

# CASTLE CHRONICLE



Patch Ceremony pg. 8

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

CASTLE CHRONICLE

## BRIGADE COMMANDER

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CSM Kendrick 2

Jump Pay 2

Mongrel CMD Team 3

Commo Shop 4

PSD 5

Promotions FRG 6

Chaplain Patch Ceremony 7

617th EN Tech Section 8

A warm welcome to everyone from Joint Base Balad, Iraq! It hasn't been as warm as everyone predicted and has rained a lot more than expected as well. But fear not – warmer weather is approaching fast, as I am sure it is in Fayetteville. The Brigade is all settled in; we executed our "Transfer of Authority" with the 36<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, so it is official now – it is up to the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade to help bring Operation New Dawn to its successful conclusion, as the last remaining Theater Engineer Brigade in Iraq. Wow! What an honor for all our Soldiers – nobody will follow us, so the legacy we leave will be the engineer legacy that remains in Iraq. Let me assure you that our Soldiers are more than up to the challenge.

While we are here we will command and control many facets of engineer operations including: route clearance operations (getting rid of IEDs); all military bridging – which is a very big deal here; major power production – enough to power small cities; minor road and building construction to include the ability to design, plan, and manage construction projects. There is plenty to keep us busy!

By now most Soldiers have settled pretty much into their routines – so hopefully they have taken the time necessary to call or at least write a letter. We have started a program that allows us to take a DVD of your Soldier reading to one of their loved

ones and have a small assortment of books on hand. If you want your Soldier to read a book "with and for" a youngster, get with the Chaplain and we can make it happen. If there is a special book you want read – get two of them and send one here to your Soldier and then your little one can follow at home when we mail the DVD. Sounds fun! The CSM and I routinely remind our Soldiers to take care of themselves and their Families and every Soldier should have at least one day of minimal activity to take care of that busi-

ness.

Although Iraq remains a dangerous place, I would like to let everyone know that we are doing everything possible to accomplish our mission to the highest standard while keeping your loved one safe – it starts with the great equipment we have and is strengthened by our Soldiers exercising the discipline to do the right thing, even when nobody is looking. Please continue to encourage them in their endeavors.

I would also ask everyone to stay connected to your Family Readiness Group and the Rear-Detachment. Both organizations are doing a wonderful job - a very tough job as well! Stay in touch and God Bless everyone until the next newsletter.

-CASTLE 6



COL Richard Kaiser





"...the Brigade Headquarters officially came off jump status in September of 2009..."

## BRIGADE CSM

Hello to all from the Soldiers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade as we begin Operation New Dawn as the last Theater Engineer Brigade (TEB) in Iraq. It's hard to believe we have been in Iraq for over a month now. Time certainly passes when you are busy learning your new role and enjoying what you are doing. The first thirty days of the deployment is normally a bit hard for some of our new Soldiers and in some cases, even our veterans. As the CSM I would prefer that they were back home having fun with their love ones in the great USA, but as you know the Brigade has a mission to perform our duties here in Iraq – and we will perform them exceptionally well as Soldiers. One of my many

tasks is to oversee and ensure our Soldiers are immersed in the operation by "building combat power", maintaining our overall health and welfare, basic sanitation, morale, discipline, and most importantly accomplishing all of our missions.

Families and friends, as you read the newsletter please keep our Soldiers in your prayers. Until next month, please keep in contact with your love one, and I will remind them to do the same. Be positive and take one day at a time - Sappers Lead the Way, All The Way.

## CESSATION OF JUMP PAY

As many of you may have heard, the Soldiers in HHC Brigade and the 30<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, (does not include the 307<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>) are officially coming off jump status and as such, will no longer be authorized the \$150 per month jump pay. As sad as that makes all of us, it is plain and simply the law of the land and we have no choice but to follow the orders. This affects ALL of the XVIII Airborne Corps separates and not just Engineers: Medical, Logistics, Military Police, Air Defense, etc...

Some background – the Brigade Headquarters officially came off jump status in September of 2009; back then, policies in place allowed us to manage the Paid Parachute Positions (PPP) – as long as we remained under our "cap". Whomever we felt needed to be on jump status, we placed on jump status. The rules have now changed, and I no longer have that authority. If a Soldier is not in a bona-fide Paid Parachute Position, I can no longer allow them to jump and receive \$150 hazardous duty pay. The XVIII Airborne Corps Commander has authorized 6 personnel from Brigade and 4 personnel from Battalion to remain on PPP status for Training and Readiness Authority (TRA) and Oversight; none of us deployed Soldiers – including me – are a part of that 6; all of the TRA jumpers remain at Fort Bragg today.

I know for many this will provide financial hardships, so I would ask if this is the case - go and see your unit chain of command – there are many venues available on post, through certified military programs to assist if you need assistance in managing your financial matters. -CASTLE 6



CPT CORNELIUS BATTIS

Greetings (marHaban) to all the Soldiers and Family members of the 20th Engineer Brigade. The Soldiers of HHC have done a lot of work to get us to where we are today. First and foremost I would like to thank the CPT Parry and 1SG Hayes (HHC Rear DET Command Team)

# Commander, HHC 20th EN BDE

along with all the Soldiers on the rear Detachment crew; without their efforts and support the deployment from Fort Bragg could have been a lot tougher.

Our transition with the 36th Engineer Battalion (out of Fort Hood, TX) was smooth. Now that we have completed our transition of authority with the 36th we find ourselves firmly seated in the saddle and in full control of our mission. Some of our Soldiers are working jointly with the U.S. Air Force (Prime Beef Squadron), Iraqi Army, and

various other engineer units throughout the area of operations.

Since we have been in country three of our Non-Commissioned Officers (SFC Harris, SSG Bick, and SGT Fulmer) have taken the oath of reenlistment; congratulations to those Soldiers and their families for their continued patriotism and enthusiasm in continuing to serve our great Nation.

*“we find ourselves firmly seated in the saddle and in full control...”*

ESSAYONS—Mongrel 6

# MONGRELS



1SG HOWARD McQUIRTER

Hello to my fellow 20th Engineer Brigade Soldiers and family members. We are well on our way to leaving our mark here in Iraq. I would like to personally thank all of the leadership and Soldiers for their tireless efforts in making this insertion into Iraq seamless.

Our Soldiers have taken the

## 1SG, HHC 20th EN BDE

bull by the horns and are already enrolling in college courses and attending FAST class to improve GT scores.

Congratulations to our Soldiers for advancing to the next rank this month. PFC Wilson was promoted to SPC and SPC Gomez was promoted to CPL.

This week some of our Soldiers and NCO's will put their best foot forward and compete for the BN NCO and Soldier Of the Month competition, good luck to PFC Matthews, Dean and SGT Hendrix.

Our Soldiers are extremely busy and are earning their money daily, however even the busiest Soldier deserves a break. When our Soldiers have downtime, they have cable TV and internet to entertain themselves, some can do this in their two-man CHU (containerized housing unit). Other MWR activities available to our Soldiers include a movie theater, several gymnasiums, and an in and outdoor swimming pool.

Though some have already gone away due to the responsible drawdown here in Iraq, there are a few restaurants available to our service members that provide them with a taste of home.

Wish Americas finest Soldiers in world luck as we get Operation New Dawn underway. No mission is too tough. AIRBORNE, ATW

# Communications Shop (S6)

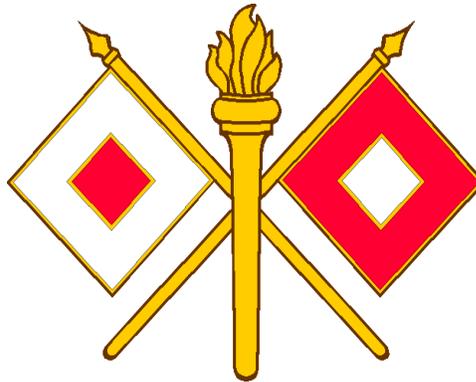


We provide your Soldier with a SPAWARE cafe, which offers free Internet for all. SPAWARE allows folks on sites that may be blocked by the Army system like Facebook and other shopping sites. So there is no excuse for not sending a birthday or anniversary gift.



AFN, the Armed Forces Network, is in the CHUs (where your Soldier lives) and in most work areas. This is the Army's version of cable TV. It has crazy commercials but most of the shows are up to date. We work on that if it is broken also.

We also offer CHUNet. This is not a free service but it allows Soldiers to have the internet in their room. This gives Soldiers and families privacy to be able to call home with a Magic Jack or have a video chat on Skype.



All these services, not to mention, all the computer systems, phones, and radios that the Army has trained us on, keeps us busy. We are very much behind the scenes but always at the forefront of every mission.

# Personal Security Detachment (PSD)

The PSD is comprised of a diverse group of Soldiers throughout the brigade, we are charged with a protection and movement of VIPs throughout the battle field. Each Soldier that belongs to the PSD brings a unique perspective and personality to the team, and it is these characteristics that makes this diverse team a force to be reckoned with. The keys to our success will be staying ahead of the game on maintaining our specialized vehicles and rehearsing different scenarios that we may encounter outside the wire.

Since we have been here we have had three birthdays within the PSD section in the month of January; SFC Tucker, SGT Husky and PFC Hernandez.

I also would like to congratulate two of our guys whom will become new Fathers; SGT Dunbar (expecting his first child on 1 June), and SPC Hyman (expecting his first child on 1 July). PFC Breed and his wife had their second child in Dec

Lastly I would like to say that I am proud of the work that the team has done to get us to where we are today; I am proud of each and every Soldier on the team.

- SFC Imundo Tucker



SPC Cabbage (Team Medic) performing medical duties on a PSD Soldier



**“ The Rat Pack  
....Come Get  
Some”**

# Promotions for January/February



**\*\*CONGRATULATIONS\*\***

**MAJOR BESINGA**



**MAJ Besinga**

Firstly, I cannot thank God enough for all His blessings in my life, for without Him I can do nothing.

Secondly, words cannot express how very proud I am of the 20th EN BDE. I am honored to have had this opportunity to pasture such an impressive group of Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers.

Thirdly, I recognize also the FRG Leaders and the dedicated spouses whom volunteer their time to support for the needs of our Soldiers and families.

Lastly, I thank COL Richard Kaiser for making this promotion meaningful and possible. God bless you all.



**\*\*CONGRATULATIONS\*\***

**CORPORAL GOMEZ**



**CPL Gomez**

I'd primarily like to thank my family for all their support and Soldiers of the 20th for always pushing me through all obstacles. This is CPL Gomez' 2nd deployment.



**\*\*CONGRATULATIONS\*\***

**SPECIALIST WILSON**



**SPC Wilson**

SPC Wilson was selected over 5 other PFCs for promotion with a waiver. At her promotion she was thankful to the Tech Section/Survey and Design Team for keeping her motivated.

1SG McQuirter	3 JAN
SSG Heckel	5 JAN
SFC Prescott	5 JAN
SGT Schudel	13 JAN
1LT Cho	15 JAN
1LT Baldwin	17 JAN
PFC Hernandez	21 JAN
CPT Meyers	25 JAN
1LT Johnson	27 JAN
SFC Tucker	27 JAN
SPC Santoro	29 JAN
MAJ Owens	1 FEB
1LT Haimann	6 FEB
SGT Huskey	7 FEB
COL Kaiser	21 FEB
CPT Longley	23 FEB
CPT Richard	25 FEB
SPC Wilson	26 FEB



## HHC, Family Readiness Group

Hello to all the Soldiers and Families, I hope that this publication finds everyone in good spirit. The HHC, 20th EN BDE FRG will be holding meetings on the last Thursday of every month at the Yellow Ribbon Trailer (as permitted) which is located at the Smoke Bomb Hill Chapel just off of Grubber Road before entering the All American Freeway. If you are unable to attend any of the FRG meetings, you can follow us on Facebook by searching for our Official Fan Page- **"HHC 20th Engineer Brigade FRG"**. If you are not already on our Email distribution list or eArmy Messaging distribution lists, please send an email with your name, the name of your soldier, and your contact information to [HHC20thFRG@gmail.com](mailto:HHC20thFRG@gmail.com).

The FRG will be sending care packages soon to those down range. Soldiers, please let us know of any specific requests; and families please let us know if you would like to help out.

- Nikki Batts



# Chaplains' Corner



**CH (MAJ)  
Dino  
Besinga**

“NEVER CAN I FORGET YOU” (Isaiah 49:8-9)

Author John Powell’s favorite story is about a student named Tommy, whom he

taught at Loyola University, Chicago. Tommy claimed to be an atheist. When he returned in his final exam, he smirked, “Do you think I’ll ever find God?” Without waiting for an answer, he left. As he headed out the door Mr. Powell yelled, “Tommy you may never find God, but God’s going to find you...”

Months later the boy learned he had a cancer. In the

course of the illness, God found Tommy in a most beautiful way. Just before Tommy died, he asked Mr. Powell to share with his future students the story of how he didn’t find God, but how God did find him.

Have we ever experienced God’s presence and love after thinking that God had abandoned us? *Prayer: Lord, help us realize that you care about us and love us more than we do ourselves.*

**“Grief shared is half grief.**

**Joy shared is double joy.”**

**-Honduran**

**Proverb**

## Task Force Castle Dons Combat Patch

Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 20th Engineer Brigade, held a formation to proudly receive their combat patch. The Combat Patch Ceremony was held in front of the Headquarters Building on Friday, February, 25, 2011. For some, this was the first time they have ever had anything on their right shoulder sleeve below the U.S. Flag, for others, it will add to their collection of patches that denote time spent at war for the nation. At any rate, first-timers and repeat veterans will of the brigade will all wear the 20th Engineer Brigade Combat Patch for the first seven days after the ceremony in a show of solidarity. After the seven days, Soldiers with prior combat experience, if they chose

to, can wear any patch they have earned.

The combat patch, also known as a shoulder sleeve insignia, indicates former wartime service, and is a tradition that has been a part of the Army since World War II. Army regulation 670-1 authorizes the wearing of the patch for Soldiers who are assigned to Army units that actively support or participate in ground combat operations against any hostile force.

The 20th Engineer Brigade Patch was originally authorized on June 30, 1967, it consists of a scarlet square bearing a white castle tower of three battlements and pointed at the base. The white areas simulate carpenter squares, grouped around the tower, (which also represents the

Headquarters of the Brigade) allude to the engineer combat and constructive groups.

In addition to the combat patch, each Soldier received a Certificate of Wartime Service and the new Brigade Combat Coin.

The scarlet and white (subdued) now will find itself a home on the right shoulder of 124 additional Soldiers who will undoubtedly wear it proudly...ESSAYONS!!!



**PFC Jesse Matthews receives his first combat patch and Certificate of Wartime Service from COL Kaiser.**



# 617th Engineer Company (Ft. Lewis, WA)

Major General Cardon, Deputy Commanding General-Support (DCG-S) United States Forces-Iraq (USF-I), presents coins to members of the 3rd Platoon of the 617th Horizontal Construction Company and the Air Force's 467th Expeditionary Prime Beef Squadron



The 3rd Platoon of the 617th Horizontal Construction Company as well as an element of the 467th Expeditionary Prime Beef Squadron, United States Air Force, are currently engaged in a substantial construction project in Northern Iraq to develop a base for the Department of State. The base, known as Contingency Operating Site (COS) Irbil, is located just outside the Iraqi city of Irbil in the Kurdish region of the country. Irbil represents the fourth largest population center in Iraq and is the center of government activity for the Kurdish people. The Department of State mission in this region is crucial to their success in the future. The Soldiers and Airmen have been tasked with upgrading all of the roads on the COS as well as improving drainage and establishing a solid base for a concrete security wall which will form the perimeter. The project will require in excess of 25,000 cubic meters of gravel material and 6,000 sections of preformed concrete wall. The completion of the road network and concrete wall perimeter is crucial to ensuring the Department of State will have a solid base from which to support the people of northern Iraq.

## Technical Section



A Soldier from 3rd Platoon of the 617th Horizontal Construction Company uses a grader to spread gravel over the surface of a newly constructed road.

Soldiers from 3rd Platoon of the 617th Horizontal Construction Company emplace formwork for a concrete headwall on a culvert which they just completed installing.

