



Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson

The 43rd Sustainment Brigade make their way to the flight line as the sun rises during the first leg of their trip to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

From Carson to Kandahar

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Khori Johnson

In the early hours of February 9th, the 43rd Sustainment Brigade stood in the Special Events Center of Fort Carson, Colo., saying their tearful goodbyes to family and friends as they boarded buses on the first leg of their journey to the Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and continue the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element mission.

In addition to the 43rd SB, now known as the 43rd SB CMRE, bidding farewell to their Families weeks prior, they once again had to say farewell but to their brothers in arms, the 593rd Sustainment Brigade, during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony

held at KAF's Fest Tent, March 3, 2013.

The 593rd SB CMRE, appropriately nicknamed the "Trailblazers," were the first to take on the recovery mission in Kandahar and pave the way for the Rough Riders.

"[We] entered into theater at less than 50 percent manning, 50 percent equipment, on short notice, with no culminating training event, no pre-deployment site survey, and no benefit of a relief in place or placed framework. Nine months later we have truly blazed a trail and set the conditions for all current and future CMRE operations to follow," said Col. Douglas McBride, Jr., 593rd SB CMRE commander.

Since Coalition Forces' initial offensive against the actions of the Taliban terrorist

"TOA" continued on page 5



Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson

Capt. Daniel King and 1st Sgt. Alfred Johnson stand strong as they wait to uncase the company colors.

43RD SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

43rd Sustainment Brigade Commanding Officer

Col. Todd Heussner

43rd Sustainment Brigade Senior Enlisted Advisor

Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Traylor

43rd Sustainment Brigade Deputy Commanding Officer

Lt. Col. Todd Fish



43rd Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Noncommissioned Officer

Sgt. Khori Johnson

The Rough Rider is produced in the interest of the Soldiers of the 43rd Sustainment Brigade, CMRE and its subordinate units. The Rough Rider is an Army-funded newsletter authorized under provision of AR 360-1.

Contents of The Rough Rider are not necessarily the views of, nor endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 1st TSC. All editorial content of the Rough Rider is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 43rd Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office.

IN THIS ISSUE



5



8



10



11



12



13



14

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE 43RD SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE. LIKE THE UNIT FACEBOOK PAGE.

FACEBOOK.COM/43DSB





THE COMMANDER'S DESK



It is hard to believe that we have been deployed for two months already. While the time seems short the team has already accomplished amazing things at home and in Afghanistan. When we arrived, two Engineer Battalions joined our task force to round out our team. The entire team is spread across the depth and breadth of Afghanistan working to clear the battlefield of supplies and equipment while our engineer brothers tear down and restore the land where we set up operations for the past 11 years. This is no small task and requires the entire team to perform their functions with skill and professionalism if we are to complete our mission on time.

The 92nd Engineer Battalion from Fort Stewart, Ga. and the 864th Engineer Battalion from Fort Lewis, Wash. the "Black Diamonds," commanded by Lt. Col. Ken Boggs and Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Lonning, are already digging in as they de-construct bases as we reduce the number of Soldiers in Southern Afghanistan.

The 864th Eng. Bn. is operating in the northern half of Afghanistan and is doing amazing things as they support the 101st in their efforts to reduce the numbers of bases that we operate from. The "Pacemakers" are already busy deconstructing four bases as we speak.

The 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Jeremy Lewis and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Ashley, has improved their operations and processes to the point that they have smashed every record set by their predecessors and have already begun building more capacity to accommodate an anticipated increase in the workload. When we arrived, there was a mountain of supplies and equipment waiting to be processed. The mountain was built over a period of a year. In less than four months, the "War Wagon" team will have the pile reduced to nothing. Never content to rest on their laurels, the hard-charging Soldiers of the "Wheels of Destruction" team are simultaneously building new yards, gaining efficiency and moving resources to ensure everyone is fully utilized to accomplish our mission.

The brigade headquarters has also hit the ground running as they work to understand where the workload is located, align resources with the workload, and then establish systems and processes to ensure that we can see the impact of our efforts on the battlefield.

The "Make It Happen" team in the Joint Retrograde Operations Center or JROC, the support operations section, and the Headquarters and Headquarters Company command team are all working in concert to enable our teammates out on the battlefield to accelerate the base closure process. We have already made a sudden and lasting impact on the pace of operations, the scope of our attack and the establishment of capacity as the base closure process accelerates bodes well for our ability to exceed all expectations.

Nine months is a long time, but we have much to do as we work to close down an entire theater of war. With two months gone and only seven to go, we've got a long way to go and a short time to get there. We have the team, we have the ability, and we definitely have the energy.

While we're taking care of the mission, I have seen a number of pictures from events and gatherings that tell me the home team is also taking care of one another. I couldn't be more proud of you all and what you are doing to make sure our families truly understand what it means to be part of a great team. Your contributions are just as important as our work in Afghanistan. The fact that you are taking care of each other at home frees us up to concentrate on our duties here. It takes an entire team to make the mission happen. We couldn't do it without you and we're proud of all you are doing to take care of one another

Every day is an opportunity to "Make It Happen!"

Warmest Regards,

Todd A. Heussner
Col. Todd A. Heussner



Col. Todd Heussner
43rd Sustainment Brigade Commander



At Ease...

First, let me introduce myself, I am the Brigade Command Sergeant Major and I've been on board since August 2012, coming from Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I haven't met most of you, because I've been gone four of my first six months assigned to this unit in preparation for the deployment. As Col. Heussner said in his comments, "it's hard to believe we've been deployed two months already." However, my wife Karen, my son Zach and I are glad to be part of the "Rough Rider" Family and look forward to the great opportunity to serve with you.

Being part of a large, joint organization during a deployment is a unique opportunity that some Soldiers never experience in their career. It will be a great opportunity for most of us to work side-by-side with our sister-service teammates and learn some of the service-cultural differences, as well as, similarities.

We've had Soldiers "Making It Happen" on a daily basis across the country, but there are a couple of standouts I would like to mention.

First, Sgt. Cynthia Landin, from the 289th Quartermaster Company, Fort Hood, Texas, serves in the 68th Combat Service Support Battalion. This noncommissioned officer is in charge of the Retro Sort Yard in Kandahar Airfield. In her first 90 days, she has already briefed some of the Army's most senior leadership at the three and four-star level, the Sergeant Major of the Army, as well as some of our Department of Defense officials, with exemplary results. She's received over 20 Coins of Excellence for her professionalism while briefing and touring these dignitaries.

Also, we conducted the 43rd Sustainment Brigade CMRE NCO and Soldier of the Year Boards and are proud to announce Sgt. Ryan Swanson and Spc. Jacob Valderrama, both from the 864th Engineer Battalion, Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Wash., are the NCO and Soldier of the Year, respectively. They will go on to compete at the 1st Theater Sustainment Command in the next couple of weeks for a chance to advance to U.S. Central Command and Department of the Army level boards. Congratulations, Warriors!

Bottom line, our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and civilian team members are working very hard together toward our mission of clearing the battlefield of all the supplies and equipment that has accumulated over the last decade by the timeline agreed upon by the two national leaders. They're focused, diligent, and forward thinking, all in the effort to return home to their Families, loved ones and friends. We appreciate your support of your service member and realize the sacrifices that you make every day.



Command Sgt. Major Anthony Traylor
43rd Sustainment Brigade Senior Enlisted Advisor

Rough Rider 7
Respectfully,

Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony A. Traylor



Walking to Afghanistan

Story by
1st Lt. Elizabeth Lewis

Sweat pouring down faces and heart beats racing, brightly colored signs and smiling faces, children running around with dogs following closely behind, hugs, smiles, and laughter being heard from far away are all too common at the “Walk to Afghanistan” events hosted by the 864th Engineer Battalion Family Readiness Group.

The Walk to Afghanistan is a friendly competition between each company within the 864th Engineer Battalion to see which company can earn the most miles before the battalion reaches its total goal of 14,000 miles in support of the 864th Eng. Bn. Soldiers who are currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in the Paktika Province of Afghanistan.

Miles are earned through multiple methods to include walking, jogging, running, biking, hiking, swimming, and even stroller pushing.

“The Walk to Afghanistan is a great way for us to keep motivated, have some competition between companies, and provide a healthy way for our Families to deal with the stress of deployment,” said Amy Henderson, senior advisor to the battalion Family Readiness Group.

Logging miles is not limited to those living in the Joint Base Lewis McChord area, home station to the 864th Engineer Battalion. In fact, anyone can participate



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Elizabeth Lewis

The Uniformed Services Organization serves food and drinks for the “Walk to Afghanistan” St. Patrick’s Day Event.

in the walk, regardless of where they are living. Submissions for logging miles are coordinated through the “Walk to Afghanistan” Facebook page and the Soldier’s FRG leader. Participants simply message the Facebook page or the Soldier’s FRG leader to submit the number of miles they wish to log.

Miles are being logged from participants in all corners of the United States in various manners. Loved ones are running in different races from Clarkesville, Ga. to Joint Base Lewis McChord, to Waynesville,

Mo. The Magna Vista Girls Track Team from Henry County, Va. log miles at each of their practices. One supporter even braved the bitter cold to run a Half Fast 10K near St. Paul, Minn., even though the temperature at the start of the race was a balmy three degrees Fahrenheit.

“We have a whole lot of love for our Soldiers. We are getting a tremendous amount of support from family and friends all over the U.S.,” says Mrs. Henderson. “So often we hear family members ask ‘what

“FRG” continued on page 7

TOA: Rough Riders take on the CMRE mission

Continued from page 1

group, a substantial amount of infrastructure and materiel has been accumulated within Afghanistan over the last decade. As Coalition Forces continue its responsible drawdown in country, the Rough Riders will continue in the recovery mission and strategically and fiscally recover foreign assets within Afghanistan.

The Transfer of Authority ceremony signified the Rough Rider’s taking on the lead role in the CMRE mission in Afghanistan. Having been provided with a seamless transition and sturdy foothold by the Trailblazers, the Rough Riders intend on not only accomplishing their set goals within the recovery mission but taking the mission to the next level.

“We have great leaders and we have great Soldiers who have prepared hard, are creative problem-solvers, and are ready to attack this problem,” said Col. Todd Heussner, 43rd SB CMRE commander. “We will make tremendous progress, leave this area better than we found it, and make sure that the folks that follow us will be in a great position to finish this up.”

“The trail has been blazed and the conditions have been set for the 43rd Sustainment Brigade to build upon the foundation and successes of the first nine months and take it to the next level of excellence,” said McBride. “The Army could not have picked a better command team or unit to come in behind my Trailblazers.”



Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson

Col. Todd Heussner and Command Sgt. Maj. Traylor salute the United States flag during the national anthem.

CHAPLAIN'S PERSPECTIVE

Greetings Rough Rider Family! This is the first newsletter for our deployment and at the time of this writing, we have been deployed now for over six weeks. I can tell you that our team, which is made up of U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Special Operations Forces servicemembers, is doing well and truly "Making It Happen!" Our teammates are exceptional at what they do and who they are. We are a blessed organization to have them in our formation.

As we look at this deployment to Afghanistan, it is important that we take a close look at ourselves and ask the question, "Who do I want to be when this deployment is over?" In other words, what are you doing to improve yourself over the course of the next several months? For me, I want to be the best chaplain I can be, enhance my physical fitness, stay deeply connected to my family, and grow deeper in my personal faith with God. I've set these goals so I have something to aim for rather than just living through this deployment day by day. I am reminded of the great quote that says "Don't count your days but make your days count!"

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

-Matthew 6:34 (NIV)

I want to challenge each of you to make your days count. Choose to live life to its fullest and focus on strengthening areas of your life you want to improve on. Life was meant to be enjoyed to its fullest, not just endured. As it says in the Gospel, God came "that we may have life, and have it in its fullest." May God richly bless you and your family this day!



Maj. Peter Keough
43rd Sustainment Brigade Chaplain

SEXUAL ASSAULT

IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE THAT
HAS NO PLACE IN THE ARMY.

IT DEGRADES MISSION
READINESS BY DEVASTATING

THE ARMY'S ABILITY TO
WORK EFFECTIVELY AS A

TEAM.





Infographic by Sgt. Khori Johnson

As the 864th Eng. FRG progresses through each "Walk to Afghanistan" event, the inch closer and closer to their goal of reaching 14,000 miles.

FRG: Showing support for servicemen and women

Continued from page 5

can we do?" Soldiers always appreciate mail, but giving our Soldier's support and encouragement is just as important. Many of our families are posting pictures of the Soldier they are running or walking for. How great to know a whole community, a track team, grandparents, parents, are all walking and logging their miles to support our great Soldiers."

The FRG leaders have hosted two successful events since the "Walk to Afghanistan" group was founded in the beginning of February, the same time the battalion deployed to Afghanistan.

The first event, which took place on Feb. 17th, was entitled "Walk to Afghanistan-Kickoff Event." Many families showed up with signs in one hand and dog leashes in the other hand. At the end of the event, a total of 201 miles were logged.

The second event took place on March 17th to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. A week

prior to the event and four weeks after the kickoff event, the "Walk to Afghanistan" had a total number of 3,367.61 miles logged towards the goal of 14,000 miles.

After the success of the St. Patrick's Day event, the total was raised to 6,675.41 miles. The spirit of St. Patrick's Day was beaming out of the participants as many of them arrived clothed in green clothing with shamrocks sprouting from every article.

The United Service Organization supported the "Walk to Afghanistan" on March 17th by providing grilled food and water for each participant.

"The USO is truly amazing and so supportive of our Soldiers and families," said Mrs. Henderson of the United Service Organization's support.

The 864th Engineer Battalion Soldier's family and friends have truly shown their support and love for their Soldiers. As of March 25th, the "Walk to Afghanistan" has logged a total number of 10,765.8 miles.

The next event, entitled "Spring Fling Walk to Afghanistan," will take place on April 13th at the 864th Engineer Battalion work area. For more information on how to participate in the event or how to participate in the "Walk to Afghanistan" group, check out the "Pacemakers-Walk to Afghanistan" Facebook page.



Photo courtesy of 1st Lt. Elizabeth Lewis
Families and loved ones of the Pacemaker Battalion show off their signs and festive apparel for the St. Patrick's Day event.

THE
ROUGH RIDERS
NEED YOU TO STAY IN THE FIGHT
REENLIST TODAY

War Wagon ready for retrograde mission

Story and Photos by
Spc. Kelun Babauta

After Lt. Col. Michelle Letcher and Command Sgt. Maj. Ian Griffin slowly rolled up and cased their battalion colors, Lt. Col. Jeremy Lewis and Command Sgt. Major Kenneth Ashley uncased and unrolled their battalion colors, symbolizing a transfer of mission responsibility, but also signifying that the “War Wagon” had truly arrived in Afghanistan.

Recently, the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 43rd Sustainment Brigade, conducted a transfer of authority ceremony with the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 593rd Sustainment Brigade to begin the 68th CSSB’s nine-month deployment in support of the Central Forces Command Materiel Recovery Element mission.

Although the 18th CSSB set the bar high by deploying as the first CMRE CSSB, the War Wagon Family was ready to take the mission into their own hands. The War Wagon Battalion is ready to take on the CMRE challenge and continue to strive toward mission completion.

The 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion left Fort Carson, Colorado on Feb. 08, 2013, leaving family, friends, and loved ones behind. They traveled thousands of miles away landing in Manas for two days of training before heading out to Kandahar, Afghanistan. The War Wagon Battalion is motivated to return home knowing that they left a lasting impact on the CMRE mission and Afghanistan as a whole.



Photos by Spc. Kelun Babauta

(Top) The 68th CSSB/18th CSSB colorguard stand together during the TOA ceremony. (Bottom-right) Lt. Col. Jeremy Lewis and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Ashley uncased the War Wagon colors. (Bottom-left) Capt. Christopher Hendrix and Sgt. 1st Class Tyler Berry wait to uncased the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 68th CSSB colors.



Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson

Sgt. Cynthia Landin escorts Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel during his visit at the Kandahar Retro Sort Yard. Throughout the tour, Landin explains the many stations of the yard.

SHE WALKS THE YARD

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Khori Johnson

She progresses through her long days of hiking along shipping-container skyscrapers by spreading her infectious positive attitude and laughter, and keeping her loved ones not far from her mind, figuratively and in a literal sense, given that she keeps a photo of her family in her patrol cap.

Armed to the teeth with a friendly smile, and maybe even a joke or two, Sgt. Cynthia Landin, who's home station is Fort Hood, Texas, with the 553rd Transportation Battalion, 4th Sustainment Brigade, spends her deployed days as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Kandahar Airfield Retro Sort Yard, which at face value may only seem to be another average assignment for an automated logistical specialist, but it is in fact a weight-bearing keystone to the responsible drawdown of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan.

Before the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan can fully stand alone as a sovereign, independent nation, Coalition Forces must steadily recover a decade's worth equipment, materiel, and infrastructure that was accumulated during their successful efforts of liberating Afghanistan from Taliban control and assistance in establishing a democratically-elected government. This materiel recovery initiative is known as the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element mission or CMRE.

According to Landin, the retro sort yard is a nerve center to the CMRE mission, where tons of American equipment, supplies, and various machinery parts are salvaged, organized, and cleaned as they venture through Kandahar to be redistributed to our Nation's armed forces to meet operational and training needs.

"We're here to save money," she said. "If anything is still of good use, we put it back into the supply system. The key here

is always to save money."

Landin, who is a Compton, Calif. native, spends a good amount of her work day overseeing the productivity of the RSY and personally checking on her crew comprised mostly of civilian contractors from around the world. Although Landin is in a supervisor position, she never hesitates to lend a helping hand by assisting in sorting through a shipping container or helping filling a generator with fuel.

"I'm a manual labor kind of person," she said. "So being around these hard-working people motivates me. I love being an [automated logistical specialist]."

What Landin does on the day-to-day intricately plays into a large-scale, high-profile recovery effort in Afghanistan, which recently became the responsibility of the 43rd Sustainment Brigade CMRE.

The nation-wide CMRE mission was originally set into motion by the 593rd Sustainment Brigade CMRE, appropriately nicknamed the "Trailblazers." Since

"Retro Sort Yard" continued on page 10

Retro Sort Yard: Over a decade's worth to recover

Continued from page 9

the 43rd SB CMRE has taken over the responsibility, the 43rd SB CMRE, also known as the "Rough Riders" intend to take the foundation laid by the Trailblazers and progress the CMRE mission to the next level, ensuring that the hard work of men and women, like Landin and her crew, will not be in vain.

According to Maj. Shane Upton, the 43rd SB CMRE brigade support operations officer, the Rough Riders are already seeing a significant increase in CMRE productivity, stating that the brigade will be able to move approximately 22 percent more materiel than the most productive month in the history of the CMRE mission. This spike in numbers has been due to the Rough Riders taking a fine-toothed comb to previous retrograde mission procedures, re-working some math, and re-aligning a few assets.

Although the Rough Riders are currently at the helm, creatively solving problems, Landin still describes the retro sort yard on KAF as being "business as usual," tackling the obstacles of the day one at a time, such as the meticulous job of sorting through containers.

One of the most daunting tasks of the KAF RSY crew is methodically sorting through the usually unknown contents of each shipping container that passes through the yard from any number of duty stations and military posts throughout Afghanistan.



Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson

Sgt. Cynthia Landin helps a civilian contractor within her crew cut a chain from a group of fuel cans.

Each container, a virtual Pandora's Box, can take anywhere from a straightforward few minutes to a painstaking few hours, depending on the care taken by the unit or organization that packed the container.

According to Landin, the container issue not only has an adverse effect on productivity, but also jeopardizes the safety of crew members as well, which inspires her to spread her concerns as gospel during her briefings and tours of the yard held for distinguished visitors. In fact, during his recent visit to the KAF

RSY, the International Security Assistance Force senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel, made note of the issue and also commended the efforts of the entire CMRE team, from creative problem-solvers up at the 43rd SB to the calloused hands of the RSY crew.

"With the team that I've just seen out here today, I do not have a worry," he said. "We have a lot of hard-working men and women that are going to make this mission happen, and I thank them for what they are doing."

DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR ALL

TRAIN AND COMMUNICATE WITH SOLDIERS

INCREASE TRUST AND COHESION EQUATES TO BETTER JOB PERFORMANCE

PROMOTE EO AND INTERPERSONAL HARMONY FOR SOLDIERS

SAFE ENVIRONMENT OF TRUST, CONFIDENCE, GOOD ORDER, AND DISCIPLINE

Engineer patch ceremony



Photos by 1st Lt. Elizabeth Lewis

(Top) Lt. Col. John Henderson, commander of the 864th Engineer Battalion, places the 555th Engineer Brigade patch on Air Force 1st Lt. Jay Marrou, 11th Civil Engineer Squadron. (Middle) Henderson addresses the 617th Engineer Company prior to their patch ceremony. Henderson spoke on the importance of a unit patch and the comradery felt through wearing the patch as a unit. (Bottom) Henderson places the 555th Engineer Brigade patch on Capt. Brandon Mackey, company commander for the 585th Engineer Company, 864th Eng. Bn.



Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson

The Kandahar Airfield community takes its first steps in the I.A.M. Strong Sexual Assault 5K. Hundreds of participants from all over KAF came together to spread awareness.

Kandahar runs 5K for Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Khori Johnson

On the morning of April 1st, the Kandahar Airfield community was not fooling around when they laced up their running shoes and participated in the I.A.M. Strong Sexual Assault Awareness run.

Hundreds of Servicemen and women, Department of Defense employees, and civilian contractors joined together to do their part in the fight to end sexual assault and spread awareness.

“People enjoy these types of activities, so it’s a good way to bring people out to have some fun but also spread an important message,” Sgt. 1st Class Erin Debaun, the 43rd Sustainment Brigade CMRE Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention noncommissioned officer.

“A lot of times people aren’t aware that it’s happening out there, or they don’t believe it can happen to them or someone they know,” she said. “So we want to make sure everyone is aware of the steps they can take to prevent these things from happening.”

The event was one of many that will take place during the month of April, which is

recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Not only did hundreds show up to put shoes to pavement in support of the event, many personnel volunteered by setting up equipment, directing traffic, and doing anything they could to help the event go smoothly.

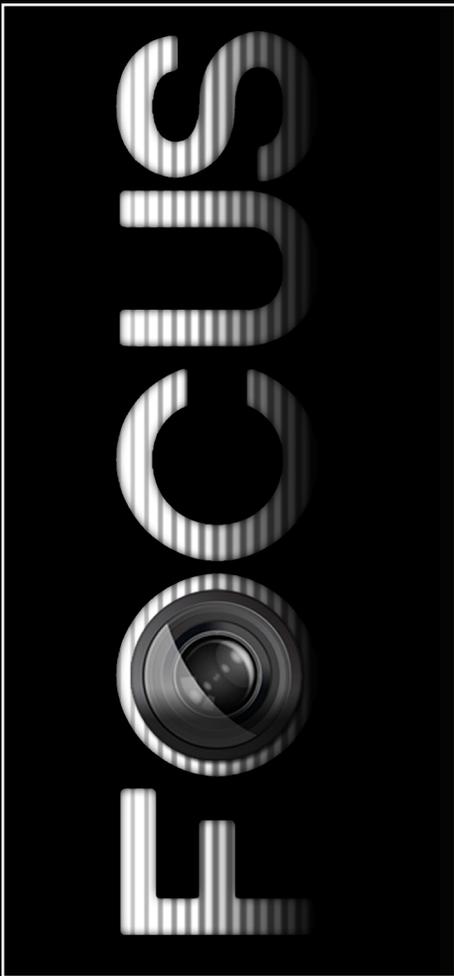
“I chose to volunteer because I really do feel that sexual assault is higher than what it should be in the military, and we definitely need to eliminate it,” said Sgt. 1st Class Eric Cooley, the 43rd SB CMRE communications chief. “Out of all the things I’ve volunteered for in the past, this is definitely the most important to me being the father of four girls. I don’t want any of them, if they so choose to join the military, to worry about this ever.”



Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson

(Top) Sgt. 1st Class Eric Cooley, the 43rd SB CMRE communications chief, and Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Grandison, supply noncommissioned officer, display their support after the I.A.M. Strong Sexual Assault Awareness 5K.

(Left) Sgt. 1st Class Erin Debaun, the 43rd SB CMRE Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention noncommissioned officer, volunteers as a traffic guard during the I.A.M. Strong Sexual Assault Awareness 5K.



Staff Sgt. John Smith

Staff Sgt. John Smith has been photographer for only three short years. Although relatively new to the art, Smith pushes himself to find the beauty in everthing around him, from the breathtaking landscapes surrounding his home station, Okinawa, Japan, to the baron earth tones of Kandahar, Afghanistan.



Black Diamonds deploy to shine bright

Story and Photos by
Spc. Brandon Clifton

On the 31st of January, Lt. Col. Kenneth Boggs, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Lonning, bridage senior enlisted advisor, cased the colors of the 92nd Engineer Battalion, 43rd Sustainment Brigade during the ceremony on Cottrell Field, Fort Stewart, Ga.

The 20th Engineer Brigade commander, Col. James Raymer presided over the ceremony, which signified the Black Diamond Battalion taking the final step in preparation for their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The colors, or battalion guide-on, are a representation of the unit and its commander, and always travel with the commander wherever he or she goes. The casing ceremony is steeped in tradition and is a common act across the Army demonstrating that the unit is ready to deploy.

Shortly after the ceremony, the Soldiers of the 92nd Eng. Bn. began to assemble in their motor pool for the last time as they said goodbye to friends and family members. After a late night of tearful farewells, the "Black Diamond" battalion loaded into buses for the short trip to Hunter Army Airfield where they would load onto a plane bound for Afghanistan.

Soldiers of the 62nd Engineer Battalion,



Photo by Spc. Brandon Clifton

Lt. Col. Kenneth Boggs, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Lonning, bridage senior enlisted advisor, cased the colors of the 92nd Engineer Battalion, 43rd Sustainment Brigade during the ceremony

"Task Force Hammer," were eager to see the Black Diamonds arrive and welcomed them with open arms, especially since their arrival meant a ticket home for the Hammer Battalion.

After two weeks of being shown the lay of the land, the 92nd Eng. Bn. officially took over from the 62nd Eng. Bn. during the Transfer of Authority Ceremony.

"There is no doubt in my mind the mighty Black Diamonds will accomplish

great things while here in Afghanistan," said Boggs. "The Soldiers of the 92nd Engineer Battalion are spearheading the drawdown of U.S. forces in Afghanistan by dismantling coalition infrastructure and clearing land so that native Afghans can take charge of their own future. A day never goes by without me asking myself how lucky I am to have such great Soldiers."



PSEC

IF YOUR FRIENDS CAN SEE IT,
SO CAN YOUR ENEMIES



Erik Gryphon is heading out on patrol at 0400.

19 September at 23:03 · Comment · Like

13 insurgents like this.

[View all 8 comments](#)



Joey Jihad See you there!!!

19 September at 23:39 · Like

Write a comment...