



# Tien Bien Times

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## Operation Mountain Highway II deals blow to insurgents

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

Soldiers from 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Regiment (Airborne) and Legion Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), teamed with the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Border Patrol to conduct Operation Mountain Highway II in Eastern Nuristan Province Afghanistan.

Operation Mountain Highway II started April 22 when Soldiers from International Security Assistance Forces and ANA simultaneously air-assaulted at night onto three mountains above the Gowerdesh Bridge.

Afghan and Ameri-



Army Capt. John Williams (left), Commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), observes the hill top while Army Staff Sgt. William Randall (center), HHT, directs Army Sgt. Shawn Seymour (right), a M-240B Machine Gun Operator in HHT, during Operation Mountain Highway II April 27 in Nuristan Province Afghanistan.

can Soldiers created Observation Post Mace, Hatchet and Brick, which enabled the ABP and ANA to drive up from the south and seize the Gowerdesh Bridge April 26.

"It was very in debt

synchronized air-assault to get everybody in," explained Capt. John Williams, Commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Regiment (Airborne). "Over four



*An Afghan National Army Soldier carrying a PK Machine gun pulls security near the Gawardish Bridge during Operation Mountain Highway II in Nuristan Province Afghanistan April 27. The ANA, Afghan Border Patrol, U.S. Army and Marines worked together during the operation to rebuild an ABP check point at the Gawardish Bridge, which was partially destroyed by insurgents last summer.*

months of planning was put into this operation.”

During the four month planning phase ABP were retrained on weapons, vehicle searches, first aid and reacting to contact, said Army Capt. Kafi Gwira, an ABP embedded tactical trainer from Chicago. ABP were also issued new uniforms, weapons, ammunition and equipment for Operation Mountain Highway II.

“We got them ready to seize the bridge for

good this time,” said Gwira. “The ABP will now maintain a 40-man ABP presence at the bridge at all times.”

ANA Soldiers built three local observation posts near the bridge during the first few days of the operation, which were handed over to the ABP a few days later. The local observation post will ensure insurgents won’t be able to sneak up on the ABP.

“The reason why this

bridge is so critical,” explained Williams, “is that its one of the last ones left for insurgents to use. If they can’t use the Gowerdesh Bridge this severely limits their capabilities in this area.”

The bridge is part of a route used by insurgents to travel from Pakistan into the interior of Afghanistan, according to Williams.

Last summer insurgents drove off the ABP and destroyed their security check point. The Gowerdesh Bridge has been a key altercation point between insurgents and government forces over the last year. Numerous fire fights between ISAF and insurgents have occurred near the bridge.

“They need strong positions, which is why we provided the engineers to

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## Commander's Corner

To the paratroopers and families of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team,

Two Sky Soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country in the month of May. We mourn the loss of these paratroopers and heroes and both will be sorely missed. The loss of these paratrooper's lives so late in the deployment underscores the importance of staying vigilant all the way to the end of the deployment. Do not let your guard down. Leaders double check your Soldiers before every mission. Keep a vigilant guard both inside and outside the wire. The enemy is still here and still fighting and they will continue to do so all the way until the end of our tour here. Work hard to fight against complacency.

**Redeployment!** In the coming days and weeks, Soldiers from 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division will begin arriving to begin the transition to replace us. I want each and every one of you to make sure your counterparts are welcomed and completely briefed on your day-to-day missions and how you accomplish them. This is not just a hand-off to

another unit while wishing them 'Good luck.' Make sure your replacements are **fully trained** and have a complete understanding of how to achieve their tasks. Don't make them waste valuable time by having to learn everything from scratch. Finish the magnificent performance of this tour by making this relief-in-place the best possible.

Once the RIP is complete, you will begin redeploying to Europe. For some of you that will be in July and for others it will be in August. Exact dates will not be known until a few days before you board the aircraft and even then, they are subject to change. I fully expect the rumor mill to be in overdrive during this period. Resist the urge to spread rumors. Redeploying an entire brigade is a challenging task that requires all of us to remain flexible. I will keep the brigade leaders informed and your chain of command will keep you informed, to the best of all of our abilities.

As we begin to re-deploy, remember the legacy of hard work that all of us are leaving behind in this country. The 173rd has a reputation heralded throughout the Army and beyond. It is well deserved and



**Col. Charles A. Preysler**  
**TF Bayonet Commander**

a direct result of your efforts and hard work. You deserve to celebrate all of your accomplishments here. But that legacy can be quickly tarnished with a rash of alcohol related or other foolish and undisciplined incidents after redeployment. Watch your battle buddies on your left and you right in order to ensure that no one does something they will later regret.

Sky Soldiers,

Bayonet 6

#### Tien Bien Times

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

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

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

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

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

# 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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MSgt Bernadette Gregory**

# “Workhorse” medics stand ready for any mission

Story and photo by Sgt. Henry Selzer, 173rd ABCT

Whether it’s a common cold or a life threatening injury the medics of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment (Airborne), do whatever it takes to keep the Soldiers of their battalion healthy and mission ready.

“We do our best to make sure that everybody gets the necessary treatment needed for whatever it is that might be wrong with them,” said Staff Sgt. Victor Salas, 32, of Los Angeles, California, a medic with HHC.

From minor joint aches to injuries due to IED blasts, including shrapnel, burns and internal injuries, the “Workhorse” medics do everything necessary to make sure the soldiers of Task Force Eagle are ready for their next mission.

To make sure

they are ready if and when they are called, the team conducts training weekly, on everything from sick call procedures to, medical evacuations by air, to spinal cord injuries, according to Salas.

Although the medics of HHC are spread throughout Task Force Eagle’s area of operation by supporting four separate aid stations and five combat outposts, they still man the Orgun-E aid station 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When an emergency arises, they also make sure the people in the local villages surrounding the base get the treatment they need, said Salas.

Local national patients are treated almost everyday, for maladies ranging from minor colds, to gunshot wounds, or traffic accidents.

“We have medics stationed everywhere throughout our battalion’s AO doing whatever is necessary to keep our guys healthy,” said Sgt 1<sup>st</sup> Class Stephen Junod, 39, of Greenville, Illinois, another Task

Force Eagle medic.

Whether it be supporting a sick call on the FOB or going on patrol with the Soldiers on the front lines, the medics of HHC are prepared and ready.



Staff Sgt. Victor Salas, 32, of Los Angeles, California, a medic stationed with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment prepares an injection March 31 for an incoming patient at the Forward Operating Base Orgun-E Aid Station in Paktika Province, Afghanistan.

## Sky Soldiers rename base to remember a fallen comrade

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

Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), renamed their combat outpost to remember a fallen comrade May 12 in a remote area of Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

Combat Outpost Kamu was renamed to Combat Outpost Lowell to remember Spc. Jacob Lowell, who was killed in action June 2, 2007.

Lowell was manning a 50 Caliber machine gun on a reconnaissance mission in the Gowardesh Valley when he was killed while engaging insurgents who ambushed his convoy.

"Lowell was a heroic paratrooper that did his duty all the way up until the end," said Capt. John Page, Commander of Bravo Company. "His actions saved my life and others in his platoon. If Lowell had not gotten back up on his 50 Cal., even though he was shot in the leg, I probably would not be here today."

Lt. Col. Christopher Kolenda, Commander of 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), and Page dedicated a large plaque on COP



Capt. John Page (right), Commander of Bravo Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), and Lt. Col. Christopher Kolenda, Commander of 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), removes a poncho covering a plaque, which officially dedicated and renamed Combat Outpost Kamu to Combat Outpost Lowell. The ceremony renamed the combat outpost to remember Spc. Jacob Lowell who was killed in action June 2, 2007. (Photo courtesy of 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 91<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Regiment)

Lowell during the ceremony so future Soldiers will remember his sacrifice.

Lowell was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for valor and the Combat Infantryman's

Badge for his actions during this fire fight.

Lowell was from New Lenox, IL and is survived by his parents Raymond and Bernadine Lowell.

# BSB Teaches Afghan Border Police Weapons Repair

Story by Spc. Gregory J. Argentieri  
173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT Public Affairs

Afghan Border Police soldiers are learning advanced small-arms repair and maintenance from the Soldiers of Bravo Company, 173<sup>rd</sup> Support Battalion (Airborne), during a week-long course at Forward Operating Base Fenty, in Jalalabad.

The small arms course began on Friday, May 1, and concluded May 8, with a final exam.

This U.S. Advanced Instructed Small-Arms Repair Course is the second course this group of border police have attended.

The first course held in March, and also taught by 173<sup>rd</sup> BSB Soldiers, was a month long.

The weapons maintenance course included repair, cleaning, and inspection procedures on an assortment of small arms that included: the U.S. military 5.56mm M4 Carbine, the .50 caliber M2 machine gun, the 7.62mm M240B machine gun, the 5.56 mm M249 Squad Automatic Weapon, the Soviet 12.7mm DShK heavy machine gun, the 7.62mm PKM machine gun, the 5.56mm AK-47MA1



*U.S. Army Sgt. Micaiah T. Ragins, 25, with Bravo Company, 173<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Support Battalion (Airborne), was the primary instructor in charge of a week-long weapons maintenance course for the Afghan Border Police. He is assisting ABP Pvt. Mohamad Taheer, 25, in reassembling the U.S. M-249 SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon) May 5, at Jalalabad Airfield, Afghanistan.*

assault rifle, the Czech VZ-58 assault rifle, and the 7.62mm AK-47 assault rifle.

The weapons repair instruction on the U.S. weapons is timely according to U.S. Army Sgt. Micaiah T. Ragins, 25, with Bravo Company, 173<sup>rd</sup> BSB, and the primary instructor.

He explained that many of the weapons used by Afghan National Army Soldiers are currently being swapped out for the U.S. standard issue M-16 rifle and M4 carbine.

He estimated that the plan for the future is to outfit most of the Afghan soldiers with

U.S. weapons.

The goal of this training is similar to many other U.S. lead Afghan training classes. Upon graduation this group of specially schooled ABP officers will return to their separate Kandaks throughout Afghanistan and train their Afghan counterparts in weapons repair and maintenance, this kind of U.S. training is commonly referred to as "Train the Trainers."

"We are very attentive and focused during the weapons class, and we try to memorize

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everything, so we can always remember everything,” said Afghan Border Police Staff Sgt. Ghaljay, who came for the training from Kunar Province.

“This is exactly the training we need, our instructor is very good, and he gets along well with us.”

According to Ghaljay, the ABP had little weapons repair experience before this training, but would set aside every Thursday for weapons cleaning.

“Weapons repair and maintenance is very important to us because this is our profession,” said Afghan Border Police Pvt. Mohammad Taheer, who came to the training from Jalalabad, “This weapons course is a great help to us in defending our country and for the future security of Afghanistan.”

As a result of this weapons repair training, this group of ABP officers will have more knowledge in small arms maintenance than the average U.S. Soldier, according to Ragins.

“I think we are doing our part in increasing cultural awareness and relations between the U.S. forces and the Afghan people,” said Ragins.



*Afghan Border Patrol Pvt. Mohamad Taheer, 25, gives the thumbs up sign to U.S. Army Sgt. Micaiah T. Ragins, 25, the primary instructor for the advanced small arms class with Bravo Company, 173<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Support Battalion (Airborne) May 5, during a week-long weapons maintenance class conducted at Jalalabad Airfield, Afghanistan.*

“Our objective is to keep more weapons in the fight by basically maximizing the reliability of the ABP weapon systems.”

After the ABP students complete their week long advanced course and successfully pass the final exam covering all the weapons, the ABP officers will receive certificates of proficiency in small arms repair and two weapon repair tool kits.

“I am very proud of my Soldiers,” said Staff Sgt. Alan T. Rojas, 38, from Hawaii, the Armament Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge for Bravo Company, 173<sup>rd</sup> BSB. “They are knowledgeable, talented, and

energetic.”

“For the ABP, coming to JAF (Jalalabad Airfield) for training is very good,” said Najeebullah Haleem, 25, an ABP interpreter.

“The ABP officers will talk to their neighbors about the weapons training by the U.S. and how it is very different from when Russia was here.”

Finally, according to Haleem, It allows the curious ABP officers to witness some U.S. culture, and he believes this training at JAF will attract more people to the ranks of the ABP.





## ANA and Sky Soldiers launch Operation Rock Penetrator

Story by Spc. Gregory J. Argentieri  
173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT Public Affairs

Afghan National Army Soldiers and paratroopers from Able Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), air assaulted into the Narang Valley during the evening of May 16 for a scheduled 24-hour mission in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

A part of Operation Rock Penetrator, the ANA soldiers took the lead role in this mission which was to search and clear Bidal Village, designated "Objective Grappa", while Able Company Soldiers secured over-

watch support positions.

Under the moon light, approximately 150 American and Afghan Soldiers flew into Kunar's Narang Valley aboard CH-47 Chinooks and UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. The Soldiers, under the protection of Apache Attack helicopters, were safely delivered from Camp Wright in Asadabad to five separate landing zones designated Owl, Osprey, Condor, Singapore, and Lucky.

1<sup>st</sup> platoon Soldiers were tasked with being the support-by-fire element for the ANA soldiers. The paratroopers exited

the helicopters in tall wheat fields west of Bidal.

Burdened with heavy equipment, the Sky Soldiers began moving upward with the help of their night vision devices. After several hours of climbing high stone terraces, crossing dangerous terrain with 10-15 foot drop offs, 1<sup>st</sup> platoon arrived at their position.

"We've had reports that rebels have been moving through this village intimidating people, and keeping weapons and supplies there, so they can

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take them up into the Korengal and Shuryak Valleys,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jason P. Levay, Platoon Leader for 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. “I know this is not a peaceful area.”

At first light, from beneath camouflage netting, the paratroopers watched as ANA soldiers began moving in the valley toward objective Grappa.

The ANA soldiers made their way through a mostly dry river bed and proceeded to search one side of the village and then the other looking for weapon caches, contraband, and insurgent safe-havens.

“While the ANA were clearing a house, they found two anti-personnel mines and some explosives. We arrested the guy, and airlifted him out of there later on that day,” said Staff Sgt. Daniel C. Metcalfe, 25, from Rochester, N.Y., acting Platoon Sergeant for 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon.

In the afternoon, after the ANA Soldiers had finished their search, an element of 1<sup>st</sup> platoon Soldiers led by Levay, climbed back down the mountainside and met up with the ANA soldiers in one of the village compounds.

Levay conducted a key leader engagement with some village elders. He stressed the importance of working with the



*Two Soldiers from Able Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), make their way down a mountainside during Operation Rock Penetrator May 17, in the Narang Valley, in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.*

Afghan government and Able Company Soldiers, saying it was the way to foster local community development and economic prosperity throughout Afghanistan.

“We made some progress with some good key leader engagements getting them closer to the coalition side of the house,” said Metcalfe.

Later in the evening, acting on intelligence that stated there were more enemy fighters in the area, the mission was extended 24 hours. Helicopters arrived and flew the Soldiers to

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon’s position, where they were re-supplied.

Throughout the next 24 hours, Able Company, with the help of close air support, had several sightings of the enemy. They fired artillery, mortars, and dropped bombs on the enemy positions.

In the afternoon, a maneuver element of ANA soldiers and an element from 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon were sent to investigate and search several suspicious looking structures a kilometer away on the mountainside.

This apparently struck a

nerve with insurgents in the area. On the way back, the ANA soldiers were fired on from a nearby mountain.

The enemy fired about 50 rounds from a PKM machine gun. No one was injured, and Able Company paratroopers proceeded to drop mortars on the enemy's location, eliminating the threat.

Despite the inherent dangers of conducting missions along the border with U.S. forces, Maj. Atiqullah, 40, from Kabul, 1<sup>st</sup> Company Commander with 1<sup>st</sup> Kandak, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade remains firmly resolved to continue the mission of helping to secure his country.

"I like this type of mission, and would love to go clear all the villages and fight with any enemies," said Atiqullah.

The love of their job was also apparent in the Able Company Soldiers.

"We had the insurgents pretty confused because they couldn't figure out if we were still in the village or if we had left the village; if we were still on the mountain or if we had left the mountain," said Metcalfe. "All in all, it was a pretty good success out there. It's what we do, and it was a pretty good feeling coming back."



*U.S. Army Spc. Trevor Petsch Able Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), watches his footing May 18 in the mountains surrounding the Narang Valley during Operation Rock Penetrator, in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.*

## Able Company display mission flexibility in Operation Longest Mile



*Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jeremiah K. Smith, 32, Platoon Sergeant for 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Able Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), readjusts his security perimeter during Operation Longest Mile May 11 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.*

Story by Spc. Gregory J. Argentieri  
173<sup>rd</sup> ABCT Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Policemen and paratroopers from Able Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), air assaulted into the Watapoor Valley under the cover of darkness May 10 to start Operation Longest Mile in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

The Afghan National Security Forces took the lead in the search-and-clear mission of the village

of Kur Baugh to search for weapons, ammunition, explosives, and other contraband. They were also there to identify and question three local Afghan men designated as "High Value Targets," who were believed to be assisting enemy fighters, while Soldiers from the 2-503rd, also known as Task Force Rock, maintained support-by-fire positions.

"We have had a lot of intelligence, both collected by us, and brought in by locals, saying that the enemy is in the village

of Kur Baugh," said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Brandon M. Kennedy, 24, from Shelton, Conn., Platoon Leader for 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Able Company.

In three different waves, CH-47 Chinooks and UH-60 Blackhawks flew the approximately 150 Afghan and American Soldiers from Forward Operating Base Honaker-Miracle to the west of Kur Baugh. The 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Soldiers air assaulted to landing zone Steeler. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, an element from Headquarter and Headquarters Com-

pany, and the ANSF landed on landing zone Titans approximately 200 meters above their separate objectives.

After the elements landed and diligently navigated through the darkness for 200 meters down steep, rocky, and unkind mountainous terrain, the mission changed.

After dropping off the Soldiers of 1<sup>st</sup> platoon, one of the Blackhawk started experiencing mechanical problems and had to make a hard landing. The pilots and crew were picked up by one of the other helicopters and flown back to Jalalabad Airfield.

Immediately, Operation Longest Mile changed from search and clear Kur Bagh to secure and rescue a disabled aircraft. While the Soldiers from 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon, 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon, and HHC were moved by air to the disabled helicopter, a Chosen Platoon Quick Reaction

Force was activated.

“That’s the good thing about Able Company, no matter what the operation is, no matter what the operation requires, Able Company will adapt, overcome and complete the mission,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jeremiah K. Smith, 32, from Lewistown, Pa., Platoon Sergeant for 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon. “No matter what it is, no matter how long we’ve been planning on conducting one mission... if there is a change of mission we are able to adapt, overcome and be successful.”

The QRF air assaulted to the disabled Blackhawk to reinforce 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon because intelligence said the enemy knew a helicopter was down and was going to attack. The remaining elements landed shortly afterwards and set up a defensive perimeter.

“When we first ar-

rived at the downed helicopter the focus was executing quickly, making sure we had a good perimeter, getting the dominant terrain, establishing secure fighting positions on the high ground to make it harder for the enemy to attack us, and determining probable avenues of approach. It was a lot of planning,” said Senior Airman Gabriel O. Bird, 28, a Joint Terminal Attack Controller with the 122<sup>nd</sup> Air Support Operations Squadron for the Louisiana Air National Guard. “We all worked through the night to make sure that if we got attacked we could speedily and effectively counter-attack and put fire on the enemy, whether bombs or artillery.”

Task Force Rock called for a Downed Aircraft Rescue Team (DART), which after arriv-

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ing, was able to make necessary mechanical adjustments and repairs to the disabled helicopter.

Early the next morning, the pilots and crew were flown in and were able to get the helicopter safely off the ground and fly it out.

Now with a very defensible position, and with the extraction helicopters not scheduled until the evening, the mission changed to disrupt any enemy activity in the northern Watapoor Valley.

During the day the enemy began sending up scouting parties disguised as local civilians, who were allegedly moving through Able Company's defensive perimeter on their way to and from work, which is one of the enemy's tactics, according to Kennedy.

"We had a man come into the area and

said he was looking for a cow. We secured him, so he couldn't actually walk our perimeter and give up our location when he returned from where he came from," said Staff Sgt. Anthony R. Chisholm, 37, a Tactical Air Controller, with the 122<sup>nd</sup> ASOS. "[Intelligence] gathered after we secured him said they couldn't attack because we had one of theirs. They did not want him to get hurt in cross fire, so it lent credibility that he was there to scout."

After 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and HHC formed a recon-

naissance squad and scouted the 9,188 foot mountaintop terrain, Able Company made adjustments to their security perimeter.

"One of the things we're taught is always, going into any kind of position, you always want the high ground. If you have the high ground you have a better vantage point than anybody else does," said Smith.

The high ground proved vital as armed insurgents came around a bend. The paratroopers engaged the enemy.

"They started run-



ning east and it put them right in my sector,” said Spc. Benjamin W. Goins, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Able Company. “I told myself I’ve got to stop him. I can’t let him get away.”

When the shots rang out Smith and the Soldiers near him immediately rose up and began rushing up the mountainside toward the gun fire.

“Once you start hearing shots fired you’re not thinking about anything else but getting up to where you need to get up to.

You don’t care how steep the hill is. You don’t care how far you have to go. You’re just going to get up there, and do what you have to do,” said Smith.

“I look at it this way, my Soldiers are there, and that is the biggest concern for me.”

ANA detained the three fighters whose

status was further confirmed by intelligence. They were brought back to an ANA base.

“If those guys would have escaped and got back to their leadership, they could have easily identified our positions and brought critical information to their commander,” said Kennedy.

Towards the end of the afternoon, more intelligence indicated an attack was going to come around 3 p.m. Able Company took the initiative and fired first. Firing 60mm mortars, 155mm artillery rounds, and dropping bombs on suspected enemy locations on the surrounding ridgeline, and on the position 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon identified as the most dangerous for the enemy to achieve, according to Kennedy.

“By Able Company’s show of force with the bomb strikes and the

heavy artillery drops, along with the precision mortar rounds and the defensive posture, we prevented the enemy from attacking,” said Kennedy.

“Able Company went from a planned 24 hour search and clear of a village that was rehearsed and had in the works for a long time and immediately transitioned into the securing and recovery of a downed helicopter,” said Kennedy. “No one got hurt, no casualties, and we went from a very confusing situation to setting up in a secure enough posture where the enemy never attacked and capturing three enemy scouts. I think that speaks high regards for Able Company’s ability, and the battalion’s responsiveness to give us the assets we need. Even though we had a change of mission, it still was a very successful mission that followed.”

Continued from page 2

build the bunker positions at the bridge," said Williams. "They also needed local OP's, which we're building near the bridge. So now we can see all the area around us. The enemy can't come here unimpeded like they have been."

ISAF will continue to operate two of three larger observation posts to support the ABP, but once the bunkers and fighting positions are built the ABP will take over operations at the Gowedesh Bridge.

Operation Mountain Highway II is an ongoing operation, but it's already considered a great

success, according to Williams. "Since we have secured this bridge we can now bring development to this region," said Williams. "We can fix the road and bring economic and government development here. The insurgents have lost the upper hand in this area."



*Army Sgt. Shawn Seymour, a M-240B Machine Gun Operator in Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), pulls security during Operation Mountain Highway II in Nuristan Province Afghanistan April 27.*



*Soldiers from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) hosted a 10-kilometer Global War on Terrorism run, nicknamed the GWOT Trot, on Forward Operating Base Fenty in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan May 17. The run was held on numerous forward operating bases in Iraq and Afghanistan. Soldiers at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, also conducted a trot to support their fellow deployed Soldiers.*



By J. Steven Birchfield  
M.D.

# DOCS CORNER

The blood suckers are out, and malaria season is back in full swing. Bayonet has had its first case of malaria this year.

Malaria comes in four types: Falciparum, Malariae, Vivax, and Ovale. Falciparum is the big killer around the world, but fortunately, only about 7% of the malaria in Afghanistan is Falciparum, and 92% of the malaria Vivax. All of the Bayonet Soldiers to date have had Vivax malaria. Vivax is only supposed to make you feel terrible with high fevers at morning and night when the parasite is most active. Unfortunately, this Vivax is brutal and all of the Soldiers that we admitted for Malaria had a big risk of bleeding to death because the malaria affected some of the elements that make the blood clot (platelets).

So far, thanks to soldiers doing the right thing and taking their meds, good leadership, and good PM support and constant reminders to take malaria medications, The 173rd has only had four people with malaria this year.

If your thinking "hey, this is pretty good, so I don't need to take my meds." You are wrong. This is down from 37 cases with 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain the



year before and over 50 cases for the 173<sup>rd</sup> two years ago.

We had 5 cases from the 1/508<sup>th</sup> in the four months they were attached to Bayonet. We also had a variety of "other units" in our AO who came down with Malaria, bringing the total military count in our AO to 17.

Of course, we have seen many local nationals with Malaria.

In order to stay protected, keep taking your Doxycycline or Mefloquine. Use your bednets, and keep the Permethrin on your uniform. Bug spray with DEET will also keep the bugs off.

It is important to know that Doxycycline and Mefloquine only kill malaria in your blood.

Malaria is tricky as it is the malaria in your blood that gives you symptoms like high fever and the doxycycline and Mefloquine keep you from getting sick, but the malaria can still hide out in your liver even though it gets killed in the blood. Sometimes malaria can show up years later.

Therefore, when you leave Afghanistan and go back to home station, we will check your blood and give you "malaria terminal prophylaxis", which means a malaria parasite killing dose of Primaquine that wipes out the malaria in your blood and in your liver.

Stay safe, keep protected.

# 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 at DSN 318-831-2330**

## Roman Catholic Services

<i>Mass</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>1230Z / 1700L</i>
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**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*

# Medal of Honor Recipient Sgt. Larry S. Pierce

**Sgt. Larry S. Pierce,  
HHC,  
1st Battalion, 503rd  
Infantry Regiment  
(Airborne)**

**Republic of Vietnam  
Sept. 20, 1965**



Pierce was serving as squad leader in a reconnaissance platoon when his patrol was ambushed by hostile forces.

Through his inspiring leadership and personal courage, the squad succeeded in eliminating an enemy machine gun and routing the opposing force.

While pursuing the fleeing enemy, the squad came upon a dirt road and, as the main body of his men entered the road, Pierce discovered an anti-personnel mine emplaced in the road bed.

Realizing that the mine could destroy the majority of his

squad, Pierce saved the lives of his men at the sacrifice of his life by throwing himself directly onto the mine as it exploded.

Through his indomitable courage, complete disregard for his safety, and profound concern for his fellow Soldiers, he averted loss of life and injury to the members of his squad.

Pierce's extraordinary heroism, at the cost of his life, are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the armed forces of his country.

# 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team



## OEF VIII

## Commemorative book

Will be available upon redeployment  
More information to follow

Will be available for purchase on the 173rd ABCT website (<http://www.173abnbde.setaf.army.mil>)



***Spc. James M. Finley***

*Finley was a military policeman in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion (Airborne), 173rd ABCT. He was a proud member of "Chaos" Military Police Platoon.*



## ***Pfc. Andrew Shields***

*Shields was a combat medic in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion (Airborne), 173rd ABCT. He was a proud member of "Chaos" Military Police Platoon.*