

battle 'rattle'

What do you write home about?



Sgt. Stephan Schnek
Multiple launch rocket system automated tactical data systems specialist
Co. C, 1-33rd Field Artillery
Camp Able Sentry

The weather

Sgt. Nathaniel York
Signal support systems specialist
HHC, 1-26th Inf. Bn.
Camp Monteith



I send packages to my son telling him I will be home soon



Spc. Sherri McIntyre
Medic
Task Force Medical Falcon
Camp Able Sentry

Missing my husband and 6 year-old son

Capt. Pavel Brzek
Company commander
Company Haek (POLUKRBAT)
Camp White Eagle



How much I miss my neices



Capt. Huber Glica
Civilian and Military Cooperation
POLUKRBAT
Camp White Eagle

About how I'm missing my family

Sgt. Jonathan Brooks
Paratrooper mortarman
HHC 1-508th Inf. Bn.
Camp Bondsteel



Family

From the newsroom

Complaint-handlers are standing by

By Capt. Dave Domingo
Staff writer

A few days ago, I called the inspector general, Maj. Kelly Dickinson, and asked if he knew of any hot issues worth writing a commentary about. I figured the person whose work includes investigating complaints from soldiers in Multi-National Brigade (East) could help identify a good, timely, meaty topic for a message to soldiers.

Dickinson paused, then said, almost apologetically, that there haven't been any major complaints – people are basically happy.

He did say that soldiers and leaders have identified certain areas where policies need to be clarified or improvements should be made, but that the command is doing what it needs to do to resolve those issues.

The next day, the brigade equal opportunity adviser, Sgt. 1st Class Dale Veneklasen, came by our detachment for coordination on a story. I asked him what people have been complaining about.

He said not much.

Veneklasen's duties include going to all the camps and remote sites in MNB(E), trying to get people to complain about unfair practices, and he had nothing significant to report.

Again, there are minor problems here, just as there are in garrison, but Veneklasen said they are being dealt with appropriately.

After talking to Veneklasen, I sent this e-mail message to Maj. Randy Mosteller, the brigade chaplain: "The EO rep and the IG say everyone is basically happy — they're not getting any major complaints. What are your observations on MNB(E) morale?"

He wrote back: "I concur. Morale is good and holding steady. Good command climate, quality religious support, etc., make a difference."

There are a few reasons business might be slow for the brigade's complaint-handlers. Things might really be as good as they seem. The chain of command – every soldier's first resort for resolving problems – might be handling things well enough that the EO rep, the IG and the chaplain don't have to get involved.

But there is always the chance that soldiers need those specialized services and just aren't taking advantage of them.

Just to make sure, we want to tell you exactly what each person's job is and how to get in touch with them if you need to.

As equal opportunity adviser, Veneklasen helps ensure fair treatment for everyone in the command "based solely on merit, fitness, and capability in support of readiness." In short, he handles complaints about discrimination and sexual harassment. His office is in Building 1340D, Room 4N, in Admin Alley on Camp Bondsteel. His phone number is DSN 781-5002. His e-mail address is Dale.Veneklasen@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil.

Dickinson said inspector generals help soldiers resolve issues that their units are unwilling or unable to resolve, and assist when there are violations of regulations. He said his office has helped fix a number of issues that soldiers "brought with them" from Germany.

Dickinson added that in some cases, regulations do not support what the soldier wants, and that in almost every case the IG has to work with the soldier's chain of command to fix issues.

He also said handling complaints is not really the focus of his job. In Dickinson's words: "Every day the IG provides advice, works issues for soldiers and gathers information that is used to better advise the commander, MNB(E)."

Dickinson's office is in Building 1340A, Room 3N, in Admin Alley on Camp Bondsteel. His phone number is DSN 781-5044; his fax number is DSN 781-5048.

His e-mail address is kelly.dickinson@bondsteel2.areur.army.mil.

Mosteller said that chaplains provide for the free exercise of religion, offer religious services and conduct confidential pastoral counseling. In the course of that counseling, they sometimes hear complaints – generally, rather than getting involved in a command issue, the chaplain will provide spiritual guidance to help the soldier work through the problem.

Things may really be as good as they seem – but if you have a problem that might require help beyond your chain of command, that's what the IG, the EO adviser and the chaplains are there for. Call on them. They are standing by.

Do you have a story or photo idea for *Guardian East*? If so, please give us a call at DSN 781-5200