



THE LUMBERJACK LEDGER

Volume 1, Issue 6, October 2007

LUMBERJACK 6

Greetings to families, friends, and fellow Soldiers. Our time left in Iraq grows short and I detect a palpable excitement among all the Lumberjacks as they look forward to going home. The Soldiers have performed magnificently throughout the entire deployment. A recent visit by MG Fil, the Commanding General of 1st Cavalry Division and Multinational Division - Baghdad, confirmed this view from his foxhole as I spoke with him about the battalion.

The five companies of the battalion, from three different CONUS installations, have coalesced into a truly crack unit. The 642nd ESC has shouldered a tour extension and continued its outstanding work in all areas. The 887th ESC has led the way in the construction of coalition outposts and joint security stations. The 510th has truly mastered vertical construction, building things that we would not have thought possible a year ago. These three companies have benefited from the work of an outstanding Forward Support Company. The battalion simply could not maintain the pace of operations or conduct the missions that it does without the contributions of the distribution, maintenance, and field feeding platoons in FSC; hats off to them! And let's not forget the battalion's Headquarters Company. HHC has conducted 24/7 operations of the battalion's command post, provided medical support to all missions, and supported important staff section operations that have carried the battalion's missions from ideas to reality. Great work by all staff sections has been vital to the mission.

Now we are approaching the conclusion of our mission here in Iraq. We are conducting missions as deliberately as ever, with a constant emphasis on safety, to ensure that no shortcuts are taken that might prevent a Soldier from returning home. Continue to support your deployed Soldiers these last few weeks. They have served with honor and distinction during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Johnny Cash wrote a song in 1980 about patriots, ones like your Soldiers:

"And when I see "Old Glory" wavin', I think of all the brave men, That fought and died, For what is right and wrong, And when I see "Old Glory" burnin', My blood begins to churnin', And I could do some fightin' of my own, 'Cause I love all my brothers, And we're proud of our birth, We've got the greatest country, Hear on God's green earth. And I'm a flag waving patriotic, Nephew of my Uncle Sam. A rough riding, fighting Yankee man."

LTC James Raymer

LUMBERJACK 9

As we reach the end of our tour here the Soldiers are getting very anxious to get home to their loved ones. Complacency now is not something we need so we all need to keep focused and maintain our sights on the prize of seeing our loved ones again soon. This has been a good deployment as deployments go and I am proud of every Soldier and Family who has done their part to make this a successful tour of duty for those deployed and for those on the home front. As we begin to return I have a challenge to all, continue to do what is right and enjoy our time at home. Be safe, be careful and God Bless you all.

Build and Fight

CSM Terrence Murphy

HHC "Diablos"

Greetings Diablo Families!

Well, we have finally come to the last few weeks of our deployment and morale is as high as it has ever been. There have been a few changes to our leadership within the company as 1SG Lingenfelter has moved over to be the 510th Sapper Company First Sergeant and the XO, 1LT McCormick, returns to the 887th EN CO. Stepping into the shoes of the new HHC First Sergeant is SFC Eric Arredondo. SFC Arredondo is a former Drill Sergeant who has been working as the S3C NCOIC from the beginning of this deployment and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with him. Coming in as the new XO is 1LT Timothy Boucher. 1LT Boucher is a prior service Soldier who has spent a large portion of this deployment as a platoon leader in the 510th Sapper Company and spent the last two months in the S1 shop assisting CPT Richardson with awards and other personnel issues as needed. Although these two have been members of HHC, we welcome them in their new positions and look forward to their continued service in HHC as members of the Diablo command team.

Even as we prepare for our imminent return, HHC continues to conduct training, daily company operations and mission taskings with a limited number of personnel. The days finally arrived when the Lumberjack Shack and the Battalion Aid Station were completed and power was turned on. Kudos to the S3C shop and 510th for their hard work on completing these two buildings. Along with the daily grind we were able to take the time to conduct a few re-enlistments and promotions. Congratulations to all! HHC Soldiers continue to lead from the front as SPC Mendoza won the Battalion Soldier of the Year, SPC Dockery won the Group Soldier of the Year and SSG McDougall won the Battalion NCO of the Year. Congratulations to these individuals on their hard work and dedication!

Promotion from PFC to SPC

Kramer	Templeton
Veley	Brown
Radich	Deluna
Northcutt	Carr

Promotion from SGT to SSG

McDougall
Bagwill

Re-Enlistments

Johnson	Sather
Golden	Armas
Davalos	Kramer
Huston	Templeton
Nicely	Buker
Mohror	



New Promotees and Awardees.



Quarterly Training.



SPC Mohror and the S6 shop on his re-enlistment day.



Promotion Formation.



WORKHORSE

Commander's Update by Captain Joe Contreras

Hello again from the desert where the Forward Support Company has continued its exemplary performance in support of numerous units across the Baghdad area. To date, the company has conducted approximately 160 combat support missions, which have included delivering quality of life amenities, distributing fuel, and providing recovery support. Your Soldier has worked diligently for over 10 months and the light at the end of the tunnel is becoming more and more visible.

We have come a long way since we were notified that we would deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08. I would like to thank a few people that have made this deployment a success. First, I would like to thank Cori Black, our family readiness group leader, who volunteered for this critical position and has performed remarkably. Next, I would like to thank each Soldier as they are the ones that make the company function. Finally, I would like to thank our loved ones who have and continue to make many sacrifices. You continue to amaze me as you take on the added responsibilities of being without a spouse for a year and support your loved ones through these difficult times. We look forward to coming home and spending the holidays with you! **WORKHORSE 6 OUT!**

1st Platoon "Distribution" by 1st Lieutenant James Wilson

In the Distribution Platoon, we welcomed SFC Vicente Guillencapeda to the position of platoon sergeant. An engineer by trade, he has adapted well and is doing a great job of leading the platoon during our final months in Baghdad. Recently our group commander, COL Martin, presented coins of excellence to SGT Julie Scott and SPC Christopher Cooper. These Soldiers have been great examples for their peers and superiors alike. They always led from the front and received this well deserved recognition. We were fortunate to promote some hard-working individuals in the last couple of months. Congratulations to SPC Anthony Banchs, SPC Christopher Michael, SGT Julie Scott, SSG Nemia Melander, and SSG Brian Applewhite. I would also like to congratulate their families. I know they could not do everything they do without your support!

As we begin our preparations for redeployment and finish our mission, our thoughts turn to our families and friends back home. We know how hard it has been for you at home and want to thank you for all your support. Lastly, I would like to say that it was a great year, made easier by the exceptional Soldiers I was privileged to work with. I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to have led your loved ones during this deployment.

2nd Platoon "Maintenance" by SSG(P) Jose Rojo

Since our last newsletter, our platoon received a new platoon leader, 1LT Joshua Haller. 1LT Haller is currently on leave, so I have the opportunity to write this portion of the newsletter for the platoon.

During this last month, our Operational Readiness Rate for the company reached 100%. This is a big accomplishment, as we started at 20% when we arrived. The 100% means that all of our equipment is fully-mission capable. A key factor towards this was the hard work of the scheduled maintenance team. It is headed by SGT Ellis and consists of SGT Grocke, CPL Moore, SPC Cuevas, SPC Starlin, SPC Gallion, and SPC Blas.

We have continued to support the battalion in many aspects. We provided recovery wrecker support to the company as well as to the line companies. The wrecker support team is comprised of SGT Herman, SGT Stenquist, SPC Roberts, SPC Harting, SPC Black, and PV2 Lewis. These individuals received many accolades for their hard work and dedication to duty. In addition, SPC Lopez and SPC Burke, were on a moments notice in case their services were required for a command and control visit.

Our maintenance control section continued to perform at a top-notch level. Our welding teams continued to stay busy welding door latches and trailers for some of the battalion's largest equipment. It also fabricated speed signs and a sign for the Lumberjack Shack. SPC Fisher and SPC Franks are the only two welders in the company, but they have been getting assistance from SPC Larkey and PFC Stanley, who have

been working outside of their primary jobs. It has been a long hot summer and would have been miserable if not for the work of our air conditioner mechanics, SPC Bundy and SPC Biles. They have worked on numerous vehicle units and also fixed units in buildings and offices both on and off the camp. In addition, our generation mechanics, SGT Hernandez and his crew SPC Sessoms and PFC Frazier have ensured that power was always available in our work environment.

Some of the unsung Soldiers of the platoon are the prescribed load list clerks. All vehicles require service and repair parts. The parts must be picked-up, inventoried, and stocked on a daily basis. Unserviceable parts also need to be tagged and turned-in when required. This has been the job of SSG Marrero, SPC Trenche, and PFC Ramos.

Finally, a motor pool could not function properly without outstanding leadership. This task goes to individuals whose management skills have truly been the key to the platoon's success. SFC Sanchez and SSG Damien have kept the platoon together and motivated it to produce outstanding results. As we reach the end of our deployment, we look forward to reuniting with all of our family and friends.

Headquarters/Field Feeding Section by 1st Lieutenant Tyler Jesionowski (XO)

Since the last newsletter, the Field Feeding Section had many significant events occur. It now falls under headquarters and is under the leadership of SFC Arnold, who has taken over the responsibilities of platoon sergeant. SGT Dillard, SPC Wilson, SPC Leibacher, SPC Hamm, SPC Splattstoser, SPC Workman, and PFC Swigert gave their oaths of reenlistment to continue service in our great Army. In addition, SPC Hamm and SPC Morgan were recognized for their hard work and received coins from COL Martin, the group commander. SSG Rogers, SGT Garner, and SPC Harder have also been promoted since our last newsletter. Thanks for all the support and we look forward to coming home.



From bottom left to right: SSG Alexander, SGT Dillard, SPC Splattstoser, SPC Leibacher, middle row; SPC Hamm, SSG Wilson, SPC Workman, back row; SPC Morgan, and PFC Swigert hold the flag during SGT Dillard's reenlistment.



SFC Sanchez advises SPC Lopez as he turns a wrench.



From Left to Right: SSG Byrne, SSG Melander, SPC Michael, 1LT Wilson, and SGT Haufe at a coalition outpost.



510th Sapper Company

September 2007

ISSUE 6

Commander's Comments - CPT Kenneth Rockwell & SFC Kenneth Lingenfelter

Greetings once again from the beautiful country of Iraq. We have completed ten months of our tour and we cannot wait for the last two to come to a conclusion. I am happy to report to you that your Soldier is doing well, is in great spirits, and continues to do his part in the global war on terrorism. Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the Soldiers of the 510th Sapper Company, we have completed every task thrown at us throughout the deployment, and we have done so with phenomenal results. Your loved ones continue to receive praise

everywhere he goes, from coalition outpost in remote regions of Baghdad to the motor pool here on Camp Liberty. I am continually impressed at the professionalism and skill level of every Soldier in the company, and I know that you too are proud of them.

The 510th had a major change of leadership this past month. 1SG Etter was selected for promotion to sergeant major and was therefore moved to the battalion S3 shop to be the S3 Sergeant Major. While we were all saddened to see him leave, we are also elated to receive

our new first sergeant, SFC Kenneth Lingenfelter. With open arms we welcome SFC Lingenfelter, his wife Marjorie, and his two boys Jacob and Jordan. Welcome to the family!

As I am sure you are intimately aware of, our deployment is quickly coming to an end. While the exact day we are coming home will not be known for some time, we expect to have the majority of the company home in the first week of November. We ask that you keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we push to the end of this deployment, returning home to our loved ones.

1st Platoon - 1LT Thomas Wynn & SFC Joseph Taylor

1st Platoon is almost to the end of the road, and it is safe to say we are all looking forward to coming home. During the last couple of months we have accomplished a lot and have been very busy. 1st Platoon has been more involved in crater repair missions, traveling throughout Baghdad ensuring that coalition forces and the Iraqi people have the ability to move freely in and around their communities. While the work is long and tiring, our Soldiers have proven to be experts in their field, gaining recognition all across central Iraq.

Over the past few months, our Soldiers have continued to support the surge by constructing multiple patrol bases and coalition outposts around Baghdad, receiving accolades for their professionalism and

craftsmanship during every mission. On one occasion, all thirty-one members of 1st Platoon received certificates of achievement for their efforts during the construction of a patrol base in northern Baghdad.

We would like to welcome back SGT Patrick Hernandez from his recovery back home. Upon his return, SGT Hernandez received his Purple Heart from COL Martin, the 1169th Group Commander. Congratulations are also in order for SPC Ramthun, SPC Sawyer, CPL Savage, SPC Reynolds, and PFC Barker for receiving their Combat Action Badges, and the platoon's medic, CPL Bugh, for receiving his Combat Medical Badge. SPC McFadden and SGT Leonel Hernandez recently received unit coins

from COL Martin for their hard work and dedication throughout the tour. Additionally, we would like to say farewell to SFC Ledezma. He has moved on, taking over the NCOIC position in S2 shop at battalion. It has been a long ride, and we appreciate everything he has done for the platoon. And finally, we'd like to welcome his replacement as our platoon sergeant, SFC Joseph Taylor. SFC Taylor was forced to dive right in to things on the second day of in the platoon when we went on a seven-day construction mission. He has not looked back since.

From all of the Soldiers of 1st Platoon, we want to thank everyone back home for your prayers and support. We will be home in no time and we anticipate seeing our loved ones in person.

2nd Platoon - 2LT Daniel Robledo & SFC Nathan Young

Hello to all from Baghdad. We hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits. As we finish our tour in Iraq, missions seem to be picking up in pace. 2nd Platoon is facing more challenging work in more condensed timelines as the units in our area are realizing our potential and skills of 2nd Platoon. These challenges are being met head on with great enthusiasm from our Soldiers. We are starting to showcase our abilities in larger missions such as Loyalty Mall, where we prepared the interior living spaces for troops by providing electrical power and carpentry upgrades. The mission was projected to take as long as a month, but, with some hard work and constantly improving construction skills, we were able to finish the project in half

the time.

2nd Platoon was pleased to welcome some exciting additions to the family since the last newsletter. First and foremost, congratulations to the Mages family on their newest addition, Justin Mages. His arrival was highly anticipated. We would also like to welcome SPC Tackett to the platoon from the battalion S2 shop. He is quickly becoming integrated into our platoon and experiencing the rebuilding of Iraq first hand.

With the end of the deployment approaching, awards seem to be trickling in. The Combat Action Badge award was presented to SSG Lyles, SGT Johnson, SPC, Mages, SPC Mackey, and SPC Smith. SPC Smith was also presented with an Army Achievement Medal for his car-

penry work done at Coalition Outpost Ameriyah. SPC Parsons was also awarded the Purple Heart for wounds sustained during the Coalition Outpost Guerrero mission.

The topic that seems to be on everyone's mind is of course redeployment. We are all eager to be rejoined with our loved ones as the redeployment date slowly approaches. Some of us will be coming home with the 60% majority while others will have to stay back with SFC Young and me to train the incoming unit, setting them up for success in their deployment. Until that date arrives, where we will finally be reunited with our loved ones, we will all be thinking of our families and friends back home and keeping all of you in our prayers.

3rd Platoon - 1LT Daniel Lao and SFC Sidney Karneke

Over the last few months, 3rd Platoon has completed several major projects, such as the new 20th Engineer Battalion aid station. The battalion aid station will accommodate three examination rooms, a large trauma area, a spacious sick-call area, and several offices, all completed in less than 30 days! The platoon also completed several other construction projects for units throughout the Baghdad area.

Since the reorganization of the platoon, we have had some personnel changes. SPC Smart moved to headquarters to become the new company armorer, SPC Gossett moved to

HHC to assist in their operations center, and SGT Mart joined our

Woodward, and PFC Moisio. These soldier have worked very hard and deserve their newly earned promotions. We also promoted SPC Marzka to Sergeant in recognition of his contributions to the platoon.

We are continuing to prepare for our next project which will be the contraction of a dining facility at a growing coalition outpost. This project will take us into October and one day closer to coming home!

We are eager to see everyone that we had left behind during our deployment, and hope everything is going well back home. We want to thank everyone for your support and we will see everyone soon.



The completed Battalion Aid Station

team from the company headquarters where he did a stint as the company armorer.

Several of our soldiers have been promoted to Specialist: PFC Taylor, PFC Purdis, PFC Golding, PFC Bigelow, PFC

As the temperature falls, so do the number of days that the Deuce has left here in Iraq. I am happy to say that this is the second to last newsletter that will be published from down range. We are all looking forward to coming home and seeing our loved ones. This month marked a very significant milestone for the Deuce. Last Friday marked our 365th day deployed, more than any other company in the battalion. And I am proud to say that the company's motivation and work ethic remain strong and professional. Everywhere the Deuce goes, your Soldiers are making a difference. Deuce Soldiers are greatly contributing to what General Petraeus refers to as "tactical momentum." They continue to set the conditions for a free and stable Iraq.

The line platoons conducted their usual wide range of missions. 1st Platoon completed the fortification of an Iraqi Police Station along a highly contested road. Their efforts established a coalition presence in an area known for insurgent activity, helping to protect the populace and open the road for commerce. 1st Platoon also tried their hand at route sanitization; a mission aimed at minimizing the threat of IEDs along roads. They did a great job. 2nd Platoon spent most of the month on a multiple phase mission. They visited one of Saddam's old palaces and conducted a number of projects aimed at making it more livable. Let me mention that the palace was bombed during the initial offensive back in 2003. They did so well that the unit they supported has asked them back to do more. 3rd Platoon spent the month improving the drainage system at one of the bigger FOBs in the area. The 1SG and I visited them a couple of times and were impressed with their workmanship and progress. Maintenance continues to keep the vehicle fleet running, allowing the line platoons to complete their missions. Everything the company has accomplished is due in no small measure to their efforts. Similarly, Headquarters Platoon has done a fantastic job coordinating missions, keeping the platoons' communications up and ensuring the supplies needed to do the mission are available.

To the Families, friends and supporters of the Deuce, thank you for everything you have done and continue to do. Your support has made this long deployment more bearable and we are looking forward to the day, in the not so distant future, when we will be home with you again. A special thanks to the FRG and Rear-D for your efforts. And least I forget, happy birthdays to 1SG SanPedro and SFC Leonard.

DEUCE 6, OUT!



DEUCE

EMPIRE

Greetings to all in the Empire and Lumberjack Family. It is with a heavy heart that I report the death of SSG Alicia Birchett. SSG Birchett was killed in a vehicle accident while on a route sanitization mission on August 9th; while preparing to change a bucket loader tire, she was pinned between the bucket loader and the wrecker. Although she had only been stationed at Fort Campbell since March of this year, she made a great impact on everyone in the Empire and will be greatly missed.

On a more positive note, as of this writing, we have fewer than sixty days until the Empire main body is redeployed and on the ground at Fort Campbell and Fort Hood, respectively.

1st Platoon recently returned from a month-long mission constructing force protection at FOB Justice. During this mission, they emplaced over 300 barriers, emplaced and filled over 550 7-foot HESCO bastions, hauled and spread over 120 dump truck loads of gravel, and leveled and compacted an area covering over four square football fields.



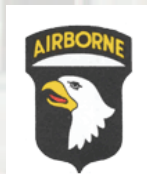
1st Platoon Construction Mission at FOB Justice – Before



1st Platoon Construction Mission at FOB Justice – After

Since the last Lumberjack Ledger, 2nd Platoon has continued to be busy. They sanitized two routes in eastern Baghdad, and constructed one Patrol Base and expanded another north of Baghdad. While constructing PB Inchon, a group of our Soliders from 2nd Platoon came under indirect fire. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured in the attack, with three Empire Soldiers sustaining minor shrapnel injuries. Additionally, 2nd Platoon has recently undergone a leadership change, with 1LT Tatum moving back to HHC, 20th EN BN, and 1LT McCormick coming back to again be a platoon leader.

(L to R) 2nd Platoon’s construction of PB Inchon; SPC Pickering, PFC Ouko, and PFC Wilson receive recognition from the maneuver commander at PB Inchon.



LONG LIVE THE EMPIRE!!

EMPIRE

3rd Platoon also had a variety of projects since the last Ledger. This included assisting in the construction of the Lumberjack Battalion Aid Station, construction of four checkpoints in south Baghdad, construction of a helicopter landing zone, a route sanitization, an entry control point improvement mission, and the construction of a security center in central Baghdad.



(L to R) 3rd Platoon constructing “Jack’s Landing” HLZ; FMT’s recovery training on a 20-ton Dump Truck

As always, the Field Maintenance Team continued to provide great maintenance support, both here on the FOB and throughout Baghdad on company missions. They really have burned the midnight oil on many different occasions making sure that the company could complete its missions.

Over the last year, the Empire has accomplished much – over 30 coalition outposts, joint security stations, and patrol bases built; 18 point obstacles built and/or repaired, over 60 kilometers of road sanitized; and more than 10 check points constructed. All of these projects included over 10,000 concrete barriers and over 1,000 HESCO bastions emplaced and filled (totaling over 30,000 linear meters of force protection). You should be proud of your Empire Soldiers, as they have truly accomplished a Herculean task.

This will be the Empire’s last submission in the Lumberjack Ledger as we continue on our road to redeployment. We wish all of our brothers and sisters from Fort Hood and Fort Drum continued success as they redeploy, refit, and prepare for their next rendezvous with destiny. The Army being as small as it is, we are sure to work with each other again soon.

CPT Hudson

Empire 6

LONG LIVE THE EMPIRE!!



REENLISTMENT



CHAPLAIN

Greetings from the Chaplain's Corner at Camp Liberty!

As I write to all of you who are back at Fort Hood, Fort Campbell, Fort Drum, and all abroad, we sure hope that you are all doing well and staying strong for you love one, because I have great news for you. What is it, you may ask? Well, we are coming home! Now that is great news! Just think, not many weeks from now you should see your love one step off that plane, in which almost a year ago broke your heart and took them from you. Many of you have anticipated that day on a constant basis. You have longed for the return of the one you hold so dear, your son, daughter, mother, father, husband, and wife. You have anticipated that day when they would step off the plane and hold you in their arms. We too have longed for that day. However, we are not there yet, but it is just right around the corner. I hope when that long waited day comes, it is one that brings you joy.

As for me, I am anticipating when I will be able to hold my children and kiss my wife for the great bravery they had in enduring the many struggles and decisions back home in my absent. I know when we step off that plane, you will tell us that we are heroes for doing our job, but in the minds of these Soldiers, you are our heroes. Each one of you, by expressing your love for us, kept us doing our job and looking out for each other. We owe you a debit of gratitude for your love and faithfulness. We applaud you for being strong and courageous for us. You have endured much in our absent. Therefore, as your chaplain, I want to thank you for being there for your Soldier. Thank you for sending the care packages, the letters of encouragement, and the many times we spent on the phone and heard the words from you, "I miss and love you, and can't wait to see you." Those actions of love gave us strength to endure. Therefore, as you anticipate the return of your Soldier, I hope it is with pride, joy, and the realization of the value in spending time with the ones you love.

However, as your emotions of anticipation rise some of you may be feeling numerous emotions ranging from fear and uncertainty. I want to encourage you. To tell you not worry about those feelings for they are all normal feelings that company such reunions. Some of you may be asking, "Chaplain, what do I expect and what can I do to make this union a success?" Well, I cannot tell you everything you can expect and that what one family goes through during the reunion process will be the same as all others in the Battalion. Each and every family is different with their own set of unique issues and arrangements. However, let me offer you ten simple tips to help you have a successful reunion. When these tips are followed by both the Soldier and love one back home, it will not only give the reunion process a tremendous advantage of success, but will make it more enjoyable and meaningful for everyone. The ten tips of success are as followed:

1. Take it slowly. There is no need to rush anything, especially your time with each other. Cherish each moment with your love one, for it is a gift from God, who loves you.
2. Make communication a priority. Talk to one another, including your children. Do not assume that you know what to expect or what the other is feeling or thinking. Always talk about your expectations, joys, worries, uncertainties, hopes, etc.
3. Listen before you speak. The most important part in properly communicating and avoiding problems with your love one is to listen (not just hear) and understand what they are saying.
4. Teamwork is essential. Understand that as a family you are a team. Do not play the blame game toward each other. A strong family is a supportive family. Support one another through the good and bad decisions. A team that works together with utmost care and diligence always wins. So respect each other as an important part of the team.
5. Be willing to GIVE more than TAKE. I have learned over the years that life and relationships are like bank accounts. If you withdrawal (take out) more than your deposit (give or put in) you will go bankrupt (divorce, break up, separate, or disconnect from children). You must be will to give 200% of your efforts (all of you) to the relationships in your life, for you have pledged before God and that you will do what it takes (that 200%) to make it successful. Both the Soldier and love one back home must be willing to be more of a giver than a taker if you want to have a successful reintegration. Life is about relationships, not stuff. It is about what you have put into them rather taken from them.
6. Avoid the, "I had it worse than you argument!" No good can or will ever come from those types of arguments or expressions. Your separation may have been different, but it does not mean it was worse or easier than the others. So be understanding and put yourself in your love ones shoes or boots.



CHAPLAIN

7. *Spend quality time with each one of your love ones.* Yes, make sure you spend time together as a family, however, make sure you spend time with each one of your immediate love ones separately. In other words, Husbands spend time alone on a date with your wives. Yes, you heard me, date your spouse and do it regularly. I have found this to be vitally important if you want to maintain a constant and thriving relationship that builds on a foundation of love. This same mindset also applies to your children. It is tremendously important to spend quality alone and special time with each one of your children separately from the others in the family. Each one of your children are unique with their own needs, personalities, and desire. Moreover, each one needs to know by the time you spend with them that they are special and vitally important to you, not just lumped with everyone else. If you do this, you will secretly thank me for the difference and impact it will make on the life of your children and family as a whole. Therefore, in advance, you are welcome.
8. *Understand things have changed.* Realize that things will feel and maybe even be different when you see each other or step through the doors of your home. So, do not expect things to be the way it was before the deployment. Be willing to compromise and negotiate. Try to find out what is different and be willing to be flexible no matter what you may encounter. Understand things will not be perfect, because we are imperfect humans who make mistakes no matter how good or smart we are.
9. *Seek help.* Everyone, no matter the rank, reputation, education, or title needs help every once in awhile. No one is an island to himself or herself, not even the Chaplain. Be aware of the problems or struggles that you are experiencing during the reunion process, and be willing to get help. It is not a sign of weakness, but rather it takes massive amounts of courage to seek help when you need it. In my book, that is great strength. In addition, realize that every Soldier and their immediate family members are entitled for help from the Army. So use it and do not neglect yourself and your love ones. Some resources of help are Chaplains, Friends, Mental Health, and Chain of Command.
10. *Have a Positive Attitude.* That is right think positive rather than negative, even if you are facing some difficult problems or choices. I know it is difficult, but I have found that if you face a problem with a positive attitude with and toward your love ones, you have a better chance of seeing a resolution to the issue. However, if you go in with a negative attitude toward others, you will possibly over look the solution, and cause more problems; especially with the ones, you love.

Thoughtful Reflection:

“Attitude is more important than circumstances, failures, successes, than what others think or say or do... It will make or break a company, as well as a home. I believe that life is 10% what happens, and 90% how I react to it.”

“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”

Proverbs 17:22

Your Caring Chaplain,
Chaplain (CPT) Rickie Wambles
Chaplain Asst. (PFC) Avery Owens

