

dition and explosives, large numbers of small arms weapons, machine guns, RPGs, mortars, and rockets; and they denied the enemy the ability to target aircraft with missiles.

Air Defense Mission

In addition to the variety of missions the task force conducted, 1-4 ADA still had an air defense mission to accomplish in Iraq. The battalion established an air surveillance radar picture and planned for contingency operations. From the very first day 1-4 ADA arrived in Baghdad, the battalion established Sentinel radar coverage of the local area. The radar was then integrated, as it should have been in a combat zone, with the Air Force Airborne Warning and Control System, Control and Reporting Center radar and Airfield Approach Control radar to provide a comprehensive and consolidated air picture for the theater commander extending from the center of Baghdad International Airport out to 250 nautical miles.

The Sentinel was also used to maintain situational awareness for the rotary wing assets supporting the division. Close air support, combat air patrols, and rotary wing reconnaissance were all monitored on the Air and Missile Defense Workstation in the division and battalion tactical operations center. The air defense Soldiers in the task force also enjoyed radar connectivity because they always had a digital air picture available to them on their Handheld Terminal Units around the airport perimeter or out in zone on missions. Patrols had the opportunity to observe air traffic patterns in and out of the exclusion zone, and the patrols were always aware of the nearest air support assets in the area.

Air defense plans were validated by conducting digital rehearsals and tactical exercises...

Air surveillance for situational awareness was a vital part of the task force's contingency planning. The task force staff planned operations that protected several coalition high-value targets from air attack, namely the deliberate collision of an aircraft into a building or structure. Planning and coordination extending from the fire-unit level to Central Command mitigated the risks presented by a terrorist attack of this nature on coalition assets around the Baghdad area. Joint coordination between the Air Force and Marine Corps incorporated Task Force 1-4 air defense assets into existing force-protection measures. Communications and operations links disseminated early warning information from the radars and ground observers to the joint team protecting high-value targets. Air defense plans were validated by conducting digital rehearsals and tactical exercises involving fire units occupying preplanned positions and using a mix of air defense systems. All of the plans involved using several systems, each

firing multiple missiles and taking advantage of early engagement envelopes to destroy the threat well before it reached its intended target.

Ensuring Iraqi Freedom

The Soldiers of Task Force 1-4 accomplished many things during their 12-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The air defense battalion received attachments of other combat arms and operated as a true maneuver task force in a combat environment, and it sustained those operations for an entire year. The task force successfully protected Baghdad International Airport from enemy infiltration or ground assault and conducted offensive operations against terrorists and former regime loyalists. Task Force 1-4 Soldiers also protected convoys, dignitaries, and aircraft using the airfield. Task Force 1-4 demonstrated its versatility and operational utility by adapting to the needs and realities of the current operational environment, providing core air defense capabilities, while simultaneously executing maneuver task force missions, in an effort to bring stability to Iraq and ensuring Iraqi freedom became a reality.



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On the alert for insurgent attacks, 4-5 ADA Soldiers of Task Force Renegade patrol Baghdad's treacherous military supply routes.

Task Force Renegade

4-5 ADA Soldiers See National Elections Fulfill Promise of Operation Iraqi Freedom

by MAJ Mark Krzczowski & MAJ Jamie Fischer

Since 9/11, the 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, has deployed at home and abroad to fight the Global War on Terror. Beginning in August 2002, a large portion of the battalion spent most of the next year protecting the National Capital Region from terrorist attack as part of Operation Noble Eagle.

Replaced by the 263rd Air Defense Artillery, Mississippi Army National Guard, the Renegades immediately switched gears to prepare for Operation Iraqi Freedom II. A few trips to the ranges and the National Training Center were all the Soldiers needed to hone their already sharpened skills. As their mission evolved, they learned that the bulk of the battalion would deploy as motorized infantry and that Delta Battery would be detached to provide convoy security for the Division Support Command. They also were informed that Foxtrot Battery, 202nd Air Defense Artillery, Illinois Army National Guard, would be attached to secure a large portion of terrain west of Baghdad.

The deployment went off without a hitch. Linking up with Foxtrot, the command learned that they would receive one more battery, Delta (Dakota), 216th ADA, Minnesota Army National Guard, once they arrived in Iraq to prevent or counter surface-to-air missile attacks against aircraft arriving at or departing Baghdad International Airport. Now designated Task Force Renegade, the largest motorized infantry battalion in the 1st Cavalry Division, the Renegades were attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team Blackjack, 1st Cavalry Division.

Battle of Holy Week

All units in combat sooner or later receive their baptism by fire.

The Renegades received theirs even as they were completing the relief in place with their sister battalion, 1st Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery, 1st Armored Division. In April 2004, in the midst of an Islamic holy week, forces led by radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr initiated combat operations against the 1st Cavalry Division. Over the next several days, every platoon in Task Force Renegade received enemy fire. The heaviest fighting occurred in the town of Abu Ghraib where soldiers from Alpha Battery used their Bradley's to engage masses of armed insurgents and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) teams. Patrols from Foxtrot fought through ambushes and rescued fuel convoys. Dakota fought off attacks on key bridges. Charlie battery defended the perimeter from repeated small arms attacks, and Bravo battery, securing the main entrance to the camp, endured smallarms fire and mortars. As the dust settled and the firing died down, several Renegades were wounded, but the battalion had proven its flexibility and capability in combat.

Patrolling the Countryside

In the following months, the Soldiers of Task Force Renegade made significant progress in the effort to bring peace and the chance for prosperity to the people in the area. Constant patrolling drove away most insurgents. Twenty-four hours each day, seven days of every week, there were Renegades operating throughout the 250-square-kilometer area of operations. The number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), ambushes and rocket attacks in the zone dropped. Diligent work by the task force's mechanics allowed the vehicles to keep up high mileage in ever-increasing heat.

Daily interaction with local citizens improved trust



A left, a 4-5 ADA Soldier stands guard at the scene of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack. At right, medics treat a wounded 4-5 ADA Soldier.

and cooperation. With assigned interpreters, task force leaders practiced constructive engagement with local leaders. Those who helped keep insurgents out received help in return in the form of improved irrigation, drinking water and electricity. Those who favored insurgents earned frequent visits from patrols. Medical personnel made visits to small communities to provide care in areas that had been long neglected by Saddam.

The security situation continued to improve until terrorists based in nearby Fallujah counterattacked to regain control, launching rockets and attempting to cut off a critical supply route. The number of IEDs emplaced multiplied greatly in August, with more soldiers receiving wounds. At this stage, it was clear that few if any of the local citizens supported these "outsiders." The battalion captured some insurgents, but was involved in a seesaw struggle. In the south of the sector, Dakota maintained its record of success, preventing any surface-to-air missile attacks on coalition aircraft and helping keep Baghdad International Airport open.

Perimeter and Convoy Security

As most of the task force patrolled the countryside, three batteries performed a far less glamorous, but equally essential task. Bravo Battery Soldiers controlled the two most important access points to Baghdad International. Hundreds of vehicles and people passed under their watchful eyes every day. All were subjected to extensive searches to ensure no unauthorized weapons or explosives entered the perimeter. Charlie Battery manned the walls and the western entry point with Bradleys and Avengers to back them up. Headquarters Battery controlled a second line of defense at several gates inside the sprawling camp. Subject to the searing heat and occasional attacks, Task Force Renegade Soldiers maintained their vigilance.

Members of the battalion headquarters turned their attention to other projects. The airport, having been forsaken by Saddam and needing dedicated leadership to assist the nascent Iraqi Ministry of Transportation, was not at standards necessary to receive commercial traffic. Soldiers developed and managed millions of dollars in projects

to bring the facility up to standard. A small team from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery trained and served as advisors to a company of the Iraqi National Guard.

Meanwhile, Delta, 4-5 used its Avengers to protect support convoys all across the division area of operations. Delta Battery Soldiers traveled thousands of miles along hazardous routes. Every convoy made it through. Occasionally, IEDs would strike, but they did little, if any, damage.

Airport Road

In September, Task Force Renegade received a change of mission. It turned over the western zones of Baghdad and the airport perimeter and took responsibility for the highway that runs between the airport and the International (Green) Zone. The batteries took turns patrolling the nine-kilometer stretch of road and surrounding neighborhoods, looking for IEDs, securing overpasses and denying the enemy positions from which to attack with RPGs and small-arms fire.

Constant patrolling was once again the name of the game. The never-ending presence of the Renegades drove off most of attackers. Those who managed to fire a shot, did so wildly; rarely, if ever, hitting their target. Those who wished to emplace IEDs simply did not have the time to do so effectively. As our Soldiers' success made the road safer to travel, the enemy increasingly turned to vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), trying desperately to wrest control of this essential route from the task force.

The enemy's attacks caused great damage, and for the first time, Task Force Renegade Soldiers were killed in action. In one attack on 18 September 2004, two VBIEDs killed two and wounded 12. Another was so powerful that, while the crew only received minor injuries, the hull of their Bradley was warped by the blast. But the Renegades kept coming, stubbornly holding on to the road and defying the terrorists. In November, two changes occurred: Task Force Renegade was attached to 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, and, sadly, lost Foxtrot Battery to another mission.

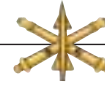
The insurgents persisted, trying ambushes with different types of IEDs and using snipers, but taking casualties only made our Soldiers more determined to honor the sacrifice of their comrades by winning. At the end of November, the insurgents were using VBIEDs to lash out at supply convoys and civilians that used the road. By December, new tactics developed by the Renegades and shared with coalition units had reduced the success of VBIEDs. The enemy began to look elsewhere to try to intimidate the people of Baghdad.

Iraqi National Elections

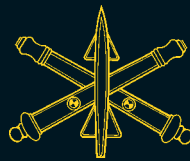
As the situation settled along the airport road, Task Force Renegade was able to devote more attention to the surrounding neighborhoods. With the same persistence they had shown throughout the previous months, the Renegades ensured a secure environment for the people of Baghdad to cast their first free votes in more than 50 years.

Members of the task force spent election day, 30 January 2005, at their posts on the highway and in surrounding communities watching for insurgents attacks. They were rewarded with the sight of hundreds of Iraqi citizens walking to and from the polls. Many gave the soldiers a "thumbs up" or proudly showed them an index finger dyed dark blue, evidence they had cast a ballot.

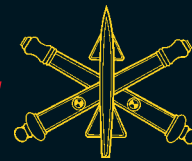
In mid-February, Task Force Renegade completed its mission and returned home. They will never forget the difference they made or the friends they lost.



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