

# W A T C H

FREEDOM  
AFGHANISTAN



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outing insurgents in  
Laghman



NOVEMBER 2011

# W THIS MONTH'S WATCH



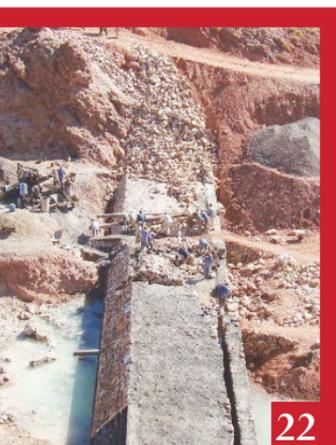
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## FREEDOM WATCH

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(Cover photo) Private Naghib Allah, 1st Kandak, 1st Brigade, 201st Corps, Afghan National Army, provides security during a mission held in Laghman Province, Afghanistan. Naghib is a member of the his commander's security detail. (Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Lindy White, Task Force Thunderbird Public Affairs)

# Operation Tofan II disrupts enemy in Suri Kheyl

Story By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. John Zumer  
Task Force Duke Public Affairs

“It’s probably the most dangerous mission all year,” said U.S. Army Capt. Michael Hefti, speaking to his Soldiers before they headed off to the remote Suri Kheyl area of Waze Zadran District, Paktya Province Sept. 15. Operation Tofan II would prove to be an illuminating one in many ways.

Hefti, commander of Blackfoot Troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and a native of Bangor, Wis., knew the mission would be a challenging one, largely because of what the area promised to reveal.

“It’s a popular transit line for the insurgents,” Hefti said.

The operation’s goal was to establish contact with the insurgents, disrupt their logistics and reduce any materiel or moral support from the local population. Movement to the extremely remote area, which featured narrow or non-existent roads set among mountains, included mounted and dismounted Soldiers who also had to be aware of the need to control the key terrain features around Suri Kheyl.

“We know this area is where the enemy enjoys freedom of movement, largely because of the terrain,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mark Borowski, commander of 6th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt.,

border with Pakistan.

“It shows that [Afghan National Security Forces] can go wherever they want,” said Hefti, adding that few Afghan or coalition forces have visited the area over the years.

The operation included several additional objectives, with the most important possibly being to convince villagers to work alongside coalition and ANSF in ridding the area of insurgent activity.

Enemy resistance and activity was less than expected during the majority of the operation.

“It was quieter and the enemy made it very clear they wouldn’t confront our air assets,” said Hefti.

Regardless, important progress was made on several fronts. Small caches of weapons, ammunition and components for improvised explosive devices were confiscated from several locations, removing all from future use on the battlefield. The most beneficial result of all may have been the levels of support and cooperation shown between coalition and Afghan forces.

“The [Afghan National Army] were amazing,” said Hefti, specifically citing the battlefield leadership of Maj. Shapoor of the ANA’s 6th Coy, 1st Kandak. Shapoor took the lead among his men, Hefti said, in professionally conducting searches, interviewing villagers and maintaining accountability of Afghan personnel and materiel.



U.S. Army Soldiers from Blackfoot Troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, pull security near a house while it is being searched during Operation Tofan II. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Joseph Watson, Task Force Duke Public Affairs)

and a native of South Hadley, Mass.

“We wanted to disrupt enemy safe havens and elicit a reaction that we could base future operations on,” he added.

This operation attempted to influence the battlefield by targeting insurgent weapons caches, securing key routes, eliminating insurgents from populated areas and removing their local hideouts.

According to Hefti, the operation was a landmark one not just for what it hoped to accomplish, but where. The Suri Kheyl area has long been thought to be fertile ground for the Haqqani network, a criminal organization with links to the Taliban and al-Qaida, and believed to be based across the nearby Afghan

Exiting the Suri Kheyl area when the mission concluded might have been the most dangerous part of the mission. Isolated skirmishes with the enemy were settled quickly through strong air cover supplemented by artillery support provided by TF Duke’s 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment. Having such powerful assets available left Hefti quite pleased.

“Those guys are the greatest. It gives you a sense of peace and has a very powerful psychological effect on both enemy forces and our own,” said Hefti.

For Borowski, the operation helped to confirm a lot of suspicions that coalition and ANA leadership had about the area.

“We think it will be very helpful for the future,” he said. 🙏

# Task Force Bronco stays vigilant above Wanat

Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Luke Graziani  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The soldiers disembarked the helicopter in a blur of camouflage. Perimeter security appeared out of the darkness around the landing zone. In a flash, Observation Point Shogun became a strongpoint at which the soldiers made their home for the duration of Operation Fire Rock, the most recent combat mission for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco.

As their name implies, Tropic Lightning bolted into action Sept. 20, high above the village of Wanat in the Waygal district of Kunar province to create a position of overwatch and security for Afghan commandos and U.S. forces who were scheduled to sweep the village for Taliban insurgents that evening.

The soldiers of 1st Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 25th ID, immediately began to force their way into the rocky soil to create fighting positions they used to protect themselves from enemy fire.

“My first thoughts were to spread security out in a way that we could have the helicopter landing zone secured,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Emmanuel Batara, platoon leader of 1st platoon, B Company. “As soon as you get off the bird is one of the most dangerous times.”

Sandbags were filled and stacked neatly in rows, rocks found close by were made part of the improvised walls and the brisk mountain air kept the soldiers cool as they worked diligently to fortify their fighting positions.

The positions completed, the Soldiers were weary and yet the mission had only just begun.

“Our specific mission was to infiltrate into Observation Point Shogun and create a support by fire for the Afghan commandos and special operations task force to allow them to clear the city of Wanat directly to our west,” said Batara. “I took everything one step at a time, taking ownership of what I could control which was security to the north and security to the east.”

The area in which Operation Fire Rock took place has a history of violence and the troops were prepared for anything.

“I thought we were going to have a lot of contact,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Shawn Burke, a native of Guilford, Maine, and a forward observer assigned to B Company, 2-35th Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 25th ID. “I knew some of the ins and outs of the mission. I didn’t really want to expect anything - just be prepared for the unexpected and always be ready for anything.”

The first few hours of the night were quiet as the soldiers settled into their positions while the Afghan commandos and coalition special forces soldiers made their way to objectives in the valley below.

“It looked like the Afghan commandos were all in the front,” said U.S. Army Spc. Mitchell Napier, a native of Augusta, Ga, and assigned to B Company, 2-35th Inf. Regt., 25th ID, 3rd BCT. “I watched the first group of commandos go in and they hit the first set of qualot systems that were about 200 meters from my overwatch position.”

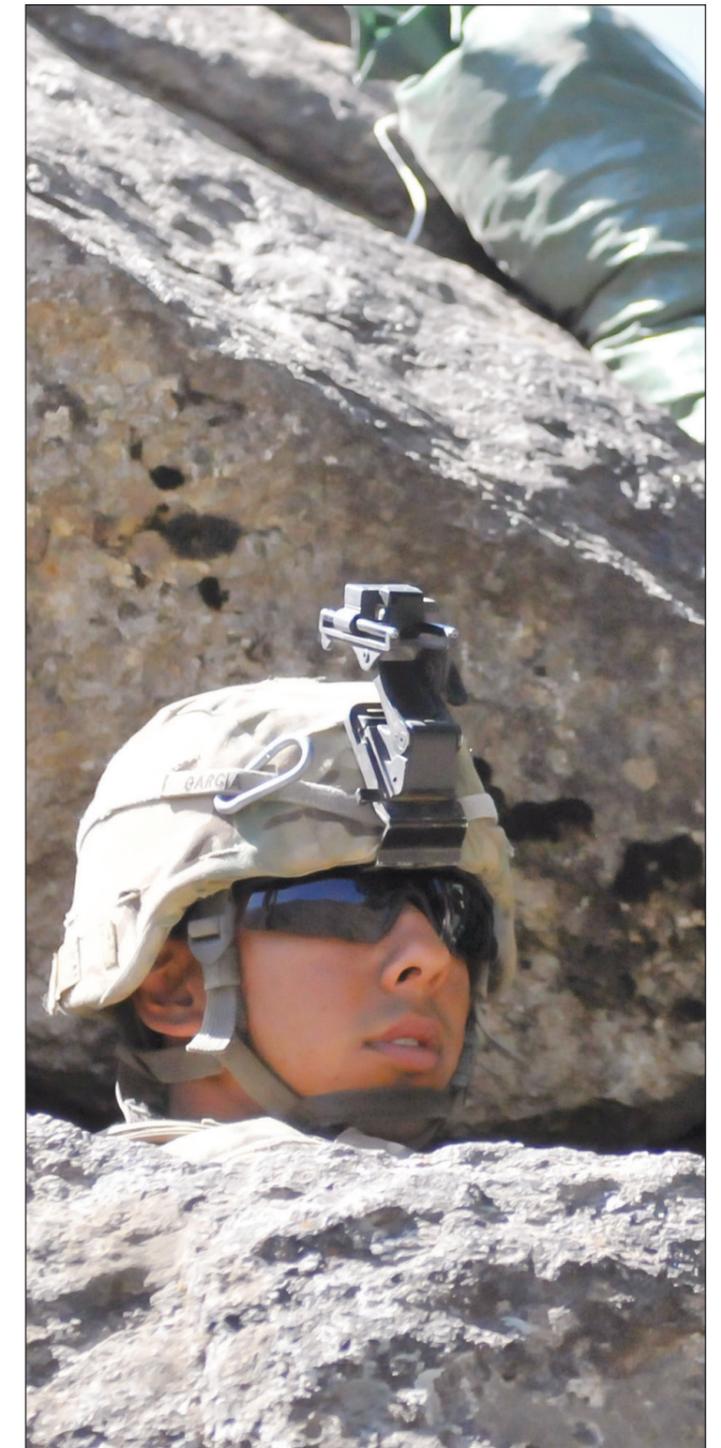
While the operation was underway, Apache Hellfire missile explosions and the rapid percussion of rifle bursts echoed loudly from the valley floor.

As abruptly as it began, the cacophony below became silent except for the intermittent shots from a distant sniper rifle.

“I think the key to their success was speed,” said Napier. “They cleared through Wanat before the sun came up.”

Coalition forces counted zero casualties when the dust settled, and Taliban militants were neutralized or pushed out.

“There was a lot of good that came out of this,” said Burke. “We can hand this [area] back to the Afghan people so these guys can do well for themselves and they can protect their own borders against insurgency.” 🙏



A Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco soldier vigilantly watches his sector of fire Sept. 21 at the perimeter of Observation Point Shogun above the Wanat Valley in Kunar province.

# ANA COMMITTED TO OUTING INSURGENTS IN LAGHMAN



U.S. Army Spc. Joseph Ferguson of Company C, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Okla. National Guard, along with soldiers from the 1st Kandak, 1st Brigade, 201st Corps, Afghan National Army, search villages of Chanak Valle Sept. 16. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Leslie Goble, Task Force Thunderbird Public Affairs)

Sory by U.S. Army Spc. Leslie Goble  
Task Force Thunderbird Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 201st Corps, Afghan National Army along with Soldiers of the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Okla. National Guard, improved security and disrupted insurgent networks in western Laghman Province by performing a week-long operation in several valleys around Ali shing district beginning Sept. 16.

The partnered operation to disrupt insurgent activity resulted in the finding of five caches, the capture of three suspected insurgents as well as killing 10 insurgents and wounding several more in the process.

During clearing operations in the villages, soldiers found caches of mortar rounds and rocket fuses as well as detaining two Afghans believed to be members of the Taliban posing as Afghan Uniformed Police.

“One man came up with an AK-47 and old pineapple grenades as we were in the village,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Paul Stokesberry, a squad leader in Company D, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, 45th IBCT. “It’s unusual to see a civilian carrying so much ammo and grenades.”

Upon further questioning of the suspect he presented a AUP certificate that he said was from a graduating school. The ANA soldiers quickly identified the certificate as false and detained the suspect.

“Our Afghan counterparts were motivated and wanted to do the right thing,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Zook, a platoon sergeant in Company D, 1st Bn., 179th Inf., 45th IBCT. “They showed that by immediately saying the certificate was no

good.”

One of the caches found was during a search of a house. ANA soldiers found five mortar rounds and 12 rocket fuses. The owner of the house was detained as well.

“The ANA were very decisive in a terrain that could have very well been riddled with insurgents,” said 1st Lt. Courtland Lane a platoon leader in Company C, 1st Bn., 179th Inf., 45th IBCT



Maj. Hayatullah Adel, commander of the 1st Kandak, 1st Brigade, 201st Corps, Afghan National Army, discusses the mission with Lt. Col. Matthew Harsha, commander of 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and Lt. Col. Robert Walter, 45th IBCT operations officer and an interpreter. (Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Lindy White, Task Force Thunderbird Public Affairs)

who worked closely with his Afghan counterparts during the mission. “If I had to work with this group of soldiers I definitely would again.”

Soldiers also stopped in each village to speak with village elders on topics regarding security of the area and potential development projects.

“The safer these roads are for the U.S. [forces] and the villagers, the more we can get into the valley to help you,” said U.S. Army Master Sgt. Dwight Mayo, 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 179th Infantry during their tour in Afghanistan.

“The people in the villages understood why we were there,”

said Mayo. “They also talked about the hooded men that come in at night.”

“The people who come out at night are our enemy as well,” said Raz Mazan, a teacher and one of the village elders. “They are not from around here.”

The ANA led the way to all the villages as well as searching the houses and received cooperation from the elders of the village as they conducted the searches.

“Soldiers of the ANA did very well and had great leadership who lead their soldiers very well,” said Lane. “They helped us clear the villages with no problem.”



Afghan National Army Master Sgt. Afsos of the 1st Kandak, 201st Corps, along with members of the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, speak with village elders in the Chanak Valley during clearing operations Sept. 16. The partnered operation, involving the 45th IBCT and the 1st Kandak, found no significant weapons in Chanak Valley, but fostered a relationship with the villagers who haven’t had outside contact for nearly two years. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Leslie Goble, Task Force Thunderbird Public Affairs)

# Blackhawk Soldiers conduct presence patrol in remote village in Paktika Province

Story and photos by U.S. Army Spc. Ken Scar  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

To the U.S. Soldier, northeastern Afghanistan is unforgiving on many levels - extreme weather, isolation and tribes afraid of outsiders but the true suffering begins and ends with the rugged terrain. It is a country of severe alpine landscapes that seem to go on forever in merciless, jagged waves of cliff faces, boulder fields and stony hillsides - and yet, somehow, life took root here eons ago and never gave up its hold.

A tiny village is carved into the spring-fed nooks and crannies of this harshest of environments. The small village of Derka, near Combat Outpost Zerok, in Paktika province, is a rustic community of earthen homes seemingly fastened to the hillsides on either side of a valley that is green with crops, fields of grass and tall, shady trees.

Like the vast majority of Afghanistan's tiny communities, Derka is extremely difficult to get to, but a company of Soldiers from Task Force 2-28, 172nd Infantry Brigade, along with their partners in the local Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan National Army, performed a combat patrol through the village Sept. 19.

The mission was to clear the village and disrupt possible insurgent activity in the area, but also to make contact and convince the small, secluded populace that the government of Afghanistan exists to help them just as much as the large population centers.

"We have reports that the most active Haqqani element in Paktika could be using Derka as a safe haven," said Capt. Craig Halstead of Sioux Falls, S.D., commander of Company B, TF 2-28. "So going in there could be like taking a baseball bat to a beehive."

The dangerous and well-funded Haqqani network, which has close ties to the Taliban, has been invading small villages like Derka for years to use as staging grounds for attacks on coalition forces.

Unfortunately for the soldiers stationed at COP Zerok, the vast majority of roads in their area of operation are impassable even to the U.S. military's high-tech armored vehicles.

"We don't drive here," said Halstead. "If we need to get somewhere outside the wire, we walk."

So in the cool darkness of night, they walked, and walked, and walked some



A member of Company B, Task Force 2-28, 172nd Infantry Brigade, braces against the prop wash from a UH-60 Black Hawk while securing the landing zone in a stream bed by the small village of Derka near Combat Outpost Zerok Sept. 20.

more, avoiding roads altogether to maximize stealth and security. For seven hours the element trudged methodically through jumbled, backbreaking stream beds, crossing the running water dozens of times until every boot was soaked through and every foot was freezing.

Finally, they slipped into the mouth of the small valley that cradles Derka and waited.

At dawn the villagers woke to find their little pool of life full of strangers.

The ANA and AUP worked fast, sweeping through the buildings and rounding up suspicious individuals before they could rub the sleep from their eyes.

Despite the unavoidable irritation of the intrusion, care was taken to treat each villager as respectfully as possible.

"Whether or not this first mission to Derka is going to have hugs and kisses all around, we can still have a positive impact on them so that they want us to come back," said Halstead.

The home of a wealthy merchant that overlooked the valley was chosen to be the center of operations for the day. The U.S. and Afghan forces set up shop in a courtyard, sharing the space with chickens, goats, a camel and several unfriendly dogs.

Throughout the morning, the intelligence teams collected information as

other soldiers pulled security. The hillside gave them good vantage of the village and its shy inhabitants.

Children often hide from strangers in these places, but occasionally a few of the braver boys would come out of the woodwork to peer at the goings on of the day or even approach and speak to the ANA or AUP soldiers. The boys did not approach the U.S. soldiers, as these strangers to them were apparently too intimidating to reach out to. According to what the village elders were saying in the courtyard, Derka had never been visited by U.S. ground forces.

Little girls are even rarer to spot, but a few did show themselves - running around in their pretty dresses to feed the camels, fetch water or do other chores. The bravest ventured out just to look at all the action, but would dart back into their hiding places when the Soldiers would smile or a wave at them from afar.

Around mid-day, Brig. Gen. Gary Volesky, 1st Cavalry Division Deputy Commanding General for Maneuver, who had been monitoring the operation, decided to visit and put his own boots on the ground.

Volesky emerged from the settling billows and was greeted warmly by Armanshah, Naka District AUP chief of police. The two strolled up the hillside together

and Volesky asked about the enemy activity in the area.

"They are sneaky," said Armanshah. "They come back and forth across the border and use villages like this one to hide in - but we are good at finding them."

"Do you need anything?" Volesky asked the police chief.

"Only that you and I be blessed with long, happy lives," smiled Armanshah.

When asked how the Afghan government can help them, the village elders' requests were equally simple.

"They asked for things like rice, flour and cooking oil for their poor," said Sgt. David Vasquez from Killeen, Texas, 504th Military Intelligence Company, 172nd Inf. Bde., who sat and talked with many of the village elders for several hours through an interpreter Mir Hadelli. "After the initial shock, I think they were happy we came."

"They claim they've never seen any insurgents around here but many of them have relatives who are involved with either Haqqani or the Taliban," said Hadelli. "Only time will tell if they told us the

truth."

"God willing, we can keep [the insurgents] out of this district," said Armanshah. "I don't know if we'll find any of them [in Derka] next time. If we do, my guys will get rid of them, but the villagers need to help us. They need to stand up and tell [the insurgents] that they are not welcome here."

Insurgent organizations like Haqqani and the Taliban are the ones who bring the war to the small villages, said Armanshah. The people of Derka and their unexpected visitors were all working toward the same goal, he added, which is, ultimately, peace across Afghanistan for all of its citizens.

By the end of the day, a good portion of the villagers had gone from being openly hostile to having a better understanding of that common purpose.

When the mission ended, the people of Derka were left with prayer rugs, winter jackets for their children and the hope that Afghanistan can finally be peaceful with Derka resting tranquilly, another jewel in the crown. ☺



Members of Company B, Task Force 2-28, 172nd Infantry Brigade, ruck down a stream bed below the town of Derka near Combat Outpost Zerok Sept. 20. They navigated seven miles of rough terrain at night to reach the town.



Members of the Afghan Uniformed Police, including Armanshah, the Naka District Police Chief (standing with cap, upper right), point out an enemy combatant they have spotted on a ridge line about 500 meters away to Brig. Gen. Gary Volesky (center, taking a knee), 1st Cavalry Division Deputy Commanding General for Maneuver, and members of Company B, Task Force 2-28, 172nd Infantry Brigade Sept. 20. Company B was in the middle of a joint mission with the AUP and the Afghan National Army to clear the village and disrupt insurgent activity in the area. The insurgent was neutralized by a U.S. Army sniper.

# Task Force Bronco heads back to Wanat

Story and photos by Pfc. Zackary Root  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Three years ago, Combat Outpost Kahler and Observation Post Topside, located near Wanat, a small village that straddles the border between Nuristan and Kunar provinces, was the target of a Taliban attack that left nine U.S. Soldiers dead, 27 others wounded and Wanat void of any coalition force presence - until now.

Soldiers from Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and the Afghan National Army conducted missions in and around Wanat Village Sept. 20-22.

"We went into the enemy's backyard easily and we were able to operate there freely," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Colin Tuley, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, whose soldiers took part in the ANA-led mission.

Conducted as part of a border-wide effort to disrupt movement of insurgents

throughout the area, the mission in and around Wanat was a response to insurgent activity reported in the area and carried a clear message about Afghan National Security Forces and coalition capabilities.

"The Taliban and the enemy networks understand there is no place to create a safe haven," said Tuley. "The ANSF and coalition [forces] can reach out and touch them anywhere."

According to U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Gary Volesky, Combined Joint Task Force-1 and Regional Command-East Deputy Commanding General for Maneuver, sending this message was important in dispelling the myth that some areas of the country were off-limits to Afghan and coalition forces.

"A lot of people were worried that Nuristan and northern Kunar [provinces] was an area where the enemy had free movement," said Volesky.

Volesky and Tuley both say this isn't the case, highlighting this mission as further evidence that ANSF can increasingly lead

security efforts wherever they need to.

"The real significance was bringing our Afghan counterparts," said Volesky. "They led the clearance and proved their security forces can go anywhere as well."

On this particular mission, Afghans took the lead in searching houses and looking for signs of insurgent support in the village. The Soldiers of TF Bronco played a supporting role, settling down in a fire-support position on a hillside providing overwatch for their Afghan partners in the village.

To clear up any confusion about the intent of their presence, ANA and coalition forces handed cards to villagers with the printed words, "We are back," a message that leaves little doubt according to those who carry it like U.S. Army Pfc. Deken Marmen, a rifleman assigned to 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Reg.

"We are still willing to push forward and continue the mission to help the Afghan people and let the Taliban know we are not afraid of them," said Marmen. ☺



A U.S. soldier with Task Force Bronco, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, looks through his sight at the village of Wanat Sept 22.



M119 Howitzer crewmembers from the U.S. Army's 1st Platoon, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, fire a high explosive round from Combat Outpost Wilderness, Waze Zadran District Sep. 16. Artillery support of coalition ground troops provides immense and immediate firepower when needed to combat insurgent attacks or reduce enemy capabilities.

## TF Duke brings the heat with big guns

Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. John Zumer  
Task Force Duke Public Affairs

Firing an artillery piece may at first look no more complex than aiming, placing the desired shell and charge in the breech and firing. Talk to U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Stephen Dunn, however, and it's quickly apparent that necessary accuracy and safety make the process far more complicated than meets the eye.

Dunn, a fire directional control sergeant with 1st Platoon, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke and a native of Troy, Pa., is entrusted with ensuring that shells fired by his platoon's M119 Howitzers from Combat Outpost Wilderness go where they need to, when they need to.

For Dunn and other Soldiers of his battery, the importance of artillery, long known as the "King of Battle" for its ability to quickly influence combat outcomes, can't be overstated. Its objective, as far as he's concerned, can be summed up quickly and succinctly.

"The goal of the field artillery is accurate first-round fire for effect," said Dunn. His Soldiers have fired more than 1,200

rounds at the enemy since arriving in eastern Afghanistan nine months ago. High explosive, smoke and illumination rounds have been the three shells most commonly used.

Three large factors always enter the equation before any firing. A collateral damage estimate is made to gauge the risk, if any, to friendly troops or civilians.

Second, topography is taken into consideration as mountain ranges or drops in elevation may result in a target distance being greater or less than straight-line distance. Finally, air clearance must be obtained to prevent rounds from not only being deflected from targets, but potentially causing harm to friendly aircraft. Tension rises when lives of fellow Soldiers come into play, according to Dunn.

"When troops are in contact, it's more stressful because of the need to be even more accurate with our fire," he added.

Sending a round downrange, however, is far more than just a one-man job. A coordinated effort between forward observers, Dunn's fire control team, battlefield commanders and the gun pit, featuring the M119s, is the defined chain of command necessary to ensure success. Needed discussion within the precious minutes available before firing may occur,

but it's a process understood by everyone down to the most junior member.

The process is so well understood that, according to U.S. Army Spc. Anthony McLeod, a fire directional control specialist with 1st Platoon, Alpha Battery and a native of Westminster, Md., everyone from fire control personnel down to the howitzers could fill in for each other in a pinch.

Dunn agrees.

"All my personnel are cross-trained," he said.

Missions are usually broken down into two main types: Counter-fire or troops-in-contact.

They're distinguished such in that a counter-fire mission is a response to enemy fire originating from some distance away, while a troops-in-contact mission requires artillery fire to decide the issue quickly and decisively.

Whatever the nature of the mission is, however, real success comes down to much more than a pat on the back or publicity for a job well done. Helping those on the ground who need it most is the most important thing and always will be, said McLeod.

"A successful fire gives me the satisfaction of doing my part on the mission." ☺

# Operation Steel Rain disrupts Haqqani network in Khowst Province

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Tobey White  
Task Force Duke Public Affairs

Afghan and U.S. troops worked together in Operation Steel Rain to disrupt Haqqani network cells operating in the Tirzaye District of Khowst Province Sept. 29.

The Haqqani network is a criminal organization with links to the Taliban and al-Qaida and believed to be based across the nearby Afghan-Pakistan border.

Units involved in the operation included the Sabari District-based 3rd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps, Afghan National Army; 3rd Koy, 2nd Afghan Border Police Corps from Tirzaye and companies from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke.

During the mission, joint forces had to cover a vast area in a short amount of time, said U.S. Army Capt. Daniel Leard,

materials involved in the making of improvised explosive devices and illegal weapons, said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Oscar Lorenziano, platoon sergeant for 2nd Platoon, Co. A, 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Regt.

"We went out and let the bad guys know we were here," the Los Angeles native said. "A lot of people were very inviting and told us to come back."

In addition to finding any munitions in the area, another aspect of the mission was to deny insurgents the use of border routes into Afghanistan and to clear cache sites, said Leard.

"There's a great deal of cross-border activity out in Tirzaye," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jesse Pearson, commander of 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Regt., and a Chicago native. "A lot of people come across the border, not just insurgents."

In order to reduce the risk of civilian casualties, Pearson emphasized the importance of working closely with the local pop-

forces led several shuras, or community meetings, designed to meet the villagers and let them know their government was there for them and wanted to help.

In addition to the ANSF-led shuras, the Tirzaye District sub-governor, Amir Badshah, led shuras for the people of Landar and Kadam villages, providing him the opportunity to hear their concerns and issues.

It was a unique opportunity to connect the government to the people to foster a better working relationship, Pearson said.

The relationship between the people and the government wasn't the only one that saw progress, however.

One benefit of Operation Steel Rain was Afghan forces being incorporated into the fight and being allowed to take the lead, Lorenziano said. ANSF forces were eager to take charge during the clearance and searching of homes, with U.S. forces acting as security and giving guidance when necessary.

"The mission gave them confidence in their abilities and the Afghan people got to see that ANSF was in charge," Lorenziano said.

"We saw an outstanding performance by the ANA and ABP," Leard said. "They really did most of the work."

U.S. Army Pfc. Wade James, a rifleman for 2nd Plt., Co. A and a native of Hampstead, N.C., said he noticed a marked change in the current abilities of the ANSF, compared to 10 months ago.

When his company first started partnering with the Afghan soldiers, James said the ANA soldiers weren't very thorough when it came to clearing a house. During Steel Rain, however, the ANSF soldiers demonstrated a capability and thoroughness that showed significant improvement.

"They did very well," James said. "I was just there to point out things to be cautious of."

Based upon the cooperation between Afghan and coalition forces that he saw during the operation, Pearson was pleased with the huge strides made in recent months. With the paramount goal of a more stable Afghan government, and one more connected to the needs of its people, the operation provided an important lesson for the future.

"Our close partnership with the ANSF reinforced that...we are standing shoulder-to-shoulder with them, fighting the enemy, reinforcing them and giving them the assets and resources they need to be successful," Pearson said. 🇺🇸



Afghan Border Patrol soldiers search a villager trying to cross a checkpoint during Operation Steel Rain in Tirzaye District, Khowst Province, Afghanistan Sept. 24. The mission was a joint effort between U.S. and Afghan forces and focused on eliminating insurgents from villages, materials involved in the making of improvised explosive devices and illegal weapons. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Joseph Watson, Task Force Duke Public Affairs)

comcommander of Company A, 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Regt., and a Pittsburgh native. The cooperation between the three different forces - U.S., ANA and ABP - allowed the joint force to synchronize their efforts to make the most effective use of their time.

"Any given day, between two companies, four to eight objectives had to be cleared," Leard explained.

The operation involved several moving parts as coalition forces moved through the area to eliminate insurgents from villages,

ulation.

"It's important for us to get out there and spend time with the local village leaders and elders and make sure we understand the dynamics inside the villages and find out where the insurgents are finding refuge in the area," Pearson added.

Because of the remote and mountainous terrain, several of the villages visited had not seen a U.S. or Afghan National Security Forces presence in quite some time, Lorenziano said. To ease the introduction of the military to the local population, ANSF



U.S. Army Sgt. Tyler Brummond, a squad leader with the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and a native of Bremerton, Wash., pulls security near a village in Tirzaye District, Khowst Province, Afghanistan Sept. 24. The mission was a joint effort between Afghan and U.S. forces and focused on eliminating insurgents from villages, materials involved in the making of improvised explosive devices and illegal weapons. (U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. James Hodges, Task Force Duke)

# Avoid Negligent Discharges

## T.H.I.N.K.

**T**reat every weapon as if it's loaded.

**H**andle every weapon with care.

**I**dentify the target before you fire.

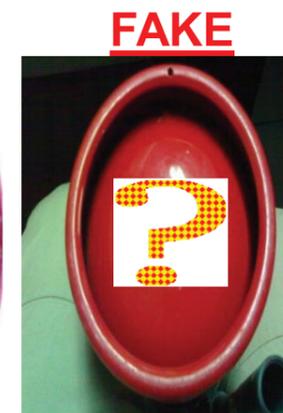
**N**ever point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.

**K**ep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

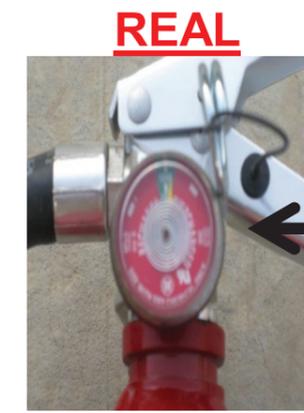


### CJTF-1 SAFETY GRAM REAL vs. FAKE Buckeyes Fire Extinguishers

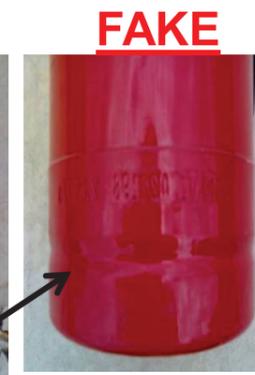
There have been several fake buckeye fire extinguishers found at Bagram. Most found are in groups with identical serial numbers. If you run across a "FAKE" fire extinguisher please contact your local fire department immediately to exchange for a REAL one. The Fake fire extinguishers are filled using air which will actually help accelerate the fire.



All Buckeyes have the born on date stamped into the bottom of the cylinder



Notice the Gauge. Red background Only



WELD



RIM

#### Other Indicators:

- The bottom rim is always strait down, there are no curves
- One cylinder without any welds showing on the outside
- Remember Silver Handles made out of Aluminum are indicators of True Buckeyes
- There is a Different serial # for each fire extinguisher

# Ghost Soldiers excel during deployment, RC-East's NCO, Soldier of the Year competition

Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Matt Meadows  
Task Force Patriot Public Affairs

In August, U.S. Army Spc. David Peter, an infantryman from Prairie City, Iowa assigned to Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, earned honors as Regional Command-East Soldier of the Year. U.S. Army Sgt. Nathan Spencer, a DeWitt, Ill. native and mortar team non-commissioned officer from the same "Ghost Troop" unit, came in second place for RC-East NCO of the Year.

Spencer mentored Peter, who was a private first class at the time of the competition, as they studied for the board. However, there was a lot more to competing for RC-East's NCO and Soldier of the Year than just sitting in front of a board and answering questions.

Peter said the competition took place within a 24-hour period - from about 7:30 p.m. Aug. 20 to about 4:30 p.m. Aug. 21.



U.S. Army Sgt. Nathan Spencer, a mortar team non-commissioned officer from DeWitt, Ill. assigned to Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, communicates using a radio while awaiting a helicopter landing during Operation Dagger Avalanche IV in Shulak of Wardak province, Sept. 15. Spencer earned second place during Regional Command East's Non-commissioned Officer of the Year competition at Bagram Airfield Aug. 20-21.

Events included a Combat Readiness Test; tactical lanes including land navigation, medical, improvised explosive device and detainee-operations events; a stress shoot, a foot march and, finally, a board appearance.

"You do it [CRT] in full battle rattle - 400-meter sprint, hurdles, obstacles, tire flips, casualty drag, [various movement drills], shuttle run and agility run," said Peter. "Honestly, I was pretty nervous about it [the board competition]. I pulled it through and did pretty good I guess."

Spencer said the competition is set up to keep candidates off balance. Vying for division-level NCO and Soldier of the Year makes for a mixture of physical and mental challenges.

"They deprive you of sleep the whole night. They pretty much take your schedule and you flip flop it. You are used to being up in the day and now you have to stay up all night," said Spencer. "You start off with everything physically stressful and then go to something mentally [challenging] then go back to physically [demanding activities]. And then, you end it off with a board. So I would say, coming into the board, [you have] little sleep ... your body is physically exhausted and you have to try to remember everything mentally."

Peter and Spencer said the nature of their missions and their operations helped them succeed in the competition.

Ghost Troop is the only maneuver unit inherent to Task Force Patriot that is not a battle-space owner, which enables the troop to conduct various types of missions all across the brigade's footprint, they said.

"The first month or two, we did indirect fire denial for this immediate area [Forward Operating Base Shank]," said Peter. "Then, after that, we started pulling Focused Targeting Force missions ... so we pulled strike and slash missions [personality-based and cache-based search missions, respectively]."

"Our battle space is the whole brigade [area of operations], pretty much," emphasized Spencer. "We've conducted air assault operations throughout all of Logar and Wardak. Every single unit's AO we have operated in - all the way through Jaghato to Kherwar."

Spencer said negotiating tactical lanes during the RC-East competition is the area of events during which his and Peter's Ghost Troop mission experience paid the most dividends.

"[We have done] everything from map reading with the overlays... [to] when you go into MEDEVAC for casualties," said Spencer. "We work with counter-IED, so we have also been able to go over IED threats. How to handle IED threats, what the process is we need to do and how to handle an IED timeline."

"And then ... detainee operations goes right into our [Focused Targeting Force]," continued Spencer. "That is our bread and butter; that is what we have been doing the whole time, so the way we have been trained this whole deployment directly went into pretty much this whole competition."

Spencer said that every Ghost Troop Soldier knows how to perform all of the tasks he and Peter conducted during the tactical lanes. He thinks that is a very important point.

"So, I carry that on to the next unit to make sure ... [every] Soldier, no matter what their level is, make sure they know every part of the mission ... not only know their level but know a level above," said Spencer.

Spencer said it was great to get together and work with all the other outstanding NCOs and Soldiers during the competition. It is a nice feeling to realize the Army trains all its Soldiers to operate in the same manner, he said.



U.S. Army Spc. David Peter, a Soldier from Prairie City, Iowa assigned to Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, provides security for his fellow "Ghost Troop," Task Force Dagger Soldiers as they clear qalats in Shulak of Wardak Province Sept. 15. Peter earned honors as Regional Command East's Soldier of the Year as a private first class during a competition at Bagram Airfield, Aug. 20-21.

"Now, they are not from the same unit, they are not from the same task force, but they do things the same way," said Spencer, whose next assignment will be with the 101st Airborne Division. "The lanes, everything, showed that about our Soldiers. So, it was really nice to see that, especially for me now that I am leaving from this unit."

U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Joseph Gaskin of Chicago is Ghost Troop's first sergeant. Gaskin had very specific reasons for selecting Peter and Spencer to participate in the RC-East competition.

"Sergeant Spencer was chosen because he is in the top three NCOs within my Troop. I could have picked any of the three and achieved the same results," explained Gaskin. "I knew that he would represent Ghost Troop and the brigade well and give 110 percent."

"Sergeant Spencer is the hardest working NCO that I have within the troop and he always goes the extra mile to achieve success," Gaskin continued. "He is the future of the NCO corps and I would feel absolutely comfortable having him lead my child into combat!"

Gaskin said he chose Peter due to his hunger for success. When Ghost Troop has been allotted waivers for promotions to specialist, Peter historically hasn't performed well during competitions the first sergeant conducts.

"Due to his failures, he has studied and applied himself like no other Soldier in Ghost and risen to every challenge put forward to him even in the face of defeat," said Gaskin. "He is one of the hardest working Soldiers, and his peers looked up to him even as a private first class."

"The single best quality he possesses, in my opinion, is humility," Gaskin continued. "Even after winning the competition, he stated that any Soldier in Ghost would have done as well and refused to take any credit for the win."

"When talking with the brigade command sergeant major [U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Womack of Leesville, La.], he stated that he drew his motivation from the fallen heroes from the brigade and he wanted to honor them," continued Gaskin. "He is truly what makes our troop a success and I have a whole unit filled with Soldiers of his caliber."

"Both of their performances are ALWAYS top notch and I would go anywhere with them in combat - and have!"

Spencer said the RC-East competition experience will help him better train and be able to help other Soldiers, in his area of expertise, during board appearances or with whatever they choose to do. It was a pleasure to study with Peter and see him to go on to win Soldier of the Year for RC-East, he said.

"The one thing I have always learned, especially in the military, is if you have a chance to do something - if you have the chance to give something a try - give it a try," said Spencer. "It doesn't matter what is asked of you. It might seem that it is out of your reach; but just give it a shot because everything is worth a try."

"Even if the Soldier came in dead last, that Soldier represented his task force. He went there, he gave it 110 percent and he still walked away with his honor," continued Spencer. "There is nothing wrong with that at all. Everybody that went there did an outstanding job and they should all be proud." ☺

# WARRIOR WATCH

U.S. Army Spc.

## Megan Aeilder

Story and photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Brian P. Glass,  
Task Force Patriot Public Affairs

Deployed Soldiers have multiple outlets to channel their stress brought on by working in a combat zone. Whether going to a Morale, Welfare and Recreation center or simply watching a movie, everyone has a way to unwind.

U.S. Army Spc. Megan Aeilder, an intelligence analyst for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division from Tucson, Ariz. uses drawing as her outlet.

"My mom said I started drawing as soon as she gave me a crayon," said Aeilder. "My mother is a painter, so she enjoys art. She's been drawing as long as I can remember, and so have I."

Having the drawing bug in her childhood, Aeilder started small and has moved her way onto more complex types of drawings.

"I started out being absolutely fixated on drawing horses. From there, I just continued to try and draw new things," said Aeilder. "I did portraits. For a while, I did anime (Japanese cartoons), then people started asking me if I could draw them something for a tattoo; and I've been doing that for a while now."

Along with drawing tattoos, Aeilder draws portraits. That skill came in handy for U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Billy Brooks, a cavalry scout from Gatesville, Texas assigned to HHC, 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. who asked Aeilder to draw a portrait of someone who means a lot to him.

"I had a picture of my daughter from her 4th birthday party; she was in a little bathing suit and these cowboy boots," said Brooks. "I saw Aeilder drawing one day and said, 'You're pretty good. So I figure, do you think you can draw this?' She said sure."

"When I got the picture back she did an extremely good job with it; I mean, she has a lot of talent," continued Brooks. "The picture was dead on, and it didn't take her very long to do it. I had the picture sent home and framed."

Bringing happiness to others through simply applying herself to her craft gives Aeilder a sense of accomplishment. However, she d

"Of course (it makes me feel good), but it's not why I draw,"



U.S. Army Spc. Megan Aeilder, an intelligence analyst for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and a native of Tucson, Ariz., drew this sketch inspired from vintage 500 Afghani currency. Aeilder produced the sketch for a fellow Soldier to use as a template for a tattoo.

said Aeilder. "I draw because it's fun, and that's why I refuse to take payments. It's a relaxing way for me to enjoy myself, just making something appear on a piece of paper."

Using drawing as a relaxer, Aeilder uses her talents to keep herself focused on getting her job done while working in a combat environment.

"This (drawing) is a good way for me to channel the stress. It's not necessarily a stress reliever," said Aeilder. "When I'm working on something for someone, they have a specific design in

mind. (It) makes it a good way for me to take the excess stress and channel it into a purpose and then see what I've accomplished."

U.S. Army Spc. Danielle Hartman, an all-source intelligence analyst for 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Dagger from Delta Junction, Alaska, is a friend of Aeilder. Hartman has seen her drawing abilities first hand but appreciates Aeilder for being more than just a visual artist.

"She's drawn things for me before. She does cartoons," said

Hartman. "She's also an amazing writer. We'll start a story - email sentences back and forth until we get the story done - and she will draw out what the story became. She is very artistic."

"She is over here being the best Soldier she can be and has no problems doing all the things that have to be done here," continued Hartman. "She is also very intelligent. She notices things others fail to notice. She finds the simplistic beauty in things."

Aeilder shows that knowing what outlet to use to channel her stress helps her remain calm throughout her deployment. ☺



Local Afghan children hold up flyers advertising the Guardians of Peace program. Distributed flyers are one of many methods used to spread the word about the program, which encourages the people of Afghanistan to call into hotlines to anonymously report any insurgent activity they witness. (U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Cammie Quinn)

## ‘Guardians of Peace’ puts security in local hands

Story by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Wesley Farnsworth  
Paktya Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, its citizens and coalition forces are working side-by-side to improve security in Paktya Province, as evidenced by the continued success of the Guardians of Peace program.

Launched in October 2010, the program encourages Afghan citizens to call telephone hotlines to anonymously report any insurgent activity they may witness.

One such tip recently resulted in the recovery of a weapons cache of hand grenades, explosives, flares, detonators, grenade fuses and ammunition.

“This program is a lot like the neighborhood watch program in the states, except we are in a war zone,” said U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Eric Ozburn, Paktya Provincial Reconstruction Team information operations officer, from Rowland Heights, Calif.

Once a tip has been received, the callers are assigned a confidential case number and asked to call back after their tip has been investigated. Tips are often handled immediately by relaying pertinent information to Afghan National Army and coalition forces in the field.

“Tips that pan out and are useful to Afghan National Security Forces or coalition forces are eligible for a reward,” said

Ozburn. “A lot of times these rewards are just a bonus to the people who call in and [are] not a driving factor.”

According to Ozburn, the majority of calls are from citizens simply tired of seeing bloodshed in their communities. This is one way the average citizen can stand up and negate insurgent tactics that unfortunately kill and maim, he added.

The program is advertised via radio, television, posters, billboards, business cards and by face-to-face contact around the province.

Rewards are based on the value of the information and issued when the individual calls back.

“A huge part of my job is just getting awareness of the program to the people,” said Ozburn. “Face-to-face is often the most effective because I see the immediate acceptance [of the initiative] in their faces. It’s a great feeling.”

Working regularly with coalition forces, the ANSF is more than happy to act upon useful information provided by their fellow citizens.

“Attacks happen and will continue to happen. It does not mean we are not ready to counter attack. We have better equipment and more capacity,” said Brig. Gen. M. Azimi, Afghan Ministry of Defense spokesperson. “We have lots of professional officers and commanders. We are all ready to repel the attacks of the insurgents and beat them down.” ☺

## Battle-tested former Rangers visit troops at Camp Marmal

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Joe Armas  
1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs

Whether it was enduring a 500-foot combat jump onto the small island of Grenada, patrolling the jungles of Vietnam or navigating the streets of battle-ravaged Mogadishu, Danny McKnight, Keni Thomas, Max Mullen and Charlie Manis have experiences that few others can account for.

The Ranger Tour, comprised of these four former Army Rangers, touched down in northern Afghanistan to visit Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Oct. 4-5.

The tour was the first of “American 300’s” warrior tours that highlights profiles of extreme courage and it gave the Rangers a chance to visit Afghanistan to see firsthand what Soldiers of the current generation are experiencing.

“One of the greatest privileges I could ever have is to visit these Soldiers over here to tell them thanks for everything that they do for us back in the U.S.,” said McKnight.

McKnight was a convoy commander the day of Oct. 3, 1993 in Somalia during the battle of Mogadishu. His character was portrayed in the movie, “Black Hawk Down.”

Thomas was involved as well in that battle, fast-roping from a UH-60 Black Hawk onto the streets of Mogadishu. Since then, he has become a county-music artist and often goes overseas to sing for and interact with the troops.

This occasion was no different for Thomas, who varied his musical set with a song that rendered a somber tone and then followed that up with one of his more lively singles, “Another Mexico Song” that brought laughter and a plethora of applause from the 1st ACB troopers.

Thomas touched on his interaction with the troops afterwards.

“It never fails,” said Thomas. “The conversations I have with Soldiers in combat zones always are the same. Within three to five minutes, they start talking about their fellow brothers in arms over here...It’s never about them.”

Thomas added, “As someone who used to wear the uniform, I understand how much this means to the Soldiers to have someone come over here and talk to them.”

Thomas, along with the rest of the Rangers, has a busy schedule back in the



Ken Thomas, a former Army Ranger who was part of the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia in 1993, listens in as a Soldier from Task Force Lobos, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, explains the intricacies of an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter Oct. 4. Thomas, a country music artist and frequent visitor to deployed service members, and three other former Army Rangers are part of the “Rangers Tour” which is “American 300’s” first warrior tour.

states and that was a fact that did not go unnoticed by the Soldiers who they visited.

“The fact that they recognize what we are doing over here... that they would stop their busy lives to come and show their appreciation...it means a lot to me,” said Spc. Janice Gonzales, a signal support systems specialist, assigned to Company C, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, originally from San Antonio.

The dates of the tour coincided with the anniversary of the Battle of Mogadishu.

As he tried to contain his emotions, McKnight talked about the importance of spending the anniversary with Soldiers for the first time.

“Eighteen years ago, I was fighting in the streets of Mogadishu and to be able to spend this anniversary with Soldiers here in Afghanistan...it’s really special for me.”

Throughout the tour, as they interacted with Soldiers, McKnight, Mullen and Thomas often referenced their fellow comrades who made the ‘ultimate

sacrifice’ during their tenures in the Army.

Thomas added, “I’ve lost friends in combat and I owe it to them to tell their stories.”

An event held at one of the 1st ACB hangars was staged as a town-hall where the Rangers sat at a table in front of the audience and talked about their experiences. That set-up quickly disbanded, though, as the Rangers relished the opportunity to have close interaction with the Soldiers.

Gonzales added, “It was really cool to hear firsthand about their experiences and see how they have grown from them,” she said.

Finally, McKnight talked about how impressed he was with the Soldiers he encountered during his visit and said he would pass that message to everyone back in the U.S.

“When I return home, I’ll be able to tell everyone about the professional demeanor and hard work ethic of the Soldiers I had the privilege to spend time with,” said McKnight. ☺



More than 30 men help construct a dam in Tar Bulagh Valley in Nawur District, Ghazni Province. (Photo courtesy of the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team, Task Force White Eagle.)

# Building a dam to improve farmers' futures

Story by Polish Army soldier Bogumila Piekut  
Task Force White Eagle Public Affairs

Specialists from the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team recently started a new cultivation project in the Nawur District of Ghazni Province.

Many farmers in the Tar Bulagh Valley lose their crops every year because of low ground-water levels. After heavy rains or droughts these farmers have problems growing corn, grapes and watermelons. The only solution to this problem is a suitable irrigation system for watering their fields.

Ghazni PRT members are building a dam that will allow

waters from spring runoff or heavy rain to remain in the region longer and permeate further into the ground allowing for effective cultivation. Additionally, rain water caused by spring snowmelt will be collected in a tank throughout the year and used during droughts. The tank will also be used to supply electricity, via generators, to three villages in the area.

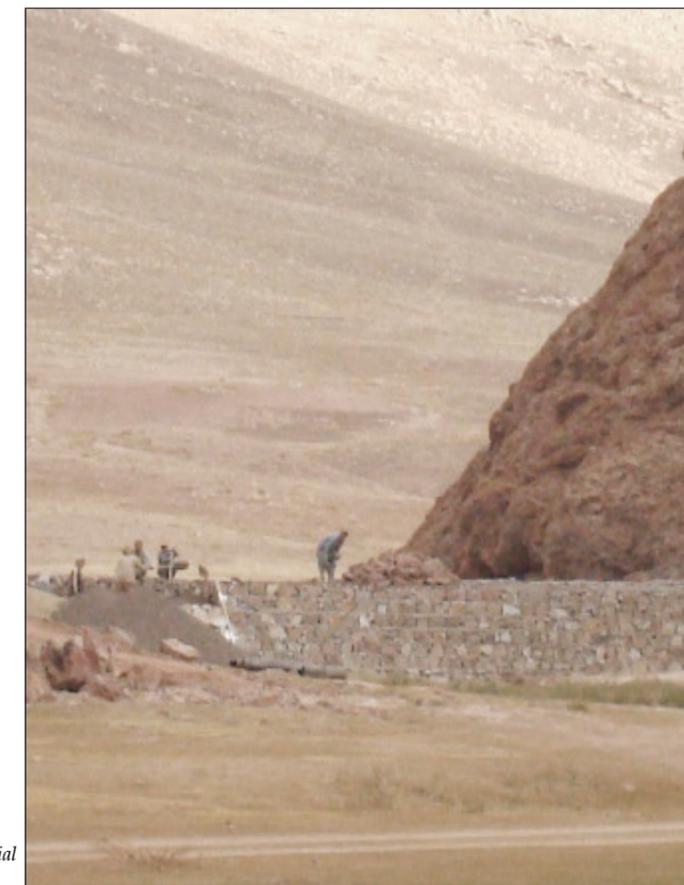
This project is very important for the local people – nearly 90 percent of the local population deal with some form of cultivation. The dam is not only a benefit to farmers but also to those who own livestock. With the new irrigation system, these farmers will also not have worry about droughts having a severe effect on their livelihood in the near future.

According to Konrad Smigielski, project officer, this is a significant step forward in the developing region. Moreover, the provincial authorities agreed that this project will improve unemployment since more than 30 men are currently working on building the dam. In the near future they will complete the rest of the project. ☺

Right: One of the bigger dams in Nawur District, Ghazni Province. The dam is more than 203 feet long and more than 24 feet high. (Photo courtesy of the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team, Task Force White Eagle)



Above: Once the dam is completed it will provide a watershed for the local population for many years to come. The dam has also provided many jobs for the locals during its construction. (Photo courtesy of the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team, Task Force White Eagle)





Philip Muller, a civil engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers, embedded with the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, checks the integrity of the bars in a prison administrative office, Sept. 1. The office is part of a year-long project of a segregation ward, separating Taliban and other anti-Afghan forces from the general prison population that is scheduled for completion at the end of this month.

## PRT prison project negates Taliban recruitment

Story and photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan  
Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

“Don’t walk too close to the windows,” the senior civil engineer said. “The Taliban inmates will spit on you.”

Heeding the warning, four Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers walked carefully toward an empty building in the rear of the prison grounds. The scent of fresh paint and concrete dust filled the air. In just a few weeks, the newest building on the prison grounds will house more than 500 suspected Taliban and other anti-Afghan forces.

Engineers visited the Jalalabad Prison, Sept. 1, to assess the quality of the construction of a segregation ward, which is slated for completion by the end of the month.

The prison currently serves as a breeding ground for terrorists, said Philip Muller, civil engineer from the Army Corps of Engineers embedded with the PRT. The Taliban would influence the general prison population, encouraging other inmates to join their ranks once free.

“The segregation ward will prevent recruitment while also allowing the rehabilitation of common criminals without the hindrance of Taliban influence,” added Muller, a native of Las Cruces, N.M.

The additional ward will prevent communication between the Taliban and the general prison population, many of whom were convicted of lesser offenses, said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Xander Fletcher, prison project manager for the PRT.

Once the risk was identified, the project went through the selection, funding and contracting process, which occurred nearly two years ago. Construction on the new ward began in the summer of 2010, added Fletcher, who is deployed from Joint Base

Lewis-McChord, Tacoma, Wash.

While on the site, the engineers looked at the exterior and each cell, evaluating everything from structural cracks, paint and doors.

“What we’re looking for is the quality and durability that the contractor is obligated for [according to] the statement of work,” said Muller, one of four PRT engineers. “We’re here to see the in-place work and how closely it is to the actual design and intent of the engineer who designed the facility.”

Between visits to the prison, the engineers are assisted by the prison staff, which also monitors the contractor and ensures the new structure meets their needs.

“The prison staff has been a third set of eyes,” said Muller. “They have kept an eye on the contractor ensuring quality work. If they noticed anything not meeting standards, they would contact us.”

In addition to ensuring the contractor meets standards, PRT engineers also use projects as a way to mentor and train contractors, added Muller. The prison was no exception; the scope of work included a leech field drip system which is perhaps the first one in Nangarhar.

“No contractor had ever done a leech field before,” said Muller. “From the inception of the design all the way through to the construction, we had to mentor the contractor. Now they have a leech field that will save the prison money by not having to clean and pump the septic system three times a year. Now it can be self sustained with regular maintenance which is a big plus for the warden.”

Although the goal of the segregation ward was to prevent Taliban from recruiting other inmates, the project turned out to be an overall success, said Muller. 🇺🇸

# TF Thunder builds up COP Dash Towp

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian P. Glass  
Task Force Patriot Public Affairs

As part of a realignment of forces to effectively quell enemy activity, Soldiers from 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Thunder are transitioning to Combat Outpost Dash Towp.

The force realignment directly affects three 4th BCT battalions, including 5th Bn., 25th FA, Soldiers, Afghan National Security Forces and coalition soldiers from at least two countries.

Putting such a movement into motion can be complicated and moving an entire battalion is never as easy as just moving people from one place to another.

“It was around the end of July when we found out we were coming out here. The immediate action at that point was to begin planning with a heavy emphasis on the logistical piece,” said U.S. Army Capt. Frank Adams, TF Thunder fire support officer and a native of Torrance, Calif. “Ultimately, you’re moving a task force, but subsequently you have to take into account the fact that when we transfer authority to the incoming unit that is replacing us, we also have to set conditions for them to come in here.”

Once TF Thunder Soldiers arrived on COP Dash Towp, they began preparing the outpost to better conduct operations.

U.S. Army Sgt. Brian Akerstrom, automations and communications team leader for the 94th Brigade Support Battalion, Task Force Strength and a native of Wantage, N.J., began working with TF Thunder to accomplish all of the work needed to get the combat outpost up and running.

“They’ve pretty much built everything from scratch,” said

Akerstrom. “I know that Thunder’s automations and communications section has been working non-stop getting the network up and running.

“That’s the most important thing ... getting communications with our brigade,” continued Akerstrom. “That’s where the focus is right now; and then, after that, run regular operations.”

To get COP Dash Towp mission ready, Soldiers worked outside in August heat for long stretches of time. The work included everything from erecting tents to running wires.

“We’ve been doing a lot of work out here, building all sorts of buildings, digging out trenches and putting down (Internet) cables,” said U.S. Army Spc. Oladele Alabi, a Los Angeles native and multichannel systems operator and maintainer for Task Force Thunder’s headquarters battery. “It’s a team effort and that’s what we’re here for - to set the next unit up for success.”

When COP Dash Towp is fully operational, the goal is for TF Thunder Soldiers and their replacements to conduct operations in the Chak District of Wardak Province.

The austere conditions of the COP might not be up to the same living standards most TF Thunder Soldiers had on Forward Operating Base Shank before the realignment, but Adams said they will make the best of it.

“The goal is to build our tactical operations center, have it established and make sure everything is working as well as it did back on FOB Shank,” said Adams.

“We will be able to accomplish everything simultaneously. It may not be the most perfect conditions, but there never are perfect conditions,” continued Adams.

“Ultimately, we will be able to accomplish everything that we need to do as far as life support, command-and-control and with planning operations for the future.” 🇺🇸



Soldiers of 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division’s Task Force Thunder set up sleeping tents on Combat Outpost Dash Towp Aug. 26. The tents will house Soldiers until construction on the COP is complete.



Women from 22 of the 52 districts within Surkh Rod, a district west of Jalalabad, meet for an all-female shura Sept. 19. The women discussed a variety of concerns but focused primarily on education. (Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Patricia Poindexter, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team)

## Female shura seeks education solutions

Story by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan  
Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, many women are emerging from the shadows after decades of oppression to meet unique challenges of a developing government. Despite years of progress, women still struggle to have a voice.

In an effort to strengthen communication between women living in the villages of Surkh Rod, a district just west of Jalalabad, and the Department of Women's Affairs, community leaders held an all-female shura at the district center Sept. 19.

In addition to female representatives from 22 of the 52 villages within Surkh Rod, the assistant director of the DOWA, assistant director of female youth and the social worker for the director of youth attended the assembly.

"We want to get communication flowing between the districts and the provincial line directors," said U.S. Army Maj. Patricia Poindexter, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team female engagement team leader, "and that's exactly what happened here."

The DOWA ties directly into the Ministry of Women's Affairs within Kabul, added Poindexter, who hails from Las Vegas. The DOWA can escalate concerns brought up during the shura that cannot be solved at the provincial level.

"A lot of what we discussed was education related," said U.S. Army Sgt. Kristin Goehler, Nangarhar PRT female engagement team member. "The DOWA was able to immediately identify education concerns. Having the DOWA there to have a dialogue with was huge. The DOWA made a commitment to the people."

The women desire education, added Goehler, a Milwaukee native. One of the long-term goals of the DOWA, which is shared by members of the shura, is to educate and train women so they can potentially learn a trade, earn a living and contribute to their households.

Members of the shura explained that efforts are being made to improve education. In many of the outlying areas, girls are unable to attend school for a variety of reasons. Many of the girls

are unable to travel to the nearest schools, many of which are nearly 31 miles away.

"The assistant director for the DOWA recommended setting up temporary girls schools using tents, shade or anything else," said Poindexter, who is an elementary teacher in addition to serving in the U.S. Army Reserves. "That is exactly what needs to be done."

Additionally, shura members spoke about how security concerns impact education. Throughout Afghanistan, many girls are targeted for trying to advance themselves, said Poindexter. Under the Taliban, women were not allowed to get an education; although the regime has been largely ousted, some of the ideology remains.

Lastly, the women spoke of the lack of female secondary teachers, which is about seven male teachers to every female teacher, while girls make up nearly 50 percent of the population. Although having male teachers for the girls may seem like a simple solution, such progressive thinking has cost such individuals their lives, added Poindexter. According to local experts, cases of violence against instructors has been an historical issue. As recently as May, a male head teacher in Logar Province, just outside Kabul, was killed by Taliban insurgents after ignoring numerous threats urging him to stop teaching girls. However, terrorists continue to target women.

"There were several younger girls at the shura," said Goehler. "When asked why they were there, they said that the older women were too fearful of traveling."

Despite the risk, the women donned their chadri, a garment that covers them entirely, and came to the shura, said Poindexter. Once inside in the company of just women, they exposed their faces. However, upon leaving, the women disappeared anonymously under the veil of their chadri.

"It requires great courage for these women to come to events like this shura," said Poindexter. "They risk being targeted with harassment and threats. Yet, this was the largest female shura that we have attended which just shows how important these events are." 🇺🇸

## Polish give support to working Afghan women

Story and photo by Polish Army soldier Bogumila Piekut  
Task Force White Eagle Public Affairs

Throughout August, specialists from District Development Group Task Force White Eagle conducted first aid courses and kidnapping courses for Afghan female teachers and police-women.

The first aid course, attended by 18 teachers, was conducted at the Alberoni School, one of the biggest schools in Ghazni Province.

"The idea of organizing and carrying out such training was born a few weeks ago, during the last meeting," said Agnieszka Hejduk, DDG education adviser. "We have been collaborating with teachers from the Alberoni School for a long time. Last month we donated equipment to the school and this time we decided to offer the female teaching staff a first aid class."

Caring about the safety of pupils in such a big school, which is attended by more than 6,000 children, is not so easy. Additionally, there are no doctors on staff and none of the teaching staff possess this type of training. The Poles were the first to organize first aid training for the school's administration.

During the course, teachers learned how to properly assist a person who has fainted and how to take someone's pulse. Teachers also had the opportunity to learn how care for injured children.

Polish paramedic Sebastian Kazmierczak, 6th Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison, showed them how to stop bleeding, care for wounds and how to treat heart attack victims.

The second course, attended by 14 policewomen from Ghazni; Task Force White Eagle Lt. Col. Zbigniew Zblewski and five officers from an anti-terrorist group, covered how to survive a kidnapping or dangerous situation.

"We should support Afghan policewomen as much as possible. Especially since they lack the knowledge and equipment necessary to prevent events such as this," said Alexandra Zamojska, advisor responsible for the cultural issue.

"During the training I wanted to show to policewomen how to be safe in dangerous situations," said Zblewski who led the course. "I wanted to make them aware of how important the behavior of the victim is."

Policewomen in Ghazni are employed on the post and at police headquarters. They also patrol streets, check the bazaars, schools and many other public places.

"Being a policewoman is a dangerous but very satisfying job. Many women from Ghazni would like to serve on the police force but they don't have a chance. Usually, families forbid women to serve or they worry about their own safety," said Nafisa, a policewoman who works at the police headquarters.

"Despite this obstacle, I am proud that I have this job and I am responsible for security," she added. 🇺🇸



Polish Army Lt. Col. Zbigniew Zblewski, who led the kidnapping course for Afghan policewomen, gives a certificate of completion to one of the attendants.

# Kunar ADT visits research farm and tree nursery in Asadabad

Story and photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonough  
1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

The Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team conducted a mission to a research farm operated by the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture and a separate, nearby tree nursery Aug. 28.

The 1-14th ADT visited the farms to further their understanding of agricultural research being conducted within the province and to assess the facilities as potential training resources.

Asadabad Research Farm manager, Mirwis Khan, greeted members of the 1-14th ADT and led a tour of the three-acre facility while explaining the farm's background and goals.

Khan said the farm has been in operation for approximately 40 years and has recently come under control of the Ministry of Agriculture.

While the land was used for tea production in the past, Khan said the Ministry of Agriculture changed its focus to other crops because the soil contained too much alkaline to grow tea.

The farm is currently used to grow spinach, mung beans, okra, radishes, olives, eggplants, okra and several varieties of corn, grapes and rice.

Khan said researchers at the farm use crop trials to compile data on the most successful plant varieties.

That data will then be pushed out to agriculture extension agents who will use it to educate farmers throughout their districts.

"We do research on different varieties of rice, for example," said Khan. "This lets us know what varieties are good for Kunar

and which ones are bad. Then the farmers can take that information and know what varieties they should plant. We provide the information to the extension department and they give the information to the farmers."

U.S. Army Spc. Alan McFalls, of Polo, Ill., a forestry expert with the 1-14th ADT, said he was impressed by the overall management of the farm.

"For its size, the farm had a pretty wide variety of crops," said McFalls. "There were more varieties of vegetables here than a lot of the other places we visited."

McFalls said, in addition to providing data about which crops to plant, specific practices used on the farm would make it an excellent training facility.

"The Ministry of Agriculture could use this farm as a facility to teach farmers good planting and harvesting practices," said McFalls. "Farmers would be able to see the direct benefits of planting in rows, maintaining good irrigation canals, properly preparing planting beds and being proactive in solving pest issues."

After completing their tour of the Asadabad Demonstration Farm, ADT Soldiers travelled by foot to a nearby tree nursery.

The nursery, which has been in operation for approximately 20 years, has recently partnered with the United States Agency for International Development through a program called Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives –North, East and West.

The program is intended to provide licit agricultural alternatives in areas of Afghanistan that are prone to poppy production.

The nursery functions as a research facility, experimenting with approximately a dozen varieties of fruit, nut and upland



U.S. Army Col. Fred Allen of Delevan, Ill., commander of the Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team and U.S. Army Spc. Alan McFalls, of Polo, Ill., a forestry expert with the 1-14th ADT, discuss crop trials and daily operations of the Asadabad Research Farm Aug. 28. The 1-14th ADT visited the farm to learn about agriculture research being conducted throughout the province.



U.S. Army Capt. Robert Cosgriff, of Big Timber, Mont., and a forestry expert with the Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, takes notes about crop trials being conducted at the Asadabad Research Farm Aug. 28. The research facility, which is operated by the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, conducts trials to determine which crop varieties are best suited to the soil and climate of Kunar Province.

trees. It also acts as a mother-stock facility, providing seed and root stock to private nurseries throughout Kunar Province.

Employees of the farm said the fruit and nut trees are sold for commercial use, while the upland species are typically used for small-scale reforestation and watershed management projects.

U.S. Army Capt. Robert Cosgriff, of Big Timber, Mont., and forestry expert with the 1-14th ADT, compared the nursery to a botanical garden, growing a large variety of tree types but with a limited number of trees within each species.

"Compared to other nurseries we've visited, they definitely

focus their production on quality and not quantity," said Cosgriff.

While the nursery does not produce the quantity of trees needed for large-scale reforestation projects, Cosgriff said the ADT gained valuable knowledge about successful nursery management techniques within the province.

"Ideally, we will take advantage of the knowledge and experience here to train other nursery managers who will be geared more toward mass production," said Cosgriff. "This type of knowledge is really what we're looking for." 🌳

# National Guard Agribusiness Development Team Medics visit orphans in Khowst Province



Dr. Wakel Muchal, the Director of Disabilities Clinic in Khowst province, inspects an orphan's eye during an Afghan-led medical screening at a Khowst City orphanage Oct. 1. More than 120 orphans were seen by the Afghan and Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team medical personnel. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Sandra Welch, Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Kaitlyn A. Ashby  
4-19th Indiana Agribusiness Development Team

The Indiana National Guard's 4-19th Agribusiness Development Team and Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team examined more than 100 boys and girls at an orphanage in Khowst City Oct. 1.

During the visit, U.S. service members worked with Khavar Amiri, the Khowst Director of Women's Affairs, as well as local doctors and staff to check vitals, distribute supplies to the orphans and put some faith back into the community.

Medical and school supplies, stuffed animals, hygiene products, clothes and hats sent from the United States were distributed to the children by medical staff and teachers.

The primary female provider during the mission, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cory Hasik, an ADT medic from Hobart, Ind., took vitals from the girls at the orphanage and provided vitamins and

cough syrup.

"It seemed like a great opportunity to help," said Hasik. "With so many under-privileged children, it's understandable them wanting so much, because they have nothing."

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Trixie Coffman, a personnel and administration facilitator with the ADT, from Orleans, Ind., demonstrated personal hygiene to the girls during her distribution of hygiene products during the visit.

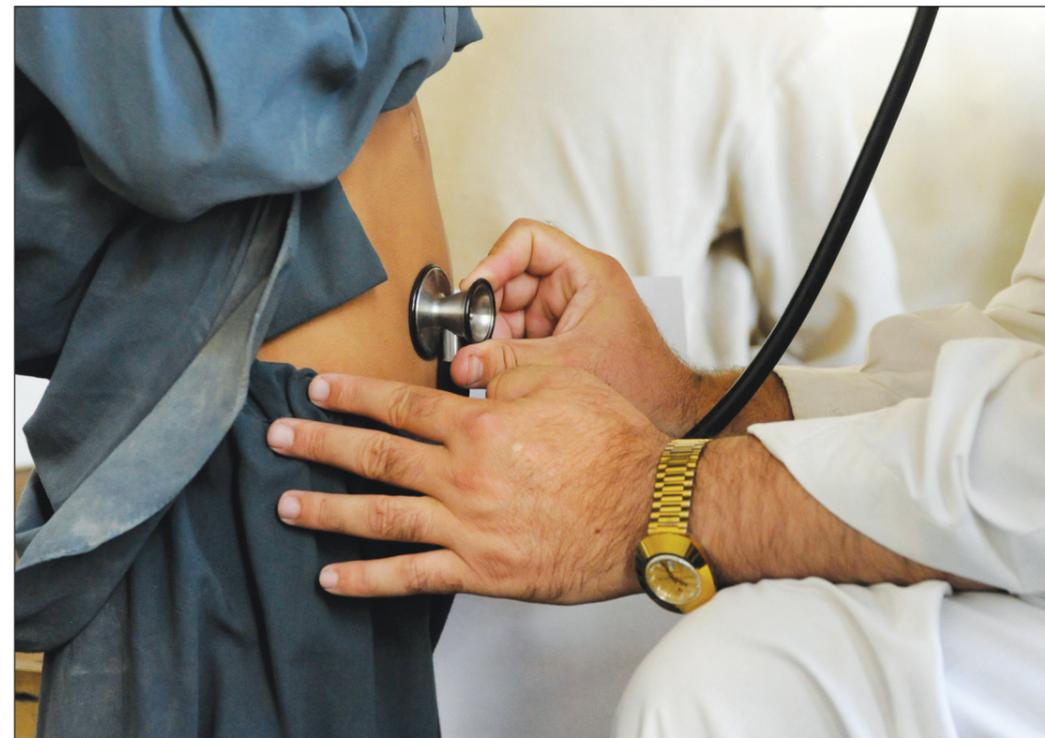
"I was very excited to see the kids because our children back in the United States don't want for anything," Coffman said. "Being able to give back to the kids was real important to me."

While on the mission, U.S. Army Sgt. Dessislava Pashova, an ADT medic from Fort Wayne, Ind., assessed and treated medical conditions for more than 50 girls.

"I was excited to have a medically focused mission," Pashova said. "You get to help out and actually see that you're making a difference." 🇺🇸



U.S. Army Sgt. Dessislava Pashova, a medic from Fort Wayne, Ind., of the 4-19th Indiana Agribusiness Development Team, treated medical conditions for more than 50 girls during an orphanage visit in Khowst Province Oct. 1. The ADT will be working in Khowst Province and plans to conduct more Afghan led missions such as these throughout the next year. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Sandra A. Welch, Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)



Director of Disabilities Clinic Dr. Wakel Muchal, checks an orphan for abdominal problems during an Afghan-led medical screening at a Khowst City orphanage Oct. 1. The most common illnesses were upper-respiratory infections, sore throats and ear infections. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Sandra Welch, Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

# W MEDICAL WATCH Cold Weather Prevention: COLD

Story by U.S. Army Maj. Ronald Havard  
CJTF-1/RC-E Prev Med / ESO

**GEAR UP!  
FOR COLD WEATHER**

**GETTIN' COLD FEET**  
Cold Weather clothing:  
- Keep it Clean  
- Avoid Overheating  
- Wear it Loose and in Layers  
- Keep it Dry

**WATCH FOR EFFECTS TO THE SKIN, SUCH AS:**  
- SWOLLEN RED OR DARKENED  
- PAIN, TENDERNESS, HOT OR ITCHY  
- NUMBNESS OR TINGLING  
- BLEEDING OR BLISTERED  
- GRAY, WAXY FEELING OR "WOODEN" TO THE TOUCH  
- DIZZINESS, WEAKNESS OR BLURRED VISION  
- VIGOROUS SHIVERING  
- LACK OF COORDINATION AND IMPAIRED JUDGMENT  
- PAINFUL, RED, WATERY OR GRITTY FEELING IN THE EYES (SNOW BLINDNESS)

If you have been here before, you will know that Bagram Airfield and Afghanistan in general can get very cold during the winter months.

Knowing about the dangers to prolonged cold exposure can help you avoid being a victim of cold weather.

During the winter months, (Sept-Feb, depending on elevation) you are still susceptible to dehydration.

Folks tend to drink less water because they are not hot or thirsty, which is the opposite of what is needed.

Other common cold-weather related injuries include frost bite, hypothermia and chilblains.

Temperatures of 60 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit and high humidity are prime weather for chilblains. A chilblain injury usually occurs hours after exposure to cold, humid climates. It appears as small red areas on the skin that burn and itch.

Symptoms often intensify when going into a warm room. Chilblains can be painful, but it normally causes little to no permanent damage. Keep your skin warm and protected from the elements to avoid chilblains.

Frostbite occurs with exposure to frigid air or icy winds, which cause skin and tissue to freeze.

Eventually the skin dies and turns black. This is easy to get in cold climate areas if you don't take precautions. Exposed skin and extremities (ears, fingers and toes) are extremely susceptible.

Keep your skin covered and protected from the wind. If you think you are beginning to get frostbite, warm the affected area with body heat. Do not rub or apply direct heat from a fire or a stove; doing so might cause further damage. Keep the frostbitten area covered from the cold or wind.

The most severe cold weather injury is hypothermia. It occurs when the temperature of the body drops below the normal core body temperature. On a cold day, your body will try to maintain its temperature by shaking

to generate heat. In a constant or extremely cold environment, your body may not be able to generate enough heat to keep up with heat loss. Symptoms of hypothermia include mental confusion and shivering uncontrollably. Hypothermia is a medical emergency that can result in death if not treated immediately.

Snow blindness is a painful condition caused by exposure of unprotected eyes to sunlight reflected from snow. It is akin to sunburn of the cornea and conjunctiva and may not be noticed for several hours from exposure. Symptoms can include the eyes becoming bloodshot, tearing, feeling gritty or swelling shut. Wearing appropriate eye protection will help prevent the condition. Resting the eyes in a dark room will alleviate pain and symptoms.

During the next few months, be conscious of the weather and plan ahead. Also try to remember the Acronym COLD which stands for: C, keep your clothing Clean; O, avoid

overheating; L, wear clothing loose and in layers; and D, keep clothing dry.

Tips to remember: Keep your body warm by moving the body as much as possible as this movement helps generate body heat, exercise big muscles (arms, shoulders, trunk, and legs) to keep warm, eat all meals to maintain energy and wear several loose layers of clothing.

If you plan to be outside for extended periods, don't wear cotton fabrics. Cotton absorbs sweat and retains moisture, creating a wet under-layer that will make you feel colder.

Also avoid tight socks and shoes. If clothes, socks or shoes get wet, try to change as soon as practically possible.

Always wear a hat or scarf and avoid direct skin contact with metal objects or fuels that have been exposed to the cold for extended periods. Drink warm liquids like hot chocolate as the sugar in it helps the body to generate additional heat. ☺

**Sexual Harassment / Assault Response & Prevention (SHARP) Program**

*“Care enough to confront”*  
**“I AM STRONG”**

## CJTF-1 Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention Campaign

- **B-** Be Army Strong and Live Army Values
- **E-** Educate yourself and your troops on risk reduction and prevention
- **H-** Have the courage and concern to intervene
- **A-** Act ---The I AM Strong Campaign and Theme is about taking action!!!
- **V-** Visualize Victory - Be committed to culture change & Victory against sexual assault
- **E-** Energize others in this endeavor—Everyone must “Care Enough to Confront”

**Leader Commitment – Command Emphasis- Soldier Awareness = Culture Change**



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# W CHAPLAIN WATCH

## What women need (Part 1)

Commentary by U.S. Army Chaplain (MAJ) Eddie Kinley, Jr.,  
CJTF-1 Family Life Chaplain, Regional Command East

There are millions of self help reading materials in book stores worldwide. With our rapid technology, we can now download books and magazines to our Kindles, iPads, Nooks and cellular devices. I am always delighted to walk inside Barnes and Noble, order something fattening from the Starbucks counter and enjoy a few hours of reading. One habit I possess is to look through the mountain of books on marriage and the family, exploring what is new and innovative.

A few of my favorites are the "Five Love Languages"; "Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work"; "Sacred Marriage"; "His Needs, Her Needs" and my top pick is "Love and Respect". All of these books are great tools for the marriage relationship. However, in my experience counseling married women, I have discovered that their needs are very simple. As men, we go out of our way doing a lot of big things for our wives and, yet, it is the small things that really make the difference. All women, regardless of age, ethnicity or culture, require the same thing from their men- demonstrative love. Now, many of us demonstrate how much we love our wives by doing a great many of things.

We purchase homes, cars, furniture for comfortable living and security; we spend hundreds and thousands on jewelry and other keepsakes. I believe we do a good job demonstrating how much we love our wives, but we have a tendency to overlook the small things. There are at least five small tasks you can employ that will excite passion and energy in your marriage.

First, spend at least 15 minutes a day privately talking to your wife. No cell phones, no television and no distractions are allowed during this 15 minute timeline. Women are great communicators and their emotions are wrapped up in their need to talk things out. Men have a tendency to compartmentalize their emotions breathing.

So, take the time to hear what your wife has on her heart. She would much rather talk to you than her girlfriend, trust me. On the other hand, men are very analytical; this is why we are great mathematicians and engineers. But, remember, your wife is not interested in you solving her problem; she simply wants you to listen. In fact, she probably already has a plan mapped out to solve the problem. I have to remind myself of this often when talking to my wife. She will quickly remind me, "Eddie, I don't need advice, I just want you to listen."

Talking is so important to women that they created a popular television show called "The View." Have you ever noticed there are no men hosting the show, only women? Yet millions of single and married women love this show because it meets their greatest need which is to communicate.

A second lesson men can learn is the art of walking. That's right, take her for a walk around the neighborhood at least nice every two weeks, more if you desire. Again, this represents

something simple and, more than anything else, it's free! Walking is more significant because you two are all alone and without distractions. My wife loves to walk with me. Now, personally, I hate walking without an objective and destination, but, to your wife, this is romantic. Talking to her soul mate is a great stress relief for her.

Thirdly, try holding her hand in public. Think back when you first met your wife and how excited you were just to be in her presence. Spending 15 uninterrupted minutes talking was only a tease, not to mention taking a romantic stroll. You would walk with her for miles if need be, only to bask in her presence. But, after marriage, we tend to forget to repeat the little things that originally won her heart. Holding her hand in public is

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**Quote for the month**  
"In every marriage more than a week old, there are grounds for divorce. The trick is to find, and continue to find, grounds for marriage."

Robert Anderson

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worth a lot of points and something you rarely see these days. My wife and I were in the supermarket and happened upon an elderly couple holding hands, which left my wife was practically in tears. Men, holding hands sends a profound message to your spouse. It tells her how important she is. It's not the big things that will make her feel special; it's the small things that are so very important to your wife.

A story is told about a woman talking with her husband about everything her sister, Karen, was making for her husband. Grimly she said, "Karen made Mike a sweater, which he adores and I can't even sew. Karen made him homemade cinnamon bread and his favorite cookies, and I can't even bake biscuits; she even made him a jewelry case in her arts and crafts class and he loved it. I feel so bad because I don't make you anything." He looked at her and replied, "Babe, you MAKE ME HAPPY." You can imagine how romantic their evening turned out. It's not what you say, but how and when you say it.

Here's some interesting facts about marriage. Did you know:

- Washington, D.C. has the lowest marriage rate in the nation.
- Because of jobs, kids, etc...the average married couple spends 4 minutes alone.
- A person's level of education influences the age that they marry.
- Married people are twice as likely to go to church than unmarried people.
- Individuals are more likely to fall in love if they're looking for adventure. ☺

# W UNIT WATCH

## TASK FORCE BRONCO REACHES LANDMARK OF 10,000 FLIGHT HOURS



U.S. Army Pfc. Brandon Hauch from Saint Clair, Maine and U.S. Army Pfc. Brandon Duckett, from Blissfield, Mich., Unmanned Aerial Vehicle operators with 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Bayonet, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco, are reviewed by U.S. Army Spc. Joshua Miller, a UAV maintainer with TF Bayonet, during an aircraft inspection at Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan.

Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Amber Robinson  
Task Force Bronco Public Affairs

It only happened once before in Army Aviation history, and now, for the second time, an Army unit has reached 10,000 flight hours without incident.

A group of Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Bayonet, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco, fly the Shadow, an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, used for reconnaissance before and during combat movements on the battlefield.

The foundation for the unit's success was laid several years ago.

"Our current programs were started by a very dedicated and professional group of Soldiers starting in 2006," said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jonathan Wynn, a native of Cave Spring, Ga., and a tactical operations officer for 3rd BCT, 25th Inf. Div. "Our programs are ever growing, and in my opinion always for the better. No matter how many times we change leadership, the programs set forth continue."

Wynn and UAV platoon pride themselves on their collective hard work, training and experience which helped them to attain

their current standing.

"In the aviation community, this is a hard task to complete," said Wynn. "Most 10,000 hour awards are based on individuals and not on the whole [unit]. Unlike with us, it has been a multitude of individuals who have collectively earned 10,000 flight hours based on their dedication to excellence in both maintenance and flight operations."

The platoon has the potential to excel past the former record of 11,100 incident-free hours. They have recently experienced six months of superior flying over combat-riddled Afghanistan. They have six more months to continue their commendable streak of incident-free UAV support to Soldiers throughout TF Bronco's area of operations.

"Being part of an organization that has accomplished what very few have done in the past is something special," said U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Spano, command sergeant major for TF Bronco and a Northboro, Mass., native. "Just think, it has been the maintainers and the operators over six months and not once have they had an accident, that is something. Here we are, six months into this deployment and they have flown hundreds of hours, all during combat, finding the enemy and we will fly hundreds more. I'm proud of these Soldiers in this platoon." ☺



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## CJTF-1 CD RETENTION

### See What's Happening in the Retention Corner!

#### Retention Contacts

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- MSG James Meyers - DSN: 303-794-9023, 3/25 IN, Fenty
- SGM Jeffrey Sabourin - DSN: 318-421-7131, RC-South/CJTF-10

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Command  
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MG Daniel Allyn

**CJTF-1CD  
Command  
Retention NCO**  
CSM Isaia Vimoto

**CJTF-1CD  
Command Career  
Counselor**  
SFC Richard Erickson

**Oath of Reenlistment**  
I do solemnly swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.



# Goodwill across Afghanistan:

# ISAF and ANSF Reach Out



U.S. Army Pfc, Rachelle Dutton, a medic from Elkhar, Kan., treats a local Afghan citizen who was involved in a major traffic accident Sep. 7. Dutton is a member of Headquarters Company, 45th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Leslie R. Goble, Task Force Thunderbird Public Affairs)

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Brian Lancey of Norwich, Conn., a platoon sergeant attached to Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team, plays tag with an Afghan child while on a mission in Qarghah'i District, Laghman Province Sept. 8. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ryan Crane, Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team)



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Cooney, a senior squad leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, has a friendly meeting and drinks tea with Yatimake-y Oyla, a local Afghan Local Police commander of Ghane Sept. 20. A year ago this meeting would have been impossible because the village was being heavily intimidated by Taliban insurgents and villagers were afraid to come out of their houses at night. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ruth Pagan, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

Two boys play with a well that Polish soldiers from the Military Cooperation Group CIMIC rebuilt Sept. 19 at the Ghazni Secondary Refugees Town School. Approximately 3,000 pupils will use the water from the rebuilt well. (Photo by Bogumila Piekut Task Force White Eagle Public Affairs )



# STORY SNAPSHOTS



## Playing

Girls from throughout Ghazni Province play volleyball in a tournament on a newly dedicated court. The tournament, which was viewed by hundreds, was designed to build relationships between the districts. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. J. LaVoie, Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)



## Smiling

An Afghan elder smiles outside a shop in the Ahmad Abad district market Sept. 18. Members of the Paktya Provincial Reconstruction Team visited the market to gauge how the local economy is doing and ask locals about security in the area. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Wesley Farnsworth, Paktya Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)



## Examining

U.S. Army Sgt. Carmen Benson, a horticulture specialist for the Georgia Agribusiness Development Team and a native of Augusta, Ga., examines a bag of seeds before handing them out to local farmers during a seed germination class at the Director of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) compound, Maiden Shahr district Sept. 21. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Brian P. Glass, Task Force Patriot Public Affairs)



## Eating

U.S. Army Col. Richard Kim, commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco; Mohammad Gardewal, Nangarhar deputy governor; and Chief Judge Fazal Hadi Fazil, Nangarhar chief judge of the Appellate court, prepare their plates during a post-Eid luncheon, Sept. 14. The Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team invited all Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan provincial leaders for the luncheon. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Gul Crockett, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)



## Pressing

U.S. Army Sgt. Jacob Miller (right), a cavalry scout for Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Slugger and a native of Colona, Ill., explains to local farmers how an apple presser works in Maiden Shahr district, Sept. 20. The hope is the farmers will take unsold apples and turn them into other products to make more money. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Brian P. Glass, Task Force Patriot Public Affairs)



## Visiting

Ambassador Richard Olson, Director for Development and Economic Affairs, U.S. Embassy Kabul, Sayed Ali Akbar, walks with Sub Governor of Surkh Rod district, at the Surkh Rod district center Sept. 22. The two, along with district leaders, discussed progress and development within the district and highlighted the governor's efforts to maintain stable governance. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Gul Crockett, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)



## Retiring

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 5 Bobby Sebren, a tactical operations officer and pilot with Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, takes a spray down by fellow aviators signifying the last flight of his military career on the ten-year anniversary of Sept. 11. Sebren conducted his last flight with Task Force Phoenix Soldiers and, in addition to the spray down, received a near-beer and a certificate of appreciation. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)



## Circulating

Marine Gen. John R. Allen, commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, meets with Soldiers deployed to Parwan Province, during his battlefield circulation to Regional Command-East, Sept. 22. Following an operational update briefing, Allen visited a high-mobility artillery rocket system site. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Michael O'Connor, International Security Assistance Force HQ Public Affairs)

## Changing

Col. Blake C. Ortner, Virginia Army National Guard 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Combined Team Zabul commander, presides at a change of command ceremony for Romanian troops at Forward Operating Base Sweeney Sept. 14. The Staunton-based "Stonewall Brigade" is deployed to Zabul Province as a command and control headquarters in charge of NATO and Afghan National Army troops conducting counterinsurgency operations as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Sgt. Francis J. O'Brien, 116th IBCT Public Affairs)



## Remembering

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven Shockney, a King Air 300 pilot with Company B, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force ODIN-Afghanistan, and a member of the Washington D.C. Army National Guard, plays Amazing Grace on the bag pipes during the unit's uncasing ceremony at Bagram Airfield Sept. 11. The pipes were played during a moment of silence observing the exact time that American Airlines Flight 11 hit tower one of the World Trade Center 10 years ago. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jack W. Carlson III, Task Force ODIN-A)



## Laughing

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Eric Jones, of Havana, Ill., a security force squad leader for the Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, shares a joke with an Afghan child during a key leader engagement at a seed company in Kunar Province Sept. 13. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs)



MELISSA HAY  
MORNING SHOW

JENN CASANOVA  
MIDDAY MADNESS

ROCKIN RUSSELL TOOF  
THE BIG DUMB SHOW

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- Have your box ready for inspection.
- Be sure your container, box or footlocker is in good shape with old markings blacked out.
- Items may not be larger than 108 inches in combined size (length+width+depth).
- Items may not weigh more than **70 pounds**.
- Have your address label and customs form already filled out, be sure include a copy of the address label inside the package.
- No checks or credit cards, only cash or the Eagle Cash Card is accepted for payment.

Some items that cannot be mailed include:

- |  |   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol of any kind</li> <li>• Plants, plants products, sand or soil</li> <li>• Live or dead animals</li> <li>• Live poisonous insects (camel spiders)</li> <li>• Cigarette lighters</li> <li>• Weapons (pistols, rifles, replicas, toy guns)</li> <li>• Weapon parts (magazines, barrels, bolts, receivers, stocks)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ammunition (live or spent, including brass)</li> <li>• Exploded and unexploded ordnance (mines, grenades, fragments there of)</li> <li>• Switchblades or knives with a blade longer than 6 inches</li> <li>• Military equipment (TA-50, radios, any chemical defense equipment, compasses)</li> <li>• No War trophies</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

For more information, please contact your unit mail clerk, a postal customer service representative or call DSN 318-431-3023.

**Batteries**  
do not  
belong  
in the  
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# THE FINAL WATCH



*A Soldier with 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, Task Force  
Cacti, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Regiment, Task Force  
Bronco, pulls security in Kunar Province. American troops continue to  
fight the insurgency 10 years after the attacks on 9/11. (Photo by U.S.  
Army Spc. Tia Sokinsson, Task Force Bronco Public Affairs)*

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