



The PHOENIX PATRIOT

“...From the Ashes...”

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205th Soldiers Recieve Bronze Stars for Valor

Story and Photo By Cmdr. Chad Snee
205th RSAC PAO

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Maj. Ronald Smith and Sgt. 1st Class Sean Mishra received the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device (for valor) Dec. 15 for gallantry in action.

Both Soldiers are assigned to the 205th Regional Security Assistance Command (RSAC), based at Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan.

During a ceremony conducted at the 205th RSAC headquarters, the two men were recognized for their heroic efforts in separate operations conducted in late August and early September.

According to his award citation, Smith was honored for gallantry in action while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as an embedded tactical trainer and senior medical provider serving with coalition forces during Operation Medusa.

Smith distinguished himself by engaging enemy forces and risking his personal safety by crossing an open field under intense enemy fire to render medical treatment to seriously wounded Canadian soldiers.

Smith’s decisiveness and medical expertise directly led to saving the lives of the Canadians under his care.

Mishra distinguished himself while

servng as a member of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan by engaging enemy forces and rendering aid to a seriously wounded Soldier after his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device, all while ignoring his own injuries.

Mishra also recieved a Purple Heart for the wounds he sustained during combat.

Col. Mark Hatfield, deputy commander of the 205th RSAC, presented the awards saying, “These awards are the real deal. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who were recognized today. I thank you for your dedicated service to Regional Command South.”

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General Guidance

Warriors,

Task Force Phoenix is making history every day by taking the Afghan National Army to new levels of readiness. We are now undergoing a significant transformation with the addition of the Police Training mission and have the opportunity to accom-

plish the same level of success with the Afghan National Police.

In addition, we have the arrival of additional Warriors to fill out our formations. However, we have not received the additional equipment (vehicles, crew served weapons, communications systems, and CREW devices) to support the increase in personnel. This fact reinforces the need for us to be creative in developing solutions to support the needed expansion of personnel.

At the same time, the size of the U.S. Forces in Afghanistan has been increased by one Brigade Combat Team with the extension of 3rd BDE 10th Mountain Division until mid June. While some may see these changes as challenges, they actually present the Task Force Phoenix team an exceptional opportunity to provide enhanced mentoring capability for both the Army and the Police in Afghanistan.

Many members of our team, both new and old, have been involuntarily reassigned to support the ANP mission. Our goal is to provide better or equal support and treatment to the personnel who are newly assigned or attached to our team.

I want to encourage every member of the Task Force Phoenix Team to take the time to extend a warm welcome to the great warriors who just arrived. Also, take a moment and thank the 10th Mountain Soldiers, who have been extended, for their service.

Douglas A. Pritt
BG, USA
Commanding



On Point w/ the CSM

Warriors,

Webster's dictionary defines diversity as : "the inclusion of different people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization."

I would argue with anyone anywhere, that Task Force Phoenix is the most diverse organization in the current war-fight.

We are a conglomeration of people. We have a diverse military make-up, a mixture of reserve component and active duty services. We have Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. We represent 49 states, three U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.

Not only do we have a wide variety of service-members, we have a diverse set of civilian employees. Our civilian employees come from all walks of life and many different countries. They are from MPRI, KBR, Titan, DynCorp International, and many other contracted agencies.

We also have many local nationals on our team, ranging from interpreters to employees that help take care of the day to day operations of the Task Force, as well as our Afghan National Security Force counterparts.

Our coalition partners add to all this complexity. We have many different countries represented as members of our Task Force: The United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, Romania, Mongolia, Italy, Germany, Croatia, New Zealand, France, Sweden, Poland, Norway and Slovakia.

I think it is easy to see that Task Force Phoenix is clearly diverse and has one of the most complex missions in the entire world. The reason the task force is successful is because of that diversity. The depth and breadth of knowledge and experience is incredible. We are able to meet and solve problems because of these incredible resources and the creativity that stems from such a diverse set of minds and personalities. Do not go home without getting to know as many different members of the Task Force that you possibly can. What an opportunity to expand your horizons.

Thank you for the diversity that you personally bring to this great mission.

Brunk Conley
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major

Fellow Patriots,

We are more than half way through the deployment for Task Force Phoenix V and many of us are counting the days until we can be with our loved ones. We have been working hard and putting in long hours and we all miss our homes.

We're all feeling the pressures of new missions and over-crowding. We are in transition and we are gaining resources that will contribute to the success of the task force. In the coming weeks the team is going to grow by an additional 2,500 people.

Tempers can run short when people work together, live together and can't get away for personal time. We need to be flexible. We can not afford at this time to lose focus on our mission or squabble about petty differences. As professionals in the military we are disciplined and we must remain civil towards each other. Civility is the glue that holds us all together.

We are all on the same team with a mission to make this a better place for the Afghan people and help to foster democracy. Remember to focus on our similarities, the commonality of our

goal, and enjoy each other's unique personality traits and quirks.

As the French say, "Vive le Difference!"

Treat each other with respect as part of your military family and remember, even families have their fall-outs. The Global War or Terror has many fronts and the only way we can be successful is if we are all pulling together. We are obligated to our loved ones back home to remain focused so we can return safely. Our loved ones are proud of our service and we will not let them down.

Can't we all just get along?

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Task Force Phoenix Eye Doc Gives Gift of Sight



An Afghan man squints to see an eye chart at the end of the room. He can barely see the chart and can't identify the symbols.

Story and Photos By
1st Lt. Cathrin Fraker

KABUL, Afghanistan – In addition to caring for vision needs of the Warriors of Task Force Phoenix, Lt. Col. James Randolph, Petty Officer 2nd Class Conward Bundrick, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Khalil Weaver, give the gift of sight to the people of Afghanistan.

A villager in his mid-fifties sat down in the exam chair. His look was very serious as he concentrated on the eye chart Weaver, pointed to. Randolph used an antique skiascopy rack to determine the correction the man needed, and Bundrick located a pair of glasses with the appropriate prescription and passed them to the doctor.

Randolph placed the glasses on the man; the change was immediate. He looked at the eye chart and his face transformed. The once stern look was replaced with a bright smile. The man laughed and told the interpreter that he could see. He pointed and said that he could clearly make out the eye chart that was barely visible without the glasses.

“When you get a smile like that, you know you have really helped someone who couldn't see,” Randolph stated.

Together, the team has experienced the smiles of children and adults who have been given the gift of sight.

“People here have so little,” Bundrick said. “To give them something we take for granted, it is the best thing.”

Bundrick and Weaver, both active duty Navy personnel, usually work in a clinical environment. The mission at Task Force Phoenix has given them an opportunity to see the immediate reaction of their patients when they see clearly for the first time.

Although they have only worked together for a short time, Randolph, Bundrick and Weaver have formed a precision team. From setting up for a Cooperative Medical Assistance (CMA) mission to routine exams, each knows their role.

During CMA missions, the team loads up several pairs of glasses, made in different prescriptions, and boxes of equipment to conduct eye exams. Bundrick and Weaver make up over 100 pairs of glasses from frames that have been donated by various organizations and businesses. During a CMA the team can fit anywhere from 40 to 150 people with glasses.

Local villagers line up outside the makeshift exam room waiting for their chance to visit the eye doctor and improve their vision. Eye problems range from normal, age-related vision problems which are easily corrected with reading glasses, to more severe problems and loss of sight. The most common ailment Randolph treats is allergic conjunctivitis which is due to soot, dust, pollen and other pollutants in the air.

Randolph and his team have participated in six CMAs. Each patient is different, but the end result is usually the same, most walk away with a new pair of glasses or medicated eye drops and the smile that reassures the team of their success.

Unfortunately, there are patients that have damage beyond the immediate help of eyeglasses. Some require cataract surgery that is available in Afghanistan. Others require more extensive surgery that is not available in this country. Still others have irreversible conditions that cause permanent loss of sight.

One common cause of blindness in Afghanistan is corneal scarring. The scarring is the result of a simple injury that is left untreated.



The cornea becomes scarred causing permanent damage and loss of sight. Some cases leave the individual with a noticeably disfigured eye.

Nazanin, a young girl with a disfigured eye, came to Randolph for care. Although nothing could be done to restore her sight, Randolph is fitting her for a cosmetic contact that will give her eye a more normal appearance.

The feeling of making a difference has been rewarding and unforgettable for the team. After 37 years in the Army, and 28 years as an optometrist, Randolph still smiles each time someone leaves his office better than they came in.

“This deployment has been the highlight of my career,” Randolph said.



Lt. Col. James Randolph, watches the expression on this man's face as he sees the world for the first time through new glasses.

No More “No



Story By 1st Lt. Amanda Straub

Part Two of a Two-Part Story

GARDEZ, Afghanistan – 3rd Kandak was ambushed receiving insurgent fire from rocket-propelled grenades and small arms while on patrol. An ANA general was in the convoy and bravely exposed himself to fire to direct the Afghan Soldiers. Stapleton jumped from his armored Humvee to secure the general as he continued to command his troops. Turner drove her Humvee into the firefight with Staff Sgt. Arthur Perez manning the crew-served weapon in the turret. The ANA gained even more respect for the medics when they saw that Turner was not afraid or hysterical. She didn't hesitate to take care of her brothers in a firefight.

“The ANA guys treat us like family now,” Turner said. “They call us Mother and Sister.”

Turner and Ivanov take family seriously and both have children at home. Ivanov is the mother of two boys and two girls. Her husband, Pfc. Ognian Ivanov, is also deployed with the 41st Brigade Combat Team as a weapons repair specialist where he is stationed at the same forward operating base with his wife. Ivanov has a civilian career as a lab assistant at Bay Area Hospital in Oregon and has been in the National Guard for five years. Turner has two sons and one daughter, all of whom are serving in the military. She is the director of nursing services at Eugene's Good Samaritan Rehabilitation Center and has been a registered nurse for 10 years and has been in the Army for 16 years. Turner and Ivanov were both deployed in support of

the Hurricane Katrina relief mission in 2005, but this is the first combat tour for both women.

When it comes to the dangers of combat, Turner and Ivanov try to be realistic. They know they are putting themselves in danger every time they accompany the ANA on a mission in the volatile pass between Khost and Gardez. They trust their training and they trust the Soldiers around them to do everything they can to ensure each others' safety.

“My ANA take care of these gals,” Stapleton said. “That's why I don't worry about taking them out with me. They're very protective – the ANA are.”

Despite the hazards, Turner and Ivanov both say that accompanying the ANA on field missions is a wonderful experience.

“It's awesome!” Turner said. “It's what we've been trained to do.”

Medics in the Army receive special training, called Tactical Casualty Care Under Fire, to prepare them to deal with combat situations. They are trained to first, secure an area, and second, to treat casualties. It is a difficult thing for many medics to postpone treating casualties until a firefight is over. But they have been taught that no one is safe until the enemy threat is neutralized, including their patients. Even the best medical care won't help a casualty if they are subsequently injured in further fighting.

“If we have to lay hot lead down range and then treat casualties, that's what we do,” Ivanov said.

Ivanov and Turner roll out with the ANA and their embedded trainers at least once or twice a week. Many of

Girls Allowed”



U.S. Army Photo

their missions require them to stay in the field for six days at a time. Their longest mission was 18 days to establish a new forward operating base in the Khost-Gardez Pass.

“If something goes down, I don’t worry,” Ivanov said. “They’re a bunch of good guys. The ANA really have our backs. They’ll take care of us.”

“You don’t know how you’ll react until that first ambush,” Turner said. “I was more pissed off than anything.”

“It doesn’t really bother me when they [insurgents] shoot at us,” Ivanov said. “It’s the IEDs that worry me.”

Turner and Ivanov began working with 3rd Kandak in support of humanitarian missions. The embedded trainers would coordinate medical assistance missions to nearby villages to make friends, gather intelligence, and help the local population. Turner was surprised when she began treating a man and an interpreter came up and whispered in her ear, “He’s Taliban.”

“It made my stomach turn,” Turner said. Both medics have come to terms with the fact that they must treat anyone in need of assistance during these medical missions.

“At the same time,” Turner said, “we got a lot of useful information. For example we found out about and stopped an illegal checkpoint.”

Treating the casualties of war can take its toll on a person. Turner and Ivanov have been exposed to the most extreme injuries of war, and like all medical professionals, they must deal with the fact that they can not save everyone. Once they responded to a rocket attack at a nearby Kuchi camp. Insurgents had been aiming at the American

base, but hit the camp instead wounding and killing several civilians. Turner and Ivanov were appalled at the gore as well as the pain and fear of the civilians there, but they swallowed their own anxiety and moved about treating everyone even as another rocket landed just a few meters away.

“It’s our job,” Ivanov said. “When you go out you do your job and you don’t think about it until later. You go person to person as fast as you can. You don’t have time to think about it.”

When they lose patients or treat difficult injuries, Turner and Ivanov are grateful to have each other for support.

“The bond we formed before this really helps us get through stuff,” Turner said.

Turner and Ivanov met three years ago during weekend drills in the Oregon National Guard. They became Battle Buddies during pre-mobilization almost a year ago on Valentine’s Day when Turner invited Ivanov to a family dinner while her husband was training.

“Luckily we both ended up at Gardez together,” Turner said. “Our leadership saw that we worked well together.” Turner and Ivanov provide each other with encouragement, advice, listening ears and strong shoulders when times are tough.

“We’re Battle Buddies. It’s what we do,” Ivanov said. “We would die for each other. You don’t think we would?”

“We have our alone time,” Turner said, “but we’re very cohesive. We’re a team.”

“There’s something about the Battle Buddy system that the Army is completely right on,” Ivanov said.

All In The Family - Mother and Son Serve Together

Story and Photos By
Lt. Janette Arencibia

KABUL, Afghanistan – They spent most of their lives riding in the same vehicle. When headed out on a mission together in Kabul, Afghanistan, Sgt. Donna Mitchell and Spc. Kenniston Allan Vogal are required to ride separately. These warriors are Mother and Son, from Portland, Ore., now deployed to Afghanistan with the 41st Brigade Combat Team.

A tradition of military service runs in the family. Mitchell's father,



Since childhood, Spc. Allan Vogal was driven everywhere by his mother, Sgt. Donna Mitchell. In Afghanistan, they can not ride in the same vehicle.

Billy G. Phebus, is a retired U.S. Army staff sergeant. Her brother is Staff Sgt. Steven D. Phebus, Air Force Reserve based in Portland. Her nephew, Jason Phebus, is stationed in Minot, N.D. with the Air Force.

"I was working at the recruiter's office before leaving for basic and they told me to think of people who I knew that I could recruit," Vogal said. "The first person that came to mind was my mother. My mother was prior enlisted and I knew she wanted to serve her country again."

Mitchell served in the Air National Guard from 1976-1984. For three years, she worked as a computer operator. Her last five years of service she worked in base supply administration.

"Service to our country is in my blood," Mitchell said, "my father is a retired drill sergeant."

After serving in the Air National Guard, Mitchell worked at Kelly Services Temporary Agency and then stayed home to raise her boys.

Prior to enlisting in the Oregon Army National Guard, Mitchell worked with the State of Oregon as the Renewal Technician for the Oregon State Board of Nursing. After September 11, 2001, she felt compelled to get back in uniform.

Serving alongside her son works to her advantage and at times, has been a advantage to the command. Mitchell said one time she was asked to counsel her son regarding a timeliness issue.

"Master Sgt. Deathridge asked that I talk with him about tardiness," Mitchell said. "Since that hour-long counseling between us, he has never been late."

Vogal is just as quick to admit that at times, a good hour long time-out might be just what he needs. He is a role model and example to his younger brother who just finished basic training.

"My little brother, David Andrew Workinger, is serving with the 218th in Portland, Ore. and just finished basic," Vogal said. "Now he's my gun chief. He wanted to come here with us."

Mitchell and Vogal hold each other in high regards and have an equal amount of respect and admiration for the other's talents and skills.

"She is someone I am proud to



Sgt. Donna Mitchell and her son, Spc. Allan Vogal, stick together while deployed to Afghanistan.

recruit because of her people skills and her knowledge of the military," Vogal said. "She really knows how to command people."

Mitchell is proud of her son's accomplishments and what his service means to the entire family.

"His enthusiasm for the military has been an inspiration to the entire family," Mitchell said.

Together, Mother and Son are proud to serve in Afghanistan, keeping a strong tradition of military ser-



Being deployed with family has its ups and downs as Spc. Allan Vogal discovered when his mother, Sgt. Donna Mitchell gave him an hour-long counseling about tardiness.

New Frenchmen Arrive to Train ANA



Epidote 17 arrives at Camp Phoenix to train Afghan officers in the Kabul area.

**Story and Photo By
1st Lt. Amanda Straub**

KABUL, Afghanistan - New faces are all over Camp Phoenix. New arrivals from 218th South Carolina National Guard are here to provide relief in place for the 2-18th Field Artillery Battalion from Ft. Sill, Okla. and assume the internal Security Forces mission in Afghanistan. New embedded trainers have arrived from 1st Infantry Division Ft. Riley, Kan. and are on their way downrange for assignments with the Afghan National Army (ANA). And a new French detachment, Epidote 17, is here to train ANA officers as part of Task Force Phoenix.

Epidote 17 consists of 35 Soldiers

from all over France. Most of the Soldiers are from Grenoble in the French Alps and are part of the 93rd Mountain Artillery Battalion, proudly wearing the big blue beret of the mountain troops. The rest of the Soldiers come from the French Training Command. Col. Eric Mauger, Commander, says 14 of his Soldiers are trainers at the Captain Commander's Course at Kabul Military

Training Center and ten are trainers at the Command and General Staff College.

The French detachment is located at the south end of Camp Phoenix where they have affectionately named their area, "Camp Lafayette," in memory of the French General Marquess of La Fayette who fought for American independence in the battles of Brandywine and Yorktown during the American Revolutionary War.

Mauger's group seems to be a friendly, fun-loving group. The French Soldiers at Camp Phoenix provide a bazaar every two weeks at the south end of camp for all Soldiers to enjoy. Mauger says they

also enjoy soccer and volleyball very much.

"Don't hesitate to contact us for a match!" Mauger said.

Maj. Hugues Chauvet is offering a French Course at the education center every Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 1945 and 2130. Overall, this new group of Soldiers is excited to be here in Afghanistan and eager to make a difference in the lives of the Afghan citizens. Mauger encourages everyone to come and visit "Camp Lafayette."

"If you want any more information, you are always welcome in the French Quarter!" Mauger said.



Col. Eric Mauger is the proud Commander of the new French training group, Epidote 17.

Medical Missions Succeed With Joint Involvement



A Special Forces Dentist treats a young Afghan girl in Shindand.

**Story By Staff
Sgt. Matt Leas
207th RSAC
PAO**

SHINDAND, Afghanistan - People in the Shindand district received some desperately needed help during a medical assistance mission from 12-15 January. The

joint-service, joint-nation effort was executed in three villages over a span of four days. The mission targeted the village of Shindand for two days as well as the villages of Shouz and Adraskan.

A full compliment of Special Forces, Army, Air Force, Navy, and Romanian doctors, dentist's, physician assistants, veterinarians and medics on site treated the ailments of the local populace.

"We mostly just saw regular aches and pains that are

relatively easy to solve," Maj. Lisa Mitchell, 207th RSAC doctor, said.

The medical team treated close to 300 people, male and female, young and old, and everyone in between. Staff Sgt. Glenn Yeager, a medic serving with 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, spent most of his day handing out Motrin and Vitamins.

"For the males, it's mostly been headaches, pain, and regular cold symptoms," Yeager said. "I did see a pretty nasty infection too. There's only so much we can do to help and then it's up to the individual to maintain their health."

The Special Forces team leader explained that medical assistance missions are important to the Special Forces mission. Medical assistance missions lend credibility to the Afghan National Army, who are always on site, and show the Afghan people that American and Afghan Armies alike are truly here to help them. These missions demonstrate good governance to the people and ensures local support for the War on Terror.

As the doctors and military trainers return to their bases, the villagers express their gratitude. Hopefully, the next time a coalition convoy drives through this area, the people will not react by picking up rocks, but by waving and smiling.

Featured Patriot - Sgt. Ransom Bodeen



Sgt. Ransom Bodeen enjoys driving in Afghanistan, and the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Afghans citizens. He also enjoys serving his country and fellow Soldiers.

Story and Photo By Sgt. 1st Class Tom Roberts

Sgt. Ransom B. Bodeen hails from Sutherlin, Ore., but has also lived in Washington and Chile.

Bodeen teaches High School Spanish, and English as a second language. He is truly sensitive to cultural differences and has found that his teaching experience of three years comes in handy when dealing with local nation-

als. His truck driving duties in the Logistical Task Force are a far cry from his daily responsibilities as a High School teacher, but Bodeen's multicultural experience has helped him in many situations in Afghanistan.

"I hope to remember the hard life the people of Afghanistan have here and by contrast, how blessed our own nation is," Bodeen said.

Bodeen's platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Gallardo, is delighted with Bodeen's performance and contributions to the Task Force Phoenix mission.

"He's a great asset to our team and leads the way to our unit's success," Gallardo said. "He contributes his experience, tactical competency and sets the standard for others to follow."

As a truck driver, Bodeen stays extremely busy running supplies and personnel around Afghanistan.

"I do all the things that the MOS entails," Bodeen said, "from being convoy commander to driving and making sure missions get done."

Gallardo says Bodeen is modest about his accomplishments.

"He assumes duties as mentor and counselor," Gallardo said. "He is way above his peers in his professionalism

and technical knowledge. He also promotes esprit-de-corps and unit motivation."

Bodeen says he misses hiking back home and sword fights with his best friend's kids, but mostly, he misses the ability to get away and spend time by himself. Still, Bodeen is grateful for the chance to serve his country here in Afghanistan and he serves for many reasons.

"There are a number of servicemen in my family," Bodeen said. "My grandfather fought in World War II and my uncle was in Vietnam. I also was directionless when I was 20 and I knew the military would jumpstart things for me. I would like to look back at my National Guard service knowing I did my best and challenged myself and served my country well."

Bodeen believes the mission is going great in Afghanistan so far, but he says many Soldiers yearn to do more.

"I know many Soldiers want direct contact with the ANA (Afghan National Army) and would like to do more to help rebuild parts of the infrastructure," Bodeen said. "However, our ETTs are doing a great job and our country is making a difference here."

Sound Off - Who's Going To Win The Superbowl?



"The Bears beat New Orleans and my team, the Patriots were beat by Indianapolis, so I want the Bears to win it all."

SPC Cody Magby
180th SECFOR
Caney, Okla.



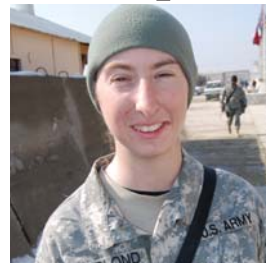
"I want the Bears to win. They're my brothers favorite team."

SPC Stephanie Coulter
Missoula, Mont.
C Co, 141 LTF



"Chicago, since they took out the Seattle Seahawks."

MSG Dana Ray Rappe
HHC 41st BDE J8
Salem, Ore.



"I'm rooting for Chicago. I always like the Underdogs."

SPC Jennifer LeBlond
A Co, 141 LTF
Saint Helens, Ore.



"The Colts. I think they are the better balanced team and they have came back and fought to win."

SSG Bernard Fleming
263rd SECFOR
Columbia, S.C.

The Phoenix Patriot is also available online at the Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V website:
<http://www.taskforcephoenix.com/>