



1-94 CAV Soldier Recieves 2nd Purple Heart

Spc. Skeeter R. Tomczak joined an honored class of soldiers by receiving his second Purple Heart Dec. 31 from Lt. Col. Eddie Frizell, the commander of 1st Squadron, 94th Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, while stationed at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

"The colonel told me he never expected to be handing out this award; he expressed how proud he was," said Tomczak.

Tomczak, an M2 gunner in the lead Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, was honored for his wounds he received from an improvised explosive device detonation during a route clearance mission from Victory Base Complex, Iraq, to Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 5.

"An IED went off on the right side of us," recalls Tomczak. "I dropped down into the vehicle to make sure everyone was ok."

After Tomczak verified that his crew was ok, he jumped back up into the turret to engage the individuals who set off the IED.

"I was trying to find them through my thermal scope, but it wasn't working," said Tomczak.

Half of the scope was blown off during the IED explosion.

At that moment, Tomczak noticed a sharp pain in his elbow and dropped back down into the vehicle. After further inspection by his truck commander, Sgt. Cade Gornick, Tomczak had come to the realization that he had taken shrapnel in his arm from the blast.

Pvt. Jason Gates, sitting in the back of the MRAP, rendered aid to Tomczak's arm, which temporarily stopped the bleeding until a medic was able to tend to Tomczak's wounds.

"Gates patched up Tomczak and then jumped on the gun, so we could continue on the mission," said Gornick.

Searching for IEDs is not out of the norm for Tomczak, as this is the second Purple Heart he has received.

The first Purple Heart was awarded to him on the brigade's 22-month deployment to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom in February 2007, after an IED exploded next to his Humvee while on a short haul convoy from LSA Anaconda, Iraq, to Forward Operating Base Spiker, Iraq.

"The first IED I went through was by far worse, because it was the first," said Tomczak.

He continued on to say, "After going through an event like that, it changes you. I know there are soldiers who have never gone



through the experiences I have, and I am thankful for that."

When asked about what he was most thankful for after his second IED, Tomczak simply replied, "I'm glad it happened to me and not somebody else."

Although Tomczak is thankful most soldiers have not experienced what he has, Gornick was working side-by-side with Tomczak in the same truck when both IEDs went off. Gornick was the driver of the Humvee during the last deployment and is now the truck commander of Tomczak's MRAP during this deployment.

"We are the luckiest unlucky people you will ever meet," Gornick exclaimed. "I knew the day they paired us up on this deployment, we were going to get blown up again."

Despite everything they've been through, Gornick was still able to say with a smile on his face, "I am very proud of Tomczak."

After taking a few moments to reflect on his ceremony, Tomczak said, "If you look back at the people who have two Purple Hearts, you can't help but have the utmost respect for them, and to find myself now in that category, it's a real honor."

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1-94 CAV Soldier gather round after the awards ceremony that awarded two of their peers Purple Hearts.

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THE RED BULL EXPRESS

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Training Days for 2-135 Infantry

By Sgt. Glenn Kuehne

After having a slower pace over the Christmas week, soldiers have focused on the Brigade's upcoming Expert Infantry Badge (EIB) testing that soldiers can earn if they have the infantry MOS. Driver's training on 4,000 pound and 10,000 pound forklifts and two and a half ton Light Medium Tactical Vehicles (LMTV's) is also scheduled to make sure the battalions have additional Soldiers who are able to support its logistical needs.

2-135 Infantry soldiers are also taking advantage of the Army's increased emphasis on using online training. Seventy-six non-commissioned officers (NCO's) are completing the distance learning common core portion of the Advanced Leadership Course (ALC) and nineteen officers are completing the online portions of their Captain's Career Course.



1st Lt. Joseph Kelly of St. Paul, Minn. grades targets on the M4 weapons qualification range. Kelly is the sniper platoon leader in Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion 135th Infantry Regiment from Mankato, Minn.

"Besides the soldiers who are working on their required courses they have to enroll in through their units, around 400 Soldiers self-registered for the Soldier Self-Development modules required to attend NCO schools," added Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Becker of Pemberton, Minn. Becker enrolls soldiers in the courses as part of the battalion training section.

The amount of time spent on completing these courses varies. As one example, soldiers on the battalion Facebook page listed the amount of time spent on their courses as ranging from ten to thirty hours based on internet speed and computer skills.

20120105-A-KUEHNE-001: Northern Kuwait--1st Lt. Joseph Kelly of St. Paul, Minn. grades targets on the M4



(right) Staff Sgt. Dustin Eggum of Mankato, Minn. scores targets at the M4 weapons qualification range. Eggum is the sniper platoon sergeant in Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion 135th Infantry Regiment from Mankato, Minn. (left) A soldier in the Mankato, Minn. based 2nd Battalion 135th Infantry Regiment reviews his kneeling firing position with two members of the Headquarters Company's sniper section. Units in the battalion were qualifying with their individual weapons.

1-94 CAV Earthpigs Last Convoy

By Sgt Matthew Sjurseth

Second Platoon of Charlie Company, 1/34th BSTB attached to the 1/94th Cavalry returns to Camp Buehring on the 15th of December to mark the end of the company's missions into Iraq.

Upon completion of their mission, 10 gun trucks operated by 2nd platoon Soldiers of Charlie Company, 1/34th BSTB drove into their home station at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Having been given orders to go directly to the Armor of God, a large overhang in which pre-mission inspections are completed, the Soldiers cleared their weapons and proceeded down the gravel road. As they made their turn, chemical luminescent sticks (chem-sticks) whirled around on strings above the remaining Charlie Company Soldier's heads who lined the 200 meter path to the overhang. Many chem-sticks were thrown onto the trucks, giving them an eerie green glow. The trucks pulled in and as the Soldiers exited their MRAP (Mine Resistant Armor Protected) vehicles, they were greeted with handshakes, smiles, and music. Each member of the company was afforded one non-alcoholic beverage and some supplied themselves with congratulatory cigars.



After some brief socializing, the Company Commander, CPT Peter DeCrans called everyone to gather around him. Captain DeCrans explained the nature of the celebration to the company. The return of 2nd Platoon had marked the completion of the company's final convoy escort mission to Iraq. The company compiled over one million miles and moved thousands of truck loads out of the combat zone. Having lost only a few Soldiers to minor, non-combat related injuries; the mission was declared a great success and milestone in the history of the unit.

After the gathering, the Soldiers lingered a while to exchange stories and enjoy the celebration. With much still to do, the returning platoon continued on with their typical after-mission routines of fueling up and parking the trucks, unloading gear, and turning in sensitive items.



With convoy operations completed by December 31st, the company will look to focus on training for the remainder of the tour. Proficiency in weapons, warrior, and military occupation specialty (MOS) skills will be emphasized.

Christmas in the Desert, by: Sgt. Nick J. Scholer Alpha Company, 1-194 AR (CAB) UPAR

One thing a Soldier understands is there will be time spent away from his or her family. With today's technology, the distance separating the Soldier from his or her family can be decreased. On Christmas Day, Soldiers were communicating with their families by various means, such as watching their families open Christmas presents through Skype and using Facebook to chat online. Despite the brown desert Christmas, the Soldiers of Alexandria, Minn. based Alpha Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor (1-194 CAB) of the Minnesota National Guard were in high spirits.

The Camp Virginia Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) staff scheduled many events to bring a festive holiday spirit to Camp Virginia. The first event was the Christmas Day 5K fun run. The run was followed by a MWR sponsored flag football event that was open to all units on Camp Virginia.

While walking through the middle of Camp you could stop and look at the Christmas tree lit up next to the MWR stage. Throughout the month, the stage has been busy with music artists performing for the troops on Camp Virginia. Soldiers at Camp Virginia have also been visited by cheerleaders from three different NFL teams, the Washington Redskins, Philadelphia Eagles, and our hometown Minnesota Vikings. The cheerleaders entertained the troops through high-spirited and fun-filled performances as well as took time to meet Soldiers for pictures, autographs and take a moment to thank them for their service, especially during the holiday season.

On Christmas Day Camp Virginia was visited by Santa and Mrs. Claus, bringing holiday cheer to the troops. Michelle Turner, USO Duty Manager, was working hard to give out Christmas presents and keep the cookies in stock. Ms. Turner and the other USO staff kept the hot chocolate and apple cider flowing for everyone to enjoy. The USO movie

theater had a Christmas theme with movies like "Bad Santa" and "National Lampoons Christmas Vacation." The laughter coming from the theater indicated that everyone was enjoying themselves.

The Alpha Company Soldiers have been decorating their small personal spaces with Christmas lights and ornaments. The company mail room has been flooded with care packages from loved ones back in Minnesota. There have been so many packages this holiday season that additional storage space was needed to store the packages while they waited to be picked up by the Soldiers.

The leaders of First Platoon organized a Christmas Day softball game. The morning was a balmy 80 degrees and just right for the platoon to battle it out on the diamond. While playing catcher, Sgt. Adam Lamberson, and infantryman from Burnsville, Minn., felt the agony of defeat when a throw from right field fell a bit short of the plate and took a bad bounce off his shin bone. Staff Sgt. Kasey Kampfer, an infantryman from Laporte, Minn., smacked a booming hit to left field right over the head of the left fielder. The left fielder quickly chased the ball down and turned what looked like an easy home run into only a double.

It may have been a Christmas spent away from home, missing the usual traditions of the season shared with family and friends, but Soldiers from Alpha Company made the most of their desert Christmas by coming together with their military family, their brothers and sisters in arms, to celebrate the holiday together. This combined with technology that allowed them to be part of the celebrations back home made for a memorable Christmas celebration. All agree though, they are looking forward to being part of those usual traditions next year, when they will be home for Christmas for real, not just only in their dreams.



Soldiers from Alpha Company made the most of their desert Christmas by coming together with their military family, their brothers and sisters in arms, to celebrate the holiday together.



1-194 AR Post-Mission Reprieve – Flag Football

By: Spc. Joseph Barnette

The Soldiers of Delta “Drifter” Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 34th Infantry “Red Bull” Division commemorated the end of their Convoy Escort Team (CET) mission with a daylong, Company-wide, Flag Football Tournament that included 10 teams and over 40 Soldiers.

Event organizer, Staff Sgt. Stephen Walker of Saint Joseph, Minn., coordinated all logistical and marketing aspects of the tournament. His primary goal was to provide his Soldiers with a fun day of physical fitness and camaraderie. Staff Sgt. Walker mentioned that he has played in several flag football tournaments and typically plays flag football weekly with friends and Soldiers back home. He used that experience to assemble the event at Camp Virginia, Kuwait. During the planning process, he was able to procure flags, jerseys, and championship medals.

Staff Sgt. Walker said, “Camp Virginia in December is a perfect location to host such an event. Not only is the weather beautiful, the soft sand is more forgiving on our muscles and joints.”

As the event drew near, Soldiers welcomed the looming excitement with speculation over which teams would be tough to beat. Teams started developing game-day strategies to boost chances of victory.

Staff Sgt. Justin McGraw of Zimmerman, Minn., stated, “Anytime you are going into a competition, it is essential to have high expectations. We did not sign-up for the tournament only to come up short. We expected close games with fierce competition. Each team we faced had their own set of strengths and weaknesses. There were teams built around speed, while others were built around finesse. In the end, we were confident that the championship would likely go to the team that could best embody the Warrior Ethos.”

Each team was assured a minimum of two games in the double-elimination tournament. Teams had to take down three opponents in order to make it to the championship game.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Chad Gohman of Saint Paul, Minn., “With only four members per team, each successive game proved to be a battle of attrition. Most Soldiers simply do not have the conditioning to perform wind sprints for hours on end. I haven’t had to run that many sprints since my glory days of Junior High.” By the following morning, it was evident that Sgt. 1st Class Gohman was not alone in his agony. Many players were walking gingerly and cringed at even the thought of jogging.

Members of the championship team, playing under the team name “Besties” and led by Staff Sgt. Izaak Schafer of White Bear Lake, Minn., considered themselves the favorites going into the tournament. Staff Sgt. Schafer

believes an event like this, even if it is merely a game, brings the Company together and builds teamwork and bonds that extend beyond a Company’s organizational structure. During missions

and training, the Company was separated as Platoons or Convoy Escort Teams, but the tournament effectively bridged the separation gap by bringing the entire company together as one cohesive unit, Delta Company. Sgt. Joseph Summers of Moorhead, Minn., claimed that their team strategy focused around getting the ball to Staff Sgt. Schafer

in any way possible. Fans agreed that he had an uncanny ability of finding his way into the end zone regardless of his field position or how many defenders were on him.

Soldiers felt that the best part of the tournament was the teamwork and camaraderie they built playing with and competing against each other. Additionally, the games attracted many fans throughout the day. For these Soldiers, it was a good reprieve from conducting convoy missions over the past five months. In addition to Staff Sgt. McGraw’s championship medal, his takeaway was the enjoyment of spending time with his fellow Soldiers and the thrill of competing on the big stage; that is, the Camp Virginia football field. For all the experiences encountered on deployment, it is the little things that arise that are most cherished and will be remembered long after the deployment ends.



Christmas Away from Home

Story and Photo by 1-125 FA



Deployments are hard on the Soldiers who are on them as well as the friends and families who are still at home while their loved ones are away. Many Soldiers called home or Skyped with their families and friends so they could participate in some sort of fashion.

Soldiers from HHB 1-125 FA surely did the previously mentioned, on top of that many Soldiers from HHB participated in a Secret Santa. About a week before Christmas everyone's names were put into a bucket and they drew the name of whom they would be buying presents for. In the days leading up to Christmas the Soldiers involved secretly left each other small gifts. Then on Christmas Eve night they all gathered for the exchange of the final large gift exchange.

Everyone sat down around the conference table and opened their gifts one by one. As the Soldiers went around the room opening their gifts, all were thoughtful, however some invoked serious fits of laughter throughout the room. "At first it seemed like mandatory fun, but after it got started I almost forgot I was in Kuwait." SSG Charlet.

After the gift exchange people gathered outside by the fire pit for a bon fire enjoying near bear, snacks and each other's company, while some stayed and watched Christmas movies. The mood was fun, calm, and relaxed when looking around you could see that people didn't even think they were in Kuwait but were back at home spending time with friends and families.



Story and photos by the soldiers 1-125 FA currently stationed at Camp Patriot, Kuwait. For more information about the soldiers please visit www.MinnesotaNationalGuard.org or on their facebook page.

BSTB Paving the Way Home for Servicemembers

by: Sgt. 1st Class Brittany L. Thingvold

Lights, sidewalk repair, moving barriers, and maintaining the grounds of Zone 6 is only part of what the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team's small maintenance section is in charge of. In addition to being the Zone 6 "maintainers", the team of ten also do their primary military specialty of vehicle maintenance. They had no idea what was ahead upon arrival to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait in July 2011. Since that time, they have all used their civilian and military experience and applied it to the upkeep of Camp Arifjan, Zone 6 that house thousands tenants. Safety is the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Gary Mundfrom's priority and the maintenance section has exceeded his expectations.

Daily operations of the maintenance section include turning on over 100 generator light sets before dusk and turning them off at dawn; maintain, order and stock the water points, and respond to all grounds issues and requests made by over 60 tenant units in Zone 6. "It may be a thankless job, but someone has to do it and it keeps the Soldiers safe" said Sgt. Paulino Rodriguez from Hastings, Minn. The section is also the main point of contact for ordering military vehicle parts for all the battalions of the entire brigade. Between that; maintaining the forklifts, Gators, ATV's, Rangers, and Bobcats, fixing thousands of meters of sidewalks, painting new signs and safety stairs the heavy demands of the section are nothing short of a daily challenge.

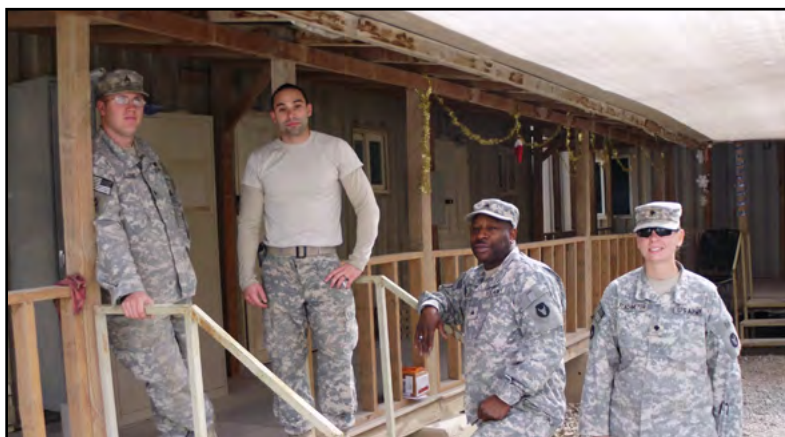
The Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team's maintenance section has recently len a hand to fellow soldiers at Camp Buehring, Kuwait by transporting 30 generator light sets to accommodate their sudden overflow of troops assisting the drawdown in Iraq. "It's good to learn how to do many different things, we can bring those back with us upon returning from deployment to our civilian jobs. We moved an entire generator farm from one location to another with forklifts!" said Staff Sgt. Joseph Schwartz of Ramsey, Minn. These are just some of the many projects the maintenance section has completed with many more to come including condensing the size of Camp Arifjan, Zone 6 before departure in the spring of 2012.



Staff Sgt. Joseph Schwartz of Ramsey, Minn and Staff Sgt. Chad Clausen of St. Paul, Minn, both of the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team are transporting a generator light set with a Ranger to a different location within Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



Spc. Carol Flachmeyer of St. Francis, Minn., Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, guides Sgt. Paulino Rodriguez of Hastings, Minn. where to move tires off the flat bed of a truck with a forklift in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



ARCHBISHOP OF US MILITARY SERVICES VISITS KUWAIT FOR CHRISTMAS



Deployed Soldiers sometimes experience difficulty being away from family when deployed overseas. Fortunately, military Chaplains perform or provide religious support for Soldiers who want to practice their faith tradition as they do at home. The US Army bases in Kuwait also received a special visitor this Christmas Eve in the person of Timothy Broglio, who is the Archbishop of US Military Services. Archbishop Broglio's Diocese covers all Catholic Service Members of the entire Armed services, although he himself is a civilian, not a military Chaplain. His visit to Camp Virginia started like many other VIP visits, with a tour of the base and a meeting with the Camp Command Leadership. Later that afternoon CH (MAJ) Lanuevo and the Archbishop conducted Christmas Eve Mass in the Camp Virginia Chapel with 64 service members and civilians, the largest crowd for a Catholic service at Camp Virginia since the 1/34th BCT arrived in August.



During his homily (or teaching), the Archbishop mentioned his first Christmas Celebrations as a Priest back in 1978. He noted if he was told he would celebrate Christmas services in Kuwait 33 years in the future, he probably would have said: "Where's Kuwait?" He also mentioned the Archbishop celebrating the Christmas Services in a forward area is a tradition that goes back to 1942, and he felt honored to carry on the tradition. There were several other indications this was more than just a weekday Mass: singing was conducted by a choir of three, along with accompaniment by a trumpet. Our own MAJ Richard Jensen of Ham Lake, Minn. also played the guitar and sang "Mary, Did You Know?" during communion. Sergeant First Class Susan Porter of St. Cloud Minn. Says: "I was glad there was so much participation on Christmas Eve Mass from all the units here on post. From those who had done the readings to those who presented the gifts to the Archbishop. It was a beautiful ceremony, one that makes memories."



Chaplain (Major) Victorio Lanuevo, Archbishop Timothy Broglio, and Captain Edward Gale listen to the first Bible reading during Christmas Eve Mass at the Camp Virginia Chapel, Kuwait. Chaplain Lanuevo is the Catholic Priest stationed at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Lanuevo is responsible for providing Catholic Services at Camp Buehring and Camp Virginia. Archbishop Broglio is the Archbishop of US Military Services and his Diocese covers all Catholic Service Members of the entire Armed Forces, although he himself is a civilian, not a military Chaplain. Captain Gale assisted during the service. Gale is from New Hope, Minn. and deployed with the 134 Brigade Support Battalion to Kuwait in early July of 2011.

After the service, Camp Virginia hosted Archbishop Broglio at the main dining facility for the evening meal. He was able to share a meal with many of the Soldiers and talk to them in a more relaxed atmosphere. "It was a great opportunity for leaders from all camp tenants of Camp Virginia to visit with Archbishop Broglio and share with him our experiences; said MAJ Jensen, Camp Virginia deputy commander.

G 700: LIFELINE OF CAMP BUEHRING, KUWAIT

How does Camp Buehring survive without water, ice, meals, lights, supplies, latrines, showers, maintenance and contracting? It doesn't. All of these functions are mission essential to every soldier and operation on Camp Buehring. G Company's mission encompasses the **Support Operations (SPO)** which includes *Class I* (water, ice, MRE's), *Container Management*, *Base Sanitation* (Showers, Dumpsters and Latrines), *Base Utilities*, and *Base Supply*; **Dining Facilities (DFAC) I and II**; **Maintenance and Fleet Management**; and **Contracting**. However, the story is better presented from a day in the life of SSG Lazer B. Striker*.

It's 0500 and SSG Striker meets his unit for their daily physical training. His unit completes a 3 mile run throughout the camp. Because it is dark at that time of morning, G 700 Base Utilities personnel have strategically placed light sets for soldier safety. The light sets are maintained and replaced as needed to ensure soldiers have adequate lighting throughout the evening and morning. Because of these light sets, SSG Striker's unit is able to complete their run on the planned course. After completing physical training, SSG Striker goes to his room to gather his personal items for personal hygiene. He walks outside and down the sidewalk to visit one of several APU (American Portable Unit) latrines that sit outside his barracks area (BA) and proceeds to one of the male shower trailers to cleaned up and dress for his work day. After leaving the shower, SSG Striker goes to his room to clean up his personal and common areas before leaving for the day. As he leaves his room, he grabs all the trash and takes it to the dumpster located on the other side of his BA. Depending on the population and soldiers needs, APU's/ILU's (International Latrine Units), shower trailers and dumpster placements are coordinated through the *Base Sanitation*. G 700 Base Sanitation personnel monitor soldier population in the barracks areas and tent pads to ensure all soldiers have proper sanitation requirements to maintain proper health and hygiene.

SSG Striker decides it's time to eat and walks to the DFAC to have a healthy breakfast. G 700 DFAC personnel manage all operations (headcount, meal preparation, maintenance, and staffing) of the DFAC to ensure soldiers receive healthy meals throughout the day. As SSG Striker finishes his meal, his platoon sergeant tasks him to coordinate with Class I to place an order for ice, water and MRE's in preparation for their upcoming M4 qualification

range. SSG Striker heads over to the Class I yard and completes the required documents to obtain supplies for range support. While he is there he also requests 10 cases of bottled water for his command headquarters. G 700 personnel manage the Class I yard to ensure all units have the required subsistence for their soldiers. The Class I yard also manages the removal of black and grey water from the Camp. Before leaving the Class I yard, SSG Striker receives a call from his 1SG asking him to place a request with the Container Management office to have two connexes moved to the container yard. SSG Striker meets with G 700's NCOIC of Container Management to place his request. Once he's completed, he remembers he needs to go to Base Supply, which is managed by G 700's supply section, to pick up supplies for his office. As he is speaking to Base Supply personnel, he is informed that he must have proper Class VIII medical supplies for range support. SSG Striker is able to get his office supplies and the remainder of his range support items while at Base Supply.

SSG Striker reports to his headquarters his activities and accomplishments for the morning and begins to settle in at his desk to accomplish some administrative tasks. As he enters his office the electricity in his building shuts off. The generator outside his headquarters has failed. SSG Striker uses his cell phone to place an emergency work order. However, the work order desk does not find it necessary that the work order be placed in an emergency status. SSG Striker then places a call to the COR office to have the work order expedited. The COR office staff assists SSG Striker with his request. SSG Striker also brought another matter to the COR office attention. He noticed the shower trailers did not seem to be cleaned or stocked in a timely manner and wanted to know how the cleaning process worked. The COR office worked with the contractor of the showers and latrines to ensure soldiers in SSG Striker's living area's received proper cleaning service of the showers and latrines. Now that SSG Striker has had a busy morning, it's time to visit the DFAC for lunch.

SSG Striker has had a busy day and many aspects of his mission depend on the Camp's life support services that are managed by G 700 personnel. Camp Buehring depends largely on these services. G 700 has effectively laid a solid foundation in life support services for the future of Camp Buehring.

**Fictional name*





Delta Company 700 BSB Soldier's receive awards

By Spc. Chalia Woody

The following soldier's of D Co 700 BSB 1-180th Calvary receive awards for their duty during Operation New Dawn. First Lieutenant Dustin W. Ruth was awarded the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (ARCOM), Iraqi Campaign Medal and Combat Patch. Ssg. Kendall B. Weger, Ssg. Paul D. Day and Sgt. Shane R. Hampton received the Iraqi Campaign Medal and Combat Patch. The soldier's were attached to 402nd Army Field Support Brigade and 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion while in Iraq.

The Delta Company soldier's served approximately five months in Iraq. Their missions were to provide logistical support and operations throughout the country. They traveled to seven different military posts, providing assistance with equipment turn in. These duties played an essential role to help meet the deadline for the draw down and bring the war to a close. The soldier's have returned back to Kuwait with their assigned unit.



Pfc. Agnes Hall is deployed with Alpha Troop 1-180th Calvary of the 1/34th Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT). She is Alpha Troop's Intelligence Analyst and also assists in Alpha Troop's Operations Cell. Pfc. Hall is from Enid, Oklahoma where she is a full time mom to her 2 year old daughter, who is awaiting her return. She has been in the military for about 18 months. Pfc. Hall was quickly sent to join the ranks of soldiers gearing up for this deployment upon completion of her Advanced Individual Training (AIT) this past May. She can be quoted in saying, "as far as a first deployment goes, I guess I am one of the luckier ones to get stationed here instead of in a hot zone somewhere in the middle of Afghanistan. Here I know I will be returning home to my daughter, in Afghanistan there would always be the 'what if' factor."

“It just doesn’t feel like Christmas” ...



“It just doesn’t feel like Christmas.” Most Soldiers in the Battalion probably said that phrase sometime in the couple weeks leading up to 25 December. Without the lights, decorations, foods, and traditions that normally accompany the holiday season, it is easy to forget what time of year it really is. The 112 MP BN’s Unit Ministry Team (UMT) decided to do what they could to bring the Christmas season to Kuwait.

Due to their extensive connections, CH (CPT) Brown and SPC Whalen were able to arrange for Santa Claus and one of his elves to stop by Camp Buehring. Despite their busy schedules, the Big Man and his helper made it a priority to visit the men and women serving away from their families during Christmas.

Santa and his elf made their first appearance at the HHD Christmas Party on Friday 23 December. Soldiers were excited to get their pictures taken with both of those lovable characters. Interestingly, CH Brown and SPC Whalen were both absent from the party. Over the next couple days, several sections throughout the Battalion received visits.

Despite their busy schedule moving to and from the North Pole to complete orders in time for Christmas, Santa and his elf also surprised the Soldiers working the border at K-Crossing on Christmas morning.

The UMT had a full schedule providing Christmas worship services for the Battalion. CH Brown and SPC Whalen attended the Christmas Eve Mass celebrated by CH (MG) Rutherford, U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains. They both also participated in the General Protestant Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at the post chapel. Afterwards, they headed up to K-Crossing and CH Brown provided a candlelight service for the Soldiers of the 113th MP CO who had to work Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day, CH Brown and SPC Whalen participated in the regular weekly 1830 Traditional Protestant Service at the Post Chapel. The services provided opportunities for Soldiers across Camp Buehring to exercise their freedom of religion, while at the same time reminding them of home.

All the Soldiers of the 112 MP Battalion would rather be home for the holidays. But we have all answered the call to be away from our families so that they can all have a safe and happy holiday season at home.





Photo Stories



Soldiers get to see a preview of a movie made by one of their own. Sgt. Kyle O'Malley of Le Center, Minn. was one of the developers of 'Memorial Day', a movie made mostly in Minnesota and using volunteers from the Mankato, Minn. based 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment.

Udari Range, Kuwait (December 28, 2011) – It was a cool windy morning on the 28th of December, 2011 when the 788th Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Company, stationed out of Fort Campbell, KY, started their operation at Udari Range in northwest Kuwait. The 788th EOD Company's mission was to help the Kuwait military destroy ordnance that has been in inventory for over thirty years according to 788th EOD Commander Capt. Amir Abu-Akeel.

The 788th EOD Company worked with the Kuwait Ground Forces EOD unit commanded by Capt. Michal, as well as a civilian who works for the Kuwait government named Claude Doppagne to arrange the Kuwait facilities needed to dispose of the code H ordnance. Code H means that the ordnance is no longer serviceable and needs to be de-militarized. On December 28th, there were five holes in the desert that would be filled with 500 pounds of code H ordnance to be detonated in each hole.

While destroying a large amount of explosives may seem like an easy task, it takes a lot of training, practice, and experience to detonate it safely and effectively. The 788th EOD Company has been in Kuwait for three months and they have been gaining extraordinary experience in their EOD teams.

Spc. Matthew Geier was in charge of constructing one of the five stacks of ordnance to be disposed of. The ordnance to be destroyed included high explosive rounds, white phosphorous rounds, and British bar mines. Spc. Geier had to ensure that all of the ordnance was stacked neatly and in the correct position in order for it all to be destroyed once the stack was detonated.

Once all five of the holes were filled, the EOD technicians placed one block of Composition 4 (C4) to initiate the detonation of the old weaponry. The C4 was detonated through a remote control device. Once the range non commissioned officer in charge, Staff Sgt. Jonathon Guisto, made sure that all five detonation locations were properly stacked, connected to the detonator, and all personnel were out of the area, he moved to a pre determined location where the 788th EOD Company used a radio controlled detonator to initiate the 5 detonations in sequence.



For more stories, photos and information about all the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division currently deployed to Kuwait visit [facebook.com/MinnesotaRedBulls](https://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaRedBulls) or dvidshub.net/units/1-34BCT

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