



The Desert Voice



28 June – 11 July 2004

Commander's Corner

TIKRIT, IRAQ & AO DANGER – Greetings again and I hope everyone had a great 4th of July holiday. We didn't publish a newsletter last week due to the holiday. Operationally, things continue to go well though the fighting the heat is a never ending challenge. Through a lot of hard work and the magic of the American soldier's ingenuity, the equipment is holding up well in temperatures that exceed 120 degrees.

The holiday weekend here was much like what you'd find stateside or on Kaserne's in Germany. We had a BBQ, sporting events and an impressive fireworks display to end the day. Coinciding with the 4th of July festivities the division hosted an "open house" for the local government officials from Tikrit and leadership of the Iraqi Security Forces. Overall, a good time was had by all.



LTC Garrison and CPT Miller at a 4th of July BBQ on FOB Danger

As with every event there's always something that happens to make it especially memorable and in this case somewhat humorous. Several of us had gathered atop the building in which we live to watch the fireworks. The vantage point

couldn't have been better. The fireworks were indeed spectacular. Midway through the show,



someone launched a flare. Now a simple flare compared to the monstrous fireworks that were exploding over would normally not be cause for alarm. It's like comparing a simple firecracker to a stick of dynamite. CSM Butler didn't see it that way. As the flare arched into the sky, he began to seek cover convinced that it was counter-fire coming from Anti Iraqi Forces and we on the roof were the intended target. This is the same guy who before the fireworks show began and a fairly large gunfight was being waged in the city of Tikrit provided everyone on the roof a calming presence, reassuring everyone that everything was ok and there was no cause for alarm. He recovered nicely in a way that only CSM's can. He ordered everyone to stop laughing at him!

The antics of the CSM don't win the funny story prize this week. That honor belongs to our beloved Chaplain, Brett Gilmore. We had stopped at LSA Anaconda on our way to FOB Warhorse to pay a quick visit and drop off some supplies to Node Center 22. The

leader of the platoon there is 1LT Satterfield who besides being an outstanding Platoon Leader is a very accomplished dancer. I've personally witnessed him giving instruction to the Adjutant, CPT Miller, in the ALOC. As we were about to leave, Brett comes up to me with an expression of desperation on his face and utters his plea, "Sir, we have to get 1LT Satterfield back to Danger for a week." I'm thinking what could be so wrong with the LT that he needs a week of counseling from the Chaplain. I asked Brett, What's wrong. Why do we need to take him away from his platoon for that long?" The Chaplain, almost begging now, says, "My wife wants me to learn how to Salsa. I must be able to Salsa when I get



1LT Satterfield

home." It took a minute for the realization of the dilemma I was facing to sink in and to calmly respond to my Chaplain's frantic plea. After we both took deep breaths, I explained to Brett that while I fully support the Army's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, I have to draw the line at having my Chaplain dancing with another man in the Headquarters.

Be on the look out for next week's edition where I'll share with you the story of one of our Warrant Officer's pulling a knife

on the Commanding General. There's never a dull moment in AO Danger. Thanks for the thoughts and prayers (Lord knows we need them), it does make a difference.



CPT Romanowski

Alpha Company

Every day that Alpha Company has spent in Iraq it has gotten hotter. I have written in previous editions about how hot it was. I now realize I had no idea what I was talking about. It was just warm. The truth of the matter is, it isn't really hot yet. For right now we're enjoying cool highs of 115. I'm told the heat actually kicks in around August, which gives us something to look forward to.

To begin this week we have an update on the Anti Iraqi Forces Camel Spider being detained at FOB Remagen by 1st Platoon. It seems that while PFC Negrette was on shift one evening, SGT Martin and SGT Ryder went outside to catch some ants to feed the AIFCS. In a democracy, the accused are innocent until proven guilty and have the right to be fed, clothed, sheltered and protected. The two NCOs found two ants which they thought would be suitable, a large ant for the main course and a smaller one for desert. After capturing the ants, they put them in the holding cell with the AIFCS.

Upon entering the holding cell, the smaller ant immediately made

for the camel spider's sleeping hole. The camel spider immediately pounced on the smaller ant and injured him, intending to finish him off and have him for dinner. The larger ant, witnessing the horror of what was happening, immediately attacked the AIFCS and killed him. The larger ant then pulled the injured smaller ant over to help him dismember the camel spider. SGT Ryder, SGT Martin and PFC Negrette were too stunned by the violence taking place in the holding cell to intervene and prevent the needless massacre.

The two ants were subsequently charged as being Anti Anti Iraqi Forces Camel Spider Ants. The ants were being detained in the 1st Platoon holding cell awaiting completion of the FOB Remagen detention center when they mysteriously died. An investigation into conditions at the 1st Platoon holding cell is currently underway.



As you probably already know, one of the constant dangers of living in a warm environment is dehydration. Recently SGT Gardner was enjoying life at FOB Dagger when he felt a pain in his side. Knowing that muscle cramps are a sign of dehydration he asked if anyone was a certified Combat Lifesaver and could give him an IV. Most people would just drink water, but SGT Gardner is man who values his time more than his body and knew an IV would be the most expeditious means of becoming hydrated. SPC Plitzner

replied that he was indeed a certified CLS and that he would be happy to administer SGT Gardner an IV as it would serve to both hydrate SGT Gardner and give Plitzner some practice.

SPC Plitzner mustered up all of his needle sticking skills in attempting to administer the IV to SGT Gardner. After several attempts he gave up in frustration saying that he could not locate a vein suitable for an IV. SPC Moore then volunteered that she had recently completed the combat lifesaver's course and would be happy to help SGT Gardner get his IV. SPC Moore, who one would think being so recently graduated from the course, would be adept at needle sticking, also attempted to administer the IV several times before declaring that she was also unable to locate a suitable vein.

Standing off to the side, PFC Jagdar thought to himself "I haven't been to the combat lifesaver course, but I've watched a lot of ER." Jagdar paused for a moment to reflect on all the episodes of ER he had watched and tried to remember a specific technique he had seen used for IVs. Unable to remember any, he figured the best way to get it done was just to jump in and do it and jabbed SGT Gardner in random spots, none of which were on his arms.

Watching all of this SGT Freerksen decided to end the madness, "It's been seven years since I've been through the course, but I'm pretty sure I still remember how to do an IV" he stated confidently. SGT Freerksen then moved to SGT Gardner's side announcing "amateur play time is over, let the master do his work." After several attempts SGT Freerksen proclaimed that SGT Gardner was physically unable to

receive an IV due to a lack of suitable veins. At this point, attempting to muster up the strength to tell everyone that this may not have been a good idea, SGT Gardner began to lose consciousness. His fading consciousness was a direct result of the loss of blood due from of the holes in his arm as well as the places Jagdar had stuck him in his legs and midriff.

PFC Lovitt and PFC Drew immediately put down their needles and decided to forego their turns at sticking SGT Gardner and instead escort him to the aid station. Within seconds of seeing SGT Gardner the medics administered an IV, seeming to have no trouble finding a suitable vein. After his wounds had been bandaged and his color returned, the doctor examined him. SGT Gardner explained his symptoms and after some poking and prodding the doctor quickly concluded that the pain in his side was from a pulled muscle. The doctor then looked at him curiously and inquired "You look like a pin cushion, what happened to you?" SGT Gardner thought quickly of how to deflect any blame from himself. Suddenly it dawned on him, "Well I was the the 1st platoon detention center on FOB Remagen..."

We had a lot of promotions during the last two weeks. Promotions began here on FOB Speicher where we had a sunrise promotion ceremony for SGT Queen. SGT Queen has done an outstanding job in the motor pool and demonstrated he was more than ready to pin on his Sergeant stripes. In recognition of his accomplishments, we then made him get in a HMMWV and ride around with us on a combat logistics patrol in the unbearable

heat so we could perform our other promotions. No thank you is needed, SGT Queen.



SGT Queen during his sunrise ceremony

Before we departed FOB Speicher, we also promoted SPC Creed, who has excelled in the motor pool ensuring we get the repair parts we need and that we get them on time. SPC Creed's performance has been top-notch and he is well deserving of his promotion.



SPC Creed receives his promotion certificate

Our travels took us to FOB Remagen, where we promoted SSG Warren to his present rank. SSG Warren has done a tremendous job as a leader in the Node Center and demonstrated he was ready to move up to the next level of responsibility.



SSG Warren gets his certificate as SSG Meiss looks on

Back on the road, we traveled to FOB Dagger where we promoted SPC Dickerson to his present rank. SPC Dickerson has been key to ensuring the 2nd Brigade Combat Team has constant and reliable communications.



SPC Dickerson gets pinned by SGT Freerksen

Once we said goodbye to SPC Dickerson and the crew at FOB Dagger we traveled to FOB Summerall to promote SPC Tubbs. SPC Tubbs has earned great praise from DIVARTY for the outstanding support he has been providing.



SPC Tubbs and SGT Miller

Our last good news story for the week took place on our nation's birthday, the 4th of July. The FOB hosted a day of sport and celebration and while the company competed in many sports against other teams from around the FOB, the volleyball team fared the best when they took second place overall. They were beaten in the final round by a team that we were told was comprised of civilian firefighters, however given their demeanor and the fact we have never seen these guys before, we now believe they may have been misrepresenting who they really were. The Alpha Company team will readily admit the "fire fighters" played very well and we wish them all the best of luck at the summer games in Greece.



SGT Queen, SSG Prado, SFC Showell, SGT Robles and SGT Cornell

If you're going to visit Iraq, this is the time of year to do it. If you wait much longer it's going to start getting hot. We have sporting activities, world class medical care and all the sun you could wish for.

And with all of the recent promotions, there is plenty of extra money floating around. You won't have to pay for a thing. The choice is yours. Wish you were here, XOXOXO

Bravo Company

Greetings from FOB Warhorse!!! We took a brief break

from the newsletter, for a week but we are all back in full force with two weeks worth of material. I hope you all had a great 4th of July. We have had a lot of great things happening in the company over the past two weeks, so sit back, relax, and enjoy the reading.

Everyone here would like to congratulate SPC Wilhelm from F41 on the birth of his daughter Caeli Brin and SSG Grace from D12 on the birth of his granddaughter Alexis. It is my understanding that in both cases mother and child are doing great. CONGRATULATIONS again.

On one of our recent trips to FOB Gabe, we had the opportunity to enjoy some music from PV2 Abernathy at F33. He played us some of his songs that he has written, about West Texas. He is a very talented musician. Writing your own songs is not an easy task, writing a lyric is one thing, but writing the music to be played is very difficult. He even managed to play us the songs with a string missing from his guitar that he had broken, a little bit before we got there. It was great to take a few minutes off and listen to PV2 Abernathy.

On a trip to FOB Normandy, we were relaxing with D12, and we had learned that to kill some down time SGT Silvers is a bit of a gardener. He took us back behind his SEN and showed us his small garden of banana trees. He went into detail about how the right amount of water, a mix of soil, and amount of sun light is important, well he lost me right off the bat, I cannot even grow grass, let alone bananas. But it is just another thing soldiers are doing to pass some of the time. I already let SGT Silvers know that when the bananas are ready, I will figure out how to get

ice cream to make some good old fashion banana splits.



SGT Silvers and his Banana Trees

During the week leading up to the 4th of July, 3BCT sponsored some sporting events here to raise morale and celebrate the upcoming 4th of July holiday. There was a 3-on-3 Basketball tournament, Volleyball tournament, Ping-Pong, Playstation2 tournament, Weightlifting, and a 5K run. Little did the 3BCT know that the soldiers from Bravo Company would be competing.

We had a crack team of volleyball players in the tournament. The team consisted of SSG Wilson, SGT Johnson, SGT Bryan, SPC Carter, and SPC Bryan and after much discussion I found out that SFC Caldwell made a cameo appearance at one volleyball game. They fought hard and played very well each game. They ended up with a 3rd place finish, personally I think they were robbed.

We also had an entry in the weightlifting competition. SSG Spradley, took 2nd place in the competition. They judged the weightlifting a little different than I have seen in the past. They took your body weight subtracted it from the amount you bench pressed, and that number was how you were ranked. Well SSG Spradley benched a competition best of 375lbs, but he was edged

out due to the crazy math used. Once again I think he was robbed.



SSG Spradley powers up the competition best of 375lbs



SSG Spradley showing off his "GUNS"

We also had a team enter the 3-on-3 basketball tournament. The team consisted of SFC Caldwell, SSG Dale, SGT Denham, SGT Graves, and SGT Armstrong. With a team like that you can only guess how they did and you are right they won it all. They placed 1st in the tournament, much to the dismay of the other teams on FOB Warhorse, which tried their luck at playing them. They easily handled the opposition in each game winning the final game by a score of 21 to 11. Congratulations to everyone that participated in that day's events, it was good to see the Blackhawks receiving their awards. I have also been told that the soldiers at NC53 have a pretty

good basketball team as well. I think I sense a showdown between the NC52 and NC53 to finally see who is the king of the court in Bravo Company. These guys were not robbed!!



SFC Caldwell controlling the game



SGT Armstrong taking his shot



The winners getting their prize



The winners with their prize

But the awards ceremony did not end the day for the festivities on Warhorse, the Dining Facility, had a little cook-out for us. Well they pretty much grilled everything

they could get their hands on. They had everything from steaks, chicken, ribs, burgers, and hot dogs. There were even your traditional side dishes of baked beans, corn-on-the-cob, pasta salads, potato salads, and a nice array of beverages to include the wonderful beverage Non-Alcoholic Budweiser. Well as for the NA BUD, I guess they have to give you something to make you feel like you were really at home, having a cookout with some family and friends. Overall the meal was pretty tasty and everyone seemed to be having a good time. There were also rumors of a cake, but it was quickly devoured before I could even lay eyes on it.

There was sadness in our week this week, but it was a sadness that has a silver lining. On 6 July 1SG Johnson said good-bye to Bravo Company, he has been replaced by 1SG Monty Peaytt of the S-3 shop. 1SG Johnson did a wonderful job with the company, and I for one, will miss him. As a new commander he taught me all the things that I needed to know to continue to make this company successful. It was a great Change of Responsibility ceremony. Now even in our sadness for losing 1SG Johnson, we gained 1SG Peaytt his eagerness, love for soldiers, and all of his past experiences will help bring this company even closer together and make the company exceed in many ways that it has not done so in the past. 1SG Peaytt will be an asset to this company for years to come. Before the Change of Responsibility the Battalion Commander was on hand to promote SFC Peaytt to the rank of 1SG.



LTC Garrison and SFC Terry Peaytt pinning the new ISG



ISG Peaytt and his wife SFC Terry Peaytt

After the Change of Responsibility some of the soldiers, including LT Kato, wanted to take ISG Peaytt out to the finest restaurant they could find. They had me convinced, so I was game on going with them. Now the rest of us knew of this little water-front restaurant, we were just not sure if we could convince ISG Peaytt to go in. We drove to the Tigris Restaurant near a pontoon bridge in our area and once we got there we started to wonder about the sanity of the idea so we decided not to dine there, and decided to head back to the

trusty dining facility on Fob Warhorse. Although we did have time to check out the local swimming hole, I think ISG started to think he was back home in West Virginia.



4 Star dining

We were able to have a small awards ceremony for some of the soldiers, with LTC Garrison presenting coins to the volleyball team, the basketball team, SSG Spradley, and PFC Houck. PFC Houck received a coin from the Battalion Commander for doing the right thing. While on Escort duty, one of the local nationals was trying to inform her of a possible attack on FOB Warhorse. She immediately reported what she had heard, and 3BCT took immediate action. She may have helped to save many lives that day for her actions.



Well that about wraps it up from here in paradise. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers, I know all of you reading this are in ours. Take Care and Have a Great Week!!!

B/121 ISG's Corner

Hello to everyone from FOB Warhorse. I would like to thank everyone in the Battalion for their congratulations, support and prayers. I am looking forward to serving these great soldiers of B Co 121st Signal BN and B Co 279th Signal Bn (NC 22). I would especially like to thank the S3 121st Signal BN for the opportunity to serve with them for the last 22 months. I will miss them immensely, good luck and god speed to all of you, my prayers are with you. Just a few more please. Thank you ISG Johnson for setting me up for success. I would like to thank LTC Garrison and CSM Butler for letting me pursue my true passion in life and that is leading soldiers. Thank you to my wife, SFC Terry Peaytt, for making

the trip down to Warhorse to share in one my best days in the Army.

We have been very busy over last week making visits to all of the out sites. All of the soldiers are motivated about what they are doing here. They take great pride in supporting the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. They are all true professionals.

While traveling to the awesome restaurant that the company took me out to though not to dine in, I spotted this swimming hole that was the best one I have seen since I left WV. The commander advised me that I should not jump in because I had just eaten at the dining facility and he didn't want me to get cramps or leprosy.

I will keep this short, thank you all for your prayers, god speed and god bless.

"Black Hawk 7 Out"



ISG Peaytt's favorite swimming hole

Charlie Company

Good day Friends and Family of Charlie Rock – 5 MONTHS COMPLETE!!

A Happy Belated 4th of JUL to you all! We had a spectacular fireworks show here on FOB Danger – best I have seen in years! The fireworks lasted for 35 bright and colorful minutes. It was a joint celebration with some of the local nationals coming on post as well as the new class of 350 graduates from the Iraqi National Guard partaking of the food and festivities.

With the first of the month came promotions in Charlie Rock. We were very excited to promote some outstanding soldiers at a sunny ceremony in front of Sadaam's infamous Bombed Out Palace on 1JUL04: SSG (P) Dwayne Washington to SFC; SGT (P) Jason McGowan to SSG; SPC Markus Sukmanowsky to SGT; SPC Prager to SGT; PFC James Bowser to SPC; PFC Cory Johnson to SPC.



All of the promotees in front of the Bombed Out Palace on FOB Danger, 01JUL04.

Charlie Rock featured training for this week is medical training. Being able to react to medical emergencies while on convoys is really important. Our brothers in 1-18 Infantry Battalion lent us their medics one day last week for some great training on how to evacuate soldiers from vehicles if injured, how to check for wounds and bleeding, and how to apply pressure dressings.



SSG Morehouse pulling an "unconscious" SFC Alvarez out of a vehicle during medical training.

Everyone has to do their part to assist with the "behind the scenes" details of keeping a FOB working and operational. Charlie Rock was privileged this week to do its part by escorting the sewage trucks off the FOB and out into the city. Charlie Rock soldiers braved the heat (up to 140 degrees inside the Up Armored vehicles) and darted through the insurgents to remove the waste safely and dump it into an open pit outside Tikrit. It is a tiresome job, so when the soldiers get back all they want to do is take a nap!



SPC Patrick Molitor mans his M249 weapon – ready for anything as we roll out the gate.



PFC Daniel Carrieri and CPL Nicholas McLin rest up between missions.

Finally, I will share the good new story of soldiers building a new place to live. The living quarters in the different buildings that Rock Soldiers live in are pretty tight. The carpenters in our

company have been working in this insane heat to complete a building outside NC53's area that will house 10 soldiers, making more room inside for the other soldiers. A grand opening ceremony is expected later this month.



Teamwork: SGT Bell and SPC Berry measure it out...and SPC Taylor holds the framework up.

In closing, I would like to say a special thank you to LaReina Mikrut for volunteering to be our new Family Readiness Group Leader. LaReina will go through the transition with Laura Poston over the next few weeks, and will assume her duties at the end of AUG. Thanks, LaReina. Your leadership is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to working with you and the rest of the Rock FRG team!!

Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers – ROCK STEADY!!



ISG Brown

HHC

I hope everybody had a safe and happy 4th of July holiday. I know here at FOB Danger we did get fireworks. 1st ID had a joint celebration with the local Iraqi's and the Iraqi National Guard

members here training on FOB Danger. Believe it or not we actually made FOX news with the joint celebration. The fireworks were really more than any of us expected.



One of the best parts of the show was when the dried up palm trees and brush below the MWR palace started on fire.

Of course it did not last too long since they did have a fire truck on hand just in case. We also had some unexpected fire works from the Special Forces unit, who launched some of their own fireworks. Of course they were just red flares, but they at least tried.

This week we also promoted two NCO's from the DFAC that I can, without a doubt, say are worth their weight in gold!



ISG Cromartie, SSG Briggs, CPT Steyer



SFC Guereroero at the 4th of July BBQ



SGT Molina & SGT Andreas

We also promoted PFC Yelverton to SPC Yelverton. Unfortunately the camera we used had a wrong setting on it so the picture came out white.

We also are proud to say that R&R is now in full swing with projections looking very good. We sent out about 30 people this month already. So, things are starting to look up. The pass program is also still in full swing to Qatar and Lake Dokan. Here are some of our R&R folks practicing dismounting the troop carrier before we departed.



Hope you all are having a safe and fun summer in Germany. We have heard it has been mostly cool, if you would like to trade the weather; we are all more than willing! Take care and have a wonderful week. See you all next week.

A/115th SIG

Soldiers from Alpha Company are doing their part to fight the war on terror. The past two weeks the soldiers have provided nearly

flawless communications to the Division, escorted over 50 soldiers to their respective R&R locations, conducted several Combat Logistics Patrols . . . and my favorite, the sewage truck escort mission, which entails escorting all sewage from FOB Danger to a gravel pit at a undisclosed location. It is imperative that the location remain secret, so terrorists cannot utilize the organic matter in a sinister manner.



Members of the Alpha Company Convoy team posing after a ROCK Drill.

CSM Brooks and SSG Gandy continue to work at the Iraqi National Guard (ING) training camp. The first crop of soldiers have recently graduated and they are returning to their respective units to provide indigenous security for Iraq. Several soldiers from Alpha have volunteered their skills at the school, and were proud to be a part of it. In particular, the maintenance section has repaired Non-Tactical Vehicles (or as most would know them as, SUVs) and conducted fueling operations on a couple of occasions to ensure the school did not miss a beat.



SSG Gandy & CSM Brooks over at the ING School

SSG Phillis Weldon (a.k.a. FROG) celebrated his 32nd year of military service this week. He is proud to have an opportunity to continue to serve, and is one of the best mechanics in the Army. He spends the bulk of his time in Iraq grooming young mechanics. He is truly a combat multiplier to our unit, and has worked on many Army systems since they were fielded!



SSG Phillis Weldon (Frog)

The Alpha Public Affairs Officer (PAO), SPC Harris, is on R&R this week. The talented young writer should be back within the next two weeks . . . so once again you may enjoy her high-quality stories.

Roughrider 6 – Out

C/711th SIG

Hello again from the other side of the world. I won't mention how hot it is because everyone talks about how hot it is and unfortunately the worst is yet to come! This has been a quiet week at FOB Danger for this bunch of Southerners with one exception. 1SG Teddy Taylor was dropped off at our doorstep (tent entrance) looking for a place to stay and someone to listen to him talk awhile. Of course we ALL love to hear Coach Taylor talk. His stories are always filled with laughter, especially his own. He has warmed our hearts again and we will all hate to see him leave. When he arrived he was looking slightly malnourished and we have been trying to increase his body composition by feeding him ice cream and various other deserts. Being the thoughtful, dedicated First Sergeant he is, he eats one for himself and a second one in honor of the Commander, CPT Shirah. How sweet!



1SG Taylor with SFC Bodiford

Other highlights for our group include the birth of Coleton Scott Smith to SGT Brian Smith and his lovely wife Marci. Congratulations to the Smith Family!



Coleton Smith sporting his new Auburn University socks



Proud Papa Smith

Other good news is the R & R program is kicking up and therefore so is the morale. Several unit members have gone home and returned already. Departure day around here (and the whole week prior), is filled with excitement. Seen here are some of the last group anxiously waiting for their convoy to Kirkuk.



SPC Whitaker and SPC Adams



SPC Montgomery and SPC Irvin

One of our SEN Teams at Camp Speicher has wined and dined their way into the hearts of an Aviation unit. They get to fly on a helicopter once a week to FOB Danger to escort their comrades in arms to pick up equipment from Division Main. That means we get to see their smiley faces more often. SPC Hathcock was the first to enjoy the adventure flying along the Tigris river.



SPC Hathcock from B51 and SFC Susan Green

We also enjoyed a very nice 4th of July celebration. The 1st Infantry Division managed to



SFC Green sporting the latest 4th of July fashions accessories

purchase some fireworks, invite a few hundred Local Nationals and put on a show not to be forgotten anytime soon. Until next time, take care and God Bless!



SFC Vernie Heard partying down

B/125th SIG

Happy belated 4th of July to everyone! We have spent the past few days recovering from the previous week of hard partying (if you consider a small Bar-B-Que “hard partying”) we all had in celebration of the 4th of July. In reality we had a couple of normal weeks. This week we will provide some quick event highlights from both node center platoons and headquarters platoon.

Headquarters platoon, under SFC Harbst, made many of our normal trips back and forth across the Atta Min province. Probably the most unique thing that happened was that we officially adopted a bunch of guys from Alabama, SEN team C41, that we picked up on the side of the road near the town of Tuz. C41 told us that we take better care of them than their own mothers. We know they were kidding because we know they were schmoozing to get us to bring more gear down, or hook them up with places to stay in Hawaii. Other highlights include fixing a lot of vehicles and generators, conducting supply transactions, doing administrative paperwork, promoting some people, working on email and web servers, working on commercial phone service, and we continued to support the entire company.



CPT Campbell reenlisting SPC Carling on the balcony of DMAIN on FOB Danger.

The past couple of weeks have been normal around Node Center 63. We do have one highlight of note. During the week of the 4th, NC 63 was proven to be the kings of “Halo” at Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Iraq. For non-gamers, “Halo” is a first person game for the XBOX where you basically run around and shoot at each other. On the 4TH of July at the Clamtina team consisting of SGT Williamson, SPC Butler, and PFC Nguyen took on all challengers in a “Halo” Tournament. Needless to say, the team went thru everyone: the Army, Air Force and Contractors alike. They eliminated all who thought they had what it took without breaking a sweat. They took home the Gold (in this case Gold T-Shirts) while those who lost lay wallowing in their excuses. After the tournament was over SPC Butler came clean and let everyone know that he is ALSO the champion HALO player in Hawaii.

The week of 4th of July at Node Center 62 proved to be a full one as a lot of essential business has occurred. We have had to adjust the work schedule as many of the platoon members went away to enjoy some well deserved time off from the monotony off maintaining a strong and robust network. Two of NC 62’s platoon members

enjoyed their fun in the sun in Qatar. They were SSG Bauer and SPC Davidek. These two soldiers have deserved this time by greatly contributing to the overall success of the network. We anxiously await their return for their brief so we can all learn the local watering holes’ rules and regulations.

On another note, Node Center 62 has several soldiers that are on Rest & Recreation (R&R) leave, enjoying time with family members. Our R&R numbers across the company are forecasted to be the best of any month yet and we expect almost half the company to have completed R&R by August.

The first soldier we want to highlight is SSG Heuring, who also has a new family member. Once again, “Congratulations, SSG Heuring, on the birth of your baby girl Hannah!” The two other soldiers, from Node Center 62, that are enjoying time at home away from us are SPC Vidaurri and PFC Cooper. Both of which are greatly appreciated and are well deserving of their time off. SPC Vidaurri incidentally just “smoked” the promotion board setting the example for others to follow. Way to send a message of professionalism and dedication to excellence others often imitate, but can’t seem to duplicate, “HELEON”.



PFC Busby at FOB Bernstein

Node Center 62 is also contributing to the modernization of Camp Speicher’s communication infrastructure. A key player in this realm has been our resident expert 31L extraordinaire, SGT Atkinson, who is utilizing her skills and expertise in order to expedite the move of SGT Correa’s team (G32) to bigger and better places. She is truly an asset that is working together with other soldiers from other units to get the job done in a professional, yet timely manner. Her commitment to excellence is greatly appreciated.

On Thursday prior to the 4th, we had our monthly leadership swap at Midland. SSG Bracewell led the way by ensuring the swap was a success by escorting and assisting in the patrol. SSG Bracewell took PFC Smith and SGT Whitener to replace SPC Rangel and SGT Richmond. SGT Richmond learned that this experience is truly a test of professionalism and dedication to duty with no room for error.



SSG Bracewell

This experience pushes the limits of a young non-commissioned officer’s commitment to excellence and is a true “leadership challenge” that veers into a new realm that forces a “drive on” attitude. An attitude that is essential to maintaining the success of this remarkable relay shot to Kirkuk, as well as, maintaining the amazing Remote RAU 62 (Army Cell Phone Tower). This relay shot

seems to act as the amoeba of the theater by encompassing an area roughly the size of Rhode Island. SGT Whitener and his team have moved in with the advantage. The team on the hill now lives in “containerized” buildings. These buildings are an extreme improvement over the tent city they previously lived in and should have a dual role in providing greater comfort and in mitigating the snake fear factor that is ever-present in the Jabal Hamrin Ridge area.



CPT Campbell reenlisting SPC Peabody on the balcony of DMAIN on FOB Danger.

We hope everyone enjoyed the 4th of July. We continue to have fun here in Iraq and hope to keep getting all of the outstanding support we receive from the families in Hawaii and the States. Thanks for all that you do! Hele On!



SPC Jones cooling off after his promotion.

Chaplain

In 1991, William Hurt starred in a movie called, “The Doctor.” He played Jack McKee, MD, an extraordinarily capable surgeon who is the star-doc of the hospital in which he works. He is known by all of his peers as the very best oncologist around. However, he’s cold, uncaring, self-absorbed and cynical. As the story unfolds, one discovers that the only thing he really cares about is himself. Even his wife and son take a back seat to his own ambition and selfishness. However, when Dr. McKee, himself, develops cancer, there begins a transformation within that allows him to see his true character.

During his illness, he meets another cancer patient, a young lady who mentors him on how to be human. At one point in his dialogue with June, he confesses loneliness. When she suggests that he talk to his wife, Dr. McKee’s response is this; I’ve pushed her away for so long, I don’t know how to let her back into my life.

There are times in our relationship to God that we push Him away because of our own selfishness and self-absorption. And we find ourselves as Dr. McKee did, forgetting how to let Him back in. You may be in that situation now and need Him to give you the strength you require for this long deployment. If so, then remember this; God loves you and is there for you if you will go to Him. Isaiah 55:6 tells us to “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.” It is while we are in particularly difficult times that God can be found. So look for Him, call upon Him, and find your rest in Him.



Chaplain Gilmore at a 4th of July BBQ on FOB Danger.

Soldier Spotlight



Rank and Name: PFC Steven Robertson

Job: Battalion Automation Technician

Home State: Dallas, since Dallas is its own state. Haha - Texas

What do you like best about FOB Danger? The fishing

If you could have one thing in a care package what would it be?

Alcohol....a pony ☺

What do you miss the most being here? Civilian clothes

What do you have to say about serving in Iraq? Hopefully what we are doing here is helping the people.



RUMOR MILL

Rumor: The rumor is that officers and enlisted will be extended until 15 NOV 05.

Fact: There has been no change to the stop loss / stop move policy that was established in November 2003.

RUMOR: An MP station at Baqubah was hit and there were soldiers that were killed. Some of them might have been soldiers from B Co.

Fact: Yes there was a MP station that was hit in Baqubah but no 121st Signal Task Force soldiers were injured in the attack.

RUMOR: Spouse doesn't know how his/her soldier is being chosen for RGR. OML questions? How RGR works, etc.

Fact: Division assigns the Battalion with a certain number of allocations normally during the last week of the month. From those allocations the Battalion divides them equally among the Companies according to company's percentage of the battalion's soldiers. Once the companies receive their allocations they use their company Order of Merit List (OML) to select those soldiers who will receive the allocations. Criteria used to create the company OML is up to the discretion of each company commander.

RUMOR: Stop loss/stop move is going to be lifted early so that people can return and have enough time to PCS/ETS or so that not everyone is leaving all at once.

FACT: The Division is currently working plans on how to accommodate the number of moves that they will experience after the stop loss / stop move is completed, however, there have been **no** change to the stop loss / stop move order initiated in November 2003

RUMOR: When 121 SIG redeploys, they will then redeploy to Afghanistan.

FACT: There is no plan for 121 SIG to deploy to Afghanistan upon redeployment from Iraq.



SFC Lehman topping a cheesecake for the 4th of July BBQ on FOB Danger



SPC Johnson working on his shelter



1LT Nagelvoort



CPT Laroque and CPT Dooley