

Battalion Update--12 November 2007. I put this "newsletter" together from excerpts of e-mail messages that were sent to me from a few of our deployed Soldiers. It's a composite of info I gleaned from their messages. It should give you an idea of what our guys are up too. Some of the info is outdated, it is from September. If you have questions or requests for information, just send me an e-mail.

Pray for the safety of all our Soldiers!!!

Tom Perry, Secretary, 107th Engineer Association, Secretary@107thengineers.org

Excerpt #1. I was on the Advance Detachment (ADVON) and left Ft McCoy EARLY (0001 hrs) on the 17th (Sep). We traveled by bus to Minneapolis and flew to Atlanta. I was the only one to get a first class ticket at first! However the rest of the staff puked got to go first class because there were open seats. However, I got the first pick!! I was in a class of my own! We flew out of Atlanta later that day on a freedom flight and stopped over in Shannon, Ireland. It was even too early for a Guinness! I liked the coffee though. We arrived in Ali Al Salem (Kuwait) after a total flight of 23 hours. Hell I couldn't tell you what time we got there, but we stayed overnight and went up to Camp Beuhring (Kuwait), arriving on Wednesday. They got us up at 0300 hrs to go "qualify" at the rifle/pistol range. The reason it was so early in the morning was to get done before it got too hot. We remained there until Sunday and then took a C-130 and stopped 2 times before arriving in Baghdad International Airport. Our ADVON has been here (Iraq) for almost 3 weeks. The rest of the Battalion was around 11 days behind us, following the same flight pattern but staying over in Camp Beuhring about 10 days. There were only 15 of us on the ADVON.

We are now doing the left seat/right seat ride. (*Editors Note: This is Army jargon for the transition period between the departing and incoming units.*) The 107th is getting anxious to take over the mission. The Sappers/combat engineers (*Ed: line units assigned to the battalion*) get hit with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) almost every night and it is a challenge to get the vehicles put back together and back on the road. The contractors do most of the repairs but we get involved as well. Our motor pool (it is MINE, I signed for it!!) is around 15 acres in size but it needs a lot of work. The Yoopers are hard at work, cleaning up and getting ready. We take over after the HOTWASH (*Ed: After action review of combat operations*) mission on Friday and complete the Transfer of Authority (TOA) on the 16th(Sep). Ready to rock and roll. The 130th (PRARNG) have been great to work with. However they do things a LOT different than the old 107th.

We have a howitzer battery close to us that opens up daily. I still get a little jumpy when those M-109's (*Ed: 155 mm artillery cannons*) go off!

Spirits are high and we are getting antsy to get into the actual missions. Route clearance is one of the most dangerous jobs over here. It's just not the same without the entire Battalion here, seems odd. We are still trying to mesh the units together, but we have some good commanders and we should be all right.

Excerpt #2. The battalion staff is working on a new commander's coin to reflect their combat mission. It will be awarded for excellence in combat. (*Editor's Note: As soon as I get a good picture of the new coin, I will have it posted to the web site.*)

Excerpt #3. It has been pretty quiet, but we are still finding IED and EFP's along the routes. Our welders are working furiously adding additional protection to the vehicles anyway they can. Now they are working on adding ballistic glass and layers of armor to protect the sides of the vehicles. These young Soldiers are some of the best welders that I have ever seen. All 3 have been working their asses off trying to improve the equipment.

We are getting into a routine but the equipment doesn't stop much. There are a lot of missions and the units are on the go almost constantly.

Excerpt #4. It's good to hear from you. I appreciate your sincerity in helping information flow from here to there. Major Webber has just been tasked as our historian and PAO. He mentioned that he was trying to get with you for wisdom and guidance on how to proceed. If it's OK, I would like to share this e-mail with him to facilitate action? We're finally starting to find a groove. We had an incident where we had our first 1 KIA with 3 WIA (*Ed: The Soldiers involved in this event were not from HSC/FSC. They were Soldiers assigned to one of the subordinate Sapper Companies*). That was very sobering for the whole organization. Our missions have been going well recently, and our Soldiers are hanging in there.

Excerpt #5. We are running a ton of missions each week, mostly hot-seating equipment. I haven't seen a logbook in weeks. One unit has wrecked 4 vehicles already. The BC is really on their asses to get their operator program under control.

The morale seems to be good and the Packers are winning. The temperatures are in the mid 80's but it feels pretty good. Most of the air conditioning units only run during the day. We are starting to get into a rhythm but the missions keep piling up. We just started letting the 12 hour shift personnel in the motor pool get a day off. We also have a 9 hour shift with no days off. It seems to make the time go by faster if you are doing something. There's not much sightseeing to do when you are off anyway, so all of the NCO's/warrants in the maintenance section have opted for no time off. We will see how that plays out.

Nora picks me up for breakfast at 0600 so I gotta run. Take care old buddy.