

VANGUARD VOICE



Vanguard couple renew
their vows in Afghanistan

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U.S. Army soldiers from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, prepare for a mission to provide overwatch support for an Afghan National Army 4th Infantry Brigade, 203rd Corps, planned, led and executed mission to search a village in Logar province, Afghanistan, June 26, 2013. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Bob Yarbrough, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Public Affairs)

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US Soldiers increase base defense measures on FOB Shank

By U.S. Army Sgt. Bob Yarbrough
4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (July 23, 2013) – Coalition Forces and civilians living on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, have an added layer of security in the form of the Counter Rocket, Artillery, and Mortar system and the Land-based Phalanx Weapons System, or the C-RAM and the LPWS, two systems that work together for base defense.

The C-RAM is an early warning detection system and the Phalanx is designed to engage rockets, artillery shells, and mortars, which are common weapons used by the enemies of Afghanistan to attack Coalition Forces and Afghan security bases.

“This is one of the only systems that is strictly defensive,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Geoff Utter, a platoon leader with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment.

“It takes the round, the rocket, artillery, or mortar out of the sky so it doesn’t fall on the protected area,” said Utter, an Omaha, Neb., native. “It definitely gives the feeling to the soldiers that live on the FOB and work there, a sense of security. I would hope they can sleep at night knowing that we have this system up and running.”

The system has been adapted from a similar naval system used to defend aircraft carriers and large ships on the open seas. It is now being deployed on a trailer platform, and has recently been brought to FOB Shank, in Logar Province, Afghanistan.

The defense systems are the first to be deployed to this area. U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert Holbrook, the executive officer for Battery B, 2-44 ADA, and a native of Lexington, Ky., said, “It’s an honor to bring the system into a new area; it’s never been done at this altitude, in this theater.”

When the C-RAM detects incoming rockets, artillery, or mortars, the 2-44 ADA’s engagement operations cell determines if the round will threaten personnel or materiel. If the threat is credible, the Phalanx fires a burst of 20 millimeter, self detonating rounds. These rounds are designed to knock the incoming weapon off

course and disable it, so even if the rocket, shell, or mortar impacts on the base, it does not explode.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Torres, a native of Temecula, Calif., and the platoon sergeant for the engagement operations cell of Battery B, 2-44 ADA, has been working with the C-RAM since 2005 in Iraq, during its initial fielding on land. “The 20 millimeter rounds self detonate after a certain distance to minimize civcas (civilian casualties),” he said. “There were zero cases of civcas after nearly 200 engagements in Iraq.”

The C-RAM system uses multiple types of radar and cameras as part of its “sense and warn” capabilities. The system sounds an alarm to alert personnel, regardless if the Phalanx will fire or not, due to aircraft in the area or system maintenance. The warning allows service members and civilians to react, giving them a higher survivability rate in case rounds impact in the area.

C-RAM’s automated systems also allow it to feed information, based on the trajectory of an incoming round, to artillery personnel. This aids in counter fire, giving artillerymen the necessary coordinates to return fire to the location the round came from, much sooner than previous methods.



The Counter Rocket, Artillery, Mortar and Land-based Phalanx Weapons System fires a burst of self detonating 20 millimeter rounds during a test fire on Forward Operating Base Shank, eastern Afghanistan, July 12, 2013. U.S. Army Soldiers with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, stand ready to provide base defense to ensure the safety of the service members and civilians residing and working on FOB Shank.



3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment

“Cottonbalers By God, Damn Fine Soldiers”

3rd ID infantrymen foster new relationships in eastern Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Elvis Umanzor

4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 21, 2013) – U.S. Army infantrymen with 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, drove to an Afghan National Army outpost, outside of Forward Operating Base Shank, eastern Afghanistan, Aug. 21, to partner with ANA soldiers from 5th Kandak, 4th Infantry Brigade, 203rd Corps.

Their visit is intended to help foster good relationships as they conduct partnered security operations to increase security for the citizens of Logar Province.

Upon arriving to the outpost, the Soldier's with 3rd Platoon, Co. B, secured a perimeter as 2nd Lt. Gene Grundy, a New York City native, and the 3rd Platoon leader asked the interpreter to call out to the ANA on the security towers and request to come in.

The request was well received as Grundy was greeted by the outpost ANA commander as Soldiers jumped on the towers to help keep watch alongside the ANA soldiers.

Grundy and the ANA commander sat down to discuss the current situation at the outpost and in the nearby village, where the U.S. Soldiers had not been before. After discussing some security concerns, they decided not to enter the village.

“They had a relationship with the town and didn’t want to compromise that in the future,” Grundy said. “In respect to their wishes, we decided to conduct a KLE (key leader engagement) ... in an area where it wouldn’t be regarded as threatening to the town.”

As the sun started to go down, the Soldiers relaxed and took turns on the towers. The ANA soldiers made tea and challenged the U.S. Soldiers to a board game that resembled a cross between checkers and pool, followed by a friendly game of volleyball. After the handshakes and smiles, it was clear they were all winners.

“They’ll go out of their way to help ... and they like to trade,” said U.S. Army Pfc. Cody Webster, a Phenix City, Ala., native and the M249 squad automatic weapon gunner for 2nd Squad, 3rd Plt.

When the prayer time neared, the Soldiers secured their gear as the ANA led the patrol to the town entrance where local citizens usually meet. They were greeted by the smiles of children, who asked for chocolate, as the joint security element ensured a secure perimeter.

Grundy and the ANA commander talked to the citizens, who received them with no regards, and handed out a tip line phone

number where the citizens could make confidential reports of suspicious events to the provincial authorities.

As the sun hid behind the ridgeline, the ANA and U.S. infantrymen peacefully departed a place they plan to visit again.

Cody has been on many similar missions and said he plans to take everything he learned back to Fort Stewart, Ga., and share with his fellow Soldiers.

“I’ve learned the people here ... just want to live their lives,” said Cody, who joined less than a year ago and is on his first combat tour.

In the last six months, the Soldiers of 3-7 Inf. Regt., or Task Force Baler, are always on alert and have been successful against enemy engagements numerous times.

Spc. Devonte Curry, from Detroit, Mi., and an infantryman with 3rd Plt., said they didn’t plan for everything they encountered, but he credited their success to his command. “We got out here, saw what we had and adjusted,” he said.

The successful interaction leaders have with their Afghan partners is also credited to the Soldiers watching their back.

“They are an extremely competent and motivated group of Soldiers,” Grundy added. “They’ve proven themselves to be assuringly reliable both on and off duty – they’re just fantastic Soldiers.”



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Eugene Grundy, center, a New York City native and the platoon leader with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, leaves an Afghan National Army outpost, with his Soldiers, during an ANA led patrol to meet the Afghan citizens at a nearby village, Aug. 21, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan. U.S. Soldiers are committed to the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan as the ANA lead operations to secure their country.



3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment

“Cottonbalers By God, Damn Fine Soldiers”

3rd ID infantrymen foster new relationships in eastern Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Elvis Umanzor

4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

U.S. Army infantrymen with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, climb to a look position at an Afghan National Army outpost Aug. 21, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan, while their leadership talks to the local command prior to a partnered mission. U.S. Soldiers visit ANA checkpoints and outposts to foster a good relationship with ANA forces, who grow everyday to fight the enemies of Afghan and secure their citizens.



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Timothy Fischer, from Cincinnati, Ohio, and the operations officer for Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, celebrates a score during a friendly game with an Afghan National Army officer with 5th Kandak, 4th Infantry Brigade, 203rd Corps, Aug. 21, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan. Games and other team building activities foster a healthy relationship and promote successful missions to disrupt operations of the enemies of Afghanistan.



U.S. Army Soldiers with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conduct a patrol near an ANA outpost in Logar Province, Afghanistan, Aug. 21, 2013, as ANA and U.S. soldiers secure the area. The ANA work to foster a good relationship with the citizens of Logar as they combat the enemies of Afghanistan.



U.S. Army Soldiers with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and Afghan National Army soldiers talk to citizens from a village near an ANA outpost in Logar Province, Afghanistan, Aug. 21, 2013, as ANA and U.S. soldiers secure the area. The ANA work to foster a good relationship with the citizens of Logar as they combat the enemies of Afghanistan.



3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment “Can Do”

Vanguard medic answers call, saves lives

By U.S. Army Sgt. Bob Yarbrough
4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 22, 2013) – U.S. Army Spc. Tyler Ivester, 21, was awarded the Army Commendation Medal, with Valor Device, Aug. 1, for saving the lives of four of his fellow Soldiers after their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.

Ivester, a combat medic with 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and a native of Greenville, S.C., joined the Army less than three years ago, attending Basic Combat Training at Fort Benning, Ga., in October 2010. From there, he went to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for his Advanced Individual Training as a combat medic.

On April 17, 2013, during an operation in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, the route clearance team that was ahead of Ivester’s platoon, struck an IED, severely damaging the vehicle and injuring the four Soldiers inside.

“The whole engine compartment was blown off the truck,” said Ivester, assigned to 3rd Platoon, Company A, 3-15 Inf. Regt. The platoon moved forward to secure the area to assist however they could.

“They (route clearing element) had two medics, but they were just kind of standing there shell-shocked,” said Ivester.

Ivester and U.S. Army Pfc. Matthew Evans, an infantryman and the platoon’s radio operator assigned to Co. A., opened one of the wrecked vehicle’s doors. “We moved a fuel tank that was pouring JP-8 (diesel fuel) all over the truck,” said Evans. “We were able to pry one of the doors open.” The opening was too small for Ivester to get in wearing his armor, so he dropped it and climbed in with only his aid bag.

Ivester said it took about ten minutes for the Soldiers outside, who used sledgehammers, to open the doors enough to remove the wounded soldiers, which gave him enough time to treat some injuries. “We drug every one of the guys out, and got them triaged and ready for evacuation,” he added.

Looking back, Ivester said he didn’t have time to think about what he was doing. “It was just... I needed to help those guys. I could hear them screaming from outside the truck. All I could think was ‘I just need to get in there and get them out.’”

“In my opinion, he (Ivester) is one of the smartest, most dedicated medics,” said Evans, a native of Storrs, Conn.

“I didn’t want an award for this,” Ivester said. “I was just doing my job.” He said that’s why he joined the Army, to help people. “That and not being a freeloader. I’ve got a good job, with benefits, and I’m not living off mom and dad,” he said. Ivester says his future plans include getting promoted to the rank of sergeant. “I’ve already got my promotable status,” he said. “I’m just working on getting more points.”



U.S. Army Spc. Tyler Ivester, a Greenville, S.C., native and an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, is awarded the Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device by U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James McConville, commander of Combined Joint Task Force - 101 and Regional Command - East, Aug. 1, 2013, at Forward Operating Base Airborne, eastern Afghanistan. Ivester climbed into a vehicle struck by an improvised explosive device, provided medical aid and saved the lives of four Soldiers, April 17, 2013. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Elvis Umanzor, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs)



3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment “Can Do”

Vanguard infantryman lives to tell the tale

By U.S. Army Sgt. Bob Yarbrough
4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 23, 2013) - “All I could think about was my mom and my sister,” said U.S. Army Spc. Marcos Fernandes, an infantryman with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. “They’re the ones who are most important to me.”

Fernandes, a native of McKinney, Texas, was awarded the Purple Heart and the Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device, Aug. 1, for his valorous actions during conflict with an armed enemy after being hit by enemy fire, April 15, in eastern Afghanistan.

He suffered a concussion after he was shot in the head and knocked off the mound of dirt he was using as a fighting position. “It just had to be the perfect bounce for me to be alive,” Fernandes said about the bullet, which hit his helmet. “It hit about two inches above my left eye, and about an inch above where the helmet stops,” he said.

Fernandes and his platoon were blocking a known area of interest in support of an Afghan National Army security patrol. “A bunch of little kids walked up to us,” he said. Not long after the children left, the Soldiers took contact.

The first attack was not the full force the enemy had to offer. “It had to be recon by fire,” Fernandes said. The enemy will often fire into the area to see what Soldiers will do. “I [returned fire] he said. “I wanted to keep them pinned down, keep them from

shooting at me and my guys.”

After the initial attack, the enemy came back in a larger force, from a nearby village. “They hit us with everything they had, and that’s when I got hit,” remembers Fernandes. “I thought my brains were in the back of my helmet,” he said. Fernandes and his team leader both checked for wounds, and found nothing. “I just started laughing, because I was so happy to be alive. We’re in the middle of this firefight, and I’m laughing.”

Fernandes regained his senses and immediately got back in the fight, despite the shock and concussive pain of the bullet strike to his helmet, and reengaged the enemy. He continued to suppress the enemy, while the clearance element bounded back from the village. His heroic return to action earned him the Army Commendation medal with Valor, in addition to his Purple Heart.

“Maybe we shouldn’t be in that spot, still,” Fernandes recalled saying to his team leader, “because of course you want to move to cover after you get shot in the head,” he said with a chuckle.

“I heard about it over the radio,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Jonathan House, an infantry team leader with Company B, 3rd Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., and a native of Dunn, N.C. “Needless to say, I was pretty surprised when I saw him maneuvering with us as we bounded up to the village we had taken contact from.”

The platoon sergeant and the squad leaders moved the element forward and checked out the area, but found nothing but brass.

Fernandes didn’t feel the effects of his concussion for quite a while. “I had a bunch of adrenaline and testosterone going,” he said, “but about six kilometers down the road, I started going down, and everybody noticed. I didn’t really know my own symptoms; I was pretty out of it by that point.”

Fernandes gave up his weapon and was helped along by his fellow Soldiers.

It was just outside of their post, Combat Outpost Soltan Kheyl, where they took fire a third time. “I was pretty much useless, because they took my [weapon], so they hid me in a little hole,” Fernandes said.

“He is a knowledgeable and motivated Soldier with no quit in him. Fernandes, even with the concussion, didn’t quit until he was back inside the COP,” said House.



U.S. Army Spc. Marcos Fernandes, a McKinney, Texas, native and an infantryman with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, is awarded the Purple Heart and the Army Commendation Medal with Valor by U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James McConville, commander of Combined Joint Task Force - 101 and Regional Command - East, Aug. 1, 2013, at Forward Operating Base Airborne, eastern Afghanistan. Fernandes was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained after being engaged by enemy fire, April 15, 2013. The ARCOM with a V Device was awarded for his heroic actions. While wounded, he effectively reengaged and suppressed the enemy allowing his unit to find cover and return to base. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Elvis Umazor, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs)



6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment

“Honor And Courage”

Cottonbalers, Mustangs team up to protect Soldiers with unmanned aerial systems

By U.S. Army Maj. Matthew Fontaine

4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 20, 2013) – U.S. Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment and 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, teamed up to fly their small unmanned aerial systems in order to combat the indirect fire threat at Forward Operating Base Shank, Aug. 14, while they braved the heat and sun.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Gerald Ratchford, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear officer with 3-7 Inf., and a Tampa, Fla., native, developed a plan to have the SUAS operator’s from 3-7 Inf., and 6-8 Cav., team up to combat the IDF threat on FOB Shank.

Their combined effort was a resounding success.

“Our unit’s operators quickly got to know one another and started working and communicating together in order to effectively coordinate our joint assets and cover the widest area as possible around FOB Shank,” said Ratchford, the primary UAS officer-in-charge for 3-7 Inf.

The Soldiers routinely fly their Puma and Raven SUAS with a high degree of safety and success to search for enemies of Afghanistan, who plan and prepare attacks on U.S. and Afghan bases.

During a recent PUMA UAS surveillance mission, Ratchford, together with 6-8 Cav. personnel, identified enemy personnel preparing an indirect fire attack. Ratchford quickly reported this information to the 6-8 Cav. tactical operations center, which reacted and took appropriate measure to prevent the attack and potentially saved lives.

“Communication was essential between our two units,” Ratchford said. “If we had not trained and worked together as well as we have, that attack could have gone off and easily killed our Soldiers.”

The SUAS operators have been flying both the Puma and Raven SUAS around the clock with each operator racking up more than 150 flight hours.

In addition to preventing IDF attacks, the SUAS is often used to support the U.S. and Afghan forces operating on the ground. They provide an eye in the sky when Soldiers are in contact with the

enemy or fly low as a deterrent. They can also serve as an intelligence collection platform, locating compounds of interest.

These assets have been pivotal to the overall success of the 4th IBCT, also known as Task Force Vanguard, in Logar Province.

“We can fly in a way the enemy knows we are there, or we can fly in a way they can never see us,” said U.S. Army Spc. Andrew Wright, a cavalry scout and a Raven operator with 6-8 Cav. “Either way we can see the enemy at all times,” added the Carson City, Nev., native.



U.S. Army Spc. Jordan Hensler, a Madison, Wis., native, and a cavalry scout assigned to 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, launches a Puma unmanned aerial vehicle, Aug. 14, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan. The UAV helps keep U.S and Afghan Soldiers safe by providing an eye in the sky and finding threats to the Soldiers.

The enemy is not the only thing the operators must look for. The airspace around FOB Shank is heavily congested with helicopters, airplanes and other UAVs. The operators are responsible for avoiding a mid-air collision.

“There have been some surprisingly stressful times I’ve had while flying,” said U.S. Army Spc. Jordan Hensler, a Puma operator and cavalry scout with 6-8 Cav. “While trying to keep an eye on the enemy, I have to constantly ensure my airspace is clear of other aircraft,” said the Madison, Wis., native.

The Puma and Raven systems operators quietly keep an eye in the sky and watch for any potential dangers vital to combating the enemy threat surrounding FOB Shank. Their teamwork continues to protect Soldiers and is a prime example of what Task Force Vanguard is all about.



6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment

“Honor And Courage”

ALP secure new areas in eastern Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Sgt. Bob Yarbrough

4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (July 24, 2013) – The Afghan Local Police set up a new checkpoint in the Muhammad Aghah district of Logar Province, eastern Afghanistan, in order to deter enemy activity in the area.

U.S. Army Soldiers from Troop B, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, visit the Afghan operated checkpoints in their area of responsibility to advise and assist the ALP as they successfully conduct patrols and reduce the activity of the enemies of Afghanistan.

“I think the ALP is doing a good job,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Alexander Ulrich, the platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, Trp. B, who has been working with the ALP since March.

Ulrich, a Medina, Ohio, native said the ALP’s presence in the area has repelled insurgents in the area and boosted the population’s confidence in the Afghan National Security Forces.

The ALP is a much smaller force than the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, and is much more localized, as most ALP members work in or near the villages they are recruited from.

The support for the ALP is not as organized as support for the national agencies, which pose a problem at times for the officers.

An ALP officer stationed at the Perchakala checkpoint in Muhammad Aghah noted their ammunition resupply is not very reliable. “While we were patrolling, we took contact,” he said. “If we had been fighting for five or ten more minutes, we [may] have run out of ammunition. It takes a long time to get more.”

Despite these difficulties, the ALP members in Perchakala continue to push forward.

“Things are going okay, but we need more manpower,” said ALP officer Hamad, the assistant commander for the Perchakala checkpoint. “As long as we receive fuel, food, and payment, the guys here are good. They don’t get scared, and they are ready to fight.”

U.S. Army Capt. Corey Mathews, the commander of Trp. B, 6th Sqdn. 8th Cav. Regt., said the area was known for ambushes against ANSF and Coalition Forces and the enemies of Afghanistan had complete freedom to maneuver in the area.

Afghan security forces and Soldiers with Trp. B worked together to conduct a massive clearing operation in early June and constructed several checkpoints.

Mathews, a Lawton, Okla., native, said the ALP conduct regular patrols in the area to prevent enemy activity, and the ANA have reinforced the ALP positions every time there has been a threat. “This small piece of the district is really acting like the model of layered security,” Mathews added.

The combined presence of the ALP and other ANSF in the area, as well as actively recruiting for more members, shows the Afghan population that their security forces are willing to stand and fight for their country.



An Afghan Local Police member, right, briefs ALP officer Hamad, center, the assistant commander for the local checkpoint, on the security patrol the policemen conducted, July 18, 2013, in the Muhammad Aghah district of Logar Province, eastern Afghanistan, in order to deter enemy activity in the area. U.S. Army 1st Lt. Alexander Ulrich, left, a Medina, Ohio, native and a platoon leader with Troop B, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was there to advise and assist as the ALP plan and lead security patrols in the area.



1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment

Duty The Spirit of '76'

'Patriot' artillerymen support ground forces, gain experience in Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Elvis Umanzor

4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 28, 2013) – U.S. Army field artillerymen with 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, provide heavy artillery support as Afghan and U.S. ground maneuver forces conduct operations to increase security in Logar Province.

A group of artillerymen from Battery A, 1-76 FA, was selected by unit leaders to provide reliable and timely fire support with the M777 howitzer, which is able to fire a GPS guided round, and other artillery canons.

"They picked us for a reason and it definitely shows," said U.S. Army Spc. Adam Lefebvre, a native of Worcester, Mass., and an assistant gunner with Btry. A. "Missions come down, [and] we're ready."

Inspired to serve his country after Sept. 11, Lefebvre, now 20, followed the steps of family members before him and joined the Army after high school.

Preparing for his first deployment was the toughest thing he's had to endure so far Lefebvre said, but he is proud and has learned a lot from his section, which he calls family. "The team is what gets it done ... no one person can shoot that gun by themselves."

The section members have specific duties to conduct a fire mission, but they have learned each other's jobs and are able to execute without hesitation.

"We work really well, hand in hand," said U.S. Army Spc. Benjamin Zeeman, an ammunitions team chief for Btry. A, and a native of Green Bay, Wis. "Every day I'm learning."

"In the heat of the moment ... [the artillerymen] have stepped up to the next level," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Dave Carbary, a howitzer section chief with Btry. A, from Sterling Heights, Mich.

Carbary said the unit was selected based on their experience and knowledge of the artillery pieces. They must ensure the proper fuse artillery combination is used and executed safely, accurately, and timely to support security operations.

The artillerymen also have a partnered mission to advise and assist the ANA. Carbary said artillery capabilities are important for the ANA in order to protect their own people and military as they build a sustainable force and government.

Lefebvre said he looks forward to returning home and spending time with his wife and son, who was born in December, but is also prepared to help train other Soldiers now that he has the

experience of serving in a combat environment.

"I love my job," he said, "The further I progress in my career, the better it gets."

Carbary, who is on his third combat tour, said he also can't wait to see his wife and their son, who was born in January.



U.S. Army field artillerymen with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, prepare to fire the M777 howitzer, April 28, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. The artillerymen provide heavy artillery in support of Afghan and U.S. infantry units who conduct security operations to eliminate the enemies of Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)



1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment

Duty The Spirit of '76"

'Patriot' artillerymen support ground forces, gain experience in Afghanistan - Photos



U.S. Army Spc. Adam Lefebvre, a native of Worcester, Mass., and an assistant gunner with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, holds a 155mm howitzer round fit with a Precision Guidance Kit, Aug. 28, 2013, in Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. The PGK is a GPS-guided fuze that uses four directional fins to steer a round onto a target. The increased accuracy reduces the chance collateral damage and lowers the risk of friendly or civilian casualties.



U.S. Army Pfc. Simpson Withrow, a native of La-grange, Ind., and a cannon crewmember with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, holds a 105mm howitzer round, April 28, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan.

U.S. Army Spc. Dillon Wiewel, an assistant gunner with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, verifies the fuze on a 155mm howitzer round fit with a Precision Guidance Kit, April 28, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. The PGK is a GPS-guided fuze that uses four directional fins to steer a round onto a target. The increased accuracy reduces the chance collateral damage and lowers the risk of friendly or civilian casualties.





4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion

3ID combat engineers overcome challenges, defeat IEDs in eastern Afghanistan
 By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Elvis Umanzor
 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

“One Team, One Fight”

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 14, 2013) – U.S. combat engineers with Company A, 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, have cleared many miles of terrain from improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance placed by the enemies of Afghanistan, since arriving in Wardak and Logar provinces earlier this year.

In their first few weeks they were tested many times by the enemy as the traditional fighting season began.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Aaron Billington, from Syracuse, N.Y., and a squad leader with 1st Platoon, Co. A, said the unit conducted more than one hundred missions, over half of which involved encountering an IED or UXO.

As combat engineers, Billington and his comrades routinely conduct dismounted and mounted route clearance patrols. “If there is an area where we think there’s possibly an IED, we will scan the area for them,” he said.

Once they detect a threat, the dangerous roadside IEDs and pressure plate IEDs that target military and civilians alike, they blow-in-place, a term used to describe the elimination of the threat by a controlled explosion, one of a combat engineers’ favorite jobs.

U.S. Army Spc. Brandon Carver, a McDough, Ga., native and a combat engineer with 1st Platoon, said he enjoys dismounted patrols and blowing-in-place. “I like being on the ground, it’s better than sitting in the truck all day.”

“If we can help defeat IEDs, we can help civilians from being hit by IEDs,” added Carver, who’s on his first combat tour.

The RCPs not only help keep the citizens safe, but also help improve the safe movement of Coalition and Afghan forces who conduct operations to disrupt enemy activity and foster relationships with local citizens.

On a recent mission to support the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th IBCT, the combat engineers lead the way to ensure safe passage.

“The plan was just to clear for the ‘cav’ guys so they could do their population engagement,” Billington said, “sounded a lot easier than it ended up being.”

U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Bradley Buss, left, a Media, Ill., native and a platoon leader with Company A, 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conducts a brief with his combat engineers prior to a route clearing mission, Aug. 13, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan. Soldiers of Company A routinely detect and eliminate improvised explosive devices, emplaced by the enemies of Afghanistan, to provide safe roads for Coalition Forces and Afghan citizens who travel in the area.



Continued on next page.

4



4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion

3ID combat engineers overcome challenges, defeat IEDs in eastern Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Elvis Umanzor

4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

“One Team, One Fight”

The patrol struck an IED, leaving one of their vehicles inoperable, followed by enemy fire. The 6-8 Cav. sent a quick reaction force to respond and it was struck by another IED. A recovery operation was initiated, and as a wrecker arrived on the scene, another IED went off.

After a long fire fight, 10 IED explosions, and two enemy fighters killed during a 40 hour period, all the Soldiers with 4th IBCT returned safely to base, a true testament to Task Force Vanguard’s concept of a team of teams.

U.S. Army Pvt. Juan Toralba, from Denver, Co., and an infantryman with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th IBCT, along with a small group of infantrymen routinely provide extra security as a response to comparable situations.

U.S. Army Spc. Jesse Powell, from Guyton, Ga., and a combat engineer with 1st Platoon, said, “I’m always thinking about getting back.” But, he makes sure his explosive charges, radios, and weapon systems are ready for a long mission. “We always plan for three to four days, just in case,” he added.

To ensure the success of the mission, U.S. Army Sgt. Charles Slabinski, a Detroit, Mich., native and combat engineer with 1st Platoon, said he makes sure his team is fully mission capable and conducts the proper inspections on the Soldiers, vehicles and equipment.

Their equipment, the Husky Vehicle Mounted Mine Detector being one type of vehicle, is very important for combat engineers and something they rely on to find the well hidden dangers.

“The Husky ...helps detect mines and any kind of ground placed IED,” Slabinski said.

As U.S Forces stay committed to a better future of Afghanistan, combat engineers with Task Force Vanguard continue to clear the roads, despite the dangerous obstacles they face.

“They’re just a great group of guys,” said U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Bradley Buss, a Media, Ill., native and a platoon leader with Company A. “They’ve been through a lot and they’ve really just come together as a team and overcame everything that has been thrown at them.”



U.S. Army Sgt. Keith Glaze, an Atlanta Ga., native and a combat medic assigned to Company A, 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, adjusts his combat kit as he prepares to go on a route clearance mission, Aug. 13, 2013, on Forward Operating Shank, Afghanistan. Combat medics play an essential role by providing medical support while combat engineers detect and eliminate roads side bombs, emplaced by the enemies of Afghanistan, to ensure a safe passage for Coalition Forces and civilians in eastern Afghanistan.



703rd Brigade Support Battalion **“Maintain”**

Vanguard couple renew their vows in Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Sgt. Sarah Bailey

703rd BSB, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 16, 2013) – Five years ago when U.S. Army Capt. Matthew Rorebeck, a Norwalk, Iowa, native and the operations officer for 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, married U.S. Army Capt. Crystal Rorebeck, a native of Breckenridge, Texas, and the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th IBCT, they made a promise to each other to renew their vows every five years on their anniversary.

Neither one could have known that in five years on Aug. 16, 2013, both would be deployed in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Fortunately, both husband and wife were deployed in the same area and were able to uphold the promise they made to one another. Matthew knew this event was not only a milestone in his marriage but also something important to his wife and coordinated with his battalion chaplain, U.S. Army Capt. Mickey Bashman, 3-7 Inf. Regt., to ensure his wife’s wishes were met.

“I think it is important to realize that even in the day-to-day grind, while under pressure, and in the event of dark days that a deployment can have, that we all realize that the mission does come first, but we need to understand that family is what will be there after we take off our helmet and body armor,” Matthew said.

Crystal and her husband did not need an elaborate ceremony to remind them of their promise to one another and planned a short, 10-minute ceremony in front of an Afghan sunset to renew their vows. “Renewing our vows didn’t change the way we feel about each other, but it reminds us of the promises we made to each other five years ago,” said Crystal. The promise was something they both wanted to uphold and celebrate even in the midst of a deployment.

As a dual military couple, the Rorebecks face unique challenges as they juggle careers, training, deployments, and most importantly, their family. At times, it is difficult to get all five of their children together when planning around military life, school, and holidays but with the help of their supportive extended family, the Rorebeck’s are able to train and deploy knowing their children are being cared for back home.



The Rorebeck’s plan to continue this tradition by renewing their vows again in five years and hope next time their family will be present to share the moment with them. “In the end of our careers, the Army will be a distant memory, but my husband and children will continue to be my happiness,” said Crystal.

U.S. Army Capt. Matthew Rorebeck, right, a Norwalk, Iowa, native and the operations officer for 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and Capt. Crystal Rorebeck, a Breckenridge, Texas, native and the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th IBCT, renew their five year wedding vows, Aug. 16, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom



703rd Brigade Support Battalion **“Maintain”**

‘Maintainers’ focus on safety as they move equipment through hostile areas

By U.S. Army Sgt. Sarah Bailey

703rd BSB, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Public Affairs

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Aug. 22, 2013) – The Afghan National Security Forces are taking ownership of logistics and materials essential to their mission as they take the lead for security operations throughout their country.

In Logar and Wardak provinces, Coalition Forces support the ANSF by moving heavy equipment from various outposts along Highway 1, one of Afghanistan’s most dangerous highways in eastern Afghanistan.

The transfer of equipment and material from Coalition Forces to the ANSF is essential for the ANSF to grow and become a self-sustainable force.

U.S. Soldiers with Distribution Platoon, Forward Support Company E, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, attached to 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th IBCT, focus on safety as they conduct long missions, that can last 12-15 hours, through hostile areas where the enemies of Afghanistan place roadside bombs.

Before every mission, U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brian Farrell, the distribution platoon leader and a native of Telford, Pa., encourages his Soldiers to avoid complacency by staying mentality diligent and looking at each mission as if it is the first. “Safety is the longest and most thorough section of the convoy brief,” he said.

Their ability to remain safe while traveling throughout the 4th IBCT, or Task Force Vanguard, area of responsibility on Highway 1 has enhanced their efforts to successfully transfer equipment from multiple combat outposts.

Soldiers of distribution platoon know the importance of their mission and take pride in their unit’s accomplishments.

U.S. Army Spc. Phil Hall, a motor transport operator for distribution platoon, 703rd BSB, credits the platoon’s emphasis on safety for their many successful missions. “Within a very limited time, we have successfully and safely completed several ... missions,” said the Miamisburg, Ohio, native.



U.S. Soldiers from Distribution Platoon, Forward Support Company E, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, attached to 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th IBCT, return from a successful supply mission in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, Aug. 13, 2013. Re-supply and logistic missions are essential to sustain Soldiers at remote combat outposts as U.S. Forces partner with Afghan forces to eliminate the enemies of Afghanistan.

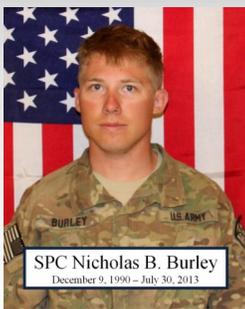
To date, the platoon safely moved 200 20-foot containers worth of material from various combat outposts in a timely manner.

U.S. Army Capt. Roger Snead, a Tuscaloosa, Ala., native and the commander of FSC E, 703rd BSB, understands the importance the equipment and materials have in helping the Afghan Forces develop and become self-sufficient. “Because of our speed, velocity, and adaptability we are able to ensure that the transfers to the ANSF were done on schedule.”

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

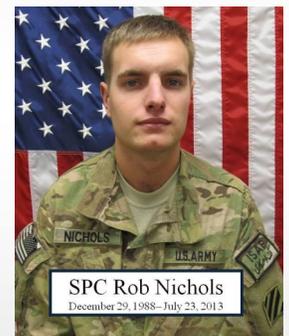
A TRIBUTE TO FALLEN VANGUARD HEROES

SPC. NICKOLAS S. WELCH, 26, OF MILL CITY, ORE., DIED AUG. 6, IN BETHESDA, MD., OF INJURIES SUSTAINED JULY 23, WHEN ENEMY FORCES ATTACKED HIS UNIT WITH AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE IN SOLTAN KHEYL, WARDAK PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 3RD BATTALION, 15TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.



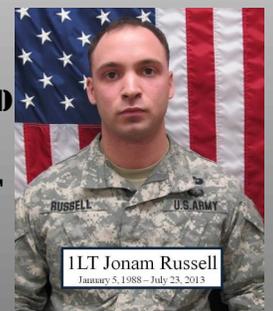
SPC. NICHOLAS B. BURLEY, 22, OF RED BLUFF, CALIF., DIED JULY 30, IN PUL-E-ALAM, AFGHANISTAN, OF INJURIES SUSTAINED WHEN ENEMY FORCES ATTACKED HIS UNIT WITH INDIRECT FIRE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 6TH SQUADRON, 8TH CAVALRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.

SPC. ROB L. NICHOLS, 24, OF COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO., DIED JULY 23, IN SOLTAN KHEYL, AFGHANISTAN, OF WOUNDS SUFFERED WHEN ENEMY FORCES ATTACKED HIS UNIT WITH AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 3RD BATTALION, 15TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.



SGT. STEFAN M. SMITH, 24 OF GLENNVILLE, GA., DIED JULY 23, IN SOLTAN KHEYL, AFGHANISTAN, OF WOUNDS SUFFERED WHEN ENEMY FORCES ATTACKED HIS UNIT WITH AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 3RD BATTALION, 15TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.

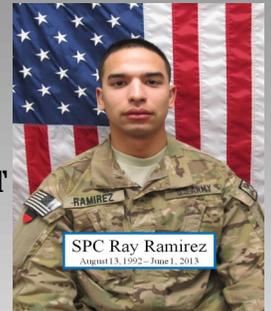
1ST LT. JONAM RUSSELL, 25, OF CORNVILLE, ARIZ., DIED JULY 23, IN SOLTAN KHEYL, AFGHANISTAN, OF WOUNDS SUFFERED WHEN ENEMY FORCES ATTACKED HIS UNIT WITH AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 3RD BATTALION, 15TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.



GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

A TRIBUTE TO FALLEN VANGUARD HEROES

SPC. RAY A. RAMIREZ, 20, OF SACRAMENTO, CALIF., DIED JUNE 1, IN WARDAK PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN, FROM INJURIES SUSTAINED WHEN HIS UNIT WAS ATTACKED BY AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 3RD BATTALION, 15TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.



SPC Ray Ramirez
August 13, 1992 - June 1, 2013



1ST LT. ROBERT J. HESS, 26, OF FAIRFAX, VA., DIED APRIL 23, IN PUL-E-ALAM, AFGHANISTAN, OF WOUNDS SUFFERED FROM ENEMY INDIRECT FIRE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 2ND AVIATION BATTALION, 10TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE, 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION, FORT DRUM, N.Y., AND ATTACHED TO THE 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM.

1LT Robert Hess
March 25, 1987 - April 23, 2013

CAPT. AARON R. BLANCHARD, 32, OF SELAH, WASH., DIED APRIL 23, IN PUL-E-ALAM, AFGHANISTAN, OF WOUNDS SUFFERED FROM ENEMY INDIRECT FIRE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 2ND AVIATION BATTALION, 10TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE, 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION, FORT DRUM, N.Y., AND ATTACHED TO THE 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM.



CPT Aaron Blanchard
April 2, 1981 - April 23, 2013



PFC. BARRETT L. AUSTIN, 20, OF EASLEY, S.C., DIED APRIL 21 IN LANDSTUHL, GERMANY, OF INJURIES SUSTAINED WHEN HIS VEHICLE WAS ATTACKED BY AN ENEMY IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE IN WARDAK PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN, APRIL 17. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 4-3 BRIGADE SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM.

PFC Barrett Austin
November 10, 1992 - April 21, 2013

SGT MAX, A TACTICAL EXPLOSIVES DETECTION DOG ASSIGNED TO 4-3 BSTB, DIED AUG. 14, 2013 WHEN AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE HE HAD DETECTED DETONATED, SAVING THE LIVES OF HIS HANDLER AND THE REST OF THE SOLDIERS ON THE PATROL



SGT Max
June 24, 2010 - August 14, 2013

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

“Ready or Not, Here We Come!”
Part I

The best part of any deployment is redeployment. Redeployment can also be a stressful part of any deployment. The following are seven expectations, not from a class, but from a Soldier redeploying for the fourth time. Hopefully they may help our redeployment from Afghanistan be a little less stressful:

I will be tired: I will be tired because I traveled over 7,400 miles across 9 time zones with very little sleep. I have also had very little downtime or time off in 9 months. I may need a few days to catch up on sleep and become adjusted to Eastern Standard Time. It may not be a good idea to plan big events for my first week home. I may just want to stay at home and enjoy my own bed, my chair, my bathroom and especially my own Family for a while.

I will need time: I will need time to readjust to life back home. My life in Afghanistan has been much different than my life back home here in the U.S. I may be a little nervous, jumpy, irritable, and may have a hard time even sitting still but, given some time, I will be okay. I may try to make up for a 9 month deployment in 9 minutes or in 9 days, but it won't work. I may need several months to return to what I would call my “new normal.”

I need trust and I need to trust you.

In spite of all you may have read on Facebook, not every Soldier cheated on their spouse in Afghanistan and not every spouse cheated on their Soldier during the deployment. MOST did not! Do not listen to rumors or be worried needlessly. If we were “in love” when I left, then we will still be “in love” when I get home. If not, then we can get help and can recommit our love one to another. Love is a commitment and a choice so chose to love and trust.

I will be thankful to be home but I may be down at times. I will enjoy my Family, friends and all comforts of home again, but I will remember the painful times of a very difficult deployment. I will never forget the Soldiers we lost who didn't come home. It will be good to be home, but I may feel like a part of me is still in Afghanistan.

To Be Continued.....

Chaplain (Major) David Trogdon
TF Vanguard Brigade Chaplain



“The God Squad”

SSG Andre Gambrell
TF Vanguard Brigade Chaplain's Assistant

Chaplain (MAJ) David Trogdon
TF Vanguard Brigade Chaplain

Medical Minute

A friend recently read a quote to me: “Either find time to exercise, or find time for illness”. I certainly don’t believe anyone would argue with the truth of that quote and most Soldiers adhere to the principle that regular exercise increases performance. As a Physical Therapist, it is my job to assist Soldiers in rehabilitating from injury to keep them in the fight. Along with that rehabilitation process, you notice the habits of individuals that often go unaddressed on the road to recovery. These habits are often related not to errors in training, but in areas of recovery. I propose that we modify the aforementioned quote to read: “Either find time for recovery, or find time for injury”.

Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Patricia D. Horoho announced the Performance Triad this past winter. The Performance Triad is comprised of three pillars: Activity, Nutrition, and Sleep. The triad is a large part of the Army Surgeon General’s strategy to transition from a Healthcare System to a System of Health. While there is surmounting evidence for a call to increase levels of physical activity among the majority of Americans, it is the last two pillars that are more commonly overlooked in the daily life of a Soldier. The Army, as a culture, dictates exercise and activity. In fact, it is such a high priority that we do it first thing in the morning. It’s an engrained habit. Nutrition and sleep, however, have very little oversight, and is perhaps why we find so little time for them.

A conversation I had recently summed up this lack of focus perfectly. The patient was explaining their exercise routine and how they wanted to increase the intensity of their workout. They just didn’t feel as if their performance was optimal, to which I replied, “What about Nutrition?” The patient responded with “I’ll do

anything to increase my performance, but I’m not changing my diet”. I then made a joke about the line from the Meatloaf song “I would do anything for love, but I won’t do that!” After we shared a good laugh, I explained that performance is a direct result of a carefully planned nutrition strategy and should be goal directed. Want to decrease your body fat percentage? Want to gain mass? Want to lose weight? Want optimal performance? Each goal requires a different nutrition strategy that can potentially make or break the pursuit of your goal, regardless of how hard you train.

How much sleep do we need? Most Soldiers would respond with 4 hours and then quote their First Sergeant. According to research, Soldier Athletes require 7-9 hours of sleep to achieve optimal performance. Want to have impaired critical thinking? Want to have decrease testosterone levels? Want to be at risk for obesity, heart disease, heart attacks, hypertension, and diabetes? Chronic loss of sleep can lead to serious health concerns.

While your mission may dictate how and when you are able to incorporate sleep and nutrition, your challenge is to be an asset to your team by striving for optimal performance. Optimal performance is comprised of a balanced exercise program, targeted nutrition plan, and a programmed sleep routine. You can find out more at the DoD’s Human Performance Resource Center website: www.hprc-online.org. Remember, “Either find time for recovery, or find time for injury”.

CPT Jeremy Fletcher

Vanguard Brigade Physical Therapist

Safety First

The Last-90 Days

They are critical, just like the first 100 days of any deployment. Soldiers become complacent to their surroundings: they can become too content, carefree, numb to challenges, have less respect for the enemy, become overconfident, and lack situational awareness.

Key Lessons for the last 90 days are:

- Perform tasks to standard every time.
- Avoid becoming complacent.
- Follow troop-leading procedures and complete pre-combat inspections.
- Our Soldiers must be able to maintain muzzle awareness, trigger safety and obey weapons statuses on their own. Appropriate training builds proficiency and teaches responsibility.
- Accidents are unnecessary 85 percent of the time, but happen all the time. Vehicle roll-overs are our #1 cause of vehicle accidents.
- The best thing to do to ensure survivability is to stress SAFETY. There are more non-combat related deaths than actual combat deaths.
- Enforcing SAFETY standards in everyday activities is absolutely necessary. "Vehicle Commander" is not just a seat and a title—it is a responsibility to oneself and to the Vanguard family for the safe operation of any vehicle.
- Conduct composite risk management before every mission, no matter how small or how many times you have done the exact mission.

TASK FORCE VANGUARD BASED ON 9 MONTH DEPLOYMENT RISK TIMETABLE PROFILE

UNCLASSIFIED

Risk Factors

Learning Mode	Disciplined Performance	Complacent	See The Finish Line
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning the Task • Learning the Environment • Learning the Enemy • Tentative/SA • Lack of Situation Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing to Standard • Aware of Challenges • Learned My Enemy • Cautious • Highest Situation Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content / Carefree • Numb to Challenges • Less Respect for Enemy • Overconfident • Lack Situation Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Cuts • Sensitive to NEW Challenges • Lower Respect for Enemy • Not Cautious • Lowest Situation Awareness
HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH
First 90 Days	90 - 180 Days	180 - 240 Days TOA - 90	240 - 270 Days TOA - 30
Start		Mid Tour	Finish

Controls

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Engagement • First-line Supervision • Capability Assessments • Rehearsals & Back briefs • Clear Command Guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Checking • Supervisors Monitoring • Adjusting to Changes • Assess & Re-Assess • Crew Coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Engagement • First-line Supervision • Enforce Standards • Confidence Level in Check • Enforce Situation Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Engagement • First-line Supervision • Enforce Standards • Emotions in Check • Focus - Focus - Focus
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TF VANGUARD
SAFETY ADVISER
Mr. Anthony Woodard

UNCLASSIFIED

As of 23 AUG 13

Safety is a frame of mind - So concentrate on it ALL THE TIME!



What is I. A.M. STRONG?

Intervene, Act, and Motivate (I. A.M.) STRONG is the Army's campaign to combat sexual assaults by engaging all Soldiers in preventing sexual assaults before they occur.

Grounded by our shared belief in the Army Values, we are a band of brothers and sisters, placing mission first, never accepting defeat, never quitting and never leaving a fallen comrade. Our interdependence and shared respect among comrades frames who we are as a Team and an Army - a Team that finds sexual assault reprehensible and beyond toleration. Those who commit assaults hurt a member of our Team and wound our Army. This criminal act is cowardly and damaging to the very moral fiber that gives our Army its innermost strength.

As Soldiers and proud members of our Team, we are duty bound to **Intervene, Act, and Motivate** others to stop sexual assaults and the sexually offensive language and gestures that create an environment friendly to this abuse.

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15, 2013 – White House Press Secretary Jay Carney today issued a statement on the new Department of Defense initiatives to eliminate sexual assault in the military.

The statement reads as follows:

The President has stated clearly that sexual assault is a crime that undermines the honor, integrity, and readiness of our Armed Forces. He has charged the nation's military leadership with "exponentially stepping up our game" when it comes to eliminating sexual assault.

Women and men who step forward to serve our country must be protected from this devastating crime, and offenders must be held appropriately accountable.

Today's announcement by Secretary of Defense Hagel of new executive actions is the result of intensive effort by the Department of Defense -- including the senior civilian leadership and each of the Services -- to fulfill the President's call to action.

The initiatives announced today are substantial, but only a step along a path toward eliminating this crime from our military ranks. The President expects this level of effort to be sustained not only in the coming weeks and months, but as far into the future as necessary. We will continue to work with the Pentagon to make progress on this high priority goal because none of our men and women in uniform should ever have to experience the pain and degradation of sexual assault.

Your Brigade SHARP Sexual Assault Response Coordinator is:

SFC Matthew D. Smith

matthew.d.smith@afghan.swa.army.mil

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

LATEST UPDATES

At the behest of Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY), in 1971 the U.S. Congress designated August 26 as “Women’s Equality Day.” The date was selected to commemorate the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. This was the culmination of a massive, peaceful civil rights movement by women that had its formal beginnings in 1848 at the world’s first women’s rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York. The observance of Women’s Equality Day not only commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, but also calls attention to women’s continuing efforts toward full equality.



WOMEN in DEFENSE OF OUR NATION

By the 1990s women commanded ships, directed bases, and flew jets for the US military. In 1993 Congress repealed the combat exclusion law. That same year Sheila Widnall became the first female Secretary of the Air Force and the first woman to lead an entire branch of the US military in the Department of Defense. Today women constitute 15 percent of the total active duty force and make vital contributions in Iraq and Afghanistan and other overseas contingency operations. In 2010, the Navy announced submarine positions were opening to women for the first time. Female service members also assist with humanitarian relief efforts in countries affected by earthquakes, flooding, or famine. As of late 2010 there were 47 female Generals and 23 female Admirals in the US military. The opportunities for women to serve and achieve leadership positions have never been greater.



03/31/2011 BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan Historic Duettes Flight – the first combat mission to be planned, maintained, and flown entirely by females



"I have never considered myself anything but a Soldier. I recognize that with this selection, some will view me as a trailblazer, but it's important that we remember the generations of women, whose dedication, commitment and quality of service helped open the doors of opportunity for us today."

- General Ann Dunwoody became the first female 4-star in the US Army on November 14, 2008

Corporal Jennifer San Martin and Corporal Tracy Hauk, part of the Marine Corps Lioness Program, search an Iraqi woman at a checkpoint in Haditha City, Iraq >



Lieutenant Junior Grade Karen Sankes stands watch aboard the USS Kearsarge >



Colonel Eileen Collins, a military instructor and test pilot for the Air Force, was the first female commander of a Space Shuttle in 1999



< Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy is the highest ranking female civilian in the Pentagon



< Captain Janet Rose joined the Army Reserve at 48 after working 20 years as a nurse; she has deployed to Iraq on medical missions

Rear Admiral Raquel Bono served as a surgeon with the Navy during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm; in 2011 she became the first Hispanic woman selected for the rank of rear admiral



Airman 1st Class Veronica Cox loads relief supplies onto a helicopter in Sendai, Japan >



Staff Sergeant Joy Hollonquest, a claims/paralegal specialist with the 355th Fighter Wing Staff Judge Advocate, helps Staff Sergeant Angela Hardy with paperwork >



Lieutenant Junior Grade Jeanine McIntosh-Menze was the first African American woman in the Coast Guard to get her wings in 2005



< Airman 1st Class Ncharallah Jasper is a technician who calibrates and repairs equipment



< Commander Yvette Davids, shown hosting members of the Royal Malaysian Navy, was the first Hispanic woman to command a Navy ship

Specialist Leigh Ann Hester was the first woman awarded the Silver Star since WWII when her convoy was ambushed in Iraq; she was serving with the 617th Military Police Company, a Kentucky Army National Guard unit



Your Brigade Equal Opportunity Advisor is
SFC James Ward
James.J.Ward@afghan.SWA.army.mil

For More Information Visit:
diversity.defense.gov



VANGUARD VOICE

An infantryman with 3rd Platoon, Co. B, 3-7 Inf. Regt., 4th IBCT, secures a road crossing while on a security patrol, Aug. 21, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan.

The Task Force Vanguard Public Affairs Team

Public Affairs Officer: MAJ Matt Fontaine

Public Affairs NCOIC: SSG Elvis Umanzor

Broadcast NCO: SGT Bob Yarbrough

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