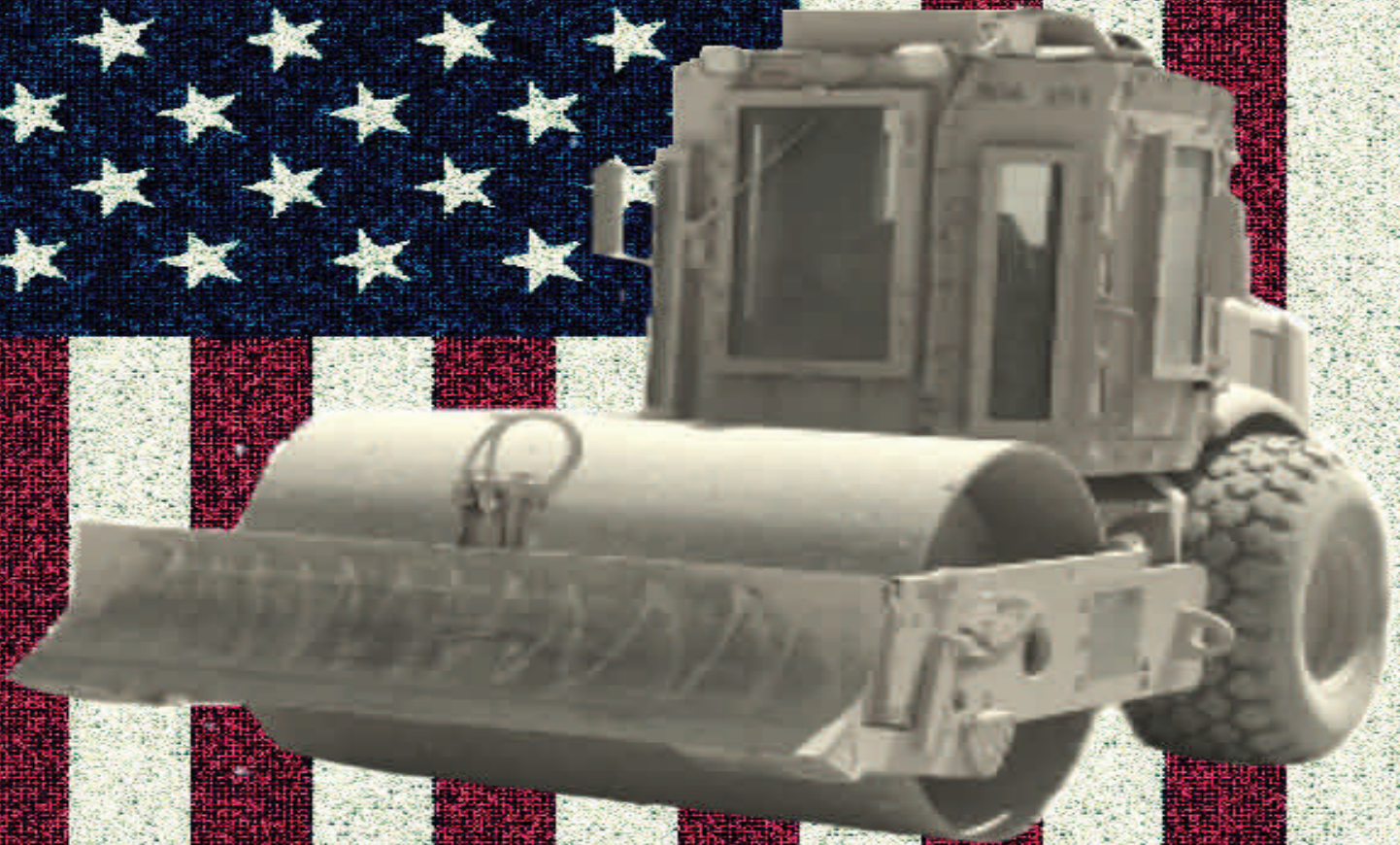


# THE PACEMAKER PRESS

Following the 864th Engineer Battalion During Its Time In Afghanistan



## 864th Engineer Battalion Sets the Pace for New and Expecting Mothers

Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group Offers New  
and Expecting Mothers a Helping Hand

## 1220th Celebrates 4th of July...Muskogee Style

Sunflower Seeds, Trucker Hats, and Sunscreen for  
Some Good Old Fashioned Baseball Fun



## THE PACEMAKER PRESS:

the official newsletter of the 864th Engineer Battalion while deployed on Operation Enduring Freedom, 2013.

The *Pacemaker Press* is an authorized newsletter for members of the 864th Engineer Battalion "Task Force Pacemaker." Contents are not necessarily endorsed by the Dept. of the Army, Dept. of Defense, or the U.S. Government. Content is reviewed, edited, and approved by the Battalion Public Affairs Officer (PAO). For questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Battalion Public Affairs Officer.

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# 864th Engineer Battalion Sets the Pace for New and Expecting Mothers

Stories that come from deployments often speak of the camaraderie and a sense of teamwork that is formed amongst Soldiers while pushing through the hard times to accomplish a mission. Very rarely, however, is it even whispered of the camaraderie formed by the spouses who are also pushing through some very difficult times while they wait for their loved ones to return from down range.

When the subject of a Family Readiness Group is raised in conversation, many people will picture a quintessential scene from the Vietnam-era based movie "We Were Soldiers," where wives are gathered around a table in a small living room discussing how to improve, or better yet-survive, their lives as temporary single parents or attempting to raise children on their own while their husbands are fighting in a distant land. Through tears and laughter and sharing of wisdom, these women form their own style of camaraderie, the spouses' support system.

If you walk into the monthly meetings of the new and soon-to-be mothers of the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion "Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group," you won't see women styled after Jackie Kennedy sitting around a small living room with The Beatles and Bob Dylan soundtracks playing in the background. You will, however, a support system that is remarkably similar to the one depicted in "We Were Soldiers"; women sharing their hardships with one another, having a shoulder to lean on during the rough times, and having a friend to laugh with over silly things that happened.

The Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group is designed to be a support system for expecting and new mothers of the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion where, at monthly meetings, professionals from various organizations on post come to provide classes on pregnancy, birth/infancy, newborn/infant care, toddlers,

parenting skills, and dealing with the stresses of not only being a mother, but being a mother while the father is deployed in Afghanistan.

However, it's not all classes. The group also provides the mothers with an opportunity to interact with other new mothers in the unit, share stories and simply...relax.

"I love getting together with the other moms in the group," explained Amanda Wagg, supporter and member of the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group whose husband is currently deployed with the battalion. "It is so nice to be able to meet and talk about babies for an afternoon. Also, I don't



Passing Out Baby Bundles to the New Mothers

know many people in the Joint Base Lewis-McChord area, so this support group has introduced me to new friends that I may not have otherwise met."

The concept of the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group started when it was officially announced that within four months, the battalion would be deploying for a nine month tour. Realizing that a nine month deployment does not provide an opportunity for Soldiers to schedule a rest and relaxation opportunity around the expected birth period of their child, the women who would eventually become the leaders for the Pacemaker Pregnancy Sup-

port Group came together and determined that the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion needed a support group for the expecting and new mothers, many of whom were or were going to be first time mothers.

In other words, many of the Pacemaker spouses wanted to ensure that new and expecting mothers were provided an opportunity to be a part of a group whose main mission was to receive multiple forms of support while being separated during the nine month deployment.

"The Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group builds family teams, or at least builds new friendships," stated Mrs. Wagg. "We are all in this together, and having the support of other moms is helpful. I am not a new mom, but my first daughter is almost six, so it's like starting all over again with my newborn child. Knowing that I am not the only one going through this deployment alone with children and knowing that I have the support of so many women from this support group is great. It is an open environment where there is no need to be embarrassed about how we look-no makeup, hair is not perfect, spit up on our shirts and baby bellies-because we're all in the same situation."

Once the idea was formed, this determined and compassionate group of women went to work on organizing the first meeting, an agenda that would "set the pace" for all the subsequent meetings.

At the first meeting, held one month after the main body of the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion deployed, the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group arranged for professionals from Army Community Services, the Family Advocacy New Parent Support Program and Madigan Healthcare Services to come and present classes to the new (groups of mothers **(cont'd on page 16)**).

## Commander's Corner

### A Letter From LTC Henderson, Commander, Task Force Pacemaker

It is a great day to be a Pacemaker! This will be the last newsletter that we send from FOB Sharana as the battalion HQs prepares to move, which indicates that we are one step closer to completing our historic mission here. Across the battalion, we will surge our efforts for the next 2 months to complete our assigned missions and prepare for redeployment. Your amazing Soldiers are currently working on over 25 projects on bases dispersed throughout eastern and northern Afghanistan. You can all be very proud of their distinguished service during this deployment supporting the retrograde of US Forces.



Over the next few months, nearly every Soldier in the Battalion will experience some type of displacement or move. In an effort to manage expectations, we can all expect that communications will experience disruptions, mail service will be shut down in many areas where we are currently working, the workload will increase, and life will continue to become more expeditious for your Soldier. Dining facilities, PXs, MWRs, USOs, gyms, finance, and chapels are closing/closed, and many of us will transition to some type of "transient" living conditions. I ask for everyone's patience with us as we prepare to go through a very complex transition here in country in order to finish this deployment strong and transfer our mission on to our replacements.

As we pull through the doldrums of mid-deployment, I am starting to see the excitement in our Soldiers' eyes at the prospect of successfully completing a very difficult mission, anticipation of being reunited with their Families, and the sense of accomplishment that can only come from rising to the challenge of serving your country with honor during a time of war. I'd like to say a very special thanks to all of our Soldiers for their steadfast dedication to their duties here, to our Families and the Rear Detachment for all your support from JBLM, and to our Alumni and community organizations which provide us with so much support. We could not do our mission without you all patriotically serving our country on this great team of teams.

**SET THE PACE!**

LTC John W. Henderson, Pacemaker 6



# Command Sergeant Major's Foxhole:

## A Letter From Command Sergeant Major Christopher D. Tipton

Set the Pace, Pacemakers!

Best wishes to all the Soldiers, Airmen, Pacemaker alums, families, and friends of the Pacemaker Family. This upcoming month initiates the start of our final move as a Task Force to where we will Relief-In-Place with our replacing unit. Another step in accomplishing our mission here in Afghanistan and another step closer to being with our loved ones. I hope you all back home are enjoying your summer and getting excited for your Pacemakers to return this Fall.



July was a great month for accomplishments and promotions. Congratulations go out to Staff Sergeant (Promotable) Freeland for his selection to the Warrant Officer Course, to Sergeant Sanchez for his promotion to Staff Sergeant and to Specialist Stephenson for his promotion to Sergeant. Congratulations also go out to Sergeant Valderrama of the 557<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company for winning the 2013 Forces Command (FORSCOM) Soldier of the Year Competition back at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He and his sponsor, Sergeant Weaver, continue to make us proud. This is the fifth out of six competitions they have won dating back to April 2013. He will now compete at the final competition, the 2013 Army Soldier of the Year Competition. Great job Pacemakers!

July was also bittersweet due to our departing Pacemakers. First, we bid farewell to our Airmen who made up our Task Force Construction Management Team as they redeploy after a great 6-month deployment back to their home stations. Their detailed reconnaissance, site surveys, and project plans played a significant part in the execution and success of our missions thus far. To our Pacemakers that our leaving the Army for future jobs and life opportunities, I would like to tell you that there is no place on earth where a man or woman gets fuller credit for every reasonable effort, or where exposure to danger is so liberally rewarded as among their comrades in the Army. Good luck and God speed to all of you and your families as you all make the transition from Soldier and Army Family to Army Veteran and Veteran Family.

Families and friends know that your prayers and blessings continue to safeguard us from harm's way. The fall season is approaching and our children will be back in school. The temperatures will begin to decrease, and the leaves will begin to change color. We hope to bring sunshine with us with the reunion of our families. Know that your Soldier is doing everything that he or she has to do to get the job done over here to Pacemaker Standard. We all look forward to being home with you all. Thank you for what you do and continue to do for our great Pacemaker Family and our great nation!

Pacemakers RISE to the Challenge!

CSM Christopher D. Tipton, Pacemaker 7



## Headquarters and Headquarters Company Regulators!

Greetings Regulator Family and Friends. Our Soldiers have been busy this month as July started our movement to our new home in Bagram. Congratulations to CPL Kasiano on her promotion. Also a big congratulations to SPC Wolphagen for winning the Battalion Soldier of the month board. The CST platoon is busy supporting our sister companies, ensuring secure movement of personnel and equipment to out-laying project sites, as well as moving our battalion headquarters to its new location. The battalion staff continues operations here at Sharana, and now Ba-



The S1 section is raising morale by making pancakes for the Pacemakers.

gram, coordinating and tracking the battalion's efforts. Thank you to the Regulator Family for your continued love and support, and your generous care packages. As we begin our move, please refrain from

sending any more mail until we put out our new mailing address. We have finally hit double digits in our countdown to JBLM. We look forward to seeing you when we return, but until then know you are always in our hearts and prayers.

Regulators!



LTC Henderson presents SPC Wolphagen with a Certificate of Achievement for winning the July Soldier of the Month Board.

gram, coordinating and tracking the battalion's efforts. Thank you to the Regulator Family for your continued love and support, and your generous care packages. As we begin our move, please refrain from



SFC Perez-Lopez promotes SPC Kasiano to Corporal.



## Forward Support Company Providers!!!

Greetings Provider Families and Friends!

July has been a very busy month for all platoons of the Forward Support Company.

The Distribution Platoon has been occupied with movements to Bagram Airfield. They successfully completed these movements in addition to their normal every day operations. When not configuring mission plans and preparation, they have been busy delivering supplies, equipment, and water and providing fuel for those units still on FOB Sharana.

The Maintenance Platoon has provided personnel for the movements to Bagram Airfield, while still completing day to day maintenance operations. The platoon has completed all services for the month of July

and has almost completed the services for August in anticipation of getting ready for the move to Bagram. Additionally, the platoon has been hard at work maintaining all vehicles so that they are fully mission capable. Moreover, the platoon has been packing all of the equipment for the transition to Bagram and eventually, home.

The Field Feeding Section has taken on its most challenging task since the start of the deployment. With only seven personnel, they have successfully managed to set up a lifeboat feeding plan designed to feed over 1900 people. Additionally, they have simultaneously been working on tearing down the Dining Facility as all of the civilian contracts used to run the dining facility have expired. Starting in August, the Field Feeding Section will



Soldiers from the Distro platoon working hard.

single handedly take on the task of providing rations for all those who are left on FOB Sharana.

In addition to FSC completing all missions for another successful month in Afghanistan, we'd also like to recognize the reenlistment of SPC Destiny Dawson of the Field Feeding Section.

As always, we thank you for your love and support and look forward to coming home to you soon!

**PROVIDERS!**



Members of the Field Feeding Team



## 557th Engineer Company Animals!!

557th Engineer Company's major milestone for the month of July was the jump of the company headquarters from Sharana to Bagram. This move wouldn't have been possible without the coordination done by the headquarters section and the legwork done by 1st and Maintenance Platoons.

Headquarters has been particularly busy lately. Besides coordinating the logistical requirements for the company's permanent move between bases, they also completed a deconstruction project of their own. They removed over 300 meters of HESCO bastions in a single morning, exemplifying their training as 12N Construction Equipment Operators, regardless of their current assignments as administrative staff. Their flexibility to



Removing HESCO barriers

perform multiple, varied tasks is a valuable asset to the company as we work to build (from the

ground up) a new company command post. 1st Platoon is now finishing up the earthwork for what will soon become the new battalion headquarters. Despite its tricky location, this site will serve as our own battalion and replacing unit's work area. Earlier this month, 1st Platoon led the company movement from Sharana to Bagram. En route, they also road-tested a new type of trailer while hauling the company's equipment. Five hundred miles and numerous smoking axles and bent tire rims later, they ensured that all Soldiers safely arrived to Castle Pacemaker, the new billeting (with indoor plumbing!) they secured for the rest of

the unit. The Soldiers can look forward to plenty of equipment operating time in the upcoming weeks.

Maintenance recently got a chance to do some construction of their own when they built the company motor-pool and maintenance bay. Though a hasty project, it is an improvement that will allow them to continue to keep the company's equipment in good condition. Now that we are on a larger base, they are nearly drowning in blessings because they can track, inventory, and receive thousands of repair parts at a much faster rate than before. Though it increases the maintenance team's workload, their hard work and attention to detail when tracking the repair parts is essential to the maintenance of the line platoons' equipment. Earlier this month, they were also essential to the company's movement to Bagram, and were particularly helpful in keeping 1st Platoon's trailers consistently rolling on recent convoys.

Also at Bagram, 2nd Platoon continues their work on the massive resort yard improvement project. The longer days and lack of rain mean that they can now work longer hours—provided the daily wind storms don't kick up too much dust! Like PFC Johnsen of 1st Platoon, PFC Hohman of 2nd Platoon has been invaluable to his platoon's construction progress by providing dust mitigation and compaction as the platoon water distribution expert. 2nd Platoon just turned over the second phase of their project for the customer's approval and is hard at work on the remainder of the project.

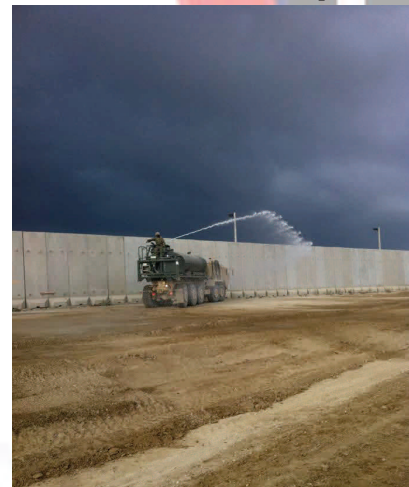
3rd Platoon, our lone platoon away



557 leading the way!

from Bagram, is quickly working themselves out of a job thanks to their rapid progress on their FOB. The platoon has developed innovative deconstruction techniques which I expect will become the standard for future units to use. Because a base under deconstruction still requires force protection as much as any other base, the Soldiers have also gotten additional experience with more typical horizontal construction tasks such as building earthen berms. Additionally, SPC Parker was recently selected as the Pacemaker Hero of the Battle, a recognition by battalion leadership of his exemplary performance.

Congratulations are due to two Animals who were recently promoted to the rank of Sergeant: SGT Kang of 2nd Platoon and SGT Valderrama of 3rd Platoon. More than any other promotion, the selection as Sergeant and induction into the NCO Corps is based



Controlling the Dust

on an individual's demonstrated potential to serve as leaders and is a reflection of that individual's past leadership. We look forward to watching them lead and develop Soldiers.

Now that the majority of the company is in Bagram, we're one step closer to making it home to JBLM. In the meantime, please continue to keep the Soldiers in your thoughts as our redeployment approaches. Animals lead the way!

CPT Richard A. Mahn, P.E., PMP  
557th EN CO Commander



## 585th Engineer Company Roughnecks!!

Hello Roughneck Family and Friends,

We are now into the double digits for our countdown to return home to JBLM. The Roughneck Soldiers and leaders continue to make us all proud with their relentless effort to complete our mission here in Afghanistan. Through their hard work, they have standardized many of the techniques and procedures to deconstruct buildings and struc-

trical and light features from the interiors. The 1220<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company has been greatly expediting our progress by following us to tear down the buildings we descope with their heavy equipment assets. Additionally, we



SGT Santana, site safety, over watches a HYEX removing debris from a project site.



SGT Camunas and SGT Calbick surveying the jobsite from their vantage points.

tures which will be used by our succeeding units to further the United States's retrograde from Afghanistan.

This month, we have started to transition in our deconstruction efforts here on FOB Sharana. The 1220<sup>th</sup> Horizontal Engineer Company has been assisting with our mission on FOB Sharana. Currently, our main focus has been to deconstruct clamshells, extremely large metal framed tents that could cover an Olympic sized swimming pool, and to descope buildings by removing the elec-

have continued our missions on several other FOBs and COPs to assist our sister companies in the battalion with their missions.

Our Soldiers have been taking time outside of the CMRE mission to develop other important warrior skills. The company recently hosted an-

other combatives level one course that certified more than 15 Soldiers, including the

three line platoon leaders, COIST officer, and maintenance platoon leader. The training was tough and the five officers came out bruised, but smiling.

We thank you again for your continued support, and look forward to seeing you all in a short couple of months!

Sincerely,

CPT Brandon J. Mackey

Roughneck 6



CPL Lamug supervises as project safety while PFC Bostwick cuts a clamshell's support cable.



## 617th Engineer Company Trailblazers!!

Greetings Trailblazers! We are currently in the middle of the summer heat and it is hot and humid. This month has come and gone at a fast pace and we are under the 100 day mark to return to Joint Base Lewis McChord. The Company has been busy with the deliberate process of deconstructing buildings and force protection in support of retrograde operations and the transfer of Afghanistan. First Platoon has primarily been busy removing thousands of feet of HESCO barriers and deconstructing buildings. Second Platoon has been responsible for deconstructing several wooden buildings and reinforced concrete buildings. Third Platoon has primarily been responsible for the deconstruction of heavily reinforced brick and mortar buildings. Third Platoon will also be moving again for another base transfer deconstruction project within the next few weeks. The FRG can provide you the new mailing address if you need it. Maintenance Platoon continues to stay busy with the never ending work involved with maintaining a heavy construction unit. Headquarters Platoon is also busy with daily operations to include processing hundreds of personnel transactions. The supply room recently had a Battalion inspection and received a 95%, the highest in the Battalion.

We had a handful of promotions this month and are expected to have several in August. Sergeant Hoke was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant. Private First Class Rezac was promoted to the rank of Specialist. Private Brooks was promoted to the rank of Private. We had one re-enlistment, SGT Perez. SGT Perez re-enlisted for stabilization at Joint base Lewis McChord. The Company also had several awards. SPC Runnion earned an Army Achievement Medal for his heroic actions on a scraper recovery mission. PFC Wiggins earned an Army Achievement Medal for his successful deployment to Afghanistan. PFC Russell and PFC Prisayzhnyuk earned a Battalion Certificate of Achievement. SGT Williams, SPC Rezac, SPC Gilmore, SPC Hendrickson, SPC Perez, PFC Lacosse, PFC Callaway and PFC Fontaine all earned Company Coins.

As always thank you for supporting us through the deployment. Your letters, packages, and e-mails keep your Soldiers

motivated and help them push through difficult times. If you have any questions or concerns never hesitate to contact me.

CPT Karoline Hood

Trailblazer 6, "Clear the Way"



This month has been a busy one for the Gladiators. We've led the Company in completing a variety of mission essential tasks to include developing an artillery placement area, clearing thousands of feet of HESCO Barriers, demolishing several buildings and helping various units around the base with their retrograde efforts. The 1st Platoon Gladiators have tackled this mission with their usual standard of enthusiasm and discipline. As always I would like to thank the family and friends of 1st Platoon, your care and support is very appreciated.



This last month has been fairly eventful for the Gravediggers. Since the last update, the platoon conducted a tactical movement. The platoon did an amazing job with the long trip ensuring that the movement was a success. Within three days of arriving, the Gravediggers resumed our deconstruction mission. Third squad constructed the dump site for the deconstruction. First and Second Squads demolished 18 buildings and

hauled all of the debris to the dump site in an impressive two weeks.

Over the last month, the Outcast platoon has been vigorously working on deconstructing buildings. The platoon has had to adapt new skills as they have been deconstructing a lot more buildings instead of HESCOs and other Force Protection. The buildings have included concrete buildings and wooden buildings. With multiple buildings coming down at one time the platoon had to become masters of handling multiple project sites at the same time.

This past month, the Soldiers of the 617th EN CO Maintenance Platoon have continued to keep the Company moving. The Platoon has supported every convoy by completing thorough vehicle checks on every vehicle before it leaves on mission. We also ensure all the vehicles are fully mission capable by working well into the night on them or coordinating with outside resources to accomplish the mission. While the platoons are conducting their mission, the Maintenance Platoon is right alongside them keeping their equipment running. We are constantly fixing hoses, replacing tires, and getting vehicles to start and keep running. Without the Maintenance Platoon, the line platoons would never have completed any of their projects thus far.

This past month, Headquarters Platoon has been working hard to ensure the company runs effectively and efficiently. Additionally, the Headquarters platoon welcomed great, new soldiers. SPC Howard Baker has become the movement NCOIC, SPC Joseph Dee and PFC Rashad Hailey have become headquarters' clerks in addition to the First Sergeant and Commander's Drivers. We would like to thank all the families for sending care packages to the company which helps to keep morale high.



## 84th Survey and Design Detachment Trojans!!

Families and Friends,

This month, the 84th Engineer Detachment Trojans' main focus was on the move from FOB Shahrana to our new home. The move is just about complete and we are one step closer to redeployment. The Soldiers have been staying busy and working hard. Sergeant Swanson was promoted to Staff Sergeant and Private First Class Babb was promoted to Specialist. Congratulations, Trojans!

July was also a month of firsts for the Detachment. SSG Ingoglia led a squad on the Battalion's first mission in RC-North, while SSG Swanson led the first survey in RC-Capitol. SGT Sanchez and PFC Rivera provided survey support for the Task Force Paladin construction site. SGT Magiapane, SPC Babb, and PFC Francis continue to provide 557th Engineer Company with survey support for the construction of the Retrosort Yard. SPC Myrum, A1C Hatfield, and PFC Lao surveyed, staked out, and prepared the Battalion's C2 footprint. SPC Lampman and PFC Burnside constructed over 9,000 square feet of wooden pads for the C2 structures. A team of Airmen (SSgt London, SRA Montoya, SRA Ruiz, and A1C Ross), designed a new ECP and guard towers for 617th Engineer Company's project sites.



SSG Swanson reconfirms the Oath of the Noncommissioned Officer.

This was also the final month of deployment for the Air Force CMT working with 84th Engineer Detachment. We are sad to see them go, but we congratulate them on a great deployment and wish them all the best in the future.

-TROJAN 6



PFC Babb is getting promoted to SPC Babb.



WO1 Clemons and SPC Babb after his promotion.



SGT Swanson is promoted to SSG Swanson.



## 1220th Engineer Company Muskogeese!!

The time slowly ticks away and the workload continues to increase here at FOB Sharana. The Soldiers of the 1220<sup>th</sup> continue to rise to the challenge and continue to drive on full throttle in support of the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element (CMRE) mission. These men and women continue to demonstrate diligence, perseverance, and an outstanding dedication to duty. With each day that goes by, you can see the noticeable difference in the FOB's landscape, due to the efforts of the 1220<sup>th</sup>, even when conditions aren't always ideal.

These Soldiers have been dealt some hefty challenges lately and yet always manage to improvise and overcome in order to complete the mission, ahead of schedule in most cases. We are at that time in the deployment when feelings of home-sickness and everyday stresses of operating in a combat zone are setting in. We have adjusted on our end to help maintain the high level of morale that we began with in February. We installed a gym in our area so that the Soldiers have a means to exercise, in addition to conducting rudimentary PT. We give the Soldiers time off when missions permit, especially during holidays. However, separation from family and the inherent dangers of the job still can get to some Soldiers.

I just encourage all loved ones, friends and family members, to try to remember what your Soldier is experiencing and that they will need your emotional and spiritual support. Ultimately, we are serving the citizens of the United States for love of God, country, and family. Occasionally, they will need your encouragement, whether in the form of a kind word, a letter, or even a prayer. These simple actions help to keep our Soldiers on task and doing what is necessary to complete the mission successfully.

A big thank you goes to the Blue Star Mother's for sending each soldier a care package. Those care packages were a much needed morale booster.

Now is the time we need to refocus and receive the reassurance to keep up the pace and carry on. So please keep these soldiers in your thoughts and prayers, as we'll be doing the same for everyone back home. "Clear the Way!"

CPT Joshua D Lawson, CDR, 1220<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company

The completion of our 3<sup>rd</sup> month is fast approaching. Since the last newsletter, the company has had to overcome a few obstacles while continuing to accomplish all mission requirements.

In June, the company was directed to move out of the old company area into what is called a "lifeboat". These "lifeboat", areas within the FOB that will not be destroyed and will be transferred to the Afghan Government. The 1220th Soldiers are amazing. Within two days, these Soldiers moved an entire Horizontal Engineer Company, to include all pieces of Engineer Equipment, into our new Area of Operations. On top of that, they constructed our new motor pool while moving. It's pretty awesome when you look back at the scope of work that was accomplished in such a short time frame.

I also want to make a note about our first Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) of the Month and Soldier of the Month (SOM) competition. The winners were SPC Brenton Munroe for SOM and SGT Vernon Smith and SGT Lindsay Ballard for NCOM. SGT Ballard also participated in the Battalion NCOM board. She put in countless hours studying for the board and did exceptionally well. Although she did not win the competition, she gained a ton of respect from across the Battalion. I can't forget to include the accomplishment of SPC Scott McCall, for his participation in the Wolverine Leader

Course conducted by the 1/89 Cav. Not only was he the Honor Grad for this class, but he was the **FIRST** soldier from outside their Brigade to receive such an accolade! HOOAH!

As with every article, I am going to continue to ask for assistance from the families for information on any issues that they might recognize as detrimental to the mental health of their soldier. Due to the time change, email is still the best option to contact me. My email is [david.b.curtis@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:david.b.curtis@afghan.swa.army.mil) or [david.b.curtis.mil@mail.mil](mailto:david.b.curtis.mil@mail.mil).

Thanks for all you do! "Clear The Way!"

1SG David B. Curtis, 1SG, 1220th Engineer Company

July was a busy month for the Bone Crushers as they completed many missions as a split group. The first and second squads completed many successful missions to include building a new entry control point, deconstruction of an Operations Center, additional force protection, leveling guard towers that were built by Navy Sea Bees, and building a shooting range for ODA. The soldiers worked hard and maintained good morale considering the additional hardships that come along with working at a small COP on the verge of closing. Third and fourth squads were busy on FOB Sharana working in support of First and Third Platoons by working on the Entry Control Point, removing HESCO barriers, and taking down fences.

Second Platoon's performance for the month of June was exceptional and has set a high standard for their expectations as they go forward on this deployment.

2LT Blake Stice and SFC Randy Cox, 2nd Platoon Leadership

The 1220<sup>th</sup> maintenance platoon has been hard at it during the past month. SFC David Howe is running a great operation down in the shop. The mission capable rating of the 1220<sup>th</sup> is over 88% due to the hard work and dedication of our maintenance crew. If you walk in the shop today, you won't see an idle hand.

SGT Carroll and SGT Richardson have been running the contact truck to the project sites daily fixing odds and ends on the equipment and keeping the projects moving at a blazing pace. Since we have moved to the "Lifeboats" we are running on generator power. SGT William Glover and SPC Rustin Devine have been keeping the generators up so that the company CP and the living quarters have power and internet (thank them for having the electricity to talk and text your loved ones while we are here). SGT Michael Crews has taken the lead on transportation around the FOB. He has been dubbed the "Gator Man" because he has kept the gators (ATV's) we drive around the FOB running smooth and getting us where we need to go.

SGT Allen Cook and SPC Jonathan Hatcher are keeping the books clean and ordering and receiving parts for the equipment that goes down. They have been a huge asset and keep the mission capable parts rolling in the door. SGT Jason Solzak took it upon himself to help the 1220<sup>th</sup> out with a few items in the gym and built a few necessary handles and bars for the makeshift pulley machine with his excellent machining skills. SSG Laprix Davis and SGT Joshua Floch cannot thank him enough.

CLEAR THE WAY!

1LT Steven Fisher, XO, SFC David Howe, Maintenance Leadership



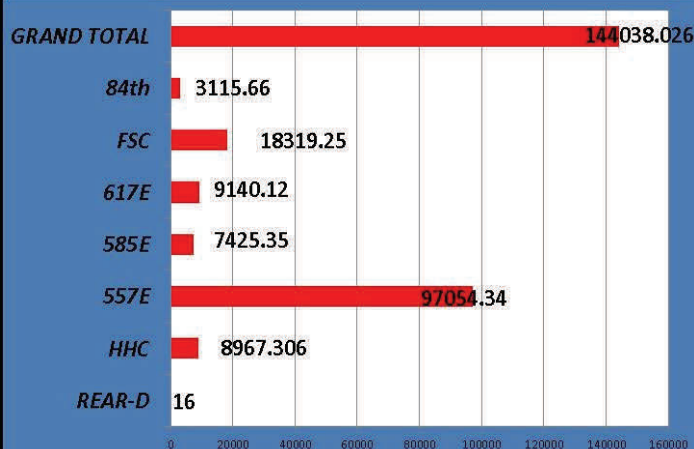


## *Tips for Spouses and Families coping while a Soldier is Deployed:*

- Include breaks in daily routines
- The parent at home needs to have a regular "Mommy's/Daddy's day out"
- Encourage all Family members to share feelings, reassure your partner of your love and commitment, and try to see the deployment as a challenging opportunity for growth.
- Communication is important between the Soldier and Family member. It is important to keep in touch; however, try to end phone conversations and letters on a positive note.
- Give children a method of measuring the passage of time.
- Make sure your spouse's parents are kept informed. The Soldier's parents share your concerns about the health and welfare of their deployed son or daughter.
- Keep children involved with outside activities and maintain constant communication with schools.

For more information access:

<https://www.militaryonesource.com>



The statistics are in! Walk to Afghanistan Update:

84th: 3115.66 miles  
 FSC: 18319.25 miles  
 617: 9140.12 miles  
 585: 7425.35 miles  
 557: 97054.34 miles  
 HHC: 8967.306 miles  
 Rear D: 16 miles  
 Grand Total: 144038.026 miles

## **Have a Question Regarding Your Soldier's Company's FRG?**

### **Family Readiness Support Assistant (FRSA)**

Karyn Hubbell [KARYN.HUBBELL@us.army.mil](mailto:KARYN.HUBBELL@us.army.mil)  
253-966-7019

### **864<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION FRG LEADERSHIP**

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# COMBATIVES

The Pacemakers are excited to announce that Combatives Level I classes have continued with ever growing enthusiasm throughout the battalion. The class takes place every few weeks, and is instructed by SGT West and SGT Mestre, 585th Engineer Company. Students learn how to ground fight, basic defensive boxing techniques, and how to close in on the enemy and secure the clinch. The class is a week long. At the end of the week, if a student passes each test and a written test, they will officially be certified in Level I Combatives. Congratulations to the following students who are now certified in Level I Combatives: 1LT Carrillo (585), SPC Dee (617), PFC Enriquez (FSC), PFC Hailey (617), 1LT Johnson (585), SGT Kearney (84), CPT Lawson (1220), SPC Morvant (617), PFC Pannell (617), 1LT Sawyer (585), SGT Shaddox (1220), PFC Vargas (HHC), 2LT Warnke (585), and 1LT Winslow (585).



Graduates of the Combatives Level I class.





## PACEMAKERS NEW PARENT SUPPORT GROUP



**Who:** All new or expectant parents

**What:** Education and support program for new parents

**When:** August 20<sup>th</sup> 2013  
12 – 1:30 p.m.

**Where:** Clock Tower Park in DuPont WA

**Why:** This is an effort to support our new and expectant mothers while their spouse is deployed.

This month we will be a social event. There are no planned speakers, just an opportunity to socialize, relax and catch up. This event will be a potluck, so please bring a yummy snack or food item to share with the group.

**Directions:**  
- Take Exit 118 off Interstate 5 and head West  
- Turn right on Wilmington Drive.  
- Turn left on Palisade Drive.  
- The park will be on your left past the Post Office.

*If you would like more information, please contact your FRG Leader, or contact the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Family Readiness Support Assistant at 253.966.7019*

### Pacemaker Baby News!



**Congratulations to SGT Christopher Kean and Rochelle on the birth of their son William Michael on 26 July**

### Pacemaker Volunteers of the Month

The Pacemakers would like to thank the following people and groups of people for their amazing donations to the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group. They have dedicated their time and skills to make quilts and collect donations for the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group Baby Bundles. Thank you all for all of your hard work and dedication to helping the Pacemakers!

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| -Sharon Pope     | -Puyallup Post 2227 VFW Women's Auxiliary |
| -Lynn Mueller    | -From Our Heart:                          |
| -Vicki Brubaker  | -Patricia Green                           |
| -Janet Goldstein | -Rilla Yancey                             |
| -Maggie Maki     | -Mildred Peterson                         |
| -Leslie Maki     | -Quilts From the Heart                    |
| -Colleen Horton  | -Carol Evans and Quilters                 |
| -Wendi Hinton    | -Vicky Mohler                             |



**(cont'd Support Group)** "In the arena of parenting," stated Army Community Service Family Advocacy Program Specialist Priscilla Nastasia, "we have provided an emotional coaching class, an overview of New Parent Support services, and a hands-on introduction to infant massage provided by our Home Visitors. We have also provided prenatal nutrition information, with links to resources like the WIC office on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov), where they can actually plan their diet during pregnancy and beyond." In subsequent meetings, the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group also recruited help from the Madigan Healthcare Services OB/GYN Department, FOCUS (Families Overcoming Under Stress), the 555<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade MFLC (Military Family Life Consultant), and many other support agencies also located on Joint Base Lewis-McChord. This not only served as a convenient forum to bring these remarkable services to the spouses, but also exposed them to the multitude of family support programs available to them on Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

One focus area for the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group is to support the new and expecting mothers by providing instruction on how to improve their resiliency and how to create good habits for building strong, family teams.

"The training provided builds personal skills in each individual," explained Nastasia, "and models reliance on others in the community. This support group is an amazing experience for new and expecting mothers. As I watch them share food, chat away, laugh, and share their ups and downs, I am reminded that one of the core strategies of resilient people is the willingness to seek support when needed."

"Within the suite of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Resiliency Modules," continues Nastasia, "we have completed 'Hunt the Good Stuff' and Energy Management modules. Since our human brains are hardwired to remember negative experiences, 'Hunt the Good Stuff' is a strategy that builds optimism and helps us overcome our negative bias."

"Hunt the Good Stuff" is a skill taught through Army resiliency programs where a person records three positive events that happened each day and reflects upon those events. The end state is to increase resiliency and lower the tendency to slip into depressive thinking by reinforcing one's thoughts to focus on looking for optimistic or positive elements within a situation.

The numerous support agencies based out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord aren't the only organizations working with the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion to serve Soldiers and their families. Quilts from the Hearts donated crocheted, hand-made blankets and baby hats for the newborn babies while the Puyallup Post 2227 VFW Women's Auxiliary, the From Our Heart Organization, and SAAF (Support America's Armed Forces) donated items for Baby Bundles-baskets



Teaching new mothers how to give their newborns massages

for new mothers that contain everything needed to carry on during the first few months of being a new mother. Moreover, the SAAF has worked with Top Food Stores in Puyallup, Tacoma, and Olympia in addition to multiple patrons and volunteers to put together boxes containing basic food items for the new mothers.

"SAAF began supporting the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion during their first deployment (Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003-2004)," stated Vicky Mohler, the lead coordinator between SAAF and the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, "and has continued providing support throughout the years, mostly in either funding or care packages for the deployed, Pacemaker troops. I came up with the 'Baby Bundles' idea when I was told by the senior advisor for the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Family Readiness Group that

they had 50 expecting mothers. At each of our SAAF collections, we began collecting diapers, baby wipes, formula, bottles, baby food, cereals, and toiletries in addition to monetary donations. We keep 6 boy and 6 girl baskets on hand."

"The unexpected support and overwhelming sense of volunteerism that has flooded in from this very supportive military community has been very humbling," stated Amy Henderson, the 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Family Readiness Group Advisor. "We cannot possibly thank all the post agencies, local organizations, and our selfless volunteers enough for all the enduring, positive impact that they have had on our Families."

Word of the overall support program and extensive training opportunities provided for new and expecting mothers of the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group is spreading.

"As far as I am aware," stated Nastasia, "the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group is the first of its kind. However, I know that two other units heard about it and asked Family Advocacy to help them start their own! That's a win for our Army."

Overall, the reaction to the Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group has been positive.

"The Pacemaker Pregnancy Support Group has been nothing short of amazing," stated Nastasia. "At a time when our Army is being asked to do so much, there is a real need for grassroots assistance for families, and frankly, this is how it is done. We know that our Service Members live a lifetime of stress in the first six years of their service to our country. That is real, and our families are living that experience too. This support group has a definite feeling of family, and I have been witness to the amazing warmth and friendship that is shared in this setting, along with the linkages to real services and support."

"I love this group and look forward to the monthly meetings," explained Mrs. Wagg. "This is an amazing group of women that come together to support each other. I think it has helped by making this deployment more bearable."



# 4TH OF JULY-MUSKOGEE STYLE AMERICA'S GAME

