



The Desert Voice

23—29 August 2004



COMMANDER'S CORNER

Hello again from Tikrit. It has been a busy week, but exciting. This week began for most of us as a normal work week in Iraq but it ended with something special, the commander's conference. Once a quarter, I have all of the company commanders and First Sergeants come to FOB Danger in order to spend some time with Staff and their fellow company commanders. When company commanders are in the states or in Germany they have the opportunity to see each other every single day. They are able to go to breakfast, have lunch, meet for a beer and easily accomplish most Battalion missions by working together. Here, however, it is much more difficult to for company commanders to meet and hob-knob together due to the geographical and other obstacles they must face in order to get to the same location. Hence, most of their communication while deployed has been through telephone and email. As we all know getting things done through these means is always more challenging than a simple face-to-face meeting. Our commanders however have done an excellent job of overcoming the obstacles of their environment and still strive to help each other out at every opportunity. It was fun to have them all together, even though it was just for a day.

As I promised from the beginning I would keep you informed of the activities that occur. I am sure most of you that have family members on FOB Danger have heard about our mortar attack the other day. First off, I would like to say that there were no injuries and all of the soldiers are fine. We had four rounds impact very close to the TOC, the Node Center's located be-

hind the TOC and HHC's building. The first impacted the landing zone next to us. It was close so most of the soldiers started to head to the bunker. The next couple rounds were even closer. One round directly impacted a generator behind the HQ belonging to NC14. Unfortunately, it is a complete loss, along with one antenna mast and a few cables. However, the soldiers were remarkable as usual. They immediately put out the fire that was caused by the generator being struck and within an hour had all of the antennas back in place, with proper grounding wires. They all reacted with great professionalism and courage and all was well again. See, your thoughts and prayers paid off again!

Last week, I forgot to mention the S2 section. Normally we have a military intelligence officer from the Military Intelligence Battalion in the Division but since they did not have one to provide us after CPT Callo's reassignment to Division, we brought in an officer of our own, 1LT(P) Buffa. Ed took over for Maria and our Battalion has not missed a beat. He has one NCO, SGT Thompson, and between the two of them they ensure that the other commanders and I are informed of all activities and threats we may face on a daily basis, to include the weather. Collectively they do a great job! Ed is rarely off more than a degree on his weather report and I can hardly wait to here what "Voice 2 Thinks" each morning on the intel analysis. Going above and beyond the call of duty, SGT Thompson give our morale a boost each morning with Crystal's Sports minute and

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her "featured athlete of the day". I guess you really have to be here to fully appreciate it. The S2 section is an invaluable asset to the team, from which we all benefit.

This week ends with the arrival of my replacement, LTC Lori

Thomas, and some of her staff. The 250th Signal Battalion leadership is conducting a site survey of the area they will be responsible for after we leave. I will be escorting them around to as many FOB's as I can in their short period of time they have to

visit here. The best part about this is that it will enable me to see many of the soldiers I have not had the opportunity to visit recently...and that is what makes the day. Thanks again for the thoughts and prayers. It does make a difference.

HHC, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALION

Hello again to all the family and friends from HHC. We have made it through another week with temperatures back up around 110 degrees. On Tuesday, we actually had clouds in the afternoon, which gave us a beautiful sunset. Clouds of any kind are pretty rare these days. One of these days (hopefully sooner than later) we will start to see a change in the weather but not quite yet.

As promised in last week's article, I have all the dirty details to fill you in about the range. If you missed last week's article I will bring everyone up to date real quick. The Battalion had a range here on FOB Danger and I made a bet that our own SGT Candace Quentin could out-shoot CSM Butler. One of the CSM's favorite things to brag about are his shooting abilities. His claim to fame is that he can out-shoot everyone no matter what the weapon.

Well, SGT Quentin is a great shot too and I felt very comfortable putting my money on her!! It was a hot day and things were moving along smoothly at the range when the CSM showed up. SGT Quentin had zeroed her new weapon and felt pretty comfortable about the upcoming competition!! The atmosphere was heating up and we are pretty sure that the CSM was starting to get nervous because the drill sergeant

came out of him and he started running around the range barking orders and taking charge of everything.



(CSM Butler taking charge.)

Just about that time the Battalion Commander got to the range. CSM Butler took the BC off to the side and they talked for a few minutes prior to going out on the firing line. Everyone took their positions on the firing line and the BC and CSM lined up right next to each other. At that time no one thought much about them being side by side but we soon learned the real reason behind it. The qualification went quickly and everyone was anxious to get downrange and check their targets to count how many hits they had. (It is a total of 40 rounds maximum, which gives the firer a

perfect score.) We walked downrange quickly to assess the targets and count. Out of a possible 40 hits the CSM had 44 hits on his target. Now the truth was known, the CSM had coaxed the BC to shoot at his target and help him in the competition. The CSM needs help in beating a girl!!!! SGT Quentin (all by herself) shot 35, which is great!!!! So all you girls out there should feel proud and know that we won one for the girls that day!!!! CSM and the BC will NEVER admit to this but I would not lie to you all!!!! Here are some pictures from the range.



(SSG Perez's other eyes!)



(SSG Briggs and SGT Sakala getting ready to fire)



(SGT Quentin on her way to the range)



(SSG Perez checking his target)



(1SG Cromartie and CPT Longwill)



(1SG Cromartie and CSM Butler)

We had another big group go out on R&R last night so some lucky family members should be able to enjoy their loved ones soon. I want you all to know that we are all working very hard to get everyone home as quickly as possible. If you have not seen your soldier yet please be patient!!! We are very confident that we will get everyone home during the deployment!! Until next week, please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers, you are always in ours!!!

Tough 7 Out!!!

A COMPANY, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALION

It's been another eventful week for Alpha Company here in the world's garden spot. In addition to our normal duties and training, we have started conducting urinalysis, health and welfare inspections and even had a company weigh in. I know what you're thinking right now "No one should be allowed to have that much fun, where do I sign up." I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but the roster is full right

now. Don't be discouraged because I will entertain applications on a case by case basis. Just to give you a peak at all the fun that you could be having, we have included the following submission from 1st Platoon.

The following piece was written by members of 1st Platoon, A Company, 121 Signal Battalion, to include 1LT Carbone, SGT Johnson, SGT Davis, and

SGT Gardner.

As the early morning dust stirred, and the heat began to rise, the warriors of FOB Remagen began to ready themselves for the struggle that lay before them. Water and food were loaded onto trucks in preparation for what was sure to be a long day. With all the preparations complete, and the last soldier loaded on the truck, the valiant

soldiers drove off to face their destiny.

They arrived on the field of honor with mixed emotions. Scorpions and camel spiders scurried away from scene (**Commander's comment** – the bugs know of the horrors that await them if captured by members of 1st Platoon and put in the platoon holding cell). As the last man exited the vehicle, the Platoon Sergeant, SFC Branyan, made the announcement that would forever remain in the minds of his troops, "Soldiers, today will decide your worth in the Army. You will succeed where others have failed. When you fire your weapons, you will hit the target at least 27 times out of 40 shots, and you will not leave here until you do so."

The faces of the soldiers grimaced in dismay at their leader's profound statement. They surveyed the field where the paper targets, that were their enemies, flapped in the wind in silent mockery. One soldier hysterically screamed, "Oh my God, we could be here for hours! What are we going to do about breakfast?"

The soldiers of Node Center 50 performed flawlessly and emerged unharmed and victorious from the exhausting range in time for chow. Among the victors, 1LT Carbone, SSG Warren, SGT Carter, SGT Ryder, SGT Campbell, SGT Johnson, SGT Martin, SPC McKnight, PFC Negrette, and PFC Quint qualified as experts scoring a 38 or more. Needless to say, a 'Great Army Day' was had by all.

On distant FOBs throughout Iraq, other members of 1st Platoon are also fighting the good fight in the war against terrorism.

One of those teams is our one and only Remote RAU 50. The following excerpt has been taken from a flyer that has been posted around local FOBs and displayed here for your reading pleasure.

In the history of the U.S. Army there have been groups of soldiers who have made their mark in the world, the Green Berets, the Dirty Dozen, and the "World Famous" RAU 50. The origin of the "World Famous" team is still unknown, said to have been possibly founded during the War of 1812 by incorporating two tin cans and a long piece of fishing line.

Today the "World Famous" team is again making its mark on the world at FOB Brassfield-Mora, by providing first rate tactical cellular phone coverage. An equal opportunity employer, the team is made up of mostly minorities, with three Hispanics, an African American, and one white dude. SPC Hector Cruz, SPC Ali Quiroz, and PFC Darius Hypolite are some of the finest line of radio operators, making radio links happen even through all the fog, rain, and ice storms so common in Iraq. SGT Patrick Davis, Sr. and SPC Juan Collantes are dedicated RAU gurus willing to assist with any trouble call. The team needs no flushing toilets, no real chow, and no decent billets. Just give them a vehicle, an antenna, a hand mike and point them in the right direction. The majority of the "World Famous" team has been together over a year, except for SPC Cruz who SGT Davis won in a poker game in Kuwait.

Even today Remote RAU 50 is still one of the finest tactical communication teams in the U.S.

Army. They are currently screening applications for the team. Anyone interested in becoming a part of the elite "World Famous" should contact a member of the team at 550-5069. But beware, the road is not easy, and it takes more than guts to be "World Famous".

FOB Dagger is home to another team from 1st Platoon, the Mighty Fox 12, which is comprised of some of the finest communicators the 121st Signal Battalion has to offer. SGT Gardner, SPC(P) Dupree, SPC Drew, SPC Plitzner, PFC Lovitt, and last but certainly not least, PFC Rodriguez. They provide phones and internet to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. In addition to their mission to provide communications they have various guard, escort and convoy duties. Fox 12 has participated in Iraqi detainee releases, psychological operations at the Tikrit radio station, convoy security to pick up chow daily, and the training of Iraqi National Guard signal soldiers on their new dispatch equipment which they also helped to install at the Tikrit headquarters. Needless to say they keep themselves very occupied, but the soldiers continue to gain new experiences daily and they find the time to relax and build relationships as battle buddies.

The morale of 1st Platoon has been high and the care that the soldiers' exhibit in helping each other through the good times and the bad makes me honored to call them my soldiers. As always thank you for all of the care packages and for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers.

Archangel 1-6 OUT



F12 –(Back row) SPC Plitzner, SPC Drew, SGT Garnder, PFC Rodriguez, (kneeling) PFC Lovitt, SPC(P) Dupree



If you look closely through the vegetation, you will see 1st Platoon soldiers firing their weapons at the FOB Remagen range



Hiding behind the lush flora and

fauna, SPC McKnight prepares ammunition to be fired

Due to the elite and highly secretive nature of the Remote RAU 50 mission, we were unable to provide a picture of the team in this week's newsletter.

We had a promotion this week to tell you about, SPC Stearns. SPC Sterns has been setting the standard while working in the (V) 3 section at 2nd Platoon's Node Center 51 on FOB Speicher. He has also been performing escort duty for the FOB Speicher Force Protection cell ensuring the safety of both U.S. soldiers and local national workers as they go about the task of making improvements to the FOB. SPC Stearns originally hails from Washington and plans to transfer to Fort Lewis after the deployment. He's not certain of his long term plans right now, but we know he'll excel at whatever he chooses to do.



SPC Stearns proudly displays his new rank and promotion certificate

The soldiers of Alpha Company have not only been honing their warrior skills, they have also continued to provide the 1st Infantry Division communications to provide assistance to the Iraqi Interim Government while at the same time training the Iraqi Security Forces in the skills they will need to command and control their formations. That's no small order and the soldier's of Alpha Company perform all of these assignments and more with pride and dedication.

As I said, I'll be accepting applications on a case by case basis. You can apply for a position in the company, or if you have what it takes to be a member of the chosen few, Remote RAU 50. The challenges are numerous and varied and the solution to those challenges is you. Bring some ice when you come to drop off your application, it's been hot outside. Wish you were here. XOXOXOXO

B COMPANY, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALON

Greetings everyone, this is SFC Caldwell coming to you live from Warhorse. The Commander and 1SG joined 279th Signal BN

and went to Tikrit for the Commander's conference and left LT Kato and I in charge, you know what they say, when the cat is

away....

Once again things are relatively calm but remain very busy in Blackhawk country. The R&R pro-

gram continues to be in full swing and is improving morale.



SSG(P) Spradley and SGT Sanchez show off their pearly whites.



PFC Kublis performing maintenance on SGT Balacy's vehicle

The "Double Wide" is much closer to completion as I observed AC units being wired in. Supply is slowly beginning to transition to their new home and they appear to love it.



SSG Hogan and SPC Spaulding making the transition.

Also the Ammo Bunker project is near completion as "1SG Peaytt's box" was finally buried underground with full honors I might add, to provide safety and security. Unfortunately the weight of the earth will require some tweaking of the doors so we can gain entry.

We have great news to report as we will be able to promote five new non-commissioned officers effective 01 SEP 04 based upon their potential to perform at the next higher grade. SGT Bryan (F42), SGT Carter (F41), SGT Depriest (SR52), SGT Franco (F32), and SGT Hill (F32). Congratulations to these NCO's and their families. We expect big things and continued excellence from them!

We had another VIP visit earlier this week as the Diyala Province governor stopped in to have lunch with the 3BCT Commander and his contingent.

F54 has quickly settled into and seem to be really enjoying life at Warhorse. They continue to express how much they really are glad to be down here. In

fact they began expressing this sentiment immediately upon their arrival. I felt like a muffin "being buttered" and I cautioned them to wait at least one month before they made their initial assessment but they said they only needed one day. Hooah!!



SPC Molitor ensuring 201st FSB has voice and data services.

Speaking of R&R we had to send 1LT Bagocsi so he could contact TISA and continue his pizza investigation, since his pleas to KBR have fallen on deaf ears. Evidently he feels there is a direct link between the amount of pizza served and the morale of the Big Red One. He gets really agitated when he doesn't get enough of the pizza food group. Recently we were having lunch and we thought that LT Bagocsi was happy, since his plate was full of pizza, however we were deceived because when

1SG came and sat down he made the mistake of asking; "LT how is your lunch?" and then LT went on a 3-5 minute tirade breaking down the sauce, bread and the meat on the pizza.

In keeping with the Olympic spirit SPC Jones, PV2 Houck and PV2 Lane are still plugging along in their attempts to prepare for the 2008 summer Olympics as their swimming pool is almost complete except for a few small details: pool, water, chemicals. To their credit, to date they have the deck and the ladder prepared, posted outside the door to their hooch. More to follow!!



PFC Ginoba, SPC(P) Edmonds, SGT Sanchez, SFC Walker, and PV2 Lane build their own houses.

Finally, the first place Blackhawks basketball team is still undefeated and representing Kitzingen well. Our victories

over these Vilseck based and Reserve Component teams have generated some animosity across the FOB and they appear to be constantly drenched with gallons of "haterade". In fact, SPC Baron, SPC Moore and SFC Walker may be under the UAV surveillance because of the avid fan support. Their exploits have generated considerable lineup shuffling and recruiting among all the 3BCT teams in an attempt to field a team that can contend with the Blackhawks. It seems that the entire FOB is waiting for the day that they will be beat. If it happens they will have to wait until after the Labor day.

BASKETBALL TEAM STANDINGS

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES	PTS
1. BLACKHAWKS	7	0	266
2. TRAILBLAZERS	6	1	351
3. HEART ATTACKS	6	1	378
4. NOROGIES	5	2	243
5. 3-5 BOYS	5	2	308
6. GHOST TEAM	2	5	55
7. RED BULL	2	5	288
8. BRT	2	5	252
9. LEGION AIR	2	5	296
10. MOTORPOOL	2	5	281
11. CASH EXPRESS	0	4	112
12. WOLVERINES	0	4	97

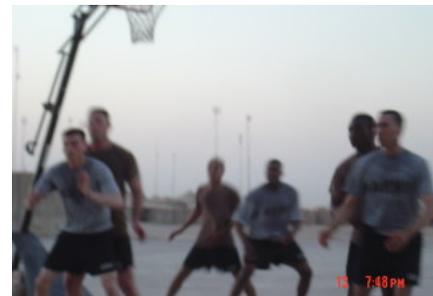
Excellence is our trademark!!!



SSG Dale and SGT Denham fill the lane as SGT Hess breaks down the D.



SGT Armstrong weighs his options, pass to SSG Hogan or SPC Pritchard.



"Double D's" SSG Dale and SGT Denham dominate the low post.



SFC Caldwell surveys after another trip to the free throw line.

Construction projects continue on the FOB and we are looking forward to

the Labor day celebration to include all the sporting events. Until next time,

thanks for your continued support. – SFC Tyrone Caldwell

C COMPANY, 121ST SIGNAL BATTALON

Dearest Family and Friends – Greetings once again from the great city of Tikrit, Iraq. We are all very excited to be closing out another successful month of this deployment. While there are slow days as well as fast ones, it all seems to be rolling right by so we can get home to you as soon as possible. This week in the Rock Steady Newsletter, I would like to start by sharing some great training and close with a sky-high event.

Most definitely, the most dangerous thing we do here is conduct combat logistics patrols throughout the Area of Operations (AO). While this is a necessary requirement in order to move communications parts so we can talk or personnel to get them home to you on R&R leave, it is a movement that is never taken lightly no matter the distance of travel. In order to ensure we stay on top of our skills on the road, we asked the Infantry Battalion that lives right across the street from us to share some of their drills and techniques with us. The infantry battalion conducts supply route patrols everyday, so we knew they would be the best ones to share what they do and what how they react to the myriad of things that can happen out there. They were more than happy to come show us a few of their tricks of the trade about reacting to small arms fire, reacting to getting hit by an IED, and how they keep their spacing

to ensure success. It was very informative, and the combat logistics patrol team from the company is much more prepared to handle anything the Anti-Iraqi Forces throw at us.



SSG Ronald Livingston mans the M249 in the turret while the crew inside the vehicle gets some additional instructions from our Infantry BN instructor.



SGT Michael Mikrut enjoys his time in the turret – actually, he enjoys just about everything he does here!



SSG Gustavo Reina and SPC James Deller at the Combat Patrol Class.

The next training event I want to share is the range that we conducted. 1LT Robert Barry did an excellent job coordinating the M4/M16/M249 range for the entire BN. He had 50 firers on his range, to include the Battalion Commander, the Battalion Operations Officer, and the “I always shoot expert on any range with anyone’s weapon” the Battalion Command Sergeant Major. The purpose of this range was specifically to qualify soldiers that have swapped weapons lately and to help soldiers increase their scores if they are going to the Promotion Board soon. The range certainly was not as nice as the ones we are fortunate to have back in Germany, but 1LT Barry and his NCOIC, SFC Washington, made the best of what they were given to put on an excel-

lent training event for the Signal Battalion.



From Left to Right: SGT Ca-tron, PV2 Acevado, SPC Nick Smith, SPC Palmer, SPC Edwards, PFC Fernandez and SPC PFC Steinke at the range waiting for their turn to qualify.



It is funny how even a mound of rocks can bring you a little comfort. SPC Deller shows off his cheesy smile as he entertains the crowd at the qualification range.

Finally, I would like to share a sky-high event that we were all very excited about. You may remember back in July when I told

you about two outstanding soldiers that re-enlisted together to stay in the 1st Infantry Division, SPC(P) Duwayne Petty and SPC James Bowser. Well, all they wanted was to ride in a helicopter, so 1SG Brown and I did some wheeling and dealing to see what we could do. Then, our big break came, and we were on our way. This was SPC Bowser's first helicopter ride. He didn't get sick, for which the rest of us were very grateful! We flew all over Iraq that day as the VIP on our bird made his rounds, and had a great time visiting our soldiers at OBJ Midland as well as meeting some new ones on other FOBs in the Division.



BG Mundt talking to SPC (P) Duwayne Petty and SPC James Bowser about their plans in the Army, their families back home, and what they thought of the helicopter ride.



Group photo by a UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter with CPT Dawn Longwill, SPC(P) Petty, BG Steven Mundt, SPC Bowser, and 1SG Robert Brown.

I have been receiving updates on the cookbook, and it is going to be a great project. Thank you to all of you who have contributed! I also hope your FRG meeting went well on Friday. If there are any compliments, issues, comments or concerns you would like addressed, please do not hesitate to bring it to the FRG leader, Lareina Mikrut, and she will work them with the Rear Detachment or get them to us down here if necessary. We understand that it isn't easy being home without your spouses right now, but you are doing a great job. We are all anxiously anticipating when we can get together to say THANKS for a job well done. Until next week – **ROCK STEADY!**

A COMPANY, 115TH SIGNAL BATTALION

As August winds down here at FOB Danger, the soldiers of Alpha Company 115 continue their focus on signal. Just this week, SR 30 deployed to FOB Omaha in support of the 118th Infantry. This is the team's second mission

at Omaha.

The SR30 team members – SGT Thomas Tank, SPC Terry Pounders, SPC Mikel Fraley, and SPC Cedric Fuqua – have spent quite a few hours training and

testing equipment since arriving in Iraq. The North Alabama National Guard soldiers were the first to pioneer the concept of a "super RAU" for Operation Iraqi Freedom II. They have worked together as a team at not only

FOB Omaha, but FOB Wilson as well.

In addition to maintaining signal flow, several Alpha Company individuals recently spent a day at the range for weapons' qualifications. Four 115th soldiers qualified with M-16s, one with the M-249. The qualifications took place at the Brotherhood Training Academy range. Other Alpha Company personnel were on site as armor custodian, sky ob-

server, and recorder.

A number of soldiers have had the opportunity to go home for R & R. More are slated to leave in September. As the company approaches the halfway mark of this deployment, the troops remained focused on the mission at hand. Whether it be signal or any number of tasks, Alpha Company 115 is in for the "long haul".

SPC Sonya Harris

27 August 2004



SPC Adams awaiting instructions from the range at FOB Danger

C COMPANY, 711TH SIGNAL BATTALION

Hello once again from FOB Mackenzie. This week we are featuring the hard working soldiers of the Motor Pool here.



SPC Lord, SPC Travis, SPC Frazier, SGT Kittrell, SGT Finney, SGT Wiggins and SFC Ryan (The Motor Daddy).

SPC James R. Lord is from Elberta, Alabama. He has been in the Alabama National Guard for two years. SPC Lord is a 52C, air condition repairman. His skills are greatly appreciated over here. His civilian occupation is construction, which is also in huge demand here as well. SPC Lord is single, but is available if anyone is interested. He is a great contributor to the Motor Pool team.

SPC James Darrell Travis is

from Bay Minette, Alabama. He has been in the Alabama National Guard for 17 looonnnng years, as he puts it. SPC Travis is a 63B, light wheel vehicle mechanic. His civilian employer is Roberts' Air Conditioning, Inc. He is a master AC repairman. Once this was discovered by our Mayor Cell, SPC Travis has become the go to guy for air condition service at FOB Mackenzie. SPC Travis is also an avid hunter. With fall just around the corner, his trigger finger is starting to get withdrawal symptoms. SPC Travis is happily married to Debbie and has three children.

SPC Jeremy Frazier's hometown is Summerdale, Alabama. He has served in the Alabama National Guard for almost three years. SPC Frazier is a 63B, light wheel vehicle mechanic. SPC Frazier is one of the hardest working solders that I have ever known. Every time I see him he is filthy from head to toe because he has been working on something. SPC Frazier has a girlfriend, Amanda. She is the daughter of our Supply Sergeant, SSGT Gault. We are just on big

happy family in the Guard!

SGT Katherine Kittrell in from Navarre, Florida. She has been in the Alabama National Guard for 12 Years. SGT Kittrell is our TAMS Clerk, 92A. In her civilian job, SGT Kittrell is a Payment Processing Clerk. SGT Kittrell is married to Kelvin. She has two children, which she is looking forward to being reunited with.

SGT John Finney residence is in Union Springs, Alabama. SGT Finney has served eight years in the Alabama National Guard. SGT Finney was deployed for OIF I. Now he is back for more in OIF II. He just can't get enough of this vacation resort atmosphere here in Iraq! SGT Finney is a light wheel vehicle mechanic and welder.

SGT Donald Wiggins is from Bay Minette, Alabama. SGT Wiggins has contributed 33 years of to the Alabama National Guard. SGT Wiggins is a 63B, light wheel vehicle mechanic. However, he is really a jack-of-all-trades. He can do just about anything. Welding, cutting, carpentry, plumbing, electrical, AC

repair, he can do it all. He has been a great asset to the team. SGT Wiggins is happily married to a wonderful lady named Mary.

SFC John Ryan is our Motor Daddy. SFC Ryan is from Bay

Minette, Alabama. SFC Ryan has 30 years of military service, 27 in the Alabama National Guard. He is the full time technician for us also. SFC Ryan provides the leadership that makes this a great Motor Pool team.

SFC Ryan is married to Bettie and has four sons.

Until next week, God bless you all and please keep us in your prayers.

B COMPANY, 125TH SIGNAL BATTALION

The company leadership and convoy team just returned from a three day trip down to Tikrit, conducting a convoy live fire, commander's conference, and returning with a Troposcatter team (communications system that bounces communications off of the atmosphere to extend long distances). We also brought food back for the entire base camp (now we are really famous). This story will be highlighted next week and it will be a good one. Node Center 62 conducted quarterly training and spent some time highlighting one of our small extension nodes. Node Center 63 conducted a normal week of activities maintaining command and control for the brigade combat team and they did some equipment layouts. Headquarters wrote a small piece on the motor-pool. They would write more but they are TOO busy fixing everything in the company. We will begin with Node Center 62.

The following was written by LT Erick Sutton, Node Center 62 Platoon Leader.

This week at Node center 62, we focused on training. We teamed up with our buddies from Node Center 51 and the rest of A/121 to incorporate some well needed fourth quarter division required training. Two classes were conducted by their NCO's and two classes on Thursday

were conducted by two of our resident expert Power Point professionals SGT Burke and SGT Richmond. They both displayed an innate ability to teach the finer points of combat to over 170 bright-eyed soldiers waiting to soak up all of this information. We will continue on this path until the end of the deployment. There is always training to do as we are all in the communications arena, but when it comes down to it, we could all be required to perform the duties of a foot soldier, both men and women. Plus, it is imperative that we know the necessary skills needed in order to sustain our force, and most importantly re-deploy home safely.

The weather in Northern Iraq seemed a little warmer than last week with little to no wind. This is all good especially from a communication's standpoint. At night we have noticed the beautiful Iraqi waxing gibbous (big word) moon shimmering overhead as we hope to have only three, perhaps no more than four of these left here in Iraq.

The team focus this week is on G73. SGT Dawn Hernandez heads this team up. She hails from San Antonio, Texas and came to us from Alpha Company before we deployed and has been a great asset and a professional NCO that we rely on daily. She has benefited the company by maintaining a high standard of

excellence. This team supported 1-14 Infantry at FOB Bernstein for the first four months of our deployment. Her team is now in Kirkuk with the main Hele On element. G73 supports one half of the air base that we live on...the half where most soldiers actually sleep. With the support provided by G73 more and more units have established command posts in her area. SGT Hernandez states, "[that her team] gives many units the convenience of working close to home on FOB Warrior." Another benefit is reducing the need to drive back and forth to the housing area in order to pass information. An additional mission for the team is to support the company's MWR facility, as well as be the company message center and coordinator for soldiers off shift.



G73 Small Extension Node - SGT Hernandez - PFC Adams - PFC Berger - SPC Martinez - SPC Long - SPC Kiner

Other than SGT Hernandez, there are five other team members on her team, but PFC Adams stands out as he has just returned from the Division Headquarters in which he was a key player by instructing other soldiers the finer art of Satellite Communications in preparation for a special mission supporting an infantry battalion. He spent several crucial weeks ensuring other soldiers are "on track". He is 20 years of age and hails to us from Dayton, Ohio. PFC Adams has a wife Tabatha and daughters Madison and Ryenne. His hobbies include football, the video game Madden, and an interesting side note; he likes to blow things up. He is welcomed back to the team as his dedication to duty has greatly been an asset to the team as well as the unit as a whole.



**SPC Adams and
SPC Martinez**

The rest of the soldiers in this team have done an outstanding job. First, we must mention SPC David Martinez. At 20 years old and residing from Laredo, Texas, SPC Martinez is supported at home by his parents David and Susan as well as a close Uncle Pablo and his brother & sister Daniel and Stephanie listed respectively. He would like to mention that his hobbies include

sketching, video games, and band.

Next we must mention PFC Brian Berger, who at 27, is from



PFC Brian Berger

St. Louis, Missouri and is supported back home by his parents Rich and Joanne as well as his brother Steven. His hobbies include computers, video games and paintball.

SPC William C. Long from Warsaw, Indiana and 20 years of age is proud to mention his girlfriend Dana. He is also supported by his parents Bill and Vickie. He has three siblings that he would like to mention Kim, Kara, and Benny. His hobbies include auto racing, electronics, and music.



SPC William Long

SPC Dustin Kiner is the fifth and last team member, but certainly not the least of this very tight knitted team. He is 21 years

of age and was born in St. Robert, Missouri. Wow, two members of this team are from the "Show Me State". SPC Kiner wanted to mention that he loves his mommy.



SPC Dustin Kiner

Well, that is all from 1st platoon this week. Next week we will focus on another team. Until then, we all say "Heleon and First Strike".

**The following was written by
SFC Marcus**

McNear....company motor sergeant. (The B Company, 125 Signal Battalion motor pool has 13 soldiers and supports 41 generators and 67 vehicles. We are only a company but this is almost the same amount of trucks and equipment found in the other BATTALIONS within the brigade combat team. The motor pool ULL-S NCO's order and track repair items and electronic maintenance parts for the company. Considering we average close to a half-million a month on parts, this is no small feat.)

Hello to all in the Signal world.

It's been another productive month for the B Company 125th Signal motor pool. The majority of the motor-pool returned from R&R this month. Services, AOAP and TMDE were all completed on time. That does not sound like much, but it is and it is important to the company and brigade. We conducted some very valuable training on the M1114. M1114 is a UPAR-MORED HUMVEE weighing almost 12,000 pounds. It has a turbo-charged engine, air conditioning, and some other enhancements. For most of the mechanics it was the first in depth study of this particular type of vehicle.



PFC Prevo enroute to fix SGT Camacho's truck

Some other highlights for the motor pool include: the "No Slack" mechanics went to the range and qualified on their individual weapons. The convoy team, which is comprised of five motor pool personnel got some special training at the CMOC where they honed their Close Quarters Combat skills by having what can only be described as a huge paint ball fight (highlighted last week). In the Kirkuk Olympics, SGT Gowie and SPC Ivey from NC 63 took home the gold medal in the wheel barrel race. PFC Prevo, SPC Moore and

SGT Gowie took home the silver in the three man sand bag relay. SGT Parker will be going home on R&R this month, which is well deserved. As we all know the Acting Secretary of the Army Wes Brownlee visited Kirkuk and three of the 125th mechanics. SGT Reyes, SGT Nunez, SGT Guerrero and SPC Multuaopele participated in a band that gave a 12 song concert for the Secretary and patrons of Kirkuk Air Base. Each of the individual Soldiers received Certificate of Achievements signed by the Honorable Wes Brownlee. I personally would like to thank the 121 Signal Battalion motor pool for all of the support given to NC 62. When ever I get the opportunity to visit you guys, Pizza Hut on me. I would also like to thank CPT Campbell for finally letting the "No Slack" receive some press time. (I always comment on the Motor Pool but SSG McNear never reads the newsletter!)



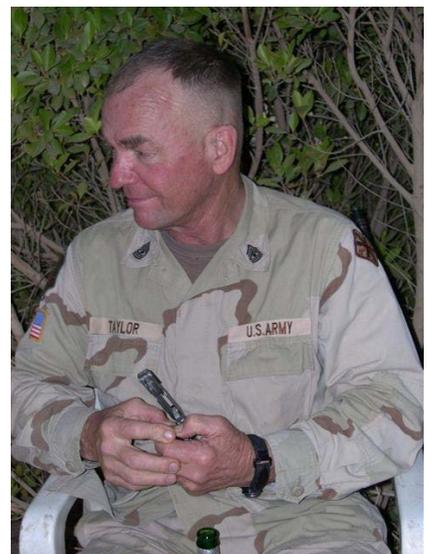
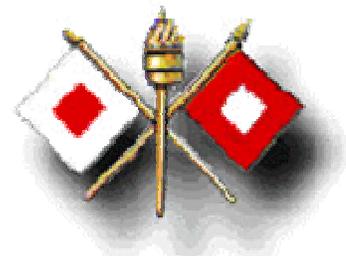
SGT Camacho yelling at the MP to fix her truck

Overall, an outstanding week! Just met the OIF III signal battalion commander which highlights the end is near. R&R allocations have been forecast out through the end of November and show us reaching a 100% of all soldiers of all soldiers on leave. Be

proud of your soldiers as they continue to go above and beyond all expectations to make missions happen and prepare themselves for any possible event! Hele On!



SPC Johnson



1SG Taylor

CHAPLAIN

Coping with the Mid-Tour Blues – Part 4 of 4 – Be Patient: Patience has got to be one of the most difficult of the virtues to master. Let me give you a little personal example: As I was typing this very article, just about finished, on my very last paragraph, happy that it was almost finished, proud of my fine work and imagination, having not saved it at all, my computer froze up...and I lost the whole thing. My first reaction, of course, was to think very bad things and even say a few of them. So I'm having to rewrite the article and, hopefully, complete it this time...I actually just hit the "Save" button!

Patience does seem to require understanding and strength that few of us regularly exhibit. I don't mean to be crude, but it's a personal observation that there

aren't very many truly patient people in this world. Most of the time we want what we want and we want it now. And we're not really interested in learning patience because of the difficulties required to master it. There's even an old Christian song that says, "I don't pray for patience anymore," because the only way to learn patience is to practice patience.

But when we refuse to learn and practice patience, we lose out on the peace and purpose that accompanies understanding that everything will truly be okay. Having said that, being patient in our situation is based on two things. First, the understanding that God is in control of what we are going through and that He has a plan to complete us and make us strong. John Wesley

said of patience that it is a "gracious temper, wrought in the heart of a believer, by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is a disposition to suffer whatever pleases God, in the manner and for the time that pleases Him." (I just "saved" again)

Secondly, being patient comes when we refuse to worry. Worry is the enemy of patience. Jesus, as he addressed a group of people at the beginning of His ministry asked this question, "Why do you worry?" He then began to explain that our entire lives are bound up in God taking care of us. Therefore, there is no need to worry. So next time you're feeling a bit impatient and getting all worked up about it, just remember these two things: God is in control and He will take care of you.



LTC Garrison enjoying a cigar at the conference



1SG Johnson, CPT Longwill, CSM Bulter, 1SG Cromartie playing spades at the commander's conference



SPC Arnett playing spades....rumor has it he and SPC Cox crushed CPT Campbell and his partner during their 3 hour game



CPT Sweeney and CPT