

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

# STEEL TIMES

ISSUE 6, VOLUME 1  
JUNE/JULY 2012



**TF STEEL**

**OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM 12-13**



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Charlie Battery, 1-377 FAR Soldiers work with Bravo Battery, 2-377 PFAR Soldiers on a M777A2 during a fire mission.

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3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Charlie Battery Soldiers demonstrating maintenance of the M777A2 for Bravo Battery, 2-377 PFAR Soldiers.

# HQ & HQ BATTERY HAWKS

## Greetings,

My name is CPT Ryan D. Howell, I have been given the tremendous honor of taking command of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 377<sup>th</sup> Parachute Field Artillery Regiment. I would like to take a few minutes to introduce myself to those I have not had the privilege to meet. I am no stranger to Alaska or the PFAR Family, first coming to Alaska during the summer of 2009. I served with the Brigade Rear-Detachment as the Operations Officer, where I worked on several projects. The most important project being the re-deployment of our Paratroopers from Afghanistan during the last deployment. At that time, I met some of the wonderful Family members of the Brigade and family members from PFAR, specifically when I worked on the Brigade Volunteer of the Month Ceremony. After a year on the Brigade Staff, I was honored to join the PFAR team as the Assistant S3. During my time on the Battalion Staff, I began to truly understand how important the PFAR Family is. Being a small organization, compared to other battalions, PFAR is able to pull together and accomplish as much as, if not more than, the other units. I was then honored to serve as Bravo Battery's Commander over the course of the last year, which culminated here in Afghanistan. Returning to HHB to be the commander is a true reward. The Officers, Noncommissioned Officers, and Soldiers are truly what make a unit special, and HHB is full of great leaders and great Soldiers. We are beyond the half-way mark in our deployment, and we will continue to see that the mission is accomplished. As we get closer to our return, we will begin re-integration training in order to understand what coming home from combat means. There are several leaders who have experience in returning from combat operations, and they will assist those who are returning from their first tour. I look forward to meeting everyone upon our return, and I ask everyone to continue to support each other during these final months.

CPT Ryan D. Howell  
HAWK 6



CPT Ryan Howell, 1SG Phillips, and HHB Soldiers in formation following the change of command ceremony.



1SG Phillips takes control of the Battery following the change of command ceremony.





CSM Moore visits HHB's Radar section.



The radar section visit with CW2 Colegrove, CSM Moore, and ISG Phillips.

## COUNTER FIRE, COUNTER FIRE, COUNTER FIRE!!!

The Radar Section of TF 2-377 is an invaluable asset for acquiring hostile indirect fire. During the first half of the deployment, the Radar Section was conducting operations out of COP Sabari, in support of TF 1-501<sup>st</sup>. While there, the section acquired mortar and rockets that targeted Coalition Forces and Afghan National Security Forces. The quality of life at COP Sabari improved over time due to the hard work of the entire section. For Example, SPC Fields and PFC Fleicher constructed a shower from nothing more than a shower head, a 55 gallon drum, and a water heater element. Half way through the deployment, the Radar Section received word to move from COP Sabari to FOB Salerno, in order to better support the Brigade. Over a period of five days, all personnel and equipment was moved to FOB Salerno. Only four days after arriving on FOB Salerno, the radar section was conducting full operations, ready to locate any rockets or mortars targeting FOB Salerno.

Radar sections are usually placed at remote outposts to provide the best coverage to support Brigade operations. Cut off from their parent unit, the section became very close, developing a working and personal relationship with one another, unmatched by other elements. The day to day operations are made possible by six highly dedicated Paratroopers. The section chief, SSG Jordan Malbrough, is responsible for the overall operational readiness of the Q-36 radar, the morale, and welfare of five Soldiers. The Senior Radar Operator, SGT Robie Dobkins, is responsible for the daily operations of the radar set and the management of two radar operators. The Radar Mechanic, SPC Jessica Day, is responsible for maintenance and troubleshooting procedures when the radar goes down. The Generator Mechanic, SPC Gregory Fields, is responsible for the maintenance and operational readiness of all generators utilized by the Radar section. Two Radar Operators, SPC Michael Green and PFC Brent Fleicher, are responsible for basic operations of the radar set and PMCS of all equipment to ensure its mission readiness.

The hard work and dedication of the entire radar section, ensures FOB Salerno can sleep quietly at night, knowing TF 2-377<sup>th</sup> Radar Section is constantly scanning the skies.

— written by SSG Jordan Malbrough

# A BATTERY FALCONS

## FROM THE BATTERY COMMANDER:

I get excited each time I sit down to write another monthly newsletter. A new letter means another 30 plus days have come and gone, and we are all closer to being with our loved ones, families, and friends. Deployments bring changes for soldiers and families alike. For soldiers many of the changes are simple things that most people take for granted; showering at home without flip-flops, walking without 60 pounds of body armor and ammunition, driving to work without preparing the vehicle for an hour or more. Yet, on the flip side, families have a significant increase in roles and responsibilities. Basically they are doing everything back home. With the increased workload, I suspect it is like trying to put 50 pounds of sand into a 15 pound container. Some of those responsibilities include; cleaning/maintaining the house alone, taking care of the kids with little or no down time, trying to take a shower while watching the young children, and squeezing in the dog's daily walk in temperatures well below freezing. We, Soldiers and families, are all distanced by time and space, yet another monthly newsletter means we are getting closer to sharing our lives TOGETHER!

So what can I tell you about the hard working Paratroopers of Alpha Battery 2-377<sup>th</sup> PFAR. I can tell you they are still out in sector, beyond the wire and HESCO baskets (these are large wire formed baskets that are filled with dirt), and patrolling daily with our local national part-



(L to R) CSM Sasser —CJTF -1 DCSM, SPC Kunsch —Platoon Medic, and SFC Keeling —Medical Platoon Sergeant; SPC Kunsch was recognized by CSM Sasser as the Division Hero of the Battle.

ners, the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP). The AUP are on patrol with the Paratroopers daily and have the same mind and mission set of establishing Afghan security. It sounds simple, but this place is both culturally diverse and mentally draining, not to mention the ridiculous temperatures. But, the Paratroopers of Alpha Battery don't complain, quit, or make excuses. They know it is their job to disrupt and deny the enemies who attempt to cause harm to FOB SALERNO and the personnel that reside here. They are doing a damn good job!

The Paratroopers of Alpha Battery will continue to push hard until all the containers are packed, and we are back at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. To this point in the deployment, their efforts have lowered the number of significant acts, or SIGACTS as the Army calls them, in the area in which we operate in. This isn't all Alpha Battery, but it is a large contribution by them. They are conducting the types of operational techniques in areas that weren't explored by previous units. Even the enemy is saying that, "[Alpha Battery] is making it too tough to operate and move throughout the area of operations." That is just a small part of the contributions made by the Junior Enlisted, Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), and Officers of this fine Battery.

For the local people of Afghanistan this month starts the beginning of Ramadan, a holy month in the Muslim religion based off the Islamic lunar calendar. Afghans honor their religion by fasting from eating,



SFC Kamal, an AUP Platoon Sergeant partnered with Alpha Battery, conducting a KLE with local village elders during a AUP led combat patrol.



drinking, and sexual relations for approximately 30 days. "Ramadan also teaches Muslims to practice self-discipline, self-control, sacrifice, and empathy for those who are less fortunate; thus encouraging actions of generosity and charity." This will alter the local Afghan lifestyle significantly to a slower paced mindset. So the challenges of Alpha Battery continue as we alter our patrol schedules and lifestyles to continue our efforts. See that... a little cultural knowledge and understanding.

A few deserving Paratroopers were recognized this month for their hard work and efforts while serving in our great nation's Army. I would like to take a few minutes to recognize their actions, as it is well deserved.

SGT Arriola, the Battery Communications NCO, was recognized by the Division for his above standards performance and hard work; which ultimately assists Alpha Battery in running smoother, while staying connected. His contributions were recognized by the Division Inspector General (IG) panel for his dedication of service and will be broadcasted in the Division newsletter.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Robert J. Wright was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant (1LT). 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Wright has grown significantly, since having been in this Battery under the tutelage of the great NCO's and officers. I shared a few quick words with the Battery prior to his promotion, **"Lieutenant's need the experience and knowledge of the Junior Enlisted and senior NCO's to grow and develop. Without this interaction with intelligent and knowledgeable Paratroopers, NCO's and Officers, they would not have the skills to lead Paratroopers and complete the missions given to them from higher headquarters."** Not to mention, the constant attention given by the finest NCO in the Battery... 1SG Zoker!



**LTC Stanco presents the Battalion coin of excellence to four paratroopers for their outstanding contributions to the TF mission.**

To some of the wives of Alpha Battery, I wanted to give you special recognition or "shout-outs," as the younger generation might say. First, the deliveries of a couple new "Lil' Paratroopers" will arrive into the world by the time this newsletter is published. SSG Rothenburger (3rd Platoon Squad Leader) and his wife are expected to give birth at the end of July. SGT Felton's (3rd Platoon Fire Support Sergeant) and his wife are expecting the first week of August, and the Hogan's have given birth to a baby girl, since the last newsletter. So congratulations again, and we all look forward to meeting the new additions. Second, for the wives of the Family Readiness Group (FRG), thank you for all that you do. Your contributions to this great team do not go unnoticed. If you are not active in the Battery FRG, I encourage you to try it out. The organization is only as strong as the people and the effort put into it. Thanks again ladies!

Finally to the members of Alpha Battery and their families, I urge you to remain focused and energetic as we push through these next few months. Soon Alpha Battery will be showering without flip-flops, shopping without body armor and driving vehicles without having to spend an hour to prepare them before and after travel. Alpha Battery wives, families, and friends be patient and get excited. Soon you will be able to enjoy the company of your beloved Paratrooper. Appreciate him for a little while, and then put him back on his duties of dishwashing, dog walking, or child watching... just in case he forgot!

CPT Dana R. Lafarier  
FALCON 6



**LTC Stanco addresses Alpha Battery Paratroopers during 1LT Wright's promotion ceremony.**

## ANOTHER DAY IN ALPHA BATTERY



**1st Platoon, Alpha Battery poses for a picture after a combat patrol.**



**3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery poses for a picture after a combat patrol.**



# A BATTERY FALCONS

## Greetings to All!

I would first like to extend my greetings to the family members and friends of Alpha Battery. As I looked at my calendar, I realized we have completed eight months of our ten month deployment, and this would have never been accomplished without the overwhelming support from each of you. I ask that you continue to provide your support because it has, and will continue to have, a profound impact on the Paratroopers of this organization for the remainder of this deployment.

Over the past eight months, Paratroopers of Alpha Battery have performed superbly while conducting the Battalion's only maneuver mission. This is a task that comes with tremendous risk, but despite the risk, our Paratroopers have taken the challenge with the utmost devotion and commitment to accomplishing the mission. I fully believe in order for any organization to become successful there has to be a solid foundation, good command structure, order and discipline, and most important, teamwork. The Officers and Noncommissioned Officers of Alpha Battery have worked tirelessly to ensure these elements exist, something that has significantly shaped our Paratroopers' ability to carry out their respective duties on a daily basis. We have some of the best Officers and

Noncommissioned Officers I have ever had the privilege to serve with. They have transformed our Paratroopers from Artillerymen to well-trained Infantrymen, capable of conducting operations completely outside their scope of duty. Alpha Battery has been able to implement critical elements that allow our Paratroopers to not only accomplish the mission with remarkable results, but also have a positive impact on the everyday lives of the local population. The outstanding leaders and Paratroopers we have in this organization strive to accomplish the mission with dedication, commitment, and professionalism. They have gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the people of Afghanistan have a better future.

With our Afghan partners, Falcon Paratroopers patrol eighteen different villages in the Khowst Province providing security and denying the enemy the ability to control or disrupt the day to day lives of the local populace. Working alongside our Afghan partners has been a great experience. Regardless of our religious practices, views, and positions, we have worked together as a collective team, committed to ensuring peace and stability come to the people of this great country.

As we count down the remaining months of this deployment, I assure you our Paratroopers remain focused and committed to the tasks at hand. As I discuss weekly with these outstanding warriors, the mission is not complete until we are back in JBER with our loved ones. I promise you we will continue to make a difference in the lives of the people of Afghanistan, we will always remember where we come from, and who we are.

**"FALCONS STRIKE"**  
1SG Samuel H. Zoker  
FALCON 7



SGT Sebastian, 1st Platoon, Alpha Battery, interacts with children during a combat patrol.



# B BATTERY BLACKSHEEP

**To all Bravo Battery Family and Friends,**

Once again, hello to everyone from Afghanistan! I hope everyone is still enjoying their summer, both in Alaska and back in the Lower 48. By the time you read this, it will be almost time to start school again, which I know your kids are excited for. But with the start of school, the calendar also brings us that much closer to being back home, so it's not all bad!

As I know all of you are aware, we are down to just two months left in our deployment. For many of us, that means we are completing tasks like packing bags, loading containers, and making preparations for things like barracks rooms. These are all great things, because they mean that we are close to coming home to all of you. But they can also lead to complacency, and to thinking that our mission is already accomplished. Because we are still conducting a combat mission, your Paratroopers' leaders are ensuring that we do not lose the focus that has been one of our Battery's greatest strengths over these last several months.

Having seen the effects an impending redeployment can have on Soldiers, I was initially worried about our Paratroopers losing their edge. But after visiting all of our firing locations over the last few weeks, I can tell you know that I had no need to worry. Your Paratroopers are still exceeding the standard in everything they do, and that has not changed since our first day in-country. I wish you all could see the great things your husbands and sons have accomplished. Whether it's the Paratroopers of 5<sup>th</sup> Platoon firing countless rounds from an austere location in the mountains, to 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon training what is acknowledged as the most proficient Afghan Artillery platoon in the region, you should all be proud of the effects that your Paratroopers have had.

As always, I'd like to thank you back home for all the support you have shown us. Knowing that we are getting close to that homecoming ceremony is making time go by even faster. Before you know it, we'll all be at Buckner Field House, celebrating redeployment; but until then, the Paratroopers of Bravo Battery will continue to put rounds downrange and work towards accomplishing our mission.

**BLACKSHEEP!**

Sincerely,

DANIEL D. FRECHETTE

CPT, FA

Commanding

MATTHEW J. DUDLEY

FIRST SERGEANT



## THE PARATROOPERS OF 3RD PLATOON

The months are going by fast as 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was occupied with training on several different weapon systems; such as the M4 Carbine, the M240B/M249, the M119A2, and the M777A2. This deployment turned into a great learning experience. The Soldiers are equipped with the knowledge and practice necessary to effectively perform in combat, no matter what situation may arise.

At Combat Outpost (COP) Zormat, we have the opportunity to train with our small arms on a live fire range. When we first arrived, this small range did not exist. All we could do is provide instruction on the safe use of the weapon systems. Now, after instructing the Soldiers on proper performance, we can put it to practice as well. This includes safe firing, clearing procedures, and conducting a zero/qualification here on COP Zormat. The Soldiers remain well-versed in the use of these weapon systems.

Despite the small-arms training, we have focused mostly on our howitzers; we are Artillerymen, after all. On the M119A2, we consistently perform both live and dry fire missions in order to keep the Soldiers prepared to fire in any condition. Our training focuses on fire commands, proper procedures, crew drills, and maintenance. We maintain a standard on fire commands, as it is too easy to become complacent and begin to do things incorrectly. We should always know the basic standards for fire commands, as different crews tend to do things differently. This applies to both the gun line and the fire direction center. Proper procedures include anything from misfire procedures to degraded computational procedures in the FDC. Of course, the purpose of this training is to maintain safety and firing capability. Crew drills revolve around understanding and working with one's crew. We train individuals on different positions as well, especially during one-man-down crew drills.

The greatest challenge we faced in our training is in the preparation and use of the M777A2 155mm medium howitzer. Crew drills are more difficult, as the M777A2 is large and quite heavy. In order to traverse the weapon beyond its limits, allowing it to face a different direction, we must pump it up in order to elevate it off the ground just enough to tip it down at the muzzle and push it in one direction or the other. This requires a lot of effort and more individuals to perform than it did for the M119A2. We have become more proficient in dealing with things like this through constant practice. Now, our gun line is faster due to our hard work.

A notable difference is in the communication. We operate the M777A2 through digital communication. This means a lot of things in relation to training for the M777A2. On the FDC side of training, the crew was taught to properly enter everything into our computer systems before the M777A2 even arrived. The goal is to prevent wrong data from reaching the gun line. An example is in basic fire commands, as we must differ-



SPC Smith and PFC Hayner cleaning the gun after a sand storm.



3rd Platoon, Bravo Battery, at COP Zormat during a fire mission.





A view of the gun pit at COP Zormat.

entiate between “Do Not Load” data and “When Ready” data. On top of this, we must be vigilant in maintaining digital communication, however, we do practice degraded operations.

Finally, our training for the M777A2 demands that we have a better understanding of the projectiles we are using. The 155mm projectiles fall under a separate loading category of munitions. Unlike the 105mm, we must manually prepare the round for fire. This requires both the gun line and FDC to understand the difference between propellants, shells, and fuses, as well as a fundamental understanding of how the projectile is fired, beginning from the primer component and transitioning into the burning of the propellant.

Ultimately, it has been a great experience to be able to work with different weapon systems in Afghanistan. CPL Ravina says, “Being a flexible force is better than being focused on one skill set.” SSG Gabard added, “‘Flexicution’ is the key.” CPL Ravina went on to note, “The ability of our red legs to jump between the 105mm and 155mm is remarkable.” We are lucky to have this opportunity and have grown a lot from the use of it. We still have several months to continue our progression and further our knowledge and practice of the weapon systems at our disposal.

“Winning the Afghan hearts and minds, one round at a time.” – SSG Brice

—written by 2LT Aaron Valtinson



3rd Platoon, Bravo Battery, COP Zormat, performing their duties during a fire mission.

# C BATTERY/1-377 FAR CRUSADERS

The month of July continued the transition for Crusader Battery firing points to Bravo Battery, TF 2-377 to prepare for its upcoming redeployment. The transition continued weeks of training and “relief in place” processes that involved multiple platoons of Charlie Battery and the transfer and movement of millions of dollars worth of equipment. During the month, both the Camp Clark and FOB Salerno firing points were transitioned to Bravo Battery, leaving the Crusaders with one remaining firing point and a host of new responsibilities. This transition marked a major turning point in the transition of fires in AO Spartan to hybrid section firing points.

The month of July marked the end for Soldiers at Camp Clark. The platoon who had spent 8 months there shot its final fire mission and transferred authority of the firing point and ANA Artillery partnership to Bravo Battery. The Heavy Coy Artillery and the Platoon’s leadership exchanged signs of appreciation before departing as a show of the hard work and lasting impact of the platoon’s mentorship to the unit. To recognize the hard work and support that 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon provided during the course of the deployment, Task Force 1-40 gave each Soldier honorary cavalry spurs. Upon returning to FOB Salerno, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon quickly reintegrated into the Battery and picked up new roles in support of the base defense and other operations around FOB Salerno.

While other platoons’ firing points were transitioning back to FOB Salerno, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon at FOB Andar was preparing to move to provide firing capabilities in Kapisa province. The process involved Soldiers from across the Battery to help move the platoon’s equipment from Andar through multiple other FOB’s in order to make it safely to the platoon’s new destination as well as key leaders conducting reconnaissance of the new firing point. The platoon managed to accom-



3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon Soldiers demonstrating maintenance of the M777A2 for Bravo Battery, 2-377 PFAR Soldiers.

plish this mission while providing fires at FOB Andar and preparing for the platoon’s redeployment.

For Soldiers at FOB Salerno, the month of July marked the end of one mission and the start of another. As the Artillery mission was ending, Soldiers from around the Battery began moving to FOB Salerno to assume additional duties at both the Field Detention Site (FDS) and Base Defense Operations Center (BDOC). As Soldiers began to return from Firebase Chamkani and Camp Clark, there were many reunions for the Soldiers who had not seen one another in up to 8 months. Many of these Soldiers ended up working again with one another in non-Artillery roles. By the end of the month, there were multiple sections of Soldiers at BDOC working in force protection roles as well as multiple sections of Soldiers working at the FDS to process detainees. The new roles were refreshing and a new challenge for many of the Soldiers around the Battery. They were also a morale boost knowing that they would be transitioning back home soon.

CPT Robert N. Collier  
CRUSADER 6



# G COMPANY WOLFPACK

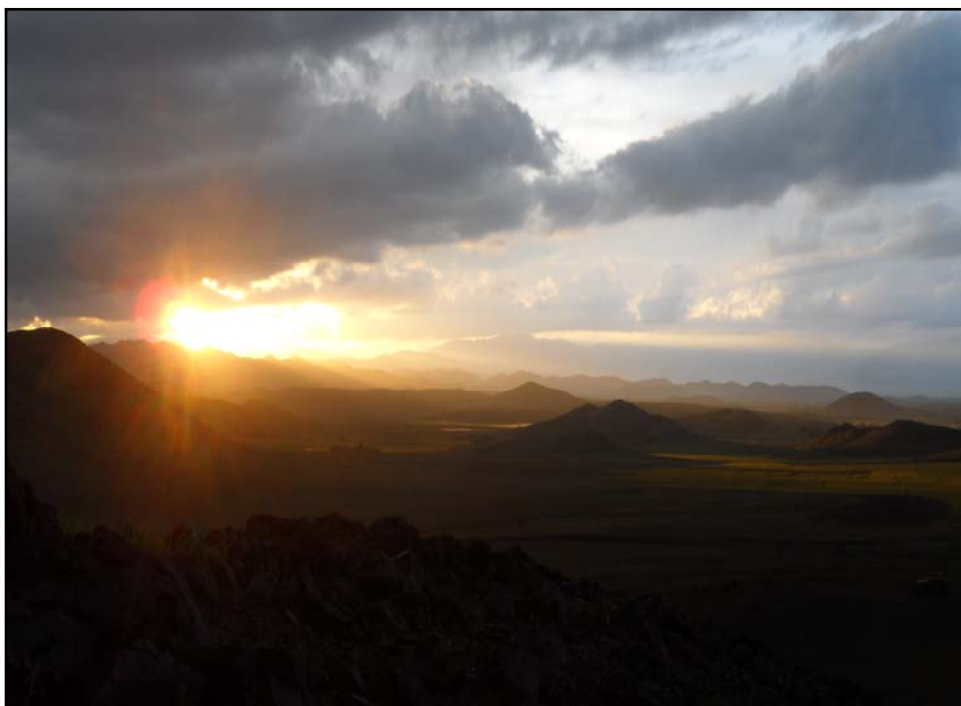
**T**he Golf Company mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) has constantly adapted to meet the fluid nature of the contemporary operating environment. Over the past 8 months, Golf Company has filled the gap time and time again to fulfill nonstandard logistical and maneuver missions. Before appreciating some of these recent nonstandard accomplishments, let's take a brief look at some of the critically important tasks Golf Company has accomplished and currently meets on a day to day basis.

SSG Benjamin Bryant and his merry band of entry control point (ECP) cohorts, continue to control the flow of all personnel, vehicles, equipment, and supplies inside and outside of FOB Salerno. Every day you can expect to see the ECP's coordinated processing of local workers, host nation supply trucks, as well as inbound and outbound security convoys. The roster of Soldiers at the ECP is nearly half of the company itself. It would be an injustice to single out only a few Soldiers without first acknowledging how all Soldiers play a vital role in their duties at the ECP. Some of the smiling faces that come to mind are SGT Glen Veney and SGT Janovia Nelson who live up to their intimidating reputations for upholding ECP standard operating procedures. SPC David Raggs, PFC Daniel Smith, and PFC Corey Ellis greet every security convoy with swift diligence to gather convoy information and help mitigate battlefield congestion. When PFC Ellis isn't busy regulating outbound convoys, his interpersonal skills help strengthen the working relationship between the ECP and their Afghan security guard counterparts. SPC Cedrick Swann remains ever vigilant as one of the ECP tower guards, putting his crime fighting abilities to use as he scans the ECP for the first sign of trouble. The ECP has many long days ahead of them, but they have the right Soldiers for the job and are on the right track to see their tasks completed.

Maintenance platoon still operates around the clock performing a task that often goes thankless. SSG Brandi Espinoza and SSG Ryan Weinhold continue to employ one of the brigade's finest platoons of mechanics. The maintenance bay is a scene of controlled chaos as the noise and smell of power tools and lubricants overpower the senses. PFC Kylara Ward and PFC Stephen Iwasko can be spotted along with the rest of the maintenance crew, their faces only barely recognizable behind a thick layer of engine grease and coveralls completely covered in oil.

The quick reactionary force (QRF) mission is one of Golf Company's major nonstandard missions. The last word shared with you on the duties and responsibilities of QRF, covered convoy security patrols from FOB Salerno to neighboring Camp Clark, the occasional explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) escort, and the wrecker recovery mission.

More recently, the QRF was entrusted with a maneuver mission to conduct joint security patrols with Afghan Uniformed Police throughout TF 2-377 area of operation. This unique experience has taken a number of Petroleum Supply Specialists (92F), Food Service Specialists (92G), Motor Transport



A beautiful sunset in Khost Province, Afghanistan.

Operators (88M), Wheeled Vehicle Mechanics (91B), and Power Generation Equipment Repairers (91D) and given them a mission traditionally tasked to a combat arms unit.

The young Soldiers in the QRF platoon; the shaky, inexperienced drivers and gunners at the beginning of the deployment are no longer found. They are still young Soldiers, but are now veterans of Khost Province's major supply routes, tactical areas of interest, and Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) checkpoints. They can draw maps and diagrams of major intersections, pinpoint key terrain, and even locate major villages, all by memory. When not on the road, SPC

Maria Van Dyne, SPC Christopher Sizemore, SPC Max Watts, and PFC Michael Kissal can be seen dispatching vehicles, keeping them in top operating condition, or preparing for another mission. The practice of convoy briefings, inspections, and verifying vehicle load plans are all second nature. The logistics Soldiers in Golf Company's QRF platoon have performed with distinction in this non-standard role and have greatly contributed to TF 2-377's main effort here in support of OEF. The completed QRF missions have been the same caliber as those carried out by their sister platoons in Alpha Battery.

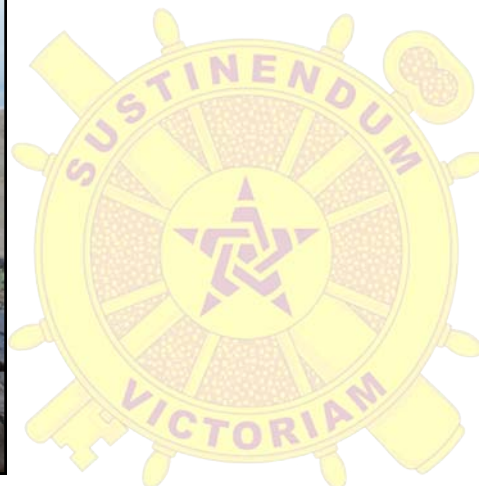
The teamwork and cooperation between Golf Company and Alpha Battery continues to improve the overall security of Khost Province and the level of effectiveness of Khost's Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Gains made by Golf Company's efforts are evident in the measures of success seen in the growing trust between Afghan civilians, the Afghan Uniformed Police, and Afghan National Army. As 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon continues to meet with local farmers and civilians on routine patrols, greeted by smiles, handshakes, and kind words, gains are made toward a more stable Afghanistan.



SPC Werner assists an Afghan local national.



PFC Michael Kissal and PFC Edwin Burmaster admire the scenery while conducting security.







**SPC Kenny Delacruz in the turret preparing to head out on a security patrol.**

Golf Company's non-standard mission requires our Soldiers to step into almost entirely new roles every few months. A good sports analogy would be to look at Golf Company as a football team. I won't select a specific team in this example just because I don't want to play favorites...Go Niners! The constant rotation of jobs and positions while in theater has seen our Soldiers playing offense, defense, and special teams. Of course, you won't see a 300 pound offensive lineman playing wide receiver, or guarding the FOB Salerno ECP, but you will see Golf Company's Food Service Specialists (92G) and Petroleum Supply Specialists (92F) securing nearby mountain tops, pulling tower guard, driving Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs), and conducting joint patrols with the local Afghan Uniform Police forces.

One of Golf Company's MVPs in the last few months has been SPC Kenny Delacruz. SPC Delacruz's skill by trade is that of a Petroleum Supply Specialist (92F). However, his job right now has nothing to do with managing the battalion's fuel requirements. Instead, try picturing Delacruz playing quarterback and pass blocking at the same time. Analogy aside, SPC Delacruz does it all.

There is hardly a typical or average day that SPC Delacruz has the luxury of enjoying. His list of recurring tasks and previously completed missions is longer than he would like, but he has completed them all with the same unfaltering energy, diligence, and dedication to mission. Delacruz has recently been reunited with the Quick Reactionary Force (QRF) platoon. He spent the first three months with QRF, then rotated over to the FOB Salerno ECP to help check security badges, screen local workers, and provide security for incoming security patrols. The deployment has flown by, considering he is right back where he started. Now that he is back with QRF, his recent missions have involved driving up and down most of the roads in Khost Province, helping clear and secure local villages, and setting up joint traffic control checkpoints. Odd jobs come through the pipeline now and again, such as helping provide additional security at the FOB Salerno Field Detention Site (FDS), loading containers for shipment back to Fort Richardson, and even patrolling the FOB as part of force protection requirements. Delacruz's performance has made him the epitome of the multifunctional logistician.

He recently returned from R&R, which he spent in Florida. Delacruz has big plans with his family and a new home at the end of the deployment. He can't wait to be back with his wife Maria, and his beautiful daughters Destiny and Genesis.

# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

## PEACE

**W**e live in a world filled with commotion, where peace is difficult to find. Frequently we attempt to find peace in everything around us, but neglect to find or instill it within us. The attack on FOB Salerno, June 1, 2012 is an example of how difficult it is to find peace in the world. We might ask ourselves, "How can I find peace in the midst of war?" There is only one way to find peace in war, and I assure you, it is possible. Peace is something we find within ourselves. It spreads from individual to individual until it reaches all who are willing to receive it. The responsibility and decision is ours, we must be willing to look internally and then be willing to change. It comes down to choice; a choice that belongs to us, individually. This choice will further define our character, who we are, and who we become.

When we face tragic events, often our emotional response is anger and frustration. In this anger or frustration lies our responsibility to choose. Will our choice allow anger or fear to consume our lives, to immobilize or hinder us? Or will our choice enable peace to flow into our lives, allowing us to concentrate on our training, our preparation, our mission, and on our families? Each of us has a different mechanism that allows peace to flow into our lives. Personally, I turn to a loving Heavenly Father to help me deal with tragedy in my life, and to help bring peace into my life.

Prayer is how I find and bring peace into my life. I witnessed the peace that comes in prayer while I was serving a mission in Brazil. The language of Portuguese proved to be a challenge for me to learn. I arrived in Brazil just a week and a half before Christmas in 1995. The area in which I served was a remote town about seven hours outside of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. There was no one in the *town* that spoke English *or even claimed to do so*. At the time, the burden of learning a new language seemed overwhelming. That combined with the onset of Christmas day became too much for me as a young missionary. Every morning I would wake up, read my scriptures, and spend a few moments wishing I could just speak to someone in English. The only comfort I had came in the moments of prayer and supplication to a loving Father in Heaven. In due time, God granted me the ability to understand and speak the Portuguese language. Through this experience my testimony was strengthened, and I know God answers our prayers in His own time and in His own way; He brought peace into my life.

The way for us to find peace is to find it within ourselves, within the walls of our homes, and within our unit. We must decide that it is more powerful to let peace flow in our lives than it is to allow anger to consume our lives. I want each of you to know, I pray for you, I pray for our unit, and I pray for our families. Let's do our best to reunite as better, stronger individuals; it is up to us.

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17 KJV).



CH (CPT) McCurdy stops to pose for a quick picture while on patrol with A BTRY.



CH (CPT) Logan McCurdy



SPC Collins, Chaplain's Assistant, while on patrol with A BTRY.



## Last Month's BLAST....

If you guessed ISG  
Dudley, Blacksheep 7,  
then you are correct.





# SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS!!!

TO THE PFAR GUN BUNNIES FOR THEIR 4&1 SOFTBALL RECORD. CONGRATULATIONS LADIES!

