

Volume 1, Issue 1
Transfer of Authority



1st Engineer Battalion

**TASKFORCE DIEHARD
NEWSLETTER**



TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

12 DECEMBER 2009



Below: LTC Petersen and CSM Morse case the 65th Engineer Battalion's colors during the TOA ceremony.



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By 1LT Elizabeth Hill

On December 12th the 65th Engineer Battalion, Taskforce Trailblazer, officially turned over their mission to the 1st Engineer Battalion. The weeks leading up to the ceremony were spent learning from 65th during the “right seat-left seat ride” or relief-in-place. Their dedication to the mission and professionalism had a direct impact on the success of the transition.

The ceremony, held behind the Battalion headquarters, boasted many honored guests, including the 130th Engineer Brigade commander, COL Fabian Mendoza and the 4th Iraqi Army FER deputy commander, LTC Khamel.

65th began with it's staff in the lead, reading the introductions and commanding the troops standing in formation. COL Mendoza, LTC Khamel, LTC Petersen, and LTC Whittle all gave their remarks; stating that they were thankful that they had had the opportunity to serve with the great Soldiers of the 1st and 65th Engineer Battalions.

Standing next to the Soldiers who've never deployed before, were many Soldiers for whom this is their second deployment with the Battal-

ion. LTC Whittle alluded to this in his speech, saying, “Once again the storied colors and guideons of the Diehard Battalion are uncased here in the nation of Iraq, and we are proud to continue our work here. The 1st Engineer Battalion served as Task force Diehard from 2006-2007, and those Diehard Soldiers who have returned with us today have been completely amazed at the positive changes

Previous Page: LTC Petersen and CSM Morse case the 65th EN BN colors during the TOA ceremony; Right: SPC Martucci serves as an usher for the ceremony and reception; Below: An Iraqi Army soldier rolls up the Flag of Iraq; Bottom Left and right: LTC Whittle greets the 4th FER contingency.



and great leaps in progress that they have observed.”

Following the speeches, the 1st Engineer Battalion staff took over. MAJ Hairgrove commanded the troops and the ceremony concluded with the playing of both the Iraqi and American national anthems.

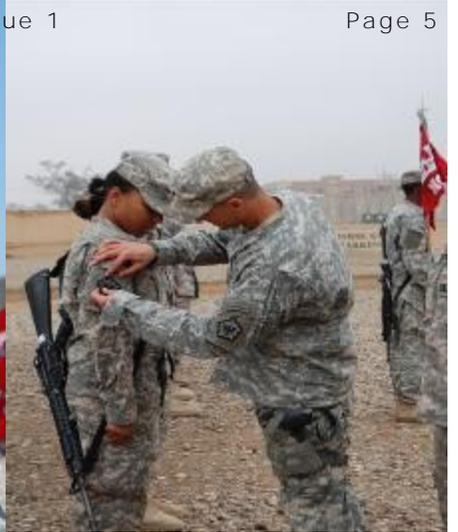


After the ceremony, the guests gathered at the helm. Our mission is to advise and train two Iraqi Army Field Engineer Regiments and perform combat engineer operations in Northern Iraq. We look forward to completing our mission with integrity and honor.

Overall, the day was successful because of the hard work put in by both battalions. The 65th EN BN deserves to be commended for a job well done here; and we will endeavor to continue their tradition of professionalism. We are now

“ALWAYS FIRST!”





HHC, FSC & 573rd Patch Ceremonies





LTC Whittle and CSM Benton visited 72nd and 4th PLT/573rd for their patch ceremony. Many Soldiers received their patch while working on a construction mission in the middle of the night.



72nd Patch Ceremony



Commander's Corner

Soldiers, Families, and Friends of the Diehard Battalion:

Greetings from Iraq. Our Diehard Soldiers here in Iraq and in Afghanistan are doing outstanding work. It is an honor to serve with them. I appreciate the tremendous sacrifices that not only they are making, but that you are making as well to support their deployment.

The 1st Engineer Battalion is executing its mission to a high standard. The 41st Engineer Company in Afghanistan is highly successful with route clearance operations, and the maneuver units there speak very well of how the company is doing. The division engineer from the 82nd Airborne Division sent me a note recently and said "the 41st Engineer Company is doing amazing work."

The 1st Engineer Battalion spent two weeks in Kuwait in November conducting final rehearsals (training on and validating all of our systems that allow us to shoot, move, and communicate) before moving on to Iraq. We began arriving in Iraq on Thanksgiving, and every Soldier was afforded the opportunity to have a nice Thanksgiving meal at the superb dining facilities either in Iraq or in Kuwait. We conducted a relief-in-place with the 65th Engineer Battalion, and on December 12th we officially took over U.S. Army engineering operations in the Salah ah Din and Kirkuk Provinces of Iraq.

Our Soldiers are working with the 12th and 4th Iraqi Army Field Engineer Regiments. Together we are conducting route clearance and doing force protection engineering work. So far we have successfully found and destroyed several Improvised Explosive Devices.

Our Soldiers missed their Families over the holidays, but still enjoyed that special day with one another. We are a tight, cohesive group, and together we will be successful in helping the Iraqi people.

Thank you for your incredible support. Always First, Diehard.

Very respectfully,

**LTC Bob Whittle
Diehard 6**



Diehard 2010 Resolutions

1. Be the Leader that makes things happen

- Every Diehard Soldier leads at least two people: himself and his battle buddy**

2. Exist to serve others

- Servant Leadership**
- Succeed by making your peers successful**

3. Be Humble

- “We,” not “I”**
- Power down the credit**

4. Never have a bad day

- Your attitude affects others-be positive**

5. Accomplish your individual and unit mission:

- Do better than what was once your best-**
do what is necessary!

Diehard Holidays:

Holiday Grievances and Inflatable Reindeer

By 1LT Katelyn Reynolds

There are three things that aggravate me about Christmas. **Now, don't get me wrong; I'm not normally one of those constantly pessimistic people that finds a fault in every person walking by me in the chow hall, but at this time of year, while I am sitting in Iraq, I think of the things that I don't miss about the holidays back home. I figure if I think of all the things that I don't miss, I will enjoy COB Speicher that much more. But I digress. The three things that aggravate me about Christmas:**

Long lines, delayed flights, and hideous inflatable lawn ornaments.

Part two of this saga shall be titled: why I love Christmas in Iraq.

No long lines. Long lines tend to be pretty **much nonexistent while you're deployed.** There is no doubt that Christmas has become quite the indulgent holiday. **There is also no doubt that "virtual" consumer spending has gone up by the millions in the past few years.** Once again, a digression has occurred; I am not in Iraq to discuss the economic downturn of the brick and mortar business. The great thing about being here for the holidays is the **fact that there are rarely lines... anywhere!** The occasional line springs up

when the chow hall has surf and turf night and Soldiers are clamoring for the crab legs. I quietly contemplate ways to untie the boot of the Soldier in front of me so he has to stop and take a knee while I breeze by him getting that much closer to my dinner selection.

I've always despised leaving the comfort of my humble heated abode to go to Christmas shopping. Sitting in the nice, relaxing heat of my home, on my comfy couch, with a cup of hot chocolate, watching A Christmas Story for the second time that week, in the pajamas that I have owned for so long that they actually come out of the **dryer in the shape of my body... just to venture out into the so called "winter wonderland" of mud scattered slush, freezing cold steering wheels, coyly covered icy curbs, and annoyingly slow drivers who follow bag laden shoppers out of the mall just to steal their parking spots. Wow. Choices, choices. I'm gonna have to go with the couch and cocoa on this one.** Of course, in Iraq, the couch is going to be folding chair, and the cocoa: a 20 ounce bottle of water with Crystal Light peach tea mixed in. **Hey, I'll take it.** Holiday shopping finished with ease all while sitting at my computer for an hour buying gifts for all my family and friends back home.

No delayed flights. Oh no. You think you know delayed flights, but you have no idea. When you first set out to deploy, you

think you're going to Iraq. After all, that's what those orders say. But, you are sadly mistaken. In all actuality, you will be in Kuwait for at least a week receiving various kinds of training for various types of situations. So, you sit in class and you do **rollover training, and if you're lucky, something funny happens like someone gets stuck upside down because she can't get** her seatbelt undone. For the most part though you are eager to head out. So, when the time comes and you get orders to move, you move quickly and with a purpose. You pack up your sleeping bag, shove all your gear back into your duffels and move out. Long story short. You sit in a terminal in Kuwait. You sit. And sit. And then you sit some more. Then, like a light in the darkness, your unit is called and move out to a tarmac where that glorious C-130 awaits to take you to Iraq. Then you stand. And stand. And stand. Meanwhile, Soldiers are getting fidgety, they are getting restless, they have to go to the bathroom, **but can't get all their gear off to get** a position compatible with peeing. Finally, you board the plane. You sit, with all your gear on, about... oh... **I'd say 2 and a half**



The author and CPT Rottenberg share some Holiday hot cocoa to celebrate Christmas.

inches from the person next to you for three hours. At the end of three hours, you land. Iraq! At last! You start to move so you can feel your butt and legs again and then someone comes to the back to tell you that you just landed in Kuwait. KUWAIT? We were flying to IRAQ?! Suddenly, familiar music begins to play in your head and you wonder if you have truly entered the Twilight Zone. You depart the tarmac, back to the terminal,

where you sleep for approximately 2 nights until you head out again. This time for real. **It's** amazing how relative things really are. I see the disgruntled passengers stuck in

Chicago's O'Hare and New York's Kennedy that are quietly stewing in anger. Arms folded, bags zipped as tightly as their pursed lips, glazed eyes fixed on the **computer screen, waiting for the 'delayed'** status to magically turn into an hour. Flights? Ha! The next flight that I plan to sit on is the one back to my **husband to set out on a weeklong cruise...** no Kevlar helmet or SAPI plates required.

And those lawn ornaments? Well, that explanation is twofold. For one, there is no lawn on which to set them up. In fact, the

occasional blade of grass tends to peek its way through the gravel on the COB and when walking by, you tend to stop in complete dismay. **"Is that... yes. I think it is. That is a blade of grass!"** At this miraculous discovery, you bend down and pluck it out of its hiding spot quickly surveying the area to make sure not a soul knows that there is, in fact, plant life on this continent. The second fold, if you will, is that lawn ornaments are just completely incompatible with the space allotted for you on a C-130. And everyone knows how heavy those things are when they are deflated. I mean, really. How is that possible that I can pick up a 30 foot tall Santa AND his eight (not so tiny) reindeer with one hand when they are full of air, but when they settle down for **their long winter's nap inside their box**, I am doubled over, literally forcing the box across the driveway in short spurts of strength, just barely managing to get it into the garage. Interestingly, the most strange ornaments one would see here are in the chow hall. These people have gone to some great lengths to make some of these decorations. On Christmas, Soldiers were greeted at the door by a **ten-foot tall snowman that I'm pretty sure was made entirely out of cotton balls**. On Thanksgiving, the host was a seven-foot long alligator (or crocodile, I can never tell the difference) made out of pineapples. Crazy, but true. Somehow, the spirit of the lawn ornament has made its way to Iraq.

Lines, Flights, Inflatable Reindeer. What does it all mean? Is this some strange twist on the spirit of Christmas? Who knows? But what I do know is that until I figure it out, I will be patiently waiting in the chow hall, next to a cotton ball Frosty, with a wrapped up homemade cookie in my pocket, dreaming of my cruise, with my foot out ready to trip the Soldier in front of me, slowly but surely making my way to those awesome crab legs.



Above: 72nd Soldiers enjoy a Thanksgiving meal together.





Top Left and Right: Thanksgiving Dining Facility decorations; Above: Soldiers from HHC enjoy the Christmas Dinner meal together at the Dining Facility.

COL Spider Christmas Dinner



Above: FSC Soldiers carry the grill into Patrol Base Wolf in preparation for the Christmas Dinner; Right: SPC Boyd and SPC Marotta of 573rd enjoy some cookies from a Christmas care package; Below: Soldiers from 573rd find goodies in care packages on Christmas Day.





Above: The Officers of 1 EN BN serve the 1 EN BN Soldiers during the Christmas Dinner at Patrol Base Wolf; Right: PFC Leaeno and SPC Danner receive coins from LTC Whittle and CSM Benton in recognition of their hard work (along with SSG Rodriguez) to prepare the Christmas Dinner.



The Hammer Times

By CPT David Shams



Aloha to all of our wonderful Hammer Families from Hammer 6. This is the first edition of the internationally read and highly acclaimed Hammer Times. It has been about 2 whole months since we got on the plane to head over here and we have been BUSY. We all participated in some quality training in Kuwait which ranged from shooting machine guns with our night vision devices to driving MRAPs to being briefed on the extra benefits we will receive while deployed. LTC Whittle and the rest of the Protective Services Detail (the PSD) were privileged enough to participate in some room clearing exercises and Advanced Close Quarters Marksmanship. We left our mark in Kuwait in the form of a painted "Texas Barrier", which was designed and painted by our very own SSG Carl Murphy, PVT Angel Acosta, and PFC Harvel Bennett.

After about 2 weeks of good training in Kuwait

we flew north with the majority of HHC ending up at COB Speicher, Iraq. (1LT Oberg went further north to COB Marez near 111th Sapper Company.)

We immediately jumped in to an organized and deliberate relief process where we gradually replaced HHC, 65th Engineer Battalion. The 65th Engineer Battalion hails from Hawaii and we were happy to have their assistance in picking up our duties here in Iraq. During this time we were privileged enough to promote SFC Sean Matteson on the 1st of December. It has been a while coming and he certainly deserves it. All of your Soldiers worked tremendously hard and we were able to quickly get our feet under us and conduct our Transfer of Authority on 12 December 2009.



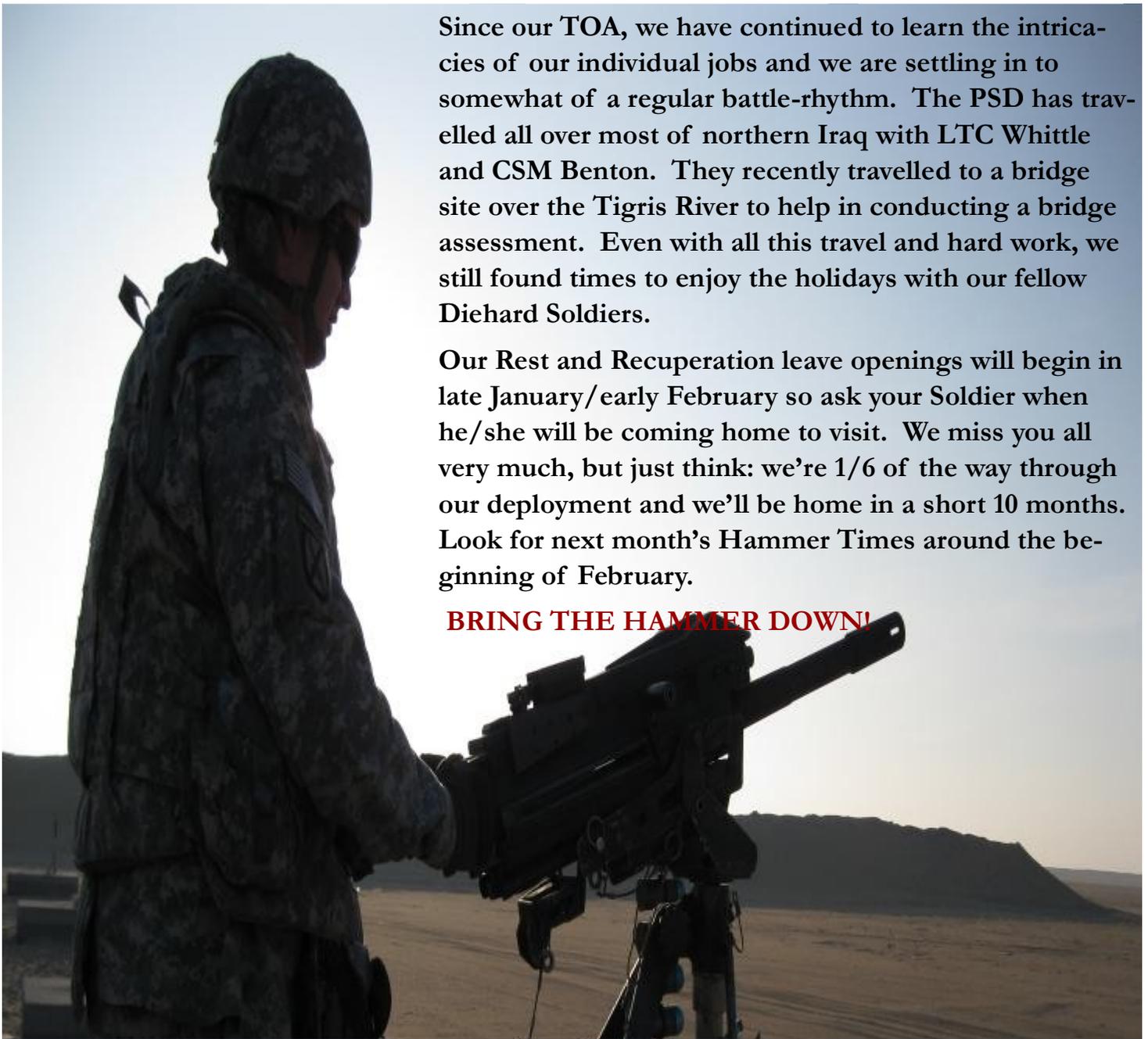
Above: SSG Murphy, PVT Acosta and PFC Bennett paint the Battalion T-Wall.

Right: The finished T-wall in Kuwait.

Since our TOA, we have continued to learn the intricacies of our individual jobs and we are settling in to somewhat of a regular battle-rhythm. The PSD has travelled all over most of northern Iraq with LTC Whittle and CSM Benton. They recently travelled to a bridge site over the Tigris River to help in conducting a bridge assessment. Even with all this travel and hard work, we still found times to enjoy the holidays with our fellow Diehard Soldiers.

Our Rest and Recuperation leave openings will begin in late January/early February so ask your Soldier when he/she will be coming home to visit. We miss you all very much, but just think: we're 1/6 of the way through our deployment and we'll be home in a short 10 months. Look for next month's Hammer Times around the beginning of February.

BRING THE HAMMER DOWN!





The Blacksheep Journal

By CPT Sean Hill

Hello to all the Blacksheep Families wherever you may be! In the first 60 days of our deployment we have seen our Soldiers rise to meet all the challenges that have been set before us, and they have far exceed any expectations of performance. You should all be very proud of the job that your Soldiers are doing out here, as they are making a huge impact on the lives of their fellow Soldiers as well as the Iraqis.

Maintenance platoon has had their hands full, as they have taken on a fleet of vehicles that needed a little TLC. Maintenance platoon was more than willing, and happy, to lend their ever so confident hands to the many projects that were laid out before them. As always, they spent countless hours crawling in, out, around, over and under every piece of equipment we had in an effort to ensure that our vehicles were always able to perform the mission. In addition to these responsibilities, they have also gone out to various FOBs to inspect and repair generators and Iraqi equipment. When not getting greasy, dirty, oily and just plain filthy fixing stuff, they've taken to frequenting the dining facilities, going to the gym, spending countless hours calling/writing home (the internet in the CHU's has made this even easier) and just spending time discussing key topics, such as which college basketball conference is the best (clearly the Big East).

Distribution platoon has been just as busy as maintenance platoon during the first 60 days, if not more so. Distribution platoon has traveled all over USF-N, with destinations such as Joint Base Balad, Samarra, Tikrit, FOB Warrior, and a bridge called Al Fatah. They have enjoyed many of Iraq's great landscapes (no, it's not a desert every-



where), and have many more adventures ahead of them. They spend the majority of their days maintaining their vehicles, on mission, or preparing the vehicles with materials to be transported. While maintenance platoon is the lifeblood of our company's ability to perform missions, distribution platoon is the lifeblood of our battalion. Without the support that distro provides, many of the units within the battalion would have difficulties accomplishing their missions. They too have

taken a liking to visiting the dining facility, but have also discovered the joys of having internet in their rooms (when it actually works).

Headquarters platoon has had a flurry of its own issues to deal with since first arriving in country. They have had to establish a command post that runs 24 hour operations, and is the lifeline between battalion and our company. While competing to see who will carry around the prestigious "dinosaur egg" that was discovered in Kuwait, the morale of headquarters has remained high, as usual. The mix of individuals within headquarters has provided the steady performance that often goes unnoticed in allowing the company to operate smoothly on a daily basis. They have also helped in missions

Top: FSC after company training in Kuwait. Below Left: SPC Youngblood works on a generator; Below Right: SPC Kicks works on a gator.

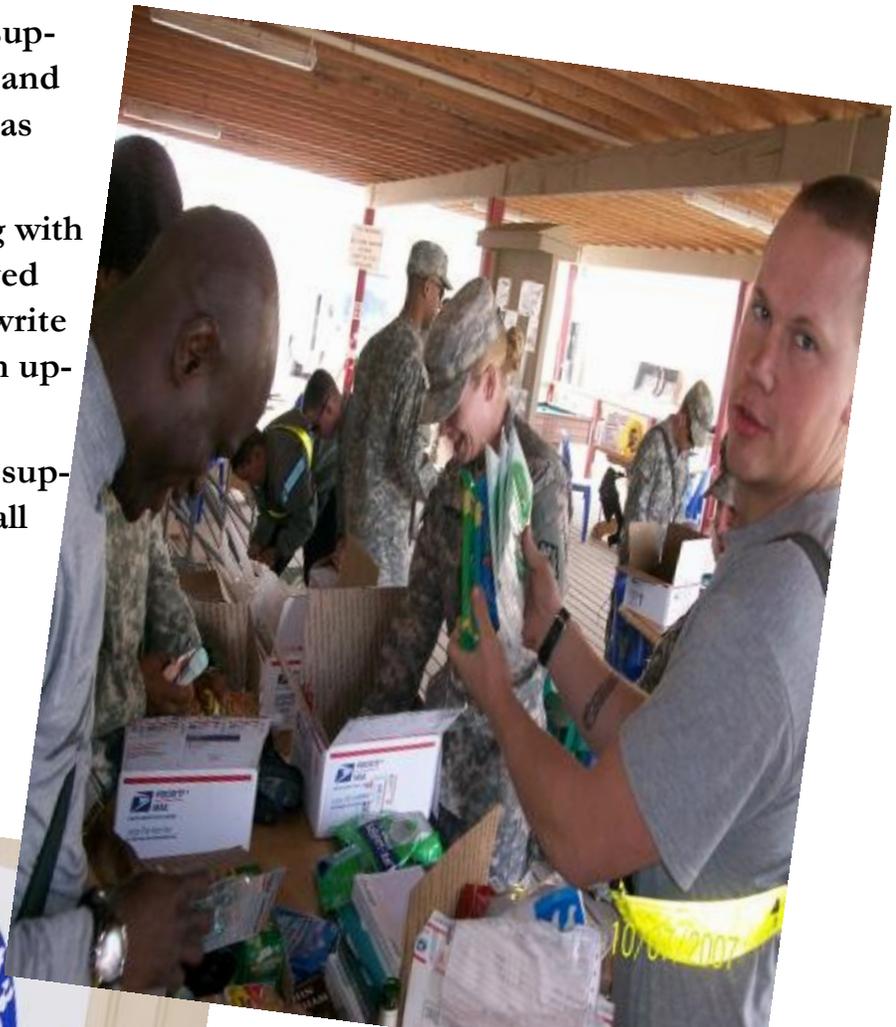


outside the wire, providing technical support in certain areas at various FOBs, and their scope of work will only increase as months go on.

I hope that all of you are coping with the distance between you and your loved ones here in Iraq-we will continue to write official newsletters once a month, with updates (and more pictures!).

Thank you all for your amazing support so far, and please know that it is all **VERY APPRECIATED!**

BLACKSHEEP!



The Christmas Day Football Game: FSC vs. 2-32 FA



Previous Page:

Top and bottom: FSC Soldiers open care packages.

Bottom Right: FSC works together like a Family to unload a connex.

This page:

FSC plays a Christmas day football game against 2-32 FA.

Score: FSC-9 2-32-10

A rematch is scheduled.

THE ASSASSIN ACCOUNT

By CPT Brian Mitchell and 1SG Jason Lovitt

Hello everyone, let us first say Merry Christmas! After two weeks in Kuwait we finally arrived at our Forward Operating Base near Mosul, Iraq. During the first two weeks in Iraq we had the opportunity to receive equipment and in-theatre training from a superb sapper company based out of Fort Campbell, KY. CPT Armstrong and 1SG Richardson and the fine Sappers of the 591st Engineer Company ensured that we had everything we needed and learned as much as possible about our Area of Operations. We

completed the handover with a very professional Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony hosted by the 591st (They even had a Sapper cake!). The first month in Iraq has not been uneventful. We have already experienced some long nights and challenging situations. The good news is, everyone has worked together as a team and taken care of their Sapper buddies. Our equipment includes the safest, toughest vehicles in Iraq and other systems to help us find Improvised Explosive Devices and stay safe even if they explode.



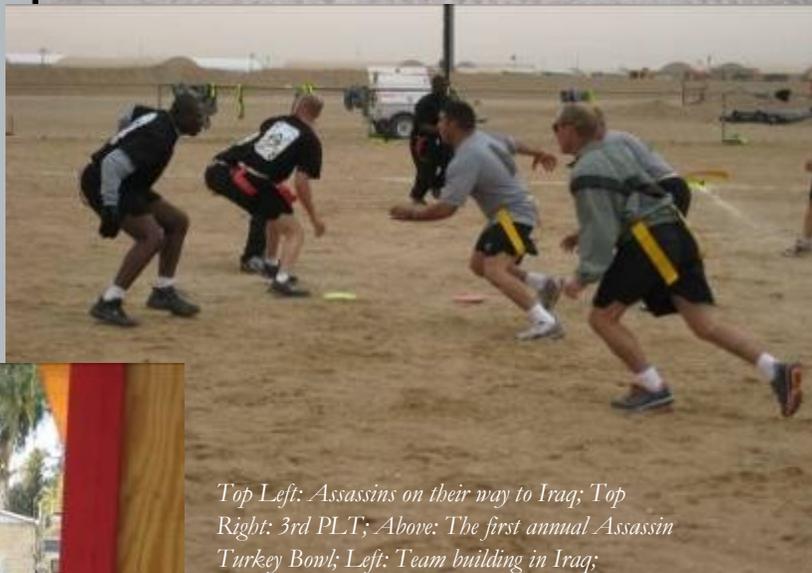
Even with the few incidents we have experienced, no one has been seriously injured. Already several Soldiers in 111th have been recommended to receive Combat Action Badges for actions during our route clearance patrols. As many of the platoons mentioned in their notes, our living conditions are above average. The weather has been nice and cool, with quite a bit of rain during this time of year.

We want to personally thank each of you for the care and love you have shown by sending packages, notes and other Christmas goodies. They are much appreciated and go a long way in keeping your Soldiers' motivation high during

the Holidays. Our challenge to everyone back home is to continue to do everything you can to help us keep our heads in the game. The best way to keep your Soldier safe is to help him focus on the mission at hand. Continue to do this with your emails, snail mail, and continued love and encouragement.

Thanks for everything you do while we are away, and have a very Happy New year!





Top Left: Assassins on their way to Iraq; Top Right: 3rd PLT; Above: The first annual Assassin Turkey Bowl; Left: Team building in Iraq;

Below: SSG Williams' re-enlistment ceremony; Bottom Right: CPT Mitchell and 1SG Lovitt uncase the 111th guidon during their TOA ceremony.



18/11/2009



The Cold Steel Chronicle

By CPT Joshua Eggar



Family and Friends of 72nd Mobility Augmentation Company,

In little over a month we deployed from Fort Riley to Kuwait, conducted two weeks of equipment training, deployed to Kirkuk, Iraq and relieved the 511th Sapper Company on FOB Warrior. We are now responsible for route clearance mission around Kirkuk, training the 12 Field Engineer Regiment (our Iraqi counterparts), and horizontal construction missions.

In order to do our construction mission we have added a fourth platoon to our ranks. These Soldiers hail from the 573rd Route Clearance Company out of White Sands, New Mexico. They are a terrific addition to our team and we are excited to be working with them.

As many of you already know, the equipment that we received from 511th is in

great shape and is probably the best equipment in the world for our mission, which is to clear Kirkuk's roads of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's).

We are now in full swing



and have already cleared multiple IED's thanks to the sharp eyes of 3rd platoon, which is currently leading the way in IED's found in Northern Iraq. Their sharp eyes and ever vigilant techniques have set the example across the Diehard Battalion!

2nd Platoon and 1st Platoon are doing equally well and are also working to clear the roads, keep our Soldiers safe, and train Iraqi Soldiers so that one day they can take over our jobs. That last task is an exciting one because not only is it great to train Soldiers, regardless of their nationality, but it also means that we will all be able to one day tell others that we played a vital part in Iraq's success. Please, no rumors that we'll be coming home early for any reason. We're still on orders to do this mission for a year!

However, Soldiers will be coming home for R&R starting in January 2010 so please contact your Soldier and make sure that you know what their schedule is. They will have exactly 15 days after the day that they touch down in the states.

And yes, R&R leave will be charged from annual leave days. The past deployment

was an anomaly due to the extension that accompanied it. As I said earlier, we're still looking at 12 months of total deployed time.

In closing, I just want to say thanks for all your support in the way of care packages. Enjoy the rest of the newsletter!

-Cold Steel 6

Right: MEDEVAC training in Kuwait; Below Right: The Cold Steel tent in Kuwait;

Below: MEDEVAC Training in Kuwait.

Bottom: A Camel herd walks across the Kuwaiti desert.



THE OUTLAW REPORT



By

CPT Richard Knox

I'd like to wish the Families and friends of the 573rd Clearance Company Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! I hope this note finds you healthy and in good spirits. I can't tell you how proud I am of our 573rd Outlaws. Our Soldiers are doing excellent work on five different bases in northern Iraq. I got a chance to visit Soldiers at three of these bases on Christmas Eve and I assure you that they are motivated and doing work that really very few other units in Iraq are capable of. Every day, Outlaw Soldiers are executing missions that will allow Iraq to be successful and allow American Forces to draw down responsibly and honorably.

I'd like to tell you a bit about our Soldiers and where they are. 1st Platoon, led by 1LT Funkhouser and SFC Warnock, are partnering with a nearby Iraqi Engineer unit. They live with, train and mentor the Iraqis on route clearance tasks. The platoon also conducts route clearance for US forces. The platoon has established quite a rapport with the Iraqis and are really making an impact. Evidently, SFC Warnock even has the Iraqi NCOs swaggering around and chewing tobacco. Hooah! SPC

Monsees is doing a great job as the platoon's electronics warfare lead and has made some good recommendations to me about such matters.

LT Simmons and SSG Lee leads our transition team. Their small, 6 man element works and lives with a nearby Iraqi Engineer unit. In conjunction with 1st Platoon, his team trains, tracks and serves as an information conduit between the company and the Iraqis. SSG Lee "runs" our patrol base- an awesome task but one he is uniquely suited for. PFC Markham has done outstanding work in a joint operations center battle tracking and will soon be fluent in Arabic.

SPC Olsen leads a small 5 man element assigned to base camp security. This team is always on call to protect our Soldiers from harm. As we were getting ready for deployment, I looked at our junior leaders- sergeants and senior specialists, and told them that they would be

leading Soldiers and in so doing, assume a great deal of responsibility. SPC Olsen is doing just this, and is doing a fine job.

2nd Platoon, led by 1LT Munson and SFC Tuimavave, conducts route clearance operations for US forces. Tirelessly, this platoon keeps our roads safe for travel. Every week, I hear about more and more units and commanders that rely on this platoon for safe conduct of their patrols. I've patrolled with 2nd many times and am always impressed with their thoroughness and their sense of duty. Last night, PFC Sullivan pumped his fist multiple times yelling "YES!" when we got a chance to interrogate a suspicious looking item on the road. 2nd platoon loves what they do, and they are very good at it.

SSG Barnes and SGT Beltran are leading a 10 man personal security detachment for a division level leader. I have heard multiple folks tell me what a great job they are doing. Both these NCOs and the men they lead lend great credit to the Company and the Engineer Corps.

3rd platoon, led by 1LT O'Shea and SFC Preski, made the difficult transition to construction operations. They've traded in their buffalos, huskys and dreams of IED hunting for earth moving equipment. The remarkable transformation this platoon has undergone really speaks to the professionalism of its leaders and the gung-ho "Let us try" attitude of its Soldiers. SPC Cedeno is one of these who has really stepped up and epitomizes our engineer motto. 3rd platoon wasn't on the ground 2 weeks here when they made critical

improvements to a nearby bridge that 100s of Iraqis use every day. 3rd platoon is that engineer platoon that will accomplish any mission no matter how difficult it is.

4th platoon, led by 1LT Adams and SFC Simpson, were chosen to do an extremely critical mission that very few other units are even capable of. Unfortunately, I can't talk too much about it. However, I can tell you that they have the eyes of the entire American chain of command in Iraq on them. While that isn't a position most seek, I assure you that 4th platoon is performing superbly and has my complete confidence. Many months ago, I asked LT Adams



LT O'Shea talks to the 4th FER commander at the Pipeline worksite.

to start looking at construction training. Who would have thought that today, outstanding Soldiers like PFC Ward and SPC Bobbit would be literally leading the way here with bucket loaders, hydraulic excavators and dozers?

Our maintenance team, led by SFC Lawrence continues to achieve unbelievable feats in the motorpool. Literally, our team here is the envy of every unit or commander to stop in our motorpool. Soldiers like SPC Keaty illustrate how effective our team is. A week ago, we had an issue with a trailer that we'd had little previous experience with. SPC Keaty got out the technical manual and started methodically troubleshooting the equipment. Soon, he located and fixed the problem. And this happens every day, 10s of times across our team. What a team! Literally, the company would stop moving with our maintenance team.

And as always, our headquarters section does great work resourcing, planning, battle tracking and taking care of our platoons. SPC Gaylor is doing great things in the command post as radio telephone operator. SPC Dickey is effectively fighting the tsunami of mail our loved ones have sent, making sure our Soldiers' mail gets to them promptly. LT Daly has marked up quite a few kills against the mice and will soon be awarded his combat action badge for engaging a feral enemy.

Thank you for your prayers and mail you have sent. And thank you for the sacrifices you have made at home. I know that deployments are just as hard on the Families at home as they are on Soldiers. Without you, our Soldiers could not perform at the level they do, day in and day out. The last month has been an extremely turbulent time. I'm excited to see what this Company will do as we get our rhythm. I assure you that with the Soldiers and leaders we have, the Company accomplish any mission required of it. Until we meet again, stay safe and may God bless you. Outlaws!

-Outlaw 6

Below: 3rd Platoon dozers move earth.



The Bulldawg Monthly

41st reports from Afghanistan

By CPT Reggie Rice

Happy Holidays Bulldawgs!

With the arrival of the 27th Engineer Battalion out of Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, we are back in a state of transition. The Route Clearance assets are being packed into Afghanistan as fast as they can be deployed to combat the IED threat throughout the country.

The commands above 41st are currently working out the best layout that maximizes the effectiveness of the platoons' efforts.

One of the things that has changed is the movement of Headquarters, Maintenance, 1st platoon and 3rd platoon to FOB Sharana. All of 41st's platoons that have operated within TF Mountain Warrior's area have done such an outstanding job that the Task Force presented arguments against us leaving their area. Also, they have requested an additional platoon from the 41st because of the quality of work the Soldiers have done.

FOB Fenty is planning many events for the Holidays. As you make your way around the FOB you see many B-Huts and other

buildings covered with lights and other decorations. Christmas dinner is always something to look forward to while deployed and the DFAC shouldn't disappoint. Also, I've seen the mail calls that have been filled with boxes and gifts from the states. This is a great boost for the Soldiers here. Remember that the mail flow is slow here so if the packages you've sent don't make it here by December 25th, the Soldiers will just get a surprise sometime in January.

I wish you all a happy holiday and be safe during your travels.

-Bulldawg 6 & 7



Above: 41st Engineer Company closes four caves that have been historically known fighting positions for the enemy.

Photo Hounds



41ST ENGINEER COMPANY



The view at Bagram Airbase.



4th Platoon displays hand knitted caps and stockings they received for Christmas.



Ssg Brown and SPC Prieur prepare 40 pound crater charges for a cave demolition mission.



4th Platoon snowball ambushes Afghanistan Army Soldiers outside of the DFAC



CPT Rice and 1SG Hopkins speak with FMT prior to passing out Company Coins.

DIEHARD SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT



Above: SGT Reed and an ISF Jundi after the TOA ceremony.

Below: SGT Reed helped escort the Iraqi Army personnel who came to the TOA ceremony.

So what does an all-source intelligence analyst do while deployed? This month's Diehard Soldier Spotlight will focus on SGT Kevin Reed, a member of the S-2 Military Intelligence shop in the Battalion.

SGT Reed came into the Army in 2002 after completing two years of his bachelor's degree. He went to basic training in Ft. Jackson, SC and then on to his Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in Ft. Huachuca, AZ. After completing AIT, SGT Reed arrived at his first assignment: San Antonio, TX. While there he worked as a cryptologist. His next assignment was Camp Humphreys, Korea. In October 2009 he PCS'ed to Ft. Riley and came to the 1st Engineer Battalion-just three weeks before the main body deployed.

Here in Iraq, SGT Reed analyzes the enemy's patterns to determine if there is a way to circumvent attacks and/or IED's.

Following the tradition his grandfather began in WWII, SGT Reed has begun a war journal. He tries to write in this jour-

nal frequently to detail his experiences while deployed. His plans on passing this journal on to his son.

SGT Reed likes to listen to music, play guitar here, talk to his son, and do the Stars and Stripes cryptogram every morning. He plans to finish his Bachelor's Degree in International Relations next year and then move on to his masters degree and Ph.D. His ultimate goal is to teach become a professor and teach at the collegiate level.

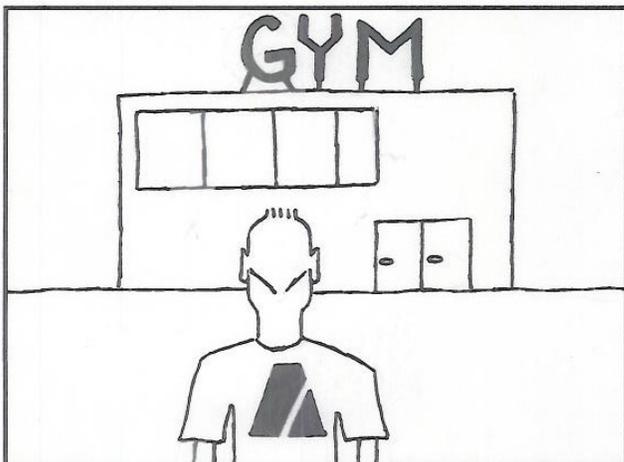
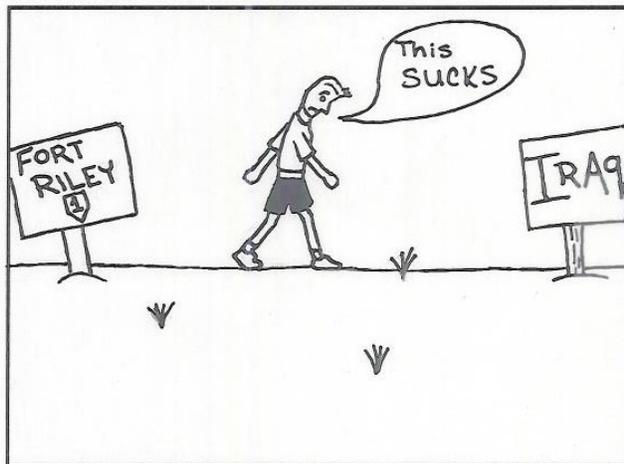
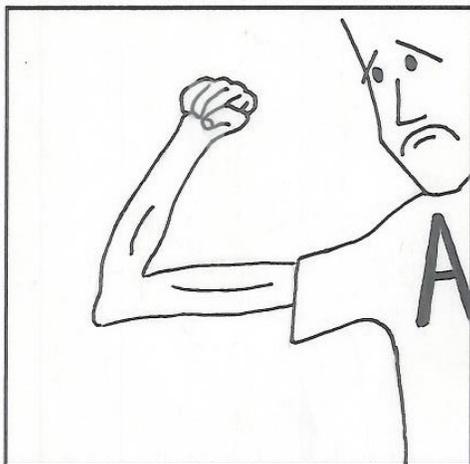
What he dislikes most about being deployed is missing his Family—especially his son. What he likes most about being deployed is interacting with the Iraqis and experiencing their culture in an attempt to understand it better.



The Monthly Comic

By SPC Knittle

DOPT



It Pays off



Top Left: LTC Whittle promotes PFC Stewart, on a helicopter flight; Top: CPT Hill promotes SFC Windsor; Left: LTC Whittle promotes SSG Farris; Below: CPT Hill promotes SSG Boone, SPC Simmons, SPC Lomas and SPC Lewis.

PROMOTION PICTURES





Clockwise from top left:: SGT Crudup and CPT Shams promote SGT Murphy; LTC Whittle promotes 1LT Ruiz; CPT Hill promotes SPC Danner; the newly promoted CPL Chase.

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