

# SAPPER SENTINEL

"SAPPERS IN!"



JOINT TASK FORCE SAPPER

NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATER ENGINEER BRIGADE IN AFGHANISTAN



Issue 2 — November 2013

## Message from the Commander

It is hard to believe that another month has passed!

We have experienced a lot of change in that short period. We said good-bye to the 878th and



122nd Engineer Battalions, welcomed the 365th Eng. Bn., and repositioned hundreds of Soldiers and Seabees to different locations across Afghanistan as our mission continues to change.

Throughout this transition, our engineers continue to execute their tasks with the highest level of professionalism. Our route clearance Soldiers operate on the roads every day to ensure safe passage for others. Our construction units are in every region supporting base closure efforts or improving facilities that must absorb units and equipment that is moving around the country. Our EBAAT team of the 14th CMT and a Seabee detachment are preparing training and facilities for the newly-formed Afghan National Eng. Brigade. The staff sections of our HQs have managed an enormous work load due to the high number of re-deploying personnel, equipment moves, and frequently-changing priorities. I could not be more proud of our team!

In closing, I hope that everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. There are many things for which I am thankful this year. Among them is the recent opportunity to pin medals on hundreds of Soldiers, Seabees and Airmen, and send them home safe and sound. SAPPERS IN!!

— COL Diana Holland



Lt.j.g. Benjamin Stafford receives the annual flu vaccination, Oct. 12.

## Flu Vaccine Keeps Seabees Fully Mission Capable

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class John Banfield

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 28 Mass Communications Spec.

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Sailors attached to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 28 received their annual flu vaccinations while down range. The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza viruses. It can be spread when a person with the flu coughs or sneezes and the aerosol droplets come in contact with mucous membranes of other individuals.

The flu has the potential to adversely impact Navy force readiness and mission execution. There are more than 25 million reported cases of the influenza, 150,000 hospitalizations for seri-

ous complications and approximately 24,000 deaths each year in the United States. Vaccination is the primary method to reduce this risk by enhancing force immunity.


"Some other ways to help stop the spreading of the flu is to wash your

**"Other ways to help stop the spreading of the flu is to wash your hands and cover your cough"**

hands, cover your cough, and if you do have symptoms (of the flu) come to medical and we will decide if you need to be sick in quarters," said Hospital

Corpsman 1st Class Carolina Bornstein.

For more information about the flu vaccine please see NAVADMIN 194/13, 2013-2014,



**November—Warrior Care Month**

November is Warrior Care Month, the Army highlights its sacred obligation to provide the best possible care and transition support to wounded, ill or injured Soldiers, their Families and Caregivers

BUILDING A READY AND RESILIENT FORCE

Facebook.com/TheaterEngineerBrigade



## At A Glance...

- ◆ JTF SAPPER SERVING AS THEATER ENGINEER BRIGADE, COMMANDING ABOUT 3,500 MILITARY ENGINEERS
- ◆ ENGINEER FORCES SPREAD ACROSS AFGHANISTAN IN SUPPORT OF NATO-LED INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF)
- ◆ JOINT TEAM LED BY 130TH ENG. BRIGADE HQS FROM SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, HAWAII... INCLUDES ACTIVE, RESERVE, AND GUARD UNITS FROM ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE
- ◆ FOURTH LARGEST UNIT UNDER ISAF JOINT COMMAND, BEHIND ONLY EAST, SOUTH, AND SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COMMANDS

## Inside this issue...

- COMMAND SGT. MAJ.'S CORNER. TF RUGGED TAKES OVER REIGNS **2**
- ROUTE CLEARANCE PATROLS CONTINUE ROAD CLEARING MISSION **3**
- ANA LEARN FACILITY ENGINEER TRAINING FROM FSC SOLDIERS **5**
- 215TH CEK LEARNS DOZER MAINTENANCE **7**
- SURVEY AND DESIGN WORK TO IMPROVE BAGRAM ECP **8**
- HEADQUARTERS & HEADQUARTERS COMPANY (HHC) UPDATE **11**
- JTF SAPPER CROSSWORD! **12**
- GALLERY: AROUND THE BRIGADE. CHAPLAIN'S CLOSING **13**



## Command Sergeant Major's Corner Command Sgt. Maj. John Etter, "Sapper 7"

Aloha to our Ohana from  
Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan!

As the holiday seasons approach, this may be the first time you and your Soldier have spent time apart, or if like my Family, this season ranks in the dozens after 25 years of service.

Task Force Sapper recognizes this and we are truly grateful for the sacrifices you make for our country and our Army mission.

Soldiers and Families put their lives on hold many times through the course of their military career for the betterment of other countries and the peaceful survival of all mankind. It is a commitment like no other and only military Families and close friends can honestly relate to the hardships in which we endure.

Years from now you'll be able to reflect back on how your support for your Soldier, our Army, and our country has

*"We are truly grateful for the sacrifices you make for our country and our Army mission."*

brought great credit and admiration on the lives of you and of your Family.

I ask that you light or display a lit candle in your home to share in our time apart during this season. Know that you are in our thoughts and prayers here.

Just in case you misplaced your Soldiers address:

NAME  
JTF Sapper  
BLDG 23050  
APO AE 09354

Thank you for supporting your Soldier! Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Feliz Navidad, Happy Kwanzaa, Happy Hanukkah, Mele Kalikimaka, Happy Holidays and Mahalo! ("Thank you!")

Sappers In,  
CSM John Etter



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe, JTF Sapper Public Affairs

The 122nd Eng. Battalion Command Team cases the unit colors in a ceremony Nov. 28 marking the end of their mission in Afghanistan.

## Rugged Battalion takes over two large footprints

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe  
JTF Sapper Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The 365th Engineer Battalion, a reserve unit from Pennsylvania, assumed authority of the headquarters mission from the 122nd Engineer Battalion, Task Force Warhorse, Nov. 28th.

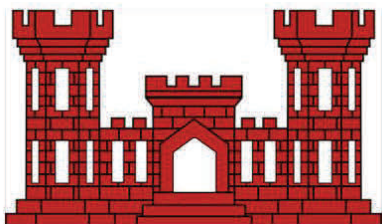
With the arrival of the 365th Eng. Bn., Task Force Rugged, takes over the headquarters

mission of all engineer units in the east, north of Kabul. TF Rugged does not stop there when it comes to their responsibility while they are in theater however. They will be assuming authority over the next month from the 8th Eng. Bn., which currently controls all engineers throughout the rest of eastern Afghanistan.

"This mission is difficult and has not been seen before," said Maj. Todd Atkinson, TF Rugged commander. "We are merging two battalions, one active duty and one National Guard into one battalion from the Army Reserve, to operate in RC-North and RC-East, covering approximately 41 percent of Afghanistan."

The unit is ready to tackle the problem set in front of them. They will be in charge of ensuring roads are cleared in both regional commands, construction and deconstruction in those areas, as well as assuming responsibility for the train, advise, and assist mission for the Afghan National Army engineers.

"Task Force Rugged knows that this mission will not be easy and it will be filled with numerous challenges," said Atkinson. "The 365th Eng. Bn. is trained and ready to take on and excel during execution of this monumental mission!"



The *Sapper Sentinel* is an authorized newsletter for members of the 130th Engineer Brigade and Joint Task Force Sapper. 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.

Public Affairs Officer: 1LT Laura Beth Beebe  
laura.b.beebe@swa.army.mil



Community & Government - Add A Category  
The official Facebook page of Joint Task Force Sapper - your source for news and photos of the dedicated TSAP engineer forces deployed across Afghanistan.

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

**Facebook.com/TheaterEngineerBrigade**  
**Email: laura.b.beebe@swa.army.mil**





# CBS NEWS: As U.S. leaves Afghanistan, engineers safeguard roads

By Charlie D'Agata

CBS News Correspondent

PAKTIYA PROVINCE -- They were just on their way to a wedding when the bomb ripped through their packed minibus. The explosion killed 18 Afghan villagers. Fourteen victims were women. One was a small child.

Nobody needed reminding that roadside bombs are the

travel. CBS News joined Soldiers of the Army's 8th Engineer Battalion from Fort Hood, Texas, on a route clearance through a volatile province in eastern Afghanistan.

The last time Sergeant Keenan Roberts and his platoon came down this road, they walked straight into an ambush.

"We had been dismounted from the vehicles for a couple

provided cover, blasting the wooded area where the shots came from with rapid bursts of fire from the mounted 50-caliber machine gun.

Roberts said the soldiers never got a good look at the gunmen, who disappeared through the thick reeds and overgrowth in a riverbed.

If you thought all U.S. troops were either packing up

Their mission is route clearance, finding and disabling the improvised explosive devices, or roadside bombs. It also means combat engineers from route clearance units will be the last ones to leave.

"We're out here looking to flush out the trigger men," Roberts said in a drawl with more than a hint of his hometown of LaFollette, Tenn. "You're looking for 'ant trails,' any disturbed earth, discoloration, for a command wire. Mostly they use lamp cord wire. We call it angel hair."

While this job has to be done on foot -- every moment keeping an eye out for anybody planning another ambush -- specially designed armored vehicles are combing the dirt roads in search for bombs.

U.S. combat engineers will be safeguarding every inch of every road traveled by tens of thousands of U.S. troops and hundreds of tons of equipment. They're called MRAPs, or Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. Leading the way is an MRAP with mine rollers in front, like rows of steam rollers, designed to trigger bombs before the vehicles themselves roll over them.

The Buffalo is a bulked-up version with a 30-foot mechanical arm and a camera mounted on its claw. That enables it to peek into culverts, the steel or cement structures that allow

water to pass under roads, an easy place for the Taliban to hide bombs without having to bury them in the road.

Another vehicle looks like a big bulldozer, but instead of the scoop (Continued on page 10)



Photo by Randall Joyce, CBS News

**22nd Eng. Co. Route Clearance Patrol Convoy on the road. U.S. combat engineers will be safeguarding every inch of every road traveled by tens of thousands of U.S. troops and hundreds of tons of equipment.**

number one killer in Afghanistan. But dealing with that threat head-on is the reason why U.S. Soldiers alone make the final sweep of any road used by American forces. It's one military operation that's not done alongside the Afghan Army.

As tens of thousands of U.S. troops and hundreds of tons of equipment move out of Afghanistan in the next year, U.S. combat engineers will be safeguarding every inch of every road they

hundred meters when we took small arms fire," he said.

As U.S. forces prepare to hand over security duties to their Afghan partners, the responsibility of clearing the roads remains strictly an American operation. Flying bullets strafed both sides of the column of men who were on foot patrol. Roberts said it was a miracle no one got hit. Their training kicked in immediately. They got low and returned fire. A soldier in a nearby vehicle

and heading home or hunkering down behind the blast barriers and razor wire of their bases, think again. Soldiers go outside the wire every day, and U.S. forces will keep conducting these dangerous operations until the last American truck leaves. You could call them America's exit strategy. They're certainly a big part of it.

**Their training kicked in immediately. They got low and returned fire.**



# **“Gaining Responsibility”**

## **ANA Engineers complete first project without Coalition**

By U.S. Army Sgt. Eric Provost  
Task Force Patriot Public Affairs

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- It is the Afghan National Army's duty to help build a better Afghanistan, but building things up starts at home. For the 201st ANA Corps, building continued Nov. 11, 2013, at their home on Forward Operating Base Gamberi.

The 201st ANA Corps Engineer Kandak's Horizontal Company began work on their first major project, building a cool-down yard.

A cool-down yard is a secured, fenced-in staging area where vehicles bringing supplies and materials onto the FOB go through an inspection process so the soldiers can ensure the truck is what it's supposed to be. Vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices are one of the main

threats facing bases in Afghanistan.

There is no set timetable for how long a vehicle will be required to stay in the cool-down yard while the soldiers are confirming the authenticity of the delivery.

"It is a major security measure," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Howard Barcus III, engineering advisor, 149th Vertical Construction Company, attached to 4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Patriot Security Force Advise and Assist Team, from Lexington, Ky. "This

*The project also marks the first joint effort between the horizontal and vertical companies.*

is really going to help not just the 201st Corps but the 4th Brigade Soldiers on Gamberi as well."

The project also marks the first joint effort between the Corps Engineer Kandak's horizontal and vertical companies.

Horizontal operations include landscaping, leveling and



**An ANA soldier with the 201st CEK's Horizontal Company is supervised as he maneuvers a scraper, to level the future site of FOB Gamberi's cool-down yard. This mission is the Corp's initial attempt at conducting engineer projects without Coalition Force assistance.**

roadway construction. Vertical engineers, on the other hand, handle carpentry, plumbing, masonry, and some units also perform electrical work.

It is the horizontal engineers' job to level the cool-down yard, cutting and filling the needed area, and provide adequate drainage, while the vertical engineers are in charge of erecting the fence that will surround the yard.

"They have great young non-commissioned officers and young, ambitious soldiers who want to learn and do good work; so I've got really high hopes for what they're going to do on this project," said 1st Lt.

Justin Zaleski, an engineer advisor to 201st Corps with 4th Bde, 10th Mtn. Div., from Havertown, Pa.

The CEK created the designs for the project with minimal input from 4th Bde, 10th Mtn

Div. advisors. The cool-down yard's actual construction is completely ANA-led and executed.

"It's really nice to see them take more autonomy and to be able to use their ANA leadership more to control the job site while just using us for confirmation of what they already believe," said Zaleski.

Many of the project's 201st Corps engineers recently completed

*"It's really nice to see them take more autonomy and to be able to use their ANA leadership more to control the job site while just using us for confirmation of what they already believe"*

Coalition Force-provided training on new bulldozers and scrapers they're using to complete this project.

"We just got done training on the bulldozer and the rest of the equipment and they all graduated and

got their certificates," said Barcus. "This is taking all those skills and putting them into one big project, an actual project, for the corps. It's something they can be proud of every time they come in and out of the gate."



**U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Howard Barcus, engineering mentor, 149th Vertical Construction Co., attached to 4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, speaks with an ANA soldier about shaping the site of what will be FOB Gamberi's new cool-down yard while an ANA soldier driving a bulldozer works behind them. It's the first joint operation between the CEK's horizontal and vertical engineers**





## ANA soldiers Complete Facilities Engineer Team Training

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Steven Keith  
Task Force Trojan Horse Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHANK, Afghanistan — Soldiers from 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps in the Afghan National Army received Facilities Engineer Team certifications from American Soldiers in the 850th Horizontal Engineer Company. The 850th HEC is part of Task Force Trojan Horse, a multifunctional engineer task force charged with providing construction and assured mobility assets in Regional Command East, South of Kabul.

The Soldiers from 850th were very proud of their Afghan counterparts, who after only

five weeks of training began showing mastery in the FET program. The program consists of classroom and hands-on portions revolving around the upkeep and maintenance of machinery at Afghan National Army bases. That includes, but is not limited to plumbing, carpentry, air conditioning/heater repair, and generator repair.

“This training enables Afghan engineers to be able to take care of their facilities after the coalition departs.” “This training enables Afghan engineers to be able to take care of their facilities after the coalition departs. If we can teach these soldiers how to fix this equipment, there is no doubt in my mind that it can provide many years of use”, said 1st Lt. Jonathan Hickey of Boston. First Lt. Hickey is the Task

*“This training enables Afghan engineers to be able to take care of their facilities after the coalition departs.”*



Photo courtesy of TF Trojan Horse Public Affairs

**Soldiers from FSC, 8th Eng. Bn. teach Afghans in small group sessions**

Force Trojan Horse Afghan National Army Partnership officer, and tracks all partnered projects in training for the task force.

The partnership between

850th and their Afghan National Army comrades will continue as they begin to focus on more construction-focused engineering at FOB Shank and beyond.

## Logistics Staff Assists New EBAAT Unit with Supply

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. James Beebe  
Joint Task Force Sapper Deputy J4

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan—The Command Supply Discipline Program (CSDP) is a program utilized by unit Commander's to ensure, regardless of their mission, that property

accountability is accurately and appropriately managed at all times.

A portion of the CSDP that is near and dear to most unit commanders is the unit hand receipt.

Joint Task Force Sapper's Engineer Brigade Advise and Assist Team (EBAAT), recently proved that, with a mission set that is constantly evolving and changing, property accountability still remains a top priority.

The J4 section conducted a Staff Assisted Visit (SAV) to help identify any areas or concern for hand receipt holders, and to ensure those individuals were properly resourced.

Presently, the EBAAT is comprised of Soldiers from the 14th Construction Management Team, Seabees from the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion

28, and Soldiers from the brigade headquarters J6 and J3 shops.

Capt. James Bouchard, the EBAAT current operations officer and primary hand receipt holder for both Organizational (ORG) and Theater Provided Equipment (TPE) hand receipts for the EBAAT, instills the importance of and need for good command supply discipline in his Soldiers.

This is critical because the EBAAT operates without a unit supply specialist located at Camp Phoenix with them.

Supply transactions and other sustainment issues are mostly coordinated with the 130th Eng. Brigade headquar-

ters company.

However, in addition to the SAV conducted by Sgt. Renee Outlaw and Spc. Aleyda Amaya, both from the JTF Sapper J4 section, Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced (PBUSE) and Logistics Support Activity (LOGSA) training was also conducted to provide the 14th CMT and NMCB 28, a means to troubleshoot sustainment issues internally if possible.

Outlaw, after having conducted the SAV, commented, “Everyone was willing and wanting to learn. For not being supply specialists by trade, they learned and understood a lot about the Army systems. I would say the SAV was a success”.

*Even with a mission set that is constantly evolving and changing, property accountability still remains a top priority*



Photo courtesy of 14th CMT

**Staff Sgt. Andrew Burrows and Staff Sgt. Michael Murdock work together in preparation for the SAV conducted by the JTF Sapper J4 section Nov. 20.**



# Kentucky Guardsmen leave behind legacy



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. John Rader

**A member of the ANA installs fiber glass insulation after a block of instructions given by Spc. Clyde Porter, 149th Vertical Construction Co. Porter will also assess the installation on the completion of the task**

Story courtesy Grayson Journal-Times

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — When the deployment for the Kentucky National Guard's 149th Vertical Construction Company is over, the unit will leave behind more than just the many structures they have built in Afghanistan.

The unit includes Guard members from Olive Hill and Cynthiana.

They're leaving behind the knowledge of their construction expertise with the local Afghanistan National Army (ANA) to help ensure the independence of a nation when the U.S. and Coalition forces scale-back their presence in the country.

"This is a mission of building lifelong bonds and structures with our ANA allies," said 149th commander, Capt. Adam Evans.

The training schedules cover all aspects of engineering that is organic to the 149th. This has the Kentucky Guardsmen working very closely with the ANA, teaching them the tools of the trade and will also include some priceless experience learned over the

years.

"Vertical construction will be the main emphasis of this training mission but horizontal engineering will be incorporated as well," said Evans. "Even though we are a vertical construction company, we have taken on horizontal training. This allows us to provide full spectrum construction engineering operations to the ANA. We will teach them everything we know to ensure they will be able to build and maintain structures from the ground up without the support of the U.S. and coalition engineers."

The Afghan Army postponed their tactical and combat training a few days out of the week to work with the

149th engineers. The training began with classroom tutorials on basic construction technique and then moved slowly to the hands-on portion of using tools and erecting structures.

The 149th's 3rd Platoon led by 1st Lt. Mathew Doyle began spearheading this training in August with Chief Warrant Officer Robert Woita. Situated in the Regional Command East Territory at Forward Operating Base

Shank, the two officers began putting together a training curriculum that walks the Afghan Army through a step by step training process in vertical engineering.

The training plans Doyle fostered became a standard that is well accepted among ANA and U.S. Coalition Force leaders. The plan was even adopted as the training model to be passed on to several other ANA brigades throughout Afghanistan.

Doyle and 3rd Platoon received great recognition for these contributions to the mission.

"I can't begin to explain how pleased I am with my platoon," said Doyle. "They have shown time and again that there is no task to big to accomplish. Now that we have the opportunity to expand our experience by teaching our Afghan allies, I'm confident that the men and women of 3rd Platoon will leave this country with a better understanding of the direction Afghanistan is headed. We will teach and be taught and therefore be able to share some amazing experiences when we return back to Kentucky."

The expertise of 3rd Platoon has been highly praised and ac-

knowledgeed when it comes to the vertical construction field in Afghanistan.

Doyle led the first big construction project in theater for the company that later became the operations command post for the 149th and the 122nd Engineer Battalion they fall under.

They have conducted numerous vertical construction projects since and have earned themselves the opportunity to operate from a

satellite location that allows for close proximity with the ANA and the facilities to meet with the Afghan chain of command to accomplish these tasks.

Additional members of the 149th have been dispatched to other parts of the country to conduct similar training from satellite locations.

1st Lt. Michael Hamblin along with Warrant Officer Jacob Lewis are among a group overseeing the Kentucky Guardsmen in Camp Mike Spann in the Regional Command North Territory.

A comparable training curriculum was established by the 149th officers in the Northern Territory because each ANA base employs a different schedule and adjustments must be made as necessary to fit into the program of the Af-

(Continued on page 9)

***"They have shown time and again that there is no task to big to accomplish."***

***"We will teach them everything we know to ensure they will be able to build and maintain structures"***



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. John Rader

**Spc. Clyde Porter along with two ANA soldiers finish up installing floor insulation at a construction site on FOB Lightning, Gardez, Afghanistan**





# Cranking Wrenches: 215th ANA CEK learns engineer vehicle maintenance

By U.S. Army Sgt. Bryan Peterson  
RC-SW Public Affairs

CAMP SHORABAK, Afghanistan — An Afghan National Army 215th Corps Engineer Kandak, or battalion, convoy was making its way back to Camp Shorabak from an operation in Sangin in late July. During the trip, the convoy struck an improvised explosive device, causing a bulldozer to roll off the trailer carrying it.

The ANA soldiers were able to reload the damaged bulldozer and continued the trek back to the regional ANA base. Once the convoy arrived, the soldiers unloaded the bulldozer and assessed its damage: two damaged tires, broken panels and fluid leaks.

Staff Sgt. Marcos Baeza, an engineer advisor with the Engineer Kandak, said the bulldozer was “dead lined and completely inoperative.” The Afghan soldiers didn’t know what to do, so Baeza and his Marines, subsequently, taught the soldiers how to fix the tires and oil leaks.

“Little things, to us, like fixing tires and oil leaks, are things they didn’t know how to do,” said Baeza, a Fresno, Calif., native. “We taught them some basics and now they’re able to do those things.”

This situation and a few others prompted Baeza and his advisor team to develop the Heavy Equipment Maintenance Course, a six-month course designed to certify soldiers as mechanics. The course is not just available to the kandak, but to soldiers within all four of the Corps’ brigades. The curriculum

also identifies select soldiers to become trainers for future courses.

The Engineer Kandak’s primary mission is horizontal engineering, which includes building roads, ditches and airstrips. They utilize everything from bulldozers and scoop loaders to excavators to graders.

Baeza said the heavy equipment operators train daily, if they are not on a mission. The soldiers are capable of building roads, for example, but “only if their equipment is operable,” as Baeza put it.

The course is broken into three phases. The first phase covers safety and basic repairs, such

as changing oil and tires. The second phase teaches soldiers how to change parts on their transportation assets, such as 7-ton trucks and Humvees. The

third phase focuses on, what Baeza considers as “the most important for the kandak,” fixing engineering vehicles, such as bulldozers and scoop loaders.

Afghan National Army Sgt. Jalaal Rasoli, feels the training will bring a sense of pride and partnership to the kandak. He said the work he and other mechanics will do will help enable the operators to conduct work both on and off of Camp Shorabak.

“[The operators] can’t operate the vehicles if [the vehicles] are not working,” said Rasoli, a mechanic attending the course from 215 Corps’ 2nd Brigade based in Sangin district. “If we can keep these vehicles operating, then the operators can do the job they’re supposed to do. This is a lot of training and I am doing all I



**ANA soldiers from the 215th CEK clean their graders during the Heavy Equipment Maintenance Course on Camp Shorabak, Nov. 2. More than 40 soldiers are learning to become certified mechanics through the six-month course designed to certify soldiers as mechanics**

can to help.”

Afghan National Army 1st Lt. Naqibullah has witnessed the Engineer Kandak make strides in the year he’s been the kandak’s liaison officer. The three-year ANA veteran is proud of his unit’s current capabilities compared to earlier this year.

He recalled a mission when his kandak went to Forward Operating Base Delaram II, in February. Their mission was to demilitarize parts of the base by clearing berms up to 10-foot-high, totaling more than five miles. The soldiers brought only two bulldozers.

After a day of work, both bulldozers broke down and the soldiers had to reload the equipment and return to Camp Shorabak.

“One, we didn’t think we would need more than two bulldozers for the job,” said Naqibullah. “Two, more importantly, we didn’t know how to fix the bulldozers if they were to break down.”

Naqibullah and his soldiers have since learned the impor-

tance of preventative maintenance. He said the course is a “big help to his kandak.”

“As of right now, we’ve built many checkpoints in Sangin, Delaram and also helped build things at [Regional Corps Battle School],” said Naqibullah. “Honestly, we are all very happy about these Marines, especially the course. Most of the guys were not experienced, but now we are getting better.”

Although taking time to develop and implement the course might sound like it took away from the kandak’s overall mission of supporting forward units, Baeza likened this training to heavy equipment operators in the states.

“Back in the states, we do the same thing the Afghan soldiers are doing here, which is sustaining our equipment,” said Baeza. “We’re here to advise them on how to do their jobs, and this [maintenance course] is part of their job. This is required training they’ll need to continue to operate as a kandak.”

*“We didn’t think we would need more than two bulldozers for the job...more importantly, we didn’t know how to fix them if they were to break down.”*

*“This is required training they’ll need to continue to operate as a kandak”*



## Surveyors work to improve Afghanistan's busiest E.C.P.

By Staff Sgt. Paul Clever  
Squad Leader, J7, JTF Sapper

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The 130th Engineer Brigade, currently serving as the Theater Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Sapper, is overseeing construction operations and upgrades in and around one of the Bagram Air Force Base's entry control points.

This mission's importance comes from the amount of traffic the ECP sees. This particular one is recorded as the busiest out of all of base ECPs in Afghanistan.

The JTF Sapper Survey and Design team that is assigned to this project consists of four individuals, the Noncommissioned Officer in charge, a team leader, and two technical engineer specialists. When asked about this project the Survey and Design officer in charge, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Willie Gadsden Jr., said, "As a unified system of expert surveying and technical engineering the J7 Survey and Design soldiers have always demonstrated sound approaches to getting the job done."

"Taking into account the



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe

**Staff Sgt. Paul Clever pounds in a stake to be used as a marker for the equipment operators who use the stakes as boundaries**



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe, JTF Sapper Public Affairs

**Cpl. Richard Ohman calls out points and elevations to be staked out at one of the Bagram ECPs, Nov. 20.**

level of professionalism and hard-work exuded by Staff Sgt. Clever and his team to complete the work out at Bagram's ECP, it speaks soundly to their prowess to accomplish any difficult task," Gadsden concluded.

This particular ECP currently handles all commercial traffic entering and exiting Bagram Air Force Base. Consisting of more than 450 vehicles per day, mostly semitrailers, which are essential for everyday maintenance and support to the Soldiers and civilians on base, the purpose of this mission threefold. They are mitigating drainage issues in the area, widening the existing lanes and adding an additional lane for coalition forces to enter and exit the base.

When they conducted their initial topographic survey of the area they began by setting survey control points using a Trimble R8 GPS system, then set up on those points using a Trimble 5601 Total Station. The used this technique because with a traditional GPS survey, it would not have been possible in the location they were working in.

To mitigate the drainage issues the area currently has, the JTF Sapper Survey and Design Cell designed a retention pond that will be able to hold in excess of 160,000 gallons of water, more than enough volume for the rate of rain and snowfall the Bagram area receives.

They then needed a design to divert all runoff in the area into the retention area. This was accomplished by regarding the area surrounding the ECP to guide any water into the drainage pipes leading to the retention pond.

This work also benefits the local Afghan community in two direct ways. First, by recontouring the land and helping to guide the water toward the retention pond, the surrounding fields drain easier, thus making them more suitable for planting crops. Second, there are local access roads on either side of the ECP which will be graded and improved while the earthmoving equipment is there working.

Widening of the existing

entrance and exit lanes at the ECP will take place during the lifetime of the project. Currently, due the large size of most vehicles operating through the ECP, and the existing width of the lanes, damage is consistently done to both vehicles and barriers. Widening the lanes will both help to prevent any damage in

the future and help the flow of traffic through the busiest gate in Afghanistan. Adding a third lane, as a dedicated coalition forces lane will drastically improve the flow of local commercial and civilian traffic through the ECP. Every time a convoy must enter or exit the base, traffic must stop for them. With the ECP improvements, commercial and civilian traffic will be able to continue unaffected by these convoys.

All the improvements to the ECP are not only essential to the mission coalition forces perform but they also will have a direct impact on the local community, helping to improve roads and farming in the area.

***"(They) have always demonstrated sound approaches to getting the job done"***





### Engineers prepared for return to Kentucky

(Continued from page 6)  
ghan Army.

"Our Soldiers receive a real sense of serving others and giving by passing on their knowledge to the ANA," said Evans. "At the end of a long work day, our Guardsmen leave the training site with a great sense of pride and accomplishment. The ANA are really excited and receptive to learning new skills which make it easy to provide training. For our soldiers, it is a very rewarding experience that they will carry with them long after the deployment is over."

Many meetings with the ANA Commanders are held to discuss

timelines, checks on learning in the form of quizzes for the ANA engineers, schedules for their troops, and training resources that are available.

This is the first challenge for the Guardsmen and it all comes together with the help of local interpreters that bridge the language gap.

"We start by teaching the ANA to request materials for training the way we do. There is some paperwork involved but it only ensures accountability for materials such as lumber for construction or fuel to fill the heavy equipment they will learn to operate," said Hamblin. "In a part of the world where most things are accomplished with a handshake and a good faith gesture, we try to explain the importance of following the proper chain of command when requesting supplies so that when we leave there is an accountable system established. This is the most difficult hurdle thus far."

Once the training is in full swing, the 149th troops get to work passing along the engineering knowhow and check the retention of information by admin-

istering periodic testing.

The vertical engineer team gives written exams that are translated from English to Dari, the local dialect in the North.

The heavy equipment team grades their students by watching them operate the equipment after giving them a task to perform with the heavy machinery.

All is part of a bigger picture so that the ANA will be ready to continue training and execute their own missions by the time the 149th is ready to redeploy back to Kentucky.

"Were making leaps and bounds with the Afghan Army despite the language barrier," said Lewis. "All seem very eager to learn and show up to class early. It's a great experience to be given the chance, not only to teach but to get to know them on a much more personal level. Everyday it's a different experience working with the ANA and it's also very exciting at the same time."

In addition to the 149th currently being engaged in two

separate Afghan Army training missions, the unit is presently making plans to adopt a few more similar missions in other parts of the Regional Command East Territory.

This will put the Kentucky Guardsmen at the top of the list for having the most missions that involve direct contact with the ANA. The company will now shift focus from construction to construction training as the end of another deployment for the 149th is just around the corner.

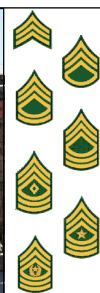
"Afghanistan is moving forward and with the right tools they will succeed," said unit 1st Sgt. Grayden Colegrove. "I'm very pleased that we had a chance to be a big part of the training that will later show when Afghanistan is on its own. Our vertical structures may someday be demolished, but the ability to educate and pass on our experience to the people of Afghanistan will last long after our buildings come down. We will return home and back to our civilian jobs knowing we left a legacy here in Afghanistan."

**The Kentucky guardsmen are at the top of the list for having the most missions that involve direct contact with the ANA**



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe

**Sgt. Click shows an ANA soldier how to use a miter saw**



### Task Force Trojan Horse Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony

Command Sgt. Maj. Sammy Sparger presided over the ceremony on FOB Shank, eastern Afghanistan, where the newly promoted Sergeants were inducted into the Noncommissioned Officer Corps Nov. 19th. (Photos by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe)



## Engineers continue to secure routes

(Continued from page 3)

in front it has a big metal plate, equipped with ground penetrating radar.

Route clearance units are discovering a lot of bombs. One recent patrol discovered 14 hidden bombs on a stretch of road less than one mile long.

Commanding officer Captain Andrew Elliott said he worries "like a parent" every time he sends his soldiers outside the base.

"No matter the training, there's still that threat," he said. "No matter how much body armor you're wearing, that bullet, that fragmentation (from a bomb or grenade) can still find its way to those hotspots that aren't covered. So you just worry, period, about your guys and gals that are on the front line, fighting every day."

It's a fight that's becoming more difficult by the day. As U.S. troops and their coalition allies hand over more of the battlefield to Afghan security forces, they're becoming more concentrated in the areas where they still operate.

That's especially true in the hostile mountainous eastern provinces along the border with Pakistan, where there are a limited number of roads American forces can use to move troops and supplies. The Taliban is aware of this.

"We know we're under a constant watch," Elliott said. "They plant hoax IEDs, waiting for us to misstep that. If we had done that (our search) incorrectly, there would have been a 200-pound bomb there the next day."

Elliott said another tactic Taliban fighters use is what the military calls "reseeding," or planting bombs behind convoys moments after they pass by, knowing that route clearance crews might be returning to base along those same roads.

"Once we don't have eyes on that area, the TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) are for insurgent forces to go right back in and put an IED right in the ground or in a culvert, because they know we've checked it thoroughly," he said. "And

**"Route clearance is always in the lead"**

**For the U.S. military, protecting its own forces is a priority as this long war winds down**



Photo by Randall Joyce, CBS News

**Sgt. Keenan Roberts, a team leader with the 59th MAC (right), walks with an interpreter through a village in the Zormat area. As U.S. forces prepare to hand over security duties to their Afghan partners, the responsibility of clearing the roads for U.S. forces remains an American operation**

unless it's eyes on, it's not deemed safe."

"Route clearance is always in the lead," Elliott said. "But just last month, there was a unit behind us that stopped for a mechanical issue, and within that time frame they actually put an IED right behind us. Within minutes."

But route clearance engineers can't clear every road, and Afghan civilians make up the overwhelming majority of deaths from roadside bombs, like the attack on Sunday that killed 18 people.

The Afghan government has chosen not to release the figures of Afghan security forces who have died in Taliban attacks this year, but as coalition forces pull back from combat missions in some of the most volatile areas, Afghan soldiers and police have suffered heavy and increasing losses.

CBS News was told they're also finding the majority of the bombs.

But for the U.S. military, protecting its own forces is a

priority as this long war winds down and comes to a close, now that almost everyone's so close to going home.

"You want everybody to walk off that plane in Texas with all their fingers and toes," Roberts said on patrol. "We want to go back as a group. We don't want anybody getting hurt and going back by themselves."

Part of that means that U.S. route clearance crews make the final sweep of any road used by American forces, regardless if Afghan security teams have checked them first.

"Route clearance will always be in Afghanistan for the long term," Elliott said. "There will always be route clearance and combat engineers leading the way."



Photo by US Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe, JTF Sapper

**Soldiers with the 59th Mobile Augmentation Company search for homemade explosives and trigger men while on patrol in eastern Afghanistan during a route clearance mission**



Photo by US Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe, JTF Sapper





## Brigade Headquarters & Headquarters Company (HHC)

Aloha & Happy Holidays Families,

As always, our team is doing great! The Sapper Family recently



celebrated Thanksgiving. We came together to break bread, play sports, and warm up with a bonfire. The day was a welcome rest from our daily activities and a chance to bond, while not losing focus of the important role we play.

The company continues to serve honorably as the foundation of the 130th Brigade, and our team performs at an amazing level. On a daily basis your Soldiers run a 24 hour operations center, provide intelligence to keep Soldiers safe, coordinate the maintenance and logistics for millions of dollars of equipment, train and enable Afghan Engineers, manage administrative functions

for thousands of Soldiers, as well as countless other tasks. We are focused, and making a difference in Afghanistan.

In addition to our mission and teamwork, the Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers of the company continue to shine as individuals. In the past two weeks alone, 1st Lt. Hawthorne, 1st Lt. Miller, Sgt. Amaya and Spc. Blanchard all were promoted to the next rank.

Others here have competed in mock boards, began college classes, earned army physical fitness badges, fired expert on their weapon, or completed countless hours of Army Structured Self Development training.

Looking back over the past two and a half months, it is clear that every individual in our company has grown as a leader.

Lastly, I do know that there is some apprehension on the home front regarding changes of mission or plans for your Soldier or loved

one. Please understand that your deployed husbands and wives are resilient, trained, and ready to complete any mission. We are prepared for any scenario, and we appreciate your love and concern on the home front.

Thank you and have a safe, healthy, and happy Holiday Season! **Combat Ready!**

**-Capt. Victor Gronenthal**  
Commander,  
HHC, 130th Eng. Bde.



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe

**Soldiers from the company enjoy cigars and camaraderie around a fire at Bagram Airfield**

***"Every individual in our company has grown as a leader"***



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe, JTF Sapper

**The J4 section enjoys Thanksgiving Dinner together at the DFAC**

## Sexual Harassment and Assault Response Program (SHARP)

### What is Personal Courage?

Facing your fear, danger or adversity (physical or moral). Personal courage has long been associated with our Army. With physical courage, it is a matter of enduring physical duress and at times risking personal safety. Facing moral fear or adversity may be a long, slow process of continuing forward on the right path, especially if taking those actions that is not popular with others. You can build your personal courage by daily standing up against sexual harassment and sexual assault in your formation.

Why is it important for us to stop sexual harassment and sexual assault?

Answer: We all have a responsibility to take action to change our culture to eliminate an "enemy that lies within our ranks." (CSA General Casey, SHARP Summit 2010)

**There is No "innocent bystander"**



When you see the warning signs of sexual violence, you either:

Support	-or-	Deter
Encourage	-or-	Discourage
Enable	-or-	Condemn
Speak Up	-or-	Stay Silent
Intervene	-or-	Ignore

You are either:

**a Leader** -or- **a Follower**

Which one are you? Whether you're a Soldier or a civilian, it takes **COURAGE**

Stand Up, Be A Leader who

**Intervenes, Acts, and Motivates!**

***We are all leaders, and as leaders there is no such thing as a passive bystander. Each of us is either enabling sexual harassment and sexual assault or standing up to stop it.***



**JTF Sapper  
Crossword  
Challenge!**

**ACROSS**

- 201st CEK \_\_ yard is 1st independent project
- 59th Mobile \_\_ Company
- Survey equipment used at Bagram ECP
- Where 149th is from in U.S.
- 215th CEK's home base
- Brigade Command Sergeant Major
- Program to ensure property is properly managed

**DOWN**

- A leader intervenes, acts, and \_\_
- TF \_\_ Horse taught FET program to ANA
- \_\_ Eng. Battalion is from Ft. Hood, Tx.
- New Task Force for RC-E & RC-N

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

**About this Photo:**  
Seabees from NMCB28 work on deconstructing a standing building in Kandahar Nov. 15. (Photo by 1st Lt. Laura B. Beebe)

**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 [OEFCRISISHOTLINE@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:OEFCRISISHOTLINE@afghan.swa.army.mil).

**Remember, you aren't alone!**

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





Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe

*Western Afghanistan – 1st Platoon, 576th Eng. Company, test fire their weapons prior to their patrol Nov. 25.*



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe

*Southern Afghanistan—Sgt. 1st Class Willy Sobczak, 837th Eng. Co., earns the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart for service in Operation Enduring Freedom. The 837th is scheduled to head home soon.*



Photo courtesy of RC-South Public Affairs

*Southern Afghanistan—Soldiers from TF Bayonet participate in the Army Ten Miler Shadow Run on Kandahar Airfield Nov. 15.*



By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe

*Eastern Afghanistan – 2nd Platoon, 22nd Eng. Clearance Company, huddles around their trucks for the pre-mission brief Nov. 13.*



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe

*Eastern Afghanistan – Petty Officer 3rd Class Hernandez receives a coin from Col. Diana Holland, JTF Sapper Commander for his outstanding work at Camp Phoenix.*

## Chaplain's Closing, Maj. John Sedwick "Challenge of Change"

Several Sundays ago I preached a sermon from the 21st Chapter of Luke, which captured Jesus' description about the end times. He warned his disciples, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven."

Whether you are a Christian or not, you might agree that many of these signs appear to be taking place in our present day and age.

Certainly everyone belonging to JTF Sapper has experienced dramatic change in the last few months, as deployments for individual battalions have been reduced by a month or more, and

even some individual engineer companies arrived in theater and promptly received orders to return to their home station after having just completed their first or second route clearance patrol. And those of us in the Brigade Headquarters find ourselves anxiously awaiting a decision about our future in the next few days.

Change can either bring joy or sadness—depending upon your perspective—but it will undoubtedly create stress for all units and solitary Soldiers as we scramble collectively and individually to pack, unpack, re-pack and stand by to stand by.

Our Families in the rear have perhaps made life-changing decisions based upon a projected 9-month deployment that may now be dramatically reduced.

I would encourage our Soldiers and Family members back

home to exercise great discretion and caution as they manage their finances. This may not be the time to purchase that motor home or beach front property in Hawaii.

I would encourage our Soldiers to continue to place the mission first; to take care of the Soldier working next to you; to

continue to lead your subordinates and keep them focused on the mission at hand.

As Jesus once told his disciples, "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."



By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe



# JOINT TASK FORCE SAPPER 'SAPPERS IN'

**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 2013-14



Questions or comments? Email  
1st Lt. Laura Beth Beebe  
Public Affairs Officer  
[laura.b.beebe@swa.army.mil](mailto:laura.b.beebe@swa.army.mil)



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