



The Desert Voice



08 – 14 March 2004

Commander's Corner

TIKRIT, IRAQ – This week we completed our Relief-in-Place (RIP) with the 124th Signal Battalion. The largest divisional level tactical communications network in the history of the Army is now in the hands of Danger's Voice. On what was probably the nicest day we've had in Iraq, the colors of the 124th Signal Battalion were cased and ours were unfurled in front of the battalion headquarters.



LTC Garrison and CSM Butler unfurling the BN Colors

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to LTC John Baker and CSM Davis for the great hospitality and enabling such a smooth transition. The Lightning battalion truly set us up for success and we are forever in their debt. They did a tremendous job and represented our Army and nation with distinction.

Additionally this week, the B Company from the 279th Signal Battalion, and C Company from 711th Signal Battalion arrived in Tikrit. We will begin to integrate them into the network next week.

This was the busiest week yet and I continue to be impressed with the attitudes and

professionalism that our soldiers display on a daily basis. There's no question that the task they took on this week was graduate level work. They personified the 1st Infantry Division motto during the RIP of "No Mission too Difficult, No Sacrifice too Great – DUTY FIRST."



ISG Cromartie with HHC soldiers after the Transition of Authority ceremony

Alpha Company

The past week has been an extremely busy one for Alpha Company. We finished the transition process with 16th Signal Battalion and 124th Signal Battalion, both out of Fort Hood, Texas. They were glad to be going home after a year and we were glad to have them out of our way. We're finally ready to get settled in for the year.

To start the week, SPC Adams, SPC Turner and SGT Cornell were promoted to their new ranks. They should have been able to share the good news with their families from the new AT&T phone center that



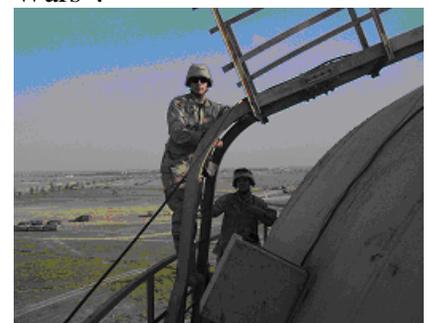
has been installed at FOB Packhorse. As always, quality of life is continuing to improve in Iraq. The 4TH Infantry Division has been a great help in that area by giving us the televisions, refrigerators and air

conditioners they did not want to take home. We were happy to be of assistance in lightening their load.



SFC Carter and LT Gates checking in with SPC Dalia

The high adventure of the week came on FOB Speicher when the 2nd Platoon LOS (V3) section installed an antenna on a water tower. When we reached the walking platform at the top of the water tower we discovered that the only apparent visitors to the area in the past several years have been birds. The section was determined not to let this gruesome discovery stand in the way of accomplishing the mission. With 100 mile-an-hour tape, camouflage poles and bungee cords they secured the antenna head to the top of the tower. There are plans to enter it in the Iraqi version of "Junkyard Wars".



PFC Bolen and PFC Young on FOB Speicher water tower

Perhaps the best news this week was that the postal section has sorted all of the mail in the 10 large shipping containers they were given upon arrival. They have been working about 20 hours a day to get caught up and mail delivery to the outposts is in full swing. There were many smiles on soldiers' faces as they received their care packages and letters from home. All in all it was a busy but good week and we look forward to the challenges ahead.

Bravo Company

This week we received our generators, trailers and containers. We put our equipment in system, and began the "sustainment" portion of the deployment.



Sunrise over the FOB WARHORSE PX.

The first major event of the week was the arrival of our generators, trailers, and containers. Finally we were able to get to work and put in the network with only minor troubles. After three days of engineering, the other (outgoing) Node Center was able to break down, and thus, the network is now ours. We unloaded the containers and got the rest of our personal items and finished the move in process into our rooms, and at last we were able to set up our operations areas the way they will stay. Special thanks on these tasks are due to several soldiers for their outstanding efforts this week, including SGT Hanson and PFC Kubilis for putting up the morale

tent and building the flooring for it, SGT Shipley, SGT Matelski, and SSG Schmidt for moving the satellite receiver, TV, deep freezer, and chairs into the moral tent, and of course, all of the operators that built the communications network, who are too many to mention.



F32, operating out of SCUNION, with SSG Spadley and SFC Caldwell, visiting and checking on living conditions. From left to right, SSG Spradley, SPC Griggs, SPC Collins, SSG Love, SPC Franco, SGT Armstrong, SPC Hill, and SFC Caldwell.

Part of receiving all of our equipment was the delivery of all of the generators to their camps to link up with their teams. Towards that end, the convoy team was able to see Scunion and Gabe this week, allowing us to visit the F32 and F33 teams.



Above: The PX. Below: SCUNION (Home for F32) living containers and front gate.



To introduce you to FOB Warhorse a little, I will try to include some pictures of the place until I run out of things to take pictures of. The obvious ones, in my opinion, are the living containers (previous column), the PX (previous column), and the dining facility (see below).



SGT Dale, SSG Johnson, SGT Sanchez, SGT Bryant, and SPC DePreist at the dining facility



Serving line and dining area

Kellogg, Brown, and Root run this facility, and the food is outstanding. Everyone says we will lose weight on this deployment, but with the way they are feeding us, I really don't see how.

Finally, towards the end of the week, the long part of the deployment begins. With setup being nearly complete for the RIP (Relief in Place) network, we begin swinging a few shots to the network that we will sustain. Upon completion, we will just have to maintain the network, and continue the daily taskings required (including Force Protection duty, site escort detail, etc) to keep the camp running while we are here.

Many thanks for the extra long hours and hard work it took for our

soldiers to stand up this network, and claim it as our own.



LTC Brown (outgoing Bn CDR) and LTC Garrison arrive by UH-60 to visit FOB WARHORSE (they are the tiny people in the middle of picture)

Charlie Company

Charlie Rock enjoyed another successful week in Tikrit, with the arrival and integration of Node Center 53. Currently Charlie Company has every communications van in system providing reliable communications to the 1st Infantry Division. Many soldiers are working hard to make the company successful in this mission from SGT Sweat and the Cable Dawgs wiring the Division HQ to SGT Mendyka and the soldiers of Node Center 53 that are serving as a crucial hub for most of the network's important internodal links. The soldiers are also serving in many other duties such as guards for the base and as convoy security teams. Morale continues to remain high as most of the soldiers have begun to settle into a rhythm and have become accustomed to the climate and their typical daily schedule.

HHC

The Soldiers from HHC thank you, the spouses and Rear D, for all of the help and support you have given to us this past month of our deployment. Just to rub it in a little I was informed from my Household 6 that the weather there is dreary and frightful. Just so you know here the weather so far is great! Not too hot, yet, and not too

cold. Let's just say it is around the high 70's to mid 80's.

This week was filled with transition and network woes. Soldiers have been laboring throughout the day and night transitioning and installing the network. Here is a picture of what



the three tool men (SSG Parker, SPC

Augusta,

and CPT Steyer) are building in the palace. It is our CQ desk; however, due to all of the current taskings and issues we have no one available to pull duty. So, right now it is a grand desk. Next week I will send you the finished product.

Hats off to LTC Garrison as you can see here he is off in his



HUMMER heading on another mission.

This

week's stellar performing section has been the DFAC. Yes, folks SGT Briggs has all of his crew gainfully employed in every mission for the BN. DFAC section has been making strides daily to help everyone. Next week I will have a picture of all of them for you. Sorry, some of them are currently not available and it would not be fair to have any of them missing. This is Tough Six bidding you all a big stay tuned for next week! HI FROM ALL OF US, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER GIVES YOU A BIG HUG AND KISS! THANKS AGAIN FOR THE WONDERFUL SUPPORT!

Chaplain

Most of us do not enjoy difficult times...myself included. I can't

say that I find joy in a cold shower, a hot soft drink or, especially, missing my wife and kids. But God has something to say to us about troubles that may seem shocking. He says in James 1:2, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds." Our first reaction might be think that God is not in touch with the realities or the depths of trials we face as soldiers and family members. And if we stopped reading right there, we might walk away thinking that God doesn't know what He's talking about.

However, if we continue into the next verse, we'd find that there's a promise that hinges on His command. He says, "Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

As I write this, we just completed our Transfer of Authority, which means that the network is officially ours and we have a job to do that may seem overwhelming. What we need to complete this mission is perseverance. And the only way to develop perseverance is to go through the difficulties of the moment with an attitude of joy, knowing that we are being made stronger and wiser as a result. Because, as our families, you are a part of this great calling, you too need perseverance. So maintain a purely joyful outlook during these times, knowing that God is completing a work in you that He will complete.

