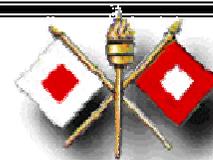




# The Desert Voice



26 April – 02 May 2004

## Commander's Corner

TIKRIT, IRAQ & AO

**DANGER** – We dedicate this edition to our fallen comrade PFC Shawn Edwards. The last week has been difficult for all of us in dealing with the loss of one of our own. Later in this edition is a special tribute to a great soldier who paid the ultimate price for our nation. PFC Edwards will be sorely missed but never forgotten.

This time of year is traditionally a transition period, and even with Stop Loss/Stop Move still in effect for 1ID, there will be some changes in personnel within the Task Force. We have a new Executive Officer. MAJ Mike Self has been freed from the “pit” (DMAIN) after 22 months of service as the Deputy G6. The XO for the past year, MAJ Mike McCaffery has assumed the duties as the new Deputy. While both jobs are within the Signal Battalion, this swap is undoubtedly a significant emotional event for both these officers.

Next week Bravo Company will get a new Commander when CPT Ryan Dooley passes his company guidon to CPT Kevin Donley. Ryan will have completed nearly 2 years as the Blackhawk leader, and will join MAJ McCaffery in the “pit” to complete the deployment. CPT Dawn Longwill will soon begin her transition into command of Charlie Company by conducting the inventory of the

associated property. Also, we welcome 1LT Barry to Charlie Co. and Node Center 53, and CPT Christensen to the G6 office in the “pit”.

Unfortunately, there are a few that have left or will soon leave the battalion to serve as Signal Officers throughout the Division. 2LT Marquis has move to FOB Gabe to be with the 1-6 FA, CPT Byrd has departed to FOB Paliwoda and 1-77 AR, and CPT Callo, the former Battalion S-2, has moved to the Division Headquarters. Yes, the “pit”. Soon we will lose 1LT(P) Prudhomme to 1-18 IN. Each of these officers has contributed immensely to our mission thus far, and while we will miss them, they will all be tremendous assets to their new commands.

The R&R program will begin this month. While we did not receive as many allocations as we thought we would, the program is operational. For this month, the soldiers will fly from Kuwait City International Airport to their desired destination for R&R. Their leave period will begin when they reach the airport nearest that destination. Since we only have a few allocations, those who have had babies since we've deployed and those that have children graduating from High School were given priority.

Additionally, we have several dozen going on pass

either in Qatar or at Lake Dokan in northern Iraq. The allocations were given to the companies based on population density and the company leadership determined who was afforded this opportunity. Going on pass to one of these sites in no way jeopardizes a soldiers chance to go on R&R.

I'd like to close by thanking all those who contributed, both here in Iraq and those in Germany, in making the memorial services for PFC Edwards at both locations truly first class events. Thank you for the thoughts and prayers, it does make a difference.

## Alpha Company

I would like to start off this edition by correcting a couple of egregious errors that I have committed during the writing of this column. To start with, SPC (P) Ryder mentioned in the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Desert Voice is in fact SGT Ryder. He was promoted while we were in Kuwait. In the 10<sup>th</sup> edition, the SGT Garner shown reenlisting is actually SGT Gardner. Also, SGT Freerkson's name was misspelled in the last edition. I don't know who keeps getting onto my computer and changing these names and ranks, but when I find them I can assure you they will be dealt with accordingly.

The weather this past week has given Alpha Company a taste of what we can expect during the summer. We have

seen warm temperatures and clear sunny skies. By warm, I mean something bordering on hot enough to boil water. Hot would be defined as the temperature at which water boils and higher. Luckily, it's not hot yet. But, we're excited because we know it's coming.

SGT Davis' "World Famous Remote RAU 50" team at Brassfield-Mora has been hard at work preparing for hot weather. Through a means that we won't question, the team was able to procure a tent shaped much like a Quonset hut to shield the shelter from the warm and soothing Iraqi sun. They also constructed a room on the back of the shelters, once again with materials procured in a means we won't question, to act as an office and a place to spend time during those relaxing Iraqi summer days. PFC Collantes, SPC Cruz, PFC Hypolite and PFC Quiroz have definitely honed their wood working and procurement skills this week.



**PFC Hypolite and PFC Collantes take a break from building to enjoy their new office space**

The F14 crew at McKenzie has been constructing a summer shelter as well. SPC Metcalf

and PFC Rayburn have been hard at work constructing a shelter that is both functional and comfortable. They also need a place to house the 3000 pounds of personal gear SGT Apodaca somehow managed to smuggle into Iraq. If your kitchen sink is missing, SGT Apodaca probably has it at McKenzie. The only snag they have run into is the lack of nails at their FOB. However, now that the Segovia package is back on line, they should be able to order some on the internet or call home to have some sent.

FOB Dagger had another possible security breach this week. SGT Gardner was sitting in his bunker pondering the warm Iraqi weather when he heard someone yelling "TWO", "NO", "YES", "TWO." SGT Gardner quickly concluded someone was attempting to walk in mortars on his position. Being a seasoned NCO, SGT Gardner knew the only way to deal with this situation was to take out the observer who was calling directions to the mortar tubes. He low crawled out of his bunker and was working his way past the back of the SEN when he was startled by someone yelling "YES." "They've gotten in the SEN and are walking in the ordnance from there" he thought to himself. He slowly rose up aiming his rifle at the door of the SEN. About to pull the trigger on the enemy observer, he took note that the enemy looked suspiciously like PFC Lovitt. Taking this all in, he called out "Lovitt, is that you." To which the unknown entity screamed "TWO." Recognizing the voice and the profile, he

decided that it was in fact Lovitt yelling random numbers and monosyllabic utterances. SGT Gardner lowered his rifle, and inquired as to what Lovitt was doing. Lovitt replied at the top of lungs "NO." As it turns out, Lovitt was attempting to use the automated operator at Fort Gordon to call home and when it didn't respond to his normal voice he switched to screaming. To make a long story short, Lovitt has yet to complete a phone call to Georgia. And FOB Dagger has once again been deemed safe.

The crew at FOB Remagen has a new mascot. They were able to capture a camel spider after rushing into the Node Center to find out why SPC Eric Smith was screaming and standing on a chair. To keep their mascot healthy, they feed it ants and other insects, and have tried to round out its diet with SSG Meiss' weight lifting supplements. To entertain themselves during the times the wind has knocked out the AFN satellite receiver at the new MWR building, they are planning to capture another camel spider to see if their nutritionally enhanced spider can win in a No Holds Barred Cage Match. Yes, life at FOB Remagen has truly become uneventful.

We had two promotions this week; PFC Lovitt from F12 at Dagger and SPC Young from NC51 at Speicher. Both have done an outstanding job during this deployment and have been recognized for their abilities to perform at the next rank. We'll close this week with their pictures.



**SGT Cornell and CPT Long pinning SPC Young**



**PFC Lovitt receives his promotion certificate**

## **Bravo Company**

The most important event of this week was the memorial service for PFC Shawn C. Edwards, who was killed by an IED on 23 April 2004. We gathered together to honor his life, to remember his death, and to show our gratitude for the privilege of serving with such a fine soldier and friend. The service was held on FOB Danger, and had the Division Commander, Division Command Sergeant Major, and the Assistant Division Commander for Support in attendance, along with several



**CPT Dooley on visit to FOB Danger**

soldiers and leaders from our battalion and others within the division. It was a beautiful ceremony including comments from CPT Poston, SSG Washington, SPC Turner, CHAP Gilmore, and LTC Garrison.



**CPT Dooley and 1SG Johnson rendering last respects to PFC Shawn C. Edwards.**

In addition, this week saw the publishing of a book written by one of our soldiers, the moving of the company CP into a “hard stand” container, a movie theater opening on Anaconda, and a previously injured soldier returning to work.

PFC Jeremy Thorpe is an operator on SSG Cady’s RR53 team on FOB Wilson. He is also known for his profound “Thoughts of the Day” that he posts on the teams bulletin board. What none of us knew was that PFC Thorpe is now a published poet. He had his first book published and is for sale on the Internet. For those that are interested, it is called “The Blue Collection” and is on sale now for \$10.00 at Amazon.com. PFC Thorpe has already begun his second book, tentatively titled, “The Red Collection.”

The Company CP has moved out of our tent and into a “Double Wide” living container, made available when they were slightly damaged by a mortar several months ago. They have been re-wired, air

conditioned, moved, and sand-bagged into place. SSG Schmidt did a fantastic job moving the operations cell into the new CP which is quieter, cleaner, and quite a bit cooler than the tent we have been in since our arrival.



**SSG Schmidt and SGT Riddle stand in the doorway of our new CP.**

While in our travels this last week, we stopped by 1LT Satterfield’s NC22 on Anaconda. Since it is located between Tikrit and Ba’Qubah, we end up staying there upon occasion while conducting the longer convoys. This time, on our arrival, 1LT Satterfield announced that the movie theater was open, along with the swimming pool and the Anthony’s Pizza. Of course we thought he was kidding. He wasn’t! The Anthony’s is



inside the new Theater, which plays several movies each night, all of them free for soldiers. The pizza has a pretty long line, but we found it to be worth while. We never did see the pool.



**View inside the new theater, and CPT Donley enjoying his first Pizza of this deployment.**

Lastly, PFC Kubilis, who was injured in the vehicle accident a couple weeks back, has finally nursed himself back into health. He has shown up at several convoy mission briefs only to be told that he was still on quarters and needed to rest. Wanting to get back on the team, he kept showing up, and I kept shooing him back to his room. Well, now that he is back in health, he is back on the team. –And smiling every inch of the route... We are all happy he is feeling better and thankful for his return. He was missed in his absence.



**PFC Kubilis returns to his Ring Mount on top of B8.**

Thank you, and have a good week.

### **Charlie Company**

This past week was a tough one for everyone involved in Charlie Company and the entire signal battalion. We lost one of our own, PFC Shawn Edwards, when an improvised explosive device struck the vehicle in

which Shawn was manning a machine gun on the way to Balad, Iraq. He was an outstanding soldier and he will truly be missed.

Although a tough week, the soldiers of Charlie Company have continued to soldier on and have performed splendidly. 1Lt Gunther has been serving as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist (EME) here in Iraq. In this capacity the Catholic Church allows her to serve communion to the service members here in Tikrit when we cannot get a Catholic Priest to perform the service in person. She has done an outstanding job and her efforts are much appreciated.

Soldiers also continue to serve in a number of different capacities here on FOB Danger outside of their assigned military occupational specialties. SPC Almirol & SPC Eisenman have been recently serving at one of the security checkpoints at the main gate into the FOB. At this checkpoint they are charged with “frisking” all Iraqi women that come onto the base. They also provide over watch while the males are searched. They seem to really enjoy this duty as it is something different and they also get to wear their hair down (so the Iraqis know that women are searching their women.)



**SPC Almirol and SPC Eisenman with “their hair down” at the Horse Gate.**



**SPC Eisenman provides over watch security as another US Soldier searches an Iraqi worker.**

The temperature is beginning to reach into the upper 90s and we are using our A/Cs for the first times. A simple walk to the chow hall or the porta-pottie and you are completely soaked with sweat. However, everyone is making the most of the weather. We have been lucky that the weather thus far has been rather mild and we expect to acclimate ourselves well by the time the temperature reaches into the 100s.



**Some of members of the motorpool trying to “beat the heat” by Saddam’s pool**

As the company continues through this tough time please continue your support through correspondence with your loved one and prayer. Each letter and e-mail makes a difference. Thanks for all of your support. CHARLIE ROCK!

## HHC

Good day ladies and Gents. The weather here is now getting hotter and hotter and hotter. Let's just say we know the end is not in sight. This week's emphasis is on the command group and their convoy team. Below is LTC Garrison's Convoy team right before they left on another mission. All the team members were hand selected for their high skills and attention to detail.



**Back Row (SPC Robertson, PV2 Kulewitz, PFC Peirce) Second Row (SGT Dunbar, PV2 Cleaver, SPC Williams, SPC Breischke, SFC Lehman) Front Row (CSM Butler, SFC Garrreo, SPC Bucci, and SPC Kriel)**

Missing from the picture is LTC Garrison who was at DMAIN.

The next group of people are the ones who help orchestrate everything that goes on over the airways here at Task Force Danger. Some of them are even good looking, while you can be the judge of that. So, without making you wait any longer I present to you the Officers of the command group.



**From left to right MAJ Self (XO), LTC Garrison (BN CDR) and MAJ Withee (S3). Absent from the picture is MAJ McCaffery (Dep G6)**

No fear, I have a picture of him also, here he is schooling some soldiers on spades. If I remember correctly they won by a landslide!



**MAJ McCaffery playing cards with SGT Dunbar and SSG Perez**

And no command team would be complete with out the Command Sergeant Major and his cronies, the other Sergeant Majors, from the S3 and G6 sections. So, here is CSM Butler and SGM Mason taking time out of their busy schedule to give me a picture.



**CSM Butler with SGM Mason**  
Of course I had to go to DMAIN to get a picture of the G6 SGM Vandertie, I took it and of course it was corrupt so,

I do not have a picture of him. So, I owe all of you a picture next week.

Mail and food update: Mail is returning to normal and we are getting tons at a time. DFAC food is slowly returning to normal, we have coke and hot A's, but we are still missing the ketchup truck. There always seems to be a shortage of Ketchup, but we are all happy for what we have. Good day to all and for all of you Mothers out there "HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!" We'll be thinking of you. Tough 6 out!

## Chaplain

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Church at Rome had some encouraging words that we should hear. To this struggling church, he said, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The knowledge that PFC Edwards had been killed in action has been difficult for everyone in the 121 family. It hasn't been easy on the soldiers and I know our families have struggled with this loss as well. While we were here dealing with the reality of what had happened, you were at home doing a whole lot of wondering about who and what had actually happened. Unfortunately, for many reasons, all your questions couldn't be answered as immediately as I know you would have liked. And, in fact,

you may still have questions that can never be answered.

That's why this message of a love so strong that it endures all things is a message we need to hear today. You see; this love is from a God who knows personally our weaknesses and our pains. It is best thought of as the type of love a parent would have for his or her child. As parents, we feel everything our children feel, both the joys and the pains. And often these feelings are magnified in us because of our love for them. And just like our love for our children is always there, so God's love for us knows no change. God doesn't love us more at one point than He does at another. His love is strong all the time.

But there is something we must do in order to make this comforting love a reality in our lives. We must seek God. This powerful love extended to us is all we need and it comforts us when we place ourselves where God is. So look for God. Look for where He is working. Look for where His presence is obvious. It may be in a friend or in a worship service or in your own meditation. But He IS there and He wants you close to Him so you can be comforted and know His peace and His presence.

## A/115 SIG

It's "Signal as usual" for the soldiers of Alpha Company 115<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion here in Iraq. As improvements continue on the living areas and work areas of the soldiers, the operations area is now official. The first thing seen by visitors to our operations' area at Forward Operating Base

Danger is: a newly displayed, orange Alpha Company 115<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, Florence, AL sign. It's a sure indication that the Alabama signal soldiers are here to stay (at least as long as the mission requires).

Not only are the soldiers at Danger busy with site improvements, but that's the case on many of the bases occupied by Alpha Company. In fact, the D-72 team members at Forward Operating Base Summerall are currently focusing efforts on a structure to be used as a type of MWR-Morale, Welfare, and Recreation building. The team plans a one room building to be used in downtime, by not only the D-72 team, but by other soldiers in the area as well. Sergeant Gary Cooper reports the building is currently in "the planning stages", but no doubt the team will make it a reality.

The troops of Alpha Company continue their efforts for Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Amid convoys, guard duties, and the soldiers' individual efforts such as the D-72 team; signal remains the number one priority.



**Specialist Duke, Sergeant Cooper, Staff Sergeant Behel, and Sergeant Walker at D-72 in Summerall.**

## C/711 SIG

To be separated from your family and friends is always

difficult and challenging, especially being in a foreign county. The soldiers of Charlie Company (NC15) have found a way to relieve stress and improve themselves physically during this deployment. Many of the soldiers have started working on physical fitness programs and activities. One of the places where soldiers conduct their workouts is the Quarter house Gym located at Camp McKenzie.

The newly remodeled gym has become a place of stress relief and friendly competition. The gym has four weight class clubs that soldiers compete for. The weight classes are: 250lb club, 300lb club, 350lb club, and 400lb club. The Signal soldiers of Charlie company are holding their own in the gym against the other units on McKenzie.(Calvary, Field Artillery, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain, Civil Affairs, Air Force and Transportation)



**From Left to right: SPC Mullenix, SPC Floyd, SPC Granberry (center) SPC Gilderseelve, and SPC Taylor**

Soldiers from NC15 have seen positive results from their fitness programs. SPC Mullenix said that getting in better shape and improving his personal fitness is a driving motivation. He likes the competition, but would like to see it evolve into other events like the squat. The benefits that soldiers have reaped are: reduced weight,

increased strength, improved stamina and good stress relief. These types of results will definitely help make life a little easier in Iraq.



**SPC Mullenix at the squat rack w/safety SPC Floyd**

*Photos and article by 1LT Kerry Wright XO Co C 711<sup>th</sup> Thursday, April 29, 2004*

## **B/125 SIG**

This past week was another adventure in Iraq, with sunny skies and clear nights, and best of all NO indirect fire on FOB Warrior. Our focus for this week was a major logistical operation, a company barbeque. The barbeque was to celebrate our 90 day mark of being deployed in this beautiful country, the return on Z63 (SPC Donahee's team) from just north of Baghdad, and the return of SSG Burton and SGT Macias from their exile to the SYSCON in Tikrit.



**SPC Donahee and SPC Goodwin with no manners on FOB Warrior.**

The date of the barbeque had already been delayed once. With all of the on-going military operations in southern Iraq, food has become a scarce commodity with many base

camps eating meals-ready-to-eat at least once a day and hard boiled eggs and stale bread for breakfast. This shortage of food was a potential show stopper, but we refused to let it happen.

The Barbeque Officer in Charge was Private First Class Frank Duran. His previous accolades include being a gourmet cook, the primary resource provider and cook for



**SPC Owens enjoying a steak at the B/125 SIG BBQ on FOB Warrior.**

the 121 Signal Commander's Conference in April. With him leading the way, we scoured the entire Atta-Min province, from the Iranian Border to the Tigris River to obtain the required supplies. (Warning: Most of the following is made up. Our real ability to acquire steaks and chickens is trade secret.) We purchased goats and traded them camels. We traded camels for sheep. We traded sheep for fruit and fruit for chickens. We ended up with a lot of chickens so we were able to trade them for steak to balance out our company meal.

We had to resource all of the condiments and beer, non-alcoholic of course. SGT Crumbly, the company scrounger, organized hand car-washes at the front gate to wash all of the dust off of the vehicles as they return from patrol. We also sold lemonade at the

company football games, where we would beat other teams so badly that the audience was always thirsty, awaiting our next great play (Not made up).

With all of that work to outfit and provision the celebration, the company **Quarterback, SFC Harbst**



**getting ready for the company football game at FOB Warrior**

barbeque ended as a success. We began the event with a football game, winning by 40 points and moved on to the great food. The primary cooks were PFC Duran, SGT Crumbly, and SSG Coe. The team did an outstanding job. Total tally was two cases of non-alcoholic beer (consumed almost entirely by the company XO, 1LT Ballard, in an attempt to see if you can actually get drunk), tons of condiments, 80 New York strip steaks, and 140 chickens. Everyone in the company that lives on FOB Warrior, 80 brave souls, participated in the event.



SPC Chung, SPC Kiner, and PFC Cortez hanging out on FOB Warrior

## SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT



**Soldier Spotlight:** PFC David Tubbs

**Duty Position:** 31F, SMART-T Operator

**Forward Operating Base:** Summerall

**Home State:** Louisiana

**Family:** Married to Ashlee

**What he has to say about serving in Iraq:** I miss my wife, but everything else is tolerable. I found out that GameBoy can be pretty addictive.

## Rumor Mill

**Rumor:** R&R has been canceled for the soldiers in Iraq.  
**Fact:** The R&R leave program has not been canceled. Our higher headquarters, CJTF-7, provides the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division with our R&R allocations. Unfortunately, due to the extension of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armor Division in Iraq, there are not as many slots available for the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division as we had originally predicted. We currently have six slots for R&R leave for the month of May and will receive slots for June by the end of the month.

## A little something

**extra:**

*MAJ Self the new 121<sup>st</sup> SIG BN Executive Officer:*



*After a long day of defending democracy in Iraq.....*



*.....the new BN XO, MAJ Self, takes a much deserved break!!!*



## PFC Shawn C. Edwards Scholarship Fund

We have established a scholarship program for the graduates of Shawn's high school, York Township high school in Elmhurst, Illinois in memory of PFC Shawn C. Edwards. If you would like to donate to the PFC Shawn Edwards scholarship fund, please make your check payable to Shawn Edwards Scholarship Fund and send them to the following address:

### Shawn Edwards Scholarship Fund

C/O Bannockburn Travel  
2101 Waukegan Road  
Suite 300  
Bannockburn, IL 60015

# In Memory of PFC Shawn C. Edwards

As we approached the hour, the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Brass Quintet played softly and the auditorium continued to fill until only two seats remained empty. Those seats were reserved for the Commanding General and the Division Command Sergeant Major, and upon their arrival we would begin the Memorial Service for Private First Class Shawn Christopher Edwards. He was one of our own, killed in action on 23 April 2004 while conducting a combat logistics patrol.

Forward of center stage, there had been placed a display consisting of those items that would ensure the military honor due this soldier and, at the same time, comfort those who knew him as a brother and as a friend. The American flag and the 121<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion Colors hung, drooped on their poles as if they themselves were rendering a final respect. In front of those were three large pictures of PFC Edwards in different places and different poses. In all them, one witnessed a face at ease with his duty, yet determined, as a soldier should be. Just in front of the pictures and on the floor sat a black box with a rifle supporting a Kevlar helmet and a set of identification or "dog tags." Finally, the brown combat boots, representing the loss that could never be filled, stood at attention, and ready.

The procession of those who would bring comforting remarks and encouraging words commenced, at 1400 hours, when the two previously vacant seats being now filled by the Commanding General and the Division Command Sergeant Major. And with that column, the time to honor the selfless service of PFC Edwards began. Grief, and the tension that is grief's friend, filled the room while Chaplain Gilmore offered a prayer asking God to bring comfort and strength during these moments together. As Chief Warrant Officer Gilyard approached the podium to offer a tribute in song, the pain that comes only from death caused our eyes to swell with tears. Chief's message was simple and, at the same time, profoundly filled with hope; to be absent from the body is to present with God.

One by one, the speakers began to tell about a soldier who was truly one of



America's finest and a hero in every sense of the word. His Section Sergeant, Staff Sergeant Washington spoke about a soldier who was a team player and could be counted upon to fulfill his mission and do his duty with little supervision. Specialist Turner, a fellow team member, told us about this man who was outgoing and friendly, and whose dream it was to own a sapphire blue Toyota Supra. His Commanding Officer, Captain Poston, spoke about first meeting PFC Edwards and how immediately he was impressed with his professionalism and maturity. Then Lieutenant Colonel Garrison, the Battalion Commander, shared with us this young soldier who was an "A Team Player," commenting that his loss could never completely be filled. Each of these soldiers choked back emotion as they spoke of PFC Edwards as a great American; one who volunteered to serve his nation in its hour of need and found himself performing that duty in war, giving the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

The chaplain then spoke for a few moments, bringing words of encouragement. He read from Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." We were comforted with the knowledge that God's love, even in our grief, surrounds and comforts us.

After a closing prayer, First Sergeant Brown took his place behind the podium as

everyone in attendance stood at attention for the final Roll Call.

He called out, "SSG Washington."

"Here, 1SG." Was the reply.

"SPC Oglesby."

"Here, 1SG."

"SPC Turner."

"Here, 1SG."

"SPC Weakly."

"Here, 1SG."

"PFC Jenkins."

"Here, 1SG."

"PFC Edwards."

Silence...

1SG Brown raised his voice and repeated the call, "PFC Shawn Edwards."

Silence...

The 1SG, again, this time louder and more intensely, called out to the soldier, "PFC Shawn Christopher Edwards."

Silence...

The trumpet broke this silence as Taps was called. Signifying the final note of the day, the call of Taps was, to us, recognition that the day has ended for our fallen brother. He will no longer feel the pain of war, but the rest of the Eternal God. While the words to Taps, "God is nigh," were not spoken during these moments, the call reminded us that God was here with us, comforting and strengthening our nation's soldiers and their families.

