

DECEMBER

# THE ATLAS

704TH EN CO NEWSLETTER



**SEASONS GREETINGS!!!**

SPC William Johnson checking out his truck

A December desert sky painted with oranges and purples by the rising sun



## Happy Holidays from Fort Bliss

### Its beginning to look a lot like Christmas

By CPT Joshua Yarbrough

16DEC2012 - Training here at Fort Bliss is rapidly coming to an end. The Soldiers have put forth an incredible amount of effort and have remained very motivated throughout this challenging period. The end result is that they are ready for the mission ahead and are prepared to tackle any obstacle. Only a few more events and equipment issues separate them from seeing/coming home for Christmas.

I would like to recognize each of my Soldier's performance while training. Their dedication to duty and ability to get the job done have been nothing short of outstanding. Without their motivation and perseverance, we would have been very hard pressed to complete our training. I'm looking forward to the road ahead, confident in their ability to go down range and return home safely.

Also, I'd like to thank the friends and family members of our Soldiers. Your unequivocal support, care packages,

letters and cards from home have made this holiday season away from home bearable. You've helped to remind us why we fight and to know that we have your love, confidence and support. The support network you are building at home is vital to our growth and success as a military family.

The outreach efforts made by Lakeside School District Primary School and Helen Tyson Middle School should also be recognized. They provided cards and treats for our Soldiers that livened up the mood around here. It was nice to receive well wishes and Christmas greetings from those outstanding young citizens.

The way ahead will be challenging, but I am confident we will rise to the occasion. Our Soldiers are some of the best trained and motivated individuals our nation can produce. I am proud to be their leader and share in your concern for their welfare. Winston Churchill once

said, "It is always wise to look ahead, but difficult to look farther than you can see." The fear of the unknown and the concerns of what happens in Afghanistan can be very tough. It is our duty as Soldiers and as family members to be willing to meet what lies ahead - word for word, blow for blow. In the end, we will all be stronger for our experiences and proud that we have given back to our country. Until next time, I wish everyone a happy holiday season and a happy new year. Take care and stay in touch - we look forward to it.

**"CLEAR THE WAY!"**



# XO's DESK

## Christmas and the coming New Year

By 1LT Chris Scott

20DEC2012 - Christmas season is upon us all and the thoughts of warm beds, home cooked meals, Christmas Trees and family fill the heads of each and everyone of our Soldiers. Many will be making the long journey home, hoping and praying flights are not delayed, or severe weather grounds air traffic altogether. These brave men deserve these four days to relax breathe and be in a place where they Can truly let down their guard. I encourage each and every family member, loved one, or friend to work hard to create a space, a hospitable, safe space for these Soldiers to rest and be at peace.

This safe harbor is all the more important when seen in the context of the next nine plus months of each and every Soldier's life. As John F. Kennedy said, "Some men sailed with the wind until that decisive moment in history when events propelled them into the center of the storm." For the men of the 704th, this is their moment in history. For some of the Soldiers its a moment they have faced down before, for others this will be first time facing down the coming tumult. Make no mistake these men are ready.

However that state of readiness is maintained in part by all of you on the home

**"Some men sailed with the wind until that decisive moment in history when events propelled them into the center of the storm."**

President John F. Kennedy

front. You have already been active with your letters and packages, and I know you will receive all of these men home with hugs, and love. Don't quit. Don't relent. These brave men are dependent on your love, your thoughts, and your prayers.

So hold your Soldier tight this Christmas. If you cannot see them in person, call, SKYPE, write and let those Soldiers hear your voices. Pray for their safe return, and for the strength, conviction and personal courage to do the their job. Put them back on the plane on the 26th with hearts full of home. God Bless each and everyone of you, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

### Commander

CPT Joshua Yarbrough  
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### Operations Officer

1LT Chris Scott  
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### First Sergeant

1SG Clayton Elmore  
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### Rear Detachment

SFC Sean Davis  
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## FIRST PLATOON

everyone else is two or lower

By 2LT Bennett Adams

15DEC2012 - The past month has been fairly busy for us in First Platoon. December started off at a high tempo with the platoon conducting route clearance patrols (training scenarios). The Soldiers experienced early days and long nights. We would wake up anywhere from 0130 to 0330 and would get to bed until 2100 to 2330.

We received great training pertaining to our actual mission in Afghanistan. The OC/T's (Observer Controller/ Trainer) gave us the advice that we needed to properly prepare for many scenarios that we will encounter in the future. Each training scenario consisted of unique and common tasks that we will have to be proficient: react to indirect/ direct fire, react to IED, casualty drills, recovery of vehicles, key leader engagements, and many more. Everyday First Platoon was able to develop better tactics that will increase our mission success.

This week we have been getting our soldiers qualified on all of our crew served weapons. That's "machine guns" to the civilian world. These qualifications are long days that start in the cold first light of the morning and end under the cold



**"Everyday First Platoon was able to develop better tactics that will increase our mission success."**

**SPC Ryan Anthony working comms on patrol with First Platoon**

starlight of the evening. However firing these weapons is one of the fun parts about serving in the Army.

Each day we work hard. Each day we push to learn something new about our mission and ourselves. There is now such thing as being too prepared. We can only fall back on our highest level of training. So, if we push ourselves and absorb as much information as we can, and put our hearts into whatever it is that we do, and remember why we do what we do, then there is no obstacle we will not be able to overcome. There will

be nothing that we will not be ready to accomplish.

I am very confident that our platoon will exceed any and every expectation that our Commander, our First Sergeant, our country, and most importantly our families could ever have of us.



2LT Bennett Adams on patrol

## TOP's CORNER

at ease, First Sergeant has something to put out

By 1SG Clayton Elmore

17DEC2012 - I just wanted to let everyone know that the Soldiers are doing very well during training; that they are motivated and proving that they can push themselves farther than they thought possible. They are picking up on a lot of new things quickly and showing how resourceful they can be when necessary.

The more time I spend around your Soldiers, the more fun we seem to have and their antics are pretty crazy. I'm learning a lot from them and their knowledge. I spent a lot of time out with them on missions and I was surprised at how much they knew. I'm proud of each and every one of them. Their parents should be very proud of them and all of their hard work. Finally, I'd like to wish everyone a safe and Merry Christmas.



L: SSG Corey Lewis loves the desert  
B: SSG Keith Olson knows what he wants for Christmas, it only comes in one size!



## SECOND PLATOON

second platoon, first in your hearts

By SPC Robert Lakes

15DEC2012 - First and foremost, thank you for your thoughts, prayers, care packages, and everything that you've done to make life better for us through our strenuous training. Morale has been very high, and we know that what we do isn't in vain. There was even a Christmas tree bought to set the mood for the Christmas season. Our platoon has been tested under many conditions; some were moderate and some were challenging, but we still accomplished the mission.

We've participated in various training events to further sharpen our knowledge about the many tools that will make our company and platoon successful overseas. For example, we trained on the basic fundamentals of map reading. After starting on paper, we became more proficient in using different digital aids to help make navigating easier. Marksmanship has been a big part of training. From qualifying on our personal weapons to refreshing ourselves on various crew-served weapons such as the .50 caliber machine gun and the MK-19 Grenade Launcher. Virtual Route Clearance training consisting of a high-tech video game platform has provided us training in a virtual Afghan environment, and also allowed become big kids again. Different computer classes have furthered our knowledge in the unique culture of Afghanistan and introduced us to basic language skills. Our medic team was strengthened through realistic training in a simulated combat environment.

We then put our skills to the test after being trained on our different tasks at an individual and platoon level. A week of desert-lurking critters, cold showers, and sleepless nights wore on everyone, but we rose to the challenge and became a team. Every Soldier in the platoon was a vital moving part which made the missions run smoothly on a daily basis.

When we aren't training for our upcoming mission, free-time occasionally finds its way into our schedule. 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon can be found visiting the local convenience shop, renting a movie for the night, or pumping some iron. Since arriving at our training site, fitness has been at an all-time high. Many have become "gym rats."

More than anything though, communication with our families has been a much needed morale-booster and motivating factor in our success. You are truly our back bones. Being able to talk with all of you and hear about life back home through FRG has made the transition here much easier. Although times do get tough, you continue to back us up with everything you have to offer. Thank you again.



## THIRD PLATOON

if two wrongs don't make a right, try three...

By SSG Jarrod Stroud

15NOV2012 - It is update time once again. We went to the M4 range to qualify on our individual weapons. Goal is 40 of 40 from 3 different firing positions with pop up targets as far as 300 meters away. Be proud of your Soldiers, they know how to shoot. SPC Jason Rich and SPC Joshua Basinger both shot 38 out of 40. EXPERT! A few guys were being kind and let their old grey headed PSG beat them. That said, fathers there is still a chance to whip them at shooting when they come home end of December.

We also trained at a reflexive fire and movement range. This range can get a little wild, but it trains the guys to always be thinking about their battle buddies when they shoot. Watching these guys bound forward, yell, reload, take cover, communicate, fire, change position, and shoot



**“These guys are trading plans for their pass like a bunch of little elementary school kids.”**

**L: SPC Jonathan Anderson, and how not to carry a shotgun**

**B: SPC Samuel Poley throwing lead down range**



enemy targets was worth the price of admission. Its always great to watch Soldiers working and being great at being Soldiers.

Then we went to a FOB(Forward Operation Base) and faced 4 hours sleep a day for 8 days. We definitely figured out who wasn't a morning person. I'm sure all the Moms are having flashbacks to middle and high school wake up rituals. We rotated Soldiers to every job in our route clearance package, so they could better grasp each job's importance. Once again I will let their version entertain you more. In the end these guys trained hard, did a little crying, a little snoring, a little sleep talking, but accomplished the mission and are ready to go.

These guys are trading plans for their pass like a bunch of little elementary school kids. So good luck corralling them for four days, and Merry Christmas!

**"As the Christmas season closes in, the connections between family and friends sharpens more and more." - SPC Wesley Casey**

## HQ

**you can triple stamp a double stamp**

**By 1LT Jared Schoen**

15DEC2012 - Greetings from Headquarters. It's been a good month for all of us. Though we all are missing our families through this holiday season, we know what we are doing here is important and we continue to feed off of that motivating thought. So what is headquarters anyways? We are the diverse group that supports the line platoons. We're the radio guys, the intelligence guys, the supply guys, and the guys that keep operations running smooth for the entire company. Several of us are engineers just like our counterparts that make up the bulk of the company. Over the course of the past month we've had some pretty outstanding training. We go through many of the same standard mobilization classes as the other

Just last week we had our field training at Westbrook, about 15 minutes from McGregor where we have been staying for some time. (45 minutes from Ft. Bliss for those wondering) You should know that headquarters was validated by the cadre in the field at Westbrook and received a lot of positive feedback about the outstanding work we did in support of the 18 route clearance missions 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon conducted while there.

You should also know that we have been taken care of and the morale here is high. We look forward to being with all of you one last time before we leave so we can depart the country on the right foot. Thank you for your continued thoughts, prayers, and support. See all of you soon!



**HQ always willing to strike a pose**



**SGT Bryan Hutson getting his hands dirty**

## FMT

**kicking tires and lighting fires**

**By SPC Wesley Casey**

15DEC2012 - The Field Maintenance Team has truly proven itself to be a motivated, proficient, tight knit group of soldiers. A variety of experiences and backgrounds have been brought together to form a highly effective group of recovery and maintenance personnel.

While the majority of the company ran Route Clearance Missions, the FMT worked at the motor pool. ManTech (civilian mechanics) were impressed with the FMT's willingness to tackle any task and complete it in a timely manner. Within minutes of vehicle arrival repair and corrections were well under way. Nearly all vehicles were repaired and mission capable within the same day. ManTech was so pleased by the work and dedication of the maintenance team, they hosted a barbecue for the entire team. Every day in the motor pool has brought the opportunity to gain more experience and skill which is appreciated and highly needed during operations overseas.

As this Christmas season closes in, the connections between family and friends sharpens more and more each day. The brotherhood and camaraderie shown by Field Maintenance Team is a testament to each individual Soldier's dedication to every task and every mission. Each day is met with motivation and determination to reach our goals achieve mission success.



# Soldiers being Soldiers

## TRAINING PICS



- (1)SGT Ricky Jones celebrates a birthday
- (2)2nd Platoon receives their patrol brief before heading out on mission
- (3)2LT Bennett Adams, way to happy to be putting an IV into SPC Henry Cicone
- (4)Husky VMDS (vehicle mounted mine detection system) leads the route clearance patrol





SPC Chris Brown and SPC Jacob Hall truly embrace the Christmas Season

## CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

who's been naughty or nice?

**"I was married on the 23rd of December. Its a sentimental thing."**

1SG Clayton Elmore

**"I got a puppy dog for Christmas when I was eleven. He got big."**

SPC Brandon Babcock

**"The first Christmas after my Mom recovered from breast cancer, the whole family was together. It wasn't about presents it was just about being together."**

2LT Adam Mueller

**"Last Christmas when my daughter was finally able to realize what was going on. She ran around the house screaming, "mine, mine, all mine."**

CPT Joshua Yarbrough

**"Going to Branson with the family and seeing all the lights."**

SSG Keith Olson

**"I walked down to my grandmother's den one Christmas morning, I was five or six, and when I looked outside there was snow all over the ground."**

SPC Stephen Drennon

**"Got a 4-10 Shotgun when I was nine. I grew up in the south so..."**

SPC Sheldon Childress

**"When I was a kid, my brother and I would always help my Pops (grandfather) put Christmas lights on the house, as we got older it became our big job every year."**

SGT Jay Witt

**"When i was five I got my first big GI Joe set of action figures. It got me interested in the military. I wanted to be in the Air Force, 19 years later I'm still trying to figure out what happened."**

SPC Henry "Chico" Ciconte

**"I got a bike one year, twelve speed, silver and mongoose orange. I put some front pegs on it. Sweet times."**

SPC Phillip Reeves

# Newest Sappers to the Unit

I just saw a baby wearing a shirt saying: "Santa doesn't exist, but thats okay, 'cause I can't read."



**(1)Oliver Jonathan Boeckman**

Son of SSG Luke and Joanie Boeckman  
Born :01NOV2012

**(2)Zoie Leigh Rostan**

Daughter of SSG Zachary and Brittany Rostan  
Born: 27NOV2012

**(3)Zoe Ann Durrett**

Daughter of SPC Brandon and Elizabeth Durrett  
Born: 29NOV2012

**(4)Tayln William Finney**

Son of Brian and Kimberley Finney  
Born: 05SEP2012

**(5)Julianna Elise Roark**

Daughter of SPC Terry Roark and Janie Corona  
Born: 20NOV2012





# AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS

## AWARDS:

### ARCAM:

(Awarded for three years of honorable service in the Army Reserve with additional awards denoted by oak leaf clusters.)

SGT DANIEL ADAMS  
CPL CHRIS AMMON  
SPC STEPHEN ARTHUR  
SPC BRANDON BABCOCK  
SPC EVAN BARTON  
SPC LOUIS BOLLISINA  
SFC KENNETH BOUY  
SPC CHRIS BROWN  
SPC WESLEY CASEY  
SPC SHELDON CHILDRESS  
SPC JIMMY CLEMMONS  
SPC STEVEN COX  
SPC THEODORE DELMO  
CPL TRAVIS DOBBINS  
SPC STEPHEN DRENNON  
SPC BRANDON DURRETT  
SSG BRIAN FINNEY  
CPL RODNEY GAYNOR  
SPC DUSTIN GRAY  
SPC JASON HARPER  
SPC LUCAS HEFFNER  
SPC JEREMY HELD  
SSG BARRY JEWELL  
SGT COUREY JOHNSON  
SPC CHASE JOHNSON  
SPC RICHARD JONES  
SGT DOMINIC KNOTT  
SPC CORTEZ LAWSON  
SPC TIMOTHY LEAVITT  
SPC JAMES MCCREERY  
SGT ADAM MEGGS  
SPC KENTRELL OUSLEY  
SGT JOHN OXFORD  
SPC JONATHAN RODRIQUEZ

SPC TERRY ROARK  
SSG ZACHARY ROSTAN  
SPC BRIAN ROUSH  
1LT CHRIS SCOTT  
SPC MARK SANCHEZ  
SPC RICHARD SCROGGINS  
SGT JACOB STEWART  
SPC JUAN TIERRADENTRO  
SPC COURTNEY THOMAS  
SPC LARAMEY TILLMAN  
SPC ANTONIO WATERS  
PFC JAMES WHITLEY  
SSG MICHAEL WILBANKS  
SPC MATT YEAGER  
SSG TODD YOUNG

### ARMY PHYSICAL FITNESS BADGE:

(\*indicates voluntary participation in BLACKHAT PT program)

SPC EVAN BARTON\*

### HERO of the BATTLE:

(certificate of achievement for performance during STX/CTE)

1LT JARED SCHOEN  
SSG BRIAN FINNEY  
SPC BENJAMIN HEINER

### COINS:

#### BRIGADE COMMANDER:

CPL CHRIS AMMON  
SPC STEPHEN DRENNON  
SPC MANUEL HUIZAR  
SGT JOHN OXFORD  
SPC JACOB SPRY

#### COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR:

CPL JONATHAN ANDERSON  
SPC ADAM CHATMAN  
CPL RODNEY GAYNOR  
SPC RICHARD JONES  
SPC ANDREW MUNYON

Heroes of the Battle (L-R):  
1LT Jared Schoen, SPC  
Benjamin Heiner, SSG Brian  
Finney



# AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS

## PROMOTIONS:

### FIRST LIEUTENANT:

DELPHIN OMAR FUENTES COSTA

### SERGEANT:

JIMMY CLEMMONS  
CHANNING BRUMFIELD

### CORPORAL:

TRAVIS DOBBINS  
RODNEY GAYNOR  
BRANDON JACKSON  
RICHARD SCROGGINS  
JASON STOREY  
ROY WADE



Third Platoon moves out



**Helen Tyson  
Middle School**  
Springdale, Arkansas  
6th Graders

**By 1LT Chris Scott**  
15NOV2012 - The 6th Grade Hoops Team from Helen Tyson Middle School has taken the 704th under their wing. No doubt many of you have seen pictures of the cards and snacks they have sent to help out the Soldiers on Facebook.

These exceptional young people with the help of their teachers and parents, in particular Rose Corscadden, have truly boosted morale and given the guys something else to look forward to over the next year. Words cannot express how proud it makes me and all of our Soldiers to know that these are the kinds of people we are venturing around the world to represent and defend. Thanks HOOPS!!!



The HOOPS TEAM  
from Helen Tyson  
Middle School,  
Springdale, AR

704 EN CO NEWSLETTER

TO: