



# The Dragon's Herald



## COMMAND NOTES BY DRAGON 6

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Dear Soldiers, Families, and Friends of the Dragon Battalion, The month of June has been highly productive for the Dragon battalion. I have been impressed by the leader's and Soldier's capabilities as we have simultaneously conducted numerous partnered operations and training with our IA counterparts, sustained the force, and maintained our large fleet of vehicles under demanding environmental conditions. Our partnerships with the Iraqi Army continue to be strong as we Advise, Train, and Assist the Iraqi Security Forces in support of Operation New Dawn. I commend the leaders and Soldiers within our ranks for your hard work and flexibility in meeting such a fluid and demanding mission set. We dedicated the battalion classroom to one of our fallen heroes – SFC Beattie. SFC Beattie was among the best Non-Commissioned Officers the United States Army had to offer. As such, he was a mentor, teacher, instructor, and role model who made a signifi-

cant impact on the professional development of the Officers, Soldiers, and NCOs of the "Dragon" battalion. The Soldier development that takes place in his classroom will be conducted with the pride, intensity, and commitment to excellence that SFC Beattie embodied. We also dedicated the battalion Gym to PFC Mora. He was a team player who always strove for excellence and encouraged others around him to strive for excellence and always "complete the set". We will honor the memory of this outstanding Soldier by sustaining our physical fitness and maintaining the facility with pride. I hope we are inspired by the memory of our fallen brothers when utilizing the classroom and the gym. In July and beyond you can expect a more demanding operational tempo. Soldiers, the PMCS of your vehicles is paramount to mission success. Leaders, ensuring your Soldiers are hydrated, rested, and are consuming the right foods is important. Supplements and

energy drinks should be avoided. However, despite the challenges we will face, I have no reason to doubt that our formation will continue to excel in all that is asked of us. To the heart of our organization, I extend my warmest thanks. Without the support and patience of our families, this proud organization would be a shell of its current self. The pictures and anecdotes of your recent halfway party have given me every reason to believe that you are as strong and dedicated as your service members a half a world away. Continue persevering and know that with your love and support the Dragon Battalion is doing great work in service to our country.

Stay motivated, hydrated, fit, and ready!

Seek, Strike, Destroy,

DRAGONS!

Dragon 6



From left to right: CSM Toney Smith, Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond Chandler, SGT James George



SGT Timothy Thompson (left) shakes the hand of the Commander of the United States Division Center Maj. Gen. Bernard Champoux

# 'DRAGONS' HONOR FALLEN HEROES

By SSG Justin Phemister

On May 22nd, while conducting counter indirect-fire operations in Baghdad, Iraq, two soldiers with the 1st "Dragon" Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their fellow Soldiers and their country. In recognition of these two fallen heroes, the "Dragon" Battalion chose to dedicate buildings that best epitomized the spirit of each Soldier in recognition of their service and to harness the dedication to duty that led to them giving their lives.

One of the fallen was Sgt. 1st Class Clifford Beattie, the platoon sergeant of the personnel security detachment for the "Dragon" Battalion's senior enlisted advisor, and a Tempe, Ariz., native was a leader, mentor, and father figure to his Soldiers.

"When I first met Sgt. 1st Class Beattie, I thought this is what an NCO looks like. This is what a leader should be," said Lt. Col. Michael Henderson, the commander of the 1st "Dragon" Bn., 63rd Armor, and an Emmett, Idaho, native.

To Beattie the "Dragons" dedicated a classroom to memorialize his dedication to training and the welfare of his Soldiers.

"May his spirit lend itself to motivate and inspire to functions held within," said Cpt. Dave Mooneyham, the chaplain of the "Dragon" Battalion and a Columbia, S.C., native.

Also recognized, Pfc. Ramon Mora, a rifleman with the personnel security detachment for the "Dragon" Battalion's senior enlisted advisor, and a Covina, Calif., native was a young Soldier who was committed to keeping in peak physical condition.

"Pfc. Mora was a gym rat, and I hope his example motivates those who make use of this gym from now on to push themselves just that much harder in his memory," said Command Sgt. Major Toney Smith, the senior enlisted advisor of the "Dragon" Battalion and a Louisiana, Mo., native.

For his service, the "Dragons" dedicated their gym in hopes that he will endure in the hearts of those who come there to better themselves through hard work and sweat like Mora was known to do.

Both the gym and the classroom received renovations celebrating their reopening as functional memorials. They were cleaned and repainted, given extra amenities, and christened with resplendent new signs that bore the name and image of the Soldier they now commemorate.

Largely responsible for making the dedications to the two fallen and accompanying renovations to their buildings possible was 1st Sgt. Alexander Aguilastratt, the senior enlisted advisor of Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the "Dragon" Battalion and a Miami, Fla., native. He spoke with emotion after the ceremony and implored his Soldiers to remember their brothers and take pride in their own service and the unit.

"See the difference their sacrifices have made, strive to be as strong as they were, and honor their memory by the wearing of this (the 1st Division) patch," said Aguilastratt.



Command Sgt. Major Toney Smith (left), the senior enlisted advisor of the 1st "Dragon" Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, and a Louisiana, Mo., native, and 1st Sgt. Alexander Aguilastratt (right), the senior enlisted advisor of Headquarters and Headquarters Company with the "Dragon" Battalion and a Miami, Fla., native, unveil a sign dedicating a gym in honor of Pfc. Ramon Mora, June 25, at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Mora, a Covina, Calif., native, gave his life in May while on patrol against the indirect-fire networks. Mora was recognized as a fitness enthusiast and shed a prodigious amount of sweat in the gym that now bears his name.



Command Sgt. Major Toney Smith (left), the senior enlisted advisor of the 1st "Dragon" Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, a Louisiana, Mo., native, and 1st Sgt. Alexander Aguilastratt (right), the senior enlisted advisor of Headquarters and Headquarters Company with the "Dragon" Battalion and a Miami, Fla., native, unveil a sign dedicating a classroom in honor of Sgt. 1st Class Clifford Beattie, June 25, at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Beattie, a Tempe, Ariz., native, gave his life in May while on patrol against the indirect-fire networks. He was known to dedicate much of his own time to training and instructing his Soldiers, making the classroom a fitting memorial to his name.

# ACE QUICK REACTION FORCE ALWAYS ON TIME

by 2LT Brandon Mulrine

Most everyone in Iraq has experienced a situation similar to this: You are in your Combat Housing Unit (CHU) relaxing from a long, hot day and getting ready to get some sleep. You climb into your bed and as you begin to doze, you hear a boom followed by blaring speakers telling you to seek cover and wait for the all clear. Indirect Fires (IDF), either rockets or mortars, has just been fired onto Victory Base Complex (VBC). Soon after, accountability is taken and you start to dream about happier places and the people you love.

However, not everyone gets to go back to sleep. If you are a member of the esteemed Alpha Company Aces, you may be tossing on your body armor and double timing over to your truck line which here at Camp Liberty. These hearty members of Ace Company are not running to their trucks to see if they have been hit by the indirect fire, but to respond in an expeditious manner in hopes of apprehending the insurgents beyond the gates and collecting vital evidence which may help us prevent future attacks. These soldiers are part of the Quick Reaction Force which respond to IDF attacks, Troops-in-contact situations and other disturbances that directly affect the welfare and safety of our comrades.

The QRF is the human element of a complex base protection system which includes an array of high tech surveillance equipment and armaments used to protect and prevent IDF attacks from occurring. As

these systems are working, the Aces are preparing to react and respond to wherever the event occurred. The Ace QRF element is 100% mission ready and is prepared to respond within minutes. 1LT Jonathan Mathias from Columbus, Ohio, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon's Platoon Leader, said that while the timeline to respond is short, it is important that it is met because these events are often time sensitive.

Depending on the mission, the QRF will often be accompanied recovery assets or the Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit. Upon receiving the signal to roll out to the event site, the QRF and associated element head to the site. As the element in charge of security, the Ace QRF sets up a security perimeter and assists with the mission as requested. A recent Ace QRF found rocket rails--which hold the rockets and allow them to be fired--unused rockets, detonation sources like cell phones and blasting caps. More importantly, the Aces were able to detain four individuals who have been accused of firing the rockets. SFC Patrick Noling, an Eagle Nest, N.M., native and Platoon Sergeant for 3rd Platoon said that was an extremely successful QRF mission because they were not only able to recover some of the evidence and apprehend individuals, but because the US Forces—the Ace QRF and accompanying EOD team—were able to work successfully with the 6<sup>th</sup> IA who had responded to the same event. This, SFC Noling says, is an encouraging sign that the Iraqi Army is prepared to handle situations like this

*“Being a member of the Quick Reaction Force is a vital part of the mission “*

in the future once the US Forces have withdrawn.

Being a member of the Quick Reaction Force is a vital part of the mission not just for Ace Company, but for the Dragon Battalion and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advise and Assist Brigade. Each soldier knows it is imperative to always be prepared for whatever situation they may be called to face. Specialist Jerry Smeding, from Scranton, PA, Ace Co's senior medic, paraphrased George Orwell when he quipped that “Soldiers sleep peaceably in their CHUs at night because the Aces stand ready to react quickly on their behalf.”



Soldiers from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade rush to the truck line after being called up to respond to an isolated incident outside VBC on June 20, 2011 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Alpha Company is the main QRF element for 1-63AR's Operating Area and has little time to react to the situation. (U.S. Army photo by 2LT Brandon Mulrine, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)



Sergeant Carlos Rojas of Tuscon, AZ, a Team leader with 2nd Platoon, Alpha Co. 1st Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, yells out a description of the developing situation to the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon on June 20, 2011 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Knowing the situation helps the QRF element prepare to deal with the situation at hand. (U.S. Army photo by 2LT Brandon Mulrine, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)

# Hail and Farewell



Welcome 2nd Lt. Choi Assistant S-2



Multi-Function Team leader 1st Lt. Conway earns his IID combat patch



Happy 47th Birthday CSM Smith



2nd Lt. Mulrine demonstrates "The Rocket," a cheer used by cadets at West Point to support their team



SGT Faling earns the Army Achievement Medal for winning the Dagger Brigade Noncommissioned Officer of the Month board



Newly promoted CPTs renew the "Oath of Office"  
From left to right: CPT Reece Doty, CPT Tim Mussack, and CPT Brian Varns

# CSM NOTES

By Command Sgt. Maj. Toney Smith



- PCI, PCC, and PMCS before and after every mission. The heat will wreak havoc upon neglected equipment
- Drink water, and sports drinks. Supplements, energy drinks, and soda will make you weak and susceptible to heat injury in the summer
- 3/4 of the tour is behind you, re-evaluate stale SOPs and fight complacency.
- The Dragon Battalion has, among many proud achievements, increased ISF operational capacity ten-fold, completed essential provincial development projects, developed targeting systems that pressure networks, begun to turn in significant amounts of theater equipment, and handed over to our Iraqi counterparts an enormous footprint in Nasir Wa Salam. Great Work!
- The PFC Ramon Mora Jr. Gym and SFC Clifford E. Beattie classroom are memorial to our fallen. Honor their memory by achieving greatness through one extra rep, or unwavering focus.

## Congratulations for the excellent performance given by this month's Dragon Battalion board winners

### NCO OF THE MONTH—JULY



SGT Todd Enoch, S-6 NCO, HHC  
Burlington, North Carolina

### SOLDIER OF THE MONTH—JULY



SPC Reggie Velishok, Gunner, 511th  
Faribault, Minnesota

## DEATH DEALERS TRAIN IA ON TRUCK GUNNERY

By 2nd Lt. Patrick Beaudry

Company D, 1st Battalion 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division Center, and their partners in the 17th Division of the Iraqi Army conducted truck gunnery exercises over the course of four days. The training was identified as needed by the Iraqi Army Commando Battalion and offered the IA a chance to take standard U.S. techniques and combine them with Iraqi ingenuity.

Roughly a month ago the IA determined they needed to go through small vehicle training events. The training specifically required a shooting from a moving vehicle, shooting from a stationary vehicle in a defensive position, and finally shooting from a stationary position with dismounted support. The first day of training was canceled due to poor visibility caused by a dust storm.

The second day however was quite a success. Starting on Monday 13 June, the Dealer's 3rd Platoon took to the road and with a handful of the Commandos trucks and made their way down to the QaQa Range at 05:00 in

the morning. Platoon Leader, 1st Lt. Daniel Gorton of Lampasas, TX and Platoon Sergeant, Sfc. Derick Dillard of Naperville, IL walked the Commando Lt. Mahamnid through the lane 1 time. The second lane was performed with Lt. Mahamnid in the vehicle with Sfc. Dillard walking him through what few deficiencies he saw.

It turns out it took a lot less time to conduct this range than was originally anticipated. "Sir, they got it. I ran the Lt. through the lane one time and then had him sit with me as we watched the first Iraqi lane go through. He caught on really quick and took charge of the entire training event. I expect us to be back before breakfast the next two days," Sfc. Dillard informed Delta Company Commander Cpt. Michael McClain while at a company meeting the evening of the first day's training.

True to Sfc. Dillard's assessment the training continued to fly by with amazing ease. This is largely attributed to just how professional the Commando Battalion is. When it comes to training and to missions the Commandos work very hard at maintaining their

reputation as the most professional unit within the 17th Division. Just over 2 months ago the Commandos completed the first of what is three planned sniper courses.

This comes as no surprise to Johnstown, PA native Cpt. Michael McClain. The Dealers Company Commander has been partnered with the Commandos now for over 7 months. "I can honestly say I like working with these guys. They are reliable and they genuinely want to work and do a good job. It is inspiring to see how well they work together and towards an end. They are especially good at applying combat power to a problem."

Over the course of the three days of active training, the Commandos refined their training processes as well as their tactics. The commando's ability to absorb and benefit from the training demonstrates their competence and professionalism. Already a top-notch unit, the Commando's continue to distinguish themselves as a true force to be reckoned with.



The 17<sup>th</sup> Iraq Army Division Commando platoon listens intently as the range brief is presented. Understanding of the range and tips from experienced Soldiers help to strengthen the effectiveness of the range. All lessons learned here will help give confidence to the Soldiers when they perform their daily missions. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Hastings, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD – C)

## DEALER SENDS

June came and went for the Dealers rather quickly this year. The operational tempo was high from the very beginning. Planning and training cycles were kicked up and relationships with the IA have steadily improved as each side grows more familiar working with the other.

This month started off with 1st SGT Alaniz, Headquarters Platoon Sergeant SSG Miller, and Company XO with R&R leave that overlapped. This was not planned to happen this way but rather was an adjustment made because of mission requirements. Despite the significant drop in immediate company Leadership, the company drove on and with success. The leadership of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon rose to the challenge serving in both the Executive Officer and 1<sup>st</sup> SGT roles.

Acting 1st SGT, SFC Cirillo continued relations with the IA Sergeant Major, SMG Thar and escorted him to VBC for a SGM conference. 1LT Middleton was able to find funds for new air conditioning units, a total of 19 were purchased. These new AC units replaced some faulty ones and

brought much needed relief and respite from the increasingly hot June summer days. Lastly, stepping up as acting Headquarters Platoon Sergeant and Supply Sergeant was SGT Maldonado. SGT Maldonado stream lined the turn in process of excess equipment for JSS Deason and the Death Dealers. His efforts and drive have not only kept Delta Company on track for a timely draw down but potentially put the Dealers ahead of schedule.

Training was also a success. From 13-15 June, 3rd Platoon went to the QaQa range with the Commandos of the 17th Division Iraqi Army. There the platoons trained on a modified wheeled gunnery further improving the IA's combat power. This partnered training is a noteworthy achievement as over 30 Iraqi Army truck crews took part in U.S. style gunnery training that greatly improved their effectiveness. With an Operation Outreach and a Combined Live Fire mission pending in the near future Delta is sure to be active over the next 30 days.

2nd Lt. Patrick Beaudry



1SG Leonard Alaniz



Lt. Col. Michael Henderson (left), the commander of 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, and an Emmett, Idaho, native, presents the Purple Heart to Pfc. Rene Mckinnon (right), a gunner with 1st Bn., and a Millsboro, Del., native, was injured in an Improvised Explosive Device attack on May 22nd while conducting counter indirect-fire operations in Baghdad, Iraq. During the awards ceremony June 25, at Camp Liberty, Iraq, Mckinnon went on to receive a Combat Infantryman's Badge.



Command Sgt. Major Toney Smith (left), the senior enlisted advisor of 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, and a Louisiana, Mo., native, embraces Sgt. 1st Class Mark Polt (right), a platoon sergeant with 1st Bn., and a Pierce, Neb., native, congratulating him on his promotion to Sgt. 1st Class, June 25, at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Polt also received a Combat Action Badge for an Improvised Explosive Device attack during a counter indirect-fire patrol May 22nd in Baghdad, Iraq.

## DRAGONS PSD RECEIVES COMBAT ACTION BADGE (CAB), COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE (CIB), AND THE PURPLE HEART



SSG Polt promoted to SFC / receives CAB



PFC Mckinnon receives Purple Heart / CIB



SGT Cenicerros receives CAB



SGT George receives CAB



PFC Garret receives CAB



PFC Jones receives CAB



SGT Ortiz receives CIB



PFC Ortiz receives CAB



PFC Stites receives CAB



PFC Ordway receives CIB



PFC Tashchiyan receives CIB

# 511TH ENGINEERS CHANGE COMMANDERS

By CPT Brian Walker

On June 7th, 2011 the 511th Sapper Company "Reapers" conducted a Change of Command ceremony between the outgoing commander, CPT Cory Hoeksema, and the incoming commander, CPT Brian Walker. The company is currently serving in the Baghdad area as part of the 1-63rd Armor "Dragons" Battalion and conducts a variety of missions from partnerships to protecting the force.

CPT Hoeksema took command of the 511th EN CO in October of 2009, and successfully returned the company home from their Route Clearance mission in Kirkuk, Iraq. Under his guidance and leadership the company immediately began preparing for their next deployment, overcoming numerous challenges over the course of their year of stabilization and training before returning to Iraq and the Baghdad area. His next assignment will be

at the Cold Weather research laboratory with the Army Corps of Engineers, and he looks forward to the new experience and to spending time with his family. His wife Jae, who supported the families of the Soldiers of 511th as the FRG leader, will also be missed.

CPT Walker is taking the company after having served on the BN staff as the assistant to the Operations Officer for the 326th EN BN, 511th EN CO's organic BN, for the past fourteen months. The company looks forward to making the most of his experience in light engineer units, where he spent his time as both a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer, as it moves forward towards the completion of Operation New Dawn. He is thankful for the opportunity and humbled by the chance to lead some of the best Soldiers in the world – Sappers.



Three generations of Reaper 6 were present at the ceremony on the 7<sup>th</sup>. The acting BN CDR for the ceremony, MAJ Brad Morgan (center), commanded the 511<sup>th</sup> EN CO prior to and for part of its last deployment. Outgoing Commander CPT Cory Hoeksema (left) was relieved by CPT Brian Walker (right).



**Outgoing Command Team**  
CPT Hoeksema  
ISG Richardson



**The Passing of the Guidon**  
Clockwise from left: ISG Marcus Richardson to Outgoing Commander CPT Cory Hoeksema to MAJ Brad Morgan to Incoming Commander Brian Walker and back to ISG Richardson.



**Incoming Command Team**  
CPT Walker  
ISG Richardson

# Dragon Reenlistments

Echo - SPC Nathane Garland

HHC - SPC Ryan Flores

# DRAGON PROMOTIONS

## A CO

PFC Gilbert Wilson  
SGT Kyle Magnani

## B CO

SPC Bradley Jaudon

## C CO

SPC Joshua Saari  
SPC Christian Scott

## D CO

SPC Bobby Tipton

## E CO

SPC Ronnie Hameth  
SPC Timothy Mears  
SPC Xiaotan Miao  
SGT Jonathan Quick

SPC Jacob Rogers  
SGT Chase Schulthorpe  
SPC Joshua Sweeney  
SPC Steven Welton  
SGT Kristena Williams

## HHC

PV2 Justin Deloatch  
SPC Johnny Arias  
SPC Sammy Chabert  
SPC Benjamin White  
SGT Scott Myers  
CPT Brian Varns  
CPT Reece Doty  
CPT Tim Mussack  
SFC Mark Polt  
SFC John Kunkleman



CSM Toney Smith congratulates newly promoted SFC Mark Polt



LTC Michael Henderson promotes John Kunkleman to SFC

# REAR DETACHMENT 1/2 WAY PARTY



Mimi Woodworth

On 11 June at McCormick Park Ft. Riley Kansas the FRG held a battalion wide 1/2 way party. About 50 Family took advantage of this event. The children enjoyed a bouncy house. An information table was available to include deployment dolls a large basket of children toys, and Trevor romaine deployment kits for the children.

**1ST BATTALION 63RD ARMOR REGIMENT**

TF 1-63 AR 2 AAB  
 Camp Victory  
 APO AE 09344

*“The Dragon’s Herald” is a monthly publication of the 1st Battalion 63rd Armor Family Readiness Group. This newsletter is not an official Army publication but is intended as a communication tool between the Battalion and the Family, to share constructive news about the battalion, and to promote the Combined Arms as a whole.*



| Battalion FRG Leadership |                       |  |
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CPT Ramos calls lightning down from the sky



Ace Tanks on the move