



May 2008

Battalion Commanders Notes.....



*APOCALYPSE
310TH EN CO (RAPPER)*



I know many of you took the opportunity to spend some time with family and friends during block leave. I hope it was very enjoyable for everyone. It was certainly a well deserved break..

Since our last newsletter we completed the Mission Readiness Exercise (MRE) which was last major training event prior to the deployment. By all accounts it was a highly successful and safe rotation. The V Corps has certified that we are trained to conduct our mission in Iraq. I am confident in our leader's and our Soldier's ability to accomplish the mission. Following our return from Hohenfels the Soldiers continued to work hard to prepare their equipment for deployment. This task is now down and our equipment is on its way to Iraq. The remaining equipment was turned over to a USAREUR agency to be maintained until we return.

We are now in the final weeks before the deployment. The battalion's advance party deploys in mid-May. These Soldiers have the mission to prepare to receive the rest of the battalion in Kuwait. The rest of the battalion follows a few days later. In the interim we have a number pre-deployment briefings and preparations that will be our focus. We've completed the last of the community pre-deployment meetings for the families. Our final meeting will be held on May 7th at 1800 and I will cover our area of operation, our living conditions and a little about the mission. If you have questions or topics you would like me to cover send your suggestions to Mrs. Wingard.

Finally, I would like to invite everybody to participate in our "farewell" activities on May 16th. We will conduct our last battalion run, case the colors and have a family picnic that afternoon. More will follow on the events and timings.

That's about it for now. See you on the 7th.

Daggers In!

LTC Chris Lestochi

Final Pre Deployment Brief

7 May 2008 at 1800

In the Post Theater

Briefings by the Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major

Your Battalion Newsletter needs your input. Hails, farewells, births, promotions or anything of interest. Send your information to sarah.wingard@eur.army.mil.

Chaplain's Corner



Dagger Chaplain's Corner

Greetings from the Dagger Chaplain Office!

In my 19 years of the military, I have never been assigned to Europe until now. I always wanted to get an assignment to Germany, but it never worked until we finally received orders to join the mighty 54th Engineer Battalion this past summer and what a great assignment it has turned out to be. The Bamberg area is gorgeous, the people that make up the battalion are the Army's best and the travel is undeniably incredible. Being assigned to Germany is an awesome experience. I say all of this to make one clear point: life is what you make of it.

Very soon the majority of the Dagger Battalion will be headed off to Iraq in support of OIF 08-10 while the 541st EN CO (Sapper) "Outlaws" will be headed to their assigned mission of training European partners in Romania. By summer, the Dagger Battalion will be deeply engaged in full spectrum operations in two different countries at the same time while our great Family members will be back in Bamberg or other home-fronts taking care of each other and their respective families. How you choose to deal with the missions we have will determine how life will be for you for the next several months.

Many of you have heard of the old saying "The grass is greener on the other side." It carries the idea that things will be "better" if we leave our current situation and go somewhere else or do something else. I had an old theology professor tell me once (years ago) that "the grass we currently stand on would be very green if we chose to fertilize it once in a while." My point is simple; though we have a deployment in front of us and family separations to deal with, how you chose to live your life while your Soldier is deployed will make the difference in the coming months. The Apostle Paul wrote about having a right focus in life in his letter to the Colossians when he said "...set your heart on things above..." (*Colossians 3:2*) This is what we need to do as we prepare for the coming mission laid before us. We need to decide today to have the right focus and right heart so when the end of our tour does come, we are healthy, happy and ready to continue our lives with joy, excitement and rich expectations. It is my prayer that God blesses you and yours with the right heart and focus needed for the coming months.

God Bless from the Dagger Unit Ministry Team!

CH (CPT) Pete Keough
SPC David Peters
DSN 469-7641
Cell# 0151-582-14788

Golf Company

Greetings Dagger Soldiers and Families!

March and April have come and gone but Golf Company is here to stay. We have had a great chance over the past few months to refine our operating procedures and develop a team that is fully capable of supporting our great battalion from Bamberg. We are up and running and we're not slowing down!

March was very busy for Golf Company and the 54th Engineer Battalion but also very productive. We kicked the month off right with a free movie day at the Bamberg Movie Theater. We plan to do more free movie events for our battalion Families in the future so keep your ears open and get involved with your company FRG for the details.



Unfortunately, we said goodbye in March to our old Command Sergeant Major, CSM(R) Terry Deffenbaugh. He will be missed but we are glad to have welcomed our new Command Sergeant Major, CSM Eric Omundson and his wife Michelle and their sons Kevin and Zachary and daughter Mallory (to arrive later in May). Welcome to the 54th Engineer Battalion. We are glad to have you as part of our team and Family. May 4th is the official welcoming of Mrs. Omundson. All Dagger Spouses are invited to attend the event. Contact your FRG Leader for the details.

During the month of April, the majority of the battalion was on block leave enjoying time with their friends and Families all over the world, but those of us here were hard at work. Our big focus for the month was to help finalize the details of the battalion's movement to Iraq and to continue managing the normal daily operations of the battalion. Golf Company did a great job managing the numerous tasks with only a few people in each area. Our S1 and S3 sections especially did a great job carrying the weight of jobs that normally require several people accomplish.

Golf Company is pictured below before a rigorous Physical Training session.



Golf Company

Golf Company also tackled the large task of cleaning and sorting out our Class IV Storage Yard. The yard consists of numerous training materials we use as Combat Engineers to do our jobs successfully in combat. The yard was in need of a lot of attention and the Soldiers and NCOs accomplished the mission with wonders in only a few days. The Soldiers all did a fantastic job in a short time and did the battalion a great service. Your hard work is appreciated! Great Job!

Below are some before and after pictures:

Before



After



April wasn't all hard work for Golf Company. We took the opportunity of being stationed in the beautiful country of Germany and used it to our advantage for an extended 30 Kilometer Bike Physical Training Session. We set out early on a rainy Tuesday morning and biked the two hour trip from Bamberg to Zeil Am Main near Schweinfurt. The trip was cold and rainy but the Soldiers pedaled on and were able to explore a new town after reaching their destination. After warming up over lunch, we took the train back to Bamberg and finished out the afternoon at work.



Golf Company



With the battalion heading out the door in May, it is important to know that Golf Company and your company FRG Leader are your points of contact while the battalion is deployed. We are here for everyone in Bamberg or in the States. If you have an issue or question, please contact us and we will be more than glad to assist you with any help you need. We are here for you and look forward to working with you. Our job is to support our Battalion by supporting our Families.

Our Family Readiness Groups have some great activities scheduled over the next few months. Please get involved and join in on the fun.

We currently plan to conduct our first Video Teleconferencing in June. The system allows us to conduct real time video conferencing with the deployed battalion members. Your company FRG leaders will have more details about this in the future.

Soldiers, Friends and Families, thank you for your work and support as the battalion moves closer to the deployment. I am very encouraged by the hard work I see everyday in our quality Soldiers and FRGs. I know this deployment will be challenging, but successful because of the high caliber of people on our team.

- CPT Jason Meier



541ST EN CO

OUTLAW UPDATE

Commander-

The 541st "Outlaws" have gone through a tremendous amount of change since our last newsletter. We received many new Soldiers, and said goodbye to many Veterans. The former Outlaws will be sorely missed and I wish them all good luck and God speed. I sincerely appreciate their service to our country during this time of war. Their sacrifices are not forgotten here. And as they leave new Soldiers take their place. There is no doubt that these new Outlaws will carry on the fine traditions that we are known for.

With the addition of new Soldiers we have been conducting rigorous training to prepare them for our future mission. The Outlaws have begun conducting a rigorous "Combat PT" program that emphasizes being able to conduct tasks associated with combat engineering under while under stress. These have included Casualty Evacuation and a 12 Mile Road March. The Outlaws have spent numerous hours familiarizing themselves with their weapons in classes and at the Range.

Finally the Outlaws have been partnering with various military units from other countries. One benefit that Soldiers have here is the ability to work with other nations. Recently the Outlaws trained with Soldiers from the Austrian Honor Guard. The Outlaws trained them on how to fire the M4, M16, M249, and M240B. Several members of the 541st earned the Austrian Sports Efficiency Badge. This was the first time a company from this battalion conducted a partnership event with the

Austrian unit, and it forged friendships that will last a lifetime. Six Soldiers from the 541st also participated in a shooting competition in Czechoslovakia.

The company is preparing for a deployment to Romania this summer. All of the training and partnership events are preparing the Outlaws to be able to operate with Soldiers from other nations as a team.
OUTLAWS!



1SG Moery, LT Burke, SSG Quarles

First Sergeant-

As we continue support for the upcoming Battalion Deployment, we also continue to prepare for our own deployment to Romania. You, Outlaw Soldiers, are doing a tremendous job supporting all missions. I continue to be impressed on a daily basis of what Soldiers can accomplish. Special Congratulations to the Brown Family and the Hall Family on their recent additions to the Outlaw Family. As we continue to grow as a Family, we will continue to strive to meet the needs of our Soldiers and their Families.
OUTLAWS.



LADY OUTLAWS



Hello Lady Outlaws!

It's that time again, yep time for our Newsletter. First I would like to start by welcoming all of our new soldiers and spouses and saying that I hope to be able to meet you all soon. We are a small family, but we are a family nonetheless. I hope you'll will enjoy being a part of our family as we will enjoy having you.

I would also like to let everyone know that we have a BN. Fundraiser coming up on April 30th at the Theater (by the shopette) and I would really love to see some volunteers out there. If you would like to bake something, cook something, craft something or just come out and help me to sell stuff, that would be wonderful! If you would like to contribute to the fundraiser, please contact me and let me know what it is you would be willing to contribute. We hope to have a really good turnout and with our ladies helping I'm sure we will!

We also have some Awardees, Reenlistments and Promotions to announce this month!

Awardees:

Douglas Ahlman, Jason Baker, David Beck, Kevin Burke, Daniel Heltemes, Murray Milton, Adam Moreno, Jason Oja, Gregory Precht and Robert Reeves.

Reenlistments:

Dexter Alfaro, Clinton Bunch, Ronald Camp, Charlton Mungin and Stepehen Quarles.

Promotions:

Lany Alik, Jorda Brummer, Jonathon Cole, Kevin Foster, Corey Gatling, Joseph Haedtke, Tony Hatley, Lawrence Hays, David Jackson, Joseph Nicholas, Robert Kruse, Justin Maldonado, Jimmy Parker, Sane Rastle, David Saucier, Patrick Shaughnessy, Darrick Smith, Camon Strickland and Shane Tackett.

Congratulations to all of our soldiers who received awards and promotions and thank you to all of our soldiers who reenlisted!

That's it for this Newsletter, I hope to see you all at our fundraiser!

Teresa Reeves
541ST FRG Leader





370th EN CO (Sappers)

370 ENGINEER COMPANY (SAPPER) – BACK TO THE FRONT

Families, Friends and Sappers of the 370th EN CO, we are less than 30 days from our deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom 08-10. For many of you spouses this will be the 2nd (possibly 3rd) time your husband has deployed and we thank you for your sacrifice. However, if this is your first time, we all feel the same emotions you are going through right now. We all share that deep empty feeling inside your stomach as that bus pulls away combined with that overwhelming sensation in your heart as your eyes well up with pride. No matter how many times we've all said good-bye it never gets any easier. However, sleep well at night knowing that your husbands are amongst the best the Army has to offer and have trained very hard to be the best. 1SG Biggerstaff and I are very proud to lead the 370th EN CO into combat and we know that we are supported by a great group of ladies that make up the FRG group. Although it will be a long 15 months, your support of all kinds will easily get us through it.

Since our successful training event at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany we have been busy preparing for onward movement. Many of our leaders and Soldiers have spent busy days preparing equipment to either stay back here in Germany or be shipped forward to Iraq. Usually with little to no supervision, young leaders and Soldiers collectively remembered the commander guidance and completed taskings ahead of schedule and above standard. It is actions like this that prove to the command group that our company is ready for combat. Small groups of Sappers making it happen when no one is watching. This is why the 370th EN CO always succeeds.

I hope everyone was able to take advantage of the much needed block leave. Many of our families went to the States to see their families until possibly R&R. Some families enjoyed what Europe had to offer and traveled throughout. I know that it provided time for reflection and hopefully time to relax and get family business in order. Don't forget that Bamberg Community (ACS) has many services available to family members if any problems/issues arise while the Soldiers are deployed.

As we return back to work, don't forget we have a few more battalion level pre-deployment meetings (April 30th (make-up) and May 7th) along with a company FRG meeting on May 13th, at 1800 in Preston Hall (finger food and drinks provided).

My last paragraph will be used to highlight new members (Soldiers and Family) to the Company and remember the Soldiers who have either PCSed or ETSed from the last published FRG newsletter.

New members:

SSG Green and SPC Way
Raul Antonio Nieves; born 17MAR08
William Andrew Bunce; born 19MAR08

Soldiers who PCS/ETS; we remember their hard work, dedication and sacrifice to the U.S. Army, 54 EN BN and 370 EN CO:

SPC Layman PCSed to Ft. Hood, TX.

Until next time, enjoy the rest of your time with your Soldier and we'll contact you with the next Dagger "desert dispatch" newsletter from Iraq. Cheers!

Very Respectfully,

Douglas A. Massie
CPT, EN
Commanding

Thomas Biggerstaff
1SG, USA
First Sergeant



Wolfpack Soldiers and Families,

I want to begin this news update by welcoming all of our new Soldiers and Families. I want to officially welcome you all to the Wolfpack Family. We ended our last update nearing the end of a busy field exercise. This update finds us right after a short, but very well deserved break. The Battalion finished the field exercise with nothing but high praises from the cadre in Hohenfels. The training was tough and tested our limits on many occasions; however, every HSC Soldier performed their job superbly. Returning to Bamberg offered little reprieve to the operational tempo. We had the task of recovering from the field exercise as well as preparing for the deployment. This task required many long hours, making April a very hectic month for most of us. As with every challenge presented to the Wolfpack, every Soldier stepped up to the challenge. I want to thank all of the support from the Families that we received during this time. There were more lunches spent at work and late nights spent away from Families than I cared to have, but the mission was met.

Chaplain Pete Keough scheduled a Senior Leaders Retreat for one weekend in March to give the Battalion leadership a quick get away. He provided several great classes and provided time for Families to spend together and the beautiful area of Garmisch.

The next three months are going to find us in the beginning of our 15 month deployment. There have been rumors of a shortened deployment, unfortunately however, this is just a rumor. Only units that deploy later in the year will have shortened deployments. I will be serving as more than just the Company Commander, I will also be serving our battalion as the Mayor and the Public Affairs Officer. As the Mayor I will be working on improving the living conditions of the Soldiers living and working areas. As the Public Affairs Officer I will be ensuring that the story of our Soldiers is getting out to as many people as possible.

At the very beginning of this quarter we will indoctrinate all of our new officers to the ranks of the Order of the Dagger Battalion by testing their mental and physical abilities. This program serves several purposes. Not only does it test the leadership abilities of our leaders, it also builds cohesion in the ranks of our officers.

Prior to the Battalion departing there will be one more Marriage Retreat. This is one final chance for couples and Families to enjoy very informational classes as well as the beautiful scenery of Garmisch.

Again I want to welcome all of our new Family members and encourage everyone to have an active part in our Family Readiness Group. We are a family and I want to ensure everyone knows that we can depend on each other no matter if we are deployed, back here in Bamberg, married or single. We are only as strong as our weakest member and so far we have been a very strong group.

We will have one more opportunity to come together and enjoy everyone's company as we conduct our last Battalion run, case the Battalion Colors, and farewell the battalion with one last party. I hope to see everyone there.

CPT Dax Pummill

FSC SPARTANS



Greetings to the Spartan Family!

I hope everyone was able to relax and catch their breath during block leave.

Much as happened since the last newsletter...last time, we were in the middle of our Graf/Hohenfels training exercise. After riding along and observing the company's training out in the field, there is no doubt in my mind that the FSC is fit and ready to deploy. Things didn't slow down once we returned from the field, as we moved into the battalion's March Madness. As soon as we got back, we inventoried over half the company's equipment to turn over to another unit to manage for us while we were gone. The rest of it got packed up in shipping containers and is already making its way down range. Our last bunch of equipment shipped just after block leave ended.

Now we are cleaning house a little bit in our newly emptied areas and getting the Soldiers ready to deploy. This means getting legal paperwork and finances in order, medical and dental check ups and shots, and just the general administrative things that need to get done order to deploy. We will wrap up with an organizational day on 16 May—a battalion run that all are welcome to run in, a casing of the colors ceremony, and food and sports events at Pendleton Field. It should be a fun day of camaraderie. I hope to see many of you there!

The FRG was also busy. We had a great turn out both for the meeting on 1 April and support for the fundraiser on 22 April. I thank everyone who made and brought food, went shopping, set up, grilled, and tore down. It couldn't have been done without you. It is heartening to see the FRG come together—I hope that the great support will continue after the company leaves. That said, the one last thing that the FRG needs is a treasurer; with the departure of Sabine Mann, we have no one to manage the FRG bank account. If anyone is willing to help with this, please don't hesitate to contact me at penny.bloedel@eur.army.mil or the FRG email at fsc.frg@hotmail.com.

The FSC's other big news is the arrival of 1SG Canez and his wife Barbara from Fort Carson. 1SG Canez is a mechanic by trade and both he and Barbara will be a tremendous asset to the FSC. The downside is, of course, that we will be saying good-bye to the Masters family as SFC Masters moves to HSC to take over First Sergeant duties there. The change of responsibility ceremony is 6 May.

Finally, I want end this newsletter with the best news of all: promotions and births. On 1 May we will promote SGTs Archibald, Miller, and Seay to Staff Sergeant, PFCs Crossley and Pomales to Specialist, and PVTs Pinson, Sanchez, and Scott to Private First Class. I also want to extend a hearty congratulations to the Pomales family on the birth of Jose Jr. on 25 April and the Wingates on the birth of their son on 28 April. Both mothers and sons are doing well.

Thank you all for everything you do!

CPT Bloedel
Spartan 6



FSC FRG News Letter

Hello Spartans!

For those that have not met me, my name is JoAngela (Jo) Washington and I am the new FRG Leader for FSC. Suzan Masters is still involved as the FRG Advisor so you can still contact either of us with any FRG matters. My family, which consists of my husband Taurean, daughter Keyara, and son Cyren, arrived in Bamberg in January. This is our third duty station together and our second tour here in Germany. I have been around the military life for more than 16 years but am still learning as much as I can about the Army, FRGs, and about the beautiful community of Bamberg. With that said, here is what we have been doing:

We started March with a FREE Team Building Bowling Day at the post bowling center. We had a blast! To those that could not make it, no worries, we will plan at least one activity every month or so during the deployment to bring everyone together and these will be on the weekends to maximize the participation.



We ended April with a very successful fundraiser. I cannot say or express this enough, but THANK YOU to everyone that made this happen. This includes the soldiers and their very generous donations. I hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!

My main goal as the FRG Leader is to connect & support all the spouses and keep everyone as informed as possible during this upcoming deployment. So, please contact myself, Sarah Wingard (FRSA), or Rear Detachment, to let us know when you are in need. This is the only way we can know that we should be doing for you besides the obvious. We do care about every one of you and hope to make this as smooth a deployment as possible. You can contact me at the FRG email (fsc.frg@hotmail.com), my personal email (yountj@hotmail.com; jo.washington@us.army.mil), or call me anytime (0951-309-4829 / 0151-111-85-888).

I look forward to meeting more of you in the weeks after the deployment, as we will be starting our monthly FRG meetings/activities back up.

Until then,
Jo Washington

535 ESC NEWSLETTER

Update from 1SG Ellis



The 479th EN BN has started to plan for their redeployment in the next few months and the TOA (transfer of authority) to the 54th; we are still the main effort supporting the 3ID. During the last 30 days we also have continued to support 4BCT in Kalsu.

First Platoon- 1st squad has completed three battle position upgrades in the south of Kalsu. SSG Philipp's section assisted in filling over 800 meters of Hescos in support of 4-3ID area. After coming off a 30 day patrol base build at COP Carver, they were eager to get back to work.

Second Platoon- completed their support for 4-3ID. In just 22 days they were able to upgrade several routes which proved very vital to two combat operations in the 4-3ID AO. They completed over 22 kilometers of road upgrade and repaired 4 culverts during this time. Their efforts truly improved the logistical supply lines throughout the 4-3ID AO.

Third Platoon- has been just as busy with the construction of another patrol base in support of 4-3ID. The 4-3ID is very pleased with the work, effort and commitment that these soldiers give on a daily basis. They have really gotten these bases down to a tie. The 4-3ID Commanding General is very impressed with the work this platoon has accomplished and with the company as a whole. Third platoon returned to Camp Stryker in time for their VTC on April 20th.

Maintenance & Headquarters Platoons- continue to support these platoons with nothing short of outstanding professionalism. Every day they are faced with challenges and somehow they manage to get the job done. As we continue this deployment, going onto our 7th month, we are sending soldiers on R&R, passes to the IZ green zone and even to Qatar for a short R&R. It appears that the soldiers enjoy these opportunities. We recently had 4 soldiers attend the promotion board on April 1st. I would like to congratulate SGT Wyckoff, SPC Herring, SPC Ganal and SPC Campbell for being recommended for promotion. The company recently placed 1st in the BN's safety board competition. SSG Hernandez, SSG Armstead and PFC Ramirez were awarded BN coins of excellence for their effort. Despite all the rumors on TV and in the newspaper, we are still currently on a 15 month deployment. Our return date is approximately 21 January 09. I would like to thank all the spouses who are doing a terrific job supporting our company. I wish I could truly express how much your sacrifice and dedication to your soldier helps our mission. Please continue to support your soldier.





FRG Meeting Notes

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Fundraiser at the company on April 18th to raise money for the welcome home signs

News from downrange

Remember to check your car registration and see SSG Boone if you need an extension to April 09

Deployment reduction to 12 months only effects those deployed AFTER 1 Aug 2008

Fundraiser for softball tournament on 24 May serve food and drinks. Volunteers needed

535 ESC car magnets are still available for purchase, \$3.00 each or 2 for \$5.00

Next Volksfest meeting on 23 April at 1800 building 539

Daggers are coming so we need a lot of volunteers for the Volksfest

Discussion:

We need ideas for fundraisers. We welcome all suggestions

USAG Auto skills center will help spouses change winter tires to summer tires.

Contact DSN 475-6239 or CIV 09641-83-6239

Roundtable:

Volunteers urgently needed for all fundraisers



Rear D Notes

The Rear D continues monthly/cyclic inventories

in and out processing personnel. The unit's vehicles continue to be serviced by civilian mechanics. Family care and unit support are our number one priority. Let's welcome the new soldiers who have joined the Family: 2LT Bradwick, PFC Ferguson, PFC May, PVT Dodds and PVT Simmons.

Home" party.



Happy Birthday



SGT Tammi Oglesly
Rodney Bing
Liliana Ramirez
your
Christeen Thompson
Sinaida Brown
Lyndsy Deskins
per
Dylan Degering

you

PVI Michael Lovejoy
Nadieha Walker
Justin Thompson

Saketra Armstead
Amanda Campbell
Gabriele Thorne

Alysha Ellis

Volksfest Food Handling Classes

The following are the dates for the food

handling. Anyone who will be volunteering at the Volksfest needs to attend one class.

June 11 building 539

June 25 building 539

July 11 building 539

July 30 building 4124

Anyone who hasn't signed up to volunteer

there is still time. Contact Simone Imber or sign up at the next FRG meeting.

We need as much help as we can get. The money will be for our "Welcome

May FRG Meeting

Our May FRG Meeting will be on May 13th at 1800 at the Graf Chapel Annex. Please bring

favorite finger food or dessert.

Childcare will be provided for the formal part of the meeting. The cost for child care is \$2.00

hour per child. Come join us for the latest up dates from Iraq and information about upcom ing events and fundraisers. We hope to see there.