



TRIPLE NICKEL TRIBUNE

"WILLING AND ABLE!"



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



Issue 2 — March 2013

Message from the Commander

Colonel Nicholas Katers,
"Able 6"

Triple Nickel Team,

The Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of Joint Task Force Triple Nickel continue to set the standard for excellence here in Afghanistan.



While our mission is tough and dangerous, I am always impressed with the positive attitudes and "Essayons" spirit of our force. Every day, hundreds of Triple Nickel Warriors spend valuable time teaching the Afghan Engineers how to perfect their trade. There are now more Afghan engineers in the fight than U.S. engineers and they continue to get better every day. Soon there will be four Afghan Engineer Battalions in the fight. We are setting the stage to let them take over completely.

I have had numerous opportunities over the last month to visit our troops in the field, and what they accomplish through their hard work and skill is definitely impressive. Commanders around Afghanistan tell me that we are a decisive force in shaping the way to Afghan self reliance. Please follow JTF Triple Nickel on Facebook to see the great accomplishments of your Soldiers. You will not be disappointed.

We are Willing and Able!

- Col. Nick Katers
"Able 6"



Photo by Task Force Anchor

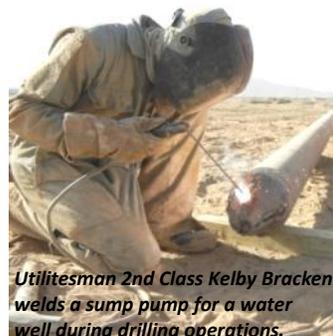
Naval engineers, or Seabees, place concrete for a water well pump house. These wells give units direct, cost-effective water access on bases across the country.

Water well teams improve bases, save millions in costs

Chief Eqpmt. Operator Dawn Mayhugh
Task Force Anchor Public Affairs

CAMP KRUTKE, Afghanistan – Naval engineers in Afghanistan have completed their fifth water well project, giving coalition forces direct, cost-effective water access on bases across the country, saving the military millions in costs.

Launching out in Sept. 2012, U.S. Navy Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133, Task Force Anchor,



Utilitesman 2nd Class Kelby Bracken welds a sump pump for a water well during drilling operations.

began to drill the first of five water wells across the country.

Two 12-man teams took charge of two Laibe drill rigs and more than \$2 million of materials.

As 24-hour drilling operations continued, each team overcame obstacles ranging from equipment repairs to weather delays as winter rain and snow intensified.

The teams were constantly tested as hidden rock formations and voids changed drilling speeds. By managing the "mud" program through skillful manipulation of chemicals, the teams progressed in operations. "Mud" is a combination of water and a number of chemical agents that allows the water well team to bring soil drilled out of the water well to the surface.

The wells have an average depth of nearly 1,000 feet and produce an average of 100 gallons of

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Facebook.com/JointTaskForceTripleNickel



At A Glance...

- ◆ TRIPLE NICKEL SERVING AS THEATER ENGINEER BRIGADE, COMMANDING ABOUT 5,000 ENGINEER TROOPS
- ◆ ENGINEER FORCES SPREAD ACROSS AFGHANISTAN IN VARIOUS ROLES
- ◆ FOURTH LARGEST UNIT UNDER ISAF JOINT COMMAND, BEHIND ONLY EAST, SOUTH, AND SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COMMANDS
- ◆ JOINT TEAM LED BY 555TH ENG. BRIGADE HQS... INCLUDES ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE, AS WELL AS ACTIVE, RESERVE, AND GUARD
- ◆ TRIPLE NICKEL FOCUSED ON AFGHAN ARMY ENGINEER PARTNERSHIP, ISAF TROOP CONSTRUCTION, AND ROUTE CLEARANCE (KEEPING ROADS SAFE)

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

Triple Nickel Family,

As we pass through the first month into the second, you can be sure your Soldier is Willing and Able to continue the fight in a far away land, alongside many other dedicated American service members. We are figuring out our battle rhythm to ensure mission success, and we will continue to move forward ensuring progress is always on the horizon.

Remember there are a lot of resources available to you in case you are feeling down and need some help. The Triple Nickel family is only as strong as its weakest link, so also be sure to lend an ear to someone that may need someone to talk to. Sometimes being heard is all one



"You can be sure your Soldier is Willing and Able to continue the fight in a far away land, alongside many other dedicated American service members."

needs to feel better about the situation. Your Soldier needs you to stay strong and remember that they are thinking about you daily.

Thank you for all the continued care and support you've given to your loved ones, the Triple Nickel team, and all our troops fighting for the Nation they love!

Willing and Able,
CSM Kevin Bryan

Important issues affecting you:

Food and services on bases:

BOTTOM LINE: Soldiers still get at least 3 meals a day, but instead of all hot chow, some may be packaged meals. We reduce contracted services so we can properly draw down our forces from Afghanistan.

Transition is a continuous operation and one we take seriously. Across the country our forces are closing bases and drawing down our presence here

To set the conditions for each base closure or a base transfer, non-tactical logistics and support services (i.e. any non-mission essential services) must begin to decline.

Typically the complete cessation of non-tactical logistics and services, such as laundry services or morale, welfare and recreation services, occurs 2-3 months prior to a base closure or transfer. Still, commanders may determine a need to make such changes earlier or phase them in slower over a longer period of time.

Such decisions depend on many factors, such as the size of the base, location and the transportation assets available. The move to an expeditionary footprint is nothing new. It is how we train, it is how we came into Afghanistan and it is how we will exit each base.

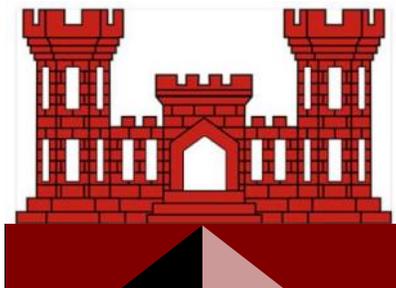
Suspending Tuition Assistance (T.A.) due to fiscal challenges:

BOTTOM LINE: No new T.A. requests until further notice. Current enrollments unaffected; other funding sources still available.

The Secretary of the Army approved suspension of Tuition Assistance beginning last week, due to the current fiscal situation. The suspension applies to all components and will remain effect until the fiscal situation matures.

Soldiers are not permitted to submit new requests for Tuition Assistance through the GoArmyEd portal. Soldiers currently enrolled and participating in courses approved for tuition assistance are not affected and will be allowed to complete current course(s).

Soldiers can continue to access their GI Bill benefits, if applicable (either Montgomery or Post 9/11 GI Bill), or use other funding sources (i.e. grants, scholarships, or Army National Guard Soldiers using state Tuition Assistance). Soldiers should be encouraged to contact local education centers for additional information. Updates will be posted to www.goarmyed.com.



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

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YOU ARE THE NEWS!

This newsletter belongs to the **WILLING AND ABLE** members of **Joint Task Force Triple Nickel...**

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 Triple Nickel Tribune!

Facebook.com/JointTaskForceTripleNickel
Email: spencer.g.garrison.mil@mail.mil

Water well teams

(Continued from page 1)
clean water per minute.

"Coalition and Afghan forces will benefit for years due to their efforts," said Chief Petty Officer David Asbury, construction officer with JTF Triple Nickel.

Each well saves the military hundreds of thousands of dollars compared to the costs of contracted drilling or having to acquire and transport water from off-base, according to Asbury.

The military has so far saved over \$2 million with these projects.

Across the country, these wells continue to have a positive impact and increase the quality of life for thousands of coalition personnel.

Task Force Anchor, part of the Theater Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, is deployed to Afghanistan in support of coalition forces and the Afghan people.



Triple Nickel & Stryker task force team up: Engineers partner with 4th Stryker Brigade to build new road

By U.S. Army Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – After more than a month of hard work, soldiers from Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) and the 229th Engineer Company of the Wisconsin Army National Guard completed a road project, Feb. 13, in the Panjwa'i district of Afghanistan.

Each of the units involved provided a critical piece to the project.

Company B, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, provided two platoons and borrowed a battalion mortar platoon to secure the area around the sites being constructed. Two Afghan National Army platoons also patrolled the road and helped secure the area.

The combat engineers of the 38th Engineer Company used Mine Clearing Line Charges to clear any obstructions from the projected road path and get rid of any improvised explosive devices that might have been buried along the old path.

Sgt. 1st Class Hayden Eckelberg, the platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon, 229th Eng. Co., and fellow horizontal engineers of 229th Eng. Co. built the road.

They used bulldozers to clear

away any debris from the combat engineers' blasts and leveled the roadway. They would then shape the road and lay a base layer of fill followed by a layer of gravel. Due to small canals that crossed through the road, the horizontal engineers had to emplace culvert systems to create stronger and more stable roadways.

The new four-mile-long road stretches through an area known as the "Horn of Panjwa'i" and gives the local populace a direct route to the district center, said Eckelberg.

Engineers also widened the road for easier access by Afghan locals, Afghan National Security Forces, and coalition forces.

"It was a one season road where maybe a donkey and a cart could've passed," explained Eckelberg, a Tomah, Wisc., native. "Now, we're turning it into a three season road and it's going to be passable here by ... anything that we've got."

The road serves not only as a means of transportation to nearby marketplaces and government structures, but it also has tactical relevance.

"It's important to both forces because what it does is it gives the ANA a fighting chance once Bayonet Company leaves this (area of operations) ... to get to the enemy faster,"



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

Soldiers with 229th Eng. Co. emplace a culvert system in a canal Jan. 30, in Panjwa'i district of Afghanistan. The engineers worked with Combined Task Force 4-2 to build a four-mile-long road.

said Eckelberg. Eckelberg said working on the project gave him a sense of satisfaction.

"It really gives me great pride to be able to build a road for these guys and make it easier for them to bring the fight to the enemy rather than just (having) to stop because of IEDs and whatnot," he explained.

Capt. Matthew Boise, the company commander of B Company, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt., said he and his soldiers, who patrol in the area, started seeing affects immediately.

Boise said his soldiers have already patrolled the area both mounted and dismounted, something they could not do before the

road existed.

"(We) see a vast difference in the AO just because of the road," said Boise.

The Afghan police created one checkpoint during road construction and began patrolling road, Boise said.

One week after completing the road, the Afghan police set up another checkpoint, he said.

In the end, it took everyone's support to complete the project that will benefit all parties involved.

"It really brought all the forces together to build an amazing road and secure it along the way," Eckelberg said.



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

A soldier with 229th Eng. Co. of the Wisconsin Army National Guard dumps gravel into a canal Jan. 30 in Panjwa'i district of Afghanistan.



Recognizing Afghan excellence: Afghan Army engineers receive medal

By U.S. Army Capt. Paul Wyckoff
Task Force Outlaw Public Affairs

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — An Afghan National Army (ANA) unit partnered with the 1433rd Engineer Company is now validated to conduct full independent route clearance operations to keep the roads safe in Afghanistan.

The 120th Engineer Battalion and its 1433rd Engineers met Feb. 19 to congratulate the Route Clearance Company (RCC) of the ANA's 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, on their successful validation of mission essential tasks.

"The common core tasks that the ANA were tested on are essential tasks that need to be mastered in order to conduct route clearance here in Afghanistan," said Sgt. First Class Barry O'Callaghan.

Sgt. First Class O'Callaghan and Sgt. Marvin Niemi are part of the 1433rd Engineer Company's ANA partnership team in charge of training. "The soldiers of the 3rd of the 205th are highly trained and efficient. They have actually been conducting limited independent operations since early August," said Niemi.

The RCC finished the validation process on Feb. 14, 2013.

"The ANA soldiers that work with the 1433rd are very proficient, well trained soldiers. The validation process gave them the ability to showcase their abilities and prove they are ready to take the lead in defense of their country as the number of American troops de-



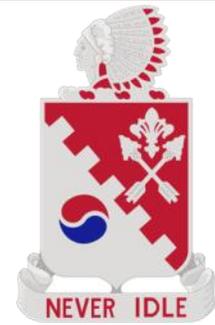
crease over the next few years," said O'Callaghan.

Lt. Col. Jack Ritter, 120th Engineer Battalion Commander, presented Capt. Aslam, commander of the 3rd Bde., 205th Corps RCC, with the Oklahoma Thunderbird medal in recognition of the RCC's achievements.

The Oklahoma Thunderbird Medal was designed to recognize and reward an individual or organization demonstrating outstanding service, achievement or contribution made in support of the Oklahoma National Guard in the performance of their missions. Eligible recipients must not be members of the United States

Armed Forces, but can include retirees, foreign dignitaries, or coalition forces.

After presenting the Thunderbird Medal to Capt. Aslam, Lt. Col. Ritter addressed the ANA troops in formation and thanked them for their outstanding service and dedication to making their country safer.



120th Engineer Bn.
Task Force Outlaw

"The soldiers of the 3rd of the 205th are highly trained and efficient. They have actually been conducting limited independent operations since early August."

Sgt. Marvin Niemi

Lt. Col. Jack Ritter, 120th Eng. Bn. commander, presented Capt. Aslam, commander of the 3rd Bde., 205th Corps RCC, with the Oklahoma Thunderbird Medal in recognition of the RCC's achievements.

Upper photo: Lt. Col. Jack Ritter, rear left, commander of the 120th Eng. Bn, and Capt. Todd Falor, right, commander of the 1433rd Eng. Co., pose with the commander and senior enlisted advisor of the ANA's Route Clearance Company, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, after the unit's successful completion of training in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, Feb. 19. Ritter presented the Afghan unit with the State of Oklahoma's Thunderbird Medal.

Lower photo: Lt. Col. Ritter congratulates the Afghan route clearance company commander after presenting the State of Oklahoma's Thunderbird Medal.



There's help when you need it...

Crisis Intervention Hotline

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

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

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

Remember, you aren't alone!

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

JTF Triple Nickel Presents... A Maze 'N' Crossword Challenge!

**HELPFUL HINT: ALL ANSWERS
CAN BE FOUND INSIDE THIS
ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER!**

*Maze:
Follow
the
white
boxes.
Start
here.*

It's a maze! Help the Triple Nickel engineers return to their base, the red castle!

About this Photo: Members of the 777th Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron and 755th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron travel to help fix broken water wells in villages near Bagram Airfield, Jan. 26. These airmen traveled by foot over dirt roads and had to carry all their tools and equipment by hand along with their weapons. (USAF. photo/Senior Airman Chris Willis)



Finish. You've returned to the base. Great job!

ACROSS

1. Prime ____ team helped fix village wells
4. Football star that met our troops
5. Our Chaplain
7. His reenlistment was a blast
10. Resist this illness by taking your meds
11. Where's the 'Super FOB'?
12. Baseball legend that met our troops
14. Thunder____ Medal presented to Afghans
15. Engineer-focused artwork: "Clear, __, Build"

DOWN

1. Seabee/Infantry brothers' hometown
2. Pvt. 1st Class pictured in knee-deep snow
3. Name of new Brigade HHC 1st Sgt.
6. Worked with a ____ brigade to build roads
8. 307th Engineer Task Force
9. We repair road ____s caused by IEDs
13. Arranged a celebrity visit to Bagram
14. A decent grade in school



Brigade Headquarters & Headquarters Company (HHC)

Greetings from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The Senior Leaders, Officers, Soldiers and sailors assigned or attached to the Headquarters company for Joint Task Force Triple Nickel have kept very busy supporting wartime efforts.

Included in the mix of targeting and planning operations, the Soldiers of the "Phalanx" company have also joined together to commemorate this important time together. On 2 March 2013, the

company officially donned the Triple Nickel combat patch symbolizing solidarity and cohesion. Also, the company welcomed First Sergeant Dwayne Beckles, and bid a farewell First Sergeant Raymond Woothtakewahbitty as the company first sergeant. First Sergeant Woothtakewahbitty will assume the rank of Master Sergeant and will stay with the Brigade Staff as Brigade Motor Sergeant.

Other notable events include Senior leaders on Brigade

staff dining together at the first leader's call in Koele Dining Facility, Brigade Soldiers enjoying some leisure time at the company batting cage, and junior leaders and NCOs learning lessons on stress and anger management from the Brigade Chaplain. All and all, we are doing well.

Strength in Numbers!

- Capt. Matthew D. Pride
HHC Cdr., *Phalanx 6*



1st Sgt. Dwayne Beckles, the new HHC first sergeant, stands before HHC with Capt. Matthew Pride and outgoing 1st Sgt. Raymond Woothtakewahbitty following the change of responsibility ceremony.



HHC receives combat patches

Spc. Tanisha Ponder, of HHC, receives her combat patch from Sgt. 1st Class Robert Nelson, during the company's patching ceremony Mar. 1.

The combat patch is the unit's emblem, worn on a service member's right shoulder beneath the American flag. It is given to a Soldier usually after a month of service in a combat zone. It can be worn proudly even after returning home from deployment.

Sales of artwork benefit 555 Able Soldier and Family Fund

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

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

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

Visit 555soldierfund.com for info and to order.



CLEAR - HOLD - BUILD

ARMY ENGINEERS CONSTRUCT A COMBAT OUTPOST IN AFGHANISTAN IN SUPPORT OF COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

FROM THE PAINTING BY PATRICK J. HASKETT

UNITED STATES ARMY  ENGINEER REGIMENT



Combat engineering runs in the family: *Deployed Sapper father promotes Sapper son, also deployed*



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

By U.S. Army Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – When Spc. Daniel Kelch, Jr. walked across the stage to receive his branch insignia as a combat engineer during his Advanced Individual Training graduation, his father, a sergeant major who was serving at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., at the time, surprised him by stepping out at the last minute to pin the insignia onto the lapel of his son's dress uniform.

Nearly a year and a half later, it was no surprise to Sgt. Maj. Daniel Kelch Sr.'s son that he was traveling from northeast-

ern Afghanistan to promote Kelch Jr. to specialist, Feb. 27 at FOB Masum Ghar in the Panjwa'i district of Afghanistan.

The father and son are both deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Kelch Jr. is a combat engineer with 38th Engineer Company, Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Div.). Kelch Sr. is the operations sergeant major for 555th Engineer Brigade. Both units are based out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

"Being I was in theatre and an engineer like he is, I wanted to be able to give him his first promotion," said Kelch Sr.

The two men agreed that the experience of Kelch Sr. being able to promote Kelch Jr. in a deployed environment would bring them closer, not only because of the father and son bond, but also the military tie.

"He's one of the inspirations I had to join the Army, so ... him being here is very important to me," said Kelch Jr.

When he decided to join the military, Kelch Jr. followed his father's footsteps after seeing how much his father enjoyed being a combat engineer.

"I have the same mindset as my dad," he explained.

Even with their similar mindsets, their reasons why they enjoy being combat engineers

are different.

Kelch Jr. said he likes the excitement of looking for improvised explosive devices, while his father said he loves building things and blowing things up.

Even though the two simply spent the day walking around the FOB and hanging out, Kelch Jr. said he was glad to have some time with his father.

"I miss him as my dad," he said. "So, it was good to see family."

Should his son choose to stay in the military, Kelch Sr. had some poignant words of advice for him.

"Remember where he came from; we were all privates once," he said.



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



Photo by Task Force Anchor

Seabee, Infantry brothers reunite

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Steven Myers
Task Force Anchor Public Affairs

CAMP KRUTKE, Afghanistan - A Seabee from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133 had a rare chance to reunite with a loved one while deployed in Afghanistan Feb. 9.

Blanchard, Okla., native Utilitiesman Second Class Samuel Cullins had the fortunate

occasion to visit the outpost where his younger brother, Army Pvt. 1st Class Stephen Cullins, is deployed with the Rakkasans of the 187th Infantry Regiment.

"It was a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Samuel, who had not seen his brother since his boot camp graduation in 2011. "I was amazed at the difference in the person that he has become, and how joining the Army has developed him. It is

hard enough to get to see family while deployed or even on active duty, much less in Afghanistan."

"I am very thankful that both of our commands let us have this opportunity," he added. "I know I enjoyed it very much, and so did he."

NMCB 133, part of Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, is deployed to in support of engineer operations for coalition forces and the Afghan people.



307th Engineer Battalion arrives, assumes mission of safeguarding Afghan roads



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

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – The mission to keep roads safe in Afghanistan is getting an Airborne boost with the arrival of the 307th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Airborne).

On the morning of Feb. 24, Lieutenant Colonel Brett Sylvia, commander of 307th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Airborne), assumed command from Lt. Col. William M. Myer of the 507th Engineer Battalion during a ceremony on base here in southwest Afghanistan.

The 307th, along with several other companies in theater, will form Task Force S.A.W. (Sapper, Athlete, Warrior). The task force will fall under the leadership of the Theater Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Triple Nickel, and they will resume the ongoing mission in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Their primary focus will be on partnership operations with Afghan Army engineers. Engineer Training Teams (ETT) will be partnering with their Afghan

National Army (ANA) engineer force and providing mentorship in engineer operations to ensure the ANA are capable of operating as an independent fighting force.

U.S. route clearance packages will also conduct partnered patrols with ANA forces. Their primary mission is to ensure safe passageway for coalition forces and Afghan civilians. They work to find and eliminate the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

The transfer-of-authority ceremony was held at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan. During the ceremony the 307th unfurled their battalion colors for the first time since departing Fort Bragg, N.C., signifying their arrival in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

At the same time, the departing 507th Eng. Bn. cased their colors until their safe return home to Michigan. Over 250 Soldiers attended the transfer-of-authority ceremony with the command teams and headquarters and headquarters companies as well as the forward support companies from each battalion.

Task Force SAW is ready for their mission, said Lt. Col. Sylvia during the ceremony.

Turning to Col. Nicholas Katers, commander of JTF Triple Nickel, Sylvia added, “We will carry your torch, and we will do it the only way we know how – with discipline, initiative, and synchronized with our teammates and partners. All the Way!”

U.S. route clearance packages will also conduct partnered patrols with ANA forces. Their primary mission is to ensure safe passageway for coalition forces and Afghan civilians.



Photo by U.S. Photo by U.S. Marine Staff Sgt. Neill Sevelius, Combat Camera

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Brett Sylvia, commander, 307th Eng. Bn., Task Force SAW, and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Steven Tetreault uncase the unit colors during their transfer-of-authority ceremony. The event marked the unit’s arrival in Afghanistan. TF SAW will continue the mission of Afghan Army engineer development and route clearance in support of the International Security Assistance Force.

The 307th is the only engineer battalion with a company in every regional command in Afghanistan besides Kabul. They spent over a year training and preparing for partnership operations and their route clearance mission. This is also the fourth time that the “All American” Engineers have answered the call to duty since the Global War on Terror began over a decade ago.





Afghan Army engineers build up ‘Super FOB’: Entrance rebuilt to improve traffic and security at Afghan base

By U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Brock Eastman
Task Force Prowler Public Affairs

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan — As part of base security enhancements, Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers of the Engineer Coy, 4th Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 203rd Corps are this month rebuilding the entrance to a massive forward operating base (FOB) known as the Khair Kot Castle (KKC) “Super FOB.”

The enhancements include building more force protection and creating two lanes of traffic, one for military traffic, and another for civilian vehicles entering the base.

Citizens traveling in the KKC area may have already noticed a road change along the outside of the base. Prior to construction, the 4th Kandak created a bypass route approximately 10 meters out from the base. All civilian traffic is now routed to this bypass.

The original road is reserved for traffic entering and leaving the base. This is part of the plan to improve security at the base entrance. People driving by may have also notice an increase in the number of “HESCO,” or wire-framed sand-filled container, walls outside the gate.

The Engineer Coy is currently building a multi-layer guard tower.

“Ali Ahmad is having the soldiers tear down and rebuild the top layer” said Shakur Allah, the Afghan non-commissioned officer who was overseeing the construction on Saturday. Ali Ahmad is the coy’s acting first sergeant and is the principal quality control approver for the project. “The top layer was not square enough, and the entrance needed to be moved,” Shakur added.

United States Army engineer soldiers are closely watching this project. The project will serve as



Afghan Army engineers chain a cement barrier to a track hoe bucket, Mar. 2. Soldiers of the Engineer Coy, 4th Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 203rd Corps are this month rebuilding the entrance to a massive forward operating base known as the Khair Kot Castle (KKC) “Super FOB.”

the final validation for the Afghan coy. For the last several months, U.S. engineers have been advising and assisting the engineer coy during projects. This project is free of any direct American input and,

when complete, will prove the engineer coy is prepared to work independently.

Construction is underway and is expected to be done this month.

Triple Nickel engineers help transfer, close bases: As part of drawdown, former joint base handed over to Afghans

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Tyler Dovel
Task Force Diehard Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — As the Soldiers from the 857th Construction Company began packing their trucks and preparing for the journey back to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shank, their job site was curiously empty. The flat empty land they were leaving behind at FOB Altimur showed very little evidence of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) ever having been there, which is exactly what the Horizontal Platoon wanted.

“One of the things we want to do is return the land back to its original state,” said 2nd Lt. Jimmy Bodies, a native of Clarksdale, Miss., and the platoon leader of

the 857th Horizontal Platoon.

This was his first deconstruction mission, but with the gradual decline of ISAF personnel in Afghanistan as the Afghan National Army (ANA) continues to take the lead in the fight, it probably won’t be his last.

“Base closures are always critical missions to perform. I’m extremely proud of the guys’ motivation,” Bodies said.

The platoon of roughly thirty Soldiers received help from Afghan soldiers stationed in the area and finished the task two days ahead of schedule. FOB Altimur, which had served as a joint base in the Logar Province, was one of many bases that were in the process of being handed over to the ANA completely.

The platoon deconstructed between twenty and thirty buildings on the older northern section of the FOB, including a fuel and a water point. A few buildings were left behind for ANA use, including classrooms and several tents. They left a large stand-off distance between the remaining structures and the outer perimeter of the FOB, something that was part of the overall plan to help increase the 1st Kandak’s defense posture once they became the sole residents.

The 1st Kandak of the 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps is the ANA’s battle space owner for security in the Southern Logar area. Their responsibility extends past the Baraki Barak, Charkh, and Kherwar districts, as well as the southern

area of Pul-e Alam. They are the only Kandak operating in the area without a direct ISAF partnership. According to Maj. Rodriguez, the former mayor cell officer in charge, there are plans of a Czech Military Advisor Team to arrive in the near future, but all of the 1st Kandak’s operations so far have been unilateral.

In an agreement between Lt. Col. Rauf, the 1st Kandak Commander, and Maj. Rodriguez, much of the salvageable materials and lumber were saved for the 1st Kandak.

“They were really thankful for all of the stuff we left at Altimur,” Maj. Rodriguez said. “As we left, Lt. Col. Rauf promised to defend the FOB and defeat the insurgent threat.”



Manning, USO score 'touchdown' with Triple Nickel

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Dave Overson
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – There are arguably tens of millions of football fans around the globe, and it is safe to assume that a great deal are fans of Super Bowl champion and current Denver

Broncos' quarter-back, Peyton Manning. So when he touched down on Bagram Air Field, March 1, the service members assigned there were ecstatic...

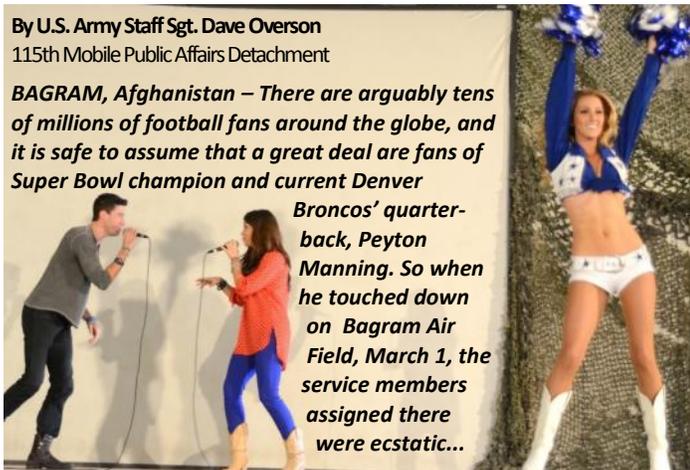


Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Overson
Top photo: American Idol stars Ace Young and Diana Degarmo sing to the troops as Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader Cassie Trammell dances.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Overson
Baseball legend Curt Schilling speaks to the troops during the USO event.

In tow with Manning, as part of a USO tour, were a few sports celebrities to help entertain the troops. Major League Baseball hall of famer Curt Schilling delighted the crowd with inspiring words, along with National Football League's Austin Collie and Vincent Jackson.

"A lot of my family members served in the military, and this is an incredible honor for me to come here today and say thank you to all the men and women putting their lives on the line for all of us back home," said Schilling.

The host of the USO show, which was held in a modified tent, was the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, US Navy Adm. James Winnefeld, who had the honor of introducing two members of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerlead-



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Overson
Football star Peyton Manning speaks to the troops during the USO tour at Bagram Airfield.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Taylor Read
Manning is met by Triple Nickel Brigade Commander Col. Nicholas Katers and Operations Command Sgt. Maj. James Mitchell upon arrival at Bagram Airfield.

ers. Both Cassie Trammell and Jackie Bob entertained the crowd with Cowboy's trivia and a dance routine.

Peyton Manning thrilled those in attendance by throwing a few passes into the crowd. Austin Collie, a wide receiver with the Indianapolis Colts and Vincent Jackson, a wide receiver with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, assisted Manning on stage.

"It's truly inspiring to see all of the pride and hard work these men and women display every day here, and it makes me grateful to be an American," said Manning.

The musical portion of the tour comprised of Ace Young and Diana DeGarmo, of American Idol fame. The couple, incidentally who are engaged to one another, met on Idol's season 11 and toured with USO for the past two years.

"To be able to come here and perform for the troops is first and foremost an honor, said DeGarmo. It's nice to be able to bring a small piece of home here and hopefully help put their troubles behind for just a moment."

"Getting to meet and talk to the soldiers about their daily duties is quite the blessing for me. I really love what they all do for us back home," said Manning.

The entertainment concluded with a myriad of adoring service members obtaining autographs from their favorite sports celebrities. Whether it was Peyton Manning, or the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, it was obvious the crowd was walking a bit lighter when the tour rolled out to the next Afghanistan base.

Thank you to the entire USO team for the visit and for all your great support!

-JTF Triple Nickel Team



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Taylor Read



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Spencer Garrison

Above: As thanks for their support of the event, JTF Triple Nickel was presented an autographed baseball from Curt Schilling and football from Peyton Manning. Left: Soldiers from HHC, JTF Triple Nickel pose with Manning at Bagram Airfield. Triple Nickel provided planning, security, and logistics support for the event.



FAMILY SHOUT-OUTS

To SSG Michael Sidley of Thompson, OH. 555th EN BDE. We love and miss you so much!!! We are counting down the days till we are together again!! —Leanne Glover Sidley

Shout out to 2LT Kurt Peterson, HHC from your family back home in Adkins, Texas! We love you so much and miss you like crazy! Always keeping you and the JTF Triple Nickel in our thoughts and prayers! Big MWA And from your proud Grandma Grams back home on the farm — Sending my love and prayers!

To SPC Jarett Davis, 120th EN BN, We love you and miss you with all our hearts. We can't wait to see you, hurry home safe! -Brandy Davis

To my son Trent Vogelsang, specialist with the 258th Engineer Company, Arizona National Guard, in Afghanistan. Can't wait to see you in May, and can't wait for our family trip to Hawaii. Please be very safe. Dad and I are so proud of you. Love you, Mom and Dad

Greetings from Pease Greeter Inge Houck, in Dover, New Hampshire. We'll leave the light on for ya. And we'll be here when you get back. I'm proud of the Engineers. Take care. *(*Editor's Note: Thank you Pease Greeters for your amazing support!)*

To CSM Richard Raby, 120th EN BN, Okmulgee, Oklahoma. We love you and are counting the days! Happy Easter! Sue, Sue Ann, Jeremy

To SPC David Frock, 585th EN CO, Message from Gettysburg, Pa... We love and miss you so much. Stay strong, we will see you soon! Love always, Your wife and son!

To PFC David Poulin II, 864th EN BN, From Turner Maine... We love you and miss you lots. Can't wait for your safe return. <3 -Heather Poulin

To 1LT James Jonathan Flowers V, 555th EN BDE. Jonathan, you're in our thoughts every day as we follow the impressive work of the entire JTF Triple Nickel in Afghanistan. We thank you all for your service in bringing about a peaceful and successful end to this conflict. Godspeed. -With much love from your entire family

Love you Pap. Pig Sooie. -Spencer

To PV2 Alexander Avila, 555 EN BDE, from Bay Area, CA. Near or Far, across land and sea our love will always be. We are Army-Family-Strong-HOOAH!! Momma, Elijah, and Miss Issy

SGT Peter St Laurence, 557 EN CO. We're so proud of you Peter and we miss you and can't wait for these months to go by so we can have you home with LeeAnn. Hope everything is going well for you over there!!! Love, Carol and Frank Hajbucki

My name is Leon Just Jr. I was with the 14th Engineers and I'm sending a shout out to all the old and new RUGGED soldiers.

To SPC Julian Wheeler, Pacemakers... From Rick and your sister Christian— Hello from New York City. WE LOVE YOU

To my son PVT Justin Crouch, 370th Sapper Co., 110th EN BN, from Millbury, MA. We miss you, stay safe, stay cool!

To PFC Scott Salwasser, 617 Co., 864th EN BN, from Fresno, CA... We love you so much. One month down. Stay safe. HOOAH!!!! -Marcie Rhoades Besecker

Welcome Home!



Pvt. 1st Class Thomas Rinebold of Albrightsville, PA embraces his daughter earlier this month, after his early redeployment to the United States with the 111th Sapper Co., Task Force Diehard.



Sgt. Snowman, of Task Force Diehard, diligently stands at his post keeping the basketball court safe during the inclement weather.

Photo by Task Force Diehard

Sergeant Snowman Says...

Want to be as 'cool' as me?
Follow us on Facebook!

Get up-to-date news, pictures, and info about the great stuff happening in the Engineer Brigade.
[Facebook.com/JointTaskForceTripleNickel](https://www.facebook.com/JointTaskForceTripleNickel)

The Triple Nickel Facebook belongs to you, our Service Members and Families, so we look forward to connecting with you soon!!



Around the Triple Nickel...



Photo courtesy of Task Force Comet

MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan – Sgt. Terry Constant from the 919th Engineer Support Company reenlists at the Explosives Ordnance Disposal range. This was conducted under strict supervision by EOD personnel, and all safety precautions were taken.



Photo by Master Sgt. Bryan Hinzman, Task Force Comet Public Affairs

MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan – Route Clearance Patrol 67, from the 321st Engineer Company, conducts a recent patrol in support of Swedish forces in northern Afghanistan. Their mission is to find enemy-emplaced improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along the road and keep them from being used against either coalition forces or the Afghan people.



Photo courtesy of Task Force Diehard

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan—Pvt. 1st Class Lane, 41st Clearance Co., trudges through knee deep snow on mission. The 41st has learned firsthand the challenge of winter route clearance.



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

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers with their canine comrades from the 49th Engineer Detachment (Mine Dogs) at an awards ceremony and change of command, Mar. 3. This marked the end of the deployment for some of them, including Capt. Vlietstra who's handing command to 1st Lt. Baker.



Photo by Task Force Diehard Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan—A D7G Bulldozer pushing the remains of the old Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) building at Forward Operating Base Altimur. The building was one of many removed by the 857th Construction Co. in Feb. before the base was handed over to the Afghan Army. Story on p. 9



Photo courtesy of Task Force Diehard

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan— Soldiers from the 41st Clearance Co. and 3rd Plt., 919th Eng. Co., attached to the Forward Support Company, Task Force Diehard, fill a large crater on Highway 1. They filled three craters in their road repair mission, allowing traffic to pass through the area at normal speeds.



Warmer weather raises Malaria risk... What should you do?

By U.S. Army Capt. Simeon Smith
Task Force Med-A Public Affairs

As we approach the warm season in Afghanistan, we need to be more vigilant in protecting our troops against malaria. Afghanistan has the second highest number of malaria cases in the Eastern Mediterranean region according to the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO). Afghanistan is acutely prone to malaria due to its tropical climate, paddy fields, poor waste management and other environmental factors.

What YOU need to know...

What is Malaria? Malaria is a disease caused by a parasite (called Plasmodium) that infects red blood cells. The parasite is transmitted from person to person through the bite of mosquitoes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), malarial mosquitoes typically bite from dusk to dawn, particularly inside structures when and where people sleep. Once infected, malaria parasites live in different stages in your body. They develop and multiply first in your liver and then in your body.

Symptoms of malaria include: Fever, shaking chills, sweats, headache, muscle aches and exhaustion. Symptoms begin 10 days to four weeks after a bite from an infected Anopheles mosquito.

We can prevent malaria with a combination of the right anti-malarial drugs, the use of DEET-base repellent, proper wear of Permethrin-treated uniforms and the use of bed nets:

- ◆ Covering most of the body with Permethrin-treated clothing
- ◆ Apply DEET –containing insect repellent to exposed skin
- ◆ Applying DEET-containing insecticide-treated bed net where air conditioning is not available
- ◆ Avoiding dusk-to-dawn outdoor activities

Take your Anti-malarial medication: Ensure you check with your healthcare provider to see which medication is right for you. Doxycycline (once daily) or Mefloquine (once weekly) is required to kill the blood stage parasites (these drugs do not kill the liver stage parasites).

Upon final redeployment, take two weeks of primaquine to kill the liver stage parasites even if you feel well (if you fail to complete this course of medication, malaria will reactivate and make you ill). Take anti-malarial medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider even if you don't feel sick and seek care immediately if you feel sick.

Follow these steps to reduce the risk of malaria. For more info, visit the CDC and WHO websites.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Chris Willis, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing

Air Force engineers lend a helping hand

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – U.S. airmen from 777th Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron help Afghan children pump water from a recently fixed water well in a local village, Jan. 26, 2013. The airmen teamed up with local Afghan leaders to fix the broken well and bring fresh groundwater back to the village.

Chaplain's Closing, Maj. Dawud Agbere

Trusting yourself and others: A key to healthy living

Trust is the cornerstone of every healthy and rewarding relationship. It is simply too difficult, if not useless, to maintain a relationship with someone you cannot trust. That is because to trust, as Warren Christopher, a former US Secretary of State has noted, "is to rely upon the good faith and judgment of others."

In essence, trust is the psychological glue that binds us together as families and communities. Our confidence in our brigade team to accomplish the mission rests on the trust that our Soldiers are "Willing and Able" to get the job done. Likewise, our nation goes to sleep every night because of the trust that the Soldier in the foxhole is watching our back.

Now, if trust is essential to our relationship with others, then it is even more so to our relationship with our own selves. Do I trust the person I see in the mirror when I wake up every morning? Am I happy with that person in the mirror? Is that the kind of person I want to live with for the remainder of my life? Simply put: Do I trust "me"?

I believe to trust others and build healthy relationships, we must first trust ourselves. We cannot trust others nor can we expect them to trust us when we cannot trust our own selves. As an Irish poet and dramatist once said, "As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live." Life success begins with self-trust.

Joint Task Force Triple Nickel - The Theater Engineer Brigade in Afghanistan

Our Mission: Deploy in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) 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, in order to help build a pathway to stability, peace, and prosperity for the people of Afghanistan.

For questions or comments, contact:
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Email: spencer.g.garrison.mil@mail.mil



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

We are the Triple Nickel...

The 555th Engineer Brigade, currently serving as the Theater Engineer Brigade in Afghanistan, with about 5,000 Engineer Service Members operating across the country. Our pride is each unit comprising our Joint Task Force—each with their own storied histories, some dating to the Civil War. This team of teams serves as a diverse, capable force that always lives out our motto, "Willing and Able!"

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Joint Task Force Triple Nickel
Willing and Able

