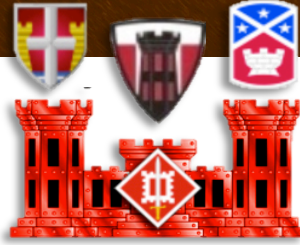


“Clearin’ the way-ROUGHNECK!”

TF ROUGHNECK REVIEW



Issue 3
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FOB Deh Dadi 2,
Afghanistan



TF Roughneck prepares for Operations



CPT Calton plans future operations

“Partnership is the theme in every operation or project we do here. The goal is a stable prosperous Afghanistan. You’ll notice we are wearing the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) patch. We are truly part of an international effort.”

Captain Matthew Calton
TFR Operations Officer



R to L. Task Force CDR Senecaut and CSM Senkirik raise the U.S. and Texas State flag at TFR HQ, DD2, Afghanistan

Task Force Roughneck Soldiers and Family,

After we completed Fort McCoy pre-mobilization training, Task Force Roughneck began preparation to conduct combat and construction operations within Afghanistan. We completed long trans-Atlantic flights. We accomplished reception, staging and onward integration, and all initial forces are arrayed within our area of responsibility. While we are arraying forces to best support our TFR mission, it is sad to report that the 926th Engineer Company (Vipers) have been assigned to a new battalion headquarters and area of operation. We wish them Godspeed and the best of luck on their tough route clearance mission. The 926th Vipers are, and will be, missed within the TFR formation. Upon arrival to Deh Dadi II, our Task Force has been assigned the opportunity to command and control elements from the 623rd (Vertical) and 877th (Horizontal). By aligning construction elements to our formation, Task Force Roughneck is now recognized as a multi-functional battalion that is capable of both combat and construction effects. TFR has been assigned the unique privilege to partner with Afghan National Army Engineer units. This partnership mission is an exceptional opportunity to educate, train, and mentor Afghan Engineers in order to create additional stability within our assigned area of operation. Our soldiers have done an exceptional job thus far. Officers, NCOs, and soldiers are quick to propose excellent

solutions to complex planning problems. Future operations will be both challenging and dangerous. Our soldiers will encounter difficult terrain, rival ethnic groups, multinational forces, and constant threat from enemy forces. Task Force Roughneck has already proven we are capable and prepared for any mission we may be assigned.



INSIDE:

- Pg. 2 XO, 1014th SAPPER CO.
- Pg. 3 XO, FSC, 111th EN BN.
- Pg. 4 XO, 190th & 623rd EN CO.
- Pg. 5 Transition Thoughts
- Pg. 6 CH Ganther
- Pg. 7 Picture Montage
- Pg. 8 Roughneck Spotlight

“We told the soldiers we need them to keep the motivation up and be, as Puerto Ricans; positive, hard working, and willing to celebrate.”

By SFC Glenn Sierra

1LT Luis Camacho, XO, 1014th SAPPER CO.

By midmorning, the June heat had soared passed the 100 degree mark at Forward Operating Base Deh Dadi 2, Afghanistan. The soldiers there made futile attempts to keep the dry powdery sand out of their eyes, ears, noses and mouths.

In a small rocky corner of the FOB, soldiers of the 1014th SAPPER Company were training on robotic equipment. Overseeing the training was 1LT Luis Camacho, Executive Officer (XO) of the 1014th. “At my level, the company level, the XO is an Operations Officer.” 1LT Camacho explained. “I am responsible for everything that has to do with the operation of the unit.”

These officers are behind the scenes making their commander’s intent into reality. He or she can change an average unit into an outstanding one. In the military, the word “operations” is the training, the execution of a mission, and then evaluation of the performance. It is in the “need to improve” that LT Camacho says he focuses on. “I am very hands-on with what goes on in the unit. I work hand-in-hand with the First Sergeant. We make sure that at the end of the day we have accomplished what we had planned.”

As soon as his boots hit the sand he faced a barrage of challenges. “We started preparing our mindset for the challenges that were to come way back in Puerto Rico.” He said. “When we got the details on what our mission was and that our company was going to be split up into different remote locations we sat down and came up with a plan.” He said one of their courses of action was to

have the senior leaders help the platoon leaders with administrative duties, which would leave the troops to focus more on their missions.



1LT Camacho observes training.

When talking about the soldiers’ motivation he said, “We have a very solid family readiness program. And receiving something as simple as a post card from home would be cause for celebration.” He said by sending anything from home like Puerto Rican flags or videos would be little treasures for his soldiers. “Some of my soldiers are single with no one at home for them.” He mentioned, “If the families and friends would also include them, that would mean so much that words couldn’t describe.”



SPC Pablo Rosario operates robots.

The movement of troops to an overseas theater of operations is a challenge due to the large number of soldiers and the shortage of comfortable facilities. But the 1014th were constantly overcoming and adapting. “Within a day they knew where everything was. Best food. Best places to go. Because that’s what soldiers do.” Before he turned to resume the training, he said. “When we get to our destination, we’ll have our own place. We’ll take care of each other. We’re eager to settle in and start our missions. Just that thought increases our energy, focus, and will to drive on.”

“I really do love these guys. No matter what we’ve done, these soldiers have stayed motivated the whole way.”

By SFC Glenn Sierra

1LT Thomas Bradshaw has been with the Forward Support Company out of Stephenville, Texas from the start. He held a different title but soon after arriving in Afghanistan he was appointed the Executive Officer of FSC. “This is kind of new for me because I was appointed the XO as soon as we got into country so I’m still learning the process.” 1LT Bradshaw said. “I’ll be doing a lot of the administrative stuff. The first sergeant and I will take care of a lot of the logistics, the beans and bullets. I’ll be making sure the troops are fed and trying to plan ahead so that when the commander walks in his job will be a little bit easier.”

He said the weight of responsibility would fall on his shoulders when the commander is not available. “You’re doing his business and obviously his mission and living up to his intent.” He said. “The commander, the first sergeant, and myself are learning each other. So, it’s a learning process, which is a pretty good challenge for us right now with all the other challenges raising their ugly heads all around us.”

The biggest challenge for FSC is getting all the pieces together so they can do their jobs. They were expecting to go to one location in Afghanistan but a change was made for them to locate to Deh Dadi II. This caused their equipment to detour, which will take time to catch up. “There are problems right now.” He said. “But, as soon as we get our equipment and vehicles, our first mission, and get on the road we’ll leave those troubles behind.”

He spoke passionately about the soldiers of FSC. “They’re really close knit, bonded, and a lot of these guys have been together for a long

1LT Thomas Bradshaw, XO, FSC, 111th EN BN

time and they absolutely know how to keep each other motivated.” He continued, “They pick on each other, there’s a lot of teasing going on but they are motivated. All they want to do is their jobs. The maintenance guys love maintenance. The CLP (combat logistic patrol) guys want to be out on the road and the young guys want to live up to the old guys

expectations. There is this tension to just get out there and start doing something.”

When asked about his thoughts about family support, he said. “I’m a single guy. So, for me, it’s probably a little bit different. You want to send care packages and you want to keep the troops motivated but I’m kind of looking the other way at it too.” He talked about the hardship the spouses have with their loved ones away. He described how family



1LT Bradshaw

responsibility is a two way street.

“One of my soldiers has four kids under the age of seven or eight at home and that’s a pretty tough job. Support from here backwards, to back home, I think is just as critical. We had issues with some of our younger soldiers making money and just buying all kinds of cool expensive military stuff. We’ve counseled and redirected them on taking care of their families back home first.”

In concluding he smiled and said, “I am really happy and pleased to be XO of FSC and part of Task Force Roughneck but mostly I’m really excited about being here with these guys.”

“We’re training hard. We’re proud and strong. This is what we signed up for.”

By SFC Glenn Sierra

CPT Christopher Lewis, XO, 190th EN CO.

The tip of the spear is the 190th, out of Tennessee. They will be clearing the way for TF Roughneck. When they arrived at FOB Konduz, they linked up with the infantry battalion there and are currently cross training with the engineer unit they will replace. “We are aggressively training on route clearing equipment, making sure our drivers are well trained. We’ve completed weapon familiarization to include a demolition range.” Said CPT Lewis, the company XO. “Once our training is complete, we will assist in training up our sister company, the 1014th, when they arrive.” He said as soon as they are both mission capable they will start conducting combat patrols on their own.



CPT Lewis

He describes their location as small and desolate but with so much to do. For his men it’s training all day. There is a MWR with telephones. They get two hot meals a day and their tents are climate controlled to mediate the 100-degree temperatures. “I work long hours.” The XO explained. “I plan all the training, take care of intelligence updates, and plan for future operations.” He also ensures the facilities are operational for his men, vehicles are maintained and ready to roll, and finally that his men are fed and rested.

“The soldiers have great morale. They’re excited to do their final training before they start.” As he ended his phone conversation, he said. “We wouldn’t miss this for the world.”



“Anything we can do to help soldiers and keep them motivated is great motivation for us.”

By SFC Glenn Sierra

1LT Trevor Ocken, CO, 623rd EN CO.

Improvise, adapt, and overcome has been the theme for Task Force Roughneck since their arrival into Afghanistan. Due to the needs of the Army, the 926th Engineer Company was reassigned to another Task Force and at the same time the 623rd En. Co. was attached.

The 623rd is unique not only in what they do but how they are put together. “We’re two units rolled into one. The 877th EN CO is the horizontal engineering unit which falls in with the 623rd, which is a vertical engineering unit.” Explained 1LT Trevor Ocken, the commander. “We’re assigned to Task Force Roughneck to support this entire region. So, we will go anywhere and everywhere to do projects.”

A horizontal unit usually consists of heavy equipment like dozers, scrapers, and dump trucks in order to improve an area for road, structure, or fortification construction. A vertical unit has specialists like carpenters, electricians, and plumbers to build structures or facilities.

(Continued page 5)

“We’ll go to a place where there is absolutely nothing there.” 1LT Ocken said. “Using our equipment we’ll landscape the area. We will build Hesco walls (earth filled containers), then build Hesco bunkers, and dig drainage trenches. Then my vertical element will come in and build tent decks. If we have to, we’ll pour cement pads. We’ll build latrines and some structures. We’ll install electrical and plumbing. We’ll install septic tanks and set up water supply tanks. Before you know it, we’ve built a new fire base.”

According to 1LT Ocken, movement to the job sites is a challenge. “If I can, I try to fly my vertical guys out because finding an open seat on a ground convoy is difficult. If the air goes red, we’re not gonna fly. With my heavy horizontal equipment we like to move with security convoys. But even on the ground, we can’t move without a route clearance patrol.”

Any shelter built in this hostile environment is improving the quality of life. But the very nature of their work and threats from the enemy is a reality. “There’s attacks every day on convoys. There’s indirect fire on bases. Mishandling our tools or equipment can cause serious injury. The heat is intense wearing our body armor and gear while working.” He concluded. “We always weigh the risk versus the reward. We practice battle drills. We’ll accomplish our missions and go home knowing we did our best and did it safely.”

Transition Thoughts



It wasn't exactly a family vacation experience, traveling to a warzone. Stops were: Manas, Kyrgyzstan; Marmal and Dehdadi 2, Afghanistan. There was a lot of "hurry up and wait!" But most of us made the best of it.

By SPC Ariel Bingham

SPC Cameron Valdez HHC, 111th EN BN

It was pretty good. The first place was Manas, the Air Force base. I guess they've been there a while 'cause all their stuff was set up. Plenty to eat there. They had AC, internet and a few places to shop. Then we moved to Marmal. It wasn't that good. The AC in the big tent broke so it was terribly hot. Then we came here. It's gonna get better. There's plenty of space. I like this place a lot.

SPC Steven Skelton FSC, 111th EN BN

The whole experience of everything that we did was just going from one place to another. And just sitting and waiting. The food wasn't half bad. Things weren't too terribly bad. I kept saying to myself "It is what it is!"

Transition Thoughts (cont.)

SPC Jose Vega 1014th SAPPER CO.

This is my third deployment so I knew what to expect. I've been helping the new guys deal with the stress. People helped me so I do the same. Marmal was not good. 240 soldiers in one tent was bad. This place is great. Everything is close by. Finance, post office, the PX is just a short walk away.



SPC John Wice 190th EN CO.

The transition experience was interesting. There were good places and bad places. Living with 200 guys in a tent with no privacy and walking a long distance to eat was rough, but understandable. What I didn't appreciate was there were no laundry facilities for us transient soldiers during our stopovers. Other than that the experience was pretty good.



*"Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles."
Philippians 4:14 (10-14)*

Well, we're here in Afghanistan. After training in Wisconsin and then, travel that included a couple of multiple day stops, we're here. Now, we're trying to get set up and settled in to begin our mission. These first two months have gone well.

It's human nature to complain though. We struggled with training in the fickle weather of the Wisconsin Spring. First, we grumbled about the cold and later, we grumbled about the humidity and warmth of sleeping in barracks without air conditioning. The shuttle bus on Ft. McCoy didn't run often enough and the hot water didn't last long enough in the showers.

Now, we find that accommodations don't measure up to what we had at McCoy. We still have a relatively comfortable place to lay our heads at night, a hot shower and plenty to eat in a cool dining facility. But, it's not home. It's hot. It's dusty. There's no shuttle bus and lots of rocks make it difficult to walk wherever you have to go. Did I mention that it's not home? I called my wife nearly every night while at McCoy. I've managed only a handful of e-mails since leaving the states. Not the same. The more technically proficient have done better than I on communicating with their families. We're going to complain, but we're okay.

The Apostle Paul assured the Philippian church in the Christian Scriptures that despite his struggles he was okay. He found great comfort and strength in God. Yet it strikes me that along with the wonderful strength of God, Paul was blessed by the concern of his friends. That's so true for all of us!

We were blessed with safe travel. We're here. You didn't have the opportunity to show your concern during the trying travel time from the States to Afghanistan. Now that we're here, it's good for you to share in this time with us! We're blessed with phones and Skype and Facebook and e-mail (when they work). But, keep the letters and packages coming. There's something about that envelope and paper. Each box is like a mini Christmas or an extra birthday. I'll encourage the soldiers to return the favor with notes and letters so you can have something to hold in your hands as well.

And thank you for your prayers. We can do everything through God who gives us strength, but it's also good of you to share in our time here with your concern. Thank you for your blessings.



CH Ganther

“Clearin’ the Way-Roughneck!”

US ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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Task Force Roughneck is in Afghanistan to clear the roadways of hazards, which will create freedom of movement for all local nationals and coalition forces. We will provide logistic support to units within our Area of Operations as well as facilitating route clearing operations. We will provide construction assets within our AO, which may include building facilities and infrastructure to support coalition forces throughout our AO. We are prepared to conduct site exploitation operations in coordination with other units in our AO. We can conduct site surveys and cost estimates for future facilities and infrastructure projects in coordination with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the region. We are able to provide limited vertical and horizontal construction assets in support of the PRTs. We are prepared to train, mentor, and assist the Afghanistan National Army Corps of Engineers to establish and maintain freedom of maneuver across northern Afghanistan.

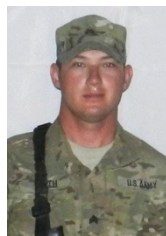
Roughneck Spotlight: *The Newly Promoted*



L to R: SGT Jaime Rivera and MSG Orlando Hernandez, 1014th SAPPER CO. Bottom: Traditional blessing with special latrine water.



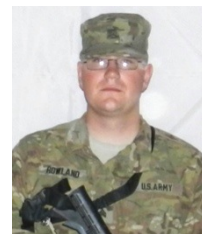
1LT Ehgie Obasoshan
 HHC, 111th EN BN



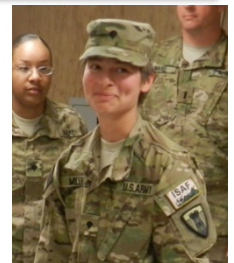
SGT Karl Smith
 FSC, 111th EN BN



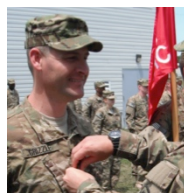
SGT Taylor Vivyan
 FSC, 111th EN BN



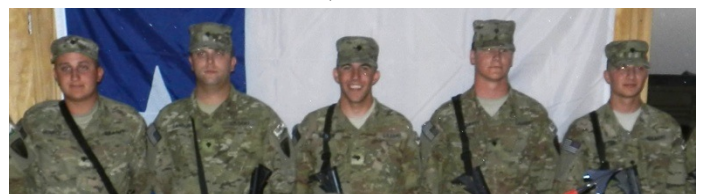
SGT Victor Rowland
 FSC, 111th EN BN



SPC Christine Miller
 HHC, 111th EN BN



1LT Jason Grizzle
 HHC, 111th EN BN



Standing L to R: SPC Dustin Monroe, SPC Michael Landon, SPC David Griffin, SPC Christopher Dougherty, SPC Austin Clayton.
 FSC, 111th EN BN