

Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

Friday
19 March 2004

-News from Camp New York, Kuwait

SJA soldiers train for convoy north

SGT Teresa L. Johnston

In preparation for the upcoming convoy into Iraq, soldiers of 1st Cavalry Division's Office of the Staff Judge Advocate recently participated in an intensive two-day field exercise.

Most soldiers cited the drive north as their biggest concern, as U.S. forces have previously come under attack while in convoys. The training, however, is designed to bolster a unit's ability to defend itself and retrieve any casualties or downed vehicles in the event the convoy is attacked.

Military Professional Resource Incorporated (MPRI) is responsible for conducting the training and is comprised of retired Special Forces, Delta



On the road again: (Top left) Soldiers stage vehicles in preparation for an early-morning mission during convoy training this week. (Photo by SGT Gabriel Galindo)



Taking a Break: OSJA soldiers take a break for lunch. Seated from left to right, PFC Kenya Lee, SSG Katara Trammel, SPC Jon Coen and PFC Billy Brewer. (Photo by SGT Teresa L. Johnston)

Force and Ranger personnel. With long-term, specialized combat experience, these professionals assist commanders in developing battle drills and then guide Non-Commissioned Officers in how to properly execute those plans.

Defensive vehicle formations, setting up landing zones for MEDEVACs, shooting on the move, and reacting to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), were just a few of the areas in which OSJA personnel received training.

"The training was realistic and I think we are much more prepared for the upcoming move north than we were

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Gearing up: SGT Gabriel Galindo listens to MPRI instructors as they explain defensive vehicle formations. (Photo by PV2 George White)

The makings of a gun truck...

SGT Teresa L. Johnston

Soldiers of the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate responded to the call by retrofitting one of their vehicles to serve as a gun truck during the upcoming convoy north to Baghdad.

The first step was the assignment of the M240b machine gun, a crew-served weapon that can either be mounted on a light-armored vehicle or a bipod and fires 7.62mm rounds. With that much firepower, the gun truck will be utilized during the convoy to repel attacks and aid in the recovery of

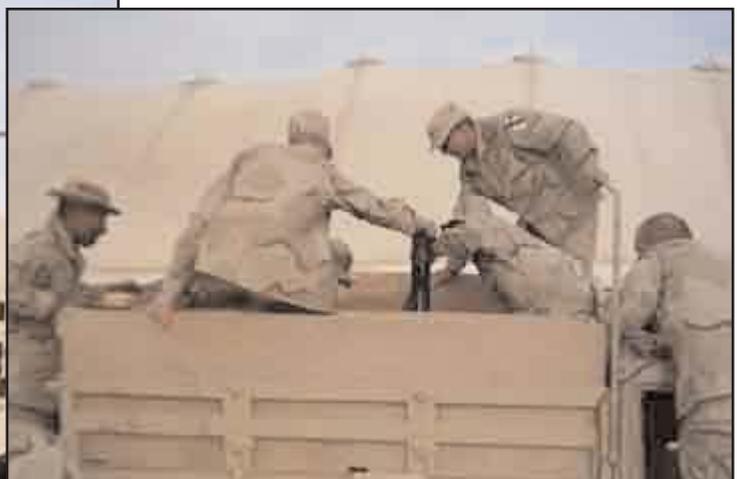
casualties or downed equipment.

The second step was transforming HQ 76, a two-seater HMMWV, into a fortified fighting position. This was accomplished by hard work on the part of the truck's crew, as well as other members of OSJA.

Eighteen inches of sand-

bags were packed inside a wooden frame, while the steel frame allowing 360-degree rotation of the weapon was bolted to the floor of the vehicle. The truck's crew will be the

following: MAJ Jim Agar, commander; SGT Teresa Johnston, driver; SPC Rick Bassham, gunner; and PFC Billy Brewer, assistant gunner.



Making it happen: (Top left) SPC Rick Bassham checks out the M240b. (Top right) SFC Thomas Torri and SPC Rick Bassham bolt down the M240b mounting bracket. (Bottom photos) SFC Terry Watson, SPC Jon Coen, PV2 George White, SGT Gabriel Galindo, SPC Rick Bassham, SFC Thomas Torri and SPC Jeremiah Burch work to secure the M240b mount. (Photo by SGT Teresa L. Johnston)

1st CD OSJA part of something historic

LTC Christopher J. O'Brien

We just hit the one-year anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The units that have gone before us are transitioning back home for a well-deserved reunion with their friends and families. It is our turn now.

We are in the midst of the largest troop rotation since World War II—involving some 250,000 soldiers and marines.

No less than 8½ of the Army's 10 divisions are taking part in this rotation. You really have to see it to appreciate its

magnitude.

All the folks in our office continue to do well. We recently completed some very useful training in close quarters marksmanship and convoy operations.

Although it was a bit chilly in the night, we slept outdoors under the stars for two nights.

The bright stars in the sky above the deserts of Kuwait made it seem like we were sleeping in the largest planetarium in the world—except this one was real.

We just received word that our movement north

will be delayed several days. We will remain in Camp New York until we depart. The soldiers are staying busy reading, watching DVDs, cleaning weapons, and fortifying our vehicles for our convoy north.

Many are anxious to get to Baghdad but we all realize we will get there eventually.

The delay is actually a good thing as our living areas at Camp Victory

North (our home in Baghdad) are still being set up. Hopefully, by the time we arrive we will be able to move directly into our trailers.

We hope to publish the next newsletter upon our arrival in Baghdad. Every day, I feel very fortunate to be a part of this fantastic team.

As always, thanks for your thoughts and prayers. **FIRST TEAM LEGAL!**

Team Work



(Top) PFC Billy Brewer and PV2 George White tie sandbags to the front of HQ 76, but later remove them. (Bottom) SFC Terry Watson checks the assembly for the M240b mounting kit that is being installed on HQ 76. (Photos by SGT Teresa L. Johnston)

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previously,” said SFC Terry Watson, Chief Paralegal NCOIC. “Being here (Kuwait) has given us a whole different perspective on what we are about to do.”

Soldiers were given guidance on how to place their vehicles in a convoy to maximize firepower while maintaining the ability to move quickly.

Drivers and truck commanders were put together in their vehicles and taught how to switch out weapons when ammo ran out or there was a malfunction with the driver's weapon.

As one instructor put it, “Your vehicle is no longer transportation, it is a fighting position.

The driver has got to be able to lay down suppressive fire on the left side while continuing to drive. The TC's job is not just to eliminate threats from the right side, but also to reload the driver's weapon and repair any malfunction of that weapon. The TC is the driver's slave.”

Private George White's opinion about the two days of training was simple: “It was high-speed.”

White added that he feels better about the convoy to Iraq since going through the training.

“I feel more confident in our ability to function under fire. We are now more prepared for the worst than we were before,” White said.

From Kuwait, with love

To my family:

This has been a wonderful experience so far. Kuwait is by far the most boring place I have ever seen.

However, the training has livened things up. I'm now the assistant gunner of the M240b. My primary missions are to guide the gunner to the targets and provide ammo when he

runs out.

Remember that I love you and pray for you. I'll be home soon so don't die before I get there. Tell Rissa I love her!

Your son, brother and friend,

PFC Billy Brewer

Mom, Dad and Gen:

I'm sorry I can't be there to help design the new house or help you finish the semester. I miss you all greatly and look forward to seeing you.

LTC O'Brien and I are becoming a well-oiled machine. Happy Saint Patrick's Day.

Love,
Jon

To Jermal:

Just wanted to say I love you. Even though we are in the same place for now, it still seems hard to see each other. Be safe on your convoy up and I will send you a letter with a number ASAP.

Your wife,
Katara

To my family:

haven't been able to call as much the last couple of days, but just know that I am doing fine. When I get to my permanent location I will start sending letters. A special hug and kiss to Keyon, Tiara, Tamia, Rachell and Cloe.

I love you all,
Katara Trammel

To my family:

Beginning with you, Mother, I love you and miss you greatly. All of the good things I am are because of you and Dad. If I haven't said it lately...thank you. Roger- I so enjoyed Christmas at home and putting together Dad's train with you and Maddie. Thank you. Sharon, your trip to Killeen meant more to me than you'll ever know. I can't begin to tell you both how much it means to be the "baby sister" of two such wonderful people.

Steven, Josh, Emily, Madison, Grayson: I love you guys and can't wait to see each one of you again. To the Sisters: keep Mother laughing until I get home. Make sure she takes care of herself and has a good time. Granddaddy, Layton, Tracie, Uncles Cleveland, L.M., and Rogers-I love you guys and can't wait to see you at the family reunion in May 2005. Pam, it's sure good to have you home again.

Teresa

Samantha, Miranda and Trinity, Daddy loves you all and thinks about you every day. Be good and help your mommy. Daddy loves you. Steph, I miss you. Find time to take care of yourself. I love you.-Tex

To my family:

I miss you all and hope to see you soon. I don't want anyone to worry about me-I'm coming back the same way I left. I love you guys and miss you.

Love,
Traig

Mommy,

The depths of your beauty is boundless like the skies of heaven because you have always been an earth angle with a soul connected to Mother Nature and a heart that longed to nurture those that inhabited her ground. That is why you strive as a nurse, mother, daughter, sister and wife...and it is also why you deserve to strive as a lover of self. Your love has been the waterfall to my river and it is that same love that helps to sustain me through whatever I encounter through life. So when you see my strength you see your own. I love you. Tell Khalil I love 'em and thanks for being the best little/big brother that God could have given me. Tell Khari that his spirit resonates through me everytime I take in a calm breath. And tell Dad that he made me a soldier before I got here because he's always shown me how to take nothing and make something. Now that's a life lesson! (Hee Hee) I'll write and call as soon as possible! Tell the fam I love them.

PFC Kenya Lee