



# Lumberjack Ledger

## Lumberjack 6

07 FEB 07 Greetings to All from Camp Liberty!

Volume 1, Issue 2



The battalion remains very busy building and fighting to support eight different brigade combat teams in the Baghdad area. Each day, platoons and squads are out repairing roads, emplacing concrete protective barriers, repairing electrical wiring, filling HESCO bastions, building vehicular obstacles, cleaning up debris, hauling construction materials, building guard towers and living areas, and executing other engineer tasks. It is really amazing to see the battalion fully equipped and out doing missions independently and with the brigade combat teams. I remember just a year ago when we had not even had the activation ceremony, let alone started the collective training plan for deployment. I am receiving messages from former Soldiers of the battalion voicing their support and asking about current operations; I recommend that everyone visit <http://www.20thEngineers.com>, a website maintained by COL (R) Bruce Porter, a former commander of the 20th Engineer Battalion. The Lumberjacks are seen everyday throughout the city doing great work to assist in clearing the neighborhoods of insurgents and retaining a coalition force presence, while transferring control to Iraqi forces. I am very proud of the work that this battalion is doing in Baghdad. We are at the tip of the Army's spear and at the cutting edge of Engineer Transformation. Something truly historic is going on here! A unit has formed from three separate posts to create an engineer battalion unlike any other. When I see the company guidons adorned with the campaign streamers of past wars, I know that the Soldiers are walking in the boot prints of greatness.

This is important work. Great plans rest their foundations on the engineers completing their missions. Our Soldiers are making a huge impact on success or failure. Please continue to support them as they strive to win a victory for coalition forces here in Iraq. I have been impressed with the efforts of the Family Readiness Group and the Rear Detachment to take care of the families and needs of the deployed Soldiers. The Soldiers in this battalion may wear three different shoulder patches depending on what company they are assigned to, but we are all united by our will to win a victory in Iraq, and by our fond thoughts of those we have left back in the United States of America.

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## Lumberjack 9

4 As we have entered the year 2007 the Soldiers of the Lumberjack Battalion continue to do great things every day. There is an air of confidence in the Soldiers' walk and talk because they are getting better and better at their task and abilities. I am truly proud of what the Soldiers are doing for the people of Iraq and fellow American Units.

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7 As Soldiers go on rest and recuperation leave they are enjoying the time spent with their families and friends. It is important to remember to be safe in all that we do whether here in country or at home with our families. Everyone plays a major part in the success of the Lumberjack Battalion and we cannot afford to lose anyone to a needless accident. We appreciate the tremendous work that the families are doing to support their Soldiers and the battalion as a whole. I would like to personally thank the rear detachment for their unending support and particularly SFC Kent for her outstanding contributions as the Rear Detachment NCOIC.

“Build and Fight”

# DIABLO

This month I want to start something new with the HHC portion of this news letter. Instead of me, the company commander rambling, I want use this forum to spotlight some of our Soldiers. I will continue to keep you updated on special activities we have been involved with, recent promotions, and changes of duty. But the bulk of this space will be written by Soldiers. One thing I would like to mention, is every Soldier currently in HHC is authorized to wear the 36<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade Patch on their right shoulder if they did not already have a combat patch from previous deployments.

There were a few changes in the HHC this month. We welcome **SSG Radke** from 510<sup>th</sup> and say goodbye to **SFC Karneke** who switched places in the battalion. We also said goodbye to **1LT Lao** who is now a platoon leader in the 510<sup>th</sup>. In exchange, we welcome **1LT Petrie** who is currently working as the assistant S-4. We also want you to know that the quality of our healthcare in the battalion has been elevated to a new benchmark with the inclusion of **CPT Meece**. CPT Meece is our Physician Assistant and his presence will compliment the fine work already done by **SSG Huston** and the medics. Coincidentally, our first Soldier in the Spotlight is one of our battalion medics SPC Tucker.



*HHC welcomes CPT Bryan Meece, as our long awaited Physician Assistant. CPT Meece is coming to us from Ft. Riley, Kansas where he will re-deploy to upon completion of this tour. His wife and six children are also still back in Kansas*



*SSG Radke, hard at work in the S3 Shop.*

*SPC Tucker is from Tallahassee, Florida. She has been in the Army since May 2005. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation Services with a concentration in Substance Abuse and Mental Health from Florida State University (2004). She is married to Matwanziek Tucker, and they reside in Killeen.*



"I am a Health Care Specialist, better known as a Combat Medic. This is my first enlistment, and my first overseas deployment. My tour here in Iraq has had its ups and downs. Initially, I had a hard time adjusting to being away from my family and friends, but I am slowly adjusting to being so far from home. This experience has forever changed my outlook on life as it was and it will be in the future. I have grown to appreciate the little things in life that we as free American citizens take for granted, such as, the freedom to go shopping safely and quality time that is spent with family and friends. During this tour I have had plenty of time to really think, about my life and ways to strengthen my weaknesses, as well as my strengths. Even if I leave Iraq tomorrow, I have been positively changed. I believe this experience will help me be a better Soldier, friend, and wife. I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me during this deployment. I would also like to thank all the "Soldiers Angels" and "Any Soldier" members. They have sent numerous care packages and inspirational letters and cards, which is much appreciated. I would also like to thank the Family Readiness Group (FRG) for showing their support through care packages and letters. Your efforts and dedication is truly appreciated. Last, but not least, I would like to thank my fellow medics of the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. They are my second family, keeping me sane through chaos. I hold dear the time that we have spent together and I love them as I love myself. Through God all things are possible. Thank You" - SPC Tucker

**Commander Final Thoughts:** "We Must Obey God, Not Men" Acts 5-29. I am proud to be serving with your Soldiers. They are employed in a dangerous profession in a dangerous place, but we are relatively safe. They have a "high standard of living" over here with a work schedule that is not overly demanding. In most units, this would be a recipe for disaster! However, your Soldiers continue to be people of sophistication and self restraint; their actions bring great credit upon their family and friends and we here couldn't be prouder. Thank You for keeping us in your prayers! CPT King (tony.king@us.army.mil)

# WORK HORSE

## Commander's Update by Captain Joe Contreras

Greetings, 1SG White and I hope this finds all of you in good spirits. Time has flown by and we have hit the three month mark of our deployment. The Soldiers' performances have continued to be outstanding. Congratulations to PV2 Swigert, who was promoted to PFC on 1 January 2007. PV2 Harder and PFC Fischer were promoted to PFC and SPC, respectively on 1 February 2007. SPC Stenquist made the cut-off score, and was rewarded for his continued hard work, as he was promoted to SGT. I also want to congratulate SPC Parker, who won the January Soldier of the Month Board for the Battalion. I want to welcome the late deployers to the Workhorse Family: 2LT Buckingham, SSG Wilson, and SPC Hamm.

The continued support of so many of you has been fantastic. Not a day goes by that I haven't seen the eyes of one of the Workhorse Soldiers light up, because they have a package from home. Please, keep up the support, it is making a bigger difference than you could possibly realize. Until next month – WORKHORSE!

## 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon "Distribution", by Second Lieutenant James Wilson

During the month of January, the Distribution Platoon has been involved with several convoys in the Baghdad area. These missions have been crucial in supporting the battalion by allowing them to have the essential supplies to complete the mission. The courage and skill demonstrated every time they go outside the wire has been extraordinary. We have worked diligently to train everyone on the new equipment that we received when we arrived, and the teamwork displayed is really showing through. This has required a lot of adjustment from the Soldiers, since most whom worked in the fuel section had not trained to operate anything other than fuel trucks and HMMWVs. The fuel section has its own responsibilities as well, ensuring that the generators around the base, that provide electricity, and our equipment are always full of fuel and other fluids. Everyone in first platoon is making an effort to learn from and teach each other the necessary skills for us to accomplish the mission, making it a common sight to see the 88 drivers working on fuel trucks and the fuelers driving heavy equipment on convoys. With what has been displayed so far, I know that we are capable of great things. Lead from the front!

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon "Maintenance", by 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Tyler Jesionowski

The Maintenance Platoon under SFC Sanchez has been doing remarkable things in order to support the battalion. The welding shop has successfully added armor to two 22 ton cranes, 2 HYEXs, and added ballistic glass to the gunner's position on HMMWVs, thanks to PFC Fisher's expertise. The mechanics continue to work hard to keep everyone's equipment rolling. They have worked for a total of 2,640 man hours this month, ensuring the distribution platoon is ready to move logistical assets around Baghdad. The recovery section spearheaded by SPC Stenquist has been busy emplacing concrete barriers. They have received many accolades on their hard work. This section has also successfully performed over 11 recovery missions. We appreciate all the support!

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon "DFAC", by SSG Thomas Wilson

3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon would like to thank its family and friends for their continued support. We continue to work hard, more to follow next month.



SPC Stenquist on the M88 during mission



1<sup>st</sup> PLT heads off on a LOGPAC

# WE CLEAR THE WAY

# SAPPER

Hello to all and Happy New Year! 2007 has started and the first month has already come to a close, and with that, the 510<sup>th</sup> Sapper Company is officially a quarter of the way through the deployment. January in Iraq has proved to be surprisingly cold and constantly wet. The endless rain turned the dirt into thick mud as far as the eye could see, soiling our boots and making the walk to the chow hall a bit more slippery.

1<sup>st</sup> Platoon spent the month of January working at a place called Yusufiyah Thermal Power Plant, also known as Patrol Base Dragon, improving the living conditions for the infantry Soldiers that live there. The Patrol Base is inside a power plant that was abandoned half way through construction when the war started in 2003. Since that time, the Soldiers have been living in the open with no heat or air conditioning. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon answered the call to fix this issue, building life support areas inside the power plant where the Soldiers can live. For the first time in 4 years, Soldiers at Patrol Base Dragon have a roof over their head, power to run electronics, and the ability to heat or cool their living areas. In addition to these life support areas, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon constructed a small dining facility, a gym, and installed stairs up to the fifth floor of the power plant. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon has truly earned their pay checks this month.



1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Soldiers trying to stay warm at Patrol Base Dragon.

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was all over the place in January. SFC Young went to look at a future project at Patrol Base Jurf where they will be installing guard towers, putting in a life support area, and improving an entry control point. The platoon went to Patrol Base Warrior Keep twice this month to repair a broken water main, install a generator, and wire the main living area at the patrol base. They are currently preparing to take the entire platoon to Patrol Base Jurf where they will spend most of the month of February.

3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon finally returned to the company at Camp Liberty after spending almost two months at Yusufiyah. The platoon completed construction on the battalion and company buildings the first week of January and were back on Camp Liberty soon thereafter. After a week of recuperating, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon performed an upgrade of the electrical facilities in the motor pool. Currently, the platoon is at a water treatment facility south of Baghdad running electrical power from a new generator to a company operations area. We are enjoying having 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon back as part of the team.

4<sup>th</sup> Platoon has spent the month establishing new police stations around Baghdad for use by the Iraqi Army and for the U.S.

Forces. 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon has been on the tip of the spear of the new plan in Iraq, helping put into motion the plan as outlined by President Bush in his latest State of the Union address.

## SPC Finkel at Patrol Base Yusufiyah



There have been a lot of personnel moves in the 510<sup>th</sup> this month. LT Petrie and SSG Radke left the company and have moved up to Battalion to start new jobs. LT Thomas has moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon to become the 510<sup>th</sup> Executive Officer and LT Lao has joined the company to fill the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon Leader slot. SFC Karneke moved over from Battalion and has taken the reigns of platoon sergeant for 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon. We received three new Soldiers this month: SPC Gadberry, PFC Santiago, and SPC Clayton. We welcome them to the 510<sup>th</sup> Family.

The spirits of the Soldier's in the 510<sup>th</sup> Sapper Company continue to be high. We are doing well and are doing great things for the Army and for the Iraqi people. We continue to appreciate your support and your thoughts as we tread through this long year. We are already half way to half way and are looking forward to the next milestone.

CPT Kenneth Rockwell

Commander, 510<sup>th</sup> Eng Co

# ENGINEERS



# DEUCE



Greetings from Iraq and Happy New Year to all back home! We hope all is well with the spouses, family and friends back at Ft. Drum, and we extend best wishes to those at Ft. Hood and Ft. Campbell who are away from their Soldiers this New Year.

The past month has been met with many different emotions amongst the Soldiers, NCOs and Officers in the Deuce. Even though we could not be with family for the holidays, the unit made the most of this time of sharing and reflection. The outpouring of support from home was amazing and deeply appreciated.

Many Soldiers were promoted, presented awards, reenlisted, or received coins from supported units throughout the month of January. These accomplishments reflect the continuing commitment to excellence by the members of the Deuce. As usual, the unit has been making a huge impact in the Baghdad area. Whether it is 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon ensuring roads are passable, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon emplacing blocking positions, or 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon clearing routes of IED hiding spots, the Deuce is greatly contributing to the fight. Headquarters, the “brains” of the Deuce, is doing a fantastic job juggling the missions, ensuring coordination is made and the platoons have everything they need to succeed. As always, Maintenance continues to amaze leaders in the unit, as well as battalion, by performing the miracles they do in the motorpool and out on mission. No matter what section your Soldier works in, you should be proud of them for all of their accomplishments in ensuring the success of our company on and off the battlefield, day-in and day-out.

Additionally, the Deuce has received some “new blood” in the past month with the arrival of SSG Arnulfo Rodriguez and 2LT Ashley Craig. SSG Rodriguez has already settled into the role of 2<sup>nd</sup> Squad Leader in 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, meshing well with the personalities of his fellow platoon members. 2LT Craig has been going through the motions of learning his new role as the platoon leader for 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, side-seating 1LT Cathcart on missions for the remainder of January. In the upcoming month the unit looks to receive additional junior officers who will be replacing platoon leaders heading to battalion to fill staff officer positions as newly promoted Captains. While we will miss the old platoon leaders, we look forward to welcoming the new Lieutenants; anxious to see what they have to offer the Deuce.

Despite all of the good things the New Year has brought the Deuce, we have also been met with the unfortunate weight of mourning a fellow Soldier. On December 22, 2006, while executing an excavation mission to recover human remains, SPC Joshua “Shep” Sheppard was killed by enemy small arms fire on the battlefield. The loss of one of our own deeply affected us all, and we sought comfort in one another in the following days and weeks. As always we continue fighting every day by remembering “Shep” and keeping his family, back home in Oklahoma, in our thoughts.

Notwithstanding these varying emotions, the Deuce continues moving forward, remaining strong, and maintaining a commitment to the mission at hand.



SPC Sheppard



PFC Wexler

*RESPECT ALL, FEAR NONE, DEUCE! DEUCE 6*

# EMPIRE



Greetings again to all from the mighty Empire! The 887<sup>th</sup> ESC has been kept increasingly busy since the last newsletter. All of the Soldiers in the Empire (both organic and attached from the 20<sup>th</sup> EN BN) have been doing an outstanding job, using their initiative and ingenuity to accomplish the mission safely. The fact that we, the 887<sup>th</sup>, have reenlisted six Soldiers since arriving (and many more on the way) is a testament to Empire Soldiers' commitment.

1<sup>st</sup> Platoon has been busy with force protection and survivability missions. Since mid-December, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon has gone on 5 force protection/survivability/patrol base upgrade missions (what we call our "long" missions), providing much-needed force protection for US and other Coalition Forces Soldiers and improving their living conditions to make their lives here more "livable." Additionally, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon completed 3 counter-mobility missions, securing the perimeter of Baghdad. Unfortunately, on one of their counter-mobility missions, SGT John Michael Fleming had his right arm pinned to the ground by the bucket of a front loader, causing serious damage to his lower arm. Thankfully, doctors were able to save his arm, but he will have a long road to full recovery. SGT Fleming is back in the United States at Fort Campbell, receiving care both at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital and Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, Georgia. SGT Fleming, our thoughts and prayers are with you!



In late December, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon picked up the on-post Force Protection mission from 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon. While they have been busy, it has been a bit of respite from their busy off-the-FOB mission schedule in December. They will be continuing on this vital mission until mid-February, when they will join the rest of the Company in performing more off-the-FOB missions.

Since starting their off-the-FOB missions in late December, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon has had very little downtime. They started with a dual force protection/survivability mission, upgrading two patrol bases at once. Upon their return, they began planning for the construction of a Joint Security Station (JSS); those of you who watch the news (and newspapers) regularly will be familiar with these sites, from which US and Iraqi forces will conduct operations. 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon has been busy constructing the force protection for three of these sites, with another in the planning stages. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon will soon also be contributing to this task, with 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon not far behind.



As usual, the Field Maintenance Team has the unenviable task of keeping our equipment running that frequently breaks due to the rigors of our operations, and has been performing beyond reproach. We have been able to accomplish our missions only because the FMT has kept our equipment running.

The coming months will have us doing much of the same missions, the most prevalent being construction of more JSS's. As our first 90 days in theater can attest, the Empire will remain busy, committed to the task at hand.



- Empire 6

(Above, left to right): 1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon Soldiers emplace barriers at a JSS. 2. (From Left) SGT Gerald Risner and SPC Michael Leonard emplace Hescos on a Force Protection Mission 3. 1SG Stanger and the Empire Christmas Tree.



# RENLISTMENT



## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER AT CAMP LIBERTY!

Wow! We made it! "Made it to what, you may ask?" Well, we made it to another year in life. That is right; we made it to the year 2007. No matter how great or small, how joyful or painful, any circumstance we might have faced in 2006; we still made it through it. We persevered! That is good news for us, all of us. As January comes to an end, I think about all the New Year resolutions that some of you have made for the up and coming year, and I want to applaud you for the goals you have set for yourselves. Some resolutions, you have already broken, while some of you continue to struggle on a daily bases and to that I say, "Press on and stay strong." It is never easy to overcome a habit, or to start a new one in an already routine life. However, I want to encourage both those who have broken resolutions and those who continue to stay the course. Stay strong and train well. The main key to overcoming and accomplishing a New Year's resolution is to focus on one word, and that word is to PERSEVERE. The word PERSEVERE means, "to persist in or remain constant to a purpose, idea, or task in the face of obstacles or discouragement." George Bernard Shaw an Irish playwright who won the Noble Prize for Literature in 1925 and the Oscar in 1938 stated, "Take care to get what you like or you will be forced to like what you get." So, as your Chaplain I would like to encourage those who have stumbled on the battlefield of New Year resolutions. "Get up, dust off your clothes and get back into the fight, winners never quit." As, I ponder the word perseverance, I think about the various missions the Lumberjacks have accomplished over the past few months. Most of them were extremely difficult and required for us think and work outside the box. Many soldiers even had to perform jobs that might not have been perfect, as it relates to their MOS, but they did it and made it happen. Even your very own Chaplain worked a little outside his MOS. That is right! I had the great pleasure to go to one of our Patrol Bases and to help our great engineers of the 510<sup>th</sup> Sapper Co. in order to fix 17 Air Conditioners and Heaters. It was great to be able roll out on a convoy to use one of my civilian skills as an Air Conditioning Technician to allow me to spend some quality time with some of our hardworking soldiers. As I look back over these past few months at the many accomplishments our soldiers have completed, one word stands out, perseverance. I know it is extremely hard for you back home and our soldiers here in Iraq to continue to stay strong while at the same time missing each other. Yet, stay strong we must. We must encourage one another and if need be, carry one another until the mission is complete. I love the encouraging words given by the Apostle Paul, as he face death and his execution for his faith. Paul stated in 2 Timothy 4:6-8, "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day..." As I close, do not forget your love ones, Valentines Day is just around the corner. So, pray hard, love forever, keep the faith, and stay STRONG. Until we meet again, may God richly bless you and your family with his love and strength.

Thoughtful Reflection:

The right angle to approach a difficult problem is the "TRY-ANGLE."

"For with God nothing shall be impossible. Luke 1:37

Chaplain (CPT) Rickie Wambles

Chaplain Asst. (PFC) Avery Owens

