

MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD

Media Release

HQ-MND Baghdad

Camp Liberty

Baghdad, Iraq

APO AE 09344

Commercial: (703) 621-0781

IRAQNA 011-964-770-252-3225

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE No. 20090212-03

February 12, 2009

MND-B cavalry squadrons hand off battle space

By Spc. Dustin Roberts

2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

BAGHDAD – After 14 months of partnership with Iraqi Security Forces in northwest Baghdad, a U.S. cavalry squadron is set to return home to Fort Carson, Colo.

The 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment “Blackjack”, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division–Baghdad, handed the security mission of northwest Baghdad to the 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. “Longknife”, 2nd HBCT in a transfer of authority ceremony on Camp Liberty, Iraq Feb. 10.

The “Longknife” squadron, partnered with Iraqi Security Forces securing the population of the Ghazaliyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad, has had their boots on the ground for about 120 days.

The new battle space will make the squadron’s area of operations significantly larger, said Lt. Col. John Richardson, who hails from Tallahassee, Fla., commander, 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt.

“We’re covering the same battle space that we’ve had since we’ve been here, plus [4th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.’s],” he said. “We are very confident in our ability to step into this role.”

Richardson complimented the leadership of his fellow cavalry squadron and the progress the Troopers made with the ISF in Mansour.

“[They] left us some big shoes to fill because they have done great things in northwest Baghdad, he said. “They were one of the first to expand into an area that was bigger than the traditional squadron area of operations. They really set the standard on how to fight the fight with the Iraqis in the lead and a smaller [U.S.] presence, so we are going to follow in their footsteps.”

In the non-lethal effort, “Blackjack” Troopers worked with contractors to refurbish numerous schools, establish essential services quarters and named public works sub stations, which provide citizens with clean water and trash and sewage removal.

“Blackjack” also erected recreation establishments, such as the Ameriyah Swimming Pool and the Adl Sports Center.

“We made a lot of progress in a whole lot of areas and one of those areas was security,” said Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby, a native of Clever, Mo., commander, 4th Squad. 10th Cav. Regt. “We just wanted to continue doing the counterinsurgency fights and rebuilding, but most of all, providing security for the population.”

Willoughby added that part of their main focus was helping the Government of Iraq and the ISF become stronger and more established.

“I think we have made some great strides,” he said. “We’ve helped give the people the ability to stand up a little bit more, the ISF to stand a little taller, a little straighter and more of a security force than they were when we first got here.”

Willoughby said his Troopers deserve a well-earned rest upon redeployment and he is positive that “Longknife” squadron will continue to move forward.

“It’s rewarding to know that we’ve moved the chains a little bit farther down the field,” he said. “I know [5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt.] is a good unit and I’ll know they’ll undoubtedly continue the success that we’ve had.”

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Flag detail.

BAGHDAD – Members of a flag detail with the 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment “Blackjack”, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad stand at the position of attention during their Transfer of Authority Ceremony with the 5th Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt. “Longknife”, 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B. The hand-off will give the Longknife Squadron more battle space to cover.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B)



Speech.

BAGHDAD – Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby (right), a native of Clever, Mo., commander, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment “Blackjack”, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, addresses Troopers at their Transfer of Authority Ceremony with the 5th Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt. “Longknife”, 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B. “I think we have made some great strides,” said Willoughby. “I can’t say enough about the Troopers of the squadron and their hard work.”

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B)



Salute.

BAGHDAD – Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby (right), a native of Clever, Mo., commander, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment “Blackjack”, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad and Command Sgt. Maj. Miles Wilson (left), of Colorado Springs, Colo., senior enlisted leader in the “Blackjack” squadron, salute the squadron’s colors during the Transfer of Authority Ceremony with the 5th Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt. “Longknife”, 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B. The ceremony signified the end of the “Blackjack” Trooper’s 14-month tour in northwest Baghdad.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B)



Case.

BAGHDAD – Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby (right), a native of Clever, Mo., commander, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad and Command Sgt. Maj. Miles Wilson (left), of Colorado Springs, Colo., senior enlisted leader in the “Blackjack” squadron case the squadron’s colors during the Transfer of Authority Ceremony with the 5th Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B. The “Blackjack” squadron returns to Fort Carson, Colo. after serving 14 months in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B)