



A Company

**54th Engineer Battalion
(Corps)(Mechanized)**

2003 Itschner Nominee



Outlaws!



Outlaws!

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(Corps)(Mechanized)

2003 Itschner Nominee

Battalion Commander

Lieutenant Colonel Donald E. Jackson

Battalion Commander

54th Engineer Battalion (C)(M)

APO AE 09139

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Company Commander

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Company Commander

A Co, 54th Engineer Battalion (C)(M)

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130th Engineer Brigade
Hanau, Germany



54th Engineer Battalion
Bamberg, Germany



Preparation for Change of Command at Hadytha Dam

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The Pass the Sapper Event, part of the physical competition portion of the first ever Bandana Ride

Introduction

Year in Review

Jan

Deployment Processing Center
Rapid Deployment equipment to Kuwait
Train for War
Media coverage of Preparation for War

Ramstein, Germany
Bamberg, Germany
Bamberg, Germany
Bamberg, Germany

Feb

Deployment of Company to Kuwait
Arrival in Kuwait
Prepare for War
Integration with 10th EN BN, 3rd Infantry Division

Germany
Kuwait
Camp Virginia, Kuwait
Kuwait

Mar

AA Outlaw
Berm Breach Rehearsals
Invasion of Iraq
Security for TF Wadi
Marking Route Rovers
TAA Rams
TAA Spartans
Support of A CO and D CO 10th EN BN
Survivability Support

Kuwait
Kuwait
Iraq
South West Iraq
Route 8, Iraq
South of Escarpment, Iraq
North of Escarpment, Iraq
Movement to Euphrates
Iraq

Apr

Objective Peach
Objective Saints
Objective Chamberlain
LSA Dogwood take 1

Iraq
Iraq
Iraq
Iraq

May

Support of 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment
Support of Crazy Troop
Change of Command

Al Qaim, Iraq
Hadytha Dam, Iraq
Hadytha Dam, Iraq

Jun

LSA Dogwood take 2
Weapons Training and CTT
Bandana Ride

LSA Dogwood, Iraq
LSA Dogwood, Iraq
LSA Dogwood, Iraq

Jul

USACE Survey support
Prison Upgrade Support
Task Force Scorpion Support

1000KM of Iraq
Abu Ghurayb Prison
Baghdad, Iraq

Aug

LSA Dogwood take 3
Change of Responsibility
LSA Security Support
Operation Muscle Freedom

Dogwood, Iraq
Dogwood, Iraq
Dogwood, Iraq
Dogwood, Iraq

Sep

Task Force Rocketeer
LSA Anaconda Move
Samarah Weapons Range

Baghdad, Iraq
Balad, Iraq
Samarah, Iraq

Oct

LSA Anaconda Security

Balad, Iraq

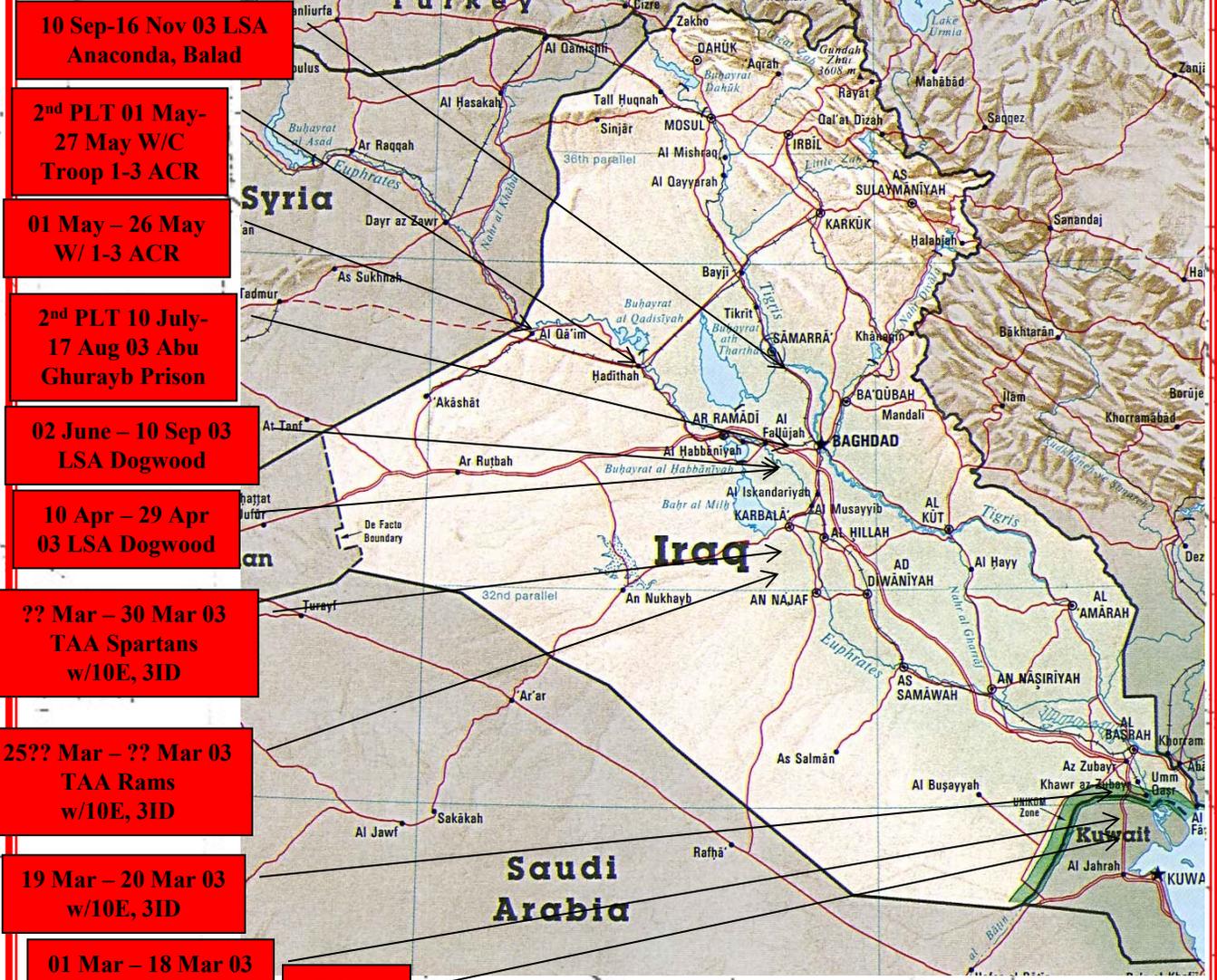
Nov

Task Force Right Of Way
Preparation for Redeployment
Redeploy to Kuwait

Tikrit, Iraq
Balad, Iraq
Camp Virginia, Kuwait

Dec

Outlaw Territory in 2003



Summary

The Outlaws ability to rapidly deploy on a moments notice, perform RSO&I operations within three weeks, and attack into Iraq with 2nd BCT, 3ID were just the start of a very successful year. Following the support of the attack on Baghdad the Outlaws secured two key bridge sites across the Euphrates until follow on units were able to take over. The Outlaws then moved north west to the Syrian border with 1/3 ACR to secure the essential border town Al Qaim. The Outlaws then moved back to LSA Dogwood and continued to train with a right of passage called the Bandana Ride. The Outlaws secured the Abu Ghurayb prison job site, supported the Marine led TF Scorpion, and TF Rocketeer during their time in LSA Dogwood. After supporting the security of LSA Dogwood the Outlaws moved to LSA Anaconda and continued training with a live fire range. The Outlaws then developed a QRF program greatly increasing the security of LSA Anaconda and continued support of TF Rocketeer. Finally the Outlaws redeployed to the Central Region.

Introduction

Mission and METL

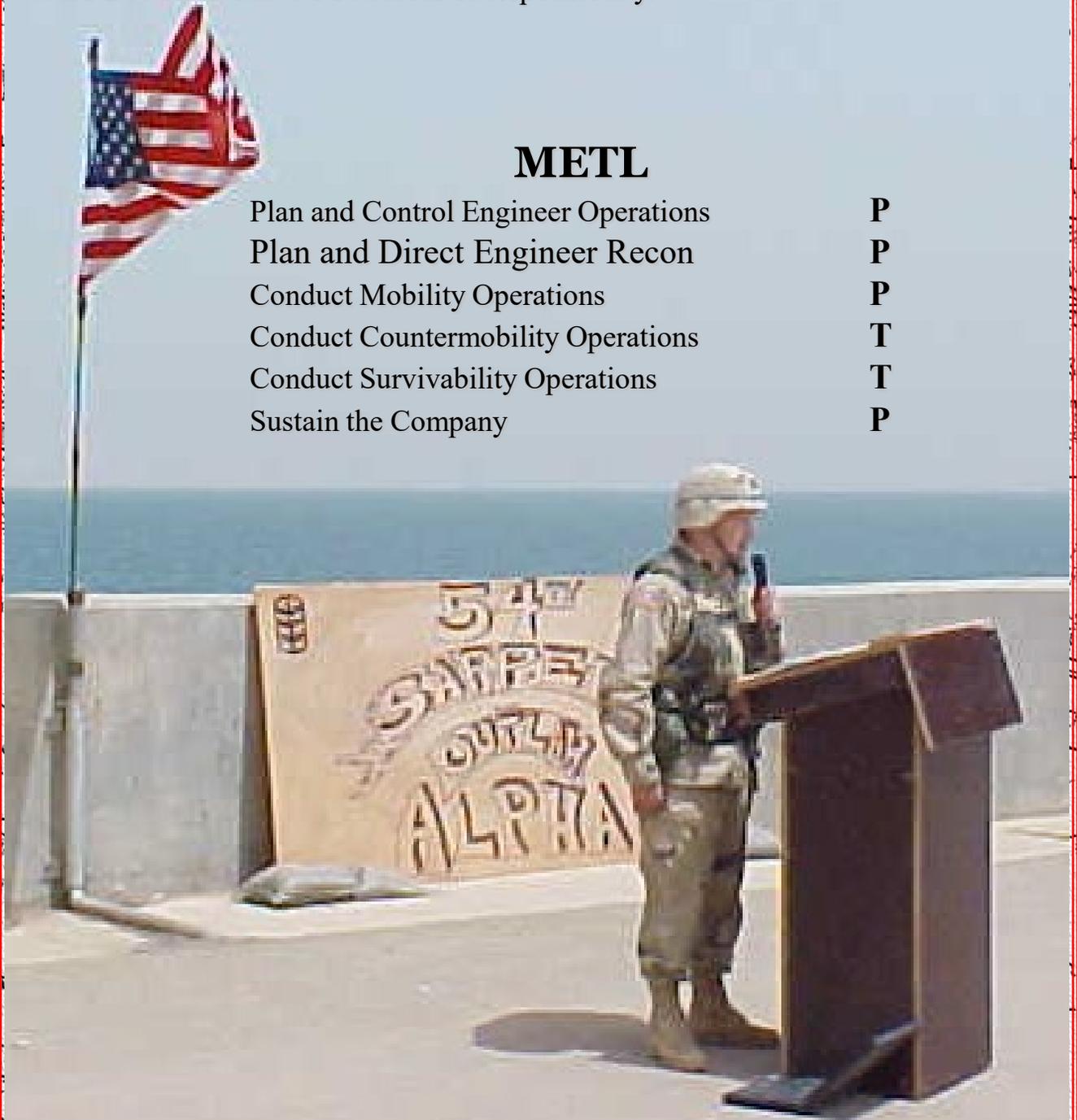
Mission

Provide mobility, countermobility and survivability engineer support to V Corps as part of 54th Engineer Battalion, 130th Engineer Brigade throughout the EUCOM and CENTCOM areas of responsibility.

METL

Plan and Control Engineer Operations
Plan and Direct Engineer Recon
Conduct Mobility Operations
Conduct Countermobility Operations
Conduct Survivability Operations
Sustain the Company

P
P
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P

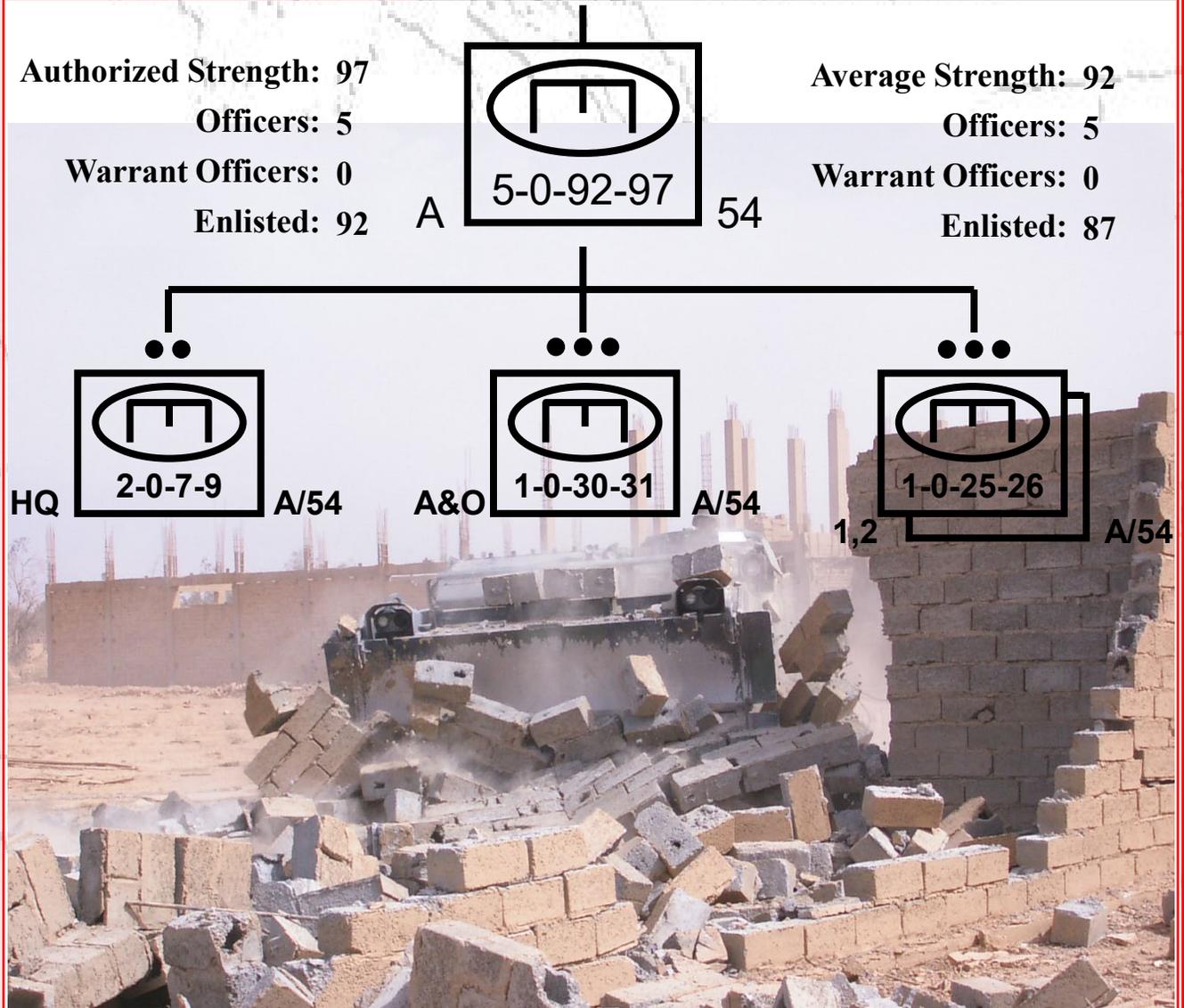


Introduction

Task Organization and MTOE

Authorized Strength: 97
 Officers: 5
 Warrant Officers: 0
 Enlisted: 92

Average Strength: 92
 Officers: 5
 Warrant Officers: 0
 Enlisted: 87



Equipment

Photo: ACE destroying Iraqi Military Barracks

Weapon Systems

M16/A4	- 55
M4	- 21
M9	- 15
M240B	- 4
M249	- 10
M2	- 9
MK19	- 3
M203	- 4
Volcano	- 2
MICLIC	- 4

Tracked Vehicles

M113A3	- 9
M577A2	- 1
M548	- 2
ACE	- 6
AVLB	- 4
Panther II	- 1

Wheeled Vehicles

HMMWV	- 6
5 Ton Dump	- 4
5 Ton Cargo	- 1
HEMTT	- 2
SEE	- 2
Miniflail	- 2

SKOs

Squad Pioneer Box	- 6
Platoon Pioneer Box	- 1
Squad Carpenter Box	- 6
Platoon Pioneer Box	- 2
Demolition Kit	- 6
Equipment Trailer	- 1
Small Arms Repair Kit	- 1

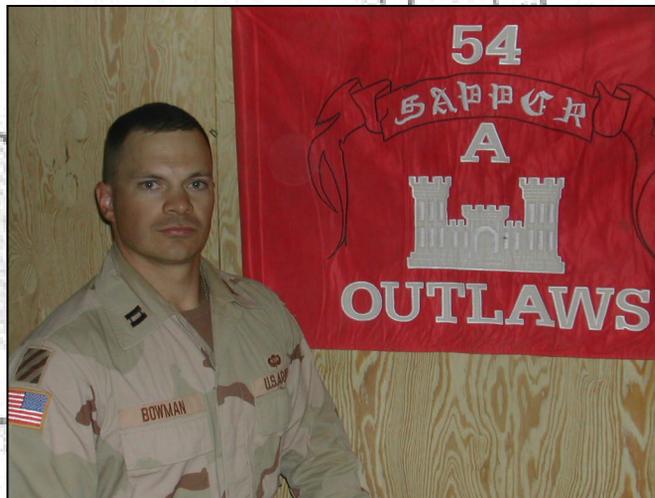
Introduction

Key Leadership

OUTLAW COMMAND TEAM



CPT John L. Hudson
Company Commander
21 Nov 01 – 26 May 03



CPT Silas R. Bowman
Company Commander
27 May 03 – Present



1SG George E. Lawrence
Company First Sergeant
23 Jan 01 – 18 Aug 03



SFC Jeffrey A. Mann
Company First Sergeant
19 Aug 03 – Present

Introduction

Key Leadership

HEADQUARTERS



1LT Joshua A. Stiltner
Company Executive Officer
20 May 02 – 15 Apr 03



1LT Michael J. White
Company Executive Officer
16 Apr 03 – Present



SFC Jeffery A. Mann
Company Operations Sergeant
01 Dec 02 – 25 Jul 03



SFC Derrick A. Gass
Company Operations Sergeant
26 Jul 03 – 07 Oct 03

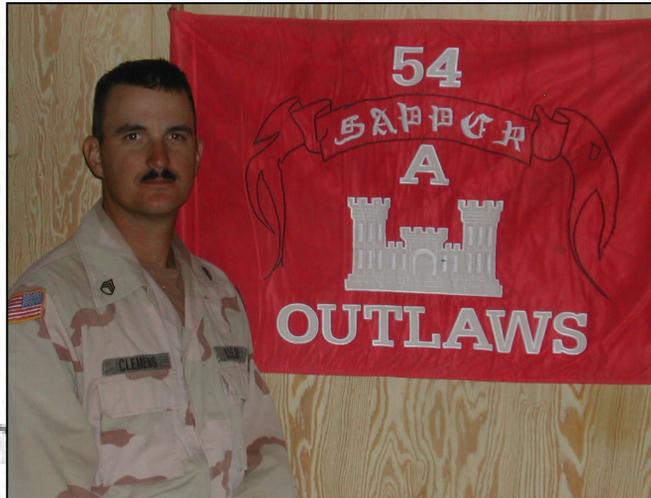


SGT Christopher M. Powell
Company Operations Sergeant
08 Oct 03 – Present

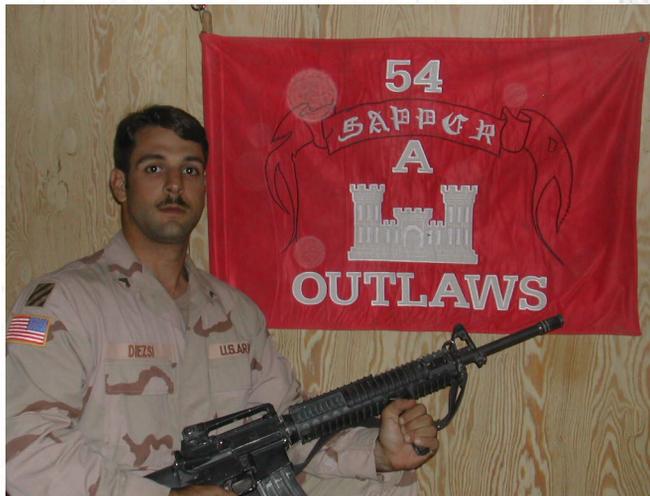
Introduction

Key Leadership

Maintenance



SSG Jason R. Clemens
Company Motor Sergeant



SGT Liam D. Diezsi
Company Wheel Sergeant



SGT Ryan L. Emerick
Company Track Sergeant

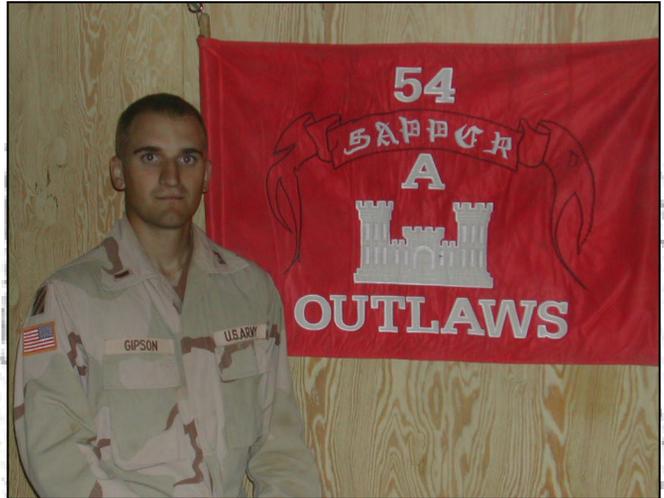
Introduction

Key Leadership

1st PLATOON



2LT Michael White
Platoon Leader
01 Jan 02 – 12 Apr 03



2LT Jeremiah Gipson
Platoon Leader
12 Apr 03 – Present

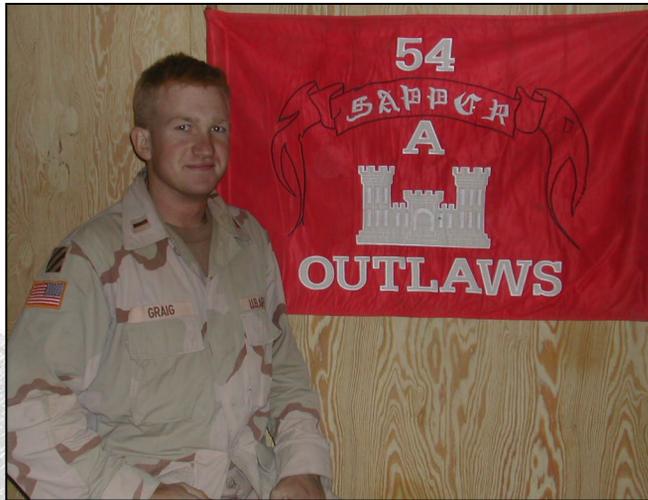


SFC Derrick Gass
Platoon Sergeant
1 Nov 02 – 26 July 03

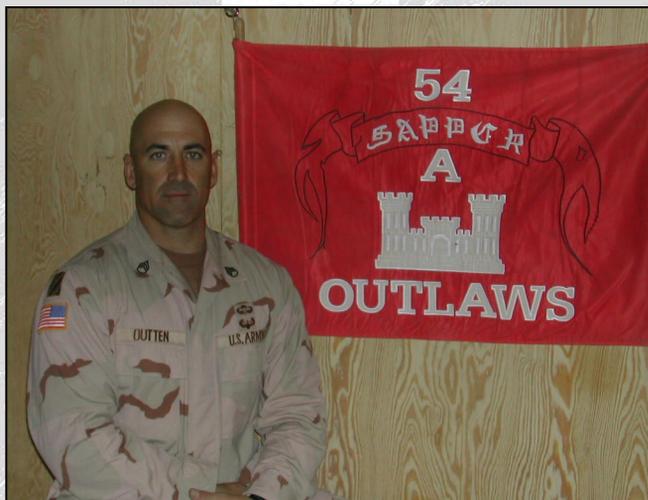


SFC Dwayne Showers
Platoon Sergeant
27 July 03 – Present

2nd PLATOON



2LT Gary Graig
Platoon Leader
Dec 02 – Present



SSG Matthew N. Outten
Platoon Sergeant
26 Aug 02 – Present

Assault & Obstacle Platoon



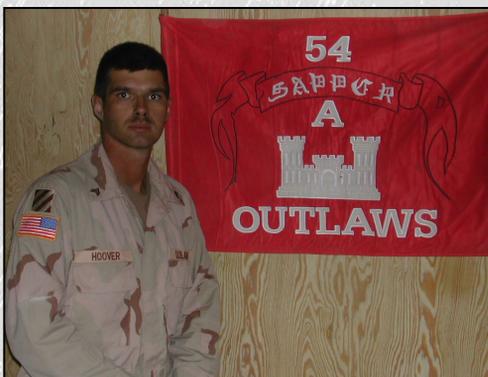
CPT David S. Thrapp
Platoon Leader
01 Jul 02 – 15 Feb 03



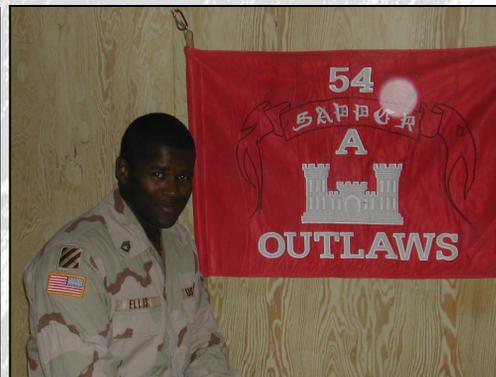
2LT Matt Mabe
Platoon Leader
15 Feb 03 – Present



SFC Robert A. Phipps
Platoon Sergeant
16 Aug 02 – 30 May 03



SGT William J. Hoover
Platoon Sergeant
30 May 03 – 19 Oct 03



SFC Cornell Ellis
Platoon Sergeant
19 Oct 03 - Present

Introduction

Key Leadership

Family Readiness Group



Dotty Phipps
FRG leader
Jan 02 – Aug 03



Simone Hoover
FRG Co-leader
Jul 03 - Present



Brenda Swartz
FRG Co-leader
Aug 03 - Present



Carolyn Hudson
Advisor
Nov 01 – May 03



Cindy Bowman
Advisor
May 03 – Present



Sabine Mann
Co-Advisor
Aug 03 – Present



Sarah Peterson
Co-Hospitality



Catherine Outten
Co-Hospitality

Introduction

The Platoons

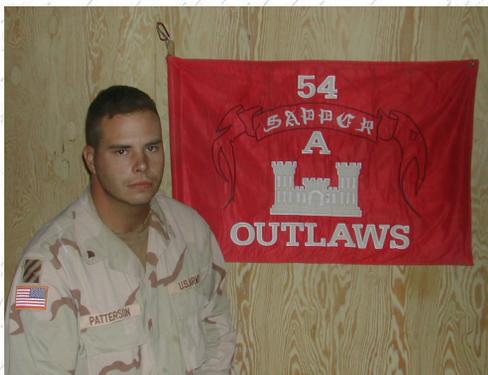


Headquarters Platoon

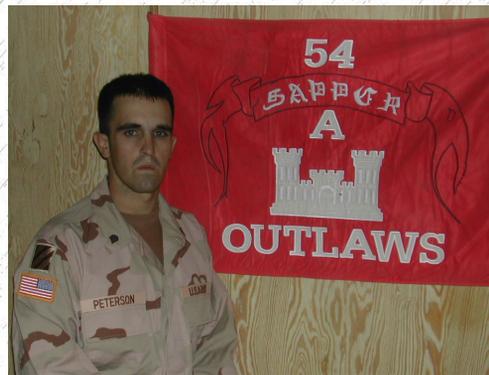


Introduction

The Platoons



SPC Lee Patterson
Armor



SPC Eric Peterson
Armor



SGT Obadiah Howell
NBC NCOIC



PFC Dru Shanks
1SG Driver



SPC David Hazelett
Commander's Driver



CPL David Jordan
Supply Sergeant

Headquarters Platoon

Headquarters Platoon

The heart of company operations for a Corps Mechanized engineer company is the M577A2 Command Post tracked vehicle. Upon receiving the deployment order, it was determined that A62 was inadequate to fulfill its intended role without drastic upgrades to its systems and maintenance posture. During RSO&I in Kuwait, A62 received upgrades to its comms systems giving it four net capability. The interior was configured to effectively utilize the limited space for continuous combat operations on the move. Load plans were established with METT-T in mind allowing for flexibility on the battlefield. Maintenance was severely lacking from the past therefore it was necessary to replace the engine the day prior to moving to the final attack position prior to crossing the Iraqi border.

The crew of the company command post consisted of the NBC and Commo specialists who alternated as vehicle operators throughout the campaign. The Operations NCO was the TC and maintained the situational awareness of the convoy operations. The company XO situated himself within the vehicle so as to track the battle while on the move. He accomplished this by using a CVC helmet and internal tracking tools, which enabled him to give as close to real time information to the commander and higher headquarters.

The movement itself blended into one long drive with stops only to refuel and conduct limited maintenance. A62 drank oil almost as fast as it did JP-8. That problem didn't get fixed until late April. The long convoy showed that some things were not taken into account clearly enough. For example, the first ROM site was completely disorganized with no apparent traffic flow layout. Vehicles were everywhere trying to get fuel and then trying in vain just to get out of the area so as to continue on. The second night had a long drive up the hardball with NVG's. Being trained on them we had no problems. However, the MRBC behind us was not as fortunate. They had a bad accident the caused the death of a soldier. The news was disturbing more so in the fact that it could have been prevented. Casualties due to enemy fire are expected in a combat zone. Vehicle accidents that occur are more often than not, avoidable and preventable.

Headquarters Platoon

By the third day we had reconsolidated as a company and were extremely worn out from the drive. The next day had us moving out but just prior to SP enemy forces were identified and chased by our line platoons. No casualties on either side resulted from the chase. The movement north had us go up through the escarpment and by nightfall we had moved into our assembly area. All hell broke loose at that time. The sandstorm from Hades arrived and stayed with us for two days. The only thing we could do was ride it out.

The next few days were spent slowly pushing north with a final move past Karbala in an effort to poise the BCT to attack Baghdad. Our 2nd platoon was with the 2BCT TOC when it was destroyed by a Frog 7 missile. We had been standing by in an assembly area south of objective Peach. We stayed at that location for a week until we reconsolidated with the 54th Engineer Battalion at LSA Dogwood.

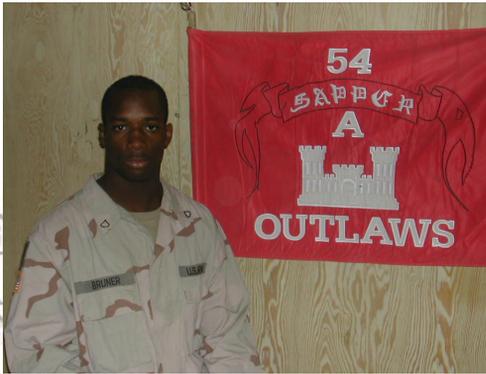
With all said and done, the Outlaw CP traveled the entire distance and supported the fight as intended. However the role of Alpha Company was small so as the CP was not challenged to its full capabilities. The equipment and personnel were adequately poised to support the company and task force.



Maintenance Section



Maintenance Section



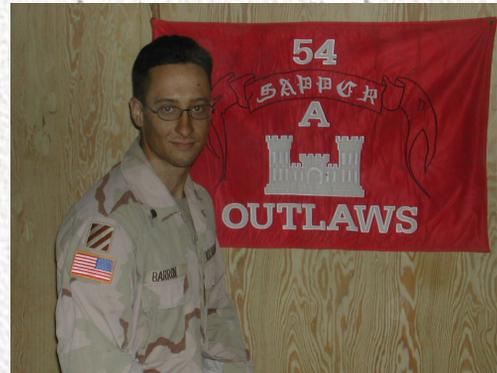
PFC Anthony Brunner
Communication Specialist



SPC Jared Apilado
Mechanic



SPC Gary Carlson
Wheel Mechanic



SPC Mark Barron
Wheel Mechanic

Maintenance Section



SPC Bryan Przybranowski
Mechanic



SPC Jared Kubasak
Mechanic



SGT Ray Polk
PLL NCOIC



SPC Richard Tieman
Track Mechanic

Maintenance Section

No support, no supplies, a need to be ready for war, and a new maintenance team put together only weeks prior to deploying is how Alpha Company 54th Engineer Battalion found itself in February of 2003. At Camp Virginia, Kuwait we did not know who was to be our direct supporting unit or even where our Class IX parts were going to come from. We were the soldiers in green that no one wanted to help. For weeks we made do with the fast dwindling repair parts we brought and pleading other units for help. With vehicles broken before they were shipped, we had to perform miracles. Maintenance the miracle workers, put to the test and expected to maintain the momentum of the company's combat maneuverability, and those mechanics proved their abilities.

The cards were stacked against us from the beginning. Three out of four Armored Vehicle Launch Bridges (AVLB) were in bad shape even before leaving Germany. Two are M48 chassis, which were built for the Korean War, the other two the standard M60 were used in Vietnam. With well over 30 to 40 years of age it has always been a challenge to keep these monsters of track vehicles rolling. Both M48 chassis were scheduled to be replaced with newer M60s, but that never happened because of our deployment to South East Asia. Now we are faced with these beasts that we stopped maintaining and have been salvaging repair parts from to keep the other M60s mission capable. Why not when we are getting replacements. We will over come though – we are the miracle workers if it breaks we will fix it. In one week three engines and one transmission were replaced with no support from a direct support unit. The only company to have all four AVLBs ready for combat we had over come one obstacle only to find another.



Changing pack on a M113

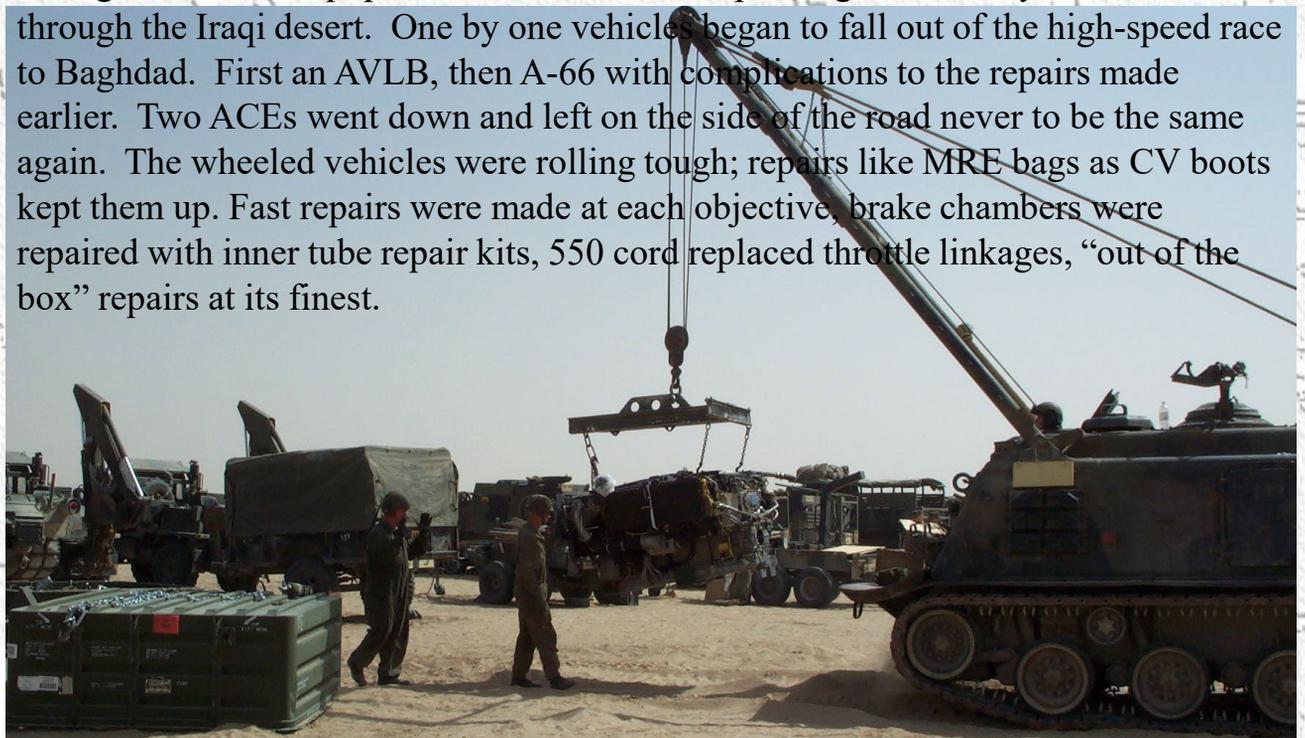


Changing pack on the 577

Maintenance Section

With our Prescribed Load List (PLL) almost depleted, bench stock gone, and every part we packed, hid, or acquired installed it looked like Alpha Company was not going to be ready to cross into Iraq. With makeshift repairs, ingenuity, and fast thinking we developed repairs by “Thinking Out of the Box.” We worked in the harshest of conditions never to lose sight of the bigger picture. On the eve of crossing into Iraq and during a voracious, blinding sand storm mechanics put back together A-66 a M113 Personnel Carrier that had its pack taken in Germany to push out another company. Committed to ensuring Alpha Company had its full combat power the mechanics remained dedicated during even the roughest work conditions. With no real time to verify any problems that may have occurred in the repairs to A-66 it made its trip into Iraq with two mechanics, SPC Tieman and SPC Kubasak, as its Tank Commander and assistant operator.

Every wheeled vehicle and track vehicle crossed into Iraq under its own power. A major win on the part of the mechanics of the condition they had deployed in. Two engineer vehicles limped across the border requiring repairs for which we had no parts or unable to make unusual repairs to keep them going. We had already been asking a lot of this equipment and now we were pushing them nearly 500 kilometers through the Iraqi desert. One by one vehicles began to fall out of the high-speed race to Baghdad. First an AVLB, then A-66 with complications to the repairs made earlier. Two ACEs went down and left on the side of the road never to be the same again. The wheeled vehicles were rolling tough; repairs like MRE bags as CV boots kept them up. Fast repairs were made at each objective, brake chambers were repaired with inner tube repair kits, 550 cord replaced throttle linkages, “out of the box” repairs at its finest.



AVLB engine replacement

Maintenance Section

The momentum of combat kept up its pace and maintenance never once flinched when something new was thrown at them. They embraced their training and knowledge to come up with new and effective repairs. Is Maintenance the heroes of the war, no, but they are the miracle workers that kept us moving despite the enemy they faced – no parts.



Top: ACE maintenance Bottom: Panther pack maintenance

1st Platoon

THE COWBOYS!



MOUNT UP AND RIDE!

1st Platoon

1st Platoon Year in Review by 1LT Mike White Platoon Leader Jan-April

On January 12, 2003, 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, 54th Engineer Battalion was notified that the call they had been anticipating had finally come – they had been ordered to deploy to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and possible combat operations in Iraq. At the time the platoon serving at the Deployment Processing Center pushing the many other units stationed in Germany to Kuwait on the same mission. On just one-week notice and in freezing and snowy conditions, 1st Platoon returned to Bamberg, Germany, and inventoried, packed, and loaded all of its vehicles and equipment onto rail cars. Just two weeks later, after completing an expedited predeployment processing, heading the company's mandatory predeployment weapons ranges, and quickly settling family issues with the loved ones that would be left behind, they boarded the plane for Kuwait City. Still carrying their Gortex Parkas from the blizzard conditions of central Europe, 1st Platoon stepped off of the plane into the blazing heat of the Middle East.



1st Platoon qualifies on weapons in January

1st Platoon

For three weeks in February, 1st Platoon staged at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, where they rigorously prepared for whatever mission they would be assigned during an attack into Iraq. The number one focus was maintenance. The soldiers and leaders worked hard on preparing their old vehicles and equipment for the tremendous movement from the Kuwaiti border into Baghdad should they be called. In just a few short weeks the platoon's hard work through daily preventative maintenance checks and services and overtime with the company mechanics brought all of the platoon's seven vehicles up to the best conditions they had reached in months. Aside from maintenance, 1st Platoon focused on the battle drills they would most likely face in combat. The platoon integrated the 3rd Infantry Division standards into their normal rehearsals for MICLIC breaching and breach lane marking drills. The entire platoon conducted mounted movement and react to contact drills in the wide open desert – unusual terrain for a Germany-based unit. In Kuwait each squad received two improved mine detectors, and school trained NCO's in the company instructed each soldier on their proper operation. Leadership professional development classes focused on handling EPWs, mine and UXO awareness, operations in urban terrain, and river crossing operations. After three short weeks of busy preparations, 1st Platoon took a dramatic step closer to combat by moving out of Camp Virginia and into the open desert south of the Iraqi border. They were attached to 2BCT and established a part of the perimeter of AA Spartan, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, staging area.

On March 4, 2003, 1st Platoon's leadership linked-up with the 535 CSE, 94th Engineer Battalion. 1st Platoon received the mission during the attack into Iraq of providing security for this company's heavy equipment while they improved washed out roads and destroyed bypasses along a 40-km wadi complex on a key route through southwest Iraq. For almost two weeks 1st Platoon integrated into this company and conducted planning and rehearsals in preparation for the order to attack north through this difficult terrain in southwest Iraq.

1st Platoon

On the evening of March 18, with almost no notice, 1st Platoon received a change of mission. Replaced by another platoon on their original security mission, they were tasked to provide mobility support to the 2-70 Armor Battalion, who was supporting the 3rd Brigade Combat Team and moving north through central Iraq. In just one day, 1st Platoon was called on to learn and perfect a completely new mission as mobility support for an armor company, A/2-70 AR, along a completely unfamiliar route into Iraq. As the squad leaders prepared breaching charges, conducted precombat inspections, and walked their squads through breaching and marking drills, the platoon leadership secured new maps and operational graphics, memorized call signs and new support relationships, and tried to gain perspective on their new mission and new area of operations. On March 20, 1st Platoon moved 60 km north with their tank company toward the border.

Before dawn on March 21, 1st Platoon moved through the border breach into Iraq. Quickly falling into a tactical formation with the tank company, 1st Platoon attacked almost straight northward for hundreds of kilometers stopping only to refuel and conduct quick maintenance checks. During this movement one of the platoon's armored personnel carriers broke down with engine problems and had to be towed. As they towed this vehicle north, 1st Platoon also recovered innumerable wheeled vehicles that had been left behind in the thick desert sand during the fast attack north. Having met no enemy contact or obstacle effort, 1st Platoon arrived just south of An Nasiriya approximately 24 hours after crossing the border.



1LT White gives mission brief

1st Platoon

Immediately after being attached to A/10 EN, 1st Platoon moved forward on a spoiling attack with Task Force 3-15 to secure OBJ Murray, a bridge across the Euphrates south of Karbala. 1st Platoon held back just southwest of the bridge to secure the task force TOC during the attack and, after the assault commenced, to construct the task force EPW holding area. 1st Platoon erected a holding area capable of holding over 200 prisoners with segregated areas for officers, enlisted, and female prisoners. They secured the prisoners within the wire holding areas, searched them, processed personal items and destroyed confiscated weapons. 1st Platoon also transported prisoners of special intelligence interest to the brigade EPW holding area. 1st Platoon maintained this holding area and secured the task force TOC for three days while all of the 3rd Infantry Divisions forces positioned for the attack across the Euphrates and into Baghdad. Throughout this security mission, 1st Platoon received sporadic mortar fire from the countryside near the bridge. There were no injuries.

On April 2nd, 1st Platoon collapsed their EPW holding area and prepared for movement north past Karbala. At dusk the column began moving north to the outskirts of the city and then west and north through the Karbala Gap, which is a thin stretch of land between the city of Karbala and the Bahr Al-Milh Lake. At dawn, 1st Platoon refueled and conducted hasty vehicle maintenance southwest of OBJ Peach – the critical bridge across the Euphrates for the attack on Baghdad. Initially the plan was for 1st Platoon to support TF 3-15 during an assault across OBJ Peach and then south into the rear of the Iraqi Republican Guard's Medina Division. However, based on the U.S. Air Force's success at destroying this Iraqi division, the mission changed. Instead, 1st Platoon's mission was to follow the brigade combat team's assault across the Euphrates as they cordoned off the capital city in the south and then to maintain security on OBJ Peach.

1st Platoon

1st Platoon arrived at the bridge after dark on April 3rd. Immediately after arriving on site, a huge explosion erupted north east of the bridge at a suspected chemical weapons compound. 1st Platoon immediately donned their chemical protective gear and then emplaced their security in MOPP4. After the platoon secured all avenues of approach to the bridge, an “all clear” was given and the platoon downgraded out of their protective masks. Each day 1st Platoon guarded the bridge they improved their fighting positions and emplaced signs and traffic control measures to organize convoy movement over the key river crossing. On the third day of security operations at the bridge, 1st Platoon was detached from the 10th Engineer Battalion and returned to their organic engineer battalion’s control.

Recently experienced in securing a bridge site, 1st Platoon was called on to secure a bridge construction site for the 299th (or 671st?) Multirole Bridge Company, who had been attached to the 54th Engineer Battalion. They were tasked with constructing an alternate crossing site up the Euphrates from OBJ Peach. First securing the reconnaissance team during their evaluation of three bridge crossing sites, 1st Platoon was next called on to secure the near and far shores of the river during the bridge construction. 1st Platoon secured the near shore prior to the arrival of the earth working equipment used to prepare the shores for the bridge ramps. Then, fourteen members of the platoon assaulted across the Euphrates in RB-15s at dawn to secure the far shore just as the bridge construction began. 1st Platoon secured both shores with dismounts and vehicles until the bridge was emplaced and they were relieved by a mechanized infantry platoon on April 12th.



1st Platoon plays kick ball in Dogwood

1st Platoon

For the next week, 1st Platoon conducted cordon and search mission through the small villages that lined the Euphrates River near OBJ Peach and the newly constructed float bridge called OBJ Chamberlain. Working with a civil affairs team and translators, 1st Platoon combed the small villages and open desert south of the Euphrates looking for hidden military equipment, weapons, unexploded ordnance, or other signs of military action. They marked and reported piles of anti-aircraft ammunition and numerous loaded anti-aircraft guns. They also made a positive impact in the Iraqi community, using the civil affairs personnel to explain the reason for their patrols through the Iraqi villages and increased community safety that would result from removing the military equipment and munitions.

Finally, in mid-April 1st Platoon completed the cordon and search missions and reconsolidated with their company and battalion. The battalion established a forward operating base at an old Iraqi industrial complex southwest of OBJ Peach. Finally, after over a month of almost constant operations in a hostile and dangerous environment, 1st Platoon received a bit of a break. For almost two weeks the soldiers and NCO's of the platoon focused on recovering and rebuilding their worn equipment. At the end of April a new platoon leader, 2LT Gipson, took charge of the excellent platoon and used this time to get to know his men. While the platoon caught its breath, the battalion staff looked forward, planning the demanding missions that would soon face 1st Platoon hundreds of kilometers west on the Iraqi-Syrian border.

1st Platoon

1st Platoon Year in Review by 2LT Jeremiah Gipson Platoon Leader April - Present

The past year has been filled with experiences that the soldiers of 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, 54th Engineer Battalion will never forget. The accomplishments of this unit have to be described as nothing short of remarkable. Many people have written books and played in movies trying to capture the life that the soldiers of 1st Platoon have lived. For the rest of our lives, we will be looked upon with awe for having excelled in the stressful environments of combat. But we did not go to war for glory, rewards, or accolades; we went for each other. We went because it was the right thing to do. We went because we were the best.

The platoon began the year at Ramstein Air Force Base working at the deployment processing center. There, the platoon assisted other units deploying to the Central Command Area of Operation by loading aircraft and preparing the sleeping and morale accommodations for the deploying troops. Suddenly, in late January, the entire 54th Engineer Battalion was ordered to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Given just one week to deploy, the platoon remarkably prepared itself to conduct a railhead operation for its vehicles and equipment. By late January, the platoon had sent all of its equipment forward for the deployment and eagerly awaited the order to deploy.



A 16 crosses Chamberlain float bridge

1st Platoon

The much-anticipated day finally arrived on February 13, 2003, the Battalion received the official call forward to deploy to Kuwait. The platoon was excited to be going to warmer temperatures, but even more excited to have an opportunity to contribute to the War on Terrorism. Once in Kuwait, the platoon focused on maintenance and training in order to prepare for the possibility of war. From countless 5988E's to the dreadful NBC training, 1st Platoon remained motivated and focused. On March 20th, everyone in the platoon realized first hand the importance of training as they crossed the Iraqi border. The nation was at war, and 1st Platoon supported the attack as part of the initial 3ID spearhead. While attached to 10th Engineer Battalion, 1st Platoon was pivotal in the marking of Route Rovers, a strategic avenue of approach leading toward the Karbala Gap. Then, the platoon moved towards the Euphrates River in order to secure Objective Peach, a key bridge site across the main avenue of approach leading towards Baghdad. Shortly after securing Objective Peach, the platoon shifted north and provided security at Objective Chamberlain, a secondary float bridge site crossing the Euphrates River. Three weeks after the longest land assault in history began, 1st Platoon reconsolidated with the 54th Engineer Battalion at LSA Dogwood, twenty kilometers southwest of Baghdad.

On April 12th, 1LT White was appointed as the new XO of A Co, and 2LT Gipson became the new platoon leader of 1st Platoon. Immediately upon becoming the platoon leader, 2LT Gipson was tasked to conduct a traffic control point along the critical avenue of approach leading to the fixed bridge site crossing the Euphrates River. Two weeks later, after being attached to 1st Squadron, 3rd ACR, the platoon found itself as the cornerstone of the security element for a three hundred kilometer, twenty-seven vehicle convoy to the Iraqi-Syrian border. During the convoy, 1st Platoon was called upon to detain nine personnel stealing munitions from and conduct an initial assessment of the Iraqi Army's western corps ammunition holding area. In one short hour, the platoon inspected over forty large bunkers finding millions of weapon systems from several different countries including Russia, Jordan, France, and the United States.

1st Platoon

Missions while supporting 1/3 ACR were nothing but exciting. Three missions stand out as memorable moments while at Al Qaim, Iraq. First, the platoon conducted a night patrol through Huysbaya, the border town on the Syrian border. The mission was to observe the nighttime activities of the local populous and drive up to and the Syrian border in order to incite a response from the Syrian border guards. The mission was successful in witnessing the night conditions of Huysbaya and in receiving a response from the Syrian guards in the form of small arms fire. 1st Platoon remains proud to have been the first U.S. combat engineer platoon in history to sit on the Iraqi-Syrian border. The second mission that excites strong memories was the tasking to conduct pay operations for government workers. The mission was going well until a couple of hostile Iraqi citizens began to push several 1st Platoon soldiers and grab for the soldier's weapons. It took just a few moments for everyone to realize the severity of the situation, and even less time for the training and rehearsals to begin to control everyone's actions. Everyone in the platoon performed their role with precision and within minutes the soldiers of 1st Platoon were in control of the situation and preparing to complete the mission. The third mission that soldiers will remember for years to come was the day an Iraqi civilian attempted to bypass a traffic control point. Instantly upon witnessing the Iraqi vehicles begin to avoid the checkpoint, two designated military vehicles began a seven-mile, high-speed pursuit ending in the detainment of the perpetrator.



1st Platoon Riot Control formation training

1st Platoon

A month after convoying to the Syrian border with 1/3 ACR, 1st Platoon was once again conducting movements toward LSA Dogwood in order to reconsolidate under the 54th Engineer Battalion. However, the platoon first had to stop at the Hayditha dam complex for the A Co. change of command ceremony. CPT Bowman became the new company commander on May 27, 2003, and the soldiers of 1st Platoon had opportunity to swim for the first time since the blistering temperatures arrived.

A large metal warehouse, similar in structure to a common backyard barn, became the platoon's new home early in the month of June. The platoon was excited and eager to continue preparing to redeploy back to Germany. However, early redeployment was not in the fortune cards as the soldiers were told to prepare to spend one year supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was unfortunate not to be able to redeploy in June, but the platoon knew that they were given an opportunity to continue to make a difference for the Iraqi people.

From June to September, 1st Platoon remained at LSA Dogwood accomplishing a variety of missions from route reconnaissance to weapons cache searches to base camp security operations. In addition to conducting operational missions, the platoon also focused on individual and squad-level training and implementing lessons learned while supporting 3ID and 3ACR. In late June, A Co. conducted the Outlaw Bandana Ride, a rigorous thirty-six hour training event designed to challenge the mental stamina, physical endurance, and technical competence of every soldier. 1st Platoon once again proved its superiority as it won multiple events including the physical competition, the Silent Sapper lane clearance obstacle, and the OPORD competition. In the end, 1st Platoon placed two of the top three squads in the company. Also in late June, the platoon set the goal to earn the V Corps Distinguished Unit Award. By the middle of October, the platoon met all of the requirements for the award by scoring an average of 268 on the APFT, having one-third of the platoon personnel qualify expert with their assigned weapon, and having no safety accidents or disciplinary problems. The week of July 4th, ten soldiers from the platoon comprised a security detail to escort three civilian foreign-weapons experts from the United States Army Corps of Engineers tasked to assess the condition and quantity of weapons munitions throughout central Iraq. In three days, the security team traveled over 1500 kilometers throughout central Iraq to various ammunition storage facilities.

1st Platoon

In the months of July, August, and September, 1st Platoon conducted countless hours of base camp security including entrance control point operations and quick reaction force support at LSA Dogwood. Also during that time, 1st Platoon supported TF Scorpion, led by the 1st MEF, on several raids and weapons cache searches, and provided the security support for the route reconnaissance of ASR Sue, the key route connecting LSA Dogwood and Baghdad International Airport.

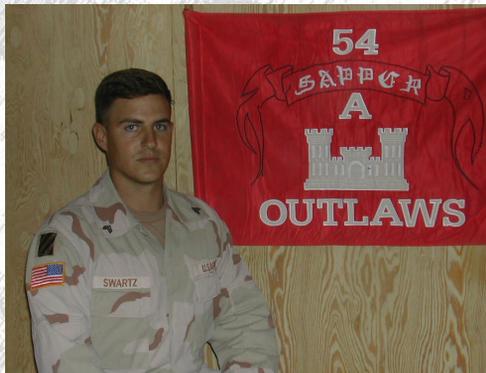
In late September, the platoon had to once again relocate. The new home was LSA Anaconda located near Balad, Iraq. While at Balad, the platoon supported 130th Engineer Brigade operations by providing the Brigade Commander and Sergeant Major with a seven-man convoy security detail. Additionally, the platoon began to prepare its vehicles and equipment for redeployment while conducting base camp security and improvement missions.

Throughout the past year, 1st Platoon has excelled in every mission. From training to war, the soldiers never faulted; they were the epitome of a proven, professional unit. Every mission was competed to the highest standard because no one in the platoon would accept anything less. Fate assigned us to the same unit, but the experiences and obstacles that we conquered together has made us brothers forever.



1st Platoon preparing for presence patrol

1st Squad, 1st Platoon “ROUGH AND ROUGHED”



SGT James Swartz
Squad Leader

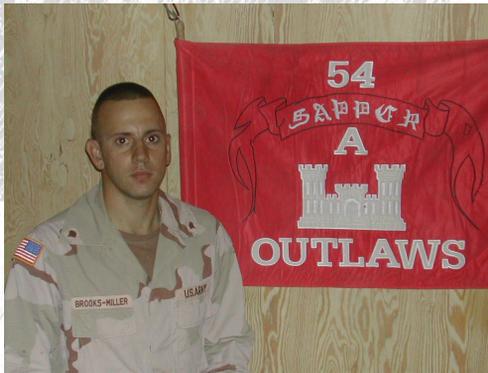


SGT Edwin Escobar
Team Leader



CPL Alan Fish
Team Leader

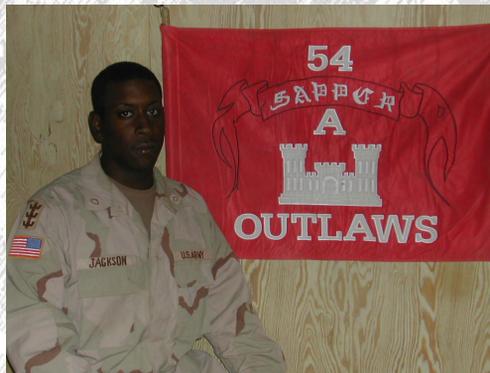
1st Squad, 1st Platoon “ROUGH AND RUGGED”



SPC Zachary Brooks-Miller
Squad Member



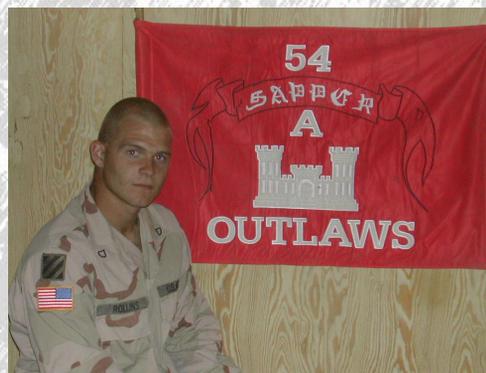
SPC Micheal Ferguson
Squad Member



PFC Shir'an Jackson
Squad Member



PFC Ray Nichols
Squad Member



PFC Brandon Rollins
Squad Member

1st Squad, 1st Platoon “ROUGH AND RUGGED”

We departed from our lonely base camp in the middle of the Kuwaiti desert on Friday, March 21, 2003, at 0130 Zulu attached to a company of M1 Abrams tanks from 2/70 AR, part of the Third Infantry Division's Second Brigade Combat Team. From our perspective, there were hundreds of M1 tanks, M113 APCs, and fuelers all moving toward the Iraqi border. None of us got much sleep that night; two nights after President Bush gave Saddam Hussein and his sons a forty-eight hour window of opportunity to flee Iraq. No one in the squad knew what was happening at the time. We remember listening to the radio weeks earlier hearing that Iraq was continuing to dismantle its unauthorized weapon systems and thinking that there was not going to be a war. Everyday more missiles were being destroyed and we all held out hope that the diplomatic negotiation process would prevail. However, none of this was enough for the President.



Picket Pounding competition during Bandana Ride

1st Squad, 1st Platoon “ROUGH AND RUGGED”

When we all heard that President issued his ultimatum, we all felt never-before tapped emotions. No one was excited. No one was scared. No words can explain what we felt. This uncertain feeling remained with us until we heard over the radio to start the engine of our APC. At this point, we all knew what was happening. What many fear, we were now living. This was not just another training exercise. This was not just another common morning stand-to exercise. We started our engines that morning for one purpose, to invade Iraq, and at 0537 Zulu, First Squad, First Platoon crossed the border and entered into Iraq. The squad was at war.

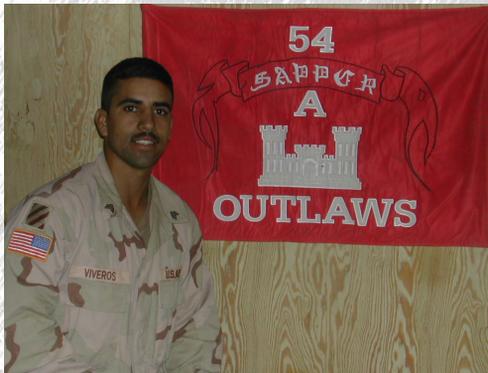


1st Platoon at convoy range

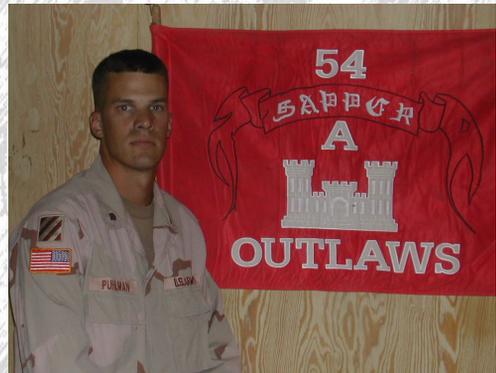
2nd Squad, 1st Platoon



SSG Jason Machado
Squad Leader



SGT Aldo Viveros
Team Leader



CPL Shawn Puhlman
Team Leader

2nd Squad, 1st Platoon



SPC Steven Sanders
Squad Member



PV2 Henry Welzel
Squad Member



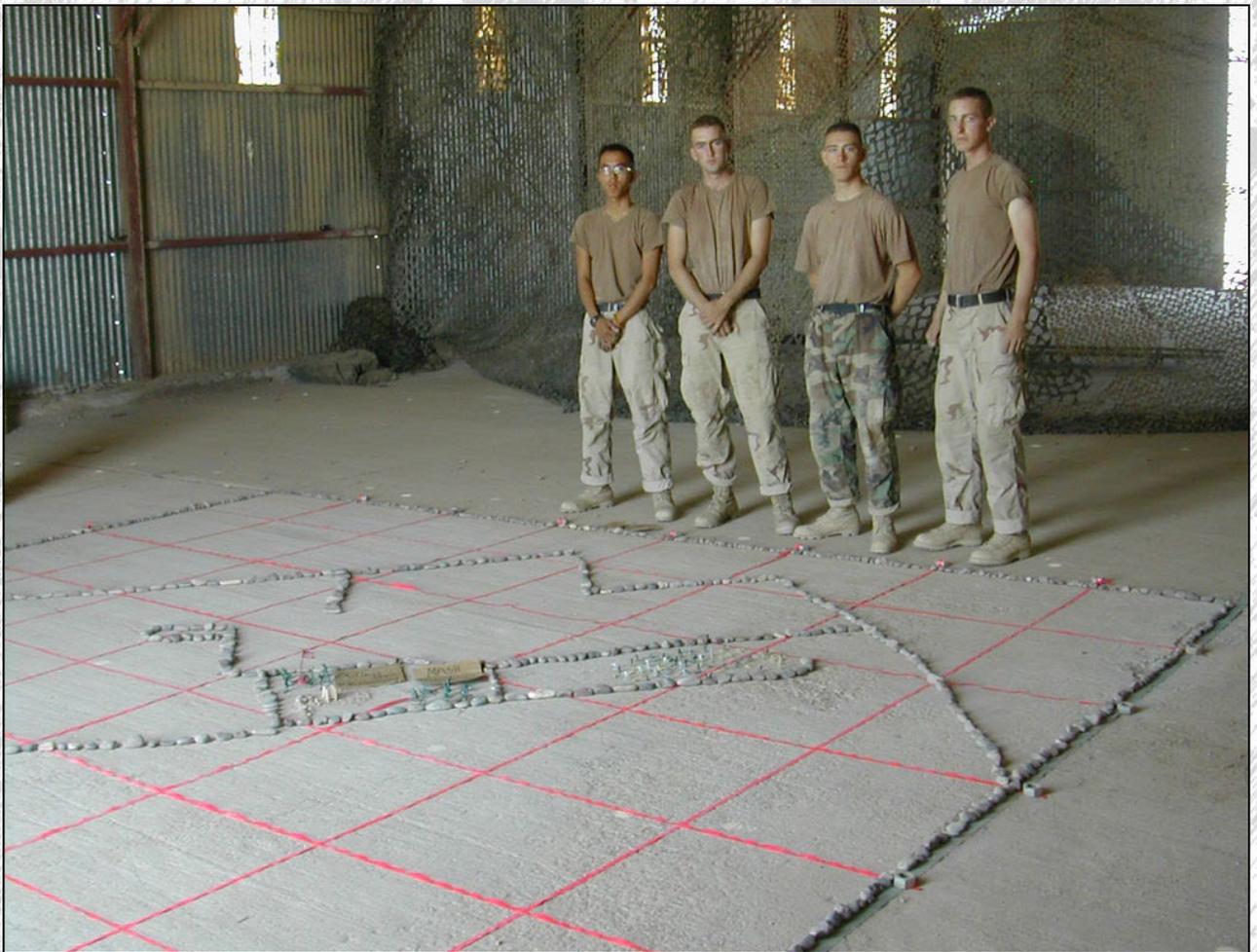
PV2 Gregory Precht
Squad Member



PFC Aaron Palmer
Squad Member

2nd Squad, 1st Platoon

The morning started no different than any other while Second Squad, First Platoon was attached to First Squadron, Third Armored Cavalry Regiment. This morning our platoon was tasked with a mission to distribute money to Iraqi government workers. As usual, the platoon was lined up and prepared to execute the mission fifteen minutes ahead of our mission start time. Our squad APC was the lead vehicle in the platoon convoy. Suddenly, just one kilometer away from our objective, the engine of our squad APC stopped running and would not restart. This was the first time of the deployment that our squad vehicle was not fully mission capable.



2nd Squad, 1st Platoon

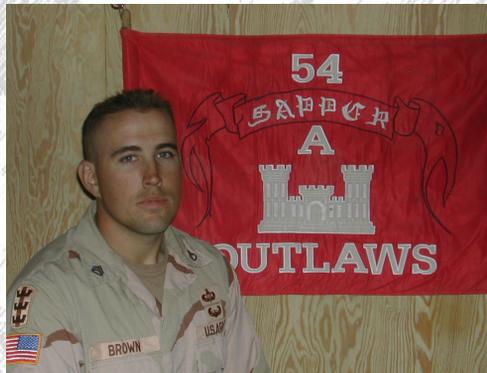
After getting towed to our position in the defensive perimeter, we began to execute the mission by preparing the lanes in which Iraqi citizens would pass to efficiently distribute the overdue money. After just five short minutes, a male Iraqi began to approach our perimeter. We yelled for him to get back but he kept coming. Eventually, he was so close to the perimeter that a soldier had to shove him backwards in order to maintain an appropriate safe distance. Suddenly, the Iraqi man, with several other Iraqi men, began pushing First Platoon soldiers and grabbing for the soldier's weapon. After two or three minutes of chaos, the soldiers of First Platoon detained three Iraqi men involved in the incident with no shots fired and without anyone being injured.

After the area was secure, we all knew that our mission had to be completed. About thirty minutes after the fight had ended, we began to distribute money to the Iraqi government workers; paying over 500 people in just two hours. We left that day knowing that we had made a positive difference in the lives of the Iraqi people.

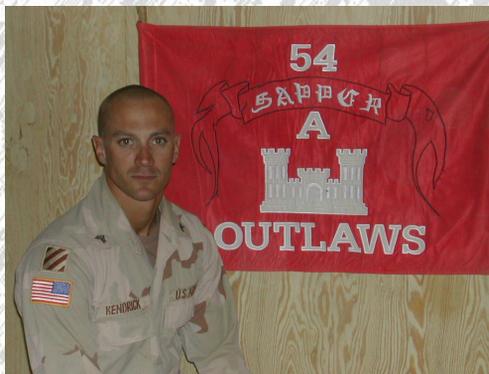


SGT Powell's temporary hair cut in Virginia

**3rd Squad, 1st Platoon
“THE WIDOWMAKERS”**



SSG Eugene Brown
Squad Leader

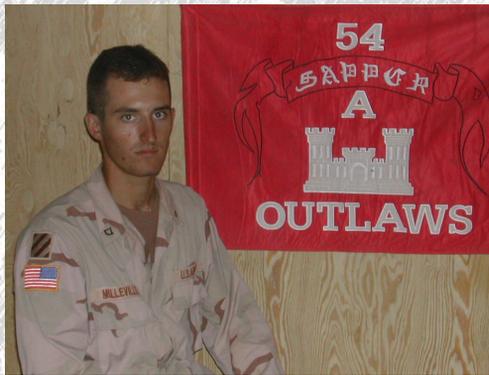


SGT Micheal Kendrick
Team Leader

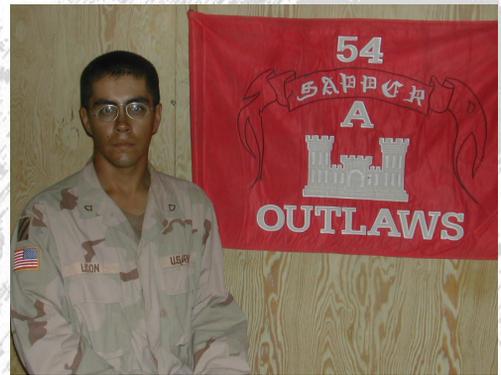


SGT Patrick Lum
Team Leader

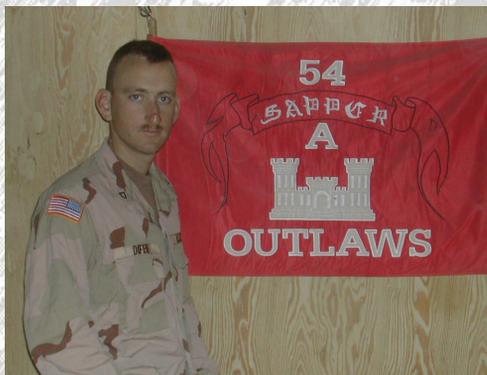
3rd Squad, 1st Platoon “THE WIDOWMAKERS”



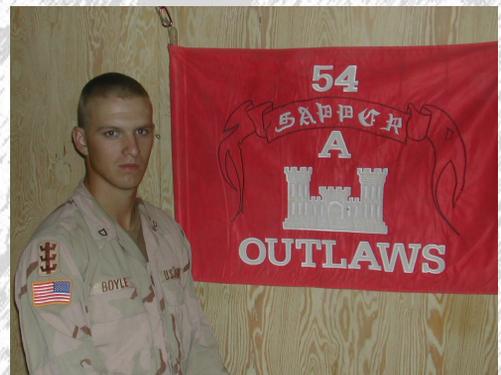
PFC Philip Milleville
Squad Member



PFC Joe Licon
Squad Member



PFC Christopher Difeo
Squad Member



PFC Roman Boyle
Squad Member

3rd Squad, 1st Platoon “THE WIDOWMAKERS”

Third Squad, First Platoon, arrived in Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on February 13, 2003. We first occupied Camp Virginia until early March when we pushed forward to attack position Outlaw waiting for the call forward to spearhead the attack on Iraq. Third Squad was attached to 2/70 AR. The squad crossed into Iraq at 0537 Zulu on March 21st as part of the lead elements of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Spearheading the effort, Third Squad assaulted forward to Objective Burroughs with 2/70 AR where we were supposed to mark Route Rovers for follow-on units, but instead pushed forward witnessing intense fighting as we maneuvered towards An Nasiriyah. After the fighting had subsided, the squad went back to complete the mission of marking Route Rovers.



Track positioned on initial assault

3rd Squad, 1st Platoon “THE WIDOWMAKERS”

Third Squad, First Platoon then pushed forward to As Samawah continuing the assault towards Objective Rams where we reconsolidated with Alpha Company. Soon after, we reorganized with the company and we were tasked to provide engineer support to A/10th Engineers. While attached to A/10E, the squad passed through the Karbala Gap and maneuvered as the part of the lead elements to secure Objective Peach. At Objective Peach, First Platoon acted as the principle near and far shore security force for the strategic fixed bridge crossing the Euphrates River.

Third Squad continued the fight after reattaching with Alpha Company at LSA Dogwood by supporting 1/3 ACR at Tiger Base of the Iraqi-Syrian border. While with 1/3 ACR, the squad was instrumental in the securing of a highly volatile area in which Ba'ath Party members once freely operated.



OE-254 erection at dawn on day two of Bandana Ride

Introduction

The Platoons

2nd Platoon “Hard Training, Easy War”



Arabia

2nd Platoon “Hard Training, Easy War”

2nd Platoon has had an extremely busy year. As the New Year rang in, 2nd Platoon headed out to Rhine Ordnance Barracks located at Ramstein Air Force base. The mission was to serve as the pusher unit for out going units at the deployment-processing center. Although select personnel from the other platoons within Alpha Company went on the mission, it was 2nd Platoon that was primarily responsible for ensuring that the units deploying out of the Germany did so in the most efficient and effective means possible. In order to accomplish the daily missions, 2nd Platoon was spread thin in order to properly man each of the 12 stations. Although at times the work was laborious and the hours long, the soldiers of 2nd Platoon met every challenge head on. The squad leaders performed exceptional throughout the mission, but it was the team leaders and soldiers who truly stepped up to ensure that each of more than 3,000 soldiers and their equipment deployed out of Germany on time. 2nd Platoon's mission at the DPC ended after only 11 days. It had been cut short with the order for the entire 54th En Bn to deploy to Kuwait.

Although the deployment orders came as a shock, 2nd Platoon was more shocked to discover that all its vehicles and equipment had to be prepped, packed, and moved to the railhead within 72 hours. Once 2nd Platoon returned back to Bamberg, the entire platoon immediately began its preparation. Through the course of those three days, there was little time for sleep and even less time to spend with families. When the deadline finally came, all of 2nd Platoon's equipment had been packed up and each of its seven vehicles had been through the ISA stations. After the platoon's equipment was successfully rail loaded, 2nd Platoon completed all the required deployment paperwork and executed the battalion's weeklong train up program.



2nd Platoon formation at Bamberg moments prior to getting on the bus to leave for Kuwait

2nd Platoon

“Hard Training, Easy War”

Several weeks passed and 2nd Platoon reluctantly said goodbye to families and friends as they departed for Kuwait. After arriving, the platoon immediately moved to Camp Virginia and focused on recovering its equipment and preparing it for battle. The platoon worked countless hours to accomplish all that needed to be done. It was exceedingly difficult to complete all the tasks with the limited logistical support

available. In the three weeks spent at Camp Virginia, each squad worked tirelessly to ensure that its assigned vehicles and mission essential equipment were fully capable of the enormous task ahead of them. Considering the time constraints, 2nd Platoon focused heavily on battle sustaining training. Everyone in the platoon effectively executed a rigorous training program focusing on invaluable squad and



3rd Squad conducts squad training at Camp Virginia, Kuwait

platoon tasks.

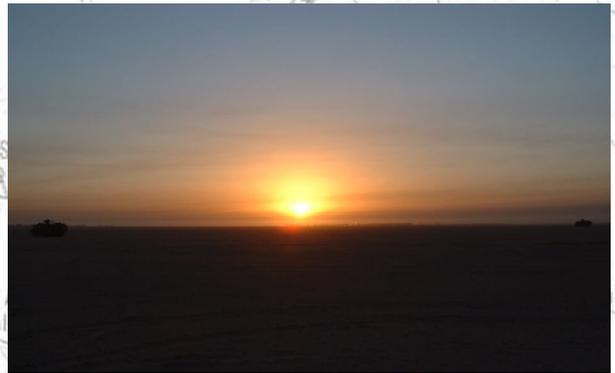
In early March, 2nd Platoon moved out of Camp Virginia to the tactical assembly area. There it linked up with the 10th Engineers of 3rd Infantry Division. The quality of life at the new location was not nearly as hospitable as that which was provided at Camp VA, but it didn't matter. The platoon's focus was on the approaching war and on ensuring that it was fully prepared to cross the border into Iraq.

2nd Platoon was soon attached to Delta Company of the 10th Engineers, which supported Task Force 1-64. 2nd Platoon was briefed on and fully integrated into Delta Dawg's war plans. For days 2nd Platoon trained hard in final preparation for battle with D Co. However at the last minute, 1st Platoon from A Co was pulled from its mission with Task Force Wadi to provide engineer support to an armored unit from 1BCT of 3ID. With just two days left before moving out to the final attack position, 2nd Platoon was given the new mission of providing security for TF Wadi as it spearheaded 3ID's assault into Iraq.

2nd Platoon

“Hard Training, Easy War”

Task Force Wadi was comprised of the 535th company from the 94th Engineer Battalion (Hvy). TF Wadi’s mission was to improve route Tornado, 3ID’s main route up to Baghdad. TF Wadi’s primary focus was on repairing the 50km section of the road that ran through the vast wadi complex located just west of Al Basrah. TF Wadi was placed in the front of the 3ID assault across the border to allow sufficient time for mission accomplishment. It was imperative that the section be repaired and trafficable prior to the divisional trains arriving so that vital logistical support could maintain pace with the main fighting force.



2nd Platoon conducts mounted training outside Camp Virginia

The War with Iraq officially had begun and in the early hours of March 21st, 2nd Platoon started what would later be known as the “Baghdad 500”. The wadi mission couldn’t have been more fortunate. The task force was never met with any enemy resistance and as it approached the wadi complex it discovered that the road was in better condition than what had originally expected. Once the 535th finished its work at the wadi complex, 2nd Platoon escorted the company to an airfield site

north of Al Samawah. After completing the TF Wadi mission, 2nd Platoon made the link up with rest of Alpha Company.

2nd Platoon moved with the rest of Alpha Company to Objective Rams, which was located just west of An Najaf. The night was spent at that location, receiving several enemy mortar attacks as well as sporadic small arms fire throughout the night. The next day 2nd Platoon was on the move again as it pushed past the dangerous Karbala gap and up through



2nd Platoon prepares an enemy munitions cache for disposal south of Objective Saints

the treacherous escarpment unscathed.

2nd Platoon’s next stop was at Objective Spartan located just north of the escarpment. It was there that 2nd Platoon was given the mission to provide security

Introduction

The Platoons

2nd Platoon

“Hard Training, Easy War”

for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Tactical Operations Center, with a stand by mission to move out with its re-trans team. The re-trans team mission was to facilitate the communication between the 2BCT TOC and its units on the front lines. Once again 2nd Platoon left Alpha Company and began moving north with the 2BCT TOC. The TOC moved directly behind 3ID's forward units and ultimately established a perimeter at Objective Saints located 6km south of Baghdad.

2nd Platoon was assigned numerous missions while positioned at Objective Saints, one of which was an enemy cache and unexploded ordinance disposal. 2nd Platoon worked closely with an Explosive Ordinance Disposal Team. In the immediate vicinity of Objective Saints were numerous enemy caches containing thousands of

rounds of Iraqi small arms, mortar, and artillery rounds. 2nd Platoon had to strip several MICLICs of its C4 explosives in order to properly dispose of the large caches. On one particular blast, 2nd Platoon used 1,800 pounds of C4 explosives needed to destroy a cache consisting of approximately 5,000 pounds of munitions.

2nd Platoon also conducted a reconnaissance of Route Viking, a potential alternate supply route into Baghdad. 2nd Platoon moved with Eagle Troop who provided additional security for the mission. Eagle Troop was equipped with several Bradley Fighting Vehicles. While moving along the route they fired countless 25mm rounds destroying the abandoned Iraqi vehicles lining the road. The vehicles consisted mainly of T-72 tanks and M113's.

On April 6th, 2nd Platoon was informed that it was being reattached to Alpha Company. The link-up would take place the next morning at Objective Saints. On April 7th, as the 2BCT TOC was preparing for its move to a secured location in Baghdad, the Alpha Company commander arrived to escort 2nd Platoon back to



Eagle Troop destroys an Iraqi tank during 2nd Platoon's recon of route Vikings

Introduction

The Platoons

2nd Platoon

“Hard Training, Easy War”

where the 54th Battalion was consolidating at its operations base at LSA Dogwood. As the commander made his link-up with the TOC personnel, the building in which the 2BCT TOC was located was attacked.

A FROG-7 missile hit the 2BCT TOC. The missile flew directly over 2nd Platoon's vehicles, which were located about 50 feet from the building, and struck the center of the complex. The soldiers of 2nd Platoon immediately sought cover within the platoon's armored personnel carriers.

Once the accountability of personnel was confirmed, everyone with the exception of drivers and tank commanders dismounted the vehicles. One of the tracks suffered damage from the impact of the blast. As a result,

the dismounted personnel immediately began working vigorously to repair the vehicle. Meanwhile as a contingency, several of 2nd Platoon's soldiers began cross loading essential equipment from the damaged APC to other platoon vehicles while others ran to the building to assist in extinguishing the conflagration quickly consuming the building and to aid the many wounded. A four-man team led by

the platoon sergeant, SSG Outten, was among those soldiers who went into the building to provide relief. SSG Outten's team demonstrated great bravery in making several trips into the building to treat and evacuate the injured soldiers despite the



A-23 towing A-21 away from the blast site following the FROG-7 missile attack



SGT Manns and SPC Dipalma cross-loading equipment

2nd Platoon

“Hard Training, Easy War”

intense fire and explosions within the complex. That four-man team included SPC Stabak, SPC Elias, and PFC Inch. Each of which received an ARCOM with valor. SSG Outten received a Bronze Star for his actions. The Iraqi missile had dealt a disheartening blow to US forces, killing four soldiers and wounding many more.

Following the FROG-7 attack, 2nd Platoon moved to LSA Dogwood to refit. 2nd Platoon executed a variety of missions at LSA Dogwood to include checkpoint operations, and provide security for the 459th MRBC float bridge at Objective Chamberlain. 2nd Platoon also conducted daily patrols through the villages along the Euphrates River in search of enemy caches and to gather any enemy intelligence.



PFC Inch on a dismounted patrol along the Euphrates River near Objective Peach

2nd Platoon was given a mission to conduct a raid on a suspected Ba'ath party member's house. The mission was conducted at first light. The platoon's vehicles cordoned off the area, while two four-man teams moved in and conducted search and seizure operations. 2nd Platoon seized numerous weapons, millions of Dinar, and detained the suspected Ba'ath

party member. The platoon also recovered a stolen BMW X-5.

Within just a few weeks of arriving at LSA Dogwood, the 54th En Bn was attached to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. Tasked to provide engineer support during support and stability operations. Alpha Company moved out west with 3ACR's 1st Squadron to Al Asad airfield. Eventually the squadron moved out to FOB Tiger located in a rail station just south of Al Qaim near the Syrian border. 2nd Platoon was assigned to Crazy Troop of 1st SQD. 2nd Platoon moved with Crazy out to FOB Tiger along an alternate route to determine its traffic ability. 2nd Platoon was responsible for conducting an engineer reconnaissance on the route. After mission completion, 2nd Platoon stayed with Crazy Troop as it moved back east to the Hiditha dam. Crazy established its base of operations there for its mission to facilitate SASO in the city of Hiditha. 2nd Platoon was fully integrated into the

2nd Platoon

“Hard Training, Easy War”

Crazy plan to conduct daily patrols through the city as well as to dispose of countless UXO located near the dam.

2nd Platoon's mission with Crazy Troop lasted approximately a month until it was informed that the 54th En Bn would be re-deploying with 3ID. Prior to moving back to LSA Dogwood where the entire 54th En Bn began to consolidate and reorganize, Alpha Company had its change of command ceremony on top of the Hidithah dam.

2nd Platoon's second trip to LSA Dogwood was filled with great anticipation. However as the platoon began to prepare its vehicles and equipment for the re-deployment, new orders came down and unit found out that it would be in theatre for up to a year.

Although the men of 2nd Platoon were disheartened by the news, the platoon's focus quickly turned to training up for the first annual Outlaw Bandana Ride. The Bandana Ride was a grueling 36-hours designed to test the squad's teamwork



2LT Graig and SSG(P) Outten sit on top of the Hidithah Dam following Alpha Company's change of command ceremony

as well as their mental and physical fitness. The event consisted of a round robin of engineer tests and orders processing, a 12-mile land navigation course, silent sapper course, a strenuous physical fitness competition, and a rigorous 12 obstacle course that was built by 2nd Platoon. The 9 participating squads were extremely close throughout the competition. However when it was over, 2nd Squad of 2nd Platoon had finished in first place. First and third squad of 2nd Platoon also performed extremely well during the competition with each winning two of the events.

2nd Platoon's next mission was to provide site security and UXO support for Bravo Company of the 142nd Engineers at the Abu Ghurayb prison located west of Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). Bravo Company's mission was to construct a 4,500-person internment facility within the prison walls. Several obstacles hindered

2nd Platoon

“Hard Training, Easy War”

Bravo’s operation. The company was forced to provide its own site security leaving it under manned to complete its mission on time. The prison also received nightly mortar and RPG attacks which scattered UXO’s throughout their construction site. Finally, located within the site was a concrete structure that could not be knocked down by any of their equipment to include a D-9 dozer.

2nd Platoon immediately took charge of the security issues by manning and reinforcing the three towers that lined the perimeter walls. 2nd Platoon filled over 800 sand bags in order to properly fortify the towers. The task was exceptionally



SSG Milstead, SGT Morgan, and the building all standing

difficult since each bag had to be hauled up the three flights of stairs in the exhausting heat. 2nd Platoon also established a QRF designed to dispose of the UXO within the vicinity as well provided local security to the Bravo soldiers working outside the prison walls. The greatest challenge of the

mission came in the demolition of the concrete structure. The structure’s walls were heavily reinforced concrete over two feet thick. The platoon submitted the building’s critical dimensions to ERDAC to obtain guidance on how to properly weaken the structure. The platoon used a small amount of demo on its initial blast to determine the precise thickness of walls and exactly how well it was supported by rebar. The second blast followed ERDEC’s guidance and was much larger than the first. Despite the significant impact of the explosion, the building still stood and remained strong enough to withstand Bravo’s machinery. The third blast had double the amount of explosives than the second and more of it was tamped into the structure.

2nd Platoon “Hard Training, Easy War”

Although the final blast did not demolish the structure, it did however weaken it to the extent that it could be bulldozed over.

Bravo Company was attached to the 94th Engineer Battalion for the Abu Ghurayb mission and based out of BIAP. 2nd Platoon established residence along side Bravo Company within the passenger terminal. The quality of life was the best that 2nd Platoon experienced while deployed to Iraq. Although the workdays were long, the soldiers of 2nd Platoon were provided with more than ample time to relax and utilize BIAP's many facilities, which included a Burger King. The mission ended in late August and 2nd Platoon returned once again to LSA Dogwood.

Immediately after arriving back at LSA Dogwood, 2nd Platoon was called upon to provide its personnel for gate and perimeter guard. After the two weeks of force protection, 2nd Platoon along with the rest of Alpha Company packed everything up and left for the battalion's new home at LSA Anaconda located at Balad airfield north of Baghdad. The platoon's time at LSA Anaconda was spent improving the company's living area, refitting, and fixing vehicles as it waited for it for its turn to re-deploy back to Germany.



2nd Platoon at the tactical assembly area in Kuwait a day before crossing the berm into Iraq

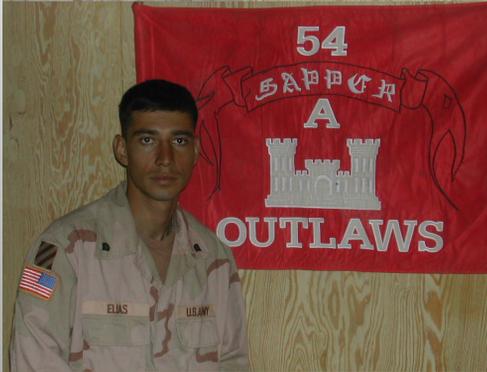
1st Squad, 2nd Platoon “Wolf Pack”



SSG LOWELL MILSTEAD
SQUAD LEADER



SGT PAUL MANNS
TEAM LEADER



SPC JUAN ELIAS
TEAM LEADER



SPC RON JOHNSON
SQUAD MEMBER



SPC KEVIN DIPALMA
SQUAD MEMBER



SPC CRISTOBAL TORRES
SQUAD MEMBER



PFC ROMIEL ALEXANDRE
SQUAD MEMBER



PV2 ERNEST FORREST
SQUAD MEMBER

1st Squad, 2nd Platoon “Wolf Pack”

Looking back at the memories that stockpile my mind due to the past months fill my mind with accomplishment and pride. Unfortunately the lingering feeling of let down that the month June brought is also there. The 54th Combat Engineer Battalion was deployed to southwest Asia after the new year of 2003. By February 14th the battalion was a whole centrally located at Camp Virginia, Kuwait. The forecast for the future was war! The soldiers of the 54th were ready.

The 54th was broken down and sold to the highest bidders. The consumers were 3rd Infantry Division. The months leading up to June were beyond demanding. The broken up battalion experienced everything from death to the feeling of just being alive.

Sometime during early June, a rumor spread throughout that made every soldiers head turn. REDEPLOYEMENT! The idea of it had been looming on minds horizon for everyone. The details were sketchy, but the end all result was that the 54th would be home no later than mid August. The rumor was fully confirmed and the battalion began to quickly reorganize at LSA Dogwood. The early stages of re-deployment were beginning to take place. CRASH! Like an unexpected piece of artillery hitting the ground. Our re-deployment hopes and dreams were shattered. The 54th was stopped dead in its tracks. Heartbreak had fully set-in.

The months to follow are unimportant in this tale. The war had been fought, the missions completed, the accomplishments achieved. The idea of re-deployment is slowly starting to re-sprout its ugly head once again. The 54th remains vigilant and most of all patient.

2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon “Ride or Die”



SGT ALFRED MORGAN
SQUAD LEADER



SGT MARQUIS CLARK
TEAM LEADER



SPC CALVIN BROWN
SQUAD MEMBER



PFC JEREMY KILGORE
SQUAD MEMBER



SGT KEVIN LASH
TEAM LEADER



SPC DANIEL STABAK
SQUAD MEMBER



PFC JACOB ORFIELD
SQUAD MEMBER

2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon “Ride or Die”

My name is SPC Stabak. I am part of 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, of Alpha Company Outlaws. My squad was deployed to the Middle East on Feb 13 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. We started our combat operations on March 21st when we crossed the border into Iraq. We were attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division. On the date of April 7th, about 6km south of Baghdad, we were guarding the 2BCT TOC. The day had all ready been very eventful with all the sporadic small arms firing and the distant sounds of bombing coming from the city throughout the night. However, no one ever could have expected that which would take place later that morning.

Initially 2nd platoon was to support the 2BCT TOC as they advanced north into Baghdad. The move was to take place later in the day after allied forces had completed their assault on Baghdad and established a secured perimeter for the TOC to move into. At the last minute the word had come down from higher informing us that we were no longer continuing with the mission. We were to wait at that location and link up with our company commander. As the other units around prepared to go north, we geared up to go back south and link back up with the battalion. The commander had arrived at about 1030. As he went into the complex which housed the TOC, out of nowhere a large black object flew over us and crashed 50 feet away. It had been a direct hit on the TOC. At first it appeared as though a jet had crashed into the building. Regardless of what had hit us, it felt as though we were experiencing a deafening earthquake.

With all the chaos that ensued, everyone within the platoon initially sought cover within the tracks while donning their chemical masks. It was immediately determined that the attack had not been chemical. All but the drivers and TC's dismounted the tracks and began recovering equipment. At that time my platoon sergeant, SSG Outten and I had noticed CPT Hudson come running out of the building. He had been in the immediate area of the attack and some how he miraculously survived. Behind him we could see others who had been hurt. SSG Outten yelled for more soldiers to come with us and try to help any others that wounded or were trapped in the building. SPC Elias and PFC Inch had heard the call, and the four of us ran to blazing building. We each had a fire extinguisher or a

2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon “Ride or Die”

couple water cans from the tracks to help counter the fire that was quickly consuming the structure. While we fighting the fire we noticed people still inside the complex desperately in need of aid. After we ran out of water and had dispensed the extinguishers, we realized that we needed to get inside in order get the wounded out.

The Iraqi's had established an ammo and weapons cache within building complex. As the four of us were moving into the inferno, the fire had taken hold of stored enemy ammo resulting in countless secondary explosions. We had entered the complex by a side entrance that we had found. We made it inside, and it was as though we had stepped into hell itself. There were bodies everywhere. The vehicles, tents, and all the other equipment that had once filled the area, were no more. Our four-man team split up and immediately began administering first aid. Despite all the fire, explosions, and smoke consuming all that was before us, SPC Elias and myself were able to aid and evacuate two personnel as well sweep the building to ensure that everyone else had made it out safely. Once we realized that we did all that we could have done, we ran back to where the platoon was recovering the damaged APC and took up fighting positions.

Days later it was determined that it was a FROG-7 missile that had hit the 2BCT TOC. Four people had been killed from the attack, and many more injured. Because of our actions, SPC Elias, PFC Inch, and myself all received the Army commendation medal with valor. SSG Outten received a Bronze Star, and everyone that was there was left with the disheartening memories of what had transpired that morning.

3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon “Hellhounds”



SSG STEVEN POOLE
SQUAD LEADER



SGT DEXTER ALFARO
TEAM LEADER



SGT JEFFREY CARD
TEAM LEADER



SPC JASON ALLEN
SQUAD MEMBER



PFC TERRIL STONE
SQUAD MEMBER



PFC JONATHAN BRICE
SQUAD MEMBER



PFC NORMAN INCH
SQUAD MEMBER

3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon “Hellhounds”

The Hellhounds' deployment to Iraq was presaged by the mission assigned to 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company, to the Deployment Processing Center in Ramstein, Germany. Starting 01 January 2003 2nd Platoon took over the DPC mission, pushing units to deployments all over the globe, not realizing that within six weeks the Outlaws would themselves be passing through Ramstein on a deployment of its own. Members of the Hellhounds returned to Warner Barracks on 11 January to assist in an inventory of squad equipment but never got the chance to start that mission; at first formation on 12 January the Outlaw elements still at Warner Barracks were informed that the unit was deploying to Iraq. While the bulk of 2nd Platoon was pulled out of the DPC mission, the Hellhounds prepared the Platoon's M113s for transportation to Iraq in addition to preparing their own APC as well as A28, A27 and A23T. 2nd Platoon's vehicles were at the railhead and loaded by the following Saturday, an astounding five days from first notification, due in no small part to the efforts of the Hellhounds. The entire Company was prepared to depart Germany by the beginning of February but endured numerous delays and finally left Ramstein on 12 February.

Alpha Company arrived in Kuwait on 13 February and were quickly ensconced in Camp Virginia where they spent two weeks on intensive maintenance in addition to recovering the Company's milvans, pulling force protection, and conducting MOUT training. On 27 February the Company moved to Assembly Area Outlaws where the Hellhounds continued their refresher training on weapons, lane marking, dismounted movement, and vehicle crewmember drills. 2nd Platoon then joined the 10th Engineers of 3rd I.D.'s 2nd Brigade Combat Team for two days to meet their new brothers-in-arms, conduct some more refresher training, and experience some of the worse sandstorms of Alpha Company's experience in Iraq.

Finally on 18 February the Hellhounds moved to the Tactical Assembly Area to make final preparations for their role in the liberation of Iraq. Hellhound elements joined the Company Convoy while A23 and A27 participated in Taskforce Wadi, moving out some nine hours ahead of the bulk of the 2nd BCT's invasion force on the night of 20 February. What followed was 2 days of intense driving as 2nd BCT pushed furiously to reach Objective Rams where the Hellhound elements were again united and took the basic configuration they would maintain for much of

3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon “Hellhounds”

combat operations. The stay at Rams was brief; after coming under mortar fire the Taskforce pushed out for Objective Raiders. After a brief stay at Raiders, the Taskforce moved on the Objective Spartan on their way to Objective Peaches in the vicinity of Baghdad. En route 2nd Platoon conducted a re-trans mission in the vicinity of enemy forces exposing the Hellhounds to enemy small arms fire.

In early April 2nd Platoon occupied Objective Saints with 2nd BCT elements on the very outskirts of Baghdad. While at Saints the Hellhounds engaged in a humanitarian mission, helping to restore water service to a grateful suburb of Baghdad, as well as assisting EOD in the destruction of stores of tons of Iraqi munitions. It was on the morning of 07 April at Objective Saints that 2nd BCT Headquarters came under rocket attack by a Frog-7 short-range missile. The Hellhounds were unscathed in the attack but were invaluable in assisting with the evacuation of wounded personnel from the Headquarters building and further helping recovery operations of Platoon equipment.

Within the week 2nd Platoon had rejoined the Company which moved en masse to LSA Dogwood where the Hellhounds engaged in some much needed maintenance and performed lane marking, secured a bridge on the Euphrates, operated TCPs, went on presence patrols and MOUT-style searches (recovering numerous weapons, ammunition, and military paraphernalia from suspected Ba’athists). 3rd Squad and the bulk of 2nd Platoon proceeded to the north of Baghdad, clearing two Iraqi air force bases. After returning to Dogwood, 2nd Platoon was promptly sent East to join 1/3 ACR. After a brief stay at Al Assad (another former Iraqi air force base) 2nd Platoon linked up with 1/3 ACR and convoyed to the rail depot at Objective Jenna. The stay at Jenna was brief but provided the Hellhounds with the opportunity to accomplish engineer recons on some critical bridges along convoy routes. 2nd Platoon continued on to the dam at Haditha, their home for almost a month. While at Haditha, Hellhounds conducted presence patrols, TCPs and Force Protection.

The bulk of Alpha Company joined 2nd Platoon at Al Haditha (where the Company change-of-command ceremony took place) before departing for Al Asad to begin redeployment procedures. There was another brief stay at Al Asad, this time in a more relaxed atmosphere marked by a barbecue cookout, rappelling,

3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon “Hellhounds”

football, and some demonstrations of skilled motorcycling. The Company returned to LSA Dogwood and engaged in several weeks of area beautification, equipment maintenance and consolidation, CTT training, QRF, weapons refresher training and the Bandana Ride, where Hellhounds again distinguished themselves by being the only Squad to win first place in two categories of competition.

In July 2nd Platoon moved to Baghdad International Airport where the Platoon supported the 142nd Engineers by providing tower security at the Abu Ghurayb Prison site. Hellhounds did not allow a single breach of security while on site at the prison in addition to providing their hard-earned expertise in vehicle searches, demolitions and force protection. Continuing the Squad's and Platoon's record of superior performance, the mission was successfully concluded in August, returning to the Company and Battalion. Once again at Dogwood, 2nd Platoon supported force protection while preparing for the Battalion movement to Balad (LSA Anaconda) to consolidate with the Brigade.

Early in September the Hellhounds returned to Balad, taking up residence and engaging in the familiar routine of area beautification and force protection while pursuing a more comfortable garrison-style schedule and lifestyle. Somewhat removed from the days of sleeping under the stars and 24-hour guard duty, the Hellhounds nonetheless maintain the same standards of excellence that distinguished them in a wide variety of missions during combat and SASO operations, proving that they are as capable as garrison soldiers as they are accomplished warriors.

A&O Platoon



A&O Platoon



A&O Platoon

January 2003 began with Assault and Obstacle Platoon's presence at the Deployment Processing Center at Ramstein Airbase. During the tasking, the platoon contributed to the deployment of over 3000 troops to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While on assignment, 54th EN BN received orders to deploy to Kuwait as well, so a hasty return to Bamberg was made in preparation for this feat. With only 96 hours notice to rail all vehicles and equipment, the platoon worked hard long hours for four days in freezing temperatures and finally loaded all mission-essential equipment. The following weeks included briefings and pre-deployment processing as well as administrative undertakings to ensure families, property, and finances were properly taken care of during the deployment for which no return time was given.



The last day in Bamberg - 12 February 2003

13 February 2003 began Day 1 of A&O's long commitment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. The platoon arrived in Kuwait with the rest of Alpha Company around mid-day. The weather was warm, but nothing compared to what would eventually be endured. As night fell and buses were loaded for the long drive to Camp Virginia located in the barren desert, it began to rain...hard. This first night's deluge proved to be symbolic of the unpredictability and intensity of the difficult task before them.

A&O Platoon

The next three weeks were spent at Camp Virginia, Kuwait in the motor pool all day everyday. Even while others slept, A&O labored furiously to bring the platoon to an acceptable maintenance posture. No one wanted to be left behind or without a vehicle if any invasion of Iraq were to begin. Incredibly, by 5 March, all nineteen vehicles in the platoon had been made mission capable for the company move to Assembly Area Spartan to await further orders. At AA Spartan, more preparations were made in anticipation of the imminent attack across the border. The ACEs were employed to berm in Patriot and MLRS batteries as well as Q36 and Q37 radars used by the artillery. The rest of the platoon used the isolation from phones and email to focus heavily on the dangerous mission ahead without distractions. Last coordinations were made with 10th Engineers (to whom Alpha Company was attached) where it was decided that A&O would take the lead in the battalion convoy that would puncture the western berm in the initial thrust forward.



Crossing the Border – 21 March 2003

A&O Platoon

On 20 March, A&O proudly led the 10th Engineer Battalion from Kuwait into Iraq beginning what would be the most trying few weeks of their lives. The platoon subsisted for the first few days of the road march to Baghdad on MREs and minimal sleep, driving for as much as 18 hours at a time. Lightning fast maintenance was performed on the go when vehicles not designed for the great distances broke down. Some of the vehicles, especially the AVLBs and ACEs had to be abandoned for lack of tow support and many soldiers lost personal equipment in the chaos. At OBJ Rams outside An Najaf, the platoon endured enemy mortar and small arms attacks from Fedayeen troops determined to be rid of advancing Americans. Their attempts were unsuccessful and the platoon continued on with 10th Engineers northward.



The sandstorm that slowed us but could not stop us

On March 25, a brutal sandstorm that made national headlines back home impaired the aggressive attack that had begun the war. The storm raged on for three days and all soldiers could do was grin and bear it. When it finally cleared, A&O pushed on with the rest of the company and began to work again with artillery and ADA units providing survivability with the ACEs (the “bread and butter” of the platoon during the war). Wheels section also assisted the company in digging fighting positions with SEE trucks and helping to berm the unit in for protection from enemy fire.

A&O Platoon

In mid-April, the platoon moved into the facilities at OBJ Dogwood 20 km Southwest of Baghdad. It was tasked to conduct Traffic Control Points and more berming operations for the influx of units pouring into the compound. The platoon then conducted patrols of the towns along the Euphrates searching for weapons and intelligence from the locals. This was a task for which the soldiers of A&O had never trained but which would prepare them for operations in the months ahead. The platoon uncovered cache sites and was rejuvenated after the long war by having some contact with locals who were welcoming and hospitable, indeed enthusiastic about the liberation.

Not too long after the arrival at OBJ Dogwood, Alpha Company was given orders that attached them to 1-3ACR for the squadron's move to a border town near Syria called Al Qa'im. At the beginning of May, A&O moved with the rest of the company to Al Asad airfield to await further instructions to link up out west. The platoon arrived at the train station on the fringes of Iraq's enormous western desert on 7 May and soon thereafter began operations to improve the security posture of the facility. Concertina wire was emplaced along missing patches around the station and concrete barriers were moved by the HEMMTs to roads through which access was to be denied. The next mission was unorthodox to say the least but contributed in no small part to achieving the American aim at ridding Iraq of all Baathist propaganda. The platoon was directed to use all available earthmoving assets, even civilian ones including a Caterpillar bucket loader, to destroy all murals of Saddam Hussein and the propagandistic writings of the Baath party in the region. The platoon did so willingly and effectively spending over a week accomplishing that goal. On one such mission, a group of 20 or so thieves were found stealing equipment from a government facility. A&O detained these men and called in Bradley support to take them into Tiger Base where they were questioned and punished. As a result of this capture, the platoon was afforded more opportunities to make a difference by patrolling and manning traffic points that would eventually yield many arrests, stolen cars, illegal weapons, and thousands of laundered American dollars. For its efforts and fruitful achievement in Al Qa'im, A&O platoon received the high praise of the Tiger Squadron.

A&O Platoon

On 2 June the platoon arrived back at Dogwood and moved into what would be “home” for the remaining two and a half months. It was a group of tin warehouses that lacked any modern amenities but that the platoon gradually turned into a very comfortable living arrangement. Much training was done here including common core skills and weapons qualification and familiarization. It all culminated in a 36 hour event named the Outlaw Bandana Ride which took place between 25-26 June. The event included a rigorous 8 mile land navigation course, a round robin event testing basic engineer skills, an intense physical test, and an obstacle course. The platoon excelled in the Bandana Ride and all participants earned the coveted Outlaw Bandana qualifying them as proctors on future company tests.

July was spent with more training and lots of vehicle maintenance. Toward the end of the month, A&O constructed an internal wooden building to complement the AC that the company eventually received to cool the tin warehouses in the heat of the summer. No sooner had the company gotten comfortable than everyone moved to the battalion proper area in buildings replete with AC, electricity, and a chow hall. Mid-august saw the company move but soon thereafter A&O was tasked with the most important Iraq mission it was to receive...Task Force Rocketeer.



Defueling an SA-2 rocket just north of Saddam City 21 Sep 2003

A&O Platoon

TF Rocketeer was a mission concept founded by Combined Joint Task Force – 7 to rid the Baghdad and other rural areas of the SA-2 surface to air Russian missile which had been emplaced in neighborhoods and communities to attack American aircraft. The missiles contained a caustic oxidizer that required a team of civilians from the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama to remove it. A&O provided command and control for the task force and began operations on 14 September in Baghdad working out of Cougar Base with the 2-2ACR and Baghdad with 1AD. In all, the platoon helped to dispose of 11 SA-2 missiles before a battle hand off with Charlie Company put them back in Balad with the rest of the battalion.



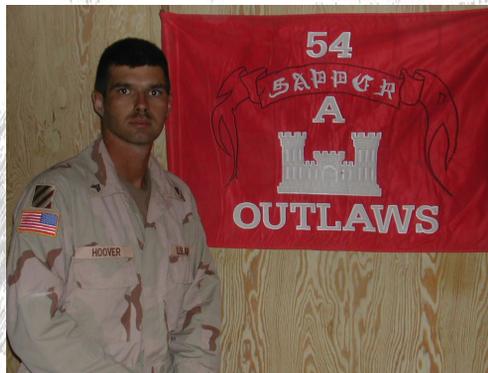
Outlaw 6 prepping for demolition
10 October 2003



The end result of a hard day's work

From 14 October forward, A&O worked diligently to improve the modest structure provided to make it suitable for a three month occupation, but on 27 October the battalion received orders that it would be home in mid-December thereby transferring the platoon focus to the cleaning of vehicles and the packing of equipment for the exciting move back to Germany.

Wheel Section, A&O Platoon



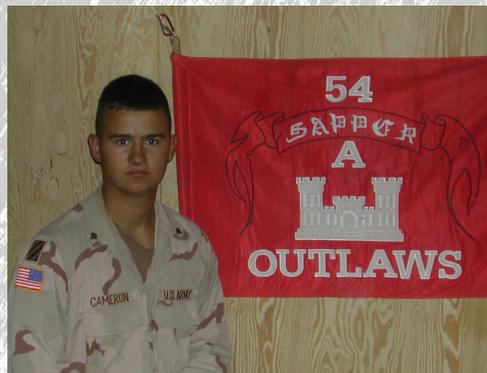
SGT William Hoover
Section Leader



CPL Andrew Dunbar
HEMMT Operator and Team Leader



PFC Jeffrey Bowens
HMMWV Operator



SPC Brian Cameron
HMMWV Operator

Wheel Section, A&O Platoon (cont.)



CPL Christopher Lamson
HEMMT Operator and Team Leader



SPC Patrick Cooksey
SEE Truck Operator



SPC Hoang Dang
5-ton Dump Operator

Wheel Section, A&O Platoon

It was the worst sand storm I had ever seen. The sky was red, I could not see 3 feet in front of my HEMTT, and I had to use a GPS to navigate around the company perimeter. For three days we struggled to conduct supply, class III, class IV, and class V operations, MICLIC reloads were a formidable challenge. As the storm cleared the company was off on recovery missions, going back for all of the AVLBs and ACEs left behind. We were linking up with the rest of our task force (D Co. 10th Engineer Battalion) when we began to get reports of enemy contact in our area. Just as the coffee had finished brewing we saw the Iraqi APCs on the desert horizon. As all the personnel in the task force scrambled to prepare for an attack and to defend their positions an A-10 Warthog screamed over head leaving a trail of flares behind it. By this point we were putting the sugar into our coffee at the back of the Platoon Sergeant's HMWWV and the A-10 started its second pass.



SPC Patterson just after the sandstorm and just before the attack

Wheel Section, A&O Platoon

The tension level was high, every one on his last nerve as the enemy was now less than two kilometers away. Tracers and smoking rockets filled the morning sky leaving the enemy in a pile of smoking rubble. All the time everyone around our position are barking orders, calling in spot reports, and trying to call for artillery support. I was trying to make it over to the company AVLB that was still moving to take him a fresh cup of coffee when I heard on the radio that someone in the task force mistook the AVLB for an Iraqi tank that had “infiltrated” the perimeter. It was a close call and I almost spilled my coffee when I heard it. These were very serious days during the war. If it had not been for a cup of coffee, we could have lost soldiers. “DAGGERS IN”

Story by: SGT(p) Hoover

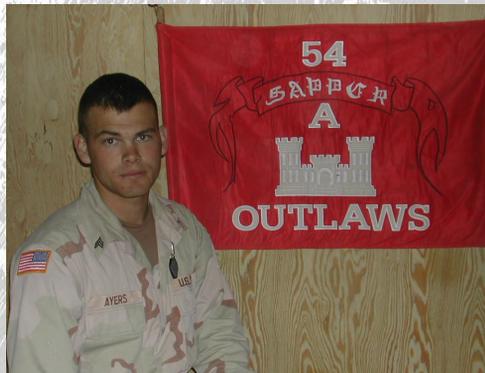


The aftermath - they never stood a chance

ACE Section, A&O Platoon



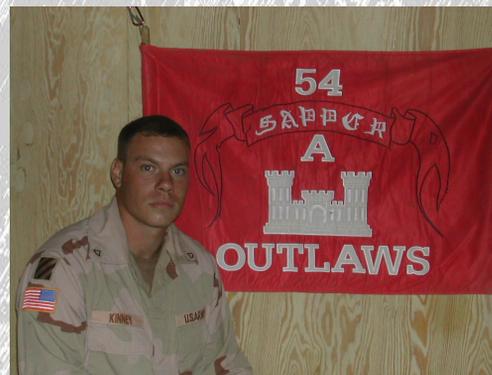
SGT Roger Beasley
Section Leader



SGT Christopher Ayers
Team Leader



SPC Samuel Maroney
ACE Operator



SPC Joseph Kinney
ACE Operator

ACE Section, A&O Platoon

While at OBJ Spartan just south of Karbala, I was attached to 1-64 AR. We were told that an Iraqi Division was trying to prevent 2BCT 3ID's movement north. We were tasked with destroying this division's aims. We moved out heading north and met little resistance. We stopped just shy of Karbala and the next morning entered the city before taking a route around the outside of the city. We moved all day and night through the Karbala Gap before proceeding toward OBJ Peach.

The sun had just set as we approached OBJ Peach. As the first M-1 Abrams tanks were crossing the Euphrates River, the Republican Guard was blowing the bridge. As we crossed, M1s and Bradley Fighting Vehicles were engaging the enemy in T-52s, T-72s, BMPs, M113 APCs, and as dismounts. Electricity in buildings and homes was still on all around us but was quickly knocked out. When all the lights went out, the American tanks flipped on their night vision and thermals and started engaging about 50 dismounts on the other side of a large concrete wall.



Objective Peach – Early April 2003

ACE Section, A&O Platoon

We were taking sporadic small arms fire and RPG rounds. As we rounded a corner in the road, an M1 had contact with a T-72 and hit it with a HEAT round. The tank exploded and lit the sky up just enough to see what was going on around us. There were bodies everywhere and small arms fire kept blazing. The T-72 lay destroyed in the middle of the road burning and exploding with rounds cooking off. Our vehicles had to squeeze between the burning tank and the wall to continue down the road. As we approached the tank, an American APC flipped the MICLIC trailer it was towing in a fighting position along the road. With the burning tank only 100 meters away we had to dismount to get the trailer disconnected from the tow pintel. As we were dismounting, we were taking fire from a lowland swamp area off the side of the road. Tracer rounds were everywhere. An RPG struck the wall just about 30 feet away. The heat from the explosion was so intense and the sound was deafening.

As I went back to my ACE, another RPG hit the wall right in front of me. We got in and shot through the gap between the burning tank and the wall to catch up to the rest of the tankers. Next we proceeded to the southern side of the complex. We had been taking fire from the other side of the wall and enemy flares were being shot up. The tankers needed a hole punched in the wall to get into the complex. As I hit the wall with my ACE, enemy fighters were shooting everywhere. The tankers moved in and started engaging. A BMP was lit up by a Bradley, and four dismounts came out burning. The Bradley shot them dead. We proceeded to go through the complex engaging tanks and dismounts. We moved out of the complex and set up a perimeter outside of a village and got some sleep.



The next morning

ACE Section, A&O Platoon

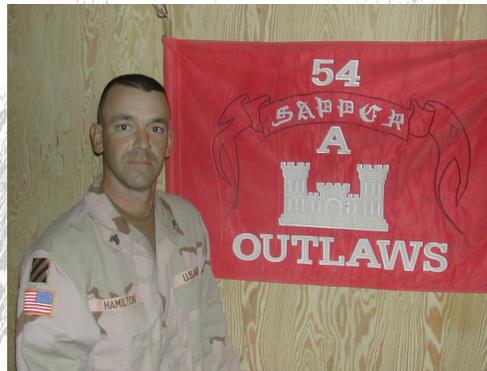
The next morning I was out berming up roads around the area and pushing tanks off the avenues of approach for friendly forces. I was also flipping trucks over into some roads to make traffic barriers. We were told we were the only unit across the Euphrates from 2BCT and that we were headed south to destroy an Iraqi unit and then move north. We destroyed them then proceeded to OBJ Saints where only then 2BCT was catching up.

Story by: SPC Samuel Maroney



Tributary to the Euphrates where the battle occurred

Heavy Section, A&O Platoon



SGT Jacques-Pierre Hamilton
Section Leader



SGT Vincent Broussard
AVLB TC and Team Leader



CPL Jamie Farmer
Panther TC and Team Leader



PFC Daniel Martinez
AVLB Operator



SPC Kenny Lindberg
AVLB Operator



PFC Nicholas Tom
AVLB Operator

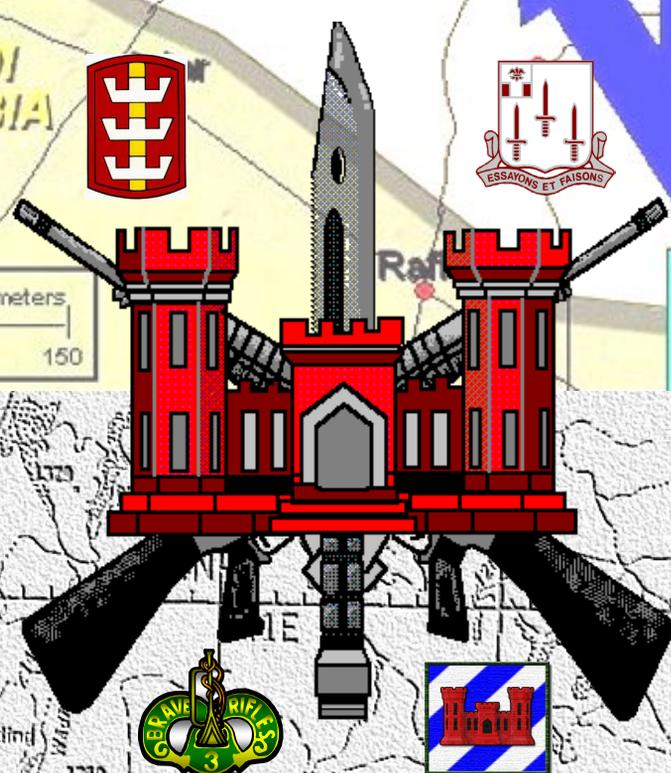
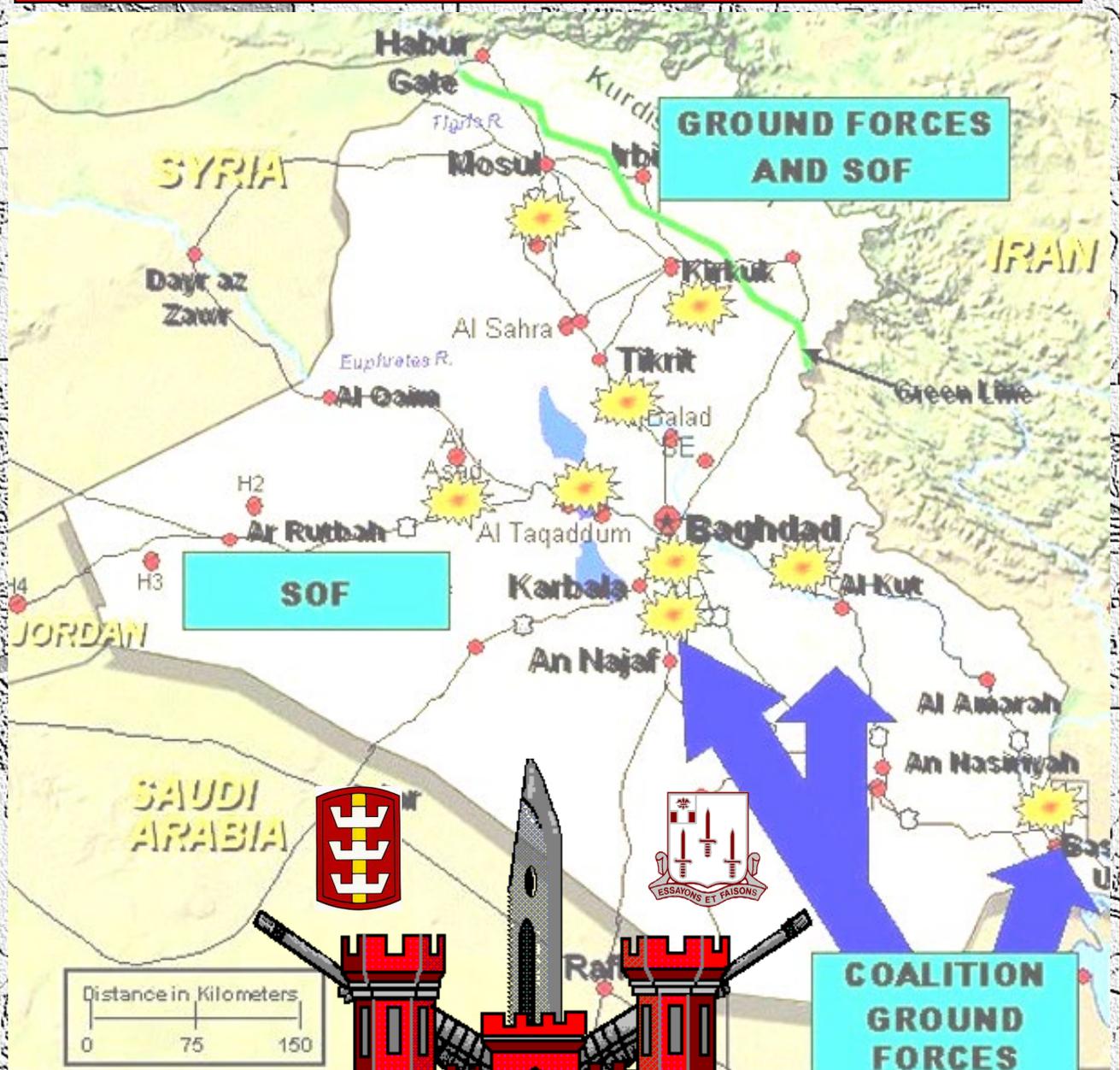
Heavy Section, A&O Platoon

On 1 April 2003 Team Panther was attached to HHC 54th Engineer Battalion, conducting security patrols and currency searches in the vicinity of Objective Peaches. Myself along with my TC (SGT Mauzerall) and the rest of the team were taking a smoke break when SPC Snyder noticed a plane flying low and appeared to be making a right banking maneuver, but instead started a nose dive. About 1000 meters from our position we heard an explosion and witnessed an ejection seat shot into the air. Instantly we were all in shock, but we were able to overcome this quickly and react. Our first instincts told us to yell for CPT Sizemore and inform him of what had just happened and that we needed to act IMMEDIATELY. We were cleared to go, so several members of the team took off with my M1 Panther. Not knowing what to expect we pulled out a CLS bag and a makeshift stretcher.

Upon arrival at the crash site, I jumped off the tank and proceeded to the wreckage, but as soon as I began running tripped and fell face first. Once I regained my composure I took off again looking for the pilot shouting "Don't shoot, we're Americans." All I found were a parachute and a helmet, but no pilot. He [the pilot] eventually emerged from the bushes carrying a 9mm pistol, a radio and a black box. I approached him and asked if he was hurt. He looked a little shaken up but had no injuries. He instructed us to tell people to leave his plane alone due to there being 500lb bombs attached to it. We then began to hear rounds starting to cook off from the crash site. The pilot's name was Maj. James Ewalled and he had flown an A-10 Warthog that had been hit by a SAM. He was linked up with the Military Police to be returned to his unit. I will never forget the day I was able to help a downed A-10 pilot and keep him from enemy harm. DAGGERS IN!

Story by: SPC Jamie Farmer

Outlaws Support the War on Terrorism



Deployment Processing Center

On January 2, 2003, Alpha Company, 54th Engineer Battalion began its mission as the pusher unit for the Deployment Processing Center (DPC) at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany. Initially the mission was led by 2nd Platoon with select personnel from both 1st and A&O platoons. Eventually as the mission manning requirements increased, primarily due to the rising conflict with Iraq, the remainder of Alpha Company moved to Rhine Ordnance Barracks (ROB) to support the mission.

The DPC consisted of twelve station system designed to quickly out-process outbound units from Germany, as well as in process incoming in the most efficient way possible. As the pusher unit, Alpha Company was responsible for maintaining the stations, certifying that unit personnel documents were complete, and ensuring that the equipment was properly cleaned, inspected, packaged and then transported to the railhead or brought out to the Purple Ramp to be loaded on a plane.

Throughout the mission, Alpha Company remained flexible in order to fully accomplish its task. This was due to the constant, yet unpredictable changes that seem to take place on a daily basis. Regardless of what happened or at what hour it took place, the soldiers of Alpha Company got the job done. While in the second week of the mission, the 54th Engineer Battalion received deployment orders to go to Kuwait. As a result of the deployment news, the DPC mission was canceled. Although the mission only lasted 11 days, Alpha Company had successfully pushed more than 3,000 personnel and equipment through the DPC.



The DPC headquarters building at ROB

Rapid Deployment 12 Jan 03 – 12 Feb 03

On Sunday, 12 January 2003, the 54th Engineer Battalion Commander received an urgent phone message while he sat in the post chapel. The Brigade Commander announced that the 54th Engineer Battalion had been called to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Kuwait. All of the battalion's equipment had to be on trains to the shipping port by Friday. The battalion's personnel would fly to Southwest Asia in only a month. The clock was ticking.

When Alpha Company was notified of its mobilization, it was still responsible for running the deployment processing center at Ramstein Air Force Base. With three quarters of the company stationed at the DPC for this mission, the order to deploy all of its equipment in just five days came as a shock and a huge challenge. Nevertheless, the company stepped up and, as always, accomplished this mission. Immediately, the soldiers in Bamberg struggled to begin packing and preparing their equipment for deployment. Working over eighteen-hour days, the few soldiers available in the company processed their vehicles through the battalion's own Installation Staging Area. Then, as the company completed a handover of the DPC mission to the 565th Engineer Battalion just two days before the rail load, the rest of the company provided them support. They inventoried, packed, and loaded their equipment while updating load plans and deployment packets. All vehicles were thoroughly cleaned and inspected for leaks and other mechanical deficiencies. Each vehicle underwent a safety inspection and blocking, bracing, and tie-down inspection. Finally, on Friday, 17 January 2003, all of Alpha Company's equipment was ready and loaded a train headed for the port.



Alpha Company rail load, 17 January 2003, Bamberg, Germany

With all of their equipment ready for deployment and successfully on its way to Kuwait, the Outlaws still faced a number of individual deployment issues before each soldier was ready to begin his own journey. First, the company focused on validating its critical soldier skills before arriving in a hostile environment. Alpha Company planned and executed one busy week of weapons gunnery. During this week every soldier in the company qualified on his assigned personal and crew served weapon. With the very serious threat of nuclear, biological, or chemical attack while in the Middle East, the Outlaws also focused combat training on validating their NBC protective equipment. Each soldier in the company tested his protective mask in the NBC chamber with CS gas and numerous classes were taught at all levels on the proper implementation of NBC detection and decontamination equipment. Having completed this training, every Outlaw felt confident in his equipment and ready to use his basic soldier skills in combat.

With the company's equipment on its way and the soldiers more confident in their basic soldiering equipment, personal issues related to deployment still required attention before departure. In the last weeks before flying out of Germany, all Alpha Company soldiers completed an intensive predeployment process. Single soldiers focused on moving out of the barracks and placing all of their belongs into storage during the deployment. The Outlaw soldiers updated all of their medical records, settled financial issues such as wills and powers of attorney, and enjoyed the last few days with their loved ones.



SPC Dygert at the NBC train-up, Bamberg



PV2 Allen in pre-deployment processing



The last day in Bamberg

Finally, on 12 February 2003, now ready for the adventures that would find them, the soldiers of Alpha Company boarded a bus and departed Bamberg for Kuwait.



Saying "Goodbye"

Media Coverage Of Outlaw Deployment

The international news coverage of the U.S. military deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom was intense in Germany, the home of hundreds of U.S. Military units. Coverage of the deployment of the 54th Engineer Battalion from Bamberg was no exception. In fact, Alpha Company was selected by a German local news organization for a feature on U.S. Military units deploying to the Middle East. Two soldiers in the company – SSG Matthew Outten, the 2nd Platoon Sergeant, and SPC Michael Kendrick, a team leader in 1st Platoon – were chosen for a spotlight series on the predeployment process from the soldiers' perspective.



Weapons qualification, Reese Range



Close up



Crew-served weapons qualification, squad movement



SFC Mann moving SSG Outten through predeployment processing



SSG Outten in an interview



The local German station interviewed the two Outlaws repeatedly throughout the predeployment process and documented the many steps leading them to Kuwait. TV cameras first arrived at the company railhead. This is where they first interviewed and selected SSG Outten and SPC Kendrick for the feature. Afterward, the German correspondents documented SSG Outten and SPC Kendrick at each step along the way. They attended medical exams, anthrax and small pox vaccinations, NBC training at the chemical chamber, and weapons qualification at the local Bamberg firing range. The German reporters also attended the company farewell just before the soldiers boarded the buses on their way to Kuwait. After each event, the news station posted a short report on the evening news that documented these soldiers' deployment progress. The feature was very positive; it highlighted for the German public the difficult process of deploying and individually highlighted just a couple of the many selfless U.S. soldiers making a significant sacrifice for their nation.

Deploy to Kuwait 12 – 14 Feb 03



Waiting for a flight out

On 12 February the Outlaws arrived at the Deployment Processing Center where they spent the next 12 hours before boarding a commercial jet and heading for Kuwait and the great unknown. Since the 54th was the predominant unit on the jet, many got to sit in First Class, Business Class, or just had a few coach seats to themselves. It was the last bit of luxury and civilization they would see for an extremely long time.



The first view of Kuwait, 13 February 2003



A comfortable ride, the last one for months



The desert bus ride to Camp Virginia



LT Stiltner ready for war

Somewhere between 12 and 13 February the Outlaws found themselves landing in Kuwait and boarding yet another bus. The four hour bus ride deposited us in what would be our new home for the next three weeks, Camp Virginia.

Arrive in Kuwait / Prepare For War 14 Feb – 5 Mar



Camp Virginia, the battalion home for 3 weeks

On 13 February 2003, A/54th arrived in Kuwait to start RSO&I with the 3rd Infantry Division. The vehicles were downloaded already, and all but two milvans had arrived. HQ's and the maintenance teams would not arrive for another two weeks. By day 2 the commander, 1SG and operations sergeant went to the 3rd ID's Engineer BDE's leaders conference held at Camp New York. While there, we were briefed on the basic scheme of maneuver if and when we should invade Iraq. Over the next 20 days, the Outlaws prepared their equipment and began squad level rehearsals in anticipation of combat operations. During this time our place in the Task Organization was finalized. The company was separated from the battalion and attached to the 10th Engineer Battalion.



Prepping AVLBs for war

2003/02/20



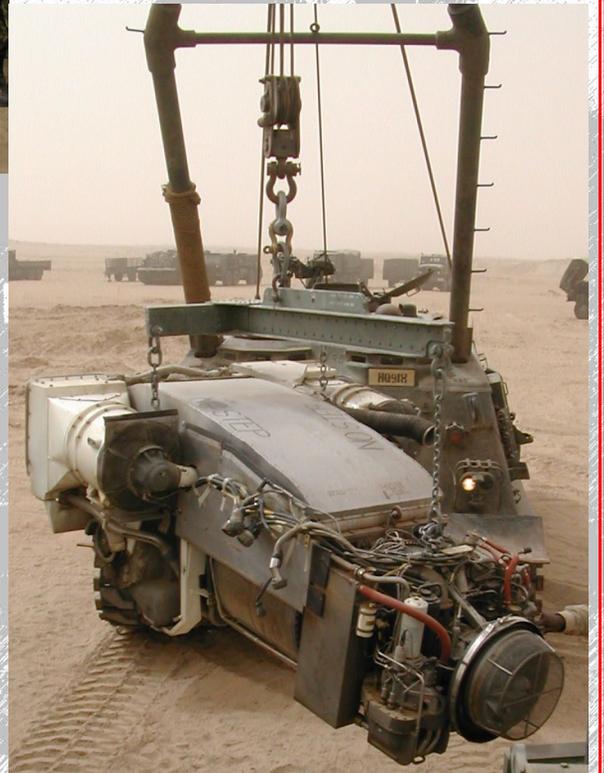
SGT Morgan tries his equipment on for size



SPC Farmer, Panther maintenance



1SG Lawrence briefing the company



**Prepare For War / Integration with 10E in AA Outlaw
5 Mar – 20 Mar**



A&O road testing equipment one week before the assault



On 5 March, the company TOC deployed to the assembly area and set the location next to HHC 10th ENG BN. Over the next two weeks the company integrated with the 10th EN BN in all areas. 1st Platoon worked with 535th CSE and 2nd Platoon worked with D/10E. The company focused on maintenance and PCCs of all equipment. Rehearsals continued until the last moment due to changes in the task organization at the last minute.



Encamped at AA Spartan

Berm Breach Rehearsals



Alpha Company on berm breach rehearsal

Part of the preparation for crossing the border into Iraq was the rehearsals for the breaching of the complex obstacle. This obstacle included fence, wire, berms, and ditches. The plan was to cross in several lanes. As engineers, elements of the company found themselves involved in the plan and rehearsal for crossing into Iraq.



Sand table briefing of the border berm complex

Invasion of Iraq 20 March



Massing on the border

After all the preparations, rehearsals, task organization changes, maintenance, and training the day finally came. On 19 March the Outlaws moved with 10 EN BN to Sky Bridge Attack Position 1, just east of the border.



The final line-up

That afternoon the company arrived in the attack position with the 671st MRBC and set up in preparation to assault across the border. Throughout the night of the 19th the Outlaws watched as the preparatory fires softened up the defenses on the other side of the border. Again on the 20th, the Outlaws waited as the initial combat forces breached the border and pushed north.



Border guard post

Early on the 21st the Outlaws pushed across the border and into the great unknown. Alpha Company was at war. From the 21st to the 23rd the Outlaws, consisting of headquarters and A&O moved to Objective Rams. 1st Platoon moved on Route Rovers marking it en route. 2nd Platoon advanced as part of Task Force Wadi.



Cones emplaced by engineers marking the lane through the final berm breach



The company still on the move on the morning of the 22nd had a few minutes to step aside and watch as other's pushed north. We had started what came to be known as the Baghdad 500.

Team Panther

One proud new addition to the Outlaws was the formation of Team Panther, a task force incorporating the battalion's two new M1 mine clearing "Panther" tanks (one of which belonged to Alpha Company.) Only six of these manually or robotically operated vehicles exist in the entire U.S. Army inventory. SGT Mauzerall and SPC Farmer were the commander and operator respectively of this awesome machine. On 21 March, the first day of the war, they ascended upon Jalibah Airfield in southern Iraq where an AH-64 Apache refuel point had already been established. Their mission, performed manually and in unison with the one other battalion Panther of Charlie Company, was to clear UXO expended by American forces in Operation Desert Storm. 20 meters of dirt had to be cleared all around the tarmac for safe transport of fuel in daily operations. In an amazing four hours, the team swiftly and definitively neutralized the area so that follow-on units could accomplish their mission. They followed on to Tallil Airfield three days later where a C-130 transport was scheduled to land that very day. This time, using the never before employed robotics, they were able to clear an area almost ten times as large in 12 hours. They accomplished in less than a day what would have taken conventionally engineer methods several days or even weeks to complete. These Outlaws were the first soldiers ever to test this remarkable piece of equipment in a combat environment. Their fortitude and expertise has contributed to the success of these key U.S. Military locations in Operation Iraqi freedom.



Panther at Objective Peach

Airfield Clearance



Panther preparing for deployment



Panther testing rollers

Task Force Wadi

On 18 March, with short notice, 1st Platoon was pulled from its mission with Task Force Wadi to provide engineer support to an armored unit from 1BCT of 3ID. With only two days remaining before moving out to the final attack position, 2nd Platoon was given the new mission of providing security for TF Wadi as it spearheaded 3ID's assault into Iraq.

Task Force Wadi was comprised of the 535th Company from the 94th Engineer Battalion (Heavy). TF Wadi's mission was to improve Route Tornado, 3ID's main avenue of approach into Baghdad. TF Wadi's primary focus was on repairing the 50km section of road that ran through the vast wadi complex located just west of Al Basrah. TF Wadi was placed in the front of the 3ID assault across the border to allow sufficient time for mission accomplishment. It was imperative that the section be repaired and trafficable prior to the divisional trains arriving so that vital logistical support could maintain pace with the main fighting force. The war with Iraq had officially begun, and in the early hours of March 21st, 2nd Platoon joined the "Baghdad 500". The wadi mission couldn't have been more fortunate. The task force never met with any enemy resistance, and as it approached the wadi complex, it discovered that the road was in better condition than what was originally expected. Once the 535th finished its work at the wadi complex, 2nd Platoon escorted the company to an airfield site north of Al Samawah. After completing the TF Wadi mission, 2nd Platoon made a link up with rest of Alpha Company. 2nd Platoon moved with the rest of Alpha Company to Objective Rams, which was located just west of An Najaf.



SSG Poole's navigating on Task Force Wadi

Marking Route Rovers 21 March – 23 March

Just two days before crossing the border into Iraq, 1st Platoon was pulled from the mission they had planned and rehearsed for weeks in preparation for combat operations. Instead, the platoon received a brand new mission in the war against Iraq. On very short notice, 1st Platoon was attached to the 2-70th Armored Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, in order to provide mobility support during their attack from Kuwait to An Nasiriya. Following this initial movement, the plan was for 1st Platoon to link-up with the 11th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team. 11E was to provide command and control and logistical support to the platoon as they marked Route Rovers – an east-west route from An Nasiriyah to As Samawah – and onward during movement to OBJ Rams. Presumably, due to the last minute change of mission and the resulting eleventh hour coordination for the unusual support relationship, the plan failed. Twenty-four hours into the war with Iraq, 1st Platoon arrived at its link-up point finding no one to meet. Via radio, the 11th EN BN denied knowledge of the coordination for operational control of the platoon for movement to OBJ Rams. Further, the 11th EN BN claimed it had no unit moving to OBJ Rams along Route Rovers that could provide any type of support. The twenty-five individual soldiers of 1st Platoon were alone in Iraq without higher command, intelligence, medical, or logistical support. They had 300 kilometers of enemy territory between them and their next objective to travel alone.

Despite the threats of enemy contact that weighed on their minds, the most pressing problem facing the platoon initially, and the problem repeatedly impeding the platoon as they progressed toward OBJ Rams, was fuel. When the platoon reached their link-up point south of An Nasiriyah at the east end of Route Rovers, the platoon had less than one third their full capacity of fuel. They were also towing one immobilized Armored Personnel Carrier that broke down during the initial movement into Iraq. Knowing that they could not safely travel the 100 kilometers west along Route Rovers to As Samawah without full tanks of fuel, 1st Platoon had no choice but to somehow fill up before heading west. Unfortunately, filling up meant driving 25 kilometers south into the open desert, away from the objective, to the last refuel point. Having no alternative, 1st Platoon dropped its broken down vehicle and the MICLIC trailer within the security of a traffic control point near the beginning of Route Rovers, left guards with the equipment, and began the fuel run south.

1st Platoon drove south 25 kilometers into the open Iraqi desert and arrived at their old refuel point in the late afternoon with nearly empty fuel tanks. With a sigh of relief the platoon found the long lines of fuel trucks they had hoped for staged at the old refuel point. However, despite their desperate circumstances, none of these fuel trucks could spare enough fuel to fill the platoon's vehicles – except one. One bulk fuel truck was stuck in the thick desert sand, a few hundred meters out of the line of the rest of the trucks. This truck needed the power and traction of a tracked vehicle as much as 1st Platoon's APCs needed fuel. A quick discussion with the operator secured all the fuel the platoon needed to fill their tanks. In return, the APCs pulled the huge fueler out of the treacherous desert sand. Finally topped off on fuel but having used over six hours of daylight, 1st Platoon began the long drive north back to their start point.

Arriving at dusk, 1st Platoon reattached the MICLIC trailer and the disabled APC for towing and then started its movement west. At ten predesignated points along Route Rovers – a 100-kilometer route between An Nasiriyah and As Samawah – 1st Platoon stopped, established security, and then emplaced marking signs that clarified the path of the route for follow-on combat and support convoys. Taking nearly all night, the platoon was forced to halt just southeast of An Nasiriyah near dawn.

As the sun rose, 1st Platoon met a huge traffic jam of vehicles just outside of An Nasiriyah. Heavy combat in the city, clearly visible to the platoon from their position just outside of town, and regular mortar attacks on the crowded military vehicles lining the road halted the platoon's progress. Stuck for hours on the road, the platoon could do little to react as they received mortar fire within two hundred meters of their position and watched the tracer fire of small arms combat in the city to their north.



Long focused convoys impeded the platoon's quest for fuel

Again low on fuel and acknowledging the 200 kilometers still left to travel to reach OBJ Rams, 1st Platoon attempted to take advantage of the crowded military traffic that had halted their progress. Lining up at a refuel point with the similar vehicles of another engineer unit, the platoon attempted to get topped off by an unsuspecting fueller. Caught, they earned sympathy but no fuel from another unit that was suffering from critical fuel supplies. Frustrated, but not yet completely empty on fuel, 1st Platoon drained the fuel tanks of their broken down APC. They distributed these last remaining drops of available fuel amongst their vehicles, and, seeing no other option than to move forward, once again headed out alone into the Iraqi desert towards their objective.

Less than 50 kilometers south of OBJ Rams and Alpha Company, the fuel levels in the vehicles were once again critical. Forced to stop, the platoon established security on the side of a completely abandoned section of road south of its objective. For nearly two hours the platoon waited, watchfully maintaining security and wondering how they were going to bridge the final 50 kilometers of road to their company at OBJ Rams with empty tanks. Finally, a long military convoy stopped next to the desperate platoon's perimeter. The company first sergeant in the convoy, upon learning of the platoon's predicament, ordered his soldiers to leave one spare fuel can from every one of their vehicles with the abandoned platoon. With this last bit of fuel, 1st Platoon was able to complete the last stretch of its long journey. They linked up with their company headquarters ready for their next mission in the long fight northward to Baghdad.

1st Platoon accomplished its mission, marking Route Rovers, and completed the independent 300-kilometer movement to OBJ Rams in just 36 hours. In fact, they linked-up with their organic company headquarters 12 hours earlier than was anticipated for even the planned movement with the 11th EN BN and its fuel trucks. Fortunately, the platoon met no direct contact during the advance, as there would have been few places to turn had the situation escalated beyond their capabilities. Nevertheless, given significant challenges, the platoon persevered; they accomplished their mission when the normal preparations and procedures expected of a combat mission fell threw.

KUWAIT

TAA Rams



Taking time to regroup at OBJ Rams

By the 23 March the company was back together in TAA Rams south of the escarpment. It was time to regroup and perform some creative maintenance. The company endured one of the worst sandstorms known in 50 years. The sky turned red from the volume of dust in the air.



The sandstorm raged for 3 days and nights

TAA Spartans



SFC Mann receives a FRAGO



Marking the perimeter at Spartans

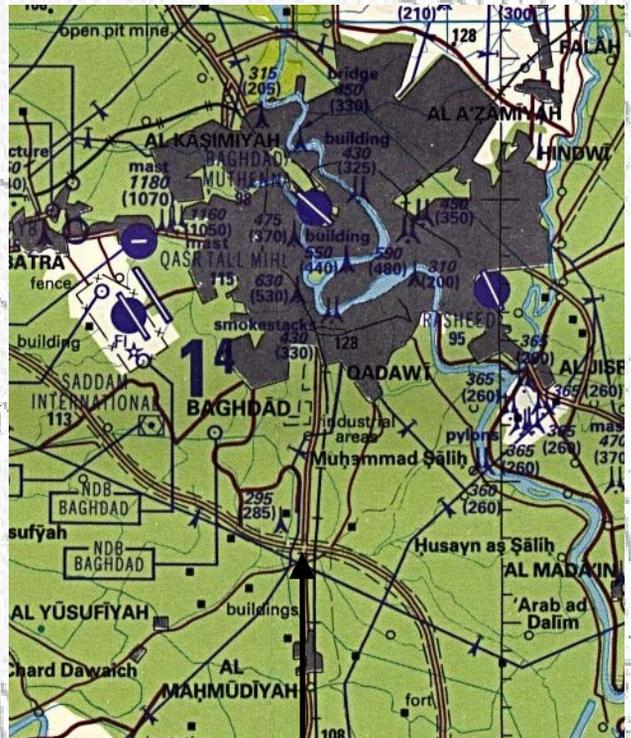
On the 26th, the company moved to TAA Spartans north of the escarpment. Here once again 1st Platoon was detached and took up supporting A CO 10 EN BN. 2nd Platoon also went to the 10 EN BN in support of D CO. In TAA Spartans the company continued plans with the 10 EN in preparation for the assault into Baghdad.



Planning on the move for the advance through Karbala

Supporting the 10th Engineers

2nd Platoon was initially assigned to augment D Co, 10 EN BN during combat operations. 2nd Platoon spent 10 days becoming fully integrated into company's war plans and conducting rigorous rehearsals. However days prior to the beginning of the war, 2nd was re-assigned to provide security for another unit. Following the platoon's security mission, 2nd Platoon once again left Alpha Company and linked back up with the 10th En Bn, as moved with the 2BCT Tactical Operations Center. 2nd had an on order mission to support the brigade Re-trans team and was to be prepared to escort and provide security as it facilitated the communication between the 2BCT TOC and its units on the front lines. The Re-trans team was never called to execute its mission and 2nd and continued to support the 10 EN BN as it moved north with the 2BCT TOC. The TOC moved directly behind 3ID's forward units and ultimately established a perimeter at Objective Saints located 6km south of Baghdad. For several days the TOC remained at Obj. Saints and 2nd



Objective Saints



SPC Bitsilly maintains perimeter security while supporting 3ID's 2BCT TOC at Obj. Saints

executed numerous demolition missions while working closely with an attached EOD team. 2nd successfully disposed of several large enemy ammunition caches and UXO's located within the immediate vicinity. 2nd also conducted a route reconnaissance of Vikings, a potential 3ID alternate supply route into Baghdad. 2nd Platoon's mission with 10 EN BN came to an end following the FROG-7 missile attack that destroyed the 2BCT TOC.

Supporting the 10th Engineers



1st Platoon soldiers secure and escort Iraqi EPWs to the holding area.

Immediately after being attached to A/10 EN, 1st Platoon moved forward on a spoiling attack with Task Force 3-15 to secure OBJ Murray, a bridge across the Euphrates south of Karbala. 1st Platoon held back just southwest of the bridge to secure the task force TOC during the attack and, after the assault commenced, to

construct the task force EPW holding area. 1st Platoon erected a holding area capable of holding over 200 prisoners with segregated areas for officers, enlisted, and female prisoners. They secured the prisoners within the wire holding areas, searched them, processed personal items and destroyed confiscated weapons. 1st Platoon also transported prisoners of special intelligence interest to the brigade EPW holding area. 1st Platoon maintained this holding area and secured the task force TOC for three days while all of the 3rd Infantry Divisions forces positioned for the attack across the Euphrates and into Baghdad. Throughout this security mission, 1st Platoon received sporadic mortar fire from the countryside near the bridge. There were no injuries.

On April 2nd, 1st Platoon collapsed their EPW holding area and prepared for movement north past Karbala. At dusk the column began moving north to the outskirts of the city and then west and north through the Karbala Gap, which is a thin stretch of land between the city of Karbala and the Bahr Al-Milh Lake. At dawn, 1st Platoon refueled and conducted hasty vehicle maintenance southwest of OBJ Peach – the critical bridge across the Euphrates for the attack on Baghdad. Initially the plan was for 1st Platoon to support TF 3-15 during an assault across OBJ Peach and then south into the rear of the Iraqi Republican Guard’s Medina Division. However, based on the U.S. Air Force’s success at destroying this Iraqi division, the mission changed. Instead, 1st Platoon’s mission was to follow the brigade combat team’s assault across the Euphrates as they cordoned off the capital city in the south and then to maintain security on OBJ Peach.



An abandoned Iraqi M113 locate far side of float bridge at Objective Peach.

Survivability Support



ACEs berming in Alpha Company



Assault & Obstacle Platoon conducted countless survivability missions in support of 3ID 2BCT. Beginning in Kuwait one week before combat operations began, the ACE section bermed in two Q36 radars, one Q37 radar, and a patriot missile battery (six patriot missile positions). They also bermed in several key tactical operations centers with sensitive equipment and mission-essential information. After the attack into Iraq began, the ACEs were several times tasked to provide defensive positions for the artillery and ADA units supporting the brigade team. Through mid-April, two more Q36 radars and two more Q37 radars were bermed in as well as two MLRS batteries just south of Karbala. An implied task for the ACE section was to berm in Alpha Company's temporary perimeters at each tactical stop along the long route to Baghdad. At every location where the company halted for more than two days, the ACEs would commence building a 360 degree "wall" around all company vehicles within. They would also take extra care to berm in the company TOC, the vital node of operations. When there was extra time, the ACEs even dug hull defilade positions for the company's APCs and other vehicles. Bottom-line: the mission was never complete for the ACE section. They worked harder and longer than any other set of soldiers in the company, always improving, never quitting.



For the ACEs, the mission was never complete

Objective Peach



**Construction of bridge
boat launching site under
Objective Peach**

1st Platoon arrived at the bridge after dark on April 3rd. Immediately after arriving on site, a huge explosion erupted north east of the bridge at a suspected chemical weapons compound. 1st Platoon immediately donned their chemical protective gear and then emplaced their security in MOPP4. After the platoon secured all avenues of approach to the bridge, an “all clear” was given and the platoon downgraded out of their protective masks. Each day 1st Platoon guarded the bridge they improved their fighting positions and emplaced signs and traffic control measures to organize convoy movement over the key river crossing. On the third day of security operations at the bridge, 1st Platoon was detached from the 10th Engineer Battalion and returned to their organic engineer battalion’s control.



Objective Peach Float Bridge



Objective Saints

2nd Platoon was assigned numerous missions while positioned at Objective Saints, one of which was an enemy cache and unexploded ordnance disposal. 2nd Platoon worked closely with an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team. In the immediate vicinity of Objective Saints were numerous enemy caches containing thousands of rounds of Iraqi small arms, mortar, and artillery rounds. 2nd Platoon had to strip several MICLICs of its C4 explosives in order to properly dispose of the large caches. On one particular blast, 2nd Platoon used 1,800 pounds of C4 explosives needed to destroy a cache consisting of approximately 5,000 pounds of munitions.



2nd Platoon conducting a recon of route Vikings.

2nd Platoon also conducted a reconnaissance of Route Viking, a potential alternate supply route into Baghdad. 2nd Platoon moved with Eagle Troop who provided additional security for the mission. Eagle Troop was equipped with several Bradley Fighting Vehicles. While moving along the route they fired countless 25mm rounds destroying the abandoned Iraqi vehicles lining the road. The vehicles consisted mainly of T-72 tanks and M113's.



2nd Platoon soldiers cross loading equipment following the FROG-7 missile attack on the 2BCT TOC.

On April 6th, 2nd Platoon was informed that it was being reattached to Alpha Company. The link-up would take place the next morning at Objective Saints. On April 7th, as the 2BCT TOC was preparing for its move to a secured location in Baghdad, the Alpha Company commander arrived to escort 2nd Platoon back to where the 54th Battalion was consolidating at its operations

base at LSA Dogwood. As the commander made his link-up with the TOC personnel, the building in which the 2BCT TOC was located was attacked.

Objective Saints



2nd Platoon works to recover an APC after suffering damage from the missile attack.

A FROG-7 missile hit the 2BCT TOC. The missile flew directly over 2nd Platoon's vehicles, which were located about 50 feet from the building, and struck the center of the complex. The soldiers of 2nd Platoon immediately sought cover within the platoon's armored personnel carriers. Once the accountability of personnel was confirmed, everyone with the exception of drivers and tank commanders dismounted the vehicles. One of the tracks suffered damage from the impact of the blast. As a result, the dismounted personnel immediately began working vigorously to repair the vehicle. Meanwhile as a contingency, several of 2nd Platoon's soldiers began cross loading essential equipment from the damaged APC to other platoon vehicles while others ran to the building to assist in extinguishing the conflagration quickly consuming the building and to aid the many wounded. A four-man team led by the platoon sergeant, SSG Outten, was among those soldiers who went into the building to provide relief. SSG Outten's team demonstrated great bravery in making several



2nd Platoon departs Objective Saints

trips into the building to treat and evacuate the injured soldiers despite the intense fire and explosions within the complex. That four-man team included SPC [Name], SPC Elias, and PFC Inch. Each received an ARCOM with [Name]. Outten received a Bronze [Name] for his actions. The Iraqi missile had dealt a devastating blow to US forces, [Name] soldiers and wounding many

Objective Chamberlain 07 April – 12 April

In the second week of April, the initial assault on Baghdad was successfully completed but the supply routes to the forward units outside the city were still in question. With two of the four lanes of the northern bridge across the Euphrates (OBJ Peach) damaged from an attempted bridge demolition, alternative crossing sites were needed to support the predicted traffic flow. In order to fill this predicted need, the 671st Multirole Bridge Company was called on to construct a float bridge across the Euphrates north of OBJ Peach. 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, 54th Engineer Battalion provided the critical security force that that made this mission possible.

On April 7, 1st Platoon received the mission to provide security for the 671st MRBC reconnaissance team. 1st Platoon linked up with the two HMMWVs from the 671st and escorted them to three different sites along a 30 kilometer stretch of the Euphrates River in order to select the most effective site for the bridge construction. At each site, 1st Platoon established overwatch positions for the bridging engineers on the ground while dismounts controlled civilian traffic in and around the site during the recon. Having evaluated the best suited locations along the Euphrates River, the 671st selected a spot just down river from a destroyed, Iraqi float bridge, which became known as OBJ Chamberlain.



Above: Chamberlain Bridge next to existing damaged pontoon bridge from southern shore

Two days later, the 671st was prepared to begin their earthwork on the near shore of the river. Before any of the earthwork equipment was brought onsite, 1st Platoon moved to the bridge site to establish on-site security. 1st Platoon controlled the civilian traffic in the area of the military personnel to keep curious Iraqis out of the work site and potential threats away from the friendly soldiers.

They established checkpoints and signs for directing the bridge trucks in and out of the small bridge head along tight dirt roads. 1st Platoon also worked with a translator in order to explain the local nationals what was happening in their small village, while also using this as an opportunity to get a feel for the level of support for US involvement in their area. Fortunately, the local nationals were cooperative for the most part and, with clear boundaries and systems in place, the near shore earthwork was unimpeded by either enemy or civilian actions. The earthwork took nearly 24 hours to complete.

Before dawn on the day that the boats and bridge sections would be downloaded into the river, 1st Platoon prepared to assault across the river in order to secure the far shore. Placing their armored personnel carriers in overwatch positions, fourteen members of 1st Platoon assaulted across the Euphrates in RB-15 assault rafts.

Once on the far shore, the small dismounted platoon quickly established a security perimeter. Again, the soldiers cordoned off the area, establishing boundaries for civilian traffic that kept curious local nationals and possible Iraqi threats away from the bridge.



1st Platoon maintained their dismounted perimeter throughout the day while the bridge was built. Finally, as the last of the bridge sections slipped into place, the float bridge was ready for use. Two of 1st Platoon's APCs were the first vehicles across the bridge, providing a crew served weapon's platform and mobility to the dismounted troops on the far shore.

Sappers on the far side prior to the bridge



Having successfully protected the bridge during construction and fully secured both sides of the bridge, 1st Platoon next worked to improve the bridge's operation and safety. First they constructed wire obstacles and established the access procedures for crossing the bridge. They built protective wire obstacles that controlled traffic flow around the bridge and established vehicle and personnel search areas on each side of the bridge in order to control access among local nationals. 1st Platoon personnel also instructed the 671st MRBC soldiers on vehicle and personnel search procedures so that they could confidently take charge of security of the bridge themselves.

On 12 April, when 1st Platoon was relieved by a mechanized infantry platoon, the OBJ Chamberlain bridge site was running very smoothly. 1st Platoon's presence during construction and operation deterred any hostile actions on the bridge, despite raids only a week later that unveiled numerous weapons caches and pro-Saddam memorabilia in the surrounding community. Also, due to 1st Platoon's work with the civil affairs and translators at the bridge site, the local nationals truly came to appreciate the bridge and the procedures required for them to use it. In fact, once opened for their use, the Iraqi locals safely used the bridge more often than the US military. All in all, the bridge construction at OBJ Chamberlain was a tremendous success. It opened an alternate, northern crossing site over the Euphrates River for US convoys and it made a dramatic impact on the local community. 1st Platoon's hard work ensured that this mission was completed safely and confirmed it as an excellent example of engineers working together toward 100% mission success.

Above, A11 an Outlaw M113 crossing the Chamberlain Bridge

LSA Dogwood Take 1



Outlaws relax on their first porch

The company was finally back together again in LSA Dogwood with the battalion. Here we once again began maintenance and supply operations to get back to fighting strength. However our time here was short and around the 18th of April we learned we would be heading out West with 1/3 ACR. We finished up what we were doing and prepared for yet another page in the Outlaws support of Operation Iraqi freedom.



Take it easy guys!!

LT Stiltner in Outlaw Ops Center



Support of 1/3 ACR – Tiger Squadron



The Outlaws found themselves supporting the 1st Squadron of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. The Tiger Squadron was led by LTC Dolan, and if the name sounds familiar, it is because you may have read about him in the September edition of Maxim Magazine. The Outlaws supported LTC Dolan during the month of May which was featured in an article titled “Iraq’s Wild West”.



(L/R) CPT Bowman, LTC Dolan, LTC Jackson, 1LT White

Support of 1/3 ACR – Tiger Squadron

Tiger Base at Al Qaim.



A&O with Iraqi children.



The Outlaws supported the Tiger Squadron and the Brave Rifles by conducting route recons on all major roads leading to the Syrian border from Al Asad Air Base to the town of Al Qaim. The Company's engineer skills were tested as they reconed and classified over 10 bridges along the way to include a rail bridge essential to the delivery of supplies to the towns factories. Once the Outlaws reached what was later called Tiger Base at Al Qaim, the Company assisted the Squadron by providing electrical and plumbing repair to the abandoned train station's existing systems. A&O platoon also repaired and rebuilt the fence around the perimeter of the entire base camp. After Tiger Base was established, the Company was given a 1,200 square kilometer sector to patrol which included the towns Old and New Al Ubaydi and Mish'al along the Euphrates River. The Outlaws began to execute the engineers secondary mission: fight as infantry, by patrolling the area and destroying UXOs when found. LTC Dolan also tasked the company to destroy all pro-Saddam murals and statues which A&O did with both demolitions and with the use of a bucket loader they had repaired. For one month, the Outlaws were one of the most valued assets available to the squadron commander.

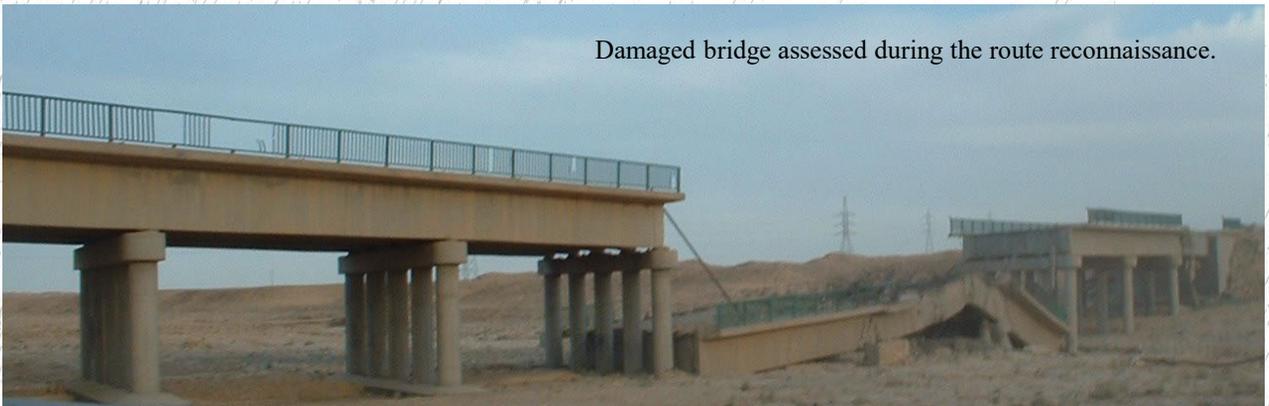


SPC Ballew counting captured money.



A&O repairing a local bucket loader.

Support of Crazy Troop



Damaged bridge assessed during the route reconnaissance.

2nd Platoon was assigned to Crazy Troop of 1st Squadron. 2nd Platoon moved with Crazy out to FOB Tiger along an alternate route to determine its trafficability. 2nd Platoon was responsible for conducting an engineer reconnaissance on the route.



Railroad bridge reconnaissance mission.

After the mission was complete, the Platoon stayed with Crazy Troop as it moved back east to the Hiditha dam. Crazy established its base of operations there for its mission to facilitate SASO in the city of Hiditha. 2nd Platoon was fully integrated into the Crazy plan to conduct daily patrols through the city as well as to dispose of countless UXOs located near the dam. 2nd Platoon's mission with Crazy Troop lasted approximately one month until it was informed that the 54th EN BN would redeploy with 3ID.

Change of Command

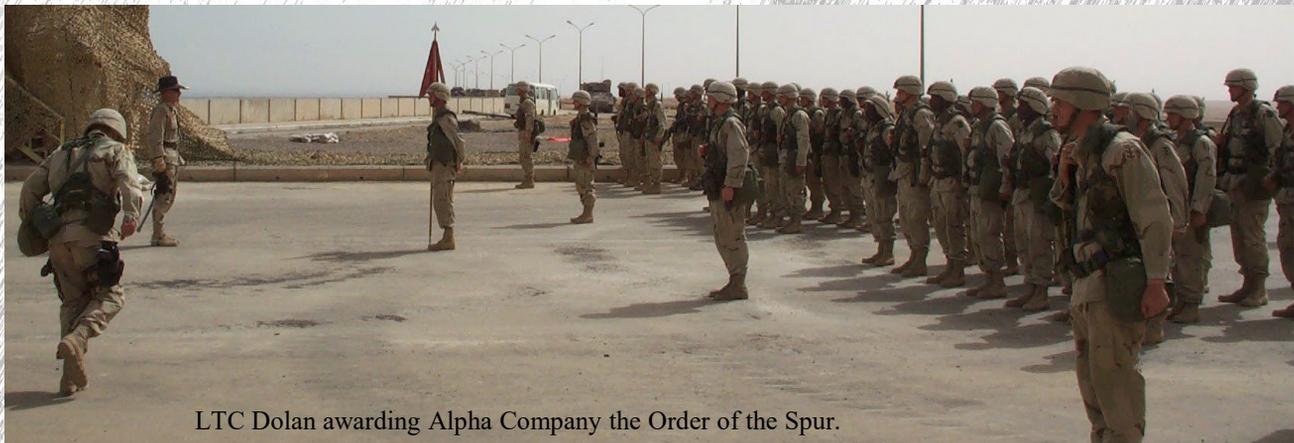


CPT Bowman's first salute as a company commander.



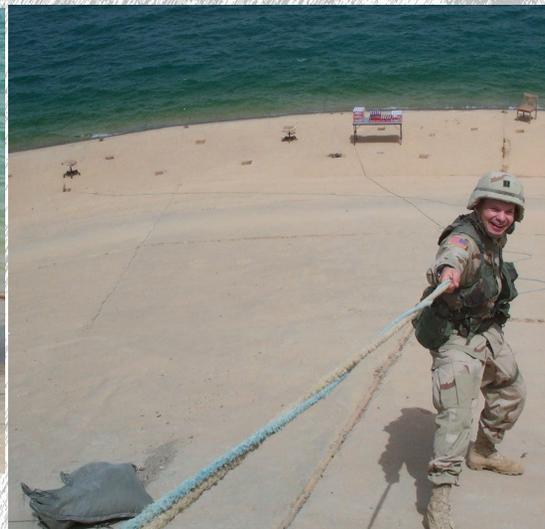
CPT Bowman accepting the guidon from LTC Jackson.

On 27 May 2003, the Outlaws conducted the change of command ceremony. CPT Silas Bowman took command of A CO 54th Engineer Battalion on top of the Haditha Dam overlooking the Haditha reservoir to the north and the mighty Euphrates River to the south.



LTC Dolan awarding Alpha Company the Order of the Spur.

LTC Dolan was present for the awards ceremony and LTC Jackson came for the change of command. The ceremony was followed by a day of relaxation on the dam with swimming and cold sodas.



Relaxing at the Haditha Lake after the Change of Command.



LSA Dogwood Take 2

Motel 6...



By the 2nd of June, the Outlaws once again found themselves in LSA Dogwood preparing to redeploy in July or early August. Of course the plans changed but the Outlaws enthusiastically moved into Dogwood and set up the Outlaw Ranch in several deserted warehouse buildings.



... We'll Leave the Light on For Ya.

Our very own Gold's Gym.



The living was rough but the Outlaws persevered and built themselves a home complete with showers, a gym, and a MWR movie room.

The Company showers (note, 'Alpha' on the doors).



Weapons training and CTT



3rd Squad, 1st Platoon reviewing the M2 50 Cal.

Hands-on CTT training on the Claymore mine.



With the word that we would be redeploying later than planned, the Outlaws took some time to do some extensive weapons training and completed the 2003 CTT training.



SSG Machado (top) and SGT Steward (right) teaching the new NBC suit.



Bandana Ride

For the second time in as many months, company was informed that it would re-deploy even later than planned. CPT Bowman and 1SG Lawrence decided the company needed a moral booster. The company leadership put together a right of passage for the Outlaws which we called the Bandana Ride. It was a mix between a spur ride and a prop blast. This 36 hour event tested the squads physical and mental toughness and gave the squad leaders a chance to practice their troop leading procedures.

OE-254 Erection



Blind Mice Event



Rope Climb



Pass the Sapper



Bandana Ride

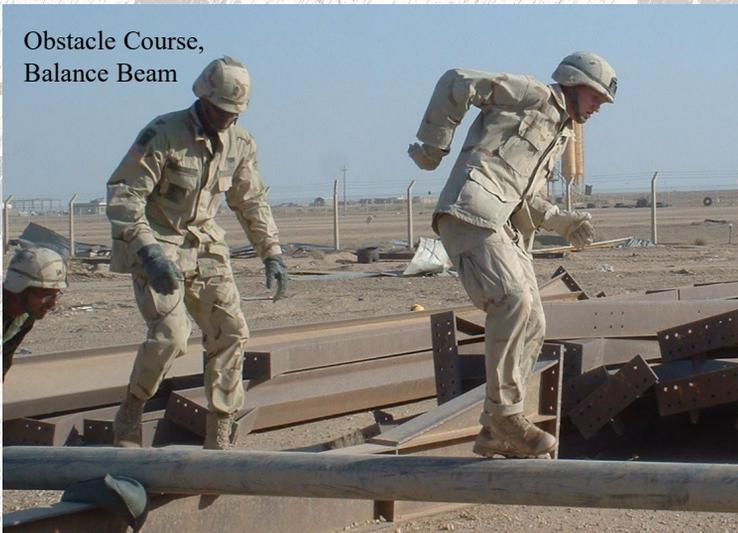
Picket Pounding



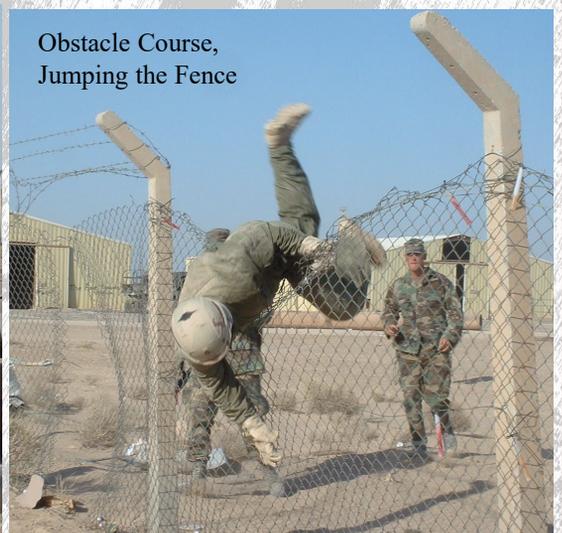
Obstacle Course,
Breaching Wire

The Bandana Ride started at midnight with half of the squads heading out on a 8 mile orienteering ruck march followed by a huge 20-minute obstacle course. The second half of the squads headed to the “Silent Sapper” which was a test of the squads engineering skills at moving through booby traps while evacuating a casualty. The Silent Sapper was followed by round robin testing including weapons assembly in the dark, demolition written test, demolition practical test, erection of an OE-254 antenna, and vehicle breakdown and cross-load testing. These events ended around 0600 and the squads were given an operations order and a mission. The squads spent the heat of the day planning for the mission and were then graded on their squad operations order at 1600.

Obstacle Course,
Balance Beam



Obstacle Course,
Jumping the Fence



Bandana Ride

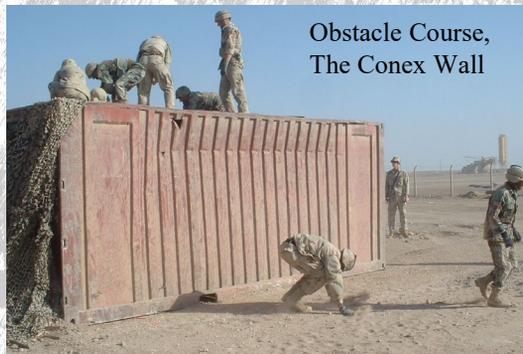


Obstacle Course,
Hasty MEDEVAC Carries



Obstacle Course

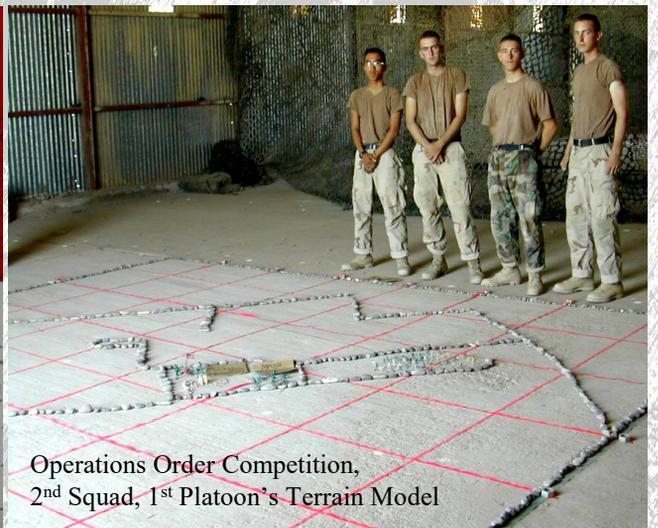
Following the OPORD, the squads had a few hours to re-fit before starting a nine station physical competition. The 10-minute events were push-up relay, sit-up relay, pull-up relay, grenade throwing, picket pounding, pass the sapper, roll the wire spool, mask relay, and the blind mice event. The physical competition ended at midnight. With no rest, half of the squads headed into 8 miles of orienteering and the obstacle course. The other half headed over to the silent sapper and the round robin testing. When all was said and done, the squads were exhausted but motivated. All those who participated received the newly introduced Outlaw Bandana.



Obstacle Course,
The Conex Wall



The Coveted
Bandana



Operations Order Competition,
2nd Squad, 1st Platoon's Terrain Model

USACE Security Mission 29 June – 5 July

In the months following the defeat of the Iraqi Army in March 2003, thousands of sites were discovered containing weapons systems once used to threaten world stability. These sites contained a variety of munitions ranging from small arms rounds to large artillery shells to surface-to-air missiles. They have proven themselves to be extremely lethal to coalition forces conducting support and stability operations since each site housed components necessary to build improvised explosive devices. Several unstable sites even self-detonated fatally wounding one U.S. soldier and critically wounding several others. Because of these threats, the U.S. Army tasked the Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Alabama with creating a course of action in order to categorize and prioritize the collection, consolidation, and destruction of the munitions that have a high potential of harming coalition forces. In late June, three civilian experts in foreign weaponry deployed to Iraq in order to conduct an initial assessment of and to define an accurate scope of work regarding the threat mitigation of these sites. On June 29, 2003, the 54th Engineer Battalion received orders to provide a security and military escort for the civilian experts and to facilitate the completion of the team's evaluation.

Over the next five days, ten soldiers from Alpha Company, 54th Engineer Battalion, conducted daylong convoys throughout central Iraq in order to allow the civilian personnel to conduct their assessment of the various foreign munitions. The security team began the mission at LSA Dogwood, forty kilometers southwest of Baghdad, by traveling to Balad, Iraq in order to link up with the munitions experts and escort them back to the LSA Dogwood munitions storage facility.



The facility at LSA Dogwood was of particular importance to the team's research because the week prior, munitions containing white phosphorous started a twelve-hour fire in which several tons of Iraqi weapon systems dangerously exploded within the LSA perimeter.

Above: Dogwood CAHA fire from three miles away

In the following days, the assessment team traveled to an Iraqi airbase at Objective Redskins, located on the banks of Habbaniyah Lake, to two sites thirty kilometers north of Bayji, and to a site guarded by U.S. Marines near Al Hillah, the site of the biblical Tower of Babel and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. In total, the security and assessment team endured the scorching Iraqi summer temperatures to travel over 1500 kilometers to five different munitions storage facilities.

The last task that the munitions experts were required to complete was to receive approval by the Combined Joint Task Force – 7 on the proposed timeline and budget for the consolidation and destruction of the weapon systems. Upon approval of the USACE engineer's plan, they were instructed to draft a contract that has currently led to a sizable civilian workforce trained to safely transport and destroy these dangerous Iraqi munitions. The strategic goal of this new civilian workforce is to eventually reduce the amount of U.S. soldiers needed to guard these hazardous sites and quickly reduce the availability of IED making material, thus making the theater of operations safer for Coalition forces and the Iraqi population.



Outlaws with the USACE team in Balad

Abu Ghurayb Prison Security Mission 16 July – 20 August

On 16 July 2003, 2nd Platoon of Alpha Company, 54th Engineer Battalion began a mission to provide site security and unexploded ordnance (UXO) disposal support for Bravo Company, 142nd Engineer Battalion at the Abu Ghurayb Prison site located just west of Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). Bravo Company's task was to construct a 4,500-person internment facility within the prison's harrowing walls. For the duration of the operation, Bravo was stayed at BIAP with the 94th En Bn (Heavy), to whom they were task organized. 2nd Platoon took residence alongside Bravo in a passenger terminal and made the daily trek to the worksite with them.



SPC Johnson maintains security from a tower position at Abu Ghurayb

Several obstacles hindered Bravo Company's success. First, the company had been forced to provide its own site security leaving it grossly undermanned to complete its mission by the planned deadline. Next, they had to contend with a multitude of scattered UXO on the construction site created by the prison's nightly delivery of mortar and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire. Finally, located on the site was a highly reinforced concrete structure that could not be demolished by any of the company's equipment, including a D-9 dozer.



The successful disposal of a UXO located outside the prison walls

2nd Platoon wasted no time in solving these problems for an already delayed timeline. They immediately took charge of the security issue. The platoon's leadership gathered intelligence on enemy operations in the area and pre-existing security protocol from the 72nd Military Police Company to ensure that the platoon's security measures were fully integrated into their force protection plan. (The MPs, located at the prison, were responsible for securing the detainees held within the facility.) Meanwhile, the soldiers of 2nd Platoon immediately began reinforcing and manning the three towers that lined the perimeter walls making

them adequate for a safe and formidable guard post. The platoon filled over 900 sand bags in the course of the first two days in order to properly fortify the towers. The task was debilitating. Each burlap sack had to be filled, and then hauled up the three flights of stairs in the exhausting heat. A quick reaction force (QRF) was also created, which remained poised to dispose of any UXO in the vicinity and also provided local security to the Bravo Company soldiers working outside the prison walls.

Daily operations fully-integrated 2nd Platoon so that they became not just a support element for the task force, but indeed an invaluable asset to an important job. The platoon provided daily convoy security for Bravo Company both to and from the worksite. Once on site, the platoon personnel quickly manned their preordained positions in the towers and took watch for any unusual incidents.

While the tower personnel moved to their locations, the QRF would begin preparations for the day's missions. The preparations included conducting maintenance on the platoon's vehicles and equipment, receiving intelligence updates from the MPs, and readying any explosives for UXO disposal or other demolition missions.

Throughout the mission at Abu Ghurayb, 2nd Platoon safely disposed of numerous UXOs. The platoon also discovered and destroyed an improvised explosive device (IED) located on the highway just outside the prison. However, the platoon's most challenging demolition mission was to weaken the aforementioned reinforced concrete structure located on the worksite in close to proximity to the outer perimeter wall. The task was to weaken the structure to the greatest extent possible with out inflicting damage the vital outer wall. The concern was that the structure's walls were made up of heavily reinforced concrete over 18 inches thick and that it would take a substantial blast to weaken the walls. The platoon called upon the 54th En Bn reconnaissance team to examine the structure, assess its dimensions, and determine where the weakest parts of the edifice existed. The assessment complete, the team submitted their report to ERDEC in order to obtain guidance on how to go about destabilizing the structure. Once the results came back, the platoon prepared the explosives in accordance with ERDEC's



A photo of the concrete structure located within the internment facility

official guidance. Although the building still stood after the third blast, it had successfully been weakened to the extent that Bravo Company could easily bulldoze over it and continue its mission.

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The concrete structure after the 2nd blast

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While at BIAP, the living conditions and quality of life for 2nd Platoon was excellent. In their downtime, the platoon's soldiers were able to take full advantage of the installation's facilities, which included a Burger King. The platoon was truly thankful for the opportunity to have

assisted Bravo Company at BIAP and Abu Ghurayb on such an important operation. They were reluctant to say goodbye when it all came to an end on 20 August.



The third and final blast on the concrete structure

Task Force Scorpion

Towards the end of July 1st Platoon supported a Marine Led operation called Task Force Scorpion. The platoon's specific mission was to provide engineer reconnaissance and engineer sweeping teams as the marines raided suspected Ba'ath Party Safe houses. 1st Platoon went out with A CO, 4th Light Armored Recon, led by Major Minor. The missions were usually at night or before first light while the suspects were still in their house asleep. The marines would kick in the door and bring out the suspect while clearing and securing the area. 1st platoon would then go around the area with mine detectors and look for underground weapons caches. Upon finding munitions the platoon would then destroy them using demolitions they brought with them. The usual find was mortar and artillery rounds. Word spread quickly that the marines had engineer support and follow on missions found disturbed ground but no munitions. This was the first time the Outlaws had got the experience to work with the new Light Armored Vehicle (LAV).



Marine Light Armored Vehicles ready for missions

LSA Dogwood Take 3



Breezeway between buildings with cammo net as shade



ISG Mann reads an order in new TOC trailer

In the second week of August a transportation unit finally moved out of the barracks near the battalion and the Outlaws moved up in the world to a building with brick walls, washers, and the promise of Air Conditioning as soon as we could improve the buildings wiring and windows.



Shower Facility transplanted in new area



Laundry Facility



Outlaw Gym 2

Change of Responsibility



1SG Lawrence's Award

1SG Lawrence who had given almost three years to the Outlaws moved on to the Sergeant Major academy and SFC Mann took the helm as Outlaw 7. 1SG Lawrence was awarded a plaque made by SGT Hamilton with keepsakes from the area.



1SG Lawrence and LT Graig



1SG Lawrence pack to go

Task Force Rocketeer 01 September – 28 October

Six months after the fall of the Middle East's mightiest military, vestiges of Iraq's seemingly limitless arsenal still silhouette the desert horizon. Charred, overturned tanks are remindful of the early tombs they made for grossly outmatched Iraqi soldiers. Abandoned artillery pieces are suggestive of the haste with which some may have fled the unforgiving bombardment from U.S. aircraft. To American soldiers fighting to win the peace in so volatile a country in so uncertain a time, these defunct relics quell pervading inhibitions of the formidable task before them. But one such remnant of the deposed regime's air defense program is deceitful in its continued existence. The Russian-made SA-2 surface-to-air missiles that litter the neighborhoods of Baghdad and the infrastructure of obscure villages in the northern region pose a greater threat than ever to coalition forces and the civilian population. While most of the U.S. Military currently labors to reconstruct a nation devastated by 24 years of brutal tyranny, costly wars, and international sanctions, a small team of Army Engineers from the 54th Engineer Battalion (Mechanized) of Bamberg, Germany called Task Force Rocketeer is ironically gaining ground in the same arena by means of destruction. In the engineers' most contributive effort to the social and environmental state of Iraq since the war began, the shocking numbers of these poised and primed SA-2 rockets have begun to dwindle through a collaborative and inventive approach.



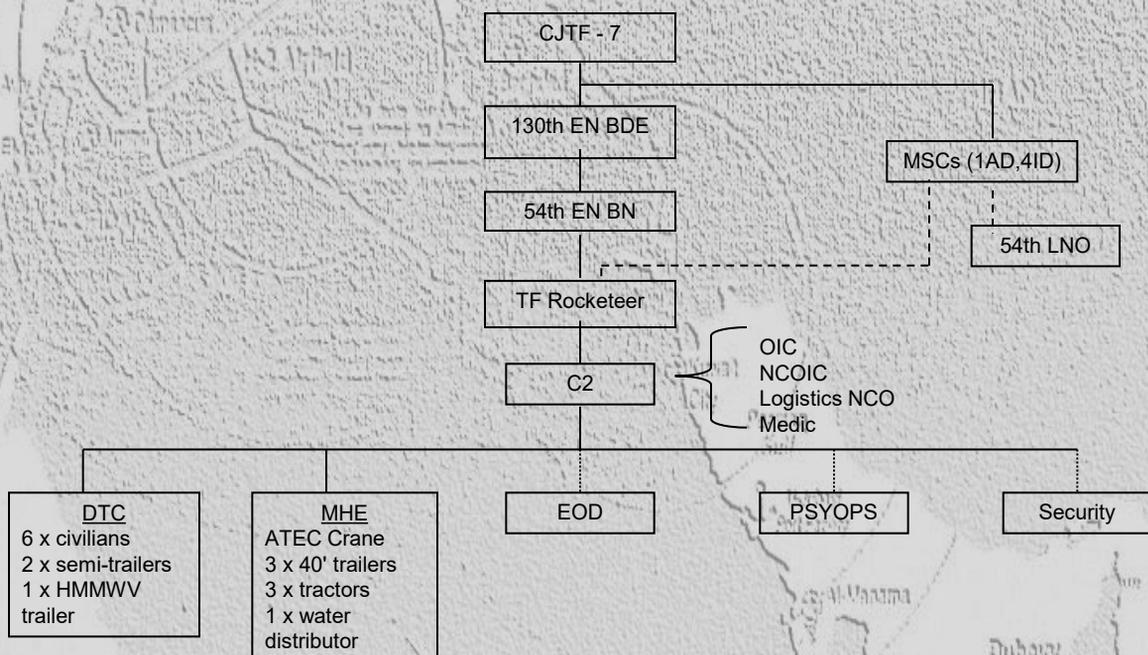
Above: A SA-2 Missile on transport system



Above: A Al Samoud Missile on transport system

The SA-2 is a Russian-designed, rail launched, two-stage, surface-to-air missile that carries a 264 lb warhead and a 1,200 lb solid fuel booster. It is 36 feet long and weighs 4,000 lbs. The liquid propellants, consisting of a highly noxious and combustible oxidizer called Inhibiting Red Fuming Nitric Acid (IRFNA) and fuel called Tonka, combine to launch the missile over 30 miles at Mach 2. The SA-2 is designed to be fueled with 90 gallons of the oxidizer just before firing. In their rest state, IRFNA and Tonka are unstable at best and may unite if disturbed causing a fire or an explosion. The instability of at least three rockets was exacerbated by the extreme 130 degree summer heat and the looting of critical components by locals. This resulted in the leakage of IRFNA and subsequent premature detonation of the warheads. Alarmed by these catastrophic effects, Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) quickly assembled Task Force Rocketeer from a battalion of the 130th Engineer Brigade. Its mission was to safely remove the IRFNA (which is hazardous and causes ghastly chemical burns, severe respiratory damage, and death) from the fuselage of 29 missiles in the Baghdad area so that they could be properly disposed.

Task Organization



1LT Jon Korneliussen, and later 2LT Matt Mabe, led the command and control (C2) element of engineers coordinating and supervising a team of six civilian rocket technicians from Redstone Technical Testing Center (RTTC) of Huntsville, Alabama. Supporting the task force were also a materiel handling equipment (MHE) section with crane operators from the 459th Multi Role Bridge Company, water distributors from the 94th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy), truck drivers from the 846th Transportation Company, and an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team from the 3rd EOD Battalion. Civil affairs (PSYOPS) and security teams were provided by the various Brigade Combat Teams of the 1st Armored Division in whose areas the Task Force operated. Working in concert, this group managed to dispose of all SA-2s in Baghdad between July and September 2003 despite the debilitating August heat, constant enemy threats, and the obvious precarious nature of the missiles being destroyed.



Above: A Al Samoud Missile on transport system

The impact of the missiles' elimination can never be adequately quantified. Yet, one need only observe the sublimely appreciative expressions on the faces of residents; their previously dejected attitude toward the arrival of their liberators has turned to gratitude, even worship. It is plain to see that the effect of Rocketeer's work has been not as powerful in its immediate riddance of an enormous hazard as it has in its ability to help shape the psychology of a once hopeless populace into support for the noble American cause. During one mission, the task force encountered an SA-2 that had already detonated thereby exploding the warhead at the front of the missile leaving the back half intact. The missile, like many others, had been strategically emplaced in a small neighborhood outside Baghdad as a guard against the widely-known U.S. refusal to bomb in populated areas. A Sheik living in a nearby home related the incident to a PSYOPS team attached to the task force painfully illustrating how some local children were playing with the all too familiar ordnance causing it to blow up. The explosion took the life of one child and the limbs of others...a testament to the horrors of war and to the significance of Task Force Rocketeer's urgency and commitment.



De-fueling a SA-2 Missile

The team demilitarized one to two missiles every two days. A typical mission began with the predawn setting-up of the equipment utilized by the team of rocket technicians (headed by Mike Liles, a Department of Defense rocket expert and liaison). Concurrently, the security teams along with PSYOPS cleared a 200 meter radius around the site ensuring that endangered civilians were not in their homes for the duration of the defueling process. Once complete, two members of the team would “suit up” in a protective rubber ensemble replete with microphones and air hoses to begin the daunting task of removing the IRFNA. If the fuming substance were not deadly enough, the limited supply of oxygen in the suits and the threat of enemy snipers always weighed on everyone’s conscience. The oxidizer was then pumped into a 500 gallon pressure-tested aluminum tank thereby isolating it from the fuel with which it is intended to react. Next, the water distributor neutralized any residue left by the IRFNA. This allowed for safe transport of the materiel (including the two rockets which are loaded onto a 40-foot flatbed trailer using the appropriated crane) to the safe disposal area. The following day, the oxidizer was pumped into carbon-steel 55 gallon drums. Lastly, EOD prepared the demolition of the rockets and IRFNA using over 200 lbs of C-4 explosive per missile. This was the last and most dangerous step in the entire process. What was left after each explosion was a quickly dissipating cloud of Nitric Acid and an ever-safer environment for U.S. Forces to garner peace.



SA-2 demolition



Loading a SA-2 Missile with crane

Task Force Rocketeer has not run without its share of obstacles. But overcoming delays in the project by remarkably innovative problem-solving has made the mission more safe and efficient. For instance, on “defuel day” the procedure originally called for pumping IRFNA directly from the rockets into the 55 gallon drums in which they would be transported to the demolition site, but the expansive nature of the oxidizer’s gas emissions and its corrosiveness were catalyzed by the intense desert heat and the violent sloshing of the drums during transport. This increase in pressure created a deadly time-bomb for which no one knew the deadline. On 30 August, immediately following defueling, one drum succumbed to the pressure of its contents and shot into the air releasing the dangerous IRFNA into the atmosphere threatening the lives of those around. Fortunately, no injuries occurred but a complete revision of the procedure was in order. In response, the civilian contractors designed and built a flange system for the 500 gallon tank that would not yield under less than 50 psi (higher than the drums’ 25 psi) and was also chemically resistant to the corrosive IRFNA. One other impediment to the operation was the heretofore unknown specifications and capabilities of the Iraqi-made Al Samoud missile. Task Force Rocketeer cleared three such missiles in addition to the SA-2s. Similar in its function, yet more cumbersome in its geometric parameters, the Al Samoud had to be learned from scratch. Modifications to defueling had to be made since the fuel capacity of an Al Samoud was two and a half times greater than the SA-2. A more stable system of transport also had to be designed since the Al Samouds were shorter and did not fit in the preexisting supports. Altogether the task force learned that the safest and most efficient way to do away with SA-2s was to work on two at a time taking two full days to completely destroy them. With four days of work to one day of refitting and rest, six missiles can be eradicated in a week’s time.



Demo Prep on missiles with fuel in barrels

Dubayy.

Now that Baghdad has been rendered safe from SA-2 missiles, TF Rocketeer is refitting and planning to demilitarize approximately 100 remaining missiles spread throughout less populated areas in northern Iraq's countryside. Fueled missiles in remote areas will simply be demolished with explosives in place, but missiles in populated areas will be defueled and removed using the procedures developed in Baghdad. The mission is accelerating from the newly developed procedures and the rising support of the population and units which the task force supports. Task Force Rocketeer has proven itself greatly efficacious through its undeniable record of safety and tangible accomplishments. In a nation gripped by turmoil and disorder, Army Engineers are doing their part to literally change the landscape and better the lives of people in Iraq.



Demolition of Al Samoud

LSA Anaconda Move



The Outlaw deck at LSA Anaconda

In September the Outlaws moved once again to LSA Anaconda located at Balad Air Base. The Outlaws moved in to what they planned to be the final home before re-deployment. We went straight to work after being given another large warehouse area using the wood and tools on hand to build rooms inside and a deck outside. We also designed and built the laundry facility that became the battalion standard. Once again constructing a Gym was a priority and an outdoor gym was built which ultimately supported the entire battalion with attachments; a total of 700 soldiers.



The Outlaw laundry facility



The Outlaw gym

Samara Range Weapons Qualification

For two days at the end of September the Outlaws conducted a live fire exercise and weapons qualification at the Samara Weapons Range in northern Iraq. Though remote, the range supported firing the full company arsenal.

In two long days, the Outlaws conducted a familiarization fire with the M203, MK19, M2 and .50 cal. Using paper targets, the Outlaws

executed zero and qualification ranges for the M249, M240B, and M16/M4. Though both of the range days were long and hot, they were a huge success. Every Outlaw zeroed and qualified on his own personal weapon. Also, the heavy weapons range

refamiliarized all of the company's tank commanders with their heavy machine guns and automatic grenade launchers.

The most impressive and memorable part of the weapons ranges was not the qualification fire, however. The Outlaws had a unique opportunity to observe firsthand the signaling capabilities of the

M203 grenade launcher. The Outlaw grenadiers demonstrated every type of M203 round for the rest of the company. The grand finale of the range was a live AT-4 fire.

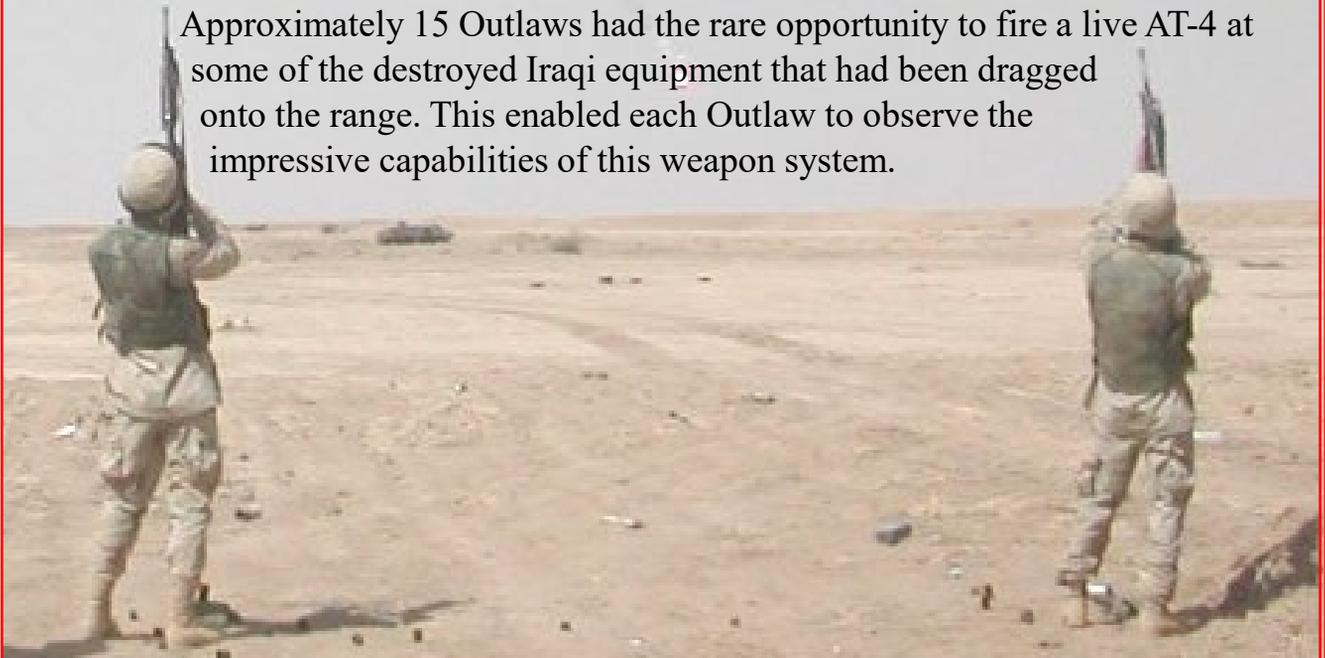
Approximately 15 Outlaws had the rare opportunity to fire a live AT-4 at some of the destroyed Iraqi equipment that had been dragged onto the range. This enabled each Outlaw to observe the impressive capabilities of this weapon system.



SGT Powell takes aim during the MK-19 fire.



SSG Showers, lane safety, clears the line during M16 zero.



Background: Two Outlaw grenadiers demonstrate the signaling capabilities of their M203 with red star clusters.

LSA Anaconda Security



PFC Boyle from 1st Platoon escorts Iraqi nationals working to improve the battalions living areas

While at LSA Anaconda the Outlaws continued their secondary mission to fight as infantry. The Company ensured the safety of the base camp by establishing the quick reactionary force (QRF) designed to respond the. The force conducted several daily presence patrols on and often off the installation. 2nd Platoon developed a QRF SOP and training plan, which was recognized by the battalion as the the official SOP for the other companies to

follow during their red cycle rotation. Other Outlaw contributions to LSA Anaconda's security include manning several tower positions located along the perimeter walls, and securing the American sector of the Kellogg-Brown & Root compound. The company also provided the 130th Engineer Brigade Personal Security Detachment (PSD) for the brigade commander for six weeks. The PSD detail escorted the commander to numerous coalition camps within Iraq.



QRF vehicles staged to react



KBR **QRF**

Task Force Right Of Way



The last Alpha Company mission during Operation Iraqi Freedom was to aid Task Force Right of Way near the town of Tikrit. On 3 November, First Platoon traveled to Tikrit in order to assist the Task Force in removing trees and large rock piles from the highway that dozers and scrapers could not reach. By removing these obstructions from the roadside, the Task Force effectively reduced the number of locations that the enemy could place an IED. Over the next four days, the platoon cleared the dense vegetation and rock piles by creatively utilizing an ACE, a SEE truck, and a bucket loader. However, after three flat tires in the first three days, an ax and a pair of leather work gloves proved to be the most effective technique at clearing the obstacles. Nine kilometers of manual labor later, the platoon's mission was complete. The platoon had accomplished the work that dozers and scrapers could not. The next day, 8 November, the platoon returned to Balad knowing once again that it had made a legitimate contribution to the security and safety of Iraq.



ACE, SEE, and Bucket Loaders clean up the road

Redeploy



On 27 October we got the great news; we would be re-deploying sooner than one year. In fact we would be going home in December if all went well. CPT Bowman decided to break the good news by gathering everyone in the MWR room and playing “Momma I’m Coming Home” by Ozzy Osborne. Most of the soldiers realized what was happening within the first few notes, but everyone figured it out by the first line of the song and the morale of the company suddenly spiked. We immediately went to work getting ready for redeployment and worked hard on finishing up our remaining missions. By 9 November we had finished our final mission and on 16 November the company main body moved to Kuwait.

Ammo Turn In



The long convoy to Kuwait

We're Going Home



M113s ready to go to the wash rack

Maintenance

Keys to Success:

- Leader Involvement
- Inventive Mechanics
- Using Parts off Iraqi Equipment
- Constantly checking fluid levels
- Fix the parts that are broken

War Time Maintenance

What happens when you can't get the part and you are going to go to war in 1 week. You improvise. That is just what the Outlaws did before during and after the war. 100% of the company vehicles made it across the border and headed north on the attack of Baghdad. Along the way vehicles broke down as vehicles do in the harsh desert conditions, but through inventive work by the mechanics and hard work by the soldiers the vehicles kept pushing. Although the OR rate dropped considerably by the time the Outlaws hit Baghdad they were back to 90% upon moving West with the Tiger Squadron from 3rd ACR. The company continued to perform missions and fix equipment up until the redeployment date and were able to role 75% of their vehicles on to the trucks or down the road to Kuwait upon completion of over 9 months of constant combat missions.



Changing Track on Panther

**OR Rate: 100%
At Border Crossing**



Greasing AVLB Road Wheel



Changing Pack on M113



Changing Pack on AVLB

Professional Development

During our time after the war in Iraq we developed what we call a Leadership Development program. We combined the Officer Professional Development Program (OPD) and the Non-Commissioned Officer Development Program (NCODP) into leadership development. All officers and NCO's attended the classes which were related to war time missions and focused on both levels of leadership in every situation.



SGT Powell Gives a class on 240B

Leadership Development



SGT Powell and SGT Vasquez's Terrain Model for Convoy Class

Leadership Development



SFC Outten gives a class on Traffic Control Points

Training During Combat Operations:

- 1. Leadership Development / classroom instruction** which includes training on the doctrinal tactics and techniques for a given task and review of specific methods used to execute the task. During war tasks focused on war time mission such as convoy operations and actions on contact.
- 2. Leadership Development / practical exercise**, typically conducted outside, where platoon leaders and NCOs go step by step through the execution of a specific task to ensure everyone understands all aspects of it. This results in trained and validated leaders. Usually done in rehearsals in preparation for specific missions.
- 3. Squad level training.** Soldiers are taught how to execute the given task through repetition and competition with other individuals and/or squads. The squads then combined a series of tasks together in the execution of squad level missions. CTT tested these tasks at a individual level and in combination with the Squad.
- 4. Mission execution** done after training was completed resulting in 100% mission accomplishment throughout the war with no injuries or fatal attacks by the enemy.



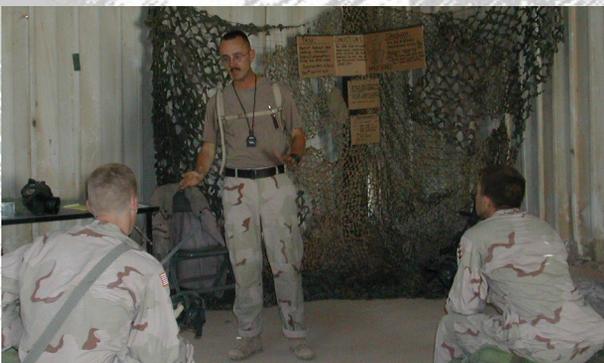
SGT Card gives a class on the AT-4

8 Step Training Model

The Outlaws structure training using the 8 Step Training Model to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of training. **This model is used in the execution of all four steps of the company's training plan.** All leaders within the company know and utilize the 8 steps for all levels of training.

8 STEP TRAINING MODEL

PLAN THE TRAINING
TRAIN & VALIDATE LEADERS
VALIDATE TRAINING SITE
ISSUE COMPLETE PLAN
REHEARSE
EXECUTE
AAR
RETRAIN



SGT Lum give a class on the protective mask

Professional Development

Physical Training

Outlaw PT Program

The Outlaws believe that physical training is the most important activity we do day in and day out. PT prepares both the mind and body. Our program is very demanding and is designed to ensure maximum physical and mental development of individual soldiers and the company as a whole. The program is not designed to max the Army Physical Fitness Test, although it does have that effect.

The Wartime Program

- 1+ hour morning PT sessions five days a week
- Saturday morning sports
- Weight Room available at night
- Innovative PT (Boat PT)

Brigade Silver Streamer

The Outlaws have earned the Brigade's coveted Silver Streamer PT Excellence award every quarter since its initiation more than 3 years ago. The minimum requirements are for 80% of the company to:

- Complete 12 mile ruck march in under 3 hrs
- Company average APFT score of 260 (Outlaws' average is ???)
- 4 mile run in under 36 minutes

Company has met two of the requirements and will complete the 12 mile ruck upon redeployment.

Anaconda 10 Miler:

Seven Outlaws competed in a 10 Mile race in October at LSA Anaconda. 1SG Mann Placed 30th out of 200 in his bracket and CPT Bowman and SGT Kendrick placed 39 and 40 out of 300 in their bracket.

Company APFT Average -
273!!



Ssg Brown during boat PT



SFC Outten after the 10 Miler

PT EXCELLENCE

Professional Development

Weapons Training

Events

Stationary Qualification Ranges

January – Pre Deployment Qualification
August – LSA Dogwood Qualification

Live Fire / Qualification Ranges

April – LSA Dogwood Convoy Range
May – Re-familiarization Fire
July – Weapon Mount Convoy Fire
September – Samarah Range Live Fire

Train While You Fight

Other than the month of January the company has been deployed for all of 2003. In the month of January the Outlaws completed one qualification range but since then have been busy staying lethal by continuous training on weapons. In April during our week of transition from 3 ID to 3 ACR we conducted a live fire using vehicles in a convoy to better train for the current situation. In May following the change of command once again we fired all weapons to give soldiers confidence in the weapons. In June the company had ranges planned for the end of the month but range restrictions kept us from our live fire. Instead we took three days to cross train extensively on every weapon so that every soldier could fire all weapons if needed. The success of this round robin training was amazing and from then on we have used this technique prior to any range with outstanding results. In July with the help of local nationals we were able to put non-standard weapons mounts on all wheeled vehicles and promptly went out on a convoy and tested the systems while moving. Finally in September we conducted the Samarah live fire range.

100% Company Qualified

100% Company Qualified
on assigned weapon!

11% experts on M16/M4

11% experts on M16/M4

64% experts on M249

75% experts on M240B

75% experts on M2 .50cal

75% experts on MK19



January
Qualification Range
Bamberg

June
Weapon Training
LSA Dogwood



July
Weapon Mount
Range
LSA Dogwood



September
Live Fire
Samara Range



Professional Development

A key aspect of all soldiers and leaders professional development is their mastery and annual certification on a few critical common tasks. During a break in combat operations, the Outlaws slowed their operation tempo to focus on training these soldier tasks. In a two-day focus on CCT, the company trained every soldiers on the tasks and tested 100% of the company.

During the training day, the NCOs of the company took charge of training the company's soldiers and developed impressive blocks of instruction on the many common task requirements. Even with few training aids on-hand, the Outlaw NCOs produced professional classes that focused on the tasks, conditions, and standards for each task. These classes covered first aid, communications, the emplacement of a claymore mine, and numerous NBC skills.

As a result of this training, 100% of the company received a first-time Go during testing.

From Top to Bottom:

SGT Lash listens intently to instructions on how to properly don his NBC protective mask.

SPC McManus after demonstrating personal decontamination procedures on his face.

SGT Viveros walks **PFC Inch** through the steps for evaluating a casualty.

SGT Lum explains the importance of properly caring for your personal NBC protective mask.

Common Task Training



100% First Time GO!

Professional Development



Squad Formation with Shields



Squad with shields met with resistance



Squad formation with weapons



Platoon column with weapons

Riot Control

With the experiences of the platoons in mind the outlaws realized they needed training in dealing with civilians. We were supporting a Military Police Company at Abu Ghurayb prison who agreed to teach us techniques for dealing with riots. The outlaws headed to the prison and spent the day learning to use the riot control shields and how to use the M16 as a non-lethal riot control weapon. We also learned different riot control formations which were similar to infantry formations.

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

The Outlaws are ready to deal with possible civilian disturbances



Platoon wedge with weapons

Professional Development

Promotions and Military Schooling

The term “Grow your own NCOs” applies well to the Outlaws this year. All three of our Platoon Sergeants were promoted to Sergeant First Class this year with SFC Ellis promoted in April, SFC Showers promoted in October, and SFC Outten promoted in December. We also promoted SSG Clemens and SSG Wilfong this year. Along with an unprecedented 11 promotions to Sergeant filling our team leader positions with qualified leaders.



SFC Showers promoted by 1SG Mann

Due to the deployment we were ineligible for most military schools but were given the chance to send 8 Sergeants to the Primary Leadership Development Course.

Number Promoted	Rank
3	1LT
3	SFC
2	SSG
11	SGT



SFC Ellis promoted by LTC Jackson and CSM Buxbaum on the Euphrates



SGT Lum promoted by LTC Jackson

Recruiting

Retention/Reenlistment

	Objective	Actual	Percent
Initial Term	2	2	100%
Mid Career	2	3	150%
Careerist	1	1	100%
Total for 2003	5	6	117%

2003 has been an outstanding year for reenlistment in Alpha Company. We credit these strong numbers to four primary factors:



- Strong emphasis on Soldier Development
- Challenging missions
- Consistent enforcement of high standards
- Positive Command Climate

Stay Army



SGT Hamilton Reenlists by the Panther

This coin is presented to spouses of soldiers who reenlist in recognition of the sacrifices they and their family make.



SGT Diezsi reenlists on the Outlaw Deck



Morale & Welfare

Awards & Recognitions

The Outlaws cleaned up with awards this year. With Engineer awards like 1SG Lawrence's de Fleury to the SSG Machado's ACE Squad Leader of The Year. The Outlaws also received the coveted Combat Order of The Spur from their support of 3rd ACR. Our support of 3ID resulted in the company receiving the Presidential Unit Citation. The valor and superior leadership resulted in 7 Bronze Star awards and 4 ARCOM with Valor. The Outlaws performance warrants the number of awards and we are all proud to be a part of this unit and this operation.



1SG Lawrence receives Bronze de Fleury

7	Bronze Stars
2	Meritorious Service Medals
4	Army Accommodation Medal with Valor
67	Army Accommodation Medals
19	Army Achievement Medal
1	ACE Squad Leader of the Year Award
100	130 th Engineer Brigade OIF Coins
1	Bronze Order of the de Fleury
3	V Corps Distinguished Small Unit Award
2	V Corps Distinguished Small Unit Leader Award



ORDER OF THE SPUR



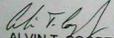
Halfway down the trail to hell in a shady meadow green
are the souls of all dead troopers camped near good old time canteen,
and this eternal resting place is known as fiddler's green.

Marching on straight through to hell the infantry are seen,
accompanied by artillery, engineer, and marine
for none but the shades of cavalymen dismount at fiddlers green.
Though some go curving down the trail to seek a warmer seen
no trooper goes to hell 'ere he emptied his canteen
and so goes back to drink again with friends at fiddler's green.

So when man and horse go down beneath a sabre keen,
or in a fierce melee you stop a bullet clean,
and the hostiles come to get your scalp just empty your canteen,
and put your pistol to your head and go to fiddler's green.

The Order of the Spur is hereby awarded to
A/54th Combat Engineer Company
"Outlaw"

On the 28th day of MAY in the year 2003
For service with the 1st Squadron 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment
in the country of Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom


ALVIN T. COOPER
 CSM, USA
 COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR


WILLIAM T. DOLAN
 LTC, AR
 COMMANDING

The Order of the Spur



PFC Brunner receives ARCOM



**SGT Morgan and SGT Manns
receive ARCOM**

Morale & Welfare

Redskins Lake Trips



Through the hottest months of the year, the Outlaws found an Iraqi paradise on the beach at LSA Redskins. Between missions, the Outlaws convoyed to the lake to enjoy a day of swimming and sunbathing that always boosted morale and reduced stress. The 459th MRBC even provided boat rides and tubing for the Outlaw soldiers on some trips.

Above: A group of refreshed Outlaws after a day at the beach.

Right: One of the bridge boats loads passengers before a trip out into the lake.

Background: Some Outlaws try to catch some rays while watching the “battle of the barge” out in the water.

Below: SGT Stewart enjoys the water.



Morale & Welfare

Babylon Trip

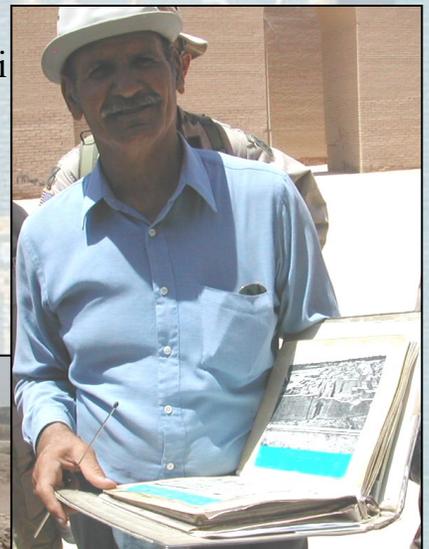
On August 1st, the Outlaws took an MWR trip to Babylon. The ruins of this ancient civilization are nestled into the fertile land along the Euphrates River in southern Iraq. Twenty-five Outlaw soldiers toured the site with an Iraqi tour guide who discussed the history of the civilization itself and the priceless ruins that tell its story. Many soldiers also had the opportunity to tour Saddam's Palace, which sits atop a hill overlooking the ruins.



The officers in front of the Babylon Lion, a symbol of state power.

Outside of the military perimeter that surrounds Babylon, Outlaw soldiers also had the opportunity to purchase Iraqi souvenirs from a small Iraqi market.

The Babylon trip was a very welcome break from the Outlaw's nearly constant missions. It also broadened the perspective of many soldiers who did not realize the dramatic and biblical history of Iraq and the Middle East.



Above: The Outlaws' Iraqi historian and tour guide opens his book to show pictures of Babylon through the ages.

Left: The Outlaws gather around their tour guide for a discussion of the three eras of Babylon and how they are distinguishable in the cities ruins.



Background: A recreation of the Ishtar Gate that now sits at the site of the original.

Morale & Welfare

Esprit de Corps



4. 7. 2003

Above: SSG Milstead and the rest of the Outlaw Tug-O-War team pull their way to victory in the most competitive event of the day.

Left: SGT Vega tosses a ringer during the horseshoe competition.



4. 7. 2003

4th Of July

For Independence Day each year the 54th Engineer Battalion sponsors an Organizational Day. Each company in the battalion competes in all sorts of sporting events – from horseshoes and a three-legged race to volleyball flag football. Though the Outlaws did not win first place overall for the day, they won the most important and competitive event of the day – the tug-o-war. Everyone in the company participated and enjoyed the teamwork and esprit de corps in their company.

Commander's Cup

The Outlaws dominated the Commander's Cup softball event in October this year. The battalion organized a softball tournament and asked each company in the battalion to field two teams. Both Outlaw teams were exception, but were pitted against each other in the first round. The A&O and Headquarters Platoon team won the first game and sailed through the rest of the battalions competition. In their final game for the Commander's Cup championship, the Outlaw's amazing sluggers scored an incredible 37 points in just the first inning! The Outlaws had no trouble securing the championship and walking away champions. The Outlaws look forward to the next Commander's Cup event when they will once again dominate the playing field.



Above: SGT Powell earns a few more RBIs during the championship game.

Left: 1SG Mann holds his runner on base while preparing for a throw.

Far Left: Final score Outlaws over Bulldogs.



Safety

Our Record

Risk Management

Every training event, from rail load operations to live fire training exercises, has a Risk Assessment Worksheet completed to ensure the utmost safety. The worksheets are designed to identify potential risk and initiate actions to mitigate that risk. The risk assessments are approved by the company commander if the cumulative risk is "Low". The battalion commander approves the risk assessment if the cumulative risk is "Medium".

0 - Cold weather injuries

0 - Vehicle Accidents

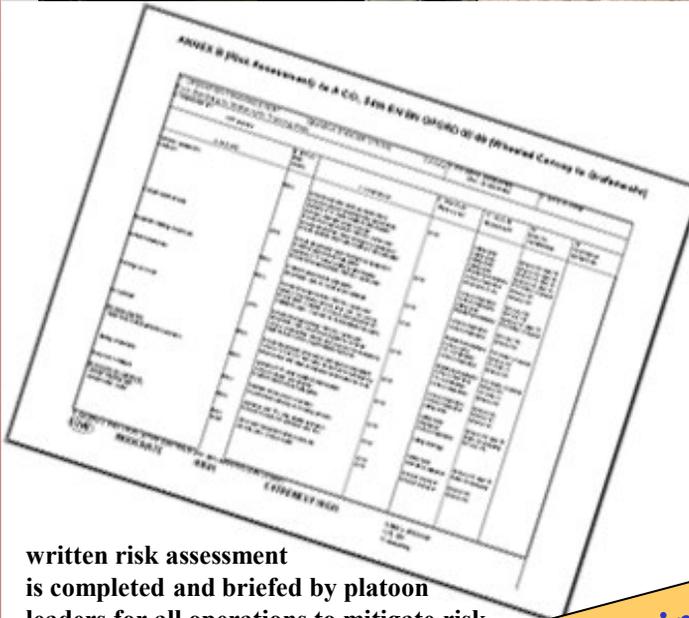
0 - Alcohol Related Incidents

0 - Hot Weather Injuries



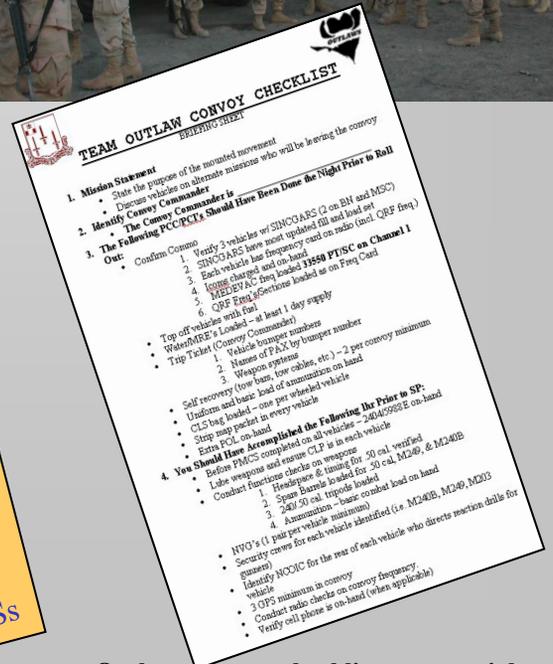
ILT White gives Mission brief and Risk Assessment

Convoy brief before convoy back to Kuwait



written risk assessment is completed and briefed by platoon leaders for all operations to mitigate risk.

Combat Lifesaver Training
 Required – 10
 On Hand – 22
 220% required number of trained CLSs



Outlaws convoy checklist an essential part of every convoy briefed every time



Our flexibility and ability to complete a vast variety of engineer and wartime missions speak volumes for the power and usefulness of the Engineer Corps. The military can call on the combat engineer company and the Corps for any mission!



Deployment Processing Center in January. The Corps of Engineers can assist in the deployment process.

Rapid Deployment to Kuwait in January and February. The Corps of Engineers can deploy on a moments notice.



Breach the Berm in March. The Corps of Engineers conducts mobility operations in combat operations.

Team Panther in March. The Corps of Engineers clears airfields with the Panther allowing for air inserted logistics.



Task Force Wadi Support in March. The Corps of Engineers secures the area for construction on the battlefield.

Marking Route Rovers in March. The Corps of engineer marks the way for others to follow.





Contributions to the Corps

Versatile Sappers



Survivability Support January – April. The Corps of Engineers provides survivability to the battlefield.

Secure the Crossing Site in March and April. The Corps of Engineers secures the main crossing site on the Euphrates



Conduct recon, engineer utility operations, and presence patrols in May. The Engineer Corps supports 3rd ACR.

USACE Security in July. The Corps of Engineers secures and accesses enemy ammunition sites.



Abu Ghurayb Prison construction support in July and August. The Corps of Engineers rebuilds a prison for Iraq.

Task Force Scorpion in July. The Corps of Engineers support the Marine Corps with Engineer sweeping teams.



Task Force Rocketeer in August and September. The Corps of Engineers removes dangerous missiles from Iraq.

Task Force Right of Way in November. The Corps of Engineers cleans up the MSR helping to minimize IED threat.

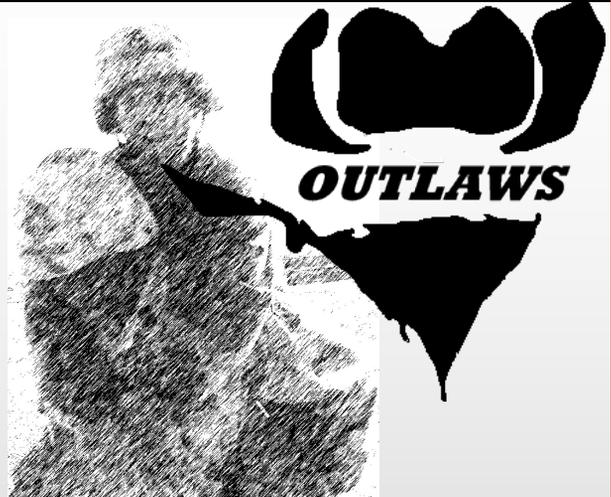


Conclusion

Alpha Company – The Versatile Sappers

From Breaching the Berm to Securing a Prison the Outlaws exemplify the term “Versatile Sapper”. In 2003 the Outlaws have performed almost every mission on their Mission Essential Task List in combat with outstanding results. The Outlaws picked up their secondary mission which is to fight as infantry and continued their part in the Global War on Terrorism supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Alpha Company – A band of Outlaws came together as a team and completed every mission bringing all soldiers back alive and well. This handful of Outlaws has become a Band Of Brothers and will forever remember the time we spent together making this world a better place.



**We Few, We happy few,
We band of brothers.**

**For he who sheds his blood with
me this day shall be my brother.
Be he nair so vile this day shall
further his condition.**

**And gentlemen at home now abed
will call themselves accursed and
hold there manhood's cheap
whilst any speak who fought with
me upon this day.”**

William Shakespeare

