

ON POINT!



CONTENTS

SMA visits Soldiers in Afghan hotspot.....Page 3
ABP knock out insurgent activity.....Page 4
MG Abrams re-enlists ‘Desert Rogues’.....Page 6
ANA bring peace to Deh Chopan.....Page 7
3-2 Spouses redeployment training.....Page 8
Supply maintains logistical integrity.....Page 9
Photo PagePage 10
Showing the ANA what right looks like.....Page 12
3/2 SBCT welcome home loved ones.....Page 14
1-23 Infantry UMT helps ‘Tomahawks’.....Page 16
Photo page.....Page 18
A family birthday in Afghanistan.....Page 20
Military, NFL tackle TBI.....Page 22
Building education one stone at a time.....Page 24
Hero carries squad leader to safety.....Page 25
Chaplain’s Corner.....Page 26
Arrowhead Remembers.....Page 27

COVER

A Soldier from Battle Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Warhorse, pulls security during a dismounted patrol in Deh Chopan district, Sept. 5, 2012. The Soldiers of B/5-20 IN was in the area to support their Afghan National Security Forces partners who were conducting Operation Kalak Hode 5. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough, Combined Task Force Arrowhead Public Affairs)

BACK COVER

(Photos by Capt. Marius Dinita, Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg and Sgt. Christopher McCullough, Combined Task Force Arrowhead Public Affairs) (Illustration by Spc. Mark Neace)

3-2 SBCT Commander
Col. Charles Webster Jr.

3-2 SBCT Command Sgt. Maj.
Command Sgt. Maj. Samuel G. Murphy

3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Office

Capt Troy Frey.....Public Affairs Officer
Staff Sgt. Joshua S. Brandenburg.....NCOIC/Photo Journalist
Sgt. Christopher G. McCullough.....Photo Journalist/
Layout and Design
Sgt. Nathaniel D. Phillips.....Broadcast Journalist
Spc. Mark E. Neace.....Illustrator

Contributors

Capt. Marius Dinita, Capt. Christine Rosalin, 1st Lt. Veronica Aguila,
Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie, Staff Sgt. Antwaun Parrish, Sgt. Lori Bilyou,
Sgt. Ashley Curtis, Sgt. Adam Keith,, Sgt. Uriah Walker, Senior Airman

Joshua Turner

The ON POINT! is a command information magazine authorized for members of the U.S. Army and the 3-2 SBCT community. Contents of the ON POINT are not necessarily the official views of , or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or Department of the Army. The editorial content of the magazine is the responsibility of the 3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Office. Any story or photo submission should be forwarded to the editor at troy.scott.frey@us.army.mil

Sergeant Major of the Army visits Soldiers in Afghan hotspot

Story and photos by Sgt. Ashley Curtis
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
FORWARD OPERATING BASE
ZANGABAD, Afghanistan - After visiting several wounded Soldiers in Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Sgt. Maj. of the Army, Raymond F. Chandler III noticed that many of those Soldiers were injured in Afghanistan’s Panjwa’i district, and decided it was high time for a visit.

The highest-ranked enlisted member in the Army visited Forwarding Operating Base Zangabad, located in Panjwa’i district, as part of his visit to the country’s southern region.

Chandler brought the deployed Soldiers personal messages from their wounded stateside brothers, and commented on what makes the Soldiers of the 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, unique.

“That bond between you and them is strong,” he told the deployed Soldiers. “They’re connected to you as they will be the rest of their lives and you to them.”

The Soldiers in Panjwa’i have been dealt many heavy blows during their time in Afghanistan, taking casualties through direct fire and roadside bombs. Through all of these roadblocks, the Soldiers continue to push on with their mission.

Command Sgt. Maj. Samuel Murphy, 3rd Stryker Brigade command sergeant major, said, “In order for us to close this war



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III answers the question of a deployed Soldier from 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division at Forward Operating Base Zangabad, Oct. 3, 2012. Chandler is the highest-ranked enlisted soldier in the Army, and visited FOB Zangabad as part of a visit to speak with Soldiers in Regional Command (South).

out successfully, we have to train the Afghan security forces to get to an acceptable level to provide security for their own country.”

“That’s the tough part of this job, and you guys are bearing the burden for that,” responded Chandler. “You’ve just got to keep getting after it, like you’ve been doing.”

During his frequent meetings at the Pentagon, Chandler said he’d often heard about the things these Soldiers have been doing and what they were up against in this area.

“Your battalion’s gotten a tremendous amount of coverage because of all the things you’re doing,” he said. “But you’re turning things around, you’re making a difference and I’m proud of what you do.”

Chandler showed his appreciation to the Soldiers by answering questions, hearing their stories and handing out coins to deserving Soldiers.

“We’re proud of you,” he said. “That’s the thing that I want you to take away from this [experience]. You’re doing such a tremendous job over here that the country is amazed by what you do.”

Afghan Border Police knock out insurgent activity with Southern Fist

Story and photos by

Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie

117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
FORWARD OPERATING BASE
SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan – More than 75 members of the Afghan Border Police executed the two-day clearance operation dubbed Southern Fist throughout the Shin Naray and Karr passes in the Spin Boldak district, Sept. 29-30.

The primary goals of Southern Fist were to disrupt enemy activity in the area and to connect the local villagers with the Afghan government. The Afghan-led operation was planned by leaders of the 3rd Zone ABP and executed by the unit's battalion-sized 3rd Kandak.

"The ABP were fully independent with advisers, from the selection of where the mission would take place, to the scheme of maneuver, and finally exercising mission command of the operation," said Capt. Tom Angstadt, commander of the Security Force Assistance Team that advises the 3rd Kandak. "ISAF provided enablers who were not organic to the ABP to further enable and embolden the ABP."

The enablers included route clearance personnel provided by the 569th Engineer Company and the 787th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company. The U.S. convoy cleared roadways of improvised explosive device threats, allowing the Afghan forces freedom of

movement.

"The ABP recognized they had gained freedom of maneuver into Karr Pass and quickly flexed their reserve platoon from the town of Sherobeh to conduct a dismounted clearance from the Shin Naray Pass over a 7,000-foot ridge line and then clear down the Karr Pass back to the Shin Naray Pass," Angstadt said.

During the clearance, the 3rd Kandak searched and cleared several villages in the areas looking for contraband. While investigating a known Taliban commander's compound, the ABP forces engaged in a firefight with insurgents.



Maj. Asmatulla Safi (center), operations officer with the 3rd Zone Afghan Border Police, leads a shura meeting with Afghans from multiple villages during Operation Southern Fist in the village of Obezhan Kalay, Spin Boldak district, Afghanistan, Sept. 30, 2012. The Afghan-led operation focused on denying the enemy freedom of maneuver and to connect local villagers with the Afghan government.



Soldiers with Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, appear after dismounting a Stryker vehicle during Operation Southern Fist in Afghanistan's Spin Boldak district, Sept. 29, 2012. The Afghan-led operation focused on denying the enemy freedom of maneuver and to connect local villagers with the Afghan government. The 1-14th Cavalry is part of the 2nd Infantry Division's 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

"They moved dismounted over 15 kilometers and an elevation gain of 2,000 feet," Angstadt said. "During this clearance, they were able to successfully engage the enemy and remove them from the battlefield."

During the fight, a number of insurgents were killed and wounded. The ABP also detained several suspects who were transferred to a nearby detention facility.

On the second day, Maj. Asmatulla Safi, operations officer with the 3rd Zone ABP, organized and led a multi-village shura in Obezhan Kalay. The meeting brought more than 30 male villagers to the central location to receive a uniformed message from the Afghan government regarding

security.

Simultaneously, Afghan Uniformed Police Capt. Noora Hyatt, the only female police officer in Spin Boldak, led a shura with more than 20 Afghan females from the local area. Female U.S. Soldiers from Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak also attended this meeting, which was the first of its kind in the area.

Other U.S. Soldiers established a tactical assembly area nearby in order to advise, evaluate and support the ABP when requested. U.S. leadership attended the shura and their respective organizations' Soldiers provided additional perimeter security.

In addition to the route clearance assets, other supporting units

included the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment; 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regt.; and Alpha Company, 426th Civil Affairs Bn.

Angstadt said the Afghan forces accomplished its primary goals during Southern Fist.

"The ABP in Spin Boldak are getting better every day and are well down the road toward being fully independent and able to assume responsibility for the security of Spin Boldak district," Angstadt said. "Every day they show more initiative, creativity and flexibility in operations while energetically facing the enemies of their country."

Maj. Gen. Abrams re-enlists 25 'Desert Rogues'

Story and photos by Sgt. Uriah Walker
Headquarters, 3rd Infantry Division
Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LINDSEY, Afghanistan – Regional Command – South and Third Infantry Division Commander Maj. Gen. Robert B. “Abe” Abrams administered the oath of re-enlistment Thursday, Oct. 18, 2012, to 25 Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team in Forward Operating Base Lindsey.

“I am grateful every single day that we continue to recruit Americans and retain American Soldiers who want to serve their country, because it isn’t for everybody,” said Abrams.

Of the 25 “Desert Rogues” re-enlisting today, 11 did so for the first time, 15 deployed at least twice, and two of those are on their fourth deployment.

“It takes a special breed of American to want to do this and I am grateful for your service, I’m grateful for your sacrifice, and for those of you with families, I’m especially grateful for their sacri-

fices because it’s not easy on our families,” Abrams said.

Staff Sgt. Phillip Smith, a track vehicle mechanic who enlisted for the first time more than nine years ago, comes from a military family.

“If you enjoy what you do in the Army, if you like leading Soldiers, if you’re a leader, continue to do it. Re-enlist. Stay in. The Army wants to keep the best,” said Smith.

According to 1-64 AR Command Sgt. Maj. Eric B. Littlejohn, there are approximately 700 Soldiers assigned to 1-64. During this deployment, 126 of those dedicated Soldiers raised their right hand to re-enlist.

Of the 25 who re-enlisted today, nearly half of them chose to stay with 1-64 as they move forward in their Army career, said Littlejohn.

“I honestly believe that they like (the Third Infantry Division),” he said. “It brings a special flair when they’re wearing the Marne Patch.”



Maj. Gen. Robert B. “Abe” Abrams, Regional Command - South and Third Infantry Division Commander, signs Staff Sgt. Philip D. Smith’s Oath of Reenlistment,” Thursday Oct. 18, 2012, in Forward Operating Base Lindsey, Afghanistan. Maj. Gen. Abrams visited 64th Armor, 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team to administer the oath of reenlistment to the largest group of Soldiers to reenlist at one time from the unit during this deployment.

Littlejohn added, “There’s always going to be days that are going to be hard. It doesn’t matter if you’re a civilian or you’re in the military. Look at what you have and what there is out there for you, take advantage of all the opportunities and be proud of the fact that you volunteered to stay in the military.”



Maj. Gen. Robert B. “Abe” Abrams, Regional Command - South and Third Infantry Division commander, surrounds himself with “Desert Rogues,” Thursday, Oct. 18, 2012, in Forward Operating Base Lindsey, Afghanistan. Maj. Gen. Abrams visited 1st Battalion, 64th Armor, Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team to administer the oath of re-enlistment to 25 Soldiers.

ANA and ANP bring peace to Deh Chopan, says 2nd Kandak

Story and photos by
Sgt. Chris McCullough
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan - In the wake of a recent Afghan-led military operation called Kalak Hode 5, a security shura was held at the district center in Deh Chopan, Zabul province, Afghanistan, to assess the local population’s thoughts on the security situation in their valley.

The shura, which included elders from most of the villages in the valley, was largely a success in that the 2nd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army Corps was able to assess whether the villagers in the neighboring valleys were happy with the Afghan National Security Forces increased presence, and whether their presence was keeping Taliban at bay.

“The intent of the shura was to talk



Maj. Jamal Nasir, Afghan National Army Religious Officer, 2nd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army Corps shares an encouraging word with village elders from the local valleys who attended a security shura at the Deh Chopan District Center, Sept. 10, 2012. Nasir’s message was simple: “They should come and join ANA and ANP [Afghan National Police] and bring peace in this district and in their villages.”

about the security situation,” said Maj. Troy Parrish, commander, Security Forces Assistance Team 42, whose team advises the ANA regarding their security. “Having just gone through several days of the [Kalak Hode 5] operation, they wanted to get some village feedback on how the villagers assess the security situation.”

The village elders indicated their support for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; however they were concerned about Taliban harassment that routinely occurs after visits from Afghan National Security Forces.

“One of their biggest concerns is that if they are visited by one of the [Afghan] security pillars at some time - perhaps, during the day - that they are more than likely going to be threatened by the Taliban after the army or the police leave their village,” said Parrish. “That is because it’s a matter of the two opposing forces trying to win over the people in the

village, at least to be sympathetic or supportive.”

In spite of that, villagers are generally happy about the security situation where they live.

Even the ANA religious officer, Maj. Jamal Nasir, was optimistic about the villagers’ reaction to the increased ANSF patrols.

“As religious officer I had advice for them that they should come and join ANA and ANP and bring peace in this district and in their villages,” said Nasir. “The people were happy to hear that from me. That was my message to all of them, to bring peace and no more fighting.”



A village elder from Deh Chopan district (standing) expresses his security concerns to Maj. Jamal Nasir (right), Afghan National Army Religious Officer, 2nd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army Corps during a security shura held at the district center, Sept. 10, 2012.

Training prepares 3-2 spouses for redeployment challenges

Story and photos by Sgt. Adam Keith
19th Public Affairs Detachment

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. - Spouses of Soldiers currently deployed to Afghanistan with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, attended the brigade's Welcome Home Academy held on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Oct. 19.

The event featured a variety of classes and group discussions on financial planning, relationship workshops, helping children through redeployment and how to deal with physical or emotional problems that could come up as a result of the deployment.

"We just really want the brigade's spouses to be as prepared as possible when their Soldiers come home," said Caroline S. Webster, 3rd SBCT Family Readiness Group Adviser and wife of Col. Chuck Webster, 3rd SBCT commander. "I feel like it's important to come here and get the information, get the resources and prepare

yourself."

Webster, whose husband is gone for the couple's third deployment, stressed the need to not only inform wives who were going through their first deployment but also those who have gone through deployments in the past.

"I think the more 'senior' you get, the more you feel like this is for first-timers, but it's not," said Webster. "A lot of our families have experienced deployments to Iraq and not to Afghanistan, and this can be a very different deployment for them because they haven't had the [internet] connectivity that they were used to having in Iraq."

Toni L. Archambault, who is going through her fourth deployment with her husband Maj. Matthew T. Archambault, agreed the training was something she could use to make the transition from life without her husband easier after he returns.

"I'm impressed. This is the first time I've really had [training] for the families left behind for their reintegration," said Archambault. "It's been nice to talk about emotions and the different feelings we are going to have and that our husbands are having as well and to know that other people are going through the same things."

"My husband actually deployed for a year before we arrived at JBLM and within two weeks we found out he was leaving again," she said. "That's why I feel like like these are really important, because for some of us, we've been away from them longer than we've been together --so the transition back into our world is important."

"It's not always easy to come back together, reintegrate and create this 'new normal,' but it helps going through training like this," added Archambault.

Spouses separated from their

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

loved ones by a first deployment were also on hand to take advantage of the training that was being offered.

"There was a lot of good information and a lot of good tools for us to use," said Sgt. 1st Class Tiffany A. Brimmer, a squad leader at the Warrior Transition Battalion on JBLM. "I took a lot of notes."

Brimmer and her fiancé, Staff Sgt. Jerry Abriam, an infantryman deployed with the 3rd SBCT, have both been deployed three times, but this is the first time as a couple that they have been separated by a military deployment.

"Because I'm in the military I like to do things by the book, I'm very organized and it's important to always be in control," said Brimmer. "I've learned from the training that it's OK to relinquish some control and it's OK for him to feel like he needs to do things to help out and also to let him know that I'm not perfect and I might have let some things slide."

Webster said every redeploying unit should have a similar program.

"I feel like this is a quality program, and we have put a lot of thought into it," she said. "It worked for the brigade's last deployment, and it's working even better this time, and I think every spouse should be able to experience this."

Supply team maintains logistical integrity

Story and photos by
SpC. Nevada Jack Smith
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan - The brigade supply section of 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division at Forward Operating Base Masum Ghar is maintaining the logistical integrity of the Arrowhead battle space.

"I think supply plays a very pertinent part of the battlefield experience, because without the supplies being moved to and from where they need to be, the mission can't be accomplished," said Master Sgt. Margaret Rowe, the supply non-commissioned officer in charge for the brigade.

Proper logistics are a crucial part of any war effort.

"Getting the newest equipment out there to them makes a big difference because it helps them defeat the threat that they are facing," said Maj. Steven Putthoff, the officer in charge of the brigade supply section. "As soon as something is developed we get it and get it out to the troops. We also provide feedback on the equipment to the Army testing and evaluation command."

Having up-to-date equipment is as important as having food and water and can sometimes mean the difference between life and death. Recently, the supply section fielded protective outer and over garments to help troops combat the improvised explosive device threat.

"I want to ensure that those Soldiers out on the battlefield have the necessary equipment to keep themselves safe," said Rowe.

The supply Soldiers take their jobs seriously and take pleasure in being able to meet Soldier's needs.

"I love my job. I like being able to train my younger Soldiers and have a positive impact on the people around me," said Rowe.

Putthoff said, "I really enjoy this. You get to work very closely with the battalions and companies and you really get to see the outcome of your efforts. You get to see tangible results of your efforts and I like that."



Master Sgt. Margaret Rowe, Maj. Steven Putthoff, and Capt. William Lower pose for a group photo at Forward Operating Base Masum Ghar, Oct. 14, 2012.



Spouses of Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team attend a relationship strengthening class at the brigade, Welcome Home Academy on Joint-Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Oct. 19, 2012. The spouses attended classes and group discussions aimed at making redeployment transitions easier for their families.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough



Courtesy Photo



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough



Courtesy Photo



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ashley Curtis

Kalak Hode 5: Showing the ANA what right looks like

Story and photos
by Sgt. Chris McCullough
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan - *Part 1 of 2* - Despite recent setbacks in Afghanistan this month, the allied war strategy to hand off control of the nation's security to Afghan National Security Forces in 2014 is still on track, military commanders report. Nowhere is this more evident than in portions of southern Afghanistan where a partnered operation, named Kalak Hode 5, came to a close in late September.

The joint operation brought together the Soldiers of 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division

based out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.; elements of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, of Fort Carson, Col., who make up the majority of the security force assistance teams in Combined Task Force Arrowhead's area of operations; and the 205th Afghan National Army Corps for a corps-wide operation. The purpose of Kalak Hode 5: advise the Afghan Kandaks (battalions) on how to conduct or improve the operations that they are conducting, as well as to further disrupt the insurgency here, explained Maj. Troy Parrish, commander, SFAT 40, whose team advises 2nd Kandak.

The combined operation, which occurred throughout Zabul

province, kicked off the first week in September, with a focus in and around the districts of Deh Chopan and Mizan, and was the result of several months of partnered training throughout Zabul province.

"This is like a culminating event for us in that we did a lot of planning with 2nd Kandak since we've been here," said Sgt. Maj. Michael Williams, SFAT 40's non-commissioned officer in-charge. "We've taught them techniques on how to plan ... and we encouraged them to plan. After we taught them planning, and the importance of planning, Kalak Hode 5 was kind of a culminating event for all the effort we put into teaching these



Lt. Col. Haji Wali Mohammad Ahmad Zai, commander, 2nd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army Corps shares a few words with some of the male villagers from Mirzayan, Afghanistan, during a routine presence patrol Sept. 5, 2012.



An Afghan National Army soldier from 2nd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 205th Afghan National Army Corps shakes hands with a local shopkeeper during a walk-through of the bazaar in Mahali Hokumat, Afghanistan, Sept. 7, 2012. The shopkeepers in Mahali Hokumat are thankful for the ANA, renewed presence in their bazaar as it allows them to operate their stores with some degree of impunity from Taliban persecution.

guys how to plan to this point." The operation involved all levels of the ANA with a degree of emphasis on observing how the various brigade and corps officers commanded and controlled their subordinate Kandaks. There was also interest in seeing how those same Kandaks reported their progress to their higher headquarters, as well as the ANA's ability to properly request ISAF enablers such as explosive ordnance disposal, fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

At the end of the operation, the Afghan National Security Forces who participated were able to demonstrate with strength and conviction that they are not only able to take the lead in combined patrols but were capable of conducting patrols independent

of ISAF, as they did so multiple times.

In Mizan district, the 6th Kandak went so far as to operate the entire time without the assistance of their ISAF partners, whereby validating their ability to conduct independent operations in the future.

"For the most part they [the 6th Kandak, in Mizan district] did it all themselves," said Capt. Brian Reiser, commanding officer, Crazy Horse Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment. "Even during the planning phase ... they had a plan, they knew what they wanted to do and they've done it all by themselves."

The 2nd Kandak, based out of FOB Eagle, in Qalat district, was

already declared independent beforehand, nevertheless they opted to employ ISAF enablers such as Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, from Task Force Warhorse, and SFAT 40, to make sure they maintained their independent status, explained Williams. "[Otherwise] this unit operates very well on their own," he said.

Families from 3/2 SBCT welcome home their loved ones

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Antwaun Parrish

5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. — As several ranks of tan boots reflected against the glossy gym floor, family members who had been waiting for months to see their Soldiers began to scream; they knew they could soon embrace them. Once the blue partisan curtain was raised, revealing the Soldiers dressed in multi-camouflage uniforms, the waiting families began to make even more noise and wave colorful signs adorned with heartfelt greetings.

“It’s been an emotional rollercoaster ride because the dates of him returning kept changing,” said Cheri Robitaille. “I never want to miss a homecoming; it’s exhilarating to see him come in. I just can’t wait to give my son a hug.”

More than 100 Arrowhead

Soldiers assigned to 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, returned from a deployment to Afghanistan. Their families and other members of their unit welcomed the Soldiers, Oct. 26, at Wilson Fitness Center, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

For Cheri Robitaille this was her third time welcoming her son home from a deployment. Staff Sgt. Brian Robitaille, assigned to 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, smiled brightly as he embraced his mom once he was released from his formation.

“It feels excellent being home,” Robitaille said. “We’ve been around our brothers and sisters in arms for the entire deployment, but it feels good to see family again.”

Cheri has two sons in the Army. She began to smile as she remembered a picture her son sent her when he first arrived

to Afghanistan. The picture was of one son arriving and greeting the other one who was leaving to return to the states. She explained that she has the same concerns that most moms have when their children leave for combat.

“When they leave I always worry,” said Cheri, who traveled to JBLM from San Diego. “I’ve done this a few times, but it still helps to have support groups with other parents and spouses.”

Robitaille was promoted while deployed and is now qualified to live off post. His mom is excited to help him with the move and happy to spend some quality time with him.

“He’s going to get settled in his apartment and we have to get him a car,” said Cheri. “Later we’re going to eat whatever he has been craving while he was gone.”

Robitaille made a list of things he needs to accomplish, but there’s one thing that he can’t wait to do that tops everything else.

“I can’t wait to get into civilian clothes,” Robitaille said.

Sarah O’hern placed a bold yellow sign adorned with colorful flowers in front of her baby’s stroller that read, “My daddy had to go & fight but now he’s back to hold me tight.”

Spc. Corey O’hern has been married for two years and his daughter was two months old

when he left. Now, seven months later, he’s back to spend time with her and his wife.

Sarah admits that life without her husband was hard to deal with at times, but she did her best to stay occupied.

“I moved back to Huntsville, Ala.,” Sarah said. “I worked out, took care of our daughter and traveled to visit family. We kept in touch through Skype and Facebook. It’s been a rough road but we made it through.”

Sarah explained that along with not being able to talk to her husband some days she had a tough time with their daughter while she was teething, and feels that it was one of the hardest things to deal with alone.

“When they were on blackout, I would think the worst and my heart would drop,” Sarah said. “I would have to remember to calm myself down. Also, in the last three months, my daughter has had five teeth come in. Dealing with that alone is enough to break you.”

Anxiously waiting to be reunited, Sarah worried that it would be awkward seeing him and wondered if he would like the new adjustments the family had made.

“I just wonder if he’s going to be the same person,” Sarah said. “I’ve moved into a new house and decorated it the way I like, so I’m just wondering if he will.”



Spc. Jessie Paquin kisses his wife, Kylie, after his redeployment ceremony, Oct. 26, at Wilson Fitness Center on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Soldiers assigned to 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division returned from a deployment to Afghanistan.

Once he was dismissed from formation their family was made whole again, well almost.

“I am excited to see my other child, our dog Stryker,” O’hern said.

For Kylie Paquin, adjusting to Army life and a deployment was tough. Her husband, Spc. Jessie Paquin, has been in the Army for five years and returned from his second deployment.

“The separation alone was hard to get through,” Paquin said. “I’m not used to being alone all the time.”

Although she’s anxious to see her husband, she feels bad for other spouses who have no one coming home to them.

“I’m excited and sad,” Kylie said. “I know some of the people he went with aren’t coming back, and some of them were his friends.”

Kylie communicated through

Skype with her husband and talked on the phone with him as often as possible. Even though she spoke with him frequently, she admits she was always on edge.

“I will stay calmer next time,” Kylie said. “It’s just tough when they don’t call.”

Kylie and her husband plan to have dinner at the Space Needle in Seattle for their one-year anniversary, which was a week and a half ago. Now finally the wait was over.

When the formation was dismissed Kylie scrambled through the flock of other families, finally recognizing her husband who grabbed her and gave her a long overdue kiss.



Sarah O’Hern displays a sign she made for her husband, Spc. Corey O’Hern, as he returns from a deployment to Afghanistan, Oct. 26, at Wilson Fitness Center on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

1-23 Infantry Unit Ministry Team helps 'Tomahawks' deal with combat-related stress, grief

Story and photos by
Sgt. Chris McCullough
CTF Arrowhead Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – While the number of U.S. casualties in 2012 has decreased dramatically, even one death of a friend or comrade can be traumatic to a Soldier. That is why unit ministry teams are so important to the Soldiers on the ground. These two-person teams usually consist of at least one chaplain and one chaplain assistant whose primary duties involve planning, providing and performing religious-support operations. One of their most important duties is to act as grief counselors to Soldiers following a traumatic event. One such team is the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment “Tomahawks” UMT, which is overseen by chaplain Capt. Yoonhwan Kim.

“Because of the very kinetic nature of this particular tour, we have focused a lot of our ministry on counseling, conducting critical event briefings and helping Soldiers deal with combat-related stress and grief,” said Kim.

Kim’s assistant, Sgt. Courtney Hickman, helps ensure Kim is where he needs to be when he needs to be there. In addition to coordinating their movements via ground or by air, Hickman also takes care of the chaplain’s welfare outside the wire, where the chaplain is considered a noncombatant.

“When we go outside the wire,

on patrols, he keeps me in check,” said Kim. “He makes sure I don’t do anything foolish that would put someone at risk. He’s my personal PSD (personal security detachment).”

The “Tomahawks” are located in the horn of Panjwa’i district in southeast Afghanistan, which is considered the birthplace of the Taliban. Panjwa’i has been a traditional Taliban stronghold and, for that reason, is quite volatile. That is why Kim feels it is their UMT’s duty to be there for the Soldiers - especially following a traumatic event - before the Soldiers even realize they need them.

Hickman, who was an ordained minister prior to entering the Army, assists Kim with grief counseling when the need arises. His background has enabled him

to be an asset not only to the UMT, but to the line companies and the “Tomahawks” battalion.

“Sgt. Hickman is an extremely mature individual,” espoused Kim. “Emotionally, he has great depth. He’s a great counselor. He counsels Soldiers apart from me, just independently.”

When asked about this, Hickman proved he is a modest man who cares little about being in the spotlight. He explained that his role is to be the chaplain assistant and make sure the chaplain is taken care of.

“I just kind of bring that ‘extra round’ in my pocket being a minister,” Hickman humbly stated.

Kim brings his own ‘extra rounds’ to the fight. Prior to joining the Army at 38, he was a church



Capt. Yoonhwan Kim (right), chaplain, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, and Sgt. Courtney Hickman, chaplain assistant, make up the “Tomahawks” Unit Ministry Team. (Courtesy Photo)



Capt. Yoonhwan Kim, chaplain, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, provides religious services to Soldiers from Apache Company, 1-23 Inf., at Combat Outpost Mushan, April 24, 2012. (Courtesy Photo)

minister for 15 years. He also earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology. As a pastor, Kim explains that he counseled a lot of people; people with marriage issues, issues with their kids, family issues, in addition to spiritual concerns. He believes those experiences have helped him prepare for dealing with Soldiers now.

“Having had that background with the church, and being a counselor working with families and married couples, it gave me that experience, that knowledge, to work with our Soldiers and help the best I can,” explained Kim. “I also have a degree in counseling and so we’ve been focusing a lot of our time and energy on counseling Soldiers ... because a lot of guys have lost their buddies ... and they have a

lot of stuff they’re dealing with, so we make ourselves available.”

Kim and Hickman both come to 1-23 Infantry with notable resumes. They also understand one another, which enables them to work together better and benefits not only their UMT but the Soldiers they serve.

“Sometimes I think chaplains and chaplain assistants get together and they don’t learn (about) each other well enough,” explained Hickman. “I think that’s made (chaplain Kim and I) stronger because we know each other. I call it the yo-yo effect. He knows when to throw me out there in a sense. He’ll back off and say something like ‘come head over here and check this out’ and vice versa. I know when to back off and he’s able to flow in.”

As the “Tomahawks” deployment draws down, Kim and Hickman’s job is far from over. Once they get back to their home station, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., they will undoubtedly be busier than ever as Soldiers unwind, decompress and begin to heal over the next year. Kim admits the workload in the Army is heavier than anything he ever did during his 15 years as a minister, but that he is glad to be able to help Soldiers.

“The stresses (of a deployment) affect everybody regardless of their rank or how long they’ve been in the Army,” said Kim. “I’m just glad Sgt. Hickman and I are here to support our Soldiers and their families.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ashley Curtis



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Veronica Aguila



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ashley Curtis



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Nevada Jack Smith



Courtesy Photo



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chris McCullough



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Mackie

A family birthday in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Sgt. Lori Bilyou
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
FORWARD OPERATING BASE
LINDSEY, Afghanistan --“Who told them my nickname was monkey?” Sgt. Alyssa Turner asked as she surveyed her desk, wrapped entirely in saran wrap and barricaded behind a stack of water bottles festooned with a variety of monkey pictures sporting birthday wishes.

Her sister, Staff Sgt. Lorena Anderson, confessed as a group of Soldiers gathered at Turner’s office to see her reaction to the mischief they had orchestrated while she was out on a mission.

Turner, a paralegal specialist and female engagement team noncommissioned officer in-charge with 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade

Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, celebrated her 26th birthday at Forward Operating Base Lindsey Oct. 23. Unlike most deployed Soldiers celebrating birthdays downrange, however, Turner got to spend hers with family.

Anderson, Turner’s sister who is deployed as a veterinary food inspector with the 438th Medical Detachment based out of Fort Carson, Colo., and stationed at FOB Lagman, used a four-day pass to surprise Turner for her birthday.

Anderson, on her first deployment despite 10 years of active service, said there is nowhere else she would rather spend her liberty pass than with her sister, even though Turner didn’t have time off.

At first, Anderson’s command wanted her to go to Kandahar Airfield for her pass, suggesting that Turner meet her there, but Turner’s unit doesn’t give four-day passes. Instead, Anderson convinced her unit to send her to Lindsey where she could spend time with her sister.

“Every night when she’s done with work, we’ll go to Table Talk [a restaurant on FOB Lindsey] and just hang out,” Anderson said.

The sisters, with a military heritage passed to them from both parents, grew up in Augusta, first on the Georgia side and later on the South Carolina side where both, along with another sister, attended Augusta North High School.

Turner recalled watching her



Staff Sgt. Lorena Anderson, a veterinary food inspector with the 438th Medical Detachment, snaps a picture of her sister Sgt. Alyssa Turner, a paralegal specialist and female engagement team non-commissioned officer in charge with 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division who celebrated her 26th birthday at forward operating base Lindsey, Oct. 23, 2012.

older sister play soccer in high school and later playing the same position, when she was old enough.

“She motivates me,” Turner said. “Even though we both grew up with Mom and Dad who were both in [the military], when she joined, it kinda’ caught me off guard.”

Anderson, who said she had always known growing up that she wanted to join the military, laughed saying she thinks her sister is trying to out-do her.

“She’s accomplished all the things that I always wanted to accomplish,” Anderson said.

Turner, however, insists she is just following in her “big sister’s shoes.”

“It means a lot to me when she

says she’s proud of me,” Turner said.

Anderson said their mother was not happy at all when she learned that she and Turner would both be deployed to Afghanistan at the same time.

“My mom, her fear of losing one of us is so great,” Turner said.

The close-knit family of women has formed a sort of support group for each other during the deployments, with their sister and mother bonding together for support at home and Turner and Anderson supporting one another downrange.

Looking across at her sister, Anderson stated, “I know I can really talk about what’s going on. I can unwind, really.”

Turner, on her second Afghanistan

deployment in less than three years, nodded her head in agreement saying, “It’s taking us back to our childhood; when secrets were secrets, and you don’t tell anyone.

“Oh my God! I’ve had some very bad birthdays these past couple of years. It means so much to me to have family here with me.”

During the birthday visit, Anderson and Turner were able to FaceTime with their mom and sister back in the U.S.

Turner smiled, “Mom was so happy to have all her girls together.”



Sgt. Alyssa Turner, a paralegal specialist and female engagement team non-commissioned officer in charge with 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (left) stands with her older sister, Staff Sgt. Lorena Anderson, a veterinary food inspector with the 438th Medical Detachment, who arranged to visit Turner at forward operating base Lindsey for Turner’s birthday, Oct. 23, 2012.

Military, NFL tackle traumatic brain injury

Story and photos by Sgt. Ashley Curtis
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
KANDAHAR

AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - At first glance he looks just like any healthy, young infantryman. He has no visible lacerations and all his limbs are intact. He certainly doesn't look like someone who's been through a blast big enough to knock the tires off of a Stryker.

"I was talking on the headset, and next thing you know, the [improvised explosive device] hit," said Pfc. Jose Ojeda from Comanche Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, recalling the blast that hit his Stryker while he served as a gunner during a mounted patrol in southern Afghanistan. "I blacked out for like 4-5 seconds and when I came to, I was in the back hatch. I was

hit on the head, fell down, and my knee buckled up."

Ojeda and his two comrades managed to make it out of the vehicle, but he wasn't as perfectly healthy as his appearance would lead one to believe.

You'd need an MRI machine to see the injuries he sustained through that blast, because Ojeda has suffered a traumatic brain injury.

A traumatic brain injury can result from a blow to the head, a fall or an event that shakes the brain. Lt. Cmdr. Craig Carroll, a U.S. Navy neurologist at Role 3 Multinational Hospital in Kandahar, Afghanistan, said the most important thing to do when a traumatic brain injury is suspected is to confirm it as

quickly as possible.

Education about traumatic brain injury and the capability to treat it has increased after the opening of the Warrior Recovery Center in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in early 2010. As a result, confirmation of the injury can now begin in the field.

"One of the ways we've tried to improve [identification] is to standardize the way that we have a medic or a primary-care provider on the front line assess an individual after they've been exposed to a circumstance," said Carroll.

Once it was determined Ojeda had sustained a traumatic brain injury, he came to the WRC, which takes an uncommon approach to care.

"One of the things unique about our care here in the WRC is the fact that we are able to approach any service member that has had a traumatic brain injury in a very multidisciplinary manner," said Carroll. "Meaning we have occupational therapists, we have physical therapists, we have psychologists and we have neurologists."

The WRC houses all of these specialties in one relaxed environment, surreally located inside a war zone.

"I think that this is certainly the model of what needs to happen to take care of traumatic brain



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno listens to military leadership at Forward Operating Base Zangabad, located in Panjwa, Aoi district, Sept. 18, 2012. Odierno visited Panjwa, as part of a visit to talk with Soldiers and leaders about various issues, including traumatic brain injury.

injury," he said. "That is the most successful way to approach these patients."

Instead of being sent stateside for care, injured service members in Afghanistan are now able to receive care in theater, rehabilitate and return to duty 90 percent of the time.

"Their motivation to get back to their unit is very strong," said Carroll. "One of our jobs it to make sure we don't get them back before they're ready."

The military is now working with the NFL to study traumatic brain injury and make care as effective as possible. The two have joined forces to study what the impact of multiple concussions can be for service members and players, as well as advocating treatment for

the sometimes taboo subject.

"The important piece of this [campaign with the NFL] is to get our Soldiers to understand the importance of coming forward," said Gen. Ray Odierno, U.S. Army chief of staff. "If you believe you have a traumatic brain injury, it's important that you come forward to get help. We have the capacity to [help], we have the capability, and it's something that's treatable."

"If we can find a more sensitive way to assess the brain, that would have an impact across not just the military, but also our civilian counterparts as well," said Carroll.

"As we work through this together, we'll find more capabilities to help our Soldiers as well as NFL players." Odierno said. "We have

to continue to move forward worrying about TBI."

The NFL understands the benefits of this kind of study for players and service members like Ojeda.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodall said, "Working together we can lead in raising awareness on this issue that affects players in all sports, our men and women in the armed forces, and the broader public."



Pfc. Jose Ojeda, a Soldier from Comanche Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, relaxes at the Warrior Recovery Center at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, Oct. 2, 2012. Ojeda received care at the WRC for injuries he sustained during an improvised explosive device blast while on patrol in Panjwa, Aoi district.

Building education for a better Afghanistan, one stone at a time

Story by Capt. Christine Rosalin
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Photos by Senior Airman Joshua Turner
Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LAGMAN, Afghanistan – After years of advocating for educational growth in Zabul, a key milestone was reached when a first block was laid by joint partners of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and International Security Assistance Force at the Regional Teachers' Training College Cornerstone Laying Ceremony Oct. 17, 2012, Qalat City, Zabul province, Afghanistan.

"Today was one of the nicest days in my life, because we have put the foundation stones of one of the education institutions, which is the Zabul Teachers' Training College, which will generate more human capacity, not only to Zabul but also to the people of the region," said Gov. Mohammad Ashraf Naseri, Zabul province.

The RTTC, once completed, will graduate between 250 and 400 professionally-qualified teachers every two years, drastically reducing the professional native Pashtun teacher shortage in the region.

Naseri's focus on a larger role and more opportunities for women starts with education. Zabul's overall literacy rate is about 11.7 percent, however, Zabul's female literacy rate is about 1.3 percent.

In efforts to boost the female literacy average, the student body of the training college will be equally made up of females and males with a total of 250 students. The school requires at least 10 instructors, which will be comprised equally of five males and five females.

In addition to boosting the region's literacy rate and women participation, the training curriculum will benefit current

and future teachers. The academic curriculum will consist of two programs: one for continuing skills education of current and active teachers and the other for new teacher training for those who want to become professional teachers.

Besides growing the teaching community, this college is expected to benefit many by allowing Afghans to pursue higher education and enter into professions that have previously been unattainable.

"Education is the top priority for the governor of Zabul Province and the reason is to build human capacity, not only for government officials, but for teachers, business people, doctors, engineers, basically every sector across the government," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Marc Sheie, Zabul's Provincial Reconstruction Team commander. "And this is the start, by growing their own teachers, not only for Zabul but for the whole southwest region."

Local members of this region can expect the training college to open next summer when the \$1.7 million project is completed.

Sheie said, "Education is really going to be essentially the cornerstone of ... the governor's strategy to get past the insurgent propaganda and to help convince and demonstrate to the people what education means to their success and how that will really make a difference in their lives."



Zabul Provincial Governor Mohammad Ashraf Naseri and Senior Civilian Representative Jonathan Addleton conducts a press conference to discuss the positive impacts of the Regional Teacher's Training College in Zabul after the RTTC Cornerstone Laying Ceremony, Oct. 17, 2012, Zabul, Afghanistan.

Soldier, hero carries squad leader to safety

Story and photos by
Spc. Nevada Jack Smith
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – At least once in every man's life he is faced with a situation that tests and challenges him to his very core. For Soldiers serving in the dangerous Panjwa'i district of Afghanistan, those defining moments are frequent and often brutal.

U.S. Army Pfc. Cory Szaro, 19, a mortarman serving with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, Task Force 1-23 Infantry, operating out of Combat Outpost Khenjakak, has spent the past 10 months willingly stepping forward into situations that would challenge other men.

"I have wanted to be an Army infantryman my whole life, it's just something I have always wanted to do," Szaro said.

The young Soldier and Nashua, N.H., native has served in a variety of roles since coming to Afghanistan by manning the 81mm and 120mm mortars, serving as an M240 and .50-cal gunner, and operating a Minehound metal detector to search for improvised explosive devices.

Szaro credits his service to his grandfathers.

"My grandfathers were both in the Navy in Vietnam and ended up seeing a lot of combat, but I realized that the Navy is not much

of a combat branch anymore compared to how the Army is," Szaro said.

With a strong desire to serve his country and fight America's enemies Szaro enlisted in the Army Aug. 3, 2011. After graduating basic training Dec. 2, he spent two short months at his home station before deploying to Afghanistan. It would be seven months later that Szaro would face what he calls his most difficult situation in Afghanistan.

During an Afghan National Army-led clearing operation Sept. 3, Szaro's squad was moving through a village and almost immediately began finding improvised explosive devices. After finding and destroying four IEDs, Szaro's squad leader found the fifth one by stepping on it.

"I was about 15 meters away from him and the rest of the platoon was on the other side of a wall so it was just my squad on scene," said Szaro. "At first I thought we had been shot at with a rocket-propelled grenade, I looked for my squad leader but couldn't find him."

Szaro could not place the position of his squad leader until he began to cry out in pain from his injuries.

"My first instinct was to run to him, but we have been taught that that is the wrong thing to do because of secondary IEDs," said Szaro. "Instead I pulled security and pulled out my tourniquet to hand off to the medic once he

arrived."

Once the wounded Soldier was stable, Szaro carried him through a series of grape rows and over a wall to get him to the landing zone for the medical evacuation helicopter.

Szaro's squad leader survived the explosion with an amputation below the left knee.

The young private first class spoke on his experiences in combat and how they have shaped and changed him.

"I think it has made me more aware of mortality. We had a joke going around for the first few months of our deployment that our platoon was invincible because nothing bad ever happened to us, but that incident changed us and it really opened my eyes," Szaro said.

When asked if he would want to deploy again Szaro said that he would, because he still wants to fight the enemy and serve his country.



U.S. Army Pfc. Cory Szaro poses for a photo at Combat Outpost Khenjakak, Oct. 18, 2012.

Chaplain's Corner

A young Soldier and his non-commissioned officer boarded a train together. The only available seats were across from an attractive young woman and her grandmother. As the four of them engaged in conversation, it became obvious that there was a mutual attraction between the young woman and the young Soldier.

As the train continued its course, it went into a tunnel, sending the train into complete darkness. Immediately, two sounds were heard in the dark. The first sound was the smack of a kiss. And the second was the whack of a slap across someone's face.

Sitting in the dark, the grandmother thought to herself: "I can't believe the Soldier kissed my granddaughter. I am glad that she slapped him. He deserved it!"

At the same time, the NCO thought to himself: "I can't blame the young man for kissing the girl, but it's a shame that she missed him and slapped me instead."

The young woman thought to herself: "I am sure glad that he kissed me, but I wish my grandmother had not slapped him for doing it."

As the train came out of the tunnel into the sunlight, the young Soldier could not help but smile. He had managed to kiss the young woman and slap his NCO and get away with both!

Ha. Ha. Ha. I share this story with you to help brighten your day but also to illustrate the point that things are not always as they seem. I want to encourage all the Families to consider this important point as you anticipate reuniting with your Soldier. Even though your Soldier may look the same as before they left for Afghanistan, expect him to have changed during the deployment.

Some of the changes are positive. You may notice that your Soldier has matured, asserting greater confidence and leadership. You may also see that he/she has developed a deeper appreciation for the Family and for the simpler things in life. At the same time, you may notice that your Soldier has developed some quirks or habits during the deployment. Please understand that these habits were acquired in order to deal with the stress of combat and that they have nothing to do with how your Soldier feels about you. Some common changes that you may notice in your Soldier are:

- Overly sensitive to sights, sounds, and situations that reminds the Soldier of combat.
- Overly concerned with safety. For example, situates oneself in "strategic" locations in public places where one can keep eyes on strangers.
- Sleeps with the lights on or has difficulty sleeping.
- Quiet and reflective. Soldier may not want to talk too much but wants to just "chill" with a cold drink, a TV remote, or a video



game.

- Shuts down due to emotional overload.

Again, I want to emphasize that these quirks/habits were formed in order to cope with the stress of combat. They are not a reflection of how your Soldier feels about you. So, please don't take it personally if your Soldier doesn't want to talk to you about the deployment or simply wants some alone time upon coming home. *In fact, one of the greatest gifts you can give your Soldier is time and space.* Time is needed for your Soldier to decompress and feel normal again. Time is needed for him/her to reintegrate oneself back into the Family routines. Time is needed for your Soldier to think, to feel, and process one's deployment experience. When your Soldier is ready, he/she will open up to you and engage you meaningfully. The quirks and the habits will work themselves out and dissipate also. Your understanding and patience will be a great source of support to him/her.

Arrowhead Remembers



Sgt. Robert J. Billings

Sgt. Robert J. Billings of Newaygo, Michigan was born on April 22, 1982. After joining the Army on Oct. 4, 2006, Sgt. Billings attended basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Following basic training, Sgt. Billings was assigned to 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., and served as a team leader for 1st Platoon, Bronco Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment.

Sgt. Billings' military awards include the Bronze Star Medal (Posthumous), Purple Heart Medal (Posthumous), Army





ARROWHEAD

On Point!