

First Lightning

VOL FY 04-09

OCTOBER 2004

LIGHTNING



BOLT

Never Broken



Lightning 6 Comments...

Team Lightning Family,

Our outstanding Soldiers continue to perform every day with absolute pride and professionalism. As we enter what we anticipate to be the last of the heat wave months here, we continue to stay trained, vigilant, and completely focused on our tasks at hand. Every facet of our operations continues to progress towards a free and prosperous society, especially in our areas of Bayji and Ash Sharqat. We continue to make tremendous progress in sector with the Iraqi National Guard (ING) and Iraqi National Police (INP). HHB/1-7 and C/1-7 continue to train the future of Iraq's security through weapons ranges and by frequently incorporating them into their operations. A/1-7, having returned completely from ASP Tinderbox, maintains responsibility for the majority of our sector and conducts essential combat patrols north to Ash Sharqat frequently. SVC/1-7 continues to ensure that we maintain an incredible vehicle operational rate of over 90% by making almost daily trips to requisition essential parts. B/1-7 continues to provide outstanding fire support for TF 1-77 and 9E, leading the way in indirect fire for the division. We are truly a team of teams and I am extremely proud of everyone's performance.

We suffered another tremendous loss in TF Lightning this month. While returning from a council meeting in Ash Sharqat, the Scout Platoon of the Steel Knights was ambushed by an estimated 12-15 insurgents with rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), machine gun fire, and small arms fire. SPC Joshua J. Henry fought heroically, earning a bronze star for valor, before his life was taken. Even after being severely wounded, he continued to fight bravely until he was hit a second and third time. His strength and loyalty to his brothers in arms was utterly incredible and in keeping with the impeccable reputation that our task force maintains. We plan to dedicate the task force weight room to our fallen hero's memory. I personally saw him there almost every night and there is no better place on FOB Summerall to name in his honor. We should all strive to be as strong of heart, mind, and body as SPC Joshua J. Henry.

I cannot thank you enough for the sacrifices that you and your families continue to make in support of our mission. I have been so proud to hear of all the wonderful activities conducted by the Rear Detachment Team. You continue to set the standard throughout the division. Stay positive and focused on the many wonderful things that we are accomplishing each day. The Team Lightning Family is a family, and together we will remain vigilant in support of our nation.

LTC Kyle M. McClelland—Commander, Task Force 1-7

Lightning 7 Comments...

Task Force 1-7 Family's,

This month, as most, has been a difficult period for us all. With long separation comes the excitement and anticipation of each Soldier's return. Even though it looks like we are on a downward path to completing this deployment, we must maintain our focus. These are the times when our days become normal routines and we become comfortable with our daily activities. Now with school starting and busy events that go with it, we must remember that accidents can happen. I ask all of you to take time and consider the risk. As soldier here in Task Force 1-7 we are taking measures to prevent unnecessary risk with assessments. The ultimate goal is to bring everyone back safely home to their love ones and friends.

In the coming month the Task Force will be conducting a Combat Infantry Badge ceremony, a Combat Medical Badge ceremony, and dedicating the gym in honor to our recent fallen soldier, SPC Joshua J. Henry. We have also continued to have great success in improving the MWR center. I would like to thank all who donated items to the center; we appreciate your gifts very much. We also received a new theater size popcorn machine and we are in need of popcorn, cooking oil, and small bags. Other item needed are dartboards w/ darts, pool sticks and repair kits, ping-pong paddles and balls, and Sony Playstation games. We would also like to start preparing for the holidays (Thanksgiving and Christmas) this would be a good time to get items sent off in the mail. Almost everything is needed from fake trees, lights, decorations of all kind, and music. We would like to have enough for each company.

The soldiers of Task Force Lightning are doing great things, not only in sector, but here on the Forward Operational Base. It is such an impressive sight to watch young men bond together; the loyalty between soldiers is as strong as brothers. This was clearly seen in the eyes of the Soldiers of Alpha Company during the recent memorial service of their fallen comrade. SPC Henry, your sprit will always live in the hearts of all you have touched.

Command Sergeant Major Wayne L. Sanders —CSM Task Force 1-7



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Alpha Company Comments...



After another month in beautiful Iraq, the Steel Knights have continued to perform magnificently. The heat has yet to leave us (although we did experience a slightly cooler period in mid-September), and we have not seen a rain drop in over five months. The good news is that it cannot get any hotter for this time of the year (or so I believe). It will definitely be a shock to our bodies stepping off the plane in Germany during mid-winter.

As I am sure many of you have noticed, R&R continues to progress as planned, so the program has certainly provided a much-needed break for the many Soldiers that have already taken the leave. As a matter of fact, CPT Holbrook is currently enjoying himself in South Africa, so I expect he will return as motivated as ever to finish this deployment.

We find ourselves in the eighth month of the deployment, so the end is quickly approaching. Operations continue to remain at a relatively constant level, and each platoon continues to help set the foundation necessary for an independent and safe Iraq. Red platoon has maintained its fire support role in top form. They recently fired a counterfire mission in support of FOB Speicher, so their role definitely is key here.

The Shadow, Blue, and Outlaw platoons have continued their superb performance in improving the security in Task Force 1-7's sector. Without their complete devotion to duty, the security within our sector would not continue to improve on a daily basis. We are certainly setting the foundation for a much better future in Iraq and the Middle East. The most frustrating thing from a Soldier's perspective, however, is the relatively slow pace of the improvements. Without question, you can certainly be proud of your loved one's dedicated service to our country.

1SG Jacobs and I would like to formally welcome Alpha Company's newest members. SGT Aphser arrived from the comforts of D Battery in Schweinfurt, and SGT Garcia joins us from the 101st Airborne Division in Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. We are certainly excited for them to join our ranks. We also are proud to report the latest promotions from FOB Summerall. SSG Daniels, SPC Cave, SPC Cabreja, SPC Largus, and SPC Grysen will certainly enjoy the greater responsibilities that come with their next rank.

Likewise, SPC Champion departed FOB Summerall in late September to return to Ft. Bragg, NC, to begin Special Forces training. We will certainly miss his presence, but we remain proud of his accomplishments and are completely confident that he will succeed in the difficult training that lies ahead. Good Luck to SPC Champion.

On a much sadder note, the Steel Knights suffered a terrible loss in Ash Sharqat on 20 September in SPC Joshua J. Henry of the Shadow platoon. As everyone in Shadow platoon will attest, he showed complete courage and will forever be with each of us. God bless him; he was an unbelievable person, and had the heart of a giant.

Every member of this company remains proud of your accomplishments back home. We cannot wait to be back with you in Schweinfurt; our reunion is quickly approaching. Please continue sending your loved ones anything. Those small reminders of home lift our spirits. Stay safe, and God bless you.

Sincerely,

David Alvarey
1LT, Executive Officer

BRAVO BATTERY COMMENTS...

Bravo Bulls



Hello friends and family of Bravo Battery! It has been another successful month here in Iraq, and that means that we are all one month closer to being united back in Germany. September has been another hectic month, as the "Bulls" have continued to provide accurate, on time, and on target fires for 2nd Brigade on FOB Remagen, FOB Brassfield-Mora and at FOB Paliwoda.

The Battery welcomes back SSG Hudzick, SGT Fullmer, SPC White, PFC Robinson, SFC Trent, and SPC Alexander to FOB Remagen. FOB Paliwoda returns SSG Savage, SPC Debellas, PFC Schotter, SSG Jones, SPC Jackson and SPC Cozad from much needed R&R. They were all sorely missed here in Iraq, and all soldiers have hit the ground running, never missing a beat, and helping Bravo Battery carry out its wartime mission.

The Battery continues on with its wartime mission to provide on call fires throughout its sector. 1st Platoon, located at FOB Paliwoda, participated in a sector artillery sweep, and recently underwent a Division level Ammunition Holding Area inspection; earning high honors. LTC McClelland traveled down to Paliwoda to present a Certificate of Achievement to SGT Shuler for his award winning AHA and "Lucky 7" coins to SPC Baker and SPC Laufau for their actions under indirect fire. 1st Platoon swept the soldier/NCO of the month boards with SSG Pincay and PFC Helwig winning in July, and SGT Cordon and SPC Coble winning in August. Lightning 6 awarded these outstanding soldiers Certificate of Achievement's. CPL Postnikov was awarded a coin from the Division Commander for his work ethic and outstanding attitude towards the

mission. 2nd Platoon, located at FOB Remagen, played a crucial role in two nighttime fire missions by providing illumination to the in-contact infantry units resulting in the capture of five insurgents. In addition, HQ and Maintenance soldiers, led by SSG Laughlin, have kept all vehicles running despite numerous lengthy combat patrols. FOB Remagen soldiers have found a way to relieve the wartime stress by participating in Labor Day Sports Day. Bravo Battery soldiers placed 2nd in Volleyball, 3rd in Soccer and 4th in the Triathlon. 2nd Platoon also has entered the Flag Football tournament, winning their first game over the MP Platoon 21-14. SPC Gressly is player/coach of the winning Bulls Team, and PFC Martinez and SPC Martin had crucial touchdowns in the team's victory. Both platoons success can be directly linked to the quality soldiers, and excellent NCO lead training that the Battery has made its trademark.

It was another good month for Bravo Battery for personal achievements. Bravo Battery soldiers are working hard, and are being lovingly supported by our families in the rear. This is an equation for success. PV2 Whitmeyer was promoted to PFC. PFC Jackson, Brooks, Debellas, Lafau and Coble were all promoted to SPC. SPC Wooden was laterally promoted to CPL. SGT Schuler was promoted to SSG. PFC Davis had a very Army month, being promoted to Specialist and re-enlisting for another 3 years and a post at Ft. Sill. SSG Perez re-enlisted for 3 years and will continue to serve as a MET sergeant in Bamberg.

In closing, we would like to thank the FRG and the wives and loved ones of the Battery for the outstanding moral support and mail support that the soldiers of the Battery have been receiving. You are with us in our thoughts and our prayers every day. God speed to each of you, and continue to keep the Bulls in your prayers.

Sincerely,

ERIC GRAHAM
CPT, FA
Commanding

HAROLD CARTER
1SG, USA
First Sergeant



CHARLIE COMPANY COMMENTS...



Dear Cobra Family,

September has been a very fast paced month and has practically flown by. All of our platoons started out the month with a squad and platoon live fire range where they got to conduct a live fire battle drill. All of the platoons went through a day and night iteration of the range and with plenty of sweat (it's still hot in here in September) and hard work were able to have fun and get some realistic training. Headquarters platoon put a lot of time into the range and used some pop up targets and even a shoot house for the other platoons to use. At a recent awards ceremony, LTC McClelland awarded the Battalion Coin those who worked on the range.

As well as the headquarters soldiers, three of our fourth platoon members were presented with awards this month. SFC Hardin and 1LT Brooker were both awarded the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for their actions on the 2nd of July and SGT Pickens was awarded the Purple Heart. One of our mechanics, SPC Evangelista, was promoted to Sergeant and SPC Woldemedhin (a.k.a. Wildman) reenlisted for four years as well.

Phil, Steve and Butch, the International Police representatives that have been living with us, gave classes to the Iraqi Police during the last two weeks of September on basic marksmanship with the 9mm and the AK-47. The International Policemen's expertise in doing police work has been helping us with our mission of getting the Bayji Police department up to standard. The Iraqi police have a long ways to go, but our platoons continue to do joint patrols with them through the city and are working hard on trying to teach them how to do their job correctly.

Team Cobra is doing well on the whole and it looks like we should be able to get everybody who was on the initial deployment back home for R and R which is helping to keep spirits up. Our platoons have been doing great things and have been getting accolades for their work on the various missions they are given. First platoon escorted the Battalion Commander out for a bridge opening and cement factory opening ceremony in town. Third Platoon escorted the Division CSM out on a patrol in Bayji and were all given coins for their excellent work. Finally, our second platoon took Chely Wright, a country western singer, and a few members of her band out to a suburb of Bayji to hand out toys to children and play soccer with them. After their trip into town, we took the members of her band out to the range and let them all fire the .50 cal, SAW, AT-4 and 9mm pistols. Chely thanked our battery for all of the support we had given her and her band during their brief visit to FOB Summerall.

We did suffer one major hit to our morale back on the 20th of September though. Even though SPC Henry was in Alpha Battery, we felt great pain knowing that a brother in arms would no longer be with us. Our prayers go out to his friends and family. We also wish to say that our prayers are with our wounded Cobra brothers and the families of those Cobras who have paid the ultimate price.

Sincerely,

1LT James K. Starling
1SG Michael A. Grinston

HHB COMMENTS...



Hello Hurricane Family!

September has flown by as the Hurricanes have remained busy and steadily on course. We have continued to conduct missions to give Iraqi children the school supplies, sporting equipment, clothing, and personal hygiene items that they are in such great need of. We have continued the effort to improve the highway checkpoints, executed a refuel, rearm, and resupply point in As Sharqat in support of a Task Force mission, conducted many joint missions with the Iraqi National Guard both inside and outside the city, and we had a great sand volleyball tournament. Our Iraqi National Guard Company discovered a large weapons and ammunition cache this month. The find not only took those weapons out of the hands of the enemy, but also provided the ING with much needed machine guns, sniper rifles, and other equipment.

Our Fire Support Teams are all deployed outside of FOB Summerall, and each one makes a marked contribution to their assigned Task Force. We have soldiers serving with every brigade unit, to include 1-77 FSE in Balad at both FOB Anaconda and FOB Paliwoda, 1-26 FSE in Samarra at FOB Brassfield Mora, 1-18 FSE in Tikrit at FOB Danger and FOB Omaha, COLT travels throughout the northern part of the country and recently interdicted a band of terrorists in the Samarra area. Finally, the Brigade FSE is proudly serving in Tikrit at FOB Dagger. All of these teams have been doing exceptional work both as FIST and Infantrymen.

Congratulations to SPC Grysen, SPC Largus, SPC Ehrlich, SPC Stephens, SPC Brooks, SPC Cabreja, and PFC Muoio, for their recent promotions. The following soldiers each received the Task Force "Play of the Week" Award in recognition of their exceptionally hard work and dedication during this operation: SPC Sturtivant, SGT Larson, and PFC Vork. We also had the pleasure of reenlisting SGT Kevin Brown, SGT Weppelman, PFC Vork, and SPC Deleon this month. Congratulations also to the winners of the volleyball tournament, the "Purple Cobras", 1LT Cole, 1LT Kestler, MSG Lizama, and SPC Sang. They beat out some tough competition, including the outstanding Iraqi National Guard team.

Well over half of our soldiers have already take R and R, and we are on schedule to ensure that all soldiers have the opportunity. This month we also bid farewell to our Civil Affairs Team, this is a group of four soldiers that have become part of the Hurricane Team since we arrived in Iraq. They are all reservists and are returning to a life of normalcy after making a huge impact on both the Iraqi people and us as well. Godspeed. Thank you to all the families, friends, and our dedicated FRG for giving each of our soldiers the support they need to continue this mission. Please keep the mail, packages, emails, phone calls, and pictures coming, the support that our families give to the soldiers reflects directly on their morale and health. THANK YOU and please keep it up!

Ride the Storm!!

HURRICANES!

BRIAN D. VAUGHAN
CPT, FA
Commanding

HOWARD C. PATRICK
1SG, USA
First Sergeant



SVC BATTERY COMMENTS...



To The Serpent Family,

Traveling over 14,000 miles throughout the 2nd BCT footprint, receiving and issuing 9,000 gallons of fuel, ordering, receiving and installing over \$5,000,000 dollars of vehicle parts equals the month of SEPTEMBER. These are only a few of the achievements, Service Battery accomplished since arriving at FOB Summerall in March. We have also joined the effort in helping the task force support Iraq in becoming a better place. We have already started doing various projects to include delivering food and water to a few villages in the area of operation. In the future we are looking at taking on a larger portion of that effort and the soldiers are looking forward to it!! Soldiers feel that this is one of the tickets to getting Iraq to become a more independent nation.

R&R/FMPP are in full motion and it looks like the battery will get 100% participation in either program or both!! For those who haven't had their love ones participate, don't worry, they will. It is well deserved and I wish that all relax and enjoy a well deserved privilege.

1SG and I would like to thank WO1 Rodriguez, SSG Silvera and the Battalion Maintenance Platoon for taking their limited free time to get the Battery MWR up and running. In the MWR there are a couple of computers for internet access, a big screen TV (which came in time because most of you know that it is football season) with access to AFN, a DVD/VCR player, we are looking at getting some movies, and hopefully get a couple of telephone lines so the soldiers will have more opportunities to talk to their spouse, family and other loved ones.

The FRG and the FRL continue to great things, I really appreciate all that they do. If any of the spouses in Service Battery have any ideas they want to express, don't hesitate to call Kimberly and SGT Cole. They are always looking for good ideas that will help the spouses and soldiers. Thanks again for your support!!

Again, I would like to thank all families and friends for their never ending support as Service Battery continues to do great things on a daily basis. SERPENTS!!

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER A. WASHINGTON
CPT, FA
Commanding

MARVIN C. CROMARTIE
1SG, USA
First Sergeant



DELTA BATTERY COMMENTS...



Another month is in the books. September saw the end of summer, the beginning of school, and continued teamwork between the families, the community, and Delta Battery. Thank you to all of the volunteers who worked in the Ice Cream booth during the Schweinfurt Community Bazaar and the "Back to School Picnic." Over the next month, we will be planning the Battalion Thanksgiving Dinner at the 1-18 IN Dining Facility and the Battalion Christmas Party. If you are interested in attending these events, please let your FRL and FRG leader know.

During most of the FRG meetings in September, we spoke about a recently published redeployment timeline from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. The most important information on the slide was not the dates, but the process. Once our Soldiers return, they will follow the four phases listed on the slide – Redeployment, Reintegration, Reconstitution, and Retraining. The Redeployment phase (25 days) includes Soldier tasks in Iraq and family briefings in Schweinfurt. The Reintegration phase (45 days) contains the Welcome Home Ceremonies, the seven half days of reintegration training, family reunion training, and thirty days of block leave. Reconstitution (45 days) includes personnel transition (PCS, ETS,...) and equipment maintenance. Finally, Retraining includes local field exercises, gunnery, CMTC rotations, and other training and testing. Retraining could occur for over 300 days. Again, the process is the important information.

One of Delta Battery's goals throughout the deployment was to improve the areas that the battalion works and lives in. Delta Battery is well on its way to achieving that goal. Over the course of the year, the battery and the community have installed new network connections in the motorpool, started painting the barracks, and started painting the motorpool. During the month of September, contractors and the Dragon Soldiers removed old office furniture in the battalion headquarters and then installed \$150,000 of new furniture. Further, we received approval to purchase and install \$239,000 of new office furniture in the battery areas, in our barracks. Our next phase is to gain approval to redesign each battery's day room with new large screen televisions, pool tables, and furniture. We are also attempting to build an overhead lift for our maintenance folks.

1SG Ebbs and I would like to congratulate the newly promoted SSG Crooks. Recently returned to D Battery as a graduate from the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, SSG Crooks is the B Battery Family Readiness Liaison.

We would also like to congratulate SSG Hernandez for earning the Leadership Award, the Commandant's Award, and the title of Distinguished Honor Graduate from his Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course. His accomplishment is a feat matched by very few.

As always, we are here to support the unit forward and its most precious resource, the families. Our phone number is 09721-96-6484 (from the German economy), 011-49-9721-96-6484 (from the United States), or 354-6484 (DSN).

Dragons!

MATTHEW LENNOX
CPT, FA
Commanding

W. LEE EBBS
1SG, USA
First Sergeant



If you have any suggestion, questions, or feedback to improve this newsletter, please feel free to contact CPT Lennox, DSN 354-6484 or email matthew.lennox@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil.

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KYLE M. McClelland
LTC, FA
Commanding

