

# ON POINT!



# CONTENTS

Chambers Prairie.....Page 3  
 Moving on up.....Page 4  
 Unit readiness exercise.....Page 6  
 51-year dispute.....Page 8  
 Voice of Shinkai.....Page 9  
 Photo page .....Page 10  
 Regulars' Academy.....Page 12  
 Keeping the roads safe.....Page 14  
 Photo page.....Page 16  
 Chaplain's Corner.....Page 18  
 Arrowhead Thoughts.....Page 19  
 Arrowhead Remembers.....Page 20

## COVER

Sgt. Joshua Barnes (left) and Sgt. Steven Pickrell of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, keep an eye on a suspicious vehicle through their individual weapon's sights at a checkpoint in Daab Pass, Shinkai District, Afghanistan Feb. 25. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg)

## BACK COVER

Soldiers of Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, patrol the villages of Shinkai District, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Christopher McCullough) (Illustration by Spc. Mark Neace)

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# Chambers Prairie adopts military unit

Story and photos by  
 Courtney Schrieve  
 Community Relations Director  
 North Thurston Public Schools

What started out as a phone call between a principal and an army Captain, has evolved into a school-wide partnership with students, staff and soldiers - and a guided missile launcher -- at Chambers Prairie elementary school.

"We have a large military population in our school, so this seemed like a natural way to support the troops and make a visible connection for students with parents in uniform," said Stan Koep, principal at Chambers Prairie Elementary, which officially has about 20 percent of students from military families.

Chambers Prairie is one of several schools in North Thurston Public Schools that is part of the community Adopt-A-Unit project which includes Joint Base Lewis McChord, the City of Lacey and Lacey Chamber of Commerce. "It was just a natural fit for our school and everyone has embraced the unit."

Led by Captain Chase Baker, about 25 soldiers from the Charlie Company 52nd Infantry Regiment (or c/52DIN), attended a school assembly followed by visits to the classroom and a "show-and-tell" of four military vehicles, including a Humvee, a MTV (cargo truck) and two Anti tank guided missile Strykers. "In the Army we say military vehicles can bite you - so please be safe and don't climb on them," Baker told students before



Parents and students sit and listen to an address at Chambers Prairie elementary school.

the vehicle tours.

Students listened intently to soldiers talk about each vehicle before they were allowed inside. "There were so many gadgets," said Isaiah, an enthusiastic second grader. "I didn't even know Army trucks had night vision cameras!"

The unit is scheduled to go to Afghanistan this spring, but they will still be in touch with students as each classroom plans to "adopt" 1-3 soldiers as pen pals. "My guys love it," said Baker of the connection made with students.

"Our hope is this partnership will benefit the mission forward and be a morale booster." He hopes once the unit is in country, they can develop a school-to-school partnership with an Afghan madrasa.

For now, the students at Chambers Prairie are elated to have their own soldier connections.

"It will be exciting to hear from them while they are away helping others," said Niya, a 6th grader. "I want to know how they are doing and what is interesting to them."



Soldiers from Charlie 52nd Infantry Regiment display an Anti-Tank Guided Missile Stryker vehicle to students of Chambers Prairie elementary school Lacey, Wash.

# Moving on up, to the east side

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Chris McCullough  
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

Moving into a new residence for the first time is a challenge for anyone. When that residence is some place that has not seen any sizeable American Forces in nearly five years, and is in a state of disrepair, it is infinitely more challenging.

“The place had been neglected for well over a year,” said Cpt. Joe Mickley, commanding officer for Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, the newest tenant at Forward Operating Base Sweeney. After living out of their bags for the better part of a month at FOB Apache, the men of Battle Company were itching to settle into their new home and strenuous manual labor wasn’t about to stop them. They set about building their proverbial ‘home away from home’ almost as soon as they arrived.

“Everything you see around here was built by our Soldiers,” said Mickley. “We built a lot of buildings, we put up a lot of tents, we filled a lot of sandbags and we increased our force protection significantly.” “We had to build it from the ground up,” the Battle



Sgt. Grant Short, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, cuts wood for a tent base which will be used to improve the housing situation at Forward Operating Base Sweeney, Afghanistan, Jan. 21, 2012. Soldiers from B/5-20 Inf. just moved to Sweeney where living quarters are limited.

Company 1st Sergeant, Aaron Alexander added.

The amount of hard work the Soldiers of Battle Company have put into their FOB in such a short time is not lost on their commanding officer.

“The obvious challenges are having to build everything that you have and make it what it is,” Mickley said. “However, the rewards of being able to sit back and see the growth – the place that you’ve put your blood, sweat and tears into – that’s the reward, and that’s what is really creating a high motivation, high morale within the unit right now because Soldiers can sit back and see the fruit of their labors.”

The Soldiers of FOB Sweeney seem to agree as well.

“Sweeney turned out to be a lot better than I thought it was going to be before we came out here,” said Staff Sgt. David Cross, one of Battle Company’s squad leaders. “The guys have really pulled together and we’ve worked hard. It’s coming along well and I think it’s going to turn out to be a pretty good outpost.”

It has not been easy, however. The quartering party that was sent in advance, worked relentlessly for the last month.

“The guys have done a tremendous amount of work – from sunup to sundown, Christmas Day, New Year’s Eve – to make sure this place was ready to support a company-plus size element and all its future operations,” said Alexander.

To make things more difficult, FOB Sweeney’s location – over a mile-high, on the east side of a mountain range, several hours from Qalat – makes getting provisions difficult.

“It’s fairly remote,” said Alexander. “So, as far as receiving the supplies and heavy equipment that we

need to expedite these projects, that’s definitely been a challenge. But the guys have overcome, they’ve adapted and they’ve made-do with what they have.”

None of these challenges have dampened Battle Company’s spirit, though.

“There is kind of the challenge of the unknown, which is fun,” said Alexander. “There hasn’t been anybody out here for a while – there has been nobody conducting any enduring operations out here for quite some time – and the enemy has realized that and capitalized on it. So we have the opportunity to make a dent in the insurgency here and the partnership with the ANA and the other local security forces.”

In spite of all the challenges they face, Battle Company is on point and digging in for the long haul at FOB Sweeney.

“There is going to be challenges,” said Mickley. “However, given the start that we’ve gotten here, I feel we’re well suited for those challenges. I feel we’re going to make a difference here ... but we have our work cut out for us. It’s not going to be easy.”



Sgt. Grant Short (left) and Staff Sgt. David Cross Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, work together to fill sandbags that will be used to improve force protection at FOB Sweeney, Afghanistan, since their arrival, Jan. 12, 2012.



A Soldier from Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, removes nails from lumber at Forward Operating Base Sweeney, Afghanistan, Jan. 13, 2012. Soldiers from B/5-20 Inf. just moved to Sweeney where supplies and equipment are in short supply.

# Unit readiness exercise prepares medics to save lives

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Chris McCullough  
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

Soldiers from Battle Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, conducted a unit readiness exercise at the newly refurbished Forward Operating Base Sweeney, Jan. 20, 2012.

At approximately 10 a.m., a simulated attack was conducted. Security forces on FOB Sweeney sprung into action, fending off the opposition forces, while others who were not repelling the mock attack began triaging the wounded – applying tourniquets and other life saving measures – before whisking the injured away on stretchers to the company aid station for proper care and

evacuation. The simulated injuries ranged from shrapnel wounds to more life threatening injuries.

“We had a Mass Cal (Mass Casualty) exercise – pretty much a rehearsal,” said Cpt. Arlene Ybarra, the Physician Assistant at FOB Sweeney. “The platoons all went to the CCPs – the casualty collection points – put them (the injured) on the litters and then our job, here at the aid station, is to get ready.”

The 1-14 Cavalry Regiment medics were ready when the surplus of (simulated) injured Soldiers from across the FOB began arriving.

Soldiers must be prepared for all contingencies, no matter how unlikely. Medics are no different; they must be confident in their own skills and the Soldiers must

have confidence in the medics to be able to take care of them when it counts.

“As soon as we heard the call, we put on our gloves, got the IVs ready, got everything prepped and waited around the tables for the casualties to come in,” Ybarra said.

When the medic platoon started to receive the mock-injured Soldiers, there were simulated wounds of varying degrees, which challenged the medics’ abilities to cope within a stressful situation and maintain their composure. The medics responded admirably, treating all the patients in an expedient manner before moving them to the helicopter-landing zone for a simulated medical evacuation.

“All in all, we had 2 U.S. and 4 ANA.

We brought them into the aid station, put them in their triage categories from immediate to expectant ... and worked on them,” said Staff Sgt. Sancar Fredsti, the aid station noncommissioned officer in charge. “Everything went pretty good.”

Should a real emergency occur, these medics will be prepared.

“Before we ever get anybody in, you always have to rehearse,” said Ybarra. “We’ve been rehearsing already, so we kind of know how to work already.”

The point of a mass casualty exercise is learning to treat Soldiers, to prepare for the worst-case scenario, no matter how unlikely.



Pfc. John Hardesty, a medic from 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, simulates working on an Afghan National Army Soldier at the company aid station during a mass casualty exercise held at FOB Sweeney, Afghanistan, Jan. 20, 2012.

Sgt. Anthony Howard, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, applies a tourniquet to a Soldier during a mass casualty exercise held at FOB Sweeney, Afghanistan, Jan. 20, 2012.



Soldiers from Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, move a Soldier with simulated injuries onto a stretcher during a unit readiness exercise held at Forward Operating Base Sweeney, Afghanistan, Jan. 20, 2012.

# District Governor settles 51-year dispute

Story by  
Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg  
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

Muhammad Zarif, the governor for the Mizan District, Afghanistan, solved a tribal dispute Jan. 14, which has plagued the region for more than 50 years.

The tribal dispute started when a common family member died of natural causes and the two parties involved could not agree over the division of the deceased family member's farmland.

The feud would escalate and cool down over the decades, with both sides committing crimes against each other. Crimes that included property damage and murder were the key motivators in both families wanting a civil resolution. "They [both families] went to the Taliban to try to resolve it, but the Taliban was not effectively able to get the parties together and make an agreement," said Pete Turner, research manager for the human terrain team in Zabul Province, Afghanistan.

Where the Taliban failed, the local representative of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan succeeded. Governor Zarif has worked to increase the government's influence in the district during the past six months, he was able to bring the right people from Qalat, Kandahar and surrounding areas to have the families sit down and resolve the dispute.

Zarif said that since this dispute was such a big issue for the district,

Mohammad Naseri, the Provincial Governor of Zabul, instructed me to call in prominent Ulamas so we could solve the dispute.

Ulama is a body of Muslim scholars that specialize in sacred Islamic law and theology. Once Zarif had assembled the Ulamas and tribal elders in the village of Shrang, he convened the assembly, also known as a Jirga.

The Jirga took several days of long intense negotiations, with Zarif being able to keep both families involved until they reached a settlement.

"It was his [Zarif] great efforts and personal interest that helped us succeed where we failed in the past," said Shrang, an elder for whom the village is named. "The district governor brought us together with the Ulamas, here in our own village, so we could resolve our conflict. We are very happy."



Muhammad Zarif, district governor for Mizan, Afghanistan, overlooks binding documents, in front of a group of Ulamas and village elders, in order to settle a 51-year dispute between two families of the same tribe at the Mizan District Center, Jan. 15. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Phil Kernisan)

Zarif ended the Jirga in his office at the Mizan District Center where they resolved the dispute and distributed documents to the parties involved. The Jirga resulted in an agreement that was acceptable to all sides involved in the dispute.

"This is Islamic Sharia and they have equal rights to go and get justice from different parties but when the two sides come together on a decision and put down their thumb print, they are bound to that decision," said Governor Zarif.

The Afghan people and the local government initiated, conducted and resolved the dispute demonstrating the benefit and impact that GIRA offers to the people of Afghanistan. The resolution of this dispute brings more stability to Shrang Village and the Mizan District.

# The 'Voice of Shinkai': Rock Star status in a box

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Chris McCullough  
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

*Part 1 of 3* - Shinkai district is an inauspicious place in southern Zabul Province, Afghanistan, where the population lives a humble existence in contrast to western standards. There is no electricity, televisions, computers or internet. The only working telephones in town are a few satellite phones that are available for use by locals who can afford to pay per minute to use them.

The communities here are largely comprised of poor farming families, most of whom are uneducated. Schooling in Shinkai has been nonexistent since the Taliban kidnapped and later murdered several village elders in March 2011. Consequently, the literacy rate here is negligible - most residents cannot read or write - therefore there are no newspapers or magazines.

The outcome is that most residents get their news and information from word of mouth or radio, said Sgt. Kat Klosinski, one of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul non-commissioned officers from the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, Green Bay, Wis.

"It is hoped that the school will reopen soon, but until it does, radio is the only form of education in the area," Klosinski said.

Recognizing that widespread illiteracy only strengthens the Taliban by allowing them to control the dissemination of

knowledge - and therefore power - in Zabul province, and across Afghanistan, the U.S. State Department put into practice a program called the Reading Literacy Program to counter the Taliban and instill in the local populace a desire for education.

"Radio Literacy's purpose is to ... push them (the Afghan people) to demand more education from their government and therefore lead to legitimacy in their government," said Master Sgt. Joel E. Fix, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Fort Belvoir, Va., who oversaw the Radio Literacy program during 116th IBCT's deployment to Zabul province.

"Radio Literacy is not a replacement for schools and education. (It) is not meaning to teach people to be fluent speakers, writers and readers of Pashtu," Fix added. "The conceptual idea is that over the course of a period of time of the program, that people will say 'I like this; I want to know

more."

## A PROGRAM IS REBORN

When 432nd CAB arrived at Forward Operating Base Sweeney, in July 2011, the Radio Literacy program was largely undeveloped. The Radio in a Box - a self-contained unit that includes a CD player, an audio-visual jack, a laptop connection and an amplifier - was broadcasting a 90-hour loop of Pashtu music and little more. There was not a disc jockey to broadcast any news or information; until two days later, when a 21-year old Afghan, by the name of Atta Muhammad, approached 432nd CAB at FOB Sweeney.

"He'd never had a job in his life, but his English was good, his 'radio voice' was excellent and he was smart enough to see the difference he could make in Shinkai," said Klosinski.

*See Shinkai on page 18*



The Radio Literacy package includes one hand-crank radio and one handbook per family. This radio can receive AM, FM or shortwave radio frequencies and can be charged via hand-crank, solar panel, or operated off typical AAA batteries, said Master Sgt. Joel E. Fix, of Fort Belvoir, Va., 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, who oversaw the Radio Literacy program.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg

# Regulars' academy is anything but

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg  
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

The backbone of any army is the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps. The NCOs train their troops, look after their needs and provide the first line of leadership to all their Soldiers. In the absence of orders, they are to take the initiative and execute with the proper actions.

That is exactly what the NCOs of Sykes' Regulars, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division believe and they are looking forward to sharing that with the Afghan National Army NCOs of 2nd

Infantry Kandak Headquarters, 3rd Brigade, 205th 'Atal' Corps.

"We wanted to enable the Afghans to be able to train themselves," said Sgt. 1st Class Paul Underkoffler, operations sergeant major, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5-20 Inf. Regt. "So the first step is training the NCOs, who will then be able to train their Soldiers."

Although the academy was a joint endeavor between Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Dallas, command sergeant major Task Force Regulars, and Command Sgt. Maj. Ahmad Buylar, command sergeant major 2nd Kandak, the NCOs of

Task Force Regulars went from a concept and created the academy in three weeks. They developed many different classes for the senior NCOs of the 2nd Kandak before presenting the curriculum to both command sergeants major. Buylar then decided which classes he wanted taught to his NCOs.

The first class started Jan. 29 and lasted three days. The subjects included roles of the NCO, identification of improvised explosive devices, map reading, first aid and field sanitation.

The academy is currently in its infancy and the NCOs of Task Force

Regulars plan on it being a huge success. They intend to conduct the academy every other month, with it growing in duration to a few weeks.

"From this academy we got a lot of ideas of what they want to be trained on," added Underkoffler. Underkoffler went on to say they are trying to develop a program where they train the Afghan Senior NCOs to become trainers themselves.

"The next phase is we get them trained," said Underkoffler. "Then we move out of the leading role and into the support role just making sure that they're training

and (we're) providing them with any help that they need."

The NCOs of Task Force Regulars are trying to ensure that the 2nd Kandak leadership recognizes the importance of having an academy that they can send their senior NCOs too. Once the ANA have a stronger NCO Corps they will also have a stronger army.

"We're trying to get them to... buy into it, and that way they will be able to sustain the academy," added Underkoffler. "Because if we train them and they don't have a buy in, the academy will cease after we leave."



Sgt. 1st Class Copeland, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division demonstrates how to properly apply a sling on an Afghan National Army Non-Commissioned Officer at the Task Force Regulars' NCO academy Jan. 30. Basic first aid was one of the main NCO skills taught at the Academy.

An Afghan National Army Non-Commissioned Officer learns how to apply a tourniquet at the Task Force Regulars' NCO academy Jan. 30. Basic first aid was one of the main NCO skills taught at the Academy.



First Sgt. Thomas Trott, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, trains an Afghan National Army non-commissioned officer on how to read a map at the Task Force Regulars' NCO Academy Jan. 30.

# Keeping the roads of Afghanistan safe, one IED at a time

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Chris McCullough  
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

The Soldiers of Combined Task Force Arrowhead may be the newest kids on the block, in Regional Command South, Afghanistan, but they've got an experienced team on their side where finding improvised explosive devices is concerned.

The 883rd Engineer Battalion, out of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, has been at Forward Operating Base Lagman, in Zabul province, since the middle of 2011 and they are ready to lend a hand in the search for IEDs.

"They (Combined Task Force Arrowhead) have platoons that need to learn the equipment and the roads out here," said Staff Sgt. Gregory Lautieri, of Coventry, RI, a platoon sergeant with the 883rd Engineers. "So they have a couple (Soldiers) each mission that jump in with us and ride and learn how to operate the vehicles out here because they just got into country. We're just showing them the ropes so that in two weeks to a month from now they can run their own route clearance missions."

That mission is fairly cut and dry.

"Our job is to clear the routes of roadside bombs (and) IEDs in order for military convoys and the civilian traffic to be able to travel on the roads and not get hurt," said Lautieri.

Fortunately for those who travel the main supply routes throughout Afghanistan on a frequent basis, the 883rd not only has the right tools for the mission, but the right people as well. People like Sgt. Steven Harrelson, a truck commander with the 883rd Engineers, who finds his job gratifying.

"It's a (rewarding) job being able to go out and clear the route for people," said Harrelson. "It's rewarding when you're able to pull them (IEDs) up out of the ground and blow them up before they can do their damage."

The 883rd's arsenal of tools include ground-penetrating radar vehicles such as the Husky Metal Detecting and Marking Vehicle - a mine protected, vehicle with a mounted mine detection system which is capable of finding and marking metallic explosive haz-



Sgt. Joseph Lilly, from Flint, Mich., 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, mans the Common Remotely Operated Weapon System (CROWS) aboard a Buffalo mine resistant ambush protected vehicle, Feb. 13, 2012. Lilly is assisting the 883rd Engineer Battalion to conduct route clearance which helps ensure roads across Zabul province, in Afghanistan, are free and clear of improvised explosive devices.

ards such as deep buried IEDs - and the Buffalo Mine Protected Clearance Vehicle, a 37-ton combat ready, mine resistant ambush protected 6x6 truck designed specifically for route clearance of IEDs, land mines, and other explosive hazards.

"What it does is, when we find an IED, we use this arm to dig the IEDs up so the (explosive ordnance disposal) guys can blow them up," said Harrelson.

Easy as that sounds, Harrelson explains that it is not as simple as rolling up to an IED and pulling it up out of the ground.

"You can't just go in and just dig it up," said Harrelson. "You have to be able to dig around it and be able to identify it, see what it is, and (then) pull it up."

"You have a lot of different things that are going on," explains Harrelson. "You also have to talk with your platoon sergeant and platoon leader (while you are digging the IED up); let them know what you're seeing and what's going on around you. It can be nerve wracking, but once you've trained enough, like we've been doing over and over, it gets to be like clockwork."

No matter how many times the 883rd digs up the enemy's handiwork, there is nothing ever easy about approaching an IED. It's a dangerous job that leaves a lot to the unknown, which most engineers seem to agree is the most difficult part of their job.

"We've been trained to do what we know when we find (an IED), when we see it," Harrelson said, "but the fact is we don't know if we're going to see it, or when we're going to see it. So basically the time prior to finding the IEDs is the worst part because you don't know if you're going to find it or it's going to find you."

Of course, even when they do find it first, approaching IEDs, is no joke.

"That's... about the worse part; going up to it," Harrelson explains.

At the end of the day, the 883rd has cleared another route somewhere in Afghanistan, but that's not to say it will stay that way. Route clearance is a difficult, never-ending job.



Elements of the 883rd Engineer Battalion move methodically across the Afghan countryside in search of improvised explosive devices, Feb. 13, 2012. Their mission helps Afghan civilians, Afghan National Security Forces, and International Security Assistance Forces remain safe as they move from one place to another.

"It's not easy," Lautieri states. "It's a lot of long days and it's just non-stop. The good thing is we have four different platoons that go out every day. We get two days to recoup, get our vehicles and equipment back up and then go back out again."

And so the iron men of the 883rd

continue their mission to keep the roads of Afghanistan open to all that travel them.

"Coming back to any FOB or COB, just getting rest is all we need to go out and do it again," Lautieri stated.



Two Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles from the 883rd Engineer Battalion make their way down a main supply route in Afghanistan in search of improvised explosive devices, Feb. 13, 2012. The 883rd Engineers routinely conduct route clearance which helps ensure roads across Zabul province, Afghanistan, are free and clear of IEDs. Their mission helps Afghan civilians, Afghan National Security Forces, and International Security Assistance Forces remain safe as they move from one place to another.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



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U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg

# Chaplain's Corner

Have you ever said something that you wish you could take back? I sure have, in fact, there have been times when that little voice of conscience in my head has advised me, "Don't say it!" or "You're going to regret this!" Even after these warnings I have still been unable to hold my tongue. Then the argument escalates, when I could have diffused it with a kind word. I have also hurt someone I care deeply about with the things I have said.

Words are a powerful thing. Even though we have all heard the old adage, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," it's not true. We have all experienced pain from what others have said to us. Often we can even remember those hurtful, discouraging words decades later.

Today's technology has created a platform to instantly broadcast our every thought or feeling. Texting, email, websites, and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have totally transformed the way we communicate. Twitter has

become so popular that if you are not "tweeting," eyes roll to insist that you are missing out! You can "tweet" that you are bored and eating ice cream as long as you use 140 characters or less.

But when you start to read some of the stuff that has being tweeted and how it instantly makes its way around the world into the headlines and onto the talk shows, you realize how careful you have to be with your words. These "tweets" cannot be taken back, and they are instantly forwarded from one end of the earth to the other.

All these options create a powerful, permanent record. People have lost their jobs for things they have said through e-mail. Others have broken off relationships with a text message. Athletes openly disagree with decisions of their coaches and team owners. When it comes to OPSEC, Soldiers' lives are at risk when people post sensitive or secret information on the internet.

Just as a small bit in the mouth of a horse controls the direction of



the horse and a small rudder on a ship controls the direction of the ship (James 3:3-4); our words, spoken and written, control the direction of our life. They linger on as a permanent record. But if the bit, the rudder, and our tongue are controlled; each can be used for wonderful purposes. When the horse is under control, it can plow a field. When the ship is controlled, it can deliver great cargo. When the tongue is controlled, we bring life to those around us, through encouragement, praise, compassion, love and kindness.

- Chaplain (Maj.) Edward I. Choi, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division

## Shinkai (continued)

"I joined the PRT team to earn some money for my family as well as serve for the poor people of the Shinkai (district)," said Atta. "Everything for me was different; strange to me. That was my first time talking into a microphone." With Atta onboard, the PRT at Sweeney set about reviving the Radio Literacy Program.

The Radio Literacy Program is part of the "Knowledge is Light" Campaign, which was designed to raise literacy awareness and is being run in some capacity across most of Afghanistan. The target audience is largely women and children, though many men participate. The participants can complete the Radio Literacy

Program from their homes and villages. The 116th IBCT, Fort Belvoir, Va. introduced the Radio Literacy Program to Zabul province in 2011. The 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, Green Bay, Wis., and the Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul, Combined Task Force Arrowhead is currently running the program in Shinkai district.

# Arrowhead Thoughts



Staff Sgt. David Cross,  
Dalton, Ga.  
Battle Company, 5-20 Inf. Regt.

Sweeny turned out to be a lot better than I thought it was going to be, before we came out here. The things we needed to improve on, the guys have really pulled together and we've worked hard, it's coming along well and I think it's going to turn out to be a pretty good outpost.

Pvt. Nikko Williams,  
Andrews, N.C.  
Battle Company, 5-20 Inf. Regt.



We're out here by ourselves, so there's not much contact. We're getting a lot of stuff done so it'll be better for other people once they come in to change with us. ANA is really good here. Also, the Romanians are also good.



Sgt. Nicholas Lightwine,  
Yelm, Wash.  
Battle Company, 5-20 Inf. Regt.

The fact that we get to build our own living conditions is sort of nice. We kind of build what we want. It gives us a lot to do; keeps our minds occupied.

Pfc. Yannick Kamdem,  
Noblesville, Ind.  
Battle Company, 5-20 Inf. Regt.



It's a great place to get to know each other, work hard, build a good environment for each other and combine as a big family.



Spc. James Bissenas,  
Phoenix, Ariz.  
Battle Company, 5-20 Inf. Regt.

It's a smaller base so I don't have to deal with a whole lot of people. It's a bigger area so we get more missions; it's more geared toward us.

# Arrowhead Remembers



**Pfc. DUSTIN PAUL NAPIER**

Born in Frankfurt, Germany, 25 November 1991

Dustin Paul Napier enlisted in the United States Army July 13, 2010 as an Infantryman MOS (11B). He completed Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Benning, Georgia where he was assigned to Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion 330th Infantry Training Brigade. Dustin's first assignment was in Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, Fort Wainwright Alaska. Soon after his arrival, PFC Napier deployed with 1-24 Infantry in April 2011 to Zabul Province,

Afghanistan.

His Awards and decorations are; Bronze Star Medal (posthumously), Purple Heart Medal (posthumously), National Defense Service Medal, Afghan Campaign Medal (2 Stars), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Army Achievement Medal, NATO Medal (posthumously), Combat Infantry Badge.

He is survived by his Wife, Tabitha Napier, Mother, Marianne Napier, Father Darrell Napier, and Brother, Darrell D. Napier.



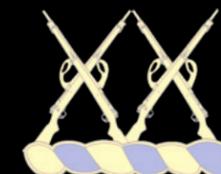
**1st Lt. David A. Johnson**

1LT David A. Johnson of Mayville, Wisconsin was born on 28 November 1987. After joining the Army on 26 January 2010, 1LT Johnson attended the Infantry Basic Officer Leaders Course (IN BOLC) at Fort Benning, Georgia. Following IN BOLC 1LT Johnson was assigned to 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Joint Base-Lewis McCord, Washington, where he served as a Rifle Platoon Leader in C Company.

1LT Johnson's military awards include the Bronze Star Medal

(posthumously), Purple Heart Medal (posthumously), National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal (posthumously), and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

1LT Johnson is survived by his parents Andrew and Laura Johnson, brothers Matthew and Michael Johnson and his sister, Emily Johnson.





**ARROWHEAD**  
3RD BRIGADE 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION  
**ALWAYS**  
**POINT**



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