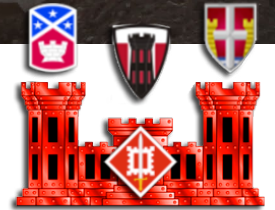


“Clearin’ the way-ROUGHNECK!”

# TF ROUGHNECK REVIEW



FOB Dehdadi 2  
Afghanistan  
November 2011  
Issue 8



## Afghans give thanks for Lukenbach Crossing Afghan & Coalition Forces attend opening ceremony

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

FARYAB PROVINCE, Afghanistan- U.S. Army Lt. Col. John A. O’Grady, commander of U.S. forces operating within PRT Mananah Ghormach District, Regional Command North along with the Governor of Faryab Province Mr. Abdul Haq Shafaq met to celebrate the record breaking completion of a low crossing bridge, named Lukenbach Crossing, in a remote region of northwestern Afghanistan outside Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghormach. Engineers from Task Force Roughneck built Lukenbach Crossing across a dry rocky river bed (called a wadi) which has claimed many Afghan lives through the years in their desperation to cross-torrents of floodwater during the wet seasons.



Lt. Col. O’Grady greets Governor Shafaq.



Capt. Calton mets with village elders.

“I’ve had several talks with the people of the two villages on the south side of the wadi,” said U.S. Army Capt. Matthew Calton, officer in charge of the project for 111th EN BN, TF Roughneck, from Brownwood, TX. “The village elders are extremely pleased about

having a means to cross the wadi when the rushing water comes down the mountain. Last year, they had two sick young ones. They didn’t make it. They couldn’t cross the wadi to get to a doctor.”

Lukenbach Crossing will have an immediate economic impact for the four villages in the area. Now, they can cross the wadi year round to buy and sell goods and livestock.

It will also be a tactical advantage for International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF). FOB Ghormach located on the south side of the wadi will no longer be cut off from supplies during the flood season.

“I am very pleased how everyone worked together to get the job done,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. John A. O’Grady, commander of 1-84th Field Artillery Battalion, Task Force Thunder. “Soldiers from TF Thunder, engineers from TF Roughneck, the Afghan National Army and Police worked in partnership toward a common goal. Everyone will benefit from this project.”

The people who live in this rough region have been promised many improvements through the years, such as paved roads, a permanent bridge, and more, which all resulted in failures.

Lukenbach Crossing is an instance where actions speak louder than words.

“We must be patient. Afghanistan is moving forward,” said Mr. Abdul Haq Shafaq, Governor of Faryab Province. “There are many challenges in the future but by the will of God and with our perseverance they will be overcome. This bridge is proof that there is improvements coming to you, your families, your villages, and the rest of Afghanistan.”



Governor Shafaq inspects culverts.



Governor Shafaq talks to media

INSIDE:	
877th	2
190th	3
FSC	4
1014th	5
HHC	6
Photos	7
Last page	8

# 877th Engineer Company last big push

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

FARYAB PROVINCE, Afghanistan-U.S. Army horizontal engineers of the 877th Engineer Company, TF Roughneck, completed a tactical low crossing bridge, called Lukenbach Crossing, for the Afghan people and coalition forces in remote northwestern Afghanistan outside Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghormach. The location is in a dry rocky river bed (called a wadi) with a gentle stream flowing at the bottom, but it's looks are deceiving because during the rainy season the wadi is roaring with rushing floodwater cutting off people on both sides.

The accomplishment of Lukenbach Crossing came with challenges such as delivery of materials, the threat of the enemy, and an underground water table but inventive solutions by officers, NCOs, and junior enlisted soldiers helped successfully complete the mission.

"My men's performance has been outstanding," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Chris Cooper with 877th EN CO, 1st platoon leader from Atlanta, Ga. "They were the backbone of this whole thing, but we were also part of a team. Captain Calton and the 111th EN BN worked hard coordinating and getting the contractor back on schedule. 1-84, Charlie Battery and 1014th Sappers watched our backs as we worked. Everybody got together on the water table. Cut a foot into the ground and water sprang up. We fixed that by laying rock as a base and allowing the water to drain back into the creek."



Lt. Cooper updates visitors.

The engineers had three construction phases to reach completion. First, they dug an entrance into a cliff and pushed the dirt down forming a ramp into the wadi.



Redirecting stream & filling Hescos

The next phase, they drove their heavy equipment down into the wadi to prepare and level the ground for the Hescos (gravel filled containers) and the concrete culverts, the centerpiece of Lukenbach Crossing. The placement of the concrete culverts in the soft wadi bottom slowed the momentum down. Eventually, rocks were used as a base and the culverts were leveled. Also, the original stream had to be redirected to flow through the new culverts.

"This is the best mission we've done all year," said U.S. Army Spc. Damen Boyd with the 877th EN CO, a heavy equipment operator from Macon, Ga. "My Hyex (hydraulic excavator) runs the job site. This is a vital piece of equipment. I broke through the cliff to get into this wadi. I filled up the Hescos with gravel. I break the ground, dig up dirt and everybody works off me."



SPC Boyd operates an excavator.

"What I'm doing with my dozer is getting a nice slope on the side of the ford site," explained U.S. Army Spc. Arron Boatwright with the 877th EN CO, a heavy equipment operator from Augusta, Ga. "The slopes will push the water away from the bridge's road surface. I'm getting the dirt to do what I want. It can get frustrating at times. If I get frustrated, I take a time out. I'll cool off, then hop back on and get it done right."



SPC Boatwright operates a dozer.

Once the culverts were in place, multiple rows of Hescos were filled with gravel to form a base for the next phase. Laying over 500 concrete slabs, called matting, each weighing 2-tons onto the rows of gravel filled Hescos. To do this, the engineers unloaded matting from the Afghan trucks onto trailers and moved them to the work site.

"Me and Spc. Billy Dogan are loading up the trailers with matting," said U.S. Army Spc. Charles Collins with the 877th EN CO, a heavy equipment



SPC Dogan (left) & SPC Collins (rt) load matting.

operator from Griffin, Ga. "We'll drive them down to the jobsite. Pick up another empty trailer. Bring it up here and load it up and start all over again. Our job is important 'cause it keeps them from having to stop from laying the matting."

(See Last Big Push on last page)

# The Chinese Camp; home away from home

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

FARYAB PROVINCE, Afghanistan- Soldiers with the 190th Engineer Company (MAC), Task Force Roughneck, from Morristown, Tenn. played an critical role in establishing the staging site, called the Chinese Camp, at the initial phase of Operation: Lukenbach Crossing in remote northwest Afghanistan near Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghormach. They erected Hescos walls (dirt filled containers), tents, and did improvements to the Chinese Camp, which provided the men and equipment security, shelter, and at the end of a hard day of work, a place to rest.

“Living conditions were pretty rough. No electricity. No running water. No toilets,” explained U.S. Army Spc. Cory Bunch with the 190th EN CO, a combat engineer from Kingston, Tenn. “We helped the big picture. You’d come off the work site tired, dirty, and angry. Come here and take a cold water bottle shower. You’d feel revived and ready to continue to drive on with the mission.”

They improvised and used available materials to construct makeshift showers, latrines (toilets), and urinals. Living conditions in the tents were crowded and primitive. For 45 days, all their meals were MREs (meals ready to eat). Although security provided by the firepower at the camp was essential, health and welfare of the soldiers involved in the construction project was critical for success. Sanitation was a priority.



SGT McAfee (left) and SPC Bunch (right) finish Chinese Camp shower with avialible materials. Soldiers rinsed off dirt with water from can.



SPC Bunch checks his vehicle before a re-supply mission to FOB Ghormach.

“We used the Army Field Sanitation Guide to construct things like the urinal tubes,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Derek McAfee with the 190th EN CO, a mechanic from Milan, Tenn. “We took a backhoe and dug a



SGT McAfee replaces headlight.



McAfee & Bunch finish field urinal tubes.

four foot hole, put eight inch tubes down, and filled it up with gravel. For a toilet, we cut the bottoms off fifty-five gallon drums, placed a piece of plywood on top, and cut a small hole in the middle. We then put up plywood boards around it, a makeshift door, and

we got an outhouse. Kinda crude, but at least you could go in private. Oh, there was no flushing, you had to burn your own waste.”

Once the Chinese Camp was established the soldiers of the 190th played a supporting role by driving their PLS (palletize loading system) vehicle to deliver Hescos to the work site. They also assisted in the construction of the ford site, provided security at the work site, and protected the officer in charge, Capt. Matthew Calton, as his PSD (personal security detail) team.



SPC Bunch with Capt Calton.



SGT McAfee helps SGT Rivera of the 1014th unload matting.

“Our part was a worthy cause for the whole operation,” concluded Sgt. McAfee. “We helped make everybody’s spirits go up. Just the act of hauling in water, when we were low, from FOB Ghormach was a morale booster. This was an experience I’ll never forget.”

# TF Roughneck calls, FSC hauls to Lukenbach Crossing

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

FARYAB PROVINCE, Afghanistan- The Forward Support Company (FSC) with Task Force Roughneck, from Stephenville, TX, logistical support directly effected the successful completion of Lukenbach Crossing located in remote northwest Afghanistan, outside Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghormach. They hauled men, equipment, parts, materials, food and water over hundreds of miles through enemy territory and rough terrain without incident.

“We’ve become very proficient at it now. We’ve got over 30 combat missions, thousands of miles logged and no injuries,” said U.S.

Army 1st Lt. Thomas TCO brings needed supplies & wanted mail Bradshaw with FSC, TF Roughneck, the executive officer and acting commander from Joshua, TX. “We were a little nervous at first ‘cause our intel showed a lot of Taliban activity in the west. So, we plussed up a gun truck or two and had no problems.”



TCO brings needed supplies & wanted mail



SGT Gaither ready to hit the road

FSC’s gun trucks protected the haulers, mainly the 916’s (semi-tractors), the 870 flat bed trailers (a 916 pulls a 870 trailer), and PLS vehicles (palletized loading system, which carry connexes). Included in TCOs (tactical convoy operation) were fuelers and wreckers, which also needed protection.



FSC’s main haulers, 916 semi-tractor pulling 870 flat bed trailer.

Lt. Bradshaw described the massive loads needed at the construction site, “We hauled three scrapers, each weighing over 100,000 pounds each, we hauled hundreds and hundreds of Hescos bastions, the biggest piece was the HyEx (hydraulic excavator) weighing over 30 tons and it’s extremely high and wide.”



870 trailer loaded with dozer



Roads used by all for travel

The FSC TCOs were big and impressive. The Afghan roads are two lanes and not designed for heavy traffic. The TCO drivers have to be highly qualified and skilled. Driving west on Highway One included long desolate stretches to busy streets full of vehicles, pedestrians, motorcycles, taxi tricycles, donkeys, camels, and sheep. Hauling tons of weight west, the TCOs required one stop to refuel.

“On long hauls with trucks heavily loaded we do a tactical halt to refuel on the road,” Lt. Bradshaw explained. “We have to be safe. We have to stop traffic. There are too many potential risks out there. On one occasion, we stopped during a sand storm. Staff Sgt. Luna and Spc. Flores pulled up their fueler. As soon as they touched the first truck, they got shocked from the static electricity. We weren’t taking chances. We continued on and fueled later.”



TCO on busy street



SPC Flores during a tactical fuel stop

In concluding, Lt. Bradshaw said proudly, “Our soldiers love the road. They’re good at their jobs. We sustain the fight. They couldn’t do it without us.”

# Guardians of Operation:Lukenbach Crossing

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

FARYAB PROVINCE, Afghanistan- Combat engineers from 1014th Engineer Company (Sapper), Task Force Roughneck, a route clearance company from Hato Ray, Puerto Rico played a vital security role in the successful completion of Operation: Lukenbach Crossing, a tactical low crossing bridge construction project in remote northwestern Afghanistan which has been traditionally known as a Taliban stronghold. TF Roughneck engineers operating construction machinery had to work in the open, exposed to enemy attack from any direction.



1014th Sappers guard the construction site using their RG-31 gun trucks

“I’m on top of our RG (RG-31, a mine resistant ambush proof vehicle) with my fifty cal. I’m ready for anything,” said U.S. Army Spc. Raphael Picon with the 1014th Sapper Company, Task Force Roughneck, a combat engineer from Naguabo, Puerto Rico. “I’m covering the north side of the wadi (dry river bed). My job as a gunner here is a pretty important one ‘cause we got to provide security for the personnel working on the ford site. We’re providing security so this could happen.”



SPC Picon looking out for any threats



SPC DeJesus (sniper) & SPC Vazquez (spotter) during opening ceremony

Lukenbach Crossing was a priority for Regional Command North because during the flood season the wadi becomes impassable. The U.S. forces located at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghormach would get cut off from supplies and ground support. It was not just a tactical advantage for the ford site but a humane one as well.

The local Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan National Army (ANA) and the people from the four surrounding villages would have freedom of movement, which would end tensions and animosities. The economic impact would improve quality of life for all.

“For me, we’re working for the Afghan people. This is for them. Now, they’ll have a way to cross,” stated U.S. Army Sgt. Noel Rodriguez with the 1014th Sapper Co, a combat engineer from Canovanas, PR. “We were the first ones out here. We cleared the whole area using our Huskies and Buffalos (explosive interrogation vehicles). After that we used our gun trucks to pull security so the construction guys could start their work.”



SGT Rodriguez scans his area



SGT Rivera repairs vehicle

The 1014th Sappers not only provided security for 45 days but also had mechanics repairing, gun trucks escorting Afghan trucks hauling in materials, sniper teams conducting surveillance, and they even helped in the construction.

“I unload the matting (2-ton concrete slabs) and lower them onto the surface,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Jaime Rivera with the 1014th Sapper Co., a mechanic from Morovis, PR. “I’m working with guys from other units. We’re working like a team. I feel we’re doing something good. I’m feeling proud. This is the first time in my life I feel like I’m doing something good for somebody else.”



SGT Rivera guides matting down

# TF Roughneck plans & designs Lukenbach Crossing

Story by SFC Glenn Sierra

FARYAB PROVINCE, Afghanistan- Task Force Roughneck was given the responsibility to design, plan, and complete Operation: Lukenbach Crossing (a tactical low crossing bridge) near Forward Operating Base (FOB) Ghormach, which they accomplished on schedule, within budget, and without incident. The directive originated as a priority for northern Afghanistan at the International Security Assistance Force headquarters in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Roughneck and German engineers flew out on multiple reconnaissance missions to the proposed site and gathered data for an engineer assessment and to develop a design. The concept was put on paper inside TF Roughneck S-3 (operations) construction office at FOB Dehdadi 2.

“This was a huge learning curve for me. My background is criminal justice and here I am the battalion’s construction officer,” explained U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jason



1st Lt Brown during planning stage

Brown with the 111th Engineer Battalion, TF Roughneck, from La Porte, TX. “Thank God, I had Sgt. Eck who’s got over 30 years of civil engineering experience. Staff Sgt. Boswell and Staff Sgt. Pruitt who both have years of operating heavy equipment to give me guidance and direction.”

Getting authority and funding for the project involved a bureaucracy, which like a board game going forward is a good thing and going back is bad. The squares to go through included the Facility Planning Board (FPB), Joint Facilities Utilization Board (JFUB), a legal review board just to name a few. As soon as the



SSG Pruitt discusses data from recon

engineer work request and letter of justification was produced, 1st Lt. Brown started to provide the technical support, scope of work, design plan, and bill of materials based on the design plan and the government’s cost estimate.



SGT Eck at construction site speaking with a language assistant

U.S. Army Sgt. Jon Eck with the 111th EN BN, a civil engineer from San Angelo, TX. designed the tactical low crossing bridge based on resources in the area and what U.S. Army engineer assets were available. When asked about his design he said, “It was cheap and it fit within the JFUB process.”

The funding was hinged on three items that had to be produced and purchased near the work site: Concrete culverts, for the water to flow through and for support; concrete matting for the driving surface on top of the ford site; and crushed gravel. The rest of the materials came through the U.S. Army’s supply system, like the Hesco baskets, once filled with gravel would be the main foundation of the ford site.

“Once Sgt. Eck produced the materials list, Staff Sgt. Pruitt, Staff Sgt. Boswell, and myself conducted market research by telephone and e-mail,” said 1st Lt. Brown. “We asked other Army units in the area what contractors they used in the past and



SSG Boswell briefs at planning meeting

their recommendations. From that list, we called the contractors and informed them of our requirements.”

Lt. Brown then created the scope of work for the project and sent it out to the contractors for bidding. The scope of work defined who will do what, when, why, and how. It included both U.S. Army engineers and Afghan contractors. But, events did not unfold as was planned on paper.

“The contractor did not follow through. That was the biggest challenge of this project,” explained Lt. Brown. “The gravel and matting were behind schedule. We had to press them to stay on schedule.”

# November 2011



Afghan boys were friendly and figured out quickly US Soldiers hand out treats.



Village elders come to construction site with questions but mainly to look.



Camel herd strolling past the Lukenbach Crossing north side of the wadi.



Beast of burden and its master passing by and looking at construction progress.



MSG Edward Garza keeps record of concrete matting trucked in daily.



Soldiers worked from dawn to dusk on the construction of Lukenbach Crossing.



1st LT Dunham, HHC and SSG English, FSC use US Army Engineer Handbook



SSG Yeats helps SPC Flores with fuel hose during a tactical halt while headed west.



1st Platoon, 877th Engineer Company



1st Platoon, 1014th Sapper Company



2nd Platoon, 1014th Sapper Company

# “Clearin’ the way-Roughneck!”

(Last Big Push from page 2)

As Lukenbach Crossing progressed so did the inquiries from the Afghans from the four surrounding villages. Every day, visitors would stop by to look and ask the engineers questions about the project.



SSG Rapp talks with ANP.

“The ANP (Afghan National Police) was asking me about the rain and rock. How the water was going to affect it,” explained U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Tracy Rapp with the 877th EN CO, a heavy equipment supervisor from Augusta,

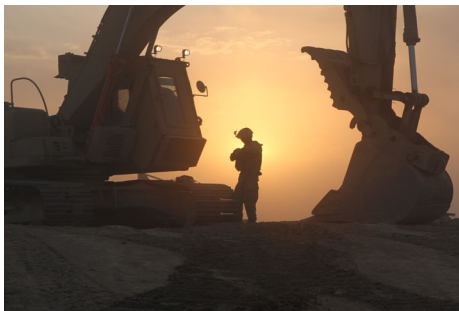
Ga. “I assured them that the bridge would hold. The water would drain through the gravel, flow through the culverts, and everything would be fine. He smiled at me, shook my hand and thanked us. He said this was a good thing. Something that they’ve needed for a long time.”

As the last of the matting were being placed, Staff Sgt. Rapp operated a grader to smooth out rocks and spread out smaller finer rocks, called pea gravel, to fill in the spaces between the matting. The relief and excitement filled the air. This was the 877th EN CO last mission and they had less than 30 days left in country.



Grader spreads out gravel.

“I’m really excited everything came together real well. Especially working with other units,” reflected U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Peter Fontejon with the 877th EN CO, a heavy equipment supervisor from Duluth, Ga. “This project was worth it. It connects everybody together. Without the bridge, people were cut off. With building this bridge it helps the military, the people,



SSG Fontejon prepares to drive off work site.

and Afghanistan.” He paused and looked out toward the setting sun and concluded, “This right here, was worth being in Afghanistan.”

(Plans & Designs from page 6)

With the completion of Lukenbach Crossing, the goal of freedom of movement was achieved. It connects the four villages in the area, which will increase commerce. ISAF forces will be able to move further west then may authorize civilian contractors to construct a more permanent bridge and possibly complete the Ring Road (Highway 1).



Lukenbach Crossing

“This is the first step to tie in the Ring Road for the country of Afghanistan,” explained U.S. Army Capt. Matthew Calton with 111th EN BN, the officer in charge of Lukenbach Crossing project from Brownwood, TX. “Even though it’s a small ford site, relatively



Capt Calton & Afghan official

speaking, I know it’s going to have a direct impact in both the local Afghan people and ISAF forces. Completing the Ring Road will connect the north with the west and bring in international commerce.”

Engineers of TF Roughneck did an enormous amount of work on a tight timeline. The Roughnecks plan to use their lessons learned on future projects.

“No matter who you talk to, ANA, ANP, local Afghans, everyone is extremely pleased that this bridge was built,” concluded Capt. Calton. “There were challenges, but TF Roughneck as a whole really did the Engineer Regiment a good service by their education and ability to problem solve.”

## Happy Thanksgiving

contact us: TF ROUGHNECK PAO

SFC Glenn Sierra glenn.sierra@us.army.mil

SPC Ariel Bingham ariel.bingham@us.army.mil

[www.facebook.com/Task Force Roughneck](http://www.facebook.com/Task Force Roughneck)