

Lightning Strikes

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

14 DECEMBER 2012

Upcoming events:

NTC Town Hall:

7 Jan 13, 6 PM, Barlow Theater

9 Jan 13, 6 PM, Barlow Theater

Green Plate Welcome for new spouses:

8 Jan 13, 10 AM, BN conference room (bldg 7806)

Key Caller Round Table:

10 Jan 13, 6:30 PM, Kite's

BN Steering Committee Meeting

15 Jan 13, 10 AM, BN conference room

Family Care Team training:

15 Jan 13, 6 PM, 2-1 BSTB classroom

BN Steering Committee Meeting:

12 Feb 13, 10 AM, BN conference room

BN Steering Committee Meeting:

12 Mar 13, 10 AM, BN conference room

BN Commander

LTC John Mountford

BN CSM

CSM Phong Tran

Staff Duty Phone Number

785-239-5222

Battalion Web Page:

http://www.1id.army.mil/UnitPage.aspx?unit=2bct_1_7FA

Battalion Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/#/pages/1-7-Field-Artillery/117945511553239>

A Letter From Lightning 6 and 7

It is with great pride that we watched the battalion develop into a cohesive team this fall as it continued to train for its National Training Center Rotation in February in preparation for the Dagger Brigade's regional alignment with Africa Command (AFRICOM). As we conducted the final iterations of the combined arms live fire exercise and convoy live fire exercise this week, we completed the last collective training events as we head into the holidays. It is our hope that you and your family have the time to relax during the holiday season after what has been a very eventful fall.

As we enter 2013 there is a certain degree of uncertainty in what the New Year will



LTC Mountford talking with SFC Jones (HHB) during the

AFRICOM during the remainder of the year. We can also tell you that there will be the normal leader transitions and Soldier moves throughout the year and that the battalion will support the typical cycle of Army tasks and provide Soldiers to support other unit's training center rotations and off post exercises. Our goal through any period of uncertainty is that our Soldiers and Families thrive

bring. What we can tell you with good certainty is that the battalion will participate in a National Training Center Rotation in February and that some elements of the battalion may support tasks associated with the brigade's regional alignment with



rather than just survive. For the Soldiers we will ensure that they thrive through challenging training that will prepare them for any mission any where any time. The National Training Center Rotation is part of this training strategy and the challenges that we will face in the Mojave Desert will make us better prepared to face similar challenges elsewhere. The National Training Center Rotation will also be an incredible opportunity for our Families to show their resiliency. They too will face challenges, whether it is the family's first Army deployment or tenth. Together, the families will thrive through the support of one another and the great volunteers that make up our Family Readiness Groups. Your Family Readiness Group Leaders along with this command rely on our ability to communicate to assist our Families. We at the battalion level have several ways in which we try to communicate with our Soldiers and Families. If you have not already checked out the unit web page (http://www.riley.army.mil/UnitPage.aspx?unit=2bct_1_7FA) or our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/1-7-Field-Artillery/117945511553239>), we'd ask that you give them a glance and see if you find them useful.

Finally, we wish you and your family a very happy holiday season and all the best in the coming New Year. If you are traveling, please be safe.

First Lightning!

LTC John Mountford and CSM Phong Tran

NCO of the Quarter

The Command Sergeant Major is happy to announce the winners of the 1st Quarter, Fiscal year 2013 NCO and Soldier of the Quarter Competition.

SSG James Key won the First Lightning Battalion NCO of the Quarter Board for 1st Quarter, Fiscal Year 2013. SGT Key is a Paladin Section in Alpha Battery and has served in the Army for six years to include deployments in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and NEW

DAWN. He is a native of Charlotte, North Carolina and has one child. His goal is to become a Staff Sergeant and eventually become a Combat Operator in 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment Delta working in conjunction with Joint Special Operations Command. He also plans to earn his bachelors and masters degrees.



NCO of the Quarter, SSG James Key, Alpha Battery



Soldier of the Quarter, SPC Stratton Johnson, Alpha Battery

Soldier of the Quarter

SPC Stratton Johnson won the First Lightning Battalion Soldier of the Quarter Board for 1st Quarter, Fiscal year 2013. SPC Johnson is also from A Battery and has over three years of service in the Army to include a deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM with 1-84 FA out of Baumholder, Germany. SPC Johnson is from Marietta, Ohio and will finish his enlistment in March of 2014.

Congratulations to both of these great Soldiers and leaders. Their hard work and dedication reflect great credit upon them, their mentors who inspired them to compete and the First Lightning Battalion.



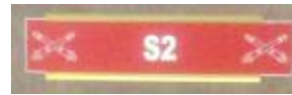
Btry Commander
 CPT Cotter
 Btry 1SG
 1SG Day
 785-240-2266

FRG Leader
 Rachel Cotter
 hhb.hellraisers@gmail.com

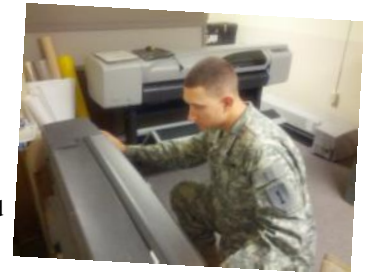
Upcoming Events:

NTC Town Hall Briefing
 7 & 9 January, 6 PM, Barlow
 Theater

HHB



Are you in need of a security clearance or background check? Do you require a military map of a specific area? What if you needed to know how much illumination (moon light) there will be next Monday night? A quick visit to the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery S2 office can help you with most of your clearance and intelligence data needs. The S2 section specializes in both war fighting products and also provides everyday garrison needs in support of all Soldiers in the battalion.



Recently, 1-7 FA conducted battery level situational training exercises (STX) in the field; a roughly two week field exercise. The Battalion Tactical Operations Center (TOC) was also deployed to the field during the STX to support the batteries as they maneuvered through their areas of the training exercise. The S2 section is located within the Battalion TOC to provide intelligence reporting for the missions.

Some of the main tasks that the S2 is responsible for are insuring that weather forecasts, illumination data, enemy/friendly movements, and significant actions (SIGACTS) are updated continuously. All of these elements play important roles in developing mission plans such as the Field Artillery Support Plan (FASP), which is the battalion commander's tactical plan for employing fires; his commander's intent and concept of operations. The main role of the S2 in the FASP is to provide intelligence on enemy information that is vital to the accomplishment of the unit's mission. This may include indirect fire capabilities, air threats, ground threat, and any other enemy information that is relevant to the unit. All of this is presented by the S2 section in a product called a Modified Combined Obstacle Overlay (MCOO). This product portrays the effects of all battlespace environments such as obstacles, key terrain, and objectives. The S2 section also has large printers allowing it to print detailed military maps of many specific areas that help with creating the proper products for the mission, which are used by the leaders on the ground to successfully execute their tasks.



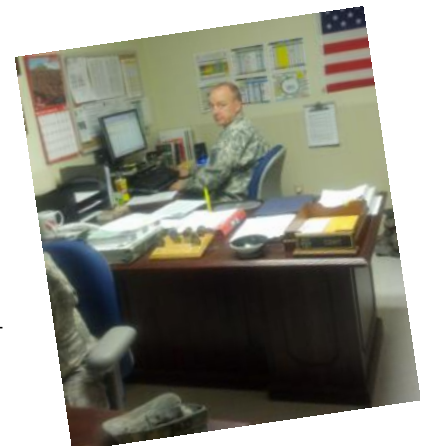
The S2 section also performs tasks for the battalion that are necessary for Soldiers back in garrison. This includes conducting security clearances for individual Soldiers and upholding the physical security standards of the battalion. Every Soldier in the battalion needs to have some form of security

clearance and because of the nature of their work, they may run into the need to access classified information. The S2 office ensures that individual clearances do not expire and are organized for renewals in a timely manner.

Keeping information secure is important, but so is the physical security of the battalion. In garrison, the S2 office ensures that physical security of all the batteries and headquarters is up to standard in accordance with the post Inspector General (IG) policies. Everything from arms rooms down to individual buildings must pass rigorous inspections based off of IG criteria.

Whatever the intelligence or security needs, the S2 section is ready to answer the call to make the battalion successful on the battlefield and at home station.

The 1-7 FA S2 section is operated and supported by CPT Todd Cramer (OIC), LT Po Chiang (AOIC), Staff Sergeant Randall Cline (NCOIC), Sergeant Nickolas Johnson (Sr Analyst), SPC Nathaniel Mueller (Analyst), PFC Tyler Reynolds (Analyst).



Alpha Battery



Btry Commander
 CPT Rhodes
 Btry 1SG
 1SG Bamba
 785-240-2221

FRG Leader
 Ricki Rhodes
 Co-Leader
 Angi Mengionette
 a1_7fa@yahoo.com

Upcoming Events:

NTC Town Hall Briefing
 7 & 9 January, 6 PM, Barlow Theater



FORT RILEY, KS
 M109A6 Paladin in position before a live fire qualification exercise. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Jesse Bullock, 1-7 FA Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division)

RETURN OF THE KING

Greetings, friends and families of Alpha Battery. I would like to take a minute of your time to explain what the Soldiers of Alpha Battery have been doing since April. As you are all aware, we have had many busy days and numerous field training exercises. The training that we have been doing has led to a fully capable Paladin Battery which has the ability to deploy anywhere in the world while performing our duties as "Artillerymen".

At the start of our training, the current strength of the unit was at about 70 percent, due to the rotational efforts of The Department of the Army after a deployment. The first process in our training was to receive all of our equipment and vehicles required for training. With our equipment and vehicles in place, we were then able to start individual training for the Soldiers. Fort Sill was able to assist our efforts by providing us with knowledgeable instructors who were capable of refreshing our Artillery skills after going without them for over eighteen months. As a result, we saw these Soldiers evolve into a highly prepared and motivated group.

SPC Justin Emerson is one of Alpha Battery's driven soldiers. His dedication is shown through the response to a query regarding his job title as "The Number One Man." "The Number One Man is responsible for the morale of the crew, because it's through his

actions that the 'HOOAH-NESS' is increased." The Number One Man in a Field Artillery Battery is responsible for loading and firing the artillery round. When asked about the overall success of Alpha Battery, SPC Emerson states "He is grateful to be a part of an organization that places so much emphasis on camaraderie and leadership". Of course, no organization is perfect, and when asked about on what Alpha Battery could improve, SPC Emerson lightheartedly said, "Earlier COB (Close of Business) Formations."

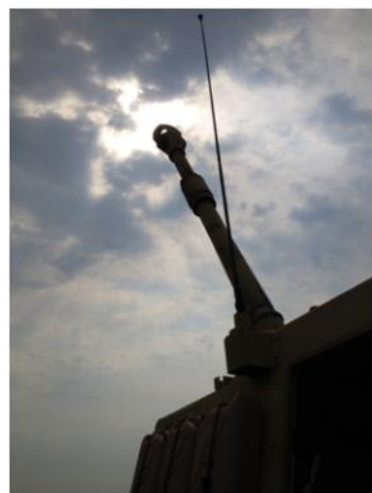
PFC Brett Thigpen joined Alpha Battery, 2nd Platoon, 1st Section upon its return from Iraq as a M109A6 Paladin Cannoneer and is currently a driver for his section. When asked what contribution he brings to his section, PFC Thigpen said, "I try to keep motivation levels high in the section, especially during field problems when we work long hours. I am very determined to be the best and fastest gun crew in the battalion." It is because of the contributions of excellent soldiers like PFC Thigpen that allows Alpha Battery and 1-7 FA to prosper.

After successful individual Soldier training was complete, we were able to move forward and begin our training at the section level. With sections still not at full strength, we managed to advance forward in our gated process. By the end of April, the Soldiers of the battery were able to successfully conduct live fire training with four of our sections, including both Fire Direction Centers. This was a tremendous accomplishment for a unit that had not fired a

single howitzer since July 2010.

The month of May brought a great influx of Soldiers to the battery. Once we were able to fully man our crews, we were able to successfully move on with our training program. We have been extremely busy training and certifying as platoons and a battery. The Soldiers of Alpha Battery have achieved a level of proficiency that has not been seen in many years. Their hard work and dedication has given Alpha Battery the capability to fight anywhere in the world and under any conditions. We are anticipating outstanding results at the National Training Center due to all the hard work and dedication provided by our Soldiers.

1SG JOHN A. BAMBA



Ft. Riley, KS
 A M109A6 Paladin Howitzer preparing to conduct a high angle fire mission. (U.S. Army photo by CPT Richie Rhodes, 1-7 FA Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division)

Bravo Bulls



Btry Commander
CPT Westbrook
Btry 1SG
1SG Deatherage
785-240-2673

FRG Leader
Molly Westbrook
bravobullsfrg@gmail.com

Upcoming Events:

NTC Town Hall Briefing
7 & 9 January, 6 PM, Barlow
Theater

The Apaches circled overhead on their way to the battlefield. Radios crackled with calls for fire as the forward elements maneuvered towards the enemy. The chaos of war unfolded to the north and Bravo Battery, 1-7 FA sat calmly at the firing point ready to provide immediate fire support to the Second Armored Brigade Combat Team. This is not the beginning of some new, high intensity conflict. This is instead 1st Battalion 7th Field Artillery Regiment's training at Fort Riley for their upcoming National Training Center rotation.

"This is a great opportunity for us to rehearse our wartime mission and also to certify our crews," said 1LT Glenn Rumph, Bravo Battery's First Platoon Leader. The field training exercise at the beginning of December provided the chance for the brigade to once again proof its fire support structure from sensor to shooter in both dry and live fire. Each day saw a new maneuver company executing their mission with Bravo Battery in support. The fire support teams in each company had the task of coordinating all the available assets from artillery, to mortars and even aircraft. "There were times when we had to go cold because of the Apaches," said SFC Andre Payne, First Platoon's Gunnery Sergeant; indicating the proximity of these two heavy weapons systems and their ability to place the preponderance of their fires onto the target.

While supporting the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX), Bravo Battery also certified each of their individual howitzer crews. "It is a testament to the abilities of these Noncommissioned Officers and Soldiers that they can so rapidly transition from supporting a complicated combined arms operation to being evaluated themselves," said 1LT Casey Nugent, Second Platoon, Bravo Battery Fire Direction Officer.

Ultimately, the CALFEX support and crew certification went very well for Bravo Battery who spent a week in the field and fired over 300 rounds safely and accurately. 1SG Deatherage summed up the event, "these Soldiers performed in an exemplary manner, proving that Bravo Battery is always ready for the call."



Btry Commander

CPT Dwyer
Btry 1SG
1SG Dewitt
785-240-2202

FRG Leader

Megan Dwyer
A1_7fa@yahoo.com
gco.gunslingers@gmail.com

Upcoming Events:

NTC Town Hall Briefing
7 & 9 January, 6 PM, Barlow Theater

Golf Company Maintenance Platoon

Golf Company Maintenance Platoon focuses on ensuring all of the mechanics are trained at their jobs but also to cover down in other positions within the platoon. The reasons for this are the tool boxes are the same, not all of the mechanics always have vehicle to work on, and a mechanic is a mechanic regardless of the type of training that the soldier received. Note that this does not mean they work on everything by themselves there are trained personnel to work with the soldiers who are not as familiar with that piece of equipment.

One of the big things we work for is recovery. Recovery is big because when we are not in the field it is the closest that

Christmas is upon us and we are all ready for a well deserved break. The Distribution Platoon has worked hard to get itself ready for our rotation to the National Training Center in February.

In September, PFC Carson and his wife welcomed into the world Sydney Capri Carson. The whole family is doing well and is very excited that she is here. This is the first of several children the distribution platoon is expecting this year and in

our guys come to running missions. Every mission is different and training the soldiers to work with and operate the M88 Recovery Vehicle is important not only hear on Fort Riley but also as the Soldier goes from one post to another. The understanding of what recovery is why it is important, and how to use the equipment to fulfill a variety of missions. The M88 can be used for the recovery of tracked vehicles; its crane can be used to pull engines vehicles or to move large items around the motor pool.

The training of the Soldiers is an important focus and we have worked to train our Soldiers how to use the M88 although it is not the school house training it is valuable training that will help these Soldiers here and wherever the Army sends them in the future. It is important to understand we have hazards

the coming months.

In October, the battalion conducted a series of Situational Training Exercises (STX) for the batteries from 26 October to 06 November. From the very north of the Fort Riley Training Area, the distribution platoon conducted rearm and refuel missions to each of the batteries numerous times, while practicing our night driving capabilities. We also practiced our ability to move our living area from one location to another at a moment's notice.

This month the distribution platoon supported the batteries supporting the brigade during 2nd Brigade's

that we work with and these vehicles because of size and functionality can be very hazardous if the soldiers do not follow the instructions of the leaders training them. Safety is a focus for us which and that is why training the Soldiers on this equipment are important to the leadership. Proper training and techniques are one and the same.



From left to right PFC Roque, SPC Walker, SPC Satterwhite

Distro Platoon

Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise. Six hundred and forty five artillery rounds and 1600 gallons of fuel were issued to support the operation. While providing this support, the platoon was also able to engage in some unique training. On 08&09 December, the 299th Brigade Support Battalion conducted a convoy live fire exercise. Twenty one Soldiers from the distribution and maintenance platoons mounted HMMWVs to practice running convoys through hostile areas, engaging enemy combatants with .50 caliber machine guns and squad automatic weapons, and reacting to suspect and detonated IEDs. Seven crews were qualified to operate gun trucks.

Live action!

1-7 FA Volunteers



Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

SSG Matthew Musteric

SSG Musteric has continued his volunteer service accruing 140 hours coaching youth sports in the Spring of 2012. He held practices during the week and attended all games. He taught youth the fundamentals of soccer, the importance of playing together as a team and respect for others. His commitment to working with youth teaching the fundamentals of soccer is truly commendable. The lessons taught will have a lasting impact.



1LT Donald Gillian



1LT Gillian volunteered with the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge of Kansas City from November 28, 2011 to January 6, 2012. During this time period, he gave over 100 hours of his personal time to help others in need. He provided a listening ear to guest as they spoke about their journey through this awful disease. He cooked amazing meals to help guests keep their nourishment high. He showed an inspiring movie to provide an escape from reality for a few short hours. The Hope Lodge staff and guest are truly grateful for such a giving person. He continues to offer his services to the lodge.

1LT Brennan Deveraux

1LT Brennan S. Deveraux was awarded the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for his continuous work with Soldiers and their families. As a purple belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and an All Army Combatives competitor, 1LT Deveraux is able to share his knowledge and experiences with those interested in martial arts. He works with Soldiers who want to become competitors as well as kids who are looking for a new hobby. His classes are a safe and friendly environment, but require a lot of hard work and discipline. He currently trains around 20 students from around post. The classes are free of charge open to anyone. The team is currently training three times a week at Robinson gym. If anyone is interested in learning they should try out a session and see what it's all about.



QUARTERLY

FRGCALENDARS

January 2013							February 2013						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 30	31	Jan 1, 13	2	3	4	5							
6	7 18:00 20:00 1-7 FA NTC Town Hall (Barlow Theater)	8 10:00 00:00 Green Plate Welcome	9 18:00 20:00 1-7 FA NTC Town Hall (Barlow Theater)	10 18:30 20:30 Key Caller Round Table (Kite's)	11	12							
13	14	15 10:00 11:00 1-7 FA Steering Committee Meeting (Tobey Con 18:00 20:00 Brigade Care Team Training (2-1 B5TB Classroom)	16	17	18	19							
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 10:30 12:00 Fort Riley Network (RCC)							
27	28 18:00 19:00 BDE VOQ Ceremony (TBD)	29 18:00 19:00 1ID VOQ Ceremony (RCC)	30	31	Feb 1	2							

February 2013							March 2013						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
24	25	26	27	28			29	30	31				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1	2							
3	4	5	6	7	8	9							
10	11	12 10:00 11:00 1-7 FA Steering Committee Meeting (Tobey Conference Room)	13	14	15	16							
17	18	19	20	21	22 10:30 12:00 Fort Riley Network (RCC)	23							
24	25	26	27	28	Mar 1	2							

March 2013							April 2013						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
31							28	29	30				

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Feb 24	25	26	27	28	Mar 1	2
2/24 - 3/1							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3/3 - 8							
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
3/10 - 15			10:00 11:00 1-7 FA Steering Committee Meeting (Tobey Conference Room)				
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
3/17 - 22							
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
3/24 - 29						10:30 12:00 Fort Riley Network (RCC)	
	31	Apr 1	2	3	4	5	6
3/31 - 4/5							

Important Phone Numbers

Battalion Staff Duty: 785-239-5222

On Call Chaplain: 785-239-4957

Chaplain's office: 785239-4729 cell: 785-307-3935

HHB Training Room: 785-240-2266

A Btry Training Room: 785-240-2281

B Btry Training Room: 785-240-2671

G Co Training Room: 785-240-2202

FRSA: 785-239-9104