



THE MULESKINNER

"No Task Too Large"



23 Oct 07
Issue 3

BUDGET SECTION: Big Bucks and Big Responsibility

- CPT Kelly Parker

With an office a couple of miles from the Brigade headquarters, in what is commonly known as "The Goathouse," (a building formerly used as Saddam Hussein's family hunting lodge) the 35th Engineer Brigade Budget Section bears the responsibility for procuring and paying for items and services not available through the military ordering system.

LTC Robert L. Jones, of Jackson, heads the section. LTC Jones has 32 years of military experience and works on a full-time basis for Do-It Best Corporation as the company's Lead Man in shipping. "The biggest challenge is trying to grasp everything that is going on here," LTC Jones said of his responsibilities. "We have five independent vendors working here-LN [Local National] companies."

With oversight for eight different contracts for concrete T-wall barriers, seven different service contracts for such things as copier and air conditioner maintenance, crane lease contracts, Local National worker employment contracts, and other miscellaneous contracts, the Budget Section has its hands full. "We have overseen more than \$4,000,000.00 paid out to vendors so far," expressed LTC Jones. "And that is only one month!"

The Budget Analyst for the Budget Section is Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2) Chris Schill of Jefferson City. CW2 Schill, a full-time Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Soldier with over 20 years of military experience, is the section's technical expert for budget matters. "I'm learning this because it is different from what I do full-time," CW2 Schill said of his experience, thus far. "It's been a learning curve for me also."

The Finance Specialist for the Budget Section is SGT Sayanara Soth of St. Robert. SGT Soth has 5 years of military experience and is an AGR Soldier who serves as an Administrative and Human Resource Specialist for the 35th Engineer Brigade at Ft. Leonard Wood. Of her current position SGT Soth said, "I support all the



administrative tasks. I also work on the badging process for the LN workers." Because "keeping force protection at its highest" by processing the badging of the LN workers is her goal, SGT Soth says this process is her "most difficult challenge."

Other challenges faced the team of three when they took over responsibility. "We came in at the end of the fiscal year," said CW2 Schill. "In the budget world that is a unique and challenging time. It's the busiest time of year for the Budget Section. We had to pick up in the middle of the prior contracts."

LTC Jones added, "The LN workers have great difficulty just getting to work. It's not like us. They live outside the wire. It is dangerous for them just to come to work. They put their lives on the line every day because the Anti-Iraqi Forces target them."

Although they have already faced some difficult challenges, the 35th Engineer Brigade Budget Section has proven they have what it takes to get the job done. This trio has accepted the enormous responsibility of guarding our tax dollars and requiring accountability in a culture where accountability has never been required. As a result of their experience and long hours of hard work, success and mission accomplishment are assured.

The 35th Engineer Brigade thanks these fine Soldiers for their great work and dedication.

"FREEDOM ISN'T FREE"

ELECTRONIC WARFARE – A CRITICAL WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RADIO-CONTROLLED ROADSIDE BOMBS

- LTC David Lowe

Electronic Warfare has become a critical piece of weaponry used to defeat radio-controlled roadside bombs. During the past four years, the enemy has become more sophisticated in their use of radios and cell phones to trigger roadside bombs. To counter that threat, the U.S. military has developed a number of counter-measures, including Electronic Warfare, that are now being utilized in Iraq.

The 35th Engineer Brigade has a Naval Officer who serves as the brigade Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO). Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Michael Smith joined the Muleskinners upon our arrival in Iraq. LCDR Smith supervises the maintenance of the electronic warfare systems on the Muleskinner's tactical vehicles as part of the effort to defeat roadside bombs. The use of electronic counter-measures prevents the roadside bombs from exploding. LCDR Smith is on loan to the U.S. Army from his Navy job in San Diego where he writes training requirements for surface ships such as destroyers, cruisers and frigates.

Ice cream lovers may be interested to know that LCDR Smith is originally from Vermont and grew up in the town where they make Ben & Jerry's ice cream. His father was a Vermont National Guard engineer with the 131st Engineering Company during the 70s and 80s. "I am very excited to be part of the Army-Navy team and to serve with the Muleskinners." The Muleskinners are pleased to have LCDR Smith as their EWO in this fight against roadside bombs.



MULESKINNERS' MISSION REQUIRES LINGUIST

- LTC David Lowe

Among the many unique things about Iraq to most Americans is the Arabic language. The 35th Engineer Brigade's mission requires the services of an operational linguist to assist the Muleskinners in understanding the Arabic language and culture.

Adam, the Muleskinners' linguist, has been working as a linguist in Iraq for the past 4 ½ years. Adam's duties with the Muleskinners include interpreting and translating written and spoken Arabic communication; transcribing and analyzing verbal communications; performing document translation; and scanning research and analyzing foreign language documents. Adam also plays the role of a cultural advisor for Americans as we interact with the Arabic/Islamic culture. The goal is to fill the gap between the two cultures so we can better understand each other and work side by side to help the Iraqi people establish their infrastructure.

Adam is originally from Casablanca, Morocco which is located northwest of Africa and south of Spain. Morocco has some mountains in its interior and is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Its population is a mixture of Arabs, Berbers, and Mediterraneans with a large degree of French influence. Adam, who comes from a large family with many brothers and sisters, moved to the United States as an exchange student from France in 1989 and eventually became an American citizen. Moroccans, like Arabs, tend to have a lot of children because they view children as an investment.



"It's a great honor for me to be here to help the Iraqi people build their country and establish their freedom and democracy which they lost for years, especially under the former totalitarian regime lead by Saddam Hussein and his Baa'th Party," said Adam. "I love what I am doing here, and I am so proud to be an American and serve my country in this difficult time to make it safer and secure for generations to come. Assalamu 'Alaikum - Peace be upon you."

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: Doing What Needs to be Done

- CPT Kelly Parker

When asked what her duties were as the Executive Assistant to the 35th Engineer Brigade Command Group, SSG Diana Eberharter laughed and jokingly said, "I do whatever needs to be done, when it needs to be done." Although *she* was joking, the Soldiers who work daily in the Brigade Headquarters know there is a lot of truth in that statement.

SSG Eberharter lives in Waynesville and is an Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) soldier serving as the 35th Engineer Brigade's Executive Assistant. Just a couple weeks before being mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, SSG Eberharter earned her Masters degree in Human Resource Management.

"I take care of the General," SSG Eberharter said. "I coordinate his schedule and whatever he needs to get done." Since Brigadier General Pace does not have an aide, SSG Eberharter unofficially serves in that role as well. "I take care of all his military correspondence and as he says, I'm 'his gatekeeper,'" added SSG Eberharter.

According to SSG Eberharter, the biggest challenge she has faced is "gathering information from all the various sources to make up the General's calendar." BG Pace commented, "She's a very organized young soldier and I really appreciate what she does."

In addition to her Executive Assistant duties, SSG Eberharter is the 35th Engineer Brigade Headquarters Building Manager and serves as Fire Warden.

Commenting on the deployment thus far, SSG Eberharter said, "I think everyone is working great together as a team—it's close knit." The 35th Engineer Brigade and its Commander are thankful to have SSG Eberharter on their team.



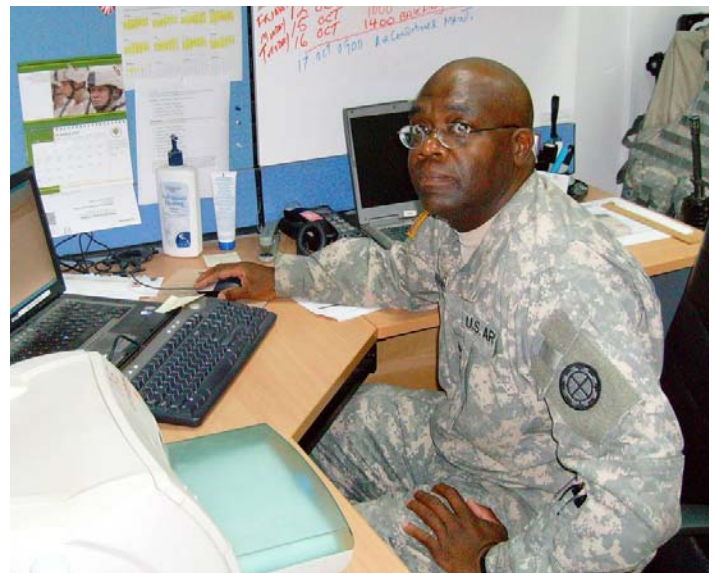
He Puts the "Team" in UMT!

- Chaplain LTC Gary Gilmore

SFC Reginald Johnson serves as the Chaplain Assistant for the 35th Engineer Brigade's Unit Ministry Team (UMT) and provides leadership in a variety of roles. He is the "keeper of the keys" and all the inventoried items at Engineer Chapel on Camp Liberty, and he coordinates exactly when and how that building is used for a variety of purposes-- not the least of which is Chapel services! Because of their auditorium seating and sound systems, Chapels are also utilized for large unit gatherings such as awards ceremonies or briefings.

And that illustrates the main role of the Chaplain Assistant-- to handle the details and provide the support that allows me the freedom to minister to Soldiers. He provides the steady management and attention to detail that is the difference between an 'okay' event and an outstanding one!

SFC Johnson admits that there is a lot of effort that people don't see, "but it's great to see the pieces come together and that work come to fruition," he noted. "I enjoy seeing the lives of some of our soldiers changed for the better because of what we do," he added. Reggie's commitment to serving soldiers grows out of his



personal commitment to the Lord, and often Soldiers approach him about their joys and concerns.

SFC Johnson has already served a full career with the Missouri Guard. He joined up in Kansas City with the old 110th as a Combat Engineer and then transitioned into the role of a Chaplain Assistant about ten years ago. He then was assigned to the 20th Aviation Brigade where we began our partnership in service. As often happens with many of our Soldiers, the Guard became a full-time career for Reggie as he served in the Chaplain's office at the Joint Forces Headquarters, the Recruit Sustainment Program, and most recently the 35th Special Troops Battalion as the Administrative Readiness NCO. He was assigned to the 35th Engineer Brigade and mobilized for this deployment, joining the unit at Fort McCoy this summer.

Reggie is married to his wife, Linda, and they are approaching their 20th anniversary next March. They have been staying in touch through email and telephone calls because, as Reggie says, "I'm here in Iraq, and it's a long way back to Kansas City!" (He still roots for the Chiefs—long distance!)

The Unit Ministry Team certainly isn't the largest section of the Brigade Headquarters, but SFC Johnson provides a vital role in giving Soldiers the opportunity to worship and sustaining "the care factor" within the unit. Or, as SFC Johnson would say it, "For Real!"

Ramadan: A Month of Devotion

- SGT Jake Boswell

Over the last month, your soldier may have mentioned Ramadan and you might have wondered "what in the world are they talking about?" Well Ramadan isn't something they made up, it is the most sacred holiday for the Muslim people, and it lasts a whole month. Unlike any holiday that we practice in Missouri, Ramadan is a month filled with devotion to Allah, in which the Muslim people spend their day fasting, abstaining from food and most everything else. Some of the things they give up day-to-day include, food and drink, swearing, smoking (which they do a lot of!), and even marital relations. If we were able equate this to one of our holidays it would have to be most like Lent, in a very extreme sense. They determine the start of Ramadan by the position of the Moon. When the Moon is in a perfect crescent they are able to start their spiritual holiday. Likewise, when the Moon completes its cycle and becomes the same perfect crescent the holiday is over.

Ramadan is not all fasting, though. There are many large feasts that are considered very fun. These usually happen after the sun goes down when they are able to have meals and enjoy some of the things that they give up during the daylight hours.

This month is a build up to a very sacred night for the Muslim people. Laylat al Qadr or "The Night of Power" usually occurs on the 27th day of Ramadan and is the holiest day of Ramadan. During this night it is believed that one prayer equals one thousand prayers, so many pray throughout the night. It is also believed to be the night that the Prophet Muhammad first received the revelation of the Holy Qur'an which is the Holy book for the Islamic Faith.

At the end of Ramadan there is a huge festival Eid-al-Fitr or The Festival of Breaking the Fast and occurs over the last three days of Ramadan. The people dress in their finest clothes and decorate their homes. They also give presents to the children and visit with family and friends. During this time they give special donations to the poor. Overall there is a great sense of generosity and gratitude during this ceremony. The Holy month of Ramadan is the pinnacle of the Muslim calendar year.

Gulf Region Division Changes Command

- LTC David Lowe

On October 10, 2007, Brigadier General (BG) Pace and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Harding attended the Gulf Region Division (GRD) Change of Command Ceremony at Camp Essayons in the Green Zone, Baghdad, Iraq. The Multi-National Force-Iraq Commanding General, David Patraeus, officiated the ceremony which saw BG Michael Walsh turn over command to BG Jeffrey Dorko.

BG Dorko's previous assignment was as Commander of the Southwestern Division, headquartered in Dallas, Texas. Prior to this assignment, BG Dorko served as the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Maneuver Support Center, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, 2002 to 2004.

Before the regime of Saddam Hussein fell in 2003, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was on the ground – first in Kuwait, then in Iraq. During these early stages of reconstruction, USACE employees, both military and civilian, formed task force teams in oil and electricity, as well as forward engineering support teams operating throughout the entire theater to assess projects, develop courses of action and initiate contracts. The success of these teams was critical in the effort to secure a new and reliable, operating government as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. On January 25, 2004, these individual engineering efforts were brought under one command with the formation of the GRD.

The GRD provides quality, full spectrum engineering and logistical services in support of civil/military construction in Iraq. GRD is committed to assisting the Iraqi Government to assume full responsibility for national infrastructure.

The GRD works the reconstruction mission along with the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Multi-National Force – Iraq command. Working in conjunction with the Government of Iraq, GRD's goal is to assist in the restoration of essential services infrastructure to the country. To execute projects, GRD has three subordinate districts throughout the country – Gulf Region North in Tikrit; Gulf Region Central in Baghdad; and Gulf Region South in Tallil.

The GRD is divided into four project sectors – electricity, water, oil, and facilities. Since 2004, GRD has completed more than 5,385 projects – including more than 325 electrical distribution projects; more than 320 water treatments facility projects; more than 1,000 school renovations; and more than 70 primary healthcare centers.

Muleskinners Cigar Night on the Roof!



Muleskinners at "The Sapper Call"



Sapper Call is an informal version of a "Dining In." At such gatherings the Soldiers of the Engineer Regiment socialize, dine, share information, and develop esprit de corps.



Muleskinner Musings



To maintain control of discussions during office meetings, LTC Lowe has been forced to equip SGT Jake Boswell with his very own muzzle. "Apparently SGT Boswell doesn't understand how these discussions are to work," LTC Lowe said. "I discuss and he listens." To this SGT Boswell replied, "mm...hum...er...um...hmm..."



LTC Greg Mason models a "hard hat" during a tour of Camp Liberty's incinerator.



SGM Craft Pulling a Long Shift

Prior to publication of the photo above, the Muleskinner received the following email from SGM Craft:

"Dear Editors of the Muleskinner Times,

Prior to publication or distribution of an undetermined number of photos which were taken of the undersigned o/a 201735OCT07, please consider the fact that I had been on duty for a period of 36 hours straight, and 44 hours out of the last 48. If, upon further review and careful consideration, you and your media outlet determine that is in the best interest of overall morale to publish said picture(s), I will seek personal damage compensation in the amount of \$1.37.

CHAD R. CRAFT
SGM, MOARNG
Operations Sergeant Major"

EDITORS NOTE: The personal damage compensation claimed by SGM Craft is under review by the Muleskinner Editorial Board. While the Board stands ready to negotiate for fair compensation, we believe the requested \$1.37 is grossly excessive. We at the Muleskinner appreciate SGM Craft's long hours of hard work. This photo was published for the sole purpose of honoring SGM Craft's dedication. For SGM Craft to recover for damage to his reputation, he must present us with evidence he had a good reputation prior to publication. Thus far, no such evidence has been provided. If anyone has any information that SGM Craft ever had a good reputation, please contact the Muleskinner immediately. The Muleskinner Editorial Board firmly believes the inclusion of SGM Craft in this esteemed publication will do nothing but improve his reputation among his peers, family, and friends.

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©LTC David Lowe

©CPT Kelly Parker








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"THE MULESKINNER" is a publication focused on the Soldiers of the 35th Engineer Brigade (a.k.a. Muleskinners) and its engineer mission while deployed to Iraq in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The purpose of this publication is to keep our loved ones and friends at home informed about the Muleskinners in a combat environment. THE MULESKINNER will be produced exclusively by Muleskinner Soldiers to ensure accurate reporting and authentic information.

THE MULESKINNER is organized and edited by the Muleskinner's Command Judge Advocate, LTC David Lowe, and his cohort in crime, fellow Judge Advocate, CPT Kelly Parker. Paralegal SGT Jake Boswell will lend his technical assistance by overseeing the layout and design. It is our genuine desire to provide timely, insightful, and entertaining information to our readers.

Baghdad Weather for the Week of October 22nd, 2007

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						
Hi: 91	Hi: 90	Hi: 90	Hi: 91	Hi: 90	Hi: 89	Hi: 88
Low: 69	Low: 69	Low: 67	Low: 65	Low: 63	Low: 63	Low: 64

Deployment Countdown

There are several ways to look at the time we have left here in Iraq, these are just a few of them.

Weeks	Days	Hours	Minutes	Seconds
32.34	226.40	5,433.67	326,020.38	19,561,222.96

Announcements

Muleskinner Promotions!

Christopher R. Tilley (left) and Hank F. Schmitz (center) are both promoted to the rank of specialist by 1LT Maureen Wells, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 35th Engineer Brigade, during a ceremony at Camp Liberty in western Baghdad Oct. 8. Tilley is a resident of Dixon, Mo., and Schmitz hails from Waynesville, Mo.



Muleskinners get Patched!

On October 3, 2007 the Muleskinners received their combat patch. They were awarded the 35th Engineer Brigade patch. This was a significant event because it is the first time that that this patch has ever been awarded as a combat patch.



"FREEDOM ISN'T FREE"