



# GAUNTLET FORWARD

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1SG Hunt and CPT Brunofski uncase the HHD Guidon during a ceremony held March 29th, 2007.



Chaplain McCain gives the invocation for the Battalion Assumption of Authority Ceremony.

## GAUNTLET 6

Dear family, friends, and fellow Soldiers of the Gauntlet:

With the publication of this, our first Monthly Newsletter, the headquarters will have been engaged in combat operations with the rest of the Gauntlet Team for nearly 60 days, and I thank The Good Lord for the smooth transition in our operations. I am especially thankful for the relative safety of our troopers as they traversed the central and southern portions of Iraq. With over eleven hundred Soldiers (and growing) in the battalion, our Gauntlet troopers cover a wide range of operations that is unmatched in either of the two military police brigades in Iraq. We should all be proud of their efforts in this long war. I'd also like to say, "Thank you" to our great families, friends, and supporters who lift our spirits and anchor our hearts in this dusty place.

Now, I know that there are many issues that weigh heavily on the minds of our Soldiers and their families, and so I will address a few of those topics of concern. First, let me discuss the 15 month deployments. All of the particulars in this matter have yet to be worked out in Washington, but for our part we know this: Reserve and National Guard deployments will not be lengthened. In fact, the new guidance states that these forces will be mobilized for no more than one year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. We'll see how the details are worked out in this matter.

For active duty forces, however, things are a little different. Units that were sched-

uled to redeploy within a 90 day window of the start date of the new policy would be considered for extension on a case by case basis. In some cases, other factors, such as commander's assessments, would determine whether a unit would stay or go. The units from Fort Hood scheduled to deploy in May will do so as planned. All other active duty units in the battalion are scheduled to be extended for the three extra months.

What I tell my troopers is this: As Soldiers, we follow orders. We don't have to like them, we just have to get them done. Now, there is no use in wasting time, effort, energy, or emotion in bemoaning something that won't change for other than operational necessity. I am thankful, though, that there is hardship pay of \$1,000 per month that will be given to each Soldier affected by the new policy. By my calculation, that means up to \$6,000 more or less, depending on rank, for each Soldier



Gauntlet 6, LTC Rangel, welcomes HHD Soldiers to Iraq.

servicing the three extra months, when you roll up the special pays and tax benefits presently in effect. So, let's focus on the positives and how to get the mission done. Another topic of concern is the rest and relaxation leave policy. I have already published guidance on this and have attached it to this newsletter for all to read. The bottom line is this: Everyone gets to take leave during the deployment, if they want to. I highly encourage it. When a person is allowed to take leave depends on many factors, such as mission needs, the number of deployments a Soldier has had previously, and personal considerations.

Continued on page 2



LTC Frank Y. Rangel, Jr.

## GAUNTLET 6 CONTINUED

Unfortunately, many folks will not be able to take their leave when they want it most, like anniversaries, holidays, etc. Again, I tell Soldiers that the things to focus on here is that we all can take leave, and that the travel time involved including the air fare to the nearest airport to their leave location, is paid for by Uncle Sam. Now that's a good deal.

This war has lasted longer now than World War II. We, as

Soldiers, do not know when the war will end. Until those decisions are settled in Washington, we must continue to move out and get the job done. It sure does help that our wonderful families and friends are so supportive of us, and we must count our blessings for the love and admiration that we enjoy from them. It helps us to get through this, and we deeply appreciate the thoughts and prayers.

I constantly say that I am proud to serve with our great service members on the Gauntlet Team. I am proud of the effort they put forth everyday and the support our home teams in the US provide. And, I am confident that our leaders are decisively engaged in the effort to make things better for our Soldiers and their families.

*FYR*

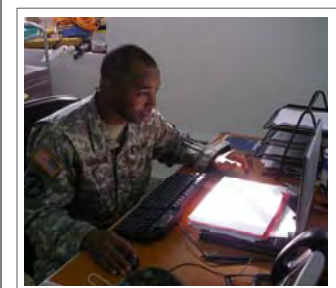
LTC Frank Y. Rangel, Jr.  
GAUNTLET SIX



CPT James, S1, takes a pose with some locals who worked on the renovation of the battalion headquarters compound.



SSG Zarco, S6 NCOIC, proudly displaces switches he and his section installed. Getting the new headquarters compound wired for internet was the priority mission for the S6 section. Soldiers of the S6 worked hard to accomplish the mission in time for the battalion to assume operations.



SGT Charles, HHD Supply Sergeant, hard at work establishing the supply procedures and keeping the books straight!

***Congratulations to SGT Tarquine Harmon for his winning name of "The Boondocks" for the Battalion's new headquarters.***

## GAUNTLET 7

Routinely I send notes and letters home to family and friends in an attempt to share with them what I see here from my foxhole. The topics spread across a wide range from the politics of the region to broad commentary on our missions. There always seems to be something I want to say about what is happening here, but the messages always seem to come around to one over arching theme; how the Soldiers and families of the Gauntlet amaze me with their commitment, dedication and willingness to do whatever is needed to accomplish any mission. I am routinely left wondering "where do we find folks like this". But somehow we do find them, and those amazing folks routinely choose to continue serving our Army and our Nation even when their initial enlistment has expired.

During our short period of time in Iraq, LTC Rangel and I have already participated in numerous reenlistment ceremonies. Each time I watch a Soldier reenlist I am emotionally moved by their willingness to continue serving our Nation in its time of need. When I observe reenlistments here, it is even more moving. These Soldiers, serving willingly in harms way, doing the hardest

thing our Army will ever ask of a Soldier or family, are volunteering to continue that service to America. The level of dedication and commitment one must possess to do this is sometimes hard to imagine.

As I've told many Soldiers over the past couple of years, I am inspired and motivated by those young Americans who choose to join our ranks. I see them as special people willing to carry the load for the greater good of our Nation. But the truth is that most of them join without really understanding what it is they are getting into. They have no concept of the real sacrifices involved in a combat deployment...or a long field training exercise for that matter. They are joining an institution that they know little about.

This is not so for those reenlisting. Those choosing to reenlist inspire and motivate me at a much higher level. These folks are choosing to continue to serve fully knowing the hardships and the sacrifices involved. They are generally backed by a spouse and family that is equally committed to supporting service to our Nation, and fully understanding that this service requires a tremen-



Gauntlet 7, CSM Craig, reminds Soldiers of the 720th MP BN to continue to be the Standard Bearers and to remember Safety, even when on Camp Stryker.

dous level of sacrifice for the family as well as the Soldier.

So for this first edition of the Gauntlet Forward published here in "The Boondocks" of Iraq, I wanted to use my message as a forum to thank all those Soldiers and families that serve and have chosen to continue to serve. Your commitment, dedication and willingness to do this hard thing distinguishes you from your fellow Americans. It inspires me, and it is that inspiration that motivates me to continue my service. Thank you to all the Soldiers and the families of the Gauntlet Team for your service and support.

GAUNTLET!

CSM J. Drew Craig  
GAUNTLET SEVEN

## 720TH MP BN ASSUMPTION OF AUTHORITY CEREMONY

The Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 720th Military Police Battalion assumed authority for the training of the Iraqi police in Multi-National Division- Center South during a ceremony in the foyer of the 89th Military Police Brigade Headquarters March 30 at 10:30 a.m.

Originally scheduled to deploy this summer, the 720th MP Battalion's deployment cycle was accelerated to fulfill the demand for a command and control element over the higher number of MP companies in Iraq.

Lt. Col. Frank Rangel, battalion commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Drew Craig uncased the battalion's colors, symbolizing the unit's return to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08 along with the assumption of responsibility for eight units and the mission of providing military police support to the 3rd Infantry Division.

Commander of the 89th MP Brigade, Col. Mike Galloucic, spoke at the event. "Back on the eleventh of November 2005, in a rowdy evening ceremony at the 13th Sustainment Command Gym, I officially welcomed the 720th MP Battalion HHD back to Fort Hood after a highly successful deployment to Iraq in support of OIF 04-06," said Galloucic. "And here we are



LTC Rangel and CSM Craig uncased the battalion colors during the Assumption of Authority Ceremony on March 30th, 2006

today in Baghdad, formally welcoming you back to Iraq and assigning you a new mission."

"All the superb Soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers in your battalion headquarters are perfectly matched against the challenges you will face in the next year serving in the newly-established Multi-National Division- Center sector," Galloucic continued.

Rangel elaborated on these challenges during the ceremony. "Meaningful change is slow in a culture," said Rangel. "It's about showing them different things, establishing great relationships, and it's [important] that they do trust us. And I think if we do those things well, we'll probably have done the most important things we can do out here. Everything after that is gravy."

The battalion prepared for their third deployment in support of OIF with theater-specific training, ranges and other traditional means of preparation. However, to cater to their particular mission, the 720th MP Battalion also teamed up with police officers from Killeen and Cop-

peras Cove, Texas, in what Craig termed a "micro-internship."

Since military police duties are more narrowly focused than civilian law enforcement, squad leaders and team leaders partnered with their civilian counterparts to gain a more well-rounded understanding of police work, said Craig. In the coming year, they hope to pass on that knowledge to the IPs by teaching them more advanced skills such as setting up shifts for their personnel, accountability, inspections, logistics and, most importantly, leadership, emphasized Craig.

During his last deployment in OIF 04-06, military policemen focused on teaching the IPs basic skills such as first aid, said Craig.



CPT Brunofski, HHD Commander, and SPC Gonzalez, Guidon bearer, pay respects to the American flag during the playing of the National Anthem.



LTC Rangel speaks at the Battalion Assumption of Authority ceremony.

*"Meaningful change is slow in a culture, It's about showing them different things, establishing great relationships, and it's [important] that they do trust us."*

During this deployment, he intends to assess where the IPs are at during the first weeks and work at moving the ball further down field so that the IPs can move closer to taking over the security mission in Baghdad.

Rangel also emphasized his Soldiers' commitment to their mission. "The great Vince Lombardi once said that, 'the quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor,'" said Rangel. "I believe that our Soldiers' lives are of a quality only matched by those whom we esteem as champions and heroes."

-SPC Millet



# HHD, 720TH MP BN "THE BEST SUPPORTS THE REST"

The last couple of months have been fast paced, but we were able to keep up and the Vanguard has done a lot of great and wonderful things.

Our adventure began with our 20 hour flight into Kuwait. We spent two weeks there training and conducting ranges. The Soldiers really enjoyed the HEAT (HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer). Basically, it is a Hummvee cab attached to a machine and it spins around. It teaches Soldiers how to react to a roll over.



Vanguard Soldiers conducting HEAT Training to learn for to react and escape from a rollover.

After our stay in Kuwait, we then took a ride in a C-130 to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP for short). We quickly settled into Camp Stryker and began work on the Vanguard Compound. Our Soldiers have been working hard to ensure we are ready for our mission.

We have also seen some changes within our organization. Since we got here, we have welcomed new Vanguardians into our family. This includes CPT Norma James, CPT Kirk Whittenburger and on loan, SFC Conoue, We have also said good by to our 1SG Hunt, who was selected to work with the Rock of the Marne, 3ID.

In closing, I want to let every one know that we are doing very well and want to thank everyone for their hard work, dedication and support.

-Vanguard 6



The Vanguard boards the C-130 for the flight from Kuwait to Iraq.



(L-R) SPC Freed, SPC Green and SSG Stocia ready for Airborne.



PV2 Harvey gets promoted to PFC by SGT Presley.

Congratulations go to the following recently promoted Soldiers:

PFC Aaron Harvey & PFC Anthony Whitaker



PV2 Whitaker gets promoted to PFC by SGT Presley. CPT Brunofski presides over the event.

## SGT IBARRA REENLISTS



LTC Rangel administers the oath of reenlistment to SGT Ibarra.

SGT Martin Ibarra of HHD, 720th MP BN reenlisted on Monday, April 23rd, 2007. The ceremony took place at the Camp Striker Dining Facility, where SGT Ibarra is a manager working with KBR to ensure quality.



CSM Craig addresses the audience at the reenlistment ceremony for SGT Ibarra.

**CONGRATULATIONS  
SGT IBARRA FOR YOUR  
COMMITMENT TO  
STAY ARMY, ARMY STRONG!**

Are you curious about your options?

If you have questions about reenlisting, call or email the Battalion Retention NCO,

SSG Davis, at 822-7503

or

[william.davis2@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:william.davis2@iraq.centcom.mil)

# 410TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY "BRAVO SPIRIT"

Here is the first edition of the Bravo Spirit portion of the Gauntlet Newsletter!! It is always great to communicate, in any forum, with our families and friends back home.

The Soldiers of the 410<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company would like to extend a warm Bravo Spirit welcome to the Soldiers of the Gauntlet and Vanguard Families!! Your presence has all ready had an impact. We look forward to working hand in hand over the next couple of months.

Our mission of emplacing Police Transition teams in the Al Mansour and Abu Ghraib

districts of Northwest Baghdad has continued to challenge the unit. Each day squad's go to various police stations and continue to work with the Iraqi Police and provide critical oversight to policing operations. Over the last four months our Soldiers have had a positive impact and made tremendous strides in the betterment of the Iraqi Police.

The unit has sent out our last Soldier on mid-tour leave and we are awaiting the last few Soldiers to return completing our mid tour leaves. This is just another of the many milestones we've crossed during our deployment. All things are set in motion to accommodate our movement back to Fort Hood and spend some much needed time with family and friends. With all the unit has accomplished I would be remise in my duties if I did not recognize the support and sacrifices of the family and friends back home.

Your support has allowed the Soldiers to accomplish all that they have. Thank you for all that you do!!

If I can be of any assistance to any of you please feel free to contact me at [derek.l.smith@us.army.mil](mailto:derek.l.smith@us.army.mil). Viper 7.



*"I would be remise in my duties if I did not recognize the support and sacrifices of family and friends back home."*



SSG Cummings re-enlisting for the big indefinite!



SGT Mwangi receiving his purple heart.



The 410th MP Company family taken on December 31, 2006.

# 1-101 FIELD ARTILLERY "IN THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE" OPERATION BOSOX



Over the first few months of deployment, Soldiers of the 101st Field Artillery noticed local nationals wearing Yankees caps at some of the different venues that they travel to on Protective Services missions. As avid Red Sox fans, this did not sit well.

With the help of friends in Massachusetts and the Boston Red Sox organization, Red Sox hats were collected over the winter. A

shipment of 73 hats arrived in theater at the end of March. 101st FA soldiers began handing out hats in the Inter-

national and National Zones to spread Red Sox pride in time for Opening Day of the baseball season. As of 10 April 2007, all hats have already been given out and a re-supply is on the way.

Some recipients include children and adult local nationals, Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army personnel, EODT and KBR staff, and the Fijian security detail for the Special Representative of the Secretary General (United Nations.)

As a result, Sox hats can be spotted in far flung areas of Karkh, Rusafa, Karada, Mansour, and New Baghdad.

Operation BoSox OIC, 1LT Macuga, said: "It is hard enough being away from home during baseball season for a lot of our guys. Having to deal with seeing Yankees hats half a world away from Fenway Park was the last straw. The men of the 101st saw a way to make a difference for Iraqis and Red Sox fans alike and went on the offensive to deliver these hats. We all look forward to continuing this operation as the season progresses. **Go Sox!**"

-1LT Macuga



SSG Farese and SGT Covell make a new friend and hopefully a Boston Red Sox fan for life.



New Red Sox Fans in Iraq!



SPC Darcangelis watches Iraqi Police (IP) at the Ministry of Justice don their Red Sox caps donated by the Boston Red Sox.



# GO SOX!



2nd Platoon strikes a pose with their interpreter prior to the start of Operation BOSOX.



SSG Scherer and SGT Covell at the Karada DAC

# B COMPANY 3-144 INFANTRY “BUCCANEERS”

## NO FOBBIT IN TEAM



SPC Pennock and SPC Mata pass out candy and toys to Iraqi children while on patrol.

I was asked by my Platoon Leader, 1LT Rosenbalm, if I would write a column for our monthly newsletter. After agreeing, my first thought was what could I possibly write about that people couldn't see on the news? I mean, we are in war torn Iraq and our country is divided on whether we should still be here or not.

Furthermore my children don't completely understand why I'm over here either. All they know that Dad is in the military and this is what Soldiers do. Over the holidays I received Christmas cards from my children and their classmates. They thanked me for serving our county, ensuring freedom, and for being a great Soldier. Reading these cards really got me choked up. I thought about what will I



Author of this article, SGT Billick.

tell my children and their classmates about my service here in Iraq. In my opinion, my job isn't that important. No one asks me which direction the war should take. I'm not training the Iraq Police or the Iraq Soldiers to eventually take control of their country either. I am just a driver of an up armored vehicle! For the most part I just drive around Iraq. I was sure that I fell short of their ideas of what my role in the conflict was. I thought to myself, "Some great Soldier I am."

Then one day while helping out our maintenance section, I had a conversation with MSG Garcia (Company Motor Sergeant) that put everything into perspective for me.

While driving him to another shop to pick up a vehicle, he told me how he was trying to upgrade the armor on all of our vehicles so we would be better protected on our missions.

During our conversation MSG Garcia explained to me that without his mechanics turning wrenches all day, the likelihood of vehicles breaking down outside the wire would

be great. He also told me that he was not pleased that someone had referred to one of his mechanics as a "FOBBIT." This is a term that, to the best of my knowledge, refers to a Soldier who doesn't leave the base, go into the city of Baghdad or to other hostile areas. It is also another way of letting someone know that you feel that their

job isn't as important as yours.

In reality there could be a case made that every time that one of his mechanics repairs one of our vehicles that a part of his shop leaves with us on every mission. If I carried this notion one step further couldn't I say that all the gear issued to us from supply, all the meals we enjoy before leaving on mission, and all people providing support are in essence running missions with these soldiers every day?

Our families and friends back home, Congress, our President and many others are also fighting this war with us every day.

These Children and MSG Garcia reminded me of something I lost sight of. All of our jobs are *equally* important and we are dependent on each other. We are all fighting for freedom. We are all great soldiers. We all love our families and our country enough to be here.

I would like to thank my children, their classmates, and MSG Garcia for reminding me how proud I am to be a DRIVER for the 3/144 Infantry, 1st platoon, 3<sup>rd</sup> squad, SGT Williams.



SGT Billick and SSG Wawrzyniak PMCS their vehicle prior to mission.

*"All of our jobs are equally important and we are dependent on each other. We are all fighting for freedom."*



The ASV.



CPL Palmore having a "moment" - in this case a "broken finger."

# 127TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY “SPEED AND POWER”



(L-R) SGT Walker, NBC NCOIC assists SGT Sanchez, Commo NCOIC, in conducting COMSEC changeover.



1SG Domenech poses with an Iraqi child during a dismounted patrol of city of Hilla. 1SG provided the child with some treats and spoke with the family about the enemy activity within the city.



SPC Roode from 1<sup>st</sup> PLT of the 127 MP CO poses with a contractor and an IP from the Iskandirayh Highway Patrol.

The month of April brings the company closer to the half-way mark of its deployment. “Speed and Power” Soldiers over the past 5 months have made significant contributions to the people of Iraq.

Daily, “Speed and Power” Soldiers do the one thing they know best, striving for and surpassing excellence. However, we still need your support and your prayers.

Without you, we would not be able to achieve the excellence we have. You are our bedrock; our foundation. So I ask that you all continue to pray for “Speed and Power” Soldiers and all of those Soldiers that are making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people.

-Captain Darren Johnson  
Power 6



(L-R) SSG McVey and SGT Parker from HQ PLT of the 127th enjoy a traditional meal com-



During Operation Déjà vu (L-R) CPL Short and SPC Keshena of 2<sup>nd</sup> PLT prepares to enter and clear a building with IPS from Mussayib IP station. The platoon conducts weekly cordon and searches with IPS.



(L-R) PFC Padgett, SGT Narcotta, 1SG Domenech and SPC Anderson take pictures with Iraqi Police (IP) from the Balda IP station after a successful cordon and search mission. During the search, IP’s and “Speed and Power” Soldiers confiscated weapons, ammunition and IED making material.



(L-R front row) SPC Koon, PFC Hess, PFC Henke and (L-R back row) SGT Taylor, SGT Wickbolt, SSG Colon and SGT Warsop from 3<sup>rd</sup> PLT pose for a photo with IPS from Iskandariya after a Cordon and Search Operation. The platoon continues to build confidence in the IPS. Since the platoon partnered with the IPS they become more active and independent during operations.



SPC Edwards from 2<sup>nd</sup> PLT assists an IP during checkpoint operations. The platoon conducts daily checkpoints, mounted and dismounted patrols and station assessments. The platoon is responsible for partnering with 4 IP stations and several checkpoints throughout the city.





## 23RD MILITARY POLICE COMPANY “BORN FOR WAR”

It's another month down (almost half way there) we all made it through the fierce “Iraqi Winter” with all our fingers and toes. It has been another productive month for the 23d Military Police Company.

HQ's Platoon divided up into many different sections. We are the spearhead of the company. Our platoon provides all the logistical support needed by the platoons to ensure that they can perform their missions. Although short handed because of soldiers going on leave, the HQ's platoon was able to complete their missions.

We had a Re-enlistment this month, PFC Clark raised his right hand in a ceremony which took place in the Unit's day room, and Re-enlisted for 3 years.

“CONGRATULATIONS!”

1st Platoon “Defenders”, while back stateside, SPC Locklear's wife (Ashley) delivered their second child (Jonathan). SPC Clendenen planned his wedding day.

SPC Campbell in conjunction with the International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs) conducted weapons and medical training for both the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police personnel. The outcome of both training events was very successful.

The platoon as a whole has been putting in some long hours to ensure that all their stations are well equipped and that the IPs there are fully trained to conduct the missions. The morale here is still high and everyone is doing an outstanding job. LT Erickson and I are very proud of everyone and glad to have them as part of our platoon.

2nd Platoon “Stalkers”



SGT Deutscher and an Iraq Police (IP) officer pulling security at the local IP station.

March was a month of promotions, advancements, awards, and 3 new family members. Our most recent Non-Commissioned Officer promotion was SGT Kovacs. Soldiers recently promoted to Specialist were Donovan, Vanlent, and Poindexter. CPL Charles and SGT Willet, two capable and competent NCO's, attended the Non Commissioned Officer promotion board. PFC Tabios was able to go home for R&R leave to be present for the birth of his daughter Daicee Anne Shyne. SGT Railey became the proud father of a little girl named Emma Elisa. SPC Thompson was also home for the birth of his daughter Katie Marie.

The PTT mission continues as we begin to hand over responsibility and authority to another unit. We finished up April with an IP recruiting mission which involved elements from 2nd and 3rd Platoons. The mission was very successful.



SFC Weller takes a moment to get a photo-op with “landowners.”

The Soldiers performed well for 6 straight long days. 1,363 IP applicants were interviewed and processed.

I have a great deal of admiration for and pride in these Soldiers and the job they are doing.

Hello again from the 3rd platoon punisher's. The soldiers have been doing an outstanding job accomplishing their mission in Iraq and taking care of business over here, servicing their equipment, and taking on their duties in an extraordinary manner. The punisher's morale is sky high, and although our mission is difficult at times, the punisher's always find time to have fun, and enjoy the comradelier together as well.

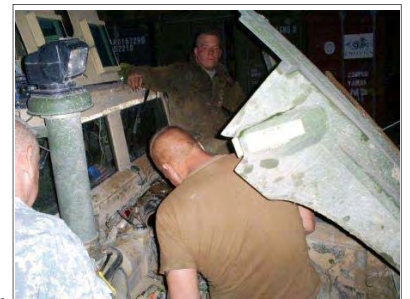
About half of the platoon has been, or is going on R and R leave after this month, and it's nice to see all our soldiers come back safely, and refreshed after seeing loved ones. Right now SPC Roberg is on leave, expecting the birth of his first child, we wish him and his family the best. We would also like to congratulate SPC Kincaid, who got married during his R and R leave in February. Lastly, we would like to wish SPC Smith good luck as he is getting married when he goes on R and R leave in April.

-SFC Milkowich



2nd Platoon eating chow with their Iraqi Police (IP) counterparts.

## “GUNSLINGER”



PFC Winburn and PFC Turner burn the midnight oil trying to repair a downed vehicle.



## 727TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY “HEARTS OF FIRE”



SPC Delaney and CPL Hoffman of the 727<sup>th</sup> Military Police Det (Law & Order) Reenlist in front of Victory Over America Palace on Camp Slayer, Baghdad Iraq.

The 727 MP DET has re-enlisted 6 MPs in theater, a 100% retention rate, with 5 more future reenlistments approaching. Love of the MP Corps, the Army, and the \$15,000 tax free bonus will keep the 727 MP DET going strong into the future!

- CPT Lange

### Keeping up Retention!



SPC Abril Reenlists for another 6 years!

## 245TH ENGINEER COMPANY “SAPPERS LEAD THE WAY”

After months of training and over four months in the International Zone of Baghdad, the 245<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company is starting to settle into their role in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The combat engineer unit from Bristow, Oklahoma, started their deployment in early September of 2006, when they left their homes to start mobilization training at Ft. Dix, New Jersey. “We spent time in classes touching up on everything from Troop Leadership Procedures, Combative Training, to MOUT and Personal Security Detail Operations,” commented 245<sup>th</sup> Engineer Co. First Sergeant Lorn McKinzie, adding, “To most units this training is hard and vigorous,

however, we have been training for this environment for several years now. Most of the train up process was very easy for the unit to grasp and move to the next level of training.”

The Combat Engineers are originally attached to the Oklahoma National Guard’s 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. The unit is made up of all different types of MOS’s ranging from 11 Bravo to 92 Yankee, but the majority of the unit consisting of 21 Bravo’s.

“This unit is a Combat Engineer Company,” said 245<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company Commander Cory Newcomb. “However, for this deployment we brought a variety of MOS

qualified soldiers to support our efforts, basically every MOS to self-sustain our unit operations.”

For over half of the soldiers in the company, this is not their first deployment. “Over 65% of the unit already has deployment time under their belt since 2001 to the present,” commented Newcomb. “Some soldiers actually are on their third such deployment in recent years.” Now in their fourth month in country, the Engineer Company has settled into their role with the 720<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion and their PSD mission.



(L to R) CPL William Leftwich, SPC Brian Wayland, SSG Crandall Brown, SPC Daryl King. Soldiers conducting IED/IMT lane training at Ft. Dix, NJ, during the units mobilization train up.

The 45<sup>th</sup> IN BDE and the 245<sup>th</sup> Engineers have supported missions in Afghanistan, Egypt, and Iraq since 2001.

The 45<sup>th</sup> IN BDE was also the first full Brigade on the ground during relief efforts for the Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans.

With so many different types of soldiers and from different units from around the state of Oklahoma, the 245<sup>th</sup> Engineers have integrated well as a team of unit soldiers.

“They have picked up from the beginning and have found ways to adapt, overcome, and combine all of their skills together and assist one another to make their teams, squads, and sections work together as one total unit of force,” says First Sgt. McKinzie. “I applaud the leadership within the unit for making this company a complete unit.”

- Sgt. Jeffery W. Lucas II



245th EN Company at FOB Freedom; Commander, CPT Cory M. Newcomb, 1SG Lorn C. McKinzie.



# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



I would just like to say while we are here in Iraq the weather has been very nice. We have heard about the strange weather patterns back in the States. There has been snow on Easter and plenty of rain in Texas.

**Our prayers and thoughts are constantly focused on loved ones in the States.**

Please know that we are performing our jobs with pride and that many of us gather strength from your prayers and support. Please know that we are looking forward to R & R with our families.

I would like to share a quote from a wonderful book I've been reading by C.S. Lewis, called "Mere Christianity," that talks about marriage.

*"What we call 'being in love' is a glorious state, and, in several ways, good for us. It helps to make us generous and courageous, it opens our eyes not only to the beauty of the beloved but to the beauty, ... They can have this love for*

*each other even at moments when they do not like each other; as you love yourself even when you do not like yourself.*

*People get from books the idea that if you have married the right person you may expect to go on 'being in love' for ever. As a result, when they find they are not, they think this proves they have made a mistake and entitled to a change-not realizing that, when they have changed, the glamour will go out the new love just as it went out of the old one."*

I celebrated my 23<sup>rd</sup> year of marriage this month (dated my wife for a three years before our blessed union) and I'm glad we have pursued happiness in our marriage. It has been a rollercoaster ride with many ups and downs, but we have stayed in the car together. We have loved our children and known that the nomadic life of the military has both challenged and strengthened our marriage.

May you also be blessed this year by being separated physically but never spiritually or emotionally.

God Bless,  
Chaplain McCain



Chaplain McCain at an Iraqi Police Station.



HHD, 720th Military Police Battalion.



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
720TH MILITARY POLICE BATTALION  
CAMP STRIKER, IRAQ  
APO AE 09342

AFVP-720-CO

1 April 2007

**COMMAND POLICY DIRECTIVE  
NUMBER 6**

**Environmental & Morale Leave (EML) and Rest & Recuperation (R&R) Policy**

1. Reference: AR 600-8-10, Leaves and Passes
2. Soldiers take leave in order to relax, recreate, attend special life events, or do whatever they choose. It is a benefit they have earned. Leaders are responsible for properly managing their leave programs IAW rules, regulations, and mission requirements; the best tools for doing this include long range planning, communicating with Soldiers, and a visible leave schedule. Proper leave management contributes to high unit morale and high retention rates; it is an "essential task".
3. All Soldiers of the Gauntlet will be permitted to take EML if their tour constitutes nine months or more in theater. If mission requirements or other issues make it impossible for a commander to permit a Soldier to take EML, the unit commander will notify me. Soldiers who serve less than nine months in theater may take EML if mission requirements and OPTEMPO permits.
4. Soldiers who take emergency leave remain eligible for EML, and will not be denied EML based solely on having taken emergency leave. Soldiers who take emergency leave have the lowest priority for EML and will be required to take leave dates that are left after all other Soldiers have selected leave dates.
5. Priority for selecting EML leave dates will be given to those who have participated in multiple deployments. Those that have deployed three or more times will be given first priority, those that have two deployments will then be allowed to choose dates, and those serving on their first deployment will select from the remaining leave dates.
6. Leave Requests:
  - a. Leave requests on a DA Form 31 will be forwarded to the 720th Military Police Battalion S-1 no later than thirty (30) days prior to the first day of leave. The DA Form 31 will have all required signatures.
  - b. The S-1 leave clerk will assign the DA Form 31 a control number and will forward the leave request back to the unit. The unit will insure that the Soldier has a copy of the

AFVP-720-CO

SUBJECT: Command Policy Directive #6 (Environmental & Morale Leave (EML) and Rest & Recuperation (R&R) Policy)


DA Form 31 prior to departure for Slather Army Airfield at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP).

c. The S-1 will insure that the Soldier is on the manifest IAW MNC-I and MND-C policies. The unit will verify that the Soldier is on the manifest 24-hours prior to arrival at BIAP through the BN S-1.

7. Soldiers are not on leave during transit and will comply with the provisions of General Order #1. Soldiers in uniform are highly visible to the public and the image of our Army can be easily tarnished by undisciplined behavior during this time. It is imperative that Soldiers maintain a high degree of discipline and conduct themselves properly during transit to and from EML. No alcohol will be consumed at any time while in transit to and from EML.

8. R&R to Freedom Rest, Qatar and other locations are available and slots will be allocated by the S1 based on the population of the unit. These opportunities will be very limited and should be given to those Soldiers that the command team identifies as needing a break. The opportunity for units to take advantage of R&R is strictly based on the unit commander's assessment of OPTEMPO and mission requirements.

9. Point of contact for this directive is the Battalion S-1.

  
FRANK Y. RANGEL, JR.  
LTC, MP  
Commanding

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720<sup>th</sup> MP BN Units  
Bulletin Board/File