



# The Desert Voice



11-18 July 2004

## Commander's Corner

TIKRIT, IRAQ & AO DANGER – Greetings once again from central Iraq. My portion of this week's newsletter is dedicated to an elite group of soldiers, the Warrant Officers. In our Signal Task Force there are eight warrants among the more than 1000 other soldiers. They are indeed special.

Those of you familiar with the Army's rank structure know what Warrant Officers are. For those of you who don't, Warrant Officers are highly specialized, single track specialty officers who are subject matter experts in their field. They are grown from the enlisted ranks and are selected for their technical skills and leadership ability. All were NCOs at some point in their careers. Until recently, all Warrant Officers wore a distinctive insignia on their uniform where regular officers wear their branch insignia. The Army directed that Warrant Officers would wear the branch insignia of their specialty and the wearing of the warrant's crest would be discontinued. Last week in a ceremony led by the Commanding General, the Warrants took off their distinctive crest and donned the branch insignias of their career field. Being unique in the rank structure and relatively few in number, there is a brotherhood amongst warrants that exist in the Army. Sort of like a fraternity.

Their history dates back to 1918 and warrants are initially appointed by the Secretary of the Army. Upon achieving the rank of Chief

Warrant Officer they become commissioned and like regular officers are direct representatives of the President of the United States. The signal field is very technically oriented and our warrants whether they are maintenance, network or automation focused are vital to the Signal Task Force's ability to do our mission. We are very fortunate to have a very skilled group of warrants serving with us.

In keeping with the Warrant Officer theme and as promised in last week's newsletter, my story this week involves one of our great



warrants. WO1 Dannie Walters stood at the position of attention in last week's ceremony anxiously awaiting the Commanding General to remove his warrant insignia from his uniform to be replaced by signal flags. Knowing what was to transpire, most warrants had cut the threads on their insignia so that it would be easy for the CG to remove the patch. Thus, what was about to happen surprised everyone. As the CG approached Mr. Walters, Dannie reached to his side and pulled out a fairly large knife. The CG's security detail was caught off guard. They had not anticipated a threat coming from the formation that was in front of them. Everyone in the room was thinking the same thing. Why

would someone pull a knife on the CG at such a solemn occasion?

Without hesitation and no visible indication of concern the CG took the blade from Mr. Walters and sliced off the "squashed bug" warrant insignia to reveal the crossed flags of the Signal Corps. In the end, no blood was shed though several people's heart rates accelerated, and Mr. Walters got lots of attention from everyone to include the PAO. Thanks for the thoughts and prayers, it does make a difference.

## Alpha Company

It's been another glorious seven days in the Sunni Triangle since last I wrote of the adventures of Alpha Company. Summer weather is still here and we wouldn't have it any other way. One would think that 159 days into the deployment life would have gotten boring. But luckily for our dear readers that simply hasn't been the case.

To say that the atmosphere in Iraq has been charged would be a bit of an understatement. This was no more apparent than on FOB Brassfield-Mora. The World Famous Remote RAU 50 is located on this little slice of paradise and has been doing a good job providing mobile phone coverage for military travelers on Iraq's dangerous roads. Perhaps too good of a job.

SPC Quiroz and SPC Cruz were on shift during a warm summer day reading about the continuing unrest after the transfer of

sovereignty in the latest edition of Stars and Stripes when they heard a crash outside. The two men looked at each other with a knowing gaze. Without saying a word they both knew the insurgents were upon them. Quiroz slowly began to walk to the door, paused, then turned around and told Cruz “get all of the ammo in one place and make sure all the magazines are loaded. If I don’t come back, it’s all up to you.” Cruz nodded and silently began to go about his task.

Upon reaching the door Quiroz took a deep breath to prepare himself for the horror he expected to see outside the door. He then placed a shaking hand on the door handle and, deciding it was now or never, swung the door open. His worst fears were confirmed. Quiroz looked to the sky and yelled “Why, why have they done this to us.” But he knew that there would be no answer. At least not one that he could understand.

Quiroz then retreated into the plywood hut to arm himself in preparation for the inevitable. While all of this was going on, Cruz moved to the door and out of morbid curiosity looked outside. “She’s, she’s dead” Cruz stuttered. Laying there on the ground, lifeless, wrapped in a tangle of tension cables, was the RAU’s antenna. The two knew there was only one course of action.

Quiroz and Cruz burst through the door. Adrenaline pumping, weapons at the ready, the only thought on their mind was to avenge the death of their beloved antenna. They didn’t have to look far before they discovered the monster that had committed the heinous crime. While anger pumped through their vanes a cold chill ran up their spines. What

they saw before them was their worst nightmare, an Anti-Iraqi Forces Water Truck (AIFWT). But before the grief stricken soldiers could react the AIFWT, obviously satiated after its meal of destruction, quickly moved out of sight.

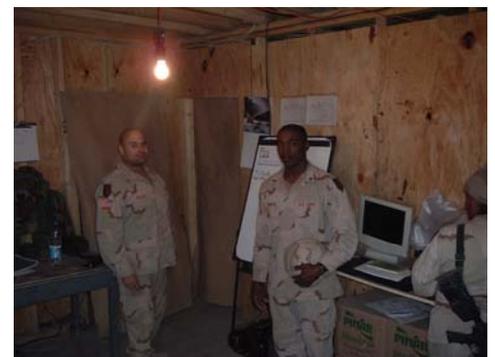
Satisfied that the danger had passed, Quiroz and Cruz immediately checked the antenna for signs of life. To their relief, they discovered that although a few tension ropes were broken and the antenna head cracked, it would make it to transmit a radio signal again. With tears in their eyes, the two soldiers erected the antenna once again. Today it stands on FOB Brassfield-Mora as a testament to the tenacity of the American RAU antenna. Though Anti Iraqi Forces Water Trucks may continue to attack equipment on our FOBs, our RAU antennas will persevere.

After hearing this news at FOB Remagen, SPC Quilez knew of no other way to deal with his feelings over the unexplainable attack on the RAU’s antenna than to lash out at those he cared about most. One evening Quilez’s grief manifested itself in an act that is almost too horrifying to write about. While PFC Wilson was in the shower washing his cares away, Quilez, reasons known only to himself, dumped cold water on him. PFC Wilson, unable to understand why a brother in arms would do this to him combined with trying to deal with his own grief over the RAU antenna, decided to seek retribution in the only way he knew how. The next evening while Quilez was in the shower, Wilson slinked into the shower trailer and surreptitiously removed all of Quilez’s clothing, leaving only his boxer shorts and Kevlar helmet.

Wilson exited the shower and toweled dry. It was only when he looked at the bench where a complete uniform should have been laying that he noticed something was amiss. Panicked, he looked everywhere in the shower trailer where his uniforms could have possibly been. The more time that had passed while he was unable to locate his uniform, the more he came to the conclusion he had two options. He could lay in wait for the next soldier to enter the trailer, knock him unconscious and take his uniform, or he could streak. Finding no suitable instrument for rendering someone unconscious, he chose the latter.

Wilson donned his boxer shorts and Kevlar helmet and with towel in hand he exited the trailer. Torn between worrying that someone would see him and enjoying the feeling of the desert breeze on his body, he skillfully performed 3 to 5 second rushes between buildings, HESCO barriers, and anything that would obscure the view of his scantily clad body as he moved. Unseen, Wilson finally arrived at his housing container breathless and exhilarated. We can only hope that Wilson’s moment of disrobed ecstasy will stop the malicious attacks in the shower trailer. We can only hope.....

And now for this week’s pictures of the beautiful people:



*SGT Hammond and PFC Franco -  
Speicher*



*SGT Kent and SPC Tubbs - Summerall*



*PFC Keuma, PFC Jagdar, SPC Dickerson, SPC Plitzner - Dagger*



*SGT Davis, SPC Collantes, SPC Cruz and SPC Quiroz - Brassfield Mora*

As you can see we have lots of beautiful faces. The only one missing is yours. We appreciate the mail, the e-mails we receive and the precious moments that we can talk to you on the phone, but at the end of the day it's you we want. Let us know what time you'll be at the airport and we'll pick you up. You too can enjoy everything Iraq has to offer. Wish you were here, XOXOXO

## **Bravo Company**

Greetings from FOB Warhorse!! It has been a pretty good week for us, despite the rising temperatures. It has been getting hotter everyday. But all in all things are going very well. The network looks good, morale is high, and we are one week closer to coming home.

We started off this week with a much deserved promotion of PFC Jones to the rank of SPC. We also handed out a Certificate of Achievement to SPC Kublis, and handed out more awards to our basketball team on behalf of 3BCT.



*SPC Jones getting pinned*



*Newly promoted SPC Jones*

We had a great rock concert this week as well. Armed Forces Entertainment (AFE) brought in the band SqueezeToy to FOB Warhorse. They played for us on Wednesday night for a little over two hours. They played some covers, and some of their own music. Their style is similar to 311 and Black-eyed Peas. It was great to see something different for a change, and it was great to have

something to take our minds off, where we are at, at least for a little while.

Hopefully next week I will have pictures of the renovation projects that are occurring here on Warhorse. They have built us a new weight gym, it is currently in use, but they still have to finish up some small things before it is complete. They have also finished a full basketball court. They are also about 75% complete on expanding our PX. Our PX is not too bad now, but hopefully by the end of next week, it will be almost three times the size it is now. They are also planning to bring in concessionaire trailers, which will probably have a new barber shop, sewing/alterations shop, and Local National products. Believe it or not one of the most coveted renovation projects is almost complete, and that is paved roads. Who really would have thought that a paved road would mean so much, but it will around here, not only does it help to cut down on dust, but it will give us a much needed PT area, so when we all come back home we are looking good and top physical condition.

We had some time to conduct some training this week. We ran a M16/M4 zero and qualification range here on Warhorse. It was a well ran event by everyone in 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, they ran a top notch event. I do not know how they coordinated for the wind and the dust but it added a great realism to the training, on how to fire your weapon through it.



**CPT Donley** – *“The range made me dirty – icky”*

Also this week 201<sup>st</sup> Forward Support Battalion held a NCO Induction ceremony. This is for all newly promoted NCOs that have not been inducted into the NCO Corps. We had two NCOs get inducted during the ceremony. SGT Jacob Johnson, sponsored by SFC Teriipaia and SGT Stephen Graves sponsored by SSG Waiters. It was a great ceremony, with COL Pittard and CSM Fourman of the 3BCT in attendance. They had some snacks afterwards to top of the event, once again I missed the “supposed” cake, and I am beginning to sense a conspiracy on this cake thing.



**SSG Waiters, SGT Graves, SGT Johnson, and SFC Teriipaia**

We also had a visit from GEN B.B. Bell the USAREUR Commanding General. He was by to do a meet and greet with the soldiers and for a question and answer period with the soldiers. It was great to see someone from home in our AO.

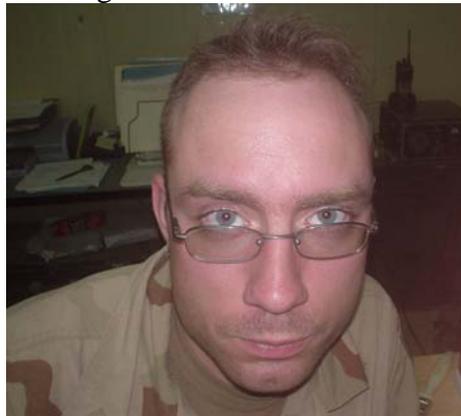
1SG wanted me to give everyone a quick hello on his behalf. But he also wanted to show off some of the renovations at his

favorite swimming hole on the Tigris River. He was very happy to see that the local Iraqis that use the swimming hole have added a diving board.



*Everyone loves the diving board*

Well that wraps it up for this week. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers because all of you are in ours. Take care and have a good week.



**SGT Matelski** after working a night shift



**SPC Kublis** readies his weapon prior to a convoy



**SPC Doty** gets comfortable in the turret

## **Charlie Company**

I would like to start this week’s episode with the announcement of a new Specialist in our company. PFC Johnathan Wyatt’s promotion to Specialist was held on Wednesday, 14JUL04 in a quaint ceremony by the mobile command vehicle he operates. Congratulations to SPC Wyatt!



**Johnathan Wyatt’s promotion from PFC to SPC on 14 JUL**

While the soldiers of Charlie Rock work very hard on maintaining reliable communications, every once in awhile we like to let our hair down. Goofing around and having a good time are all part of breaking up the monotony around here. SFC Bebbs facilitates letting the company hair down as the unit barber. When asked how he feels about cutting the soldiers’ hair, SFC Bebbs responded, “Just doing my part to make the Rock look as stylish and good as I do. Some soldiers are a challenge, but I charge it *head* on.” I think the pun was intended!



*SFC Frank Bebbs tries to tame the mane of SPC Clifton Johnson after his 3-week tour at OBJ Midland.*

The “funniest comment of the week” award goes to our Motor Sergeant: On Tuesday night, members of C Co watched Legends of the Fall. In the movie, there was a Native American funeral scene. Later SGT Catron compared the similarities of the scene to her Navajo tribal ceremony with SFC Wallace, a native of the Virgin Islands. She noted that like in the movie, when her tribe has a funeral they all let all of their hair down at the ceremony. SFC Wallace then described his island’s funeral ceremony. He said, “SGT Catron where I am from, when someone dies, we all light up.”

Elsewhere in the motorpool, SGT Attao returned this week from his trip to Washington D.C. and R&R in Germany. He quickly fell back into his normal routine of sitting around, only now he has a new couch to do it on.



*Motorpool soldiers breaking in their brand new couch.*

Also this week, Charlie Rock was sized up for the new army uniform of the future. Troops will soon be receiving high-tech desert boots, gloves, undergarments, socks and t-shirts. However, the most important item will be the new helmet. SFC Carter is thankful the new style of helmet will increase his productivity levels by decreasing the amount of time he spends brushing his hair down after taking the current KVLAR helmet on and off everyday. Everybody is very excited about the new equipment fielding, which we will hopefully receive before the end of the deployment.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!** SPC William Wilkinson, PFC Jeffrey Salazar, and CPL Brian Gibbs all celebrated birthdays this week.

On 16 July, the Chief of Staff of the 1ID stopped the 1SG’s vehicle, skillfully driven by SSG Reina and TC’d by the mighty C CO XO, for speeding at the DMAIN palace. SSG Reina was driving at the reckless speed of 3 miles per hour and nearly lost his driver’s license for this horrible offense. Incredibly enough, when pulled over, both LT Nagelvoort and SSG Reina thought they were being stopped for going too slow!!!

In closing, if any spouse is interested in doing a VTC with their soldier here in Iraq, please contact the FRG support in

Germany. The BN does VTCs every other weekend from the S1 office in the BN HQ in Kitzingen. The next chance will be 31JUL/1AUG. Please contact 1LT Lamborn in Kitzingen to schedule a time slot, and she will let us know down here so your soldier will be there. I did one two weeks ago with my husband, and it was great sound with a great picture – definitely worth it!!

Thanks for all your thoughts and prayers. Until next week – **ROCK STEADY!!!**

## **HHC**

First of all I must say I thought it was hot before. I was wrong it is now just starting to get hot! This week has been mostly routine with not a lot happening with the network. The network has stabilized out and we are doing what we can do maintain and improve.

This week we also packed some of our equipment for an early retrograde of items we do not need while we are down here. The early retrograde of some equipment will make our upcoming redeployment that much easier when the time comes.

Okay I am sure you are dying to wonder how we put some spice in our lives. Let just say water fights lately have been quite popular, so if you have not shipped a water gun to your loved one. I suggest that you please do. Super Soakers are in high demand here.

Friday we had a Company Cook out where we all got to relax, play volleyball, and have water fights! We will start out with the preparations for the party. Here is SSG Brigg, SGT Andreas, and SPC Williams. Cooking all of the food for us on the new Grill the

local Iraqi's built for us.



*SSG Briggs and SPC Williams at the BBQ*

Here is a better picture of the grill they built for us. So, they tried, I guess they just do not know how to build an awesome brick grill, but the whole time they said, yes, yes we can do that. Here is what I think they really said translated in English: "No, no that is impossible, what did he say again!"



As you can see from the picture there is quite a space from the fire to the grill top. We went through 14 bags of 5 lbs charcoal match light.



Wow look at that watermelon. It was so good. In the back ground is PFC Augusto eating another piece of watermelon, I think it was his 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>, but you know you have

to keep the DJ happy. Here he is with CPT Iwanicki in the DJ's corner.



*PFC Augusto and CPT Iwanicki.*

The other event that drew much controversy was the volleyball games.



*Here is SPC Ross up for a spike, better luck next time, he got stuffed! But, boy can he jump!*

Now for the meal it was so good, SSG Briggs and his DFAC crew really know how to prepare everything.



*Here is LTC Garrison, Maj Withee, Maj Self, and 1LT Negelvort checking to insure it was safe for the soldiers to consume.*

Now for the real fun was the water fights that lasted pretty much all day. Here is SGT Andreas doing a dry practice run on SPC Williams, notice the technique.



*SPC Williams and SPC Andreas*

Here is PFC Robertson drenched after a cease-fire in the water fight.



*From Right to Left: SGT Quentin, PFC Robertson and SGT Thompson*

That is all for this week. R&R is still looking good, with more slots coming at the end of July for August. I wish you all a safe and happy week. See you all next week.

## **A/115th SIG**

This week started off in typical fashion for the Roughriders of Alpha Company. SGT Scott Johnston entered the second FOB Danger weight lifting competition and defended his bench press title. SGT Johnston, who weighs a mere 170 pounds, bench pressed his personal best of 331 pounds, and took second place in the competition. Congratulations to SGT Johnston for breaking his personal bench press record.

Newton's Gun Rock Café is nearly complete. The soldiers of Alpha Company only need to add the picture of Bear Bryant to complete the MWR facility. The hold up on the grand opening is the

framing material needed to properly display this college football legend's image. We are hoping to get this "squared-away" sometime during the next week.

Several soldiers have been spending their rest time fishing off of the Café's pier. Although I never would have imagined that Iraq would be a good fishing spot, the soldiers here at Danger have caught some impressive fish. Once caught, they give the fish to some of the local nationals who work on the FOB. The local nationals don't seem to be very lucky in their fishing endeavors.

PV2 Adam Hodge was promoted to PFC. Congratulations Hodge . . . the promotion is well deserved.

Roughrider 6 – Out.



*SSG Jones, SGT McCullar & SGT Walker fishing off of the Café's pier.*



*SPC Sherman Jenkins proudly displays one of his big catches.*



*SGT Scott Johnston receives a T-shirt from Chief Rucker after the Bench Press Competition.*

## **B/279th SIG**

Our CE Maintenance Section supports Company B, 279th Signal Battalion's military communications assets. The CE stands for Communications Electronics and covers a wide range of hardware including computers, radios, amplifiers, power supplies, circuit cards, telephones and cables as well as software installation, repair and upgrade. They provide technical advice, conduct periodic electronic maintenance inspections, and perform several levels of maintenance, each more in depth than the one before, and work with General Dynamics to replace unserviceable equipment. (General Dynamics is the government contractor that designs, implements and upgrades our communications systems.)

Recently promoted Master Sgt MacArthur Johnson, of Huntsville,

supervises a team of four soldiers with different but interrelated job skills necessary to accomplish the CE Maintenance mission. On the team are specialists in Computer Automation Systems, Microwave and Tactical Satellites, Radio Transmission Systems and Encryption Technologies. The group normally works at Battalion level, but was attached to Company B for this deployment. Johnson says the Company has been very supportive of the extra people who have been attached.

MSG Johnson has spent 18 years in the military, including ten years active duty. He served his first four years as a cannoneer before moving on to a Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) team. While assigned to the 6/32 Field Artillery (MLRS), he earned an additional skill identifier and began performing electronic maintenance on the MLRS. For the last eight years, he has served full time with the National Guard performing and supervising communications electronics maintenance.

On May 1st, Johnson was promoted to Master Sgt. He says, "I excelled a lot faster than I expected to." He says the keys to promotion are "enrolling in Army Correspondence Courses, getting a college education, and going to military schools." He plans to attend 1st Sgt School upon return from Iraq and hold a 1st Sgt position in the 279th Signal Battalion.

Johnson is "very positive" about his experience here. He says, "We're doing something to help the Iraqi people enjoy some of the freedoms that we, as Americans, enjoy."

He misses Tammy, his wife of nine years, and daughter Selena.

He says, "Daddy misses you. Hope to see you soon. I miss the times we used to watch cartoons together." He expresses his thanks to Cpt Porter and the Headquarters Company (279th) Family Readiness Group for all of their support.

Sgt Jacob Hicks, of Somerville, has worked in CE Maintenance for four years as a Computer Automation Systems Repairer. After only three years in the National Guard, he earned his Sgt stripes. He contributes this feat to scoring high on physical training and marksmanship, receiving two Army Achievement Medals, and always being available for schools.

At home Hicks has worked for Fis-Cal Systems in Madison since June of 2003 and says the have been very supportive of him during this deployment.

He misses his wife Alisha. They were married on January 30th. He talked about some of the things that a new family has to do to get started and says, "She is doing a good job by herself." You can hear the pride in his voice.

When asked about his experience in Iraq he says, "Americans are very lucky to have the things we have. The stuff people send us is more than these people have to their name. When you see a little kid on the side of the road begging, that's pretty realistic."

The CE Maintenance Section of Company B, 279th Signal Battalion troubleshoots, repairs, and replaces a wide range of communications related equipment in support of our mission.

## **B/125th SIG**

Hele On  
CPT Michael Campbell  
1SG Thomas Lemasters

We have crossed what is politely referred to as "hump day"...Our 6 month mark since the departure from Hawaii for the majority of the company and the brigade combat team. The week was marked by the awarding of the combat patch to every soldier and a visit from the commanding General of 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, MG Olson and CSM Ashe. Additional highlights include our ongoing project of sending almost 40 soldiers on leave this month, several reenlistments, and our normal loud booms in the night from rockets and mortars.

At Node Center 62, this week started off with a visit from MG Olson, the 25<sup>th</sup>'s Division Commander. He was surrounded by an entourage of security as noted by Switch Operator extraordinaire SGT Burke who noticed that there were personnel on site with differing uniforms and strange weapons, but after further inspection, he noticed that this was a Marine and he was carrying an MP-5 assault rifle. "Cool" he thought...then he wondered what is going on as he wandered in to the NC's operations area and quickly saw that General Olson was in town to see the mighty, mighty 62 element. MG Olson was flanked by his enlisted counterparts CSM Ashe and CSM Taylor, who gave a coin away to SPC Judd.



*CSM Ashe and 1SG Lemasters*

SPC Judd was picked for recognition for setting the standard for others to follow. SPC (P) Judd has stepped in to fill the role of maintenance liaison for the 62 element while the regular maintenance guru "deadline Ritchie" is serving her time at Midland. Anyone that knows her quickly has come to the conclusion that she has the ability to deadline a vehicle in 4.5 minutes or less (which is a good thing because she keeps all of us safe and honest). SPC Judd is currently filling in these big shoes and hasn't missed a beat. Which brings me to a discussion involving 62's extracurricular activities whereby SPC Devlin (V3 operator and low bar observer/notifier for shots that dip below the standard) holds his weekend martial arts extravaganza.



*PV2 Pratt, SGT Richmond and PFC Devlin*

Node Center 62's resident sagacious martial arts expert/wrestling guru, SPC Devlin, has taken the time on the weekends at 2130 in the main gym here at Speicher to teach martial arts. SPC Devlin has focused on the

“grappling“ side by side by lowering the learning curve so many can easily follow his well-honed techniques (it is less technical and much more exciting). He uses his background in wrestling, and his knowledge of various disciplines of martial art mastery to “school” students (incidentally he holds a third degree black belt). His credentials speak for themselves. SPC Devlin was on the All-American team, All Army, and has competed in national arenas such as those held in Chicago, New York and Las Vegas. SPC Devlin is truly an asset in the self defense area for those lowly souls who aspire to one day become proficient in this time-honored artistry.

It has been a quiet week in Node Center 63 and Headquarters. Both platoons participated in the patch ceremony and got to spend time with MG Olson and CSM Ashe. One highlight we want to mention is Node Center 63’s project to establish procedures for over the air rekey (OTAR) to distribute communications security keys to remote sites. The project leader, SSG Dafonte has taught SSG Freeny and SSG Herring both on how to use OTAR. This procedure will enable Node Center 63 to avoid putting soldiers on the road every month and potentially save lives. Preventing or reducing risk is something we all owe SSG DeFonte and his expertise.



*SSG DeFonte*



*SSG Freeny*

A second highlight of the week is the unique re-enlistment of SGT Jackson. SGT Jackson is the team chief of G31, one of the best SEN teams in the company and a team uniquely qualified in building things. SGT Jackson requested and received the rare privilege of being reenlisted by MG Olson immediately following our patch ceremony. This was a special moment for him, his family, and for the company. Congratulations!



*MG Olson reenlisting SGT Jackson*

We will close this week with some thoughts from our patch ceremony. The patch itself means little to any soldier, at least right now. The patch ceremony is a time where we recounted the events the combat patch symbolizes to give us something to reflect on and goals to continue to achieve. Our accomplishments begin with deploying a huge company task force with less than a month’s notice from Hawaii to Iraq. We off-loaded a ship in Kuwait, tested our gear and trained on our weapons in just a few weeks. We drove 500 miles in four days and survived numerous ambushes. We tested our gear and

established a communications network the size of West Virginia in another four days. We established the ONLY website and email exchange domain of any Brigade. We managed the two longest line of site relays in Iraq and the best army cell phone coverage of any unit. We conducted almost one hundred convoys. We freed up divisional assets for other missions by making our network more efficient. We played soccer with local Iraqi police and we gave toys to Iraqi children. We began the only Joint Army and Air Force communications infrastructure project in Iraq. We maintain the highest maintenance rate of any unit in the brigade and the most motivated and talented motor pool. Because of all of this and more our soldiers will look down at that 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division patch and be proud and the patch will be a common bond that all will share for the rest of their days. We hope that you are proud too. Hele On!.



*From Left to Right: SFC Wright, SPC Judd, CSM Taylor, SGT Burke, CSM Ashe, MG Olson, LT Sutton, SSG Bower and kneeling, PFC Dupuis*

## Chaplain

While my grandfather was a good man who possessed some good qualities, compassion was something that he did not do very well; particularly when it came to the men of the family. Men, he believed, should never cry, show weakness, or admit to pain. This lesson became painfully obvious for me at 11 years old on a family fishing trip. My grandfather, grandmother and I were in a boat fishing when through a series of mishaps a hook embedded itself into my thumb...all the way to the barb. It was, to say the least, extremely painful, so I yelled out. My grandmother, the one with the compassionate gene, immediately jumped over to see what had happened and how she could help. Paw-paw put up with that for about 10 seconds before he started mumbling something about taking me the hospital or just cutting my thumb off to solve the problem. We eventually got the hook out and put a little Mercurochrome (anybody remember what that was) and a band-aid on.

I'm sure there was very little chance that I would have had any long-term negative effects from the embedded hook. But as I recently remembered that day, the question occurred to me: when I'm hurting,

physically, emotionally, or spiritually, who do I want to help me? Would it be the one who feels my pain and wants to help, or the one who says, "You're not in pain. Get over it!" I think the answer is obviously the former. We all want friends who "feel" us and know where we're coming from; who want to reach out and help when we need it most.

So, the question I'd ask you this week is: What kind of friend are you? Are you the one who helps? Will you be the friend who encourages? Can you be a person who shows compassion and strengthens those around you? I Thessalonians 5:14 encourages us in this way, "And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone."



*Duke's bar on FOB Warrior*



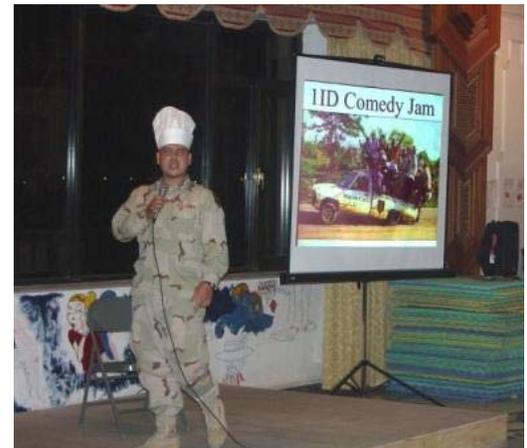
*MG Olson and SGT Crumbley*



*25 ID Patch Ceremony*



*LTC Garrison*



*SPC Andreas during comedy hour on FOB Danger*