

The Sword and Castle

VOLUME 1,

SEPTEMBER



Task Force Sword



To the Soldiers & Families of the 18th Engineer Brigade,

As Commander of the 18th Engineer Brigade, I am excited to be working with your Soldiers in Afghanistan. Although this headquarters came from Germany, I understand the wide variety of units and Soldiers that are in this command from the 1249th Engineer Battalion out of the Oregon National Guard to the 111th Engineer Battalion from the Texas Army National Guard. Our overall goal is to assist the people of Afghanistan in becoming self-reliant. Instead of doing route clearance and constructing buildings for them, we will be partnering with Afghan units to teach them how to do it themselves. As a result, we will give the people a chance to have a better life.

In fulfilling this goal, we are tasked with building, repairing and patrolling bases and routes throughout Afghanistan. A priority of mine is to keep Families informed as much as possible, as quickly as possible, and without exposing ourselves to unnecessary risk by leaking sensitive information in the process. Also, I want to give your beloved Soldier the opportunity to contact you, and your families as much as possible.

I expect us to be very active during this deployment, which will require a great deal of work from the soldiers of the 18th Engineer Brigade; however, in saying that, I need something from you in return. I ask that you stay strong, talk to your loved ones often, and pray for our safe return. Use the FRG as a resource to help and lean on one another for support. Remember that sometimes we, as Soldiers, will be stressed out about seemingly small problems and need someone to talk to about them. I encourage you to talk about it with them and don't dismiss it.

I'm sure we all hope that time will fly by and we will be home sooner than you think, and I am hopeful that you will stay strong for your beloved Soldiers and your Family. I can't thank you enough for your prayers, support, and service to our Brigade and Nation.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Paolozzi
Commander, Task Force Sword

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S1



It is another moderate warm day at Forward Operating Base Sharana and the Identification Card Section manned by Specialist **Jesse Cole** is in full swing. **SPC Cole** expressed to his customers that, "Task Force Sword is the only show in town and we are proud to be serving Soldiers, Department of Army Civilian and Contractors." When asked about the difficult part of his day **SPC Cole** responded with, "there is not really a difficult part of the day, except when we lose connectivity. When this happens,



I don't have the opportunity to do what is most enjoyable to me and that is providing service to customers." That is my branch's motto, Defend and Serve! We are the first and sometimes the only ambassadors for TF Sword on FOB Sharana. I'm glad to have this opportunity to do my job and provide world class customer service to Soldiers, DA Civilian and Contractors. I cannot believe that the Army is paying me to do what I love. This comes naturally. God Bless America."

Even with all the hard work, most of the S1 section participated in the EOD 5k run.



The S2 shop has successfully managed the challenges of deploying and setting up shop. However, the challenges of continuously adapting to the mission have only begun. The shop spent its first month working very hard but has also found ways to take well-earned breaks. For instance, on 16 July, the bulk of the shop participated in a 5k EOD Wounded Warrior Foundation run where **SGT Walter** and **PFC Jenkins** got a chance to play with a robot used by explosive ordinance disposal technicians. **SSG Lee** and **SFC Rodriguez** tried on bomb suits, not exactly the preferred casual wear.



Small breaks like these provide the Soldiers a mental rest from the demands of their boss, **MAJ Shankle**. **PFC Easton** and **PFC Ulmer** have become the resident maintenance men, fixing air conditioners and doing other tasks to make the place habitable. Both as a break from work and in an attempt to better themselves, **SGT Walter**, **SGT Voll**, and **PFC Ulmer** have enrolled in college courses, following the example of **SFC Rodriguez** who recently completed his Associates Degree.

S2

As always the S3 shop buzzes with activity. The tactical operations center (TOC) welcomed some new faces and some familiar faces to the mix to include, **1LT Zenger** joining us from the HHC, **CPT Jon Gill**, joining us from the 170th IBCT, **PFC Jenkins** from the **S2 shop** and **SPC Williams**, **SPC Key-Jones** and **SGT Morris** from the S1 shop. The shop stays busy tracking movements, receiving reports from route clearance missions, communicating with subordinate units and our higher headquarters and keeping all activities on the battlefield running smoothly. We are extremely proud of the mission we have and already, we are influencing the units of Task Force Sword in a positive way.

The TOC still manages to find time to relax between their shifts with plenty of PT, movie watching, calling home or shooting off emails to loved ones. **SPC Stringfield** even found some time to grow a mustache! The team is growing and learning a lot. **PFC Fire** celebrated her 21st birthday this past month. **SFC Bewater** splurged on a 6 pack of non-alcoholic beer! **PFC Cruz** learned that when **MAJ Baim** refers to "the Poles" he is referring to our NATO brothers in Arms, the Polish Army not a pole in the ground or next to the road. We are staying safe and keep each other in high spirits with green beans coffee and lots of jokes.

S4



The S4 section continues to work diligently to support the Soldiers of Task Force Sword. Since arriving in Bagram Airfield, the Soldiers of the S4 shop have remained busy learning their new jobs. Every day, members of the S4 look for ways to improve their work systems in addition to their work and living conditions. Whether streamlining the financial liability investigation process as **SFC Dumas** accomplished or **CW2 Parsons** ensuring incoming units are fielded the necessary equipment to accomplish their mission, the Soldiers in the S4 are hard at work. The S4 section would like to give a heartfelt welcome to incoming OIC, **MAJ Terrance Kratz**. **CPT Kratz** hails from Oklahoma and is coming to the 18th EN BDE after commanding HHC, 21st TSC.



SPC Njoroge and his wife Lilian are expecting to welcome their first child, a boy in November. In charge of supplying the entire Sword Task Force with ammunition and other mission critical supplies is **SSG Hinson**. **SGM Ledbetter** keeps busy handling billeting issues, taking care of Soldiers, and running the S4 shop on a day to day basis. He has played an essential role in ensuring our Soldiers have the best protective equipment available.

The transportation section, comprised of **CW2 Reynolds** and **SPC Rubio** not only have been doing an excellent job coordinating the movement of equipment and Soldiers throughout Afghanistan, but they also have been hitting the gym hard. The transporters have also located numerous lost or frustrated containers and ensured they arrived at their proper destinations.

The maintenance section, led by **CW3 Straughter** and **MSG Dillon** work tirelessly to ensure the mission readiness and timely repair of all vehicles. Also in maintenance is **PFC Cagle**, who everyday consolidates, tracks, and publishes critical maintenance reports.

The entire S4 section would like to thank their family and friends for their love, support, and care packages! God Bless the USA and the Soldiers that protect it.

S6



Hello to everybody back in Germany and the great US of A. Once a month we get to send back a small report of all our accomplishments, so this is our first installment of the "SWORD VOICE", a look into the lives of the Brigade Commo Shop. Since this is the premiere, we'll keep it standard, but subsequent excerpts promise to rival any New York Times best seller as we get deeper into the deployment.

After we left Tompkins Barracks we had several stops along the way however, once we got to FOB Sharana, **SGT Hamilton** and **SSG Soto** were ready to receive us and ensure TF Sword was ready to roll. Unfortunately, there was nothing they could do to help us with the altitude and luckily the weather has been great as of late so it has helped the acclimatization process.

The last month has gone by very quickly because the S-6 mission is essential to the modern battlefield and has kept busy. We do not take the motto "PRO PATRIA VIGILANS" (Watchful for the Country) lightly. We have stayed busy supporting TF Sword, several units and organizations on FOB Sharana, as well as units all across RC-East and RC-North. We are responsible for everything from maintaining information systems to providing guidance and instruction on communications equipment.

SPC Janssen, located in RC-North, is working diligently to ensure that the TF Sword elements working with him have around the clock connectivity and situation awareness with TF Sword TOC on FOB Sharana. We also got to celebrate the promotion and induction into the NCO Corps of our S-6 Representative at Bagram Air Field (BAF), **SGT Sinclair**. He has been an invaluable asset since he joined the S-6 Shop and continues to be in BAF where he provides communications support to TF Sword elements, as well as supporting our Air Force Engineer brothers and sisters in arms. We are looking forward to continuing to show all of Afghanistan that we are the best S-6 section in the Army!



S7

The Technical Headquarters Section assumed the reigns as the champion of construction effects for the 18th Engineer Brigade in Afghanistan. Technical Headquarters Section Soldiers immediately provided quality survey and design support to ongoing construction missions and improved the infrastructure of our Soldiers and the Afghan population. Over the past month, the section focused on acclimatization with early morning physical training and country orientation. Plus, we settled into our new living quarters and dining facility at Sharana.

Congratulations, **Chad Finholt** earned a promotion from PFC to SPC, and we look forward to promoting **PFC Billy Johnson** and **PFC Jose Reyna** to SPC on August 1, 2011. The THS team is as strong as ever and mission focused; we miss home and our loved ones. Jamais Construie- *build forever*- we are proud of everything we do. Swords Up!

Greetings from Afghanistan from the newly formed S8 shop -

The S8 office, or procurements office, provides funding support and contracts liaison for the Brigade. The shop is newly formed because in Germany the work was partly done by the S4 shop, and partly done by the 21st TCS G8 shop. Specialist **Aislinn King** (formerly Amig) joins the team from the Public Affairs Office; her blazingly fast typing skills are quite something to watch or listen to, but you probably don't want to challenge her to a race. She is pleased to have the opportunity to work in her military specialty. **SGT Ruben Medina** joins the team from the S4 shop where he was already working with financial information. He is the "GO TO" guy for matters about emergency leave, but a few people scratch their heads and wonder when they see the New York Yankees photos on the wall behind him.

We truly appreciate the packages, cards, and notes. For as much as we are looking forward to a productive and successful deployment, the work sometimes gets long and tedious, and it only takes a taste from home to make the whole day a lot better. Thank you for your continued support and prayers, and know that we are here doing the best we can for you and all of our deployed brothers and sisters out there. SWORDS UP!

PAO



The PAO is up and running! We've taken over an office big enough for the three of us and all our equipment. Everyone is settled into their rooms and ready to take photos and write stories. **SGT Petrus** and **PFC Huddleston** body build every day in the hopes of winning the bench press competition while **CPT Werback** runs around the FOB. We're looking forward to promoting **Huddleston** to SPC in August.





The TF Sword JAG Office hit the ground running. Taking the reins from 176th Engineer Brigade seemed daunting at first, but once we established a battle rhythm, we managed to get everything running like a well oiled machine. **CPT Hendrickson** and **SSG Nikolao** comprise the Administrative Law team, handling Investigations and FLIPL review, among being the Brigade Judge Advocate and the Chief Paralegal NCO respectively. **CPT Hendrickson** also doubles as the Legal Assistance Attorney. **CPT Newman** heads up the Military Justice portion of the office in regards to Article 15s and Administrative Separations, she also doubles up as the Fiscal Law Attorney. **SPC Tobias** is the jack-of-all-trades in the office; he

assists with Administrative Law, Legal Assistance, Claims and Military Justice. When the JAG Team isn't hard at work in the office, they spend their time at the gym, getting tougher and stronger; at the DFAC, eating some of the most interesting cuisine, backed by some very unique staff; or spending time online speaking to family and friends through Skype or Facebook; or sleeping in rooms that are much nicer than most would expect. We are happy to be out here, and appreciate all of your support dearly.

Chaplain

Greetings from the TF Sword Religious Support Team consisting of **Chaplain (LTC) Terry Hayes** and **SSG Shairese Smith-Banks**! The dust of Sharana barely covered our boots before we jumped into the work here. Davis Memorial Chapel at the center of Town Square on Sharana has five services every Sunday (General Protestant, Roman Catholic, Gospel, Latter Day Saints and Contemporary Protestant). Add to that the weekly Bible studies, choir and praise team practices and it's an active spot. During the week we find ourselves flying to other Forward Operating Bases (FOB) to visit our battalion RSTs and their soldiers. Two are fairly close and the other is a day or two away. Getting around this ancient country of Afghanistan is always an adventure. Adventure is sometimes another word for frustrating. Flights can quickly be cancelled or changed. **SSG Smith-Banks** can be found reading her Kindle while we wait patiently. **Chaplain Hayes** always packs a few theological books and enjoys checking out the bazaars for rare finds of antiquity.

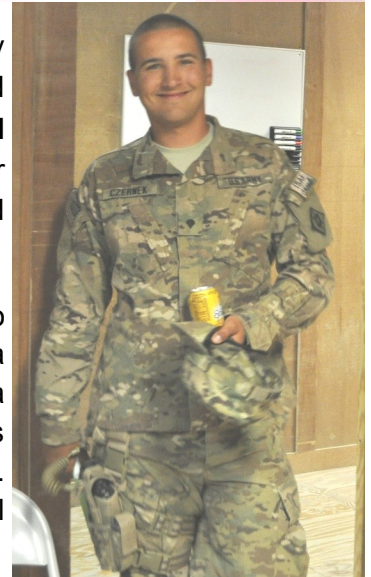
While we greatly miss our families and friends, we feel very much needed here and involved in ministering to our soldiers in the brigade. It really does become a family and it must be for our time in Afghanistan. We really appreciate your continued interest and prayers on our behalf. God's blessings upon you.





The Command Group has hit the ground and is busy flying from place to place to meet as many units and Soldiers as possible. While **COL Paolozzi** and **CSM Clark** are circulating the battlefield, **LTC Drew**, our new DCO hailing most recently from Ft Leonard Wood, and **LTC Gaffney** keep the staff in line.

After working hard all day, **SSG Flaherty** gets to go home to some ocean-front property and relax for a few hours before having to wake up early and go on a pleasant run with the commander. Congratulations go out to newly promoted **SGT Wilson** and his family. **SPC Czernek's** new NCO keeps him running at all hours.



HHC

Greetings from Eastern Afghanistan from everyone at the company, we are excited to be a part of Task Force Sword supporting the mission of the International Joint Command. With a month gone by, we have only 11 months remaining to make tangible difference with our Afghan counterpart and to impart the skill necessary for them to be successful after our departure. Thus far, for the most of us this deployment has been a great experience. Soldiers are eager to engage their assigned duties head on and we are very fortunate to be here at this stage of the conflict.

Let me address concerns about your spouse's quality of life and safety. Depending on where you are station in Afghanistan, there is a wide range of quality of life and safety issues unique to every duty station. It can range from living in tents eating MRE three times a day to living in brick building with catered meals at the dining facility. For the most part, our Soldiers at Bagram, Sharana, and Kabel are lucky in that they have pretty much everything they need. Although I have not had the opportunity to visit the outlying stations, it is my understanding that the four Soldiers located in RC-N are the most spartan in the company. Although the brigade's mission covers the North Eastern half of Afghanistan, the company's foot print is extremely small in Sharana where majoring of our Soldiers are located. It takes four minutes to walk to the cafeteria, the PX, laundry point, gym, USO, chapel, Green Bean Coffee Shop, DVD store, or the barber shop. The dining facility serves a variety of healthy choices to include a fresh salad bar with every lunch and dinner meals. The PX also offers a variety of household items similar to a very robust convenient store and which eases some of the burden of transition. The USO offers wireless internet, free phones, TV, and gaming for those who chose to partake. Thanks to **CPT Watts** initiative and hard work, the commercial internet is up and running. So far, the morale of the Soldiers is good. As Soldiers become more familiar with their surroundings, they will be able to reach out and participate in more activities. Recently, the EOD team around the corner had a 5K fun run event and fundraiser for their memorial foundation. Many of those participated were Sword Soldiers from this company. The bottom line is the quality of life in Sharana is above average by deployment standards and we are by no means living off rations and sleeping on cots.

Last month, the following warriors were promoted in theater: First Lieutenant **Jeffrey Johnson** to Captain, SGT **Donald Keeney** to Staff Sergeant, Specialist **Michael Wilson** to Sergeant, and Private E2 **Eric Jenkins** to Private First Class. There is nothing more memorable for those who are selected and promoted in deployed conditions. Promotion will occur on a monthly basis and we are looking forward to the next round of promotion in July. Feel free to address questions you may have with concerning your spouse via the Family Readiness Leader and CPT **Judy Steele** back at Tompkins Barrack. We are all doing well and looking forward to a productive year ahead.

MEDO



The surgeon section is settling in nicely in Afghanistan. In between Green Bean coffee smoothies and running endless amounts of cable for the civilian internet we've been able to improve the overall health of the brigade using our in-depth working knowledge as Excel ninjas. **CPT Johnson**, recently promoted, is also quickly adjusting to his new rank. Under the mentorship of his fellow captains he has quickly learned how to delegate his workload to **SSG Simison** but at the same time seem busier and even more important following the promotion. Even **CPT Watts** is learning new and innovative ways to accomplish the mission, as long as his wife tells him that it is ok in advance. Meanwhile the only productive member of the team, **Dr. Leckie**, has used his wisdom and ruggedly (some have said brutally) handsome features to cure illness and disease throughout the land, or at least inside the special staff. His expertise will be sorely missed as he travels back to San Angelo in August. Good luck and safe travels to **Dr. Leckie** as he travels back to Texas, the bosom of Army Medicine that we all miss so much... Thanks again to our families that continue to stock us with coffee and baked goods. We miss you all and hope to see you again soon.



The 18th Engineer Brigade FRG recently hosted their first post-deployment event at The Patrick Henry Village Bowling & Family Entertainment Center. It was a

Free Pizza and Bowling night out, and more than 75 Family members turned out to get together for some food, fun, and good information. There was a speaker who came by to give an important presentation on OP-SEC to start off the evening, and then it was out to go bowling. "The bowling party was a good idea. Our family had a blast, and if you want to do it again, just let us know!" said **SGT Bogacz**. The next big event the FRG is working on will be coming up in August, when they will be putting on a Back-to-School Bash. It will be an education focused event, both for the parents and the children, with a lot of community agencies participating. Hopefully all the area Families will be able to come by!

The FRG would like to make sure they are in communication with all of the Families, whether they are in Germany or elsewhere. If you would like to make sure the FRG has your most current contact information and they know how to reach out to your Family, please contact the FRG leader, **Susan Hayes**, at: frg18thengi-needbde@yahoo.com, or the Brigade FRSA, **Shannon Nevinger**, at: shannon.nevinger@eur.army.mil.

Welcome to the newest little members of the 18th Engineer Brigade!

Katelyn Bogacz

DOB: 08 June 2011

Weight: 7 pounds, 14 oz

Length: 19.5 inches

Milia Vivian Myers

DOB: 21 July 2011

FRSA

PHOTOS



