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Photo by Staff Sgt. Leah R. Kilpatrick

The Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team conduct a pass and review during the unit's inactivation ceremony at Cooper Field here Oct. 17. "This ceremony is symbolic and yet is a real initiation in the first step which is to enhance the capability of our units here at Fort Hood," said Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, the 1st Cavalry Division commanding general.

'Long Knife' Brigade cases colors, ends legacy at inactivation ceremony

Sgt. Angel Turner

4th BCT Public Affairs, 1st Cav. Div.

FORT HOOD, Texas — One day short of its eight-year anniversary, the 4th Brigade "Long Knife" Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, cased its colors during an inactivation ceremony Oct. 17 at Cooper Field here.

"This ceremony is symbolic and yet is a real initiation in the first step, which is to enhance the capability of our units here at Fort Hood," said Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, the commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division.

"Long Knife Soldiers, past and present, thank you for all you have done," said Ierardi, a native of Philadelphia, Penn. "Your legacy and greatness will forever live in the rolls of Army history."

The brigade, activated in 2005 at Fort Bliss, Texas, is the first to inactivate as the Army transforms its overall structure to meet the needs of war.

"The Army has been through organizational changes before," said Col. William Benson, outgoing commander of 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. "Divisions and brigades have come and gone in an almost cyclical way according to the needs of the American

people and government."

"Long Knife" Soldiers have deployed four times, three tours to Iraq and one tour to Afghanistan, where they advised and assisted their counterparts to enhance their security forces.

Along with the brigade, the 27th Brigade Support Battalion; 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment; and the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion also cased their colors.

The remaining three battalions were reassigned within the 1st Cavalry Division.

The 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment now falls under 1st Brigade Combat Team; 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment is now assigned to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team; and the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment is now a part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

"The need for the brigade is no longer so this should not be a cause for disappointment," Benson said. "The brigade accomplished its assigned mission. The efforts of the brigade helped provide the people of Iraq and Afghanistan with an opportunity for a different future. A better future."

"Though we may case our colors, we do not erase all that these brigade Soldiers and leaders have accomplished in the past

or will accomplish in the future," added Benson.

The inactivation ceremony had a bitter-sweet effect on the unit's only sergeant first class to help stand the brigade up.

From serving as a platoon sergeant in the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, to serving as the first sergeant for Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Sgt. Fernando Fernandez, former first sergeant for the brigade headquarters company has a long history with the unit.

Fernandez recalled the small office with only a desk and one computer and a sign on the door that read "4-1 Cav" was all that represented the brigade.

"We started from scratch," said Fernandez, an Alamo, Texas, native. "We had to borrow equipment to qualify our soldiers and within a year we deployed."

A unit named from a contest where the name was drawn from a hat will now be remembered for the hard work and accomplishments put forth by the thousands of Soldiers who had the privilege of calling themselves the "Long Knife" Brigade.

"It's always a little sad to see a unit inactivate and case their unit colors," said Benson. "but it's for a good reason and the Army becomes stronger because of it."



Photo by Sgt. Kim Browne

Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Spinks, an expert infantry badge candidate with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, tests within the patrol lane of the expert infantry badge test, Sept. 26 at Fort Hood, Texas. Spinks, also the first sergeant for Company B, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT, has been unable to test for the coveted badge due to professional development courses before, until now.

EIB: We proud, we few

By Sgt. Kim Browne
3rd BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

FORT HOOD, Texas – An infantryman stood in a dusty field calling to two other Soldiers, holding out his fist to bump each of theirs as they passed by, “one more lane, a 12-mile ruck and we’re done.”

These were some of the self-motivating words heard from the infantrymen with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division before they pressed forward on the last two portions of the week-long Expert Infantryman Badge test Sept. 26 at Fort Hood, Texas.

“The EIB is all about the infantry guys that came before us,” said Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Spinks, first sergeant for Company B, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT. “It’s all about the veterans and warriors before you.”

As a long-time EIB holder, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Martinez, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the EIB testing for 3rd BCT, said that all 11-series military occupational specialty Soldiers should treat the EIB as their play-offs. He said you have to go to the play-offs before going to the Super Bowl.

A total of 309 Soldiers from throughout

3rd BCT and Fort Hood began their journey for the coveted EIB Sept. 23 with the Army Physical Fitness Test. The Soldiers were required to score 75 points in each event of the APFT - the push-up, sit-up and two-mile run – which is 15 points above the Army standard of 60.

Upon completion of the APFT, only 182 Soldiers remained to face the next challenge: day and night land navigation.

The 3rd Brigade’s EIB attrition rate was consistent with what other Army units experience, with only 10 to 15 percent of the total candidates completing the testing.

“I don’t know if it was from these guys staying out in the field for train up or if it’s just nerves,” said Martinez.

Day and night land navigation posed a problem for many of the candidates as well. The requirement was to physically locate three out of the four given grid coordinates within two hours on one of Fort Hood’s training areas, first during the day, and again later at night.

By morning on the 24th, only 62 Soldiers remained, and were separated equally onto three lanes: the patrol lane, traffic control point lane and urban operations lane.

Over the course of the next three days and nights, the Infantrymen would com-

plete one lane a day, each lane each presenting their own challenges that would test more of their infantry skills

The patrol lane consisted of tasks such as identifying terrain features on a map, controlling bleeding on a casualty, moving under direct fire, preparing a night vision device, to reporting intelligence information.

On the traffic control point lane, Soldiers performed a functions check on an M240B 7.62mm machine gun – loading, correcting a malfunction and unloading the M240B, performed first aid for an open head wound, determined the grid of a location on a military map and properly searched an individual.

Among the tasks facing the infantrymen on the urban operations lane were preparing an antitank weapon for firing and performing misfire procedures, employing and identifying hand grenades, and performing first aid on a suspected fracture and on an abdominal wound – then to call for a medical evacuation.

“The most strenuous part for me was the first aid of the urban lane,” Spinks said. “It was very challenging.”

Each lane involved 10 tasks and eight of those had to be considered a ‘go,’ or pass.

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Cav on the Spot:

Ironhorse Soldier uses Army skills to train young football stars

By **Sgt. Bailey Kramer**

1st BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

FORT HOOD, Texas – “Hut ... Hut ... Hike!”

To some people, hearing these words means another NFL Sunday night football game, but these words mean so much more to one Ironhorse Soldier.

Sgt. 1st Class Ethan Braud, a transportation coordinator assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop “Hammer” of the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division here, is the head coach of the Fort Hood Warriors.

The Warriors are not a Fort Hood team but were founded by a Soldier who was stationed at the installation.

Braud said although the majority of the 22 players are military family members, the only connection between the team and Fort Hood is the name.

Since 2011, Braud has coached the Warriors, a Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. football team, for two reasons. His 10-year-old son is a Warrior, and he wanted the chance to influence young children.

“Being a football coach at that age, nine times out of 10, I will be somewhat of a foundation for the choices they make in the future,” Braud said about coaching athletes ages 9 to 11.

Staff Sgt. Eric Warner, a Reserve drill sergeant for the 2nd Battalion, 354th Regiment of the 95th Training Division in Waco, Texas, also thinks Braud is a valuable influence on the kids.

“He is a great coach,” said Warner, a Dover, Ohio, native. “The kids respond to him as a father figure and are real receptive of him.”

Warner believes Braud’s relationship with the kids has been



Courtesy photo

Sgt. 1st Class Ethan Braud, a transportation coordinator assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop “Hammer” of the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, breaks down a play for his team, the Fort Hood Warriors, a Pop Warner Football Team, at Fort Hood, Texas, Aug. 12.

a main contributor to their 6-2 win-loss record, a successful season thus far.

“They have our heart, and we have their heart,” Warner added.

Although coaching football or joining the Army wasn’t in his plan, he’s happy with his decision.

Joining the Army right out of high school wasn’t Braud’s original plan, but due to family circumstances he had to make a choice.

“My plan was to go to college straight out of high school,” said Braud, a native of New Orleans. “My wife ended up getting pregnant with our first kid, so I had to make a choice ...

that was a big decision maker for joining the Army.”

Skills he has acquired during his military career have transferred over to his coaching style.

“The biggest one is being a motivator,” Braud said, adding that many of the players are shy, and it can take awhile for them to come out of their shell.

“Me, putting them in a position to where I let them know they can be comfortable being who they are ... expressing themselves verbally or through their actions and not being afraid to do so is probably the biggest leadership skill I use on the field.”

Warner agreed that Braud’s Army leadership style is transferred into his coaching style, and it is noticeable.

“All the coaches learn from that,” Warner added.

In addition to his military experience, Braud has incorporated self-taught lessons as a coach into his Army career.

“(Coaching) makes me a better leader,” Braud said. “Being around kids at a young age and noticing how each kid has a different personality helps me as a Soldier, because it makes me realize adults are the same way. Each Soldier won’t be the same.”

Braud compares techniques used to keep players motivated on the field to those used to motivate his Soldiers.

“Things I would have to do to get a Soldier to perform at their top level won’t be the same thing I would have to do for another to perform at their top level,” Braud said. “And I kind of compare that to my kids.”

Braud isn’t only coaching to teach them about football but hopes to leave a deeper impression on his players.

“Whatever you want to be in life and whatever you want to do in life, don’t let anything hinder your ability to accomplish that,” Braud said.

When Braud retires, he doesn’t plan on leaving the coaching scene.

“I had a joke while I was recruiting, that when I get out (of the Army) all I want to do is put stickers on people when they come in Wal-Mart,” Braud laughed, adding that after coaching, his primary focus will either be coaching a football organization or starting a business focusing on helping young children advance in their athletic abilities.

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Live The Legend!

Face of Defense: Senior NCO Recalls Army Career

By **Sgt. Quentin Johnson**

2nd BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Stepping down from your last position of responsibility before retiring is a proud moment for most, but for Army Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Chepenik it's more -- monumental, nostalgic and bittersweet.

Chepenik relinquished responsibility as the senior enlisted advisor for the 2nd "Spartan" Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, at Bagram Air Field, Oct. 18, 2013, in preparation for his retirement next year after 30 years of Army service.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Roderick Jones from Flint, Mich., replaces Chepenik as the Spartan's command sergeant major. Roderick's previous assignment was with the 249th Engineer Battalion, Fort Belvoir, Va.

Chepenik said he began his career almost 30 years ago, serving with 2nd BCT's, 8th Brigade Engineer Battalion, and will now retire from the same brigade. A change in life from a career he described as a "journey and unforgettable experience."

"I acknowledge my time has come to an end. I began my journey in 1984, and the experiences I have had along the way will never leave me," Chepenik said.

He said his experiences led him to be a better person and leader. Chepenik said he hopes has left a positive impact on those he met throughout his Army career.

"I have had the privilege of meeting individuals from around the world," he said. "I just hope I have impacted the lives of those soldiers whom I have led throughout my tenure."

Army Lt. Col. Archie Herndon, Spartan commander, said Chepenik's impact on soldiers and friends throughout his career couldn't be overstated.

"Few have had the impact on soldiers



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Quentin Johnson

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Chepenik, then command sergeant major of 2nd "Spartan" Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, received the U.S. Army Bronze Star award for his deployment to Afghanistan with Black Jack, prior to the Spartan's change of responsibility ceremony on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Oct. 18, 2013. Chepenik will retire next year after 30 years of active Army service. U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Roderick Jones from Flint, Mich., replaced Chepenik as the Spartan's command sergeant major.

that [Chepenik] has had, for as long as he has had it," Herndon said. "He did everything possible to care for our nation's treasure, our sons and daughters."

Herndon said Chepenik cared because he stayed true to the philosophy -- the Army is our family and we train and care for it first.

Chepenik said he was proud to have served and to be able to finish his career with such an amazing group of soldiers, and let each know he will not forget them.

"[Spartan soldiers] are an amazing group

of soldiers and leaders that will forever be my family," Chepenik said. "Whether it's an e-mail, phone call or 'hello' in passing, the Spartan team will always be in my heart."

Herndon closed with a resolution of thanks and gratitude towards Chepenik.

"Phil, thank you for everything you did for the Spartans, and your exceptional service," Herndon said. "I look forward to our continued friendship, and a report on life after the Army; Godspeed brother."

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Anymore than two tasks with a 'no-go,' or fail, the Soldier would be disqualified from attaining the EIB.

"The attrition rate was so high at this point," Spinks said. "I felt the pressure and a little case of nervousness because what you don't want to do is mess up on the little things."

Following the three lanes, in the pitch black of one of Fort Hood's training areas, with no moon to light their way and humidity that made the air stagnant and difficult to breath, the infantrymen gathered with chemical lights attached to their helmets, ready to defeat their final task: the ruck march.

Ultimately, 30 infantrymen - Spinks included - remained for the final task: marching 20 km, approximately 12.5 miles, with at least 35lbs in their rucksacks

and in less than three hours.

Almost two hours of silence went by in the darkness, then, one-by-one, the sound of shuffling boots on gravel, rucksacks shifting and swaying, and the groan of pain from the Soldiers started to fill the air as the men began trickling in toward the finish line.

As dawn was starting to break, only 23 weary Soldiers were able to complete the 20 km within the three hour time frame. From a starting group of 309, only these 23 infantrymen finished all tasks successfully and earned the Expert Infantry Badge. Following the awards ceremony, with his newly-earned EIB pinned to his chest, Spinks reflected on the challenges of the week.

"At the end, you just have to pay attention to detail and give it all you've got," he said.



Cav Kids play, color at Storytime event

Brian Wadlington colors a picture of a cow during the "Tell Me a Story" event at the division's Soldier and Family Readiness Center, Oct. 3. Brian is the son of Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion's schools noncommissioned officer, Sgt. Nicole Wadlington. 1st Cavalry Division's HHB hosted the event in partnership with the Military Child Education Coalition's Parent to Parent team, a non-profit organization that builds partnerships between military communities and their surrounding school districts.