

## U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

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RELEASE #2008-12-02-04

Dec. 2, 2008

### Events welcome 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment home, honor its fallen Soldiers

By Dave Melancon

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**VILSECK, Germany** -- The U.S. Army's oldest continuously serving cavalry regiment completed another chapter in its history during memorial and welcome home ceremonies here Nov. 25.



DAVE MELANCON

Soldiers of U.S. Army Europe's 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment salute during the regiment's colors uncasing ceremony in the Rose Barracks Memorial Fitness Center in Vilseck, Germany, Nov. 25. Earlier the same day the regiment conducted a memorial service to honor its Soldiers who died during the unit's recently completed deployment in Iraq.

Fellow "Dragoons," friends, families and members of the U.S. Army Garrison and neighboring Vilseck communities packed into the Rose Barracks Memorial Fitness Center for two events. First was a memorial service to remember the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment's fallen Soldiers, followed later in the day by a ceremony to uncasing the regiment's colors and officially mark its return home.

The memorial service paid tribute to the 25 Soldiers who died in

action during the regiment's recently completed 15-month deployment to Iraq.

"We pray that the sacrifice of our comrades will be an instrument of peace," said regiment Chaplain (Maj.) Samuel Lee during the service's opening prayer. "And that we

who are present may dedicate our energies -- individually and collectively -- to live out our nation's creed: one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all."

Col. John S. John S. RisCassi, the regiment's 74th commanding officer, said the fallen Soldiers are examples of every "Dragoon" trooper past and present who has answered the nation's call to duty and paid the ultimate price defending America's Constitution.

"Perhaps their strongest legacy is their selflessness. They traveled to a foreign desert to provide peace and security to those most in need," RisCassi said. "Their example will inspire our own service to our country and will equally inspire generations to come."

The memory of the fallen Soldiers, he continued, will be "forever enshrined in our hearts and their names will echo through the ranks of our regiment as sacred examples that will endow each of us with the courage to live our lives in their memory."

Following RisCassi's eulogy and a photo presentation honoring the Soldiers, Lee called on those attending to celebrate the Soldiers' lives, to remember their service and to look forward to the future.

"We must go through the storm and overcome the evil and our fears," he said. "Not just for ourselves, but for future generations."

During the afternoon uncasing ceremony, the regiment and its guests honored 23 wounded "Dragoons," some attending the ceremony from hospitals in the United States, as they assisted their leaders unfurl their units' colors.

"I know all the 'Dragoons' are glad to be back in the Vilseck community after successful deployment," RisCassi. "Your service and performance over the course of our deployment has been nothing less than remarkable."

The regiment earned a reputation for success throughout Iraq, he said, as it brought security and stability that will enable the people of Iraq to prosper and develop a democracy.

The unit's missions included hard-won fights against insurgent forces and distributing humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people, the colonel added. He credited the regiment with smashing Al-Qaida forces in Baghdad, suppressing an uprising in Sadr City and destroying a suicide bomber network in Diyala province.

"You left a lasting and indelible mark across Iraq," RisCassi said. "In doing so, you have earned the respect of every witness to your achievements."

The commander thanked the U.S. and German communities for their support during the deployment, then saluted the families of the regiment.

“Most important of all, the ‘Dragoons’ before you would like to thank our Family members who endured hardships and challenges as daunting as anything we experienced in Iraq,” RisCassi said. “Your love and devotion allowed us to focus on the fight.”

Calling the 2nd SCR’s performance in Iraq unprecedented, V Corps Commander Lt. Gen. Kenneth Hunzeker praised the unit for its rapid deployment and successful completion of its varied assignments in Iraq.

“It was nothing short of the most brilliant performance of duty by a regiment during war,” he said. “You should not only know that, but you should also be proud of it. You made a difference. You created change.”



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