

LIGHTNING BOLT

**1-7 Field Artillery****LIGHTNING 6 COMMENTS...**

Well Team "First Lightning", the time has come!! Within a few days we will be deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. I want to take this opportunity to express how proud I am of our efforts during the train-up and other pre-deployment activities, and recognize the actions of the FRG/FRLs/BSB/Schweinfurt community/DODS. You all should be proud of where we were and where we are now. The high point of the 6-month preparation was that it was executed flawlessly, without accident, or injury to any soldier...Well done! We are trained and ready to assume this mission, execute it to standard and make the country of Iraq a stable and secure environment for the Iraqi people. You all should feel a sense of pride in what we have accomplished. Now, our job is to deploy, be disciplined, be focused and have the utmost of teamwork at both ends. We have set the foundation for this to happen.

Again, I encourage you to be a 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 can be contacted and that you have coordinated to have someone take care of your government housing. The rear detachment is a first class organization and is here to support you. CPT Matt Lennox, 1SG Ebbs, Michele Zeeman and Roxsana Sanders, along with their very talented group of FRG leaders, continue to amaze me with their outstanding work during these challenging times, from the bottom of my heart and from every Lucky 7 soldier...Thank You!!!!

I would like to thank the students of the Schweinfurt Elementary School for dedicating "Wilbur Schweinfurt" as the

Task Force 1-7 mascot!! Wilbur will accompany us wherever we go. We will ensure that we send photos home of Wilbur in action. Please keep in touch with us.

I would ask that you all come out and support the Brigade Combat Team run on 5 Feb 04. It will be a truly amazing sight to see. There will be a deployment ceremony at 1300 hrs (1:00 PM) behind the Conn Club.

My thoughts and prayers are with you and your families. CSM Sanders and I want to thank everyone that has pulled this team together and made it a GREAT organization to be a part of. God Bless...stay safe...One team, One fight!! First Lightning!!! Never Broken by Hardship, or Battle!!! We will see you on the high ground in 2005!!!! The next message from me will be from the Salah Ad Din province of Iraq.

LTC Kyle M. McClelland
LTC, FA
Commanding





LIGHTNING 7 COMMENTS...

This has been a tough and difficult month. We have experienced loading mil-vans, barges and railhead. The batteries have also completed other tasks such as Pre-Deployment Preparation (PDP), weapon qualification, vehicle maintenance inspections, and many other Pre-deployment tasks. We conducted the 2004 Saint Barbara's Day Ball to include preparation, rehearsals, and execution. We were responsible for the Color Guard; as expected, they did a magnificent job. The Task Force 1-7 Punch Bowl ceremony was the highlight of the evening; overall the entire ball was a complete success. Our biggest challenge lies ahead, as we will soon depart from our families and loved ones. I am totally confident that the Rear-D is ready for the task of taking care of all our loved ones. Along with the BSB and Schweinfurt Community, we have come together through community updates, Pre-Deployment Preparation, and BN Steering Committees. The foundation for success has been laid! Our Soldiers will be successful in knowing their loved ones are in great hands. Task Force 1-7 finally has a design for the new BN OIF II coin. On 27 January 2004 Task Force 1-7 held the official adoption ceremony for our new mascot - Wilbur Schweinfurt the Pig, donated by Schweinfurt Elementary School. I would like to personally thank all the above-mentioned organizations for their continued support throughout our deployment. FIRST LIGHTNING.

Wayne L. Sanders
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major

WEB RESOURCES...

- <http://www.schweinfurt.army.mil/1-7> Field Artillery Web Page (1-7 FA)
- www.schweinfurt.army.mil (280th BSB)
- www.schweinfurt.army.mil/phone (Schweinfurt Phone Book)
- www.milcom.de (The Point Newspaper)
- www.schweinfurt.army.mil/HOLD-2ndBDE (2BCT)
- www.1id.army.mil/DIVARTY (DIVARTY)
- www.1id.army.mil (1st Infantry Division)
- www.hqusareur.army.mil (USAREUR)
- www.army.mil (Army Homepage)
- www.us.army.mil (AKO)
- www.armyonesource.com (Army One Source)
 - Login: army
 - Password: onesource
- www.goacs.org (ACS)
- www.tricare.osd.mil (Tricare)
- www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/r/r/ (OIFII R&R)

DID YOU KNOW...

- The new 1-7 FA Battalion Website is available online at <http://www.schweinfurt.army.mil/1-7> Field Artillery Web Page or you can link to it from the Schweinfurt Web site. (www.schweinfurt.army.mil)
- The Lightning Bolt is available via email. Contact your FRL / FRG Leader to add your friends and family members to the distribution list. The emailed version will be a PDF file, viewable with Adobe Acrobat Reader. Acrobat Reader can be downloaded from www.adobe.com, for free.
- 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, the CMR, and a unit representative. *Your housing is still your responsibility*, even if you are gone. Tricare benefits change once you depart. Ensure you have all the information you need.
- If you plan to fly Space Available, ensure you have a memorandum from the Rear Detachment CDR, to show that you are command sponsor.

ALPHA BATTERY COMMENTS...



Greetings from the Steel Knights. The battery has done an absolutely phenomenal job preparing for our upcoming Operation Iraqi Freedom II deployment. Everyone has put their hearts, souls and time into ensuring Alpha is ready for combat when we arrive in Kuwait and Iraq. All our hard work will pay off when our equipment is fully mission capable and Soldiers are trained for combat.

In the past 2 months since I have taken command, the battery has transitioned from an Artillery Battery to an Infantry Company. We have reconfigured our vehicles, trained on infantry tasks, and reconfigured our internal task organization to look and more importantly act as an infantry company. This is just one more example of the dedication and flexibility of our Soldiers.

Just recently the "company" sent some of its Noncommissioned Officers and their wives to the prestigious St. Barbara's Ball. There, SFC Macher, SFC Ogle, and SSG Sowell were awarded the Honorable Order of St. Barbara. This is an outstanding award for their commitment to Fire Support. Mrs Macher, Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Jacobs received the Molly Picher award for community excellence and their dedication and comment to the artillery's mission.

Even with all the deployment work going on, there are still more congratulations in order.

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

SSG Handwerk	SPC Martinez
PFC Palmer	PFC Walker

SPC Crocker
PFC Wright
PFC Hlebinski

PFC Rhodes
SPC Martin
PV2 Duran

We would like to welcome PFC Lokotkin to the battery.

A photo of SFC Macher and SFC Ogle receiving their Saint Barbara's Award and preparing to drink our traditional "Artillery Punch".



Thank you all for your support. I appreciate and I know all our Steel Knight Warriors appreciate it too.

STEEL KNIGHT SIX, OUT

CPT Deric Holbrook
Alpha "Company" Commander

We need you - join in the blood drive now

The community is encouraged to donate blood at the Kessler Fitness Center Feb. 24-25 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. The blood drive increases the blood supply in Europe and supports our troops. While Soldiers are deployed hospitals will rely on the donations of the community.

To donate blood you must know:

- The name of any medication you are taking or have taken in the past 4 weeks
- Any immunizations (including small pox) and the date administered.
- Every place you have been outside of the U.S. or Canada since 1980.

For more information, call 354-6665 or (09721) 966665.

BRAVO BATTERY COMMENTS...



Greetings to the "Raging Bull" family. As you are all well aware, we are continuing with our fast paced schedule in preparation for our upcoming deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF II). We all did in fact enjoy the much needed break during the holiday block leave period and were very glad that everyone arrived back in Schweinfurt safely. Only a few minor changes since the last newsletter. We would like to extend our sincerest congratulations to both SPC Cozad and PFC Laufau who were recently blessed with new children, for the Laufau's it will be double the work as they gave birth to twins. We also congratulate three newly promoted NCO's, SSG Hudzick, SGT Norton and SGT Johnson. Both Platoons received additions to their Fire Direction Centers as LT's Larson and Ammons just arrived and SPC Villadiego joined us from Alpha Battery. Just recently all senior NCO's and Officers attended the annual St. Barbara's Day Ball, where CPT Hodo, SFC Torez, SFC Kreeger, SSG(P) Hibley SSG Laughlin and SSG Duroseau were awarded the prestigious Honorable Order of St. Barbara for their numerous contributions to the First Lightning Battalion and Field Artillery Community.

As always our workload has been heavy and shows no sign of slowing down in the near future while we are deployed. Because of everyone's hard work and untiring efforts, we will be slowing down for a short time to spend some much needed time with families before we deploy. With all vehicles and equipment en-route to Kuwait, that leaves only our families and us to prepare for our departure. This is no easy task as people are our most valuable asset. Bravo Battery will be the only Battery deployed as a firing Battery within the Battalion. Our mission will be to provide artillery fires in support of 2nd Brigade Combat Team's (BCT) operations in Iraq. The battery will be split up into two separate elements. First Platoon will be supporting TF 1-77 within their Task Force's sector and Second Platoon will be located with TF 1-18 sector.

Last, but certainly not least, we are all aware that this Battery will be deploying to the Middle East in support of our nation's war on terrorism. This obviously affects not only the Raging Bull soldiers, but also the entire Raging Bull family. I would like to thank each and everyone for their outstanding support and ask that you continue to support all that we do during our deployment to Iraq. The Battery's FRG will continue to support you and your families while we are deployed.

"Bull 6"

LINNEN E. HODO
CPT, FA
Commanding

CHARLIE BATTERY COMMENTS...



The Cobras have been very busy preparing for our deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. I'd like to start by thanking the soldiers and families of the Cobra Team for your hard work and understanding. Now that our deployment preparations are almost complete, the battery leadership will work tirelessly to ensure that the Cobras are afforded every opportunity to spend time at home with family prior to our departure.

Many of you are probably feeling, to some degree, worry over your loved ones deployment to Iraq and their safety in general. I can tell you - with no reservation or hesitation - that the Cobras are ready to deploy. The soldiers of Charlie Battery have the right training, equipment, leadership, attitude and drive to execute an extremely successful and safe rotation to Iraq. I am proud to be counted as one of their number and am confident that we will prevail under any circumstances.

During the deployment, the battery will send frequent unit updates/pictures of daily life in Iraq. If you wish to receive the battery newsletter it is imperative that you inform the FRG Leadership (Jo Williams, Alexandra Grinston, or Jessica Kirby), as well as the Rear Detachment, of any change to your e-mail or home address.

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!**

CPT Bill Kirby
Cobra Commander

SVC BATTERY COMMENTS...



Greetings!! First of all, I would like to say that it is an honor to be the new Service Battery Commander. Kim and I would like to thank CPT Brad and Manuela Smith along with soldiers and spouses of the battery for making the transition as smooth as possible.

The Serpents have been very busy since returning from a well-deserved block leave. Countless hours have been spent preparing and packing needed equipment for the upcoming deployment. For the finale, we had to prepare to ship our vehicles by train and barge, which included a 4-hour convoy to Babenhausen, the barge site location. While accomplishing these tasks, the battery was still able to provide first class support to the battalion. A job well done by all and I thank every soldier for their relentless effort.

Our current focus is finalizing soldier and family readiness. Ensuring soldiers and families are prepared for the deployment is a priority of mine and it can be fulfilled completely with your help. Please take the time to make sure that all necessary documents are current and in place such as power of attorneys, wills, and financial records. We have already begun progressing along the path of success with outstanding attendance to the most recent FRG Meeting. SGT McQueen from C/106 Finance Detachment attended and provided some helpful information to soldiers and spouses on the entitlements soldiers will receive when deployed. There will be other agencies coming to the FRG meeting in the future to inform spouses on beneficial opportunities and updates on what's going on in the community. We encourage more participation and attendance to future FRG meetings. This is your program and we are open to new ideas to continue enhancing the progress of your program.

Before closing, there are some congratulations in order. First, we would like to congratulate SGT Delarosa, SGT Sulbaran, and CPL Jones for becoming some of the Army's newest noncommissioned officers. Congratulations are also in order for SPC Reynoso, PFC Ashford, PFC Alvarez, PFC Rutland, and PFC Wisdom

“THIS IS SERPENT 6, ROGER OUT!!”

CHRISTOPHER A. WASHINGTON
CPT, FA
Commanding

HHB COMMENTS...



The Hurricanes have been living up to their reputation as we prepare for our participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom II (OIF II). Our battery has been successfully accomplishing an amazing number of missions at the same time. We have recently completed preparing and shipping our fleet of 45 vehicles and all of our equipment. During this fast-moving and intensive time, we also fielded several new tactical computer systems, automations equipment, combat gear, and weapons. We sent many soldiers to advanced training in support of our new mission, to master the potential of the new equipment, and to learn about the environment of our new area of operations. Now that our equipment has been shipped, we will be focusing further on the readiness of our soldiers and families. We have just completed our Pre-Deployment Process which allowed all Hurricanes to update personnel and legal documents, housing agreements, mail cards, dental, shots, medical, and ID tags. Combined with our earlier Family Deployment Process held at the Conn Club, each Hurricane family has had a great opportunity to prepare financially, legally, and medically for the upcoming mission. Due to our teamwork, late nights, and flexibility we have already accomplished most of our pre-deployment mission. This now allows us to slow down and spend some very deserved quality time with our families. All Hurricane soldiers and families are encouraged to use this time to enjoy themselves, travel within Europe when possible, and focus on the most important building block of our organization -- our families.

Our Family Readiness Group is as active and strong as ever. Please use it as your greatest resource for unit information and assistance. Our FRG Co-Leaders, Amy Lennox and Uschii Ebbs, and our Family Readiness Liaison, SSG Jorge Monge, are very well informed and look forward to maintaining an open and beneficial exchange of accurate information and assistance.

During the last three months the soldiers, NCOs, and Officers of our battery have been training and preparing for our future. We are ready to conduct this mission and achieve complete success. We would like to thank our families for being supportive and accepting when the nights were late and the workweeks went straight through the weekends. This dedicated training and work will prove its value in our near future.

Ride the Storm!!

BRIAN D. VAUGHAN
CPT, FA
Commanding

HURRICANES!

HOWARD C. PATRICK
1SG, USA
First Sergeant

DELTA BATTERY COMMENTS



The rear-detachment is in full swing. Currently, the Dragon Battery is focusing on aiding the battalion's deployment, helping Soldiers in transition, completing the FRG room, and updating the battalion website. We are ready to perform our mission.

Delta Battery has recently moved out of the FRG room and into the old S-3 shop. Thus, the FRG room is in the midst of its transformation into a family resource. We would like to thank all of those people who generously contributed to the FRG room.

We would also like to recognize a few of our Soldiers who have made some incredible contributions, during the last couple of months. During the most recent Battalion Awards Ceremony, SGT Crabill, SGT Crooks, and SPC Edwards all received the Army Achievement Medal for their contributions to the annual Saint Barbara's Day Ball. SSG Monge received a coin from the DIVARTY Command Sergeant Major for his contributions to the rear-detachment and different holiday programs. Finally, we would like to thank SGT Cole for the time and effort he has put into updating the battalion website.

In addition, a special thanks goes to the Noncommissioned Officers who recently devoted several hours a day to teaching the children in the Schweinfurt Elementary School about the training and equipment that soldiers going down range have received. These classes are meant to instill a level of confidence that the children may not have had, about their parents going on OIF II. Four of the five NCOs served in the war, and the last had time in Kuwait prior to the war. The NCOs are 1SG Ebbs, SSG Brown, SSG Hernandez, SGT Crooks, SGT Villarreal.

We would like to congratulate SSG Hernandez, on his promotion. SSG Hernandez is a recent addition to the Dragon team. He came to the Rear-Detachment from Fort Stewart and the 3rd Infantry Division. There he served as a cannon crewmember during Operation Iraqi Freedom. SSG Hernandez is the Charlie Battery Family Readiness Liaison.

Finally, we would like to express our personal thanks and best wishes to SSG Hotaling. He was a major factor in the rear-detachment's transition from a gunnery/CMTC type organization to a battery that is ready to support our families and our battalion forward, during OIF II. He recently left the Army team, but will remain associated with our great organization as an employee for Brown and Root, in Afghanistan.

Victory for our Troops - Victory for our Families!

Dragons!

MATTHEW LENNOX
CPT, FA
Commanding

W. LEE EBBS
1SG, USA
First Sergeant

On communication...

Mail:	RANK, FIRST NAME, LAST NAME	PFC Beate Bailey
	BATTERY, 1-7 FA	HHB, 1-7 FA
	FOB LANCER, OIF II	FOB LANCER, OIF II
	APO, AE 09392-XXXX	APO, AE 09392-XXXX

Notes:

- 1) Soldiers will not be able to receive mail in Kuwait. They can send mail out. DO NOT PUT SSN ON MAIL.
- 2) MPS (from a CMR) or FREE (from a US Post Office) must be hand written in the upper right hand corner.
- 3) PLEASE do not send mail prior to 15 FEB. Mail sent earlier will only cause a backlog and delay in the system.
- 4) Packages cannot exceed 1 meter cubed or 70 pounds.

Phones / Internet: There are phones and about 13 computer terminals connected to the internet on FOB Lancer. MWR phones take credit cards or phone cards purchased through AAFES. Internet availability will continue to improve throughout the deployment. Initially, there will be over 1500 soldiers on FOB Lancer competing for these resources.

FINAL NOTES...

[1] FRG / Rear Detachment Involvement. As the deployment draws closer – take the time to get involved with your unit Family Readiness Group. Family Readiness Groups are organized to provide mutual support for a unit's family members and benefits you, your family and your unit. The FRG also serves as an important source of training, communication and support to families during the deployment - Become part of the solution, visit your FRG.

[2] Essential Documents. Gather and safeguard the necessary documents you will need during the deployment. These documents include; Special / General Powers of Attorney, a will, financial statements, LESs and tax paperwork, family member military ID cards, family member medical records, prescriptions and insurance documents. Ensure these documents are updated and safeguard them.

[3] Emergency Contact #'s. As you prepare your household for the deployment, ensure you clearly post a list of appropriate emergency contact numbers by your phone. This list should include the phone numbers for the MPs, the hospital / local clinic, Polizei, your unit Rear Detachment Center, Family Readiness Group Points of Contact, Fire Department, DPW, and the local Chaplains office.

[4] Driving. Driving in Germany can be intimidating - and is complicated by winter weather conditions. Snow, ice, and "black ice" make even well plowed roads hazardous. Pay attention to posted road conditions and slow down. Drive defensively and be alert.

[5] Vehicle Readiness. Ensure your vehicle is ready for the winter. Check antifreeze and windshield fluid levels. Have your tires inspected for proper tread depth. Prepare a winter emergency kit for your car. The kit should include; a blanket, extra hat / gloves, sand or kitty litter for traction, jumper cables, tool kit, Euro for phone calls or minor repairs, a shovel, a flashlight, and a list of emergency phone numbers. It is necessary to ensure your vehicle is "winter ready" and will prevent future problems.

File taxes now – make an appointment

The Schweinfurt Tax Center will prepare tax returns and e-file it for free starting today, Jan. 20. The tax season has started earlier this year to give you time to file your taxes before the deployment. These services are available on a walk-in and appointment basis. However, an appointment is the best and most efficient means of obtaining tax assistance. Spouses with a power of attorney authorizing them to handle tax matters can file a joint return even if their spouse is deployed and can't be present. If you intend to e-file, you need to bring:

- I.D. card
- Social Security Number card (if available). If filing with a spouse who has no SSN, bring your spouse's taxpayer I.D. number (ITIN number)
- All W-2 and 1099 forms
- Copies of last year's federal and state returns (if available)
- Check or bank card with routing and account numbers
- If filing jointly, you must bring your spouse or a power of attorney
- Any other relevant tax information

For more information, call 353-8573 or (09721) 968573.

(Soldiers deploying in support of OIFII will automatically be extended until 180 days after they return. Otherwise, the filing deadline for soldiers in Europe is 15 JUNE.)

(You CAN NOT contribute more money to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) than you make (taxable income) in a given year.)

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.

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

Individuals concerned have given their consent (under the provisions of AR 340-21, The Army Act Program) for newsletter to be published. All addresses are cautioned that personal information (Home Address/ Home Telephone Numbers, etc.) Included in the attached newsletter must be protected with AR 340-21 (The Army Privacy Act Program). Unauthorized disclosure of information is also prohibited without consent.

KYLE M. McClelland
LTC, FA
Commanding

