



THE STRIKER STATEMENT

Issue # 6 OIF

19 JUNE 2003



STRIKE HARD !

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DOWN RANGE NOTES:

The following units should have access to phones and email during the dates noted below:

- 1-35 AR: 30 June – 3 July
- 1-6 IN: 4 July – 7 July
- 4-27 FA: 8 – 11 July
- 1-6 IN: 12 – 15 July

Change of Command Time Line:

- 1-35 AR BN: 20 June
- 2-6 IN BN: 20 June
- 1-6 IN BN: 20 June
- B CO 47th: 21 June
- HHC 40th: 21 June
- A 1-6 IN: 25 June
- A 1-35 AR: 1 July
- HHD 47th: 1 July
- 2nd BCT: 9 July
- 40th EN BN: 13 July
- 4-27 FA: 17 July

All dates are tentative and can change without notice.

ANNIVERSARY:

July 3rd: 2 year anniversary of SPC Kenneth Reed and Shirin Caiola-Reed!!

Chaplain and Mrs. Sorenson celebrate their 15th Anniversary on July 2

2-6 IN:
SSG William "Billy" & Nicole Micklus for July 25th. Billy is in Bravo 2-6. Nicole Micklus's Birthday is July 9th

1-35 AR
Birthdays:
Tiffany Stokes 19 June
SFC Cormier 25 June
1SG Wolborsky 27 June
1LT Searcy 23 June
SFC Wilson 22 June

Anniversary's
2LT Jason & Katie Eason 22 June
1SG Diego & Siegrune Wolborsky 20 June

1-35 Armor is holding a Battalion Wide FRG BBQ/Picnic on 21 June. Please check with your company FRG leader for more information.

Baumholder Events:

July 4, 2003

Get ready! Baumholder will be celebrating July 4th with the American Pride Celebration. The day will be full of food, games, sports, live entertainment and of course FIREWORKS! The fun begins at 11 am and will be held on Minnick Field, so mark you calendars!

Youth sporting competition – we will also have a youth sporting competition with several different events. Sign up deadline is June 27. Youth can sign up at the all YS locations. Call DSN 485-8779 for more information!

Do you have a private organization or FRG that wants to raise some money? We have the opportunity for you! You can hold your fundraiser at the American Pride Celebration and keep what you raise! If you are interested, please call DSN 485-8779!

LIVE FREE CONCERT

On July 30, Baumholder MWR will host Amy-Jayne McCabe LIVE in concert! This is a free concert so come out and enjoy the show! Watch for more details to come!

METZ Flea Market

Looking for antiques, furniture, souvenirs and other items? Join Baumholder Outdoor Rec on June 21 as we load up and head out to Metz, France for their popular Flea Market! This is a stroller friendly trip and is a mere \$35! Call to reserve your seat now! DSN 485-7182

NIKE Demo Day

On June 26, Rolling Hills Golf Course will host a NIKE Demo day! Come out and visit with the NIKE representative and check out their products! You will receive a discount on all NIKE products you purchase in the pro shop during the day! Heineken will also be on hand for a tasting and will have many giveaways! The fun will take place





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noon – 6 pm! Call DSN 485-7299 for more information!

Bowling Center Hours

Beginning June 9, the Baumholder Bowling Center will be operating under new hours. The hours will be as follows:

Monday – Wednesday: 4-11 pm
Thursday 3-11 pm
Friday 2-11 pm
Saturday 1-11 pm
Sunday/Holidays 1-9 pm

Kids' Cinema Night

Every Thursday from 5-7 pm the Baumholder Rod and Gun will host Kids' Cinema Night. We will play a movie and give the kids free popcorn and kool-aid! This wonderful weekly event is open to kids of all ages! Call for details DSN 485-6345.

KIDDIE BINGO

If you have kids ages 5-12 bring them out to Kiddie BINGO at the Rod and Gun Club on June 22. The fun runs from 3-5 pm and kids will win toys as prizes! Call DSN 485-6345 for more information!

Six Flags here we come!

Feeling the need for a roller coaster? Baumholder Outdoor Rec is going to Six Flags Belgium this month! Great prices and Great Fun! Get your friends, your kids and their friends together to enjoy the day! The day of fun is June 8. Call to reserve your seats today! DSN 485-7182

HEADSTART IS BACK

CLASS START DATES:

8-11 JULY 2003 (Monday Holiday)
14-17 JULY 2003
21-24 JULY 2003
28-31 JULY 2003

WHERE: EDUCATION CENTER

WHEN: MONDAY-WEDNESDAY

TIME: 0900-1700

THURSDAY 0800-1700 (TRIER TRIP)

NOTE FOR MILITARY AND CIVILIANS PERSONNEL:

- MUST MAKE NECESSARY CHILDCARE PROVISIONS FOR THE ENTIRE DAYS (NO EXCEPTIONS) ie. .NO APPOINTMENTS
- MUST COMPLETE ENTIRE CLASSROOM WORK TO ATTEND FIELD TRIP AND RECEIVE CERTIFICATE
- MUST REGISTER FOR CLASS BY CALLING DANNA STONE AT 485-7574 BY TUESDAY THE WEEK PRIOR
- NO DAILY TRANSPORTATION WILL BE PROVIDED (WILL BE PROVIDED FOR TRIER TRIP FROM EDUCATION CENTER)
- LUNCH IS AN INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSIBILITY





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Howdy all!

First of all, I'd like to thank Grandma and Grandpa Wheeler as well as my good friend Rog for the letters they mailed me. I received them all last week. These letters, a link from my world to yours, meant a lot to me.

Thank you. :-)

To catch you all up on what's been going on, my unit is part of the 1st Armored Division's Headquarters here at the Baghdad International Airport. Yes, the airport. When we first arrived after a day-and-a-half road trip from Kuwait, we actually moved into a passenger terminal. I had my own room then--a passport control office. But the powers that be are looking at re-opening the airport in a month or two, which is a good thing, so they kicked us out a week ago. Now I'm in a tent until they get another building ready for us.

My typical day starts with my waking up at 3 am, then my being at work at 4 am. I'm not sure what happens between 3 and 4 am. but I think I somehow shave, brush my teeth, get my uniform on, and drive across the airport in a Humvee. Then I work for 14-16 hrs as a Battle Captain for my unit, helping run things.

I don't normally get to go "outside the wire" and see things. Today was an exception. Today, for the second time, I took a trip into the city of Baghdad.

Today, my commander and I drove to the east side of Baghdad, hopped in a helicopter, and took a tour of the eastern side from the air. That was exciting. What really stood out from the air was how nice some of the homes along the Tigris are--especially when compared to how 99% of Iraqi's live. As nice as these mansions were, though, they weren't nearly as massive or lavish as the palaces and monuments I visited during my first trip into Baghdad: some of Saddam's buildings are as huge as the pyramids, and probably required as much repression and national wealth to build. Truly, Saddam believed himself a King of Mesopotamia!

When our helicopter landed, we went for a drive through the ghetto portion of Baghdad--two million people crammed into one square mile. As we drove, I was

amazed--as I always am--at just how much these people love us: adults stand and wave while kids come running out to greet us. We dismounted from our vehicle at one point and walked the length of a market: it was disgusting, the market: vegetable and fruit and electronics and assorted junk intermingled with trash and the smell of waste. Apparently, the sewage pipes can't handle the amount of waste produced in this part of Baghdad, so the sewers back up. I had to stifle the gag reflex more than once while all these dirty kids were running around me, laughing and excited..

Still, it was exciting, that walk: I could've been a snowball rolling down a hill the way I accumulated laughing and chattering kids. By the time I reached our vehicles, I was in the center of a huge mass of kids. I led them in a chorus: I'd say "Iraq--yeah!!!" and give a big thumbs up, and they'd all do the same. Then I'd say America--yeah!!!" and give a big

thumbs up and they'd all do the same. Then I'd say "Saddam" and show them a thumbs down and they'd all kick the ground and spit. It was fun. :-)

Most Iraqis, no doubt about it, hated Saddam and are glad we are here.

When I returned to the command post, I discovered our new TV which can broadcast the news (and only the news) 24 hrs. a day. I watched the news for a few minutes and was again amazed: the picture these news programs are painting of Iraq is nowhere near the Truth. If I were watching the news and were not here in Baghdad, I would believe that there is almost complete lawlessness here, soldiers are getting attacked constantly, and the Iraqi's don't like us--all untrue. I've never personally seen a looter, everywhere you go Iraqi's are conducting business as usual, and they generally adore us. Yes, we are attacked occasionally, but you have to remember, that these people are very VERY well-armed (grenades, RPGs, machine guns, etc.) and we're the de facto police force for a city of five million. How often does a cop in New York get shot at? Get killed? Perhaps not as often as we are here, but probably not much less. We generally lose one or two soldiers a week to violence, that's all. From watching the news, you would think we lose 10-20 soldiers a day!

Amazing.

Well, I better get back to work. Take care all. Oh yeah:





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Sherry and Heather. Best wishes for your babies, when you have them. I'll get them something from Iraq, when you do. Let's see, what do they sell at the outdoor markets here? Semi-automatic rifles, grenades, surface-to-air missiles, RPGs, fly-covered fruit. Hmmm...maybe I should just get them something online. What do you think?

:-)

Love,

Doug

Submitted by CPT Doug Pryer

2-6 IN:

After weeks of careful planning and consideration, 2BCT has assigned Task Force Gator to help a new sector of Baghdad. Although the Gators will still live, refit, train, and make plans from their original Forward Operating Base (FOB), guard duty and patrolling will take place all new zones. The Gators' new sector is desperately in need of humanitarian assistance and the TF is poised to begin making a difference where it is needed most. After a month of upgrading the FOB—fixing generators, installing plumbing, and cleaning up truckloads of rubble and broken glass—the soldiers were happy to hear that they wouldn't have to move out entirely. For two out of every three weeks, the Gators will live in the same buildings that they have worked so hard to improve. Once every three weeks the Gators will rotate to the new sector, about 30 minutes away, and live in the barracks at the Rasheed Military Compound. It took ten days to remove five truckloads of debris from the building but it is ready to be lived in.

The new barracks are not as decorated nor as homey as the FOB living areas but they'll allow soldiers to rotate on and off guard shifts without taxing transportation assets. The Gator companies have already begun work in the new sector and some platoons are finished with their orientations, in full charge of their stations. The Task Forces' new operating schedule has soldiers guarding fixed sites for a week (necessitating them to live in the sector), patrolling the streets for a week, and then training and refitting for a week. The TF will continue to

emphasize soldier-citizen interaction over simply driving by and waving and the TF will continue its practice of 24-hour patrolling.

The standards of living for the citizens in TF Gator's new sector are almost the exact opposite of those in the old sector. Whereas the neighborhoods and houses surrounding Saddam's palace grounds are largely upper class, the neighborhoods and houses just across the river rival those of third world countries. Although the new sector is only a 20 to 40 minute ride away, many places have very few of the modern conveniences most of America's poorest slums are privy to. Some neighborhoods are without any kind of sewer system and human waste is left to pool between houses. Empty tracts of land alongside the road resemble landfills and dirty children run apparently unsupervised through the streets.

Though some work has already begun, there is still much to do in the new sector. Just as TF Gator began Neighborhood Advisory Councils (NACs) in its sector prior to handing it off to TF 1-35, 3-7 Infantry began NACs in their sector prior to handing it off to us. The Gators will continue on with the NACs in the new sector, as well as continuing efforts to improve roads, schools, and infrastructure. Though the process of rebuilding these neglected areas of Baghdad will take considerable effort, the Task Force is not starting off entirely from square one. A lot of work lies ahead of the Gators but they are prepped and poised to help out where they are needed most.



1SG Forbes will continue to be the custodian of the HHC guidon during CPT Redmond's command





SPC Cortney Allen, 40th ENG uses a mine sweeper to look for buried weapons during a Charlie Co. patrol.



CPT Redmon, CPT Fouche discuss medievac assets in the new sector.

1SG Forbes will continue to be the custodian of the HHC guidon during CPT Redmond's command



SSG Pack and SSSG Robinson of B Co., 1plt recon the new sector.



It's unfortunately necessary: these C Co soldiers search a shop for illegal weapons for sale.



Every patrol through a neighborhood ends the same way: with a procession of dozens (or hundreds)



Bravo Co, 3rd plt, stands guard at an electrical plant in the new sector.



Defaced pictures of Saddam adorn nearly every building in Baghdad. This one is on the wall of the UXO



S5G Carter and CPT Morgan man work for TF Information Operations. They help determine what messages



S5G Garcia and SPC Gorham handle supplies for the Gator BN.



PV2 Patrick Oswald, SPC Joseph Lohrey and, SPC Huff fix a ruptured gas tank on the TF CSM's Humvee.



SPC (P) Cross drives out into the streets of some of Baghdad's poorest neighborhoods.



A view from atop a gun truck. PFC Gerardo Robledo, B Co, 2nd plt, talks to a HMMWV driver.





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SSG Payton, a heavy wheel mechanic reenlisted this week for another 2 years of service and he hopes to be redeployed to Ft. Bragg or Ft. Eustus upon leaving Iraq and 1AD.

When asked how he felt, SSG Payton responded directly, "Tell my wife, Renee, I miss her and to send me my passport; I want to go home." SSG Payton has been serving in the Army for 11 years.

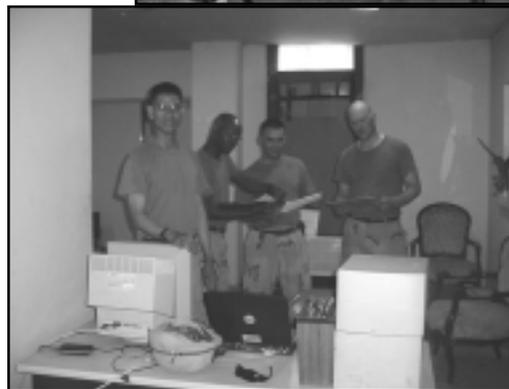


The TF Cdr pins Captain rank on newly promoted Jose Rodriguez. Captain Rodriguez was the B Co. XO but will now be the TF S4 ---in charge of Supply.

The quote pretty much says it all; Good Luck, Captain!

"I wish my wife were here to see it and I wish that she was here to put the rank on my collar. One of my biggest helps to being promoted has been my wife's support for the last 28 months. I'm thankful for her help." --CPT Jose Rodriguez

SGT John Bernet Jr., Doc Robinson, and SPC Eric Dealba relax after a game of bones. SPC Dealba explains that his platoon, 1st platoon got picked to guard some newly discovered SA-2 missiles.



SSG Villalon, SFC Lesure, SGT Jordan, and SPC Lewin keep track of awards, promotions, personnel transfers and other adjutant matters.





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B 1-35 AR:

This week Bravo 1-35 Armor Company began preparing for a new kind of mission. Very soon, the company expects to begin patrolling in the Task Force's sector on foot—an idea that goes against everything a tank is taught when he assumes his position on an M1 Abrahams—the U.S. Army's main battle tank. *"Death Before Dismount!"* is every tankers creed but, for a short while, the Blackjacks will have to come to terms with walking the dirt streets with the grunts of TF Gator. In preparation for foot patrols, the Blackjacks conducted dismount training and room-clearing techniques while they were still in Kuwait. The tankers also have a wealth of experience in interacting with the local population through manning checkpoints and especially guarding Baghdad's busiest gas station. There's no doubt that Blackjack Company will be able to foot patrol with the best of the Task Force, but the tankers make no bones about their desire to "get back to the tracks" as soon as possible. B 1-35 will also be hosting a Neighborhood Advisory Council in one of the poorest sections of Baghdad known as Diyala. Just as the TF had done before, CPT Zelkowitz, the B Co. Cdr, will sit in on NAC meetings ensuring that issues are promptly and fairly addressed. Sewage control is expected to be one of the biggest problems within Diyala and B Co. is more than up to the task of bringing the Iraqis in this district out of their plight. As a last minute task, Bravo 1-35 was assigned to guard dozens of SA-2 missiles that were recently found by the Iraqi citizens. Iraqis were reported to be stripping the 27-foot long missiles for their metal, motors, and—no doubt—the warheads for sale on the open and black markets. Though the mission was originally expected to last only 24-hours, the sheer size and number of missiles makes coordinating for their removal more difficult. The tankers are currently keeping a 600m distance from the missiles for safety reasons.

B 40th ENG:

Though the 40th Engineer Bulldogs (B CO) haven't moved from their home in the Baghdad zoo, they are remaining in place primarily to support operations within TF Gator's old sector. The Bulldogs have been officially detached from the Task Force.

Still, Task Force Gator and the Engineers are working together whenever possible. On a recent patrol the Engineers lent some unique equipment and an operator to Charlie Company. As C Co looked through a village in search of illegal weapons markets, the Engineers probed dirt piles and trash heaps with mine detectors in search of buried firearms.

