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warmest regards from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

The brigade headquarters is about to mark its first 90-days in Afghanistan with the 23rd Sapper Co and 17th CSSB right behind.

It's been a challenging first 90-days filled with constant change and uncertainty. Your Soldiers have proven to be adaptive, innovative and resilient and I am very proud of their many accomplishments.

The brigade headquarters is executing a myriad of tasks that include training Afghanistan's only National Engineer Brigade and execution of the numerous base closures and retrograde of material out of Afghanistan.

I can say without reservation that this is the most challenging mission that I have been involved with in four deployments.

We have assembled the “team of teams” working on disparate mission sets that include not only the Army but also the Navy and Air Force. Our joint team is also

a multi-component one made up of Active, National Guard and Reserve forces.

The months in front of us will be more challenging than those behind as the movement of personnel and equipment out of Afghanistan accelerates.

As units redeploy our work requirements will increase as we take down the tactical infrastructure they are currently operating from, our joint team of professionals is well postured and prepared for success regardless of the complexity.

For the Soldiers back in Alaska, we are well aware of the monumental challenges you face executing the accelerated reorganization of the brigade.

Your mission is as complex and meaningful as the one we are executing forward in Afghanistan and we are very proud of what you have accomplished in such a short time.

Thanks for your leadership and professionalism during this very challenging period of our Army's history. Please don't underestimate the significance of your mission!

Sadly we had to say farewell to LTC Bill and Lynne

Conde and their family in June. We want to wish you all God speed as you move on to the Army War College. Your presence in the Brigade made lasting impact on hundreds of Soldiers and families in the 6th EN BN to include mine.

Though we lost a great team we also gain a new one, we want to welcome LTC George and Carena Walter and family to the Trailblazer team. We couldn't ask for a better fit to fill the tough tasks associated with this time of restructuring.

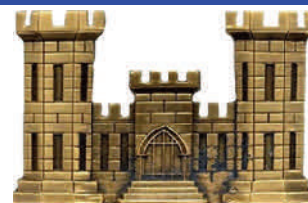
Finally to the Families, we are so very thankful for your sacrifices. You have borne a tremendous burden to enable your service member to serve our nation. We could not accomplish our mission without your service and sacrifice and we are eternally grateful for what you do every day, you are truly the strength of our exceptional Soldiers.

Please be safe; look out for yourselves, your Soldiers and each other!

- COL Andrysiak

ARCTIC TRAILBLAZERS

PUT ‘EM ACROSS!



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At A Glance...

- ◆ 2^D ENGINEER BRIGADE WILL INACTIVATE BY MAY 2015.
- ◆ BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, EACH OF THE SUBORDINATE BATTALIONS WILL INACTIVATE OR TRANSFER TO ANOTHER COMMAND.
- ◆ THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS THE BRIGADE IS TRAINING, CERTIFYING AND DEPLOYING UNITS IN SUPPORT OF OUR NATION'S STRATEGIC GOALS.



Command Sergeant Major's Corner Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston "Trailblazer 7"

Greetings from Afghanistan!

First I would like to say how proud I am of all the Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen that make up Task Force Trailblazer. Our troops embraced this historical mission the moment we landed and haven't looked back.

Their dedication, commitment and discipline truly set them apart from other units serving in the theater.

Our troops are making a difference and everyone knows that the Soldiers from Alaska with the Seahorse on their patch are making it matter.

Our mission here as the last Theater Engineer Brigade will have a significant impact on the country of Afghanistan and also allow the United States and our coalition partners to close this mission out respectfully.

From our train, advise and assist mission with Afghanistan's only National Engineer Brigade to theater wide de-scope your troops are doing it all.

All of the units have built a great reputation and are respected across the country for their efforts.

Lastly to the great leaders of the 532nd and all of

our Families back home we truly appreciate your support.

Knowing that all is well on the home front allows our troops to focus on the mission at hand here in Afghanistan.

Your support of our mission and of our Soldiers contributes greatly to the morale and well-being of every single one of us.

No word of thanks can ever truly convey what your unwavering support means so I will just simply end with thank you.

TRAILBLAZER 7

CSM Houston



The Arctic Trailblazer is an authorized newsletter for members of the 2^d Engineer Brigade. 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 Brigade Public Affairs Officer.

For questions, comments, or submissions please contact the Brigade PAO, Capt. Richard Packer, at:

ArcticTrailblazers@yahoo.com



The command team of 2^d Engineer Brigade and Joint Task Force Trailblazer, Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, while deployed to Afghanistan.

This newsletter belongs to the members of 2^d Engineer Brigade

Send us photos, stories, and ideas for future coverage and see your unit's accomplishments highlighted on our Facebook page and in future editions of the Arctic Trailblazer!

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Joint Task Force Trailblazer Solutioneering in Afghanistan

By **Capt. Richard Packer**
2^D Engineer Brigade

Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan – Soldiers from the headquarters of 2^D Engineer Brigade have taken responsibility as ISAF's Theater Engineer Brigade, forming the core of Joint Task Force Trailblazer.

Responsibility for being the TEB was transferred to the Alaska-based brigade from their predecessors, Hawaii's 130th Engineer Brigade, during a ceremony here May 29, 2014.

At the ceremony the command team of 2^D Engineer Brigade, Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, uncased the brigade colors on a stage above scores of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines.

Following the colors portion of the ceremony, Andrysiak expressed his gratitude to the 130th Engineer Brigade team and thanked the generals in attendance for bringing the Arctic Trailblazers to the fight in Af-

ghanistan.

"I know there are a lot of hard decisions being made about what the right mix of units and capabilities are as you manage the drawdown," Andrysiak told the generals.

"My team and I are grateful for the opportunity you have afforded us to contribute to your missions here in Afghanistan. Thank

"Thank you for bringing us to the fight and allowing us to devote our solutioneering expertise towards meeting ISAF's strategic goals."

you for bringing us to the fight and allowing us to devote our solutioneering expertise towards meeting ISAF's strategic goals."

While in Afghanistan, JTF Trailblazer is assigned a complicated mission covering a wide range of engineer responsibilities. They will also be operating across a large portion of the country.

Their number-one priority is mentoring and developing the Afghan National Army's newly-formed National Engineer Brigade.

The task force is also responsible for managing construction, deconstruc-

tion, drilling wells to provide drinking water, demining and bridging operations.

Upon arriving in Afghanistan, they were also tasked with managing the large deconstruction effort on NATO's largest base in the region, Bagram Air Base.

This work will help prepare the installation for the next phase of ISAF's mission in the region.

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey N. Colt, the deputy commander, operations, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, referred to BAF as a "Frankenstein" which had been built piecemeal over the length of the war.

He then laid responsibility for making sense of it on Andrysiak and the Trailblazer team.

JTF Trailblazer will play a large part in the engineering

aspects necessary to meet President Obama's recently-stated goal of reducing America's military commitment in Afghanistan to 9,800 uniformed service members.

Since the TEB was not selected to continue operations past 2014 JTF Trailblazer will also be managing the drawdown of their own people and equipment.

As projects are completed they will be sending subordinate units and gear home before finally heading back themselves.

The 2^D Engineer Brigade is expected to return home to Alaska by the end of the year.

The brigade will inactivate shortly thereafter having written another chapter of service to our nation.



The command team of 2^D Engineer Brigade and Joint Task Force Trailblazer, Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, uncased the brigade colors during a transfer of authority ceremony May 29, 2014, on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.



The First Month Deployed

By **1st Lt. Amy Briggs**
17th Combat Sustainment
Support Battalion

The 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Headquarters has been in Afghanistan for one month managing the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element (CMRE) mission. This unique mission centers on recovery and retrograde operations vital to the materiel drawdown of U.S. forces in the region. The Soldiers of the 17th CSSB have encountered multiple experiences within the past 30 days, from visits of four star generals to boxing classes, but remain focused on mission success.

The transition of the headquarters to their overseas station began at the end of May when the Advanced Echelon (ADVON) departed Alaska for Afghanistan. Their responsibility was to establish con-

ditions to receive the main body of Soldiers. They found housing, prepped paperwork and unloaded previously shipped containers with individuals' belongings.

"We had a really strong and motivated team for ADVON," said Maj. John Short, the battalion executive officer, who led the advance team. "As ADVON, we wanted to make sure we provided the best reception possible for the arrival of the rest of the company. I think our team enjoyed working with each other and the camaraderie, but we were glad to see the others arrive since it meant we were one step closer to assuming the mission and making it our own."

When the main body arrived in mid-June they were able transfer

smoothly into their new surroundings thanks to the hard work of the ADVON. This easy adjustment helped the unit focus on their upcoming responsibilities.

The 17th CSSB conducted their transition of authority ceremony with the unit they replaced, the 1103rd CSSB, on 2 July, 2014. Like all military ceremonies, the participants were expected to uphold the honorable customs and

"The 17th CSSB is tasked with validating and properly disposing of excess equipment in theater."

traditions of the Army with each movement and command.

The attendants included the command team of 3rd Sustainment Command

(Expeditionary), Brig. Gen. Donnie Walker, Jr., and Command Sgt. Maj. Edward A. Bell, and the command team of 45th Sustainment Brigade, Col. Gregory G. Boyd, and Command Sgt. Maj. Dana S. Mason, Jr.

The 17th CSSB and 1103rd CSSB ceremony participants represented their units and the Army with great esteem as the transfer of authority was made official by the changing of the battalion colors.

With the Ready Lion flying proudly in the center of the color guard, the 17th CSSB officially took over four companies totaling 592



Soldiers, 227 Civilians and the significant CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element mission.

The 17th CSSB is tasked with validating and properly disposing of excess equipment in theater. The equipment will be shipped, destroyed, or given to Afghan allies.

So far, the 17th CSSB has processed thousands of pieces of machinery and automation by utilizing Forward Retrograde and Retro-sort Yard Teams.

These teams are sent to forward operating bases to inventory equipment and determine the fate of each piece. This process is a vital step in reducing the U.S. military footprint in Afghanistan.

"The CMRE mission is unique to logisticians," Cpt. Bart Lajoie, the Support Operations Officer in Charge, explained. "Normally we focus on sustaining other units, but in this situation we're concerned with drawing down

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The First Month Deployed

(Continued from page 4)

the amount of equipment. We have to utilize other assets in theater in order to complete our goal instead of rely on our own resources."

The CMRE mission is considered high visibility, meaning that many high ranking officials are watching its progress.

Within this first month of deployment, the 17th CSSB was visited by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko, Maj. Gen. Darrell K. Walker of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, and Gen. Paul J. Selva, Commander of the Air Mobility Command.

The distinguished visitors are interested in seeing the progress the 17th CSSB has made in decreasing the stock of excess equipment in Afghanistan and the timeline for when the mission will be complete.

"The boxing class not only helps build strength, but it's a great stress reliever too!"

They know that the future of our country's presence in the region depends upon how efficiently our provisions and personnel can be reduced.

Though the Soldiers of the 17th CSSB work tirelessly towards mission success, they still prioritize physical fitness and resiliency events.

Several female Soldiers have begun a boxing class, taught by 1st Lt. Rory Santos-Mitchell, a nationally

ranked boxer.

"The boxing class not only helps build strength, but it's a great stress reliever, too!" said Master Sgt. Felicia Boyd, the support operations noncommissioned officer in charge.

Besides personal fitness, there are multiple events that are held by the Morale Welfare and Recreation services that allow Soldiers to spend time with their peers.

Soldiers are able to participate in 5k/10k runs, volleyball games, and even

ping-pong tournaments. There are plenty of opportunities to maintain physical readiness while developing friendships.

The 17th CSSB has had a successful deployment so far and looks forward to the completion of the mission.

Though the Soldiers miss their loved ones in Alaska, they understand the significance of their work in Afghanistan and are proud to be a part of the force that is bringing this 13-year conflict to a successful close.





Unit Spotlight: 109th Transportation Company

The Muleskinners of 109th Transportation Company are a motor transportation unit that specializes in line haul operations.

"Line hauls are operations in which vehicles cannot make more than one round trip per day due to distance, terrain restrictions, or transit time" (ATP 4-11). 109th TC will also run local hauls that are operations that make more than one round trip per day.

Local hauls, unlike line hauls are intrazonal operations, meaning they take place within the boundaries of a specific transportation organization's area of operation.

The 109th TC synchro-



The command team of 109th Transportation Company, Cpt. William Lower and 1st Sgt. Richard Bullard, during a change of command ceremony held at the Naval Reserve Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 30, 2014.

nizes "all elements of the logistics system to deliver the right things to the right place at the right time to support the combatant commander" (ADRP 4-0).

The 109th TC has experienced a busy summer in its mission of sustaining the force. The season started with a change of command on May 30, 2014 as 109th TC said farewell to Cpt. Nicole Fredrick and welcomed the incoming commander, Cpt. William Lower.

In conjunction with the change of command, Polar Express missions have stepped up in frequency and load sizes as is typical in the summer months.

The Polar Express missions are line hauls that run weekly and last two to four days on average. Fort Wainwright is the usual destination but the company will occasionally travel to Fort Greely and Donnelly Training Area as well.

Loads vary from supply and sensitive items such as protective masks and ammunition to larger end items like trucks and Humvees. Polar Express missions are run using a method known as unit distribution.

This method includes the distribution of supplies, "by which the receiving unit is issued supplies in its own



Vehicles of 2nd Platoon, 109th Transportation Company, during a tactical stop in Talkeetna, Alaska, en route to Fort Wainwright during a line haul Polar Express mission.

area, with the transportation furnished by the issuing agency" (ATP 4-11), meaning that the 109th TC will load and transport the loads and the receiving unit will unload and take possession.

The key to success is the capability to move personnel and supplies quickly and efficiently across the area of operations. The 109th TC has completed successfully all 98 local and line haul missions that it has been tasked with since the unit's redeployment in February.

109th TC has had no significant safety accidents throughout these missions and has met every start time and end time given for each mission.

Soldiers and squads have followed brigade policies for physical readiness

training and have been better for it as squad-run PRT has allowed leaders the flexibility and time to focus on individual Soldiers and their growth.

109th TC squad leaders have adapted and designed their PRT planning in accordance with 3-22.20, master fitness training and modern athletics to create safe, realistic and productive workout sessions.

109th TC has also completed several other tasks such as personnel accountability inventories, company safety classes, combatives level one training and hosted an 88M branch briefing. Sending soldiers to company safety and combatives classes supported initiatives from higher echelons to help the war fighting effort.

In preparation for the

(Continued on page 7)

The Polar Express missions are line hauls that run weekly and last two to four days on average.

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Unit Spotlight: 109th Transportation Company

(Continued from page 6)

532nd Engineer Battalion 20k ruck march, platoons from within 109th TC will be training for the event by executing ruck marches on of various distances each Thursday until the event.

109th TC is currently fulfilling its mission set while moving its remaining fleet to the 793rd Military Police Battalion motor pool in support of the Army Force Restructuring process.

ARSTRUC is ongoing and expected to conclude before the month of August.

The transition has many moving parts with the occupying unit moving their containers, vehicles and other equipment out as 109th TC tries to fill in the gaps in an organized and practical layout.

The new motor pool will better serve the 109th TC's mission set and allow for increased supervision and guidance being located closer to company headquarters.

Looking to the future, 109th TC's line haul platoons will be conducting field training exercises in

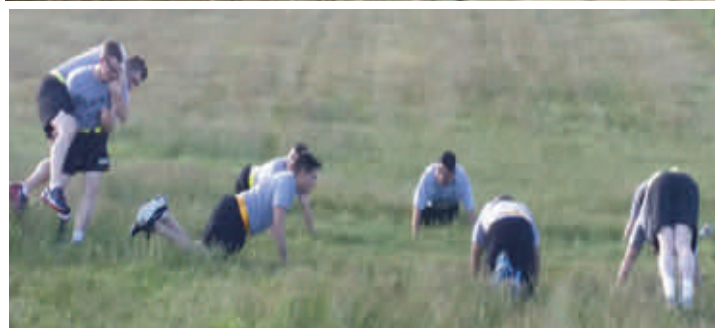
ARSTRUC is ongoing and expected to conclude before the month of August.

September as the unit looks toward an opportunity to go through the U.S. Army National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. in January 2015.

Weapon qualification ranges will also be held in August in preparation for the training rotation.

As other units deploy and train, the Muleskinners will be where they always are:

"OUT FRONT!"





17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Retrograde Logisticians in Afghanistan

By **Capt. Richard Packer**
2d Engineer Brigade PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers of the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, based 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion took the mission of the CENTCOM Material Recovery Element CSSB from the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of the Alabama National Guard during a transfer of authority ceremony July 1.

The CMRE mission focuses on the return of military equipment from the battlefield in Afghanistan back to the U.S. and American forces around the world.

The 17th CSSB will help sort, track and transport equipment as the logistical arm of CMRE.

Lt. Col. Brian Formy-Duval and Command Sgt. Maj. Jacqueline Williams, the command team of 17th

CSSB, uncased the unit colors.

This is the final step in a military tradition which recognizes the unit's move from home station to being operational on the battlefield.

"As we take over this historical mission called CMRE, we understand that we are one of many storied units who will write the last chapter of our nation's war against terrorism in Afghanistan," Formy-Duval told the audience.

"These next few months will be defining moments. How we depart Afghanistan will be the yardstick of how the war in Afghanistan will be measured for years to come."

"Do not let previous deployments guide your perceptions of the current operating environment," said Army Col. Gregory G. Boyd, the CMRE commander. "As you have already

"These next few months will be defining moments."



The command team of 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Lt. Col. Brian Formy-Duval and Command Sgt. Maj. Jacqueline Williams, uncased the battalion colors during a transfer of authority ceremony June 1, 2014, on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

seen in your short time here conditions change every day."

Boyd was referring to the complex challenges facing CMRE as they carry out the downsizing of IS-AF's footprint in Afghanistan.

The 17th CSSB will be helping to manage a steady, responsible draw-down of personnel and equipment as America prepares to transition from Operation Enduring Freedom to the next phase of our nation's commitment in the region, Resolute Support.

For many of the 17th CSSB Soldiers this is their first deployment. For others, deployment has become a way of life.

"This is my sixth deployment," said Staff Sgt.

Sean Ryan, a 17th CSSB platoon sergeant from Port Deposit, Md. "I volunteered to come with this unit to Afghanistan. I love being here and what I do."

After the ceremony and refreshments the 17th

CSSB's officers and senior noncommissioned officers received a brief from their commanding general, Brig. Gen. Donnie Walker of the 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command.

"You've uncased your colors. It's time to rock and roll. Get after this mission," Walker said after sharing his command philosophy. "You are empowered. Now go out there and execute violently."

The 17th CSSB is expected to return to their Families and friends in Alaska early next year.

"You are empowered. Now go out there and execute violently."

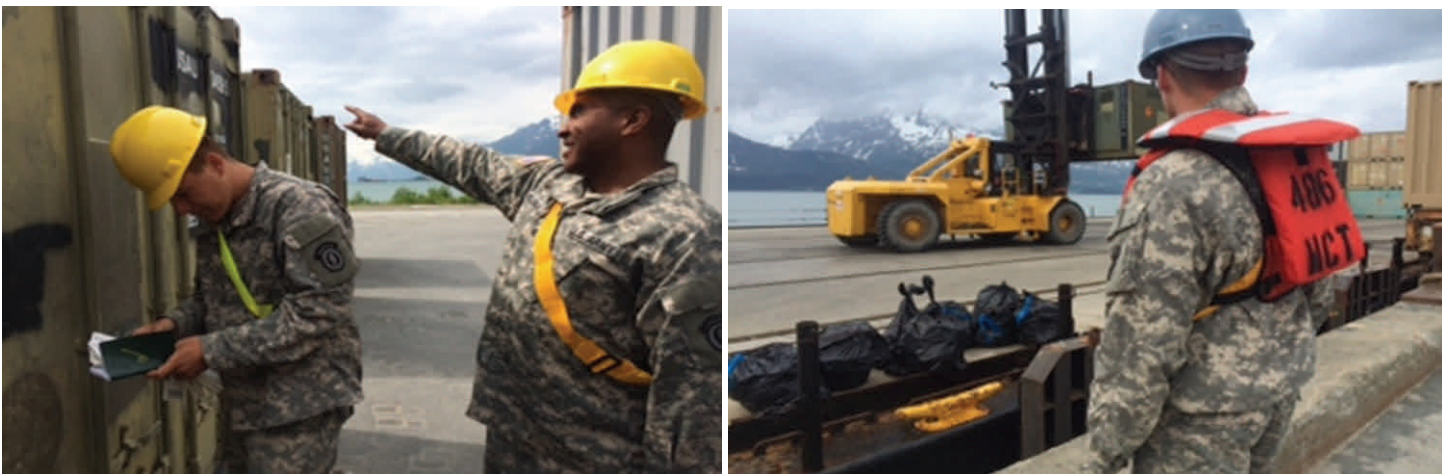




486th Movement Control Team



Joint Logistics Over the Shore (JLOTS)
Port of Anchorage, Alaska, February 22 - May 14, 2014.



Semi-annual Department of Defense Ammo Barge
Port of Valdez, Alaska, May 22 - 30, 2014.





Trailblazer Spotlight: Spc. Richard Thompson

by **Capt. Richard Packer**
2^D EN BDE Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— U.S. Army Spc. Richard Thompson is a technical engineer specialist assigned to the Survey and Design section of 2^D Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Trailblazer, and is currently deployed here from the unit's home station, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Thompson has been in the Army for three years. He was recently recognized as the Joint Task Force Trailblazer Soldier of the Quarter after appearing before a panel of senior noncommissioned officers to test his knowledge and mastery of topics including drill and ceremony, Army regulations and current world events.

"The competition was close. We have a lot of exceptional Soldiers," said 2^D

Engineer Brigade's Master Sgt. Gregory Workman, one of the board members. "But at the end of the day, there was one clear winner.

No matter how hard we pressured him, Specialist Thompson maintained his professionalism and answered our questions. He's an outstanding Soldier."

After outperforming his peers Thompson was recognized by the brigade commander, Col. Pete Andrysiak, with a commander's coin for his accomplishment during an awards ceremony.

"I like how it challenges me to do my best on a daily basis. The friends that I've made along the way are some of the best I've known through my life," said Thompson about the Army. "Also I enjoy the

traveling around the world and United States. In my short time I've been to South Korea, Afghanistan, Romania, Alabama, South Carolina, Texas and every airport in between."

The 23 years old Thompson was born and raised in St. Cloud, Minn. He graduated from St. Cloud Cathedral High School in 2009 and St. Cloud Technical and Community College 2011. His parents, Joseph and Joyce Thompson, have been married for nearly 30 years and still live in St. Cloud.

"I'd say the hardest thing is being away from family and friends and having them worry about you on a daily basis," Thompson said when asked about being deployed. "There's not much you can do about it besides just trying to stay in contact with them and

reassure them its ok."

With two years left to serve in the Army, Thompson has begun looking forward to what he wants to accomplish next.

"After the Army I can't wait to go back to school and get my degree and start my life as a civilian again. I plan to finish my degree in Land Surveying at St. Cloud State University," said Thompson.

"I feel that I can accomplish anything and nothing can hold me back."

Maybe I'll warm up my pitching arm again and try out for college team. I've had plenty of practice playing for one of the U.S. Army Alaska teams and I'm ready for the next big challenge," said a confident Thompson.

The 2^D Engineer Brigade deployed to Afghanistan in late May and is expected to return to Alaska near the end of the year.

"I like how it challenges me to do my best on a daily basis."

"Specialist Thompson maintained his professionalism and answered our questions. He's an outstanding Soldier."

"I feel that I can accomplish anything and nothing can hold me back."





Trailblazer Spotlight: Spc. Jeremy Berglund

by **Capt. Richard Packer**
2^D EN BDE Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— U.S. Army Spc. Jeremy Berglund is a geospatial engineer assigned to the intelligence section of 2^D Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Trailblazer, and is currently deployed here from the unit's home station, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Berglund has been in the Army for three years. A sentimental patriot, he chose to reenlist on Independence Day.

The 2^D Engineer Brigade's intelligence officer, Maj. Chris Collins, administered the oath of enlistment during a ceremony held outside the airfield flight line.

Both participants had to yell the oath to be heard over the thunder of helicopters.

"Specialist Berglund is an outstanding Soldier, and

it's an honor to re-enlist him today," said Collins.

Berglund was recognized for his positive attitude, dedication to the section and unit, and for his skills as a geospatial engineer.

Collins added, "In a field where retention and advancement are becoming more difficult, it's good to see someone of Specialist Berglund's talent and

skill choose to re-enlist."

Enlisted Soldiers complete basic combat training prior to advanced individual training

for one of the more than 200 different Army specialties.

New recruits pick the job they'll be trained in when they first enlist in the Army.

"I analyze terrain and display it so the commander and his staff have a better understanding of the terrain and its effects

in the operational environment," said Berglund when asked about his job and what he enjoys about the Army.

"I like the structure. Most of all I like the feeling of being a part of the team as well as feeling like I contribute to that team. I've never felt more appreciated as I have in the Army working as a geospatial engineer. I know what I do matters."

For many serving in uniform it is easy to focus on the negative aspects of the military drawdown.

"I think it is important to remember that we are still retaining, promoting and developing the best Soldiers in the world," said Col. Pete Andrysiak, commander of 2^D Engineer Brigade and JTF Trailblazer.

"Specialist Berglund's reenlistment and performance proves his value to this command and our Army."

Berglund's goals are to finish his degree in geospatial information systems and become a geospatial engineer technician warrant officer.

"In my opinion I am the luckiest Soldier in the world. I'm thankful to be in this unit. I'm lucky to have the friends I've made in the Army and the leadership I've had," said Berglund.

"I am also lucky that I have the wife that I do. Bottom line, I'm a pretty lucky guy."

Berglund is from Parker, Colo., just south of Denver.

He and his wife Sam have two dogs and hope to have children someday. He wants boys but she says they must have at least one girl.

The 2^D Engineer Brigade deployed to Afghanistan in late May and is expected to return to Alaska near the end of the year.

"...it's good to see someone of Specialist Berglund's talent and skill choose to reenlist."

"In my opinion I am the luckiest Soldier in the world."





Headquarters, 2^D Engineer Brigade



By **Capt. Edward Major**
Commander, HHC, 2^D Engineer Brigade

As the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) for 2^D Engineer Brigade, JTF TRAILBLAZER, we are providing Mission Command to the many disparate parts of the Theater Engineer Brigade (TEB) to keep them coordinated and moving in the right direction together.

The HHC Operations section is the Base Operations Support – Integrator (BOS-I) for the TEB units at Bagram Airfield (BAF.)

We coordinate for and oversee the arrival and departure of 11 different units, totaling over 1000 personnel, ensuring that their life support was in place and that units were prepared to receive them.

We also ensure that required reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) is set up, to prepare the incoming units for operations in Afghanistan.

Additionally, as the BOS-I for JTF TRAILBLAZER, we are responsible for a good deal of land on BAF. We oversee 19 separate parcels, totaling 107 acres

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Headquarters, 2^D Engineer Brigade

(Continued from page 12)

or ten percent of the entire BAF footprint.

Our second major focus is working with the Afghan National Army's National Engineer Brigade (NEB) to prepare them to stand on their own and provide engineering expertise to their country. Each of the staff sections in HHC is spending time with their counterparts in the NEB to train and help develop them.

These leader relationships will allow the Afghans to train the rest of their soldiers and grow as a professional army. Our face-to-face interactions are at an Afghan base and allow us to work with them in their own spaces and check on how they are progressing.

It is incredible to cross the cultural divide and teach through an interpreter in a different language to such a different society.

In many ways, it has brought out our differences but also our similarities. The bond of Soldiers, even of different languages, different cultures, and different upbringings, is a strong one. We rely on and strengthen this bond to strengthen our allies.

Within the headquarters, HHC's

job is to enable each staff section to serve the commander and our subordinate units. We ensure that the staff is able to do its job free of distractions and does not have to think about administrative ankle-biters that crop up to steal time.

Fortunately, we have a superior team that has grown in teamwork and abilities to care for the needs of the commander and the staff.

I am moving on to take command of another JBER Engineer unit: 23rd Engineer Company (Sapper). I am incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to work with such great Soldiers. My own HHC Operations section has been such a blessing and has helped me grow and develop as a leader.

Additionally, I am thankful to have had such great supporters across the staff. It has been a joy to work together. I leave you in the very capable hands of our new Executive Officer, 1LT Chris Jacobs, and unmatched first sergeant, 1SG William Shoaf. They will be a great team that will prepare the ground for my eventual replacement, CPT Kathryn Hermon, who will arrive in September.

Godspeed and good hunting to all!





6th Engineer Battalion

Follow the 6th EN BN on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/pages/6th-Engineer-Battalion-CombatAirborne-Arctic-Sappers/133069323381604



The winds of change have come to the 6th Engineer Battalion in the past few months.

We bid a fond farewell to LTC William Conde after a long, successful command of the 6th EN BN and welcomed LTC George Walter as the new Sapper 6.

The Army Restructuring Process (ARSTRUC) has also become a major part of daily operations for the 6th EN BN. All units in the battalion have worked tirelessly to successfully complete the ARSTRUC Mission.

The companies have transferred thousands of pieces of equipment to other units or turned it in for demilitarization. This is critical to the over-all restructuring of the US Army.

In addition to equipment losses, the units have faced a mass exodus of personnel due to ARSTRUC as well.

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6th Engineer Battalion

Follow the 6th EN BN on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/pages/6th-Engineer-Battalion-CombatAirborne-Arctic-Sappers/133069323381604



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Hundreds of Soldiers have PCS'd, ETS'd, and changed units in the past few months.

These personnel moves are the prelude to the complete inactivation of 56th EN CO (VERT), 84th ESC, and 240th EN DET over the next few months.

These major changes conclude with the transition of 6th EN BN to 4/25 where they will become the 6th BEB in FY15. These changes are only part of the 6th EN BN mission.

The 23rd Sapper CO continues to complete its mission in Afghanistan; meanwhile, the BN continues to support their families here in Alaska. The Arctic Sapper team will continue to strive for excellence in all its missions.

The changes will continue and the battalion will adapt and over-come all of the obstacles in its way.



Clear The Line!





Headquarters, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Follow the 17th CSSB on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/17thCSSB>



It's great to be in Afghanistan commanding such a great battalion.

As we continue this historical mission called CMRE, we understand that we are one of many storied units who will write the last chapter of our nation's war against terrorism in Afghanistan.



These next few months will be defining moments. How we depart Afghanistan will be the yardstick of how the war in Afghanistan will be measured for years to come.

This past month, a lot of our units conducted their combat patching ceremony. When Soldiers typically walk past each other, first they look for the other Soldier's rank and then their eyes gravitate towards the right sleeve in search of a combat patch.

When I first came in the Army, Desert Storm had just ended and I became aware of this phenomena and the importance of the combat patch. Soldiers proudly wear them on their uniform like a badge of honor.

These patches identify which combat unit they have been assigned to. The combat patch signifies their unit's active participation in combat operations against hostile

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July NCO of the Month for HHC, 17th CSSB
CPL Michelle Partin



July Soldier of the Month for HHC, 17th CSSB
SPC Rachel Hennessy



Headquarters, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Follow the 17th CSSB on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/17thCSSB>

(Continued from page 16)

forces in which they have been exposed to the threat of enemy action or fire, either directly or indirectly.

This month many Soldiers had the opportunity to continue the longstanding tradition and received their combat patch. This is an opportunity for them to be lifelong teammates as they are awarded a combat patch.

By volunteering to serve in our nation's Army and deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, they have now earned a lifetime membership in this unique club. I ask every one of you to wear your combat patch on your right sleeve with pride.

I want to say a big thank you to our FRGs. You are a big part of our mission success and we appreciate everything you are doing for our Soldiers.

I am really proud of each and every Always Ready Soldier and your accomplishments. It's an honor to be part of this memorable time and I appreciate your hard work.

It is now our turn, our duty, to take our place in the line of history. Always Ready.

- Lt. Col. Brian Formy-Duval





532nd Engineer Battalion (Provisional)



532nd Engineer Battalion (Provisional) Commandos, Family, and Friends,

The 532nd ENG BN (PROV) was established as a Rear Detachment for 2^D EN BDE which is currently deployed to Afghanistan.

Our primary role is to administratively support companies formerly assigned to 17th Combat Service Support Battalion (CSSSB) who are also deployed to Afghanistan.

Our mission focuses primarily on support roles such as transportation, ordnance, and maintenance.

We have five units located on JBER and three on Fort Wainwright (FWA).

Of the units assigned to the 532nd ENG BN (PROV) the 98th Maintenance Company (SMC), 109th Transportation Company (TC), 486th Movement Control Team (MCT), 205th Ordnance De-

tachment (OD), and Headquarters/Headquarters Company (HHC) are located in JBER; and the 539th TC, 9th Army Band, and C-1/25 Finance are located in FWA.

Our mission set is as complex as the units that are assigned to us.

We conduct maintenance support for all USARAK units, perform convoys to and from FWA with necessary equipment and supplies, man the Ammo Supply Point for JBER, operate the Gold Rush Inn Dining Facility and conduct Band Performances at various community events.

Our objective is to set-up other Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) for success.

Over the last quarter we set the conditions for the 2^D ENG BDE and 17th CSSB HQs to deploy and provide Mission Command for their subordinate units.

I am pleased to announce that their deployment has gone

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532nd Engineer Battalion (Provisional)

(Continued from page 18)

smoothly and safely. We are in routine contact with the 2^D EN BDE and 17th CSSB; both are doing well and fully engaged in their mission to support the citizens of Afghanistan.

Over the next several months the 532nd ENG BN (PROV) will shift to an increase in field training. Several of our Companies will head off to a Combat Training Center Rotation in order to partner with and train alongside a maneuver BCT.

You can expect longer days and some time away from home as we enter this intensive train up period.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of our families for the many silent sacrifices they make every day.

Your support to the Soldiers and to the units is truly appreciated. We are looking for more volunteers to support our FRGs if you are interested in assisting in any

capacity please do not hesitate to contact me or one of the commanders.

Lastly, we are entering the period where the weather in Alaska will change rapidly. I encourage all of you to make the necessary preparations to ensure you and your loved ones are safe as you explore Alaska.

By all means take the time to get outdoors and experience all Alaska has to offer, but have a plan that lets people know where you will be, when you will return, and plan for those unexpected encounters with Alaska's wildlife

Again, to the Commando's and Families, on behalf of the leaders in our Army, and especially Pikwan and I we send a sincere thank you for all of your sacrifices, as well as your continued support. Be Safe.

Sincerely,

"Commando 6"





793rd Military Police Battalion

Follow the 793rd MP BN on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/793rd>



Spartans, Family, and Friends, We are in the final stages of inactivating the BN. CSM Lynch and I could not be more proud of the professionalism, dedication, and energy all have displayed in executing the tasks to support this inactivation.



To date, the 793rd MP BN has moved more than 8,000 pieces of property and are on glide path to meet the DA suspense of 15 SEP 14.

More than 300 Soldiers and their Families have PCS'd in the past several months and an additional 200 will PCS in the next sixty days.

Throughout all of my interaction with Soldiers and Families, the feedback has been positive that the process is going smoothly and that our SPARTANS have been receiving tre-

mendous support for the Garrisons.

Additionally, the 793rd MP BN successfully conducted a 793rd MP BN Sports day to commemorate our 72 year history, in particular conducting a 1946 Army Physical Fitness Test.

We successfully conducted a 793rd MP BN Organization Day, both at JBER and FWA, to come together in fellowship, recognized our outstanding Volunteers, and to say our farewells one last time.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pass on my congratulations for continued excellence:

545th MP CO for winning the Anchorage Alaska HERO Games.

CW2 Cruz, 793rd MP HDD, for winning the Department of the Army Supply Excellence Award as Property Book Officer of the year.

(Continued on page 21)





793rd Military Police Battalion

Follow the 793rd MP BN on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/793rd>

(Continued from page 20)

SPC Hightower and 1LT Sullivan for taking first place in the 793rd MP BN 1946 Army Physical Fitness Competition.

The next few weeks will continue to be a whirlwind of activity.

We will transfer the 545th MP Det. to the 4/25 IBCT and the 28th MP Det. to the 1/25 SBCT by the end of July.

We will continue to transfer property at the accelerated pace while simultaneously, PCSing Soldiers and Families out of Alaska.

I ask that you stay in touch with you Chain of Command and FRG Leaders. We want to know how you are doing and if you need any assistance from the BN or Garrison to make this as smooth as possible.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of our Families for the efforts they have made to support the Soldiers and to the units

during this challenging time; your support and dedication is truly appreciated.

Lastly, to all Soldiers. Family members, both past and present, you are all invited to the 793rd MP BN Casing Ceremony which will be held on 28 August at 1300 in Buckner Gym JBER, AK.

Spartans, on behalf of our Senior Leaders, and especially Pikkwan and I, we send a sincere thank you for all of your sacrifices and for the 793rd MP BN's years of faithful service to our nation. I thank each of you.

As the last Spartan 6, it has been my Honor and Privilege to Serve and Soldier with you. This has been the highlight of my career. Thanks for all that you have done and continue to do.

Once a Spartan, Always a Spartan!

Sincerely,

"SPARTAN 6"





Run to Home Base 10k

By **1st Lt. Amy Briggs**
17th Combat Sustainment
Support Battalion

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Soldiers from the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Headquarters participated in the Run to Home Base 10K here July 18.

Among them was 1st Lt. Justina Sisler, the Battalion S-4 Officer in Charge, who took second place in the female category.

Sisler said she first ran competitively during her high school years as part of the cross-country and track teams.

It's an activity she has been competing in for the last 10 years.

In March 2009, she ran the Bataan Death March

Memorial Marathon in the military light division and finished third place in the female category, completing the 26.2 mile race in just five hours.

In October 2013, Sisler was the first female to cross the finish line at 67 minutes in the U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) 10-Miler at Joint

Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

She was then chosen to be a member of the USARAK Army 10-Miler team that competed in Washington, D.C.

Sisler stated she was two minutes shy of meeting the time requirement for the official All Army Women's Cross Country Team.

She said her goal this year is to compete in the Bagram Airfield Shadow

"My favorite race that I've run so far is the Spartan Race."



Run for the Army 10-Miler and finish it in less than 65 minutes so she can qualify for the All Army Women's Cross Country Team.

"My favorite race that I've ran so far is the Spartan Race," said Sisler. "It was a 10-mile course full of challenging obstacles."

Sisler enjoyed the added challenge climbing up walls of mud and jumping over fire pits to the normal cadence of a race.

Instead of solely focusing on her breathing and stride, she said she used creativity and critical thinking to traverse the various obstacles, which heightened the excitement of the competi-

tion.

After the Run to Home Base 10K, Sisler's motivation for running has been intensified.

"Don't hold back and know where the finish line is," said Sisler, "or someone can beat you in the last 200 meters."

Sisler was referencing another female runner who beat her in the last few seconds of the Run to Home Base 10K.

She said she is now, more than ever, determined to participate in every race at Bagram Airfield in order to improve her time and take on her competitors again.

"Don't hold back and know where the finish line is.."





Chaplain's Rhapsody

"Causes and Cures for Discouragement and Burnout"

By Maj. Ernest Ibanga
2^D Engineer Brigade



Burnout is one of the contemporary problems in the Army. The study of the life of Prophet Elijah in the Old Testament Scriptures has provided us with a profound insight into the causes and cure for discouragement and burnout.

In 1 Kings Chapter 18 and 19, Elijah was called by God to draw a decisive issue in Israel, to help Israel turn a corner, to forsake syncretism, and return to worship Yahweh alone.

One of the most invincible personalities of all the Old Testament prophets is Elijah. From this passage, it was Elijah who challenged the worshippers of Baal to a showdown at the

top of Mount Carmel. Each was to build an altar to his own God, and then each was to pray to his own God to supernaturally send down fire from heaven to burn down the sacrifice at the altar.

It is a dramatic story in which God physically displayed His mighty power to the people. And immediately following that event, Elijah faced another situation one seemingly insignificant in comparison, but it sent him running in fear. Elijah was discouraged, he was burnout.

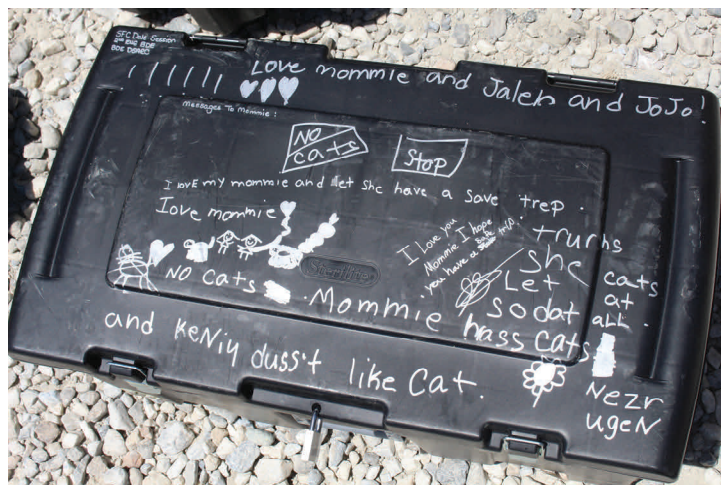
Discouragement is a tantrum of the emotion objecting to what we or God or other people have done in circumstances of life.

It is a way of judging life on our own and saying, I will pay for this myself. Or, God, I can run this universe better than you.

Discouragement is that negative mood that comes and overwhelms our emotions when things have not gone our way. When the appointment which we had

anticipated from God is not met according to our standards, our timetable, and our criteria, and we

The deployment tough-box of Sgt. 1st Class Lakisha Dale-Session. Families can be an amazing source of strength to a Soldier.



are drained of the courage we have, we become burnout.

Last year, I helped several Soldiers overcome this problem. One of them told me of an experience of being burnout. As a leader, she has taken full responsibility of the future of the brigade on her own

heart, she worked harder than anyone else, she forgot about rest and nutrition, she neglected recreation, and basic relationships of her life.

She felt that she was the only one who took any responsibility, the only one who really cared about anything, and the only one whom God could use.

Eventually, she became drained; her prayers

become shallow, and finally she falls into the pit of discouragement and burnout. She came to me for help.

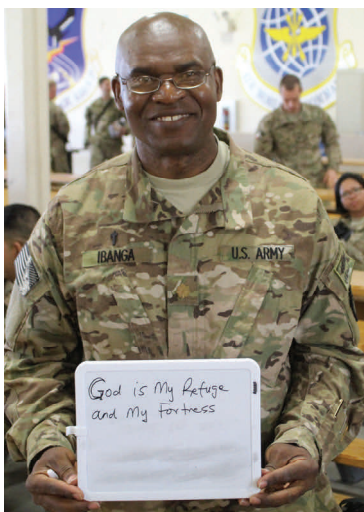
We talked about the changes she needed to make in her lifestyle. I advised her to live by the energy of God. Rather than working for God, to let God work through her; to practice relaxation and relinquishments; to be more forgiving and less of a perfectionist.

I was able to not only use the story of the life of Elijah to counsel her, but also sponsored her on a weekend retreat where she came back with a

"Burnout is one of the contemporary problems in the Army"

"I advised her to live by the energy of God."

"Discouragement is that negative mood that comes and overwhelms our emotions..."



Contact the Chaplain

ERNEST.M.IBANGA.MIL@MAIL.MIL

907-384-0620



2^D Engineer Special Brigade History Challenge!

ACROSS

- 2. First commander of 2ESB
- 6. Birthplace of 2ESB
- 10. LC
- 12. Original name of 2ESB
- 13. First unit motto

DOWN

- 1. LCV = Landing Craft _____
- 3. California fort where 2ESB trained
- 4. First 2ESB Soldier to earn the Soldier's Medal
- 5. LCP(R) Landing Craft _____ (____)
- 7. Number of Presidential Unit Citations earned by 2ESB
- 8. LCM = Landing Craft _____
- 9. Cape Cod _____ (first nickname of 2ESB Soldiers)
- 11. LCT = Landing Craft _____

All answers can be found at 2esb.org and
http://2esb.org/04_History/Book/Chapter_01.htm

*The first person from each
battalion to submit the
correct answers to
ArcticTrailblazers@yahoo.com
will win a prize!*

About this Photo: A 2^D Engineer Special Brigade landing craft carrying Soldiers ready to hit the beach during World War II.

There's help when you need it...

Crisis Intervention Hotline

Warriors: Need someone to talk to, or have a buddy here who needs help?

The Crisis Intervention Hotline is available 24/7.

If you need to talk to a counselor, you can reach them at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

You can also receive immediate help by calling (907) 563-3200.

Remember, you're not alone!

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs