



1/181st Infantry Regiment

Around the Powder Horn

“Keep Your Powder Dry”



November 30, 2010

Volume 7

B Co. Soldier Awards Father Purple Heart at Mehtar Lam

By 2nd Lt. Chase P. McFarland

Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team

MEHTAR LAM, Afghanistan – Some 19-year olds bond with their fathers by going fishing. Some bond with their fathers by just calling home and having a conversation. But very few will ever share the bond that comes from pinning on a father’s purple heart in a combat zone.

Staff Sgt. Brian Willette, a squad leader with Foxtrot Company, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment, 86th Brigade Combat Team, had the chance of a lifetime to have his son Pvt. Kevin Nieves, of Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team, pin on his Purple Heart during a ceremony on Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam Oct. 28.

“I was so proud and honored to have been here for my dad to award him his Purple Heart,” said Nieves, a member of B Co. 1/181 which deployed as the security element for PRT Laghman.

Willette, formerly of the 1/104 Infantry, earned his Purple Heart when his truck was hit by an improvised explosive device during one of his regular missions.

He was finishing his nine-month tour at FOB Mehtar Lam as Nieves was gearing up to start his time at the same FOB, allowing them the opportunity to spend some quality father-son time together for a few days.



“I’m just so amazed that he was 10 when the towers came down,” said Willette. “And now, nine years later, he is proudly serving his country. I’m so happy we got to do it together.”

Nieves joined the Army 16 years after his father and had the privilege of his father coming home during leave to put on his blue infantryman cord at basic training.

“I saw how honored and proud my father was to be in the Army and how he would carry himself, and I decided that, that is what I want to be like, that’s what I want for myself, to live out the Army values, just as my dad does,” said Nieves.

Not only does he have a son serving in the military, Willette has a daughter, U.S. Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Christine Willette, serving in public health for the 104th Fire Wing of the Massachusetts ANG.

“She was the first of us to have seen indirect fire,” said Willette. “Needless to say, we were all a little envious of her.”

Willette will be heading back to the U.S. to resume his role as a parent, supporting from the sidelines.

“I’m glad to be heading home,” he said. “Now I’m just another concerned parent who knows my son will probably be driving over that same spot where my truck got hit many times before he comes home.”



Photos by Senior Airman Ronifel S. Yasay

Pvt. Kevin Nieves, left, a member of B Co., 1/181 in Laghman PRT, pins the Purple Heart on his father, Staff Sgt. Brian Willette, F Co., 1/102 Infantry Regiment, 86th Brigade Combat Team at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam Oct. 28

Snapshots From Around Afghanistan



Photo by 2nd Lt. Chase McFarland

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Mason, a platoon sergeant 1/181's B Co., chats with local boys about their puppy that they brought along to meet members of the Laghman PRT Oct. 29.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson

Staff Sgt. Will Gingras, left, and Sgt. 1st. Class Jeff Cesaitis, of Zabul PRT, familiarize themselves with the area during a quality assurance, quality control patrol near the city of Qalat, Zabul province, Afghanistan, Nov. 1.

For more photos showcasing the 1/181's efforts from all over Afghanistan, search Facebook for the 1/181 Infantry Regiment page!



Photo by 2nd Lt. Chase McFarland

Local boys walk with Spec. Os-vacdino Tavares, of 1/181's B Co., who's providing security for Laghman PRT, on the way to the Center of Education Excellence Oct. 29.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson

Private 1st Class Nicholas Sudano (right) and Private 1st Class Nicholas Querzoli, both assigned to the Zabul PRT, secure the gate to the construction site of a radio station and media center while engineers inspect the project site in Qalat, Afghanistan Nov. 6.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Matt Lohr

Sgt. Jonathon Morgan, left, of A Troop, 1-33 Cavalry, 3rd Brigade 101st Airborne Division, listens to his twin brother who is newly deployed, Sgt. Joel Morgan, a member of the Khost PRT from C Co., 1/181, as he asks him about his experiences in Afghanistan.



Nuristan PRT



Uruzgan PRT



Nuristan PRT



Paktika PRT

Humanitarian Operations in Afghanistan

By Capt. John Quinn

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – A small town principal who’s no stranger to supporting others overseas has volunteered to help collect clothing and supplies to local children.

Earlier this month, 1st Lt. Alan Molin, the executive officer for HHC 1/181, sent out several e-mails to promote Operation Outreach Afghanistan, a non-profit organization based at the camp which helps empower Afghans by collecting donations from home.

While he did not hear back from the college or high school he attended, Molin received an e-mail response from Jan Williams, principal of Hardwick Elementary School in Gilbertville, Mass., who turned out to be a willing partner.

Molin said Williams has three sons and a daughter-in-law who are currently serving in the military and have deployed a total of ten times. He added she previously supported her son, who helped establish a school for girls when he served in Afghanistan.

“So she’s interested in getting it started,” Molin said.

Molin is one members of the 1/181 who have volunteered to help collect and distribute items, including children’s clothing, shoes, toys, school supplies, backpacks and unopened basic first aid kits.

The organization comprised of members of the U.S. Military, coalition forces and civilians assists a particular site based on suggestions from patrols, including those conducted by the 1/181, according to Capt. Brian Dreyer, chair of the humanitarian assistance committee.

“Whatever you guys identify as a need since you are the ones who go out every day,” Dreyer said, adding members of the 1/181 stationed at Alamo already suggested a site nearby the facility which is part of the Kabul Base Cluster.

“We try to get a mission out every ten days,” Dreyer said, adding donations are still needed and are appreciated by the Afghan children.

“It’s not just the kids at the school, it’s the ones at home too,” Dreyer said.

Lt. Col. Andy Gerlach, chairman of Operation Outreach Afghanistan, said volunteers accompanied members of the 1/101 Field Artillery, who are based in Massachusetts and deployed to Camp Phoenix, to deliver supplies to students at a new school on the outskirts of Kabul Oct. 30.

“We really try to focus on orphanages, hospitals and schools,” Gerlach said, adding it’s truly rewarding to help Afghan children.

The group holds full meetings every two weeks in the Camp Phoenix chapel - Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. and committees meet every other week to organize humanitarian assistance missions, hand-write thank you notes to donors, plan social events and handle information technology issues.

Volunteers sort donations for future missions every Friday at 5 p.m. in the container yard in the northwest side of Camp Phoenix.

For more information, visit www.opoutreach.org.



Photo by Capt. John Quinn

Spec. Angela Anderson, left, of the 196th Maneuver Enhanced Brigade, and 1st Lt. Alan Molin, of HHC 1/181, sort donated clothes which were later bagged by volunteers at Camp Phoenix Nov. 5 in preparation for the next humanitarian mission by the members of Operation Outreach Afghanistan.

Donations for Operation Outreach Afghanistan must be mailed to specific individuals using the following example:

SGT John Doe	(Rank, Name of Soldier)
HHC 1-181 IN	(Unit or Organization)
Camp Phoenix	(Name of military base)
APO, AE 09320	(Military Postal Address)

Congratulations to the family of Staff Sgt. Michael Longton and his wife, Amanda, for the arrival of Serena Rose Longton, who was born 7.99 pounds and 21 inches, Nov. 15.

XO's Notes

You may have heard this expression before: "Pay Yourself First." It's usually applied when the topic is money. Simply put, it means if you ever want to get ahead and save money for the always uncertain future you have to pay yourself first, take it off the top, squirrel it away, etc. Because if you wait until you pay all the bills, go out to eat a few times, possibly squander some of it away on the X-Box game you don't need, etc., then in the end you'll have nothing to put away for your future. So, think about paying yourself first monetarily by looking into the Thrift Savings Program (TSP) and the Savings Deposit Program (SDP). TSP is open to all of us whether at home or deployed. SDP is only open to us while deployed. Take advantage of the extra tax-free money you're making now by saving it for the future.

Paying yourself first isn't just applicable to money. Think about it. How many days have you said to yourself: "I'll do PT later" or "I'll work on the course I'm enrolled in later"? I know because I do it too. Pay yourself first when it comes to PT. Just do it. Most of us work all day, every day, and if you don't make time for yourself it is likely that nobody will.

A full 24 hours go very quickly when you have such a high operational tempo, so take one or two of those hours every day to pay yourself first. Conduct PT, write home, Skype, work on your course whether it's military or civilian and make a video to send home for the holidays. Mobilization day was more than 110 days ago... use your precious time wisely.

—Maj. Mark Kalin, 1/181 Executive Officer



Photos by Capt. Timothy Lundberg (Left), Airman 1st Class Chanise Epps (Bottom Right)

(Left) Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) All Terrain Vehicles provide secure transportation for Kapisa PRT members as they patrol throughout the district of Nijrab Nov. 23. (Top Right) A C Co. Soldier provides security as fellow members of Paktya PRT move around a convoy of armored vehicles in the valley below in early November. (Bottom Right) Spec. Udo Gonzalez-Collado, of B Co., a mortar team leader for the Nuristan PRT, positions himself near Kalagush Oct. 30.

Leader's Corner

It has been a difficult month for some of the elements of the 1/181. There have been incidents of patrols hitting Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) as well as troops in contact. We have been in theater a little more than 30 days and have suffered some casualties. My thoughts and prayers go out to the injured Soldiers and their families. The Soldiers are receiving appropriate medical attention and doing well through the recovery process. The strength and dedication of these Soldiers renews my pride in being part of this organization.

Although every injury is serious, the majority of cases are bumps and bruises and after a medical evaluation, the Soldiers return to duty. For some other Soldiers the injuries have been more severe: broken bones or back injuries that require evacuation out of Afghanistan to Germany or even back to the United States. All Soldiers involved in any of the incidents are doing a great job responding in regards to immediate actions, security and evacuation assistance. Medical personnel have been doing very well providing immediate and expedient aid until an evacuation vehicle; usually a MedEvac (Medical Evacuation) helicopter makes its way to the scene. The Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles are shielding Soldiers from more life threatening injuries. The demanding training and continuous battle drills that small units of the battalion focused on over the past six months are proving invaluable.

There is a network in place to notify family members of situations that occur here in Afghanistan. A severe illness or any injury notification will be made by the Soldier or a leader in his chain of command. The rear detachment and family readiness group leaders will also follow up to ensure communication is consistent and continued throughout the recovery process. Meetings will be held to share information, but please respect a family's request to keep details as private as they desire.

Thank you for your continued support of our Soldiers. I see packages, cards and letters flowing to the Soldiers on a daily basis. It means a lot to receive a note and know you are being thought of back home. I traveled to numerous Provincial Reconstruction Team locations and the Soldiers are doing well with high morale. As the end of the year is upon us, I wish everyone the best for an enjoyable holiday season and please take some time to remember all the families of our organization.

Keep Your Powder Dry!

—Lt. Col. Tony Couture, Powder Horn 6



The 1/181 holds a Battle Streamer for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in World War I. The 47-day conflict, which was the largest and final campaign of the war, ended with the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918.

