

TIGER Tracks



To:

TAG Visits Tiger Brigade

Tiger Brigade Watches the LSU Tigers

A Helping Hand from Home

Best Friends Remember the Fallen

Photo by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

256th Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs Office

FREE MAIL

Please forward to your loved ones...Seal with tape or staples

To the Families and Troops

BG John Basilica, Jr.
256 BCT Commander



As this edition of the Tiger Tracks goes to press we are again saddened by the loss of 9 more Tiger Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and their fellow soldiers.

In two separate attacks, members of Black Sheep (C 2/156) and Charlie Rock (C 3/156) gave their lives in support of Iraqi Freedom III. The losses have hit the Tiger Brigade hard. In addition, the families and the communities of these Soldiers have had to bear a heavy burden. We loved them, too, and will never forget them. We remain committed to the cause that they so courageously died to advance.

Soldiers of the Tiger Brigade, I am proud of each and every one of you and the job that you have accomplished up to this point. But we must keep in mind, that there is so much more that we have to do. Let's keep

CSM James Mays
256 BCT Sergeant Major



the "One Team" and the 256th BCT family together.

With the recent loss of our Soldiers, we all came together as one family and took care of each other during the difficult time. To me, that is what makes

the Tiger Brigade so special. We work as a

But the enemies of freedom underestimate our collective resolve. From the pain and sorrow we find strength. In the midst of their grief, the families find the grace and fortitude to lift us up. I call your attention to the letters from the Bergeron and Murphy families included in this edition. They epitomize strength of faith, strength of family, strength of conviction and strength in the values and principles we hold dear and are sworn to defend. They inspire and motivate us beyond that which mere words could describe. As we close ranks as an extended family, it galvanizes us as a fighting force. As our Commander in Chief has asserted, "... we will not falter, and we will not fail".

These are historic times. The next two weeks will be critical to setting conditions for a successful election. By the next edition, I will be able to report that the people of Iraq have had the opportunity to vote in free elections. The Tiger Brigade continues to conduct full spectrum operations in support of this most worth while goal. Our enemies will do everything possible to attempt to disrupt these elections and it is therefore a most dangerous time. It is imperative that we maintain a high state of security and force protection during this period.

team and are there for each other during trying times. We cannot lose that. To the families of our fallen brothers: Know that this is a hard time for you, but I would like to thank you for your support of all of the states of the 256th BCT. You all have accepted the constant changes throughout this process, and I know that they have been hard to keep up with from day to day.

As time goes by please maintain that stability, and Soldiers, let's keep that "One Team" spirit.

The Tiger Tracks is a publication of the 256th Brigade Public Affairs Office. This Soldier and Family Support Group newsletter contains official information and complies with the provisions of AR 360-81 and AR 25-51. Questions or concerns can be directed to the editor at taysha.deaton@us.army.mil.
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Chaplain's Corner



*Meet Your
Ministry Team*

**By Lt. Col. Robert Baker
256th BCT Chaplain**

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the wonderful people of Louisiana. Your support for the 256th BCT during these times of trouble and loss has been truly phenomenal. December and January have been terrible times for us, as we have lost several Soldiers.

Your prayers and support have been what keeps us going here in Iraq. The letters, gifts, and phone calls demonstrate to us just how lucky we are.

I have been greatly blessed to serve as chaplain in this brigade for the last 18 years. You, the Soldiers and families of the 256th BCT, are the best folks on God's earth. The words in this column can never come close to expressing what deep and heartfelt love we Soldiers here in the 256th have for you. Once again thanks to you all. May God bless you and yours and give each of you a prosperous 2005.

**Meet Your Ministry Team (Part II)
By Maj. Whit Gallaspy**

Our Tiger Brigade is blessed with seven unit ministry teams, each consisting of a chaplain and an assistant. The assistant is the "eyes, ears, and right hand" of the chaplain. As a general rule, the first contact a Soldier has is with the assistant. The responsibilities of the "56 Mike" are many.

Since chaplains are non-combatants, their assistants must serve as personal bodyguards for their bosses. In addition, they must be skilled at vehicle operation, maintenance, and navigation. Administrative duties, procuring supplies, and maintaining inventories also add to their workload. They are trained in the arrangement and preparation for any type of worship service including Islam, Jewish, and Christian.

The assistants receive extensive training

in crisis intervention and critical incident management, as well, and assist in mass casualty scenarios. Alcohol, drug, and suicide prevention are other subjects that they are well versed in.

Both the chaplains and their assistants must be very open-minded and receptive to all religions and denominations.

Our Brigade Chaplain is Lt. Col. Rob Baker (Full Gospel) of Stonewall, La. His assistant is Sgt. 1st Class Ken Bucy (Southern Baptist) of Temple, Ariz. Supporting the 1088th Eng. Bn. and Task Force Bandit is Maj. Mike Gillett (Evangelical) of Duluth, Minn. His assistant is Staff Sgt. Jeremy Breaux of Denham Springs, La.

The famous "Fighting 69th" is watched over by Capt. Alejandro Sanchez (Roman Catholic) and assisted by Sgt. Bob Flores (Roman Catholic) of Brooklyn, N.Y. The 199th team is Maj. Orlando Madrid (Southern Baptist) of Alexandria, La. and Spc. Keith Istre (Charismatic Roman Catholic) of Mermentau, La. Representing the historic Washington Artillery, 1/141 Field Artillery (FA), is Capt. Jessie Staunton (Conservative Baptist) of Rockyford, Col., and Spc. Gerald Falgout (Roman Catholic) of Houma, La. The 1/156 Armor, is supported by Capt. Tyler Wagenmaker (Christian Reform) of Beaver Dam, Mich. and Sgt. Micah Woods (Charismatic) of Greenwood, La.

The Abbeville based Infantry battalion, 2/156th is staffed by Maj. Jim Lucas (Lutheran) of Elkhart, Kan. and Spc. Jay Bradley (Nondenominational) of Lafayette, La.

The mission of the chaplaincy can be summarized as "nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the dead." The point of contact (POC) for the Tiger Unit Ministry teams is your immediate supervisor or the Chaplain Assistant. These talented Soldiers stand ready to serve and epitomize the motto "Pro Deo et Patria."

TAG Visits Tiger Brigade

MG Landreneau &
CSM Morrow

**By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PA Staff Writer**

If you ask most fathers throughout the world, they would probably testify that saying goodbye to their children and allowing them to be on their own for the first time is a tough thing. For years, they nurture them, watch them learn and grow, and finally one day must step back and trust that they have made all of the right decisions regarding the welfare of their kids. When the Tiger Brigade of Louisiana left home to deploy to Iraq, such may have been the feeling of Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, Adjutant General for the State of Louisiana.

Last week Landreneau and Command Sgt. Maj. John Morrow, Senior Enlisted Advisor for the State of Louisiana, paid a visit to Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr. and his Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT). The purpose of the event was to get a hands-on picture of the hard work that the Tiger Brigade has been doing since arriving in Baghdad.

The distinguished guests began their visit at Camp Tigerland by taking the grand tour with Basilica as their guide. They were shown the "hot spots," such as the MWR Facility, the gym, Tiger Plaza, the new chapel and the Onwardi-Shondee Troop Medical Clinic (TMC).

To continue, they spent the day with troops from 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery (FA) Regiment. After having lunch and a short briefing by Lt. Col. Jordan Jones, Commander of the 1/141, Landreneau and Morrow were taken to the M109 A6 Paladin firing position and able to meet the Soldiers that

make it all happen. He was so excited as a result of his tour inside the Howitzer that when he emerged he exclaimed, "I almost shot that thing!"

Following this potentially earth shaking experience, the visitors circled the perimeter of Tigerland to meet the Soldiers standing guard from their towers, then headed to the Brigade Interrogation Facility (BIF), where the 1/141 has been making outstanding strides in gathering intelligence from detainees to focus the mission of the 256th.

Operated by Soldiers of Service Battery, 1/141, the BIF is an integral part of the operations at Tigerland. Sgt. 1st Class Vernon Dunn from New Orleans, La. showed Landreneau and Morrow around the facility and also explained to them the different levels of force that may be used at any given moment. But, as the night warden, he does all that he can to ensure that it doesn't have to come to that.

"We always have more Soldiers (guards) than detainees," he said.

Maj. Darren Ledet, of Baton Rouge, La. is the Human Intelligence Coordinator for the facility. He oversees the collection and exploitation of human intelligence gathered for the brigade. Ledet also ensures that everything is in order so that the process of determining innocence or guilt of a detainee is a smooth one.

"We see this through all the way up to the court system," he explained to Landreneau and Morrow, "that's why it's essential to have a complete packet on the person from the patrol on up."

At the end of the day, Landreneau explained his abundant sense of pride for the Soldiers of the 256th BCT.

"I'm just overwhelmed by the professionalism of the 256th Brigade. Everywhere I've been the Soldiers seem so focused, so dedicated, so committed to doing the mission."

The following day was spent with various units of the Tiger Brigade, beginning with the 1st Battalion, 156th Armor Regiment. After breakfast with the troops and receiving a briefing by Lt. Col. Thomas Plunkett, commander of the 1/156th, Landreneau and Morrow went to Geronimo's Motor Pool to get a firsthand view of what the troops have been working on.

They were escorted by Master Sgt. Billy Myers from Natchitoches, La, Battalion Maintenance Technician for 1/156th. As part of his tour, he introduced them to Sgt. 1st Class David Shaw, from Rosepine, La. Shaw exhibited a project that he and some of his fellow Soldiers have been working on. They designed a kit to go in back of an up-armored humvee that provides for extra protection for the Soldiers when they go out on missions.

After bidding farewell to the Soldiers of Task Force Geronimo, Landreneau and Morrow spent time with the Soldiers of Task Force Steel. The 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment troops appeared thrilled by the visit. They showed their guests around the motor pool and as they were having lunch together, they presented them with a gift to take back home to Louisiana with them.

Upon arriving in Baghdad, both the Maj. Gen. and the Command Sgt. Maj. lost their luggage, and though showed up in the end, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion felt it in their hearts to give the visitors a gift; an outfit

more fitting for their new environment. As Command Sgt. Maj. Homer Stelly, Bn. Sgt Major, explained to everyone, "we thought that you could hang this in your office back home." They were presented with an authentic Iraqi headdress and robe, complete with the patch of the 256th Brigade on the sleeve. The Louisiana leadership was genuinely touched by the sentiment, and was all smiles after viewing their gifts.

Next they were whisked away by the logistical masterminds of the Tiger Brigade, the 199th Forward Support Battalion (FSB). Lt. Col. James Waskom, commander for 199th FSB, not only brought them around to meet troops, but they also

participated in an awards ceremony for four of their Soldiers. Landreneau awarded each with their respective honor and thanked them for their service to the people of Iraq, as well as to the citizens of the United States. The recipients were as follows: CW3 Parnell Sumblor from Alexandria, La. Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM); Sgt. Bryant White from Shreveport, La., ARCOM; Sgt. John Beeson from Alexandria, La., Army Achievement Medal (AAM); and Spc. Harold Baylor from Alexandria, La., AAM.

Perhaps the highlight of their day, though, was the Retention Ceremony held in the Tiger Den Dining Facility. Along with special guest, Louisiana Senator Mary Landrieu (D), Landreneau and Basilica facilitat-

ed the ceremony. Over seventy of the one-hundred and four Soldiers who extended their service raised their right hands and took an oath of extension.

Landrieu was part of the



Louisiana Leadership, Sen. Mary Landrieu, Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, and Brig. Gen. John Basilica Jr., discuss the activities of the Tiger Brigade.

Congressional Delegation, which consisted of senators from several states. They came to Baghdad to meet with local leaders and to have dinner and conversation with Soldiers from their states.

Landrieu expressed her pride for the troops of Louisiana. "It's so impressive, that these brave men and women would raise their hand and sign up for (up to) six more years." She said, "It's going to be tough, it may even get harder before we win, but ultimately freedom and democracy will prevail and it will be a great gift to the world."

She also expressed her sorrow of the Soldiers that the brigade has lost since arriving into Baghdad.

"Our hearts and gratitude go out to the families for what

they've given in support of this operation."

When the news of the most recent attacks that killed seven members of the Tiger Brigade came in, Landreneau and

Morrow rushed to the sides of the friends of the fallen Soldiers. Morrow explained that as his heart was feeling the pain of the accident, he also knew that he had to be tough for his guys.

"I felt such a deep loss. I felt like I needed to be there," he said, "but at the same time I knew that I had to keep strong, keep the leadership going so that they (the Soldiers) can move out to do their missions."

Morrow said that he couldn't really describe what he was feeling that night.

"It's a tremendous loss felt and I really don't even have the words to put forth on this. But the sun's going to come up in the morning and we've got to be ready for it."

Along with the sorrow also comes pride in their Soldiers, and as Landreneau said, they couldn't be more proud of the job that the 256th has done thus far.

"I'd have to say that the determination and dedication stands out most. Whether you're in the motor pool watching the mechanics do the marvelous work and getting equipment back up, or you're watching teams as they prepare to go out on their missions, it's all about the professionalism of the Tiger Soldier."

The Day the Tiger Den Stood Still

Capital One Bowl

**By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PA Staff Writer**

When Gen. Robert E. Lee was in command of the units of Louisiana prior to the Civil War, he probably didn't know what legacy he was leaving behind by referring to the collective Soldiers the way that he did.

The Washington Artillery, which has evolved into the 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery (FA) Regiment of the 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), used a tiger as their mascot. They were the beginning of what eventually became the confederate artillery, hence Lee referred to all units of Louisiana as "Lee's Fighting Tigers."

Around the turn of the century, long after William T. Sherman, the first president of the then Louisiana State University War College, left to become a Northern general for the Civil War, the establishment began looking for a mascot for the school. In light of the history of the tiger and the association that it had with Louisiana already, LSU became known as "The LSU Fighting Tigers."

Fast forward to January 1, 2005. It's New Year's Day and the Louisiana Tiger Brigade is deployed to Baghdad, Iraq. Being a National Guard Unit, the brigade is full of Soldiers who are full-time college students, many of them at LSU. Not only that, but the die hard fans of the LSU Tigers, in general, grace every corner of the 256th BCT.

In previous wars or conflicts Soldiers may have missed the opportunity to catch such an event as the Tigers playing in the Capital One Bowl on New Year's Day. But thanks to the technology of satellite television, not only did the Soldiers of the Tiger Brigade get to watch the LSU Fighting Tigers, but they got to watch them from the Tiger Den Dining Facility in Camp Tigerland, located in Baghdad.

Lt. Col. Mark Kerry from New Orleans and of HHC 256, says that this one is a game to remember.

"This is a historical event. The Tiger Brigade Soldiers are doing battle in Iraq and are able to watch the LSU Tigers as they do battle on the playing field."

He also said that it means that much more knowing that the LSU Tigers get their lineage from

the 256th Brigade Combat Team's heritage.

Soldiers who saw the game in the dining facility were also in for another Louisiana treat: the favorite dish of many of the Cajun Soldiers, gumbo.

As one Soldier said, "if I could have a real beer right now, I'd almost feel like I were at home."

Just down the road from the Tiger Den was another LSU viewing party.

On any given day one could walk into the room of Sgt. First Class Damon Hebert, from Erath, La., and Sgt. First Class Daniel Rachal, from Alexandria, La., and feel as if they had just walked into an LSU Tiger gift shop. Blankets hung as curtains, banners, pillows, vehicles flags, an "Eye of the Tiger" flag, license plates, Mike the Tiger stuffed animals, footballs, and even a purple and gold Christmas tree with the matching Christmas stockings are laid out like a shrine to the football team.

It was no surprise that on this night their room was filled with the ultimate necessity for any LSU Football Game, the Tiger fans.

"It's amazing to be able to watch a game that's going on back home while we're here, I didn't think that we'd be able to do that."

Staff Sgt. Jared Robinson from Jennings, La. and of HHC 256 is grateful that he got the chance to not only watch the game, but to watch it with his fellow Soldiers. "It wasn't necessarily the decorations in the room that made watching it enjoyable as much as it was the personalities in the room."

During halftime, Hebert called his fiance, Theresa Schembre, from Metairie, La., who was also watching the Tigers in the Capital One Bowl. The couple, who will be married after Hebert returns home, met at, where else, an LSU football game.

Although the outcome of the game wasn't what the Soldiers of the Tiger Brigade would have liked, according to most they still enjoyed the chance to watch it. As Lt. Col. Kerry implied at the start of the night, the two Tiger affiliations have more than just a name in common.

"They are currently the national champions, and we think we're pretty good too."

LSU Photo Album



Soldiers of the Tiger Brigade relax and enjoy watching, their namesake, the LSU Tigers, in the New Year's Day Capital One Bowl.



Maj. Blaine Kelly, Commander of HHC 256, is an obvious Iowa Hawkeyes fan who hung Mike the Tiger from the ceiling of the Tiger Den Dining Facility. Kelly shows no mercy as he points a gun at the already strangled LSU icon.

Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Rachal and Sgt. 1st Class Damon Hebert hold up a bag of the Louisiana brand Zapp's Potato Chips. For the special occasion of the Capital One Bowl, Zapp's manufactured the "Tiger Tators," in specially designed LSU packaging.



Operation Home Front Support

A Helping Hand from Home

**By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PA Staff Writer**

Albert Einstein once said, "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing."

When Maj. Geary Mason first left his home of New Orleans, La, in 2003 for Afghanistan, he knew that evil was lurking in every corner. Rather than let it slide, he set out to make a difference. Shortly after arriving in his area of operation, his heart took over and he helped to launch a campaign that is still going strong. Even today, as he sits in his office at Merrill Lynch, Mason is not throwing in the towel in fighting the war on terrorism.

Mason is the Battalion Executive Officer for the 2nd Battalion 20th Special Forces Unit of the Mississippi National Guard.

"At the beginning of our tour we were told to establish a rapport with the people of our area," he said, "but the problem was, we didn't have anything to offer them."

With guns blazing and a will on fire he and his Soldiers began emailing and writing letters to co-workers, families, friends, and companies back home. They requested items such as school supplies and clothes, that would allow them to help give the locals around them a better quality of life. They received overwhelming support and Mason says that the people were very grateful.

"To the people of Afghanistan it was almost like someone came to their front door and told them that they'd won the sweepstakes," he said.

Now that Mason is back home, he is helping the 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) to bring the same goodwill to the Iraqi people.

Along with a group of business leaders from the New Orleans area, he has formed Operation Home Front Support. Meetings are held every two weeks with the Board of Directors, in which Mason is the president, and they discuss ways to help the cause of the Soldiers overseas. The operation was recently

approved as a 501 C3 organization, making all donations tax deductible.

The basic concept is for the members of OHFS to maintain contact both with the public and Soldiers and to be the middleman in getting the troops what they need to earn the trust of the local nationals. The group does this, partly through drives at schools and companies, for example. There are a few mail centers set up, and all donations are sent out at no cost to the contributor. Mason says he feels that it was just common sense.

"It's all about winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, that's how we're going to win this war," he said.

Soldiers of the 256th have regularly been distributing toys and various supplies that have been sent over from the citizens of the New Orleans, La. area. As a result of OHFS, many of the people in the

Baghdad vicinity now have an abundant supply of toothbrushes, clothes, shoes, toys, non-perishable foods, and school supplies, just to name a few.

Master Sgt. Wilton Gibson from Jeanerette, La and of HHC 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, says that he and the Soldiers in the battalion Civil Affairs Section have already shown the people of Iraq the generosity of the United States Citizens as a result of the clothes, toys, and school supplies donated through Operation Home Front Support.

"We've distributed the items that we've received to various schools and communities," he said, "we commonly give the Soldiers going out on patrols the supplies to hand out to families in their areas of responsibility."

Most recently 2nd Battalion participated in a medical screening clinic for refugees of the attacks on Fallujah, and clothes and school supplies, as well as toys for children were given out.

Mason says that starting this was a no-brainer. "Having been there, I saw the need on a regular basis. I would feel guilty if I were at home doing absolutely nothing about it."



1Lt. Kaylor Fredrick of HHC 2/156th Infantry Battalion, gives candy and stuffed animals to children who were forced out of their homes in the attacks on Fallujah.

Contributions

*From Families and
Soldiers*

HOOAH LA!

They say our men and women have been
deployed to this land of riches and ruins,
of sand and oil.
So that we here at home won't have to fight the war
on American soil
Like their grandfathers before them
they will go to war
To give to others what America stands for
This is the true measure of a man
To fight for freedom in a foreign land
Like others, they responded to Liberty's call
To bring justice and meaning to the lives of those who
did fall.
Our prayers to the Father and our letters in the mail
Will go out to Iraq daily and without fail
They will be gone for about a year you see
But, we'll send care packages often to this foreign
country.
We'll be sure to send tuna, crackers and candy bars
And we'll all ride around with yellow ribbons on our
cars

We'll proudly display support for our
troops from the
homeland
As they fight,
rebuild and make
their beds in the
sand.
We love you and
miss you and can't
wait to see
the day you all come
home to us safely.



Pfc. Ryan Grant
C Co. 1088th Engineers

We'll dance in the streets and have a big parade
We are extremely proud of our 256th Infantry Brigade
"Godspeed" Cajun soldiers as you spice up Iraq.

HOOAH Louisiana,
"They've Got Your Back!"

By Amy Conway

Very Proud Sister to Pfc. Ryan Grant
C Co. 1088th Engineers
and to my other boys: Spc. Ricky Saurage,

Spc. Jeff Angelloz, Pfc. Josh Anderson, Pfc.
Joey Foureaux and Spc. Leigh Dupree -
I love you ALL!

Weathering My Storm By Sgt. Victoria J. Carey HHC 199th FSB

The journey of any distance begins with a single step
and ends the same way.
One day, I started out on a journey and a storm came
into my life.

The thunder roared and the lightening flashed. The
winds blew hard and the rain poured down. The
clouds were so dark that I could not see.
I looked around and realized I was not alone.

I asked for guidance and God blessed me with you.
I asked for support and was given your friendship.
We all may endure many storms in our lives in one
form or another, but they will not stay.

For I will be there for you every step of the way,
just as you were there for me.
Many of us take for granted the friends
that have been bestowed in our lives.

Always remember it is never too late to
Say thank you to the many friends that have endured
the storm with you.

I want to say thank you, for my storm has passed
because I have friends like you to help me weather
my storms.

God Bless

Jan. 8, 2005

Dear Soldiers (Sons),

I call you sons because anyone who was like a brother to Bradley is like a son to me. It is with my deepest appreciation that I write to you. I am so grateful that you were like brothers to Bradley. I know how much easier it made his time there. Bradley spoke fondly of several of you to me.

We know that no matter where Brad would have been at the time of his death that it would have happened. We have no choice in the matter, it's God's will. He was with guys he loved and that makes taking his death a little easier. I know God will give us the strength we need to go on without him with a purpose in life. Bradley's death will not be in vain. I know I will go on with a new sense of purpose, I wouldn't have it any other way. Brad was too important to me to let my life go on without it.

I hope this will help you go on with your missions without any sense of guilt. You have nothing to be guilty for. You have nothing to be sad about. Go on celebrating his life! Go on celebrating you lives! He wouldn't have wanted it any other way. One day this will be over and you will be able to come home to the ones that love you and there are more people that love you than you know. And when you do come home, I'll be there to greet you all just like I would have been there to greet Brad. My sons will be coming home.

If any of you need to talk or want some home-baked cookies, just let me know. I'll be here for you.

With All My Love And Respect,



Angela Bergeron
(Hooahh!)

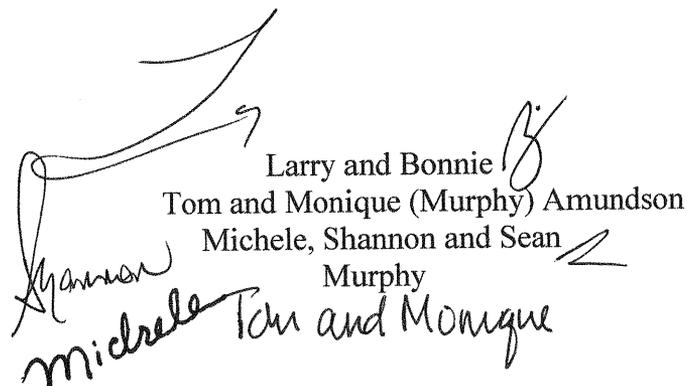
10 January 2005

To the 2nd Battalion, 156th Mechanized Infantry,

A few days ago we were informed that our son Warren, along with 5 of his friends and comrades were killed while on patrol outside Baghdad. To say that it was a shock and that we felt pain would be a gross understatement of what our whole family felt. Our hearts and minds were initially left reeling at having to lose a son so early in his life. But, today we are writing to you to say thank you; thank you for making our son your friend and part of your great family. Warren was a quiet young man most of the time, but he had a great sense of pride and honor, coupled with a tremendous love of his family, his God, his country and you. Each of you helped to make those values grow to new heights. How? By working with you and being among you, that in itself solidified those precious qualities any father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, son or daughter could ever ask to see in one that they love.

For what you do and how you do it we want you to know that we are so very proud of each of you as if you were in fact our own. We know that after this kind of tragedy, one which has certainly touched all of us that you are not worrying about yourself but those that you have left behind here at home. I am pretty sure you are asking yourself what are their thoughts? How are they managing through all this? And how do they feel? There are answers to those questions. As to how we feel, well, we are just so proud of you and your ability to stand up and be counted on to preserve the traditions of the United States and the protection of your family and homeland. As to managing we have people like Chaplain Fish and General Downer and so many others of the Guard family and our communities that we are doing just fine, not perfect but fine and you need to know that, because this is our part of believing and doing here as you are doing there, we are in this together.

Stand proud and tall and know that now and always we stand at your side in our thoughts and in our prayers. My wife and I and all our family want you to know we love you and pray for you each day and that you are in our thoughts. Don't give up heart that is what the enemy is counting on and if they knew us at all they would know they have failed and that **our Louisiana Pride** will rise to the top and you will get the job done. God bless and protect each of you and we mean that from the bottom of our hearts.

A collection of handwritten signatures and names. At the top left, a large signature 'Shannon' is written. Below it, 'Michele' is written. To the right, 'Tom and Monique' is written. Further right, 'Larry and Bonnie' is written with a signature. Below that, 'Tom and Monique (Murphy) Amundson' is written. Below that, 'Michele, Shannon and Sean' is written with a signature. Below that, 'Murphy' is written. At the bottom right, 'Tom and Monique' is written again.

Larry and Bonnie
Tom and Monique (Murphy) Amundson
Michele, Shannon and Sean
Murphy
Tom and Monique

256 BCT Photo Album

Soldiers at Their Best



Staff Sgt. Jeanne Crochet, of Charlie Med 199th FSB, examines a child with cold symptoms. The little girl and her family are refugees of the attacks on Fallujah.

Capt. Michael Benoit, B Bat. 1/141 FA and Capt. Vaughn Leatherwood, HHB 1/141 FA warm their hearts by a bon-fire.



U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu shares her Iraq experiences with the Soldiers from her home state of Louisiana. Landrieu assisted Maj. Gen. Landreneau in a re-enlistment ceremony, and swore in over 70 Soldiers who opted to extend for six or more years of service in the Louisiana Army National Guard.



Maj. Gen. Bennet C. Landreneau and Command Sgt. Maj. John Morrow admire their new wardrobes, courtesy of Command Sgt. Maj. Homer Stelly and the Soldiers of 2/156th.



256 BCT Photo Album

Soldiers at Their Best



The Sergeant Major's Club:
CSM Homer Stelly, 2/156th;
CSM James Mays, 256th BCT;
CSM John Morrow, Senior Enlisted Advisor for La.;
CSM Gary

Ermatinger, 3/156th

1st Sgt. Albert VanZant, A Co. 1/156th, grabs some take out and a chat with Maj. Gen. Bennett C. Landreneau, Adjutant General for La.



U.S. Senator, Mary Landrieu (D-La.) has a Cajun feast of gumbo and New Orleans King Cake with Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat team.

2 Lt. Taysha Deaton, 256th BCT Public Affairs Officer, and her uncle, Staff Sgt. Mike Dugas, 3/156th, work together to bring packages to the Soldiers of the Tiger Brigade. The packages were gifts from citizens of Louisiana who participated in "Operation Adopt-A-Soldier."



Soldier's Voice

Did you bring something special with you that might make you feel closer to home?

In Their Words



Staff Sgt. Paul Breaux
HHC 256
S1/Personnel Service
Specialist
Church Point, La.

"My little girl and little boy slipped her stuffed Pooh Bear and his football award into my bag without me knowing. So I have that and also my New Orleans Saints flag."



Sgt. Marcus Zebbs
HHC 1/156
Mansfield, La.

"My grandfather gave me a leatherbound Bible before he died, so I brought that with me for the deployment."

Sgt. Kacie
Champagne
256 MI Supply
St. Martinville, La.



"I have a picture of my son in my nightstand. It's in a frame that has a recorded message from him."

Sgt. Jerald
Holmes
B Bat, 1/141
New Orleans,
La.



"I brought my favorite t-shirt to work out in. It makes me feel a little like I'm at home in the gym when I'm wearing it."



Sgt. Chris
Charrier
HHC 2/156
New Iberia, La.

"My daughters gave me a stuffed bunny rabbit for Easter and asked me to take it with me. I've had it with me since we were

first mobilized."



Sgt. Hector "The
Beast" Saillant
HHC 199th
Miami, Fla.

"I brought my favorite headband of my daughter's. She wore it in my wedding."

Best Friends Remember the Fallen

*From Those Who
Knew Them Best...*

In Memory

Sgt. Craig Nelson
HHC 1/156th

By: Trey Harold
HHC 1/156th Scouts

On how SGT Nelson came to be known as "Murm:"

"It started when we both had a summer job at Barksdale Air Force Base. A military doc said that he had a heart murmur so I started calling him "Murm" and it stuck." "The platoon meant absolutely everything to him; it gave him a sense of belonging, it gave him friends, and it gave him a reason to smile."

By: Donald Ray Henry II
HHC 1/156th Scouts

"I have known Murm for thirteen years...it all started in the 3rd Grade when I was the new kid...He loved his country and would often share how he couldn't wait to serve it and how much he wanted to fight in a war. So, it was no surprise when he enlisted in the National Guard. He got four others to join and would have died for anyone in the platoon."

By: Spc. Ray Alexander Jacobson, HHC 1/156th Scouts

"He loved being a scout, loved the history and heritage behind it. He even had the story of the Fiddlers Green framed on his wall. One of the most important things about being a scout was the platoon that he was in. I know now that he is truly happy dancing around and telling jokes again, but I will miss my friend."

Sgt. Armand Frickey
C Co. 2/156th

By: Spc. Jeremy Voison
C Co. 2/156th

"He always wanted to be the only medical officer with a CIB on

his scrubs. SGT Frickey was an outstanding American and an excellent soldier. He was a wonderful husband who loved his wife. Someone said of him: everyone should have a Frickey in their lives."

Sgt. 1st Class Kurt Joseph Comeaux C Co. 2/156th

By: Spc. Henry Arnold
C Co. 2/156th

"SFC Comeaux never put himself first before anything. When we first got the call I couldn't handle it at first, but after talking to him about it, he made me believe that everything would be okay and that I would be okay. He will always be in my heart and will never be forgotten."

Spc. Kenneth Vonronn
HHC 1/69th, attached to C Co. 2/156th

By: Staff Sgt. Albert Delaunay
HHC 1/69th

"I remember SPC. Vonronn as a 19 year old kid who grew up to be a 20 year old man. What I remember most was the way he lit up when talking about being in the Bradleys and the guys and missions and how he loved his job and wanting to be the best at it. He was a great medic and friend and will be greatly missed by the Blacksheep and the Medical Platoon."

Sgt. Bradley Bergeron
C Co. 2/156

By: Spc. Jeremy Bergeron
C Co. 2/156th

"Back home Brad was just one of those good old boys who was just as laid back as they come. He loved to hunt and fish and he loved his girlfriend. He talked about his family a lot and how he was thinking of proposing to his girlfriend when this was over. To describe him in just a few simple

words would go as follows: 'He was dedicated to his job, committed to his platoon, took pride in his work, always there to lend a hand.'"

Sgt. Warren Murphy
C Co. 2/156th

By: Staff Sgt. Terry Naquin
C Co. 2/156th

"Murphy's father said in a newspaper that he was 'one hell of a man'... and he was. He never moaned or complained much, he would just grab his boots, ruck-up, grab his weapon, flash a toothy smile, and march out the door. He loved being a grunt and said that the dismount world was where he belonged. The Blacksheep will never be able to play Madden Football, eat a cola flavored gummy candy, smoke Marlboro 27's, without cracking a smile and getting misty eyed."

Sgt. Huey Pierce Long
Fassbender III C Co. 2/156th

By: Spc. Jonathon Boudreaux
C Co. 2/156th

"We all drew strength from you, you gave us all so much. When I wanted to give up it was your words that kept me going. No doubt the only reason I'm still here is because you kept me strong when I needed someone to talk to. I love you and miss you."

Staff Sgt. Christopher Babin
C Co. 2/156th

By: Staff Sgt. Howard Turner
C Co. 2/156th

"He will be remembered as someone who like his job, but loved the people he worked with. He was an outgoing person who never met a stranger, and never made enemies. He will be missed dearly both on and off the battlefield."

Fallen Soldiers

In Loving Memory

SGT Craig Nelson
SGT Armand Frickey
SFC Kurt Joseph Comeaux
SPC Kenneth Vonronn
SGT Bradley Bergeron
SGT Warren Murphy
SGT Huey Pierce Long Fassbender III
SSG Christopher Babin

A Soldiers Story

I was that which others did not want to be
I went where others feared to go
And did what others feared to do
I asked nothing from those who gave nothing
And reluctantly accepted the thought of eternal
Loneliness.....Should I fail
I have seen the face of Terror
Felt the stinging cold of fear
And enjoyed the sweet taste of a moments Love
I Have Cried, Pained, and Hoped
But most of all I have lived times
Others would say were best forgotten
At least I am able to say that
I Am Proud of what I was....A Soldier

-Anonymous