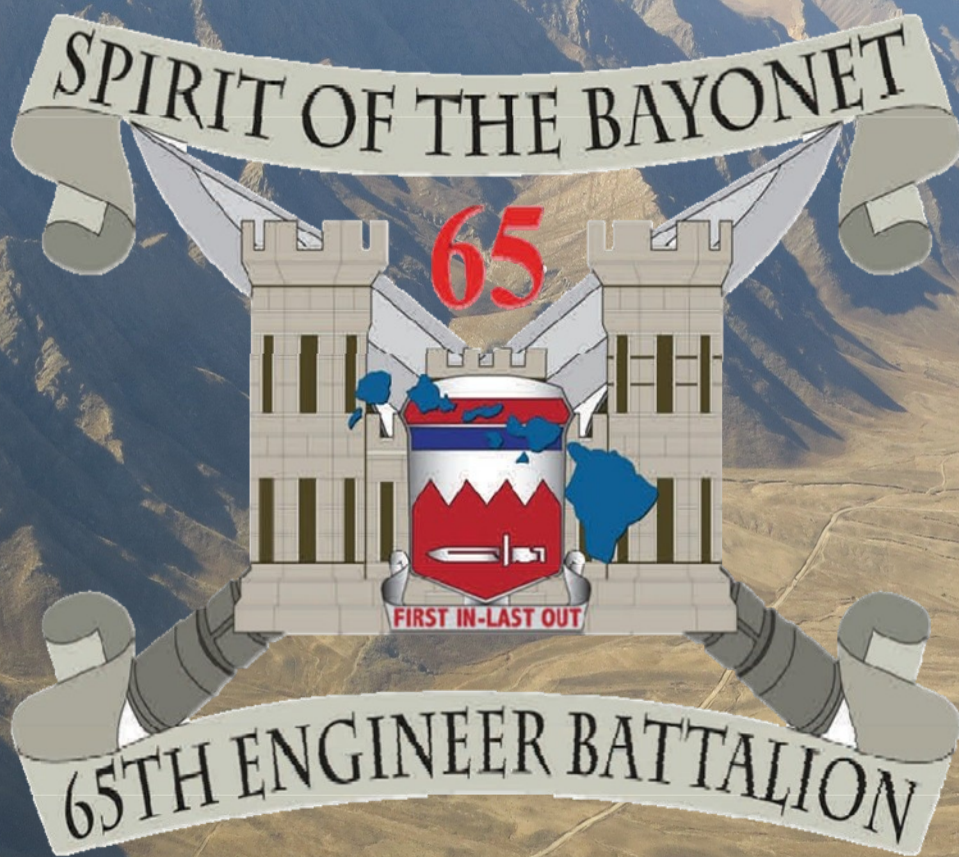


TASK FORCE BAYONET



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A Word from the Command Group

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Aloha Friends and Family of Task Force Bayonet,

In the past month, the ranks of TF Bayonet have swelled to over 1100 Soldiers providing route clearance, bridging and logistical support to RCs West, Southwest and South.

Additionally, our team is partnered with two Afghan Engineer Battalions whom we train, advise and assist. Our team has performed remarkably well, and CSM McVicker and I could not be more proud of the incredible achievements of this magnificent Task Force. We want to extend a special thank you to the Families and Friends of TF Bayonet, as well as our rear detachment, for all the support you have shown us during this deployment. It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve the Soldiers and Families of this great team, and lead them through this historic mission. We trust you will all have a safe and happy holiday season, and wish you all the best in the upcoming New Year.

"First In, Last Out"

LTC David Acker - Bayonet 6

Aloha from the office of the Task Force Bayonet CSM,

The Soldiers of Task Force Bayonet continue to inspire and live up to the honor and traditions of one of the most decorated Engineer Battalion's in the Army. Much like our forefathers who came

before us, the Soldiers of Task Force Bayonet, continue to live the warrior ethos. Even though the Task Force is spread across three different regional commands, your Soldiers continue to exhibit daily the expertise and war fighter spirit that is synonymous of the Engineer Corps.

As we transition into the holiday season, I would like to thank each and every one of you that answered our Nation's call. I would also

like to thank you for your sacrifices as well as the sacrifices of your Families.

In closing, I would encourage all service member's to take a few minutes out of their busy schedule during this holiday season and give thanks to those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice and take some time to reach out and contact your loved ones back home.

From My Family to Yours, Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CSM Harold McVicker III- Bayonet 7



CSM McVicker and LTC Acker stop for a quick photo after the 455th Combat Patching Ceremony

Bidding a Fond Farewell and a Vigorous Greeting

Early in December, Task Force Bayonet will say farewell to the 541st Sapper Company as they finish their deployment of 9 months and head back to their home station of Bamberg, Germany. Although short, the 541st made a honorable impression on Task Force Bayonet and their expertise and experience will be missed. Farewell Sappers and Essayons!



Members of the 541st Sapper Company depart the plane at the airfield in Bamberg, Germany (Photo by 54th EN BN)

Task Force Bayonet extends a hearty greeting to its new member, the 927th Sapper Company out of the Louisiana National Guard. The 927th will assume control of Route Clearance Operations at FOB Apache from the 819th Sapper Company, Arizona National Guard.



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Headquarters and Headquarters Company

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TIGER 6-

Aloha, Tiger Family and Friends,

Times remain busy for TF Bayonet and HHC continues to play a pivotal role in establishing our footprint here in Afghanistan. Our team has been working hard to clean up our Area of Operations as we move forward with the mission at hand; conducting retrograde operations with the ultimate goal of bringing all US Armed Forces home.

All the staff sections in HHC have been busy with their respective missions. One of the busiest has been the S4, who are spearheading the efforts of all retrograde activities throughout all TF Bayonet areas. Massive clean-up efforts are underway with dozens of military vehicles, hundreds of excess items such as computers or radios, tens of thousands of rounds of excess ammunition, and thousands of pounds of trash and scrap being properly turned in or disposed of as we move towards making our work and living space our own. This has resulted in increased efficiency and mission readiness of all TF Bayonet units, making them better equipped to face their daily

mission here in Afghanistan. It is also a major step towards cutting operating costs here and throughout the Army, stretching all of our tax dollars a little bit further.

While we have been very busy here on KAF, and throughout the rest of Afghanistan, it hasn't been all work and no play for HHC this month. Several of the Tigers participated in the Army 10-miler as well as the Veteran's Day 5-miler. Notably, CPT Christina Somnuk was the top finisher in the Women's Division in the Veteran's Day 5-miler.

We hope all our family and friends are doing well back on the island and the main land. Know your soldiers are working hard and staying focused on the mission at hand.

STRIKE FIRST!!!!!!!



CPT O'Nan (HHC Commander) with SSG Outlaw (SFAAT OPS NCO)



1LTs Hicks, Hanratty, Wright, Spies and Lostetter stand proudly with CPTs Somnuk and Davis, showing off medals and race T-Shirts.

TRACKING THE BATTLE!

The TF Bayonet Tactical Operations Center (TOC) and Tactical Command Posts (TACs) are the central hubs that receive and relay reports from all Bayonet units in Afghanistan. The TOC and the TACs keeps the Commander as well as the Staff informed of all current patrol operations. Operating continuously 24 hours a day, the command posts are fully manned by the Battle Staff which works in 12 hour shifts.

Task Force Bayonet maintains one TOC and three TACs across Afghanistan, all synced as one team. The TOC and TAC Battle Staff are a cohesive team that plays a vital role in TF Bayonet's mission. The Battle Staff will continue to strive for excellence every hour of the day!



Kandahar TOC Day Shift: (left to right) SFC Tuimavave, SFC Delira, PFC Williams, SGT Hansen, SSG Smith, SGT Cox, SSG Pangelinan, 1LT Spies (Not Pictured: SSG Newberry)



Kandahar TOC Night Shift: (left to right) SPC Chung, SSG Sailo, 1LT Whitfield, SFC Jubinville, and SSG Carberry (Not Pictured: SPC Holmes)

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Headquarters and Headquarters Company

3

TRACKING THE BATTLE!



Regional Command West TAC- (Pictured Above, Left to Right) SSG Gardner, CPT Borchik, MSG Wilson and SGT Lopez

Regional Command South West TAC- (pictured below, left to right) PFC Blair, SSG Womack, SSG Talmawalsh, CPT Hanson, 1LT Robertson, and SSG Carberry



65th SFAAT Hits the Ground Running

The 65th SFAAT "Hell Hounds" are aggressively training and preparing to partner with the Afghan National Army Engineers. Although the Afghans have not yet arrived in Herat we do not rest on our laurels and continue to prepare ourselves every day. The Soldiers are bonding as a team and preparing for their mission through such instruction as Guardian Angel Training from SFC McDowell and SFC Turpin. They will use this to provide security for their fellow Soldiers and DOD Civilians, protecting them as they conduct training "shana ba shana" (shoulder to shoulder) with our Afghan partners. Thanks to the dedication of our Motor Sergeant, SGT Schellenberg, our vehicles are prepared to meet any obstacle. SPC Martin is providing expert medical care for your Hell Hounds, keeping them ever ready to meet the challenges before them. SGT Clarito and SSG Outlaw have tirelessly worked to prepare the operations section to track your Hell Hounds every movement. The teams exceptional efforts will truly pay off in the coming months and can only lead us to mission success. It is the team's mission to ensure the Afghan Engineers are fully prepared for independent operations allowing them to take the lead in their own country for generations to come. We will succeed at this mission.



CPT Oliver, SGT Koeth, SFC Turpin and SPC Martin prepare to go out on mission.



SFAAT making their mark outside their operations center in Camp Stone, Afghanistan

Worry Not! Your Hell Hounds are living comfortably in the West. We work amongst a diverse community of Italian, Spanish, Slovenian and other European allies. The Italian DFAC is filled to overflowing with delicious bread and pasta, however, the gym is part of our daily battle rhythm so expect a buff bunch of warriors to return to you next summer. After all, SFC Turpin and SGT Koeth placed first and second in the Camp Stone bench press contest. The days here are growing cold as we yearn for the paradise weather of Hawaii, but knowing that we are supported by the Bayonet community will carry us through. Until next time, Unleash Hell and love you're Hell Hounds.



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Forward Support Company *RISE UP!*

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SUSTAIN THE BATTLE!



Phoenix 6 showing off his skills on the Gyro-Cam

Over the past month of November, the Phoenix Team has continued to make its mark on the South and Southwest regions of Afghanistan. FSC's Distro, Maintenance and PSD platoons have continued to execute flawless missions both inside and outside the wire.



Since arriving in Afghanistan, the Distribution Platoon has participated in every Convoy Logistics Patrol that TF Bayonet has conducted. Distribution Platoon missions have taken the Soldier's East, West and North of both Kandahar Air Field (KAF) and Camp Leatherneck. The Distribution Platoon have aided both Route Clearance and Bridging Units by delivering all classes of supply to include over 16,000 lbs of ammunition to the 849th EN CO. The Convoy Team has moved Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the 1438th Bridging Company equipment to KAF. The Phoenix soldiers have already traversed more than 1,000 miles on the roads throughout RC South and Southwest.

Maintenance Platoon has also accomplished a variety of tasks. They began by repairing 27 inoperable vehicles to keep the Task Force operational. This team was stretched thin in order to support convoys the company has been conducting. Additionally, this team assisted with the retrograde of over 10 containers full of equipment that had built up in the motor pool over the past ten years of conflict in Afghanistan. At times they were also asked to work late into the night to support S-4 loading trucks with forklifts to get supplies and parts to Task Force Bayonet's SFFAT team located in RC-West at Camp Stone. The Maintenance platoon also assisted 82nd, HHC, and the Guam National Guard by moving containers to help organize their areas. Maintenance Platoon has truly proven to be an invaluable asset not only to the Forward Support Company but also Task Force Bayonet and its subordinate units.



The PSD moving out to conduct a Key Leader Engagement with the Afghan National Army.

PSD was originally assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), TF Bayonet. Not long after landing in Afghanistan, PSD and the Forward Support Company (FSC) began working side by side to support the battalion's retrograde from Camp Leatherneck to Kandahar Air Field (KAF). The partnership started on 14 October 2013 when FSC and PSD combined to move equipment and supplies to KAF. Not long after the first mission it became apparent that PSD would be best utilized as a component of FSC's Combat Logistic Patrols (CLP). Since joining FSC, PSD has partnered with FSC to successfully move millions of dollars of equipment across Afghanistan on five separate CLPs. The battalion and its subordinate units depend on these patrols to deliver mission essential equipment. Soldiers from PSD and FSC have integrated flawlessly as one Phoenix team, to provide our sister units with the logistical support they depend on.



1LT Harris and his team provides security for LTC Acker during the meeting with the Afghan key leaders

The Phoenix team will continue to make its mark within the Task Force over the month's to come. With various missions coming up and non-stop maintenance to be done, FSC will remain busy with the final transition from Camp Leatherneck to Kandahar Airfield.

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82nd Engineer Support Company

BLADE

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While it has been only a short time since Blade Company left Schofield Barracks for Helmand Province, it seems like much longer for the Soldiers separated from their family and friends. The beautiful tropical sunrises and sunsets have been replaced by ones that are equally as beautiful in their own barren way. While Blade Soldiers have faced many trials along our journey thus far, Esprit de Corps and moral remain elevated as always. With two months of route clearance operations complete, we continue to push forward into familiar operations and uncertain territory. This uncertainty is what drives the Blade team to continually sharpen our ever-growing and diversified engineer skills.



The 82nd's equipment fleet.

In a recent addition to the TF Bayonet footprint, on Camp Leatherneck, SSG Warburton and a team of dedicated Soldiers from 1st Platoon have created what many have dubbed "Robot Wars". Over the period of multiple days, and with countless man hours invested, they devised an impressive and competitive way for Soldiers to hone their skills on numerous robotic platforms. What can only be described as an obstacle course on steroids, Soldiers created two mirrored lanes of ramps, serpentines, explosive oriented tasks, and an opponent with whom to challenge.



CPT Dursky and SSG Warburton inspecting training site



British Soldiers prepping for the competition.

On what would normally be just another Tuesday in Afghanistan, Soldiers from the 82nd ESC stepped up their game and put pride on the line. Pitted against our British Engineer counterparts from Camp Bastion, a challenge began. The mid-day sun was high in the sky, like an old western movie duel, but pistols were replaced by futuristic control boxes and robots with mechanical arms. On the command "GO!" Soldiers moved their Talon robots out of the storage areas and proceeded through the serpentine. They then had to conduct technical movements of various objects, such as golf balls, with its mechanical hand. The old adage, "slow is smooth, smooth is steady, and steady is fast", proved to hold true throughout this phase. The operators then moved into what was undoubtedly the most difficult part.

Each robot proceeded into a "dark house" where Soldiers were required to use onboard cameras for navigation to the exit. After exiting, it was an all out race over one last obstacle to the finish line!

This collaborative exercise has hopefully increased cultural awareness as well as increased equipment proficiency for our young Sappers. While blood sausage from the United Kingdom may be less than enjoyable, the company, professionalism, and competitive nature of a fellow engineer is always welcome in the Bayonet family, regardless of the country in which they serve. First in, last out, Essayons always.



SSG Warburton gives a Robot site orientation

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The Brothers McGuckin

Story by CPT Mason Flemmer

There is a unique situation within the band of brothers of the 455th Engineer Company of Hayden, ID. Among the ranks, there is a distinctive pair of Soldiers that have a bond that cannot be broken. Brothers Tom and Fred McGuckin. Both Tom and Fred grew up in Northern Idaho in a little lake and ski resort town known as Sandpoint, along the banks of Lake Pend Oreille. Coming from a large family, the brothers are not the first to join the ranks of the 455th, or to serve our nation's military. Older brother and sister, Ben and Kate, are graduates of University of Idaho Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). Ben, a 1st Lieutenant (1LT) in the US Army, served his time as a Cadet while performing his duties during Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) with the 455th, becoming an Army Engineer Officer. Ben served in Afghanistan as a Platoon Leader of a Route Clearance Patrol from FOB RAMROD, RC-South, Afghanistan 2011. Ben is currently stationed in Korea as a Facility/Contract Construction Engineer. Their sister, Kate, a Captain (CPT) in the US Army, is currently leading a Female Engagement Team (FET) throughout Afghanistan. Younger sister, Mary, served with the US Navy, and is currently on maternity leave from service.



The brothers McGuckin, CPT Tom McGuckin (left) and SPC Fred McGuckin. (Photograph by SSG Demetrio Montoya)

Of the two McGuckins currently serving with the 455th, Corporal (CPL) Tom McGuckin, joined the United States Army Reserves (USAR) first on February 21, 2007. He served in Balad, Iraq with 455th's sister company, the 391st Engineer Company, Boise, ID during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), 2011, in a Route Clearance Company during Retrograde Operations. Specialist (SPC) Fred McGuckin joined the USAR on December 26, 2008, and this is his first deployment. Both brothers joined feeling a family obligation to our nation's military.



CPL Tom McGuckin inspecting his CROWS system during QRF spin-up. (Photograph by SSG Demetrio Montoya)

CPL McGuckin was in the process of completing his obligation to his contract and finishing his last two years in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), when he found out the 455th was placed upon the Sourcing List for a deployment to Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), with the mission of Route Clearance Patrols. Immediately, he tossed aside his paper work, and committed himself to the 455th on the foreseen deployment, not allowing himself to stay home as his younger brother deploys, where he would worry about his younger brother, Fred. Both brothers agree that it is amazing to deploy with your best friend, both have gone through rough times together, and what better way to go through a stressful time in life than a deployment, establishing a stronger bond and foundation between brothers.

455th Engineer Company **LOBOS!**

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Both McGuckins have been placed into separate Platoons. CPL Tom McGuckin is with 2nd Platoon as a Common Remotely Operated Weapon System (CROWS) operator and a dismounted Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) gunner. SPC Fred McGuckin is with 3rd Platoon as a HUSKY operator, leading the RCP, scanning and searching for Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

When they return home from the 455th 9-month tour through RC-South, Afghanistan, they both plan on pursuing careers in their individual fields, and leaving the ranks of the 455th. Tom, a recent graduate of Wyoming Technical Institute, plans to establish a career in the Diesel Tech field in the Pacific Northwest. Fred, a graduate of the Divers Institute of Technology plans to move to Florida and begin his career as a Deep Sea Diver.

These two brothers exemplify the meaning of courage and sacrifice. Their actions show that there is more to being a Soldier than just having the gear and wearing the uniform. They show what family sacrifice and brotherly love truly means. Coming together as one to fight the battle, to carry each other through challenging times, and perform duties as an integral piece of the 455th Engineer Company, they make our band of brothers even stronger.



SPC Fred McGuckin standing in front of his HUSKY (Photograph by SSG Demetrio Montoya)



The 455th Engineer Company out of Hayden, ID recently assumed control of route clearance operations based out of FOB Pasab, Afghanistan from the 515th Engineer Company. Pictured above, CPT Flemmer, along with SFC Schoessler, uncased the company's

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576th Engineer Company *SPARTANS!*

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As we continue with operations throughout Western Afghanistan, the Spartans have adopted new equipment and have refined Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures through training to assist with our mission to **SEARCH-FIGHT-DESTROY** all explosive hazards along critical retrograde and supply routes as well as prevent the enemy from gaining an advantage over us. With the help of Forward Service Representatives and other units, our Soldiers have become experts at using advanced equipment and life saving techniques to better enable us to remain safe!



Left: Operated by remote control, the DOKING sets off to clear an area of explosive hazards.

Right: Within a cloud of dust, the DOKING clears and renders safe lanes for personnel and vehicles to travel.



M-160 DOKING (ABOVE)

The DOKING is a unique piece of equipment; remote controlled and able to take a blast so our Soldiers do not have to. Equipped with a flail designed to detonate mines, this robot sweeps lanes, clearing the way for foot or vehicle traffic. We are fortunate to have a dedicated trainer in theatre to assist with training, and to allow our Soldiers to become more proficient at “pounding ground” on route. On occasion, the XO, 1LT Krug, takes the DOKING in the backyard to blow off some steam and send some sand flying.

STALKER (BELOW)

UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEM

To better enhance the view of the battlefield, SGT Martinez, SGT Paulin, SPC Jones, SPC Long, SPC Maldonado, and SPC Vanslambrouck conducted training with “Stalker Dan” to enable each platoon with this system. Used while on patrol or stationary, this adult sized model airplane takes our ability to remain situationally aware to the next level. An asset never used by the company before, its capabilities provide a critical eye-in-the-sky to safeguard our Spartans.



The Stalker system prior to training in the company area.



Spartans pose with the Stalker before they begin test flights.

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The “Golden Hour” rule of thumb is the timeframe expressed upon to patrols of the utmost importance during our operations. The “Golden Hour” refers to the amount of time that is expected for a Soldier to be evacuated off the battlefield in the event of an injury; within one hour, a Soldier will be taken from the battlefield to an appropriate level of care facility to receive treatment. The company is fortunate to have the help of Task Force Nightmare’s MEDEVAC personnel and pilots to facilitate realistic training to ensure the Spartans are prepared for any MEDEVAC situation.

Medic and First Responder Training

The most important Soldiers on a patrol are our medics and first responders. SPC Cook (Medic) performs immediate care to PFC Porter during this rehearsal. A proper diagnosis and immediate care save lives on the battlefield. SGT Monroy assists as the first responder, recording critical information for the incoming flight medics.



The HLZ

Critical to the “Golden Hour” concept is the use of helicopters throughout the battlefield. Clearing the Helicopter Landing Zone, or HLZ, is a task required before safely landing to evacuate casualties. Our patrols are proficient in clearing HLZs with specialized equipment organic to the patrol. With security, Spartans bring their injured comrade to safety as the MEDEVAC approaches.

MEDEVAC Hoist— *What a Ride!*

In certain circumstances, MEDEVAC helicopters are not able to land on the battlefield, requiring more extreme techniques. SPC Keith Jones experiences first hand a MEDEVAC Hoist as he flies high, over 100 feet above the route clearance patrol below. With the help of flight medics cross-trained as firefighters, the locations for MEDEVAC are virtually limitless.



849th Mobility Augmentation Company

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NITRATE

TO THE BREACH!

Written by: 1LT Schiller, Andrew

November came in like a lion as we received our WARNO (Warning Order) to support a named operation in Regional Command South. The operation involved clearance of a route that historically was known to be an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) hotspot, and a Taliban stronghold. A historical high IED threat, paired with intelligence from the previous unit left only one obvious method to clear this route. Company leadership conducted MDMP (Military Decision Making Process) and decided the best course of action was to conduct a conventional combined arms breaching operation.

We were fortunate as a unit to have an opportunity to conduct this exercise while at Ft. Bliss, TX during our mobilization training. We gathered debriefs and the AAR's (After Action Review) of previous clearance operations of this route which strengthened our decision to treat this as a combined arms breach and integrate various assets and enablers. SFC James Whitcomb said back in Texas to some of our Soldiers that, "this is a core task in which engineers do, however being in the National Guard we often don't have the opportunity." That exercise was a great learning point that proved to be a crucial stepping stone for this operation.

Combined arms breaching uses engineer doctrine to act as a guideline for leaders to use in their planning process. Although these are written in terms for use in a conventional fight, they can still be applied on today's modern battlefield. There were late nights discussing details of each obstacle along the route and how to effectively breach each one, with tasks assigned down to the individual Soldier. Our leadership and Soldiers were up to the task, and everyone came together to ensure we were fully prepared. While the planning was going on, Soldiers were hard at work going through rehearsals at the squad and team level. Those rehearsals proved to be crucial as the proficiency of each Soldier greatly enhanced this operation's success. One of the rehearsals focused on employing a MICLIC (Mine Clearing Line Charge). SFC Scott Larson mentioned, "I've been waiting 18 years to see a MICLIC detonate." In addition to the planning of the directed operation we still were responsible for our normal battle rhythm, which added to the complexity.



MICLIC rehearsal drill (Picture by: 1LT Schiller, 849th)

The ability to successfully clear this route would result in the construction of an AUP (Afghanistan Uniform Police) checkpoint and provide freedom of movement for local villagers in the area. Insurgents had free reign in the area, and they continually harassed local villagers, which resulted in a challenging environment leading into upcoming national elections. The success of the operation would set the framework for local villagers to vote without fear, and ensure the area was able to continue to grow and move toward peace and stability.

Due to the complexity of the operation, the mission start date was fairly fluid, and poor weather resulted in an additional delay of one day. The morning the operation started you could sense the excitement within the company, as the first vehicles left the ECP (Entry Control Point) towards their objective. Initial movement to the objective went smoothly, since the route had been cleared previously and the threat was low. In total the route was 27.27km from the FOB (Forward Operating Base) to the LOA (Limit of Advance), with the actual objective route being approximately 10km.

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849th Mobility Augmentation Company

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TO THE BREACH! (Continued)

NITRATE

The operation was planned to last three days, with the patrol establishing a patrol base overnight, and then continuing to clear after sunrise the following day. On the first day of the operation the patrol would breach the first two obstacles and find two IEDs, which EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) blew in place. The patrol base setup went swift, but due to the threat in the area the Soldiers would sleep in their vehicles the first night. Day two of the operation resulted in our first IED detonation on one of our vehicles. The maintenance team didn't miss a beat as they recovered the down vehicle in a timely

manner under threat of possible attack. On the final day of the operation they encountered the most IED's, with three IED finds and another IED blast just short of the LOA. Encountering that many IED's on the final day was of no surprise, as it was in close proximity to the insurgent's strong hold.



Vehicles on line and Soldiers ready for mission. (Picture by: SGT Reiman, Seth, 849th)



MICLIC on the final obstacle (Picture by: SGT Reiman, Seth, 849th)

After three exhausting days on mission, all elements returned back to the FOB. Our nearly flawless execution on the route to our LOA, and bringing all Soldiers back safely was enabled by all the countless hours of planning, rehearsals, hard work, and dedication during mission preparation. In total, we found five IED's, and took two IED blasts. Our find to detonation Ratio of 71% is higher than the historical average of 65%. That figure does not take into account IED's that were possibly detonated during the explosive breaching of the template obstacles. All the countless hours of planning, coordinating assets, integration enablers, and rehearsals were all keys to the overall mission success.

This was an outstanding opportunity for our Company to complete the roadmap of combined arms breaching, beginning with the basic doctrine at Ft. Bliss, TX all the way to running full spectrum combined arms breaching operations in Afghanistan. Each Leader and Soldier has gained a massive amount of skills and knowledge throughout the roadmap process. Few others will get to experience working side by side with maneuver forces in the depth we have, and we are thankful to have brought each and every Soldier back safely. Soldiers are already talking about when they will get their next opportunity to conduct an operation of this magnitude. Having a greater knowledge base and a better understanding of combined arms breaching and each Soldier's role; we stand ready for the next opportunity to test and enhance our Combat Engineer skills and abilities.

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1438th Multi-Role Bridge Company

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RIVER OTTERS

OTTER 6-

Families and friends of the 1438th EN CO

Things are pretty crazy out here and we are in the process of moving to a new location in Afghanistan. So far we have most of the maintenance and part of Head Quarters in Kandahar Air field (KAF). Although things are going crazy and we are moving from our old location to a new, we are still managing to handle business as usual. We have completed our second Highway One maintenance for the month of October and successfully added a bay to Tom Bridge, also on Highway One. Your Soldiers continue to impress the Theater of Command here in Afghanistan by their performance.



1438th Soldiers cut supports to make necessary repairs to local bridges

Also, since we have been here we successfully moved an entire bridge park on Camp Leatherneck which truly was an amazing accomplishment. Our next important big move is to bring the rest of the company to KAF and remove Tom Bridge from Highway One in order to allow the remaining bridge to be completely open for the people of Afghanistan. Our bridging capabilities here in Afghanistan are important for the Theater of Operations and remain a number one focus from our higher Commanders. It is imperative that our bridging capabilities remain intact for the entire country in order to facilitate the return of our Soldiers from Afghanistan and support the retrograde of our equipment as well.

We remain dedicated to supporting the removal of our Soldiers from Afghanistan and will do our best to facilitate the retrograde process. It is in our best interest to send all of our bridge equipment out of Afghanistan because the sooner we get rid of the equipment here the sooner we can depart. This is no easy task Friends and Families. We have a ton of equipment here in Afghanistan and we are doing our best to retrograde our equipment from Afghanistan. We have not heard any rumors or talk of an early departure from Afghanistan nor have we heard anything of an extension. What this means to us is that we are still on schedule. We will stay focus and strong in order to be home on time. We ask that all of the Families and friends continue to pray for our safety and the safety of all the troops here in Afghanistan and will be with you soon. Happy Thanksgiving to all and God Bless America!



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515th Engineer Company (Sapper)

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The 515th Sapper Company is honored to have been able to serve with Task Force Bayonet, if for such a brief time. The Outlaws received tremendous assistance from the 65th Engineer Battalion in the pursuit of our mission as well as in our retrograde operations. After being warmly received and recognized by the Task Force Bayonet leadership winning both the Soldier of the Month and the Non-Commissioned Officer of the Month for the month of October, the 515th has been assisted as we prepare to turn in our equipment and re-deploy to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Our timeline was admittedly different than that of the 65th but they stepped in superbly and provided the support we needed in order to succeed under an accelerated schedule. While in theater, we contributed to combat operations by clearing in excess of 2,000 kilometers over the course of 25 separate route clearance missions. These numbers may seem small but our contributions extended beyond the miles cleared. The Outlaws also supported Quick Reaction Force requirements and retrograde operations. Supporting the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the 515th turned in almost \$8,000,000 worth of equipment that had been accumulated over a decade of combat operations.

Our time was short, our mission vital, our Soldiers brave. In this small Army of ours we will undoubtedly cross paths again with the 65th Engineer Battalion, and when we do, we will recall fondly our time spent together. Until that reunion, Godspeed and First In, Last Out!



CPT Ricky Brown (Commander) and First Sergeant Randal Clayton prepare the Company guide-on for casing during the Relief in Place / Transfer of Authority ceremony; officially handing off responsibility for route clearance operations in Regional Command South.



The 515th stands ready along side the 455th EN CO in their motorpool in Forward Operating Base Pasab.

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If the Air Force is known for flying and the Navy for sailing, then the United States Army is known for their Engineers. The Engineers have a long and proud history, and no other Battalion has a more prestigious history than that of the mighty 65th Engineer Battalion. As the mission in Afghanistan winds down, the Sappers out of Schofield Barracks, HI have been called upon once again to take on the most difficult of tasks – clearing the roads of deadly IED's (Improvise Explosive Device) so that allied forces may return home safely and victoriously.



Chaplain Hodge meets with the Regional Command South West TAC group for a pizza dinner.

LTC David W. Acker was hand selected for the challenge of commanding Task Force Bayonet, a massive organization and mission spanning three regions of Afghanistan. With CSM Harold McVicker at his side, and a group of some of the finest young officers and NCO's this nation has to offer; LTC Acker has set his gaze on the finish line and now moves with determined focus toward that goal.

As a new Chaplain, the last year has been an exciting learning experience. Even so, my time in garrison has not been nearly as exhilarating as my first month here in Afghanistan. I will never forget my first convoy outside the wire. I sat in the back of a MAXXPLO (a mine resistant vehicle) listening to the Soldier's tense voices over the radio as we approached a bridge with a vehicle blocking the way. I could see what it meant on the commander's face and the sudden silence across the radio as someone mentioned a local truck was driving up alongside the now stalled convoy (as vehicle born IED's are a major threat to convoys). What I felt was fear, not the fear of being late for work, or the fear of rejection that every adolescent experiences while trying to fit in – I felt the fear of imminent death.

In this case nothing happened. After a few minutes the vehicle was moved and we continued on with no issues whatsoever. It seemed that within seconds the light-hearted conversation between the young engineers was at full force again. I sat back and smiled as the most amazing realization came over me. These guys were all in their 20's, many not even old enough to drink, yet they were facing death and continuing to do their duty every day.



So the next time we feel the urge to complain, let us stop for a moment, take a breath, grab hold of a new perspective, and think about the young soldiers and their commanders who have faced death to safeguard the freedoms continually purchased by the blood of our Braves since the Revolutionary War. I for one am so proud to have the honor to serve them as their Chaplain.

-CH (CPT) Christopher Hodge
65th EN BN Chaplain

Snapshots of Afghanistan

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Re-Enlistments, Promotions and Ceremonies

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Public Affairs Information

The *Task Force Bayonet Newsletter* is an authorized newsletter for members of the 65th Engineer Battalion. Contents are not necessarily endorsed by the Dept. of the Army, Dept. of Defense, or United States Government. Content is reviewed, edited, and approved by the Battalion Public Affairs Officer.

For questions, comments, or submissions, please contact the Battalion PAO.

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