Replacement Company sees huge swell of incoming troops; develops creative adjustments to processing

by Spc. Chris Jones
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There may be a lot of inexperienced privates over at Replacement Company, but in a war of numbers, they'd probably win.

With more than 600 Soldiers, Replacement is virtually the size of a battalion -- it is by far the largest company on Fort Campbell and would make a pretty formidable army in itself. Most of these troops are on their way to the 101st Airborne Division's new 4th Brigade Combat Team.

The flood of Soldiers began in late spring and peaked in July, when several hundred Soldiers filled the ranks in replacement formations, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Secor, operations non-commissioned officer there.

"I added a bunch of new bunks for the barracks," said Secor, explaining how the new Soldiers were housed. "When I ran out of bunks, I brought out cots for the Soldiers to sleep on."

It's a race against time for Secor and the staff at Replacement. The initiation of 4th Brigade has brought troops in at the fastest pace in years, and nobody gets to their unit without going through Replacement.

Secor estimates more than 1,100 Soldiers will arrive at Fort Campbell by November. With only one NCO in each platoon to get these Soldiers ready for their unit, the mission has carried on as normal, but now with around four times as many troops in the company.

"Long days, every day," Secor explained. "I haven't taken a weekend off in a long time. I'll come in at least for a few hours on Saturday on Sunday. You never know when a Soldier will need help with something."

The role of Replacement Company is to guide and prepare Soldiers for their future service on Fort Campbell. While at this short-term unit, troops arrange their finances, medical and dental records, and personnel files, all the while going to briefings nearly every weekday.

"I'm glad to be here at Fort Campbell," said Pvt. Matthew Stene, an infantryman who spent nearly three weeks at Replacement. "But you can only sit around at Replacement for so long. When you first get here, you're happy to be getting paid for doing nothing. After a while, you can't wait to go train."

Lately, Replacement endured yet another flood of troops -- this time, the Soldiers were leaving. In no more than two weeks, between three and four hundred Soldiers were shipped out to their respective units.

"[In July and August], things were definitely bad," said Secor, "We were way backed up over the summer, but things are way better now, pretty much back to normal."

The influx may not be over yet, but it's a good week for Replacement Company. The cots are back in storage, company runs don't look like battalion runs, and the local dining facility may now have enough food to give troops a second tray.

Jones | *40th PAD*

NCOs at the replacement detachment on Fort Campbell daily lead incoming Soldiers in physical training. Numbers of incoming troops have more than doubled lately.

Aviation Soldiers deploy to Fort Hood for AH-64 Apache helicopter training; fourth deployment in three years

McDowell | *Courier*

Brittany Adkins and Spc. Jonathan Pyles, 3-101, hug goodbye Saturday.

by Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell
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Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment packed up cars and gathered at their headquarters Saturday to sign out for a nine-month deployment to Fort Hood, Texas.

Family members hugged and kissed their Soldiers goodbye as they loaded into their cars and the caravan drove away.

Soldiers of 3-101 are headed to Fort Hood for the Unit Fielding and Training Program, which is responsible for receiving and training new units on AH-64 Apache helicopters.

"The Soldiers will be receiving training on the same aircraft, just with updated systems," said Capt. Mike Williams, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3-101.

"[Soldiers] will receive everything from [Common Task Training] to battalion level training," said 1st Sgt. Al Holder, HHC first sergeant.

The training is considered important for new Soldiers as well as seasoned veterans because the unit is receiving new personnel who have not deployed with the unit before, said Holder. The training will show Soldiers how to work together fast to help understand each other's jobs.

"I hope the new Soldiers will gain experience and the old Soldiers will gain a familiarization," Williams said.

This is the unit's fourth deployment in the last three years. They were deployed to Afghanistan for six months and then to Kosovo for another six months. After returning from Kosovo, they deployed to Iraq for a year. They returned from Iraq in February and reached Fort Hood this week.

Family members are able to join their Soldiers for the deployment, but many did not because of work or children in school.

"At least they are not going overseas," said Kristina Romero, wife of Pvt. Robert Romero, who is new to the unit and fresh out of advanced individual training.

The Army is planning to provide the Soldiers of 3-101 an opportunity to return home to their families for the holidays. The date has not been determined.

Bastogne welcomes units to The Club

GRAY

MALLOY

First Brigade, 327th Infantry Regiment is embracing transformation.

Consisting of three infantry battalions -- "Above the Rest", "No Slack" and "Battle Force" -- Bastogne recently added 2/320th Field Artillery, 426th Brigade Support Battalion and 326th Brigade Troops Battalion to its rolls.

Change is occurring all around in the home of the Bulldogs as Soldiers meet the challenges of transformation through discipline and focused direction toward their wartime mission.

The brigade's storied history includes service in conflicts and peacekeeping missions during World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Haiti and Southwest Asia.

The unit came to Fort Campbell in 1956 and has been an Air Assault infantry brigade since January 1972. Bastogne conducted the largest air assault in history during Operation Desert Storm.

Bastogne Soldiers can be recognized by the club they wear on the side of their Kevlar helmets. During World War II every regiment of 101st Airborne Division was distinguished by stenciling one of the four playing card suits on the side of their helmets. The club marks Bastogne and will remain a part of it.

The most significant change in store for 1st BCT is making sure all of the units that have supported them during their training exercises in the past are now "full members of The Club," said Col. David Gray, commander of 1st Brigade Combat Team.

Transformation will affect how the entire brigade operates, said Gray and Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy.

"We will be a more integrated combined arms force that's more cohesive and versatile, capable of fighting across the full spectrum of warfare," Gray said.

"The Soldiers understand that change is tough," Malloy said, "but remaining flexible is the key to success."

The core mission of the brigade will remain unchanged; to defeat all enemies.

"The BCT will be able to deploy faster than before," Malloy said, "and it will allow us to be more effective once we get to our destination."

Strike first: 2nd Brigade Combat Team welcomes new members

The long anticipated Army transformation and reorganization has become more of a reality every day for 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

Commanders from the unit say they look forward to all the changes.

"The overall effect of transformation on 2nd Brigade is very positive," said Col. Todd Ebel, 2nd Brigade Commander. "We've simply made the brigade war-fighting team's structure permanent day in and day out."

"This will go a long way to build trust and confidence essential for war fighting," he said.

STALL

Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Stall said the atmosphere in the entire brigade is "energized" even though transformation affects some units more than others.

"Second BCT ranks remain filled with capable, competent and skilled Soldiers committed to ensuring our mission," Stall said.

EBEL

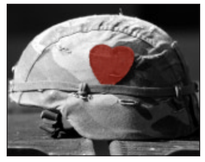
"We will benefit because we'll daily be in contact with each other," Ebel said. "This helps all to gain a better appreciation of the teamwork required on a modern battlefield."

While every BCT is similar in structure what makes 2nd BCT special is twofold.

"First it has the best motto for a war-fighting unit, 'STRIKE!' that simply says it all. This motto, coupled with the mark of an outstretched eagle claw, should open everyone's eyes to what 2nd BCT is all about; war fighting, striking our enemies with the speed and fury of an angry eagle," Ebel said. "Second, and more importantly, 2nd BCT, the Strike BCT, is filled with great people, Soldiers, NCOs and officers alike."

He said each can be totally trusted and counted on to accomplish his or her mission.

"Each MOS and the Soldiers that fill them are critical to the strike BCT's success," Ebel said. "Regardless of special skills training, all of us are warriors first."



New Torii rising

Rakkasans add fresh coat of paint to rich heritage

Third Brigade Combat Team has a long history of deploying since organizing August 1917 as an element of 80th Division at Camp Lee, Va.

DIAZ

However, 3rd BCT did not evolve into its modern configuration of three infantry battalions until February 1964.

STEELE

After spending nearly 18 of the last 24 months again deployed, the unit is tackling its latest mission; configuring to the Army's newest unit transformation. Everybody is on board, according to Maj. David Beachman, executive officer for 3rd BCT.

Along with personnel changing, the amount of assigned vehicles will also increase, said Beachman.

"It is a slow process getting the vehicles we need since this transformation is Army-wide", Beachman said.

Another hurdle being overcome with the new transformation is finding temporary facilities for their Soldiers while reconstruction of the unit takes place, said Beachman.

"These are merely hurdles," said Beachman, "that will be overcome to make this transformation complete."

Rakkasans' unit awards

* The Meritoious Unit Commendation -- Vietnam 1968
* Valorous Unit Award -- Vietnam 1969
* Presidential Unit Citation -- Vietnam 1969
* Meritous Unit Commendation -- Desert Storm 1991

Fourth BCT awaits regimental history while transforming

From scratch.

That is where 4th Brigade Combat Team is starting in forming the newest unit to hit the streets of Fort Campbell.

Although the unit is new to the area, many of its Soldiers are not. In an effort to get the unit up and running, battalion and company commanders from the three existing brigades called for volunteers, about 200 per brigade, to join the ranks of 4th.

VAIL

Since then, many unit commanders and senior enlisted have settled under the brigade colors.

Besides getting new Soldiers and equipment, 4th is also having to create new subordinate units, said officials at the Modularity Coordination Cell on post.

CHAPMAN

As an example, 1st, 2nd and 3rd have received an artillery battalion each from the old Division Artillery. Fourth is creating a new artillery battalion from a slice of each of the old battalions.

The remaining question is one of identity. Regimental affiliation is still being ironed out at the Department of the Army.