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1st ID commmander thanks soldiers, civilians, families

We should all be very proud of our soldiers



The recent months have been extremely busy for the 1st Infantry Division and the V Corps separate brigades stationed within the division's footprint. We all should be very proud of what soldiers, family members, and civilians have accomplished in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, Israel, and Turkey; peace operations in Kosovo; and ongoing training and force protection missions in the Central Region.

As the division transitions back to Germany following recent operations in Turkey, allow me to address the mission in Turkey to ensure that we all understand the enormity of our efforts and the impact we collectively had on the war on terrorism. Thank you all for your contributions and support—this was truly a team effort. I could not be prouder of our soldiers, families, rear detachments, and community leadership.

As you may recall, the division was alerted back in November to be prepared to deploy to Turkey to set the conditions to receive and move the 4th Infantry Division across Turkey and into Northern Iraq. We reconfigured the headquarters to take command of all Army Forces in Turkey (ARFOR-T) and prepared soldiers for the deployment. ARFOR-T units from the 1st Infantry Division included elements of HHC/IID; 1-4 Cavalry; 1-26 Infantry; 1-6 Field Artillery; 2-1 Aviation; the Engineer Brigade, to include HHC and 9th Engineers; DISCOM, to include HHC, 701st Main Support Battalion, and the 601st Aviation Support Battalion; 4-3 Air Defense Battalion; 101st Military Intelligence Battalion; 121st Signal Battalion, and the 12th Chemical Company. From outside the division, the ARFOR-T task organization included elements of the 21st Theater Support Command (to include numerous CONUS based logistics units), 18th Engineer Brigade (to include a company of SEABEEs), 7th Signal Brigade, 66th Military Intelligence Brigade, 67th Combat Support Hospital, 106th Finance Battalion, and the 38th Personnel Services Battalion. Before Christmas, ARFOR-T units assembled soldiers and equipment, conducted planning, and participated in two command post rehearsals. Just after Christmas, we deployed leaders to participate in the process to develop a comprehensive memorandum of understanding between the governments of Turkey and the United States, and to begin the leasing process

to acquire land and facilities to support seaport, airport, and convoy operations across a five hundred mile highway in southeast Turkey, all the way to the border with Iraq. In mid-February, we deployed in an expeditionary fashion to establish initial entry capability with 2,200 ARFOR-T site preparation soldiers. This included living conditions in leased warehouses that were initially rudimentary at best. As with any expeditionary operation, conditions improved from day to day. We opened three seaports of debarkation, two airports of debarkation, three command posts as far east as Mardin, and numerous convoy support centers along the highway connecting the Port of Iskenderun east to Mardin. We were prepared to construct facilities to support a division tactical assembly area just north of the Iraqi border, to include an ammunition upload point to support up to 2,000 containers of ammunition and a "fuel bag farm" for two million gallons of diesel. We contracted to improve the rail line in southeast Turkey and ran a test train with ARFOR-T equipment. We downloaded six ships of ARFOR-T equipment at the Port of Iskenderun and moved up to 1,200 vehicles, trailers, and containers all the way to Mardin, a distance of up to five hundred miles. We rehearsed Heavy Equipment Transport (HET) movement with HETs from the 701st Main Support Battalion. We prepared to receive the 4th Infantry Division with enormous amounts of fuel, water, and food. Our plan called for robust maintenance and recovery capabilities along the entire distance of the approach march. Our Forward Surgical Team from across USAREUR and E/701st Main Support Battalion, the division's medical company, set up operations at every ARFOR-T position with a concentration at Mardin to support the 4th Infantry Division approach march and expected combat in Northern Iraq. From the very beginning, we set and maintained very rigorous force protection standards. We did all of this despite the challenges of host nation bureaucracy with only 2,200 site preparation troops.

The balance of the 14,000 ARFOR-T and 35,000 4th Infantry Division troops remained in Germany and the United States awaiting the final agreement of the government of Turkey to allow the 4th Infantry Division into Turkey. As you well know, the Turkish Parliament eventually voted to deny US ground forces access to Turkey and ARFOR-T received a change of mission. In early April, ARFOR-T began a deliberate redeployment to collapse the line of communication we had built. At this writing, equipment is loading five Cape-series vessels at the Port of Iskenderun and soldiers are



Photos courtesy of 1st ID

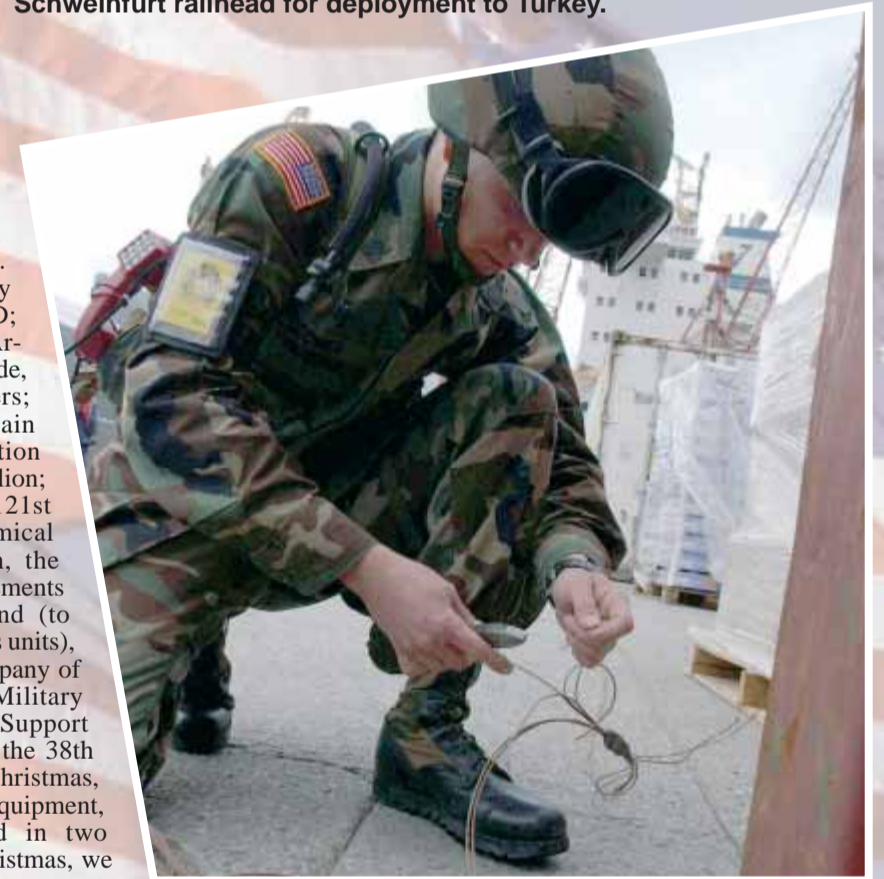
1st Battalion, 26th Infantry soldiers prepare equipment at the Schweinfurt railhead for deployment to Turkey.



A Heavy Equipment Transport (HET) from the 701st Main Support Battalion is downloaded at the Port of Iskenderun. 1st Infantry Division soldiers and equipment deployed to set the conditions to receive and move the 4th Infantry Division across Turkey and into Northern Iraq.



Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division make force protection improvements at the ARFOR-T Headquarters in Mardin, Turkey.



An ARFOR-T soldier establishes communications at the Port of Iskenderun.



1st Infantry Division vehicles lined up in the motor pool outside the ARFOR-T Headquarters in Mardin, Turkey.



ARFOR-T soldiers coordinate with Turkish Jandarma at the back gate of the headquarters in Mardin, Turkey.



The 1st Infantry Division stakes claim to the ground at Mardin, Turkey, as headquarters for ARFOR-T. ARFOR-T set the conditions to receive and move the 4th Infantry Division across Turkey and into Northern Iraq.

redeploying from Incirlik Airbase. The mission is nearing completion.

When all is said and done, the soldiers of ARFOR-T set the conditions to receive and onward move the 4th Infantry Division. We exceeded all expectations and were fully prepared to get the job done. Our presence in southeast Turkey fixed up to thirteen Iraqi divisions in Northern Iraq, reducing enemy strength for the US V Corps' fight in and around Baghdad. The conditions were difficult and the risks to terrorism and accidents were enormous. I could not be more proud of the entire ARFOR-T organization, to include our rear detachments, family readiness liaisons, and family readiness group

leaders. Our prayers remain with the V Corps soldiers in harm's way in Iraq (to include Task Force 1-63 and the 201st Forward Support Battalion) and the division's Task Force Falcon in Kosovo. Well done to all as the division reintegrates and continues to train for the next contingency.

John R.S. Batiste

JOHN R.S. BATISTE
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding



ARFOR-T staff busy working in the command pit at the headquarters in Mardin, Turkey.



Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division on guard outside the ARFOR-T Headquarters in Mardin, Turkey.

