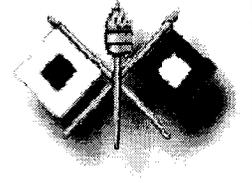


# The Desert Voice



29 March – 04 April 2004

## Commander's Corner

TIKRIT, IRAQ & AO Danger –

I've said in previous editions that we appreciate the thoughts and prayers of our readers, and that it does make a difference. Well, if there was any doubt in this, here's some proof.

This week a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) flew through the office door of SSG Cady's, Remote RAU 53 team and lodged itself into the back wall of the building, but didn't detonate.

A mortar round landed about 30 feet outside Node Center 15 at FOB McKenzie, but didn't detonate.

Another mortar round impacted about 100 meters behind the Battalion Headquarters, detonated without injury to anyone or damage to any equipment.

A Charlie Company convoy had an IED explode behind their trail vehicle. Again, nobody was hurt.

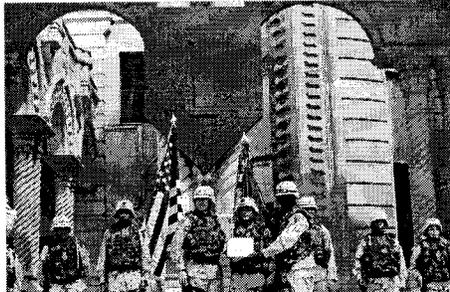
A rocket attack in Kirkuk saw several rounds impact in the sleeping area on FOB Warrior. While there were injuries to U.S. forces, none of them were part of Task Force Signal.

As you can see, we had some close calls this week. But at the end of yet another busy week, all is well and everyone is doing fine.

Some might choose to believe that we were just lucky. For me, I've decided to continue to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers for our safety because it does make a difference.

I had the privilege of reenlisting SPC Gajo this week on the steps of

the Tikrit palace. This was the first reenlistment in the battalion in



SPC Gajo's reenlistment on the steps of the Division Palace.

Iraq. It's always a pleasure to see a great soldier make a further commitment to serve our nation.

We held our first Commander's Conference this past weekend where we did a little "bonding" and worked out some tenuous Command and Control (C2) and reporting procedures. The highlight of the event was the BBQ out on an island, accessible only by boat, in the lake on FOB Danger. Special thanks go to the staff and others in HHC for making it a fun and informative event. Also, kudos go to B/125<sup>th</sup> for acquiring the steaks from the As Sulaymaniyah province. What kind of meat was that again? Until next week, Voice 6 out.

## Alpha Company

This week the convoy team took our longest trip since arriving at FOB Speicher. We traveled to FOB McKenzie (formerly known as FOB Pacesetter) to visit the F14 team. We arrived to find everyone well. The FOB is spartan, mainly consisting of bunkers, but the housing there is in prefabricated trailers and each one has its own heating and air conditioning. As

strange as needing a heater sounds in Iraq, we've experienced cooler temperatures this week, and the heat helps keep things comfortable at night. PFC Shields was on duty in the SEN during our trip and doing an outstanding job providing communications for 1-4 Cavalry Squadron.

We always conduct rehearsals for situations that could arise during the convoy and on our trip pack from FOB McKenzie we got to use or training. Shortly after getting back on the road the rear gun truck started overheating. SPC Kearney, our convoy mechanic, quickly checked the engine and determined that there was no coolant in the overflow tank. After an initial attempt to refill the radiator, the decision was made to attach a tow bar for the journey home. Needless to say that made for a slow journey home, but everyone got back without incident.

We conducted several promotions this week. SPC Arnett and PFC Morrow from Node Center 51 was promoted on Thursday morning. Also, PFC Blankenship and PFC Moree from F11 were promoted to their current ranks. SPC Houtman from EMS was promoted on 2 April. We have a few more promotions to do in the next few days which we'll cover next week. Job well done to everyone who got promoted this month by showing you have the stuff needed to get the mission

accomplished in a combat zone.



PFC Morrow displays his new rank



SPC Arnett gets pinned

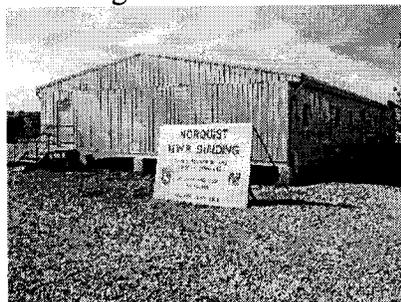
## Bravo Company

This week in the Bravo Company Area of Operations, we have experienced our first direct fire engagement at FOB Warhorse, began a construction project, opened a new MWR facility, and began preparations for the company's upcoming Change of Command.

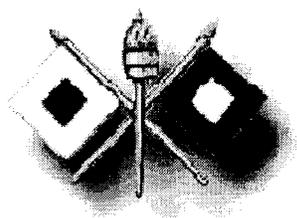
On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, an IED was sent off at the west gate of FOB Warhorse, almost simultaneously, two RPGs were fired at vehicles coming into the north gate. This is significant for a couple of reasons. First, this represents the first activity evolving either direct fire or indirect fire actually on our FOB. Second, and this is important, there were no US casualties or even injuries during this attack. The grand total of damage that occurred

was that a Hemmit has two flat tires and a small fuel leak.

Which brings us to the construction on FOB Warhorse. The Mayor Cell has begun building adding security to our gates and fence line by adding 12-foot concrete barriers and HESCO baskets to our perimeter. The thought is, of course, that they won't shoot at us if they can't see us. The construction is a rather large undertaking and will take a few weeks to complete, but gates are visibly different (improved) with each day the convoy team rolls through.



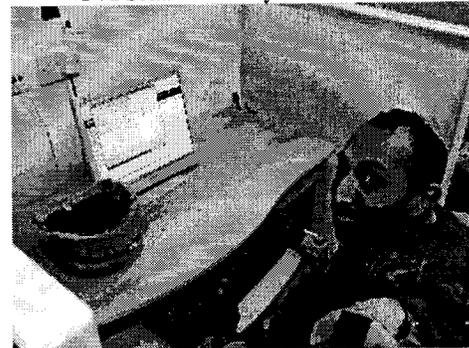
FOB Warhorse opened the new Norquist Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facility on 1 April, which has moved the soldiers from the old dusty hanger (which used to be the MWR facility) into a nice, air conditioned, furnished, and so far dust free facility. The services available at that facility are a TV room (with VCR/DVD), game room (Playstation 2 and a whole page of games to chose from), Fuss Ball, Ping Pong, a weight room (with treadmills), the IP phones to call home, and the computer room with commercial internet access. All of these services are provided at no cost to the soldier, who only sign up and wait his or her turn to use whatever



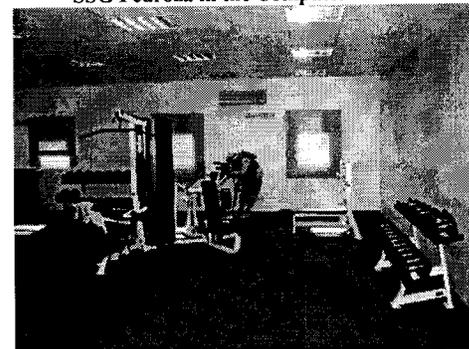
they would like.



PV2 Sofia in the Playstation Room



SSG Pedroza in the Computer Room

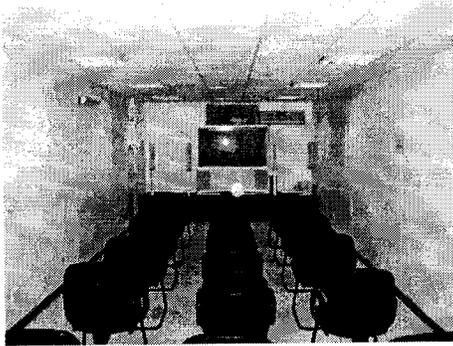


Weight Room



Game Room

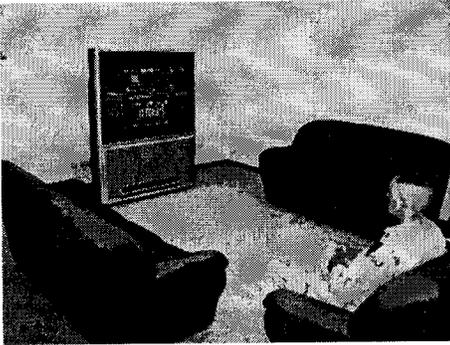




Movie Room



Treadmills in Weight Room



TV Room

The entire company has begun preparations for its upcoming Change of Command. After almost two years of commanding this company, I am being forcefully removed by the Battalion Commander who insists on "giving someone else a chance." I still think it's a conspiracy, but have yet to uncover and foil the plot to have me ousted from my company. In all seriousness, the new commander has been named, and will be CPT Kevin Donley, who now serves the Division in the G6 realm. The Change of Command will take place on 9 May, with inventories beginning 9 April.

The convoy team spent some long hours on the road this week,

and have visited every Camp, FOB, and station in our area of responsibility. I can personally attest to the fact that the company is doing well, and morale is high. Each soldier on every FOB is making the best of their own situations and working towards making their environment downright "livable" for the duration of their stay.



F33 Site on Camp Gabe. PFC Abernathy sitting in the SEN.

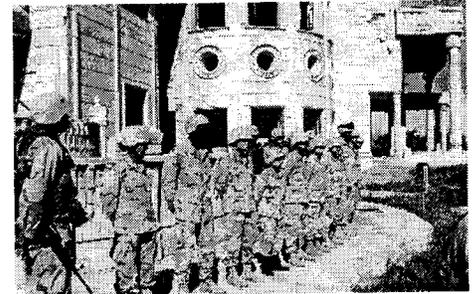
### Charlie Company

Charlie Rock continues to provide outstanding communications support to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Iraq. This week we continued to improve our working conditions with the construction of a unit supply room. This room was constructed from scratch by SPC Froeschner and SSG Reina in only two days. SPC Guldamen, our air conditioning mechanic, has been busy on a project to augment all of our communications assemblages with commercial air conditioners. This project will be worth its wait in gold once the temperature in Iraq begins to rise over 100 degrees. Although the temperature here had been breaking into the 90s, we have enjoyed a relative cool spell with temperatures in the 70s this week. Charlie Rock also had the

privilege of promoting the following soldiers:

SPC Catron to the rank of SGT  
SPC McLin to the rank of CPL  
PFC Palmer to the rank of SPC  
PFC Jones, Jennifer to the rank of SPC  
PV2 Jones, Anthony to the rank of PFC  
PV2 Wallace to the rank of PFC  
PV2 Vanya to the rank of PFC  
PV2 Bowser to the rank of PFC  
PV2 Holster to the rank of PFC  
PV2 Luna to the rank of PFC  
Congratulations to each of these soldiers!

CHARLIE  
ROCK!!



### HHC

Good day everyone! It has been another busy week for everyone. The weather this week has been on the cooler side with some clouds and a nice breeze which was a nice change from last week's heat wave. We did receive some rain this week but not much; just enough to keep the dust down.

Ok the first picture in this week's edition is of the ladies of the S1 section. Here CPT Miller, SFC Vinson and SPC Whitehead take some time out of their busy schedule to look for a quick photo. The S1 section is charged with the important task of managing of all the personnel for the battalion here at FOB Danger as well as all the other FOBs that 121 SIG soldiers are located as well getting the mail out to the companies for distribution to the soldiers.



Below is a picture of the men of the S1 section out in front of their tent. From left to right, SPC Burns, SSG Barreto, SGT Lopez, SPC Store and SGT Gonzales were determining who could do the most pull ups.



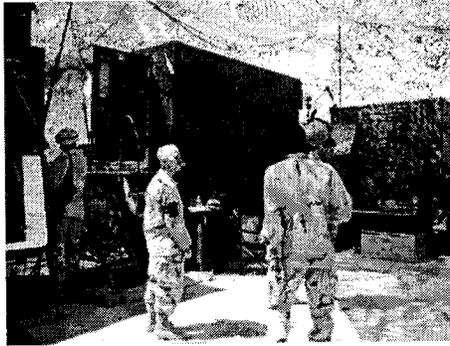
This week's stellar performing section has been EMS. They are the unsung heroes. They are the ones responsible for fixing broken signal equipment that is required to carry out our mission. Anytime, day or night, they are ready to respond and take care of any problems with our equipment.



From Left to Right: 1<sup>st</sup> row, SPC Marquis, PFC Summerall. 2<sup>nd</sup> row, CW2 Gilyard, PFC Managan, SPC Starr. 3<sup>rd</sup> Row, SFC Smith, SGT Wilson, SSG(P) Tufele, and PFC Alba.

In the picture below, SPC Marquis, SPC Starr and PV2 Summerall play a game of PIG on

their homemade basketball court as they find some downtime in their busy schedule.



Yesterday SSG(P) Walker was promoted to SFC Walker. Here 1SG Cromartie and I are about to pin the rank on SFC Walker as everyone is at attention as the orders are read. SFC Walker is an invaluable part of the Movement Control Team keeping track of all the 121 convoys that are on the road.



CPT Steyer and 1SG Cromartie promoting SSG Walker to SFC.

Well that's all for this weeks edition of the Tough Corner. I would like to thank you again for all your wonderful support. This is Tough Six saying goodbye and stay tuned for next weeks edition of the Tough Corner.

### Chaplain

**Lagniappe**—ever heard that word? In South Louisiana, where I was raised, it's used all the time and it's pronounced simply (*lan-yap*). It's an interesting word that has a rich cultural meaning.

Webster's defines it as: *A small gift presented by a storeowner to a customer with the customer's purchase.* In my home, and in many across the state, it was used

to refer to the cream that rises to the top of a Gumbo or an Ettufe...the really tasty stuff. But in everyday life, it's simply *that little something extra* that makes you smile.

We all need that little something extra in our lives, particularly when things aren't always going our way. In that case, a different twist on lagniappe for you can come in many different forms; like a friendly word, a kind act, or an encouraging deed. How would you like to have a little of that lagniappe in your life? My guess is that you would! So, here's what you do; say a friendly word or do kind act for someone near you. When you do that, the blessing becomes yours and you get to experience that *little something extra* for yourself.

This week, practice being that lagniappe for a friend or a loved one.

### A/115 SIG

Members of Alpha Company 115<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion arrived in Iraq a little over a week ago. The soldiers of the 121<sup>st</sup> have worked hard to incorporate us into their team, and we've worked hard to fit into their organization. We could not have asked for a better group of folks to work with. We've been really busy the last week and have replaced the Iowa National Guard's 234<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion's soldiers and equipment. We have the good fortune of working with 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of Charlie Company of the 711<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion who's located out of south Alabama. 2LT Mike Beber, SFC Green and their platoon have done an outstanding job. I'm very proud of what our soldiers have been able to accomplish thus far. Your soldiers have been the consummate professionals. The soldiers at all

the sites have been working hard to improve their quality of life. I visited a couple of the remote teams within the last few days, and SSG Bretherick's team (Shivers, Heath, Thigpin, Lyles and Cliff Davis) were actually making an addition to a house. It was very impressive . . . SSG Newton and the maintenance folks have remodeled the interior of their living quarters and it is very nice. We housed some folks from another unit the other night and they really enjoyed their stay with us. They kept thanking me for our southern hospitality. The ride north from Kuwait was an interesting experience. The picture below is of SFC Sam Anderson readying himself for a "patrol" prior to our arrival in Tikrit. PETA should not be worried, the camel in the below picture was not permanently harmed . . . the poor thing only groaned for a couple of minutes . . .



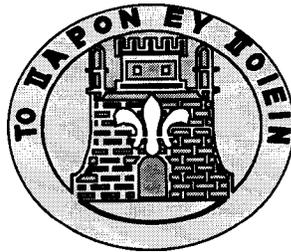
SFC Anderson riding a camel from A/115 SIG

### C/711 SIG

Node Center 14, Company C, 711<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion gets a visit from Headquarters, 711 Signal Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Scott Gedling. SFC Vernie Heard, Node Center 14 Transmission Section Supervisor from Foley, Alabama and the rest of the soldiers in first platoon were happy to see him and his staff. The visit was extra special because Company C has been tasked to work with another battalion, the 121st, yet the 711<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion has not forgotten us!



SFC Heard and LTC Gedling



### Soldier Spotlight:



**Soldier Spotlight:** PFC

Moranda Bowman

**Duty Position:** Cook, HHC, 121<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion

**Forward Operating Base:** Midland

**Home State:** Pennsylvania

**Family:** Engaged

**What she has to say about serving in Iraq:** I love it for a few reasons: I get to do my job everyday, I feel safe, and much of the countryside is more beautiful than I had imagined. I'm proud to be here serving my country.



CPL Neely's reenlisting in front of the Division Palace.



From Left to Right. 1<sup>st</sup> Row: SFC Brown, CPT Poston. 2<sup>nd</sup> Row: CPT Long, ISG Frazier, CPT Sweeney, ISG Brooks, CPT Steyer, ISG Cromartie, CSM Butler, LTC Garrison, CPT Dooley, ISG Johnson, ISG Taylor, CPT Shirah, and CPT Campbell.