

# 769th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy)



December 20, 2002 — Issue 10

## Soldiers of the 769th Engineer Battalion:

Our time here is drawing to a close and the number of days remaining are getting smaller. I know it's hard for everyone to be away from their loved ones during the holiday season, however, it is important to remember that Christmas is about giving to others. Now is the time to appreciate Christmas more than ever. We as a unit are giving the best gift to our country and that gift is sacrifice. We are away from our families during the holiday season ensuring that freedom will endure for our great nation. The nation we call home. When you are not feeling the holiday spirit remember the true meaning of Christmas. It is a time of giving as God gave the life of his only son for us. Now is our time to give to others. This will be the holiday season that you will always remember.

There still isn't a definitive date on our re-deployment. As I've stated in last update to the battalion it should be sometime between January 20th and February 28th. I know all too well it may seem like an eternity, but

stay gainfully employed and keep up the effort as we have done in the past. The date will be here before you know it. Replacements have been identified and will be on the way.

The 769th Engineer Battalion has made and will leave a lasting impression with our construction efforts. We have displayed courage and job competence thus far in Bagram and Khandahar. As our deployment draws closer to the end, it is vitally important to work harder than ever. The impression that people will remember most is the legacy that we will leave behind. Keep up the great job and stay motivated.

There continues to be an ongoing problem with soldiers on Bagram Airfield purchasing illegal items from local nationals. This is not allowed and is for the protection and safety of all soldiers. We must support all base policies and encourage others to do the same.



LTC Boutte'

I still never tire of hearing compliments of your accomplishments. Other units, both US and foreign coalition partners, have all felt and reap benefits from what this engineer battalion has managed to achieve. Many times you work in harsh environments, often with limited resources, and under less than ideal conditions.

What this team has managed to accomplish has truly been amazing. No unit before us has made such a lasting impact. I am confident that no future unit will match our resolve and commitment to excellence.

## A Letter From Home

While I was raking my yard recently, my neighbors, a father and son, walked over and gave me a plate of jambalaya and white beans. They told me they thought I could use some lunch and hope I enjoyed it as much as they did. As they walked away, I began to cry.

I cried because of the kindness of my neighbors, whom I hardly know. I cried for all of the families of soldiers who are spending time alone. Another day passes by without a son, a daughter, a father, a mother, a spouse, a friend, as they serve our country in Operation Enduring Freedom.

More than 500 citizens of Louisiana left their families and comfortable homes for our freedom. Troops of the Louisiana 769th Army National Guard of Baton Rouge were called to active duty in May and are still serving in Afghanistan with no word of when they will return to our great state. These soldiers are from several parishes

within Louisiana and have left behind their families and job positions, and many are students who have put college on hold to serve the United States.

As soldiers serve their country and worry about families back home, life goes on as usual in Louisiana. I ask you to remember our patriots in Afghanistan, the many families of the 769th and all other members of the armed services. Should you know one of these families, a simple call to ask how they are doing may make a difference in their daily life while their loved one is overseas. While supporting our soldiers' families in Louisiana, you are supporting our soldiers in Afghanistan. And by the way, it was the best jambalaya and white beans I ever tasted.

Thanks for caring.

-Mechelle Miller



## SOLDIER PROFILE

Each week, this newsletter would like to recognize an exceptional soldier or group of soldiers for his or her commitment and positive work ethic. Please send recommendations to 1LT Townley and the reasons why you think a particular soldier(s) should be recognized.

This week the newsletter crew would like to recognize the horizontal platoon of Alpha Company. This group, headed by 2LT Sayer and SFC Dewhurst, do a variety of jobs throughout Bagram Airfield. The platoon operates 5 ton dump trucks, rollers, and graders; improving the roadways and clearing areas in order to establish base camps.

Good job to all those who participate in these operations.



Horizontal Platoon

### A few words from CSM Serio...

Christmas is around the corner and 1LT Townley is planning a big Christmas celebration that should put everyone in the holiday spirit. The party will consist of a variety of Christmas music, including lots of refreshments, and the option of settling back, relaxing and wearing civilian clothes.

This is also a time when you and your families are going to need each other more than ever. So remember to call your loved ones and wish them a Happy Holiday. Let them know how you are doing.

There have been several changes to the uniform policy since our arrival in Afghanistan. The latest alteration is you are now allowed to wear the black fleece as an outer garment with the PT uniform. This new rule does not apply to the desert com-

bat uniform in any way.

For several weeks now we have had a Kabul trip sign up sheet posted in the TOC. Unfortunately due to circumstances beyond our control, the chance of taking these trips doesn't look good. But on a better note, it looks like we're going to have a bazaar just about every Friday. The last few have brought more vendors with more souvenirs for us to purchase.

Words of caution. Anyone looking at purchasing muskets or muzzle loaded weapons, be extra careful since some of those weapons may still contain powder in them. Use common sense, thoroughly inspect the chamber and do not attempt to dry fire them.

One of the things leaders will be



CSM James Serio

looking for is if operators are taking care of their equipment. Primarily PMCS. This not only applies to military vehicles, but also down to the weapons each of us carry.

Time is short, lets not get careless. Accidents won't happen as long as you use extreme caution in everything you do. Make it happen.

## Chaplain's Corner

This may not be like the Christmas you wish to have, but it reminds me a lot of the first Christmas.

### Away From Home:

Like us, Mary and Joseph were far away from home. World circumstances had taken them out of the familiar sounds of Nazareth. Instead, they found themselves in a lonely place far away from the people they loved.

In their case, it was taxation from the Roman Empire that led them to Bethlehem. In our case, it's an attack from terrorists that leads us to faraway Afghanistan. In both cases, the twists and turns of history led away from family.

### Temporary Quarters:

In the case of the Holy Family, it was a crude barn and an animal trough for Jesus' bed. As for us, we sit within tents that make a feeble effort to shield us from the cold winds that creep like frozen fingers through the gaps and spaces we never noticed in warmer days.

### Stress:

There are few things more stressful than the sudden and unexpected birth of a child. For us, there are few things more stressful than the sudden and unexpected outbreak of war.

### Unexpected Blessing:

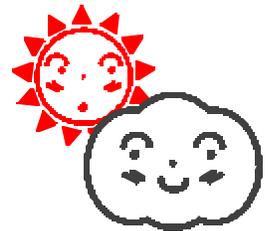
Mary and Joseph thought the joy of the birth of the Savior would be something they would share just among themselves. Then a group of rustic shepherds, smelling very much of the field, burst through the door to spread joy and cheer. Now here's the part where we must supply the ending. I know we smell the part, but will we perform the part? May God give us the grace to take care of each other this Christmas!

God bless you, and have a good day,  
Chaplain Sanders



## Camp Cajun Weather Forecast

Friday: 15/ 40 Cold & Rainy  
Saturday: 15/ 40 Cold & Rainy  
Sunday: 15/ 40 Cold & Rainy  
Monday: 15/ 40 More of the same

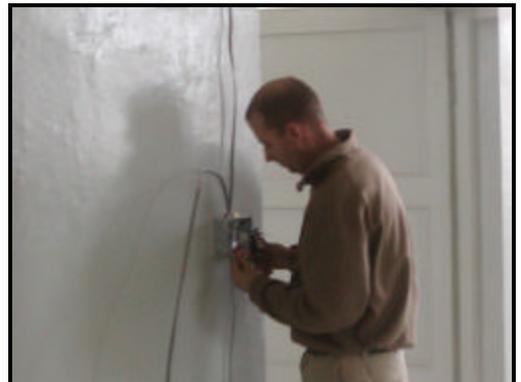


## Promotions

During HSC's formation held this past Friday Roy, Raby, Martin, and Streva were promoted to the rank of SPC. Also during the formation a number of soldiers received Army Achievement medals to acknowledge their hard work and dedication during Operation Enduring Freedom.

## New Post Exchange

Alpha Company and 678th electricians have been busy installing electrical outlets and light fixtures in the new PX. The facility is scheduled to be open to the soldiers on December 20th, just in time for last minute Christmas shopping. The new facility is much larger than the present PX, allowing for more merchandise. Shown to the right is SGT Melton installing a light switch.



**What are some of the activities you would like to see for Christmas?**

“I'd like to see everyone stand in front of the building and sing Jingle Bells.” 2LT Mike Bendich

“Christmas Caroling by the amazing Gospel Choir.” -SGT Jake Witte

“Christmas Bingo.” -CPL Chris Dedon

“A bonfire on Christmas Eve.” -SPC Jeremy Day

“O'Doul's served at the Christmas party.” -SSG Jackie Bronson



**Question of the Week**

What are you going to remember most about Bagram?

*Submit answers to 1LT Townley*



**Hard at Work**

The 678th EN Detachment has been performing various jobs around Bagram Airfield. Currently, SSG Alcorn (section leader) and 1st Utility Section are forming up concrete for the DOIM conduit expansion to the North BAF. The concrete is formed into junction boxes for the communication lines to be laid.

**Let it Flow**

Engineers are emplacing a new box culvert along Disney Drive, near the four corners. This culvert should alleviate some of the drainage problems that may be experienced during the rainy season. The culvert is being framed with wood to ensure proper installation and support. The 769th Engineers are making a name for themselves in Bagram. Thanks for all the hard work.



**Paving the Way**

The vertical platoon of Alpha company, with assistance from HSC's concrete section, has been pouring concrete near the SSA. The soldiers are utilizing the Slovakian concrete truck to make the pour. The project began several weeks ago and will continue until complete. The total amount of concrete poured when it is all said and done will be 1,800 cubic yards.



### **CPL Humphries**

This soldier has been nicknamed “the 769th artist”. CPL Humphries has drawn everything from the 769th Battalion mascot to individual portraits of soldiers. He is now in the process of painting a backdrop for a stage that will be used to promote mine awareness to the local children of Bagram. Public Affairs is hoping this project will help reduce the incidents when children play with mines due to their lack of awareness.

### **Thanks For a Remarkable Job**

769th EN BN presented soldiers of the 249th Prime Power Electrical team with certificates of appreciation for their hard work and dedication. While working under the 769th command, the group has done a wonderful job installing and maintaining electrical power to various installations around Bagram. They have also assisted 769th and 678th with electrical work in Viper City and the new Post Exchange.



### **Maintenance Shop**



SPC Jason Faul from DS Maintenance

Maintenance continues to be one of the most important operations in an Engineer Battalion. If the equipment is not running properly projects may be delayed or grind to a halt.

Due to an influx of repair parts, HSC and Alpha Company Maintenance platoons and DS Maintenance have been working steadily. As we spend more time in theater, our equipment is becoming worn. Operators must remember to perform proper PMCS before, during, and after operating equipment.

### **Class IV Yard**

769th EN BN controls all Class IV item on Bagram Airfield. That includes construction material such as wood, nails, electrical equipment, etc.

CPL Lavernge and SPC Distefano are seen here taking a break from issuing BOM to the many customers they see on a daily basis. Now get back to work.



## Cajun Pics



SGT Provo



SFC Vicellio & CW2 Shoefstall



SFC Mizell



1LT Lloyd



SPC Siefford & SPC White



CPL "Mailman" Martin



SPC Johnson, 1LT Johnson, & SPC Gaines



1SG Smith & 1SG Lynch

## SSG McNaughton is Recognized



During our deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom SSG McNaughton has stepped up and taken charge of all mine clearing operations. This an extremely unique and important job in this environment. Prior to construction, all areas must be cleared to ensure there are no unexploded ordinance in the ground. During his mission he has maintained an exceptional record of 0 accidents and 100% safety at all times. For his exceptional effort and dedication to the mission, he was presented with a group picture of the demining team as a small token to show our appreciation.

## Romanian's Tour Afghanistan

The USO sponsors many different celebrities to entertain soldier, such as: Robin Williams and Joan Jett. This month entertainers from Romania put on a concert to entertain the troops. Not sure what they were singing about, but who cares, they were hot.



## Keep Cutting

SPC Bradford has revealed a special talent since she began her tour in Bagram. She is a licensed cosmetologist and hair stylist. That's right females, we have all been experiencing bed head and SPC Bradford is the one to wipe those blues away. She's been interviewed by the Freedom Watch (the post newspaper) for her skills and may be experiencing a high volume of customers over the next few weeks.

## Carpentry Shop

SFC Hotard of Alpha Company's vertical platoon heads up the wood shop which is utilized by numerous carpenters. The shop houses various woodworking tools that enable carpenters to make everything from baptismal pools to picture frames. Our carpenters have also been responsible for the construction and winterization of guard towers base-wide.



If you have anything you would like published in the newsletter please submit to 1LT Townley.

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1LT Townley—SGT Witte



# Three Trees

## By: Harley Dave



Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, "Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver, and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty."

Then the second tree said, "Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength in my hull."

Finally the third tree said, "I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on the top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me."

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true; a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first he said, "This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter"...And he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree a woodsmen said, "This looks like a strong tree, I should be able to sell it to a shipyard. The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true.

One of the woodsmen said, "I don't need anything special from my tree so I'll take this one," and he cut it down.

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was placed in a barn and filled with hay.

This was not at all what he prayed for. The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end. The third tree was cut into large pieces and left alone in the dark.

The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams. Then one day, a man and a woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and he stood and said "Peace" and the storm stopped.

At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it.

When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

The moral of this story is that when things don't seem to be going your way, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, He will give you great gifts. Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined. We don't always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.