

# THE SWORD AND CASTLE

VOLUME I, ISSUE III

JANUARY 2012



## Task Force Sword



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Happy New Year from all of the Soldiers in the BDE S-1 section! The coming of the New Year has brought about many changes for our section. Right around New Year's Eve we gained a new section NCOIC, **SFC Shannon Huntsman**. She came to us from TF Red Devils, which is otherwise known as the 7<sup>th</sup> EN BN out of Fort Drum, NY. In the short time she has been with us, she has become an invaluable leader for our Soldiers. Around the same time, we also gained **SPC Michael Grimes** of the 578<sup>th</sup> EN BN out of southern California, **SPC Jose Caldera** of the 111<sup>th</sup> EN BN out of the great State of Texas, and **SGT Jason Donaldson**, who came from the rear element at Tompkins Barracks. They have all integrated themselves into the section and have become an integral addition to the team.

**1LT Mary Wong** finally arrived from Germany, where she served as the 565<sup>th</sup> EN BN S-1. She is in the process of settling in and being brought up to speed on all of the tasks and missions the S-1 is currently executing. In about a week, she will assume the role as the 18<sup>th</sup> EN BDE S-1 OIC/Adjutant.

Although my time here has been short, it has been a great experience and the feelings of disappointment of not able to see the mission through to the end of the deployment with this section are tempered by the knowledge that my Soldiers will be led by such a capable Officer. For the Families of the 18<sup>th</sup> EN BDE FRG, know that your loved ones are very successfully executing a very difficult mission in an austere environment. You should be extremely proud of them and let them know it when you get the chance. For the men and women of the S-1 section, thank you for all of your hard work and the long hours you have put into execute our mission. I look forward to seeing each of you when we are all back in Germany next summer. **CPT Pierce**

Winter is now in full swing and there is even snow on the ground as the unit enters into the second half of the deployment. The members of the S2 shop are still going at it full force and are ready to take on the entire Afghanistan footprint. Analyzing intelligence can be a tedious and boring endeavor, but you can find **SSG Lee** and **CPT Fraser** enriching their work environment by watching the latest films on their 42" flat screen TV after duty hours of course. The Terrain Team has been working diligently on bringing graphic representation to the battlefield in the form of their great looking maps, all the while finding ways to relax in their free time by manning guard tower number one. Nothing says fun like perimeter security!

On Christmas day **MAJ Shankle** and **SFC Rodriguez** came bearing gifts! **MAJ Shankle** delivered big portions of mashed potatoes at the dining facility. On that day as you walk through the serving line, you may have noticed he was standing at the serving line with a spoon dishing up the day's finest feast while forcing out a smile and a Merry Christmas to boot. When it is all said and done, the staff of the Sharana dining facility often boast you can expect a home served meal. **SFC Rodriguez** on the other hand wanted to look out for Santa Claus from tower one but was unsuccessful. On his Inaugural shift of tower guard **SFC Rodriguez** realized how beautiful a place FOB Sharana can be under the stars, at night, and through NVGs.

**SPC Ulmer**, and **SPC Easton**, could have been spotted in the 578<sup>TH</sup> EN BN's maintenance bay giving three non-operational, all terrain vehicles a full scale face lift. These two high speed Soldiers, playing the role of Doctor Frankenstein rebuilt three engines, bringing these sluggish monsters back to life!

**SGT Walter** embarked on a journey to Bagram Airfield to compete in the NCO of the quarter competition, he is actually competing right now and will be presumably winning the competition, bringing home the gold and honoring the S2 section. Go Get'em **SGT Walter**!!!

**SSG Lee** has been actively engaged in taking college courses, thus made him one of the grumpiest bear in the cave.

After losing our CIDNE operator and All Source Analyst civilian contractors, the S2 shop has welcomed two great new addition to the team. Our new CIDNE operator **Timothy Zbaracki**, who was a former Air Force Captain and our All Source Analyst, **Thomas Clute** - a former Marine Corps Corporal. Welcome aboard guys!



The S3 Shop continues to stay busy even with the onset of colder weather. We also hit the 7 month gate of the deployment and marked it with picking up 2 Route Clearance Battalions in the Southern Engineering Region and an extensive series of base expansions in Ghazni. All of the Soldiers have been working hard to ensure that our subordinates get the best Brigade Support we can provide. We have also been able to get out and see the fruits of our labor and we took the opportunity to celebrate the holidays with our Sword family as well. We kicked several members of the S3 shop out to establish command and control nodes out to the build sites. **MSG Huber**, **CPT Bruning** and **MAJ Baim** packed their bags and headed to Aryan, Warrior and Ghazni respectively. Earlier in the month, several members of the shop headed out to swing hammers with the 1022nd EN CO and the 236th EN CO working on extensive projects in the Ghazni province. **SPC Reinzi**, R. perfected the art of cutting gusset plates while **CPT Sloan** tried her hand at the nail gun. The TOC made the most of the Christmas season. While there was still work to be done, the officers took shifts for the Soldiers for tower guard and let the Soldiers have a "low key" day in order to afford them the opportunity to communicate with their Families. Additionally the TOC held a holiday party and displayed their musical talents with "doot doots" otherwise known as a cardboard paper towel roll that Soldiers sing through. Everyone is working very hard and doing a great job. The S3 Shop wishes everyone a very happy new year and we are glad to say that we will be home this year!



As the Holiday Season is upon us, we find ourselves reflecting on the past 6 months and on our Family who have helped to keep our spirits up in so many significant ways. We value the Task Force Sword Family and know we couldn't accomplish this mission with such success, without you. We are staying very busy in the Property Book Office, over the past couple months, we said good bye to **CW3 Coltes**, the TF Dolch PBO and **CW2 Bonney**, the TF Gridley PBO and welcomed **Chief Lxtlahuac** (most of us just call her Chief X), from TF Red Devils; Chief X comes to us from Fort Drum, NY but she isn't a stranger to the 18<sup>th</sup> EN BDE, she used to be the PBO for 15<sup>th</sup> EN BN from 08-10 and **CW4 Rineberg**, the TF Mad Dog PBO out of sunny California. We have learned so many things over the past months, but the most important are the relationships we have built in order to support our Soldiers. TF Sword is not following in any path; we are making our own and building a trail that will lead the incoming units to success. We are moving at a fast pace, and plan to exert every bit of energy we have in supporting the Soldiers of TF Sword until the day we step on the plane home. Meanwhile, the Transportation Section would like to welcome the newest members of the 7th EN BN and 578th EN BN to the Section that "gets things moving". The Trans Section, which consists of **CW2 Reynolds**, **SFC Cheek**, **SSG Labastida**, **SGT Stephenson**, **SPC Rodriguez** and **SPC Rubio**, has been moving everything from heavy equipment to the smallest classes of supplies, all in support of TF Sword operations. They have done a phenomenal job at being Sword Magicians. **CW2 Reynolds** says, "No task is too big or too small. You call; we haul, and now let me get back to work".



During the past month the Maintenance Section has assisted the BDE in providing maintenance support to many construction projects at outlying areas that are currently being developed as well as areas that are already established. The maintenance section provided maintenance guidance to the incoming 578<sup>th</sup> EN BN to ensure a smooth handover from the outgoing unit (1249<sup>th</sup> EN BN). The maintenance section created a standard operating procedure to direct and provide standard procedures for all subordinate units to conduct maintenance. **PFC Cagle** (SAMS-2E Clerk) was promoted to SPC on 1 December 2011. His promotion was a significant event and reiterated his growth as a Soldier. The Brigade Maintenance Section will continue to provide maintenance support in the upcoming month to enhance the functionality of the Brigade to conduct engineer operations. The Service & Supply section would like to welcome **SGT Proctor** and **SFC Cervantes-Scott** to the team. Many congratulations are in order for **SGT Njoroge**, as he was promoted to sergeant and also welcomed a new baby son to the Sword Family, **Franklin Njoroge Jr.**, on 24 November 2011. The Budget Section has been diligently working at reducing the number of unpaid contracts throughout the Sword BDE, as well as contracting for TF Sword coins to present to Soldiers for their outstanding contribution to the Sword mission. Along with the Service & Supply Section, we've been working to get contracts to aide in the



Ghazni Province buildup, to ensure that our brothers and sisters have all the necessary tools they need to complete their mission. In addition, Sword Soldiers can get a good night's sleep thanks to the efforts of the budget section and all of CP-East in coordinating the contract, delivery, and transportation of mattresses to Soldiers throughout the TF Sword area of operation. The S4 wishes you a very happy Holiday Season and a New Year filled with harmony and prosperity.

It's been a hectic couple of months for PAO with **CPT Thomas Ryder** running around Afghanistan practicing his NCIS skills ... or so he says. When he's back here at FOB Sharana and the good idea fairy is not visiting him, he enjoys imitating "The Situation" on Jersey Shore.



**SPC David Huddleston** recently started college. Whatever free minutes he gets outside the office, if he's not hitting the books, he's hitting the gym preparing to show off his beach-body for a well deserved R&R trip to Hawaii!

**SGT Petrus** stays in the late almost every night. We're not sure if it's to work or just to watch re-run football games on ESPN. His hobby of the month is learning to tie knots—he's currently having trouble with distinguishing between the clove hitch and the constrictor knot.

Together this unstoppable, incredible, intelligent, and powerful team keeps the 18th Engineer Brigade Facebook page up and running—when the internet is working. If you not a fan yet, "like" us on Facebook to get all the updates from the 18th Engineer Brigade.



Hello everyone back home in Germany and all Family members back in the good ole US of A. Here in the world of signal, we have been working extremely hard to ensure Soldiers can communicate throughout Afghanistan. **SSG Soto** came back early this month from leave and at a good time because **SSG Staley** is home now with his wife enjoying a well deserved break. **SPC Jamison** also returned from leave; he took advantage for the R&R program and went to Australia and returned with good stories to tell and nice pictures that got everyone excited and wishing we all went to Australia. **SGT Carter** is in Kandahar working on setting up a few computers to help with the new mission coming up, he should have a chance to see his big brother who is also deployed in area of operations. **SGT Hamilton** and **PFC Rivera** are getting anxious to go on leave next month and so are we because they are the last ones to go one leave. This means when they come back we will only have less 3 months to go. **SGT Sinclair** is doing what he does best up in Bagram Airfield working hard. He will be returning to the promotion board in the next two months so he is studying hard to ensure he makes Signal Soldiers look good in this world of engineers. **SPC Janssen** should be on his way back from his leave and we hope he enjoyed his time with his Family. **MAJ Johnson** is leading the charge as always making sure all of us are getting the work done and doing fine.

We are all here counting down the days to get back home and see all of our loved ones again. Take care everyone and have a great new year. Always remember to "TALK HARD"!

Salutations from the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade S-7! Another month has come and gone and we are excited to be over the half way mark of this deployment. We remain intensely engaged in our mission and continue to provide top notch survey and design support throughout our area of operations. At this point, the S-7 has a presence in three different locations. **LTC Volkman**, **CPT Pasqualucci**, **SSG Taylor** and **SPC Johnson** are out conducting project management operations and managing building supplies for a major project. **SPC Vorous** and **SPC Michelini** are conducting a large scale survey in the north. **CW2 SanMiguel**, **SFC Young**, **SSG Bonello** and **SPC Finholt** are holding things down on FOB Sharana providing design support and ensuring the team has what it needs. **SGT Cooper** and **SPC Reyna** are enjoying a little R&R back in Germany and Texas.

Congratulations are in for **LTC Volkman** for his promotion from Major to Lieutenant Colonel. Big thank you goes out to **SSG Szambelan** who has returned to Germany to begin his transition out of the Army. **SSG Szambelan** was suppose to hang up his boots prior to this deployment but he extended in order to deploy with the team and set conditions for our success and the S7 shop is truly grateful for that.

We all miss home and our loved ones back there. We remain proud of what we are accomplishing here and look forward to completing what we started. Those of us who have not been home on R&R yet will be in the near future and we're exciting about that. Until next time rest assured in the fact that we are taking good care of one another. Swords Up! Stay Sharp!

**THE TEAM**

- **CPT Hendrickson**  
Brigade Judge Advocate
- **CPT Newman**  
Trial Counsel
- **SSG Nikolao**  
Senior Paralegal NCO
- **CPL Tobias**  
18th Engineer Brigade  
Paralegal NCO
- **SPC Chavarria**  
578th Engineer Battalion  
Paralegal
- **SPC Holland**  
111th Engineer Battalion  
Paralegal
- **SPC O'Reilly**  
7th Engineer Battalion  
Paralegal

Santa expressed his gratitude to **CPT Newman**, Brigade Trial Counsel, for her assistance in the production of this year's naughty list.



# SWORD LEGAL

## 18TH ENGINEER BRIGADE (TASK FORCE SWORD) - FOB SHARANA, AFGHANISTAN

SWORDS UP

STAY SHARP

### **WELCOME TO OUR SECOND ISSUE OF "SWORD LEGAL" FROM WONDERFUL FOB SHARANA!**

On behalf of the 18th Engineer Brigade Legal Section we wish all Soldiers and their families a Happy Holidays!! Being away from family on the holidays is a challenge, but the office still enjoyed a great holiday party and some down time.

Our spirits have been lifted by some of the great awards and accomplishments of the staff.

**CPL Tobias** was awarded a coin from TJAG for his outstanding efforts in the office. The coin was presented by the Brigade Commander on behalf of TJAG at the most recent brigade awards ceremony.



**SSG Nikolao** became the newest member of the Sgt Audie Murphy Club. Congratulations **SSG Niko**, keep up the good work!!

Congratulations to our Brigade Judge Advocate **CPT Hendrickson**, who was recently awarded his "Silver Spurs" by completing the Spur Ride. Do not let the picture fool you, he is all about getting the job done!



*Pictured: SSG Nikolao and CPT Hendrickson preparing to serve holiday meals for the Soldiers*

In other news!



We would like to welcome two new paralegals to the Sword legal team. **SPC Chavarria** with the 578th Engineer Battalion of Manhattan Beach California, and **SPC O'Reilly** with the



7th Engineer Battalion of Fort Drum New York. They have both been great additions to our team. We also send our condolences and regards to one of our paralegals, **SPC Holland** as her grandmother passed away recently.

## Chaplain

Dear Families:

A belated New Years Greetings from your Religious Support Team here on beautiful FOB Sharana, Afghanistan! It's pretty chilly with whiffs of snow in our part of the world. Of course, we were all happy to see the New year in since it puts us in the calendar year of our re-deployment. I'd like to give a special message of thanks to **Chaplain (CPT) Dmitri Kostyunin** who has served admirably as our Rear Detachment Chaplain. I personally appreciate his planning, coordination and teaching for our Strong Bonds Retreats for our families. He's one of the best! We will miss him but wish him God's best for he and his wife **Elena**. They return to the States where he serves as a prison chaplain in Florida. We will be talking with your Soldiers about healthy ways of redeploying in the months ahead and will do our best to get them in the best frame of mind possible. We do have Strong Bonds Retreats planned at the Edelweiss in Garmisch. These retreats for Families and Singles will occur later in August after block leave. **SSG Smith-Banks** is just coming back from R & R and I will join **Susan** for ours in a couple of weeks in Oregon. Though a year is a long time, the R & R break is really needed. You should be very proud of the hard work and long hours your soldiers are putting in. Progress is certain in this country. They are doing well and will be home with you soon. Please contact **Chaplain K** before he leaves if you have chaplain needs or why not just say 'thanks' for the work he has done? Take care

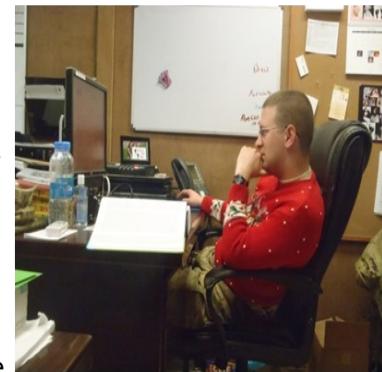


and look for us in the spring! God bless you all.

## Command Group

During the past month, the command group was quite lonely at times. **COL Paolozzi** and **SSG Flaherty** were on R&R, being reunited with loved ones. With the BDE CDR on R&R **LTC Drew**, our acting commander has had his hands full from attending conferences to signing personnel actions. **LTC Gaffney**, while enjoying the peace and quiet around the office was still battling the staff to ensure standards and timelines were met. **1LT Lotspeich** was transferred out west to FOB Warrior, shaming as the brigade LNO. Although **CSM Clark** has been out of the office on battlefield circulation motivating our troops, he has stolen newly promoted Staff Sergeant from the Technical Headquarters Section, **SSG Kevin Gibson**. Many of his fellow coworkers were jealous about his departure, for we have stolen the Brigade NCO of the Quarter. With a new job come new responsibilities, from mastering Zuma to making coffee which **SPC Czernek** has spent diligent hours teaching him. During inclement weather, **SSG Gibson** and **SPC Czernek**, the lone cowboys of Command Group spent hours on the phone and the PAX terminals trying to get everyone where they needed to be. But in the end, we all enjoyed our PT in 8 degree weather.

It's the holidays and the hard-charging Soldiers of the brigade medical section continue to enjoy themselves in the spirit of the season. **CPT Johnson** has limited his time running outdoors due to the significant drop in temperature. Being from California, he was caught unawares by this phenomenon called "winter." True he experienced it in Germany, but in his ignorance he thought it was just a European thing. **SSG(P) Simison**, recently returned from R&R, has spent his days convincing everybody that he never left. Whether he is attempting to take another leave period later or simply in the first stage of grief, it is difficult to get him to recognize this ridiculous denial. We all hope his impending promotion to SFC cures him of this grief and



allows him to embrace FOB Sharana once again as home. **CPT Watts** was accepted into Radiology residency at BAMC in San Antonio, which has caused him to start wearing spurs and boots, calling people buckaroos, and incessantly talking about his ranch in the country. Not being a true member of the cavalry like **CPT Johnson** and **SSG Simison**, he has become utterly intolerable. All in all the section continues to take care of each other on this vacation

in the true Family spirit of Christmas.



Happy Holidays from the men and women of HHC! We certainly hope everyone had a wonderful holiday vacation. As for us, being deployed away from Families during these special times are always difficult. With the help of the folks at the Ross Toles Dining Facility here on Sharana, they mitigated this by going all out as far as putting together an awesome holiday meals for the Soldiers. Soldiers have also showed to be very creative in the way they decorate their offices to reflect the holiday spirit. Overall, the company is doing rather well with Soldiers engaged in various construction or route clearance mission across the battle space. One would be astonished at the level of performance they exhibits on a daily basis if you were to witness what they do. So I ask that everyone back home be extremely proud of what your Soldier is doing for the country of Afghanistan and our Nation.

In November, **SPC Volsky** won the Soldier of the Month board while **SPC Finholt** led the way in December. In January, the Brigade Soldier of the Quarter board was held in Bagram Airfield at which **SPC Goldenthal** was 5 points shy of bringing home the trophy while **SGT Walter** performed remarkably well. We are very proud of the two of them who represented HHC. In addition to the board, **1SG Roberts** participated in the BDE First Sergeant Conference with **CSM Clark** who organized the event. The conference included guest speakers from various outside agencies and leaders to address issues most pertinent to our formations. **1SG Roberts** also participated at the Forum and the company senior NCOs of **1SG Roberts** was engaged with **CSM Clark** with the 1SG Forum.

In December, **CPT Tsui** was able to relinquish the reigns to **1LT Cichorz** for two weeks while he went on R&R. **1LT Cichorz** ran the company in his absence and will be leaving for R&R at the end of January. As Soldiers are reassigned based on mission requirement, **MSG Wingfield** was dispatched to Bagram to assist with the team there. SGT Vergien took over as the new Operations NCO and is currently doing a great job. During the month of January, **2LTHamilton** was promoted to 1LT and **SSG Nikolao** was promoted to SFC.

We also want to give our big congrataulate to SSG Hinson and SSG Smith on getting married this month. They are both currently on R&R with their husband. Other news, **1LT Cichorz**, **SSG Becker**, **SGT Vergien**, **SPC Palmer**, **SPC Johns**, and **SPC Goldenthal** were awarded Combat Action Badge while in support of a named operation. **SPC Palmer** and **SPC Rajczak** were reassigned to support route clearance mission in the north and has been away from the company since the beginning of December. They were excited about the mission since they have opportunity to practice and refine their MOS skills.

We are very proud of all our Soldiers and their continued effort to perform and do well no matter what tasks they are assigned. I hope this newsletter finds all Family members in good health and spirit. Feel free to address questions you may have concerning your spouse via the Family Readiness Leader and **CPT Judy Steele** at Tompkins Barrack. We are all doing very well and look forward to a productive second half ahead. On behalf of the men and women of HHC, we appreciate your being Army Strong!



# PHOTOS



# PHOTOS



# PHOTOS

