

BOTTOM TIMES

Volume 1, Issue 3

April 2005

511th En TM

1LT Richard W. Wertz III

Detachment Commander

Hello again everyone, another month has passed so here I am to tell you how we are doing. I have received a few updates and some feedback on the last letter, so I will continue to write these. Again, if you have any suggestions or people to add to the mailing list, please let me know.

We have been fairly busy the past month diving all over Kuwait, Iraq and



This is the bridge that we repaired, note the big hole.

Qatar. The guys in Qatar have been doing security swims on Army and Navy vessels to ensure that there are no hazards to the incoming traffic. This is not the most glorious mission, but the water is nice and it is some pretty good diving. We have had a few opportunities to visit the capital of Doha and the environment is a little more relaxed in Qatar.

We have been to Iraq several times over the past month, most notably to salvage a submerged pontoon from an Iraqi civilian bridge. This bridge was upstream from an American bridge and had it failed, it would have taken out both bridges severing a vital line of communications in theater. It was fairly chilly and rained most of the time we were there, so it was great diving weather. The local Iraqi children kept us pretty entertained with their unusual knowledge of GI English and the civilians were very happy we got the bridge opened again.

In Kuwait we have been working on equipment recoveries, hydrographic surveys and security swims. We had a sports day competition against the Kuwait Navy and we discovered why we are divers and not athletes. The weather here has been perfect. For a week it got up to 95 degrees, but for the most part it has been between 80-85 degrees.

Right: SPC Rowley, SSG Kaufman, SGT Knoop and some other guy...our second place 200m relay team.

We have moved living quarters from our eight man tents to 50-80 man bays. Sorry to say that I can't really report the bright side of that, because it really is not that great. Guess that is our only other complaint next to being away from our families though. Speaking of



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Attached USADA Newsletter

Attached Reunion Registration

Remember anyone can write a letter into the editor voicing their opinions.

TACOM

SFC Clay Haney

For those of you that do not know as of yet LTC Jeffrey Carr is the new Product Manager for this office PM-SKOT. He is really behind the Diving Program and is putting an emphasis on diving that we have not received in the past. LTC Carr will be making a visit to all of the units in the future to get a feel for what we really do. He was able to visit Panama City during the last MDV evals but we all know that P.C. is a far cry from how the real world functions. All units will be receiving training for the ROV in the next few months from Outland Technologies; this should help everyone with the learning curve on the ROV. You will also be getting manufactured certified training for all Kirby Morgan products we currently use (MK 48, SL 17K, and the EXO) this will give all attendees a certificate that states they are factory certified repair technicians. We are also working on the communications for the MK 48 that will allow you to communicate without the aid of an umbilical. PM-SKOT is also looking into the problems associated with the containers for the deep sea sets to see about switching from aluminum to steel for durability. As of last report from the 511th the new compressors are performing well and they are happy with them in the land of eternal sun.

I would like everyone to know that TACOM/ PM-SKOT is here to support the soldier in every possible way. Should you have any equipment issues/ concerns or would like to express that you actually like the gear you have please feel free to contact me directly. If you have equipment problems let me know as soon as possible so we can correct it. Also keep in mind that if you develop a need for something that would benefit the teams directly write it up and send it to myself and the DCD at Leonard Wood we are unable to change things without input from the field. I will be linking up with the 511th at the end of April to support those deployed, that will also help to determine how well the equipment is holding up and to identify any future requirements.

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Training Developer Desk

By SFC von Keyserling

I would like to thank the 13 skill level one, 4 skill level 2, 3 skill level 3, and 3 skill level 4 Soldiers who completed the survey that I sent out to the field. It is reassuring to know that out of all the divers in the field that 24 think enough about diving to provide input into the development of future and current training programs for diving.

I will be keeping the survey open through the month of May in hopes that we can achieve a 90% response from the field. Here is the website for the survey in case you may have misplaced it.

https://secure.armyqualityjobsurveys.com/ENL_21D_FE_B05/index.cgi

Other news, the STP for Skill Level 1 & 2 is only waiting on the results of the survey before being sent out to the editors for a final review. I will be starting the revision of Skill Level 3 & 4 in May and would welcome any suggestions on tasks training frequency, pertinent warnings, modified job steps, or any other area in regards to improving the tasks for these skill levels. If you are interested in reviewing any of the tasks just send me an email with what area you would like to look at: Diving operations, Medical, Demo, salvage and rigging, combat, communication, Recon and Survey, and/or Mine warfare.

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Chief Diving Supervisor

By MSG Kane

We just finished up our second Master Diver Evaluation for the year. The board ran very smoothly and was a great board to be a part of, especially as my last one. Congratulations to SFC Burress on passing the evaluation portion of ANCOG. We await his arrival to Ft Leonard Wood to take over as the Combat Developer.

Army transformation is still happening very quickly. However, diving being a low density MOS and not high on the food chain, our transformation is coming slow. Transformation is becoming a money issue for the Army and we fall below the poverty line. With help from Ft Eustis we are trying to get moved up on the list and hope to transform in the '06 timeframe. Presently we are slated to fall under the 249th out of Ft Belvoir. After some concerns with that move, their command is now all for us becoming a part of their organization. Getting under an Engineer flag is the first step in establishing two diving companies. Hawaii's transformation into a company of the same design (HQ section and three dive teams) is still some time away.

In the area of training, PC is doing great work in incorporating the Warrior Tasks and Drills into their training. With support from the Ranger Training Battalion at Eglin AFB, the FTX will be the best it has ever been. Talk around Ft Leonard Wood is that D/577's AIT training is the best in the Army and should be the bench mark for other AITs to follow. PC is also working on training the AIT, 1CL, and EBDO courses together. Again, striving to accomplish the Army's vision of gauntlet style training. FBCB2 training for BNCOC is still pending concurrence from the National Guard. Hopefully it will be approved for training by the end of the year. SFC von Keyserling has sent out task surveys to each unit. Please complete the surveys so that he can make changes to the STP in line with what the soldiers and leaders believe are most viable to current missions. This is every diver's opportunity to have their say in the future of diving.

On a personal note, this will be my last input to Bottom Times. MSG Pagel will be taking over my position about 1 June 05. My last day on Ft Leonard Wood will be 19 July. I just want to thank everyone for a wonderful and enjoyable 20 year diving career. I've had the opportunity to travel to a lot of great places and to work with many of the most professional SOLDIERS in the Army. I will surely miss the comradery and hope to maintain the strong friendships of which I have built with many of you over the years. Good luck in the future and stay safe.

MSG James "Big Daddy" Kane

Phase I Comments

SFC Bobby Irvin

Life is good at Fort Leonard Wood, it's almost warm enough to run around in shorts / T-shirts. We've had a total of 6 soldiers graduate Phase 1 since January and we will start a new class in April. SSG Bascomb and I are trying to improve the graduation rate without lowering the standards by updating the information being taught and emphasizing areas of importance to allow for a successful graduation rate in Panama City. I still believe that we are falling way short on the number of reclasses entering the field. I have to ask that the divers in Hawaii / Virginia take an active role when possible and try to motivate other soldiers that are eligible to submit a dive packet. DA form 5030R is a good direction to point these service members to. If there are any questions, contact us at 573-596-0131 ext: 6-2679.

Starting in May, we are going to have the first "Diver Orientation Day" for the 577th EN BN. We will invite 16 highly motivated E-4 and below to attend a day of education on what Engineer Divers are all about, and at the same time, allow them the chance to experience some pool evolutions.

With the new automatic promotion to E-5 regulation, I was a little worried about accepting some reclasses that were pushing the time in service / time and grade requirements. After further considerations (talking with smart people), this should not affect us in the long run. Who knows, with our shortage of E-6's in the field, maybe that too will become automatic?

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which, we deeply appreciate the letters, packages, prayers and support. Our families, friends and even civilians that have no ties to the team have continued to show their support and consideration for what we are doing and we surely appreciate it.

We fall under the 844th EN BN over here and they have done a fantastic job supporting us. The Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major visit regularly and continue to meet all our needs. The Battalion Chaplain has been here several times to check on moral and provide support. People frequently come and visit our compound, I think because we have the best location in theater or maybe to try and get in on a dive. Either way, everyone has been fantastic in supporting us.

Well, I have rambled on long enough. Again I have attached a few pictures of the boys at work or play as well as two letters from SPC Kennedy and SPC Kneipp. Hope you enjoy. Our thoughts are with our families' everyday and please know that the Master Diver and I are doing everything we can to keep your diver safe and sound.

I would also like to let you know that I carry a phone with me at all times. Should you have an emergency that you would need to contact your loved one, please call my wife Joyce at 757-532-1675 or 757-833-1696 and she will contact me immediately.

1LT Rick Wertz



Above: *The mighty 511th do I need to say any more*

Left: *SSG Vance and SSG Woodcox trying to figure out how to fix the bridge.*

Howdy! I'm SPC Tom Kneipp. Life in the sandbox has been pretty good actually. We've had some awesome times and good missions. I really feel like we're doing a lot to support the mission and help the people of Iraq. We've gone up north on a couple of missions and left a lasting impression on our supporting units. We've also had our not so fun jobs, but we can always find a way to make it a good time. We also have a lot of people that are willing to work with us and get us what we need, which is a huge help. We've done a lot of training also, knocking out our salvage diver checklists. We stay busy and it helps the time go by a lot faster. Well, that's it for me; ya'll have a good one!

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Right: No one is sick, so our Medic SPC Nadeau is working like a diver.

To Friends and Family of the 511th:

Things in the Middle East have been much better than I have previously anticipated. The living conditions are very accommodating, considering where we are. The work has been steady, which makes the time pass much quicker. The first two months have flown by. The one thing that I personally think could be a little better is the food that they serve in the DFAC. The selection is poor, at best, and the food is usually not as hot as it should be. But who am I to complain, I could be eating MRE's three times a day.

Sincerely,
SPC Dan Kennedy



SPC LaFrance, SPC Evers, SGT Roberts and SGT Machuca preparing for a dive in the Tigris River.

Delta Company

Cpt Shawn English



What a start to the New Year for Delta Company. We have had five courses running concurrently all while hosting the ANCOG Master Diver Evaluation Board which was a big success for the Army Dive field by adding Master Diver Boyer from Delta Company and Master Diver Irvin who runs the Phase I diver program from HHC 577th EN Bn. The Iron S-3 was the Board President and kept the Cadre and Students loose in a very difficult time.

January also meant many Graduates from the Dive field including: 9 Second Class AIT students, and 10 BNCOC 1st Class Divers who are ready to contribute to the two Army Dive Company's missions around the world. The company also volunteered 43 hours to help run the Iron Man Triathlon held in Panama City as well as volunteering time to Habitat for humanity in order to help local citizens rebuild homes from Hurricane Ivan contributing more than 60 hours on nights and weekends.

February kept up the torrid pace with the start of another AIT 2nd Class Diver course, BNCOC, along with the continued training of the new Engineer Basic Diving Officer course led by SFC Lohman. 1SG Wilson and I, were able to get up to FLW for the Command and Staff brief and get to see the great training plans going on in the Battalion for the STX lanes.

March has brought nice weather again to Panama City and the FRG with help from SSG Valencia has taken advantage of the weather in order to raise \$645.00 in order to offset costs for the upcoming diver reunion that will be held in August. The Company has been volunteering to help out our Navy counter-parts with the upcoming blessing of the Fleet on the 26th of March as well as taken on the Navy's 25th Anniversary Copper Collar run led by SSG Lopez which will be held in June. The end of March will start another Master Diver Evaluation Board and we welcome the Bn. XO to have his flip-flops shinned and his Hawaiian shirt pressed and ready to go.

I would like to thank all of the soldiers and families for the time they give and the patience shown with the ever-changing schedules we ask of every one. We are looking forward to the training and resources we are being provided from the Battalion staff and the 6th Ranger Training Battalion at Eglin, A.F.B. in getting divers ready to contribute to our on going battle against terrorism.

CPT English
D Company Commander

Editors Note:

7th Dive contributions were not forgotten it is just they were to busy doing what they do and could not find the time to let the rest of us in on the great things they are doing.

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