

The 31st CSH remains on its current timeline for departure. All soldiers have arrived safely and they ensured that all equipment was received and loaded up safely and departed Fort Bliss last week. All the soldiers are working hard to complete their required training and have been working since their arrival on 9 Mar 03. As you can imagine, there has been a great deal of team building occurring as we prepare to do our collective mission of providing outstanding medical care to our soldiers in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. Our doctors completed Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) training 10 days ago and over 230 of our staff completed the 2 day Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Casualty Training Course last week taught by a mobile training team from Aberdeen Proving Ground.

We still have some weapons qualification to complete and some limited Nuclear, Biological and Chemical training to do but otherwise, your loved ones are doing well. We started Physical Training yesterday morning to help the unit acclimatize to the desert (it was nearly 80 degrees today at Fort Bliss). There were a few creaks and groans, but everyone seemed to enjoy the camaraderie.

I want each of you to know that the 31st Combat Support Hospital is a very well-trained outfit with a very recent and highly successful Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation under their belt. In fact, the Commanding General, Fort Polk and JRTC said they were the best medical unit he had seen in 2 years. Bottom line, your loved ones are with an outstanding medical unit that is well prepared to conduct its medical mission.

This is the second of many updates to come as we keep you posted on the deployment of your loved ones. Should you have any additional questions, you are reminded to contact your Family Readiness Group representative at your respective Medical Activity or call rear detachment commander for the 31st Combat Support Hospital at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Respectfully,

Commander, 31st Combat Support Hospital