



Ironhorse Desert News

Operation Iraqi Freedom



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“Steadfast & Loyal”

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Task Force Ironhorse Soldiers Reflect on and Remember 9-11

Story by SSG Craig Pickett; photos by CPT Allen Hansen

TIKRIT, Iraq -- Two years after the tragic events of September 11, soldiers of Task Force Ironhorse honored and remembered those who lost their lives and those who valiantly tried to save them on that fateful day. They paid homage from Iraq, where they are currently engaged in the global war on terrorism, which President George Bush promised to bring to anyone who continued to bring violence to our shores.

The early morning ceremony was held in front of a lavish palace in Saddam Hussein's hometown. MG Raymond Odierno, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, spoke to soldiers who gathered in remembrance. The mood was somber and full of reflection.

"It is important to remember, the good and the bad and not through rose-colored glasses; so we are looking at the world through the eyes of good and of God and reality," said Chaplain (CPT) Ted Baccich, a chaplain with the 1-44 Air Defense Artillery Battalion.

Another ceremony to remember the heroes of 9-11 was held in the evening in the chapel of the R & R (rest and relaxation) building. It included a slide show of images from the World Trade Towers. It showed the victims in their final hours and brought back the vivid memories of that day.

"It makes us remember why we are fighting," said PVT Frankie Basinger, a soldier with the 1-68 Armor



4th Infantry Division's Honor Guard stands at attention during September 11th Memorial.



Task Force Ironhorse soldiers attend the September 11th Memorial, conducted at the Division Main stage.

Battalion.

Most sat in silence until the end, when, just as Congress did on the steps of the Capitol, close to one hundred soldiers stood and sung *America the Beautiful*. The chapel was filled with song about America the great, America the free.

After the ceremony ended, soldiers filed out in silence, reflecting on the past and thinking of the future, knowing their time in Iraq serves a greater purpose. As President Bush stated in his address to Congress on September 20th, "...Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done...We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail..."

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Task Force News

Soldiers Get Reacquainted With Their Weapons

Stories and photos by SPC Joseph Norton

Taji, Iraq -- Soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division have been in Iraq up to six months, and depending on their job, they haven't fired their weapon once in that time span. If a soldier were to encounter hostile fire, how will he know if his weapon will fire?

The 44th Rear Area Operation Center (RAOC), at Forward Operating Base Gunner, is ensuring the possibility of having malfunctioning weapons is slim to none. On August 18, 2003, the 44th fired the inaugural shots at a live-fire range. The range is a collaboration between the 44th RAOC and the 5th Engineer Battalion from Fort Leonardwood, Mo., who actually built the test-fire range.

"I think this is a good opportunity for the soldiers," said CPT Christopher Strahlman, officer in charge of the range. "Some soldiers here have not fired their weapons since they've been here, and they need to get this done."

The range exercise by the 44th was actually a dual-purpose mission.

"Number one, we're testing the functionality of our weapons," said Strahlman. "The second thing we're doing is putting the Standard Operating Procedure through a dry run to see if any revisions need to be made"

The soldiers each took turns firing their weapons into a 15-foot dirt berm. The .50 caliber rifle was fired first, from 200 meters. Then the nine-millimeter pistols fired from 25 meters, M16A2 rifles and M249 Squad-Automatic Weapons from 150 meters.

Since it has been a while since many soldiers fired their weapons, they were all satisfied with the experience.

"It was good to come out here and fire the weapon and get confidence in it," said SFC Aaron Wortman, with the 44th.

Specialist Lyle Lasater agreed, saying, "All in all, I think it went well."

The biggest improvement the soldiers said they'd like to see at the range is to have targets set up. Strahlman said DIVARTY is going to help get targets for future use at the range.

The long-term plan for the range is to rotate all the units in DIVARTY on to the ranges once per month to test their 50-caliber and below weapons systems. Firing their weapons will keep soldiers' confidence high, knowing their weapons are tested, accurate and ready to fire, if necessary.



Left: 1LT James Allison of the 4th Infantry Division RAOC, fires his M16A2 rifle. Above: SGT Kevin Detrick, of the HHC 5th Engineer Battalion, fires off some rounds from a .50 caliber "Ma Deuce" at the new firing range in Taji, Iraq.

New Convoy Checklist

SGM Rivera, G3, revised the convoy checklist. All soldiers and units will abide by the new requirements when their vehicles depart FOB Ironhorse.

4ID Bands' Upcoming Performances

18 Sept: 7 Iron Horsemen @ 1-8 Infantry's DFAC in Balad, at 6 pm
19 Sept: Prime Mover in Balad at 7 pm
20 Sept: Prime Mover in Balad at 7 pm

Task Force News

War Trophies are Cool

Story and photos by SSG Craig Pickett

FOB IRONHORSE, TIKRIT, Iraq -- Souvenirs, war memorabilia, or cool stuff; whatever you call it, everyone wants it. Soldiers across Task Force Ironhorse continually keep an eye out for a trinket or some memento of their time spent at war and rebuilding a nation.

The items they collect are as varied as the soldier. Some will keep their well-worn desert camouflage uniform; others will treasure photos of friends and comrades. Others want something from Iraq or its former soldiers.

"I just want to have something from the war; something for show-and-tell," said SGT Julian Webb, with the 418th Civil Affairs Battalion, who plans on keeping an Iraqi tanker helmet, a uniform and some Iraqi field gear.

"I'm giving my kids a typical book that has pictures of Saddam in it. It also shows how they read from right to left," said SSG Dustin Graybill, also with the 418th. Graybill thought it would be interesting to show his children how all Iraqi money has Saddam's picture on it.

Under current policy, it is authorized for soldiers to keep items typically found on a soldier, such as head coverings, field gear, uniforms, patches, and flags. They can also keep books, pamphlets, posters, photographs and any other items that clearly pose no safety or health risk.

Items soldiers are not allowed to bring home are any type of weapon system or component of a weapon. These items include all firearms, operational, non-operational, antique or

demilitarized, to include knives and bayonets.

Even if an item seems safe, it may have to stay in Iraq. For instance, all Iraqi privately owned articles of a household nature are off limits. This means your favorite palace couch will have to stay behind for the next set of soldiers; along with any objects of art, science, archeological, religious, national, or historical value. Even the ever-present sand, dirt and rocks need to remain in the land from which they came.

"As a rule-of-thumb, if a soldier carried it, you can keep it; except for weapons," said CPT Megan Shaw, an administration and operational attorney with the Staff Judge Advocate. She also advised paying attention to what you pick up; you do not want to pick up anything dangerous. She suggested keeping items that will help you remember your time spent in Iraq and items you can share with your friends, family and children.

On a larger scale, individual units are authorized to bring home one weapon system and up to twelve non-weapon items and retain them as historical property. These are the items units intend to donate to museums or placed in glass cases and put on display.

Major Mike Rauhut, executive officer of the 1-22 Infantry, said many of the items they have confiscated in the course of operations will be donated to the 4th Infantry Divisions Museum. The National Infantryman's Museum at Fort Benning, GA, and their own regimental museum.

Many of the more unique and varied weapons adorn the wall in their tactical operations center.

SEE TROPHIES, PAGE 7

A mix of old and new weapons hang on the wall in the tactical operations center of the 1-22 Infantry Battalion. Each is labeled with the make, model and country of origin for easy familiarization.



Task Force News

MPs Mentor as Iraqis Conduct Raid

Story and Photos by SPC Jason Phillips

TIKRIT, Iraq -- The fields were bathed in early morning sunlight when the 720th Military Police Battalion soldiers and Iraqi police officers arrived. In a distant village, roosters crowed, dogs barked and a few women and children peered out of the doors and windows of their homes. The humble assortment of mud huts did not seem a likely target for a major raid.

But on August 23, it was the target of a raid led by 180 Iraqi police officers of the Salah Al-Dein province and supported by approximately 40 720th soldiers. The raid was the largest joint operation conducted by Iraqi Police and the 720th since the Fort Hood, Texas-based unit began working with the Iraqi police force in Tikrit in June.

The Iraqi police suspected the village to be the home of a gang responsible for car thefts, robberies and assaults against women and girls on the highway between Tikrit and Kirkuk. Though supported by the MPs and two 4th Infantry Division Apache helicopters, the Iraqi police were responsible for planning and executing the raid.

"The significance of this operation is that the Iraqi police conducted it," said Lt. COL David Poirer, commander of the 720th. "The MPs were there in a support role in case they had problems, but they had no problems."

In the early morning darkness on the day of the operation, Iraqi police vehicles led the raid convoy from Tikrit, northeast through the rugged mountains of the Jabals Hamrin Ridge and into the remote desert toward the objective. While MPs watched from a distance, Iraqi police drove their trucks into the village, dismounted and searched through huts, farm buildings, chicken roosts, equipment and piles of grain. They arrested 25 men suspected of belonging to the gang of bandits, confiscated weapons, ammunition and over 3 million Iraqi Dinar.

In addition, they captured a man considered the region's most wanted criminal who had avoided arrest for 10 years under the former regime, according to Mazehr Taha Ahmed, chief of the Salah Ad Din provincial police. Poirier, who credits decreased criminal activity against coalition forces and civilians in Tikrit to the improved Iraqi police force, was impressed with the performance of the Iraqi Police.

"They performed wonderfully," he said. "The raid couldn't have been conducted better. This is a good indicator that the Iraqi police are now on board in Tikrit and the Salah Ad Din province, and that they no longer always have to rely on U.S. MPs to create a safe and secure environment for their people."



Above: SGT Matthew Dusenbery, MP, 401st Military Police Company, observes two Iraqi police officers clear confiscated weapons after a raid on a village northeast of Tikrit, Iraq, Aug. 23.
Below: An Iraqi police officer watches as a 411th MP Company vehicle crosses a bridge northeast of Tikrit, Iraq, during a recent raid.



Task Force News

Truckers Return to Desert for an Encore

Story by MSG Dave Johnson; photos by SGT Donald Hankins

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq -- The 656th Transportation Company, a reserve unit out of Springfield, Ohio, returned to the desert to haul the fuel that keeps equipment running and soldiers working in the Taskforce Ironhorse area of operations.

This time it's Operation Iraqi Freedom. Twelve years ago, it was Operations Desert Shield and Storm in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The desert has not changed. It is perpetual -- brutal on equipment, pitiless on soldiers. The 656th is assigned to the 544th Maintenance Battalion from Fort Hood, Texas.

The 656th has been busy since arriving in Southwest Asia, not only with its mission, but integrating most soldiers into the unit to become one team.

Since the 656th was one of the first units in the war zone, it needed additional soldiers.

The 656th had to have most of its soldiers involuntarily transferred in during mobilization day in January after receiving deployment orders. "We got soldiers from 25 units throughout seven states in the Midwest," said MAJ Catherine Kaus, commander. "The experience from not only our leaders but our junior enlisted soldiers who were transferred in has helped immensely. Some of our new soldiers are so talented, I put them in charge of key areas."

"Some soldiers came to us from units that do a lot of tactical training, and they have helped us a lot," said 1SG Lisa Yager.

The third platoon had the biggest influx of new soldiers. "The platoon really gelled together," said Spc. Felicitas Lopez, a truck driver. "Only six of the forty-one soldiers are originally from 656th." Thirty-five soldiers from other units augmented the platoon, and camaraderie emerged quickly because of the fuel-hauling missions to be accomplished. The 3rd Platoon is located at Camp Anaconda, Balad, 40 miles north of Baghdad.

Synergism emerged from combining soldiers from many units and backgrounds. The soldiers with Desert Storm experience increased the experience base exponentially.

"I was a platoon sergeant then," said Master Sgt. Mike Spieker. "We ran missions night and day. We knew what to do to prepare our trucks for the desert, and so far, they're holding up." Experience from Desert Storm helped the 656th prepare for and perform its current mission.

"We've been doing all kinds of extra missions, too," said Spieker, now the food service NCO. "We're



Above:
Mechanics from the 656th tackle alternator maintenance on a 5-ton truck.

Right: The 656th fuel haulers head north from Kuwait to Iraq during the unit's first convoy on its way to Tikrit.



escorting Iraqi truck drivers, picking up spare parts and the duties soldiers do in the field."

With the recent improvement in supply channels to the Ironhorse AO, maintenance workers are receiving the parts they need to keep vehicles on the road.

"It's getting better," said SSG Michael Summers, a mechanic who was with 656th during Desert Storm, referring to repair parts. "Our maintenance section is getting the job done, and we definitely need spare parts to keep us running." Summers applied his desert expertise to prepare the unit's trucks during pre-deployment at Fort Campbell, KY.

Combat experience has paid dividends. From movement to maintenance, NCOs have stepped up to offer experienced leadership.

Many units have benefited from 656th's combat experience.

According to SGT Donald Hankins, an

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Task Force News

Proposed Monument for Task Force Ironhorse Soldiers



Task Force Ironhorse is having a monument built to remember the soldiers who lost their lives during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This picture is a clay replica of the bronze statue that will be built. The statue will be at 4th Infantry Division Headquarters at Fort Hood, Texas. The materials for the statue are already at Fort Hood, taken from the bronze statues of Saddam Hussein that were taken down off the perch from the front of the palace at Forward Operating Base Ironhorse. The 555th Engineer Group took down the statues

There will be a young Iraqi girl standing behind the Sergeant.

Memorial Statue is Funded by Soldiers from Task Force Ironhorse.

The senior NCO from every unit assigned or attached to Taskforce Ironhorse will inform his or her soldiers that the Memorial statue is self-funded. All soldiers are asked to give \$1 to pay for the statue. Soldiers are not obligated to contribute. Any soldiers wishing to give more than \$1 may do so. Division Command Sergeant Major Fuss and HHC First Sergeant Anderson are heading up the project. The cost of the statue is \$20,000.

Task Force News

TROPHIES, FROM PAGE 3

The arsenal ranges from a modern AK-47 assault rifle to an antiquated bazooka, to handguns, even a sword. Until they are demilitarized and sent home through proper channels, they serve as an unofficial tally of their successes and help to familiarize soldiers with the weapons they could expect to see out on the street.

Whether a soldier is looking for a small token of a larger endeavor or a T-55 tank, always think safety. Be aware of your surroundings and do not become exposed to booby traps or pick up any suspicious items. If a soldier has any questions about what may be kept, direct them to their chain of command or visit a representative from the Staff Judge Advocate.



TRUCKIN', FROM PAGE 5

Administrative NCO, during the convoy north along Highway 1 from Kuwait, the 656th helped units without transportation assets maneuver into their designated AO for the war effort.

The unit actually arrived ahead of the 4th ID in Tikrit, the Division's headquarters, said SSG Odessa Thurman, communications NCO.

With the full compliment of Taskforce Ironhorse units in place, the 656th transports much of the fuel to keep units going.

Soldiers who were assigned to 25 different units in January, are accomplishing the mission in the desert now as one, cohesive unit.

Local Announcements

Combat Stress Team

Now available at FOB Ironhorse located at the Aid Station.
Call 534-0161

SPORTS BAR CHANGE

SUNDAY IS NOW A FOOTBALL NIGHT

Two live games will be shown starting at 9 pm.

Tuesdays are still tape-delay football games from either college or the NFL.

Other nights remain on the same schedule.

Religious Services at FOB Ironhorse Sunday:

9:30 a.m.-- Protestant
11:00 a.m.-- Gospel
Noon-- LDS
1:00-- Catholic

Wednesday:

6:30 p.m.-- Prayer & Praise
7:00 p.m.-- Bible Study

Friday:

7:30 p.m.-- Jewish
12:25 p.m.-- Muslim

Movie Schedule

Movies are shown at the Soldiers' Inn.

**Movie times are 11 am,
2 pm, 8 pm**

Sept 15th: A Guy Thing
Sept 16th: End of Days
Sept 17th: Old School
Sept 18th: Star Trek Nemesis
Sept 19th: Basketball
Sept 20th: The Crow
Sept 21st: Lord of the Rings:
Two Towers

** Sunday's Movies are shown
at 2 pm and 8 pm only.**

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News Briets

AP -- As night fell on a mourning nation, twin towers of white light beamed brighter into the sky above ground zero, capping the emotional second anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. "Tribute in Light" returned after a 17 month hiatus Thursday night, a ghostly reminder of the day hijacked jetliners slammed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, killing more than 3,000 people in the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history.

AP -- Laid-back California's extraordinary campaign to fire a sitting governor and shoo in a replacement has stirred up the public as few elections here have. Forget that it's an off-year in the political cycle and the earliest 2004 presidential primaries are months away. Voters are jazzed or angry or both.

SEATTLE/SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) -- Microsoft Corp.'s warning of a newly discovered security flaw in Windows prompted experts on Thursday to urge computer users to update their software to avoid a repeat of a devastating attack similar to the recent Blaster worm. "We have to assume the worst," said Jeff Jones, senior director of trustworthy computing security at the world's largest software maker.

AP -- Shoppers kept cash registers humming last month to push sales at the nation's retailers up by 0.6 percent, but they backed away somewhat from July's buying binge.

MANCHESTER, England (Reuters) -- More people are living to a healthier old age with fewer disabilities and the trend is likely to continue, an expert in geriatric medicine said on Friday.

SPORTS ZONE

COLLEGE FOOTBALL -- TOP 25 teams suffered three upset losses on September 13th.

- #1 Oklahoma 52, Fresno St 28;
- #2 Miami 38, E Carolina 3;
- #3 Ohio State beat #22 N Carolina St in 3 OT, 44-38;
- #4 USC beat Hawaii, 61-32;
- #6 Kansas St beat U Mass 38-7;
- #7 Michigan pounded #14 Notre Dame, 38-0 in front of the largest crowd in NCAA history, 111,726 in Ann Arbor, Michigan;
- #8 Georgia beat S Carolina 31-7;
- #10 Florida St beat Georgia Tech 14-13 by scoring two touchdowns in the final eight minutes;
- #11 LSU beat W Illinois, 35-7;
- #12 Pittsburgh beat Ball St, 42-21;
- #17 Colorado was upset by Washington St, 47-26;
- #18 Nebraska beat Penn St 18-10;
- #19 Iowa defeated Iowa St for the first time in five years, 40-21;
- #20 Florida beat Florida A&M 63-3; and Purdue upset #21 Wake Forrest, 16-10.

NFL WEEK TWO --

Carolina blocked three kicks and surprised defending champs Tampa Bay 12-9 in overtime at Tampa Bay. The Panthers moved to 2-0; the Bucs fell to 1-1. Indianapolis (2-0) romped Tennessee (1-1), 33-7. Seattle (2-0) 38, Phoenix (0-2) 0. New England (1-1) 31, Philadelphia (0-2) 10. Oakland (1-1) eked by Cincinnati (0-2) at home, 23-20. Kansas City (2-0) 41, Pittsburgh (1-1) 20. Denver (2-0) 37, San Diego (0-2) 13. Green Bay (1-1) 31, Detroit (1-1) 6. Baltimore (1-1) ran over Cleveland (0-2), 33-13. Baltimore RB Jamal Lewis ran for an NFL record 295 yds. Washington (2-0) 33, Atlanta (1-1) 31.

NFL WEEK TWO cont'd --

Miami (1-1) 21, N.Y. Jets (0-2) 10. Buffalo (2-0) 38, Jacksonville (0-2) 17. St. Louis (1-1) overcame the 49ers (1-1), 27-24 (OT). New Orleans (1-1), 31 Houston (1-1) 10. Minnesota 2-0) 24, Chicago (1-1) 13.

BASEBALL -- The New York Yankees continue to lead the American League East with a 90-56 record four games ahead of Boston. The Central Division continues to be a tight race with Minnesota and Chicago tied for first place and Kansas City only 3.5 games back. The West is also close with Oakland only 2.5 games ahead of Seattle.

The American League Wild Card race is also close with Boston having a half game lead over Seattle.

The National League East is all but wrapped up for Atlanta with a 9.5 game lead over Florida. The Central is still a close race with Houston having a two game lead over Chicago and a 4.5 game lead over St. Louis. San Francisco should win the West with a 11.5 game lead over Los Angeles. The National League Wild Card race leading Florida Marlins have a 1.5 game lead over the Philadelphia Phillies.

Roy Halladay became the first 20-game winner in the majors this season, pitching a five-hitter as the visiting Toronto Blue Jays beat the Tampa Bay Devil Rays 3-1 Thursday.

Tyler Minges homered and drove in four runs as the Akron Aeros hit five home runs in all to beat the New Haven Ravens, 11-4, and sweep the Eastern League championship series, three games to none.

NCAA Soccer -- The University of Akron Zips defeated # 11 Indiana in overtime, 1-0.