

HEARTBEAT

The Official Magazine of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division



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Staff Sgt. James Leach, a platoon sergeant with 1/75's HHT, points at enemy positions while in a fire fight during an objective for Operation Dragon STRIKE



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Words from the Top

STRIKE Soldiers and Leaders,

We are winning. Operation DRAGON STRIKE has resulted in a significant increase of security along Highway 1. We continue to improve each day while we fight alongside our Afghan National Army partners. Elections were conducted without significant incident and our ANA Partners performed well securing the polling stations with the Afghan National Police. While we increase the security we are providing to the Afghan people we are also enabling their freedom of movement to improve their daily lives. STRIKE Soldiers, Leaders and units are working tremendously hard each day; each day we get better and stronger. The Insurgents are paying a heavy cost when they attempt to fight us and we continue to attack them in multiple directions. Due to the incredible strength and resolve that you and your Afghan Partners have displayed we are now securing areas that were insurgent safehavens for years.

On 21 September, CTF STRIKE



relinquished responsibility of the Arghandab District and that means that both 1-320th "TOP GUNS" and 1-66th "KNIGHTS" are now under the tactical command of 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, CTF RAIDER. STRIKE will continue to support TOP GUNS with combat enablers, supplies, personnel, mail and equip-

ment. I am confident that TOP GUNS and KNIGHTS will continue to perform superbly under command of the RAIDER Brigade.

I could not be prouder of the tremendous work TOP GUNS has accomplished and continues to accomplish each day and they continue to win while in a tough fight.

STRIKE now has tactical command of 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment "Leader Rakkasans" who are partnered with three ANA Kandhaks. They will fight alongside STRIKE and assist us in our clearing operations before they head back to Fort Campbell.

To all STRIKE Soldiers and Leaders, remember each day the sacrifices we make, and those made by our brothers while we continue this critical mission.

Maintain your focus, look out for each other and remember to "keep your head on a swivel."

We are STRIKE Soldiers, we fight where told and WIN where we fight! STRIKE!

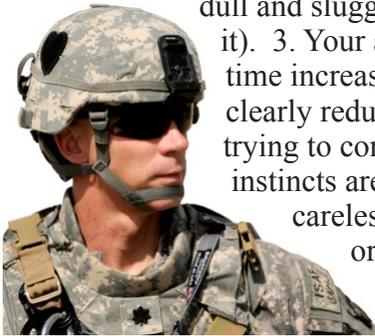


The Doctor's Orders with Lt. Col Michael Wirt

Sleep, Why is it so important? Sleep is where your body and mind recuperate from the day's work. It changes your body temperature, affects your digestion, heart rate, chemical levels and muscle tissue repair. Adequate sleep is not "optional." The average person needs 8 hours of sleep a night. About 95% of fatigue is due to lack of sleep!

As TF STRIKE continues successful operations in Arghandab, Zhari and Maiwand Districts, our operational tempo is increasing. With a rise in the pace and hours of work, we expect to experience a degree of fatigue. This is ok, as we all have experienced fatigue for short periods of time. When this becomes a normal feeling or steady state, you need to take action. Your medics, PAs and Physicians at your aid station can help. There are seven signs and symptoms of *Chronic Fatigue*:

1. Difficulty in keeping your attention or concentration on a task. 2. You feel or appear dull and sluggish (just cannot snap out of it). 3. Your accuracy decreases, reaction time increases, and ability to think is clearly reduced. 4. You are always trying to conserve energy. 5. Your instincts are just not right and you feel careless, uncoordinated, confused, or irritable. 6. Social interactions decline (you get angry too easy and



snap at your battle buddies or withdraw, and do not want to talk with anyone). 7. You just cannot stay awake.

Intentional Sleep Restriction is the most common reason we don't get the sleep needed. This can be as simple as decreasing sleep time by a few hours a night, working longer hours. In the operational environment it can be unavoidable and necessary for these actions to happen, just be aware of the their affects.

The best countermeasure is prevention through adequate sleep, but this isn't always possible. Stick to a *consistent* bedtime/wake-up schedule when possible. Create a quiet and comfortable sleep environment. Maintain an aerobic exercise routine during daytime. No exercise within three to four hours of going to bed. It produces short term alerting affects and interferes with sleep. Don't consume caffeine within four hours of bedtime and don't smoke cigarettes within one hour of bedtime. Maximize every sleep opportunity and consider using ear plugs and eye shades.

Another countermeasure is strategic napping. This is the best countermeasure, other than full 8 hours sleep. Even short naps are helpful (20-30 minutes) although longer naps (2-4 hours) are optimal. It is best to nap between 0100-0600 and 1400-1600 as it generally matches your body's normal rhythm. To minimize grogginess, keep naps less than 45 minutes or at least 2 hours in length. Sleep, it can save your life and your buddies. Lack of it can get you both killed, so get some rest!

The Chaplain Says... by Chaplain (Maj.) David Beavers

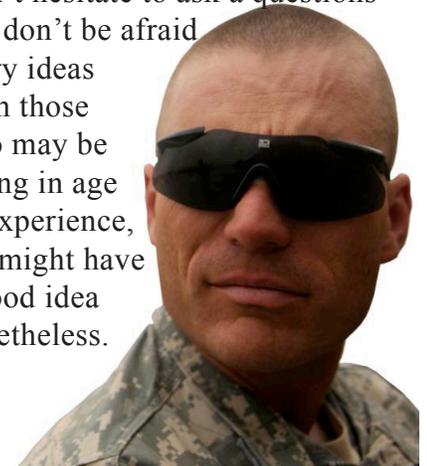
Many years ago, a dump truck driver decided to take a short-cut through a small town, instead of taking the highway. Unfortunately, his truck was too tall for the tunnel under a bridge in the middle of town. He managed to slam on brakes to avoid a catastrophe, but still wedged his truck in the tunnel. The townspeople didn't know what to do, since the town's only two truck was on the other side of the tunnel. After several failed attempts to pull the truck free and everyone was at their wits end, a little girl walked up to the Sheriff and asked a question "Why don't you let some air out of the tires?" They followed the little girls advice and it worked.

In the book of Proverbs you can read: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)

In the story above, the Sheriff and the townspeople could have ignored the little girl's question as being naive or irrelevant because she was too young or lacked experience and their egos could have stood in the way of success.

When we think we know everything or that we can't ask a question because others may think less of us, then we run the risk of failure based solely on our ego. While this deployment may not be our first for either a Soldier or a spouse, there still may be something for us to

learn from a 'first-timer'. Further, it never hurts to ask questions to make sure we understand what is intended or what the desired outcome is. This will prevent confusion or misunderstandings. Don't hesitate to ask a questions and don't be afraid to try ideas from those who may be young in age or experience, but might have a good idea nonetheless.



Combat Stress Column

Suicide is a difficult topic to talk about, but it must be discussed. Last year alone, there were 162 suicides in the Army. In 2008 there were 128, so the problem is growing.

To highlight this and bring more awareness to Soldiers the Army has dedicated September to suicide prevention and awareness.

Suicide prevention is not only a commander's program, but the responsibility of all leaders and Soldiers. Everyone needs to be involved in saving Soldiers lives. Active engagement by everyone can help minimize the risk of suicide and stop the unnecessary loss of life.

The Army's method of involvement is described by the acronym ACE.

Ask: Don't be afraid to ask your friend, your buddy or anyone if they are feeling like hurting themselves. If you don't ask, how will you know? If you ask, you may save a life.

Care: If your friend or buddy says yes, you CAN'T leave them alone. Encourage them to follow you to the nearest source of support: your chain of command, the chaplain, behavioral health, or the Aid Station.

Escort: Walk, drive, or carry your buddy to the next level of support. Don't let them suffer alone. Ensure your buddy talks with someone and check with them about how they are.

The website dedicated to suicide prevention training is <https://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/training> Please contact me if need help or know of someone who does.

The Mayor's Cell

Afghanistan recently made the headlines with its elections, Sept. 18. For years, Taliban had denied a choice for the people and today's Afghan citizens understand the importance of having that choice.

Americans are fortunate enough to be born with the right to vote. The STRIKE Soldiers deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan help continue the tradition.

America's Election Day is coming up soon. Here is how a STRIKE Soldier can cast their vote.

Visit the company's Unit Voting Assistance Officer for a Registration and Absentee Ballot Request-Federal Post Card Application.

If you are not registered, Fill out the RABR-FPCA and hand to the UVAO for mailing. Within a couple of weeks, an absentee ballot arrives via mail, email or fax. Fill out the ballot and mail it.

Time is of the essence, so this should be done as soon as possible and once complete, look for the results on Election Day, Nov. 4.

Voting is important and the process needs to continue, especially during deployment.

For further information, log onto www.FVAP.gov



Safety Standards with Safety Mike

We live and operate in a high risk environment. Reducing those risks is an all the time job which every Soldier should do. The best way to reduce risk is to follow the STRIKE Standard for whatever your doing.

If tasked to work around cranes as they place T-walls, the ACH is worn to protect against head injuries.

The same applies when working on the top of flat bed trucks guiding forklifts as they pickup pallets. If you working around fuel, rubber gloves and splash proof goggles are needed to prevent burns and loss of eyesight.

Recently a vehicle rolled over with Soldiers inside. One Soldier was wearing his restraint system and aside from some bruising returned to work shortly after the accident. The second Soldier failed to wear his

restraint system. He was medically evacuated back to the States.

Every STRIKE Soldier is important to the mission. Follow the standard for each task, stay safe, and keep up the good work.



Engineers Teach Infantry Demolitions, Explosive Breach



Staff Sgt. Matthew Connolly, an engineer with 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) explains demolitions at Forward Operating Base Ramrod, Aug. 23. The engineers taught Soldiers how to use demolition charges to clear routes of hidden explosives and destroy objectives.

The dangers of improvised explosive devices and land mines are real threats across the Kandahar province. Many Soldiers have been wounded or lost their lives when these devices detonate. Detecting and destroying these weapons is an issue throughout the combat zone.

Engineers with Company A, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, conducted a class for infantry personnel on demolition techniques for field operations Aug. 23.

A second class was given to combat engineers with Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division from Ft. Carson, CO, Aug. 28.

The 1st Bn, 502nd Infantry Regiment and the 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment sent members of their units to attend the first class held at the Ammunition Holding Area of Forward Operating Base Wilson.

“Today we’re teaching basic demolitions to the Soldiers,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Connolly, native of Dubuque, IA, and a squad leader in Co. A, 2nd BSTB. “We’re going to teach them how to prepare and prime C4, how to use the Anti-Personnel Obstacle Breaching

system, how to do emplacements so that they can do the basics on their own when they are out in sector, due to the fact that there’s not enough engineers to go around.”

The instructors taught the proper method for setting up and launching an APOB unit, a self-contained route clearing device consisting of a non-explosive rocket with a series of explosives carried behind it. The device launches out and carries the line of explosives, laying them down the route to be traveled. When triggered, the explosives detonate which trigger nearby IEDs and mines to explode. Knowing how to use the APOB system will help save Soldier’s lives in combat, Connolly said.

“The APOB is like a pack you carry,” said Spc. Matthew Falcon, combat engineer with the 4th ID. “It’s a good tool, we’re actually going to be using it on the battlefield. After this class we’ll be good to go. We’ll go out on missions and do our thing.”

Safety is vital when handling explosive devices. The engineers demonstrated how to use detonation cord, a cord used to trigger explosive devices. By measuring the time it takes to burn

specific distances, Soldiers can estimate safe burn times for their demolition projects. This limits the risks of accidental detonation when using explosives in field.

“It’s easy to train people on these systems,” said Spc. Agostino Salvati, native of Miami FL, and assigned to 2-BSTB combat engineers. “You just have to be careful working with explosives and follow safety procedures.”

Salvati demonstrated how to tie detonation cord for different devices. Many different styles of knots were demonstrated and Soldiers were given cord to practice with themselves.

“We have to use this when we go outside the wire,” said Sgt. Jason Burger, a non-commissioned officer with Troop A, 1-75th CAV. “In any given situation it could be really vital for us to know. This class is good, we’re learning a lot here.”

To some Soldiers, this was their first experience with demolition equipment. Learning how to handle these in a battlefield situation will help Soldiers as they move around.

“I’ve learned basic demolition today, I’ve never done this before,” said Spc. Arturo Hernandez, native of Houston, TX, with Troop A, 1-75 CAV. “I can’t wait to use the APOB system, it looks interesting. I’ve never seen the APOB before in person.”

Infantry Soldiers benefit from the class by being able to use explosives like C4, a common military explosive, to bring objectives down or blow doors open. These are skills that can come in handy especially in urban terrain where obstacles are prominent.

Hernandez added that the class was educational and fun and he was eager to use his new skills during missions.

Learning new ways to do things is a mainstay of the Army. With the training provided by the engineers, other Soldiers of STRIKE Brigade now have more skills to help accomplish their missions.

ANA Gets Behind the Wheel

Driver's training is a rite of passage for many American teenagers. The thrill of being behind the wheel, the first time the engine turns over and the vision of days cruising the beach all wrapped up in one class.

Afghan soldiers from the 6th Kandak, 3rd B205th Corp, Afghan National Army, got the same thrill when Soldiers from the Combined Team Wolfpack sent 29 ANA soldiers through a driver's education class.

The class ran for eight hours a day for 11 days covering how to drive both the ANA Ford Rangers and the HMMWV, according to Staff Sgt. Brent Moote, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the driver's course. The class started with basic familiarization with each vehicle and their function. The main focus was on the manual transmission, the clutch and switching gears.

"For some of the guys it took a couple of days just to get the Ford Ranger moving," said Moss. However, after some long hours, it began to click for them.

"It was really hard at first, but once they started learning and I got to see that expression on their face, when things clicked; that's when I knew what it was really like to be a teacher," said Spc. Kaleb Siler, one of the driving instructors. Once each ANA Soldier finally "got it" they had a huge smile on their face as they pulled into the Academy training area. Moments like those and more helped build a strong feeling of camaraderie throughout the training.

The class was a good step in creating an environment where the ANA and Wolfpack Soldiers were 'Shanna ba Shanna' according to Moote.



Afghan National Army Sgt. Sayeed Ghafa smiles as he learns to switch gears properly during driver's training



Spc. Kaleb Siler, an instructor for the Driver's Education class ran by Wolfpack Soldiers, teaches a group of ANA Soldiers some preventive maintenance. The class lasted for 11 days and covered both safety and proper driving techniques.

Once the students were able to shift a few gears, the training progressed into serpentines and driving narrow paths.

"Before I arrived I did not know how to drive the Ranger, which we use all the time," remarked Staff Sgt Abdul Sabul, the NCOIC of the ANA class. "The class was really helpful and fun. It will help us to be safer."

Ultimately, the instruction covered common courtesies and rules of the road: checking for traffic at an intersection, using the blinker, etc.

"This training gives the ANA Commanders more flexibility; they now have a larger base of experienced and accomplished drivers to utilize," stated 1st Lt. Chad Humphrey, the Mortar Platoon Leader. "With a lot of focus on safety during training, what we are doing is actually saving lives. The advanced instruction they received on convoy operations will put them ahead of their peers and prove valuable in future operations." As the training came to an end, students were visibly proud to hold their certificates of graduation.



ANA Soldiers practice driving a Ford Ranger during a Driver's Education class run by Wolfpack Soldiers.

OPERATION: *Dragon Strike!*

Combined Task Force STRIKE Attacks Taliban



Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), watch a 155mm artillery round land on a Taliban fighting position in the Zharay district, Sept. 21. The attack occurred during an objective for Operation Dragon STRIKE.

Since its arrival to the Kandahar Province, Combined Task Force Strike has been kinetic. They came into the Taliban's backyard of Zharay, Arghandab and Maiwand district and have conducted multiple operations in a dangerous part of the world.

CTFS is conducting another major mission involving all of its assets called Operation Dragon Strike. The operation intends to provide security to southern Afghanistan.

"Operation Dragon Strike is

one of many operations designed to secure the majority of the Afghan population in the Zhari and Maiwand districts," said Col. Arthur Kandarian, CTFS commander. As the operation continues, the amount of attacks on Highway One has decreased, said Kandarian.

The operation has each unit attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), clearing Taliban strongholds along Kandahar's busiest route. Highway One was considered Taliban property, but since the operations start on Sept. 16, control has been given back to the populace.

"Since the Operation Dragon Strike began, we have seen an increase on the freedom of movement for the Afghan people on Highway One," said Kandarian.

ian. "We also seen an increase in the amount of elders and leaders come to the district center and we

"This is what we trained for... this is a classic dismounted fight."



Spc. Robert Kruse, a combat medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, looks into the tree line where Taliban is firing small arms from, Sept. 21. The fire fight occurred during an objective for Operation Dragon STRIKE.



Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and Afghanistan National Army's 205th Corps, fight side by side in the districts of Zharay and Maiwand during Operation Dragon Strike, beginning Sept. 16.

have seen able to have the district governor go to more of the villages a places in the district to conduct shuras with the locals.”

North of Highway One is desert terrain with a lower population where the southern part of the highway is a combination of populated villages, deep water canals, large grape fields, mountains chains and Taliban presence. Partnered patrols from the Strike Battalions and the Afghan National Army’s 205th Corps, over 8,000 strong, eliminated and continue to take out key Taliban positions.

“By removing the firing points the Taliban use along Highway One, we remove the Taliban’s ability to limit our movement in the area,” said 1st Lt. Reily McEvoy, a Fort Knox, Kentucky native and a platoon leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, one of the units in the operation. “This is what we trained for and this is a classic dismounted fight.”

With the US and Afghan CTFS units clearing south of Highway One, Taliban presence and influence leaves the area and the two partnered forces grow stronger.

“This is one of the many operations we are going to continue



Combat Engineers attached to the STRIKE Brigade launch an Anti-Personnel Obstacle Breaching-system, down a trail with multiple improvised explosive devices during an objective in the Zharay district, Sept. 21. The objective is part of Operation Dragon STRIKE, where Soldiers of Combined Task Force STRIKE are clearing Taliban from the districts of Zharay and Maiwand.

to do to improve the security for the Afghan population in Zhari and Maiwand,” said Kandarian. “It also increases the skill and capabilities of our Afghan partners, the Afghan Army and the Afghan police.”

As Combined Task Force Strike continue its partnered objectives in Operation Dragon Strike, the security of Zhari and Maiwand increases as do the capabilities of the people of Kandahar.



Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), bound across to a building while team members lay suppressive fire in the Zharay district during Operation Dragon Strike, Sept. 21. The operation has over 8,000 partnered Soldiers clearing Taliban from the districts of Zharay and Maiwand.

What is... HOWZ-E-MADAD



Howz-E-Madad is the Forward Operating Base for Combined Action STRIKE Force. The Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and 1st Kandak, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 205th Corps, Afghan National Army conduct joint operations from the base and provide security to the Zharay district.

The infantry companies of the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), operate in Kandahar's Zhari District, the center district of Combined Task Force Strike's Area of Operation and is one of the key locations for Strike's success. Located in the western part of the district, right off of Afghanistan's famous Highway One, is the base responsible for every "Strike Force" mission.

Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad has been the center of coordination since "Strike Force" began expanding its borders earlier this summer.

"Howz-E-Madad was a combat outpost that we have turned into an actual camp," said Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Napper, 2nd Battalion's FOB mayor. It started off about 90-days ago and was pretty much a large dust bowl. Improvement and growth continued and now the FOB houses 2nd battalion, ANA and more, said Napper.

The US and Afghan partners use the FOB to assess and plan their battlefield together and they do this in the FOB's Joint Defense Operation Center.

"The JDOC is a battle-space put together for us to have one on one contact with our ANA counterparts

where we come to decisions together," said Napper. In this building, 2nd Battalion guides and works with the ANA as they take the lead in the combat zone, said Napper.

Many assets are inside Howz-E-Madad allowing it to fully operate as a FOB. One important asset is the FOB's flight line.

"The FOB Howz-E-Madad flight line is used to transport Soldiers back and forth to the FOBs and COPs of the area and since we are an air assault division, we try to do a lot of helicopter missions," said Napper.

The helicopter landing zone also provides the FOB's medical clinic a faster way to transport the wounded to more equipped facilities.

"We also use the HLZ for ANA and US Soldier Medical evacuations when needed," said Napper. The medics bring the wounded to the flight-line and the medical birds take them to either FOB Wilson or Kandahar Air Field, added Napper.

FOB HEM's medical clinic is another way Strike Force is working "shoulder to shoulder" with its ANA counterparts. Together the US and ANA medics treat Soldiers as well as civilians.

"We provide medical support from coughs and sniffles to battlefield trauma and we also care for local civilians living around the FOB," said Sgt. Samantha Perry, a medic with 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, who is attached to Strike Force. "When a civilian gets hit with shrapnel or crossfire we can treat them here or we can send them to Kandahar Airfield if need be."

As the Strike Force medics keep the Soldiers in the fight, the Strike Force mechanics keep the vehicles mission ready. Patrolling the rugged Afghan terrain on a daily basis puts a lot of stress on their heavy up-armored



A UH-60 Blackhawk lands on the flight line at Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad, Sept. 6. The FOB's flight line is extremely active and is used for transporting personnel, supplies and medical evacuations.



Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center houses 40 computers, 20 telephones, a large screen television connected to the Armed Forces Network, a library of DVD movies and comfortable seating for the Soldiers of the base to use during times of refitting.

vehicles and the FOB's mechanics have Strike Force rolling along.

"Our Soldier mechanics handle an array of maintenance," said Napper. They handle missile repairs, weapon repair and trucks like the Multi-purposed All Terrain Vehicles and the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle, said Napper.

The dining facility, like most of the FOB's structures, was built by Strike Force Soldiers and caters to the entire base.

"Basically everything that is here was done with troop labor and our dining facility was put up by 2nd Battalion Soldiers," said Napper. Six tents make up the facility and its staff feeds about 1800 Soldiers and personnel within a three-hour time frame.

The spiritual and mental fitness of a Soldier is vital to his performance on and off the battlefield and the FOB's chapel not only provides multiple religious services to those on the FOB, but also puts a great emphasis on each Strike Force Soldier's morale.



Spc. David Hallee, a Strike Force mechanic with 526th Brigade Support Battalion, attached to 2nd Battalion, restocks on some hygienic supplies at Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad's chapel, Sept. 5. The chapel offers religious services to the FOB and provides supplies to the Soldiers donated by organizations like Adopt-A-Platoon and the United Service Organization.

"It's not just a chapel for prayer, the chapel is also there for morale," said Napper. "The guys can go in there and get coffee and juice and supplies like toothpaste and toothbrushes and visit with the chaplain to have one on one talks, said Napper.

Located near the HEM Chapel is one of the more advanced Morale Welfare and Recreation center in the Combined Task Force Strike area. With its 40 computer and 20 phones, HEM's MWR center allows Soldiers to connect to friends and family.

"When Soldiers are out on mission for extended lengths of time, it's important for them to have a place to come to where they relax and talk with their loved ones," said Sgt. James Boldizar, Strike Force chaplain assistant and the a major contributor in the setting up of the FOB's MWR. "Whether it's checking their Facebook page, using the phones to call the states or just sitting down and watching a movie on the big screen TV, our Soldiers come here to unwind for a little bit."

FOB Howz-E-Madad houses one of the most historical units in the 101st Airborne Division and what's inside its borders is crucial to the success of the FOB's surrounding areas.

"We are here to really make a change," said Napper. The Soldiers of 2nd Battalion are located where they are for a reason. They have been chosen by command, along with its ANA counterparts, to lead the charge in securing an important part of the Zhary District, said Napper.



The partnered Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment and the 1st Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps, conduct joint patrols and operations in the Zhary district from Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad. The base serves as Combined Action STRIKE Force's main headquarters.

STRIKE Force's *Delta Company*



Company D, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, operate in the Zharay district out of Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad and Combat Outpost Spin Pir. "DOG Company" is the battalion's Heavy Weapons Unit.

Inside the sand walls of Forward Operating Base Howz-E-Madad is a Combined Action Strike Force company who is going beyond the call of its traditional duties.

Normally, a heavy weapons company is an infantry battalion's Delta Company and during deployments are dispersed throughout three other light infantry companies. Its designed so the rifle companies, Alpha, Bravo and Charlie, would be able to take out heavily armored obstacles, like bunkers, machine gun turrets and up-armored vehicles. Today's enemies do not fight with such things. So as the landscape of war changes, so does one heavily armed company.

The Soldiers of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), no



STRIKE Force's "DOG" Company is partnered with the Afghan National Army's 4th Company, 6th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 205th Corps and patrol the Zharay district. The two companies have brought security to the region.

longer attach their platoons to the other companies and since their arrival to the Zharay District this past June, operate just as their brothers do.

"We are a heavy weapons company consisting of four small platoons, but today we operate and run the same mission as the other rifle companies," said Sgt. Taylor Wellendorf, a platoon sergeant in Company D. "We have less personnel, but we still have the same mission in securing the Zharay District."

The four platoons which make up Company D, nicknamed "Dog Company," consist of 20 or so men less per platoon compared to a full light company's platoon, but the lower numbers do not hinder the company's mission intent. Each platoon rotates its duties and responsibilities weekly and each platoon offers much to the Strike Force mission.

"Dog Company's four platoons each have a separate mission and all of them do so much to better this area," said Sgt. 1st Class Erric Allen, acting first sergeant for company D. "Because of these guys, the Strike Force area of operation is making things safer for the people here."

One platoon is responsible for the force protection of Howz-E-Madad; a mission affecting the entire FOB and those operating inside of it. Force protection consists of two major parts, manning of the guard towers and operating the FOB's entry control point.

"The ECP is a very important part of the FOB's force protection because they control the access of the FOB," said Wellendorf. "They report to headquarters of any patrols coming in and out of the FOB as well as any wounded local nationals that come."

The guard towers provide eyes for Howz-E-Madad, overseeing the surrounding areas of the FOB. Delta's arsenal of heavy weapons adds more power to each tower.

"The towers play a key role in the protection of this FOB and our heavy weapons can stop attacks smaller weapons would not be able to take out, like v-bids," said Wellendorf. The heavy weapon element also includes the Improved Target Acquisition System Tube-launched Optically-guided Wired Missile Launcher. The TOW Missile's effectiveness against enemy attacks has been so successful that the Taliban have labeled it, "The Finger of God," said Wellendorf. While the one platoon protects the



Sgt. Taylor Wellendorf, a platoon sergeant in Company D, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment looks toward a Taliban target in the Zharay district while Spc. James Webb, a TOW Missile operator prepares to fire. The two were on guard tower duty, a responsibility of the company.



A STRIKE Force Soldier with Company D mans a guard tower at FOB Howz-E-Madad's Entry Control Point.

FOB, another platoon rolls out and patrols the local areas. The patrols place "Dog Company" in with the local populace as they work to secure the area through recon missions with their Afghan National Army counterparts and the Afghan National Police.

"A platoon goes out on patrol all the time," said Wellendorf. "Up north to the Dashte and to the bazaar south of the FOB; they patrol to the local areas, to include the ANP check-points along Highway One. This is all done with our ANA brothers."

Each platoon is paired with an ANA platoon while conducting their missions in Zharay. The two work closely together and have built a rapport with each other. Recently, the two conducted a joint operation surveying the area along Highway One where they have plans to build ANP Check Points.

"We performed a recon mission trying to set up Afghan National Police Check Points and over watch towers at three different locations and this definitely will help bring the security needed for this highway," said Staff Sgt. Garth Landis, a section leader in Delta.

Currently, there is only one ANP check point in Delta's section of the Highway One and the construction of the newer check points could

prevent the highway from further Taliban attacks.

"A functional ANP check point will be constructed in the area relatively soon and the areas that are now hot spots for enemy activity will be secured," said 1st Lt. Kyle Snook, a platoon leader with the heavy weapons company. "The check points will definitely increase security in an area where vehicles are struck by roadside bombs often because an ANP presence will lower, if not eliminate, the amount of IEDs placed there."

The third of the four platoons



ANA's 4th Company, 6th Kandak, 3rd Brigade 205th Corps train with STRIKE Force's Delta Company on the heavy weapon systems at Combat Outpost Spin Pir.

perform their duties from outside of the Howz-E-Madad borders. This platoon bases its operations with its ANA partners from Combat Outpost Spin Pir, where the joint platoons conduct force protection for the COP and patrol an important part of the Zharay District.

"Spin Pir is a platoon sized COP we recently took control of and we have been building it to make it more functional," said Snook. "It's a key place for Coalition Forces at this point in time because of its location." It's located just north of Sangar, the birthplace of the Taliban and Mullah Omar's hometown, so it's a key holding place and will prove to be key terrain during the

deployment, Snook added.

The fourth platoon of the rotation does what is known as refitting. Refitting platoons use their time to reconnect to home, clean some clothes, rest and train up for their rotation back into the kinetic part of the fight.

FOB Howz-E-Madad's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center has 40 computers and 20 telephones where Soldiers can call home and check our Facebook, said Wellendorf. Refitting gets the mind right and keeps the platoons mentally ready.

Making the transition from a once separated heavy weapons company to the now tightly knit group rolling out together, has the platoons of Company D shining in the "Strike Force" battalion.

"I'm very proud of these men and they are the most versatile fighting force we have in Strike Force; they have done a whole array of missions," said Snook. "From force protection to recons to bazaar missions, COP and FOB security to even establishing a COP, we're pretty much the utility player of the battalion and we can accomplish any mission they ask us to do."



1st Lt. Kyle Snook, a platoon leader with Delta, shakes the hand of a village elder in the Zharay district. Delta and its ANA partners conduct Key Leader Engagements to ensure the security of the villagers.

The Faces of STRIKE!





Honoring Our Fallen



SGT Patrick Durham, 24, of Chattanooga, Tenn, died Aug. 28 in Babur, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment.



SPC Andrew Castro, 20, of Westlake Village, Calif., died Aug. 28 in Babur, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Company B, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion.



SSG Jesse Infante, 30, of Cypress, Texas, died Aug. 30 in the Arghandab River Valley, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Company F, 4th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment.



PFC Chad Clements, 26, of Huntington, Ind., died Aug. 30 in the Arghandab River Valley, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Company F, 4th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment.



SSG Kevin Kessler, 32, of Canton, Ohio, died Aug. 30 in the Arghandab River Valley, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Company F, 4th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment.



CPT Dale Goetz, 43, of White, S.D., died Aug. 30 in the Arghandab River Valley, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment.



SSG Matthew West, 36, of Conover, Wis. died Aug. 30 in the Arghandab River Valley, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked their unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 71st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group.



1LT Todd Weaver 26, of Hampton, Va., died Sept. 9 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment.



SGT Aaron Kramer, 22, of Salt Lake City, Utah, died Sept. 16 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with small arms fire. He was assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment.



SPC Timothy Johnson, 24, of Randolph, N.Y., died Sept. 16 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, died of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment.



CPL Deangelo Snow, 22, of Saginaw, Mich., died Sept. 17 in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his vehicle with a rocket propelled grenade. He was assigned to Company D, 526th Brigade Support Battalion attached to 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment.



SSG Jaime Newman, 27, of Richmond, Va., died Sept. 17 in the Zhari district, Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the Co. B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment.



1LT Eric Yates, 26, of Rineyville, Ky., died Sept. 18 in the Zhari district, Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the Co. B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment.



SGT Justin Officer, 27, of Wichita, Ks., died Sept. 29 in the Zhari district, Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment.





STRIKE ZONE AFGHANISTAN



STRIKE Zone Afghanistan is the brigade's Tv show dedicated to keeping its viewers up to date with unit's events and missions during its deployment to Kandahar Afghanistan.

Learn about each company, battery and troop and be a part of their high-speed missions by checking out the STRIKE Zone Afghanistan. Look for it on the Brigade Facebook Page.

STRIKE HONORS



*A weekly look
at STRIKE's History*

The Brigade Facebook Page

The STRIKE Brigade is in the social networking world with the Brigade Facebook Page. On it are images and videos of the great missions and actions involving the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. Join to start conversations and leave comments about everything the Team is doing. Watch the Brigade's Tv show, the 'Strike Zone' with monthly updates of our time in Afghanistan, read about the illustrious history of 2nd Brigade in the weekly edition of 'Strike Honors'. The page is an awesome way to stay close your Soldiers, even while they are far away.

To be a part of the STRIKE Brigade via the internet; log onto your Facebook page, click in the search box and type 2nd Brigade Strike. When the 502nd  comes up click on it and then click 'like'. Join the already thousands of viewers keeping up with the STRIKE Brigade!



Facebook registration fields: First Name, Last Name, Email, Password, Confirm Password, I am: Select Sex, Birthday: Month, Day, Year.