

STEEL SPIKE EXPRESS

Halfway
there!

ADSEQUOR - "TO ACHIEVE"



As the "Steel Spike" Battalion reaches the half-way mark of their deployment, big changes are on the horizon.

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Officer Professional Development events take "Steel Spike" leadership's learning to new heights.
See inside for more information.

It's time to 'show what you know' as Soldiers and NCOs face the panel of judges at promotion & "NCO & Soldier of the Month" boards.





Commander's Observations

Hello again to all the Family and Friends of the Steel Spike Battalion! The last 30 days have seen a tremendous amount of change here and back home. Following the inauguration of President Obama, the Battalion supported the Iraqi citizen's provincial elections which as you all know occurred without violence here in Baghdad, quite a difference from the elections held during my last tour in Iraq in 2005. Here in Baghdad, the peaceful elections created a feeling of hope and confidence that the improvement in security, the growth of businesses, and the restoration of basic services would continue, and the streets of Baghdad visibly reflect this optimism. There is still a great amount of engineer effort required, and a threat still exists, but progress is undeniable. Our Soldier's efforts have made a difference, and all of us can be proud of how we have fulfilled the role our Nation has asked us to perform.



LTC Matthew Zajac
Battalion Commander
46th ECB (H)

Another reason to be proud is that the hard work and professionalism of the Steel Spike Battalion's leaders, Soldiers, and units is now formally recognized across the Army. The United States Army Reserve Command recognized the 955 Engineer Company as the Army Reserve's Best Engineer Company 2008 and selected 1LT Christopher Smiley as the Army Reserve's Outstanding Engineer Platoon Leader 2008. On the Active Duty side, the continental United States nominations for the final Active Duty Army-wide competition were Bravo Company as the Best Engineer Company 2008 and WO1 Jellison as the Outstanding Engineer Warrant Officer for 2008. The Battalion also placed in the top three in all other Active Duty categories - 1LT Michael E. Cirillo second place Outstanding Engineer Platoon Leader 2008; SFC James D. Dean third place Best Engineer Noncommissioned Officer 2008; and SPC Levar J. Hayter third place Outstanding Engineer Soldier 2008. These awards are a testament to the quality of our Soldiers and leaders, and to their Families who have supported them throughout their careers. I am humbled to be commanding a unit that received such high recognition from the Engineer Regiment.

We have passed the half-way there mark for the Battalion's deployment, and we have been successful because we have maintained our standards and actively supported one another. I want to thank our team of the Rear Detachment and the FRG leaders and volunteers who continue to do wonders in coordinating events and supporting the needs of Families. We could not be successful here without the support of the Rear Detachment, the FRGs, and our Families. I want to specially recognize Mrs. Shari Baye and her selection as the Fort Polk Volunteer of the Month. With all of us working together, and our collected experiences of the last eight months, I'm confident that we can overcome any challenge as our deployment approaches its completion.

STEEL SPIKE – ONE TEAM!



Spike 6 awards BN coins to the broadcasters, journalists and reporters of 4ID's Media Operations Center, 18 Jan.



"Steel Spike" officers receive a wealth of knowledge from the Gulf Region District of USACE.



CSM's View

The Battalion had another great month with several promotions and nine Soldiers being recommended for promotion to Sergeant. Bravo Company once again has edged out the rest of the Battalion to maintain the NCO and Soldier of the month. The Battalion gym is now opened and has been named the "BODYSHOP". I want to thank the Alpha Company electricians and all of the Soldiers who volunteered their free time to see this project through. I will include some pictures of the gym in the next newsletter. The Soldiers, as usual continue to daily do the impossible. Steel Spike Soldiers played a major role in setting the conditions necessary to insure the elections held in Baghdad were able to occur safely. I hope everyone has recovered from the Holidays and thanks as always for your support.

Spike 7



CSM Frank Thibodeau
BN CSM
46th ECB (H)

PA's/Chaplain's Corner

Ankle Sprains

Ankle sprains are common injuries. They usually happen when the ankle "turns in" more than it should. Ligaments connect the bones of the ankle together. When a ligament is stretched or torn, a "sprained" ankle is the result.

What can I do to prevent ankle sprains?



CPT Troy Bidez
BN Physician's Assistant

- Stretch before and after you exercise.
- Do special exercises that strengthen the muscles around your ankle. Handouts available in the Aid Station.
- Do special exercises to improve your balance.
- If you have had ankle problems before, ask your PA about taping your ankle or wearing an ankle brace.



CPT Wagner unloads a truck full of school supplies for little children at Al Magrieb Al Araby School, 15 Jan.



HSC "SPARTANS"

We are half way there!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Can you believe how time truly flies? Noticing the warm temperatures really made me think, wow it's turning spring again. This is significant because we deployed in the summer and spring is already upon us. I reflected back to getting to Fort Polk amidst HSC preparing for deployment, inventories and connexes being packed, a fairly new staff. Spouses worried about the deployment, some saying to themselves "I don't know if I can do this."

We deployed to Iraq and hit the ground running at full speed. The battalion at one point was managing 22 lines of effort at one time!!! We went from M114s (HMMWVs) to MRAPs (Mine Resistant Ambush Protectant), some M16s to M4s, Iraqi Security Agreement, newly elected President, and a junior staff to a more experienced senior staff. The list goes on endlessly of the changes we have experienced here in Iraq.

I am sure there have been equally monumental changes happening for the Families in the states such as births, 1st steps, 1st words, 1st hair cuts, changing the living room around and the list goes on and on. This deployment has been like a roller coaster ride. We all waited in line impatiently, got on the ride, strapped in and prepared ourselves, and waited in anticipation as the ride clicked slowly up the steep slope, through all the good and bad, here we are....at the top of the peak....HALF WAY THERE!!!!

Hold on for the ride!!! We still have more work to do! We can't get complacent or lose focus of our missions as Soldiers and Family members. We have to stay strong through the end. I am so proud of all the Soldiers and Families for staying strong and disciplined through it all.

Please take the opportunity to contact Mrs. Shari Baye (337-208-3045), the Spartan FRG leader for any updates or events. And as always, "It's a Family Affair"!

SPARTANS!! Never Retreat!!!



CPT Angela Smoot
HSC Commander
46th ECB (H)



1SG Steven Hall
HSC First Sergeant
46th ECB (H)



SPC Armenta helps unload a truck of school supplies for Iraqi children.



MAJ Stinnett & CPT Beal (B CO) discuss the water treatment plant process during an OPD, 6 Feb.



The tunnel crew at the Vernon/Sword mission.



EQ PLT supporting A Co, 4th ID mission



2LT Riggio gets promoted to 1LT.



46th ECB (H) officers visit a USACE construction site during their tour, 6 Feb.



EQ Soldiers staging pavement at the Vernon Bridge site.



ALPHA "GATORS"

Greetings from Baghdad,

February marks the end of nearly two years as the A/46th ECB (H) commander. Command was a rewarding and challenging experience that I will cherish. I have enjoyed working with all of you during my command, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your extraordinary effort and support. Allow me to introduce my replacement, CPT Reyn Landreth:

Hello Gator Family and Friends! I am extremely happy to be the new commander. In my previous job as the S-3 Construction officer, I saw firsthand the significant contributions the Gators are making to win hearts and minds and defeat the insurgency. This month, we managed to transition company leadership with all of cumbersome inspections and turnover while simultaneously continuing our general engineering support missions. Our Soldiers met the challenge, and I was very impressed with their energy and enthusiasm.

Our Task Force Gold Forward Security Team continues to provide security for the Engineers chartered to oversee the contracts to improve the Iraqi infrastructure. In all, the security element supported over 110 missions, improving the lives of literally hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens.

The Gators also found time to improve the lives of the other Soldiers deployed in support of OIF. They completed a building renovation, erected a statue in front of the 4ID Headquarters, and replaced a structurally-unsound staircase that allowed for access to the roof of the facility. The roof was previously only accessible by crawling out of a window!

Our Soldiers are doing amazing things every day, but we cannot do it without your continued support. I want to thank each of you for all you do back home so that we can remain focused on accomplishing our mission over here. You are the unsung heroes of the deployment. I look forward to meeting each of you in the future and wish you a Happy Valentine's Day.

Over halfway there.....Steel Spike!...and GO GATORS!



CPT Reyn Landreth
A Co. Commander
46th ECB (H)



1SG David Roman
A Co. First Sergeant
46th ECB (H)



MAJ Stinnett and 1SG Roman posing with the 6th Iraqi Army Soldiers at Muthana airfield.



SPC Kindhart teaches a sniper mitigation class to the BN NCOs.



LTC Goolsby congratulates 1LT Tate on her recent promotion



SFC Wright and SGT Ballentine review all the materials for an upcoming project.



1LT Cirillo re-enlists SPC Reisenberg



CPT Heenan promotes SPC Secrest



BRAVO "BEAST"

Hello BEAST Families and friends!

It gives me great pleasure to announce that we are over hill on the deployment timeline. Over the past eight months the BEAST have performed like a well tuned machine! The month of February has also been a very productive month. The Earth Moving Platoon's project quality assurance and quality control mission has come to an end. They are now performing horizontal and more engineer specific task. Our Head Quarters and Maintenance Platoons have both lead the way in reorganizing personal and equipment because of our recent mission change.

Over the past two months 1st Platoon labored in a dusty old potato chip, biscuit and candy factory. When their project was completed the office and living space of the old building had been expanded over 23,000 square feet. 2nd Platoon was selected to construct a three tier Iraqi and U.S. joint command center.

They worked alongside the Iraqi Army Soldiers and received numerous praises from the Battalion, Brigade and Division commanders. Needless to say this past month has been extremely busy.



CPT Christopher Beal
B Co. Commander
46th ECB (H)



1SG Gregory Williams
B Co. First Sergeant
46th ECB (H)

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EM PLT, SPC Rovig, at JSS Doura Access Road



1st PLT, SPC Hoaks, working on a panel box at FOB Shield



**Maintenance Platoon Soldiers working with
6th Iraqi Army Soldiers.**



SPC Richardson working with the Iraqi Army mechanics.



**Working with the Iraqi Army Engineers on furniture for the
Baghdad Operations Center (BOCAT)**



**2nd Platoon at the Baghdad Operations Center ribbon cutting
ceremony.**



955th EN CO "CLYDESDALES"

CPT Lauver:



CPT Crystal Lauver
955th EN Co. Commander

Hello to all friends and family! The 955th Engineer Company continues to stay busy with missions and now redeployment preparations! Most recently, 1st Platoon completed a retention pond at JSS Ur to keep the area dry for Soldiers to live there, 2nd Platoon finished a new motor pool area at JSS Ghaz I, and Support Platoon returned from JSS Tharwa I after a successful Route Sanitation mission. Our Headquarters and Maintenance platoons have been busy getting all necessary paperwork completed and ready for the new unit. We can't wait to do a final countdown and get back to the States!

SFC(P) Gibbs:

We want to thank all the family and friends for their tremendous support during this deployment! As the month winds down, we are all very excited to see everyone again. Our Soldiers have been staying very busy, which makes time fly by. Our Soldiers will soon be busy again, packing equipment and getting it ready to ship back home. Our replacements, the 277th Engineer Company, has been in contact and are excited to start their mission here as well. We look forward to seeing everyone soon!



1SG Matthew Gibbs
955th EN Co.
First Sergeant

ENGINEER COMPANY



SPC McElreath and SPC Beasley recertify for CLS.



**SSG Eftink , 1LT Smiley and 1LT Long enjoy
the fire at Sapper Call.**



**SFC Torres presents SSG Lopez with a Retention Award for
Excellence**



Promotion ceremony for new NCO's.



SFC Fraine and CPT Lauver check serial numbers.



SSG Rice receives an impact award for Ali's Shop construction.

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SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS



CPT Taylor re-enlists SSG Orange.



**SGT Davis, B CO
"NCO of the Month"**



1LT Long re-enlists SPC Cantu.



**A Co—1LT Cirillo, M., SFC Bennett and
MSG Jackson receive an ARCOM fr
926th EN BDE**



**SPC Falcon, B CO,
"Soldier of the Month"**



CPT Smoot re-enlists SPC Brown



46th ECB (H) Welcomes 277th EN CO

The 277th EN CO "Dirt Devils" arrived in Kuwait 17 FEB 09.



CPT Robbins, Commander 277th EN CO



**CPT Cowlin, CPT Robbins & 1SG Thomas
Fleischhauer at the Key Leader's meeting.**



**PFC Dutkiewicz & SGT Merced - Medics
discussing upcoming medical training .**

For photo submissions contact your FRG leader or email me: laverne.taylor1@mnd-b.army.mil.



Steel Spike Birthdays & Fun

March

3/2 SGT Jones, Ian	3/17 CPT Cowlin
3/3 SGT Wallace	3/18 SPC Blas
3/3 SPC Hoaks	3/19 SGT Wright
3/4 SSG Davis	3/20 SSG Pankonin
3/4 SPC Armenta	3/20 SPC Thrailkill
3/5 SPC Kelsey	3/21 Jones, James
3/6 SGT Dusenberry	3/21 CPT Taylor
3/6 SPC Cravens	3/22 1SG Williams
3/7 SGT Howard	3/22 SPC Roller
3/8 SPC Herlick	3/25 PFC Porrier
3/9 SSG Woods	3/22 SGT Pollom
3/10 PFC Welch	3/24 PFC Domingue
3/11 Jones, Brian	3/26 SSG Rogers
3/11 SGT Eugin	3/26 SSG Eftink
3/11 PV2 Cervantes	3/26 SPC DeMarchi
3/12 SGT Workman	3/27 SGt Bock
3/13 PFC Zadra	3/28 SPC Prenger
3/15 SSG Gannon	3/28 LTC Zajac
3/15 SPC Cummings	3/28 CPL Mena
3/17 SGT Sweet	3/30 SPC Lourie
3/17 SPC Pritchett	3/30 SPC Rhea



HSC shows their Valentine's Day shout out from the FRG.



A Co receives some Valentine's Day greetings.



955th—SSG Collins enjoys a Valentine's Day cookie.

Congratulations to
SFC Coleman (S6), winner of
the "Spartan Fantasy
Football
League!"



A Word from the FRG



"Steel Spike" kids play "Simon Says" @ the Half-way there party.



Connor McIlquham says: "It's almost time to see daddy!"



Kelly, Shari, Lisa & Tekesha are recognized by Shannon Wagner for their continued support.



Mrs. Fontenot & SSG Matthews enjoy the Christmas Party @ Fort Polk.



Mrs. Shari Baye receives the "Volunteer of the Month" award for February from COL Sage.



Mrs. Fletcher give s Mrs. Fontenote a hug @ the Halfway There party held @ Fort Polk.



Sharise Spellmon & Shannon Wagner.



Participants take a seat while playing the "Have you ever?" game at the Half-way there party held at Fort Polk.

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Mrs. McIlquham holds up her gift.



Shari Baye & Lisa Otto hold up their red engineer castles.



Luilani & Daddy.



The Nelson kids say: "Hey daddy!!!"

The 46th ECB (H) is having a Blanket Drive for Iraqi citizens.

Send new or slightly used blankets to:

CH Wagner, CPT Landreth or 1LT Yarber

HSC, 46th ECB (H)

APO AE 09344

(Also accepting: stuffed animals, soccer balls & children's clothing/shoes).



HSC & A CO FRG members enjoy a night of bowling!



46th kids enjoy a night of bowling @ Fort Polk.



More photos from the A CO & HSC Bowling Night event from 2008.



Taking a break from bowling during the FRG event.

FRG LEADERS

NAME	COMPANY	CONTACT #	E-MAIL
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GINGER SALTZ	955TH EN CO	573-433-6460	ginger.e.saltz@us.army.mil

KEY FRSA

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REAR DETACHMENT CDRs

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2LT ROHMAN, JOSEPH	955TH EN CO	417-894-9998	joseph.rohman@usarmy.mil