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## RETURN OF 2ND SQUADRON, 6TH CAVALRY COMPLETES TRANSFORMATION PROCESS FOR V CORPS' 11TH AVIATION

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**ILLESHEIM ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany** — If someone were to make a film about the recent return of 100 Soldiers of V Corps' 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry to their home station here, it would probably be called, "Planes, Buses, Automobiles and Helicopters."



CLAUDETTE ROULO

Coming in from the rain, Soldiers of the 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry of V Corps' 11th Aviation Regiment hold onto tie-down ropes as one of the squadron's new AH-64D Apache "Longbow" helicopters is pushed into the unit's hangar upon the unit's return to Illesheim Army Airfield, Germany from a year of transformation training in the U.S.

Nearly everyone and everything that made up the 2/6th -- Soldiers and family members, dogs and cats, or bags and baggage -- arrived over the course of two days in late July and early August.

"It's good to be finally moving the whole unit together," said 2/6th Command Sgt. Maj. John Sundermann.

Sponsors from the 2/6th's sister unit, the 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry, quickly took the newly arrived Soldiers and family members in hand to help ease their integration into the unit and the Illesheim community. The two units serve together in the corps'

11th Aviation Regiment, and the Soldiers of the 6/6th knew just what the new arrivals were going through, as that unit went through the same process two years ago.

After what Sundermann referred to as a “quick in-processing,” each newly arrived Soldier and family was taken to waiting quarters.

Each Soldier was assigned a sponsor responsible for ensuring that the transition from Ft. Hood, Texas, to life in Germany went as smooth as possible. Sponsors arranged for family housing or barracks rooms for the new soldiers, signed for temporary furniture and lending closet items, and even purchased a basic supply of food for the Soldiers and families they sponsored.

The return of the 2/6th marks the end of a several-years-long transformation process for the 11th. Following the same path taken earlier by its sister squadron, the 2/6th returned from deployment to Southwest Asia last year and cased its unit colors to head to the United States for an intensive training program aimed at replacing the regiment's AH-64A Apache attack helicopters with the state-of-the-art AH-64D Apache “Longbow.”



STAFF SGT MANUEL TORRES-CORTES  
Col. George M. Bilafer, commander of V Corps' 11th Aviation Regiment (right) watches as Command Sgt. Maj. John P. Sundermann of the regiment's 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry (center) and 2/6th Commander Lt. Col. Michael J. Swanson uncase the squadron's colors during a ceremony welcoming the 2/6th home to Illieshiem Army Airfield, Germany August 20.

Pilots were sent to Fort Rucker, Ala., and mechanics went to Fort Eustis, Va. for certification on an aircraft that has undergone a major technological overhaul.

Following that training the unit reformed and was reactivated in September at Fort Hood, Texas, where it immediately began unit-level operations, including aerial gunnery, troop-level training and lots of field time.

“In less than 90 days we went from aviation training to blackout operations against an opposing force,” said Lt. Col. Mike Swanson, the 2/6th commander.

On August 20, the 11th welcomed the 2/6th home and signaled the completion of its Longbow transformation when it uncased the squadron’s colors during a ceremony here.

