

A SPECIAL **VFW** PUBLICATION

# WAR IN IRAQ

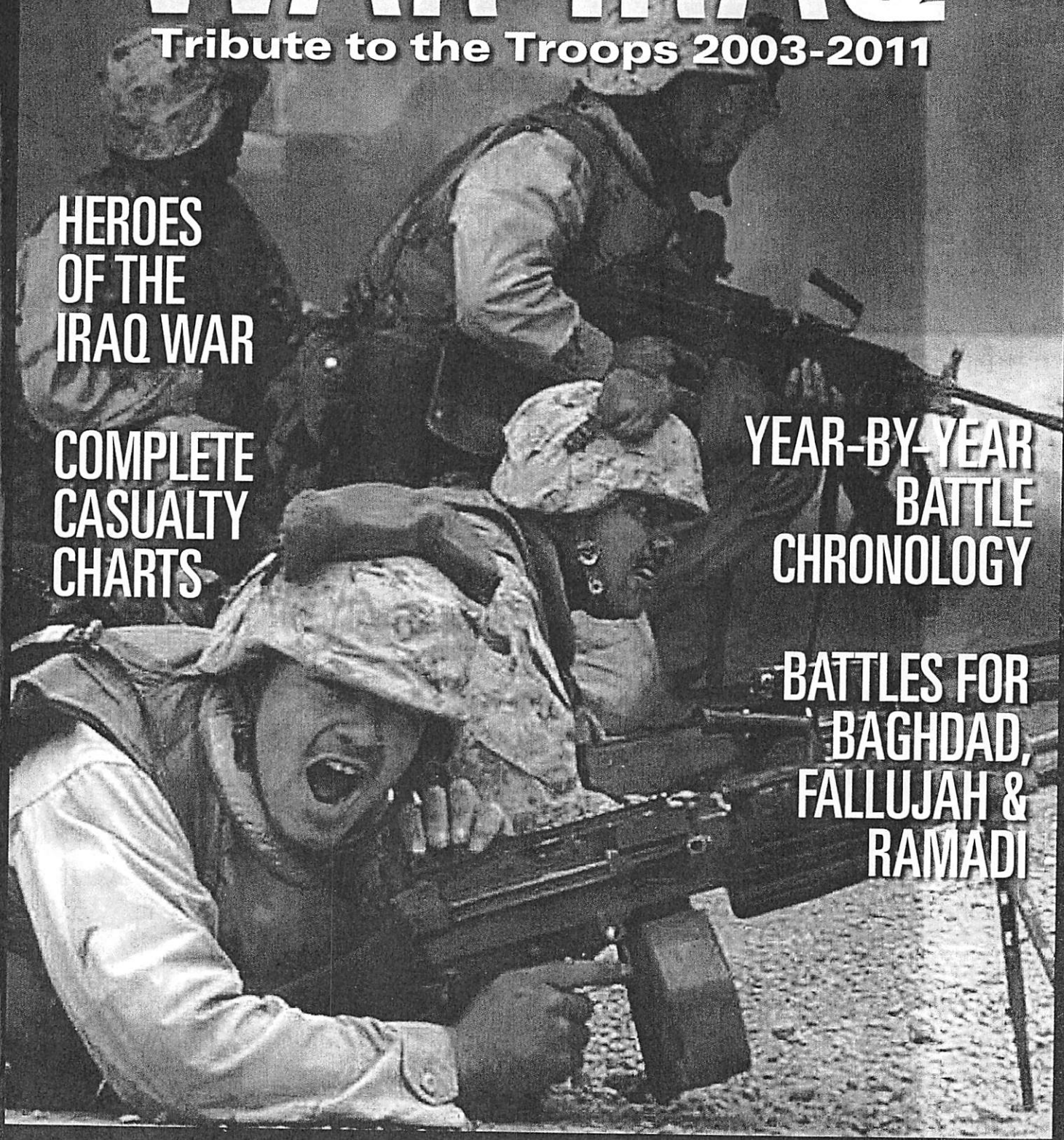
Tribute to the Troops 2003-2011

HEROES  
OF THE  
IRAQ WAR

COMPLETE  
CASUALTY  
CHARTS

YEAR-BY-YEAR  
BATTLE  
CHRONOLOGY

BATTLES FOR  
BAGHDAD,  
FALLUJAH &  
RAMADI



**WAR**  
IN  
**IRAQ**


# 'OUTSIDE THE WIRE'

## Citizen-Soldiers in Combat in Iraq



Leathernecks of 2nd Squad, 1st Platoon, I Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines (Reserve), take time out during their mission in Iraq. Lima Company suffered 23 KIA and 48 WIA during its tour in 2005. Nicknamed "The Vikings," they are: back row, Lance Cpl. Schreiber, Lance Cpl. Burke, Cpl. McCauley, Doc Arnold and Cpl. Reynolds; front row are Lance Cpl. Shay, Lance Cpl. Cain, Sgt. Taylor, Cpl. Rizvi and Lance Cpl. Flynn.





This is a snapshot of service and sacrifice from simply a sampling of National Guard and Reserve units that fought in Iraq. It represents the finest traditions of America's armed forces.

**BY KARA PETROVIC**

**“N**ow, four-fifths of my soldiers are combat veterans,” then-Adjutant General Brian Tarbet of the Utah National Guard declared. “That’s an unheard of number. Even by World War II standards, it is a shift of monumental proportions.”

Indeed, it was. Though 19% of U.S. troops in Iraq in mid-2006 were National Guard or Reserve, that wasn’t so just a short time before. In the first part of 2005, reserve unit members represented 43% of total American strength in the war zone. That included eight National Guard brigades versus only two by April 2006.

Moreover, for the first time since the Korean War, an entire National Guard division was fully committed to a war theater. The 42nd Division (New York) drew manpower from nine states and included 40% regulars among its ranks.

Using reservists in overseas ventures has always been a risky political proposition. Deaths among active-duty troops are equally valued, but impact the public differently.

As Michael O’Hanlon, a defense analyst at the Brookings Institution, said: “The tragedy of the citizen-soldier casualty is a loss of a member of the community who is usually a parent, husband or wife. It adds to the national pain when you see people from all different walks of life dying in combat. In that sense, the death of Guardsmen in Iraq compounds the national pain.”

On the other hand, if the nation goes to war without the National Guard and Reserves, it seldom has the public behind it, as several Vietnam War historians have observed. Here is a look at citizen-soldiers in action from 10 units during the war’s earlier years.

### **“Lucky Lima”: Hardest Hit**

The 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division (Reserve), was destined for notoriety in Iraq. But not the type normally craved. And one company in particular would be singled out.

The 3rd Battalion consisted of five companies (three

rifle, one weapons and one headquarters and service). Based in Brook Park (a suburb of Cleveland), Ohio, the roughly 900 members hailed from Ohio, West Virginia and New York.

In March 2005, about 150 (growing to 300) Marines from Lima Company, based in Columbus, Ohio, deployed to Iraq as part of the 3rd Battalion. One of the battalion’s primary duties was to block the “ratlines” from Syria—infiltration routes into Anbar province. Along with accompanying units, Lima’s area of operations was the size of West Virginia.

After more than a month in Iraq, Lima operated without fatalities. But the unit’s “luck” ran out in early May that year, when four Marines of the 1st Platoon were killed. Then on June 9, the 3rd Battalion lost three more men.

On Aug. 1, insurgents ambushed six Marine snipers attached to the battalion’s Headquarters and Service Company.

The two sniper teams—of three men each operating on foot—were working in Haditha, a city in western Iraq along the Euphrates River. That city served as the guerrillas’ main way station on the path to Baghdad.

Both teams were wiped out in the ambush. Ansar al Sunna, a terrorist group, claimed responsibility for the deaths.

A mere 48 hours later, on Aug. 3, tragedy struck Lima Company. Fourteen Marines and a civilian Iraqi interpreter died when their 25-ton personnel carrier hit an IED composed of five 155mm artillery rounds and two to three propane tanks buried several feet under the road’s asphalt.

The explosion threw the burning vehicle into the air, landing upside down and leaving the 14 Marines with no escape. Nine of the men were from the company’s 1st Squad of the 3rd Platoon alone.

Lance Cpl. Travis Williams was the sole survivor from the 1st Squad. He was traveling two vehicles ahead of the assault vehicle when the blast erupted. He scrambled out to survey the damage from several yards away.

“I think the most frustrating thing is there’s no sense of accomplishment,” Williams told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. “You’re biding your time and waiting. But then you lose your friends, and it’s not even for their own country’s freedom.”

Maj. Steve Lawson, then the company’s commander, told the *Washington Post*, “They used to call it Lucky Lima. That turned around and bit us.”

Members of VFW Post 2505 in Columbus had been raising money and sending care packages to Lima Company. Later, then-Post Commander Jeff Mers said members were dazed from attending all the funerals.

“I think I’ve been to nine of these just in central Ohio in the past few months,” Mers told the Associated Press



**U.S. Navy Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 14 pay their respects to their seven fallen comrades in May 2004. They were killed in two separate attacks within a 72-hour period. Five of the men were killed in a single mortar attack in Ramadi.**

in August 2005. As Dave Carroll of Post 9340, located outside of Cleveland, put it, "It is our duty as members of the VFW to not let the country forget these sacrifices."

Isolde Zierk became the coordinator for the Key Volunteer program, Lima Company's family support group, in Columbus. Zierk (her son, Sgt. Guy Zierk, was in the weapons platoon) and eight other volunteers, mostly mothers, were liaisons between the Marine Corps and families. The volunteers handled everything except notifications of death.

VFW awarded Zierk a *Military Family Member Volunteer Service Award* at its 2006 Legislative and Community Service Conference.

Despite being part of one of the hardest hit U.S. units in Iraq, members witnessed at least a "spark of progress."

"We know we made a positive difference," Cpl. Jeff Schuller told the *Christian Science Monitor*. "I can't say at what level, but I know that where we were, we made it better than it was when we got there."

Lima Company returned home on Oct. 7, 2005, after sustaining 23 KIA (16 from Columbus) and 48 WIA during a seventh-month deployment. (The A&E Channel ran a documentary on Lima in May 2006.) The 3rd Battalion as a whole counted 48 dead.

"All I can ask is that the American people be given more than the bombings and daily death toll," Cpl. Jacob Arnett

of the 3rd Battalion said, "because we are giving much more than that for Iraq."

### **"We Build, We Fight": Seabees at Alpha Yard**

Approximately 400 Navy Reserve Seabees from the 14th Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB 14) were deployed to Iraq on April 17, 2004. It would be a fateful tour of duty.

Based in Jacksonville, Fla., the 14th was made up of sailors (average age 42) from Florida, Georgia and Puerto Rico. This was the unit's first overseas deployment since World War II. It was stationed at Ramadi, site of an old Iraqi military base that hosted Camp Fallujah, a U.S. Marine compound.

NMCB 14 had been in Iraq for only two weeks—assisting with civil engineering work and building structures for Marines—when it was hit. Seven Seabees were killed in two separate attacks over a three day period in Anbar province west of Baghdad.

On April 30, two Seabees died after an improvised explosive device (IED) hit the convoy vehicle in which they were riding. Six more were wounded. They were escorting supply and troop convoys on a Tactical Movement Team.

Two days later, on May 2, Rear Adm. Charles Kubic, commander of the First Naval Construction Division, met with about 40 sailors to inspect damaged vehicles in "alpha yard," a vehicle parking and maintenance area.

Kubic and the Seabees were standing beside the vehicles when a mortar round struck with deadly accuracy, sending shrapnel flying. Five Seabees were immediately killed and 28 wounded.

"I felt, like, a shock wave came across," Equipment Operator 2nd Class James Nappier, Jr., told *Navy Times*. "It knocked me down, and when I stood up, I was on fire."

The wounded were quickly moved to Charlie Med, the camp's medical station. Then Medevac helicopters took them to Fallujah where enhanced medical facilities were available.

"We'll honor the courage and sacrifice of our fallen Seabees with our work," Kubic said. "Their resolve is like steel."

Nappier underscored the camaraderie of the unit: "We're very tight," he said. "It's like one big family. It's like we've been brothers all our lives. There isn't anything we don't do for each other in the military and in the civilian world."

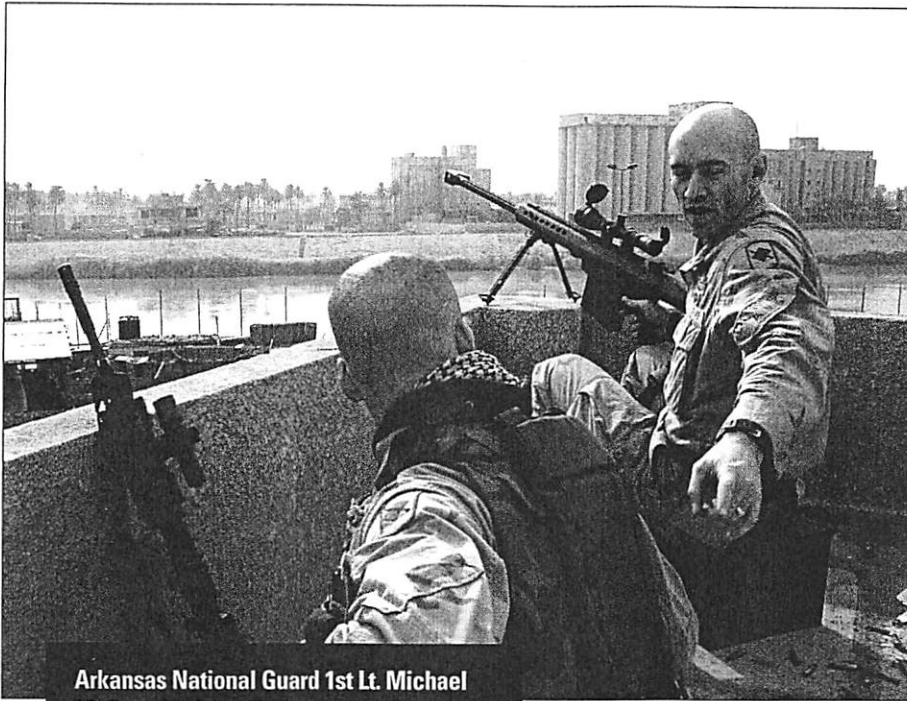
Some 60 reservists from NMCB 15 based in Belton, Mo., and 75 of the Engineer Group of I Marine Expeditionary Force were among the 1,100 Seabees (including active duty) serving in Iraq when the attack occurred. The 14th NMCB arrived back in Florida in November 2004.

### **"Bowie Brigade": Arkansas Guard**

The 39th Infantry Brigade sent more than 3,000 soldiers to Iraq from April 2004 to April 2005. Though nicknamed the "Arkansas Brigade," Guardsmen from nine other states were among them. The brigade included the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 153rd Infantry, as well as the 2nd Bn., 162nd Inf. (Oregon National Guard).

Based at Camp Cooke in Taji, Iraq, the regular Army's 2nd Bn., 7th Cav, 1st Cav Div., also was assigned to the 39th, rounding out the brigade combat team (BCT). That secure base camp, however, did not prove to be a safe haven.





**Arkansas National Guard 1st Lt. Michael McCarty (right) calls for another box of ammunition for his .50-caliber sniper rifle at "Fort Apache" in Baghdad on Jan. 30, 2005. Two months earlier on Nov. 20, 2004, as a platoon leader in C Co., 3rd Bn., 39th BCT, McCarty earned the Silver Star.**

Adhamiyah district of Baghdad, killing at least 30. The unit had four WIA. Platoon leader 1st Lt. Michael McCarty charged and single-handedly took out a three-man enemy machine gun crew.

Mortar rounds slammed into the area occupied by the 39th Support Battalion, killing four men, on April 24, 2004. All four soldiers were based in the small town of Hazen, Ark. The "Bowie Brigade," as it also is known, thus became the first National Guard unit to sustain a large loss in a single incident in Iraq.

"The loss here was a stark and somber illustration of why civic leaders and politicians had been loath to send National Guard troops into combat for nearly 50 years," wrote staff writers Scott Gold and Rone Tempest in the *DeValls Bluff* (Ark.) *Times*. Nevertheless, "Hazen is trying to stand firm, to remain resolute in the belief that their Guardsmen died for a just and righteous cause."

The unit had already attracted national attention. The Discovery Channel aired a three-episode special on the 39th—57 members of the 239th Engineer Company from Clarksville—that April.

Like all other American units in the war, the 39th would have its share of heroes. On Nov. 20, 2004, 26 men of 3rd Plt., C Co., 3rd Bn. ("Gunslingers"), 153rd Inf. Regt., took on 75 insurgents attacking an Iraqi police station in the

He was awarded the Silver Star on Feb. 4, 2006. "I did what I do best," he said, "I got out and closed with the enemy and destroyed them." The lieutenant also commented: "There were 26 of us that started the mission, and if one man hadn't done his job, then none of us would have come home." McCarty was the second Silver Star recipient from Arkansas. Sgt. Russell Collier received it posthumously for valor in Iraq in April 2005.

In April 2005, the last troops of the 39th came back to Arkansas. Determined that their fellow soldiers' supreme sacrifices not be forgotten, the unit memorialized their loss.

On Feb. 5, 2006, the Fallen Soldiers Memorial Wall was unveiled in Little Rock. It lists the 33 names of those killed while serving with the 39th by then, 16 of them from Arkansas. Some 270 more unit members were wounded.

### **Baqubah: Tarheels in Action**

The North Carolina Army National Guard's 1st Battalion ("Tuskhogs"), 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Separate Brigade ("Old Hickory"), deployed to

Iraq in February 2004. The unit was attached to the 3rd BCT, 1st Infantry Division. Home-based in Wilmington, it performed pre-dawn bomb sweeps, among other duties, in eastern Iraq near the Iran border.

On June 24, A Company's ("Wolverines") 3rd Platoon was 30 minutes away from wrapping up a patrol in the violent city of Baqubah when more than 150 insurgents staged an ambush.

"It was one of those days we'll be talking about for the rest of our lives," Spc. Ralph Isabella told *Army Times*.

Insurgents—who were perched atop buildings—attacked with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), small arms and heavy machine guns. The enemy surrounded the platoon's three Bradley Fighting Vehicles on both sides of the road, but not for long.

The platoon sped a half-mile south, positioning itself facing the onrushing insurgents. "These guys were very organized," Bradley commander Staff Sgt. Will Murray later remarked.

The unit was ordered to move closer to the enemy and keep the insurgents visible until reinforcements arrived.

"On the fourth time through, they started mortaring us off of a pedestrian crosswalk, and they were tossing down improvised explosive devices, but they missed," Murray said.

Insurgents continued to fire RPGs, but so far no one was hurt. "When they hit the Bradley with an RPG, the explosion was like a white flash of sunlight," Sgt. Jeff Derich related to the *Army Times*. "It feels like your brain is going to leak out your eyes."

By 6 a.m., 3rd Platoon was heading north back to Warhorse, the unit's forward operating base (FOB), to regroup. Meanwhile, Alpha's 1st Platoon raced toward the city center to secure two bridges. Five Bradleys—two led by Capt. Christopher Cash and his executive officer—headed for the bridges where the ambush raged relentlessly.

At 6:20 a.m., an enemy machine gunner struck Cash. Spc. Daniel Desens was mortally wounded when an RPG tore through his Bradley. The blast also wounded five others, as well as knocking the commander unconscious.

After being wounded, Desens killed the man who fired the RPG. "We had



**North Carolina Guardsmen of A Company, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Separate Brigade, take up positions during the Battle of Baqubah on June 24, 2004. The unit lost two KIA and 6 WIA, but killed some 40 insurgents.**

PHOTO COURTESY CAPT. MATTHEW STAPLETON / NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD

Bn., 156th Mech. Inf. Regt., 256th BCT, deployed to Iraq in October 2004. A single incident would catapult the unit into the national spotlight.

Based in the small fishing community of Houma, the battalion's Charlie Company served with other soldiers from Minnesota, Wisconsin and New York. The 69th Infantry Regiment (New York National Guard) was attached.

The 256th's area of operations in Iraq encompassed 1,250 square miles, including the city of Taji.

On Jan. 6, 2005, seven soldiers were killed—six from C Company (nicknamed the "Black Sheep") and one from the 69th—by a roadside bomb near Awad Al-Hussein. An explosive device, believed to have six to eight 155mm artillery rounds strapped together, hit their 50,000-pound Bradley, blowing it upside down.

This would be the single largest combat loss for a National Guard unit in Iraq.

Four of the soldiers killed were from Houma and nearby Raceland. Despite the devastating loss, most Houma residents like Lolly Fassbender—who lost her grandson, Sgt. Huey Fassbender, in the attack—still believed the war was worth fighting.

"We have to stay," Fassbender told the *London Times*. "For them [U.S. troops] to come out now, I would be angry. Huey's death would be in vain." She continued: "Everyone here believes they must stay and finish the job."

Sarah Ferguson, who ran a local coffee shop, agreed. "It's just hardened attitudes," she said. "It's made us more passionate about the mission."

With such resolve, it is not surprising the unit's missions proved successful. "They are proud of their service," Maj. Gen. Gennett Landreneau told the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. "They are making a difference, and they know that."

The brigade detained more than 250 suspected insurgents, denied the enemy their "rocket boxes," which are used to launch mortars into American bases, and participated in humanitarian efforts in subsequent operations.

"It's a great source of pride to us," Brig. Gen. John Basilica, then-commander of the 256th, told the *Times-Picayune*. "But at a great, great cost and sacrifice."

PHOTO COURTESY LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD



**Louisiana National Guardsmen of the 256th Brigade Combat Team patrol the streets of Iraq. Serving there in 2004-05, the unit sustained the second-highest number of KIA among National Guard outfits. The 2nd Battalion's C Company alone lost six KIA in one action.**

to pry [Desens'] fingers off the gun," medic Isabella said.

The driver was unhurt, but the roar of battle prevented all radio contact. Reaching the bridges, 1st Platoon took the wounded back to the base to be evacuated. Cash and Désens died during the helicopter ride to the hospital in Balad.

An eight-hour firefight consumed

the Wolverines, but they secured the bridges. Alpha Company estimated that it killed 30 to 40 insurgents. But losing two soldiers, among them their commander, and having six wounded, was a blow.

The 1st Bn., 120th Inf., lost four KIA and 19 WIA in Iraq. It redeployed state-side in January 2005. Its members had displayed courage under fire and demonstrated the unit's effectiveness.

### Louisiana "Black Sheep"

The Louisiana National Guard's 2nd



Per capita, Louisiana reportedly then had the largest number of residents in the Army National Guard—4,000 served in Iraq.

Members of the 256th returned home in September 2005. Louisiana's Guard counted 21 KIA and 208 WIA. The 700 members of the legendary "Fighting 69th" (attached) lost 11 men in Iraq.

### "Raven 42": Day of the Silver Stars

The Kentucky Army National Guard's 617th Military Police Company, assigned to the 503rd MP Bn. (Fort Bragg), 18th MP Bde., deployed to Iraq on Nov. 27, 2004. The 150-person unit from Richmond protected convoys by operating 24-hour patrols on supply routes leading in and out of Baghdad.

On March 20, 2005, a 10-member squad—two women and eight men of 4th Platoon traveling in three armored Humvees using the call sign "Raven 42"—was providing security for 26 civilian tractor-trailers near Salman Pak, about 12 miles southeast of Baghdad. The trucks were moving supplies along an alternate supply route when 40 to 50 insurgents ambushed the convoy with RPGs and automatic weapons.

"We noticed seven vehicles the insurgents had staged and ready," Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein, who was on his second tour in Iraq, told the Army News Service. "Doors open, trucks open; ready for a quick escape. Once we turned down that road, the insurgents didn't have a choice but to stay and fight. We had just cut off their escape route."

As the squad's three Humvees roared forward, positioning themselves between the trucks and attackers, the insurgents' intentions changed.

"They quickly shifted all fire from the transportation convoy to us," said squad leader Nein.

Nein continued: "Once I knew how many people we were fighting against, it hit me we had to fight back extremely hard."

As the first Humvee raced toward a paved side road, an RPG hit it, but the vehicle kept moving. The other two Humvees followed close behind and opened fire on the terrorists. Three of the four soldiers within the third Humvee bailed out to fight, as one continued to rain fire from the vehicle. In



PHOTO BY SFC. JEREMY D. CRISP / U.S. ARMY

**Military policemen of the Kentucky National Guard's 617th MP Company received medals from Lt. Gen. John R. Vines (center), commander, Multinational Corps, Iraq, during a ceremony at Camp Liberty in Iraq on June 16, 2005. Recipients are Spc. Jesse Ordunez, Sgt. Dustin Morris, Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein, Spc. Casey Cooper and Spc. Jason Mike. Hester, Nein and Mike received Silver Stars.**

mere moments, three of the four were wounded.

As medic Spc. Jason Mike and another soldier ran over to assist the three wounded MPs, Nein and team leader Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester ran toward the lead trench line, tossing grenades as they went.

"On the right-hand side was a berm," Hester told the Army News Service. "They were still shooting at us from there and from down in a trench line."

Suddenly, the firing stopped. Bodies littered the trenches and nearby orchard. The only sounds were cries from the wounded.

In 45 minutes, the MP squad had killed 24 insurgents, wounded six (two later died) and captured one.

"We're infantry with badges, is the way I like to refer to it," Nein said.

On June 16, 2005, at Baghdad's Camp Liberty in Iraq, Hester, Nein and Mike received the Silver Star, the Army's third-highest award for valor. (Nein's medal was later upgraded to a Distinguished Service Cross.) Five other squad members also received awards for valor—three received the Bronze Star and two the Army Commendation Medal with V devices. Spc. Ashley J. Pullen, Hester's driver and one of the Bronze Star recipients, said, "It is important to give credit to all who are due the recognition."

The same week the Raven 42 squad received its medals, a soldier from the 617th MP Company was killed in a

RPG attack.

Sgt. 1st Class Marshall Ware, who served 10 years on active duty before joining the Army National Guard, said the company had been preparing "since Day 1" for such a firefight.

"The Guard is not the same Guard it was two years ago," Ware told *National Guard* magazine. "They're as good as any active-duty unit."

The 617th MP Company returned home Oct. 31, 2005, after sustaining two KIA and 34 WIA in Iraq.

### Keystone Troopers in the Sunni Triangle

Elements of the 109th Inf., 55th "Strike" Brigade, and the 111th Inf., 56th Stryker BCT of the 28th Division (Pennsylvania National Guard) deployed to Iraq in November and December 2004.

Alpha Company (153 soldiers) of the 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry—mostly from the Philadelphia region—were based at FOB Summerall near Beiji, 110 miles north of Baghdad. They were part of Task Force Dragoon (750 strong). Early months of their tour were relatively fatality-free.

But August 2005 proved to be a deadly



Sgt. Phelan Piehota, 1st Lt. Christopher Wilson and Spc. Devin O'Neil of B Company, 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry Regiment of the Pennsylvania National Guard pose near some of the weapons they captured from insurgents in Ramadi on Jan. 29, 2006.

PHOTO COURTESY PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD

feeling we failed because we lost six soldiers.”

The following month, on Sept. 19, a roadside bomb in Ramadi killed three more Pennsylvania Guardsmen, this time from the 104th Cav and 109th Infantry. A New York Guardsman of the 42nd Division also was killed in the explosion.

On Sept. 28, 109th Infantry soldiers were securing construction of a railroad bridge near Ramadi when a bomb, made of five or six artillery shells, exploded underneath their Bradley. An insurgent ambush with RPGs and small-arms fire followed. Five C Company soldiers died in the attack.

While members of the 111th Infantry landed back on Pennsylvania soil in October 2005, the 2nd BCT (28th ID) remained in Iraq later. All told, the Pennsylvania National Guard sustained 29 KIA and 217 WIA in Iraq.

### Mississippi's 155th BCT Showcases Najaf

When 3,500 troops of the 155th Brigade Combat Team (Mississippi National Guard) arrived in Iraq in January 2005, they included soldiers from Arkansas, Utah and Vermont. The 2nd Bn., 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, which trained with the 155th, was attached.

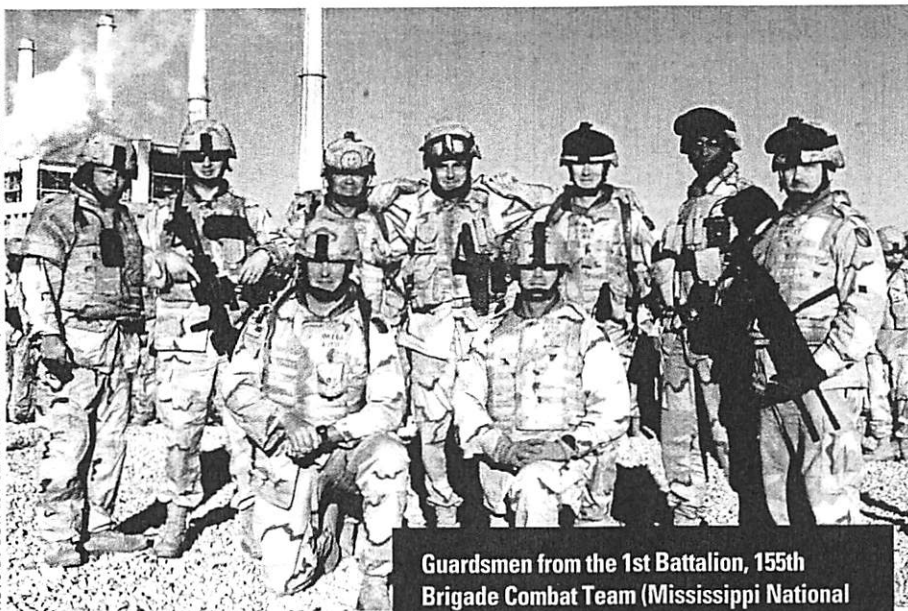
Serving with the 1st and 2nd Marine Expeditionary Forces, the Tupelo-based unit operated in Karbala, Najaf and Babil provinces. The city of Najaf is one of the holiest places in Islam.

Patrolling from FOBs with names like Kalsu and Iskandariyah, the Guardsmen ventured “outside the wire,” a reference to operations beyond heavily fortified U.S. military compounds.

“Even the paved roads have been blown up so many times they are like gravel,” Sgt. Michael Homes remarked after getting a taste of the countryside.

On March 29, 2005, four soldiers, among them Spc. William Brooks, assigned to Det. 1, HQ Co., 1st Bn., were

PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS KEVIN REEVES / 155TH BRIGADE, MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD



Guardsmen from the 1st Battalion, 155th Brigade Combat Team (Mississippi National Guard) on duty in Iraq. One of the duties of unit members was to tame the city of Najaf, one of Islam's holiest places. They successfully did so, earning praise from President Bush.

month for the Pennsylvanians. On the 6th, two members of A Company were KIA by an IED while patrolling Beiji.

Then on the 9th, four men of 2nd Plt., A Co., died when their Humvee was nearly obliterated after insurgents set off a bomb located in a culvert under Smuggler's Road in Beiji. Another Keystone State Guardsman was killed separately on the same day.

“I consider this hallowed ground now,” Army Lt. Col. Philip J. Logan, TF Dragoon commander, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. “We're not going to have locals traipsing through it.”

The pain was felt at home, too, espe-

cially in Plymouth Meeting, 1st Battalion's base. “Seven Guardsmen in less than four days—it brings home the crushing reality of this war,” then-Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell said.

“We're in a dangerous situation; this is the Sunni Triangle,” said Capt. Anthony Callum, then A Company commander. “But at the end of the deployment, the soldiers are going to be proud of what they accomplished. They need to feel that pride. They don't need to go home



## National Guard and Reserve Casualties

*Citizen-soldiers sustained 21% of U.S. KIA and 22% of U.S. WIA in Iraq.*

	IRAQ		
	HOSTILE	NON-HOSTILE DEATHS	WIA
National Guard	369	134	4,238
Reserves	317	102	2,855
<b>Totals</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>7,093</b>

Source: Defense Manpower Data Center

blown out of their Humvee when it was hit by an IED near Baghdad. Brooks lost both of his legs just below the knee.

"It was the worst combat experience I've had," said Sgt. Richard Anthony, who was riding in a vehicle that just missed the device before the explosion.

VFW Post 10567 in Southaven, Miss., held a benefit auction that July in Brooks' honor, raising more than \$24,000.

"If God would grow my legs back, I'd be on the first plane back to Iraq," Brooks said, exemplifying the *esprit de corps* of his outfit.

Tragedy struck again on May 23, when four Guardsmen of HQ and C companies, 1st Bn., 155th Inf., were killed by an IED in Haswa.

By September, the 155th began turning responsibilities in its area of operations over to the Iraqis. And by December, Najaf had become a showcase of progress.

"They were receptive; they actually wanted to take control of their own area," Sgt. 1st Class Paul Bedford of the Recon Plt., 1st Bn., 198th Armor, told the *New York Times*. "Assessment would be more the word than training at this point."

A change in attitude was clearly evident. "The people didn't really talk to us that much [at first]," Brig. Gen. Augustus L. Collins explained to the *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*. "But now [after a year in country] they've opened up to us, and they see the way to peace is through this democratic idea that we're trying to share with them."

The last members of the 155th ("Dixie Thunder") returned to Camp Shelby in mid-January 2006. Guardsmen counted 13 hostile deaths and 110 WIA.

### "Night Stalkers": California Guard

In February 2005, 685 soldiers of the California National Guard's 1st Bn., 184th Inf. Regt., arrived in Iraq. Head-

## National Guard Fatalities in Iraq—10 Highest by Hostile Fire

STATE	KIA
Pennsylvania	29
Louisiana	23
California	22
Arkansas	20
Michigan	18
New York	16
Georgia	15
Mississippi	15
Tennessee	14
Minnesota	14

Note: Vermont is often cited as the state with highest per capita losses with 8 KIA.

Source: Statistical Information Analysis Division, Defense Manpower Data Center.

quartered in Modesto, the unit would soon receive more public scrutiny than it bargained for.

Three of its companies were assigned to patrol the Dora district of southern Baghdad—one of the city's toughest sectors. Not even halfway through their tour, the "Night Stalkers" (the battalion's nickname) found themselves in the media glare for the misdeeds of a few. Because some soldiers were court-martialed for dereliction of duty and mishandling prisoners, all were tarnished.

"But what never made it into print were the things that will mark our hearts until well after we become old-timers down at the VFW," 1st Lt. Robert C.J. Perry, a battalion officer, wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*. "We never flinched in a fight. But we were smeared nonetheless."

Seven unit members died in September in multiple roadside bomb blasts. On Sept. 16 alone, three were killed when two tanks absorbed explosions.

On Oct. 25, Lt. Col. William Wood, the new unit commander and an active-duty officer, promised his battalion he would do his utmost to reduce casualties. But 48 hours later, Wood himself lost his life to a roadside bomb while trying to help soldiers in a Humvee that had just been disabled. Wood was the highest-ranking U.S. officer killed in Iraq at that time. (He was posthumously promoted to colonel.)

Jim Wood, William's brother and a long-time VFW member, said, "We are extremely proud of my brother. By serving in Iraq, he was upholding an honorable family tradition."

On Oct. 29, two more soldiers were killed when the battalion led *Operation Clean Sweep*, raiding 350 houses and capturing more than 40 suspected insurgents in Baghdad.

This successful mission helped "put these guys back up on a pedestal, where they should be," said Lt. Col. Denton Knapp, the battalion's third commander and also active-duty Army.

The 184th returned home after 10 months in Iraq on Jan. 16, 2006. The battalion lost 10 killed and 100 WIA. Some 14 Bronze Stars for valor went to unit members. The "Night Stalkers" also received a Valorous Unit Award.

### Georgia Bulldogs in the "Triangle of Death"

The 48th BCT represented the largest overseas deployment of Georgia National Guard members since WWII. Among its 4,300 soldiers were 2,500 Georgians. Others in the unit came from Alabama, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri and Puerto Rico.

Deployed to Iraq in May 2005, the 48th conducted combat patrols southwest of Baghdad (including the infamous "Triangle of Death") and assisted with convoy and base security.

But nothing could prepare the unit for what was coming—11 deaths in 11 days. Starting off, a pair of fatal bombings claimed the lives of eight soldiers of a single platoon in A Co., 2nd Bn., 121st Inf. Regt.

On July 24, the first four died when

their Humvee rolled over a massive bomb on Route Aeros, close to the Iraqi capital.

Six days later, on July 30, four more soldiers were KIA in a similar attack on Route Red Sox. The unit was just minutes away from the base's entrance. Both vehicles involved in the explosion literally disintegrated. The only remaining pieces from the second Humvee were two front tires, two back tires and an engine block.

"These are people you knew, that you trained with, you laughed with," Sgt. Bill Jones told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. "You become angry real quick. You want to get the bastard who did this."

Then on Aug. 3, a suicide car bomber at a traffic checkpoint in Baghdad killed three soldiers and wounded three more from the 648th Engineer Battalion.

"Our future actions will not bring them back but will honor their memory," commander Lt. Col. Steve McCorkle said to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. "Their sacrifice will not be in vain."

The next morning, a new mission was planned after local Iraqis provided intelligence on specific insurgents who were responsible for some of the 11 deaths. The brigade established a new patrol camp, "Lions Den," intended

to take territory away from the enemy. On Aug. 4, brigade elements searched 14 houses and buildings, and seized 45 Iraqis for questioning.

By October 2005, the 48th was approaching its sixth month in country and had lost 22 soldiers—17 in combat and five in accidents.

"That much loss drops anybody to their knees," Brig. Gen. Stewart Rodeheaver told the *Columbus (Ga.) Ledger-Enquirer*. "But our guys did a tremendous job of coming back and doing great things after that. ... Morale is extreme-

ly high. They're proud of what they're doing, and they do a great job."

In mid-November, the 48th BCT ("Old Gray Bonnet"), headquartered south of Baghdad at Camp Striker, was split up for security reasons.

The brigade's spirit took another hit when a vehicle rollover killed three members in early December near Nasiriyah. But the unit pressed on.

The 48th's last combat patrol was conducted March 31, 2006. It arrived home in May, after losing 19 Guardsmen and 175 WIA during its deployment.

### Proven Mettle in Battle

Clearly, the National Guard long ago shed the characterization of "weekend warriors." Unit members proved their military value time and again in Iraq.

At their peak in March 2005, 50,285 Guardsmen were stationed in Iraq. At least 13 Army National Guard combat brigades had rotated through the country by then.

Casualties attest to the combat role played by the National Guard and the Reserves in Iraq: 686 KIA and 7,093 WIA.

As predicted by defense experts and military historians, using reservists in combat brought the war home to many local communities. Unit deaths among hometown boys mobilized public concern and thus support. Entire families had a stake in the war's outcome.

The dedication and bravery of citizen-soldiers in battle is now fully recognized by all Americans. ★



PHOTO BY SFC. DAN BALDA / U.S. ARMY

**Soldiers of the California National Guard's 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, speak with an Iraqi citizen while on patrol on Dec. 12, 2005. The "Night Stalkers," as the unit is nicknamed, served in Iraq for 10 months. Despite initial negative media publicity, they demonstrated dedication to duty and courage under fire.**

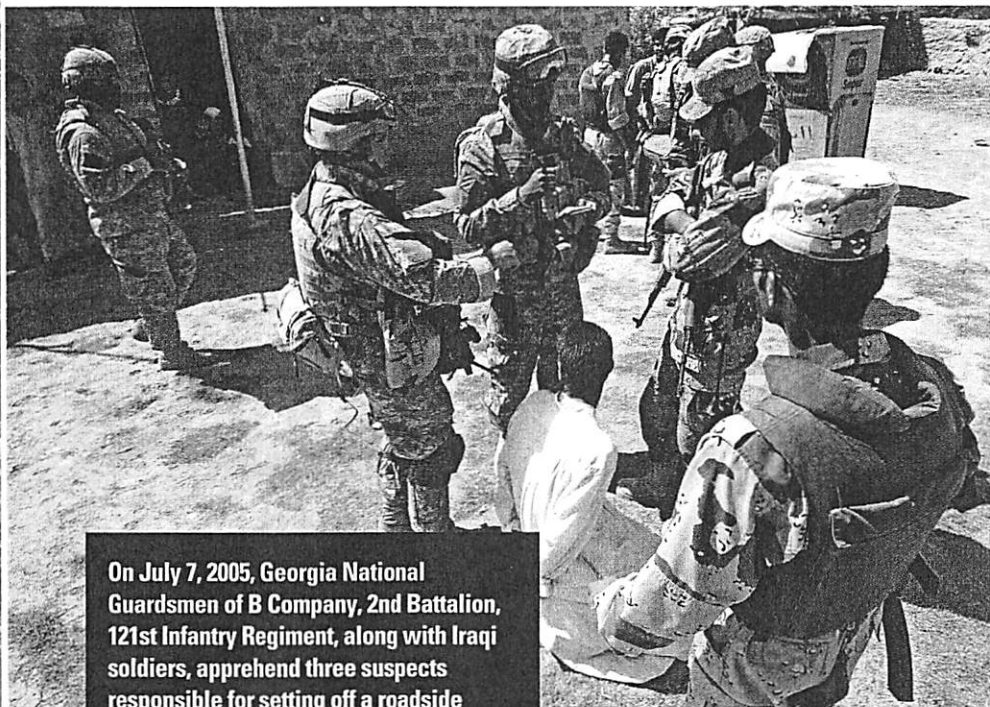
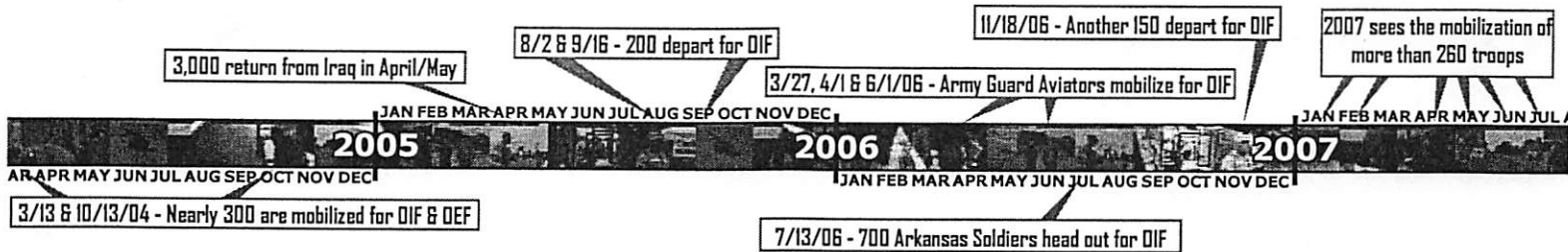


PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. REYNALDO RAMON / U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO

**On July 7, 2005, Georgia National Guardsmen of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, along with Iraqi soldiers, apprehend three suspects responsible for setting off a roadside bomb near Al-Radwnea. Georgia Guardsman sustained 15 KIA in Iraq.**



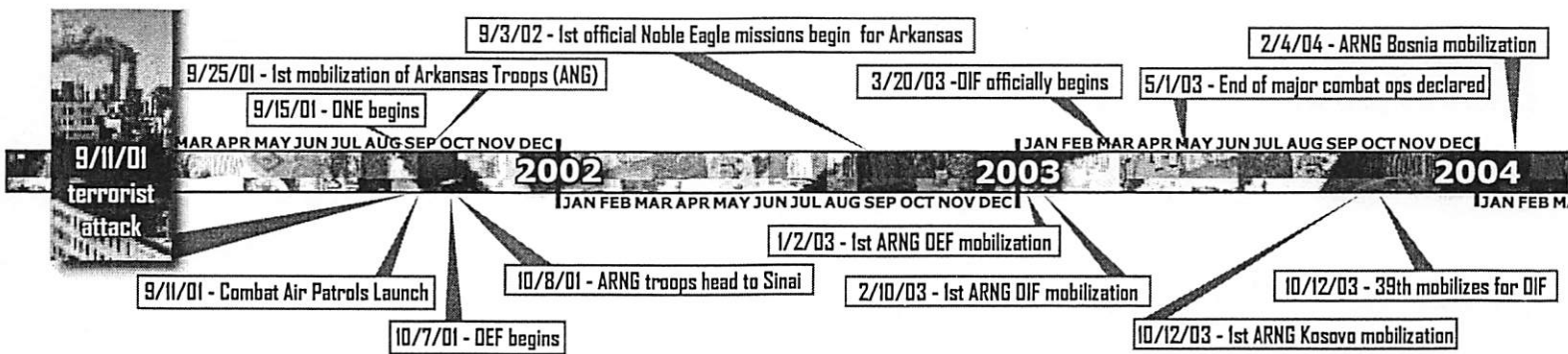


## Operation Iraqi Freedom & Operation New Dawn

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was launched on March 20, 2003, in an effort to free the Iraqi people from the tyrannical rule of Saddam Hussein, and destroy his regime's ability to use weapons of mass destruction or to make them available to terrorists. By May of 2003, the regime was removed and the end of major combat operations was declared. The mission shifted to helping the new government of Iraq improve security, establish a system of governance and foster economic development. The American-led military coalition focused on destroying terrorist networks operating in the country, and helping the Iraqi people rebuild. Personnel from nearly every unit of the Arkansas Army National Guard have been mobilized in support of OIF, which ended Sept. 1, 2010.

87th Troop Command	296th Ambulance Company	Feb. 03 - Mar. 04
87th Troop Command	1123rd Transportation Company	Feb. 03 - Jun. 04
39th Infantry Brigade	All units of the 39th IBCT	Oct. 03 - Apr./May 05
35th Aviation Brigade	HHC, 2nd Battalion, 114th Aviation Regiment	Dec. 03 - Jan. 04
87th Troop Command	Company C, 212th Signal Battalion	Oct. 04 - Jan. 06
142nd Field Artillery	Battery B, 1st Battalion	Aug. 05 - Oct. 06
87th Troop Command	25th Rear Operations Center	Sept. 05 - Oct. 06
77th Aviation Brigade	Detachment 1, B Company, 449th AVIM	Feb. 06 - Jul. 07
77th Aviation Brigade	1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment	Mar. 06 - Sept. 07
77th Aviation Brigade	Airfield Management Element (Kuwait)	Apr. 06 - Jul. 07
77th Aviation Brigade	2nd Battalion, 114th Air Traffic Services	May 06 - Aug. 07
77th Aviation Brigade	1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment	Jun. 06 - Oct. 07
142nd Fires Brigade	A & B Battery, 2nd Battalion (Kuwait)	Jul. 06 - Jan. 08
87th Troop Command	875th Engineer Battalion	Jul. 06 - Nov. 07
142nd Fires Brigade	Battery, C, 2nd Battalion	Nov. 06 - Feb. 08
142nd Fires Brigade	Battery, C, 1st Battalion	Jan. 07 - Mar. 08
142nd Fires Brigade	Headquarters	Apr. 07 - May 08
87th Troop Command	Headquarters, 871st Troop Command	Jun. 07 - Jul. 08
87th Troop Command	213th Area Support Medical Company	Jul. 07 - Aug. 08
39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team	Included Soldiers from most AR ARNG Units	Jan. 08 - Feb. 09
<b>Operation New Dawn began on Sept. 1, 2010</b>		
77th Theater Aviation Brigade	1st Battalion, 185th Aviation	Nov. 10 - present*
77th Theater Aviation Brigade	Headquarters	Feb. 11 - present*

\*As of Sept. 30, 2011 - end of fiscal year



The Arkansas National Guard responded quickly and decisively in the hours and days following the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001. All Guard facilities in the state immediately moved to Force Protection Condition Delta, and access to Camp Robinson and Fort Chaffee was severely restricted. Multiple missions were tasked down to Arkansas Army and Air National Guard units to secure state and national facilities. Response missions included the first launch of aircraft from the 188th Fighter Wing with live ammunition to secure and defend the nation's skies.

*In the days and months following the attack, the Arkansas Guard performed a myriad of security missions across the state:*

### Airport Security

- Little Rock National
- Fort Smith Regional
- North West Regional
- Mountain Home Regional
- Texarkana Regional

### Infrastructure Security

- Arkansas Nuclear One
- Highland Industrial Park

### Arkansas Military Security

- Camp Robinson
- Ebbing Air Guard Base
- Fort Chaffee
- Little Rock Air Force Base
- Pine Bluff Arsenal

## Operation Noble Eagle

188th Fighter Wing	Combat Air Patrols	Sept. 01 - Jul. 02	Nationwide to include Presidential Security
189th Airlift Wing	Security	Oct. 01 for up to two years	Security Forces at Shepherd Air Force Base, Texas
223rd Combat Com. Squadron	Communications Support	Jan 02 for two years	Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.
142nd Field Artillery Brigade	Security	Sept. 02 - Jun. 03	Fort Huachuca; Fort. Polk; Red River Army Depot; Pine Bluff Arsenal.
216th Military Police	Security	Oct. 02 - Aug. 03	Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.
935th Support Bn.	Security	Jan. 03 - Dec. 04	Little Rock Air Force Base
142nd Field Artillery	Security	Mar. 03 - Oct. 03	224th Maintenance at Ft. Sill, Ok.
875th Engineer Bn.	Engineering support	Mar. 03 - Nov. 03	Umatilla Chemical Depot, Hermiston, Ore.
935th Support Bn.	Security	Dec. 03 - Dec. 04	Ebbing Air Base, Fort Smith; LRAFB
212th Signal Bn.	Security	Jun. 03 - Jan. 04	Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Red River Army Depot.
142nd Field Artillery Brigade	Security	Mar. 04 - Jan. 05	Pine Bluff Arsenal; Pueblo Chemical Depot, Pueblo, Colo.



## Arkansas National Guard Unit Welcomed Home

By SGT Chris A. Durney

Arkansas National Guard State Public Affairs Office

**2/8/06, Camp Joseph T. Robinson, North Little Rock, AR** Within the Arkansas National Guard they're known as Charlie Rock. But for the people who lined the streets of White Hall, Ark., to watch them parade by, they're simply heroes come home.

Thirty-three members of Company C of the 212th Signal Battalion were honored at a parade and welcome home celebration in White Hall Saturday, Feb. 4, 2006. The unit is based in the nearby city of Pine Bluff and has recently completed a 14-month mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The battalion mobilized approximately 130 Soldiers in October 2004, serving with the Mississippi National Guard's 155th Brigade Combat Team while in Iraq. The 212th returned to the United States with the 155th throughout December and early January.

White Hall resident Lindsey Alford and her daughter admired the troops as they smartly marched by wearing their desert uniforms. The Alfords held small American flags and waved at the Soldiers as they passed.

"It's really nice that they went and did that for us," said Alford. "I really appreciate it, and we should all be proud of them."

The parade ended at the city park, where friends, family and fellow Guard members gathered to honor Charlie Rock's accomplishments in Iraq. From political candidates to mayors and commanders, speakers rose to let the troops know that they are appreciated. But it was 11-year-old Joey Broadnax who brought the house down with a rousing rendition of "God Bless America." Most watching were amazed that such a strong voice was packed into such a small boy.

For SGT LaDale Higgins the deployment was a learning experience. "It was like a long annual training period, I learned a lot about my job there," he said. SGT Higgins served as a cable installer while stationed near Kalsu. The Pine Bluff native is a student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and has three sons.

For SPC Sara Brown of Pine Bluff, it was a satisfying deployment. "There were a lot of good things done over there," said SPC Brown as she kept an eye on her daughters Christina, 3, and Sara, 7, "and we made some good friends."

One place they were able to make friends was at a school in Kalsu. According to SGT Higgins, Charlie Rock adopted the school and spent some of their time helping out there. "It was our way of reaching out to the locals," said SGT Higgins.

The 212th Signal Battalion installs, operates and maintains communications systems for combat control, intelligence, fire control, combat support and combat service support. As part of the Arkansas National Guard's transformation and re-structuring plan, the 212th is dissolving as a battalion. One company is slated to move to the 39th Brigade Combat Team, and one company will become a unit of the 142nd Fires Brigade.

Company C, STB was reorganized from Company C, 212th Signal Battalion at Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The Company is now located in White Hall, Arkansas. The 212th Signal Battalion was formerly headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas, but was inactivated at the same time as the reorganization of the 39th Brigade Combat Team in 2005.

Company C, 212th Signal Battalion was mobilized for Operation Desert Storm in 1990, but did not deploy to theater.

Company C, 212th Signal Battalion deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III from August 2004 to January 2006 as a part of the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.<sup>[5]</sup> During this tour of duty, the 155th HBCT suffered fifteen fatalities. The Brigade served under the II Marine Expeditionary Force.<sup>[6][7]</sup> Elements of Company C were based out of FOB Kalsu and Camp Dogwood.

Company C, STB is additionally entitled to Campaign Participation Credit for the Aleutian Islands Campaign. The company served as a Company D, 1st Battalion, 153d Infantry Regiment during World War II and was stationed in the Aleutian Islands with the rest of the 153rd Infantry Regiment.<sup>[8]</sup>





**87<sup>th</sup> Troop Command  
History of Activated Units**

**Operation Desert Storm**

- \*148<sup>th</sup> Field Hospital- November 1990
- \*224<sup>th</sup> Maint CO – November 1990
- \*204<sup>th</sup> Dental DET (USAREUR) December 1990
- \*119<sup>th</sup> AG CO (MOB Spt FT POLK) January 1991
- \*25<sup>th</sup> RTOC - February 1991

**Bosnia-KFOR**

- 296<sup>th</sup> Medical Company - September 1997

**Operation Noble Eagle**

- 216<sup>th</sup> MP CO - September 2002
- \*\*A CO, 875<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion - March 2003
- \*212<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion –2003

**Operation Enduring Freedom**

- 216<sup>th</sup> MP CO - 4 October 2002
- \*25<sup>th</sup> RTOC – February 2002
- \*\*Detachment 1, 70<sup>th</sup> Mobile PAD - July 2003
- \*1123<sup>rd</sup> Trans CO – February 2003
- 224<sup>th</sup> Maint CO – February 2003
- 1037<sup>th</sup> EN CO – November 2009
- \*Agriculture Development Team 1 – February 2010
- \*Agriculture Development Team 2 – January 2011
- \*1964<sup>th</sup> Contingency Contracting Team – January 2012
- 1039<sup>th</sup> EN CO – June 2012
- 216<sup>th</sup> MP CO – May 2014
- 1038<sup>th</sup> EN CO – June 2014

**Operation Iraqi Freedom**

- \*1123<sup>rd</sup> Trans CO - February 2003
- 296<sup>th</sup> Medical Company - January 2003
- \*C CO, 212<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion – October 2004
- 875<sup>th</sup> EN BN – July 2006
- HQ 871<sup>st</sup> TC – June 2007
- 213<sup>th</sup> ASMC – July 2007
- \*1123<sup>rd</sup> Trans CO – January 2008
- 216<sup>th</sup> MP CO – January 2008
- 1038<sup>th</sup> EN CO – January 2008

\*Denotes units that have been disbanded and are no longer a part of the Arkansas National Guard

\*\*Denotes units that have since changed names but are still within 87<sup>th</sup> TC.