

# COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION



## 1st Combat Engineer Battalion; *"The Super Breed"*

Our mission: provide mobility, counter mobility, survivability, and limited general engineering support to the 1st Marine Division

## COMPANY COMMANDER

Family and friends of Echo Company

Although we've come to the back end of our deployment, your Marines, Sailors and Airmen remain focused and continue to push hard each and every day. While they're out on missions, the platoons ensure they keep their eye on the task at hand, but back "inside the wire" all the Marines, Sailors, and Airmen find ways to keep themselves busy when they're not training or working on vehicles. Everything from working out (I'm convinced that approximately 50% of the world's nutrition supplements are delivered to Afghanistan) to Marine Corps martial arts training (with the associated bleeding and bruising) to mustache growing (results varied).

As always, care packages are enormous morale boosters. The care packages you all send are the first things the Marines get their hands on once they arrive back at the company compound after missions. With this in mind, please be aware of the impending mail service restrictions associated with the troop level drawdown. Camp Dwyer's mail services will be curtailed to the point that we will only receive mail once or twice per month.

While things may get tough out here, they pale in comparison to what wives and families contend with in the absence of their service member. Should you run into any situation that may prove difficult to deal with on your own, please reach out to the company family readiness network. There is help and information available to wives, parents, and friends.

Semper Fidelis,  
Maj Mike O'Quin

### Company Commander:

Major Michael O'Quin

### Executive Officer/HQ Plt Commander

Captain Erik Brandriff

### Company First Sergeant

1stSgt Deryl Jarnagin

### Tank Leader/Ops Chief

MSgt Michael Kadlub

### HQ Plt Sgt/Comm Chief:

GySgt Mark Ellison

### 1st Platoon Plt Commander

1stLt Matthew Overly

### 1st Platoon Plt Sgt

GySgt Matthew Dordal

### 2nd Platoon Plt Commander

2ndLt Alexander Wu

### 2nd Platoon Plt Sgt

GySgt Wilson Hinson

### 3rd Platoon Plt Commander

1stLt Thomas Hodge

### 3rd Platoon Plt Sgt

GySgt Shane Marshall

### Advisor Team OIC

1stLt William Oliver

### Advisor Team SNCOIC

GySgt Aaron McNeal

### Maintenance Chief

SSgt Andrew Hedrick

### Senior Line Corpsman

HM2 Emmanuel Marquez

### EOD Team Leaders

TSgt Adam Putnam

TSgt Damian Taylor

TSgt Mark Walker

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COMPANY FIRST SERGEANT

Family and Friends,

Greetings from Southern Afghanistan!

It is hard to believe yet another month has passed. The deployment is progressing very rapidly, well for us here it is, and before you know it, your loved ones will be back in your arms. Please remain patient and diligent as the work they are doing is extremely important here. Their collective efforts keep the roads and thoroughfares free of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) so that coalition forces and the local populace can navigate them without the pervasive cloud of fear and uncertainty that accompanies the employment of these nefarious devices.

I wanted to remind all about a couple of important pieces of information. First, by now you should have all received an email from 1stSgt Fowler, about the family post deployment briefs to be held Friday, 19 October in the Patton museum. These briefs will cover such topics as VA Benefits, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Combat Operation Stress, employment resources, what to expect upon the arrival of your loved one, and other beneficial resources available to military members and their families. If you have not received this information, please contact 1stSgt Fowler at brant.fowler@usmc.mil or via 502-624-6224.

We are about to experience the previously mentioned increased delivery time for mail to Dwyer. It will go from 10-14 days normal delivery time to upwards of 3 weeks or even a month, so please bear that in mind when you are posting anything, especially perishable items. Also, be advised that the mail is handled many times before it arrives at Camp Dwyer and will only increase with the expanded delivery times. Given these factors, it is imperative that you fully pack all packages with goods and/or packing materials so as to minimize the likelihood of damage. We have had quite a few crushed boxes wherein the contents were damaged or destroyed.

On the issue of mailed items: I would caution against sending any pressurized, canned drinks such as Monsters, or other like energy drinks, cola and/or soft drinks of any kind etc. The pressure and heat placed upon these items during transit have resulted in many of them exploding in the care packages and infiltrating the remaining contents. This includes those wrapped in plastic and sealable plastic bags, i.e. Ziploc's. Last comment about mail; please **do not mail anything postmarked after 1 October**. Check eMarine for further details.

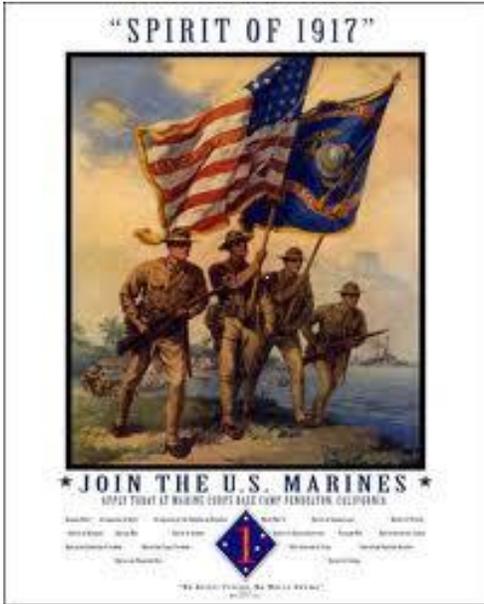
Your Marines, Sailors and Airmen continue to accord themselves in the highest sense of professionalism and conduct. They have built and continue to build upon relationships they have established with Coalition forces, the Afghan National Army and the local populace throughout the entire area of operations. What they have done and are doing will resonate long after we have left Afghanistan. You can be, as we are all, extremely proud of their continued efforts towards helping Afghanistan and all Afghans maintain national self-determination by defeating terror wherever it may fester.

A special thanks to all the organizations who continue to support our Marines, Sailors and Airmen by send the multitudes of Care packages. You are too numerous to list but, please know we ALL appreciate your sustained efforts!!

Until next time, take care of each other!!

Semper Fidelis,

1stSgt Jarnagin



## COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

### HEADQUARTERS PLATOON

To the family and friends of Headquarters Platoon,

The Marines and Sailor of Headquarters Platoon hope everyone back home enjoyed Independence Day. We also thank everyone for their continued support by sending care packages. The snacks, hygiene gear, and magazines are greatly appreciated.

The company continues to support 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines. Headquarters Platoon participates in the missions with corpsman support (Hospital Corpsman Second Class Marquez), mechanic support (Lance Corporal McGregor), vehicle crewman support (Corporal Iracheta) and "PUMA" Unmanned Aerial Vehicle support (Corporal Prater and Corporal Mynes). Newly promoted Corporal Wilson assisted our battalion on a mission with AVLB (Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge) operator support. Although all of these Marines and Sailor patrol with the platoons from time to time, they are still able to meet the requirements of their Headquarters jobs as mechanics, senior corpsman, armorer, and supply.

Physical fitness is still very important to Headquarters Platoon. Even though temperatures have reached 136 degrees, we all still run, do "Insanity", and work out at the gym. Given the heat, many of us just work out early in the morning when the temperature is *only* around 100.

We continue to work with and support the Afghan National Army (ANA) with their HMMWVs. The Afghan soldiers appreciate our assistance and the Marines enjoy the opportunity to work with service members from another nation. We all understand that working together on maintenance and planning is just as important as working together on combat patrols.

I am including the information on the Camp Dwyer coffee shop once again because the Marines, Sailors, and Airmen have been enjoying the iced coffee drinks and sweet tea throughout this very hot month. Camp Dwyer's coffee shop, Green Beans Coffee, has a promotion called "Cup of Joe for a Joe" where friends or family can go online and sign their Marine, Sailor or Airman up to receive "codes" valued at \$2 each which enables them to purchase any number of drinks at the Green Beans Coffee shop here on Dwyer. The email address is [www.getcoj.com](http://www.getcoj.com).

Thank you,  
Captain Erik Brandriff  
Company Executive Officer



The HQ crew sporting their hard earned deployment 'staches.



Cpl Garcia working hard at keeping the vehicles in top mechanical shape

# COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

## 1ST PLATOON

Dear Family, Friends, and Loved Ones,

First Platoon has been working overtime this month covering our normal Area of Operations as well as Third Platoon's while they were away providing support to other units. This extra work load has led to long days, lots of sweat, and very little sleep, but as always the Marines of First Platoon have conducted themselves with the dedication and professionalism that makes the Marine Corps the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen. This exemplary work ethic has led to increasing success in our Counter-IED Operations and has solidified the confidence we have in our equipment, our training, and each other.

As we cross in the latter stages of this deployment, support from those of you back home becomes more and more important. A long, hot, grueling day can be instantly turned into a great one just by receiving a care package from someone we love, so we ask for your continued support and prayers as we enter the home stretch. Be safe, stay strong, remember that even though we may not be in contact as much as we would like, you are always in our thoughts and prayers, and know that we will be home soon.

Semper Fidelis,  
The Marines of 1st Platoon



TSGt Walker doing pull-ups while on FOB Geronimo



1st Plt demonstrating the Afghan version of the County work crew



Sgt Kok, HM2 Galindo and Cpl Ivy are all smiles now that they have completed their workout!



LCpl Bradford concentrating very hard at not hitting his finger, again!

## COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

### 2ND PLATOON

Family and Friends,

Another busy month has come and gone and your Marines and their ANA counterparts have fully established an effective battle rhythm of operating and training together. Over the past month, our partnered mounted and dismounted counter-IED patrols have guaranteed freedom of mobility for friendly forces and local villagers over 1200 kilometers of sarach (road). The ANA tolai (company) we work with is relatively new, and with each successful IED find and reduction, their confidence and proficiency grows. Even in the short time we've been here, we've personally observed our partnered ANA become more combat effective.

As we reach the midway point of the deployment, the company has made it a priority for all its Marines and sailors to conduct official reset training in addition to the regular sustainment training on crew-served weapons, communication equipment, combat life-saving, and other essential skills that your Marines conduct nearly every day. Your Marines will be dedicating themselves to reset training in everything they do while operating on mission: mounted and dismounted counter-IED lanes; crew-served and personal weapons ranges; and radio employment and troubleshooting; the Law of Armed Conflict and Rules of Engagement; Escalation of Force procedures; vehicle maintenance; Casualty Evacuation Procedures; Combat Life Saving; the US Service Member's Code of Conduct; MRAP driving courses; theatre-wide tactical directives; and refreshers on Afghan culture and language, amongst other courses. As is almost always the case, your Marines, from Lance Corporal to Sergeant, will be the ones teaching these subjects to their peers in the platoon, simultaneously sharing their knowledge and honing their leadership and communication skills.

As a quick summary, the Law of Armed Conflict arose from the 1949 Geneva Convention as a framework to prevent unnecessary suffering and destruction by mandating the principles of Military Necessity - ensuring we as combat forces engage only in acts required to accomplish a legitimate military mission; Distinction - discriminating between lawful combatants and non-combatants such as civilians, prisoners of war, wounded fighters, and medical and religious personnel; and Proportionality - using only the amount of force or violence necessary to accomplish a legitimate mission. From the Law of Armed Conflict arise theatre-specific Rules of Engagement (when to shoot and when not to shoot; going even further, especially in the counterinsurgency environment, when CAN I shoot vs. when SHOULD I shoot?) and, at a small unit level, our platoon's Escalation of Force procedures, which delineate successively escalating steps on how to warn others to stay away from areas in which we are conducting sensitive operations (i.e., an IED interrogation or exploitation), and eventually end with the application of deadly force.

This month, your Marines were honored to participate in an Awards Formation for two ANA Route Clearance Company (RCC) soldiers. We drove over to the ANA RCC's motor pool as a platoon, formed up alongside the ANA RCC's formation, and stood at attention side by side with them as the ANA RCC Commander spoke to both his own soldiers and your Marines on how much they appreciated the training and mission support your Marines have provided them, and how they look forward to continuing operating together. Technical Sergeant Taylor, our United States Air Force EOD Team Leader who has been constantly training his ANA EOD counterparts both on mission and back at Dwyer, was asked to present one of the awards.

Congratulations are in order for Said, one of our hard-working and absolutely mission-critical linguists. He and his wife just recently gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

Also, congratulations to another one of our talented linguists: Hemy. He was awarded by his employer a Certificate of Merit and Appreciation for his continued performance and dedication to duty.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Respectfully,

2ndLt Alex Wu

## COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

### 3RD PLATOON

Families and Friends of 3rd Platoon,

The time here in Afghanistan is flying by for 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon! I only hope the time is flying by on your ends as well. Your Marines and Sailor have been busy as usual keeping the roads clear of road side bombs. On top of our normal day to day operations of route clearance our platoon has been recently tasked with clearing routes in support of other units as they conduct "Named Operations". A "Named Operation" is simply operations/missions that are conducted in Afghanistan with multiple, different units involved with a particular goal or end state. For instance, one of the "Named Ops" we took part in was to provide safe, clear routes for other units involved in the operation so they could move freely and quickly to their objective which in this case was to disrupt drug smuggling operations that goes towards funding Taliban operations. This operation was very successful in that it resulted in the seizure of drugs, money, and weapons and also the apprehension of several Taliban supported drug smugglers. This particular operation was more offensive in nature, the other notable Operation we recently took part in was more defensive minded and it took the platoon way out in western Afghanistan where our individual mission was the same as always, to clear routes. The platoon was away from our so called home longer than normal and our accommodations weren't as nice but the Marines endured and kept a good attitude through its entirety.

In addition to our route clearance responsibilities some of our Marines were tasked with collateral duties. Our 3 engineers, Cpl Garza and LCpl's Vanzomeren and Watson were sent away for 7 days for BIP training. BIP stands for "*Blow in Place*" and this is a responsibility that normally falls on our Air Force EOD (*Explosive Ordnance Disposal*) team in how they dispose of an IED that we find. This training that our engineers completed was very difficult and although a few of them were sweating some of the test they had to take they all ended up passing the course and are certified BIP experts. This training gives our platoon and company more versatility for the remainder of this deployment.

With all that goes on in preparation for our missions our Marines and Sailor still find the time to maintain a high level of physical fitness that is required and expected of our military personnel. The company was tasked with running an PFT (*Physical Fitness Test*) for score last month and over 95% of the platoon increased there scores from the last time they ran it over 10 months ago. This PFT is very important in the Marine Corps as it has an immense impact on determining who gets promoted. The leadership of 3rd Platoon looked at the PFT results with great pride in knowing that our Marines remain physically ready for remainder of the deployment

In addition to our Marines staying physically sharp for this deployment they also proved to be mentally sharp as well. A requirement at the half way point of the deployment is for each platoon to conduct reset training. Reset training encompasses all of the training that we completed during EMV (*Enhanced Mohave Viper*) when we were preparing for this deployment. The reset training we conducted is meant to ensure that the Marines stay fresh and pointed with all of their job responsibilities as it relates to Route Clearance.

I mention all of this to reassure all the family and friends that your Marines and Sailor are trained professionals both physically and mentally who are equipped with some of the most advanced tools necessary to do their job to the best of their ability. Our platoon recently acquired new sets of tools that will go a long way in making our job easier and the bad guy's job more difficult. I can't mention specifics here in this newsletter for security reasons but know that we have and continue to gain some of the most state of the art equipment to make our jobs easier and keep us safe.

I would like to congratulate LCpl JD Rose for the birth of his first son, Damion Edward Rose while we were out on mission last month. The platoon celebrated together by firing up some stogies in congratulations for LCpl Rose.

I would like to once again thank everyone for the care packages that you all take the time to prepare and send to our Marines and Sailor. It really means a lot and gives us all great joy when we get back from mission and find a small mountain of care packages awaiting us. With that being said, the Postal Office here on Camp Dwyer will be going away soon which will slow the mail flow down considerably for its occupants. The last day that the Postal Office will be here is August 15th, after that they will bring mail here to us every 21 days. That doesn't mean the mail and care packages have to stop, it just means you need to take extra precautions in what you send as it will take much longer to get to us now. For further deadlines pertaining to sending mail, check the eMarine website.

Semper Fidelis  
3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon Staff

ANA ROUTE CLEARANCE ADVISOR TEAM

Hello again all.

We have yet to slow down the pace here. Since the last news letter we have run our PFTs and all did well with everyone getting a first class for their scores. Most importantly, however, is that another of our ANA counter parts has completed his EOD training Validation as a team leader and technician. The month wasn't over yet by the time Malik completed his testing scenarios. The day was plenty warm and bright and the scene was set by our USAF EOD technicians on the range. They explained the situation as he would get the info if he were really was on a mission. After some clarifying questions about the security and great concern for the local populace safety by Malik, he and his assistant geared up and went to work. Using the skills and his knowledge, Malik was able to take care of the IED and retrieve some components for later study. The USAF EOD techs gave an after brief, telling Malik what a great job he did and the highlights of their favorite things he performed. Congratulations Malik! You deserve it and we can't wait to begin working with you on missions!

So the first week into July has us running full throttle as usual. We are assisting two more ANA soldiers with their EOD training. We are arranging more maintenance work on their vehicles and mine rollers. Whew! What a week.

The rest of July, was filled with partnered Route Clearance missions, with Sgt Thompson and Sgt LaClair seeing most of the action and Sgt Cole was able to support the military police advisors on a helicopter inserted interdiction mission. The team also completed the PFT requirement with Sgt Cole taking the highest score on the advisor team. His leg didn't feel right and had it looked at and was diagnosed and is recovering from a broken leg; just above the ankle from a fierce football (soccer) match with the ANA a few weeks ago. GySgt McNeal and Sgt Thompson continue to work out vehicle maintenance issues and continue suggesting simple improvement ideas.

SSgt Anwar and SSgt Malik were presented their certificate of completion for their Explosive Ordnance Disposal Validation Training. Their certificates were presented by their instructors; USAF TSgt Taylor, SSgt Woodward and SrA Swanson. Echo Co. 2nd Plt, the partnered platoon, were in full attendance. The event was coordinated by the Tolai's advisors 1st Lt. Oliver and Sgt Cole, who also coordinate the daily training events for the ANA EOD. EOD Validation is the culmination of months of classroom and on the job training and for unpartnered operations. It is the final stage to becoming an EOD Team Leader under Joint Task Force Paladin and the ANA EOD Team Leader under Joint Task Force Paladin and the ANA.



TSgt Taylor and SSgt Anwar during the EOD validation graduation.



Lt. Wu and SSgt Malik during the EOD validation graduation.

COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

MARINES, SAILORS AND AIRMEN IN ACTION!



GySgt McNeal, contractors and linguists from LNK with the ANA Motor Transport Maintenance students.



(L to R) SSgt Malik, Sgt Cole and SSgt Anwar celebrate after the EOD validation graduation.



HM3 Ybay conducting reset training on the Combat Lifesavers course



Sgt Wilson patrolling amongst the local populace



2nd Platoon formed up with ANA Tolai during an awards formation.



HM3 Ybay and an ANA soldier administer aid to a local child.

COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

MARINES, SAILORS AND AIRMEN IN ACTION!



Good show of sportsmanship displayed by LCpl Bunch during game of touch football



Cpl Brown preparing his truck for tow



Cpl Sanders and LCpl Ravitskiy cleaning out their truck after a mission



Sgt Rutledge is ready to roll (as soon as he puts his gloves on)



3RD Platoon honing in their weapons at the range



LCpl Ravitskiy and GySgt Marshall enjoying a cigar together

COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

MARINES, SAILORS AND AIRMEN IN ACTION!



LCpl Jankowski, Cpl Guadamuz and LCpl Bahl swore they did not buy these magazines but, the look of joy on their faces states otherwise.



SSgt Herrington, GySgt Dordal and Sgt Tate finishing up their workout; can you guess who the trainer(s) and trainee are?



LCpl's Klimek, Bahl and Allen getting psyched to work-out; can't you tell by their expressions?



LCpl Bodenbender concentrating hard as he contemplates his lift



1st Platoon prepping to embark on their next mission



"I hope I do not drop these" Sgt Tate exclaims as SSgt Herrington stands by but, the look on his face says it all.

COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

MARINES, SAILORS AND AIRMEN IN ACTION!



Marines of second platoon enjoying some fruit from a local harvest; not pictured is Cpl Williams who was diligently monitoring the comm.



Cpl Iracheta enjoying his care package from Operation Gratitude



Major O'Quin showing off his care package from Operation Gratitude



LCpl McGregor experiencing what has been coined "Brownboozled"



A typical Afghan Nomad encampment complete with a Camel herd.



Members of 3rd Platoon along side of LCpl Rose celebrating the birth of his son, Damion

# COMPANY E, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

## MESSAGES TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

### Headquarters Platoon:

#### HQ Platoon:

#### Cpl Prater:

To my wife and family, I miss you, love you and can't wait to see everyone! All is well here. I hope you all are enjoying your summertime. I know recently there were a handful of my fellow Marines' wives at my house and have only heard good things from their time spent together. It is great thing knowing such a strong support system exists not only for Abbie but for all; a big Oorah to you ladies from all of us here. Stay strong!

Thank you to everyone who sent me a care package lately! They are great as always and very much appreciated. Take care and we'll talk to you again soon!

Aaron

#### LCpl Serra:

Thank you for everything that you all have done for me so far during my time over here. It means so much knowing that I'm still in your thoughts and prayers. I just want to say happy birthday to my cousin Chris on July 28th and congratulations to my cousin Nicole for getting engaged. I'm so happy for you guys and I can't wait for the wedding. It's going to be great to see you all there.

#### LCpl Jackson T.L:

Hey good people, I hope all is well on the home front. Thanks for your love and support and prayers. Mail ends soon so it's last chance to get all your care packages in. Also to my soon to be wife "love ya kid...stay frosty" lol continue to pray and care about us out here.

#### LCpl Brown:

I want to say that I greatly appreciate your support and encouragement, the days are flying by, there won't be much longer until I am home to see you all. I love you all and I will see you soon.

### Second Platoon:

#### SSgt Collins:

Dear Family and Friends,

Thank you for the birthday wishes. Thank you for the prayers and the continued support. I also want to thank the following persons and organizations for the packages they sent to 2nd Platoon and Company E:

Mr. Douglas T. Anderson (GE Water & Process Technologies)

Mr. Dennis B. Dyer, et al (GE Water & Process Technologies)

Mr. Ben Magaldino

Operation Gratitude

Mr. Ty Remington (GE Energy)

Mr. Mark W. Shafer (GE Aviation)

Mr. Neil S Wingert (GE Water & Process Technologies)

Take care,

Stephen

#### Cpl Ellis:

Happy Birthday to my sisters Audra and Vannesa. Also, "hello" to the rest of my family. Hope you are all doing well. And "thank you" to all family and friends who have sent care packages.

Love you all,