



AIRBORNE

# THE TIEN BIEN TIMES

## OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM X



MARCH 2010

# SHOWING THE WAY



Sgt. 1st Class Jack Fryberger, of York, Penn., directs Soldiers from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, and Afghan National Army and police to exit a CH-47 Chinook and set up security as part of Operation Comanche Sky Soldier, March 22.

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



**173rd AIRBORNE**  
Brigade Combat Team \* Sky Soldiers



# Social Media

Public Affairs fulfills the Army's obligation to keep the American people and the Army informed, and helps to establish the conditions that lead to confidence in America's Army and its readiness to conduct operations in peacetime, conflict and war. Deputy Chief of Army Public Affairs Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Phillips said that social media is the best way to keep the American people informed.

"Given the new pace of electronic communication, Army social media efforts now include Facebook, Twitter, and blogging in order to utilize all means available to reach the Army family and the American people," said Phillips.

The Task Force Bayonet Public Affairs Office is following suit with a myriad of social media efforts to better inform the American people, fellow Soldiers, and the international community of all that Bayonet Soldiers have accomplished in the Wardak and Logar Provinces.

Please share these efforts and subscribe to our feeds so as to inform yourselves and your colleagues of all the Bayonet efforts.



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**Deputy Commander** Lt. Col. Kyle Lear  
**Command Sgt. Maj.** Command Sgt. Maj. Nicholas Rolling

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# Commander's Corner

## Sky Soldiers, Family & Friends,

You may have heard the term 'COIN' used a great deal in the context of our mission here in Afghanistan. I would like to take this month's Commander's Corner to explain what it means and how we are accomplishing our mission by focusing on some proven COIN techniques.

COIN is an abbreviation for Counter-Insurgency. Combined with our Afghan and Coalition partners, we are fighting insurgents, who desire to remove the legitimate Afghan government from power. They are using many methods in their attempt to accomplish this goal, including threats, misinformation, corruption and illegal violent actions.

The local nationals here are dubious about their lives becoming better in an environment where short-term survival and who they decide to trust can be matters of life or death for some here in Afghanistan. Regardless of the roadblocks or temporary setbacks initially encountered, members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team have been steadfast in winning over skeptical Afghans.

In terms of building trusted networks, Kherwar is a perfect example as Sky Soldiers have worked with the elders to demonstrate our sincerity and resolve, showing them how consistent we are about relying on their ideas to help forge the way forward for their district.

By constantly reassessing along all lines of operations, we show villagers with our words and deeds signifying we understand and value Afghan input to operations. An example of this is how we have dealt with governance in all our districts.

We recognize that we cannot apply an American or coalition solution to the problems the Afghans face here and expect them to last. We must find local solutions to local problems. We work closely with ANSF & GIRoA leaders to help them develop solutions which work and will continue to improve until they are fully sustainable by Afghans.

Gaining and maintaining the support of the local Afghan people is the ultimate objective of every action we take. Every success is important to communicate and what we do is broadcasted on the RIAB in order to inform the local nationals about the how GIRoA and ANSF are making real progress.

Partnerships and relationships are the only hope for long term success; this is not a problem with a military solution: We conduct all operations with our partners. We host monthly District Governance conferences, Commanders conferences and competitions like Common Goal and the Repel Commander's Cup to strengthen our partnership.

While we cannot befriend everyone here. Our focus is on isolating the insurgents from the rest of the populace. This buys time for the Afghan government to make the all-important connections with the citizenry and affords Afghan leaders the chance to make progress, building momentum and improving the day-to-day lives of the villagers here.

Security is the best invitation for business owners, farmers and villagers to return to an area and commit to re-building their lives with a sense of optimism and hope. When commerce returns to any area that had previously been plagued by violence or illegal activity, it is because people are able to see the signs of progress. Villagers can then sense their ability to walk freely, travel the roads and interface with each other once again, thanks to the ANA and their coalition partners.

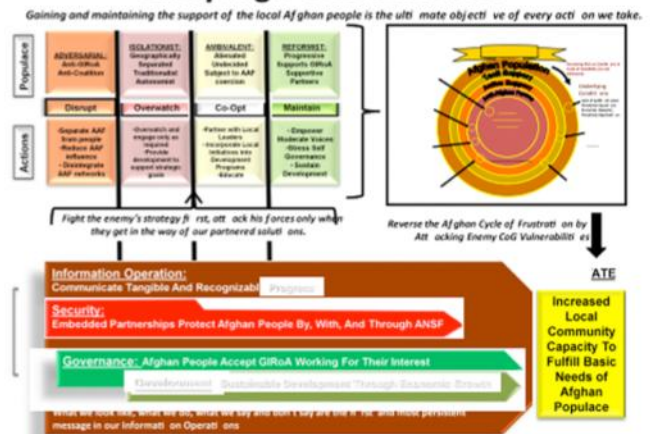
Isolating insurgents and improving security are not easy. We recognize that our Area of Operation (AO) is comprised of villagers who are constantly making determinations who they should be aligning themselves with. Due to their survival depending on stability, security and economic improvements being made here, we see our role of partnering with Afghan National Security Forces as being far more strategic than tactical. It is not just what we do, it is also how we do it.

It goes beyond tactics or strategy; it really is a whole mindset for our paratroopers here to embrace and demonstrate on a consistent basis. Defeating counterinsurgents is an arduous, dangerous and frustrating situation. However, if we can separate the insurgents from the people and the villagers withdraw their support from these enemies of Afghanistan, that will be key. Once villagers have seen the counterinsurgents' violence and illegal tactics and realize these criminals are not who they should be aligning themselves with, they can arrive at their own conclusion that the ANA and ISAF soldiers are here to legitimately protect them and help the GIRoA offer solutions to the Afghan populace.

In the simplest of terms, our actions must show the insurgents that there is no hope of them winning, while at the same time convince the Afghan population that GIRoA will win. We know from experience that this mission is going to take time and effort. The greatest coordinated efforts could be undone by a single action of one inattentive Sky Soldier.

We will conduct many projects, missions and shuras (meetings) to convince the populace that we are not here to harm innocent Afghans and in fact, we are here to help pave the way for them to flourish on their own. Counter-Insurgency (COIN) methodologies will be the mortar between the bricks that will help "The Herd" to build up local nationals' confidence and faith about the work we were sent here to do – a partnership mission of governance, security and development.

## Campaign Visualization



Col. Jim Johnson  
Bayonet-6

## TIEN BIEN FLASHBACK



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

Army 1st Lt. William Cromie, Alpha Company, Special Troops Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, watches his Soldiers, Aug. 15 2007, from an overwatch position as they clear an ambush point previously used by Taliban extremists in Chowkay Valley, Afghanistan. The RCP cleared the road into Chowkay Valley, which has been a site of fighting for several years. Task Force Rock recently had lost Army 1st Lt. Benjamin Hall, a platoon leader in Destined Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), during a fire fight in the valley July 31.



### NCO Helps Soldiers Grow Despite Themselves

Editorial by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick, TF Bayonet Public Affairs

*"Pacheco did not like pounding quasi-fit people into a pulp – he adored it."*

Not so long ago, in a land not too far away, there was a kingdom called "TRADOC" (Training and Doctrine Command) – and it was no Camelot. The kingdom was located in Columbia, S.C., and it was the home to many Army trainees. However, as any good cadre member knows, you cannot have training without trainers. Enter Army Sgt. Jose Pacheco, our battalion's PT zealot!

Many people presume things in life. The Army Soldier is no different. We often believe that certain military occupational specialties are "soft" or "easy" when compared to jobs in the combat arms specialties. Despite his being a human resources noncommissioned officer (NCO), I recall a soldier who was a standout both as an Army professional and as a warrior.

Sgt. Jose Pacheco was the kind of NCO any soldier would want on his team – unless you happen to be a mistake-prone trooper or out of shape! Pacheco's approach to exercise and fitness mirrored his approach to paperwork - there is only one right way to do something. The Army way!

Continued on page 19

# THE TIEN BIEN TIMES ASKS...

## What are your NCAA Men's Basketball Champion predictions for March Madness?

Army Sgt. Battle 173rd ABCT



"Kentucky is going all the way."

Army Sgt. Diggs 173rd ABCT



"I think Georgia Tech looks pretty good this year."

Army Spc. Jackson 173rd ABCT



"I like UNC because I'm from North Carolina, I think they'll do well in the N.I.T."

Army Sgt. Grupp 173rd ABCT



"Duke will probably win it all."

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## Sky Soldiers Honor Cook For His Selflessness, Courage

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

FOB SHANK, Afghanistan — A memorial was conducted recently, honoring Pfc. Nicholas S. Cook, an infantryman with 3rd Platoon Battle Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

Scores of Soldiers gathered for the service and recounted their memories of Cook, who was born on 5 October 1990. His fellow warriors remembered him as being able, willing and ready to take on any mission that was given to him and Cook was the kind of paratrooper, who did so with a positive attitude, peers said.

Task Force Bayonet's Commander, Col. Jim Johnson, said, "Pfc. Nicholas Cook selflessly enlisted in an Army at war and volunteered for one of the most demanding assignments; Airborne Infantryman."

He enlisted in the Army on 7 April 2009 as an Infantryman in Butte, Montana. He attended Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training, and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon successful completion of his training, he was assigned to 3rd Platoon Battle Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, Camp Ederle, Italy in early September 2009. He was assigned as a Machine Gunner.

In December of 2009, Pfc. Cook deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X where he and his platoon conducted counter-insurgency operations in Dangam, Asmar, and Shaigal districts in the Konar valley, vicinity of combat outpost Monti.

***"His service was with distinction and represented everything that the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team stands for," said Task Force Bayonet's Commander, Col. Jim Johnson.***



Pfc. Cook's military awards and decorations include the Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Parachutist Badge, and the Combat Infantry Badge. Pending posthumous awards are the Purple Heart Medal and the Bronze Star Medal.

The ceremony, which featured the traditional display of the Fallen's weapon, helmet, boots and ID tags, served as the backdrop for Sky Soldiers from Cook's company, battalion and brigade to stop, pause and salute. For many Soldiers, contemplating Pfc. Cook's sacrifice – the ultimate act of selflessness that any warrior can ever make – the ceremony and words from the chaplain brought tears.

No team wants to lose one of their own. Battle Company's loss was felt throughout its ranks. According to his peers, Cook was sincerely respected and admired.

"Pfc. Cook answered his Nation's call and gave everything he had to a mission to bring security to the people of Afghanistan," Johnson said.

Pfc. Cook was killed in action March 7, while conducting combat operations in Dab Sar, Konar Province, Afghanistan. He is survived by his mother, Ms. Charlotte Martin of Hungry Horse, Montana.

"His service was with distinction and represented everything that the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team stands for," Johnson said.

## Governor Visits Kherwar, Addresses Villagers' Concerns



***"To the people, it's a pretty important thing that 'the governor came to my village and talked to us, asked how we were doing and asked what problems we have,'" said Capt. John Williams.***

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- After talking with the village elder and the residents of the village of Chalakhel in Afghanistan's Kherwar province, the Soldiers of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, and their Afghan National Army and police counterparts were joined by the Kherwar district governor on their move to their next stop in the village of Bazikhel as part of Operation Commanche Sky Soldier, March 22.

The appearance of the governor was as much a surprise to the forces on the ground as it was to the villagers of Bazikhel, far from the district center of Kherwar where the governor resides.

"The original plan had me taking him, but he had a shura the same day," said Capt. John Williams, of Chickasha, Okla., commander of Troop C. "I think it's huge for him to get out and see the people in these villages that aren't close to the DC."

Once arriving to Bazikhel, Williams and the governor began talking to the village elder and the other villagers that gathered around. The meeting drew a crowd of several older villagers and children, anxious to see U.S and Afghan forces for the first time since last summer. Once the conversation started, education and the lack of a school in the area quickly became the main topic of discussion.

There is no school or education here, this is the problem, one villager said. This is why the children become bad guys.

The governor, who recently held a shura with the director of education for Logar province, quickly informed the villager of their plans to build a school in the area.

The government of Afghanistan has done nothing for us, added another villager. It is a concern that Williams, and now the governor, continues to hear in the villages far from the district center.

"Kherwar is very isolated, in a way, it's the last place in Logar to even have governance," he said. "But, I think it goes a long way in changing people perceptions when the district governor shows up at your village and asks you what problems your village has."

"Hopefully it lets them know, he obviously cares or he wouldn't be here," he added.

By the end of the meeting, the governor had ensured the people of Bazikhel knew that he, Williams and the rest of Troop C and their ANSF partners are committed to the district's development and security, regardless of their distance from the district center.

"To the people, it's a pretty important thing that 'the governor came to my village and talked to us, asked how we were doing and asked what problems we have,'" Williams said. "That's a pretty big deal."

"The meetings in both villages turned into a bigger success that we anticipated," said 1st Colin Murch, platoon leader for 2nd platoon, from Grand Rapids, Mich.

## First Female ANA General Speaks to Women of Logar Province

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- International Women's Day, March 8, is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. In some places like China, Russia, Vietnam and Bulgaria, it is a national holiday. General Khatol Mohammadzai, the first female parachutist and general in the Afghan National Army, spent the day speaking to the Task Force Bayonet command group and women of the Logar Province.

She recognized the vital roles that women possess in the military.

"The whole world knows the military females are real heroes, they left their families behind and came to Afghanistan or to any other country, and are working shoulder to shoulder, and side by side their male counterparts," she said.

Mohammadzai said that women must work to empower other women.

"These women can make other women braver, and tell them what they do. Just as you made me brave today, and convinced me to come to come to Logar province, you can convince other ladies to come to the military and work with their male counterparts. Women can work alongside males in the community," she said.

Mohammadzai spoke of unity and the female Afghan community.

"Even though we are away from each other, I am in Kabul and you are in Logar, we are not far away in our hearts," she said. "I am part of your body, as one of your hands. When you need me, I'll be here to help."

You have to work diligently in this community, she said. "

Becoming a general, especially in Afghanistan as a female, is not an easy thing. I wanted to do this, I wanted to work hard for it and show the other Afghan females that a female can be a general in this community," she said.

This diligence is required not only as a commanding officer, but also as a parachutist, said Mohammadzai.

As a parachutist, or as a jumper, you have to be a storm, you have to be an earthquake, you have to be something that can move the whole world with your jump," she said. "We have all proved ourselves in the



**"I am part of your body, as one of your hands. When you need me, I'll be here to help," said General Khatol Mohammadzai.**



sky as parachutists."

Mohammadzai said her first experience with parachuting was not without anxiety.

"The first time I jumped, I screamed so hard, thinking that the parachute was just there, not moving anywhere. There was nobody there to help me, and I thought I was just standing there not moving. I was so lightweight that all of my fellow parachutists were already on the ground and I was still in this sky," she said.

She continued.

"When I reached the ground it was so comfortable and very nice; that was the only time, the first jump and the last jump that was very comfortable. I didn't tell my family ... when my mom found out she was crying and screaming, asking what kind of job I had chosen," she said.

"Every time I was jumping, my mom could not sit in the house. She would go crazy running and walking around, praying to god for my safety. At the time I didn't understand because I didn't have kids. Now that I have kids I understand both the pain in life, and how sweet kids are," said Mohammadzai.

*Continued on page 9*



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Mohammadzai thanked her mother for playing such a vital role in her life.

"It was the prayer of my parents, my mom, that made me reach what I am today," she said.

Prayer and hard work pushed her forward, she said.

"I had to work very hard; sometimes I was even scared for my life. I still went ahead and did it," she said.

Mohammadzai said she grew brave because of all her hard work.

"If you receive, or get, or achieve something difficult, then you are so proud and always happy. If you get something easily, then you are always looking to the ground, you don't think that you worked hard for it, you just got it. I'm so proud and I can talk to anybody bravely because I worked hard," she said.

Mohammadzai left with parting words igniting a call to action for the women present.

"We should work to make our male co-workers understand that women can do something like this," said Mohammadzai.

"I know males and females because I've worked with both and understand," she said. "The reality is that women deserve more respect than what they are given."



*General Khatol Mohammadzai, the first female paratrooper and general in the Afghan National Army, greets the Task Force Bayonet command group on International Women's Day, March 8. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Daniel D. Haun, TF Bayonet Public Affairs)*

## *Equal Opportunity*

### **WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH - MARCH**

American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways. They have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural, and social role in every sphere of life by constituting a significant portion of the labor force, working inside and outside of the home, and by providing the majority of the volunteer labor force. Against the odds, women have earned respect and admiration from our nation.

The overarching theme for 2010 and the 30th Anniversary celebration is Writing Women Back into History. It often seems that the history of women is written in invisible ink. Even when recognized in their own times, women are frequently left out of the history books. To honor the 2010 theme, the National Women's History Project is highlighting pivotal themes from previous years. Each of these past themes recognizes a different aspect of women's achievements, from ecology to art, and from sports to politics.

When the National Women's History Project began working in the early eighties, the topic of women's history was limited to college curricula, and even there it languished. At that time, less than 3% of the content of teacher training textbooks mentioned the contributions of women and when included, women were usually written in as mere footnotes. Women of color and women in fields such as math, science, and art were completely omitted. This limited inclusion of women's accomplishments deprived students of viable female role models.

Today, when you search the Internet with the words "women's +history + month," you'll find more than 40,500,000 citations. These extraordinary numbers give testimony to the tireless work of thousands of individuals, organizations, and institutions to write women back into history. Much of this work was made possible by the generous support of people like you.

## Air Assault Mission Shows Kherwar District Improved ANA, ANP

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Far from Combat Outpost Kherwar and the surrounding villages that are familiar with the presence of U.S. and Afghan soldiers, CH-47 Chinook Helicopters fly deep into Afghanistan's Kherwar district, to drop the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, and their Afghan National Army and police counter parts near the northern limits of the district as part of Operation Commanche Sky Soldier, March 22.

The operation was intended to give nearby villagers a first impression of Troop C's Soldiers and bring the presence of U.S. and Afghan National Security Forces to an area of Kherwar that traditionally sees a lot of insurgent activity.

"Chalakhel and Bazikhel are two really good villages to visit because it's an area that hasn't seen our unit before and hasn't seen U.S. forces since May of 09," said 1st Lt. Colin Murch, platoon leader for 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, a native of Grand Rapids, Mich. "This is a good way to meet with them without being here for kinetic reasons."

Upon landing, the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, the ANA and ANP provided security and set up traffic control points for the first stop in the village of Chalakhel.

"The ANA and ANP did an outstanding job," said Murch. "The ANP commander directed his troops without our instruction, they made corrections on their own, and adjusted their own security."

The troops of the ANA and ANP also made a good impression on the local villagers.

"We would like to see more of the ANA and ANP and less of the U.S.," was a common statement throughout both villages.

The request for a greater Afghan National Security Force presence by the people of Kherwar is a large difference from when Troop C first arrived here four months ago.

"When we first got here, people would come talk to us instead of the ANA or ANP," said Capt. John Williams, commander Troop C. "We've had a shift in perception, now they are seen as a strong, trustworthy,

***"This was their first air assault and they did very well," said Capt. John Williams. "Kherwar is pretty lucky to have such a good ANA and ANP. They're very motivated, they enjoy training; they're soldiers."***



capable force."

"That's the way we want it to be," said Murch. "We want to get it to the point where they'll plan, run and execute missions on their own with very little U.S. support."

"We'll still be there to guide them along in the process, but for us to be successful, we need to empower the ANA and ANP," he said. "This was a big step toward doing that."

"This was their first air assault and they did very well," said Williams. "Kherwar is pretty lucky to have such a good ANA and ANP. They're very motivated, they enjoy training; they're soldiers."

After visiting two villages, and a day of providing security, the Soldiers of Troop C and their ANSF partners wait for their helicopter ride home. The operation was a success and the troops of the ANA and ANP showed improvement and their potential for success on future missions. Their presence on this operation gave the villagers of Chalakhel and Bazikhel evidence that the ANSF is improving and will continue to work to improve their future security.

"I think the people in Kherwar are really starting to trust the ANA and ANP," said Williams. "Eventually what I'd like is for some of the Afghan kids here to see that ANA or ANP soldier and say 'They did good things in my village, I want to be like that.'"

## TF Talon Train ANA Soldiers, Develop Leaders



***"We need to do more of this so they can be more confident and take over their own battle space," said Sgt. 1st Class, Paul Makwakwa.***



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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- After four days of classes, discussions and training, troops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Kandak, 201<sup>st</sup> Corps, Afghan National Army, graduated the senior leaders course conducted by 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team, at Forward Operating Base Airborne, March 4.

The course was a joint-effort between Marine embedded training teams for both 2nd and 6th Kandak, their sergeants major and Soldiers of 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt.

"We based it off of the concept for our battalion's team leader course," said Command Sgt. Maj. John Bagby, command sergeant major of 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt., of Tuscaloosa, Ala.

"We got the ETT guys from both kandaks, using their experience working with the ANA, to come up with a base list of classes they thought they needed," he said. "We also brought in both kandak sergeants major and they gave us a list of other classes they wanted taught to their senior leaders."

After months of joint-planning, the course was ready.

"They were very excited about it," said Bagby. "They've been motivated about it from the onset."

Over the four days, the training focused on a variety of subjects, including staff functions, physical training, maintenance and squad movement techniques. The intent was to make the classes discussion-based and let the ANA soldiers share their experiences.

Sgt. 1st Class, Paul Makwakwa, of Greensboro, N.C., a former U.S. Army Ranger instructor, was in charge of teaching the squad movement and hand and arm signals classes.

"We're here to facilitate and generate discussions," said Makwakwa. "Once they get the conversation going, we just make sure they hit the key points, and if they missed a key aspect, we would bring it up."

During the class, Makwakwa also taught the importance of pre-combat checks and inspections.

"We had them as small groups create their own pre-combat check and pre-combat inspection checklists," he said. "If they write their own checklists, add things that other groups had, they can take it back to their units and turn it into a standard operating procedures."

"They're solving their problems in a learning environment versus doing it out on a real mission," he added.

Knowing the importance of leadership in the U.S. Army, it was important to Bagby that the first course be for the Afghan army's senior leaders. However, they have plans to continue teaching more classes, starting with a team leader's course later this spring.

Overall, the class was well received by the troops of the 2nd and 6th Kandak.

"I think it went well and I enjoy working with these guys," said Makwakwa. "We need to do more of this so they can be

*Continued on page 21*

## 4<sup>th</sup> Kandak, Repel Soldiers Brave Snow for Commander's Cup

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Snow and sleet filled the air, as Task Force Repel Soldiers and Combined Action partners from the Afghan National Army's 4<sup>th</sup> Kandak joined forces Saturday in the Repel Commander's Cup at Forward Operating base Shank. The partners competed in a timed series of events including a rucksack run, buddy litter carry, M9 familiarization fire, and a weapons assembly.

Army Staff Sgt. Kendall Gilbert, the Base Defense Operations NCO for the 173<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Support Battalion, imparted a few words of wisdom to competitors before the start.

"It doesn't matter how fast you are as an individual, it's a team effort, because you can't start an event unless your whole team is there," said Gilbert. "We're out here with our coalition partners to have a good time and to win the cup. This is what you guys are competing for."

Though the competitors looked focused, the mood was light.

"Let's go out here and have a good time, learn something about our coalition partners, and they'll learn something about us. We'll hug and drink chai tea afterwards," he said with a chuckle.

Gilbert continued.

"It's a team effort, it's a team sport, a team competition. We're out here to have a good time. It's going to be physically challenging, it's going to be mentally taxing. Just make sure you guys pick everybody up, and pick up you teammates," said Gilbert.

Pick up they did, as words of encouragement volleyed from competitor to competitor.

'Come on, lean into it; you got this.' 'Lets go; you're alright.' 'Push it out.' 'Pick it up.' 'Keep it going.' 'Don't stop, don't lose it.' 'Looking good, your almost there.' 'Bend your knees, center mass, there you go.' 'One more



*"It doesn't matter how fast you are as an individual, it's a team effort," Army Staff Sgt. Kendall Gilbert.*



*"You had to push your team as hard as you possibly could, keep them going all the way through, and make sure your heart was there. Keep driving on; just push all the way through," said Army Spc. Nathaniel Pelter.*

turn.' 'Slow is smooth, smooth is fast, come on.'

Afterward, Lt. Col. Curtis Johnson, commander 173<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Support Battalion shared a few laughs with the competitors. "This is some great weather, huh," said Johnson

Johnson pointed out the importance of those words of encouragement, and thanked Combined Action partners for joining and helping their Repel counterparts.

"If I could get the ANA members to stand up real quick ... to all the ANA participants, what a great performance. I saw you out there in front; you did a great job. I see some familiar faces from the last competition, again I'd just like to thank you for a great performance and for all of you do ... let's all give them a round of applause," said Johnson.

*Continued on page 18*

# Air Traffic Control Operators Keep Birds Up, At 'Em



***"They can't control themselves, somebody's got to tell them what's going on out there," said Pfc. Rodney Fater.***

Carlton, Mich., native U.S. Army Pfc. Rodney Fater, an air traffic control operator attached to HHC 4<sup>th</sup> Aviation Bn., 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div., concurs.

"You've got to keep them apart, or you're in trouble ... everything's important when they're in the air, but you've got to keep them apart or you're going to lose your job, plain and simple," said Fater.

Dorries continued.

"We separate aircraft; we give traffic calls to aircraft depending on where their location is, and who is going to be crossing in front of them, beside them, or behind them. "We've got to let them know everything above and below them as part of the separation process," said Dorries.

While separating, Dorries and company guide aircraft into varying sectors.

"We take these pieces of the pie that we call our sectors, we listen to where they're calling them in. The sectors are big, but they're not extremely big," said Dorries. "We just bring them in here and put them into our puzzle, which is our traffic pattern, and we fit them inside the traffic pattern according to guidelines that we have to follow."

"We bring them in according to what our puzzle is here, meaning if we have different aircraft inside of our traffic pattern, we'll fit them in according to the position they are," said Dorries.

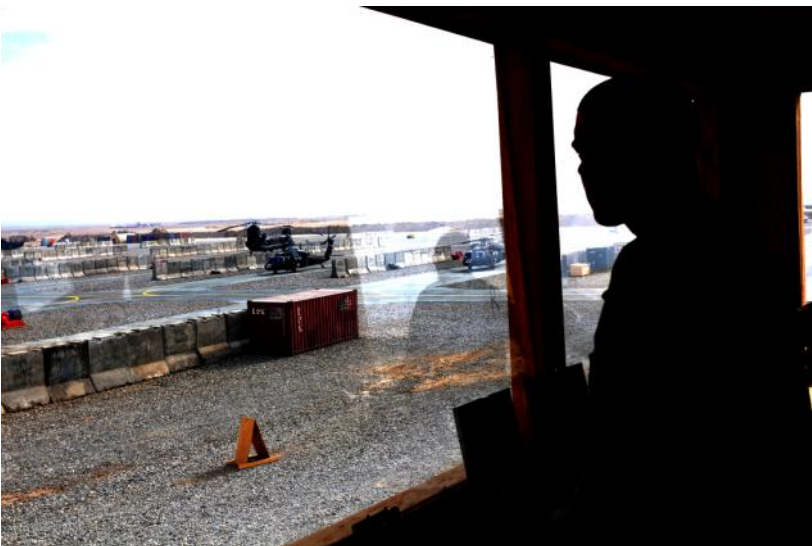
Along with orienteering pilots, air traffic controllers provide advisories for the pilots, said Dorries.

"We issue them safety advisories if there's any safety advisories for Forward Operating Base Shank, as well as any aircraft that might be in that area. There's different phraseology we have to use for the pilots, in order to make them aware of that, and then they have to follow our instructions from there," said Dorries.

Juggling all these aircraft in the air and on paper requires a great deal of incisive action. "You've got to make decisions quick, fast; there's really no time to think.

You've just got to know what's happening, and then act. The most important thing is to act quick and efficiently," said Fater. 'Safe, orderly and expeditiously' is our air traffic controller motto; you've got to think on your toes, and fast."

"I talk fast and that's part of it. You've got to spit the stuff out in case someone else calls up. You've got to tell them the same stuff you told the last guy, if they're coming from the same direction," said Fater.



*"We control millions of dollars of aircraft every single day. We have hundreds of people's lives in our hands; everyone that's in that aircraft is our responsibility," Spc. Jeremy D.*

*Dorries.*

**Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun**

**TF Bayonet Public Affairs**

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- AH-64 Apaches and UH-60 Black hawks circle a landing zone, each unaware of the others' next movement. No one is there to guide them in succession; no one is there to ensure their safety. Such is the tale of a world without Army air traffic control operators.

Happily, Soldiers attached to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Aviation Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, here at Forward Operating Base Shank are guiding said pilots, ensuring the safety and rapid transit of Task Force Bayonet personnel.

U.S. Army Spc. Jeremy D. Dorries, an air traffic control operator attached to the 4<sup>th</sup> Aviation Bn., 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div., says that separating the aircraft and informing them of their surroundings is crucial.

"We have to give traffic calls, it's a must. We can't just let our aircraft fly around, not knowing what's around them. That's one thing we train hard on; traffic controls and separation," said Dorries.

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## Hospital LNOs Ensure Best Care for Wounded Warriors

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Melissa Potter

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Since the beginning of the 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT's deployment to Afghanistan there have been four Soldiers performing a very vital role in a job that often goes unseen. We're talking about the Hospital LNOs. The current 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT Hospital LNOs are SSG Roberto Santiago at Craig Joint theater Hospital (CJTH) at Bagram Air Field (BAF), SFC Christopher Dorman at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC), SFC Robert Anderson at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), and SGT Anthony Hopkins at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC).

The Hospital LNO is the liaison between the patient and the unit and is the patient representative in the Medical Treatment Facility (MTF). They are fellow Sky Soldiers that ensure our wounded warriors get the best care that is available and that their every need is taken care of. Their duties include meeting basic administrative needs such as ensuring that the patient has an identification card, securing sensitive items, escorting the patient to appointments, arranging for transportation and billeting, checking on the inpatients, and communicating daily with the Forward and Rear Chain of command on each patients' medical progress, status, overall morale, and well being. The hospital LNO does it all from transportation arrangements for family members to simple things like toothpaste and socks.

The 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT Hospital LNOs watch over our wounded and ill warriors from the day they arrive at the Level III Medical Treatment Facility in BAF to the day they are released and returned to duty or sent to the Rear Detachment for recovery. When a Soldier is MEDEVAC'd or CASEVAC'd to BAF because they are wounded in action (WIA) or they become injured or ill, they are entered in to the Medical Evacuation System. Hospital LNOs are one of the first people greeting the patient when he or she arrives to a major MTF and one of the last people they will see before moving on to receive specialized treatment in the United States or upon return to their unit in Afghanistan. SFC Dorman expressed, "The guys are my only concern in the world and when I know I have a wounded Sky Soldier coming in, I do all I can to make sure I'm there to meet them".

The workload of the Hospital LNOs increases and decreases in synchronization with events taking place



***"The guys are my only concern in the world and when I know I have a wounded Sky Soldier coming in, I do all I can to make sure I'm there to meet them," said SFC Christopher Dorman.***

in the deployed environment, however their responsibilities and duties remain the same. They are patient representatives, travel planners, personal assistants, problem solvers, mentors, counselors, and most importantly friends. Soldiers who are evacuated out of theater are in a confusing time in their life and are scared many times. Our Hospital LNOs are there to provide comfort, support, and familiarity for wounded Sky Soldiers. "When Sky Soldiers from the 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT come in and see my patch, they know that I'll do whatever I can to take care of them, it's what Paratroopers do" (SFC Anderson-WRAMC).

Being a Hospital LNO seems fairly simple, but it is extremely mentally, emotionally, and physically challenging to take care of the numerous Soldiers that are evacuated out of theater for medical care. Managing the high number of Soldiers who all have differing and numerous needs is a difficult task for one person to handle, however our hospital LNOs are doing a superb job. When asked if the job can get overwhelming, SFC Dorman said, "Of course it is at times, but helping our Wounded Warriors is the most rewarding mission I could ever be involved in as a Soldier." SGT Hopkins added, that "the job can be depressing because I only see the Soldiers wounded in the tragedy of war, but my job is to be there for them and it helps me remember how blessed I really am and to take nothing for granted.

"SFC Dorman makes daily visits to the various treatment wards and outpatient billets. He meticulously reviews patient records and communicates to 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT MEDOPS about patient progress, needs, and overall status. SFC Anderson was quoted saying, "Make sure you check on your Sky Soldiers as often as possible. Provide the utmost care to your Paratroopers and be there for your patients. When you go to work they should be on your mind all day, from

*Continued on page 21*

## ISAF Commander Talks Progress, Future at FOB Shank

***"It's going to take a lot of people and more out of the international community than they've ever given, more Afghan forces and it's going to take that every day," said Gen. Stanley McChrystal.***



fore," he said. "It was really locally focused. "Before we did the operation, we made no secret that we were going to do it."

"Through the government of Afghanistan, we engaged the local population for months," he continued. "Ultimately, they requested it officially, so they had ownership of the operation."

According to the Deputy Commanding Officer, for the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Lt. Col. Kyle Lear, "we are seeing more and more ownership and buy-in from the Afghan soldiers. We have progressed from coalition-led operations where Afghans had fewer responsibilities in missions to where the Afghans are now taking the lead in all phases of any given operation. There is substance and credibility being cemented within their ranks each iteration."

McChrystal said, "President Karzai reviewed the early planning for this and made the decision to execute the operation, so this was the first operation that was run by the president of Afghanistan as the commander in chief."

"It was Population focused," he said. "We went in to execute in a way that was not really focused on the enemy, it was focused on the people."

"That's the theory of how we have to fight this fight from now on," he said. "It has to happen here, it has to happen everywhere in a different form, uniquely constructed to what the conditions are."

He also noted the progress being made in the area by the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team and the rest of TF Bayonet, but reminded those present that they cannot lose sight of the ultimate goal: the people of Afghanistan. "I'm incredibly impressed by how far you guys have come as a team here," said McChrystal. "But it's going to take a lot of people and

*Continued on page 21*



***"There's no doubt that this is an effort that will require both short term and long term solutions," said Gen. Stanley McChrystal.***

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Gen. Stanley McChrystal, International Security Assistance Force commander, made a stop at Forward Operating Base Shank, March 10, to discuss the current status of Task Force Bayonet's area of operation.

During the visit, TF Bayonet commander Col. James Johnson and members of his staff briefed McChrystal on the progress being made in Logar and Wardak provinces. The visit also allowed McChrystal to speak directly to them, as well as Jordanian and Afghan army officers about his thoughts on TF Bayonet's progress, the counter-insurgency front, ISAF operations in southern Afghanistan and their impact on future operations.

"The actual mission that ISAF has is to create stability in Afghanistan, to give the government and the people of Afghanistan the time and space to shape their future," said McChrystal.

"It's going to be the Afghans deciding to do that and we're trying to give them that opportunity."

He then talked about current operations in southern Afghanistan and how it's not business as usual for ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces.

"This operation was very different than what we've done be

## ISAF Command Sergeant Major Talks COIN

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hall, the ISAF Command Sgt. Maj. paid a visit to Forward Operating Bases throughout Afghanistan and offered some insights as to what is important here, sharing ideas about what approaches Soldiers need to be mindful of in order to achieve the desired end state, a centerpiece of his visit being COIN – counter-insurgency.

Hall said, “We need to look at things as a whole. The insurgency comes from the people.”

However, COIN methodologies teach ISAF warriors that once the insurgents are isolated from the population, they no longer blend in and easily hide their presence.

“It is important to build relationships, while working to eliminate insurgency,” said TF Bayonet’s Command Sgt. Maj. Nicholas Rolling, who spent the day with Hall. “We are very serious about teaching COIN methods and we’re pleased with the results we are getting,” Rolling said.

When the roadways are made safe, good things begin to happen. Time after time, increased security brings forth confidence, and commerce starts to flourish again, which is good for the sustainment of a village. “The presence of coalition forces making a difference is noticed by these villagers,” Hall said.

According to Hall, “These local villagers are just like you and me. They have lived under the Taliban in the past. While they do not like living under the rule of the Taliban, if they predict they will be living under the rule of the Taliban, they make choices that they think are best for their families here. It is not so much about intimidation. For the Afghan citizens here, it’s about predicting who is going to be the future rulers here and their wanting to line themselves up with who they think is going to

***“We have to see things through their eyes and not jeopardize their safety or livelihood,” said Sgt. Maj. Michael Hall.***



be in power here.” He continued.

“There is more to it than getting the ball in the hole,” according to Hall. “This is not like sports. Part of that is technology. Part of that is the danger here of losing focus. I do not see that here at FOB Shank, but as we grow and expand, it’s important that we maintain focus. We are trying to separate the insurgents away from the people, but they are worried about their future and want what is best for their kids.”

The Command Sergeant Major realizes the Afghans are asking hard questions though. Once we convince the people that the future is not with the insurgency, that’s key to this whole thing. Hall said, “They are just like you and me. At the end of the day, they are asking if the Taliban are going to provide the jobs, if they are going to have the power and authority and apply the rule of law, then they are going to have to hang with them.”

He stated that the coalition forces and the local and provincial leaders here need to show the people here that Afghanistan’s government can provide those things and meet their family’s needs.

“The local nationals still have not determined which way they should go, despite the duration of our efforts. We have to see things through their eyes and not jeopardize their safety or livelihood, as we endeavor to make conditions safe for our forces,” Hall said.

“We need to help them see their future, because this is life and death here. It is much bigger than the people feeling intimidated here. They want to know who is going to provide them land, so they can grow crops – and not to get rich, but just so they can survive.”

Hall talked in terms of being a realist, and his thoughts convey basic fundamentals that have to be taken seriously in order to win over the hearts and minds of the local Afghan citizens.



# An Old Herdsman's Perspective

*"It would mean more than words could ever tell to be able to properly welcome the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade and my son back from combat," said Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Leamond (Lee) C. Stuart III.*



knew the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Headquarters was nearby, he immediately went to look them up. Lee said he was walking into the Brigade Headquarters when he heard someone yell, "Major Stuart, what are you doing here?" When he look back at the person hollering at him, it was 1LT Charles Diggs, who was a Specialist Fourth Class as a driver with Stuart during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, when he served with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Apache Battalion in 1990-1992.

Stuart said his main role in Iraq was to serve as the Senior Civilian Operations officer to help in the rebuilding of the five Northern Provinces of Iraq. With that unique duty, Stuart was required to travel throughout ALL of Iraq to meet with various military personnel/units and continually ran into numerous soldiers he had served with during his 32 year career. Stuart said he always made it a point to try and get down to Kirkuk on Sundays so he could go to 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Chapel where he became close friends with two of the Brigade's Chaplains, then CPT Steve Cantrell and Major Tom Wheatley.

Stuart said that when he located the Brigade Headquarters Medical unit he knelt down in front of the sign and thanked God for allowing him to reunite with his ole Vietnam unit. Stuart said that even though decades of time had passed since he last served with the 173<sup>rd</sup> in 1968 he felt fully vindicated emotionally, physically and spiritually that he was once again afforded the opportunity to serve with one of America's finest Combat units.

Back in November 2009, LTC (Ret) Stuart made it a point to visit with his son and family before Major Stuart deployed to Afghanistan. LTC (Ret) Stuart said he had many mixed emotions about his son deploying with the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade but he knew that his son and the 173<sup>rd</sup> would once again serve with great distinction and honor as has always been the tradition of ALL 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade deployments whether it be Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan.

LTC (Ret) Stuart said he hopes to be able to be part of the "Welcome Back Home Ceremony" for the 173<sup>rd</sup> once they redeploy back to their home base in Vicenza, Italy. LTC (Ret) Stuart said it would mean more than words could ever tell to be able to properly welcome the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade and his son back from combat as opposed to the way Vietnam Veterans were treated upon their return home.



Major Stuart's father, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Leamond (Lee) C. Stuart III, not only served with the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade in Vietnam in 1968 as a young 19 year old Corporal, but also as a civilian consultant with the 173<sup>rd</sup> when they were stationed in Kirkuk, Iraq in 2003-2004.

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- On May the 1st, 2010 Major Leamond (Bo) C. Stuart IV will be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the same combat unit his father Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Leamond (Lee) C. Stuart III served with in Vietnam in 1968 as a young 19 year old Corporal. Major Stuart's father not only served with the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade in Vietnam but also as a civilian consultant with the 173<sup>rd</sup> when they were stationed in Kirkuk, Iraq in 2003-2004.

Major Stuart's father was wounded on 17 June 1968 while serving with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade (Separate) and his wounds were so severe that he was evacuated to Japan for further medical treatment. Major Stuart's father, Lee, said he did not leave Vietnam the way he wanted to and always felt he never completed his tour successfully because of having to be medically evacuated. Stuart said that once he arrived in Kirkuk, Iraq and he

### 4<sup>th</sup> Kandak, Repel Soldiers Brave Snow for Commander's Cup

*Continued from page 12*

Pvt. Abdul Salam Watandost, a Soldier standing from the 4<sup>th</sup> Kandak, said later that the biggest challenge was weapons familiarization.

"We didn't have many problems, we were a little unfamiliar with some of the weapons, said Watandost. "By having training and running every day, every morning and well prepare ourselves before we go to competition."

"We have to have more training and more competitions and we'll be ready," said Watandost.

Pvt. Sadr-Udin Himat, another Soldier honored from the 4<sup>th</sup> Kandak, said the experience was a good one, and that the greatest challenge was the inclement weather.

"The problem was that it was raining and snowing, my uniform was drenched," said Himat. "The competition was like a lesson, and we learned many things from it," he said.

Bravo team member Army Pfc. Joseph Machtemes agreed that the weather was the hardest obstacle to overcome.

"The snow made it really hard to shoot, blurring the targets, the sweating, breathing really hard," said Machtemes.

In spite of the blurring, sweating, and toil, Bravo pushed through, said Machtemes.

"We do what bravo does best. We're the muscle of the battalion. We just pushed hard right through and kept going," he said.

Bravo Company took the cup when all was said and done. Gilbert noted their endurance and exertion.

"Bravo won in the end. They just outlasted the rest of the competition. It's a team effort, so it was a great event," said Gilbert.

Army Spc. Nathaniel Petter, the Bravo team leader, shared Machtemes's sentiment.

"You had to push your team as hard as you possibly could, keep them going all the way through, and make sure your heart was there. Keep driving on; just push all the way through," said Petter.

"Our team kept it going, we drove all the way through... we kept going through in and through out. The competition was outstanding."



### Air Traffic Control Operators Keep Birds Up, At 'Em

*Continued from page 13*

None of which comes without application.

"We study hard. It's like going to college on a continuous basis; you're always studying regulations. Any changes you have; be on top of those changes and you have to understand those changes," said Dorries. "The shift leaders have to make sure they implement those changes and that we supervise them accordingly. If our trainees or people on our shift are making bad calls, it is our place to stop that and correct it."

Position correlation is one of the mainstays of these studies, said Dorries.

"You know they're telling you they're coming from this place; you need to be familiar with that place. You need to know your points on a compass North, East, South, and West. As long as you know where they're coming from, you can retain that information, which isn't hard, and then you can give that information to other aircraft. It's not hard to do at all, its just position correlation," said Dorries.

Dorries continued.

"They don't have side view mirrors, they don't have rearview mirrors. They can only see what's in front of them. Without us, they don't know where everything else is at; also they may not be able to pick up the winds and know how to land. If they have an emergency and there's no tower, they can't get assistance. It would be tougher for them. We're here as a middleman to make sure they get what they need, when they need it," said Dorries.

Fater agrees.

"They can't control themselves, somebody's got to tell them what's going on out there. They can't see what's going on overtop of a mountain. If somebody's coming inbound over top that mountain, they cant see that, so someone's got to tell them or they're not going to know," said Fater.

The job is not without its share of liability.

"We control millions of dollars of aircraft every single day. We have hundreds of people's lives in our hands; everyone that's in that aircraft is our responsibility until they're on the ground safely. That's something that people may not know, or may not understand. One bad call could end their life," said Dorries.

That's not a call that either plan to make.

"A lot of our job is training. It's repetition; things that we do every single day, also things that help make sure our Soldiers come back home alive. It's just maintaining awareness. We can train you how to maintain your awareness, and it's a shock for the first time, but once you get your awareness you usually don't lose it. It's there because you know the importance of our job," said Dorries.

# NCO Helps Soldiers Grow Despite Themselves

Continued from page 4

Unrelenting, Pacheco would take about a nanosecond to square you away, adding new meaning to the expression “immediate correction.” He was familiar with the minutest detail of regulations and Army standards, and no one would ever accuse him of being shy or lacking backbone. If you were going to do something wrong or halfway, you did not dare to do it around Pacheco - such things only fueled his fury for fitness and discipline. Each week, something new was added to the physical training regimen.

The fast-moving train had pulled up to our station and the message was clear – everyone was going to climb aboard or the conductor was going to make a meal out of you, chewing you up one side and spitting you out the other. The conductor’s name: Pacheco. The words “mean” or “cruel” while often used by the faint of heart, but these did not adequately describe Pacheco.

Pacheco did not like pounding quasi-fit people into a pulp – he adored it. He brought a fervor to fitness. Terms like “muscle failure,” “poker PT,” “circuit course” and “shallow water races” began to permeate our unit’s daily vocabulary. Prior to Sgt. Pacheco’s arrival, morning formations had offered a brand of peace and tranquility because unit members knew what exercises were looming. After his boots landed on the ground, morning formations were never be the same. Pain and suffering were in accordance with Field Manual 21-20, Army Standards on Physical Fitness.

Repetitions now became double-digit figures that filled the muscles of the chest, shoulders, back, triceps and biceps with a constant ache. Our platoon was convinced that his Poker PT playing cards were all face cards, jokers or ten’s.

No one could recall hearing a small, user-friendly number like “three” or “four” being verbalized during workouts. A “nine of diamonds” was cause for celebration! But, in time, the house of pain that Pacheco built began paying off, and the “toyota,” “split jump,” “fury squats” and “firecrackers” began to hurt less and less.

The burn would always be there but, as the weeks went by, our “PT Wingnut” (our affectionate name for Pacheco) began to make us all believers. Our skin got thicker, our patience improved, and we felt energized as time marched on.

Pacheco was not born in the United States. Having a slight accent, it was not always possible to understand everything that he said. The best course of action, however, was to just follow his lead and never ask him what he just

might have been confused about his terms or phrasing. Nothing annoyed him more than a member of the platoon asking, “What did you say, Sarge?” The questions typically turned an hour session into a ninety-minute mini-marathon.

Every unit should have a Pacheco. I am proud to say he was my best friend and readily admit he knew more about the Army than I did. I enjoyed serving beside him. Make no mistake – he was a tough NCO. Always ready to insert just enough humor and comedic genius, Sgt. Pacheco gave us enough laughs - and lunges - to last a lifetime. I understand “Papa” (his other nickname) is still serving and is currently at Ft. Hood, Texas.

While Pacheco was a demanding and unforgiving PT zealot, it is precisely that kind of drive and tenacity that injects an infectious sense of pride and can-do spirit within the NCO corps. Often it is the people who push you beyond your limits that you revere most. Thanks to them, we grow ... despite ourselves!

**The NCO Creed**

No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers. As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as “The Backbone of the Army”. I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.

Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind – accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers. I will strive to remain tactically and technically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve: seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!

SGT Soto is an MSGT in the 101st Airborne Division assigned to AEC 101st ABCT at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. The NCO Creed is an Army-wide initiative to ensure that every soldier understands the role of the NCO. SGT Soto is currently serving a Bachelor's Degree and has served as a Senior Intelligence Operations NCOIC, Team Leader and Intelligence Analyst.

I am the NCO!

**U.S. ARMY** **Army NCO | No One is More Professional than I**

## Afghans Observe Month of Events for Women



*"For being a two-man team, the Brigade chaplains team travels pretty extensively throughout this Area of Operation," said Chaplain Sean Wead.*

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick

TF Bayonet Public Affairs

FOB Kherwar, Afghanistan — Here in Afghanistan, an entire month was marked for women, as ladies were recognized for their contributions, and as the past few weeks were filled with various luncheons, outings and ceremonies, including speeches and presentations by Governor Fidai, the month also saw ANA Soldiers partnering with the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team's team of Chaplains.

The combined effort brought Sky Soldiers together with Afghan soldiers and police officers to the village just outside of FOB Kherwar's gates, a village in dire need of school supplies, clothing, shoes and staples. Women play a pivotal role in all societies and the month of March was dedicated to assisting women here in Afghanistan be recognized for their attributes and sacrifices.

"While the women were not allowed to come out to receive the grain, foods, clothes and needed items, their households all benefited from the day, and I am sure they did appreciate the efforts of these ANA soldiers, who along with the village elders, helped pass out item after item to the children and men of the village," said Chaplain Sean Wead, who is the 173<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team's Chaplain.

"We've done many missions like this," said Wead. "We get out quite a bit. For being a two-man team, the Brigade chaplains team travels pretty extensively throughout this Area of Operation (AO)," he said.

A member of the 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT, Sgt. Anna Flores said, The humanitarian mission was originally set to be accomplished during Women's Month, so the US

female soldiers could engage with some of the local females. While we were not able to interface with the women directly as we had hoped, we were able to provide beans, rice, cooking and many clothing items donated.

"These items were very well received by the local villagers. It was a most heartwarming to see the smiles on the children's faces as they received clothing, school supplies and toys," said Flores. The ANA Soldiers coordinated the event, organizing the children, lining them up and serving the scores of young little faces with a variety of treats, school supplies, clothing and staples that their families would benefit from.

"The little ones have a hard time understanding what is so good about beans or rice, standing in long lines for some grain and such, but their parents and siblings I know will appreciate their diligence and patience," said Wead, referring to the boys and girls having to be a little coaxed at times to stay in line and grab bags of grain and beans, as children here in Afghanistan are no different than other boys and girls — they immediately saw the value in waiting for the candy and fun items that appealed to their love for sweets.

"I want to help this village get a school and for these kids to have some pencils, books and paper, so they can learn," said one Afghan sergeant. "I am very happy here today to be helping these people. I am not from this village, but I can tell you these villagers have next to nothing," he said. "It is nice that they see their countrymen here in uniform helping the people out."

The villagers welcomed the ANA soldiers, as members from the 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT, located at FOB Kherwar, provided security patrols and communication support for the event.

"The ANA soldiers did a great job of getting in there and passing these items out. I think the people's level of trust is increasing," said Wead. "They are growing accustomed now to the ANA Soldiers being seen as helpful to their villagers and that's very beneficial to our mission here," Wead said.

Sgt. Flores was on hand to assist with Women's Day. According to her, it was a long day, but it was obvious to her that the children and the village elders were appreciative of the many truckloads that were filled with box after box of food and clothing. "It felt good to help serve these people here," she said.

The timeframe of February and March marked a number of events that highlighted the important contributions that women make, across Afghanistan, as female paratroopers of the 173<sup>rd</sup> were on hand.

## TF Talon Train ANA Soldiers, Develop Leaders

*Continued from page 11*

more confident and take over their own battle space."

Bagby also plans to eventually turn the courses over to be taught by the ANA.

"My goal is to turn it over to them, then we'll just oversee it and not do anything except assist them," he said. "That will be a win, having them educating their own troops."

With the first course over and planning already getting started for the next, Bagby and Makwakwa see progress being made and potential to develop the current and future leaders of the Afghan National Army.

"They're enthusiastic about learning new ideas and new tech and they're highly motivated," said Makwakwa. "This is my 4<sup>th</sup> tour here in Afghanistan and there are definitely significant changes in the ANA."

"Overall, I think it was a success and I was glad to be a part of it," said Bagby. "We're here to help build their army and part of building any army is educating leaders. Whether it's our Army or theirs, it doesn't matter."

## Hospital LNOs Ensure Best Care for Wounded Warriors

*Continued from page 14*

the time you wake up until you go to sleep, you're there for those Soldiers."

The hospital LNOs were selected for their job position based on their maturity, ability to deal with difficult situations, interpersonal communication skills, empathy and care, and dedication to duty to 173D ABCT. Each one of our Hospital LNOs has proven to be the person for the job and has validated that the 173D ABCT Command team made the right choice in selecting them for their positions. All hospital LNOs expressed how much of an honor it is to care for our wounded and sick Sky Soldiers.

## ISAF Commander Talks Progress, Future at FOB Shank

*Continued from page 15*

-ple and more out of the international community than they've ever given, more Afghan forces and it's going to take that every day."

"There's no doubt that this is an effort that will require both short term and long term solutions. There are realistic needs the Afghan people have presently, due to being in a survival mode, and while the Afghan government works tirelessly to provide the kind of security and economic solutions that will offer its citizens programs that are lasting and worthy of their support.

We are taking steps to support and facilitate these efforts, so that corruption and intimidation don't unravel Afghanistan's chances for success. Through partnering, we are buying the Afghan leaders' time, while we increase their capability to provide their own security and a government that is responsive to their constituents, so the needs of the Afghan people are met. Once that occurs, we will know success," said Lear said.

McChrystal said, "We are here, not to fight the war, but we are here to win," he said. "And we win through the people."



*Lt. Col. Curtis Johnson, commander 173rd Brigade Support Battalion, hands the guidon to incoming commander of BSB's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Capt. Kristen Preczewski.*

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael Sword TF Bayonet Public Affairs

## Soldiers Maintain Readiness During Mass-Cal Exercise



taking up security, and getting back to operations.”

Exercises like this are one method of ensuring that warriors are prepared for a real-world incident and determining their ability to respond to these situations.

“An exercise like this is extremely important,” he said. “These people have to be able to react under pressure. Warriors have to be able to know their jobs, know their duties, and act on such. Somebody has to take up that slack and control people and get things done.”

“This is a very likely circumstance,” he added. “This shows where people are proficient and where people are deficient.”

The number of casualties in the exercises provided additional challenges for the Soldiers responding.

“We had so many injured that we had to be moving back and forth constantly,” said U.S. Army Pvt. Erin Massie, a Soldier from the 173rd Brigade Support Battalion, from Indianapolis. “As soon as we turned over a casualty to the aid in the rear, we had to bring the litter back up to the front.”

“Having to carry people long distances can be difficult,” added Army Pvt. Nicoleus Murphy, of Davidson, Mich., a Soldier from the 173rd BSB. “People are heavy, but you’ve still got to get them out of there,” said Murphy.

Watching the exercise from start to finish, Kelley was pleased with what he saw.

“People are doing their jobs, and it looks like no one is getting truly rattled, so that is a good thing and inspires a lot of confidence,” he said.

***“These people have to be able to react under pressure. Warriors have to be able to know their jobs, know their duties, and act on such. Somebody has to take up that slack and control people and get things done,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Kelley.***



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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Normally when an Army medic doesn't have to do their job and doesn't tend to any casualties, it's a good day. However practice makes perfect, and with that in mind, the Soldiers from the 173rd Brigade Support Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, participated in a mass-casualty exercise at Forward Operating Base Shank, March 12.

“They had a simulated suicide bombing with several wounded and a few dead,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Kelley, of Elgin, Texas, an observer/controller for the exercise. “Right now we're just observing how they respond in regards to casualties,

## ANP, TF Bayonet Leaders Meet, Discuss Resources

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

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- District and provincial commanders from the Afghan National Police force and Task Force Bayonet leaders met Thursday in a conference to increase partnership capacity, enhance lines of communication and sustain cross levelling of information.

District and provincial commanders spoke about concerns for their respective areas of operation, and shared success stories concerning security and development. The open discussion focused on increases in personnel, supply and resourcing issues, and the utility of checkpoints versus community policing.

Col. Sayed-Ahmad Salangy, the district chief of police for Sayed Abad, said the chiefs of police brought issues to the forum to solve.

"It was very effective because the chiefs of police for each district within the Logar and Wardak provinces were present, and they were talking about the different issues they face. They can bring it up freely in this environment," said Salangy.

Gen. Haqyar Nawaz, chief of police for the Wardak province, agreed.

"This is a very effective conference, because all the police force leaders can bring their issues to the conference, they can speak freely about these issues. Also they can solve and try to find solutions for these issues," said Nawaz.

Nawaz said that working with the people and earning their trust could solve most of their issues. "We find the best way is to earn their trust.



***"We are here to earn the trust of people, we are getting close to the people," said Gen. Haqyar Nawaz.***

They can trust our military and police and we can trust them, and that is the best way to bring security. The relationship between the people and the police should be based on trust, honesty and honor," said Nawaz.

Salangy shared the same sentiment.

"The best way to ensure safety for the people of Afghanistan is to work directly with coalition forces. Whether it is reconstruction or security, working with coalition forces and the people will be the best way. If they help us, we can help them," said Salangy.

Salangy continued.

"This will bring more changes because our chiefs of police will bring these ideas and programs and strategies with them back to their district. They can implement them in their own district," said Salangy.

"The police administration is implementing these changes in all the different areas. We are here to earn the trust of people, we are getting close to the people," said Nawaz.

## Sky Soldiers Reflect On Revered Combat Jump



**"There was a lot of confidence among us. We knew we were going to get the job done," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Scott Cahill.**

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

Seven years ago, on March 26, 2003, some 5-jump-Soldiers cut their teeth on what was to be the Army's 29<sup>th</sup> Combat Jump, as seasoned paratroopers and battle-hardened jumpmasters led the way on a mission that helped to further the legacy of one of the Army's most prestigious Airborne units, the 173<sup>rd</sup>

"Opportunities to conduct a combat parachute jump are few and far between," according to Operations Sgt. Major Richard Howell, a paratrooper who was a Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> class, newly assigned to the brigade known as, "Sky Soldiers."

"One has to understand the context of what went into that jump," said Command Sgt. Maj. Nicholas Rolling, who served as a jumpmaster on one of the most famous days in the airborne community's history. "We had been exposed to the extreme cold of Kosovo, Czech Republic, Hungary and Germany, so we knew what being cold and wet was all about. We may not have known that war was coming, but we had an inkling of understanding what might be facing us, and so we were disciplined due to our austere training; there was no signs of complacency in the unit; we were trained up and ready," said Rolling, who was a first sergeant with the 173<sup>rd</sup> at the time of the parachute jump.

The traits within the ranks of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team were strong feelings of confidence, flexibility and according to Rolling, "the jumpmasters leadership and strength on that day spilled over to the men and the troopers knew that they could place their lives in the hands of these jumpmasters to get them through the experience, because our troopers saw these jumpmasters were fearless and knew precisely what they were doing," Rolling said.

"I had experienced a combat jump before that

one, so I knew what to expect, but when you go from 40,000 feet to 1,000 feet in an airplane in less than 6 minutes, you have to do what you can to brace yourself and your men for that kind of G-Force and in a situation like we were in. You cannot risk the mission, so we knew going into it that if there were any towed jumpers involved, they would have to be cut loose, because that C-17 airplane, which was new to jump missions, needed to rapidly gain elevation and clear that mountain in a hurry," said Rolling.

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Scott Cahill, was a specialist then, and he shared how being weighed down with a full load on his back, standing in the plane for a good half hour was tough on the paratroopers. I was a machinegunner, so I was able to use my weapon as a crutch but a lot of Soldiers were feeling some pain, because we were standing with full gear and parachutes for a good 30 minutes. "We had our houses on our backs, and they were big houses," joked Rolling, because as he explained it, "we did not know what contingencies we would be facing, so we had all of our Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) gear with us, as much ammo as we could load and everything we would require to survive."

Cahill said, "there was a lot of confidence among us. We knew we were going to get the job done."

Rolling said, "I was the last jumper of the 10<sup>th</sup> and final chalk, and I knew there was only one way off that bird, and that was jumping," Rolling said. "What I was worried about for my team was the fact that there was enough time that elapsed between chalks that the enemy would be alert and aware of our arrival, and being the last chalk meant our group would not have the element of surprise on our side, so I was concerned that about enemy forces having time to react to our landing. Your mind races a hundred miles an hour and you think of every little detail you have been trained to do, so the tempo is fast and it's serious business," Rolling said.

Howell, who lives and breathes the Army, said he was lucky. "I landed on rocks, squared away my gear and then moved out."

"That journey was made up of six-inch steps, traipsing through that muck," and Rolling agreed, saying despite being well-conditioned, he was just smoked, having been confronted with the kind of physical exertion that just took everything it had out of you."

Howell continued.

"One thing that I recall is how well tied in we were, as a unit. We stood up the 'Rock' battalion in a very short amount of time. The camaraderie was tight. Leaders were taking care of their Soldiers and Soldiers were performing as a team. You have to realize it was March and we just stood up Chosen Company that same year.

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## Sky Soldiers Reflect On Revered Combat Jump (continued)

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

-same year. It took every man, every available day to turn newly assigned Soldiers into battle-ready units. We were turning privates into companies," said Howell.

Asked about the most famous image of a Sky Soldier on that famous day, the photograph of a Soldier taking a knee with a full combat load on his back, Cahill said, "that photo causes memories to come flooding back for me. It was exactly how that first 24 hours was for us that day. That was really how people looked that day, wet, miserable, loaded down with everything and mud caked on everything."

But somehow Soldiers hold on to good memories and the colorful characters that comprised a platoon of men with Legion Company, 1-503<sup>rd</sup> are something that Cahill will never forget.

"I was a Specialist, with Legion Company, back then. Our platoon had the best sense of humour. We had a fantastic platoon. The camaraderie was awesome. We were tight. Back then, we were training for all kinetic, force on force scenarios. We would go to ranges and go through tons of ammo. Times were different. I especially remember Spc. Benjamin P. Pickford as being one of the colorful characters I remember. The "P" stood for Paratrooper, Cahill joked. He was a six foot five tall machine gunner with Legion Company, who was with us for operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. That trooper I often think of," said Cahill.

Cahill said, "we were gung-ho, but nervous at the same time. We were convinced, as young troopers that there was going to be tons of Iraqis on the ground."

"But those fears were put to rest by colorful leaders like General B.B. Bell. He loved Sky Soldiers. We were his babies," Cahill said.

"General B. B. Bell, (then) United States Army Europe Commander, stood out there and met with 1,200 of us Sky Soldiers, shook their hand and handed us paratroopers his coins. That really stuck out in my mind all these years. He loved us. You could just tell," Cahill said.

"That general took the time to shake the hands and have a little conversation with every single Soldier lined up to get on that bird, and I do not mean Hi, how are you – he took the time to learn something about each of us and genuinely cared."

After the jump, not everyone knew what the gold star on the jump wings meant. Cahill jokingly shared how he and some other combat jump veterans went to PLDC and when they were asked about our gold stars on our jump wings, we told them a story that went over their heads.



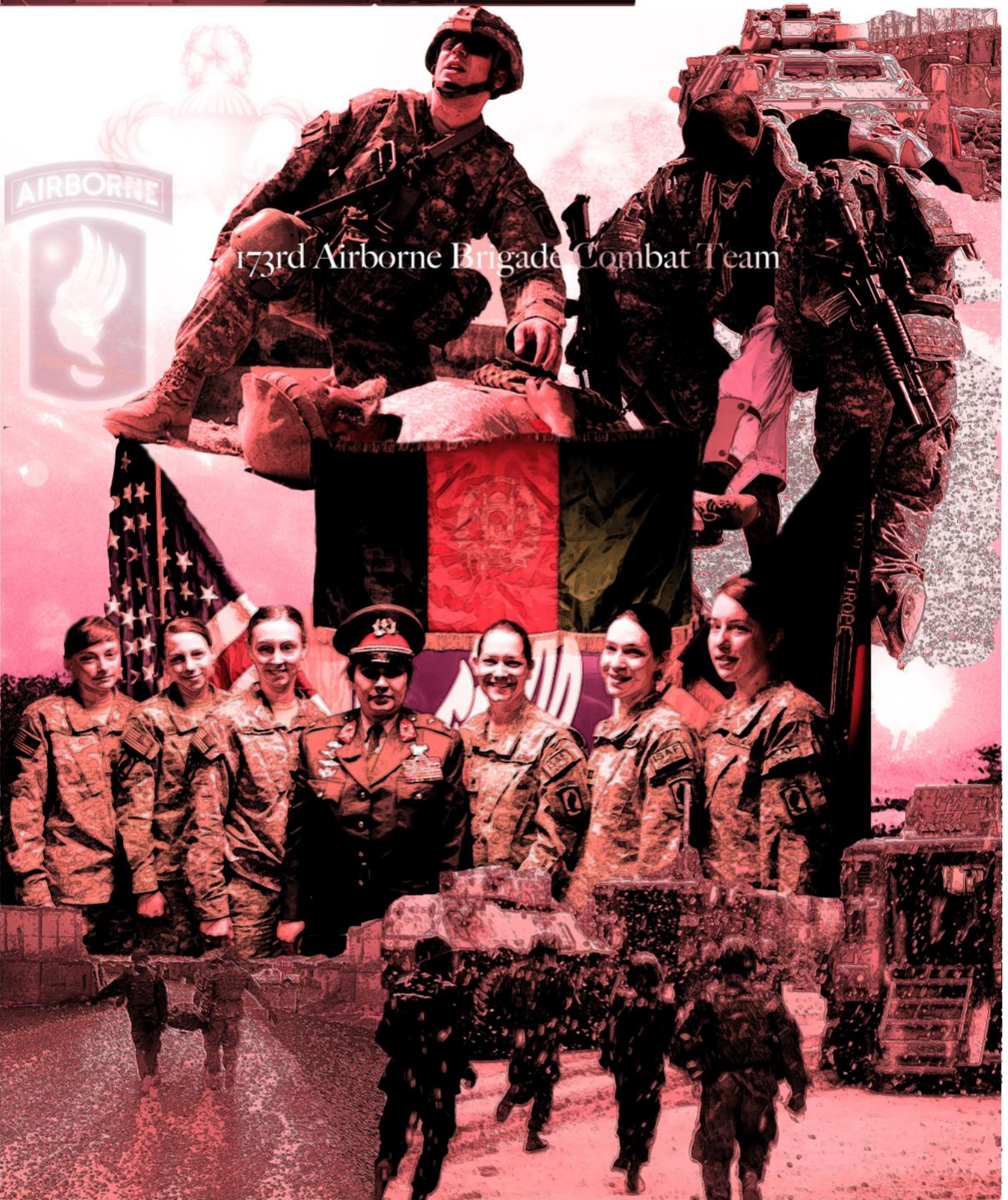
**"Being in the 173<sup>rd</sup> has made my career. Everything great that has ever happened to me in the Army has happened when I have been with this unit," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Scott Cahill.**

Knowing most soldiers lack familiarity with the "mustard stain," the unofficial name for the Combat Jump Device, which adorns the wings of any paratrooper who has conducted a combat parachutist assault, "well, Soldiers, when you go to the chow hall at Airborne School and you make it to the front of the chow line five times, you get a gold star for your wings, and the young, naïve Soldiers bought it," Cahill mused.

"Being in the 173<sup>rd</sup> has made my career. Everything great that has ever happened to me in the Army has happened when I have been with this unit. St. Michael definitely likes me. I have never been seriously hurt. We have had some good times here," Cahill said.

"I would steer any paratrooper to the 173<sup>rd</sup>. The opportunities in this Brigade are absolutely incredible. My career has been made possible by what I have experienced and learned within this brigade. Being in Italy is amazing. There is so much to see and do, being stationed where we are.

Asked if he has any advice for would be paratroopers, Cahill offered this: "Our experience in Iraq was amazing. Do not worry. That parachute is going to open. Just keep your feet and knees together and everything else is gravy. The guys we were going with on that jump with were so colorful, so funny. When passing through the city of Irbil, the Iraqis lined the streets and cheered us on. One Iraqi man leaned in the vehicle and gave my Company commander a big kiss on his face, thanking him for saving his country."



173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

Photo Illustration by Army Spc. Daniel Haun