

April 18/04

MAJ David R. Kennedy
Rear Detachment Commander

Dear Major,

My name is Graciela K. Belanger. I am the mother of SPC Nicholas A. Belanger. My son was part of the 82nd. Engineer battalion but before leaving for Iraq he was transfer to the HHD, ENG BDE. My husband's name is Charles A. Belanger. We live in Alexandria, Virginia We want to let you know how much we appreciate receiving the newsletter telling us different things about the 1st infantry Division, Engineer Brigade deployment in Iraq. These are very difficult times for us and until now we have felt very isolated .

Our son Nicholas left home for basic training few months after he finished High School. He did his basic training at Fort Leonardwood in Missouri. On April 9, 04 he turned 21 years old. This made me realized that the last three of his birthdays have been spent away form home. One in Germany, one in Kosovo and now this one in Iraq. Since he left he has visited us several times but all together it hasn't been more than two months. As you can imagine we miss him terribly. It has been a very long separation aggravated by the fact that his contract of three years with the Army (due in August /04) will not be honored and he has been told that he will remain in Iraq for a full year deployment. I am sure you understand how we feel about it since it seems to have affected many military families.

His home base has been Bamberg, Germany. We have not been able to share too much with him or with other families. In a way we miss not having the support of a group of families like the one you get when you live in a base community. Our son is very responsible about calling us or e-mailing us , which helps to ease our concerns but at times we would like to have somebody who could understand our situation because they would be experiencing the same. Your newsletter has given us so much information and we are very happy to receive it. I am sure that all through the U.S. there are many families of soldiers that feel the same way we do specially the ones with soldiers stationed overseas . Please keep up sending the newsletter when it is available for distribution. It means a lot to us! I also want to thank you for letting us know about our son's safe arrival into Kuwait and then into Tikrit. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. You and the whole Engineer Brigade and their families remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,
Graciela K. Belanger

