



Essays

875TH ENGINEER BATTALION

FROM: 875th EN BN
IRAQ
TO: HOME!
AR, VT, IN

Sapper Movers, Inc.

Logistics keeps the battalion moving

- ◆ *Battalion fuelers are a gas*
- ◆ *Collins is awarded Bronze Star with Valor*
- ◆ *20th Engineer Brigade takes over from 411th*
- ◆ *Trip to Genesis, chapter 11*



“Let us try”

Essayons

Vol. 2; Num. 8, 2007

875th Engineer Battalion

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Above: Sgt. Cindy Evins of the 875th Engineer Battalion’s communications section enjoys spending some time with a young Iraqi girl during a recent visit to the Civil Military Operations Clinic at Camp Striker, Iraq. Evins joined Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Golaway and Capt. Jacob Roy, 131st Engineer Company commander to take food, candy and toys to the clinic. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney.)

On the cover: Logistics support section NCOIC Sgt. 1st Class Hunter Dale uses a battalion forklift to move a cardboard container that is packed full and ready to go. The 875th Engineer Battalion’s logistics support section continues to keep the 500 man battalion supplied while preparing for the upcoming monumental movement back to home station. See the story on page 6. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney.)

INSIDE ISSUE TWELVE



6 Sapper Movers, Inc. Logisticians keep it moving

The logistics support section is responsible for over \$60 million in equipment, and for keeping the 500 man 875th Engineer Battalion supplied with everything from toilet paper to ammunition.



8 Battalion fuelers are a gas, keep patrols on the road

A team of three dedicated 875th Soldiers work day or night to keep patrol vehicles fueled up. Sgts. Williams, Lambert and Goza bring years of experience to the job of moving fuel.



10 Collins earns Bronze Star with Valor for bravery

1st Lt. George Collins was presented a Bronze Star with Valor device for bravery while leading Alpha Company, 1st Platoon during a route clearance patrol. Fourteen received the Army Commendation with Valor.

20th Engineer Brigade takes over from the 411th	12
Soldiers get chance to see Genesis 11 up close	14
Alpha and Charlie Soldiers receive Purple Hearts	16
875th engineers aid injured Iraqi Soldiers	20

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.

DEPARTMENTS

Commander's Message:	4
From the Command Sgt. Major:	4
Company Corner:	5
From the Chaplain	18



FROM THE TOP



Battalion Commander Command

Greetings, I hope this newsletter finds everyone healthy – physically, mentally, and spiritually. There is no hiding many of the smiles on the faces of the Soldiers of the 875th these last several days. Our replacements have started arriving in Kuwait and there is a sense of impending change in the air with the transfer of authority to the 20th Engineer Brigade. It will not be long before we turn over the reigns, so we are preparing our replacements to carry on in the same outstanding manner as we done.

We have set the bar very high for our replacements and it is for very good reason. Our service and more importantly our success is critical to the overall success of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The routes that our Soldiers clear everyday are the main supply routes for the entire military logistic and maneuver arteries. We keep ammunition, water, fuel, and food moving and protect the Soldiers and Civilians traveling the roads. When the route closes due to an insurgent attack on a bridge or culvert, the engineers are there to repair it. When the threat level goes up on high value targets like bridges and culverts, the engineers work fast to protect them and prevent the insurgents from attacking them. When critical cargo and personnel are using the routes, the engineers are leading the way to ensure their safe movement. When insurgents try to hide bombs, the engineers dig them up. When the infantry moves to find caches, insurgents, and IEDs, the engineers blaze the path to provide them the vital mobility necessary to do their job. When 3rd Infantry Division embarked on the decisive Surge Operations, the engineers built patrol bases and cleared new roadways. Not just any engineers....Our engineers. We have completed over 2,600 combat patrols, cleared over 300,000 kilometers of routes, sanitized nearly 600 kilometers of road, prevented more than 30 culverts from being used as a road cut location, and prevented nearly 200 road craters from being used as IED hiding place. We have spent over 200,000 mission hours ensuring the roads are open so that WE can succeed in our fight against the insurgents of Iraq.

Please see 'From The Top' on page 24

Sergeant Major

Greetings from Iraq, we are now entering our 11th month in Iraq, and all continues to go well with the 875th. We are continuing to work hard to stay diligent and to focus on the mission at hand. One thing is for sure, our Soldiers are dedicated to each other and to the mission. It is my duty to make sure that my senior NCOs refocus our soldiers, and that they continue with their marching orders until the completion of the mission. We are closer to home, but we still have much more to accomplish here.

The weather is now constant and we are adjusting to the rising temperatures. We are prepared and trained on each and every situation that may occur, including extreme conditions. Remember our Motto: Ready and Willing. All of my Soldiers have become more and more knowledgeable of their battle space and missions, and it is a great honor for me to lead such great NCOs and enlisted Soldiers.

We are at a very vital and important time due to being so close to returning home. This is why it is my responsibility to assess and maintain the highest standard of military bearing for every Soldier of the 875th. I require that my NCOs make sure every Soldier is focused and ready for every mission and situation. We understand what is at stake, and we thank God for the freedom we have in America; so be assured that we will not fail and that the mission will be completed.

Finally, continue to keep us in your prayers and continue to keep your love one abreast. Our children are returning back to school, and we are sorry to miss the beginning of another school year, but we should be home shortly. Again, I am so very thankful to have this opportunity to send words of encouragement and information. Thanks for your hard work, and thanks for all that you do. Please take care of yourself and your family.

READY AND WILLING!

HOOAH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CSM Billy Ward

131st Engineer Co.

Not many people think about the historical significance of the area we are in. Human civilization began in this area, and wars have been fought here for thousands of years. The Persians, Alexander the Great, the Romans, British, Germans, dictators and the United States have all fought in this land. There is one major difference, though. We are not here to take over this land, but to root out terrorists and make the word a safer place for everyone.

What we are doing is nothing short of historic. The 131st Engineer Company and units of the 3rd Infantry Division are part of the main effort to secure Baghdad. The surge operations being conducted are historic as they will determine the outcome of the United States' role in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 131st is having a direct effect on the success of the surge operation. We are providing needed route clearance support to the maneuver units on the ground, and we're training the 3rd Infantry Division's route clearance teams.

The teams on the ground, our mechanics who keep our equipment in good working condition, and the folks in the tactical operations center who track the teams and relay information are all participating in this monumental effort.

When future historians write about the success of the surge operations the Soldiers of the 131st Engineer Company can be proud to know that they were a part of it.

Capt. Jacob Roy



HHC

Time is starting to fly, and we can see light at the end of the tunnel. We are working so hard, though, that we're finding it hard to raise our heads to see that light. When we leave here there will still be Soldiers in Iraq who are just starting, or in the middle of, their tours here. It is still our responsibility to continue to take care of these Soldiers until we turn the reins over.

We take a lot of pride in doing our mission right, and we're going to continue working hard until we're told to quit.

This month has seen the 411th Engineer Brigade rotate out and the 20th Engineer Brigade come in. Everyone has now had their R&R leave, so we are all

ready to finish the race.

Everyone is doing well and we're looking forward to seeing our replacements. We know that this road has been just as hard for you as it has for us, and we appreciate all of the love and support from home. We long to see you all again, but we're staying focused on our mission until then.

Capt. Joshua Simmons

Alpha Co.

Co A, 875th EN Battalion recently had an awards ceremony to recognize Soldiers for their achievements and valorous acts during this deployment. 1st Lt. George Collins received the Bronze Star Medal for Valor while the following Soldiers received the Army Commendation Medal for Valor: Sgt. 1st Class Kahlon Mays, Staff Sgt. Marcus Hutto, Staff Sgt. Benjamin Myer, Sgt. Walter Rau, Sgt. Richard Isom, Sgt. Brian Tarmy, Spc. Gideon Grissom, Spc. Kevin Robert, and Spc. James Wolfe. These fine gentlemen distinguished themselves through acts of valor on the battlefield and are very deserving of these awards. It is truly amazing what the Soldiers of Co A have done and their willingness to serve our great nation.

During the past month, the Soldiers of Co A have attended several briefings, one of which was an operational security briefing. This briefing basically enlightens Soldiers about information that we need to protect so that it can't be used against us. I explained that when you post information on the internet, it is there for everyone to see and can be exploited by people wishing to do harm to you or your family. Myspace, Facebook and many other websites allow users to post information about their family, friends and events happening in their lives. Remember to protect your information so that it can't be used against you or your loved ones.

We still have several Soldiers who have been injured in combat or were medically evacuated from theater. I ask that you continue to keep them in your thoughts and prayers. I also want to thank everyone for their continued support.

Capt. David Moore

See Charlie Co. Page 21

COMPANY
CORNER

Logisticians keep battalion supplied

Sapper Movers, Inc.

Logistics: the art of moving, quartering and supplying troops. – 1879 French definition.

For one group of Soldiers, the current 875th Engineer Battalion mobilization and deployment began long before the first troops stepped off of a transport plane in Iraq last September.

As early as May 2006, the battalion's band of logisticians, better known as the 'supply guys,' began the arduous process of equipping, moving, housing and supplying over 500 Soldiers from three different states for over a year. Capt. Lorne Kelley and Sgt. 1st Class Hunter Dale lead a nine man contingent who, along with the four company supply teams, ensure that the battalion has everything it needs to complete its critical assured mobility mission in Iraq.

Route clearance, route sanitation, rapid crater repair and culvert denial patrols have been able to frustrate insurgents and save lives every day of the 875th's deployment, thanks to a complex logistical system that keeps them in vehicles, weapons, ammunition, housing, uniforms, computers, radios and a sundry of needs. Over 135,000 rounds of .50 cal ammunition alone has moved through the battalion's logistics support section.

"We're responsible for over \$60 million in equipment," says Kelley from his spartan office at the battalion headquarters on Camp Striker. "We had to get equipment and supplies together from three states into one organization, and get it to Iraq. While here we have to keep it all maintained, distributed and accounted for. Then we have to get it all back and shipped back out to the states it all came from," he explained.

"We utilized tractor trailers, boats, planes and rail points to move all of that," points out Dale from behind a bank of computer screens. "It's a multi-national, joint service effort."

Dale says that he has tracked nearly 130 logistical packages just since April, each bringing needed supplies out of Kuwait to the battalion's units at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, near Balad, and Camp Striker, near Baghdad. "That's covering both air and ground logpacks," he explains.

"It's a lot like going on a camping trip back home," adds Kelley. "You need to make sure you've got your hiking boots, a tent, sleeping bag, food, lanterns and all of that. Now think of doing that for 500 plus guys.

"Here, we don't have the luxury of saying 'oh well, we left that at home,'" he says. "Our job is to make sure that these guys have what they need to do the mission, and to get it for them if they don't."

According to Kelley and Dale, getting all of the supplies, and moving, distributing and accounting for everything is a seven days-a-week job. Millions of tons of supplies have been delivered to the 875th's Soldiers, including everything from armored vehicles and crew served weapons to printer cartridges, pens and even the occasional note pad for an old Army journalist.

In addition to keeping supplies flowing through the Army supply system, Kelley says that he has procured over \$1 million in contracted items such as furniture, trailers, copiers, truck lighting, computers and phones.



“We have three main methods of getting things outside of the military supply channels,” explains Kelley. “There’s contracting, cash for items needed expeditiously, which we purchase through the local economy, and credit, which we use for items that are not available locally. We prefer to help local Iraqi economy whenever possible.”

“It’s not an easy job, but it’s certainly satisfying,” says Dale. “Getting everything where it needs to go is constant work, but the war fighters couldn’t do their job if we didn’t do ours.”

And, according to Kelley, their job won’t be finished until well after the heroes of the 875th come home from Iraq at the end of summer.

“All of our equipment that we’re sending home won’t hit the demobilization site until at least two months after we’re home,” says Kelley. “It will take another five months of work after demobilization to get everything where it needs to go, and to close out the deployment.”



***Previous page:** Staff Sgt. Edgar Brown and Spc. Christopher Davenport prepare cardboard containers. **Above:** Staff Sgt. David Turpin, Alpha Company’s supply sergeant checks his inventory recently as his section gets ready to ship items back to the States. **Left:** Sgt. David Burbo unloads Class I supplies from a truck for 131st Engineer Company troops at Camp Striker. **Below:** Sgt. 1st Class Hunter Dale loads containers onto an armored transport bound for Logistics Support Area Anaconda. The battalion logisticians, led by Capt. Lorne Kelley, have moved millions of tons of supplies, vehicles and war fighting materials.*



Fuel crew keeps battalion gassed up

“Here they come, all lining up for their fuel,” says Sgt. Lawrence Williams in an aged drawl as he reaches

for a nearby nozzle. Armored patrol vehicles are pulling up to the makeshift pump station in a squeal of brakes and suspension springs.

The 875th Engineer Battalion fuel point is neatly tucked into a corner niche at the motor pool on Camp Striker. A thick black hose snakes across the gravel lot from two large fuel trucks, capped by a silver nozzle rendered shiny by the constantly blowing Iraqi dust. Three dedicated Soldiers man the small outlet and keep diesel fuel in an array of humvees, gun trucks and patrol vehicles belonging to the 131st Engineer Company and Headquarters, Headquarters Company.

On a recent hot Iraqi afternoon, Williams and Sgt. Terry Lambert make an efficient team as they fill up or top off a succession of vehicles about to head out on a route clearance patrol. Williams offers a friendly stream of chatter as the quieter Lambert handles the ever-necessary paperwork.

“We’ve got to be here when the guys are getting ready to go out,” says Williams as an RG-31 gun truck pulls up. “There’s no central fuel



point on Camp Striker, so we have our own. We take our fuel trucks over to the bulk fuel point on [Camp] Liberty about once a week.” According to Williams, the eight-wheeled pump trucks holds about 2,400 gallons of diesel each.

“We pump anywhere from 200 to 250 gallons in a day and take care of any Army truck that pulls up,” says the gray haired Lambert. “We’re happy to offer the best service on Striker.”

“Most of the vehicles are quick and easy,” adds Williams, “except for the RG, those are hard because you need a step ladder to get up to the filler cap.”

The third member of the crew, Sgt. Charles Goza, was taking a well-deserved day of rest and recreation.

Williams, Lambert and Goza all bring years of civilian and military experience to this critical job. Williams lives in Jonesboro, Ark., where he worked in industrial maintenance before deploying with the 875th. Although he has been a member of the Jonesboro-based unit since 1974, he last deployed to Iraq with the Arkansas Army National Guard’s 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2004. He’s considering returning to Iraq next year with the 39th.

Lambert, who grew up in Tampa, Fla., and now lives in Paragould, brings 22 years of active duty Air Force experience to the job. He joined the 875th in

2004 and has been a part of the fuel crew ever since.

“My wife’s family is from Paragould, so we moved there after I retired from the Air Force,” explains Lambert. He managed a convenience store in Paragould before deploying with the 875th.

“Because of the current patrol schedule and the heat, our normal work hours are from 1700 to 0500,” says Williams. “We’re on call, though, the rest of the time. It doesn’t matter what time of day it is, these guys need their fuel and we’ve got to be here.”

The line of vehicles needing fuel dwindles as quickly as it formed as Williams and Lambert alternate pumping fuel and handling paperwork. Nearby a group of Soldiers from the 131st are gathering in preparation for another critical route clearance mission. Williams and Lambert move among them stopping to talk to guys they’ve gotten to know well over the past year.

“It’s good work and we’re happy to be a part of this,” says Lambert, “and I think we’ve all done a good job. But I know we’re all ready to go to the house.”

Williams flashes his trademark grin and says, “For now, we’ll be here for these guys until they say we’re done.”



Previous Page: Sgt. Lawrence Williams flashes his trademark grin as he pumps diesel fuel into an 875th Engineer Battalion patrol vehicle before it heads out on a route clearance mission in central Iraq. **Above:** Sgt. Terry Lambert fills up a thirsty humvee at the battalion motor pool at Camp Striker, Iraq.



Maj. Gen. James Simmons, deputy commanding general MNC-I (behind Capt. Dave Moore, Alpha Company commander), pins the Bronze Star with Valor device on 1st Lt. George M. Collins.

1st Lt. Collins earns Bronze Star with Valor

Fourteen receive Army Commendation Medal with Valor in Ceremony

1st Lt. George M. Collins and members of Alpha Company, 875th Engineer Battalion were honored at a ceremony here today for their bravery in the face of enemy fire.

Collins was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor while another 14 Soldiers of 1st Platoon were each awarded the Army Commendation Medal with Valor. Major General James Simmons, deputy commanding general of Multi National Corps – Iraq, pinned the prestigious awards on Collins and nine of the 14 who were able to be at the ceremony. Sgt. Erich S. Smallwood was recognized posthumously. Smallwood died when an improvised explosive device detonated on his vehicle during a route clearance patrol May 26, 2007.

Late on November 27 Collins and his 1st Platoon route clearance patrol began taking small arms fire from insurgents along a major supply route near

Balad. The insurgents then shifted their complex attack to an approaching heavily laden supply convoy as it slowed to negotiate a nearby checkpoint.

As Collins directed his men to get the patrol's massive unarmed Buffalo to a secure position, a rocket propelled grenade crippled one of the supply trucks. Seeing that the convoy was in trouble, Collins quickly decided that his patrol was the convoy's best chance to make it out of the ambush. He positioned his line of armed vehicles directly between the convoy and the enemy forces, including his own gun truck.

Enemy small arms fire poured in on Collins and the patrol. With bullets ricocheting off of their armor plating, 1st Platoon gunners engaged multiple targets in multiple locations with accurate and deadly fire. With Collins and 1st Platoon beating back the enemy, the damaged rig was recovered and the convoy was

able to move out of the kill zone, continuing its mission to deliver critical supplies to coalition forces.

The 1st Platoon Soldiers held the enemy off until their ammunition was nearly exhausted. U.S. Army cavalry units arrived on the scene with two Abrams main battle tanks and brought the action to a decisive end. Collins re-assembled his patrol and continued on their route clearance mission.

“It didn’t hit me until we were half way back to [LSA] Anaconda what we had been through,” said Collins. “It was then that I thought about all of the tracer rounds and bullets that were hitting the vehicle.”

Collins and his wife Lindsay own a golf course in Hot Springs, Ark. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas Little Rock and has been a member of the Arkansas Army National Guard’s 875th Engineer Battalion for six years. He has been a platoon leader in Alpha Company since receiving his commission in 2005.

The 875th is headquartered in Jonesboro, Ark., and is 11 months into a yearlong deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 500-man battalion is augmented by Soldiers from the Vermont Army National Guard’s 131st Engineer Company, and the Indiana Army National Guard’s 1313th Engineer Company. The unit is charged with a critical assured mobility mission in central Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Marcus L. Hutto, Sgt. Benjamin J. Myer, Sgt. Walter E. Rau, Spc. Kevin L. Robert and

Spc. James S. Wolfe each received the Army Commendation Medal with Valor for their actions as part of Collins’ patrol.

Sgt. Richard C. Isom was recognized for bravery during a grenade attack on his patrol Jan. 2, 2007 in which Spc. Reddi Parker was injured. Sgt. 1st Class Kahlon E. Mays and Sgt. Brian Tarmy each received the Army Commendation Medal with Valor for saving the life of the gunner of the vehicle in which Smallwood was killed on May 26.

Spc. Timothy R. Goldman is currently assigned to Camp Striker, and Spc. Gideon G. Grissom was in class at Camp Victory at the time of the awards.

Spc. Brady A. Jefferson, Spc. Anthony McCann, Jr., and Spc. Adam Williamson were also recognized with an Army Commendation Medal with Valor, but were unable to attend the ceremony. Jefferson has been evacuated from the theatre for non-combat related injuries. McCann and Williamson were injured in IED attacks March 30 and July 4, respectively.

“I’m really honored to get this award, especially with the valor device, and everyone in 1st Platoon deserves the recognition,” said Collins. “But, every line Soldier in the battalion should get one too. It takes real bravery in your heart to go out and do what the 875th does every day.”

Simmons hosted the awardees at a luncheon at LSA Anaconda following the awards ceremony. Simmons is an Arkansas native and played football at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro.



Maj. Gen. Simmons, right, talks with members of Alpha Company, 875th Engineer Battalion at a luncheon honoring the Soldiers. 1st Lt. George Collins, fourth from left, received the Bronze Star with Valor.

Fort Bragg's 20th Engineer Brigade takes charge of corps engineer efforts

411th Engineer Brigade hands over reins at Anaconda ceremony

By 2nd Lt. Jennifer Patterson



With over 1,000 craters repaired, 12 bridges maintained and more than 1,400 improvised explosive devices found and cleared, the 411th Engineer Brigade handed over the reins to the 20th Engineer Brigade. A formal ceremony on July 30 made the change official.

The 20th Engineer Brigade, commanded by Col. Peter A. DeLuca and Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Burnett, has a strong lineage dating back to the Civil War. The unit is an active duty unit from Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the only airborne engineer unit in the U.S. Army.

"The enemy situation has changed drastically in the last 3 months," explained DeLuca during the ceremony, "and engineer capabilities are invaluable to the fight." According to DeLuca the 20th, which is based out of Logistical Supply Area Anaconda, plans to "put it all on the table and hold nothing back" as they continue the engineer mission in Iraq. The units



of the 20th Engineer Brigade have a diverse mission set as the theatre engineers for Multi National Corps-Iraq. This mission set will include route clearance, rapid crater repair, and a partnering with Iraqi engineers to assist in rebuilding infrastructure and improving military capability.

As Maj. Gen. Simmons, Multinational Corps-Iraq deputy commanding general, stated "the expectations are high, don't screw up." The staff of the 20th Engineer Brigade has prepared for this task over the last eight months by attending a Counter Insurgency (COIN) seminar with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division, participating in a mission readiness exercise with the XVIII Airborne Corps, and attending a COIN briefing at the Iraqi Engineer School in Taji, Iraq.

Col. DeLuca, Command Sgt. Maj. Burnett and their team of paratroopers are prepared and "eager to get started."

Right: Col. Peter A. “Duke” DeLuca, 20th Engineer Brigade commander. **Below:** Sgt. Maj. Robert Goode and Brig. Gen. Michael Silva, 411th Engineer Brigade commanding general, carefully case the brigade colors at a transfer of authority ceremony July 30. The 875th Engineer Battalion fell under the 411th until the 20th took the reins at the ceremony. **Bottom:** Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Burnett and Col. DeLuca with the uncased colors of the 20th Engineer Brigade - the only airborne engineer brigade in the U.S. Army.



Soldiers get first hand look at Genesis 11 in biblical Ur

Photos by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

A group of 875th Engineer Battalion Soldiers recently got the chance of a lifetime to see an ancient city described in Genesis, Chapter 11.

Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Golaway invited Soldiers who participated in his weekly bible study classes to accompany him to the ancient city of Ur, near Tallil, Iraq, August 3. A second group is slated to tour the famous cradle of civilization later this month.

The small group was flown into Ali Air Base which is situated within sight of the birthplace of Abraham - said to be the father of three major faiths.

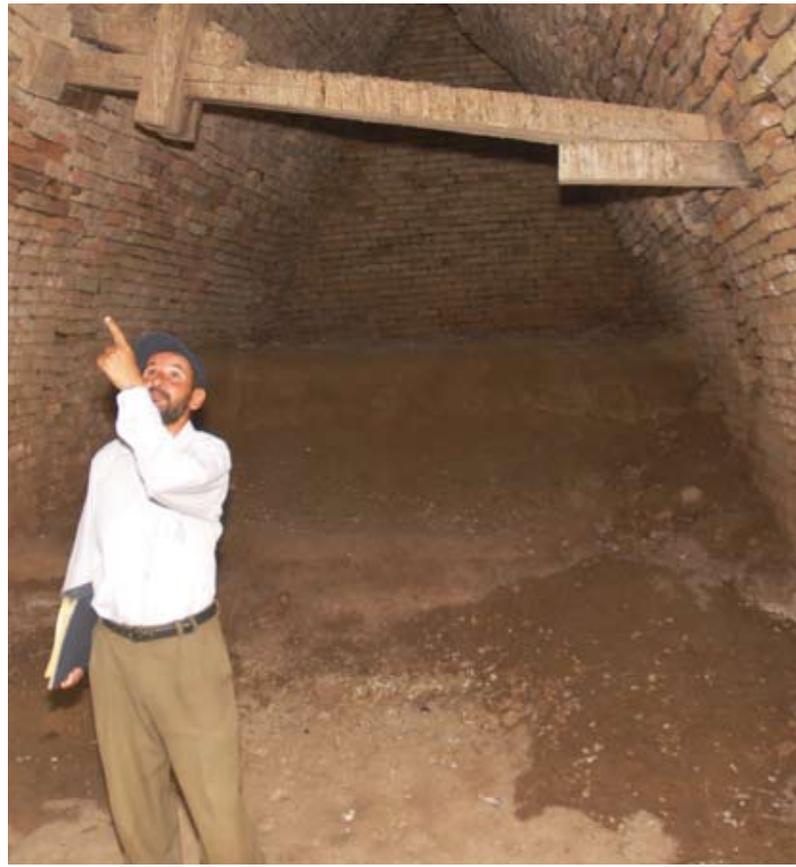
According to biblical writings in the book of Genesis, the aged Abraham traveled from Ur to the prom-

ised land with his family hundreds of years before the birth of Christ and Mohammed.

The early morning tour was conducted by an Iraqi tour guide who lives near the complex of ruins. Notable sights on the tour are the reconstructed home of Abraham and his family, a cemetery that includes the tombs of Mesopotamian kings and one of the few remaining ziggurats from the ancient world.

The impressive mud brick temple of the moon deity Nanna dominates the site, and can be easily seen from the nearby military post. The impressive structure is about five stories tall and is estimated to be over 5,000 years old.





Previous page: The famous Mesopotamian ziggurat in the ancient ruins of Ur, near Tallil, Iraq. The impressive structure originally had three levels, two of which survive today. **Top left:** An Iraqi tour guide talks about the site with a group of 875th Soldiers and some civilian contractors. **Middle left:** Ruins of a royal palace said to be over 5,000 years old lay near the ziggurat. **Top right:** The tour guide talks about the construction of a royal tomb, pointing to the mud bricks that line the dank room. **Above:** A courtyard in the reconstructed remains of Abraham's house in Ur. **Left:** A young Iraqi boy helps his father man the ziggurat gift shop at Ur.

Seven from Charlie Company receive Purple Heart

Seven Soldiers from Charlie Company, 875th Engineer Battalion, received a Purple Heart at a July 28 ceremony.

Brig. Gen. Michael Silva, 411th Engineer Brigade commanding general, pinned the familiar medals on the men at Logistics Support Area Anaconda. It was one of the final events for the 411th before the 20th Engineer Brigade assumed their mission on July 30.

Clockwise from upper right: Spc. Johnny L Cartwright for wounds received February 13; Sgt. Ronald S. Griffin for wounds received February 19; Staff Sgt. Jesse N. Blomgren for wounds received in December, 2006; Staff Sgt. William A. Percifull for wounds received February 13; Sgt. 1st Class Johnny McCarroll for wounds received February 20; Spc. Brandon E. Morris for wounds received January 21; Sgt. Christopher A. Centers for wounds received February 5.



Rau brothers and four others earn Purple Heart

Two Arkansas brothers share the wounds of war, and the distinction of being awarded the Purple Heart.

Walter and Carey Rau of Piggott, Ark., and four other members of the 875th received the award at an outdoor ceremony August 10 at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq.

Col. Robert “Duke” DeLuca, 20th Engineer Brigade commander, pinned the medal on the men, taking time to talk to each of them and tell them how much he appreciated their service.

Spc. Justin Bagley, Alpha Company, was wounded June 16. Sgt. Richard Isom was wounded May 18. Spc, Andrew Newsom was wounded August 7. Spc. Clayton Shelley was wounded May 24. Walter Rau was wounded May 25 and Carey Rau, of Charlie Company, was wounded June 4.

The awardees joined DeLuca and Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Burnett for a luncheon at the dining facility following the ceremony.



Above: Col. Robert “Duke” DeLuca, 20th Engineer Brigade commander talks to Alpha and Charlie Company troops following an outdoor Purple Heart ceremony on LSA Anaconda. Below, left to right: Spc. Carey Rau, Sgt. Richard Isom, Sgt. Walter Rau, Spc. Andrew Newsom, Spc. Clayton Shelley and Spc. Justin Bagley each received the Purple Heart at a ceremony August 10, held between the Alpha and Charlie Company headquarters buildings.





From the Chaplain

By Capt. (Chaplain) Mark Golaway

What defines us as people? In what ways do we express who we are? Some people think it is by the job they perform for society. Some believe it is their role in the family system. Some look to their accomplishments to define them. I think it is simpler than that. I submit to you that we are most clearly defined by our habits.

Habits are the actions and activities we build into our lives so that we function regularly and, many times, without thinking. That which we value, we do. If we value something greatly, we are more likely to do it often. An activity repeated often becomes a habit. We can then look at our habits to see what we value and who we truly are.

Let's take food for example. We value not being hungry, so we eat regularly. However, we demonstrate whether we value personal satisfaction, health, convenience, or style in choosing what we eat. We demonstrate whether we value cost, atmosphere, family time, conversation, or entertainment by where we choose to eat.

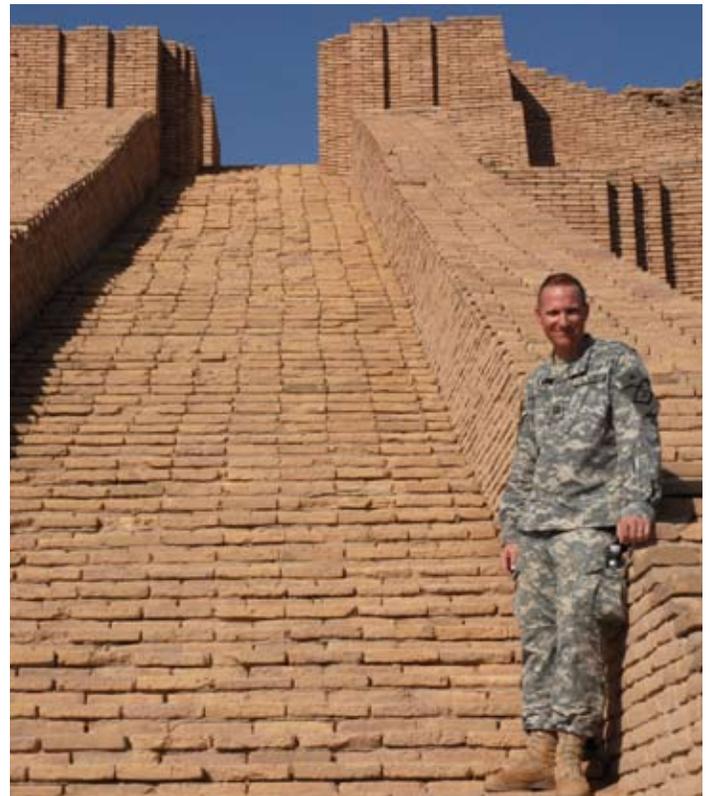
I bring this to your attention because as creatures of habit, we resist change. Change forces us to adjust our habits. We feel most comfortable in the routine, sometimes choosing to continue a routine that we know is harmful simply because we don't want to do the work of reforming our habits.

When the 875th first deployed, it was difficult on all of us, soldier and family member alike. Much of that pain came from a loss of the routine, and the necessary change of habits. We had to adjust to working, living, and functioning in a different world with different players and different assets. We had to suddenly shift from what had been routine to a new reality. After a couple of months we obtained a new normal as our actions were repeated into habits. Now, with our impending redeployment and return home, many of those habits are going to be changed again. Our routines are going to be upset, our functionality disrupted, and our lives once again shifted. This recognition is

what brings some of the anxiety about the homecoming that we all feel.

My encouragement is that you begin to anticipate what some of those changes of habit may look like. Begin to discuss your expectations and fears, your hopes and your dreams. Instead of allowing this to be a painful time, make it a wonderful time of reinventing your homes. Think of all the times before the deployment where you thought or said, "Wouldn't it be neat if we..." or, "One of these day I wish we..." Now is that day!! All the habits you used to have that kept you from changing the family habits have been broken. Your families have been separated for a year and new habits were formed. Soon, we will walk back through the door again, and we will have opportunity to redefine the home with the habits we have always hoped for and wanted. It takes about thirty days to form a new habit and it takes committed planning. By communicating our desires and concerns to one another we can develop the habits we want instead of falling into them by accident. Take this opportunity to build a closer, happier home for everyone involved. Let the habits you build in the coming months truly reflect who you choose to be.

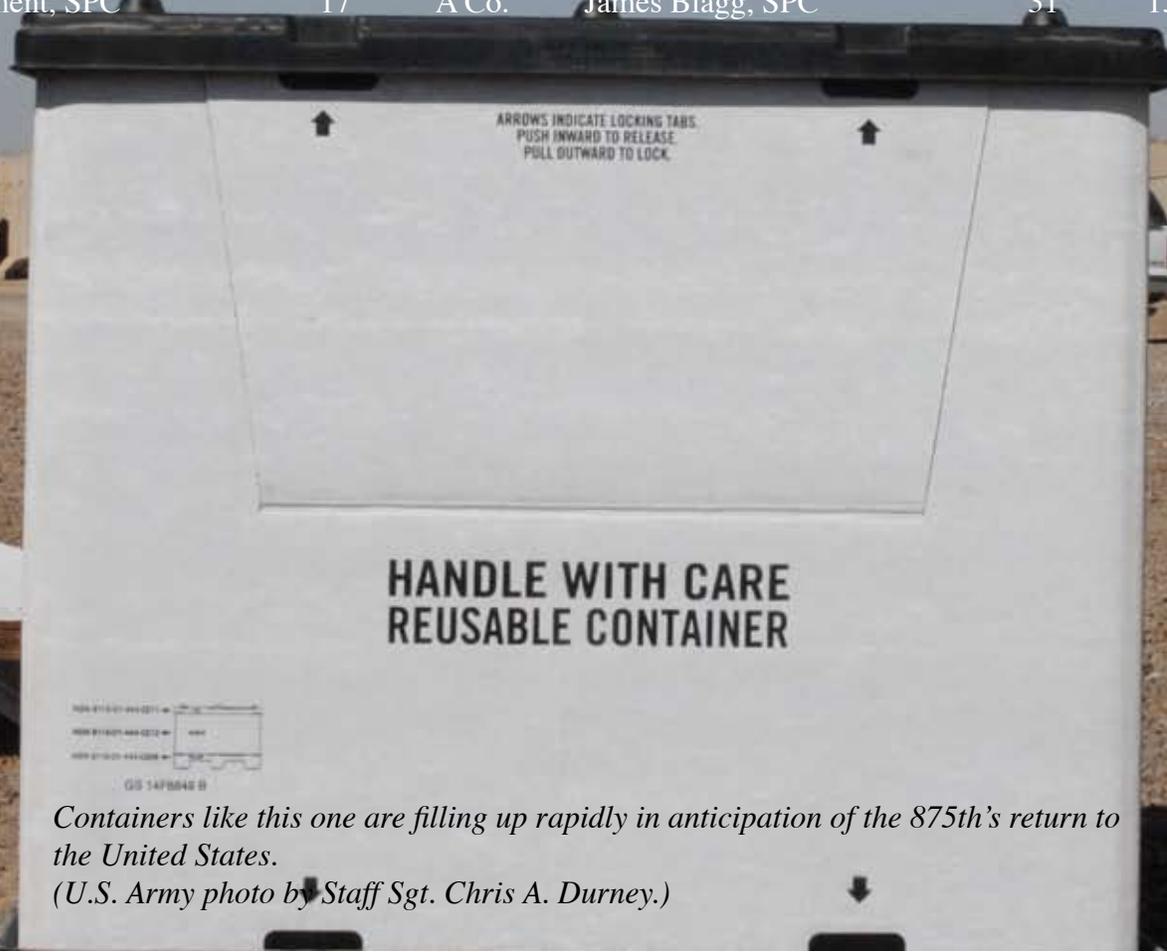
Blessings!!



Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Golaway on the steps of the ziggurat in the ancient and biblical city of Ur, which is near Tallil, Iraq. Ur is the biblical home of Abraham, the father of three monastic faiths.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Chris Durney, SSG	01	HHC	Mikel Brooks, SPC	17	131st
Joshua D. Beasley, SPC	02	C Co.	Ronald Brinkley, PFC	17	131st
Justin Bagley, SPC	02	A Co.	Austin Phillips, SPC	18	A Co.
Rickey Walker, SGT	05	HHC	Duane Hardesty, SPC	18	A Co.
Douglas Croft, SGT	06	C Co.	Kevin Pohl, SGT	18	A Co.
Jonathan Duckett, SPC	06	HHC	Levi Crawford, SPC	19	A Co.
Erin Sulham, SPC	07	HHC	Rhonda Riley, SPC	19	HHC
Marcus Hutto, SSG	07	A Co.	Timothy Augustine	19	131st
Larry Johnson, SSG	08	C Co.	Adam Carmichael, PV2	20	A Co.
Michael Wiley, SPC	08	A Co.	Henry Herring, SPC	20	HHC
Nicholas Cox, PFC	08	C Co.	Wesley Gautreaux, SGT	21	131st
Phillip Simpson, SPC	08	C Co.	William Percifull, SSG	21	C Co.
Shannon Reed, SPC	08	131st	Krik Wortham, SGT	22	HHC
Brandon Boone, SPC	09	C Co.	Scott Whitney, SGT	22	HHC
Michael Smithson, SGT	09	131st	Brian Cowan, SPC	23	A Co.
Steven Parker, PFC	10	C Co.	Bradley Smart, 1LT	27	C Co.
Patrick Barbarrow, SGT	11	C Co.	Scottie Drawbaugh, SPC	27	C Co.
Steven Woodall, SPC	13	A Co.	Adam Holcomb, SGT	28	131st
Melissa Rawson, SGT	16	HHC	Eric Bouchard, SGT	28	131st
Jeffery Foster, SPC	17	131st	Joshua R. Beasley, SGT	29	131st
Jerry Dement, SPC	17	A Co.	James Blagg, SPC	31	131st



Containers like this one are filling up rapidly in anticipation of the 875th's return to the United States.

(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney.)

Route clearance team rescues five from vehicle accident

875th engineers aid injured Iraqi Soldiers

An 875th Engineer Battalion route clearance team rendered aid to five Iraq Army Soldiers injured when their armored vehicle flipped along a major supply route near Balad August 16. A sixth Iraqi was killed in the single vehicle accident.

According to official reports, a 2nd Platoon, A Company, route clearance patrol arrived on the scene at about 10:15 the morning of August 16. The up armored Iraqi Army patrol vehicle experienced a front tire blow out, which flipped the truck into a nearby ditch and ejected an Iraqi Soldier.

Sgt. Patrick Hart, Sgt. Richard Isom and medic Spc. James Werner quickly dismounted from their armored Buffalo and rendered first aid to the injured Iraqi men. All five were flown via a U.S. Army Blackhawk air ambulance to a hospital in Baghdad for treatment.

The U.S. route clearance team was able to use a winch mounted on one of their armored vehicles to pull the flipped truck upright and off of the ejected Iraqi, who was dead at the scene. The rest of the patrol team provided a security cordon around the accident site until the injured were medivaced and the area secured by additional American troops.

The Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion is attached to the active Army's 20th Engineer Brigade, and is 11 months into a yearlong deployment to Iraq. Soldiers from the Vermont Army National Guard's 131st Engineer Company, and the Indiana Army National Guard's 1313th Engineer Company augment the 500-man unit. The 875th is charged with a critical assured mobility mission, which includes route clearance, route sanitation, rapid crater repair and culvert denial operations.



An Iraqi Army armored patrol vehicle lies off the side of a major supply route near Balad after flipping due to a tire blow out. An Alpha Company patrol aided five injured Iraqi Soldiers in the August 16 accident.



875th Engineer Battalion motor officer Kenneth Baker receives his new rank of Chief Warrant Officer 5 from Col. Patricia Anslow, battalion commander, at an August 2 ceremony at Camp Striker, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney.)

Chief Baker promoted to CW5

Kenneth Baker, 875th Engineer Battalion motor officer, was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer 5 at an August 2 ceremony at Camp Striker, Iraq.

Col. Patricia Anslow, the battalion commander, pinned the new rank on Baker outside of the 875th's headquarters building. She then congratulated Baker for doing a great job keeping the battalion's assorted vehicles in top working condition.

"Chief, you've done an exemplary job and you're a real asset to the battalion," said Anslow. "Way to go, you deserve this promotion and we're all proud to have you here with us."

In addition to being one of two warrant officers in the battalion, Baker has the added distinction of being one of only three members who served tours in VietNam.

The New York native entered the active duty Army in 1967 and served in VietNam from 1968 to 1969. He left active duty in 1971 and moved to Arkansas with his wife Marie in 1974.

He went into the U.S. Army Reserve in 1983 and became an Engineering Equipment Repair Technician warrant officer in 1984. He served a second active duty tour at Fort Drum, N.Y. from 1984 to 1990, and then joined the Arkansas Army National Guard.

He first drilled with the 875th from 1995 to 2002, then he transferred to the 224th Maintenance Company out of Mountain Home, Ark. He rejoined the 875th in 2006.

As a civilian, he is a tactical support manager for Cummins Midsouth in Little Rock, Ark.

He has three sons and five grandchildren, and lives in Conway with Marie.

Charlie platoon recognized for hard work with cookout and brigade coins

Charlie Company's 4th Platoon took some deserved time out from their hard work for a July 28 cookout and brigade pat on the back.

The platoon is responsible for the 875th Engineer Battalion's route sanitation and rapid crater repair efforts in the Balad, Iraq area. Charlie Company is headquartered at Logistics Support Area Anaconda.

Col. Patricia Anslow, battalion commander, helped at the grill before taking time to thank the 4th Platoon Soldiers.

"I want to tell you all that you've done a great job and continue to do great things out on the route," said Anslow. "You deserve this day and thanks for all of



Charlie Company's Sgt. 1st Class Paul Jaques tends the grill as Col. Patricia Anslow lends a hand.

your hard work."

Brig. Gen. Michael Silva, 411th Engineer Brigade commander, also stopped by to spend some time with the troops and thank them for their efforts.

"I'm especially proud to have commanded great Soldiers like yourselves," said Silva. "Your dedication to the mission is a testament to the Engineer Corps. and the 411th."

Several members of the platoon, including platoon leader 1st Lt. Stephen Spencer, received brigade coins in recognition for their assured mobility accomplishments. The Soldiers enjoyed their break by playing basketball, 'hillbilly golf' and horseshoes.



Brig. Gen. Michael Silva, 411th Engineer Brigade commander thanks members of 4th Platoon.

Charlie Co.

As we are hard at it and continue to work and stay focused on the mission at hand, the time is flying by. It continues to stay hot and that is always a concern. You should be very proud of what your loved one has done for the people of Iraq; it will be a long road for them. If you look back in history, you will see that after the Declaration of Independence was signed, it was years until our country was standing on its own. It will be no different here and I'm sure that we can't look for it to be fixed in a year, but we sure have made a step toward that end.

As we wind things down and start to prepare our replacements, I ask that you throw up a few extra prayers. We will do the same for you because I know school is about to start.

Company Corner continued from page 5

I talked last time of the little things we miss of home. It is the little things here that we can not miss in order to set our replacements up for success. Without a doubt, it is prayer that has gotten us this far and it will be prayer that brings us home. I thank you for all you do and ask that you look to each other for support over these last few weeks. The guys are staying focused on the mission while looking forward to the end of the tour. It is amazing how hard everyone here works. To be able to stay focused and excited to serve is a true gift.

It won't be long now!! Keep the faith and remember us all. Thanks for the support. Oh, you may want to stop mailing us boxes; they may not make it. Smiles!!

Dinkens re-ups for six while on patrol

Spc. Mathew Dinkens added six years to his hitch in the Indiana Army National Guard while on a mission in Iraq August 11.

Dinkens is currently deployed as a member of 4th Platoon, Charlie Company of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion. The 875th is 11 months into a yearlong deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Charlie Company operates out of Logistics Support Area Anaconda.

Soldiers from the Indiana Army National Guard's 1313 Engineer Company and the Vermont Army National Guard's 131st Engineer Company augment the 500-man battalion.

1st Lt. Stepher Spencer, 4th Platoon leader, administered the oath of enlistment to Dinkens during a culvert denial mission on a main supply route near Balad. An American flag that Spencer carries with him on all of his missions was used as a backdrop for the brief ceremony.

Dinkens turns 27 in September and is a full time technician with the Indiana National Guard.



Spc. Mathew Dinkens, center, is administered the oath of enlistment by 1st Lt. Stepher Spencer along a main supply route near Balad, Iraq August 10. Dinkens re-enlisted in the Indiana Army National Guard for six years. He is currently assigned to 4th Platoon, Charlie Company of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion. The 875th is 11 months into a yearlong deployment to the Iraqi theatre of operations. (Photo provided by Charlie Company.)



Col. Patricia Anslow, 875th Engineer Battalion commander, promotes Greg Sutton to Sergeant.

Sutton promoted

Greg Sutton of Beebe, Ark., received his Sergeant stripes July 21 in a ceremony at Camp Striker, Iraq. Sutton is a Military Intelligence Analyst with the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion, which is currently on deployment.

Sutton is a graduate of Beebe High School and joined the Guard in March 2004. He was a student at Arkansas State University at Beebe before deploying with the 875th.



Spc. Jeffrey Brown, left, is administered the oath of enlistment by Capt. Kovar Petersen, 875th Engineer Battalion communications officer, Aug. 14, 2007.

Brown adds to hitch

Spc. Jeffrey Brown of Colechester, Vt., re-enlisted in the Vermont Army National Guard for six years August 14 at Camp Striker, Iraq.

Brown is a computer network technician with the 875th Engineer Battalion, which is 11 months into a yearlong deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Vermont Army National Guard's 131st Engineer Company is attached to the 875th for this deployment.

Like father, like son

Gary Vest pins Randy Vest at OCS graduation



Officer Candidate School graduate Randy Vest, of Fayetteville, Ark., gets his new rank of 2nd Lieutenant pinned on his shoulder during his class graduation ceremony on Saturday, Aug. 18.

Vest was pinned by his father, Sgt. Garry Vest, who was home on leave from service in Iraq with the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion.

A resident of Bald Knob, the elder Vest served 30 years as an officer himself, successfully holding the rank of colonel prior to mandatory retirement as an officer.

The younger vest was one of 16 Arkansas Guard members graduating with the 50th anniversary class of the Arkansas Army National Guard's Officer Candidate School at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock.

(U.S. Army photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott, Arkansas National Guard state public affairs officer.)

'From The Top' continued from page 4

And some in America, perhaps some in the battalion may still be asking why? As we celebrated Independence Day last month and we recall the significance of Women's Equality Day in August I know exactly why we must be here fighting and sacrificing. We live in the greatest nation in the world. We have embraced democracy and we are the world's foremost champions for equality, freedom, justice, and prosperity. Unfortunately, there are some people in this world who want to do nothing else but ensure our version of government and society is destroyed. We can not take our freedoms for granted. We must show the enemy that we are willing to take the fight to them before they bring it back to us. Never forget September 11, 2001.

Thank you for all that you do, every day. God bless Indiana, Vermont, Arkansas and the friends and family of the 875th Engineer Battalion.

Essayons – Ready and Willing!

Col. Patricia Anslow



Like sister, like brother: Pvt. 2nd Class Jeremy Marcoc, 3rd Squad, 2nd Cavalry, 84th Engineers, visits his sister Spc. Tamra Marcoc, 875th Engineer Battalion, at Camp Striker, Iraq. The younger Marcoc's unit was transitioning through the forward operating base near Baghdad where his sister has been deployed for 11 months. Tamara is a medic with Headquarters, Headquarters Company of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th. Both are from Russellville, Ark. *(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney.)*