



# The Seahorse Standard

19th Engineer Battalion  
Kandahar, Afghanistan

Volume I, Issue VII

November 28, 2009



**“Bridle and Reins—Stand Tall!”**



## The Commander's Column



Family & Friends – another month completed, seems like the time is flying by. I'd like to start off my column this month on a more somber note in order to make our Family members aware of a trend that is developing in the Army. That trend is an increase in spouse suicide. Unfortunately, our higher HQ at Fort Bragg experienced this recently with one of its subordinate units. The Brigade Commander has asked that we increase our awareness and that is why we have dedicated a section in this newsletter for your benefit. You may have already received emails from the Chaplain back at Fort Knox on this topic at my request which should include installation agencies available for support. I have also asked CPT Turbeville and the FRG leaders to make some time during monthly meetings to talk about this subject. I want to ensure that our military and civilian leaders here and back at Knox are doing our part to reverse this trend and support our spouses and Families - who are under as much if not more stress than our deployed Soldiers. Now on a lighter note – Thanksgiving is upon us and Christmas is right around the corner. These are tough times to be away from Family and the chain of command here in Afghanistan is taking steps to recognize each of these holidays with food, sporting events and some much deserved time off when applicable. I would ask the Families to take advantage of the VTCs that the units have set up with the rear to talk to your deployed Soldier over this holiday period. I have heard from the rear and Soldiers participating that this is a big moral boost and large success. We also expect hundreds if not over a thousand care packages and boxes over the next few months.

The outpouring of support from organizations across America is truly awesome and very much appreciated. The battalion is entering into a new phase of construction as it moves off of the larger bases and begins construction/expansion of smaller combat out-post or COPs to support the maneuver forces. Once again, much like we started out – these locations are austere and lacking much of the amenities of larger bases your Soldiers have built up. I am extremely proud of how the subordinate units have responded to these new missions and their “can do” engineer attitude. As always, I want to thank the rear-detachment and FRGs for the outstanding support of Families. I hope you all have a HAPPY THANKSGIVING!  
BRIDLE and REINS!!!



**LTC Heath C. Roscoe**  
19th EN BN Commander

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Below: CPT Riesel's Change-of-Command ceremony.



**Editor-in-Chief: CPT Jaime M. Miller**  
**Contributing Editor: SPC Jason Blythe**







SH7 and 1LT Byrne



CSM Darrell L. Dixon  
19th EN BN CSM



SH7 conveys guidance



Newly promoted 1LT with his Platoon



502nd's new 1SG w/ SH7



2LT Byrne gets promoted to 1LT

**SOLDIERS  
RECEIVE THEIR  
CITIZENSHIP**



3 sea. studs receive their citizenship



SPC Lemma and CSM



SPC Rondon and CSM



SPC Pham and CSM

Seahorse Families!!! Can you believe we are seven months into the deployment? Time is definitely flying by. The month of November has been another busy month. I started the month off as usual, traveling from company to company. I will have you know your love ones are doing extremely well and looking finer and finer. Please know how proud of you we are!! As we continue to answer the nations call, we keep ourselves motivated and focused on returning home safely in about five months. The month of November is one of the twelve months that we take special time out with family and give thanks to our families and a higher power. On behalf of your Soldiers forward and me "we say thank you". I was invited to a very historical ceremony on 12 November 2009. We had three Seahorse Soldiers receive their citizenship to become US citizens on Bagram Airfield Afghanistan. It does my heart good to witness these quality Soldiers become US citizens. I witnessed 2LT Byrne get promoted to 1LT at FOB Leatherneck. I would be very remised if I didn't mention the Change of Command for the 76th Engineer Company. CPT Riesel welcome to the Seahorse team, we wish you well. Please enjoy the photos of my most recent trip to the citizenship ceremony and visit to 502nd. **Command Sergeant Major's Advice:** Please remember, our success over here is partially dependent on you back there. **Please** continue to write your Soldiers, send emails/cards, goodies, and constantly **remind them of how much you support and appreciate what they are doing.** This is motivation like you wouldn't believe. **CSM's words of the month:** SELF ENDURANCE and WILL POWER. HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!





## Commander's Corner

The Deuce has dug in. The company headquarters has fell into a productive battle rhythm and has finally got up to speed with BN operations. Getting equipment and personnel moved to their desired location has been a challenge, but the wheels are turning and the company operation cells is diligently making it happen.

First platoon has been assisting the local Sea Bees on Camp Leatherneck with hard work and myriad skill sets. When the platoon first offered assistance to the Navy, they were quite far behind and were not nearly on schedule to meet their deadlines. Over the past month, First Platoon has sent two vertical and one horizontal element to assist, and now the Navy is ahead of schedule. This isn't all the platoon has accomplished this month; with masterful planning by the platoon leadership, they've also pushed nearly 30 troops through ACROW bridge training. ACROW bridge is a new Army fixed bridge system similar to the MJB, and our company is on schedule to become the first theater experts on this system. This platoon is still working on several bridge reconnaissance courses of action and has sent some NCOs to a working bridge site to lend their expertise to their effort.

Second platoon has also been extremely busy at their Kandahar home. Not only are they continuing to serve as a liaison for the rest of the company, but are in the middle of the home station equipment surge through Kandahar to Camp Leatherneck. They too have sent quite a few Soldiers to ACROW training, and will soon be fully equipped to take on missions with this asset. Currently, the platoon is focused most of their efforts on a major line of communication bridging mission. This project will kick off around the end of the month.

Maintenance and Support continue to improve their facilities and have begun the arduous task of unpacking shipping containers and maintaining equipment. They've put together a great maintenance program and the company has begun a rigorous command maintenance regiment which will assure that all our equipment is fully mission capable. Support has also found quite a few ways to keep themselves occupied. They've finished a small arms range for Leatherneck, a FOB burn pit, and have assisted in airfield expansion. Their new project has been to help the Sea Bees with a FOB expansion; a three week project running two shifts on horizontal equipment. Again, the Deuce is there to save the day.

Thanks again for all your support from back home.

Bridge 6 — CPT Lucas



**Above:** 502nd MRBC Soldiers at ACROW bridge training



**Center:** SFC Main receiving a Gold Star award

**Below:** 502nd MRBC Soldiers standing tall at company formation.







### Commander's Corner

We have made it passed the halfway point. Team Blade has accomplished so much in a short time. I am very proud of the men and women of Team Blade. Their efforts have allowed US military forces to function at a high level protecting local Afghan citizens, projects that protect military units and gaining the respect of fellow units. FOB Wolverine was just a dust bowl six short months ago. That has all changed. We now have a gym, receive mail three to four times a week, local vendor shops, roads, a hospital, company operations building and established motor pool. Be proud of you soldier. They have put their best foot forward. Thank you for your dedication to your soldier. Thanks to the FRG for all their efforts.

BLADE 6 — CPT Fairel

### 3/15th (below)

3rd finished yet another project, the retention ponds for the FOB. They are gearing up for a horizontal mission that is at a near by patrol base. Engineer assets are needed all over theater and 3/15 continues to take



### 15th EN CO Maintenance (below)

Maintenance has replaced several engines, worked on anti-lock brakes, and received and stored parts properly. They have also replaced thrown tracks on dozers and replaced worn out belts, tires and alternators. 15th maintenance team does not only support the 15th but anyone on the FOB that needs assistance they lend a hand or parts if they have them.



### 3/60 Jungle Eaters (above)

3/60th has finished the construction on the entrance control point footbridge. They have passed all of the inspections for the 50' x 90' tactical operations center building. 3rd platoon has also been working on work orders and building furniture. They have also sent a small team to do a reconnaissance mission for an up

### 1/76 EN CO (below)

1/76th has had a recent change in command and had to inventory all of their equipment. They finished the work on the Engineer Compound buildings. 1st Platoon is currently building two tent pads for the dust-off crew. They are splitting the work orders here on the FOB with 3/60th. The work orders have come in wide range of projects.





## Commander's Corner

Jungle Eater family and friends,

This was another busy month for the Jungle Eater team as we continue to make a positive impact on those around us. Our fine Jungle Eater Soldiers are staying focused on completing the mission and are doing a great job assisting the Stryker Battalion at FOB Frontenac. During this month at FOB Frontenac, the Jungle Eater team celebrated Veterans Day and Thanksgiving.

1<sup>st</sup> platoon started working on the counter-IED building for the Ordnance detachment here at FOB Frontenac. They have done a great job meeting the customer's needs and are working at record speeds as they are on schedule to complete this project before the end of the month. Also, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon thanks LT Uhal for his leadership and guidance over this past year and wishes him the best in his future endeavors.

2<sup>nd</sup> platoon, 15<sup>th</sup> EN CO continued construction on the new FOB landing zone and ammunition holding area. Also, this platoon executed numerous reconnaissance missions to various patrol bases and combat outposts. Halfway through the month, most of the 2/15 pushed out to a combat outpost to expand the COP.

2<sup>nd</sup> platoon continued construction of the Company TOCs for FOB Frontenac. 2LT Morris and WO1 Kone had a great start with the platoon and continue to demonstrate their strong work ethic and leadership.

We look forward to the coming months as we continue our mission and prepare to redeploy home. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Regards,

Jungle Eater 6 — CPT Vanessa Stolzoff



**Above:** SPC Collins talks with BG Hodges during a visit at Fronte-



**Above:** Elements of the 60th EN CO rollout to conduct a recon at a patrol base.



**Above:** 1/60EN works on building trusses



**Above:** SGT Norton working on installing trusses



## Commander's Corner

Team Hammer Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am CPT Terry Riesel; the new commander of the 76<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company. I would like to thank all of you for your amazing support of Team Hammer over the past 6 months. We would not be successful out here if it wasn't for your support back home.

This month has been a very busy and exciting month for Team Hammer. The Soldiers continued working hard on all their projects on top of doing layouts for the Change of Command inventories. Because of their hard work the inventories were a breeze and not a single mission was ignored.

1/15<sup>th</sup> continued to work hard finishing up the refueling area for helicopters. This was a short term project that 1/15<sup>th</sup> Soldiers reacted to quickly and executed superbly. Also, 1/15<sup>th</sup> has been continuing to do great work building the permanent ammo storage area. This is no easy task since they have also started building the permanent burn pit for the FOB. 1/15<sup>th</sup> has been spread thin with all of their missions but they continue to stay positive and motivated. This month 1/15<sup>th</sup> finished installing HESCOs around the Team motor pool and dug a 300 meter trench for the company's new TOC building.

2/76<sup>th</sup> has also been very busy this month. They have done a great job working on the platoon's second 50 x 90 building for the Stryker Battalion here on FOB Spin Boldak. This is a large project that the Soldiers are staying motivated to finish. When it is complete it will have work areas for 4 companies from the Stryker's. They have also been working on the Company's TOC building that is looking really great. 2/76<sup>th</sup> has been executing these missions while having some Soldiers away in training. 2/76<sup>th</sup> is also starting to do more inventories since they will be getting a new Platoon Leader this month. 2LT Calloway will do a great job as the new 2/76<sup>th</sup> PL.

I would like to thank the FRG for all their hard work keeping the Team Hammer Family members informed with everything going on. Continue send your love to your Soldiers in any way you can. Cards, emails and packages full of goodies are always morale boosters. Take care and God bless.

STEEL HAMMER 6 — CPT Riesel





## Commander's Corner

First of all thanks for all the great things that the FRG has been doing for the Families and the Soldiers. The Halloween candy was a big hit. It lasted about three days before it was gone without a trace. It was awesome. Well this month has been a busy one for the company. We have passed the halfway point and are already thinking about what it will take to get us all home with the handover of missions and property. Granted it is still a ways off but it does feel good to have to start the planning for it because it feels like starting the journey back home. The Battalion Commander is working on plans for what we will do when we get back. From the discussions that we've had it looks like a great schedule for our homecoming.

We are all waiting to hear the president's decision regarding the surge. As you can imagine, that will have a definite impact upon us and our mission here. Don't worry we are up to the challenge. We can't guess exactly what our missions will be but we are staying flexible. Other than that we continue with our mission of supporting the battalion. We've been doing everything from convoys to the outer FOBs to construction projects here around the battalion motorpool. The unit that replaces us will definitely have a sweet set up to fall in on.

We've had a lot of changes and new faces here in the HQ. They keep sending lieutenants like they are growing on trees. Additionally MSG Quillin has moved from the BN Intel NCOIC and is the new 1SG for the 15th. MSG Ratliff is moving out to take the reins as the 502nd 1SG. 2LT Davis is set to transition to the XO for the 15th and 2LT Enriquez is going to become the new platoon leader for the PSD. It's a lot of moving pieces but they are positive moves and we are happy to see folks move on to new challenges.

All of the projects that we support are definitely making a difference for the battalion and thereby for all our forces here in Afghanistan. Here's a kind of run down on some of what we do as HSC:

1. Here in KAF we order and manage the materials for the battalion projects. It looks like a home depot here.
2. We provide armed escort for materials, personnel, and equipment out to the FOBs along the supply routes here.
3. We process all the leaves personnel actions, finance, and legal issues that the Soldiers have.
4. We send the Chaplain out to maintain the spiritual fitness and to help Soldiers with issues that they need to talk about.
5. We plan the construction projects for the battalion based on directives we get from the Navy. This is not as easy as it may seem. The Navy unit that gives us the orders is not always on their A game. Sometimes it takes a magic eight ball, a fortune cookie, and a thesaurus to make sense of what they are asking us to do.
6. We execute construction missions here on Kandahar. Our customers for these missions include other units here on Kandahar and ourselves.
7. Track and manage all the Battalion's communication equipment and issues. It takes a lot to keep the battalion talking over hundreds of miles. The guys in the commo shop are always much in demand and very busy.
8. Just about anything else that the Battalion Commander comes up with.

As far as our quality of life, we are still living pretty well in regards to the food and board that we have here. Things are supposed to improve with us moving into new sleeping quarters called RLBs sometime in December. They are kind of like little Lego rooms that you can stack and arrange. It looks like we will be able to put two soldiers into one room. I haven't been in one yet but they should protect us from the elements better than the tents. That will provide a boost to morale but also a longer walk to get to work. Right now we have everything from billeting to motorpool to offices within a square mile. I think that the trade off will be worth it to get our Soldiers more elbow room and some privacy. Our moving completely depends upon the contractors finishing their work so we're crossing our fingers.

Thanks again for all the great work ya'll are doing. Please don't doubt for a second that you are helping us out because we really appreciate what you are doing. The time is coming upon us to begin planning for the holiday seasons. That's about all that we have for now. Let me know if there is anything specific that you want to hear from us or if you have any questions. We are looking forward to the VTC on 21NOV. Be proud of your Soldiers because they are doing great things over here.

Best Wishes

Warrior 6 — CPT Wittmeier



**Above:** 2LT Enriquez's first brief as the new PSD Platoon Leader.

**Below:** Soldiers working together with the concrete modules





## Commander's Corner

Reinforcer Friends and Families:

I cannot be more proud of the work that your Soldiers have accomplished thus far in during our deployment. Daily they go above and beyond to ensure that the Engineer Battalion that we are charged with supporting is sustained and maintained. The dedication of your Soldier has ensured that the Engineer Companies, who are positioned in extremely austere bases, have the capabilities to successfully conduct and complete their operations.

As I have said before, our success could not have occurred without the tremendous support of our Families and Friends. The sacrifices that you make, and the support that you give us, are critical to our ability to accomplish the mission.

As always, thank you for your continued support of your deployed Soldier and the company. I am truly proud to serve with each of you.

Reinforcer 6 — CPT Brown



## HQ PLT

The month of October has been a great one for the Headquarters element of the Forward Support Company. Although cooler temperature has come our way, the mission has not let down. With the redeployment of our 92G (Cooks) we said our goodbyes to SGT Kinney. His leadership and can-do attitude will be greatly missed. We wish him the best and know that he will lead the way with our Company's redeployment. We gladly welcome SSG Souza and SPC Swaso (originally from our distribution platoon) as they joins the Headquarters team as the night shift NCOIC and assistant operations clerk. SFC Doby (Company Operations Sergeant) set up a BBQ that was suppose to be for our outgoing cooks. However, our cooks were sent back earlier than expected and the company just enjoyed a day off. SSG Harris and SPC Chuipka continue to take care of all the Soldiers through her supply channels. SPC Hall and PVT McDuffy continue to work diligently as SPC Mosely and PFC Kannenberg went on their well deserved R&R leave. Your Soldiers are doing extraordinary work and I am extremely proud to be working beside them each and every day.

1LT Mitchell Bosch

## Maintenance

This month Maintenance has been busy with the finishing touches of setting up the new and improved Motor Pool! SPC Davis and SPC Baker helped the Command Post (CP) set up AFN so now FSC can enjoy watching Football on the weekends! SGT Trevis and SPC Singletary now have a concrete pad to work on and are busy fabricating and welding parts for the Battalion. The 25<sup>th</sup> of October was designated "Fun Day" and we had a barbeque and played football in recognition of the 92G (cooks) that are leaving theater. SGT Keedy continues to support convoy missions with the recovery team and is enjoying seeing the Afghanistan country side! We had many October birthdays this month and would like to wish SPC Stewart, SPC Kraft, SGT Rodriguez, and SPC

Davis James a Happy Birthday!!! We are back into the swing of things in our new Motor Pool and working hard to get everyone's equipment back into operating condition.

Happy Thanksgiving!

LT Bridget Hug

## Distro

This past month Distro has been extremely busy pushing out equipment and supplies. As the number of jingle trucks increase, so does the platoon's participation on ground assault convoys with PSD and other units. 502<sup>nd</sup> EN CO's equipment has been coming in by the truck loads on Kandahar Air Field, and Distro has been receiving the trucks and downloading the equipment. They also do the reverse cycle, which is receive an empty truck and upload it with that same equipment. The goal has been expanded to not only push out the Theater Provided Equipment, but 502<sup>nd</sup>'s bridging equipment as well. In order to speed up the process, Distro has been tagging along with PSD on several convoys to other FOBs bringing as much vehicles, equipment, parts, and supplies as they can manage. They arrive at these FOBs download and upload equipment and supplies, and push out again as soon as possible. They have also been along with the 286<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company on several convoys. Distro is currently working to ride with a unit from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division to push out lumber and insulation to new FOBs to help support international units as well. When the platoon is not on the road, they work to support the many Battalion tasks on the FOB. They've helped pick up incoming materials from the Air Field for designated companies, helped deliver equipment to be up-armored on KAF, and assisted with providing vehicles and drivers for various other tasks. The Company also had its first barbeque to celebrate the re-deployment of the Cooks. FSC took the day to cook and have recreational activities and games. Distro also welcomes new incoming personnel, to include its new PSG, SFC Thomas. The new soldiers and NCOs came from Headquarters Support Company and have become a valuable asset to the platoon in supporting the Battalion's mission.

1LT Jo Kim







## Commander's Corner

First I would like to say congratulations to our Commander. Chief Johnson took his R&R this month and returned to a promotion ceremony on his behalf. Congratulations to CW3 Rodney Johnson!

Now that we are over the half way point, the R&R cycle is in full swing. I know that all the guys that have taken their leave really enjoyed their time off, and the ones that are still left to go are counting the days. Moral is still high and we are continuing to push to the end. All the teams have been very busy. The KAF Team has completed multiple surveys for multiple units and nations to determine the best fit for future buildings. KAF is really growing and we are starting to run out of land, so these surveys are critical in the design of the base. We also utilized our drafting skills by designing 10 buildings that are going to be constructed in the new future. The Spin Team has been working directly with the Afghani surveyors, training them on construction surveying so that the Afghans can take over the construction. The Frontenac team has started working on the Combat Out Posts in the area. These are smaller bases that are being built from the ground up, and our guys are playing a critical role in this process. Finally, the Wolverine team is finishing up the last few projects left there, and have been working on the Design of FOB Sweeny.

Everyone is doing a great job, and I am extremely proud of all of the guys.

SSG Jason Machen

Detachment NCOIC

**Left:** 72nd Soldier setting up Survey equipment for mission  
**Right:** 72nd Commander, Chief Johnson being promoted from CW2-CW3.



## Words from the Battle Desk

Dear Seahorse Family and Friends,

Military spouse suicides typically are not made public, so the extent of the problem is not exactly known, but family readiness is very important to the unit command group. A 2008 survey by the American Psychiatric Association found that 40% of spouses believe their mental health was hurt by their husband's or wife's service overseas. Approximately 25% of spouses reported regular problems with sleeplessness, anxiety and depression.

Signs and symptoms to look out for: depression, anxiety, insomnia, adjustment disorder, nervousness, headaches, dysphoria, and changes in eating habits.

A common myth among military spouses is that seeking mental health help will affect their spouse's career or chances of promotion. This is absolutely not true. Spouses are encouraged to seek the help they may need for themselves or their families before, during, and after deployments. According to Sheila Casey, wife of General George Casey (Army Chief of Staff), "Army families are the most brittle part of the force..they are sacrificing too much, and we can no longer ask them to just make the best of it".

Secondary PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) is the name given to dependents of Soldiers who suffer from single or multiple deployments.

### Resources available to Military Dependents:

**Military One Source:** 1-800-342-9647 (available 24/7 and offers 10 free counseling sessions)

**Military Family Life Consultants:** (270) 307-2630 and (270) 307-2631 (offer up to 12 counseling sessions and can refer as necessary)

**Family Advocacy:** (502) 624-6291 (counseling available)

**Chaplain Cox:** (502) 664-8833 (counseling and referrals available)

**Social Work Services:** (502) 626-6170 (social workers available and referrals off post available)

S3 Battle Captain - CPT Jaime Miller



## And Now a Word From the Soldiers.... by SPC Jason Blythe

Hello Everyone. My column, this month, is going to be a little different than last time's. For this column I will be conducting a round table interview. The topic is going to be over the holiday season and awareness of suicide amongst dependants. Hope you all enjoy.

**Seahorse Standard (SHS):** Hello everyone, with me today is 1SG Jeremy Gross ( JG), the 1SG of HSC; 1SG Marvin Dye(MD), the 1SG of FSC; the Chaplain, CPT Peter McDonald (PM) and the Chaplain's assistant, Michael Raymond (MR).

**SHS: Hello everyone, how are you today?**

**PM:** Fairly well, it's a good day.

**MR:** Excellent!

**MD:** I am doing really well. It is a good day, today.

**JG:** Wonderful, Absolutely wonderful.

**SHS: Has everyone deployed before or is this your first deployment for the Holiday season?**

**PM:** Well yes, this is my first deployment, in my time in the army. So the answer to the question is yes.

**MR:** This is my first deployment as well.

**MD:** This will be my third deployment.

**JG:** Yes I am going to have to go right off of 1SG Dye; this will be my third deployment.

**SHS: What do you think is the hardest part of being deployed during this time?**

**JG:** well for me, I would have to say, for me, my son is 5, he will be 6 tomorrow. Being away from my son would be. We are very close. He has spent every holiday together. So when I am away from him, to be away from him in the holiday season, not to see his facial expression, especially since his birthday is this time of year. You don't get to see his face when he opens up his gifts for his birthday, see him when he is around his friends, you miss that, same thing for Christmas. More so, the excitement of running downstairs to the living room, waking you up at "Oh God" thirty to go check out what Santa dropped off. You miss those things. It also brings the family together. We either have it with close friends or family. But now, I only have it with close "Army Friends" to spend it with.

**MD:** My kids are 15 and 20, fixing to be 21, so my kids are kind of done with that stuff. But my wife and I are really close and I just miss being with her and my kids. But I really miss being with her, because we are more like best friends. It is just kind of hard on me.

**MR:** well for us (my wife and I), I agree with 1SG Dye. We do not have children. So I am really close with my wife. This is our first holiday away from each other so it is really hard. Being away from family, not seeing them, growing with them, and not spending the holiday with them. It's kind of tough

**PM:** I think the separation is the hardest part. The hardest part is not being able to be the man of the house, to make the tough decisions of the house. To look back, to see my wife go through that and my family, it's like, wow, I am not that person any more, at least not now. The huge change in the separation that is how it really affects me, but yes. I miss my wife and kids. That is the kind of stuff that you have to keep going with and make sure the communication holds up. Like 1SG Gross, 1SG Dye, and Raymond, here I miss my wife. My wife is my best friend. And when you see your good friend, and especially your wife going through the struggles and your like man I can't be there. I think that is what really affects me on the deployment the most.

**SHS: What are your normal plans, around this time, while you are at home?**

**JG:** the usual stuff that my family does is we spend a lot of time together. We go out everywhere. My wife tries to organize stuff on weekends. Especially a long weekend, we will take a one day trip out and head to Nashville. We live to see children's museums aquariums, zoos, during the summer. So we try to do a lot of things as a family, because we always want to cherish the time that we do have. As we all know, the longer you stay in the military; there is always another pending deployment that is going to pop up on ya. So rather than sit in the house and watch television we really like to get out and enjoy things we also like to enjoy family dinners with each other. where we can all talk over dinner as opposed to, you know, just feeding my kid and stuff 'em in the room. But this way, we can talk to our kid. They just started school and we can talk about school work and stuff like that so it gives us a lot of time together. So it gives me plenty to fall back on while I am deployed so I have something to lean back on. To remember the good times, it really helps to get you through those rough days. You can fall back on those great days to remember on

**MD:** My family and I, for thanksgiving, we usually get together with her parents at their house or her brother and wife at theirs. We all kind of have thanksgiving and enjoy it. For Christmas, we usually head down to Litchfield. Her side of the family is really large, we go down there and have this big party and we have a lot of food and fun. It's just a really good time and I miss that kind of stuff.

**MR:** Christmas we spend popping in and out of different family member's homes. We pop in this one house then go to the next. We make the week long affair for Christmas. Thanksgiving we usually go to her grandfather's and have the whole family there other than that, our time together, we are like 1SG Gross and his family, we go spelunking in caves; we go to Tennessee, for trout fishing, camping, hike the Appalachian Trail. We do all that stuff. That is what we do

**PM:** I think that the quality time is what really counts. When I am back at home, I love to build that quality time, to see my kids smile and laugh. I love to see my wife smile and laugh. That is even more important, I think. Because when she's not happy, nobody is happy. (Panel laughs) so it's building those moments and memories. That's what is going to count when I am looking back at this life, I can be like, and oh I remember this. So building those fond memories is my answer

**JB:** I will have to say, being the only single one here; I will say having a family is important where ever you are. Not every Soldier is as fortunate as I am this assignment and able to go home for thanksgiving. But I know how they feel because I was far away, in Alaska, for the last. I have missed numerous holidays. As well as being deployed. But having a strong army family, it really helps. Having those that you know you can spend time with and share in some of the important moments. You can build great memories with those too.

**SHS: Who do you think has the hardest time coping with deployment? Service members, Spouses, or is it split between the two parties?**

**JG:** Ohh, I am biased. I actually think it is harder on the spouse. As soldiers, when we do deploy, we do have that comrador with our battle bud-





dies and peers. You have such a chain to work with and they can spot you when you are feeling down, and check up on you. And get you the help you need. When your spouse is at home, they are making the decisions when no one else is around. If they choose to stay in the house and not go find the help that they need. They will stay in and get depressed, they do feel a little more isolated. Then you have the young families. They new spouse may not have anyone to reach out to. I mean we have the phone or the internet but they may not always be reliable when they are depressed they pull away from those things. So they don't have as much help lines as we do.

**MD:** I totally agree with 1SG Gross. He is right about that. The spouse has those issues. And now they have to do everything themselves; chores, decisions. They are worried that you will like those choices. If they work, it is much harder.

**MR:** Yea, I would have to agree with the two "seasoned" First Sergeants. On top of that, I would add that they are worrying about our safety over here. That just adds to the stress. I do like what 1SG Gross said about staying connected or get involved. If they do that, then they will gain the connection that they need, with somebody.

**PM:** well, I am going to make it unanimous, I say that it is harder on the spouse. All the seasoning has made me hungry.. ( Panel laughs) but this is surely harder on the spouse. Back home, we were a team us versus the world together. Now its like I am over here and she is over there. Now, it is just her not like I have nothing to worry about but back home it is all of the weight. Dumped completely on my wife, everything. A lot revolves around the kids. We are no longer a team. It is hard when you lose a member of your team. All of that affects the soldier too. We feel the same pain but not as much

**SHS: Why do you think that the suicide rate among dependants have spiked, as of late?**

**PM:** Isolation.. Because, now a days, we lock ourselves in the house, my parents would leave the doors unlocks, windows wide open. Not us. We would close the windows and lock the doors. Forget out answering the door if we don't know who it is. We have almost shot ourselves in the foot as couples. the only support network that we have is cut in half with the soldier being gone now you don't have that when we start to feel like we cant handle it we go through this wave of depression we are not used to seeking help, and because of that, we fall apart

**MR:** to add to that there is a lot of young soldier coming in the army married. We have time to grow and understand. But with a young marriage, it makes it harder on the spouses. You are asking the spouse to tear away from your family. There is a big gap and it is hard on the two parties as well

**MD:** totally agree with the chaplain families may not be close these days as back in the day. The spouses family may not always be there for them a soldier could try calling back home and nobody being there. Or the spouse back home may have some issues so there is not that same support network.

**JG:** I guess my answer to this question will fall back to one of the answers to your previous questions. I think it all ties back with the spouses left in the rear. If you have a young marriage, young children or a lot of children the number of bills there are quite healthy. Sometimes the ability to contact home is not there. Because the money to maintain the phone or internet is not there they have issues keeping their car running. The stresses are all there on that spouse if the spouse does not leave their quarters then they will never see the resources available to them. Then isolation sets in and they feel that there is no hope. I think Isolation is the key reason.

**SHS: What are some of the signs to look out for, for suicide?**

**PM:** probably changes in behavior. It is when you notice something different about yourself or others notice something different. One of the most serious changes is your sleep pattern. Your eating is another. It is the downward spiral., I have equated that to flushing a toilet once it starts , and you can't stop it. The things you can do are notice that downward spiral, the changes. You know when things are not normal anymore.

**MR:** I would add changes in hobbies. My wife likes to nit with her lady friends. If she stopped going, then there is something wrong. Maybe just not caring and letting yourself go. Maybe the complete change. they were down and out to extremely happy

**MD:** I agree with the Chaplain and Raymond.

**JG:** my personal experience, since I have been in is that I had two individuals in two different units that have both committed suicide as those who knew them came together to share what they knew of them, and what they did their last week, their last month, one of the things said was their behavior changing. They said that the were withdrawn from most committed that it was like pulling teeth trying to get them to come out. As it got really close to the day that the incident occurred, they really were giving things away, saying their final goodbyes, getting closure and closing relationships with people. Telling others how they really felt. Those are signs I would look for. And someone who have stopped taking care of themselves. They close in on themselves and everything else disappears

**SHS: what advice do you have for those reading, back at home?**

**JG:** the two things that I and my spouse have relied on is a routine. Having something that you know that you are doing every single day. Where they have a chance to interact with other adults, is key. Helps time fly by that much faster.

**MD:** if they have friends, then just to make sure they keep those friends and to make sure that they have those strong bonds with them. If they have extended family around, then contact them and keep in contact. Find a friend to get out and do things.

**MR:** I totally agree with the two 1SG. Also not pay attention to gossip. If they hear it tries to communicate with the soldier. The more communication, the less worries they have and stay away from army wives.....the TV show. (Panel laughs) I had to save myself.

**PM:** we can sum it down to the two things routine and commendation. In routine, you are like, so what. Why should I do X Y Z in that order. But the most important thing in recovering and coping with a huge amount of depression is the routine what do I need to do now. Once you have that stability, you have that self worth and importance that you need. You feel like you are doing something again. Communication is just as important.

Everyone is on face book, twitter you have friends that you hardly even know, but the different forms of communication. All of these way of communicating. The verity makes it so much better. The more we do it builds the support network of friends and family. The more you put yourself in the situation amongst those with a common interest, then you can help each other through the hard times

**JB:** I just want to add, it is good to have a routine but make sure you don't make it a rut. A rut is doing something over and over and it is just not fun or enjoyable anymore. Make sure you make a routine of stuff that you like to do. If you are in a rut, it is 10 times a worse

**SHS: We are about out of time. Does the panel have anything to say to those reading, at home?**

**MD:** I want to give a shout out to my wife and kids. I love you and miss you. I also want to give a shout out to Jake

**JG:** Jake the dog?

**MD:** Yes

**JG:** Obviously I want to say that I love and miss my wife and Hi to my boy.. I don't have a dog. Just two cats. Carlos and Ricky

**MR:** to my wife I do love you. Despite what you think, sometimes.

**PM:** I just want to say, abbey I love you. And tell my girls, Leah, Emily and Zoe, I love you. And let everyone know back home that we are praying for you and let you know that it is absolutely critical for your support back home. Because we know, if you can't make it, then we can't make it to also let you know that we cherish your support and to let you know how important it is



## 19th Engineer Battalion Kandahar, Afghanistan



## Chaplain's Corner



### 19th EN BN Primary Staff

BN Executive Officer  
MAJ Joseph Lehman



BN Operations Officer  
MAJ Daniel Segura



BN Adjutant  
2LT Brandi Smith



BN Intelligence Officer  
CPT Megan Conrad



BN Logistics Officer  
CPT Troy Miller



BN Signal Officer  
1LT Thomas Lopez



### HOW TO MAKE IT IN ONE PIECE

To our Seahorse family: that is, to the soldiers of the 19th EN BN, to their spouses and children, and to those who faithfully support our efforts here in Afghanistan. I write these words to offer encouragement in order to endure the remainder of this deployment. First, a very special thanks for all those involved in sending care packages and goodies to the soldiers over here (see pictures).

We begin the seventh month of this separation knowing that we have five more to go. Many have taken their R&R to see their loved ones, but many still suffer the stress of the separation. Spouses and family members are probably taking this harder than the soldiers; however, we soldiers react to the stresses back home. When things are out of control for our families, things get out of control for us soldiers. What can we do?

Well, we could all go home, but that would jeopardize the mission and ultimately our jobs in the Army. That would cause MORE stress (financial, medical, you get the idea). So what is it that we truly miss about being together with our families? If you are like my wife, Abby, and I, you miss each other's company. Those long talks help us release the tensions of the day: how the kids misbehaved, how the pets misbehaved, and how life just seems to be against us for a season. Talking with a good friend about frustrations is absolutely important, so find someone to confide in: friends, family, FRG's these are all good support networks. Ideally, the more we talk things out, the easier they are to handle. Remember, we are all in this together. One team, one fight!

The one thing that I find most effective to remember when things get out of control is this: find what I CAN control and point my efforts in that direction. It's disastrous to focus on what we CAN'T fix or CAN'T have. Just watch enough TV commercials about new cars and you will find yourself wanting a new car. Then you become frustrated because you can't afford a new car. Before you know it, life is miserable because you don't have a new car and that OLD car of yours just makes things worse. You see how there is no hope in dwelling on what we don't have or cannot have, yet if we redirect our efforts on what we DO have - the extra cash per month without another car payment, the beauty of the car we already have (if washed and cleaned) - then we can laugh away those silly car commercials and be satisfied with what we CAN control.

All that to say this if we learn to trust others with our concerns and worries, we find strength in community and if we remember that we redirect our efforts in what we CAN control in life then we'll be able to make it through the separation in one piece. We will be able to endure and at the end of the deployment, we'll truly be ready to receive our dearest ones without blame, guilt, or disappointment. We'll be able to cope, in control, and better able to chase our dreams in life (and even chase our lovers around the bedroom). =)

God bless you all as you continue to endure. Trust yourself, trust others, and trust God during all of life's heartaches.

Taking Hold of Today and Looking Forward to Tomorrow, CH McDonald



**Above:** HSC & FSC Soldiers enjoying a "Turkish" Thanksgiving at KAF. A special Thank-You to SGT Treves for welding the Battalion an impressive grill that will be used for future celebrations!

### Rear Detachment Commander's Corner — Alpha Company Gators

October was a great month for the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. We struck the half-way mark of the Battalion's 12-month deployment to Afghanistan. We all hope that it will be "all downhill from here." Additionally, thanks to the 16<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment and generous sponsors, we were able to host the First Annual 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Spouse Appreciation Day. This event was a huge success and provided the spouses of deployed Soldiers an opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves at Stithton Baptist Church. After a day that included sumo wrestling and self defense classes, I can say for certain that the home front is safe. We closed October with a Battalion Trunk-or-Treat which saw lots of goblins, ghouls, and even Wall-E take to the parking lot to strut their stuff.

The Holiday Season promises to be just as much fun for the families here on Fort Knox. Lots of folks have signed up for the Thanksgiving Assistance from the Red Cross and we appreciate the Red Cross's support of this event. In December, we will have a Battalion Christmas Party at Camp Carlson. This pot-luck event will be guaranteed fun for everyone. Then, we'll have a Saturday morning march from the Battalion Area to the Red Cross to drop off toy donations. I encourage everyone to participate in these events and to have a wonderful Holiday Season. Cheers!

Gator 6 — CPT Turbeville



**19th Engineer Battalion  
Kandahar, Afghanistan**

**19th EN BN Holiday Party**

**When:** December 11, 2009

**Time:** 1700-2000hrs

**Where:** "Carson Hall" at Camp Carlson

**Fun:** Kids face painting, crafts and games for kids, games for spouses, may door prizes, and much more fun!

**Food:** Potluck Competition, there will be prizes for the food competition. Turkey and Ham will be provided by the FRG.

**Toy March**

**When:** December 12, 2009

**Time:** 1000hrs

**Where:** Marching from BN (back parking lot) to the Red Cross and back to BN. (Buses will be provided if you choose not to march back to BN)

**Bring:** One NEW toy to donate to the Red Cross. (Do not wrap the toy, do not attach a card, do not attach a name)

Children are welcome to participate in the Toy March

**Food:** Water, coffee and donuts will be provided in the BN classroom after the march.

**Upcoming FRG Meetings:**

**HSC—December 5, 2009**

1800-2000hrs

Pritchard Chapel

**FSC—December 8, 2009**

1800-2000hrs

BN Conference Room

**15th EN CO—December 8, 2009**

1800-2000hrs

McDonald @ Radcliff

**76th EN CO—December 17, 2009**

1800-2000hrs

BN Conference Room

**502nd MRBC—December 8, 2009**

1730-2000hrs

Annex

Truck or Treat FRG Halloween  
Celebration at Fort Knox!



**19th EN BN FRG Leaders**







# THE SEAHORSE STANDARD

