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‘Warhorse’ Battalion cases its colors at historic end of Operation New Dawn deployment

1st Lt. Richard Vogt
3rd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt.

In a transition ceremony with particular significance, the ‘Warhorse’ Battalion cased its colors in preparation to leave Iraq and transfer Contingency Operation Station Garry Owen to the 10th Iraqi Army Division as the United States military prepares to end its mission in Iraq.

“We arrived in Maysan Province to conduct an advise, train, and assist mission,” said Lt. Col. Tim Brumfiel, commander of 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. “We assumed battle space in the most complex, dangerous area in Iraq, and our mission quickly changed into doing more partnered patrols and aggressive targeting as enemy activity increased. And now, as we prepare to leave, enemy activity has decreased to the point of being almost non-existent. This is a big accomplishment; it’s something you can be really proud of.”

Brumfiel was addressing his Soldiers during a colors casing ceremony at Contingency Operating Station Garry Owen, Iraq Oct. 15, 2011.

Iranian-Backed Militias (IBMs) targeted COS Garry Owen through the spring and early summer with 107mm rockets, improvised rocket-assisted munitions and 120mm mortar fire. In all, these groups fired well over 150



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Vogt

Lt. Col. Tim Brumfiel, commander of 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and Command Sgt. Maj. Tim Metheny, case the battalion colors.

rounds at the base in addition to the many improvised explosive devices used to attack U.S. vehicles.

In response to this threat, U.S. Forces partnered with Iraqi Security Forces to target and disrupt enemy networks.

During the year, the ISF also appointed two accomplished and competent leaders: Brig. Gen. Abdul Amir assumed command of the 10th IA Div., and Brig. Gen. Ali Hashemi took over as Maysan’s Provincial Chief of Police. Under the direction of these aggressive leaders, the ISF became a much more proactive force that made Maysan province a difficult place for IBMs to operate. These appointments also resulted in an immediate increase in public confidence, particularly in the Iraqi Police.

“The ‘Warhorse’ Soldiers dis-

played professionalism, vigilance, and discipline every single day,” Brumfiel said. “Your efforts had a tremendous, historic impact for millions of Iraqis who will know the peace and security denied them for so long.”

As Brumfiel and the battalion’s Command Sgt. Maj. Tim Metheny cased the colors, the ‘Warhorse’ Battalion reflected on the change they’ve seen in Iraq. Many of these Soldiers fought at the start of the war and have been in Iraq through the height of the insurgency and sectarian conflict. They leave this country with a feeling of accomplishment and the satisfaction of knowing that their hard work, loss, and sacrifice over the years resulted in an assertive Iraqi Army and Police force that is capable of providing the security needed for the government of Iraq to succeed.

Reflections on Iraq

Sgt. Omar Estrada 3rd AAB PAO

The infrastructure of Iraq has morphed several times since the Saddam Hussein regime was overthrown.

There are many beliefs of what Iraq was like before the war, and how it is now.

Many people agree that the war was beneficial for the Iraqi people and their country, while others believe that Iraq was fine or better before it. However, most believe that a free country with democracy is the best way for its citizens to grow; a democracy that won't be embraced in a year, but will probably take generations for it to become what it is truly meant to be.

"At that time life was beautiful and easy as long as you didn't scratch their noses. No one will touch you, no one will say anything to you, everything was under control, there was no democracy; you could not say anything. Democracy was zero but it was good on some things and bad on others," said Nadia.

Nadia, a linguist with 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, was born and raised in Baghdad, Iraq where she spent the first 37 years of her life. She supported her family by working for 13 years as a chemistry teacher at a high school for girls. Then at the end of 1991, she decided to move to the United States with her family to search for a better life.

"I agree with the liberation 100 percent," said Nadia. "But the United States should have handled this a different way. If there is a better way than war, they have to do it for the goodness of Iraqi people," she added.

Troops from the 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division have had their personal experiences in this war, since the early stages of the liberation of Iraq to the latest campaign, Operation New Dawn.

"My family understands, they know this is what I signed for and they support me 100 percent. I'm not going to say that they agree with everything that's going on over here, nor am I going to say that I agree with everything that has transpired here, but this is my profession, this is what I chose and my family backs me on what I've chosen to do," said Master Sgt. Sean Carroll the Intelligence Operations supervisor for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop and a native of Elk Grove, Calif.

Before 2008, U.S. Soldiers were able to defend themselves no matter the circumstance and act alone. Now they have to abide by the Security Agreement, where Soldiers rely on Iraqi rule of law.

"Now we have the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police, which is part of helping them take the lead on the defense of their country," said Carroll. "You have to figure out who is doing (illegal activity) then get with the IA's and request warrants be issued for them."

Carroll said that by signing some of the agreements with the Iraqis such as the SA, he thinks U.S. Soldiers lost the ability to proactively defend themselves. Although he understands why, he believes the conditions make this deployment difficult for the average Soldier.

Soldiers have witnessed the several stages that this country and the U.S. Army have gone through. The citizens of the new democratic Iraq are free. Free to express their views and opinions. After going through a storm that has lasted for eight years, the waters have calmed and now it is time for Iraqi citizens to repair their country and improve it.

"I don't know much of how it was before the war, but I know that they are free now, they can choose their leaders and they don't need to be scared anymore," said Pfc. Jared C. Heath, a



Photo by Sgt. Omar Estrada

Master Sgt. Sean Carroll, a native of Elk Grove, Calif., speaks with an analyst about some of the missions.

native of West Palm Beach, Fla., and a command team driver with the brigade on his first tour to Iraq.

After war, peace follows, as well as reconstruction of the broken political structure. Iraqis have been allowed to vote for their representatives in governmental offices by following democratic standards.

"There are good things and bad things that have happened. I hope that the good things supersede the bad things because Iraq is going through a lot of changes," said Nadia. "This country didn't even have a democracy, you couldn't even breathe because you were scared that someone will interpret it the wrong way. Now they are not scared, there is democracy, if they don't like something they don't have to agree with you, they have their own mind to say it loudly and be heard," she explained.

The U.S. government has plans that both countries can share a robust and enduring partnership. The country of Iraq now has cabinets and ministries and with the help and guidance of the U.S. Department of State, they can continue to grow.

"Leading people to democracy will not happen overnight, this will be a long process, it's better for citizens of Iraq to have democracy," said Nadia.

Deployed troops proclaim renewed commitment to U.S. Army

2nd Lt. John Heath
1st Bn., 12th Cav. Regt.

As operations in Iraq draw to a close, many Soldiers are preparing for redeployment and eventually reintegration training upon arriving back in the United States. It is during this phase that Soldiers begin to prepare for what lies ahead in their careers or for life after service to the nation. As service obligations run their course, there comes a time in a Soldier's career when they must decide if they wish to continue to serve in the Army.

There are very few moments that are as selfless as an American who pledges their service to any branch of the armed forces. It is an even greater act of selfless service for an American Soldier who wishes to renew their commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic while deployed to a combat zone.

In a ceremony on Oct. 8, five Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division stood before their peers and recited the oath of enlistment stating that they wish to dedicate their services once more as Soldiers in the United States Army.



Photo by 2nd Lt. John Heath

Capt. Bryan Herzog, commander of Company B, re-enlists Sgt. 1st Class Larry Green, a native of Gainesville, Fla., and Sgt. Aaron Crouch, a native of Sacramento, Calif.

Spc. Barton Smith, a native of Belton, Texas, Spc. Steven Worden, a Bloomingburg, N.Y. native, Sgt. Aaron Crouch, a native of Sacramento, Calif., Staff Sgt. Brian Jones a native of Macon, Ga. and Sgt. 1st Class Larry Green of Gainesville, Fla., decided to continue to do what only one percent of our nations populace has the intestinal fortitude to do; volunteer their services once more to the United States Army.

"It is an honor and a privilege to re-enlist Sgt. 1st Class Green and Sgt. Crouch," said Capt. Bryan Herzog, a native of Shrewsbury, Pa., and the commander of Co. B. "Sgt. 1st Class Green

is a great noncommissioned officer and will please his future commanders. Sgt. Crouch is one of the most intellectually gifted Soldiers, as well as one of the most talented NCOs I have ever worked with."

It is no small feat to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces, especially in a time of war, but it is a special moment to re-enlist while deployed in support of Operation New Dawn or Operation Enduring Freedom. These five Soldiers that have chosen to continue their service in the U.S. Army during a time of war, are great examples of the values, commitment, and pride that make our nation great.



Photo by 2nd Lt. John Heath

1st Lt. Brian Rulison, executive officer of Company B, shakes hands with Spc. Barton Smith, a native of Belton, Texas.



Photo by 2nd Lt. John Heath

Soldiers and noncommissioned officers with Company B, pose with their Company guidon.

'Gladiator' troops maintain communications in Basrah

2nd Lt. Grace Geiger
3rd Bde. Special Troops Bn.

Ensuring that communications are maintained for troops on the ground is crucial to mission success. At Contingency Operating Base Basrah, Iraq, the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division have remained vigilant in their work to ensure communications are fully functional at all times as forces drawdown.

Hard work and preparation have made mitigating outages easier for the platoon and they increase their capabilities daily. Teamwork is also an essential part of the platoon's effort as well.

In preparation of the transition from military to U.S. Department of State operations, the platoon worked closely with the brigade's communication shop (S-6) and the Consulate Transition Team, located in Basrah, to ensure a smooth transition.

As units redeploy, the platoon will fill the gaps left on COB Basrah and expand services to the remaining units as required.

In addition to maintaining a Joint Network Node and a Satellite Transportable Terminal, Co. B is responsible for several point-to-point communication lines and fiber links throughout the province. Several Soldiers have completed missions



Photo by 2nd Lt. Grace Geiger

Spc. Michael Cline conducts routine maintenance checks on the Satellite Transportable Terminal to ensure the equipment is functioning properly.

taking them outside the base's perimeter wire and into the city of Basrah to troubleshoot systems at remote sites.

Several additional missions have been added to the duties of the platoon, such as the Command and Control Vehicle system, which provides commanders the capability to have all communications available inside a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle while it is moving. This allows for more efficient command and control on the battlefield, which is important as the use of hardened structures makes way to more expeditionary and mobile platforms during movement out of the

country.

The platoon also provides morale support as several Soldiers have been tasked with the mission of ensuring the Armed Forces Network (AFN) is up and running at locations around COB Basrah. This allows all Soldiers and civilians the ability to watch television as well as listen to the radio.

Even as the mission is winding down, the Soldiers of Second Platoon continue to maintain their most basic Soldier skills, all while making sure their main focus is on the network and providing the best services possible for redeploying units.



'Saber' Master Gunners complete school; prepare to train

2nd Lt. Stuart White
6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

Three noncommissioned officers from 6th 'Saber' Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division graduated from Master Gunner School at Fort Benning, Ga. recently, after four intense months of training.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Morrison, an Orange County, Calif. native, Staff Sgt. Anthony Markham, an Abilene, Texas native, and Sgt. Nicholas Ferzacca, a Long Beach, Calif. native, will return to Fort Hood to be the Master Gunners for their respective units and start to develop gunnery training plans ready for the rest of 'Saber' Squadrons return from Iraq.

"A Master Gunner is the subject matter expert for everything having to do with weapons. The school focuses on operating and maintaining the weapons on a Bradley, but Master Gunners are responsible for knowing everything about all weapons," said Staff Sgt. Jason Jespersen, 6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt. Master Gunner.

The three NCOs were handpicked by their commanders, first sergeants, and the two current Squadron Master Gunners, Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Gold and Jespersen, based on their extensive knowledge and leadership abilities.

Being a Master Gunner means fulfilling the typical leadership duties of an NCO, with the added responsibility of planning and executing weapons training for the unit. These NCOs were selected because they were identified as reliable, competent, and knowledgeable which enables them to handle the extra work load.

Markham and Ferzacca, were released from deployment to go to this school, but before they left, they had to go through a "Pre-Master Gunner class" that was created by Gold and

Jespersen to help them prepare.

Master Gunner School is known for its rigorous academic requirements and 'Saber' Sqdn., set their Soldiers up for success.

The school consists of two phases, gunnery and maintenance spread out over a 16-week period. Each student is required to memorize the function of every part of the M242 Bushmaster Chain Gun, broken down to its smallest component. Master Gunners are expected to recite verbatim the functions of all 46 major assemblies within the Bushmaster, including over 300 individual parts. The school also requires students to memorize how to maintain each part.

Once the Squadron returns to Fort Hood and resets into a garrison setting, training will become a top priority.

Master Gunners design the training for the whole Squadron. All the Master Gunners will coordinate with each other to create a training plan that the 'Saber' Soldiers will execute. Training will begin with re-qualifying on individual and crew served weapons and will then facilitate training to qualify with all weapon systems on the M3A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

"Master Gunners have a lot of responsibility because the Squadron relies on them for our readiness. So we do not entrust this responsibility to everyone, and these NCOs clearly proved themselves by coming through this extremely challenging course successfully," said Sgt. Maj. Van Prier, Operations Sgt. Maj., for 'Saber' Sqdn., and a New Orleans native.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Stuart White

Staff Sgt. Matthew Morrison, an Orange County, Calif. native, Staff Sgt. Anthony Markham, an Abilene, Texas native, and Sgt. Nicholas Ferzacca, a native of Long Beach, Calif., all with 6th 'Saber' Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment stand in front of an M3A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle at Fort Hood, Texas after they returned from Master Gunner School.



Photo by Spc. April Stewart

'Steel Dragon' proudly stands in front of their Headquarters Building on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

'Steel Dragon' Soldiers receive end of tour awards

Sgt. Edward P. Sandstrom
2nd Bn., 82nd FA Regt.

Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division were presented with an assortment of awards, signifying their accomplishments and the end of a year-long deployment at an award ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq Oct. 25, 2011.

In February of this year, HHB Soldiers departed their home station of Fort Hood, Texas in support of Operation New Dawn, leaving behind their family, friends and loved ones. For some Soldiers, this was their first deployment, but for others it was their fourth or fifth time deploying to Iraq.

The HHB Soldiers were recognized by their leaders for their multiple achievements, the sacrifice of both the Soldiers and their families and their unwavering vigilance during their involvement in Operation New Dawn.

The 'Steel Dragon' leadership presented 145 awards to include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal and Army Commendation Medal.

Lt. Col. Robert A. Wright IV, commander of the 'Steel Dragon' Battalion, individually presented each of the one hundred and forty five Soldiers with their award. Lt. Col. Wright acknowledged all the accomplishments that took place during their deployment.

The Soldiers accomplishments are a long and proud list. This list includes providing a Tactical Operations Center, conducting over one hundred key leader engagements, radar operations, Battalion Aid Station operations and maneuver operations.

With the United States military re-posturing personnel in Iraq, the Soldiers and leaders of HHB can be proud of their many accomplishments during Operation New Dawn and put this deployment down as yet another victory in the proud and distinguished history of the U.S. Army's First Team.



Witchdoctors ride for their spurs

1st Lt. Adriana Ramos
215th Bde. Support. Bn.

One Spur Ride wasn't enough so, Charlie Medical Company, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division took part in their second Spur Ride Oct. 14, on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

After a strong showing at the September Spur Ride hosted by 'Steel Dragon' 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, where the Witchdoctor's five-member coed team placed sixth out of twenty-five teams, Charlie Med decided they just had to do it again.

Led by Capt. Joseph Lopez, the brigade physical therapist, and a native of San Antonio, the team marched to the 'Steel Dragon' area of operation for the longest twelve hours of their lives.

After completing a ten minute, grueling physical fitness obstacle course, the teams conducted a 13 mile course where they were tested on such common Soldier tasks as 9-line medevac, land navigation, weapons skills and knowledge, and medical treatment skills.

The Witchdoctor team, or "Team Charlie Med," was a strong one. Sgt. 1st Class Jim Fequiere, a former drill sergeant, and native of Brooklyn, N.Y. was no stranger to ruck marching or any of the military tasks the team surmounted.

The course's three medically-themed challenges were no problem thanks to the medical knowledge of the other team members, Spc. Theodore Carey a native of Mesa, Ariz. and Spc. Amanda Harrison, a Temple, Texas native. The fifth member of the team was the Witchdoctor executive officer, 1st Lt. Michelle Alderson, a native of St. Louis.

The team immediately divided its roles prior to executing the 13 mile



Photo by Capt. Evette Barnes

A team of Soldiers jumps onto a 24-inch box as quickly as possible during a timed event.

trek through COB Adder. Lopez and Fequiere took the lead at the military events while Carey took the radio in his pack and Alderson oriented the map.

The team's MVP was Harrison. The night-shift medic contributed a valuable asset to the team: experience.

A member of the company's previous Spur Ride team, Harrison was competing for the second time.

"Knowing Spc. Harrison did it [the Spur Ride] twice, I had to do it at least once," said Lopez. "Don't underestimate the medics of this battalion!" he added.

Others in the group were similarly motivated.

"The rest of us had it easy, mentally-speaking, because we didn't really know how painful it was going to be to stay up all night rucking," stated Alderson. "Spc. Harrison knew exactly what she was getting into; and she did it anyway. It was really helpful having someone who knew some of the better ways to tackle the six stations."

Harrison's endurance and selflessness attracted the recognition of the 'Steel Dragon' command team. Command Sgt. Maj. David Osborne

awarded her with his battalion's coin in recognition of her warrior spirit.

"I am proud to be able to say that I completed two Spur Rides, and I can say that it was by far the most physically challenging competition I have completed thus far in my life," said Harrison. "The physical aspect of rucking between 13 and 15 miles is hard enough. Then to add the mental aspect of going through the lanes and knowing your basic Soldiering and warrior tasks just adds to the challenge."

Although the team didn't finish in first place, it was still a successful ride.

"We were a rapidly assembled team with virtually no training or conditioning for this event. We were that team that should have fallen out in the first five miles," said Alderson. "But none of us were willing to do that. We pulled together as a team and had a strong finish. I'm real proud of everyone and I think we'll do even better at the next ride." she added.

Lopez and Carey received their silver spurs for participating in the ride while Harrison, Fequiere, and Alderson received their gold spurs.



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6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.



Photo by by 2nd Lt. Stuart White

Sgt. Jordan Hamilton, Apache Troop, and a Fremont, Ohio native was awarded the Commanding General's coin for his outstanding performance as a Raven, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator.

Maj. Gen. Champoux awards coins to outstanding performers

2nd Lt. Stuart White
6th Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

Maj. Gen. Bernard S. Champoux, Commanding General of United States Division – Center, awarded the 25th Infantry Division coin to Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division at a ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Delta, Iraq, Oct. 19, 2011. Champoux presented the coins to the ‘Saber’ Soldiers for outstanding performance in support of Operation New Dawn.



Photo by by 2nd Lt. Stuart White

Sgt. Matthew Braasch, Charlie Company, 111th Aviation Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and a Jacksonville, Fla. native was awarded the Commanding General's coin for his outstanding performance as a flight medic while attached to 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment



Photo by by 2nd Lt. Stuart White

Pfc. Richard Jansen, Comanche Troop, 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and a Zulfo Springs, Fla. native was awarded the Commanding General's coin for his outstanding performance in support of Operation New Dawn.



Photo by by 2nd Lt. Stuart White

Sgt. Marcus Crosby, Bandit Troop, 6th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, a native of Hattiesburg, Miss. was awarded the Commanding General's coin for his outstanding performance as a gunner.