

2ND BATTALION, 377TH PARACHUTE FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT
FOB SALERNO, AFGHANISTAN

STEEL TIMES

ISSUE 2 VOLUME 1
FEBRUARY 2012



TF STEEL

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM 12-13



COMMANDER'S CUT



Dear Families and Friends of Task Force STEEL,

Another month has come and gone— time is quickly passing as we are soon approaching our third month of the deployment. Again, we trust you will enjoy this edition of the STEEL TIMES, to keep you informed and remain connected with your loved ones while we are deployed.

At the outset, I would like to convey a message to you— the spouses and Families— we would hope that this issue of the newsletter resonates with you, and in the very least, you understand how important you are and how much you are missed. Truly you magnify the joy, soften the sadness, and multiply the richness in our lives. It is you who share our successes and our triumphs, as well as, our frustrations— and you do so with grace, elegance, kindness, generosity of spirit, and unconditional love. To the spouses, you remind us that greatness is not found in possessions, power, or prestige— but rather it is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character. Thank you for the support you provide to our Soldiers.



SPC Kunsch, a medic attached to A Battery, stops to examine an Afghan child while on patrol in a small village outside FOB Salerno

It is hard to believe how much we have accomplished over the last 30 days. With probably the most diverse mission, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery remains at the core of the command and control piece of the battalion, overseeing numerous operations, logistics and manning movements, and resolute in the execution of security. Their role in partnership and training of the Afghan National Army is a top priority and improvements towards independent operations is being made daily— learning from them as much as they learn from us. The success of Alpha Battery as a maneuver force has been a complementary factor with each maneuver battalion here in Khost Province. Their steadfastness in mission execution and relentless pursuit of the enemy has facilitated an increased level of security and greater confidence in the Afghan National Security Forces with the local population. The firing batteries— Bravo and Charlie— continue to provide needed close supporting fires throughout the entire region. Providing an umbrella of protection with precision guided and non-weather dependant fire support 24 hours a day, facilitating combined operations. While Golf Company's responsiveness, flexibility, and proactiveness on all aspect of sustainment operations, flawless manning of the entry control point, and employment of the quick reactionary force has been unparalleled for mission success.

On the Cover...



Members of 1st Platoon, B Battery in action: The CoS is inspecting ammo from the number 2; Gunner is setting up for the next round; ATC is yelling commands to the section; number 1 is checking the bore.

There is no doubt, your Soldier is making a difference. Be confident that wherever we deploy, that the sight of an American service member in uniform— proud, confident, and purposeful— enables others to contemplate a life where hope has replaced despair, where peace has replaced conflict; where the human spirit is encouraged and not suppressed, and where the future can be brighter than the past.

Again, on behalf of CSM Moore, Task Force STEEL, and myself, you all are missed and remain in our thoughts and prayers. May God bless the United States Army, the Spartan Brigade, PFAR, and all of you.

Sincerely,
LTC Frank Stanco
STEEL 6



MESSAGE FROM STEEL 7



**To the families,
friends, and loved
ones of PFAR,**

This month, I really thought I would write about specific accomplishments of some of your loved ones. I thought that I would write about a few Soldiers from each Battery and use them as an example of the great work that your Paratroopers are doing over here, but I changed my mind. I think I am going to write about you all again.

Many are familiar with the story behind the praying hands. I will try and condense the story as much as possible for the sake of time and space. In the 15th century in Germany, in a small town near Nuremberg, Albrecht Durer worked 18 hour days and did chores around his village for additional money just to put food on the table for his 18 children.

Two of his older sons had a dream to go to the Academy in Nuremberg and pursue their dream of becoming artists. One night, they came up with a plan. The plan was simply to toss a coin; whoever won the toss would go to the Academy in Nuremberg, and who ever lost the toss would go down into the mines to finance the other one through the Academy. After four years that would switch, if needed, depending upon the success of the one who went to the Academy.

One Sunday morning after church they tossed a coin and Albrecht won the toss. So—Albrecht Durer went to the Academy in Nuremberg, and Albert went into the dangerous mines to finance his brother's art career for the next four years. Albrecht was almost an immediate success, his art work was better than most of his professors. By the time he



CSM Moore on a UH-60 flight in route to COP HERRERA

finished his four years at the Academy, he was earning quite a bit of money for his art work.

After four years, the young successful artist returned to his village for a celebration in honor of his success. As the festivities were coming to an end, Albrecht motioned to his brother to take his seat of honor at the head of the table and made a toast to his brother. Albert repeat-

edly stated, “No, no, no” as his eyes filled with tears. He began to tell his brother it was too late for him to pursue his dream of being an artist. He showed his brother his hands and told him every bone on every finger had been broken at least once and it was a struggle just for him to hold his cup up and give a toast. He said it was impossible for him to make delicate lines on parchment and it was too late for him, as



(L to R) 1SG Phillips, 1SG Zoker, and CSM Moore all in deep thought during the CSM's NCO sync meeting

the tears continued to fall.

One day, to pay honor to his brother's enormous sacrifice, he painstakingly drew his brother's scarred and abused hands. He would title this powerful drawing, simply, "Hands". It served as a reminder that we all need someone and no one ever makes it alone. The world embraced this powerful work, and the masterpiece was renamed, "The Praying Hands".

I wrote all of this to simply say that a deployment does not have to be an event you endure. If you go at it alone, then it will be a very challenging and enduring process. My prayer is that this deployment will be an example for the Albert Durer's out there who are willing to sacrifice and help a fellow spouse in need. I pray that if anyone needs help or assistance, then the issue is having too many wives reaching out to help. There are many spouses out there who have phenomenal talents and abilities; I ask that you would use your talents to be part of a great team—a team that has learned the lesson that no one makes it alone, but together we all make it. And believe it or not, at the end of it all, you will be able to say you actually enjoyed this deployment and not just endured it. I am not taking away the separation from your loved ones and the missed holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and so on. I am talking about the solemn pride and joy you have in being part of a team that really cares about you—the solemn pride, joy, and contentment you have in knowing you were worthy enough to be there for someone in their time of need. The Commander talks often about not tiring in doing good things. It comes from Galatians 6:9, and at the end of that scripture, it talks about the rewards you will receive in the end.

It's an honor being a part of our team because of the quality of the young men and women I work with and the phenomenal Officers and NCOs I have the privilege of learning from. I am humbled by the dedication and commitment of our loved ones back at Ft. Richardson. Know that we are doing well, we are staying focused, and we miss you all dearly. Keep up the good work!

STEEL7 Out!



The Radar Section: (L to R) SGT Dobkins, PFC Fleicher, SPC Day, SSG Hayes, and SPC Green gather for a photo with CSM Moore during his morale visit to COP SABARI

HQ & HQ BATTERY HAWKS



As another month rolls by, Task Force STEEL continues to solidify its presence in the area. The days of Task Force DUKE are but a distant memory; symbols of Task Force SPARTAN are emblazoned everywhere. All groups go through four phases of development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. Hawk Battery is performing, and we are performing to an incredible standard.

HHB personnel take great pride in the versatility of the Hawk Battery. As many know, HHB is not your average Battery with just a simple mission. HHB is truly the glue that keeps the Battalion together. Whether it's the networks that keep communications a flow, or the radar that watches the sky; at any given time Hawk Battery will have its claws in the fight in numerous different ways.

On Forward Operating Base (FOB) SALERNO, it's the Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC) working along with the Battalion Tactical Operations Center (TOC) that allows FOB SALERNO to sleep peacefully at night; the medics that perform miracles attending to the wounded; and the field detention facility that continues to secure insurgents detained on the battlefield. At Camp CLARK, it's the Security Forces Assistant Team (SFAT) embedded with the Afghan National Army; teaching them the skills and techniques that are essential to conquer the enemy. This past month has been no different, and Hawk Battery continues to execute every mission with enthusiasm and proficiency.

The Battery held a traditional ceremony to award HHB Paratroopers the combat patch of the 25th Infantry Division. For most of HHB's junior enlisted Paratroopers and officers, this is their first time in combat, and they all proudly wear the 25th Infantry Division combat patch. The shoulder sleeve insignia is worn to represent the highest division headquarters that one served under in a combat zone. It is worn on the right shoulder and under the United States flag. The patch is worn regardless of the unit currently serving with.

The "Hawk's Nest" has grown into a lounge that is reminiscent of a place back at JBER. Inside, movies are always being played on the projector. There are ample books in all genres, and audio books are also available for those who desire something different. There is a phone available for morale calls and a separate room for Skype. Thank you to all who contributed to the growth of the Hawk's Nest. The Hawk's Nest is a true relief center for rest and relaxation (R&R) personnel, especially when flights are delayed or canceled.



PFC Dioum providing critical care to a local national



(L to R) CPT Willis, SSG Trail, and MSG Fletcher enjoy a meal with their Afghan counterparts



(L to R) CPT Sullivan, MSG Fletcher, SSG Trail, CPT Aldoph, 1LT Pachnieski, and 1LT Luman at the 4-1 Kandak headquarters



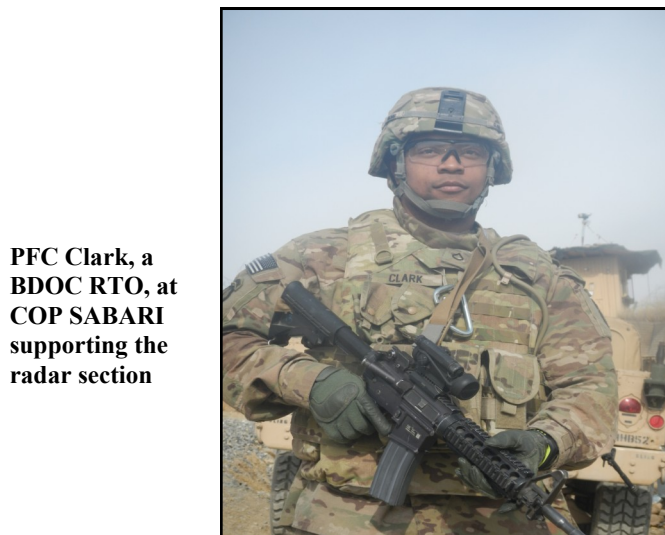
CPT Aldoph and 1SG Phillips at the patch ceremony



CPT Aldoph at the BDOC promoting PFC Pierce (far left) and PFC Davis



SPC Day (left) and SGT Dobkins at COP SABARI showing off their combat patches



PFC Clark, a BDOC RTO, at COP SABARI supporting the radar section

The Super Bowl was the most exciting event for MWR activities this month. The game may have been on at 0300 Afghanistan time, but that wasn't a hindrance to the many who came out to watch it. Whether they were Giants fans, Patriots fans, or just football fans, everyone was thrilled and watched the game with bated breath. After all was said and done, Giants fans were ecstatic, and Patriots fans were disappointed.

R&R has already started, which means we have been here for some time. Some wait their turn as others come back with stories from home; stories that consist of holding a newborn for the first time or doing extraordinary things with friends and family, but mostly it's stories about getting a little rest that was well-deserved. R&R is something that all personnel in combat look forward to.

To families, friends, and supporters on the home front, rest assured that your Paratroopers are taken care of. The care packages, love, patience, and support from home make all the difference in the Paratroopers' morale in this combat environment. Every day that goes by is one day closer to Alaska.

This month, HHB has promoted PFC Kunsch, PFC Warren, PFC Webb, and PFC Werner to SPC and PV2 Davis, PV2 Pierce, PV2 Fleicher, and PV2 Lumsden to PFC. The past month also saw the birth of Sophia Lynn Cooper on 19 January to SPC Cooper and his wife Lindsey.

From the home front, the Family Readiness Group (FRG) is planning their first family event since the deployment. Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Aldoph promise that this event will be a lot of fun for the young ones. Please show your support at the upcoming "Let's Pump It Up" FRG event.

— written by 1LT Adam Pachnieski
and edited by 2LT Arafat Shawon



(L to R) CSM Moore, SSG Hayes, CW2 Colegrove, and 1SG Phillips at COP SABARI during a morale visit to the radar section

A BATTERY FALCONS

To all Falcon team members,

Hello to everyone from Afghanistan! I hope everyone is enjoying getting more and more daylight every day; another two months and the breakup will begin!

Things here at FOB SALERNO are good as we're past our two month mark. It's hard to believe the deployment is already 1/5th over, and that our Troopers have already started going on their mid-tour leaves. We are all working extremely hard, but I can tell you it is having an effect. I'm sure you'll hear all the war stories when the deployment is over, but we have had a lot of success over the past two months, and we hope to have more. I know our efforts are already making life on the ground better for the people who live in our area of operations.

All our Troopers here are doing well, and they are performing at an outstanding level. Just seeing them operate makes me feel extremely proud, knowing how hard we worked to prepare for this deployment. Although we would obviously much rather be home with our families, our morale is still high, in large part due to the dozens of packages we get every week. Thank you, and keep them coming!

We are now into the peak of our deployment; we aren't new to our area of operations, but we haven't been here long enough to get used to everything. We are operating at a very high level, a level only possible because of the strong support that our families back home give us. As I've said before, it is only with your support that we are successful as a Battery, and I thank you for the support you've shown so far. We will continue to accomplish our mission out here, until that great day when we are at Sullivan Arena for the Re-deployment Ceremony. FALCON STRIKE!

Sincerely,
Daniel D. Frechette
CPT, FA
Commanding

(Below) Paratroopers from A Battery observe fires outside of FOBSALERNO



(Above) Paratroopers from A Battery conduct a combat patrol in Khowst Province, Afghanistan (Photo by SSG Jason Epperson, 4-25 ABCT Public Affairs NCOIC, 26 JAN 12)

The Paratroopers of Alpha Battery, 2-377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment have been hard at work for the past three months, working hand in hand with the Afghanistan Uniformed Police (AUP) and the Afghanistan National Army (ANA). The current fight in Afghanistan is complex with many variables. More than ever, the Coalition Forces have been focusing on training and preparing their Afghan counterparts as they assume responsibility for the security of their country. No longer are Coalition Forces acting alone in their fight against insurgency. Everyday our Soldiers are



SSG Novak and three AUP pose for a photo after conducting a KLE with a local shop owner

the AUP and ANA. On any given day you can find an A BTRY platoon out on patrol with uniformed police. The police are trained to search buildings and tactically question local nationals. The advantage to having the police on patrol with Coalition Forces is that they can often receive information or provide guidance that our Soldiers may not have previously considered. Not only do the police

act as a security force, but often they act as cultural advisors to the US Paratroopers. Kamal Ludin is the current ranking sergeant of the AUP. He has been working with Coalition Forces for over five years. When asked how he felt the partnership was progressing he had this to say, "Working with the Americans is a partnership. We Afghans understand how people in Afghanistan are. We know where they work and how they live. It is our job to teach Americans about Afghan culture so we both win." Kamal has been working with 2nd Platoon for the last three months and asked to stay another three months to continue building the already strong partnership with the Battery. The AUP have become an invaluable resource to overall mission success. Alpha Battery will continue to train and work with police forces over the course of



An ANA medic and AUP greet two village elders during a security patrol

working on building a partnership with the military and security forces in Afghanistan. It is a responsibility that requires attention and dedication to the overall success of the Combined Joint Task Force's mission to build stability in Afghanistan before our forces leave the current theater.

Alpha Battery in particular has taken this mission to heart and become very familiar with working with



An ANA medic provides medical assistance to an Afghan boy

their deployment with the intention of enabling a more tactically proficient and well prepared security force for the people of Afghanistan.

The ANA has contributed to Alpha Battery by providing combat medics to insert into platoons and train with the medics of Alpha Battery. These medics receive daily training at the medical clinic on Forward Operating Base (FOB) SALERNO when they are not on a patrol with a platoon. When on patrol, the ANA medics provide first aid to local villagers and continue to develop their medical skills. SPC Webb, from Cambridge City, Indiana, is one of the lead field trainers for the ANA medics. “Working with their medics has been a challenge,” said SPC Justin Webb from 2nd Platoon. “Everything we teach them has to be translated through an interpreter, so at times it can be difficult to convey more advanced medical terminology. The good thing is they are very eager to learn and want to do well when they go back to their regular units in the Afghan Army. The more we work with them, the more confident they become, which makes them a greater asset to the country of Afghanistan and their battle buddies in the Afghan Army.” Juma Gul is the resident lead medic for the ANA medics currently

working with Alpha Battery. Juma has studied English since he was a boy and speaks it fluently. He is often found teaching and translating medical classes for the

other medics. He said, “The Americans have many resources to train that we do not have in Afghanistan. For both of us to benefit we need share knowledge and resources to better equip Afghanistan when the Americans leave. I hope to become a doctor one day and this training will help me in my studies at medical

school.”

Alpha Battery is currently conducting a non-



(L to R) SFC Andre, SSG Aleman, SFC Ramos, the platoon linguist and a AUP came together for a photo after conducting a KLE with village elders a KLE with village elders

standard mission for an Artillery Battery by assuming the role of a maneuver element on the battlefield. Al-

pha Battery has risen to the challenge and continues to excel daily in Afghanistan. The Paratroopers of Alpha Battery look forward to the day they come home, but



Alpha Battery poses for a photo after their combat patch ceremony

until that time they will be working on building a more stable Afghanistan, without insurgent influence, for future generations of Afghans.

— written 1LT Kyle Reding

B BATTERY BLACKSHEEP



LIFE AT COP ZORMAT

*3rd Platoon, Bravo Battery
2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment*

Christmas has come and gone, and while these first few months have been difficult and strenuous for the men of 3rd PLT, we are finally settled in and excited for what the new year holds for us! While it took over a week to arrive at our final destination, Combat Out Post (COP) ZORMAT, much has been accomplished since December. From improving the gun positions, to improving our living conditions, 3rd PLT has been busy and hard at work. This first month has gone by quickly and we are almost into February! Although the holidays were not the same without our loved ones, we did find the time to play a friendly game of football with some new friends in our Cooks and interpreter (Its always good to make friends with the cooks!)

3rd PLT has the privilege of supporting the combat operations of D "DOG" Company, 3-509th IN. Our mission is to provide them with timely and accurate indirect fires, when and wherever needed. Although the mission is demanding, the Soldiers still have time to surf the internet and call home.



Pictured Above: 1st Section during a high angle illumination mission : SGT Brice (right) explaining to his men why they are so much faster than 2nd Section.

Pictured Below: SGT Wells (left) oversees SSG Gabard (Center) and SGT Brice (Right) in the cooking of Christmas lunch.



Pictured Above: SGT Cross (third left) instructs PFC Wagler (third right) and SPC Smith (second right) on the proper way to sling load a M119A2 Howitzer during an air mobile operation.

The Soldiers have been hard at work, training daily to keep competency up for fire missions. Everyone is learning their job as well as the job above them. When Soldiers begin to go on leave, those below them will be able to step up and perform almost every job in their section. In addition to daily duties in the Fire Direction Center (FDC) and on the gun line, Soldiers are also hard at work around the COP pitching in and volunteering where they can. SGT Cross says, "We are in a team fight here. We pitch in where we can. 509th is hard at work outside the wire keeping us safe, and ultimately we are here to support them, whether that's on the guns or fixing generators."



Pictured Left: CPT Howell, 1LT Quinn, and SFC Williams address the PLT during the Combat Patch Ceremony, awarded for their service in a combat environment.

Pictured Right: 1st Section firing a round for calibration at COP ZORMAT



Highlights!

We've had the great privilege to promote two of our own, PFC Hayner and SPC Caywood, in the past month. We look forward to promoting other deserving Soldiers, giving them a pay increase as well as increased responsibility in their respective sections in the months to come.

***Pictured Below:** CSM Moore promotes SPC Caywood in front of his PLT on a short visit.*



***Pictured Above:** PFC Caywood, SGT Wells and SSG Gabard watch as SFC Williams promotes PV2 Hayner to PFC.*



***Pictured Above:** PFC Hayner and SPC Smith enjoy a game of flag football Christmas day while waiting on a great meal provided by the cooks.*

Words From the Soldiers to Loved Ones

"Hold it down baby. Daddy will be home before you know it." —SGT Cross

"Hey baby, we've got this. Before we know it, we'll be together again holding our little girl. I love you both" —PFC Wagler

"Hey honey, just know I love you and miss you. I will be home soon! Kiss Braydon for me. I love you." —PFC Hayner

"Hey baby, I love and miss you very much, and can't wait to come home. Madison and Cody, I love and miss you too!" —PFC Caywood

"Hey baby, love and miss you very much. Give Liam a big kiss for me. See you soon. Bye!" —SGT(P) Brice

"Stay strong lover. Stay safe and hold down the fort for me. I love you." —SSG Vlieger

Over the past month we have upgraded our living conditions—moving closer to the showers, chow, and MWR. We now have consistent heat and power, significantly raising morale. We have also recently received wireless internet to the joy of many Soldiers in the platoon, allowing guys to connect and talk with families back home. In the coming months, we look to continue improving our living conditions and the situation around us. We have taken on much of the work around the COP. I am very proud of the guys and the way they help out and work as a team to support all the Soldiers on the COP, working to support the mission any way possible. As the Super Bowl comes and goes, we find ourselves buried in snow. Hopefully Spring comes soon bringing with it warmer temperatures and us closer to home.

—1LT Quinn

Reunion at COP HERRERA

The week of January 29th was a very special week for me. I was able to visit my son at COP HERRERA in Afghanistan. I haven't seen him in over 2 years. I am a contractor working at HQ ISAF and have been in Afghanistan for 23 months now. I missed his wedding in July of 2010, although I was able to see it via DVD, I still wished I could have been there. I knew Frank would be deployed to Afghanistan in December of 2011, but I didn't know which province. I was hoping I would get to see him while he was in country and on January 30th that happened. I was only scheduled to stay for 3 hours at COP HERRERA, but the helo never came back to get me because of the weather; what a blessing that was. I was able to spend 2 nights with him and learn all about what he does to support the war here in Afghanistan.

—Dave Worsham



On 30 January 2012, a day after my birthday, I got the opportunity to see my father in Afghanistan. Due to his job he had to hand deliver something to FOB SALERNO, and since that was the closest we have been in over 2 years we found an open seat on a bird for him to swing by COP HERRERA for a couple hours. It was nice to get some down time with him, show him around COP HERRERA, and explain to him the job of Field Artillery in Afghanistan. Thankfully, the weather did not cooperate with us and air went red for a few days. He ended up spending just over 72 hours with me and my Paratroopers here on COP HERRERA. I showed him how to lay and safe howitzers using the aiming circle, how to shoot fire missions using primary and secondary aiming references with the howitzer, as well as how to calculate data for a fire mission on the AFATDS and chart. We spent the entire 72 hours talking about his job and my job in Afghanistan, what I will be doing for my next job, previous hunting and fishing stories from Alaska, and future hunting and fishing plans for the year of 2013. I learned my outdoor hunting and fishing skills from him and both of us are very outdoor oriented. We talked about the possibility of him heading up to Alaska in the next few years before my wife and I PCS so that we could get a hunting or a fishing trip going while in the great Alaskan outdoors. When air finally turned green again on his third day here, with another snow storm forecasted only a day out, we knew he needed to leave to get back to his job and thankfully they had an open seat for Space-A back to FOB SALERNO. The 72 hours proceeding my birthday was by far the best Afghanistan birthday present I could have asked for. My father is planning on being here in Afghanistan for anywhere from another 12-24 months and we are looking forward to the opportunity to be able to see each other again.

—1LT Frank Worsham

C BATTERY/1-377 FAR CRUSADERS

The start of a new year brought changes and new challenges for the Crusader Battery, which took on added areas of operation and even more fire missions in the month of January. The biggest event of the month for the Crusaders was the movement of a firing section from Camp CLARK to COP CHAMKANI in Paktiya Province in support of combat operations in that area. The move included the sling loading of a 155mm howitzer from Camp CLARK to COP CHAMKANI via a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. This was a major first for the battery and for 1st Battalion, 377th Field Artillery Regiment, which is aptly named the Gunslinger Battalion for its Air Assault lineage. The move increased the Crusader Battery's operational footprint which now spans Ghazni, Khost and Paktiya Provinces.

1st Platoon, at FOB ANDAR, spent the month supporting combat operations for TF BLACK SCARVES in Ghazni Province. 1st Platoon faced challenges— by both enemy fire on their position during the month of January and harsh winter weather which often covered their firing points with several feet of snow.

(L to R) SGT Castro, PFC Park, and SPC Gutierrez of C Battery, 1st Battalion, 377th Field Artillery Regiment practice crew drills on the M777 Howitzer at COP CHAMKANI



2nd Platoon at Camp CLARK continued its partnership with their Afghan National Army Artillery counterparts to improve their firing capabilities. 2nd Platoon along with 3rd platoon at FOB SALERNO shot four Excalibur rounds at a known enemy rocket site, demonstrating the Crusader Battery's ability to mass fires and successfully use precision guided munitions.

3rd Platoon, at FOB SALERNO, spent the month of January improving its firing capability and preparing for an increased demand for fire support by multiple task forces. 3rd platoon conducted numerous fire missions with both high explosive and illumination ammunition in sus-

pected enemy areas of operation in order to dissuade insurgents from using those areas for attacks against Coalition Forces.

The newly formed 4th Platoon was established at COP CHAMKANI at the end of January. They have spent their short time together at the new firing point establishing living areas, battle rhythms and firing capability, while preparing to be busy in February asserting their firepower over the new area of operation.

CPT Robert N. Collier
Battery Commander



(L to R) SGT Lizotte, SSG Stierlen, SPC McPherson, PVT Batchelor, SPC Salgado, PFC Salvino, and PFC Fisher from C Battery, 1-377 FAR at their M777 gun position at CAMP CLARK

CRUSADER BATTERY SOLDIER OF THE MONTH



Crusader Battery, 1-377 FAR Soldier of the Month, SPC Mitch Salls

SPC Mitch Salls arrived at 1-377 FAR in June 2010, just as the Battalion was returning from Iraq. A member of the Crusader maintenance support team for over two years, SPC Salls is a vehicle mechanic by training, but a jack-of-all-trades by choice. Due to the needs of the unit, SPC Salls has adapted to working inside the platoons Fire Direction Center (FDC) as a Fire Direction Specialist. The FDC is a dynamic and complex operation, but SPC Salls adapted to his job quickly and successfully to the benefit of his platoon. Though he works full time in the FDC, SPC Salls is still looked at to perform maintenance for the platoon, which is another full time job in and of itself.

A native of South Jordan, Utah, SPC Salls really believes his hometown is the best place on the planet. The youngest of four boys (brothers Dave, Doug, and Mike) with both an older and younger sister (Jennie and Monique, respectively), SPC Salls is the only member of his family who lives farther than 10 minutes away from home. His parents, Michael and Roseangela, live in South Jordan as well, but have admirably managed to keep all but SPC Salls' youngest sister from staying under their roof. While he is deployed, SPC Salls' wife, Lauren, and two sons, Keldyn and Dryden, have stayed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, where she has found that raising two boys under six years old constitutes a full-time job. SPC Salls wants to re-enlist after deployment; he intends to remain a vehicle mechanic but is trying to take his family somewhere new and interesting (Okinawa and Germany top the list) and hopes that wherever it is has more sunshine than Washington State. After re-deployment, SPC Salls is planning on spending a lot of quality time with his family, including taking them on a vacation to Disney World before moving to his next duty station.

— written by 1LT Joshua Geiger

G COMPANY WOLFPACK

Some of you may not know what missions this company performs on a daily basis. I am going to use this month's article to highlight the many diverse missions we are entrusted to complete. Unlike some jobs and missions within the Brigade that don't occur due to weather, unqualified operators, or mechanical issues (their equipment is broken) nothing fails due to Logistics. We accomplish this on a daily basis and you can be proud that all Soldiers in Golf Company take pride in their work and always give 110% effort.

Maintenance Platoon: Led by SFC Keeling and SSG Espinoza, they are the hub of the Company and perform a variety of missions daily and respond to emergencies 24/7. SFC Keeling along with his Soldiers (SGT Vaughn, SPC Brown and SPC Williams) keep track of vehicle and howitzer statuses, order and receive parts from the support activity and liaison with 725th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) to coordinate support. They work hand in hand with SSG Espinoza to keep Task Force STEEL in the fight. Her maintenance section (SPC Flores and SPC Stevens) repairs generators throughout the FOB, keeps Alpha Battery up and running, and with our sole howitzer mechanic, PFC Osowski, keeps the M119's firing to support our Battalions. We also have a mechanic that rotates out to COP Clark weekly to assist in our partnership with the Afghanistan National Army (ANA). This is one of the Battalion's main focuses as we transition to enabling the Afghans to be self supporting; it is also a good opportunity for our Maintenance NCOs to teach their trades to our Afghan partners. We also have SPC Bakihs, who completes services and repairs on all of our night vision devices. PFC Glidden, the Battalion's only welder, repairs the perimeter fence and helps with all metal repairs that require welding all around the FOB.



SPC Dixon prepares to roll out on a security mission



Members of the Distro platoon interact with locals to build a partnership and get a feel for happenings in the community.

The distribution platoon is definitely a "Jack of all Trades." Led by 1LT Vogeles and SFC Williams, they are definitely the workhorse of both the Company and the Battalion. They are very versatile in the jobs they perform. One day they execute special missions for SPARTAN STEEL during Key Leader Engagements (KLE) with local elders and government officials, and the next they perform duties as a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for incidents that happen both on and off of FOB SALERNO. They also provide additional support to both our maintenance platoon and Access Control Point (ACP) during periods when their personnel are on leave or tasked for other missions.

The ACP platoon, led by 1LT August and SSG Bryant, are most notably our largest platoon that conducts the most highly visible mission within the Battalion. More than 900 people enter and exit our main ACP daily, from patrols headed out or returning from missions, to the numerous local nationals that come to work on FOB SALERNO. We are the first line of defense. The personnel at the Entry Control Point (ECP) not only screen equipment and supplies entering FOB SALERNO as part of their force protection platform, they also have spent the last two months improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.



1SG Betanzos trying to recruit future baseball players, the kids here have great throwing abilities but catching is a different story

Finally, our headquarters platoon, led by SFC Smith, our operations NCO, has the sole mission of supporting the line platoons in their mission. They conduct daily mail call, do routine taskings such as dining facility monitor, order supplies and equipment, and operate the tactical operations center 24/7. We also have a four man section at Bagram that are the first faces we see as we enter country and the last ones we see as we leave. SSG Doke, formerly the facebook liaison NCO, is the NCOIC for ALOC operations at Bagram. His team coordinates housing and transportation for those traveling to and from Afghanistan on R&R, as well as getting critical parts and supplies shipped priority from Bagram to FOB SALERNO. In closing, the 1SG and I could not be more proud of our Soldiers and the jobs they perform on a

day to day basis. Thanks to the FRG and all our extended families for the support and love they provide, we could not do this job without you.

CPT Douglas E. Rudd
Company Commander



Now see that's efficient travel, there must be 12 local nationals packed in the back of that truck, all hurrying home after their work on the FOB is completed

WOLFPACK SOLDIER OF THE MONTH

What can be said about SPC Robert Cottrell (AKA Bob the Builder) other than he is definitely not your average cook? As it turns out, quite a bit! To say he is a valuable asset to the Access Control Point (ACP) is an understatement; as he happens to possess in a single individual what most engineering companies possess as a whole.

He is a carpenter; coordinating the construction of new facilities at the ACP, constructing and rebuilding the supply room and arms room, and even building a reinforced stand for the humongous 4/25th logo proudly displayed outside the motor pool.

He is an electrician; running power and lighting to the Garda World structures that even the contractors won't touch, creating electrical cables and new lighting for various parts of the ACP, and even the occasional work order. When power was cut to the Vehicle Control Point (VCP) tower, he repaired the connection himself, as the days it would take the normal process to follow through to completion would not allow us to effectively complete our mission.

He is a heavy equipment operator; utilizing forklifts, backhoes, and bobcats, efficiently and effectively moving gravel, dirt, and even containers in order to rebuild and revitalize an ACP that has remained mostly unchanged for years. Due, in large part, to his efforts, the redesign process of the ACP has moved on steadily. SPC Cottrell has pushed gravel where it needs to go, one wheelbarrow at time, filled sandbags to plug water runoff issues, and built a master staircase 250 sandbags strong, from the VCP to the ACP it not only acts as a dam to route water, but a safe and stable platform for ACP cross movement.

He brainstormed the idea of replacing the blast shield with an up-armored McCurdy's armored shack, which replaced a simple ballistic window to a robust barrier that can not only stop bullets and suicides vests containing 35lbs of explosives, but also 155 artillery rounds; leaving the troops on the other side rattled, but otherwise unharmed.

SPC Cottrell was instrumental in the removal of the existing fence work and hescos that made the old ACP. He personally placed and coordinated the filling of a new walkway. He took a simple design for the new scanner monitoring station and expanded upon it, creating a facility that will dominate the walking lanes. This allows the scanner operator full control of not only the new scanners, but also the electromagnetically locking turnstile and the MAD acoustic hailing device. This is vital in order to lock down the lane when any potentially harmful items are revealed in the scanner, and provides the ability to aurally disable any individual without the use of deadly force.

In addition to the multiple projects at the ACP and company, SPC Cottrell works as the company class II clerk; accepting projects for the Soldiers ranging from tables and desks, to slightly more elaborate constructs. To summarize, SPC Cottrell's efforts supporting the ACP have allowed more improvements to FOB SALERNO's control points in the last two months that we have been in country, than have been done in the past five years of Coalition efforts.



(L to R) SPC Cottrell, SGT Vaughn and PFC Ward put the final touches on the newest symbol of the "Spartan Brigade" on FOB SALERNO



(L to R) PFC Ward, 1SG Betanzos and SPC Cottrell stand at the entrance to the company motor pool in front of the newest "Spartan Brigade" symbol on FOB SALERNO.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Seeing with an Eye of Faith

All too often, we find ourselves wondering why we experience what we do in our lives. During moments of hardship, many of us tend to doubt God and what he can do for us. Our choices play a great role in how we experience life; we can grow to be better or worse. Society tends to teach that our problems are not our own, however, our Heavenly Father teaches us to be responsible for ourselves. In Paul's letter to the Romans, he emphatically counseled the church to "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1c KJV). What does Paul mean when he asks the Roman Christians to be a living sacrifice? He says that it is the duty or service of everyone to sacrifice that which is acceptable before God.

In verse two, Paul defined his initial demand, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2a). He suggests that this transformation take place by conforming to the will of a loving Heavenly Father. We accomplish this task by studying scripture and conversing with Him on a regular basis. Then, when we face the agony we will certainly experience in this life, our Heavenly Father can easily communicate with us through the things we have learned in our scripture study and in our communication with Him.

A wonderful New Testament story is the moment Jesus walked on water. A storm was raging; the apostles feared for their lives. Their fear intensified when they saw what they thought to be a spirit com-

ing to them across the storm-ridden waters. The Man called out to them and said, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matt. 14:27b). Peter, hearing and recognizing the voice of Jesus, asked if he, too, could walk on water and come unto Him. Peter stepped out onto the water, moved forward, and walked on the water as he focused on the Savior. However, the storm overwhelmed Peter, he took his eye off the Light of the World and he began to sink. His attention was removed from the Giver of Peace and he worried about the storm around him.

Are our lives any different? When we are sur-

rounded by the raging storms of life, are we focused on what is happening around us? Or are we fixated on the Light ahead? Just as Peter sank, so shall we, if we do not recognize the hand of God working in our lives and remain focused on the Light ahead. During that moment, Peter called out to Jesus and Jesus held out His hand to save Peter. Je-

sus said to him, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

This does not seem to be a mere chastisement, but a reminder that we have no need to doubt. It also helps us recognize that even the greatest men worry about the busyness of life around them. God will always continue to remind us, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" When we feel that we do not know who we are or where we are headed in life, let us look to our Father in Heaven. If we desire to remain focused on the one true source of light, there are a few things we must do in our lives.

First, we must know Him; we must know our



CH McCurdy stops for a quick picture with the local children while on patrol with A Battery outside FOB SALERNO

Heavenly Father. It is through constant study of scripture that we begin to learn of Him and understand His will. When we know the scriptures and learn from them, it is easier for our Father in Heaven to communicate with us during our trials and moments of despair. There is no canon or verse of scripture that tells us this journey of obedience, commanded by the Father, will be easy. In fact, the Apostle Paul is adamant in his letters that this journey is difficult. He cites the life of Jesus and his own life as examples of how difficult living a good life can be. The blessings may not be apparent at this time, but as God takes hold of us the blessings will become abundantly clear.

Second, we must listen and give heed to the voice of God. Listen for His promptings, and heed those promptings, because sometimes God wants so desperately to bless us that He will prompt us to ask for His help.

Finally, we must endure the storms of life well. What I mean by this is that we must have an eye solely to the glory of God. We must rely on Him and trust Him. Through our faithfulness, we will be strengthened. I promise that even in the most difficult of circumstances, God is and will be with us.

The scriptures are filled with stories of men and women that were harrowed up with sorrow and grief, but every one of those men and women who followed the command of our Heavenly Father were renewed in their strength. We, through our faithfulness, can and will see God for who He is a kind, loving, Heavenly Father who desires to bless our lives. He sees us not for who we are, but who He knows we can become.

CH (CPT) Logan McCurdy



SPC Collins enjoys some Chai tea with the local national children while out on patrol with A Battery outside FOB SALERNO

REAR DETACHMENT UPDATE

The Rear Detachment of 2-377th PFAR has been busy lately. Classes have begun for a Combat Lifesavers Course (CLS) for Soldiers. This course is designed to help teach Soldiers the basic life-saving techniques that every Soldier should know. The week long training is taught by combat medics and includes lessons on evaluating a casualty, requesting casualty evacuation, and familiarization of medical equipment.

In addition to CLS, Rear Detachment has recently started Individual Readiness Training for several Soldiers. This four week course is meant to prepare Soldiers for a deployment. The cold and hot weather classes, counter Improvised Explosive Device (IED) training, live-fire ranges, and drivers training reinforce the necessary soldiering skills that a Paratrooper of the 2-377th PFAR will need.

On top of the training conducted by the Battalion,

friends and families at JBER have been battling record snowfall and low temperatures in Anchorage and the neighboring area. Several storms have gone through the area, leaving behind large amounts of snowfall. So far, the Anchorage area has received a staggering 81 inches of snow, nearly 7 feet! This is four more inches than the previous record set in 1977. Despite the snowfall, the Battalion has succeeded in staging a bake-sale that raised funds for the Battalion's Family Readiness Group, and passing out stuffed animals, dubbed "deployment buddies", to friends and families of deployed Paratroopers.

The 2-377th PFAR has also maintained its airborne mission and proficiency with Paratroopers from our Battalion jumping from high performance aircraft throughout the month.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

The first junior enlisted Soldier (E-4 or below) who can identify the TF STEEL leader shown in the picture below will get a day off, courtesy of STEEL 7.

