

# HHC 926th EN BDE



*A look into the lives and missions of the Soldiers of*

*926th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division*

*Baghdad, Camp Liberty, Iraq*



**A BI-Monthly Newsletter**

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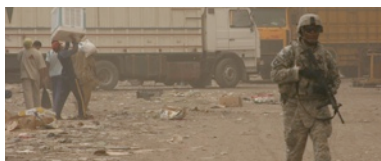
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## **Command**

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## **Task Force Gold**

*Task Force Gold, the turning point for Operation Iraqi Freedom, it is a successful and fully capable force. It is here in an area known as Sadr City where the 926 EN BDE is focusing its efforts to re-vitalize a war torn and impoverished neighborhood.*

In only a few short weeks Task Force Gold has achieved astounding results. The Jamilla Market area is being re-born as Iraqis rebuild their shops with the assistance and backing of the 926 EN BDE and the Iraqi Government.

Already the area is becoming safer for Coalition Forces who routinely interact with the local population. CPT Darrick Wright of Task Force Gold said, "The people see that we are here dealing with them honestly and that we want to help. JAM (Jeysh al-mahdi) only wanted something in return."

**"One team, One fight!"**

The revitalized market has brought about a change in an area which was once hostile. This area of Sadr City is quickly becoming a model for the rest of Iraq. As time passes in the area, one can easily see the transition from a battle ground to a vibrant and thriving community.

Streets which were once filled with garbage and raw sewage are now being cleaned up. The Iraqi people in the area show a keen desire to help themselves, to better their situation, and live a normal life. According to COL Jared Olsen, Task Force Gold Commander, "the Iraqi business owners have had the courage to return to their shops after the Coalition Forces forced JAM members out of the area." He continued by saying that the Government of Iraq has also provided workers who assist in cleaning efforts around the Jamillia Market area. The mission of Task Force Gold is to bring peace to Sadr City and improve the quality of life for its residents.

-SPC Hutchins



*Residents within Sadr City work to improve their neighborhoods by replacing war destroyed walls and reopening markets. What once seemed a dream now seems only weeks away.*





## 926th EN BDE PSD (Protective Services Detail)

### “One Team, One Fight”

They have long hours, little to no down time, and they often forget what day of the week it is due to the amount of missions they perform. They joke about what they will do when they return to the hooch. Yet despite the fact that they are in Iraq, you will still find them in high spirits, laughing and cracking jokes. What little free time they get they spend either combating each other on “Call of Duty 4” or sitting in their motor pool having a barbeque. They talk about everything from the day’s mission to which college is better; Auburn or Alabama. The later discussion normally gets a little heated from time to time. Each one has their own favorite part of the job, for some it is the money, others it is the adventure, but for SSG Thomas Bowie it is, “Being able to see more of Iraq, and see how the people here live and to understanding the Iraqis better.”

Before they leave, they huddle together, where they bring their thoughts, fears, and gratitude before God. Before every mission SGT Rusty Tetter says, “I pray to God to watch out for the team and for protection.” As they leave the comforts of the Victory Base Camp they know that the enemy could be lying around any and every corner, but for these Trojans they fear only mission failure. They watch with vigilant eyes every rooftop and suspicious person that they can see. The heat of the Iraqi desert and the weight of the body armor add discomfort for them, yet they move on into their mission. They may get to eat breakfast and lunch today or they may not, but you will never hear them complain. When they return late in the afternoon or evening they think of only three things; chow, a shower, and mail call. Those soldiers who are lucky enough to



**Members of the 926th EN BDE PSD get their vehicles, gear, and themselves ready for a convoy.**

get mail that day keep their enjoyment to themselves. Both SGT Tetter and SSG Bowie say that they enjoy working out and hanging out with the rest of the team after a mission, it is their way to relax. SSG Bowie enjoys playing basketball and has said that it puts him in another mode. The team’s work done, they return to their living area to rest and relax; preparing themselves for the next day’s tasks.



-SPC Hutchins

## Good Friends, Good Food

*Just down the road the promise of a healthy meal awaits us. We trudge from our CHUs and offices, motor-pools and worksites, through the blazing heat knowing that inside the dining facility we will find something good to eat and a friend to share a meal.*

The Dining Facility is a large structure with two entrances and guards stationed outside to make sure that no-one can get in that shouldn’t be there. They also check our weapons to make sure that we have them on “safe” so that there are no accidents to ruin our day.

Our Mothers would be proud to see that as soon as we enter the building there are wash stands for us

all to wash our hands. And we all do. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, you know.

We pick up our trays and plates and a packet of flatware and head towards the serving line. Along the way we scan the rows of tables looking for the usual suspects. I spot MAJ Liles, CPT Waddell and MSG Roberts and acknowledge them with a nod and mark my seat at the table with the silent gesture.

There is lots to choose from and always something new. Eggs to order, omelets with anything you want in them, bacon, biscuits and gravy. There is fresh fruit and danish pastries, cereal and bagels, and of course, hot coffee.

For lunch you can choose short order stuff like burgers, fries, Philly-Cheese-Steak sandwiches, and sloppy-joes or a more traditional or healthier meal such as baked or grilled chicken or a deli sandwich.

Dinner varies depending on the day of the week. Specialties include Surf and turf with huge pre-cracked crab legs and sizzling steaks. There is meatloaf and pork-chops and BBQ ribs that fall off the bone.

And with every meal there is an open salad bar, a taco bar and drinks of every type, from milk to juice and even “Near-Beer”, an alcohol free beverage that tries real hard to taste good but misses by just that much. Still, a taste of lemon makes it tolerable and, for a brief moment, can transport you back to a memory of a back yard BBQ on a hot summer day.



The People who work here are from all different nations. They cook and clean and stack the trays. they refill the coolers and restock the salad bar. They go out of their way to make sure that our meals are tasty and filling.

The Mess Sergeant is in charge and plans this all out . They organize and supervise and direct the decorations that adorn the walls and the tables. He makes sure the menu is complete and assures that the food is ready on time.

And because of all that we can sit down and chat and for an hour if we are lucky can relax and spend time with good food and good friends.



- CW3W-

## Awards and Promotions

The following soldiers have been promoted since arriving in theater. Their efforts are in keeping with the finest traditions of military service and reflect distinct credit upon themselves, the unit and the United States Army

SGT Shonda Wright of Montgomery, Alabama was promoted to the Rank of Staff Sergeant. Our sincerest congratulations.

### 926th Engineer Brigade Coin for excellence

CPT Scott Swilley, SSG Wade Frehn, 1SG Anthony Coker and the commander, LTC Dave Hill, of the 1st Special Task Battalion 4th Infantry Division received the 926th Commanders Coin for Excellence at Forward Observation Base (FOB) Falcon. These soldiers have made an outstanding accomplishments in training the Iraqi National Police in Route Clearance tactics. Another step in the US to Iraqi handover.

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## Birthdays



*The following soldiers have birthdays in the month of June*

SGT Michael England	July 1st
SPC Todd Meuli	July 7th
SPC Amos Kent	July 10th
SPC Tiffany Snow	July 11th
SGT Curtis Calhoun	July 17th
CSM Daniel Zebrauskas	July 18th
1LT Stephen Gress	July 20th
LTC Alberto Rosende	July 20th
SPC Kimberly Tyus	July 21st
MSG Jody Roberts	July 24th
MAJ William Reeves	July 26th
SFC Roy Holmes	July 28th
SGT Terence Barron	July 29th
PFC Thomas Odeneal	July 29th

## MWR

### Camp Liberty provides numerous Moral, Welfare and Recreation Activities (MWR)



The Engineer Express just finished its last preseason basketball tournament in

preparation for the start of the basketball season in August. Coach Flowers, of Brundidge, AL states "we have an enormous amount of talent that needs to be synchronized" SGT Barron is the leading scorer on the team. The Engineer Express team motto is "Discipline and Class will beat talent every time" Coach Flowers is a football fan and a bigger fan of his wife and enjoys her homemade spaghetti. He loves to play pool and fish.

The 926 Softball team is preparing for its 4<sup>th</sup> of July tournament. The team is coached by SSG Joyner and CW3 Babon. Coach Joyner, of Jackson, MS states "I have seen dramatic improvement in play.....the morning practices are really helping.....outfielders need to be ready to see a lot of action.....most people will try to swing for the fences instead of hitting the holes...SSG Joyner's hobbies are playing computer games, watching football and chatting with his girlfriend. Coach

Babon is from Missoula, MT. He states: "I am looking forward to opening play. We are slowly gelling as a team, people are getting their equipment through the mail from loved ones. Babon enjoys hunting, wood working, gardening and spending time with the family.



### "Just a Word"

#### From the soldiers of the 926

We recently asked two questions of random HHC, 926 soldiers and want to share their answers with you. Each issue, we will ask questions of different soldiers until all have been represented. The process will then start all over again.

This issues questions:

- (1) What do you miss most about home?
- (2) How has the 926 affected the people of Iraq?

#### SSG Wright

"(1) The thing I miss the most is spending time with my kids...(2) Making a difference with the kids by passing out toys to them. It means a lot to them."

#### SGT Lehman

"(1) I miss my family and my dog, Armani... (2) The 926 is building a better life and community for the people of Iraq"

#### MSG Roberts

"(1) My wife, family, & Friends and of course my Harley... (2) I believe that the 926 is working very hard to improve the living conditions for the people of Iraq"

#### SGM Hudson

"(1) My wife and proud of my son who scored 22 on his ACT...(2) I think the 926 is doing a great job working with the people of Iraq. Mission Above All!"

#### SPC Osterman

"(1) My family... (2) By improving their quality of life."

#### SSG Robinson

"(1) I miss spending time with my daughter...(2) I think knowing that we're putting our lives on the line makes a difference."

#### SFC Caselberry

- 1) Chillin with my friends....(2) We supply power, water, etc."



SSG James Shoemaker poses with children while the 926th EN BDE assess repairs to a Sadr City School.



Photos taken by SGT Eric Hill and members of HHC 926th EN BDE



# Soldiers Photos

## Photos of soldiers and scenery from around Baghdad.

Photos listed from left to right top to bottom

### Photo 1

SSG Gaela Smith of Montgomery, Alabama reads over email for the 926th S1 section.

*Photo by MAJ Enrique Sandoval*

### Photo 2

SPC Tiffany Snow & PFC Conesha Massengal laugh together during a rooftop ceremony.

*Photo by MAJ Enrique Sandoval*

### Photo 3

CPT Jared Corsi of St Louis, Missouri promotes PFC Christopher Wright of Wetumpka, Alabama to the rank of SPC.

*Photo by MAJ Enrique Sandoval*

### Photo 4

SPC Christopher Wright

*Photo by MAJ Enrique Sandoval*

### Photo 5

SPC Katrina Rhodes of Montgomery, Alabama looks

up with a smiling from her computer while working with the 926th EN BDE S1 section.

*Photo by MAJ Enrique Sandoval*

### Photo 6

MAJ Chuck Liles of Wetumpka, Alabama reads over equipment status with the 926th EN BDE S4 section.

*Photo by MAJ Enrique Sandoval*

### Photo 7

Iraqi children waiting with a convoy

*Photo by LTC James Barte*

### Photo 8

Iraqi Family

*Photo by LTC James Barte*

### Photo 9

MSG Jody Roberts towers with the 926th EN BDE Colors during the combat Patch ceremony.

*Photo By SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 10

LTC James Barte of West Memphis, Arkansas poses

with a young Iraqi during a site assessment.

*Photo by SGT Whittney Stamey*

### Photo 11

SSG Jeffery Flowers of Montgomery, Alabama brings the 926th EN BDE Patching ceremony to a new level with his singing of the National Anthem during the Patching ceremony.

*Photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 12

PFC Brandon Petersen catches his breath while waiting on the start of the

926th EN BDE patching ceremony.

*Photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 13

PFC Morgan Agricola of Birmingham, Alabama receives his combat patch from SGM Danny Hudson of Atlanta, Georgia during the

926th EN BDE patch ceremony.

*Photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 14

Members of the 769th EN BN & 107th EN BN stand in perfect line during the 926th EN BDE patch ceremony.

*Photo By SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 15

PFC Amos Kent of Indianola, Mississippi is promoted to the rank of SPC by CPT Jared Corsi of St. Louis, Missouri.

*Photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 16

PFC Joshua Osterman of Columbus, Georgia is promoted to the rank of SPC by CPT Jared Corsi of St. Louis Missouri.

*photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 17

CPT Matthew Slyder waits on a MRAP for a convoy from Tharwa 1.

*photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 18

MAJ Victor Estes of Daleville, Alabama stands in front of a damaged building at Tharwa 1.

*photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 19

Iraqi Family

*Photo by LTC James Barte*

### Photo 20

SGT Amy Lehman of Albany, New York listens the BDE Commanders comments before a coin ceremony with the 926th PSD.

*photo by SGT Eric Hill*

### Photo 21

BG Jeffrey Talley of South Bend, Indiana presents the Commanders Coin for Excellence to SPC Thaddeus Lake and the members of the 926th EN BDE PSD.

*photo by SGT Eric Hill*



## Note from the HHC Commander

*CPT Jared Corsi*

We have moved into our second month of deployment. All of you are doing an excellent job as Iron Castle soldiers. We have placed the 926 Engineer Brigade patch onto our right shoulders and are now officially recognized as combat experienced soldiers. Our engineering efforts are making an immediate difference in the many Mohallas that make up Baghdad. Your teamwork, focus and bravery are evident to all. Task Force Gold continues to be the main effort and never lose sight of this. Continue to work hard and respect the local culture. The temperature is definitely rising as we move through the heart of the summer months. Most of us have never experienced such heat. Stay hydrated and find time in your busy schedules to conduct

Physical Training a minimum of five days a week. This physical training will help you sustain the mental and physical demands of every mission you go on outside of the wire. I am sure that all of the members of the Protective Services Detail and Command Team will attest to this. To the families of our great soldiers, thank you for your love and patience as we push through this mission. Our children may not understand the big picture of our efforts here, but the point you can drive home is we are doing this for them.



## Note from the First Sergeant



*1SG Dennis Denton*

Getting ready for a deployment and family separation is all part of what Soldier's do in today's ARMY. We will soon start our cycle of allowing HHC, 926th Engineer Brigade Soldier's to begin their allotted Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Leave from theater, which will take them away from the ongoing stresses of a combat environment. As we learned in our R&R leave briefing, going home in the middle of a deployment, Soldiers must use good common sense as they again mingle with loved ones. Take

time to relax and not over indulge in the things that a free society offers. When Soldiers return home, try not to make your schedule so full that it crates an unacceptable level of risk. You should always make reasonable plans. All Soldiers of the Brigade headquarters are doing an outstanding job up to this point, although we still have a ways to go in accomplishing what we have set out to do. We need all Soldiers to return safely and on time to continue the success of accomplishing our mission. All Soldiers will have an opportunity to take their R&R during their tour. We ask that everyone be patient as travel begins, because we all know that air travel can be delayed for one reason or the other. In closing, we need to note that the support that is provided by those in the rear is appreciated greatly and we could not have come this far in our deployment without that support. From the heart, I say thanks again for all that you do. Continue to support us and we will make you proud. I hope everyone has a wonderful 4th of July celebration and continue to be safe.