

15 August 2004
FOB KMTB (Caldwell)
Diyali Province, Iraq

It appears that certain members of the 30th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) Command Section sense geriatric qualities within the office of the Brigade Chaplain. In one day, two copies of a certain article were placed on my desk and one of them had written upon it these words: "If this would apply to anyone in the 30th, it would definitely describe the Brigade Chaplain." The title of the article is "Send Old Men to War." I take exception to this because I believe the multiple copies of this article came from persons beyond the half-century mark, of which I do not belong, yet. I will share with you a few of the lines from said article and you decide.

"If I could, I'd enlist today and help my country track down those responsible to killing thousands of innocent people in New York City and Washington, DC. Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. If we can't kill the enemy we'll complain them into submission. "My back hurts!" "I'm hungry!" "Where's the remote control?"

If old guys are captured we couldn't spill the beans because we probably forgot where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser. Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten cowards who attacked our hearts on September 11. The last thing the enemy would want to see right now is a couple of million old guys with attitudes."

And, then it said, "Share this with your senior friends. (It's purposely in big type for us old guys...)"

Believe it or not, there have been a few evenings when Brigadier General (BG) Dan Hickman, Colonel (COL) Hal Davis and I have pondered the wisdom of the Bible, especially Proverbs. This is how geriatric soldiers spend their evenings. Like Proverbs 15:22: "Without good advice everything goes wrong – it takes careful planning for things to go right." This is why we have so many staff meetings and Battle Update Briefings (BUBs) and FECCs or Fire and Effects Coordination Cell meetings. We are simply endeavoring to plan so as to give our Commander good advice. But then we found this verse and agree that the result of our meetings and planning is not entirely in our hands. Somewhere in all of this then, it not our fault that we find ourselves living in the desert of Iraq. It is the Lord's, as you can see from the next verse. Proverbs 16:9: "We make our own plans, but the Lord decides where we will go." I just wish He had decided on a place with a more moderate climate. In our musings about how to achieve shorter lines into the dining facility, we have surmised the following may help some. Proverbs 20:4: "If you are too lazy to plow, don't expect a harvest." It is that "don't work, don't eat" thing. Sometimes the Bible shares the antithesis of our lives at home and words that are strangely humorous to the soldier, not because they resemble the truth, but because of the desert reference. Proverbs 21:19: "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife." No one lays claim to that one. The one we like better is: Proverbs 18:22: "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord." Since the three of us reside in the Old Folks Home, commonly called the command building, we especially like the following verse. Proverbs 16:31: "Gray hair is a glorious crown worn by those who have lived right." And finally, since wrinkles grace our faces and the only benefit of short hair is less gray hair, we take special delight in the infinitesimal wisdom of this portion of the Book of Life. Proverbs 20:29: "Young people take pride in their strength, but the gray hairs of wisdom are even more beautiful."

The following recently showed up on BG Dan Hickman's desk and was meant entirely for humorous purposes. SGT Howard is BG Hickman's driver and has been for some time. Enjoy.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters and Headquarters Company
30th Brigade Combat Team, Command Section
FOB Caldwell, Iraq, APO AE 09392

HHC – Cmd Sec

14 Jul 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Two-week notice

I, SGT David Howard, regret to inform you that I will soon be leaving the company and Iraq to pursue my educational goals that were interrupted by the mobilization some 11 months ago. My time here has been well spent and I have enjoyed serving here with HHC. This experience has been quite fulfilling and I believe it will further my career in the future and also me as a person. I feel that a year should be ample time for Uncle Sam. It is my hope to return to North Carolina State University in time to attend the fall semester of 2004 and subsequently the spring semester of 2005 putting my graduation sometime in May of that year. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to further myself with this unit and to help this country rebuild itself but I feel it is time to move on. Please know that the time spent here has been good for me and I leave with no bad feelings or grudges with anyone. I wish you continued luck and success through the completion of this mission and hope to see you return home safely.

David S. Howard
SGT, US Army
Command Section
HHC 30th BCT

On 27 July 2004 Old Hickory lost another soldier at the hands of our enemies. He was a member of the 1-150th Armor Battalion from the great state of West Virginia. At 2014 hours (8:14 p.m.) an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) was detonated in the city of Balad Ruz just as the second vehicle in an three vehicle convoy was passing through town on a routine patrol. When the first word of casualties came into our TOC (Tactical Operations Center), I walked to our medical center to support our soldiers. While waiting anxiously inside the medical center I learned that we had one KIA (killed in action) and three WIA (wounded in action). Our medical folks were poised to receive our soldiers and the air was tense with expectancy. The wounded were brought in by HUMMWV and soon transported into treatment rooms. All of the rehearsals for such an occasion were paying off as each member of our medical company, known as Charlie Med, went to work. Two were medevaced to the closest Level III facility at Balad and surgery was performed on the other to ensure he could safely make the trip. At 2230 hours (10:30 p.m.), the final wounded soldier was loaded onto an ambulance and

transported to the flight line for evacuation to Balad. The Company Commander, Platoon Leader, First Sergeant, Platoon Sergeant and I remained till the end. Later, the Platoon Leader (who was on the patrol) and the First Sergeant waited until well after midnight for the body of our fallen soldier to be delivered to Mortuary Affairs. Earlier I had sent three chaplains to check on the soldiers who were in the convoy and reserved the unpleasant task of going to Mortuary Affairs for myself. LTC Mauldin made the final determination as to this soldier's cause of death and he and I took the long walk back to our area. We knew that this evening was not over for us for we had witnessed the frailty of life and the horror of war. It is times like this that fellow soldiers do indeed become a "band of brothers."

CPT Patrick Reese is the Company Commander of Charlie Company, 1-150th Armor Battalion, a 30th Brigade unit from West Virginia. He gave the eulogy at the Memorial Service for Sergeant (SGT) Deforest Lemar Talbert, our mortally wounded soldier. The following are his comments:

Sergeant Deforest Lemar Talbert of Alexandria, Virginia was born on January 24, 1982. He was graduated from T. C. Williams High School in June of 2002. You might remember this high school from the popular movie based on its Football Team, "Remember the Titans."

Because he had a troubled youth, Deforest entered the alternative education program at TC Williams. He was supposed to try the program for a year - but he stayed for three, thriving. By his senior year, he was a star running back on the football team, known to teammates and fans as "Touchdown Talbert." He also became a mentor to children from low income families at a nearby Preschool.

Sergeant Talbert came to Charleston, West Virginia to become a student at West Virginia State University, where he was majoring in Communications. While attending WV State, he met Frances Hamilett and together they had a child, Deontae, they were raising. Deontae was the pride and joy of SGT Talbert's life.

Sergeant Talbert enlisted in the West Virginia Army National Guard at Dunbar, WV and was assigned to Bravo Company 1/150th Armor Battalion. He completed his basic armor training on September 13th, 2001 and was awarded the 19K Armor Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

Sergeant Talbert was mobilized as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom on October 1, 2003 and reassigned to Charlie Company 1/150th Armor Battalion. On February 29, 2004, SGT Talbert was deployed to the Iraqi Theater of Operations where he served as an Assistant Gunner to Staff Sergeant (SSG) Scutlock in the First Platoon.

SGT Talbert's awards include: Army Service Ribbon; Sharpshooter Marksmanship Badge (Pistol); Expert Marksmanship Badge (Grenade); Combat Patch for 30th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and 1st Infantry Division; Purple Heart; and Bronze Star.

SGT Talbert is survived by his son Deontae; his girlfriend, Frances Hamilett; his Mother, Gloria Nesbitt; his Father, Benjamin Dickens; one brother and three sisters.

As his commander, I am proud to have had this fine young man in my company. He worked through a lot of challenges to become a fine Non-commissioned Officer in whom his family, his fellow soldiers, and his leadership can be proud.

CPT Patrick Reese

On behalf of all the men and women of the 30th, let me say that we already felt that the 1/150th Armor Battalion is as much a part of the 30th Brigade as anyone from North Carolina. We grieve equally for

our fallen soldier from West Virginia as we would one from the Tarheel State. For this point and time in our lives, we are one unit and the grief of one is the grief of us all.

The following comments and pictures came to us from Danger 6 or Major General (MG) John Batiste, the Commander of the 1st Infantry Division. He, his chaplain, and his bugler come to every memorial service within the Division. He never sits during the entire service to honor our fallen comrades and after it is over, he is the first to walk in front off the Memorial Box and render a slow and precise salute honoring this hero. MG Batiste takes each casualty personally and we gladly adjust the time to

As I participated in a recent memorial service for a fallen comrade, I felt honored and privileged to be standing in formation with so many great American soldiers and patriots. While the grief for the loss of one of our own was overwhelming, we found comfort in our God and each other. Never have I served with finer warriors, men and women completely dedicated to each other and to the units within which they serve. We understand the meaning of teamwork. We trust one another and move out on mission with confidence in knowing that the entire division combat team is leaning into the fight. We know that success is fundamental and will never accept anything but victory. We know that victory is non-negotiable. As I look into the eyes of the soldiers of this great division, I see a degree of commitment, maturity, and steadfastness that only a seasoned veteran would understand. I see proud soldiers who have earned their combat patch. I see professionals who love their country. Your hard work and sacrifice in Iraq is paying off in spades. You are taking the fight to the enemy with all forms of contact, every day and every night. At the same time, you are breaking the cycle of violence and bringing hope to a ravaged people. Indeed, we are now witnessing irreversible momentum as the 25 million good people of Iraq are well on their way to living in a free and democratic society. I know you are very proud of the contributions you are making. You all will continue to make an enormous difference. You have my profound respect. God bless you all and continue to take care of one another. Continue mission. Duty first! Danger 6 August 2, 2004



accommodate his schedule.

Major General (MG) John Batiste, Commander and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) McCarty of the 1st Infantry Division, of which the 30th Brigade Combat Team is a part.

It seems that a certain Deputy Brigade Commander left the Iraqi Desert recently without properly instructing his roommate, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Tim Mauldin in the fine art of making his own coffee. After all, he is the Brigade Surgeon and it is widely known that persons of his persuasion normally have someone look after their basic needs. Not Colonel (COL) Hal Davis. He just up and left his roommate high and dry. His battle buddy, LTC Mauldin tried to make his own coffee but ended up in hot water. Having depended on his roommate of greater rank to assume command of such issues, LTC Mauldin gave his best effort the next morning. He put the water in the top of the coffee maker and proceeded to turn it on. Then he checked on his coffee a little later with high hopes of beginning his morning with a gracious supply of java. On this particular occasion, he was not so fortunate. The water was warm, the decanter was full and his paper cup was ready to receive his daily

fix of caffeine. There was only one minor problem. In order to make a proper cup of coffee one must put coffee in a filter and place both in the coffee maker. Just a minor detail that was overlooked. It seems that such an oversight could never be the fault of our Brigade Surgeon therefore total responsibility must be placed on the roommate who left without giving a class or even a written set of instructions. With the aid of other soldiers it is hoped that our Brigade Surgeon may soon gain competence in this area. We hope so. His behavior on the day of said hot water left something to be desired.

The life of a deployed chaplain is anything but boring. Having had the opportunity to get to know many of our Military Police I was asked by two, a male and a female, if I would officiate at a service honoring their commitment to each other. Well, I am not one to turn down a challenge and I also saw it as a good thing that a budding couple would want God's blessing on their mutual love. I can't perform weddings in Iraq but then that wasn't what they were seeking. I have already had that request from two other soldiers. Seems as if I have no authority in Iraq to perform nuptial agreements. After I agreed to perform this ceremony of shared love and after I had explained what I was doing too many times, it was then my task to figure out what to say and do. I have never done one of these, whatever it is I was supposed to be doing. So, I knew that the answer to most questions can be found on the Internet, so I began looking. First, I looked under "Engagement Ceremony." Maybe this is what I am doing, an Engagement Ceremony. They are planning on getting married in October of 2005, so it sounded reasonable to me. The problem is that there is no such ceremony in any culture close to our own. Having struck out on that one, I thought, maybe it is a "Commitment Ceremony." I was encouraged when I found many references to that one. Upon closer inspection, I realized that such ceremonies are reserved for persons of the same sex. The internet is not helping. It's up to me.

So on the first Saturday in August at 2000 hours, Benjamin Lucas Parrish and Charlie Anne Bland had their love for one another blessed in our Chapel by the Brigade Chaplain. About 20 other soldiers were gathered for this event and I now have a service celebrating the love between two people that has no legal ramifications. Scriptures were read, prayers were offered and vows of shared love were tendered. Another first in the Diyala Province.

Last weekend we had a Hickory Hayride. We didn't go anywhere but to the Chapel for this particular hayride. It was actually a performance of parodies from Iraq put into songs by a group known as "The Hickabillies." I will not even attempt to give you a blow by blow rendition of the evening but suffice it to say that it was 90 minutes of laughter that was thoroughly enjoyed by all. A DVD has been made of the evening and the talent was pretty unbelievable. The greater hickabillies include: Sergeant(SGT) Joe Byrd, B Co. 230th FSB from Dunn; Captain(CPT) Buck Rogers, HHC, 30th Brigade from New Bern; Specialist(SPC) John Riggs, B Co. 230th FSB from Kinston; SGT Steve Carpenter, 1-113th FA from Spruce Pine; Emet Itara, a civilian contractor from Fayetteville; SGT Dave Parker, HHC, 230th FSB from Hickory; and SPC Emory Altman, HHC, 30th Brigade from Johnson City, Tennessee. Lead vocalist throughout most of the evening was SPC Altman whose comedic talents are well known but whose vocal gifts are equally awesome. The base where we live in Iraq is called a FOB or Forward Operating Base. The first song was "Take this FOB and shove it." There were 12 more songs poking fun at FOB life and the joys of being deployed. The final number was "I'll Never Smoke Weed with the General Again." I promise, it wasn't me. The evening was complete with costumes, dancing, and wonderful musicians. These guys ought to go on the road when we get home.

I will conclude with another piece of wisdom from our Brigade S-1 or Personnel Officer. At a recent meeting he was asked how long will our soldiers continue to get opportunities to go home for two weeks or go on R & R. Major Dan Marks once more dazzled us with his brilliance in his response,

which was: “Leave will continue until it ends.”

CH(LTC) Dennis Goodwin
30th Brigade Combat Team