



Vol. 2 Num. 3 2007

# *Essayons*

875TH ENGINEER BATTALION

## ***New Leaders Part One***

**New Alpha and Charlie NCOs celebrated at brigade ceremony**

- ◆ *Route sanitation - the other critical mission*
- ◆ *Engineer castle goes big on headquarters building*
- ◆ *Essayons wins 1st place in National Guard competition*



"Let us try"

# Essayons

**Vol. 2; Num. 3, 2007**

**875th Engineer Battalion**

*Battalion Commander*

Lt. Col. Patricia Anslow

*Command Sgt. Major*

CSM Billy Ward

*Executive Officer*

Maj. Kevin L. Vines

*Public Affairs NCO/Editor*

Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

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**On the cover:** An 875th Engineer Battalion Buffalo is silhouetted in the first rays of early morning sunshine at Camp Striker in central Iraq. The massive vehicle idles as it awaits the start of another critical route clearance patrol. Maj. Gen. James E. Simmons, deputy commander Multi-national Corps - Iraq, tagged along on this mission. See page 13. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney.

**Above:** Spc. Joshua D. Beasley and Spc. James Nothern of Charlie Company shoot some hoops at Logistics Support Area Anaconda. The court is situated between the Charlie Company and Alpha Company headquarters buildings, and just outside the living quarters. Physical exercise and recreation time are important parts of 875th Soldiers' health and welfare. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney.

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*Questions, comments or submissions to the Essayons should be directed to Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney at christopher.durney@us.army.mil. All submissions will be cleared of OPSEC violations and edited to Associated Press standards. Photos and stories from home are welcome and encouraged. Please look for issues of the newsletter to be published about every three weeks.*

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# 131st Engineer Co.

I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health. A lot has happened in the last couple of weeks that I am sure has concerned everyone. You may or may not know it, but as you at home watch the news about troop surges and car bombing here in Iraq, we watch the news about record snow falls, ice storms and tornados. I am happy to say that I have not heard that anyone is affected by these events.

The 131 recently had the honor of showing Maj. Gen. Simmons, the deputy corps commander, what we do, and how we do it. He and members of his staff accompanied 4th Platoon on one of their patrols. He also took time to talk to several of the Soldiers and pose for some pictures. The 131 also had a group led by Staff Sgt. Dave Lawrence take a large amount of items over to the local Civil Military Aid Clinic or CMAC. Soaps, clothing, school supplies and many other needed items were donated. The CMAC will use just about anything, and they are really happy to see units helping the local people.

I wish everyone the best. Take care, and God Bless.

Capt. Jacob Roy

## HHC

Time is an amazing thing. It's always relative to what is currently going on. For some of us, it is moving really fast, for others it is moving really slowly. When we are looking at the past or the future, the speed is dependant on the present. No matter what, though, we are making History, and it's important that we remain focused on the present so we can be successful.

HHC's mission is to support the battalion, which means supporting all of our line companies. It is hard to measure the success that HHC is having, until you look at the line companies and see what great things they are accomplishing. I know the companies see our mechanics and medics hard at work, but it's tough for them to see how hard all the sections work in HHC to help the battalion be successful.

I, as the company commander, have been very impressed with the hard work and dedication that my soldiers and their families have put into this fight. I

see all the mail that comes from home, and I want you to know that we greatly appreciate it. I know that your support is another key element to our success. You lift our spirits, and bring home the reality of how important it is for us to succeed in the global war on terror. You should be very proud of what we are doing here because you have just as much ownership in this. I want to say thank you for your support, and I want to remind you that no matter how fast or slow the time is moving, what we do in the present determines our future, and that is what we have to look forward to.

Capt. Joshua Simmons

## Alpha Co.

This past month has been exciting for the soldiers of Alpha Company. I have always heard that everything is constantly changing, and Alpha Company is no different. We received eight new team members this month. They are a welcomed sight, and we look forward to integrating them into the company. We have also had a few duty position changes. 1st Lt. (P) Roger Evans, our operations officer, is moving to fill the brigade liaison officers position and Sgt. 1st Class Ronnie Copeland, currently holding that position, will be returning to the company. 1st Lt. Daniel Tyrrell will become the new operations officer for the company.

The battalion recently had a Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony and Alpha Company had ten new NCOs earn their stripes. This ceremony is significant because they are now part of the NCO Corps, better known as the "Backbone of the Army." NCOs are professionals, leaders of soldiers, and tactical and technical experts. Congratulations to Shane Barrow, Brandon Hancock, Chris Isom, Phillip Jordon, Allen Massey, Zackary Mullins, Robert Norwood, Michael Smithson, Christopher Strubbe and Garry Vest.

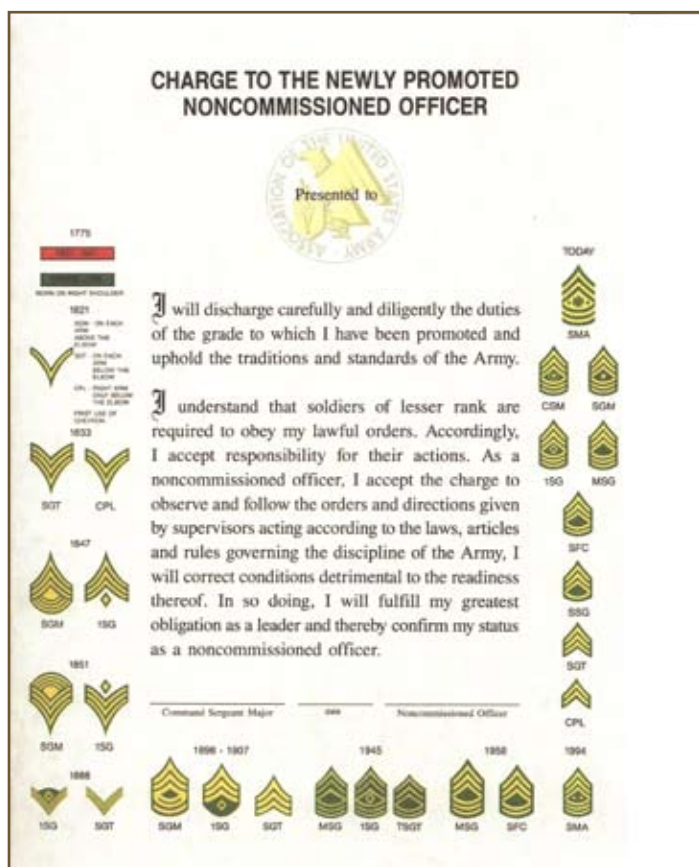
Essayons!!!

Capt. David Moore

**See Charlie Co. Page 17**

# 875th Soldiers step through "Arch of Leadership"

## Seventeen inducted into Corps of Noncommissioned Officers



Seventeen members of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion walked through the Arch of Leadership at Logistics Support Area Anaconda and joined the ranks of Noncommissioned Officers Feb. 23, 2007.

At an NCO induction ceremony held by the 411th Engineer Brigade, to which the 875th is attached, Soldiers from Alpha and Charlie companies joined new leaders from other 411th units. A second induction ceremony for new NCOs from Headquarters, Headquarters Company and the 131st Engineer Company is scheduled for March 8 at Camp Striker.

Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky E. Knox spoke briefly about the important role of the noncommissioned officer in today's Army. The assembled candidates then collectively recited the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer. As each Soldier stepped through the Arch of Leadership, they were presented a signed copy of the Charge to the Noncommissioned Officer, which details their new role as a responsible leader.

A full list of 875th participants is on page 7.





**Page 6:** *New noncommissioned officers of the 411th Engineer Brigade, including 17 from the 875th Engineer Battalion, recite the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer. **Below:** Sgt. Patrick Hart of Alpha Company prepares to be inducted into the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers. **Below center:** Sgt. Shane Barrow steps through the Arch of Leadership to become a new NCO. **Bottom left:** Senior enlisted NCOs, headed by brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Knox stand ready to greet new leaders. **Bottom right:** Brigade NCO of the Quarter Sgt. Hart recites the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer.*

## New 875th NCOs:

Sgt. Shane O. Barrow - Alpha  
 Sgt. Douglas M. Croft - Charlie  
 Sgt. Yousef A. Fahoum - Charlie  
 Sgt. Ronald S. Griffin - Charlie  
 Sgt. Brandon H. Hancock - Alpha  
 Sgt. Richard C. Isom - Alpha  
 Sgt. Phillip N. Jordan - Alpha  
 Sgt. Robert S. Martin - Charlie  
 Sgt. Allen R. Massey - Alpha  
 Sgt. Joseph D. Moore - Charlie  
 Sgt. Zackary T. Mullins - Alpha  
 Sgt. Robert D. Norwood - Alpha  
 Sgt. Jeremy L. Qualls - Charlie  
 Sgt. Michael S. Smithson - Alpha  
 Sgt. Christopher Strubbe - Alpha  
 Sgt. Charles E. Tucker - Charlie  
 Sgt. Garry L. Vest - Alpha





# THE OTHER CRITICAL MISSION

## Route Sanitation

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

A lot has been said and written about the 875th's critical route clearance mission, but the Arkansas Army National Guard engineer battalion has another important role in the fight for assured mobility in central Iraq.

Route sanitation is the other critical mission used to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the 875th's role in assured mobility efforts. At Camp Striker, that task falls to the 131st Engineer Company.

According to a battalion operations statement, route sanitation is "the quick and through removal of debris, obstacles and terrain along a specific corridor, thereby denying terrorists easy placement and concealment of improvised explosive devices." In other words, the route clearance teams look for hidden IEDs on the roadway, and the route sanitation teams get rid of the stuff often used to hide the IEDs.

"The two missions really go hand in hand," said Capt. Jacob Roy, 131st commander. "And we consider them equally important in the ongoing effort to make traveling here safer."

While the Buffalo is the workhorse for route clearance, route sanitation missions utilize a more diverse stable of vehicles. Up-armored bulldozers, graders, front-end loaders, dump trucks and a special vehicle called a husky are used to clean up large sections of a

main supply route.

Members of the 131st's 1st Platoon recently pulled a day mission that called for removing debris and brush from over two miles of highway. They began preparing for the long, hard, workday before sunup, gathering an impressive column of heavy machinery that would thrill any young boy.

After briefing their Soldiers thoroughly on the mission objectives, platoon leader 2nd Lt. Mathew Lady and Staff Sgt. Dustin Stinson see that everyone is in their vehicles and ready to go. The large column lumbers along for over an hour before meeting up with a security detail from the 377th Field Artillery, an active duty unit out of Alaska. A little further down the road they pull up and begin the hard work.

Spc. Timothy Augustine expertly maneuvers the heavily armored dozer, plowing large swaths of brush and debris into piles just off the road. Spc. Joey Ward adds scrub brush, pieces of metal and the remains of burnt out vehicles to the piles with an up-armored front end loader. Further up the highway, Spc. Aaron Hooten is at home in an armored grader as he deftly scrapes dirt and debris from off of the blacktop.

At one point, after Hooten has finished scraping a sec-

**See "Route sanitation" on page 10**





***Previous page:** Up-armored bulldozer clears dirt and debris from the side of a major supply route near Baghdad. **Left:** 2nd Lt. Mathew Lady briefs the men of 1st Platoon, 131st Engineer Company on the day's route sanitation mission. **Below:** The long column of heavy machinery heads out from Camp Striker before sunup, and won't return until the end of the day. **Bottom:** An array of construction machinery that would thrill any young boy is ready to begin work.*





## **Route sanitation, continued from page 8**

tion of highway, Sgt. Andrew Bippus clambers into one of the battalion's more unusual sanitation vehicles. The Husky is a single seat armored truck with a industrial grade blower mounted on the nose. Bippus moves the ungainly looking Husky slowly along the edge of the roadway as the angled blower pushes anything left behind by the grader off onto nearby farm fields. As a large cloud of dirt, dust and sand settles behind the Husky, the clean road bed is revealed. As each section is finished, Spc. Ricky Massey and other members of 1st platoon use flares to set the debris piles aflame, burning off the scrub brush and leaving a manageable pile ready for removal. Sgt. Jeff Foster, from Indianapolis and a member of the Indiana Army National Guard deployed with the 875th, watches as Ward uses the front end loader to fill his armored dump truck with dirt and debris. Once the dump bed is at capacity, Foster takes the

load to a nearby dedicated dump site and off loads it in a burst of dirt and dust. Foster makes several dump runs during the day-long mission. "These sanitation missions are pretty fun for us," says Foster. "We get to take out some pretty cool equipment."

As the sun settles toward the horizon, the crew loads the dozer onto it's 12-wheeled trailer, and lines up all of the vehicles into a long column. Lady keys the microphone on the radio in his command vehicle and gives the word to head out.

Back at Camp Striker, the exhausted Soldiers park the vehicles, clean weapons and conduct a quick after action report before wrapping up for the day. Many of the men will be outside the wire again the next day on a route clearance mission.

"These are dedicated, hard-working, Soldiers performing a mission that is every bit as important as the route clearance job," says Roy. "By cleaning up the roadways, we're not only contributing to assured mobility, but we're performing a public service by helping to improve this country."







**Page 10:** Spc. Aaron Hooten works his up-armored road grader on a section of roadway while Spc. Timothy Augestine bulldozes terrain and dirt near a farm field. **Top left:** Sgt. Jeff Foster drives a load of dirt and debris to a specified dump site in his armored dump truck. **Above:** Spc. Joey Ward concentrates as he operates an up-armored front end loader as part of an 875th Engineer Battalion route sanitation crew. **Middle left:** Staff Sgt. Brad Holcomb makes radio contact with one of the route sanitation vehicles during a recent 131st Engineer Company mission. **Bottom left:** Sgt. Andrew Bippus drives a battalion Husky during a recent route sanitation mission near Baghdad. The odd-looking Husky employs an industrial strength blower, mounted on the front of the vehicle, to send dust, dirt and sand billowing off of the roadway.





## New sign adorns battalion headquarters



It's big, it's bright and it screams engineers. It's the new 875th Engineer Battalion sign that adorns the battalion headquarters building on Camp Striker.

The massive sign is over four feet high and over eight feet long. It took construction specialists Sgt. 1st Class Joe Hyde and Spc. James Carpenter a week to construct the sign out of wood. Then Sgt. Timothy Honea spent a week adding the paint and lettering. Sgt. Lannie Collins fashioned the metal brackets that hold the heavy three dimensional sign onto the front of the building.

On the last day of February, a crew from Headquarters, Headquarters Company hoisted the icon of the Army Corps of Engineers up with a forklift fitted with a special platform. According to Carpenter, it took the crew nearly the entire day to get it leveled, centered and mounted.

The bright red sign can be seen from quite a distance away from the building, and has attracted attention from neighboring infantry units. One member of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division was seen snapping a photo of the impressive sign shortly after it was put up.



# Maj. Gen. Simmons rides along with 131

**M**aj. Gen. James E. Simmons, deputy commanding general, Multinational Corps - Iraq, got a first hand look at how the battalion conducts route clearance Feb. 15, 2007.

The Newport, Ark. native was on Camp Striker to ride along with 4th Platoon, 131st Engineer Company. According to Simmons, route clearance is an important part of the MNC-I mission.

“It’s absolutely critical, as we move both our logistical convoys and our combat formations around theatre, that we do our very best to find and clear all of the IEDs,” said Simmons.

It was the second time inside of three months that Simmons has visited with the 875th. He met Dec. 29, 2006 with the battalion staff to talk about the war effort and to take questions.

Simmons serves under Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno at MNC-I, which is part of Multinational Force - Iraq, and is the tactical unit responsible for command and control of operations throughout Iraq.

Simmons is a graduate of the Arkansas State University, where he was in the R.O.T.C. program and played football.



*Above: Maj. Gen. James E. Simmons (center), stands in front of a Buffalo with Capt. Jacob Roy, 131st company commander, Spc. Robbie Layton, Spc. Shawn Danaher and Sgt. 1st Class Dwayne Somers.*



## From the Chaplain

By Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Golaway

I'll have to admit, I hated the old Army slogan, "An Army of One." I think it set a lot of young troops up for failure as they may have expected to join an organization which would allow them to remain individuals instead of team players, only to find that expectation crushed in Basic Training. Still, I loved the idea behind the expression. We are a united front, a team of equals. We stand as one, fight as one, and treat each other as brothers and sisters. That means we may scrap amongst ourselves from time to time, but we are single-minded against those who would harm any one of us. The Army has historically been at the forefront of our culture regarding desegregation, women's rights, and the inclusion of vastly diversified peoples. The Apostle Paul captured this idea perfectly in his letter to the church in Corinth, a major trade city in Greece known for its diverse culture.

He wrote, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body...Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special

treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it (1 Corinthians 12:12, 14-26, NIV)."

Our nation's motto, "E Pluribus Unum," Latin for "Out of the many, One" demonstrates the crucible of our strength. Americans are a great people because we came from everywhere in the world, from every Empire, Kingdom, and Tribe to form our singular nation founded on the central idea of freedom. Now we as soldiers and family members have been united from units spread over three states to help the Iraqi people inherit the greatness of freedom. When we left home, we were united by the deployment. We all were soldiers and families shipping off to war. As time has played out, the diversities that would threaten to separate us have begun to surface. Each of us now has a choice to make. We can be a body, joined together by a common goal, or we can point fingers, assign blame, and tear the team apart. As we approach the half way point in this journey, let us celebrate the diversity that adds color to life. Let us share the differences of upbringing, the variety of views and opinions, and the broad scope of skills and abilities each of us possess as we work together to solve problems and create solutions. We are now engaged in relationships with other soldiers and families we have never known before, and relationships require work to maintain their strength. Now is the time to roll our sleeves up and finish the job as a team. May we continue to share an attitude of respect and consideration, and create an atmosphere of unity as we stand together, "Army Strong."

Blessings.



*A 875th Buffalo seems to help the sun rise at Camp Stiker, Iraq.*



# MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Kevin Jenkins, SGT	01	A Co.	Albert Frye, SPC	13	HHC
Kevin Turner, SSG	01	A Co.	Hank Sprouse, PFC	16	C Co.
Jesse Blomgren, SSG	02	C Co.	Jerry Greenwood, SFC	17	HHC
Paul Jaques, SFC	02	C Co.	Stephen Moore, SPC	18	A Co.
Jerrold Wofford, SPC	02	131st	Ronnie Taylor, 1SG	18	131st
Michael Sanders, SGT	03	C Co.	John McReynolds, PFC	19	131st
Jacob Mitchum, SPC	04	A Co.	Joshua Hicks, SPC	20	131st
Justin Noblin, PV 2	04	A Co.	Dustin Miller, SGT	20	131st
Jeremiah Dyer, SPC	05	131st	David Angell, SSG	22	131st
David Clayton, SGT	06	A Co.	Brian Catt, SPC	23	A Co.
David Jones, SPC	06	A Co.	Douglas Strickland, SSG	23	C Co.
Edward Peters, MSG	06	HHC	Ricky Benson, SGT	25	131st
Jeremy Delph, SPC	07	131st	Anthony McCann, SPC	25	A Co.
Richard Holler, SSG	07	A Co.	Edward Roach, SGT	25	131st
Justin Clough, SPC	08	131st	Robert Reynolds	26	C Co.
Wayne Reynolds, SSG	08	A Co.	James Duboise, SSG	27	HHC
Charles Roe, 1SG	08	C Co.	Seth Kittredge, SGT	27	A Co.
Walter Holloway, 1SG	10	A Co.	Wendy Forbs, SSG	28	HHC
Roger Evans, 1LT	11	A Co.	Julio Mendoza, SPC	28	C Co.
Rodney Rice, SGT	11	131st	Christopher Strubbe, SGT	28	A Co.
Quinton Bristow, SPC	12	131st	Robert Ortiz, SPC	29	131st

*The view down the barrel of a .50 Cal machine gun as a patrol gets ready to head out early in the morning.  
U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney*

# Essayons takes first place in NGB contest

The 875th Engineer Battalion newsletter, *Essayons*, won first place in the Field Newspaper category for the 2006 National Guard Bureau Media Awards.

The annual awards results were announced March 1 on the National Guard Bureau web site. The *Essayons* competed against field publications by deployed Army Guard units from every state, and took the top prize for calendar year 2006.

The Ohio Army National Guard's 196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment took second place with *The Grayling Bootprint*. The Kansas Army National Guard's 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment placed third with *Am Mag*.

All first place entries for the National Guard Bureau are automatically entered into the active Army's Keith L. Ware Journalism Awards. Results of the Army competition have not been announced yet.





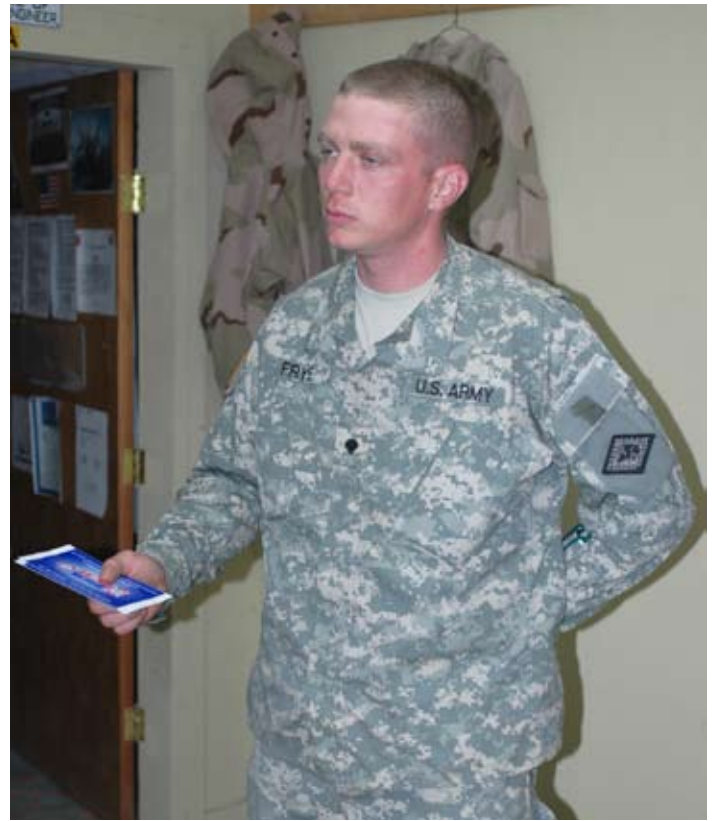
# Frye named 875th Soldier of the Quarter

**S**pc. Albert Frye, Jr. of Headquarters, Headquarters Company has been named 875th Soldier of the Quarter for the 1st quarter of 2007.

Frye is a native of Ludlow, Vt., and a member of the Vermont Army National Guard's 131st Engineer Company. During this deployment, Frye is assigned as a wheel mechanic with the battalion maintenance section of Headquarters, Headquarters Company.

The 32 year old Soldier has seven years of military service, six with the active component. He has an associates degree from Ohio Technical College, and is not married. His parents, Albert, Sr., and Rose, also live in Ludlow.

Frye was chosen from candidates from all four battalion companies, and competed for 411th Engineer Brigade Soldier of the Quarter, where he placed third. Frye received a four day pass to a recreation area in Qatar.



## Company Corner, continued from page 5 Charlie Company

Hot dog what a great day to be in Charlie Company!!!

The men continue to consistently exceed my expectations and to impress everyone they come in contact with. We continue to help each other through the tough times. The old adage "You don't know what you have until it is gone," often comes to mind around here. As I listen to the guys talk about all of the things they miss, excluding their families, it is often the little things that are mentioned most. Things like foods, pets, clothes, even the smell of freshly cut grass are often common themes. We become so engrossed in our day-to-day life that we forget to stop and smell the roses.

This deployment is an opportunity for all of us to understand not only ourselves better, but each other as well. We should treat this time apart as a way to reconnect with each other. Although this separation has been difficult on all of us, I ask that you focus on the future and not just on the here and now. We need to think about five, 10, even 20 years from now.

Your mission to support us and take care of all

of the things at home is greatly appreciated, and I ask that you stay strong. I continue to pray for each of us here as well as you at home. Hang in there, and God will prevail. I want to thank you for all that you have done, and continue to do, to comfort us on all issues concerning you. I have said it before and it still holds true -- you are the true warriors. You pick up the load while we are gone.

I hope everyone has weathered the bad storms that have happened. There aren't too many of those here. One of the guys was recently talking about things he misses, and mentioned how an afternoon thunderstorm will cool things off on a hot day. It doesn't work that way here.

We have stormed through a Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year Day, Martin Luther King Day and Valentine's Day. I challenge each of you to cherish the time we've spent talking and communicating from afar, and to dream of the fun and joyful times ahead upon our return.

**WE LOVE AND MISS YOU ALL**

Capt. Timothy Norman