



The Desert Voice

26 July—01 August 2004



COMMANDER'S CORNER

Greetings all!! Another week has passed and believe it or not, after my article in last week's newsletter, I still have my job. An even more remarkable thing is that they are making me **stay** on board and write LTC Garrison's part of the newsletter, **again**. So let's see what I can talk about this week.

First off I would like to say that we received our August R&R allocations and it appears like we will be sending droves of soldiers home for a well deserved break throughout the month. The Battalion will be sending home 135 soldiers in the next 30 days, which is outstanding news!!

Secondly, I would like to send out a thank you to all of the Company Commanders, the Chaplain and the Battalion Commander who write this newsletter every month. Being a commander while deployed is quite a challenge and, needless to say, it is a 24/7 job. Responsibilities can consume every hour of their day, hence every additional or repetitive tasking can become quite a nuisance. Unfortunately, I have to be the one that reminds and, if required, motivates them to write their articles; so I can tell you firsthand, they deserve a **BIG THANKS** from all of you. Their desire to make sure that you are kept informed, while at the same time, entertained, comes through each and every week. So thanks Commanders!! Keep up the good work!!

Another highlight I would like to make is our attached companies. We have an active duty company from Hawaii, B/125, and we also have three Alabama National Guard companies, A/115th, B/279th, and C/711th that have

become part of our Task Force since our arrival in Iraq. When our Battalion deployed we all knew each other, had been through numerous field exercises together, spent countless hours and many long nights preparing to deploy and we felt like one well-trained team, so you could only imagine what it felt like for these attachment companies to fall in and try to adapt to our team and our habits. This was NO easy task. I tend to relate things to sports, so it may help you to better understand what actually occurred if you think of it this way. It was as if we had three separate teams (1) the 121st Signal Battalion (2) B/125 from Hawaii, and (3) the three National Guard Companies from Alabama. All three teams ran out onto the field (deployed) as a team, then the players (soldiers) were scattered across the field and traded amongst the teams (companies). So we basically mixed up all of the players and created new teams. Now, we have soldiers from each original team falling under different teams with different players and NOW we are playing the game. So you could imagine how difficult this has been for the coaches (the commanders), as well as, the players to adapt and overcome this process. And to heighten the stress just a little bit, this all occurred in an environment where errors can be fatal.

But since their arrival, these attachments have exceeded all of our expectations. Our National Guard companies have been able to conduct the same mission as the active duty soldiers, while simultaneously, turning everywhere they are located into

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“home.” I stayed a night with NC 22 on FOB Anaconda and even though they were living in tents, and I was used to living in a building on FOB Danger, I felt right at home. They had managed to build everything they needed and even used dryer sheets to make it smell clean and fresh. It felt like a vacation and I never even felt like I was staying in a tent and being a female that says A LOT! All I could think of was that these guys really knew how to live and enjoy life.

Others have used their civilian skills to teach their active duty counterparts how to improve their working and living conditions. Being the S1, I have seen how many sacrifices these soldiers have made to be here. They have left their civilian jobs and their families behind to serve on active duty in order to support OIF II and they continue to do so with tremendous dedication.

In addition to our National Guard, our active duty attachment, B/125, has also been an invaluable asset to our team. They actually arrived prior to our Battalion, which means they not only endured the playing field

fiasco with us, but they had to undergo the same process with the Battalion we replaced, the 124th Signal Battalion. But through their experiences with the 124th Signal Battalion, they were able to teach us things that could have caused us severe growing pains if they had not been here to advise us. Also, they have led the way on their FOB through an intensive wiring project which will extend communications across the airfield where they are located. This will set up the future rotations in that area for success. They all have done a tremendous job and without them we would not be able to successfully support the 1st Infantry Division here in Iraq. So thank you guys and I hope that we have at least been able to make you feel like part of the team, because in our eyes, you are an **amazing** asset. Keep up the good work!!!

Now for an update from last week's story about the field grades spring break. With the boss man still away, the field grades have continued to revert back to their fraternity days. They have progressed from nightly poker games to full out

near-beer keg parties. They have put Greek letters on the front of their house and it has been reported that they received several disturbing the peace violations from the Military Police in the last week. Luckily for them, all violations get sent to the Battalion Commander to enforce the punishment, but since the XO is the acting Battalion Commander, these violations have conveniently been misplaced. They have also hung a count down clock in the ALOC which is counting down the time until LTC Garrison returns. They have named the clock, *The End of Our World* and they keep playing the REM song, *The End Of The World As We Know It*, on the hour mark. I don't know about you, but something is telling me that they are not looking forward to the boss's return. (Again, I have made most of that up, but I found it funny and going off of the advice of my very first Battalion Commander, LTC Crotts, who used to always say, “I don't care who's feelings it hurts as long as it is done in good humor” I figured it would be OK.) Until next week – and thanks again for all of your support.

HHC, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALION

Tough Corner

This week has been a very busy week here for HHC. Lake Dokan, FMPP, and R&R are in full swing right now. We have been shuttling people back and forth this whole week. It's always good news for soldiers getting well deserved rest and relaxation, no matter how long it is.

I also had the privilege of pro-

moting a fine young soldier into the NCO Corps. SPC Evans is now SGT Evans, and is well on his way to becoming a fine NCO.



Left to Right SSG Reno, SGT Evans, and CPT Steyer

We also promoted PFC Burns to SPC Burns. A well deserved promotion with plenty more potential to move up the ladder.



Left to Right CSM Butler, SPC Burns, and CPT Steyer

Now just to let you all know we are finally in our building. Yes, that is right we moved in and it is awesome to have A/C that cools down the room.



Left to Right, SSG Briggs, SPC Grinage, SGT Quentin, and CPT Romanowski

Now for the real story happening in Iraq at FOB Danger, the unbelievable is happening. Folks prepare yourself for the unbelievable. CSM Butler has tasked 1SG Cromartie with building a miniature golf course in our area. Yes, unbelievable, but the CSMs commitment to golf goes beyond the deployment. In order for us to win the Kitzingen open upon our return and steal it from the 17th Signal Battalion on Larson Barracks, we need to be good both on the fairway and especially the green. So, 1SG Cromartie seen here with CSM Butler's celebrating the 1st hole of the 18 hole miniature golf course.



1SG Cromartie and CSM Butler

Actually, there is no golf course, but I thought I would spice up the CSM's pride and joy. He has single handedly grown grass in Iraq. Yes, grass will grow in the desert if you water it. There are also some shrubs, but they are a little small and I am glad we will not be here long enough to trim them in the spring!

I also was able to get a quick picture of some of the tireless S1 section.



SGT Lopez, SFC Vinson, SPC Burns, SPC Williams, SPC Kahraman, SPC Whitehead

Until next time I hope you all have a safe and happy last month of summer.

A COMPANY, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALION

This week the Alpha Company column will be rather short. We have one tale of life in Iraq to relate and one reenlistment to tell you about. The soldiers are doing great things, but it's been a slow week for stories. We'll definitely try to do better next week. So, without further ado, let's get started.

Our tale this week comes from FOB Remagen. It seems recently promoted SSG Warren fancies himself an electrician. To give you a little background, SSG Warren has no formal training

and most of what he has learned about electricity comes from remembering the consequences of sticking a fork in an electrical socket. As luck would have it, Node Center 50 recently received several commercial air conditioners. You see, feeling that the military air conditioners were not up to the cooling standards the platoon demanded, they requisitioned commercial air conditioners for their shelters.

Upon receipt of the Node Center air conditioner, SSG Warren assured everyone there was

no need to submit a work order and wait around for a fancy pants licensed electrician to connect the A.C. unit to the generator because he was more than capable of doing the job himself. And so SSG Warren quickly set about the task of wiring in his new A.C. Satisfied with his work, he rewarded himself by sitting in the shelter and enjoying the cool air blowing from his newly installed cooling device. After a short time, he began to notice that the temperature slowly climbing in the shelter. He also made the

observation that he could no longer hear the pleasant humming of his beloved air conditioner in the background. SSG Warren knew something was wrong.

Quickly surmising that he had received an inferior quality commercial air conditioner, SSG Warren walked around to the front of the shelter where the A.C. had been installed. With his keen eyesight and superior intellect he was quickly able to surmise that there were flames coming from the air conditioner. Fleet of foot, SSG Warren sprinted around the shelter, then around the side of the building in which the platoon office was located, burst through the outside door, then threw open the inside office door and announced "The shelter's on fire." SGT Ryder, SGT Martin and SPC Negrette, who were sitting in the office pondering why nothing seems to live more than two or three days in the 1st Platoon detention center, quickly jumped to their feet and ran through the office door, through the outside door of the building, around the side of the building and around to the front of the shelter to see the fire.

As all four soldiers gazed upon the fire, Negrette thought aloud "Man, that's going to catch the camouflage on fire." Then it struck SSG Warren "We should put the fire out." Adrenaline still pumping through his veins, SSG Warren sprinted 5 feet to the fire control point, grabbed a fire extinguisher and, sprinting the 5 feet back, doused the flames. "That was a close one" mused SGT Martin seeing that the fire was out "if you hadn't acted quickly to extinguish the fire after you saw it, the whole place could have gone

up." "Gentlemen, that kind of quick thinking only comes from years of experience" SSG Warren informed the group. "What started it anyway" SGT Ryder asked as he picked up a charred ball where the wiring insulation had melted together. "It's hard to say with these air conditioners produced in the Middle East" SSG Warren replied "probably poor construction, they have a strange color code scheme for their electrical wiring as well. I had a hard time figuring it out." "Yep" SPC Negrette replied "no mystery there, probably just a poorly made A.C. Hey, a camel spider. Let's go catch it!"



Self-proclaimed electrician and volunteer firefighter SSG Warren

SGT Rivera reenlisted this week for 5 more years with the Army. SGR Rivera was able to get his assignment of choice, Fort Carson, Colorado. He's done a great job for us in Alpha Company, so it is only grudgingly we will bid him farewell after our return to Germany. SGT Rivera will also be pocketing some tax free cash with which he intends to help support the Colorado Springs economy. A non-alcoholic malted beverage toast to SGT Rivera on his reenlistment!



SGT Rivera displaying the document that trapped him for 5 more years

The soldiers of Alpha Company continue to do great things as we rapidly approach the half way mark of the deployment. We're operating in extreme heat in a forbidding environment and the soldiers' diligence and hard work continue to keep communications links strong for the First Infantry Division. We are continuing to get as many soldiers out of here on Pass and R&R as we can. Life just couldn't get much better. Wish you were here. XOXOXO



B COMPANY, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALON

Greetings from FOB Warhorse!!! I hope everyone has had a good week. For us it has been another a great week of fun in the sun. We did a lot of traveling this week visiting everyone. The D12 SEN team at FOB Normandy even cooked us some fine southern cuisine. This weeks issue is about those SEN Teams that are supporting all of these units.

We are lucky here on Warhorse we two SEN Teams with us, they are F41 and F42. F41/F42 have the daunting task of supporting the 3BCT TOC. Between the two of them they have over sixty phones and over fifty computers. To help their cause in supporting the monster that is 3BCT, the Battalion gave us a shiny new toy. Their shiny new toy is called a Data Package, we are not quite sure what it is supposed to do, but it makes a great place to stack things on. Actually SSG Wilson and PFC Letourneau are highly trained at working the data package, we are just waiting for a big satellite to put in system. These two SEN Teams work hard day and night to support 3BCT, and they are doing an outstanding job.

We will now jump in our vehicle and head over to F32 at FOB Scunion. These guys are hard at work supporting 2-63 Armor. F32 is one of the lucky SEN teams, because they have actual grass to look at. Grass is a pretty hot item in our neck of the woods, there just is not a lot of it. There is a rumor that no one is allowed to touch the grass, just look and admire. Because these guys are so close, they are right here with us all of the time, barely a day

goes by when I do not see someone from F32 hanging around here on Warhorse.



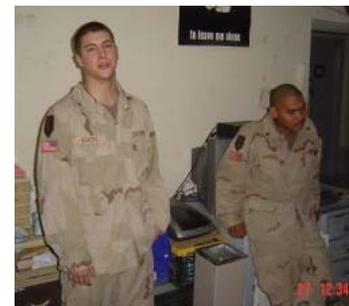
The Gang of F32

Jump back into the vehicle and we will head over to FOB Gabe where F33 and B63 hang their hats. F33 supports 82nd Engineers and B63 is supporting 1-6 Field Artillery. Both of these teams have been doing an outstanding job. And both have some unique individuals working on their teams. F33 has guitar, singer and songwriter sensation PFC Abernathy, he has jammed with some great guitarists since he has been here to include our own 1SG Peaytt. B63 is an equal in ability SEN team, lately their main focus has been on construction and some handy carpenter work, building themselves a new hooch on the back of their shelters, to help keep things cool and organized. They also report that they are untouchable at NCAA Football 2004, although their remains a deep rivalry in the team on who to use Alabama or Auburn, me personally I would use Penn State and after I said that I was promptly thrown out of their hooch.



B63 on Gabe

Next we travel to the Baqubah Police station, where the soldiers of Super Rau 52 work and play. Now they do not have the biggest FOB to do things in but they make the best of it. A Super Rau is a cross between a SEN and a RAU, some kind of mutant invention the Battalion has created for us. These guys work very hard at providing phones and e-mail capabilities for their subscribers.



Super Rau 52 Teammates

We are now going to make a long trip out to FOB Normandy where the team of D12 resides. These guys support 2-2 Infantry. Lately they have also been working on some construction, they have built themselves a very nice hooch complete with kitchen. And on our last visit they cooked us some fine southern cuisine; Pinto Beans and cornbread. Now to be honest I have never had Pinto beans, but I gave it a try and I

must say that was some of the best chow I have had in a long time. They also make some pretty good corn bread. Along with SGT Silvers growing banana trees in his own little garden, these guys have skills that are unmatched. There were even some remarks by some saying that these guys need to teach our spouses how to cook like this. Not to mention they provide outstanding phone and e-mail service to their customers.



SSG Abbot in his kitchen



Fine Southern Cuisine

Next we are going to travel to one of our most scenic sites, Camp Echo where Remote Rau 23 lives. Camp Echo is very scenic, it has a nice view of a lake and some mountains. RR23 is providing mobile phone coverage to many customers that drive through their area. The only bad thing is that it is a very remote site, but they have everything they need, hot chow, internet, showers, satellite television. What more could one ask for?



The view from Camp Echo

Next we are going to travel over to LSA Anaconda home to F31 and B61. F31 is supporting 299th Forward Support Battalion and B61 is supporting 2BCT TAC, the two of them are also supporting numerous other small units. These two teams are also doing an outstanding job at supporting their respective customers. F31 serves as a small hub for our company along with NC22, they are main points of contact on LSA Anaconda, sometimes doing

things for us, that would require us to stay overnight there. But without these two SEN teams doing some very hard work on LSA Anaconda supporting 11D units and some from 13th COSCOM, without these two SEN teams, communications would be very quiet there.

That about sums up our tour to all of our SEN Teams, not that it matters to me but just so everyone knows RR23 and C23 are our National Guard SEN Teams from B/279th, B61 and B63 are our National Guard SEN Teams from C/711th, and D12 is from A/115th. All of these teams are from the Alabama National Guard. Without these guys here our unit and 11D would not be successful. To all of the SEN Teams out there keep up the good work and Thank You.

Well that wraps things up from our neck of the woods. We should be coming online shortly, so we can start doing VTCs from here to the Battalion headquarters in the near future. I will let SGT Versie and SSG Schmidt know as soon as we are ready, so we can schedule some face time with your loved ones here. Until next week take care and have a good week!!!

C COMPANY, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALION

Good day to you all, and a happy welcome to AUGUST!! Another month down, and we couldn't be happier!

This week's article focuses mostly on sports. We have a lot

of outgoing individuals that get involved around FOB Danger when they aren't on shift – it helps to pass the time.

First up, the 1SG, SFC Harrise and 1SG Cooke from HHC, 11D

teamed up to dominate the first full-court basketball tournament on the FOB. Normally, they play half court and do very well, but with their combined age topping the century mark, we weren't sure these GOM (Grumpy Old

Men) still had it in them. However, they proved us all wrong as they beat three high-speed soldiers from our own company in the final game to win the tournament. Nice job, GOM!



SPC Mary Steinke and SGT Winema Catron cheer the players during the basketball tournament, while SPC Anthony Jones, SPC Patrick Edwards, and SPC Nathan Haselhorst await their next game. They lost to 1SG's team in the last round.

You may recall last week, we mentioned the MEGA HALO match we had at the company. Well, four of our deadliest warriors took their skills to the FOB Danger HALO Championship this week where they came in an extremely close second place. The team consisted of SPC Johnny Jordan, SGT Benjamin Growden and his brother in HHC and SPC Brian Pierce. Thanks for keeping our universe safe from the deadly invaders!



SPC Brian Pierce is all smiles after his HALO tournament at FOB Danger's MWR facility.

The next item of business is near and dear to my heart. Finally, after a long spring and summer, football season is right around the corner. Along with watching the games on TV, many of the soldiers are forming up their fantasy football teams. Last Thursday night at Rock Central, we conducted the Rock Steady Fantasy Football NFL Draft for the 2004 season.



The Rock Steady Fantasy Football NFL Draft.

Soldiers watch each other intently as the research was conducted and the players were chosen by each "captain" and put up on the big board. SPC Haselhost was quoted as saying, "Although I didn't get the Running Back I wanted, I am confident my team will pulverize the other teams in this league." We will keep you posted as the season progresses.

In the continuing effort to improve our living quarters, the XO finally pitched in to help out SPC Froeschner, carpenter extraordinaire, to build a desk and new shelves. Although SPC Froeschner felt like he was teaching *Carpentry for Dummies* to the XO, it all came together to make a great finished product. Messy already, but a great piece of furniture.



SPC William Froeschner and XO, 1LT Chris Nagelvoort, built this great desk/shelf combo.

I would like to close out this week with a welcome to our newest soldier, PV2 Dorian Meeks. PV2 Meeks is a 31F from the GREAT state of Nebraska, and he just arrived in country straight from AIT. He will be a part of 2nd Platoon and NC53.

B COMPANY, 125TH SIGNAL BATTALION

Well it is time for the newsletter...AGAIN! The weekly newsletters always seem to sneak up on us. Looking back at the old newsletters, they do give us a pretty good historical record of events and our fun time here. As nice as that is, please, do not let me kid you. I would much rather be off skiing in Montana or surfing in Hawaii than hanging out in Iraq. But we do what we have to do. This week we have updates from Node Center 62, who had a Barbeque. Node Center 63 worked on improving some of our line of site radio links and finished up a massive wiring project. And headquarters platoon continued to support everyone by repairing everything, tracking everything, and keeping email and the company radio nets humming.

During the past week the mighty Node Center 63 Platoon has been quite busy with an increased workload due to personnel shortages. We have been working twelve hours on and twelve hours off to fulfill all of the platoon's obligations with guard duty and escort detail during a heavy R & R period where we have sent 40 soldiers home. This has been quite stressful at times with the soldiers, but overall the soldiers have kept their heads in the game and been the backbone of the platoon. On a lighter side we were able to promote one of our high speed SEN Section soldiers PFC Spencer to the rank of SPC. He expressed during his

promotion acceptance speech that he was very excited to have obtained the rank of Specialist and looked forward to doing bigger and better things for Node Center 63 Platoon.



CPT Campbell and SGT Ragnadio promote PFC Spencer to the rank of Specialist.

The temperature here on Warrior has been quite extreme with temperatures reaching in the excess of 115 degrees at times. The Transmission Section has also been hard at work this past week as they diligently worked at improving several antenna shots to improve the quality of voice and data for the numerous units that are being supported by Node Center 63. At times the soldiers were making the changes to the shots during the hottest times of the day. The sun was beating down with such extreme heat that without gloves on, the antenna mast would literally burn your skin to the touch.

The largest joint wiring project in Iraq was completed this past week. SSG Brown, SGT Hall, SPC Lopez, and SPC Kamiloa were all on the wiring team.



SOC Kamiloa, SPC Rodriguez, SSG Brown, SPC Lopez, and SGT Hall.

The project has taken more than a month but essentially brings service to our container city, where we live, from the distant side of the Kirkuk airfield. The project included running miles of fiber through underground conduit,



which is a more backbreaking job than anything else we have done while we have been here. The team also coordinated to dig more than a mile of trench 4 feet deep, filling it with conduit.



SPC Lopez in the trench

They completed two complicated road cuts to push the cable across two busy roads....both accomplished without interrupting traffic. This joint project helps establish communications across three miles of airbase and is a serious tribute to both accomplishing a communications goal for 2nd Brigade Combat Team and to posturing ourselves for the next rotation of soldiers in 6 months.



SPC Lopez



SSG Brown taking a breather



SPC Rodriguez



This week at Node Center 62 has been very hot. The temperatures soared to 120 degrees for most of the week. The platoon's biggest highlight was a small but entertaining barbeque. Sorry, no pictures were taken. The node center section sponsored the BBQ with SSG Bracewell on the grill, SPC George in charge of music, and the rest helped with set-up. The BBQ was run like a pot luck. Soldiers brought various items including chips, salsa, pop tarts, bags of candy, cookies, and many other great items to make it a successful gathering.

The gathering started around 2100hrs to avoid the extreme heat. The soldiers played many hours of volleyball in the front yard of the houses. Many personnel from other units on FOB Speicher were invited. Soldiers from A/121, 264th En-

gineers, and 216th Engineers were present for the small platoon party.

SPC Tolley returned off of R&R. He arrived on FOB Speicher via Blackhawk helicopter, swooping in like a General, returning to his fiefdom. We could not have any of that so two days later, he accompanied SGT Burke and SGT Millikan to FOB Midland. They replaced SGT Whitener back to FOB Speicher to prepare for the E-6 promotion board next month.

The Node Center 62 cable team continues to assist in the commercialization of FOB Speicher. The hard-work by SGT Atkinson and SPC Kaimulooa put into the 1st Infantry Division Rear Headquarters shows everyday. Their commitment to duty has freed up the first of many signal assets. SGT Correa, the team chief of G32, was very pleased to hear his team could start the subscriber relocation process.

One last point, SFC Wright accompanied the 498th MEDEVAC on a supply run to Kirkuk, Mosul, and Talifar. The purpose of the flight was to get much needed vehicle parts for deadlined equipment that has been non mission capable for more than 30 days. He also hand carried a brand new dell computer power supply for the battalion executive officer of 225 Forward Support Battalion. The flight crew was also surprised when SFC Wright returned to the flight strip with a 29" television and DVD player....not to mention the vehicle parts. (Few units

take care of each other as well as the platoons within Bravo Company. The company, platoons and teams are separated by many miles yet continue to help each other out). The flight crew was very helpful and courteous. The only problem SFC

Wright had the whole was all the 498th flight personnel at Mosul and Talifar thought the TV and DVD player was for them. Sorry guys. The TV will be used to bring much needed CNN news into the Node Center command post (really it will be used to

watch football).

AGAIN, I would rather be skiing in Montana or surfing in Hawaii...but the work of all of the soldiers in our great company makes life here in Iraq the best it can possibly be. Hele On!

A COMPANY, 115TH SIGNAL BATTALION

.Two close calls this week at Forward Operating Base Danger top the list of "happenings" for Alpha Company 115th Signal Battalion.

Monday afternoon, Specialist Chris Albright was standing in the door of the V-3 tent on the Node Center 30 site when a rocket struck the rear of the tent. Luckily, Specialist Albright was not injured. The tent's homeowners, Staff Sergeant Tim Behel and Sergeant Frank Henson returned from a convoy to find home sweet home a little "holier" than when they left. Staff Sergeant Behel was returning from R & R in North Alabama...welcome back to Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

The tent sustained only minor damages, and has since been repaired. A V-3 rig outside the tent was also struck, resulting in damage to the hood and windshield. Signal itself was interrupted for a short period of time, but the 115th

soldiers quickly corrected the problem.

On Thursday morning, Alpha Company's maintenance section was struck with shrapnel from an incoming mortar. Again, no soldiers were injured. Thursday's round left a small hole in the roof over motor pool. The round did not affect the newly constructed living quarters at the motor pool.

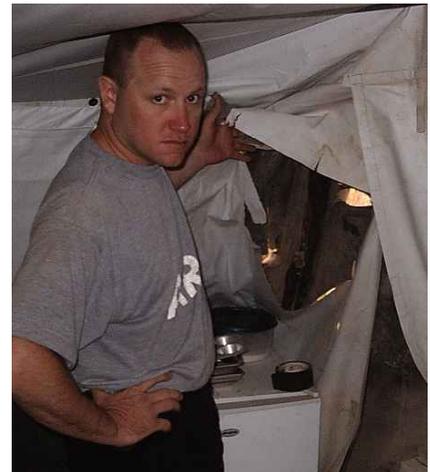
On a lighter note, Sergeant Joel Elston took part in the Wednesday night ping-pong contest at the MWR. He placed 2nd among the military contestants, and 4th overall. Sergeant Elston won 3 out of 4 games in the single-elimination tournament. He was the only Alpha Company soldier to enter. The contest was sponsored by the MWR here at Danger.

Several soldiers have now had the opportunity to visit friends and family at home through the R & R program. Others will have the

chance for R & R in the coming weeks and months. As July winds to a close here in the Middle East, Alpha Company remains steadfast in their commitments: not only as soldiers, but in all that they do.

Specialist Sonya Harris

30 July 2004



SSG Behel holding up the torn liner in his tent.

CHAPLAIN

What's keeping you from being happy? We have an amazing ability as people, to always think that happiness is just around the corner. We think that we'll be happy if we lose ten pounds or maybe gain ten pounds. We think we won't be happy until we have kids, then when we have kids, we'll find happiness when they leave. Or we think happiness is found when we start school, until we start school, but then happiness is when school is out. Maybe when I start that new job I'll be happy, but then I need to retire to be happy. I'll be happy when I get married, right? Or is when I finally get divorced? I know I'll be happy when Friday

night gets here, but then I look for it on Sunday morning. Happiness is surely found in a new home or a new car or a nice vacation or maybe a nose-job will do the trick!!! We'll surely be happy when this deployment is over, that is until the reality of life hits and we think, "I can't wait until the next deployment!" (I went too far didn't I?)

The truth of the matter is that there is no better time to be happy than right now. The challenges we face day in and day out are not excuses for being miserable. They are, in fact, opportunities for growth and renewed strength and, yes, happiness. Alfred D. Souza once said,

"For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin – real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life."

If we took this perspective and applied it to our lives, then we'd understand that happiness is found in the journey of life, not the destination. So treasure every moment you have and use those moments to share yourself with someone else and to find happiness right where you are.



Mosque in Tuz



Firing some rounds of a .50 cal



SPC Williams and the Commander's Convoy Team