

## LAST CHANCE TO ROCK

By Private First Class Christine Samples

**T**he 770th Engineer Company from Penn Yan, New York, probably the dirtiest Soldiers at NTC, made big rocks into little rocks at the quarry as part of Operation Sand Castle. The 770th worked 12 to 14 hours daily to supply crushed rock for construction projects. They also produced extra rock for a 10-mile road project that will be completed next year at Operation Sand Castle 2008. Their goal was to produce 800 tons of rock a day. That goal meant 40 trips for the crew in 20-ton dump trucks to deliver the product.

The rock crusher occupies about half a football field and is nearly 2 ½ stories high. It is made up of several components that can be disassembled and moved to the next location. The crusher starts its job when an operator in a bucket loader fills it with rock from the side of the quarry. Another crew member in the crow's nest controls large metal plates that crush the rocks into smaller pieces. The crusher then sifts the rock onto different conveyers for each size of rock—waste that is too small to



**Above:** A member of the 770th Engineer Company scoops rock out of the side of a hill to feed the crusher.



**Left:** A Soldier with the 770th Engineer Company cleans the dirt from his uniform.



**Dust created by the crusher as it throws out waste product covers the entire quarry area, making the 770th's job possibly the dirtiest one at NTC.**

use, one-inch rock, two-inch rock, and three-inch rock. Another crew member watches for any objects that aren't rock that managed to get into the product. The crushed rock is then spilled onto the ground in separate piles where it is stockpiled or transported to work sites. The dust produced by the crusher is like a thick fog that is hazardous to breathe. Members of the 770th wore goggles and face masks, but the dust still crept in to cover their faces.

When the 770th Soldiers were deployed to Iraq, they never crushed rock and they probably won't have another opportunity to crush after they finish their rotation at NTC, because they're losing their crushing equipment to the Army National Guard and will have to find new military occupational specialties.



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