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2nd SCR welcomes new regimental, squadron commanders

By Dave Melancon
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GRAFENWOEHR, Germany (Jan. 13, 2009) – The U.S. Army's oldest continuously serving cavalry regiment welcomed its 75th commanding officer and six new squadron commanders during change-of-command ceremonies here Jan. 13.

Col. James R. Blackburn assumed command of U.S. Army Europe's 3,500-Soldier 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment from Col. John S. RisCassi shortly after passing the squadrons' unit colors among the incoming and outgoing commanders.



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Gen. Carter F. Ham, U.S. Army Europe commanding general, passes the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment's colors to Col. James R. Blackburn during change-of-command ceremonies in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Jan. 13. The "Dragoon" Regiment also welcomed six new squadron commanders during the same ceremony.

Blackburn reported to Germany from Carlisle Barracks, Penn.

RisCassi commanded the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash. in November 2005. He became the "Dragoon" Regiment's 74th commander when 1st Brigade was reflagged in Germany as the 2nd SCR June 1, 2006.

"The squadron commanders who have just relinquished command have served this regiment with dignity, respect, loyalty and with unparalleled success over the last 39 months," RisCassi said during his farewell remarks. "I am proud to have led and served with each of them."

The leaders were totally dedicated to their Soldiers, one another and to the regiment, he continued.

“Together we have witnessed firsthand the tragedy of war,” RisCassi said, adding, “We have also seen bravery, dedication and the professionalism of our Soldiers.”

RisCassi thanked the officers, Soldiers and their families for their efforts to move the regiment from Fort Lewis to Germany and for successfully deploying and completing their mission in Iraq.

“You have redefined for me what it means to be an officer, to be a Soldier and what it means to be a commander,” he said. “I salute each of you and your families.”

The regiment has undergone major changes since 2005, when it was known as the 2nd Infantry Division’s Lancer Brigade, he said. The regiment was reflagged, transferred to Germany, and with 90 day’s notice, deployed to Iraq.

“The regiment’s display of agility and effectiveness is a testament to each Dragoon’s strength and the entire Dragoon family’s steadfastness,” he said. “Dragoons, you are a shining example of what is right with our Army.”

Gen. Carter F. Ham, USAREUR commanding general, praised RisCassi and his squadron commanders for 38 months of leadership: successfully moving the regiment to Germany, preparing for short-notice deployment and a 15-month long mission in Iraq.

“Looking at the Soldiers in this formation, I see a lot of familiar faces -- from days at Fort Lewis and from good and bad days in Iraq,” he said.

The outgoing squadron commanders “led (their) squadrons with distinction, personal bravery and with the expected cavalry élan,” he said.

“This wonderfully talented team of commanders under Col. RisCassi’s expert leadership brought this great regiment from Fort Lewis, settled briefly in Vilseck and then led their troopers through the fire of 15 hard months of combat.”

The incoming commanders will continue the regiment’s tradition of excellence set by their predecessors, the general said.

“You are inheriting in the Stryker Cavalry Regiment a battle-hardened outfit filled with steadfast civilians, Soldiers and families,” Ham told Blackburn in his closing remarks. “I know that you will care for them and will prepare them for the inevitable challenges that lay ahead. I know you will reach new heights together.”

Blackburn pledged to continue to maintain strong bonds between the regiment and its German military partners and communities. He also thanked the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr community and the regiment’s families for their support of the unit.

“We thank you for what you have done, for what you are doing and for what you’ll do in the future,” he said. “You are our center of gravity and our source of strength. It is good to be home with people we love and people who care.”

Incoming 2nd SCR squadron commanders are:

- 1st Squadron: Lt. Col. Daniel R. Barnett, outgoing; Lt. Col. Douglas A. Sims II, incoming.
- 2nd Squadron: Lt. Col. Myron J. Reineke, outgoing; Lt. Col. Omar J. Jones IV, incoming.
- 3rd Squadron: Lt. Col. Robert M. Coffey, outgoing; Lt. Col. Bryan E. Denny, incoming.
- 4th Squadron: Lt. Col. Antonio Aguto Jr., outgoing; Lt. Col. Christopher Boyle, incoming.
- Fires Squadron: Lt. Col. Robert M. McAleer, outgoing; Lt. Col. Steven A. Bergosh, incoming.
- Regimental Support Squadron: Col. Danny F. Tilzey, outgoing; Lt. Col. Michael M. McCulley, incoming.

CUTLINE:

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