



Tien Bien Times

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 1, 2008

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Able battles elements & violence to bring hope



Paratroopers from 2nd Platoon, Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), endure snow and freezing cold temperatures during a patrol to Omar in Kunar Province Afghanistan Jan. 11.

Story and photo by Sgt. Brandon Aird
173rd ABCT Public Affairs

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - The sound of water dripping through the roof was a constant reminder of the weather outside of Forward Operating Base Able Main. A stray cat seeking shelter was making noise as it curled up in the loose roof insulation- enjoying the warmth of the rising heat.

Two paratroopers frantically ran around covered from the waist up in mud- unsuccessfully trying to divert a small pond of water that had built up above their building. Water was seeping through sand-bags and was running inside.

Three days of rain had turned the FOB into a field of puddles. Once the puddles were contained and their gear was safe, the paratroopers went back to work.

These paratroopers never stop patrolling the newly constructed Pech Road in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. Night and day through rain and snow they diligently patrol the \$7.5 million Pech Road to bring security to an area known for violence.

They make up Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), also known as "The Rock".

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Even though Able Company is an infantry company, the company commander stresses their main focus is helping and taking care of the villages in and around the Pech River Valley.

"We're responsible for over a hundred villages," explained Capt. Louis Frketic, Commander of Able Company.

Able Company works side-by-side with the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army to help bring security and development to the area.

"We've put a tremendous amount of effort into connecting with the people," explained Frketic.

One of the key ways Able Company is accomplishing that task is through humanitarian aid type missions and assisting the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team as they build infrastructure and construct government facilities in the province.

"We literally do one to five humanitarian aid missions a day between our platoons or facilitating the PRT (Kunar PRT)," said Frketic. "We've done at least 500 since we got here. It's astronomical. We've given out building supplies, food, Korans, prayer rugs, clothing- pretty much the entire spectrum of HA."

One of the biggest projects in the area has been the construction of the Pech Road, which over the last eight months has opened up the area to new opportunities. The Taliban extremists don't want the region to prosper under the new government. Since arriving in country in May, Able Company has been engaged in over 150 fire fights with Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and other insurgents.

Contact your Voting Assistance Officer today



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Commander's Corner

To the Soldiers of Task Force Bayonet and their friends and families, all of the people back home that support us,

February marks the beginning of the ninth month of our deployment here to Afghanistan. At this point in the deployment the days and the weeks and months tend to run together. But the holidays that we celebrate as Americans help break up the monotony of the many repetitive days of a long deployment.

This month we celebrate Valentine's Day. There is no better time to re-affirm our love for our families back home and your love for your Soldiers down-range. Make sure you don't miss this opportunity to send a note or a card to your loved one. Mail continues to be the number one morale booster for our Soldiers and I am sure that it is the same back home.

We continue to make our push to further the development of the infrastructure, education, and security in Eastern Afghanistan this month. We have made great progress on all of these fronts and we will continue to do so. While the insurgents hide in the mountains and fighting slows down, we are developing lasting relationships with the citizens in our area of operations- showing them that change for better is possible. This is the most important part of our mission, to let

the Afghans know that there is hope for a better life for the next generation. The people here are hungry for this and they have demonstrated over and over during our tour that they are willing to step up and do what is required to make the needed changes for their children to have a better life. We will continue to do whatever is necessary to aid them in this effort, denying the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other enemies of peace a sanctuary in this country.

In January, one paratrooper from Task Force Rock was lost in this very effort. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families and friends of this young man. While this and every loss in our brigade is more painful than words can express, I have no doubt in my mind that his sacrifice is not in vain. The success of our mission depends on Soldiers like him who are willing to risk everything so that our families back home can live a safe and peaceful life. Knowing the mettle of the paratroopers in this brigade, I have no doubt that we will be successful.

Lastly, I ask that you assist the 173rd ABCT command, the Rear Detachment and the Family Readiness Groups in keeping the rumor mill under control. Some of the rumors that make their way to me are humorous in their creativity, but most are potentially harmful. Harmful to the morale of the



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

Soldiers in harm's way and to the spouses back home dealing with the stress of keeping a split family healthy and stable. A deployment is hard enough when everything is going well. Let's not make it even more difficult by propagating rumors.

Thank you all once again for your outstanding support.

Sky Soldiers,
COL Preysler
Bayonet 6

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 173rd 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 173rd 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 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 Bien 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.

Chief undeterred after IED attack

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Hendrix,
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan— Chief Warrant Officer Sammy Rodriguez from Arecibo, Puerto Rico, is the battalion maintenance technician for 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment. It's a job which isn't exciting until things go wrong.

On a routine mission Jan. 23 to deliver supplies to the Korengal Outpost in Kunar Province, one of the vehicles in the convoy was struck by an improvised explosive device. Luckily, none of the vehicles' occupants was injured. The vehicle itself wasn't so fortunate. The explosion ripped through the engine compartment, bent the chassis frame and blew out a tire. Rodriguez knew immediately what he had to get done in order to recover the vehicle and get the convoy moving again.



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Sammy Rodriguez, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment makes quick work Jan. 23 of preparing a damaged vehicle for recovery to a forward operating base in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan.

"I took a look at it and it took about a minute, and I told the commander, we can do this," he said.

"One of the first things I thought when I saw this vehicle was, 'We have to retrieve it.' I remembered the commander telling me about a time he saw local villagers dancing on a burned out chassis and how angry it made him."

Damaged vehicles left behind can be used in enemy propaganda to proclaim a victory over U.S. forces. Every effort is made to make sure the enemy does not have this opportunity.

However, preparing a vehicle to be moved under extreme conditions isn't a simple task.

"A standard wrecker can't make it up the road, so I usually send a mechanic on the patrol," said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez had to work as quickly as possible while the rest of the convoy's Soldiers secured the site. "I had to cut off the remainder of the blown-out tire with my knife to free up some room. We had to pry the chassis

outward from the cab because it was bent up, but it was enough to fit a tire on it."

Rodriguez didn't have to work alone. Three of the Afghan drivers who regularly run these patrols with the company immediately offered their assistance. They came running up with hydraulic jacks and pry bars, and set to work. The chief added, "We did greatly appreciate what they did, it was amazing."

Once the crew had the spare tire on the vehicle, it was able to roll, and be towed the remaining short distance up the road to the base. At the top, Rodriguez talked about the humvee. "I didn't think the tires were going to hold out, but it's an amazing piece of machinery. The armor definitely saved the lives of the occupants."

Capt. John Thyng, Commander of Fusion Company, 2-503rd said, "Chief Rodriguez knows his stuff. When I talked before about the need to make sure we recover absolutely everything to prevent the bad guys from getting hold of it, he really took that to heart."

Chief Rodriguez's skills came into play at just the right time on this day, not only saving a vehicle, but making quick work of a challenging task.

Despite the inherent dangers of the job, the Soldiers of Fusion Company will not be dissuaded from their job.

"Next week will be our next patrol and we'll make it up and back down," said Rodriguez.

Workshop trains Afghans on construction skills



At a skilled labor workshop in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, an Afghan student hammers the roof of a tool shed. The tool shed is one of two hands-on projects conducted at the workshop instructed by Task Force Rugged Soldiers, 36th Engineer Brigade and the 864th Engineer Battalion. The skill labor workshop is funded by the Commander's Emergency Response Program to develop construction skills among Afghan residents.

*Story and photo by Army Capt. Ashley Dellavalle
TF Rugged Public Affairs Office*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Engineers of Task Force Rugged concluded the first of three Winter Skilled Labor Workshops to train local Afghans on construction skills Jan. 13.

Soldiers with the 76th Engineer Company, Task Force Pacemaker, stationed at Fort Knox, Ky., instructed 50 Afghans on masonry and carpentry skills here.

"We wanted to provide the training during a time of traditionally low economic activity," said Army 1st Lt. Alberto Locsin, the TF Pacemaker Civil Military Operations officer from Tacoma, Wash.

In a close partnership between the engineers and local governments, the provincial labor directors nominated unemployed

citizens to attend the course. Other students were nominated by Afghan contractors to improve the skill level and capability of their employees.

Saidghafoor Shah, a 32-year-old from Dari Noor, Jalalabad, participated in the workshop. As a carpenter for 10 years, Shah not only wanted to learn additional carpentry and masonry skills but said, "I want to... share ideas."

"I have learned a lot of things that I can use on the outside; it will help me get a job," Shah added. "The techniques I've learned will make me more efficient. I have learned great methods on construction."

All of the students in the course receive free room, board, transportation to and from the worksite, and the tools necessary to

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Task Force Saber partners with Naray schools



For the past 30 years, Afghan education has collapsed under the weight of warfare, most people are illiterate. These Afghan children are receiving tooth brushes and tooth paste, and many have never seen or used them before. (Photo provided by TF Saber)

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

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – With a mind to the future of the country to which they are deployed, Soldiers from Task Force Saber began a school partnership program in May 2007 between American schools and Afghan schools in Eastern Kunar and Nuristan provinces – a program that is still going strong today.

The partnership links children and schools in Afghanistan with children and schools primarily in the U.S., Italy and Germany. The program provides the Afghan children with educational supplies, pens, pencils, paper, chalk, notebooks, and also with pen pal letters. In return, the Afghan children write letters about themselves, include drawings, and thank you notes.

The 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment in Eastern Afghanistan is acting as a liaison for the school partnership, receiving and distributing the supplies. The paratroopers are also providing updates to the partnership schools on the progress of the Afghan children with pictures and write-ups.

“Being in the U.S., it is hard to visualize the lack of resources they have here,” said Capt. Jay S. VanDembos, 30, from Tahlequah, Okla., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-91 Cav., “Ninety percent of the schools are open-air schools, which are sometimes a tarp and a dirt floor. They’ll have a rock that they use as a chalk board, and kids sit underneath the tarp and learn.”

“Most of the kids want to learn. They yearn for

Continued from previous page

knowledge," said VanDenbos. "Anytime anyone goes on patrols, the kids are screaming giving me pen, give me pen. They don't have anything they can use to learn."

"The partnership program is important because the Afghans don't have money," said Staff Sgt. Larry D. Gormley, 39, from Livermore, Calif., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-91 Cav., "An American school sending them paper, pens, and pencils is helping to educate the Afghan people, and educated people are not the kind of people that strap a bomb to themselves and go and try to blow somebody up."

The benefit of the partnership between the schools goes both ways.

"For the American kids, it gives them a little bit of cultural awareness of the rest of the world," said Gormley. "I think the mission is great, kids are getting school supplies, and it's improving their level of education."

The Afghan teachers of the schools, who have seen their facilities destroyed over the years, are firmly behind the program and appreciate the benefits of it.

"Coalition Forces are always giving school supplies to the students, and I support the Coalition Forces for helping the children," said Pacha Gul Aulfat, 36, an Afghan school teacher. "It makes me really angry that

we do not have school buildings, but Coalition Forces are building schools for us."

"Most of the past generations are uneducated, but my plan for the future is to teach. I will provide the students of the next generation with an education," said Aulfat. "Now is a time for education, and all of our attention must be given to education."

Ultimately, all of the effort put into the program is for the children, like 10-year-old Ibrahim, who lives nearby and is spending his winter break learning English from a cook at FOB Naray.

Ibrahim says he likes school, and has very good teachers. He has been attending school for only a year, but proudly says that he passed his year-end exams, and will advance to the next level when school resumes.

"Whenever I get an education in the future, I would like to become a doctor or engineer," said Ibrahim. "Whenever I grow-up, and I become older and older, I would like to serve my country. I love my people, and this is my mission, to complete my education and serve the people of my own country."

--*Writer's note: If you would like to participate in the school to school partnership program please contact the following address: Naray School Partnership, HHT 1-91 Cav, 173rd ABCT, TF Saber, FOB Naray, APO, AE 09354.*



Afghan girls sit under a tarp at one of the larger elementary schools in the village of Naray. These students received new book bags and pencils as part of Task Force Saber's school partnership program. (Photo provided by TF Saber)

ANA mechanics learn tricks of the trade



Staff Sgt. Jabar C. Steward, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic with Company B, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion explains Afghan National Army soldiers the difference between three classes of leaks on a vehicle, with the help of some Gatorade. Steward and his Soldiers trained the ANA on how to conduct Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services on an M1025 HMMWV at Forward Operating Base Hughie, Afghanistan Dec. 29.

*Story and photos by Army 2nd Lt. Monika Comeaux
173rd Brigade Support Battalion*

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Soldiers from Company B, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion paid a special visit Dec. 29 to Forward Operating Base Hughie.

The US Army mechanics trained twenty some soldiers from the Afghan National Army's 5th Kandak, 3rd Brigade on how to properly conduct preventive maintenance checks and services on the M1025 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle.

Although right now the brigade only has a few of

these Humvees, they are scheduled to receive more in the near future.

The training followed the same steps any US Army training would: "You go from the crawl to the walk to the run phase," said Sgt. 1st Class George V. Castillo, a vehicle maintenance supervisor originally from the 95th Training Division, from Albuquerque, New Mexico. "You sort of hold them by their hand and show them everything...A lot of these guys can do a lot more things than we can, they just don't think the

same way we do," he added.

Besides the proper PMCS steps, the ANA soldiers also learned small tricks of the trade of the US mechanics. "We gave them some quick trouble shooting guides on things like, if the vehicle overheats, we let them know that they can unplug the time delay and they will be able to continue the mission," said Staff Sgt. Jabar C. Steward, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic with Co. B., 173rd BSB.

While some of the ANA troops only wanted to know why does the horn not work if

Continued from previous page

the HMMWV's lights are not on, the more technically inclined were ready to pull out the engine and disassemble it.

The turnout for the training was excellent. Castillo only anticipated to see maybe 10 ANA troops, and was pleasantly surprised when he saw the small crowd anxiously awaiting the arrival of the US Soldiers.

One of the eager participants, ANA Sgt. Azbullah had a great time. Since he speaks fairly good English, he was able to ask his own questions and took detailed notes of the PMCS procedures. "The HMMWV is a very good vehicle," he said.

Lt. Col. Shamsuddine, the commander for the Com-

bat Service Support Battalion, 3rd Quick Reaction Forces Brigade, 201st Corps of the ANA welcomed the training his troops received. As soon as his brigade received the trucks, he requested some assistance with training the operators and mechanics. "I like the cooperation between the US Army and the ANA," said Shamsuddine through a translator. "As you know, there has been a war in Afghanistan for the last 30 years. We lost everything we had. Now we can have a stabilized government. With the assistance of the US, we can continue to improve," he added.

"I enjoy working with other cultures," said Steward. He jumped on the opportunity

to train the ANA and brought two of his best mechanics with him. As for what would have made the training and his job easier... "It would make the job real easy if I could speak Pashto, but that is not going to happen," said Steward with a smile.

Both parties are looking forward to future training events. There are plans on translating the more important parts of the technical manuals and setting up more detailed maintenance training.

"It is very important for the ANA soldiers to learn how to use these vehicles, because we will one day independently provide security for our whole country," said Azbullah in conclusion.



Spc. Jason P. Holstein, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic with Company B, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion teaches the steps of Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services on an M1025 HMMWV to Afghan National Army soldiers. The training took place at Forward Operating Base Hughie, Afghanistan, Dec. 29.

Matin bridge will connect village to Pech Road

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

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - The village of Matin is nestled on a rocky mountain at the base of Hindu Kush Mountain Range in Eastern Afghanistan. The village and crop fields are shaped by hand-meticulously cut out of the mountain side.

But the people living there are hampered from interacting with surrounding villages because the road leading to Matin washed away in a flash flood nearly six months ago. Villagers must use a cable and a hand crank to cross the 30-foot-wide Pech River on the valley floor. The Pech River Road, a newly constructed paved road, is on the opposite side of the river.

"The people of Matin are isolated," said Lt. Commander Alan G. Moore, Chief Engineer for the Kunar Provin-



Kunar Province Governor Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi cuts the ribbon during the Matin Bridge ground breaking ceremony Jan. 6 in Kunar Province Afghanistan. The new bridge will link the isolated village to the Pech River Road.

cial Reconstruction Team.

Kunar Province Governor Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi is working with Kunar PRT to help link Matin with the rest of Kunar Province.

The Unique Builders Construction Company (UBCC) is building a jingle-truck-capable bridge linking Matin with the Pech River Road, said Moore. The construction is part of the Pech River Road Project—a \$7.5 million project funded through the Kunar PRT.

Wahidi along with members of the Kunar PRT, Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police participated in the bridge ground breaking ceremony Jan. 6.

During the ceremony Wahidi asked the village elders of Matin to support the ANA and ANP.

"You village elders have to think about the future of Afghanistan," said Wahidi dur-

ing his speech. "Better security will bring more construction."

"Make them [ANA & ANP] your brother so we can be rid of the enemy," said Wahidi. "We can't continue to fight. We've been fighting for 30 years. I can't do this alone—I need your help."

After Wahidi's speech, the governor used a shovel to break the ground for the new bridge.

"The bridge should be done by the end of February," explained Moore.

When the new bridge is completed it will open up Matin for new projects to improve health care, schools and government facilities.

Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), continues to patrol the area side-by-side with ANA and ANP to bring security to the Pech River Road and surrounding areas.

Able Company ‘Snap’ TCPs disrupt illegal activities



Staff Sgt. Dawayne Krepel, a squad leader in 2nd Platoon, Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), searches a motorist on the Pech River Road in Kunar Province Afghanistan Jan. 11. Krepel led a group of Soldiers trying to thwart the movement of weapons and ammunition by Taliban extremists into the Korengal Valley.

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

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Paratroopers in 2nd Platoon, Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) conduct tactical check points on a near-daily basis on the only road leading into the Korengal Valley.

The Pech River Road is one of two paved roads in all of Kunar Province, Afghanistan. The road allows easy travel in an area dominated by mountains from the Hindu Kush Mountain Range.

2nd Platoon works side-by-side with Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army to keep the road safe for local Afghans, thwart the smuggling of illegal goods and prevent movement of Taliban extremists.

“We’re basically here to be a deterrent against those activities,” said Spc. Trevor Petsch, a 25-year old Paratrooper from Nebraska.

The platoon is strategically located at Forward Operating Base Michigan. The base is at the mouth of the Korengal Valley.

On Jan. 11 paratroopers from the platoon conducted a two hour ‘snap’ TCP to look for weapons and ammunition that intelligence reports indicated would be coming into the Korengal Valley on the Pech River Road.

The spot chosen this day served two purposes: to try to intercept contraband and also to make a statement.

“We set up the TCP in an ambush spot to show the Taliban we can’t be bullied,” said Staff. Sgt. Dawayne Krepel, a squad leader in 2nd Platoon from New York.

The TCPs involve searching through trucks, cars and motorcycles for ammunition, weapons and materials that can be used to make weapons. The results of the TCPs vary from day to day.

“Sometimes we find stuff and sometimes we don’t,” explained Petsch. “One time we got a call about some guys about to place an IED on the road. So we set up a TCP and pulled over a car with four guys in it—all four were from different areas. They had a video camera and \$80,000 cash on them.”

While this snap TCP didn’t produce any weapons or ammunition, the Soldiers did gather valuable intelligence they will be able to use in future missions.



Staff Sgt. Dawayne Krepel (right), a squad leader from New York, and Spc. Trevor Petsch (left), a 25-year old Paratrooper from Nebraska, both from 2nd Platoon, Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), search a vehicle with the help of Afghan National Police on the Pech River Road in Kunar Province Afghanistan Jan. 11.

FOB Naray Aid Station making a difference along the border



U.S. Army Maj. Warren Cusick, 41, from Mesa, Ariz., a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, and the officer-in-charge of the 160th FST, takes a moment to play with an infant brought in for treatment Jan. 3 at the FOB Naray Aid Station in Northeastern Afghanistan.

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

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan— Surrounded by snow covered mountains, the medical personnel of Task Force Saber work side-by-side to provide a first-class, life saving aid station on Forward Operating Base Naray, in northeastern Afghanistan along the Pakistan border.

The FOB Naray Aid Station team is comprised of medical personnel from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and the 160th Forward Surgical Team. Their first responsibility is to the U.S. Soldiers, whether it is routine shots, taking care of them when they're sick, caring for them when they are injured, or their top priority, treating Soldiers wounded in action.

"The Soldiers know that we are here for them, and that has given me a lot of good feelings about being out here. It's a huge privilege to be able to take care of U.S. Soldiers," said

Maj. Warren Cusick, 41, from Mesa, Ariz., a Certified Registered Nurse-Anesthetist, and the officer-in-charge of the 160th FST.

"The main thing is for troops to have confidence and know when they go fight they're going to be cared for if anything bad happens to them. I used to be enlisted, and one thing that made me feel confident, was knowing I would get medical care, and that is important," said Cusick.

Even though the aid station is made only of a series of tents, the Task Force Saber medical team delivers extraordinary medical care day and night as close to the fight as logistically possible.

"Our biggest challenge is ensuring that the U.S. personnel are taken care of when they get wounded in battle, and that is what we're always training for," said Capt. Scott M. Harrington.

Continued from previous page

ton, 31, from Daytona Beach Fla., a Family Medicine Doctor, assigned to Charlie Company, 173rd Brigade Support Battalion.

"In a big battle, we could have 10 or 20 Soldiers come at one time, and that's happened before, we handled it appropriately, we got everybody out, and we saved their lives."

"I am much more emotionally invested out here because you're among friends. It's very scary when we know the guys are in harm's way," said Harrington. "Every time somebody goes out, one of our medics from the aid station go with the line units. Whenever they go on convoys, one of our medics, who I work with daily, goes out with them."

The Naray Aid Station does much more than provide medical care for only American Soldiers. They also are providing life changing and life saving medical treatment to many Afghans, Afghan National Security Forces, and when the need arises, the enemy.

"We have the best relationship with the Aid Station, they help us all the time," said Afghan National Army Capt. Amanullah, 36, a General-Internal Doctor, assigned to the 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 201st Corps. "When our soldiers are sick, first we treat them. We try to cure them by ourselves. If we are unable to cure them, we take them to the aid station, and the good doctors help us. We have a very good relationship with the surgeons."

"I was worried and nervous about being treated by U.S. doctors, not knowing what to expect, but after arriving at the aid station and seeing how nice and kind everyone there was, I was okay," said Afghan Soldier Sherin Beg, 22, a medic assigned to 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 201st Corps. "Within an hour after arriving, I was asleep on the operating table having my appendix removed, the next thing I was awake and it was all over."

The majority of people in need of medical care at the aid station overwhelmingly have turned out to be Afghan. Mostly by word of mouth, the doctors and medics are gaining the trust of the local people, and are building a solid reputation for their compassionate, and respectful medical treatment.

"Since we've been deployed, from May of 2007, the [aid station] has seen 5,400 local nationals in our five clinics throughout the upper Kunar Province," said Harrington. "We see many children, adults, and fewer women, but everyday we're seeing more of the local nationals and more of their women because they're feeling more comfortable with us."

An Afghan named Ramdad from the nearby village of Juba is one of the 5,400 people pleased with the services provided by the Sol-



Capt. Scott M. Harrington, 31, a Task Force Saber Family Medicine Doctor, examines an Afghan baby girl, testing her reflexes with help from members of the 160th Forward Surgical Team Jan. 3 at the FOB Naray Aid Station in Northeastern Afghanistan.

diers at the Saber-run aid stations.

"The first time I came to Coalition Forces hospital on FOB Naray was three months ago when I brought my daughter for treatment because she was burned. I was not sure the doctors were going to take her, but they treated my daughter, and the doctors did a good job," said Ramdad, "I was very happy, and because of that I brought my three-year-old son, who is sick with pneumonia in for help. We are happy with the American doctors taking care of our people because we are poor people, we are not able to take our sick family members out of the country, and it's helpful for us."

The doctors and medics working at the FOB Naray Aid Station are the best of the best, they are highly-trained, dedicated professionals, working tirelessly day in and day out, while remaining committed to providing excellent medical care to all.

"Being out here providing the care that I've been trained to do is why I joined the Army. I get to wake up everyday and know that I am doing the right thing," said Harrington.

January snap shots



Maj. Gen. Frank Helmick, Southern European Task Force Commander gets a quick brief on the Korengal Valley from Capt. Daniel Kearney, Battle Company, 2-503rd Inf. Commander Jan. 27 at the Korengal Outpost. (Photo by Sgt. Nathan Bowen, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)

Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Rice, Southern European Task Force Command Sergeant Major, speaks with paratroopers from Battle Company, 2-503rd Inf. Jan. 27 at the Korengal Outpost. SETAF leadership was conducting battlefield circulation with the 173rd ABCT in Eastern Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. Nathan Bowen, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)



Navy Adm. William J. Fallon (center), the Commander of U.S. Central Command, along with Gul Agha Sherzai (left), the Governor of Nangarhar Province greet local leaders Jan. 23 at the governor's compound in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. (Photo by Spc. Gregory Argentieri, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)

(Right) An Afghan National Policeman stands guard at the gate to the Nangarhar Joint Provincial Coordination Center Jan. 24 in Jalalabad. The JPCC coordinates law enforcement efforts for the entire province. (Photo by Spc. Gregory Argentieri, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)



(Above) Maj. Gen. Frank Helmick, Southern European Task Force Commander pins a Combat Medical Badge Jan. 27 on Spc. XXX Michael, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion at Forward Operating Base Koghyani. (Photo by Sgt. Brandon Aird, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)

(Right) Capt. Scott M. Harrington, 31, a Family Medicine Doctor, assigned to Task Force Saber, tests the reflexes of an Afghan girl Jan. 3, at Forward Operating Base Naray Aid Station in Northeastern Afghanistan. (Photo by Spc. Gregory Argentieri, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)



Nangarhar JPCC blazes trail in emergency services



Afghan National Police Maj. Abdul Gadim, of the ANP's Criminal Investigative Department, fields an emergency call Jan. 24 on the 1-0-0 number at the Nangarhar Joint Provincial Coordination Center in Jalalabad. After fielding the call, emergency responders are dispatched if needed. (Photo by Spc. Gregory Argentieri, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs)

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

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Every week the Nangarhar law enforcement representatives and Task Force Raptor Soldiers meet at the Joint Provincial Coordination Center in Jalalabad to exchange information and discuss what they can do to better serve the citizens of the province.

The JPCC is a model in Eastern Afghanistan for synchronizing the efforts of the U.S. forces, Afghan National Police, Afghan Border Police, Afghan National Army, and emergency fire and medical services.

While the successes of the JPCC are numerous, the highest profile program thus far has been the implementation of a 9-1-1 type emergency number; a service Americans take for granted. The 1-0-0 number in Jalalabad offers virtually the same services offering quick access to emergency responders 24 hours a day.

"They dial three numbers and they can talk to ANP," said 1st Lt. Jeff Reed, JPCC Officer-In-Charge, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion.

"If they need to talk to anybody, if there is anything going on, from this center they can dispatch fire trucks... ambulances, police patrols, or they can just ask questions," said Reed.

The JPCC averages 25-50 calls on the 1-0-0 number on a normal day. Some days that number surpasses 100. For now, the majority of the calls are to check and see if the number actually works. It does.

The ANP respond to an average of 10 percent of the emergency calls – those that provide actionable information.

The program is yet another step forward in the progress of Afghanistan according to Lt. Col. Jeffrey Milhorn, 173rd Special Troops Battalion and Task Force Raptor Commander.

"Generally, the people are now securing themselves," said Milhorn, "They now have a communications network established that they can tie back to the JPCC immediately and get a relatively rapid response."

As with any new program, there have been obstacles that had to be overcome, according to Staff Sgt. Michael Roth, JPCC Noncommissioned-Officer-In-Charge.

"The initial problems were dealing with the different phone carriers, Roshan, AWCC, etc. Now they have lines for everybody regardless of whatever phone carrier the people are using," said Roth, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd STB, "They can call in and make contact."

There are also some minor annoyances to overcome according to Afghan National Police Maj. Abdul Gadim.

"People crank call because the number is free, many calls are not emergencies," said Gadim.

But overall, Gadim is impressed with the success of the program.

"It's fantastic! It's great. If there's a problem we can jump on it and help the people."

Chaplain's Corner

I love to fish. To me there is little that is more relaxing and peaceful than an early morning on a lake, the mist quietly hovering over the water like a gray veil. Or a warm afternoon, when I probably should be at the office, but instead decided to extend lunch and head for a nearby pond before going back to work. Alone with my thoughts, or with my wife and boys on a picnic on the bank, it makes no difference. Different things about fishing appeal to me at different times. Sometimes it's the smell of "Old Woodsman" insect repellent, the scent taking me back to when I was a kid fishing with my dad on our summer vacations in Maine. Other times it's the excitement in my son's voice when he "almost had one!" And sometimes – not often, but once in a while – I actually catch a fish.

My brother fishes for the outcome. His walls are adorned with mounted citation bass and muskie. He has all the stuff: an expensive bass boat, state-of-the-art fish finder, hundreds of lures (depending on whether it's 68° or 71° outside, whether it's mostly cloudy or just partly cloudy, whether the water is muddy or just murky, etc.). And if he comes

back empty-handed, he's disappointed. I just find the experience itself enjoyable. I remember fishing one afternoon at a small, overgrown pond on one of the ranges at Fort Sill, when all of a sudden

God rarely, if ever, shows us the big picture, but He does give us enough light for the next step.

a squad of AIT Privates, their sweaty faces streaked with black and green camouflage, emerged from the brush and made their way through my small clearing on the way to their objective elsewhere.

I can't help but think that a chaplain fishing in a pond was about the last thing they thought they'd encounter on their little field exercise. But it struck me as funny, and I couldn't help but chuckle as I greeted each

one walking by. From that point on, whether or not I caught anything was irrelevant (I didn't, as usual). The enjoyment and oddity of that small moment was all it took to call the fishing trip a success.

Looking for the meaning in every experience (like a deployment) can be a discouraging challenge. After all, we want there to be some purpose, larger than, but relevant to, ourselves so that the hardship will have been worth it. And though there always is, we won't necessarily see it at that moment. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your Word is a lamp unto my feet." God rarely, if ever, shows us the big picture, but He does give us enough light for the next step. He simply asks that we trust Him enough to take it and leave the big picture to Him.

If we strive each day to honor God by our thoughts, words, actions and choices, then we will end up with the big picture: a life that has made God its priority, one day at a time. And that's where we will find meaning.

Chaplain (CPT) Michael Hart
173rd Brigade Support Battalion

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

We will not forget those who have fallen

As of Jan. 1, 30 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.



Sgt. 1st Class Matthew R. Kahler
Chosen Company,
2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne)
KIA January 26, 2008

Continued from page 5

complete the course requirements. At the successful completion of the course, graduates will receive a tool kit as a means to continue their endeavors in the construction industry and possibly start their own construction business. U.S. Army noncommissioned officers are instructing students with the help of interpreters.

The program, which involves hands-on training, is seven days of instruction and construction, including safety training, basic carpentry and masonry skills training, and the construction of two instructional projects, a wooden garden tool shed and a brick and block wall.

"The workshop is designed to increase the capabilities and skills of Afghans in order to improve wage-earning abilities and competition among contractors," Locsin said. "Ultimately, the workshop will improve infrastructure and the economy in Afghanistan. The workshop is also increasing the capacity of Afghan contractors increasing the skilled-labor pool in the area."

Shah, as many of the participants conveyed, plans to put these skills to perfect use.

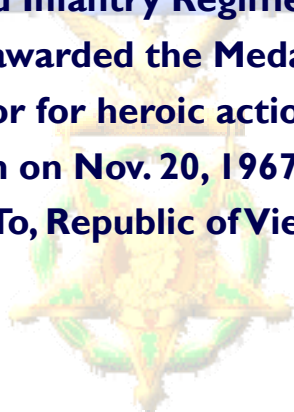
"I want to be able to serve my country, my people, and support my family," Shah said.



Staff Sgt. Windle Morgan, Task Force Pacemaker, instructs 50 Afghans students attending a Winter Skill Labor Workshop in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. The workshop is hosted by Task Force Rugged, 36th Engineer Brigade, stationed out of Fort Hood, Texas, and the 864th Engineer Battalion of Fort Lewis, Wash.

Medal of Honor Recipient PFC Carlos J. Lozada

Pfc. Carlos J. Lozada, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroic actions taken on Nov. 20, 1967 in Dak To, Republic of Vietnam.



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Lozada was born Sept. 6, 1946 in Caguas, Puerto Rico. He entered the service from New York, New York.

His citation reads as follows: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Pfc. Lozada, U.S. Army, distinguished himself at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in the battle of Dak To.

While serving as a machine gunner with 1st Platoon, Company A, Lozada was part of a four-man early-warning outpost, located 35 meters from his company's lines.

At 1400 hours, a North Vietnamese Army company rapidly approached the outpost along a well defined trail.

Lozada alerted his comrades and commenced firing at the enemy who were within 10 meters of the outpost. His heavy and accurate machine gun fire killed at least 20 North Vietnamese soldiers and completely disrupted their initial attack.

Lozada remained in an exposed position and continued to pour deadly fire upon

the enemy despite the urgent pleas of his comrades to withdraw. The enemy continued their assault, attempting to envelop the outpost.

At the same time, enemy forces launched a heavy attack on the forward west flank of Company A with the intent to cut them off from their battalion. Company A was given the order to withdraw.

Lozada apparently realized that if he abandoned his position there would be nothing to hold back the surging North Vietnamese soldiers and that the entire Company withdrawal would be jeopardized.

He called for his comrades to move back and that he would stay and provide cover for them. He made this decision realizing that the enemy was converging on three sides of his position and only meters away, and a delay in withdrawal meant almost certain death.

Lozada continued to deliver a heavy, accurate volume of suppressive fire against the enemy until he was mortally wounded.

His heroic deed served as an example and an inspiration to his comrades throughout the ensuing four-day battle. Lozada's actions are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.