

228TH FSB NEWSLETTER

Issue 3, Volume 1

“Iraq and Back, We take no Slack”

NTC Rotation 05-06

TRAINING NEWSLETTER: From Ft. Irwin, California, simulating Iraq



Above: Sgt 1st Class Balfe, SSG Hixon from the 1-110th IN BN, and SFC Ortego from the 228th FSB (from left to right) discuss the various options to evacuate patients to level two care inside their M113 Track Ambulance.

Consolidated Aid Station Provides Care

The Battalion Aid Station is one place on FOB Denver that everyone hopes is slow.

The aid station (BAS) is operated by the 1-110th Infantry Battalion, with augmentation from Charlie Company of the 228th Forward Support Battalion, and the 2-123 Armor Battalion, from Kentucky.

Staff Sgt. Eric Kinney, the BAS treatment NCOIC, is one of those soldiers from Kentucky. His role is to supervise the stabilization of patients. “This is a level one

facility,” says Staff Sgt. McKinney. “Our goal is stabilization, which is anything from checking bandages, wounds, and splinting suspected breaks.”

Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Ortego is the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) for the detail from C Co, 228th. He has a dual status as a ‘go-to guy’ for the aid station, and top NCO from C Co. One of his jobs has been to work with the other NCOICs to integrate the medics into a consolidated effort.

“I want to make the
Cont. on page 3

228th FSB Completes Transfer of Authority From 532nd FSB

By 1st Lieutenant Rose M. Forrest

FOB Denver, Iraq- All the immersion training and cultural acclimation became meaningful to the soldiers of the 228th Forward Support Battalion last week, as they made the seven-hour convoy from their Base Camp near Irwin City, Iraq, to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Denver, near the city of Medina Jabal.

Yesterday the Transfer of Authority became final, and the 532nd FSB, which has been providing support on FOB Denver for the past year, will start redeploying home to their families in the United States.

After spending five days on the FOB, learning the ropes from the 532nd FSB, the soldiers from the 228th are ready to step up. The Battalion Commander, Lt Col. Glenn Nissley says that he intends to “maintain the success the 532nd has had, and expand the humanitarian assistance aspect of the mission.”

Continued on Page 2



Three Squares Makes Soldiers Feel at Home

They say a well-fed soldier is a happy soldier. This is the goal of the 228th and 1-110th consolidated dining facility.

“All of our diners will get a meal that is nutritional, looks good, and tastes good,” says Sgt. 1st Class Theodore Banks, the Senior Food Operations Sergeant, in charge of the dining facility. He calls the soldiers who eat at his Mobile Kitchen Trailer (MKT)

“Diners” because, “we treat them like our customers and it is our goal to please them.”

Sgt 1st Class Banks orchestrates efforts from the 228th FSB, 1-110th IN, and 779th OD Co. “A mass congregation of units,” he calls it. He finds this job easier than he expected. “Integrating these soldiers has been

Cont. on page 3

Inside this Issue

NTC Hero's.....	Page 2,3
Paladins.....	Page 4
Weather	Page 5
Hot Tips.....	Page 6



Sgt. Sopko Saves the Day

FOB DENVER, IRAQ- Sgt Amber Sopko, from Bravo Company 228th has a new found faith in the Army, after a trip in an M1 Abrams tank and UH60 (Huey) Helicopter, all in an effort to keep the Brigade Combat Team from Pennsylvania running.

Sgt. Sopko is 24 year-old from Belle Vernon, PA. She joined the Army National Guard six years ago as a junior in high school. She began her career in the military working in the supply field. This gave her a great background to become a Standard Army Maintenance System (SAMS1) Operator. "I love my job," explains Sgt Sopko. "I control the flow of maintenance for a Direct Support company."

Automation is critical for Sgt Sopko's job. She receives information electronically from "customers," units receiving direct support maintenance across several FOBs, and manages the maintenance of all the equipment and vehicles in the brigade. "Basically, without the SAMS1, maintenance stops," says Sgt. Sopko, "and without maintenance, the brigade stops."

With automation being so critical to Sgt Sopko's mission, she was shocked when all three of the SAMS1 computers broke. "Everyone worked on them, trying to fix them, but I knew it was a critical piece of the maintenance mission, so I made a phone call." Sgt Sopko was able to secure two SAMS1 computers from

the Logistical Support Area (LSA) near Irwin City. It meant going outside the wire, and it had to be done quick, but Sgt. Sopko was dedicated to her mission.

"I hopped a ride on an M1 Abrams tank," Sgt Sopko explains. The tank was from the 172 Armor Battalion, and on it's way to FOB Detroit. "I was a transient," says Sgt. Sopko. From FOB Detroit, Sgt. Sopko hopped another ride, this time on a LOGPAC to the LSA. At this time, she still didn't know how she was going to get back to her base camp, at FOB Denver.

At 0855 hrs, Sgt. Sopko was informed there was a "Log Bird," a UH 60 Helicopter filled with supplies heading to FOB Denver at 0900 hrs. She grabbed her SAMS1 computers and in 5 minutes was in the air. The Log Bird stopped at FOB Dallas, FOB Detroit, and had her back to FOB Denver in 15 minutes.

Sgt. Sopko reports that she was very impressed with the transportation she received. "Those guys were so serious about what they do. It was my first time ever in either a tank or a helicopter...I am so impressed by what the Army can do.

At the end of the day, not only has Sgt. Sopko rediscovered her faith in the US Army, but Maintenance at the 228th is back on *track*. Literally.

TOA, Continued from Page 1

The 228th shares the FOB with the 1-110th Infantry Battalion. Both units are Pennsylvania National Guard units and part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, of the 28th infantry division. As a support battalion, the 228th's mission to provide the logistical and health support for the units of the 2nd BCT. "We sustain the force," says Lt. Col. Nissley. "The battalion is postured in various unit areas, to enhance critical support requirements, with five companies spread out amongst three FOBs."

In addition to the Headquarters Company, which provides command and control, communication, and dining facilities, there is Alpha Company, a supply company, providing water, subsistence, fuel, ammo, and transportation assets to the Brigade Combat Team (BCT). Bravo Company is a Maintenance Company, with a significant task of supporting this heavy brigade's equipment. To supplement their effort, the 779th Maintenance Company with headquarters from the Tennessee National Guard, and augmentees from Ohio, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, has deployed with the battalion as well and has been integrated with B Co. Charlie Company, "Charlie Med," as it is affectionately nicknamed provides medical support to the BCT.

The 228th, having not been co-located with the 1-110th before, is benefiting from the consolidated effort. Both the Dining Facility and the Medical Aid Station are a consolidated effort between the two units. Also, the 228th has played a hand in the FOB security plan. According to Command Sgt. Maj Harry Delorenzo, from the 228th, the FSB is responsible for about 25% of the perimeter. While FOB defense has not historically been a responsibility of a support battalion, it shows the non-linear direction the Army is taking to integrate the forces and provide the best plan

"While soldiers enjoyed the training at Camp Shelby," says CSM Delorenzo, "They enjoy working in their MOS [military occupation specialty]. A Co is motivated to be working in supply, and when something gets fixed, there is a feeling of accomplishment in B Co. Our goal though is to come back and be with family and loved ones."

Continued From Page 1

effortless. They have all had the same training, and they know their jobs," says Sgt 1st Class Banks.

Not only have these soldiers received the same Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) training, which includes setting up and operating an MKT, and preparing and serving food, but they have all spent 5 months at Camp Shelby, Mississippi training up on their soldiers skills, like weapons qualification, convoy operations, first aid, and other vital skills that will keep them safe on this deployment.

Being a cook at this consolidated dining facility provides an opportunity for these soldiers to get to know one another. While preparing the meals, they talk about family, friends, and life back home in the United States.

Things are certainly different out at Forward Operating Base Denver for these cooks, but "they haven't skipped a beat," says Sgt 1st Class Banks. There is a lot of problem solving involved in mess operations. "This can be exciting," says Sgt 1st Class Banks. "I like to present problems to the soldiers and let them work it out."

Operating a dining facility, also called a mess facility, is an eventful mission. Sgt. Eboni Wood and Spc Jody Rodgers, both from the 228th FSB work the overnight shift. Because the FOB operates 24 hours a day, these soldiers provide snacks and beverages from 2000 to 0800 hrs. Sgt 1st Class Banks usually wakes up around 0300 hrs to begin his day. He has to check the water tanks, inventory rations, and order anything that is running low. Sgt. Dennis Siatkowski, Sgt. Jeffrey Colbert and Spc. Robert Lopez work during the day, to prepare and serve meals.

According to Sgt 1st Class Banks, the soldiers are enjoying the "chow" at FOB Denver. It was a big adjustment from Camp Shelby, where soldiers received two hot meals a day from a civilian facility, and chose from vendors such as Dominoes Pizza and the Catfish Shack for lunch. "I have not heard anything bad about the MRE's. I think it is a psychological effect on the soldiers. MREs are great when you're hungry. Especially since the Army has done a lot to improve the quality.

The dining facility certainly has a lot to do with the morale of the troops. On day two the 228th moving onto FOB Denver, when the first supplies rolled in and the dining facility offered ice and fresh fruit, "it was an instant morale booster," says Sgt. 1st Class Banks.

Currently, there are two boxed meals, or MREs a day, and one hot meal. There is also the evening snack for those soldiers who work the night shift. The mess facility is currently coordinating to offer cereal and milk every day during the morning hours.



Above: Capt. Dupler, Spec. Waytashek, Spec. Stambaugh, Spec. Rios, and Spec. Schmidt, pose with Col Gronski after being awarded the Brigade Coin.

THREE FAT GUYS AND A 'GERBER'

By Spec. Aaron Berger

The 228th Forward Support Battalion is ecstatic to announce the performance of the CSSAMO soldiers at NTC Rotation 05-06. They call themselves "Three Fat Guys and a Gerber". Spec George Schmidt, Spec Jerry Waytashek and Spec Troy Stambaugh come from many different military backgrounds, but continually find a way to bring success when it comes to all things associated with computers. Spec Schmidt is a medic, Spec Waytashek is a Blackhawk crew chief and Spec Stambaugh is an admin

clerk by military occupational specialty, but all have been performing as Combat Service Support Automation (CSSAMO) specialists. Recently, the CSSAMO has added another soldier to their crew, Spec Christopher Rios. Ironically, he is a cook by trade.

Upon arriving at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, they have far exceeded the expectations of just four specialists. They were able to complete the Admin Gunnery in the third fastest time in NTC history.

Cont. on page 5

Battalion Aid Station, Continued from Page 1

operations smoother by integrating elements from separate commands," says Sgt. 1st Class Ortego. "I do that by communicating and coordinating for mission requirements.

So far, the BAS has seen its fair share of patients, most of them have been soldiers adjusting to the new conditions. There have been lots of stuffy noses as the sinuses adjust to the sand and dust, some sore backs from the body armor, and of course some soldiers were seen for conditions from the heat.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Ortego, the medics are working very hard. "It can be difficult to maintain focus under hard conditions, but their training has prepared them for this."

The medics and physicians are also looking forward to doing work in the local villages of Medina Jabal and Al Sharque.

"It is my understanding that there will be assessments done in the villages, and if we have the assets, we will be able to assist them," says Sgt. 1st Class Ortego.

The soldiers of the BAS are prepared not only to deliver supplies, but providing training to local medical providers.

"We are willing to help the local population in anyway that we can," says Sgt. 1st Class Ortego. "We hope to get supplies out to the villages soon as a gesture of our good intentions."

Bravo Company Gets a Bath

By Spec. Alyssa Skorupa
B/228th FSB

Every National Guard Soldier knows what it is like to go two weeks without a shower. For Bravo Company, 228th Forward Support Battalion, it's usually two weeks in May at Fort Drum, N.Y. for Annual Training. But try it in 90+ degree weather with 40 pounds of body armor and the stink factor gets higher.

So how many days can Bravo Company go without a shower.... two days...three days...try five. That was the limit for the might "Black Nights" of Bravo Company. Field expedience was the method, as ponchos, 550 cord, a pallet, and 5-gallon water cans made their way to the motor pool.

By day, the motor pool is a workshop. By night, a Field Shower Haven. Bravo Company soldiers mastered the art of building makeshift shower units. It might not sound so great, but a walk by the motor pool at night reveals oooohs and aaaahhs as Bravo Company washes the dust off.

A Co conducts Successful Negotiation

May 12- Capt. Todd McTavish, Alpha Company Commander, met with Hamad, the village Sheik, and the two have agreed to a mutually beneficial plan.

Capt. McTavish made arrangements to meet with Hamad, to ask assistance in quelling the riots in the village. Both men agreed the riots caused concern for the safety of the Iraqi people. This common ground allowed them to work together to facilitate peace in the area.

Hamad was initially concerned that by helping the coalition forces, the patrols would increase and cause further disruption. Capt. McTavish assured Hamad the patrols are for the safety and peace, and will lessen as stability increases. Hamad is also providing 20 men to work for the Coalition Forces as security.

Since the agreement, Hamad has spoken to his people and the area has been quiet.

Alpha Company can now conduct humanitarian assistance to the area.



2-222nd Shoots Paladins over FOB Denver

By Spec. Scott Farrington

May 18th - It wasn't a mortar attack. This time it was *our* big guns making noise on FOB Denver. The 2-222nd Field Artillery got great training, and the 228th FSB got some great entertainment, as the Paladins practiced firing.

The guns took turns, back and forth firing from the foothills around FOB Denver. For the most realistic training, the FOB was put on alert for loose rounds and ordered to don "full battle rattle," to include body armor, even though we were behind the firing line. This also provided acclimation training, as the ground shook as each round was fired.

Several soldiers in both the motor pool and headquarters took a break to watch the guns fire. It is not an everyday event, but the soldiers of the 228th FSB can expect this personal firepower display throughout the next week.



Above: a soldier seeks refuge in a tent during a sand storm on FOB Denver. During the storm there were winds of 35 mph and visibility was severely limited.

Three Fat Guys, Continued From Page 3

Admin Gunnery is the initial check to see if the Standard Army Maintenance Systems (STAMIS) can all “talk” to each other. STAMIS at NTC consists of three systems: SAMS keeps track of the next higher maintenance requests, SARS keeps track of all classes of supply and ULLS-G is a unit system that is used to interact with the other two. Unfortunately, there were some complications with borrowed equipment, and they were slowed down by six and a half hours. With out the delay, they would have broken the all time record.

They then performed the Tactical Gunnery which consists of the setting up the LOGNET with the satellite system, VSAT, and the CAISI system. They completed the tactical gunnery and beat the NTC record by three days. Through this system they began to order parts by day zero minus two. By day one there was 1064 parts ordered which broke the previous record by 897 parts. Currently 2084 parts have been ordered.

In the last rotation at NTC, the CSSAMO shop consisted of 14 soldiers including a Major, two warrant officers and enlisted soldiers ranking from Master Sergeant to Specialist.

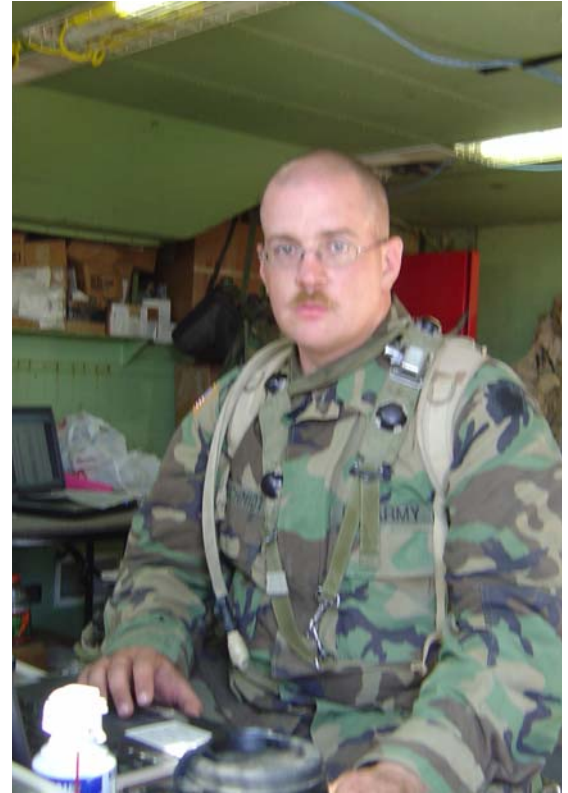
The LOGNET was up far before the other Brigade networks were 100% mission capable. The higher command was elated about their achievements. The 2nd Brigade Combat Team Commander, COL Gronski himself, paid them a visit to show his

appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

The group is led by Capt Douglas Dupler, an IRR with a 10 year break in service. When Capt. Dupler left the Army in 1995, the Army was running old fashioned wires and field phones. He quickly got spun up on the new technology and has become an asset to the team.







Each of the “Fat Guys” have very different personalities and all function in different ways to ensure their success. Spec Waytashek is the brains of the outfit. Spec. Schmidt is the mouthpiece at all of the meetings with “the brass”. His personality and energy is contagious. Specialists Stambaugh and Rios are the muscle behind the whole group. Spec Stambaugh is the old man of the group at “40 something” and according to his section leader, Capt. Dupler, “His knowledge and work ethic are unmatched by anyone that I have ever met in the Army.” This motley crew can troubleshoot just about any problem that arises if the tools and parts are available to them. They maintain that the “Gerber” can help them maintain nearly all of the automation equipment, hence the name.

The “Three Fat Guys and a Gerber” (actually 4 now) and their commitment to excellence have reflected greatly upon the 228th Forward Support Battalion and the United States Army. If their dedication to mission is contagious, the 2nd BCT is ensured success.



Above: Spec. George Schmidt, “Smitty” is considered the “mouthpiece” of the three fat guys. He is pictured about connecting the SAMS1 system.

FOB DENVER WEATHER

Sun, 22 May	Mon, 23 May	Tue, 24 May	Wed, 25 May	Thur, 26 May	Fri, 27 May
					
104/70	102/68	99/66	97/65	96/63	91/61

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Soldiers, please remember to sign your family up for an AKO address so that you can receive email from them overseas. You will have INTRANET access, limited to DOD websites.

To sign your family up...go to www.army.mil/ako and click on "new user/ Register for AKO," then select "Create Guest Account."

Also let your family know they can check out updated photos and newsletters on the 228th Website:

www.228fsb.org



Above: Lt Col. Nissley presents Spec. Gerald Waytashek, one of the famous "three fat guys," with an award from NTC Trainer, Lt Col Rissley for his hard work. He was dubbed an "NTC Hero."

HOT TIPS

FOB Denver Area: If you're out on a convoy or entry control point, and you have the opportunity to speak to Iraqi Civilians, remind them to report dangerous situations such as weapons caches and insurgents.

Let them know 2nd BCT offers **Cash rewards for information that leads to**
–Seizure of dangerous weapons, explosives, hazardous material
–Seizure of insurgents, terrorists who want to harm Iraqi people

612.805.8052

228th Newsletter Staff

- Commander.....LTC Glenn Nissley
- CSM.....CSM Harry Delorenzo
- Public Affairs Officer.....1LT Rose Forrest
- HHD P.A. Representative.....SPC Aaron Berger
- A Co P.A. Representative.....SSG Marci Ficht
- B Co P.A. Representativ.....SPC Alissa Skorupa
- C Co P.A. Representative.....SGT Michelle Lynn
- 779th P.A. Representative.....1LT Eric Leeds

Please see the above individuals if you would like to make a submission to the newsletter. It could be an article, photo, or artwork

