



THE IRONHORSEMAN

1st Brigade Combat Team 1st Cavalry Division



Looking back, charging ahead:

Ironhorse family welcomes new command team



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1st Cavalry Division
Fort Hood, Texas**



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Cav kid fights his own battle

Story and Photos by Sgt. Bailey Kramer
1BCT, 1CD PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – To a Soldier, the Fort Hood water tower with a big “A” at the top might represent the First Army Division West, but to one chubby-cheeked young boy, it is the headquarters of Captain America.

This chubby-cheeked young boy is Antonio Laguna, also known to his family and friends as Supertonio, the 7-year-old son of Sgt. Frank Laguna, a small arms/artillery repairer assigned to Company B, 115th “Muleskinner” Brigade Support Battalion, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and he lives a normal life despite his illness.

At the early age of 6, this superhero was diagnosed with the rare and terminal disease of Rapid-onset Obesity with Hypothalamic dysfunction, Hypoventilation and Autonomic Dysregulation.

Candace Laguna, Antonio’s mom, said ROHHAD affects everything the body is supposed to do naturally like weight management, eye focus, bowel movements, breathing, temperature regulation, and even psychological behaviors.

“It’s like a computer,” Candace explained. “Even though it is supposed to run automatically it glitches and doesn’t always do that, it’s dangerous.”

Antonio’s parents knew something wasn’t right when Antonio was just a toddler.

Antonio gained 40 pounds in two months when he was 2, spiking worry in his mother.

The Laguna’s took Antonio to see multiple specialists, who kept insisting it was his exercise and diet plan, but his parents knew that wasn’t the case.

“He is engaged in sports,” Frank said. “He eats fish and vegetables ... no 3-year-old has ever had a more perfect diet.”

So, they kept trying.

While seeing an asthma specialist, the doctor noticed Antonio was hyperventilating.

When his records were rushed to a pulmonologist at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, he was finally diagnosed with ROHHAD.

Even though there is no cure for Antonio’s condition, Candace believes that finding an answer saved her son.

Since ROHHAD affects the body’s ability to remind the body to breathe, the doctor got Antonio a bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP) breathing machine to help him breathe when he is sleeping.

Although the Laguna’s were grateful they finally knew what the issue was, they were devastated by the results. Frank was at work when his wife called saying she was coming to pick him up. Antonio had a terminal disease.

“We lost it. What are we suppose to do,” Frank said, teary-eyed. “They just gave him a death sentence.”

After learning the few options ROHHAD patients have, Antonio’s parents spent night and day searching for doctors across the country who could give him even a little hope. After many disheartening phone calls to specialists, they received a hopeful message from Johns Hopkins Hospital.

They had an experimental chemotherapy treatment they



Antonio Laguna, the 7-year-old son of Sgt. Frank Laguna, a Muleskinner small arms/artillery repairer, was diagnosed with Rapid-onset Obesity with Hypothalamic dysfunction, Hypoventilation and Autonomic Dysregulation, a rare and terminal disease affecting less than 100 individuals worldwide. While receiving experimental treatment at Johns Hopkins, he was granted the opportunity to receive one wish. He is choosing to grow an orchard and greenhouse to sell the produce and plant more trees.

wanted to test. Wanting to give their son the best chance for a normal life, the Laguna’s packed up and traveled to Baltimore.

“They told us before we left they wouldn’t know if the treatment worked until he outlived us,” Candace said. “So I told them, ‘Okay, I will just wait around for that.’”

While in Baltimore, the Laguna’s found a support group with children who also suffer from ROHHAD. Within their first year in the group, the Laguna family saw three children lost. The children were between the ages of five and nine, the normal lifespan of a child with this condition.

While undergoing chemotherapy, Antonio was granted the opportunity of a lifetime, the wish of his choice.

Antonio’s wish: an orchard and greenhouse, where he could raise fresh fruits and vegetables to sell and raise money to plant more trees.

“It’s also fresh,” Antonio said. “I like fresh.”

Since being diagnosed, Supertonio hasn’t let the diagnosis get him down, and his parents have done what they can to support a normal life. He goes to school, takes care of his garden and chickens, and has chores.

“We are mean parents,” Candace said. “We make him do chores.”

In only meeting Antonio a few times, Command Sgt. Maj. Russell Salter, the Muleskinner’s senior noncommissioned officer, said that despite everything he has endured, Antonio is still an energetic, fun-loving young man.

“(He is) excited about life,” Salter added about the young superhero. “Let me tell you, Antonio cares about other people.”

The Laguna family has done everything they can for their son and are thankful for every minute they get with him.

“A lot of people think they have so much to complain about, and so much isn’t good enough or enough,” Candace said. “Be thankful. Stop complaining.”



Brigade welcomes new command team

Story and Photos by Spc. Paige Behringer
1BCT, 1CD PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas –The sound of cannons firing and horses galloping could be heard across Cooper Field as the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division said farewell to its leader and welcomed two new leaders to the Ironhorse family April 7 here.

Col. Steve Gilland, a native of Rock Island, Ill., and the outgoing Ironhorse commander, relinquished command to Col. John DiGiambattista, an Anaheim, Calif., native and the incoming brigade commander during a change of command ceremony.

Brig. Gen. Michael Bills, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division, was the host and presiding officer, who also welcomed a new senior noncommissioned officer to the Ironhorse family: Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Cornelison, a native of Tunnel Hill, Ga.

Gilland took command of Ironhorse in July 2012. He now hands the reins over to DiGiambattista following several training exercises in Europe and a rotation to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif.

“Colonel Steve Gilland’s accomplishments in the last two years are immeasurable,” Bills said. “His focus has been on tackling every assigned mission and achieving outstanding results ... when he first took the brigade’s colors, the Soldiers of Ironhorse had just returned from a deployment to Iraq and Kuwait ... Steve and Betsy Gilland wasted no time in building a great team here at Fort Hood.”

Bills said DiGiambattista is taking command of Ironhorse at an important time. This year, the brigade will head to Europe for exercises related to Ironhorse’s regional alignment.

“We are fortunate to have (DiGiambattista) as he comes from the Pentagon,” Bills said. “He comes to us with a wealth of experience as an infantry officer with three deployments to Iraq ... I can’t think of a more qualified and capable officer to take command of an outstanding team as (DiGiambattista).”

“I know I have arrived at a great organization, and I can see it with my own eyes,” DiGiambattista said.



Col. John DiGiambattista (center), the incoming Ironhorse commander, hands the brigade colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Cornelison (center, right), the incoming senior noncommissioned officer, at the Ironhorse change of command and assumption of responsibility ceremony April 7 at Fort Hood, Texas.



Chloe Gilland (center), daughter of Col. Steve Gilland, the outgoing commander of the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, receives a single red rose at the Ironhorse change of command and assumption of responsibility ceremony April 7 at Fort Hood, Texas.



FORSCOM CSM visits Lancer Soldiers, tours equipment

By Spc. Paige Behringer
1BCD, 1CD PAO



(Above) Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Greca (left), the command sergeant major of U.S. Army Forces Command presents a coin to Pvt. Frankie Cabrera, an infantryman assigned to Company A of the 2nd "Lancer" Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, during his visit to the Lancer motor pool April 14 at Fort Hood, Texas.

(Below) Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Greca, the command sergeant major of U.S. Army Forces Command, sits in the driver's seat of an M1A2 Abrams tank during his visit to the 2nd "Lancer" Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division motor pool April 14 at Fort Hood, Texas. Greca discussed upcoming exercises for Ironhorse and got an up-close look at some of the Lancer's equipment.



Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Greca, the command sergeant major of U.S. Army Forces Command, listens as Sgt. 1st Class Ramon Dias (right), a Sulfur Springs, Texas, native and Lancer tanker, explains the capabilities of the M1A2 Abrams tank during Greca's visit to the Lancer motor pool April 14 at Fort Hood, Texas.



Lancer Battalion remembers Siege of Sadr City

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. John Couffer
IBCT, 1CD PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – “Ten years ago, yesterday, all of our lives would significantly change forever.”

Fighting back tears, 1st Lt. Joshua York addressed an audience here April 5, recalling the scene on April 4, 2004, during the Siege of Sadr City, Iraq.

“Soldiers from Comanche Red Platoon found themselves immobilized in the middle of Sadr City engaged in a fight for their lives.”

York spoke as part of a memorial ceremony held by 2nd “Lancer” Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division to honor those Soldiers who gave their all during that battle and throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

York described how the task force responded immediately by mounting every vehicle available - from Bradley Fighting Vehicles to lightly-armored Humvees - in order to reach the 19 members of the pinned down platoon.

“I can tell you, as the 20th Soldier, I wanted nothing more than to get to my brothers in their most desperate time of need,” he said.

York said this weekend is all about reconnecting, honoring and remembering all the members who paid the ultimate sacrifice that day.

Lt. Col. Carter Price, the Lancer commander, spoke to those in attendance about how the battalion’s 73 campaign streamers, hanging on an ash-wood staff, symbolize something far greater than the campaigns written on them.

“Together, they represent the tens of thousands of Soldiers who served under them,” Price said. “Their weight is the physical manifestation of the (missions) this battalion has borne for this Army and its nation. Today, we honor our brothers who bore this burden most.”

Price said he sought to connect the history and lineage of the Lancer Battalion with the Soldiers currently in its ranks.

“Toward this end, we have sought to connect the past with the present, to bring the lineage to life,” Price said.

Sen. John Carter (right), a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Texas’ 31st District, prays during the benediction of a memorial ceremony April 5, at Fort Hood, Texas. The 2nd “Lancer” Battalion, 5th Cavalry Division, hosted a memorial ceremony in honor of those who fell April 4, 2004, during the Siege of Sadr City, Iraq, and Operation Iraqi Freedom Two, April 5. Gold Star Families, friends and veterans attended the ceremony to remember the Soldiers and their sacrifice.



Lancer Battalion remembers Siege of Sadr City

"Today, as you remember your fallen, your enduring commitment to your brothers, (you) forge that mission in great detail."

Later in the ceremony, York and Capt. (Ret.) Lucas Cioffi, the former executive officer of Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the Lancer Battalion in April 2004, read the names of 26 Soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

The 26 fallen are:

1st. Sgt. Michael L. Anderson
 Spc. Robert R. Arsiaga
 Spc. Ahmed A. Cason
 Sgt. Yihjyh "Eddie" Lang Chen
 Spc. Benjamin Allan Czechanski
 Sgt. Adam W. Estep
 Spc. Israel Garza
 Pfc. Leslie D. Jackson
 Cpl. Forest J. Jostes
 Spc. Robert Taylor Hendrickson
 Spc. Stephen D. Hiller
 Sgt. Joseph Kelley
 Spc. James "Gabe" Kentfield
 Sgt. Kevin Kerrigan
 Sgt. Jeff Legg
 Spc. Jacob D. Martir
 Pfc. Ryan M. McCauley
 Spc. Jose Rivera
 Sgt. Jerry Laine Rose
 Spc. Marco D. Ross
 Pfc. Sean M. Schneider
 Spc. Casey Sheehan
 Staff Sgt. Destiny Shumpert
 Sgt. Todd Singleton
 Sgt. Lee C. Wilson
 Sgt. Durward Benjamin Worster

The Siege

The Siege of Sadr City was a blockade established by U.S. and Iraqi forces in the Shia district of northern Baghdad to stifle the efforts of the Mahdi Army in their center of power.

Just a few weeks prior, the Lancer Battalion had arrived to relieve elements of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment of the responsibility of securing of Sadr City.

In defiance of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Mahdi Army started an uprising against the Coalition forces in early April 2004.

The Sacrifice

The morning of April 4, 2004, a day some would come to call "Black Sunday," started like every other day for Soldiers assigned to Task Force Lancer at Camp War Eagle in the northeastern area of Baghdad, also known as Sadr City.

While on mission, Comanche Red Platoon came under heavy fire from insurgent forces. The unit was ambushed and pinned down.

The platoon took immediate casualties from rocket propelled grenade and small arms, fired from several street-level and rooftop enemy positions.

The unit called for support and Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st BCT, and units from the 2nd ACR responded with a quick reaction force.

These elements fought the enemy, often at distances of 30 meters, to get to their brothers-in-arms. After a few hours, the relief force finally made it on-site. Yet after reaching their comrades, the Soldiers still fought for several more hours while exiting the city to their base.

Eight Soldiers were lost and approximately 50 were wounded during the battle.

"To all my Comanche Red Platoon brothers, there's not a day that goes by that I don't think about all of you," York said.



Gen. Mark Milley (center), commander of III Corps, took time to speak with veterans of Company B "Ridge Runners", 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, after a memorial ceremony April 5, at Fort Hood, Texas. The Ridge Runners, who served in Cambodia in 1975, attended the ceremony, hosted by the Lancers, paying respects to those lost in wars gone by.



Sen. John Carter (right), a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Texas' 31st District, renders honor at the playing of Taps, during a memorial service honoring fallen Soldiers, April 5, at Fort Hood, Texas. Gold Star families, Friends and veterans of Soldiers lost, attended the ceremony in remembrance of the sacrifices made during the Siege of Sadr City on April 4, 2004.



Training time: Ironhorse packs up, moves out again

By Spc. Paige Behringer

1BCT, 1CD PAO



(Above) Spc. Daniel Santos (right), a Los Angeles native and Hammer Troop infantryman, moves a bag down an assembly line of Soldiers loading gear onto trucks April 28 at Fort Hood, Texas, in preparation for a multinational training exercise. After the bags were loaded, Soldiers said one last goodbye to their loved ones before boarding buses.

(Left) Sgt. Tyrone Montgomery (right), a native of Oklahoma City and a Hammer Troop fire support specialist, hugs his daughter, Georgia, April 28 at Fort Hood, Texas, before boarding a bus on the first leg of his journey to participate in a multinational training exercise. Georgia tried to board the bus with Montgomery but found out she couldn't go along for the ride.

(Below) Soldiers assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team "Ironhorse," 1st Cavalry Division file onto a bus April 28 at Fort Hood, Texas, headed for a multinational training exercise. Soldiers from several Ironhorse battalions departed to conduct training with more than a dozen countries.



Engineers role redefined in changing Army

Story and Photos By
Spc. Paige Behringer
1BCT, 1CD PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – Army engineers are entering a new era by making their way into specialized battalions in an effort to better support brigade combat teams in the future.

The transition kicked off in October, transforming brigade special troops battalions across the Army into brigade engineer battalions.

The 91st “Saber” Brigade Engineer Battalion, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division recently completed its transition, making the unit a topic of discussion during Engineer Week, March 31 to April 3 here.

Capt. Anthony Daniels, commander of Company A of the 91st BEB, said the transition builds engineer assets in preparation for more conventional warfare.

Before the change, the 91st BEB was the 1st “Centurion” Brigade Special Troops Battalion and contained only one company of engineers. Now it is primarily composed of engineers.

Daniels said he thinks Ironhorse would be ill-equipped to face a conventional army with only one engineer company to support the brigade.

One Engineer Week participant Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Lawson, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Ironhorse’s engineer section, has seen the Army Corps of Engineers adapt and grow since he began his career as a combat engineer in 1990.

“With new equipment comes changes (and) ... a lot of learning,” Lawson said. “But most of all with a new piece of equipment it entails our survivability on the battlefield.”

One of the newest pieces of equipment to engineers is the Assault Breacher Vehicle. It allows obstacles to be pushed out of the way during breach missions, can withstand several mine blasts, and is equipped with explosives to clear lanes of travel.

The 91st BEB has been training on the ABV for months and put it into action during the brigade’s recent rotation to the National Training Center. The unit will be



Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Lawson (center), a native of Pontiac, Mich., and the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division’s engineer section, instructs combat engineers from Company B, 91st “Saber” Brigade Engineer Battalion, Ironhorse Brigade during a class on the M58 mine clearing line charge March 31 at Fort Hood, Texas. “With new equipment comes changes ... (and) a lot of learning,” Lawson said. “But most of all with a new piece of equipment, it entails our survivability on the battlefield.”

getting the new M104 Wolverine Heavy Assault Bridge to enhance current gap crossing capabilities.

Despite changes in roles, units, and equipment, combat engineers haven’t strayed from their three key tasks: mobility, countermobility and survivability.

By providing unmanned aerial vehicle surveillance, digging fighting positions, clearing routes, breaching obstacles, building protective burms, and providing communication support, the battalion supported the brigade’s maneuver units during NTC.

“At NTC, the BEB did excellent,” said Lawson, who worked closely with Saber at NTC. “Being in that new role just (starting) up, there were a lot of things that had to be worked out, which they got through.”

Aside from Ironhorse Rampage in Nov. during the 91st BEB’s transition, NTC was their first operation as a newly formed battalion, Daniels said.

He said he thinks the 91st BEB’s performance at NTC was good, but left

room for improvement.

“We did well (at NTC) for the challenges that we had,” Daniels said. “Everybody got a common understanding of how we should support the brigade. I think that was just the first step.”

Lawson said the role of engineers has been redefined since the onset of the war and sharing information on performance and equipment is beneficial to engineers across the board.

He said he thinks Engineer Week should happen more often to facilitate learning and training for engineers new to the Army.

Daniels said it is good for engineers and commanders to get together during Engineer Week to discuss the future of Army engineers.

“The engineer job is important,” Daniels said. “It all depends on what the threat is ... (engineers) being able to do everything is key.”

The 91st BEB’s contributions to Engineer Week included a static display of equipment, featuring an ABV, and a brief on the new unit’s capabilities.



Engineer battalion sports new colors for new leader

By Spc. Paige Behringer
1BCT, 1CD PAO

Lt. Col. James Wills, the executive officer of the 91st "Saber" Brigade Engineer Battalion, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, marches the Saber color guard during a reflagging and change of responsibility ceremony March 26, at Fort Hood, Texas. The 1st "Centurion" Brigade Special Troops Battalion was constituted as the 91st BEB and was officially reflagged. On the same day, Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel O'Brien, Saber's outgoing senior noncommissioned officer, handed the reins over to Command Sgt. Maj. Derek Cuvellier.



(Above) Command Sgt. Maj. Derek Cuvellier (left), a native of Exeter, N.H., and the incoming Saber senior noncommissioned officer, and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel O'Brien, a Dunedin, Fla., native and the outgoing Saber senior NCO, uncase the battalion colors during a reflagging and change of responsibility ceremony March 2, at Fort Hood, Texas.



(Left) Lt. Col. Michael Gaffney (right), the commander of the 91st "Saber" Brigade Engineer Battalion, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, hands the battalion colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Derek Cuvellier, the incoming Saber senior noncommissioned officer, during a reflagging and change of responsibility ceremony March 26 at Fort Hood, Texas. Cuvellier, a native of Exeter, N.H., assumed responsibility of the battalion from Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel O'Brien, the outgoing Saber senior NCO, after the unit was reflagged from the 1st "Centurion" Brigade Special Troops Battalion to the 91st BEB. The passing of the battalion colors represents the heritage and history of the unit and stands for the unity and loyalty of its Troopers.

Lancers go back to school for career day



Sgt. Rebecca Martinez (center), an Austin, Texas, native, and Lancer combat medic, demonstrates the use of medical equipment to Joe M. Pirtle Elementary School students during career day at the Lancer's adopted school May 2 in Belton, Texas.

Story and Photos By Spc. Paige Behringer
IBCT, 1CD PAO

BELTON, Texas – Six Soldiers assigned to the 2nd Battalion “Lancer,” 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team “Ironhorse,” 1st Cavalry Division took one Army value, selfless service, to a new level while conducting a mission in a special area of operations.

Two combat medics, a mechanic, a sniper, a tanker and a cavalry scout made the 25-minute journey from Fort Hood to Joe M. Pirtle Elementary School in Belton, Texas, to showcase their skills in support of their adopted school's career day.

Pirtle students rotated through classrooms learning about different careers. In two of those classrooms, Soldiers demonstrated their military occupational specialties and equipment.

Volunteers shot their hands in the air when combat medics, Sgt. Joshua Chebret and Sgt. Rebecca Martinez, both assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the Lancer Battalion, explained the basics of first aid. Pirtle students laughed as they learned about different bandages, splinting techniques and improvised tourniquets.

Staff Sgt. Nith Keo, a Lancer cavalry scout, showed students the gear Soldiers wear while deployed. Teachers selected students to try on body armor, an Army combat helmet and a ruck sack.

A native of St. Petersburg, Fla., Keo, who serves as the Lancer Adopt-a-School liaison, coordinated the visit. He said the program helps foster community relations between local schools and the Fort Hood community.

“For us to serve in the community is just as important when we’re deployed in another country,” Keo explained. “If we’re able to support another country we also need to make it just as important to be back here to serve our community, especially our school system.”

Once a month, Keo speaks with school counselors from Pirtle and the Lancer's second adopted school, Leon Heights Elementary School.



Staff Sgt. Nith Keo, a St. Petersburg, Fla., native and Lancer cavalry scout, explains the importance of the Army combat helmet while showcasing Army gear during career day at the Lancer's adopted school, Joe M. Pirtle Elementary School May 2 in Belton, Texas.

Whether it's an email, phone call, breakfast with students, lunch with administrators, or helping support an event like career day, Keo stays involved with the program.

Keo said he feels a sense of pride to be involved with the schools as a Soldier but also as a dad. A father of two boys, Keo said he's a kid at heart, so the AAS program is near and dear to his heart.

The Lancers have participated in fundraising events like the fall festival when Pirtle needs volunteers to help set up or supervise.

Christy Sharum, the school counselor at Pirtle, said the school loves having Soldiers come to visit or volunteer.

“We have a lot of children whose family members are in the military, and just having their presence here gives our children a (sense of) appreciation,” said Sharum, a native of Salado, Texas. “They’re very proud of our country and proud of our Soldiers.”

Sharum said her favorite part of the AAS program is when Soldiers are able to come interact with children whose parents or relatives are deployed.

“It’s like there’s a little hole left in the (kids),” Sharum said. “It satisfies them to be able to connect with another person that maybe does mommy or daddy’s kind of work. Maybe their mommy or daddy is gone, but they get to connect with this other Soldier that is here.”

The Army’s presence at career day helps the children see Soldiers in a different light, Sharum said.

“Soldiers are fun-loving, smart, kind people that do more than just go to combat for our country,” Sharum said. “I think it helps inform (the kids) about all the different kinds of jobs that you can do ... in the Army. It’s not just one set thing.”

Along with Soldiers from the Lancer Battalion, Pirtle hosted a surgical technician, accountant, engineer, attorney, pastor and other representatives from various professions during career day.

Keo said it’s great for the Fort Hood community to be involved with the kids’ education system.

“They know we serve,” Keo said. “They know we deploy. We’re also here to serve you in this way.”

Ironhorse prepares for Combined Resolve



Soldiers from Company B, 91st Brigade Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team conduct equipment inspections prior to signing for equipment from the European Activity Set. The EAS is a prepositioned set of equipment for U.S. forces who come to Germany for training.

Story and photos by Capt. John Farmer
1BCT, 1CD PAO

Grafenwoehr, GERMANY – Tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, mobile artillery vehicles and cargo trucks line the motor pool on a cold, cloudy day. Basic issue items such as shovels, wrenches, air hoses and technical manuals are laid out in an orderly manner ready for inspection.

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division are signing for equipment from the European Activity Set as they prepare to participate in Combined Resolve II, a multi-national training exercise, here.

The vehicles and associated equipment are part of the European Activity Set, a combined-arms battalion-sized set of equipment pre-positioned on the Grafenwoehr Training Area to outfit and support U.S. Army forces rotating to Europe for training and contingency missions in support of the U.S. European Command.

Sgt. Diedra Marien, the 1st BCT logistics noncommissioned officer in charge said that the brigade will be drawing more than 5,000 pieces of equipment as they prepare for their training.

"It [EAS] includes weapon systems, Bradleys, tanks, wheeled vehicles, signal equipment, support equipment, kitchens, tool kits, and maintenance equipment," said Marien, a native of Alexandria, La.

Many of the vehicles and their associated equipment are either brand new or have been completely overhauled.

"Charlie company is preparing to draw their 14 tanks. We laid out all the [Basic Issue Items] for them, so they're currently here and they will inventory and sign for all their BIL. Once that's done, they'll [conduct maintenance on] their tanks, go on a road test, they'll return, do their after operations maintenance and they'll check everything off, make sure everything is good to go,"

said Tony Rotti, a logistics management specialist with the 405th Army Field Support Brigade. "Once we get the thumbs-up from them, that they're ready to go, the company commander will sign the master hand receipt saying he's received all the equipment, that he's good to go and the guys are ready to go out and do their thing."

Considering the fact that Ironhorse Soldiers are the first ones to draw this equipment, Rotti said the draw is going quite well. He added that the AFSB only received these tanks less than 30 days ago, which has necessitated a faster than usual pace in order to get everything ready for the first draw.

"I only see a positive attitude from the Soldiers. They're like kids in a candy shop because this equipment is all brand new. They're the first ones to use it, which is a once in a lifetime thing for some of these Soldiers where they get on a piece of equipment that's basically never been operated before. They're fortunate to have this and we're happy to give it to them to be able to go and train," said Rotti.

Many of the Soldiers were very excited to see the shiny new equipment, their eyes alight with excitement and anticipation.

"So far, so good. Everything looks real nice. All the equipment looks like it's in good order, all brand new. The tanks look like they're in good shape. No real mechanical issues that we've seen so far. It's going to be nice having nice, new equipment," said Staff Sgt. Keith During, a tank commander with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

During, a native of Augusta, Maine, expressed confidence in his soldiers' training, which will enable them to reap maximum benefit from this experience.

"We've been training up for this for the last year and a half, two gunneries, [brigade situation training exercises], and a [National Training Center] rotation. Our guys are ready to come in here and get to training," said During.

Ironhorse prepares for Combined Resolve



(Above) Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment conduct equipment inspections prior to signing for equipment from the European Activity Set.



(Right) Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team conduct equipment inspections prior to signing for equipment from the European Activity Set.

Cav unit builds camaraderie among Ironhorse teens

By Sgt. Bailey Kramer
IBCT, 1CD PAO



(Above) The members of the winning team of the Ironhorse teen spur ride proudly displays their certificates after completing the friendly competition March 29 at Fort Hood, Texas. The troopers completed four events: archery, medical lanes, engagement skills trainer and an obstacle course.

(Right) Nathaniel Miseli, son of Lt. Col. Jay Miseli, commander of the 1st Squadron, 7th "Garryowen" Cavalry Regiment, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, inspects his weapon at the engagement skills trainer during the Ironhorse Teen Spur Ride March 29 at Fort Hood, Texas. "It was a lot of fun and a good experience," Nathaniel said. "I am glad I got to do it, because I might not be able to do it again. I would have been upset if I had not done it."



(Left) Taylor Swift, daughter of Lt. Col. Bradley Swift, commander of the 115th "Muleskinner" Brigade Support Battalion, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, climbs a ladder during the obstacle course of the Ironhorse Teen Spur Ride on Fort Hood, Texas, March 29.



(Right) Hope Jeffers, daughter of Maj. Nicholas Jeffers, the Ironhorse intelligence officer jumps from post to post during the obstacle portion of the Ironhorse Teen Spur Ride. "I thought the obstacle course was interesting," Hope said. "It was pretty challenging, but helped me face my fears and, I did it."



Pass or fail, EFMB candidates endure tough training

By Spc. Paige Behringer
1BCT, 1CD PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – More than 200 Fort Hood Soldiers, around two-dozen from the 1st Brigade Combat Team “Ironhorse,” 1st Cavalry Division spent 10 days working through their own limitations to find out what it takes to become an expert in their field.

From May 10 through 20, Soldiers in medical professions endured pouring rain, mud, a challenging land navigation course, three Combat Testing Lanes, a written test and a 12-mile ruck march during training and testing for the Expert Field Medical Badge.

Regardless of the outcome, these candidates experienced the training and witnessed what it takes to earn the EFMB, a badge signifying physical fitness, mental toughness and proficiency in medical and Soldier skills.

For many participants, including Sgt. Cindy Rojas, a combat medic, and Spc. Lawrence Echon, a dental specialist, both assigned to the 91st Brigade Engineer Battalion “Saber” of the Ironhorse Brigade, this isn’t their first trip through the EFMB lanes.

Rojas, a Salinas, California, native, excelled during her two previous attempts, scoring high in each lane, but tragedy struck during the 12-mile ruck march on her first EFMB.

“(On) mile eight, I started running,” Rojas said. “I was still on time, (but I) tripped and fell on my tibia. (I) broke my tibia and tore a calf muscle.”

It took Rojas a year to get back into shape after her injury, but she went after the EFMB once again. After making it through the lanes her second time, she missed the ruck march cutoff time by only a few seconds.

Although disappointed, Rojas trained even harder for the ruck march this time, determined not to let the near miss stop her from earning the badge she strived for since she trained to be a medic at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Aside from not making it in the past, Rojas said she believes the training is still valuable. She said there are things she would not have had the opportunity to learn without participating in EFMB.

Echon, who is shooting for the badge for his fourth time, agreed.

“It’s good training, great training,” said Echon, a native of Yigo, Guam. “You learn a lot of new stuff, (and) you get to know a lot of people.”

Echon said he feels an advantage this time



Sgt. Paulus Smallwood, a Lexington Park, Maryland, native and Muleskinner radiology specialist, gestures to a barbed-wire obstacle while describing tasks in a Combat Trauma Lane during training for the Expert Field Medical Badge May 14 at Fort Hood, Texas.



Spc. Joseph Giardina, a Phoenix native and Garryowen combat medic, demonstrates strapping a casualty into a Skedco stretcher during training for the Expert Field Medical Badge May 14 at Fort Hood, Texas.



Sgt. Cindy Rojas, a Salinas, California, native and combat medic assigned to the 91st Brigade Engineer Battalion “Saber,” 1st Brigade Combat Team “Ironhorse,” 1st Cavalry Division, demonstrates a high-crawl during training for the Expert Field Medical Badge May 14 at Fort Hood, Texas.

Pass or fail, EFMB candidates endure tough training

around having been through the training before. He had a hard time with day and night land navigation and the written test in previous attempts.

"You have to be physically fit, because everything here is a smoker," Echon said. "You have to know what to do when you're tired."

Basic Soldier skills like land navigation, weapons knowledge, movement and communication account for a large portion of the EFMB qualification, so Echon's unit used Sergeant's Time Training to prepare months in advance.

"I think if you study hard and listen to whatever they teach you, then you will pass," Echon said.

With high hopes, Echon said it's always possible for everybody to succeed. He said he has wanted to wear the badge ever since he saw a drill sergeant wearing it in initial entry training.

Rojas said her favorite part of the EFMB is completing the lanes, because she knows she tried her best.

"It's great training, and it's always good to get out and see people from different groups. Different ranks all come together, try and teach each other to get something," Rojas said.



Spc. Joseph Giardina, a Phoenix native and Garryowen combat medic, pulls a simulated casualty using a Skedco stretcher during training for the Expert Field Medical Badge May 14 at Fort Hood, Texas.

Division Run

By Spc. Paige Behringer
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Soldiers from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division ran alongside thousands of First Team Soldiers during the Division Run, April 30, at Fort Hood, Texas. Sounds of cadence and motivation filled the air as Battalion Avenue turned black and grey from the physical training uniforms of Soldiers across the division.

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