



Tien Bien Times

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APRIL 1, 2008

Bulldawgs patrol villages to help keep the peace

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

NURISTAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – “We got a guy with an AK-47 400 meters from your position,” crackled over the patrol leader’s radio.

Chief Warrant Officer Byung Kim, a Marine from Alexander, Virginia shouted for everyone to “Get down.”

Kim was leading a group of 20 Afghan National Army Soldiers up a mountain to Combat Outpost Warheit in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan when the report came over his radio March 2. Kim and the Afghan National Army works with Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne) to help spread Islamic Republic of Afghanistan influence in a remote part of Afghanistan.

Before Kim’s patrol left Forward Operating Base Keating, the forward operating base was placed on high alert



Soldiers from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), patrol outside of Forward Operating Base Keating in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan March 1, 2008.

after a Taliban radio communication was intercepted.

Extra vehicles were set around the perimeter with 50 Cal. Machine Guns and Mark 19 Grenade Launchers locked and loaded.

Two days earlier near the same location a large scale fire fight broke out between a patrol from Bravo Troop and Taliban extremists.

Kim continued the mission after the radio report- a squad from Bravo Troop was in an over-watch position covering the patrols movement. The individual spotted with an AK-47 disappeared back into the mountain side.

Kim and the 20 ANA Soldiers walked three and a half hours up the mountain to check on ANA Soldiers living at COP

Warheit. The patrol reached COP Warheit safely by lunch and left shortly after.

"I just wanted to go up and see how my ANA Soldiers were doing," explained Kim.

Combat Outpost Warheit is nestled near the top of a mountain. The muddy-slushy trails leading in and out of Warheit are worn into the snow-covered hillside by patrolling Soldiers. When Kim and the rest of the patrol left FOB Keating the temperature was in the low 70's. By the time the patrol got near the top of the mountain the patrol was struggling through snow drifts three feet deep.

The surrounding mountains dominating COP Warheit's



landscape are covered in snow. Large tree covered valleys, rivers and towns dot the landscape below. The outpost is so remote supplies can only be delivered by helicopter. The other option of hand carrying supplies from the valley floor from FOB Keating isn't feasible.

Bravo Troop manages both FOB Keating and COP Warheit.

The Soldiers work side by side with their ANA counterparts.

"We fight together. We patrol together. We live together," said Sgt. 1st Class Mike Burns, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon.

Bravo Troop even shares showers with ANA Soldiers at FOB Keating because of the limited facilities in the remote area.

"The hardest part of

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(Above) An Afghan National Army machine gunner looks back after struggling over an obstacle in the snow during a patrol to Combat Outpost Warheit in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan March 2.

(Left) Chief Warrant Officer Byung Kim, a Marine embedded tactical trainer from Alexander, Virginia walks up the mountain with Afghan National Army Soldiers during a patrol to Combat Outpost Warheit in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan March 2.





Commander's Corner

To the Soldiers of Task Force Bayonet and their friends and families.

We're coming upon the one year mark for this deployment, and the rumor mills are buzzing with talk of early redeployment and possible redeployment dates.

I would like to make sure all understand the following so there are no false expectations; first we are still on a 15 month deployment. The Army has announced recently the return to standard 12 month deployments, but this does not apply to those already serving 15 month tours. Secondly, there are a lot of variables involved with planning redeployment.

The biggest variable is the scheduling of airflow known as the TPPFD, which is the system that locks in our airplanes for redeployment. This schedule will not be done until June and is merged with the airplanes from the deploying unit coming in to replace us as we go out on their airplanes. This will not be done for a couple of more months and I assure you no one knows the true timelines yet. So any rumors you hear are just that - RUMOR!!!

As of the writing of this newsletter, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team is still scheduled for a fifteen month tour. I realize that a fifteen month deployment is difficult not only on us, but also on our loved ones.

I ask everyone to stay focused on that fact and the mission at hand. It's essential to the success of our mission here and the sustainment of all that we've accomplished thus far that we keep our heads and hearts in the pre-

sent and not be distracted by hearsay and rumors. As hard as it is, we must still be patient awhile longer. Summer is just around the corner, and we all look forward to getting back.

During these last months in country, we are all looking forward to that fifteenth month, and there is nothing wrong with that. We have all sacrificed a great deal and have much to show for it.

The Brigade has such tremendous momentum right now and we are making really important progress in our AO. We've built up an infrastructure that has increased commerce, security, education, medical aid, agriculture, and emergency relief over our entire area of operations.

We've formed relationships with leaders, citizens, and children that have positively affected their lives and those of their families.

We've shown the citizens of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan, Laghman, and 1-503 in Eastern Paktika, Provinces a way to a better future -- sustainable by their own people.

We've played the roles of protectors, educators, nation-builders, warriors, and ambassadors with utmost professionalism. We did all of this as a team, making progress everyday. None of this could be accomplished without the efforts of everyone in Task Force Bayonet, or the support of our families and friends on the home front.

Now, in these last months, we must continue to carry that success until it's time to go home. As soon as we have official word for a timeline or window for redeployment, I will be more than happy to share that information with all of you.

The Rear Detachments will get



From the desk of
Col. Charles A. Preysler
TF Bayonet Commander

the word out when we have the flow locked in. Until then, keep up the great work. Thank you all, once again, for your outstanding efforts on both the front lines and the home front.

I'm extremely proud of the work we've done here and I believe it will last long after we've departed.

Sky Soldiers,
COL Preysler
Bayonet 6



Tien Bing Times

Commander COL Charles Preysler

Command Sgt Maj. CSM Isaia Vimoto

Public Affairs Officer MAJ Nicholas Sternberg

Editor SSG Brandon Aird

Writers SFC Jacob Caldwell, SSG Brandon Aird, SGT Nathan Bowen, SGT Henry Selzer, SPC Gregory Argentiari

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This newsletter is a command information product that places emphasis on missions, events and activities occurring throughout the 173rd 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 Bing Times distribution list, please email: Jacob.caldwell@us.army.mil.

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

Contact your Voting Assistance Officer today



The upcoming election year is upon us. During the year of 2008 we will decide who will be given the honor of heading our nation for the next four years and the command wants to ensure you have the opportunity to let your voice be heard in the upcoming federal, state, and local elections. Although U.S. citizens are not required to vote, citizens will be afforded the opportunity to participate in all federal, state, and local elections with the help of unit voting assistance officers (VAO). These VAOs are specifically designated by the command to assist you in requesting your absentee ballot by helping you fill out the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), sending in your FPCA to your local election official in order to receive your Absentee Ballot and cast your vote per guidelines set forth by your state or territory. For more information please contact your unit Voting Assistance Officer.

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**Nuristan PRT
CPO Kyra Maillard**

**Kunar PRT
CPT David Feldner**

**Mehtar Lam PRT
MSgt Bernadette Gregory**

Sky Soldiers celebrate anniversary of Iraq combat jump



Army Col. Charles Preysler, Commander of 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, leads the brigade March 26, 2008 during a run commemorating the five year anniversary of the brigade's combat jump into Northern Iraq March 26, 2003. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Brandon Aird, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)

The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team parachuted onto Bashur Drop Zone in Northern Iraq March 26, 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom I.

Roughly 1,000 paratroopers landed on the muddy drop zone to secure the airstrip, which allowed for the rest of the brigade to land safely in the following days.

The 173rd ABCT opened up the Northern Front, which

relieved pressure off other ground forces coming from the south.

Five years later Soldiers from the 173rd ABCT celebrated the combat jump by conducting a motivational brigade run around Forward Operating Base Fenty in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

After the run Soldiers participated in boxing, volleyball, basketball, dominos and card game tournaments. The anniversary gave Soldiers time

to reflect on past accomplishments.

"That operation was the first-ever C-17 combat insertion conducted and is now a part of our unit's and our Nation's history," said Maj. Nicholas Sternberg, Public Affairs Officer for 173rd ABCT. Sternberg is one of a handful of Soldiers left in the brigade whom made the jump.

Since OIF I Sky Soldiers have deployed for Operation Enduring Freedom VI and VIII.

FOB Goshta in the making

By Spc. Gregory J. Argentieri, 173rd ABCT Affairs

NANGAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan –

Cavalry Soldiers from Charlie Troop “Crazy Horse”, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne) moved to the newly built Forward Operating Base Goshta Feb. 28. Soldiers from the 76th Horizontal Engineer Battalion have been working around the clock building the remote forward operating base since early January. Structurally more than \$750,000 has already been invested in it, not to mention the millions of dollars of military equipment already on the ground.

The forward operating base is located near the Pakistan- Afghanistan border in Nangahar Province. Goshta District is a known smuggling route between Af-



ghanistan and Pakistan, and the majority of local citizens have seen little if any Coalition Forces.

“Alpha Company, 173rd Special Troop Battalion, prepared the earth for construction...” explained Capt. Nicholas R. Talbot, 28, from Washington, D.C., Commander of Crazy Horse. “Eventually there’s going to be a company of Afghan National Army, and 50 Afghan Security Guards who are going to help us guard all of the walls of the FOB.”

Engineers are working from sun up to sun down trying to improve the forward operating base. In 30 days engineers will have all of the work and living areas graveled, and also the helicopter landing zone.

“Our 60 day goal is to have more of the road surfaces graveled which is going to help us particularly in the bad, rainy season that is coming,” said 1st Sgt. Charles Joseph Owens Jr., 42, from Cincinnati, Ohio, assigned to Crazy Horse. “A 90 day goal is for a running track. We have a big long flat area here, and we want to make an area around the exterior wall on the inside in order to put a running track so people have a descent place to run and won’t twist an ankle or foot.”

Crazy Horse shares their new home with a team of Paratroopers from the 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne



Field Artillery. The artillery Soldiers provide the forward operating base and nearby patrols indirect fire support from their M198 Howitzer guns.

“The big challenge was the timeline for the troop to come out here, and to get all of this up before they got here, so that they had some place to come in and live,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brian J. Barber, 42, from Hillman, Mich., Platoon Sergeant 2nd Platoon, Crazy Horse. “The guys really busted their butts, that on top of security, I will put it this way, we were up a lot.”

The longest hours for Crazy Horse came just



Maj. Scott Sonsalla, Executive Officer for the 173rd Special Troops Battalion (Airborne), greets a Senior Captain in the Afghan National Border Patrol near FOB Goshta in Nangahar Province, Afghanistan March 4.



Paratroopers from the 4th Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment (Airborne), fire one of their M198 Howitzer's guns at their new home, Forward Operating Base Goshta, in the Nangahar Province, Afghanistan March 4.

before the troop moved to FOB Goshta.

“We had an elevated threat, threats of suicide bombers in the neighboring district, so we reacted to it,” said Barber.

Once the perimeter around FOB Goshta was completed Soldiers started working on improving their work and living conditions.

“As first sergeant, morale is my biggest concern,” explained Owens. Right now we just got here, so we don't have a DFAC (chow hall).”

Owens is working with the engineers, and soon Soldiers at FOB Goshta will be eating in a new chow hall.

Owens is also working with the Afghan National Army, whom Owens and the rest of Crazy Horse will be sharing FOB Goshta with.

Charlie Troop is working on a daily basis with Afghan Border Patrol, Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army on and off FOB Goshta, explained Owens.

The Soldiers and policemen patrol together, play sports together and are helping keep a remote part of Afghanistan safe together.

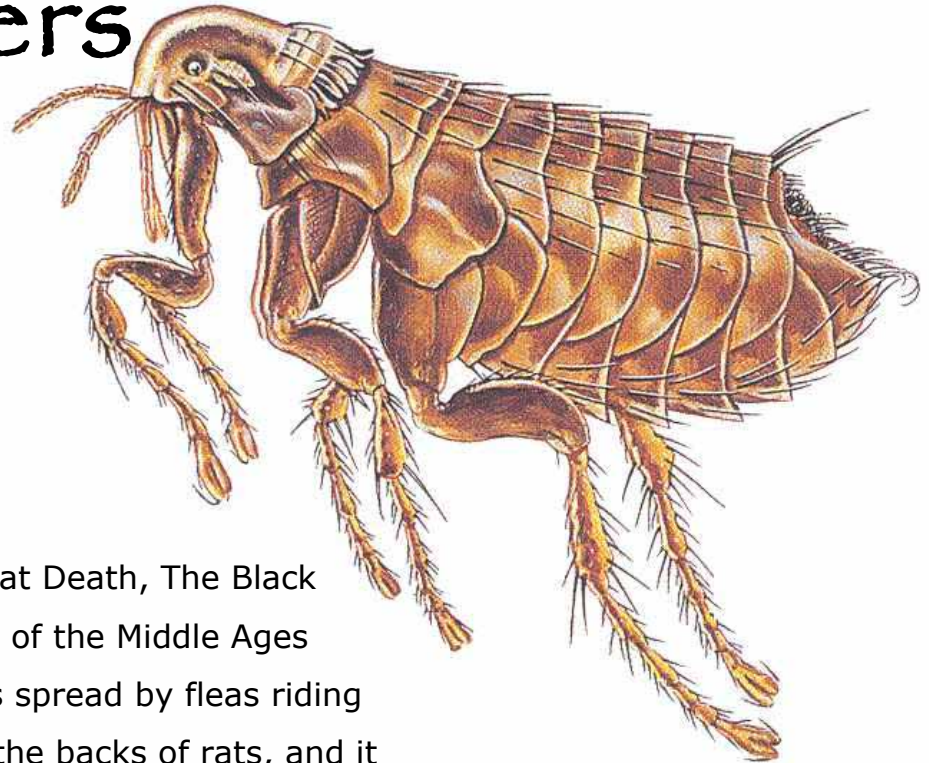
Silent killers

By 1st Lt. Justin D. Sprague, 173rd ABCT
Preventive Medicine Officer

Imagine for a minute that you were an English Knight living in the 1460's. Instead of fighting the Saracens, you were more likely fleeing, but not from the enemy's sword.

Your enemy, and that of all Europe during that time, was the flea. This tiny bug carried larger-than-life consequences.

The Plague, the



Great Death, The Black Veil of the Middle Ages was spread by fleas riding on the backs of rats, and it killed as much as a third of the European population. Nobility, Knights, and Peasants alike fell before

this awful disease, writhing in pain from the black boils, or buboes, appearing on their groin and under the armpits.

Despite popular belief, the plague is still around today.

The incubation period is 2-6 days with symptoms of fever, chills, and notable tenderness in the lymph node regions.

Fortunately medical advancements allow our doctors to treat the illness with antibiotics, and



the plague usually responds quickly when treated in this state.

If allowed to progress, the fever continues, heartbeat may become erratic, and occasionally causes delirium and convulsions.

Fleas, ticks, and lice are considered ectoparasites, which are known to carry disease to their human hosts.

The biodiversity of Afghanistan is largely unstudied, but several investigations have resulted from disease incidence associated with a particular vector.

DNA analysis showed that the fleas carried *Bartonella Quintana*, *B. elizabethae*, *B. koehlerae*, and *R. felis*, which are all recognized human pathogens.

But who cares about flea bites when you're at war? Historically, disease and non-battle injuries

take more Soldiers from the fight than direct and indirect fire *combined*.

Just because you are in Afghanistan does not mean that you can forget to clean your living area and keep pet rats—in fact quite the opposite.

Your body is already stressed by the harsh environment, and it is even more important to take care of yourself.

From Vegas to FOB-Keating, Soldiers in the 173rd ABCT have battled with fleas and other nuisance pests.

Keep in mind, when your area becomes infested with fleas, or another parasite, it is incredibly difficult to get rid of them.

But when all else fails, you can spray pesticides. Chemicals pose special hazards, so spraying should always be part of a larger pest management approach.

If you are having trouble with pests and need some specific guidance, please call the BDE Preventive Medicine Office at 831-6044

Tips on avoiding such infestations:

Keep your area clean.

Sweep, take out the trash, and wash your bedding.

Get rid of the pets. Dogs, cats, and monkeys are all favorite flea hosts, as well as carriers of rabies.

Use bug repellent. Treat your uniforms with permethrin and apply bug spray.



Mechanics battle snow, terrain and Taliban to keep vehicles working



Paratroopers from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), recover a vehicle out of a river during the summer near Forward Operating Base Keating in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan 2007. The road gave way during a patrol causing the vehicle to roll over. (photo provided by unit)

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

Mechanics from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), work numerous odd jobs besides their average nuts and bolts mechanic work in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

The mechanics work out of FOB Keating, which is located in a valley between a junction of two snow-melt fed rivers in the Hindu Kush Mountain Range.

The terrain makes driv-

ing and maintaining vehicles a daunting task. Vehicle roll overs, flash floods, road wash outs, rock & snow avalanches- are just some of the hazards Soldiers face.

During the winter months both Taliban extremist and Coalition forces are forced to stay near their homes & bases or face battling the elements.

"One of the things about the snow, when it fell," said Spc. Larry Gonzales, a 33-year-

old construction and vehicle repair mechanic from East Los Angeles, California, "It made things very difficult around here."

During the winter months over four feet of snow fell in the valley. Combat Outpost Warheit, which over looks FOB Keating, had over eight feet of snow. The snow made movement extremely difficult.

"Mobile wise, air wise, water wise- everything was freezing up," explained Gonza-



Spc. Nathan Bolt-Ray (right) and Spc. Larry Gonzales (left), both from California and Mechanics in Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), work on a radiator damaged by a rocket propelled grenade on Forward Operating Base Keating in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan Feb. 28. (photo by Staff Sgt. Brandon Aird)

les. "The fuel even started to gel."

When the snow receded Soldiers on FOB Keating were able to start on projects, which previously were hindered by the snow.

Feb. 22 Gonzales and Spc. Nathan Bolt-Ray, a mechanic in Bravo Troop, worked on a HUMVEE that was damaged during a previous fire fight.

"We're replacing the radiator in the HUMVEE," said Bolt-Ray, who's originally from California. "The radiator took shrapnel from a RPG (rocket propelled grenade) during a fire fight."

Bravo Troop, according to Bolt-Ray, has

only taken the Troop's HUMVEE's out a handful of times. Most of Bravo Troop's patrols are by foot.

"As you can see by the bullet holes in a lot of these vehicles trunks they've taken quite the beating," explained Bolt-Ray. "The roads... I guess you can call them that also take their turn beating on the vehicles."

The two mechanics worked throughout the day, and by night fall were able to fix the radiator. Without any more vehicles to fix the two mechanics went back to their odd jobs around the forward operating base.

A few days later the fork lift being driven by Gonzales broke down on the landing zone during an air resupply mission. The two mechanics from California grabbed their tools and went back to work.



Pvt. Useless becomes Sgt. Useful

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

Sgt. Gordon N. Eutsler III, a 42 year old from Arizona, joined the military for the first time in 1983, and decided to re-enlist 19 years later. When he first entered basic combat training at 17, he was the youngest in his class, but when he returned he was the oldest.

When Eutsler arrived at basic training the drill sergeant said, "What's your name Soldier," and when he answered Pvt. Eutsler, the drill sergeant shot back with "useless, private useless." Now many of his fellow Soldiers refer to him fondly as "Sgt. Useful".

Eutsler is a truck driver in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion. He arrived on FOB Goshta in early January.



Sgt. Gordon N. Eutsler III, 42, from Meyer, Ariz., a truck driver assigned to HHC, 173rd STB, and the temporary cook for Charlie Company, 1-91 Cavalry takes a break to help position the just arrived latrine trailer March 2 at the new Forward Operating Base Goshta in the Nangahar Province, in Eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan Boarder.

The forward operating base was in the initial stages of being built.

Eutsler volunteered to work as a cook, which isn't his normal job as a truck driver.

Eutsler's effort in the kitchen replaced the packaged meals Soldiers from 76th Horizontal Engineers and Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st

Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), were eating.

"I've known Sgt. Eutsler for a little bit over a year now, and he can do anything," said 1st Sgt. Joseph Owens Jr., First Sergeant of Charlie Troop, from Cincinnati, Ohio. "He's the type of person always on the move, always thinking of improving something to make everything better for everybody."

Owens often refers to Eutsler as a backyard mechanic who can fix just about anything.

"Sgt. Eutsler built a





make shift shower point," said Owens. "He was cooking on a little fire outside the tent for the first few weeks to make life a little better for 76th Engineers and Crazy Horse."

Eutsler was able to acquire a small 80 liter hot water tank, which he attached to a 10 man wooden shower point.

Eutsler ability to fix problems comes from his love of hotrods and high performance automobiles.

As a child Eutsler grew up poor, and for entertainment would find and tear apart broken TV sets, stereos, radios and wonder how and why they worked.

"My dad's friend owned a junk yard, and I would go to the junk yard and take different pieces, carburetors, manifolds, and soon was putting big V8s into cars that only had 4-cylinders, different stuff like

that to see if I could get it to run," said Eutsler.

His knowledge and first hand experience with cars has enabled him to improve

basic amenities on FOB Goshta.

"To me, what's more important is other peoples living conditions and happiness..." said Eutsler.

"If he hadn't have been here I think a lot of stuff would have fallen through," said Sgt. 1st Class Brian J. Barber, 42, from Hillman, Mich., a platoon sergeant in for Charlie Troop.

Eutsler feels the Army is the best opportunity for him to use all of his skills.

He says "Your as old as you feel and I feel like I'm in my twenties."



Sgt. Gordon N. Eutsler III, 42, from Meyer, Ariz., a truck driver assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion (Airborne), and the temporary so-called cook for Charlie Company, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), attends to his highly appreciated shower in a box creation to perform some preventive maintenance on a small leak caused by excessive use and broken gasket March 2 at the new Forward Operating Base Goshta in the Nangahar Province in Eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan Boarder.

Spartan Day for the 173rd STB

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

The 173rd Special Troops Battalion marked Feb. 29th as Spartan Day and took a moment to celebrate their 300th day in Eastern Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey O. Milhorn, Commander of 173rd STB, and his entourage commemorated Spartan Day by visiting his Sky Soldiers located throughout Nangarhar Province, praising their service, pinning Afghan Campaign Medals, and eating cake.

"It's a hell of a milestone," said Milhorn of Shalimar, Fla., to his paratroopers.

"We are two-thirds of the way in, you have accomplished so much, and you make us all proud every day with your high standards."

Spartan Day was established to give the Soldiers something to look forward to, and a chance to acknowledge their hard work.

"It's an opportunity to compliment all of the Soldiers battalion wide, and then focus their efforts on the days we have remaining so they can continue to watch each other and to protect the family as best as we can," said Milhorn. "It is amazing when you look back at where we began and where we are



Commander of 173rd Special Troops Battalion, Lt. Col. Jeffrey O. Milhorn salutes Pfc. Tiller on the 300th day, nicknamed Spartan Day after pinning the Afghanistan Campaign Medal on his chest.

today."

The 425 STB Soldiers have all played an instrumental role in keeping the wheels rolling, from cooks to mechanics, from ad-

ministration to logistics, from communications to intelligence, STB does it all. Headquarters and Headquarter Company's part in STB has traditionally

been one of support, but in the Nangarhar Province they have actual battle space to patrol and protect in addition to their many responsibilities.

The Military Police Platoon of HHC has the huge privilege of partnering, training, and mentoring the Afghan National Police. Their latest success story is the recently implemented, 100 emergency call center for Nangarhar Province.

The Jalalabad Provincial Coordination Center 100 emergency call center is modeled after the U.S. 911 system, and is the first of its kind throughout Afghanistan.

The Engineer Company has been very busy with a myriad of building projects as well as forming personal relationships with the people, local government officials, sub-governors, tribal leaders, and village elders. The

Sappers construction projects include building FOBs, roads, schools, bridges, health clinics and digging wells, which would all be impossible without the help and cooperation of the locals.

To get this party started right, the Spartan convoy carrying Col. Milhorn, rolled out of the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team compound first thing in the morning.

“We got on the “Nangarhar 500” route of running between FOBs by ground to visit with all the Soldiers from the battalion,” said Milhorn. “We started out by going out to the Khogyani Fire Base; Khogyani is the home to the Alpha Company, the Engineer Company. Then we headed south to fire base Lone

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Commander of 173rd Special Troops Battalion, Lt. Col. Jeffrey O. Milhorn displays a Spartan 300th Day plaque presented to him by his Sky Soldiers February 29th at the Nangarhar Province PRT while Capt. Jeremy Riegel, Company Commander for HHC 173rd looks on.



Sky Soldiers from the 173rd Special Troops Battalion, Headquarters and Headquarters Company sound off in formation for the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Jeffrey O. Milhorn, celebrating Spartan Day February 29th at the Nangarhar

Star, it's a platoon size fire base, and the southern most fire base in Nangarhar Province on the hills of the Tora Bora Mountains. Then we went back to Fenty Airfield where the Military Intelligence Company and Signal Company are located. We awarded them, and returned to the Nangarhar PRT, for the final ceremony where

we awarded and complimented all the Soldiers from HHC."

Capt. Jeremy Riegel, from Dwight, Ill., Company Commander for HHC, and a member of the colonel's Spartan entourage remarked, "Commanders always love reenlisting Soldiers, pinning medals on their chests, promoting Soldiers

etc."

Capt. Riegel went on to explain how a great number of his paratroopers were new to the Army, but at the same time had amassed a great wealth of experiences from their time being thus far deployed in Afghanistan.

"Absolutely the Soldiers are doing a great job over here they have really pulled

together and accomplished a lot of great missions, a lot of great feats since we've been here," said Riegel.

"Were on the down slope with 150 days left, we need to stay vigilant, stay safe, and continue to take care of business," said Riegel. "The ultimate goal is having Afghanistan be a self sufficient nation that can provide for its own citizens without the need for the U.S. military, NATO, and the U.N. to be here assisting them."

"In the end, a Spartan's true strength is the Warrior next to him, so respect and honor him, and it will be returned to you," from the movie, 300.

"Only the hard and strong may call themselves Spartans."

Chosen Company spreading their presence

Story and photos by Army Sgt Henry Selzer, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs

Just after sun up on the first day of March, soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment set out for a long day of patrolling the mountains around their base in search of the enemy, or any signs of enemy activity, in the area.

3rd squad set out from Forward Operating Base Bella and moved forward throughout the valley of Jamachgal-Khwar to begin their long day of traversing the steep mountains of the valley and completed their patrol late in the afternoon after what looks like a 3 kilometer trek on a map but in reality is much longer.

These patrols have a purpose. The Soldiers of 3rd Squad conduct these patrols to put boots on ground in the hard to reach areas of the valleys

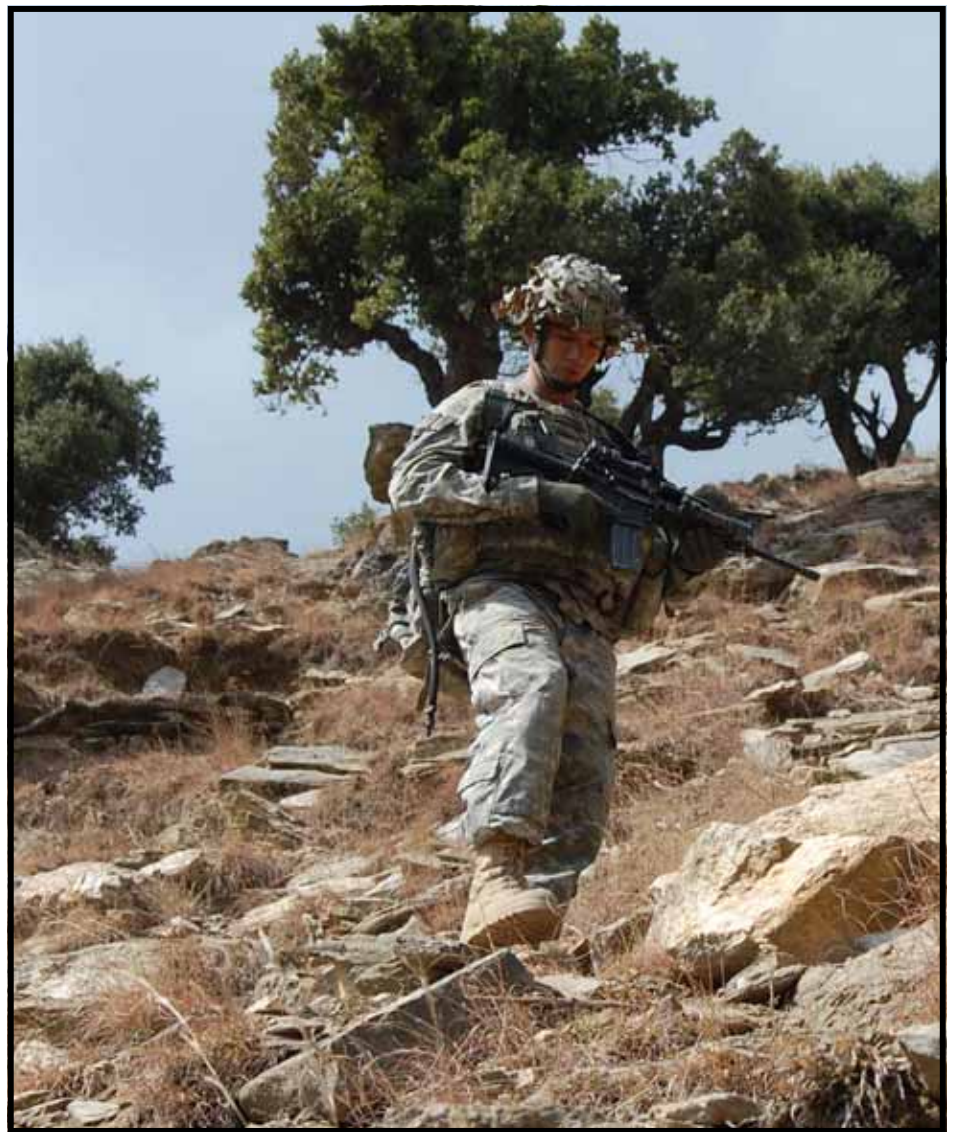
and show the Afghans that they are available for assistance.

“The purpose of these patrols is to keep the enemy off balance and provide FOB Bella with more security.” said Staff

Sgt John Oftinoski, 26, of Middleton, CT, a squad leader in 2nd platoon.

By conducting the patrols

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Spc. Francisco Rodriguez, 22, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, a rifleman with Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, takes his time as he makes his way down a mountainside March 1 during a patrol in the Jamachgal-Khwar Valley, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.



Staff Sgt. John Oftinoski, 26, of Middletown, CT (front) listens carefully to his radio March 1 as Soldiers of 2nd platoon, Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, pull security during a patrol in the Jamachgal-Khwar Valley, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

Continued from page 17

in the valleys surrounding their FOB, the Soldiers of 3rd Squad are providing the base with more separation from the enemy and strengthening relationships with Afghans in the area.

“We like to make our presence known and let the locals know that we are not going anywhere and we are here to help,” said Spc. James Schmidt, 26, of Decatur, IL, a gunner and radio-telephone operator for 3rd squad.

Although during the day’s patrol the soldiers of 3rd squad did not see much activity, it helped them become more familiar with the area they will be protecting throughout the summer.

“As the summer gets closer and enemy activity becomes more frequent, the length and amount of patrols we will be conducting will increase,” said Oftinoski.



Soldiers of 3rd squad, 2nd platoon, Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, navigate their way through steep and rocky terrain during a presence patrol conducted March 1 in the Jamachgal-Khwar Valley, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

1st Platoon maintains presence in Nangalam



Army Pvt. Kevin Coons, 22, of Wichita, KS, a Forward Observer with 1st Platoon, Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, scans a local shop owners finger prints using the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment System during a presence patrol Feb. 24 to the local village of Nangalam, Kunar Province, Afghanistan. (Story and photos by Army Sgt Henry Selzer, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, conduct frequent patrols to the local village of Nangalam to reassure local citizens that they are there to help.

The soldiers of 1st Platoon find themselves leaving the gates of Camp Blessing to head to the same village of Nangalam quite often.

For some this may seem like a tedious and redundant task, but the soldiers of 1st platoon

understand that it is necessary for them to complete these patrols in order to keep good relationships with the Afghans around their base.

“The reason that we conduct the Nangalam patrol so often is to become familiar with the locals and to make the locals of the village more comfortable with us,” said Staff Sgt, David Dzwick, 30, of Traverse City, MI, a squad leader with 1st Platoon.

In order to monitor traf-

fic in the village of Nangalam, and make sure that the enemy is not making the village their home, soldiers of 1st platoon enroll the local shop owners and villagers into the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment System to make sure that they are not wanted by the local police or government.

“The village of Nangalam is a very important area because it is the biggest bazaar in the area, so there is a lot of traffic in and out of the area, to many smaller villages,” said Army 1st Lt. Aaron A. Thurman, 30, of Seattle WA, 1st Platoon Leader.

The frequent patrols that the soldiers of 1st platoon conduct to Nangalam appear to be accomplishing their purpose.

The Afghans of the village recognize these soldiers and greet them warmly by welcoming them into their shops and cooperating in every way possible when asked to help.

173rd Special Troops Battalion brings Afghan and Pakistan forces together over border

Story and photos by Sgt. Nathan Bowen, 173rd ABCT Public

Communication and cooperation between Afghan and Pakistan border security forces is essential to the success of both sides.

To this end the 173rd Airborne's Special Troops Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Milhorn, recently held a Border Flag Meeting with leaders from the Afghan and Pakistan border security forces at Torkham Gate to address security and communication issues, as well as the upcoming opening of the Khyber Border Coordination Center.

Stopping insurgents from entering the country through Pakistan requires constant communication between the Afghan and Pakistan border forces, said Milhorn. He hopes to improve this by supplying the Afghan and Pakistan Border Police with radio equipment so they can speak directly with each other.

The recent improvements at Torkham Gate, such as installing an X-ray machine to scan incoming cargo trucks, and entering personnel who regularly cross the border into nationwide databases, are just



1Lt. Jose Ramos of Alpha Battery, 4/319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment (Airborne), oversees security along with Pakistan Border Police at the Border Flag Meeting on the Pakistan side of Torkham Gate Feb. 28th.

some of the processes put in place to more efficiently regulate border operations.

Col. Qaiser Alam, the charismatic commander of the Khyber Rifles, talked about the importance of all three organizations (the U.S. military, Afghan Border Police, Pakistan

Border Police) pooling their resources to combat the common enemy.

"A terrorist is a terrorist. He has no nationality, no religion, no color." Qaiser said.

The meeting moved to the roof of the border checkpoint on the Pakistan side

Special Troops Battalion's Executive Officer. "Our goal is to improve the country through prosperity and security. Closing the border to illegal traffic does both."

The Afghan side of the border is improving daily and operations are becoming more streamlined. While there are still many challenges to face, Milhorn and the representatives from the Pakistan and Afghan military are looking forward to the end of this month when the Khyber Border Coordination Center opens and all organizations involved in securing the Afghan/Pakistan border have a dedicated point to consistently exchange ideas and information. It's another large step in making both countries a safer place.



1Lt. Jose Ramos and soldiers from Alpha Battery, 4/319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment (Airborne), pull security during a Border Flag Meeting in Pakistan on Feb. 28th.

to take in a full view of the bustling Afghan border station across the bridge and plans were discussed about future changes. Part of these plans, Colonel Qaiser hoped, would include newer facilities on his side of the border, alleviating some of the burden from the Afghan side.

Right now there is no paperless communication between the two, and although only a few hundred feet apart, the checkpoints work virtually independent of each other.

"I will spend a lot of energy and a lot of miles on my vehicles trying to improve communication between checkpoints." Milhorn told Qaiser and Lt. Col. Saeed Qadir, Afghan Border Police Commander.

"Estimates by experts indicate that [Torkham Gate] has the potential to generate 350 million dollars in revenue each year—money that could be put back into government projects." said Maj. Scott Sonsalla,



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Milhorn, 173rd Special Troops Battalion Commander, and Col. Qaiser Alam, Khyber Rifles Commander, take a look at Torkham Gate from Pakistan's side of the border Feb. 28th.

Continued from page 2

of being up here is not being able to shower," explained Burns, who's last shower was 29 days ago. 1st Platoon has been operating out of COP Warheit. The outpost's only running water is the melting snow line.

"We have spartan living up here," said Burns. "I think my soldiers and myself like it a little bit better because it's away

from the flagpole. Not that we relax more but that we have a tendency to govern ourselves a little bit different."

A platoon from Bravo Troop rotates monthly to COP Warheit along with a platoon of ANA Soldiers. The Soldiers help provide over watch security for FOB Keating and patrols in the valley below.

"Probably the most im-

portant thing we also do is provide a link to the local population with coalition forces," explained Burns, from Indiana.

Bravo Company and the ANA are helping keep the peace between the villages of Nagar, Papristan, Jimjuz, Binuz, Upper and Lower Kamidesh.

The villages have been fighting amongst each other long before Coalition Forces entered the area.

"You see that village over there," pointed Burns. "The buildings were destroyed and the farms were mined by the other villages. The Kushto Tribe used to live in those homes. The only thing left standing is that mosque. They now live over behind the next ridge."

1st Platoon and ANA met with the local village elders to help promote local development and build working relationships amongst the villages and Coalition Forces. ANA Soldiers also hand out humanitarian aid supplies to help the local villagers during the winter season.

"The village elders tend to support us," explained Burns, "but their sons want to declare jihad against us. The village elders say 'You can't declare jihad because they (Coalition Forces) haven't broken any Islamic





A Paratrooper from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), pulls security during a patrol near Forward Operating Base Keating in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan March 1, 2008.

Laws.”

The fighting amongst the villages, and also foreign fighters who enter the area to attack Coalition Forces, has slowed down during the winter months.

“They’re fair weather warriors in a manner of speaking,” said Burns.

“They’re not going to go out in the bad weather. The snow limits their movement. So they’re going to hunker down for the winter for

the most part.”

The receding snow line around COP Warheit marks the approaching spring and the beginning of a new fighting season.

“They’ll (foreign fighters) regroup, resupply and when spring comes they’ll come back with fresh fighters,” explained Burns. “We’ll be ready for them.”

1st Platoon only had one day at COP Warheit left before

they were flown to FOB Keating.

Soldiers from Bravo Troop have endured one fighting season in Afghanistan this deployment, and have one more to go before they can head home.

“In the ten months we’ve been here we improved the outpost and our relationships with the locals, explained Burns. “The progress takes a lot of hard work, but we’re getting there.”

Medal of Honor Recipient SSG Charles B. Morris

**Staff Sgt.
Charles B. Morris,
Company A,
2nd Battalion, 503rd
Infantry Regiment
(Airborne)**

**Republic of Vietnam
June 29, 1966**



Seeing indications of the enemy's presence in the area, Morris deployed his squad and continued forward alone to make a reconnaissance.

He unknowingly crawled within 20 meters of an enemy machine gun, whereupon the gunner fired, wounding him in the chest. Morris instantly returned the fire and killed the gunner. Continuing to crawl within a few feet of the gun, he hurled a grenade and killed the remainder of the enemy crew.

Although in pain and bleeding profusely, Morris continued his reconnaissance. Returning to the platoon area, he reported the results of his reconnaissance to the platoon leader. As he spoke, the platoon came under heavy fire. Refusing medical attention for himself, he deployed his men in better firing positions confronting the entrenched enemy to his front.

Then for 8 hours the platoon engaged the numerically superior enemy force. Withdrawal was impossible without abandoning many wounded and dead. Finding the platoon medic dead, Morris administered first aid to himself and was returning to treat the wounded members of his squad with the medic's first aid kit when he was again wounded.

Knocked down and stunned, he regained consciousness and continued to treat the wounded, reposi-

tion his men, and inspire and encourage their efforts. Wounded again when an enemy grenade shattered his left hand, nonetheless he personally took up the fight and armed and threw several grenades which killed a number of enemy soldiers.

Seeing that an enemy machine gun had maneuvered behind his platoon and was delivering the fire upon his men, Morris and another man crawled toward the gun to knock it out. His comrade was killed and Morris sustained another wound, but, firing his rifle with 1 hand, he silenced the enemy machine gun.

Returning to the platoon, he courageously exposed himself to the devastating enemy fire to drag the wounded to a protected area, and with utter disregard for his personal safety and the pain he suffered, he continued to lead and direct the efforts of his men until relief arrived.

Upon termination of the battle, important documents were found among the enemy dead revealing a planned ambush of a Republic of Vietnam battalion. Use of this information prevented the ambush and saved many lives.

Morris' gallantry was instrumental in the successful defeat of the enemy, saved many lives, and was in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army.

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>1430Z / 1900L</i>
<i>Bible Study</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>1400Z / 1830L</i>

Point of contact CH (CPT) Hart at DSN 318-831-2330

Roman Catholic Services

<i>Mass</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>1230Z / 1700L</i>
<i>Weekday Mass</i>	<i>M-Th</i>	<i>0700Z / 1130L</i>
	<i>Sat</i>	<i>1230Z / 1700L</i>
<i>Confession / Reconciliation</i>	<i>Walk-In</i>	

Point of contact CH (CPT) Kanai at DSN 318-831-2329

Latter Day Saints

<i>Worship</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>0800Z / 1230L</i>
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The FOB Fenty Chapel remains open for personal prayer, worship, and meditation for all faith traditions.

For more information, contact Chapel Office at DSN 831-2330 or 831-2329.

"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