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### MANNHEIM-BASED SIGNAL SOLDIERS BRING COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY TO GROWING FORWARD OPERATING BASE IN IRAQ

By Sgt. Daniel T. West  
214th Fires Brigade Public Affairs Office

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELTA, Iraq** -- "Running cable isn't that interesting unless you stop and play with the puppy," said Spc. Jennifer Dimitroff of 5th Signal Command's B Company, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion.



SGT DANIEL T. WEST

Spc. Rebecca Greer of 5th Signal Command's B Company, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, installs a communications cable in a conference room on Forward Operating Base Delta, Iraq, June 21.

The puppy that brightened Dimitroff's day was adopted by contractors living near one of the many manholes where B Company Soldiers are working here.

B Company provides voice and data services for this base and 12 sites away from the FOB, said Capt. Kelly McCay, B Company commander.

The company's Soldiers have been busy setting up and operating a Technical Control Facility and running 26 miles of fiber optic cable through a series of manholes around the FOB.

At the same time, as FOB Delta grows, the signal Soldiers have to make sure its communications systems grow with it.

“As new buildings are raised, we work within the construction process to ensure they are wired for communications,” McCay said.

B Company also services the base's existing cable systems. As the 41st Fires Brigade arrived from Fort Hood, Texas, and prepared to take charge of FOB Delta, the unit's work order count jumped by 65 percent.

“One challenge has been dealing with the speed of growth on the FOB ... We have to manage who’s most important for the mission to keep up with how fast demand is growing,” said 1st Lt. Michael Marrinan, officer-in-charge of the TCF.

Despite the challenges, McCay said morale remains high in the company.

“Many times, people don’t see the impact of their work, they just work their shifts. The motivation level is high because they see the impact each day of what they’re doing,” he said.

Spc. Blake Martin, a satellite communications technician, said he has no regrets about coming to Iraq.

“I wanted to do my part,” he said. “I saw Soldiers on TV working over here, and wanted to do my part to help that. I joined to come over here and I feel I’ve done my part.”

The 44th ESB is a Mannheim, Germany-based unit currently serving a 15-month tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



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