

# The CANNONBALL FORWARD OBSERVER

November 15, 2003



This month's **FORWARD OBSERVER** has been written primarily by the Battery Commanders. We hope that it helps you all to feel closer to your

paratroopers!

DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE DIVARTY,

Greetings from the paratroopers of the 319<sup>th</sup> AFAR! In this second edition of the Forward Observer we want to send our best wishes for to all our family and friends for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday.



Paratroopers of the 319th continue to perform their missions in the outstanding tradition of the 82d Division Artillery! We are fully engaged in the operation and security of Champion Base, as well as providing essential Command and Control to the consolidation of enemy ammunition and working closely with the Civil Affairs soldiers and the local leaders of this province.

Quality of life on Champion Base continues to be one of the primary concerns of the Base Operations and Mayor cell. We have worked hard to ensure the soldiers have the amenities that can be provided here, to include Armed Forces Network television decoders, TV's in the rooms, laundry service, and an improved PX facility. We continue to undertake quality of life projects to improve our living and working conditions.

As we move into the holiday season, be assured that you are in our thoughts and prayers. The paratroopers of the 319<sup>th</sup> are proudly serving their country and looking forward to returning home soon. We are thankful for the support of our family and

friends. We wish the blessings of the season to you all.



COL Thein and CSM Williams



## HQB, DIVARTY

Greetings Family and Friends:

Over the last few weeks, the paratroopers of HQB continued the multitude of missions assigned to the Battery by the Division. The collection of captured enemy ammunition mission dominates the work of the S3 section and several others in the Battery. With the help and partnership of civilian contractors, we've coordinated the safe shipment and consolidation of several hundred tons of Saddam's old bullets, rockets, and missiles.

Colonel Thein's governmental support mission continues to develop and yield results daily. He and his team have logged hundreds of miles, held numerous meetings, and completed hours of homework this month as the conduit of information and the sounding board for the local civilian leaders with the 82d Airborne Division. These efforts lead to a truly monumental event this past Saturday as nearly 100 members of the Al Anbar Provincial Council met here at Champion Main with General Abizaid, the CENTCOM Commander. The Rough Riders got the mission late Friday to organize the site, arrange for transportation, and execute all implied tasks to make this meeting happen. It was a hair raising Saturday! The paratroopers of HQB, as they always do, made it happen without a hitch!

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The whole Battery continues to play a key role in the Mayor's Cell and base security.

Everyday, we receive shipments of items ordered by all Division units here, coordinate repairs needed, and organize construction of new facilities. The amazing thing is that we've actually settled into a fairly reasonable rhythm in this regard.



The Administrative and Logistics team continues to provide support to the whole installation here. They've consolidated lists of all the items purchased for the living and work areas and developed an installation property book to account for it all. This way, the next organization that replaces us will find the quality of life here far better than we did upon our arrival.

Our quality of life continues to improve. The procurement of two basketball goals has highlighted a month of improvements in our Battery area. We've set up quite a workout area as well with equipment we brought augmented by items purchased here. Other significant improvements include the purchase and installation of 2 washing machines in the barracks, and we've received nearly 60 bunk beds and mattresses. After 2 months on cots in shoulder to shoulder barracks rooms, the bunk beds have been a very welcome improvement.

Thanksgiving is right around the corner, and the Food Service team along with help from members of the DIVARTY

staff has gone above and beyond to make sure this is a first class event here.



Additionally, we've begun to plan a large tailgate party for the Army-Navy football game.



Thanks for all the prayers and continued support!

Tom Earnhardt  
Rough Rider 6

## HSB, 1-319<sup>th</sup> AFAR

The Hardchargers continue to exceed the standard in supporting the Loyalty Battalion and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. Some of our regular occurring missions include re-supply convoys, guard duty, and the new mission of civil military operations.

The Hardchargers are now manning two towers as well as providing two gun trucks to act as a quick reaction force and as convoy escorts. In addition our maintenance team has once again done more than their share by providing not only recovery support to the battalion but also providing outstanding combat recovery to the Brigade.

Our cooks are enjoying life a little more now that the KBR DFAC is open. The cooks now provide support to the KBR DFAC as well as the Brigade R&R facility. The cooks are also assisting with the QRF force by manning their MK-19 on one of the gun trucks.

The Support Platoon as been the back bone of the QRF and has conducted numerous tactical convoys providing heavy truck

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support to Alpha Battery and Charlie Battery.

The Radar section is welcomed back to the battery and are now back with the battery here in FOB St Mere after providing radar coverage to 1-32 Inf and Charlie Battery to our south – a job well done!



The TOC, consisting of the S2, S3, and FDC, have been hard at work in the counter mortar fight resulting in numerous counter-fire missions protecting all of the soldiers here in FOB St Mere.

On the lighter side, HSB has had the chance to have some fun with a football tournament during Loyalty day with the Hardchargers placing 1st and 2nd.

For Halloween, Chaplain Hollins hosted a scary movie night and HSB had a spades tournament. A few Paratroopers have even gone swimming in Saddam's Palace's swimming pool during a recent reenlistment ceremony. SFC Johnson (Commo Section Chief) was there and reenlisted in Saddam's thrown room.

October was a banner month for the battery with the following Hardchargers being promoted: CPT Reilly, CPT Mitchell, SFC Phillips, SSG Temple, SPC Veney, SPC Shaheen, SPC Savary, SPC Santillian, SPC Ochoa, SPC Morganthal, SPC Lloyd, SPC Hernandez, SPC Dean, PFC Santana, PFC Meister, PFC Frank, PFC Saecho, and PV2 Ocampo.

Congratulations to each of these as well as to the following as they celebrate the birth of healthy little paratroopers: SSG Hernandez and Nilda's son Michael Alexander, 7lbs

10z.; CPT Persons and Loida's son Steven J. , 8lbs, 11oz.; and CPT Lieble and Yvonne's son Joshua Aaron, 8lbs 14 oz. The Hardchargers remain motivated and are ready to continue their unwavering support to the Loyalty Battalion and Task Force Panther. Airborne, All The Way!



## A Battery, 1-319<sup>th</sup> AFAR

A Battery has recently transitioned from providing point security at a food distribution site to providing security at FOB Ste Mere. They continue to provide excellent support for both the Red Devils and Loyalty. Soon they will transition yet again to the mission of providing close fire support and counterfire support for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team.

## B Battery, 1-319<sup>th</sup> AFAR

Over the past few weeks 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, non-lethal 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 mortar threat. It was the quick response of 2nd Section lead by SGT Robert Gutierrez and 6th Section lead by SGT Gregory Seymour and the accurate calculations in the Fire Direction Center (FDC) chiefed by SGT Luis Tirado, which responded to the mortar threat and eliminated it.

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In addition to occupying Firebase Shoemaker, Bravo Battery has assisted 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 (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 professionally. On November 1, 2003, 2LT Truc Pham was promoted to the rank of 1st Lieutenant (O2) and SGT Aaron Sullivan was promoted to Staff Sergeant (E6). The following paratroopers were promoted from the rank of Private 1st Class (E3) to Specialist (E4): Kevin G. Russell, Demon A. White, and Robert J. Grossic. Both, Jonathan M. Fonzi and Brandon D. Geer were promoted from the rank of Private (E2) to Private 1st Class (E3). Pham, Sullivan, Grossic, and Geer are all apart of the FIST attached to 1-505 PIR. SPC Eric Green received an Army Achievement Medal in preparation of his ETS date. SPC Green has been a member 1 Panther FIST, assigned to C-Team since September 2001 and is expected to ETS on 7 January 2004. SSG Brent Middleton will travel to Ar Ramadi, Iraq, for the 82nd Airborne Division, Audie Murphy Board. SSG Middleton was selected by the senior NCOs of 3rd Brigade to represent the brigade at the division level. SPC Peter MacRichie was selected as the 1-319th AFAR "Trooper of the Month" and will go before the brigade board in the following weeks. 1st Section lead by SSG Calvin Martin, 3rd Section lead by SGT Steven Toon, 5th Section lead by SSG

Steven Kerrigan, and the Fire Direction Center (FDC) lead by SGT Luis Tirado all completed the DIVARTY Section Certification process which confirms their proficiency and recognizes their leadership, expertise, and ability to chief a section.



The Bulls also received accolades and thanks for all their hard work in the construction of Firebase Shoemaker and their overall motivation and dedication to the mission in recent visits from the DIVARTY Commander and Command Sergeant Major, as well as MG Swanack the 82nd Airborne Division Commander.

## C Battery, 1-319<sup>th</sup> 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 Thanksgiving 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.

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

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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 E. MELENDEZ**  
**A Battery, 2-319<sup>th</sup> AFAR**

Hello family and friends! Here we are one month closer to accomplishing our mission and getting back home! We are all very ready for that time to come upon us. Until then we will continue with the highway security mission and counter fire mission in the defense of the airport. The demons had a great month as far as mission success. The battery was responsible for preventing several road side bomb attacks and should be credited for saving other soldiers from serious injuries, possible death, and damaged equipment. You should really feel proud of your men; they are doing a totally outstanding job every day. They are truly making a difference here in Baghdad and are first rate paratroopers. If anything we have seen about ourselves during this deployment, it is that we are and this unit is head and shoulders above the rest of the units in our Army. I can honestly say paratroopers are a cut above the rest. Feel proud and realize the separation from your loved one has been for a great and historic cause that has helped bring about the ease of suffering to millions of Iraqi citizens.

We have moved yet again for the final time (I hope!) We are still located in Camp

Falcon, we just moved into a different building. The new building is actually better because there is more room for all of our people and we are all located together unlike the last building. The plumbing actually works most of the time and the color scheme....hmmm; I'll just say the color scheme "makes everyone smile."



We continue to send our men to Qatar for five days of rest and relaxation and we have sent more people home for two weeks of environmental leave. We will continue to send even more on these trips as we receive allocations to send soldiers. Unfortunately, I continue to foresee not everyone making it home on leave while on this deployment. The last of our slots should be used up by December sometime. But that is because this is when we will start to make our initial preparations and movements out of Iraq, into Kuwait, and finally back to Bragg by early to mid February. Hang in there! The light is at the end of the tunnel!

I hope this newsletter finds everyone well and in good spirits. I am also proud of you all as you continue to be patient for our return and the support you all have given has been great. You all truly give us reasons daily to fight hard and come home as soon as we can to open arms. Again thanks! Continue to send care packages and letters and we will try to call as often as we can. Again, I want to emphasize the use of the FRG channels if you have questions or need some assistance with anything; feel free to call my wife Heather or Cindy Condliffe or your key caller if you do. They will be happy to point you in the right

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direction. Keep us in your prayers and hope to see everyone soon.

Airborne!!  
CPT Chris J. Ward

hometown schools, churches, merchants and libraries. We



hope this project will be able to help the Iraqi school children and ultimately, their way of life.

## 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 is functioning well. The HHB Family Readiness Group has held several meetings with Key Callers and other HHB spouses. These meetings have focused on programs and fund raisers that the HHB Family Readiness Group can organize in order to support our soldiers in Iraq. Recently, HHB gathered at Mrs. Darlena Fudge's house for a Halloween Hayride and Campfire Festival in the country. The kids enjoyed the ghost stories and the adults were entertained as well.

The FRG of HHB has also taken on the recent task of supporting the schools in Iraq. Many of the schools that DIVARTY is operating near are without school supplies and books. The FRG of HHB has started gathering all sorts of school supplies and books through donations from local and

As we continue to count our blessings, the HHB Family Readiness Group and Rear Detachment issues have been minor. Kim Johnson, Sandra Santiago and Darlena Fudge, along with all of the Key Callers have been the backbone of this FRG. Without their support and hard work, Rear Detachment operations would surely suffer. Thanks for your continued help.

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.

Airborne!!

