



Old Bill's Chips

278th Regimental Combat Team



Issue 07

July 2005



Independence Day in Iraq

If you would like to submit stories or pictures for Old Bill's Chips, or if you have questions or comments concerning this newsletter please send them to:

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Public Affairs Guidance for dealing with the media

- Always check to see if the media rep. is credentialed. If not credentialed, suggest they contact the 42ID PAO, Maj. Goldenberg at the DIV HQ.
- Never discuss current or future operations. Topics such as Force Protection and ROE are off limits.
- Everything is on the RECORD when talking with the media.
- Stay in your lane and only discuss what you know and NEVER speculate.
- Be prepared by knowing three things you can say about yourself and three things about your job.
- Avoid using any military jargon. Keep it plain and simple.
- If you do not know the answer, then just say you do not know. NEVER lie to the media.
- Set the record straight if the media has the facts confused.
- Have your chain of command notify the PAO about the interview.

Remember, if we do not tell the story, the media will be forced to write it on their own. We can be proud of what we are doing for OIF and the sacrifices our families are making. Let the world know that you are making a stand and what you are willing to defend.



Soldiers from the 278th RCT play in a volleyball tournament as part of the Fourth of July activities at Camp Caldwell, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



www.278acr.com



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika



To be a good leader and a good soldier, you must be loyal. Stand by your organization, the officers, noncommissioned officers and fellow soldiers in it.

Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. You began your Army career by promising to support and defend the Constitution. Your loyalty to the Constitution also means obedience to the orders of the President and higher ranking officers and NCOs. Since before the founding of the republic, America's Army has respected its subordination to the President; a civilian. A loyal soldier is one who supports the leadership and stands up for fellow soldiers. You show loyalty to your unit by doing your share without complaint and to the best of your ability.

A soldier who displays loyalty does the following:

- Put obligations in correct order: Constitution, the Army, the unit, and self (to include your family)
- Show faithfulness to the unit (to include wearing the 278th RCT Combat Patch not the 1ID Combat Patch or the 42ID Combat Patch)
- Carry out tough orders without expressing personal criticism
- Defend soldiers against unfair treatment from outside or above
- Abide by and enforce the standards of your unit

Loyalty to fellow soldiers is critical for generating confidence and trust. Loyalty to one's leaders and fellow soldiers is the most vital resource for a unit. It is this commitment that causes units and soldiers to risk everything to succeed and to bring everyone back. You will find that after enduring a difficult experience the bond between the soldiers of your unit will be even stronger.

When NCOs stand in front of their soldiers, they will see a reflection of themselves. Look into their eyes and you will know how well you are leading.

Regimental Command Sgt. Maj. James T. Pippin
278th Regimental Combat Team
Diyala Province, Iraq



Regimental Commander

Volunteers,

As I write this, you have successfully completed over 9,600 dangerous combat missions in "Operation Thunder Road". No easy task in the environment that you are conducting business on a daily basis. I am very grateful and proud of your immense accomplishments. We are helping the Iraqi people by establishing a safer, securer eastern Iraq. You can see the progress as you travel around the area – shops and houses are being built everywhere. The Iraqi adults have started to wave and smile at us as we pass; something only the children were doing before. I feel that in AO Volunteer, the Iraqi people's spirits have been lifted from what you have done for them. They have a greater confidence in the Iraqi Army, Police and Department of Border enforcement that we have been training. They are improving everyday and the Regimental partnership teams are on the leading edge of building a new Iraq with a competent, capable and moral force. We are teaching the Iraqi people that their armed forces are for protecting them - not controlling them as they did in Saddam's time. There is still suspicion, but every good deed and act chips at the wall of skepticism. We have made progress here, but my trepidations are many. We must be cagey in all that we do and everyone must have a wingman. It is still a very dangerous place and we must make sure we do all that we can do to protect and watch out for each other. The weather is hot and unforgiving, and we must prepare for any contingency as we move through the battle space. Safety is paramount in all operations. We can prevent injury and death by enforcing standards and with the NCOs living out our motto of "Take Charge!"



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika

The Regimental R&R program has been a success. For the eligible soldiers who have served more than 270 straight days - the last 26 will take their leave in September. The RS1 Section and the CSMs have done an enormous job implementing this program while preserving command and control and leadership structure. I want to thank you all for making this work in a very complicated situation.

I also must give accolades to our families and friends back home. We continue to receive exceptional support for the soldiers of the Regiment - which means a great deal. This has been a hard deployment on everyone; including our families. We all have learned many lessons about life and sacrifice during this time. We have learned that freedom comes with a price and that many have paid so much both here and at home. I want you to know that the prayers we have received have made a difference here and I know all the folks back home will continue to pray for our safety as we complete our mission.

The Regiment is poised to make a huge difference at this juncture, by allowing the Iraqi people to control their own destiny. Your commitment to excellence and your service to this historic Regiment and to your country has made the Iraqi's dream more real than they have ever known. We need to button our chin strap a little tighter and sprint to the finish line as we fulfill our momentous duty here in AO Volunteer. God Bless this Regiment and "Take Charge!"

TAKE CHARGE!

Col. Dennis J. Adams
U.S. Cavalry
Diyala Province, Iraq





4th of July Independence Day



Controlled explosions simulate fireworks for the soldiers to enjoy as part of the Fourth of July events at Forward Operating Base Cobra. (U.S. Army photo)



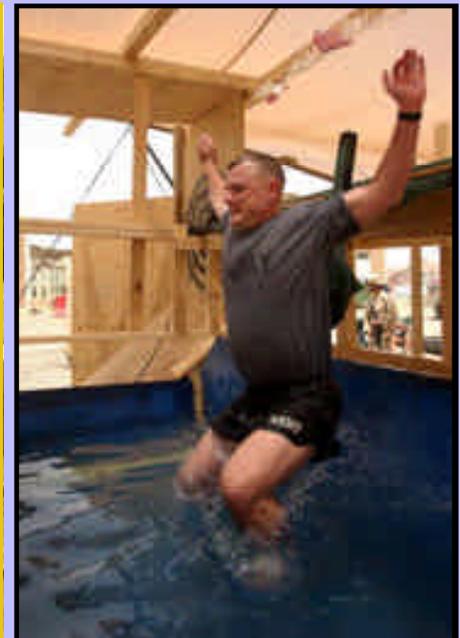
Capt. Mitch Murray, commander of 1st Squadron's D Battery, fires up his troops in a game of tug-of-war. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Sgt. Kenneth Bindschatel, 1071st Maintenance Company, (left) and Sgt. Barry Byrd, Troop A, Regimental Support Squadron (RSS), 278th RCT, (center) fight for control of the ball in a volleyball game on July 4, 2005, at Camp Caldwell, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Sam Wood plays in a horseshoe tournament at Camp Caldwell on July 4th. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Capt. Owen B. Ray, II, commander Regimental Higher Headquarters Troop, 278th RCT, is plunged into the water by an accurately thrown softball at FOB Caldwell on July 4th, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)

Soldier Mechanics Keep 278th Troops Rolling

By Edward Lee Pitts
Chattanooga Times-Free Press

On each of the 278th Regimental Combat Team's three Iraqi bases, soldiers sporting grease stains on their desert camouflage uniforms or tan coveralls stand out from the others.

These troops carry standard-issue M-4 machine guns slung over their shoulders or pistols strapped in holsters, but their primary weapons include wrenches and screwdrivers.

If it has wheels or tracks and can be driven in the Iraqi desert, the hundreds of mechanics with this Tennessee-based National Guard unit ensure the combat vehicle stays on the roads. The mechanics understand there are no second chances as their 278th counterparts depend on the vehicles for protection from an insurgency that can strike anywhere.

"If a guy is out there on a vehicle you've worked on, you want to make sure they make it back," said Sgt. 1st Class Larry McCollum, 57, of Lenoir City, Tenn.

Long hours spent keeping the vehicles running will not end until the regiment returns home, according to Staff Sgt. Sue Duty, 47, of Knoxville, a maintenance logistics clerk. She said the soldiers feel a

greater sense of urgency here where life and death hinge on the right tweaks and changes made under the hood of a Humvee.

"If there is even the slightest chance it will break down, we won't send it out," Staff Sgt. Duty said.

This attention to detail by the 278th mechanics has paid off, officials said. The daily measurement of fully operational 278th vehicles has averaged more than 90 percent of capacity since the 278th arrived in Iraq in December.

The regiment's 1st Squadron, whose 25 mechanics work 10-hour days, six days a week, has the best maintenance record in the entire 42nd

Infantry Division, which oversees the 278th, according to Sgt. 1st Class Eddie Watson, 56, of Athens, Tenn.

The 1st Squadron mechanics have changed more than 400 tires, conducted more than 300 oil changes and completed more than 600 service checks on about 320 vehicles, records show.

The desert dust and pothole-marked roads in Iraq make every mile rough for the 278th vehicles, wreaking havoc on their suspension. Soldiers say driving on the roads is like four-wheeling back home.

"Seventy-six thousand miles here is



Soldiers replace the tracks on a M3A3 Bradley Fighting vehicle at Camp Caldwell, Iraq, on February 16, 2005. (U.S. Army photo)

like 200,000 miles back home." said Cpl. Chris Galyon, 32, of Harriman, Tenn., "Sometimes I think it would be cheaper to fix the roads."

Keeping engines humming is a round-the-clock task for the nearly 3,000-member regiment. But it has recently been made harder by Iraq's soaring summer temperatures, where the mercury can be measured daily in the triple digits.

The 130-degree-plus temperatures make it too hot for the mechanics even to touch their tools and force many units to switch to night hours.

Mechanic Sgt. Billy Humphrey, of Knoxville, said he's lost 21 pounds here

in six months, mainly from sweat.

Meanwhile, the heat is doing more damage to the vehicles and causing more work for the mechanics. There is a shortage of air conditioning parts throughout Iraq for the military's armored Humvees, said Capt. Holly Payne, a maintenance shop officer.

"Not only are soldiers fighting the enemy, they are fighting the heat, and that's not good," said Capt. Payne, of Hendersonville, Tenn.

But Staff Sgt. Todd Thomas, 40, of Wartburg, Tenn., a motor sergeant with Support Squadron, said he expected a lot more trouble with the vehicles in Iraq.

He said daily use of the vehicles prevents some of the long-term problems the mechanics often had to deal with back home when the regiment's vehicles sat in armory parking lots most of the year. On drill weekends back home if mechanics failed to repair a broken-down Humvee in one weekend, it could be put off until next month's guard duty, according to Spc. Chris Lindsay.

In Iraq, the mechanics focus on preventive maintenance on the regiment's fleet of tanks, Humvees, trucks of all sizes and Bradley Fighting Vehicles that get driven up to 300 miles a day and need regular oil changes and replacement parts.

Capt. Payne said her unit tries to anticipate problems by stocking up on parts. Her Support Squadron unit, which has completed more than 2,000 work orders since December, keeps about 900 parts stored at Camp Caldwell, the regiment's main operating base. Metal containers stacked in rows outside her unit's building hold the biggest items -- five-ton engines for M1-A1 Abrams tanks.

The biggest battlefield beast in the 278th arsenal gets top maintenance priority, Capt. Payne said. When a tank breaks down, mechanics work without stopping until the tank is fixed, she said.



Staff Sgt. Monty Fritts, Regimental Support Squadron, 278th RCT, offers a word of prayer for a safe journey from Camp Caldwell to Forward Operating Base Prosperity in Baghdad, Iraq, on July 16, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



1st Lt. Colby Tippens, 3rd Platoon Leader, K Troop, 278th RCT, Capt. Paul Shannon, commander, K Troop, and Sgt. Jeffrey Wright, HQ Platoon (left to right), stand watch as soldiers from the Iraqi Army finish searching houses in the village of Isla, Iraq on June 17, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)

AROUND AO VOLUNTEER



Col. Dennis J. Adams, commander, 278th RCT, pins Lt. Col. rank on newly promoted Chap. (Lt. Col.) Sam Wood, Regimental Chaplain, at Camp Caldwell, Iraq on June 22, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Capt. Michael Parker, 1st Squadron, 278th RCT, examines an Iraqi child at the village of Mahmoud Ali, Iraq on July 6, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)



Staff Sgt. Brian VanNote, of K Troop, 3rd Squadron, 278th RCT, motions for another detainee to move forward for questioning in the village of Ruwad, Iraq on June 17, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Capt. George Demetriades talks on the radio on his way to Forward Operating Base Cobra for a monthly Targeting Meeting on July 3, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Anthony "Scotty" Simmons, of Crossville, Tenn. (center left) and Joseph "Broadway" Joe of Salem, Oregon (center right) trade blows in the ring during Fight Night at Camp Caldwell, Iraq on July 3, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



A patrol of Iraqi Army tanks lines up to leave Camp Cooke in Taji, Iraq, on July 15, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Lt. Col. Kim Dees, 1st Squadron 278th RCT, talks to local Iraqi children in the village of Qanazia, Iraq, on July 1, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)



Sgt. Brandon Cross, of K Troop, 3rd Squadron, 278th RCT, watches over an Iraqi man during a cordon and search of the village of Ruwad, Iraq on June 17, 2005.. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Alan Mingledorff)



Sgt. Randal Slayton, 2nd Platoon, K Troop, 278th RCT, escorts a detainee to a holding area in the village of Ruwad, Iraq, on June 17, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)



Lt. Col. Gerald Waddle (right) talks to Iraqi Brig. Gen. Essa Khaleel Ibrahim (left) at the Baqubah Regional Security Working Group Meeting held at Kirkush Military Training Base on July 3, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)



A plume of smoke and debris rises after the second of two 2,000 lb. bombs drop, destroying two separate cave complexes near Tuz, Iraq, on June 23, 2005. The caves were being used by insurgents as a base of operations to launch attacks and hide weapons. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)



Soldiers watch and record the explosions with their personal camera's and camcorder's on June 23, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)



Soldiers examine the impact site after the two bombs were dropped on cave complexes near Tuz, Iraq, on June 23, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)



Maj. Brian Filler, Air Liaison Officer (ALO), 169th EASOS, communicates with a Marine aircraft during Operation Fort Pillow, on June 23, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)

Cave Busters



Military vehicles make their way back toward the city of Tuz, Iraq, on June 23, 2005, after the cave complexes were destroyed. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika)

CROWS Keeps Gunners Out of Harm's Way

By U.S. Army Sgt. Daniel W. Bailey
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE O'RYAN, Iraq - June 20, 2005 — For the soldiers of Troop K, Task Force 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, the safety of their gunners during patrols is a paramount concern.

The Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station (CROWS), a remotely operated weapon mounted on top of a vehicle and controlled from a command center inside the vehicle, offers a solution to some of the hazards the gunners face as they patrol the main supply routes and alternate supply routes providing security and looking for improvised explosive devices in their area of operations.

"The primary purpose of the CROWS is to get the gunner out of the turret where he is exposed to enemy fire and fragmentation and get him down inside the vehicle for protection," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Sam Cottrell, CROWS Fielding Center non-commissioned officer in charge.

The gunner now sits safely inside an armored vehicle, looks at a computer screen and controls the weapon with the use of a joystick.

"In addition CROWS gives them a powerful color day camera, a Generation 2 forward-looking infrared camera and a laser range finder," said Cottrell. All the gunner has to do now is tell the computer where to fire the weapon and the computer does the rest.

"Once a target's been identified the computer

builds a ballistic solution, taking into account distance, elevation and the type of weapon and puts the rounds on the target," said Spc. Kendall Hargis, CROWS operator, Troop K, 3rd Battalion, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

The M-2 .50-caliber machine gun, M-240B medium machine gun, MK-19 automatic grenade launcher and the M-249 squad automatic weapon can all be mounted on the CROWS.

Centrally fielded and serviced from

Logistical Support Area Anaconda, the CROWS was supplied to units in Iraq in April. Several hundred will be fielded in the next year and a half, according to Cottrell.

Troop K received the 10th unit in Iraq, sent four gunners through the two-week certification course and now uses the CROWS daily during combat patrols of the main supply routes and alternate supply routes.

"The CROWS system is an excellent tool," said Sgt. 1st Class Craig Bailey, Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment. "The advantages are obviously its optics, zoom and thermal capabilities. It's able to see things a lot farther in advance. It's excellent to have a thermal system mounted right on the vehicle to use at night or in daytime."

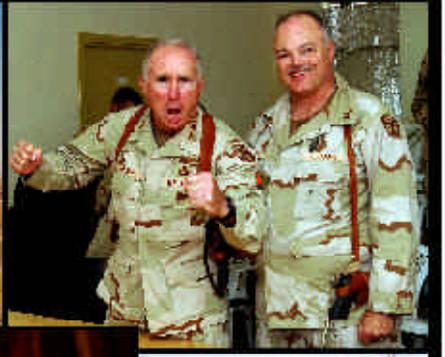
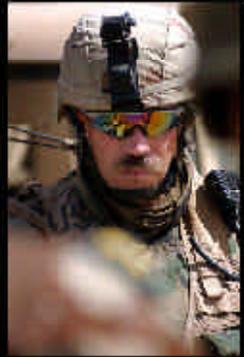
"The CROWS is great for the (main supply route) patrols because with the (forward looking infrared) it sees things that are out of place," said Hargis. "Even spotting (improvised explosive devices) in the road prior to coming up to them, but I think the most rewarding thing I can do catch some of these guys laying the (improvised explosive devices)."

Task Force 1-128 is comprised of Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company A, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, from the Wisconsin Army National Guard and Troop K, 3rd Battalion, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, from the Tennessee Army National Guard.



Spc. Kendall Hargis, Troop K, 3rd Battalion, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, operates the Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station from inside the safety of a vehicle on Main Supply Route Tampa, May 15, 2005, near Balad, Iraq. Hargis controls the weapon with a joystick and watches a monitor that provides live video using a day camera or Generation 2 Forward Looking Infrared camera. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel W. Bailey)







WARRIOR ETHOS

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I will not accept defeat
I will never quit
I will not leave a fallen comrade



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278



Regimental Combat Team

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