

# Polar Bear Tracks



EDITION 24

JUNE/JULY 2008



*Drawing by SPC Michael Stone  
of A/4-31*

## INSIDE

### THIS ISSUE:

- SSG Jimenez and SPC Fouty found** 1
- 2 BCT Fire Support Coordination Exercise** 2
- A Co and the "Long Grey Line"** 3
- C Co shifts focus** 4
- FIST preps OP** 5
- AASLT school at USMA** 5
- The ROCK WALL** 5
- C Co Test the Water Obstacle Course** 6
- Urban Operations at USMA** 6
- West Point Warrior Challenge** 7
- A/2BSTB Hooligans display the engineer expertise** 7
- Blackhawks nested in Cadet Summer Training** 8
- Task Force Sapper raises right and in the house that Ruth built** 9
- The Assassins visit the Big Apple** 10
- Task Force participates in local 4th of July Celebrations** 11

## 4TH BATTALION, 31ST INFANTRY REGIMENT NEWS

### UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT, NEW YORK

On May 12, 2007 Seven Soldiers of TF 4-31 on patrol, in the volatile area south of Baghdad known as the "triangle of death", were ambushed by enemy forces using automatic rifle fire and explosives, in Al Taqa, Iraq. (PFC Joseph J. Anzack, Jr.; SFC James D. Connell, Jr.; PFC Daniel W. Courneya; CPL Christopher E. Murphy; and SGT Anthony J. Schober) died and were recovered. SGT Alex R. Jimenez and SPC Byron W. Fouty were listed as missing or captured. The Defense Department said Friday 11 JUL 08 that the remains were discovered Wednesday 9 JUL 08 and identified a day later. The Pentagon generally waits 24 hours after notifying the next of kin before publicly releasing the names of dead service members. The bodies were found with help from special operations forces who on July 1 captured someone suspected of knowing where the soldiers were buried, military officials said Friday in a statement. The two bodies were found in the Iraqi village of Jurf as Sakhr. The bodies of both soldiers were taken to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Dover, Del., where military officials are expected to perform further tests to determine the causes of death. SSG Alex Jimenez and SPC Byron Fouty disappeared after insurgents ambushed their combat team 20 miles outside Baghdad. The soldiers killed were from D/4-31. "Every combat death is a tragedy, but this has been especially difficult for the families of these two 10th Mountain Soldiers because of our not knowing for over a year of their whereabouts," Maj. Gen. Michael Oates, 10th Mountain commander, said in a statement. "We take solace in the fact that they are finally home."

Task Force POLAR BEAR currently at the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY, has placed the colors at half mast in honor of the service of SSG Jimenez and SPC Fouty. It is a somber day for the TF as the discovery of our comrades saddens all as it brings closure and reality to the situation, it also reopens old wounds.



*SPC Byron Fouty was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1988, in California. Byron completed High School in Waterford, Michigan and entered the service at Fort Benning, GA on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2006.*

*SPC Fouty's awards include the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge.*

*Byron is survived by his father, Mick Fouty, his Step-Father, Gordy Dibler, his sister, Sarah, who reside in Michigan, and his Mother who resides in Texas. We join them in mourning the loss of a truly remarkable man and also in celebrating his life and accomplishments. We will miss you Byron.*



*SSG Alexander Jimenez was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1982, in New York. He graduated from high school in 2000 and entered the service at Fort Benning, GA on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2002.*

*Alex served as a Team Leader in 1<sup>st</sup> Squad, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Delta Company, 4-31 INF Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division (LI). Alex also served with Bravo Company and Charlie Company on one previous deployment to the theater of Iraq as a SAW gunner and Team Leader.*

*SSG Jimenez's awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.*

*Alex was a friend of many peers, leaders and Soldiers within the Battalion. He is well known for taking young Soldiers under his wing to ensure they are taken care of and trained. But he is best known for teaching himself to speak Arabic and learning the culture after his first deployment, realizing the importance of breaking down the language barrier. His commitment to the men under his charge, accomplishment of any mission, and his country will be missed by all.*

*Alex is survived by his Wife, Yaderlin, his Father, Andy and his Mother, Maria. We join them in mourning the loss of a truly remarkable man and also in celebrating his life and accomplishments. We will miss you Alex!*

## 2 BCT Conducts Fire Support Coordination Exercise

Re-printed article By SPC Jennie Burrett  
2nd Brigade Combat Team Journalist

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team conducted a fire support coordination exercise June 2-6 at Range 48 here (Fort Drum).

The purpose of the exercise was to train and validate company commanders, fire support officers and joint tactical air controllers in planning and executing indirect fires, close combat attack and close air support.

“The importance of this exercise is to get company commanders and FSOs trained on their critical leader tasks,” said Col. David Miller, 2nd BCT commander.

During the exercise, company commanders and their FSOs had the ability to direct 81 mm and 120 mm mortars, 105 mm howitzers and close combat attack provided by 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment’s OH-58 Kiowas. Commanders also had to work with joint tactical air controllers to coordinate and direct the close air support of A-10 warthogs, F-16 Fighting Falcons and F-15E Strike Eagles.

“The effect of this is the most realistic training the company commanders and fire support officers will ever get,” Miller said. “To me, these are commanders’ basic skills.”

Company commanders started the planning phase of the exercise May 14 where they had to develop maneuver plans after receiving brigade and battalion orders.

“The commanders got the appreciation of the art and science of battle command, which is the integration of maneuvers, fire support and all the assets and enablers,” said Lt. Col. Heyward Hutson, 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment commander. “It is important to build relationships so that they can effectively communicate and employ all assets to achieve the (brigade) commander’s intent.” After forming maneuver plans, officers then had to brief the brigade commander.

“It is a very important step to be able to command and control their troops and the other assets,” said Lt. Col Mark Kneram, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment commander. “This exercise reinforces all the command and control techniques that we have drilled over and over again, and it drives home how much combat power they have in their control. It is much greater than they realized.”

Many company commanders are new in the position since 2nd BCT’s recent redeployment from Iraq. “For most of the officers, this is a brand-new team and this is the first time they have had to execute leadership tasks,” said Lt. Col. John Petkosek, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment commander. “This is the first time they have had to integrate fires into their maneuver plan, and they gained an appreciation for it.”

Being the first time company commanders have done something like this, they realize there is a lot to know.

“I realize there is a world of knowledge to learn about fires, and I may not have mastered anything, but I do know what I do not know about fires,” said Capt. Tom Miller, C Troop, 1-89 commander. Flexibility was built into the exercise to accomplish the intent.

“This exercise was designed so that the commanders could do what they wanted to do and not be limited to the lane,” the brigade commander said. “So every company commander chose to do things differently.”

Company commanders look at this exercise as a learning tool to build upon.

“This exercise helps improve us as commanders,” said Capt. Rich Thompson, D Company, 2-14 Infantry commander. “It is my job to direct assets in a combat way, and this helps to learn what to do and what to avoid when in a real-life event.”

The brigade command is planning another exercise in the near future.



Capt. Nicholas Ziembra (center), commander of C Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, and 2nd Lt. Mack Turner (left), fire support officer for 4-31 Infantry, discuss tactics with Maj. Brett Kessler, 2 BCT fire support officer, during a fire support exercise June 2-6. Photo by SPC Jennie Burrett

# Alpha Company Plays Important Role in Training the “Long Grey Line”

Story by CPT Ryan Liebaber, A/4-31 IN

In mid-June Alpha Company deployed to Camp Natural Bridge, a small camp just outside of the gates of West Point. The company is currently tasked with conducting summer training for the cadets of the United States Military Academy. Because of the extensive combat experience within its ranks of Alpha Company, there could be no better unit tasked to conduct this training. The Soldiers of the Company, while initially less than thrilled about spending their first summer after a 15-month deployment away from family and friends, have fully embraced their mission like the true professionals that they are, and are performing in absolutely phenomenal manner.

Third Platoon, the Company's main effort, is tasked with conducting Land Navigation training for cadets between their Plebe (Freshman) and Yuk (Sophomore) years at the Academy. To execute this training, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon is running 20-hour a day operations that requires 2LT Jackson and SFC Ford to strictly manage their personnel and resources. The training is broken down into three training sites, each of which has a Day and Night portion. Site 1 is led by SSG Rodriguez during the day, and SGT Hason at night; Site 2 is led by SGT Patino during the day, and SGT Abbadusky during the night; Site 3 is led by SGT Morrell during the day, and SGT Browne at night. At Site 1, the cadets receive numerous blocks of instruction given by SGT Hogan, PVT Klipp, PV2 Adams, and SPC Tiarks during the day portion, and SGT Hason and PVT Proctor at night. After their classes, the cadets execute several practical exercises where they test the newly learned principles and techniques that were taught to them by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon's Soldiers. At Site 2, the cadets execute a day and night practice course. Site 2 has the fortune of having several black bears living on the course, which routinely chase both Cadets and our 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon Soldiers. Site 3 is the graded land navigation test course for the Cadets, and requires flawless execution to ensure all Cadets receive an accurate and fair land navigation test. The Cadets must find 8 out of 10 points during the day, and 3 out of 4 points at night to successfully pass their land navigation testing. Luckily for them, they are receiving top-notch training from 2LT Jackson's and SFC Ford's Soldiers that is definitely setting them up for success.

*Cadet Tyler Becvar prepares to head to his first point on the land navigation course (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)*



Second Platoon is tasked with conducting Advanced Rifle Marksmanship (ARM) training for Cadets, also between their Plebe (freshman) and Yuk (sophomore) years at the Academy. During the course of the training, the Cadets receive instructional classes given by members of 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon. SGT Flores presents a class on “Engaging Targets from Covered Positions,” SPC Wright presents a class on “Neutralizing Enemy Threats,” CPL Cecil gives a class entitled “The Fundamentals of Close Quarters Marksmanship,” and SPC Bettin gives a class and then critiques the Cadets on the fundamentals of a proper shooting stance. Upon completion of the classes, the Cadets execute close-quarters marksmanship shooting led by 2LT Ryan, where they engage numerous targets that are presented to them from 360 degrees. The Cadets must execute proper turning movements, and then engage the targets with a “failure drill.” Upon completion of this training, the Cadets move to SFC McMillian's station where they execute a stress-shoot. During the stress-shoot, the Cadets must sprint a ¼ mile, after which they engage and close-in on a group of targets from various covered positions. While most of the Cadets have very little experience handling and shooting their weapons upon arrival to ARM training, by the time they leave 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, they are capable of effectively engaging and destroying enemy targets with their rifles.



*PV2 Daniel Aguilar and SPC Oscar Ponce conduct cross-training on 120 mm mortar system (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)*

The Company's Fire-Support and Mortar sections, led by 2LT Sullivan and SSG Castro, are busy almost every day working with the battalion FSO, CPT Fisher, and the attached artillery battery, A/2-15 FA. Our mortar Soldiers have become masters of their 60mm mortars, while also cross-training on the battalion's 81mm and 120mm mortars. The Company's Fire-Supporters are truly in heaven, being able to train on fire-support missions and actually call-for-fire on almost a daily basis. Their proficiency at the end of this deployment will certainly be unmatched.

Alpha Company's Infantrymen are also busy preparing for Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) testing that will occur in September, immediately following the designated block-leave period. The platoons spend their off-days at the rifle qualification range, where Soldiers must achieve a rifle qualification score of “Expert” to be eligible to compete for the coveted EIB. They are also executing Land Navigation training at 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon's Site 3, and will conduct a 12-mile foot-march planned for later in the summer as pre-requisites for the actual EIB testing.

When not busy executing training for the Cadets, or preparing for EIB testing, the Soldiers have a numerous other activities that they can participate in. Several Soldiers are taking advantage of college courses that are being offered on West Point, while others use the free wireless internet on Camp Natural Bridge to surf the net and stay in touch with loved ones. Camp Natural Bridge also has a cantina where Soldiers of legal drinking age can go after a long day of work and enjoy some adult beverages in a responsible manner. Some of our Soldiers have also taken advantage of our close proximity to New York City, and have taken advantage of things such as Yankees' baseball games and visits to the Statue of Liberty.

As you can see, the Company is doing extremely well. We are performing an important function by training the Army's future leaders, training ourselves and developing our leaders, and having some fun in our free-time. With this deployment about half way over, we will be back at Fort Drum before we know it and preparing for our next mission, whatever that may be.



## Charlie Rock shifts focus to USMA mission

By CPT Nickolas Ziemba, Commander C/4-31 IN

At the end of May, Charlie Rock finished out its squad training, culminating in a squad live fire exercise that included the company's 60 mm mortar assets in support. The scenario had an infantry squad depart a patrol base enroute to conducting a reconnaissance of an area recently reported to contain suspicious activity. Notional insurgents then ambushed the squad who had to assault through on to a target house. While in this house, the squad leader received reports that insurgents were preparing to fire a mortar from a location nearby. The squad had to quickly react and neutralize the threat, sustaining a notional casualty along the way. Our mortars fired on a pre-planned target at the beck and call of our young squad leaders while the squad started the long and fatiguing process of evacuating their wounded soldier. At the end of the training, the tested squad leaders grew tremendously in their leadership and poise under-pressure, and the squad-members themselves came to understand their value within the greater Charlie Rock team.



Photo By CPT Nickolas Ziemba

With that, Charlie Rock put a temporary hold on their collective training and shifted focus towards preparations for our West Point training deployment. The primary and assistant instructors drilled their classes time and time again back at Fort Drum to perfect their delivery, and it all has paid off now that the company has started training Cadets. Rocks are tasked to teach Cadets about a wide variety of weapons systems, urban operations, military mountaineering, bayonet training, and squad-level patrolling. The schedule is busy, but it is not without time to relax by scenic Lake Popolopen. Our soldiers, from the youngest private to the most seasoned senior non-commissioned officer, are standing tall in front of the Army's future platoon leaders, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Cadets have commented daily on the professional and engaging instruction that our soldiers have provided them, and for a good reason too. Many of these young Cadets will grow up to be platoon leaders for these same Rocks. It is with this in mind that our company focuses our efforts.



Photo By CPT Nickolas Ziemba

## The Task Force Fire Support Teams (FIST) prepare the Observation Post

Story by SPC Christopher Norkin  
HHC/4-31 IN

As the Forward Observers of HHC/4-31 establish their site for the Cadet Summer Training at West Point, NY, they conducted training on the newly fielded Lightweight Laser Designator and Range-Finder (LLDR). "This is state of the art equipment unlike any we have had the opportunity to train with" said PFC Christopher Morvant of the B Co FIST. They had extensive training, and much time to practice, and perfect their skills.



The Task Force Fire Support Teams prepare the Observation Post for the arrival of West Point Cadets for summer training. (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)

CST provides all four classes with challenging, realistic military training. It is conducted on two venues Cadet Field Training (CFT) and Cadet Basic Training (CBT). TF 4-31 will focus the majority of their time in CFT with the Cadets who have completed their Freshman year (Plebes) where as CBT is for the Cadets just recently graduating high school and arrived at the academy.

The Task Force Polar Bear mission is to support USMA's Department of Military Instruction in execution of Cadet Summer Training by passing on our skills, experiences, and mindset to Cadets as they train to become leaders in America's Army.

## AASLT School at USMA

Story by CPT Bill Fisher  
FSO 4-31 IN

While deployed to the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY, Soldiers from Task Force Polar Bear were given the opportunity to attend the Air-Assault School. The course was conducted on USMA property and operated by Cadre from Fort Campbell.

The Task Force was given sixteen slots for this particular course. Less than half prevailed in the end and graduated, donning the coveted air-assault badge. The Task Force hopes to send many more of its Soldiers to future courses held here at USMA.

Those who completed the course were; SGT Mathew Konopatski, A/2-15 FA; SGT Monte Robertson, HHC/4-31 IN; SPC Clarence Hood, F/2BSB; SPC Nicholas Phillips, C/4-31 IN; PFC Christopher Blair, A/4-31 IN; and PV2 Daniel Pesavento B Co 4-31 IN.



SGT Monte Robertson, HHC 4-31 IN operations section, graduates Air-Assault school while supporting Cadet Summer Training at USMA, is congratulated by SGM Mangels the 4-31 IN BN Operation SGM.

## Rock Wall at Arvin Gym, West Point NY

Story by SPC Christopher Norkin  
HHC/4-31 IN

The Task Force Soldiers are given many opportunities to enjoy a wide variety of activities while deployed to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Everything from bowling to rock climbing (seen here).

The rock wall is set up at Arvin Gymnasium on the Academy Campus and Soldiers from the Task Force were invited to come and give it a shot. Most agreed that it was a great learning experience, and a lot easier than some of the Soldiers thought it might be. It took a lot of coordination, by maintaining contact with the wall at all times. "It was physically demanding for even the most fit soldier", said SPC Jenson Mariur from the 4-31 communications section.

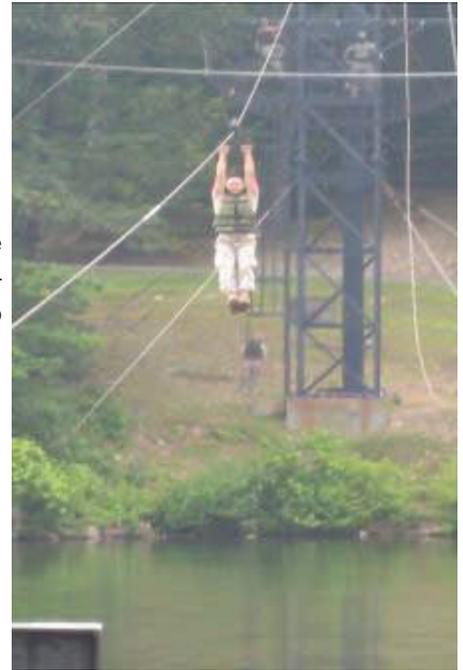


PFC Hammond of HHC/4-31 IN (Bottom Left). Photo by (PFC Gabriel Vieira.)



## Splashing it up on Lake Popolopen

Story by SPC Christopher Norkin  
HHC/4-31 IN



C/4-31 IN jumped at the opportunity to trade another hot day at Camp Natural Bridge for some training on the Water Obstacle Course, that has been established and will be executed by B/4-31 IN for Cadet Summer Training (CST). What other job is going to pay you to play in the water on a hot day and call it training.

*A Soldier from C/4-31 Infantry checks the Slide for Life obstacle at Camp Buckner's' Water Obstacle Course.*

## C Co Conducts Urban Ops at USMA

Story by SPC Christopher Norkin  
HHC/4-31 IN

2nd Platoon C/4-31 IN will be teaching the basics of Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) throughout their deployment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY in support of Cadet Summer Training (CST).

The platoon spent two weeks prepping the site prior to the Department of Military Instruction's validation of the training. The Soldiers have been rehearsing their classes of instruction in such areas as entering and clearing a room and using proper four man stack procedures. With the time allowed, each scenario was practiced until it was up to standard. The platoon focused most of their preparation time on the correct ways for window and door breaching. They will instruct the Cadets on detainee operations, focusing on how to control them according to The Laws of War. The effort is to perfect the instruction allowing it to be easily understood, and easily taught by anyone.



*PFC Jacinto Tellez, PV2 Robert Swink, PV2 Jesus Vasquez, and PFC John Mckillip perform a four man stack at the glass house on the urban operations site. (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)*

CST provides all four classes with challenging, realistic military training. It is conducted on two venues Cadet Field Training (CFT) and Cadet Basic Training (CBT). TF 4-31 will focus the majority of their time in CFT with the Cadets who have completed their Freshman year (Plebes) where as CBT is for the Cadets just recently graduating high school and arrived at the academy.



The Polar Bears feel privileged to share our information and insight with the Corps of Cadets, along with our steadfast belief in the Army Values and Soldiers' Creed.

*An array of Soldiers from F Co and HHC 4-31 act as a mock Cadet squad for C Co 4-31 USMA Department of Military Instructions validation of the Urban Operations Lane. The Soldiers of the mock Cadet squad are learning quality infantry, artillery, engineer and warrior task Techniques Tactics and Procedures (TTPs) as they act as training aides for the site and instruction validations. PV2 Adam Ferch being detained (In the picture below) says he "now has a clearer understanding of the correct handling of detainees". (Photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira.)*



## West Point Cadets take it to the limit in the Warrior Challenge

Story by SPC Christopher Norkin  
HHC/4-31 IN

The cadre of A/2-15 FA said this was the best training event that they have had a role in at USMA so far this summer. It was an obstacle course with a series of water events that the Cadets had to complete in competition. A 400 Meter swim to the Zodiac operations (seen to the right) synchronizing the paddling of their boat to the shore, and then a one mile run. This training was more than just a day out at the lake. "This was a test of Endurance" says SSG Belles of A/2-15 FA, "This gave them a brief introduction of the extensive training ahead, to push themselves, both mentally and physically".



*Cadets paddle as they race across the lake Lead by A/2-15 FA Cadre (photo by CPT Bill Fisher.)*

## Hooligans Demonstrate Engineer Force and Expertise

Story by SPC Christopher Norkin  
HHC/4-31 IN

The Soldiers of A/2BSTB demonstrate some of the different techniques, tactics and procedures (TTPs) involved in entering and clearing a building. By using a four man stack, Each member from each stack got a chance to practice mechanical breaching using the breaching RAM, C charges (seen in the picture below), and the Combat Engineer's trusty Hooligan Tool Kit. In the picture to the left is a Soldier from A/2BSTB demonstrating Ballistic Breaching with a 12 gauge shotgun fired at the hinges of a door in order to enter the building. It is done at close range, so extreme caution is used during this particular exercise.



*Soldiers from A/2BSTB rehearse other techniques such as Ballistic Breaching at close range. (photo by SPC Benjamin Drzemala)*



*At the Engineer Site, A/2BSTB demonstrates the proper way to use the C charge when entering a locked room. (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)*



# Blackhawks Nested in Cadet Summer Training at USMA

By 2LT Michael Veglucci , B/4-31 IN

In the morning of June 18<sup>th</sup> Bravo Company boarded busses and began their mission to the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point NY. Less than five hours later Bravo Company's new home at Camp Natural Bridge was a flurry of activity as soldier's unloaded bags and equipment into the barracks that would serve as their living quarters for the next two months. The following day the soldiers were given a tour of West Points campus and learned some interesting facts about the Cadets day to day lives, such as the freshmen cutting cake into perfect slices. By the end of the day B Co had already begun work on the mission that was ahead of them for the summer.

Bravo Company has been tasked with the important role of training USMA Cadets who are currently between semesters of classes. Some of the skills cadets will be introduced to are the correct ways to conduct patrolling operations to include, conducting squad and platoon recons, as well as squad and platoon ambushes. The days of preparation had begun, 1<sup>st</sup> platoon was in charge of teaching the Cadets the skills that they need to possess in order to make it through the following days of training. Instruction is given on emplacing the claymore mine, radio operations and the squad and platoon level ambushes and recons.



SPC Matthew Williams talks to Cadets about the importance of patrolling for squad and platoon level recons

The following day of training Cadets are met with members of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> platoons, as well as attachments from Delta Company in order to begin a 3-5 mile ruck march, Then establishing patrol bases that they will conduct rehearsals of the skills they learned the previous day. After Cadets finally set up their patrol bases, correctly, they will get some sleep before an early wake up when they will conduct and entire day of patrolling. During the day of patrolling, Cadets will experience real world situations to include gathering and interpreting intelligence gained from civilians on the battlefield and other information gained from each of the objectives. The soldiers from B Co are tasked with providing OPFOR for these real world situations. The final day out in the field consists of the platoon being ambushed and required to litter carry their casualties to a LZ, where they will then be transported by helicopter to the water confidence course.



At the water confidence course soldiers of B Co. will lead the cadets through a series of obstacles designed to overcome fears. They will begin by learning how to create a poncho raft that holds their ruck sacks and float them across the lake. Immediately after that class a slide for life is conducted, which consists of a sixty foot high zip line with a water landing. Last is the log walk rope drop where a narrow beam is negotiated to include a going up and down two steps in the middle followed by climbing a rope to the middle of the lake to the MOUNTAIN tab and dropping into the water. All of the soldiers of B Co. got the opportunity to conduct the water confidence course which proved to be a very exciting event.

Cadet Ian Moss releases from the zip line on B/4-31's water obstacle course





## SAPPER RAISES HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE 'HOUSE THAT RUTH BUILT'

Story by 2LT STEPHEN C. LAWSON Mickey Mantle, Lou Gehrig, and Yogi Berra stood witness on Tuesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> as

Staff Sergeant Lawrence Korson of A Company, 2d BSTB, as he raised his right hand in Monument Park and took the Oath of Enlistment for his fifth and final time. Captain Anzovino, former Platoon Leader and Company Executive Officer, delivered the Oath and commented "Having worked closely with SSG Korson for three years, it was an honor to re-enlist him." The two had discussed doing the ceremony in Yankee Stadium almost two years prior and seeing it actually come together "It was just an awesome experience (Anzovino)."



Photo by 2LT STEPHEN LAWSON

Coming from a military family it was important for SSG Korson to make this event memorable for not only himself but for his wife, Jolane, and sons, Morgan 6 and Cooper 4. Fortunately, the Yankee's were very receptive to this opportunity and provided the family with tickets so they could share in this special occasion. The Korson family believes that the best way to give back to the Country for keeping them safe is to serve as you can see through their lineage which includes his father, a Korean War Veteran, four uncles who served in World War II, and two brothers who were formerly enlisted. SSG Korson agrees with his family and can think of "no better way" to give back commenting that he "Wanted to re-enlist in Yankee Stadium because I wanted to have an experience of a lifetime with my family in the final season of the House that Ruth built," he wanted to ensure that his final enlistment was something that could never be forgotten.

The planning for this ceremony began during his previous deployment to Iraq. Working in conjunction with the 2d BSTB Re-enlistment NCO, Sergeant Scano, the two were able to complete most of the preparations from Fort Drum. The New York Yankees Organization was very helpful in arranging what SGT Scano claims to be "the most memorable reenlistment he's ever completed."



Photo by 2LT STEPHEN LAWSON

Originally from Sutton's Bay, Michigan, SSG Korson enlisted as a 12F, Combat Engineer Vehicle Crewman, in June 1995. After completing Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri in 1995, SSG Korson spent 8 years at Fort Hood with Charlie Company, 8<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. SSG Korson was also a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Horse Detachment from 1998 to 2000. In 2004 SSG Korson returned to the 8<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion with Bravo Company. From 2004-2005 he conducted mounted and dismounted operations during OIF-2. Before assignment to Fort Drum in 2005, Korson served as a recruiter in Denver, Colorado. Now a member of Alpha Company, SSG Korson has served as a Squad Leader and Operations Sergeant on the Company's recent OIF 06-08 Deployment and is currently the Company's Light Equipment Section Sergeant.

For the final time, SSG Korson raised his right hand and swore to protect and defend the United States against all enemies, while standing in the most historic baseball venue in America. Serving for an indefinite termination date SSG Korson has accomplished much throughout his 13 years of service. SSG Korson is a leader, mentor, teacher, and expert in his field. As a part of Task Force Polar Bear currently at the United States Military Academy at West Point, he is training future officers with a wealth of knowledge and experience dealing with Route Clearance and Improvised Explosive Devices.



## A BTRY/ 2-15 Field Artillery Regiment visits the “Big Apple”

Story by SPC Brian Doyle On June 28, 2008, Soldiers from A Battery “Assassins,” 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment had the opportunity to go on a trip to New York City. While there, the Soldiers were able to enjoy a Major League Baseball game. They attended a “Subway Series” matchup between the New York Mets and the New York Yankees, at Shea Stadium in Queens, NY.

On the way to the game, the Soldiers stopped in Times Square. They ate authentic New York City pizza for lunch. The Soldiers also had the opportunity to take a few photographs in front of the famous Times Square Armed Forces Recruiting Center. For many on the trip, it was their first time going to New York City. PFC Coree Underwood of Newton Falls, Ohio thought, “it is really cool being able to spend some time in a place that I’ve seen in so many movies.”



(Above from left to right) PFC Gregg Swanson, SPC Jonathon Watson, PFC James Drake, and SPC Brian Doyle (photo by 1LT Tom Loveless)



(Above from left to right) The Yankees bat boy, PFC James Drake, SPC Jonathon Watson, PFC Gregg Swanson, and SPC Brian Doyle (photo by 1LT Tom Loveless)

PFC David Kiefer of Hornell, New York said, “I am really glad I got to stop by an official FDNY firehouse, the guys on duty there were also really thankful of me for my service.”

The Soldiers then made their way to the game via subway. At one point the game was delayed due to rain, but for the Professional Soldiers of the 2-15 FAR, it proved no obstacle to enjoying a great outing. After the rain delay was over the Yankees went on to win the game 3-2, which turned out to be a thrilling pitchers’ duel between aces Johan Santana and Andy Pettite. After the game, a few Soldiers were invited to take pictures on the field and in the Yankees dugout. PFC Gregg Swanson of Los Angeles, California was, “extremely proud of the amount of respect and gratitude that the people of New York City extended to us during this outing.”

The trip was planned and organized by the Assassins’ commander, CPT Lee M. North, and sponsored by TF 4-31 IN’s commander, LTC Richard G. Greene, Jr. The Soldiers are currently deployed to the U.S. Military Academy, in support of Task Force 4-31’s mission to train West Point Cadets.



(from left to right) SPC Brian Doyle, PFC Gregg Swanson, PFC Justin Barlage, PV2 Matthew Zimmerman, SPC Jonathon Watson, PV2 Robert Mobbly, SPC Jesus Garcia, PFC Brandie Frey, PFC Dave Levy, SGT Bradley Tristan, and PFC James Drake (photo by 1LT Tom Loveless)



# Iron Sappers Celebrate Independence Day With The People of Cornwall, NY

By 2LT Ken Stover, A/2 BSTB

The Engineers of A Co, 2BSTB, 10<sup>th</sup> MTN DIV spent the afternoon of July 4<sup>th</sup> loading buses bound for Cornwall, NY. Invited by the Mayor of Cornwall, the Iron Sappers were prepared to march in the town's annual Independence Day Parade, covering 3 miles of road alongside floats from local community groups and businesses.

Upon arrival in Cornwall, the Iron Sappers fell into formation and entered into the parade behind a float from one of the local youth groups. Greeted by applause and thanks from onlookers, A Co. marched down the streets sounding off with cadence and displaying to the local people what a Company of professional Soldiers looks like.

It was not only a celebration of Independence Day for the Iron Sappers, but also a celebration of one of their own re-enlisting at the end of the parade. SSG Jose Leon thought no better time or place to re-enlist but at a celebration of the nation's independence on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Climbing atop a bus in



CPT Brandon Thrasher of A/2BSTB and his soldiers represented the POLAR BEAR 4/31 TASK FORCE in the Cornwall, NY fourth of July parade (photo by 2LT Ken Stover)

view of hundreds of spectators, SSG Jose Leon raised his right hand and recited the Oath of Enlistment in front of the nation's flag and his fellow Iron Sappers. After the oath, SSG Leon sounded off with a motivated, "IRON FIST," which is the motto of his Platoon. "Try and top this," challenged SSG Leon as he hopped down off the roof of the bus.



SSG Jose Leon raising his right hand and reciting the Oath of Enlistment (photo by 1LT Matthew Schade)

After a 3 mile march in the parade and after congratulations were wished to the newly re-enlisted SSG Leon, the Iron Sappers gathered back up and headed towards the town's park where they were greeted with a BBQ and more thanks from the grateful locals of Cornwall. After an evening of food and festivities, the Iron Sappers got back on the buses and left Cornwall with a sense of pride and truly feeling appreciated.

## Task Force POLAR BEAR Participates in Local 4th of July Festivities

Reprinted article from "The Pointer View"



DAVE BRZYWCZY/PA.O



KATHY EASTWOOD/PV

### 10th Mountain Division Soldiers march in Highland Falls and Cornwall July 4 parades

Contingents from Task Force 4-31 of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, N.Y., marched in both the Highland Falls (left photo) and Cornwall parades held July 4 to celebrate Independence Day. Command Sgt. Maj. Alexander Jimenez, who marched with the Highland Falls group, and Sgt. Maj. John Mangels, who was with the Alpha Co., 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Cornwall, kept cadence for their respective groups. They also facilitated the movement of the troops and the vehicles that were also part of the parade, including an up-armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, an HEMTT wrecker recovery vehicle and a light mobility tactical vehicle. The two contingents were applauded by all who saw the parade and feted afterward at the events that followed. The Task Force, nicknamed the Polar Bears due to their first combat experience in Siberia during the early 1900s, is at West Point for the summer supporting all the Cadet Summer Training activities at Camp Buckner for both the new cadets and the yearling class. They arrived in early June and will stay through mid-August, training the cadets and also conducting some training of their own. Since most of the Soldiers in the task force have deployed at least once, they will share their real-world experiences with the cadets throughout the summer.

