



The Desert Voice



22 – 28 March 2004

Commander's Corner

TIKRIT,
IRAQ & AO
Danger –

This week saw a moment we've all been waiting for;

the completion of the largest divisional level tactical network ever created. All of our National Guard augmentation is in sector and their systems are in the network. The network consist of 11 Node Center Switches, 1 Large Extension Node, and 50 Small Extension Nodes. There are eight companies and more than 1000 soldiers in the Signal Task Force that operate and maintain the division's command and control network. AO Danger ranges from Baghdad north to Kirkuk and from the Iranian border to the western limits of the Salah Ad Din province. Roughly an area the size of the state of West Virginia. All members of the Task Force have performed magnificently and much to be proud of. They are truly making history. More importantly, they've done it safely. Tens of thousands of miles have been logged getting everything in position, recovering line-hauled equipment, moving parts and supplies around the battlefield without incident to date. This is only attributable to great NCO leadership.

We now enter a new phase of our deployment. One of maintaining the network as the temperatures begin to rise. While

my priorities will remain the same, (mission, force protection, and quality of life) special emphasis will be put towards maintenance of generators, communications equipment and prime movers. Again, the key to success is NCO leadership.

The battalion will host its first commander's conference next weekend, 2-4 April. All company commanders and their First Sergeants will travel to Tikrit to participate. The objective of this conference will be for all the



commanders and ISGs to get to know one another, and to iron out some command relationship challenges that this mission has presented us. There are many new faces and each commander has some part of another commander's organic assets operating in their area. The discussion is bound to be lively! I can't wait.

Additionally, we will familiarize our National Guard friends on how we do business in the Big Red One. Oh, by the way, we're also going to have fun!

Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers. We appreciate those of you who are doing so. It does make a difference. o



Alpha Company

It was another challenging week for Alpha Company. Spread across six FOBs, keeping up with all the teams' news is always challenging. One highlight this week was PFC Collantes from the Remote RAU at FOB Brassfield. SGT Davis reported to me that Collantes has been using his expertise and a little old fashioned elbow grease to ensure that the 1-26 Infantry Commander's MSRT (tactical mobile phone) stays functional. That MSRT is critical while a convoy is operating off the FOB as a communications source, and PFC Collantes' efforts have been vital to mission success.

A tragedy on FOB Packhorse brought to light a couple of 1st Platoon heroes on FOB Packhorse. The MWR tent caught on fire this week for reasons yet to be determined and PV2 Ballard, PFC Acosta and SPC Berish served as first responders by grabbing shovels to help form a volunteer fire department. There were no injuries and the soldiers were able to extinguish the flames before any other tents or structures caught fire.

PFC Jagdar reported that soldiers are now enjoying FOB Raider's heated indoor pool. The pool is in one of Saddam's old palaces that is now used to house soldiers and troop headquarters. While Jagdar himself hasn't taken a dip yet, he said the pool definitely serves as a morale booster for the troops. It may be

time to relocate the Alpha Company CP to FOB Raider.....

Life on FOB Speicher has been relatively uneventful. SPC Sellman has been burning the midnight oil keeping our SMART-T satellite terminals up and functional. We have two at different sites on the FOB and SPC Sellman has been making the rounds to ensure we stay connected. 2nd platoon recently added an outdoor gym to their site. While it's seems a good idea now while the weather is mild, I'm not sure how much use that gym is going to get come summer. "Feeling the burn" may take on a whole new meaning.

I always cringe when I get a Red Cross message but we got two great ones this week. We are proud to welcome our two newest additions to Alpha Company. SPC Jackson is the proud father of a new baby girl, Jaliah who came to the world March 22. Also SGT Apodaca became a proud new daddy when baby Aaliyah was born 26 March 2004. A No Alcohol Budweiser toast is in order for the new mothers and bouncing baby girls.



The mighty 1st Platoon V3 section PV2 Her, PFC Wilson, SPC Quiles and PFC Acosta

Bravo Company

This week we picked up some SMART-Ts from Baghdad; had a visit from the Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major; received, tested,

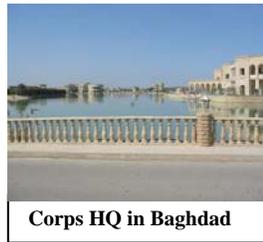
and integrated the D12 SEN team; and sent some soldiers into Baqubah for training.

It was a busy week for the convoy team. We started on Monday with two missions. We were to drive into Baghdad, pick up some equipment, and drive it to Warhorse so that someone else could pick them up and take them to where they would be used. In addition, we were to pick up the D12 SEN team from Anaconda, but received word that they would probably not be there until the next day. We went to Baghdad, got the equipment, but on the way back to Warhorse, we received a phone call that said the D12 team was there. We stopped to pick it up, and ended up having to stay the night. We eventually got everything back to Warhorse on Tuesday, without incident. "Without incident" actually means "after freezing overnight because several members of the convoy team forgot to plan on overnight contingencies." -NEVER, AGAIN.

Starting Tuesday, Node Center 52 began testing D12's equipment and preparing them for their move to FOB Normandy. Several pieces of bad equipment were identified and replaced and SSG Allen was able to work his magic with their computers. The end result should be that the team can get there equipment in system with little difficulty.

The convoy team escorted D12 to FOB Normandy on Friday, at which time the team began putting the SEN into the network.

LTC Garrison and CSM Butler (and the rest of their convoy team)



Corps HQ in Baghdad

came down to Warhorse for a site visit. They received the "full tour" and spoke with several teams on the site. The visit was cut short, due to the length of the drive and time constraints, but all in all, it was a good visit, and I believe they were pleased with what they saw from the company.

We also had some bad news for the Company this week. SSG Armstrong (F32, Camp Scunion) received a Red Cross message and was sent home on emergency leave, due to the death of his son. We bid him Godspeed and will keep him and the remainder of his family in our prayers.



F32 Team at Scunion. SSG Armstrong is third from the left

On a much more positive note, Bravo Company has continued its 100% LT promotion rate. 1LT Buffa (attached to C Co), 1LT Kato, and 1LT Prudhomme were all selected for promotion to Captain! Congratulations to all three of them. They certainly deserve it!



1LT(P) Prudhomme and 1LT(P) Kato in front of the Company CP

Have a good week!!

Charlie Company

The soldiers of Charlie Rock continue to soldier on as we become more comfortable in our surroundings here in Iraq. Although we have enjoyed fairly

mild weather since our arrival, we are now beginning to see a continued rise in the temperature into the 90s. We also continue to improve our living and working conditions here through our own construction projects. SSG Reina and SPC Froeschner recently finished their construction on the unit supply office. SPC Guldamen has the lead on our plan to augment our signal equipment with commercial air conditioning units so that our equipment can survive the 130 degree summer. We continue to pull force protection duties as well with SPC Montgomery and PFC Storni providing tower guard this week. SPC Callahan and PFC Wyatt continue to provide important retransmission communications support at one of the more secluded and austere sites in the 1st ID area of responsibility (AOR). Charlie Rock also continues to provide patrol support for the movement of personnel and equipment throughout the 1st ID AOR. Some of the personnel that have played a key role in these patrols are SPC Catron, SGT Mikrut, SGT Bell, and SPC Petty. We also welcomed back PFC Stadtler and SPC Johnson. They were deployed further north than any other soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division. Their mission in the north was to train soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division on how to install, operate and maintain their satellite communications systems. PFC Salazar and SPC Taylor recently left on a Blackhawk flight to near the Iraq/Iran border to provide the same expertise on satellite systems for members of the 30th Enhanced Separate Brigade of the North Carolina National Guard. Morale continues to be high and each and every one of the members of

Charlie Rock continues to perform magnificently.

HHC

Good Day everybody. Where to start this week is a tough one. So, I will begin with my 1SG Cromartie and CPT Miller. 1SG Cromartie and CPT Miller here are discussing the issues concerning



our all girls' school HHC is sponsoring. Yesterday, with the help of an interpreter, we inspected work that was completed and future plans for the school. 1SG and CPT Miller are putting a full court press on this one. More to follow as our progress continues.

Here is SGT Smith from the automation section getting



untangled from the camouflage netting being put up. Believe it or not the netting actually can lower

the temperate beneath by at least 10 degrees. Today's temperature is a whopping 90 degrees outside. A little warmer than we all like with all of our gear on.

Enjoying a green network, SFC Peaytt and SGM Mason take a minute to give me a special pose. I do not think SGM saw SFC Peaytt's hand. He knows the real deal on the green network, time will tell the tale.



If you all are wondering who takes the pictures, it is me Tough 6. I have heard allot complaints about not seeing faces, sorry I will try to do better, but when we shrink the pictures down they loose some of the quality and are difficult to see. I will remedy this by sending a CD back to the FRG to view them and will also start a website online soon for all of you to download your loved ones pictures. I leave you with a picture from Soldiers Palace.



Chaplain

Ten Days to Happiness

Day 1: I will grow spiritually by spending more time in prayer and Bible study.

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Joshua 1:8

Day 2: I will nurture my body with the understanding that it is the temple of God.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. I Corinthians 6:19

Day 3: I will not strike back as I recall the example of Jesus in turning the other cheek.

Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:39

Day 4: I will pray for those who treat me poorly.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44

Day 5: I will treat others as I wish to be treated.

¹²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12

Day 6: I will go the extra mile by sharing someone's burden.

And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. Matthew 5:40-42

Day 7: I will forgive.

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37

Day 8: I will secretly do something nice for someone.

When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:3-4

Day 9: I will encourage someone.

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. I Thessalonians 5:11

Day 10: I will be careful about what I say so as not to offend needlessly.

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. James 1:26

Soldier Spotlight:



Soldier Spotlight: SSG James

Waiters

Duty Position: Motor Sergeant for Bravo Company, 121st Signal Battalion

Forward Operating Base:

Warhorse

Home State: South Carolina

Family: Wife, Cynthia and one daughter, Maxime

What he has to say about serving in Iraq: I love and miss my family, but am glad that we're able to keep in touch and everyone is doing fine.

Being an NCO out here takes on a special meaning being with soldiers 24/7 and helping to keep their morale up.

Rear Detachment

Rear-Attachment POCs

- **Commander: 1LT Lamborn 355-2967**
- **NCOIC: SFC Young 355-2864**
- **HHC Rear-D CDR: SFC Jaggernaut 355-2885**
- **A Rear-D CDR: SSG Degro 355-2816**
- **B Rear-D CDR: SGT Versie 355-2746**
- **C Rear-D: SGT Garcia 355-2600**

Family Readiness Group POC's

- **HHC FRG – Edith Floro**
- **A FRG – Mindy Long**
- **B FRG – Debbie Pedroza**
- **C FRG – Laura Poston**

**Thanks for
all of your
support!!!**