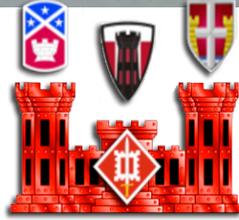


“Clearin’ the way-ROUGHNECK!”

# TF Roughneck Review



Issue 5  
August 2011



FOB Dehdadi 2  
Afghanistan



## Major Paul Cerniauskas Executive Officer, Task Force Roughneck

Awesome news! 190th EN CO is now fully trained and is conducting route clearance missions with our Infantry brothers from Europe as well as coalition forces from other nations. Their mission is to clear roads in Kunduz to make it safe for the people of Afghanistan. FSC Tactical Convoy Operation (TCO) platoon ran their first mission this last week hauling equipment and escorting construction project material to Kunduz – a successful mission. We’ll be relying heavily on their capabilities. Det 1 623rd EN with 877th EN CO are continuing their excellent work with construction projects benefitting U.S. soldiers and the people of Afghanistan. 1014th SAPPER CO is engaged in their training to conduct route clearance missions out of Camp Deh Dadi 2.



Maj. Paul Cerniauskas, XO of TF Roughneck

We’re also waiting for active duty construction units from Fort Hood to join us. Then we’ll make our presence felt even more because of what we can do as Engineers in the northern part of Afghanistan.

All our soldiers are doing great, and spirits continue to rise as we’re more and more doing what we trained and prepared for. I reflect on what it takes to build organizational capability. As it turns out, it takes a lot! Collectively, we’ve had to take deep breaths many times. We’re Engineers and working with complex problems is our specialty. This Task Force responded in the same way we’ve responded to countless other problems – thoughtfully planning out the best course of action in the midst of uncertainty and driving to success with determination. The Roughnecks are always performing with excellence. In the past, however, everything was on hand up front to do the mission. Everything wasn’t on hand for us here when we arrived. We started out from scratch and are getting more and more capable every day, as we get more accustomed to the mission and surroundings, and with the arrival of more equipment to do our jobs. In this case, success is not defined by how far we are from the top, but rather how far we rise off the bottom. I’m happy to say we’re well away from the bottom.

Roughneck 5



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SPC Chance Tall & SSG Danny Mitchell receive recognition from Col. Paolozzi for placing 2nd in TF Sword’s Soldier & NCO of Year.

CSM Bryan Senkirik motivating troops of the 190th EN CO at FOB Kunduz thanking them for their work and dedication.

# 623rd EN CO builds strategic firebase

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

KUNDUZ PROVINCE, Afghanistan- Soldiers from Detachment 1, 623rd EN CO near completion of the new Combat Outpost (COP) Shir Khan in record time. The biggest challenge these engineers had was working under extreme heat. “Everybody is working together and working really hard.” Explained SSG Tracey Rapp with Det. 1, 623rd EN CO, horizontal supervisor from Augusta, Ga., “For the first 11 days, when we were building the perimeter, we had to be in full battle rattle. Once that got established we were able to downgrade and that was a big help. We were constantly trying to stay hydrated and safe.”



Construction site at Combat Outpost Shir Khan.

The shell of COP Shir Khan was built in two phases. First, the horizontal engineers (bucket loader, grader, dozer) landscaped, built the walls, and installed waste tanks. Second, the vertical engineers (masonry, carpenters, plumbers, electricians) built cement pads, erected tents and structures, and then installed lights and air-conditioning.



“When we got here there was nothing here. It was our job to set up and fill the Hescos. It took 11 million pounds of dirt to fill them up.” Said SGT Lindsay Fowler with Det. 1, 623rd EN CO, a heavy equipment operator from Douglasville, Ga., “I was digging out the bottom of the hole so we can set in a new waste tank. Once that’s in, they’ll put in a kitchen and start cooking hot food.”



SGT Fowler operates bucket loader

The U.S. Army contracted with local cement companies to haul in the cement.

“We’re pouring the pads to put full size Alaskan tents on. We’ll do small ones for the A/C units to sit on and then hook up the electricity.” Explained PFC Jonathan Foster with Det. 1, 623rd EN CO, a masonry specialist from Omaha, Neb., “My biggest frustration is the cement deliveries. I prefer to pour early in the morning or late in the evening. It’s really hard to keep it from cracking right now because



SPC Foster tightens forms for cement

we poured it at mid-day.”

While describing their experiences and frustrations, all the soldiers of Det. 1 displayed a sense of pride and accomplishment. “We’ll soon set up

latrines with showers, sinks, and toilets. I’d

rather come out here and work in the middle

of nowhere, where I feel like I’m helping the guys.” Concluded SSG Brett Yochum with Det 1, 623rd EN CO, vertical supervisor from Ashland, Neb., “It’s been all MREs (meals ready to eat) out here. Showering with bottled water. We live in a tent with no air conditioning. Everyday last week was about 117 degrees. But you know, this isn’t about us or what we went through. It’s about completing this COP for the greater goal in the near future.”

# FSC soldiers' view



SGT Evelyn Taylor from Hico, Tx

I always hear “I never seen a girl welder before” or “Women should be in an office” and I say, no. I want to keep welding because that’s what I love to do. My job entails welding, fabricating, designing whatever my unit needs and incorporate it to make things work better.

When I joined the Army and went to welding school it was only the basics, I wanted to know more. So I took college courses and got my certification and that’s what I do as a civilian.

I think everything we do has a purpose. We were supposed to go east but instead we’re up in northern Afghanistan. There’s a reason. If it’s for road construction, building structures, or sharing our technical knowledge I’m glad we’re here. We have a lot of knowledge. If we could help one person all this is worth it.

I pray everyday. I keep in touch with my friends and family. I want them to know we’re doing the best that we can. Any appreciation will go a long way.



Taylor says welding here you got to deal with high winds and rusty metal.



SPC Shaquela London from Midland, TX

I went to church, here at Camp Dehdadi and heard about the choir so I joined up. Singing is a part of me. It’s such a great feeling to sing with other soldiers from other units sharing music with the rest of our FOB every Sunday.

I’m a light wheeled mechanic but we’ll work on other types of vehicles here that need to be fixed. It could be the A/C, electrical problems, or just changing tires. I am the only female mechanic in our battalion. I work as hard as any male so there’s never been an issue with me being a woman mechanic or a soldier.

I’ve always liked fixing my car. I tell my friends back home, “Do what your heart desires. Don’t get a job you don’t like.”

This is my first deployment. I feel we are blessed being in this area. I’m not letting my guard down, I’m saying the Afghans seem to appreciate us here. Like the ones I meet here on the FOB, I show them respect and they in turn respect me back.



London grabs the biggest wrench out of her tool box and says “I’m ready!”.



SPC April Flores from Los Fresnos, Tx

I’m a 92F, that’s a fueler, and for this deployment I was trained as a gunner. I like to be outside. I like FSC. The leadership, the NCO’s, really support me. They made me a gunner because they needed a mature responsible person that could make smart decisions.

My favorite is the 240B machine gun. It’s exciting. I like the way it kicks back as my tracers hit the target. There’s a lot of rules we gunners must follow so we must be disciplined. Sometimes the situation happens so fast, I have just seconds to react. It helps to constantly communicate with my TC (truck commander).

As a fueler, I’m driving a combat armored gas station. On my last mission, a truck in the convoy ran out of fuel at a choke point in a mountain pass. It was night. The gun trucks set up security and I fueled up the truck in total darkness.

I joined the Army to deploy. Now, if someone shakes my hand thanking me for my service, I’ll feel at ease. I contributed my part.



Flores says keeping busy makes days go by faster as she switches from gunner to fueler.

# Bloodhounds do recon and recovery

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

KUNDUZ PROVINCE, Afghanistan-1st Platoon, 190th Engineer Company from Morristown, Tennessee rolled south out of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Kunduz to conduct a route reconnaissance. “We’re going to see if the road can stand military load classes and make sure that the bridges can also sustain those loads,” explained 1st LT Jason Carter with the 190th EN CO, 1st Platoon Leader from Clarksville, Tenn. “If the bridge can’t hold, we’ll find fording sites for our heavy vehicles.”

Conducting a bridge assessment is classic reconnaissance where accurate measurements of its dimensions will determine its usefulness to military as well as to civilian vehicle traffic. “I was using



SPC Branum uses laser range finder

a laser range finder to take measurements to see what size vehicles could fit and how much weight it could take.” Explained SPC Eddie Branum with the 190th EN CO, a combat engineer from Maynardville, Tenn. “We cleared it and found nothing underneath and found some potential fording spots, if needed. The recon needed to be done and it’s part of my job.”



SGT Seals uses measuring tape

said SGT Jonathan Seals with 190th EN CO, a combat engineer from New Market, Tenn. “But instead of waiting for it to come down, we took the initiative and started measuring and sending up our readings. The bridges were fairly new. The roads systems are actually wide enough for our needs. I think we did a good recon.”

Soldiers used the Enfire (electronic measuring system) to measure the top of the bridge while soldiers clearing underneath turned to the old method of measuring the height and pillars with a measuring tape. “The Enfire eliminates the tape measure,”

A few days later, combat engineers of 2nd Platoon, 190th EN CO self-recovered two of their disabled route clearance vehicles without assistance or incident while conducting their route recon mission north of FOB Kunduz.

Their mission was simple: Conduct a route recon, deliver a waste storage tank to Combat Outpost (COP) Shir Khan, and return to base. “We delivered the tank at the COP and



Teamwork was key to recovery operation

discovered a vehicle problem. We used our wrecker to tow it back,” recalled SSG Audie Smitley with 190th EN CO, 2nd PLT, Platoon Sergeant from Sevierville, Tenn. “Going down the road, another vehicle started to lose power and needed to get recovered. We loaded it onto the trailer we used earlier in the mission.”

As soon as the patrol pulled off the hardball, the dismounts set up a security parameter while the rest of the soldiers worked on loading the disabled vehicle. “I’m a dismount in the patrol. My job is to get out of the truck and look for threats,” explained PFC Michael McGinnis with the 190th EN CO, a combat engineer from Rogerville, Tenn. “I think it’s the best job to have. You get up close and personal. We made sure our guys were safe as they recovered the vehicle. I think it’s a privilege.”



PFC McGinnis scans for any threats

2nd Platoon was able to return the two disabled gun trucks to base without incident and prevented further damage with their self-recovery actions. “We came back

to the FOB and it was a successful event. I think they did an outstanding job today,” concluded SSG Smitley, “We did teamwork. Nobody was arguing. Everybody did what he was supposed to do just like clockwork. 2nd Platoon is just a hard charging team. We pride ourselves at being the best in our company and we outshine everyone else. I think these guys proved it today.”

# Along the watchtowers

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan- During the past month, Task Force Roughneck located at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Deh Dadi II provided route clearance, logistics and construction support for the northern provinces of Afghanistan. While inside the FOB, like good neighbors Roughneck soldiers shared the burden of base defense.

When the daily hustle and bustle winds down and the sun sinks below the horizon, these soldiers wake up and prepare to man the FOB's watchtowers guarding all personnel, civilian and military, resting for the night. "How

would you like to wake up in the middle of the night with a bad guy standing over you? Or what if a bad guy explodes himself right next to you," asked SPC

Echo Holland, with HHC, 111th EN BN, a paralegal specialist from Miles, Texas. "What we do is very important. We're there to keep them out."

Most soldiers have performed guard duty at least once in their military careers. In Afghanistan, the threat is real. "They like to make rock formations. (used as markers) When a new one appears, we get real interested." Holland said, "Last night two mysterious trucks drove by in my sector, I called it in, and my SOG (sergeant of the guard) acknowledged and started tracking them."



SPC Holland checks her buddy's equipment



PFC GarciaGarcia checks her equipment

She explained that she and her battle buddy alternate sitting down to relieve their feet after hours of standing. They tell each other stories or jokes, and develop mind games to keep themselves alert and vigilant as they watch.

"We've gotten used to it. You gotta do things to keep your mind clicking." Said PFC Lucero GarciaGarcia with HHC, 111th EN BN, an NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical) specialist from San Angelo, Texas. "One of the things we do is, while she's watching, I'll read the writings on the walls, it's pretty interesting stuff. We make fun of each other. I get a good feeling inside, knowing we're out there together watching out for each other and, of course, for everybody sleeping."

Some nights are calm and quiet. But when the wind roars up, the blinding sand is everywhere and covers everything. "The other morning, when I got off duty and I went into our tactical operations center (TOC).



SPC Holland on her way to guard duty

A lieutenant gave me a disgusted look and asked where'd I come from. I was covered with sand from my head down to my boots." Holland explained, "Guard duty, I said. He shook his finger at me and said I should've worn a scarf or rag so I wouldn't have gotten sand in my nose and mouth. So I licked my lips and said, 'But, it tastes good! Sir!' We all laughed."



GarciaGarcia and Holland at intel briefing before their guard shift

# Ace in the hole

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan-The 1014th Sapper Company has trained long hard and are nearing their validation as a route clearance company. The platoons are undergoing their final collective training while their equipment gets refitted and upgraded.

“The guys are motivated and eager to get validated. It’s been a long road,” said Master Sgt. Orlando Hernandez with the 1014th EN CO (Sapper), human resource and assistant operations sergeant from Toa Alta, Puerto Rico. “Collective training is platoon size training. You got 30 guys in different vehicles executing various route clearing tasks to achieve one goal: safely clear the road of any threats.”



MSG Orlando Hernandez



Bonecrushers rehearse battle drills

He services the 1014th, or Bonecrushers, in several capacities. His two main efforts are administration paper work and when needed assists in operations.

“I take care of my soldiers. I want to keep their morale high. I do their pay, promotions, issues from the family readiness group, or from our rear detachment.” Explained MSG Hernandez, “When soldiers come to me they’re trying to get something fixed. I try to resolve it as soon as possible or give them an idea of what’s going on. An issue is a distraction to a soldier. I want to avoid that.”



Preparing to move out

As the Bonecrushers develop their battle rhythm, he will shift over to the operations side and assist in planning and executing other supporting tasks. “We’re here because we were assigned to do this mission, here in Afghanistan,” Hernandez concluded, “When we got here we



Headed to weapon ranges

were dealt a bad hand. But we continued to train, stayed focused and now as our turn approaches, we’ll be ready aces high. We’ll come out of here winners.”

“All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.” Proverbs 14:23



CSM Bryan Senkirik (left) and SGT Daniel Cecil (rt) listen as CH Ganthier reads Scripture at ceremony for a deceased soldier.

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,  
 When the road you’re trudging seems all uphill,  
 When the funds are low and the debts are high,  
 And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
 When care is pressing you down a bit,  
 Rest if you must, but don’t you quit.  
 Life is queer with its twists and turns,  
 As every one of us sometimes learns,  
 And many a failure turns about  
 When he might have won had he stuck it out,  
 Don’t give up though the pace seems slow –  
 You may succeed with another blow!  
 Success is failure turned inside out –  
 The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,  
 And you never can tell just how close you are,  
 It may be near when it seems so far.  
 So stick to the fight when you’re hardest hit –

It’s when things seem worst that you must not quit. -Unknown



left to right: SPC Soto, PFC Moore, and SSG Smith salute farewell to a fellow soldier.

There are many parallels between the above poem and the state of our struggle in Afghanistan. We try to smile. Yet honestly, we also “sigh” as it seems we trudge uphill against our national debt, a suicide here on base, the recent tragic loss of life in a helicopter crash and helping the Afghan people stand on their own, while at the same time, drawing down our forces. At times, “care presses down a bit” and “the pace seems slow” as we work diligently towards establishing security and building our training partnership with the Afghan National Army forces in our area. Yet, we will not quit. Your loved ones are dedicated professional soldiers! I’m proud to assist them in their spiritual and religious freedom while they “stick to the fight.” Thank you for the encouragement of your continued prayers and loving support. CH (CPT) Ganthier

# August 2011



Horizontal engineers of Det.1, 623rd EN CO after completing mission.



Bucket loader operated by SGT Fowler prepares a pit for waste tank installment.



Vertical engineers of Det. 1, 623rd EN CO pose between tasks at construction site.



SSG Yochum and SPC Hergott move an electrical component for new living tents.



Combat Engineers of 1014th EN CO (Sapper) from Puerto Rico before mission.



1st LT Jose Hernandez with 1014th Sapper Co conducts safety briefing.



SPC Julio Acevedo with 1014th Sapper Co from Hato Rey, PR ready for the mission.



SPC Wilfredo Torres from Aguadilla, and SPC Carlos Rios from Barceloneta, P.R.



SGT Jason Wilson with 190th EN CO adjusts a light on his vehicle before mission.



SGT Allen Carpenter with 190th EN CO takes point looking for thtreats.



L to R. Bill Halsam, Gov. of Tenn. greets SPC Aaron Reed at chow hall during VIP visit.



Bill Halsam, Gov. of Tenn, and members of 190th EN CO hold up Tenn. state flag.



SSG English (L) and SFC Zapata (R) with FSC, 111th EN BN arrive at destination.



SSG Karen Luna with FSC, 111th EN BN from Austin, TX checks her equipment before driving her fuel truck.



SSG Philip Thomas (R) and SGT Nathan Zwahr (L) with HHC, 111th EN BN prep for a PSD mission.



SGT Jessica Garbarino, Intel NCO with HHC, 111th EN BN from San Angelo, TX posts the weather report.



MSG Garza and CPT Litton (center L to R)HHC, 111th EN BN with Afghan Army officers.



CPT Matthew Calton with HHC, 111th EN BN departs to meet key leaders.



MAJ Paul Cerniauskas with HHC, 111th EN BN discusses courses of action before SP.



LTC Tim Senecaut, CDR of TF Roughneck and Gen Jamil agree to partnership training.

# “Clearin’ the Way-Roughnecks!”

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## Roughneck Spotlight:



SPC Sean Curl from Dandridge, Tenn.



SPC Elisha Fanney from Morristown, Tenn.



SGT Jason Mooneyham from Rogersville, Tenn.



SPC Matthew McLaughlin from New Market, Tenn.

**Awarded  
 ARMY  
 ACHIEVEMENT  
 MEDAL  
 190th EN CO**



SGT Michael Becker from Ft. Cambell, Ky.



SPC James Bullard from Morristown, Tenn.



SGT David Lawhead from Kingsport, Tenn.



SPC Jon Foster from Omaha, Neb. with 623rd EN CO



SPC Idelfonso Rivera (left) from Naranjito, PR & SPC Emilio Vizcanino (right) from Agua Buenas, PR & SPC Edgard Mendez from Bayamon, PR all with 1014th Sapper Co.

**Awarded AAMs  
 Forward Support Co.**



SSG Christopher English (left) from Coppers Cove, TX, SPC Kenneth Weaver (right), SPC Chance Tall, & SGT Cleresa Hair

**Awarded  
 ARMY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL  
 1014th Sapper CO**

1st LT Jose Hernandez, Corozal, PR  
 SSG Carlos Rodriguez, Canovanas, PR  
 SGT Wilfredo Rodriguez, Vega Alta, PR  
 SGT Ernesto Mujica, Rio Piedras, PR  
 SGT Antonio Andino, Caguas, PR  
 SPC Julio Acevedo, Isabela, PR  
 SPC Nelvin Burgos, Juana Diaz, PR  
 SPC Edgar Melendez, Caguas, PR  
 SPC Roberto Ortiz, Vega Alta, PR  
 SPC Jose Rodriguez, Vega Alta, PR  
 SPC Orlando Vazquez, Comerio, PR

**Recently  
 Promoted**



(R to L) SPC Leslie Goben from San Angelo, TX; SPC Kenneth Kent from Corpus Christi, TX; and SSG Bryan Denson from Brownwood, TX all with HHC, 111th EN BN



SSG Robert Bennet from Cross Plains, TX with FSC, 111th EN BN