

“Clearin’ the way-ROUGHNECK!”

TF ROUGHNECK REVIEW



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Supply mafia keeps Roughnecks running

By CPT Ben Garcia 111th EN BN S4 OIC

Connecting the dots. What? Connecting the dots. Let’s say you have two points and you want to get from point A to point B. Everything required in between the dots is logistics. Planners plan, operations operate, and logisticians get things from point A to point B. Let’s say, for example, you have an engineer battalion that has to go from Brownwood, TX to a land half way across the planet. That engineer battalion must be equipped and transported from point A (Brownwood, TX) to point B (Camp DDII, Afghanistan) through a methodical and labor-intensive process. The logistic section must also insure everything gets from point A to point B in a timely and accountable manner based on the specified mission requirements.



CPT Garcia, “The Godfather”

What would we need to insure success for logistics movement within a battalion? One would start by staffing the logistic section with qualified personnel. I will use our current section as a model for this article. Our staff is comprised of an OIC (Officer in Charge), PBO (Property Book Officer), BMO (Battalion Maintenance Officer), NCOIC (Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge), property book sergeant, and 3 specialists to make sure everyone has the right equipment on time. I will call us the Task Force Roughneck logistics family. (Family is what we call ourselves in the logistics section). Please let me introduce you to my family. (Imagine me talking like Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando) of the Godfather).

The OIC is Benito “The Godfather” Garcia, the PBO is Eric “Big Chief” Olson, the BMO is Stuart “Knuckle Buster” Kuhrt, the NCOIC is Donny “Don Juan” Daniels, the SGT is Elizabeth “Tat-tat” Patterson, one specialist is Jack “El-Ranchero” Ford, another specialist is Patrick “The Pounder” Desomma, and finally specialist Cameron “The Cruiser” Valdez. Also, a vital part of the family is the parallel support from specified muscle within the HHC ranks: Smitty “The Six Shooter” Smith and PFC Tyler “The Tenacious” Wagner would be that help. This is the makeup of a highly trained and skilled section/team required to make sure approximately 500 Soldiers are sustained from point A to point B in support of highly complex missions in Afghanistan.



(Gangsters left to right) SPC Valdez, SGT Patterson, SFC Daniels, CW2 Kurht, SSG Smith, PFC Wagner and SPC Desomma

It has been the section’s mission to supply, transport, and sustain five units within the battalion, over a 500 mile span, throughout a period of approximately a year and return them from point B to point A. Along with movement and sustainment, there is accountability and maintenance of complex equipment.

(See Mafia last page)

190th EN CO launches Afghan engineers in North

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

KUNDUZ PROVINCE, Afghanistan- The Afghanistan National Army 2/209th Route Clearance Company successfully accomplished their first route clearing mission in an insurgency stronghold west of Forward Operating Base Kunduz. The mission named Operation: Desert Dragon was the first ANA led route clearing and show of force mission into the Chahar Darah District with the 2nd platoon of the 190th Engineer Company, Task Force Roughneck playing a secondary support role.



190th & ANA 2/209th RCC stage vehicles before mission

“The ANA went into an area where no ANA had been before,” U.S. Army Capt. Thomas Gilley, commander of the 190th EN CO, TF Roughneck from Morristown, Tenn., said. “The Afghans villagers seemed surprised but very happy to see the ANA. There were times we had to dismount and walk to conduct clearing and security tasks. As we went through those small villages, the people came out and welcomed the ANA soldiers.”



1st Lt. Eric Madison with 190th and officers w/2/209th RCC

For months, the 2/209th RCC trained with the 190th EN CO in partnership to develop and strengthen the RCC’s tactics, techniques and procedures. According to Gilley the RCC professionalism and performance during Operation: Desert Dragon was proof that the partnership program works.

“The effects of Operation: Desert Dragon were critical,” U.S. Army Capt. Neal Litton with TF Roughneck, the partnership liaison officer from Brownwood, Texas explained. “It now shows the face of the ANA wanting to do route clearance missions, oppose to what has been U.S. and coalition forces previously.”



ANA 2/209th RCC takes point clearing road of IEDs

The operation was confirmation that the power hand off from coalition to Afghan forces is becoming a reality to the people of northern Afghanistan and the world.

“In the upcoming months, we will see more and more ANA route clearance units conducting clearing operations for their country,” said Litton. “We will continue our partnership training and mentoring with them.”

Gilley said the RCC conducting several interrogations for possible improvised explosive devices (IED) during the operation and their show of force was impressive.

“The RCC did an excellent job,” Gilley said. “They followed their training and conducted their operations by the book. They proved to me that they’re capable of conducting operations on their own. I look forward to being able to do some more joint operations with them in the future.”



190th and 2/209th soldiers pose for pictures at end of mission

1014th Sappers & coalition mentor ANA engineers

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

KABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan- The last three Afghan National Army Route Clearance Companies to be fielded stood proudly in formation as guest speakers commended and wished them well at their validation ceremony outside Kabul, December 2011. Also in their formations were Spanish, French and American soldiers who spent months training and mentoring the Afghan combat engineers. Each mentor was wondering the same things, “Did I do enough to get these guys ready for combat? How will they perform, when we’re gone? If I only had a little more time.”



Afghan combat engineers at their graduation ceremony

Their thoughts were sincere and their time was up. The soldiers of the ANA 3rd/201st, 3rd/207th and 1st/209th RCC’s were being shipped out the next day from the Consolidated Fielding Center at Forward Operating Base Blackhorse to their new areas of operation. Both Afghan and coalition mentors spent four months developing and refining the art of finding and disposing IEDs which is one of Afghanistan’s major threats in becoming a secure and stable independent nation.

“Today, my soldiers are ready,” said ANA Sgt. Taj Mohammad with 1st/209th Corps Route Clearance Company and a squad leader for 1st platoon. “Four months ago, we knew nothing. Now, four months later, we know what tasks and procedures we must do to clear our roads of IEDs. Of course, without our mentors we wouldn’t be able to be at this level of proficiency. They worked very hard and their presence in our company helped us become more professional.”

CFC fields new Afghan army units by manning, equipping and training them. American contractors based at CFC and soldier mentors from the various coalition regional commands conducted the training. The Afghan army recruits came from a two-month basic soldier course before they started specialized training at CFC in their specific army branch including infantry, artillery and combat engineers.

“At the beginning, training them was very frustrating,” explained U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jose Hernandez with the 1014th Sapper Company, Task Force Roughneck from Corozal, Puerto Rico and mentor for ANA 1st/209th RCC. “The day training improved was after I yelled at the officers for not planning their mission and their poor field performance. One of the officers took me aside and humbly said ‘Please teach us what to do because we don’t know. We are all new to the army. I’ve only been in the army and a captain for four months.’ After that, my heart and mind changed. I had to start from zero and taught them every detail on how to organize, command and control their unit. From that moment on, the company improved daily.”

The RCC engineers were trained on individual and collective tasks. They learned how to operate and maintain their equipment and weapon systems. Then, the instructors and mentors taught them tactics and techniques to conduct route-clearing missions. All the training and procedures that were taught would be



tested during their final validation exercise. “We were given an objective and we obtained this objective during our final exercise,” French Army Warrant Officer Venil Sebastian with the 3rd Engineer Regiment and mentor for the ANA 201st RCC said. “This is important for Afghanistan. This is important for me. When I’m given a mission, I give it my heart and soul to do my best. To teach these Afghan soldiers engineering methods was a challenge. They were eager to learn and they did well. They worked through the different scenarios and validated with high marks.”

(See Last RCC last page)



1st Lt. Hernandez w/1014th Sappers

FSC construction engineers make hard work easy

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan- Heavy Equipment engineers of 5th platoon, Forward Support Company, Task Force Roughneck, expanded the entry control point at Forward Operating Base Deh Dadi 2. Due to increase vehicle traffic, extra vehicle lanes will be added to ease congestion and provide better security of the main entrance.

“The extra lanes will help with the increase of traffic at DD2,” U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jesse Gloe with FSC, TF Roughneck, the site project manager from Rapid City, S.D. said.



Ssg Gloe, SGT Vig & SGT Lanz watch progress

“We almost have the ground leveled out. Out here, I have to make sure everything goes smoothly. I’ve got great Soldiers working hard, but I still have to manage things. Some of this equipment can beat you up. A scraper is pretty rough on your body. So, I try to change the operators out regularly.”



Scraper gets help from a dozer in slippery mud

The wet winter weather caused some of the heavy equipment to struggle in the slippery mud. The big scraper was one of those. Its huge tires spun hopelessly in the mud. But the engineers overcame the slick ground by using a pushing technique to continue their mission.

“I was using my dozer to ‘Cat-push,’” explained U.S. Army Spc. Matthew Vig with 5th platoon, FSC, TF Roughneck, a heavy equipment operator from Faith, S.D. “A scraper doesn’t have enough traction to get through the mud. So, by getting behind it with my dozer and pushing it, I help the scraper with traction, power and give it momentum to scoop up dirt it needs to fill its bowl (dirt collection compartment).”



SGT Vig operates his dozer

Once fully loaded the scrapers deposited the dirt on the expansion area for the graders and compactors to level everything out.

“I operate the vibrating roller compactor to compress the dirt down tightly,” said U.S. Army Spc. Sheena Olson-Embry with 5th Platoon, Forward Support Company, Task Force Roughneck, a heavy equipment operator from Belle Fourche, S.D. “The weight and the roller does its thing as I go back and forth flattening the area for the new ECP lanes. Every machine has its specific function and so far so good.”



Vibrating roller compactor and grader expand and level ground

TF Roughneck has been effectively building and improving military bases or outposts throughout Region Command North since their arrival in theatre. With their new horizontal platoon in full operation the engineers are ready for more future projects.

“This is our first real project since we got here,” Gloe concluded. “We’re pretty enthusiastic about being here. We’re almost finished with this project and looking forward to the next one. My guys are hard workers and having fun. I couldn’t be happier.”

Back stage with Roughneck MCC

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

KABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan-Sending Soldiers or cargo in and out of northern Afghanistan sounds simple, but it's not. People and equipment can get lost, misrouted or delayed in the maze of multinational terminals, flight lines and military or civilian flight representatives.

For Task Force Roughneck located in the northern Afghanistan, Bagram Airfield (BAF) outside Kabul is the nearest supply hub. It is also the only airport for U.S. personnel entering or leaving the country. To get there southbound travelers have to fly over the mountains out of Camp Marmal Airfield, located outside Mazar-e-Sharif. Key Soldiers in these two busy air hubs have kept TF Roughneck Soldiers and supplies on time and on schedule.



SGT Hubbard delivers departing passengers at Bagram terminal

“The U.S. Army is about accountability,” explained U.S. Army Sgt. Richard Hubbard with TF Roughneck, BAF Movement Control Center (MCC) coordinator from Killeen, Texas. “I’m the eyes and ears for our battalion. Hundreds of Soldiers pass through BAF daily on their way to or returning from rest and recuperation (R and R), emergency leave or official missions. With us here, we take care of them and the turn around is quicker. If a Soldier misses a flight, movement or delays himself he’s really hurting his buddy, by delaying his buddy’s R and R.”



SGT Hubbard finds arriving group of Roughnecks headed for R&R



Traffic jam on BAF's main Disney avenue

BAF is described as a small city with the busiest airport in Afghanistan. It has its own power stations, fire and police departments, stores, several dining facilities and thousands of huts, tents and office buildings. With over 45 thousand multinational military and civilian living and working there, it is crowded. Vehicles and pedestrians commuting the only avenue, called Disney, cause daily traffic jams. BAF is also a big target for the enemy.

“Back in September, we were attacked by indirect fire,” described U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Theodore Steadman with TF Roughneck, BAF MCC supervisor from Austin, Texas.



“During the attack, I got all our traveling Soldiers accounted for except for two. They were located on the other side of the airstrip and there was no contact. As soon as we got the all-clear signal, I drove out across the tarmac to find them. That’s when a rocket hit my vehicle. The truck was in the air; glass shattered and dust and smoke filled the cab. The truck slammed down hard damaged and twisted but was still running, so I drove it to the nearest bunker. I wasn’t hurt bad, but we did find those two missing Soldiers alive and well.”

SSG Steadman tracks flight times

TF Roughneck’s mission requires vehicles such as specialized route clearing trucks, gun trucks, tractor trucks to haul supplies on trailers and heavy construction machines like dozers, excavators and graders. If a vehicle breaks down getting a replacement part or a field service technician to repair it is a challenge because of the North’s remote location.

(See MCC page 6)

We Can See the Finish Line!

It's still a little ways off. But I sensed that after we crossed over into the New Year, it was like we turned a corner and can now see the finish line of the deployment. We will strive to stay focused and "on task" until the last day, of course. But, it won't be long now! Our deployment up to this point has gone without the loss of life from enemy action. Thank God. I hope and pray with you that the deployment will continue in this way and we will all return safely to you, our friends and loved ones. I know you will continue to keep us in your prayers. Thank you!

We've encountered some twists and turns along the way. We ended up going to a completely different area of the country than we anticipated. We started from "scratch" at this new location instead of having equipment, systems and procedures handed off to us by another battalion. We scattered across the northern region of Afghanistan instead of operating out of a common location. A small part of the battalion was told to go home early as a part of the draw down of troops. Yet, your soldier has adjusted and adapted wonderfully to each new challenge.

I've encouraged your soldiers. I've prayed with your soldiers. I've tried to be "present" with your soldiers. I've preached and lead worship with your soldiers. I've counseled your soldiers. And I have grown to love your soldiers. It's been my honor to serve your soldiers. It's been my honor to serve with your soldiers. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift his countenance upon you and give you (and every soldier of the Task Force Roughneck) His peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

Pax Christi,

CH (CPT) Ganther

111th Engineer Battalion Chaplain



(L to R) CH Ganther, SPC Moy & COL. Paolozzi, CDR TF Sword

(MCC from page 5)

"Being here at BAF, I find parts or field service representatives (FSR) for our task force," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Andrew Adams with TF Roughneck, officer in charge of the BAF MCC and the alternative logistics operations cell (ALOC) from Houston, Texas. "I've established relationships here. It's easier to talk face to face with someone to get things done than by email or telephone. We've been a vital part in the success of our task force's vehicle maintenance program by finding parts or FSRs and pushing them up north. We even use the returning R and R passengers to carry parts across the battle space because it's faster than by ground convoy."

Once those passengers carrying the parts fly north they land at Camp Marmal Airfield. The German Army controls the camp, airfield and terminal. Waiting there to support them is another TF Roughneck MCC team. They coordinate connecting flights, lodging or whatever support they can provide to the traveling Soldiers. Most Soldiers will fly on a civilian airline that shuttles passengers, mail or cargo by helicopter from the airfield to the different military bases scattered throughout the north.



Marmal MCC (L to R) SPC Moreno, SFC Hodges & SSG Luna "Here at Marmal, we push cargo and Soldiers in and out of the northern provinces," explained U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jaime Luna with TF Roughneck, Marmal MCC supervisor from Austin, Texas. "The bulk of our work is the Soldiers coming or going on R and R. I have Spc. Eric Moreno, Spc. Jose Caldera and Sgt. 1st Class David Hodges rotating from taking care of passengers, finding cargo or working in the office. I've enjoyed doing this job; I've got to meet a lot of people. Everyday is an adventure. When we hear the guys out in the field say they got the part or materials and their mission was a success, it's very fulfilling. We've done our part. It may be a small part but we've contributed to the overall success of Task Force Roughneck."

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(L to R) PFC Justin Newton, Spearfish, SD & SPC David McKelvey, Rapid City, SD



CPL Karl Jansson from Houston, Texas conducts driver training class



SFC Dawson & SFC Bush both from Texas. Show off their caffeine produced smiles



SPC Silos with FSC from Houston, TX. Splitting 2x8s into 2x4s



SPC Kimbrell, SPC Garcia-Garcia, SPC Wehmeyer & SPC Soto all from Texas



SSG Mario Fernandez, SGT Marlon Negron, SPC Kevin Hernandez & SPC Jose Vega



SPC William Trejo, TX & SGT Gary Maldonado, PR. Practice mental telepathy



PFC Kayleigh Rowett, Sturgis, SD & SPC Kimberly Williamson, Belle Fourche, SD



SPC Skelton & SGT Lopez both from Texas. Caught over inflating ATV tires



SSG Miguel Colon Cruz from Puerto Rico. Mentor for ANA 1/209th at CFC for 4 months



1LT Obasohan & SSG Smith both Texans. Smith full of excuses for not wearing eye-pro



SPC Molina, SSG Lozada & SPC Perez. "Dios los bendiga y protega siempre"



SPC Michael Thomas from Texas. Thought he was snow blind, but it was his hat



SPC Susan Martin from Texas. Started shoveling outside after shoveling inside all day



SPC Julio Acevedo & SPC Julio Rodriguez from Puerto Rico. Snow-ninjas & snowman tippers



SGT Duane Rawls from Houston, Texas. Working on another construction project



SPC Christine Miller from Corpus Christi, TX keeps connectivity w/outside world



SFC Michael Howington from Tennessee. Helps SAW gunner repack rounds



SPC Justin Agerton from Tennessee. Inserts magazine into his M4 then locks & load



1LT Marc Lawson with 190th from Tennessee. Gives after mission war stories

(Mafia from page 1)

To place the enormity of this effort into perspective, Task Force Roughneck manages 1500 property book items in the amount of \$126 million. Many of those property book items like to break at the most inopportune times of the day and night.



CW4 Olson conducts inventory

That is when Big Chief (PBO) and Knuckle Buster (BMO) jump into action to make sure the equipment is accounted for and running as designed. Multiple times, we have been asked to find ways to sustain missions and projects that would normally be simple routine tasks in a non-tactical environment. However, given distances, infrastructure challenges, and limited supply trains, those tasks become complex and challenging. I will give you an example of how this normally plays out; I will approach the family with, "I have an offer you can't refuse". They will listen intently and respectfully; because, again I sound like Vito Corleone when I talk. They do not want the repercussions of any details that could cause Soldiers or equipment harm. Let's say you need, MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat), water, tents, construction materials, fuel, stuff to blow things up with, large construction equipment, and vehicle parts; because, your unit has to build a bridge in a remote location. Don Juan would gather Six Shooter, Tat-tat, El-Ranchero, Pounder, Cruiser, and Tenacious to develop a plan insuring all that stuff gets put on trucks and out to that remote location.

They would spend countless hours in all kinds of weather to make sure the mission is accomplished. Soldiers are counting on them to do their job. Ultimately, the soldier will pay for our failure: Therefore, failure is not an option. I would have to say this team does this consistently and effectively. They do this day in and day out with sweat on their brow in the heat, with frozen fingers and toes in the cold, with bloodied knuckles on the hard days, and with quick wit and humor to maintain their sanity. By the way, I would not trade any of them. As a logistics family, we've experienced PMT (pre-mobilization training), post mobilization training, and movement of a Task Force across Afghanistan.

We've moved and sustained personnel and equipment from the Pigs snout to the Monkey's behind. Monkey's what? (Ask your soldier). We've conducted countless hours of inventories and stored and transported enough supplies to sustain a small city. One could ask why? Bottom line, we do it to make sure Task Force Roughneck is equipped and supplied for success. I believe we've done a pretty good job. However, I may be considered a little biased. I am the Godfather.

Roughneck 4

(Last RCC from page 3)

The very nature of CFC was unique to all the men involved in training the last ANA RCCs. Here four different nations, cultures and languages had to work and live together in order reach one worthy goal. Language assistants were crucial during the training. But it was the culture biases that the men had to tear down so that they could teach, learn and work as a team.

"At first, this place was crazy," Spanish Legionnaire Sgt. 1st Class Gregorio Serrano with the 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion and mentor with the ANA 3rd/207th RCC said.

"I had Afghan officers that thought it was OK to miss training. I had American civilians



Spanish Legionnaire SFC Serrano

telling me how to conduct military tactics. We do things differently in the Spanish Army. But with time, it got better. The Afghan officers began to understand that their soldiers looked to them for leadership and they affected the discipline and morale of the unit. I still have my differences with the American civilians but we respect each other because our goal is the same: to train and get ready the Afghan RCCs for the real world."

After the ceremony all three companies departed to their prospective provinces of Afghanistan to conduct route-clearing missions. The ANA 3rd/201st RCC and the French Army mentors headed for the eastern provinces, the 3rd/207th RCC and the Spanish Legionnaires flew out west, and the 1st/209th RCC with the U.S. Army 1014th Sappers convoyed north.

"I'm proud I was part of this experience," Hernandez concluded. "They still need a little more from us, but they're fully capable of conducting combat operations. My biggest award was gaining their trust. That allowed me to reach and teach them. It was rewarding to watch these soldiers learn and perform well. This was something I'll always remember the rest of my life."



Hernandez holds up appreciation certificate & dedicates it to ANA soldiers