



## Newly Issued Rifles Put Teeth In Rainbow Division's Sniping Capability

### LRS(D) Sniper-Trained Soldiers Test Their New Weapon System

Story and photos by SSG Raymond Drumsta, 42nd Infantry Division

FORT DRUM, NY—Sniper-trained Soldiers of the Rainbow Division's 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment, better known as LRS(D), conducted what some might call a quality control mission on Saturday—testing their newly-issued M-14 sniper rifles.

"This is not a detachment of snipers," said LRS(D) Commander CPT. Mike Manning. "This is a detachment of highly trained intelligence collectors. We have sniping capability." LRS(D)'s Soldiers tested their M14 rifles at Range 21 and chose the best for modification to increase their accuracy.

The rifles are "part and parcel" of the changing LRS(D) mission, Manning said, a way for the unit to "redefine their usefulness".

The unit's mission used to be strictly reconnaissance and surveillance—working in small groups 80 to 100 kilometers beyond friendly lines, reporting information on enemy movements and the battlefield to a higher command. The enemy and battlefield have changed, so the mission has changed, according to Manning.

"We're not training for the Fulda Gap anymore," said Manning, referring to the area in Germany that NATO forces were assigned to defend against Russian maneuver brigades. We're fighting insurgents who operate in small groups, he added. "That drives the way we conduct operations."

Manning described the new mission as reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition—in other words, LRS(D) will be assigned to observe areas for IED and indirect fire activity and, if ordered by the combatant commander, eliminate insurgents with their sniper rifles. The M14, commented Manning, has redefined the unit's mission.

"What the 42nd Division has done, by virtue of outfitting

LRS(D) with M14 rifles, is make us the cutting edge of the LRS(D) community," said Manning.

But the real edge in LRS(D)'s sniping capability are the LRS(D) Soldiers behind the newly issued M14 rifles, who recently graduated from the four-week National Guard Sniper School at Camp Robinson, Arkansas.

As the best shooters in the unit, these Soldiers were used to test the accuracy of the M14's.

LRS(D) sniper-trained Soldier SSG Tim Halloran said the rifles with the best shot groups of two firers were picked for modification. He said the rifles' barrels will be bedded in fiberglass to ensure greater accuracy.

"The round will react the same way every time," he said. Halloran is team leader of LRS(D)'s Team 5. "Being a LRS team leader is the best job in the Army," said Halloran. He called LRS(D) the "intelligence gathering business".

"We're a combat multiplier because we can give the division planners nearly real-time information, and a picture of the battlefield," he said. "If we're on a mission and we acquire a high-value target, we can not only report it to higher [headquarters], we can eliminate it."

*(continued on page 2)*



Long Range Surveillance Detachment sniper-trained Soldier SGT Doug Ray takes the wrapping off one of the M-14 rifles recently acquired by the unit.

## 'Comanche' Soldiers on Patrol Ensure Success of Sadr City Operation

CAMP EAGLE, BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 26, 2004 — Some flew above Sadr City in Apache attack helicopters during Operation Iron Fury and some rode on the ground in Abrams tanks or Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicles, but some Soldiers had another method of transportation: their own two feet.

For every company of armored tanks and Bradleys that pushed into the volatile portion of Baghdad during the Iron Horse Brigade's extensive operation, there was a platoon of dismounted Soldiers like the infantrymen of White Platoon, "Comanche" Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

When the call came for 2-5 Cavalry to mount up in their Bradleys and move into Sadr City in the late afternoon of August 17, the Soldiers of White Platoon

crammed into the troop transport area at the rear of their Bradleys, where they sat with equipment and weapons resting on their laps, waiting to hear that command ring out over the troop speaker in back:

*(continued on page 2)*

A Soldier with "Comanche" Co. 5th Cavalry Regiment, sights a Dragunov Sniper Rifle to provide counter-sniper fire for his unit against attacking insurgents in Sadr City.



## SNIPER RIFLES (continued from page one)

Halloran cited the main supply routes (MSRs) in Iraq as an example.

"The way to make MSRs safe is to use LRSD Soldiers to observe them," he said. "Then we can report what we see, and possibly eliminate the threat. That means less terrorists to place IEDs."

"Hopefully we can interdict the people placing the IEDs," said LRSD Assistant Team Leader CPL Wayne Lynch, who, along with LRSD Team Leader SSG Thomas O'Hare, served a tour in Iraq last year.

"That's all I thought about when we were in Iraq last year: 'how do we stop these people who are placing the IEDs?' Now that we've got snipers in LRS(D), we're able to do surveillance and take direct action," Lynch said.

Deployed to Iraq with the 119th Military Police Company, Rhode Island National Guard, Lynch said he and O'Hare made it their job to find IEDs. In fact, the Pentagon-sponsored IED Task Force used videos shot on patrols he was part of. According to Lynch, he and O'Hare are visible on video used in IED classes taught to 42nd Division Soldiers here, and O'Hare's voice can be heard on the tape.

Lynch said he hopes LRSD will be tasked with interdicting terrorists placing IEDs. He's been a member of the unit for nine years and loves it. He does not regret going back to Iraq.

"I'm going with a unit I've trained with," he said. "I'm honored to go to war with them."

LRSD trains hard. Based in Rhode Island, the unit ruck-marches to the north summit of New Hampshire's Mount Mooslacki every year. All members of LRSD are airborne qualified, and nine are ranger qualified. They have to do a jump every three months to maintain their airborne status.

"We train on a higher plain," said LRSD sniper SPC Richard O'Connor. "Most units do five-mile rucksack marches. We do 15-mile rucksack marches. Other units have 45-pound rucksacks. We have 80-pound rucksacks. We have to march farther and faster than anyone else."

O'Connor was a scout/sniper with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine



*WATCH YOUR LANES:* Sniper-trained Soldiers of the Rainbow Division's Long-Range Surveillance Detachment fire five-round shot groups to test the accuracy of their M-14 rifles.

Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. He's been on real-world missions to Tunisia and Liberia, and took part in the rescue of Air Force Pilot CPT Scott O'Grady, who was shot down over Bosnia in 1995.

"Anticipation of the mission is awesome," said O'Connor. He described the job as a "rush", and said LRSD team members must be physically fit, mature, and disciplined, and must know each other's jobs.

Part of that job is going 'subsurface'—patrolling to a location outside friendly lines, digging a hole, and living in it while observing enemy activity.

"They might live in that hole for two to four days," said Manning. "It takes an unbelievably disciplined individual to do this job."

"We're just guys with rifles," said O'Connor. "You have to have absolute confidence in everyone on your team. There's nothing else in the Army I want to do."

## USO to visit Rainbow Soldiers

Rainbow Division CSM Richard Fearnside encourages all Rainbow Division Soldiers at Ft. Drum to attend the free "2004 USO Show" at McGrath Gym on September 22 at 6 p.m.

The 60 minute-performance will feature the USO Troupe of Metropolitan New York.

The troupe has been performing since 1941. The troupe's performers this year are Genna Griffith, Josette D'Ambrosi, Lynelle Johnson, and Tad Emptage. The show will be a musical revue spanning several eras. Concessions will be available when doors open at 5 p.m.

Contact your unit for transportation.

Show information is available from the Fort Drum MWR Marketing Division at 315-772-6724.



Until Every One Comes Home.

## IRON FURY (continued from page one)

"Dropping ramp!"

After rolling out of Camp Eagle's gate, Comanche proceeded to "Route Charlie," a street in Sadr City that was their designated area of responsibility for Iron Fury.

Around 8:15 p.m. that evening, after hours of slowly creeping up Route Charlie in the hopes of spotting an improvised explosive device before it could detonate on one of their vehicles, the Soldiers reached an intersection that was their first-day objective. It was time for the White Platoon to dismount.

Under the imminent threat of rocket-propelled grenade attacks, possible improvised explosive devices and sporadic small arms fire, the platoon proceeded to clear several nearby buildings and alleyways, before locating a house where the Soldiers could adequately provide over-watch for the rest of their company staged along Route Charlie.

They spent the night there, hunkered down in make-shift guard positions on the roof of the building, defending the slew of armored vehicles on the streets below from would-be assailants and eliminating persistent insurgent snipers slinging lead their way.

After a night filled with mortars, sniper-fire and very little sleep, the Soldiers of White Platoon. raided a nearby house, netting a slew of detainees and a variety of weapons, such as a Dragunov sniper rifle, an AK-47, an RPG launcher with several armor-piercing rocket-propelled grenades, and a couple of mortars. They even found a Mahdi Army uniform.

At noon, the platoon piled in the back of their Bradleys, linked up with the rest of Comanche Company and moved-out to establish another strong-point farther up Route Charlie.

The platoon's actions on the first day, and the days that followed were only a small part of Operation Iron Fury. The Soldiers insist that it's all in a day's work for a 2-5 Cavalry trooper.

"We do missions like this everyday," SPC Alexander Bryant said. "This is just an everyday thing."

RAINBOW READY NEWS is a Command Information product of the 42nd ID (M) PAO for division's post-mobilization training program.

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