

# Task Force Automatic News

The Official Newsletter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery

## **Where the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery fits in the 1-25 SBCT.**

*The 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery is one of 7 battalions within the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (1-25 SBCT). There are also 3 Infantry Battalions, 1st BN, 5th Infantry (1-5 IN); 1st BN, 24th Infantry (1-24 IN); and 3rd BN, 21st Infantry (3-21 IN); in addition to the 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry (5-1 CAV); the 25th Brigade Support Battalion (25th BSB), and the Brigade Troops Battalion (BTB).*

### **Highlights:**

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## **Message from LTC Sean Bateman, Battalion Commander**

The Automatic Battalion continues to provide indirect fires in support of Regional Command-South in Southern Afghanistan and conduct Counter Insurgency Operations in Daman District. As we mentioned in a command message we have had several platoons change their mission from artillery to maneuver and have moved locations. Everyone should have the new locations of their Soldiers. The summer heat is continuing but all of our Soldiers have adapted well and shortly it will ever so slowly start to cool off.

Many of you may have seen a recent policy change by the Army to shorten deployments from 12 months to 9 months. That does not take effect for units deploying until after January 2012. 2-8 FA and the 1-25 SBCT are still executing a 12 month deployment and nothing has changed that based on this new policy.

We continue to send Soldiers on their well deserved R&R leave. While we strive to provide as much predictability as we can in the actual date the R&R will begin it is not something we can get 100% right all of the time. Delays in transportation from the outlying locations to Kandahar Airfield and then on to Kuwait can push the Soldiers arrival left or right a couple of days. We have also had a change to the ending period of our R&R window, so we have about 30 Soldiers who will need to have their R&R dates adjusted so that they begin their R&R no later than the middle of February.

We have thirteen Soldiers deploying to join the Battalion this month, including our new Battalion Chaplain; Chaplain (CPT) Dennis. We look forward to his arrival and getting him out and about to all of our locations. One item to note for the Families of the Soldiers

deploying in August or any other late deployers from this point on is that those Soldiers are not projected to be deployed for more than 270 days therefore those Soldiers are not entitled to an R&R.

In early August we utilized the E-Army Family Messaging System to deliver a message to assure Families that all of the Automatic Soldiers were safe after a helicopter crash that had a large number of casualties and a lot of media attention. If you do not receive the message and would like to be added to the distribution please contact your FRG leader or the Battalion Family Readiness Support Assistant (FRSA). We anticipate using that system extensively around the period of redeployment to keep Families apprised of redeployment information.

We all thank you for the support from the home front.

## **Message from CSM Alexis Shelton, Battalion CSM**

Your Soldiers of the Battalion have been very busy doing what we do best and that is provide accurate and responsive fires in support most forces in Southern Afghanistan. They also have been busy doing great work in partnering with people and police of Daman District. I know some of you may be wondering how are things going with the transition of a few platoons to conduct a different mission, well they have adjusted just fine and doing a great job in the new mission set. You would be very proud of each and every one of them. Our Soldiers continue to make the American people proud of their efforts here in theater. I am very pleased with the attitude that every Soldier has in making daily adjustments to whatever we ask them to do. They continue to execute to standard and the complaints are minimum. The motivation is probably the best in the BDE and as the Soldiers prepare to go on RR it seems to get

better and better. I have noticed that most of the troopers that have returned are refreshed and ready to get back after it.

The BN CDR have mentioned the RR already, but I would like to add that every Soldier should have a date of when they are scheduled to go on leave; however sometimes things change above any of our control, mainly due to aircraft and other mechanical issues. I am sure you will all agree that that is something that we can't control. The weather here is very warm and in no way close to anything in Alaska, even at its coolest at night. I am sure the cooler temperatures are around the corner for you back there and us out here.

I would like to mention that congratulations are in order for a few of our Soldiers. A few Automatic Soldiers were selected for Battle Filed Promotions. SGT Robins of the Bulldog Btry was selected for SSG, PFC Clark from Charlie Rock was selected for SPC,

and PFC Dowdy was selected for SPC. This is a very great accomplishment and you all should be very proud of each one of them. Congrats!

I am very thankful everyday for all that you ladies and men do back there to keep the train rolling. We are more than appreciative of you support to the troops in the field. I would ask that you keep supporting the Rear-Detachment and keep the letters, packages, and e-mails coming to Afghanistan, it really means a lot. Lorrie and I will continue to pray for you and your families as you are away from your Soldier. Thanks for all that you do every day. AUTOMATIC!



HHSB 2-8 FA FOB LINDSEY DEUCE  
AFGHANISTAN

01 August 2011

Volume 3, Issue 1

# Werewolf Gazette

## S3: An Old, Old Wooden Ship...

### Commander's Corner

The Werewolves are moving into their third month of deployment and the spirits are high. The Battalion is about to receive more "Automatic" Soldiers into the family down here at FOB Lindsey and we are excited to have those "radlugs" on the ground. We have many activities to break up the daily monotony including volleyball and basketball tournaments as well as multiple monthly activities hosted by our FOB MWR. We've also installed more phones and computers to improve communications with families. I have said, and will continue, to say that I appreciate all of the support from home. Please know that IISG Stites and myself are doing whatever we can to improve the lives of our Soldiers serving here on FOB Lindsey and throughout our areas of responsibility. Again, I thank you for your support.

Captain Pató Samanoff

If you think of TF Automatic as a ship, then the S3 shop is the rudder—tirelessly guiding TF Automatic through the murky waters that are southern Afghanistan. As the Battalion's mission continues to evolve and change, the S3 shop has the task of ensuring that all movements and operations are synchronized so that the Commanders focus on mission accomplishment, safety, and efficiency is maintained. To date, the S3 shop has produced five named operations, four Targeting tasking orders, and produces tasking updates daily to provide the guidance necessary to "steer" TF Automatic on the best Course.



Though combat operations often are unpredictable and take us far from home, it is comforting to know that our friends and family are back home

"anchoring" us to our Alaskan roots and providing the "beacon" that guides us home. You stay classy Fort Wainwright.

Above: the S3 Shop

## July 4th Celebrated on FOB Lindsey

The Soldiers of the Automatic Battalion celebrated 4th of July with a volleyball tournament. After their stinging defeat last month, the Australians begged and were allowed to participate as well. In a stunning upset, the Ausies defeated the 2-8 FA S3 team in the championship match. Since that time the Australians have conveniently been unavailable for a re-

match. The event was great for morale and allowed soldiers a brief reprieve from their demanding duties.

(Right: TAC 2 playing in the July 4th tournament.)



## Alpha Battery Update – Archangels!

### CPT Mike Dolan and 1SG Keith Colbert

Friends and family of the Archangels, thank you for your continued support of your Soldiers. We have completed nearly 4 months and your Soldiers have done an outstanding job. In just a short period, each platoon has transitioned from firing artillery in support of maneuver units to providing security and support to Afghans and trainers. The Battery has completely transitioned over the last month and every Soldier has now assumed a different role. Both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon continue their work in Zabul Province helping 1-24 Infantry provide security to their Afghan counterparts as well as helping out the Afghan citizens. 1-24 IN has done an outstanding job helping the platoons' transition and is providing them with the training and support they need to be successful.

1<sup>st</sup> platoon and the HQ section

moved down to FOB Lindsey II and is now co-located with the 2-8 battalion headquarters. Additionally the Bulldogs have sent us a platoon and we now help secure the Daman District Center. The platoons rotate out at the Daman District Center and continue to work hard to improve the quality of life at the district center. The platoons also work with Afghan police and security forces advisors to help increase the capability of Afghan security forces. This is one of the most important jobs we can do in Afghanistan as we help local security forces operate independently and without coalition help.

Currently in Afghanistan and all over the world, Muslims are celebrating Ramazan (pronounced Ramadan), which is during the month in which the Quran was revealed to Muhammad. During



*HQ Soldiers hooking up the Howitzer at FOB Wolverine for movement to Lindsey II*

Ramazan, which occurs throughout the entire month of August, Muslims fast throughout the day and abstain from eating, drinking water, smoking cigarettes, etc. During hours of darkness they are able to break fast and many of them have celebrations at night. It is a very tough time for many Muslims due to the extreme heat and work hours during the day are severely reduced. At the end of Ramazan, Muslims will celebrate Eid-

al-Fitr, which will occur in September. This is an important time for Islam and your Soldiers have done a great job in respecting Muslims during this period.

Continue to send your love and support to our Soldiers. They have done an excellent job transitioning into their new roles and they continue to work hard every day. Expect no Mercy! - CPT Dolan

### 1st Platoon News:

1st Platoon was recently re-missioned to conduct maneuver operations for TF Automatic in the Daman district. While they enjoyed their time at FOB Frontenac, the Soldiers are excited for the new mission and the change of pace it will bring. Their time at FOB Frontenac was great and they enjoyed working for 5-1 CAV during their time at Frontenac. The resident carpenters of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, SPC Jimmo and PFC Hamby left a parting gift for 5-1 CAV in the form of a gazebo they built complete with mosquito netting. 5-1 CAV was equally disappointed to see 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon leave. In honor of the time and support that 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon gave to 5-1, they were given a certificate allowing them to wear the famed gold "combat spurs" in their dress uniform. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon has settled into life at FOB Lindsey and they are enjoying some of the perks of their new FOB such as personal internet. Some of their time will be spent out at the Daman District center living

with ANP and helping provide security for this important center. They are having fun building and improving the living conditions out there. Currently they are working

on expanding the gym as well as building a deck for everyone to relax on. Overall, they are enjoying the change of pace and the new

"scenery" that their re-missioning has provided. Strike hard! Strike deep! – 2LT Patrick Scuppert



*SPC Jimmo, 2LT Scuppert, and CPL Ricci taking a break at the OCC-D by playing Dominos.*

## 2nd Platoon News:

I would like to take a moment to thank the Soldiers and their families for their continued work and support as we reach complete the first four months here in Southern Afghanistan. I would also like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding performers of the Platoon. Second Platoon, Alpha Battery continues to work diligently in support of 1-24 Infantry. We have had the opportunity to show the diversity and multiple skill sets of Field Artillery Soldiers in just the first four months since deploying to Afghanistan. Not only have we had the opportunity to provide indirect fires, we have also been afforded the chance to conduct operations usually reserved for Infantry units. Every Second Platoon Soldier continues to do well here in Afghanistan. As a Platoon, we have been recognized by Task Force Wings and 1-24 IN as a highly trained and disciplined unit. In June, COL Wood, 1-25 SBCT Commander, presented both SPC Logue and PFC Gemme with Commander Coins for their continuous dedication and hard work. Also in June, CPL Marshall was recognized by the BN Commander TF Wings as the "Hero of the Week" for his outstanding leadership in the FDC and the accuracy of our fires during our Calibration shoot. Additionally, SGT Lopez has been recognized as the NCO of the Month for July for his Leadership as the Sergeant of the Guard of the Entry Control Point. Second Platoon also deserves credit for their recent training event involving our Afghan National Army counterparts. We recently had the opportunity to coach, teach, and mentor a Platoon of ANA Field Artillerymen in order to help improve their accuracy and timeliness of indirect fires on Russian D30 122mm Howitzer. Other Soldiers that merit recognition for their promotion include SFC Shannon, PV2 Conkey, and PV2 Finley.

## 3rd Platoon News:

Hello friends and family of 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon from Afghanistan. For the last several months, Soldiers of 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon have lived and worked on 'Al Masaak' a Company Outpost, where they fired the most artillery missions in the Battalion! Your Soldiers persevered through less than ideal conditions working alongside Romanian and Afghan forces. The Platoon has recently been remissioned to a non-standard role, and our address has changed. Your Soldiers' new address is:

Soldier's Name, 3/A/2-8 FA, FOB Lagman [PHQ], APO AE 09383

The Punishers are excited about our new mission, and not least of all because we will get our mail twice a week instead of once a month! 1-24 Infantry Battalion recognized the professionalism of the Punishers, and as such has made us their main effort at the Provincial Headquarters in Zabul province where we will have a tough and rewarding mission partnering with the local Afghan police force. The Platoon is currently conducting training to prepare us for success in our new mission.

The Platoon is also working on custom belt buckles, coins, and t-shirts! Falling into a long tradition, members and friends of the Punisher Platoon will be given coins that they should carry at all times in case they are coin checked! If you are interested in a t-shirt or a belt buckle, please let your Soldier know!

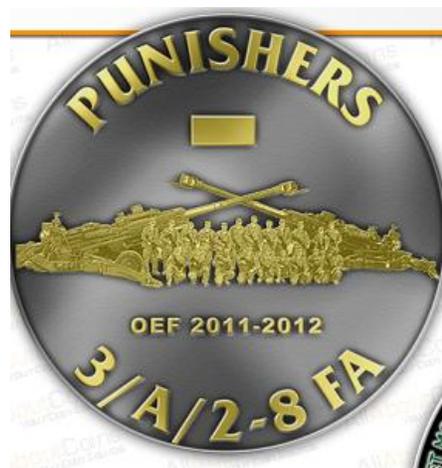
The Soldiers send their love and thanks for all the support from home!

Respectfully yours,  
Wolf-Ekkehard Hindrichs, CPT  
Platoon Leader

The Soldiers of Second Platoon continue to work hard every day. SFC Singleton and I could not have hand picked a better set of young Soldiers to accomplish our mission. Their dedication and selfless service to 1-25 SBCT is unprecedented. Please continue to send your love and support as we head into the second quarter of our deployment. – *1LT Brandon Cox*



*PFC Grogan helps bandage Afghan boy who was injured by the concertina wire.*





# BRAVO BATTERY 2-8 FA, 1-25 SBCT

## “BULLDOGS”

Volume 1, Issue 2

12 August 2011

### Commanders Corner

#### CPT Caroffino

This past month has been a busy time for Bravo Battery. Whether supporting maneuver forces with timely fires or transitioning into a maneuver element, Bravo Battery has been ready to support any mission that comes our way.

#### First Excalibur Rounds

Our hats are off to 1st PLT for being the first PLT in the Battalion to successfully fire the Excalibur round in Afghanistan. The Soldiers displayed discipline and proficiency in their jobs by in a moments notice, able to provide precision guided munitions in support of 3rd Brigade 10th Mountain Division.



### 2nd PLT Prepares for new mission in the Daman District

The guns have gone silent as 2nd PLT departs Sperwhen Ghar and assumes a new security mission in support of the Afghan population in the Daman District. With a limited timeline, 2nd PLT was able to quickly conduct a hand-off of with D/52 and resume operations. We wish 2nd PLT the best of luck in their new mission.



### 3rd PLT Illuminates the night at Pasab

Over the past month 3rd PLT has been occupied with providing illumination fire for maneuver forces on a nightly basis. The Soldiers in 3rd PLT have become to known for their dependability and reliability in proving accurate fires. SGT McCann expertly captured a picture of a fire mission that made it into the Stars and Stripes!

### PROMOTIONS FOR AUGUST

PFC Dowdy to SPC

SGT Robins to SSG

PFC Grullon to SPC

PFC Jackson to SPC

PFC Frjelih to SPC

PV2 Lang to PFC

## Charlie Battery Update – Rock!

### CPT Mike Gorman and 1SG Jason Christianson – Command Team

#### BC's Corner

It's hard to believe that another month has come and gone. We're 1/3 of the way to the finish line! Talk of planning and preparations for redeployment have created a sort of hushed excitement. It's still a bit early to get too excited about redeployment, but the planning for it certainly lifts the spirit.

This is my last full month as the Battery Commander. Unfortunately it is time for me to move on to my next assignment here in 1/25 SBCT. CPT Chris Miano, who has been serving as the 5-1 CAV Squadron Fire Support Officer, will be taking the reins in mid September. August has been a busy month of inventories in preparing for the change of command. Our Soldiers have done an excellent job. I know that CPT Miano will appreciate the hard work that has been done as the 1SG and I have.

Please continue to support your Soldier with letters and care packages. The simplest gestures often have the greatest impact. These Soldiers have answered our nation's call. Be proud of them and let them know that you support them. We all appreciate what you do for us on the home front. - CPT Mike Gorman

#### 1SG's Corner

Another month has gone by and as they say "time flies when you're having fun".

We have a lot of Soldiers coming and going on R&R leave. All that I have talked to thoroughly enjoyed their

time away and have come back refreshed and ready to continue the mission. Everyday our Soldiers continue to better the areas they operate out of and live in. Before long our little dirt hill that 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon occupied, Fire Base Wali, is going to be a flourishing paradise fit for a king! Well maybe not that great but that place is steadily being built up and receiving lots of support from all. The Soldiers on that hill are doing a great job out there. I completed a great trip to FB Bagthu and had a good time visiting with the Soldiers out there. The day I arrived the NCO's were putting on a BBQ for the Soldiers and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon played their 5-1 CAV counterparts in a game of softball. Although the platoon lost by one point it was a fun time and tons of stresses where melted away. I think maybe the 5-1 CAV score keeper was a bit biased, but that's just me.

Our Soldiers are steadily receiving packages from home and other great support organizations around the States. We have been able to acquire a few archery items that have been sent out, giving them more options for recreation on their downtime. We will be busy working inventories as the Commander's Change of Command is on the near horizon. Lots of work to be done in preparation for that and the Soldiers are doing what they have to too be ready.

As always continue to support your Soldier while he is deployed. There is nothing better for our men that support from home. Be proud of them and all they do as the Commander and I both are!

Lastly I would like to recognize the promotions we have had since the last newsletter. A big congratulations goes to these Soldiers for the hard work they have done to earn the next rank and the increased responsibility. - 1SG Jason Christianson

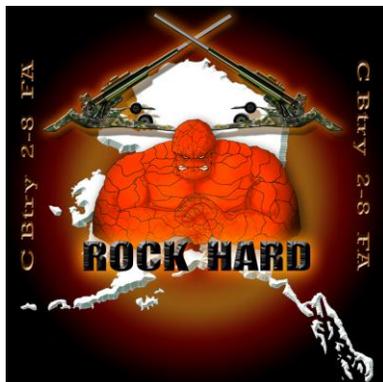
#### Platoon News

Charlie Rock is represented in the Uruzgan Province by both 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoons. These soldiers are tasked with supporting a multi-national force of American, Australian, and Afghan forces. Both platoons have been living and working closely with our Australian allies and have attached liaison officers

who help to coordinate with the Australian observers and maneuver element while at the same time learning how to use American equipment to provide fire support.

The Australian government has purchased several of the same M777s and computing systems that the Automatic Battalion uses to shoot artillery and will be putting them to use in the near future. The liaison officers that have been assigned to both 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoons will return to Australia to teach these new systems to their colleagues at the Australian School of Artillery in [Puckapunyal, in the state of Victoria, Australia](#). All of the Soldiers enjoy picking up on the Aussie culture and slang but also keep up friendly banter and competition. The fun and games take a break and real life cooperation start however when Charlie Battery is called on to provide fires. The professionalism and hard work of the Soldiers here has resulted in firing hundreds of rounds of artillery. While firing in training and in support of operations is hard work every Rock Solider is thrilled to be in the FDC or behind a M777A2 Howitzer while firing. "It's my job and it's what we all signed up to do" says PFC Watts. This attitude is shared across the battery and is one of the reasons morale is so high.

Although all Batteries have been affected by the recent change in assignments of firing platoons, Charlie Rock was the least affected with only giving up the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of 1<sup>st</sup> platoon. This section was moved to FOB LINDSEY II and is in the more than capable hands of SSG Faafetai Tui, who stepped up and volunteered for the challenge. SSG Tui has had multiple deployments as well as a previous maneuver mission and along with SGT James Powell will use the section to provide security for a team of advisors for the Afghan security forces. This change has given the rest of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and, more specifically, SSG Timothy Ruddle and 1<sup>st</sup> Section the opportunity to step up and exceed expectations by continuing to provide Combined Taskforce Uruzgan with fire support 24/7. - 2LT Bryan Martin



#### Charlie Btry Promotions:

1<sup>st</sup> LT White  
SGT Younkers  
SPC Harrington  
SPC Portillo  
SPC McClatchy  
SPC Watson  
SPC Clark, this Soldier received a very limited Battle Field Promotion  
PFC Banks  
PFC Buttery  
PFC Kaye  
PFC Garza  
PFC Richardson  
PFC Singleton  
PV2 Sheffield  
PV2 Simmermon  
PV2 Willison



## 2-8 FA Battalion FRG Information

The Battalion FRG is having a great time this summer. We were able to once again have another picnic for all the families. We had the support of the Echo Battery Rear Detachment to cook and help set up.

The Fire Department was a huge hit with the kids. They set up a fire truck for the kids to climb on and their very own Sparky themed bouncy house. The fire fighters had fun entertaining the kids and the adults enjoyed some good conversation in the wonderful weather we were lucky to have. The kids enjoyed playing frisbee, soccer, volleyball and just playing in the sand.

If you weren't able to attend the picnic, don't worry as we will have more events to come in the next few months. Look for an email or a post on our BN Facebook page for more details

If you have an idea for an event, please let your FRG Leader know.

Now that school is starting August 18, the FRG's will again get back into regular meetings

so look for an email about your next meeting or event with your Battery FRG.

For information on your Battery FRG, you can contact the following:

For Headquarters (HHSB) your FRG Leader is Karla Freshwater and co-leader is Lori Glassco.

[Hhsb2-8frg@yahoo.com](mailto:Hhsb2-8frg@yahoo.com)

For Alpha Battery, your FRG Leader is Jessica Sasse and co-leader is Yolanda Singleton.

[Alphabtry\\_frg@yahoo.com](mailto:Alphabtry_frg@yahoo.com)

For Bravo Battery your FRG Leader is Janie Fields.

[Bravo2\\_8frg@yahoo.com](mailto:Bravo2_8frg@yahoo.com)

For Charlie Battery your FRG Leader is Evelyn Gorman and co-leader is Tami Sylvester.

[Charlie28frg@yahoo.com](mailto:Charlie28frg@yahoo.com)

Each Battery also has their own fundraising and if you would like to find out more about how you can help, please contact your FRG Leader or Key Caller.

If you are unsure of whom your FRG Leader is, Sherri Woodburn, the BN FRSA can look that up for you.



SFC Carpenter and Echo Battery Soldiers grill up some good eats!



The Bouncy House supplied by our own Fort Wainwright Fire Department was a huge hit with the kids (and some adults)!



The volleyball court gets some action!



Kids also enjoyed having their faces (and hands) painted by Chad Melson. Thanks Chad!

## **2<sup>nd</sup> BN 8<sup>th</sup> FA**

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[SBCT/units/2-8\\_fa](http://www.wainwright.army.mil/1_25_SBCT/units/2-8_fa)



3rd Platoon, B Btry demonstrating the M777 for a group of dignitaries at FOB Pasab

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**TO: ALL 2-8 FAMILIES**