

# THE ARROWHEAD

## Family Readiness Group Newsletter

Vol. 19

"For the families of those deployed"

4 September, 2004

Dear Arrowhead Families and Friends,

We are entering our 11<sup>th</sup> month of deployment, and our thoughts are inevitably drifting back to home, but we still have our hands full here, and are continuing to work hard to lay the foundation for stability in Iraq. August was a busy month, with task organization changes, political shifts in the Iraqi Interim Government, and continued acts of violence from forces hostile to the new Iraq. Rest assured that your soldiers are responding to all of these challenges with remarkable courage and professionalism. The young men and women of this Brigade are truly worthy of respect and admiration, and I am proud of all of them.

The rear detachment commander, Major Mark Landes, is firmly on board and working hard to ensure that things are prepared for the arrival of the Brigade back at Fort Lewis. I know that there are a million questions, and I urge you all to stay closely connected with your Readiness Groups to remain current.

Thank you again for all your support; we look forward to another successful month here in Mosul, and another month closer to you.

ARROWHEAD!

COL Mike Rounds

### 1-23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion

Tomahawk Friends and Families,

Greetings again from Iraq. It's still hot, but our Iraqi comrades tell me that it will continue to gently cool down. It should prove to be just the ticket to prepare us for a Fort Lewis fall and winter.

As you may have heard, recently we had been working temporarily in another area. Unfortunately,

### Joint Action



Soldiers from the Iraqi National Guard (ING) conduct a joint patrol with Stryker soldiers in Mosul, Iraq. The ING soldiers were trained by the Arrowhead Brigade soldiers deployed in Mosul.

### Arrowhead Brigade Reunion Workshops

5, 6, & 7 October 2004,  
6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Stone Education Center

#### Topics:

- Working through the unique stressors of a combat deployment
- Post deployment personal finance
- Bonding, separation anxiety and discipline
- The balancing act: reuniting, discipline, and family fun (school-age children)
- Communicating again

\*Children can be taken to the Center after 6:00p.m. Check in at the Stone Education Center will run from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

The following web site contains more information:  
[www.lewisfamilyfocus.com](http://www.lewisfamilyfocus.com)

**\*Call your FRG Leader for more info\***

email and phone services there were extremely limited. Our job continues to be staying ready to back up our good friends of the Iraqi security forces should they ask. Rest assured that they are

stepping up every day and my confidence grows every time I work with them. Their courage in the face of threats to their lives and the lives of their families is inspiring. The cowards who threaten them and continue to oppose a legitimate Iraqi government will perish because these Iraqi patriots won't be swayed by bullies and thugs.

You will also be glad to know that our sister battalion from the Lancer Brigade is making its final preparations for deployment and relief in place as scheduled. Our Strykers continue to provide a tremendous capability for the mission and excellent protection. As I have told you many times, we have the advantage being equipped with these excellent vehicles but our strength is in our Soldiers and leaders – steadfast and respected in battle and genuine in peaceful pursuits.

As I told you in my last update, we should all be home in early November. Please continue to trust that we will send out all redeployment information through the rear detachment and FRG channels. What I can tell you with absolute surety is that I will continue to send soldiers home on leave and on R&R pass until the last possible day the theater policy will allow. I don't know what that date is until we finalize the re-deployment dates. I would like to continue to offer my thanks for your patience. I apologize, but I still don't have many specifics to give you, but here's what I know. Our task force dining out (formal ball) will be 02 Dec 04 and block leave dates are confirmed to be 03 Dec 04 – 03 Jan 05. I hope you are looking forward to both of these events as much as I am. I think the dining out will be a great opportunity to celebrate the history of our unit and enjoy an evening with good friends. And, of course, block leave will be a well deserved rest for many a weary soul.

Media interest is really starting to get strong. Operational security is critical during the transition period because we need to protect the timing and events that could give an enemy the chance to attack. As always, I strongly encourage you not to speculate or spread rumors and not to discuss sensitive information with anyone outside official channels (Rear detachment and FRG). And, as always, if you are not comfortable or don't wish to speak with the media, please tell them to contact the Fort Lewis Public Affairs Office at 967-0155. Also, please be sure to talk to your FRG point of contact if you leave town and make sure she has your correct phone number. I want to be sure that you continue to receive information on leave, re-

deployment, and other important events of the Task Force.

Again, please accept my sincere thanks for your continued support and understanding. The hope of better days spent with our loved ones sustains us all. God bless you and please take care. I look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Respectfully,  
LTC Buck James

## 2-3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion

Dear Family, Friends, and Fellow Patriots,

Great news from Iraq, the temperature is beginning to drop! It is finally below 80 degrees at night, a long awaited sign that fall is approaching and our tour here is coming to a close. In a few weeks we also expect the temperature during the day to drop below 100 degrees. We are all looking forward to that day as it will make life a little more comfortable.

The Battalion continues to establish a more stable environment in Mosul. Our efforts include work done by the Civil Affairs team to complete some major projects in the city. Recently, the team completed two sewage projects, improving health conditions and the appearance of the streets. In the last two weeks alone they secured funding for over \$150,000 to complete additional projects and



submitted a request for \$500,000 in funds to rebuild a high school that was damaged in the initial bombing

campaign. While costly, these efforts to rebuild infrastructure and create jobs have an extremely positive impact on the Iraqi people.

The companies continue to perform extremely well. Part of our mission is to prepare the Iraqi National Guard to assume the primary responsibility for the security of Mosul. Recently, Blackhorse Company reached a milestone when they conducted an operation with the Iraqi National Guard. The Iraqis provided the main assault team and confirmed that they are capable of conducting raids on their own.

Additionally, Legionnaire, Blackhorse, and Charger Companies continue to focus on force protection missions. Their efforts have helped prevent the

enemy from firing mortars and rockets from preferred locations, reducing the accuracy and



effectiveness of attacks on our Forward Operating Bases. Throughout these patrols they interact with the Iraqi people and help to develop the information needed to capture enemy cells. It is hard work to be sure, but a necessity to protect our Soldiers.

Of course no Patriot operation would be possible without the outstanding support of Highlander Company. You may not know it, but given the mix of missions that we have been assigned, our Strykers have the highest average mileage of any group of vehicles in the Brigade. Keeping the vehicles running in this dusty and hot environment is not easy, but Captain Van Hook, Chief Johnson, and the great Soldiers that deliver parts, and turn the wrenches make it happen every day. Without their hard work, the Battalion's accomplishments would not have been possible.

I also want to let you all know about a workshop for families being held at the Stone Education Center from 5-7 October from 1830-2130. The topics for the workshop include:

- Working through the unique stressors to a combat deployment
- Post deployment personal finance
- Bonding, separation anxiety, and discipline
- The balancing act: reuniting, discipline and family fun (preschool through kindergarten)
- Communicating again

Daily we remember our family and friends back



home in our thoughts and prayers. We are thankful for the love and support that you send our way. Your support has provided invaluable motivation for us in

the last ten months. I am so proud of what this

Battalion has done and continues to do every day. Know that your efforts are a vital part of our success. We miss you and are definitely looking forward to our reunion very soon.

LTC Jay G. Flowers  
"PATRIOTS"

### 5-20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion

Dear wives and family members of the Sykes' Regulars,

The past two weeks have remained busy for the Regulars. We continue to apply offensive pressure to the enemy in our AO and continue to be successful in our endeavors. Concurrently, we are training and equipping the newest addition to the AO, the 109<sup>th</sup> Iraqi National Guard (ING) Battalion. The ING will make a great contribution to our AO once they become operational and will in essence give us a capability we have not had here in the past. We continue to make preparations for our return trip home getting our containers and equipment ready for our changeover with the incoming Infantry Battalion.

### Battle Company

As we come to the end of another month, we get one step closer to returning home to family and friends. The men of Battle Company continue to perform superbly in Northern Iraq. The operational tempo remains high here and Battle Company continues to do its part in ridding the country of terrorists. The men of Battle Company continue to excel in every endeavor and relentlessly pursue the enemy. The continuing situation in Tall Afar keeps us busy but great strides are being made to create a peaceful and secure area. All the members of Battle Company have performed superbly



throughout the year and the present month has been no different. While remaining focused on the mission at hand, we are beginning

preparations for the arrival of 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade and our upcoming hand over to them. While weary from a long year in country the energy can be felt in the air as we look forward to our relief arriving and Battle Company returning home. September will hopefully bring with it cooler temperatures for us to enjoy

here in sunny Iraq. All of you at home have a tremendous amount to be proud of for the contributions and effort your loved ones have made here. As always our thoughts are with all of our families and friends back home and everyone is excited about our upcoming return.

### **The Rock**

The last two weeks have been very eventful for the Rock. Concentrating mostly on capturing the enemy, The Rock undertook many operations inside the city. We detained over 15 suspected terrorists two weeks ago and again succeeded in depleting the enemy's ability to conduct attacks against US and Coalition forces. We are becoming more acquainted with the enemy's tactics and methods, and therefore are having greater success stopping him. Right now, the soldiers of the Rock are staying focused on the job at hand. The last week has been very good for Rock Company. Throughout a myriad of operations in and around Tall A'far we continued to degrade the enemy's ability to conduct attacks. This was accomplished by taking upwards of 10 verified terrorist fighters off the streets. Also, the Battalion displayed that it understands the enemy and is going to take the fight to him. Rock's efforts this week succeeded in keeping the "Bad Guys" off balance and unable to mount any credible efforts against Coalition Forces. As a result of this success the morale of the company has been very high. Nothing is better than victory. Knowing that the work we do makes a difference is why all of us joined in the first place. We understand that time is getting short, but we stay focused on the job at hand. Thanks for all your support and prayers.

### **Hound**

Another week has passed us by, one step closer to our long awaited return home, and returning to our loved ones. This week, the company continued to



make headway in our rebuilding of Iraq. The company conducted screening of new Iraqi National Guard candidates. It took a few days to complete the screening of a few hundred potential soldiers - a job well done and very necessary to ensure that we are training loyal, strong and dedicated soldiers. The Battalion will continue

screening candidates in the upcoming month, in order to process enough soldiers to fulfill local requirements for developing Iraqi National Guard

Battalion's. Otherwise, on the FOB, operations continue on par. We continue to prepare for the arrival of our counterparts and begin to count down the days until our arrival back home. We look forward to the opportunity to spend the holidays this year with our love ones. We all miss you, and as always appreciate your support. We know that you are anticipating our return as much as we are.

### **Fire Support Element**

Within the Fire Support Element (FSE) section, all of us have been busy with the new FOB we currently reside in. We have been involved with many missions, providing Kiowa Warrior air support during each of the battalion's missions. Fire support Team certifications are going to be starting soon and we will be the evaluators for the line unit tests. Our section has been responsible for maintaining the Entry Control Point (ECP) to the main operations center of the battalion. We monitor who enters and leaves through the gates, as well as the FOB security. Our section oversees the new Iraqi National Guard (ING) and the Iraqi Police as well. We provide them with the training and weapons to take the lead for Iraq's security. To all the families within the sections, all of us here in the FSE thank you for all your devotion and dedication back home.

As this week closes, so does the month of August, bringing soldiers of the Hound family one month closer to returning home. The month of August was full of diverse missions, from Battalion sized operations to the screening of Iraqi National Guard candidates. The month was long, but has gone by fast.

### **Medic Platoon**

August comes to a close and new beginnings emerge. The medics stay busy by screening over 250 new recruits for the Iraqi National Guard each day. The following weeks will bring opportunities to train the future Army of Iraq in the necessary medical skills they must possess in order to save the lives of their brethren. SPC Justin Teston, who has previously taught new Iraqi medics, is excited by the chance to help them acquire the knowledge to take care of wounded and sick. "It is a great responsibility and honor to show these guys what it takes to perform life saving measures. We will equip them with the skills they need to take care of their fellow Soldiers".

### **Thunder Platoon**

Greetings again from the Thunder platoon. I hope this newsletter finds you all well as it brings us all a little closer to the reunion we yearn for so much.

The platoon has been doing an outstanding job these past months and I am amazed at how focused the Soldiers still are after being deployed for ten months. I can only assume that the love for their families is what drives them forward through this deployment. We look forward to seeing you soon and, until then, we will write and call whenever possible.

As you can see, and from what you have read about the Battalion and more particularly, the company, operations continue with great tempo, and the soldiers of Hound company continue to maintain focus, and excel at all missions and tasks asked of them. The summer has been long, hot, and at times very difficult. The soldiers of this company, your family members that you have missed for so long, continue to perform with great success, second to none; a mission that has only been accomplished by the untiring support of the Hound Family Readiness Group. For this, I speak for everyone in the company; thank you and we will see you soon.



#### **D Troop/1-14 CAV**

The days are going by fast now as we get closer and closer to coming home. The kids will be going back to School soon and like them, we are now preparing for our own fall return. D Troop is still busier than ever.

The UAV platoon still flies their "birds" around the clock supporting almost every element in our region. After a little bit of a break, the NBC platoon is back on the road supporting convoys and providing security for near by missions. HQ section is vigilant as ever overseeing FOB security. My own platoon has been busy too. Rare outside the FOB missions have reenergized the GSR section within the platoon and of course, the Prophet guys are a 24-hour intelligence steam rolling team. While all the platoons have their designated missions, they also have an additional common mission now.

Milvans need to be cleaned and prepared for storage of equipment to go home. Continuing maintenance must be done on all assigned equipment to ensure that the next Stryker Brigade can take over and continue the fight! Every one is eager to do their part and morale is high. The last of the Troop are taking their leave within the next few weeks.

Many soldiers within the Troop are reenlisting, some even staying at Fort Lewis. There is no shortage of pride here!

Finally, the Troop has gotten word of block leave during the month of December. With more phone calls and emails being sent everyday and the constant search for those good airline deals, this year's Holiday season looks to be a special one for the troopers.

As usual our job over here takes on more meaning with all the support you give us. Even at this stage in the deployment the care packages are still coming! On behalf of the soldiers in D Troop I want to say thank you for all the support and goodies you send. The mailroom is up and running and most packages get to us in about two weeks. So there is still time to send a September care package (smile).

We hope you all had a good summer and look forward to seeing you soon. Take care!

#### **BSMC**

During the month of August, the Brigade Support Medical Company saw in excess of 427 sick call patients, 316 dental patients, and 119 physical therapy patients.

In addition to the superior Level I+ and Level II care the BSMC provides on a daily basis across the 3/2 Arrowhead Brigade Combat Team battle space.

The 3/2 Arrowhead Brigade Combat Team is on the brink of entering the tenth month of deployment. The subject of redeployment is addressed daily, along with planning and execution of combat health support.

Soldiers began packing the bags they will send ahead in MILVANS, preparing the MILVANS for shipment, and organizing Company equipment to facilitate a smooth transition between the current and incoming Brigade Support Medical Company. Nevertheless, as combat operations continue for 5-20 IN in Tall A'far, the Brigade Support Medical Company maintains the objective to conserve their fighting strength.

In an effort to maintain the medic's skills proficiency, providers and senior medics facilitate rigorous, daily medical training, challenging the



medics to triage and treat in an expeditious and innovative manner. The result has been superior medical support

for the AO. In addition to continuous Level II and

MEDEVAC support, the Brigade Support Medical Company recently worked alongside the 5-20 IN Medical Platoon to screen incoming Iraqi National Guard recruits. The medics task was to ensure that the new recruits were "fit to fight," capable of performing the rigorous training exercises that would be required for proficient execution when ultimately called to duty to defend their country against Anti-Iraqi Forces.

As the month of August comes to a close we end yet another chapter in the combat history of the Regulars. The past month was very successful and rewarding for the Regulars. We targeted many high echelon terrorist cell leaders and have temporarily staved off our foe in the city of Tall A'far. We will continue to target the enemy to take



the bad guys off the streets so that we can bring peace and stability to our part of Iraq in the remaining months. The leave program is entering its 8<sup>th</sup> and final month and I am happy to report

that all soldiers who deployed with us back in November have been afforded the opportunity to take leave as well as many who joined us in January and February. We creep closer and closer to the day when we will hand over authority to our relieving unit and come back to our wonderful families. Each of you has served your country every bit as much as we have and we thank you for your sacrifice even though you did not raise your right hands to enlist. Without you, we could not do all that we do here. Thank you for your continued love and support.

LTC Karl D. Reed

### **1-14<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron**

Dear Family and Friends of the WARHORSE Squadron,

Once again the Squadron has been on the move since our last newsletter and is now established in Mosul at their latest FOB home. C/52 continues to do great things while working on a different FOB. This is a different mission than what we were doing and everyone has adapted well and is doing an exceptional job. I would also like to let everyone know that we are currently planning to hold the annual Cavalry ball on 18 November 2004, the details of the event are currently being worked

out, but we hope all will attend. This newsletter, we have asked that a Platoon Sergeant from each troop/company provide the input, we hope all is well back home and we appreciate all of your support.

"Warhorse"

Sincerely,  
CSM Brian Shover

### **Horsemen**

Dear families and friends of the Horsemen,

At last, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. We can almost feel the bite in the air that the Washington winter will bring upon our arrival there in the next couple of months. Without a doubt, we are ready for some cold weather. What a great time to come home, just in time to share Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year with all our loved ones.

The soldiers as always are doing a fantastic job accomplishing their assigned missions and then some. They continue to support the Troop and Squadron, by taking care of all of the soldiers of the Warhorse Squadron.

Special thanks to the extraordinary friends and family members our soldiers have. You would not believe how much the occasional email, letter, or care package helps to get us through our family separation blues.

Finally, a special thanks to my awesome wife. You are my soul mate and my inner strength and motivation. My love for you is unexplainable-thanks for taking care of our rotten kids. Dad misses and loves you all.

SFC Shawn E. Romero  
Medical Platoon Sergeant  
HHT, 1-14 Cavalry Regiment

### **Apocalypse**

Welcome to another edition of the sands of time.

A warm and hearty greeting to the family and friends of the Apocalypse Troopers, this edition finds us once again back at our old stomping grounds around the greater Sinjar and Tall'Afar areas. Yes as you probably heard we have moved again, the last place just wasn't exciting enough for us.

The soldiers of Apocalypse have adjusted to their new living conditions and are enjoying some well-deserved air-conditioned living areas and adequate dining facilities. So with a change of assignments comes a change of missions, we

currently are responsible for part of the continuing border security mission along the Syria and Iraq border and also force protection here at the FOB. You may remember when the Squadron owned this place, but now the infantry owns this piece of ground and we are here to help them out.

The missions are long and sometimes frustrating and other times there is more excitement than you would wish on your worse enemy, but the troopers are taking it all in stride because they can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Yes, we know when we are supposed to leave here and we know when we should be back in the good 'ole US of A. So with motivation like that we can accomplish any task given to us.

The Troopers of Apocalypse as a whole would like to extend a hearty get well soon and come back to the fight to, SGT Little who was injured in a vehicle accident and to SPC Lawatch who was injured in an IED attack. You guys get well soon and we will see you when we return to Fort Lewis.

And to all the friends and family, especially the wives thank you for your support, you make this much easier than it seems. God bless you all.

SFC Timothy Scott

### **Bronco**

Dear Bronco Troop Friends and Family,  
Hello from sunny Iraq. Yes, the temperatures are still hovering in the 110-degree range; however, cooler weather will eventually show up. The troop has been busy putting miles on the vehicles as we continue to stabilize and help the Iraqi people get their new government and infrastructure in place. Morale in the troop is very high and everyone has a sense of pride in what they have helped to accomplish in Iraq. We have had some well-deserved promotions in the past couple of months. PFCs Chau, Ellison, Montgomery, and Auyeung were promoted to Specialist on 1 September. CPL Jankowiak appeared before the Sergeant Board and after a great performance, was recommended for promotion to Sergeant.

Our base area allows for the troopers to attend a wide array of activities including movies, Internet, and many MWR activities. There is also the nightly ritual of sitting in front of our sleeping accommodations swapping stories of the days activities. The troop is looking forward to that day when we will start packing out and get ready for the flight back home. All Bronco Troopers have performed their duties in an extraordinary way that

sets each one apart, however, as a troop they become one ensuring mission success every time. Each Trooper sends his best to his loved ones and extended families in the states. We appreciate our family's support and will see all of you soon.

SSG Francis Rose  
HQ Platoon Sergeant

### **Crazy Horse**

Hello to all the friends and family of Crazy Horse Troop,

Another month is now behind us. This brings us closer to the day we have all been waiting for, redeployment. The next thing you know we will all be eating Thanksgiving dinner at home with our loved ones and talking about of how long we waited in line the previous year in Kuwait. On the other hand, the Troopers here have not "smelled the barn" just yet. Everyone is concentrating on the mission at hand and is doing a great job as usual.

Our year in Iraq has taken us to many locations and has led us through many missions. All the troopers of Crazy Horse have performed beyond all expectations and are a testament to the outstanding NCO and Officer leadership that we are blessed with. We are all looking forward to enjoying the wet, cold Washington weather with all of you. See you all soon.

SFC William Burnett

### **Avalanche**

Hello Avalanche Fans. Another two weeks have passed here in Iraq, and the Company is still moving right along. We have had a rather successful 14 days, both in preparing ourselves to transition back to tactical operations outside of the Forward Operating Base, as well as developing and preparing the Iraqi National Guard for the assumption of security operations here in Northern Iraq.



Before I begin telling all of you about these exciting events, I would like to say as simply as I can how proud I am of the entire Avalanche family. The

FRG leadership has told me about all the wonderful things that are being planned for our return, and I must say that I find myself frankly astonished at the amount of support that has come our way. It truly makes the men here proud, and lets us all know how much our efforts are appreciated. Thank you one and all for everything.

OK, down to the good stuff. I am proud to inform you that C Company, 52 Infantry Regiment has now completed something that no other unit in Northern Iraq has been able to do. On 26 August 2004, nine platoons of Iraqi National Guardsmen from two ING battalions graduated here on the FOB. It was the single largest graduation of Iraqi citizens who have willingly volunteered to help defend their country ever conducted, with almost 350 plus soldiers. The formation was so large that it had to be conducted outside on two separate soccer fields that were transformed into a parade ground. These men were all trained by the Avalanche Family. Their addition to the security forces here in Northern Iraq is sure to be immediately felt by the local populace.

The ceremony began with nine Red, Green, and White colored smoke grenades being discharged behind the formations. As the smoke began to



bellow forth from their individual containers, LTC Ali gave a speech praising not only the Iraqi men who had volunteered to fight for a new free Iraq, but also the soldiers who had helped make it possible by spending day after day training them to become soldiers.

In attendance at the ceremony was BG Ham, the TF Olympia Commander. Upon the completion of the ceremony, the general, as well as the TF Commander, LTC Sliwa, personally congratulated the Company. LTC Ali also had a surprise. He individually shook the hand of each instructor. After he had finished, he gave each one a present. Although the completion of this class was a momentous step, it does not end C/52's involvement as instructors. One more company of the ING Battalion, remains. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon has taken it under their wing, and it is scheduled to complete training in mid-September.

The company has been pushing hard preparing themselves for operations outside of the FOB again. In the past two weeks every soldier has qualified with their individual weapon system, as well as began to confirm their zeroes on a weekly basis. Several of the platoons have conducted Advanced Rifle Marksmanship Exercises to include reflexive fire ranges. Within the next week alone the Company will complete a known distance range, 240E qualification and familiarization range, PAQ4 zero and night fire, TAC light night reflexive fire, and day reflexive Fire drills. These ranges will culminate with a Company level stress shot, which will emphasize each individual soldiers ability to fire while under a great deal of physical stress. All of these events will be conducted over a weeklong period. Rest assured, the men of C Company, 52<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment will hit anything they fire at!

We have been fortunate enough to have several of our brothers decide to continue on with the Avalanche family as well. Within the last week SSG



Bessey, SGT McIntyre, and SGT Green re-enlisted. 1LT Pope and 2LT Brashers read the orders. It was a short but emotional event. To the families of these fine men I

would like to say thank you. It is because of the sacrifices that both the soldiers here, as well as you at home, make that allow others to maintain the freedoms they have. The world would be a far better place if there were more like them – those willing to defend the honor and rights of less fortunate and oppressed people, as well as the interests of our great nation. I am proud to call myself their commander, lucky to be able to say that I know of their caliber, and pleased to call myself their friend.

One last note before I sign off. As many of you know, the Company basketball team finished 7-2 overall this season. We were not able to take home the championship, but fought right up to the end. Now, our softball team finds itself undefeated, with just one game left! If we win this one, we will become the FOB Champions! Lets keep our fingers crossed for the players. I'll be sure to let you all know if they win in the next newsletter.

Well, that's it for another two weeks. I can almost smell the air of our homes, Fort Lewis Washington, on the breeze. Please continue to pray for our

safety. For my part, I will do everything I can to ensure we all come home safely. I know my wife looks forward to seeing many of you at the FRG meeting. Please take care of yourselves, and God bless you all...



“COLD THUNDER”  
CPT Arieyeh J Austin

### Chaplain's Corner

Last month our conversation revolved around the growing energy many of us are feeling as we draw near the end of this long journey. I encouraged everyone to capitalize on this anticipation to increase our level of communication in general, and to talk about our plans for the future specifically. Communicating and Planning together are critical and central elements in Re-Integration.

This month, we add 3 other key ideas, Expectations, Patience, and Stress. Now, I hope that just by looking at these 3 words you will immediately be drawn back to the importance of the 2 ideas we have already talked about (Communication and Planning), because they are essential in handling the other 3.

To one degree or another, everyone in the re-integration picture has some expectations. Everybody in my household, from my wife, to my 3 boys, all the way down to Winston the dog and Jogger the hamster have some homecoming expectation of me, and I of them. Having or not having expectation is not the question. The real questions are: Are my expectations reasonable? Do we have a plan so that as many of our reasonable expectations as possible can be met? Again, Communication and Planning are the keys. What am I looking forward too? Have I communicated it to my spouse or family? Can we make it work? (Planning) The other side of the expectation coin is; what are my spouse and family looking forward too? We apply the same process to those set of expectations as well. Our goal, meet as many of these reasonable expectations as possible. We also have to mix in flexibility and grace. Flexibility, because we may not get exactly what we want, when we want it. Grace, because everybody in this situation probably feels like they have had it rougher than anyone else. Avoid the trap of saying, “I was in a war zone, and so I deserve to have my needs met first” or, “I have been here 24/7 with these kids, running this house, I need a break right now.” Work together, protect each other, and make

sure everyone has an opportunity to have their needs met.

As we go thru this process, patience will become a much-needed commodity. Patience with the changes that have occurred, patience with the kids, patience with the little idiosyncrasies that your spouse may have picked up, patience, patience, patience. One of the best pieces of Re-Integration advice I have ever heard is simply, Go Slow. Don't expect things to be back to normal in the first week. Re-Integration takes time.

One aspect that requires a good deal of patience is for the soldier to find his place back in the family. This may sound strange to say, but soldiers almost universally speak of feeling somewhat like strangers in their own homes when they first return. My family and I moved to Ft Lewis in January '03. We bought a house in March. With NTC, JRTC, and deploying in November, I have lived in my house in Olympia for a little over 5 months. I have been in Iraq for 12 months. So, I have lived in my container here at the FOB longer than I have in Olympia. Many soldiers will need you to be patient with them as they re-adjust to home and family. The other group that needs a lot of patience is children. It will take a while for soldiers to get used to being around kids again and vice-versa. GO SLOW, be patient, it will happen in good time. Be patient with each other re-working your roles with the children. Help each other.

The final word for this month is Stress. Everyone has been under a lot of stress. As we arrive home, a good deal of stress will be removed. Sometimes, that leads to feelings of anxiety. A feeling that there is something that I should be doing is very common for soldiers and spouses who have been going 24/7 for 365 days. Some folks report that they find it almost impossible to just relax, because they have this overwhelming sense that they should be doing something. Again, GO SLOW, be aware of this and plan your days and activities so that they move back towards a more normal and even distribution of work and relaxation. Be aware that stressful events that happened during the deployment may continue to come out for a while after deployment. Often times, soldiers do not have time to process feelings because they have to continue the mission. Once at home, when they have some down time, these unresolved feelings might re-emerge. Again, be patient, go slow, work thru them, and things will even out.

Over these next several weeks and months, there are a variety of things that I think will assist us in this process. The soldiers here will be receiving some classes on Re-Union. Many of you have sent me ideas and issues that you think are

important to address, please keep sending them, they are very helpful. Re-Integration training is also being offered 5-7 October at Stone Education Center. I would highly recommend attending these classes. As a Squadron, we are attempting to arrange some Evening Marriage Seminars, and as soon as we have more information I will forward that to you. Our schedule will also help us with transition. There will be a period of time after we arrive home, and before we go on block leave, that will be long on time off, but will also include some work. That may sound strange to you, but I have found in the past, as have many others throughout the Army, that coming home from a long deployment and sending husbands immediately home to their families 24/7, is a recipe for disaster. This way there will be a nice even mix that is long on time together, but also gives us some breathing room.

The seminars will be during this period, as well as the welcome home ceremony, the Squadron Ball, and several other events. I also will be available to do counseling if you would like to come by and see me. All of this should help us settle, before we go off on Block Leave. It is good to be talking about Re-Integration. There are few subjects that I can think of that excite me more at this point in my life. I am praying it will be a wonderful time for us all.

God Bless

Chaplain Dave

### 3-17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron

#### **BLUE TIGERS TRAIN CLOSE QUARTERS MARKSMANSHIP**

August literally started off with a bang for the Blue Tigers as the troop made their way out to one of the small arms ranges to train close quarters marksmanship and qualify on their primary weapon systems. Using the training technique known as “train the trainer”, representatives from each unit in the Task Force attended weapons training with special operations soldiers, and in turn, taught those same techniques to their individual troops. To build their skills as leaders and trainers, SGT Wietig of Maintenance Platoon and SGT Bush of Shops Platoon attended the special weapons training class and planned the troop’s marksmanship training for early August.

One of the biggest challenges with troop-level training for the Blue Tigers is to maintain the capability to work on aircraft so flight troops can meet their missions, while also getting the troop trained. SGT Bush and SGT Wietig met this challenge by working with platoon sergeants and the troop chain of command to design a training plan with three parts that worked around the maintenance schedule. Their range plan covered testing soldiers overdue for marksmanship qualification, verifying weapons zeros, and completing a special section on close-quarters marksmanship for the majority of the troop by working the range from 0800 to 1700.

At the range, the troop started off with a weapons zero course, where they verified the adjustable



settings on their M16s by practicing good breathing and trigger-squeeze techniques to make a tight three-shot group. If the shot group is

consistently off from the target center while conducting zero fire, an instruction grid on the targets provide soldiers with instructions for adjusting their weapons to bring their shot group back onto the target center. Once each soldier was zeroed, he or she then moved on to qualify with their weapon – an alternate paper target course where troopers put rounds in targets of varying size that simulate a distance of 25 to 300 meters. Following the qualification round and a short break for lunch in the shade of a desert camo net, it was back to work on the close-quarters marksmanship portion of the course. For this section, SGT Wietig and SGT Bush walked firing orders through stance and shooting techniques at close target ranges from 5 to 25 meters, including a walk-thru portion in which troopers fired on the target while closing their distance.



As an aviation maintenance troop, close quarters marksmanship could be seen as a waste of time, a subject usually isolated to infantry training. But the lesson learned during this troop training was that basic techniques can always be improved upon,

and the quick reaction nature of close-quarters training can be an exciting challenge. Training at

the range is also a good reminder that the Blue Tigers are soldiers first and maintainers second, and that being prepared for anything is part of the job. Maintaining proficiency on weapons systems boosts soldier confidence and training together means the troop is better prepared to fight and win together. The best part of weapons training, however, is that it definitely has its fun side... there's just something good about laying in the dirt and taking out targets that makes the day better for a cavalry trooper.

**AVERAGE DAY FOR B TROOP, TASK FORCE 3-17 CAVALRY**

"10 seconds....call me clear." That phrase starts the process, which turns dinosaurs and fossil fuel into noise. More importantly, it turns hours of hard work and planning into the execution of missions. A comforting sound is heard as the turbine engines spool up in unison and the aircrews conduct final preparation before take off. As their skids break contact with the ground and they move towards their objectives, the aviators' ears are flooded with traffic from one or all of the aircraft's several radios. Another mission has begun for the aviators of B Troop. They begin by contacting the personnel they will be working for to see what assistance they can offer. The assistance comes in many forms, from relaying messages to assisting units in distress. When those supported are home safe or no longer require assistance and the mission is complete, the aircrews return to base. After the skids touch down and blades slowly trade kinetic for potential energy the aircrews gather up their gear and start to prepare for tomorrow and the next mission. This is the "average day" for the aviator but the real magic starts where this "average day" ends.

The crew chiefs are the backbone of the Air Cavalry Troop. As the blades lose their kinetic energy the crew chiefs pick it up and begin their work. Working through the heat of the day on a large hunk of metal, that by noon will be hot enough to burn unprotected flesh, the crew chiefs set out to



accomplish their tasks. When not working during the 115-degree heat of the day they work through the night fixing and preparing the aircraft for the next mission. From preventive maintenance to rectifying unscheduled maintenance, they tackle the

tremendous tasks one by one. After spending hours turning wrenches and completing mandatory paperwork, they prepare the next aircraft for its flight. By checking fuel samples, fluid levels, cleaning windscreens and double-checking the paperwork they are ready to stand behind their work, assuring the pilots that their aircraft is safe and will be reliable for the upcoming mission. When the next aircrew arrives at the flight line to preflight and inspect the condition of their assigned aircraft, the crew chief will be standing by to remedy any deficiency or fault.



Prior to flying, the aircrews will meet and begin the planning process. Checking weather, managing risk, coordinating and developing the plan with the ground and air elements occupy their time. Once the plan has been completed, the Air Mission Commander will brief his aircrews on what will occur during the mission and any contingencies, just in case.

After a thorough preflight they conduct the final preparation of their gear, lock and load their weapons, cinch down their chin straps and climb into the freedom-fighting OH-58D Kiowa Warrior. Near by a crew chief looks down at his watch. It is 10 seconds to until they start. He echoes the aviator's call. "Clear."

1LT Mark O. Fulmer, 2/B/3-17 CAV

**1-37 Field Artillery Battalion**

Hello to all the "On the Minute" families! We hope this article finds you all well. The battalion is in superb shape; morale and spirits are high. We have had resounding mission successes over the last couple of weeks and recreational events have been at a level that keeps all of the soldiers busy during their time off. Task Force Minute completed training of nine platoons of Iraqi National Guard, a significant force that should go a long way in providing stability to the region. All of our elements are very busy making plans and conducting missions; it is an exciting time to be part of the "On the Minute" battalion!

Headquarters and Service Battery continues to support a diverse mission to include civil-military operations to numerous towns and villages. They embrace and execute the difficult

support missions including manning the Tactical Operations Center and all logistics operations. They always have their hands in the cookie jar, helping out with all missions undertaken by the other elements in Task Force Minute. SPC McFarland and SPC Gordillo both re-enlisted for continued service. SPC Clark was promoted to Sergeant, congratulations! We have also had some additions to the "On the Minute" family. CPT Jin Park and SFC Wise have both joined the team in theater; we look forward to meeting their families.

Alpha battery has been very busy with both missions and recreation. They recently took part in exploiting the largest weapons cache (hidden explosives and weapons) North of Baghdad. The "Steel" Battery has been busy with a softball and volleyball team. It is obviously difficult to practice



and play with such a high operational tempo, but they find time. Their confidence is high at their chances at the base volleyball championship, and their softball team still is at an even .500. SPC McCarthy and McNutt were both promoted to Sergeant over this last week. Congratulations to them and their families. We also had the honor of re-enlisting SPC York, SGT Vickers, SSG Jefferson and SSG Cason. These great American's signed on the line to continue to serve in our Army. We could not be more proud of them.

The "Thunder" battery also has been very busy with missions. They are currently assisting civilian contractors and perform missions in our area of operations. They continue with their now standard missions of convoy security, presence patrols and fixed site security. They have also had the opportunity to conduct some re-enlistments as SPC Law and SGT Lunford have extended their term of service to the Nation. We extend our appreciation to their families and for the sacrifices that they are enduring.

Charlie battery continues to protect the MNB-NW and BDE Headquarters. They have been busy with providing fixed site security and quick reaction force for the base. SPC Hallman and SPC Miller were both promoted to Sergeant, congratulations! They continue to work hard and we receive lots of compliments for the work they do.

Well, as another passage comes to an end, we wish to send our warmest regards and love from

over the miles. We anxiously look forward to the swift passage of time and the future months. All of our soldiers continue to keep their minds on the mission at hand, but at the completion of the mission our thoughts return to home and our loved ones. "On the Minute!"



LTC Steven Sliwa

## 296<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion

Frontline Family and Friends,

This letter marks the end of August and with it the completion of just under ten months in the deployment!! If all goes as planned re-deployment to Ft Lewis is just around the corner and every passing day we get closer to returning home to our families. As the summer heat and dust-dry days pass, we anxiously await that much-anticipated reunion and the cleansing, cooling rains of the Northwest Fall. The Battalion is hard at work planning for the transfer of authority and our subsequent move back to Lewis.

Temperatures are beginning to cool off slightly (highs are only in the low 100s!) and the small but noticeable shift in temperatures is allowing for measurable relief for our soldiers. The local Iraqis say that fall weather is similar to spring time. We can't wait for a break in the temperature.

Upon redeployment the battalion will be focused on some administrative matters to include a battalion Change of Command and a Change of Responsibility as we welcome in a new Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major. Of course there is also the Brigade Welcome Home Ceremony and the Brigade Change of Command scheduled in the upcoming quarter as well. Make sure you are in contact with your Company FRG POCs so you have all the latest information.

Following all of these ceremonies, the battalion will put the majority of its soldiers on a block leave for the month of December for some much deserved and much needed rest, reunion, and relaxation. Prior to our return home all deployed soldiers will be going through re-deployment training in order to educate them on what to expect as we transition

from a year of combat operations back to stateside living and for many of us back to family life.

As soldiers undergo this training here in Iraq, similar training will be offered for all spouses at Ft Lewis. This training will instruct spouses and family members on what to expect from their deployed soldier and how to deal with the often-stressful reunion and re-acquaintance period upon return. I highly recommend and encourage everyone to attend this training and be better prepared to work through the adjustments of having your soldier back in your daily routine.

As we draw nearer to the re-deployment the work of the Rear Detachment and the FRG gets busier. I fully recognize and appreciate all of the hard and detailed work these great folks have done for the soldiers and their family members. In many cases the Rear D and the FRGs have gone well above the call of duty but have done so with grace and with absolute selfless dedication to serving the Frontline Soldier and the Frontline Family member. A commander could not ask for a better group of supporters! You all have no idea how much easier your efforts have made it for the soldiers of this battalion. You have truly been combat multipliers for the battalion and the Arrowhead Brigade.

Please continue sending mail and care packages but be aware that anything mailed to us after September 15 is at risk of not making it due to re-deployment. Keep up the great work and hang in there. Still lots to do here but we will see you soon! FRONTLINE SUPPORT!!

LTC Dennis Thompson

### **HHC OUTLAWS**

From all of the soldiers of HHC, 296<sup>th</sup>: greetings from Iraq. Spirits are soaring here in Mosul as the Arrowhead Brigade has put out fragments of information on redeployment! Integrated now in daily missions is accountability for equipment for the incoming Brigade. The Outlaws continue to provide the finest support to the Brigade and its mission.

HHC must constantly react to the unpredictability of insurgents and the missions that follow from Brigade, usually on short notice. The readiness and motivation of soldiers to contribute to the success of missions is impressive and has created a solid reputation for the Outlaws. Earlier this month a dozen soldiers moved to re-establish dining facility operations after a disruption from

insurgents. The field feeding team consisted of soldiers from 296, 1-14, and 1-37. They did an outstanding job in supporting operations.

1-23 FFT remains with 1-23 IN and is providing class I support for the soldiers of Task Force Tomahawk.

Four of our soldiers, SPC Williams, SPC Shavers, SPC Abeyta, and SGT Lugo re-enlisted during the month of August to remain a part of the Outlaw family. All of the soldiers contribute daily to success. Pulling guard in one of the towers under our responsibility, performing duties in the dining facility, and manning the command post or repairing deficiencies in our AO are important functions soldiers are performing.

SPC Ronald Rittenbery is in charge of the company communications shop. He is a 92G by MOS but has learned many of the intricacies of the various company communication systems. He is the resident expert for the company on FBCB2 and ASIPS operations and has installed, troubleshot, and maintained countless systems. Due to his hard effort the company was able to adapt an FBCB2 system to function within the CP, dramatically improving C2 and providing increased visibility of operations. In addition, he is an excellent M249 gunner and has also been selected as the 1SG's driver, maintaining an unparalleled OR rate on the 1SG's vehicle.

### **Mad Dawg's August FRG Letter**

The Mad Dawgs welcomed back their commander from leave a few days ago. CPT Joe Greenlee looked rested and relaxed upon his return and ready for the final push on this deployment. Luckily the company was given a few more slots for leave in September, enabling many more soldiers to go home this month for a 2-week break.

We continued to promote soldiers throughout the month of August. Some notable promotions included SGT William Daniels, SPC Kyle Hess, SGT Thomas Harris, SPC Jonathan Carmean, and SPC Johnnie Taylor. They are all well deserved promotions and everyone in the Mad Dawg family is proud of each one of them. Congratulations to them and their families!

The Mad Dawgs are getting close to getting through the "dawg" days of summer over here in Iraq. Lately the nights and early mornings have been cooler with promises of cooler days ahead.

All the local nationals who work on post tell us we are only a few short weeks away from much more bearable temperatures. However, I think that every last soldier over here longs for the cool weather of the Pacific Northwest. Soon enough we will all be able to enjoy a cool autumn Washington breeze together.

As we approach the end of the deployment it is important to let you know that all the soldiers in the Distribution Company are working as hard as ever and throughout this entire deployment never let their guard down. It is so important to thank all of you at home for your continued support. You have all done such a wonderful job keeping our spirits up and holding down the fort at home. Thanks for all your work. Can't wait until we can celebrate all our hard work together!

### **FMC**

As August 2004 dwindles to an end, the hot temperatures of summer seem to be hanging around just to remind us that we aren't home yet. The soldiers of the Forward Maintenance Company can see cooler temperatures ahead and the long awaited arrival of the other Forward Maintenance Company from 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. We are currently preparing all the property to ensure its serviceability and proper accountability in order to transfer the equipment over to the new unit. Above all, there is great anticipation of being reunited after a long year of separation with all of the families that have waited so patiently for loved ones' arrivals. Blacksmith soldiers' morale continues to be extremely high.

I would like to again give special thanks to all the Blacksmith soldiers like SSG Robbins and SGT Snell from the 1-14 Cavalry CRT and their families that have decided to continue their service to this great nation and have re-enlisted during this time of conflict to continue their careers in the Army.

Congratulations to SPC Madison and SPC Hall who have been selected to compete in the September Promotion Board.

We welcomed the 1-14 Cavalry CRT soldiers to our FOB. They have been doing an outstanding job in support of the 1-14 Cavalry. I have asked them if they have lived in the same place for more than 30 days.

All across the land you will find Blacksmith soldiers working and living among the maneuver battalions

providing outstanding maintenance support to the Arrowhead Brigade. Blacksmith soldiers continue to man guard towers and one of the main access gates to the FOB 24 hours per day. The soldiers have done an outstanding job in ensuring that the towers and the gate are fortified and ready for any threat from Anti-Iraqi Forces.

In addition to all the great things that the Blacksmith soldiers do day in and day out, SSG Collazo does an outstanding job every month instructing soldiers from different companies in the BSB to get licensed on military vehicles. While Battalion Driver's Training was being conducted, FMC also held a Safety Day to ensure all Blacksmith soldiers received refresher training on all weapon systems and military vehicles.

Once again, our thanks and appreciation goes out to the families of the Blacksmith soldiers. We look forward to having the entire Blacksmith Family together again. Your support truly makes a difference. God Bless.

"FMC Rocks and We Won't Stop"

### **BSMC - Witchdoctors Provide Frontline Support for Task Force Tomahawk**

Elements of BSMC, 296<sup>th</sup> BSB hit the road in support of Task Force Tomahawk this August. PFC James Mead, SPC John Bland, SSG Steven Cole, CPT Michael Garcia and CPT Scott Trapman convoyed with elements of 1-23 Infantry, 5-20 Infantry and 296<sup>th</sup> BSB to provide additional medical support for combat operations in several cities south of Baghdad.

The Witchdoctors primary mission was to provide direct support to the Task Force Tomahawk medics by accompanying them on each mission and working with them at their aid station. A second mission was to act as liaisons between U.S. and Ukrainian military medical facilities in the area.

One of the Witchdoctors, SSG Cole, has provided forward medical support for every major combat mission of the 3<sup>rd</sup> SBCT. "It has been a great privilege to assist in the rebuilding of Iraq," said SSG Cole. "I believe that our combat units could not have accomplished their missions without our support."

"I learned a lot from the 1-23 medics," said SPC Bland of his first combat operation. "They work

hard and play hard. They're a great bunch of guys and really know their jobs."

### **276<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion**

We hope this newsletter finds you all well! We send our thoughts and prayers to all family and friends of the Arrowhead Brigade. We also hope LTC Choppa and his family are starting to settle into the Virginia Beach / Norfolk area. His attendance at the Charlie Company FRG meeting was certainly appreciated. We have a great many successes to tell you about, so please read on!

#### **"Bravo Bears"**

In a ceremony on August 25, 2004 at 1900 hours, 2LT Ed Lewis and 2LT Greg Williams-Fernandez were promoted to the rank of 1LT – MO' MONEY – MO' MONEY – MO' MONEY. Both 1LT Williams-Fernandez and 1LT Lewis have come to Bravo Company from other parts of the state but have become an essential part of the Bear family.

1LT Williams-Fernandez has been a part of the Bear family since being assigned to the company during the early phase of the mobilization back in December 2003. 1LT Williams-Fernandez has been the platoon leader of Bravo Company's Third Platoon. Third Platoon has been responsible for the majority of the Al Kindi projects under 3/2 BDE. Without the leadership of 1LT Williams-Fernandez and his platoon, the Al Kindi project



would not have been successful.

1LT Lewis is the newest member to the extensive Bear family. 1LT Lewis has come to Bravo Company, as well as his 3rd platoon, from Charlie Company under an administrative control relationship. 1LT Lewis has overseen a variety of missions including work at a distant retrans site, Badush ASP, Al Qosh, Al Kindi, Mosul Airfield and on one of our FOBs. They have also been a part of the Bullet mission, which supports EOD.

#### **"DON'T FEED THE BEARS"**

### **Charlie – Cobra Company**

Another month has come and gone, and everyone is still counting 10 fingers 10 toes. The good news definitely overshadows any potential bad for this month. We had 13 soldiers receive the 1-37 Field Artillery Battalion Commander's coin in recognition of their accomplishments. Also, the Cobra Company basketball team did it again, winning the FOB's second season in a row. The game also had the players breaking the record for most points



scored in a game...they won the Championship game 116-75.

This month saw an increase in combat engineering missions, specifically in finding and destroying enemy weapons and ammunition. For us, finding them is crucial. Every one we find is one less we worry about being thrown at us. It's good to be an engineer!

### **18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company**

Sapper friends and families. Thank you so much for your continued support. It is now about 2 months until we will be able to see you again. All the soldiers are excited but focused. They know that Iraq remains dangerous and they must remain alert to accomplish their important mission and come home safely. The company put together a basketball team to compete against other units here on the FOB. We are currently 2-2 but improving



and most importantly having fun. Another piece of good news is that after a short separation we have 1st platoon back. It was lonely without them and we are glad to have them back. The weather is cooling as well. All in all a great two weeks. Thanks again for your strength and support while we are gone.

CPT Kenneth D. Mitchell

## **A (TAB)/2-131<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery (MLRS)**

Dear Family and friends,  
Excited to say that we've got 12 soldiers going home on leave this month. Everybody is in high spirits as we are hitting our halfway mark for the deployment. SGT Rice, from RDR section 3, is busy taking pictures of the soldiers hard at work at all the locations; he plans on publishing a "yearbook" when we redeploy. New equipment is on its way, the soldiers were fitted for equipment that includes new boots, sunglasses, belts, socks, ski masks, helmets, underwear, and Gortex gloves.

CPT Al Gomez

## **209<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Company**

Greetings from Mosul! The last couple of weeks have been relatively quiet for the Mustangs. The end of the Olympics and the standoff in Najaf have helped reduce tensions in the area. This has allowed us to focus more of our attention on requirements for the handover. Of course we continue to work hard at identifying and apprehending those terrorists that attack coalition and Iraqi national forces, but we have also been planning how to best set up our replacements for success. And, of course, get home with the minimum amount of delay and disruption.

The weather has been continuing its cooling trend, although not as quickly as we would like. The temperature has been hovering just under 110 these past couple weeks, which is just cool enough for us to feel the difference. You know you've been in Iraq too long when 104 feels like a cool day! The evenings, though, have actually



become pleasant as the temperature is usually in the low '70's with a slight breeze blowing. Additionally, the days are starting to shorten and night is coming earlier, which helps. Every evening you can find soldiers relaxing outside, enjoying the night air, but wearing plenty of insect repellent, of course.

This weekend is another promotion board for the Brigade. The Mustangs have two soldiers eligible, both of which participated in the company mock promotion board last weekend. SPC Cragg

and SPC Idol both performed well in the mock board. We have high hopes that they will represent the MICO well in the upcoming Brigade board.

We have had three soldiers return from leave during the last couple of weeks. SGT Josephson, PFC Shelton, and SGT Williams all arrived safely and are now hard at work. CPT Kaplan, CW3 Baker, and SFC Daniels have all gone or are about to go on leave. After their hard work these last 10 months their rest is well deserved, and we hope they have a safe and enjoyable time with their families. Leave is going to continue through the end of the month, and because of events in country we managed to pick up enough seats that everyone who wants leave will be able to take it. However, everyone who goes on leave does have to return.

Seven MICO soldiers were awarded the Good Conduct Medal for their exemplary service during the last three years. SPC Figueroa, SPC Thomas, SGT Wilkins, SPC Sprout, SPC Cragg, SPC Thornton, and SGT Schelble were all presented their medal during a ceremony in the company TOC. The Mustangs thank them for their service and example, and look forward to their continuing contributions.

The MWR has been continuing its soldier support programs, holding competitions, tournaments, and games for soldiers to enjoy during their free time. The MICO has fielded a volleyball team that has been particularly successful, and we also continue to do well in basketball.

In closing, the Mustangs focus is slowly but surely shifting towards redeployment tasks. While we continue to support the Brigade's intelligence requirements, our thoughts turn increasingly to home. We look forward to returning to our families, knowing that we have contributed to a safer and more democratic Iraq.



CPT Kevin Hosier

## **293<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company**

The 293<sup>rd</sup> MP Company is still working hard to assist the Iraqi police and we continue developing their law enforcement skills. We are having success in increasing the amount of joint patrols we conduct by increasing the proactive spirit in the

local police stations. The Iraqi police still have issues they have to overcome, but along with our help we are paving the way to a much safer city.

Our company's morale continues to remain high. Our company has a team competing in the installation basketball tournament. Currently we have only one loss, so let's keep up the good work. We also have a team competing in the installation dodge ball tournament and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. The leave rotation is going better than expected. Our troops are going on leave at regular intervals and the troops are very happy to see their loved ones back home.

1LT Aaron Noyes

### **334<sup>th</sup> Signal Company**

Hello again from beautiful downtown Mosul, Iraq! As always, our last two weeks were extremely busy, and without a doubt, our schedule will be even busier as we prepare for our upcoming redeployment. I would like to recognize SSG Pfeifer and SGT Lords, who recently returned to Mosul after assisting with offensive operations in southern Iraq, for their outstanding support to 1-23 Infantry Battalion. Welcome back, and job well done!

The Company recently rotated the personnel manning our remote extension sites. These extension sites provide the Brigade's ability to maintain voice and data networks throughout its battle space. The living conditions can be a little austere compared to life in better-established camps. I would like to express to all the retrans personnel my sincere appreciation for their professionalism and astounding dedication to their mission. We welcome back 1LT Wojciechowski, SGT Mejia, SPC Frickling, SPC Traylor, PFC Lather and PFC Deskins. Good work, Boys!

I hope all of you had a great summer this year. Some of you are probably getting ready to send your children back to school, and hopefully your daily routine will return to something more normal. As I mentioned, the entire Brigade will be exceptionally busy with packing our personal gear and equipment for redeployment from Iraq over the next couple of weeks. I'll make every effort to disseminate information throughout the Company regarding redeployment and all the activities thereafter. Additionally, I am still soliciting volunteers for the Family Readiness Group, which

will play a vital role in planning several activities upon our return. Please contact either myself or Mrs. Haun. We need your help to build a strong and effective FRG!

CPT Dave Kim

**And finally...**



A ground-level view of the mountainous region of Dahuk in northern Iraq.

Thanks to everyone once again for your continued care and support. Knowing we have the support of the folks back home makes our job that much easier. In the coming months we will face many challenges – both in Iraq and at home. Please keep us in your thoughts. You are always in ours.

- Arrowhead

\* You will notice a conspicuous non-use of spouse names in the newsletter. This is purposefully done to protect families.