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3 post brigades to deploy to Iraq Commanders not surprised by new orders

By CHANTAL ESCOTO
The Leaf-Chronicle

Three brigades of the 101st Airborne Division received orders for Iraq on Tuesday with the rest of the division expected to be told soon they'll deploy to Afghanistan.

The Pentagon orders for 1st, 2nd and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams said the soldiers will "serve up to 15 months" in theater starting as early as August.



exercises at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., in July. Third brigade is currently training at JRTC with elements of the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade and 1st brigade scheduled to go within the next month. The mock urban area set up at JRTC is vital to soldiers' training because it simulates a typical village found in Iraq or Afghanistan.

"It will certainly be another stepping stone on our way to Iraq," Garcia said.

The 101st units are among 10 brigade combat teams to begin deploying to Iraq as part of the next rotation of forces, Army officials confirmed Tuesday.

The confirmation followed a Defense Department announcement made Tuesday morning affecting about 35,000 soldiers.

Maj. Frank Garcia, of the 2nd BCT, said the orders were not big news for his unit because it's what they've been training for.

"Is it a real surprise? Probably not," Garcia said. "It's business as usual. Our brigade is used to deploying. It's what we do."

The 502nd "Strike" brigade is slated to undergo combat

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Chantal Esc

Sgt. 1st Class explains how casualties in Fort Campbe deployment.

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This is the first big announcement of brigade combat team rotations since Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced last month that active Army units in the Central Command area of responsibility will serve no more than 15 months in theater and spend no less than 12 months at home.

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Although Dianne Mueller's husband is not among those 101st soldiers scheduled to deploy to Iraq, she's preparing for him to leave for Afghanistan within the next year with the 101st CAB.

"What can you do about it? Why worry about something you (can't control)," said Mueller, who passes the time when her husband is gone by caring for their four children and running the Meandering Stitch quilt shop on Franklin Street. "I just want to enjoy the time I have with him today. You just have to live day by day."

She and her husband, Warrant Officer 2 Steve Mueller — an Air Evacuation Black Hawk helicopter pilot — said they support President Bush and she believes Bush is doing the right thing by fighting the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. "It has to be done," she said.

But Mueller said she is a little concerned with this deployment because of the time away.

"Fifteen months is the longest we will have been apart," she said.

The other units called up for this rotation released by DoD includes:

- 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, the longest actively serving Cavalry Regiment in the Army and the service's newest Stryker Brigade, will deploy in August from Vilseck, Germany.
- 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was the first brigade formed under the Army's modularity transformation initiative in 2004. The unit deployed to Iraq in January 2005, and will deploy again in September from Fort Stewart, Ga.
- 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment from Fort Hood, Texas, will deploy in early November. The unit relocated to Fort Hood from Fort Carson, Colo., in July 2006 after its second tour in Iraq.
- 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, of Baumholder, Germany, will deploy in late November.
- 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, will deploy in late November from Fort Polk, La. This brigade was formed in January 2005.
- 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, will deploy in December.
- 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, will deploy at the end of December from Fort Hood.

The 15-month deployment policy will remain in place until the Army can revert to 12 months in theater and 12 months at home, with the ultimate goal of 12 months deployed and 24 months at home. National Guard and Reserve soldiers are not affected by the policy and will be mobilized for no more than

12 months at a time. No time frame has been announced for a return to 12-month tours for active Army soldiers.

Right now, there are 17 BCTs in Iraq and two in Afghanistan; by June there will be 18 BCTs in Iraq, five of them sent to theater as part of the "surge."

Gannett News Service contributed to this report. Chantal Escoto covers the military and can be reached by telephone at 245-0742 or by e-mail at chantalescoto@theleafchronicle.com.

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armyman89, and bamamama, my best wishes are for the soldiers and a number of my friends that are soon to deploy.

My comments were only tongue-in-cheek comments that I heard from an old warrior years ago in Vietnam. They were addressing the real issue at the time. Since the bad guys, in the day they were farmers and in the dark of night they were Mr. Charles, the VC and attacking us, we had a hard time identifying them in the daylight. The second comment originates from the same fellow, meaning if the bad guy insist on shooting at you, then you do the duty at hand.

Take care guys.

Posted by: **Jacob** on Wed May 09, 2007 11:15 pm

Take care fellas.... I'll keep the beer cold and a candle lit for ya 🍷

Posted by: **clks ant** on Wed May 09, 2007 3:10 pm

Soldiers of the 101st, thank you for chosing and continuing to be part of something vitally important. The truth is what you are fighting and standing for will be respected, valued and honored long after the critical self serving comments are forgotten.

You have the support and prayers of more than you will ever know. God bless and protect you.

Posted by: **INTJ** on Wed May 09, 2007 12:32 pm

I agree w/armyman on Jacobs attitude. I hope he is not a soldier as well. Being a retired military wife and military brat before that I have never heard my dad or spouse say anything like that. They are both Viet Nam Vets . That is really said that Jacob feels that way. I won't go into a sermon for him but most of you know what I am feeling right now. My prayers are with the soldiers and the love ones they have to leave behind that al will be okay and the time apart will go fast for them all. GOD BLESS THEM ALL AND

KEEP THEM SAFE!!!!

Posted by: **bamamama** on Wed May 09, 2007 9:54 am

God Bless our Soldiers!!!! I will pray for your safe return!!!

Posted by: **GOUSA** on Wed May 09, 2007 9:46 am

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