SIGNAL READY

April 2011

# SIGNAL STRONG

## 228th TTSB ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND CEREMONY

*By Capt. Karena Hill*

The 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Greg Batts, assumed command of network operations for all expeditionary signal assets located in the Combined Joint Operations Area-Afghanistan during a transfer of authority ceremony held at Bagram Airfield on March 27.

228th TTSB unit colors were unfurled by Batts and Command Sgt. Maj. Charles R. Campbell.

The ceremony officially ended the command of Task Force Thunder, 359th TTSB commanded by Col. Chris Kemp, and recognized the beginning of Task Force Spartan, 228th TTSB. Although the name of the task force changed, the overall mission for the new TTSB remains to maintain and commercialize the communications assets throughout the Combined Joint Operations Area- Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In regard to the effectiveness of the 359th TTSB, Batts stated that they established a high standard (*continued on page 6)*

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## INSIGHT FROM HHC COMMANDER

*By Capt. Sean Maly*

Our troops hit the ground running and adapted to many challenges. They have maintained military discipline, adapted to changes in climate and surroundings and have been eager to take charge of our very important mission here. In my years in the South Carolina Army National Guard, I have always known that we have a higher standard than other Guard units. Our standards are very high and our soldiers always do the right thing. I couldn't be more proud to serve as HHC Commander of such fine group of men and women. I also know that these soldiers could not meet such high expectations without the loving support of the families.

# FROM 1ST SGT'S BUNKER: NO PLACE FOR COMPLACENCY

*By 1st Sgt. Kenneth Green*

I am very pleased to see that we are settling into a good battle rhythm.

I want to encourage Soliders not to become complacent with their daily routine or military performance. We need to continously strive to improve our own areas of operation. When thinking about your AOR, think outside the box. Think about how your AOR might effect others around you.

When thinking of responsibilities here are a few things to consider; your work area how can you make it better both visually and operationally. Your living area, how can you improve your living conditions, how respectful are you of the Soldiers around you.

Another AOR would be "you." Are you working on improving your Soldier skills, mentally challenging yourself, are you conditioning your body and improving your physical abilities?

Don't become complacent with your individual and professional leadership responsibilities. As we get set in our day-to-day routine, don't let the Soldiers around you learn negative or unprofessional techniques. Keep your mind sharp and alert, always displaying your best military bearing.

We are mentoring Soldiers whether we realize it or not. Let's make sure we are always displaying positive mentoring qualities.

Lastly, let me mention complacency in regard to security. DON'T DO IT. Since arriving in country I have heightened awareness that I need to constantly be alert and ready to react, in a split second.

We all need to be continually thinking about our next place of protection, where's the next bunker, what can I get behind, can I get in that ditch if I need to, etc…

Also don't be complacent with your environment. Remember how alert and aware of your surroundings and the people around you, when you first encountered a combat environment. We need to maintain that sense of awareness daily.

# PROTOCOL FOR ALL

Left, New Chief of Staff of the Army, General Martin E. Dempsey

Right, New Sergeant Major of the Army, Sgt. Maj Raymond F. Chandler III

# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER: ESTABLISH ROUTINES

Traditional Protestant Service
Sunday at 0830

Latter Day Saints
Sunday at 1000*

Chapel Next- contemporary music, Protestant.
Sunday at 1030

Roman Catholic Mass
Sunday at 1230

Lutheran Service*
Sunday at 1300

Gospel Service
Sunday at 1500

Church of Christ*
Sunday at 1730
*See Chaplain for additional details

We are getting settled in now and hopefully are establishing routines for our day to day, week to week work schedules. Establishing routines generally include times for physical fitness, sleep, talking with families and work schedules.

I would encourage everyone to also establish routines for spiritual fitness as well. This could include daily quiet times but also times to attend worship services on Sunday. This is important for our Spiritual Resiliency. It takes effort to establish these times, we have limited privacy in our rooms, work spaces are busy and noisy, and we work long days.

Some suggestions include finding a break area where you can get away for 10 or 15 minutes by yourself or even going to the chapel during the day for a quiet place. Our office has several different Bible translations and Gideon New Testaments that will fit inside an ACU pocket. Stop by any time to see what we have or just to talk. We also have a messaging chair that a number of soldiers have already taken advantage of.

SGT Moore and I are located in the B-hut immediately behind the command group in the Brigade area. All Soldiers are welcome to stop by and see us at any time.

God Bless,
Chaplain (LTC) Turner

# SOLDIER LEGAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

*By 1st Lt. Kevin Esber*

The 228th TTSB Legal Section is headed by CPT John K. Edwards, 1LT Kevin J. Esber is the Trial Counsel, and SFC Carla Walker is the NCOIC.

The Legal Section has been busy during the transfer of authority from the 359th TTSB, getting up to speed and assuming responsibility of all legal matters pending, preparing initial memorandums, and providing legal services and advice to 228th TTSB's Command and Soldiers as well as to subordinate commands.

The Legal Section wants all Soldiers to know they are available to help with legal issues that arise during this deployment.

Just a reminder, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act provides Soldiers while deployed some of the following protections: 6% interest cap on pre-active duty obligations, lease terminations, cell phone contract termination/suspension, eviction protection, mortgage foreclosure protection, installment contracts repossession protection, taxation provisions, voting rights, professional liability insurance, life insurance protections, durable POAs for MIAs, reinstatement of health insurance, non-discrimination protection, stay of proceedings, protection against default judgments, suspension of statutes of limitations, and stays of execution of judgments and attachments.

If you have any legal questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Legal team. For an appointment, please contact SFC Walker via DSN at 481-1687 or via carla.l.walker@afghan.swa.army.mil.

# FAMILIES THAT DEPLOY TOGETHER

*By Sgt Bethany Witherington*

Typically when Soldiers deploy, their fellow service members become part of their family as if they were related by blood.

The bond Soldiers share is often times indescribable to the family members and friends they leave behind.

However, for four sets of Soldiers in the 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, currently deployed to Bagram Air Field, the Soldier bond is much deeper, they are family members.

There are two fathers and sons; one brother and sister; and one married couple. For them, it is a blessing to be able to deploy with another individual who knows them.

Prior to the deployment, only one of the four pairs were members of the 228th TTSB. The remainder of the family members joined the unit after the deployment was announced.

The reasons for volunteering for the deployment are varied. For father and son team, Maj. Preston Gee IV and Sgt. Maj. Preston Gee Jr., it was a matter of being deployed with his son and the Soldiers he had worked with in the past. Sgt. Maj. Gee said, "I wanted to volunteer for this deployment, to be with my son. I also know the team I will be working with and feel honored to have the opportunity to work with such a great team."

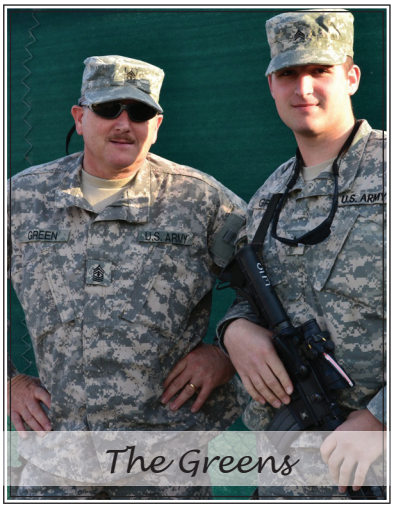
For the Malys, Maj. Lisa Maly and Capt. Sean Maly, a brother and sister team, the chance to deploy with family had more to do with opportunity than anything else. Maj. Maly, former commander of the Mobile Communications Detachment, was a member of the unit prior to her younger brother joining. Capt. Maly, current 228th TTSB Headquarters and Headquarters Company Commander, joined the unit for the specific task of being company commander.

When asked his feelings about being in a command position he said, "I was honored to have been asked to command such a fine unit as the 228th TTSB. Working with my sister was just a bonus to working with some of the finest Soldiers in the state of South Carolina."

The unit's only married couple are Capt. Amanda Kane and Sgt. 1st Class Leo Kane. Although both are members of the 228th TTSB, they work in different areas and have very different missions. Capt. Kane works in the S1 section and is responsible for maintaining unit accountability of Soldiers in the 228th TTSB and its subordinate units. Sgt. 1st Class Kane works in the S3 section and is responsible for the planning and organization of day-to-day operations. This is the second time the Kanes have deployed together as a married couple.

1SG Kenneth Green and son SGT Kaleb Green are also members of the 228th TTSB. Both father and son joined the unit shortly before the deployment knowing the unit was preparing for a deployment. Both were excited to deploy together as an opportunity to grow professionally and strengthen their bond.

The Gees


The Greens

The Malys

The Kanes

# COPING WHEN YOUR SPOUSE GETS DEPLOYED

*Online Source at www.ehow.com*

Coping with the reality of being a military spouse is no simple task. It is particularly difficult when you don't see your spouse for months at a time when they deploy. The stress of a separation is further intensified by the danger associated with deployments and the risk of possibly losing your loved one. Finding ways to deal with the harsh reality of a deployment while providing support to your deployed spouse is essential to preserving a relationship.

## GET INVOLVED

Volunteer in your community. Seek volunteer opportunities within your community and get involved as much as possible with a variety of charities. Filling your time with positive interactions and opportunities will help keep you in a positive mindset.

Join a gym and work out on a regular basis. Exercise is essential to keeping you healthy mentally, emotionally and physically. This will also provide an outlet for you to vent frustrations and extra energy.

Take continuing education classes through a local college. Pursue interests that you never expected to be able to pursue. If traditional college courses don't interest you, consider taking an art class or a cooking class.

## COMMUNICATE

Speak with your spouse candidly and often about how you are coping. Keep him/her aware of everything you are going through and provide him with an opportunity to use you as an outlet for the stress he/she is managing. Try to keep your interactions positive and avoid pointless arguments. It is easy to slip into a pattern of negative behavior when you are feeling scared, worried, lonely and sad, but treating your spouse poorly will only make you both feel horrible and it will negatively affect your relationship. Seek professional counseling if necessary.

Send care packages and gifts to your spouse. Don't wait for a holiday or birthday, but send gifts randomly to show your spouse that you are thinking about her/him. Sending favorite food items, toiletries, magazines, books, music and mementos will improve the deployment experience for both of you. Your spouse will greatly enjoy getting the packages and you will take pleasure in sending them. This will give you an opportunity to connect despite the distance between you.

Set up long-distance cyber dates. Invest in a web cam and use a VOIP service such as Skype to have dates with your spouse. Eat dinner, share a book, flirt and laugh together or play a board game. Find unique and fun ways to spend time together. Setting up these dates in advance will give you both something to anticipate.

Serve as an outlet for your spouse and be understanding of her/his moods. Soldiers keep extremely odd hours during deployments. Often they are called upon to serve for 24-72 hours straight with little or no sleep. Staying up for three days in a highly stressful, dangerous environment is enough to make anyone grouchy.

Stay faithful. Do not stray in your marriage, but rather put it and your spouse first. Commit to your spouse and your marriage by avoiding temptations and finding positive outlets for your energy. You are both lonely, so seek solace in each other rather than in the arms of another.

## MAINTAIN NORMALITY

Keep a regular schedule. If you have volunteered at your local soup kitchen every Friday afternoon, continue to do that during the deployment.

Stay on top of your responsibilities. Do yard work and manage repairs around the house as issues present themselves. Pay your bills on time and continue to work if you have a job. If you don't have a job, consider getting one. You might be tempted to stay in bed for the duration of the deployment, but shirking your responsibilities will just cause more stress on you and your spouse.

Spend time with friends and family. Attend family gatherings and consider doing Sunday dinners with your loved ones. Having family around you and using that support system will make it much easier for you to deal with the rigors of a deployment. Don't push people away and allow yourself to sink into depression.

## TIPS & WARNINGS:

Deployments are hard, period. They are hard on the soldier the spouse, the children and the extended family/friends. Use the support system and resources you have available to you.

# TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGERS

*By Sgt Bethany Witherington*

Joint Network Control Center-Afghanistan is a network control center that manages tactical communications for all American Forces in Afghanistan.

The collaborated efforts of the Army, Air Force, Marines and civilian contractors allow the JNCC-A to run smoothly, like a well oiled machine.

JNCC-A is an operation that is manned 24 hours a day to offer assistance to network users. Second shift management is just as important as first shift management.

MSG Terry Wessinger, 228th JNCC-A Information Assurance/ Computer Network Defense NCOIC said, "Ensuring the integrity of the system from external and internal threats, for example: hackers, viruses and worms, is a 24 hour-a-day job."

"The reason for IA is not only for social networking; we focus more on maintaining bandwidth so the network can function at its most optimal speed," said Wessinger. Accessing sites that use a large amount of bandwidth slows down the system, making the internet run slow.

In order to maintain such a widespread system that supports all of Afghanistan, JNCC-A has six sections that run the network. All six sections are essential for the control center to function as it does. If one section is lost the control center will not fail, but it will take time to operate as efficient as it does when fully manned.

MSG Keith Alumbaugh, C-4 support NCOIC, said, "Almost everyone in my section has a technical background and can be taken out of my section and work adequately in another section within the JNCC-A." This is not the case for all sections. However, through cross training, they too could be taken out of the office they are in and do sufficient work in another office.

The sections at JNCC-A have started the process of cross training their personnel so that when a Soldier takes his/her two week leave or is needed in another section the section will operate as efficiently as it does now.

With the wealth of knowledge the civilian contractors have and the willingness of 228th Soldiers to learn, cross training is not difficult.

MSgt Tim Wood, 627th Communication Squadron Future Operations NCOIC, said, "I have not met anyone within the 228th TTSB who has not been easy to work with." Working with the different branches of service and civilian contractors has been an easy process.

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*continued from page 1*

of distinction and have definitely set a high bar to reach. "As we, the members of the 228th TTSB take on this mission, we can't help but stand in awe and admiration of the work you've done and the example you have set."

The mission here is not done though, and my team is prepared and ready.

Soldiers of the 228th TTSB are accustomed to deployments in support of the current global war efforts. Since September 11, elements of the 228th TTSB have deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I, deploying 376 Soldiers of the 151st Signal Brigade and more than 120 Soldiers of the 114th Signal Company in Kuwait and throughout Iraq.

Soldiers of the 228th TTSB have a long history of providing excellent signal support services to the warfighter. 228th TTSB Soldiers have been called upon again to provide mission critical communications to units throughout the area of operations.

"Our time has come, and we are ready", stated Batts.

# SOLDIERS AWARDED COMBAT PATCH

The combat patch, officially called shoulder sleeve insignia-former wartime service (SSI-FWTS) patch is traditionally given to Soldiers in designated war zones within the first 30 days of their deployment.

228th Soldiers arrived in Bagram, Afghanistan on 18 March and received their combat patches on 15 April.

**Spc. Anthony Vassallo listens to Spc. McDowell**

**Sgt. Moore shows off his first combat patch**

**Know anyone named Preston?**

## 228th PATCH HISTORY

Orange and white are the colors of the Signal Corps. Blue and white are colors associated with the infantry and the South Carolina Army National Guard and refer to the unit's heritage and war experience. The bayonet suggests the unit's long military history that began in 1907 when they were an infantry unit. The white crescent is taken from the flag of the unit's home state. The lighting flashes allude to the unit's mission and motto.

# HHC Soldiers with April Birthdays!

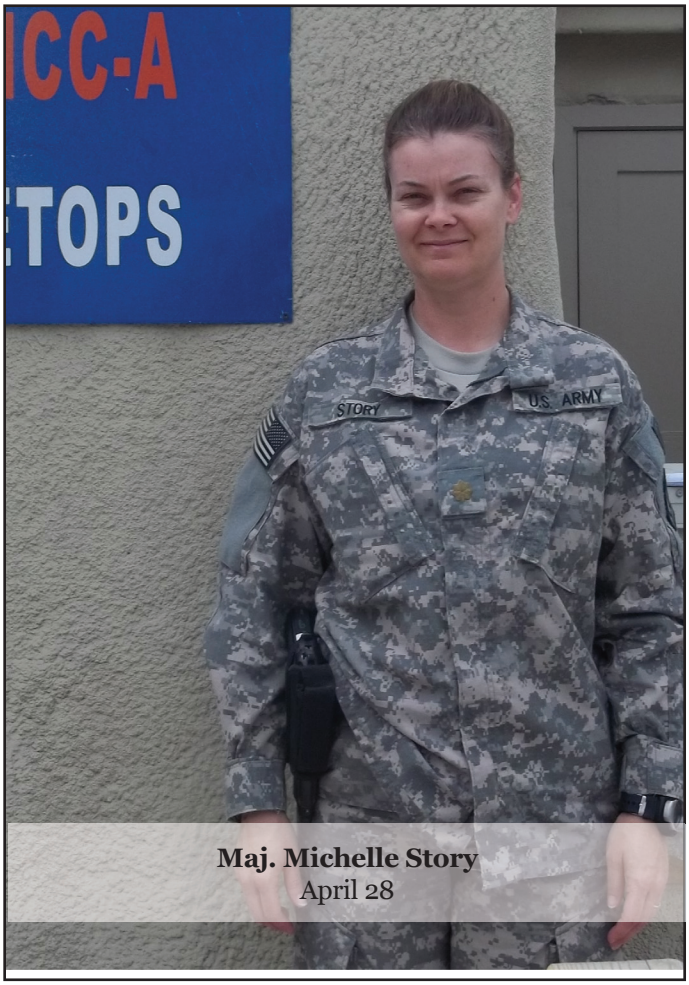
**Master Sgt. Kenneth Porter**
April 4

**2nd Lt. Kenneth Campbell**
April 10

**Maj. Barbara Mesaros**
April 23

**Spc. Gary Colon**
April 4

**Sgt. Lorene Littlejohn**
April 21




**Maj. Michelle Story**
April 28

**Maj. Mitch Jackson**
April 5

**Spc. Matthew Duncan**
April 8

THE BEST BIRTHDAYS OF ALL ARE THOSE THAT HAVEN'T ARRIVED YET.

~JONATHAN SWIFT

# 228th Soldier Promotions

Hooah!

**Maj. Dale Goff**

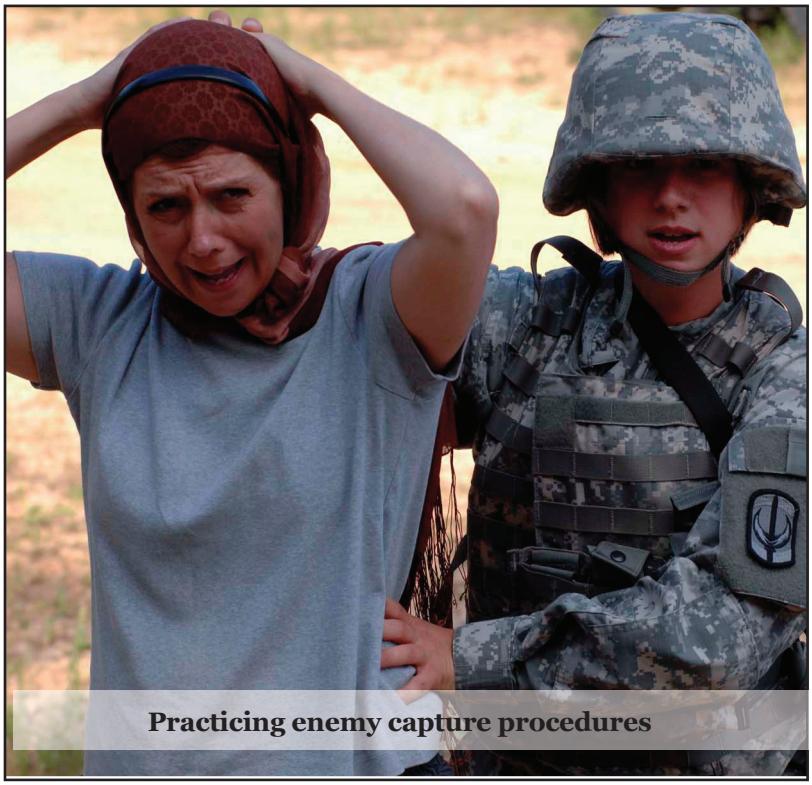
**CPL Michael Skinner**

**Above Left-Capt. Dale Goff , Logistics Supply Officer, gets promoted to Maj on 13 April.**
**Above Right-PFC Skinner gets promoted to SPC and CPL on 28 March. Capt. Maly forcefully pins on rank of Spc.**

# *The Long Road to Bagram*

## *Lots of hard work and a little fun along the way!*

**In the spring of 2010, 228th Soldiers train at McCrady Training Center, Leesburg, South Carolina, in prepration for year long deployment to Bagram, Afghanistan.**



Practicing enemy capture procedures

Always at the ready

PFC Skinner prepares for rollover.

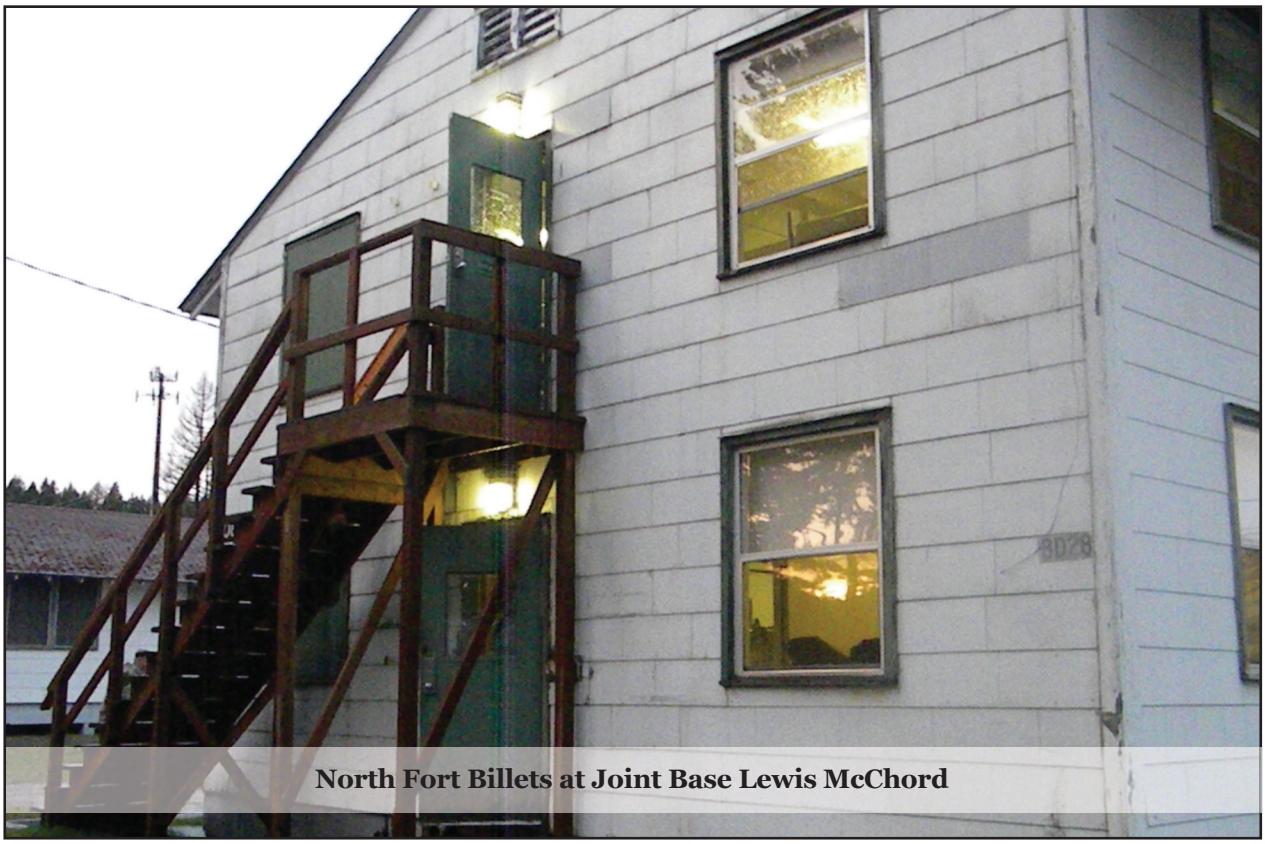
Just a little walk in the woods.

228th Train the Trainers Team

Is it all clear in the front?

Napping after a long day's work in the field.

All smiles for training!



North Fort Billets at Joint Base Lewis McChord

**Left, Photograph of female billet at Joint Base Lewis McChord.**

**Chief Warrent Officer 2 poses infront of 9/11 tribute at Manas Air Force Base**

Staff Sgt. Downs

**Above, Staff Sgt. Downs participates in a mock RAMP ceremony while at COL Eagle, Joint Base Lewis McChord.**

Soldiers unload duffle bags at Bagram

228th Soldiers work together to unload duffle bags on their first day arriving in Bagram, Afghanistan.

Teamwork at hand

228th Soldiers in RIP/TOA formatioin

Above, 228th Soldiers stand in formation during RIP/TOA ceremony. This ceremony marked the official beginning of the reign of Task Force Spartan.

CSM Campbell unfurls unit colors