

MARCH

# THE ATLAS

704TH EN CO NEWSLETTER



**the way ahead...**

**CPL Andrew Newlon puts eyes on the objective**

# 704TH EN CO



## Around Afghanistan in 120 days four months in the books

By CPT Joshua Yarbrough

15APR2013 - Time continues to fly here in Afghanistan and we are halfway to mission completion here in western Afghanistan. The Soldiers of the 704th Engineer Company continue to perform at the highest level and are leading the way across Task Force S.A.W.

Much of our success comes from the excellent training we received both prior and during our time here in country. Success however does breed new challenges and among them complacency is the most dangerous. As an organization, we must maintain solid discipline to continue our success. I continue to stress every day to the leadership of our organization to maintain the highest standards of discipline.

Small slips can result in larger problems. Whether it's maintaining professional military appearance or maintaining accountability of our sensitive items, it is attention to detail, pride, and discipline that ensure our continued success and avoidance of complacency. Indeed, one of the key components of all military training is maintaining good order

and conduct - discipline - across the formation. This ensures our prevalence over our enemies.

The Greek general Thucydides was quoted as having said, "In practice we always base our preparations against an enemy on the assumption that his plans are good; indeed, it is right to rest our hopes not on a belief in his blunders, but on the soundness of our provisions. Nor ought we to believe that there is much difference between man and man, but to think that the superiority lies with him who is reared in the severest school." Discipline, morale, and freedom have always been a character of Western military success over more individualistic, less disciplined Eastern military forces. For our families back home, this month I challenge you to focus on discipline as well. What can you do to make discipline a more inherent part of your life? Is it the discipline and commitment to physical improvement? Is it to make more time for family and friends? Finally read that book, see that movie? Discipline is a measurement of self-motivation and

improvement. I encourage you to provide me with feedback - Soldiers and Family members alike - on what your definition of discipline is and what are the characteristics you look for in a person/organization that indicate discipline (both good and poor).

"Why is discipline important? Discipline teaches us to operate by principle rather than desire. Saying no to our impulses (even the ones that are not inherently sinful) puts us in control of our appetites rather than vice versa. It deposes our lust and permits truth, virtue, and integrity to rule our minds instead." - John MacArthur

"CLEAR THE WAY!"



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# XO's DESK

## ancient words made new

By 1LT Chris Scott

22APR2013 - There is a greek word that I have been thinking about quite a bit lately. Its a word I discovered while reading a book called "Run With the Horses." The word is areté. It is sometimes translated as virtue, but like a lot of ancient words, or words from any language, it is not as simple as a one for one swap. Areté comes closest to meaning, be the best you can be, or reaching your highest potential. In the book the author talks about how Greeks would often use the word in the context of bravery, but more often with effectiveness.

Reading all of this left me more than a little daunted by the word itself. It felt like a challenge, like a measure of performance, I can only assume its a word that was not bought and sold cheaply or given flippantly to any old "greek" thing. Then I have to ask the question, would I consider myself areté?

Honestly, no. I think I am like a lot you (maybe not Ava Knott, I have seen her awards and she is killing it!), even though I put on the uniform and wear the flag of my country, I am still flawed and human. I get upset about little stuff. I forget how lucky I am, and take for granted being born and raised in the United States. I procrastinate. I sulk. I struggle.

So I continue to try and improve. I work to be better. An perhaps that is really what living a life that is areté is all about. Excellence the best we can be, is something we strive for continually. Its a process, an unrelenting process where we are greeted and met with moments of awesomeness, excitement, and dare I say "perfection."

Your Soldiers are busy about this everyday. The Army life is an

unrelenting push to be better. Soldiers are constantly asked to refine their actions, their movements, their day to day activities. And I can also tell you with 110% confidence, your Soldiers, your sons, your brothers, your husbands, nephews,

**"Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit."**

-Aristotle

boyfriends, your grandchildren, your loved ones are actively seeking to be areté men. I am lucky enough to witness it everyday. Whether it is their effort in the gym, their leadership of other Soldiers, their relationships with each other, their work developing themselves, or their dedication to the mission. These exceptional men never quit, they never give up, they always place the mission first.

I know I have put out a few challenges to you back home. Keep it up. Keep pushing yourself to meet the areté standard of your Soldiers. God Bless, take care, and FOUR MONTHS IN THE BOOKS!!!

## FIRST PLATOON 1ST TIME IS THE CHARM

By CPL Brandon Jackson

15APR2013 - Everyone in first platoon has been kept pretty busy doing missions. If we are not out on mission then we are here at Shindand in the motor pool working on trucks, making sure they are ready for mission and resupplying them with water MRE's and energy drinks for our next mission.

The weather is starting to heat up, which means a lot more bugs. It also means a good time to get out and enjoy some activities and relieve some stress. We got some golf balls and clubs, so we take those out on mission with us and hit some balls in our down time. We also have been playing football lately. We just got in a flag football set the other day. and everyone gets pretty competitive. The games can get a bit rough.

Our Platoon leader, 1LT Bennett Adams got promoted last week from 2nd Lieutenant to 1st Lieutenant. Last week on mission, 1LT Adams, and SPC Durrett tried doing a test flight with the puma. Its a remote controlled plane that we can fly to get a aerial view of areas we are going in. SPC Durrett got the puma ready and 1LT Adams said he wanted to throw it. So, he threw it and it went in the air a whole, ten

feet then crashed. Making 1LT sure didn't give him a strong arm.

We appreciate all the support that we get from everyone back home. It makes time go by way faster knowing how much support we get from everyone. We have a very good feel of our AO (area of operations) now, and missions are starting to get refined.

There is a new group of Italian Soldiers at a FOB (forward operating base) we stop at, and they have been really good to us, they are some real good guys.

Everyone else has been working hard and we are getting the job done. We all want to wish all of our families back home a late Happy Easter and that we love all of you and once again thanks for the endless support you give us all. Hopefully this helped catch all of you up on the exciting things happening with us on the other side of the world. Until next have a great day, and know we are all doing great so don't worry about us, too much!



B: SGT John Oxford thumbs up, mustache thumbs down.





## SECOND PLATOON 2 TIMES THE EXCITEMENT

by 1LT Adam Mueller

20APR2013 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon of 704<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company has been staying busy with mission as usual, and our operations have been going smoothly as we become experts at our job here. We've been stopping at small outposts during our missions, which provide a good place to sleep and sometimes unexpected entertainment. At these smaller bases, some of the soldiers get to experience Afghanistan culture and food. The interpreters invited the entire platoon to a "party" where they cooked a feast of traditional Afghani food, drank tea, and provided good company. We all collected money to buy a goat from the locals, and our Afghani friends fired up the barbeque pit as the meat was prepared. During the meal, they expressed their thanks for everything 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon does to keep the roads safe in their country and how happy they were to be able to host a meal for us. We were joined by an American Colonel and a Captain from the Italian Army. Special occasions like this meal make us happy to be doing the job that we have, and helps us understand the history and culture of this country as we talk to our Afghani counterparts over a good meal.

In addition to the fun we get to have between missions, we also find some fascinating sights to see while on patrol. One of the more interesting areas we've been to has a large castle that is still standing with much of the interior intact. Our mission happened to bring us right to it, so we took advantage of the opportunity to explore for a few minutes and imagine what it looked like when it was first built. We never thought we'd get a history lesson on a deployment, but a local elder told us a little bit about the castle and that the president of Afghanistan used it years ago as a "picnic area." You never know what you're going to come across over here; nothing surprises us anymore.

The weather is just starting to get warm for us out here, but we haven't yet begun to experience the real desert heat this region has to offer (and we aren't looking forward to it). We've been cranking up the A/C in the trucks and drinking plenty of water. I'm sure most of the platoon would rather be at the lake or in a pool, but we make the best of it. We've got Frisbees and volleyball; all we have to do is pretend we're at the beach. We continue to think of everyone at home and thank you for your support as we near the halfway point of our tour. See you all soon!

**A:** 2nd Platoon seats down to an Afghan feast, goat available upon request!  
**R:** Images of a long deserted castle in the deserts of Afghanistan.



# THIRD PLATOON

## 3 TIMES THE AWESOME

By 2LT Donnell Smith

18APR2013 - On a cold night in March new Platoon Sergeant “SFC Cavezza and I found ourselves on an airfield arriving to an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people. I remember thinking to myself, is it really this cold in a country where you normally think of heat? It was far different from the location and temperature I had grown accustomed to in the southern part of the country. With bags in tow I arrived at 704<sup>th</sup> EN CO. Some might say that being the new guy isn’t a popular position to hold, especially in a combat situation. However, that is where we found ourselves, “the new kids on the block”. Being the new kid on the block is never easy and it always brings with it a large number of questions and uncertainties. But often times, once we have the opportunity to look back, new beginnings are blessings in disguise.

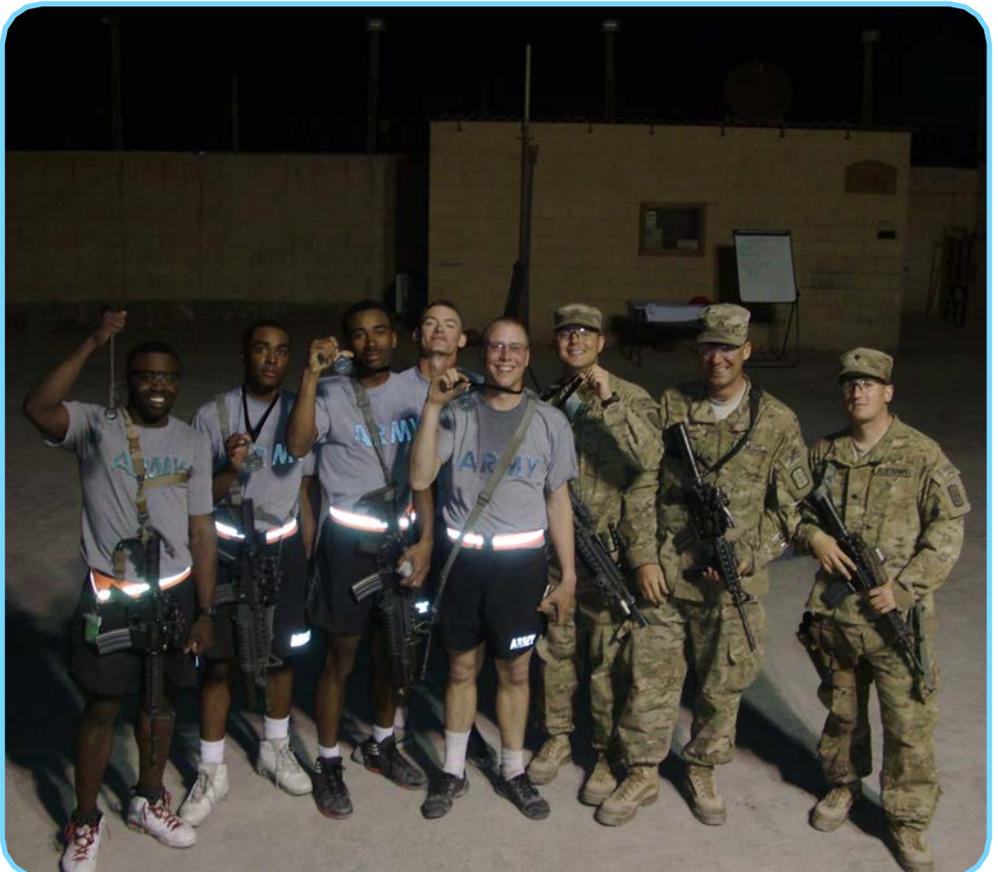
The welcome I received here at 704<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company was nothing short of remarkable. The company as a whole is an organization that Soldiers dream about being a part of. Soldiers will be talking about being a part of 704<sup>th</sup> years after they are done serving under its colors. Third Platoon in particular is a platoon that has its own character that cannot be mimicked. The group of men consolidated here comes from different backgrounds, geographical locations, and units to mesh together and form one of the best

Platoons in the Task Force. I have had the opportunity and the blessing to stand in front of and lead your sons, husbands, and fathers. The philosophy behind the success of the men of 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon is simple; it is a top down- bottom up approach. From the highest level down to the lowest level we must all march to the beat of the same drum. The cadence of the beat we march to is produced by the hearts and souls of the men of 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon 704<sup>th</sup> EN CO.

In the recent days there have been some accomplishments that I would like to share with the Assassin family. We placed second in the annual March Madness basketball tournament. After working for 12 hours prior to the start of the tournament SSG Stewart, SPC Lawson, and SPC Waters mustered the energy to play in a double elimination tournament and place. Corporal Scroggins and SPC Chatman continue to bring the house down every opportunity during open mic night by providing an interpretation of hit songs and displaying their sense of unit pride each time they step on stage. From our family here at 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon 704<sup>th</sup> En Co. to your family, keep us all in your thoughts and prayers and we will do the same for you. As always Assassins, Clear the Way. God’s speed and safe travels.

**R:** SGT Channing Brumfield, SPC Antonio Waters, SPC Cortez Lawson, SPC Hunter Graves, SSG Jacob Stewart, SGT Ricky Jones, SSG Michael Wilbanks, SPC Philip Reeves celebrate after a day of missions and a night of basketball.

**B:** SPC Benjamin Heiner bonds with one of our Italian allies.



**FMT**  
grease monkeys and grunts

By SPC Taylor Saiz

08APR2013 - The strength of the bond between soldiers is like a brotherhood and it cant truly be explained, its something you have to live. 704th has been in country for 3 months now. No matter how hard it gets, or how long the missions, there is always a Soldier by your side pushing through the deployment with you. I've noticed that the strength in this unit comes from within each platoon. Everyone in the 704th is willing to do whatever it takes to make sure everyone gets back home safely. I'm proud to support all the platoons as a wrecker crew member. Being apart of the FMT while imbedded into 1st platoon gives me a big since of pride.

While on FOB we work in the motor pool to make sure all of the vehicles for the platoons are mission ready. While outside the wire with 1st platoon I am a part of a recovery team that supports the patrol. We are constantly supporting the platoon, making repairs and whatever needs to happen on route. The recovery personnel have learned to love the MRV and M984 (different types of wreckers) combo on missions. The two vehicles have proven to be great assets for the patrols and for the recovery teams.

Missions are now routine for the company and the Soldiers see a lot of time outside the wire. Our constant presence on the road is keeping the routes safer for NATO forces and civilians, while keeping us all busy. The work never stops. Some nights we will role into a FOB from mission with a vehicle on a trailer. Then starts the real work of doing whatever we can to get the vehicle up before we roll out again the next morning. Sometimes we are up all night working, we never go without having a helping hand from the rest of the Soldiers. Even if we are up until 0100. It feels good to put in the work and the next morning having all our vehicles up and ready to go. The sometimes the recovery personnel and I make "magic happen." Outside the wire we do not have a shop to work on these vehicles, so we are coming up with ideas and pushing ourselves to come up with fixes.

After mission when we get back to Shindand, the rest of the FMT jumps on our vehicles and works to get them ready for the next mission. Its a routine that we now have down pat due to hard work and determination the company has been getting stronger day by day.



**T:** The fabled MRV, recovery vehicle

**M:** PFC Micah Hazelip getting ready to do some work while on route.

**L:** The classic M984 wrecker, ready to roll.

**HQ**

can you email that too me?

By SSG Brian Weathers

15APR2013 - The Spring is passing quickly and summer is now on top of us. There is complete silence compared to the squeaking winds and horrible crashing of rain on our tents in the month of March. With the climate change comes a seasonal cold so SGT Knott and SPC Ciconte have been busy treating runny noses and scratchy throats.

LT Scott set up our first MWR event making brackets for the NCAA basketball tournament with the winner to be given the Double Deuce morale patch, and the loser to be given the Welcome to Suck-Ville morale patch. Every morning soldiers came to work discussing what had happened in the games the night before. A great change to the tempo of the day.

The "Coistlings" are busy working there little fingers off. With the new addition of SPC Overton the Coist section is going strong. They have made some new designs to their desk including the word SPRAILERTON (Webster's definition Spry, Bailey, and Overton combined).

LTC Sylvia (TF S.A.W Battalion Commander) came for a brief visit during early April. I think he had a great time. 1LT Scott with the assistance of CPT Y, and SGT Witt took him for a very entertaining tactical athlete cardio work out. He was introduced to THE CHAIN. The CHAIN is a 100ft logging chain that stretches across the gym it is then pulled into a huge pile and sprinted back out testing how much heart you actually have.

The FOB has opened up several more shops for soldiers to buy movies (bootleg) and souvenirs to remind them of the deployment. LT Schoen and I have purchased really nice Cashmere suits. These have not been authorized for wear around the FOB.

CPL Wade, SPC Glover, and SPC Fryar are doing great things keeping the Platoons supplied with snacks, ammo, and all the randomness they need after every mission. They are growing every day physically due to CPL Wade having them on a rigorous PT schedule, and mentally due to the quizzes that I pop on them every day.

Now look at the time April is almost over with and May is right around the corner. I want to wish Briana Weathers a Happy birthday on May 10<sup>th</sup>, and for all the Soldiers we can't wait to get home to see all of you. As always keep us in your prayers.

**ASSASSIN 4 OUT**



1.SSG Brian Weathers working THE CHAIN.

2.1LT Jared Schoen building power points that will win the war.

3. TEAM SPRAILERTON!!!

4.SPC Chris Overton teaching THE CHAIN who's boss.

L. SGT Dominic Knott forgot he had bacon in his pocket.

# Soldiers being Soldiers

## DESERT MEMORIES



**T:** 1LT Adam Mueller, king of the castle.

**M:** SPC Benjamin Heiner geared up and on route

**B:** SPC Kyle Cox reports to CPT Joshua Yarbrough. SPC Cox was awarded an Army Achievement Medal (AAM) for his performance, and excellence at Fort Bliss, TX



# Soldiers being Soldiers

## DESERT MEMORIES



**T:** 2LT Donnell Smith, SSG Jacob Stewart, SPC Cortez Lawson, and SPC Antonio Waters pose with their medals from the FOB Farah basketball tournament.

**M:** CPL Christopher Ammon and SGT Adam Meggs stand ready to execute.

**B:** SPC Joshua Crane, SPC Terry Roark, SPC Antonio Waters, SPC Stephen Arthur enjoying a few laughs between patrols.



# Soldiers being Soldiers

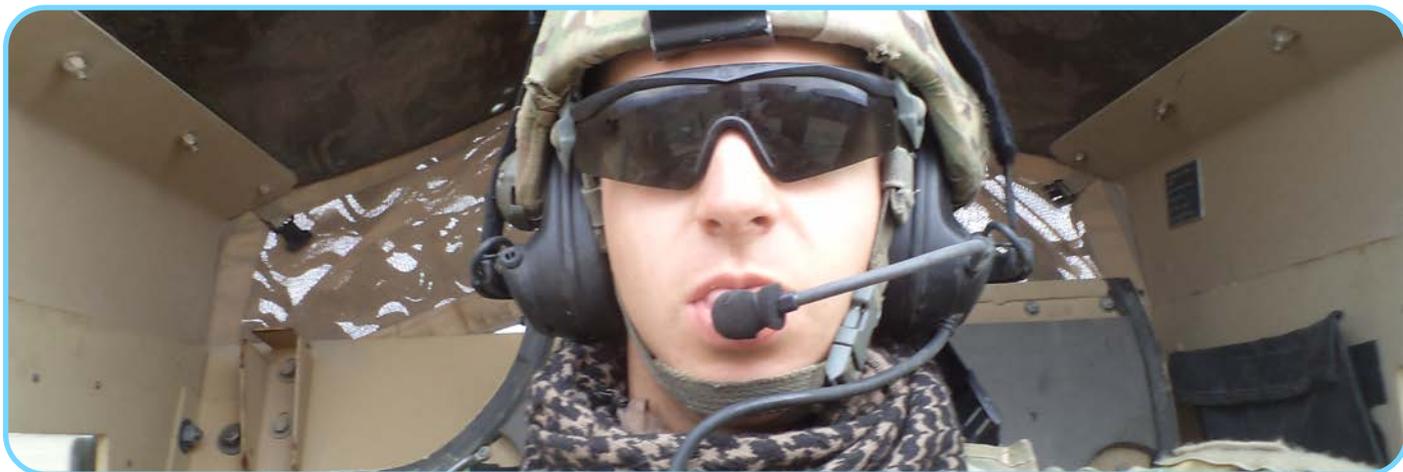
## DESERT MEMORIES



T: SPC Courtney Thomas poses down, SPC Carlos Ortizmejia is not impressed.

M: SPC William Johnson boots on the ground.

B: CPL Jonathan Anderson scanning his sector.



# AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS

## PROMOTIONS:

### FIRST LIEUTENANT:

BENNETT ADAMS

### SERGEANT:

SHELDON CHILDRESS

### PRIVATE FIRST CLASS:

MICAH HAZELIP

## AWARDS:

### AAM:

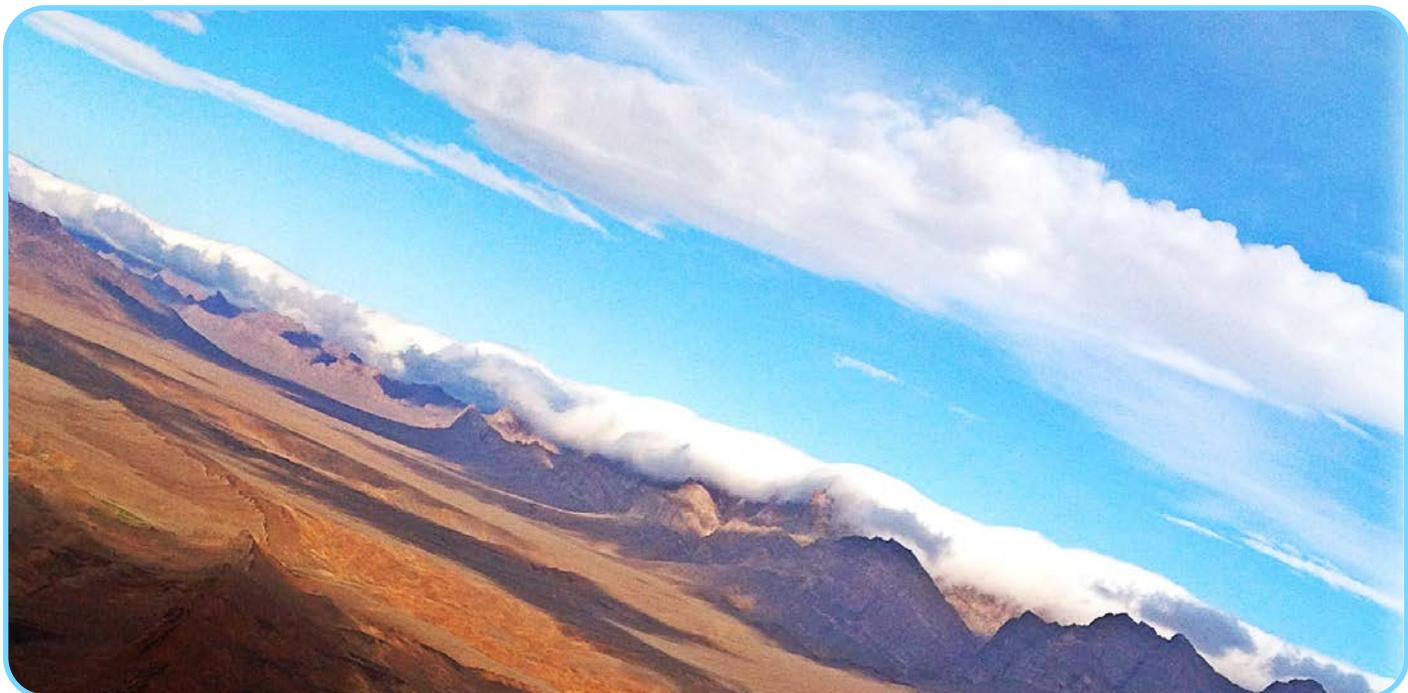
1LT BENNETT ADAMS  
SPC KYLE COX  
CPL TRAVIS DOBBINS  
SPC BENJAMIN HEINER  
SGT BRYAN HUTSON  
CPL ROY WADE

### HERO of the BATTLE:

SPC LOUIS BOLLASINA  
SPC ADAM CHATMAN  
SGT BRYAN HUTSON  
SPC JOSEPH WELCH

### Battalion Supply Soldier of the Quarter:

CPL ROY WADE



## TOP's Corner in search of mountain dew

By 1SG Clayton Elmore

16APR2013 - It is starting to warm up a little more here. I just returned from being out on mission with 1st Platoon. They have a very important job. Their performance could not have been better. I took the time to learn new things about my Soldiers. SPC Chase Johnson has a car at home with a T-Top, and that just happens to be his down range nickname, "T-Top." SPC Timothy Leavitt talked to me about his last deployment, and he always keeps me up beat. Talking to all the guys makes the days on route go by faster. SPC Terry Roark told me how much he missed his girlfriend and new baby. He cannot wait to get home to see them. SPC Evan Barton also told me a number of stories about his wife and kids.

At night, after the patrol, I was thinking of home myself. I started to think about our deployment, and I realized we are in the "dog days" of our deployment. Its the hardest part. It isn't the beginning, or the end, its the doggone middle. Its tough for everybody.

Keep reaching out on Skype, Facebook, email, and all the rest. I hope that all of you family members are reaching out to each other, making friends, building bonds, helping one another. These bonds and relationships make us all stronger, here and at home.

The Soldiers are doing great, and we will be home before you know it!



1SG Clayton Elmore, on mission

704 EN CO NEWSLETTER

TO:

