Arkansas

39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Bowie edition

39th Bowie Brigade Commander

Col Kendall Penn

Over 14 months ago, we began this mission in Arkansas in armories all across the state like Little Rock, Benton, Newport, Russellville and Searcy—'our own backyard.' And, we fired our weapons at Camp Robinson, crawled through the mud at Fort Chaffee after numerous days of non-stop rain, and ultimately, back to our armories to bid our farewells.

Many of you rolled out of your armory—your town—in the early morning hours at the beginning of the New Year as you hugged your wife, child, parents, brothers and sisters—your family—for the last time in a long time. As you boarded the buses, you made one last ditched effort to show your loved one you cared with a wave that would stay in your mind for the next several months until you saw them again.

There can be no doubt that the training that we endured for nearly six long months in both Arkansas and Mississippi was hard, but compared to leaving family behind I think you'll agree that the training was the easy part. Now, I would like to spend time focused on your accomplishments during this deployment, and the time you've spent with your 'Bowie' family.

As your Brigade commander, I couldn't be more proud of the accomplishments that have resulted from your dedication to this mission.

The 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team commanders and command sergeants major pose for a photograph in April while training in Kuwait.

And, I'm confident in saying that the 39th Brigade—and the Bowie knife—is well known throughout theater. Soldiers recognize the Bowie patch that you now wear on your right shoulder as a combat veteran. It's recognized as a symbol of excellence, and as I've heard general officers phrase it here in Baghdad—a quite professionalism. We go about our jobs with pride, and we get it done with hard work. As a commander, I can't ask for any more than that, and I take 'quite professionalism' as a huge compliment.

We don't have to tell everyone how good this Brigade is, because we do it with our actions. But, this comes as no surprise to me after my time in the Brigade; hard work and dedication is just something we've come to expect from one another; not just in the 39th, but all of Arkansas.

Since arriving in theater, we've been sent in many different directions and have done many different missions. In fact, our missions are as varied as the locations in which we serve—Al Asad, Tallil, Taji, Baghdad and the surrounding areas.

We've provided convoy security, manned towers and gates (force protection) while also serving in mayor cell operations in some locations. I've seen numerous accomplishments first hand here on Victory Base Complex where we've not only done our job, but we've made security here better for those that will follow. It's a common theme that I see everyone following—leave it better than you received it.

I look at the mission in Al Asad as a prime example of dedication to mission. It's amazing to think that after just eight months in country, the battalion has racked up well over two million miles on the road. Day in and day out, 2nd Battalion is rolling a convoy down the road that stretches out some 50 miles at times. Just stop for a moment and imagine the challenges that a 50-mile convoy can provide when you're task with securing it—nothing short of amazing. These teams are providing security to the very supplies that keep the military fueled, fed and supplied in general. And, the risk is evident when you consider also that these supply routes are a 700-mile journey roundtrip.

The same mission holds true for the CAV and the 206th Field Artillery Regiment. Their routes vary in length; however, the focus has to be just as intense as they run similar convoy security missions. Since March, Lt. Col. Darrell Daniels, and his 'Lead the Way' Regiment have logged more than 700 missions and equaled 2nd Battalion's two million mile mark. Lt. Col. Damon Cluck's Soldiers have much shorter convoy missions, yet, equally dangerous as they've spent a lot of time in Sadr City, which we all know has been a hot spot for terrorist activity. Waiting while trucks unload concrete barriers for eight hours in that area of Baghdad is challenging.

In addition to the convoy missions, the 217th in Tallil and 206th in Taji have served as mayor cell operations which bring on a whole new set of challenges. Each of which has been handled with 'quite professionalism' by each organization.

And of course, I've had the luxury of going out on several missions here in Baghdad with 1st Battalion as they own a large part of the tower and

Bowie Team

gate security on VBC. I've joined the troops on patrols in the village of Makasib, and I've dealt directly with several of the sheiks at various tribal meetings and meals. We've dedicated schools, soccer fields, opened veterinary clinics, built greenhouses and we've worked closely with the Iraqi Army and other international military organizations. We've brought good things to the people of Iraq, and I see the biggest positive today being the fact that we're allowing the Iraqis to solve their problems—our role is more advisory.

From my view today, improvements in this country are evident. You can be proud of your role in those improvements; not only this time but during the last deployment.

Our Charlie Company has run the VBC Joint Visitor Bureau hotel and have served as the personal security detail for entertainers like the 'American Soldier' himself—Toby Keith—as well as the president-elect of the United States—Barrack Obama—before he was the president-elect. You probably never thought—or at least I didn't—that an infantry company would be running a hotel, but that just goes to show you the variety in the missions we've had. But again, important missions nonetheless.

I would be remiss if I didn't take time to recognize my battalion commanders in whom I have placed much confidence— Lt. Col(s). Damon Cluck, Darrell Daniels, Brad Cox, Jim Treece, Mickey Stewart. A strong leadership team was critical to success as we went our separate ways after Kuwait, and each—along with the support of their sergeants major—has proven they were up to the challenge. Additionally, a personal word of thanks to our deputy commander— Col. Kirk VanPelt—as well as Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Veazey for their leadership and friendship.

The list is long when talking about the accomplishments of this Brigade, and I don't want to rehash the things that you'll actually see for yourself in this book. It's true that a picture is worth a thousand words, and I think these pictures will help tell the story on what you've accomplished since October of last year. It will take you from the early stages of saying goodbye to your family at the armory, to training at Camp Robinson and Fort Chaffee, the winter days and nights at Shelby, the dust-filled days in Kuwait and then on to your specific location where you've called home the last eight months.

While your face may not be seen anywhere in this book, if you will back up just a little and widen your perspective what you will see is a team—Bowie Team. It's that perspective that has made us successful on this deployment. Each of us pulling our own weight and always looking out for the other guy or gal that's watching your back. You've been in the military long enough to know that some of the best bonds you'll ever develop in your lifetime will happen here with those wearing the same clothes as you—Soldiers, Bowie Team Soldiers.

And with that said, I'd ask that you keep our two fallen Soldiers from this deployment and their families in your prayers. Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Woodham and Spc. James "Jimmy" Clay served their country with honor, and their family as well as their 'Bowie family' is hurting today. Never forget these Soldiers, never.

I hope this book will help you realize the great amount of pride you should have for having been on this deployment with your brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors and your fellow combat veterans. You have made this deployment a success. You have kept your 'Bowie' buddy safe while out on missions. You have sacrificed being away from your family. But, "we" have served our country well. We are Bowie Team!

The rest of our team—our families, our employers—are awaiting our safe return to the States. They have stood by us throughout this deployment, and their sacrifices have been as great as our own. They have simply served in a different location. Your spouse may have been on the front lines of her own handling the kids, the bills and managing all the other issues that families are challenged with, and they've done it well. I encourage you to thank them for that support. Your reintegration back into your family is the next most important mission of your life once this one is complete.

It would appear I've written about a picture and a half, or roughly 1,500 words, in putting this message together—a little longer than my norm. But, I could go on and on about the integral role each of you has played in making this Brigade successful in this, our second deployment to Iraq. May God bless each and every one of you and keep you safe as you go forward. And now, I'll leave you to visual words that make up this book—enjoy! Bowie Team!

When we initially started hearing the rumblings of a potential second deployment for the 39th Brigade back in 2007, we immediately knew we had a serious challenge ahead of us. We did not, however, have any doubts in your ability to successfully accomplish this mission.

The Brigade's success during the first tour in Iraq from 2004 to 2005 no doubt played a role in the National Guard Bureau's decision to call the 39th as the first National Guard brigade combat team to return for a second tour.

Roughly half of the Soldiers in the 39th had honorably served on the brigade's first deployment to Iraq. Now you were being asked to set your lives aside once again. Some of you have answered that call three or more times. But even for our first time 'deployers,' you endured a great sacrifice. You said goodbye to your families, friends and civilian employers as you stepped up to serve. Many of you walked away from your college education, and some of you left behind personally owned small businesses for the honor of wearing the uniform in support of our nation.

I salute you for your service and the sacrifice endured as a result of it.

Yours was not the only sacrifice however. The Families and employers that you had to leave behind are true patriots as well. We can't thank them enough for their support over the years, and their continued support as we face the future.

As we prepared the 39th for this most recent deployment, the biggest question we faced was how we would fully man the force. With over 8,500 Arkansas Guardsmen having served on deployments already over the previous six years, it was quickly realized that this latest call for 3,200 more Arkansans was about 1,000 shy of what the 39th had deployable at that time. This led us to a 'Joint Force Arkansas' deployment - primarily made up of the 39th Brigade - augmented with professional Soldiers from all four corners of the state. Truly great Arkansas Soldiers from each major subordinate command in the state rounded out the Bowie Team to answer the call to duty.

We are extremely proud of each member of this team as is Governor Beebe and the entire State of Arkansas.

In return for your service, we pledge our continued support. Our troops are not led into combat to fight alone. They shouldn't be left alone to fight the challenges resulting from combat and operational stress. Help us to help you. It takes a Warrior to stand up and serve in time of war. It takes an even stronger Warrior to stand up and admit they need help as a result of it.

You have served us; now help us to serve you. Welcome home Bowie 'Team.' Job well done.

TAG

Maj. Gen. William Wofford

Gov. Mike Beebe

The mission—Some days, the mission is full of intense and dangerous operations, protecting each other as you carry out orders. But often, the mission means long days of inactivity and waiting and that gives you more time to think about your friends and family back home. Fortunately, you can communicate with your loved ones from halfway around the world in ways that soldiers in previous wars never could, but I know it can still be frustrating not to be there yourself. I hope you can take comfort in remembering that while you carry out your mission, we are committed to helping your families back home.

Some of you have now served multiple tours in Iraq, and you bring that extra experience with you on your current mission. I want you to know that the support efforts for your families back home are also building on previous experience. That experience is making it simpler to direct families to better-coordinated services and resources that can best assist them. This is where my office can help. When your families contact us, we are able to provide advice and direct them to the assistance they need. Arkansans are generous people who support military families in our small state where large deployments have a significant impact on all of us.

What I told you at Camp Shelby in March still holds true, that if you take care of the mission; we'll take care of your families. I continue to receive mission updates from General Wofford, and he tells me that his recent visit to Iraq reinforced what we've known for a long time: Our victories are won at the squad and platoon level of our Guard. I will proudly put the professionalism and dedication of Arkansas's soldiers up against any other state in America. On those long days of waiting in the desert, know that all Arkansans take pride in your service and feel a deep appreciation for what it takes to complete your mission and return safely home.

Bowie Team Hooah

Command Sgt Maj Steven Veazey

As the Brigade command sergeant major, I've spent nearly 15 months of throwing challenges your way. And these challenges you've repeatedly met, and in most cases, exceeded. But today, I provide you with one last challenge for this deployment—a deployment that will be complete by the time you read my words.

The 'Bowie Brigade' has received every kind of accolade possible for our work here in Iraq. And, you have spent countless hours manning the towers and entry control points of our bases. You've driven across mile after mile of highway bringing safety to those that bring us life sustaining supplies. You've run mayor cells and morale welfare and recreation activities. But today, I ask you to reach deep within yourself and find the pride that our Soldiers are known for and remember our fallen.

That's it. My challenge to you is ***remembrance of our fallen Soldiers*** that we lost during this deployment. Our mission success here in Iraq will always come with a caveat that says, 'the 39th Brigade lost two Soldiers during the deployment.' You'll hear that every time this deployment is the topic of discussion, whether it's on television or in the local coffee shop of small-town Arkansas over bacon and eggs.

But, I want you to remember their names—Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Woodham and Spc. James "Jimmy" Clay. They were two Soldiers, Warriors and Bowie Team members that did not die in vain; instead, they gave their life in defense of this great country of ours. They deserve every accolade that can be bestowed upon a Soldier and that includes remembrance by their fellow Soldiers. And while we all have different religious faiths, I personally feel the best accolade that I can bestow on these Soldiers is that of prayer.

And for those of you that worked closely with these Soldiers over the past year, I know your heart is hurting even today. I encourage you to seek help for that pain and know that talking through those issues will be much better for you than holding it inside as the pain will only get worse. You know I take a lot of pride in the words 'Bowie Team,' and to me it's more than something we say—it's about being a military family. And, we have to look out for each other even when we've finished this deployment, because we will be working together again.

Words just never seem to be enough to express my feelings of pride and what it means to be a part of this team. I thank God for all of my Soldiers and non-commissioned officers who have been the glue that have held this Brigade together throughout this deployment. As I said earlier, I've challenged you throughout, and you've risen to the top—and I've seen that daily.

While we've been spread apart across theater, I'm well aware of the accomplishments you've made as my sergeants major have kept me well informed. You can rest assured that it's difficult as the command sergeant major of the Brigade to be so far away from his flock; however, the confidence I have in my sergeants major is untarnished. They have made it their mission in life to take care of their troops and that is all I can ask for out of them.

I've been out on numerous patrols with the Soldiers in 1st Battalion, and I've seen the professionalism on a regular basis. Our training in Arkansas and at Camp Shelby paid off as we well expected it would. I can still imagine those freezing temperatures at Shelby as we were running the mounted combat patrol lanes. There was snow and ice falling at one point, and it was hard to get motivated about training on those days. But, the secret to my motivation lies within each of you. It is so encouraging to see a young troop get so excited about training, and it is that excitement that feeds this Brigade day in and day out.

And while I'm strolling down memory lane, I can't help but wander back to the night the tornado hit the barracks at Shelby where our 1st Battalion guys called home. I knew on that night that this Brigade was ready to go into a combat zone and complete any mission given to us. That night was the true meaning of 'Bowie Team' with guys putting themselves in harm's way to help their brothers. I can remember the adrenaline and fear that ran through my body worried that we had suffered a catastrophe before we even really got started.

But, God was waving his protective hand over us then as he has throughout this deployment. That night was our 'final exam' for the training, and we passed with honors, and I'm convinced we've never looked back from that moment on. It's not enough to say thank-you. In fact, I'm convinced I don't know what reward is great enough for the service and sacrifice that you've given, that your family has given. And just like you, I long for the day that I return to my home and my family. But just as I long to be with my family, I will always long to be back with my Bowie family. And that next time we meet, we will only be in a drill status at our local armory as opposed to active duty in the desert. But, the challenge to each of us to be professional Soldiers doesn't change just because we put on the uniform one weekend a month. We always have to focus on professionalism.

And, we focus on being professional Soldiers to honor those two gentlemen, those two 'Bowie Team' members that I asked you not to forget. Have you forgotten? Never forgotten—Bowie Team!

The tip of the Bowie knife—the pride and symbol of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team—is a little sharper today as yet another significant event in the Brigade's history draws to a close as we complete this deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. History will show that the Soldiers of the 39th have a long-standing tradition to excellence and the current generation of 'Bowie' Soldiers has elevated this standard to yet another level as today's enemy is not well identified and there are no front lines. Today's fight takes place on a 360-degree battlefield, and in many cases the battle is won with information. Nonetheless, Soldiers are the key to any fight.

The Brigade is the largest major subordinate command within the state of Arkansas and is headquartered in Little Rock. Battalion headquarters are located across the state in Conway, Malvern, Searcy, Warren, Russellville and Hazen. In addition to the federal mobilizations that have been a highlight in recent years, the Brigade has responded to local emergencies such as floods, tornadoes, forest fires, ice storms and have participated in numerous searches for missing persons.

A quick look into history will show that on July 18, 1917—some 91 years ago—the 39th Infantry Division came into being when the unit designation was given to National Guardsmen from Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas. On August 3, 1917, the unit organized for training at Camp Beauregard, La. and was designated as the 39th Division. After several reorganizations and participating in various capacities in World War I and World War II, the 39th Divisional Headquarters was reconstituted, organized and federally recognized on September 30, 1946 in Louisiana and reorganized again on August 26, 1947 in Arkansas. The Division was designated as the "Delta Division."

Twenty years later, the Division would face reorganization again when it was designated as the 39th Infantry Brigade (Separate) on December 1, 1967. The Brigade participated in extra training from May 1968 to September 1969. The training was for selected Reserve Component forces to increase their readiness.

In 1967, the 39th Infantry Brigade was approved to wear the "Bowie Knife" as part of the uniform for general and field grade officers, sergeants major, chief warrant officers 4, and the brigade commander's aide de camp. The knife was adopted in memory of the famous version of the Bowie knife or "Arkansas Toothpick" designed by Jim Bowie and presented to Arkansas blacksmith James Black in the form of a carved wooden model in December 1939. James Black made the knife with some improved modifications for Jim Bowie, who made the knife famous in later military operations. Wearing the Bowie knife is now part of the tradition of the 39th Infantry Brigade. In 1969, the Department of the Army designated the 39th Infantry Brigade or 'the Arkansas Brigade."

Since its' organization, the 39th Infantry Brigade has undergone several minor reorganizations to increase its effectiveness and modernize its force structure to meet National Defense requirements. In 1973, the Brigade was affiliated with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) for the purpose of training and a greater emphasis on combat readiness. In 1994, the unit was designated as one of only 15 enhanced brigades in the nation, to be manned, equipped and trained to a high level of readiness to respond rapidly to the call of the president. The 39th Infantry Brigade (Separate) was selected as one of the light enhanced brigades to "stand up" the active component, reserve component (AC/RC) integrated division. It became part of the 7th Infantry Division in 1999.

In 1999, the 'Bowie' Brigade also mobilized and deployed three infantry companies in support of Operation Southern Watch in the Kingdom and Kuwait. In 1999 and 2000, the Brigade mobilized

and deployed two anti-armor companies in support of operation SFOR 9 in Bosnia.

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, units from the Army National Guard were called to active duty in support of the War on Terrorism. The 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, 39th Separate Infantry Brigade, was among the units mobilized and deployed. The 529 Soldiers in the task force performed peacekeeping operations along the Gulf of Aqaba in the Sinai Peninsula from Eilat, Israel to Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt where the base of operations (South Camp) is located. Additional personnel were selected from the 39th's Military Police Platoon in Little Rock; the 39th's 239th Engineers Detachment 1 at Booneville; 3rd Battalion, 153rd's Company C at Dumas and Detachment at McGhee; and 3rd Battalion, 153rd's headquarters at Warren and detachment at Monticello. The nearly 550 members of the 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry were the first pure-Guard unit to take part in the Multinational Force and Observers, or MFO, mission on the Sinai Peninsula.

The Army announced on July 26, 2003 that it had alerted two U.S. Army National Guard Enhanced Separate Brigades that may participate in the Army unit rotation plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom. The units were the 30th Infantry Brigade from North Carolina and the 39th Infantry Brigade from Arkansas. The 39th Infantry Brigade was augmented with an infantry battalion from the 41st Infantry Brigade of Oregon.

The 39th Infantry Brigade deployed to Fort Hood, Texas, to begin their mobilization train-up with the 1st Cavalry Division. The brigade then deployed to Fort Polk, Louisiana in January 2004, and was validated during its Rehearsal Exercise at JRTC. The 39th deployed to Camp Taji and Baghdad, Iraq in late March, and remained in this theater of operations as part of the 1st Cavalry Division for one year, then redeployed through Fort Sill, Okla. in late March and April 2005.

On July 21, 2004 Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said at a Pentagon news conference that the Defense Department does not plan on extending any reserve component service member beyond the 24-month limit. At issue were about 400 Soldiers of the 39th Brigade Combat Team of the Arkansas National Guard. The 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry served on peacekeeping duty in the Sinai beginning in October 2001. The unit was now is serving with the 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad. The Soldiers would go over 24 cumulative months of active duty beginning in November, officials said. The brigade, however, was not due to rotate back to the United States until March. No other units in any service bumped up against this time limit.

The 39th Infantry Brigade returned from OIF II in April 2005, and immediately began transforming as one of the first Modular National Guard Infantry Brigade Combat Teams. In September 2005, the 39th IBCT was called to a security and humanitarian mission in New Orleans, La. after Hurricane Katrina. The 1-151 Cavalry Squadron, made up of companies from 1st and 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment of the 39th IBCT was one of the first responders in Operation Katrina, where Soldiers assisted with the evacuation of survivors of the storm who took shelter in the New Orleans Dome and Community Center. Once this was completed the 39th IBCT Headquarters deployed to command and control operations in the New Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines Parishes through November. The 2-153rd Infantry Regiment took over control of operations in St. Bernard Parish in October, and the 39th IBCT Headquarters returned to Arkansas in November. The 2/153rd returned to Arkansas in December, but many Soldiers of the Bowie Brigade remained in Louisiana as part of Task Force Arkansas through February 2006.

In June 2006 the 39th IBCT was called upon to send Soldiers to New Mexico in support of Operation Jumpstart as part of the Southwest Border Patrol mission. Charlie Company, 1-153rd Infantry Regiment deployed to New Mexico a month later and remained until December 2006 when they rotated with the 39th's 1st Battery, 206th Field Artillery. Various members of the 39th remained on duty in support of this mission until its conclusion in July 2008.

Fast forward to October 1, 2007—'Bowie Brigade' Soldiers report to their local armories located across the state to begin training in preparation for the federal deployment that would occur on 2 January 2008 for a one-year mobilization. From October through the end of the year, the Brigade would train at three separate locations—local armories, Camp Joseph T. Robinson in Little Rock and Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center near Fort Smith. The significance of the training is that the Arkansas National Guard had made a decision to do something that hadn't been done before—train a brigade-sized element for mobilization. Part of the onus to undertake such a venture was based on the fact that the 39th Brigade had over 1,600 combat veterans from the previous deployment to Iraq and felt they could train their own—in their own backyard. This would provide excellent training on familiar grounds, but it also allowed these citizen Soldiers a 'family-friendly' mobilization giving them more time with their families before heading off to Camp Shelby, Miss.

With in-state training done in mid-December, troops were allowed to take one last break to be with Family before boarding buses around the state and heading out for Mississippi. A National Guard facility, Camp Shelby offered the troops a taste of 'theater immersion training' which provided realistic training based on actual events occurring on the battlefield in Iraq. At the time, the realism injected into the scenarios was hard to distinguish from the real thing. In late March, the Brigade would once again board Soldiers onto busses for transport to Atlanta and ultimately Kuwait for more training.

Once in Kuwait, Soldiers spent approximately two weeks training before moving forward to their home for the next eight months—either Al Asad, Taji, Tallil or Baghdad. The brigade's headquarters element —commanded by Col. Kendall Penn – along with the 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment— commanded by Lt. Col. Brad Cox— were stationed in Baghdad. The 1st Battery, 206th Field Artillery— commanded by Lt. Col. Damon Cluck—went to Taji, along with the deputy commander of the Brigade, Col. Kirk Van Pelt. The 1st Squadron, 151st Cavalry—commanded by Lt. Col. Darrell Daniels—and the 217th Brigade Support Battalion—commanded by Lt. Col. James Treece—went to Tallil. The 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment—led by Lt. Col. Mickey Stewart—set up shop in Al Asad. The missions of the 39th were as varied as the locations in which they served to include base defense, convoy security as well as serving in mayor cell functions.

The Brigade's first wave of Soldiers returned to American soil via Gulfport, Miss., heading back to Camp Shelby for demobilization activities, on November 25th, 2008. Company A, 1st Battalion, 151st Cavalry led the way for the Brigade, with the remaining units returning throughout the following month.

Iraq 2004- 2005

Cpl. Jimmy Buie
January 4, 2005

Sgt. 1st Class William Labadie
April 7, 2004

Sgt. Michael Smith
November 26, 2004

Sgt. Ronald Baker
October 13, 2004

Sgt. Russell Collier
October 3, 2004

Staff Sgt. Hesley Box Jr.
May 6, 2004

Cpt. Arthur "Bo" Felder
April 24, 2004

As the 'Bowie Brigade' was faced with a deployment to Iraq, memories from just a couple years earlier were still fresh in the minds of the Soldiers. A deployment that required them to keep 'boots on the ground' in Iraq for twelve long months. The training for this deployment actually began on October 12, 2003 and sent the Brigade packing for Fort Hood, Texas to prepare for what ultimately would be an 18-month deployment. The war was in full effect, and the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team would be a major player in this war on terror. At the end of the day, the Brigade was successful in its' mission; however, success didn't come without a price as 16 Arkansas Soldiers would lose their life. An additional 17 Soldiers from units under the command of the Brigade would also lose their life for a total of 33 troops. The commander of the Brigade was a one-star general— Brigadier General Ronald Chastain. The current Brigade commander— Col. Kendall Penn—was one of the general's battalion commanders— 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment. The deployment would draw to a close in February 2005 as the 'Bowie Brigade' returned to the United States via Fort Sill, Oklahoma. During this deployment, there were many heroic events by these infantry Soldiers as the team earned two Silver Stars, more than 300 Bronze Star Medals, plus more than 30 Bronze Star Medals with Valor. Over 300 of the Brigade's Soldiers earned the Purple Heart during the deployment as a result of wounds received in combat. Ultimately, this experience from the first deployment to Iraq would prove valuable to training troops for this most recent visit to the Middle East.

Chief Warrant 4 Patrick Kordsmeier
April 24, 2004

Sgt. 1st Class Troy Miranda
May 20, 2004

Spc. Jeremy McHalffey
January 4, 2005

Spc. Joshua Marcum
January 2, 2005
Staff Sgt. Billy Orton
April 24, 2004
Staff Sgt. Stacey Brandon
April 24, 2004
Sgt. Kenneth Melton
April 25, 2004
Spc. Lyle Rymer
January 28, 2005
Staff Sgt. William Robbins
February 10, 2005

Story/Photographs by Cpt. 'Chris' Heathscott

The 39th Brigade Combat Team began FY04 with the mobilization of its entire force on October 12, 2003, for an 18-month mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. On November 1st, 2003, the final group of Soldiers departed Arkansas and arrived at Fort Hood, Texas, to link up with the rest of the Brigade for their pre-deployment training. As well as preparing Soldiers to deploy personally through records and insurance updates, legal assistance, medical checkups and inoculations, time at Fort Hood also provided an intensive training program in order to prepare them professionally. Although not all inclusive, the training effort at Fort Hood consisted of common tasks, Combat Life Saver, Force Protection, Close Quarters Combat, Motorized Convoy Lanes, Route Clearance Lanes and Urban Operations Lanes training.

Following the three-month train up at Fort Hood, the Brigade moved on to put their training to the test in a Mission Rehearsal Exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La. As the 39th pushed through the fast pace environment of the exercise, they also realized the benefits of mobilization through the Rapid Fielding Initiative. Despite claims of the inadequacies of equipment, the buildup of new equipment to prepare the 39th for the deployment actually brought the Brigade's preparedness to a higher level than their active component counterparts.

Having successfully completed their pre-mobilization training, most of the Soldiers of the 39th wrapped up two weeks of leave time and boarded airlines headed for their next stop at Camp New York, Kuwait. The final Soldiers arrived in Kuwait on March 26, 2004, five days after the 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery led the way for the 1st Cavalry Division as the first combat battalion north of Baghdad. The Brigade fell in on their equipment while in Kuwait and made their final preparations before moving north into combat operations, with the last convoy of Soldiers arriving at Camp Cooke, Iraq, on April 16th, 2004.

The 39th Brigade conducted a Transfer of Authority with the 1st Brigade of the 1st Armored Division and assumed full responsibility of their new area of operations on April 24, 2004. Along with the 3,000 Arkansans, 700 Oregonians and 500 Soldiers from eight other states, the Brigade also conducts operations with the support of its two subordinate battalions of Iraqi National Guard (ING) Soldiers. The Brigade trains the Soldiers and mentors the leaders of the 301st and 307th ING Battalions to support Brigade operations and prepare them to conduct future operations of their own. The 39th also has an active duty battalion from the 1st Cavalry Division, and a Macedonian Special Forces platoon within its task organization.

During the 2004 Fiscal Year the 39th Brigade conducted 380 Civil Military Operations projects amounting to over $16 million in spending towards the future of Iraq. These projects were focused to improve the Sewer, Water, Electricity, Academics, Trash and Other (SWEAT-O) areas of need the Brigade's Area of Operations. Funding for the projects came from confiscated monies from the former regime until the Transfer of Authority to the Interim Iraqi Government on June 28, 2004, at which time appropriated funds became the source of project funding.

The highlight of the brigade's mobilization was the first successful democratic elections held in Iraq since 1944. More than 70 percent of the registered Iraqi voters turned out to cast their ballots despite insurgent threats and attacks.

At the conclusion of the deployment the advanced party of the 39th returned to the United States via Fort Sill, Okla. in late February 2005, with 13 flights of the main body returning throughout the month of March. The majority of Soldiers were released from active duty on in April 2005.

The Brigade suffered its share of tragedies while performing combat, stabilization and security operations during the deployment. The 39th suffered the loss of 16 Arkansas Soldiers, during the deployment. The 39th suffered the loss of 17 more Soldiers that were attached to the Brigade, for a total of 33 Fallen Soldiers during the deployment.

The State of Arkansas hosted a Welcome Home Celebration on May 21, 2005 at War Memorial Stadium. Nearly 18,000 patriots gathered to pay tribute to all of Arkansas' returning service members. Several cities within the state also paid tribute to their local heroes.

Overall, the team earned two Silver Stars, more than 300 Bronze Star Medals, plus more than 30 Bronze Star Medals with valor. Over 300 of the Brigade's Soldiers earned the Purple Heart during deployment as a result of wounds received in combat.

Recent Deployment History

The 39th Brigade mobilized nearly 2700 Soldiers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II from October 2003 to April 2005.

Over 600 Soldiers deployed to the Sinai Peninsula in support of the Multi-Force and Observers mission from October 2001 to October 2002.

About 170 of the 39th's Soldiers deployed to Bosnia in 2001 for about a six month mobilization in support of Operation Joint Forge.

The brigade deployed over 400 Soldiers to Saudi Arabia / Kuwait in 1999 for about a five month mobilization in support of Operation Southern Watch.

2004-05 Tradition • Bowie

the first deployment in pictures

While on middle-eastern soil during the first deployment, the 'Bowie Brigade' set a standard and made history for the Brigade— this standard of excellence has continued through the current deployment. This photographic depiction of this 'Bowie Tradition' is made up of images captured by the previous public affairs officer for the Brigade— *Cpt. 'Chris' Heathscott* — while in Iraq. Cpt. Heathscott now serves as the State Public Affairs Officer at Camp Joseph T. Robinson in Little Rock. Also contributing to these images were Cpl. Benjamin Cossel and Staff Sgt. Rebecca-Mae Bruns, who were on the PAO staff during the deployment— they were from Ohio and Oregon, respectively.

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Another chapter has closed on the historic 'Bowie Brigade' — *the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Arkansas Army National Guard* — as Soldiers reunited with family at the end of November and throughout December 2008 after a deployment that began at armories all across the state on October 1, 2007. Prior to this formation, the commander— Col. Kendall Penn— would forge a plan to lead 3,000 plus Soldiers back to the war-torn country of Iraq— a country that many Brigade Soldiers had only left behind just over two years earlier. In fact, over half of the Brigade were combat veterans as a result of the 2003-2005 deployment, in which, one year was spent 'boots on the ground' in Iraq. This plan would start with training and that training would take place in a very familiar place— 'our own backyard.' With so many combat veterans on the Bowie Team, Penn, along with his deputy— Col. Kirk VanPelt— and the Adjutant General for the Arkansas National Guard— Maj. Gen. William Wofford—were determined that Arkansas Soldiers could train Arkansas Soldiers in Arkansas. This decision would ultimately provide the Brigade Soldiers with excellent training as well as a 'family friendly' deployment as Soldiers could spend extra time with their loved ones. On October 1, the Brigade began the first day of what would ultimately be almost 15 months on active duty. The first training period would be under Title 32 orders— the Governor retained control of the 39th while the funding was provided by the federal government—and would last through the end of the year. Training was conducted at the numerous armories that the 39th Brigade maintained around the state in addition to Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock and the Fort Chaffee Training Maneuver Center in Fort Smith. The intent for the next three months was to focus on individual Warrior Training Tasks— and there were 40 of them with numerous sub-tasks that had to be completed— to prepare the Brigade for collective training at Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. As expected, the Soldiers of Bowie Team excelled in their training as combat veterans showed great leadership in training those that didn't deploy during the last trip to Iraq. Shortly after the New Year holiday, the Brigade loaded buses from the local armories, waved good-bye to loved ones and headed south after being federally mobilized. (Continued back cover)

Arkansas 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Bowie edition

Upon arrival in Mississippi, the leadership of the 39th Brigade would quickly realize that the training plan in Arkansas had been very successful as Soldiers were well prepared for the collective training they would encounter at Shelby. The realism of the training they faced at Shelby— Theater Immersion Training— was modeled after real-world scenarios and events that were happening in Iraq in real time. Oftentimes, the training was so real Soldiers would be required to take a step back to realize it was a training event. Braving the cold weather of January and February, along with a tornado that struck a barracks full of sleeping Soldiers, the 39th Brigade completed training with rave reviews from the leadership of 1st Army. Late in March, the Brigade would move on to Kuwait for additional training and then their final stop— Iraq. But the locations in which the Brigade would serve would vary— Al Asad, Tallil, Taji and Baghdad. The mission set for each, however, would basically be the same— convoy security and force protection. It was a very different mission than the combat veterans of the last deployment had faced, nonetheless, it was a very challenging mission. And, one thing remained the same— loss of life. And while the number of deaths varied greatly, the impact was the same. Sixteen Soldiers would lose their life in 2004-2005 and two would suffer the same fate on this deployment— Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Woodham and Sgt. James "Jimmy" Clay. With that said, this book is dedicated to the memory of all 18 Soldiers that lost their lives fighting for the Bowie Brigade. It's with much sadness that we bid these Soldier farewell from the battlefield, yet, we find much happiness in knowing they are in a better place today and will never be forgotten by their Bowie Team family. In documenting the Brigade's activities throughout this deployment, I have had the benefit of meeting numerous Soldiers— both officer and enlisted— and have watched the progress from individual training to collective training to actual movement on the battlefield that is Iraq. And while today's Iraq is much different than the combat veterans of 2004-2005 witnessed, it is still dangerous and a very volatile place that requires much focus in order to keep Soldiers safe as they put themselves in harm's way daily. It has been my privilege to serve with you— my privilege to have been a part of something much larger than myself. Bowie Team!

Maj. Craig Heathscott
Brigade Public Affairs Officer