

Vilseck/Zabul

# Kommandoübernahme am Unabhängigkeitstag

## US-Strykerbrigade aus Vilseck beginnt Einsatz in Afghanistan - In Nachbarschaft zur Talibanhochburg Kandahar

Das in Vilseck (Kreis Amberg-Weizbach) stationierte 2. US-Kavallerieregiment hat Anfang Juli seinen Einsatz in Südafghanistan, in der Provinz Zabul, offiziell begonnen. Die Strykerbrigade führt für knapp ein Jahr die Task Force Dragoon (Einsatzkommando Dragoner) und das Combined Team Zabul (Gemeinsames Team Zabul). Am 4. Juli, dem Tag der amerikanischen Unabhängigkeit, entrollten die Strykersoldaten in der Forward Operating Base Lagman (FOB, vorgeschobene Operationsbasis Lagman) ihre Regimentsfahne.

"Wer, wenn nicht wir?", fragte Oberst James Blackburn, der 57. Regimentskommandeur bei der Zeremonie am Sonntag in Anlehnung an US-General George S. Patton. Der Krieg werde genau hier im Süden Afghanistans, wo er begann, gewonnen. "Die Wiege der Taliban wird ihr Grab werden, hier im Süden Afghanistans, während die Soldaten dieses fantastischen Regiments das nächste Kapitel unserer Geschichte schreiben", versprach Oberst Blackburn.

Die Strykerbrigade aus Vilseck löst die 4. Brigade der 82. US-Luftlandedivision ab. Zudem sind in der Provinz litauische und rumänische Truppen stationiert. Letztere hatten sich im Winter auf dem Truppenübungsplatz Hohenfels auf ihren Afghanistan-Einsatz vorbereitet. Die Strykerbrigade soll gemeinsam mit der afghanischen Armee und Polizei sowie den anderen Isaf-Kräften für Sicherheit sorgen und Aufständische bekämpfen. Sie setzt damit die neue, sogenannte Partnering-Strategie der Nato in Afghanistan um.

Die Provinz Zabul, wo die Strykerbrigade eingesetzt ist, liegt im Süden Afghanistan, an der Grenze zu Pakistan. Quer durch das Gebiet führt die aus Kabul kommende Ringstraße in die Talibanhochburg Kandahar. Die gleichnamige Provinz grenzt im Südwesten an Zabul.

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## Dragoons ring in Independence Day with uncasing of Colors



### **New Beginnings**

Col. James Blackburn, the 75th Commander of 2SCR, right, and Regimental Command Sgt. Major Mark Morris, left, unfurl the Regimental colors during a ceremony held July 4th at FOB Lagman Afghanistan.

*Zabul, Afghanistan* – The Dragoons of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment celebrated this Fourth of July with the official uncasing of the Regimental colors at FOB Lagman in Zabul, Afghanistan. This historic event marks the 2SCR's official assumption of command of Task Force Dragoons and Combined Team Zabul.

In a stirring speech that would rival the immortal words of Patton himself, Col. James Blackburn, the 75th Regimental Commander put an inspirational perspective on the unit's mission as he addressed the Troops.

*"The questions, if not us then who? If not now then when? Have been asked for a very long time," he said. "Well I will tell you as we stand here on the Fourth of July, our forefathers already have answered those questions for us."*

*"It is you and it is now!" Blackburn continued. "There is no question this war will be won this year, and this war will be won by Soldiers of this Regiment for the Afghan people."*

*“It will be won right here in southern Afghanistan where it started,” he said. ‘The Taliban’s cradle will become it’s grave, here in southern Afghanistan, as the Soldiers of this fantastic Regiment write the next chapter of our history.’”*

*Blackburn stressed the magnitude of the role each Soldier will play in the Dragoon’s mission in Afghanistan.*

*“You are part of something much larger than yourself,” he said. “We are all part of something much larger than just this Regiment, but this Regiment will be pivotal in the victory here.”*

*The Colonel closed by urging each Soldier to remain dedicated and focused and not lose sight of the Regiment’s ultimate goal, providing for the security of the Afghan people.*

*“There is no time to stop and wait for somebody to build a better bunk,” he said. “To wait for somebody to create the best FOB.”*

*“There is a very, very narrow window of opportunity we will exploit in short order.”*

*“Thank all of you for what you’ve done to this point and thank you more importantly for what you are about to do in the future.”*

*We are not just Dragoons for a three year term PCS tour. We are Dragoons for life! The colors are the symbol of the unit. Uncasing the colors mean that 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, the oldest continuously serving regiment in the United States Army, are here and ready for operations in Afghanistan. Toujours Pret.*



### ***If not us than who?***

*Col. James Blackburn, the 75th Commander of 2SCR, thanks his Troopers for their commitment and dedication to the mission during an uncasing of the colors ceremony held on the Independence Day at FOB Lagman.*

## **2SCR Begins Afghanistan mission with Partnership and Professionalism**



*Col. James Blackburn, the 75th Commander of 2SCR, right, shakes hands with the Deputy Governor of Zabol Province, Gulab Shah Alikhel, during the Relief in Place, Transfer of Authority dinner held June 30 at FOB Lagman.*

Zabul, Afghanistan –Partnership and professionalism was the theme Wednesday night June 30 as key leaders from U.S., Romanian, Lithuanian, and Afghan Forces gathered at Forward Operations Base Lagman for a Transfer of Authority dinner. The dinner was held to honor the partners which compose Combined Team Zabul by outgoing 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division that made up Task Force Fury and to welcome the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment as it assumes leadership of CTZ.

Task Force Fury Command Sgt. Major Mark Sturdevant said that the road that lies before 2SCR will be a difficult and often times a perilous

one, but stressed how important the struggles are for the people of Zabul to understand and feel what freedom is like for those who have it.

Sturdevant also said there is light at the end of that long dark road with the people that make up Combined Team Zabul. Task Force Fury Commander, Col. Brian Drinkwine, continued the evening by reflecting on his time in command and the cooperation he shared with his coalition brethren.

“When we talk about Zabul,” he said. “We talk about true partnership, integration and true brother and sisterhood.”

“For the paratroopers and Soldiers that I command,” he continued. “It has been a great honor to work with and learn from my Afghan brothers how to take care of the people and do the mission right.” While Drinkwine said he was a little saddened to be going, he took great comfort in knowing he was leaving the mission in the capable hands of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

“Command Sgt. Major Morris has a fantastic record in the Army,” he said, “all the Soldiers of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment are bringing a great reputation and experience to Zabul.”

Drinkwine went on to speak highly of Col. James Blackburn, the 75th Colonel of the Regiment. “It brings great joy to my heart to know that my brother, Jim Blackburn, whom I have known for five years and been to combat with, is coming in,” he said. “In these two men (Blackburn and Morris) you are getting such great quality leadership.”

Drinkwine presented the Regiment with a certificate of appreciation and a photo of the 82nd Airborne patch.

Col. Blackburn said he was honored to be taking up the mantle from Drinkwine and looks forward to the mission ahead.

“It is a pleasure to be among professionals as we honor the fine Soldiers that comprise Combined Team Zabul,” he said. “We are excited to exploit the narrow window of opportunity before us this summer as we continue to work towards a safer and more secure Afghanistan.”

The evening concluded with the presentation of a certificate of appreciation to the Deputy Governor of the Zabul Province, Gulab Shah Alikhel.

The Deputy Governor thanked Col. Drinkwine and the Soldiers of Task Force Fury for their work and helping to work towards bringing peace to the people of Afghanistan. He went on to assure Col. Blackburn that he will have the full support and cooperation of the people of Zabul.

The 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment is partnering with Afghan National Security Forces and other ISAF Forces to form Combined Team Zabul. The mission of CTZ is to conduct population oriented operations and to neutralize insurgent activity in and around key terrain in RC-South. The intent of these operations is to promote freedom of movement and enable enduring stability and security for the people of Afghanistan.



### ***New Beginnings***

The Command Team of CTZ and Task Force Fury strengthen their bonds with a cake cutting ceremony during the Relief in Place, Transfer of Authority dinner held June 30 at FOB Lagman.

*For additional information, contact the CTZ Public Affairs Office at SIPR: TBD Rochan Cell 0793397897 or 0793369910*

*Story and Photos by Sgt. Jerry Wilson*

<http://dragoons.org/2010/07/01/2scr-begins-afghanistan-mission-with-partnership-and-professionalism/>