



ADSEQUOR

“TO ACHIEVE”

STEEL SPIKE EXPRESS

Soldiers are awarded Combat Patches during Patching Ceremony

August 4th 2008 marked the day that first-time deployed Soldiers would get to wear their first combat patch.

The 46th Engineers held a Patching Ceremony early in the morning in front of the “Steel Spike” battalion headquarters.

46th ECB (H) commander LTC Zajac gave a speech before he placed the first patch on CSM Thibodeau. He spoke of the great job the battalion was doing during the first 60 days deployed and urged the “Steel Spike Team” to keep up the good work and not to lose focus on maintaining standards.

After placing the combat patch (the unit’s organic patch) on the battalion’s leadership, LTC Zajac then placed the



HSC Soldiers stand in formation wearing their newly-earned combat patches on their right shoulders.



An Alpha company Soldier salutes CPT Heenan after receiving his patch, while ISG Roman stands by.

patches on the company’s leadership. Then the CDRs and ISGs patched their Soldiers and congratulated them.

The Patching Ceremony has a long tradition beginning at the end of World War II when Soldiers were authorized to wear the patch of a specific unit they served in combat with.

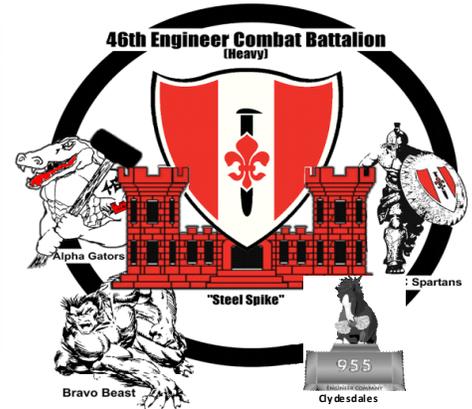
Today, Soldiers can earn the right to wear a combat patch after deploying to a combat zone. The brave Soldiers of the 46th ECB (H) follow in the footsteps of the many men and women that bravely served in times of combat.

The 955 Engineer Company’s combat patch is their own unit patch. This is due to a recent change in Army Regulations.

46th ECB (H)
Camp Liberty, Iraq
Operation Iraqi Freedom

Special points of interest:

- HSC has a block party!
- EM PLT excels at their new mission.
- Steel Spike B-days
- New additions to the Steel Spike Family



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Commander's Observations

The temperature climbs to over 110 degrees, and a Steel Spike Soldier wipes the sweat from their brow, takes a drink of Gatorade, makes a half-joking comment about the weight they've lost, and then refocuses on the task at hand and continues with their mission. While this very well could be a scenario back at steamy Fort Polk this August, this event replays continuously across Baghdad as our Soldiers successfully overcome the physical challenges of the hottest period of the year amid a simmering insurgency. The Battalion's strength has grown over the last month to well over 600 Soldiers and our team is currently accomplishing projects at 19 locations across Baghdad. The Steel Spike Battalion is the primary source for military construction here in Baghdad and our Soldiers are proud of their unique ability to improve the living conditions for their fellow Soldiers and to improve the routes that both Coalition and the local population use every day.



LTC Matthew Zajac
Battalion Commander
46th ECB (H)

Just to provide a sample of what we're doing, we are building and improving barracks, repairing electrical systems, installing showers, filling craters, clearing debris, improving ranges, creating helipads, protecting inspection teams, overseeing local construction contractors, and even building a gym. All that supported continuously by the operations, intelligence, logistics, and maintenance skills of Soldiers determined to ensure that the right information, equipment, and materials are available at the right time. I am tremendously proud of what the Steel Spike team is accomplishing under extreme conditions, and the standards by which we are completing our mission and taking care of each other.

Likewise, I am proud of the Soldiers and Families of the 814th Multirole Bridge Company who are still praised for their bridging skills and accomplishments by leaders at all levels here in Iraq. CPT Nichols and 1SG Carey have now led the company back to Fort Polk, and their Soldiers and Families are enjoying a well-deserved period of reunion before returning to work and the challenges of refitting equipment and integrating new Soldiers.

Last, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the continuing efforts of our Family Readiness Group volunteers at Fort Rucker, Fort Polk, and across Missouri. The time and effort that you volunteer to support information flow, assist Families in need, and provide special events to bring Families together is recognized and is critical to allowing the Soldiers here in Iraq to accomplish their mission. To each Family member I ask that you stay connected, and contact the Rear Detachment leadership or an FRG volunteer if you need assistance. While FRG volunteers attempt to maintain accurate contact rosters, nothing prevents any Family member from calling their FRG representative or the Rear Detachment leadership to verify contact information, to inform them of an issue, or to simply ask what's new. These contact numbers and email addresses are located at the end of this newsletter. Information flows both ways, and only by all of us working together will we support each other through the remainder of our deployment.

STEEL SPIKE – ONE TEAM!



(L-R) CSM Thibodeau and LTC Zajac visit the historic site of Aqar-Quf — making a quick stop with the HSC PSD Team.

Aqar-Quf was a city in Southern Mesopotamia (about 30 miles west of Baghdad).

The site contains a well-preserved ziggurat (a pyramidal structure with a shrine on top), temples and a royal palace.





CSM's View

Welcome home to the 814th and congratulations on a job well done, they have set a new standard in the bridging community. I Hope everyone back home is enjoying the last of summer and the mini Spikes are looking forward to the start of a new school year. The past month has been extremely busy for the Battalion. The Soldiers here are definitely fully engaged and ready for a break from the Iraqi summer heat.

The past month was a great month for promotions with three Soldiers becoming Sergeants, nine Soldiers being promoted to Specialist and eighteen making the rank of Private First Class. On the first of September we will see SFC Jackson promoted to Master Sergeant. SFC Jackson has proven he is the backbone of the Battalion and is going to be a tremendous First Sergeant; he has made a huge impact on the Battalion since the day he arrived.

The Battalion continues to execute missions in several locations in and around Baghdad. Each location I visit the message from the leadership of the units they are supporting is always the same, they praise our Soldiers for the quality and the quantity of work and without fail they always ask, "How long can they stay"?

The mechanics of the Battalion continue to work miracles; we have some of the most gifted mechanics in the Army. The Battalion motor pool has been a very busy place since we arrived, and they have worked nonstop to insure that everyone leaving the base does so with equipment they have serviced and validated. Every one of our mechanics is making a direct impact in the Battalion accomplishing its mission.

Thanks again for all your support and a special thanks to our family support groups and their leaders for all they do for the Battalion and our families.

SPIKE 7



CSM Frank Thibodeau
BN CSM
46th ECB (H)

Chaplain's Corner

Storms

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full." (Mark 4:36-37, KJV)

Some Soldiers, spouses, and family members may have been on board a ship in a true storm. Prior Navy stationed on a small boat, this Chaplain has been in a couple himself. Some are currently going through spiritual and emotional storms of life which combat, separation, and change make more difficult.

For many years I had skipped over a small point added into these verses. "And there were also with him other little ships." Mark intentionally added this detail into the text for a purpose, but why?

I believe the significance is that the author wanted the reader to know that the ship carrying Jesus and the disciples was not the only ship in that storm. By that same token, I believe we can find comfort that we are not the only ones going through a storm at a given time.

I encourage you to find support and comfort from other military families, religious groups, FRG's, and support organizations designed in part to link you up with people who are likely going through similar difficulties that will pass.



CPT Jerry Wagner
BN Chaplain
46th ECB (H)



Headquarters and Support Company

Commander's Corner



CPT Angela Smoot
HSC Commander
46th ECB (H)

Building teams and forging relationships, HSC is leading the way, as the battalion's most complex element. We have over 11 different sections/elements each performing unique missions within the company and battalion spread-out to every corner of Baghdad.

Within 4 weeks of training HSC has stood up a Convoy Security Team (CST) to support company missions and missions across the battalion. The team just received new vehicles to facilitate safe convoy operations. The equipment platoon (EQ) just completed a road repair mission on an Iraqi Bypass. EQ executed their mission along with help and support from the 6th Iraqi Army. The roadway repair was truly a great experience for us all. S3C has been journeying across Baghdad providing electrical assessments to units in desolate location. These assessments literally save lives of Soldiers who are at risk of hazardous construction.

Last, but not least, maintenance has been putting in over time on over 100 pieces of equipment, ensuring mission success for the company and entire battalion! Just a small snapshot of the many facets of HSC. All Soldiers are working to full capacity and well above the standards. As we work hard I have made a commitment to incorporate time for HSC to also bond and build cohesion by having cookouts, etc..

I receive weekly updates from the rear of great activities being hosted by the FRG or post agencies. I ask that you participate in them and help continue to build cohesion among Soldiers and Families in the rear. I am sure there is no replacement for spouses/Soldier members but being with Families helps to fill that void. Please take the opportunity to contact Mrs. Shari Baye (337-208-3045), the Spartan FRG leader for any updates or events. And as always, "It's a Family Affair"!

SPARTANS!!

Spartan 6

Spartans



First Sergeant's SITREP



1SG Steven Hall
HSC First Sergeant
46th ECB (H)

I would like to start by referencing a term which is becoming more and more commonly used throughout the company. The term I'm referring to is "Leaning Forward". This simply means to be proactive, anticipate requirements and exercise selfless service for the good of your comrades and the mission.

This month we have truly been role models in leaning forward and meeting the demands of a vigorous combat environment. The maintenance sections (DSU and 2nd Shop) continue to display impressive dedication to duty, by safely and diligently working in 100 plus temperatures to keep the company's and the battalion's equipment operational. Our commo section (S6), lead by 2LT Riggio and SFC Coleman not only kept the automations and communications equipment running, but they were key players in the success of three VTCs within the battalion. Our PSD and CST continue to safeguard the movements of our equipment and Soldiers from point A to point B, throughout Baghdad.

The Equipment Platoon's versatility continues to amaze the command team after the completion of a complex mission in the heart of Baghdad. Our S4 shop even with a limited staff seems to work miracles by staying one step ahead. The S1 section works closely with the leaders in the battalion to ensure the Soldiers and their family's administrative needs are met. The medics of the battalion aid station not only support the day to day medical needs here on camp. They also provide medical support to the Soldiers on missions throughout Baghdad.

The S2, S3 and S3C sections are truly making their mark in country. They are responsible for the mission plans, work schematics, Intel updates and the overall operations of the battalion. The contribution of HSC is clearly noted and recognized as essential to the success of the battalion. Always Leaning Forward!

Congratulations to the following Soldiers on their recent promotion:

SPC Armenta, PFC Evangelista, PFC Shell, PFC Buntley, PFC Razo, PFC Smith, PFC Henderson, PFC Talla, PFC Hatcher, PFC Fisher, PFC Poland, PFC Stier, PFC Wilkes, PFC Lersch, SPC Otto, SPC Markwell and SPC Stanton.

SPARTANS!!

Spartan 7



HSC Throws a Block Party!



Pondering the next move...

Enjoying the grub....



Limbo anyone?

Now...Back to Work!



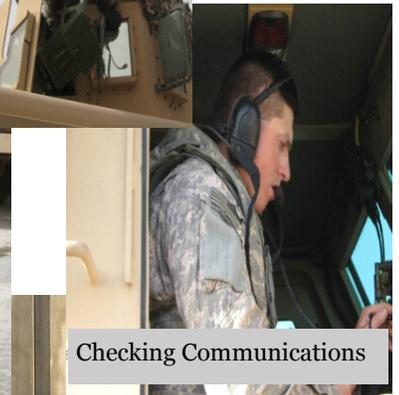
Cleaning windows before heading out on a convoy mission.



EQ PLT mixes cement.



Ready to Roll!



Checking Communications



Patching Ceremony



Sapper Series Run—17 August 08



Alpha Company

Commander's Corner



CPT Sean Heenan
A Co. Commander
46th ECB (H)

We can hardly believe it but it has been a month since our last newsletter was published. Things continue to go well for us in the Baghdad area and your Soldiers continue to make their mark with every project completed. We've been busy over the last month and have been able to complete multiple construction missions for units throughout the area.

1st Platoon completed their first major construction project in late July upgrading some living and work areas for an American Military Transition Team (MiTT). They also recently completed oversight to an Iraqi contractor building living space in a former mall used by American Soldiers for a Forward Operating Base (FOB). They have taken the lead as well to reconstruct a base damaged by terrorists and are making things both more safe and comfortable for the Soldiers there.

2nd Platoon has split its efforts over the last month with repair projects throughout the Baghdad area. They put together "Task Force Sparky" and "Task Force Turd" to work specifically on electrical and plumbing repairs at multiple locations. Both teams have traveled from location to location making sure both systems are safe for Soldiers. 2nd Platoon has also moved the remainder of the platoon to begin a mission to construct a two-story building within a warehouse. When finished, the building will house additional Soldiers as well as the camps dining facility, MWR (phones and Internet), and gym.

EM Platoon has been providing steady support to our neighbors from Fort Polk, the 4th Brigade of the 10th Mountain Division. They spent much of their time installing concrete barriers in 4/10 MTNs area in order to increase safety on the roads and camps. They also completed constructing a new helicopter landing zone for the brigade. They will begin missions soon to clean up debris along some of the roads in the area to make movement safer for all the Soldiers as well as the civilians who travel on them.

Headquarters and maintenance platoon has been supporting the company every step of the way. The mechanics have been busy repairing our equipment when the platoons return from missions as well keeping things running from day to day. The company headquarters is closely tracking the progress of the missions we conduct and work tirelessly to make sure that all the materials and people get where they are needed when they are needed.

As always, we appreciate the support from everyone back home. Despite the heavy work load and large area we cover here we make sure your Soldiers are able to keep in contact with you. Mail is always a priority to get out to the Soldiers. We hope everyone enjoyed the Video Teleconferences (VTCs) on the 2nd and 17th of August. More will be set up in the near future so we can get those Soldiers who were not available time to talk to their loved ones back at Fort Polk.

DRIVE THE SPIKE!

CPT Heenan

First Sergeant's SITREP

It is an honor and a privilege to be the Senior Non Commissioned Officer of the Alpha Company Gators. You should be very proud of what the Gators are accomplishing. The Warriors of Aco along with their Families are truly great Americans. On behalf of the entire Chain of Command and NCO Support Channel thank you all. These thanks are also extended to all of you from the maneuver elements that the Gators are supporting. The numerous projects that the company is completing is making life a lot more tolerable for the infantry, MPs and other maneuver elements spread across Baghdad.

In recognition of their hard work the Gators have received numerous "tokens of appreciation" from those maneuver commanders and Command Sergeant Majors. After each project is complete the Soldiers of Aco are anxious to show the chain of command the coins, Certificates of Appreciation, Army Achievement Medals and Army Commendation Medals presented to them by the Maneuver Commanders and Command Sergeant Majors. I was going to name all the Soldiers that received awards in this news letter, but if I did that we would run out of my authorized space. I will however name the Soldiers that have received well deserved promotions:

John Ortiz joined the ranks of the Non Commissioned Officer and was promoted to Sergeant. Steven Ackerman and Gregory Painter were promoted to Private E-2, Talib Hodges, Andrew Layton, Erik Swanson, Ridge Watson, Derek Fay, Michael Finney, Jeremy Polipnick, Jacob Wade, Andrew Rainville, Christopher Scroggins, Lucky Eukupe and Andrew Seymour were all promoted to Private First Class. Joseph Cropprue, Joseph Roberson, Aljaleel Eaddy, Aquanta Grandberry, Christopher Miller, Kimberly Ortiz, Travis Peters, and Robert Shoults were all promoted to Specialist. With the continued great work the Gators are completing, it would not be a surprise that all the Soldiers receive at least one promotion. These Soldiers are indeed our future leaders.

The most important job that our Warriors have accomplished here is that no Soldier has been seriously injured. In the environment we are in it is a true credit to all the Soldiers in Aco. This is proof that the training the Gators received prior to our deployment, the posture that our Warriors are always in, the protective equipment our Soldiers use, the intelligence we receive, buddy teams, the use of risk assessment and the mitigation of risk along with the constant awareness of what the Gators are doing in this environment has paid off. The Battalion Commander has stressed the fact that the first couple of months along with the last couple are historically the most dangerous. The Chain of Command along with the NCO Support Channel continues to stress the fact that these 15 months is a marathon and not a short distance run. Therefore, all the Warriors of Aco will remain vigilant in regards to Soldiers safety to the maximum extent possible. Although you all are physically far away in distance, you are mentally always standing next to us in our hearts and minds. One team one fight!



1SG David Roman
A Co. First Sergeant
46th ECB (H)

Gators





Building up a Combat Outpost in Iraq

By 2LT Stephen Clements

When a vertical team from Alpha Company, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion and an earth moving team from the 955 Engineer Company arrived at the Combat Outpost (COP) in Baghdad, there was lots of room for improvement in the living conditions for the Soldiers bravely serving there.

The team's mission was to install two pumps and tanks to contain grey water from the two shower trailers and remove a health risk at the outpost. The health risk was a direct result of the uncontrolled shower runoff, clearly visible to the casual observer. Behind one trailer was a swamp of lush green ferns growing out of an impassable section of the motor pool where drainage water had been flowing, and in another area a deep, green cesspool, where a temporary tank had over-flown, created a haven for mosquitoes to breed.

After arriving at the combat outpost, 955th Engineer Company Soldiers Spc. Nicholas Emory and Pfc. Matt Callahan put their D7 bulldozer and hydraulic excavator (HYEX) into action, removing obstructions and spreading gravel. They demolished the swamp, leveled mud mounds, and did the same in the rest of the motor pool. Instead of following the initial limited scope of work and simply filling a hole and leveling a parking area, their skilled efforts created almost 20% more useable motor pool space.



PFC Peters repairs an air conditioner at the Combat Outpost in Baghdad, Iraq on July 15th.

Next, Alpha Company Soldiers led by Staff Sgt. Gary Butler, ran pipe from the two shower trailers to pumps, then to water storage tanks, and placed concrete for two pads and sumps.

"In addition to the directed scope of work, the carpenters, electrician, and plumbers did whatever could be done in order to enhance the living standards of the maneuver elements," states Butler.

Pvt. Steven Lincoln, from Rhode Island, designed and built a safer set of stairs for the COP's Tactical Operations Center (TOC) with the help of Pfc. Robert Shoults. Pfc. Travis Peters, an electrician with Alpha Company, repaired electric outlets, repaired and installed air conditioning units, and made two trailers safer by grounding them. Plumbing specialist Spc. Johannes Cawood, from Michigan, spent a lot of time on his back in the drying muck beneath the shower trailers improving the piping.

During their planned repairs the team found themselves suddenly reacting to a crisis.

"While investigating the cause of a leak from municipal lines, the leaking water main crumbled, causing water to pour from both ends at nearly 150 gallons-per-minute!" says Cawood.

For twelve hours, Spc. Cawood and Pvt. Lincoln fought to repair the broken main - often while completely submersed. Meanwhile, Pfc. Callahan and Sgt. Nicholas Daniel enlarged a lagoon to accommodate the deluge and prevent flooding of the COP and a nearby barracks. Finally, at 0130 in the morning, the water main repairs were completed.

By the end of the mission, the vertical and horizontal engineers of the 46th ECB (H) accomplished their directed repairs and resolved numerous other quality of life issues. In doing so, these Soldiers exemplified the battalion's motto of "To Achieve!"



SPC Cawood fits PVC pipe sections on July 10th at the Combat Outpost in Baghdad, Iraq.



PV2 Lincoln gets a hand shake and coin from LTC Zajac after "going swimming" while making repairs on a water main.



Bravo Company



CPT Christopher Beal
B Co. Commander
46th ECB (H)

Beast



Commander's Corner

Hello Beast Families and Friends. During the month of August 2008 Bravo Company completed numerous missions that are considered vital to the success of MND-B. We've continued upgrading some of the existing Combat Out Post (COP); in order to improve force protection and provide better living and work conditions for our fellow Soldiers in our AO.

Our electricians have been extremely busy lately assessing electrical hazards throughout Baghdad, Iraq. Several issues have been identified and corrected that could have been detrimental to the overall Operation Iraqi Freedom mission. Our Earth Movers (EM) are conducting quality control and quality assurance on several projects throughout Baghdad. Their technical and tactical competency to move around the battle field has ensured our ability to maintain eyes on Division Level Projects. Our vertical platoons have also been diligently working at various locations.

1st Platoon has simultaneously worked at four different locations. These locations had the bare minimums to sustain military operations and were in desperate need of upgrades. They have been busy building guard towers, replacing field showers and burn out latrines. 2nd Platoon started a larger construction project consisting of several buildings and showers. They are building a Combat Out Post from scratch. The Maintenance Platoon has flawlessly maintained our equipment ensuring that all elements are capable of moving forward with no issues.

At the beginning of August Bravo Company promoted several admirable Soldiers: PV2 Bailey, PV2 Delong, PV2 Green, PV2 Pride, PV2 Murphy were all promoted to the rank of Private First Class. SGT Portez and SGT Haywood were both promoted to Staff Sergeant. All of these Soldiers have demonstrated outstanding performances and capabilities to perform at the next rank. This month we also had numerous Soldiers commended by our leaders in recognition of their hard work and going above and beyond expectations.

Lastly I would like to thank everyone for their support. We have a dedicated FRG, sponsors, and friends that have allowed us to focus on our missing. Your actions do not go unnoticed by us and will never be forgotten.

Thanks,

BEAST 6 OUT!

First Sergeant's SITREP

Greeting to all Warriors, newly assigned, and Family members of the Bravo CO, 46th Engineers Battalion. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself again to all of the Beast Family. I am 1SG Gregory Williams and have been the First Sergeant for about 7 months now and enjoying the roller coaster ride. My goal in the company is to accomplish all diverse missions in "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and bring high motivation to the company. The unit as a whole is doing extremely well. I am very proud of their accomplishment thus far. I have never been more excited to lead Soldiers as I am today. Having this opportunity is an honor and a privilege in a historical environment. The Warriors of this unit professionalism and respect has welcomed me into my position. I look forward to working with all of my newly assigned and Family member as my time progress during the responsibility I have taken upon.

There is a lot of good thing going on with all five platoons. Headquarters element down to the Maintenance platoon is leading the way in the 46th Engineer Battalion. The missions for us are very diverse and critical to the Iraqi populace. The unit is definitely making a change for the best to the local citizens of Baghdad, Iraq. And, we are leaving an everlasting mark here stamped with Bravo Company credentials. As I mentioned in the battalion newsletter earlier in the month, we owed the spouses and loved ones more respect than we can imagined. I will like to take this time and say, Thanks!!

There are many things we continue to establish and put into function. And one of them is our Family Readiness Group. We need volunteers for the FRG, "WE NEED YOU"!!! We welcome all Warriors and Family members that would like to participate and volunteer with the FRG. You are needed in order to get this program up and running. I encourage each and everyone in the company to step up and participate. We do realize your jobs are tougher being left home alone being Mr. Fix-it all. And we do understand.

In conclusion, I will like to say thanks for supporting your Warriors family members. They need to know you are there for them. As we pray for you, we know you are praying for our safe return as well. Bravo Beast to you all!!



1SG Gregory Williams
B Co. First Sergeant
46th ECB (H)



EM Platoon's Prestigious Mission

By 1st LT Jeremy Atkinson

The Earth Movers of Company B, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), based at Fort Rucker, Ala., are not currently conducting engineer specific operations in Baghdad.

Instead, they are conducting a very honorable and prestigious mission for fellow Soldiers – they are safeguarding their lives and enabling their mission accomplishment.

“Engineers provide our force with a flexibility to accomplish tasks spanning the full array of lethal and non-lethal options in a counterinsurgency fight. Trained and equipped to execute independently or in concert with maneuver forces, engineers often find themselves accomplishing their ‘engineer tasks’ while providing their own security,” states Lt. Col. Matthew Zajac, commander of the 46th ECB (H).

Currently, the EM Platoon is attached to Task Force Gold and conducts mounted and dismounted security operations for a Quality Assurance/Quality Control Team. The Soldiers of the QA/QC team ensure that the construction projects around Sadr City stay on track and to also make sure the Iraqi contractors adhere to construction standards.

“It is incredible to see the progress made every day by Iraqi citizens in their efforts to better their lives. It’s something the news back home never reports on. Every day we see new schools, soccer fields and parks being finished,” stated Sgt. 1st Class Antwann Rhodes, a native of Tennessee, and EM platoon sergeant.

After a training period with a Military Police Personal Security Detachment teams, EM developed sound tactics, techniques and procedures to accomplish their non-standard mission. The effectiveness of these tactics are apparent in the comments of the Soldiers that EM protects. After every mission, the QA/QC Soldiers offer thanks and praise for the job well done by the 46th ECB (H) Soldiers.

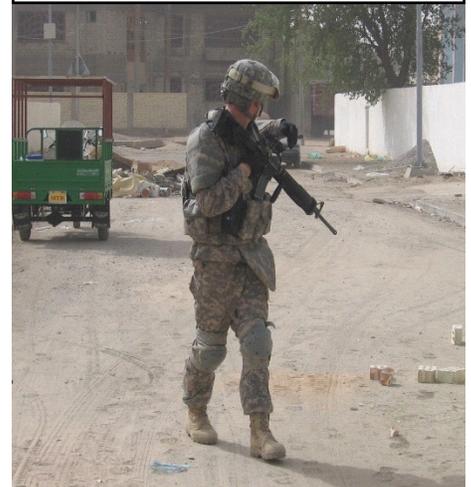
“The Earth Movers have always been a close platoon, and this mission has made us even stronger. We are developing that unique bond created during combat, often described as becoming Family. Each Soldier can tell how the other one thinks and acts. It’s our camaraderie and dedication to excellence that made it easy to transition to this mission,” said Sgt. Matthew Shane, of Cazenovia, N.Y., who serves with EM Platoon, 46th ECB (H).

The Engineer Regiment’s full-spectrum capabilities are always in high demand by our maneuver brethren, and the Soldiers of the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) demonstrate this versatility on a daily basis. The Earth Movers of Company B exemplify the spirit captured by the verses of the unofficial Army Engineer song:

*“We put them over rivers and across the mountains streams,
Do everything but tuck them in, and wish them pleasant dreams.
When the going’s really tough, and bombs do burst their ears,
The whole division’s quick to say, “GOD SEND THE ENGINEERS!”*



Top: SPC Thurston provides security.
Bottom: SGT Shane on patrol.



Before a mission in Baghdad, SSG Schwenkler gives a convoy brief while SFC Rhodes and 1LT Atkinson supervise.



EM PLT says a prayer before heading out on a mission July 23, in Baghdad, Iraq.



955th Engineer Company



CPT Crystal Lauver
955th EN Co. Commander
46th ECB (H)

Commander's Corner

Hello friends and family of the 955th Engineer Company!

The latest projects we've completed include first platoon working on an ammunition holding area, second and support platoons cleaning up debris along roadways for route sanitation, and maintenance and headquarters platoons keeping everything running smoothly for missions. Additionally, many of our soldiers are now on leave (rest and relaxation for a couple weeks!), and that is always an exciting time.

I want to thank everyone for sending so much support! Our mailboxes are full, and we keep getting more letters and boxes! I want to send our soldiers' gratitude for you keeping them informed, updated, and supplied with love and hopes from home. At the end of the day, soldiers always look forward to mail call. Please keep up the efforts!

As always, if you haven't heard from your soldier lately, please let Ms. Saltz know so we can get them in contact with you. Thank you for being a vital part of the 955th Engineer Company team!

Crystal (CPT Lauver)

Clydesdales



First Sergeant's SITREP

Hello to all,

I just wanted to say how proud of our soldiers I am. They have done so many projects already and have made a name for themselves. Many units already know the name of the 955th and that is a direct reflection on our soldiers.

The soldiers have done some tough missions and lived in some tough conditions, but every time I see them on site they are all smiles. To date four soldiers have received the Army Achievement Medal and about 18 coins from various high level officials.

Once again the 955th is making a name and driving along. Be very proud of your soldiers for they are Engineers. I could not have asked for a better unit to be the First Sergeant of, so tell everyone about your soldiers. As the CO said soldiers are now coming home on leave, enjoy your time with them and be patient with them. A deployment changes the soldier and the families.

Until next time God bless you and God bless the 955th.

SFC Gibbs 955th 1SG.



1SG Matthew Gibbs
955th EN Co. First Sergeant
46th ECB (H)



The Final Days of the “Big Blue Building”

By 2LT Christopher Smiley

25 Soldiers from 1st Platoon, along with 2 Soldiers from Maintenance Platoon, all from 955th Engineer Company from Fort Leonard Wood Missouri have returned from a two week long mission at JSS (Joint Service Station) Sadr City. The soldiers were tasked with the demolition and removal of what was known as “The Big Blue Building” which was located within the confines of the JSS. This building, which was formerly an Iraqi Police Directorate building, was badly damaged 4 months prior in an IRAM (Improvised Rocket Assisted Mortar) attack. Several IRAM’s impacted the building leaving it structurally unsound and unsalvageable.

After the attack, this large two-story building, stood as a daily reminder of the violent history the JSS had endured as well as a potential hazard for those working and living on the JSS. With a damaged building in their space, the infantry unit operating within JSS Sadr developed plans to have the building removed in order to make room for 25 new housing trailers in order to accommodate more soldiers. With several weeks of sending requests, attempting to gain permission from the Iraqi Government (who owned the building), and developing plans, the demolition of the building was finally approved. 1st Platoon, 955th EN Co. was finally given the tasking to tear down “Big Blue”.

It wasn’t just by chance that 1st Platoon got this mission. We requested it. We had previously been working out at JSS Sadr City on another construction project and heard about the need to have the building removed. 2LT Christopher Smiley the Platoon Leader and SSG Randy Collins, the platoon sergeant, spoke with the unit responsible for the JSS and told them that we had the equipment and personnel necessary to do the job. SSG Collins, who has a lot of experience with similar projects from his civilian occupation, developed a solid plan for how we would accomplish the mission. It was presented to 46th Engineer Battalion, where they were tasked with the mission. They felt that this mission would give their soldiers a valuable opportunity to gain a lot of experience on the various uses and abilities of their construction equipment. Plus as Army Engineers, anytime they are authorized to destroy something, it’s a pretty good time.

The initial estimates for this project predicted that it would take 60 days to bring the building down and remove all the debris. When all was said and done, 1st PLT soldiers were able to finish the mission in only 9 days. The structure of the building and the materials used in its construction were not as strong as estimated which contributed much to its quick removal. However, As 2 LT Smiley said “I also attribute a few other factors to the timely completion of this mission. First, I have never seen my soldiers more motivated than they were during this project. Everyday each one of them looked forward to getting on the equipment and doing their part to bring down and remove “Big Blue.” Secondly, this project provided the soldiers a lot of opportunities to enhance their operating skills and I was amazed how much they improved each day. On day one we had two soldiers familiar with operating the excavator. By day nine, there were at least five soldiers who could operate it quite effectively. Their motivation and ability to gain proficiency on the equipment is what I believe contributed the most to our ability to complete this project in such a short amount of time”.

The efforts of the soldiers involved in the “Big Blue Building” project were recognized during visits from the 926th EN Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Tally, and also from the Commander of the 412th Engineer Command, Maj. Gen. Hamm. Over the course of these visits, 3 soldiers were presented with coins from the 412th ENCOM and 8 soldiers received coins from the Brigade. Below is a list of these soldiers:

- | | | | |
|---|---------------|--|--|
| COINED BY THE 412th ENCOM | | COINED BY THE 926th EN BDE | |
| SGT LUTTRELL | SSG EFTINK | PV2 ESKEW | |
| SPC HEPPERMAN | SPC MCELREATH | SGT TRAINDL | |
| PFC MCGEE | PV2 FARRIS | SGT JACKSON | |
| SGT VERNON | SPC KUMP | | |

These soldiers were recognized for going the extra mile each day to ensure mission accomplishment, often giving up their time off to continue working.

During our two weeks at JSS Sadr City, the Soldiers of 1st Platoon as well as the two Soldiers from maintenance displayed a high level of professionalism in the way that they accomplished the mission ahead of schedule and openly dedicated their off time to helping other soldiers from other units. They have definitely set a high standard for the next mission and I know they are looking forward to it.



SSG Roberts moves material out of the work area, while SPC McElreath ground guides.



SGT Luttrell, SPC Hepperman and PFC McGee receive coin from 412th ENCOM CSM Guy Taylor.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS



Alpha's PVT Finney, PFC Roberson, PFC Grandbury & PFC Ortiz are promoted on-site where they are repairing damaged facilities.



955 Soldier SPC Joshua Kramer (right) re-enlists on August 9. Pictured with 2LT Smiley.



HSC's 1LT Neal Traweek (center) is promoted on July 18.



HSC's SFC Robert Taft (center) is promoted on July 1st.



Bravo Company Soldier SPC Jonatan Campos receives an Army Achievement Medal from BN CDR LTC Zajac August 12.



HSC's SFC Justin English (center) is promoted on August 1st.

In the News...

Read up-to-the-minute articles about "Steel Spike" Soldiers, by checking out the following links:

<http://www.kwtx.com/forhood/headlines/27073444.html>
(Alpha and 955 Companies rebuild a Combat Outpost)

http://www.fortpolkguardian.com/articles/2008/08/01/army_news/08jss.txt
(Engineers Rebuild a Joint Security Site)

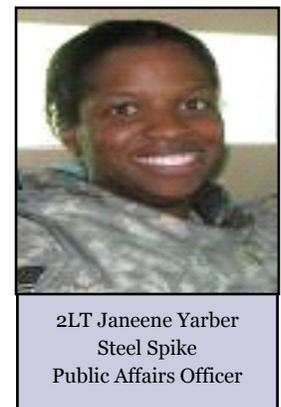
<http://www.leesvilledailyleader.com/news/x1806343728/Earth-Movers-professionally-adjust-to-new-missions>
(EM PLT Adjusts to New Mission)

<http://www.tpatch568.us/roar.html>
(Key Leaders Meet with Iraqi Colonel)

http://www.dvidshub.net/index.php?script=images/images_gallery.php&action=viewimage&fid=107664
(955th Engineer Company Gets Recognized)

<http://www.leesvilledailyleader.com/news/x2045582325/Construction-project-tests-soldiers-skills>
Construction Project Tests Soldiers' Skills)

And stay tuned... Starting August 22nd you can watch video clips of your Soldier in "Hometown Greetings" on <http://www.dvidshub.net> website. Just click on "Videos," then "Greetings" to see if your Soldier recorded a message to you!



2LT Janeene Yarber
Steel Spike
Public Affairs Officer



Steel Spike Birthdays

August/September

August

1st — CPT Kelly Boone, 1SG Steven Hall
 3rd — SPC Xavier Garcia, PV2 Sarah Gerke, SPC Eric Bones
 4th — SSG Richmond Branch, PFC Markus Williams
 5th — CPL Roberto Ferguson, PV2 Andrew Layton
 6th — SGT Steven Thomas, SGT Jason Peura, PFC Christopher Cody
 7th — SPC Christopher Rollings
 9th — SGT Kyle Vernon, PV2 Tiffany King
 10th — SPC Charles Adair
 11th — SGT Thavone Nakhonexay, PV2 Talib Hodges
 12th — SGT Aaron Baye, PFC Jacob Moon
 13th — SGT Robert Rodgers, SPC Francis Hickey
 14th — SFC Antwann Rhodes
 15th — W01 Anthony Jellison, SPC David Rhoden, PFC Curtis Dittmer, PFC Nathan Miller
 16th — SPC Isaiah Franklin
 17th — SGT Coty Mallory, PFC Dustin Bone, PV2 Daniel McCorkendale
 19th — 2LT Stephen Clements, SPC Joseph Underwood, PFC Adam Pearce
 20th — SPC Seth Willson
 21st — SPC Aaron Gray, SPC Kyle Thornton, PV2 Jonathan Cole
 22nd — SPC Timothy Marler
 23rd - SSG Dario Edwards, SPC Jonathan Campos, PFC Joshua Howard, PFC James Lawson, PFC Jacob Hester, PV2 Kenneth Eskew
 24th — SGT Marcus Jones, SPC Thomas Anderson, SPC Cory Pratt
 25th — SFC Rosa Fraine
 26th — SPC Gary Kyle, PFC Patrick Murray
 27th — PV2 Cassandra Dutkiewicz
 28th — SSG Dedrick Davis, SGT Jeremy Casserly
 29th — PFC Jacoba Vermeulen
 31st — SSG Gary Rice, SPC Jeremy Vanover



September

1st — SSG Jamiallah Jackson, SGT Jeremy Royer
 2nd — PFC Derrick Godhigh, PFC Gregory Eylandt
 4th — PV2 Nathaniel Coleman
 6th — SPC Bryan Thurston
 8th — CPT Kevin Wooster, PFC Precious Hogan, SPC Jason Ladner, SPC Paul Brooks, SSG Sean Ledford
 9th — SPC Gary Gochenour, PV2 Jessie Spencer
 10th — SSG Leonard Phillips, SPC Sean Curtis, SSG Allen Evans
 11th — 2LT Matthew Riggio, SPC Franky Galloway
 12th — 1LT Joshua Hollman
 15th — PFC Samuel Voss, SPC Carl Watson
 16th — PFC Christopher Geradts
 17th — PFC Ryan Stanton
 18th — CPL William Watson
 19th — SGT Jonathon Bell, SGT Russell Hull, SSG Harry Morris, PV2 Michael Allen
 20th — SPC Shaea Mendenhall, PV2 Michael Finney, SPC Angel Reyesfonseca
 21st — SPC Antonio Woods, SSG Gary Butler, PV2 Daneil Secrest, SSG Cedric Brown, SGT Frederick Vickers
 22nd — 1LT Daniela Serban, PVT John Gavit
 24th — SFC Alfred Coleman, SGT Maurice Polite
 25th — CPL Kyle Morris, SPC Matthew Ulrich
 27th — SGT Richard Lincoln, SPC Matthew Smith
 28th — 1LT Jane Capra, SPC Kurtis Nahl, SGT Jonathan Kinney
 29th — PFC Ricardo Garciamora





A Word from the FRG

Greetings families and soldiers of the Steel Spike Team,

First and foremost I would like to introduce myself; I am SFC Kuzmik and have been assigned to the rear-d ISG position. I have been in the Army for over 18yrs. I also have been assigned to the 814th En Co two times before. I love FT. Polk, and hope you will find it enjoyable too. My self and CPT Dickerson arrived here at the same time and are glad to be working beside you.

I would like to tell you that our number one priority is to take care of Soldiers, which includes family members also. If we fail to take care of you, we fail the Soldiers. I will be sitting down with the FRG Leaders and the BN Advisor to go over what we need to do, as a team, to better serve you. I have given the FRG Leaders an office which has a computer, internet connection, printer and a phone. I am in the process of getting two more computers and have requested a work order for two more internet lines to be ran. Currently, I am having the soldiers repaint the FRG office and the Orderly Room.

On Friday August 1st we had an organization day at the softball complex. I apologize for the short notice but I wanted to bring the morale up a little. Although it

was a typical hot Louisiana day was filled with fun and activities which fostered a positive setting for a great day. Mark your calendar, our next BN Family day is September 20 at the DeRidder Park. We will havemore information in the upcoming weeks.

We thank Mrs. Fontenot for bringing in Breakfast Wednesday, a great way to start off the Hump day. Wednesdays are now known as "Wonderful Wednesday". This is a way of saying Thank You to Rear-D Soldiers for going the extra mile in helping family members left behind. The Rear-D has been a great asset to the Family Readiness Group. The plan is to have a different FRG member bring something in for the Soldiers. We thank you in advance.

I am excited to announce the kick-off to our 46th ECB (H) Biggest Loser Contest. We have several participants from both Alpha and HSC. We also have SGT Roman's family, who are not here at Fort Polk yet, participating from Fort Bragg. Two teams will be competing against each other and will have their own workout schedule and support system. We will also be having challenges throughout the year. Our goal is to achieve a healthy weight and lifestyle before our soldiers return home!

Our Family Readiness Group mission is to provide activities and support that



(L-R) Kelly Stinnett (BN Secretary), Shannon Wagner (Event Planner), and Gina Fontenot (BN Advisor).

enhance the flow of information and esprit de corps within the Battalion. I encourage each and every one of you to support each other. If you have not had contact with our FRG, please make the first move to contact your leader. The leaders are working diligently to make this the best FRG possible and could use any assistance you can offer. Please attend monthly meetings and activities regularly and share your ideas. Help our FRG become an even bigger success by staying involved. We cannot help each other if we don't get to know each other. Please feel free to contact me for anything. I will do everything I can to fix any issues/problems. You can be assured that I will put in 100% effort in supporting you. Once again I am glad to be here and working with you.

STEEL SPIKE One Team One Fight!
Kuzmik, Edward J



"Wonderful Wednesday" Breakfast.



Organizational Day at Softball Complex.



FRG News & Notes

**Congratulations to
Mrs. Henry the
814th FRG Leader, for
winning the September
“Volunteer of the
Month” Award!**

**A warm welcome to the
newest *little* additions to the
“Steel Spike” Family:**

- Fayth Davis—16 April 08
- Keely Kimara Scroggins—6 June 08
- Connor Gabriel McIlquham—23 June 08
- Caleb Michael Locklin & Jathaniel Jovan Padilla—25 June 08
- Alexa Cartagena Vazquez—28 June 08
- Ariana Lilah Staples—12 July 08
- Kolton Lee Gene Bettes—15 July 08
- MaKalya Fraser—16 July 08
- Jamarri Shelton—7 Aug 08
- Nathanel Aden Auguste - 22 Aug 08

Rear D / FRG Contact Info

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