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Soldier Edition

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An issue dedicated to Soldiers' stories

Overwhelming sense of patriotism brings Soldier into Army

PVT. CHRISTOPHER MCKENNA
3RD BCT, 101ST ABN. DIV. (AASLT)



CAMP STRIKER – “I was 16 years old when 9/11 happened, and being the hot-blooded person that I am, I joined the Army on my 17th birthday,” said Spc. Jontel Watson, a 3rd Platoon, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division combat medic. “I graduated (from high school) early and went to basic training in 2002.”

Watson, who was raised in a military family, planned to join the Army even before the events of 9/11.

“I was going to go to college and get a degree first,” he said. “After I finished college, I was planning to come in as an officer, until 9/11 happened. For me, it was the final nail in the coffin toward joining; I was going to do it right away.”

Watson graduated from Basic Combat Training in Fort Benning, Ga., and received the Soldier of the Cycle award.

“I felt proud; I felt unstoppable,” he said. “I had just gone through what people told me would be the most difficult place for basic (training), and I

“I felt proud; I felt unstoppable. I had just gone through what people told me would be the most difficult place for basic (training), and I came out on top.”

– Spc. Jontel Watson
3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Regt.

came out on top.”

Following basic training, Watson faced a major decision in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina struck. Being a native of New Orleans, the hurricane had an overwhelming effect on his family.

“I literally had nothing to go back to,” Watson said. “My family was safe, though. They left the city prior to the actual hurricane, when the mayor ordered (the) evacuation.”

Following the devastating effect of Katrina, Watson, stationed in Korea at the time, was given the option of receiving a compassionate reassignment to be closer to his family.

“My family is proud,” he said. “They refused to receive assistance from me, the government or anybody; but as time’s gone by, they have improved and are once again doing well.”

He spent another year in Korea before receiving orders for reassignment to Fort Campbell. Shortly thereafter, his unit received orders to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“When we came on orders to deploy here, I expected the worst -- I was expecting some adventurous stuff,” Watson said.

Stories told by service members who already served multiple deployments in Iraq cultivated Watson’s expectations of what lay before him. Fortunately, conditions in the area have improved.

“I haven’t had to work on one American Soldier during this deploy-



Photo by Pvt. Christopher McKenna

Specialist Jontel Watson, a New Orleans, La., native and combat medic with 3rd Plt., Co. C, 3-187 Inf. Regt., examines another Soldier in the Patrol Base Yusufiyah aid station.

ment,” Watson said. “I have, however, worked on a couple of gunshot wounds and stab wounds (on both Iraqi citizens and Iraqi Army Soldiers), things I have already seen before.”

Overall, Watson feels that being deployed to this area of Iraq gives him a positive outlook on the future. He’s decided to shoot for a college education when he leaves the military.

“I’m looking to pursue a degree in engineering, or maybe even journalism,” he said.

You've got mail: Postal clerks really deliver

PFC. MICHAEL SCHUCH
2ND BDE., 1ST ARMD. DIV.



FOB HAMMER – When Patton's tanks rolled across North African desert sands, letters of encouragement, love and support connected the Iron Soldiers to loved ones left behind.

Today, in the heat of Iraq's deserts, mail continues to bridge the distance between Soldiers and their Families. Even in today's age of advanced technological communications, nothing compares to holding a letter or opening a package pieced together with affection by someone at home.

"Even though my wife and I are able to communicate almost daily via the internet, it still brightens my day to open a package from her," said Sgt. 1st Class Donald Johnson, of Baumholder, Germany. "To know that her hands held this just days ago makes me feel that we are not so far apart."

It takes hours of work and numerous Soldiers to get the mail from its origin to the Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

"On an average day, we bring in roughly 8,000 pounds of mail, sending out nearly 1,000 pounds from the Soldiers," said Sgt. Lamond Jackson, of Los Angeles, Calif.

Soldiers serving in war zones such as Iraq are able to send letters home



Photo by Pfc. Michael Schuch

Private First Class Courtney Flaherty, mail clerk and Pacific, Miss., native, sifts through letters for Spc. Daniel Conley, of Columbiaville, Mich., in the mail room of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bde., 1st Armd. Div. on FOB Hammer.

to the U.S. free of charge.

When families send mail from anywhere in the United States, it is sent to a central facility in New York. The letter or package is then sorted as a piece intended for a Soldier in Iraq; mail is received and sorted by Soldiers working at Baghdad International Airport. These Soldiers then arrange for the mail to be shipped by convoy to the appropriate base.

Every letter, parcel and package received by the mail handlers of the 2nd Bde., 1st Armd. Div., is sorted into the individual units; then, the office or group of each Soldier; and finally, by the Soldier's name. It takes each piece of mail an average of five to 10 days to travel from origin to destination, passing through several checkpoints and countless Soldiers along the way.

Before the mail passes into the hands of its intended Soldier, it goes through the final link in the chain, the unit mail clerk. The unit mail clerk is solely responsible for ensuring that each package is intact, protected and delivered to the correct Soldier.

"Being the mail clerk is a big responsibility, because mail is really important for our Soldiers," said Pfc. Courtney Flaherty, of Pacific, Mass. "I really enjoy being able to perform this job."

No matter what a Soldier may encounter during any given day, a little piece of home provides meaning to the sacrifices they make.

"Mail is the sole thing I look forward to each day. I love it," said Cpl. John Wilson, of New York City.

"Just knowing that someone special took the time and effort to write to me makes all this worth while," he said.

Do you have an idea for the Soldier Issue?

The Mountain View staff would like to showcase your photos, drawings, poems, funny stories, favorite quotes and whatever else you'd like to share with our readers.

Send all submissions and ideas to Staff Sgt. Amber Emery at amber.emery@iraq.centcom.mil

THE Mountain View

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7th Sustainment Brigade
41st Fires Brigade
354th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
793rd Military Police Battalion
Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mtn. Div.
Task Force 49



Soldier Photo of the Day



Soldiers of 10th Mountain Division (and members of the Not-So-Secret Run Club) pose for a photo after participating in the 4.5 mile Run for the Fallen Aug. 24 on Camp Victory. Photo by 1st Lt. Justina Assmus

Opet's Odyssey



To MND-C Task Force Mountain and all supporting units,

My heart swells as I write this farewell note to all of you. The word bittersweet comes to mind. Bitter, because I leave wonderful people that I have had the honor to work alongside and a job that I love. Sweet because I go home to my husband and loved ones and a job that I love. God bless you all and thank you; each and everyone. I am a better person because of you and the experiences of this mission. I will keep you in my prayers, stay safe and joyful.

Namaste`
 Judy LaRue
 MND-C Recreation Officer, 10th MTN

Joke of the Day

How many politicians does it take to change a lightbulb?

Two. One to change it and another one to change it back again.

Word Search

J	U	S	M	E	A	U	Y	E	O	U	H	I	K	I	N	G	S	A
S	M	W	E	E	A	N	L	U	B	N	W	A	S	E	Y	R	E	
U	T	W	I	R	R	S	G	I	C	A	B	L	N	A	R	E	R	
N	S	H	V	M	T	C	C	L	T	E	A	U	D	T	V	L	C	
T	Y	U	G	I	M	Y	S	E	A	D	B	I	R	S	S	K	E	
A	G	L	C	I	C	I	R	N	N	S	L	R	R	N	D	N	C	
N	R	E	U	L	F	M	N	A	U	O	S	E	A	R	G	I	I	
O	E	A	E	J	E	R	S	G	H	S	W	E	A	B	N	R	C	
S	E	D	A	L	B	R	E	L	L	O	R	O	S	R	I	P	R	
C	N	A	O	F	L	O	G	T	L	T	B	T	E	E	T	S	E	
H	G	N	I	H	S	I	F	F	A	E	O	A	E	E	A	H	C	
O	R	C	A	M	P	I	N	G	T	W	T	H	B	Z	O	C	C	
O	A	C	I	N	C	I	P	A	W	A	S	P	S	E	B	A	O	
L	S	F	L	I	E	S	K	M	O	S	Q	U	I	T	O	E	S	
T	S	U	G	U	A	S	I	L	L	A	B	E	S	A	B	B	O	
G	N	I	N	E	D	R	A	G	S	U	N	S	H	I	N	E	N	

Summer

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Ants | Picnic |
| August | Roller blades |
| Barbecue | Sandals |
| Baseball | Skateboard |
| Beach | Soccer |
| Bees | Solstice |
| Bicycle | Sprinklers |
| Blue sky | Sunburn |
| Boating | Sunglasses |
| Breeze | Sunscreen |
| Camping | Sunshine |
| Fishing | Suntan |
| Flies | Sweat |
| Flowers | Swimming |
| Gardening | U V rays |
| Golf | Wasps |
| Green grass | Water fights |
| Hat | Watermelon |
| Hiking | |
| Holidays | |
| Hot | |
| Ice cream | |
| July | |
| June | |
| Mosquitoes | |
| No school | |

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH A MILLION DOLLARS?



Photo by Spc. Sophia R. Lopez

"I would give \$300,000 to charity, buy 100 acres of land and build a ranch house, and pay off my dad's hospital bills," said Spc. Scott Lewis, of Antwerp, N.Y., G-3, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Mountain Division.



Photo by Spc. Sophia R. Lopez

"I would pay off my bills, buy a house and a muscle car," said Steven Otto, of Stafford, Va., geo spatial analyst, 10th Mountain Division.

Anagrams

An anagram is a word or phrase formed by transposing the letters of another word or phrase. Can you transpose these words or phrases to make new words or phrases?

Example: Rearrange the letters of the word 'rail' to make a dishonest person

Answer: Liar.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Rearrange eat to make something to drink. | 7. Rearrange Dorothea to make another woman's name. |
| 2. Rearrange brush to make a kind of bush. | 8. Rearrange supersonic to get part of an orchestra. |
| 3. Rearrange lemon to make something else to eat. | 9. Rearrange hormone to get the name of a bird. |
| 4. Rearrange skate to make a poet. | 10. Rearrange spectrum to make some eatables. |
| 5. Rearrange wand to make a time of day. | 11. Which food might you make out of stale lamb ? |
| 6. Rearrange Alice to make another woman's name. | |

Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

from Sudoku Easy Presented by Will Shortz

2	4	8	3	1	9	7	6	5
6	3	5	2	4	7	1	8	9
7	9	1	5	8	6	2	3	4
3	1	9	7	5	2	8	4	6
4	8	2	1	6	3	9	5	7
5	7	6	8	9	4	3	2	1
8	2	4	9	7	5	6	1	3
9	5	3	6	2	1	4	7	8
1	6	7	4	3	8	5	9	2

Trivia of the Week

Who was the first father and son duo to win the Winston Cup Championships?

Answer to last week's trivia: Frances Perkins was the first woman to hold a cabinet position in the United States government