

AUGUST 2, 2013

Special points of interest:

- Welcome from Lt. Col. Hibner
- Iron Fist assumes authority
- Company Updates



The Iron Fist Coat of Arms

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THE IRON FIST

LT. COL. HIBNER LEADS TASK FORCE IRON FIST

Task Force Iron Fist Family and 4th Engineer Battalion Team,

As is customary for the 4th Engineer Battalion, we remain very busy and engaged in our Nation's priorities. Last month the Battalion Headquarters, comprised of Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Forward Support Company, deployed to join Regional Command-South in Southern Afghanistan.

At the same time we rejoined Joint-Task Force Triple Nickel, our parent Engineer Brigade Headquarters who are stationed out of Bagram Airfield Afghanistan, and it is great to work for our parent HQ directly once again.

Since our arrival we've worked very hard to quickly form our engineer Task Force – named Task Force Iron Fist. We proudly bring into the 4th Engineer Battalion fold five new companies: the 333rd Eng. Co., "Blade," a horizontal construction company from the United States Army Reserve (USAR) Pennsylvania; the 372nd Eng. Co., "Dire Wolf," a vertical construction company from the USAR Wisconsin; the 591st Sapper Company,

"Venom," Fort Campbell, Kentucky; the 819th Sapper Company, "Firestarter," from the Arizona Army National Guard; and the 837th Mobility Augmentation Company, "Brutus," from the Ohio Army National Guard. We are proud to have these great engineer companies on our team, and also proud that they will forever be a part of the long and distinguished history of the 4th Eng. Bn.

It is our history and lineage that directly influenced the naming of our Task Force. If you look at our official coat of arms you will see the metal gauntlet, or iron fist, on the crest above our shield. According to the US Army Institute of Heraldry, this part of our coat of arms was designated in the 1920s following World War I. The institute states, "The mailed hand and arrows are indicative of the combat capabilities of the unit, the number of arrows corresponding to the numerical designation of the battalion."

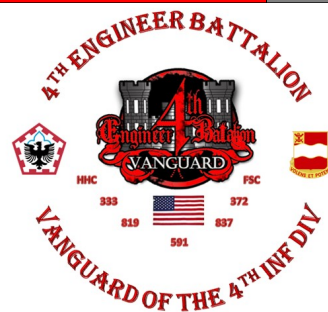
Just as our coat of arms was forged by the combat capabilities demonstrated in combat by our "Willing and Able" predecessors, our task force is "forged in com-

bat," in Afghanistan, and with our team of professional and dedicated engineers, we will add to our proud history and lineage.

So far we've established our partnerships with our Afghan Engineers in construction and assured mobility operations. We've already cleared thousands of kilometers of routes for our coalition, and we've built up living support areas and taken down tactical infrastructure; we have accomplished much in our short time here.

While we push hard in our deployed mission, the 62nd Sapper Company is in the heart of their deployment, doing incredible work in their assured mobility mission not far from our HQ. The 576th goes into their final preparation for deployment while the 569th begins their train-up for their deployment next year.

Although there is a lot going on in the battalion and task force we are able to handle it all – not only because we are 'willing and able' to get it done – but also due to the incredible support we receive from our friends and Family back home.





A Soldier from 4th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Iron Fist, wears a newly earned 555th Engineer Brigade.

"The combat patch is something Soldiers are authorized to wear every day until they leave the Army, which will remind them of their service to our nation at a time of war."

4TH ENGINEER BATTALION TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY AND PATCH CEREMONY

By U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Erin Jankowski
4th Engineer Battalion Public Affairs Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— The Transfer of Authority ceremony, officially passing responsibility from Task Force Lumberjack to Task Force Iron Fist, occurred on June 26, 2013. A week later, Soldiers of the Forward Support Company and Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 4th Engineer Battalion, 555th Engineer Brigade, received their wartime shoulder sleeve insignia on July 4, 2013, denoting service in a combat theater.

Task Force Lumberjack, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Jason Kelly, handed over the operational reins to Task Force Iron Fist, commanded by Lt. Col. Daniel Hibner of Michigan City, Ind. TF Iron Fist consists of Forward Support Company and Headquarters and Headquarters Company from Fort Carson, Colo., 372nd Engineer Company from Wisconsin, 333rd Engineer Company from Pennsylvania, the 591st Sapper Company from Fort Campbell, Ky., 837th Route Clearance Company from Ohio, and 819th Route Clearance Company from Arizona.

Task Force Iron Fist operates throughout Regional Command South. The Task Force focuses on construction projects, route clear-

ance patrols, and Afghan National Army development.

In his speech at the patch ceremony, Lt. Col. Hibner explained the significance of the day, both as Independence Day, and as a ceremonial day to don the 555th Engineer Brigade patch on their right shoulders.

He chose the Fourth of July as the patch ceremony date for two reasons: the battalion has been deployed for about a month; and secondly, to conjoin the pride we feel as Americans on the Fourth of July with that of the pride we feel when putting on our combat patches and serving our nation in a combat environment.

"The same sense of patriotism that drove early Americans to fight for independence is in many ways the same sense of patriotism that drives Soldiers to serve today," said Hibner. "The combat patch is something Soldiers are authorized to wear every day until they leave the Army, which will

remind them of their service to our nation at a time of war."

The Soldiers of the 4th Eng. Bn. feel the pride Lt. Col. Hibner discussed. Pfc. James O'Rourke of Orange County, N.Y., a Human Resources Clerk in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, said wearing the patch on his right shoulder makes him feel like he has done his actual job.

That feeling was shared by others in the unit.

"It feels good to be a part of the unit and help out with whatever I can," said Sgt. Acofaafetai Dominguez, originally from Hawaii, of the Forward Support Company.

These Soldiers expressed the service and patriotism which Lt. Col. Hibner saluted in his ceremonial address.

The 4th Engineer Battalion has had a busy month from assuming command to receiving combat patches.



Lt. Col. Hibner commands the HHC and FSC formations during the patch ceremony.

333RD ENGINEER COMPANY BEGINS MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Dan Roberts

333rd Engineer Company Executive Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— The 333rd Engineer Company from Reading, Penn. commanded by Captain Michael Griffie from Carlisle, Penn. is a horizontal construction company whose normal scope of work consists of building roads, airfields, foundations, and other such groundwork. Back at home station, the 333rd Eng. Co. falls under the 365th Engineer Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Samuel Spurlock; however, in theater, the unit falls under Task Force Iron Fist, commanded by Lt. Col. Daniel Hibner.

The 333rd Eng. Co. mobilized to Ft. Bliss in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in April of 2013 and deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan in June. Since being deployed, the unit has encountered projects such as area clearance, route clearance, Forward Operating Base (FOB) demilitarization, FOB improvements, unmanned aerial vehicle hangars, and Afghan National Army (ANA) partnership training.

The most important mission of the 333rd Eng. Co. is to provide partnership with the ANA in order to train and assist them in construction activities and to provide constructional support for Regional Command-South. The main emphasis of projects is demilitarization in preparation for

the drawdown of U.S. forces out of Afghanistan.

The Soldiers of the 333rd Eng. Co. have been working extremely hard on their various projects and are seeing results.



The Task Force Iron Fist logo posted outside of Battalion Headquarters.

“The most important mission of the 333rd Eng. Co. is to provide partnership with the ANA in order to train and assist them in constructional support for Regional Command – South.”



The 333rd Eng. Co. awaits departure and is seen off by their organic Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Samuel Spurlock, and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Otto on 3 June, 2013. (Photo by 1LT Ashley Alameda, DoMAD Public Affairs Officer, Ft. Bliss, TX, U.S. Army)



Sgt. John Bacon and Spc. Kenny Yeager work alongside the Afghan National Army as they install a drop ceiling into the literacy center. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Michael Maxwell)

"We are doing something positive that matters. The project is definitely giving them a leg to stand on as far as completing a mission that they set out to do. I feel like we are making our country proud by giving the ANA the skills they need to sustain themselves."

SOLDIERS OF 372ND ENGINEER COMPANY OVERSEE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY LITERACY CENTER CONSTRUCTION

By U.S. Army Spc. Michael Maxwell

372nd Engineer Company Unit
Public Affairs Representative

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—The United States Army Corps of Engineers is working with the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) Engineers to ensure that they are able to conduct construction missions independently when coalition forces end operations in Afghanistan. Soldiers of the 372nd Engineer Company, United States Army Reserve, based out of Pewaukee, Wisconsin, commanded by Captain Andrew Reichert, have been assigned to oversee the ANA's first generation of military engineers on a project to build a literacy center.

A small group of Soldiers belonging to the 372nd Eng. Co., detached from their main company, is working with the ANA. The literacy center which they are currently tasked with assisting in building is located at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Hero. The project began five months ago, and consists of building five new rooms into an existing military building.

"It is a proud moment for us to be able to train and assist in the development of engineers in the beginning of their new nation. The unique character of the team we assembled afforded us the ability to develop a good working relationship with the Afghan soldiers, and the beginnings of a good working friendship between the engineers of our two nations," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Hewes, the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the 372nd Eng. Co. ANA Group. He is enthusiastic about the prospect of helping Afghanistan's future engineers.

The ANA Engineers have been busy constructing walls, installing drop ceilings, and running electrical wire through rooms to lighting, outlets and electrical boxes. Soldiers of the 372nd Eng. Co. have been acting as Quality Assurance/Quality Control and have overseen the operation to provide technical advice to the ANA Engineers when secondary opinions are needed. However, the ANA Engineers are largely in control of the project and it is the duty of the Soldiers of the 372nd to provide additional instruction only where needed, and ensure that the ANA Engineers direct construction operations.

"We are doing something positive that matters. The project is definitely giving them a leg to stand on as far as completing a mission that they set out to do. I feel like we are making our Country proud by giving the ANA the skills they need to sustain themselves," stated Tony Reeves, a member of the 372nd ANA Group, who is positive about the outcome of working with the ANA Engineers.

The ANA literacy center project is a culmination of months of training that was initiated by the 181st Eng. Co., Army National Guard. The 372nd Eng. Co. ANA Group looks forward to helping the ANA move forward with the final steps of the project, and to help them develop a method of training and instruction which sustains their skills as they move forward.



Soldiers of 372nd Engineer Company and the Afghan National Army Engineers, outside the literacy center construction project. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Michael Maxwell, 372nd Engineer Company)

591ST ENGINEER COMPANY CONTINUES MISSION AND LOOKS TO HOME

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. William Lee

591st Engineer Company Battle and Operations Non-Commissioned Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— For the last several weeks, the 591st Engineer Company, “Team Venom” has pushed through the sweltering heat in Southern Afghanistan to continue to take the fight to the enemy. The 591st Eng. Co., organic to the 326th Eng. Battalion and Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Borders, falls under Task Force Iron Fist commanded by Lt. Col. Daniel Hibner while in Afghanistan.

Team Venom conducts assured mobility operations, clearing more than 2,500 Kilometers this month alone. The platoons continue to train hard by going to the range

and continuously practice their route clearance skills.

Maintenance is hard at work keeping up with numerous broken down vehicles. The Operations section has been steadily cleaning up the company footprint and completing administrative tasks (awards and shipment of equipment) in order for the Company to prepare for its return to the States this Fall.

Even through the heat, the 591st Eng. Co. continues to conduct promotions and award ceremonies in order to highlight the great things our Soldiers are doing. The company promoted another Non-Commissioned Officer into the corps and was able to support the re-enlistment of three Soldiers to continue their Army careers. Most recently, several Soldiers were awarded the Combat Action

Badge for engagements with the enemy.

The ManTech support team was recognized for their continued support of the company, and the 591st said goodbye to several Field Support Representatives that have been here supporting us for the last several months.

The 591st also had to say goodbye to one of its own earlier this month. Pfc. Brooks flew back to the States a few days ago. We thank him for all of his contributions and wish him well as he transitions out of the Army.

As we begin to prepare for redeployment, we would like to thank our Families for their continued love and support. All of Team Venom appreciates your continued support throughout the remainder of our deployment.

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Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, the US Central Command Command Sgt. Maj., Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Bryan, the 555th Engineer Brigade (Joint Task Force Triple Nickel) Command Sgt. Maj., and Command Sgt. Maj. Jon Stanley, the 4th Engineer Battalion (Task Force Iron Fist) Command Sgt. Maj. pose with Soldiers from the 591st Eng. Co.



Command Sgt. Maj. Grippe talking to Soldiers of the 591st Eng. Co.



Lt. Col. Hibner, Maj. Caldwell, Maj. McNamara, and Sgt. Maj. Aucoin relax at an Iron Fist cookout. The 819th falls under Task Force Iron Fist while deployed.

"The quick notice of deployment required the Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers of the unit to be highly flexible and agile."

819TH ENGINEER COMPANY (SAPPER) TRAINED AND READY FOR OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM DEPLOYMENT

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Sayward Hall

819th Engineer Company Executive Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— The 819th Engineer Company (Sapper) was established within the 253rd Eng. Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Sandison of the Arizona Army National Guard in December of 2008. Upon establishment, the company immediately began preparing for its mobilization in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and its deployment to Afghanistan.

Based in Bellemont, Ariz., the 819th Eng. Co., commanded by Capt. Jared Wagoner of Maricopa, Ariz., is trained to clear roadside bombs and other obstacles, as well as perform engineering functions to support Infantry forces.

The quick notice of deployment required the Soldiers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Officers of the unit to be highly flexible and agile. The NCOs and Officers were tasked with developing training plans to ensure the Soldiers were prepared to clear the way for other US Soldiers by identifying and eliminating roadside

bombs.

Upon receipt of the notice of deployment, the company's command team pursued an extended Annual Training (AT) period at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri in June of 2012 to participate in the Engineer School's Counter Explosive Hazard Center. The 819th Sappers were introduced to, and trained with, the route clearance vehicles they now use over here in Afghanistan. This provided the 819th Eng. Co. with an outstanding baseline for its training for the rest of the pre-deployment process and allowed its Soldiers to hone their tactics, techniques, and procedures.

After a very successful annual training, the company returned to Arizona and geared up for an extensive home station training regimen consisting of an increased monthly operational tempo. The 819th Eng. Co. had monthly training periods which culminated in an extended training exercise and then a month long pre-mobilization exercise in Florence, Arizona.

This training prepared the 819th Sappers for mobilization training at Fort Bliss, Tex., and ultimately

its deployment to Afghanistan.

The 819th Sapper's training has paid large dividends for them. Despite being inducted into the Arizona National Guard only several years ago, the company is a valuable asset to Task Force Iron Fist.

HOOAH

-Command Sgt. Maj. Stanley

Find the Battalion on Facebook!

Search for: 4th Engineer Battalion (Official)

Questions or comments? Email

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837TH ENGINEER COMPANY'S LONG AND HONORABLE UNIT LINEAGE

By U.S. Army Sgt. Richard Ventresca

837th Mobile Augmentation Company Unit Public Affairs Representative

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — As the 837th Engineer Company (Mobile Augmentation Company) “BRUTUS”, Task Force Iron Fist, Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, an Army National Guard unit from Lorain, Ohio, continues their route clearance mission, we would like to recognize the history of the unit. The 837th Eng. Co. (MAC), commanded by Captain Chad Apple, has been providing excellent engineer and maneuver support in the defense of freedom for over 87 years.

The unit was federally recognized as a member of the Ohio Army

National Guard on February 2, 1926 under the 37th Infantry Division. Throughout the unit's past, the 837th Eng. Co. participated in multiple World War II operations including Normandy, northern France, northern and central Europe, Rhineland, Northern Solomon's, and Luzon.

More recently, on January 30, 2003 the 837th Eng. Co. was called to Federal active service in order to support Operation Enduring Freedom. The unit was tasked with assisting in the force protection efforts at several different Air Force Bases across the country. The 837th is part of the 112th Eng. Bn. commanded by Lt. Col. David Rhoads at their home station. The 112th Eng. Bn. is one of the most decorated battalions in the Ohio Army National Guard. The battalion as-

sisted in Operation Enduring Freedom during 2010-11 as Task Force Predator in support of route clearance operations.

Currently, the unit is deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom under Task Force Iron First commanded by Lt. Col. Daniel Hibner, Joint Task Force Triple Nickel commanded by Col. Nicholas Katers. Under Task

Lt. Col. Hibner and Command Sgt. Maj. Stanley uncased the 4th Engineer Battalion colors at the Transfer of Authority ceremony. Task Force Lumberjack transferred authority to Task Force Iron Fist on June 26, 2013. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Amanda Cooper, 4th Engineer Battalion)



2nd Lt. Fuchs, Spc. Pauley Spc. Wright show off their hard work which is displayed in front of the Company CP. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard Ventresca, 837th Eng. Co. Unit Public Affairs)

“The 837th Eng. Co. (MAC) has been providing excellent engineer maneuver support in the defense of freedom for over 87 years.”



The Task Force Iron Fist Gym before the new equipment. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Timothy Colon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1st Sgt.)

*“CHAOS Soldiers
continue to
physically prepare
for the Company’s
October 22nd and
23rd Army
Physical Fitness
Test, but more
importantly, for
their Families
awaiting them in
the United States!”*

HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY IMPROVES IRON FIST GYM

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Katie Wurzbach
Headquarters and Headquarters Company

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Small, unimposing, and hidden behind a section of T-Walls resides one of the most important buildings to the members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Engineer Battalion — the battalion gym.

One of the facilities Task Force Iron Fist inherited from the 20th Engineer Battalion before their departure from country was the “Lumberjack Gym,” located within the battalion footprint at Kandahar Air Field (KAF). The gym was used by the 20th Eng. Bn. to fit in quick lunch time workouts, as its proximity to work and the barracks allowed Soldiers to get away throughout the work day without making the longer trek to several other gyms around the airfield.

While the gym was outfitted with several sets of weights and a few treadmills from the 20th, Headquarters and Headquarters Company (known as CHAOS Company), commanded by Captain Alberto Baez, knew they would be able to further resource and “upgrade” it to proper Task Force Iron Fist standards. Sgt. 1st Class Max Burgdoerfer of Morehead, Kentucky, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company Operations Sergeant, took the lead in

contacting the Kandahar Morale Welfare and Recreation in order to acquire additional weight sets, kettle bells, stair masters, benches and weight machines for the gym. With the assistance of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company Operations Section, the newly christened “Iron Fist Gym” was filled end to end with brand new equipment ready for Soldier use.

Since the upgrades to the gym and equipment, Soldiers from both Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Forward Support Company, as well as other Task Force Iron Fist companies stopping overnight at KAF, have utilized the facility and furthered their personal physical training plans.

CHAOS Soldiers continue to physically prepare for the Company’s October 22nd and 23rd Army Physical Fitness Tests, but more importantly, for their Families awaiting them in the United States!



The Task Force Iron Fist Gym with the new equipment. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Timothy Colon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1st Sgt.)

The Task Force Iron Fist Gym in use. Soldiers take advantage of the new equipment and the gym’s close proximity to work. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Timothy Colon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1st Sgt.)



FORWARD SUPPORT COMPANY IS MAKING HEADWAY WITH THEIR AFGHAN COUNTERPARTS

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Johnny A. Garcia II
Forward Support Company Executive Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Forward Support Company (“Beast”), 4th Engineer Battalion, 555th Engineer Brigade, commanded by Captain David Hall, is progressing in leaps and bounds in their efforts of support aimed at enabling their Afghan National Army (ANA) counterparts in a collective push toward greater operational functionality.

Forward Support Company leadership and Soldiers have paved

the way for greater future relations. From holding welding classes, participating in joint exercises and projects, to the mutual respect displayed in every visit, Soldiers like Sgt. Lance Hengesbaugh from Wetland, Michigan, are making the right decisions that will reap great benefits later on. Working and training with the ANA has provided Forward Support Company with great insight into their counterparts’ levels of expertise, work ethic, and overall preparedness to tackle maintenance and recovery operations by themselves.

“Beast” is faced with the complexi-

ties of teaching, training, and advising a group of individuals who do not speak the same language, share the same culture, nor adhere to the same lifestyle in general; yet the “Beasts” continue to produce outstanding results. They continue to dedicate their time and effort into developing new ideas and approaches to find solutions to proposed obstacles.

However, these successes do not come without sacrifices. We owe all of our successes to our biggest supporters: the Families, friends, and loved ones of Forward Support Company Beast. So a big “thank you” to the ones who make all of this possible.



The Soldiers of both companies were able to relax and socialize with fellow Soldiers while enjoying a good, old-fashioned cookout.

NCO OF THE MONTH



SOLDIER OF THE MONTH



Congratulations to Sgt. Weis and Spc. Moya, who won the NCO and Soldier of the Month Board, respectively! Both are from the 591st Eng. Co.

“We owe all of our successes to our biggest supporters: the Families, friends, and loved ones of Forward Support Company Beast. So a big “thank you” to the ones who make all of this possible.”

Thank you for all of your continued support! We could not complete our mission with as much motivation without knowing you are behind us!

Please contact us if you would like to add anything to next month's newsletter.

Check us out on Facebook!

4th Engineer Battalion (Official)



The Iron Fist Command Team places combat patches on the 372nd Eng. Co. Command Team.



U.S. Army Col. Nicholas Katers, commander of the 555th Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, and Lt. Col. Daniel Hibner, commander of the 4th Eng. Bn., Task Force Iron Fist, JTF Triple Nickel, poses with Afghan Lt. Col. Mohamad Osman, the 205th Corps Engineer Kandak (CEK) commander, during a meeting July 8, 2013. TF Iron Fist is working with the 205th CEK on several construction projects.



Soldiers from Forward Support Company and Headquarters and Headquarters Company find some time to enjoy themselves in between all of their hard work.