

RED WARRIORS

1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment

Hello Red Warrior friends and families.

This month the Red Warriors continued camp improvements as well as conducting several operations against an entrenched enemy. The battalion had much success in preventing attacks along a major highway and ousting many mid-level Taliban leaders.

However, the cost of our operations is felt with the loss of PFC Michel, a loss that will never be forgotten.

The battalion is once again postured for the second round of Afghanistan Presidential elections. This mission will be one of the most important we will conduct because it will determine the future of Afghanistan.

In the meantime, we are building a company outpost for our D Company and simultaneously closing another for B Company. However, as Thanksgiving approaches, we are confident that all Red Warriors will be set in

their new locations.

We are currently planning a day of rest and relaxation for our warriors this Thanksgiving. The day will include a traditional Thanksgiving meal and I have even ordered beer.....well, near beer.

The day will also include sports events, a weightlifting competition and poker tournament. The team at Kandahar (ALOC) will also have similar Thanksgiving festivities so they will not be left out.

I understand the hardships families face during deployments and we are doing everything we can to alleviate it. Each company has a date for a Video Teleconference. Please check with your company leadership on your date and time.

Thank you for all you do!

MAJ Korey Brown
BN Executive Officer

We Remember ...



Pfc. Devin J. Michel, of Stockton, Ill., died Oct. 24 when enemy forces attacked his platoon with an improvised explosive device. Michel joined the Army in 2008 and deployed to Afghanistan, May 24. He leaves behind his wife, Anika. To read more, turn to page 4-5.



Comforts of home packaged, delivered

Everytime the whir of a helicopter is heard, Soldiers located here at Forward Operating Base Wilson hope it's the sound of the "mail bird" flying in some of the comforts of home.

Thanks to the combined efforts of one Soldier's wife and several stateside businesses, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment have received more than 250 packages addressed to "Any Soldier" since arriving to Afghanistan in June.

"Soldiers are the ones making sure that my family is safe, by keeping the fight elsewhere," said Makenzie Pidgeon, wife of SSG Jeremy Pidgeon. "They may not have the comforts of home; but they know that even though there is an economy with issues -- family members that pass while they are not home, children that are born -- and as life goes on, they are still cared about and not forgotten."

Although the packages may be small, it's the comforts of home contained within that help boost the morale of the troops receiving them.

"It's cool that random people send us stuff that we can use," said SGT Derek Strohl, 1-12 IN Personal Security Detachment, as he opened a package containing magazines, snacks, toiletries and games. "The support for us has been amazing."

Although Mrs. Pidgeon spearheaded the effort, she refuses to take all the credit for it.

"The Internet," she said. "It's amazing what you can find on it. If there is dedication and respect for those serving, than there is the time and effort put into locating different organizations to help them. These organizations cannot help, if they don't know and they don't know, unless people ask them."

And ask she did. Makenzie was able to solicit support for the Soldiers of 1-12 IN from more than 35 organizations and businesses.

"I always have a comfortable living arrangement," she said. "Soldiers don't. They don't have the comforts of home that a lot of people take for granted. They know that by getting these packages, they have people who know they don't have what they have 24/7."

Most deployed bases have a small post exchange where Soldiers can get some of the essentials they need.

FOB Wilson has yet to get a PX here and it makes the packages that much more special for the Soldiers receiving them.

"We can't always get the things we need," said SGT Michael Razo, a Tracy, Calif. Native. "It's great to see that the support is there for us."



Thanks to the joint efforts of our Canadian and battalion's Soldiers, a hockey/indoor soccer rink was built. The first match-up saw the battalion staff take a beating in a devastating 6-17 loss to the medics. A new cardio and gym tent has been built and the sand volleyball court offers a relaxing end to the day.



One of three sections in our chow hall. Currently the television broadcasts Canadian TV.



One final SALUTE



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment mourned the loss of a fallen Soldier during a memorial service, Oct. 29, at Forward Operating Base Wilson.

Pfc. Devin J. Michel, of Stockton, Ill., died Oct. 24 when enemy forces attacked his platoon with an improvised explosive device. Michel joined the Army in 2008 and deployed to Afghanistan, May 24. He leaves behind his wife, Anika.

“It is absolutely devastating to lose him to an incident like this after we have begun to make a difference in this critical area of Afghanistan,” said LTC Reik Andersen, 1-12 IN commander. “Our current successes on the field of battle can be squarely set on his shoulders as well as the shoulders of his valiant comrades of 3rd Platoon.”

Soldiers from the 1-12 IN Battalion Charlie Company, 3rd Platoon, remembered PFC Michel for his ability to make you laugh, his calm under fire and his unfaltering work ethic.

“Devin’s positive attitude, unwavering determination and courage are all qualities that he displayed on a daily basis,” said Capt. Duke Reim, C-Co commander, as he recalled Michel in a firefight, firing his M4, radio strapped to his back, pausing to call up reports in between magazine changes. “Cool and calm, ‘The Rock,’” he said. “These I think will solidify his legacy among all who knew him. He is the very finest of America’s sons and we will always remember him.”

Friends of Michel -- Soldiers who worked with him everyday -- talked about the man they had grown to love.



“Devin Jay Michel was possibly one of the brightest, most courageous, dedicated men I have ever known,” said Pfc. Robert Lyons, who talked about Michel giving up a basketball scholarship to instead join the U.S. Army and serve his country. “He was my best friend, my fellow Soldier, but more importantly, he was my brother. I love you Devin.”

Spc. Tony Ruiz spoke of Michel as a friend who was always there for him.

“Michel was one of a kind, whose personality spoke for itself to those who knew him,” said Ruiz. “He touched our lives in his own way and became our brother. Until the time comes for us to meet at Heaven’s door, be at

peace. Rest easy my brother, for the line has held, your job is done.”

The service ended with a 21-gun salute, taps and a flyover by two OH-58 Kiowa helicopters. Digital pictures of Michel flashed on a screen before the memorial and as music played, hundreds of mourners moved in a long line in front of a set of symbolic remains to pay their last respects.

“Never drafted into war, Devin volunteered, in an America where things were good – no depression – he wanted to serve,” said Reim. “Michel gallantly approached his destiny with the family of C Company. Together, he has given selflessly to a noble cause. May God continue to bless us and guide our actions; and may he comfort Devin’s family in this, their time of need.”



I'm Free

-- Written by SPC Tony Ruiz --

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,
I'm following the path God laid for me,
I took his hand when I heard him call,
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day,
To laugh, to love, to work or play,
Tasks left undone must stay that way,
I found that place at the close of day

If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it with remembered joy,

A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
Ah yes, these things, I too will miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow,
My life's been full, I've savored much,
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seems all too brief;
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief,
Lift up your heart and share with me,
God wanted me now – He set me free



Promotions News:

On Oct. 11 the Red Warriors conducted a battalion awards ceremony. We awarded more than 150 Red Warriors various types of awards and badges. The awards included Army Commendation Medals, Army Commendation Medals with Valor and the badges included the Combat Infantryman Badges, Combat Action Badges, and Combat Medical Badges. So far we have awarded more than 300 awards, badges, and certificates of appreciation within the battalion.



4-Star Visit

Battalion leadership posed for a picture with the Central Command Commander, General David Petraeus. He was only on the ground for just over an hour but was able to give us an operational brief and visit with Soldiers. Private First Class Stephen Mossey, the battalion legal clerk, was able to sneak in for the picture as well.