



Notes from the Front

Note Number 2

2 March 2004



Camp New York has exploded into a frenzy of activity in the past week as the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) conducted port operations, Rapid Fielding Initiative equipment issue, Convoy Live Fire Exercises and initial movement into our theater of operations. All of these are the final preparation for the BCT as we start our transition for operations in Iraq. The desert is getting hot – over 85 degrees today and getting hotter!

Within a matter of hours the vast empty expanses of desert sand turned into fully functioning motor pools as thousands of vehicles rolled within the berm from the port. Bradley's, tanks, engineer bridges, and HMMWVs were brought into the gates on Kuwati trailers and Military Heavy Equipment Transports. These came along with our beloved containers – over 200 containers -- which hold our more sensitive equipment and most of the soldiers' comfort items from home. No one was to be found in their tent as every body available was parked, fixed, or prepared the incoming equipment.



We filled sandbags with a special grade of sand to “harden” our HMMWVs and trucks. Great job by all soldiers and leaders!

While sandbags were being transported here and there and mechanics worked feverishly to ensure vehicles were working, formations of soldiers marched to and from a large hanger-looking tent. They marched there with empty sack. They marched back each with armfuls of equipment. This was the Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI) equipment issue. RFI is the Army's way of getting the best equipment available to soldiers in the quickest time possible. Most of us won't be sporting the gear you've seen us in back at home. We will be wearing a modular system, which is less cumbersome. We also got new socks, T-Shirts, underwear, boots, knee and elbow pads, and assault packs -- It was a little like Christmas in the desert. Soldiers ripped open packages, tried on new gear, and finally...PACKED ALL THIS STUFF!!! To put it in perspective this issue is about an extra



rucksack worth of equipment. Dagger soldiers are inventive and adaptive -- they wear what they need and packed the rest away. As you can see from this photo, our senior NCOs gathered in a tent at Camp New York and began to figure out our standard for wearing all the new gear they had just received. Where were they going to snap this and just how were they going to attach that.

Now most of the BCT is out practicing for our upcoming movement to Iraq. Convoy Live Fire is a thorough three-day experience where soldiers riding in vehicles learn to deal with explosive devices, ambushes, and other possible events on our movement north. BCT soldiers are practicing how to fight from their vehicles, as well as how to recover a vehicle that breaks on the road, or how to call in medical evacuation helicopters. If you had been here to watch this training, you would have been proud of the spirit and discipline that your husband, wife, dad, or mom displayed – absolutely magnificent!! We are ready as a team, and we will hit the ground running in Iraq.



We had the great fortune to be visited by a great soldier, a former commander of the 1st



Infantry Division, and a former Chief of Staff of the Army – General (Retired) Gordon Sullivan. General Sullivan visited soldiers from Task Force 1-77 who were practicing their skills for military operations in cities. His emotionally charged message provided keen insight for the upcoming operation, as he talked with every available soldier and thanked them for their dedicated service to our great nation.

We have a new addition this week, as we welcome our brothers from the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry from the New York National Guard – they were activated several months ago and left their families, civilian occupations, and college to do their duty as part of the Dagger Brigade Combat Team. They come from New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Vermont, and a couple of other states in the northeast US, and they are now part of our BCT and will serve with us in Iraq – we welcome them and they a great addition to our team.

We down here know that the weather will begin to get nicer in Germany as Spring approaches. We depart Kuwait in the next few days knowing that you are all part of everything we have, and will accomplish. We are all too aware of your sacrifices at home and we love you for it. You are prayed for daily in our chapel services. And as the sun sets in the Kuwaiti desert, we want you to keep the home fires burning and we wish you all the very best!



DUTY FIRST!!!!

COL Randy Dragon
Commander, Dagger Brigade Combat Team