



THE TIEN BIEN TIMES

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM X

KING OF BATTLE



Army Pfc. Adam Hubbard and Army Pfc. Kenneth Freeborn, of the 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, calibrate Howitzer rounds on the east side of FOB Shank February 14.

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For Story Suggestions, contact [SSG Cobbeldick](#)



173rd AIRBORNE
Brigade Combat Team • Sky Soldiers



1st Annual Pat's Run April 17, 0800

A 4.2 mile run commemorating the civic service and leadership of Pat Tillman, funding the Pat Tillman Foundation's continued support of military members and their families through educational scholarships which last year dispersed over \$625,000, starts at 0800 on April 17th 2010 at the Jordanian Compound. The 1st 500 registered runners will receive a commemorative Pat's Run T-shirt.

-Free food and beverages at the post-run party

-Prizes for top finishers in each category

-Register as a participant or volunteer

-Sign up sheets are located at all FOB DFACs

-Email: castroattherun@yahoo.com for further questions

-Phone-Roshan;079-911-9178

PAT TILLMAN FOUNDATION

1ST ANNUAL PAT'S RUN

0800 - 17 APRIL 2010 -
JORDANIAN COMPOUND STARTING LINE

-JOIN THOUSANDS OF FELLOW RUNNERS AROUND THE WORLD TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF FORMER ASU AND ARIZONA CARDINAL FOOTBALL STAR AND ARMY RANGER, PAT TILLMAN.

-OUR FIRST ANNUAL PAT TILLMAN (SHADOW) RUN STARTS AT 0800 ON APRIL 17TH 2010 AT THE JORDANIAN COMPOUND.

-4.2 MILE RUN COMMEMORATING THE CIVIC SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP OF PAT TILLMAN AND PAT TILLMAN FOUNDATION'S CONTINUED SUPPORT OF MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS. LAST YEAR DISPERSING OVER \$625,000.

-1ST 500 REGISTERED RUNNERS RECEIVE A COMMEMORATIVE PAT'S RUN T-SHIRT

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-PRIZES FOR TOP FINISHERS IN EACH CATEGORY

-REGISTER AS A PARTICIPANT OR VOLUNTEER

-SIGN UP SHEETS ARE LOCATED AT ALL FOB DFACs

-EMAIL: [CASTROATHTHERUN@YAHOO.COM](mailto:castroattherun@yahoo.com) FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS



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Commander's Corner

Sky Soldiers, Family & Friends,

As March approaches, we enter our third month of our deployment. This is statistically the most dangerous time of the deployment from a safety perspective. Units in their third month of deployments have experienced up to a forty percent increase in preventable safety injuries. This is an unacceptable trend not only because we cannot afford to lose a teammate to a preventable accident, but also because we know the correct actions to take to prevent accidents. At this point in the deployment we have suffered 26 preventable accidents.

Six Sky Soldiers have been evacuated, three of whom are not expected to return to theater. These are more than numbers, each case represents a teammate who failed to perform their mission properly, or a leader who failed to properly supervise and enforce standards, and now our mission becomes more difficult with one less Sky Soldier ready. Don't let this happen to you and don't let it happen to your Sky Soldiers.

Operational hazards are an inherent part of combat, and we take actions to minimize their effects. We must do the same for safety hazards. From proper weapons handling procedures to equipment tie-down plans to proper training on vehicle operation to fire safety, all Sky Soldiers and leaders must do everything within their power to ensure proper standards are known, enforced and that unsafe actions are identified and corrected immediately.

The difficulty of explaining to loved ones that their Sky Soldier has been lost is significant, but to explain that it could have been prevented would be unbearable for all concerned. Do your duty to ensure it does not happen. We owe this to our Sky Soldiers and their families.

The second item I will address this month is combined action. Combined action is the goal for partnerships with our ANSF and Coalition Partners. We can no longer settle for just executing operations together. We must train, plan, prepare, rehearse, maintain, execute and AAR together. Combined TOCs, aid stations, maintenance facilities, and training events will become commonplace. Lessons learned must be shared, we can learn much from each other. General McChrystal, Commanding General of ISAF and Major General Scaparrotti have made living, working and fighting with the Afghan Security Forces one of their top priorities in order to enhance their capabilities. There will be increased risks initially, but the long term benefit to all formations will allow us to succeed. It will require discipline to execute combined action properly. Discipline is one of our hallmarks as a Brigade. We can and will succeed.

It will be though combined action that we will train the ANSF and build their capacity to maintain security in AO Bayonet. It will be though combined action that the ANSF

and build their capacity to maintain security in AO Bayonet. It will be though combined action that the ANSF learn how a military in a free society takes its direction from the civilian elected leadership. It will be through combined action that we will accomplish our mission of building their capacity to conduct security operations that provide security and uphold sovereignty with continued success and requiring less coalition support. Combined action is the way ahead.

Sky Soldiers!

**Col. Jim Johnson
Bayonet-6**

**"A dead Soldier who has given his life because of the failure of his leader is a dreadful sight before God. Like all dead Soldiers, he was tired before he died, undoubtedly dirty, and possibly frightened to his soul; and there he is on top of all that...never to see his homeland. Don't be the leader who failed to instruct him properly, who failed to lead him well. Burn the midnight oil that you may not, in later years, look at your hands and find his blood still red upon them."
---James Warner Bellah, Colonel Canadian Army WWII,**



THE TIEN BIEN TIMES ASKS...

What are your favorite Winter Olympic Events?

Army Pfc. Samuel Johnson HHC 173rd
ABCT



"Speed skating, because it reminds me of when I used to do track and field."

Army Pfc. Justin Tally 2nd Plt. C Troop 1-
91 Cavalry



"My favorite Winter Olympic events are curling and hockey."

Army Sfc. Melissa Wakefield HHC 173rd
ABCT



"Snowboarding, because it's something I can't do but I want to try it one day. I like watching it."

Army Pvt. Dustin Holland 2nd Plt. C
Troop 1-91 Cavalry



"My favorite Winter Olympic Sports are all the men's and women's snowboarding events."

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TIEN BIEN FLASHBACK



The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team's Soldiers have seen many wars and conflicts.

On December 2, 2003 1200 troops from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and Iraqi security forces conducted Operation Bayonet Lightning, designed to capture weapons, materials, and people that posed a threat against Coalition Forces. The joint operation, lasting about 16 hours, was concentrated on Al Hawija and the village of Rashad, 60 Kilometers to the south of Kirkuk. 173rd Soldiers located and confiscated 62 AK-47 assault rifles, 200 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, one rocket propelled grenade launcher and two improvised explosive device making kits. Twenty six individuals were captured, including three targeted individuals: Saad Mohammed ad-Douri, the private secretary of Izzat Ibrahim ad-Douri, Hamid Saad, a senior official of Saddam Hussein's former ruling Ba'ath Party in charge of youth and student affairs, and a former general of the disbanded Iraqi Army.



Superb Followers

By Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cob-beldick,

“Follower-ship” is akin to selflessness and maturity.”

Most people associate leadership with the military, but few people realize just how essential “follower-ship” is to the equation.

Without “follower-ship”, even the best leadership is derailed. One cannot fathom a great leader not being able to earn the trust, respect and dedication of his subordinates, but missions also hinge on “follower-ship” due to junior personnel being ready, willing and able to execute.

Placing ones trust in another person is never easy. Good followers should also be thinkers – blind “follower-ship” is not a desired trait.

Superb followers can make an operation go like clockwork. Followers know when to ask questions and when not to ask questions. Warriors know when to accept the decisions and unequivocally support their leaders. Quibbling or undermining have no place in a follower’s rules of engagement. “Follower-ship” is akin to selflessness and maturity.

King of Battle Calibrates Artillery Rounds, Charges

Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — “King of the Herd” Field Artillery Specialists and Cannon Crewmembers deployed with 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, here at Forward Operating Base Shank are using the tools accumulated from prepping countless artillery rounds to prepare for assisting troops in contact.

Army Pfc. Adam Hubbard, a Cannon Crewmember and Field Artillery Specialist with the regiment, said the intricacies of calibrating artillery rounds and charges are more involved than people think.

“It’s a lot more than what most people think. Most people think its ‘pull string, go boom.’ That’s not at all what it is; it takes a lot to do what we do,” said Hubbard.

“You’ve got to have the round runner bring out the round, make sure the charge is right, hand us the round, put the round in, have someone close the breach, put the deflection and quadrant in, make sure we’re going to be on point, and make sure everything goes smoothly as verified by our chief.” said Hubbard.

Every calibration involves connecting data with fire direction control, said Army Pfc. Kenneth Freeborn, a Cannon Crewmember and Field Artillery Specialist with the regiment.

“We calibrate each lot, each powder, to make sure we have all the data in the computer with fire direction control. When we fire a different lot, it could be made by somebody else, so we have to calibrate each round, and check the velocity and how far that round is going to go,” said Freeborn.

“How far typically depends on what charge you have, there are a lot of different charges,” he explained. “A charge two shoots a lot shorter than what a charge seven or charge eight would.”

When calibrating, the Cannon Crewmembers use forward observers to verify target information, said Freeborn.

“We have forward observers looking at the impact zone, telling us where to fire,” he said. “They have marks where they want the rounds to land, so we just make our corrections and put the rounds on the ground.”

The regiment calibrates lots, powders, and charges often because of the critical nature of responding accurately to assist troops in con-



“We’re here to destroy the enemy.”



Kings of the Herd show ANA brothers in arms the intricacies of lots and charges.



“Most people think its ‘pull string, go boom.’ That’s not at all what it is; it takes a lot to do what we do,” said Army Pfc. Adam Hubbard.

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“The purpose of the calibration is that when we get a tic message, troops in contact, we run out to the guns and we know that when we shoot we’re going to be on point. We know that all our data is correct and that we’re going to hit the target that we intend to hit,” said Hubbard.

Both Freeborn and Hubbard agreed that being in the cannon trails is a great feeling.

“I love it; I wouldn’t do anything else in the army,” said Freeborn.

“It’s a rush when you’re inside of the trails and the cannon goes off. There’s nothing like it in the world,” said Freeborn.

“It’s a great feeling hearing that round go off and hearing the boom smelling the smoke that come out it’s a great feeling,” said Hubbard. “We love to shoot, especially when our battle buddies need it. When they need us, we’re here to shoot for them and destroy the enemy.”

TF Bayonet, ANA Soldiers Improve Security in Kherwar



“It’s important to have some time with kids to show them we’re friendly, we’re here to help and we’re to make their lives better,” said 1st Lt. Jose Burgos, platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, C troop.

Story and photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – In a valley surrounded by the snow-covered mountains of the Kherwar district, stands Combat Outpost Kherwar, the home of the Soldiers of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. The valley and its surrounding areas have long been a stronghold of insurgent and Taliban forces.

The Soldiers of Troop C have been at COP Kherwar for almost three months and with their help, the security in the area has improved and the people of the area are beginning to see the Afghan government at work.

Every day, members of the Afghan National Army and Police, alongside the Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Troop C, patrol the area ensuring the progress and development of a district that previously had not seen the presence of Afghan governance continues.

Outside the COP, lies the village of Ashnie, a frequent patrol stop for 2nd Platoon.

“This is one of our security bubble areas,” said Army 1st Lt. Jose Burgos, platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, speaking about the surrounding villages that he and his Soldiers patrol daily. “We try to come here once a week.”

“We come here to talk to the village elder and the people of the village to one, let them know we’re coming around and two, to make sure that their families are okay and see if they need anything,” Burgos said.

These patrols are about more than providing security and building relationships. They allow villagers to be able to see their own army and police troops patrolling their villages

“We’re trying to get the ANA and ANP out so that people know they are going to be active during the summer,” said Spc. Jordan Lovett, a machine gunner in 2nd platoon, and native of Fresno, Calif.

“It’s letting the populace know they’re in charge, and we’re just here assisting them,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class Jack Fryberger, of York, Penn., 2nd Platoon’s platoon sergeant. “It’s the Afghan National Security Forces winning over their country.”

The increased presence of Soldiers and Afghan army and police has helped improve the area’s security and with that improvement, 2nd Platoon and their Afghan counterparts see progress being made.

“We’ve noticed a lot of differences,” said Burgos. “In the way they treat us and the way they come talk to us.”

“When we first got here, only the older gentlemen would come talk to us,” he continued. “If there were kids out, the elders would tell their kids to go inside. Now when the villagers see us, they come out to talk to us.”

Building relationships with the young kids in the village is something Burgos wants his Soldiers to work on in addition to working with the village elders.

“It’s important to have some time with the kids to show them we’re friendly, we’re here to help and we’re here to make their lives better,” he said. “Now, we’re always surrounded by kids and if there are kids around, it’s usually a good sign.”

With the Afghan National Army and Police getting more involved, the impact of their presence can be seen when the platoon walks into a village.

“With the ANA being so involved now, people want to talk to them,” said Fryberger. “The villagers understand now that the ANA is their force and we’re just here with them.”

The improved security has also impacted the nearby bazaar.

“When we first got here, there were only four shops in the bazaar outside the COP,” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Pine, a squad leader for 2nd Platoon. “Now, there are more than 15 and more keep moving in.”

However, one of the most telling signs of progress can be seen in the ranks of the Afghan army and police troops.

“When you see their regular enlisted guy on patrol, he’s out there shaking hands, drinking chai tea and talking with the locals because he now feels that the ANA are in charge,” said Fryberger.

“Even down to the lowest level, they’re all doing something to help.”

Kherwar Radio Station Provides News, Link to Leadership

Story and photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Every day, the Soldiers of C Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, and their Afghan counter parts patrol the villages surrounding Combat Outpost Kherwar. While they talk to villagers and provide security to the area, they have another tool working for them back at COP Kherwar.

The district of Kherwar is mountainous and devoid of cell phone towers, making communications between villages difficult. However, C Troop with the help of an Afghan DJ, bring news, music and dramas to the people who would otherwise be without news.

Everybody in Kherwar listens to the radio", said 1st Lt. Timothy Miller, of Annapolis, Md., and the officer in charge of radio programming. "Their primary news comes from the radio station."

"Every day we have messages, music and citations from the holy Koran," said Miller.

However, the radio station is a recent development for the people of Kherwar.

"The radio station started in November and we got here in early December," said Miller. "It's something our squadron is pushing to really get the message out there."

In order to help ensure the message gets out, C Troop Soldiers have given away many hand-cranked radios to the people of Kherwar. The radios do not require batteries so they are perfect for the area, which during the winter is often covered in several feet of snow.

In addition to the normal programming, the DJ also takes requests from villagers.

"Since they don't have phone towers here, people who want to request music or a poem to be read on the radio, they'll take the request and drop it off in the district center," he said. "A lot of them are poems and shout-outs to their friends."

"We have an average of just over 300 requests a week and some people from as far as 7km away will walk to the district center and drop off a request," he added.

Recently, they've added an event they call "big Friday." Every Friday, the DJ will pull one name from the requests of the week and they win a prize, usually a blanket and radio. "Big Friday" premiered in January and has become a hit.

"Everybody loves it," said Miller. "We've never had a guy not claim a prize."

However, the weekly prizes aren't the only benefit to the radio station.

"Our main goal is to bring in Afghan leaders because it's their district, it's their country," said Miller. "It's also a very good way to legitimize the Afghan lead-



The DJ for radio Kherwar, Karwan "Pete" Takar, gets his equipment ready so he can read a poem he wrote on the air, Feb. 15. "I think this has been a winner of peace here," said 1st Lt. Timothy Miller, of Annapolis, Md., and the officer in charge of radio programming. "Everything we do is backed up with messages on the radio; it's a pretty big key to developing this area."

with the ANA, the police chief and the sub-district governor."

"They usually each come in once a week," he said. "If there's a big event, they usually come in right after the event."

Having a radio station in the Kherwar district, having long been a haven for the Taliban, is also effective in the fight against anti-Afghan forces.

"The Taliban have a cultural advantage, they live among the people," Miller explained. "When our messages are coming over the radio, they don't have a radio they can use to counter back those messages."

"When we have the ANA platoon leader, the ANP chief and National Defense Service guys coming in and talking about the progress we're making, they don't really have anything to counter that," he added.

As the radio station reaches more and more people, Miller and his DJs have plans to keep growing and improving the station.

"We want to get more material," Miller said. "We're getting more and more each month."

The investment in more material is a small matter compared to the benefits of the station.

"I think this has been a winner of peace here," he said. "The people feel like they're involved with the leadership and what the leadership has to say."

"Everything we do is backed up with messages on the radio," he added. "It's a pretty big key to developing this area."

C-Troop 1-91 Soldiers Train ANA Counterparts

Story and photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Combat Outpost Kherwar is under a blanket of fresh snow and as the sun comes up over the mountains in Logar's Kherwar province, the Soldiers of C Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, meet up with troops from the Afghan national army and prepare for a long day.

No matter the weather, the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon and their ANA counterparts patrol the surrounding villages, improving security, relationships with the local villagers, while also developing the ANA troops in preparation for them completely taking over future patrols.

"We patrol every day and the ANA lead the patrols," said Jordan Lovett, a machine gunner for 2nd Platoon.

Leading the patrols allows the ANA troops to put their training to the test.

"We train with them two times or more a week," said Sgt. 1st Class Jack Fryberger, 2nd Platoon's platoon sergeant.

"During training, we train them on certain tasks, and they train us on what they do," he said. "Then we put it together when we do our patrols."

"They are starting to learn more and realize we're teaching them things they can use," said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Pine, a squad leader from Los Angeles.

"Their leadership is also starting to get developed."

"The patrols reinforce the training that we do with them," he said. "They're like practical exercise of what we already know."

The training and patrols are working and the ANA are steadily taking more responsibility of the operations.

"They are starting to take part more and more," said Pine.

"As a troop, we've always had them lead the patrols," said Fryberger. "In the last week we've had them deciding what the routes were going to be, what we're going to do and what the mission is."

The goal is for the ANA to be able to pick up where 2nd Platoon will leave off at the end of their deployment.



"We're trying to help develop the Afghan army to be able to patrol the countryside on their own, without us," said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Pine.



"We're trying to help develop the Afghan army to be able to patrol the countryside on their own, without us," said Pine. "It's their country and they need to start taking control of it."

With a new, ambitious ANA commander in the area, their soldiers will continue to improve and take on more operational responsibility.

"He wants to do more training with his guys," said Pine. "He wants to help take part in planning processes so he can integrate in and take over patrolling."

In only three months, the ANA troops have made many improvements and 2nd Platoon can see the results of their efforts.

"I think there has been a definite improvement," said Lovett.

"It is getting better," added Pine.

As the year goes on and the patrols continue, the Soldiers of C Troop will be watching the continued development of their Afghan partners. With the last three months as evidence, the future looks bright for the future of the Afghan soldiers and the people of the Kherwar district.

"This just reaffirms that they're getting it, that they understand," said Fryberger. "They're doing extremely well now that they're being given the chance to be in charge."

TF Bayonet, Logar Sub-Governors Refine Project Proposals

Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The Task Force Saber command group of the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, and Logar province's district sub-governors are continuing to fine-tune the project proposal process for provincial reconstruction efforts for the people of Logar.

Army Capt. Raymond Spees, the civil military officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion, said that these provincial reconstruction projects are a unifying dynamic.

"Projects are one of the few tools to influence the people and be able to unify Afghanistan, therefore we have all these development agencies here USAID, coalition forces, the Czech provincial reconstruction team, the state department," said Spees. "We're all working together to use these tools to be able to build development and also build governance capacity."

The Feb. 9 conference was the second of many to come between the sub-governors and Task Force Saber.

"In this conference, we figure out the mistakes we are trying to solve, and it's a big coordination between the government departments," said Logar Deputy Governor Alhaj Shojakuddin Shouja.

It is very important for these projects to build rapport between the developmental agencies, said Shouja.

"If we coordinate every time, then we will not have problems anymore. It is important to make a close relationship," said Shouja.



The Task Force Saber Command Group of the 1st Squadron 91st Cavalry Regiment and Logar District Sub-Governors fine tune the Provincial Reconstruction Project Proposal Process for reconstruction efforts in the Logar Province.

"The message of these projects is basically that the government is here to help the people," he continued. "The people need to understand that."

If they understand that, the people can take ownership of these Reconstruction projects, said Spees.

"Hopefully people will have a better understanding of how they can get projects done within their communities. We want the government to understand how we can better support them in the process, that way they can be more effective and more efficient. It's very important that the government is able to reach out to the people and unify the people. They need to understand that the government is here for them ... these projects are a way to empower them," said Spees.

Not only are these reconstruction projects a means of empowerment, but also governmental lucidity, said Spees.

"We're able to create transparency, we're getting the government to actually communicate more with its people," said Spees.

The dialogue initiated by these meetings will hopefully create grassroots movements of project development conceived by the people themselves, said Spees.

"We want the people to come up with their own projects, their own ideas, and then we want them to bring those projects to the government. They bring them to the district level, which has representatives from all the different villages. Then at the district level we want them to prioritize these projects," said Spees.

Shouja shared the same sentiment.

"I'm looking to the people's needs. I am looking to the people's favorite projects and then I'm prioritizing those projects. I am doing my work according to the people's wishes, according to the people's needs; that's my job," said Shouja.

"I want to have the people of Logar province able to work and to have food or subsistence for their families, because if they are jobless, the enemy is using them and they are joining the enemy's ranks. I would like to have some long term projects to give them some jobs," said Shouja.

These projects are not only a means of job creation, but also ensure the security of the people, said Amin.

"If you want to bring security you should work on something, some project like this," said Amin.

"The people are going to find work. They are not going to be jobless. The economy of the people is going to get better day-by-day, and also the security is going to improve by those projects," said Amin.

"This is the thing the people need. Most of the people generally in Afghanistan are jobless. If they are going to get jobs, then they're going to support their families," said Amin. If they're going to support their families, the security is going to get better day-by-day." The only thing I want for the people, especially in Baraki Barak, is for them to have jobs to do."

Gallery Grand Opening Displays Afghan Cultural Identity

Story by Army Staff Sgt. Bruce Cobbeldick,

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan - - The Wardak Provincial government unveiled on Feb. 17 a new hub of culture and history - a gallery that underscores the common history and shared culture they claim as their own. They have additional icons that represent their heritage, as they take steps towards coming together.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony began with an opening prayer, given by a prominent Wardak woman, indicative of the progressiveness of Governor Fidai's administration. The gallery includes books, prints, paintings and calligraphy, celebrating a wide array of cultural artifacts. Governor Fidai said, "knowing ones history promotes unity and patriotism." The governor also announced he already has plans to expand the new facility in the near future.

"The event was an absolute success," according to one of the attendees, 1LT Kirsten Miller, an Intelligence Officer, for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. The room where the speeches were given was packed with government leaders, local elders, and mullahs from throughout Wardak. Furthermore, three women sat in the front row.

"The leaders who spoke during the event were excited about such an important gallery opening," said Miller. "They spoke from their hearts about Afghanistan needing to embrace their culture and unite as one in order to move forward. They were already talking about increasing the size of the gallery and the number of art exhibits."

"Some dominant themes in the gallery include concepts that include war and honor," said Miller. "The warring nature is a big part of the Afghan culture and history of Afghanistan. These wars and the great men who fought them are such a point of honor to the people of Afghanistan. This new gallery serves to help them remember the wars and the reasons they were fought, which makes working toward peace and democracy that much more important."

The other dominant theme, honor, also permeates the gallery. Great figures in Wardak and Afghanistan's history--Kings and Presidents, valiant and brave warriors, Mullahs and Islamic scholars. The gallery's walls even showcased the



Images, paintings, photographs and calligraphy filled the walls of Wardak Province's new gallery, which opened its doors on Feb. 17.

man who first brought apple orchards to Wardak. The gallery is filled with tributes to the Afghan people and their heritage.

"While the gallery focuses much of its work on Afghanistan's past, it does contain a wall that is dedicated to President Karzai. His pictures rest between two Afghan flags. The gallery features a wide array of important symbols of how hopeful the people are for stability. President Karzai has a difficult but important responsibility to the people of Afghanistan to build a government that is responsive to the needs of the Afghan people," Miller said.

The many exhibits include a picture that represents the future of the Afghan people - a painting of a blue dove. The dove's wings are outstretched as if in flight and the word "Peace" floats above it. This picture was placed just below paintings of both President Karzai and Mullah Omar. "The elements of this picture of a dove are symbolic of both how far Afghanistan has come in less than a decade, as well as how far Afghanistan still has to go," Miller added.

New Platoon Leader, Same Platoon Mission

Story and photos by Army Pfc. Michael Sword TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – In the Army, change happens all the time. Whether it's uniforms, weapons or the food at the dining facility, nothing is more inevitable than change. For the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, this week marks one of their biggest changes yet.

1st Lt. Jose Burgos, has been the platoon leader for 2nd Platoon for 18 months, since the unit returned to their home station after the 173rd's last deployment to Afghanistan.

"When I came to the unit, I got a bunch of brand new guys, it was a brand new platoon," he recalled. "My platoon sergeant and I built up this platoon and we've become a family, we've become very close."

We do everything together," he said. "You become real close and they become not only good soldiers, but also good friends."

1st Lt. Colin Murch, a native of Grand Rapids, Mich., will be taking over for Burgos this week and plans to quickly integrate himself into the platoon.

"The challenge is learning all the guys in my platoon, learning what their strengths and weaknesses are," said Murch. "And getting to know each one of them as an individual and building those relationships."

That, however, is just the beginning of the long road ahead for a new platoon leader Burgos said.

"Initially, the most difficult part is trying to work with your counterparts, the ANA," he said. "Since we've been here we've had 2 different Afghan National Army platoons and it's hard to adjust to their way of doing things and for them to adjust to the way we're doing things since we are a new unit that just came in."

"Also, learning the area, learning the people, meeting the village elders, trying to build the relationships that we need in order to continue progress and follow the counter insurgency fight," he said.

Even with all the challenges ahead, Murch is excited for his opportunity to have what he calls the best job in the Army for a lieutenant.



New platoon leader, 1st Colin Murch (left), of Grand Rapids, Mich., and 1st Lt. Jose Burgos, both of 2nd Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, talk to the village elder of the village of Malik after giving him school supplies for him to give to the village's children.

"Taking over in a combat zone has its challenges but it's also a great opportunity and it's something that, when you're a lieutenant, you want to do," he said. "1st Lt. Burgos, along with his squad leaders, has done a great job and set me up for success."

After working side-by-side with Murch for the last week, Burgos is confident in his replacement.

"I think he's doing very well," said Burgos. "He's got a good attitude, he's willing to learn, willing to take direction and I think he's going to do great."

"He's a good fit for the platoon," he added.

Capt. John Williams, commander, Troop C., agrees. "He's got a very outgoing and positive attitude," said Williams. "When I met him, I thought this would be the perfect guy because that's what you need to have to talk with the elders."

Losing a platoon leader is always hard for a commander. However, Williams has faith that although he's losing the experienced Burgos, Murch will quickly assume the lead of 2nd Platoon and continue providing security and building relationships with his soldiers, village elders and the residents of Kherwar district.

"The biggest thing here in Kherwar is relationships," said Williams.

"I think it's going work out well," he added

"Taking over in a combat zone has its challenges but it's also a great opportunity and it's something that, when you're a lieutenant, you want to do," said 1st Lt. Burgos.

Logar NDS and ANP Arrest Four Men for Fuel Theft



A man suspected of illegally obtaining fuel from a U.S. fuel distribution point looks on as a worker pumps fuel into a truck. The photo was taken in the hours before local NDS and ANP officials arrested the men outside of Forward Operating Base Shank.

Story by the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Local National Directorate of Security, NDS, and Afghan National Police arrested four men for allegedly stealing fuel in a joint undercover law enforcement operation Sunday in Pul-e Alam.

The men are accused of illegally obtaining fuel from U.S. Forward Operating Base Shank and selling it to local gas stations for profit.

U.S. officials on the base first notified Abdul Quayom Nurzai, the Logar Chief General Crimes Prosecutor, about the suspicious activity Saturday morning.

"The law will be enforced not only in Logar, but all over Afghanistan," said Nurzai. "We will find and prosecute criminals to the fullest extent of the law."

"Mr. Nurzai planned and led this joint undercover law enforcement operation," said Major Thomas Gilleran, Public Affairs Officer for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. "We're pleased with the result and the execution of such a complex operation shows great promise for Afghan law enforcement."

Nurzai's agents arranged a meeting in which one of the men in question provided money to an undercover agent posing as a fuel distribution point worker.

The men proceeded to fill up two 5,500 gallon trucks with fuel. Officials apprehended them as they drove off the base.

Two U.S. Soldiers are also under investigation for their possible link to this and other fuel thefts on the base.

Further details are pending the ongoing investigation.

Equal Opportunity

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH - FEBRUARY

This month, our Commander in Chief issued a proclamation concerning the 2010 Black History Theme of Black Economic Empowerment. An excerpt of which is below.

The 2010 Black History Theme: The History of Black Economic Empowerment

...Overcoming today's challenges will require the same dedication and sense of urgency that enabled past generations of African Americans to rise above the injustices of their time. That is why my Administration is laying a new foundation for long-term economic growth that helps more than just a privileged few. We are working hard to give small businesses much-needed credit, to slash tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, and to give those same breaks to companies that create jobs here at home. We are also reinvesting in our schools and making college more affordable, because a world class education is our country's best roadmap to prosperity.

These initiatives will expand opportunities for African Americans, and for all Americans, but parents and community leaders must also be partners in this effort. We must push our children to reach for the full measure of their potential, just as the innovators who succeeded in previous generations pushed their children to achieve something greater. In the volumes of black history, much remains unwritten. Let us add our own chapter, full of progress and ambition, so that our children's children will know that we, too, did our part to erase an unjust past and build a brighter future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2010 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand ten, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Combined Action Commanders' Conference Unites

Story and photos by Army Spc. Daniel Haun TF Bayonet Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Army Col. James Johnson, commander of Task Force Bayonet and the U.S. forces in Logar and Wardak provinces, hosted a conference Feb. 23 for Afghan National Army and coalition commanders and command sergeants major for these provinces.

The conference was a forum for these military leaders to discuss the many ways that forces can work together, and the methods to improve cooperation and security across the two provinces.

"Combined action for us, with our Afghan and all of our coalition partners, is movement forward to achieve the same end state, and we must do that in all phases of the operation," said Johnson.

"The more we get close, the more we share information with each other, the more we live together, helps us more and more with understanding, and helps in the future, said Brig. Gen. Abdul Razik, commander of the 1st Brigade, 201st Afghan National Army.

This understanding and future-minded thinking will keep the forces alert, said Razik.

"As we all know the spring will soon come, and the enemy will also come ... before the enemy starts acting, we will be there to stop them. We are alert for them," said Razik. "We must plan together like we did today, discussing our plans for the future. We must train together to prepare for the missions, and then we must rehearse together so we that we can go out and be successful," said Johnson.

He continued.

"Even more importantly, we come back after the mission and figure out what we can do better, so that the next time we are even more successful. Combined action is the all encompassing partnership between us and our coalition partners," said Johnson.



"We have momentum moving forward, and I think the partnership is going to be the most vital piece to that."



Even with these after-action reviews, there's no standardized answer to every obstacle, said Johnson.

"Logar and Wardak, the two provinces of which General Razik and I are responsible for, are very diverse. Even within those two provinces, you have different threats, under different conditions, in different districts, so there's no one uniform action against a specific threat," said Johnson.

The combined action forum, despite uniform action, did present a blueprint to respond to these diverse threats.

"One thing that is consistent is, we are focusing on the population separating the Afghan people from that threat, so that we can achieve the end state of improving their local communities and giving them more capacity to live a better life," said Johnson.

"I think we have momentum moving forward, and I think the partnership is going to be the most vital piece to that."

Sky Soldiers Thank Partners, Welcome Comrades



Col. James Johnson presents departing Jordanian Commander, Col. Mohammad Badareen, a token of appreciation for his service alongside the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

The Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar, Commander, Col. Milan Schulc, transfers his authority and bids fellow Combined Action Partners farewell, Feb. 23.



Lt. Gen. Michael Oates, director, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, greets fellow IED Defeat and Route Clearance Package Soldiers here Feb 20.

Major General John F. Campbell, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Commander, visits Forward operating Base Shank and parts of Logar Province Feb 19, in preparation for assumption of command of Regional Command East.





173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team



Photo Illustration by Army Spc. Daniel Haun