



# THE STRIKER STATEMENT

Issue # 10 OIF

24 July 2003



## Editor

Hello family, friend and soldiers of the Striker Brigade. It looks like I might get this one out on time to all of you this week. I heard several comments this week on the Striker Statement. Most people were very excited about the content. There was some grumbling about the large quantity of information on the Gators.

I assure you that I do not give any preferential treatment to those fine soldiers. The plain truth is they have a team of soldiers working diligently to provide the information for their own newsletter. I include all of the input I receive and regularly contact the units in Iraq to solicit input. The one factor to consider is that the Gators are doing all the same kind of stuff as everyone else. They have a soldier who is going out of his way to send news back to us all here in Germany. If you read about maintenance then your soldiers are having the same challenges. Supply runs, chow, electricity, they are all experiencing much the same conditions downrange, so the stories really apply to all of the Striker Family.

CPT Ted M. Preister  
BCT Rear-D Commander

## RAM

18 JUL 2003

Dear Friends and Family,

So much has happened in the last three weeks. I am certain most of you have been watching the news and have heard about the attacks that are reported every day. I imagine that many of you are probably very worried, and that is understandable too. I thought I might open this by reassuring you with two facts. The first fact is that despite the recent attacks, no one in our battalion has been hurt by an enemy attack. The other thing I want to emphasize is that there are 5 million people in Baghdad, and a very small portion of the population perpetrates these attacks. By and large the people here are happy that we are here and we are convinced that being here is worth the sacrifice of being away from you.

The opening of the Zaw Zoo in Baghdad has been our top priority and we are about to open the zoo tomorrow. In the last month we've done a tremendous amount of work with the help of the Iraqi

people. Today we finished the final police call of the Zoo. Tomorrow we have the ribbon cutting ceremony, and on the 20<sup>th</sup>, the park will be opened to the public.

Of course, we cannot fail to mention that our battalion has changed hands. LTC Porter passed the Guide-on to LTC Coats on July 13<sup>th</sup>. We welcome LTC Coats and his family to the Battering Rams, and we bid farewell to LTC Porter.

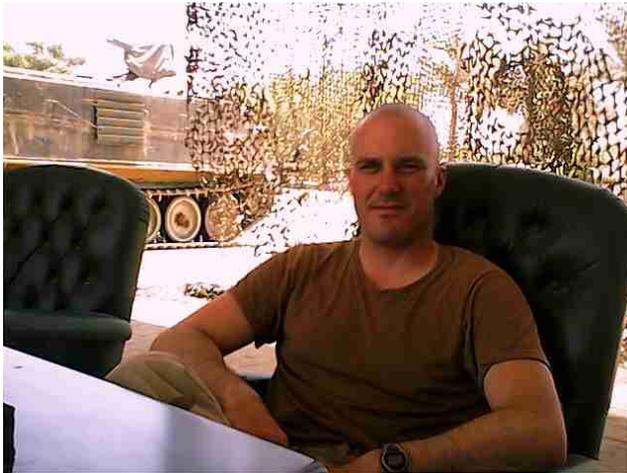
The battalion has been a part of so many projects, I'm not certain I can remember all of them. As always, we are patrolling Baghdad everyday and we have checkpoints to cover as well. Those two responsibilities take up a sizeable portion of our time and manpower, and in the heat it can be draining, even for the toughest soldier. Of course, we're the toughest soldiers in the brigade, so I feel sorry for all those Infantry and Armor soldiers...they must be suffering. But there have been a few projects to break things up.

Assassins have been operating a payment site to cover the salaries of former Iraqi Military. They have also put their SEEs and ACEs to work to build a small arms range for 1-6 IN. Bulldogs have been swamped with work on the Zoo, but they have managed to hire and train 160 Iraqis to be part of a future security force for the Zoo. There's still some work to be done, but the toughest part of that training is now over with. Now that the zoo is soon to be done with, Bulldogs will take some time for driver's training. It's not exactly a break, but it is a breather for them. 1SG Vasquez has now retired and is replaced by SFC Neal. We wish him the very best, and I'm certain he'll enjoy a well-deserved retirement that somehow involves his Harley motorcycle. Rock has been busy with their checkpoints, but has found time to put the SEEs to good use by digging burn pits for trash and building fortifications around key points. Rock has also supervised the removal of destroyed vehicles from our sector to the bone yard. The company is also responsible for a small neighborhood. Of course, I can't fail to mention the Headhunters. They've been servicing vehicle and providing logistical support to the entire battalion plus some attachments, and no doubt they've been key in keeping us operational. Also important to note is their change of command. CPT Michael Parsons is the new Company Commander, and Captain Harris should be returning home in the next few days.

There have been some improvements in daily life around here too. It's probably a bad idea to admit this



to all of you. I'm sure our soldiers wouldn't want me to tell you about it, because some of those great packages and letters might stop coming in. But, I have to tell the truth. We've been able to purchase some air conditioners, and there is now a laundry drop off, but not everyone uses it. We've gotten some phones to circulate around the companies, so we are better able to call home than we were when we got here. And I've got to say that there is a lot of sharing going on right now, so a lot of the goodies that come in get passed around to everybody. Thanks to each of you for your thoughtfulness, and keep it coming!



**1SG Long sends a message home,** "To the Assassins and the Long family, Be proud of your family members here in Iraq. The Assassins are all very busy providing security and humanitarian assistance to the people of Baghdad. The soldiers are motivated and make a home wherever they stay. Keep the packages and letters coming. Mail call is a big morale boost when we see full orange bags. Thanks for all the support. We miss you all and look forward to reuniting again soon. Sincerely, 1SG Long, Assassin 7"

## **GATORS**

### MSG to 1SG Gandy

In a brief ceremony Thursday, MSG Gandy was appointed as 1SG Headquarters Headquarters Company 2/6 IN BN. This promotion came unexpectedly for the 15 year veteran, but "it is every enlisted man's goal to make it to 1SG and as always in the infantry it will be business as usual". I've had

to wait for this opportunity but now that it has come, it's time to make the most of it.

1SG Gandy a Charleston, SC born son of a now retired Navy Seal veteran of the Vietnam Conflict. Graduated from MIT in 1987 with a bachelor degree in electrical engineering. Following school he enlisted in the army and has been stationed in Korea and Fort Campbell 3 times each, Fort Stewart and has been at Baumholder, Germany since 2000.

While in the army he has completed air assault school, airborne, he has held the position of a Drill Sergeant, and earned his EIB and CIB prior to this deployment.

1SG Gandy is also an independent computer business owner and has two stores in Georgia called "Gandyman Computer". The stores sell new and used computers, TV's, VCR's as well as repairs them. His wife Dawn used to work as a district manager for McDonald's before they moved to Germany.

He carries a photo of his father in his wallet to remind him that "things could always be worse" in regards to deployment. "My goal is to improve what we can control, that's the dining facility." We are going to wheel and deal and refurbish the best dining facility in Baghdad. "Soldiers can have all the problems in the world, but when 1700 comes and they know they can go, eat, have a cold drink, relax in the A/C with tables and comfortable chairs, it washes away all those problems". That will help improve the morale and productivity of our soldiers, which is vital to our success as a unit.



*LTC Williams and CSM Bobb pin on the rank of 1SG for 1SG Gandy*

### Trading Spaces

Bravo tank and second platoon Bravo Company are planning on moving back on base with the rest of the



battalion. Ever since the last move to this base they have been living out at the nuclear and power plant sites, pulling guard and patrol duties 24 hours a day.

The battalion took some advice from the other companies, who said that it would have been nice to have a few people come over prior to moving in and clean up the barracks and start the contractors on the electric and water. So that is what we are doing for the platoons out at the two sites. The XO, Lt Searcy and his staff have moved into the barracks and have been cleaning up and walking the contractors through so that when the rest move in hopefully everything will be set up for them.

We are not sure exactly when the move will happen but we do know it will happen within the next week or so.



*Lions, Tigers, and Bears, Oh My*

### Baghdad Zoo Opens

A large crowd of Iraqi civilians and American soldiers gathered for the reopening of the Baghdad zoo. This is actually a grand opening to the Iraqi public since it was only available to Ba'athist party members when Saddam was in power.

A Platoon from C Co actually helps protect the zoo at the moment. However, with increased popularity and hiring of employees the zoo will be self-sufficient in time.

The reopening of the zoo is important because it is another one of those steps towards restoring Iraq to its previous state. The sooner that happens the sooner we come all come home.

*Hundred's of people came to the grand reopening of the Baghdad zoo.*



### More EOD

Two days just weren't enough! The initial plan of one EOD team for two days has turned into three teams over a two week period. Even after the two weeks of cleaning up these explosives there will be some left, but none that will endanger us or civilians. After an extensive look into our sector the first EOD team helped us get a second and third team to continue the clean up. The UXO sites have been prioritized so that those that endanger civilians or our forces are the first to be cleaned up. Soldiers from Dealer and the Support PLT have been making daily pick ups and trips to "Bulldog" the military collection site for all UXO's. Lt. Thompson said, "the days have been going by fast this month, but daily they go very slow because we are out all day in the sun".



*B Co, 2<sup>nd</sup> PLT LDR, 2LT Allen stands next to one of the rockets to be picked up Wednesday*



*SPC Williams looks on while SGT Salley lowers the crane to pick up the wall fallen on top of the rockets*

### Going Home

Now that the stop loss has been lifted and soldiers are allowed to ETS ending their term of service TF 2-6 Gators will lose 5 soldiers. A Co, SPC Ruben Castrejon; and four members from HHC, SPC Gabriel Lackey, SGT John Grimm, PFC John Miller, and SPC James Scaife, were taken to Baghdad International Airport on Wednesday to fly back to Germany to be reunited with friends and family. Good luck to all five in the civilian workforce.



## The Supply Line

The supply line for the Gators is literally thousands of miles long, but is beginning to flow strong. Every other day a supply run is made by HHC's Support Platoon to our supply depot an hour away next to the airport. SFC Navarro platoon sergeant for support platoon, says "Here we will pick up the mail, water, food, and any equipment that we have ordered". The trips consist of at least 4 trucks to pick up all the supplies needed for the next two days. Usually vehicle and communication parts are picked up to ensure that they are always up and running. Large parts such as vehicle engines are brought to us when they come in by the mechanics at the supply depot.



*SFC Navarro, Support Platoon Sergeant, briefs his soldiers on the route and speed to the supply depot*



*SPC Penalver and SPC Lewin, S1 mail handlers, sort through the packages*

## Gator Garage

Keeping the multitude of Gator vehicles up and running is more demanding than ever. However, the need for working vehicles is tremendously high because all the operations which we conduct daily require the use of vehicles in one form or another. So how are the battalion maintenance teams keeping up?

Most operations are run with wheeled vehicles only because most of the tacked vehicles (Bradley's

and M113's) are awaiting parts or not conducive to the mission. 99% of the problem with the tracked vehicles are the tracks themselves. SGT Bowman, C Co maintenance, said that because of the sand/payment/ and heat the rubber that should be hitting the ground has worn or burned off and causes the tracks to run on metal. The problem with running on the metal is that eventually the rods that hold the track together will loosen and will eventually shoot out, causing an accident. If that were to happen the soldiers in the vehicle would probably be fine, however the danger to the civilian drivers is extremely high.



*PFC Madore, HHC recovery team works on an engine for an M88*

"We can only fix what we have parts to fix" said Sarto. The majority of the parts are coming in slowly, but the larger items, such as the tracks are barely coming in at all. Six Thousand tracks are needed to fix all the tracked vehicles and have been ordered but only 266 have come in thus far. The next problem with the supply line is that to do one job you may need 21 parts, but only 20 have come in so we have to wait on that one part said SFC Dickerson, B Co maintenance.

SFC Dickerson says when we do get the parts we are fixing the problem and returning the vehicles as fast as possible. My soldiers are very proficient at their jobs and can fix 90% of the problems routinely. Actually, my soldiers are working on a high level then they are trained for, but because of it they will leave here with much more knowledge. "They are really working hard, with no distractions they are all business when it comes time to work.



## HELLRAISERS



### "2nd Brigade Ladies on the road again".

Some of us got together to go on a trip to the "Eifelpark", it's a big amusement park about 1 hour from Baumholder. We sure had a lot of fun and the weather was awesome.

## CONQUEROR

Dear Conqueror Families, 13 July 2003

Many people have visited the Conqueror Battalion within the last week. We hosted the Chief of Staff of Army, General Keane, last week. He enjoyed talking to the soldiers from A/2-6 IN, HHC, and A/1-35 AR. We also welcomed the new Brigade Commander, Col Baker, this week. He immediately came out with the Conquerors and saw our sector and met with the soldiers. As I expected, he was very impressed with how the soldiers conducted themselves and how they told him their mission and the issues they faced. Despite temperatures reaching 117 degrees everyone was looking good and conducting business as usual. Despite the recent heat wave, we have had no heat casualties or even many problems. That says a lot about the NCOs and soldiers taking care of one another within the battalion. Almost everyone has some form of air conditioning for sleeping now and each soldiers receives four bottles of water pre and at least one block of ice every day. Every tank crew or section has at least one cooler for ice, water and sodas.

The new incoming Commanding General, BG (P) Dempsey, also visited us. He was also impressed

with both A/2-6 IN operation at Assassin Gate and when he visited C/1-35 AR at the new Iraqi Government Building. CPT Graves and his attached infantry platoon from Bravo Company, 1-6 Infantry are securing the meeting site for the delegates that will form the new Iraqi Interim Government. The new CG's intent is to balance a trained unit with increased family time when we return. The new Assistant Division Commander BG Scaparroti is scheduled to visit us on 17 July 2003.

SFC Feathers from A/1-35 AR has been holding down the fort on one of our outermost checkpoints. He has some great help from SPC Jaimez and SGT Rosas. The soldiers have completely reconstructed the barriers and guard posts to make them even safer. At Checkpoint 4 SSG Revette has his tank crews making major improvements to ensure that the entire force is protected. Each checkpoint rotates out every 8 to 12 hours depending on the sight. The different platoons switch up missions every couple of days to keep everyone fresh. There are more people on each checkpoint than we need to run them but with the heat we need to rotate individual soldiers out every 30 minutes.

We had one attempted attack just in front of two of our checkpoints. It was an explosive device that was thrown under a civilian's car and the terrorists sped off in a taxi. The improvements to the checkpoint help ensure that the blast could not even come close to our soldiers and luckily no civilians were hurt either. The car burned to the ground but the explosion did not harm anyone.

One of the larger projects we have going on right now is called "Task Force Neighborhood." We are clearing off an area and setting up a soccer field and playground for the youth in two neighborhoods. As part of this project, we will be bringing in doctors and dentists to help conduct training at clinics within the neighborhoods. It is an outreach program of sorts designed to help jumpstart the communities and get them back to some degree of normalcy. CPT Smith, 2LT Tamura, and 2LT Elliott, who is brand new, along with the entire Alpha Company 1-35 AR are heading up this effort for our battalion. We will also be sponsoring a school in the fall, much like what we do at Baumholder or in the states.





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The 40th Engineers are setting up the Baghdad Zoo for the public on or about 20 July. This is yet another effort to get the people doing normal activities and off the streets. You will also hear your husbands talk about Force Protection Forces. These are Iraqis we are training to stand guard at sites and allow our soldiers to stop guarding them 24 hours per day. This is a great thing and a huge step toward empowering Iraqis to police and protect themselves.

SFC Hayes and 2LT Gowel just arrived today and will be brought on board the team as quickly as possible. LT Gowel will be working in the S3 shop for a short while before we get him down to a platoon. SFC Hayes will be moving out to fill a PSG slot as soon as possible. We also have a new Fire Support Officer, CPT Charles Steward. He is replacing CPT Shawn Miller. Both are normally from 4-27 Field Artillery but are living with us in Iraq.

Congratulations to the following soldiers who have been promoted since we arrived in Iraq:

**B/1-35 AR** - SPC Pollard, PFC Arizaga, PFC Benavides, PFC Senn, SPC Little, PFC Gillespie, SPC Parsons

**C/1-35 AR** - 1LT Eason, SPC Cooper (Darnell), SPC Johnson (Andrew), SPC Tabag, SPC Wood, PFC Wellman

**HHC** - SFC Green, PV2 Brown, PFC Proctor, SPC Parker, 1LT Songer, SPC Benco, SPC Cooper (Niall), SPC Dugger, SPC Harding, SPC Hollowell, SPC Hyslop, SPC Meeks, SPC Stecher, PFC Adolph, PFC Cott, PFC Taylor (Michael), PV2 Scott, PV2 Smith (Joshua)

Additional promotion boards are being held every month and if the soldiers have sufficient points we should be promoting more individuals this summer. We have also reenlisted 9 soldiers since we have been in this country. It has been my pleasure to reenlist three of those soldiers.

Our prayers go out to SPC Crosley, from the Support Platoon, who was sent back to Germany due to an aggravated respiratory problem.

A special congratulations to SGT Drayton of B/1-35 AR for the birth of his baby boy. Both mother and son are doing fine. SGT Drayton and the company

were very excited when they received the news over in 2-6 IN.

Well that is all until the next update...

Conqueror 6

## THUNDER



4-27 develops a feeling of home.



Building friendships with the locals



## Community Announcements

47<sup>th</sup> FSB will have a consolidated Battalion FRG meeting at the Wagon Wheel theatre on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of July at 6 o'clock P.M.

The Baumholder Town Hall meeting will be run by the BSB at the Rheinlander on Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July at 4 o'clock P.M.

40<sup>th</sup> EN will have a consolidated Battalion FRG meeting at the Battalion Headquarters on Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of July at 6:30 P.M.



A favorite photo opportunity.



4-27 Works the streets.

