

Jedi Blog: Episode 14, End Game

Written by Jedi 6, Maj. Merv Brott
Saturday, 06 June 2009 14:41

Combat Outpost Meade, Iraq (Baghdad)

June 5th, 2009. Our journey began over a year ago in Ft. Riley as we trained up for this mission in a Kansas spring and early summer that now seems like a distant, but fond, memory from years past. At this writing, our team has a little over a month left in our tour.

We have had several milestones that point to the coming end: All of our R & R breaks are complete — I was the last one to take R & R and I returned from Germany in mid-May. We are at the point now where it is now too late to send us mail — a bitter-sweet sign.

On a separate sequence of events, we have just witnessed the transfer of authority (TOA) process between the old Task Force we had been assigned to these last seven months and the replacement Task Force. Our old Task Force was a unit from Germany; this new Task Force is a National Guard unit from North Carolina.

After I returned from my R & R in Germany (Joy flew out and joined me in the Bavarian Alps for two wonderful weeks), I began to take a look back at what our team has accomplished this past year, and what tasks I still wanted to accomplish before we hand the reins over to the next MiTT and redeploy in July. I'll have more to say on that in my next journal.

As I look back, I am amazed at how much emotional and physical energy our team has spent to accomplish our mission: Advise, Mentor, Teach, Coach and Train this Iraqi Army Infantry Brigade to conduct sustained, independent operations. Our collective tanks are nearing empty, but we're not done yet — we've still got some juice left, and we'll need it to finish strong.

These year-long deployments take so much out of you. You have to go into these deployments with your mental, emotional, and physical gas tanks "topped off" because you are going to draw off them throughout the year. That's one of the benefits of having experience from multiple previous deployments: you know how the roller coaster will play out at different points of the deployment, you know when you can tap into that reserve. If these deployments are like marathons (and they are), we're running these last few miles with the thought of the finish line driving us on.

In addition to continuing our primary mission of training this Iraqi Army Brigade, we also have a

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multitude of redeployment tasks that must be accomplished on firm timelines. Not surprisingly, we manage to find the time and energy to complete those tasks!

All of us have our orders for our next assignments. You can't help but to think about those next steps, yet we remain focused on the task at hand. Several of the guys on the team are busy looking at homes online as they prepare for their immediate move after the redeployment.

Likewise, several wives of our team members are moving their household by themselves (Joy is one of them) and will link up with their husbands at their next assignment. Even our personal lives are executed with military precision (complete with checklists, just ask Joy!). Army wives are incredibly self-sufficient — they have to be to put up with our career choice!

The team has been re-energized with the realization that the End Game is here and the completion of our mission is coming into focus. We have completed over 250 combat missions, but we still have a few more missions to go, a few more miles in this marathon.

Until next time, this is Jedi 6 — out.