



THE CAVALRY CHARGE

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The Next Surge in Afghanistan

By Maj. Steven Miller
 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The troop surge in Afghanistan officially ended in September, but Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division are preparing for another surge that will arrive in country over the next three weeks: mail.

Each year the United States Postal Service publishes a deadline for sending mail from the U.S. to troops in Afghanistan with a reasonable chance of it arriving before Christmas.

This year that date was Dec. 3. Now that the date has passed, the mail handlers of the “Long Knife” Brigade prepare to process the many packages, cards and letters.

About 600 pieces of mail are processed each week at Forward Operating Base Gamberi, said Spc. Terrence Burgess, the mail clerk for the installation that houses more than 600 people. He expects that number to get larger as Christmas gets closer.

Burgess, a native of Morgan City, La., and one additional mail handler, both on their first deployments, are responsible for receiving, processing and distributing all of the mail that comes to this FOB.

To get from a post office in the U.S. to a FOB in Afghanistan, mail gets routed through a system of civilian and military agencies that move the mail by truck, plane and boat. Eventually, usually two to three weeks later, the mail arrives at the correct FOB in Afghanistan.

To deployed Soldiers, mail matters. A lot. It is a tremendous morale boost to get letters, cards and especially packages.

“The mail here is important. Someone may be waiting for a pillow from home to sleep on, a picture of their family or a favorite snack,” said Burgess.

With the instantaneous communication capabilities of tools like email, Facebook and Skype, there are certainly fewer cards and letters these days than in times past. But no electronic communication de-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff VanWey, 4BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Spc. Terrence Burgess, a human resources specialist and the primary mail clerk for Forward Operating Base Gamberi, Afghanistan, writes down the names of those who received mail while Spc. Zachariah Parvi, an air defense battle management system operator and the assistant mail clerk for the FOB, sorts through a postal “kicker” boxes which arrived at the base Dec. 9, here.

vice can take the place of a box from home, because the things Soldiers want and need cannot be emailed or Skyped.

Burgess likes getting snacks, but, as strange as it might sound, he especially likes getting basic hygiene items.

“Sometimes it’s hard to buy soap and shampoo here. It’s good to be able to have it mailed,” he said.

In an era in which Soldiers can order things online for themselves from Amazon and eBay, some things are still best handled by loved ones rather than retailers.

Burgess especially enjoys getting simple cards from his dad and teachers from high school.

“I’m still close to a bunch of my teachers and my basketball coach. It’s great when I get cards from them,” he said.

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Terrence Burgess, a human resources specialist and the primary mail clerk for Forward Operating Base Gamberi, Afghanistan, and U.S. Army Sgt. Brandon Fellin, an infantryman and the flight operations non-commissioned officer in charge for FOB Gamberi, unload postal “kicker” boxes which arrived at the base Dec. 9, 2012. Nearly 600 pieces of mail are processed through the FOB every week by Burgess, a Morgan City, La. native, and several other members of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, bringing much needed morale boosts to the “Long Knife” Soldiers stationed there.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff VanWey, 4BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

Though Burgess has had training in mail handling procedures, it is not his primary job in the Army. Normally, Burgess works for 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. This is an additional duty that he embraces, because every day he sees the importance of what he does.

“I didn’t expect to come out here to do mail, but I like it. I meet a lot of people and it definitely brings up morale,” he said.

Of course, the packages often contain things more emotional than just cookies, candy and shampoo. Many boxes carry photos of wives, husbands and kids. Some contain special Christmas gifts for the deployed Soldier.

Sgt. 1st Class Blake Constantine has a small package wrapped in red paper displayed prominently on a storage box in his office next to his desk. Taped to the package is a small piece of paper with the crayoned writing of a child.

“I won’t open that until Christmas Day. It’s from my seven-year-old son. It doesn’t matter what’s in it. It really is the thought that counts,” said Constantine.

All of these snacks, toiletries, gifts and emotions are carried in boxes that are packed with care and entrusted to the U.S. Postal Service for delivery.

After the long journey to Afghanistan and after much shuffling between hands of people who may not know, and might not care about the origination, destination or contents, the mail finally arrives at a FOB.

Once the mail arrives, a Soldier, who is waiting and looking for his own card or bottle of soap, carefully sorts and logs each piece of mail. He then finally presents the prized package to the intended recipient.

When that happens, everyone is happy.

1st Brigade prepares for future exercises

By Spc. Bailey Kramer and Sgt. John Couffer

1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – The 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division prepares for future missions with a Tactical Operations Center Exercise here, Dec. 3 to 6.

The Ironhorse Brigade executed readiness training by putting together the Deployable Assembly Shelter and establishing communications as part of the TOCEX.

“Being prepared and mission ready is important to the success of any unit,” said Philadelphia native, Sgt. Maj. Robert Leimer, the operations sergeant major for the Ironhorse Brigade. “If you aren’t mission ready, you can’t execute your commander’s intent.”

“You never know when you are going to need this set up, you never know when your mission will change or where you will be that you will need to know how to set up and work out of a DRASH,” explained River Falls, Wis., native, Spc. Koehl Heebink, a forward observer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop of the Ironhorse Brigade.

According to drash.com the DRASH is, “a quick-erect shelter system that integrates shelter, mobility, lighting, heating, cooling and power in one package. Part of the U.S. Army’s Standard Integrated Command Post System, DRASH Systems have helped military personnel establish rugged, user-friendly facilities for more than 25 years.”

The Soldiers organized the equipment, identified necessary equipment to take to the field, inspected and transported the chosen equipment to the site, and then set it up, Leimer went on to explain the planning process.

“We wanted to inspect and ensure we still had all our equipment from before we deployed,” explained Leimer. “I wanted to make sure we still had all the tents and connectors that put this whole thing together.”

After completing the set up, the perimeter and communications equipment were installed.

“You have to have a plan before boots hit ground and be ready to implement it right away,” Leimer explained. “Communications is what ties everything to a plan, so if you can’t establish communications, your plan will fall apart. That’s why we start here. If you are not mission ready it will go bad from day one and when it goes bad you can’t crawl from out of that hole.”

Leimer, who has lead the brigade in the DRASH set up since 2008, said that it takes about 25 Soldiers to properly construct the equipment, but 50 is a more ideal number.

“The more Soldiers helping, helps make the process quicker and smoother,” Leimer added.

“The more you set it up, the more it becomes second nature,” said Heebink, who has been involved in more than seven set ups. “Every time you set it up, you become faster and more proficient at it.”

Due to deployment, this was the first time in nearly two years

Ironhorse Soldiers have constructed the DRASH, but Leimer believes that their hard work ended in success.

“I am proud of what the Sol-

diers accomplished,” Leimer concluded. “It looks great.”

Following a six-month reset period, Ironhorse will resume field training exercises in February.



Photo by Spc. Bailey Kramer, 1BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – Glenville, N.C. native, Sgt. Lyle Pressley, an infantryman assigned to the operations platoon, HHT “Hammer,” 1st BCT, 1st CD, prepares framing for a Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter tent during a Tactical Operations Centers set up, here, Dec. 5.

Ironhorse participates in Christmas Parade

Photos by Spc. Bailey Kramer 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO



KILLEEN, Texas – Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, leads Soldiers from the Cav’s 1st Brigade Combat Team during Killeen’s 50th Annual Christmas Parade, here, Dec. 8. Ierardi served as a marshal in the parade.



KILLEEN, Texas – The 1st Cavalry Division’s “First Team” Color Guard leads Killeen’s 50th Annual Christmas Parade, here, Dec. 8. Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, the First Team’s commanding general, served as the parade’s marshal.



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1st Cav Band treats Fort Hood community to holiday sounds

By Spc. Angel Turner
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas—The time of year for holiday cheer, togetherness and famous Christmas songs has arrived.

Soldiers assigned to 1st Cavalry Division's Band performed a holiday concert for the Fort Hood community at Palmer Theater here, Dec. 8.

"The holidays are a time for Family and celebration," said Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, commanding general, 1st Cav. Div. "We can think of all sorts of images for this time of year but it's the sounds, those special unforgettable notes that always get us in the right mood."

The concert, themed Christmas Through the Years, drew in the crowds of people. Many Families in attendance joined together to hear favorite holiday tunes, a treat from the 1st Cav. Div. Band to them.

Accompanied by her husband, a Soldier in the 1st Cav. Div., and her daughter, Diana Glynn said she looked forward to hearing the band play.

"I never saw a military band perform and wanted my three-year-old daughter to get a chance to experience the fine arts," said Glynn. "It's nice to support them and I think this helps build the morale of other Soldiers."

Within the division's concert band, specialty bands, to include brass, jazz, and rock showcased the variety and capabilities of the band by doing their own rendition of holiday favorites.

"This is good for the holidays," stated Rickey Bell who is retired military. "It's good for people on the installation to have the chance to enjoy a free concert, es-



Photo by Spc. Angel Turner, 4BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

Soldiers assigned to 1-7 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., ruck-march to the half-way point of a 7.1 mile competition in which teams are faced against each other to finish with the fastest time, here, Nov. 16.

pecially the people that are not able to go out of town for the holidays. Overall this is something good for the community," added Bell who heard about the concert through the Fort Hood Sentinel.

Throughout the concert, Soldiers donned various costumes to resemble famous singers known for performing specific versions of various themed songs. The crowd interacted by singing along and moving to the beat. The theater known for playing movies for the public, for the time being, had a much different atmosphere.

"We entertain Troops and we do ceremonies but for some of our groups this is the first time they really had the opportunity to play for an audience," stated Chief Warrant Officer-5 Jeanne Pace, band master and commander of the 1st Cav. Div., band.

Toward the end of the concert, the band dedicated a song to all those who will be separated from their Family and friends during the

holiday season.

"That's what we're all about — morale, especially at special seasons like this, to help people kick off their holidays and have remembrances of Family time," said Pace.

Before starting the song, Home for Christmas, the audience

viewed holiday shout outs from the deployed 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cav. Div., who is currently serving in Afghanistan. During the song the reality of the separation of Family and friends during this time of year appeared evident.

At the conclusion of the concert, the band received a standing ovation. With the crowd happily cheering, the hard efforts of the band indeed paid off.

"I think it was a success," said Sgt. Elliot Chodkowski, a keyboardist assigned to the band. "With the limited time to prepare, I think we executed and made everyone ready for the Christmas season."

The group of Soldiers look forward to performing again next year if their deployment schedule allows for them to do so.

"The band had always been a part of the op tempo. I believe this is the first time in four or five years that there has been a concert on Fort Hood and it turned out really nice," stated Chodkowski who hails from Buffalo, N. Y.



Photo by Spc. Angel Turner, 4BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas—Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, commanding general, 1st Cav. Div., guest conducts the unit band during a holiday concert at Palmer Theater, here, Dec. 8.



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Live The Legend!

Medics certify new lifesavers, gain instructor skills

By Sgt. Quentin Johnson
2BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – The Army Combat Lifesaver is a bridge between the first aid given to all Soldiers during basic training and the medical training given to combat medics, according to the Medical Simulation Training Center, Fort

situations, approximately 50 Dark Horse Soldiers completed a combat lifesaver course here, Dec. 4 to 7.

The first of the year squadron-wide CLS class included lectures, slides, hands-on, practical exercises, lane training and a written test, Sgt. 1st Class Celester Harris said.

Soldiers learned advanced first aid procedures in controlling bleeding, pressure dressings, tourniquet applications, airway management, and tactical care operations such as care under fire and assessing wounded on the battlefield, Harris, a Dark Horse medical platoon sergeant, explained.

Combat lifesavers are vital during deployment in the fight against a battlefield threat Harris calls “blood loss.”

One of the most important things taught in class is control the bleeding while not trying to cause further harm to the wounded, Pvt. Tyler Debozy, a Dark Horse cavalry scout, said.

“Statistically, 60 percent of all preventable deaths in combat are due to blood loss,” Harris, from Coney Island, N.Y., added. “A CLS can bring these numbers down while allowing medics to work on the severe trauma cases.”

Helping medics during combat is a Dark Horse priority as

its goal is 90% of all Soldiers in the squadron CLS certified,” he added.

“With medics spread throughout the squadron’s troops, CLS trained Soldiers are needed to support them during deployments as ‘force multipliers.’”

As force multipliers, a CLS must be confident and proficient in the training, not forgetting they are assisting medics in saving lives.

“The CLS class is not a ‘check the list’ class, it’s important and makes a difference in combat especially when medics are busy with the severely wounded,” Spc. Cesar Rodriguez, a Dark Horse medic with Troop B, said.

Debozy agreed saying anything can happen in a deployment including the loss of a medic at which point a CLS would be the next step in treating the wounded, and the more CLS certified the greater chance for success.

“A friend of mine deployed last year to Iraq. He conveyed to me wounded were treated faster because of the efforts from medics and combat lifesavers working together,” Debozy who hails from Detroit, said.

Helping the wounded in combat is part of lessons learned during the class as part of the tactical combat casualty care, Harris said.

“CLS training is not just advanced first aid. It incorporates casualty care under fire, assessing patients and prepping them for transport,” he explained. “This is knowledge required to successfully pass the class and be certified.”

In addition to Soldier’s certification, the class afforded the medics an opportunity to build on their skills, confidence in instructing and inspire confidence in Sol-

diers.

“The class is very significant to medics as it provides a train the trainer concept. My senior medics lead the class and are assisted by two qualified junior medics,” Harris explained.

To become a CLS instructor, medics must successfully pass a combat lifesaver instructor course at Fort Hood’s Medical Simulation Training Center, he added. As instructors medics also keep refreshed and effective on their skills.

“Instructing keeps (medics) refreshed on our medical training as we get to incorporate real life scenarios into training and ensure our equipment works properly,” Rodriguez said. “We need that hands-on training ourselves and face to face experience with Soldiers we work around.”

As instructors, medics transfer some of their knowledge onto the Soldiers allowing them an active role in the life of a medic and building their confidence as lifesavers, Rodriguez, from Klamath Falls, Ore., stated.

“I become more confident as the Soldiers do ... when you evaluate others you start to evaluate yourself, looking for small mistakes,” Rodriguez said.

Self-evaluation paid off as the morale was high and Soldiers continued to excel during the class.

“(The class) was taught really well. The instructors were competent and knowledgeable,” Debozy said. “I retained more in this class than in any other class I have been in during my career. I am confident because of the teaching and confident I will do well treating wounded under the stress of combat.”

Another squadron-wide CLS class is scheduled for February.



Photo by Sgt. Quentin Johnson, 2BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – Spc. Arnold Redsteer, from Flagstaff, Ariz. and a multichannel transmission system operator-maintainer with HHT, 4th “Dark Horse” Sqdn., 9th U.S. Cav. Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., simulates applying a bandage to a Soldier’s arm for a hands-on practical exercise during the Dark Horse combat lifesaver course here, Dec. 4.

Carson, Colo.

Ensuring cavalry scouts with the 4th “Dark Horse” Squadron, 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are prepared to aid medics during combat trauma

are due to blood loss,” Harris, from Coney Island, N.Y., added. “A CLS can bring these numbers down while allowing medics to work on the severe trauma cases.”

Helping medics during combat is a Dark Horse priority as

Cav spouses paint with a twist

Photos by Spc. Angel Turner 4BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO



(Left) HARKER HEIGHTS, Texas—Spouses of Soldiers assigned to 1st Cav. Div.’s Headquarters enjoy casual conversation while adding dots to their pictures during a private session at Painting with a Twist here, Dec. 11. “The ‘twist’ part of Painting with a Twist is the wine,” stated Jane Connor, the artist who gave the class. “This is a way to encourage people to come out enjoy themselves, relax and have a glass of wine. This is a chance for people to connect to each other and have fun seeing how the paintings are developing.”



HARKER HEIGHTS, Texas— Spouses of Soldiers assigned to 1st Cav. Div.’s Headquarters showcase their final portraits, A Twinkling Christmas Tree, following a private session at Painting with a Twist here, Dec. 11.





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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

December 25, 2012

Commander, 1st Cavalry Division

To the Soldiers, Families and Supporters of the 1st Cavalry Division:

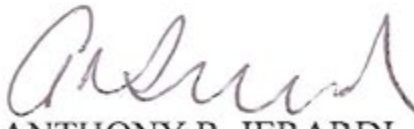
As we prepare to celebrate the holiday season, the Command team of the 1st Cavalry Division sends our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all the Troopers and their Families proudly serving our unit and this great Nation.

Each of you has sacrificed to defend America and our way of life. Families, friends, and supporters have all played a part in making sure we have a strong foundation from which to accomplish our many tasks and missions each day. Please take time to remember our deployed Troopers. I offer my sincere appreciation for their efforts in contributing to the safety and security of the Afghan people. I ask you to dedicate a portion of your Holiday celebration to keep our deployed First Team Troops and those around the Army and the rest of our military's branches in your thoughts and prayers. No matter the challenge, America's Citizens and Families have answered the call to duty for over 237 years. Just like Soldiers of yesteryear, today's Army is proof of the dedication and professionalism that make this an accomplished and proud organization.

Families are one of the pillars supporting our Troopers, and so is the Central Texas community. For the past 70 years they have worked hand in hand with the Fort Hood community to help improve the lives of our Soldiers. We can never forget the hard work and dedication they put in to make Central Texas a better place to live.

We celebrate the Holidays each year in this great Nation because we have the freedom to do so. By serving in our Army, you and your Families play an important role in allowing us to be thankful for what we have as we look ahead to greater challenges and opportunities. I want to thank you for your service, and I know that none of what this storied unit achieves is possible without the hard work, dedication, and sacrifices of you and your loved ones.

First Team - Live the Legend!


ANTHONY R. IERARDI
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

Happy Holidays