



225TH ENGINEER BRIGADE

OCTOBER 7, 2009

VOLUME III, ISSUE V

What's Inside:

*Top Engineer Visits
225 Soldiers*

**ENGINEER CALL WITH
SPICY HOT TWIST**

*Force Protection
at 4 Corners*

**Soldier Promoted After
1,000s of Miles of Missions**



COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

BG Owen W. Monconduit

Hello Engineer Family. The month of October presents another opportunity during this deployment for everyone to remain vigilant, be determined, and Soldiers to Maintain Military Standards (MMS). Engineering operations continue to be OUTSTANDING and accomplishing our objectives for October are ever so important.

Engineers, you have proudly made significant contributions in partnering by, with, and through our Iraqi brothers to protect the people



and develop civil capacity. Together as an engineer team, FIRST TEAM, numerous single story wooden structures, force protection barriers, roads, parking areas, Commander's Emergency Response Program projects and yes, even bridging missions are attributable to your dedication and service

– "you place the mission first." Great job Engineers! And, good news, we have a number of additional engineer projects similar to those just listed, which are currently under design to

enable the Brigade Combat Teams. The projects under design will become future engineer work tasks. An indicator of your past performance leads to a high certainty that each task will be completed to standard. Keep up the great work!

Safety is always a command priority. October is a lead-in to the forthcoming holidays in November and December but don't become preoccupied or anxious. Implementing proven and reliable safety measures will win out over haste or taking short cuts.

Remember, a
**SAFE DEPLOYMENT ≈
A SAFE RETURN**

MESSAGE FROM CASTLE 7

CSM Joseph Major

Greetings Engineer Warriors,

As we begin to prepare to move the unit back to home station, let's not forget about safety. We don't need anyone hurt or hospitalized this close to going home. The 225th Engineer Brigade's leaders and Soldiers have done an outstanding job looking out for one another and keeping their "battle buddy" safe. So let's stay mission focused and keep safety our number one priority.

I would like to remind everyone to wear a reflective belt while running or while moving around at night. When moving around the FOB, JSS, COB either by walking, riding a bicycle, or driving, always observe the traffic signs. Don't speed, don't drive recklessly and watch out for the other people. Be

careful in the office and housing area, because there are a lot of rocks and uneven walkways. Use a flashlight at night as you move around the areas.

Before moving outside the wire, conduct pre-combat checks (PCC) and pre-combat inspections (PCI). Make sure all Soldiers have their personal protective equipment (PPE), like IOTV, ACH, gloves, eye protection, and hearing protection. Ensure they know the mission, routes and any hazards on route. Conducting PMCS before all missions is a must. Take



no short cuts during the preparation process. STAY MISSION FOCUSED and watch out for your battle buddy.

So far this deployment has been a great experience. Now let's continue to keep it a safe one. Remember to Maintain Military Standards (MMS) each and every day.

"REMEMBER: IT'S NOT WHAT YOU HAVE, IT'S WHAT YOU DO WITH WHAT YOU HAVE THAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE."

Safe Deployment equals
Safe Return

CSM Joe Major



On the Cover: Photo by 1Lt. Michael Lind. Staff Sgt. Trevor Harlow of Huron, Ohio, Spc. James Altomare of Norwalk, Ohio, and Spc. Kyle Kelley from Sugarcreek, Ohio, 1192nd Engineer Company, guide a metal pallet into place on an ammunition storage container in Mahmudiyah, on the outskirts of southern Baghdad, Sept. 29.

Public Affairs Officer

Lt. Col. Pat Simon

Editor:

Sgt. Rebekah Malone

Staff Writers

1st Lt. Michael Lind

Sgt. Tracy Knowles

Contributing

Journalists

Foy Hartman



—Vol. III, Iss. V—

- 2 Commander/CSM comments
- 3 Chaplain's Corner
- 4 PT Test
- 5 Army 10-Miler
- 6 Eng. Call
- 7 Soldier promoted / Safety
- 8 SM/NCO of the Month
- 9 4 Corners / Top Eng.
- 10 Mongols

Chaplain's Corner

By Chap. (MAJ) Jeff Mitchell

The Greatest News Ever Heard

"And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness." Romans 4:3-5



Staff Sgt. Paul Fleming and Chap. (Maj.) Jeff Mitchell at a school.

Abraham was made right with God the same way any human ever has or ever will be made right; justification by faith. Justification is perhaps the greatest news ever heard. Justification is the act of God by which He deems an ungodly person righteous based on the performance of Jesus Christ on the cross, not

man's performance. Man can do good moral acts without God, but those moral acts cannot transform a man's heart to make him righteous and acceptable to God. When any man or

woman or child believes God and accepts the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, God the Father reckons that person righteous at their core and spirit level. Then the person does acts of righteousness from their new-righteous nature or identity. It

becomes natural. Not only is it the greatest news ever personally heard; it is the greatest news worth telling. It is also the base line of our praise. Receive the Greatest News Ever Heard, then live it and give it as you have opportunity. Chap

Joke of the Week

By Staff Sgt. Richard Hebert

A Platoon Sergeant and his Platoon Leader are bunking down in the field for the night. The Platoon Sergeant looks up and says, "When you see all the stars in the sky, what do you think, sir?" The LT replies, "Well, I think of how insignificant we really are in the universe; how small a piece of such a grand design. I can't help but wonder if what we do truly means anything or makes any difference. Why? What do you think of, Sergeant?" "I think somebody stole the damn tent."

PT TEST IN IRAQ

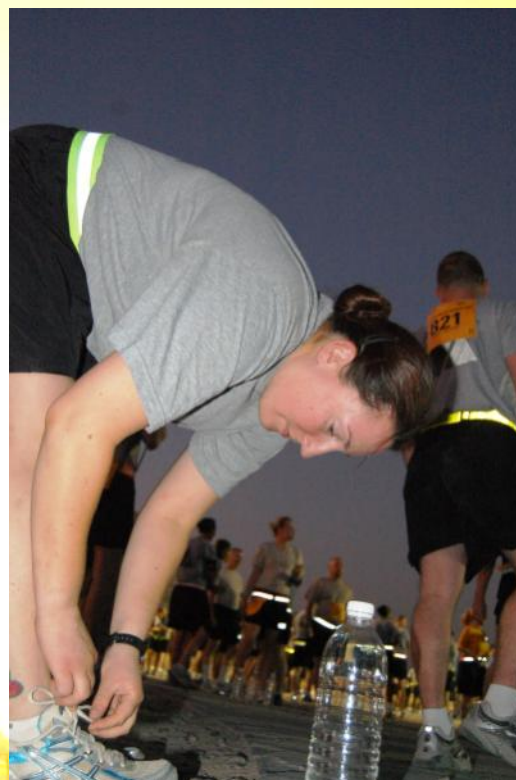
photos by Lt. Col. LaDenna Piper



Top L to R: Sgt. Natasha Oford-Green and Sgt. Justin Tigner perform the push-up event of the Army Physical Fitness Test. Middle: Soldiers are graded on push-ups at day-break. Bottom L to R: Capt. David Noles smiles as he finished the two mile run around Signal Hill. Spc. Ryan Custis and Pfc. Taylor Crooks lead a pack of Soldiers running the two mile event.



THE NEXT Day...THE ARMY 10-MILER by Sgt. Tracy Knowles



L to R: Lt. Col. Pat Simon shows some spirit during the Army 10-Miler Oct. 4 even after taking the Army Physical Fitness Test the day before. Lt. Col. Connell Archey, Lt. Col. Greg Parker and another Soldier run together. Bottom: Showing 101st Engineer Battalion pride, 1st Lt. Ben Smith (left), of Mashpee, Mass., and Staff Sgt. Paulo Baganha, of North Dighton, Mass., display their homemade T-shirts representing their battalion and home state. Sgt. Keri Warren, from Webster, Mass., ties her running shoes, Oct. 4, before her first 10 mile run.

By. Sgt. Tracy Knowles

Wetness on the tips of eyelashes, the strong aroma of chili peppers, music, laughter and heat. Lots and lots of heat.



Top: (L to R) Sgts. Maj. Timothy Adams, James Reppond, Tommy Brouillette represent the Four-Star Mafia. Bottom: Spc. Cas Sharp (right) adds the special ingredients to the Mac Chiles pot of 3rd Place chili as Staff

Bottom: Staff Sgt. Lance Theriot works on the chili for the Marksville Mafia. Top: Capt. Michael McDevitt, shows off the secret ingredient to his team's chili, the Monkey Butts.

These were just a few ingredients added to craft the 225th Engineer Brigade's Engineer Call Chili Cook-Off, here, Sept. 26.

Every month brings a new theme to the social gathering for the engineers of Multi-National Division — Baghdad, and this month's theme was a tailgate party and chili competition.

The chili cook off was a near epic battle between seven teams, representing Louisiana, Tennessee, Massachusetts and Michigan, that included members from sergeants major with over 100 years of cooking experience to three specialists with over 1000 minutes of cooking experience.

Capt. Steven Belford, of

Pineville, La. explained that the International Chili Society, sponsors of this month's theme, all started with Lt. Col. Vincent Tallo, of 225th Eng. Bde., from Ball, La.

The International Chili Society, who wanted to sponsor a chili cook off for troops in Iraq, contacted his wife, a member of a nonprofit organization called "Soldiers Angels". Both groups partnered together and worked with folks from around the country, to include California, Washington, D.C., and Texas.

Each team received a box of supplies from the International Chili Society. The supplies included aprons, decorations, recipes and hints for making each team's chili the best that it could be.

Participants were asked to vote for their favorite chili based on color, aroma, consistency, taste, and after taste. The 1st Cavalry Division's band's "Tuff Box and the Baghdad Horns" provided the day's acoustical after burn.

The surprise upset of the night went to Team XXX Chili, from Michigan, winner of the chili cook-off. Spc. Steven Plesko, of Hale, Mich., Spc. Pete Bice, of Big Rapids, Mich., and Spc. Steve Rich, from Mancelona, Mich, all part of the 1434th Engineer Company, said their secret to winning had more to do with ingredients outside of the pot.

"We have the voice, looks, and brains. What more do we need?" Rich explained.

engineer can win a SPICY HOT twist

By Lt. Col. Pat Simon

Soldier promoted after 1,000s of miles of missions

Driving a dump truck for his first job in the Louisiana National Guard almost three decades ago, then Pvt. Jerry Crooks, a small town farm boy from Deville, La., could not even begin to imagine that he would travel the world conducting various life-changing military engineer missions and eventually reach the rank of Colonel. But it happened.

On Oct. 4, before some of the same Soldiers that he has worked and traveled with through the years, Lt. Col. Jerry Crooks, deputy commander of the 225th Engineer Brigade, was promoted to Colonel at Camp Liberty, Baghdad Iraq.

"It's taken me longer that I had originally planned, but as a 19 year old kid trying to lay out long term plans and not fully understanding the requirements and the competitive nature of the process, it was hard," reflected Crooks.

Crooks' military travel can easily qualify for frequent flier miles: more than 20 missions that took him to countries like Belize four times, Honduras, Panama and Guatemala twice, the Bahamas, Jordan, Italy, England, Germany and now Iraq.

Crooks' most memorable missions

were humanitarian and partnership in



nature in Guatemala and Belize building schools and roads and in Honduras in 1992 which had suffered devastating effects from Hurricane Mitch.

"Entire communities were just gone," recalled Crooks. "It's amazing the amount of water and the flooding that took place in such a short time period. The elevation rose 20 plus feet in just two to three hours."

It is those missions that helped shape Crooks' skills in leading Soldiers and dealing with civilian and military leaders from different countries.

"As you continue to get bits of

training opportunities, it leads to leadership development," Crooks added. "As some leaders say the science of leadership is there. You can read and train. You can prepare. You have trained staffs that can support that, but the many years of experience fine tunes the overall art of leadership."

Like Crooks, his son Pfc. Taylor Crooks also joined the Louisiana National Guard in his late teens. Crooks said he is fortunate to have his son along with him during his current tour supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, and he was proud to have him at his promotion ceremony.

"In some ways, I think he was more excited. He was just so pumped up," said Crooks with a smile. "It was just good seeing the excitement on his face. He and I have come a long ways in the last 18 months as a father and son and there's no doubt that a lot of that is a result of the military."

Wherever his military travels may take him next, Crooks plans to take it all in stride as long as he can.

"I'm not through yet. I think I have a few more years in me," Crooks joked.



Sgt. 1st Class Larry Johnson supervises more than 40 full time employees at Café Deflury over the past ten months with a zero percent accident rate.

He has received numerous Fire Safety Inspections with commendable results from the inspectors. Johnson's ability to

enforce safety standards is attested to having been rated as one of VBC's outstanding DFAC's.

Safety Spotlight



FIRE



POLICE



EMS

EMERGENCY CALL
485-4070

(VOIP OR DSN)

IRAQNA 0790-194-2960
SVOIP - 243-4407NON EMERGENCY 485-2758
FM 902 - GATEKEEPER
 225 EN BDE TOC: 242-4407 / 847-2613
 HHC, 225 EN (GOAT HOUSE): 242-4150 / 847-2382

September's NCO & Soldier of the Month

By Lt. Col. Pat Simon

SPC John Winsper

It takes dedication to duty and devotion to country to put your life on the line as a member of the 225 Engineer Brigade's Command Security Team, and that's one of the reasons why Spc. John Winsper, 23, Alexandria, La. is this month's Soldier of the Month.

"I am a part of a valuable team that allows me to drive equipment that I would probably never have had the opportunity to drive," said Winsper.

He and other CST members provide escort security for the command staff to various project sites and key leader engagements throughout MND-B. And he does it with courage and pride.

"Every time we go on mission, I feel that my life would be the biggest contribution (I can make). We never know what may happen while out there," he said.

That's not the only thing Winsper is passionate about.

Add working out, camping, fishing, hunting and cooking to that list.

As for inspiration, he quickly points to his girlfriend Alaina.

"Without her being there through trying times, this deployment would have been a little tougher," he said.

SSG Cedric High Behind every great JAG is a great staff and this month's NCO of the month easily fits part of

"Through military justice we establish for every unit the standard for the unit's discipline and overall success."

That success, according to High, also includes properly developing junior Soldiers to become effective paralegals and mentoring their growth. That's one of the reasons High was chosen as NCO of the month, an award he regards highly (pardon the pun).

"It's an honor that I will always remember," said High. "Being at this stage of my career every moment

begins to matter." In his spare time, High enjoys



Spc. John Winsper receives an award for his high PT score.

that bill.

Staff Sgt. Cedric High,

39, Leesville, La. is the Assistant

NCOIC of the MND-B 1st Cavalry Division Legal Center. High is responsible for the processing of all military justice actions under MND-B and coordinating all court-martial, witness travels and prisoner confinements.

"I believe my mission is critical here," said High.



SSG Cedric High receives a coin from Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp.

weightlifting and reading. He looks forward to returning home to his wife of nearly 20 years, Yvonne, and having friends over for bar-be-cues before football games.

By Sgt. Tracy Knowles

4-Corners

At Joint Security Station Four-Corners, sunrise casted shadows on half built structures; structures that had little to no shape in the new light.

During the daytime, Sept. 24, engineer Soldiers are hard at work with one thing in mind; fellow Soldiers.

At the expanding JSS Four-Corners, the project to build more B-huts is right on schedule despite limited tools and only one generator. The Soldiers from the 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Engineer Battalion,

have already constructed five B-huts along with three foundations in less than two weeks. Some structures are being used for



LEFT: Sgt. Jerry Justice, of Cheboygan, Mich., makes precise cuts using a skill saw. RIGHT: Sgt. Les Meyette (right) of Freemont, Mich., checks plans with Pfc. Jonathan Williams (left), of St. Helen, Mich.

Top Engineer visits troops

tradition

By Lt. Col. Pat Simon

Iraq may be thousands of miles from Disney World, but the Army's top engineer Soldier spent time with troops from the 225th Engineer Brigade during an informal gathering at Camp Liberty, Sept. 22, comparing their roles to their civilian counterparts at the house that Mickey built.

"In Disney, their engineers are called 'imaginers'", said Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, chief of engineers and commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "In the Army, I think of you as 'solutioners' because we are always called upon to find solutions."

Van Antwerp told the 100 attentive Soldiers that he is proud of their service and their courage in the current fight, and then he broke into a story about a tradition his family enjoys every Christmas holiday: solving jig-saw puzzles, and how that

living quarters while others are to become supply and command posts.

"Less than a week 'till done," boasted Sgt. Les Meyette, of Freemont Mich., an engineer with the 1434th Eng. Co., 101st Eng. Bn.

Often called a "hooch", the B-hut usually houses up to eight personnel. Made of plywood and built with local materials, these structures are adaptable and movable.

Since the typical Soldier serves a year's

duty at any given location, there is plenty of time to customize the 50 square feet space per Soldier to give it a homely feel. Inside, walls may offer visual privacy, but sometimes they are built to be open bays.

"We lost power and internet and we were running on generators but it's nice to be able to do our jobs and not be sitting back at base camp," said Pfc. Willie James, of Escanaba, Mich., also with the 1434th Eng. Co., 101st Eng. Bn.

"The troops on the ground have been working from dawn to dusk every day," said Spc. Brian Long, of Benzonia, Mich., of the 1434th Eng. Co. "Morale is up and... I have really enjoyed doing my job."



illustrated the impact engineers make on the battlefield.

"While we worked on the 10,000 piece puzzle, we had lots of children running around and they would take pieces while we didn't notice," said Antwerp jokingly. "That was the most difficult part at the end of the puzzle when about five to 10 pieces were missing."

"You are like pieces of a puzzle," he told the engineer Soldiers. "The picture doesn't look right until all of you do your part."

For their part in Iraq, engineer Soldiers have spent countless hours training and partnering with Iraqi engineers on

projects from building B-huts, dining facilities, morale and recreation sites, roads, bridges and even taken on the more dangerous missions of clearing routes of improvised explosive devices and cleaning debris along roadsides Van Antwerp, a Desert Storm veteran, also urged engineer Soldiers to keep up the good work of designing the changing needs of the military and remain vigilant on the constantly changing battlefield.

"It's different today than previous deployments," he said. "And it will be different for Soldiers coming in on the next deployment."



Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp presents a coin to Sgt. 1st Class Larry Johnson (left) and Lt. Col. John Page (right).

Article by Foy Hartman, engagement coordinator

Baghdad and the Mongolian Empire

In 1250, France's king, Louis IX was being pressured by the Pope to commit to another push to reclaim the Holyland or at least hold the areas they controlled. European leaders had watched the Mongolian Empire spread from the limits of the Far East to Persia and Eastern Europe. Some looked upon the empire with fear and dread while others hoped for an alliance with the Mongols in the fight for the Holy Land. The Mongols were not interested in an alliance but they did begin expanding from Persia toward Mesopotamia to complete the rule of the world as he saw it. Mongke, son of the great Ghangis Kahn sent one of his brothers, Hulegu, westward toward Baghdad while Mongke planned to lead the conquest of China. In 1256 as Hulegu and his army were traveling through Persia (Iran), another son of Ghangis Kahn was assassinated by the paid assassins called the Hashshashin. The Mongols attacked the seemingly "impregnable" fortress with 50,000 mounted bowmen destroying the Muslim sect known in Europe as the Assassins and opening the Mongol's route to Baghdad, the largest and richest city in the Muslim world.

Many Christians, Jews and Shiite Muslims in Baghdad used the coming of the Mongols as an opportunity to free themselves from Muslim rule or to avenge past wrongs, and Mongol military leaders, as was their habit,

used such conflicts to their advantage. Within Hulegu's army were many Christians, Jews and Shiite Muslims, and they are said to have been the most fervent participants in attacking Baghdad's Sunni Muslim inhabitants. In 1258, Baghdad was destroyed and many Sunni inhabitants were butchered while Christians and Shiite Muslims were spared. The conquest of Baghdad ended the Abbasid caliphate there and Baghdad, once an Islamic spiritual capital became a center for ethnic diversity under Mongolian rule.

The Mongols remained in Baghdad for many years even after their

Mongols probably never numbered over one million, their custom of accepting people of all religions and ethnic backgrounds while adopting weapons and strategies from enemies kept their armies numbers up to 200,000 with Christian and Muslim conscripts side by side with Mongol soldiers. At the height of the Mongolian Empire it was more than three times the size of the Empire of Alexander the Great and six times the size of the Roman Empire.

The Mongols fought mainly from horseback armed with bows. They used a bow made from wood and cattle horn and fought from a distance. The Knights of Europe rode large slow horses and carried between 300-500 lbs including rider, saddle, arms and armor causing the mounts to tire quickly.

The Mongols fought ground forces by swift repeated attacks on flanks by archers destroying the infantry formations rendering them ineffective as a fighting force then closing with fast units while archers continued to assault breaking up any

efforts to re-establish formations.



A copy of the Mongolian Bow



The Mongolian Empire prior to the conquest of Persia and Mesopotamia.

advance westward was stopped in 1260 near Egypt. Although the

2009: Year of the NCO



Brigade Contact Info

LTC Patrick Simon

patrick.a.simon@
mnd-b.army.mil
DSN: 847-2547

Sgt. Rebekah Malone

rebekah.malone@
mnd-b.army.mil

Mailing Address

225 EN BDE
APO AE 09344

Want to be a ghost writer for the Express? Can you draw, do you have an amazing photo you want to share? Please share your ideas, talents and thoughts with us. The Engineer Express is about you! Get published today!

-PAO Team

"Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets."

- Napoleon Bonaparte

United States Army Non-Commissioned Officer Creed

No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers. As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as "The Backbone of the Army". I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.

Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind -- accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers. I will strive to remain tactically and technically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!

Sgt. Jordan Jones competes during the NCO of the Quarter competition.

Know a high-speed Soldier that should be featured in the Express? Recommend them today!