

## LIGHTNING BOLT

**1-7 Field Artillery****BATTALION COMMANDER COMMENTS...**

Happy holidays to all in the First Lightning family!!! This is a special time of the year and as you know, we have been extremely busy preparing for our upcoming mission. We are quickly approaching the Christmas season and the block leave period, which also means that we are on the verge of our deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. I want to take this opportunity to say how proud I am of the First Lightning battalion for its hard work and efforts in preparation for this year long deployment. We still have much to do and not many working days to accomplish it. From a training and war fighting perspective, we are ready to deploy and support this mission and to make Iraq a better place for the people of that country.

Let me take this opportunity to pass on a few of the Division Command Information Support Group messages (you should be receiving these messages routinely from your FRL/FRGs):

“Soldiers and leaders must understand that we are deploying to a combat zone. The threat is high and we will not hesitate to use direct action to eliminate any threat to our forces. We are deploying to win a war against forces that oppose the new Iraqi freedom. Do not hesitate to crush the rattlesnake before he strikes.

“The 1st Infantry Division is the right unit for this complicated mission. Our TEAM is motivated, trained and will be ready to deploy to Iraq to conduct the relief in place with the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. We have the right people in the right jobs to ensure success - we have a winning team!”

“Safety and soldier issues are always a priority for the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. Maintain situational awareness at all times and don't cut corners on safety. Safety will always remain a priority: now, while we are deploying and throughout our mission in Iraq.”

I personally believe in these messages and also that the 2 BCT, our rear detachment, FRLs/FRGs and the Schweinfurt community is well prepared to support the soldiers, and in particular the families, remaining behind during this deployment. I encourage you to be proactive participant and stay with the TEAM that you know to make this a true team effort. If you do depart the Central Region for ANY period of time, ensure that the rear detachment has a good point of contact phone number and address for where you will be and that you have coordinated to have someone take care of your government housing. The rear detachment has been stood up and operational since our deployment to Grafenwoehr and has been doing a truly amazing job!! Michele Zeeman and Roxsana Sanders along with their very talented group of FRG leaders have been doing outstanding work during these challenging deployment/holiday times, thank you for the great support and winning attitudes!!

A few key dates are quickly approaching: 12 & 15 Dec are our dates for the Schweinfurt Family Deployment Preparation seminar (FDP) at the Conn Club, I highly encourage you to participate with your spouse and benefit from the vast quantity and quality of information available; 17 Dec is our battalion Christmas party at the Abrams Center; 19 Dec-4 Jan is block leave; 5 Jan we begin preparations for movement of our equipment to the Installation Staging Area (ISA) and onward to the port; this process will take place between 16-23 Jan; 31 Jan is the last day for training and the first week of February is for soldiers and families to spend quality time together. We will deploy shortly thereafter.

I would like to say farewell to CPT Mike Salvo and Natalie and CPT Brad and Manuela Smith; you will be greatly missed. Thank you for the great command teams that you both provided the battalion. I would also like to welcome CPT Chris and Kimberly Washington (SVC), CPT Derric Holbrook (A Btry), CPT Matthew and Amy Lennox (D Btry), and 1SG Marvin and Shannon Cromartie (SVC) to the command team.

Again, CSM Sanders and I want to wish you and your families the joyous of holiday seasons!! Enjoy the time together. NOEL, Happy New Year, God Bless....stay safe.....One team, One fight!! First Lightning!!! Never Broken by Hardship, or Battle!!!

LTC Kyle M. McClelland  
LTC, FA  
Commanding

### ALPHA BTRY COMMENTS...



Greetings, from Steel Knight Land. Talk about a successful quarter! The battery did an absolutely outstanding job during the recent Grafenwohr gunnery density and the Infantry Training this past November. We truly put a lot of rounds down range accurately and on time and we are adapting to the new tasks and skills we need to develop to accomplish our mission in Iraq.

The battery is moving fast and the soldiers remain motivated and mission focused. Currently we are conducting Change of Command inventories preparing for a change of command between CPT Salvo and CPT Holbrook on 12 December 2003.

We are also preparing for the holidays, with Christmas just around the corner. Families will also be focused on a well-deserved Christmas Leave period. It will be the last long period of time that families will spend with their loved ones before we prepare and deploy to Iraq.

There are also several congratulations in order. First we would like to say congratulations to SSG Huntley for his recent promotion. This is a big step for this deserving NCO who has a bright future ahead of him. Congratulations also go to the following soldiers for their promotion to Sergeant and entry into the world of the NCO Corps.

SGT Beadles  
SGT Vassel

SGT Martinez  
SGT Koroma

We wish to also congratulate the following soldiers on their promotions:

SPC Scleigel  
SPC Schofield  
SPC Everhart

SPC Whilby  
SPC Henry

We would like to welcome the following soldiers to the battery:

SGT Sesay  
PFC Swetlik  
PFC Davidson  
PVT Hledinsky

SGT Kallie  
SPC Hickenbothem  
PVT Smith

STEEL KNIGHT SIX, OUT

## **BRAVO BTRY COMMENTS...**



Greetings to the “Raging Bull” family. As you all know, we have been extremely busy during this pre-deployment period. In both Grafenwohr and Schweinfurt we have honed our skills and readied our personnel and equipment for the impending deployment. First, I would like to welcome some new faces to the battery. 1SG Carter and his family joined us during our time in Grafenwohr. Additionally, we have recently received SSG Savage, SSG Webb, SGT Orallo, SGT Cordon, PFC Jarrell, PV2 Helwig, and PVT Schotter. We welcome them and their families to the Schweinfurt community and are excited to have them become a part of the team. As a result of the Department of the Army directed Stop Loss, we won’t be saying good-bye to any of the “Raging Bulls” at this time. While I recognize that this may be difficult for families expecting to return to the States, the battery as a whole will greatly benefit from the wisdom and experience of our senior “Raging Bulls.”

As always our workload has been heavy and shows no sign of slowing down in the near future. The battery successfully deployed to Grafenwohr in October to complete a Gunnery evaluation and Infantry skills train-up in preparation for Iraq. We were chosen to serve as the only Artillery Battery in support of 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade while downrange; so we will be able to showcase our high level of training on our traditional gunnery skills. Additionally, we continue to conduct training on a wide range of subjects that will ensure our success in Iraq.

We expect things to be busy up until the highly anticipated block leave period (19 December – 4 January). From Commander’s Week (1-5 December), to maintenance, to packing equipment, and conducting PDPs for both soldiers and families, December will be a busy month. After the New Year we expect to be loading our equipment onto trains for eventual shipment to Iraq and continuing to train on a daily basis for deployment sometime in February.

The “Raging Bulls” families remain a top priority for me. We have enjoyed successful involvement from the FRG to include a chili cook-off and a welcome home lunch after our redeployment from Grafenwohr and we look forward to continued support. Preparing our spouses and children for the deployment emotionally, financially, spiritually and mentally is of the utmost importance. Please take this opportunity over block leave to ensure that your family is prepared as much as possible. The FRG will always be standing by to support you along with the Rear Detachment personnel, but remember that proper planning starts with you. I would like to thank each and every one of you for your support and ask that you continue to remain actively engaged as we prepare for deployment. Have a wonderful block leave and holiday season and please remember that we need each member of the “Raging Bull” family to return safely in order to be successful both here in the Schweinfurt community and downrange in Iraq.

“Bull 6”

LINNEN E. HODO  
CPT, FA  
Commanding

## **CHARLIE BTRY COMMENTS...**



The Cobras have been very busy preparing for our future deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Of note was our recent 1-month deployment to Grafenwoehr. The battery executed a gunnery density, platoon evaluations, convoy live-fire training, air-load training, and infantry training at the squad, platoon and battery level. The performance of the soldiers and leadership during the rotation was absolutely superb. I would like to thank the spouses for your staunch support during the rotation. I know being separated from loved ones is difficult, but the training we were able to complete has ensured that our deployment to Iraq will be successful. The BSB will be hosting a Family Deployment Preparation Briefing for the firing batteries on 15 DEC. It is essential that spouses attend the meeting with your husbands to ensure all necessary paperwork (Power of Attorney, Wills, etc) is complete prior to deployment. Childcare will be available for children that are enrolled with CYS. If your child is not yet enrolled, please take the time to enroll them at CYS. More information will be disseminated through the battery FRG as the event approaches. The battery will also have an FRG meeting in

December to discuss the deployment, the FRG's role during the deployment, and to answer any questions that spouses may have - information will be passed through the FRG once we have settled on a date. Again thank you for your understanding and support during these trying times. The battery would not be as successful as we are without the support of great spouses like you!

**COBRA STRIKE!**

#### **SVC BTRY COMMENTS...**



I would like to take this opportunity to thank each soldier and family member for the privilege of commanding Service Battery. It has truly been an honor to be surrounded by such professionals. The change of command ceremony will take place on 08 December, at 1000 hours at the Ledward Gym. The Serpents have been extremely busy in their preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Of course, a large portion of our deployment readiness surrounds the battery FRG. This vital internal organization integrates families with the ongoing deployment preparation. The next FRG meeting will be held on 10 December, 1800 hours at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor DFAC. Please attend this meeting, as it will be the first opportunity to meet the new battery commander, CPT Christopher Washington, and his wife, Kim. Additionally, it will provide you the chance to ask questions in order to abate any rumors and further strengthen the Service Battery Team.

#### **HHB COMMENTS...**



The Hurricanes have been very busy preparing for our future mission in Iraq and our Family Readiness Group is a big part of the effort. On 10 December at 1900 we will hold our next FRG meeting at the Abrams Community Center. At this meeting we will meet our new FRG Leader, Amy Lennox, and our new Treasurer, Nancy Monge. We will also meet the Rear Detachment Commander, CPT Matt Lennox and receive a presentation on financial readiness. Please come to this important meeting and become part of the mutually supporting family structure within HHB. The Hurricanes FRG is all about families helping each other by sharing information and experiences.

**Ride the Storm!!**

#### **D BTRY COMMENTS...**

While the rear detachment has been in full swing for well over 2 months, we will officially stand up on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December. During the last several weeks, the Family Readiness Leaders, 1SG, and myself have been attending classes and training events to eventually take over operations in Schweinfurt and provide for the families during the deployment.

D BTRY will man stations during the Family Deployment Briefs at the Conn Club on Conn Barracks. The briefs will be well worth your time and effort. HHB and SVC batteries will attend on 12 DEC. A, B, C will attend on 15 DEC. There will be one make-up day on 13 DEC. Finally, anyone who participated in the Warfighter Exercise can attend on 18 DEC. The event kicks off at 0900 with short briefings from just about every agency on post involved in the deployment. After the briefings, there will be booths set up around the club for you to get information, ask questions, sign up for an AKO account, construct wills, and acquire Powers of Attorney. Please show up early, traffic has been bad getting onto Conn, and consider using the free babysitting service offered by CYS. Again, we hope to see all of you there.

We ask that all of you take the time, over the next several weeks, to stop by the FRG room and introduce yourselves to the rear detachment chain of command. Have a safe and well-deserved holiday season and block leave period.

CPT Matthew Lennox  
CPT, FA  
Commanding

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Every Tuesday (0930-1130) and Thursday (1130-1330) throughout the deployment, Family Member Fitness at Finney Gym, Free Babysitting with CYS (Not available through the Christmas Holidays)
- Now through 22 DEC, Schweinfurt Christmas Market, Markt Platz
- 10 DEC, 1900-2000, HHB FRG Meeting, Abrams Community Center, free CYS Babysitting or bring your children. Financial Specialist to discuss OIF deployment entitlements.
- 11 DEC, 0900-1100, ACS Savings and Investment Class
- 11 DEC, 1700-2000, Outdoor Recreation pool trip to Gerolzhofen, Geomari
- 12 DEC, 0900-1400, Family Deployment Brief, Conn Club (HHB / SVC)
- 13 DEC, 0900-1400, Family Deployment Brief, Conn Club (Make up day)
- 15 DEC, 0900-1400, Family Deployment Brief, Conn Club (A / B/ C)
- 17 DEC, 1700-1900, 1-7 FA BN Christmas Party, Abrams Club
- 20 DEC, 0830-1400, Rothenberg Christmas Market Trip
- 20 DEC – 04 JAN, Block Leave

### DID YOU KNOW...

- Starting in January, the Lightning Bolt will be available via email. Please sign up through your FRG leader or FRL to be added to the distribution list. Immediate family members, to include single soldiers parents, can be added to the list. The file will be distributed as a PDF file, viewable with Adobe Acrobat Reader. Acrobat Reader can be downloaded for free from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).
- During the deployment, if your child is enrolled in CYS, there will be several ways to earn over 10 hours of free childcare per WEEK. Contact your FRG leader or FRL for more information.
- If you are returning to the United States during the deployment for more than 30 days, contact your FRL. You will need to visit housing, the DEERS office, Tricare, and a unit representative. Your housing, even if you are gone, is still your responsibility. Tricare benefits change once you depart. Ensure you have all the information you need.
- Soldiers who take and successfully complete Army Family Team Building level 1 earn promotion points.
- The JOB outlook for the deployment is looking very good. There will be a job fair in January, watch for information. You can get a head start by visiting Mrs. Alyson Knoll at the Employment Readiness office, ACS.
- The BSB and health clinic are in the process of hiring a pediatrician.
- There will be spouses' sport leagues during the deployment, to include volleyball and bowling. Contact MWR for more information.
- Looking at taking classes during the deployment? AER is offering Spouses Education Awards. Contact Mr. Bunker at AER, 354-7071.
- If you plan to fly Space Available, ensure you have a memorandum from the rear detachment CDR. This memorandum verifies your command sponsorship status.

### FINAL NOTES...

**[1] American Red Cross.** You must notify the Red Cross of emergencies that require the presence of a deployed family member. The Chain of Command will pass the Red Cross message to the deployed soldier and if appropriate, will make arrangements for their return. The 24-hour American Red Cross phone number in Germany is: 0703-115-334. The toll-free number to call the Red Cross while in the United States is: (877) 272-7337. Ensure you have the following information about your deployed family member: full name, social security number, rank, unit, and military address.

**[2] Operations Security.** As a family member, you will often know critical bits of information such as indicators of morale, security procedures, and times and locations of deployments. Adversaries can use this information against us. Do not discuss this

information outside of your immediate family or with anyone who does not have the need to know that information. Remember, OPSEC is everyone's responsibility.

**[3] Goals.** Having an achievable goal can help keep you focused during the deployment and can help you spend the time more efficiently and effectively while making a difference. Goals could focus on, but aren't limited to, finances, travel, family, personal development or educational accomplishments. Develop a realistic plan to help you achieve that goal.

**[4] Help Prepare.** Help your spouse and help your unit by becoming involved in the preparations for the deployment. Organize essential documents, participate in FRGs, work on a communications plan, or develop your family financial arrangements. Deployment success begins with deployment preparation. Family participation is essential to successful personal deployment preparation.

**[5] Stress.** Deployment is a stressful time for soldiers and family members. Communication is a key to reducing that stress and making the deployment easier for families. Ask questions and get involved in the deployment preparation. Talk to your family and friends about the deployment and share ways of coping and reducing stress. Your local chaplain and Army Community Services offer programs to help families and soldiers effectively deal with stress.

**Have any questions about the deployment or heard any good rumors lately, contact your FRL or FRG leader to get the right answers and most current information.**



#### Editor's Notes

*If you have any suggestion, questions, or feedback to improve this newsletter, please feel free to contact CPT Lennox, DSN 354-7097 or email [matthew.lennox@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil](mailto:matthew.lennox@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil).*

This internal newsletter contains official information, and complies with the provisions of AR 25-30 for dissemination to Family Readiness Group internal newsletters.

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KYLE M. McClelland  
LTC, FA  
Commanding

