



42nd Infantry Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 29, 2004

Rainbow Division Readies for Iraq

FORT DRUM, NEW YORK – Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division are on the move. Over the past 30 days, the citizen-soldiers of the Army's famous "Rainbow Division" departed home station armories across the United States for movement and in-processing at their Fort Drum, NY, Fort Dix, NJ, Fort Hood and Fort Bliss, TX and Camp Shelby, MS mobilization sites.

In the past month, more than 3,000 division Soldiers mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the nation's Global War on Terror.

Assisted by the training support members of the Army's 78th Division, Rainbow Soldiers began their individual training preparations as a first step towards 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.

"We'll get this mission done as a team," said Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto, the 42nd Infantry Division Commander, "it's just that simple."

The division expects to complete its training tasks later this year and deploy to Iraq at the end of 2004 and early 2005.

Manning the Rainbow Team.

The mobilization of the Rainbow Division provides a foundation on which the Army can build a combat task force for operations in Iraq. It is a reflection of the Army's transformation towards division-level command and control "units of employment" and combat brigade "units of action" in which different organizations can be assembled to form a combat force.

Division Soldiers will provide the command and control, logistics and operational base for maneuver brigades to succeed in their mission to establish a safe and secure environment in Iraq. While the maneuver brigades have yet to be announced by the Department of the Army, they may reflect any combination of Army, Army National Guard, or multinational forces.

The entire process is part of the Army's design for employing smaller, modular units for mobilization and deployment. The concept provides "plug and play," capabilities-based forces, capable of seamlessly integrating with other Army formations in joint and combined operations.

"This division headquarters has some significant experience in standing up an operational task force," said the division Chief of Staff, Col. Mark Heffner. "Hundreds of our Rainbow Soldiers deployed for state active duty in New York City following the terror attacks of September 11th, 2001. Command of the Army National Guard, Air National Guard and Naval

Militia forces for the State of New York was in the hands of the 42nd Division Headquarters," he said.

The 42nd Infantry Task Force represents National Guard members from more than twelve states. Rainbow Division Soldiers mobilized from their home states of New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Delaware, Vermont, Rhode Island and Florida.

The Rainbow Team welcomes troops from Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri and Pennsylvania. These National Guard units arrived to fill in some specialty combat service support functions.

Rainbow Division 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. Additionally, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment mobilized as a supplement to the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Separate Brigade.

Additionally, the division expects to receive a variety of Active Army and Army Reserve combat, combat support and combat service support elements to complete the division base organization. Those forces will conduct their own predeployment training and join the task force overseas.

Equipping the Rainbow Team.

One of the most significant differences for Soldiers now serving on active duty is the issue of new individual and organization equipment. Members of the 42nd Infantry Division began to receive new equipment items such as Interceptor Body Armor and the Modular Sleeping Bag System.

Under the Army's Rapid Fielding Initiative, other items of issue for Soldiers will include the Advanced Combat Helmet and the Improved Hot Weather Desert Boot. These items will be provided to Soldiers as they receive their Desert Combat Uniforms, or DCUs. The Army budgeted more than \$400 Million this fiscal year towards equipping Soldiers for missions overseas.

More importantly, the unit supply system is full of replacement or new issue items. Weapons systems such as the M240 Machine Gun, the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, M16A2 rifles and their associated support equipment continue to flow into arms rooms at Fort Drum and Fort Dix for Soldiers to train, fire and qualify.

On a larger scale, units will continue to receive new vehicles, radios and other items necessary for the success of the mission overseas. For many division Soldiers, these items will require familiarization training or refresher training over the course of the summer.

Training the Rainbow Team.

The 42nd Infantry Division training program during post-mobilization blends all the portions of individual, crew, team and collective training. Rainbow Soldiers will complete validation training in their basic Soldier skills, crew and team training in tasks such as convoy operations, and collective training in command and control operations for the combat task force.

"Each and every Soldier, when they arrive in Kuwait," Maj. Gen. Taluto instructed his commanders and staff, "will be motivated, confident and rested; they will be ready for our mission."

Team-building exercises will be conducted throughout the summer as Soldiers conduct more challenging training events, culminating with the division's mission readiness exercise in the fall.

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

Commanders and their staffs will conduct a series of 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.

"This is your training plan," said Lt. Gen. Joseph R. Inge, the First U.S. Army Commander to the group of division leaders before mobilization. "I will ensure that you get everything you need to train and that every Soldier who gets on that plane for Iraq is ready for his job, but the training plan to get there is yours to develop," Inge told the Rainbow leadership.

A Mission Not Without Sacrifice.

While thousands of 42nd Infantry Soldiers continue to train and prepare for the mission in Iraq, hundreds of Rainbow Division Soldiers are already serving overseas for Iraqi Freedom 2.

Soldiers from the Division Artillery's 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery from New York and the 3rd Battalion, 112th Field Artillery in New Jersey are currently in Iraq providing security force missions in central Iraq with Task Force Baghdad.

Sadly, four Rainbow Division comrades were killed in action in the early part of June. Killed on June 4th were Sgt. Frank Carvill, 51, of Carlstadt, NJ and Spc. Christopher Duffy, 26, of Brick, NJ. The following day, June 5th saw the loss of Sgt. Humberto Timoteo, 25, of Newark and Spc. Ryan Doltz, 26 of Mine Hill, NJ.

The loss of a single Soldier is a tragic and devastating event. The thoughts and prayers of the entire division go out to the Soldiers, families and communities of the 112th Field Artillery.

"General Douglas MacArthur once said, "No man is entitled to the blessings of freedom unless he be vigilant in its preservation,"" commented Maj. Gen. Taluto. "These fellow Rainbow Soldiers gave their lives not just for the ideal of peace and liberty for the people of Iraq, but to protect those same freedoms that are threatened here at home."

"We shall never forget their sacrifice nor let it diminish our resolve to succeed," he said.

The Road Ahead.

As Soldiers continue their training tasks and focus their efforts and energies towards their mission in Iraq, recognitions are due for the families, employers and veterans' groups whom all provided the support necessary for our success so far.

Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) have come together in armories all across the many Rainbow Division states and we will continue to reinforce their success. Division Soldiers have long known that the "Guard is Family." Our mission-focus overseas shall be matched only by our family-focus to support those at home who sacrifice so much for our Army and our nation.

Likewise, employers and communities have shown a tremendous outpouring of support and enthusiasm for our deployment, for it is they who make the citizen-soldier possible.

Lastly, Soldier thanks go out to members of the Rainbow Division Veterans Memorial Foundation. Those veterans and family members of the 42nd Infantry Division who came before know and understand that in this coming mission, our Soldiers are confident in their leaders, their equipment and their mission ahead.

RAINBOW!