11 - (1-113 Cav)
Sioux City
- June 27 - (832 Eng/134 Med)
Mount Pleasant
- July 10 - (334 BSB)
Camp Dodge, Cedar Rapids
- July 11 - (334 BSB)
Sioux City
- July 16 - (1-194 FA/2-34 BSTB)
Des Moines
- July 17 - (2-34th BSTB)
Cedar Rapids, Davenport

For details on individual events, please contact your Family Readiness Assistant or follow your chain-of-command.

For additional information on the yellow ribbon events, please visit their web site at:
www.yellowribbon.mil

Upcoming
'Strong bonds'
events for Soldiers
and their families

Sign-up for events soon

**Strong Bonds for Couples
Weekend**

Preventative relationship enhancement program offers a fresh approach that is basic and straight forward.

May 15-16 in Davenport

**Laugh your way to a Better
Marriage**

Explores the underlying dynamics of male/female relationships, combining striking clarity and practical solution to common relationship woes.

July 17-18 in Des Moines

**7 Habits of Highly Effective
Families**

Brought to you by the same people who brought you 7 habits of highly effect people, but designed to help develop a successful plan for your family.

July 24-25 in Boone

For more information about Strong Bonds events visit:
<https://www.strongbonds.org>.
You can even register for the events online!

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Photo by U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Jeremy Strachan

2nd Lt. Joel Sage receives his commission from Lt. Col. Jay Soupene, Professor of Military Science at Iowa State University December 2009.

platoon and completed Ranger school as a private first class. After his initial enlistment was over, Sage returned to Iowa and transferred to the 194th Infantry Detachment long range surveillance (LRS) airborne team and concurrently enrolled in Drake's Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC).

When he deploys, he will leave behind his wife, Jessica and their two children, Bradley and Sydney.

"The toughest thing about this deployment will be spending time away from my family. As soon as the brigade returns I'm planning to go on a family vacation and then find a job," Sage said. He began the infantry Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) in March.

Much like Sage, 2nd Lt. Eron Lindsey has also

made sacrifices beyond those routinely expected of a Soldier. In fact, Lindsey resigned a relatively "comfortable" job as an Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) recruiting non-commissioned officer (NCO) to pursue his commission through federal Officer Candidate School (OCS), which he graduated in February. After the completion of his field artillery BOLC this spring, Lindsey will assume the duties of fire direc-

tion officer for B Battery, 1-194th Field Artillery Battalion during the brigade's deployment.

Lindsey is also leaving behind a family as he deploys: Heather, his wife of 12 years, and his son Caleb and daughter Hailey. He understands it won't be easy on them.

"Personally, it is hard on my family," said Lindsey. "All of the training that I have had to do: OCS, BOLC and the upcoming deployment mean that over the next 18 months or so, I will have limited time with my family. I will definitely be ready for some down time when training and the deployment is all over."

Lindsey, who deployed in 2004 with the 1-168th Inf., says he expects more of himself now that he's an officer, and that his commission means

taking care of troops at a different level than as an NCO. Now, he says he has to step back and look at the big picture.

Neither of them have any regrets, nor are they under any illusions. They understand the sacrifice they have made and what they're asking of their families in order to pursue their calling. Both of them definitely see "the big picture."



"The toughest thing about this deployment will be spending time away from my family."

2nd Lt. Joel Sage,
Headquarters Company, 1-168 Infantry



Chaplain's Corner

Constant yet flexible

By Maj. Murray E. Phillips
Chaplain, 2-34th BCT

Read Mark 6: 7-13

Jesus gave his orders to the disciples. He sent them out two by two to go and proclaim the good news, preach repentance, heal the sick and to drive out the demons which tested the peoples' faith. Their mission was clear but, in reality, they still had to react to strange and possible hostile situations for no two towns or groups were ever the same.

When they entered each town, there was no way of

knowing whether they would be received with open arms or whether the people would rise up and throw rocks and stones. Would the public listen and accept them, or reject and possibly kill them?

For many of us, we live somewhat structured lives. We know our mission. We have job responsibilities, family responsibilities, educational pursuits, etc. Most days, we probably know where we are going, when we have to be there, and what we must do to be successful.

However, as a wise person once said, "the only constant in life is change." This means we have to be ready to adapt no matter what. For example, if you are married and you receive news one day that you are going to have children, doesn't that cause some anxiety along with obvious joy? Likewise, does it require some adjustments in your routine and lives?

If nothing else, Jesus taught the disciples to adapt to the circumstances. In this passage from Mark, he tells them: "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave from there." This was a sign that the disciples were welcome and that it was

proper courtesy to accept the hospitality of the hosts. However, Jesus also gave them alternative instructions if the house or village was hostile: "Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them." (Mark 6: 10-11, New American Bible). Adaptability was the key even as the disciples were constant and focused on their mission to spread the gospel.

In our own lives, may we also become adaptable to change even as we strive to be consistent in our work ethic and moral values. 🦋

I don't want to be a Soldier today

By Capt. Adrian Sean Taylor
HHC 334th Brigade Support Battalion

I love being a Soldier. I have always wanted to be one. I guess it came from watching the old World War II movies on Saturday afternoons. I have always wanted to be a Soldier, but I never thought I could be one. The idea wasn't popular in my house when I was young. I had asthma. I wasn't strong. I wasn't brave. But oh, how I wanted to be a Soldier! Maybe, someday.

I got married. I had children. I got a job as a school psychologist. I got old and my dream of being a Soldier faded away. Then the attacks on 9/11 occurred and my childhood dream exploded in my mind. I could no longer ignore it. It consumed me like the Devil's Tower consumed Richard Dreyfuss in *Close Encounters*. But I was married, had children, had a job as a school psychologist and was old.

My cousin Jake wasn't old. He was young. And he was an Army Ranger. I secretly wanted to be Jake. Jake is the ultimate in cool. Sure the Jake I heard about was mainly just in family stories. I hadn't seen him since he was a kid, but oh how I clung to those stories. I heard he was in Colombia. I served as

a missionary in Colombia. Does that count? Was that my Soldier service?

No, I am young still. I am brave. I can be a Soldier, can't I? On October 24, 2002 I raised my hand and enlisted in the United States Army National Guard, three days before I would be too old. I went to basic training as Jake went to Baghdad. I went to Officer Candidate School (OCS), officer basic and became a medical logistics officer.

I walk a little taller now. I have pride when I put on the uniform. It looks good on me. My kids think I am one of the strongest men in the world. I love being a Soldier. I love my family.

Last April, at 42, I went to Air Assault School at Ft. Benning, Ga. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done. Of the close to 200 that started the course, only around 140 of us graduated and only one was older than me. I graduated Air Assault School! Best off all, my cool Airborne Ranger cousin Jake, who was stationed at Fort Benning, pinned the wings on my chest. He did it the right way, when no one was looking, like I hoped he would.

I got up this morning and put on my uniform and got ready for another drill weekend. I look good in the uniform with the air assault badge. We are get-



U.S. Army Photo by Airman 1st Class Sandra Welch
Members of the Arizona National Guard carry the casket of U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Glen Jacob Whetten, past his grieving family during a dignified transfer ceremony at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. on March 19, 2010. Whetten was killed on Mar. 12, 2010 after the vehicle he was traveling in was struck by an improvised explosive device near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

ting ready to deploy to Afghanistan this summer, so this drill weekend will be a week long for me. I don't get to go with my family to the Mall of America

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for spring break. Its all OK, I am a Soldier, I am brave.

I just found out this morning as I was walking out the door that my brave, cool cousin Jake was killed in Afghanistan last night. I don't want to be a Soldier today. I don't want to be cool. I don't want to be brave. I want to cry and Soldiers don't cry. I drove down to

drill but then I decided - I don't want to be a Soldier today. I came back home and took off my boots and my uniform. Today I want to mourn for my dear Aunt Amy and for all the mother's who have sacrificed their children to war.

Tomorrow morning I will put back on the uniform. I will not secretly smile and think I am cool when I see my air

assault badge in the mirror. It means something different now. Yes, tomorrow I will be proud to be counted as a Soldier, but not today. I don't want to be a Soldier today. 🐄

In memory of:

*Sgt. 1st Class Glen "Jacob" Whetten
3/19/1978-3/12/2010, KIA-Afghanistan, Army Airborne Ranger, 1st
Brigade 1st Infantry, Ft. Riley, Kan.*

Opportunity training allows for cross-training

**By 1st Lt. Derek Kinnison
C Troop, 1-113th Cavalry Squadron**

Opportunity training time allows Pathfinder and Mountain Warfare qualified Soldiers to pass on their school-house knowledge in an informal and hands-on environment.

The training schedule for C Troop, 1-113th Cavalry Squadron is packed enough with mandatory Warrior Task and Battle Drill training for the upcoming deployment, but a reprieve with "opportunity training" proved to be a welcome change of pace for some C Troop Soldiers.

"Not everyone gets a chance to go to Pathfinder or Mountain Warfare School," said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Luck, 1st Platoon Sergeant, of Sioux City, Iowa, "so it is critical for us as leaders to share that wealth of knowledge. Not only does it pro-

vide real world training for our deployment, but it also prepares Soldiers who will attend those schools in the future."

A common misconception of Pathfinder school is that it is an ultra-extensive land navigation school. In reality, land navigation is a very small portion of Pathfinder school; rather, it teaches Soldiers to become proficient in air traffic control, aero-medivac procedures, sling load operations, and establishing helicopter landing zones, pick-up zones, and drop-zones. All of which are important skills involved in air movement troops and equipment to locations that are not easily accessible.

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Koch, a Pathfinder graduate from Grand Mound, Iowa lead the Pathfinder instruction on how to establish a helicopter landing zone.

"These are perishable skills; getting the time to train on them keeps it fresh," Koch said.

Not many units in the Iowa National Guard have Pathfinder, Air Assault, and

Mountain Warfare qualified Soldiers from which to learn. It's an exciting opportunity for C-Troop 1-113th CAV Soldiers to take advantage of these unique skill sets. 🐄



U.S. Army Photo by 1st Lt. Derek Kinnison

Spec. Jesse Van Wyk (front) aligns VS-17 panels with Spec. Curtis Sitzmann and Pfc. Cody Engebretson April 10, 2010 near the Lemars, Iowa Armory to establish a mock-landing zone for helicopter touchdown points. C Troop, 1-113th Cavalry conducted opportunity training which allowed Soldiers to cross-train on Pathfinder Operations.

SLING-LOADING

Soldiers of C Trp., 1-113 Cavalry work with C Co. 2-147 Aviation to conduct sling-load operations May 3, 2009 in Haywarden, Iowa. Sling-loading allows aerial transportation of equipment and supplies into areas for speedy operation set-up and/or extraction.



2-34TH BCT

