

# 2nd Cav begins shipping Strykers to Iraq

By Seth Robson  
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany — Less than a year after arriving in Germany, the 2nd Cavalry (Stryker) Regiment already is on its way out of town.

July 8, Cav Soldiers began loading the more than 300 Stryker armored personnel carriers onto trains at Grafenwöhr for the long land and sea journey to Kuwait. Final destination: Iraq.

On July 11, the movement was still in progress at Grafenwöhr with Soldiers loading 40 Strykers from 2nd Cav's 3rd Squadron onto trains, in a scene that is a reversal of the Strykers' arrival in Vilseck in late July 2006.

Maj. Jon Pendell, 2nd Cav. spokesman, said transport of the eight-wheeled vehicles is the first phase in the unit's deployment.

"This is the first time we have deployed Strykers out of Europe. We had our test run when we came here. Now we are pushing the Strykers out to a combat zone," he said.

In August, Soldiers from the regiment will join the vehicles in the desert and begin the last phase of training for deployment to Iraq, he said.

One of the Soldiers helping load the Strykers — Sgt. Travis Bettinger, 27, of Toledo, Ohio — appeared eager to get to Iraq as soon as possible.

"It's time to go do the job. We've been training long enough," he said, adding that he expected the deployment.

"I got here in August last year, and I thought we would be leaving sooner," he said.

Stryker driver Pfc. James Jones, 19, of Hopkinsville, Ky., was busy driving Strykers onto freight cars on July 11. Jones, who joined the Army in 2005, will be on his first trip downrange.

"I know I'm prepared for the worst, and I'm looking forward to it just to say I've done it," he said.



Seth Robson/Stars and Stripes

The hardest part of the deployment will be separation from his wife, who works at the Vilseck Burger King.

"She's going to be here in Germany. She's getting a lot of support, but she is

still worried about me," Jones said.

Another Soldier helping load the Strykers — Pfc. Steven Grim, 21, of Erie, Pa. — is also leaving a young wife behind.

Grim said he met his German wife shortly after arriving here last year. The couple married in April and is expecting their first child in November.

"Hopefully, I can come home on

leave for the birth," he said.

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## Two brothers deployed to Iraq grow closer together

By Spc. Courtney Marulli  
2nd Infantry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq — When tragedy strikes, it can change people. It can make them depressed, anxious or angry, but it can also make them stronger than they were before. For two Army brothers, tragedy literally brought them together and made them both better Soldiers.

Amarillo, Texas, natives Pfc. Trevor D. York, and Spc. Keith A. York, were able to spend time with one another when Trevor traveled to Camp Liberty to see his younger brother during his recovery from a wound received in a firefight.

Trevor is a topographic analyst with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, stationed in Korea, and his brother is a team leader with C Company, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, stationed at Fort Lewis.

One night, their mother e-mailed Trevor, informing him Keith had been shot. Trevor said he was constantly worried, as there wasn't much information to go on at that time. He knew Keith was alive, and that was all that mattered.

Keith and his unit were carrying out combat missions when he was shot in the upper left leg. He was taken to safety by his fellow Soldiers.

Trevor had some trouble going to see his brother, but with the help of his chain of command, he was able to be by his brother's side.

"When I first saw him, he was on crutches," Trevor said.

The first question Trevor asked was how Keith was feeling.

"He said he was physically fine, but was having some bad dreams," Trevor said. "Every time he went to sleep, he kept seeing the bullet go through his leg in his sleep."

The bullet missed Keith's femoral artery by about six inches, which spared his life.

"Well, it was really motivating when I was able to see him, because I was quite down on myself after the whole incident," Keith said.

Having his brother there helped Keith actually sleep.

"He said the first night I was there was the first time he got a good night's sleep," Trevor said.

Using a chair next to Keith's bed, Trevor slept until Keith moved his feet off the bed so both brothers could have an edge to rest on.

Trevor has been in the Army for four years and Keith for almost two. Both brothers are natives of Amarillo, Texas, and decided they needed to serve their country before they really settled down and decided what they wanted to do with their lives.

Both brothers have college in their future.

"I thought my personality and skills would excel in the Army, and I thought the discipline would be really good for me," Keith said.

That discipline and training are



U.S. Army photo

Amarillo, Texas, natives Spc. Keith A. York (left), and Pfc. Trevor D. York meet at Camp Liberty in western Baghdad, where Keith recovered from a gunshot wound.

what make each brother confident about having the other in combat.

Keith said he doesn't really know how it feels for them to be deployed at the same time, but he knows it stresses out their mother.

Trevor said being deployed at the same time makes him nervous because he knows what his brother does as an infantryman.

"My mom is stressed, stays stressed," Trevor said. "My dad doesn't worry about us too much. My mom is very stressed out. He knows we know what we're doing. He stays strong so our mom doesn't have to."

The time they spent together was restricted to Keith's room, but they talked and just enjoyed being able to see one another. But, as both Yorks are avid sports fans, the conversation would go from Keith's injury to the latest statistics and plays of their favorite teams.

Despite being injured, Keith said he is not apprehensive about going back outside the wire.

"I will proudly return to doing my job once I am fully recovered," he said.

Being injured is not something Soldiers want to experience, but with that experience comes knowledge that they can, in turn, use to help others going through a similar situation.

Keith said his injury actually reinforced the training his unit had received.

"Well, it was one of the scariest events of my life, but everyone did exactly what they were supposed to do so in a way, I think it helped them to know that all of our training wasn't for nothing and they properly remembered what to do," he said. "I take pride in knowing that I am here with people who know what to do when something like that happens."

Trevor said he has gained valuable knowledge of how to deal with a sibling who has been injured. He said just being an ear to listen to them is one of the biggest contributions one can make, but he also said to tell them to talk to a chaplain about how they feel.

Keith isn't the only one who was changed by his injury.

"It's made me ... want to seize the day," Trevor said. "Live like it's your last. Carpe diem."

## REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

# 'Mission-focused' pilot recalled

By Andrea Hauser Chapman  
Northwest Guardian

Know affectionately as "Negatron" to some, family and friends from the Fort Lewis community remembered with tears and laughter the life of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Scott Oswell during a memorial service Monday at the Main Post Chapel.

Oswell, 33, was killed in action July 4 near Mosul, Iraq, when his OH-58D "Kiowa Warrior" helicopter struck a power line and crashed, according to the Department of Defense. During his second deployment to Iraq, Oswell was a pilot in the 4th Squadron, 6th U.S. Air Cavalry, which left in June.

The Colorado Springs, Colo., native was buried July 13 at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver. Oswell's family requested that his picture not be published.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Spalsbury met Oswell when they were stationed in Hawaii and said he earned his nickname, a play on the Megatron Transformer, due to his "ability to complain about almost everything that didn't make sense to him." Being in the military, Spalsbury added, topics were never lacking.

"Whenever we would address him as Negatron, he was quick to counter with the statement, 'I'm not negative, I'm a realist,'" Spalsbury said. "All the while with that contagious, smirky smile of

*"Whenever we would address him as Negatron, he was quick to counter with the statement, 'I'm not negative, I'm a realist.' All the while with that contagious, smirky smile of his beaming across his face."*

Chief Warrant Officer 2  
Michael Spalsbury

his beaming across his face." Spalsbury flew with Oswell for eight months during their first tour in Iraq and said he considers him "a brother from another mother" and plans to name his first child in his friend's honor.

"You come to know pretty much all there is to know about that person," Spalsbury said. "I have never been, nor will I probably ever be, as close to someone as I was to Scott. I thank him for trusting in me the way he did. I will ensure that my son knows of the great warrior and dedicated family man that was Scott Oswell."

Captain Ricky Thomas, 4-6 ACS rear detachment commander, also praised Oswell's work as an instructor pilot,

which he began upon arriving at Fort Lewis in August 2006.

"Scott was a mission-focused pilot, who was a proven war fighter," Thomas said. "Your fellow Soldiers down-range have been trained exceptionally well by Scott. I assure you that they will perform well in combat because they were trained by the finest air cavalryman. They will all come home safely because Scott was there to train them."

Oswell's awards and decorations include: two Air Medals, an Army Commendation Medal with "V" device, three other Army Commendation Medals, the Army Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Army Good Conduct Medal, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terror Service Medal, Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Aviator Badge and the Combat Action Badge. Oswell was a Marine for 10 years prior to joining the Army.

Oswell is survived by his wife, Cheri, daughters Amanda and Caitlyn, son, Ian, parents, Barry and Nancy Oswell, and numerous other family members.

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## Soldiers, friends gather to remember pair

By Don Kramer  
Northwest Guardian

Fourth Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers and friends gathered Tuesday at the Evergreen Chapel on Fort Lewis to honor the memories of two Dragoon Raiders killed last month in Iraq.

Sergeant Joel Dahl, 21, of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, and Cpl. Victor A. Garcia, 22, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, died of wounds from enemy small arms fire in Baghdad, Dahl on June 23 and Garcia July 1.

Brigade rear detachment commander, Maj. Chad Sundem, called the two Soldiers "quiet professionals," the most recent of "15 national treasures (who) have come home to us."

Garcia, of Rialto, Calif., enlisted in November 2004, and trained at Fort Knox, Ky., as a 19K tanker before reporting to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment at Fort Lewis in April 2005.

He was assigned last January to 1-38 Inf. and deployed in April with 4th Bde. to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. His last job was radio-telephone operator, chosen by his company commander and first sergeant, according to Capt. Craig Butera, 1-38 Inf. RDC, because of his competence and proven reliability in transmitting accurate reports and instructions between higher headquarters and the company. Before his desig-

nation as RTO, he was a driver in the Army's latest Stryker vehicle variant, the Mobile Gun System.

"Victor's spirit was impenetrable and his smile served as the ever-present reminder of this," said Butera.

His friends remembered him as an avid soccer fan who took most long weekends and holidays as opportunities to motor home to California.

He is survived by his mother, Socorro Garcia, father, David Garcia, brothers Abel and Danny, and sister, Belinda.

Dahl, of Los Lunas, N.M., fell short of two milestones by less than a week when he lost his life in the Rashid District of Baghdad — his leave to the states and the birth of his son. He called his 19-year-old wife, Alia, every day for the two weeks before his death after she reported contractions in early June. She gave birth to their son, Kaiden, five days after her husband's death.

Friends described Dahl, an infantry fire team leader, as a professional, charismatic and goal-driven Soldier. Staff Sgt. Jonathan Taylor said he had plans to be promoted to staff sergeant by age 25 and sergeant major before he retired. He brought a unique level of intensity to everything he did, "always challenging himself ... and willing to take (training) to the highest level."



Dahl



Garcia

Despite his career aspirations, "he was the guy who always took time out of his day to talk to you about problems you were having," Taylor said.

Friends saw a "different Joel," however, when he met his wife.

His squad mates agreed with Taylor that Dahl had finally found with his marriage something he loved more than the Army.

Alia Dahl told reporters that she dreaded answering her son's inevitable question about why he didn't have a dad. She said she planned to tell him his father loved him and that he died for his country.

Dahl's local newspaper estimated 275 people attended his funeral in Behlen, N.M. Senator Pete Domenici from New Mexico offered condolences.

In addition to his wife and son, he is survived by his mother, Rheta Dahl, and his stepfather, Jose Aragon.

Each Soldier was posthumously promoted and awarded the Bronze Star Medal, a Purple Heart, and an Army Commendation Medal as well as an Iraq Campaign Service Medal and a Combat Action Badge. Dahl also received an Overseas Service Ribbon and Garcia a Good Conduct Medal.

Iraq-bound 2nd Cavalry Regiment Stryker armored personnel carriers prepare to load onto trains at Grafenwöhr on July 11. The unit, which arrived in Germany last July, is headed to Iraq.