



THE TIEN BIEN TIMES

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM X



APRIL 2010

ENGAGING KEY LEADERS



2nd Platoon, A Troop, 1/91 Cavalry, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Soldiers conduct Key Leader Engagements, speak with the local populace, and find out the main concerns in the daily lives of Afghans. Page 9

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For Story Suggestions, contact [SSG Cobbeldick](#)



173rd AIRBORNE
Brigade Combat Team * Sky Soldiers



Equal Opportunity; Remembering Victims of the Holocaust



The United States Holocaust Memorial Council (USHMC) was established in 1980 by public Law 96-388. The council coordinates an annual, national civic commemoration of the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust, held in the Nation's capital. Ceremonies are conducted throughout the U.S. during the annual Days of Remembrance, proclaimed by the USHMC for a designated one-week period (Sunday to Sunday) each spring between mid-April and Mid-May.

In commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has designated **Stories of Freedom: What You Do Matters** as the theme for Days of Remembrance 2010.

STORIES OF FREEDOM: WHAT YOU DO MATTERS

"When I was liberated in 1945 by the American Army, somehow many of us were convinced that at least one lesson will have been learned—that never again will there be war, that hatred is not an option, that racism is stupid.... I was so hopeful."

— Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, during a June 2009 visit to the Buchenwald concentration camp with President Barack Obama, reflecting on his feelings at the moment he was freed.

The United States Congress established the Days of Remembrance as the nation's annual commemoration of the Holocaust and created the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a permanent living memorial to the victims. This year, Holocaust Remembrance Day is Sunday, April 11, 2010. In commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps, the Museum has designated **Stories of Freedom: What You Do Matters** as the theme for the 2010 observance.

As Allied soldiers were closing in on Germany in the spring of 1945, they encountered dozens of concentration camps and were suddenly confronted with the reality of Nazi atrocities. The few surviving victims fully experienced the depths of human evil and depravity. For the soldiers, however, even the brutality of war did not prepare them for what they encountered.

Upon seeing Buchenwald, a member of the 333rd Engineers Regiment stated, "My feeling was that this was the most shattering experience of my life." A U.S. Army chaplain trying to make sense of the carnage wrote to his wife, "This was a hell on earth if there ever was one." After photographing Buchenwald, Margaret Bourke-White wrote to her editor at *Life* magazine, "The sights I have just seen are so unbelievable that I don't think I will believe them myself until I've seen the photographs." One American journalist wrote, "Buchenwald is beyond all comprehension. You just can't understand it, even when you've seen it."

And that was the problem. Survivors and other eyewitnesses understood and believed. But would the world? General Dwight D. Eisenhower grasped this problem and, after visiting a subcamp of Buchenwald, he addressed his staff: "I want every American unit not actually in the front lines to see this place. We are told the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for. Now, at least he will know what he is fighting against."

Eisenhower not only understood that this was a war that at its very essence was a struggle for the freedom of peoples and the ideals on which civilization is based but also that the horror was so extreme that it might not be believed. Realizing that a failure to believe would be a danger for the future of mankind, he ordered other soldiers to visit the camps, and encouraged journalists and members of Congress and the British Parliament to bear witness as well. He wanted others to be, just as he was, "in a position to give *first-hand* evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to 'propaganda.'" And ultimately he was right.

Sixty-four years later, standing at Buchenwald with Elie Wiesel by his side, President Barack Obama acknowledged the value of bearing witness: "We are here today because this work is not finished. To this day, there are those who insist that the Holocaust never happened—a denial of fact and truth that is baseless and ignorant and hateful. This place is the ultimate rebuke to such thoughts, a reminder of our duty to confront those who would tell lies about our history."

President Obama referred to the Holocaust as "our history," understanding that Holocaust memory belongs to all of humanity. Because unlike the battle-hardened soldiers who liberated the camps and brought freedom to Europe, we now know that the unthinkable is thinkable. We know all too well the human capacity for evil and the catastrophic consequences of indifference in the face of evil. And we now realize that to preserve human freedom, **what we do matters**. Every day each of us has the potential to shape the world in which we live. By keeping these stories of freedom alive and building on Elie Wiesel's original hope, each of us must work to promote human dignity and confront hate whenever and wherever it occurs. As the American soldiers who unwittingly became liberators 65 years ago understood, our future depends on it.



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Commander's Corner

Sky Soldiers, Family & Friends,

The American military has invested eight years of effort and we have helped them make great progress toward our mutual goals of Afghan provided security for Afghanistan, but we have much left to do before our partners can fully provide this on their own. Afghanistan must identify and cultivate its leaders in order to gain momentum and turn the corner. Leadership is at the center of everything for the Afghan military, government and populace.

We have gone to great lengths to understand the Afghan culture and its people. We know what we need to do to bring forth success here. I am proud of how our teams have managed to improve our partnership with the Afghan security forces and develop their future leaders.

There is no purely military solution to the problems that have impacted Afghanistan. We have learned that we cannot kill our way to victory here, although we retain the ability to use lethal force when necessary to protect our forces and Afghan citizens. This is why the 173rd ABCT has invested so much time and resources into learning how to communicate better with the Afghan leaders.

The commander of the NATO training mission, responsible for training the Afghan army into a force capable of taking over security for Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, has ordered that development of leadership skills be a top priority.

"It's more important than equipment," Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the top allied commander here, said in an interview. "It's more important than doctrine. It's more important even than ideology."

And experts believe, and I believe that leadership may be the single most important factor that determines whether the Taliban is defeated and the U.S. military can go home.

What we need to focus on now is a strategy that will allow coalition forces to hand over the reigns to the Afghan government and its military. We want to do that, but before we can, Afghan leaders who are capable of building and leading such a force must be in place. People such as Governor Fidai, through his vision and strong leadership, have been dispelling conspiracy theories and managing perceptions with credibility and transparency, discussing grievances with elders and conducting Peace Shuras that are winning over both minds and hearts here. It is people like Colonel Merab Uddin, Logar Province's new National Directorate of Security (NDS) Chief, who is courageously

taking on law enforcement issues, and is demonstrating that he is a true partner in every sense of the word.

The Afghanistan government benefits when leaders promote the idea of Afghans showing increased ownership and tackling tough problems with substance and genuine effort. Leaders like Governor Fidai and Colonel Merab continue to fuel the engines of change in Afghanistan.

Our role continues to be that of facilitators, supporters and partners here, helping the ANP and ANA with their objectives of security and governance that builds trust and brings the citizens of Afghanistan to their government. Once the Afghans can look to their government to meet their needs, this will reduce their feelings of confusion and fear should the Taliban try to bully the citizenry here.

As for our part in all of this, we will achieve our objectives here by creating momentum that yields increased reporting from the local populace. We are seeing more accurate information being fed to our Soldiers here in our Area of Operation (AO). And that big increase in reporting helps immeasurably. We are seeing the fruition of training, as members of the Afghan Army, Police and Air Corps are taking over missions and succeeding at their objectives. This increased ANSF capacity that we are seeing now is a byproduct of all the training and time we have invested in their forces.

We want to solve this. To do so, we are striving for lasting solutions that will stand the test of time. It is encouraging to see the training evolve into large-scale operations where ANSF personnel can go in and hit an area, where they can clear a village on their own and this increase in capacity is a real turning point for this war.

We will continue to help our partners secure their villages and districts. We will work together to develop those institutions which will sustain the Afghan people and we will help the Afghans develop leaders capable of carrying these successes forward.



Col. Jim Johnson
Bayonet-6

T I E N B I E N F L A S H B A C K



Scouts of the 173rd Airborne Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, react as villagers below run after spotting the soldiers moving on the hillside during Operation Destined Strike in Chowkay Valley, Afghanistan Aug. 22, 2007

The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team's Soldiers have seen many wars and conflicts.

Scouts of the 173rd Airborne Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, pull over-watch during Operation Destined Strike while fellow paratroopers search a village in the Chowkay Valley in Kunar Province, Afghanistan Aug. 22, 2007



Army Maj. Christopher Milstead, attached to Task Force Bayonet, watches as a 500-pound bomb lands on a Taliban position after a small fire fight during Operation Destined Strike in Chowkay Valley, Afghanistan Aug. 22, 2007.



Why are the Taliban so Popular Today?

Editorial by Army Staff Sgt. Donald Reeves, TF Bayonet Public Affairs

After eight years in Afghanistan, spending huge amounts of money and time on winning hearts and minds, one has to wonder why the Taliban, who harshly oppress the populace they overpower, are still so popular.

Two quick reasons: security and religion. Remember that every time you go into a village on patrol, you can't stay and protect every single person. You don't know anyone's name. You are a stranger in a strange land. You are going to be gone by nightfall.

The Taliban that goes into that village is almost guaranteed to be related to someone. It's like going to a small town. Everybody knows everyone and their cousins, even if they moved away years ago. If you knew somebody who was a powerful man in the mob, and their cousin came and stirred up a little trouble for somebody else, would you turn him in?

Well, you would, of course, with all your Army values, but a lot of people would fear the payback of the mob boss. Who wants a member of the Taliban Sopranos knocking on their door in the middle of the night?

Values are another reason the Taliban remain popular in some areas. What?! Values?! These guys lop off hands, ears, and plant bombs in ways that would make James Gandolfini blush.

You have to remember that most of the country is devoutly religious. However, four out of five of them can't even read their own holy book. So when a guy comes along and says, "according to the Koran, if you help Americans, bad things (spiritual things, not just getting your face rearranged) will happen to you," they have to take his word for it.

Plus, you have to look at the alternative. In a country that has been run by thugs for a generation, a culture of corruption has developed. The government is constantly weeding out corrupt officials that would be right at home in the Vegas Mafia.

So, when the Taliban can come in with religious authority (and a pair of hand-loppers) to solve land disputes before the government can figure out who to pay off, you can see where the popularity might go.

So what's your role in this ISAF Soldier? How do you fight back against seemingly insurmountable propaganda?

ISAF Commander, General Stanley McChrystal once said "You don't win an insurgency by killing people, you win an insurgency by convincing people."

THE TIEN BIEN TIMES ASKS...

What is the one song you listen to get you going in the morning?

Army Spc. Shannon Thomas-driver

G Battery, 4-319



AHN - "I don't know why"

Spc. Deyonte Mosley- combat cameraman
982nd combat camera



Pastor Troy - "Vice Versa"

Spc. Karolina Miller-fueler G Battery, 4-319



Brookroyal - "punchline"

Sgt. Jason Hernandez-infantryman D Co, 1-503rd



The Proclaimers - "I would walk 500 miles"

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A First Class Mortar Team

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Donald Reeves
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- On the valley floor of the Baraki Barak Valley a patrol base has been established. U.S Army Soldiers stand watch on the Squad Automatic Weapons scanning the distance dotted by herds of sheep and goats.

Soldiers not on watch have given up finding any shade, made dramatically scarce by the midday sun beating down on them. At the southern end of the patrol base, Pvt. 1st Class Jacob A. Wheat, of Rome, Georgia says, "Let's run through it again."

Pvt. 1st Class Richie M. Jimenez and Pvt. 1st Class Adam F. Zach enter new numbers into a handheld computer, plot new points and run through fire drills on the mortar cannon that they have lugged into the desert.

As part of a three-man mortar team deployed to the Logar Province of Afghanistan with Anvil Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, the privates take their job as indirect fire infantrymen seriously. They push each other to train on all aspects of the job.

"Every single one of us has to learn each other's job in case one of us goes down," said Zach. "We all have to know each other's job."

A mortar can launch high explosive projectiles in close support of troops. Mortar teams open up more options to commanders of units in contact with enemy forces because the HE rounds have a wide kill zone and can reach places otherwise difficult to target due to their high trajectory.

"It's a bad boy," said Jimenez. "It'll push out a lot of rounds in a short amount of time too. If our guys got in a tic, we could suppress the enemy real quick," said Jimenez, using the common acronym for 'troops in contact.'

It takes a lot of skill to fire the mortar accurately.



"If our guys got in a tic, we could suppress the enemy real quick," said Jimenez, using the common acronym for 'troops in contact.'"

"There's a lot of stuff that could go wrong," said Wheat.

"We have the LHMBBC, the light handheld computer, that you put all the information in," said Jimenez. "If it goes down, we have to break out the plotting board."

"That's why we always carry a plotting board. It basically does the same thing, it just takes a little bit longer," Jimenez said.

According to Jimenez a well-trained team should be able to adjust fire and launch a new round within 30 seconds to a minute.

Zach explained some of the other skills needed. "Another thing you have to be proficient at is map reading. You've got to be good at math and map reading. You also have got to know how to plot points," said Zach.

Zach said that map reading is something his Afghan National Army counterparts, who they train with, excel at.

"They're real good at finding points on the map," said Zach.

"Whenever I'm plotting my targets out, the ANA sergeant will come over, and he'll do some of it himself too," said Jimenez.

"They come out, and we have them hang rounds," said Jimenez. "They do gun drills with us," he said.

The team thought they would get to put their skills to the test recently. A patrol heard an explosion and reported contact to over the radio.

"I yelled contact and instantly started grabbing for stuff," said Jimenez. "We had the LHMBBC, I started grabbing the rounds out, popped the top off of the mortar and got the mortar ready to fire."

"Everything we do, we have to do it quickly, proficiently, calm, cool and collectively," said Wheat.

Zach agreed. "The main point about it is you've got to stay

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Human Terrain System Navigates the Complex Afghan Culture

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Donald Reeves TF Bayonet Public Affairs

Dr. Richard R. Boone of Wimberley, Texas is in the valley of Baraki Barak, Logar Province, Afghanistan, creating a map.

For his map he will ignore the rugged mountains that spring up on the sides of the valley, and the roads that criss-cross through it. Boone is part of the Human Terrain System, and his job is to create a map of the Afghanistan people to give to commanders so they can navigate the complex Afghan culture.

"We're looking at the regular people, the average people and we're trying to figure out how they view their own lives, what issues do they think are important, what attitudes do they have toward their own national government, what attitudes they have towards the enemy," said Boone.

Boone says that by gathering this information from average people, HTS members can save lives on a civilian-oriented battlefield.

"Our purpose is to get the information in the hands of commanders to help them determine what their actions will be. That will help them reduce the lethality of what we have to do," said Boone.

Human Terrain Teams and HTS have been operating for years in Iraq and more recently in Afghanistan. The teams are made up of civilians who usually have a degree in Social Sciences and military background.

Boone's degree is in Psychology, and he has served in both the Army and the Navy in his field. Boone served two tours in Iraq as part of a combat stress team.

Now, he finds himself deployed to Afghanistan on patrols with Stryker teams and Airborne Brigade Combat Teams.

"I was with a Stryker Brigade, and we were always out in Stryker vehicles. It was always a mounted patrol. We'd drive to a village and we would come right up to the edge of the village, get out and walk into the village," said Boone.

"In Logar and Wardak, we do dismounted patrols much more frequently," Boone said.

Currently embedded with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Boone sleeps in the desert valley alongside the Soldiers. They conduct long foot patrols into



Part of the HTS mission is to "collect information on people who are typically overlooked by military collection teams," Boone said. By doing so they hope to, "increase the cooperation that we get from some of the average people."



villages where Boone gathers data.

Boone, at age 55, has to keep up with Soldiers who are sometimes more than 35 years his junior. "I'm inclined to exercise anyway to stay physically fit," Boone said.

As the Soldiers conduct key leader engagements, Boone interviews ordinary citizens.

Part of the HTS mission is to "collect information on people who are typically overlooked by military collection teams," Boone said. By doing so, they hope to "increase the cooperation that we get from some of the average people."

In the Baraki Barak valley, he found a major concern to be roads. "Here, what I've discovered is that a lot of people want their roads to be improved," said Boone. According to Boone, this concern was often overlooked before because of the demographics of the village.

As a psychologist, Boone looks to children as the future of Afghanistan. He hopes that some of his findings may lead to children centered operations.

"The kids are curious and they're also interested in pens and notebooks, and it tells me, unless they're sell-

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173rd Medic Treats Village Elder

Story and photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan –Walking four kilometers to Combat Outpost Garda from the village of Dara in Afghanistan’s Wardak province is a normal occurrence for Muhammad Zahir, the elder of the village. However, instead of walking, on this trip to the COP April 23, Zahir limped.

Zahir came to the COP to follow up on a project being done in his village, said 1st. Lt. Mason Heimer, the executive officer for A Battery, 4th Squadron, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. When they got done talking, he showed the lieutenant his leg.

Zahir, a tough 55-year-old man with a graying beard, informed Heimer that 18 days ago, while working with his livestock, he was kicked in the knee by one of his cows. The kick left a cut on his knee cap that made it difficult for Zahir to walk, or even sleep.

“During the night I never sleep,” said Zahir. “When the blanket touches my leg, I wake up from sleep.”

Seeing the injury, Heimer took Zahir to the COP’s medical station, and put him in the care of combat medic, Cpl. Wes Swearingen, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd ABCT.

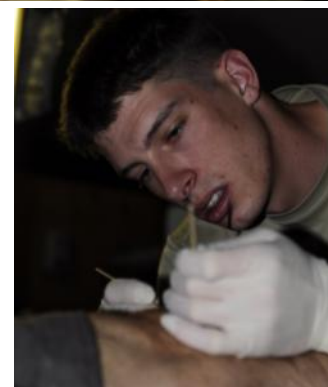
“A patient evaluation starts from when you first see the patient to the end of treatment,” he said. “I noticed his stance and he was favoring one leg.

“It was a gash to the patella, the kneecap,” he continued. “When I had him sit down, I looked at his leg and I noticed the infection was spreading throughout the joint in the knee.”

Though Zahir did not act like the injury was more than a cut, with infection setting in, the situation could have become much worse very quickly.



“I would say, give him a week and the infection would have spread underneath the knee and possibly infected the artery.”



“I would say, give him a week and the infection would have spread underneath the knee and possibly infected the artery,” he said. “If that happens, it goes right into the heart, spreads the infection inside the body and it’s a lot harder to treat.”

“This is worst case scenario, but another week or two and he probably could have been dead,” he added.

After being treated, Swearingen gave Zahir some extra bandages for his wound and wants to check up on him in a few days and Zahir quickly thanked him.

“Thanks a lot,” said Zahir. “I appreciate you, I respect you and I feel much better now.”

For Swearingen, who spent his last deployment in Iraq working in a burn unit that, at times, saw 20 patients a day, this was a routine procedure. However, this procedure saved a man’s life, and for him, nothing about that is routine.

“I think that’s probably the most rewarding part of my job, is knowing that even though I’m on a COP most of the time, little things like that at least make a difference,” he said. “I’m just here to treat and save lives.”

Just Another Day of COIN Operations for 2nd Platoon

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Donald Reeves
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- 2nd Platoon, A Troop, 1/91 Cavalry, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team is all about counter insurgency operations. "We live it out here," said A Troop 1st Sgt. Jacob Stockdill.

Part of International Security Assistance Forces commander, General Stanley Chrystal's, COIN policy is to live and train with the Afghan National Army Forces. Also, a huge part is interacting with the Afghanistan people, up close and personal.

To accomplish this directive, Stockdale routinely sends his troops, already based with local Afghan forces in a small command outpost, into remote villages to live among the Afghan people.

While on these patrols they will conduct Key Leader Engagements, intermingle with the local populace, and find out the main concerns in the daily lives of Afghans.

On April 16, 2nd Platoon air assaulted into the Baraki Barak valley of the Logar Province. From there they would visit two towns and talked with the nomadic Kuchi people that travelled across the country, grazing herds of sheep and goats.

After an hour long march into the village, the patrol met up with a local farmer. 2nd platoon leader, 1st Lt. Scott J. Schmutz called out in the traditional greeting, "Salam Alaikam." "Alakim Salam," the farmer answered. Leaning against his shovel, the farmer took the time to answer a few standard questions that Schmutz had been trained to ask.

"When we go into these towns, we are trying to determine the roots of instability by asking a prescribed set of questions," said Schmutz.

The four questions are; have any new people moved into town in the last year, what is the biggest problem in your village, what do



"One, I think we have a better understanding of what's going on between the Kuchi and the townspeople. Two, I think that we've probably disrupted insurgent operations with our presence."

you think should be done first to help your village, and who do you think can best solve your problem?

The questions are always followed with "why?"

"By asking why, we get to the root of the instability. Like asking why they are allowing insurgent activity to take place in their village," Schmutz said.

Schmutz said that the questions are helpful to getting information. "I'm able to both build rapport and get those questions answered," said Schmutz. "Generally speaking they open more the longer I talk to them."

Closer to the center of the village the platoons met a group of elderly men drinking chi tea. Schmutz was invited to join them and asked his set of questions. He laughed and joked with the men in the impromptu KLE, sharing their bread.

Schmutz said that he had enjoyed the light-hearted meeting. "By spending time, face-to-face with people, it takes away the chance to dehumanize us," said Schmutz.

When asked what objectives had been accomplished by the patrol, Schmutz said, "One, I think we have a better understanding of what's going on between the Kuchi and the townspeople. Two, I think that we've probably disrupted insurgent operations with our presence. And then lastly, it gave the villagers here a chance to see that they may be at the south end of our [area of operations], but we still see their security as an important and vital part of our AO."

Staff Sgt. Bradley S. Shadden concurred, calling the COIN driven patrol "a unique opportunity."

"We've moved away from the mega FOBs and out into the

Continued on page 17

Agriculture Helps in Wardak Counter Insurgency Fight

Story and photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Not long ago, Afghanistan’s Wardak province was known as “the breadbasket of Afghanistan.” Apples, apricots, potatoes and other crops were thriving in the province. After decades of war and civil unrest, the province is no longer the oasis of agricultural production it once was. However, that is quickly changing thanks to the efforts of Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, U.S. government agencies like the United States Department of Agriculture and the Wardak department of agriculture, irrigation and land.

According to Faizel Omer, the director of Agriculture of Wardak province, 85% of the province’s people are dependent on agriculture in one way or another.

“We know that economy of Wardak is based on agriculture,” said 1st Lt. Kevin Smith, the civil affairs officer for 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt. “It’s a broken system right now, so the more we can do to improve it will set us up for success more than anything.”

“The biggest complaint in Wardak is joblessness,” he continued. “Farming is good because it can employ so many people and it’s very cost-effective employment.”

In order to help teach the local farmers how to improve their farming abilities, Smith relies on an expert, USDA agricultural advisor Gary Soiseth to help track and solve problems like black rot in apple orchards. In turn, Soiseth relies on Omer and his agricultural department to help coordinate training for local farmers and solve problems at the village level.

“These farmers are looking for new techniques to increase their yields and lots of them want trainings,” said Soiseth. “Beekeeping is one of them because they pollinate and that

“The biggest complaint in Wardak is joblessness,” he continued. “Farming is good because it can employ so many people and it’s very cost-effective employment.”



“Now, poppy cultivation for the last three years has been zero,” he added. “Since we stopped that, maybe a time will come where we can stop people from working with insurgents.”

pollination increases yields up to 40% in the first year.”

“It won’t affect this year’s yields, it will affect next years,” he added. “Everything is long term that we do in agriculture.”

Regardless, the new techniques will help farmers continue to improve their farming methods and productivity. As the farmers grow more quality crops, they will have more to sell, both locally and as an export.

“Last year they exported several hundred metric tons of apples and apricots to Dubai, India and Pakistan,” said Smith. “That was a first in the last 10 to 15 years.”

“Improving agriculture, they’ll have more money to spend on other foods and when their economic standing improves and their health improves they’ll invest in other things,” said Soiseth. “I think it’s really important when the economy is based so much on agriculture.”

For everyone involved, that investment is a means to an end. When the people of Wardak have food to eat and money to spend, they will be less inclined to join an insurgency that depends on people in economic need. Economic independence and ownership of farmland that yields a dependable income will lead to improved security in Wardak as farmers work to protect their farms.

“Improvement of agriculture has a big role in the improvement of security,” said Omer. “Most of the people who can’t send their children to school because their economic situation is bad,

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Improving ANP Checkpoint Key to Improving Security

"You have to give the people ownership of the ANP," said Hall. "When we have the ANP with us, it shows them we're taking an active interest in training their police force to protect them."



Company, 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt., 173rd ABCT. "If you can control ANP checkpoint Salar and you can make the ANP productive, then you can affect Salr."

"It ensures that at some point every day, you have a platoon that's readily available to work with these guys, train them, go on patrols with them," said Sgt Brody Hall, operations sergeant for D Company, 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt., 173rd ABCT, from Princeton, Ill. "In the end it's going to make these guys better."

The ability for U.S. and Afghan forces to train together is the first on a list of benefits of the improved checkpoint.

"You have to give the people ownership of the ANP," said Hall. "When we have the ANP with us, it shows them we're taking an active interest in training their police force to protect them."

"The people need to be confident in them too," said Brasher. "If we can join them on patrols, increase their confidence and increase their standing with the people, they're less likely to get attacked."

Though the building started recently, Brasher has already seen an improvement in the villager's attitude toward the ANP. However, the job in the nearby villages isn't done yet.

"We'd like to do more development, but were constantly reacting to IEDs and small arms fire," he said. "If we can make it safer we can start working on more projects, like building schools," he said.

"The ANP should be able to patrol, people should be giving them information and it should be a safe area just like our police stations," Brasher said.

Improving the checkpoint has truly been a combined effort, with help from D Company Soldiers, ANP and 1st Lt. Steven Caraluzzi and his Soldiers from the 118th Military Police Com-



"When the people see us every day they'll start to trust us," said Hall. "When you're not with them every day, people are going to believe whatever the insurgents tell them about us."

Story and photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Afghan National Police checkpoint Salar sits along highway one, near Combat Outpost Carwile in the Sayed Abad district of Afghanistan's Wardak province. This small base was previously covered with trash and lacked the amenities of newer, bigger checkpoints. Only a few Hesco barriers and a dirt mound separated the ANP who work inside from insurgent attacks. After an attack last month, the Soldiers of D Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, are working with the ANP to fortify the checkpoint and use it to improve the security of both the nearby village of Salr and the Afghan police that man the station.

In four days, D Company Soldiers, and the ANP put up more than 200 seven-foot Hesco barriers, increasing the ability of those inside to fend off an attack. Fortifying the checkpoint is only the beginning, as soon CP Salar will be able to house both U.S. and Afghan personnel.

"It's something that we can work out of that's safe," said 1st Lt. John Brasher, of Albuquerque, Nm., executive officer for D

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4th Kandak, TF Repel Graduate First Warrior Leaders in Logar



"There's no greater gift that a nation can bestow on an individual, than to place the lives of it's Soldiers in your hands."

the official duty of training, coaching and teaching future ANA NCOs assigned to the 4th Kandak and their combined action partners from the Brigade Support Battalion. The first class graduated April 8, with over a dozen Warriors Leader Course honorees.

Staff Sgt. Akhel Malager, a reconnaissance NCO with the 4th Kandak, said at the graduation that he learned both tactical and medical guidance throughout the course.

"The ANA commanders and coalition forces set up classes for us we would start with physical training, and after that they would teach us in the field. We learned a lot about tactics and received medical training. We learned how to save a life and how to protect ourselves," said Malager.

He continued.

"I feel very good right now; we've been through the classes, we know how to lead. I'm ready for the challenge," said Malager.

1st Sgt. Richard Carullo, Alpha Company 173rd Brigade Support Battalion 1st Sgt., spoke to the graduates about the importance of their training and the importance of leadership.

"The course you just completed is a culmination of nearly ten years of partnering between our two countries," he said.

Carullo continued.

"It is understood in militaries around the globe that noncommissioned officers are the backbone of an army. The fact that Task Force Repel and the 4th Kandak are taking the time to establish a noncommissioned officer education system, speaks volumes of the dedication these commands have to the success of our partnership," he said.

Carullo said that the graduates were now given the responsibility of young Soldiers lives under their guidance.

"There's no greater gift that a nation can bestow on an individual, than to place the lives of it's Soldiers in your hands," he said.



Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- The 4th Kandak and 173rd Brigade Support Battalion Noncommissioned Officer Academy is the first Combined Action Noncommissioned Officer Academy in the Logar Province. Due to a shortage of trained and certified junior NCOs in the 4th Kandak, Csm. Jimmy Sellers, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion Csm., and Csm. Abdul Qadar, 4th Kandak, 201st Corps Csm., developed and implemented the institution for the purpose of training NCOs.

The first class enrolled on March 27, with Msg. Sean Wilson as the Commandant. The Academy was designated the 4th Kandak and 173rd Brigade Support Battalion Non-commissioned Officer Academy on February 25. At its inception, the Academy occupied two adjoining bases, Camp Maiwan and FOB Shank; charged with

D-Troop Provides Roadside Assistance in Afghanistan



enemy attacks or poor road conditions. "We're always on standby, 24 hours a day, seven days week. We get calls in the middle of the night," said Savage. "We got to go out there and help recover, or provide assistance," he said.

Savage said his team sometimes travels as part of a convoy. At other times they go in aid of a convoy or civilian vehicle that has overturned and is blocking one of the narrow roads. One of the biggest concerns is recovering a vehicle that has been hit by an IED.

"There's always the threat of a secondary IED. They like to blow up the first vehicle and then to wait for the recovery element to come out," said Savage. "When you're on ground trying to hook up, that's when they blow the second one up," he said.

Spec. Bolt-Ray says that's when the "God-lights" come in handy. This is the name given to the massive floodlights used in nighttime operations.

"All the lights down the side and the back will illuminate the area and you'll be in a lot better shape for secondaries," said Bolt-Ray.

Bolt-Ray is the driver of the Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck. It is nearly 30 feet long and can pull 167,000 pounds. Bolt-Ray explained that to be a driver on the treacherous mountain roads you have to have a good truck commander.

"On the pass, you can't see the road that you are driving on," said Bolt-Ray. "All you can see is the mountains, the sky and the drop-off. Its the guy ground-guiding you that's going to keep you alive," he said.

"But," continued Bolt-Ray, "as long as your TC is good, then your good. You have to trust him 100%."

Savage said that as a noncommissioned officer, he takes safety very seriously. "It's a dangerous job. They say that next to infantry, recovery is one of the most dangerous jobs in

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"When doing this job you have to know your weights and ratios. There's some math involved in it. You have to know how much the thing weighs that you are trying to recover, and you have to know how much your truck can pull."



Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Donald Reeves
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

In America, when your truck gets stuck in a ditch, a quick call to a local wrecker service will solve the problem. In the Logar Province of Afghanistan, where mountain roads twist and turn around sheer cliffs, and with the possibility of insurgents and improvised explosive devices nearby, it can be a problem.

"No worries," say Sgt. Brian E. Savage and Spec. Nathan J. Bolt-Ray of D troop, 191 Cavalry, 173rd Airborne Combat Brigade Team. They are on call 24 hours a day and are ready to assist you.

Savage and Bolt-Ray are part of a recovery assistance team that helps to recover vehicles that have been victims of IEDs,

South Carolina ADT Dons 173rd ABCT Combat Patch

Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Members of the South Carolina Agri-Business Development Team deployed to Afghanistan's Logar Province donned the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team's Patch for the first time in a combat patch ceremony April 9.

The shoulder sleeve insignia recognizes wartime service and is a representation of the time Soldiers spent abroad.

"It shows you've served alongside other Soldiers, for other Soldiers, and for your country and state. There's a certain level of pride to wearing the patch," said Sgt. Frederic Moore, a team leader with the South Carolina Agri-Business Development Team Security Force and Sumter, S.C. native.

Sgt. Eddie Creel, a Beaufort, S.C. native and team leader with the Development Team Security Force, agreed.

"I'm really proud of my young Soldiers, and the patch that they wear shows a commitment to their country, and a commitment to their job," said Creel.

Sgt. Kimberly Dixon, a Kershaw, S.C. native and Large Animal Specialist with the Development Team, said a lot of the pride comes from being able to represent her state.

"I'm full of pride because I was born and raised in South Carolina, so I'm very proud to be able to represent the state here," said Dixon.

"There's a lot of pride representing the state under this patch, and being able to serve our state and our country for this operation in Afghanistan," said Moore.

"I'm proud of our state, I'm proud of the job we're doing and I'm proud of our Soldiers. We're happy to be here and it's an important mission," said Creel.

Dixon said that she joined the Army primarily for the purpose of earning a combat



"I'm proud of our state, I'm proud of the job we're doing and I'm proud of our Soldiers. We're happy to be here and it's an important mission," said Creel.

patch by helping people overseas. "One of the main reasons I joined originally was to deploy, so I could help people over here who really need the help," said Dixon.

Creel shared the same sentiment.

"We're giving people here a future, a future to sustain themselves, and a future to get away from those who've oppressed them for years. It's important for us to build an agricultural base so they can actually feed themselves and be self sufficient," said Creel.

"These people are learning different skills and, more important than anything, they are learning how to put their government into place," said Moore.

Col. Michael Dunn, commander of the South Carolina Agri-Business Development Team thanked the team at the patch ceremony for their dedication.

"It's hard for me to find the words to express the pride I have in each of you and the team as a whole," said Dunn. "As I've mentioned so many times before, it's an honor to be a part of this team. You have excelled at every task, and proven to all your professionalism and dedication under adverse conditions and enemy contact."

Dunn acknowledged the storied history associated with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and the patch it honors.

"We fall under an elite organization that has a tremendous history throughout the twentieth century, with extended participation in major wars and conflicts like Vietnam and in today's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Dunn.

Dunn left them by proposing they maintain this history and pride the rest of the deployment.

"Be proud of your accomplishments, wear the combat patch proudly, understand that we have a long way to go and as you have already proven, be diligent in every task and mission," said Dunn.

ANA, ANP, TF Bayonet Commanders Address Reintegration

Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Leaders of the Logar and Wardak Provinces' Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police forces and the Task Force Bayonet Commanders and Command Sergeants Major met for a Commanders' Conference April 20 to discuss upcoming elections, the forthcoming national peace jirga, and progress with the reintegration process.

"We must work at this peace process; how to bring peace, how to reintegrate those individuals who are against the government of Afghanistan," said Alhaj Shojakuddin Shouja, Deputy Governor of the Logar province. "We are working through the tribe elders, and we will have the tribe elders and the governor talk with them, and raise the issues that are the most crucial steps. We have to bring the people's support to the government of Afghanistan," he said.

Maj. Stephen Wisniew, the Task Force Bayonet chief of plans, addressed the members of the conference concerning one of the major components of the peace process, reintegration.

"President Hamid Karzai has stated that the future of Afghanistan is going to be a negotiated peace, and since we're here working together, we've found that this is an appropriate time to talk together on how we're going to bring those who want to stop fighting into the government, and also discover what's being done now concerning fighters coming to us to stop fighting," said Wisniew.

The first two phases of reintegration are planning and Malmastia, or hospitality, in which the community is informed.

"Reintegration is a community-focused process, meaning we're bringing everyone from the community and involving them in this very important process. In phase one, we're looking at an Afghan led process. In phase two, a broad information program or campaign," said Wisniew.

The next phases are Nanawati, Ghayrat, and Dostee, or sanctuary, honor, and trusted friend. In these phases, the fighters are brought to the table, publically reintegrated, and re-evaluated.



"Reintegration is a community-focused process, meaning we're bringing everyone from the community and involving them in this very important process"

They want to be part of the greater Afghanistan part of that solidarity and the community brings them together and finds them a job or a safe place to live and they decide that they will no longer fight."



"In phase three, we want to bring the combatants or fighters to the table. In phase four we want to have a public reintegration, a community reintegration, and for phase five, we want to follow up with those who want to come to the government, those who want to be a part of Afghanistan," said Wisniew.

"At this time we think we're in phase three of the operation, which is to bring the fighters to the table, or those who want to be a part of the government. What we see is that they go to a legitimate local leader, such as an elder or religious leader they trust, and then say they want to be part of the government. They're brought to a government official such as a sub-governor or the governor himself," said Wisniew.

"Then in the next phase, public reintegration or community reintegration, a community comes together and accepts the former fighter, and brings him into their community and to the government," said Wisniew. "The last phase is what we call a trusted friend, or somebody who has decided that they will no longer fight. They want to be part of the greater Afghanistan part of that solidarity and the community brings them together and finds them a job or a safe place to live and they decide that they will no longer fight," he said.

Lt. Col. Matthew McFarlane, the Task Force Talon

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CSM Capel Honors Select Group of Sky Soldiers



"I know what you've been through and I just want to say thank you for what you have done to help defend and protect our country."

load a plane, to fly anywhere in the world they want to fly. Do you think they're worried? No. Do you think they're afraid? No. They're not worried, and they're not afraid, because of you who said 'never again would I allow you to attack our country on my watch,'" said Capel.

Capel said that each Soldier present could have chosen a life outside the military.

"I just personally want to thank you for raising your right hand, swearing on the constitution to come into this United States Army, to help protect and defend the freedom that we're so used to in the United States of America. Did you have to join the Army? No. Could you get a civilian job? Yes. You chose to come in and help us fight this war on terror, so that people in the United States can continue to have the free life that they're used to and comfortable with," said Capel.

Capel also said he knew the rigors each Soldier experienced prior to deployment.

"I've been working with Task Force Bayonet for years, right here in Afghanistan. I know your capabilities, I know how you fight, I know how you trained before you came here, and it was hard. It was tough; you sweated a lot, and you hurt a lot, but it was just to make you better for this operation," said Capel. "I know what you've been through and I just want to say thank you for what you have done to help defend and protect our country."

Not only did they train well, but also worked lucratively here, said Capel.

"We will continue to fight this war to protect the freedom of the United States of America, to protect the freedom of the Afghan people. We will continue to fight this war, to protect other countries who are so afraid and terrified of terrorist activities and networks around the world," said Capel. "You're building a country that was torn down to rock bottom."

"I just personally want to thank you for raising your right hand, swearing on the constitution to come into this United States Army, to help protect and defend the freedom that we're so used to."



Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel, CJTF-82 Command Sgt. Maj., honored a select group of Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, and Brigade Support Battalion at Forward Operating Base Shank, April 13.

Capel presented a select group of Soldiers challenge coins bearing the 82nd Airborne Division's insignia, signifying his appreciation of their service. Capel thanked the Soldiers for their service.

"We can live a free life because of men and women like you, who put your boots on the ground in Afghanistan, Iraq, and places where the terrorist network trains and tries to operate. Its because of you who came over here, who raised your right hand, who swore on the constitution that you were going to protect and defend the United States of America," said Capel.

Capel continued.

"Millions of people right now are at airports, getting ready to

A First Class Mortar Team

Continued from page 6

calm. If you get too excited everything could go wrong," he said.

The complete mortar can weigh in excess of 40 pounds. The rounds, depending on the type, can weigh as much as 15 pounds a piece. Getting to fire the mortar is what makes it worth carrying the extra weight out into the field.

"That's the exciting part of our job, when we get to shoot," said Jimenez.

"When we actually get to fire HE it's a lot of fun," said Zach. "It's one hell of an adrenaline rush."

"It sucks carrying it around because it's a lot of weight on your shoulders, but once you finally get it set up you feel content because you can do your job well," Zach said.

"And being three PFCs out here as part of the platoon, it makes you feel pretty good to know that your sergeants can trust you," Zach continued.

The mortar team attributes that confidence to their intensive training. "Ever since we got to Anvil Troop 1/91 It's been practicing, practicing, practicing. That's how we're out here today," said Zach.

"One more time," said Wheat and the team started the drill again.

Human Terrain System Navigates the Complex Afghan Culture

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ing them, that they have some interest in the resources that you would associate with going to school," said Boone.

"And, most of the parents that I've talked to want that for their children, and it seems like that's lacking," Boone said.

Boone hopes this will lead to a change in the cultural terrain.

"I think that if there was some way to reach them culturally and socially and get them to embrace some of our values while still holding true to their own cultural values the country could go a long way toward achieving some sort of democratic system," said Boone.

Boone says his mission is not to come up with programs and plans. He will chart his piece of the map and leave it to others to find the way.

Just Another Day of COIN Operations for 2nd Platoon

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COPs, but we're still surrounded by walls," said Shadden. "Now we've moved into the local populace. This way we're not surrounded by walls. We're showing that we're not just holed up there with a bunch of electricity," he added.

Those Soldiers who had patrolled the day unrolled sleeping bags and settled in for another night of living and breathing counter insurgency operations under the stars in an Afghan sky.

Improving ANP Checkpoint Key in Improving Security

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pany, who, according to Brasher, has been invaluable to the project.

"The biggest help over time has been lieutenant Caraluzzi and his guys," he said. "He's been mentoring these guys all year and he came up with the plan for the station."

Once checkpoint Salar is completed, combined training will begin full time and the plan is that improvements in the presence and performance of the ANP will lead to improved security in the area.

"When the people see us every day they'll start to trust us," said Hall. "When you're not with them every day, people are going to believe whatever the insurgents tell them about us."

ANA, ANP, TF Bayonet Commanders Address Reintegration

commander, said that many insurgents are looking to begin the process.

"It's important to note many low level insurgents are looking for jobs and have approached either coalition forces, or leadership in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, or Afghan National Security Forces leadership recently to talk about how they can stop fighting," said McFarlane.

Wisniew noted that job creation is a large part of this process.

"We need to have a procedure for the peace reintegration, and it should involve some sort of job creation for those who would come to the government," said Wisniew.

Agriculture Helps in Wardak Counter Insurgency Fight

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their children to school because their economic situation is bad, have to use whatever way they can to make some money."

"Farming gives them a means of income," he added.

Omer has been the Wardak director of agriculture for four years and in that time has seen many improvements, including the eradication of poppy plants that had once been a problem in the province. Those improvements give him and his coalition partners hope.

"We had high poppy cultivation in this province, but our extension workers advised the farmers it's not good for their health, meanwhile we gave them some improved seeds to help them," he said. "It was not stopped because of destroying their fields or law enforcement, but because of the agricultural extension workers, our advice and assistance from the international community, we stopped poppy cultivation."

"Now, poppy cultivation for the last three years has been zero," he added. "Since we stopped that, maybe a time will come where we can stop people from working with insurgents."

Though agriculture may not be the first thing that comes to mind as a way to fight a counter insurgency, Wardak is a good example of the potential of improved agriculture as a tool to not only improve security, but also increase development and the quality of life for the people of the province.

"Really, the farmers are the way we're going to defeat the insurgency," said Smith. "Insurgencies are, more often than not, economically based, so if we improve their agriculture and tie them to the land, then they won't have the economic incentive to put bombs in the road."



Roadside Assistance in Afghanistan

Continued from page 13

the Army," said Savage.

Recovery crews have to be trained on power saws, cranes, cutting torches, as well as occasionally providing their own security.

"So much stuff happens during recovery," said Savage. "There's so many things going on. You have so much heavy equipment that's being moved around.

"When doing this job you have to know your weights and ratios. There's some math involved in it.

"You have to know how much the thing weighs that you are trying to recover, and you have to know how much your truck can pull.

"If one thing goes wrong, if a cable snaps, it could kill somebody. I haven't had anyone get seriously hurt on watch. I try to take safety into effect," Savage said.

"This is going to sound like an AFN commercial," said Bolt-Ray, referring to the many Armed Forces Network public service announcements that stress safety, "the whole composite risk-management thing is a huge part of being a wrecker operator."

Savage said that the uniqueness of each recovery effort helps to avoid the monotony of doing the same thing day in and out that often happens to Soldiers deployed in other military occupation specialties.

"It's tricky at times, but it's real interesting," said Savage, "because it's never the same thing. It's always something new."

Recently he and Bolt Ray had to cut apart a 60,000-pound civilian crane that flipped over on the side of a mountain, dividing a convoy in half. It turned out to be a 17-hour job.

"You never know when you're going to go out there, or how long you'll be," said Savage. "We stay until the mission's accomplished."

Though the conditions can be dangerous and difficult, "The funny thing is," said Bolt-Ray, "we love it."

As a fellow Soldier walked by that they had assisted that morning, Savage asked him how he was doing.

"Better, now that I'm out of that culvert!" The Soldier called back.

"Its good times, I love it!" said Savage.



CPT'S LIST FOR FY2010 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1LT(P) BRETT BUSSART - TF HEADHUNTER | 1LT(P) EARL KIM - " |
| 1LT(P) MICHAEL PARISO - TF HEADHUNTER | 1LT(P) KYLE KUBALI - " |
| 1LT(P) RACHAEL SCHENK - TF HEADHUNTER | 1LT(P) RYAN MEEHAN - " |
| 1LT(P) BRANDON SELLERS - TF HEADHUNTER | 1LT(P) TROY ARAMBULA - " |
| 1LT(P) REAMER ARGO - TF TALON | 1LT(P) JOSEPH CASEY - " |
| 1LT(P) CHRISTOPHER CODA - TF TALON | 1LT(P) JOSHUA DABASHINSKY - " |
| 1LT(P) ROSS DALY - TF TALON | 1LT(P) JOSE BURGOS - TF SABER |
| 1LT(P) DENNIS GENEST - TF TALON | 1LT(P) HENRY HUGHES - " |
| 1LT(P) LUKE GIESE - TF TALON | 1LT(P) ERIC JEZIERSKI - " |
| 1LT(P) ALEX HAIG - TF TALON | 1LT(P) JASON FELDT - " |
| 1LT(P) MICHAEL NAYLOR - TF TALON | 1LT(P) MATTHEW SHUBA - " |
| 1LT(P) JIM NGUYEN - TF TALON | 1LT(P) ANDREW SMITH - " |
| 1LT(P) JEFFREY OWEN - TF TALON | 1LT(P) MELISSA FUSCO - TF KING |
| 1LT(P) ZACHARY THELEN - TF TALON | 1LT(P) ERICKA CHEW - " |
| 1LT(P) MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ - TF TALON | 1LT(P) JEFFREY SEITZ - " |
| 1LT(P) KEVIN SMITH - TF TALON | 1LT(P) DREW SHEPLER - " |
| 1LT(P) TODD GALLIAND - 1-503 REAR-D | 1LT(P) MATTHEW WEBB - " |
| 1LT(P) MATTHEW NIHILL - TF ROCK | 1LT(P) PETER HARRINGTON - " |
| 1LT(P) JAMISON PEREIRA - " | 1LT(P) ANNA PATTEN - TF RAPTOR |
| 1LT(P) ERIK STRANGE - " | 1LT(P) DAVID ROSE - " |
| 1LT(P) JOHN TATO - " | 1LT(P) PEDER ANGELL - TF REPEL |
| 1LT(P) MARSHALL JOHNSON - " | 1LT(P) MONIKA COMEAUX - 173D BSB |
| 1LT(P) JACOB KEATING - " | REAR-D |

Photo Illustration by Army Spc. Daniel Haun



Photo Illustration by Army Spc. Daniel Haun