



TASK FORCE PACEMAKER 864TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION (HEAVY)

HISTORY ON THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM
OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM VI
30 MARCH 2005 - 30 MARCH 2006



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On 30 March, Soldiers from Alpha, Bravo and Headquarters Support Companies (HSC) of the 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) (ECB(H)), stationed out of Fort Lewis, Washington boarded C757 chartered commercial jets at McChord Air Force Base (AFB), Washington for their deployment to Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) VI. These Soldiers wore their Desert Combat Uniforms, with individual body armor, advanced combat helmets, carrying their weapons and one OD green flight bag.

The Soldiers departed McChord AFB and arrived to their first stop in their long journey to Afghanistan, Bangor, Maine, approximately six hours later. After an hour and a half break, the Soldiers re-boarded the plane for another six hour flight to Hahn, Germany for another re-fuelling stop. From there, it was on to Incirlik Air Force Base, Turkey, which was the Soldiers' first official hazardous duty zone of the deployment. A two hour break in Turkey was followed by a four hour flight to Manas, Kyrgystan, where the Soldiers departed the aircraft and unloaded all of their baggage. Civilian aircraft does not fly into Afghanistan, thus from this point, the Air Force took over the responsibility of transporting the Soldiers and all of their baggage and equipment on their C130 and C17 cargo flights to Kandahar and Bagram Air Fields in Afghanistan.

Air Force personnel stationed at Manas welcomed the Soldiers of the 864th ECB (H) and offered them the use of their facilities. The Soldiers received beds in a clam shell tent, a brief overview of the base rules, and were then released to take the shuttle from the airfield to the mess hall for breakfast. Just two hours after landing, 54 Soldiers were offered seats on a C130 along with a cargo shipment to fly to Kandahar Air Field (KAF). Those 54 Soldiers, primarily key personnel, such as the Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major, A Co. and HSC's company commanders and any staff officers that were not part of the Advanced Party, left for their final destination to KAF.

Bravo Company headed to the north-east region of Afghanistan and had to wait for a flight to Bagram Air Field to connect to Salerno, Afghanistan. The remainder of the Battalion, however, was stuck in Manas for 10 days waiting on a flight to Kandahar. This was primarily due to a sudden snow storm in Manas and daily dust storms in Kandahar.



Soldiers sleeping in the waiting area of McCord Air Force Base.

April 2005

On 1 April, the lucky 54 Soldiers that made it straight through to Kandahar arrived to receive their in-processing briefs. They were then transported to the transient tents, where they claimed a cot and collected their duffel bags and ruck sacks to settle in. They took a day to adjust to the time change of 12.5 hours from Fort Lewis and quickly began to get to work, meeting with their counterparts from the 528th Engineer Battalion out of Louisiana, for whom they will be taking over. The Soldiers quickly fell into a routine, conducting physical

fitness in the mornings and doing their various jobs in the afternoons. These jobs included cleaning up the motorpool, maintaining the equipment that had already arrived from Fort Lewis, and conducting Relief in Place (RIP) procedures with the 528th.



Soldiers on board C130 bound for Kandahar.



Soldiers in Manas AFB clam shell tent.

HSC/ A Company

Ten days later, on 10 April, the main body of A/864th and HSC met up with the rest of the Battalion in Kandahar and quickly fell into the same routine. The trail party, consisting of about 10 Soldiers, was left in Fort Lewis to push out the rest of the equipment that did not fit on the flights and tie up the loose ends that needed last minute attention. The trail party arrived in Kandahar on 14 April to join the rest of the Battalion. A and HSC/864th met up with C/864th stationed out of Fort Richardson, AK, C/926th Engineers, a US Army Reserve Unit from Huntsville, AL, the 298th Engineer Detachment of the Hawaii National Guard, and A/391st Reserve Light Engineer Battalion from Ashville, NC to form Task Force Pacemakers.

In April, Task Force Pacemaker performed a Transfer of Authority ceremony, in which they officially took over the responsibilities and operations of the outgoing 528th Engineers. This ceremony consisted of Task Force Pacemaker uncasing their colors and presenting them in the Fraise Chapel on KAF, while the 528th rolled up their colors and cased them for transport back to the United States. Task Force Coyote's Commander, COL Nancy Wetherill addressed both units, and Task Force Pacemaker's Commander, LTC Paul Paolozzi addressed the Pacemaker Soldiers, explaining his expectations of excellence, energy, and commitment to service.



LTC Paul Paolozzi, Task Force Pacemaker Commander, and CSM Neville Lewis, Task Force Commander Sergeant Major, uncover and unfurl the colors of the 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), signifying the start of their command.

On 14 April, 1st Platoon, A/864th began work on the KAF MP/CID Building. 1st Platoon had to completely tear down the existing construction, as the previous unit gutted the building prior to their departure. There were many tasks involved in the building of this facility. 1st Platoon had to design and re-wire the entire electrical system, and design and build a complex column portion of the building. They also designed and welded an evidence room out of scrap materials, (as the chain link fence in the plans was insufficient), installed shelving and counters in rooms, as well as an exterior porch; all of this with no formal plans to work from. In addition, they inserted stud walls into all of the second floor rooms and put up partition walls in all the rooms. 1st Platoon constructed all partitions and doors, installed all electrical lighting fixtures, switches and duplex receptacles, as well as changing all ceiling and wall fixtures to double 48in. tubing. They mounted 30ft. x 30in. wood frame Plexiglas windows in existing window openings and constructed a frame wall with a door to enclose the outside edge of the patio by the staircase. They conducted considerable masonry patchwork on both the interior and exterior walls, as well as patchwork on the floors and front steps. They also installed a smoke detector in each office, as well as a one-way mirror in the partition between the interview/interrogation and witness viewing room on the first floor. A great amount of time was spent painting, as 1st Platoon had to paint the entire building from top to bottom.

The mobility ramp at KAF was a concrete extension to the Kandahar International Airport, which will provide a greater maneuver area for large aircraft, as well as an increased number of parking areas. Construction began on 15 April with Second Platoon, A/864th working alone on both the earthwork and the framework for the mobility ramp. This required a great deal of hard labor and ingenuity, as Task Force Pacemaker had to overcome several problems during the mission. One of the biggest problems they encountered was that their power screed broke and the screed process had to be completed by hand. This required the Soldiers to tie ratchet straps around their waists that were secured to a level wooden board, placed across the concrete and then pulled across the section of concrete they were working on. Other Soldiers ensured that the board stayed level as it moved across the wet concrete to create a flat, level surface. The 2nd Platoon, A/864th Animals, did all this expertly and expeditiously as the temperatures in Kandahar began to top 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Due to the rise in heat index, the concrete prematurely hardened, which made the float and finishing process extremely challenging. The Soldiers often worked 10-14 hour days and even incorporated a 24-hour work schedule, using a rotation system. In all, the Animals placed 1,146 cubic yards of concrete in only 14 placement days.



2nd Platoon placing concrete on KAF for airfield expansion.



SGT Bridges pulling the screed.

B Company

While waiting for a JMR flight into their final destination of FOB Salerno in early April, 1st Platoon, B/864th Bulldogs volunteered to do a B-hut carpentry mission in Bagram. This mission involved constructing 8'x10' partition walls in three different B-huts. There were two walls in each B-hut, for a total of six walls. Each of the three squads in 1st Platoon constructed two partition walls in a B-hut.

B/864th was tasked with sending a vertical squad to begin construction of a 350-Soldier marine base camp in late April. The base camp improvements were to last about one month. Second squad, 1st platoon excelled while working in a joint environment, despite the tough living conditions and extreme difficulties with transportation and logistics support. When the Bulldogs arrived in Jalalabad, there were no phone or internet capabilities, no laundry facility, showers only every three days, and only MREs for meals. In less than a month, the squad constructed 25 tier three tents, four guard towers, a 20'x20' chaplain's office, and an additional 20 tent floors for force protection facilities. In addition to carpentry missions, they ran power and lighting in 20 tents, constructed and ran waste lines to three leach fields, and executed various plumbing missions around the base camp. The 2-3 Marines were forever grateful for the great quality of life improvements that the Bulldogs constructed for them.

In April, one earth mover from B/864th was sent to Sharana, Afghanistan to receive equipment and perform various horizontal missions at the FOB and the nearby Sharana PRT. There were many small horizontal projects that Sharana needed completed. Beginning on 26 April, SGT Pullin of the EM Platoon began work on the various missions. He completed a burn pit, created a local national access road and improved many of the roads throughout the FOB with a grader. He also built a jogging route. The bulk of SGT Pullin's efforts were focused on constructing a helipad site within the Sharana PRT. He spread and compressed approximately 500 LCY of material. In his spare time, he also assisted vertical mission in building and transporting trusses.

In addition to the horizontal missions needed at Sharana, vertical mission were also essential for the FOB; the first being a need to upgrade the roofs. A squad of vertical Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, B/864 was sent to Sharana on 20 April, to construct wooden truss roofs. The nine man vertical construction squad equipped with various carpenter tools successfully built four truss roofs for buildings with an average size of 26'x48'. The squad worked a total of 1,872 man hours during this twenty-six day project. The squad's hard work improved the quality of life and living conditions of the Old Legion Base. Afghan National Army Soldiers used the buildings.

In April, B/864th was tasked with improving FOB Salerno. Their improvements consisted of building a new sewage system involving two lagoons, maintenance facility slabs made of concrete, and a north entry control point. They also constructed helipads, a basic load ammo holding area (BLAHA), communication vaults, concrete wadi crossings, and a maintenance clamshell pad. Finally, an AM2 Matting runway was required, in order for C130 aircraft to land at FOB Salerno.

Due to sewage problems at FOB Salerno, a new sewage system involving a lift station and piping, running from the latrines to two massive lagoons was designed. The sewage would first drain into one lagoon, and then once that was half full, a pipe would drain the excess into a second lagoon. Finally, the sewage would then drain out into a leach field, where the solids would settle and the liquids would evaporate. This mission started on 11 April, with B/864's EM Platoon creating the second sewage lagoon on FOB Salerno. This consisted of the squad sized element removing 15,815 LCY of spoil, spreading 3,410 LCY of sand, and working a total of 273 man hours. The mission was complete in just two weeks and resulted in two complete lagoons on FOB Salerno, the first capable of holding 3.62 million gallons and the second capable of holding 4.1 million gallons.

FOB Salerno had problems with communication lines being cut. Due to heavy rains, all NIPR/SIPR and DSN phone lines were buried underground but kept coming up. In order to correct the problem, there needed to be stable, weatherproof centralized locations for lines to be distributed out of. B/864 was tasked to construct ten concrete "commo vaults" located in convenient spots for units to get internet and phone access out of. Starting on 18 April, 1st Platoon constructed and placed ten 5'x4'x5' underground communication vaults. For each vault, the platoon prepared the site, dug the pits for the vaults, built and placed the base, rebar and outside wall forms, and placed three cubic meters of concrete. In addition, they ran trenches at least three feet deep in

between vaults, for the lines to run. These vaults improved conditions at Salerno by allowing all units to sustain reliable communications throughout the deployment. Several wadis came in and out of the wire of FOB Salerno, causing force protection problems during flash floods. Debris would get caught in the existing concertina wire along the wadis and would sometimes breach the inner wire, as well. In order to prevent this from happening, 2nd Platoon was to construct concrete wadi crossings so that the vertical rebar would catch the debris, and the concertina tied into the top of the rebar screen would not be affected. This mission included the placement of three concrete wadi crossings, which would tie into the chain-link fences along the perimeter of the FOB, so there would be no breaks in the perimeter. The concrete had to be deep enough under the ground so that the water would not “undercut”, and erode the ground away. 2nd Platoon completed all three wadi crossings in just over two weeks. Each squad took one crossing, and together they worked a total of 429 man hours and poured a total of 203 cubic meters of concrete. The three crossings were up to 125’ long, 16’ wide and 4’ deep.

Due to an influx of troops on the FOB, a need arose to construct new maintenance facilities. B/864th was responsible for constructing the concrete slabs necessary for maintenance personnel to have a clean and safe worksite. The mission included the construction of 20 concrete pads that were 12in thick, 36ft long and 18ft wide. These slabs would accommodate four different units: Engineers, Direct Support mechanics, Marines, and Organization maintenance teams. Each unit would receive five slabs that they could use to construct B-huts on or place maintenance tents over. This mission was planned to be executed in four phases. Before leaving FOB Salerno, B/864 was able to finish two. During Phase I, 2nd squad of 2nd Platoon, emplaced 80 cubic meters of concrete for five slabs with wire mesh in two weeks. Phase II was completed by 2nd squad 1st Platoon in just two weeks. The 36ft by 18ft by 1ft slabs were constructed with a broom finish and were the starting point for the Salerno Maintenance Facility.



2nd Platoon B/864th, emplacing concrete for one of the five slabs.

FOB Salerno’s main entrance and exit point was the North ECP. Prior to 1st Platoon’s construction, there was only a serpentine and one gate that allowed vehicles in and out of the FOB. Due to the amount of traffic on the FOB, an improvement needed to be made. A wooden pole barn was constructed prior to the Bulldog’s arrival, along with a personnel search area. 1st Platoon was tasked with constructing the concrete pad underneath the pole barn, to include two vehicle search pits. This mission involved the construction of one large 12in thick concrete pad that sat directly under the pole barn. The two inspection pits were 25’x3’x6’, located on each side of the pole barn for the entry and exit points of the ECP. In just three weeks, 1st Platoon finished placing all three concrete pads with four access ramps; a total of 48 cubic meters of concrete. They first dug out and created formwork for the two concrete pits to use as vehicle inspection aisles. 3rd squad designed a safety curb around each pit which included speed bumps, and an access ladder made of rebar.

FOB Salerno was the home of the 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment and a small section of the 12th Attack Helicopter Regiment. At any given time there could be up to 21 helicopters parked on the FOB. Concrete helipads with taxiways were required to improve the safety and durability of the aircraft for the helicopter units. This mission involved the construction of three concrete strips with dimensions of 44'x555'x1'. Each strip would be able to park seven helicopters with mooring points for securing and rods for grounding. The mission would be conducted in three phases with each strip being a phase. The three strips were constructed between the months of April and July.

Phase I was completed by an eight Soldier squad in 1st Platoon. They placed a total of 297 cubic meters of concrete in two days, finishing what the previous unit left for them. Phase II combined the work of EM and 2nd Platoon. EM skillfully prepared the ground and raised the 555ft long strip with 4ft of earth material and gravel. Once the ground was level, the nine Soldiers of vertical construction squad completed the concrete pad in 18 working days working 2,120 total man hours. They placed a total of 688 cubic meters of concrete while precisely positioning the mooring and grounding points. Phase III was conducted in the same manner as Phase II by 1st Platoon, again in a short amount of time. Thanks to the Bulldogs, the aviators of Salerno now have three working helipad strips to more easily land and transport personnel, equipment and mail. In addition to the three strips, B/864th constructed a ramp from the edge of strip #2 to the hospital road so that medical personnel had a direct route to the MEDEVAC helicopter.

The previous ammunition supply point (ASP) on Salerno did not meet the requirements for standoff distance away from troops and equipment. It also was not properly grounded. B/864th changed the ASP to only a BLAHA and relocated it so that it was properly grounded and a safe distance away from the motorpools and living areas. This mission called for four massive earthen berms that were each 408 feet long. Two of the berms were to have fingers cut out of them for ammunition storage MILVANS to be placed in. The other two were for blast protection. Each berm was designed to be ten feet of compacted earth material of various widths.

On 13 April, parts of 2nd Platoon B/864th flew from Salerno to Orgun-E to construct multiple roof systems. There were a total of four buildings that needed new wooden trusses with tin emplaced and another six buildings that were in need of tin only. The roofs varied in size but on average were 30'x82' which required 77 plywood panels and 198 sheets of tin. The ten Soldier vertical construction squad, equipped with various carpenter tools including two skill saws, one reciprocating saw, one miter saw, one compressed air nail gun, and one air compressor, successfully built the four wooden truss roofs, placing tin on a total of ten. This was all done in just over a month, with a total of 2,400 total man hours. The new roofs proved to be weather resistant and did not leak through the last part of the rainy season.



1st Platoon B/864th, placing concrete for North ECP in FOB Salerno.

C Company

C/864 and C/926 were already working on the main mission of the Task Force; the Kandahar to Tarin-Kowt (TK) Road and operating out of the FOBs in Regional Command (RC) South. C/926 operated out of FOB Ripley, the furthest north along the TK Road route, and C/864 operated out of FOB Tiger II, the southern most FOB along the TK Road route. The vertical platoons of A/864 and the 298th Engineer Detachment began vertical construction projects on KAF, and Sappers from A/391 began demining the area around KAF for future expansion. A/864th and 298th Earth Mover (EM) Platoons, Equipment (EQ) Platoon, along with some of HSC/864th Maintenance Soldiers and route clearance packages from A/391 moved out to aid C/864 and C/926 with road construction.

298th

25 April, 20 Soldiers from the 298th Engineer Detachment were tasked to build ten 20'x30' steel group observation cells for the detainee facility on KAF. These cells came in kits as cages, however, the 298th had to properly space their measurements to fit all ten cells in the facility. Actually emplacing the cells consisted of drilling holes into the concrete floor in order to bolt the base of the cage down. The Soldiers also had to alter one of the kits, in order for it to fit into a smaller space that the pre-arranged package would allow. They had to place locks and locking mechanisms onto the doors of the cages, requiring a considerable amount of welding and metal work, done by KBR. Finally, the 298th Soldiers emplaced three toilets in the facility, as well.



298th Soldier building cages on KAF.

May 2005

The main mission of Task Force Pacemaker for the first half of the deployment was to finish building the TK Road. It is a 123.4 km, two-lane highway, connecting the provincial capitals of Kandahar and Tarin-Kowt. It is the hope that this road will help the Afghan people better their trade, their voice in government and their lives. The 528th EN BN worked for ten months, completing a respectable 51km, until Task Force Pacemaker took over operations. Shortly after this handover, the deadline for road completion was moved forward by five full months so the Afghan people could use the new road to travel to polling places for the elections scheduled for 18 September 2005.

HSC

With 72.4km of road to finish in less than five months, the leaders of Task Force Pacemaker, LTC Paul Paolozzi and CSM Neville Lewis, decided to split the Task Force into two teams. Team Kodiak consisted of C/864's EM Platoon and half of HSC/864's EQ Platoon, with culvert crews coming from C/864's vertical platoons, while Team Cougar consisted of C/926's and A/864's EM Platoons, and the other half of EQ Platoon with culvert crews coming from C/926's and A/864's vertical platoons. Team Kodiak worked out of FOB Tiger

II, constructing the road from south to north, while Team Cougar worked out of FOB Ripley, moving north to south. Small elements of the 298th Engineers worked for both teams, operating heavy equipment. The route clearance packages (RCPs) of A/391 also operated out of both locations, clearing the road each morning for the horizontal construction teams.

A Company

On 15 May, 1st Platoon A/864th finished their work on the KAF MP/CID Building. This mission was completed two weeks ahead of schedule with a cost of \$249,430. Without a day of rest from their last completed mission, 1st Platoon joined 2nd Platoon on 18 May for the completion of the mobility ramp mission.

B Company

On 10 May, 3rd squad, B/864th, EM Platoon began work on creating the BLAHA, to be located in the eastern portion of the FOB. They moved tremendous amounts of fill from the wadi outside of the FOB to level the ground. Once the ground was level, they began on the largest berm which was to be 143 feet wide and ten feet high. Although they could not finish the project due to new missions, the Bulldogs completed a quarter of the project, rerouting the wadi to avoid flooding and moving a total of 25,950 LCY of earth.

FOB Salerno's initial plans called for four maintenance sections to be constructed. The massive clamshell pad was located in the engineer maintenance section and was planned to be used as the foundation for a clamshell structure, anchored to the pad. It included the construction of one smooth finished concrete pad with dimensions: 210'x120'x10", the ends were to have sloped ramps so vehicles could drive in and out of the clamshell with ease. 1st Platoon, B/864th began construction on the large concrete pad on 13 May. With a little over a squad, the unit completed the mission approximately one month ahead of schedule. The squad used motorized finishing machines in order to obtain the required smooth finish and worked with EM Platoon to create the difficult sloped ramps on both ends. They placed and finished over 600 cubic meters of concrete in two days.



Left to Right: LTC Paolozzi, SFC Brekke, Lt Col Thomas, and CPT Sui-tonu cut the ribbon on the mobility ramp.



Second Platoon poses for a group picture after the ribbon cutting ceremony on the mobility ramp.

298th

On 13 May, 298th Soldiers finished their mission building the observation cells for the detainee facility on KAF.

June 2005

A Company

The original estimated date of completion was set for 26 July by the 528th Engineers. However, A/864, aided by Soldiers from the 298th Engineer Detachment, who leveled the earth began making incredible progress and finished the mission on 23 June 2005, over a month ahead of schedule.

On 23 June, the ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the mobility ramp with the vertical platoons of A/864 and some Soldiers from the 298th. They were joined by Task Force Pacemaker's Commander, LTC Paul Paolozzi and the KAF Air Force Lt. Col. Thomas; both of whom had words of appreciation and gratitude for the hard work and dedication shown by A/864 and the 298th Soldiers. This mobility ramp is of great importance to the future needs of Afghanistan, as the airport is supposed to become international, and this ramp allows it to do so, opening up travel and commerce to a land-locked nation used to isolationism.

B Company

In early June, Task Force Sword tasked B/864th to help build a small base camp near the town of Gayan, Afghanistan. It was to be home to a Special Forces unit that interacted with the Afghans often. A squad sized element from 1st Platoon took the mission of designing all of the structures, as well as building them, entirely by themselves. Because the base was carved into a mountain at a 7000ft altitude, its location presented many challenges, including having to use donkeys to transport BOM to mountain-top jobsites. In three weeks, the squad constructed guard shacks, two guard towers, installed wiring and electrical outlets in 14 B-huts and one shower facility, installed a washer and dryer system, identified FA gun positions, extended the septic system, designed a layout and installed waterlines for the base, and designed a vehicle entry gate for local contractors. Once supplemented by a small maintenance team, they were also able to repair several generators and freezer containers, service all wheeled vehicles, and design the FOB electrical grid. The squad also served as liaisons with local national contractors, providing QA/QC to HESCO-bastions and more than six brick and mortar facilities.

C Company

With the biggest limiting factor being the travel time between the FOB's and the actual road construction site, the Task Force came up with a plan to build a new FOB. This new FOB would be located between FOB Tiger II and FOB Ripley. In addition, the FOB will shorten the travel time, and allow more time for the operators to actually work on the road. Thus, on 27 June 2005, FOB Pacemaker was born. During the construction planning process of the FOB, (estimated to hold both teams and a majority of the Task Force Staff), Team Kodiak realized that they could not wait for the new FOB to be built. So they decided to build a small Construction Base (CB) for their operators and maintenance teams to live and work. This became Construction Base Kodiak.



Aerial view of Construction Base Kodiak.

Both teams worked incredibly hard, making record time with their construction efforts. The units worked 7-day work weeks, with Soldiers rotating on a “Low Battle Rhythm” (LBR) day once a week, and breaking for maintenance only for a half a day, on Saturdays. Thus, Soldiers had to ensure that they were conducting proper PMCS’s on their equipment every morning and during each shift rotation. Team Kodiak had enough Soldiers to operate in shifts, thus increasing their work-day by 4 hours, while decreasing the amount of time the Soldiers were actually out on the road. Team Cougar did not have that luxury until they moved to FOB Pacemaker in July, where A/864th’s EM Platoon received 6 vertical engineer Soldiers from 1st and 2nd Platoons of A/864th, who volunteered to operate the heavy equipment and work on the road. Task Force Pacemaker also received some additional support from infantry platoons helping with security, thereby allowing for more engineers to operate equipment, rather than pulling security on the road.



Sgt Davis, Sgt Krauss of A/391st, standing in front of the Caspire, a device used for demining.

A 391st

On 26 June, the two vertical platoons of A/864, along with a majority of their operations section, command team, 1st Platoon, A/391, and part of Task Force Pacemaker’s Construction Operations Section, which included the assistant S3C and a team of surveyors, departed KAF for FOB Tiger II on a ground assault convoy (GAC) to begin their next mission of building a new FOB from scratch to facilitate the TK Road Mission. After spending one night at FOB Tiger II, the unit continued their GAC to the location of their new FOB (Pacemaker). Upon arrival at the designated location, just north of the village of Tanuchey, Afghanistan, the company realized that the terrain was not at all what they had anticipated. Instead of a large flat open space, they found a space that contained several hills and wadis, causing the Task Force’s surveyors and assistant construction officer to quickly revamp the layout of the FOB, in order to not waste any time in beginning construction of the force protection.

Upon arrival at what was to be FOB Pacemaker, 1st Platoon, A/391 swept random areas of the location, to reduce any mine/UXO threat at the FOB. After sweeping over 300 meters by hand, the Soldiers did not have a single hit. They then visually inspected the entire FOB for any potential UXO/mined areas and found none. After this, they incorporated the use of the Husky (demining device) and swept an additional 3000 meters. There were no hits for the Husky as well, so they deemed the area free of UXO and mines. After completing their initial mission, the Sappers of 1st Platoon aided A/864th Soldiers for the next week in building FOB Pacemaker.

The first step in the process of constructing FOB Pacemaker was creating the berms for force protection surrounding the FOB. Soldiers from A/864 EM Platoon were temporarily pulled off of the road construction efforts, in order to assist the vertical platoons with this task. As the berms were being constructed, 1st Platoon began work on the bunkers that were required for a FOB the size of Pacemaker, and 2nd platoon started construction on six of the seven guard towers that protected the FOB, with 1st Platoon, A/391 constructing the seventh. 1st Platoon, A/391 also put up over 1000 meters of triple strand concertina wire. During this time, the headquarters section of A/864 was in charge of pulling security for the construction forces. Once the force

protection was in place, 1st Platoon began working on the five living areas of the FOB, 2nd Platoon finished the guard towers, a TOC was erected, and Soldiers were able to put up the tents. A mess hall area, gym, helipad, MWR tent, and medic tent followed closely behind. 1st Platoon built a small yet ornate chapel which added some character and a sense of home to the FOB. The last items to be built were the tent floors and the showers.

FOB Pacemaker eventually housed all of A/864, C/926, the 44th Signal Soldiers who provided communications to the FOB, as well as half of HSC's EQ Platoon, a TAC for Task Force Pacemaker and maintenance Soldiers, in addition to several cooks and eventually the 5th Maintenance Support Team. Several infantry units from Task Force Bayonet would enter the FOB to sleep under the protection of the berms and the guards pulling security in the towers. Members of Task Force Pacemaker lived at the FOB for two to three months, and it will be handed over to the Afghan National Army, upon completion of our missions in that area of RC South.



EM Platoon, B/864th constructing a road outside the Orgun-E city gates.

July 2005

B Company

Once the main body of B/864th arrived to OE on 1 July, 4th Platoon was immediately tasked with drainage improvement, requiring them to cut a large trench to divert mountain run-off outside of the camp, rather than through it. The platoon cut a large wadi redirection which blocked water from flooding the FOB. With a scraper and three dozers on the mission, the newly attached platoon finished the mission in two days.

B/864th Bulldogs began the OE to Sharana road on 5 July. B/864th's EM Platoon was augmented with a Heavy Equipment (HEQ) Platoon from Task Force Wildcat and began working on the road right away, beginning at the city gates of Orgun-E and working westward through the OE Riverbed toward the mountains. Local nationals were also hired by the Bulldogs, which aided them in construction, as well as public relations. Each day, the horizontal assets of the EM and HEQ Platoons consisted of six D7G dozers, three scrapers, six five ton dump trucks, six graders, four bucket loaders, three rollers, a water distributor, and several trailers with low-boys.

Both platoons started working together, initially, doing both cut and fill, grading and shaping, compacting, and borrow pit operations. In July, EM Platoon laid and compacted over 5,500 LCY of fine material and shaped the road from scratch, cutting and filling approximately 55,000 LCY of earth material. HEQ Platoon started with the technically challenging finish work involving drainage, grading, and compaction near the OE city gate. They laid and compressed nearly 4,000 LCY of fine material and completed approximately two kilometers of ditching, to ensure flood waters would not destroy the road and the city. Towards the end of July, the two platoons split up, with EM doing the dozer and HYEX heavy cut/fill operations and HEQ staying behind and laying the important fines to seal the road.



A 391st

Demining the KAF Perimeter was the first priority on KAF during the months of June-August. A/391's Heavy Equipment Platoon was tasked with this mission alone first but was joined by 1st Platoon, A/391 in July. While demining the perimeter, HEQ had reduced over 115,000 square meters, detonated over 65 mines, and found numerous UXO through the month of July. The mission was temporarily halted in July when local nationals became upset with the fact that the new KAF perimeter went through their land and fields. After Base Ops worked the proper political channels and resolved the issue, HE platoon returned to the mission with an interpreter and ten Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers for security. Reduction complete, minus "watermelon fields."

In July, 2nd Platoon A/391st continued to operate their three RCPs. Two supported Task Force Pacemaker, along the TK Road. The primary mission for these two squads was to clear the route of IED/mines every day, prior to construction and then provide job site security for the EM and EQ Soldiers. Other missions for the month included GAC escorts (nearly every Task Force Pacemaker GAC), recovery for breakdowns, serving as the TK Road Mission's quick reaction force (QRF), and IED investigation, security and reduction. 1st Squad operated out of FOB Tiger II, and 3rd Squad operated out of FOB Ripley. 2nd Squad was attached to Task Force Bayonet, to provide route clearance for them in the vicinity of FOBs Lagman and Wolverine. They provide route clearance for Bayonet engineers building the Lagman-Sweeny Road, as well as maneuver units in the area of operations (AO).

On 8 July, 1st Platoon, A/391 Roughnecks were tasked with removing a known Soviet mine line at a site near the KAF known as GR-7, in an attempt to expand the base. First, Ronco Demining, a company out of Africa, reduced the area in front of the mine line by rolling a thirty meter wide area. This allowed the Roughnecks to safely remove the steel planking that was used in the mine line. 1st Platoon A/391 manually swept the area at GR-7, making remarkable progress, all the while, running its own TCP's and air traffic coordination. Towards the end of the month, mine dogs aided the efforts of 1st Platoon in reducing a lane for a road that was intended to be used to divert traffic away from area GR-7, for safety purposes.

August 2005

B Company

First squad and part of Second squad, 1st Platoon, B/864th worked together to place an AM2 Matting runway, measuring 650 feet long by 90 feet wide. In all, it consisted of 325 rows of matting emplaced in only three and a half days. The mission started on 27 August and was completed by 31 August. The groundwork, completed by the 1224 EN BN from Guam, and final inspection took up the remainder of the five day time period that the runway was closed for construction. These two squads worked hard, directing the crew of Local Nationals, supplied by BASEOPS, to compensate for having only half a platoon, due to other missions. They began work every day at 0200Z(0630 Local) and worked until sundown, carrying the 144 pound panels from the pre-staging area to the runway. Despite the challenging working conditions, these Soldiers completed their

mission well ahead of schedule. The new runway was later renamed Walker Airfield in memory of 1LT Laura Walker, former platoon leader of 1st Platoon, who was killed in action on 18 August.

In August, B/864th EM Platoon continued to drive forward, cutting new road over very mountainous terrain, and HEQ started placing the final cap with locally purchased gravel. The two platoons began to operate entirely separate of each other, due to the large distance between the two job sites. They each provided their own internal security with crew-served weapons mounted on up-armored vehicles, as well as providing internal traffic control points to reinforce the Afghan National Army check points on the outsides of B/864th's internal security. EM cut approximately ten kilometers of new and upgraded road into the side of the mountains and over ridgelines with dozers, redirected the river in several locations with the hydraulic excavator, took out two incredibly sharp turns by filling over 10,000 LCY of earth, and emplaced three steel culverts. HEQ started using local nationals to their advantage and directly controlled locally purchased gravel and eight water trucks to use for wetting before compaction. They ensured that the road was wide enough for two large trucks to drive simultaneously on, as well as capped the road complete, placing approximately 12 km of the larger #5 gravel and finished about 5 km of the final finer #3/4 gravel. By the end of August, the Bulldogs completed approximately 15 km of road.

107th

In August, the Task Force received an additional Sapper platoon from the Michigan National Guard. The 107th, Yoopers, as they liked to be called, conducted security missions on and around the TK Road, as well as the FOB's and CB Kodiak. Without this additional support, the Task Force would have had to decrease their number of operators on the road, reducing their productivity.

With the construction of FOB Pacemaker and CB Kodiak, production on the road doubled, and the Soldiers of Task Force Pacemaker went from being approximately 7% behind schedule to 4% ahead of schedule in a matter of two weeks. Two weeks after that, the Task Force got even further ahead of schedule, at 8%.

On 2 September, just shy of two weeks ahead of schedule and nearly five and a half months ahead of the original completion date, Task Force Pacemaker finished the TK Road and began remediation efforts, to ensure that it would last through the severe seasons of Afghanistan. Remediation efforts consisted of extra ditching along the sides of the roads to aid in run off during the rainy season, emplacing culverts along the road to prevent the road from being flooded in the winter, and additional grading and compacting in certain areas.



PFC Lucas of the 107th, pulling security for the TK Road construction.

September 2005

HSC

September was another eventful month for everyone in Afghanistan. The TK road was finished before the 15 September goal, national elections on the 18th of September, and the departure from FOB's Tiger, Pacemaker, and Construction Base Kodiak kept everyone in HSC/864th busy. HSC/864th was back together for the last part of September for the first time in a while. Parts of the DFAC, aid station, and the Yoopers helped close down FOB Tiger. Now that they're back, they're joining the rest of the company for a rest and refit period before the move east.

EQ/864th kept busy getting themselves and their equipment ready to move east. This has been a full-time job during their rest and refit considering the amount of equipment their platoon has. Supply has been constantly working all of the supply issues to get Soldiers ready for the next mission. The medics have been teaching classes to the different sections within the company to prepare them for the winter. Of course, they've also been busy issuing Soldiers doxy pills. The DFAC stayed out at FOB Tiger until the end of the month, which meant that in between meals they were busy packing up to come back to KAF. The staff sections were busy preparing for the Task Force's next mission. In addition, the TAC moved back to KAF from FOB Tiger. The S-3 section also worked the plans to close down FOB's Tiger and Pacemaker. 2LT Wandstet took over A/864's EM Platoon and CPT Cullen replaced her as the Task Force S-5.

A Company

The month of September brought A/864th together at KAF for the first time since April. The EM platoon assisted C/926 in the closing down of FOB Pacemaker moving back to KAF for refit operations. First, second, headquarters and maintenance platoons completed their refit operations preparing for a pending movement to Gardez which later changed to PRT Sharana.

While waiting for mission directives for the movement east the vertical platoons stayed busy doing vertical projects in the Task Force area. 1st Platoon A/864th constructed a monument for the road closing ceremony with incorporated artwork from the 298th. 1st Platoon also finished up burn latrines and two guard towers for placement out at PRT Sharana. The big project for 1st Platoon was their second pole barn, which turned out to be a feat in engineering. With limited scaffolding, a crane, and a forklift, 1st Platoon created an impressive structure a full five feet taller in height than the ones built in past projects. This new pole barn will soon be used for maintenance support here on KAF.



Ariel view of Forward Operating Base Pacemaker

2nd Platoon A/864th completed a guard shack for movement to Sharana and then began on a myriad of squad level projects in the Task Force area. First was the hexagonal gazebo with a span of 20ft in diameter. The angles proved to be a challenge but the end result was impressive. MWR remodeling consisted of expanding the music room, improving the movie theater, and just improving the atmosphere of the entire MWR

complex. The final 2nd Platoon project was the Task Force sidewalks which connect all Task Force buildings which will enable Soldiers to stay out of the mud in the upcoming winter.

C Company

The C/864th Kodiaks began the month of September celebrating the huge accomplishment of finishing the Tarin Kowt to Kandahar Road on 3 September. The fact that the Soldiers completed a project that had lasted the last eight months for them resulted in a bolstered feeling of success for all of the Kodiak Soldiers. Due to the road being complete, there was no longer a need for Construction Base Kodiak. All of the Soldiers in Team Kodiak focused on the tasks involved with closing the base and only leaving a very small Kodiak footprint on the base of the Sha Wali Kot District mountainsides. There was a brief handoff from the Kodiaks to the Afghan Security Force Soldiers, who remained at the site in order to further provide security presence in the area for coalition forces.

After the construction base environmental closeout was completed on 12 September, the Kodiaks returned back to FOB Tiger to begin retrograde and refit operations in preparation for follow on missions in the Task Force. There were over 240 pieces of engineer equipment, over 110 culverts, and over 130 connexes that were required to move back to KAF. There were at least five ground assault convoys and 40 Jingle Trucks each week during the month of September that hauled assets back to KAF. These convoy operations required extensive planning, coordinating (contractual and operational), and aggressive execution while maintaining a very close watch on safety and enemy threat. Upon return back to KAF, the Soldiers slowly began reintegrating back with Task Force Pacemaker and also readjusting back into life at KAF. The company began focusing on a strict refit effort at KAF with the rest of the Task Force that included 20 level vehicle maintenance TI's, inventories, repair of M870 trailer purple heart wood, and detailed maintenance and services on weapons, commo equipment, and other unit components. Additionally, the company had some time to provide a rest period to all of the Soldiers after working the exhausting seven day work schedule for the last eight months.



SPC Gibbs, C/864th EM Platoon

C/926

During the month of September, C/926 ECB conducted a variety of operations. As the road drew to a close the priority shifted from road construction to remediation. This was to ensure that the Nation of Afghanistan was receiving the best quality of road possible. The LBG placed DBST on the grade that had been placed by Team Cougar. The next mission for the company was to shift operations from road building to retrograde operations; which included the closure of FOB Pacemaker and retrograde of all equipment from FOB Pacemaker to KAF. This was done by a mixture of local national haul assets and company organic haul assets. As the FOB shut down, the operational aspects of the company shifted to KAF and the mission shifted to maintenance. Our equipment was cleaned and technically inspected by our mechanics for issues. As these issues were discovered, parts were placed on order and installed when they arrived. Upon full retrograde of

Team Cougar, the Commander released A/864th EM Platoon back to their organic company, thus ending the Company Team. We also made some other changes. The company Rear Detachment was dissolved, due to no longer having a need for such an operational cell with most of the company in one place (1st Platoon had been previously assigned to FOB Sharana). The month closed with the company operating together at KAF to prepare for follow on missions, readjusting to garrison life, and working to clean and repair their equipment.

October 2005

HSC

October was a very busy month for HSC/864th. While no major missions were going on, everyone in the company was getting set for the next mission. By the end of the first week of October everyone, including the Yoopers were back in KAF. While here in KAF there was some company and Task Force cohesion building. Along with catching up on some much need equipment maintenance and personal time; the company also ran several APFT's and two test fire ranges for crew served and small arms weapons. As the company and Task Force continued to get ready for its next mission, an earthquake hit Pakistan and a talk of us providing relief effort was quickly reviewed. In the end, however, we only sent 3 members from staff to do an assessment.

Near the middle of October the sections began to get ready to roll out the gate and get started on projects again. The Yoopers were the first to leave, along with the DFAC section as they escorted A/864th EM Platoon up to FOB Sharana. The Yoopers will be in charge of security there and the DFAC got to work right away doing their job. A few days later, EQ Platoon rolled out with C/864th EM going out to Sweeny. They got set up and started immediately working on the Lagman to Sweeny road with C/864th making excellent progress. The Motorpool and DS section led by 1LT West left a few days later for Sweeny to set up shop and provide maintenance support to Team Kodiak. The TAC cell also moved out to Sharana during these periods followed by the S3-C surveyors.

Meanwhile back at KAF support operations continued on a daily basis. In addition to normal operations, the company and the rest of the Task Force began getting equipment ready for early redeployment. The unit had received enough APS equipment that they could send most of their home station equipment back to Fort Lewis. Several other support movements occurred as well in order to get all of the necessary equipment out to the FOB's.



*The new EM Platoon leader
2LT Wannstedt.*



*CPT Chad Suito leading the troops to
Sharana.*

A Company

In the first few days of October, a portion of the A/864th leadership switched positions. CPT Sara Cullen left the company's Executive Officer position for a position on Task Force Pacemaker staff. 1LT Patrick Sullivan moved from A/864th EM Platoon leader to the Executive Officer position, and 2LT Elizabeth Wannstedt entered the company as the new EM Platoon leader. Coming into this month, the company was in refit mode at KAF. The vertical platoons finished off the huge maintenance bay in the Task Force motorpool, the gazebo next to the Task Force TOC, some construction in the MWR facility, and a sidewalk connecting all

of the company TOCs to the Task Force TOC. Meanwhile, the EM platoon was getting all of their equipment ready for the next mission.

The first group to start moving to the Sharana PRT was lead by 1LT Sullivan along with one vertical squad from 2nd Platoon, the 44th Signal package, and the support platoon. Once this group got on ground, the vertical squad began to quickly build the company TOC. The next group in route to Sharana was led by CPT Suitonu along with the rest of the vertical platoons. After just a day on the ground, the vertical platoons began making progress. The two A/864th vertical platoons were joined by 1st Platoon from B/864th led by 2LT Darcy Jones and the construction platoon of HHC/391st led by 2LT Michelle Veach. The third group to get on the ground was the EM Platoon lead by 2LT Wannstedt. All of her EM equipment provided the Animals with even more assets on the ground at Sharana. The third group also brought up an important Sapper asset for the security force of the Sharana PRT.

With these four vertical platoons and the EM Platoon, the Animals first focused on force protection. The first priority was the construction of a new ECP, Triple Strand Concertina wire completely around the perimeter, and the construction of five guard towers. Using their own operators, who gained vital experience from the last missions, the vertical platoons were able to use the company's bucket loaders in order to get all of their HESCOs filled. With two vertical platoons working on force protection, the other two platoons continued to get the living areas ready for more personnel. The Animals built 32 K-spans in living area two. The insulation team insulated those 32 along with an additional 16 from living area one. KBR lead a electrical team made up of their electricians in order to give electricity to all 32 K-spans in living area two and 8 K-spans in living area one. The electrical team also set up enough Whilms Heaters to sufficiently heat all 64 K-spans in the PRT expansion. Once these projects were completed, the vertical platoon started the construction of the MWR in a 20' x 100' building, the C-Hut for the Task Force offices in 32' x 89' building, four maintenance pole barns (72' x 30'), and two maintenance offices (18' x 32'). The EM Platoon also worked on many FOB improvements. They finished the ground work on the fuel point, which has a capacity of 80,000 gallons. They did the earth work for the motorpool, which enabled the company to move connexes into the new motorpool. They dug the sewage line for the new showers and latrines. They are not quite completed with the water lines from the well to the showers and latrines, and they are still working on placing and filling HESCOs around the FOB, where they are needed.

While The Animals have only been on the ground for a few weeks, they are making great progress. Many new buildings are going up, and a lot of progress is being made on a daily basis. The next month has The Animals continuing the construction of the expansion as well as starting the road from Sharana to Gardez. By the time winter hits the Sharana PRT, The Animals will have this area set up to be a great place to spend the cold winter months.



SGT Lovely of 1st Platoon, working on electrical wiring.

C Company

October began with C/864th spending their final days at FOB Tiger in the Shawhi Kot District approximately 60 miles north of Kandahar City. The Kodiaks occupied FOB Tiger shortly after arriving to Afghanistan in February of 2005, and used it as their base of operations for construction of the Kandahar to Tarin Kowt Road and civil affairs missions. The close-out of FOB Tiger included retrograding almost 200 pieces of equipment and 100 containers, tearing down tent accommodations for over 250 people, and closing down TOC and ORG/DS motorpool operations.

Upon returning to KAF, the company conducted refit and recuperation following eight months of continuous construction, security, and FOB support. This included inventory of company property, conducting technical inspections on all vehicles and equipment, handling administrative issues, participating in several unit runs, and giving Soldiers an opportunity to relax. Soldiers welcomed the luxuries that KAF provided such as three hot meals a day, PX access, MWR facilities, and indoor plumbing.

Leaders also used this time to plan for the follow-on mission for construction of the Lagman to Sweeny Road and expansion of FOB Sweeny. However, in the wake of the devastating Pakistani earthquake in early October, the Kodiaks prepared to provide humanitarian aid to Afghanistan's eastern neighbor. Upon further evaluation of this mission, higher echelons of command determined that movement to Pakistan was not the best use of the Kodiaks valuable engineer assets. Instead, focus turned back to FOB Sweeny and the Lagman-Sweeny Road in an attempt to complete the majority of construction projects prior to the setting in of winter conditions.

On 17 October, Team Kodiak began the first of three movements to reposition personnel and equipment nearly 120 miles to the east at FOB Sweeny. Immediately upon occupying FOB Sweeny, coordination began with the Able Company from the 173rd Airborne Infantry Brigade, and FOB improvements were underway. By the end of the first week, the engineer equipment motorpool was established, work started on Section 3 of the Lagman-Sweeny Road, Able Company provided all security on the FOB and jobsite, the vertical platoons broke ground on the first of 18 B-huts, and Charlie Company was fully integrated into operations at FOB Sweeny.

By the month's end, both road construction and erection of B-hut exceeded the production rates required to complete the all projects prior to moving back to KAF for redeployment. The equipment platoon for HSC/864th is providing valuable borrow pit support for the road project while a direct support maintenance element is helping to keep equipment on the job-site. As the vertical platoon finish the final insulated B-huts that will accommodate Soldiers throughout the winter, they plan for restructuring FOB Sweeny's electrical grid and constructing a new MWR facility and DFAC to further enhance quality of life on the FOB.



A/391st, placing targets in a new training device.

A/391st

For the entire month of October, 1st Platoon A/391 has worked at the GR-7 site. Incredible progress was made throughout the month mainly because of the attached 67th Mine Dogs. Over 17000 square meters of the new airport parking area were cleared. The platoon averages about 1000m of mine line daily and because of this hard work, coalition forces are able to continue construction on their new airport ramps. These new ramps

that are being constructed by the British and the Dutch will allow 6 Harrier Jets (England) and 6 F-16's (Netherlands) to park in a previously unusable area. The bypass road was also installed by KBR to allow traffic to continue to go around the outer perimeter. KBR also installed a bazaar parking lot on our cleared area. The GR-7 site has had a lot of construction and many cubic yards of dirt have been moved, and to date there have been no explosions of any kind.

November 2005

HSC

The month of November was a great month for HSC/864th; everything was back together after the rest and refit period in October and became fully employed with supporting C/864th on construction of the Lagman to Sweeny Road and supporting A/864th with the construction and establishment of FOB Sharana as the next Pacemaker Base of Operations. On Thanksgiving Day we enjoyed a wonderful dinner wherever we were: Sharana, Sweeny, KAF or BAF. Our cooks up at Sharana and Sweeny did an excellent job of treating their fellow Soldiers to a dinner they will not soon forget. Also, the Task Force commander was kind enough to give us all a low battle rhythm day, so most of us were able to relax a little and enjoy the holiday.

At FOB Sweeny, EQ Platoon finally had the opportunity to work as a complete unit, after being divided for the previous six months, and proved that as a united force they are simply unstoppable. The road construction out of Sweeny moved forward at an unbelievable pace and set the stage construction to be complete well ahead of schedule. Also at Sweeny our two cooks, Specialists Chiasson and Shreves, integrated into the DFAC operations there and assisted in providing quality food support. The surveyors and medics worked a regular schedule and more than met the needs of everyone on the FOB. Our DS and organizational maintenance teams, under the leadership of 1LT West, SSG Smith, and SGT Bradley are working very hard to stay on top of the ever demanding challenge of keeping our equipment on the road and out of the motorpool. Fortunately, they worked off a schedule that allowed one day a week to be fully dedicated to maintenance.

As for FOB Sharana, construction is continuing to move along at a rapid pace. The largest HSC portion of this construction was completed by the Yooper Platoon. They took the mission of constructing the majority of the force protection structures. They established a new and improved ECP and took over 24 hour operations of this facility. Additionally, they were able to move all of the Soldiers into K-huts prior to the onset of winter.

At KAF the work returned to normal, however there was still a lot of work to be done with only a few people. With the majority of the company's support assets out executing and supporting missions, the Soldiers remaining at KAF supported them by pushing supplies, parts, equipment and personnel. They also managed leave dates, flights, property, and preparation for redeployment. The troops cleaned and prepared 75 pieces of HSC equipment to go home, and passed them through customs. The departure of this equipment made it much more manageable and will make their final departure preparations in March easier.



SPC Shreves cooking omelets at FOB Sweeny.

A Company

For the month of November, A/864th has been extremely productive in the Province of Paktika. Working out of the Sharana PRT, the two vertical platoons along with 1st Platoon B/864th have been making great progress on the Sharana expansion. At the same time, the EM Platoon has been out on the road building a by pass route around the city of Sharana. Every day progress has been made inside and outside of the wire.

For the vertical portion of The Animals, the Sharana PRT is becoming more and more habitable every day. The biggest accomplishment this month was the completion of all the water and sewage lines inside and outside the PRT. One small plumbing team with a little help from KBR dug, placed, and buried all of the water lines for two separate living areas, the DFAC, and two additional areas inside the PRT for showers and latrines. This task was not an easy one. The 500 feet of trench needed for all five areas was dug through solid rock. With the use of jackhammers, the separate sewer and water lines were buried four feet deep. Now, all four of these showers and all six of these latrines have running, hot water and a heater going to them. This FOB now has the latrine and shower facilities for more than 600 personnel.

The Animals has worked hard on the showers and latrines, but have also made great progress on new buildings for the improvement of everyone's daily lives. They have a laundry facility that is up and running for Soldiers to wash and dry their clothes. They have also made great progress on the MWR Facility and Chapel, which will be completed next month. Along with the completion of the initial ground work for the gym expansion, and are working diligently to get it finished as soon as possible. All of these new facilities will greatly increase the morale of the Soldiers here at PRT Sharana.

Not only have they improved the morale facilities and latrines here, but they have also worked on some force protection and life support. The HESCO perimeter was completed by placing 4ft HESCOs on top of the seven footers, thus decreasing the visibility and chance for direct fire on the PRT. A/864th has also placed 54 bunkers around the PRT expansion living areas. This will provide more protection against an indirect fire attack. For life support, they have completed a generator shelter in order to protect the energy sources from the harsh environment. They have also finished the ground work for a pump house, which will protect the well and the water storage system from the elements. With these necessary improvements, the occupants of the FOB will definitely be safer and more comfortable this winter.

Near the middle of the month of November, the A/864th EM Platoon received the mission to build a bypass around the city of Sharana. This road would enable military vehicles to go north to Gardez without traveling through the middle of the city. It would also allow the road construction vehicles to bypass the city every day on their way to the jobsite. This 3.5 km bypass will keep our military vehicles farther from an area that could potentially become dangerous. In a short amount of time without much material near the road, the EM platoon greatly improved this route for all traffic.



1st Platoon B/864th constructing K-huts in Sharana

B Company

November was an even more eventful month for the B/864th, Bulldogs. With all of their assets finally moved to Sharana PRT, they could now focus on new vertical missions there, as well as completing their road construction from this side. The Bulldogs would also return to Task Force Pacemaker on 1 December of this

year, so they took the end of November to tie up loose ends on the Orgun-E to Sharana road with Task Force Wildcat, and transition to another road mission with Task Force Pacemaker.

1st Platoon B/864th finished the construction of their 65 K-huts at the beginning of this month, and continued on with the Sharana vertical expansion OPCON to A/864th. The projects they started in November included the Task Force Pacemaker TOC C-hut, the Sharana Medical Station, and the Sharana Chapel. By the end of November the Sea-hut was 90% complete, and the other two would be completed in mid to late December. 1st Platoon continued to do outstanding work for A/864th.

2nd Platoon B/864th wrapped up their QA/QC of the concrete drainage structures and started on building partition walls to improve the quality of life for Pacemaker Soldiers. At the end of November, 2nd Platoon had supervised the local Afghani emplacement of 70 concrete drainage structures. The over 100 local nationals constructed causeways, culverts, and low water crossings along the OE to Sharana road all under 2nd Platoon's watch. At the end of the month 2nd Platoon had constructed partitions for over 20 K-huts, which assisted Soldiers in having their own privacy and personal space.

B/864th EM Platoon cut the final section of road on 15 November, culminating the 50 kilometers of cut/fill operations. For the rest of the month they made final touches to the whole road starting from OE and going all the way to Sharana, improving drainage, seaming in low water crossings, and widening the road in several locations with a civilian rock breaker. On 30 November, EM designed and constructed an expedient HESCO causeway, which solved a drainage problem 2 kilometers from Sharana PRT. EM is looking forward to their two week refit period, and then they will join A/864th on the Sharana to Gardez road. B/864th HQ Platoon made huge strides to get all of the small and large gravel laid on the remainder of the road. The major area that HQ worked on was from Sharana to Sar-Haweza (truck stop). They laid an average of 50 loads of gravel per day and closed on the truck stop prior to December. The road was finally finished and the surface was outstanding. When LTG Strock, Chief of Engineers, visited in late November he was impressed at what a great job the Bulldogs had done. Now that the road was complete and the missions were done with Task Force Wildcat, B/864th Soldiers now look forward to the new Task Force Pacemaker missions of the Sharana to Gardez road and the construction of Construction Base Paul Smith.



C/864th, 1st and 2nd Platoons completing construction on B-huts in FOB Sweeney

C Company

During the month of November, C/864th Kodiaks were engaged in construction of the Lagman to Sweeny Road and vertical efforts in support of Task Force Rock at Forward Operating Base Sweeny.

Construction on the Lagman to Sweeny Road crossed the Lora Rod River and began its journey towards to Dab Pass, averaging just over 400 meters a day and completing over 8 kilometers of finished road. Team Kodiak worked in conjunction with CADG to build a temporary river crossing at the Lora Rod River to allow for unimpeded retrograde of personnel and equipment for FOB Sweeny following the completion of construction mission.

On FOB Sweeny, 1st and 2nd Platoons made significant progress on the Sweeny Expansion construction mission. All 18 B-huts were complete by the mid-month, and construction began on the new dining facility. With a conglomeration of efforts between both platoons and extensive prefabrication, the structure of the

building was near completion by month's end. Despite this being the first vertical construction effort during the deployment, First and Second Platoon's carpentry skills quickly progressed as they completed their projects ahead of schedule.

Team Kodiak conducted three ground assault convoys from FOB Sweeny to KAF to provide class IV and class IX re-supply, deliver mail, transport construction equipment, and move personnel between each respective location.

As the month came to a close, efforts began to shift towards retrograde of personnel and equipment from FOB Sweeny and redeployment to Alaska.

December 2005

HSC

Even without the events that create the hustle and bustle of the Holiday season in the U.S., the month of December proved to be a very busy month for HSC/864th Rock Steady, just the same. December marked the beginning and end of projects, reposition of troops, clean-up and reorganization for re-deployment, and the continued personal and professional accomplishments of HSC Soldiers.

The Company started operating two substantial missions from two separate locations. CPT Parranto spent most of his time and hung the HSC colors in KAF while managing the personnel from every company's element remaining in KAF to re-deploy their respective companies; which was no small feat. 1LT Austin moved to oversee CO operations in Sharana as well as work with SSG Weist to establish Base Operations in Sharana. 1SG Powers moved between both locations and covered down on all troop care. HSC essentially begun running two Company HQs and worked to establish all policies and procedures to run an installation of about 700 personnel.

The EQ Platoon with their maintenance and direct support attachments along with a medic team and cook completed their mission on the Lagman-Sweeny road project they were building with C/864th. Burrow pit material proved to be better than expected and with EQ's first-class operators the 65km road was finished in record time. EQ, DS, MNT, Medics, and the cooks did not miss a beat or take a break before loading up and making the two day trip from Sweeny to Logman and then onto Sharana.

The MNT and DS Platoon continued to be fully employed. They continued to furiously work and put priority on getting all APS equipment FMC for the follow-on unit as well as make some final repairs on Ft. Lewis equipment as it gets prepared to ship home. The maintenance requirements for nearly 300 pieces of equipment continued to be an enormous task, but our mechanics were never daunted and continued to uphold a high maintenance standard and ability to accomplish anything thrown their direction. Our medics moved into a brand new aid station and have been working furiously to complete the interior needs and extra touches for operational needs and patient comfort. They began work alongside LTC Jones, PA, and his team of medics from the CMOC here that includes two medics from the Texas National Guard as well as a couple of Marine medics. They have proved to be a large force with great skill and capabilities.



2nd LT Rolling, Yooper Platoon

The Yoopers have been busy with ECP operations at Sharana as well as having run numerous security escort missions to move equipment between Logman and Sharana with the Support Platoon and EQ. They

also began running more roving patrol missions to keep the enemy guessing by conducting unexpected movements and observations. 2LT Rolling, PL along with his PSG, SFC Gibson built all of the interior wall, desks, and offices in the new HSC/BASE OPS TOC.

The HSC cooks had a huge impact on our holiday season here as they provided a large Christmas feast. Under the direction of SFC Krueger, DFAC NCOIC, the Sharana Dining Facility had a 100% improvement in both food quality and dining atmosphere. Christmas dinner included turkey, ham, and rib-eye with all the trimmings complete with shrimp cocktail, egg nog, and sparkling grape juice. Despite being away from loved ones over Christmas, Soldiers seemed to be in pretty high spirits as they were given both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as an LBR. Christmas Eve the company got together a very competitive football team and took on both A and B/864th with a lot of Rock Steady Spirit. CH Gibson and SGT Lowe organized and executed a beautiful candlelight Christmas Eve service which had a very high turnout and really made things feel like Christmas. The music was led by CPT Glenn, S2, and accompanied by SFC Petilo, of the construction shop, on the guitar. On Christmas day all of the officers and senior NCOs of HSC served Christmas dinner and pulled guard duty on two guard towers in order for all the Soldiers to be able to relax completely and be reminded of their hard work and dedication.

Back in KAF, DS, MNT, HQs, and EQ elements worked hard to complete clean-up and re-organization of the motorpool. They were very busy starting the initial re-deployment preparation. LTC Paolozzi and CSM Lewis commended the mass amount of work and improvement made in the motorpool by HSC Soldiers. Although the Task Force's primary mission is now in Sharana, the pace in Kandahar continued to be busy as the element there continued to push and provide support via ground and air.



Sometimes acting 1SG, but most often the motor sergeant of A/864th.

A Company

The A/864th Animals have been incredibly productive throughout the month of December. They've enjoyed the winter holidays by celebrating Christmas, and starting the New Year with a little snow. Productivity has slightly decreased due to the holiday celebrations and inclement weather. Overall, they have acclimated themselves to the change of temperature and continue to carry out their mission. The XO, LT Sullivan went on leave, as did EM Platoon Leader, 2LT Wannstedt. 2nd Platoon leader, 1LT Crossland went on to start her new job as the S5 for Task Force Pacemaker. 1st Platoon leader, 2LT Ynacay, took over as the temporary XO until 1LT Sullivan returns from leave next month. 1SG Pullman returned from leave in mid-December, relieving the acting 1SG, SFC Kampenga, the motor sergeant.

During the month of December, 1st Platoon has managed to finish 4 out of the 5 Pole Barns for Maintenance purposes despite the shortage of BOM materials. Team One has also managed to start the 5th Pole Barn by placing the concrete pad and pre-fabricating construction on the trusses. They finished putting in the insulation for the Maintenance B-Hut which enabled DS to move in immediately. They also worked on putting in the insulation for A and B CO's Maintenance B-Hut. 1st Platoon helped with building the furniture for the office as well. They have also built generator shelters to three large generators near the latrine, DFAC

and guard tower. They also went to all the guard towers to repair the windows by sealing them tighter to keep out the cold winter winds. They began construction on Sea-hut Transit for temporary and permanent residents of FOB Sharana.

2nd Platoon, “Deuce”, has completed construction on the expansion of the Gym and the MWR. They worked diligently on completing the roofing system for 3 generator shelters; as well as constructing noise abatement walls for 2 of the 3 generators. Deuce has also begun to work on the formwork for the 60’x120’ Mantech Pad, and started on the Sea-hut for KBR workers. They have only been able to pre-fabricate gusset plates due to limited BOM. However, they managed to build an office inside the DFAC along with some new furniture for it.

The EM Platoon has also been very productive throughout the month of December. They have been heading the force protection projects for FOB Sharana by keeping a constant watch on the local nationals who work around the FOB. EM set up HESCOs in the FOB and set sand bags for the fuel blivet area. They have also been working on setting up the bunkers as the concrete barriers come in. They have set up the HESCOs around these bunkers and placed sand bags on top for extra protection against mortar attacks. EM has been essential in preparing for construction of the pole barns and Sea-huts. They have done the groundwork for these projects, ensuring the ground is level and well compacted. They’ve also been continuously working on any missions that require the crane support. When EM isn’t working on the FOB, the rest of them are out on the road working with B/864th to construct the Sharana to Gardez Road.

The plumbers and electricians have also been working hard to keep the FOB up and running. The latrines are constantly going down due to the cold weather breaking the pipes, and the plumbers have to keep a constant watch on the plumbing. They got the pump house up and running and just started getting water into the blivet. The electricians are keeping busy with installing lights, outlets and power to the maintenance B-huts, pole barns, gym, MWR and all the other structures that have been built here.

The Animals are doing great out here and really making progress. The leadership has been preparing for redeployment and getting things organized and prepared for the big move back to the States.



Sharana PRT Chapel



Sharana PRT Aid Station

B Company

At the beginning of the month, B/864th completed a full two-week refit period of all their equipment in order to get ready for its next mission. Maintenance, services, and TI’s were completed on all equipment. Full blown inventories of all sets, kits, outfits, and BII were conducted. Numerous personnel issues were made known and many were fixed. B/864th 1st Platoon worked on numerous missions in the past two months while being attached to A/864th. These projects included the 20’ x 80’ Sharana PRT Chapel, the 24’ x 36’ Pump House, 18’ x 60’ Sharana PRT Aid Station, and the 89’ x 32’ 84th BN Sea-hut. On 26 December, the platoon began their newest mission of constructing a 30’ x 72’ Maintenance Pole Barn.

B/864th 2nd Platoon completed constructing four foot walls and shelves in the 65 Task Force Pacemaker K huts. Concurrently the platoon is constructing two snow roofs for 1/508th Infantry Battalion barracks. Each building requires 90 45’ trusses. When this project first began, the platoon experienced many BOM shortages and could only do the knee walls on both roofs. Once the BOM arrived on 26 December, the platoon

immediately began building and emplacing trusses.

EM Platoon began on the 70KM Sharana to Gardez Road on 17 December. The platoon was originally assigned to shaping the road. They completed 1000 meters. However A/864th EM Platoon took over shaping the road and thus B/864th EM began spreading #5 and #3/4 gravel on the road. They have currently spread 5150 meters of gravel. B/864th was also joined by a horizontal platoon from B/37th and HSC 864th EQ PLT. B/37th has conducted an M16/M4 range and is currently conducting driver training on all earthmoving equipment.



B/864th EM Platoon working on Sharana to Gardez Road.

A Company 391st

27 December, the Mine Clearance 1st Platoon has begun a project for Base Operations to clear a 10,000 square meter section of land in front of Tower 16 in order to use the area to park fuel trucks. 1st Platoon has been making quick work of the site and has already reduced the entire area and has begun proofing it. 1st Platoon has also conducted two missions this month through Kandahar to Delak to complete a construction assessment of low water crossings along the Tarin Kowt Road. On the 10th and 22nd of December, 23 Soldiers went on the GAC and to assess that the contractors were correcting earlier problems and had begun pouring concrete. After much discussion, the convoy returned to KAF safely.

On 27 December BAF Logistics Support 1st Platoon was ordered to complete a logistical and relocation convoy to pick up the fixed RG-31 and drop off the 4th RCP. The platoon accomplished the 650 mile trip in four days with no accidents or injuries. At BAF, 1st Platoon successfully picked up miscellaneous supplies and the RG-31 and returned back to KAF safely.

In Sharana the RCP 1st squad supported Task Force Pacemaker in their efforts to construct FOB Sharana and repair the Sharana to Gardez Road. One of the squad's primary missions is to conduct route clearance for all the convoys. This squad has also been critical for clearing the route every week from Sharana to Ghazni in front of the Support Platoon.

Task Force Devil, 3rd squad is attached to the 391st EN BN and they are currently located at FOB Salerno. Third squad is supporting C/926 EN BN and their mission to construct a road from FOB Salerno to Border Control Point 9. They also clear routes for Task Force White Devil and their maneuver units. This month 3rd Squad found three 107mm rockets, off a local national tip, that were aimed at the FOB and connected to a timer. They called in EOD and AH-64 support to destroy the rockets before they could go off. This squad is set to move back to Task Force Pacemaker at FOB Sharana within the next month.

The Mechanical Mine Clearance Platoon has been very useful around KAF in a lot of the quick, smaller clearance missions. During the month of December, the Mechanical Mine Clearance Platoon cleared an area by ECP 3 for a local national parking lot. They have also cleared debris from the road outside the gate to eliminate IED placement spots. Mechanical Mine Clearance Platoon has also begun a project for Base Ops. to clear a 10,000 square meter section of land in front of Tower 16 in order to use the area to park fuel trucks. Mechanical Mine Clearance Platoon has been making quick work of the site and has already reduced the entire area and has begun proofing it.

Support Platoon was busy transporting Task Force Pacemaker construction assets. Support platoon conducted four convoys that moved an incredible amount of building material, heavy equipment construction vehicles, and connexes filled with parts. The platoon operates out of KAF and hauls the required material to Sharana where the Task Force is busy constructing a new FOB. Eventually the Task Force wants to make Sharana the home for all the Engineer assets in Afghanistan. Even with this daunting task, Support platoon has traveled over 2480 miles of accident free convoys in December while being the support for a FOB of over 250 people.

298th

In late December, 298th joined Task Force Pacemaker to assist in projects on KAF. While on KAF, the unit built an observation deck for Task Force Storm, refurbished 173d Spt Bn S1's office interior, leveled and rolled 82d Devil Dogs Motorpool, constructed 5 desks for 117th MPAD, built 25 guard shacks that were taken out to various FOB's and to Kandahar City, and converted 15 milvans into mobile kitchens, bathrooms, and offices. A small vertical team was sent to Kandahar City where, in a 5 day period, they completed the set up of 2 pre-fabricated guard towers on the ground floor and built 2 guard towers on the roof, installed electrical lines and 10 AC units, ran temporary power from Kandahar City to the PCC, switched temporary power from Kandahar City to generators, installed electrical power to the refrigeration unit, troubleshoot and repair existing electrical lines, and installed beams for camouflaged nets from building to building at the PCC. On three other separate occasions, the team also completed construction of shelving units, a 2-man toilet stall, a 25 X 15 storage cage, a 16 x 14 deck, ran electrical lines for the water heaters, and installed electrical outlets in the TOC.

B 37th

On 16 December B/37th BushMasters joined Task Force Pacemaker as replacements for C/864th. On 21 December, the BushMasters, Light Equipment (LE) and Maintenance moved to FOB Sharana to learn how to operate heavy construction equipment. By 23 December 1st squad, 1st Platoon moved to Sharana to begin RCP training, and then on 25 December, 1st squad, 2nd Platoon moved to Qalat for RCP training as well. The 2nd squad from both Sapper Platoons remained here on KAF to assist the remaining C/864th Soldiers and KBR with the construction for the Boardwalk and the new PX. The Bushmasters officially assumed the mission from the Kodiaks during a TOA ceremony on 3 January 2006.



A/864th Soldiers welcoming the Soldiers of B 37th to PRT Sharana.

January 2006

HSC

January was a busy month! The medics continued to provide excellent support and under the direction of SSG Pharis, NCOIC, organized and provided all medical support for the Patika Province P2K convention on 21-23 January. The DFAC has overcome continuous obstacles of power and water outages but has not failed to produce a hot meal yet. EQ Platoon conducted two large GACs to retrograde equipment from

Sharana to KAF and in two trips almost cleared B/864th's entire equipment fleet for re-deployment preparation. MSG Walters and SSG Ash from BMO flew to BAF to receive training on the installation and operation of SNIC equipment providing Task Force Pacemaker the capability to clear roads and mountain passes under heavy snow. The Yooper Platoon continues to pull security operations this month and have confiscated bags of suspicious material off of the local national workers leaving Sharana. Items found in these bags consisted of wires, dozens of batteries, electronics, and remote controls. Their professionalism and expertise is crucial to FOB security. On the staff side of the house, HSC said good-bye to CPT John Glenn, S2, CPT Taylor, asst. S4, and 1LT Samuel Rasberry, S3 night battle captain as they returned back to their host units for re-deployment. The Rock Steady team at KAF has been very busy washing and preparing equipment for redeployment. HSC worked hard to get over 50% of their connexes packed, inspected, and pushed through customs over a month ahead of schedule. Despite excitement of returning home in less than two months, Soldiers are remaining mission focused and continuing to flawlessly execute every mission.

A Company

The month of January was another busy and productive month. As well as getting equipment ready to go back to Fort Lewis, A/864th also did their change of command inventories along with continuing the furious pace of construction. Also, this was the last month that 1st Platoon B/864th was attached to Team Animal.

For construction, Team Animal put the finishing touches on the gym, aid station, and chapel because the material shortages for these projects arrived this month. We started the Mantech pad, Pole Barn 5, and 508th B-hut and also finished these projects this month. We also are nearing completion on a couple of larger projects, as we have been working on the Transit C-hut and the KBR C-hut all month long, but there is still a little bit of work to do in order to finish these two projects. Two more projects that we just started are maintenance pad 6 and maintenance pad 7.

The EM Platoon is still attached to B/864th for construction on the road. They will continue to be working on the road, while attached to another company.

The biggest news for A/864th will be the Change of Command that is scheduled to occur the first week of next month. Fortunately, all of the inventories were completed the last week of January. CPT Mona Tanner has been inventorying all of A/864th equipment, which was not an easy task, as the company has been in five different locations during the last ten months.

Team Animal has also retrograded nearly all of their home station equipment back to KAF, in order to get everything back to Fort Lewis.



A/864th 1st Platoon, constructing Pole Barn 5.



A/864th EM Platoon, despite the harsh weather, completes the mission.

B Company

This month was an eventful one for the Bulldogs. Whether it was executing vertical missions as part of the FOB expansion, working on the Sharana to Gardez road, or conducting Change of Command inventories, every mission B/864th stayed busy even through the harshest of winter months.

The EM Platoon had their hands full out on the Sharana to Gardez road this month because of snow and freezing conditions. When no work could be done on the road, EM Platoon completed many horizontal missions on the FOB. They completed filling eight force protection HESCOs, completed 15 K-huts with sandbag skirts, a trash metal pit, improved the FOB with over 2,500 cubic meters of gravel, and installed a culvert at the fuel point, and performed snow and ice removal missions as required. On the Sharana to Gardez road they completed laying 15 kilometers of #5 gravel towards the city of Zormat. In addition, they completed laying 5 kilometers of #5 and #3/4 gravel on the Sharana city Roads. Even though the weather was always challenging in January, the earthmovers always found a way to get the job done.

A/864th EM Platoon became attached to B/864th at the end of December and was replaced by the Light Equipment Platoon from B/37th Engineer Battalion out of Fort Bragg. LE Platoon transitioned very quickly and received their equipment and got started right away on constructing a new ECP for the FOB. Starting in the first week of January, LE Platoon completed three new HESCO bordered traffic lanes to improve the force protection of the FOB. Their amazing work with drainage and HESCO filling proved to be great even in below freezing temperatures.

1st and 2nd Platoons continued to work hard improving the FOB executing the many vertical missions. 1st Platoon completed a pole barn, B-hut, and made numerous improvements all over the FOB. 2nd Platoon completed two massive roofs for the 1/508th IN BN that would withstand the winter. They also performed hundreds of R/U type missions, aided in the set and construction of living space for the local national Winter Workshop, and installed five culverts on the bypass of the Sharana to Gardez road. January was a busy month for the vertical platoons as they were not hindered at all even in the harshest of weather.

From 12 January to 18 January, the company gave the fairly new CPT Bird his first impression of them. He was impressed by all of their continuing hard work, even this late in the deployment and he took command on 19 January, taking over for CPT Emery. The month to follow will be redeployment focused, as everyone will be packing up and preparing for the trip back to Fort Lewis.

B 37th

With just one month of deployment under their belts, B/37th has fallen in line with the rest of Task Force Pacemaker to make the month of January a success. 1st and 2nd Platoon moved to Jalalabad Airfield on 14 January to begin construction on four Sea-huts for the Marines. This mission will be completed the end of January.

Before pushing out to Jalalabad Airfield, 1st Platoon assisted KBR with the construction of the new boardwalk in KAF. Upon completion, the new boardwalk is said to be over double the size of the original boardwalk located by the PX. This new boardwalk will have all the amenities the old one had to include; Burger King, Pizza Hut, Subway, embroidery shops and other small vendors. LE continued the ECP upgrade through the entire month of January. HQ section began the process for shipping equipment from KAF to Sharana. B/37th will begin operating out of Sharana by 15 February.



B 37th 1st Platoon constructing the new boardwalk in KAF.

February 2006

A Company

February started with the change of command ceremony which brought CPT Tanner in as the new company commander. Even though February is a short month, the platoons were still as productive as they were in any other month.

Team Animal finished up the Transit C-hut, as the insulation arrived this month. They also completed the KBR C-hut inside the PRT walls as well. The roofs on Pole Barn 3 and 4 were completed with the Tin and felt paper, and all four pole barns were set up with lights in each of the bays. Team Animal also continued with the placing of concrete as pad 6, pad 7, tire shed B-hut pad, and the Mantech maintenance pad.

Another big mission that Team Animal accomplished this month was the packing of all home station equipment into connexes. All of A/864th equipment was sealed into 22 connexes and shipped to KAF. This slowed construction for a few days, but then we were right back to work.

One of the next missions included the training of local nationals during a work shop to teach them how to build using American wood building techniques. This was done in two sessions, one for 15 ANA soldiers and one for 52 local nationals. This workshop was a great success as the locals were able to build sheds and latrines which will be used by the ANA at check points in the city of Sharana.

This month, Team Animal also did a lot of work for the next task force's construction base named CB Paul Smith. They did the prefabrication of all of the tent floors, latrines, and guard towers so that B/37th can get on the ground of the new construction base and quickly have security and living facilities.

Another mission that continued this month as well was the Mantech maintenance clamshell tent. This tent has been partially finished, which will allow the Mantech contractors to have a place to easily fix the route clearance equipment.

A/864th has also done quite a bit of work on the punch list for the small deficiencies on all of the projects that we have completed thus far on the Sharana PRT. They have also picked up the R&U squad for base operations, which works on job orders for the entire PRT.

The EM platoon has now moved from working for B/864th and is now working for B/37th on the road.

B Company

February was a month mainly devoted to finishing up construction missions around Sharana, and executing redeployment operations. The company sent a platoon sized element down to Kandahar to wash vehicles and get them to the reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSOI) yard, led by 1LT Tolbert. All B/864th vehicles and milvans were hauled by Support Platoon or jingled to Kandahar, starting the process. All of the Bulldog equipment and milvans were sent down to KAF by mid February.

1st and 2nd Platoons finished up their remaining vertical missions at Sharana, completing the new pump house, a maintenance B-hut, and placing culverts on both the Sharana to Gardez road and on the FOB as well. They also conducted extensive inventories with the incoming B/37th, and signed over all of their tool kits to them, leaving them in theatre along with the Bobcat's. All new tools were ordered and will be shipped to Fort Lewis.



B/864th 2nd Platoon assisting A/864th EM with a culvert on FOB Sharana.

EM Platoon continued work on the Sharana to Gardez laying #5 and #3/4 gravel north towards Zormat. They did a great handover with LE/B/37th, and gave them full control of the mission on 23 February. During this time, EM hauled gravel for B/37th, using five 20 ton dump trucks from HSC/864th.

Headquarters and Maintenance Platoons were busy this month trying to get supply and maintenance accounts closed, ammunition turned in, equipment and milvans inspected by customs, and much more.

On 25 February, 2nd Platoon flew to KAF to assist with redeployment operations. The rest of the company in total flew to KAF on 1 March, an important milestone for the Bulldogs, leaving Sharana.

The wash rack team did a phenomenal job getting vehicles through using only two wash racks. Using a 24 hour shift schedule plan, the Bulldogs cleaned more than half their equipment by the end of the month.



A/391st Mine Clearance Platoon Soldiers stringing up FRAT fence along uncleared areas of KAF.

A Company 391st

On 12 February Manual Mine Clearance 1st Platoon was responsible for installing over 20 kilometers of fraternization fence on KAF. The fence was installed to identify the unclear mine areas from the cleared areas. 1st Platoon completed this monstrous project on time.

On 14 February 1st Platoon was tasked with their most dangerous mission yet, they were ordered to remove a 900 meter long Soviet mine line. The 9-C mine line was full of many types of mines. The project began with the platoon installing a new outer perimeter fence that was constructed of triple strand concertina. The platoon then removed the PSP (pierced steel planking) with the armored bucket loader. Reducing the mine line was an experience that none of the operators will forget. During the reduction the platoon detonated 29 mines. Over 300 other mines have been unearthed during the sifting, manual clearance, and MCAPing of the mine line. The platoon finished the project accident free and ahead of schedule. The newly cleared area allows for the expansion of additional airfield parking.

On 21 February 1st Platoon was relocated to BAF to rejoin Task Force Wildcat. The platoon completed all the major projects on KAF and they moved to BAF a month ahead of the rest of A/391st to begin work on BAF. Currently the platoon is working at BAF reducing minelines and sifting berms. The manual mine clearers have unearthed one low metallic anti-tank mine.

Route Clearance Platoon, 1st squad supported Task Force Pacemaker in their efforts to construct FOB Sharana and repair the Sharana to Gardez Road. One of the squad's primary missions is to conduct route clearance for all the convoys. This squad has also been critical for clearing the route every week from Sharana to Ghazni in front of the Support Platoon.

2nd Squad conducts route clearance for Task Force Rock between FOB Sweeny and Laghman and all of their additional FOBs. They provided route clearance for the 173rd CSC while they continued blasting operations in the Daub pass. 2nd Squad also relocated to the Gumbad safe-house to support the Canadian forces working in central Afghanistan. The squad went to Gumbad for two weeks and successfully cleared the way for multiple Special Forces groups and coalition forces. The safe house was a remote living area with only the essential living requirements. The squad was glad to return to KAF.

3rd squad is attached to the 391st and they are currently located at FOB Salerno. Third squad is also supporting C/926 and their mission to construct a road from FOB Salerno to Border Control Point 9. They also clear routes for Task Force White Devil and their maneuver units. A fourth RCP was created and led by SSG Ray to Jalalabad to conduct route clearance operation. SSG Rays squad relies on local aid to identify possible locations of IED's and to date this method has unearthed over 12 IED's/UXO's. The squad is working directly with the Marine Corps clearing the routes on some very rough terrain.

Support Platoon is the primary haul assets for Task Force Pacemaker and during the month of February the platoon continued to make weekly GAC's to and from FOB Sharana. Support platoon conducted four LOGPAC convoys that moved an incredible amount of building material, heavy equipment construction vehicles, and connexes filled with parts. The platoon operates out of KAF and hauls the required material to FOB Sharana where the Task Force is busy constructing a new road. This month the platoon was also responsible for moving B/37th from KAF to Sharana. The platoon also was essential in the retrograde of Task Force Pacemaker from FOB Sharana. Support Platoon will conduct one final LOGPAC to Sharana on 8 March.

298th

For the month of February, the Kapilis continued to work the many projects in KAF and began coordinations for redeployment. They successfully completed the MP Maintenance building, the Fire House by ECP 3, the International Office in the TLS, winterized the ECP 3 Checkpoint, and KAF perimeter fence. They also produced two plaques for the Task Force Pacemaker Chaplain.

B 37th

On 17 February 1st and 2nd Platoon, Bushmasters, completed four Sea-huts for the Marines on Jalalabad Airfield, three weeks ahead of schedule. LE Platoon completed the #5 gravel on the Sharana to Gardez Road on 27 February and began remediation to repair areas where heavy rains had flooded the road. HQ section began shipping all of the equipment and most of the connexes from KAF to Sharana. B 37th will officially take over control of the Sharana to Gardez road on 23 March from B/864th.



B 37th LE Platoon working on Sharana to Gardez Road.

March 2006

With the deployment slowly coming to an end Task Force Pacemaker was busy getting ready for redeployment. 26 February thru 5 March the last of the connexes were inspected by customs and ready to be sent back to Ft. Lewis. 28 February Torch Party consisting of CPT Koh, S6 and CPT Sakai, S4 redeployed back to Ft. Lewis to set up communications and prepare logistics for the incoming Task Force. On 12 March the Advanced Party redeployed to Ft. Lewis. 26 March the main body of Task Force Pacemaker redeployed back to Ft. Lewis while their friends and family members waited patiently for their arrival. It was truly an unforgettable sight and a relief for all. On 22 March the handover of responsibility to B 37th was held during the Transfer Of Authority in Sharana PRT.

