

MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD

July 17, 2008

46th Engineers Drive a ‘Spike’ Into Baghdad

2nd Lt. Janeene Yarber
46th ECB (H) PAO, 926th Eng. Bde., MND-B

BAGHDAD – Within hours of being in country, the Soldiers of the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) picked up their tools and went to work on various projects around the city of Baghdad. The 46th Eng. Bn. is assigned to the 926th Engineer Brigade serving with Multi-National Division Baghdad.

It was just the first week of June when the engineers left their homes at two different posts (Fort Polk, Louisiana and Fort Rucker, Alabama) and boarded planes for Kuwait.

At Camp Buehring, Kuwait, the battalion linked up with the 955 Engineer Company, a Missouri-based Army Reserve Company. Together with the battalion’s organic Headquarters Support, Alpha and Bravo Companies, they made up the ‘Steel Spike Team.’ The ‘Steel Spike’ name dates back to December 7, 1917 when the 46th ECB (H) was an Engineer Railway Maintenance-of-Way Battalion.

For two weeks the “Steel Spike” Battalion validated weapons qualification, close-quarter marksmanship, first aid skills, convoy live fire exercises and their cultural understanding.

“The Soldiers of the ‘Steel Spike’ battalion are prepared to handle any mission tasked to them. We have trained for many months and these exercises in Kuwait are just

the final measures before the push north into Iraq,” states Lt. Col. Matthew Zajac, commander of the 46th ECB (H).

By the end of the month, the highly trained engineers were in Iraq upgrading a building for a Military Transition Team and completing a new battalion administrative and logistics operations center.

By July 3, the official day of the Transfer of Authority from the 769th Engineer Battalion to the 46th ECB (H), the 46th Engineers had already taken over major vertical construction operations.

“Our team’s potential to make a lasting contribution to the security and stability of the Iraqi people is enormous,” added Zajac,

The 46th ECB (H) Soldiers were also organized into Quality Assurance/Quality Control Teams and were tasked to support other high priority missions throughout Baghdad.

Task Force Gold is one such high priority mission that requires Soldiers to work with civil affairs teams to identify, contract and oversee projects aimed at enhancing basic services for the population. It is also the main focus of the commander of the 926th Engineer Brigade, the 46th’s higher headquarters, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Talley.

“The success of Task Force Gold is dependent upon the Soldiers who risk their lives every day to bring peace and stability to the area by helping to re-build the neighborhood and by bringing economic prosperity to the merchants who live and work there,” stated Talley.

A select group of 46th ECB (H) Soldiers are assigned to TF Gold and work to rebuild the communities wrecked by years of violence.

“There’s so much to do out there. It’s a lot of hard work, but I love it,” stated Sgt. RJ Eugin, Bravo Company, 46th ECB (H) and a member of TF Gold. “We’ve trained hard for this and I’m glad we’re getting a chance to be here making a difference.”

2nd Lt. Virginia Brickner, HSC, 46th ECB (H), sums up the battalion’s immediate impact on the city stating, “You can see the progress you are making and that’s what’s so great about being an engineer.”

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TOA.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers stand in formation July 3 as Lt. Col. Damien Waddell of the 769th Engineer Battalion transfers authority over to Lt. Col. Matthew Zajac of the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) on Camp Liberty, Iraq. This ceremony signifies the handover of tactical construction projects in Baghdad to the 46th ECB (H). The 46th Eng. Bn. is assigned to the 926th Engineer Brigade serving with Multi-National Division Baghdad.

(U.S. Army photo by Capt. Patrick Jenkins, HSC, 46th Eng. Combat Bn. (H), 926th Eng. Bde., MND-B)



“Steel Spike”

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Following the Transfer of Authority ceremony, Spc. Cedric Sutton, of HSC, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion raises the “Steel Spike” flag over the 46th ECB (H) headquarters July 3 on Camp Liberty, Iraq. The 46th Eng. Bn. is assigned to the 926th Engineer Brigade serving with Multi-National Division Baghdad.

The flag will be lowered when a new battalion takes over engineer operations in 2009.

(U.S. Army photo by Capt. Patrick Jenkins, HSC, 46th ECB (H), 926th Eng. Bde., MND-B)



NAILS.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – A 1st Platoon Bravo Company, 46th Engineer Battalion Soldier uses a nail gun to make trusses for the roof of a brand new building July 1 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. It will house the offices of 46th ECB (H) staff members and will provide four companies with supply and communications offices. The 46th Eng. Bn. is assigned to the 926th Engineer Brigade serving with Multi-National Division Baghdad.

(U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Sam Jefferson, 1st Platoon, Bravo Company, 46th ECB (H), 926th Eng. Bde., MND-B).