

August 2009



# STEEL SPIKE EXPRESS



ADSEQUOR - "TO ACHIEVE"

## Heading Home!



The 46th ECB (H) team prepares to Transfer Authority to the 101st Engineer Battalion and lower the "Steel Spike" flag, after a 15 month tour in Iraq.

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SFC James Dean is inducted into the "Audie Murphy Club"— one of the most prestigious Army organizations and the pinnacle of NCO Leadership.





# Commander's Observations

## Family and Friends!

As I write this we are just about 48 hours away from saying farewell to our first group of Soldiers redeploying home! The last few weeks have been busy with packing returning equipment, preparing for our replacements' arrival, and now with passing our experience and practices on to their team. Just as we were, they are eager to take charge of the mission and I know that our Soldiers have done their best to make them successful.

As I look around at our Soldiers and reflect on what we have accomplished, I am amazed by their changes. Soldiers who were Privates now wear Specialist rank, many have earned the right to wear the stripes of the non-commissioned officer, and we have even been fortunate to witness the selection and promotion of some of our own to the senior rank of Master Sergeant. The very young team of officers that deployed are now seasoned Captains. All of us are veterans.

These changes are reflected back at home too. Children have been born, some have graduated high school, spouses have taken first jobs or new jobs, Families have lost loved ones or are dealing with illness. Many have settled into homes and surroundings away from Fort Polk.

Change is a good thing - it provides opportunity and challenges us to excel - but it also brings risk. All of us have been changed by the long deployment, and I ask all of us to have patience and understanding with each other as we reunite and work through and adjust to new surroundings, reuniting as Families, and enjoying some of the freedoms that we have foregone while deployed. Throughout the last long months we have been successful because we have watched out for one another and taken care of one another - this should not change simply because we are ending this deployment.

Wherever we are, we are always "One Team," and one Army Family.

**SPIKE6**



LTC Matthew Zajac  
Battalion Commander  
46th ECB (H)



LTC Zajac & CSM Thibodeau thank dining facility and laundry workers for their dedicated service to the 46th ECB (H), during the past 15 months of deployment.





## CSM's View

First let me say it was a tremendous honor to serve you as your Command Sergeant Major and I truly want to thank everyone for their efforts and the sacrifices you gave in support of Battalion and its mission.

Looking back, I know we all enjoyed our extended pleasant stay in Kuwait, but we were able to receive some outstanding advanced medical and weapons training. The weather and the relentless dust storms however sure did have a way of making Soldiers want to get to Iraq.

You quickly assumed the mission from the 769<sup>th</sup> and never looked back; unbelievable best describes the amount of missions which you accomplished regardless of the conditions. The Battalions has been blessed with the best Medics, Mechanics, Communicators, Human Resource Personnel, Surveyors and Logisticians the Army has to offer. The Non Commissioned Officers and Officers and Soldiers of this Battalion were the most respected and requested in the entire MND-B, I can't count the number of phone calls or the emails in which battle space owners relayed compliments and gratitude for the work you had done.

The one thing you should be the proudest of was the Battalions success in the counter IED fight. The brave contributions the Soldiers of the Battalion played in the defeat of IEDs and EFPs impacted every unit in the Baghdad area of operations. Steel Spike Soldiers logged in thousands of miles and hours on the roads of Baghdad, in order to ensure safe travel and deny the enemy the ability to emplace IEDs. The miles of sniper screen emplaced on the Joint Security Stations have saved countless lives. The Battalions electricians worked at times, up to eighteen hour a day to correct unsafe wiring. The new construction, renovations and force protection work done by the Vertical and Horizontal platoons made life safer and provided a better quality of life for US Soldiers.

The partnership and training you provided our fellow Iraqi Engineers was phenomenal, you trained them on all aspects of engineering. The Iraqi engineers no doubt will be ready when we transition, to conduct independent operations because of you and your commitment to enable them.

The Battalion also was a major player in the stability of Sadr City and the Rusafa district of Baghdad. Daily you conducted mounted and dismounted patrols thru some of the worst neighborhood s in Baghdad in order to support reconstruction efforts for the Iraqi people.

To the Soldiers of the 955<sup>th</sup> and 277<sup>th</sup> Engineer Companies thanks for being a part of the team you all bring a very unique ability as well as an expertise that you willing shared to enhance the Battalions capabilities.

To the Soldiers of the Battalion all I can say is THANK YOU -for being the BEST, I can truly say I have the best job in the Army because of you and who and what you are.



CSM Frank Thibodeau  
BN CSM  
46th ECB (H)

"ONE TEAM"  
SPIKE 7

## Chaplain's/ PA's Corner



CPT Jerry Wagner  
BN Chaplain

"When I am getting ready to reason with a man I spend one third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say and two thirds about him and what he is going to say" -

Abraham Lincoln

**Proverbs 29:20 "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words?  
There is more hope for a fool than for him."**

Words are very powerful, and sometimes things we say are not easily retracted. I encourage you to choose your words wisely and consider the implication and reaction before you speak. This is especially true for those of us reuniting with family members and loved ones.

## ALCOHOLISM

So we are going home. I'm sure many of you are thinking, "I cant wait to get a beer". That's fine, you deserve it. But, don't let it get the best of you by trying to drink all the beer that you missed out on for the past 15 months.

**ALCOHOLISM** is defined as-A psychological and physiological dependence on alcohol, resulting in chronic disease and disruption of interpersonal, family, and work relationships.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Use alcohol in moderation—if at all—to provide a healthy role model. Set limits, drink slowly, dilute drinks and don't drink alone. Help a spouse, friend, or co-worker to admit when an alcohol problem exists, and seek help.



CPT Troy Bidez  
BN Physician's Assistant



# HSC "SPARTANS"

Hello again, Spartans and Spartan Families!

I write this newsletter segment as the last one of our long, successful tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Spartan Soldiers are leaving Iraq immeasurably stronger, more skilled and talented; even the more seasoned combat veterans show that the adversity of deployment and the chaos to which we brought order have improved everyone's skill sets. We have learned from each other, from enduring the merciless Iraqi sun, and from all the missions we have accomplished. It has been an honor and a privilege to lead these fine Soldiers as we transition out of Iraq.



CPT Kimberly Cowlin  
HSC Commander

The timing of our return could not be better, with Labor Day weekend coming up! We will truly miss grilling out with frozen meat, surrounded by blowing dust and concrete barriers; but the time we will enjoy at Alligator Lake, Toledo Bend, and other beautiful recreation spots with family and friends will be priceless.

The weather back home will be a welcome relief from the 110+ temperatures we have endured for two summers, and the green, green grass of home will be a great replacement for the dirt and uneven rocks we walk on everywhere we go.

Most of all, we will just be glad to be back among friends and the family that we miss most. When we get back, it'll feel good to say...finally: 'Mission Accomplished.'



1SG Steven Hall  
HSC First Sergeant

**CPT Cowlin &  
1SG Hall  
SPARTANS  
Never Retreat!**





HSC ADVON receive their Iraqi Campaign Medals.



WO1 Jellison is promoted to CW2 and takes the Oath of Office, 21 August.



SGT Jones, CSM Thibodeau, SPC Fontenot & SGT Lopez have their photo taken at the Taji bridge site.



The Battalion CST receives their Iraqi Campaign Medals.



MND-B CSM Malloy inducts 1SG Hall, SFC Dean & CSM Thibodeau into the MND-B Chapter of the Audie Murphy Club, 15 August.

Spartans!





# ALPHA "GATORS"

*"We are different, in essence, from other men. If you want to win something, run 100 meters. If you want to experience something, run a marathon." Emil Zatopek*

Hello from Baghdad, Gator Nation!

August is here and I feel like I just sprinted a marathon. As I type this, your Gators are using the last month in theater to continue making contributions to improve the quality of life for the Brigade Combat Teams we support in Multi-National Division Baghdad.

The "Reapers" of First Platoon are scurrying to finish renovating an old warehouse into 2-story living quarters for 2-5 CAV Second Platoon, "Dirty Deuces," is putting the finishing touches on the nine facilities including a Dining Facility, a Gym, a troop store, and storage facilities they built in support of 2-5 CAV. The Earth Movers of the infamous "Gator Pit" just upgraded a range to meet 1<sup>st</sup> CAV Division standards to give the Soldiers at a remote Joint Security Station south of Baghdad a premier training facility while simultaneously keeping the Iraqi farmers that work the surrounding farmland safe.

The Company Convoy Security Team continues to push Soldiers, construction materials, equipment, and supplies to logistically fuel the tempo. Even though the end is in site, your Gators are picking up the pace towards the finish line.

In the months ahead, you will undoubtedly hear the accolades, the war stories, and the stuff "Operation Iraqi Freedom legends" are made of, but allow me to be one of the first to tell you how proud I am of your Gator Soldier. Each Soldier made contributions to ensure that our mission here was completed—safely and to standard.

The numbers speak for themselves: over 150 construction missions completed since June 2008 all in support of U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces in order to restore a sense of normalcy and a commitment to democracy in Iraq. We could not have done this without the love and support of our families back home.



CPT Reyn Landreth  
A CO Commander

Special thanks to Mrs. Lisa Otto and all of our Family Readiness Group volunteers who took care of things back there, so we could focus on our business here.

Just like a marathon, your Soldier will need time to rest and recuperate. Take advantage of the Army Community Service Couples Training and other reintegration tips to ensure a smooth transition.

It's been a long race, and we're finishing strong.

See you soon!

**GATOR STRONG. GATOR PROUD!**

**-Gator 6**

Hello Gator Family,

This month another page in history has been written for the Alpha Gators with the completion of our 15-month deployment in support of OIF 08-10. Alpha Company has completed 105 vertical, horizontal, route sanitation and other special projects, along with over 200 security missions throughout Baghdad. Some projects were completed with the Iraqi Army Engineers jointly working side by side with the Gator Soldiers, creating a bond between the Iraqi Military and the United States Army.

When I took over as the 1SG for the Alpha Gators, I started researching the history of Alpha Company for the past 60 years and realized that there is hardly any history recorded.

Our company historian, SGT Sanders, has been diligently compiling all our project articles, newsletters and Soldier's interviews to archive all our hard work for the past 15 months. A copy of this history will be placed in the battalion's history case for all future Soldiers to see.



1SG Tracy Jackson  
A CO First Sergeant



The more I researched, the more I realized I needed to do something for Alpha Company to be remembered forever. And since the company will be transforming into a vertical company in early 2010, I decided to create the coin above that each Soldier of Alpha Company (past, present and attached that is still in battalion), will receive for their part in the making of Alpha's history.

Early 2010 we will close the book of history on Alpha Gators forever.

I want to thank the FRG and rear detachment for the support you have given all the Alpha Gator families and Soldiers for the past 15 months. "Gator Strong, Gator Proud!" Respectfully, **1SG Tracy Jackson "Gator 7"**



August 2009

Steel Spike Express

**Gators!**



“Gators” pose for photos after receiving their End of Tour awards and Iraqi Campaign Medals.



CPL Nathan Hoover from “Reaper” PLT, uses a router during construction of troop living quarters. The project required the renovation of an old warehouse.



HQ PLT poses for a photo after receiving their End of Tour awards and Iraqi Campaign Medals.



SPC Joshua Higdon of the “Dirty Deuces” PLT, uses a nail gun to sheath flooring for a troop store in support of 2-5 CAV.





# BRAVO "BEAST"

Beast Families and friends!

I would first like to commend every Soldier to my left and right who have and displayed unquestionable patriotism and selfless service for their country. Despite being deployed many have battled several issues on the homefront and stood steadfast by putting mission first and living the Seven Army Values (Loyalty, Duty, Honor, Respect, Selfless Service, Integrity, & Personal Courage).

As the finish line comes within the reach of our finger tips over 160 BEAST Soldiers, Family members, and friends join together in the welcoming home our Soldiers. The command team would like to thank all of those who have stood by and supported us. We have had a successful Operation Iraqi Freedom mission only because of your words of encouragement, prayers, letters, team work, dedication, care packages, loyalty, patience, and countless other things have all pushed our Soldiers and allowed them to focus on what they do best (build).

We are very proud and excited to say our mission is "almost" complete! I say almost because it is not complete until everyone has made it back from their block leave safely. I consider the block leave portion of the deployment just as hazardous as

as the last 15 months. This phase consists of high self esteem Soldiers who have survived a long high OPTEMPO environment and may have thoughts that if they can conquer a deployment in Iraq then they are untouchable in the U.S.

Unfortunately, this is the thought process of many Soldiers redeploying from combat. Although we are in the process of emplacing a series of policy letters to detour Soldiers from getting into trouble or becoming seriously injured, I will need your help.

When our Soldiers redeploy, I'm asking that all Family members help by planning trips responsibly, ensuring they have a plan before drinking, and putting safety first in every situation.

We will see you soon!



CPT Christopher Beal  
B CO Commander



1SG Gregory Williams  
B CO First Sergeant

Feel free to visit our company website listed below  
for more pictures and monthly information:

[www.bravo46en.com](http://www.bravo46en.com)

**Lean Forward and Rock  
Steady**

**BEAST 6 & BEAST 7 OUT!**



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"Beasts!"  
"Beasts!"



Before Completion



After Completion

1st PLT takes photos before & after their Dining Facility construction mission.



SGT Worman explains the workings of locally purchased 220V outlets to BG Monconduit and LTC Zajac.



SPC Bonilla repacks his belongings after the customs inspection.



Bravo "Beast" ADVON pose for a photo after receiving their Iraqi Campaign Medals.



SSG Portes unloads his belongings for the customs inspection.





# 277th EN CO "DIRT DEVILS"

Hello Dirt Devil Families,

This month we have truly been role models in meeting the demands of a vigorous combat environment. The maintenance section continues to display impressive dedication to duty, by safely and diligently working in 110 plus temperatures to keep the company's equipment operational.

Our Communications Soldier, SPC Wasserman not only kept the automations and communications equipment running, but he was the key player in the success of three Soldiers coming off of the Remedial PT Program. Our CST continues to safeguard the movements of our equipment and Soldiers from points A to B, throughout Baghdad, Iraq.

The Equipment Platoon's versatility continues to amaze the command team after the completion of a complex mission in the heart of Baghdad, Iraq. Our supply shop even with a limited staff seems to work miracles by staying one step ahead of what is needed on a daily basis.

Our S-1 Soldier, SGT Cruz works closely with the Battalion S-1 section to ensure the Soldiers and their family's administrative needs are met. The medic of the company, SGT Merced, works along with the



CPT Gordon Robbins  
277th EN CO Commander

entire Battalion Aid Station team not only supports the day to day medical needs here on camp, he also provides medical support to the Soldiers on our missions throughout Baghdad, Iraq.

The contribution of the 277<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company is clearly noted and recognized as an essential force to the success of the Battalion. Also, this month we also had numerous Soldiers commended by our leaders in recognition of their hard work and going above and beyond expectations.

Lastly I would like to thank everyone for their support. We have a dedicated FRG, sponsors, and



1SG Antwann Rhodes  
277th EN CO First  
Sergeant

friends that have allowed us to focus on our mission. Your actions do not go unnoticed by us and will never be forgotten.

Thanks,

**Dirt Devils leading the way!!**

**Dirt Devil 7 Out.**

1SG Rhodes



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"Dirt Devils"



PFC Gould sprays down dirt at the Taji Bridge site.



BG Monconduit, LTC Zajac & CPT Robbins take a photo at the Taji Bridge site.



SSG Arispe ground guides the bulldozer pushing dirt to the edge of the Tigris River bank.

## Joint engineer mission to span the Tigris

Story & photos by SGT Rebekah Malone, 225th Eng. Bde. PAO



The Tigris River, or in Arabic *Nahr Dijlah*, winds itself through the very heart of Baghdad. For centuries, it has provided life-sustaining water and enabled trade in Mesopotamia.

Traversing the fabled waterway is what a joint U.S. and Iraqi engineer project hopes to accomplish.

The 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, with help from the 555th Engineer Brigade, out of Balad, Iraq, and Iraqi Army engineers aim to complete an iconic Mabey Johnson Float Bridge that will span the banks of the Tigris River by Taji, north of Baghdad, by the beginning of September 2009.

The bridge, known for the speed in which it can be built, its dependable nature and the heavy weight capacity make the Mabey Johnson a perfect fit for the nearly 90 meter span of river that engineers must cross.

Currently, the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team holds responsibility for the land west of the Tigris in Taji area. Once the Pennsylvania National Guardsmen redeploy in a few weeks, Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division will add the area west of the river to their current battle space.

Without the bridge, troops would have to take a route into the cities late at night, a two hour one-way trip, in order to support the rest of the BCT on the west side of the river.

The bridge currently in place cannot support neither the weight nor height of large military vehicles.

The first step of the project kicked off with the 277th Engineer Company, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Eng. Bde., using D9 Bulldozers, the Army's largest dozer, to move 6,000 cubic yards of dirt. That is nearly 400 dump trucks worth of dirt in order to level the ground for the Mabey Johnson.

By early morning, heavy equipment operators, surveyors, combat engineers, maintenance personnel and a security detail are on site working in full protective gear to finish the project on time. Most nights do not end until close to sundown.



Heavy equipment operator, Sgt. Thomas Pearson, of Spokane, Wa., 277th Eng. Co., said high motivation is what gets the Soldiers through the long, hot, tiring days.

"Our work ethic means we will never miss a deadline," Pearson said. "If you treat your Soldiers the right way, it gives them the right motivation to succeed, no matter what the cost."

Sgt. Adam Deluna, of San Antonio, Texas, is in charge of the dirt-moving portion of the project. He said the Army engineer surveyors have the difficult task of carrying equipment back and forth across the river.

This is Deluna's second deployment. On the first deployment, he completed a project similar to the one he is supervising now, just further down the Tigris.

"This is my second time to have fun by the river," Deluna said with a smile. "Anytime we get to do a big project we have fun. We've been waiting on this project for over a month!"

It is expected to take 12 days to complete the dirt work, and another 15 days for the 555th Eng. Bde. and Iraqi Army Engineers to install the actual bridge before it is ready for military vehicles to drive across.



August 2009

## SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS



**MND-B CSM Malloy congratulates SFC Dean (HSC), during his induction into the Audie Murphy Club.**



**CH (CPT) Wagner re-enlists medic PFC Hurst at the Battalion Aid Station.**



**CPT Beal presents SPC Wright with his Army Good Conduct Medal.**



**SPC Rhodes (B CO), Soldier of the Month (August).**



**CPT Landreth poses with "Gator Pit" Soldiers, SSG Gardner, & the newly promoted SPC Ackerman.**



**SGT Sweet (B CO), NCO of the month (August).**

## 46th Engineers In the News...

**dvids**  
**NEWS**  
FROM THE FIELD

Check out all of our "Steel Spike" videos, media, news articles, holiday greetings, photos, audio interviews, National TV interviews, and archived "Steel Spike Express" publications at:

**[www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net)**

**Search: 46th ECB (H)**



**1LT Janeene Yarber  
"Scoop Spike"  
Public Affairs Officer**

**Thank you to the FRGs for all of your support! Also, thank you to everyone who sent me photos and information to include in each issue. Take care & see you soon! - LT "Scoop Spike"**





# Steel Spike Birthdays & Fun

## September

SGT	ROYER, JEREMY	1-Sep
SSG	JACKSON, JAMIALLAH	1-Sep
PFC	EYLANDT, GREGORY	2-Sep
SPC	GODHIGH, DERRICK	2-Sep
PFC	COLEMAN, NATHANIEL	4-Sep
SGT	STALLARD, THOMAS	5-Sep
SPC	THURSTON, BRYAN	6-Sep
SPC	BROOKS, PAUL	8-Sep
SFC	LEDFORD, SEAN	8-Sep
SPC	HOGAN, PRECIOUS	8-Sep
CPT	WOOSTER, KEVIN	8-Sep
SPC	GOCHENOUR, GARY	9-Sep
SPC	CURTIS, SEAN	10-Sep
SSG	PHILLIPS, LEONARD	10-Sep
1LT	RIGGIO, MATTHEW	11-Sep
SPC	GALLOWAY, FRANKY	11-Sep
CPT	HOLLMAN, JOSHUA	12-Sep
PFC	VOSS, SAMUEL	15-Sep
SPC	GERADTS, CHRISTOPHER	16-Sep
PFC	STANTON, RYAN	17-Sep
CPL	WATSON, WILLIAM	18-Sep
SGT	BELL, JONATHON	19-Sep
SGT	HULL, RUSSELL	19-Sep
SPC	MENDENHALL, SHAEA	20-Sep
PV2	FINNEY, MICHAEL	20-Sep
SPC	REYESFONSECA, ANGEL	20-Sep
SPC	WOODS, ANTONIO	21-Sep
SSG	BUTLER, GARY	21-Sep
PV2	SECREST, DANEIL	21-Sep
SSG	BROWN, CEDRIC	21-Sep
SGT	VICKERS, FREDERICK	21-Sep
1LT	SERBAN, DANIELA	22-Sep
SPC	GAVIT, JOHN	22-Sep
SGT	POLITE, MAURICE	24-Sep
SFC	COLEMAN, ALFRED	24-Sep
CPL	MORRIS, KYLE	25-Sep
SPC	NAHL, KURTIS	28-Sep
CPT	CAPRA, JANE	28-Sep
PFC	GARCIAAMORA, RICARDO	29-Sep
SPC	BARNES, ERICA	29-Sep



1SG Hall is caught by surprise on his birthday as Spartans gathered at the MWR building, August 1st.



Actress & movie star Angelina Jolie makes a stop in Baghdad and takes photos with 46th & other Soldiers.



"Steel Spike" Soldiers meet & greet Country Music singer Mark Chesnutt during his visit to the 225th Engineer Brigade.

# Thank You!!!

On behalf of the deployed Soldiers and Officers of the 46th ECB (H),

A big “thank you” to our wonderful FRG leaders and Rear Detachments for keeping information flowing in and out of theater. Without your help our Families would not be informed of our many accomplishments during this 15 month tour in Iraq.

Thank you for sending photos, news, and updates for the battalion newsletter and for keeping us on top of your FRG functions back home. It was good to see our Family’s smiling faces as you all fellowshiped together.

Special thanks to: Tekesha Saint-Val, Shari Baye, Kelly Stinnett, Lisa Otto, Treva Williams, Brenda Leach, Deborrah Cisneros, Virginia Baughn, Ginger Saltz and the Rear Detachment CDRs and 1SGs.

**We will see you soon!**  
**“Steel Spike! One Team!”**



## FRG LEADERS

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