from the top

Major General Thomas Turner

Commanding General, 101st Abn. Div., and Fort Campbell

To the Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell families, Screaming Eagle alumni and civilian employees of our post community: We are a nation at war. It is a war in which the safety of the American people is threatened like it has never been. As we remembered the horrors of Sept. 11, 2001, this past weekend, we were reminded of the sacrifices we must continue to make in order to defend our way of life.

As so many of you know quite well, these sacrifices include long combat deployments for the Soldiers of our great Army. So many of our Soldiers and spouses endured a year without their loved ones while the 101st fought in Operation Iraqi Freedom. If the mission was easy, they wouldn't need our division. Each and every one of you deserves a Screaming Eagle challenge coin for your commitment to our mission.

I ask you now to keep your focus. As the War on Terrorism enters its fourth year, our division has been handed a new mission. By March 15, 2005, we must be trained and ready under rapidly deployable and more lethal fighting formations. Starting today, we begin our execution towards that end. The Army must change to meet its new challenges. This has included a number of new additions and subtractions to the 101st Airborne Division.

Indeed, our division scantly resembles the force that returned home from northern Iraq at the beginning of the year. We have reorganized our two aviation brigade combat teams to mirror each other's capabilities. We have created a Sustainment Unit of Action out of the elements of the 101st Corps Support Group and DISCOM. In addition, we have stood up a completely new unit of action -- 4th Brigade Combat Team -- while reorganizing our other brigade combat teams and changing our division headquarters into a unit of employment.

To make way for these new units, the 101st has said goodbye to many of our keystone elements. This past summer, we inactivated 501st Signal Battalion, 311th Military Intelligence Battalion, 326th Engineer Battalion, 101st Corps Support Group, and the Division Support Command.

It's been a whirlwind summer for the division, and as many have come to expect, the 101st Airborne Division is meeting -- even exceeding -- the standard.

This process has not been easy and it won't get easier. The last four months have been full of hard work, and I suspect, a certain amount of confusion. There is still a great deal to be done as we continue to move Soldiers, transfer equipment, train on new equipment, and then train our units.

It will take the effort of each and every Soldier in our division, but there is no better division to lead the Army into the future. On March 15, 2005 - six months from now -- the 101st Airborne Division will emerge a vital part of a more joint capable, more expeditionary, more flexible Army.

We will be trained and ready to deploy in combat against any and all enemies of our country in this war.

Who better to lead our Army into this new era than this division? And who else but the outstanding Soldiers of this great division, who this time last year delivered hope to a nation locked in fear?

The Screaming Eagles have been called upon by our nation to lead our Army in new concepts of warfighting, while at war in the past.

Once again the 101st is called upon to lead a vital effort.

We will succeed!

Air Assault!

101st Aviation

Winds of change blow over rotors of aviation brigades

159th Aviation

Transformation is affecting all aspects of the 101st Airborne Division, creating a stronger, faster and more easily deployed unit.

A major component of transformation lies with the aviation brigades housed on Fort Campbell; 159th and 101st.

Before Army transformation began, 159th Avn. Bde., was purely an assault helicopter brigade, having no direct fire or attack assets.

The 101st Avn. Bde., was strictly an attack helicopter brigade, housing three Apache battalions, a Cavalry squadron and a Command Aviation Battalion.

Each brigade is now being transformed into mirror images of each other -- having both attack and assault capabilities as well as the support personnel needed for self-sustainment.

Each brigade will be made up of an attack battalion, an assault battalion, a cavalry squadron, a general support aviation battalion, or GSAB, and an aviation support battalion.

During the transformation to become "units of action," each brigade lost units. The 2/101st will deactivate from Fort Campbell and reactivate at Fort Bragg, N.C. One assault battalion originally with the 159th has now been assigned to 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga.

"Even though we've lost units, the brigade is actually going to be bigger," said Maj. Jim Adams, 101st Avn Bde executive officer. "We've added support battalions we didn't have before."

The aviation support battalion formerly with DISCOM -- 8/101st -- will be split apart. Half of the companies will join the 101st Avn. Bde., and half will be reactivated as the 9/101st under the 159th.

"Having these aviation support battalions is big," Adams said. "We will be able to almost completely support ourselves and it will give us a lot of flexibility."

It may be a while before the support battalions are operational since they are being built from scratch, Adams said. The equipment necessary for operation still must be acquired.

Once the transformation process is complete with each aviation brigade, they will have both light and heavy aircraft with attack and assault capabilities.

"We will have the best of everything," Adams said.

History: Division Support Command, 101st Corps Support Group contribute to new 101st SUA

Division Support Command has accepted change.

Several Soldiers moving from DISCOM to infantry brigades will be taking on that brigade's heritage. They will now have a history to their brigade, said Lt. Col. Randy Patterson.

HOLLOWAY

The name is changing as well. DISCOM will become 101st Sustainment Unit of Action, completely separate from Division Headquarters.

When the new headquarters deploys to an operation, DISCOM more than likely will no longer deploy with them. Instead, they could go somewhere else in support of a different operation.

The new SUA will be deployable with other units. They will not only be in support of the 101st. They are capable of working with other divisions, Patterson said.

"Now, we can be more modular and more dependable," Patterson said. "We can act as a joint entity for logistics."

VINING

Patterson said unit leaders are working hard to create a smooth transition so Soldiers are not really affected by the changes.

"I would hope they do not see a difference at all," he said. "When there is tension because of things like this, the lower levels feel it."

The Soldiers will only see the changes as preparation for the future, according to Patterson.

"They are looking at a deployment over the horizon."

Family readiness groups adjust to meet changes

by Jakki Williams
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The only certainty these days is change.

The structure of the Army is changing, and with it the structure of the family readiness groups at Fort Campbell. As part of that change, eight civilian workers were hired in June to act as FRG assistants on post.

One assistant works in each brigade combat team with the eighth acting as a supervisor -- or site manager -- to the others and as the FRG assistant for the newly realigned division headquarters.

"We are a part of a FORSCOM initiative," said Robin O'Sullivan, FRG site manager and assistant to the UEX. "The program came after officials recognized the stress of the rapid deployment of the Army, the pace of the Army, the strain that is on FRG volunteers. They recognized the need to augment the volunteer core."

The assistants will act as liaisons between unit commanders, Soldiers, FRG leaders and families. They are an additional referral source to individuals seeking help. They also are able to take feedback about services provided and help improve support mechanisms on post.

"The FRG leaders are tired and they need support," said Kimberly Arne, Division Support Command FRG assistant. "This program is to help them continue their mission to help the families,"

One mission the new assistants have is helping commanders navigate the transition and better support their Soldiers by providing for their families.

"In the transition, the first four UAs are getting pieces from all over post and we will assist the command group in making sure that they have operational family readiness groups," said Charlene Thomason, 1st UA assistant. "We will make sure Soldiers from all branches are made to feel welcome, are getting information and that it is passing all the way down from the brigades to the smallest platoons."

Who are they?

Fort Campbell hired eight civilian employees to operate as liaisons between the command and the family readiness groups. They are:

Site Mgr -- Robin O'Sullivan
1st BCT -- Charlene Thomason
2nd BCT -- Heidi Melvin
3rd BCT -- Cheryl Burns
4th BCT -- Jennifer Banks
101st Avn -- Karla Sketch
159th Avn -- Rhonda Klinger
101st Spt -- Kim Arne

In addition to married Soldiers, FRG assistants are attempting to make the groups attractive to single Soldiers.

The biggest advance anticipated is a new Web site for a virtual FRG.

The aim of the group is not to replace the all-volunteer FRG system, but to augment it. The volunteer groups will often shift as members PCS or ETS.

"During deployments, as volunteers come and go, we will be the continuity," Thomason said.

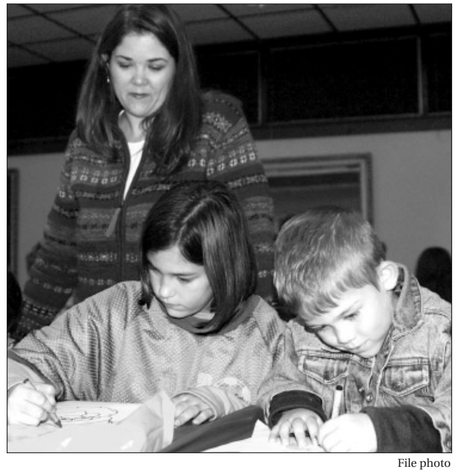
"We will be the steady source of referrals, the point that is not changing."

In addition, the assistants will inform both the UA and the FRG leaders of regulations.

"It is an awesome task to be an FRG leader," Thomason said.

Because the FRG system is volunteer based, all the rules, regulations and resources are hard for leaders to keep track of in the midst of their own lives and trying to guide others. This is where the assistants work. With 22 percent of resources being referred, the group wants to improve usage of aid agencies to 100 percent, Arne said.

During a deployment, the staff is able to support the rear detachment commander.



File photo

Family readiness groups have received a full-time staff of paid employees to help keep vital programs running equally.

File photo

Division Soldiers work in coordination with a Chinook helicopter at a post training exercise. Under modularity, division headquarters will have capabilities currently found at the corps level.

Division headquarters takes on new role as corps level support

by Pfc. Brett Townsend
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Joint, expeditionary and modular; these three terms describe the basis for all the transformatsions taking place in the Army today and in years to come.

In times past, the Army tackled operations by "borrowing" slices of necessary components to complete a mission. Now, the need to borrow slices of different combat and support elements will no longer be a necessity.

Major Ike Wilson, chief of plans and operations at the 101st Modularity Coordination Cell, works daily to aid in making the transformation happen.

"The whole idea is to focus on the brigade combat team to make all the brigades the same," Wilson said.

In addition to increasing the operating size of most units and companies, the headquarters element is also undergoing a large influx of incoming Soldiers.

Wilson pointed out that because headquarters will be designed to function over larger and more varied groups, it was in turn necessary to drastically increase the numbers within the headquarters element.

"The new headquarters will be doing jobs that used to be at the corps level as well as taking complete control of manning," Wilson said. "Essentially, our span of control will be greatly increasing."

The relationship between the new 101st Headquarters Company and the rest of the units on Fort Campbell will also change.

"Before these changes, Headquarters 'owned' the rest of Fort Campbell's units," Wilson said. "Now, the relationship will be more like that of a foster parent and foster children."

Wilson also stated that U.S. Army Garrison will take over much of the caretaking that was traditionally done by the division.

The likelihood is that the majority of the changes involved with transformation will be complete by mid-March 2005, but Wilson said complete transformation for Fort Campbell could last well into next year.

Army-wide, the transformations are projected to be completed by the year 2010.

Did You Know?

The new HHC, 101st, has increased troop numbers from about 200 to more than 1,000. The unit, called 501st STB, will be organized with two tactical command posts and Headquarters UEx.