



THE HUSKY HERALD
1431st Engineer Company
SAPPER
March/April, 2009



FROM THE COMMANDER: CPT Thomas K. LaFave

Hello Friends and Families,

Here we are it is already the end of March. We are already starting to get people home for leave. The first group has left already. The second is getting ready to leave. Remember, the travel arrangements from here are not the most reliable, so if your Soldier tells you he will be home on a certain date he could be late, but he is on his way.

Congratulations, to the Loar Family, Braund Family, and the Yaniskivis Family. They all have had kids since the last news letter. The hardest part of being here is missing the family. The mail is still coming in good it is great to have all this support.

Your Soldiers continue to impress whoever they meet. We are getting a lot of people that would like to see what we do and how we do it, so we normally will find a way to get them out on mission with us. From all the feedback I have gotten we have impressed them. Once again the Soldiers of the 1431st are standing out.

CO.

1431ST EN CO (SAPPER)
NCO OF MONTH



SSG DeForge, Lee

SSG DeForge is a versatile NCO with numerous MOS's. He consistently uses his knowledge to ensure his Platoon's equipment is fully mission capable and his Soldiers thoroughly trained. SSG DeForge used his maintenance training to direct operations during quarterly maintenance lands, he is a primary dismount for RCP 7 and personally conducted 14 Hides during the Month of March. SSG DeForge is a take charge, lead by example NCO who inspires both his subordinates and peers.

1431ST EN CO (SAPPER) SOLDIER OF MONTH



SPC Turunen, Daniel

SPC Turunen sets the example for gunners, always ensuring his weapons are clean and fully mission capable, utilizing quick and sound judgment while employing EOF procedures to protect the RCP during missions, and he exemplifies the poise and discipline required of a future NCO.

235TH EN COMPANY SOLDIER OF THE MONTH



PFC, Champagne, Bradley

- PFC Brad Champagne is currently attached to the 235th Engineer Company at FOB Orgun-L. He is a member of RCP 14 and is from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He is a 25U, Communications Specialist.
- His knowledge of communications has been vital not just for the 235th, but also for the maneuver element at Orgun-L. He has completed every task assigned to him while his superior NCO was on leave.
- He was able to install communications in four vehicles. He helped fabricate a radio and antenna mount as well as running all cables in a 916.
- He helped the new maneuver element with their communication issues in the middle of the night before their first mission ensuring that all vehicles were fully mission capable. He taught commo classes to maneuver individuals including those with much higher rank.
- He has been able to teach classes and answer all questions asked of him. If he doesn't know an answer, which is very rare, he knows where to look the answer up.

FROM THE FIRST SERGEANT: 1SG Robert J. Jeannotte

Hello family and friends of the 1431st!!! Time is moving by and we are working our way through the deployment. I'm sure we all wish it was going by faster, but we will be home soon enough! The leave cycle has started, so some of you will get to see loved ones at home over the next 7 months. The weather here is starting to get a little on the warm side, and we are getting less and less rain as we move into spring. The Soldiers here are working hard, and excelling in everything they do, it makes me very proud to be a part of this unit.

A BIG congratulation goes out to the Loar, Braund and Yaniskivis families as they all recently grew a little bigger. All three Soldiers had the chance to spend a little time at home and enjoy the new additions to the family.

1SG Jeannotte

FROM THE OPERATIONS SERGEANT: SFC David A. Rye HUSKY 3

SSG Houle just reminded me that it is time for another update for the Husky Herald from the Operations Section. Through the midst of reports, scheduling, tracking, and overall organizational tasks, the time just flies by. So, here it goes: dit, dit, dit, dit, dit (old news type audio entry into the news report).

News: The old guys just got older, SSG Houle and SFC Rye with the help of some outside person, were able to bring a little celebration to each others birthday. A little surprise get-together and some gag gifts, just brought a little humor to an otherwise serious environment.

Weather: Rain/mud...sunshine.....rain/mud.....sunshine.....rain/mud.....you get the picture.

Sports: Most of us rooted for MSU during the NCAA Basketball Tournament, (Didn't we LT June?)

Lifestyle: Not much change there, we are still in the Army Uniform doing what we are asked to do. Beyond the day to day duties and job we are asked to do, everyone here knows what is expected of them and are doing an outstanding job. We seem to be the talk of the FOB because everyone that depends on us knows we will perform and do the ultimately best in what is expected.

So keep the home fires burning, and keep the cards and letters coming, the Soldiers really enjoy getting mail.



SFC David Rye (not getting younger)

SAPPER ADMIN



Somebody's got to do it!

FROM THE ADMIN SERGEANT: SSG Timothy J. Houle

Hello Everybody,

Things are going well, we have gotten to learn our daily routines and we are now putting all the training and schooling from the past year into practice. I am extremely proud of the guys, they are performing their missions with the same dedication and professionalism that always leaves anybody who witnesses it, wanting to become a member of the 1431st Engineers.

Our Battalion Commander, LTC Zollar, came for a visit and presented the following Soldiers with Battalion coins for taking that extra step and distinguishing themselves amongst their peers:

PFC Kyle Loar, SPC Brian Quello, SPC Jeremy Morrison, SGT Mitchell McPherson, SSG John Kilpela, SPC Heath Krook, SGT James Allen, SPC Alejandro Alaniz, SPC Chance Augustine, SGT Daniel Berryman and PFC Andrew Bain. Congratulations to you all!

We have also had quite a few promotions since our last news letter. Congratulations to the following Soldiers that were promoted to the rank indicated: SPC Alejandro Avramenko, SPC Bradley Champagne, SPC Brandon Haines, 1LT Nicholas Harrington, SPC Ryan Idstein, SPC Steven Kivela, SPC Kyle Loar, 1LT Robert Matthews, SPC Joseph Nicholson, SPC Joshua Rhodes, SPC Scott Rose, SPC Brennan Shardlow, SPC Cole Smith, SPC Scott Stoinski, SPC Nicholas Terdoest, 1LT Michael Van Eerden and PV2 Christopher Voakes.

One of my jobs is to pick up the mail.... I would like to thank you all for the **job security!** I use a 6 wheeled John Deere ATV with a large dump box on the back of it to pick up the mail, it is usually packed and having to make 2 trips is not unusual. The guys always appreciate the packages and letters from home.

Till next time, SSG Timothy Houle

FROM 1st PLATOON: 1LT Nicholas G. Harrington and SFC Ross T. Stevens

Hi all,

It's hard to believe we've been on ground in Afghanistan for two months already, the schedule is busy but it helps time fly. Congratulations and great work to SSG DeForge as NCO of the month this month, receiving the award in large part due to his expertise and hard work during quarterly maintenance as well as the success he's had collecting biometrics from local nationals on mission.

First platoon recently supported a mini-medical civilian aid mission, providing treatment to two local national children, one a three year old girl with a second degree burn on her hand and arm and the other a boy about nine with an infected injury on his foot. Our platoon medic, SPC Alaniz and our company medics SFC Thomas and PFC Zelinski treated their injuries in front of an appreciative family. We have seen the kids a few times since then and they are doing well.

The platoon wishes to extend hearty congratulations to the Loar Family on their new arrival!

We appreciate the support from the home front with all the mail and packages that have been received.

Regards,

1LT Nick Harrington & SFC Ross Stevens

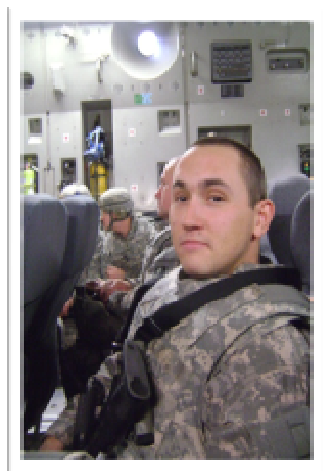
FROM 2nd PLATOON: 1LT Michael J. Van Eerden and SFC Joseph F. Battisfore

1LT Van Eerden has been on leave and for **SOME REASON** didn't quit enjoying himself long enough to submit a story for the news letter.... I guess we'll forgive him this one time 😊

FROM 3rd PLATOON: 1LT Robert Matthews and SFC Joshua Yaniskivis



PFC Augustine and SPC Sexton sitting outside their barracks in Mississippi waiting to start the journey to Afghanistan.



SPC Murdock about to enjoy his flight on a C-17.



A view of some of the mountains we see on a daily basis.

FROM 3rd PLATOON: 1LT Robert Matthews and SFC Joshua Yaniskivis

First off, we would like to thank you so much for all of your support while we have been here. We have been so grateful for all of the care that you have shown us while we have been deployed. We have been on a good personal physical fitness regiment given to us by "us" administered by SGT Berryman and 1st Lieutenant Matthews. We all have been executing our missions diligently and to the best of ability. Here at 3rd platoon SGT. Deroche and SPC Seageren have been keeping smiles on all of our faces, and have continued to do so even when the tough gets going. Thank you families and friends and we're appreciative of all your support.

SGT Spencer Gates, 3rd platoon

Greetings from FOB Salerno!

To the families back home, this is SPC Christopher Parsons. I am just writing to let everyone know how we are doing over here. Everyone in the platoon is doing really well. We are taking care of each other and especially taking care of our vehicles making sure they are in good shape for our missions. In our spare time, we have gained a little bonding time. We have been playing volleyball and getting to know one another better. I know that everyone of us is missing our families and friends back home and are anxious to see everyone again! I know that a few people started their leave to return home to see family and friends. It's going to be nice to see loved ones again after being away for awhile.

SPC Christopher Parsons, 3rd platoon

FROM THE FAMILY READINESS GROUP:

UPCOMING FRG EVENTS:

Following are just a few of the things that your FRG has already been or will be working on! There are several other activities and events that are still in the planning stages and we'll keep you posted with pertinent details on their progress! Please come and join us at these activities and events--all are most certainly WELCOME!!

NEXT FRG MEETING: Saturday, April 25th--12:00 P.M., Baraga Armory. This will be a combined FRG meeting, poster making session and a "Pot Luck".

The posters that we'll be making will be for the Armed Forces Day Parade in Houghton/ Hancock on Saturday, May 16th, at 10:00 A.M. Following the parade, there will also be a rally at the Copper Country Mall at 1:00 P.M.

FLOAT BUILDING FOR THE MAY 16th PARADE: The FRG will be building a float with possible help from local High School students and the ROTC. For ample storage purposes and ease of transporting it to the parade site, the float will be constructed at the Calumet Armory. As further details are determined, an email will be sent out to all which will give the dates and times that we'll be working on the float.

MID-DEPLOYMENT BRIEF: Sunday, May 17th, 1:00 P.M., Baraga Armory. The State of Michigan Family Programs Office will conduct a mid-deployment brief for our Families. Military Family Life Consultants will be present to address communications and stressors during deployment and will offer helpful tips and suggestions on these and other topics of interest.

Further information on this brief will be provided as soon as possible.

1431st EN CO--T-SHIRTS and SWEATSHIRTS: A design has been decided on for the shirts. Ordering information with pricing / sizes will be sent out shortly via email notification along with a picture (if available) of the wonderful design that was chosen.

**Best Regards,
Amy Rye
1431st EN CO
FRG--Communications**

IN COUNTRY ACTION:



MEMBERS OF THE 1431ST EN CO, AND LTC ZOLLAR OF THE EN BN, REVEL IN THE HANDING OUT OF ICE CREAM TO YOUNG CHILDREN OF AFGHANISTAN. IN AN OTHERWISE HOSTILE AREA, THE ENGINEERS MANAGED TO SUPPLY A LITTLE KINDNESS AND GOODWILL WITH A GIFT OF ICE CREAM AND SOME MINOR MEDICAL AID. AREA RESIDENTS SHOWED APPRECIATION AT THIS EFFORT AND IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN TRUST AND SUPPORT, THE GROUNDWORK WAS LAID TOWARD THAT GOAL. WINNING THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF LOCAL NATIONALS.