

4th BCT conducts final preparations, packs for deployment to Iraq

PFC. APRIL FOSTER

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

Since their September return from the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, has double-timed to pack, train and move out for their deployment to Iraq, which is scheduled for late October.



Sgt. Andrea Myers, a combat medic of 4th Special Troops Bn., assists in the Soldier Readiness Process for deploying Soldiers.

“Preparation for deployment involves a lot of aspects of military readiness,” said Lt. Col. Michael Boden, deputy brigade commander. “We have completed over a month-long training exercise at the National Training Center, August through September. Getting equipment ready, conducting NTC recovery operations, cleaning and servicing the equipment and getting it all on rail cars for the boat and into transportation containers, has been keeping troops busy,” said Boden.

“Once we returned [from NTC], there were a lot of other Soldier-readiness tasks, like making sure we have all the required medical actions taken, the right briefings conducted and our Soldiers have all of their personal affairs in order,” Boden added.

To help with getting their personal affairs in order, troops visited the Soldier Readiness Processing Center to update shot records, check legal and financial documents and conduct medical assessments.

The brigade also has its own human resources representatives who are responsible for ensuring the right person is in the right job with the correct security clearance needed to get their job done.

“We’re making sure we keep an accurate picture [of who can deploy],” said Billy R. Michael, brigade human



PHOTOS BY SGT. PAULA TAYLOR

Soldiers of the 4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division load equipment and prepare for their deployment to Iraq.

resources technician. “We have to identify Soldiers who are non-deployable for various reasons.”

Another aspect of readiness is the BCT’s deployment support team. They are working alongside Soldiers to ensure all of the necessary equipment makes it to its destination in a timely manner so the unit can remain mission-ready downrange.

“To do that, the team started by preparing their deployment equipment list, then began looking at their equipment readiness and validating the [shipping] containers for the port,” said Albert Borjas, brigade lead deployment support specialist. “We will spend several weeks helping the brigade receive their shipments when they arrive at port in Kuwait.”

Packing their offices and all of their

equipment has been a major undertaking for Soldiers during the past few weeks.

“It’s strange having most of the office packed,” said Pfc. Rose Bazor, signal support system specialist. “It took a lot of hard work. I was glad when we got everything packed and our container [approved] for shipping.”

“Packing was a lot of hard work, but it was fun at the same time,” said Pfc. Sandy Ackerman, signal support system specialist. “It’s exciting to be ready for the deployment we’ve been training for.”

“The troops are attacking the deployment process in a positive fashion,” said Boden. “The Soldiers in this brigade are awesome. It’s only been possible because of the tremendous efforts of the Soldiers.”



Bliss troops become U.S. citizens

‘Long Knife’ Soldiers earn citizenship before deployment

SGT. 1ST CLASS BRIAN SIPP

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

Forty Soldiers from Fort Bliss raised their right hands and completed their journey toward citizenship in a ceremony held Thursday at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Biggs Army Airfield.

Transforming the academy auditorium into a federal district court, Judge Philip R. Martinez, U.S. District Judge, administered the Oath of Allegiance to the assembled troops who represented 22 different countries ranging from Ghana to Uzbekistan.

“Today, it gives me great pleasure not to have to preside over a civil case, or to have to sentence someone to jail, but instead to preside over this ceremony and this happy occasion for all of you,” Martinez said. “We ask that you don’t forget your heritage or origins, but rather you bring your traditions and bring your culture so that it will continue to enrich us [as a nation].”

“This is a country that I’ve always wanted to be a part of,” said Pfc. Maria Ortiz, a cook with the Special Troops Battalion of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division and native of Trinidad and Tobago. “There is just something inside my heart; I feel so proud. There is so much freedom here. Everybody looks to America to lead; and to be able to serve in the military and defend this country is really great,” added Ortiz.

Honored as the guest speaker in the ceremony, U.S. Congressman Silvestre Reyes, D-Texas, spoke to the unique circumstances under which Soldiers, already serving in the military and defending the country, are afforded citizenship. Already known as an authority on immigration issues and a champion of Soldiers’ rights in the House of Representatives,

Reyes pledged his continued support to the troops. “You have not just a friend [in Congress], but a champion and an advocate.”

Of the 40 troops who were administered the Oath of Allegiance, 27 of them are members of the 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div., and are scheduled to deploy to Iraq in the next few weeks.

Joining after 9/11, and calling New York City

“home,” Pfc. Artom Neekonov, a combat engineer with the Special Troops Battalion, 4th BCT and native of Uzbekistan, echoed the feelings in the room. “I have so much pride in this country.”

“If I had one thing to say to the American people, it would be that God has truly blessed you and this country,” concluded Ortiz.



PHOTOS BY SGT. PAULA TAYLOR

Pfc. Catherine Joaquin, B Co., 27th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, takes the Oath of Allegiance with 39 other Fort Bliss Soldiers Thursday at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Biggs Army Airfield. Joaquin’s unit will be deploying to Iraq in the following weeks.