



# Tien Bien Times

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

DECEMBER 1, 2007

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Commander's Corner	4
SACEUR and AA6 visit	5
IED Investigators	7
Running of the Herd	8
Chaplain's Cor-	11
Laghman Province Shuras	12
NCAA Player Becomes Citizen	13
I-503rd Photo Essay	14
Tax Time	16
Cold Weather Injuries	17
Fallen Heroes	18
Nov. 8, 1965	20

## Ambush Alley: The Road to Zerok Combat Outpost



**A convoy from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, starts the long trip from Zerok Combat Outpost to Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, taking them through Ambush Alley in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Nov. 6.**

*Story and photos by Spc. Micah E. Clare  
4<sup>th</sup> BCT, 82<sup>nd</sup> ABN DIV Public Affairs Office*

PAKITKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan—It's known to Coalition forces as "Ambush Alley."

Despite the imminent threat of attack by insurgent fighters along the winding, narrow road surrounded by steep hills and large rocks on the way to Zerok Combat Outpost in northern Paktika Province, nothing it throws at them can deter the courage of the Paratroopers of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Airborne), 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

Army Staff Sgt. Timothy Hamilton, a mortar team squad

leader in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, from St. Petersburg, Fla., remembers one such attack on August 27, a day he will never forget.

The HHC convoy was moving from Forward Operating Base Orgun-E to Zerok COP on a mission to secure a nearby pass while the battalion command group convoy traveled through.

Just as the HHC convoy stopped to send a dismounted team into the hills, the attack began.

Hamilton stepped out of the passenger side of his vehicle to set up a mortar firing position with his Soldiers, when he heard a roaring



**Continued on page 2**



Paratroopers from 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, conduct a dismounted patrol along with an improvised explosive device clearance convoy through Ambush Alley in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Nov. 3.

noise somewhere behind him.

"I heard a big explosion," he said. "I whirled around just in time to see a [rocket propelled grenade] impact into the truck behind me.

I immediately jumped back in my truck."

On cue, a hail of small arms fire came raining down on the convoy from that direction, and the gunners went into action immediately.

"My gunner opened fire with the [M-240b machine gun]," Hamilton said. "The enemy firing positions were so close though; his machine gun broke down after it was directly hit three to four times, so he switched to his M-4 and emptied about six magazines at the attackers."

This was when Spc. Dillon Bergstad, a .50 caliber machine gunner from North Bend, Ore, took a round through his upper arm while firing from the company commander's vehicle,

"Suddenly I was knocked down," Bergstad said. "It felt like somebody pushed me over, and I fell back into the truck. When I got back up, I looked around, but didn't see anything at first, so I thought nothing had happened."

He kept firing, and remembers killing several enemy fighters at close range.

As the convoy started moving forward to get away from the side attack, they started taking even heavier contact from the front.

Four RPGs hit the company commander's truck.

"Every time we stopped, another pane of armored glass was 'spider webbing' as round after round cracked against it," Bergstad said. "I couldn't believe the intensity of this attack, they just wouldn't stop coming. These guys weren't joking around."

Hamilton, back in his vehicle, felt something

hit him in the back of his helmet.

"It felt like a jackhammer," he said. "It slammed my head down, and right about then, I heard another thump and a searing heat on my neck."

Two rounds had punched through his truck. One had hit his helmet and another had grazed his neck. He could see a dent on the floor where that bullet had missed his thigh by inches and hit the floorboard.

It was during this time that the first sergeant's gunner, Pfc. Thomas Wilson of Maurertown, Va., was killed.

Even though the loss of their teammate was awful, the rest of the platoon still had to concentrate on getting out alive, Hamilton said.

"We just couldn't believe it," Hamilton said. "In the moment, you kind of have to forget about it and just focus."

The attackers retreated after about 10 minutes of sustained gunfire and the Paratroopers quickly worked to tow the severely damaged trucks and bring everyone back to Zerok COP. Three vehicles needed to be towed back, and the other vehicles had broken glass, blown out tires and other damage.

Once there, both Hamilton and Bergstad were treated by medics, who were amazed to find their wounds very minor.

Hamilton had barely escaped having his neck pierced and his thigh penetrated; Bergstad had a bullet lodged just under the skin near his

bicep, which was easily removed with little damage.

"I realize I could have lost my dome," Hamilton said. "I was incredibly lucky."

In his three deployments, Hamilton, a husband and father of two, says this is the worst ambush he's ever been in. He was able to count 34 bullet strikes on his truck, including the two above his head that nearly killed him.

Three days later, the HHC convoy was mission ready once again, patrolling on the way back to FOB Orgun-E.

Since August, the 1-503<sup>rd</sup> Paratroopers have made many more trips through ambush alley and have been attacked on most of them.

It doesn't make any

difference to the 173<sup>rd</sup> "Sky Soldiers" though.

Sometimes Hamilton looks up at the bullet holes above his head, and sees the sunlight shining through them.

"When I see those holes, I think to myself, 'a few more inches,'" he said. "It would have been a completely different story."

Despite the loss of a comrade, he still knows they have a job to do.

"We'll just keep rolling through," he said.

Bergstad, looking over the ambush site from his turret, says he now sits a little lower in his seat than before.

"Still, somebody's got to patrol this area," he said. "It might as well be us."



**Army Staff Sgt. Timothy Hamilton, a mortar team squad leader in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, looks at bullet holes above his seat during a security halt along Ambush Alley in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Nov. 3. Hamilton is from St. Petersburg, Fla.**

#### Tien Bien Times

Commander COL Charles Preysler

Command Sgt Maj. CSM Isaia Vimoto

Public Affairs Officer MAJ Nicholas Sternberg

Editor SFC Jacob Caldwell

Writers SFC Jacob Caldwell, SGT Brandon Aird, SPC Henry

Selzer, SPC Gregory Argentieri, PFC Daniel Rangel

The Tien Bien Times monthly newsletter is an unofficial publication of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team and the U.S. Army

authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1.

The newsletter is published and distributed monthly in an electronic format. The newsletter can be viewed on the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team website at <http://www.173abnbde.setaf.army.mil>.

This newsletter is a command information product that places emphasis on missions, events and activities occurring throughout the 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT's deployed area of operations.

Information and photos included in this newsletter are acquired from sources that highlight events, programs and activities in Nangarhar,

Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman and Paktika Provinces of Afghanistan. Dates, times, locations, and the events themselves might change or be cancelled without prior notice.

To be added to the Tien Bien Times distribution list, please email: [Jacob.caldwell@us.army.mil](mailto:Jacob.caldwell@us.army.mil).

This address can also be used to submit photos or information on upcoming events, or you can reach the 173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT Public Affairs Office by calling DSN 318-831-6028.



## Commander's Corner

Seasons Greetings to all the members of Task Force Bayonet and the family, friends, and veterans who support us.

As we come to the end of 2007, I would like to express my gratitude to you for all the many things you have done and endured over the last year. Your dedication and commitment to this great organization and its members is incredible. It is what makes the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team a success in everything it does.

Earlier this year, we were notified that our orders to Iraq had been changed sending us to Afghanistan for 15 months, not the expected 12 months to which you all answered the call. Our newly formed Brigade Combat Team made the required adjustments and took the changes in stride preparing for the extended deployment. We trained and packed for the deployment, all the while sharing every spare moment with you, our family and friends, saving up memories to carry us through our long endeavor.

The memories we have carried with us over the last six months are especially important during this holiday

season, as are the many letters and packages that have been coming in non-stop over the last few weeks. Rest assured that mail is a priority with every means of transportation being employed to ensure our Sky Soldiers receive your gifts and well wishes in time for Christmas and the many other celebrations that occur this time of year.

As the New Year approaches and we reach the midway point of our deployment, I challenge every Soldier and leader in Task Force Bayonet to assess yourselves and your units. Refresh yourselves on the training that you received prior to deploying and make necessary adjustments based on all the many lessons you have learned during your first six months here. Never lose sight of what 'right' looks like, and never forget that discipline and high standards are the hallmark of this historic unit.

Finally, as you celebrate, remember the families that are missing a loved one this holiday season. Make the extra effort to reach out to those families and let them know that we share their hurt, that they are not forgotten, and that we truly



**From the desk of  
COL Charles A. Preysler  
TF Bayonet Commander**

care. This is a particularly hard time for them, but they need to know that we are all in this together. This unit has bonds that connect us together in a way that most people will never understand. Let's keep those bonds strong by reaching out and caring for each other like only we can.

I wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sky Soldiers,

COL Preysler  
Bayonet 6

# Generals express their gratitude for Paratroopers' service



**U.S. Army Gen. John Craddock, Supreme Allied Commander Europe speaks with 1st Sgt., Todd Shippy, Company A, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion (Airborne) on Thanksgiving Day in the Jalalabad Airfield dining facility. Craddock spent the time thanking Soldiers for their service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.**

*Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Caldwell,  
173rd ABCT Public Affairs*

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Two generals made a point to thank Task Force Bayonet Soldiers for their service Thanksgiving Day at Jalalabad Airfield.

U.S. Army Gen. John Craddock, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, expressed his thanks for the service of Soldiers deployed in Afghanistan.

“You are indeed the front line of the effort that’s going on here in Afghanistan for the NATO Alliance, the United States, and all freedom loving nations,” said Craddock during a brief speech in the dining facility,

“I know it is difficult. It’s separation. Every-day there is danger out there. You know it. You live it,” said Craddock.

“You are making incredible progress and a significant difference in the lives of the people of Afghanistan and also for this entire NATO Alliance,” he said.

“As you go about your duties today, when you give thanks in your own special way, for whatever it is you’re thankful for, know that there is an alliance out there of 26 nations, 2.2 million in uniform... they are supportive and thankful for your efforts and for your sacrifice,” concluded Craddock.

Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, Combined Joint Task Force 82 Commander, also visited the Soldiers at JAF. With little fanfare, but obvious enthusiasm, he went straight to serving paratroopers their Thanksgiving meal in the JAF dining facility alongside the senior officers and non-commissioned officers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.



**Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, Combined Joint Task Force 82 Commander serves mashed potatoes to Soldiers of Task Force Bayonet Nov. 22 at the Jalalabad Airfield dining facility.**

# From the 173rd Retention Office

★ AIRBORNE ALL THE WAY ★



★ STAY ARMY STAY AIRBORNE ★

## Task Force Bayonet Retention Team:

Jalalabad Airfield	MSG Lopez	831-6051
Jalalabad Airfield	SFC Dickerson	831-6051
Organ-E	SFC Ortiz	431-8022
Bagram Airfield	SSG Kubash	431-3035
Camp Blessing	SSG McCullers	846-4222

# ANP train to become IED investigators



**Afghan National Police Officers, from Nangarhar Province, bag evidence during post blast investigation training on Forward Operating Base Fenty in Jalalabad, Afghanistan Nov. 26.**

*Story and photos by Sgt. Brandon Aird,  
173rd ABCT Public Affairs*

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Afghan National Police from Nangarhar Province participated in a month long course on post-blast investigations on Forward Operating Base Fenty in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

The course was taught by a tactical exploitation team, explosive ordnance disposal technicians, and contracted police trainers throughout the month of November.

Having already concluded 'train the trainer' sessions, the new Afghan trainers are now 'training the force.'

During the course, police officers were taught how to compile scene sketches and how to mark, log, and bag evidence, said Army Maj. Sean O'Brien, a Mobile Training Team member from Nevada. Police officers were also taught how to interview witnesses and fill out interview worksheets.

The course is a new concept for the Afghan National Police and will help develop an internal asset of improvised explosive device investigators.

"If all goes well we plan on training police officers from each province in our AO (area of operation)," said O'Brien.

The instructors used simulated devices and controlled explosion scenes to teach the police officers post blast investigation.

The police officers complete everything in the investigation, but leave unexploded ordnance to EOD teams, explained O'Brien.

The class will help investigators catch individuals planting the devices and also help prevent further attacks.

"I've learned a lot in these last weeks," said Shrifullah, a Nangarhar Police Officer taking part in the training.

"The class is very technical and educational," said Shrifullah.

# The running of The Herd

Soldiers start a 24-hour run at Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan Nov. 8. The run was organized to commemorate a bloody day in the history of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, when it lost 48 Soldiers on Nov. 8, 1965 during Operation Hump in Vietnam.



By Army 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Monika Comeaux  
173<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Support Battalion

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, Afghanistan - "On the 8th of November, the angels were crying as they carried his brothers away...There were few men left standing that day," sings the country band Big & Rich in their ballad commemorating the fall of 48 American Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade in 1965 in Operation Hump, war zone D, in Vietnam.

Forty-two years later, members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, other service members, and civilians deployed to Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan, honored the fallen Soldiers of Operation Hump by participating in a 24-hour run.

The event celebrated unit

cohesion, teamwork and esprit de corps. Participants ran along a roughly three-and-a-half mile route lined by miniature American flags and passed a bayonet, which is depicted on the unit patch of the 173rd ABCT, to one another in lieu of a baton. The event was made even more special by having a Vietnam veteran, Rick Petersen, from the Facility Engineer Team participate.

"I think it is a great idea. I think it is great that everybody is going to come out here and support one another. It is great for camaraderie," said 2nd Lt. Kate Fullenkamp, a quartermaster officer and platoon leader of "3-5-1" Platoon of Company A, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion (Airborne).

Her platoon of forty entered with not one, but two, seven-man teams. There would have been more volunteers, but mission requirements did not allow all of her Soldiers to participate.

"We had more than seven people who wanted to do this, but we picked the best seven," said Pfc. Ikechuku Odi, a combat engineer with Road Clearance Patrol 4, Company A, 70th Engineer Battalion stationed at Fort Riley, KS. Ever since they found out about the race, the engineers ran two laps every day when they didn't go outside the wire, in preparation for the challenging race. When Odi heard about the race, he thought 'we are going to win this.' "Our tactic



### Continued from previous page

is simple: run as fast as you can," he said, after completing his first lap in a little over 22 minutes.

"Some people are out here for the physical aspect... But there are people that are out here because it is fun and you enjoy it and you will always remember it, for sure," said Fullenkamp.

The rules of the run were pretty simple.

"Basically it is a 24-hour relay with seven-man teams. One runner must be running at all times," said 1st. Sgt. Drake F. Sladky from Company C, 173rd BSB. An avid sportsman, he was one of the masterminds behind the event.

According to Sladky, the idea of organizing another run after running a 10-kilometer race shortly after the 173rd's arrival to Afghanistan was cherished by many. Originally they were aim-

ing for New Year's Day, but then they received a disk containing the music video, '8th of November,' from James Bradley, a member of the 173rd Association. "We knew that we had to do some sort of race in commemoration of that date," Sladky explained.

"Everybody in the company helped out, mostly by getting sponsors for the race day and organizing the registration," Sladky said. As a result, a total of 21 teams signed up.

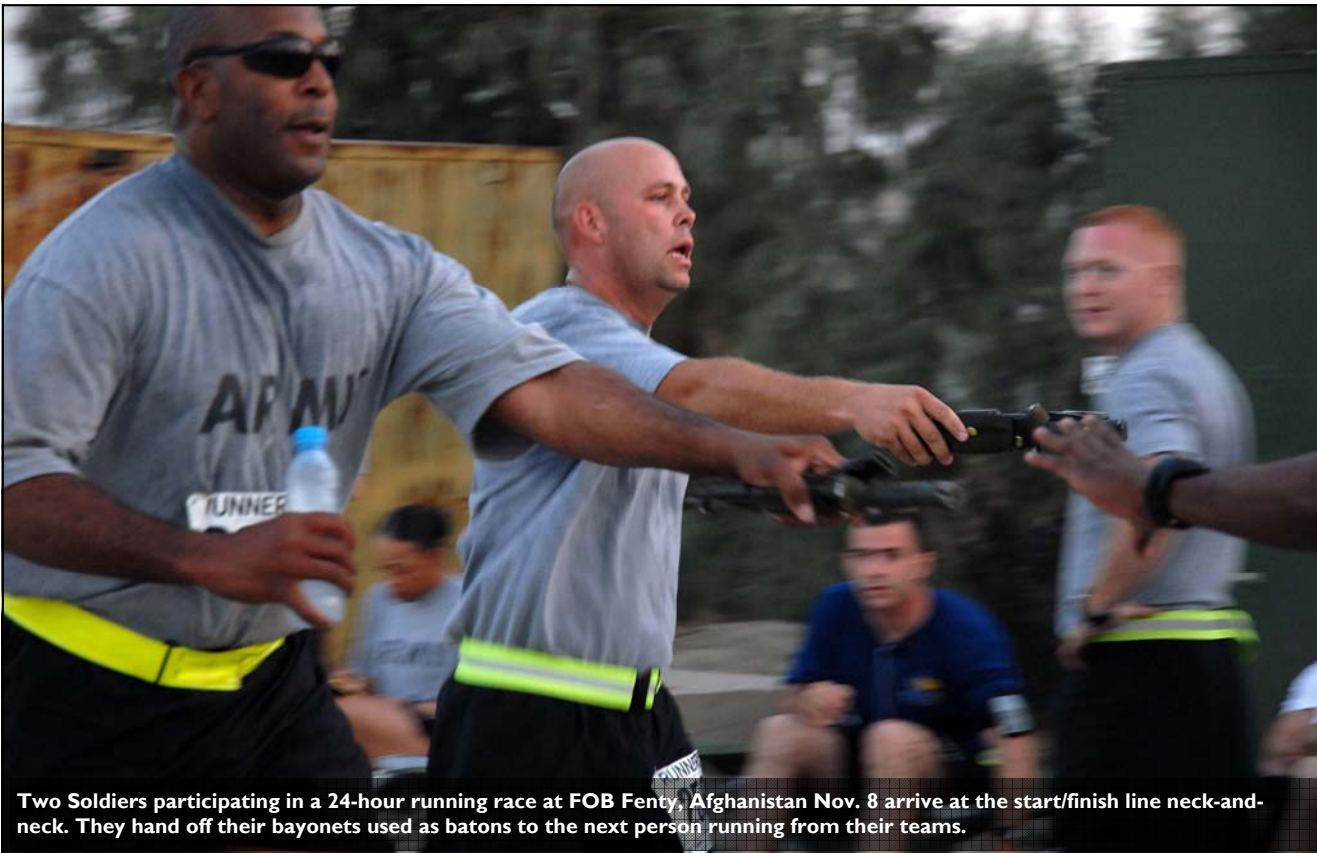
"We were really lucky; we started early and got sponsors... The 173D Association sent the race t-shirts. Niles Harris, [the Vietnam veteran who was the inspiration for the country song and was himself injured on November 8, 1965], sent about 200 autographed T-shirts," said Sladky.

Some of the shirts ended up as prizes, but the majority

were sent out to subordinate units of the 173rd who are deployed to other forward operating bases and weren't able to participate in the run. Prizes included name brand golf clubs, shirts, hats and a multitude of other things. No team went home empty-handed.

Pfc. Odi was right when he thought his team was going to win. On the 9th of November, 2007, perhaps the angels were smiling a little as his team from Road Clearance Patrol 4, Company A, 70th Engineer Battalion carried their prizes away.

The winning team completed a total of 51 laps, covering, coincidentally, 173.4 miles in the 24-hour period, and consisted of: Staff Sgt. Luis D. Rivera, Pfc. Ikechuku Odi, Pfc. Vincent A. Fiorillo, Pfc. Joshua M. Contryman, Sgt. Eric E. Chappel, Sgt. Bradley J. Edmonds and Spc. Tin T. Tran—all engineers.



Two Soldiers participating in a 24-hour running race at FOB Fenty, Afghanistan Nov. 8 arrive at the start/finish line neck-and-neck. They hand off their bayonets used as batons to the next person running from their teams.

# FOB Fenty (JAF) Chapel Schedule



## Protestant Services

<i>Prayer-borne Ops</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>0330Z / 0800L</i>
<i>Traditional Protestant (Beginning July 8)</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>0430Z / 0900L</i>
<i>Contemporary Protestant</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>0630Z / 1100L</i>
<i>Gospel</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>1400Z / 1830L</i>
<i>Bible Study</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>1400Z / 1830L</i>

Point of contact CH (CPT) Hart

## Roman Catholic Services

<i>Mass (English)</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>1030Z / 1500L</i>
<i>Mass (Español)</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>1230Z / 1700L</i>
<i>Weekday Mass (Beginning July 9)</i>	<i>M-F</i>	<i>0700Z / 1130L</i>
<i>Confession / Reconciliation</i>	<i>By Appointment</i>	

Point of contact CH (MAJ) Herrera

## Latter Day Saints

<i>Worship</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>0800Z / 1230L</i>
----------------	------------	----------------------

The FOB Fenty Chapel remains open for personal prayer, worship, and meditation for all faith traditions.

For more information, contact Chapel Office at DSN 831-2222 or 831-2223.

*"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up as with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." - Isaiah 40:31*

## Chaplain's Corner

This time of year brings about thoughts of "Peace on earth, good will toward men." But what does real peace mean? When I was in Korea I learned that they have two different words for peace one that they use in their greeting that means contentment in you heart as in, "is your heart at peace?" to be the equivalent of us saying "how are you doing?" And they have a completely different word for the absence of international wars. In fact they think it rather strange that we use the same word for both meanings.

When we think of "peace on earth" we often think of the absence of international conflict, which would be nice. The phrase actually originates from the idea of internal contentment, peace in our hearts.

During the time of the Roman Empire, when this phrase originated, the peace of Rome or Pax Romana, ruled the Mediterranean area. Because it was bad for the Empire, no countries within the Roman Empire were allowed to fight each other. Therefore Rome would stop Greece and Lebanon from going to war with each other just like the US would stop Georgia and Alabama from going to war with each other

(some think this is why we invented football). So with no wars occurring, or even the threat of war, we may understand that this phrase was not intended to that end. It was intended to focus on the peace in each person's heart.

While world peace focuses on the absence of international conflict, peace in our heart does not just focus on the absence of conflict but the presence of contentment, joy and love in our hearts. In fact the deeper meaning of the phrase is to convey the intent that outside circumstances do not force a direct influence over our internal condition. We all know that we can be living in a land of peace and have conflict with our families, with our friends or co-workers, even within ourselves. The absence of external conflict does not automatically bring the presence of internal contentment. But the more important meaning is that external conflict does not automatically block our ability to have internal contentment in our heart; peace in our soul.

The true gift of this holiday season will not be

**When we think of "peace on earth" we often think of the absence of international conflict, which would be nice. The phrase actually originates from the idea of internal contentment, peace in our hearts.**

found in a decorative box. The true gift of this time of year is peace in our hearts. A peace that is so deep and meaningful that it brings contentment, joy and good will toward others. A peace that is not dependant on external circumstances but only dependant on the presence of God's Spirit of peace in our soul.

May the peace of God's love bless your soul this season and the joy of life bless your family as well.

Shalom,  
Assalaam alaikum,  
Peace on earth, good will toward men,

Chaplain Lee Nelson  
TF Bayonet Chaplain

# ISAF leaders engage district leaders of Laghman Province

*Story and photos by Spc. Gregory Argentieri,  
173rd ABCT Public Affairs*

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment (Airborne), and 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, Arizona Army National Guard, conducted Operation Noble Extension Nov. 9 in Laghman Province in Eastern Afghanistan.

The mission was to rid the area of insurgents in Mayl and Gonapel Valley and to discuss key issues in the area with local leaders.

Soldiers air assaulted and launched ground convoys into the area to thwart enemy movement while military leaders participated in three well attended shuras.

While the ground forces provided security and scouted for insurgents, U.S. Army battalion commanders from the 1-508th, the 1-158th, and the commander of the Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team, together with the Laghman sub-governor, traveled the province to participate in shuras.

Key leaders from the Afghan Government, the National Police, the National Army, village elders, mullahs, and imams gathered for the shuras to discuss security, potential construction projects, and the villager's concerns.

"To date, since we arrived back in March,



**U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Robert S. Ricci, 41, from Norwood, Mass., Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team Commander sits with the Laghman Province Governor, Gulab Mangal listens attentively to the key leaders gathered Nov. 14 outside of the Vehicle Patrol Base Najil, in the Alishang Valley of Eastern Afghanistan.**

the PRT has spent 15.5 million in Laghman Province, and we have another 14 million in proposed projects," said Lt. Col. Robert S. Ricci, Laghman PRT Commander.

The shuras provide a chance for dialogue between the leaders and the opportunity for American Forces to distribute humanitarian assistance. Rice, tarps, school supplies, and cold weather gear were distributed to help make the upcoming winter a little more comfortable.

"Today we came up here to see how we can help," said Lt. Col. Brian J. Mennes, 1-508th PIR Commander, who also spoke during the shuras. "We come here promising nothing but the hope to be your friends, and to show our enemies that together we will be strong, and 'Sang to Sang'(shoulder to shoulder) we can move forward."

In conjunction with the shuras, International Security Assistance Forces conducted medical outreach engagements. Medical care is a rare commodity in Afghanistan.

"We're here doing a medical engagement in conjunction with the shura trying to help as many of the locals as we can because the closest medical clinic is about 4-5 hours by foot," said Maj. George J. Jicha, Physician Assistant, 1-158th Infantry, Arizona National Guard. "If we can extend some medical treatment up here in this valley it will do everybody some good and hopefully slant opinions to be pro coalition forces and pro local government."

Medical engagements, air assaults, convoys, and shuras; these are all things these Soldiers have done all year. But 'shoulder to shoulder' with the Afghans, these Soldiers are making progress in Afghanistan one shura at a time.



**In a new \$84,000 school built with money provided by the Laghman Provincial Reconstruction Team, U.S. Army Maj. George Jicha (left), Phoenix, Ariz., part of 1-158th, Arizona National Guard, a physician assistant examines a rash on the thigh of Sakhi Shah, an elder from the Gonapal Valley. He came to the medical outreach taking place in conjunction with a shura Nov. 12 in Eastern Afghanistan.**

# Former NCAA basketball player, Soldier becomes U.S. citizen

By Army 2nd Lt. Monika Comeaux  
173rd Brigade Support Battalion

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, Afghanistan— Nov. 12 was a very special day for Spc. Kinga Kiss-Johnson, 31, a motor transport operator from Company A, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion (Airborne.) Not only did she spend Veterans Day weekend deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, but she also became a U.S. citizen during a ceremony held at Bagram Airfield.

"When I walked across the stage, I was in the clouds ...To me it was a dream and a privilege to become a US citizen," Kiss-Johnson, a Bradenton, Fla. Native, said.

Kiss-Johnson has seen communism collapse in Romania and cars with UNICEF and USA printed on their sides deliver humanitarian aid to the struggling country. She remembers that although the revolution was short-lived, a lot of people lost their lives. As a child she said she was thinking: "One day, I will be the one helping others," and here she is today, deployed to Afghanistan, serving what she now can truly call her country, the United States of America.

Kiss-Johnson arrived in the United States on a basketball scholarship in 1998. She barely spoke English at the time. According to her own account, her coach at Missouri State University had to draw pictures for her so she would understand what tactics to use during the game. She hit the ground running and learned English fast. It was in college where she met her husband.

"She would come to me in my computer lab for assistance," said her husband, William A. Johnson through an e-mail. "Over the time we struck up a friendship and things led to our eventual [nuptials] in 2001."

Kiss-Johnson, who played on Missouri State's 2001 NCAA Final Four basketball team, was very grateful for the opportunities she had in the United States.

"During college, during Sept. 11, I wanted to join [the Army], but I was still in college. I couldn't give up my scholarship. After I finished college, I had a secure job, I decided that now I can do my share, pay back something to the country all I got in the last five years in scholarships."

Thanks to a program her employer, Wal-Mart, has, she was able to take a 'military leave of absence' from her assistant store manager job and sign up to do her share.

Her husband was supportive of her efforts. "After having done quite a few years of Army service myself when my wife came to me with the thoughts of going into the Army ... I felt it would be hypocritical for me ... not to support her desires 100 percent."

According to her company commander, Capt. Michael Revels, an ordnance officer, Kiss-Johnson truly stands out in the crowd not only because she is the tallest Soldier in the company, but because she "is a great Soldier with lots of character. She likes to talk to people and really listens to what they have to say."

Revels felt proud that Kiss-Johnson asked him and her first sergeant to attend her ceremony.

"Kiss was so happy knowing that she was about to become a U.S. citizen, it made you want to be there to share her experience," Revels said.

"The ceremony humbled me! It made me think about how so many people in America take being a citizen for granted," he added.

There was only one other person Kiss-Johnson wished could have been there with her: her husband.

"I would have loved to have my husband there. I had his picture in my hand during the ceremony," Kiss-Johnson said, pulling a laminated color-photo of a gentleman wearing a shirt and tie. "That was the hardest thing I guess. We went through all the years of process of application and he was there step-by-step helping me out and at the final end he couldn't be there, but he was there in heart," she said.

"My wife, Spc. Kinga Kiss-Johnson is my hero. She has endured more in her lifetime that many could ever begin to comprehend...Her humble demeanor inspires me and shows just how great her character is," said her husband in his e-mail. He said he thinks it is a great thing that Soldiers like his wife are able to get their citizenships in an expedited manner.

"I feel if anyone deserves to be put at the front of the line it should be Soldiers like her that are willing to put their lives on the line and make the kind of sacrifices we are willing to make for our country," concluded Revels.



**Army Spc. Kinga Kiss-Johnson, a motor transport operator from Company A, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion (Airborne) sheds some tears of joy as she participates in a citizenship ceremony held at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan on Nov. 12. (U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Melissa Escobar, 22nd MPAD)**

# I-503rd Bringing Security to the People of Paktika

Photos by Spc. Micah Clare, 4th BCT, 82 ABN DIV Public Affairs



Paratroopers from 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, pull security for trucks clearing a route to a new district center in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Nov. 10.

A paratrooper from 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, watches as an aircraft flies overhead while dropping supplies in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Nov 9.



A shepherd herds his goats by the site of a new district center construction near his village in Charbaran, Afghanistan. Charbaran is an area in eastern Paktika Province, where, up until the new district center's construction, the Taliban have had free reign.



(Left) Two Afghan boys walk their bikes up a difficult hill before coasting down again on their way to their village in Charbaran, Afghanistan, Nov. 9. The town's District Center was burnt down by insurgent fighters, but is now being rebuilt by the coalition forces, which will provide more security for the people of the area.



(Above) A paratrooper from 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, scans the low ground while providing security for a convoy passing through the mountains of Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Nov. 10.

(Left) Army Sgt. Mike Fogleman, a mortar team squad leader from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne) 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, struggles to keep a parachute from blowing away after it was detached from the supplies it carried to the ground in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, Nov. 9, 2007.

# Tax time around the corner

By Capt. Eric Hanson,  
Judge Advocate  
TF Bayonet Legal Affairs

Once again, the end of the year is upon us, and tax time is just around the corner. Believe it or not, this is good news for Sky Soldiers currently deployed to Afghanistan and their families.

Some families would prefer to delay preparing their taxes as long as possible. Soldiers currently deployed in Afghanistan or another combat zone – and their spouses – can delay submitting their 2007 tax returns until 180 days after the Soldier returns from the combat zone. That means Soldiers whose deployment ends in August 2008 can wait until February 2009 to file their taxes for 2007. In other words, these families may be able to file their 2007 and 2008 taxes at the same time. How is that for convenience? If you are a family that expects to owe taxes at the end of 2007, this may be a good strategy for you.

Other families, usually those expecting a refund at tax time, are anxious to file their taxes as soon as possible. Due to the deployment schedule of the 173d ABCT, most Sky Soldier families will get a bigger tax refund than usual for both the 2007 and 2008 tax years. Families in this situation should consider filing their 2007 tax returns as soon as possible in order to get their refund as soon as possible. The same will also be true for many Sky Soldier families in 2008. Deployed Soldiers wishing to have a spouse or other trusted individual prepare and submit their tax returns should contact their nearest legal office to create a special power of attorney for tax filing.

Most deployed Soldiers and their families will have some taxable income in both 2007 and 2008, and will need to file federal and state tax returns. Since the amount of taxable income in each year will be less than usual, Soldiers may qualify for tax credits and other tax benefits they ordinarily do not qualify for. The situation of each Soldier and family is different, so this is something you want to ask your local tax center about.

Let's consider the fictional case of SGT Smith. SGT Smith has been in the Army for 7 years, is married, and has 3 children under the age of 18. Ms. Smith does not have a job, and spends most of her time caring for their three young children. SGT Smith deployed with the brigade and arrived in Afghanistan in May. Before deploying, SGT Smith had \$400 a month withheld from his pay by the IRS. According to the IRS ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)) and free tax estimator

programs (<http://www.taxbrain.com/taxcalculator/default.asp>), SGT Smith may be entitled to a relatively healthy return. According to these tax tools, SGT Smith should be entitled to a return of the \$1,200 withheld, an additional \$3,000 child tax credit, and a \$3,710 earned income tax credit, for a total estimated return of \$7,909 in 2007. 2008 may be much the same. For accurate income tax advice, see your local installation tax center for free assistance preparing and submitting your tax returns.

From a tax perspective, the expected 15-month deployment of the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team is timed perfectly to minimize the number of months in 2007 and 2008 that Soldiers must pay Federal taxes on their income. While a tax break is no substitute for spending time with loved ones, Soldiers and their families would be wise to take advantage of this opportunity to ease financial burdens.



**For more information, please  
visit the following websites:**

The Internal revenue Service

*<http://www.irs.gov>*

Tax Brain.com

*[http://www.taxbrain.com/taxcalculator/  
default.asp](http://www.taxbrain.com/taxcalculator/default.asp)*



# Cold-Weather Casualties and Injuries Chart

## In Cold Weather:

- Train soldiers on the proper use of cold weather clothing
- Remember the acronym **C-O-L-D** when wearing clothing in cold weather (**C**: Keep it **C**lean; **O**: avoid **O**verheating; **L**: wear clothing **L**oose and in layers; **D**: keep clothing **D**ry)
- Maintain adequate hydration and ensure nutritional requirements are met

### Chilblain

**Cause**

- Repeated exposure of exposed skin for prolonged periods from 20°- 60°F with high humidity (for those not acclimated to cold weather)

**Symptoms**

- Swollen, red skin (or darkening of the skin in dark-skinned soldiers)
- Tender, hot skin, usually accompanied by itching

**First Aid**

- Warm affected area with direct body heat
- Do not massage or rub affected areas
- Do not wet the area or rub it with snow or ice
- Do not expose affected area to open fire, stove, or any other intense heat source

**Prevention**

- Use contact gloves to handle all equipment; never use bare hands
- Use approved gloves to handle all fuel and POL\* products
- In extreme cold environments, do not remove clothing immediately after heavy exertion (PT); wait until you are in a warmer location
- Never wear cotton clothing in cold-weather environments

### Hypothermia

**Cause**

- Prolonged cold exposure and body-heat loss. May occur at temperatures above freezing, especially when a person's skin or clothing is wet

**Symptoms**

- Shivering may or may not be present
- Drowsiness, mental slowness, lack of coordination that could progress to unconsciousness, irregular heartbeat, and death

**First Aid**

- Get the soldier to a medical facility as soon as possible, because hypothermia is the most serious cold exposure medical emergency and can lead to death
- Never assume someone is dead until determined by a medical authority, even if a victim is cold and not breathing
- Remove wet clothing and wrap victim in blankets or a sleeping bag
- Place another person in sleeping bag as an additional heat source
- Minimize handling of the unconscious victim with a very low heartbeat so as to not induce a heart attack

**Prevention**

- Never wear cotton clothing in cold-weather environments
- Anticipate the need for warming areas for soldiers exposed to cold, wet conditions

### Frostbite

**Cause**

- Freezing of exposed skin, such as fingers, toes, ears, and other facial parts
- Exposure of skin to metal, extremely cool fuel and POL\*, wind chill, and tight clothing, particularly boots

**Symptoms**


- Numbness in affected area
- Tingling, blistered, swollen, or tender areas
- Pale, yellowish, waxy-looking skin (grayish in dark-skinned soldiers)
- Frozen tissue that feels wooden to the touch

**First Aid**

- Evacuate immediately, because frostbite can lead to amputation
- Start first-aid immediately. Warm affected area with direct body heat
- Do not thaw frozen areas if treatment will be delayed
- Do not massage or rub affected areas
- Do not wet the area or rub it with snow or ice
- Do not expose affected area to open fire, stove, or any other intense heat source

**Prevention**

- Use contact gloves to handle all equipment; never use bare hands
- Use approved gloves to handle all fuel and POL\* products
- Never wear cotton clothing in cold-weather environments
- Keep face and ears covered and dry
- Keep socks clean and dry
- Avoid tight socks and boots



### Immersion foot (trench foot)

**Cause**

- Prolonged exposure of feet to wet conditions at 32°- 60°F. Inactivity and damp socks and boots (or tightly laced boots that impair circulation) speed onset and severity

**Symptoms**


- Cold, numb feet may progress to hot w/shooting pains
- Swelling, redness, and bleeding

**First Aid**

- Get medical help immediately
- Rewarm feet by exposing them to warm air
- Do not allow victim to walk on injury
- Evacuate victim to a medical facility
- Do not massage, rub, moisten, or expose affected area to extreme heat

**Prevention**

- Keep feet clean and dry; change wet or damp socks as soon as possible
- Wipe the inside of Vapor Barrier boots dry at least once per day, or more often as feet sweat
- Dry leather boots by stuffing with paper towels



Additional Medical Considerations in the Cold Weather environment

### Dehydration

**Cause**

- Depletion of body fluids

**Symptoms**

- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Blurred vision

**First Aid**

- Replace lost water. Water should be sipped, not gulped
- Get medical treatment

**Prevention**

- Consume 3-6 quarts of water per day at a minimum

### Snow Blindness

**Cause**

- Burning of the cornea of the eye by exposure to intense UV rays of the sun in a snow-covered environment

**Symptoms**

- Pain, red, watery or gritty feeling in the eyes

**First Aid**

- Rest in total darkness; bandage eyes with gauze
- Evacuate if no improvement within 24 hours

**Prevention**

- Use sunglasses with side protection in a snow-covered environment
- Use improvised slit glasses if sunglasses are not available

### Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

**Cause**

- Replacement of oxygen with carbon monoxide in the blood stream from burning fuels without proper ventilation

**Symptoms**

- Headache, confusion, dizziness, excessive yawning
- Cherry red lips and mouth (in light-skinned individuals); grayish tint to lips and mouth (in dark-skinned individuals)
- Unconsciousness

**First Aid**

- Move to fresh air
- CPR if needed
- Administer oxygen if available
- Evacuate

**Prevention**

- Use only Army-approved heaters in sleeping areas and ensure that personnel are properly licensed to operate the heaters
- Never sleep in running vehicles
- Always post a fire guard when operating a heater in sleeping areas

\* POL - petroleum, oil, lubricants



# We will not forget those who have fallen

As of Dec. 1, 26 members of Task Force Bayonet and the 173rd ABCT have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom VIII. We will remember them always.



**Capt. Matthew Ferrara**  
Chosen Company,  
2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne)  
KIA November 9, 2007



**Sgt. Jeffrey Mersman**  
Chosen Company,  
2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne)  
KIA November 9, 2007



**Spc. Lester Roque**  
Chosen Company,  
2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne)  
KIA November 9, 2007

# We will not forget those who have fallen



**Spc. Sean Langevin**  
Chosen Company,  
2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne)  
KIA November 9, 2007



**Pfc. Joseph Lancour**  
Chosen Company,  
2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne)  
KIA November 9, 2007



**Capt. David Boris**  
Alpha Troop,  
1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne)  
KIA November 12, 2007



**Sgt. Adrian Hike**  
Alpha Troop,  
1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne)  
KIA November 12, 2007

# Medal of Honor Recipient SPC6 Lawrence Joel



**SPC6 Lawrence Joel (then SPC5), Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion , 503rd Infantry (Airborne), was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroic actions taken on Nov. 8 1965 in the Republic of Vietnam.**

SPC6 Lawrence Joel (then SPC5), Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion , 503rd Infantry (Airborne), was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroic actions taken on Nov. 8, 1965 in the Republic of Vietnam.

Joel was born Feb. 22, 1928 in Winston-Salem, N.C. he entered the service from New York City, N.Y.

His citation reads as follows: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. SPC6 Joel demonstrated indomitable courage, determination, and professional skill when a numerically superior and well-concealed Viet Cong element launched a vicious attack which wounded or killed nearly every man in the lead squad of the company.

After treating the men wounded by the initial burst of gunfire, he bravely moved forward to assist others who were wounded while proceeding to their objective. While moving from man to man, he was struck in the right leg by machine gun fire.

Although painfully wounded his desire to aid his fellow soldiers transcended all personal feeling. He bandaged his own wound and self-administered morphine to deaden the pain enabling him to continue his dangerous undertaking.

Through this period of time, he constantly shouted words of encouragement to all around him. Then, completely ignoring the warnings of others, and his pain, he continued his search for wounded, exposing himself to hostile fire, and, as bullets dug up the dirt

around him, he held plasma bottles high while kneeling, completely engrossed in his life saving mission.

Then, after being struck a second time and with a bullet lodged in his thigh, he dragged himself over the battlefield and succeeded in treating 13 more men before his medical supplies ran out.

Displaying resourcefulness, he saved the life of one man by placing a plastic bag over a severe chest wound to congeal the blood.

As one of the platoons pursued the Viet Cong, an insurgent force in concealed positions opened fire on the platoon and wounded many more soldiers.

With a new stock of medical supplies, SPC6 Joel again shouted words of encouragement as he crawled through an intense hail of gunfire to the wounded men.

After the 24-hour battle subsided and the Viet Cong dead numbered 410, snipers continued to harass the company. Throughout the long battle, SPC6 Joel never lost sight of his mission as a medical aid man and continued to comfort and treat the wounded until his own evacuation was ordered.

His meticulous attention to duty saved a large number of lives and his unselfish, daring example under most adverse conditions was an inspiration to all.

SPC6 Joel's profound concern for his fellow soldiers, at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.