



NORMANDY NOW

29th Combat Aviation Brigade – Task Force Normandy

THE LAST CAB STANDING. CAMP TAJI, IRAQ & CAMP BUEHRING, KUWAIT.

Normandy Cases Colors In Iraq

By Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington,
29th CAB Public Affairs

Task Force Normandy's commander Col. David Carey and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard, cased the brigade's colors on, Dec. 14, 2011, signifying the end of its mission in Iraq.

Task Force Normandy provided full-spectrum aviation support throughout the Iraq theater of operations. It simultaneously cleaned and cleared Camp Taji and repositioned the force to Kuwait.

"We took a mission that was a sprint. It wasn't a two-mile run, it was a sprint," said Beyard. "We're getting close to the finish line and we're still sprinting."

Casing the colors usually means a unit is transferring its mission to a replacement unit or preparing to redeploy home. However, in the case of Task Force Normandy, the casing ceremony signified that the brigade has reached the end of mission in Iraq and will reposition to a new location in Kuwait.

January 1, 2012, Task Force Normandy will begin its new mission in support of



United States Army Central Command.

The nearly 2,000-Soldier task force from more than 20 states brings many air assets to the new mission. These assets include: AH-64 Apaches, CH-47 Chinooks, UH-60 Blackhawks, OH-58 Kiowa Warriors, unmanned aerial systems and fixed-wing aircraft.

"Remember, we are part of a team. A big team. None of us could have done this alone," said Carey.

"You truly embodied the spirit of the 29th Infantry Division when they coined the motto, Let's Go," he added.

NORMANDY NOW

Commander:

~Col. David Carey

Command Sergeant Major:

~Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard

Public Affairs Officer:

~1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner

Design/Editor:

~Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington

Contributors:

~Chaplain (Maj.) William Butler

~Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan

Commander's Corner



200 fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft across the theater.

Although Task Force Normandy has been in-theater only a short time, it feels like we have done a year's worth of work preparing Camp Taji for its transition to the U.S. State Department and Iraqi forces. At the same time, we have been working tirelessly to get this brigade repostured in Kuwait and prepared for follow-on missions.

Some of the units that came into our fold when we arrived have begun to rotate back to their home stations. The 40th CAB, 77th TAB, 6-17 CAV, 1-131 AHB, 2-224 AHB and 1-229 AV have all begun redeploying; some are home already. I want to thank these units for their efforts and their dedication during the last days of Operation New Dawn. I wish them well, and thank them for their contributions.

For most of us, however, the beat goes on. All of our Soldiers are now in Kuwait. President Obama promised the U.S. mili-

tary would leave Iraq by December 31st, and we have done that with time to spare. Hundreds of buildings stand empty at Camp Taji, waiting for the next chapter in Iraq's history. The base that once housed 45,000 U.S. and Coalition troops has now reverted to Iraqi and U.S. State Department control.

As the U.S. ends its largest military operation since Vietnam, Task Force Normandy has repostured and is preparing for whatever missions our nation calls on us to do. I have been impressed, but not surprised, with the job we've done so far. We have accomplished every mission safely and with professionalism. I know you are the finest Soldiers the United States has to offer, and together we'll continue to make history.

I wish all of you and your Families a very happy holiday season.

"29, Let's Go!"

David Carey
Colonel

Command Sgt. Maj.



in support of Operation New Dawn ends. However, our overall mission won't end on that date. We will simply begin a new chapter by starting a new follow-on mission in Kuwait in 2012.

Soldiers of Task Force Normandy, you should be very proud of what you have accomplished. You have become part of history by serving with the last combat aviation brigade in Iraq. I have flown many times, and I admire the skill and courage of our Soldiers. Without a total team effort, we could not be successful. I tip my hat to each of you and pass along my thanks and respect.

I ask each of you to not lose your focus and military bearing. We need to continue to do our work safely and in accordance with military standards. We must not forget the importance of military customs and courtesies. We must be a disciplined force, and leaders need to make

on-the-spot corrections if they see something wrong. As I walk around each day, I know each of you are proud of your work and want to do the right thing. I appreciate your professionalism and ask that you continue to make a difference in your units.

With the holiday season upon us, I wish each of you a merry Christmas and the very best in 2012. I pass along the same holiday wishes to the Families, loved ones, friends and coworkers of our Soldiers back home. While we remain focused on our work here, we also patiently wait for the day when we finish our mission and return home.

In closing, I pass along my continued thanks for your continued sacrifices. I am proud to serve with each of you, and I will never forget what we have been through together.

Thomas Beyard
Command Sergeant Major

Since uncasing our colors, the Soldiers of Task Force Normandy have continued their sprint to the finish line in providing full-spectrum aviation support throughout Iraq. I mean Dec. 31, 2011 when I say finish line, when our mission

From the Chaplain

by Chaplain (Maj.) William Butler



The holiday season upon us is a great time for reflection, being thankful and looking forward to a better future in the new year. In other words, being thankful for all our accomplishments, learning from our past mistakes, and hoping for a better life for ourselves and families, will help us to transition into the new year with a better attitude.

We can be thankful for the challenges we have had to face during this past year. You may wonder why that's so important. We'll never learn how to be a better person or gain much-needed experience without going through the trials of life.

As we anticipate the new year, we can be thankful for another opportunity

to either get it right or to start a new chapter in our lives. In either case, we want to take full advantage of every opportunity to make life better for ourselves and our families.

I encourage you to take some time during this holiday season to reflect on how you're going to move to the next level in your life. Most of all, keep hope alive! Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, a well-known author and speaker, defined hope this way: "Hope is wishing for a thing to come true. Faith is believing that it will come true. Hope is wanting something so eagerly that in spite of all the evidence that you're not going to get it, you go right on wanting it. The remarkable thing about it is that this very act of hoping produces a kind of strength of its own."

On behalf of the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade Unit Ministry Team, we wish you and your family a blessed holiday season and a happy new year.

Yin

Yang



The background behind the 29th Infantry Division's shoulder sleeve insignia.

The blue and gray patch was first authorized in 1919. On the current Army Combat Uniform, the patch is a subdued black and sage green.

When first authorized, the division was comprised of two masses of U.S. Soldiers, one from the North and the other from the South. The North is represented by the blue, symbolizing the Union, and the South by gray, for the Confederacy.

Description: Green border encircles a taeguk, a symbol derived from traditional oriental philosophy, with the opposing forces of yin and yang that achieve perfect harmony and balance.



**By Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington,
29th CAB Public Affairs and
1st Lt. Kristen Gellhaus, 6-17 CAV**

When the United States Army modernized, trading horses for helicopters, jeeps and tanks, the ground and air cavalries worked to retain much of the horse cavalry's distinctive traditions. The 6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment is steeped in history and tradition. It made history once again, by being the last air cavalry to leave Iraq. The 6-17 traces its lineage to F Troop, 17th Cavalry, the last ground cavalry unit to leave Vietnam.

Toward the end of their Iraq deployment, troopers from the 6-17th CAV received their combat spurs during awards ceremonies at Camp Taji, Iraq, Nov. 12-19, 2011. The 6-17th is based at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

Spurs have been a symbol of the cavalry since the mid-1800s. The Army began the transition from the horse cavalry in World War I to a fully mechanized cavalry in World

War II. The 26th Cavalry Regiment of the Philippine Scouts was the last horse cavalry unit in the Army to fight while mounted during World War II.

Deploying in support of a cavalry unit, Soldiers are awarded gold spurs. Soldiers earn silver spurs through a "Spur Ride," a test of cavalry-Soldier skills and proficiencies.



"It feels good to be acknowledged for the things you do. It's too easy to get overlooked," said Spc. Kieasha Farbs, an automated logistical specialist in F Co., about receiving her spurs. "It felt

great; made me feel like I'm a part of the CAV."

"From the old horse cavalry, if you're a new cavalryman that showed up to a unit you have not proven yourself or your abilities to ride your horse. So he would be given a shaved-tail horse — a horse that has had its tail shaved off to allow a new rider to ride it a little easier," said Chief Warrant Officer Allen Mays, squadron master gunner. "As you proved yourself, you would then get a horse with a full tail and obtain your spurs."

Upon obtaining spurs, according to horse cavalry traditions, the new cavalryman would get a smack on the rear end to send them off to ride.

During the ceremonies, many Soldiers were awarded Combat Action Badges, Air Medals and Army Commendation Medals with the "V" device for valor during a May 2011, indirect fire attack.

Early on a May morning, Camp Taji received more than several rounds of indirect fire. Shortly before the attack, a B Troop scout weapons team returned to aircraft parking for maintenance.

When the first rounds impacted, Chief Warrant Officers Brian Jacobson and Michael King's OH-58D helicopter immediately took off. They flew in the direction of the indirect fire to thwart the enemy's actions. A maintenance team assessed and repaired a second helicopter to get it into



the fight.

The actions by the aircrews and maintenance team enabled the scout weapons team to be the first U.S. forces on scene in response to the attack, causing the enemy to flee.

“The aircrews and maintainers of Bravo and Delta Troop 6-17 CAV showed personal courage under fire, extreme dedication to duty and selfless service,” said Lt. Col. Michael McCurry, squadron commander. “Their actions are not only the embodiment of the Army values but also demonstrate what it means to be a Cavalry Soldier in the 6th Squadron, 17th U.S. Cavalry Regiment.”

6-17th Colors Cased



Lt. Col. Michael McCurry, 6-17th squadron commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. William McGaha, 6-17th command sergeant major, cased the squadron's colors on Nov. 28, 2011, signifying the end of its mission in Iraq. The squadron will return to its home station of Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

**By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan,
1-151st ARB, Public Affairs**

The 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion medics took control of the medical clinic during a transition period between the command of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade.

“There was a period when there were not many medics available,” said Staff Sgt. Stephen Snodgrass, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company medical section. “We just did what we had to do to make the clinic work.”

Snodgrass had help from Capt. Shawn Troy Hill, officer-in-charge of the clinic. Hill is with the 25th Infantry Division, and he had a few medics from his unit. Together they made a schedule work even though they were short-handed.

“The clinic is a level two



medical facility. That means it is an urgent care clinic, plus we have x-ray, laboratory, and pharmacy abilities. We also provide follow-up care for patients who require it,” said Snodgrass.

“We would average about 90 people a day, most being

routine injuries and illnesses,” added Snodgrass. “We provided all medical care for the camp, even for the civilian contractors.”

“One of the most exciting days was when the outgoing NCOIC for the 40th CAB, who was supposed to be spending several days training me, fell and had to get medically evacuated out of camp. That was our first and last day of training. Good news is she is alright, but I didn’t get much of a handover,” said Snodgrass.



Snodgrass assigned the other medics to areas within the clinic. Spc. Mark Wainwright works in the laboratory; Spc. Kenneth Owens works at the check-in desk, processing most of the medical evacuation situations; Spc. James Pendley works in the pharma-

cy; Spc. Zachary Davenport works with the database that managed the medical records of flight physicals for the pilots on the camp and Spc. Wendell Steward works in the x-ray room. As the need appeared, each medic would cross-train to help out.

Lt. Col. Stephanie Batten, the physician assistant for HHC said, “It was a seamless transition as Snodgrass took over as NCOIC for the clinic. The medics made it run smoothly.”

“The 151 medics ran the clinic and enhanced our ability to take care of our Soldiers,” added Batten.



1-151ST MEDICS LEAD THE WAY

Red Falcons - ARF, ARF, ARF

**By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan,
1-151st ARB, Public Affairs**

The Aerial Reaction Force is the 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, A Co. 1/325th Battalion, the Red Falcons, part of the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade.

The ARF provides a quick reaction force for downed aircraft offering security and first-responder capabilities. According to Staff Sgt. Bryan Johnson, a squad leader for the ARF and an infantryman for seven years, "This mission is different than what we are used to. But it's a privilege to be chosen to do this because they wanted the best our unit had to offer, and we were the chosen ones."

Johnson said, "We haven't really done much besides train for the possibility of a downed aircraft because no aircraft have gone down, and that's a real good thing. But we are ready when needed."

"Working for the CAB, we have had many opportunities to learn new skills," said Johnson. "Because several units fall under the CAB, we have had to learn how to recover unmanned aerial vehicles, set up landing zones for the Blackhawks, secure point-of-origin sites where mortars were fired from, pull security for distinguished visitors, and

we have all been trained in medical evacuation in case we have to help injured pilots."

The ARF platoon has one school-trained medic with them, so everyone has been trained to be combat lifesavers, and a few Soldiers have training in emergency medical treatment.

Private 1st Class Giovanni Peralta, a rifleman in the ARF, said "I have enjoyed this mission. We have



had a lot of great training, and we know we are ready if an aircraft ever goes down."

"Flying in Blackhawks is much better than traveling in (mine resistant ambush protected vehicles) and on foot," said Peralta.

"We have been training for this mission for three months now, and we have learned a lot," said Peralta. "We have been trained to secure the area where the aircraft went

down, help the pilots, and then evacuate on Blackhawks."

1st Lt. Wells Crawley, commander for the ARF platoon, said, "It has been an interesting deployment. We have prepared for all that we can, but we hope never to use it. Working with these units and meeting different Soldiers has been a great experience."

Maj. John McElveen, Apache pilot and operations officer for the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion said, "The training we have done with the ARF has been excellent. We have conducted training here on Camp Taji to make sure they knew how to recover a pilot from a downed Apache, done air assault training and gone to the range together."

"We were evaluated by United States Division-Center during one of our training missions," added McElveen. "They said they had not seen a better-trained group; the ARF was truly part of the aviation team."

McElveen continued, "We have repositioned the ARF team along with our downed aircraft recovery team to be closer to important missions. We know we can count on them to do their jobs. They are available and ready."

Spheres of Recognition



Capt. Gary Cover, information operations officer for Task Force Normandy, was awarded the Army Commendation Medal Nov. 15, 2011. Cover's leadership was vital for successfully preparing the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade for mobilization.



Warrant Officer Donald Culp, a Soldier in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to chief warrant officer on Nov. 03, 2011.



Sgt. Mark Baker, an Apache mechanic in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was awarded an Army Achievement Medal on Nov. 1, 2011, for his outstanding performance during the first months of this deployment.



Warrant Officer Aaron Cooper, a Soldier in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to chief warrant officer on Nov. 13, 2011.



Spc. Andrew Shropshire, a cable systems installer-maintainer in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, was promoted to sergeant on Nov. 18, 2011, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



Warrant Officer Caleb Wilkes, a Soldier in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to chief warrant officer on Nov. 03, 2011.



Capt. Tony Bassham, chief operations officer in Headquarters Headquarters Company, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, was promoted to major on Dec. 5, 2011.



Lt. Col. Stephanie Batten, a physician assistant and an Apache pilot in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was awarded an Air Medal on Nov. 13, 2011, for her outstanding performance during the first months of this deployment.



Spc. Jamiylah Lawson, a cable systems installer-maintainer in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, was promoted to sergeant on Nov. 24, 2011 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



Lt. Col. George Kennedy, a flight surgeon and Blackhawk pilot in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was awarded an Army Commendation Medal on Nov. 13, 2011, for his outstanding performance during the first months of this deployment.



Spc. Gobe McElveen, a Soldier in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to sergeant on Nov. 1, 2011.

Holiday Meals Among Friends

The third and fourth weeks of November were full of special meals and holidays for both Task Force Normandy Soldiers and their Iraqi partners.

Task Force Normandy hosted a special pre-Thanksgiving dinner for its Iraqi partners, Nov. 23, 2011. Iraqi Brig. Gen. Nadhem Lafta Agwadey and many of his officers attended.

“We are not able to be with our family and friends at home, but it is our pleasure and honor to share our Thanksgiving with our new-found friends,” said Col. David Carey, Task Force Normandy commander.

November 26, 2011, was Al-Hijra, the Islamic New Year, it marked a new Islamic calendar year. In 622 CE the Prophet Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina, and set up the first Islamic state. The Islamic calendar is based on lunar observations and begins on the evening before the selected date.

Task Force Normandy's Iraqi partners invited Task Force Normandy's leadership to dinner on the Iraqi side of Camp Taji, Nov. 29, 2011. In keeping with customs, Carey and Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard presented gifts to Iraqi Brig. Gen. Nadhem.

“It was a unique cultural experience, that allowed different people to come to the table in celebration of past and future relationships,” said Capt. Abba Welte, Task Force Normandy's automations officer. “My favorite dish was the baklava at the end. The dessert was good!”

Leaders Serving Meals

It is a custom in many units for high-ranking officers to serve holiday meals to Soldiers.

Maj. Gen. Thomas Spoehr, deputy commanding general for operations, United States Forces-Iraq and Task Force Normandy's leadership served Thanksgiving lunch to U.S. Servicemembers and contractors on Nov. 24, 2011, at Camp Taji, Iraq. After working in the serving line, Helmick also ate lunch and conversed with some of those same Servicemembers.

"It felt nice to be able to see people smiling and happy even though we're here and away from our families," said Warrant Officer Derek Hailley, network administrator for Task Force Normandy and first-time holiday meal server.

This Thanksgiving meal was the last for the U.S. military in Iraq. The ending of Operation New Dawn will bring the responsible repositioning of American military elements from Iraq.

"I feel very encouraged, just by the fact leadership, so high up, is taking the time to visit us," said Spc. Clifford Cannedy, a signal support system specialist.



DART On Call

By
Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan,
1-151st ARB, Public Affairs

The downed aircraft recovery team, a section in D Co., 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, has a special mission with the ARB. They are an integral part of the successful recovery of an AH-64 Apache if that aircraft lands in a location other than its intended destination. When an Apache lands off-course, it is called a fallen angel or a precautionary landing.

Once there is a fallen angel or PL, it is reported to the 1-151st ARB's operations section. The operations section collects as much information as possible.

"We find out what is wrong with the Apache, grid coordinates of where it landed, if anyone is injured, and what the surroundings are like. Then we notify everyone that needs to go out to help get those pilots and the Apache back to camp," said Sgt. 1st Class Donny Cooley, operations sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-151st ARB.

Spc. Jason Willoughby, intelligence specialist for HHC, 1-151st ARB said, "The intelligence section provides

the DART with an assessment of the location to determine if there is a threat in the area. [It] prepares them for what they should expect while fixing the Apache."

That information is then given to the DART sergeant. The operations section also provides radio communication with the DART throughout the mission and tracks their progress until everyone has returned back to camp safely, added Cooley.

"My guys are ready for whenever the DART is needed."

**- Staff Sgt. Rusty Long
DART sergeant**

As with everything, practice makes perfect. Staff Sgt.

Rusty Long, DART sergeant, routinely conducts rehearsals to keep his team ready.

Long makes the announcement in the hangar, "DART!" All maintenance in the hangar stops. Even those who are not on the team wait for guidance to see if they can help. The DART members huddle around Long, and he gives them the information they need to gather gear.

There are several Soldiers per shift in the D Co. hangar. Long sends one Soldier to get the radios and night vision goggles they will need. One Soldier goes to supply to get the parts they will need to fix the Apache, and the others collect up the tools and gear they will need to accomplish the repairs.

As the DART has scattered throughout the hangar



to collect their gear, other D Co. personnel help however they can. In a matter of minutes, the DART members are gathered together again, ready to leave the hangar.

Long goes over the fallen angel mission once more, ensuring they have collected all parts and tools the team needs. Team members check each other's gear, and they load into the back of a truck to move to the landing pad where they will get on a Blackhawk that will take them to the site of the fallen angel.

"There are times when we are having to wait for information, and that will slow us down some," said Long. We don't know what tools or parts to grab if we don't know what is wrong with the Apache."

Spc. Adam Starr, an aircraft mechanic in D Co. and communication specialist for the DART said, "I'm excited to be part of the DART. We have done several DART practices, and we had a mission taking us to Balad, where an Apache did a precautionary landing.... Once (the helicopter) was fixed, the Apache could continue its flight to Camp Taji. We have also done training on how to sling-load an Apache."

Long added, "My guys are ready for whenever the DART is needed."

V I P S



Brig. Gen. Paul LaCamera, deputy commanding general for operations, United States Division-Center, visited Soldiers from the 1204th Aviation Support Battalion on Nov. 24, 2011, at Camp Taji, Iraq.



Maj. Gen. Bernard Champoux, commanding general, United States Division-Center, presented a coin to Pfc. Melissa Green and Spc. Dan Cermak on Nov. 22, 2011, at Camp Taji, Iraq.



Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, deputy commanding general for operations, United States Forces-Iraq, presented a command-signed football to Command Sgt. Maj. Randy Hambrick on Nov. 24, 2011, at Camp Taji, Iraq.



Soldier of the Week

Spc. Christopher Drysdale

D Troop, 6-17 Cavalry Regiment

Nov. 15, 2011

Spc. Christopher Drysdale organized and prepared the avionics squad and shops platoon for redeployment. He prepared more than 25 unit packing lists and load diagrams for 10 containers. He served as the single point of contact for the platoon for all movement actions during the squadron's load out. He led a team of 10 Soldiers to load and turn in seven truck loads of serviceable and unserviceable equipment.

He quickly provided necessary expertise by driving a forklift for numerous troop movements allowing them to maneuver their containers for shipment back to home station. He also assisted by driving generators and other equipment necessary for turn in during his normal shift and also providing assistance during his personal time. Drysdale serves as an example for all with his mission-first attitude.

Spc. Matthew Walker

1-111th Aviation Regiment

Nov. 23, 2011

Spc. Matthew Walker helped the battalion S6 communications shop face various challenges including setting up user accounts, setting up Command Post of the Future systems, assisting with the tactical operations center set up, managing Microsoft SharePoint software and becoming familiar with new equipment. Walker embraced every challenge without hesitation.

He realized that the 92-network account packets were incorrectly filled and tirelessly worked to recreate each packet. He worked relentlessly to track down various contractors in order to stand up the battalion's CPOF systems. In addition, Walker assisted Soldiers in setting up their user accounts and learned how to remotely access the Cisco switches in order to troubleshoot network connectivity issues.

Spc. Anthony St. Arnold

C Company, 1204th Aviation Support Battalion

Nov. 30, 2011

Spc. Anthony St. Arnold quickly established himself as a technical expert at Task Force Normandy's help desk. He successfully closed more than 150 work tickets in fewer than two months. He was assigned to the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade to work in an unfamiliar technical environment and excelled at system security practices and troubleshooting application issues. St. Arnold holds a position previously supported by 12 Soldiers.

He maintained operations as the sole day-shift operator. St. Arnold provided such outstanding customer service while establishing communications for the brigade, that the deputy brigade commander selected him as a technical attaché to create a mayor's cell tactical operations center when the brigade assumed control of Camp Taji.

Spc. Delvon Anderson

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade

Dec. 7, 2011

Spc. Delvon Anderson distinguished himself as an exceptional analyst, leader and team player during his time at Camp Taji, Iraq. As the daytime current operations intelligence analyst, he responded to multiple high-impact events and provided timely and accurate intelligence analysis. He also coordinated additional intelligence collection, ensuring all levels of command were appropriately informed.

Anderson coordinated, executed and refined a battle drill to ensure Soldiers throughout the brigade were properly informed and prepared. He led the brigade tactical operation center's effort to improve battlefield visualization techniques. His efforts and his techniques are now part of the tactical operation center's standing operating procedures.



**By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan,
1-151st ARB, Public Affairs**

The Taji Reposture Cell was tasked to clear all units and their buildings on Camp Taji and to do a handover of all the facilities to those units that will be taking over once the U.S. troops are out of Camp Taji.

Lt. Col. Tom Roach, commander for the 1204th Aviation Support Battalion and commander of the TRC said, "We have to leave Taji better than we found it. This is new ground having all U.S. forces pull out. We have been working hand-in-hand with the Office of Security Cooperation- Iraq, the mayor cell on Camp Taji, to ensure a proper hand over."

"We are also doing everything we can to help units maintain good stewardship of Army equipment and materials," added Roach. According to 1st Lt. Jeffrey Pond, commander for E Co., 1-111th General Support Aviation Battalion and operations officer-in-charge for the TRC, "We are a group of Soldiers pulled together to accomplish a very important task. The first thing we did was create a tracking system and a flow chart that we update daily. There are 1,017 structures on Camp Taji, we narrowed down the number to 380

that were occupied by U.S. Army forces. The next mission was to start clearing those structures."

Pond said that the TRC was started on Nov. 12. By Dec. 4 the team had cleared 68% of the buildings.

"The facility team would pre-inspect a building for a unit before it left, and once the unit was gone, the facility team would go back to make sure nothing was forgotten," said Pond.

The TRC is also in charge of non-tactical vehicles. There are dozens of NTVs on Camp Taji. The NTVs were given to the Iraqis. Master Sgt. Leon Carr, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade liaison and TRC non-commissioned officer-in-charge coordinated arrangements to collect the NTVs and deliver them to the Iraqi forces. Carr said he and his team would pick up the NTVs from departing units, clean each one, and stage them all in a holding yard. Another mission for Carr and his team was to drive all the NTVs over to the Iraqi side of camp and deliver them.

The units that are left on Taji until the last days are the ones holding the majority of the last buildings and NTVs. Those will be checked by the TRC days prior to

the end of mission and considered ready for turn-in.

Sergeant Major Ryan Russell, with the 230th Sustainment Brigade and in charge of transportation requirements for the TRC said, "We helped get convoys linked up with the units that needed things moved. With so many moving parts, we just helped match things together."

Staff Sgt. Carlos Castro, 1204th non-commissioned officer-in-charge for personnel, was also in charge of personnel on Camp Taji. He said, "We would go door-to-door checking on units. It was very hard to keep track of everyone out here. But it was part of our responsibility to ensure everyone was taken care of, and if they needed help, we would direct them."

"Soldiers have been very engaged, and the units have been very proactive in this mission. The TRC is ahead of scheduled timelines for getting all tasks accomplished," said Roach. "This is the first time we have ever had to leave a theater like this. Everyone has done a great job, and we are leaving Taji to the Iraqis knowing that it is clean."

An AH-64 Apache helicopter from Detachment 1, attached to the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion in support of Operation New Dawn, flies around the forward arming and refueling point on Camp Taji, Iraq. (By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan, 1-151st ARB, Public Affairs)



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