November 2008

Call of the WOLF

Volume 1, Issue 1

The Wolf's Howl

Greetings to the Soldiers of the Arctic Wolves and to the entire team in support of operations here in Diyala Province, Iraq. It is hard to believe that it has been two months since our deployment ceremony on 11 September 2008.

If you were like me, I was so ready to get out of Kuwait that I would have walked the 360 miles from Kuwait to Diyala. The good news is that the Arctic Wolves team is set here in Diyala Province and we are getting settled in at our COPs and FOBs. You may not be able to tell from your vantage point, but I assure you all that we are doing great things here in Diyala and we are already making a difference with our security, governance and economic development lines of effort.

We must all continue to assist our new Iraqi Army, Police partners with maintaining a safe and secure environment, which is essential to get at one of the most important efforts we have – to ensure governance, justice and the rule of law for all citizens of Diyala. Our Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT) partners are essential to our success and I am grateful for their dedication to make Diyala a safe, vibrant and prosperous place for her citizens.

On 18 November 2008 we will begin our Environmental Leave Program ("mid"-tour leave); we decided to start no later than the 18th so those who choose to go on leave during this period of time will have a good chance to be home in time for a nice Thanksgiving meal with the family. For the rest of us back here in Diyala, no worries, we will eat very well on Thanksgiving Day.

Later this month, the CSM and I will fly around to each FOB and conduct a Patch Ceremony, awarding each battalion with their 25th Infantry Division Combat Patches.

As most of you know, one of our most significant missions in the coming year will be the facilitation of elections in Diyala and Iraqi National elections in 2009. These will be monumental events for both Diyala and Iraq and will certainly set conditions for the future of this country.

In Diyala we have plenty to keep us busy. We are, and will continue to be, involved in assisting the PRTs and the government of Diyala with: improvements in agriculture, voting, computer automation, business management, drip irrigation systems and water management projects, human rights, medical care, law enforcement, rule of law and justice, and we are even helping the Iraqi Police with starting a Military Work Dog program.

On 16 October 2008 we had a rocket attack on FOB Warhorse. Twelve of our warrriors were injured in the attack. SPC Heath Pickard and PFC Cody Eggleston, both assigned to Charlie Company, 1-5 Infantry, departed our ranks as a result of wounds sustained during the attack. We memorialized our heroes, in two separate Memorial Services, here at FOB Warhorse. Hundreds of Soldiers and our Iraqi Army and Police partners attended the service which was a great tribute to two American Warriors who will be missed by all of us. Memorial services were also held at Fort Wainwright for both SPC Pickard and PFC Eggleston, providing our family and friends back home the opportunity to pay tribute and honor our fallen heroes. I would humbly ask that we all continue to pray for the Pickard and Eggleston families, our wounded warriors and for all of the great Soldiers and Families of the Arctic Wolves.

Col. Burt "The Wolf" Thompson

I thank you all for what you have done over the past 23 months of our lifecycle, and for what you are doing and will continue to do here in Diyala Province, Iraq.

Take care of each other and stay focused on the task. I look forward to seeing you out in the battle space.

With great respect and admiration for your dedication and service!

The Wolf

Letter from Wolf 7

To the Family and Friends of the Arctic Wolves, Greetings from Diyala Province, Iraq. I ask that you pause for a moment and say a silent prayer for SPC Heath K. Pickard and SPC Cody J. Eggleston and their loved ones.

It has been a busy first month. The movement of a Stryker Brigade, with its equipment and 4,200 personnel, does not just happen. It requires the effort of every leader on the team to ensure every Soldier is at the right place at the right time with all his/her equipment moving from Fort Wainwright through seven different hubs before reaching their Combat Out Posts or Forward Operation Bases in Iraq. Col. Thompson and I continually brag of the Arctic Wolves and their loved ones. We are very proud of all of you and we are blessed and honored to be part of such a great group of Soldiers.

I would also like to thank the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Dragoons for a great transition. The accountability of all equipment left behind and the improvements made to all the COPs and FOBs in their short five month stay in the Diyala Province is a testament to a great organization. Their mantra was, "Let's make it better for the next unit." 2SCR is in our prayers as they make their journey back to Vilseck, Germany to reunite with their loved ones. We wish them the best and God speed.

We will continue to reinforce an inspiring and positive attitude through recognition at all levels. Positive, can-do attitudes are contagious, especially when reinforced with recognition. The same way every Soldier is empowered to prevent complacency, every Soldier is empowered to recognize and recommend recognition of another. Enthusiastic leaders understand the power of recognizing performance. There are several programs to recognize performance. To name a few: Hero of the Day/Week at all levels, Battle Field Promotion and Safety Awards.

As we begin our year-long journey, whether you are a Soldier in Iraq or a Family member in Alaska or somewhere in the lower 48, I ask and encourage all of you to set goals that will improve your life: from spiritual, educational and physical, to financial health. I will personally improve my spiritual health by reading scripture daily to enrich and nourish my soul. I will eat healthy and exercise daily to have the health and strength required to perform my duties 100% and then some. For Soldiers of FOB Warhorse, the Brigade Unit Ministry Team (UMT) will soon begin a fellowship covering the

Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes

book, "Lead Like Jesus," by Ken Blanchard. All of you are invited to participate. Learning and always trying to be better is a never ending process that is tied to, "PREPARE, POLITE, PROFESSIONAL!"

Reminder: let's all maintain the Battle Buddy concept. It's about looking out for each other--never allowing a fellow Wolf to become complacent. For example:

- Use the Stryker driver's hatch safety bar when driving with the hatch open.
- Use the buddy team when clearing weapons. Drop the magazine first.
- Slow down - speed does not equal security in this environment; there is no need to rush to failure.

Complacency is represented in small acts of unsafe, undisciplined and substandard behavior, which leads to bad things and, at times, gets Soldiers hurt.

Finally to the families and friends of the Arctic Wolves: thank you for your prayers and continued support. Be proud of your Soldier for protecting the American way of life and for giving the Iraqi people hope for a better life.

Very Respectfully,

Wolf 7

"ARCTIC WOLVES"

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The Call of the Wolf, a command information magazine, is authorized for members of the U.S. Army and the 1/25 SBCT community. Contents of the The Call of the Wolf are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or Department of the Army. The editorial content of the magazine are the responsibility of the 1/25 SBCT Public Affairs Office.

The Call of the Wolf is prepared monthly by the 1/25 SBCT Public Affairs Office, which includes Soldiers from the 14th Public Affairs Detachment. Any story or photo submissions should be forwarded to the editor at richard.hyde@us.army.mil

Soldiers from 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, stand tall during a transition of authority ceremony signifying 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div. taking over the battlespace and relieving 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment. (Photo by Pfc. Alisha Nye, 14th PAD)

On the Cover

Capt. Graham Ward, recon platoon leader, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, looks up at his buddy after jumping into a crevasse, a deep cleft in glacial ice, while climbing Mount McKinley shortly before deployment.

2-8 FA:
Training before the movement north

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Alicia Torbush
20th Public Affairs Detachment

Two Soldiers from 2nd Battalion 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division use an M94 Chronograph to measure the muzzle velocity of the M777 A2 howitzer in order to calibrate and improve the accuracy of the weapon.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division fired M777A2 howitzers, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Oct. 2, 2008.

Calibrating the artillery piece and improving accuracy, the firing crew used an M94 chronograph to measure the muzzle velocity of the weapons, explained, Maj. Jon Sowards, executive officer, 2-8 FA.

"The crew then subtracts that measurement from the standard velocity and makes adjustments to improve the accuracy of the weapon," added Sowards.

The SBCT is assigned to Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and was at Camp Buehring to complete training, while adjusting to the environment.

The equipment had to undergo a thorough maintenance when it arrived in country, said Sowards, a Bowling Green, Ky., native. The fluid and nitrogen levels had to be adjusted because of the condition.

Safety is also important when firing a weapon of any kind.

Having a forward observer, while firing the howitzers, is a requirement so that safety is ensured, said 1st Lt. Drew Maney, platoon leader.

In Alaska, the unit had to deal with a hard, frozen ground and work with bulky gloves, added Maney. In Kuwait, the Soldiers had to deal with the sand and dust, which gets into the equipment.

"The weather also has a lot of impact on firing," said Maney. "The wind picks up the sand and that limits visibility."

Despite adjusting to the different conditions, the 2-8 FA accomplished the mission in preparation for their movement up north.

"We've been doing some pretty good training," said Maney, a Shalimar, Fla., native, whose unit has also conducted various trainings at Camp Buehring, including close quarter marksmanship, counter improvised explosives device and HMMWV Egress Assistance trainings.

The calibration was the last requirement for 2-8 FA to complete before the 1-25th SBCT heads into Iraq.

Soldiers from 2-8 FA fire an M777 A2 howitzer, Oct. 2, 2008. The calibration took place at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, and was the last requirement for the SBCT complete before heading into Iraq.

Lt. Col. James R. DeMoss and Command Sgt. Maj. Kyle W. Crump, commander and command sergeant major of Task Force 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, during a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Normandy Oct. 22.

3-21 IN gains new area of operations

Story and Photo by Capt. William D. Boisvert
HHC, 3-21 IN, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

A transfer of authority ceremony took place between 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment and Task Force 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Normandy, located in the Diyala Province of Iraq, Oct. 22.

The ToA marked the transition of responsibility of an area of operations from 3-2SCR to TF 3-21 Inf. Regt.

The ceremony began with comments from the commander of 3-2 SCR, Lt. Col. Rod A. Coffey. He discussed the many things that the squadron had accomplished over the past 15 months of their deployment and announced that he was in receipt of orders to redeploy the unit to Vilseck, Germany, to reset and prepare for future operations.

After Coffey's remarks, the official party, which included Command Sgt. Maj. Everett Clark of 3-2SCR, Lt. Col. James R. DeMoss and Command Sgt. Maj. Kyle W. Crump of TF 3-21 Inf. Regt. as well as Coffey, exited the stage and moved to their respective colors.

The 3rd Squadron commander and command sergeant major cased their colors and ended their operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As they did so, the squadron flag came down from the flag pole. The TF 3-21 Inf. Regt. commander and command sergeant major then uncased their colors, which signified the start of their combat tour in support of OIF. Simultaneously the TF 3-21 Inf. Regt. flag rose to fly proudly above FOB Normandy.

The TF 3-21 Inf. Regt. commander, Lt. Col DeMoss, thanked 3-2 SCR for the amazing progress that they had achieved while working out of FOB Normandy. He then set his sights on the proud journey that TF 3-21 Inf. Regt. has ahead of them.

Confident of the strength and abilities of the Soldiers, Lt. Col. DeMoss outlined their plan for success in assisting the local governments and Iraqi Security Forces to restore security and prosperity to the people of the Diyala Province.

The ceremony ended with the singing of the Arctic Warrior March and the Army Song, a tradition of 3-21 Inf. Regt. and the entire Arctic Wolf Brigade.

The NCO
BEHIND THE SCENES

Story and photos by Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Staff Sgt. Yvonne Smith and her staff of three are the unsung, crucial assets to 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. Whether a group needs something from the brigade commander or command sergeant major, or the commander and sergeant major need something to occur, Smith and her team are the people that make it happen.

"We really do become a Jack-of-all-trades," said Smith, the command group chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear noncommissioned officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., acting as the brigade adjutant.

For Smith, this job is nothing new, having done the same job while deployed with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team. However, having a staff working with her is something new.

"This is an interesting role because I worked in the command group on my last deployment and I did that on my own," Smith said. "This is different. I have a staff of three now. We're doing a little of everything."

When Smith says "everything," she means it. Together, the quartet is the head of for the protocol and administrative responsibilities for the entire brigade, which encompass much more then they let on.

"We do a lot of facilitating for any group that needs something from the brigade commander or sergeant major and along with that goes anything that the command group wants to make happen, from life support to transportation," Smith said. "We do anything to make sure we can take care of them so they can take care of Soldiers."

While this Jack-of-all-trades role is one she is now used to, Smith admits being 'a little lost in the sauce' the first time around.

"The first time I deployed, I didn't know what to expect," she said. "Everything was brand new to me. Certainly, the role I had in garrison, which was purely administrative, took a huge turn and I got more involved. I actually went out on patrols and I was part of a lot of engagements."

One of the biggest roles Smith took on, she said, was that of a record-keeper.

"I took the role of a historian and passed on a lot of my records to the 172nd when it was deactivated and I sent out all that information to museums," she said. "I think I served well in that capacity. I still hold those records and I still keep in touch with a lot of the people, a lot of the leadership."

Smith's experiences from her last deployment have been dutifully carried over to her current deployment.

"It's sort of helped on this deployment because now I have a bigger role," Smith said.

Smith said of the many hats she wears, her favorite is of a behind-the-scenes employee.

"I'm not one of those folks who likes to take a lot of credit for anything that I do, but I like just the little things that I do that help Soldiers and their families out," Smith said.

The most meaningful cases are when Smith helps to facilitate in memorials, she said.

Staff Sgt. Yvonne Smith, brigade adjutant, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, helps coordinate the organization and execution of the first of 1st SBCT, 25th In. Division's memorial ceremonies while on the current deployment.

Staff Sgt. Yvonne Smith, brigade adjutant, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., smiles kindly out at a passersby as she readies to enter her office and get to work at anything and everything with the command group.

"We had our first memorial reunion, I guess you could call it, for the 172nd at Fort Wainwright," Smith said. "A lot of those records I maintained and I was able to make sure that family members had all those records. From pictures, memorial programs, anything like that so that the families could keep them as a memory."

The detail-oriented Smith believes that it is the little things that count and takes pride in insuring that every little thing is done to perfection, especially for a memorial.

"I was able to ensure the little things, like that their names were spelled correctly or we let people know who were the 172nd pure Soldiers, who was attached to us, what role they played in the brigade if they weren't part of our unit, but still made it known that they were fallen comrades, Brothers in Arms, Sisters in Arms," Smith said. "As small a role as that may seem, I think having someone's name or birth date or date that they were killed in action is very important for their family."

No matter what amount of experience Smith has brought to the table for this deployment, she still credits two of her Soldiers, Spc. Joe Keller and Spc. Stanley Jacobson as not just the on-the-job entertainment, but also as working class heroes.

"They're funny," Smith said. "But Specialist Keller is our Photoshop guru and he really played a big role in our psychological operations detachment while we were at the National Training Center. He really, really contributed to our rotation there. He does a lot of our artistic work, which is just great."

Jacobson helps Smith with a little bit of everything, she said.

"Specialist Jacobson helps me a lot," Smith said. "We both assist the commander in anything he may need. We'll go out with him whenever he needs us to go out with him and right now we're filling in wherever we're needed."

Despite the long hours they are required to work and their consistent role-changing, Staff Sgt. Smith is confident that she and her workforce of three can handle anything that comes their way.

"As we evolve, as we get a little more involved, our roles will change and we'll just adapt," Smith said. "We'll just be whatever we're needed to be."

1-25 Takes over battlespace

Story and Photo by
Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

A transition of authority ceremony took place Oct. 27, at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, located in the Diyala Province of Iraq, signifying the end of a 15 month tour of duty for the2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Dragoons and the start of a year-long tour of duty for the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Arctic Wolves.

"It's a very important day because the Arctic Wolves are coming in – a very good organization," said Maj. Gen Mark Hertling, commander of 1st Armored Division and Multi-National Division-North. "They're coming at a very historic time in Diyala. There's still a lot of clearing-out of enemies to do, but, more than that, they're going to be forced to meet the big challenge of reconstruction, improvement of economic capabilities and the assistance of the government in a time where we're about to head into elections."

Hertling said he's seen Col. Burt Thompson, commander of 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., and his Arctic Wolves rise to the challenge of taking over the battlespace.

"I'm very much looking forward to working with Col. Thompson and his group because, what I've seen so far, they have come right into the province and have really taken charge from the first day," Hertling said.

The biggest thing Hertling hopes to accomplish with 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., is setting the conditions for the Diyala Provincial Elections.

Col. Burt Thompson and Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes, commander and command sergeant major of 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, uncase the brigade colors during a transition of authority ceremony Oct. 27.

"That's going to take continued economic improvements because the governor has very distinct plans for what he wants to do for agriculture, infrastructure and helping people of the province," Hertling said.

The mission for 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., doesn't stop there, however.

"We want to get at making Diyala a better place for the citizens in the province, but also we want to get at establishing security as a primary line of effort for us and we are doing that," said Thompson. "We want to improve economics, prosperity for the people of Diyala. All of this together, this is our mission here. It's to fight a counter-insurgency fight and propel Iraq, Diyala for us specifically, forward."

Thompson said 2SCR set 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div, up for success and the transition from the regiment to the brigade has been going smoothly so far.

"The operative word there is, 'transition,'" Thompson said. "It is a change from one brigade combat team, or regiment, to a new one and, certainly, the most volatile time for any organization is during a period of transitions. So we have to make sure, which we have done here, that it is smooth."

Despite the huge undertaking, Thompson said he has no doubt in his mind that his SBCT will accomplish the mission ahead.

Hertling agreed.

"They have a good training background, they know what they're getting into, they all have a very good feel for what they have to accomplish very quickly," Hertling said. "They're ready for it. There are some very sharp soldiers in every single one of the battalions. It's good to have that new energy here to bring new things to the province. They've come just at the right time."

Scenes from 5-1 CAV

Soldiers from 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conduct a relief in place/transfer of authority in their supply room in mid October.

Soldiers from 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, get ready to go out on one of many missions to come at Forward Operating Base Caldwell, Iraq.

Capt. Keelan McNulty uses a sap phone to make a Mother's Day phone call back home while in the process of climbing Mount McKinley, North America's tallest mountain, shortly before deploying to Iraq. (Photos contributed by Capt. Graham Ward)

Kings of the MOUNTAIN

Story by Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

He didn't climb Mount McKinley for the thrilling rush of adrenaline through his veins when there was nothing but a 5,000 foot drop on either side of him, or for the sheer adventure of climbing a 20,320 foot mountain, or even to just to have the ability to say that he did it. Capt. Graham Ward climbed the tallest mountain in North America simply to help his best friend, Capt. Keelan McNulty, fulfill a life-long dream.

"I had no desire to climb it before then," said Ward, the recon platoon leader for 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "I was always envious that he, at least, had the desire to climb it. I never knew where he got that desire from."

The whole thing started while the two were driving around in a car one day.

"He was telling me all his friends canned him," Ward said. "Things came up and they wouldn't be able to do it before we deployed."

That was when Ward started thinking about climbing a mountain for the very first time in his life.

"I told him, 'You know what? It sounds like an awesome challenge and, if you want, I'll be your partner,'" Ward said. "He didn't really believe me at first."

To prove that he was 100 percent committed to training and subsequently climbing the mountain, Ward bought all of the equipment necessary make the ascent.

After three months of strenuous training, the pair started their 17 day, 16,000 foot climb to the summit, but not before getting special permission from their respective battalion commanders as well as the brigade commander.

"The battalion commander thought it'd be cool, I guess, to tell the brigade commander," Ward said. "Keelan went in and saw him and Colonel Thompson said, 'Hey, best of luck and here's a bag of coins,' He gave us 10 brigade coins and told us to take them to the top."

This was just part of the deal.

"The deal was, I had the battalion flag and Keelan had the coins," Ward said. "We brought them all the way to the summit. One of the things people do is leave something at the top. We got the idea because one our buddy's good friends died so he left a laminated picture of her up at the top. So, we brought the coins all the way to the top and took one out and buried it right next to the elevation marker."

Making it to summit is much easier said than done, however.

"I wouldn't say luck has (anything) to do with making the summit," Ward said. "I would say persistence does."

Of about 1,300 people who registered to climb Mount McKinley this year, only about 400 made it to the top.

"It gets pretty mental when you're up there," Ward said. "You have to be really mentally driven."

Of the 400 who did make it, Ward and McNulty were in the top 20 who made it there first.

The numbers aren't important to Ward, however. What is important to him is the mile-marking adventure he had with a good friend.

"If you're at Fort Wainwright, you know Captain Keelan McNulty," Ward said. "The kid's famous. He's the most energetic, free spirited, happy guy you'll ever meet."

These are personality characteristics McNulty chose to share with other climbers on the mountain through the sweet sound of cowbells.

"It ended up being pretty funny," Ward said. "We were just those guys that, everywhere we went, just had cowbells."

Of the groups mirroring Ward and McNulty as the climbed, it was Ward and McNulty themselves that usually woke up first and made the climb to the next elevation goal.

"As we climbed the mountain, we'd beat everybody else up there and, as they'd come up, we'd be there ringing cowbells and cheering," Ward said.

Despite the fact that some of these climbers were from different countries and didn't speak a word of English, Ward said they all seemed to understand. The cowbells and the cheering got everybody involved with one another and motivating one another.

"From the get-go, as we climbed, we were like a big family," Ward said. "Always climbing, always pushing each other up. It also helps because when you're that high and it's that cold, screaming doesn't do anything. But you can hear that cowbell."

After sleeping in one day, Ward and McNulty woke to find that they were the only group left to climb to the next elevation goal and it was everyone else waiting with the motivational cheering.

"Now the whole camp was cheering us on, welcoming us in," Ward said. "It was one of the best feelings."

The feeling from the familial atmosphere Ward and McNulty helped to create with a simple cowbell was one topped only by the feeling of finally making it to the top.

"I was speechless," Ward said. "It ended up being an awesome adventure. From start to finish, it was definitely a mile-marker in my life."

Even though climbing Mount McKinley was the first time Ward has ever seriously climbed, he can't wait to have that kind of adventure again.

"That's the thing about mountaineering," Ward said. "It's your own adventure. No two climbs are ever the same. Just like no two days are ever the same."

SOLDIER SERVICE OF THE MONTH

When separated by oceans and international boundaries, communications between troops and their families and loved ones are of the utmost importance to morale. When medical emergencies arise or other accidents occur, the American Red Cross is there to help – to bridge the gap of boundaries to ensure Soldiers receive Emergency Communications about important events happening on the home front. Sending Emergency Communications to through the American Red Cross is even preferable because it ensures that Soldiers receive an accurate and verified message, good information from someone they know. It also provides commanders better insight into the lives of their Soldiers. In some cases, a Red Cross Message may even prove to be a basis for sending a Soldier on leave.

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, the 1/25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, S-1 Section is on call to monitor phone lines and receive Emergencies Communications for Soldiers from the American Red Cross. In the event of an emergency involving severe or minor medical issues, birth, and death of loved ones, the American Red Cross gathers information from friends and family members to validate and communicate information forward for Soldiers stationed at home and abroad. The Brigade S1 section transcribes the information, verbatim, and sends it to unit commanders and first sergeants to ensure Soldiers receive important messages, no matter where they are.

If you have an important message to send to a member of the Armed Services or a DA Civilian, please contact the Red Cross at 1 (877) 272-7337. When calling the Red Cross, be ready to provide the following information:

American Red Cross

- Full name
- Rank/rating
- Branch of service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard)
- Social Security number or date of birth
- Military address
- Information about the deployed unit and home base unit (for deployed service members only)

It is highly recommended that Family members write this information down and keep it in an easy to find location, such as posted on a refrigerator or carried in a wallet so that they are prepared to send a message if needed. The Red Cross may gather specific information surrounding details of the emergency for confirmation purposes. Once sent, the American Red Cross will confirm the information and send it through chapters until they contact the unit to which that Soldier or Service Member is assigned, as well as monitor the status of that message until it is confirmed that the message is received, from a responsible member of that unit, in person.
For more information about the many services provided by the American Red Cross, go online to www.redcross.org .

What are you looking forward to on this deployment?

Staff Sgt. Jefferey Evans, Co. C, 1st Bn, 24th Inf. Regt.

We're always training and training for the real thing. Well, this is the real thing and now we get to do our jobs.

Spc. Dereck Call, Co. C, 1st Bn, 24th Inf. Regt.

I'm looking forward to helping the people out here and getting to know their culture a little better.

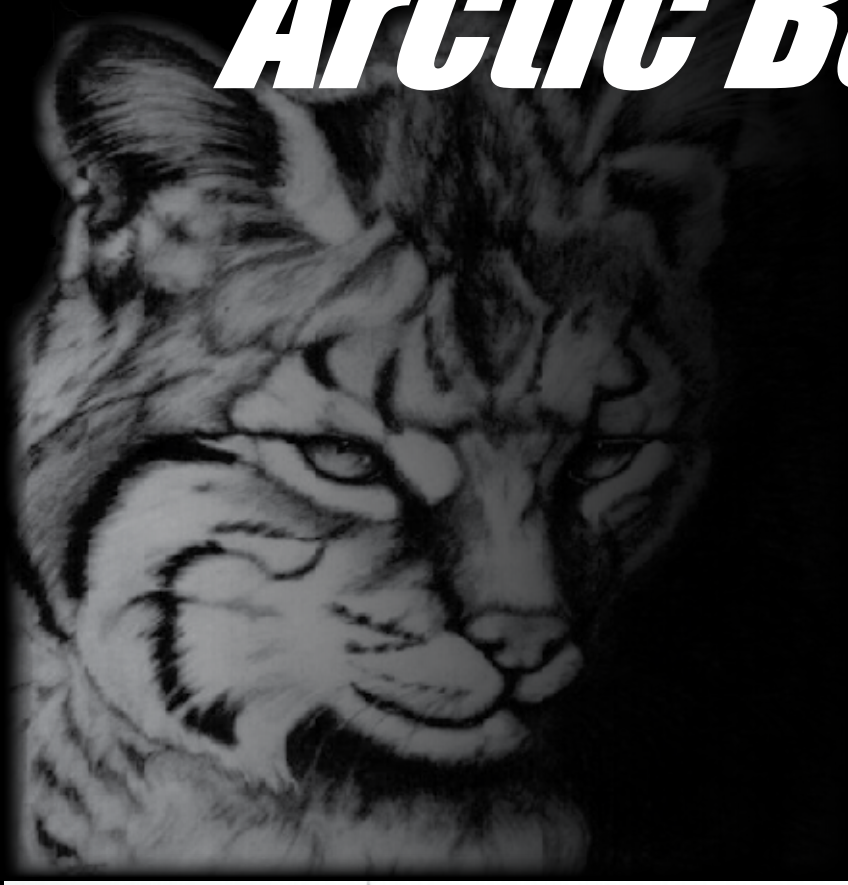
Spc. Seth Berens, Co. D, 52nd Inf. Regt.

I'm looking forward to gaining new life experiences on this deployment.

Spc. Joshua Warren, Co. D, 52nd Inf. Regt.

I'm looking forward to helping the Iraqis so they can feel a little more safe and develop more.

1-5 IN Arctic Bobcats



Uncasing *the* COLORS

Photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Sullivan
HHC, 1-5 IN, 1SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Lt. Col. Shawn Reed, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Herbert, 1st Bn. 5th Inf. Regt., 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., unfurl the 5th In. Regimental colors during an uncasing of colors ceremony held at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, Oct. 18.

Bisons on the move

Contributed by 1st Lt. C'omaro Douglas
25th BSB, 1st SBCT, 25th In. Div.

The Bison Herd is on the move as always, but in order to ensure that the brigade is provided uninterrupted logistical support, Soldiers have to ensure all of the Theater Provided Equipment (TPE) is in tip top condition first. This equipment has been used by 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, so it has been combat tested, but not Bison approved, however.

Soldiers from Distribution Co., 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conducted a tire changing rodeo on the biggest and most critical asset, the HET, or Heavy Equipment Transporter. It has a total of 54 tires that require detailed and frequent checks. The HET is used to transport any battle damaged equipment throughout the area of operations. These vehicles have to mission ready at all times.

The Field Maintenance Company, (FMC,) commanded by Capt. Eric Pahnke, partnered with the Bison Soldiers, conduct maintenance of all mission critical equipment every Monday and Tuesday.

Proper maintenance and discipline is going to be the key to 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div. Soldiers' survival. The command team is dedicated to ensuring all of our Soldiers return home safely.

A Soldier from Distribution Co. 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, takes part in vehicle maintainance.

Run to the hills

Story by Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

The Equinox Marathon held in Fairbanks, Alaska, annually is one of the most difficult marathons in the United States. It is bested only by the Pike's Peak Marathon. This fact still didn't stop Chief Warrant Officer William "Chip" Steele from making it the first marathon he ever ran. Even at the age of 40. It also didn't stop him from running it again.

"I ran it last year and I had so much fun," said the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division lethal targeting officer.

When he finished, he finangled a promise out of two of his buddies, 1st. Lt. Michael Ward and Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Anthony, to run the next one with him.

Courtesy Photo

1st Lt. Michael Ward, 1st SBCT, 25th ID assistant fire support officer, paces himself while running the Equinox Marathon in Fairbanks, Alaska.

"It's funny," said Ward, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., assistant brigade fire support officer. "I promised my battle buddy, Chief Steele, that I would run it with him. My wife and I had a trip planned that weekend but we ended up cancelling the trip and we thought we'd be moving out, coming over to Iraq."

All Steele heard was his battle buddy chickening out.

"I think he told me he would run it thinking we wouldn't be there and we'd be deployed," Steele said. "That's my take on it."

So, what do you do when a man goes back on his word? You tell on him.

"Chief Steele wouldn't lay off me about not running it," Ward said. "He called my wife and called me out on it."

"Yeah," said Steele. "I called his wife and told her that he was a Nancy Boy and he's not a real man and stuff like that."

So, Ward caved.

"As reluctant as I was, I just woke up one morning and was like, 'Hey, why not?'"

Steele and Ward both agreed once you run one marathon, you'll find yourself wanting to run more.

"I even tried to plan my leave around one in Memphis," Ward said. "I hope that'll all pan out."

As addicting as marathon running is, it still doesn't come easy. Especially not when you wake up two weeks before a 26.2-mile marathon through rough terrain and just decide you want to run it, Ward said.

"About nine or 10 miles into it, it's all straight uphill," Ward said. "It's about a 2,500 to 3,000-foot elevation change. So when you get to the nine or 10-mile mark, you shoot straight uphill."

Courtesy Photo

Chief Warrant Officer William "Chip" Steele, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division lethal targeting officer, runs the Equinox Marathon for the second year in a row.

But, the hills were only part of the challenge.

"In all honesty, it got pretty depressing around mile 21," he said. "It's like, 'Ah, I only have five miles left!' And then around mile six or seven I got stung by bees."

Also difficult to Ward was a straight, downhill drop for about a mile. To Steele, however, jsut starting the marathon was the most difficult part.

"Starting, I think, is the hardest part. You're thinking, 'Am I really about to run 26.2 miles?'"

Despite the challenges of the rough Alaskan terrain, both Steele and Ward agree that it is something they are glad to have done.

"There's a few of us guys who like to run it each year," Steele said. "It's kind of a fun thing, to challenge yourself."

"It was a lot of fun," Ward said. "It's definitely something worthwhile."

Swap Meet

Story by Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Separate battalions within 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division traded one unit for another after recently deploying to Iraq. The units making the swap were 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment and 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment.

"Bravo Battery, from 2-8, was switched with Bravo Company from 3-21," said 1st Lt. Justin Geen, 4th Platoon leader, Company B, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div. "It was mostly due to a personnel issue."

An artillery battery contains fewer Soldiers than an infantry company, Geen said.

"The sector for 2-8 was a little more active that they originally thought it was going to be," Geen said. "So they wanted an infantry company with Strykers in the area in order to augment the other two batteries."

Geen believes swapping the two units out was a good move and that it will help the two battalions complete their missions to the fullest extent, especially 2-8 FA.

"It gives 2-8 another asset to work with," Geen said. "Obviously not to take anything away from artillery, but we're a little more trained at what the Army is doing here in Iraq. So, it gives the 2-8 commander a little something more to work with."

Geen said one of the biggest assets the infantry company supplies the artillery battery with is Stryker vehicles, where the artillery unit would otherwise only have Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles.

"We have Strykers, which are an excellent vehicle for the type of warfare in Iraq," he said.

So far, Geen said, the swap is going well.

"As far as our company is concerned, I think it is going very well," he said. "It is never easy, as far as personnel and property go, to detach and attach a unit, but we did the best we could and things are starting to fall into place, so I think it will work out well."

At first, however, it was a little difficult for some of the Soldiers to get used to.

"It was a little strange for some of the Soldiers really to understand what was going on," Geen said. "It was difficult for them to understand why things were happening the way they were."

Geen said despite the initial confusion, it is always good to get the chance to work with different people.

"I think, for the senior noncommissioned officers and officers, it is always good to work with different people and a different command," he said. "It's always a good thing to experience and now everybody is starting to get used to it."

After a careful approach of one another, Geen said, from what he's seen, Soldiers from both units have started working with each other.

"Working side by side at the staff level and also sharing living conditions has helped to get people to start working together," he said. "Half of Bravo Company is living out at the Diyala Media center with Alpha Battery from 2-8. So, living out together out there has also helped people get used to one another and start working together."

Despite the initial friction, both units have started to work cohesively with one another and Geen believes it will turn out to be a binding experience that will help Soldiers in both units grow.

"When you stick two different units with each other out in the middle of nowhere, there's going to be some friction at first," he said. "But after a while, things will start coming together and people will start working together. They'll make things happen; for the better of both units."

Courtesy Photo

A Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, stands prepared for any mission that comes at him while deployed to the Diyala Province of Iraq. The battalion recently swapped a battery to 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 1st SCBT, 25th Inf. Div., for one of their companies.

Chaplain's Corner

Coach Wooden's First Fundamental

I am fascinated by the life and accomplishments of Coach John Wooden, a man who coached basketball for over forty years and had only one losing season in his entire life – his first. He coached UCLA to ten NCAA championships. When a basketball coach of more than 40 years has only one losing season, they have my full attention. I want to hear what they have to say about coaching, basketball, and leadership.

I was intrigued to find that John Maxwell interviewed Coach Wooden when he was 92 years old. In a nutshell, He attributed over forty years of victories to four things. 1: knowing players. 2: getting them to fulfill their roles as part of the team. 3: paying attention to detail. 4: working well with others.

These fundamentals stuck with me for days. I couldn't quit thinking about them. I pondered them and how they apply to the teams I'm on and the relationships I share.

I've always enjoyed watching and understanding people. I like to know what motivates them, encourages them and inspires them. I love to encourage their strengths, their gifts and their passion.

Early on, I noticed that most people do not work just for money. They work for what they believe in, what they're passionate about and what develops them as people. A challenge of peers and leaders is understanding people and helping them function where their gifts and strengths can thrive and be a blessing to others. I am reminded of a few scriptures in the Bible which indicate we all have different gifts, talents and abilities. We all have various abilities and experiences and see the world differently.

While attending Graduate Business School, one principle manifested consistently in organizational behavior cases over the years. Conflict and leadership challenges emerge in team relationships when leaders or team members fail to see the world from the perspectives of those around them.

In our Strong Bonds marriage retreats, we spend a lot of time helping couples learn about themselves and each other. We do this because it eliminates a lot of conflict in the relationship. Couples realize, "Hey, my spouse is not doing this just to tick me off. They do it because they experience the world differently than I do." Once partners see this, it changes the entire chemistry of their relationships.

Several years ago, I was counseling a father who was frustrated with his 15 year old son. For over a year, he had gradually lost a close relationship with his son. As we discussed their relationship, I saw that the father and son had different personalities and interests. They had the same values, but the father failed to value the son's emerging talents and interests because it did not take him where his father wanted him to go in life. The sad part is the father viewed his son's life through his own interests and lost 90% of his relationship with him.

John Wooden's first principle of successful coaching is knowing players. I like to think that in some way, we are all coaches and need to understand our players. Parents are coaches to their children. Leaders are coaches to those they lead. Dozens of my peers are coaches to me in my professional and personal life. Many of my brothers and sisters

Chaplain (Maj.) Roderick Mills

of faith are spiritual coaches to me.

To be effective, it is essential that we work to understand those around us and how they experience the world. There's an old saying, "Seek first to understand before you seek to be understood." I am surprised at the amount of relationship failures and leadership breakdowns that occur from inadequate attention to this difficult yet simple principle.

Perhaps Jesus said it best when He tells us that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as our self. If we love our neighbors (our team, our family, etc,) we are interested in their success and their well-being. Our investment in them gives passion to understand and promote them.

I believe Coach John Wooden had this kind of love for his players. It drove him to understand them, motivate them and assist their growth. Even into his 90's, his players from throughout the years continued to visit him. Swen Nader, one of his players, summed up how he and all of the players throughout the years felt about Coach Wooden in the following poem.

I saw love once, I saw it clear.
It had no leash, It had no fear.
It gave itself without a thought.
No reservation had it brought.
It seemed so free to demonstrate.
It seems obsessed, to orchestrate.
A symphony designed to feed.
Composed to lift the one in need.
Concern for others was its goal.
No matter what would be the toll.
It's strange just how much care it stores.
To recognize its neighbor's sores.
And doesn't rest until the day.
It's helped to take the sores away.
Its joy retains and does not run.
Until the blessing's job is done.
I saw love once. 'Twas not pretend.
He was my coach. He is my friend.

FALLEN WOLF

They who give all, will never be forgotten.

PFC Cody Joel Eggleston

C Company 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment
1st Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division
Born 17 September,1987, Eugene, OR
WIA 16 October, 2008, Diyala Province, Iraq
Died 24 October, 2008, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD, USA

On 16 OCT 2008 at 12:20, while returning from mission, PFC Eggleston was involved in a 107mm rocket attack on FOB Warhorse, Iraq. SPC Eggleston sustained life threatening wounds from the attack and later died while receiving medical attention. PFC Eggleston's bravery, patriotism, and service will NEVER BE FORGOTTEN for he gave all in support of the United States of America and the people of Iraq. 1-5 Infantry held a memorial service for PFC Eggleston on 27 October 2008 at FOB Warhorse.

FALLEN WOLF

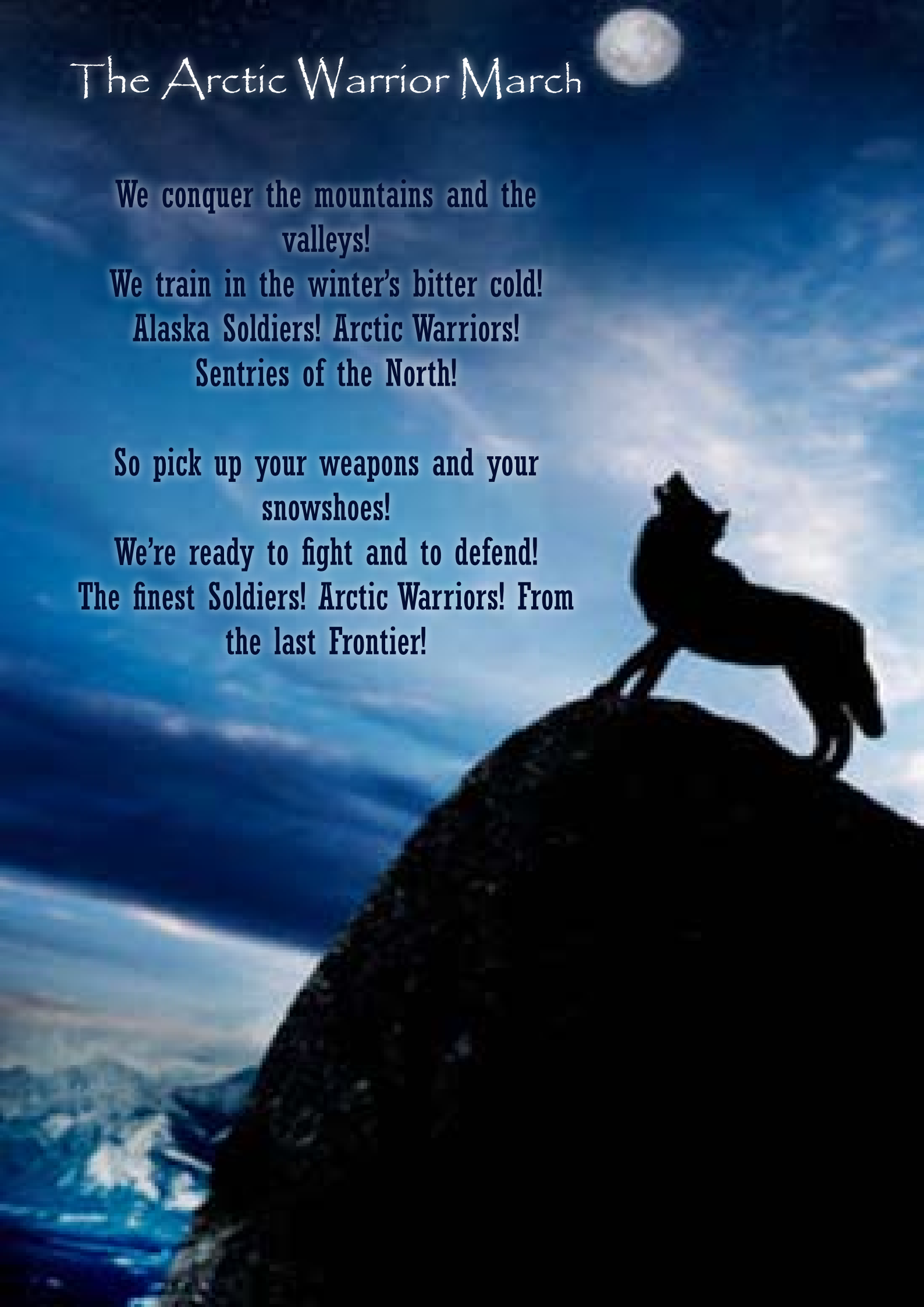
They who give all, will never be forgotten.

SPC Heath Kayne Pickard

C Company 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment
1st Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division
Born 18 September,1987, Palestine, TX
KIA 16 October, 2008, Diyala Province, Iraq

On 16 OCT 2008 at 12:20, while returning from mission, SPC Pickard was involved in a 107mm rocket attack on FOB Warhorse, Iraq SPC Pickard sustained life threatening wounds from the attack and later died while receiving medical attention. SPC Pickard's bravery, patriotism, and service will NEVER BE FORGOTTEN for he gave all in support of the United States of America and the people of Iraq. 1-5 Infantry held a memorial service for SPC Pickard on 21 October 2008 at FOB Warhorse.

The Arctic Warrior March

We conquer the mountains and the valleys!
We train in the winter's bitter cold!
Alaska Soldiers! Arctic Warriors!
Sentries of the North!

So pick up your weapons and your snowshoes!
We're ready to fight and to defend!
The finest Soldiers! Arctic Warriors! From the last Frontier!