



Tien Bien Times

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TIEN BIEN TIMES IS A COMBINED EFFORT OF THE 173RD ABCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE AND THE 22ND MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT



TF Bayonet takes over N2KL

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

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, also known as "The Herd", held a transition-of-authority ceremony on Forward Operating Base Fenty in Jalalabad, Afghanistan June 6. The TOA is part of the regular rotation of coalition forces.

The 173rd ABCT is taking over for 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division area of operation in Eastern Afghanistan for the next 15 months.

During their deployment Task Force Spartan conducted over 100 medical outreaches, 540 humanitarian aid missions and brought medical aid to over 44,000 Afghans.

During the TOA ceremony the 3rd IBCT commander described the last 16 months.

"It's been a lot of hard work," said Col. John Nicholson, Commander of 3rd IBCT, "We have sacrificed much, but it has been a great honor to fight beside you. I'm sad to leave, but we are leaving you in good hands."

The 173rd ABCT is no stranger to combat operations. The 173rd ABCT has deployed three times since 2003.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom the herd made the largest combat jump on a single drop zone since WWII into Bashur, Iraq in 2003.

In the spring of 2005, the 173rd ABCT was once again called upon in support of Operation Enduring Freedom VI.

After making the transition from an airborne brigade to an airborne brigade combat team, the 173rd was once again called upon to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Task Force Spartan leaves their



Col. Mark Johnstone (left), Deputy Commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, and Sgt. Maj. Lyle Womack (right), Operations Sergeant Major for the 173rd ABCT, unveil the colors during the transition-of-authority ceremony on Forward Operation Base Fenty in Jalalabad, Afghanistan June 6. The 173rd ABCT takes over for 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

area of operation after 16 months of successful combat operations in the hands of the 173rd.

"Task Force Bayonet pledges to continue to build upon your legacy of teamwork," said Col. Mark Johnstone, Deputy Commander of Task Force Bayonet.

The 173rd ABCT looks forward to working with the Afghan people, concluded Johnstone.

Battle Company makes presence known

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

KORENGAL VALLEY, Afghanistan -- The paratroopers were keen for the mission despite their rough conditions. The difference between a tan line and dirty skin has long since passed. Bites from sand fleas and mosquitoes just add to the problem. Electricity, toilets and running water (a 45 min. patrol away) are long forgotten conveniences.

The paratroopers are Sky Soldiers from Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

For the last month 2nd Platoon and a platoon from the National Afghan Army have been operating out of Fire Base Phoenix- the southern most fire base in the Korengal Valley, which is located in Afghanistan's Kunar Province.

The living conditions for the Soldiers are the least of their problems. The Korengal Valley is a safe haven for Taliban extremists.

"The towns here are neutral at best," said 1st Lt.

Mathew Piosa, Platoon Leader for 2nd Platoon, "In the last eight days we've had five (enemy) contacts."

Within days of interviewing Piosa his platoon had two more enemy engagements- one being a coordinated ambush by the enemy.

"We take steps to prevent the enemy from having the upper hand," explained Piosa. "Every patrol is at a different time and we try to vary our route as much as possible."

Even with the precautions Soldiers still get hurt. On June 5 during a night patrol Pfc. Timothy Vimoto was killed during an ambush by insurgents.

The platoon has not allowed the loss to deter them and they continue to conduct reconnaissance, counter IED, and security patrols daily.

When the platoon isn't out on patrols they pass their time by improving individual Soldier skills to improve their combat capability.

"We've had classes on all the weapons out here (on site) and today were training on the LLDR (Lightweight Laser Designator Rangefinder)," said Pfc. Sterling Dunn, 2nd Platoon.

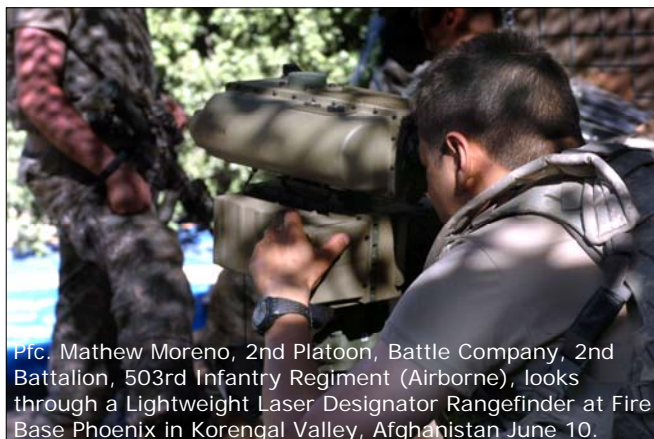
Battle Company is working to improve the situation for 2nd Platoon by getting a generator to Fire Base Phoenix.

For now 2nd Platoon is just going to have to make due with what they have, said Pfc. Matthew Moreno, a paratrooper in 2nd Platoon.

2nd Platoon plans to stay in the area to help the Afghan people for the next 15 months until they are relieved by Coalition Forces or the ANA.



Pvt. Miguel Cortez and Spc. Aaron Johnson, 2nd Platoon, Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), negotiate a hill during a patrol in Korengal Valley June 10. The patrol is off the main road along a foot path to avoid following the same routine.



Pfc. Mathew Moreno, 2nd Platoon, Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), looks through a Lightweight Laser Designator Rangefinder at Fire Base Phoenix in Korengal Valley, Afghanistan June 10.



Commander's Corner

To the paratroopers and families of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team,

We are approaching our second month in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and it has been a tough first 30 days since joining the fight. We have already accomplished a lot and I see great progress on my third tour to Afghanistan. We are now settled in and ramped up to help the Afghan people rid themselves of the Taliban and other insurgents.

We have spent a good portion of our time familiarizing ourselves with our area of operations and expanding the capacity of our forward operating bases and forward bases. Some of these bases are very remote and austere which makes staying in tough with families very difficult. Despite these challenges, the brigade is fully focused on the task at hand. I appreciate the tremendous effort Sky Soldiers have put forth over these many months of preparation, throughout the relief-in-place and now in combat.

It is truly remarkable how quickly and efficiently the brigade has completed the tasks necessary to move forward to this phase. We stood up the brigade to start

transformation on 15 September, trained hard for several months- all the while receiving new paratroopers, leadership and equipment. We received the change of mission in February to deploy to OEF vice Iraq and modified our plan; accelerating our deployment timeline. And all this in only 7 months – an incredible feat that few units have ever been called upon to do.

At this point, we all realize it is a long road to redeployment. It is not an easy mission we have been given in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan. There are some tough days ahead to be sure. I would ask that you all continue to support us like you always have. I believe there is no better unit in the Army in terms of professionalism, leadership or proficiency that can complete this mission the way the Herd can.

Although we have already experienced the pain of losing some of the best Sky Soldiers in combat, we will not be deterred from winning every fight and helping the Afghan people. The lives of our fallen Soldiers have given us a vested interest in the future of Afghanistan and the success of our mission and we will not fail them.

Although our main

focus is to increase the readiness and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces, we are committed to defending ourselves, our Afghan counterparts and the innocents from terrorists and criminals who use intimidation and fear to impose their will upon the populace of northeastern Afghanistan where the insurgents have become accustomed to roaming free. I know we will leave here having made a difference.

To our families back in Italy, Germany and the United States, we love you all, we miss you terribly, but are bolstered by the knowledge that you stand behind us through these challenges. I can only tell you about the tremendous job all are doing and the pride we all have for the courage of these Sky Soldiers. It is truly my honor to be a part of this great unit and to be around all these heroes every day. Thank you for the love and pride you display in us. We will not let you down. You are in our minds on a daily basis and we will be home soon.

COL Preysler
Bayonet 6



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

PMD keeps UAV eyes in the sky

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, Afghanistan - One of the assets commanders in the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team use to view the battlefield is the RQ-7 Shadow 200 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

The UAV is able to provide the combat team with video coverage of an area of interest for hours at 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the launch and recovery site.

The aerial vehicle uses a pneumatic launcher and is recovered by a tactical automatic landing system on the runway. It's stopped using an arresting hook and cable system.

The first launch of a RQ-7 Shadow UAV in the 173rd was by Army Col. Charles A. Preysler, 173rd ABCT commander, in Germany during the training for preparation to Afghanistan.

The UAV is a new asset to the combat team and keeping it operational is essential.

By the time the Shadow gets into the sky, it gets checked a minimum of six times, said Army Staff Sgt. Pablo Villanueva, maintenance chief for the Shadow, Bravo Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion (Airborne).

"We take it apart to make sure everything is tightened down, verify all the electronics work and conduct preflight checks," Villanueva said.

The UAV is also inspected by the flyer and again by the mechanics when on the launcher.

Villanueva's crew of mechanics performs maintenance, which is called "preventive maintenance daily," every day.

"I enjoy doing this," said Army Sgt. Christopher Johnson, a UAV mechanic in Bravo Company, 173rd STB.

The 173rd's Shadow operation is non-stop mission, which doesn't end until the deployment is over.

"We work in 12-hour shifts," explained Villanueva. "Eight hours are spent doing PMD and the other four are doing preflight inspections."

Once the UAV gets back from a flight the work starts all over again.

"We have to check to make sure no parts fell off or loosened during flight," Villanueva said.

Villanueva and his crew open the plane up and take it apart to make sure everything is right. PMD is a daily process, which doesn't end until the mission is over.



Staff Sgt. Pablo Villanueva, Bravo Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion (Airborne) conducts "preventive maintenance daily" on a RQ-7 Shadow 200 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle June 19 on Forward Operating Base Fenty in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

By the time the Shadow gets into the sky, it gets checked a minimum of six times

173rd Commo shops get wired up

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, Afghanistan – During WWI a battalion advanced too far into enemy lines and came under a barrage of friendly artillery fire. The only means for a communication was a pigeon named Cher Ami. Cher Ami took to the skies and instantly took enemy fire taking a round to the chest, eye and foot, but that didn't stop Cher Ami from delivering the message and saving the battalion.

Luckily for the troops in the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team the Army doesn't rely on the valor of pigeons anymore, but the flow of information today is just as important as it was back then.

That's why 173rd ABCT Combined Communications Shop is hard at work picking up where the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Task Force Spartan) left off.

The 173rd ABCT's Headquarters and Headquarters Company Communication's shop and Charlie Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion joined together, and are working through out the day running thousands of feet of wire across Forward Operating Base Fenty in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

The incoming task force head-

quarters, Task Force Bayonet, is significantly larger than Task Force Spartan headquarters. The difference caused cramped living and working conditions during the transition period.

The influx of Soldiers required new buildings to be built for work areas.

"We're running 24-hour operations," said Sgt. William E. Nievaart, HHC, 173rd ABCT.

As fast as the buildings are built, the communications shop is installing non-secure internet drops, secure internet drops, and Voice over internet protocol phones (VoIP phones).

"We've installed 15-20 VoIP phones, ran over 2,000 feet of non-secure internet cable, and 1,000 feet secure internet cable since we got here," said Sgt. Christopher Masterson, Charlie Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion.

The secure internet is a lot more difficult to install than non-secure internet. The cable has to be run through pipes, which are run under ground. The actual drops are secured in locked boxes to ensure they can't be tampered with.

The information that will be flowing through the systems installed by the communication shop will

play a key role in combat and day-to-day operations. Without it the 173rd might find its self looking for a new Cher Ami.

Luckily for the troops in the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team the Army doesn't rely on the valor of pigeons anymore



Pvt. Ben Williams (left), 76th Engineer Company based in Fort Knox, Ky., and attached to the 864th Engineer Battalion out of Fort Lewis, Wash., and Sgt. Christopher Masterson (right); Charlie Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion, dig a trench to bury internet lines in the combat teams tactical operations center June 4 in Jalalabad Airfield. The airfield is under going significant changes over the next year to improve base structures.

From the desk of
J. Steven Birchfield
M.D.
MAJ (P)/MC, IM
TF Bayonet Surgeon

*"For thousands of
years malaria
swept through the
ranks of
humankind like a
scythe in the
hands of an angry
god"*



In nature, malaria parasites spread by infecting two types of hosts: humans and mosquitoes.

Malaria prevention no joke

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by a parasite. People with malaria often experience fever, chills, and flu-like illness with body aches. Left untreated, they may develop severe complications and die.

Each year 350-500 million cases of malaria occur worldwide, and over one million people die each year. Most of those that die are children from Sub Sahara Africa that are under five years of age. Most of these children die because their bodies have not built up defenses against the parasite. If these children live past five years of age, they can become relatively immune to the disease because they have had so many exposures to the malaria parasite; their bodies recognize the disease and attacks it before they get too sick.

Fortunately, U.S. Soldiers rarely, if ever, have experienced the disease before. Unfortunately, they also have not built up any immunity to the parasite, and they can die or get very sick if they aren't treated for the dis-

ease. There were many cases of malaria amongst U.S. Soldiers in Afghanistan last year.

In nature, malaria parasites spread by infecting two types of hosts: humans and mosquitoes.

In humans, a mosquito bites the person, and the parasites travels through the blood stream to grow and multiply first in the liver cells and then in the red cells of the blood.

In the blood, successive broods of parasites grow inside the red cells and destroy them, releasing daughter parasites ("merozoites") that continue the cycle by invading other red cells.

The blood stage parasites are those that cause the symptoms of malaria, like high fever and chills and just feeling lousy. When another mosquito bites the infected person, certain forms of blood stage parasites ("gametocytes") are picked up by the *Anopheles* mosquito during a blood meal, and start a different cycle of growth and multiplication in the mosquito. This mosquito then passes it

on to its next victim

This sometimes fatal disease can be prevented and cured.

Permethrin treated uniforms are the first line of defense. Our second line of defense is the use of bed nets as these mosquitoes typically bite from "Dawn till Dusk", and they love to get you when you are in the rack. Next, use insecticides like DEET or Deep Woods Off. Lastly, we take anti-malarial drugs to kill the parasite in the blood stages. These are all effective tools to fight malaria in areas like Afghanistan.

We have two drugs that we use to prevent malaria infections; Doxycycline, which you have to take every day (Doxycycline Daily), or Mefloquine that we take once a week (Mefloquine Mondays). These drugs protect you from the blood stage of the malaria infection if you take them as prescribed. If you miss a dose, however, it may not protect you completely from the parasite growing in your liver.

Be Safe! Protect Yourself! Sky Soldiers!

A reflection on freedom



Freedom. Life is all about freedom. Freedom to choose where you live, who you marry, what your career will be, who will you worship. Why are these freedoms so important to us? Because God created us with a free Spirit and with the freedom to choose. He could have created us as creatures of instinct. Instead he created us in his image, different than the rest, with the ability to create, discover, make mistakes and learn from them (hopefully). He created us to choose our own path in life. Even the freedom to choose him or reject

him is ours. God gave it to us. So when someone else tries to take it away or limit it in an unjust way we are ready to fight to keep our freedoms because our creator gave them to us in the first place and we have a right to keep them.

It has not always been this way. There was a time when virtually no one had any freedoms to speak of. Harsh kings, ruthless dictators, and godless emperors ruled the world. People were told where they could live, what job they could take even who they could marry. The state even told them what god they had to worship!

After thousands of years of this tyranny a group of folks got sick of it and decided to leave the world they knew and travel to a new world that later became the United States of America. They came in search of freedom for themselves and their children. No longer would they tolerate a government telling them who they had to worship or where they could live. They could own their own land (a novel idea in that day) they could take what ever job was offered and change jobs if they thought they needed to. They could fall in love with whomever they please and live happily ever after.

The kings and dictators and emperors of the world laughed at the experiment and said all that freedom would lead to anarchy. But of course it did not. To be sure, our forefathers did not get every aspect of freedom right to begin with, but they set a course that has led us to where we are today. And now, 231 years later, the world envies our freedom.

So here we are in another land helping these people discover a freedom that we have long since taken for granted. As we celebrate this 4th of July holiday let us remember the freedom that God has granted our country, be eternally grateful for the freedoms we have, and pray that these people may understand what true freedom really is and that they may one day take freedom for granted as we do.



From the desk of
CH (MAJ) Lee Nelson
TF Bayonet Chaplain

The kings and dictators and emperors of the world laughed at the experiment and said all that freedom would lead to anarchy.

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>
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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 831-2222 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

Big guns play big part in Eastern Afghanistan

Story and photos by Spc. Jon Arguello,
22nd MPAD

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Few things are as frightening on the battlefield as incoming artillery. But these essential assets are more than loud bangs heard sporadically on the forward operating bases in eastern Afghanistan. The “King of Battle,” as artillery is called, has become increasingly important, being called upon as soon as possible when troops find themselves in contact and also being used to fix the enemy, which has become as important as finding them.

Everything from the incredibly unforgiving terrain to the ability of insurgents to dissipate into the civilian population has made clear the significance of indirect fire support.

“In this fight, fire support is very important,” said 1st Lt. Duane Mantle, 2nd Battalion’s 503rd Infantry (Airborne) assistant fires support officer, from Warren, N.J. “As soon as we make contact, the first thing the Soldiers look for is to bring in fires on the enemy.”

Although the manner in which wars are fought today are different in many respects, the adaptability of the 155mm Howitzers of Bravo Battery, 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment on Forward Operating Base Blessing and other indirect assets providing support to paratroopers based along the Pech River Valley, has been proven and used extensively in just a short time after arriving in theater about a month ago.

“It’s not like the previous wars when they lined up and we would mow them down,” said Mantle. “Fires have a lot of different effects. When we fire the 155’s from here the enemy doesn’t hear the round coming in. It immediately puts the enemy on the defensive and has a tremendous demoralizing effect.”

The rounds can also be used to fix enemy combatants.

“That’s a huge part of this conflict, separating them from the population, but we can do it when they are on a ridge firing on us,” said Mantle.

As artillery is called in it disrupts the enemy’s movement or causes them to seek cover, providing US or Afghan Forces a variety of options.

“What we can do for example, is fix the enemy and cause him to hunker down in one location and then neutralize him with precision munitions from close air support,” Mantle explained.

The Soldiers who man the guns at FOB Blessing understand the impact they have and their job of placing timely, accurate fires on the enemy is a job they take seriously for good reason.

“Last deployment we had a fire mission to support some troops in contact,” said Sgt.

Stephen Murphy of Bravo Battery’s, 2nd Platoon, 2nd Section, a native of Berwick, Penn. who had just finished a fire mission with his section. “One of the Soldiers who was there came to us afterwards and said we had saved his life. He even showed us pictures of his family. I was like ‘Roger. I’ll be faster next time.’”

Just hours later the 155mm Howitzers at FOB Blessing pounded the mountains of the Pech River Valley in support of multiple troops in contact. In a few hours the battery had fired 111 rounds simultaneously supporting three separate sites.



Paratroopers from B-Batt, 4-319th AFAR fire their 155mm Howitzer from FOB Blessing in eastern Afghanistan.

We will not forget those who have fallen



Pfc. Jacob Lowell
Bravo Company, 1-503rd Infantry (Airborne)
KIA 2 June, 2007



Pfc. Timothy Vimoto
Bravo Company, 2-503rd Infantry (Airborne)
KIA 5 June, 2007

Why call it Tien Bien Times?

The 173rd has a long and storied history spanning from WWII to the present.

While the 173rd has had many names and has served in many locations, The Herd first made its mark during the Vietnam War.

Prior to the 173rd's service in Vietnam, it was reactivated as the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) on Okinawa, Japan March 26, 1963. Under the command of Brig. Gen. Ellis W. Williamson, they began training in order to fulfill their new charter as the quick reaction force for the Pacific Command.

Under Williamson, the unit trained extensively, making mass parachute jumps earning the nickname "Tien Bien" or "Sky Soldiers" from the Nationalist Chinese paratroopers.

Deployed to Vietnam in May 1965, the brigade was the first major ground com-

bat unit of the United States Army to serve there. They were the first to go into War Zone D to destroy enemy base camps, introduced the use of small long-range patrols, and conducted the only combat parachute jump in the Vietnam conflict on 22 February 1967 (Operation Junction City). During more than six years of continuous combat in

Vietnam, the brigade earned 14 campaign streamers and four unit citations. Sky Soldiers serving in Vietnam received 13 Medals of Honor, 32 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1736 Silver Stars and over 6,000 Purple Hearts. There are over 1,790 Sky Soldiers' names on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C.

The 173rd was deactivated shortly after the Vietnam War ended, but reactivated again on June 12, 2000 on Caseram Ederle in Vicenza, Italy.

On March 26, 2003, the Sky Soldiers once again lived up to their name by jumping into the Bashur Drop zone, effectively opening a northern front in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Herd has been called upon twice more to serve in support of OEF VI in Regional Command South and now in support of OEF VIII in N2KL in eastern Afghanistan.



173rd paratroopers serving in Vietnam.