



THE TIEN BIEN TIMES

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM X



JUNE 2010

READY, ABLE



Soldiers from Troop C 1st Squadron 91st Cavalry Regiment patrol a ridgeline near Shaykhan, Kherwar district. Page 8.

ANA, ANP FIND WEAPONS. AIR ASSAULT TO KHERWAR PAGE 12

MEDICS LEAD THE WAY WITH BRAIN TRAUMA CLINIC PAGE 15

5TH CONTINGENT CZECH PRT LOGAR BUILDING, SUPPORTING PAGE 19

SKY SOLDIERS CELEBRATE ARMY BIRTHDAY WITH RUN PAGE 20

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



173rd AIRBORNE
Brigade Combat Team * Sky Soldiers





THE ARMY'S DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

The Army defines diversity as the different attributes, experiences, and backgrounds of our Soldiers, Civilians and Family Members that further enhance our global capabilities and contribute to an adaptive, culturally astute Army.

THE ARMY'S DIVERSITY MISSION

The Army's diversity mission is to develop and implement a strategy that contributes to mission readiness while transforming and sustaining the Army as a national leader in diversity.

THE ARMY'S DIVERSITY VISION

The Army's diversity vision is to be the national leader in embracing the strengths of diverse people in an inclusive environment. This includes investing in and managing talent, valuing individuals and developing culturally astute Soldiers and Civilians who enhance our communities and are prepared for the human dimension of leadership and global engagements.

HOW A DIVERSE ARMY BENEFITS US ALL

There are many benefits of the Army's diversity efforts, including:

- The opportunity to better understand our Nation's increasingly diverse population and attract the best available talent to fill our Soldier and Civilian ranks.
- Personnel who feel valued are inspired to serve at a higher level and want to remain in the Army.
- Our diversity education and training will enable leaders to create environments that are inclusive of our Soldiers, Civilians, and Family Members, enhancing our ability to develop those who join our ranks and integrate individual talents into mission accomplishment.

A diverse Army does not determine success by a Soldier's or Civilian's appearance, preferences, ideas or beliefs, but rather by what's inside... the abilities, the determination, the courage. Bringing everyone's different attributes and experiences together will enhance our ability to operate globally with a culturally astute Force.

PLANS FOR A STRONG FUTURE IN DIVERSITY

The Army's future plans are reflected in a vision to become the national leader in embracing the strengths of diverse people in an inclusive environment by investing and managing talent, valuing individuals, and developing culturally astute Soldiers and Civilians who enhance our communities. The Army will pursue an aggressive, but comprehensive strategy that assures:

- Leader commitment.
- Managed talent across our diversity.
- The best available diversity training and education.
- Inclusive environments sustained by informed leaders.



Commander Col. James Johnson III

Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kyle Lear

Command Sgt. Maj. Command Sgt. Maj. Nicholas Rolling

Public Affairs Officer Lt. Col. Thomas Gilleran

Public Affairs NCOIC Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick

Editing Staff Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick, Staff Sgt. Ryan Harris, Pfc. Michael Sword, Spc. Daniel Haun

In accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 5120.4, *Tien Bien Times* is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of *Tien Bien Times* are not necessarily the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee. The content of this publication is the responsibility of the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee Public Affairs Office. Pictures not otherwise credited are Department of Defense photographs. News items should be submitted to the *Tien Bien Times* editor, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs Office at 318-481-5056 or bruce.cobbeldick@us.army.mil.

Commander's Corner

Sky Soldiers, Family & Friends,

dis-ci-pline [displin]: orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior (Webster's Dictionary).

Discipline is the most common word on the Vision Statement for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, as it appears four times in the short statement that defines us as an organization. Discipline is the foundation of our military. Discipline, in its simplest form, is doing the right thing, for the right reasons, even though no one else is watching. Discipline has kept you and your fellow Sky Soldiers alive and successful in accomplishing your mission so far, and it is the most important character trait you can demonstrate to guarantee your successful return home.

Discipline begins at the individual Sky Soldier level. When we initially deployed, we all were rigorous in maintaining our equipment and our basic Soldier skills. We fired and cleaned our weapons routinely. We checked the serviceability of our medical kits. We maintained fresh batteries in our NVGs. By not becoming complacent, we ensure that we are still always ready to react, because if we have learned anything so far this deployment, the environment in Afghanistan is unpredictable and we need to be ready for anything.

Disciplined Soldiers make disciplined units. Units that are disciplined continue to adhere to standards that they know will keep them alive and lead to mission accomplishment. They do not cut corners, no matter how many times they have conducted a mission or a task. Disciplined units conduct After Action Reviews that allow them to improve. Our enemies are always improving their techniques and we must do the same. Disciplined units are essential to the accomplishment of one of our hallmark principles: What we look like,

what we do, what we say and what we don't say are the first and most persistent message we leave with the Afghan people.

There are many other smaller aspects of discipline that must also be addressed at this point in our deployment. Discipline is not limited to military aspects of your life. Discipline should be interwoven into all aspects of your character. It takes discipline to keep yourself clean, to eat right, and to conduct physical training in this environment. Discipline is also necessary to maintain spiritual and moral well being, especially in an environment where our normal values are skewed by corruption and the complexities of Afghan society. Discipline is required to maintain the social support you gain from family and friends who you can not forget.

Discipline is at the heart of everything that is right about our profession. It keeps the huge, complex enterprise of war functioning. It is what drives Sky Soldiers to rush forward to cover their wounded buddy. It is what compels us to leave the comfort and safety of our homes to serve our Nation. And it is what will bring us back to those same things that we treasure so dearly.

Sky Soldiers!
Col. Jim Johnson
Bayonet-6

OUR VISION STATEMENT

An accomplished and adaptive Airborne Brigade Combat Team comprised of skilled and disciplined Paratroopers who will succeed in any type of mission for our Nation.

An Army formation that values discipline, initiative and integrity, and respects each team member as someone who volunteered to serve a cause greater than one self.

A disciplined, combat experienced organization toward which all others aspire.

OUR IMPERATIVES

Leadership	Integrity
Discipline	Adaptability
Initiative	Teamwork
Communicate Effectively	

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

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



Army paratroopers exit from an Air Force C-130 airplane during a mass tactical airborne exercise in Grafenwoehr, Germany. The Soldiers are assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Vicenza, Italy.



Not Your Typical War

By Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick

For ISAF troops deployed in Afghanistan, leveraging knowledge and being able to successfully fight an insurgency war depends on understanding the culture and the operating environment, then taking that experience and training up all elements of the forces, down to the platoon and squad level. Ideally, that baton of knowledge is then passed on to the next unit arriving in theater, so the transition is successful.

Two combat veterans who recently visited Task Force Bayonet have some ideas as to how to make the most of Counterinsurgency efforts and the knowledge transfer issues that hinge on mastering relationships – both within ISAF and in the villages, districts and provinces that the coalition forces are partnering with.

Whether it is the importance of building trust and establishing rapport with the new unit or local Afghan leaders – be they ANA Soldiers or village elders – Counterinsurgency advisors John Lemke and Steve Lupenski are quick to tell anyone willing to listen that this is not your typical, “shoot, move and communicate” kind of war.

“It can begin with doing things in a proactive manner. It may be as simple as taking the effort to doing things like creating a Continuity Book,” said Lemke, who still embodies soldierly traits, though he is no longer in uniform. With resolve in his voice, Lemke expressed passion about what it takes to fight a war against insurgents. Lemke spoke about the importance of knowing ones terrain and surroundings – both physical and human.

According to Lemke, it is dangerous to assume things. These Soldiers who will be following the forces presently in Afghanistan may have one or two tours of combat under their belts. The warriors transitioning in might come in with a big head of steam, professing that “they have got it, or that they’re good,” but saying they are “good to go” or “no worries brother” may be signs of overconfidence. According to Lemke, that is where mistakes and assumptions open Pandora’s Box.

Continued on page 23

173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

Partnership with the Afghan National Army continues to grow as the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Special Troops Battalion works and trains together on daily missions, providing security for the villages in the area. Sgt. Agsel Hernandez motivates Spc. Sherwood Moore on a dismount mission at right.



The ANA's patrolling knowledge and techniques continue to improve daily, as they focus on security and counter insurgency patrol tactics within the local villages. Sgt. Amador Magana and Spc. Michael Baker talking to locals on a patrol.



Each mission and training event brings them closer to becoming a strong independent Army that can provide security for its country. Sgt. Steven LaChapelle pulling security for A Company, 173D Special Troops Battalion.



173rd CHAPLAIN CONTACT INFO

Chaplain's Assistant: stephen.tennant@afghan.swa.army.mil

NIPR: 318.481.5102

Chaplain: sean.wead@afghan.swa.army.mil

SIPR: 308.431.8103

Rodriguez Was a Soldier's Soldier Say Peers



Army Sgt. Mario Rodriguez Jr. , "Spartan-41"



"He loved his wife and daughter so much and always talked about them. Even when we were so busy that it was hard to find time to sleep, he made time for Leslie and Raven. He would stay up late and talk to his family on the phone or internet, only to wake up early for a mission. He was so proud of his wife and her accomplishments in school, that he kept a copy of her college transcript in his "love me book". He wanted Lesley and Raven to have the world. " - Sgt. First Class Anthony Powers, Platoon Sgt.

FOB Shank, Afghanistan -- A memorial ceremony was held June 16, at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shank, for Army Sgt. Mario Rodriguez Jr., 4th Platoon Squad Leader, 264th Clearance Company, 27th Engineer Battalion, who was killed in action, June 11.

The hundreds of service members and civilians gathered at the ceremony to pay respects, beginning with prayers and remembrances for Rodriguez, who supported Task Force Bayonet's Area of Operation, here in Afghanistan.

"The Soldier is called upon to offer and give his life for his country. It is the noblest trait of all of mankind," said Army Chaplain Cpt. Jeffrey Mitchell. "No greater love exists than that of a man who lays down his life for his friend," the Chaplain proclaimed.

"I will always remember how he wanted to bring every one of us home safely," said Army Sgt. Antonio Morfin, a Soldier who said he "had the privilege of speaking with him every night during this deployment."

According to members of his unit, this was second deployment for Rodriguez to the Middle East. "Sergeant Rod," as he was referred to by his fellow combat engineers, waived his dwell time with family and friends at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina in order to selflessly join his fellow Soldiers and report for duty beside his brothers on the battlefield, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The chaplain said that when we experience the loss of a hero such as Mario Rodriguez, it's only natural that we think about how we will be remembered and what will be said about us when we are gone. The heartfelt words that were said about Sgt. Rodriguez included comments from his peers and platoon sergeant, who deeply admired and respected him.

Rodriguez Memorial (cont.)

Sgt. First Class Anthony Powers, Rodriguez' platoon sergeant said, "Rodriguez was an excellent Soldier, squad leader, family man and friend. Sgt. Rod could be both hysterically funny and be the serious, consummate professional. He will always be an important part of this platoon," said Powers.

"I would want Sgt. Mario Rodriguez to understand the honor and pride I felt being his subordinate and fighting beside such an outstanding leader, warrior and human being." - Army Spc. Altair Hebig, Route Clearing Package-36

Editor's Note: The unit wishes to recognize 3rd ID for their support.



Soldiers from the 27th Engineer Battalion and the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, gather to pay their final respects to Sgt. Mario Rodriguez Jr., who was killed in action on June 11th. (Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick, Task Force Bayonet Public Affairs Office)

To honor Rodriguez, his call sign with the 264th Clearance Company, "Spartan 41," will be retired, per Cpt. Peter Katzfey, who commands the 264th Clearance Company. Rodriguez's awards, decorations, campaign, and service medals include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (4), Army Good Conduct Medal (3), National Defense Service Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Combat Action Badge, and Driver Mechanics Badge with Driver Wheeled Vehicles. Rodriguez is survived by his wife Leslie Rodriguez and seven-year-old daughter Raven.

Members of Dark Horse Honor Madden



Spc. Russell E. Madden, a fearless Paratrooper

LOGAR PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN — Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team gathered to honor Specialist Russell E. Madden, who was killed in Logar Province, Afghanistan on June 23, 2010.

Madden died at a U.S. medical treatment facility of wounds he received when his platoon was attacked while conducting a combat logistics patrol. Three other Soldiers were wounded in the attack.

He was assigned to D Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Task Force Saber), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

Madden served in the Army for one year and seven months. He is survived by his wife, Michelle Lee Reynolds Madden and his son, Parker Lee Madden of Fort Thomas, Kentucky; and his parents Martin



(Photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword, TF Bayonet PAO)

Madden brought with him an amazing energy and attitude. he was always ready to give 100% to any mission. Madden would never leave his buddies in a bad situation. I and the rest of the Soldiers of Dark Horse will always remember his fearless attitude, his sense of humor, as well as his constant drive to better himself. Madden always inspired everyone around him to meet his standard.

- Company Commander Capt. Matthew Booth

Madden's military awards and decorations include the Purple Heart Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, the Driver's Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the Combat Action Badge. He has been recommended for the Bronze Star Medal and has been posthumously promoted to the rank of Specialist.

Story by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick, TF Bayonet PAO

(Story continued on Page 9)

Madden Memorial (cont.)

“Spc. Madden was committed to a mission to improve security in Afghanistan, and he was committed to his fellow Soldiers. He will be missed, and his sacrifice will not be forgotten,” said Lt. Col. Paul Fellingner, commander Task Force Saber.

Memorial Services for Specialist Madden were held on June 30, at the Ledward Chapel, US Army Garrison, Schweinfurt, Germany and will be held on Thursday, July 8, at 1400 at Caserma Ederle, in Vicenza, Italy to honor the Fallen Sky Soldier and hero.



Soldiers from D Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment and others representing the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, gather to pay their final respects to Spc. Madden, who was killed in the line of duty. (Photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword, Task Force Bayonet Public Affairs Office)



Hennigan Was Everything a Commander Wants in a Soldier



Sgt. Matthew Hennigan, a Sky Soldier and Hero



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

"It's Soldiers like Sgt. Hennigan that keep us free. His outgoing nature drew people to him his courage and strength and kept them coming back. I've been honored to command such a Soldier, and am proud to have served with him."

-Lt. Col. William I. Brown

FOB Shank, Afghanistan — A memorial ceremony was held at Forward Operating Base Shank, for Army Sgt. Matthew Hennigan from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team's Special Troops Battalion, July 3.

Hennigan, 20, died at a U.S. medical treatment facility from wounds received, while conducting combat operations in the village of Shekabad, in Afghanistan's Wardak province, June 30.

"Sgt. Matthew Hennigan was everything a commander wants in a Soldier, a proud, professional paratrooper," said Lt. Col. William Brown, commander of the 173rd STB. "People who knew Sgt Hennigan used the same four words to describe him: What a great man."



A Paratrooper with the 173rd Airborne Brigade stands at the position of attention, rendering military honors.

Scores of Soldiers and civilians attended the memorial service that honored Sgt. Hennigan, a hero, killed in action, while fighting in the War On Terror, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X.

(Continued on Page 11)

Hennigan Memorial (cont.)

Hennigan enlisted in the Army in August of 2007 and served in Company B, 173rd STB, 173rd ABCT, as a human intelligence collector. While with company B in Afghanistan, Hennigan completed over 20 patrols in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X and was a very important part of Company B.

"We did not lose a Soldier; we lost something so much more important to us," said Staff Sgt. Michael Stefan. "We lost a family member, we lost a friend, we lost a warrior."

"Matthew was a warrior to the very end," he added.

Hennigan's military awards and decorations include the Purple Heart Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, the Combat Action Badge and the Parachutists Badge. Also, he has been recommended for the Bronze Star Medal and has been posthumously promoted to the rank of sergeant.

"One thing Matt always told me, if anything happened, we celebrate our dead we do not mourn them," said Stefan.



Following Hennigan's wishes, the ceremony was just that, a celebration. Stories were told by Soldiers about his work ethic and outlook on life.

"Matthew did not leave us empty-handed, he left a legacy of hard work and dedication that we can use as an example for everything that we do in our lives: 100 miles per hour, no matter what," Stefan added.

Hennigan is survived by his father Joseph Hennigan of Illinois, his mother Suzanne Hennigan and his brother Edward Hennigan of Las Vegas.

"It's Soldiers like Sgt. Hennigan that keep us free," said Brown. "His outgoing nature drew people to him his courage and strength and kept them coming back. I've been honored to command such a Soldier, and am proud to have served with him."

ANA, ANP Find Weapons After Air Assault to Kherwar Village

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – After more than six months in Afghanistan’s Kherwar district, Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, and their Afghan National Army and police counterparts fly in two CH-47 Chinook helicopters, headed for the village of Kwajangur for the first time, June 6.

The visit to the village, the largest and easternmost in the district, was to assess the area’s needs and talk with the village elder about a proposed road-improvement project. However, shortly after landing, the mission objective changed.

Upon hearing reports of insurgents moving through the village with weapons, the U.S. and Afghan Soldiers quickly moved through the village. With some help from the helicopters in the air, they were given an area to start in and began searching. Led by the ANA, the tactical call-out began. They dispersed and began knocking on doors, questioning local villagers that were nearby and began investigating a small storage building where an insurgent had been seen earlier.

Once inside, they found the building dark, dusty and filled with farming tools and hay. Searching further, they found a machine gun hidden in a blanket under the hay pile, evidence enough to continue the search. In another adjacent storage qulat, an AK-47 was found the same way, wrapped in a blanket and under a hay pile, with a box of ammunition and an extra magazine.

Troop C. commander, Army Capt. Chris Shepherd, of Houston, was happy with the quick and motivated response by the ANA and the ANP.

“They’ve always been the lead since we’ve been here,” said Shepherd. “When we had to shift into searching for weapons or personnel they’re pretty good.”

After the search concluded, the mission returned to its original objective. Shepherd met with the village elder in a field surrounded by villagers and kids, anxious to hear what the American commander had to say. The focus of the discussion was a proposed road-improvement project that will run through Kwajangur to the Kherwar district center and



“Security has to come first and it has to come from villages actually taking responsibility for it, because we can’t be everywhere at once.”

getting the villagers to ensure local security for the workers on the project. “Security has to come first and it has to come from villages actually taking responsibility for it, because we can’t be everywhere at once,” said Shepherd. “The one thing standing in the way right now is an agreement by the elders to provide security along the stretches of road by their villages.”

After some talking, the villagers and village elder finally agreed to provide local security for the project.

“The biggest success story was securing the agreement on the road,” said Shepherd. “Up until today, we hadn’t gotten any of the elders to agree to it.”

With violence increasing in the area, the presence of armed insurgents was no surprise, but the success of the overall mission and the cooperation of the local villagers were unanticipated.

“A lot of towns have been threatened not to interact with any coalition force or government group,” said 1st Lt. Timothy Miller, of Dunkirk, Md., Information Operations officer for Troop C. “Some villages we go into are ghost towns and we have to act knock on the door to actually talk to somebody.”

However, even after the Soldiers arrived by helicopter and throughout their visit, the town was bustling with activity. Farmers tended their fields and villagers walked around, talking to the troops of the ANA and ANP, and for Shepherd, Troop C’s first visit to Kwajangur was a success.

Sgt. Sejad Atal, a squad sergeant for 2nd Company, 1st Kandak, 4th brigade, Afghan National Army, agrees with Shepherd and was happy with how the mission went and proud of how well his troops performed.

“I’m very happy that we got the weapons of people that are against the government,” he said. “The guys did a very good job.”

Fighting to Preserve Progress in Kherwar

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – During the winter months the main adversary facing the Soldiers of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, was the weather. At an elevation of more than 8000 ft., the mountainous district of Kherwar in Afghanistan’s Logar province was constantly covered in freshly-fallen snow and mud throughout the winter. Still, Troop C’s Soldiers pressed on, patrolling the district through sheets of ice, and feet of snow and mud.

Now, instead of fighting the weather, Army Capt. Chris Shepherd, of Houston, Troop C’s commander, his Soldiers and their Afghan National Army counterparts are fighting an increased insurgent presence in the area.

Patrols frequently result in firefights and inside the villages, it’s a fight against the threats of the area’s fighters, both groups vying for the faith and trust of the populace and putting an increased emphasis on the troop’s information operations campaign. However the conditions may have changed, the objective remains the same: bringing security, development and governance to the district.

“The whole IO campaign had to be completely restructured after 200 fighters came into the district,” said 1st Lt. Timothy Miller, of Dunkirk, Md., information operations officer for Troop C. “Things that were working in the winter have changed because the Taliban has an IO campaign build upon threats: threats of death, kidnapping and beating people up.”

“We’re still engaging with the same techniques like radio messaging, encouraging nationalism and unity,” added Miller.

In addition to continued radio messages, Troop C has been helping to develop the Kherwar district center that is frequently seen by the village elders from across the district, providing evidence that security and development aren’t just words, but the future for the people of the district.

“Right now there’s one spot in Kherwar that I know I can absolutely guarantee security on, because we’re right here with it, and that’s the DC,” said Shepherd.



Soldiers from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, patrol Kherwar district in Afghanistan’s Logar province, May 27. Though patrols are becoming increasingly dangerous, the Soldiers of Troop C continue their daily patrols to keep their momentum bringing increased security, development and government presence in Kherwar.

“They come to the DC and they can see the improvements, so it puts a visible face on development for the people,” he continued. “I’m hoping that that’s going to make them want to go back and take responsibility for security in their villages so they also can get those projects.”

Troop C has also started a program called the project security program. The program aims to track the villages that prove they can provide security for projects and workers in their villages, and rewards them with continued development in their area.

Though the program is in its beginning stages, it shows promise and gives the villagers of Kherwar hope and the resolve to continue fighting to secure their district from the insurgents fighting to unravel its development.

“The insurgents know the less interaction villagers have with us, the more chance their message is going to get across, so they’re doing everything they can to make sure we don’t interact with the people,” said Miller. “The main thing is that they’re scared, we just have to find ways to mitigate that fear so we can continue to do our work here.”

During a recent patrol, Troop C’s 2nd Platoon was able to patrol for most of the day in some of the more remote villages of Kherwar, areas where patrols often result in firefights and though things have become more difficult for the Soldiers of Troop C and their Afghan counterparts, Shepherd is confident in the momentum they have secured thus far and the progress to come.

“I see that as a sign of progress,” said Shepherd. “The way forward is to remain aggressive with the enemy and keep them back on their heels. It allows us to get into the closer villages and secure a foothold for development and governance and as people see the projects actually coming to Kherwar, they’ll be able to start taking responsibility for their own security.”

“We’re finding ways to talk to the people even though it’s dangerous,” said Miller. “People have seen that and they’re starting to respect us a lot more.” “The summer is still young and a lot of this will change, but we are still seeing progress,” he added. “Trying to be a consistent presence is the best thing we can do.”

Logar Deputy Governor Visits Kherwar

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – In a valley known as the bowl, for its shape and surrounding mountain peaks, Afghanistan's Kherwar district has long been looked over by Logar's provincial government. Its location, surrounding terrain and insurgent activity make it an intimidating journey for any Afghan government official. However, Logar's deputy governor made the journey from Pul e Alam, the provincial capital to attend a shura at the Kherwar district center, May 29, to ensure the village elders of the district know that the provincial government is taking an active interest in Kherwar.

At the shura, deputy governor Shuja –u- din Shuja spoke to more than 20 village elders from across the district, pleading for their help in decreasing violence in the area and increasing cooperation with the still-beginning presence of Afghan government in Kherwar.

"We have problems because people don't come to the shuras," said Hamayoon, Kherwar district's sub-governor, starting off the meeting. "This shura is to solve people's problems through the government."

Though the district holds shuras at least once every two weeks, Hamayoon did not hesitate to make known his desire to have them more often. He then gave the floor to din Shuja, who plead with the elders to help him and the Afghan government stop the fighting in the district.

"We need to find a way to stop the fighting," he said. "War isn't good for our country, for our sons or for our daughters. Tell the people who aren't here to come together and become one."

After an impassioned speech, the elders also heard from Matyas Zrno and Col. Rudolf Honzak, the heads of the civilian and military elements of the Czech Republic's Provincial



Shuja –u- din Shuja, deputy governor for Afghanistan's Logar province, gives a message on the radio at Combat Outpost Kherwar, May 29. The radio message mirrored his comments to village elders at an earlier shura, asking for help to end fighting and bring development to Kherwar.

Reconstruction Team, respectively. Zrno, following the same lines as Hamayoon and Din Shuja, expressed his concern for the district and asked for help to make Kherwar a suitable destination for development.

"You have all rights to be angry at the situation here," said Zrno. "But, if we want to change the situation here, we need the government here."

Though Army Capt. Chris Shepherd, of Houston, commander of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and members of his staff were in attendance, the shura was Afghan-led from the start.

"At that shura I barely spoke because it was about having the provincial level government talking to the people of the dist," said Shepherd. "Seeing representatives from Pul e Alam come down is huge, because it lets the elders know that outside of Kherwar they are focused on developing the district."

After the shura came to an end, din Shuja stopped by the radio station at Combat Outpost Kherwar to deliver a radio message to the people of the district, mirroring his speech to the elders and ensuring his message would continue to be spread by the radio long after he left the district.

Sky Soldiers Medical Staff Leads the Way with Brain Trauma Clinic

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team's medical team launched the Army's first mild traumatic brain injury clinic at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan in an effort to conserve the fighting strength for units within Task Force Bayonet's Area of Operation.

Army Cpt. Erik Johnson, an occupational therapist with "The Herd," helped spearhead the first mTBI (Mild Traumatic Brain Injury) clinic that helps Soldiers return to their unit without the arduous delays that previously kept Soldiers out of theater for evaluations or treatment.

According to Johnson, who resides in Little Rock, AR, "Headaches, irritability, short-term memory loss and troubles with problem-solving skills are some of the most common symptoms that medics with "The Herd" encounter after a Soldier has had a minor traumatic brain injury.

"If you come into our clinic, at any given time, you will see Soldiers involved in a variety of activities that help them with their concentration skills, balance, short term memory and problem-solving skills," said Johnson.

The new clinic at FOB Shank is the first of its kind here in Afghanistan, and Army Staff Sgt. Melissa Potter, the Medical Operations Non-commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC) of the 173rd ABCT says the progress being made within their brigade is both groundbreaking and impactful for units and Soldiers alike.

The program has been set up to allow Soldiers to stay with CPT. Johnson and his assistant, SPC Rivera at their clinic for up to 14 days. It lets Soldiers to get back in the fight and re-join their units sooner than ever before, and the Pilot Program has caught the attention of military leaders at the Pentagon, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mike Mullen, due to the tremendous contributions that Task Force Bayonet's medical team are making by reducing the time it takes to get Soldiers treated and returned to duty.

One Soldier who got rocked by an IED is Army Sgt. James Doyle Triplett, a resident of Lawton, OK, who said he came to the clinic with concentration problems. His mind would wander and he had some difficulties with thinking clearly, but Johnson and Bridges helped him improve dramatically.

"Instead of a lot of activity and distractions, we have found it is conducive to the brain's healing process to ensure patients here get a chance to let their brains rest."



Triplett said the room they prepared for him felt like going to grandmother's house. "It was a great place to decompress and recover," Triplett said.

"When we work with Soldiers, they have a variety of tools that the 173rd ABCT has been very supportive about. Leadership here has been extremely supportive in seeing to it that our clinic has everything we need to get our Soldiers what we need to help them," Johnson said.

"Once a combat medic such as myself determines that there may be some indicators that a Soldier who has experienced a blast or head trauma that warrant mandatory observation, Soldiers are referred to the mTBI Clinic, so they can be treated here in theater," said SPC Ashley Marie Bordges, a medic with Brigade Support Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

Bordges, a whose hometown is located in Spokane, WA, says there are cards that combat medics use to help identify problems that may be indicators of a brain injury.

Johnson, a caring and dedicated medical practitioner, has invested huge amounts of time and effort to see to it that Soldiers within Task Force Bayonet's AO get the tailored, specialized attention they need to return to duty. Johnson leverages an array of activities designed to sharpen their mental acuity ranging from chess boards and knotted ropes, video games and being given the chance to decompress.

"Instead of a lot of activity and distractions, we have found it is conducive to the brain's healing process to ensure patients here get a chance to let their brains rest, so we provide comfortable, quiet space for 24-48 hours, as minimal brain activity accelerates the human brain's ability to heal itself. Letting the brain calm down a bit after an experience with an IED or RPG attack is an essential part of the therapy.

"In the history of theater, there has never been such a clinic that has made this kind of progress.

"We are very proud of our accomplishments here. There are a lot of firsts going on here and we are covering a lot of new ground here, helping both the Soldiers and their respective units," said Army Spc. Jessica Rivera-Mendoza, who assists Johnson with his work at the mTBI Clinic, at FOB Shank.

Johnson said, "In the past, they would be medically evacuated out of theater. This is the first clinic of its kind. When these Sol

Continued on page 22

Accountability through Words, Deeds, Images

Bayonet personnel and members of the local Afghan media met to discuss the importance of transparency.



"We're using the Commanders' Emergency Relief Program (CERP) to emulate the 'people's budget' component under projected Sub National Government provincial budgeting to build district and provincial capacities."

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan—Task Force Bayonet is working to facilitate transparency and accountability for partnerships with GIRoA.

"Gaining and maintaining the support of the local Afghan people is the ultimate objective. Connecting the Afghan people to their government and security forces through efforts that facilitate Afghan transparency and accountability through words, deeds, images, partnerships and relationships is the only hope for long-term success," said Maj. Matthew Yandura, the Task Force Bayonet Information Operations Officer.

Yandura recently held an Information Operations Conference highlighting the importance of words, deeds and images. Bayonet personnel and members of the local Afghan media met to discuss the importance of transparency. Yandura addressed the media concerning efforts to keep the public informed.

"A recognizable increase in local awareness of GIRoA efforts to meet the needs of local communities, an increase in ANSF confidence and capabilities, awareness of improvements in security at the village level, improved awareness of efforts that connect people to their government, and an increased sense of hope for a better future are all parts of that success," said Yandura.

He continued.

"We're working to facilitate transparency through face-to-face communication with locals, area assessments, open source intelligence (OSINT), media surveys, radio spots, and the distribution of printed products and promotional materials," said Yandura.

Yandura mentioned that the TF Bayonet Radio Network was the most important part of this local interaction.

"RIABs (radios in a box) remain our most important weapon system in the COIN (counter insurgency) fight. Named programs like Reward Arrest Capture Kill (R.A.C.K), the Department of Defense Rewards Program (DoDRP), Operation Streetwise with counter-ier cell phones, Operation Sound wave with a GIRoA leaders radio program, Command Service Phone Numbers (CSPN), and others are achieving effects," said Yandura.

Recently Yandura worked to help local media members define the need for project transparency in the newly established People's Development Fund. To help this transparency, he illuminated aspects of the Commanders' Emergency Relief Program and the Capacity Building Fund Program in a provincial budgeting training session prior to the conference.

"We're using the Commanders' Emergency Relief Program (CERP) to emulate the 'people's budget' component under projected Sub National Government provincial budgeting to build district and provincial capacities for project selection, management and financial oversight," said Yandura.

"We have been providing technical assistance on process, institutional, and technical engineering aspects of the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) program when requested. Provinces and districts must own this process, and manage it, with our help in the background," said Yandura.

He continued.

"Provincial Development Committees (PDCs) and District Councils (DCs) receive national CERP budgets from TF Bayonet units in order to enact the Capacity Building Fund, and Afghan media coverage of events is necessary to establish cycles of transparency and public disclosure," said Yandura.

The PDCs and DCs announce chosen priorities and projects via radio messages so that the local populace stays informed. They also publicly announce winning bids for projects through radio messages. The completion of projects including results and effects are also publicized, and the Afghan media plays a large part.

"What we say, what we do and how we and our Afghan counterparts use imagery to share a vision for a more stable, prosperous Afghanistan will facilitate Afghan transparency and accountability," said Yandura.

King of The Herd Uses Innovation to Reduce Collateral Damage

Story by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan– While some Commands either severely restrict fires or elect not to employ them effectively, opting instead to fire at offset targets rather than the actual target, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team's 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment (Task Force King) has a new solution. TF King has embraced the rules of engagement and taken active steps to reduce collateral damage by developing an alternative which reduces the chance of civilian casualties.

This technique provides the Commander with an alternative to the potentially negative consequences of an indirect fire mission using solely high explosive TNT.

By reducing civilian deaths and collateral damage, the Sky Soldiers are meeting the objectives that support the Counterinsurgency COIN doctrine.

According to Army Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Woods, 4-319th AFAR, 173rd ABCT, "the insurgents are choosing to fight among the people employing them as human shields; this amounts to an avoidance strategy. Our rules of engagement have been a challenge, because our enemy knows when we use artillery in a conventional fire fight there remains a very real possibility of unintended collateral damage. In our efforts to avoid that, commanders have previously been far less inclined to use artillery. Insurgents are not stupid. This enemy has been using our ROE to avoid our fire support advantage... Until now!"

The 4-319th AFAR Task Force crafted a way to fire non-exploding training rounds in the adjustment phase, and then by wisely switching to a lethal one in the fire for effect phase; fewer live rounds are fired. The less lethal training round in use is the M804A1 also known as the "smurf" round due to its blue color. It's a ballistic match for a live high explosive artillery round, meaning the round will have the same effects while in flight from the tube to the target. The difference is in the impact effects.

According to Woods, "the 173 ABCT gives up nothing in terms of effectiveness; the fire for effect round is exactly where it would be had we fired all explosive artillery rounds. This new approach that we are using here is more sensitive to the environmental impact issues along with the cultural issues that affect Afghanistan citizens."

Woods said that because Afghanistan is an agrarian society, when high explosives are used, they contaminate the soil. When TNT, RDX, and HMX erode into the fields, crop yields can be harmed, so using less high explosive rounds is good for Afghanistan's long-term future, as well as posing a far less likelihood for collateral damage.

"The 173rd ABCT is aware how collateral damage separates us from the people. Since the people are the real objective, within a counterinsurgency war, our ability to increase public safety is the moral choice and the strategic choice that best delivers our

"They are taking significant steps at reducing civilian casualties and collateral damage. The enemy's efforts are routinely aimed at creating more civilian casualties. That is key for the people of Afghanistan to understand." Staff Sgt. Michael Kain and Pvt. William Fiel of Alpha battery display the round used for civilian casualty reduction. Photo by SFC Rodney Graves, Alpha Battery, 4-319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment.



vision and ROE directives."

"This technique allows us to pursue the enemy despite his use of human shields. We can fire closer to protected structures with less potential for collateral damage."

"No one told these Sky Soldiers how to avoid collateral damage or civilian casualties, but rather than think inside the box and apply conventional thinking which typically sees units restrict one of our advantages - our fire power - we opted to tailor our effects and deliver focused lethality," said Woods.

"So within our Rules Of Engagement, we can still pursue the enemy, as well as negate his avoidance strategy. Instead of complaining about the rules of engagement; we adopted our effects to meet the ROE, developing a morally supportable alternative. This technique also meets one of our brigade commander's Counterinsurgency (COIN) directives; "fight the enemy's strategy not his force."

"We have brought artillery back into the fight with 'tailored effects' so now, more tools are available to Commanders."

"Adapting artillery's effects supports the COIN fight," said Woods. "There aren't many armies that would go to this extent to increase public safety and reduce collateral damage like the 173D Airborne is doing day in and day out."

Every 155 mm M777A2 cannon crew in the 4-319th AFAR has the 'smurf' round on location.

Woods said, "this is not courageous restraint; they are firing 98-pound, artillery rounds at people who want to kill them. Our Paratroopers choose to adjust fire with less lethal rounds to protect the citizens."

"They are taking significant steps at reducing civilian casualties and collateral damage. The enemy's efforts are routinely aimed at creating more civilian casualties. That is key for the people of Afghanistan to understand."

"I've been a big advocate of this technique since the 90's. It reduces the potential for unwanted damage; increases public safety, and provides a more morally acceptable fire support option," Woods said.

A TF King Soldier commented from Sayed Abad, "when the blue training round arrived on location, I asked why they are issuing us less lethal rounds. After learning their purpose in reducing collateral damage, I then asked why we haven't been doing this for the last nine years?"

173rd ABCT, Afghan Partners Open Road for Local Citizens

"Locals are happy to have their road back. They are optimistic about the increased traffic thru the Bazaar"



The ceremony concluded three months of hard work to transform the bazaar from its original state into a thriving business center. Shopkeepers attested to the fact that business is increasing and prices have nearly tripled since the inception of the project.

The key GIROA and CF leaders then walked the bazaar to discuss the project with the people in the bazaar.

It demonstrates to the people of Sayad Abad that we work with the District Government, listen to, partnering with GIROA officials and village elders.

According to the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, Commanding Officer, Army Lt. Col. Matthew McFarlane, "the construction required A Company to relocate several things on the combat outpost, purchase many tons of gravel, and a month and a half of work by a Coalition Engineer Platoon. The work and results empowered our unified partners, the District Sub Governor and his staff. It allowed them to gain the confidence of people that they serve and demonstrated to the people that GIROA and Coalition Forces care about them and their concerns."

McFarlane said, "Locals are happy to have their road back. They are optimistic about the increased traffic thru the Bazaar."

The deputy governor and Sayed Abad sub-governor gave rousing speeches highlighting the action of the government on the part of the people and calling for closer cooperation for security reasons.

Sub-governor Nematullah at one point posed the question, "If we are trying to help the people while the enemy is killing their own people, why do we not work together for our future?"

ISAF personnel have worked tirelessly with their Afghan partners to pump prosperity and security back in this region. The new road marks the beginning of a new era for business owners.

Members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team have been partnering with provincial and district leaders and tribal elders from Southern Wardak area in order to help improve security discussed with local leaders how the area's elders need to be involved in problem-solving by working with their government to remedy matters.

SGT Russell A. Gilchrest, of Fitchburg, MA, was there for the event and said that the local villagers were delighted to get their road back.

Army Col. James Johnson, commander of the 173rd ABCT and his paratroopers realize that development and security go hand in hand.

According to McFarlane, who commands the 1-503rd Battalion, he has enjoyed a good relationship with the elders and the Governor of the local province. McFarlane, who has seen a variety of projects go forward, understands the importance of fighting for the Afghan people, as this insurgent war has called for both infrastructure and infantry intervention.

"Protecting routes and keeping them safe and clear from insurgent activity is everyone's responsibility," said McFarlane.

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) pose more than injuries and deaths to innocent people with the region; the fear that goes with such attacks also reduces faith in the government and reduces Afghanistan's citizens desire to travel or do any shopping in the area.

In order for Afghanistan to enjoy a brighter future, roads like this are very key, as safe passage is essential for villagers to build the kind of lasting trust in their government and to move forward and prosper as a nation.

McFarlane said, "the local elders and businessmen were glad to see the road opened and believe it will increase commerce in the bazaar and access to the District Center and health clinic. Some of them remained concerned about security and wanted Afghan security forces and Coalition Forces to be vigilant of potential threats."



"Protecting routes and keeping them safe and clear from insurgent activity is everyone's responsibility"

Story by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- In Southern Wardak, businessmen rely on roads for their life line. Commerce hinges on it. Having the needed infrastructure paves the way for socio-economic success and the Sky Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team were on hand today to help celebrate Onkhai Road's opening -- an event the business community sees as being vital, according to shop owners in Sayed Abad.

In Afghanistan, Onkhai Road is Sayed Abad's commerce connection in many ways. It connects customers with shop owners and villagers with each other, increasing commerce and social interaction. While successful business operations is one goal of ISAF personnel, there are pockets of insurgents who prefer dysfunction and despair over success and prosperity.

The 173rd ABCT, with its Combat Outposts and Forward Operating Bases, has thousands of Soldiers in Wardak and Logar Provinces, who are here to assist by helping improve security, governance and development. Onkhai Road's reconstruction was just one aspect of several concerns local national elders brought to the attention of the District Governor during a shura in February.

The Onkhai Road was the main link between Highway One (Ring Road) and the Onkhai Valley. The road was blocked due to force protection concerns following a vehicle suicide IED attack in the summer of 2009.

This forced Afghans from the Onkhai Valley to take a long, unimproved bypass road which decreased their access to the District Center and local health clinic. Reopening the road re-established a critical link between Onkhai and Highway 1 and provides access to the graveyard.

The road construction demonstrated to the people of Onkhai that their District Government listened to them and that the District Government worked with Coalition Forces to make this happen.

The day began with a briefing that saw the Deputy Governor, Sayed Abad sub-governor, chief of police, ANA commanders, and distinguished guests discuss the

5th Contingent Czech PRT Logar Building, Supporting

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan—The 5th contingent of the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team Logar conducts military operations to extend GIROA authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the Logar province, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts.

The PRT recently organized and supported school refurbishment, radio station refurbishment, and journalist internships.

Realization of these projects included technical equipment for radio station Millie Paygham, such as voice recorders, transmitter, and a motorcycle. The production of radio reports about Czech PRT projects reports broadcasted in Arman FM. Millie Paygham received equipment necessary for their journalist efforts in Logar, the signal of the radio is stronger and more districts of Logar can hear it.

PRT Logar organized and supported an internship for three reporters from Logar in Prague. The reporters were chosen according to their media experiences, language skills and a personal interview. During the six weeks internship they learned basics of investigative independent journalism and also practical skills from the afghan RFE/RL newsroom.

Training for Journalists and reporters from each radio station included media laws, practical journalism, reporting, how to work with radio equipment and an internship in Salam Watandar.

A Media Campaign on Women Rights included a radio soap opera with topics such as health care for women, girls going to schools, and stopping domestic violence, that were all made by Afghans.

PRT Logar also made a project for journalism students in Kabul in which the students made reports about PRT projects with a camera provided by the PRT. The author of the best report was rewarded with the camera. The reports were broadcasted by Tolo TV. The winner is now a professional reporter for Tolo TV.

PRT Logar's school refurbishment included a new classroom, teaching materials, and water basins for drinking water.



Sky Soldiers Celebrate Army Birthday With Run

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Headquarters and Headquarters Company hosted a 10k run and hot-dog eating contest to celebrate the Army's birthday. The run paid respect to those who have served throughout the Army's history, said First Sgt. William Fogle, First Sgt. 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Headquarters and Headquarters Company

"Events such as the Army Birthday run are important. There are multiple reasons why events like this are so important. First as a Soldier we pay our respects to all of those who have come before us, the men and women who have paved the way must be honored. If we allow the traditions of the military to fall to the side, we are doing them an injustice. This run may not be a tradition, but the celebration of the Army's Birthday certainly is," said Fogle.

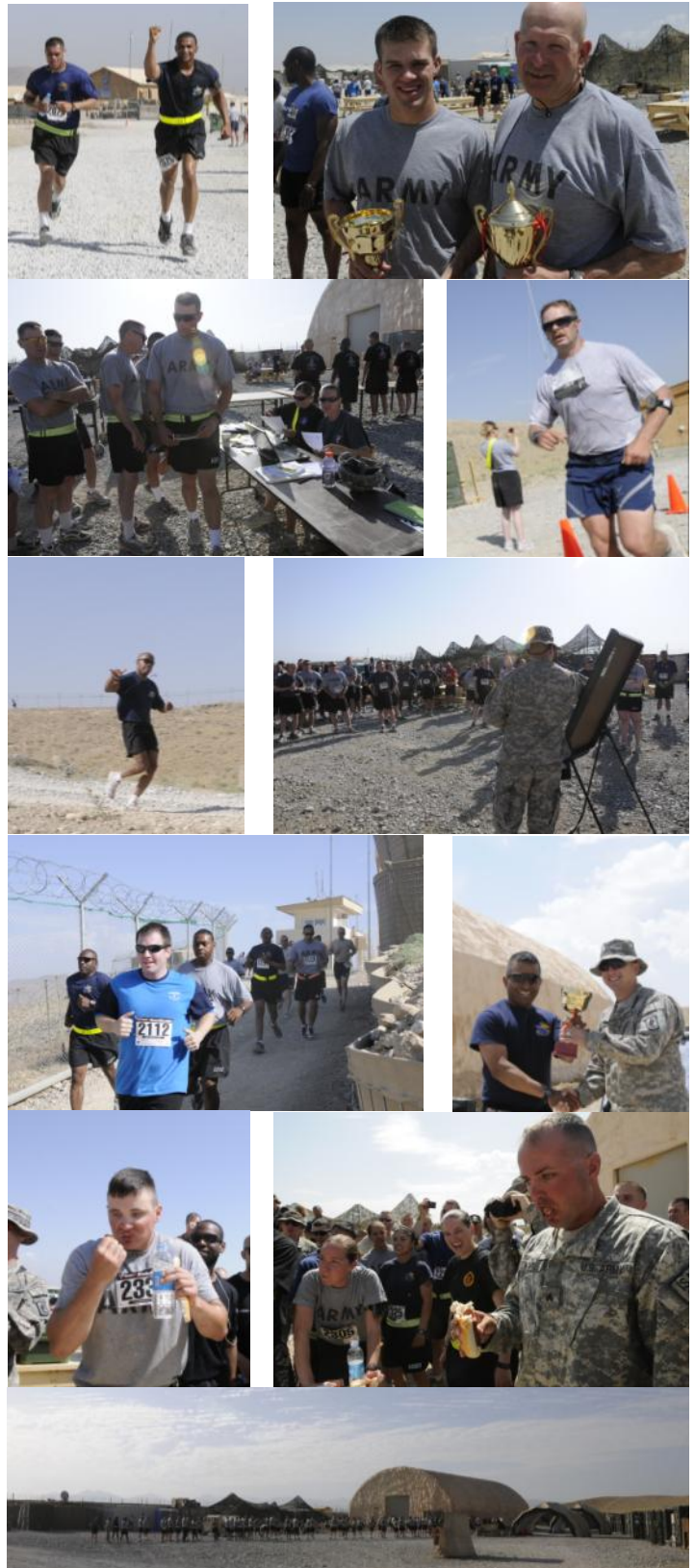
"The competition is a health way for us to channel our energy and enjoy a few minutes away from the fight. This brings us back refreshed and more focused. We also get some great exercise and changed ourselves," said Fogle.

"Ultimately no matter how you look at it days like this increase the esprit de corps of all us involved. High morale in any unit leads to nothing but great things. Greater levels of confidence, discipline and a willingness to perform better at everything we do. Our Sky soldiers deserve our best and that is the real goal for us," said Fogle.

"The run was a great event showing some esprit-de-corps, celebrating the Army birthday, and getting some exercise at the same time. It was good to see so many people, as busy as they are here, to be able to work their schedules around so they could participate. First Sgt. Fogle did an outstanding job pulling in all the resources and support to make it all happen," said Cpt. David Kopecky, commander 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

"We had a great turn out and terrific support from the FOB Shank Tennant Units," said First Lt. Brandon Sellers, executive officer 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

"My hat goes off to the Hot Dog eaters. Paratroopers can run, but eating five giant hot dogs in 10 minutes is Herculean," said Sellers.



Military Service a Family Tradition

Story and photos by TF Bayonet Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan (June 7, 2010) – For many people, serving in the military is a family tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. This is especially true for the Matthews family.

CW2 Sterling Matthews has served in the military for 29 years and both his father-in-law and grandfather were soldiers. At present Matthews is serving as the J-1 for the Army Corps of Engineers in Kabul. Not more than 30 kilometers away, his son, PFC Michael Matthews, is at FOB Airborne serving with 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry.

PFC Matthews is a 4th generation soldier who can trace back his lineage to Soldiers serving in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Currently he is an Infantry Soldier for TF ROCK, headquartered at FOB Airborne in northern Wardak Province, Afghanistan.

Both Matthews are from Gorham, Maine where Mrs. Matthews and her son presently live. CW2 Matthews said it has been hard on his wife and son with both of them being gone at the same time, but being able to see his son while they are here has been an unexpected blessing. "If you had told me a year ago that I would be with my son in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, I wouldn't have believed it" he said.

This is CW2 Matthews 4th overseas deployment and the first combat deployment for both father and son.

Before PFC Matthews joined the Army his father sat him down to talk. He explained the importance of getting an education and what it can mean to his career. PFC Matthews said he wanted the experience of an Infantry Soldier before he pursues a college education.

This is not the first time both father and son have been together while in the military. CW2 Matthews was able to attend his son's Advanced Infantry Training graduation at Fort Benning, GA in 2009.

Both Matthews want to wish all the best to the families of the 173rd ABCT and all families of deployed Soldiers.



This is not the first time both father and son have been together while in the military. CW2 Matthews was able to attend his son's Advanced Infantry Training graduation at Fort Benning, GA in 2009.

+

ATTENTION U.S. FORCES
Military and U.S. Contractors
Especially all new arrivals to the FOB

+

The FOB is in **URGENT NEED** of Volunteers with
ALL BLOOD TYPES
to get their blood pre-screened as part of the
whole blood donor program.

**SCREENING HELD AT THE
C-MED AID STATION EVERY
WEDNESDAY 0800-1800**

**Or to coordinate a screening for 10 or more
people, call C-MED at 481-5205 or email
kent.smith@afghan.swa.army.mil**

A limited amount of blood products is kept on hand. When those are depleted, the local surgical team relies on volunteers like you to donate whole blood which is then transfused immediately into the patient. Last time donors were needed, it took 120 units of blood products (including blood from over 50 volunteers) to correct the blood loss. Potential future donors must be pre-screened and blood tested for disease. Donors are only called to donate blood in case of emergency when blood supplies are depleted and more is immediately needed.

If you have 2 or more months left on the FOB...
POC: SFC SMITH / SGT LEDOUX, C CO 173D BSB 481-5205

+

Save A buddy

+

'Medical Staff Leads the Way' Continued

Continued from page 15

diers get hit with a blast, there is a concussive force that can travel through the vehicle and also through the Soldier. Our treatment program is definitely helping the 173rd to identify injury symptoms as early as possible. It's great to see these Soldiers make comebacks like this."

Major Jay Baker, the 173rd ABCT Surgeon, said that the program is ideal because you want the neurons in the brain to reconnect, and so by pulling these Soldiers aside and letting them get exposed to occupational therapy, and some new techniques like cooling down time, having them rest in a dark, quiet place for 24-48 hours while attending to any medical or psychological issues the Soldiers have, we saw these new techniques were highly effective."

"Soldiers in the past were sent back to home station and due to their not being a solid treatment plans, so they were losing Soldiers due to not having good follow-up. My predecessor, Maj. Jen Bell, thought if we could leverage the skills of an occupational therapist here, we could do the rehabilitation here rather than back in the rear. With proper resourcing, we took the idea and ran with it. It has become a real force multiplier. We have seen close to 150 Soldiers receive treatment, and 100% have been returned to duty. It allows the command to interface with them and be close to them. We are able to treat the symptoms here in theater and then push them back to their units," said Baker.

"Potter said, "We now have an individual & facility in theater that is completely focused on identifying and treating post concussive head injuries and mTBI so that no Soldier slips through the cracks. This clinic fills in the gap in care that we have had with mTBI in the past. All Soldiers who are in an IED blast or incur a head injury are screened at the mTBI clinic, educated on head injuries, and given the time & treatment to heal and get back in the fight."

"We also track each Soldier who has had a head injury so that we can identify high risk Soldiers and ensure they have follow up screenings after the deployment. This is the continuity and access to care that our Soldiers deserve, but has not been available in the past," said Potter.

"Also, Soldiers can do their recuperation here with their unit and not have to be evacuated out of theater and feel alone. Some Soldiers who are evacuated out of theater may feel a guilt that they are abandoning their team. Keeping them in theater, keeps them focused on the mission and keeps them with their unit and that support system."

"We are giving our Soldiers the best medical care they need while still keeping them in the fight. It is a Soldier program and a Commander program. Everyone wins! Potter exclaimed.

"Captain Johnson is completely dedicated to his job and the Soldiers. Because he is dedicated to the mTBI clinic, he is able to personalize his treatment plans and really know the Soldiers. He makes his patients feel at home and a part of the team. Soldiers are comfortable talking to him and coming to the clinic to receive care," said Potter.

"This has been needed for a long time. I think there is nothing being missed. We work with the 173rd in the rear too, so when these Soldiers redeploy, we are monitoring them and following up. This command has given me help with the Brigade Surgeon's support, access to emergency funds and has been wonderful about supporting me in what we are doing here at this new clinic," Johnson said.

"Soldiers tell me all the time that when they were deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in the past, they never had this program before. It is a very comfortable program for our patients and 100% return to duty is just great," Johnson said.

Baker said it is a comprehensive treatment plan that called for an occupational therapist, and that is where Cpt. Johnson fit in. "The Division Surgeon came down and liked what was being done here, so it was institutionalized and our command here has seen to it that we support what our occupational therapist and his technician are doing. We have treated more than 150 patients – mostly combat engineers and RCP Package troops because they are getting the brunt of these attacks," Baker said.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Nicholas Rolling, command sergeant major of the 173rd ABCT, said "I have seen the tremendous strides that the Sky Soldiers' who are managing this mTBI Clinic are making, helping injured Soldiers recover and he says the statistics are very impressive. We are doing some innovative things here and making some breakthroughs that lead the way in terms of treating these kind of traumatic brain injuries. What they have done with this clinic is awesome," said Rolling.

Attention Sky Soldiers - ZIP codes for some Sky Soldiers will be changing. Effective immediately, the ZIP code across AO Bayonet is 09364 for all COPs & FOBs. This is a change for some, but not for all. Mail addressed with the old ZIP code will be delivered, but it may be delayed. Please inform your loved ones and other contacts.

'Not Your Typical War' Continued

Continued from page 4

Steve Lupenski, Lemke's associate, agrees.

According to Lupenski, "There is far more to it than remembering to take your sunglasses off when dealing with local Afghan leaders here. In general, when you need to get information from local Afghan leaders or charismatic personalities with this region, due to their culture, Afghans do not typically offer information when confronted by direct lines of questioning from people they do not know or trust."

"It takes relationship building, time, patience and an emphatic understanding of the Afghan people's sense of timing before Soldiers can begin to make progress here. The insurgents here have a clear advantage over us, because they have instant credibility with their countrymen. They share the same heritage, speak the same language and know what all the social and cultural norms are. When ISAF units come here, it would be of great benefit for an outgoing unit to prepare a nice body of knowledge, in some searchable kind of format, whereby the new units arriving in theater could access important lessons learned and query that database for help," they said.

"The other thing is having an appreciation for what the previous unit has promised the people prior to getting in country. It may be wise not to start your own list of projects until important promises have been kept. Soccer goals being set up are all well and good, but look for items that are going to make a real and lasting impact here to the people of Afghanistan. Are soccer goal posts going to have lasting value? I don't honestly think so," Lemke said.

Lemke said he is not knocking doing nice things for the youth here. "Building schools and so forth are great endeavors, but we have to look at it from the perspective of once the school is built, where are the pens, paper, books and teachers' salaries going to come from. We have to help the government be self-sustaining, or once we depart, these many efforts will be for not," according to Lemke.

Lemke continued.

"There is a natural order to things. Infrastructure is key. Having the right set of priorities about wells or roads, before worrying about things like dairy farms or sewing shops may be of more immediate help to the local populace here. If we get a handle on where their pain is, we can perhaps reduce the instances of them opting to help insurgents just to make fast money for their families due to being in a survival mode, influenced by economic unrest. These villagers here are in a survival mode. Few of them are really strong proponents for either the Taliban or ISAF. Most are just trying to get by and make it, on a day-to-day basis," Lemke said.

Another pillar of good counterinsurgency work is telling them the truth, practicing hard love and saying what must be said but doing so without sounding insensitive or cavalier about it," said Lemke.

"Understanding the challenges or realities that exist here aids any unit facing a counterinsurgency," said Lupenski. The duo agreed that they would like to see more of an overlap between units and even if a few members of the outgoing unit could make the trek from Afghanistan to New York and call on the Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division to give them insights and some food

for thought prior to their even arriving here, that would be very effective," said Lupenski. "An alternative would be leveraging distance learning or web-based solutions to deliver such training, but share the knowledge early on," he advised.

"Many Soldiers poised to leave do not give the new reporting teams ample time to become exposed to the environment here. It is probably not practical to expect an outgoing team to be able to take newly arrived Soldiers around to every, single point of contact within their Area of Operations. However, Lemke said, "if there is some better relationship-building and trust is established earlier on in the process between outgoing and incoming units, there are opportunities to have some Chai tea perhaps with key leaders or government officials, who are on a short list of people that might be instrumental to missions to go smoothly."

"We cannot fight a series of one-year wars over a period of ten years. We have to understand that this is going to be an arduous, time-consuming endeavor here." Lupenski and Lemke both agree that there has to be some teeth to our approach here though. Let the locals know that our preference is to work through them and gain their cooperation, but at the end of the day, if it appears that we have to go in there, and pull the bad guys out ourselves, we are prepared to do so. You have to draw lines in the sand and mean it. The other piece to this whole thing is getting the Afghan Army and its government to take control of the reins in their own hands and let the citizenry be aware that their government has done so. Do not miss an opportunity to show the Afghan citizens here that the ANA and their leaders are providing security for them. It's not enough that they are doing so; they have to be seen doing so."

The team said that when Afghans see fellow Afghans coming up with solutions for Afghan problems, that is what it boils down to. "Frankly, we make huge mistakes by assuming they want to be westernized here. They don't," said Lemke. "We need to be able to balance our methods with their natural approach to things in order to be effective."

Lupenski said, "We cannot overlay the Western Template here and expect it to work. It is not that easy. In order to get new units battle-ready for an insurgency war, it would be great to send over some Noncommissioned Officers to the new unit's home station, prior to deployments, have some real Afghan Soldiers and Afghan leaders accompany them and talk through some scenarios together. If nothing else, leveraging the technology of web-based meetings and hosting teleconferences that offer some substance – some meat on the bone – to promote awareness levels early on may be helpful to the transitioning Soldiers. The key to all of this is knowledge transfer and effective relationship-building."

"We must accept that we have to take risks out here, and I think it is not a case of us or them type of proposition. At times, it may boil down to us or the mission, and the mission must come first, but COIN (Counterinsurgency) is about doing so wisely. That is why it so important that we share these mindsets down to the platoon and squad level here. We mitigate risk and improve our chances for success when we realize it is not just what we do here, but how we do it," they said.



173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Photo Illustration by Army Spc. Daniel Haun