

Crossed Sabers

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"Telling the First Team's Story"

Wednesday Jan. 4, 2006

First Team Aviators Return from Pakistan

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs

It was a cool, clear early central Texas morning, with the stars in full view as Soldiers from Task Force Quake stepped off the plane at Robert Gray Army Airfield Dec. 4.

Not only were there stars in the sky, but two stars were waiting for the troops on the flight line as they were greeted by the warm hand of Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., the commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, an energized band and senior leaders from their brigade and battalions.

"Seeing the Soldiers smiling and coming off the plane with no complaints speaks largely of their attitudes," said Col. Daniel Shanahan, commander of 1st Air Cavalry Brigade.

The first members of Task Force Quake touched down at 2 a.m. Sunday, following a six-week deployment to Pakistan providing humanitarian assistance to earthquake victims. The task force included Soldiers from Headquarters Company, Bravo Company, and Delta Company of the 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, and



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1ACB, Public Affairs)

Spc. John Esquivel, an aviation operations specialist with Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 227th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division serves up a juice to his daughter, Jasmine, age 2, with his wife, Christina at his unit's hanger bay at Robert Gray Army Airfield Dec. 4. Esquivel returned with the first group of Soldiers from Task Force Quake, which completed a six-week deployment to Pakistan in support of earthquake relief efforts.

Bravo Company of the 615th Aviation Support Battalion.

The families and friends of the Soldiers waited anxiously at

the 2-227th's hangar, located on the other side of the airfield, as the returning "Lobos" finished up some in-processing. For

some families, this was not the

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Cav's Aviation, Support Brigades to Deploy

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Major General Joseph Fil, Jr., commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, announced that two brigades from the division have received deployment orders.

Fil made the announcement during the III Corps-sponsored quarterly "TV Town

Hall" broadcast Thursday (Dec. 15) on KNCT-TV, the Killeen area Public Broadcasting System affiliate.

Two brigades, the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade and the 15th Support Brigade, are slated to deploy in 2006. Both units are expected to begin deploying in late summer next year. The announcement came in response to a viewer's question during the call-in show, which allows Fort Hood area

residents to air their concerns to senior leaders from the installation.

Though the rest of the division has yet to receive deployment orders, Fil told the caller that the entire division continues to prepare for a return to Iraq next year.

"We have a timeline for the air caval-

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New Year Brings New Missions into Focus

The end of 2005 saw the first two brigades from the 1st Cavalry Division receive deployment orders for Iraq. As this new year dawns, the focus for those two brigades and our entire division is crystal clear; transform, prepare, and take care.

These three key tasks will ensure the success of our division in whatever we're called to do in 2006. All three tasks are equally important, and we

must strive for excellence in each area.

We are well into our transformation and the creation of brigade combat teams that can and will - deploy. Our leadership is actively equipping and training our formations under the new design which will assure us of continued success on future battlefields in the Global War on Terrorism.

Our preparations for deployment cover every facet

of our operational capability. From individual weapon qualifications, to small unit tactics and brigade-level field training

exercises, we must approach each training event with professionalism and deadly earnest. We must train as we will fight.

As we focus on equipment and training, we must also continue to recognize the criticality of caring for our troopers and the family members who support their efforts. We do it because they all deserve nothing less than our best efforts.

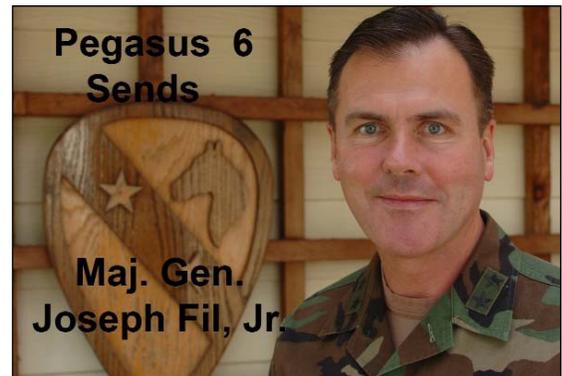
I expect our leaders to take the reigns and spearhead these efforts, but it is, likewise, imperative that each Soldier understand their individual role in the division's effort.

Several years ago, this division's senior leadership established a campaign aimed at safety and personal responsibility. The program stressed individual responsibility to act responsibly and safely in all

that we do and served as a reminder to every trooper in this division that their nation, their unit and their families depend on their well-being.

I intend to reinitiate this program because I feel it is absolutely critical that everyone understands the 1st Cavalry Division depends on each and every one of us. The First Team Power Thought "I can save my own life" is indeed powerful. I expect each of you to do the same.

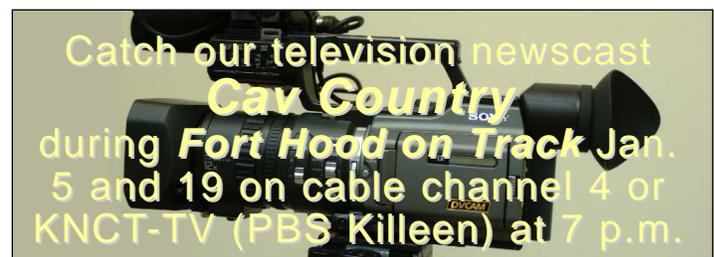
This year we will finish our transformation, prepare to respond to our nation's call as needed, and take care of each other. With a sharp focus on the mission at hand, and an eye on the well-being of our troops and their loved ones, there is nothing we cannot achieve in the coming year - together.



(Courtesy Photo)

Write On!

Spc. Sheena Reyes, a public affairs specialist and printjournalist with Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, was presented by her award for second place in the commentary category of the Department of the Army Keith L. Ware journalism competition Dec. 15.



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Tax Statements Being Released

ARLINGTON, Va. – Military service members, military retirees and annuitants, and federal civilian employees paid by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) can expect to receive their 2005 tax statements beginning this month.

DFAS customers with myPay access will be able to retrieve their tax statements electronically up to three weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery. myPay is DFAS' secure Web-based pay information system.

Tax statements for Active Duty Soldiers should be available on myPay Jan. 21. If the statement is not available on the myPay the form will be mailed Jan. 24 to Jan. 27. Civilian employee W-2 forms will be posted Jan. 9 or mailed Jan. 10-21. Forms for Retirees all should be online or are already mailed out. One of the many benefits of myPay is the ability to receive tax statements electronically, saving time and avoiding risks associated with identity theft. myPay has a series of security measures with layers of defense against identity theft. The secure technology provided to myPay customers meets or exceeds security requirements in private industry worldwide.

According to DFAS officials, myPay is becoming the standard method of pay and tax statement delivery for those individuals paid by DFAS.

"Not only do our customers get their statements quicker, but more securely," said Jim Pitt, Electronic Commerce director with DFAS' Military and Civilian Pay Services. "Our customers are discovering that myPay's encryption technology is providing the security they demand to protect their sensitive pay and personal information.



(Photo by Spc. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Members of the 1st Cavalry Division Horse Cavalry Detachment greet soggy spectators on South Orange Grove Boulevard during their performance at the 117th Tournament of Roses Parade Jan. 2 in Pasadena, Calif.

Rain Can't Spoil Cav's Parade

**By Spc. Colby Hauser
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

LOS ANGELES – Rain-drenched spectators roared with applause at the Home and Garden Television's grandstand Jan. 2, as the Army's last mounted cavalry unit presented arms during one of the nation's largest parades.

The 1st Cavalry Division Horse Cavalry Detachment braved Mother Nature's wrath and basked in the adoration of more than 200,000 fanatics as they moseyed down Colorado Avenue during the 117th Tournament of Roses Parade.

"This is what this trip has been all about," said Staff Sgt. Donnie Davis, a demonstration rider with the detachment.

An odyssey, seven days in the making for the detachment, this year's parade performance was not without its challenges. It hadn't rained on this parade since 1955.

This year, it poured.

"It's only rained once in my lifetime," said Patsy Grant, a passenger on the Wells Fargo stage.

Grant said that after 25 years of coming to the parade, this was her first time participating in the event.

The line-up consisted of 48 floats, 25 marching bands, 23 equestrian units and three official vehicles which made their way down the five-and-one-half-mile route,

fighting sheets of rain every inch of the way.

"Our biggest concern wasn't the horses, but the floats," said Gerald Freeny, the chairman of the equestrian committee for the parade. "By 2:30 this morning we were drilling holes in the bottom of the floats to help them drain water, but the real concern was the winds."

Weather forecasts predicted four to eight inches of rain with winds in excess of 40 miles per hour for the parade. Still, he show went on. Soaked to the bone, the Soldiers played to the crowd, as "Buddy," the detachment's dog, howled to the delight of thousands of children.

Past the grandstands and through the streets, Longhorn and Trojan fans were engaged in a torrid war of words, but as the First Team troops rode past those words turned to cheers for the Soldiers and what they represent.

Riding tall in the saddle and shivering from the cold, the members of the detachment were all smiles from beginning to end. A lot has happened since their last appearance at the Tournament of Roses Parade, but for the troopers it had been worth the wait.

"Coming to the parade and representing both the Cav and the Army is an honor, but talking to the people about who we are and what we really do is what makes things like this worthwhile," said Sgt. 1st Class Rip Bussell, the detachment platoon sergeant.

Horse Det Troops Rope Calves in L.A.

By Spc. Colby Hauser
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

LOS ANGELES – It was a damp and dreary day at the Saddle and Sirloin Club, one of Los Angeles' oldest and most exclusive equestrian establishments.

The last remnants of the Army's mounted cavalry, weary from the trail, were given the 'red carpet treatment' Dec. 31, after a week of 18-hour days in preparation for their performance at the 117th Tournament of Roses Parade.

Nestled in the rolling green hills of Glendale, Calif., the 1st Cavalry Division Horse Cavalry Detachment took the morning off, sort of, to spend time with their hosts chowing down, swapping stories and shooting the bull, literally.

"If you would've told me three years ago that I'd be going on a trail ride and roping calves in downtown L.A., I would've said you were crazy," said Sgt. Randy Melton, a "mule skinner" or wagon driv-



(Photos by Spc. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Randy Melton (left), a "mule skinner" or wagon driver for the 1st Cavalry Division Horse Cavalry Detachment, attempts to heel a calf with demonstration rider Sgt. J.D. Nose, at the Saddle and Sirloin Club in Glendale, Calif., Dec. 31.

er, for the Horse Detachment.

Roping, a trade skill of the working cowboy and an event in professional rodeo was one of the main attractions as several First Team Soldiers teamed with Saddle and Sirloin members to test their skills in the

arena.

Here's how it works. A team of two riders back into their box, an area in the arena, and wait for a horned calf to be released.

The header attempts to lasso the calf's head while the heeler ropes the back legs. In professional rodeo, this is a timed event and whoever has the lowest time wins.

The looming clouds, which brought flooding to northern California, opened up on the horsemen forcing the festivities indoors. A crimson and cream bunkhouse welcomed the soggy riders in from the elements.

The warmth of a wood burning fire helped dry out the troopers as they bellied up to a long wood bar and for coffee and conversation.

"This is by far the absolute worse place to be a cowboy," said Ted Konopisos, the president of the Saddle and Sirloin

Club. "Still, this is what we love to do."

Established in 1929, the Saddle and Sirloin Club is made up of only 50 members. Stockbrokers, movie industry professionals and even a California superior court judge round out the membership of this diverse group, but are united by their one true love: horses.

"When I was growing up I remember going to see John Wayne movies and saying, 'I'd like to be a cowboy someday,'" Konopisos said.

The fire side chat concluded as riders returned from a long, wet trail ride through the Hollywood Hills. One by one, the members of the Sirloin and Saddle said goodbye to their guests and departed.

For the detachment troopers, it was back to the stables and preparations for their next performance, the Tournament of Roses Parade.



Chief Justice Bill MacLaughlin of the California State Superior Court demonstrates his calf roping skills for members of the 1st Cavalry Division Horse Cavalry Detachment Dec. 31.

Rose Bowl Or Bust**Horse Detachment's Trail to Pasadena**

By Spc. Colby Hauser
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

PASADENA, Calif. – The wafting odor of manure and fresh cut hay permeated the air as troops made final preparations under a moonlit sky Dec. 27 for their return to California and another New Year's on the road.

Like many times before, the members of the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment loaded the tools of their trade for the three-day trek across the western United States, culminating at their performance at the "Tournament of Roses Parade" Jan. 2.

By 6:30 a.m., the convoy was well on its way, westbound and ready for the challenges of the road. The ground crew's spirits were high and all was well until the radio squelched.

"First horse, you've got some smoke coming off of the right side of your trailer," said Sgt. J.D. Nose, a demonstration rider with the detachment.

"Roger, that," replied Bussell. "We'll pull off up here at the four way."

A few miles shy of Eldorado, Texas, the lead tractor-trailer was sidelined by a burned out axel on the trailer, laden with 25,000 pounds of horses, saddles and assorted cavalry gear. Undaunted, the First Team Soldiers simply adapted. The functioning vehicles continued on while repairs were made on the disabled trailer.

Eventually, the first half of the ground crew pulled into Fort Bliss and headed for the stables where they would keep their most prized possessions for the night.

Chores don't end on the road, explained Cpl. Dominick Anderson, the assistant mule team driver. At the end of every day of travel the horses and mules must be exercised, fed, watered, and put up for the night.

"In the morning, we make sure we clean the stalls and leave them in better shape than we found them," Anderson said.

Without fail, the "routine" is performed on every trip. The next night they stopped at Casa Grande Fair Grounds, and the long awaited surprise for the animals.

Unlike the stables at El Paso, Casa Grande was a large circular rodeo pin.



(Photo by Spc. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. 1st Class Rip Bussell, platoon sergeant for the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment and Larry Borth, the detachment trainer and stable master, repair the middle axle hub on a horse trailer outside Eldorado, Texas, Dec. 27. The detachment conducted a three-day trip to Pasadena, Calif., to perform in the "2006 Tournament of Roses Parade."

Quickly, the detachment members unloaded the horses and after 900 miles of cramped quarters and rocky roads the horses finally got to stretch their legs.

"This is really special for them," said Larry Borth, the detachment trainer and stable master. "They can get out there and blow off some steam."

An equestrian ballet ensued as 12 horses, four mules and one dog ran, jumped and rolled in dusty pens like little kids cut loose for summer vacation. The spectacle did not go unnoticed as a small crowd of campground dwellers ventured out to take in the show.

Prior to departing for some well deserved sleep, a quick inspection of the horses yielded a bum shoe on Phantom.

"A bad shoe, if left unattended, could prove to be disastrous for both the horse and rider," Sjule said.

A farrier by trade, Sjule carefully replaced the shoe and returned the grateful horse back to the pin where a post-shoeing dust bath ensued.

With two days down and one to go, the ground crew consumed a quick breakfast the

following morning.

Black coffee, boiled eggs and bagels were served as the troops moved back to the fairgrounds to load up and move out for the last, and worst, leg of the journey.

Bussell flicks a switch on the radio, ending Don Williams' "Tulsa Time," bringing up the local traffic report. Traffic delays, injury, accidents and holiday traffic await the First Team convoy on the outskirts of L.A.

Just 40 miles away from their southern California stable area, the L.A. Police Department horse stables, traffic was at a stand still.

An hour and a half later, the convoy reaches the police stables and their three-day odyssey is at an end.... almost.

Happily, 12 horses and four mules exit the trailers as if being paroled from a long stint in the joint.

"Get those horses cleaned up," Borth barked. "They're filthy."

After a substantial bath, it's off to the stalls for the horses. Left behind are the road weary warriors, who for all their effort, are rewarded by more work.

CAB Vivid Reminder of Iraq Tour

By Pfc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT, Public Affairs

No longer looking at scars as his daily reminder of his duty in Iraq, 1st Sgt. Wendell Franklin said he now looks at his new Combat Action Badge that he and more than 700 other Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team received during a ceremony Dec. 14.

The Combat Action Badge was designed and awarded to recognize the active role of Soldiers who are engaged in combat situation, regardless of military occupational specialty.

"It's a true reminder of the importance of training, motivation and the importance of being

a leader," said Franklin, the top noncommissioned officer with Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment. "It's a reminder [to me] of the guys who passed away, who would have rather had a CAB than losing life."

The badge is also a reminder of personal experiences, Franklin said. While Franklin faced several battles in Iraq, he is regularly reminded of two incidents.

April 4, 2004, while in Abu Ghraib, Franklin was riding in a humvee when his convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device. The blast knocked Franklin unconscious, wounding his back and legs.

Two privates pulled

Franklin from the vehicle and began to administer first aid until medical help arrived. He was placed on bed rest while his injuries began healing.

A few days later, Franklin's Soldiers were tasked to help secure a convoy that was attacked. Following his philosophy of leading from the front, Franklin said he did not want his Soldiers to go into danger without him by their side. Franklin volunteered to help the company effort. He gathered a tank crew and proceeded to complete the mission.

Receiving small-arms fire upon arrival, Franklin helped synchronize the company's security effort and maneuvered his tank into position to engage the enemy. Through the course of battle, he was engaged by rocket propelled grenades and machine gun fire, standing fast to destroy the enemy threat and spearhead the recovery effort.

"It's like seeing a bear attack your child," he said. "You don't think about fighting the bear, you think about rescuing your child. Everyone's a Soldier, everybody's American. You would never leave a buddy behind, whether you know him or not."

Later that day, a Marine convoy was hit in the same area. Franklin and the Soldiers went to provide them with support, too. Their efforts saved lives.

It was those efforts that earned Franklin the Purple Heart, a Bronze Star with "V" device for Valor, and eventually, the Combat Action Badge.

"When I look at the CAB, I remember how important taking care of your guys is ... how important it is to motivate Soldiers to want to get up every day, knowing that they have to



(Photo by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs)

1st Sgt. Wendell Franklin receives his Combat Action Badge during a ceremony Dec. 14. Franklin, the first sergeant for Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, also earned the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with "V" device for valor.

face dangers," he said.

Now that his unit has returned to a garrison environment, Franklin said his experiences have changed his focus as a leader. Instead of focusing on the disciplinary aspects of shined boots and trimmed haircuts, Franklin said he now concentrates on "the more important things ... things we take for granted while in garrison."

Franklin said he stresses the common military tasks such as first aid and land navigation, but he has learned the importance of knowing each Soldier's job.

Because rank does not always matter in war, Franklin said he trains his Soldiers two levels above and two levels below their skill requirements.

"All Soldiers in Iraq hold their own weight. I think it's about time that they are recognized," he said.



(Photo by Spc. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Land Ho!

Staff Sgt. Donnie Davis, a demonstration rider for the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment, leads the detachment back to the Los Angeles Police Department stables in Glendale, Calif., following their performance at the "Pasadena Tournament of Roses Equestfest" at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center Dec. 30.

Landings Challenge Chinooks

By Spc Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

QASIM, Pakistan – With mountains and canyons sloping drastically around them, delivering supplies to the earthquake victims in Pakistan proved to be an obstacle for deployed 1st Cavalry Division pilots.

Facing challenges they have never encountered before, they still accomplished their mission.

“In 17 years of flying helicopters this is probably the most beautiful and challenging flying I’ve done,” said Maj. Thomas Jesse, a Cav Chinook pilot.

He said the high altitude the helicopters fly navigating through the mountains, with steep climbs and descends, make flying relief supplies different from how Chinook pilots flew in Iraq.

“This is very good training for our younger pilots,” said Jesse, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade. “If you can fly in this terrain you can fly anywhere.”

The steep terrain also makes landings a little difficult for the pilots. Canyons and



First Cavalry Division crew members pass supplies out to crowds of waiting Pakistanis at an unsecured landing zone.



(Photos by Spc. Joshua McPhie, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Blake Thompson tries to hold back Pakistanis at a supply drop off. Growing crowds forced the crew to leave before they had finished unloading.

landing zones close to buildings make some landings a tight fit.

“About half of the landing zones are not ideal for Chinooks,” Jesse said. “But we’ve always been able to land.”

“We’ve done quite a few landings on the mountains where all we could do was put two wheels on the ground and unload what we could,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeffrey White, who is also a Chinook pilot.

Another challenge pilots frequently face is low visibility in some of the mountain passes, White said. This is also an issue when landing, since most landing zones are in fields.

“With the dust and debris you have to be careful when landing and make sure you’re not hurting people,” White said.

When First Team Chinooks land in a

village to drop off supplies, the area is guarded by Pakistan military and Pakistan soldiers help unload the helicopters.

While most landing zones are secured by the Pakistan military, occasionally the helicopters end up at an unsecured location.

“All the grid coordinates are supposed to be secure [landing zones],” Jesse. “If it isn’t, it could be the wrong coordinates or the Pakistan military already left.”

Jesse said it is not common and he has only encountered two landing zones that were unsecured.

“What we did was assess the situation, and there were no large crowds,” Jesse said.

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Return

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first reunion they have had to go through.

“The kids are really excited to see their Dad,” said Guin Hilmes, wife of Sgt. J.D. Hilmes. “I’ve done this many

times, but it never gets old. It’s like getting married all over again.”

For some of the Soldiers, this will be their first Christmas home in two years, said Lt. Col. Chris Joslin, commander of the Lobos. Most were deployed in Iraq last Christmas, and some away from home the year before that. More recently, many have

been gone due to the hurricane relief efforts in Louisiana and southeastern Texas.

When the moment finally came for the Soldiers to arrive, the hangar door slowly slid open, revealing the Soldiers. The families cheered when they marched into the hangar. Although at attention, more than a few smiles shined on the

troops’ faces. A quick salute and a few words from the Lobos’ commander preceded the real homecoming.

Hugs were held at length and kisses traded under the bright lights of the hangar. Tears of joy and relief were obvious among families and Soldiers alike. The giggles and laughter of children filled the air.

Task Force Living Conditions Improve Daily

By Spc. Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

QASIM, Pakistan - When 1st Cavalry Division troops first arrived in the hanger on Qasim Army Airfield that was their home for the duration of their humanitarian aid deployment to Pakistan, living conditions were fairly primitive.

The Soldiers who had arrived before them were living on mosquito net covered cots, received two hot meals a day, had little water to run the cold showers and only had a handful of port-a-potties.

When the division's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade advance team landed, they took charge of the living areas and set to work making improvements.

"Our first priority was putting everyone on cots, making sure everyone had a place to stay," said Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Vielma, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Task Force Quake's life support areas.

A local company was contracted to make bunk beds.

By the time the first wave of 1st ACB Soldiers arrived in Pakistan, the first load had been delivered.

When the final group of



(Photo by Spc. Joshua McPhie, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Schultz, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, assembles the frame of a tent inside a hanger at Qasim Army Airfield, Pakistan. The tents offer the Soldiers of Task Force Quake more privacy than the open bay of the hanger and will be climate controlled.

First Team troopers arrived a few days later, large tents had begun to arrive. Soldiers who weren't busy were put to work building tents, which can house 20 Soldiers in bunk beds, inside the hanger.

"Now everyone is in tents and we're getting them in bunks," Vielma said. "Were not there yet but we're getting there."

"When we arrived the only

living space we had was cots and mosquito nets," said 1st Sgt. Terrance O'Neal, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment. "Living in tents we're out of the elements."

Besides the tents housing the task force, there is a tent for the chapel and another for the aid station.

Another problem tackled by the team early on was the shortage of water and shower

facilities. The showers were cold and the water tanks had to be refilled every couple of hours.

They solved the shower problem by bringing in trailers with a hot water heater, sinks, toilets and several showers in each. Contractors from Kellogg Brown and Root then tapped into an existing well to provide a continuous flow of water to refill the showers' water containers.

While the trailers water heaters weren't able to keep up with the demands of the Soldiers, they did take the chill out of the water.

When they first arrived, most Soldiers were happy to have two hot meals a day, having to only eat an MRE lunch.

The task force ate their meals at tables inside the hanger, but there wasn't enough seating for everyone. Construction of a dining facility brought more hot meals and more seating for the Soldiers.

"Living conditions have dramatically increased," said O'Neal, who is the first sergeant for the Cav troops assigned to the task force. "What we have set up can support the expected 600 Soldiers."

Deploy

From Page 1

ry brigade and the support brigade, and I have every reason to expect that there will be other deployment orders coming as well," he said.

Fil also said he anticipates a return to Baghdad for the First Team.

"I think it would be fair to expect that we will probably fall in and replace the mighty 4th Infantry Division as they finish their year in theater," he added.

Fil made the announcement during the

PBS program, since the program is aimed at Fort Hood troops and their families.

"We wanted to use the town hall forum because it allowed Maj. Gen. Fil to speak directly to our families," said Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, division public affairs officer, following the broadcast.

During the 90-minute broadcast, a Soldier from the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team called in to ask when Soldiers and family members in the rest of the division can expect to go back to Iraq. Fil said providing timely notification to his troops and their families is a top priority.

"We don't have orders for the other

brigades, although we do believe they, indeed, will come," Fil explained.

Fil reminded one caller that preparation for deployment is the division's focus for the coming year.

"We are preparing as if we are (all) going to deploy, in anticipation of an order," he said.

"We now have deployment orders for two of our units. I have every reason to expect that there will be other deployment orders coming, as well," he added.

"So, we're going to continue to get ready as if the whole division were going to deploy."

Air Cav Troops Take on Extra Duty

By Spc. Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

QASIM, Pakistan – Bringing relief supplies to the Pakistanis affected by the devastating earthquake became a first priority for deployed 1st Cavalry Division Troops. In fact, many of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade troopers

helped by volunteering their free time to fly on extra missions to help load and pass out supplies.

Some are maintenance, others are pilots. Some of them fly after finishing their regular work day, others on a day off.

They all had one thing in common; they didn't get to hand out supplies on a regular

basis.

"I'm there mainly to help the guys load and unload," said Spc. Nathan Schultz, a Chinook maintainer with 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment. "It seems like it would be hard work but we're not doing that much work, the Pakistan military is doing a lot."

Pakistani soldiers were at

each supply point to load the aircraft and are also at most of the landing zones to unload.

"It's a lot of heavy stuff," said Capt. Sarah Pearson, a Chinook pilot with 2-227th AVN. "I went along for the experience. When I'm there not acting as a crew member I can help. The more people, the easier it is to get out." Pearson was just one of several pilots who pitched in.

"When you're flying you sometimes feel like you're missing something," said Capt. Michael Stone, 2-227th AVN. "You never get the full picture."

Stone said the pilots often heard the crew talking about what happened at a landing zone, but usually didn't get to see what happened.

"I was a little bit jealous of some of the experiences they have," he said.

Regardless of the reason they wanted to help out, all the Soldiers agreed it felt good to help.

"It was awesome," Stone said. "Seeing the people we're helping was great."

"It's pretty nice because it shows we care and we're here to help," Schultz said.



(Photo by Spc. Joshua McPhie, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Capt. Michael Stone, a Chinook pilot with the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, helps Pakistanis unload supplies from a 1st Cavalry Division Chinook.

Landings

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"Had we flown by and there were several hundred people, we would not have landed."

White has encountered several landing areas with little or no military presence.

At one, the crowd around the aircraft, became more than the few Pakistani soldiers could handle.

Shortly after landing people started coming onto the helicopter to try to get the supplies. "Safety was becoming a concern so we raised the front wheels off the ground

which helped a little bit," White said.

Despite the crew's efforts people still kept pushing their way onto the aircraft. "We finally had to lift off and go to a secure LZ," White said. "Crew member safety is the priority."

Once they land in an unsecured area, the crew has a few things they can do to keep the helicopter safe while unloading. They close the side door and raise the ramp and if the crowd looks like it could become unstable they can hover a few feet off the ground while unloading the supplies.

"You're last option is to take off," Jesse said.

Even as the crews become acclimated

to the tight landings and landing zone conditions, new challenges approach with the colder weather.

Though the aircraft perform better in the colder weather because of the denser air, the crews are affected by the cold, which can make their job harder, especially when unloading a helicopter or when sticking their heads out the windows during landings.

When it starts to snow, the crews could face visibility problems at some of the landing areas, Jesse said.

"Some of the LZs will become much more challenging if they have snow on them," he said.

Trooper Translates for Task Force Quake

By Spc. Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

QASIM, Pakistan – Instead of tossing supply boxes out of a 1st Cavalry Division Chinook to waiting hands of hurricane victims in Pakistan, Spc. Sim Pradhan spent most of his time at Qasim Army Airfield chatting.

Pradhan, with the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade's 615th Aviation Support Battalion, wasn't slacking off though, he was the translator for Task Force Quake, a job he volunteered to do.

When he first heard his unit would be sending Soldiers to aid in relief efforts following the massive earthquake last month, he told his first sergeant he could understand the language and would like to go.

Pradhan grew up in Nepal, moving to the U.S. when he was 23. He speaks four languages. One of them, Hindi, is similar to the language spoken in Pakistan. This allowed him

to understand and speak with the local workers and Soldiers.

"Sometimes it's kind of hard, but I can still make out what they're trying to say," Pradhan said.

He spent most of his day working with the locals who helped build the life support area for the task force, and helped them communicate with the task force's Soldiers.

"The local nationals are happy because someone can speak their language," Pradhan said.

He said they were often surprised when he first talked to them. Having that communication saved a lot of time that would have otherwise been spent trying to figure out what everyone was saying.

"If an English speaker doesn't speak the local language it might take 30 minutes to figure out," said Spc. Jeffrey Capalar, 615th ASB. "Sometimes you can tell by their body language what they're talking about. With this

guy, 30 seconds and we're done."

Pradhan and Capalar often worked together making many trips to the base's gates each day to escort local workers onto the base.

"Most of my time is spent going to the gate and picking up people," Pradhan said. "All the guards recognize me so it's easier to get the people in."

Once Pradhan escorted the workers on post he helped the task force leadership let the locals know what work needed

to be done.

"We have an advantage over a lot of people because of this communication," said Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Vielma, non-commissioned officer in charge of maintaining the living area. "That was one of the best moves we made, bringing him."

Pradhan proved so useful the task force's leadership provided him with a cell phone so they can always reach him if they need a translator, even in the middle of the night.



(Photos by Spc. Joshua McPhie, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)



Spc. Sim Pradhan chats with the operator of a crane during a break from moving cargo containers. Pradhan, the Task Force Quake translator in Pakistan, works with the local contract employees to make sure they understand what work needs to be done around the living area at Qasim Army Airfield.

Spc. Sim Pradhan, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, coordinates with truck drivers and a local crane operator to have cargo containers unloaded from trucks at the Task Force Quake living area at Qasim Army Airfield. Pradhan, the translator for the task force, volunteered to come to Pakistan to be a translator.

Cav Delivery Helps Clear Roads

By Spc. Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

PATTIKA, Pakistan - Most of the missions the Soldiers of Task Force Quake go on are similar, dropping off food, tents, blankets and clothing to towns affected by the earthquake.

Occasionally though, they get a mission that's unique.

The crew of one 1st Cavalry Division Chinook got a break from their usual deliveries when they were assigned to deliver a bulldozer instead of the usual load of supplies.

They, and another Chinook crew, would be delivering a pair of bulldozers to an area just outside of Pattika.

"They told us they were going to be used to help clear out the roads," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Eugene Santos, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, one of the pilots on the mission.

The bulldozers weren't at the usual supply pick-up point at the Chaklala airport, but the Chinooks had to fuel there so the crew loaded up with tents before flying to Muzaffarabad to pick up the bulldozers. The landing site had been a stadium before the earthquake, now it is a major hub for delivering supplies to the damaged city.

"We set down in the stadium in Muzaffarabad while they prepared the load, a generator and a small bulldozer," said the mission's other pilot Chief Warrant Officer 2 M.A. Kemp Jr., 2-227th AVN.

In Muzaffarabad, Pakistani soldiers unloaded the tents from the Chinook and helped load the bulldozer and generator aboard the aircraft.

Once the bulldozers were



(Photos by Spc. Joshua McPhie, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Jerimiah Peryam, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, guides the operator of a bulldozer as he drives out of a 1st Cavalry Division Chinook near Pattika, Pakistan. The two bulldozers were a change from the usual supplies of food, tents and clothing delivered by the Cav and were used to clear roads closed because of debris from the earthquake.

loaded on the two Chinooks, the flight headed out for Pattika where they would drop off the bulldozers at two different locations.

The plan was to have the bulldozers start clearing the road from opposite sides and eventually meet in the middle, Santos said.

Pattika wasn't hit as hard by the earthquake as Muzaffarabad, but the damage was still extensive so the bulldozers would help.

"Things are not as bad now but you can tell they were bad," Kemp said. "It feels pretty good to help."

"We don't want to be away from our families, of course, but it's good to be bringing this



Pakistani soldiers unload a generator from a 1st Cav. Chinook. The crew delivered the generator and a small bulldozer so they could be used to clear the road.

stuff to the people who need see who to help, there are so many people out there."

Dose of Reality**Safety Showcased for Grey Wolf Troops**

By Pfc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers showed off their prized possessions Friday during a unit-sponsored car show, but were reminded, graphically, how they could be taken away, along with their lives, as images of wrecked cars and broken dreams also went on display.

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program sponsored the first "Operation James Dean" car show, but emergency rescue workers and law enforcement officials added a counterpoint to the day as they demonstrated the effects of drunk drivers on the

road.

The 3rd BCT Soldiers gathered around a parking lot to look upon the cars and trucks that were brought in to be showcased. The cars and trucks ranged from Chevrolets to Fords, muscle cars, motorcycles and blaring loud trucks, all eccentric in their own ways. Some cars had been lifted further off the ground while some cars had new paint jobs with pictures on the hoods. The vehicles were being judged in groups for best rims, best 'hooptie,' and best over all in show.

But the show also offered other events to catch the eyes of the 3rd BCT Soldiers. The Soldiers of the "Grey Wolf"

BCT were not expecting what would happen next. A scene was constructed showing three cars in an accident. What the Soldiers didn't know was that they were about to receive a lesson on drunk driving.

Jonte Scott, 3rd BCT's BOSS president, said she remembered witnessing a car accident while sitting outside her barracks.

The idea to have a car show and inform the Soldiers about driving safety seemed like an affective approach, said Scott.

The name for the event came from the famous, young actor James Dean who died before his prime in a car accident, she said. The BOSS pro-

gram thought this was a fitting title for the Soldiers to relate to.

"James Dean was someone who people idolized and thought was invincible, and he died from a car accident. We felt this would help people realize what we are trying to talk about. We're not invincible, it could happen to us too," said Scott.

As Michael Perez, a trooper with the Texas Department of Public Safety, talked to the crowd of onlookers, he explained about the dangers of driving drunk and getting into an accident. He spoke about what it felt like to go to a person's house to tell them about the son or daughter they just lost to an alcohol related accident. Perez spoke about the consequences that a drunk driver would have to face if caught driving under the influence of alcohol.

Safety is important, Perez said. At least once a year a trooper from this area has to inform a family member of a loved one who has died from an alcohol-related accident. It's real tragic, he said.

And when he finished, the Soldiers got a taste of reality. A loud blasting sound came from the distance as two fire trucks arrived at the scene of the staged accident. A squad car and an ambulance followed. The fire fighters inside the truck quickly rushed out to the pedestrians inside the wrecked vehicles. They offered on the spot aid as they tried to pull the passengers out of the first car.

It was a married couple in the first car who was hit head on by a drunk driver. The fire



(Photo by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

After using the "jaws of life," fire fighters pull off the roof of the car to free the passenger trapped inside during a demonstration on Fort Hood Dec. 9 to 1st Cavalry Division troops from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

Safety

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fighters had to pull out a tool known as “the jaws of life” to cut away pieces of the destroyed car to free the injured passengers. The passenger was quickly pulled out and the fire fighters worked hard to free the driver of the car. Once freed, the Soldiers witnessed to sad expressions over the fire fighters faces as they had to cover the driver with a white sheet. He was dead.

The driver of the last car was successfully pulled out of his vehicle and placed with the passenger of the first car into the ambulance. As the ambulance sped off, the drunk driver from the car who caused the accident was being checked by a police officer. He was not physically injured. The officer proceeded to perform a sobriety test on the drunk driver and watched as the driver miserably failed every part of the test. At this point, the driver had no idea of the damage that he has caused and the life's that he has changed.

The Soldiers looked on, most of them with the look of shock on their face. Their focus was then turned to a grave yard that has been set up to display crosses as grave stones. Each stone represented three Soldiers from the Army who lost their lives to drunken driving accidents last fiscal year.

The reality of the scene was hitting the Soldiers.

“This was amazing,” said Pfc. James Porto, Headquarters Company, 3rd BCT. “I couldn't imagine what it would be like to be in that car.”

Next, the Soldiers filed into the Red Team Chapel to witness the funeral of the Soldier who died in the accident. Six Soldiers dressed in



(Photo by Pfc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT Public Affairs)

A “drunk” driver attempts to walk in a straight line taking a field sobriety test demonstration during “Operation James Dean” Dec. 9 .

their Class A uniforms carried a casket covered with the American flag through the isle, to the front of the room. A chaplain spoke and the Soldiers watched movies about families who are now coping with the loss of a loved one from a drunken driving accident. There was nothing to be heard in the chapel but silence and nothing to be seen but the look of disbelief on their faces.

The message conveyed to the Soldiers was one life taken by a drunk driver is one life to many. With the holiday season approaching, the BOSS program wanted to show the harsh realities that most people don't think about when they climb into their car drunk, Scott said.

You're getting into a weapon, said Spc. Lee Clark, 3rd BCT. You could hurt your-

self or someone else when driving under the influence, she said.

Along with the car show and accident scene, there was also a motorcycle safety show and car wash that the BOSS

program offered. The car wash raised money for Soldiers who have too much to drink so they can call the BOSS program for a ride home if no designated driver is available. The money will be spent toward taxi cab fairs.

“We will call the taxi service for the Soldier and the money will be picked up at the staff duty desk, no questions asked. We just want to make sure the Soldier gets home safe,” said Scott.

The BOSS program is offering the Soldiers of 3rd BCT an alternate route to getting home safely since Soldiers might have a problem calling their chain of command to ask for a ride home, said Scott.

The BOSS program is paving the way for the Soldiers here in the “Grey Wolf” Brigade, said Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Felt, 3rd BCT command sergeant major. They are stepping up to the challenge and forcefully trying to put a stop to alcohol related accidents.

These Soldiers want to help others, they want to change lives. BOSS is showing leadership by taking a stand against drunk driving and showing loyalty and selfless service to the Soldiers.



Preventing POV Accidents



- **Defensive Driving Course** (18-26 years old, regardless of rank, it's mandatory)
- **Motorcycle Safety Foundation Course** (If you operate a motorcycle on or off post, it's mandatory)



It doesn't matter if your Soldier took any of these courses in the past. A refresher never hurts! At Fort Hood the number is 287-4639.

DODI 6055.4 -- Traffic Safety Program

→ First Team ←

Cav Kinders Kindle Christmas Cheer

By Spc. Nicole Kojetin
1CD Public Affairs

White Christmas's do not usually occur on Fort Hood, but even without the snow, holiday cheer is not on short supply in the 1st Cavalry Division.

Visions of Santa Clause and twinkle lights danced in the eyes of the youngest members of the First Team during the division's tree lighting ceremony Dec. 13 on Cooper Field.

The children were instrumental in the evening, helping Maj. Gen Joseph Fil, Jr., the First Team commanding general, flip the switch for the festive light to appear in the increasing darkness. They were clearly ready for Christmas and expressed how their holiday would go.

"Santa is bringing me 'Kitchen Dora,'" said Evaleena who will be three years old Jan. 2. Her dad, Staff Sgt. David Gracia, who works in the commandant office, said she always says it backwards as she wiggled around with excitement.

Evaleena said she knows exactly what Santa is bringing her this year. She said it will be easy for him to bring it, since he is skinny enough to fit down her chimney

She wasn't the only one who was excited.

Jason Hall, 9, is planning on Santa bringing him a scooter. He is the son of Spc. Charles Hall, of the division's honor guard. Jason reminded everyone of the present that all children dread.

"The worst present is clothes," he said. "I don't want any of those."

He knows that Santa has lots of stops, but he was confident that he would make it to his house.

"His sleigh and reindeers



(Photos by Spc. Nicole Kojetin, 1CD Public Affairs)

Lindsey Hall waits for Santa Claus to give her popcorn after getting her photo taken at the 1st Cavalry Division tree lighting Dec. 13. She is the daughter of Spc. Charles Hall of the headquarters honor guard.



Children and their parents crowd around Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, to help him flip the switch lighting up Cooper Field during a ceremony Dec. 14.

are really fast," Jason said. "I don't know how it works, but it just does."

Anticipation was in the air. When the announcer mentioned the sighting of Old Saint Nick, little eyes darted all

around the field.

Eventually Santa was spotted. Instead of arriving on a sleigh with his nine reindeer, Santa showed up cavalry style, on a horse.

Everyone cheered and



Evaleena Gracia, daughter of Staff Sgt. David Gracia, of the division's commandant office, points in the direction of the performing horn assemble at the 1st Cavalry Division's tree lighting Dec. 13.

yelled traditional greetings to the fat man and followed him inside the division headquarters for goodies and pictures.



(Photo by Spc. Nicole Kojetin, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)



(Photo by Spc. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

(Above) Santa rides in cavalry style with an escort from the 1st Cavalry Division Horse Detachment, at the division Christmas Tree lighting ceremony Dec. 13. Children of First Team Troopers had an opportunity to have their photo taken with Santa Claus following the tree lighting.

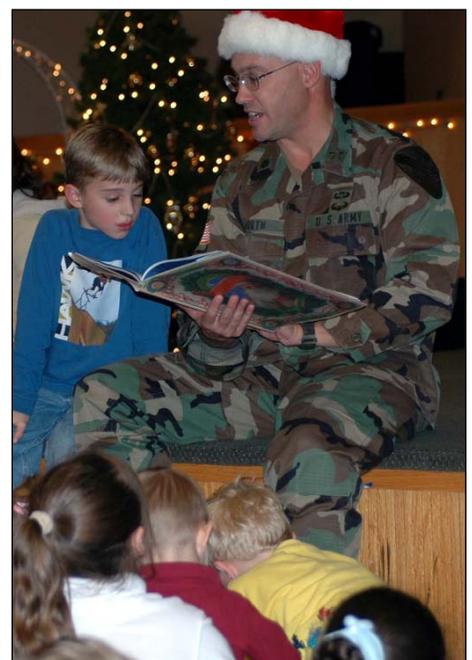
(Left) Maj. Gen. Joseph Fil, Jr., 1st Cavalry Division commanding general takes his turn letting Santa know what he wants for Christmas. Santa visited the First Team Dec. 13 for the division tree lighting ceremony.

(Bottom left) A brass quintet from the 1st Cavalry Division Band performed at the division tree lighting at Cooper Field.

(Bottom right) Lt. Col. Steven North, the division intelligence officer, 1st Cavalry Division, reads "The Night Before Christmas" to children of First Team Soldiers at a Christmas party Dec. 14.



(Photo by Spc. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)



(Photo by Spc. Colby Hauser, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)