



42nd Infantry Division

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Rainbow Division Task Force Grows

FORT DRUM, NEW YORK – The 42nd Infantry Division Task Force continues to expand. Over the past 30 days, citizen-soldiers of the Army's famous "Rainbow Division" completed their initial mobilization requirements and began organizing their combat formations for Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

In the past month, the remaining units of the divisional base mobilized and deployed to their training sites to join more than 3,000 division Soldiers mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the nation's Global War on Terror.

Arriving at the Fort Drum mobilization site this month were the 272nd Chemical Company, the 42nd Military Police Company, the 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment and members of the 42nd Infantry Division Band. The mobilization of the Rainbow band marks the first time in more than 50 years that an Army National Guard band has been called to wartime service.

Assisted by the training support members of the Army's 78th Division and the First United States Army, Rainbow Soldiers have moved forward towards their validation and deployment. All divisional troops will undergo evaluation by their Army unit trainers in a number of individual Soldier combat skills as well as team or collective training tasks.

The division is conducting deployment training at mobilization sites at Fort Drum, NY, Fort Dix, NJ, Fort Hood and Fort Bliss, TX and Camp Shelby, MS.

Expanding the Rainbow Team.

In early July, the Department of Defense announced the organization of the Rainbow Division Task Force for Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

Division Soldiers will provide the command and control, logistics and operational base for the Idaho Army National Guard's 116th Brigade Combat Team, the Tennessee Army National Guard's 278th Regimental Combat Team and the Army's 1st and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams from the Fort Stewart, Georgia-based 3rd Infantry Division. The division task force is part of the Army's third rotation for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

With other elements from the Army and Army Reserve preparing to join the division task force later this year, the Rainbow Division organization will span more than twenty states. The entire force will include nearly 18,000 Soldiers from across the country.

"While our task force may not quite reach the same size and composition as the original Rainbow formation back in World War I, it is a reflection of how the Army can build the right

force at the right time for the right job,” said Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto, the 42nd Infantry Division Commander.

The 42nd Infantry Division includes National Guard members from New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Delaware, Vermont, Rhode Island and Florida. Other Army Soldiers joining the task force hail from Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

Additionally, Soldiers from the Rainbow Division’s 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment mobilized as a supplement to the Louisiana National Guard’s 256th Separate Brigade. The battalion, known as the “Fighting 69th,” is training at Fort Hood, Texas and will be part of the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division task force and deploy to Iraq later this year.

Preparing the Rainbow Team.

Team-building exercises conducted throughout this summer focus on the collective combat skills and command post exercises to provide Soldiers more challenging and complex training events. The division’s training plan culminates with a mission readiness exercise in the fall.

Soldier training for the summer includes such items as identification and response to improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, convoy live-fire exercises, combat marksmanship or reflexive fire ranges, defensive fire exercises, communications training and other tactical skills necessary for operations with the Multinational Corps – Iraq.

Commanders and their staffs will undergo command post exercises. These are designed to challenge leaders’ abilities to gather information, plan and execute mission orders, and stress the command and control systems of the units.

Additionally, leaders and staff members of the division task force continue to conduct reconnaissance visits to Iraq and Kuwait. They will return with information that will better prepare our Soldiers for their arrival and forward deployment into Iraq later this year.

An Historic Mobilization, an Historic Mission.

Operation Iraqi Freedom marks the third time in the division’s history that Soldiers of the Rainbow have mobilized for war. The 42nd Infantry Division served with distinction in both World Wars and has been an instrumental part of the Army’s strategic reserve throughout the Cold War.

In his 1984 inaugural address to the nation, former President Ronald Reagan commented on the role of the Rainbow Soldier in preserving and defending liberty.

“Under a marker in Arlington National Cemetery,” President Reagan said, “lies a young man, Martin Treptow, a citizen-soldier who left his job in a small-town in 1917 to go to France with the Rainbow Division. There, on the Western front, he was killed trying to carry a message between battalions under heavy fire. We’re told that on his body was found a diary. On the flyleaf under the heading, “My Pledge,” he had written these words:

“America must win this war. Therefore, I will work; I will save; I will sacrifice; I will endure; I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone.”

Maj. Gen. Taluto expressed this devotion of 42nd Infantry Division Soldiers July 17th to the annual reunion of the Rainbow Division Veterans’ Memorial Foundation. Addressing the gathered veterans and their descendants at the Memphis, Tenn. reunion by telephone, Taluto compared the training of the Rainbow Division for war in 1944 with Soldiers today in 2004.

“The commitment of our Rainbow Soldiers is as great today in our nation’s Global War on Terrorism as it was some 60 years ago,” Taluto told the assembled Rainbow WWII veterans.

The Road Ahead.

Following the completion of unit training this fall, the Rainbow Division Task Force will begin deployment preparations across the country. Units will deploy to the Central Command area of operations in sequence. This phased deployment allows Soldiers to conduct their training, reception of equipment and onward movement into Iraq for a relief in place with Army forces currently deployed.

Rainbow Division base units mobilizing for Operation Iraqi Freedom consist of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters, the Aviation and Engineer Brigade Headquarters, the Division Artillery Headquarters, the Division Support Command Headquarters, the 1st Battalion, 150th General Aviation Support Battalion, the 50th Main Support Battalion, the 642nd Division Aviation Support Battalion, the 250th Signal Battalion, the 642nd Military Intelligence Battalion, the 42nd Military Police Company, the 272nd Chemical Company, 42nd Division Band, Battery E (Target Acquisition), 101st Field Artillery, the 42nd Rear Operations Cell and the 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment.

RAINBOW...NEVER FORGET!