

ABSTRACT

Documenting and Interpreting the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment's 2007-09 Deployment to Iraq for the Third Cavalry Regiment Museum

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The Third Armored Cavalry Regiment (3d ACR) has a history spanning more than 150 years and is the last heavy cavalry regiment in the United States Army. In February 2009, the 3d ACR returned from its third deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09. This time is recorded in thousands of documents including after action reviews, journal articles, news reports, and award submissions. The objective of this thesis is to explore ways in which that deployment could best be interpreted for museum visitors in a meaningful, unique, and educational way. This thesis will both document much of the history of the deployment, and develop a way to summarize the deployment so that audiences learn about the significance of the unit in Iraq to the soldiers, their families and the people of Ninewa Province.

Documenting and Interpreting
the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment's 2007-09 Deployment to Iraq
for the Third Cavalry Regiment Museum

by

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A Thesis

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ABBREVIATIONS

3d ACR	Third Armored Cavalry Regiment
ACE	Armored Combat Excavator
ACU	Army Combat Uniform
AO	Area of Operations
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
CEC	Combat Engineer Company
COP	Combat Outpost
CPT	Captain
EOD	Explosive Ordinance Disposal
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
FRG	Family Readiness Group
FRSA	Family Readiness Support Assistance/ Assistant
FSG	Family Support Group
GOI	Government of Iraq
HMMWV	High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISF	Iraqi Security Force
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
MAJ	Major
MNF-I	Multi-National Forces – Iraq

MRAP	Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle
MRE	Meal Ready to Eat
MSR	Main Supply Route
OIC	Officer-in-Charge
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SGT	Sergeant
SIGACT	Significant Actions (that cause a report to be documented)
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TOC	Tactical Operations Center
TCP	Traffic Control Point
XO	Executive Officer

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To the 44 Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice
so that strangers could live in peace.
Brave Rifles. Veterans. Ai-ee-yah!

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Soldiers of the 3d ACR have a long and distinguished history of guarding the vulnerable in dangerous areas and times, which they continued during Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09 (OIF 07-09). As one of the last units to serve as part of “the surge” sent to restore order in Northern Iraq, in the cities of Mosul and the Ninewa Province, the soldiers soon realized that they were fighting a different kind of war. While their goal was always to demolish the enemy – though the identities of the enemy were often indistinguishable – there was also the mission of improving the lives of millions of Iraqis – poor and caught in the middle of a political power struggle they had no part of.

Soldiers of the 3d ACR knew this deployment was going to be a dangerous one. Practically on the eve of their deployment, Al-Qaeda in Iraq had declared their “Last Stand” Grand Victory over the Coalition. Major Matthew Dooley remembered that the “3d ACR waded into Mosul and Ninewa Province ready to fight. The brutality of our first 6 or 7 months there...reflected the intensity of that confrontation.”¹ Dooley continued:

¹ In researching this thesis, the author interviewed ten soldiers who served with the 3d ACR in Iraq 07-09. This quote is from an interview with MAJ Matthew Dooley, January 6, 2010.

Sent to one of the worst places imaginable, against an enemy who had declared our AO to be 'his chosen spot for his last stand' ...we confronted him, out-thought him, out-fought him, and ultimately defeated him by preventing AQI from seizing control over Mosul. Unfortunately, it was not without cost, as the Regiment received the highest casualties of any similar brigade sized unit assigned to MNF-I. All of this was accomplished within the constraints of the Regiment operating as an economy-of-force to a division, who itself was operating as an economy-of-force to a Corps. Ultimately, being short of everything, except the enemy, is one of the proud Cavalry traditions present in our nation's military history. This mission was no different.²

As in any experience, this deployment had its victories and tragedies.

These Soldiers were in constant danger. These feelings were most often tempered with knowing that they were making a positive impact on others. LTC Cameron Cantlon (a major during the deployment) remembers, "It was dangerous and required Soldiers to place themselves within their formations into harm's way on a daily basis. The work, however, was punctuated by the constant feedback in the form of seeing security and life in general improve amongst Iraqis."³ CPT Justin Harper concurred:

While there were many individual tragedies that were incredibly significant, the most significant event was the individual Soldier seeing real progress in accomplishing our mission. This manifested itself in Iraqi security forces occupying areas they previously abandoned, civilian business reopening shops, traffic jams worse

² MAJ Matthew Dooley, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2010.

³ LTC Cameron Cantlon, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2009.

'than major US cities, and the ultimate sense that Iraqis were finally taking responsibility for security of their country.⁴

And while the United States Military is the most powerful military ever known to man, this mission needed a human touch to succeed. As CPT Harper noted: "Our work in Iraq had success because we evaluated individual men and woman and interacted with them with a firm understanding that they could not be typecast into an easy formula...Recognizing this inside and outside of my organization was the key to using human capital in an effective way"⁵

Combating a different type of enemy also demanded a different type of soldier. According to MAJ Dooley, these troopers were required to be versatile acting as "leader, planner, soldier, and statesman." The soldiers had to become "adaptive leaders" who needed to "exercise very mature judgment and tactical patience. In this art, the careful application of restraint and shrewd political skills was every bit as important as our willingness/capacity to kill 'bad guys.'"⁶

It would be foolish, however, to believe that statesmanship was the only key to winning this conflict. "Without the constant pressure the Regiment kept on the enemy, there would have been no credibility to back-up our softer levers of influence (diplomatic, economic, political, etc)," says Dooley. He continues, "Despite the popular mantra of counter-insurgency being an art form of creating

⁴ CPT Justin Harper, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2010.

⁵ Harper, Interview

⁶ Dooley, Interview

largely non-military solutions, the importance of how effective we were at killing and capturing bad guys on a regular basis cannot be understated.” Dooley explains:

As innovative, well-funded, and deliberate as all of our non-lethal methods and programs were, we would have had no traction with any of these efforts if we hadn’t had the firepower of an Armored Cavalry Regiment present to back it up and impose our will. In (the Iraqi) culture, it seems power is respected and the appearance of weakness begets disrespect and violence.⁷

When the 3d ACR landed in the city of Mosul, the war had been going on for more than five years. The regiment had, in fact, been deployed during Operation Iraqi Freedom twice before, in 2002-03, and 2005-06 and like many units during that timeframe succeeded in their individual missions. And while there were victories, the units redeployed knowing there was still much work to be done in Iraq before the Iraqi government could take control of their own country and people. Soldiers who deployed with 3d ACR during OIF 07-09, through hard work and sacrifice, were able to see tangible success. Major Adam Boyd points out that the regiment arrived during a transitional time in that region – the Iraqi Government was preparing to take control of their country, Ninewa province was moving toward a representative government, and in the United States, campaigning for the 2008 Presidential election was in full swing.⁸

⁷ Dooley, Interview

⁸ MAJ Adam Boyd, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2009.

LTC Gary Dangerfield, who served as the Regimental Public Affairs Officer and the Distinguished Visitor's Bureau Officer-in-charge (OIC), concurs. Working almost daily with news reporters, Dangerfield was consistently up-to-date on what was happening throughout the Regiment: "When the Regiment arrived in Mosul [in November 2007], the previous unit was experiencing 35-40 attacks on any given day. Prior to the Regiment's departure in January [2009], the attacks dropped to 7-10 on any given day."⁹

With great success came great tragedy. The 3d ACR lost 44 soldiers during its 15-month deployment. They have not been forgotten. While their names have been added to the 3d ACR Iraqi Freedom Memorial located on Fort Hood, it is the private toasts and the table at many Regimental social functions that is symbolically set but empty that continues to honor those fallen soldiers.

⁹ LTC Gary Dangerfield, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2010.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Background

Third Armored Cavalry Regiment

The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment began as protector to Americans on their journey toward Manifest Destiny and the promise of a new life in the unsettled west. When the country needed defending, the Regiment ran to the sound of battle. Throughout their 163 year history, these dual missions – protecting citizens and fighting for peace – has defined this unit, the second-oldest serving cavalry unit in the Army. As the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, the unit was the first to defeat Santa Anna at Chapultepec during the Mexican-American War, and protected settlers on the western frontier. Fighting as the 3d Cavalry Regiment, the unit fought against the Confederacy, many of whose soldiers belonged to the Regiment only a short year or two before. The Regiment traveled to Cuba and then to the Philippines to fight in the Spanish American War, the first counter-insurgency war that America ever fought, returning to the Philippines several years later to keep the peace for the war-torn country. So impressed with the ruggedness and swagger of cavalrymen, Western Artist Frederic Remington used the Regiment's soldiers as inspiration for some of his famous cavalry works, including the iconic "Old Bill." After World War I, the Regiment gave up its horses in favor for more modern and deadly means of

transportation. With the battles finished in World War II, the Regiment helped liberate the Ebensee Concentration Camp, continuing their role as guardian to those in desperate need. As a specially-trained REFORGER force in the 1970s, the Regiment was poised to rapidly deploy to Europe at the smallest sign of communist aggression. In the next decade, the Regiment diversified, adding highly technical elements to its tank fleet and specialized units to the Regiment to become a new and unique fighting force. One of the first to be deployed in 1990 to support Operation Desert Shield, the Regiment fought against the Iraqi Republican Guard Divisions. Later that decade, the Regiment would take on its first United Nations peace-keeping mission in Bosnia, returning the soldiers to their roles as protector. In 2000, the Regiment would begin the first of three deployments to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During their third deployment, the 3d ACR would again find themselves serving two missions – protecting the citizens of Mosul and fighting Al-Qaeda.

Defending the Frontier in the 19th Century

In the 1840s, thousands of Americans set out on the Oregon Trail. To protect and guide these settlers, the U.S. Congress passed laws on May 19, 1846, authorizing and funding military posts to be established along the westward

roads and to raise a Regiment of Mounted Riflemen to garrison those posts.¹

This begins the history of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment (3d ACR).

Fierce fighting in Mexico, scouting Indians on the Frontier, and serving in the Civil War formed the experiences of the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen in the 19th century. At first organized only to help secure trails for settlers traveling west, the Regiment would quickly prove its worthiness as foot soldiers on the heavily contested fields of battle in Mexico during the Mexican-American War. On the frontier, their experiences fighting Indians, an unconventional enemy, forced the Regiment to fight in unorthodox ways using their horses' speed and revolvers rather than traditional sabers to counter the Indians swiftness and dexterity. Unappreciated and misunderstood by the Army in the East, the Regiment's role in the Civil War took on a more traditional appearance, serving as an advanced guard for General William Tecumseh Sherman. After the war and guided by General Philip Sheridan's new offensive tactics, the Regiment served all over the Frontier fighting the Indian Wars to the end.

The Mexican War

Having been quickly raised to travel to Oregon, the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen was unexpectedly and immediately redirected south to fight in the

¹ Osborne Cross, *The March of the Mounted Riflemen, first United States military expedition to travel the full length of the Oregon trail from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Vancouver, May to October, 1849, as recorded in the journals of Major Osborne Cross and George Gibbs and the official report of Colonel Loring*, ed. Raymond W. Settle [Glendale, CA, Arthur H. Clark, 1940], 13.

Mexican-American War arriving at Vera Cruz, Mexico on March 9, 1847. When the Regiment's horses were tragically lost during a storm off the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, the Regiment fought as foot riflemen, distinguishing themselves in six campaigns, including battles at Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Molina del Rey as well as Contreras and Churubusco.² The Regiment's most celebrated victory was on September 13, 1847 at Chapultepec, a battle cited as "the most brilliant operation" of the war for its difficult maneuvering and hot firing of cannon and guns from both sides.³ As historians George Winston Smith and Charles Judah wrote in their book, *Chronicles of the Gringos*:

The enemy was in the strongest position he has ever occupied and was twelve thousand strong with ten pieces of cannon, the whole force being under command of Santa Anna in person.⁴

Led by Lieutenant B. S. Roberts, the Regiment's storming party was the first to plant the American flag on the Mexican national palace. While reviewing the Regiment the next day, General Winfield Scott, commander of the American forces, famously said, "Brave Rifles! Veterans! You have been baptized in fire and have come out steel!" These words were immediately

² Albert G. Brackett, *History of the United States Cavalry* [Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1865]

³ George Winston Smith and Charles Judah, *Chronicles of the Gringos*, The U.S. Army in the Mexican War, 1846-1848 [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968], 263.

⁴ Ibid.

adopted as the Regimental motto and continue to be part of today's

Regimental Accolade: Brave Rifles! Veterans! Ai-ee-yah!⁵

Indian Campaigns

Upon the completion of their assignment in the Mexican-American War, the Regiment focused on their original purpose of patrolling the western frontier. The Riflemen arrived in Oregon City in November 1849. While not engaged in traditional warfare, their mission was a difficult one, "Surveying routes while guarding against hostile Indians and dealing with the problems of supply, swollen rivers, and disease made for a grueling mission."⁶

The Regiment was also hampered by the Army's lack of manpower. Settlers and military officers alike were equal in their criticism of the government for not increasing the size of the Army. Additionally, with their direct experience of fighting "fast riding Indians," they called for more horse soldiers.

The Daily Missouri Democrat weighed in on the criticism writing:

As well might we send boys into a cornfield to catch marauding crows with hopes of success as to start foot-soldiers in pursuit of Indians.⁷

⁵ Cross, 15. Cross is one of many authors who cite the victory at Chapultepec as the motivation for Scott's famous quote. Other authors claim that it was the victory at Churubusco that inspired him. The Third Cavalry Museum continues to research the event.

⁶ Third Cavalry Museum, *Blood and Steel! The History, Customs, and Traditions of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment*, Fort Hood, Texas, 2008, 6.

⁷ James M. Merrill, *Spurs to Glory, the Story of the United States Cavalry* [Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966], 76.

Indeed, Indians proved to be a different kind of enemy. The idea of fighting this quick, so-called “shifty” enemy required soldiers to rethink their strategy, especially in terms of the types of weapons. The most criticized weapon was the saber, “a noisy encumbrance”:

The saber’s advantage, a few argued, was in the cavalry charge when row upon row of plunging steel blades struck terror in the uninitiated. The impulse was to turn and run. But against Indians the only chance a trooper had to wield the saber was when his adversary had engaged another opponent. The mounted red man was too shifty and quick to be caught by a blow from a swinging blade. The cavalry’s use of the lance was limited by the Army’s principle of employing mounted troops capable of dismounted action. As cavalry tactics developed, the Army emphasized the use of rapidly concentrated firepower and discovered that mounted riflemen were far superior to lancers.⁸

By January 1852, the Regiment had settled in Fort Merrill, Texas, to continue campaigning against – and often with – various Indian tribes. In 1853, while still at Fort Merrill, the Regiment was redesignated as the First Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, as the Army considered raising another regiment of mounted riflemen. Although another unit of riflemen was never raised, the Regiment continued using its “First” designation.⁹

During this period, one of the unit’s most famous members was assigned to the Mounted Rifles. Upon his graduation from West Point in 1854, Lt. James

⁸ Ibid., 80.

⁹ Third Cavalry Museum, 7.

Ewell Brown “JEB” Stewart served with the Regiment. Stewart would later find fame – and infamy – as the Commander of the Confederate Cavalry.¹⁰

Beginning in 1856, the Regiment spent the next five years moving through Texas and the New Mexico Territory continuing the United States’ campaign against Indians. The inadequate number of troops continued to be a problem for the Regiment, which had the task of “patrolling an area that extended from Denver, Colorado to the Mexican border, and from West Texas to Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.”¹¹ It was also often an unnerving mission as one soldier wrote regarding a typical day, “we continued our march without any incident of note, although, as I have said, we were in hourly danger of attack or molestation from our redskin neighbors.”¹²

Civil War

In his *Recollections of a Virginian*, General Dabney H. Maury wrote passionately about the effect the upcoming War Between the States had on the unit’s members when he was stationed in New Mexico as a Captain with the Regiment.

We all got on very cordially together until the quickening excitement of the approaching war separated us. Before the year was out we had to be upon our guard in our intercourse with each

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Dabney H. Maury, *Recollections of a Virginian* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1894], 121.

other; for whereas we seemed to be in accord before the hostilities began,...when the time came to prove the faith, there were but few [Southern soldiers] who gave up the certain pay and emoluments of the established government of the United States for the uncertainty of one yet to be created. I remember that at our last Christmas dinner in Santa Fe, we carefully selected our guests according to their avowed intentions in the coming crisis.¹³

Lydia Spencer Lane, wife of Lieutenant William B. Lane, attended that dinner and recalled in her book, *I Married A Soldier*, that indeed tensions did run high, even among Maury's carefully selected dinner guests. "The possibility of war between North and South was freely discussed at table, with considerable excitement, and so hotly at times the ladies were embarrassed considerably. There were advocates for both sides, while others were reticent as to their sentiments." ¹⁴

The fall of Fort Sumter signaled the beginning of the Civil War. Maury describes the sadness that many in the Regiment felt at the news:

The die was cast. The great war which was to bring to us and to our people ruin and desolation was upon us, and we must go to meet it. It was in no light or unappreciative mood that we sat looking at each other in the silence which followed the reading of the telegrams; for we realized the greatness of the sacrifice expected of us, and it was with sad hearts that we turned our backs upon the friends and associations of a happy past, and faced the issues of a future which had little to offer us save the consciousness of duty loyally performed. At last I awoke once more to the excitement of the moment, and to a realization of the great crisis of which we are

¹³ Ibid., 128.

¹⁴ Lydia Spencer Lane, *I Married a Soldier* [Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott, 1893], 96

alone were informed, and seizing the papers, I ran out into the street and made my way to the officers' quarters, shouting aloud as I went that Fort Sumter had fallen, and war had begun!¹⁵

Once war was announced many of the Regiment's soldiers, including the commander, COL William Wing Loring, left to join the Confederate cause. This exodus of soldiers in addition to inter-Army transfers ultimately left the Regiment the size of a battalion. Unlike the South, the Northern states were not accustomed to horse soldiers and failed to see the benefit of a trained cavalry unit during the war. Only after much public pressure did President Abraham Lincoln order the War Department to accept additional volunteer cavalry units. Unlike the Regiment's experienced soldiers, the enthusiasm these volunteer units brought to the battlefield heavily outweighed their abilities and ultimately did little to enhance the Union's fighting force.

In August 1861, the U.S. Army's mounted soldiers were reorganized, with the First Regiment of Mounted Riflemen being redesignated as the 3d United States Cavalry Regiment.¹⁶

Not all Southerners left the Regiment. CPT Alexander McRae of North Carolina, for example, "was ostracized by his own family for remaining loyal to the Union cause. His belief in the oath to 'preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution' was absolute - "McRae, commander of a provisional artillery

¹⁵ Maury, 129-130.

¹⁶ Third Cavalry Museum, 7.

battery, fought the Confederate army at the Battle of Val Verde, “the largest Civil War land battle west of the Mississippi.”¹⁷ Ordered to cover other Union soldiers, McRae’s battery found itself in fierce battle, ultimately engaging in hand-to-hand fighting with pistols, knives and bayonets. When his battery was overrun and his commander ordered him to withdraw, McRae refused. *The St. Louis Republican* wrote, “With his artillerymen cut down, his support either killed, wounded or flying from the field, Capt. McRae sat down calmly on one of his guns, and with revolver in hand, refusing to flee or desert his post, he fought to the last.”¹⁸

The Regiment spent much of the war performing reconnaissance missions for General William Tecumseh Sherman as part of his advanced guard.

Battle during the Civil War claimed the lives of two officers, including McRae, and 30 enlisted men. Three officers and 105 enlisted soldiers died of disease or other non-combat related causes.¹⁹

Frontier Life

After the Civil War, the 3d Cavalry was sent to Carlisle Barracks to reorganize and regain strength. The soldiers would continue the U.S.’s campaign against the Indians working for the Department of the Platte. Working in Arizona, Wyoming, Montana, the Dakotas and Nebraska, “the 3d Cavalry

¹⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 11.

became the main cavalry force for Department operations in the Black Hills region."²⁰

Prior to the Civil War, the frontier campaigns had been primarily defensive with the cavalry protecting settlements and keeping peace among the tribes. In 1868, General Philip Sheridan was assigned to the Department of the Missouri which protected the Great Plains. Because he was convinced that "moral persuasion" would not work with all of the Indian tribes, Sheridan switched to an offensive strategy, one designed to crush the hostiles' power and force them to submit to the supervision of the Indian Bureau. After studying the Indians, Sheridan knew that the Indians were most vulnerable during the winter when food and forage were scarce and their horses were in no condition to assist them in battle. Sheridan encouraged hunters to shoot as many bison as possible to limit the Indians' food supply and ordered his units, including the Regiment, to attack the Indians in the dead of winter, when the U.S.'s "well-fed horses could pursue and overtake the hostiles."²¹

The Regiment ended its participation in the Indian Wars after its defeat of the Apaches at the Battle of Big Dry Wash in 1882.

The mid-1880's brought some organizational changes to the Regiment including changing the term "company" with "troop" and the return of their

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Merrill, 198.

original guidon, which was “swallow-tail in design, the top half of which was red with the troop letter in white, the bottom half white, with the regimental number in red.”²² During the Civil War, the Regiment exchanged its original guidon for the 1863 stars and stripes pattern. The red and white guidon continues to be used by the Regiment today.

*The Battlefield Gets Bigger:
Defending Freedom in the 20th Century*

While America in the 19th century was focused on domestic concerns including westward expansion and the Civil War, America in the early 20th century quickly became a world power, with concerns outside its continental borders. The 3d Cavalry Regiment would see the world traveling on behalf of the United States as both warriors and guardians. Between the two World Wars, the Regiment would make one of the most dramatic changes in its history when it retired the use of horses in its operations.

The Spanish American War

While in Tampa, Florida, preparing for imminent deployment to Cuba, the Regiment was visited by western artist Frederic Remington, who was sent by *Harper's Weekly* to cover the war. Remington was a good friend of G Troop commander, CPT Francis Hardie. During their visit, Remington was inspired to draw the scene around him, particularly sketches of SGT John Lannen, one of

²² Merrill, 77.

Hardie's non-commissioned officers who struck Remington as the epitome of the cavalry soldier. From some of those rough sketches, Remington later drew his famous "Old Bill," which depicted a soldier on his mount with his weapon cradled in his arms (see appendix A). Universally used and "recognized as the symbol of mobile warfare in the United States Army, the drawing represents a Trooper, a unit, and a branch of service." Sadly, shortly after Remington's visit, Lannen died of yellow fever, having served 30 years in the Army."²³

Between 1895 and 1898, Cuba and the Philippines revolted against Spanish rule in an attempt to gain independence. The United States soon found itself engaging Spain on behalf of the two countries. In 1898, the 3d ACR was called into action to fight in the Spanish American War. The 3d ACR landed in Daiquiri, Cuba, in June 1898. On July 1, 1898, the soldiers of the Regiment, along with Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders, were among the 26,000 Army soldiers who attacked San Juan Heights, crossing over Kettle Hill.²⁴ During the operation, Troop B of the Regiment raised the first American flag on the San Juan Blockhouse declaring victory.²⁵

In 1899, eight of the Regiment's troops deployed to Manila, Philippines. By the next year, the rest of the Regiment joined the troops in Luzon where they

²³ Third Cavalry Museum, 15.

²⁴ David Trask, "The Spanish-American War" Library of Congress, The World of 1898: The Spanish American War, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/trask.html> [accessed February 18, 2010].

²⁵ Third Cavalry Museum, 14.

fought more than 60 engagements before they left in 1902. Fighting in the Philippines was fierce. It was also different than any fighting the Regiment had ever encountered, being the first time the U.S. Army fought a counter-insurgency or in a jungle environment.²⁶

Having spent nearly three years in the U.S., the Regiment was tasked with peacetime occupation duty back in the Philippines in 1905. When it returned to the United States in 1908, the Regiment was stationed in Texas where it worked in garrison and patrolled the Mexican border for the next nine years.²⁷

World War I

When the United States entered World War I (WWI) in 1917, the 3d Cavalry Regiment was one of the first units to be deployed. Stationed in France, the Regiment operated three remount depots for the duration of the war. These depots were responsible for purchasing horses, mules and forage as well as caring and training the remounts. After the war's end, the Regiment sold more than 345,000 animals, recovering more than \$52,000,000, and returned to the states in July 1919.

Only one of the Regiment's troops saw combat during WWI. The Regiment's 'K Troop' served with the III Army Corps on the Vesle Front, and during the Oise-Aisne and Meuse-Argonne Operations. The Troop was also part

²⁶ Third Cavalry Museum, 16.

²⁷ Ibid., 17.

of the Army of Occupation, which continued to train and was prepared to act in case Germany did not sign the armistice or hostilities erupted again.²⁸

President's Own

After WWI, the Regiment was reorganized. Second Squadron, along with C and D Troops, were inactivated, and 3rd Squadron became 2nd Squadron. HQ Troop and 1st Squadron were stationed at Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont, while 2nd Squadron was stationed at Fort Meyer, Virginia. Because 2nd Squadron was stationed near Washington, D.C. and Arlington National Cemetery, it was “frequently called upon to furnish honor guards and escorts...It became known as the ‘President’s Own’ because of these duties.” One of the most significant of these assignments occurred on 11 November 1921, when the Regiment was called to serve as cavalry escort for the interment of WWI’s Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.²⁹

During this peaceful time, the Regiment was well-known for its outstanding horsemanship after winning and sponsoring many riding competitions and demonstrations. In 1920 and 1921, the Bowman Challenge Cup, a trophy awarded to the winner of the Army Officer competition by the National Horse Show Association, was won by the Regiment’s own Major

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 18.

George S. Patton, Jr. Later in 1938 to 1940, Patton served as the 28th Colonel of the Regiment.³⁰

The Goodrich Trophy was awarded annually to cavalry troops who excelled in general cavalry proficiency including mobility, fire power and shock action. The first regiment to win the Trophy three times would retire the Trophy and keep it as its own. Intended to be awarded many times, the competition lasted only eight years, as troops from the Third Cavalry Regiment won the Trophy in 1926, 1929, and 1934. Both the Bowman Cup and the Goodrich Trophy are displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum.³¹

While cavalry units continued to train with horses, it also began using mechanized vehicles including armored cars and motor transport trucks. As a result, the Regiment began developing new tactical strategies using these fighting machines.

World War II

Described as “the end of an era,” 1942 saw the Regiment go through a number of significant changes. In February, the 3d Cavalry retired its use of horses in battle operations. In the same year, the Regiment was reorganized and redesignated as the 3d Armored Regiment. Within the next year, the Regiment would again be reconstituted. This time it was redesignated as the 3d Cavalry

³⁰ Third Cavalry Museum, “The Expert Horsemen” display label, January 22, 2010.

³¹ Ibid.

Group (Mechanized), and then moved to Camp Gordon, Georgia. There it began mechanized operations training in preparation for its eventual deployment during World War II in June of 1944.³²

Acting as spearhead of the XX Corps, the new 3d Cavalry Group (Mechanized) was part of General Patton's Third U.S. Army. The Group was on the shores of Normandy in August 1944.³³

The 3d Cavalry Group was the first to reach the Meuse and Moselle Rivers, and ultimately the key city of Thionville, France. In November, the Group, which originally numbered about 1200, enlarged to more than 5000 when an engineer battalion, a field artillery battalion, a heavy field artillery battalion, and two tank destroyer battalions were attached. A powerful fighting force due to the enhanced fighting abilities of the attached units, the combined Group was known as Task Force Polk, named after the Group Commander, Colonel James H. Polk.³⁴ Task Force Polk was immortalized in one of popular war artist Don Stivers' drawings, "Task Force Polk Patrols the Saar."

After the war, COL Polk compiled a narrative of his experiences in Europe from letters to his wife and other published and unpublished sources. While heavily censored, his letters to his wife give insight into the life of a Group

³² Third Cavalry Museum, 19

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 19-20

soldier during the war. On October 25, 1944, Polk wrote about the “hurry up and wait” experiences every soldier in the Army has endured:

You see some funny things in this world. There was an utterly deserted and ruined little French town yesterday, right down on the Mozelle, in the front lines, and held by one of my troops. Well, in the middle of the town square, in a little grassy plot, there were four dirty American soldiers armed to the teeth with grenades, pistols, carbines slung over their shoulders and what have you; and they were solemnly playing a game of croquette. It is so utterly incongruous but gives you a good idea of the typical American soldier and the high morale of my men.³⁵

Around the time Task Force Polk was being organized, Polk wrote to his wife wanting to share what he was doing but frustrated that he had limitations since correspondence was highly censored and much information including his whereabouts and activities were strictly off-limits. Still, he is able to evoke an extremely personal account of what was happening around him. His soldiers were fighters and he was proud of them:

We had a couple of damn fierce fights last night, very local and not mattering much in the big picture, but very personal and mattering a hell of a lot to some of my men. I wasn't in either one of them, but was directing the show from battle headquarters. I hate not being right in it when I order other people in, but I can really do more good seeing that everything is coordinated and that the men are getting fire support and other things they need. But I hate like hell to order people in sometimes, to what seems like certain wounds. We really punished those bastards last night – I

³⁵ The library at the Third Cavalry Museum includes a photocopied collection of letters COL James H. Polk wrote to his wife, Joey while he was fighting in Europe during World War II in 1944-45. The typed title page notes that the letters were compiled and edited by COL Polk. This quote and other attributed to him were taken from that compilation of letters. This letter was dated October 25, 1944.

can't help but feel good about it. I am not getting cruel or ugly, really I'm not; but when you see your friends die, it is a very personal thing. And when you get the chance, we really dish it out to them. An outfit like this that has been in combat so long (it) doesn't whimper or cry. They get scared, yes; we all do, but they have a real hate and real motivation...

We are doing a big job and a hard job and are doing it well. My higher headquarters thinks well of us; in other words, our reputation is good which is really the big thing. It might sound as if I am getting a swelled head, which is not the case. The truth of the matter is that I have a grand bunch of men working for me. We understand one another and we like one another and we are getting the job done. I'm just about as proud as a man can be about his outfit; the new 'Brave Rifles' really are good. And a lot of people besides myself think so.³⁶

As the resistance began to crumble in 1945, the Group raced from Germany through Austria to link with the Soviet Army. Once hostilities ended, the Group traveled through the Alps to northern Italy and back to Austria. In doing so, the Group "was the first military unit to cross the Alps since Hannibal's army did it in 215 B.C."³⁷ The Group's significance to the fight and historical prominence was not lost on General George Patton when he addressed the unit in May 1945:

The 3d Cavalry has lived up to the accolade bestowed upon it at Chapultepec by General Scott. As horse cavalry you were outstanding; I have never seen a better regiment. To your

³⁶ Letters from COL Polk dated October 27 and November 2, 1944.

³⁷ Third Cavalry Museum, 20.

performance as mechanized cavalry, the same applies. It is a distinct honor to have commanded an army in which the 3d Cavalry served.³⁸

On May 6, 1945, just as Polk's men should have been celebrating the end of the war, they were introduced to a different type of tragedy. Polk's area of operations included Ebensee, Austria. The Group drove to the site of a reported concentration camp there to find 17,000 starving prisoners and hundreds of dead. All of the German guards had fled three days earlier and the prisoners, already suffering from malnutrition, had not eaten since, which resulted in more than 300 prisoners' deaths a day until help could be secured. The scene was almost indescribable to those who attempted. COL Polk wrote to his wife, "I have seen suffering before, I thought, but I really did not know the depth of despair and depravity that people can sink to...Such sights and such tragedy leave little time for rejoicing. I'm simply drained of emotion by it all. The taste of it is still in my mouth" ³⁹

Immediately, soldiers began foraging nearby cities for food, often meeting with resistance to help. In one instance, a local baker refused a soldier's request to provide bread for the former prisoners. It was only after Third Cavalry soldiers pointed their tank's cannon at the shop that the baker decided to help. Within a few days, more humanitarian help was on its way including an Army

³⁸ Third Cavalry Regiment, 21.

³⁹ Letters from COL Polk dated May 6 and May 7, 1945.

mobile hospital, food conveys and administrative headquarters to organize the effort needed.⁴⁰

After the war ended, Group Headquarters Troop stayed on in Germany and operated a displaced persons camp. Refugees at the camp were either concentration camp survivors or fleeing the Russian Army.

Creating a Stronger Regiment during the Cold War

With the war over, America continued its commitment to protecting Western Europe by stationing soldiers throughout Germany, including the Regiment, which was stationed in Germany throughout the 1960's. With the Soviet Union looming as a potential adversary, the Army – and the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, prepared for new, more modern and highly-technical warfare. To meet these threats the Regiment became a REFORGER unit in the 1970s and diversified its abilities by adding chemical, engineer, and aviation units, and fielded the state-of-the art M1A1 Tank in the 1980s. As the Cold War ended, a new threat erupted in the Middle East. This conflict would take the Regiment to Kuwait and Iraq to fight in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The Regiment's role as protector evolved at the end of the century as it traveled to Bosnia on a United Nations' peacekeeping mission.

⁴⁰ Letter from COL Polk, May 7, 1945.

The Regiment Diversifies and Evolves

On January 15, 1948, the 35th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron – an all-black unit – was reassigned to 3d Cavalry Group (Mechanized), changing the Group back to a three squadron unit. These soldiers would be the first African-American soldiers to serve with the Regiment. Also in that year, the unit would be redesignated as the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (3d ACR), a designation that the unit has continued to keep.

During the Korean Conflict, many of the Regiment's soldiers were transferred to other units to fight. The Regiment, much reduced in number, trained new soldiers in the United States.

In 1952 more than 250,000 American soldiers were stationed in Germany to oversee and guard Western Europe as it recovered from WWII against the threat of Soviet invasion. Army units continued this mission well into the 1960's. The 3d ACR was deployed twice to Germany during this time. Between 1961 and 1968, the Regiment conducted reconnaissance work preparing for possible attack by Warsaw Pact Forces. At the end of the 1960s, the United States began withdrawing divisions of soldiers. At the same time, some Army units began conducting large-scale exercises designed to demonstrate its willingness and ability to rapidly deploy to Germany should it be required. These exercises were named REFORGER, REturn of FORces to GERmany.⁴¹ The reconnaissance work

⁴¹ Global Security.org, "REFORGER" Military, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/reforger.html> [accessed February 19, 2010].

that the Regiment did in the 1960s was important to the unit as it became a “major REFORGER unit” in the 1970’s.

Beginning in 1979 and throughout the 1980’s the Regiment was enlarged to include additional units that would enhance the 3d ACR’s fighting abilities. In 1979, the 407th Army Security Agency Company and the 89th and 507th Chemical Detachments were added to the Regiment. These new units provided the Regiment expert support in electronic and chemical warfare. In 1985, the Regiment added its Support Squadron (RSS) to assist with logistics. In 1989, the Regiment would enlarge its aviation component by developing it into its Aviation Squadron, or 4th Squadron. These additions and changes to the Regiment helped it evolve into a fighting force that could engage in more modern and technically-enhanced warfare.

Also during this timeframe, the Regiment began operating new tank technology. During WWII, American tanks were technically inferior to German tanks. Since the end of the war, tanks were improved in the United States. In the 1970s and 1980s, multiple advances would result in America developing the best tanks in the world. These advances culminated in the M1A1 tank, which had major improvements in all three areas of tank warfare, including mobility, protection and firepower. Generally, in the past, the more a tank was able to sustain hits from other tanks the more slow-moving it was. With new, lighter armor materials, the M1A1 was able to withstand the most deadly anti-tank weaponry while also allowing for a heavier, heartier engine, which allowed the

tank to move with higher speeds. Additionally, advances in computer technology such as laser range finders and the ability to move and shoot simultaneously made the M1A1 a truly state-of-the-art weapon. In 1985, the Regiment's 2nd Squadron was the first U.S. Army unit to field the new M1A1 Tank.

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

In response to Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, the United States began a defensive buildup in Kuwait known as Operation Desert Shield in 1990. The 3d ACR was deployed to Kuwait in August 1990 to train in anticipation of the ground assault into Iraq. When the United Nations initiated the preliminary air attacks of Operation Desert Storm, the Regiment moved 2400 vehicles 250 kilometers north to the Saudi Arabian/Iraqi border. When the ground war phase began a month later in February 1991, the Regiment drove into Iraq. Within 100 hours, the Regiment traveled more than 300 kilometers to Basra, Iraq, to end the quick offensive in the Rumaylah oil fields having encountered and defeated three Iraqi Republican Guard Divisions. The Regiment returned to the U.S. in April of that year.⁴²

Bosnia

In 1996, the Regiment moved to Fort Carson, Colorado. Four years later, the 3d ACR was deployed to Bosnia to take part in the United Nations peace-

⁴² Third Cavalry Museum, 28.

keeping mission. Unlike its previous missions, this deployment required soldiers to be neutral observers rather than aggressive fighters.

In March 2000, soldiers from 3rd Squadron provided security to a special group. Mourning the 1995 massacre of more than 10,000 Bosniacs by the Bosnian Serb Army, family members of the victims had not been able to return to the suspected site in Potacari, Bosnia. With the escort of 3d ACRs 3rd Squadron and “despite various attempts to prevent their return, widows and mourners, known as the ‘Women of Srebrenica’ returned safely to mourn and pray at Potacari.”⁴³

The Regiment in Iraq

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, immediately took America’s armed forces back to the Middle East. Deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom I, the Regiment helped secure and stabilize Al Anbar Province. A year later the Regiment would return to Iraq. This time the Regiment engaged the enemy in some of the most fierce fighting Coalition Forces had seen there, ultimately taking control of Tall Afar, an insurgent stronghold.

Operation Iraqi Freedom I

Coalition Forces invaded Iraq in March 2002. One year later, as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom I, the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment crossed the border into Iraq on April 25, 2003, on its way to Al Anbar Province, the country’s largest province, located in western Iraq. Once there, the Regiment was tasked with

⁴³ Ibid., 31.

securing and stabilizing their area of responsibility (AOR), the largest AOR in the war at that time. The main thrust of their operations at Al Anbar included reconnaissance and security patrols, targeting hostile regime loyalist camps and weapons caches, and establishing preliminary relationships with local civic leaders to help restore order to the civilian population.⁴⁴

Coalition Forces in Iraq established Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). Unlike unit assembly areas and command outposts used earlier, FOBs were similar to mini-garrisons, which allowed for better logistical support. Among other services, FOBs allowed for better food services, quicker assistance with vehicle maintenance, and room for combat surgical hospitals.⁴⁵

The Regiment also participated in numerous humanitarian efforts focused on restoring basic services to the population of Al Anbar including working with the United Nations World Food Program to deliver more than 49,000 Humanitarian Daily Rations (HDRs) to local hospitals and other organizations. The Regiment also helped reopen more than 300 schools, many of which had been used as munitions storage facilities by Saddam Hussein's regime because the regime knew that Coalition Forces would not target schools.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid., 34-42

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The Regiment transferred authority of Al Anbar Province to the 7th Regimental Combat Team on March 14, 2004.⁴⁷

Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-06

Soldiers from the 3d ACR returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom I in March and April of 2004. In July of 2004, the Regiment received another order to deploy to Iraq, giving most soldiers only about 10 months at home with their families before they had to leave again for a year-long deployment. In March of 2005, the Regiment landed in Kuwait, and moved into Iraq in April.⁴⁸

This time, the 3d ACR headed south to Babil Province, south of Baghdad. Once a retreat location for Hussein's military, intelligence, and police personnel, the Province became a dangerous insurgent stronghold. The Regiment immediately began reconnaissance and offensive operations against the enemy resulting in the capturing of insurgent network cells and discovering munitions stockpiles.⁴⁹

While the rest of the Regiment operated in Babil Province, 2nd Squadron was tasked to move to Western Ninewa Province. In May, 2nd Squadron was joined by the other units of the Regiment minus 3rd Squadron, which remained in

⁴⁷ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁹ 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-06 January 2005 – February 2006, [Fort Hood, Texas: After Action Review, 2006], 17-21.

Babil Province, attached to the 3rd Infantry Division to assist with combat power.⁵⁰

Tall Afar, in Ninewa Province, was an insurgent stronghold. The enemy set up training areas, and planned attacks from their Tall Afar base. Upon its arrival, the Regiment challenged the enemy.

The [2nd] Squadron's ground units conducted raids and engaged in several pitched battles with the enemy that lasted several hours – some of the toughest urban combat seen by American units in Iraq. The enemy countered the advantage of reconnaissance aircraft to ground troops by developing a highly organized air defense network that relied on timely communications and large volumes of small arms and machine gun fire. Enemy actions against the Regiment's air assets resulted in damage to 12 aircraft in less than two months of intense fighting...It was clear that Tall Afar was under the control of Al Qaeda in Iraq.⁵¹

The Regiment set out to change that and take control of Tall Afar and western Ninewa Province. Spread out in various locations throughout the Province, the Regiment, working with Iraqi Army, Police and Border Police, conducted extensive combat operations which resulted in establishing a presence along the Syrian border, an area that the enemy used extensively, and securing a 'critical supply route' from the Syrian border to Tall Afar. "The Regiment helped to establish the border police and severely restricted the enemy's ability to smuggle weapons, terrorists, and suicide bombers into Ninewa Province and

⁵⁰ Ibid. and Third Cavalry Museum, 43-53.

⁵¹ 3d ACR, After Action Review OIF 04-06, 18.

Iraq.”⁵² Throughout the summer, the Regiment continued to relentlessly engage the enemy. Heavily armed with firepower and reconnaissance, the enemy began to suffer heavy losses during continued hot fighting:

As coalition forces moved in on the enemy, the Regiment gained key intelligence from civilians who wanted to regain control of the city. Intelligence reports indicated that insurgent leadership and fighters has been so depleted that remaining insurgent leaders began to advise their fighters to escape Tall Afar at all costs. In order to seize insurgents as they fled the city, Iraqi Army and Police forces helped the Regiment to identify enemy fighters trying to escape...From 24 August – 23 September, the Regiment killed over 150 enemy fighters and captured over 800 trying to flee the city...The enemy realized they had lost control of the city and responded to their losses with brutal suicide bombings in an attempt to intimidate the population.⁵³

The Iraqi citizens, happy to be rid of the violent and dangerous insurgency displayed their refusals to be intimidated in a more peaceful way. Approximately 70% of Tall Afar’s population cast their votes in the October Referendum. More than 4,400 citizens voluntarily joined the Tall Afar Police and Iraqi Army in an effort to bring stability and security to their lives. In December, more than 85% of the population voted for their first full term government.⁵⁴

The Regiment redeployed to Fort Carson in March 2006 but would not stay long. In July 2006, the Regiment moved its garrison operations to Fort

⁵² Ibid., 18-19.

⁵³ Ibid., 20.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 20-21.

Hood, Texas. In May 2007, the Regiment once again received orders to deploy to Iraq that fall.⁵⁵

The Other Members of the Regiment
3d ACR Families and Family Readiness Groups

Be brave. Remember, you are a soldier's wife now.

- Frank Baldwin, Army Officer, 1867

I am glad to have known the Army: the soldiers, the line, and the Staff; it is good to think of honor and chivalry, obedience to duty and the pride of arms; to have lived amongst men whose motives were unselfish and whose aims were high, amongst men who served an ideal; who stood ready, at the call of their country, to give their lives for a Government which is, to them, the best in the world.

- Martha Summerhayes, 19th century Army Wife

As the United States continued settling the West after the Civil War, the Army – and the Regiment – continued its protection of the settlers and its return to the Frontier. Sometimes, wives accompanied their soldiers, and often they wrote about their experiences. Sandra L. Myers, in her article, “Romance and Reality on the American Frontier: Views of Army Wives,” writes:

Almost unnoticed among the more flamboyant and famous writers of the nineteenth century, the Army wives' journals, diaries, and letters provide some of the richest sources of information on life in the West during the last years of the American frontier. These women were perceptive observers, and they offered comments and

⁵⁵ Third Cavalry Museum, 55.

insights that give a vivid, detailed, and an intimate view of western military and civilian life.⁵⁶

In her book, *Members of the Regiment Army Officers' Wives on the Western Frontier, 1865-1890*, Michele J. Nacy concurs: "After close examination of the experiences of these remarkable women, it becomes quite clear that their impact upon garrison life, overlooked for too long, was quite substantial...wives were not footnotes to history – they were full participants."⁵⁷

While difficult to determine how many wives traveled with their husbands at this time, "the idea of an exclusively masculine domain is clearly wrong. The diaries of officers' wives make clear that other women associated with the officer corps were present, though the numbers vary greatly and were never, at any given garrison, large."⁵⁸ Still, they did exist and continued to grow in numbers as time passed.

Myers and Nacy both acknowledge with some regret, that during this time period, it is only the writings of officers' wives that have been discovered and studied. "Unfortunately, we know very little about the other women of the army – the wives of the enlisted men, the laundresses, and the 'camp followers.'" From the writings discovered, it is clear that fraternization between officer and

⁵⁶ Sandra L. Myres, "Romance and Reality on the American Frontier: Views of Army Wives," *Western Historical Quarterly* [1982]: 409-427.

⁵⁷ Michele J. Nacy, *Members of the Regiment, Army Officers' Wives on the Western Frontier, 1865-1890* [Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000], 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

enlisted wives was not only limited but also discouraged. Unlike many of the enlisted soldiers' wives who sought employment as children's nannies or laundresses, officers' wives were chiefly concerned with their personal issues of domesticity such as keeping house, cooking meals, and raising children, generally with the assistance of servants or paid help. Many of these women were educated and concerned with bringing their Victorian ideals to the unsettled west. In fact, they were expected to do this. Lydia Spencer Lane traveled with her husband throughout his military career as a lieutenant first with the Mounted Riflemen in the 1850's and 1860's until his retirement as a colonel in 1870. In her recollections, entitled *I Married a Soldier*, Lane writes about the necessity of entertaining and the hardship of it. Protocol stated that "established" officers and their wives entertain incoming ones.⁵⁹ Lane describes her responsibilities while living at remote Fort Inge, Texas, in the mid-1850's:

It was fortunate for us there was such a supply of game, for, almost from the day we began housekeeping, we had guests to entertain, – people passing from one post to another, – and we had more than our share of them. When meat was not to be had, an hour's fishing and hunting gave us all we required. We had no vegetables except rice, hominy, and beans. Macaroni was a standby, but we had to send to San Antonio for it. Mike [their cook], with the help of my old family receipts, had become quite a good plain cook, and was kept busy with our numerous guests...Our little centre-table was the only one we had, and did not answer very well for three people to sit at and hold the various dishes at dinner; some rested in the floor, others on chairs...It was all we could do, so we did not apologize. We became very weary of entertaining people of whom

⁵⁹ Ibid., 47.

we knew nothing; but there was no hotel nor house of any kind where they could go, so the officers felt themselves obliged to look after their comfort and take them in.⁶⁰

Although they found their share of adventure, to be sure, Army wives on the frontier were required to adhere to a lifestyle in which they had little representation.

Indeed, the Army, as a public institution, colored virtually every aspect of these women's domestic lives [the frontier]. The Army determined not only where they lived but also how often they would move, in what housing they would establish their homes, and indirectly the circle of friends and acquaintances regarding their social obligations and at times the Army world blatantly intruded into their most intimate moments, particularly their experience of childbirth...The United States Army consisted of a group of men who had sworn an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Every aspect of daily life, including private life, was subordinated to the mission of that institution. That mission involved the perpetual threat of danger and death, entailed significant transience and protracted separations of spouses, and included considerable deprivation of creature comforts...in the process officers' wives necessarily adapted to their environment and modified their notions of domesticity."⁶¹

To follow one's soldier around the frontier meant moving all of their belongings multiple times a year in crude ambulances or wagons, through torrential downpours and blistering heat, and always with the threat of disease or violence. It meant working hard and with what was available; often substituting what was needed with what would do. Army wives on the frontier

⁶⁰ Lane, 23.

⁶¹ Nacy, 11.

were expected to adhere to the formality and customs of the military, but no one told them how, so the women made modifications where needed and in the best way they could. Housekeeping in adobes and tents required an admirable amount of dedication considering bugs, rodents and snakes were common bedfellows. Entertaining was not a convenient undertaking but it was done just the same. Lydia Spencer Lane may have used fine china to serve her guests, but she only had a small wooden table to serve it on. According to Nancy, these experiences gave a new and unique “texture and depth” to the women’s “relationships, ideologies, and attitudes.”⁶²

Indeed, these women defined themselves as an Army Wife rather than having a husband who was in the Army. Frances Roe lived with her husband in Army garrisons on the Western frontier for many years. In 18 years, Roe would set up house 16 times. Later, she would publish her *Army Letters from an Officer’s Wife, 1871-1888*. As revealing as what she writes is the photograph she chooses for the frontispiece:

With her dog Hal, Frances Roe posed for a photograph wearing a riding habit she had designed ... She wore a conventional skirt, but the jacket was modeled after her husband’s West Point dress uniform, complete with high collar and brass buttons...There are no records as to why Frances chose this picture, but the photograph seems to provide her preferred definition of herself. After living out seventeen years of her adult life in Army garrisons on the Western frontier, Frances Roe no longer thought of herself as true

⁶² Nancy.

woman, frontierswoman, or lady: she was a member of the regiment.⁶³

Lydia Spencer Lane describes a time in 1861 when she quite literally became a member of the Regiment. Lieutenant Lane was sent to remote Fort Fillmore to command the small post made up of only two or three lieutenants. Lane and the sutler's wife were the only two women. Lane writes that because the country was at the brink of the secession crisis and Fort Fillmore being in Texas, "there were plenty of men in the small towns, ready at a moment's notice, in case war was declared, to make a raid" on the fort, from which it had little ability to defend itself. Barely settled, Lieutenant Lane was ordered to take his troops to Indian scout at Dog Canon:

There was nothing to be done but to obey, although everybody at the post knew there was far more danger from the Texans than from Indians. A sergeant and ten men...were left behind to guard the post and our small family... *I* was left in command of Fort Fillmore. All public funds were turned over to me, and the sergeant reported to me every day...The public money in my hands gave me considerable uneasiness, and I hid it away in what I considered a secure place; then it seemed to me that would be the first spot searched, and I found a safer one. I was determined no one should have that money while I was alive to defend it. Just how I would act circumstances must decide; if I lost my life in protecting it, I would have done my whole duty...An express was sent to Dog Canon with orders to abandon the scout, and, to my great joy, the soldiers returned, when, with much pleasure, I relinquished the command of Fort Fillmore. It was my first and last appearance in the role of commanding officer of a military post.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁴ Lane, 105-107

Slow to formally acknowledge the contributions of the Army wife, the Army provided nothing in terms of additional pay or improved housing for soldiers with wives and families. Only officers and soldiers were counted in official Army records, wives were not.⁶⁵ In fact, Libby Custer, (whose husband LTC George Armstrong Custer was not part of the Regiment) undoubtedly spoke for Army wives in general when she wrote, “The book of army regulations enters into such minute detail in its instructions giving the number of hours that bean soup should boil, that it would be natural to suppose that a paragraph or two might be wasted on an officer’s wife.”⁶⁶

But even if the Army would not discuss the importance of spouses in garrison, Army wives were more than happy to do it for them, and often with some wit. In September 1877, Frances Roe was on her way to Camp Baker, Montana Territory, and insisted that she and others like her “had a purpose and duty within the framework of the regiment”:

We know, if the world does not, that the part we are to take on this march is most important. We will see that the tents are made comfortable and cheerful at every camp; that the little dinner after the weary march, the early breakfast, and the cold luncheon are each and all as dainty as camp cooking will permit. Yes, we are sometimes called “camp followers” but we do not mind – it probably originated with some envious old bachelor officer.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Nacy, 16.

⁶⁶ Myres, 419.

⁶⁷ Nacy, 15.

Though these women endured dangerous travel, uncomfortable surroundings and little say in the direction of their lives, many did so quite happily. Lydia Spencer Lane after describing hot prairie winds and scorching days traveling in army marches was sure that the new Army brides on the march for the first time were rethinking their marriage vows. Lane, however, assured her readers that she suffered no such ill-thoughts: "I for one never regretted having done so, and loved every thing connected with the army: the officers, – not always the wives, however, – the soldiers, mules, horses, wagons, tents, camps, every and anything so I was in the army and part of it."⁶⁸ Eveline Alexander who traveled with the Regiment during the 1860's concurred when she wrote to her mother, "Andrew and I often discuss the pros and cons of army life and we always come to the conclusion that take it altogether it is a good place."⁶⁹

And because many believed it was "a good place," wives and families continued to accompany their soldiers. Nacy argues that the "integration of families and the recognition of domestic issues into the official Army structure" can be directly attributed to the Army wives of the 1800s. While "impossible" to determine exactly when wives were officially recognized, "Throughout most of the twentieth century, however, United States Army officials assumed that officers' wives, especially those married to commanders, were part of the Army team."⁷⁰

Present day Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) have been the gradual result of the Army's increasing recognition and concern for families of soldiers. Like

⁶⁸ Lane, 89.

⁶⁹ Myres, 424.

⁷⁰ Nacy, 105.

Army wives of the nineteenth century wrote, Army wives of twentieth and twenty-first century soldiers were also expected to do their share of entertaining other wives. From this tradition, more formal types of communication between Army families developed including welcome-to-the-unit calls, phone trees, and coffee groups, as well as visits to new mothers in hospitals and at home. In the 1990s, recognizing grassroots efforts to increase communication to soldiers' families, the Army instituted Family Support Groups (FSG), unit organizations that included families of all ranks to disseminate information, assist families during training exercises when their soldiers were away, and build cohesion throughout the unit with social functions.

As soldiers continued to be deployed multiple times in support of OIF, the Army shifted the goals of family organizations from providing spousal support to better preparing families for eventual deployment by establishing Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) at the company level, with battalion and brigade level groups acting in advisory roles in accordance with Army regulation 608-01. Made up of family members, soldiers, volunteers, and civilian employees belonging to the unit, as well as the chain of command and the chain of concern, "FRGs assist the unit Commander in providing family members with the tools

necessary to educate, enable, and empower them so that they are self-sufficient.”⁷¹

While responsible for the FRG, the unit commander does not provide leadership to the FRG. That is done by a family member of one of the soldiers in the unit. The FRG leader can be the commander’s spouse, but is also often the spouse of a different soldier. It is also common to have co-leaders. The FRG also has several supporting positions including treasurer and newsletter editor. Family Readiness Groups are open to family members and friends of every soldier in the unit, regardless of rank. Spouses of soldiers of any rank can hold FRG positions.

As FRGs evolved, the responsibilities of FRG Leaders grew significantly. According to Stephenie Palmer, who served as a FRG Leader, “By 2004, it became obvious to the FRG and Army senior leaders how much work was truly involved in being an FRG volunteer who faced multiple deployments and no end to the conflicts in sight.” As Palmer explained: “It was taxing, and we started to see a lot of burn out. As a result, the Family Readiness Support Assistance (FRSA) program was conceived and implemented.”⁷² FRSA provides paid assistants known as FRSAs to work with the FRG leaders and rear detachment commanders. The program decreased volunteer stress by providing

⁷¹ John A. MacDonald, “Army Commander’s Guide to Family Readiness Group Operations,” September 26, 2005, http://nationalguard.idaho.gov/FamilyPrograms/files/CC_Guide_to_FRGs.pdf [accessed February 16, 2010], 2.

⁷² Larry Stevens, “Army keeps strengthening family support,” ARMY OneSource, October 14, 2009, www.armyfrg.org/skins/frg/home.aspx [accessed February 12, 2010].

administrative and logistical assistance allowing the volunteer leaders to focus on their unit's families.

The Army's devotion to the health and wellbeing of Army families continued. On October 17, 2007, days before 3d ACRs torch party left for the deployment to Iraq, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Chief of Staff of the Army GEN George W. Casey, Jr. and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, signed the Army Family Covenant (see appendix B), a pledge by the Army "to support Soldiers' Families while they defend the nation."⁷³ During the signing ceremony, Mr. Geren noted that the Army, "entering its seventh year of conflict in Afghanistan, is in its third longest war, and longest with an all-volunteer force, after the Revolution. This brings unique and unexpected stressors."⁷⁴ GEN Casey agreed stating that "It was immediately clear to us that the Families were the most stretched, and as a result, the most stressed, part of the force, and that what we were asking those families was a quantum different than anything I expected we would ask. It struck me that the best wasn't good enough."⁷⁵

According to Casey, the signing of the Army Family Covenant was proof that the Army wanted to provide Soldiers and their families with a level of support commensurate with their level of service, and that the covenant was

⁷³ ElizabethM. Lorge, "Army Leaders Sign Covenant with Families," Army.Mil/News, October 17, 2007, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/10/17/5641-army-leaders-sign-covenant-with-families/> [accessed February 3, 2010].

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

written in direct response to concerns from Army Families including “funding and support for Family programs, physical and mental healthcare, housing, education and childcare and employment opportunities for spouses.”⁷⁶

From the time the Regiment was notified in 2006 that it would be deploying to Iraq in 2007, the unit’s FRG groups at every level prepared for the day their soldiers would leave. Family members attended forums at the troop, squadron, and regiment levels to receive information but to also be able to ask questions. Briefings, supported with countless guides and packets of information were given to family members and soldiers on topics ranging from health care to finances to recreational opportunities available during the deployment. Special meetings facilitated by Army chaplains were also held for husbands, wives, and children to discuss how they might react emotionally to the deployments and provide ways to cope with feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and anger that they may feel once the deployment was underway.

In October and November 2007, families said good bye to their soldiers. Some waited in gyms well into the early morning hours with the soldiers till the last minute. Others chose more private farewells at home. Many tears were shed, but also an enormous amount of pride was felt in sending the 3d ACR off to a mission that they were well-prepared for and ready to take on.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

History of Iraq War in Mosul

Located 250 miles north of Baghdad, in the Ninewa Province, the area around Mosul has been populated for more than 8,000 years. Strategically located between India, Persia, and the Mediterranean, Mosul was an important trade center during the Islamic era. It was also known for its Mosul marble and the production of muslin fabric, which was named for the city. Once the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, the city's importance in trade declined as cargoes could travel by sea. Beginning in the 1920s, the discovery and exploitation of oil brought wealth once again to the old city.⁷⁷

Presently, Mosul is one of the largest cities in Iraq with a population of 1.8 million. More than 2.5 million people live in Ninawa Province. The city is made up of approximately 70% Sunni Arab and 25% Kurd. Shi'as, Turcomans, Yezidis, and Christians make up the remaining 5%.⁷⁸ Similar to Baghdad, the city is divided by the Tigris River, with the western half largely Sunni Arab and the eastern half primarily Kurdish.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Black Anthem.com, "Mosul, Iraq," October 16, 2007, http://blackanthem.com/News/Fact_Sheets/Mosul_Iraq10716.html [accessed December 15, 2009].

⁷⁸ Eric Hamilton, "The Fight for Mosul," Institute for the Study of War, Military Analysis and Education for Civilian Leaders, April 2008, <http://www.understandingwar.org> [accessed January 6, 2010].

⁷⁹ Ibid.

The Sunnis, Ba'ath Party and Saddam Hussein

For hundreds of years, dating back to the Ottoman Empire, Mosul has been known for the great number of army officers it has produced. After World War I, under the British Mandate, Sunni Arab military officers “became important members of the mandate government and formed the core of the new Iraqi Army.”⁸⁰ Mosul was confirmed as an Iraqi possession by the League of Nations in 1926 and the Treaty of Lausanne.⁸¹

Beginning in 1958 and encouraged by Iraqi Prime minister Abd al-Karim Qasim, the city was integrated with many different ethnic groups including Kurds, who have traditionally believed the land to belong to them. In the 1980's, under the direction of Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath Party, some of these ethnic groups, were forced out of Mosul. Despite all of this political and ethnic maneuvering “Mosul has maintained a multi-cultural and multi-religious mosaic.”⁸²

Mosul's history of training soldiers was not lost on Hussein when he seized control of Iraq in 1979. It continued to be an important military center and a Ba'ath Party headquarters. “By some estimates, Mosul and the surrounding areas contributed over 300,000 residents to [Hussein's] military, security and intelligence services...After the fall of Saddam Hussein these officers and

⁸⁰ Hamilton

⁸¹ Black Anthem

⁸² Ibid.

soldiers formed the core of the Sunni insurgency in Ninawa.”⁸³ The collapse of the Ba’ath Party also prompted Kurdish fighters to move back into the city causing tension between them and the city’s Sunni Arabs.⁸⁴

Mosul’s ethnic balance and history as a Ba’athist and military stronghold help to explain the city and the fight taking place there. Part of the conflict in Mosul is tied to a larger Arab-Kurd competition in northern Iraq because Mosul’s Arabs are fearful of Kurdish expansionism. Even though the current fight for Mosul is

not fundamentally ethnically-based, this factor has created a skeptical population of well-trained former military and security personnel who have supported the insurgency since the war began because they had the most to lose when Saddam Hussein fell from power. Mosul, therefore, serves as both a recruiting ground and sanctuary for the insurgency.⁸⁵

Initial plans for invading Iraq in March 2003 called for U.S. Forces to enter northern Iraq through Turkey. When Turkey failed to authorize this plan, a smaller contingent of paratroopers and Special Operations Forces (SOF) worked with Kurdish forces to secure Kirkuk, Mosul and surrounding military and oil assets. “Coalition planners were careful to keep Kurdish political parties and their peshmerga militias from provoking a Turkish invasion or inflaming Arab-Kurdish tensions.”⁸⁶

⁸³ Hamilton

⁸⁴ Black Anthem

⁸⁵ Hamilton

⁸⁶ Ibid.

After Saddam Hussein's capture, Iraq fell into chaos. Ethnic aggressions compounded the problem for Mosul:

Kurds fought Arabs, pro-Saddam Arabs fought anti-Saddam Arabs; and they all blamed each other for the disorder...In the midst of the general disorder in Mosul, former regime elements began to organize themselves into an insurgency. Demonstrators appeared in the streets with pro-Saddam and anti-Kurd banners and Iraqi flags calling for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. At various mosques throughout the city, clerics called for unity and opposition to the American presence as former Ba'athists and military personnel met and began to organize for resistance. Higher-level Iraqi generals fled to Tikrit and across the border to Syria, where they continue to organize and support the insurgency.

Clashes between American military forces working with Kurdish peshmerga and an embryonic insurgency became increasingly frequent.⁸⁷

By the end of April 2003, then-Major General David Petraeus and the 101st Airborne Division he commanded began to arrive in Mosul and the U.S. presence in Ninewa Province grew from approximately 3,000 to more than 20,000 soldiers. After nine months there, the 101st Airborne Division returned some semblance of normalcy to the city, engaging various political factions to work together. The work that MG Petraeus and his unit did during their time in Mosul "would become the core of a revised counterinsurgency strategy" used all across Iraq, including Mosul, four years later.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

The 3rd Stryker BCT (SBCT), 2nd Infantry Division, replaced the 101st Airborne Division with only 8,700 troops, less than half the number of troops its predecessor had in place. This reduction in troop size proved costly to Coalition Forces as much of the gains MG Petraeus made in the city were reversed in less than a year.⁸⁹ Mosul was vulnerable, and loyalty to the new cause was fragile. In November of 2004, in a coordinated attack, “several hundred insurgents stormed police stations across the city. Instead of confronting the masked gunman, all but 200 of Mosul’s 5,000 policemen refused to fight and melted away into the population. The insurgents then established themselves in western Mosul.”⁹⁰

At the same time, Kurdish forces re-entered the city, operating as the 2nd Iraqi Army Division. Described as a “stalemate,” overwhelmingly Kurdish army forces took root on the east side of Mosul and insurgents occupied the west side. The insurgents were generally tolerated and often supported by the city’s Sunni Arab population and were able to operate easily there. This stalemate continued through 2006.⁹¹

Coalition forces in Ninewa Province during that time and into 2007 worked out of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), conducting “mostly targeted raids, while focusing on a train and transition strategy.” South in Baghdad, the

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

new counter-insurgency strategy and troop surges were being used to take control of the area. Coalition forces in Mosul and Ninawa Province began to be redirected resulting in a drastically reduced presence. “In total, 1,000 U.S. soldiers and about 6,500 Iraqi soldiers and policemen were responsible for securing a contested city of almost 2 million.”⁹²

Surprisingly, the number of attacks against Coalition forces fell during the first half of 2007. Eric Hamilton, a researcher for the Institute for the Study of War, points to three possible reasons for this including an increase in Iraqi Security Forces, AQI’s focus on central Iraq, and “a great deal of infighting among insurgent groups in Mosul and the surrounding area [leading] to a decrease in the enemy’s ability to conduct attacks.”⁹³

In 2007, Coalition Forces, with the help of increasingly more cooperative local citizens, were able to target higher-ranking insurgents within AQI leadership. These successful targeted “captures and kills” began to weaken AQI allowing Coalition Forces to gain the upper hand in Mosul. This control was short-lived. As a result of Coalition Forces successes in Baghdad, AQI began to migrate north to Ninawa Province and the city of Mosul during the summer. By

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

November 2007, insurgent attacks in Mosul and Ninewa Province were the highest in the country.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09

Members of the Advance Team arrived in Kuwait at the end of October 2007 to prepare for the 5,000 Soldiers of the Regiment to join them to begin the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment's 15-month deployment to Iraq. Upon his arrival in Kuwait, Regimental Commander, COL Michael A. Bills received a fragmentary order (FRAGO) redirecting one of 3d ACRs five squadrons to a different location. Sabre Squadron (2nd Squadron) was redirected to Diyala Province, south of Ninewa Province. According to COL Bills, "Sabre Squadron was given the largest area in Iraq for a combat unit its size. Its mission was to clear and hold one of the most volatile areas in the country, which included the Iranian border."¹

COL Bills had received notification prior to leaving the states that the Regiment's 4th Squadron – the aviation squadron also known as Longknife Squadron – would be sent south to support several units in Baghdad.²

For two weeks prior to moving into Iraq, 3d ACR soldiers spent an intense two weeks at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, making final organizational preparations,

¹ Michael A. Bills, "A message from the 72nd Colonel of the Regiment," *The Mounted Rifleman*, January 2009, 3.

² Because the focus of this thesis is on the Regiment's Mosul and Ninewa Province areas of operations, the missions of 2nd and 4th Squadrons are not addressed in this document.

doing equipment maintenance, and continuing training. Master SGT Tim Volkert of 3d ACR's public affairs office wrote that the training was nonstop and included additional training on "improvised explosive device awareness and counter IED equipment operation, counterinsurgency, medical training, HMMWV rollover training, primary marksmanship instruction, rules of engagement and continued refresher training on their basic Soldier skills."³ This final preparation also allowed the soldiers to fire their personal weapons and get accustomed to their new surroundings. According to Private 1st Class Esteban Polito, a scout with Fox Troop, 2nd Squadron, "It's better that we got a chance to get [in theater] and get prepared. I think it makes us mentally ready."⁴

In the beginning of December, the 3d ACR traveled north from Kuwait to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Marez in Mosul, Iraq. The 3d ACR assumed responsibility over Ninewa Province and Salah ad-Din Province in a Transfer of Authority ceremony on December 11, 2007 (see appendix C). At the ceremony, GEN Mark Hertling, 1st Armored Division, Task Force Iron, and Multi-National Division-North Commander, remarked that the handoff of power in Mosul was from the newest brigade in the Army, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry

³ Tim Volkert, "One Last Look," *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 28.

⁴ Ibid.

Division, which was formed in 2005, to one of the oldest regiment in the Army, the 3d ACR, which has served the nation since 1846.⁵

The geographical area that the 3d ACR took over was the size of Maryland. It included Ninewa Province, which is situated in the northwest part of Iraq and borders with Syria. The Regiment also occasionally worked in the Dahuk, Irbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Salah ad-Din Provinces that surrounded Ninewa Province. While the Regiment's area of operations (AO) was vast, their focus during the deployment was in Ninewa Province.

Operations began immediately, as the 3d ACR moved to its locations and began its mission of security to the city and protection of the population of Ninewa Province and the city of Mosul.

Getting Acquainted with the Allies and the Enemies
December 2007 – February 2008

Two days after taking control of Ninewa Province, Regimental Commander, COL Bills, met with about a dozen members of Iraqi Army, police and political officers working in the area to discuss recent accomplishments and future goals. Although each member had different concerns, it was clear that teamwork would be the only way for all to succeed. "If we don't cooperate and coordinate with Coalition Forces, we cannot reach our goal. We need to work together, all as one, to stop the terrorists," remarked Brigadier General Sami

⁵ Tim Volkert, "3d ACR takes reigns in northern Iraq," *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 6.

Homeidi Mohmood, deputy commander of the 3rd Iraqi Army Division, who led the meeting.⁶ COL Bills concurred: “What’s important is that this is a team effort.”⁷ This team effort strategy was established in all of the work the 3d ACR did in Iraq.

First Squadron (Tiger Squadron) was immediately sent south of Mosul to FOB Qayarah West (Q-West). “We are conducting operations into the strategic area known as the Zaab Triangle, and have now moved to the west conducting security and reconnaissance missions to the Iraqi and Syrian border,” wrote LTC Thomas Dorame, commander of Tiger Squadron of the early stages of the deployment. He continued, “In the cities, towns, and small villages up and down the Tigris River, Tiger Soldiers have fearlessly patrolled the streets, engaged local sheiks and political leaders, and conducted joint patrols with their counterparts in the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police.”⁸

First Squadron’s Apache Troop conducted their first dismounted patrol on December 30, 2007, with their primary goal being to patrol the Qayyarah marketplace to meet and talk with local Iraqis. “We wanted to let people know that we are here and what we are about,” said CPT Steve Wojdakowski, Apache

⁶ Tim Volkert, “3d ACR, ISF leaders meet to discuss issues at Western Ninevah Security Conference,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 20-21.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Thomas Dorame, “Tiger, 1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 9.

Troop Commander. In an article in *The Mounted Rifleman*⁹, Wojdakowski explained that it was “good for the Iraqi people to see the Coalition Forces working alongside the IP, because it lets the people know the CF is here to protect and help them.”¹⁰

Regimental Headquarters, Third Squadron and the Regimental Support Squadron, were stationed in the city of Mosul. Because of Sabre Squadron’s move to Diyala Province, 3rd Squadron’s AO was expanded to include the desert west of Mosul including the city of Tall Afar all the way to the Syrian border. Much of the Regiment’s focus during the deployment, especially early on, was on the city of Mosul – its security and its infrastructure. Mosul is divided by the Tigris River that flows through the city. The east side of Mosul includes approximately two-thirds of the city’s 140 neighborhoods and is generally Kurdish. Although still at risk for violence, eastern Mosul was a more stable environment that included some normal traffic and market flows. The Regiment’s soldiers lived and worked out of FOB Marez, which is located in the eastern section. The west side of Mosul was significantly more volatile and, compared with the eastern side, traffic and commerce was nearly non-existent. It is also largely Sunni Arab. Averaging approximately 40 attacks per day, insurgents were embedded in the western neighborhoods. With the redirected

⁹ *The Mounted Rifleman* is the official publication of the 3d ACR. During OIF 07-09, the Regiment published eight issues of *The Mounted Rifleman*.

¹⁰ Eric A. Rutherford, “Engineers open road for Mosul residents,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 23-24.

2nd Squadron in Diyala Province, 3rd Squadron (Thunder Squadron) was given responsibility for the entire city of Mosul as well as villages in the outlying area. This was a huge undertaking for a reinforced squadron of approximately 2,000 soldiers in an economy-of-force role.¹¹ To supplement the Regiment after 2nd squadron's departure, COL Bills, requested additional support for Thunder's AO. Already serving in Baghdad, 1st Battalion 8th Infantry (1-8IN), from Fort Carson, Colorado, was attached to the Regiment. Thunder Squadron settled into western and northern Mosul and 1-8 IN occupied the south-eastern part from January 2008 through the duration of the deployment.¹²

Thunder Squadron engaged the enemy in combat, responded to enemy attacks, and conducted targeted raids of insurgent strongholds. The squadron also fought the enemy in several non-lethal ways during this first period of the deployment. They "developed a sense of comradeship with the Iraqi Security Forces in the area. This level of friendship and a professional understanding

¹¹ An economy-of-force mission is one which is second to the main effort. At this point in time, the United States was primarily concerned with fighting Al-Qaeda in Baghdad where violence was escalating. While the main focus was in Diyala Province in southern Iraq, Mosul and northern Iraq continued to see increasing violence and needed to be secured. Thus, the 3d ACR's mission was an economy-of-force mission. It was not the main focus of the Army's operations, but an important and necessary mission just the same.

¹² Information from this section was ascertained from several sources provided by the 72nd Colonel of the Regiment, COL Michael A. Bills including an early, pre-released version of an interview given to the Contemporary Operations Study Team, Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; an emailed interview given to Louise Oliver, and a copy of his "Road Show" presentation given to groups after the unit's redeployment to Fort Hood.

resulted in an emboldened Iraqi Police and a confident Iraqi Army” wrote Thunder Squadron commander, LTC Keith Barclay.¹³

At the same time Thunder Squadron was working with the Iraqi forces against the enemy, they were also spearheading civic operations in the city to help restore a sense of normalcy in the western neighborhoods. LTC Barclay continues:

December we conducted the first Thunder Reaper in the series. These operations focused on a deliberate IED clearance of named routes, clean-up of all the trash piled in the streets and finally, repair of all of the potholes. The ‘Reaper’ projects were completed by the 43rd Combat Engineer Company...The local citizens quickly realized that we were improving their city and securing the areas. While the number of SIGACTs decreased in each of the subsequent Thunder Reaper operations, the benefits for the local Iraqi citizens continued to grow.¹⁴

Citizens began to see an increase in commercial and economical development with the repairing of roads. On December 8, 2007, Thunder Squadron began Operation Thunder Reaper with the mission of reopening Highway One, Mosul’s major highway. Al-Qaeda IED attacks on civilians and military units damaged the road, leading to its closing. In the first five days of

¹³ Keith Barclay, “Thunder, 3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 11.

¹⁴ Ibid.

the operation, ISF and Coalition Forces cleared and repaired five kilometers of Highway One and other roads that support the highway.¹⁵

The goal of Thunder Reaper IV, conducted on December 13, 2007, was to open a section of Route Tampa, which had been one of Mosul's busiest roads until it had to be closed due to danger of IEDs. Fortunately this mission was accomplished with no casualties or notable contact with the enemy. Thunder Reaper IV, which lasted 17 straight hours, demonstrated the scope of taking on such a project. Beginning at dawn, 3d ACRs 43rd Combat Engineer Company began route reconnaissance, searching for roadside bombs and other hazards.

At one point, a live IED was exposed by the engineers' Buffalo mine resistant ambush protected vehicle (MRAP), which uses "video cameras and a hydraulic arm to search areas for potential explosive threats."¹⁶ Once the IED was identified, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team destroyed it.

During the route clearance phase, Bradley Fighting Vehicles and M1A2 Abrams tanks provided protection to the engineers. Route sanitation was the next phase of operation. During this phase, Armored Combat Excavators (ACE) cleared trash and other debris including rubble from buildings and large piles of dirt, all of which had or could be used as hiding places for bombs. The engineers

¹⁵ Multi-National Division – North Public Affairs Officer, "Iraqi Security Forces, MND-North Soldiers rebuild Mosul highway," Blackanthem Military News, December 19, 2007, <http://www.blackanthem.com/News/iraqi-freedom/Iraqi-Security-Forces-MND-North-Soldiers-rebuild-Mosul-highway12850.shtml> [accessed December 16, 2009].

¹⁶ Rutherford

then placed concrete barriers to better control traffic on the four-lane highway.”¹⁷

Because the mission ran smoothly, more of the road was opened than expected.

“Today we set out to do a large scale route improvement in our sector. We used our dig assets to improve what was a trash filled, dirt filled, improvised explosive device magnet into a four-lane highway with serpentine,” said 43rd CEC trooper SGT Daniel Preston. That night, after the mission, the Thunder Squadron soldiers used the newly cleaned stretch of road to return to FOB Marez, experiencing firsthand the difference they made that day in Mosul.

In a Blackanthem.com article in December 2007, Thunder Squadron’s Operational Officer, MAJ John A. Oliver, Jr., discussed the importance of the Thunder Reaper missions:

Highway One is a four-lane expressway that represents the economic heart of western Mosul...Its reopening will improve local and provincial commerce, thereby creating economic opportunities. The road will also improve security for the people of Mosul by offering Iraqi Security Forces an increased freedom of movement when required... Infrastructure such as Highway One are what enable major cities such as Mosul to thrive; al-Qaeda has made every attempt to keep this unusable...By their actions, al-Qaeda puts their version of the future for Iraq on display. The ISF and CF see a prosperous future for Mosul and Iraq. The success of Thunder Reaper is just one aspect of that future that can be seen today.¹⁸

¹⁷ Rutherford

¹⁸ Multi-National Division – North Public Affairs Officer

While 3d ACR was worked on non-lethal, civic operations, it also engaged the enemy in very hazardous scenarios during that first part of the deployment. According to COL Bills, by February 2008, “In combined operations with the Iraqi army, police, and border forces, we have conducted more than 3,500 patrols, found countless weapons caches, (and) captured or killed more than 300 terrorists.”¹⁹

On January 7, 2008, 3d Squadron’s Howitzer Battery’s mission to search for “a known al-Qaida bomb-maker and improvised explosive device cell leader,” led the Battery into narrow alleyways “leaving them vulnerable to a variety of attacks.”²⁰ First Lt. Richard Ybarra describes the start of the hazardous mission:

As the short columns of Humvees [sic] works its way slowly down the narrow back streets of Mosul’s Tamooz neighborhood, the unmistakable hiss of a rocket propelled grenade is followed closely by an explosion, interrupting the low rumble of the armored vehicles’ engines. A round of positive status reports indicate that no one has been hit. A series of bursts from a .50 caliber machine gun from the rear vehicle convinces the al-Qaida grenadier that a second round is probably not a wise course of action. The radio crackles. It is Sgt. Pedro Santiago of Yauco, Puerto Rico. ‘There was a guy in a brown suit. He just walked across the street, went around the corner and came right back out and fired an RPG!’²¹

¹⁹ Michael E. Bills, “A message from the 72nd Colonel of the Regiment,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 4.

²⁰ Richard Ybarra, “Redlegs detain HVT while under fire,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, February 2008, 26-27.

²¹ Ibid.

After the troopers spent the next several hours looking for the bomber, he was spotted in a market with a companion. It had been reported that the suspect usually traveled with guards. With the suspect in sight, the Battery was ordered into action. Staff Sgt Harry Halfalla of Daly City, California, was the first soldier to get near the suspect. "He shouts at the al-Qaida operative while motioning with one hand, leveling his M4 with the other, 'Get your hands up. Keep your hands up.'"²² While neither the suspect nor the companion resisted when captured, the bomb-maker's guards fired rocket propelled grenades at the soldiers once they realized that the suspects would be leaving with the Americans. The rockets landed 100 meters short of the high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV) that provided flanking cover for the troopers and suspects. The soldiers quickly found cover for themselves and the detainees behind additional HMMWVs, while the soldiers continued to weapons search the suspects. First Lieutenant Valton King, Howitzer Battery platoon leader explains the importance of this type of search:

Loading an AQI operative inside a vehicle without a thorough search for weapons, primarily explosives, is considered an unacceptable risk...We have encountered people who have had suicide vests or other weapons. Just the possibility they may have them is more than enough reason to conduct a thorough search. We have to defuse that situation, to make sure they have no means to engage us while we have them detained.²³

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

The guards' efforts to disrupt the proceedings continued as another RPG was fired on the Americans. It missed the dismounted troops and suspects by less than five meters overhead and struck a building 20 meters behind them.

First Lieutenant Robert Ybarra described the intensity of the situation:

Fragments of concrete followed by a coating of dust fall upon friend and foe alike in the target area. It seems a redundant reminder that it is time to move the detainees to a more secure site, as if the flash, heat and noise from the explosion had not been a sufficient prompt.²⁴

The troopers quickly loaded the detainees into vehicles and proceeded to FOB Marez where the suspect was positively identified as the bomber. The mission speaks to the training and professionalism of the 3d ACR soldiers and the uncertainty of the situation. According to 1LT Valton King, Howitzer Battery platoon leader:

The Soldiers performed excellently. We had a little issue with the outer cordon at the beginning, but they adjusted under fire. They were scanning the rooftops, got more RPG fire, they couldn't identify the shooter and held their fire which is what we want. We don't indiscriminately shoot up a neighborhood. We are not al-Qaida. We want to keep a positive image of Coalition Forces. We are here to stabilize the city.²⁵

Major Thomas Feltey, 3rd Squadron's Executive Officer (XO), concurred when he described how the soldiers' behavior reinforced their mission:

The apprehension today was a great victory for the citizens of Mosul and should positively impact their security, as AQI's work is

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

clearly intended to terrorize the populace. The efforts of these Soldiers to safeguard the detainees while under fire from AQI was nothing short of heroic.²⁶

Between November 2007 and February 2008, the Regiment lost 14 soldiers. Many soldiers were killed as a result of IEDs. Others were killed in action. One incident that resonated with the soldiers throughout the regiment occurred on December 26, 2007, in Mosul. Approximately 60 members of Thunder Squadron were assisting approximately 75 to 100 Iraqi Army soldiers clear and secure an abandoned civic building to use as a headquarters for the Iraqi forces. The large building was being cleared of civilians who had found refuge inside the building. Part of the mission was to clear out these Iraqi families, including children. Both Iraqi and American soldiers continually moved in and out of the building. Throughout the day, a few of the Iraqi soldiers were observed by the American soldiers to be making mistakes including one who accidentally fired his weapon. Luckily none of the soldiers or the civilians being escorted from the building was hit by the shot, but the lack of discipline was dangerous.

Five Thunder soldiers and their interpreter entered the building in search of the Iraqi Army Commander on site to encourage tighter control of the Iraqi soldiers. As the five Americans entered the building, an Iraqi Army Soldier began shooting at point blank range. In a matter of seconds, CPT Rowdy Inman and SGT Benjamin Portell were killed, SGT Charles Duplesse and PFC Donald Sohler were critically injured, and MAJ John A. Oliver and the interpreter known

²⁶ Ibid.

as Gary were also slightly injured. Although the Americans, especially SGT Portell, fired back, the individual ran out of the building unscathed and attempted to blend into the crowd. Chaos ensued. CPT Inman, known as "John Wayne" to his troops due to his swagger and pearl handled pistol, had been the Ironhawk Troop Commander and the soldier leading the security. With the troop commander down, MAJ Oliver and 1SG Gast immediately got the American soldiers under control and in order. Quickly air-lifted to a combat surgical hospital, the two critically-injured soldiers swiftly received needed medical care. MAJ Oliver later realized he was grazed in the hand, but required only stitches. The alleged attacker was captured and taken into custody. As of March 2010, the attacker continues to be in Iraqi custody and on trial for the murder of Inman and Portell. CPT Inman was awarded the Purple Heart. SGT Portell was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor and the Purple Heart.²⁷

This incident affected the soldiers deeply. CPT Inman, as his first name – Rowdy – might indicate was boisterous and well-known in the regiment for his personality and leadership. SGT Portell was a newlywed and also well liked. When asked what should be remembered about the deployment, several soldiers who were interviewed wrote about this incident as one of the most significant events during the deployment. LTC Gary Dangerfield wrote: "the murder of two

²⁷ Information on this event was collected from several sources including: discussion with MAJ John A. Oliver, Jr., who was the officer in charge at the site; phone conversation from the Department of Defense to Louise Oliver informing her of the event and her husband's condition in December 2007, speech at the Regiment's memorial service for CPT Inman and SGT Portell in February 2008 at Fort Hood, Texas.

of our troopers and several others who were wounded by the hands of an Iraqi Soldier on 26 December, 2007, brought the Regiment closer together.”

Establishing a Presence
March – July 08

During the next phase of the Regiment’s deployment, two missions – Operation Lions Roar and Operation Mother of Two Springs – had a tremendous impact on the city of Mosul. According to COL Bills, “attack levels have dropped from 116 per week to around 60. We have seen a transition of very positive trends in Mosul and the entirety of Ninewa Province with more Iraqis, specifically families, moving about the city. With commerce improving and markets opening across the city of Mosul, the people are enjoying the change.” At the same time, COL Bills commented on his Regiment’s ongoing efforts. “We have the momentum but also must continue to go after those insurgents who try to intimidate the ISF and Iraqi people as we transition to more non-lethal aspects of this fight.” According to COL Bills, “We still have a lot of work to do in transitioning our Iraqi partners to the lead and with projects to improve the living conditions for the Iraqi people in the cities, villages and provinces across Iraq.”²⁸

²⁸ Michael A. Bills, “A message from the 72nd Colonel of the Regiment,” The Mounted Rifleman, June 2008, 4.

At the same time, Command Sgt. Major William Burns, the 17th CSM of the Regiment, commented on the frustration American soldiers sometimes felt with their Iraqi counterparts:

We need to remember that the Iraqi Security Forces are only a couple of years old. It takes our Army about a year to take in an initial recruit and train him to be a fully functioning Soldier. Then, with seasoned leadership, it takes another year to build the team and be prepared to go to work. The ISF has the leadership, however, not only are they training new recruits and police to fill the ranks, they are simultaneously rebuilding their entire support system so they can adequately equip and sustain their forces. That just does not happen in a year or two. They are doing great work and we are all seeing the improvements they are making every day. The people of Ninewa are also witnessing it and gaining confidence in them as well...The 3d ACR and attached units have helped create the opportunity for the Iraqi Security Forces to begin this operation and rid the city of insurgents...We have set the stage for the ISF to take over and protect their countrymen. They are getting better and gaining confidence with every mission they go on and every fight they win. It is our job to ensure their continued success and we will not fail.²⁹

As the Regiment began to stabilize and secure Mosul and Ninewa Province, they began to change tactics. Early on, Iraqi forces and American soldiers would patrol neighborhoods together on foot or by tank, but would leave some areas to report back to their headquarters. For the Americans this meant returning to FOB Marez daily and/or nightly, effectively losing the upper hand against the enemy embedded in the area they patrolled. As part of their ongoing counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq, 3d ACR began to “partner with Iraqi

²⁹ William Burns, “A message from the XVII CSM of the Regiment,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, June 2008, 5.

Security Forces and move off the larger bases into smaller outposts in local neighborhoods. The close proximity not only decreased response time to emergency situations but allow[ed] the Coalition more opportunities to interact with the local population” because of the unit’s constant and consistent presence.³⁰

These structures, known as Combat Outposts, or COPs, were a visual reminder that Coalition Forces were a presence there. Other units had built and used COPs before 3d ACR took over in December 2007. During the Regiment’s deployment, the building of additional COPs corresponded with a gradual, but marked decrease in the number of enemy attacks. CPT Richard Ybarra, in his article, “Securing One Neighborhood at a Time,” described the COPs in this way: “The COPs are designed to drive a wedge between AQI and the citizens who live in the troubled neighborhood. This is accomplished by improving security and acting as a facilitator for constant communication between the citizens and their IA and CF protectors.”³¹

The importance of the COPs cannot be overstated. The Regimental Commander, COL Bills, wrote that one of the most significant events of the entire deployment was “quickly taking back the city [of Mosul] through the

³⁰ Patrick Lair, “3d ACR tackles dangerous Mosul neighborhood,” Blackanthem Military News, January 29, 2008, http://www.blackanthem.com/News/Military_News_1/3d-ACR-tackles-dangerous-Mosul-neighborhood14277.shtml [accessed December 19, 2009].

³¹ Richard Ybarra, “Securing one neighborhood at a time,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, June 2008, 30.

development and occupation of neighborhoods through COPs.”³² 1SG Anthony Gast of Thunder Squadron discussed the long-term effects the COPs had on their neighbors: “The COPs provide increased security and ultimately as security increases, allows for infrastructure improvements and more commerce...COPs allow the Iraqi army to have a permanent presence and show the Iraqi people that the IA and IP are here to defend them every day, and that has made a big difference.”³³

SFC Ronald Corella agreed: “This really fits in with what we’re trying to do all over. The IA gathers the intel, leads the raids and patrols the area while we provide security and help them with things they can’t do.”³⁴

Constructing and occupying the COPs was never an easy process. COP Killer is one example of the difficulties of preparing and maintaining a COP. Combat Outpost Rabiya (Arabic for “Spring”), also referred to as ‘COP Killer’ because Killer Troop assisted in the protection of the COP, was built on a corner that was a known “weapons stash and hideout for insurgent snipers” according to a local interpreter who generally refused to be identified for security reasons.³⁵ SFC Corella explained that: “This intersection and this whole little neighborhood has been a hotbed of SIGACTS...What we’re trying to do is close the gap

³² Michael A. Bills, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, January 2010.

³³ Ybarra, “Securing one neighborhood at a time,” 30.

³⁴ Lair, “3d ACR tackles dangerous Mosul Neighborhood”

³⁵ Ibid.

between some our other COP's, put some soldiers in here and catch the bad guys.'"³⁶

Not eager to be displaced or caught, the insurgents fight for the corner and the building. "On day one the insurgents realized what we're building and they've been taking shots at us to slow us down,' Corella said. 'Every day we get hit with something – RPG's, small arms fire – but we haven't had any casualties...If we can get the people to move back and the insurgents to go away, that's just one more little piece of Mosul that's secure.'"³⁷ The American forces stood their ground. In the first four days of the operation, "Killer Troop soldiers patrolled the area, sleeping inside their vehicles or on the hoods with the engine running to stay warm at night, as engineers worked to clear the area of rubble and erect protective barriers around the premises." Additional support and protection came in the form of helicopter units which continued to deter enemy activity.³⁸

By the spring of 2008, American soldiers witnessed how the Iraqi Security Forces were continuing to take on the enemy in Mosul through sheer tenacity. They simply were refusing, step by step, to be deferred by insurgents. A good example of this was the fight over COP Inman, a COP named in honor of CPT Rowdy Inman. The COP was manned by 2nd Iraqi Army Division soldiers. At 7

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

a.m., on March 28, 2008, al-Qaeda sent a suicide-truck-bomb crashing into the gates of COP Inman. After the bomb detonated in the main compound, 13 Iraqi soldiers had been killed and 35 more were wounded.

Immediate concern was for the casualties, but also for the surrounding residential area. "All the damage the terrorists have caused to the people and their homes, I do not understand these men, why would they do that?"

questioned Iraqi soldier Nami Ibbrahim of the 2nd Iraqi Army Division.³⁹

Trusting that help would come from their own units and American counterparts, "the IA soldiers did not abandon their post." Engineers from the 2nd IA Division and the U.S. Army's 232nd Horizontal Engineer Company, 94th Engineer Battalion, which is attached to the 3d ACR, began reconstructing the COP five days after the bombing. Quickly falling into the same work rhythm, the IA and CF soldiers seemed indistinguishable as they strung Hesco barriers, worked construction equipment, and patrolled the area for possible threats of additional enemy attack. First Lieutenant Nathan Foust of the 232nd Eng. Co., had only high praise for the IA: "They are doing real well, their morale has been unbelievable, I couldn't ask for anything more. The NCO's have really been on top of it, they are great. The Soldiers are all solid. They all work very hard."⁴⁰ So devoted to rebuilding the COP were the soldiers that the mission took only two nights

³⁹ Richard Ybarra, "Iraqi and coalition engineers team up in Mosul for COP Inman rebuild," *The Mounted Rifleman*, June 2008, 26-27.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

rather than the three that was expected. Nami Ibbrahim, 2nd IA Division soldier, who helped rebuild the COP commented on his dedication:

By rebuilding we are showing the people that we have the will to continue this fight to win, that we will not abandon them. We will carry the fight, wherever they make it, we will win. With all my friends in the IA, I will stay and fight, forever if we have to. I am from Diyala and he is from Baghdad, but together we are the IA.⁴¹

Evidence of the tide turning in Mosul was also witnessed by 1-8 Infantry Battalion commander LTC Christopher Johnson. Attached to 3d ACR, Johnson's unit's AO was the eastern side of Mosul and worked closely with 3d ACR's Thunder Squadron, which was located on the western side. Johnson commented on the change his unit saw in the enemy and urged American soldiers in the area to recognize it:

Some insurgents are tired and want to seek political solutions. We must convince the reconcilable insurgents to stop fighting, while at the same time be prepared to kill the enemy that is irreconcilable. The best way to reach out to the reconcilable individuals is understanding their culture (conscious competence), developing trust and confidence and demonstrating humanity. Your daily actions and words make the difference. Our non-lethal operations will encourage Iraqi reconciliation, which is critical to the future peace and stability of Iraq.⁴²

On May 1, 2008, Sabre Squadron experienced, not for the first time, the tenacity of the enemy and the tragedy of the enemy's attacks. Squadron's

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Christopher Johnson, "1-8 Infantry Bn., 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division," *The Mounted Rifleman*, June 2008, 12.

soldiers were busily preparing final details to conduct Operation Sabre Tempest the next day. Nine miles away in the city of Balad Rud, “a suicide bomber, pretending to be pregnant, walked into a crowded area and blew herself up.”⁴³ Shortly after Iraqi forces arrived on scene, another suicide bomber walked through the crowd and blew himself up. At this point, FOB Caldwell was called in to assist with the 35 dead and approximately 65 injured citizens. “The quick reaction force from Rattler Troop, made up of members from its support platoon and cooks joined the IPs to bring order to a chaotic situation.”⁴⁴ With so many injured, the small medical clinic at the Kirkush Military Training Base (near Sabre’s FOB Caldwell), was quickly overwhelmed. Sabre Squadron’s medical force, including the field surgeon, physician’s assistant and other available medics, assisted with the triage and determined that most of the casualties would need to be evacuated by air to Balad, the largest city near FOB Caldwell. The tactical operations center (TOC) assisted with ordering the air medevac helicopters and Rattler Troop mechanics “organized and loaded patients onto the aircraft. In the early morning of May 2, only a few hours after the last medevac helicopter departed, the squadron began Operation Sabre Tempest with the largest (375 men) combined air assault conducted in Theater.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Paul Calvert, “Sabre, 2nd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, June 2008, 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Later, the Sabre Squadron's commander, LTC Paul Calvert, wrote about the way in which his soldiers performed a myriad of tasks under the most difficult of circumstances:

I am amazed every day as I watch our Troopers fulfill their duties and responsibilities. They conduct air assaults as easy as they conduct ground infiltrations. They conduct raids, reconnaissance and security operations, engagements with the local populace, and provide humanitarian relief. They live in harsh conditions for long periods of time without complaint. They take care of each other and work to make the team successful. They are flexible, adaptable, and a team, and it is an honor to serve amongst their ranks.⁴⁶

While 2nd Squadron fought in Diyala and 3rd Squadron was focused on the fight for Mosul, 1st Squadron's mission was to lead the war against the enemy's improvised explosive device (IED) network that ran along the Mosul/Baghdad highway:

This mission took on the appearance of what I can best describe as 'submarine warfare,' with each side quietly stalking the other. Prolonged periods of tedious strain were punctuated with the sudden violence of either an IED detonation on one of our patrols or by us executing a successful ambush on a group of IED emplacements...The complexity of this fight required an equally complex set of solutions, ranging from direct, violent engagement of IED emplacements to the detainment of bomb makers, financiers, and cell members, to the deliberate management of reconstruction projects designed to change the allegiance of villages and tribes within our part of the province. -MAJ Matthew Dooley, 1st Squadron's Executive Officer⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Dooley, Interview

Throughout the deployment, 3d ACR Soldiers were also involved with many different types of humanitarian efforts, often asking and receiving help from family and friends back home. In February 2008, after clearing the area of insurgents, Sabre Squadron supervised drops of much needed food and kerosene to citizens in the Mansuriyah region. Later, the squadron would assist with medical mission and rebuilding schools. In April 2008, students at a Mosul elementary school was surprised with a visit from Iraqi police and Coalition Forces who brought the children shoes, sandals, clothes and toys. The items came from family and friends of American soldiers and civilian contractors who wanted to help the kids in some way.⁴⁸ Scenes such as this played out across Ninewa province for the rest of the deployment. Other times school children were given school supplies in addition to clothing, shoes and toys.

Humanitarian efforts were also extended to the women in Iraq. In 2005, Jaghreed Youysf opened the Women's Development Center in her village in Qaraqush, Iraq. The center provided classes to thousands of Iraqi women, especially single and widowed Iraqi women, who needed to learn skills that would help them make a living. One of the most significant skills taught was sewing, but Youysf had to limit enrollment because of a lack of supplies. Impressed with Youysf's determination and success despite resistance from the Iraqi government and religious organizations, MAJ Wilbur E. Kline of Company

⁴⁸ *The Mounted Rifleman*, "IPs and MPs surprise school with gifts, June 2008, 29.

C of the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion (which was attached to 3d ACR), reached out to his hometown of Huntington, Indiana, and the Rotary Club there to assist Youysf's efforts. He also contacted the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Iraq. On September 4, 2008, Kline presented Youysf with more than 400 pounds of fabric and sewing supplies. The PRT also donated \$5,000 to the center.⁴⁹

Sometimes, charitable donation ideas came from family members back in the United States. Starline Nunley of Springfield , Ohio, wanted to do something for her son, MAJ Parker Frawley, the planning officer for 3d ACR. When Frawley could not think of anything his fellow soldiers needed, he started to think about others in the unit. That is when he remembered that the military working dogs in Iraq needed supplies. During missions, the dogs often suffered from sand blown in their eyes and hot sand and asphalt burning their paws. As a member of the Gem City Dog Club in Dayton, Ohio, Nunley loved the idea. Within two months, SGT Budge, SGT Lucky, and SSGT Bronco as well as all of the other working dogs at FOB Marez and the surrounding area began receiving canine cooling vests, cooling packs and doggles – canine eye protection as well as water bowls and toys from funds raised by Nunley and also from her dog club.

⁴⁹ Kyle Richardson, "Center helps Iraqi women develop skills," *The Mounted Rifleman*, October 2008, 18.

The dogs' co-workers were as excited as the dogs themselves, "They're awesome. It's a morale thing for the dogs. You can't find stuff for the dogs out here."⁵⁰

The Deployment At Home

While the soldiers of 3d ACR worked through the deployment in Iraq, the other members of the Regiment, the families of the Soldiers, worked through it at home in different ways. With their Soldier deployed, spouses, significant others and other family members and friends endured the same time at home single-handedly taking care of everything from childcare to home repairs to bill paying. Additionally, for many spouses and families, this deployment was only the most recent of 3d ACR's three deployments to Iraq since 2002.

Throughout the deployment, the Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) worked closely with the Regiment and Squadron Rear Detachment leadership. Most FRGs held monthly meetings to discuss how the units were doing in Iraq, disseminate information about classes, activities and resources, and plan upcoming events such as picnics, family fun days or holiday parties. Mrs. Jennifer Harper, wife of CPT Justin Harper, explained her role as a FRG Leader during the deployment:

My responsibilities as an FRG Leader dealt mainly with the welfare of the family members of the Soldiers in the unit. I did my best to keep the family members informed of what was going on both at Ft. Hood and down range [in Iraq]. This was somewhat difficult as our family members were spread throughout the entire country,

⁵⁰ Tim Volkert, "Dog lovers send goodies to military canines," *The Mounted Rifleman*, June 2008, 15.

and we found that e-mail was an extremely effective and efficient way to distribute information. I also acted as a go-between for family members and Rear Detachment when questions needed to be answered, when rumors needed to be controlled, and when emergencies came up. In addition, I also provided support and assistance to family members whose service member was killed or injured in theater.⁵¹

While FRG leadership worked to keep families informed, many Regimental spouses helped families in other, more neighborly ways. This deployment was not the first for Mrs. Daphnie Cantlon, wife of MAJ Cameron Cantlon. Although she cared for her three small children and was pregnant during the deployment, she was able to set a wonderful example of the capacity Army wives have to support one another. While she was quick to point out that she “didn’t have any official responsibilities,” and that she considered her volunteerism as minor, the sheer variety and amount of work she actually did clearly shows the dedication she had to helping the families of the Regiment thrive during the deployment:

I tried my best to build relationships and to be an active listener in the FRG channels. Being present to show support and doing what we could behind the lines made the deployment less stressful...[I] helped support the LTC wife the best I could, filled in for her when she left for one holiday, helped coordinate with other volunteers and deliver layettes to 3d ACR wives during the months that Sabre [Squadron] was responsible, provided childcare on occasions to Sabre wives, attended most coffees and troop FRG meetings, made meals for wives who had babies or who had lost a loved one, took notes for a troop commander’s wife during steering meetings when she couldn’t be present. [I] went to all Rattler Troop holiday

⁵¹ Jenny Harper, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2010.

parties, attended or planned unit playdates to help my children know the other children. In general I tried to build relationships with younger volunteer leadership and offered support through listening and sharing experiences.⁵²

Because of the efforts of Mrs. Cantlon and many other Army wives like her, the Regiment was able to take care of its 3d ACR families.

The FRGs also provided valuable social interaction between Army spouses and other family members. Mrs. Harper explained how the families of the Regiment supported each other:

We didn't hesitate to lend an ear when someone needed to complain, provide a shoulder to cry on when things were tough. No one understood better what we were going through than the other members of the Regiment, and we stuck together. People should remember that we were an extremely close, tight-group of family members, particularly at the Squadron level. We supported one another and our Soldiers and were dedicated to the success of the unit, both stateside and down range. I think there is something to be said about going through a deployment with someone. It's almost as if it accelerates your friendship, bringing you much closer together than you would be otherwise.⁵³

While the FRGs were able to provide a personal connection that the soldiers' spouses and children needed, the Army and Fort Hood, encouraged them to keep busy by offering many free and reduced rate activities on post and in the surrounding communities. Mrs. Cantlon shared how the post supported the families of deployed soldiers in a variety of ways:

⁵² Daphnie Cantlon, interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2009.

⁵³ Jenny Harper, Interview

I will always remember the efforts from Chaffee daycare ([which provided] free hourly care to children of deployed soldiers) to help make the time my children spent there fun. Darnell Hospital staff did an amazing job helping me with my pregnancy and supporting my birth experience while I was alone. Youth services provided free ballet classes to my girls which allowed them to meet with other military children going through deployments while encouraging them to try new things.⁵⁴

Lydia Spencer Lane traveled with the Regiment for twenty years beginning in the mid-1850s. In 1893, she wrote about the hardships and dangers of being an Army wife in the unsettled western frontier. She concluded: "Think of what I have told you, my young army friends, and cease to grumble at trifles. Compare your lot with your mother's, and see how much more comfortable you are than she was."⁵⁵ While they may not have known who Mrs. Lane was, the spouses of Thunder Squadron echoed her sentiments when they adopted: "Put your big girl panties on and deal with it!" as their deployment motto.

While the Regiment sponsored many events during the deployment, the most popular was the cavalry's traditional Spouses' Spur Ride, held May 16, 2008. Divided into squadron teams, nearly 150 spouses, dressed in ACU's, squadron t-shirts made special for the event, and Army gear, demonstrated their support for their unit and soldiers. To earn their silver spouses' spurs charms, the wives – and one husband – were required to complete nearly six hours of activities including an obstacle course and land navigation exercises. The

⁵⁴ Daphnie Cantlon, Interview

⁵⁵ Lane, 147.

spouses also enjoyed a delicious MRE lunch and a game of 3d ACR History Jeopardy.

Even with the many activities the Army and Regiment provided, the families missed their soldiers and worried for their safety. For many spouses, trips to the post office to mail care packages – sometimes filled with necessities like socks or trail mix, often filled with reminders from home such as children’s drawings and photo albums – was a weekly occurrence. Telephone calls and email messages helped families stay connected. The Regiment published *The Mounted Rifleman*, the 3d ACRs magazine, to give families and friends an idea of what and how the soldiers were doing during the deployment. One of the most personal ways families were able to communicate with their soldiers was through video teleconferencing, or VTCs, conducted between the units in Iraq and the rear detachment at Fort Hood. While there were many technical and logistical details to attend, many families enjoyed actually seeing their loved ones on two big screens and having their soldier able to see them. Although each family was limited to only 5 to 10 minute VTC conversations, the opportunity to see their soldier in real time was well worth the efforts.

As the deployment began to wind down, the FRGs prepared for their soldiers’ homecoming by hanging large, personalized banners all along the road from the airport to the unit headquarters. Many units surprised single soldiers by decorating their barracks rooms with “Welcome Home” signs, gift baskets

made up of donated items from local businesses, and a nicely made bed complete with new sheets and blankets.

Lasting 15 months, the OIF 07-09 deployment was longer than most other deployments. For many, the fact that the Regiment missed two Thanksgiving and two Christmas holidays, made it seem even longer. Just as the families before them endured long separations, these families served the Regiment honorably. When asked what museum visitors should remember about these “other” members of the Regiment, Mrs. Megan Bills, wife of COL Bills, wrote:

They should remember how strong, flexible, resilient and supportive they were. They came together as one during a very long and difficult separation.⁵⁶

Maintaining Stability
August – December 2008

As the heat increased well into the 100's, soldiers of the Regiment continued their work, often attempting to put off their more physical duties to earlier or later daytime hours, if possible. A new type of uniform, the Army Combat Shirt, also helped with the heat. Designed with a thin fabric for the body core and ACU-style, fire-resistant sleeves, the troopers appreciated the cooler material. “The Soldiers love them, as they are much cooler to wear under body armor than regular ACU's.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Megan Bills, interview by author, 2010.

⁵⁷ William Nance, “Remington, Headquarters Troop, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, August 2008, 8.

In southern Mosul, Tiger Squadron continued its combat operations against insurgents but also focused on training Iraqi soldiers at the Iraqi Warrior Leader's Course located on FOB Q-West. Designed to train, teach, and mentor Iraqi soldiers, the three-week curriculum included courses in "rifle marksmanship, first aid, map reading, and guard duty; and in leadership responsibilities like the law of war, effective communications, the military decision-process and the mission essential task list."⁵⁸ One of the most important elements of the training is teaching the soldiers how to properly clear homes. To add a bit of fun and teambuilding elements into the courses, platoon competitions were built into some of the training. As of October 2008, about 900 soldiers had graduated from the course. Tiger soldiers anticipated that the experience would lead to the Iraqi graduates to pass on what they learned to other Iraqi soldiers. SGT Shehab Ahmad Nori, a soldier with 3rd Battalion, 8th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Army Division, explained how he would accomplish this: "It's very important for all soldiers to learn this kind of training. I'm a very aggressive soldier, so when I leave here, I'll be sure to teach other soldiers what I have learned to help get the Iraqi army forward."⁵⁹

In Northern Diyala Province, Sabre Squadron continued its victories against the enemy and began to see a marked increase of Iraqi soldiers and

⁵⁸ Adam Carl Blazak, "Leadership Training, Tiger Squadron's course teaches soldiers to take charge," *The Mounted Rifleman*, October 2008, 26-27.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

citizens joining the fight. Battling for most of the summer in southern Balad Ruz, Sabre Squadron routed the enemy by employing versatility in tactics that included cavalry troopers who conducted air assaults, field artillerymen who patrolled roads and met with village leaders and cooks who helped secure towns.⁶⁰ All of these efforts resulted in the Squadron securing the way for the Iraqi army and police to man outposts and checkpoints and control the area. Villages once occupied by al-Qaeda, now thrived as citizens returned to a safer, more normal life. "Braving intense heat, battling through IED traps laid by their departing enemy, and with the eyes of the world on them, Sabre Troopers upheld the best traditions of the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen as they cleared hundreds of square kilometers of previously enemy-held land." And it was not only the Iraqi forces that joined the fight. In increasing numbers, Iraqi citizens began taking ownership of their homes and villages and engaging the enemy:

Emboldened as al Qaeda leaders and thugs are killed, captured, or fleeing, ordinary Iraqi citizens are standing up for themselves. Sabre Squadron has recruited more than 300 'Sons of Iraq,' local citizens who pledge to guard their own communities. In July [2008], al Qaeda terrorists viciously attacked a small group of these citizens as they manned an outpost near their village. Despite being outnumbered by their attackers, these citizens did not run. They fought back, took casualties, and kept fighting. When the dust cleared, a key al Qaeda leader lay dead, and the 'Sons of Iraq' held their ground...We are now seeing things that once seemed like a pipe dream: Iraqi police arresting high value targets; elite Iraqi army units leading large offensives with minimal coalition help;

⁶⁰ Paul Calvert, "Sabre, 2nd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, August 2008, 10, 34.

and ordinary citizens laying their lives on the line to protect their homes from terror.”⁶¹

At the same time, Sabre Squadron’s Grim Troop continued its mission of clearing villages of insurgents. On July 25, 2008, in extreme heat, Grim Troop and soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 18th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division flew into Al Fatah Miaya, a village in eastern Diyala Province where the enemy was known to be. The soldiers searched homes for possible terrorist threats and also canals where the enemy had been known to stash weapons. The mission was dangerous and used highly technical equipment. The joint operation was led by the Iraqis because, according to 1LT David Sherck, a Grim Troop platoon leader, “they know what looks different. They have a better sense of things that are out of place, they are more aware of where people would hide stuff.”⁶²

In May 2008, Sabre Squadron led Operation Sabre Tempest. In July, the unit continued the fight leading Operation Sabre Pursuit in and around the city of Balad Ruz, a rural, agricultural area with a population of about 100,000. Similar to Grim Troops operations, these missions cleared villages, scored multiple caches, defused improvised explosive devices and rid the area of insurgents with the help of local villagers.⁶³ The success of these joint operations

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Kyle Richardson, “Grim Troop clears out insurgents,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, August 2008, 24.

⁶³ Mary Rose Mittlesteadt, “Sabre Squadron operation paves way for successful future in Diyala Province,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, October 2008, 24-25.

between Iraqi and Coalition forces in the Balad Ruz area paved the way for a change in security control of the region. On August 2, 2008, the Multi-National Division – North transferred responsibility for the southern Balad Ruz area of Diyala Province to two Iraqi Security Force units, the Balad Ruz police and the 18th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division. Commanders of the two Iraqi units and Sabre Squadron met three days earlier to finalize boundary and responsibility issues between the two Iraqi units. Police Chief COL Faris Radi Abbas, was optimistic about the change: “The Iraqis are ready to take over this area. Our people are ready to come back to their homes and support the Coalition and Iraqi forces.”⁶⁴

North in Mosul, Thunder Squadron began to see Iraqis stand up in a different way. On July 15, 2008, Iraqi voter registration sites opened across Mosul and Ninewa Province. Even the process to find suitable sites for voter registration was an arduous task. While choosing a secure location was the most important factor in determining whether a site was appropriate, other considerations included a site that was large enough to handle a large number of registrants and a location that was known to most people in the area. Because of their level of safety and size, schools were typically chosen to fill this important role. If it was the first time Iraqis registered to vote, they were required to do so in person at one of the registration sites. If they had previously voted, Iraqis

⁶⁴ Multi-National Division – North Public Affairs Office, “Sabre Squadron transfers Diyala security control to Iraqi forces,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, August 2008, 26

could register to vote over the telephone. Thunder troop and company level leadership visited more than 40 sites to assist in any way necessary. Unlike earlier elections, security and order would be the sole responsibility of Iraqi Security Forces. In an article for *The Mounted Rifleman*, LTC Keith Barclay, Thunder Squadron Commander, wrote: "This is a great step forward, further illuminating how Iraqi institutions are beginning to take responsibility for their jobs allowing the coalition to reduce its role."⁶⁵

September 2008 brought with it thunder storms, the first rain the 3d ACR and Iraq experienced in almost six months and it was a welcomed relief. Many of the contributors to October's issue of *The Mounted Rifleman* give telling insight into how the Regiment was handling the deployment.

Moving into the final phases of the deployment, Regiment leadership cautioned that while soldiers might be looking forward to returning home and complacency could set in, they must also remain vigilant and focused on the duty at hand. Regimental Commander COL Bills spelled out his priorities for the remainder of the deployment that included telling leadership to continue being engaged with soldiers, work toward a seamless transition with the incoming unit that would be relieving the Regiment, and upholding safety

⁶⁵ Keith Barclay, "Thunder, 3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment," *The Mounted Rifleman*, August 2008, 11

standards.⁶⁶ Command Sergeant Major Burns was even more direct celebrating past achievements, but also reminding them of the continued dangers:

We have kept the enemy off balance, taken away areas they once controlled, and have showed them that direct contact with us leads to death or capture. We have been successful, but this success can be easily reversed if we allow ourselves to lose focus and let the enemy regain their balance. The momentum in this fight is ours and we must continue to move forward and maintain the edge that has allowed us to help the Iraqi Security Forces hold the cities and villages in this province. We owe it to our fallen Troopers and those who have been injured during our deployment to keep attacking the enemy and not allow them the opportunity to strike at us....As I have said many times before, I expect you to Be professional, Be polite, and Be prepared to kill.⁶⁷

Shortly before redeployment, Sabre Squadron rejoined the Regiment in Ninewa Province. Sabre's commander, LTC Paul Calvert wrote, "After spending 12 months in Diyala Province, Sabre Squadron is extremely proud to once again be standing in the Regiment's formation with its colors to our front." He complimented his soldiers for their "truly herculean" efforts and looked forward to ending the deployment with his squadron's regimental brothers.⁶⁸

Thunder Squadron's commander, LTC Barclay wrote that "Signs of change are everywhere here in Iraq. Soldiers are refreshed by the cooler weather

⁶⁶ Michael A. Bills, "A message from the 72nd Colonel of the Regiment," *The Mounted Rifleman*, October 2008, 4-5.

⁶⁷ William Burns, "A Message from the XVII CSM of the Regiment," *The Mounted Rifleman*, August 2008, 6-7.

⁶⁸ Paul Calvert, "Sabre, 2nd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment," *The Mounted Rifleman*, October 2008, 10.

[and] reinvigorated by the Iraqi Security Forces' determination." Barclay continued, "The actions of the Thunder Squadron Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces during the first 11 months of this deployment fundamentally changed the nature of Ninewa Province...Iraqi Security Forces continue to assert their dominance over the insurgents through increasingly independent operations. [Thunder] soldiers watch proudly as their [Iraqi] counterparts succeed. It is a sign that we are leaving a lasting impression and proof that we are accomplishing our mission."⁶⁹

Redeployment
December 2008– February 2009

As 3d ACR ended OIF 2007-09, there was one last mission it would lead. Serving as the testing unit for a new Army pilot program, the Regiment began the Early Retrograde Equipment Process (ERE). The new program was "designed to speed up how the Army redeploys and resets its combat power platforms, its tanks and Bradleys, and get them back to units faster than the current redeployment methods allow." In the past, units stripped down the equipment and computer systems, sent the vehicle to get repaired and the computers to get upgraded separately and then put the pieces back together once the elements were returned to garrison. With ERE, the entire vehicle with its computer system was sent together to get repaired and upgraded. When the

⁶⁹ Keith Barclay, "Thunder, 3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment," *The Mounted Rifleman*, October 2008, 34.

equipment was returned to garrison, in this case, Fort Hood, it was already repaired, upgraded and ready to begin training exercises. This quicker process was also easier on commanders who would ultimately benefit from the process' reduction of the loss and damage that occurs each time equipment is stripped. The process planned for the equipment to be returned to the unit about 120 days earlier than with the other system.⁷⁰

Home Again

Music blared as moms allowed their dressed up and anxious children to dance to the music on the gymnasium floor at Fort Hood. Each time there was a break in the music, emotions and excitement bubbled. Finally the words the families had been waiting to hear were spoken across the sound system – “the buses have arrived.” Soldiers from the 3d ACR had returned home.

Within minutes, hundreds of the Regiment's soldiers marched single file into the gym welcomed by the cheers of their loved ones. After a quick word from the commander praising their efforts, the soldiers were released on a 72-hour leave to go home. Family members and soldiers rushed to find each other in the wonderfully chaotic scene. Soldiers hugged parents, kissed their wives and husbands, held their children, and more than a few met their newborns for the first time. Scenes like this occurred many times during January and February 2009 as soldiers returned in groups to the families and friends who missed them.

⁷⁰ Tim Volkert, “3d ACR test Army program for redeploying equipment,” *The Mounted Rifleman*, December 2008, 20-21.

On March 25, 2009, the 3d ACR honored its fallen soldiers from OIF 07-09 with a special ceremony at the Regiment's Memorial where a new stone engraved with the soldiers' names was added to the site.⁷¹

⁷¹ 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, "3d ACR honors fallen heroes during ceremony," 3d ACR Home Page, "In the News," March 26, 2009, http://www.hood.army.mil/3d_acr/in_the_news/0903/20090326-01.pdf [accessed February 22, 2010].

CHAPTER FOUR

Interpreting Operation Iraqi Freedom for Third Cavalry Museum

The Third Cavalry Museum is the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment's own unit history museum. The museum began as a trophy room around 1930 as an effort to keep important and interesting artifacts significant to the Regiment in a safe place. Tradition being important to the Regiment, the collection grew and became a "museum" in 1985 when it was directed under the auspices of the Museum Division of the Directorate of Plans, Training, and Mobilization at Fort Bliss, Texas. At that time a professional curator was hired and the museum's history-themed exhibits were professionally developed. On January 22, 2010, the Third Cavalry Museum celebrated its grand opening on Fort Hood, Texas, the present home of the 3d ACR in a ceremony which included an outside event with the Regiment on parade, soldiers in historic cavalry gear and on horses, and speeches by Fort Hood's Commanding General, LG Robert W. Cone, (who commanded the Regiment's 1st Squadron as a Lieutenant Colonel), present Regimental Commander, COL Reginald E. Allen, and the museum curator, Mr. Scott Hamric, who served in the Regiment in the 1970s and 1980s. The ceremony was followed by an official tour of the new museum led by Hamric. Reporters from the local newspaper and television outlets covered the event.

Made up of three separate buildings and an outside vehicle park, the Third Cavalry Museum uses the first building to tell the story of the Regiment from its incorporation in 1846 to the present day, which includes one small display case exhibit dedicated to Operation Iraqi Freedom 2007-09. It also has additional storage space. The second building is used for administrative offices and the museum's archives. The third building is not yet being utilized.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss ways in which the Third Cavalry Museum could expand its discussion of the Regiment's last deployment to Iraq in a larger-scale exhibit.

Exhibit Principles

Before discussing how the 3d ACR's deployment could be interpreted for the Third Cavalry Museum, one must define what a museum is, explore exhibit interpretation methods and learn about museum visitors. In 1926, museum pioneer John Cotton Dana claimed that "a good museum attracts, entertains, arouses curiosity, leads to questionings – and thus promotes learning."¹ About 75 years later, Marjorie Schwarzer wrote in her book *Riches, Rivals and Radicals*, "Museums do matter. They are the only institutions that collect, preserve, display, interpret, and educate for the public good."²

¹ Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion, An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* [Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2008], 257.

² Marjorie Schwarzer, *Riches, Rivals, and Radicals, 100 Years of Museums in America* [Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2006], 2.

Both Dana and Schwarzer, as well as the greater museum community, support the idea that museums are institutions that not only present information to an audience but expect that the audience to be active participants by asking questions or directing their own experiences within the museum walls. The museum profession is also devoted to the idea that the objects and information contained in museums are not only open to the public but that the institutions exist for the good of the public.

When the public visits a museum, they do so for a variety of reasons. According to museum professionals John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, in their book, *The Museum Experience*, "The museum experience includes feelings of adventure, of awe, of affiliation with loved ones or friends, and of seeing, perhaps touching, and learning about new things."³ The authors suggest that observing museum visitor behaviors reveals the reverence that is associated with the museum-goers visit: "They speak in hushed tones, quietly wait their turn to look at exhibited objects, and respect the rights of others to have a turn. The museum experience can be as much an emotional as an intellectual experience."⁴ Authors George E. Hein and Mary Alexander concur, writing in their book, *Museums, Places of Learning*, "museums offer visitors profound, long-lasting, and

³ John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience* [Washington, D.C.: Whalesback Books, 1992], 83-84.

⁴ Ibid., 92.

even life-changing experiences.”⁵ A museum’s responsibility is to educate visitors while in the midst of their museum experience, whether the visitor is conscious of it or not.

Museum exhibits are at their best when they are able to create a bridge between what a museum visitor already knows and what the museum may want them to ultimately leave knowing. In his classic work, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Freeman Tilden discusses his six principles of interpretation. The six principles are:

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things.
3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural.
4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children...should not be a dilution of the presentations to adults but should follow a fundamentally different approach.⁶

Tilden’s fourth principle is the most important. An exhibit should not be a lecture or a mere list or recitation of facts. Rather, it should be presented in

⁵ George E. Hein and Mary Alexander, *Museums, Places of Learning* [Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1998], 45.

⁶ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007], 18.

such a way as to encourage visitors to want to learn more about a subject. By giving them all of the information, if one succeeds in holding the visitor's attention that long, the chance or opportunity of a more meaningful, interactive experience is lost. Tilden's second and fifth principles encourage interpreters to challenge visitors to think more deeply about the subject and therefore understand it better. Visitors are apt to understand and care about an exhibit or idea if it speaks to some part of their identity or experience directly, as Tilden discusses in his first and third principles. When a visitor is made to feel as though he has something in common with the people or objects that are being discussed, it will have a more emotional and deeper impact than if the interpretation only highlights someone else's foreign experiences. When a visitor is lectured to rather than invited to become part of the conversation, he will often not care what is said.

Along with a strong idea of what an exhibit's message or storyline will be, an exhibit at the beginning stages must include an idea of what objects will be displayed, the physical setting of the exhibit and an idea of what visitors would likely think about the exhibit.⁷ Ken Ames developed an 11-point guideline to creating exhibits which takes in account not only physical realities of developing an exhibit but also includes the abstract ideas of Tilden's interpretive principles.

Interpretation does not just inform us but pushes us to a deeper and more subtle understanding of some aspect of the world around

⁷ Alexander and Alexander, 239.

us...The best exhibitions emanate from a clear sense of purpose, or focus...they must be guided by that focus...An excellent exhibition evolves from a dynamic creative process that recognizes and seizes on serendipity...and presents the public with nonverbal, sensory experiences...The challenge is to help visitors *feel* the interpretation.⁸

Museum exhibits are developed to enlighten, entertain, and educate their visitors. These goals cannot be realized unless the exhibit is designed to interact in some way with the visitor. The exhibit must deliberately begin a discussion regarding what is displayed and then encourage the visitor to join in the discussion, either internally or within a group, as the exhibit progresses. There should be something about the exhibit that makes the visitor want to see it through to the end.

Beginning in the late 1980's and continuing through present day, the way information and ideas were communicated in museums changed. "At history museums the long, explanatory label and object-laden display gradually gave way to a new approach, a storyline that was more emotional and enhanced by personal, eyewitness accounts."⁹ In 1987, the National Museum of American History opened its "A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and U.S. Constitution" exhibit which discussed Japanese-American internment during World War II. Its innovative use of oral histories incorporated into the exhibit impacted visitors in a more emotional way than the exhibit would have had it

⁸ Ibid., 240.

⁹ Schwarzer, 161.

not included the oral histories. Selma Thomas, who produced the oral histories, explained the impact: “We wanted to create a document that was incontestable, so that even museum visitors who were strangers to the story would have to accept it as true. If you believe in the power of historical record, this is it. But the oral history also gives it a humanity that is often lacking in other kinds of documents.”¹⁰

At the same time, other museums were experimenting with other ways multimedia concepts could enrich their exhibits, ultimately discovering that these new elements added “both information and context to the exhibitions.”¹¹ The “Homeplace Minnesota” exhibition was one of the first to use the “object theater” concept which used light and sound effects as well as recorded narration and oral histories that, according to the Minnesota Historical Society’s former exhibitions director Paul Martin, created an “emotional connection to the past through hearing and seeing people’s stories.”¹² His colleague, Barbara Franco, former MHS curator, concurred: “All the research we did indicated that people...didn’t want [history] digested [for them]. They wanted the raw materials, the original voices. They wanted to hear all sides.”¹³ The public enjoyed the concepts the new media presented. “Visitors, however,

¹⁰ Ibid., 162.

¹¹ Alexander and Alexander, 262.

¹² Schwarzer, 163.

¹³ Ibid.

overwhelmingly approved of new technologies that offered new perspectives and more information. 'Some ask why audio-visual techniques should be used in a museum,' wrote former American Association of Museums President Joseph Veach Noble. 'The answer is, for the same reason that Pope John XXIII changed the celebration of the mass from Latin to the vernaculars. In short, it is better for communication.'¹⁴

Finding ways to communicate a museum's message to its visitors is key because of the different ways that individuals learn and retain information. Some people enjoy reading labels; others prefer to listen to a docent; while others may benefit from a more tactile experience. As the museum community embraced the concept of different learning styles, they also discussed the idea of going to the museum as less of a "visit" and more of an "experience," as well as the exhibits being only one part of the experience which also included a number of other factors such as how comfortable the visitor was in the building, the cleanliness of the bathrooms, the quality of food in the café, and the items in the gift shop. As Falk and Dierking conclude:

The visitor's perception of the museum is functional because he is a user, not a planner or insider. His view is not limited to an intellectual discipline or to individual exhibits or objects; rather the visitor's perception is highly contextual, including the personal, physical, and social contexts. The visitor's experience must be seen as a whole, or gestalt.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 164.

¹⁵ Falk and Dierking, 83.

Falk and Dierking studied museum visitors and ultimately developed their Interactive Experience Model, their interpretation of the abstract museum gestalt concept. The Interactive Experience Model illustrates how a visitor's physical, social and personal "contexts" interact to form the visitor's museum experience. "Whatever the visitor does attend to is filtered through the personal context, mediated by the social context, and embedded within the physical context...The Interactive-Experience Model can be visualized as a three-dimensional set of three interacting spheres."¹⁶ The physical context is the museum itself, the visitor's surroundings, and the literal exhibit. The personal context is how the visitor perceives the world – the museum, the exhibit, the ideas in the exhibit, as well as their personal backgrounds and past experiences. The social context is the way in which the visitor's museum experience is shared with others. Where all three of these contexts meet is the visitor's museum experience.

Exhibits help tell the story of a museum's mission. The mission of the Third Cavalry Museum is to preserve and display the history of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. The Museum endeavors to not only present the history of the Regiment, but also bring visitors closer to the soldier's experiences so that ultimately the visitor will better understand the motivations and actions of the Regiment in Iraq in 2007-09. Guided by Tilden's interpretation principles, Falk and Dierking's Interactive-Experience Model, and the ideas of object theater, the

¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

Third Cavalry Museum could develop an exhibit about the Regiment's deployment to Iraq that recreates to some degree what it felt like to be a 3d ACR Soldier in Iraq; engages the visitor to wonder how they would feel about being a soldier and think about the complexities of the Regiment's mission; and finally allows and encourages discussions and shared experiences about the deployment and the exhibit.

In researching the deployment, the author used a number of sources including: the Regiment's historical documents such as After Action Reviews and its "Road Show" Presentation that was used by COL Bills after the deployment was finished, and *The Mounted Rifleman*, the Regiment's own publication as well as news reports and historical books about the 3d ACR. Many of these sources included quotations from Soldiers of all ranks.

While the exhibit interpretation was guided by academic principles and published reports about the deployment, it was also largely shaped by the soldiers and families of the Regiment through interviews which asked questions such as:

- What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?
- What will you remember of your deployment?
- What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment's deployment?
- Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?
- What types of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

- What ideas should be discussed in the museum exhibit about the deployment? What is the story of the deployment? How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

As much as the academic research, these interviews helped shape how the deployment was interpreted in this paper. By their inclusion, the Soldiers and families were part of the curatorial process. This added an additional layer to the depth of the exhibit. It also transformed the job of the author as “curator” to that of a “facilitator curator.” That is to say that the author developed an exhibit that represented as many voices as possible including that of the Regiment, the Regimental Commander, the Soldiers, and the families as well as the museum staff.

The exhibit must first consider the physical context of the visitor. The building must be kept clean and at a comfortable temperature, be well-lit, quiet, but not too quiet, and have clearly marked entrances, exits, and bathroom facilities. Visitors should feel confident that they know how to move around the museum and exhibit.

Next, the exhibit must also attract visitors’ attentions in a variety of ways to encourage different kinds of learning and empower visitors to complement what they already know about the deployment. Text and labels should be written to the novice’s level with basic concepts such as the history of the conflict and the Regiment’s mission that build to more abstract ideas such as counterinsurgency warfare, political statesmanship, and transferring authority to the Iraqi forces. While all of the labels tell a comprehensive story of the

deployment, most visitors do not read all the labels. This means that each label not only move the story along but are also interesting and informative enough to be used independently. Falk and Dierking explain:

The key is to create an environment in which the visitor becomes part of a seamless array of mutually reinforcing contexts which separately and collectively support the museum's goals. In such a scheme, the museum professional would create not only exhibits and programs, but also museum experiences.¹⁷

Finally, the exhibit should be appealing to individuals visiting alone and with their family as well as to school children on field trips and soldiers learning about their unit. There should be enough information to satisfy visitors with acute interests, but must also be able to convey information to more casual and younger visitors. Docents are viewed as experts and many visitors enjoy discussing the exhibit with them or look to docents to answer questions. Hands-on activities or interactive elements such as films or items that can be touched or manipulated will often interest even the most remote guest.

History museums, such as the Third Cavalry Museum, have the responsibility of not only caring for and displaying the Regiment's artifacts but also with educating visitors about the importance and significance of the unit and its history. Falk and Dierking wrote that people visit museums for one of three reasons including social-recreational, educational, and reverential. ¹⁸ The Third Cavalry Museum has the unique position of being visited for all three

¹⁷ Ibid., 130.

¹⁸ Ibid., 14.

reasons. Family members, including many visiting parents and grandparents, consider the visit a fun outing. Soldiers and researchers use the facility to learn more about the unit and its history. For soldiers, this is especially significant since they are living parts of the Regiment's history. Others, whether associated with the Regiment in some way or not, often visit the museum to pay their respects to their brothers-in-arms. Many visitors come to honor the memory of those lost. Regardless of their reasons for visiting, the Museum has the opportunity to educate each of them about a part of history that is somewhat relevant or interesting to the person they are. "From the great public collections down to the small town's roomful of memorabilia...It is no stretch...that museums actually deliver more history, more effectively, more of the time to more people than historians do."¹⁹ The Third Cavalry Museum continues this tradition.

Interpreting 3d ACR's Deployment

As already discussed, the deployment to Iraq in 2007-09 was a complex, multi-layered mission which simultaneously required military might, political statesmanship, civic rebuilding, and humanitarian aid which all took place within a location with a history of ethnic strife. Each subject matter could inspire its own exhibit. Through interviews with soldiers and additional research, the ideas surrounding the deployment were narrowed into three themes that

¹⁹ Alexander and Alexander, 113.

satisfied both the intent to interpret the complex deployment accurately and comprehensively; and the museum visitors' varied and often personal interest in the subject matter. The goals of the exhibit are to allow the average Third Cavalry Museum visitor to:

- experience what it was like for the Regiment's soldiers to be deployed to Iraq
- understand the complexities of the deployment and what the Regiment's soldiers were required to do
- contemplate the impact the Regiment had on the people of Mosul and Ninewa

At first, an exhibit which followed the Regiment chronologically throughout the deployment seemed the most logical. Charting the Regiment's progression during their time in Iraq could allow the exhibit to follow a timeline, periodically highlighted by significant events during the deployment. This approach proved to be too cumbersome and did not readily lend itself to discussing the layers of work that was being done within the Regiment. While the Regiment led several significant missions such as Harvest Reaper and Lion's Roar, they could not necessarily be characterized as decisive events that changed everything from that point on. Because it was a war based on counterinsurgency, none of the missions were a Gettysburg. The battles the Regiment engaged in were more subtle.

Another idea was to design the exhibit around each of the Regiment's Squadrons. The idea was that by describing the efforts of each squadron, a museum visitor would appreciate the different types of missions and

responsibilities each unit was required to carry out. This approach also became cumbersome because of the location of each squadron and the fact that many of the Regiment's units either had different units attached to them, such as 3rd Squadron had 1-8 IN attached to it, or that a Regimental unit was attached to a different unit, such as 4th Squadron being sent down to Baghdad. By the time it was explained where each unit was and what they were sent to do there, the exhibit would become a group of different stories rather than a related whole.

Ultimately, the best way to discuss the deployment was by separating it into five different thematic interpretations. This approach discusses the Regiment's ultimate dual mission of providing security to the Iraqi population and destroying the enemy, how those missions were accomplished, and what impact the Regiment had on Ninewa Province during and after its deployment. Additionally, a section honoring fallen soldiers was the most important to the soldiers interviewed and is included. Finally, an exhibit about how the Regiment's families were affected by the deployment not only brings additional emotional connectivity to the exhibit but is also one the Museum that has not yet approached.

Exhibit Section One – Stabilizing Mosul

Stabilizing Mosul and Ninewa Province was the immediate goal when the 3d ACR were boots down in Iraq. This section introduces the visitor to the Regiment's Iraqi area of operations and what it found when it arrived including the kind of attacks the enemy conducted, the state of the roads and neighborhoods, and the relationships between the U.S. Army and the Iraqi Security Forces and citizens.

The first answer many soldiers gave when asked about their memories of the deployment was the idea of always being in danger. "Every day, whether holiday or not, the threat of danger was imminent."²⁰ They often also talked about how hard they worked every day, often with little or no time off, causing what many described as "mind-numbing fatigue."²¹

Building on the idea that the entire experience was stressful, this section of the exhibit could include sensory input to convey that idea, including light and sound. This could be achieved by controlling the light in the exhibit. The beginning would be the darkest, echoing both the metaphorical dark days of intense violence and the literal idea that there were – or could be – things going on around them that were unseen, unknown, and dangerous. The use of movement-triggered and user controlled sound effects including subtle sounds of tanks, helicopters, gunfire, yelling in English, Arabic, and Kurdish could add to the constant uneasiness.

²⁰ CPT Isaac Bates, Interview by author, Fort Hood, Texas, 2009.

²¹ Dooley, Interview.

During the deployment, the Associated Press filmed a documentary called Killer Blue that followed the 3d ACRs Blue Platoon, Killer Troop, during the deployment, made up of four parts: “Part One: We Were Family,” “Part Two: Who Are We Fighting,” “Part Three: He Was My Friend,” and “Part Four: I Move On.” Through the course of the film, soldiers talk directly to the camera about their experiences, their pride in serving, their attempts at understanding the enemy, the pain of losing a friend, and the effects the deployment had on their lives. The wives of fallen soldiers also offer a glimpse of the personal tragedies of war. Interspersed with the personal interviews is footage of the soldiers at work riding in tanks, working with Iraqi soldiers, and during their off time listening to music and pulling pranks. Including this film in the exhibit would draw visitors in, giving the exhibit a depth and emotional impact that would be difficult to express in a different way. As Selma Thomas described, hearing oral histories gives the subject “a humanity that is often lacking in other kinds of documents.”²²

In this part of the exhibit text panels would discuss the Regiment’s area of operations, the enemy, the condition of the roads and neighborhoods, and the partnership between 3d ACR and the Iraqi Forces. Artifacts that demonstrate the ideas in the text would include:

- maps showing where the different squadrons were located
- photo montage of the road construction – route clearing, sanitation removal, and road repairs

²² Schwarzer, 162.

- gravel, chunks of concrete, items that were cleared from streets reinforcing the ideas in the photo montage
- chai tea set, representing cultural difference soldiers encountered while working with Iraqi citizens and Iraqi Security Forces

Exhibit Section Two – Engaging the Enemy

Although the number of attacks decreased, the enemy continued to be dangerous. Once the preliminary work of securing and cleaning up Mosul was begun, the Regiment focused on engaging the enemy by moving into insurgent-held neighborhoods and wresting power from them. This section of the exhibit would focus on two primary ways the Regiment engaged the enemy including the building of Command Outposts (COPs) and attacking powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Networks.

Continued from the first section of the exhibit, visitors notice that the exhibit has more light and the audio components have changed, with the sound of fighting diminishing although not disappearing entirely and sometimes punctuated with the sound of an IED explosion, signaling that a shift has occurred, that the chaos of the first section has calmed a bit.

This section of the exhibit lends itself to hands-on, interactive components. This could include replicating a section of a COP, using similar materials, in which visitors could walk through, explore items inside the COP including graphs and signage written in both English and Arabic, equipment, weapons, and perhaps a guard tower “window” with a view of the neighborhood.

Text panels in this exhibit would discuss the impact COPS had on the neighborhoods and the population, highlighted by the fact that the building of the structures became a true partnership with Iraqis as evidenced by the rebuilding of COP Rabiya, discussed earlier. The dangers and frequency of IED attacks and the Regiment's commitment to go after the larger IED Networks would also be included in this section.

Often quotes from soldiers can be effective ways of communicating ideas. In this case the following quotes express the ideas in ways that only soldiers can:

COPs allow the Iraqi army to have a permanent presence and show the Iraqi people that the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police are here to defend them every day, and that has made a big difference.
- 1SG Anthony Gast, Thunder Squadron

This mission took on the appearance of what I can best describe as 'submarine warfare,' with each side quietly stalking the other. Prolonged periods of tedious strain were punctuated with the sudden violence of either an IED detonation on one of our patrols or by us executing a successful ambush on a group of IED emplacements...The complexity of this fight required an equally complex set of solutions, ranging from direct, violent engagement of IED emplacements to the detainment of bomb makers, financiers, and cell members, to the deliberate management of reconstruction projects designed to change the allegiance of villages and tribes within our part of the province.

-MAJ Matthew Dooley, 1st Squadron's Executive Officer

In addition to the items that might be found in the COP replica, other artifacts in this section might include:

- Chart showing the decrease in number of enemy attacks

- Photographs and films of COPs being used and constructed (and maybe reconstructed)
- Photographs and films of IED explosions emphasizing their destruction
- Replicas of IEDs used as training aids for soldiers displaying the wide range of IED sizes and strength

Exhibit Section Three – Transitioning to Iraqi Control

The third section of the exhibit is the last one to discuss events that happened in Iraq during the deployment. It also forms the conclusion to the story that the exhibit has unfolded: The 3d ACR went to Iraq; it stabilized a chaotic situation in Mosul; through direct engagement with the enemy, took control of Ninewa Province, and finally transferred that control to the Iraqi Security Forces. The main thrust of this section is exploring the evolution of the Iraqi forces during the 15 months that the Regiment was in Iraq, from Iraqis assisting, to partnering, to finally taking over missions in Ninewa Province. The gradual evolution of the Iraqi citizens should also be discussed, how ambivalence and weariness gradually gave way to hope in elections, and grew to increased loyalty to the new Iraqi government. This hope is reflected in the well lit exhibit area and in the sounds of a more stable city – traffic, children playing, and a marketplace.

Soldiers from the Regiment were asked what items should be displayed that best exemplified the Regiment's deployment. The suggestion to include Iraqi Army, Police and National Police Uniforms illustrates how much of the

mission was to strengthen the Iraqi government and facilitate its transition of power. Uniforms symbolize authority and order. The question of what a uniform means is one that visitors of all ages can think about and discuss: “If someone wears a military or police uniform, what can we guess about them?” “What if we didn’t have policemen to protect us?” “How do you think the children in Iraq feel about seeing someone wearing a new type of uniform?” “What do you think American Army Combat Uniforms (ACUs) mean to Iraqis?” By presenting these types of questions, visitors would be encouraged to think deeply about the changes that occurred in Mosul and Ninewa Province.

Displayed items in this section might include:

- Uniforms of the different branches of the Iraqi security forces
- A transitional Iraqi Flag – “one without the Saddam handwriting and green stars” to demonstrate the increased legitimacy of the GOI (Government of Iraq).”²³
- Materials and photographs from the Iraqi Warrior Leader’s Course facilitated by the 3d ACR
- Projects from local school children answering the questions about uniforms with an opportunity for other visitors to do the same

Exhibit Section Four – Memorial to the Fallen Soldiers

This section was important to all of the soldiers interviewed. While museum visitors could be directed to visit the 3d ACRs memorial site near the museum on

²³ Dooley, Interview

Fort Hood, it would also be appropriate to display the photographs of each of the fallen soldiers. To give the display a more three-dimensional feel, the tradition of setting an empty table for fallen soldiers at Regimental social functions could be demonstrated. The table known as a “White Table” is generally set for one and each item on the table is a symbol of an attribute or idea. Some of the items include a white tablecloth for the soldier’s purity of heart when called to duty, a white candle for peace, a slice of lemon symbolizing the soldier’s bitter fate, salt for tears shed, and an overturned glass for a meal not taken. Usually lit from above, the display is an emotionally moving symbol of the Regiment’s promise to not forget.

Exhibit Section Five – The Other Members of the Regiment

The final section of the exhibit would discuss the ways in which the families supported their soldiers back here in the United States. Starting with the Army Family Covenant, a brief discussion about Family Readiness Groups could introduce metaphorical snapshots of FRGs during the deployment. Displays might include discussions on how families communicated during the deployment, celebrated holidays together while thousands of miles apart, the 3d ACR’s Ladies Spur Ride, and items that demonstrated support for their soldiers including Army inspired jewelry and handbags as well as car decorations and home furnishings.

Items that could be displayed in this section, many suggested by 3d ACR

Spouses, include:

- Email messages, video teleconferences, and U.S. Post Office Flat Rate APO Boxes
- Holiday signs and banners decorated by FRG groups, especially the soldiers' children, that hung in various mess halls and TOCs during the deployment
- Photographs and t-shirts from the 3d ACRs Ladies Spur Ride and a spur award
- Custom-made silver and gold military dogtags with soldiers' images and endearments engraved on them, custom-made ACU purses and diaper bags with unit designations embroidered on, 3d ACR yellow ribbon car magnets, and decorations with blue stars, signifying that the home is missing a deployed soldier.

Conclusion

In October 2007, the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment was sent to Iraq to do what they have always been asked to do – protect innocent citizens and defend their country, whether in the United States or abroad. And just as they always have, the 3d ACR excelled in their mission, stabilizing Mosul and Ninewa Province and guiding the Iraqis in their quest to govern their country that was for too long out of their control.

Shortly after their return from Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09, the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment received notification that they will be returning to Iraq in September 2010 to continue the fight. Brave Rifles! Veterans! Ai-ee-yah!

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



Figure A.1. SGT John Lannen, a soldier with the Third U.S. Cavalry Regiment was the inspiration for Frederic Remington's famous drawing of the iconic U.S. cavalry soldier "Old Bill." (Image courtesy of Third Cavalry Museum.)

APPENDIX B

The Army Family Covenant

We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our families are making every day.

We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families.

We are committed to providing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service.

We are committed to providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

We are committed to building a partnership with Army families that enhances their strength and resilience.

We are committed to improving Family readiness by:

- Standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services
- Increasing accessibility and quality of healthcare
- Improving Soldier and Family housing
- Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and childcare
- Expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members

Figure B. 1. The Army Family Covenant

APPENDIX C



Figure C.1. Map of the Middle East. The 3d ACR arrived in Kuwait in October and November 2007. In December, the Regiment entered Iraq. (Map courtesy of U.S. Army)

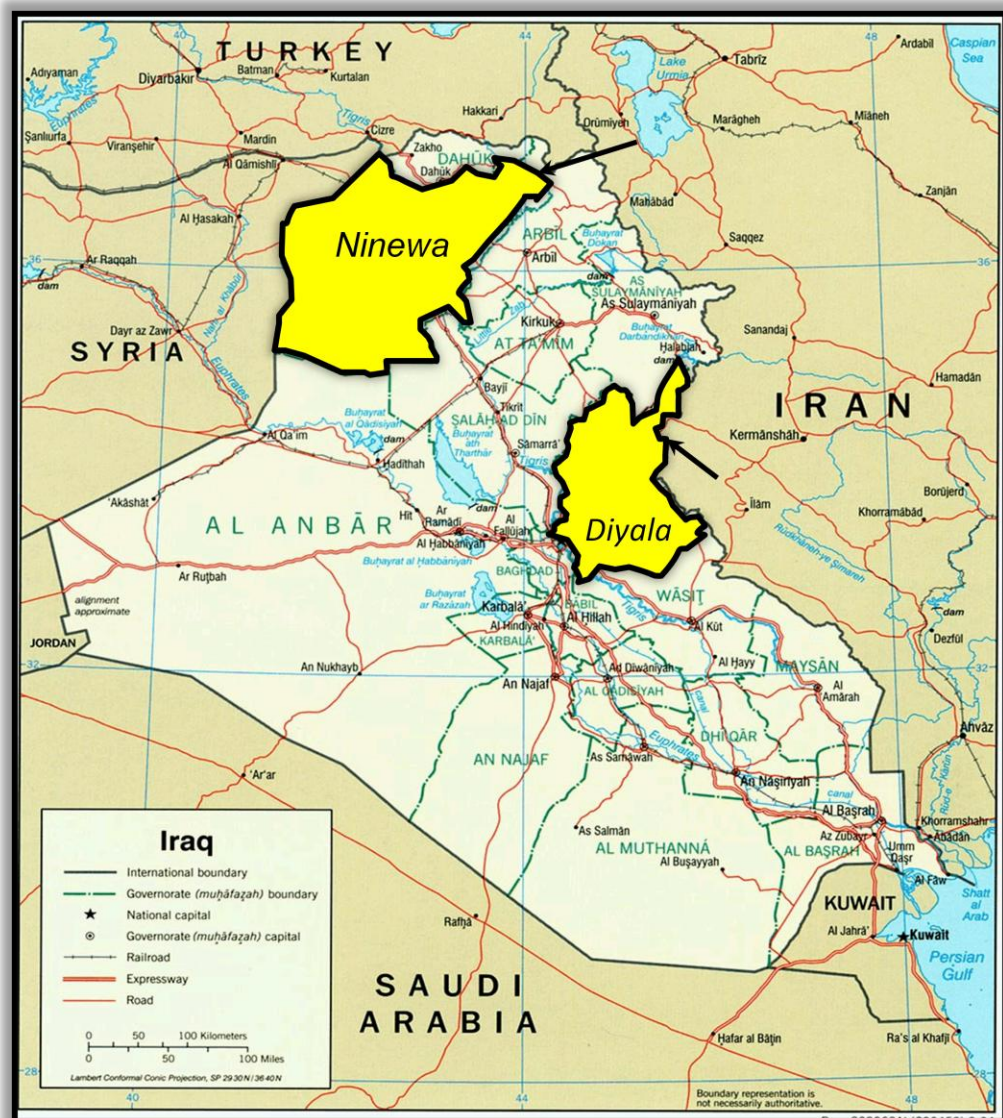


Figure C.2. The 3d ACR assumed responsibility of Ninewa Province on December 11, 2007. Ninewa Province is approximately the land size of the State of Maryland. The Regiment received orders for Second and Fourth Squadrons to support units in Diayala Province. (Map courtesy of the U.S. Army.)

APPENDIX D

Interviews of Soldiers and Family Members

Name: **Isaac L. Bates**

Rank: **CPT**

Date: **5 December 2009**

Unit you were in during the 2007-2009 deployment:

Maintenance Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment

Describe your professional experience in Iraq

I served as a Troop Commander and as an Assistant Operation Officer

What will you remember about your work in Iraq?

Every day, whether holiday or not, the threat of danger was imminent.

What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?

When the Regiment was fully operational in theater, it was evident that travel on the roads was safer.

What will you remember of your deployment?

Everything, it was a very distinguishable moment of my career.

What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment's deployment?

The size of the area of responsibility compared to previous organizations that were deployed in the area.

What were the most significant events that happened to the Regiment or your Squadron during the deployment?

The large amount of supplies and material moved across the country in support of the fight.

What should go down in history about the Regiment's deployment?

If possible capture the number of lives touched by 3ACR in Northern Iraq.

Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?

Because so many lives were touched by the 3ACR in Northern Iraq.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have participated in?

During this deployment I actually witnessed the direct affect of supporting the battle. In contrast, during my previous deployment I worked at a level above "the Soldier level"; a part of a General's Staff.

What type of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

The names, ranks, faces, and duties of the Soldiers lost, because they made the ultimate sacrifice.

What ideas should be discussed about the deployment? What is the story of the deployment? How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

This is reasonably a question for someone higher ranking than I.

How did your family do during the deployment? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family in any particular way? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family differently this deployment than others?

My family did well during the deployment. The families of the support squadron immediately developed a bond. Although the bond began developing during the train-up phase, middle of 2007, it was evident that it strengthened during the deployment. During my previous deployment I did not experience the luxury of an FRG; I deployed as an augmentee.

Fortunately with the 3ACR we were able to develop a FRG before we deployed, it definitely made my command time easier.

Name: **Megan Bills**

Spouse's Name & Rank: **COL Michael A. Bills**

Date: **24 January 2010**

What will you remember about this last deployment?

- a. That it was way too long.**
- b. The difficulty and emotions of the monthly memorial services.**
- c. The strength of the FRG's and of the FRSA's**
- d. The wonderful spouses and family members.**

How did the families of the 3d ACR get through the deployment?

- a. Some chose to go home to their families.**
- b. Through the support of their friends and the support of the FRG.**
- c. Support of the Rear Detachment.**
- d. Support of the Central Texas Community such as the Spouses Appreciation Day sponsored by the city of Salado.**

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have been through?

- a. During our first deployment to Desert Shield/Storm, there were no FRG's, FRSA's or family support structure established.**
- b. This was the longest deployment.**
- c. The means of communication between family and soldier this deployment was outstanding compared to past deployments. Cell phones, email, and VTC were non-existent years ago.**

What should people remember about the families of 3d ACR during this deployment?

They should remember how strong, flexible, resilient and supportive they were. They came together as one during a very long and difficult separation.

What type of objects or items would best represent 3d ACR families during the deployment? Why?

- a. FRG Handbook**
- b. T-Shirts designed by each squadron**
- c. Welcome home photos**
- d. Photos of all the FRG activities**
- e. Spur charms earned by the spouses during the Spouses Spur Ride sponsored by the Rear Detachment.**

All of these things represent the uniqueness of each squadron.

Describe your responsibilities as part of the Family Readiness Group.

I represented the Commander of the 3d ACR and provided oversight and assistance where needed for the FRSA's and FRG's. I provided weekly information from the Corp level meetings to the FRSA's and Rear Detachment on family focused issues.

Name: **Michael A. Bills**

Rank: **Colonel**

Date: **24 January 2010**

Unit you were in during the 2007-2009 deployment:

3ACR

Describe your professional experience in Iraq

Regimental Commander

What will you remember about your work in Iraq?

The Soldiers and the leaders that we have today are absolutely phenomenal. They are the best Soldiers and leaders we have in the world. My RCSM and I had the opportunity to observe an amazing group of young people and leaders grow in both training and in a wartime environment. Their impact had strategic consequences. We talk about the strategic corporal and his impact. It was obvious from the great leadership down to the platoon level, change was being made daily. Some areas slower than others but the overall impact on the people, security, some projects and relationships built with their counterparts changed a city and province under siege. Security improved through the efforts of our Soldiers and successful relationships built with their counterparts as we transitioned the city to the Iraqis.

The bravery, professionalism, and care our Soldiers and Leaders showed every day when they left the FOB or COP, set the stage for change in the environment that saw an improvement over 15 months.

The time we spent with the Provincial government, working through or around government officials and change needed in providing the right focus for the city was always a challenge. At times a very frustrating experience when government officials have their own agenda's and most of the time not the peoples' choice. As I surveyed the landscape in Iraq and talked to my peers, we had the best PRT in the country. I pursued a relationship with my State Department counterpart so that we could both learn from each other and understand what capabilities we both bring to the fight and work closely together to attempt change. This made a difference in building a much needed relationship that was not there before. I had an aggressive PRT Leader in Alex

Lascaris, not your typical State Department Official, who I had to slow down several times but in his defense wanted change as much as I did. A budget for the province, a first for the governor and council, that was approved and tracked carefully by the PRT, Regimental and Division Staff. Priority of projects, surging where needed, providing oversight, and assessing success or not.

What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?

When we arrived, the unit we replaced was operating from the forward operating base. We had to get out into the city, have a permanent presence both day and night, take one neighborhood at a time and build a relationship with our Iraqi counterparts who eventually take over as the security force. Our presence improved the security, killing or capturing those who intimidated the population not allowing for any growth, economically or politically.

What will you remember of your deployment?

How well the Squadron Commanders and their staffs planned and executed their operations. This was a squadron/battalion fight with the Regiment resourcing their efforts. In long deployments there is a tendency for units lower to higher or higher to lower not to get along and staff actions break down with commanders at both levels getting involved. This did not happen. There were enough friction points that occupied both levels of command but when there was a surge to one side of the city or province, it was well thought through, coordinated and supported by both units and staffs involved. The Regiment changed the landscape and environment of Ninewa Province and Mosul allowing the Iraqi people to have their city back.

One friction point that destroys unit morale quickly are the murders of your Soldiers by their counterpart who they worked with daily. Our Troopers were disciplined, professional and reacted as they should have to ensure there was no more killing between each other after three different incidents. This was telling and an indication of the tremendous leadership found in our units. Could not be more proud.

What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment's deployment?

See answers below.

What were the most significant events that happened to the Regiment or your Squadron during the deployment?

1. **Seamless deployment, FRAGO sending Sabre and Longknife to Diyalla and Baghdad respectively.**
2. **Quickly taking back the city through the development and occupation of neighborhoods through COPs.**
3. **Partnering with their counterparts, training and development of the Soldiers and Leaders.**
4. **A presence in the city that was not there when we arrived and continued for 15 months (see statistics on the last slide)**
5. **Reducing the violence and allowing growth to occur in the city with markets, Family movements, traffic, some construction, services, and getting a city back on its feet.**
6. **Conducted several major operations that influenced change (see Iraqi/US operations)**

What should go down in history about the Regiment's deployment?

See answer below.

Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?

The Regiment changed the landscape wherever they served. The security situation improved over a 15 month period from what was a city and province under siege. The Regiment gave back to the people a livelihood they had not experienced in years. (see the attached brief and attack levels). They trained a counterpart who was untrained, not equipped into a security element was on the verge of taking the lead and making a difference for the people of Iraq.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have participated in?

This was my third deployment and the best in train-up, planning and rehearsals. The attention to detail by the Regimental staff, Squadron Commanders and their staffs was the best I have ever seen in 25 years. Due to the detail our deployment to theater was seamless allowing for a good TOA and transition into the province. My last long deployment, Desert Shield/Storm, we did not have the structure in a good rear-detachment and FRSA/FRGs were non-existent. There was no real system of Family support

especially for comforting gold star Families. The Non-Commissioned Officers were better trained going into this deployment with several rotations under their belt. Their expectations were understood and the care for their young Troopers was incredible. A lot happens in 15 months, bonds are established, friends for life are made, and this has continued well after the deployment.

What type of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

Soldier and unit photos that represent where each unit served, Ninewa, Diallya, and Baghdad. Photos of their Iraqi counterparts partnered with our troopers and the Iraqi Families they touched. Gifts given to the regiment by other units who served with the regiment, Iraqi gifts, and gifts from VIPs. A separate display with pictures and narratives of the troopers lost in combat. Capture the deployment, combat operations and redeployment to include the Families during all three phases.

What ideas should be discussed about the deployment? What is the story of the deployment? How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

A well trained, A well planned, and well rehearsed deployment is key to a successful deployment with an understanding what role leaders and Soldiers play in the deployment. Empowerment and trust of our young leaders, both officers and Non-Commissioned Officers, was critical to our success. They will perform and take care of Soldiers as displayed during the rotation. Our Soldiers and Leaders understood why they were there and the message must be clear and understood by all troopers in the Regiment.

How did your family do during the deployment? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family in any particular way? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family differently this deployment than others?

My Family did well. Having two sons at home to support Mom made a difference. Megan was very busy with the FRSAs and rear-detachment to include the Squadron/Family activities. She also had a great support group in other senior officer wives.

Name: **Colonel Michael A. Bills**

Date: **12 January 2010**

(FRG Interview Questions)

1) What will you remember about this last deployment?

The professionalism, discipline, and care our leaders had for their Soldiers and Families. It is more important to talk first about the team building prior the period 2007-2009. It started in July 2006 as a BRAC unit and the move of 400 plus Soldiers and Families from a previously assigned 5200 and 3,000 Family members at Fort Carson. CSM Burns and I had an opportunity to observe this great Regiment grow both in numbers, professionally and establish a reputation as the Regiment. The emphasis placed on a one team approach as we entered Fort Hood was critical. The establishment of relationships with other units and the Central Texas Community was critical to building the reputation as one team in support of a larger III Corps.

The reestablishment of Families, Regimental footprint, fielding of new equipment, squadrons receiving new Soldiers and their Families, establishment of a new FRG/FRSA structure, individual Soldier training, crew/squad/platoon/troop, company and battery training and integration of squadrons into the Regimental team was paramount in getting ready for the deployment.

The solidification of the "Team" was established at the NTC. You could see through observation/OC feedback, the hard work the Squadrons accomplished in their march to the NTC. We now had an NCO Corps in ratio of Leader to Soldier that could provide the necessary tools and over watch required. CSM Burns and I were concerned about supervision and leading, especially with very young inexperienced Soldiers to include a very young NCO Corps. The growth in learning and caring was incredible to observe over time and would be very apparent in our deployment to Iraq. They stepped up to the plate and performed magnificently.

I was very fortunate as a Regimental Commander to have the best Officers and NCOs our Army has produced. It made my job and decisions easier. Each commander and leader different in their own way but all

understood the meaning of one team, helping each other if asked, and establishing a reputation of caring.

The period of 2007-2009, OIF 07-09, had its positive and negatives. Let me talk first about the negatives. The loss of a Soldier or the casualties we experienced always had an effect on a unit from platoon to Regiment. Tough on the leaders, Soldiers and our more importantly our Families. The support groups established at each level assisted in getting through each critical juncture in the process. The healing was a continuous process, affecting each individual differently and in some cases never getting over the loss of a fellow Soldier, a friend, a brother, a father or a son. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that our Soldiers and Leaders affected had all of the means and assets necessary available to them in order to get through this emotional time. This included me as the Regimental Commander.

Positives. We the Regiment no matter where we were in Iraq, Diaylla, Ninewa, or Baghdad, changed the landscape we operated in. From security, to economic, to governance, we influenced the people that operated in those environments in a positive direction. Our Soldiers were making strategic decisions daily and those decisions impacted change. Reducing the violence for example and allowing traffic, markets to grow, Families moving about the city and province by car or foot was an indicator of success and positive change. As hard as it was working with those in the Provisional government, we found ways to influence change or by pass the problem and influence change a different way.

I mentioned growth in our units. A tremendous experience was established among our great Soldiers and Leaders in 15 months. The CSM and I routinely talked about how proud we were of our Leaders, specifically our junior leaders who took charge, led their Soldiers, and cared deeply about each and every Soldier they led. Each and every leader representing the Brave Rifles has a reputation that has carried forward into new ranks of new units. There is something to be said about those who serve in a Cavalry Regiment compared to a Brigade that being the pride and comradely established among those who serve. A Family and Team environment you will never find elsewhere.

2) How did the families of the 3d ACR get through the deployment?

Most Families got through the deployment through well established support groups that started at the squadron FRSA and FRG Level. The

framework for success were the squadron commanders and identifying their best officers and NCOs who would represent them as part of the rear detachment. I did the same at the Regimental level selecting one of the best in MAJ Dave Olsen. The information flow back and forth to our Families was critical in keeping Families informed through different venues; internet, VTC, and newsletters for example. For the most part information flow went through our conduit in the rear-detachment. The SRP process is supposed to identify issues found in Soldiers and Families before they deploy. You will not capture all of the issues and something different will come up that should have been taken care of before the deployment or occurred while the Soldier was deployed. The rear-detachment took on many Family problems at home, each different, but all could have affected the morale of our Soldiers in Iraq. The level detail and effort by the rear-detachment allowed me and the leaders of the Regiment to focus forward.

- 3) How was this deployment different than other deployments you have been through?

The last unit deployment I had, 1/4 Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kansas, Desert Shield/Storm did not have all the systems in place we experience today. Communications back to the states was difficult to obtain. Occasionally, you would come across an AT&T phone bank established in a very austere desert location with a line of Soldiers waiting to use the phone. I would call my wife with pen and paper in hand to record information passed on from other wives or Family members and in turn would pass onto the leaders and Soldiers of the Troop. We did not have an FRG. It was not established during the early 90's. We found that support groups were established, but not at the fidelity we see today. Technology as we see it today, with portable VTCs, cell phones, and newsletters that come electronically were not available and did not exist. Lessons learned were built from DS/DS that carried forward into the next decade to what we have today. We continue to build upon our experiences through shared experiences within our Army structure.

- 4) What should people remember about the families of 3d ACR during this deployment?

Strong, resilient and caring is the best way to describe our great 3ACR Families. The older Family members who had experienced several deployments took the younger Families under their wing and assisted them through the deployment. The team work on the green suit side carried over

the Families. This alleviated a number of Family problems that we could have experienced if it were not for those Families. Megan and I are very proud of our Families and how they handled each circumstance.

5) Describe your responsibilities as part of the Family Readiness Group.

The Family Readiness Group/FRSA was my program. A Commander's program. I was supported by great members of a team in my wife, the squadron commanders and their wives. Built upon that are the FRSA's who are not paid enough for their time, effort and emotions that come with the job. The FRGs had to have the right person in the position. An unpaid position, with a lot of responsibility in collecting information from the FRSA and disseminated to the Family members through meetings, phone calls and e-mail. Megan and I were fortunate to have a tremendous team of FRSAs in Dana, Amanda, Kim, Diana, Sheila, and Jaycee. Megan was very dependent on them in getting information out to the Families she obtained at Corps Level meetings.

6) How did your official responsibilities differ from the kinds of things that you actually did?

My official responsibility as the lead for the Family Readiness Program was to have a program that was functional and responsible to the Family members. I empowered those in paid and unpaid positions, FRSA/FRGs to lead this great formation in taking care of Family members. They did it extremely well especially during some very tough times during the deployment. My focus was preparing, deploying, fighting, and redeploying the Regiment knowing a critical part of my fight, an enabler, FRSA/FRGs, were taking care of the Families and allowing me and the SCOs to focus forward on the fight.

Name: **Adam Boyd**

Rank: **MAJ**

Date: **11 December 2009**

Unit you were in during the 2007-2009 deployment:

RHHT/3d ACR

Describe your professional experience in Iraq

- **Intelligence officer for the 3d ACR**
- **Demanding, but professionally rewarding experience**

What will you remember about your work in Iraq?

- **Daily interaction with Iraqi military & government officials**
- **Many VIP and media briefings**

What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?

- **Providing security transition assistance in order to afford the Iraqi people with time/space to provide for themselves**

What will you remember of your deployment?

- **Briefings**
- **Meetings**
- **Interagency interaction**

What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment's deployment?

- **Improvements in security & government (through election)**
- **Never forget culture & history**

What were the most significant events that happened to the Regiment or your Squadron during the deployment?

- **Iraqis in charge**
- **Creation of Ninewa Operational Command**
- **Prep for Provincial Elections (Rise of the Hadba)**

What should go down in history about the Regiment's deployment?

See next question

Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?

We deployed during a transitional period:

- **For Iraq – transition to Iraqi control**
- **For Ninewa – Move to words representative**
- **For U.S. – Election (2008)**

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have participated in?

- **Very little sectarian violence (more ethnic)**

What type of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

- **Iraqi Army Uniform(s) – Army, Police, National Police**

What ideas should be discussed about the deployment? What is the story of the deployment? How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

The story of the deployment is the story of the would-be Kurdistan, Ninewa, and the disenfranchised Sunni Arabs

How did your family do during the deployment? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family in any particular way? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family differently this deployment than others?

My family did very well...they endured.

Name: **Kristen Boyd**

Spouse's Name & Rank: **Major Adam Boyd**

Date: **11 December 2009**

Unit you were in during 2007-2009 deployment:

RHHT 3d ACR

What will you remember about this last deployment?

It was long. But it was not as much of a hardship as the first deployment.

How did the families of the 3d ACR get through the deployment?

I felt that the families did relatively well. It is based on seeing the families I was in contact with. So I am sure it was a difficult deployment for many families, but I was not personally aware of such. I created more of a family with the friends I had here.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have been through?

The first deployment April 2003-July 2004 was more stressful. I had smaller children, as well as a third child, since I was taking care of my 9 month old nephew for 9 months of that. I injured my knee and couldn't drive, we were in Germany, and I did not have the support there I had here at Fort Hood.

What should people remember about the families of 3d ACR during this deployment?

It does affect people differently. Some families can handle everything pretty well and others have a much harder time adjusting, and getting thru the day. But I felt as if I was part of a larger family within the 3 ACR, where sometimes we get along great and other times it is best to keep our distance.

What type of objects or items would best represent 3d ACR families during the deployment? Why?

Well, a telephone/cell phone, computer. Items representing communication because that is a major key.

Describe your responsibilities as part of the Family Readiness Group.

I did not have an official role. I did volunteer when called upon to help at parties, meetings, other volunteer situations.

Name: **Cameron Cantlon**

Rank: **LTC [Major during deployment]**

Date: **23 December 2009**

Unit you were in during the 2007-2009 deployment:

HQ, 2/3 ACR

Describe your professional experience in Iraq

I was the Squadron S3 (Operations Officer) and, later, the Squadron XO (Executive Officer). As such, for the first 7 months I planned, resourced, and facilitated the execution of squadron-level operations in Diyala Province, Iraq. As the executive officer, I coordinated and oversaw all staff actions at the squadron-level to facilitate the squadron operations in both Diyala and Ninewa Provinces.

What will you remember about your work in Iraq?

It was dangerous and required Soldiers to place themselves within their formations into harm's way on a daily basis. The work, however, was punctuated by the constant feedback in the form of seeing security and life in general improve amongst Iraqis.

What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?

From a 3d ACR perspective it was the deployment in the northernmost province in Iraq and securing the 2nd largest population center - the city of Mosul.

From a 2nd Squadron perspective it was securing the easternmost province in Iraq and over 165km of the Iran-Iraq border. Coupled with securing the tumultuous oil-rich areas in northeast Diyala between the Iraqi-Kurd disputed zone and this Iranian border region, the actions of 2nd Squadron went a long way to provide the Government of Iraq time to develop diplomatic solutions in these areas.

What will you remember of your deployment?

The success of the local governments in Diyala Province (Balad Ruz and Khaniqin Q'ada(s)) and the improving security forces in particular the 5th IA Division and Balad Ruz IP and ERF (IP) BN.

What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment's deployment?

Obviously, first to remember are those who lost their lives in this operation. After that, the items listed above. The details and summary of these actions are in the unit's Valorous Unit Citation (just as it is detailed for the other squadrons).

What were the most significant events that happened to the Regiment or your Squadron during the deployment?

- **Operation Raider Harvest: This BDE-level operation in northern Diyala Province re-established the local government control of this agricultural area (fruit).**
- **Operation Sabre Tempest: This Squadron-level operation re-established local governance and long-term Iraqi security to the southern areas of Balad Ruz. Also re-established joint governance between Shia and Sunni in Balad Ruz. Balad Ruz is the most important city in eastern Diyala and is split nearly 50-50 Shia/Sunni. To this date, only the Shia portion (northern) of Balad Ruz was secure and policed by IP. After 4 long months of Area Security operations and countless enemy engagements, this area was firmly in control of the autonomous Iraqi Security Forces with combined IP and IA operations.**
- **Operation Iron Pursuit: This Division-level operation focused in 2nd Squadrons Operational Environment. As a primary unit in this 4-month operation, the ISF in eastern Iraq were completely re-postured and conditions were set for long-term border security and long-term plans to work with the Kurds.**

What should go down in history about the Regiment's deployment?

It was a critical time of ISF transformation and strengthening of local governance – and 3d ACR's actions were paramount to this growth.

Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?

Same as above.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have participated in?

My first in Iraq. From my perspective, it was the marked improvement across Iraqi governance and Iraqi security lines of operation.

What type of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

Maps and pictures of the operations – depict in time and space the actions of the Troopers.

What ideas should be discussed about the deployment? What is the story of the deployment? How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

Same as my operations and summary explained above....

How did your family do during the deployment? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family in any particular way? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family differently this deployment than others?

I am blessed by having a very strong wife and family. They are truly self-sustaining and just plain tough. The programs on Fort Hood, in particular the CYSS services were very supportive. For example, free hourly child care (there was a particular number of hours per month) was very appreciated. The Darnall Army Community Hospital provided tremendous care for my wife when our 4th child was born. I was not home and the hospital let her stay an extra night or two to recover and be with our son who had a couple of complications in the first 3 days. The 3d ACR and 2nd Squadron did a fantastic job keeping families informed and supported.

Name: **Daphnie Cantlon**

Spouse's Name & Rank: **Cameron Cantlon (LTC)**

Date: **1 December 2009**

Unit you were in during 2007-2009 deployment:

Sabre Squadron

What will you remember about this last deployment? **Strength of Soldiers and Families.**

Friendships developed, Support provided from everyone.

How did the families of the 3d ACR get through the deployment? **Spirit of the mission,**

Friendship developed within unit, Technology, 3ACR planned events and functions to keep us tied together.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have been through?

Not alone (had 3ACR FRG family), utilized Fort Hood services offered to deployed soldiers families, added an additional child to our own family, attended almost all memorials with other wives, use of skype to visually connect to our soldier.

Fort Hood supported all our efforts with perks to help our families. I will always remember the efforts from Chaffee daycare (free hourly care to children of deployed soldiers) to help make the time my children spent there fun. Darnell hospital staff did an amazing job helping me with my pregnancy and supporting my birth experience while I was alone. Youth services provided free ballet classes to my girls which allowed them to meet with other military children going through deployments while encouraging them to try new things.

What should people remember about the families of 3d ACR during this deployment?

They overcame the hardships of temporary separation from soldier and endured the addition 3 months (15 months). They supported each other the only way they knew how by giving back to other families.

What type of objects or items would best represent 3d ACR families during the deployment? Why?

- **Cross-We all had faith that 3ACR was there for a purpose to make life better. We all made sacrifices because we believed in the purpose. We supported the challenges. We attended the memorials to show our hero's families we respected and honored the life of their lost one and hero.**
- **Computer was the link to family and soldiers. It was our voice when we needed to share or hear from our loved ones. Website- leaders words updating us on missions.**
- **Newsletters written by troopers that gave us an idea of what life was like over there. Being able to see that via pictures and word helped children.**
- **Posters that displayed the art of children who were eager to show support.**
- **Spurs to represent the Ladies Spur ride. Lots of spirit!!!**
- **Jack Daniels Whiskey, Sabre Squadron blankets, Simply Sabre lotion products, Rattler Tee Shirts, bug pin, etc. All the money raised from these things went towards celebrating Sabre's accomplishments with a Formal Ball upon return.**

Describe your responsibilities as part of the Family Readiness Group.

Helped support the LTC wife the best I could, filled in for her when she left for one holiday, helped coordinate with other volunteers and deliver layettes to 3ACR wives during the months that Sabre was responsible, provided childcare on occasions to Sabre wives, attended most coffees and troop FRG meetings, made meals for wives who had babies or who had lost a loved one, took notes for a troop commanders wife during steering meeting when she couldn't be present. Went to all Rattler Troop holiday parties, attended or planned unit playdates to help my children know the other

children. In general I tried to build relationships with younger volunteer leadership and offered to support through listening and sharing experiences.

How did your official responsibilities differ from the kinds of things that you actually did?

I didn't have any official responsibilities. I did what I could to volunteer. As a mom of 3 little ones and one on the way I was extremely busy. But I tried my best to build relationships and to be an active listener in the FRG channels. Being present to show support and doing what we could behind the lines made the deployment less stressful.

Name: **Gary Dangerfield**

Rank: **LTC**

Date: **5 January 2010**

Unit you were in during the 2007-2009 deployment:

I was assigned as the Regimental Public Affairs Officer and distinguish visitor's bureau OIC.

Describe your professional experience in Iraq:

My experience in Iraq was one of the most rewarding times of my career. As the Regimental public affairs officer and the OIC of the distinguish visitors bureau, I had my hands full. The officers and the soldier's who I worked with, provided me and my staff with first class support. Their effort made my job easy at the end of the day.

What will you remember about your work in Iraq?

I was busy, but it made time go by faster. It seemed like we were dealing with embedded reporters and then executing the movement of VIP either at the same time or back to back.

What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?

When the Regiment arrived in Mosul, the previous unit was experiencing 35-40 attacks on any given day. Prior to the Regiment's departure in January, the attacks dropped to 7-10 on any given day. I would say the Regiment set the standard for success and once again, produced the blueprint for accomplishing counterinsurgency operations.

What will you remember of your deployment?

I will never forget the smiles on the faces of the children of Iraq. I will never forget the man and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice so those children will have an opportunity live in a safe environment.

What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment's deployment?

We will always remember the troops who paid the ultimate sacrifice. The Regiment has and will continue to build on the lessons learned from OIF 07-09, so the next element can improve and add to the legacy the Regiment has established.

What were the most significant events that happened to the Regiment or your Squadron during the deployment?

The murder of two of our troopers and several others who were wounded by the hands of an Iraqi Soldier on 26 December, 2007, brought the Regiment closer together.

What should go down in history about the Regiment's deployment?

The Regiment returned to combat after going through a BRAC movement and equipment reset to establish itself as one of the Army's most respected formations.

Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?

It's simple: We pray for peace, but train for war. The troopers of the Regiment's formation know how to fight, but more important, they know how to take care of each other.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have participated in?

My first deployment with the Regiment during OIF III, was difficult, but did not seem as long emotionally draining as OIF 07-09.

What type of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

The faces of the Soldiers as they work with the local populace would be a great way to relay our story. The display reminds all of us why we do what we do.

What ideas should be discussed about the deployment?

There should always be a discussion about what went right and what we could have done better.

What is the story of the deployment?

The story of how the Regiment reduce the number of attacks and restored a sense of calm to the area of operations we served.

How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

Soldiers understand the importance of protecting each other, in addition to protecting the local population in their area of responsibility. The general public loves the American Soldier and appreciates their service to the Nation. Detailing the human interest story would be the best way to relay the Regiment's effort to the general public.

How did your family do during the deployment?

My family was real source of strength for me during both deployments.

Did the Army/Regiment assist your family in any particular way?

The family readiness group did a great job of keeping my spouse informed.

Did the Army/Regiment assist your family differently this deployment than others?

The town hall meetings allowed my spouse the opportunity to see and hear from the Regimental commander and get the truth about our operations and squash rumors.

Name: **Matthew A. Dooley**

Rank: **Major**

Date: **6 January 2010**

Unit you were in during the 2007-2009 deployment:

1st Squadron/3ACR from JUN 06 through JUN08. Regimental Planner from JUN08 to MAR09.

Describe your professional experience in Iraq

I was the Squadron Executive Officer for 1st Squadron/3ACR for the first half of the deployment. From the tactical perspective, our challenges in 1st Squadron were much different, I think, than either 2nd or 3rd Squadrons. Furthermore, the fact that each Squadron had its own unique and demanding problem sets complicated the Regimental HQ's ability to provide its attention equitably. While 3rd Squadron became justifiably consumed with the intensity of the fight inside Mosul, 1st Squadron's war against its IED networks along the Mosul/Baghdad highway took on the appearance of what I can best describe as "submarine warfare," with each side quietly stalking the other. Prolonged periods of tedious strain were punctuated with the sudden violence of either an IED detonation on one of our patrols or by us executing a successful ambush on a group of IED emplacements (either capture or kill was fine with me). The complexity of this fight required an equally complex set of solutions, ranging from direct, violent engagement of IED emplacements to the detainment of bomb makers, financiers, and cell members, to the deliberate management of reconstruction projects designed to change the allegiance of villages and tribes within our part of the province. Lastly, the fantastically successful Sons of Iraq security program we expanded in our area of operations, coupled with our reconciliation efforts with hundreds of former insurgents, dried up the available pool of potential AQI recruits and thus helped reduce the level of violence in southern Ninewa Province.

The logistical challenges we faced for the first seven months ranged in everything from the normal complexities involved in deploying a Heavy Cavalry Squadron into a combat theater "in contact" to the extremely challenging task of building three separate Troop sized combat outposts from practically nothing up to "FOB quality" living standards. Added to these challenges was the added burden of fixing a very tired and worn-out fleet of

theater provided up-armored HMMWVs, while at the same time managing our own sizeable fleet of tracked combat vehicles. The equipment we inherited from our predecessors had simply been ridden hard and the previous unit had been too busy in the fight to stand down for serious services and overhaul. We were able to change that, but it took a deliberate effort on everyone's part to make it happen.

Our other most problematic logistical challenges were tied to three aspects of our battlefield environment that we could not change during our time over there: 1.) A U.S. Army ribbon bridge erected over the Tigris River during our first week in country to replace concrete and steel bridge blown up by a massive truck-borne IED just before our arrival, was a never-ending source of maintenance challenges 2.) The burden of supporting three distant Troop sized COPs, each located a minimum of 15 kms from the Squadron HQ, kept the Squadron's logistics planning team busy. 3.) The obligation to facilitate GOI payment of over 2000 Sons of Iraq security personnel each month spanning over 9 separate contracts in 9 separate locations seemed to evolve with each month as the parameters of each contract changed. Bottomline: every day, the sheer scope and size of our massive area of operations presented us with a set of challenges that required us to carefully plan and husband our resources to ensure mission accomplishment.

What will you remember about your work in Iraq?

I will remember the versatility demanded of me as a leader, planner, soldier, and statesman. The skill sets the Army talks about in producing "adaptive leaders" are never more thoroughly tested than in fighting a counter-insurgency. Though I was not the Squadron Commander for 1st Squadron, there were a number of scenarios and vignettes I can talk to where I can recall the requirement to exercise very mature judgment and tactical patience. In this art, the careful application of restraint and shrewd political skills was every bit as important as our willingness/capacity to kill "bad guys."

What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?

In my opinion, the single most significant achievement of 3ACR's deployment in support of OIF 07-09 was our unflinching confrontation against a determined enemy. Against what Al-Qaeda in Iraq had declared, practically

on the eve of our deployment, to be their “Last Stand” Grand Victory over the Coalition, 3ACR waded into Mosul and Ninewa Province ready to fight. The brutality of our first 6 or 7 months there, I think, reflected the intensity of that confrontation. The fact that we were able to accomplish so much, in spite of the limited resources derived from our role as an economy-of-force for MND-North, speaks to the professionalism and determination of every soldier in 3ACR.

What will you remember of your deployment?

The level of violence across the Regimental AO and the mind-numbing fatigue of my first six months there will be what I will most remember.

What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment’s deployment?

So much of our more kinetic efforts are still classified, particularly our methods on targeting “bad guys” and their leadership. In my opinion, that was significant. Without the constant pressure the Regiment kept on the enemy, there would have been no credibility to back-up our softer levers of influence (diplomatic, economic, political, etc). Despite the popular mantra of counter-insurgency being an art form of creating largely non-military solutions, the importance of how effective we were at killing and capturing bad guys on a regular basis cannot be understated, in my opinion. As innovative, well-funded, and deliberate as all of our non-lethal methods and programs were, we would have had no traction with any of these efforts if we hadn’t had the firepower of an Armored Cavalry Regiment present to back it up and impose our will. In that culture, it seems power is respected and the appearance of weakness begets disrespect and violence.

What were the most significant events that happened to the Regiment or your Squadron during the deployment?

Squadron Events:

- **Establishment of Qayarraah Ribbon Bridge over the Tigris- DEC ‘07**
- **Assumption of control over both Q-West and FOB Sykes in support of Regiment’s efforts to isolate and secure Mosul. JAN-MAR ‘08**
- **Establishment of three Troop-sized, long term Combat Outposts in Tiger’s AO. DEC ‘07- JUN ‘08**
- **Killing of our #1 HVT, Numan Juwar, in Sharqat, Iraq on 15 JAN 08 (establishes credibility of Squadron against AQI in our AO)**

- Tiger Squadron reconciliation program in northern Sal-A-Din Province, in the towns of Sharqat and Heschel, (managed by C and B Troops) accounts for over 400 potential insurgents. Conducted FEB-APR 08.
- Establishment of nine “Sons of Iraq” security contracts to provide security jobs in southern Ninewa Province and northern Sal-a-Din Province JAN-MAR 08
- Planning and execution of Tiger Squadron literacy program employs and teaches Iraqis in eastern part of AO, while Tal-Abtha road construction project employs and teaches Iraqis in western part of AO. JUN-DEC 08

Regimental Level Events:

- Zanjili Apartment Building Bombing in Mosul
- OPERATION RIFLES HARVEST (I and II)
- OPERATION RIFLES RESOLVE
- Systematic collection, planning, and execution of various kill or capture missions against high value targets. DEC '07- DEC'08
- Transition of western Ninewa Province to MNF-West (Marine Task Force) control frees up some Regimental energy and combat power enabling regiment to prepare to redeploy. OCT-DEC '08.
- Return of 2/3 ACR to Regimental control. NOV-DEC 08
- Preparation, securing and registration for provincial elections. OCT-DEC '08

What should go down in history about the Regiment's deployment?

See below.

Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?

We should remember that 3ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009, because we were one of the last of “the surge” units, sent to one of the worst places imaginable, against an enemy who had declared our AO to be “his chosen spot for his last stand.” It is there where we confronted him, out-thought him, out-fought him, and ultimately defeated him by preventing AQI from seizing control over Mosul. Unfortunately, it was not without cost, as the Regiment received the highest casualties of any similar brigade sized unit assigned to MNF-I. All of this was accomplished within the constraints of the Regiment

operating as an economy-of-force to a division, who itself was operating as an economy-of-force to a Corps. Ultimately, being short of everything, except the enemy, is one of the proud Cavalry traditions present in our nation's military history. This mission was no different.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have participated in?

The level of violence across the Regimental AO and the mind-numbing fatigue of my first six months there will be what I will most remember.

What type of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

A display case of captured insurgent weapons with a backdrop of the faces of the over 150 some odd HVTs we killed- demonstrates our dominance of the battlefield

A transitional Iraqi flag (the one without the Saddam handwriting and green stars)- demonstrates the increased legitimacy of the GOI why witnessed during our 15 months in country

A wall with pictures of our honored fallen- ensures we never forget their sacrifices

What ideas should be discussed about the deployment? What is the story of the deployment? How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

I think my answers throughout this pretty much cover it. See the attached article I've also included entitled "The Fight for Mosul." It is a comprehensive look at everything from the beginning in 2003 through our deployment there in OIF 07-09. It's a pretty good read.

How did your family do during the deployment? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family in any particular way? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family differently this deployment than others?

My wife chose detachment and avoidance as her coping mechanism for dealing with this deployment. She remained deliberately unengaged for a multitude of personal reasons. We neither requested nor received any assistance from the Regiment.

Name: **Jenny Harper**

Spouse's Name & Rank: **CPT Justin Harper**

Date: **6 January 2010**

What will you remember about this last deployment?

There are two main things that I will remember about this past deployment. The first is that the spouses, particularly those in Thunder Squadron, were like a family. We ate meals together, went on trips together, helped each other when times were tough....it was something that I had never experienced before. I don't think I would have gotten through this deployment as well as I did without the support (and a shoulder to cry on) from the other spouses in the unit. I am truly grateful for the with my "deployment husbands"

The other thing that sticks out in my mind from this deployment is the circumstances in which some of our Soldiers were killed. Being a troop commander's wife, it was extremely difficult for me to cope with the losses of two troop commanders, particularly the death of CPT Rowdy Inman. I would have to say that out of all the Soldiers I've known who have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, he was the one I knew the best. His death was so tragic and untimely it made me fearful that we would lose more Soldiers in the same manner. Unfortunately history repeated itself on Nov. 12, 2008 when an Iraqi Soldier opened fire on several Killer Troop Soldiers, killing 2 and wounding 6. That was the lowest point of the deployment for me. It was only by the grace of God and the support of friends that I was able to get through the last 2 months the guys were down range.

How did the families of the 3d ACR get through the deployment?

The families of 3d ACR got through the deployment by supporting one another. We didn't hesitate to lend an ear when someone needed to complain, provide a shoulder to cry on when things were tough. No one understood better what we were going through than the other members of the Regiment, and we stuck together.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have been through?

This deployment was different for me in that I received much more support from the spouses in the unit and Rear Detachment than on our previous deployment. I truly felt that the leaders throughout the Squadron (Commanders and FRG Leaders) made a point to make sure that the Soldiers and their families were extremely involved and dedicated to the well-being of each member of the Squadron, and I feel that this made a huge impact on the overall morale of the unit. I also felt an increased level of anxiety this time around as my husband was in much more danger than on his last deployment. It seemed like my temperament paralleled what was going on in Mosul- when things were good I felt good, and when things heated up I was quite worried.

What should people remember about the families of 3d ACR during this deployment?

People should remember that we were an extremely close, tight-group of family members, particularly at the Squadron level. We supported one another and our Soldiers and were dedicated to the success of the unit, both stateside and down range. I think there is something to be said about going through a deployment with someone. It's almost as if it accelerates your friendship, bringing you much closer together than you would be otherwise.

What type of objects or items would best represent 3d ACR families during the deployment? Why?

When thinking of items that would best represent Regimental families from the deployment, I would say photographs and artifacts from times when we came together as one- Spouses' Spur Ride, Memorial Service for fallen Soldiers, and Welcome Home Ceremonies.

Describe your responsibilities as part of the Family Readiness Group.

My responsibilities as an FRG Leader dealt mainly with the welfare of the family members of the Soldiers in the unit. I did my best to keep the family members informed of what was going on both at Ft. Hood and down range. This was somewhat difficult as our family members were spread throughout the entire country, and we found that e-mail was an extremely effective and efficient way to distribute information. I also acted as a go-between for family members and Rear Detachment when questions needed to be answered, when rumors needed to be controlled, and when emergencies came up. In addition, I also provided support and assistance to family members whose service member was killed or injured in theater.

How did your official responsibilities differ from the kinds of things that you actually did?

My responsibilities in Killer Troop were somewhat unique in that I had a wonderful Co-Leader to work with, and our family members were extremely involved and active in the FRG. As a result we were able to come together as a troop and spend time together outside of FRG Meetings. We had a Killer Ladies Night once a month where we would all go out to dinner, occasionally we had a Killer Playgroup at one of the Youth Centers on post, we had a baby shower for the expectant moms in the troop, and we also packed over 130 goodie bags to send to the guys for Christmas.

Name: **Justin Harper**

Rank: **CPT**

Date: **4 January 2010**

Describe your professional experience in Iraq

I served as a Squadron planner and Troop commander with 3/3 ACR during the OIF 07-09 deployment

What will you remember about your work in Iraq?

I will remember that the success of Army units has nothing to do with checklist or wrote formula. In the end, our work in Iraq had success because we evaluated individual men and woman and interacted with them with a firm understanding that they could not be type cast into an easy formula. Every individual is unique and not repeatable, recognizing this inside and outside of my organization was the key to using human capital in an effective way.

What would you say was the most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq?

The most significant part of the Regiment's presence in Iraq was the interaction between our unit leadership and the leadership of Iraqi security forces. We developed real and trusting relationships that allowed us to partner effectively in securing Mosul.

What will you remember of your deployment?

Those who focus on technical solutions to human problems can never find true success in combined operations. There is real strength in allowing junior leaders the freedom to develop an exercise their skills within a broad understandable framework. I had this opportunity throughout my deployment and tried to give my subordinates the same chance.

What should be remembered/ documented from the Regiment's deployment?

Exercising mission command that truly allows for decentralized operations is key to developing leaders for the Army's future. In the end, we executed a successful area security mission using the same principles that have worked in counterinsurgency for millennia.

What were the most significant events that happened to the Regiment or your Squadron during the deployment?

While there were many individual tragedies that were incredibly significant, the most significant event was the individual Soldier seeing real progress in accomplishing our mission. This manifest itself in Iraqi security forces occupying areas they previously abandoned, civilian business reopening shops, traffic jams worse than major US cities, and the ultimate sense that Iraqis were finally taking responsibility for security of their country.

What should go down in history about the Regiment's deployment?

The Regiment and 3/3 ACR truly accomplished the mission of combined area security with a subsequent transition to Iraqi security force control. Few units actually saw the fruits of their labor accomplished within the framework of a deployment but I believe we were a truly great exception.

Why should we remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq in 2007-2009?

We should remember that 3d ACR went to Iraq for OIF 07-09 to give the Iraqis a fighting chance to reestablish control of their country and we absolutely succeeded in that mission.

How was this deployment different than other deployments you have participated in?

While my previous unit defined our deployment as successful, there was not a sense of having accomplished our overall mission of transitioning to Iraqi Security Force control. Every member of my previous unit would have told you that there likely would be years of continuing deployments before we could "finish the job". This time, we actually saw evidence of the transition.

What type of items or objects should be displayed in the Third Cavalry Museum that best represents the Regiment's deployment? Why?

The Regiment should display tangible reminders of the deployment. This should include things that give unique character to the deployment and remind those of us who visit years from now what we did and where we fought.

What ideas should be discussed about the deployment? What is the story of the deployment? How would you explain it to other soldiers and also the general public?

My favorite point of discussion on this topic follows:

Without airplanes you cannot have an air force, without ships you can't have a navy, but as long as you have people you have an Army. In the end technology can enable but cannot replace the individual Soldier. The presence of computers, advanced surveillance, equipment, and all the expensive things the taxpayer buys were not the critical factor leading to our success. In the end, well led and properly motivated Soldiers won the day for the Regiment and our Iraqi allies.

How did your family do during the deployment? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family in any particular way? Did the Army/Regiment assist your family differently this deployment than others?

My family did very well during the deployment. I think the best "Programs" that exist are not necessarily a formal Army construct but instead informal relationships that naturally spring up between people of like mind and good will.

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