

1ST ENGINEER BATTALION



**TASKFORCE DIEHARD:
THE DEPLOYMENT IN PHOTOS**

The Anti-Vehicular Ditch and Berm Project





Taskforce Dichard: The Deployment in Photos 3

Ist EN BN HISTORY

The 1st Engineer Battalion is the oldest and most decorated engineer battalion in the United States Army, tracing its history back to 1846 when they served in both the Mexican War and the Civil War. During the Spanish-American War, elements of the battalion deployed to Cuba and the Philippines.

With the start of World War I, the 1st Engineer Battalion was expanded to form the 1st Engineer Regiment and assigned to the 1st Infantry Division. In World War II, the battalion took part in the North African landings and invasions of Sicily and Normandy.

The battalion deployed to Vietnam with the 1st Infantry Division in 1965. For five years they engaged in combat engineer support of the Big Red One and III Corps.

In 1990, the battalion deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. In 2002, the battalion deployed to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, supporting the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and the 1st Marine Division. From September 2006 to December 2007, the battalion deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, clearing over 1900 IEDs from main and alternate supply routes in Multi National Division – North.

The Diehard Battalion is now completing its third deployment in the Global War on terror. The 41st Clearance Company deployed to Afghanistan in July of 2009 and is now redeploying home to Fort Riley. HHC, FSC, IIIrd Sapper Company, and 573rd Clearance Company deployed to Iraq in November of 2009, and will redeploy to Fort Riley and White Sands Missile Range. The 72nd Mobility Augmentation Company will serve a full twelve months in Iraq and redeploy in November of 2010.

The 1st Engineer Battalion continues to serve our country in the proud tradition of the many Diehards of years gone by. Our colors, heavy with battle streamers, are a proud testimony to our continued dedication to the defense of America.

“NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT, NO SACRAFICE TOO GREAT—
DUTY FIRST!
ALWAYS FIRST!”
DIEHARD!



TASKFORCE DIEHARD ACHIEVEMENTS

Task Force Diehard consisted of the 1st Engineer Battalion HHC, FSC, 111th Sapper Company, 72nd Mobility Augmentation Company, and 573rd Clearance Company. This task force provided combat engineering support throughout USD-N, including the Iraqi Army (IA), three Brigade Combat Teams, and the Iraqi Police. Over 590 Soldiers in Task Force Diehard (TFDH) accomplished all of their major objectives without a casualty while deployed to Iraq in support of OIF 09-10. TFDH contributed significantly to many Lines of Effort (LOE) which included Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) Development, Assured Mobility, General Engineering, and Reconstruction. These efforts significantly improved the self reliance of the Iraqi Security Forces, the overall security environment, and force protection and quality of life for U.S. Forces.

ISF Development was the main effort for the 1st Engineer Battalion, a pivotal part of enabling a strong and sovereign Iraq. Partnership activities included staff training and mentorship, logistics systems training, NCO Development and general construction, route clearance, and bomb disposal, at all levels. The primary staff trained and advised their counterparts; platoon leaders and platoon sergeants conducted joint route clearance patrols; medics conducted combat lifesaver training and junior NCOs and Soldiers worked closely with their partners and coached them in marksmanship, physical training, maintenance, risk management, and problem solving, allowing the unit to eventually hand over the Regiments to the Iraqi Army to run missions independently without the help of U.S. Forces.

From the Transfer of Authority Ceremony in December 2009, TFDH began to work with the Field Engineer Regiments to allow them to become fully mission capable and completely independent. The Task Force continued an established 24/7 presence at the command post of both Field Engineer Regiments. These Engineer Military Transition Teams (e-MiTTs), were based at the posts of the respective IA FERs (K1 and COL Spider). These e-MiTTs were embedded with the FERs, providing training in battle tracking, planning, targeting, and command and control. Having these dedicated teams of experienced engineers greatly accelerated the development of the 12th and 4th Field Engineer Regiments into fully functional Engineer units. In Kirkuk, the 72nd Mobility Augmentation Company and a newly formed horizontal construction platoon from the 573rd Clearance Company conducted extensive individual and collective training and joint missions. The joint TOC there coordinated EOD response, and reconnaissance missions independently; the 12th Field Engineer Regiment established an initial operating capability in each of these areas, and upon receipt of additional critical equipment will demonstrate equal or better capability. To support this partnership effort, the Forward Support Company conducted hundreds of Combat Logistic Patrols covering 55,000 kilometers in support of partnership operations.

At COL Spider in Tikrit, the 4th Field Engineer Regiment made great strides in both independent route clearance patrols and EOD response to their Division's Area of Operations. By January 2010, the 4th Field Engineer Regiment was conducting at least 4 independent route clearance patrols per week along with one joint patrol with the 573rd Engineer Company providing over watch and feedback before, during and after each joint patrol. The 4th Field Engineer Regiment also continued work on a ditch digging project to protect an oil pipeline near Bayji.

In early March 2010, Iraq held its first Parliamentary Elections in five years. Task Force Diehard's emphasis on partnership, combined with the meticulous planning and coordination, influenced the Iraqi Army Field Engineer Regiments to execute a vital role in preparation for and during the elections, and as a result, the Field Engineer Regiments provided excellent Route Clearance, EOD, and Quick Reaction Force support to the Salah ah Din and Kirkuk Provinces. These joint route clearance patrols proved invaluable in keeping the Main Supply

Routes and Alternate Supply Routes open for traffic as the local populace traveled to polling sites. The democratic process continued unhampered due to these patrols throughout the election period.

As the Battalion moved into an advise and assist role with each of the Field Engineer Regiments, the training, time, effort and operational experience that 72nd and 573rd provided to the ISF was able to shine through as the Field Engineer Regiments continued to conduct independent patrols. The professionalism of both companies fostered a close partnership with the commanders and Soldiers of both Field Engineer Regiments. The foundation of training allowed the Field Engineer Regiments to become fully operationally capable in general engineering, route clearance and EOD response.

TFDH controlled over 800 patrols with over 125,000 kilometers of roads cleared mitigating 17 IEDs and clearing 5 UXOs through effective targeting. 1st Engineer Battalion coordinated over 60 joint route clearance patrols with the 4th and 12th Field Engineer Regiments and created a fully integrated targeting process. As a direct result of their efforts, both the 4th and 12th Field Engineer Regiments are able to execute many of the Assured Mobility and General Engineering missions that the battalion had been executing in the past.

Task Force Diehard also contributed to the successful elections in the Kirkuk, Salah ad Din, and Ninewa Provinces through both General Engineering and Assured Mobility. The task force planned and coordinated the construction of six checkpoints for the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DiBs) in Kirkuk. Due to TFDH's effective coordination with multiple echelons, units, and agencies, the work, in support of the Ready First BCT, was completed in just twenty-four days. The battalion also planned and coordinated the construction of the Kirkuk Combined Coordination Center, providing the infrastructure for a joint TOC.

Task Force Diehard was able to contribute to both the Assured Mobility LOE and the General Engineering LOE with the help of a topographic team. Topographic engineers allowed the commander, companies, and staff of TFDH the ability to visualize the battlefield, and played a large role in decision making.

In a supporting effort, the battalion conducted Assured Mobility operations in the assigned Area of Operations. These efforts were extensive and successful in providing freedom of movement to U.S. Forces. The 72nd, 111th, and 573rd Engineer Companies conducted over 900 targeted route clearance patrols during the reporting period, clearing over 125,000 kilometers on main and alternate supply routes in USD-N. Over 20 IEDs, Improvised Rocket Launchers, Mines, Anti-Armor IEDs, and UXOs were cleared by their patrols. The key to this success was continued enemy-focused pattern analysis coupled with near constant presence in patterned Targeted Areas of Interest at the right time.

In order to support the General Engineering Line of Effort, Team Blacksheep, which encompassed Forward Support Company, along with teams from every company in the 1st Engineer Battalion, was assigned the mission of building a 57 kilometer Ditch near the Syrian border. The Blacksheep seamlessly integrated elements from six different companies into one team, and then did a tremendous job of working in austere conditions as the unit pulled security while completing the ditch in forty-three days.

As a majority of the Diehard Battalion returns home to its Families, our Soldier and leaders recognize that our 72nd Engineer Company continues with the vital route clearance mission on MSR Tampa. We thank the 72nd for their professionalism and dedication as they conduct their combat operations, and we look forward to welcoming them home in November.

Always First.

Diehard.

TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

12 DECEMBER 2009





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HHC, FSC & 573rd Patch Ceremonies





72nd Patch Ceremony

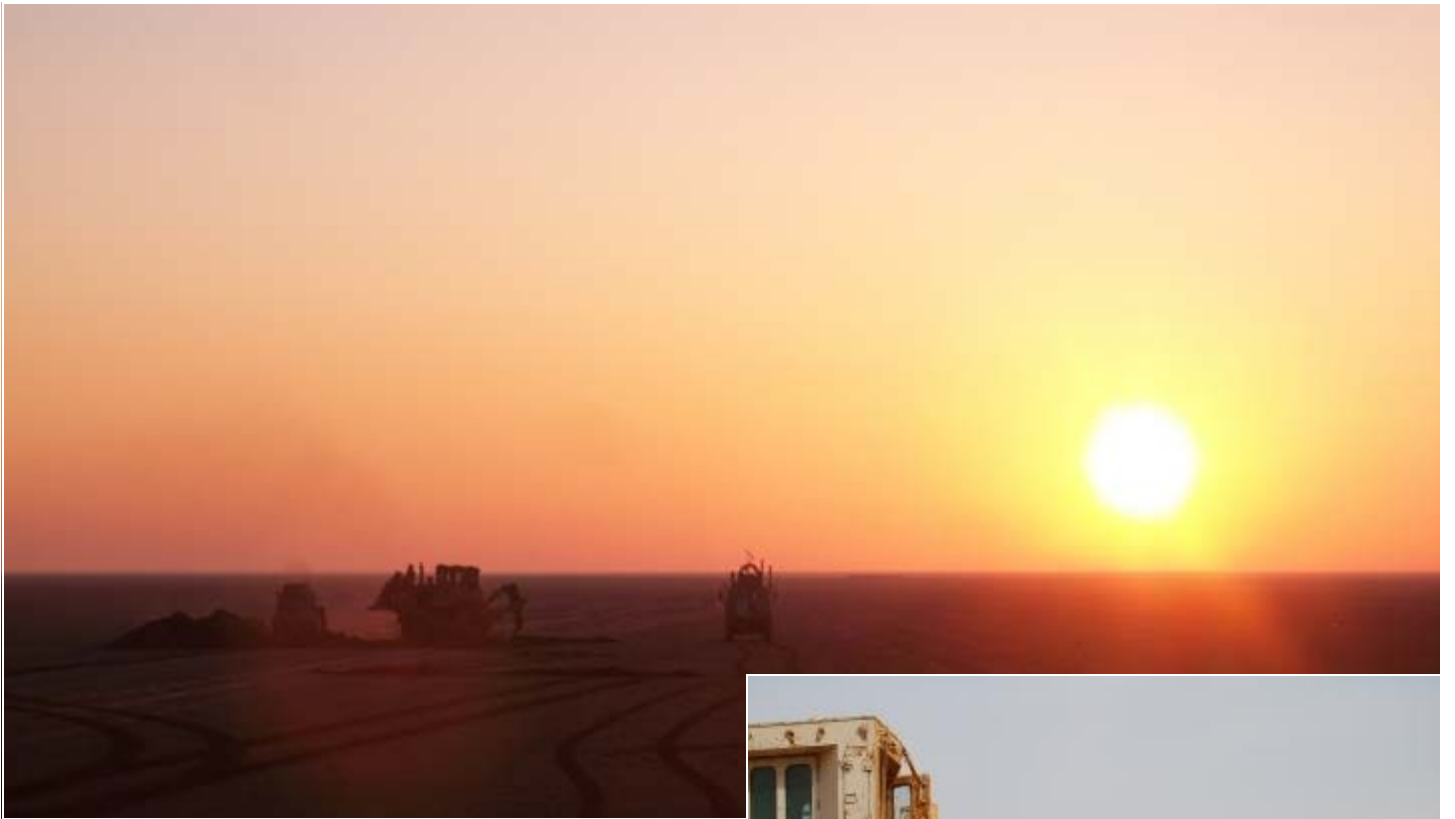


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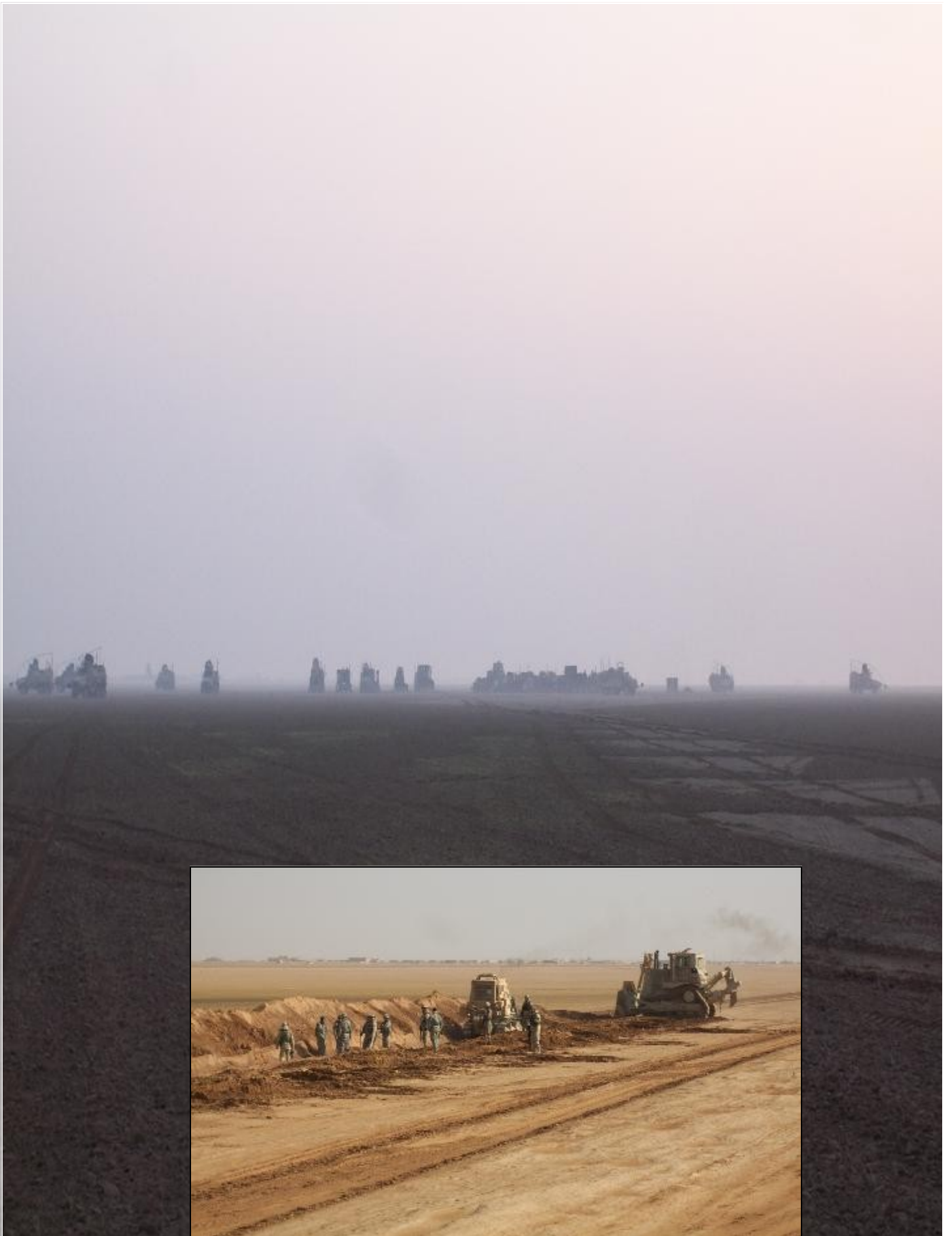


Requiem
for
a
Hero

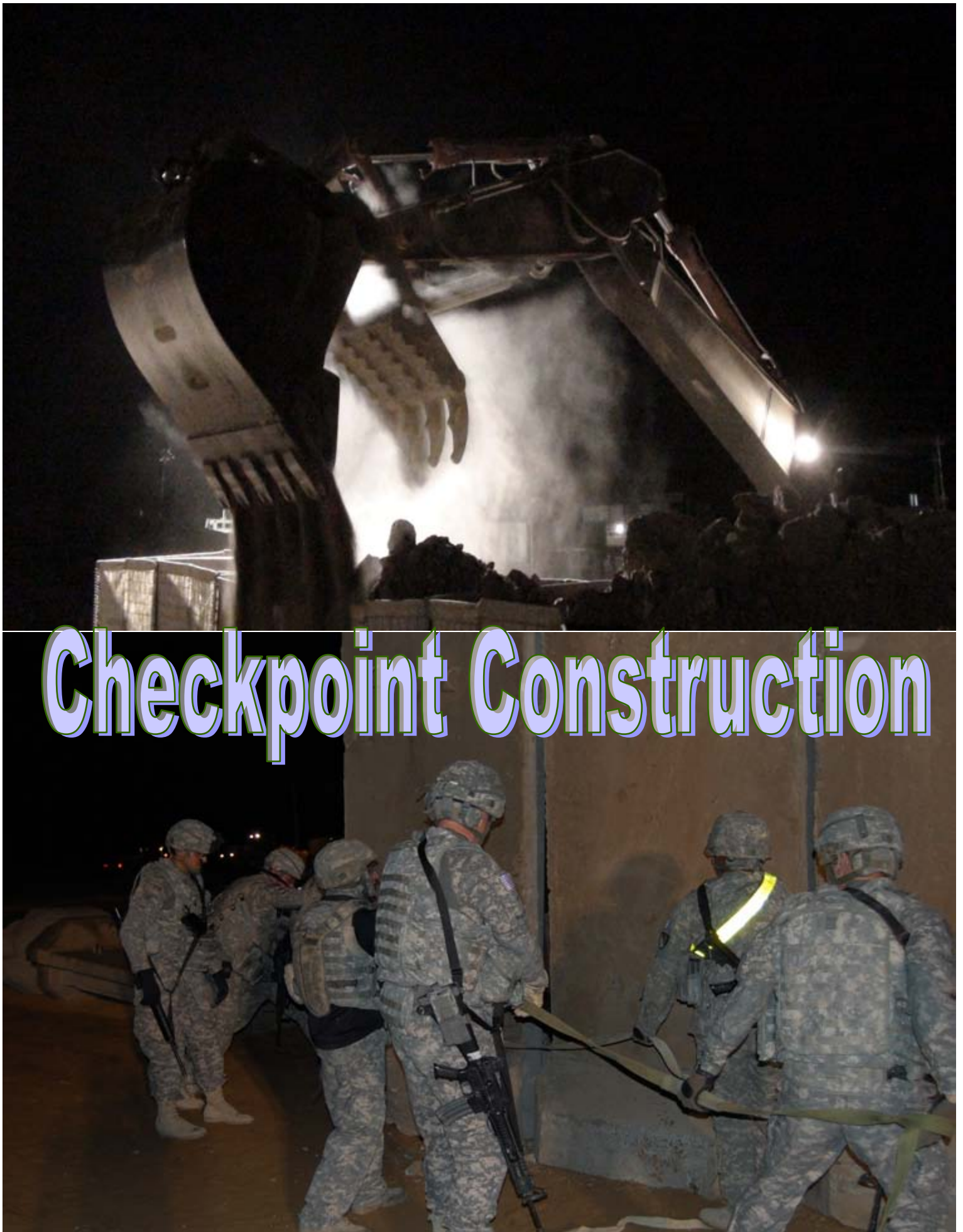




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Checkpoint Construction



Taskforce Diehard: The Deployment in Photos 17

*COL Spider Christmas
Dinner*





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Partnership



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4th Field Engineer Regiment



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12th Field Engineer Regiment





Donation Drop





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Two Governors visit the Battalion





Culvert Denial



ENGINEERS DENY ENEMY ACCESS FOR IED PLACEMENT

By Sgt. Chad D. Nelson,

135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 3rd Infantry Division PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING SITE

MAREZ, Iraq –On a humid, overcast spring day in Iraq, six trucks driven by the combat engineers of 3rd Platoon, 573rd Clearance Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, 130th Engineer Brigade, roll down a main supply route, scanning the sides of the road for their next mission. Just a few years ago, improvised explosive devices riddled roads like these, threatening the safety of U.S. service members and Iraqi civilians.

While still dangerous, these roads are now relatively safer. This is due, in part, to the efforts of previously deployed engineer brigades denying access to culverts – tubes that run underneath roads, which allow water to flow. Violent extremists used these culverts in the past to hide IEDs, resulting in the deaths of servicemembers and civilians. U.S. Army engineers effectively denied access to these culverts, but they did so hastily in order to quell the threat as quickly as possible. In their haste to protect fellow servicemembers and innocent civilians, the engineers often installed denial systems that stopped the water flow through the culvert. This was the case with 3rd platoon's most recent mission. A large Hesco barrier filled with earth – surrounded by concertina wire and barbed wire – completely blocked the culvert, reducing the water flow to a mere trickle.



“The Hesco was very effective, but it was hasty,” said 1st Lt. Matthew O’Shea, platoon leader, 3rd Plt., 1st Eng. Bn., 130th Eng. Bde. “It definitely worked but ... it’s causing flooding.”

To improve water flow and decrease flooding in the area, the engineers brought an arsenal of tools to combat this project. A high mobility engineer excavator first ripped the Hesco barrier to pieces and pushed the mountains of dirt away from the culvert. Once exposed, the culvert presented a new

challenge: earth and tar plugged the hole.

The engineers used everything they had to clear the dirt and tar. The sound of shovels, jackhammers and a cement saw pierced the humid air as cars raced by on the nearby highway. Large globs of oily, putrid tar mixed with mud and dirt came out in awkward clumps as the engineers took turns on the excavation project. Sweaty, exhausted and covered in tar and mud, the Soldiers took turns digging, encouraging their comrades.

“We need to clear this out to allow free water flow of the culvert,” said 1st Lt. O’Shea. A small streambed wandered away from the culvert and traveled off into the distance, leading to possible farmlands. “People can start to use the drainage for irrigation.”

While the threat of IED placement is lower than in the past, the threat still exists and the engineers must deny access to the concrete tubes that run underneath the road while still allowing water flow. They accomplish this one of two ways: constructing and installing a grate or placing a new, specifically designed “Lapeer kit.”

The hope for the mission was to use the new Lapeer kits. The kit is pre-fabricated and completely covers the culvert. Holes are large enough to allow water to flow, but small enough to deny access to the tube. Bright purple in color, the kit looks like it would belong in a carnival or children’s museum instead of on the side of an Iraqi road protecting Soldiers and Iraqi civilians from IED blasts. While the kits and grates are equally effective at denying access to culverts, the kits are far more efficient to install, according to 1st Lt. O’Shea.



After hours of digging, pounding and sawing their way through the tar and muck, the engineers discovered the tube was too small to support the Lapeer kit. The engineers have the capability to weld on site. A small trailer, pulled by their Mine-Resistant, Ambush Protected vehicle, acts as a portable welding station and the tractor-trailer, which hauls the HMEE Excavator, holds the metal needed for the job. Still hoping to capitalize on the efficiency of the Lapeer kit, the engineers tried to widen the tube further so that the kit could fit. After attempting this for more than an hour, the platoon leader decided to take measurements of the culvert and fabricate the grate at the engineer’s motor pool on Contingency Operating Base Speicher.

“Pre-fabricating means better quality and stronger welds,” said 1st Lt. O’Shea. Normally, the engineers recon the site and take measurements so they can pre-fabricate before going to the site. This was impossible for this site, as the Hesco barrier denied all access – even to the engineers’ measuring tapes.

After a hasty denial system consisting of a huge pile of dirt was in place, the engineers headed home to construct the grate, and an already long day turned even longer. It took hours to construct, but the resulting grate was very effective: a large square of iron covered horizontally by iron rebar. The bars are less than six inches apart, denying access to the culvert but allowing large amounts of water to flow through uninter-

rupted.

Local Iraqis often come by to thank the engineers for their work after a project like this, but none were present on this day. However, the Soldiers needed no thanks. The knowledge of a job well done was more than enough for these Soldiers. They installed grates on both sides of the road in less than four hours, which is quicker than expected, according to Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Preski, 3rd Platoon sergeant, 573rd Clearance Co., 1st Eng. Bn., 130th Eng. Bde.

While this project may seem finished, the engineers will return to this site and other culverts they have denied to make sure no one tampers with them. They will also be refitting and improving additional culvert denial systems that previous engineers have hastily emplaced – no less than 20 projects. During the height of the war in Iraq, engineers placed countless hasty denial systems. Now, as U.S. troops prepare to withdraw from Iraq, they take special care to leave things right, to leave things as they found them. In this case, they are leaving things improved – offering an opportunity for irrigation while still protecting citizens from danger.



HHC



Speicher

HAMMER



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FSC



Speicher

BLACKSHEEP





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111TH SAPPER



Diamondback

ASSASSINS



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41ST EN CO



Afghanistan

BULLDAWGS



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72ND MAC



Warrior/Speicher

COLD STEEL





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573RD



Speicher
OUTLAWS





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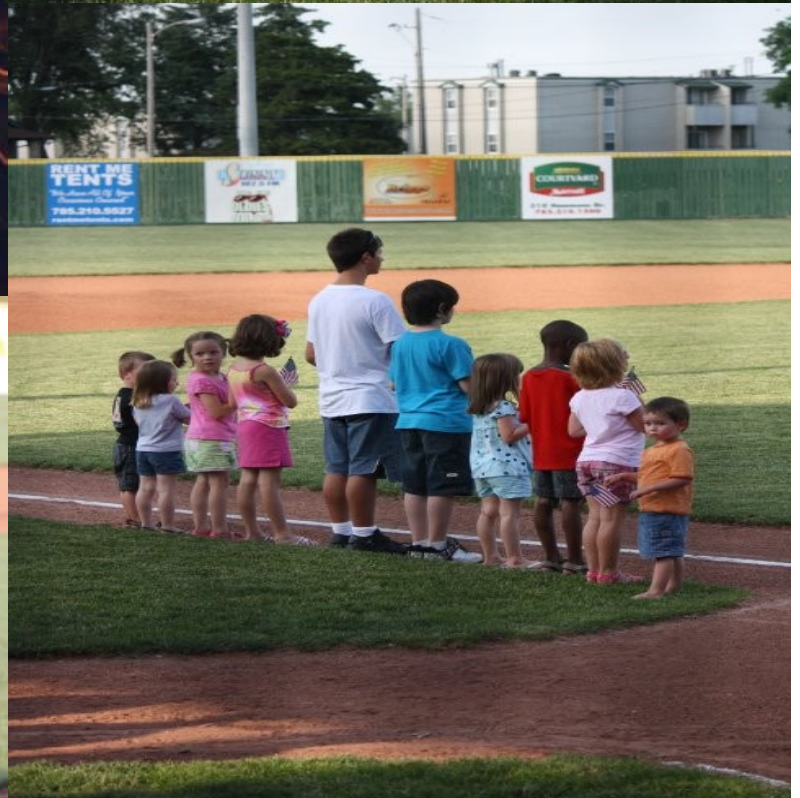
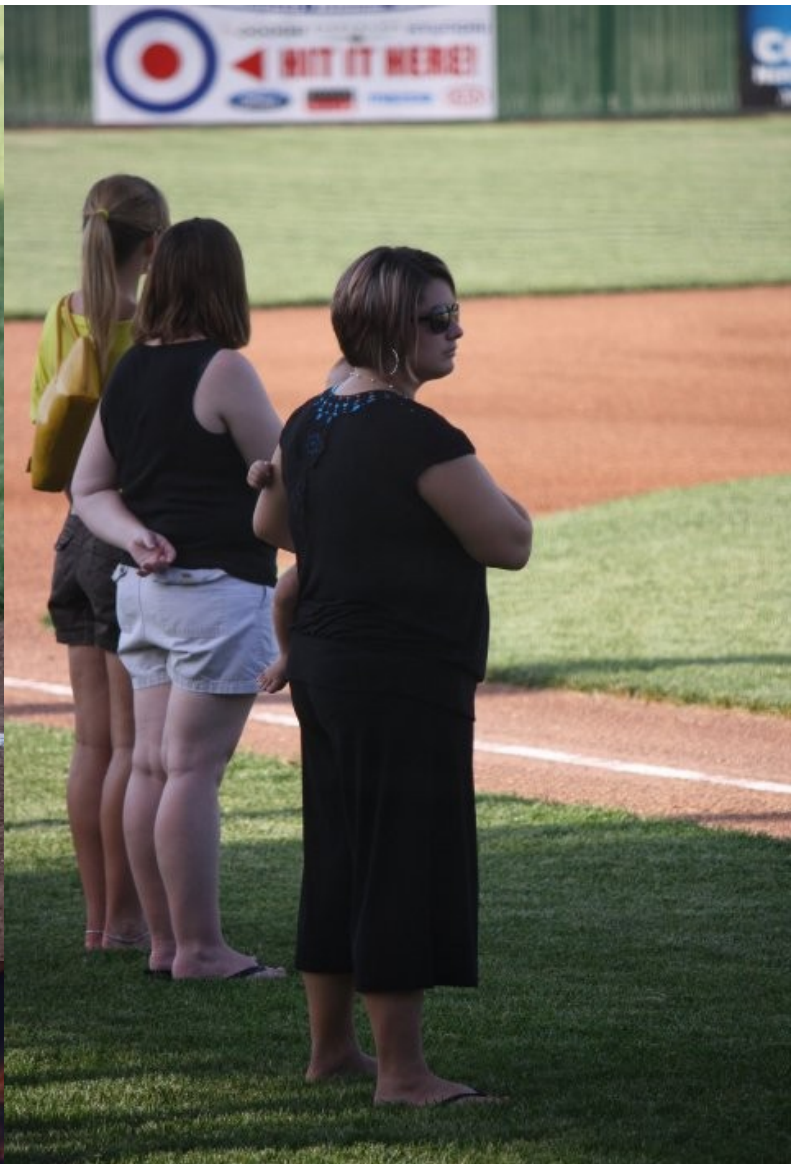


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Our Heroes at Home





Taskforce Diehard: The Deployment in Photos 49



Taskforce Diehard: The Deployment in Photos 50

Retiring of the EN Flag in Badgerville, COB Speicher. The EN Flag, which has flown over Badgerville since the beginning of the war, was taken down to represent the end of Taskforce Trailblazer.



