



TRIPLE NICKEL TRIBUNE

"WILLING AND ABLE!"



JOINT TASK FORCE TRIPLE NICKEL
NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATER ENGINEER BRIGADE IN AFGHANISTAN



Issue 8 — September 2013

Message from the Commander

Colonel Nicholas Katers,
"Able 6"

Triple Nickel Team,

Greetings Families, friends, and members of JTF Triple Nickel. This month marks the end of the



Brigade's deployment to Afghanistan, and I could not be more pleased with the accomplishments that we

have made in these nine months. My recent travels have taken me across the country where it has been my honor to reward your Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen for their achievements, by presenting them with end-of-tour awards. As I recognize their accomplishments, I can't help but reflect upon how they have built the Brigade's success.

Our engineer partners in the Afghan National Army saw considerable growth over the past nine months, as the number of Afghan engineer battalions went from two to five, and we helped field and train over forty ANA route clearance companies.

The Afghans have a long hard road ahead of them, but we have set the conditions for their continued success. The will never be defeated, because our Soldiers took the time to train them right.

As we transition with the 130th Engineer Brigade, we wish them the best and know they will greatly build on the progress we have made. Willing and Able! Sappers In...

—Able 6 out!



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Chenee Brooks, COMICAM

A legacy built to last

A Soldier assigned to Joint Task Force Triple Nickel scans the area during a recent route clearance patrol. The brigade has built a positive legacy around route clearance and other vital engineer missions.

Triple Nickel completes mission in Afghanistan

555th heads home as 130th Engineers take over

By U.S. Army Capt. Spencer Garrison
JTF Triple Nickel Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — "In every sense, this is a legacy built to last," said Col. Nicholas Katers, as he reflected on his unit's mission in Afghanistan.

It's a mission complete for the team he commands from the 555th Engineer Brigade Headquarters — they're now heading home to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State.

For the past nine months, the 555th has served as Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, leading a 5,000-strong

U.S. Theater Engineer Brigade made up of Army, Navy and Air Force units, all in support of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

Coalition forces looked to JTF Triple Nickel for a critical triad of engineering needs, including training Afghan Army engineer units, construction and deconstruction projects, and clearance of the enemy's explosive threats along key roadways.

Now that engineer mission falls on new shoulders, as the Hawaii-based 130th Eng. Bde., JTF Sapper, has arrived to take over the Theater Engineer Brigade.

(Continued on page 8)

Coalition forces looked to JTF Triple Nickel for a critical triad of engineering needs.

CFC-Overseas Campaign kicks off
Even far from home, you can make a positive impact in the charities and causes that matter to you!
 Consider giving through the **Combined Federal Campaign-Overseas.**
 Speak with your unit CFC rep, or visit www.cfcoverseas.org

Facebook.com/TheaterEngineerBrigade



At A Glance...

- ◆ TRIPLE NICKEL SERVING AS THEATER ENGINEER BRIGADE, COMMANDING ABOUT 4,500 MILITARY ENGINEERS
- ◆ ENGINEER FORCES SPREAD ACROSS AFGHANISTAN IN SUPPORT OF NATO-LED INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF)
- ◆ JOINT TEAM LED BY 555TH ENG. BRIGADE HQS FROM JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD... INCLUDES ACTIVE, RESERVE, AND GUARD UNITS FROM ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE
- ◆ THEATER ENGINEER BRIGADE WILL SOON FALL UNDER 130TH ENGINEER BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS, BECOMING 'JOINT TASK FORCE SAPPER'... VISIT: FACEBOOK.COM/THEATERENGINEERBRIGADE

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Command Sergeant Major's Corner Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Bryan, "Able 7"

Triple Nickel Family,

Our time here in Afghanistan is finally coming to an end. Be proud of your loved ones deployed here with us, for they have given their all to ensure this country has a chance for freedom and stability.



I have visited our units throughout the country one last time, to congratulate each and every one of our Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen on a job well done.

It is important to recognize the larger importance of this mission. Indeed, before U.S. and Coalition forces arrived here, schools didn't exist as we know back home, and only the wealthy and chosen boys were allowed to attend. Now girls are allowed to attend and make up 38% of the students; there are presently 10 million students now in school and their soci-

"I have visited our units throughout the country one last time, to congratulate each and every one of our Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen on a job well done."

ety is coming online with the rest of the world. It was your Soldier that helped make this happen.

There are now well over 300,000 Afghan National Security Forces taking the lead in defending their country, advised and assisted by our outstanding service members. It may still take a while for them to get to where they need to be, but through their increased capabilities and an enduring international commitment, they will continue on the path to winning, to building a stronger Afghanistan.

Thank you for staying strong for your loved ones, for they are worth it!

*Willing and Able,
CSM Bryan, 'Able 7'*



NMCB 28 Command Master Chief Corey A. Cain (left) and NMCB 15 Command Master Chief Richard B. Cousins mark the Transfer of Authority at Kandahar Air Field, Sept. 18.

Triple Nickel welcomes new Seabee construction battalion

By U.S. Navy MC1 John Banfield
Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 28

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 15 transferred authority of Camp Toles to NMCB 28 during a morning ceremony at Kandahar Air Field, Sept. 18, 2013.

Cmdr. Anthony Spinler, commanding officer, NMCB 15 and Cmdr. Curtis Smith, commanding officer, NMCB 28 exchanged salutes before command master chiefs from both battalions conducted the transition of the Battalion Equipment Evaluation Program (BEEP) to signify the official transfer of authority.

Guests of honor were Col. Nicholas Katers, commander, Joint Task Force (JTF) Triple Nickel, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Bryan.

"As part of Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, NMCB 15 completed more than 53 construction projects across the theater," said Katers. He added that 34 of those had been top priority projects in the past.

"I'm really proud of my Seabees," Spinler said. "We tackled some very difficult projects with a great deal of pride." He went on to say that they completed most of

their projects ahead of schedule.

"The major runway extension at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghazni added a much needed intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability to Regional Command East, and allowed the brigade's route clearance patrols to be better supported while on mission," Katers said.

NMCB 15 poured more than 2,000 cubic yards of concrete to extend the existing runway by 1,500 feet.

Smith said that it will be a privilege to serve alongside the men and women of Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, and to be relieving NMCB 15 who has just completed an over-

whelmingly successful deployment.

Seabees attached to NMCB 28 spent three months at Naval Base Ventura County, Port Huene, Calif., conducting homeport training in preparation for this deployment.

"We could not be more prepared to support the mission in front of us," Smith said.

"It is truly an honor to be leading a fully combat ready navy construction battalion down range."

"It is truly an honor to be leading a fully combat ready navy construction battalion down range."

The Triple Nickel Tribune is an authorized newsletter for members of the 555th Engineer Brigade and Joint Task Force Triple Nickel. Contents are not necessarily endorsed by the Dept. of the Army, Dept. of Defense, or United States Government. Content is reviewed, edited, and approved by the Brigade Public Affairs Officer. For questions, comments, or submissions, please contact the Brigade PAO.

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STAY INFORMED!

With the 555th Eng. Bde. heading home, follow JTF Sapper for the all news about the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen still deployed with the Theater Engineer Brigade!

'Like' them on Facebook
www.Facebook.com/TheaterEngineerBrigade

*The JTF Triple Nickel page will still exist but won't get updates. To follow the 555th specifically, visit Facebook.com/555enbde



‘What we’ve been trained for’

Army bridging supports Coalition, civilian traffic

By U.S. Army Sgt. Justin Moeller
Task Force Currahee Public Affairs

PAKTYA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – “During the rainy season of this past year the abutment of an existing bridge had washed out, collapsing half of the bridge,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Stephen Keene, soldier with the 1438th Engineer Multi-Role Bridge Company, and native of Columbia, Mo. “This bridge helps facilitate [traffic] the forward operating

bases that are around this area, fixing it will help the civilians also by keeping them from driving in the creek bed and out of harm’s way.”

“The abutment of an existing bridge had washed out, collapsing half of the bridge.”

To bring a measure of ease to vehicular movement, soldiers with the 1438th Engineer MRBC, Missouri National Guard, constructed a Mabey-Johnson bridge in the village of Laka Tiza, Afghanistan, Aug. 30 through Sept. 3.



A Soldier from 1438th Multi-Role Bridge Co. monitors progress of a Mabey-Johnson bridge as it rolls across the gap it will cover.



A Soldier signals to an excavator during construction of a Mabey-Johnson bridge in the village of Laka Tiza, Afghanistan, Sept. 2, 2013.

“So far it’s been a little rough due to threats we’ve received,” said Capt. Mack Gaono, company commander of 1438th Engineer MRBC, Missouri National Guard, and native of Cape Girardeau, Mo. “The biggest thing for us is staying here until we get the job done.”

Working in a fast-paced, potentially hazardous, environment is a difficult obstacle to overcome, especially for new soldiers without the experience of a previous deployment.

“About two thirds of my soldiers are new to the unit and have never deployed before,” explained Gaono. “I’ve been in 17 years and haven’t deployed, this is my first. I’ve been waiting years for this. This, right here is what we’ve been trained for.”

The long hours spent in preparation for their deployment shows. Though some of the company has not been in country yet a week.

“I’m enjoying this [deployment] so far, I’ve wanted to do this since I was a little kid,” said Spc. Shelton Johnson, native of Novinger, Mo., and soldier with 1438th MRBC. Serving his country is something he has always felt strong about and being able to put his training to use gives him a sense of accomplishment.

“I think it’s gone pretty smooth for the most part,” Johnson said. “We ran in to a couple of snags, we had a couple of bays that wouldn’t work with

us, they bent up but we were able to tweak them to get them to work.”

“With fixed bridging, there’s always one small thing that will set you back a couple of hours,” said Keene.

Overcoming setbacks, they worked diligently around the clock and other than those few small hiccups in construction, the weather held and they completed their mission.

“The biggest thing for us is staying here until we get the job done... This, right here, is what we’ve been trained for.”



‘Like they built their own house’ Afghan Army engineers construct literacy center

By U.S. Army Sgt. Eric Glassey
Regional Command South Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Ismail, commanding general, ANA Engineer Corps 1, praised 205th Corps engineers for the construction of a literacy center at Camp Hero, Kandahar, Afghanistan, Aug. 24.

“Afghan National Army engineers built this school with their hard work; it is like they built their own house,” Ismail said. “This building will get our soldiers educated. I promise that we will educate our people. This school will prepare the 205th Corps for the future. Everyone will be proud of the ANA soldier.”

The literacy center will pro-

vide ANA soldiers the opportunity to learn how to read and write. It was built by the ANA engineers and International Security Assistance Forces engineers.

The literacy center will provide ANA soldiers the opportunity to learn how to read and write.

Afghanistan’s literacy rate is currently at 28.1 percent, according to the Central Intelligence Agency’s World Factbook. The online database was not the only source to indicate concern about the lack of education in the country.

“The international community found that the ANA was mostly uneducated, so the international community funded this literacy program,” said Abul, director, ANA literacy program.

The literacy center is staffed by six civilian instructors who all play a role in educating the ANA



Afghan Major Generals Ismail and Abdul Hamid lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Afghan-built literacy center at Camp Hero.

soldier.

“The ANA soldier that is completely uneducated will be reading in 3 months,” Abul said. “This includes...writing.”

The majority of the construction was completed by the 205th Corps engineers, led by Capt. Farmanullah Safi, who

thanked his ISAF partners.

“With the help and assistance of the ISAF advisers we’ve been able to read and write; this literacy program is very important,” Farmanullah said. “We can show all the Afghans, that the Afghan National Security Forces will be able to get educated.”

WILLING & ABLE

Triple Nickel NCO selected into prestigious ‘Audie Murphy Club’



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Staff Sgt. Maria Morales, 555th Eng. Bde. medical section noncommissioned officer-in-charge, has been named to the Audie Murphy Club, Sept. 27, following a rigorous selection process earlier this summer.

Out of 49 candidates across all of Afghanistan, she was one of only seven Army NCOs ultimately selected. Already a top performer as a Soldier and leader, Morales,

from Turlock, Calif., studied for hours after work every night for two months, then passed a culminating selection board which tested her skills, knowledge and judgment as a leader.

Photo courtesy of RC-E PAO

1438th Multi-Role Bridge Company begins mission as 2225th heads home

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Alessandra Braun
Task Force SAW Public Affairs

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — The 1438 Multi-Role Bridge Company (MRBC) assumed responsibility from the 2225th MRBC, Sept. 3, and will take on all bridging operations in country.

For the past nine months, the 2225th, under Task Force SAW, has provided freedom of movement to U.S., Afghan and Coalition forces. As the theater bridging asset, they were vital to the success of the Theater Engineer Brigade.

The 2225th was responsible for emplacing eight bridges, completing 20 bridge inspec-

tions, eight reconnaissance missions, and repaired 15 bridges. They traveled more than 8,000 miles and conducted more than 30 combat patrols.

The 2225th MRBC accomplished two firsts for the bridging community by being the first company to ever launch and retrieve a Dry Support Bridge without the use of a launching vehicle.

“The 2225th set the standard in military bridging operations and they have truly set us up for success,” said 1st Lt. Graydon Gaines, 1438th executive officer. “They have shown us what a theater asset MRBC is capable of and set us on the right path to conquering our mission.”



Army Engineers earn Cavalry Spurs

By U.S. Army Spc. John Rader
Task Force Long Rifle Public Affairs Rep.

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — With the arrival of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, it was necessary to build a structure that would provide ample workspace for the incoming unit. The task of building the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) was assigned to the first platoon of the 149th Vertical Construction Company, a National Guard unit out of Kentucky, falling under Task Force Warhorse.

To complete the build, the 149th Vertical Construction Company (VCC) ran 24 hour operations that consisted of three shifts, 7 days a week. The TOC houses dozens of offices, as well as large conference rooms and large command centers. Led by Warrant Officer Jacob Lewis, the construction took two months to complete.

“I give all the troops in my squad the ability to learn as we

go along. We try not to rush things for two reasons. One reason we don’t, is so that the soldiers that are not too familiar with this type of work can get a hands-on approach to learning the skill. The second reason is to ensure quality of the craftsmanship. We want to present an excellent product to the 2/1 Cavalry when they arrive. Our name will be attached to the quality of this structure long after we leave and have done

“I couldn’t be more proud of these Soldiers. They always seem to rise to the occasion to get the job done with a touch of excellence.”

our part,” said Staff Sgt. Steven Willoughby, 2nd Squad Leader, 1st Platoon, 149th VCC.

On July 22, 2013, the construction project assigned to the 149th Vertical Construction Company was completed and presented to Colonel Robert Whittle, commander of the 2/1 Cav., and his staff.

Unbeknownst to Whittle and his troops was that Warrant Officer Lewis had plans drawn up to make a custom conference table as an additional task.



Staff Sgt. Timothy Shanks, 149th Vertical Construction Company, puts finishing touches on the Cavalry conference table.

“All the Soldiers involved were on board with this addition to our construction task and pitched in when and where they could. Most of my guys stayed long after their shift had ended to work on this and it really is the icing on the cake. I couldn’t ask for a better group of soldiers. They pay attention to every detail, catch things that I haven’t seen yet, and fix it right away without being told” said Warrant Officer Lewis.

The table is in the shape of the Cavalry patch and mirrors the very recognizable yellow shield that is symbolic of the United States Cavalry.

“I don’t know what to say here... what you all did here is amazing. I’m literally at a loss for words,” said Col. Whittle of the 2/1 Cavalry. “I will make sure we take this table wherever we go, and when we get back home, I will make sure we hang this up at our headquarters in Ft. Hood.”

To show their gratitude, the 2/1 Cav held a surprise ceremony for the 149th soldiers that constructed the TOC. The ceremony inducted the participating soldiers into the Order of the Combat Spur. Soldiers who receive this prestigious recognition are given the honor of wear-

ing the Cavalry’s Stetson and Combat Spurs during authorized events to showcase their honorary Cavalry membership. “This is really an amazing award to take home. It’s an award that not every soldier has the opportunity to obtain, especially since we’re engineers, and now, an honorary part of the Cavalry community,” said SGT Gary Forsyth, 149th VCC.

“I couldn’t be more proud of these Soldiers. They always seem to rise to the occasion to get the job done with a touch of excellence,” CPT Adam Evans 149th VCC Commander explains. “It’s the recognitions like this that keep these troops going day in and day out.”



“What you all did here was amazing.” Col. Whittle, alongside Soldiers from the 149th VCC and the 2/1 Cav., reacts with surprise after the unveiling of the new conference table.



Staff Sgt. Andy Wiglesworth (right) with the 149th Eng. Co. is presented the Order of the Combat Spur.



Building Skills: Afghan and US engineers team up to improve medical center

By U.S. Army Spc. Michael Maxwell
Task Force Iron Fist Public Affairs

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Afghan National Army Engineers are busy equipping a medical center with the assistance of soldiers from the 372nd Engineer Company.

The U.S. Army Reserve unit, based out of Pewaukee, Wis., and ANA engineers from the 203rd Corps Engineer Kandak are constructing shelves for medical supplies, benches for medical patient visitors in the waiting room, and patient beds for medical visits.

Afghan soldiers frequently appear at the medical center requesting medical attention. Afghan 1st Lt. Navid Ahmed Safi, the medical center lead doctor, immediately put to use the benches and tables the 205th CEK built.

The Engineers helped Safi and his small team stay organized for a shot clinic at the medical center. The medical staff utilized their new center to administer vaccinations for tetanus, measles, mumps and rubella to more than one hundred ANA soldiers.

Spc. Rob Bauer, a combat medic for the 372nd Engineer Company, jumped at the opportunity to provide medical care to some Afghan soldiers with ailments. Bauer treated a couple minor ear infections and cleaned existing wounds for some Afghan soldiers, saving them from further infection.

"It is rewarding to put my

"It is rewarding to put my training to good use, and also train with the ANA on how to provide care for soldiers."

training to good use, and also train with the ANA on how to provide care for soldiers," stated

Bauer concerning his duties at the medical center.

Soldiers of the 372nd Engineer Company ANA Group continue to develop strong ties with the 205th CEK, as well as act as quality assurance/quality control and

provide construction advice as needed. The medical center mission has turned into a great opportunity for the ANA engineers to hone their carpentry skills.



Spc. Devin Hall, 372nd Engineer Company, works alongside Afghan Army engineers from the 205th Corps Engineer Kandak as they construct a patient visitor bench for the medical center on an Afghan base. The team from the 372nd is working with the 205th CEK on several construction projects.



Spc. Rob Bauer, a combat medic with the 372nd, provides medical aid to an ANA soldier suffering from an earache at the medical center.



23-year veteran mentors fellow Seabees and now Afghans

By U.S. Navy MC1 Daniel Garas
Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 15

CAMP KRUTKE, Afghanistan – Builder 1st Class Johnny Wilder carefully observes his students as they train each day. He watches over his pupils and offers guidance where he can. But when one of students approaches to ask a question, Wilder cannot give him the answer he needs. Not because Wilder does not know, but because he cannot understand Pashto. All of Wilder’s student’s are Afghans.

Through an interpreter, Wilder learns the Afghan wants to know if he married and if he has any children. It is an unusually personal question for a class about basic construction, but Wilder laughs it off with a smile.

“That’s how they get to know you,” he says. “I’m trying to teach them what an inch is, and they keep bringing up you and asking about your personal life.”

Wilder explains how Afghanistan is a cultural based society where trust is important to a student-teacher relationship. He admits that the questions were strange and daunting at first, but quickly realized the Afghans have their own methods of learning. Some instructors find that adjusting mentorship styles to students’ learning abilities difficult. For Wilder, it is nothing new.

Wilder enlisted in the Navy in 1990 and has served for over 23 years. After serving with Support Unit 4 in Atlantic City, Illinois, the unit decommissioned in 1994 and Wilder found himself in Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 15. Over the course of his career he has men-

tored hundreds if not thousands of students.

“Back then you used to call your mentor a sea-daddy,” says Wilder. “You would take them [junior sailors] and walk them through the process and get them up to speed.”

In the past, Seabees came into the Navy to learn a skill or trade in the construction industry. Senior enlisted would pass on to their juniors the knowledge of their trade and shape them into professionals. But after years of the same methods the dynamics began to change. More Seabees were arriving in the fleet with experience and newly developed techniques. Wilder noted that in the past construction work was more

Wilder also believes that a good teacher is an even better student.

He continues to listen and learn...

physical. With advent of new technology, the new ways require more thought process.

“A lot of Seabees today are so advanced when they get in,” said Wilder. “Now

we have people who will come in and take the lead on building projects because of their experience as a civilian. You can take a third class and put him in charge of a project just because of his expertise.”

Wilder added that the Navy has been quick to embrace the influx of experience.

“You have to change and move on. The Navy is about being aggressive and modernizing,” said Wilder. “The Navy needs to be modern. You can’t keep depending on the past to get the job done in a modern world.”

Wilder also believes that a good teacher is an even better student. He continues to listen and learn from his young Seabees. He attributes his willingness to listen to his success as a mentor.



“With technology things change,” says Wilder. “The younger generation is picking up this technology and teaching it to us.”

Wilder is now using that knowledge and experience to help train Afghans.

Starting with the basics, he slowly increased the level of difficulty. Beginning with basic units of measurements, he moved on to explain different types of materials and what their function was. He then moved into teaching them to read prints. Only then were they ready to learn actual construction techniques. Wilder refers to it as a crawl, walk and then run approach.

Keeping their instruction simple, Wilder says he refrains from teaching them advanced tricks.

“Tricks of the trade are always for the advanced,” Wilder says. “Here we concentrate on the basics.”

The Afghans are learning from their mentors. Wilder says since they have started they have learned how to prefabricate and assemble walls. He admits there are challenges, but sees some promise.

“Afghans are curious,” notes Wilder. “They have some people that really want to learn. The ones that really want to learn try very hard.”



Mission Complete: 555th returning home

(Continued from Page 1)

“The 555th Engineer Brigade has done amazing things here over the past nine months,” said Col. Diana Holland, commander of the 130th. “It has been a pleasure working with them as we prepared to deploy and now that we assume the lead.”

The formal transfer of authority from the 555th to the 130th will take place this week at the engineer headquarters, as the Triple Nickel team cases its unit colors for the long trip home. JTF Sapper will then unfurl their own colors, officially marking the start of their mission.

As Katers and his staff hand off the mission, they also want to hand off a positive, lasting legacy, a substantive record of progress and development on which the new

team can build.

The numbers suggest they are well on their way, with visible progress in each aspect of the Theater Engineer Brigade’s mission.

The Triple Nickel team cases its unit colors for the long trip home. JTF Sapper will then unfurl their own colors, marking their start of mission.

With Coalition mentorship, including training and support from JTF Triple Nickel, over 40 ANA engineer companies now operate independently, including route clearance units, and five construction battalions have also been established. These construction units have already built and improved Afghan

roads and facilities throughout the country, helping ensure that Afghan forces can build, protect, and sustain their own infrastructure, especially after the drawdown of coalition forces.

The next big step for the 130th will be to advise Afghani-



HHC commander Capt. Matthew Pride briefs the company on their departure plan, Sept. 28, as the unit prepares to return home.

stan’s first-ever National Engineer Brigade, being formed this winter.

The 555th managed over 240 construction projects, totaling more than \$40 million in value, to support the draw down and consolidation of Coalition forces. The brigade also established and managed small-repair teams which completed well over 100 health and safety-related projects (such as plumbing and electrical fixes) for smaller bases across Afghanistan, helping fill the gap in essential services as contractors draw down.

JTF Triple Nickel’s ongoing

route clearance mission led to the discovery and safe removal of over 300 enemy-emplaced improvised explosive devices from key roadways across the theater, thanks to the continued efforts of more than 30 route clearance patrols operating under the brigade. This has helped protect the lives of both Coalition forces and the Afghan populace, both targeted by IEDs.

Soldiers of the 130th Headquarters Company express excitement and confidence as they take on the theater engineer mission.

“I feel pretty confident overall,” said Spc. Jaymz Smith of Sanger, Calif., an intel analyst for JTF Sapper. “When you have guys who are giving 100 percent to everything they do, things tend to get done pretty effectively.”

Smith is excited to experience his job in a deployed setting, but admits he’ll miss hunting and scuba diving back home, and he will most of all miss his fiancé Andrea.

Meanwhile, the homeward bound Soldiers of Triple Nickel are anxious to finally see their families.

Sgt. Taylor Read, assigned to 555th Eng. Bde. command group, is one of a few Soldiers in the unit who had to miss the birth of a child while out here, but now the father of three from Salt Lake City is only days from reuniting with his wife, Kaitlin, and meeting two-month-old Ariana for the very first time.

“I’m beyond excited. My family means everything to me,” Read said, no doubt echoing the feelings of countless Triple Nickel Soldiers.



Sgt. Sterling Campbell (right) and other members of the ADVON, or advance party for the Triple Nickel headquarters company’s redeployment, are congratulated upon receipt of end-of-tour awards, Sept. 13.



Farewell and Thank You
from
Headquarters & Headquarters Co.,
Joint Task Force Triple Nickel,
555th Engineer Brigade

Though the 555th Engineer Brigade Headquarters is now headed home, our thanks and best wishes remain with the many Engineer Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen continuing to serve in Afghanistan as the Theater Engineer Brigade — now led by 130th Engineer Brigade, 'JTF Sapper'.

Willing & Able, Sappers In!



555th Eng. Bde. HHC, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan



RETHINK YOUR DRINK

The summer may be drawing to a close, but with temps still over 90°F, do not lose sight of the importance of staying healthy and hydrated!

A Public Service Announcement from members of the JTF Triple Nickel Medical Team...



CPT Zaal H Paymaster Pfc. Moody Watson

Water has many benefits for your body.

- 75% of the body is made up of water
- 80% of the brain is made up of water
- 75% of the muscles are made up of water
- 92% of the blood is made up of water
- Transports nutrients, waste and oxygen in the body
- Regulates body temperature
- Lubricates and cushions joints
- Moisturizes the air we breathe
- Aids in digestion

How much water should I drink?

There is no consensus regarding the daily amount you should drink. As a recommendation, you should drink a minimum of 3liters per day. Why 3liters?

- Your body on average loses 2L-3L daily.
- 3L is a minimum and does not account for workload and environmental temperature, hence, adjust intake accordingly.

Complications of not drinking water.

- 1% dehydration results in thirst
- There is a 10% decrease in mental performance when you feel thirsty
- 2% dehydration reduces your ability to work
- 4% dehydration results in headaches, lethargy, confusion, dry or cracked lips, dryness of the nasal passages.
- Kidney Stones – Increased risk for developing
- Urinary Tract Infection – Increased risk of developing, especially in women.

Other ways to get water.

Water is not only acquired through drinking, but can be absorb through the food we eat.

What about drinking too much water (Hyponatremia)?

Hyponatremia is when the sodium (salt) content in your blood drops to a low level. Sodium is vital for muscle contractions and sending nerve impulses. Hyponatremia is very rare but can occur from drinking too much water too quickly. That is why you must drink no more than 1.5L in an one hour. Also it is important to replace your sodium when you notice excessive sweating. You can do that by drinking a sports drink.

What to take from this.

- Water is used by our body in numerous ways
- The temperature is getting hotter so we need to drink more water.
- Drinking water is the preventative action for water deficiency induced problems.
- Your body does not store water, so you have no reserve.
- Lastly, drink at least 3L (6 water bottles) a day.

References.

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- http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Water_a_vital_nutrient



ACROSS

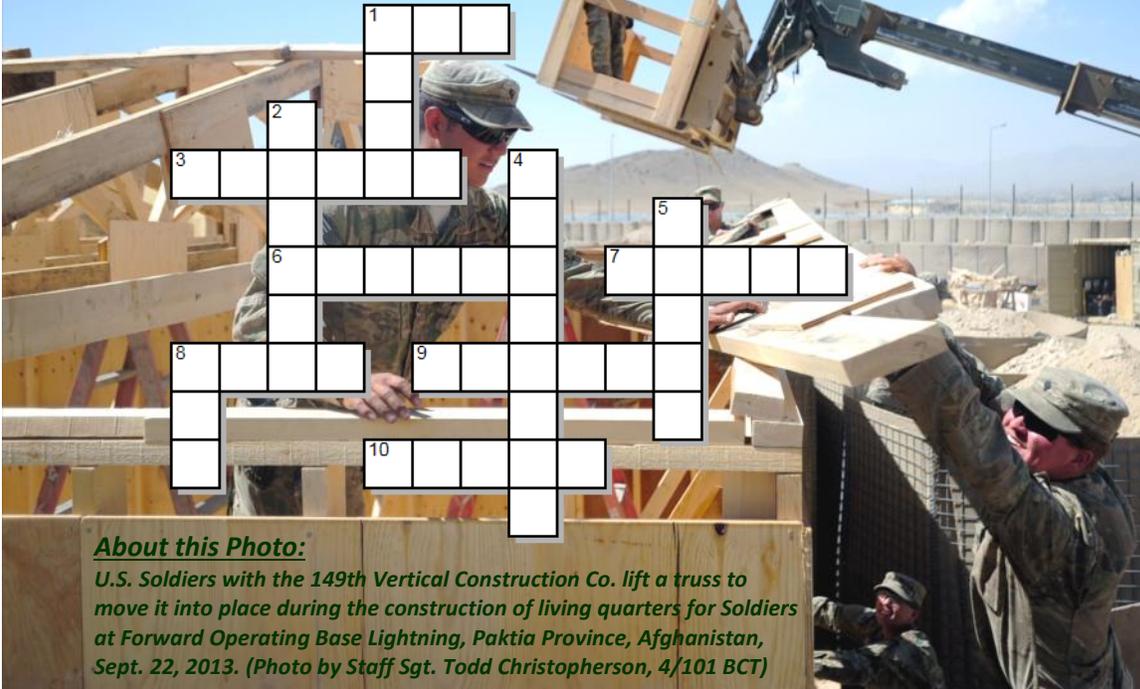
- 1. Literacy Center built by ___
- 3. Seabee teaching Afghans
- 6. Triple ___
- 7. Earned medal for Valor
- 8. Seabee unit
- 9. Multi-Role ___ Co.
- 10. Engineers earned Cav ___

JTF Triple Nickel Crossword Challenge!

**HINT: EACH ANSWER
CAN BE FOUND INSIDE
THIS NEWSLETTER**

DOWN

- 1. Willing and ___
- 2. Engineers improved medical ___
- 4. Triple Nickel Chief of Staff
- 5. Important for your health
- 8. ___ Induction Ceremony
- 9. Almost as good as an 'A'



About this Photo:

U.S. Soldiers with the 149th Vertical Construction Co. lift a truss to move it into place during the construction of living quarters for Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Lightning, Paktia Province, Afghanistan, Sept. 22, 2013. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Christopherson, 4/101 BCT)

There's help when you need it...

Crisis Intervention Hotline

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

The Crisis Intervention Hotline is staffed 24/7. If you need to talk to a counselor, you can reach them from any NIPR phone by dialing 1-1-1. You can also reach Crisis Counselors by Afghan Local National Phone by dialing 070-113-2000, (wait for tone) then 1-1-1.

Also reach Crisis Counselors by NIPR email at OEFKRISISHOTLINE@afghan.swa.army.mil.

Remember, you aren't alone!

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



Brigade Headquarters & Headquarters Company (HHC)



Greetings once more from Bagram, Afghanistan,



for perhaps the final time, God willing—or, as one expresses in Islamic tradition, In’shallah. This term is not so much an expression of overt religiosity as it is a gentle reminder that certain things are simply beyond our control. We labored under conditions of intense scrutiny, against rigorous timelines, and beyond physical and mental limitations to set the best possible conditions for a successful transition with our replacements, the Headquarters Company for the 130th Engineer Brigade. The momentum is strong and we can now only wish for the best as Joint Task Force Sapper takes the helm of the Theater Engineer Brigade.

However, it does not take one very long, after observing Captain Victor Gronenthal and First Sergeant Kevin Brummel in action, before the same one

concludes that these two make an excellent command team, and that the Leaders and Soldiers of 130th Engineer Brigade Headquarters company, “Sappers In!”, are an exceptional bunch. As the Phalanx Company of Joint Task Force Triple Nickel prepares to transfer authority of the Theater Engineer Brigade to Colonel Diana Holland and Command Sergeant Major John Etter, and their company, we keep in mind the tremendous sacrifices made by so few on behalf of so many. From End of Tour awards to exceptional physical achievements,

“We keep in mind the tremendous sacrifices made by so few on behalf of so many.”

from targeting cycles to wellness training, from medical follow-ups to managing battle tracking systems, the diverse, multi-functional, “Willing & Able” Officers,

Non-Commissioned Officers, and Soldiers of Joint Task Force Triple Nickel have done everything well. Now finally, after nine months, we can return to the safety and security of home proud of the work we have done, but fully cognizant that after so long, our family mem-

bers have adjusted, some having to make reluctant accommodations to cope with our absence. And so, the beat still drums, and our job is not yet through, not until every Soldier returns home and every military family and friend is sufficiently reintegrated.

Like a Phalanx, we will prevail. Like a Phalanx, we stand together. Like a Phalanx, we gain “Strength in Numbers!”

**-Capt. Matthew D. Pride
Commander, HHC
‘Phalanx 6’**



“Like a Phalanx, we stand together.”



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Spencer Garrison, JTF Triple Nickel

Members of JTF Triple Nickel Headquarters Company go on a warm-up run at the start of a “Castle CrossFit” workout earlier this month, as construction was completed on their new brigade CrossFit gym.



Sales of artwork benefit the 555 Able Soldier and Family Fund

The 555 Able Soldier & Family Fund helps support our Triple Nickel Soldiers and their Families during their times of greatest need, assisting those deployed and Families of our Fallen troops.

The Able Fund recently commissioned world-renowned combat artist Patrick Haskett to create a **print titled “Clear-Hold-Build.”** This print, shown above, depicts the 864th Engineer Battalion constructing a combat outpost in Afghanistan.

This print is being offered at \$80, with proceeds going directly to the Able Fund.

More information, including how to order, is available at 555soldierfund.com.



Family Shout Outs

Thank you Families for your love and continued support



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jon Flowers, JTF Triple Nickel

To our son, SPC John Shannon, 585th EN CO, 864 En Bn: Jack, you're in the home stretch now! Stay strong, be safe, and know we all send our love. You are My Hero! Hooah!
Love, Mom, Dad and Adam <3

To PFC Stephanie Harper, 864th EN CO, From Graham, NC: Won't be long now!! Love, Jeanne

To Spc. Symon Powlison, HHC, 555th EN BDE,
Hi hunny, I love you so much and miss you to the moon and back. I can't wait to be reunited with again, we're almost done!
☺ Love, Amber

To my BB, I love you, I miss you, I'll see you in a few days. I can't wait to take our dogs for a run and eat some sushi with you! Love, Joshua

To SPC Julian Wheeler, Pacemakers,
We are so proud of you and all you have accomplished!
We love you!
- From Christian and Rick and all the babies in New York City

To Lieutenant JG Matthew Wanamaker:
We are so very proud of you and the work you are doing!
Looking forward to seeing you for real hugs.
Sending Love, Mom and Dad

Only a few days left! All the best to the 555th — Keep safe and bring our son Stephen Steiner home safely with the rest of the troops. Love, Mom & Dad

To Captain Spencer Garrison and ALL who serve with him... THANK YOU for your service to our country, and we ALL look forward to your return. Safe travels, and we'll see you in Yardley, PA soon, Spence! *Editor's Note: Thanks Ma! See you soon, and it's been a real hum-dinger of a good time communicating back and forth via this newsletter these past nine months! Now I'm tired of tellin it! Love, —Spence*



Welcome home!

The first group from the 555th Eng. Bde. HHC arrived back at Joint Base Lewis-McChord earlier this month as the advance party. The rest of the company will return in October. Above: Capt. Eric Beattie reunites with his family at the welcome-home ceremony.



Photo courtesy of 321st Eng. Co.

Northern Afghanistan – 3rd Plt., 321st Eng. Co. prepares to board a helicopter headed to their company headquarters as the unit prepares for its final departure from Afghanistan.



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Spencer Garrison

Bagram Airfield – Col. Katers (left), JTF Triple Nickel commander, meets Afghan Maj. Gen. Muslim, Ground Forces Command chief engineer, to discuss progress of ANA engineers.



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Alessandra Braun, TF SAW

Southwest Afghanistan—Pfc. Brendan Bartz, 307th Eng. Bn., earns the Army Commendation Medal with Valor for defending fellow Soldiers during combat earlier this summer.



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Chenee' Brooks, COMCAM

Eastern Afghanistan – Soldiers with 149th Eng. Co. work on a construction project at FOB Lightning, to expand living areas to house more Soldiers.



By USAF Staff Sgt. Archiquette, AFN

Eastern Afghanistan—Afghan soldiers from the 203rd Corps Engineer Kandak partner with U.S. engineer units to take an active part in various construction projects, such as the expansion of FOB Lightning.



'Welcome to the Corps'

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Newly promoted Sergeants from across JTF Triple Nickel assembled at the Brigade Headquarters, Sept. 7, to be officially inducted into the Corps of the Noncommissioned Officer. Brigade Command Sergeant Major Kevin Bryan was the keynote speaker, and said, in part... "I ask you, What kind of leader will you be? Will you have a motivated spirit that your Soldiers can see and want to emulate? Will you have belief and conviction in your heart, knowing that it is your job to ensure your Soldiers receive the best leadership and training to succeed at their wartime mission? Your country, the U.S. Army, and your Soldiers are depending on you."

Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Spencer Garrison, JTF Triple Nickel Public Affairs

Chaplain's Closing, Maj. Dawud Agbere "This too shall pass away."

In an address in 1859, Abraham Lincoln told of an Eastern monarch who gave his counselors an assignment to come with a truth that would apply at all times and situations.



After careful consideration, they returned with this sentence: "This too shall pass away."

Fact is: nothing under the sun is permanent, no matter how wonderful or painful it may seem. That change is inevitable should be comforting. It is only a matter of time and our challenges and frustrations "too shall pass away."

Not long ago I was referred to as *incoming* — not "incoming" as in indirect fire, but as the new guy marooned in a dark eternal dungeon called Afghanistan who will never see the light of day again. Then, 9 months seemed forever.

It's all a matter of perspective. Today my new title is *outgoing*. Again, I do not mean "outgoing" in the sense of being nice or sociable. Doubtless, you all know I do possess neither of those qualities. Rather, "outgoing," meaning I have survived the many late night counseling of the Chief of Staff for my transgressions and for that I get to go home finally with an award. By this I mean nine months seemed only like yesterday.

It feels good to be "outgoing", and I congratulate my comrades on the Triple Nickel team for a job well done. But it was also an honor to have first been "incoming", beto have brought smiles to deserving Soldiers and families. Likewise, my "incoming" Sapper comrades have brought smiles to us and our families. Thank you for your willingness to serve. I pray that God shield you under His divine protection. And soon "this too shall pass away."

Remembering our Fallen

2013

JTF Triple Nickel, Afghanistan

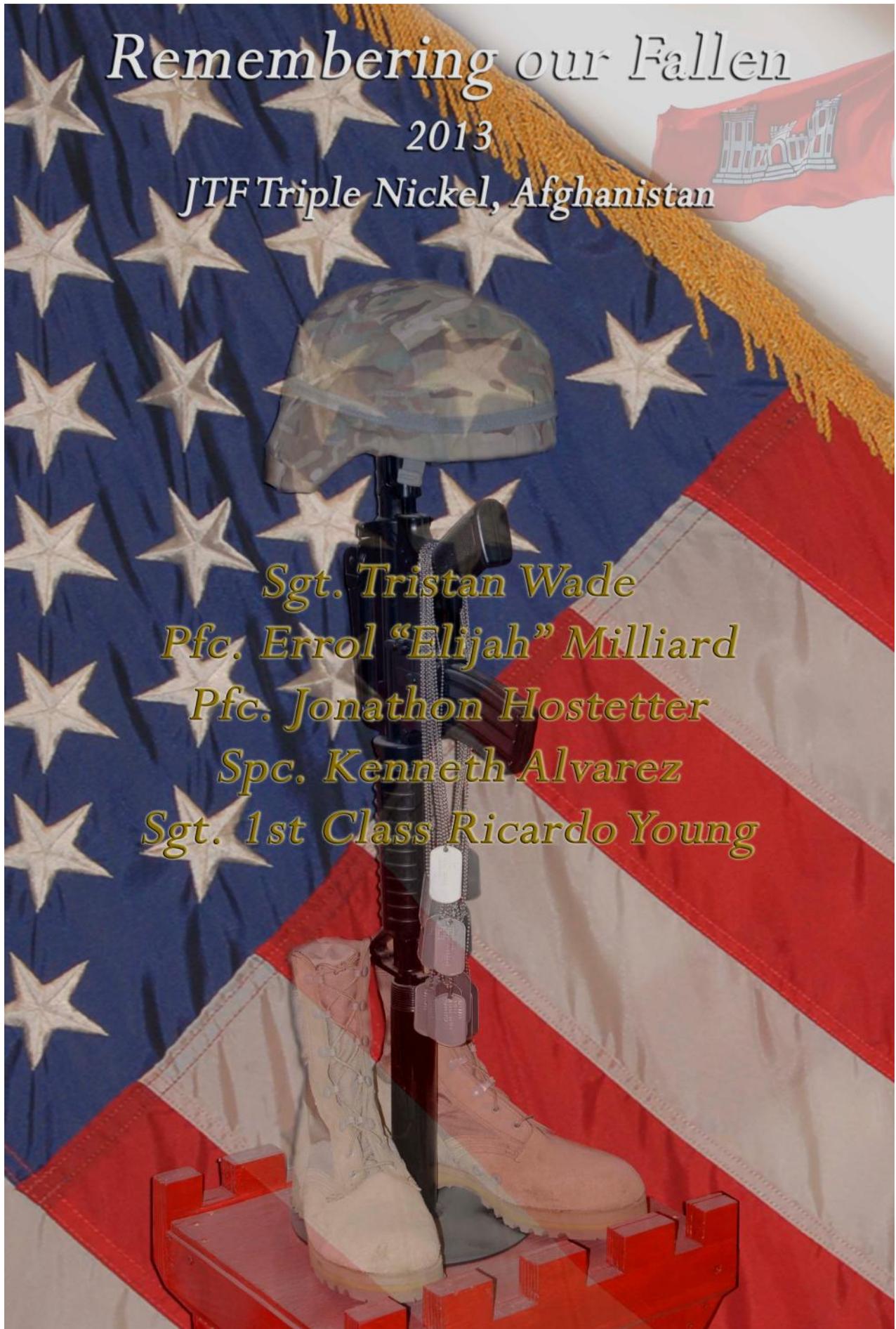
Sgt. Tristan Wade

Pfc. Errol "Elijah" Milliard

Pfc. Jonathon Hostetter

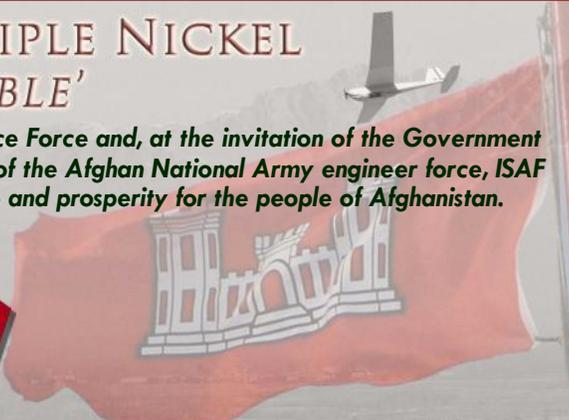
Spc. Kenneth Alvarez

Sgt. 1st Class Ricardo Young



JOINT TASK FORCE TRIPLE NICKEL 'WILLING & ABLE'

Our Mission: Deploy in support of the International Security Assistance Force and, at the invitation of the Government of Afghanistan, provide theater engineer support to include development of the Afghan National Army engineer force, ISAF troop construction, and route clearance, to help build a pathway to peace and prosperity for the people of Afghanistan.



U.S. THEATER ENGINEER BRIGADE
AFGHANISTAN 2013

 [Facebook.com/JointTaskForceTripleNickel](https://www.facebook.com/JointTaskForceTripleNickel)

We are the Triple Nickel...

The 555th Engineer Brigade, currently serving as the Theater Engineer Brigade in Afghanistan, with about 4,000 Engineer Service Members operating across the country. Our pride is each unit comprising our Joint Task Force—each with their own storied histories, some dating to the Civil War. This team of teams serves as a diverse, capable force that lives out our motto, "Willing and Able!"

555



Questions or comments? Email
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