



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command
16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

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Washington Guardsmen take base defense reins at Q-West

BDOCTOA

By Sgt. Keith M. Anderson

16th SB Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Guardsmen from Everett, Wash., assumed responsibility for base defense operations and force protection here during a transfer of authority ceremony Nov. 16.

Soldiers from the 81st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 81st Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard, assumed authority from Task Force 113, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Muncie, Ind., Indiana Army National Guard.

“Believe it or not, we have looked forward to this day almost as much as the 76th IBCT Soldiers,” said Lt. Col. Kenneth Garrison, commander, 81st BSTB, to the audience of Soldiers and civilians at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center. “This day has been a long time coming, and we have worked long and hard to prepare for it.”

The ceremony marked the end of a year-long deployment cycle for the Soldiers of Task Force 113.

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“Task Force 113 Soldiers were responsible for 39 QRF (quick reaction force) responses, 90 pump house missions, 320 perimeter patrols and 252 reconnaissance and counter-rocket patrols covering over 115,000 miles,” said Col. Martin Pitts, commander, 16th Sustainment Brigade.

“You did this safely, with no loss of life and no serious accidents,” Pitts added. “Your unit had an outstanding IED (improvised explosive device) find-rate, continually adapted to new enemy TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) and adjusted to an ever-changing battle rhythm. Your battalion’s achievements during this rotation have been phenomenal.”

Soldiers from the 81st BSTB were anxious to get started.

For Spc. Sarah Fister, radio transmitter operator, 81st BSTB, the deployment will be an opportunity to learn about operations in Iraq first hand.

“It’ll be great,” said the 33-year-old from Puyallup, Wash., “I’ll be one of the first to hear what’s really going on.”

Fister, who has served in many roles, including laundry specialist, fabric repair, cook, and water purification specialist in the National Guard for 13 years, said she had some mixed feelings about deploying.

“I don’t really have anything against it,” Fister said. “I miss home, but I understand the purpose behind it. I think it’ll be a good experience.”

Garrison had a final injunction for his Soldiers at the ceremony.

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“To the Soldiers of the 81st BSTB, I offer you a challenge,” he said. “You have worked and trained hard for this moment. This is the execution phase of this operation, and I am supremely confident in your ability to perform this mission, and we will bring everybody home when we finish this tour.”

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Maj. Kimberly M. Martindale, commander, Task Force 113, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Indiana Army National Guard, and Command Sgt. Maj. Steven P. Ridings, command sergeant major, TF 113, case the unit colors during a transfer of authority ceremony at Q-West, Iraq, Nov. 15. The task force, headquartered in Muncie, Ind., wrapped up a year-long deployment cycle and transferred responsibility for base defense operations and force protection to the 81st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 81st Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard. (Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Adam V. Shaw)



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Lt. Col. Kenneth S. Garrison, commander, 81st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 81st Brigade Combat Team, and Command Sgt. Maj. David Nunn, command sergeant major, 81st BSTB, uncase the unit colors during a transfer of authority ceremony at Q-West, Iraq, Nov. 15. The Everett, Wash.-based Washington Army National Guard unit assumed responsibility for base defense and force protection at Q-West from Task Force 13, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Indiana Army National Guard. (Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Adam V. Shaw)