

Reactivation of Foxtrot Company, 82d Chemical Battalion

MSG Michael L. Newsome

Foxtrot Company, 82d Chemical Battalion Reactivation Events, 4 December 2002

74D5M, First Sergeant

20 September 2006

Class #57

Abstract

Foxtrot Company, 82d Chemical Battalion reactivated on 04 December 2002 to train the increased One Station Unit Training (OSUT) load for over 20 weeks. Our mission required us to train and provide discipline, confident, motivated, physically fit, technically and tactically proficient Soldiers for worldwide assignment while embracing the Army values. CPT Bradford A Ruff served as the unit's first commander following its latest reactivation along with 1SG Michael L. Newsome as the company First Sergeant. The original Foxtrot Company dates back some 14 years prior to the reactivation. The success of Foxtrot Company attributes to the lessons learned from a prior activating sister OSUT unit.

Reactivation of Foxtrot Company, 82d Chemical Battalion

Foxtrot Company, 2/48 Infantry Brigade, Fort McClellan, Alabama redesigned as Company F., 82d Chemical Battalion, Training Brigade, Fort McClellan, Alabama on 1 July 1988. Their mission included Basic Combat Training (BCT) while providing command, control, discipline, administrative, and logistical support. After their first BCT cycle, the unit converted to a One Station Unit Training (OSUT) company that conducted BCT and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) for MOS 54B (Nuclear Biological Chemical Specialists). This Advanced Individual Training included survivability skills; preparing them to perform NBC detection, identification, and decontamination; fuel handling; and smoke operations.

CPT Mark D. Daugherty served as Foxtrot Company, 82d Chemical Battalion's first original company commander from 30 March 1988 - 11 January 1989. During this time, Foxtrot Company trained 27 classes and graduated 1,042 Soldiers. CPT Daugherty commanded until the unit's deactivation in the summer of 1989 due to the reduction of forecasted chemical Soldiers requiring training. The company reactivated, once again, under the command of CPT Hildebrandt, training OSUT Soldiers for one cycle from 1 August 1990 – 12 October 1990 and again deactivated.

After a twelve-year hiatus, Foxtrot Company, 82nd Chemical Battalion reactivated once again on 04 December 2002 to train the increased OSUT load. The unit assumed the nickname – “The Phantoms”, and consisted of four line platoons. CPT Bradford A Ruff served as the unit’s commander with 1SG Michael L. Newsome as the Company First Sergeant. Foxtrot Company’s, one of six companies within the 82d Chemical Battalion, first training cycle commenced on 10 January 2003. Their charter consisted of training confident and competent warrior scientists to operate in any CBRN environment.

The Brigade and Battalion Commanders placed extreme emphasis on benefiting from all previous lessons learned when activating a new OSUT company. This was necessary due to the command’s great concern for the prior activation of a sister OSUT Company (Echo Company, 82d Chemical Battalion). Although equipment and resources proved successful with Echo Company, situations later discovered a need for more qualified senior cadre members with previous Initial Entry Training (IET) experience. With the newly activating Foxtrot Company, the command carefully considered specific qualified Captains, Lieutenants, First Sergeants, support Noncommissioned Officers, and Drill Sergeants. These individuals included cadre members already serving in positions throughout the 82d Chemical Battalion and some newly arriving Lieutenants for the Executive Officers position and Drill Sergeants fresh out of Drill Sergeant School.

On 1 November 2002, 1LT Faye Cameron reported as the first official cadre member for the new unit. She served in the position as Executive and Training Officer. Her initial duties included planning, gathering resources and equipment requirements for requisitioning. She

began operations in an empty office behind the battalion's S4 shop. Weeks following, she received the unit's first personal computer. This officially began the setup operations and planning process for the new company. The 3rd Chemical Brigade Commander later selected CPT Brad Ruff and 1SG Mike Newsome to complete the remainder of the command team.

CPT Ruff previously served as the Charlie Company Commander. His previous experience as an enlisted Drill Sergeant and an OSUT commander quickly started the unit's successful movement toward the right direction. 1SG Newsome, a Sergeant First Class (Promotable) at the time, formally served as the Senior Drill Sergeant for Delta Company. His IET and previous leadership experiences made him extremely qualified and a valuable resource for such a project. Following the selection of the TOP 3 (Commander, XO and First Sergeant), the Battalion Command Sergeant Major, 1SG Newsome and fellow First Sergeants of the battalion began the process for final selections of the remaining cadre and Drill Sergeants. On 10 January 2003, 224 Soldiers arrived to the 82d Chemical Battalion footprint for Initial Entry Training. Adrenaline, motivation, and anticipation were extremely high among the cadre, Drills Sergeants, and Soldiers especially. This was largely due to new barracks facilities, training equipment and resources received prior to the Soldiers' arrival. The Commander and First Sergeant immediately concluded that this would be a successful training cycle after observing Reception and Integration Operations administered by this unit. The Day One event would not be successful if not for the lessons learned and experiences gathered weeks prior during sister unit operations.

Weeks following, the unit engaged in many Basic Combat Training (BCT) events and Soldier training requirements. Foxtrot Company seized their first major and probably most important training event with excellence. Most commanders of IET units place great emphasis on Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) Qualification. This command was no different. The First Sergeants, assisted by the Drill Sergeant, implemented a vigorous and regimented BRM training program. This program proved extremely successful by contributing to a 94% first time qualification statistic, an act rarely accomplished by any IET unit, never-mind a new IET company. The higher command was elated. In comparison to the previous BRM statistic of the prior activating company within the battalion, this achievement resulted in a 180-degree turn. The Battalion CSM concluded that the big dividends attributed to the careful initial planning and qualified personnel resourcing of Foxtrot Company.

The unit went on to receive commendations and accolades in several other major training events. Soldiers of Foxtrot Company completed the End Of Course Testing (EOCT) with 98% first time GOs. Again, this was virtually unheard for a brand new unit. Because of the extreme emphasis place on training during this first BCT cycle, the unit received the Brigade Commander's prestigious Triple Crown Streamer award for excellence in Basic Rifle Marksmanship, End of Course Testing, and the Army Physical Fitness Test. All of the hard work and effort on behalf of the cadre and Soldiers proved victorious.

Foxtrot Company showed no signs of diminishing performance during their initial Advanced Individual Training (AIT) rotation. The unit's Phase IV Field Training Exercise (FTX), executed during week 14 of training, receive very high praise from the 3rd Chemical

Brigade Commander for achieving 100% mission certification. After completion of the FTX, the unit began training for their final training events associated with AIT. The Drill Sergeants and Instructors remained vigilant, realizing all accomplishments to date, to a challenging training regiment. Foxtrot Company consistently completed their remaining training requirements above standards. At the completion of their 20-week cycle, the unit received the Battalion Commanders coveted Honor Company Award.

Since the Foxtrot Company activation, the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) implemented many changes to IET. Changing tactical environments and threats called for major adjustments in basic training. The Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) developed the warrior tasks and battle drills based on lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. We wanted to ensure Soldiers in basic training learned the fundamentals on how to protect themselves in the current Contemporary Operating Environment (COE). Other changes to the basic training program include Convoy Live Fire and Combatives.

Foxtrot Company, 82d Chemical Battalion will deactivate within the near future due to lack of mission requirement. Today, they celebrate a 17-year history of call to duty, when needed. The Chemical Corps benefited immensely over the years from the great effort and commitment of the Soldiers and cadre of Foxtrot Company. It is equally important to note the enormous amount of planning and execution involved with the activation of an Initial Entry Training unit, or any active Army unit for that matter. Commanders should always refer to

lessons learned from previous units who undertook similar endeavors and consider all changes to the current COE.