

The CANNONBALL FORWARD OBSERVER

December 15, 2003



DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
OF THE DIVARTY,

Season's Greetings! The
paratroopers of DIVARTY
continue to perform

outstandingly!

We have had several events since our last
newsletter that we would like to highlight for you
this month.

Our recent Thanksgiving celebration was a
smashing success! The troopers of the
DIVARTY and in particular the Food Services
section worked very hard planning and
executing the meal preparations and the
decorations for the entire base camp. All the
hard work paid off with the entire base camp
enjoying an outstanding meal, and incredible
decorations.



***Troopers enjoying the 82d Band
performance at Champion Main***

We also had a weekend of activities that
centered around the Army vs. Navy football
game. On December 6th the DIVARTY
celebrated St. Barbara's Day with our brothers
from 1st Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment out
of Ft. Riley, KS. They are working out of
Junction City located across the Euphrates from
Champion Base. The evening's festivities
included the traditional punch bowl ceremony, a
motivational video, comments from the Division
Command Sergeant Major, CSM Amaker, and a
soldier recognition ceremony. Again the efforts
of the troopers of DIVARTY resulted in a
resounding success.

The following day the entire base participated in
a DIVARTY sponsored "tail-gate" party where
there was BBQ provided and a taped replay of
the Army/Navy game. As part of the afternoon's

entertainment the
Division Band played
for those assembled.
Although Army lost
to Navy, the event
was a welcome diversion for the troopers of
Champion Base, and there is hope that Army
will beat Navy next year. GO ARMY!



The following night the base camp held a tree
lighting ceremony complete with Christmas
music and comments from the Commanding
General, MG Swannack. We have also
decorated the Dining Facility with seasonal
decorations and we are playing Christmas music
each night during the dinner hours. These little
touches of the season cannot substitute for our
family and friends back at home, but they do
help us to enjoy the season with our Army
family.



***Christmas tree lighting ceremony at
Champion Main***

We are looking forward to our upcoming
Christmas celebration with a traditional
Christmas dinner planned and another day of
DIVARTY sponsored sporting events.

We want to send our best to all the family
members who are keeping the home fires
burning while your loved ones are here. We are
thinking about you and wish you all the best the
season has to offer.

AIRBORNE! ALL THE WAY!

COL Scott Thein
And
CSM Michael Williams

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A/1-319 AFAR

To the friends and families of A/1-319th AFAR, the Gators would like to wish all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Since the last newsletter, the



Night falls on the Gator's firebase

Gators have been busy conducting certification training while conducting force protection duties at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Saint Mere. Recently, the Gators' mission has changed and we have once again occupied Fire Base Shoemaker where we fired over 100 rounds in training and are once again standing ready to provide indirect fires in support of 3rd Brigade.

Since the last newsletter there have been a few changes as soldiers have rotated back to the states or to other assignments. On the 29 of November, CPT Jason Leible assumed command of Alpha Battery. I

have been with the battalion since April 2001, where I served as the Battalion Adjutant, Battalion S2, and 3-505 PIR Fire Support Officer. I am married to Yvonne Leible and have two children Jake (2yrs) and Joshua (1mo). If you have any concerns or issues you can contact my wife through the battalion staff duty at Fort Bragg. Other additions to the battery are SFC Ambrose and his wife Sandra, who is serving as the Chief of Firing Battery and SSG McLaurin, who is serving as the Gunnery Sergeant.

Recent additions to the "Gator Ready" community: On 19 October, SSG and Mrs. Janice Valentine had a baby boy Ziven Y. 7lbs 1oz; 3 November, CPT and Mrs Leible had a baby boy Joshua A. 8lbs 14oz; 20 November,

SPC and Mrs Gina Wiles had a baby girl Kendra Jaylene 6lbs 9oz.



I would like to recognize the following soldiers that have been promoted. In October, SPCs Watson (6th Section) and Tapia (4th Section) were promoted to Sergeant (E-5). In the month of December, PFCs Vorpapel and Duprey (Fire Direction Cell), Baughman (Headquarters), Myers (1st Section), Ketchum (4th Section), Viator and Sleasman (6th Section) were promoted to Specialist (E-4) and PVT Kuklinski (3rd Section) was promoted to Private First Class (E-3).



Alpha battery soldiers are promoted in the firebase

To the Family Readiness Group and the rest of the "Gator Ready" community we would like to thank you for all of your support in sending the Thanksgiving Turkey Decorations and Christmas boxes. These acts of kindness speak volumes of the love and support that we are receiving and enable us to remain focused on our mission. While you are celebrating the holidays know that everything you have done has been deeply appreciated and has maintained the moral of the unit.

"Gator Ready!"

CPT JASON LEIBLE
1SG CHARLES JARVIS

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B/1-319 AFAR

Over the past few months the "Bulls" of Bravo Battery, 1-319th AFAR have continued to set the standard across the battalion and strive for excellence in all areas

of operations. The Bulls have maintained the mission of providing lethal, nonlethal and counter-artillery fires in support 3rd Brigade Combat Team. Firebase Shoemaker has provided the catalysis for delivering lethal counter-artillery fires against a local indirect fire threat. On the 3rd of December the battery began the mission of force protection.

During Force Protection Cycle Bravo Battery has the responsibility of assisting in the base defense plan of FOB St. Mere by supporting two guard towers along the perimeter, as well as the main entry control point. The Bulls have also provided a quick reaction force

Nathan Hall were promoted from the rank of Private (E2) to Private First Class (E3). The following



Noncommissioned Officers will be attending the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC) in January 2004: SSG Brent Middleton, SSG Anthony Gregerson, SSG Robert Gross, SGT (P) Robert R. Gutierrez and SGT (P) Gregory A. Seymour. SPC Joshua Busser was selected as the 1-319th AFAR "Trooper of the Month" and will go before the brigade board in the following weeks.

The Bulls of Bravo Battery have maintained a high level motivation and professionalism throughout the rotation.

All the Way!

CPT MIKE PEELER
1SG STEVE PAYTON

B/1-319 at the entrance to Firebase



Shoemaker

(QRF) for FOB St. Mere defense and convoy escort security to aid in the diverse and widespread operations of the entire battalion.

Although the operational tempo of Bravo Battery has not slowed, Bulls have continued to train and develop those perishable artillery skills essential to mission accomplishment. On December 1, 2003, 2LT Paul Santamaria was promoted to the rank of 1st Lieutenant (O2) and SGT Miguel Gomez was promoted to Staff Sergeant (E6). Specialist Marcos Ortiz was promoted to Sergeant (E5) and Specialist Edwin Villanueva was laterally promoted to the rank of corporal (E4). PFCs Nathan W. Steen and Dustin Ramsey were promoted to the rank of Specialist (E4). Privates Joshua Bailey and

C/1-319 AFAR

Hello Families and Friends, Another month has disappeared as we move into the holiday season. We all wish that we could be home with our families for the impending Christmas festivities, but if we're not home with you, at least we're among brothers.

Daily life continues to improve as the days go on. In-door plumbing and hot showers arrived right on time as the nights and mornings continue to get cooler. The chow is getting better and so is the mail delivery. Much to some of the soldiers' relief, we should have an Internet café soon. So, expect soldiers to communicate with their loves ones more often.



Awards Ceremony at C/1-319 Firebase

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As mentioned in a previous newsletter, we are performing combat operations with the 10th Mountain Division. Not only are we fighting the war against terrorism, but we are also helping to rebuild the local community. We have adopted a local school. We are donating funds and supplies to improve the institution and supervising the construction of the facilities. I won't lie to you, it's been quite a challenge to win the hearts and mind of the students, but we continue to drive on. The FISTERS, as always, continue their great work supporting 1-504th. Unfortunately, we still remain geographically separated and it continues to be a challenge to maintain day-to-day communications with them.

Last but not least, congratulations to SGT Erik Ellis and his wife on the birth of their new son, Brandt. He was 9 lbs. 9 oz. and 22 inches at birth.

We miss you all very much.

Cobra Strike!

CPT JOSE MELENDEZ
1SG GREGORY SMITH

HSB/1-319 AFAR



HSB awardees in front of Loyalty Base sign

On behalf of the Hard Chargers, I would like to wish all of our families a Merry Christmas and joyous holiday season. Each one of our families have been tremendous in their support and

generosity to the paratroopers of Headquarters and Service Battery. Christmas time is called the season of giving and each of you has definitely made that true. The out pouring of gifts and food has been overwhelming. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers during this season. The Hard Chargers continue to do each mission to the highest standard of excellence in support of OIF. Recent missions include transporting prisoners from the local detention center to Abugarayb prison, numerous convoys, re-supply missions, escorting local nationals working in



Loyalty Base, receiving and delivering all of the mail, gun truck patrols, tower guard, regular maintenance, recovery operations, dining facility support, medical care, and the quick reaction force. These are just some of the missions that the Hard Chargers do each day.



Cleaning weapons in the motorpool

Some recent highlights for the battery have been the promotions of 1LT Jordan, 1LT Brunner, SFC Earnest (SFC Earnest also received the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious service), SSG Tutman, SGT Sale, SGT Folsom, SPC Chum, and SPC Hurtado. The battery also said goodbye to some dear friends as they rotated back to the states with 1SG Gardner receiving the Bronze Star, CPT Bault, SFC Shaver, SPC Murray, and SPC Shier receiving the Army Commendation Medal. Thanksgiving dinner was great with the Loyalty Battalion being able to join together in a prayer of thanksgiving and to have dinner together. The only thing most missed, other than our families, was

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watching football. The meal was great and so were the leftovers that they are still serving. Merry Christmas and best wishes, the Hard Chargers. Airborne, All the Way!

CPT CHRIS WADE
SFC ROBINSON

HHB, 319th AFAR

The paratroopers of HHB continue to perform magnificently. The missions of the DIVARTY continue to progress. Within the Battery, we've had an exciting and busy month. We celebrated Saint Barbara's Day with our artillery brethren of 1st Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment from Fort Riley, KS. Our Thanksgiving celebration incorporated a meal designed by our Food Service section with a host of activities and games for the soldiers of Champion Main. We're gearing up for an even bigger Christmas Day celebration full of sports, games, and traditional holiday meals. The 82d Airborne Division Band paid us a visit and contributed to the holiday spirit with a fabulous performance of Christmas music combined with contemporary songs.

A lot of new promotions took effect on the first of December. We have a new senior NCO as Staff Sergeant Montgomery, the HHB Supply Sergeant, was promoted to Sergeant First Class. We promoted SFC Rodriguez, the DIVARTY S2 NCOIC, to Master Sergeant. We also promoted two of our Specialists to Sergeant. The two new NCOs are both from the HHB Supply section, SGT Nettle and SGT Kennedy. PFC Tamblyn from DIVARTY S1 is now Specialist Tamblyn.



Troopers enjoying the St. Barbara's Day celebration

The DIVARTY Operations section continues to focus on consolidation of all the captured ammunition. Productivity has increased, and we expect to complete the mission prior to our pending departure from the Al Anbar Province. We are very proud of the monumental effort of the DIVARTY Operations section as they focus on this mission.



The Battery continues to staff the Champion Main Mayor's cell. We've been extremely successful in streamlining the day to day maintenance and operations of Champion Main. During the last few weeks, we hosted a team of US Marines from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force as they conducted their site survey to plan for replacing us in the months ahead.



The "Punch Bowl" ceremony – A very closely guarded recipe!

The phenomenal performance of the HHB Family Readiness Group is a great source of pride for all of us. The Christmas packages arrived, and the soldiers here are very excited to open their gifts. The video greetings were a big hit as well. Thank you for all your effort and your prayers. We couldn't do this without you!

CPT Tom Earnhardt
Roughrider 6

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REAR DETACHMENT

The DIVARTY Rear Detachment continues to support Operation Iraqi Freedom by taking care of the paratroopers forward and caring for their families. The

DIVARTY Rear Detachment is engaged daily with supporting the logistical and administrative needs of the deployed soldiers.

The DIVARTY Rear Detachment is engaged in bi-weekly meetings with the Division (-) Chief of Staff and Assistant Division Commander for Operations. These meetings focus on how we can better support the deployed soldiers and take care of Family Readiness Group issues while maintaining the Division Ready Brigade.

The DIVARTY Family Readiness Group has been involved in several projects this past month. First, the families and Rear Detachment worked very hard putting together Christmas treats and ornaments for all of the HHB soldiers. Many hours were spent crafting the decorations and other gifts. We know the soldiers appreciate them during this difficult time away from their families. The Family Readiness Group also held a children's Christmas party at the bowling alley on post. Over 30 children enjoyed pizza and snacks along with some entertaining bowling games. Everyone seemed to have a terrific time.



SPC Smith in front of an ammunition bunker at one of the caches

On the 6th of December, some of the HHB Family Readiness Group leaders were fortunate enough to participate in the Ft. Bragg St. Barbara's Day celebration. St. Barbara's Day just wasn't the same without the entire DIVARTY here, but it was a nice event hosted by the

Corps Artillery and the 18th Field Artillery Brigade.



The big push this month was to make sure all of the Christmas decorations and packages were gathered, inventoried, and delivered before the suggested deadline. We are glad to report that everything made it to Iraq just fine. Even the coveted Bo Flex bars made it to Champion Base. We expect our soldiers to come home fit to fight.

The DIVARTY HQ's has received many phone calls and emails wanting to know how they can help support the mission in Iraq. Many have started collecting school supplies and other school materials to support the DIVARTY with their mission of improving the school situation in Iraq near Ar Ramadi. Additionally, many families and businesses outside of the DIVARTY have begun to send care packages to deployed DIVARTY soldiers. We appreciate their generous efforts.

To date, the DIVARTY Rear Detachment has experienced little or no issues. This is due in large part to the tremendous efforts of Kim Johnson and her team of heroes as Key Callers. A big thanks to her and the rest of the HHB Rear Detachment Family Readiness Group for all they do everyday for our soldiers.

The DIVARTY Web page is full of useful information for families and soldiers. Please use this link <http://www.bragg.army.mil/319AFAR/> to view photos, news stories, and general information about military resources. Happy Holidays. Airborne!!



SPC Rivera working at one of the caches