



14 April 2004



**Operation Iraqi Freedom Extension
Task Force First Armored Division**

1. To the families and loved ones of Task Force First Armored Division: The Commander, U.S. Central Command has requested, and the Department of Defense has approved that Soldiers of the First Armored Division Task Force remain in Iraq for up to an additional 90 days. Redeployment to Germany through Kuwait will add an additional amount of time, potentially up to 30 days. The leadership has further stated that if increased force strength is required in Iraq beyond the 90-day period, replacement formations will be brought in to ensure the First Armored Division departs Iraq within the 90-day timeframe.
2. Old Ironsides Soldiers have spent the last year working to bring peace and democracy to the citizens of Iraq. Your troopers have achieved phenomenal success in this most noble mission, while proving to be exceptional Soldiers, warriors, and patriots. Indeed, the year has been filled with enormous sacrifices on their part and certainly on yours. You are all our heroes. The decision to extend the division was made by commanders in the field, with the full recognition of the additional sacrifices the additional service in Iraq will require.
3. Headquarters, United States Army Europe will work to bring the entire First Armored Division home quickly, as soon as the mission the unit is assigned has been completed. In the meantime, I want you to know that all the leaders here in Europe, from your Rear Detachment Commanders, through your BSB, ASG, and V Corps, to Headquarters, United States Army Europe, will work tirelessly on your behalf to ensure we meet your needs. We will not let you down. We will continue to provide updated information to you as we support each other and your Soldiers during this challenging time.
4. All of us in United States Army, Europe and the entire Nation are deeply grateful for your continuing sacrifices. Thank you and God bless you and your incredible Soldiers.

B. B. BELL
General, USA
Commanding

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