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U.S. ARMY EUROPE'S 'DAGGER' BRIGADE PASSES MISSION IN IRAQ TO 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

By **Sgt. James P. Hunter**

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Public Affairs Office

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq -- U.S. Army Europe's 2nd "Dagger" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division handed over responsibility for operations in northwest Baghdad to the 2nd "Strike" Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) from Fort Campbell, Ky., during a transfer of authority ceremony here Nov. 17.



SGT JAMES P. HUNTER

Col. J.B. Burton, commander of U.S. Army Europe's 2nd "Dagger" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, speaks during the brigade's transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Liberty, Iraq Nov. 17. During the event the "Dagger" Brigade handed over responsibility for operations in northwest Baghdad to the 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Division.

"... It is with great humility, but with great confidence in the abilities of the 'Strike' Brigade Combat Team, that I relinquish responsibility for coalition force efforts in northwest Baghdad," said Col. J.B. Burton, commander of the Schweinfurt, Germany-based "Dagger" Brigade. "We have achieved the tasks that you put before us, but we leave knowing that there is still much to do."

The "Dagger" Brigade helped transition a hostile northwest Baghdad from a heavy, kinetic and costly fight to a secured population rid of extremists, criminals and terrorists, he said. Throughout their 15-month deployment they played a

vital role moving Iraqis into the political process and the formal reconstruction of Baghdad and Iraq.

Burton said all Iraqis, regardless of sect or religion, received equal municipal services, education, opportunity and a total improved quality of life.

The “Dagger” Brigade capitalized “on the opportunities provided by the noble efforts and sacrifices of coalition forces, Iraqi security forces and brave Iraqi citizens who have delivered an opening for enduring victory and a future where Iraqis are not measured by religious sect or special group affiliation,” Burton said. “Our combined efforts have set the conditions necessary for re-integration, reconciliation and reconstruction here.”

Though the day was a great one for the “Dagger” Soldiers, who will be returning home to their families in Germany, said Col. William B. Hickman, commander of the 2nd “Strike” Brigade, “It is truly a great day to be a ‘Strike’ Soldier and now a part of the First Team serving in Multi-National Division - Baghdad.”

The brigade redeployed from south Baghdad in September 2006 and spent the last 12 months preparing themselves for this deployment where they look to, through combined efforts, set the conditions for a strong, prosperous Iraqi future.

“We know this mission comes at a pivotal time and that our actions will make a lasting impact,” Hickman continued. “I know our Soldiers and units are ready for the upcoming challenges and opportunities to serve with the Iraqi security forces.”



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