

# 769th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy)



January 31, 2003 — Issue 13

## Soldiers of the 769th Engineer Battalion:

The 527th advance party has arrived and our advance party departed last week. Upon arrival back into the states they will have an opportunity to visit with their families for a few days then they will head back to Fort Polk to ensure the 769th is ready to be received for out-processing so that we aren't delayed.

I want to thank everyone for the outstanding work we have accomplished while in theater. We would have not been able to achieve our goals or complete our missions if everyone did not work as a team and give it 100%. I know this journey has been hard at times but it is almost to an end and we can look back and say we have accom-

plished an extraordinary feat and will be remembered in Bagram as the engineers who built this base from the ground up.

I am encouraged by many of the things I have seen on this deployment. I saw new soldiers and seasoned veterans working side by side, learning and sharing knowledge. I have seen accomplishments by our maintenance personnel on tasks that they completed in hours instead of days. I have enjoyed many of the base improvements by our carpenters, electricians and equipment operators alike. These are the things that I will remember most and tell others. You honor me with your achievements.



LTC Boutte'

I will be proud to tell others that I served with the 769th during Operation Enduring Freedom and I think this is a stepping stone for new and more difficult challenges. There is no doubt in my mind that this battalion can accomplish any mission that we are tasked with. Essayons.



## Getting Ready

Customs inspections have begun and will be continuing over the next few weeks until we depart theater. They are inspecting gear, operational equipment, and personal baggage so that there is not anything illegal transported into the states. Some of the items include unauthorized weapons, weapons without proper documentation, foreign soil, unfinished wood, fur, war trophies, and other items. A more detailed list of what cannot be brought back is posted in the company TOC building. This may be a long process, but it must be completed before we are able to re-deploy.

## Profile of the Week

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 Equipment Section of HSC 769th EN BN. The group of personnel assist horizontal engineer missions with heavy equipment such as the HYEX, 916s, and fork lifts.

The section is led by SGT Arthur Brown. Thanks for doing such a wonderful job.



**Equipment Section**



## General Vines

The new commanding General of Bagram Airfield is MG Vines of the 82nd Airborne. He took the opportunity as the newly appointed Bagram mayor to visit Camp Cajun and present several soldiers with coins for performing an outstanding job during our deployment. Pictured to the left are LTC Boutte', MG Vines, CSM Serio, and CSM Turner.

## Troops Build Memorial

A memorial is being built at the quarry to honor SSG Michael McNaughton and his contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom. SSG McNaughton coordinated demining operations from June 2002– January 2003. He was transported to Walter Reed Army Hospital after being injured in the line of duty. Pictured to the right are SGT Prince, SPC Foster, and SPC Morris.





## Bush Visits Troops at Walter Reed

by Brett McMillan  
 Stripe News at Walter Reed Hospital

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Jan. 22, 2003) -- In their first visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush met Jan. 17 with five soldiers wounded in Afghanistan, and thanked them for their service to America.

Following the private visits on the hospital's Ward 57, Bush told reporters in the second-floor lobby that he and Laura had "just met with five incredibly brave soldiers - five of America's finest citizens who have been severely injured in the line of duty.

"We had a chance to tell both soldier and loved one alike that service to our country is noble and strong and good and we appreciate it very much," Bush said.

After thanking Walter Reed commander Maj. Gen. Kevin C. Kiley for his hospitality, Bush called Walter Reed a remarkable facility, "full of healers and compassionate people - people who are trained with the very best of skills to take care of people who have been injured badly.

"Having been here and seen the care these troops get is comforting for me and Laura," he said. "We should and must provide the best care for anybody who is willing to put their life in harm's way. And I can report to the American people that these five soldiers, badly injured in the line of service, are getting the best possible care. And our government is providing it to them."

While word of the president's visit was kept quiet for most of the hospital, the soldiers he visited - much to their surprise - were informed a day or two prior. A couple of them said they even found the chance to get a haircut. Ward 57 staff said they were also excited for the opportunity to meet the president and his wife.

Staff Sgt. Michael McNaughton, from the 769th Engineer Battalion, Louisiana National Guard, said he and his wife were "very excited" about meeting the president.

While doing reconnaissance, McNaughton stepped on a land mine in what was believed to be a cleared area at Bagram Air Base Dec. 27. The explosion took his right foot as well as two fingers on his right hand. Severe shrapnel wounds extending up his right leg required the leg to be amputated just above the knee.

The president spent nearly 10 minutes with him, McNaughton said, "Maybe less - when you're talking to the president of the United States you kind of lose track of time and everything."

"We talked about my injuries, and he wanted to know if I ran. And I said 'yes I run.' And he challenged me to running when I get better. He didn't say how long or how fast, he said he just wanted to run with me and see if I could hang with him," McNaughton said. "He kept on repeating it so I'm going to hold him up for it. That would be an honor to run with Mr. President."

Although he doesn't know how long to expect before he'll be fitted with a prosthesis and walking again, McNaughton said he is motivated to run again as soon as possible.

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

We still have a short period of time left in theater so we need to remember safety guidelines and that complacency is our enemy.

Thanks to all those who helped barbeque for the Kings Day Celebration. The event was a great success.

The Super Bowl was this past Sunday, January 26th and as luck would have it, Tampa Bay Buccaneers came out on top over the Oakland Raiders. Final score 48 to 21.

By now, everyone should have removed any remaining dividers in their tents. No exceptions, this

must be completed in order to facilitate the move-in of 527th soldiers. We will have to double up in many of the tents for a few short days during our RIP (relief in place) period. I need everyone's cooperation in this matter. I will tour the base camp to ensure this has been accomplished.

During your cleanup, if you have something of value you want to leave behind, think of our adopted village. The folks there can certainly use much of what you may consider throwaway items. Food, bedding, clothing, tennis shoes, etc. We are planning on one final trip representing the 769th to the village before we head out. Have



CSM James Serio

a heart and lend a helping hand to the citizens of Turkman village.

What is left for us? Just a good, thorough packing plan and a customs inspection. Train our replacements, then go home.



## Welcome the 527th

The advance party of the 527th has arrived and the group is inventorying equipment and supplies prior to the arrival of their main body. This battalion is also from Louisiana and is a part of the 225th Engineer Group. The advance party consisted of 38 personnel headed by Major McGee, the 527th battalion XO. Let's all give them a warm southern welcome and make them feel at home. Current plans are to consolidate all engineer units onto one area of the airbase.

## W-2's Now Available Via WWW.DFAS.MIL Website

Now that we're in the new calendar year, many of us are wondering about what to do about our taxes. IRS tax laws provide for an additional 180 days to file your taxes once you arrive back in the United

States from presidentially declared combat zones. The Department of Defense (DoD) has provided service members with access to W-2's forms via the DFAS.MIL website. All you need is your social security number and PIN number. W-2 forms can be downloaded or printed directly from the website and are IRS approved.

## Troops Get Some Income Tax Relief for Combat Zone Service

By Gerry J. Gilmore—American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24, 2003 -- Military members serving in designated combat zones in support of the war against global terrorism get a tax break from Uncle Sam.

Depending upon rank, eligible service members can exclude from federal income tax either all or some of their active duty pay -- and certain other pays -- earned in any month during service in a designated combat zone. According to the Internal Revenue Service's Armed Forces' Tax Guide for 2002, "a combat zone is any area the President of the United States designates by Executive Order as an area in which the U.S. Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat."

Current combat zones are Afghanistan, specified parts of the Kosovo area and the Persian Gulf region. The tax guide defines the qualifying areas. Service members in several other areas specified in law as "qualified hazardous duty areas" are eligible for the same tax breaks. Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia have been listed since November 1995. Some members providing direct support for military

operations within a designated combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area may also be eligible for income tax exclusions. New for 2002 are service in Djibouti, Africa, after July 1, 2002; and service in the Philippines after Jan. 9, 2002, providing members' orders specify their duty is "in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom - Philippines."

Service members who serve one or more days in a designated combat zone are entitled to federal tax exclusion benefits for that entire month, according to the IRS. The downloadable Armed Forces' Tax Guide for 2002 can be accessed on the Web at [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3.pdf). It lists many, but not all, designated combat zones.

While military members can use the tax guide in preparing their 2002 federal tax returns, those who have specific questions about designated combat zones should contact their unit personnel or pay officials or unit tax assistance officer.

The IRS guide notes service members normally don't need to claim the combat zone exclusion or subtract eligible earning on their federal tax returns. The services normally have already excluded combat zone earnings from the taxable gross income reported on service members' Form W-2s, the guide says. The IRS points out that military retired pay and pensions aren't eligible as combat zone income tax exclusions.



### At the Carwash

In this dusty environment equipment is prone to getting a little dirty. Prior to departing all equipment is being cleaned to turnover to the 527th. SPC Delehaye is pictured to the left cleaning the MCAP.

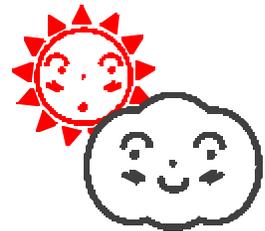
### Electrical

Prime Power is in the process of connecting more circuits into a feeder post. This is one of the many improvements they are making to expand power to all soldiers on post. Pictured from left to right are SSG Parker, SGT Parker, SFC Roper and SGT Whitehead.



### Camp Cajun Weather Forecast

Friday: cold  
Saturday: cold  
Sunday: cold  
Monday: cold



### Rollin', Rollin', Rollin'

SPC Gaspard is in the process of leveling the rock at Delta SOD preparing the area before the concrete is poured.

### Moving Transformers and Generators

Prime Power has been very busy as of late, relocating transformers and generators in order to accommodate several of the new camps currently under construction on Bagram Airbase. In addition to relocating power equipment, they are entrenching more power lines and expanding the electrical grid. You may have also noticed the new utility poles along Disney Drive. Be patient and cautious as the work they are performing is quite dangerous and risk of electrical shock is always there. Often forced to block roads and redirect traffic, use extreme caution when operating engineer equipment in and around the areas they are working in.



## What are you going to do when you get home?

“Take my girlfriend on a picnic to our favorite spot.” SPC Stubbs

“Build a house and sleep in my own bed with my beautiful wife.” SGT Mitchem

“Get to know my wife in the biblical sense.” CPT Erickson

“Spend all day in the bathroom and flush the toilet five times.” SGT Juneau

“Drink a twelve pack of beer.” SFC Pecoraro

“Sit on my couch and veg.” SSG Tetzal

“Take a three hour bath. SGT Lejuene

“Go to Taco Bell and eat 12 tacos.” SPC Mills



## Leading From the Front

CPT Sumner and SFC Doxey of the 678th are in the process of painting ballards. The majority of their detachment are working outside of the wire so they're performing the remainder of the jobs they have on Bagram Airbase. Good job fellows.



## General Visits Troops

MG Strock visited Camp Cajun last week. While here he received a briefing on the engineer mission. Following the briefing he gave a short speech on the importance of our mission and how our support allows the “trigger pullers” to do their mission. It is a joint effort and everyone must work as a team in order to succeed.

**Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day** was celebrated with a battalion barbeque and volleyball game. 1SG Lynch and his entourage of assistants did an excellent job of ensuring the steaks were cooked to perfection. There was plenty of food and sodas to go around. Thanks for all your hard work. Pictured are 1SG Lynch and SGT Juneau.



### **Delta SOD**

Everyone is working together to prepare Delta SOD which is located on the west side of the airfield. The welders are tying in the rebar and horizontal equipment operators are preparing the ground for installation of the concrete. Pictured to the right is SPC Donnie Smith of HSC Company Maintenance.



### **249th Prime Power**

is in the process of installing power lines throughout Bagram Airbase. This is just one of the changes that are being made around the Airbase to improve the quality of life. The power lines will run the length of Disney Drive and provide power for over 5,000 soldiers.



### **Chaplain's Corner**

Dear Fellow-Short-timers:

I wish all of you God speed as you prepare to head home. I will also be praying for your friends and family during the anxious final days.

I know we'll all reflect over the course of a lifetime on these days. For one thing, we'll never take things for granted! And we'll appreciate the freedom that's ours in America.

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers those who are headed here and to the other theater. We know what it's like to leave the familiar behind for an uncertain future!

May God richly bless each of you,  
Chaplain Sanders

## Cajun Pics



SPC George, SPC Buchanan, & SPC Donald



Electrician's truck



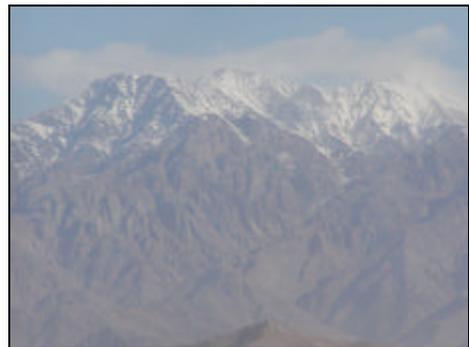
SFC Mizell & SGT Juneau



1LT Townley



SPC Owens & SPC Scott



One last view



MG Vines with soldiers



SGT Bridges

# Bucs top Raiders



SAN DIEGO (Jan. 26, 2003) -- Just defense, baby!

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers didn't need much more -- for most of the Super Bowl, anyway.

Coach Jon Gruden and his Bucs won their first NFL championship, routing the Oakland Raiders 48-21 in the first matchup of best offense vs. best defense.

The Tampa Bay defense won by a mile, returning three of a record five interceptions for touchdowns and shutting down any hope the Raiders had of a late comeback.

It was the first Super Bowl victory for the former NFL laughingstock, a team that lost its first 26 games after it started playing in 1976 in those garish orange uniforms.

"I want to thank Coach Gruden for what he did," said Bucs owner Malcolm Glazer, who a year ago was the butt of jokes for his revolving coach search that finally brought Gruden from the Raiders.

"He came from heaven and he brought us to heaven. We were waiting for the right man

and the right man came -- Jon Gruden."

Gruden, who at 39 became the youngest coach ever to win a Super Bowl, is known as an offensive guru.

This victory was with a defense run by Monte Kiffin and other holdovers from former coach Tony Dungy.

Super Bowl MVP Dexter Jackson had two interceptions, as did Dwight Smith, who returned both of his picks for touchdowns, including a 50-yarder to finish off the scoring with 2 seconds left in the game. Derrick Brooks also returned an interception for a touchdown.

Simeon Rice had two of the Bucs' five sacks as Tampa Bay romped to a 20-3 halftime lead then scored two quick third-quarter touchdowns.

That rendered futile a late comeback by the Raiders that included a touchdown on a blocked punt and 48-yard TD pass from league MVP Rich Gannon to Jerry Rice. "Right now, I wouldn't care if they put Mount Everest in front of me," said Simeon Rice, who was playing against a line of all 300-pounders. "I just wanted to be a world champion."

The Tampa Bay offense did its part, too, led by Michael Pittman, who ran for 124 yards on 29 carries.

Mike Alstott had a 2-yard TD run and Brad Johnson added two TD passes to Keenan McCardell, the second an 11-yarder after an 89-yard drive that ate up almost eight minutes of the third quarter. Just 43 seconds later, Smith grabbed the ball away from Jerry Rice and took it to the end zone to make it 34-3.

Oakland owner Al Davis' slogan "Just win, baby!" wasn't going to work this time.

Although Gruden denied it, his knowledge of his old team worked out perfectly.

"Every play they've run, we've run in practice," Tampa Bay safety John Lynch said.

But Gruden said: "That was all overrated. I stayed away from the defense. That's a

credit to our players. We've got a great defensive club."

To be fair, the Raiders might have entered this game a bit distracted.

Their All-Pro center, Barret Robbins, was sent home before the game for missing team functions the day before the game. The Bucs took advantage, with Warren Sapp, Lynch and the interior defense pushing up the middle constantly against backup center Adam Treu to put pressure on Gannon and shut down the run. This was a victory for one of the NFL's longtime sad sacks.

Between 1983 and 1996, the Bucs were the league's worst franchise, going without a winning season and losing 10 or more games in 13 of those 14 years.

Even a year ago, they were a mess after the Glazer family fired Dungy and went after big-name coaches like Bill Parcells and Steve Mariucci before landing Gruden.

But if this was a glorious day for the Bucs, it was the opposite for the Raiders, who have three Super Bowl victories but hadn't been back to pro football's showcase game in 19 years.

Tampa Bay started badly, but it soon took control and led 20-3 at halftime on a 2-yard touchdown run by Alstott and a 5-yard TD pass to McCardell. The defense held the Raiders' top-ranked offense to three first downs at intermission. But the Raiders struck the first blow.

Jackson's first interception for Tampa Bay set up the next score: Gramatica's 43-yard field goal early in the second quarter to give the Bucs a 6-3 lead.

Jackson got another interception on the Raiders' next possession, returning it 23 yards to the Raiders 45. Tampa Bay couldn't move and Tom Tupa had to punt.

But the Tampa Bay defense held the Raiders to three downs and out, and the Bucs finally broke through to take a 13-3 lead.

*Above excerpt from ESPN News.com*

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

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