

Retrained Soldiers deploy

Spc. Levi Spellman
214th Fires Brigade PAO
 Members of B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 4th Field Artillery were recognized during a farewell ceremony for the unit at Rinehart Fitness Center, Jan. 12.

The members of the Multiple-Launch Rocket System battery have retrained to operate the Firefinder Radar System, which is designed to detect incoming artillery and determine its source, said CW2 Leo Cargill, one of the 214th Fires Brigade's experts on the system.

Last autumn, the first wave of B Battery troops deployed with members of H26 Target Acquisition Battery. At that time, Capt. Robert E. Barnett, B Battery commander, set the tone for his unit's approach to the mission.

"These Soldiers can adapt. They are agile, and this is a perfect example of the field artillery community adjusting to meet the Army's needs," he said.

This wave will be deploying at various locations around Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn, said Cargill.

Thanking the audience for honoring the Soldiers and families with their attendance, Col. Mike Cabrey, 214th FiB commander, praised the unit's readiness. Wishing its personnel a safe and successful deployment, Cabrey also reiterated the importance of their responsibility in providing safety to those serving beside them.

"The role of force protection has never been more important," said Cabrey.

However, the demands of this deployment are unique for Sarah Medlock, wife of deploying Spc. Aaron Medlock. With the birth of their first child only a few weeks past, the gravity of the situation has truly set in, she said. Yet, she still believes in her husband, his unit, and their purpose.

"This is our first deployment. It's going to be very challenging because he's very helpful. It's just pretty emotional," she said. "But, I support him. He's fighting for our country."

News briefs

Ceremonies

The public is invited to the Commanding General's National Prayer Breakfast Feb. 9 from 7-9 a.m. at The Patriot Club. The guest speaker is Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Douglas Carver, Army chief of chaplains.

The public is invited to the Fort Sill African American History Luncheon Feb. 17 at 11:30 a.m. at the Patriot Club. Tickets are \$8 and are available at the Fort Sill Equal Opportunity Office or by calling 442-5895.

ID Web appointments

The Fort Sill ID Card facility now has a Web-based appointment scheduling system. Make, cancel or find an appointment at <http://appointments.cac.navy.mil> then click on the "Make appointment" tab, select "OK" for Oklahoma from the drop down menu and click "Go," click "Fort Sill" and then follow the prompts. Customers can also still call 442-5010 to make an appointment.

Road closures

One lane of Bald Ridge Road from Beef Creek Road to East Boundary Road will be under construction until spring.

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Plowing ahead



Fort Sill road and surface crews worked all day Tuesday in treacherous conditions to make post roads passable after Mother Nature dumped 5 to 6 inches of snow, sleet and ice on the Lawton-Fort Sill community Monday night and Tuesday. The post closed Tuesday and Wednesday.

Photo by Keith Pannell

Drivers should prepare for gate closures

By James Brabenec

Modifications to Fort Sill entry control points moves to the south side of post Monday as Fort Sill Boulevard (Scott) gate will close for construction.

Bob Pirtle, Emergency Services director, said the work on the post's primary two south gates will take place during time the Oklahoma Department of Transportation is working on traffic improvements to access Rogers Lane.

The intent is to minimize the impact to people who commute to work daily along this route," said Pirtle.

Jerry Harwell, resident engineer for the Fort Sill Boulevard and Sheridan Road interchange improvements, said the work will only affect northbound traffic flow for each closed gate. The gist of the construction is to install traffic lights with left-hand turn lanes at both ends of each over-

pass. This will do away with the surface level median openings to make left turns onto Rogers Lane.

Each interchange will allow east-bound Rogers Lane drivers to exit and head south into Lawton. Conversely, those west-bound drivers will still be able to exit up onto the overpass and head south into Lawton.

Work is scheduled to end on the Fort Sill Boulevard interchange no later than May 1. It will then begin on Sheridan Road interchange no sooner than May 2.

To help alleviate congestion, Gate 2 will open Monday through Friday from 5-9 a.m. for in-bound traffic only. After 9 a.m., Gate 2 will revert to normal in- and out-bound traffic from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, like 52nd Street Gate.

Pirtle said the entry control point construction will continue for the next 12 to 18 months to complete Automated Installation Entry infrastructure upgrades to

Sill gates. The automated technology will not be installed at this time but will be added at a later date.

Traffic will be monitored during this transition period, and Pirtle added his staff will continue to monitor traffic flow.

"If we see something that's not right, we're going to change it and try to make the flow better and safer while keeping force protection measures in mind," he said.

He said those people who elect to enter post through Gate 2 will be asked to follow Mow Way Road to Condon or Geronimo roads rather than cut through post housing to access Sheridan Road. Drivers may likely see routes through housing blocked to traffic during the morning commute.

Although drive times may increase during this construction phase, Pirtle said post leadership

has not considered staggered report-to-work hours to help alleviate traffic concerns. Pirtle said that has not been discussed.

"I stay in contact with my traffic control section, chief of police and operations to forecast how things will go," said Pirtle. "We will continue to this and may make adjustments to optimize traffic flow."

Randy Butler, Directorate of Public Works director, said DPW will provide oversight of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gate improvement project. Once the upgrades are complete they will significantly enhance the security posture of the post.

"People need to adjust their entry to the installation based on the gates that are open. Expect lines at left-turn lanes off Rogers Lane or consider using Key Gate or 52nd Street Gate during this construction."

Cold blast joins 75th FiB blasts

By Marie Berberea

The name Operation Diamond Freeze couldn't have been more appropriate during the last part of the 75th Fires Brigade's combined arms live fire exercise which took a pause from training to practice safety.

"We should be able to train and fight in adverse conditions, but that line of being stupid versus good training, we have to be cognizant of it," said Col. Joseph Harrington, 75th FiB commander.

Monday afternoon the sky was still filled with rounds as commanders watched the weather progress. The 100th Brigade Support Battalion was furiously trying to oversupply those who may be in the field for an extended period of time.

"The first week was absolutely gorgeous here at Fort Sill. The second week has turned into a bit of a challenge," said Col. Gavin Gardner, 100th BSB commander. "We procured extra heaters and tents to make sure everyone has a warm place to sleep."

As everyone waited to see if the weather predictions were right, freezing rain and hail began to fall. Temperatures dropped drastically and the exercise was officially frozen; a stark



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jason Kucera

Vehicles sit trapped in the snow as Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Singaporean observers stay warm inside Forward Operating Base MowWay. Operation Diamond Freeze earned its name after a storm blew in during the massive combined live fire exercise Feb. 1.

contrast to the conditions of the previous week.

"It's interesting. Last week I thought Diamond Freeze was Diamond Sunshine, it's making up for it right now," said Harrington.

The onslaught of snow transformed the previously brown ranges to a blinding white as the slew of participants trudged on. The exercise began Jan. 24 focusing on combined arms maneuvers and counter fires. Soldiers, airmen, Marines and even Singaporean observers practiced their part in real-world combat joint operations.

"In 2004, the Army went from all the divisions running how we fight to all the brigades. Each brigade is now independently deployable," said Harrington. "Fires brigades are supposed to integrate fire support assets and we're focused on the team fight."

However, Harrington said with current operations, Soldiers found themselves serving as truck drivers or military police while deployed and weren't afforded the opportunity to practice the transition.

The Diamond Brigade is making up for that now as this is their third major joint exercise, and

they brought in even more participants.

"If you screw it up here, who cares? These guys are learning how to put all of this together. There's not a script when you get deployed. If you learn to make multiple contingency operations and make decisions on the fly — that's a lesson you can't replace," said Harrington.

While the weather may have slowed down operations in the second week, the training is still viewed as a success.

"This is the last major exercise that we have to complete before our company will say, 'Yep, you guys are certified to go to Afghanistan,'" said Maj. Kevin Stout, 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Stout said the exercise offers a unique training opportunity with the Army, and one his fellow Marines seem to enjoy.

"I just like getting out and actually doing my job, you know dropping bombs and whatnot," Cpl. Vincent Scognamiglio, 1st ANGLICO.

Scognamiglio explained that Operation Diamond Freeze gives them objectives and goals to meet with ever-changing scenarios to keep those in the field on their toes.

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