

# Duke



# Dispatch

Vol. 10

MTBI patients treated  
with rest , video games

TF Duke, ANA eliminate  
weapons caches

April 2011

# Table of Contents

- 3 **Commander's Corner**
- 3 **Voice of the CSM**
- 4 **Chaplain's word**
- 4 **Controlled detonation**
- 5 **TF Duke treats mTBI**
- 7 **Traveling chaplain**
- 9 **Cache clearance**
- 11 **Warrior's Profile**
- 13 **Columns**



Photos from operations of Task Force Duke taken between March 15- April 15. Top Left: Photo by Pfc. Donald Watkins, Top Right: Spc. Tobey White, Middle Left: Pfc. Donald Watkins, Middle Right: Spc. Tobey White Bottom Left: Pfc. Donald Watkins, Bottom Right: Pfc. Donald Watkins

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Cover photo- U.S. Army Soldiers with 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, walk up a hill to search for a suspected buried weapons cache in the village of Starkats, Khowst province, Afghanistan, April 2. (Photo by Pfc. Donald Watkins)

## Commander's Corner

By Col. Chris Toner  
TF Duke Commander

We are now approaching three months in the saddle and have reached steady-state operations. Well, as steady state as can be expected here in this challenging, counter-insurgency environment where building relationships are oftentimes the most effective weapon used. Without positive relationships with our Afghan partners, which we continue to build upon daily, true success, the type that will lead to a secure, stable Afghanistan, will be near-impossible to achieve.

Our first large-scale tactical mission, Operation Maiwan, was hugely successful in denying weapons and munitions to the enemy before the spring fighting season. During six productive March days, working with the Afghan National Security Forces, we jointly removed over 200 enemy mortars, rockets, grenades, IEDs, and land mines; 107mm rocket launchers, several suicide vests, over 600 pounds of homemade explosives, nearly 5,000 heavy machine gun rounds, dozens of AK-47s and similar

firearms, and countless IED-making components. It's comforting to know such weaponry and other materials can no longer be used against coalition Soldiers, ANSF, or the Afghan people we are here to protect. We plan to build upon this success as we execute more joint operations with our ANSF brothers leading the effort.

Success here is complimented by a strong supporting cast on the home front. I can't emphasize enough the importance of maintaining positive relationships with Families and friends. Stay in touch with them; call or Skype as often as possible for your own sake and theirs. For all the platoons "adopted" by the Fort Knox community, show your gratitude with letters and tokens of appreciation in return, capturing a piece of your Afghanistan experience to share with these people who cared enough to send a bit of love from back home.

Sadly, the past month was not without loss. Three additional heroes have joined the ranks of the fallen in recent weeks. Staff Sgt. Mecolus "Mack" McDaniel, Troop A, 6-4 Cav., died March 19 from an IED strike



against his vehicle while on patrol. We also lost 1st Lt. Robert Welch, Company B, 201st Brigade Support Battalion, who died from wounds sustained in a rocket attack on Forward Operating Base Salerno April 3. And, on April 11, we lost Spc. Brent Maher, Co. B, 1-168 Inf. Regt.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of these brave Soldiers. When we think of them, and it will be often, always remember how they gave their tomorrows so that others may have their todays. They epitomized what all Big Red One Soldiers aspire toward.

No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great. Duty First!



we moved into spring fighting season was here in Afghanistan. I'm not trying to be a hero, showing how tough I can be, by putting the Army above my Family. That wasn't my intention. I do this because I know my Father would have preferred it, and because my lifetime battle buddy, my big brother Chris, told me he'd handle the funeral arrangements back home. Chris told me the best place for me was here with the Dukes.

My heart is warmed that even in the sadness of my father's passing, I have a brother who has my back in my absence, so I can remain here with my other Family.

I write about such things now only to remind everyone of the continued importance of our Families. Before thinking of your Family only in terms of blood relatives left behind in the states, think again. Every Duke Brigade Soldier, whether you realize it or not, is part of your extended Family this deployment.

By CSM Drew Pumarejo  
TF Duke Command Sgt. Maj.

I received word recently that my father and former Marine, Oscar Negrón Pumarejo, had passed away after battling heart disease for quite some time. Although his death was something my Family had been expecting, the news was still difficult to swallow.

During my last deployment to Iraq where I served as the Command Sergeant Major for the 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, my mother passed, which was equally difficult news to hear. I departed theater to be with my Family then because I could. I'm grateful the Army allows deployed Soldiers to go home for such things.

However, this time I didn't return. I loved my father very much and certainly wish I was there with my Family during this difficult time, but the best place for me as

## Voice of the CSM

## Chaplain's Word

By Chaplain (Maj.) Mike Nishimura,  
TF Duke Chaplain

Some significant religious observances will occur during the month of April this year. For Christians, we are currently in the season of Lent which started on Ash Wednesday (March 9).

It is a period of 40 days (without counting six Sundays) leading up to Easter Sunday, April 24. The traditional purpose of Lent was the preparation of believers for the annual commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ—when the faithful rededicated themselves and when the converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. According to the Gospel accounts, Christ spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness before the beginning of his public ministry where he endured temptation. Thus, Christians imitate Christ's wilderness experience dur-

ing Lent.

For Jews, "Pesach" or Passover is observed in April this year. The primary observances of Pesach are related to the Exodus from Egypt after generations of slavery. Pesach begins on the 15th day of the Jewish month of Nisan. It is the first of the three major festivals with both historical and agricultural significance (the other two are *Shavu'ot* and *Sukkot*). Probably the most significant observance related to Pesach involves the removal of *chametz* (leaven) from homes. This commemorates the fact that the Jews leaving Egypt were in a hurry and did not have time to let their bread rise. It also has the symbolic meaning of removing the "puffiness," or arrogance and pride, from one's life.

Here on FOB Salerno, our Catholic community has been observing a Lenten Learning Series on Saturday nights with



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joseph Hannon teaching a sort of Christianity 101, a mixture of church history, theology and Scripture. There are many events scheduled during Holy Week culminating on Easter Sunday with an ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service as well as the regularly scheduled Sunday worship, Scripture study and fellowship opportunities. I hope you can appreciate your religious heritage and get involved in it.

May God bless you as you continue to strengthen your spiritual resiliency.

## 'Grey Wolves' keep TF Duke rolling

By Spc. Bryan Thien,  
TF Centaur

In a large maintenance bay on Forward Operating Base Salerno, U.S. Army Sgt. Christopher Cates, a welder from Friendswood, Texas, and U.S. Army Spc. Anthony Fludd, a mechanic from Washington, D.C., are hard at work on April 6.

At his station, Fludd is working on a tactical light mount for a vehicle while Cates is preoccupied with building a set of pull-up bars.

These two Soldiers and their 11 comrades of the Maintenance Platoon, Company G, 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, work hard at FOB Salerno to ensure the task force can roll out to the battlefield and keep the FOB functioning as well.

The Soldiers of the Co. G "Grey Wolves" perform essential tasks from within the confines of their bay as well as outside the wire. They are kept busy with welding projects, repairs, ordering and replacing parts, and performing guard duties, while constantly on stand-by for a broad spectrum of missions.

"Long hours and hard work is the best way I would describe what's being done here," said U.S. Army Capt. Brian Thompson, commander of Co. G, and a native of Newport, R.I.

The Maintenance Platoon has eight personnel responsible for the recovery aspect of quick reaction force missions who, at a moment's notice, might have to drop whatever project they're working on to roll out, support, and recover any downed vehicle.

The Grey Wolves have conducted 10 missions to date outside the wire. One mission stands out being particularly tough, said Thompson.



Photo by Spc. Brian Thien

Spc. Anthony Fludd, a wheeled vehicle mechanic in Co. G, 201st BSB, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, and a native of Washington, D.C., builds a tactical light mount for an armored vehicle on FOB Salerno, April 5.

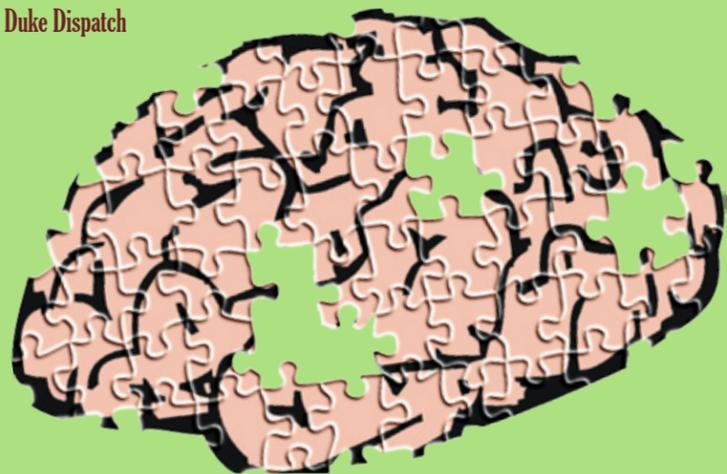
"Recently we had to go out on a vehicle recovery and casualty evacuation mission where we had to provide some medical assistance and security," said Thompson.

They recovered the vehicle and stabilized the casualty, but they weren't done yet.

"On our way back we had a vehicle rollover," said Thompson. "So with one truck already on the wrecker, it was a matter of towing the newly disabled vehicle back with the materials on hand, like cargo straps and winches."

Despite the surprises along the way, the Grey Wolves successfully completed that mission, and returned to their everyday job of repairing the broken vehicles and equipment.

"Without maintenance, a lot of things wouldn't happen," said Warrant Officer Dewayne Evans, the Grey Wolves Maintenance Platoon leader from Columbus, Ga.



# Putting the pieces back together

## TF Duke center treats mTBI with rest, games

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Ben K. Navratil  
TF Duke, PAO

Over the last few years, interest in the effects of concussions on sports figures, especially in hockey and football, has increased dramatically.

The issue of concussions, also known as mild traumatic brain injuries, is not one that only affects sports stars. Anyone who suffered a head injury is at risk of being affected, particularly Soldiers who have been struck by improvised explosive devices or other attacks.

But these Soldiers have help in their recovery from this common but potentially severe injury. Task Force Duke's mTBI Reconditioning Center at Forward Operating Base Salerno is just one facility of many operating in Afghanistan to help Soldiers

recover.

According to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, mTBI is any "disruption of brain functioning from a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury."

While that may sound fairly simple and direct, what can occur inside a person's head, and the ensuing injuries, can be very severe.

The physical effects on the brain itself from being bounced or twisted inside the skull, or even penetrated by an object like a bullet or bone fragment, is only one factor physicians need to consider at when working with an mTBI patient, said Maj. Thomas Hair, a family care physician, and department chief for warrior care at Ireland Army Commu-

nity Hospital in Fort Knox, Ky.

Hair deployed to Afghanistan with the Fort Knox-based 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and is currently serving as the battalion surgeon for the 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke.

In addition to the physical injury to the brain, the affected Soldier may also suffer from emotional trauma as a result from the injury, said Hair.

During an injury resulting in a loss of consciousness, the rational part of the brain can be damaged and stop working properly, sending the emotional center into a frenzy, which often results in varying degrees of post-traumatic stress disorder, he said.

The symptoms exhibited by Soldiers affected by mTBI vary, and can often be subtle, or may not appear until later, Hair said.

"A lot of time guys will come in and they 'just ain't right,'" he said.

"You can't find any one thing wrong with them. But everything they do is two or three percent slower than they used to be. They can remember things, but it takes five seconds longer than it used to," he said.

U.S. Army Spc. Chamai Shahim of Portland, Ore., a CH-47 Chinook mechanic with Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, was playing basketball when another player's jaw came down hard on the top of her head.

"I was vomiting and slurring my words," she said, but she didn't realize it had to do with her head injury until she met with U.S. Army Capt. Emily McGinty, an occupational therapist from Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, and currently the officer-in-charge of the TF Duke mTBI

Reconditioning Center.

Shahim explained her symptoms to McGinty, who advised her to get a professional examination. She was diagnosed with a concussion and referred to the center for out-patient treatment.

Another U.S. Army Soldier, Pfc. Jeremiah Mullins, a military policeman from Richmond, Va., attached to 1st Bn., 26th Inf., 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, was on duty in a guard tower at Combat Outpost Bak when a mortar shell exploded within five meters of where he was standing.

"The blast knocked me out," he said, and since then he's had bad headaches, trouble sleeping, bad dreams and difficulty getting the incident off his mind.

This was the second time Mullins had been in an incident like this – an improvised explosive device detonated near him previously – so he was referred to the center by his commander to ensure he was examined for any sign of mTBI and for treatment if necessary.

One of the keys to treating mTBI, is early diagnosis from a physician and the proper medication and treatment.

As long as Soldiers seek help from medical personnel, Hair said, they can recover from almost all head injuries.

"The most important treatment is time, reassurance, realistic expectations and rest," said Hair.

Affected Soldiers are first examined by their unit medics. If they show signs of concussion, they are ordered to get at least 24 hours of rest.

If they continue to show symptoms after the rest period ends, they are sent to see a doctor who determines if the Soldier needs treatment at the mTBI center.

Rest is the first treatment Hair recommends; ideally the affected Soldier will get 72 hours of real rest, if the mission allows it.

"Most Soldiers in a combat zone are sleep-deprived to begin with," he said, "The reality is someone who is sleep-deprived looks just like someone who's had a concussion."

He added that sleep is one the best ways for the brain to heal itself.

But that doesn't mean Soldiers can take three days off to do whatever they want.

To get good rest, the Soldiers must avoid as much stimulation as possible, said Hair, so that means no video games,

caffeine or cigarettes, to name a few restrictions.

"Soldiers need to go to bed at night, instead of staying up late watching TV or talking on the phone," he said. "This is actual rest."

"I was told to stay in a dark room and get as much sleep as I could for the first couple of days," said Shahim. "I try not to do anything mentally exhausting or stimulating."

Shahim said she had insomnia before the injury, which complicated her healing process since she couldn't get proper sleep on her own.

She was prescribed medication to help her sleep by a healthcare provider. The sleep has led to a noticeable improvement.

She said she isn't bothered by slurring words or nausea anymore, but she still gets headaches when she exerts herself.

When she no longer shows any symptoms, Shahim will move to the next step, known as the exertional period of her recovery, where she will conduct some basic physical training, like riding a stationary bike.

If she can increase her heart rate without a recurrence of her symptoms, she'll be cleared to return to her normal duties, said McGinty.

Mullins, on the other hand, is scheduled to leave the facility Wednesday and return to duty, which he's looking forward to.

"I feel a lot better now," he said. "The memory building exercises and the brain game I played on the Wii really helped out a lot."

"Nintendo's Wii gaming system is used by the center as a training tool for visual, perceptual, balance and cognitive rehabilitation," said McGinty. "It's become a standard practice tool in all four established mTBI reconditioning centers in Regional Command – East."

"The Wii Fit game focuses on improving balance and coordination through games that require the service member to challenge his vestibular system," said McGinty. A person's

vestibular system is located in their inner ear and contributes mostly to their movement and balance.

The Wii also allows occupational therapists like McGinty to identify a patient's improvements by providing feedback regarding the patient's speed and accuracy, and it adapts to patients' progress by increasing the challenges as they improve, she added.

Using a guided recovery process with graded intervention, the TF Duke mTBI reconditioning center treats Soldiers affected by mTBI with care, and challenges them to get better.

The center has treated 33 patients since October, said McGinty, and only one had to be sent on for level III treatment, which is conducted by a five-person team at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

That Soldier was eventually able to fully recover and return to normal duty.

"[mTBI] is not new," said Hair. "Discussion of brain injury dates back to the beginnings of medical literature, and even the ancient Greek dramas. We know how to deal with it as doctors. The Army knows how to deal with it as an Army. We just need to treat it, and be intelligent about it." ■



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ben Navratil

U.S. Army Pfc. Jeremiah Mullins, a military policeman from Richmond, Va., attached to 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, plays "Brain Academy" on the Nintendo Wii at the TF Duke mild traumatic brain injury reconditioning center on Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan, March 16.

## Remember: HEADS up!

If you or your battle buddy has received any head trauma, even if it seems minor, be on the lookout for these symptoms of mTBI:

- Headache**
- Ears ringing**
- Altered or lost consciousness**
- Dizziness or double-vision**
- Something's just "not right"**

Anyone exhibiting these symptoms may be affected by mTBI, and should be seen by a professional immediately. Most Soldiers with mTBI can be treated in a few weeks or less and returned to normal duties. The most important part of recovery is a prompt diagnosis, though, so make sure to see a health care professional immediately!

Story and photos by Spc. Tobey White,  
TF Duke, PAO

# Making the rounds

## Catholic chaplain travels to tend congregation

In a little chapel made of plywood and nails, a small congregation gathers for mass after a long days work.

Fancy, the chapel is not. It is barely able to hold eight unfinished wooden pews. It's the first time in several weeks a Catholic priest has made the journey to Forward Operating Base Goode, Afghanistan to hold services, March 28.

For U.S. Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joseph Hannon, an individual augmentee with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and a native Leavenworth, Kan., it wasn't the first time he'd says mass to a group who hadn't attended services in 5-6 weeks. As a catholic chaplain, he traveled from FOB to Combat Outpost ministering to a flock spread among 24 installations and 5,000 square miles of eastern Afghanistan.

Five days a week for his year-long deployment, Hannon has traveled around Khowst Province, Paktya Province and parts of Ghazni Province visiting military personnel and civilians who don't have access to a catholic priest.

In an Army whose two biggest denominations are Catholics and Southern Baptists, only 100 priests fill the 400 available Catholic Chaplain slots. That's 300 less than minister to Southern Baptists.

It's not easy traveling as much as he does, especially being an older Soldier at the age of 68. To make it easier on himself, Hannon, a tall, thin man whose enthusiasm gives you the impression he's younger than he is, has developed a routine of sorts. He packs the same thing, the same way, every morning before a trip. It makes traveling easier, and he has less of a chance of forgetting something, he said.

"I can very well pack in the dark," he joked.

Becoming a chaplain in the military was a long road. He knew as early as 2nd grade that he wanted to become a Catholic priest. He grew up in the 50's and it was a very different culture back then, he said.

The desire to join the priesthood was supported 100 percent by his friends and family. His 8th grade class even threw a surprise party for him, when they learned he was going to a preparatory high school to get ready for seminary, Hannon said.

It took him 12 years after he graduated high school to become an ordained priest. First, he had to go to a five-year seminary college before attending ministry for three years. Lastly, he had to attend a four-year university before he could be ordained.

While in high school he became very interested in the military, but kept it in the back of his mind while he was pursuing the priesthood. It wasn't until three years after he was ordained that he was allowed to enter the Army Reserves in 1977, Hannon said.



U.S. Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joseph Hannon, an individual augmentee with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and a native of Leavenworth, Kan., offers communion to a member of his congregation at Forward Operating Base Goode, Afghanistan, March 28. Hannon travels five days a week visiting installations that don't have a Catholic chaplain to attend to their spiritual needs. His flock is spread over 24 installations in Khowst, Paktya, and parts of Ghazni Provinces.

His religious order wouldn't let him go active at first and he spent 15 years as a reservist. It wasn't until 1992 when the order had a new supervisor partial to military ministry that he was allowed to go active.

As a Catholic pastor in garrison, his main work is running a Catholic program that lets him attend to the spiritual needs of people ranging from kindergarteners to retirees. One of the deployment aspect he enjoys is being able to minister to many men and women from all military services.

One thing he never gets tired of is saying mass. On his previous 14-month deployment to Iraq, he said mass up to six times a weekend.

"I never get tired of it," he said, speaking of saying mass. "I enjoy the religious and spiritual aspect of it."

To help him in his work, U.S. Navy Religious Program Specialist 1st Class Monica Williams, a chaplain's assistant and an individual augmentee to 3rd Bde., 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, a native of Virginia Beach, Va., is in charge of his travel arrangements and takes care of the administrative side of being a chaplain. The role of chaplain's assistant is to act as a bodyguard for the chaplain, who while in a

### Taking care of your chaplain involves knowing your chaplain —Religious Programs Specialist Monica Williams

combat zone does not carry a weapon, allowing him to focus solely on the work of a chaplain.

"Taking care of your chaplain involves knowing your chaplain," Williams said. "It helps out big time in forming that relationship."

Hannon admits keeping him on the road is a tough thing to do, especially in the winter months of January and February, but Williams does an excellent job. At times she gets up at 4 a.m. to check flight times and occasionally she stays up most of the night making sure they get onto the right flight, Williams said.

One of the toughest aspects for both of them is constantly being on the move. It's easy to build a religious relationship with the people at these bases, but there isn't any time to build anything but a surface friendship, Hannon said. They can only make it to each base about once every five weeks. Even when they do make it to a FOB, some people will be on mission or have moved, making it another five weeks before Hannon and Williams are able to see them.

Still, that doesn't make Hannon and Williams any less determined to reach people in the outlying FOBs and COPs, Hannon

said. They send out emails to the congregation and publish an electronic bulletin focusing on Soldiers' lives. Hannon also

appoints a lay leader who is in charge of leading services and organizing readings in Hannon's absence. This person is usually a volunteer at one of the installations.

"He brings so much to the table," Williams said, speaking of Hannon. "I'm not even Catholic, but I love listening to his services."

On the weekends Hannon makes it back to FOB Salerno, he can be seen running for as long as two hours on Saturdays. He credits his energy as a nice gift from God, citing it as one of the reasons he wanted to come on this deployment.

Being an older Soldier, he wants to do as much as he could for the troops while he still has the energy to do it, Hannon said.

Whether it's traveling, running, or providing religious succor to his congregation, Hannon's enthusiasm for his job shows through and provides an inspiration for others, Williams said.

"I take preaching very serious, and I put a lot of work into it," Hannon said. ▀

U.S. Army Sgt. Nicholas Radde, from LaCrosse, Wis., of 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Rgt., 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, searches a pile of brush for weapons in Khowst Province, Afghanistan, March 15.



U.S. Army Sgt. Nicholas Radde, from LaCrosse, Wis., of 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, searches a room for weapons or bomb making materials in Khowst Province, Afghanistan, March 15. The mission was part of Operation Maiwan, which was intended to find and eliminate weapon caches throughout Khowst and Paktya Provinces.

By Staff Sgt. Ben Navratil,  
TF Duke, PAO

## TF Duke, ANSF clear weapons caches

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, completed a major operation intended to severely degrade insurgent activity prior to the spring fighting season in eastern Afghanistan, March 20.

Operation Maiwan was conducted by TF Duke alongside their Afghan National Security Force partners in Khowst and Paktya Provinces to recover and eliminate weapons caches across the two provinces, with the ultimate goal of increasing security and reinforcing the ANSF's control over the area.

"We recovered an active cache, and also identified a method used by insurgents to mark caches," said U.S. Army Capt. Aaron M. Tapalman, native of West Alexandria, Ohio, and commander of Viper Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke.

In all, during a six-day period, the American and Afghan Soldiers successfully recovered over 200 mortars, rockets, grenades, improvised explosive devices and land mines; multiple rocket launchers and suicide vests; over 600 pounds of homemade explosives; thousands of machine gun rounds and dozens of AK47 rifles and similar firearms.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jesse Pearson, a native of Joliet, Ill., and commander of the 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Rgt., noted that cache clearance operations was extremely successful in his battle space, and "clearly disrupted insurgents' plans across Khowst Province."

He added that feedback he'd received from district governors in both Jaji Maidan and Sabari district of Khowst revealed that the operation gave citizens of both areas hope, because "the level of violence [occurring during the operation] was notably reduced."

Khowst Governor Al-Jabbar Naeemi applauded the joint effort between the Afghan National Security Forces and the Soldiers of TF Duke.

In a statement released by his office, Naeemi praised the citizens of Khowst who "cooperated in this effort because they want to live in peace."

He also made a call for reconciliation by insurgents to join the overall effort to bring peace and stability to the region.

Speaking from his past experience as a battalion commander in nearby Paktika Province in 2006-2007, U.S. Army Col. Chris Toner, TF Duke commander and native of Topeka, Kan., said that he's never seen the amount of pressure put on the insurgency here that is being applied today.

"Our massing of effects is having a significant impact [on the insurgency]," said Toner of the density of forces in the region.

There was more to the operation than simply removing weapons from the battlefield, however.

This first large-scale, joint operation undertaken by TF Duke and the ANSF since TF Duke's taking control in January was an opportunity for the two units to work closely toward a common goal.

"We got into areas we needed to go," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mark Borowski, a native of South Hadley, Mass., and commander of the 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke.

He went on to say the lessons learned working with his Afghan counterparts were just as important as the actual cache clearance itself.

"This was our first sustained operation with the ANSF and we certainly have learned from the experience," said Borowski. ■



Photos by Pfc. Donald Watkins



Middle- A Soldier from the 1st Battalion, 26th Inf. Rgt., 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke pulls security in Khowst Province, Afghanistan, March 13.

Bottom- U.S. Army 1st Lt. David Chappelle, from Virginia Beach, Va., of 1st Plt., Co. D, 1st Battalion, 26th Inf. Rgt., 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, instructs Afghan National Army Soldiers before they begin searching the Kholbesat Bazaar in Khowst Province, Afghanistan, March 13.

# Warrior's spotlight

## 'Mayor' of COP Deh Yak wears many hats

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. John Zumer,  
TF Duke, PAO

He's never had to take a platform to the voters, deal with critical press coverage or balance the books at City Hall. But, as mayor of Combat Outpost Deh Yak, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Wesley Shealey has more in common with his civilian counterparts than most people know.

Both work to ensure the safety and health of their communities, provide recreational opportunities and facilitate orderly traffic flow. The big difference is that Shealey governs in eastern Afghanistan and not Main Street, U.S.A.

Shealey, an infantryman assigned to the Fort Knox, Ky.-based Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, is serving a one-year deployment that began in January.

Less than a week into his tour, the Jacksonville, Fla., native was designated by his superiors to be the COP Deh Yak mayor, largely because he possessed the initiative and personality needed to not only interact with locals, but also with Soldiers seeking answers to numerous problems.

He's balancing his new mayoral duties alongside his regular job as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the company's operations intelligence team.

"I'm still only getting one paycheck," he joked.

The duties he is entrusted with as mayor are a fulltime job in their own right. Having days off like a civilian mayor is a luxury he hasn't enjoyed yet, largely due to the upkeep of life support systems like plumbing and electrical on which his Soldierly constituents depend. It's a testament to Shealey's abilities that his superiors felt he was the right man for the position.

"The COP mayor is a jack-of-all-trades with one of the most important positions on any installation," said U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Michael Berry, Company C, 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf., and a native of Columbia, S.C.

Berry, and U.S. Army Capt. Michael Carrion of Bell Buckle, Tenn., Co. C's commander, receive a daily report from Shealey summarizing outstanding COP issues.

Those concerns include the necessity of maintaining adequate fuel resources that are needed to keep all tactical operations at the COP functioning seamlessly.

"You can't survive without it," Berry said of Shealey's role.

As for his other mayoral duties, name the civilian equivalent and odds are good Shealey is doing it.

Waste water and fresh water concerns? He purifies and regularly tests the non-potable water used by Soldiers for personal hygiene, and stages bottled water across the COP for drinking.

Fire prevention? He maintains fire control measures and equip-

ment near the many fuel points, which have pumps that require his new generator mechanic skills.

Shealey even dabbles with police-type work; ensuring local workers are properly escorted around the COP and Jinga trucks making deliveries follow COP traffic regulations.

Shealey even manages to supervise the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center, acquires new fitness equipment and assists with other morale issues.

For Soldiers deployed to a distant, isolated location such as Afghanistan, those other issues often come down to receiving letters and packages from home. The mayor helps sort the mail and puts the word out when it arrives, but even he's not a miracle worker when it comes to the post office.

"Mail is a little slow, with some letters taking a month to get here. It's one of the biggest issues," said Shealey.

All of these daily tasks are accomplished with only one fulltime assistant, U.S. Army Spc. Victor Garcia, a Company C infantryman from Denver, Colo., who knew Shealey long before the present deployment.

"He was one of the first mentors I had at Fort Knox," Garcia said.

Effectively governing COP Deh Yak and developing young Soldiers into leaders are his main professional obligations, but a planned retirement from the Army is also on the horizon.

Shealey may even resume his civilian career as a paramedic, a position he held during a break in military service from 1999-2003.

His wife Alisha is a nurse and they have three sons who range in age from 5 to 9, all of whom probably look forward to Shealey switching to the hats of husband and father.

The chance to have made a positive contribution for his community and its residents is important to Shealey, as it should be to any mayor.

Still, his most enduring legacy might be how well COP Deh Yak could function in his absence, a scenario only made possible by a mayor who cared enough to share his knowledge and concern for the common good with those who may one day walk in his own or similar shoes.

If that's the case, Mayor Shealey may be heading for a landslide victory.

"Everything that he does, I'm able to do it if he's away because of his training and coaching," said Garcia. 🍌

(Opposite) U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Wesley Shealey, a native of Jacksonville, Fla., and the mayor of Combat Outpost Deh Yak, makes his rounds, March 25. In his duties as COP mayor, Shealey is entrusted with matters that include waste water management, fire prevention, traffic control, and morale, welfare and recreation.

# Retention changing

By Master Sgt. David Burgoon  
TF Duke Retention

**H**QDA announced a policy last month that retention control points for staff sergeants and below will lower, effective June 1, 2011.

The Retention Control Point is the maximum number of years a Soldier may serve in the active Army. A Soldier may not reenlist or extend for a period of time that will take them beyond the given amount of years for their MOS/promotable status.

Under the previous RCP levels, Soldiers could gain retirement eligibility as a Sergeant Promotable. Under the new levels, the minimum rank that can obtain retirement eligibility is staff sergeant.

The new levels will seriously curtail many Soldiers plans to reenlist. Many Soldiers who can currently reenlist for a term of 4 years, the minimum to secure an overseas assignment, will find they are unable to reenlist for more than 2 years come June 1.

Rumors and misunderstandings about the RCP reduction have driven many Soldiers and NCOs to worry about their careers. The best bet for these Soldiers is to simply ask their Career Counselor their specific questions and voice their concerns to them. Some of the key points of the policy are these:

-Soldiers who reenlisted previously under the indefinite reenlistment program, are eligible to serve up to the RCP point they reenlisted under.

-Soldiers who have obtained between 18 and 20 years of service already will not be separated but will be able to request retirement.

-Soldiers who will reach or exceed their RCP during this deployment, and will not be eligible to take action to reenlist, may serve up to 12 months from redeployment plus 90 days.

-Soldiers who elected the Career Status Bonus will be allowed to serve to their previous RCP levels.

The easiest way to find out the particulars of how this program will affect you is to talk to your career counselor. They can help you understand your options for continued service, to include reserve component affiliation.

Act now! June is right around the corner! ▀

### Reenlistments: March 15- April 15

- Staff Sgt. Bobbi Augustyn
- Staff Sgt. Ronald Badger
- Staff Sgt. John Ball
- Spc. Charles Belletto
- Sgt. Jonathan Bower
- Staff Sgt. Franklin Carnegie
- Sgt. Dennis Carney
- Sgt. Michael Catron
- Spc. Dana Chatt
- Staff Sgt. Steven Clemens
- Staff Sgt. Israel Cuellar
- Sgt. Alexander Englehart
- Spc. Christopher Ferraro
- Spc. Jason Fitzgerald
- Sgt. Jonathan Freese
- Spc. Joshua Gholson
- Staff Sgt. Joshua Hall
- Staff Sgt. James Harder
- Sgt. Matthew Hoggatt
- Spc. Kristopher Irwin
- Sgt. Brandon Jones
- Staff Sgt. Eric Kramer
- Spc. Ryne Krites
- Sgt. Jared Lynch
- Sgt. Kyle McGrail
- Staff Sgt. Keven Melvin
- Staff Sgt. Christopher Miller
- Spc. Caleb Mindemann
- Spc. Arturo Molanoarenas
- Staff Sgt. Rodney Nash
- Spc. Rodney Palaganas
- Spc. Andrew Pipkin
- Staff Sgt. Cory Ragin
- Sgt. Quaashie Rose
- Staff Sgt. Ethan Schweitzer
- Sgt. John Simmons
- Sgt. Joshua Smith
- Sgt. Anthony Tennenbaum
- Spc. Frank Thibodeax
- Spc. Robert Williams
- Sgt. Jack Willis
- Staff Sgt. Shawn Wrzesinski
- Staff Sgt. Yobani Yanes
- Spc. Laimonis Zatlars

# Sexual Assault Awareness

By Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Kretz,  
TF Duke Equal Opportunity Advisor

**T**his April marks the seventh annual sexual assault awareness month with the theme sexual assault hurts one, and affects all. It harms victims, the families associated with each case, a unit's climate and cohesion, and in some cases, our nation's strategic alliances. At all levels, we must remain diligent; we cannot afford to let this crime continue within our Army. Step up, treat each and everyone with dignity and respect, and Intervene, Act, and Motivate.

**Intervene:** When I recognize a threat to my fellow Soldiers, I will have the personal courage to intervene and prevent sexual assault. I will not tolerate obscene gestures, language or behavior. I am a warrior and a member of a team. I will intervene.

**Act:** You are my brother, my sister, my fellow Soldier. It is my duty to stand up for you, no matter the time or place. I will take action. I will do what's right. I will prevent sexual harassment and assault. I will act.

**Motivate:** We are American Soldiers, motivated to keep our fellow Soldiers safe. It is our mission to prevent sexual harassment and assault. We will denounce sexual misconduct. As Soldiers, we are all motivated to take action. We are strongest...together. ▀

# FRG events

By Ally Reese  
FRG

**M**arch was a busy month for our Duke Brigade Families with lots of activities and events to keep us feeling fit, resilient and ready for spring!

The Brigade hosted its second Outstanding Volunteer Ceremony on March 22nd where 18 remarkable volunteers were honored from all battalions. We truly appreciate all of our wonderful and dedicated volunteers who are doing great work both here on post and within the community.

We were honored to host the Sergeant Major of the Army's wife, Mrs. Jeanne Chandler, here at Fort Knox on March 23. More than two dozen of our FRG leaders and advisors were able to discuss with Mrs Chandler their successes and challenges within their FRG Groups.

FMWR hosted several free movie nights, BUNCO with free childcare, free massages for Spouses as well as beginning several fitness programs including the Walk to Afghanistan program where spouses will have a year to walk the 7,612 miles it takes to get to Afghanistan.

Our own 3/1 IBCT FRG Groups are holding monthly resiliency events and training sessions as well to teach spouses techniques to better cope with the stresses of deployment.

A few events upcoming for April include a "Ladies Fight Back" Self Defense Class, Wine Getaway at Huber Farms, Easter "Eggstravaganza" event, Free Bowling, as well as many Spring Break Activities through CYSS and the Devers Middle School and Teen Center/SKIES programs. ▀

Visit the FRG website for future events @  
<http://www.knox.army.mil/forscom/3ibct/frg.asp>

# Barrackslawyer

**D**uring the course of a year, there are several selection boards for promotion purposes. Part of what is evaluated during the selection process is portions of a Soldier's Official Military Performance Fiche. For some individuals who are not selected, the discriminating factor could be negative information located within their OMPF.

By Staff Sgt. Marvin Kauger,  
TF Duke Paralegal NCOIC

What a lot of personnel do not realize is that, if a memorandum of reprimand or an Article 15 is put into their performance fiche, they have the ability, after one year has passed and they have received at least one nonacademic evaluation report, to submit an appeal to the Department of the Army Suitability Evaluation Board under AR 600-37, Ch. 7.

A Soldier in the rank of sergeant or below will only do this as an exception to policy because a Soldier's OMPF is not a factor in promotion until they are being considered for a senior enlisted rank (Sgt. 1st Class and higher), warrant officer or officer candidate school.

Regarding memorandums of reprimand, admonition or censure; if the Soldier is appealing the decision based on the information being untrue or unjust, in whole or in part, the burden of proof is on the Soldier to provide clear and convincing evidence that this is the case.

For memorandums and Article 15's, the basis of appeal is that a) the intended purpose has been served and b) the transfer of the appropriate record would be in the best interest of the Army. The imposing commander also has the option of writing the Soldier a letter of support which will make the Soldier's case even stronger, however, there is no requirement for that commander to support that request.

If you have any questions about this process or how to prepare this letter, please call my office and make an appointment with the 3-1 BCT Legal Assistance Attorney. The number is (NIPR) 851-0514 or (SIPR) 851-1286. ▀

*This article is not to be construed as either legal advice or as a substitute for legal advice.*

# Safety corner

By Ken Campbell,  
TF Duke Safety Director

**A**s Soldiers across the brigade prepare for their upcoming R&R leave, I would like to highlight a few things to think about.



The Army on average loses more than 140 Soldiers each year due to off-duty accidents.

These accidents are normally due to risky behaviors like not using protective equipment such as seatbelts or helmets, speeding, alcohol, distractions and fatigue.

Some of the root causes are lack of discipline, overconfidence, lack of proper training and complacency.

Since 2004, there have been more than 190 reported vehicle accidents where fatigue was a contributing factor and more than 375 where alcohol was a contributing factor.

I emphasize the relevance of these two because many Soldiers across Task Force Duke will be traveling once they reach their respective destination to visit family and friends, and many will partake in an alcoholic beverage or two while home on R&R.

Leaders, please ensure that you are discussing rest-drive cycles with your Soldiers, as well as emphasizing the need of a designated driver.

I hope everyone has a safe and relaxing R&R and the Task Force awaits your safe return.

Safety First! ▀

# Purpleheart

Awarded for: "Being wounded or killed in any action against an enemy of the United States or as a result of an act of any such enemy or opposing armed forces."

### Recipients: March 16 - April 15

**Sgt. Benjamin Connell**  
D Co., 1-26 In

**Pfc. Carlos Gomez**  
A Trp., 6-4 Cav.



**Pfc. Hayward Joseph**  
D Co., 1-26 in

**Spc. Brent Maher**  
B Co., 1-168 In

**Staff Sgt. Mecolus McDaniel**  
A Trp., 6-4 Cav.

**Sgt. Robert Slimmer**  
HHT, 6-4 Cav

**Pvt. Matthew Stubblefield**  
D Co., 1-26 In

**1st Lt. Robert Welch**  
B Co., 201st BSB

# World News Highlights

## United States

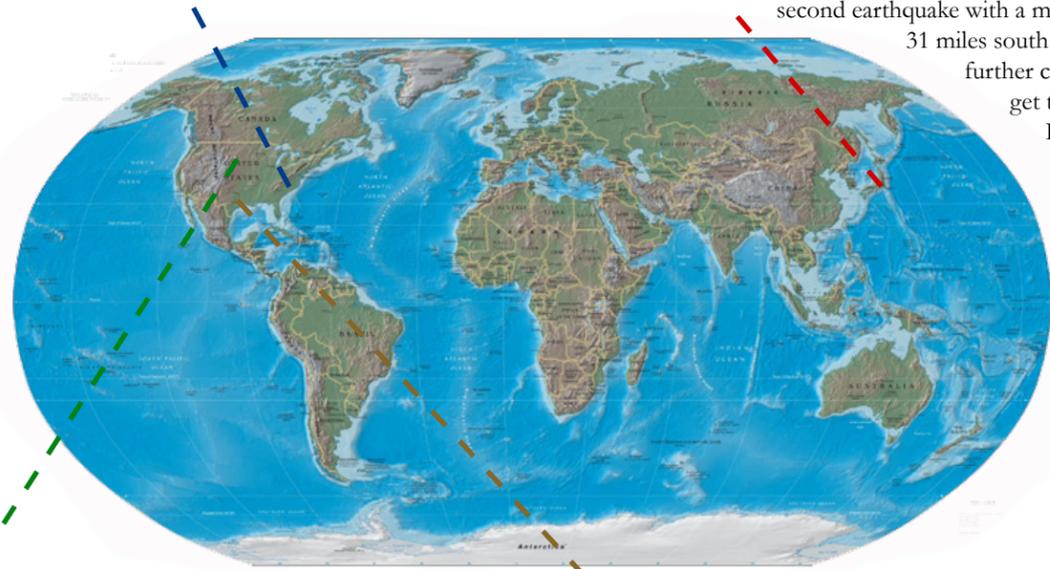
### Government shutdown

After two previous extensions on the budget, congress finally reached a deal to fund the government through the end of the fiscal year, April 8. The deal cuts \$38.5 billion in spending. It came an hour before midnight which would have resulted in a government shutdown.

## Japan

### Nuclear plant crippled

One month after an 8.9 magnitude earthquake, struck Japan, and the resulting 30-foot tsunami hit the north-eastern coast, Japan still struggles to contain the damage done by its crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Radiation levels have risen in the sea surrounding the area and more towns surrounding the plant have been ordered to evacuate. Japan has already stopped selling certain produce and food originating from that area. A second earthquake with a magnitude of 6.6 struck 31 miles south of the plant on April 4, further complicating attempts to get the plant under control. Reports indicate this nuclear power plant disaster is on par or worse than the Chernoble disaster that ravaged the Ukraine, April 26, 1986.



## Iowa

### Tornado caused 'major damage'

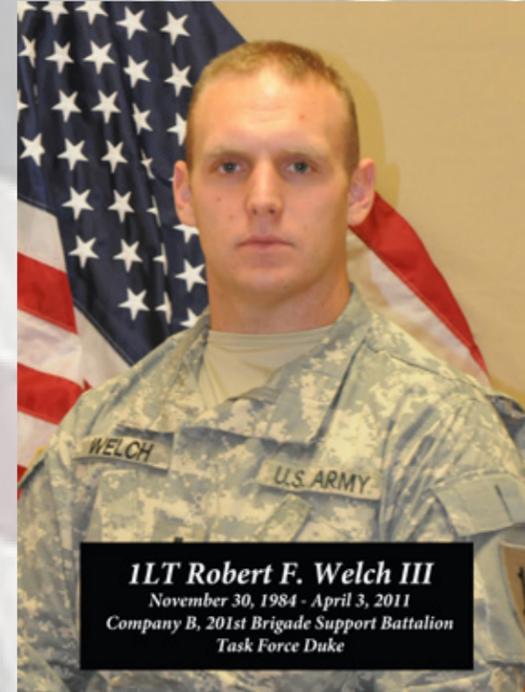
Several areas in Iowa were hit by tornados. One of the hardest hit areas was Mapleton which suffered damage to 60% of the city, according to Monona County Sheriff Jeff Pratt. Only minor injuries resulted from the tornados. National Guard troops were sent to the area to help with the cleanup.

## Texas

### Wild fires rage

Wild fires in Texas continued to rage, with six new ones starting up on Sunday, April 10. The new fires were quickly brought under control, however, several of the older blazes involving more than 130,000 acres were still uncontrolled as of April 15. The National Weather Services issued "red flag warnings" for parts of six states when weather conditions worsened in the area.

# IN MEMORIAM





A Soldier from the 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment pulls security in Khowst Province, Afghanistan

Photo by Pfc. Donald Watkins