

ENGINEERS PAVE THE WAY FOR VICTORY

By Specialist Jon H. Arguello

Shortly before Soldiers from 3d Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 10th Mountain Division, handed over control of their area of operations to the unit due to replace them, engineers from 3d Platoon, Alpha Company, 3d Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3d BCT, 10th Mountain Division, worked hard to ensure that the incoming Soldiers had decent accommodations and facilities.

Even though 3d Platoon had been at the forward operating base (FOB) for more than a year, there was still a lot of work for the sappers to do, inside and outside the base. Since defeating the Taliban is the most important job for the new unit, the engineers wanted to make a stable base so the new arrivals could do their job of clearing the way for a secure Afghanistan without worrying about facilities.

Facilitating the fight is a concept the commander of Alpha Company stands behind. The FOB is supporting many more Soldiers than it was set up for, so it has been expanded to house more people, and that includes changes in infrastructure.



Photo by Specialist Jon H. Arguello

A combat engineer moves concertina wire to make room for an expanded air resupply area.

The expansion has also benefited the local population. Construction and base development brought an influx of jobs and business to the area, improving the local economy. The more legitimate money infused into the economy, the easier it is to move the local population away from the trade in illegal narcotics.

The dedication of the engineers to the mission—right up to their redeployment—was impressive. The purpose of the improvements and expansion was to ensure that the replacement Soldiers were set up for success, allowing them to start combat operations immediately instead of worrying about base camp construction. The members of 3d Platoon got their gratification from knowing that the Soldiers replacing them would be able to concentrate on the fight.



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A Soldier fixes a generator during a power outage.