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Thousands of Miles Away, Troops in Iraq Take Part in Sturgis Bike Rally

Story by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
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By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st
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CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers from the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Cavalry Division attended the Sturgis bike rally at Sturgis, S.D.

Well, not exactly.

But thanks to a live satellite feed and the ability to watch events at the rally via streaming video, the Ironhorse Soldiers had the next best thing to being at an extravaganza which draws more than a half a million motorcycle enthusiasts each year to the small burg of Sturgis—a town with a population of about 6,000 people.

The Aug. 6 live video feed allowed Soldiers the opportunity to see events happening in Sturgis. Through a satellite connection, bikers at the rally in Sturgis could see what the Soldiers were doing.

The event was sponsored by Texas Roadhouse Productions, which provided live entertainment for the troops in the form of a band along with motorcycle-themed events, which Soldiers on Camp Taji, Iraq, watched on a big screen.

The Soldiers who are bikers took the opportunity to give shout outs to fellow bikers in Sturgis as well as to send messages to their families.

The Ironhorse Brigade also provided some live entertainment to its troops in the form of a rock band that played for 30 minutes just prior to the events in Sturgis kicking off.

“This type of event brings peoples spirits up and their morale, giving us a little taste of home,” said Pfc. Valentin Alvarado, an infantryman, Headquarters Troop, 1st BCT, who hails from Roswell, N.M. “The fact that the folks in Sturgis took the time to set this up for us shows that they appreciate what we’re doing out here.”

“It feels nice to be a part of something like this. The only thing missing is some barbecue and it would feel exactly like home,” said Pfc. Thomas Gutierrez, also of Headquarters Troop and a Lockport, Ill., native.

Gutierrez and Alvarado, who although not motorcycle bikers, are part of a low-rider bicycle club on Camp Taji and they showed off their highly polished bikes via live video to the folks in Sturgis.

“We like to show off our bikes and we think it’s great for our bike club to be able to have the opportunity to participate in this,” said Gutierrez, who explained that the club takes great pride in its bikes in much the same way that motorcycle enthusiasts take pride in their machines.

“Being able to interact with folks (in Sturgis) makes us feel good, especially with us being out here in a combat zone,” said Sgt. Chris

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Monday, 0845 - 1000 EDT



Delacruz of Company B, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, who is also a member of the low-rider club. "It helps to break up the monotony of working eight to 12 hours a day with no days off and allows us to relieve a lot of stress."



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