



The Pacemaker



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Dear Pacemaker Families and Friends,

There isn't a day that goes by when I marvel at how tough and determined our Soldiers are. I just spent five days at FOB Tiger, Construction Base Kodiak, and FOB Pacemaker with the Command Sergeant Major Lewis. Although each of the FOBs have Soldiers from different units doing different things, they're joined in spirit by the fact that they're working on one project – the Kandahar to Tarin Kowt Road. The locations are austere and simply getting a shower is a luxury at times. The days are long and dust filled but I never heard one complaint unless it involved getting the resources or materials to complete the mission. I'm truly humbled to be working beside this great group of Soldiers. Every Soldier family should be immensely proud of what your Pacemaker Soldier is doing. I've often told Soldiers in formation that the long-term American presence in Afghanistan can only be shortened by building the infrastructure that the Afghani people need. Our Pacemakers are the largest group of American Soldiers investing in that required infrastructure.

I'd like to welcome a new senior leader in the Task Force – Major Craig Quadrato. Major Quadrato comes to us from Fort Leavenworth after completing his intermediate level education as an officer. He looks forward to his experience with the 864th Engineer Battalion and Task Force Pacemaker as we continue our mission in Afghanistan. His wife Christie is settled in Dupont, Washington with their new daughter.

Sadly, Major Tony Adams departs in the first week of August after two deployments and nearly two years of separation from his family. He's been a strength in our Task Force and battalion, making us successful in training, deployment, construction and in combat conditions. I'll miss him very much and wish him the very best as he assumes his duties in the Office of the Chief of Engineers located in the Pentagon.

It's hard to believe one-third of our deployment is already over and we're feverishly planning for the return home and our activities at Fort Lewis in March of 2006. It's also exciting to start working with our replacement unit from Fort Bragg, NC.

Next week we'll see the first visiting party that will start the planning process for their rotation starting in March 2006.

Finally, I'd like to encourage your support for our "Welcome Home Dinner" that the FRG is planning a few weeks after we get home. It should be a great event that will allow the deployed Soldiers an opportunity to recognize

all of the great supporters we've had during this deployment. It will take quite a bit of effort and support but I'm confident we'll have a first-class event with everyone present.

Warmest Regards,

PACEMAKER 6

Pacemakers,

Hi everyone! Well, today we have reached a milestone. We have not only have caught up, but we've moved ahead of our estimated schedule on the road. We are in the green! With a little over a month and a half to go, the finish line is in sight. It may be too early to be gloat, but there are many folks who said we couldn't do it. Your soldiers are proving them wrong. We will finish ahead of everyone's schedule. I may be counting my chickens before they hatch but I've got faith. Great job Pacemakers!

So what is going on back there on the home front? Are you all getting much news on the Task Force? Please don't forget that we have a Task Force website and your Family Readiness Groups are always available for you to check in with. I hope we have kept you informed of what is going on over here.

I must say I that I am grateful for your efforts in keeping these fine young men and women able to focus on the work here. We have not had any major family issues that you have not taken care of for us. Families back home have been true team players. Our success is all because of you.

So what other milestone have we hit? The Kodiaks have hit the half way mark! Wasn't it a short time ago we all though a year was a long time? As you can see, it goes by fast when the team is busy. Folks are focused on what they are doing, and people are having a great time. Next month the Wildcats will be hitting that same milestone, and then the Pacemakers and Roughnecks in the following month. At this rate, we will make quick work of the next six too.

Well team, I've got to go see some road built. The summer is a long way from being over, so go enjoy some more of it. Oh! Stay away from those darn hurricanes; they don't go well with having fun.



MAJ Adams, CPT Parranto, and CSM Lewis observe Kodiak soldiers hard at work below; Photo by 1LT Laura Walker



Pacemaker soldier receive a convoy and safety brief prior to heading out on the road; photo by 1LT Laura Walker

PACEMAKER 7

C/926th “GC Platoons are Top Security”

By 1LT Omari Robinson

In all the talk of earthmoving and road construction it is easy to forget those who take a back seat in order to support the mission. In a time when the Army is stressing the “Warrior Ethos”, it’s good to see carpenters and electricians in charge of security. Team Cougar security is led by 2LT Roy and SSG Flanary. Cougar security teams are the first vehicles to leave in the morning and the last to return in the evening.

A majority of the soldiers who are now on security spent their first few months in country doing construction on FOB’s at Laghman, Matr Lam, and Ripley. When the 25th Infantry Division left this past spring, and was not replaced, it fell to many support units to pick up the slack.



Cougar 6 & Animal 6 discuss work with LBG, the Indian Contracting company working behind TF Pacemaker on the TK Road; Photo by 1LT Laura Walker

Though a few of our soldiers actually claim to be highly-trained “grunts”, most of our engineers have done an outstanding job of securing the TK road jobsite. They handle the 50 cal machine guns and MK-19’s with as much skill as they do their hammers and skill saws.

When asked about the biggest challenges security faces, 2LT Roy says “covering a large area and communication with local nationals.” There are no traffic laws here and many of the local nationals are getting their first driving experience on our road. They love to drive fast, which is a hazard to the safety of



Average Load for a motorcycle in Afghanistan; Photo by 1LT Laura Walker

our soldiers. Also, many of the Afghan people don’t understand signs or barriers, so part of the security element’s job is also to control the flow of traffic. When asked what was

the weirdest thing they’ve seen while running the checkpoints, 2LT Roy quickly responded, “A pickup truck with 15 people on it.” Not an uncommon site here.

Another critical security team are the Sappers of A/391. They leave each morning before most of us have even left our cots. The route clearance team, led by SSG Decatur, not only keeps the roads safe from IEDs and mines, but assists in the security of the jobsite as well. All in all, the security for Team Cougar, despite all the challenges it has faced, has done an awesome job of protecting the safety of their buddies building the road.



Cougar and Animal soldiers work together to chain a downed Scraper; Photo by 1LT Laura Walker

SET THE PACE!

Calling All Pacemaker Families!

- Do you have a suggestion for the Task Force website?
- Want to send a picture or a message to your loved one in *The Pacemaker* ?
- Have a great idea for supporting Task Force Pacemaker?
- Just need to be added to the distribution list?

If you are interested in contributing to *The Pacemaker*, assisting in the redesign of our website, or have a good idea you’d like us to hear, please contact 1LT Laura Walker via e-mail at laura.walker@kaf.afgn.army.mil. All submissions are welcome!

A/864th "The Creation"

By 2LT Shai-lin Ynacay

It all started with a huge convoy, 46 vehicles long, heading out to Forward Operating Base Pacemaker. A normal eight hour trip took us seventeen! Murphy was with us that day as we faced multiple maintenance issues. The trip could have quickly turned dangerous, but A/391st detected a planned ambush and neutralized the threat before the enemy could take action.



Somebody's got to do it: Alpha Company Soldiers on waste burning detail at FOB Pacemaker; Photo by 1LT Sara Cullen

Arriving at the planned location we realized quickly that it wouldn't work as planned. The perfect square that had been FOB Pacemaker required an enormous adjustment due to the existing terrain; enormous waddis all around! . SGT Saechao, one of the surveyors, and I worked all through that night to redesign the original plan into something we could use on the available land. What a



The "moon dust" makes difficult working conditions; Photo by 1LT Sara Cullen

night; working on the hood of a my vehicle, wrapped in mosquito net, having the only light around for miles while designing the base. The final plan was no longer a square, but in the shape of a rocket, airplane or as I saw it, a women's shoe. The helipad shaped the heel, the arch held the showers and laundry and the field artillery area occupied the pointy toe. Some say it has a woman's touch...?

Thus began the creation of FOB Pacemaker. The next day and every day since then, A Company, 864th has inexhaustibly labored and con-

tinuously sweated in order to successfully complete the construction of FOB Pacemaker. The journey was complete but the experience had just started.

THE ANIMAL EXPERIENCE...

The first week was spent under the beautiful sky, underneath millions of bright stars, looking at Milky Way. During the day, soldiers were building , and at night, they ensured everyone's safety by pulling security. Between construction and guard shifts, there was not much time for

HOME SWEET HOME... FOB PACEMAKER



rest for the soldiers.

The first things constructed were berms for force protection, the Animal tent where operations are conducted and, the essential latrine. A berm is just pushed up dirt at a height of 9 to 10 feet. On a deployment where there is no plumbing, we use what we call "burn-out" latrines. We burn the waste as the best means of purification and cleanliness.

Once construction started going the soldiers quickly became professionally HESCO Bastion constructors. Those amazing and expensive contraptions make protective guard towers, bunkers, and barriers for living areas, eating areas and work areas. The HESCO's we've set-up range from 2' in height to 7' in height.

The wind and dust have proven to be both an irritation and a hindrance to our construction. However, the larger annoyance that began in the past two weeks is the infestation of cicadas! These large locust-like bugs swarm around you constantly. They love to pummel their huge bodies onto your back, in your shirt or on your face and flutter their floppy wings around.

Overall, the construction has been successful.

We've been very flexible, adjusting as necessary, and plans for the FOB are now finalized. Soon, we will be joined by our earth-moving platoon and the FOB construction will be complete. Through all the dust, heat, and bugs, there is still the beauty of this land and the thought of family and friends back home that keeps us positive and keeps us hoping.

ANIMALS SET THE PACE!



Animals work on the HESCO's at FOB Pacemaker; Photo by 1LT Sara Cullen



SSG Gadsen and SGT Rojo fill the water buffalo from a local well; Photo by 1LT Laura Walker

A/391st "Take a Break!"

By 1LT William Mohr

Even with their busy schedule, the members of First Platoon (1/A/391 EN BN) still find time to relax at Kandahar Air Field. When the platoon is not in the minefields, free time consists of any activity that can help reduce the stress. One of the most popular stress reducing activities is to go to the gym. SPC Nathan Moose said it perfectly when he belted out, "You can not have a keg, so you might as well have a six pack!" Most of the platoon had similar answers after asking them the question, what exactly goes on during the "personal hours?"



SPC Shane Gregory probes for a mine at KAF... After days like this, relaxation is important; Photo by SPC Milton Leon

SSG John Brown explained his hierarchy of free time, "Reading, watching movies, and working out." Not all of the guys have such a regimented plan during their down time. For example PV2 Scot McIntyre enjoys going to the MWR (morale, welfare, and readiness) room to try and contact home. Others in the platoon seem to have mysterious secrets on how they reduce their stress. The platoon sergeant, SFC Jamie Burkholder, once again seems to know more than us all when he casually responded by telling me he spends his free time, "fishing and hang gliding." When asked when and where these events were held there was the usual wink and coy smile; the response was ever fitting, "I do it with the Romanians."

Other than pumping iron and visiting the MWR room, watching movies seems to be a favorite relaxation technique. "The Hajji movies are great because you can buy five movies on one disc for two dollars" exclaimed SGT Anton Hiett. Hiett, first platoon attached medic, likes to watch his pirated movies and play X-Box in his spare time. It has been noticed that many members of the platoon like to challenge Hiett, or attempt to challenge him on the game system. Another fellow gamer is PFC Chris Greene, "I like to play PlayStation because it relaxes me." The most popular game that is played is Halo-2; it is an interactive Army game that allows multiple people to play at the same time. Sometimes it gets a little rowdy during the Halo battles. I guess even in the platoon's free time they still want to be in the "Army" or at least a virtual Army.

One popular Saturday morning event is to visit the local bazaar. The bazaar has many interesting items for sale and some of these trinkets might even become gifts for you



SPC Brandon Elliott shows off new tools; Photo by SPC Jason Black

lucky few. The platoon was faced with another difficult question; what is the most bizarre item sold at the bazaar? SSG John Brown states, "The oddest item at the bazaar is the scorpions that are buried in a clear acrylic." For all you investors out there, I am not sure the ten dollar scorpion paper weight market is that successful. However, the market continues to thrive with each new wave of incoming units. According to SSG Thomas Lear, "The neatest thing at the bazaar is the antique weapons because of their unique shapes and designs." Not only do the weapons bring top dollar, the black market jewelry seems to also be a top seller. PFC Chris Greene adamantly explains, "I have



Some motivated Roughnecks in front of Task Force Pacemaker Headquarters; Photo by SPC Milton Leon

not bought a fake Rolex yet, but the false brand sunglasses might become a purchase in the near future." There is one sale item that everyone agrees always seemed a little out of place. SPC Andrew Walsworth agrees that "the women's chain mail lingerie" seems to make everyone's head turn. I guess there's something for everyone at the bazaar!

“HSC/864th Populates the Battlefield”

By 1LT James Sakai

Where are the Soldiers of HSC? We are on every Forward Operating Base (FOB) that Task Force Pacemaker has soldiers. From FOB Tiger, to Ripley, Pacemaker, or Kodiak you will always find a Soldier from HSC.

HSC supports the road effort on all fronts. At newly established FOB Pacemaker we have a few surveyors, some communications specialists, and SPC Daniel Garcia from the Battalion Aid Station. All of them work alongside the Animals to keep them headed in the right direction.

HSC is also present at FOB Ripley where SFC Sherman Walker leads half of EQ platoon out on to the road everyday. SPC Jennifer Hedges provides medical support, our cooks work long hours to make sure every soldier gets the best meal possible, and there is never a lack of work for the mechanics.

At FOB Tiger
1LT Jonathan Fallin

leads the other half of EQ alongside Charlie Company, 864th, working on the road from the south. The soldiers of EQ are on the road each day while the TAC, aid station, & DS maintenance shop work from FOB Tiger to support their efforts.

Finally, here in Kandahar, there are soldiers from each section coordinate logistical support for their battle buddies out at the FOBs. They ensure that those away from KAF still have hot chow, showers, supplies, and equipment. All of the things necessary to make our mission a success! The Headquarters and Support Company is spread all over the battlefield doing it's job for the Task Force.



HSC Soldier stands guard over FOB Tiger; Photo by SPC Douglas McDonald



CPT Parranto meets with local villagers; Photo by SGT Christopher Olson

Commander, CPT Greg Parranto continues to run security operations out of FOB Tiger, ensuring safety of the soldiers working on the road. FOB Tiger will soon be used as the forward logistical hub for all operations. 1SG Mario Powers has been all over the road, taking care of soldiers at every location and assisting at FOB Tiger to keep things running smoothly.

Recently we've had several new additions to the HSC family. 1LT Jenn Austin is now the assistant S3-C and 1LT Laura Walker took over the S-5 job. 2LT Justin Groza, just arrived from the states and is already out at FOB Tiger assisting with base operations.

Wherever your soldier is, you can be certain that they are well taken care of and motivated about completing this road in the very near future. Thanks for the continued support from home; you are in our thoughts always.

ROCK STEADY!

Did you know...?

The name Buzkashi, means "goat killing". It comes from hunting mountain goats on horse-back. Today the rider (or team) who is able to pitch a dead calf across a goal line first wins. The game may last as long as a week. Wrestling matches always accompany Buzkashi because usually a hand to hand fight followed a cavalry campaign. Buzkashi horsemen wear thick hats, quilted dresses, long boots and wind strong scarves around their waists. According to unwritten rules of the game, nobody can tie the carcass to his saddle or hit his opponent on the hand to snatch the calf. Likewise, tripping an opponent by using the rope is forbidden. The Afghans play for very high stakes and take the game very seriously. It is not uncommon for riders to continue in the game with cracked ribs, broken limbs and various head injuries.

Fact from:

<http://www.afghan-network.net/Culture/buzkashi.html>

SPORTS IN AFGHANISTAN; BUZKASHI



Equipment Platoon at the borrow pit; Photo by SPC Joshua Maggard

C/864th "Keep on Rollin"

By 1LT Nova Martin

Rollin' is exactly what the Kodiaks are doing. We are rolling down the same road that we are building to create Fire-Base (FB) Kodiak. C/864th plus elements from HSC, 391st, and 504th are pushing their efforts further up the road. The construction of the new FB will increase our productivity since we won't have to drive so far to reach the jobsite. With the change in locations, we will undoubtedly complete the road by the suspense, if not ahead of schedule.



T Clifton Hall works with SPC Jeremiah Sides at setting up a tent at the new Fire-Base; photo by CPT Kim Gage

Within a twenty-four hour period visions of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Tiger faded as the tents, equipment, and Soldiers moved out in order to establish their presence at FB Kodiak. Going in head first and head strong the FB main life support, operations, and maintenance support sections were set up during the first day.

We are leaving a small detachment at FOB

Tiger to provide logistical support and supplies to our teammates to our North. That team will become critical in pushing out logistical support for all of Team Pacemaker. Improvements in the quality of life and FB capabilities will continue throughout the duration of road construction. The Kodiaks

are zoned in on the mission and nothing is standing in their way.



A squad of Kodiak Soldiers work on setting up the first of several 36 meter long tents; Photo by CPT Kim Gage

Within a couple of months the road will be complete, the entire company will be back together, and we will be ready for our next mission. We are starting to see the finish line! Preparations are already underway for getting all of our Soldiers and equipment back to Alaska safe and sound.

**Take Care!
Kodiaks**



SGT Chadwick Neuleib re-enlists. CPL Richard Taylor and PVT Kofi Hevi hold the flags; Photo by 1LT Matthew Schwind

B/864 "Squad in the Spotlight: 1/EM/B"

by 2LT John Colledge

Toss any problem that Afghanistan can muster up in the path of the 1st Squad of Bravo Company, Earthmoving Platoon and they will overcome it. When the Bulldogs first landed in Bagram, Afghanistan, the company looked to one squad to take charge of pushing out the company's equipment. 1st squad stepped up and flawlessly pushed out every piece of equipment that landed in Bagram. After tackling that mission, 1st Squad joined up with the rest of the company in Salerno. Shortly after arriving, SSG Pearson, the 1st Squad leader was challenged to once again step up as Platoon Sergeant. SGT Chadwick Neuleib, in return, accepted the challenge of being the 1st Squad leader.

The squad immediately began assisting in the ongoing missions on the FOB. CPL Richard Taylor stepped in right away as second in charge of a massive project creating an ammunition holding area composed of four large earth berms and redirecting a major river bed on the FOB. SGT Neuleib took on the mission of forming the ground preparation for a third helipad strip. SGT Joseph Fulgaro was tasked almost daily with various crane missions. SPC Curtis Wilson, SPC Kenneth Hudson, PFC Thomas Chartier, and PVT Kofi Hevi have all carried the weight of operating in every project the EM platoon has taken on. They are currently creating various pieces of the Orgun-E to Sharana Road. In the approximately 10 kilometers that have been completed, 1st Squad has made an impact on every part. Keep up the good work Doh-Doh's!



CPL Richard Taylor and SPC Curtis Wilson pose on the helipad; Photo by 2LT John Colledge

BULLDOGS!