



The PHOENIX PATRIOT

“...From the Ashes...”

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Photo By 2nd Lieut. Amanda Straub

CJTF Phoenix Mourns Three Fallen Brothers

Story by Lt. Janette Arencibia

The strength, fortitude, and service of three American Soldiers will become part of the Afghan legacy as Master Sgt. Bernard Deghand, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Taua'e Fuga, and Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Lindsey are honored for their contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom. The example they provided for the Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers

who served beside them will ensure the success of the continued fight for freedom in Afghanistan.

All three Soldiers recently lost their lives while engaging the enemy in combat as part of Operation Mountain Fury. The operation is intended to limit insurgent abilities to conduct operations and organize continued violence and criminal activity in the Eastern and Southern regions of Afghanistan.

The operation's key tasks include insurance of long term peace and growing economic prosperity by eradication of insurgent forces with focused operations in Ghazni and Paktika. The efforts to extend the capabilities of established governance are parallel to the push across the East. In areas where Taliban occupation exists, coalition forces are infiltrating routes and transition areas at the eastern border. As operations extend to areas

where Taliban have established strongholds, our Soldiers face increased threat and danger.

Families who have lost a Soldier to date can rest assured that their efforts contributed directly to the great success of Operation Enduring Freedom in bringing prosperity and peace to Afghanistan. To date, American troops and their families have honored the lives of 276 service members.

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On Point w/ the CSM

Jungleers,

It is with great sadness and yet great honor that I write this column as a tribute to our fallen warriors. Over the last two weeks we have had three of our warriors pay the ultimate sacrifice. I could not be prouder of the Task Force in the way that we have

honored and respected these great Americans.

I was touched beyond belief as I talked to the pallbearers at each ramp ceremony. I was moved to tears as our warriors dropped all they were doing to honor the memory of our fallen comrades.

It should bring into sharp focus the fleetingness of this life. I remember talking to Staff Sgt. Lindsey a couple of weeks before he was taken from us. We were sharing our experiences in Iraq, in New Orleans, and here in Afghanistan. I was amazed at his commitment to duty, his country, and his family.

Although, I never had the opportunity to meet Master Sgt. Deghand, or Sgt. 1st Class Fuga personally, I am sure of their commitment to those same values and way of life. I have heard stories from their peers and comrades and have no doubt that they were men of conviction, honor, and values.

I ask that you continue to keep them in your thoughts and remember that Freedom isn't Free, and we owe our all to continue to drive toward completing our mission in their honor.

Brunk Conley
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major



General Guidance

Warriors,

Last week three great Warriors from our task force were killed in action while engaging the enemy; Sgt. 1st Class Mike Fuga, Staff Sgt. Brad Lindsey and Master Sgt. Bernard Deghand. All three were exceptional Soldiers who volunteered for this mission

because they felt a personal commitment to defend freedom and protect their loved ones. Each had a family and didn't want their children to live under the threat of terrorism. These Soldiers, and their families, sacrificed a great deal so they could serve their nation. They were proud of their service and were role models for others. Rather than following the path where others had gone, they went where there was no path and left a trail of accomplishments for others to follow.

These brave men were warriors and were all battle tested. Each felt discipline was an essential characteristic to accomplish our mission and demonstrated that discipline on a daily basis. As seasoned veterans they knew how to conduct themselves in combat and when they came under fire they protected their fellow warriors. Their actions saved the lives of others and demonstrated their professionalism.

Their fellow Soldiers described them as caring and compassionate but demanding of excellence. They took time to mentor and coach at a very personal level. All three will be remembered for their commitment to the development of the Afghan National Army Soldiers and Leaders. They fought alongside ANA Soldiers and wanted to be on the front lines where they could make the most impact.

We will miss Sgt. 1st Class Fuga, Staff Sgt. Lindsey and Master Sgt. Deghand and we grieve in their loss, but we also honor their service. Their dedication to the mission, our nation, the citizens of Afghanistan and the free world, is what set them apart as special Soldiers and Patriots. They will live forever in our hearts and minds. As we continue this most important of missions let us rededicate our efforts in their memory.

Douglas A. Pritt
Brigadier General,
Commanding

Fellow Patriots,

We are serving in eventful times in a dangerous place. Some of you encounter danger frequently and eliminate it. Others continue the work of building a prosperous nation through humanitarian assistance projects, medical assistance missions, education facilitation and economic restoration. Some of you traverse the hazardous countryside delivering necessary supplies and personnel to sustain the fight. Many of you are engaged on a daily basis mentoring Soldiers in the ANA, developing their

tactical skills, leadership abilities, and nurturing experienced logisticians. Still others of you are working in remote locations with your Afghan National Army (ANA) counterparts to hunt down and purge insurgent threats from this country as part of Operation Mountain Fury.

In the last two weeks we have seen a rise in insurgent activity and we all have mourned the loss of our fallen comrades. They worked tirelessly in support of our operation here because they believed whole-heartedly in our mission. Let us all band together in memory of their strength

and sacrifice to continue the fight for a free Afghanistan. If this country is not free from the rule of terrorists who seek to harm and control Afghans and citizens of every nation, then none of us can be free.

The stories in *The Phoenix Patriot* are told to you by your counterparts deployed around the country. Loyal support the members of the task force, your military family, and the people of Afghanistan in everything you do. Above all, remember your loved ones back home and all of the things that make fighting to end terrorism worth the trip.

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Medics Overcoming Gender Barriers in Afghanistan

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Margaret C. Nelson

FOB CAMP STONE, Afghanistan – Sgt. Nova J. Dragoo, 1042nd Medevac, Salem, Ore., says her team of female medics is not letting gender bar them from accomplishing their goals of, “teaching any Afghan, or soldier willing to learn.”

The two medics are doing just that by crossing cultural differences at FOB (Forward Operating Base) Camp Stone, about 10 miles south of Herat. They are teaching combat lifesaving skills (CLS) to approximately 60 male Afghan translators and civilian contractors not accustomed to receiving instruction, guidance, and correction from females.

“People were skeptical at the beginning about how many Afghans would show up because of our gender,” Dragoo said.

“We heard the only reason the local nationals were showing up was because we are females,” Sgt. Brooke L. Welborn, Portland, Ore., added.

“That’s a plus in my books. If being female drew them into the classroom than obviously the informa-



Afghan interpreters check-out one of the medical “dummies” during a class-break.

tion we’re teaching is keeping them here,” said Dragoo.

An interpreter for the coalition



Army Sgt. Nova J. Dragoo, Oregon’s Charlie Medical Company, shows a student where to find a pulse.

forces is one of the most dangerous occupations for Afghan nationals to hold as Taliban insurgents target them for assisting coalition forces. They are also exposed to danger as they accompany troops into combat and missions around the country translating the languages spoken here: Dari, and Pashto. They come from all over Afghanistan.

“We initially volunteered to teach a first aid class. It was so well received that we expanded it into a CLS class instead,” Welborn said.

The seven-week course is held for two hours every Friday, typically a day off for Afghans and a “relaxed” day for most Soldiers deployed here.

“The interpreters chose to be here on their day off. It was the only time they could commit as a group,” said Dragoo.

The course, in its infancy, is the first of its kind at Camp Stone. The attendance initially totaled around 40, and now numbers near 60 with the addition of civilian contractors.

“The interpreters are eager to learn,” Welborn said. “They know what we’re teaching is important and they catch on quickly.”

When asked why give up his Fridays to attend this course especially, a Kabul native said, “It is a

very important class because I may be the only one left to help my coalition friends...my buddies.” The 21 year-old has been assisting U.S. forces for two years and this is the first opportunity he has had to learn lifesaving skills.

Another interpreter said that he wanted to, “Serve his country and assist the Afghan National Army’s (ANA) efforts to establish peace and security here.”

The U.S. medics covered instruction on airway clearing and provided demonstration on a mannequin followed by a question and answer period. The class was then broken-down into groups of eight to 10 for “hands-on” exercises on mannequins, and each other.

The enthusiasm and interest amongst the students was evident throughout the lesson with complete participation. The medics monitored the groups making on-the-spot corrections when necessary.

The interpreters are between the ages of 18 – 26 which could explain the quick acceptance of the medics’ gender.

“Maybe I was feeling funny when I first saw that it was females teaching, but they know what they are talking about,” said another Herat native.

***The names and faces of interpreters have been omitted for their safety.**



An Afghan student looks over the CLS assessment test.

Training and Teamwork

Story and Photos by
1st Lieut. Cathrin Fraker

GARDEZ, Afghanistan – “Now this is National Guard duty!” jokes a Soldier from 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company.

Soldiers from 2nd Platoon are engaged in moving and stacking sand bags around their “B-Huts” adding a level of protection to their sleeping quarters against rocket attacks.

Everyone in the platoon takes part, including 2nd Lieut. Jake Howard, the platoon leader from Salem Oregon.

“The sandbag detail is a force protection issue that is being addressed by the whole camp,” Howard says. “We will continue the detail once every other week or so until the job is complete.”

A job like stacking sandbags can be a little less than good clean fun, but it doesn’t bother these Soldiers. They carry on with their work smiling, laughing and covered in dirt and sand.

“We are always cracking jokes and playing games. It makes the time go by faster,” Cpl. Samuel Gates, Klamath Falls, OR, said.

Whether the Soldiers are out on patrol or pulling guard duty in a tower, the same positive attitude is present, but a solid team is not built overnight. The Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, like many in the Task Force, have been working together since March at Camp Shelby. The Non-commissioned Officer leaders are an essential link to the overall unity of the team.

“The squad leaders do a great job with team cohesion. They instill it in every Soldier,” Howard said.

Time and training has bonded the platoon establishing a sense of unity and fierce loyalty.

“We are a family, we have our petty arguments from time to time but all of that is put aside when we have a mission,” Howard said.



Teamwork in 2nd Platoon makes tedious tasks bearable.

Stabilize SECFOR



Sgt. Derryl D. James supervises the training of his close-knit Soldiers.

Story by 1st Lieut. Cathrin Fraker

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – “We have the best mission in Afghanistan,” Pfc. Jason R. Haataja, of Corvallis, Ore, said.

Haataja is a member of 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1-180th Infantry Battalion, Security Force (SECFOR) for the 205th Regional Command Assistance Group (RCAG). This group of Soldiers is tight-knit and has been through a lot together over the last three months.

During a recent trip to Garmsir 3rd Platoon Soldiers put all of their training to work as they came in contact with insurgents on many occasions.

“You hear about all of this stuff, you train for it, and you expect it. And then when it happens, it all comes together. You understand why you do the things you have been trained to do,” Spc. Scott J. Delapp, Salem, Ore., said.

Training is a high priority for 3rd Platoon. When they are not on a mission, they are training to keep their skills sharp. There is a significant amount of confidence that comes from being well trained. During 3rd Squad’s first ambush, training became instinct. Sgt. Derryl D. James of Albany, Ore describes the incident.

“It is funny, the communication inside the vehicle. I was surprised. I remember thinking, ‘Wow, everyone is so calm.’” James said. “You have to be loud because things are loud outside. But the radio traffic was calm. The driver maintained a straight line. Everyone’s training just kicked in.”

1st Lieut. Vincent P. Habeck of Beaverton, Ore. ensures his Soldiers are trained and ready. The regimen is strict.

“They have weekly required training. Battle drill training is required, PT is required and we throw in additional training.” Habeck said.

Sons of Soldiers

Story by 2nd Lieut.
Jeffrey Fullmer

Two days after I arrived in country I hopped into a Ford Ranger and drove to the village of Shir-Zai.

I drove by a swimming pool that once heard the happy ring of laughter. Now the pool is dried up, the voices silenced by time. Once an oasis for the Russian Bear, little remains. The road is cluttered with abandoned Soviet equipment. A junkyard holds inoperable T-34 tanks, a shell of a once powerful army.

In the distance a massive apartment complex towers above the ground. It has been bombed repeatedly, and is largely toppled, a glaring symbol

of the Soviet fall. Now the families of Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers reside in the hollowed out rooms.

We drive down a dirty street, marred by potholes. As the burning sun beats upon us we pass through a makeshift Afghan town. Children boldly smile and wave. One, then another, and soon a horde of children rush the vehicle, begging for water and candy.

Full of the happy ignorance of youth, the sadness of reality remains undiscovered to them. One of them boys me a red action figure, the only toy he owns. He motions that he is giving it to me and I desperately tell him no. That toy means so much more to him than it will to me. Neverthe-

less, he throws it into the back of our Ford Ranger and runs away with glee, proud to give a Soldier a gift. A tear swells in my eye as I realize he gave all he had to give.

As I enter Shir-Zai I look back to the Afghan town, red with the setting sun.

Although they have little, the space is their own, no longer riddled by the rule of the Soviets. Children play in the streets and Soldiers walk

happy and free.

The Afghans are rebuilding. Hope rings in the air, carried along by the laughter of little children. All that is needed now is for the entire country do what the families of Shir-Zai did-rebuild.



Photo by 2nd Lieut. Amanda Straub

Young boys, sons of ANA Soldiers in Shir-Zai, attest to the progress thier fathers are making rebuilding Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander Visits Oldest Kandak in Afghanistan

Story and Photos by
Maj. Timothy B. Smart

KUNDUZ, Afghanistan – is home to the oldest Kandak in the Afghan National Army (ANA), 1st Kandak, 1st Brigade, 209th Corps (1-1-209th Kandak.) The Kandak Commander, Lt. Col. Majid, briefed Lt. Gen. Eikenberry, CFC-A Commander, Command Sgt. Maj. Wood and Maj. Gen Shaw, ANA Ministry of Defense, on his concept of operation and mission sets the past few months.

Eikenberry and Shaw seemed impressed with the recent success of missions and presence patrols in the Northeastern region of Afghanistan. Eikenberry asked Majid about individual weapons qualifications (IWQ),



Lieut. Gen Eikenberry and Col. Brandsetter discuss the multitude of projects and upgrades in 1-1-209th Kandak.

physical fitness training, and the integration of the coalition partners. The IWQ in 1st Kandak is conducted

six times a year and the physical fitness training cycles every six weeks with a 25 km road march.

Majid praised the team of coalition partners and the Soldiers in the 1-1-209th Kandak. Saying that with time and patience, security and stability will reign in the Northern provinces with the help and mentoring of American menroting and reconstructino teams.

Majid did raise two major issues with Shaw: personnel strength and deployment pay. The Kandak will lose 80 Soldiers to retirement in the nest three months and they are already below strength. If they do not recieve replacements security in the region may suffer.

Eikenberry praised the kitchen staff and support platoon leader during his visit saying, “This is the cleanest kitchen I have ever seen in the Afghan National Army.”

The visit continued with a lunch at the PRT and a short presentation by the PRT Commander, COL Brandstetter, who delivered a clear overview of the uniqueness of the Kunduz PRT and their four pillars.

“The ANSF partnerships with the PRT play a major role in the success here in the North,” Brandsetetter said.

Brandsetetter emphasized that 90 percent of the people in the region are pro-Western and desire security and stability. They support U.S. Operations, in large part, because of the outstanding work of the teams in place there.

The Mission of a Lifetime

Story by Capt.
Jack Gillentine Jr

I've been on several missions where we captured bad guys or weapons, but today was one of the most rewarding missions I've been on in a much more enjoyable sort of way.

Three weeks ago Staff Sgt. David Bowman and I went with our Afghan National Army (ANA) weapons company to a little town called Mashkay Kala, about eight km south of Orgun, for a leader's engagement.

It was a new experience. As we pulled into the center of the village several older men came out to investigate the ruckus. Young boys peered out of colorful doors, from behind the men, with wide eyes staring at the strange new people with extraordinary vehicles.

I thought these children must think we look like something from outer space, but then I realized they probably don't even know about outer space. So I had no perspective for what these children must have thought.

I jumped down from the gun turret to meet the village elders. I shook hands with the nearest man and was surprised to hear him respond in english, "Welcome to my village, my name is Hassan."

Hassan led me to a shaded area, where a couple of the older children spread a large colorful bamboo mat on the ground. I carefully placed a boot carrying half of

300lbs on the mat, and knelt down. The village elders joined me on the mat sitting cross-legged.

The men began to claim their boys, and they appeared to relax a bit. I asked Hassan and the others what their village needed to become more prosperous. He told me they needed a democratic school, that the madrasa was ok for conservative education, but they wanted to teach children, (girls included) more modern classes. He pointed to several of the men surrounding me and explained that they are teachers. He also asked for pens and paper for the school children.

We finished our chai and Hassan walked us back to our vehicles where we donned our space suits with dark glasses and cranked up our large loud humvees. The children stood back as I waved goodbye from behind the Mk-19 in the gun turret.

I returned to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Orgun-e and e-mailed friends and relatives. I described my visit and asked them to send pens and paper for the school children. The response was overwhelming. I've collected hundreds of pens and notebooks, from the states.

Bowman, and I returned today with our ANA counterparts to deliver the school supplies I received and humanitarian assistance items. We received a warm welcome from the same elders we talked to before. We talked about family and the United States while sipping chai.

We walked to the school where teachers and children were outside waiting for us. I felt like a

Capt. Jack Gillentine Jr. shares chai tea with the village elders of Mashkay Kala while discussing their needs.



celebrity walking down the red carpet. The teachers made an imaginary line in the air to keep the students back. I was impressed with their discipline.

The headmaster gave a command and they jumped to their feet at nearly attention. I was again impressed. The headmaster asked if I wanted to speak to them.

I decided that I should just talk to them like American children. I told them that they should be proud of the ANA, and that I was honored to be in Afghanistan, and that if they studied hard in their new free country that they could be whatever they wanted to be.

We moved back to our vehicles as the ANA began to distribute humanitarian assistance items and school supplies.

Surrounded by children, I thanked the headmaster and the elders for allowing us to visit their village. Several children chased our convoy until they could not run any farther.

I will not soon forget this experience. The look on the children's faces when the ANA distributed material was priceless.

I like conducting combat operations and looking for bad guys as much as the next Soldier, and I'm not naive enough to think that we won over Mashkay Kala today with some paper and pens, but it certainly was a step in the right direction. If all of us can make that little difference then the US Army won't be here for long.



Afghan Soldiers from 3-2-203rd Heavy Weapons Company distribute humanitarian assistance items to the children of Mashay Kala.

Featured Patriot - MSG Dave Bauer

Story by 2nd Lieut.
Amanda Straub

Master Sgt. Dave Bauer is an outstanding non-commissioned officer dedicated to the development and well-being of junior Soldiers in both the American and Afghan Armies.

“He is a true patriot and loyal to his country, his command and all the Soldiers he serves with,” Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Roy said.

According to Roy, Bauer is normally quiet and hard working, but on a deeper level, he has a vast wealth of experience he is willing to share as a master logistician and multiple combat veteran.

Bauer began his career as a Marine in Vietnam and now, after 33 years of service, he is finishing his career with Task Force Phoenix here in Afghanistan.

“I was going to get out after 20 years,” Bauer said, “but I was busy

and having fun and forgot to do that.”

Bauer is a Senior Non-commissioned Logistician and mentors three Afghan National Army (ANA) logisticians for 201st Corps. Bauer says it is a great challenge to work with the newly formed army on logistical planning. The ANA is not used to long-term logistical thinking when it comes to preparing missions.

That’s where Bauer comes in.

According to Roy, it is Bauer’s efforts that allow the ETTs and ANA to be combat effective.

“We hear a lot about supporting ETTs,” Roy said, “but Master Sgt. Bauer lives up to the task and even accompanies supply pushes forward.”

Bauer works in Lincoln, Nebraska as a research analyst in his civilian career. He says he misses his family and friends and “the celebration of home” but he enjoys being here working with seasoned professionals and meeting new people in Afghanistan. He says



Photo by Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Roy
Master Sgt. Dave Bauer is an expert logistician, a seasoned veteran, and wise friend.

he loves getting outside the wire to learn about the people and the country.

“I don’t know how you can determine what your purpose in Afghanistan is if you don’t know what Afghanistan is about?” Bauer said. “If we’re going to fight for a country, we should prove that we’re worthy of that fight. It’s hard to do, but be admirable and act admirably.”

Sound Off - What’s Great About Your Homestate?

“Three things: the Ducks, Thursday nights at John Henry’s (it’s 80s night) and Saturday Market.”

Staff Sgt.
Kristen Jenness
PMO and Effects Cell,
62nd Air Lift Wing Command Post
Eugene, OR



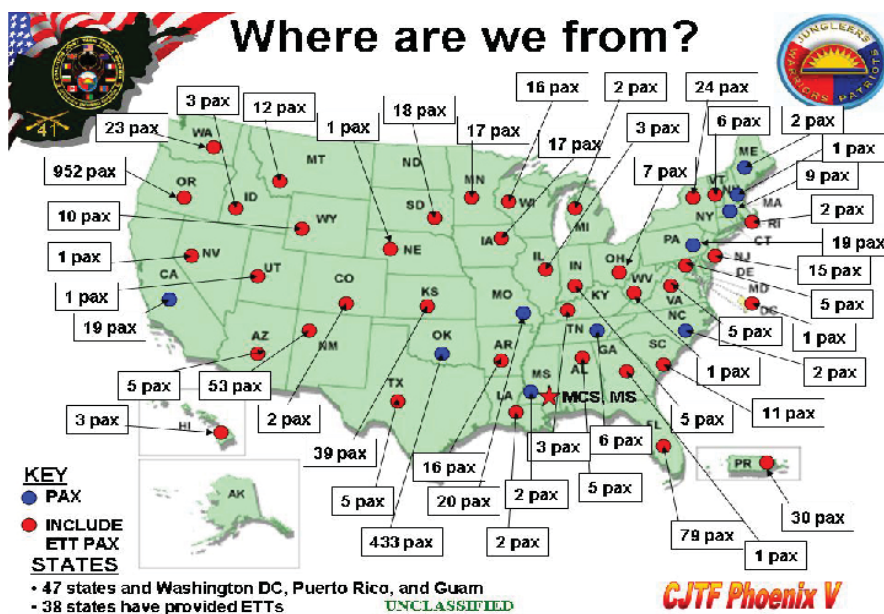
“I love the wide open spaces.”

Spec. Jeffery Cooke
SEC FOR
Durant, OK



“The food; Philly cheesesteak and hoagies. I love to eat!”

Spec. William Marine
Electronic Repairman
B Co, 141 LTF
Philadelphia, PA



“The sun! It’s warm there even in winter. I love the warm and the beaches, the casual island feel. It’s the sunshine state!”

Sgt. Jean F. Gali
Billing Operations
NCO
A Co, 53rd Inf Bde.
Clearwater, FL