

VANGUARD VOICE



“Ready or not, here we come!”

November
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FROM THE COVER:

U.S. Army Soldiers with 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, take their seats on a C-17 cargo airplane bound for Fort Stewart, Ga., following their nine-month deployment to eastern Afghanistan.

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Airman honors Vanguard Brigade with mural

By U.S. Army Maj. Matthew Fontaine

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

U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jeffrey Schmidt wanted to give something back to the Army family that took him in and treated him like one of their own.

Schmidt, a Joint Terminal Attack Controller attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, during their deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, painted a “t-wall” mural to memorialize the unit’s deployment and honor the Fallen Heroes that made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Louisville, Ky. native said he was inspired to paint the memorial after the unit took their first casualties, not long after arriving at Forward Operating Base Shank in March.

The three-panel mural, painted on giant cement walls that resemble an upside down ‘T’, depicted the storied actions of the 3rd Inf. Div. from WWI to present and included the names of the 4th IBCT Soldiers who died in service to the nation.

There are thousands of t-walls, used as protection from incoming rockets, on bases across Afghanistan which makes them a universal symbol of deployment for veterans of both the Iraq and Afghan wars, making them a fitting canvas for such a memorial.

Schmidt lost count of the hours spent painting but said it was common for him to paint for several hours after his 12-hour shift in the unit’s tactical operations center. During his shift he’s responsible for air space coordination, planning air support for ground forces and controlling multiple aircraft in the unit’s area of operations.

Following the loss of his friend and workout partner, U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jonam Russell, to an improvised explosive device, Schmidt promised himself he would finish the mural and Russell would be the last name he added.

Schmidt followed in the footsteps of both of his grandfathers, satisfying a need to serve, and enlisted in the Air Force in 2004. He earned bachelor’s degrees in art history and psychology from the University of Maryland University College’s Wiesbaden campus in Germany and earned a commission through Officer Training School as a JTAC in 2011.

When asked why he would invest the time and energy to paint the 9 x 12 foot mural, he said he wanted “to mark what we’re doing here; there’s a price to what we do.”

Before he began painting the mural, he discussed his idea with

U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Rimoni Mapu, 4th IBCT’s operations sergeant major. Mapu, an infantryman from American Samoa, was tasked with finding an artist for the unit and asked the personnel in the TOC who could paint. “Lt. Schmidt came forward, showed me a sketch and I said ‘go paint’”. Lots of soldiers take their pictures in front of the mural and read the names,” said Mapu.

“He’s doing a pretty good job,” which is high praise from the soft-spoken Mapu. He did lots of work in addition to his duties in the TOC and only painted on personal time, he added.

Schmidt’s interest in art began early in life, often drawing cartoons as a child. His great-grandmother and grandmother were both artists and encouraged and inspired him. He went on to study art at Elizabethtown High School in Louisville, Ky., where he believes he had great teachers.

Schmidt tried to keep a low profile about his work but it wasn’t long before admirers began posting photos of the mural in progress. After being tagged on Facebook, his friends and family requested regular updates. Schmidt’s biggest fan, his mom, regularly sent brushes and other supplies, things not easily found on a combat base, to help him finish.

The 4th IBCT has grown quite fond of the memorial and is working to take it back to Fort Stewart, Ga. when they depart Afghanistan later this fall. Schmidt said he hopes he made an impact and is excited the unit is trying to bring the memorial home.

When he returns home next month, Schmidt is looking forward to catching up on his sleep and spending time with his fiancé who is a mechanical engineer in Louisville.



U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jeffrey Schmidt, a Joint Terminal Attack Controller, and a Louisville, Ky. native, attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, prepares to continue his work on a “t-wall” mural, Sept. 19, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, in honor of the Vanguard Brigade’s combat tour. The memorial also pays tribute to the 4th IBCT Fallen Heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice.



3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment

"Cottonbalers By God, Damn Fine Soldiers"

3rd ID 'Cottonbalers' complete mission in eastern Afghanistan

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Gerald Ratchford

3-7 IN, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Unit Public Affairs Representative

U.S. Army Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, prepare to return to their home station in Fort Stewart, Ga., after a successful mission in eastern Afghanistan.

The 3-7 Inf. Bn., known as the Cottonbalers, arrived on Forward Operating Base Shank in March 2013 to serve as the division reserve, or emergency combat element for Combined Joint Task Force-101, operating in support of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Regional Command-East, Afghanistan.

Operating as the division reserve was no easy feat. The battalion maintained the ability to move anywhere in RC-East within 24 hours. Each mission was different and posed its own set of challenges.

Many missions involved partnered operations with Afghan National Army soldiers including securing a pivotal area for a special operations unit to move into.

The mission, which included ANA, 3-7 Infantry Soldiers, and Special Operations Soldiers, was planned within 24 hours, which made it a tough plan to execute. "This was one of the most complicated missions I have ever been on," said U.S. Army Sgt. Christopher Brown, an East Hartford, Conn., native who is on his third deployment and the battalion's fire support sergeant. "The number of assets and ground forces involved was the key to the success of the mission."

After six months as the division's reserve, the Cottonbaler Battalion maneuvered elements to support other operations.

Company A, 3-7 Inf., supported 3rd Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., 4th IBCT, to deny the enemies of Afghanistan freedom of movement along Highway 1, a critical route for resupply and movement in Wardak Province and one of the most volatile regions in RC-East.

The ANA, with the assistance of Co. A, increased their presence to eliminate enemy activity in the area and denied them accessibility to supplies. ANA commanders commended the efforts of Co. A and praised them for their ability to take the fight to the enemy.

In southern Logar Province, Company C, 3-7 Inf., partnered with the ANA, and first targeted an area that went without a Coalition Force presence for over a year. During an operation, Co. C and ANA soldiers entered the area at night to surprise the enemies of Afghanistan. The enemy attempted to mount a counter-offensive which was quickly defeated by U.S. and ANA soldiers working together to surmount the attack.

Headquarters Support Company, 3-7 IN, provided support in the form of enablers such as mortars, scouts, maintenance personnel, medical assets, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

The HSC's mortar section advised the ANA on the proper use of their mortar systems. The medics provided medical training to the ANA and cared for casualties.

Unmanned aerial vehicle operators provided over 500 hours of aerial surveillance to identify enemy activity which directly led to defeating several indirect fire attacks on FOB Shank and prevented the emplacement of improvised explosive devices along roads increasing the safety of Coalition and Afghan forces and Afghan citizens.

Co. B, 3-7 Inf., attached to 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th IBCT, provided an essential presence within their area of responsibility augmenting 6-8 Cav's operations.

At the culmination of the nine-month tour, the Cottonbalers supported the ANA in one of their most significant missions. The Soldiers advised and assisted the ANA as they conducted clearing operations in the Tangi Valley, known to be a historical safe haven for enemies of Afghanistan.

A portion of the Cottonbaler's advise and assist mission entailed air support operations, as this was the first time an Afghan Air Force aircraft supported an Afghan ground operation. The airspace and aircraft were coordinated by new Afghan Tactical Air Coordinators or ATACs for the first time in an operation known as Shaheen II.

U.S. Army Capt. T.J. Marlatt, a native of Summerville, S.C., and a battalion fire support officer for 3-7 Inf. was on hand to coordinate airspace de-confliction between U.S. and Afghan aircraft with the new ATACs. "Their air-to-ground integration was exceptional and I was very impressed that they had just completed their ATAC course," said Marlatt. "They performed very well for their first operation considering how difficult air to ground integration can be." The ANA and Afghan Air Force were successful in increasing security in the area and pushing enemy fighters back.

The Cottonbalers, who earned their nickname when their commander, soon-to-be U.S. President Andrew Jackson, had them hold their position using cotton bales as cover against the British, proved they are just as tough, agile, and disciplined in today's fight as they were then.



3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment

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U.S. Army Soldiers from Headquarters Support Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, prepare to sling load supplies to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, June 15, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. Resupply missions played an important role in supporting combat operations during the unit’s tour in eastern Afghanistan



U.S. Army Soldiers from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, provide security for a dismounted patrol in Logar Province, Afghanistan, Aug. 25, 2013. U.S. Forces stayed committed to the security and prosperous future of Afghanistan as they supported Afghan security forces during their tour in eastern Afghanistan.



U.S. Army Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, pose for a picture in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, Oct. 10, 2013, while in support of Operation Shaheen II. U.S. Forces are committed to the growth and development of the Afghan Security Forces as they lead operations to secure their country.



U.S. Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, come together after an end of tour ceremony, Oct. 30, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, marking the end of their successful tour in eastern Afghanistan. The Cottonbaler Soldiers served as the division’s emergency combat element for Combined Joint Task Force-101, operating in support of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force in Regional Command East, Afghanistan.



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

Vanguard’s ‘China’ Battalion concludes mission to secure Afghan’s Highway 1

By U.S. Army Capt. Wesley Sparks
3-15 Inf. Regt., 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

The 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Stewart, Ga., is finishing their time spread across Wardak Province for the past fighting season.

The 3-15 Inf. Regt., known as Task Force China, which relates to the regiment’s service in China, secured a province that for years had been staffed with two battalions. Balancing the reduction of U.S. Forces in the province while enabling the Afghan National Security Forces and securing Highway 1, a main route in eastern Afghanistan, were the unit’s main objectives.

The battalion commander of Task Force China, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Joel Smith, a native of Nebraska, developed a congruent framework of effort for the infantrymen assigned to this light infantry battalion under the 4th IBCT, or Task Force Vanguard. The objectives and lines of effort in Wardak match the terrain, everything radiates from Highway 1 which divides mountainous terrain on both sides. Due to the significant economic impact the road has on Wardak Province, the road dominates security and governance conversations.

Upon their arrival Task Force China had the difficult task of continuously securing a long stretch of the primary road used for local Afghan traffic, International Security Assistance Force convoys, and the security apparatus of a poor province. Task Force China had Security Force Advise and Assist Teams in

place to aid three kandaks (equivalent to battalion) from the 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps, of the Afghan National Army.

Three rifle companies of Task Force China were able to bring ISAF assets to the appreciative kandaks. In addition to the traditional infantry role that Task Force China was prepared for, they were responsible for assisting a provincial police headquarters, standing up district level reporting centers, and maintaining route security along Highway 1.

Company B, 3-15 Inf. Regt., had a unique, dangerous, and critical mission at Combat Outpost Sultan Khel. The company there, known as Bandit, served in a highly contested and kinetic region of southern Wardak where there was continuous criminal pressure on the highway. The enemies of Afghanistan attempted to use this critical vein of commerce to destabilize the growing trust of the local population in their Afghan National Security Forces.

Enabling medical evacuation of wounded ANSF was a great success. Working through this new capability has been a great boost to the morale of the Afghan soldiers and police in Wardak.

The many awards for combat and valor pinned on the Soldiers of Task Force China stand as testament to their dedication. The past year has been critical in the continued development of the security of Wardak Province. The motto of Task Force China and their response to any challenge is “Can Do” and the battalion truly showed their ability to face any task during Operation Enduring Freedom XIII-IV.



U.S. Army Spc. Lucas Parker of Company C, a Tucson, Ariz. native and an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, salutes the Vanguard Brigade commander, Col. Kimo Gallahue, of Frankfort, Ky., after being awarded the Purple Heart, Oct. 26, 2013, in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, for injuries sustained during combat operations. Parker and many like him from 3-15 Inf. Regt were recognized at an end of tour awards ceremony for their tremendous work in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment "Can Do"

Vanguard's 'China' Battalion concludes mission to secure Afghan's Highway 1
By U.S. Army Capt. Wesley Sparks
3-15 Inf. Regt., 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Kenton Gotshall, left, an infantry squad leader with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and a native of Woodstock, Ga., walks back to ensure all the members of his team are accounted for during a foot patrol in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, Aug. 21, 2013.



U.S. Army Pfc. Paxton Steen, a forward observer with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and a native of Sioux Falls, S.D., scans the area for enemy activity to enhance security along Highway 1 in Wardak Province, Afghanistan on Aug. 24, 2013.



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. William Clapp, left, infantry platoon leader, and U.S. Army Spc. Ronnie Ancheta, a radio operator, both with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, cross a small stream in Wardak Province, Afghanistan, Aug. 21, 2013, while on a foot patrol in order to secure the area.



6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment

“Honor And Courage”

Vanguard's Mustang Squadron fights until end of mission

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. David Conrad

6th Sqdn., 8th Cav. Regt., Unit Public Affairs Representative

As the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, wraps up their deployment in eastern Afghanistan, the Soldiers of the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th IBCT, are continuing to take the fight to the enemy.

The squadron, known as Task Force Mustang, took responsibility of operations in Logar Province, Afghanistan, on March 7, 2013, in support of the 4th IBCT, or Task Force Vanguard, while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 6th Squadron's unique composition as a specialized reconnaissance unit, comprised of infantry and cavalry scout Soldiers, allows for a flexible organization that can take on a variety of missions.

Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6-8 Cav., not only supports the squadron's headquarters operations but has two specialty platoons that constantly maneuvered throughout the area. The Security Platoon provided personal security for the squadron commander and command sergeant major while they conducted over 150 battlefield circulation missions. The Mortar Platoon conducted a wide variety of missions, from supporting the squadron with timely and accurate fires, to securing Patrol Base Pul-e-Alam in support of the Logar provincial government and then moving to an austere outpost to conduct counter-indirect fire patrols.

U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Christopher Williams, a Bloomington Ill., native with 6-8 Cav., spoke about what this deployment showed about today's Soldiers. "They understand the strategic consequences of their actions and they are making the right decisions on the ground to prevent setting the Army back 10 years," he said.

Troop A Soldiers conducted more than 500 missions to disrupt the enemy's ability to fire rockets onto Forward Operating Base Shank. The three platoons of Troop A traveled more than 17,000 meters dismounted and 15,000 meters mounted. They also partnered with the Afghan National Army's 1st Kandak, 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps, where they advised and assisted the ANA during the nine-month deployment.

Troop B was responsible for northern Logar Province, based at Combat Outpost McClain, and partnered with the ANA 7th Kandak, 4th Bde. The soldiers worked tirelessly over the last nine months to increase the ANA's capacity to fight and win in the Mohammed Agha and Khoshi districts. Troop B Soldiers covered hundreds of miles mounted and dismounted between northern and eastern Logar, and they helped the ANA establish a new outpost

in eastern Logar to disrupt enemy movement into the area.

The Soldiers of Troop C spent most of the deployment on COP Barak-i-Barak, disrupting enemy activities within the BBK district of Logar Province. Troop C Soldiers walked hundreds of miles on dismounted patrols with their Afghan counter-parts greatly increasing governance and security in the BBK district.

Co. D, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th IBCT, attached to Task Force Mustang as a forward support company, supported the squadron's efforts throughout the area of operations. Co. D traversed more than 2,700 miles, the equivalent to driving from New York City to Los Angeles, and provided some 240,000 meals and pushed 160,000 gallons of fuel to outstations in the province. Co. D Soldiers also maintained the squadron's equipment and vehicles, ensuring the troops were ready for every mission and providing services on over 140 weapon systems, 900 radios, and 50 vehicles.

"The accomplishments achieved by the Soldiers have far superseded the expectations of a normal forward support company," said U.S. Army Capt. Jeffery Sowecke, of Huron, Ohio, and the Co. D commander. "Facing a significant reduction in personnel strength prior to deployment caused Soldiers from every commodity section and platoon to work together as a cohesive unit in providing sustainment to the squadron. Throughout the deployment, the 'Maddawgs' constantly pushed themselves to the extreme, often providing logistical support under the most adverse conditions, including enemy contact."

The infantrymen of Co. B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th IBCT, had the opportunity to be attached to the cavalry squadron during the highly-kinetic fight. The Co. B infantrymen constantly patrolled an insurgent hotbed north of FOB Shank to deter indirect fire and enemy activity. The efforts of the infantrymen resulted in the construction of two observation posts near the village, which are now occupied by the Afghan National Army, to provide a constant presence to protect the local populace.

Throughout the deployment Task Force Mustang enabled the Afghan government and ANA to provide better security and service to the people of Logar Province. The Afghan National Security Forces now patrol unilaterally throughout the province, something they have not done before on such a large scale. The Soldiers of Task Force Mustang continue to work towards lasting peace in eastern Afghanistan.



6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment

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6th Sqdn., 8th Cav. Regt., Unit Public Affairs Representative



U.S. Army Sgt. James Brooks, a Las Vegas native and a maintenance service team noncommissioned officer-in-charge with Company D, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, attached to the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th IBCT, maintains security while his platoon conducts a hasty road repair, Sept. 2, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan. The Soldiers of 6-8 Cav. were committed to the development and security of Afghanistan during their nine-month deployment in eastern Afghanistan.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Michael Shepard, a Miami native and a platoon leader with Troop A, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, speaks with the headmaster of a local school, Sept. 23, 2013, in Logar Province, Afghanistan. The 6-8 Cav. Soldiers delivered school supplies in order to support educational development and foster good relations with the Afghan citizens.





1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment

Duty The Spirit of '76"

Vanguard 'Patriots' complete mission in eastern Afghanistan

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert Gordon

1-76 FA, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Unit Public Affairs Representative

U.S. Army artillerymen from 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team "Vanguard", 3rd Infantry Division, were recognized at an end of tour ceremony, Oct. 18, on Forward Operating Base Shank as their mission of providing supporting fires to the Vanguard Brigade and advising Afghan National Army soldiers comes to an end.

The Patriot Battalion deployed 50 Soldiers to Forward Operating Base Shank on March 3, 2013.

Soon after their arrival, 13 members of the detachment partnered with the ANA's 4th Kandak, 203rd Corps Field Artillery Battery to increase the 4th Brigade's fires competencies. Thirty-seven others were instrumental in providing radar, meteorological support, fires, and fire support to the Vanguard Brigade's combat units as they supported ANA ground forces to fight the enemies of Afghanistan.

During the end of tour ceremony, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Matthew McCollum, from Columbus, S.C, and the 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion commander, and Col. Kimo Gallahue, the 4th IBCT commander, a native of Frankfort, Ky., highlighted the battalion's accomplishments. These accomplishments included safely and accurately firing almost 130 missions, totaling nearly 500 rounds.

Throughout the deployment the "Filthy Fifty", as they call themselves, provided counter-fire, illumination fires, direct supporting fires for troops in contact, and interdiction fires against insurgents emplacing rockets and improvised explosive devices.

They stood ready to respond with counter-fire on every enemy indirect fire attack on FOB Shank. Within seconds of the battery radar section acquiring enemy fire, the battery fire direction center was calculating accurate firing data to send to the howitzer section. After receiving the technical firing solution from the FDC, the howitzer section, with ammo in hand, stood ready to fire on command. The howitzer section was trained and certified to fire two versions of the weapon system depending on the type of mission they received.

"The Soldiers within Alpha Battery continuously impress me with their versatility, resiliency and commitment," stated U.S. Army Capt. Michael Wisser, the Battery A, 1-76 FA commander, and a Pittsburgh native. "Through a wide variety of missions the battery was able to consistently place first round effects on targets throughout Logar and Wardak Provinces, achieve a 90 percent acquisition rate on the most heavily attacked forward operating base in Afghanistan, and most importantly create Afghan sustainable systems to provide fire support to Afghan National Security Forces."

Wisser also stated it was the determination and dedication of the noncommissioned officers and Soldiers that made the battery's operations a tremendous success. Alpha Battery moved a M119 Howitzer by helicopter from Forward Operating Base Shank to Combat Outpost Sultan Kheyl to provide fires in support of ground combat operations.

According to U.S. Army Maj. Jeff Ivey, a native of Mobile, Ala., and the senior field artillerymen deployed with the Vanguard Brigade, "Success of the Afghan National Army may eventually come down to their ability to plan, synchronize, and integrate fires into operations. As Coalition Forces continue to remove combat power from Afghanistan, the Afghan Army will become more and more dependent on their organic fires assets and less reliant on Coalition Force capabilities."

When the Soldiers of the Patriot Battalion arrived in Logar Province, Afghanistan, the ANA D-30 Battery had recently learned how to shoot in indirect fire mode, were completely reliant of Coalition Forces for training, and barely had the equipment to conduct basic operations. Trained ANA forward observers, fires support officers, and fires support NCOs, were hard to find.

With assistance from the Patriots, the 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps, doubled their D-30 combat power, can now conduct split-battery operations across multiple provinces, consistently make mission-time standards, and have significantly increased their overall sustainment capabilities in terms of ammunition management, maintenance, and logistics resupply. Additionally, they fielded an abundance of equipment needed to provide more accurate artillery fire.

High payoff training events such as the D-30 Master Gunner Program, the Fire Direction Center Digital Master Gunner Program, the Fire Support Master Trainer Program, and Air-to-Ground Integration training has drastically increased their training and operational capabilities. After completing AGI training, members of the Patriot Battalion assisted the ANA brigade with conducting close combat attack support with MI-35 helicopters, gaining mission success with four enemies killed in action. This was the first time the ANA had successfully integrated air force assets into operations.

The integration of MI-35's, D-30 howitzers, and forward observers to support troops in contact can only aid in the future success of the Afghan National Army and could be one of the deciding factors in gaining overmatch against the enemies of Afghanistan.



1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment

Duty The Spirit of '76'

Vanguard 'Patriots' complete mission in eastern Afghanistan

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert Gordon

1-76 FA, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Unit Public Affairs Representative



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class James Brantley, a native of Grady, Ala, and the acting first sergeant for Battery A, 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, hands the formation to U.S. Army Capt. Michael Wisser, a native of Pittsburgh and the Battery A commander, during an end of tour awards ceremony, Oct. 18, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. Some of the awards presented included the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal and the NATO Non-Article 5 Medal, in recognition for their outstanding performance and service in maintaining and conducting artillery fires and advising and assisting the Afghan National Army's 4th Kandak, 4th Infantry Brigade of the 203rd Corps, during their nine-month deployment.

Afghan National Army soldiers from Artillery Battery, 4th Kandak, 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps, fire their new D-30 Howitzer, June 2013 on Forward Operating Base Altimum, Afghanistan. U.S. Army field artillery advisors with 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, enhanced the ANA's ability to employ their artillery systems to fight the enemies of Afghanistan during their nine-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.





4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion

Sentinel Battalion completes mission in Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Capt. Penny Volino

4-3 BSTB, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Unit Public Affairs Representative

“One Team, One Fight”

The 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, served as the garrison command on Forward Operating Base Shank, the second largest FOB in the International Security Assistance Force's Regional Command-East, from March to November 2013, and are preparing to return home after a nine-month deployment.

The responsibilities for 4-3 BSTB, known as Task Force Sentinel, included providing critical life support services and force protection to over 8,000 civilians, local and other country nationals, contractors, and U.S. and Coalition Forces who live and work on Shank.

Task Force Sentinel supported the transfer of responsibility to a capable Afghan National Security Force by conducting combined patrols, marksmanship training, and integrated base defense operations with the Security Toli (Afghan company-sized unit) from the Garrison Support Unit, 4th Infantry Brigade, 203rd Corps of the Afghan National Army.

The Sentinel Battalion was responsible for the site development and integration of the Land-Based Phalanx Weapon System, the first of its kind in Afghanistan. The system includes multiple interconnected weapon systems dispersed throughout Shank to counter indirect fire.

The Sentinel's were responsible for ammunition allocation and distribution; grading and construction of communication and power infrastructures; and installing security bunkers.

The Base Defense Operations Center secured the perimeter of FOB Shank and ensured the synchronization and execution of base defense rehearsals.

In May, after a C-130 Hercules aircraft conducted a hard landing on Shank's runway, the BDOC dispatched an incident command post to the scene while force protection personnel secured access to the site. They also coordinated for water and medical support by communicating with the on-scene commander.

The 4-3 BSTB is comprised of military police, engineers, military intelligence and signal Soldiers who directly support the Vanguard Brigade.

Company A, 4-3 BSTB, served as the brigade's route clearance element to allow freedom of movement in support of 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 4th IBCT, in Wardak Province; 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th IBCT, in Logar Province; and 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., 4th IBCT, who operated in both provinces.

Co A. was organized into two route-clearance platoons which executed maneuver enhancement operations, finding and removing improvised explosive devices, for both partnered and unilateral U.S. and ANSF operations. They also supported RC-East's retrograde, combat operations, base transfers, the installation of culverts and culvert denial systems, road repair, and provided general engineering services along main supply routes and other strategic locations within RC-East.

“The company was responsible for the most contentious portion of the main line of communication within TF Vanguard's area of responsibility . . . and [allowed] for safe passage of key lines of communications for retrograde convoys and disruption of enemy indirect fires cells,” said U.S. Army Capt. Philip Song, the commander of Co. A. and a Hacienda Heights, Calif., native.

The Sentinel Battalion provided continuous intelligence operations consisting of signal intelligence, human intelligence, geospatial intelligence and intelligence analysts across two provinces. The Unmanned Aerial Systems Platoon completed over 5,000 flight hours, and conducted more than 800 flights in Logar and Wardak.

The signal Soldiers provided direct support to the 4th IBCT communication sections at two FOBs and eight combat outposts. They also provided radio training to the ANA 4th Bde., 203rd Corps, in support of the brigade's advise and assist mission, enabling the ANSF to conduct long range radio communication which is critical to command and control during operations.

U.S. Army Capt. Orlando Varela, commander of Company C, 4-3 BSTB, said his company “provided a robust mission command network, strategic and tactical, to Task Force Vanguard and its subordinate commanders.” “We are what gives this brigade their voice,” added the Charleston, S.C., native.

“The Soldiers of Task Force Sentinel demonstrated on a daily basis that they are disciplined, competent, and confident Soldiers who operate as a team of teams to support and enable the BCT's operations,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Matthew D. McCollum, a native of Columbia, S.C., and commander of the 4-3 BSTB. “They are the living embodiment of our battalion's motto, ‘one team, one fight!’”



4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion

Sentinel Battalion completes mission in Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Capt. Penny Volino

4-3 BSTB, 4th IBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Unit Public Affairs Representative

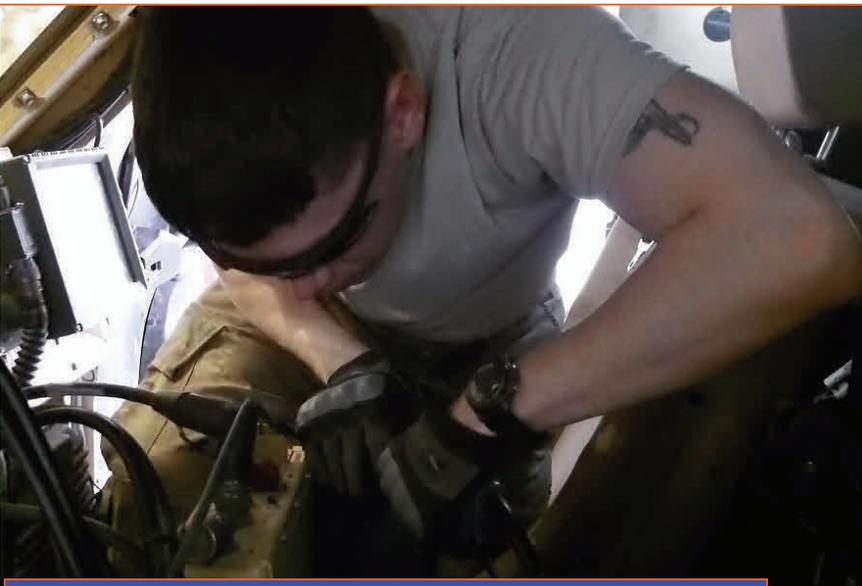
“One Team, One Fight”



U.S. Army Soldiers with 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and Afghan National Army Soldiers with 4th Infantry Brigade, 203rd Corps, take for a photo on Camp Maiwand, Afghanistan in April 2013 before going on a joint patrol to disrupt enemy activity and counter indirect fire. The patrols help increase security for both the military and civilians on Forward Operating Base Shank and Camp Maiwand.



U.S. Army Lt. Col. Matthew McCollum, a Columbia, S.C. native, and commander of the 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, presents Sgt. Scott Hanshew, a supply sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4-3 BSTB, and native of Hettinger, N.D., an end of tour award, Oct. 16, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank. The Soldiers of 4-3 BSTB, or Task Force Sentinel, successfully completed a nine-month deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and prepare to return to Fort Stewart, Ga.



U.S. Army Sgt. Mario Gordillo, a senior transmission system operator-maintainer with Company C, 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and native of Laredo, Texas, installs vehicle radio mounts at Sultan Kheyl, Afghanistan in August 2013. During their nine-month deployment, the signal Soldiers with 4-3 BSTB provided direct support to the 4th IBCT, or Task Force Vanguard, throughout two forward operating bases and eight combat outposts; they also provided radio training to the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps, enhancing the Afghan security forces' ability to communicate as they take responsibility and lead operations.



703rd Brigade Support Battalion "Maintain"

703rd Brigade Support Battalion ends successful deployment

By U.S. Army Sgt. Sarah Bailey

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

The 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, gathered for an end of tour awards ceremony, Oct. 24, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, marking the end of a successful nine-month deployment of conducting sustainment operations in Logar and Wardak provinces.

As a support battalion, 703rd BSB, or Task Force Maintain, is comprised of diverse companies that have unique missions, which began March 8, 2013, to support the 4th IBCT, or Task Force Vanguard, while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In order to successfully execute their mission, the Maintain leaders were well prepared for the potential demands and challenges before arriving in theater. "As a commander of a support battalion, neither myself nor my company commanders have the option to focus on one piece of the fight," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Nathan Swartz, the 703rd BSB commander. "We knew in order to be successful ... we need to be adaptable and agile when adjusting to challenges, as well as execute all operations with a sense of speed in order to stay ahead of the ever-changing demands this deployment brought us," said the Tullahoma, Tenn., native.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 703rd BSB, is the heart of sustainment operations. The Soldiers with the Sustainment Operations Center of HHC are the fighting force that ensures units receive food, fuel, ammunition, and medical support in order to successfully complete their missions. Sustainment Specialty Teams were created to travel to the outlying posts within the area of operation to gain an on-the-ground assessment and troubleshoot potential problems before they impacted the unit.

These Soldiers worked around the clock to make sure all sustainment needs were met and were able to adapt to changes quickly in order to meet the needs of the brigade.

Soldiers with Company A were on the ground taking care of the personnel on Forward Operating Base Shank. From distributing water on the base, to conducting tactical convoy operations through Logar, Wardak, and Parwan provinces, the Soldiers always performed their tasks with the utmost professionalism. Two platoons completed 65 tactical convoys, responsible for moving 1,052 twenty-foot containers of materials.

The company traveled more than 70,000 miles; escorted more than 765 host nation trucks; and were responsible for the retrograde of more than 1,100 twenty-foot containers in support of Task Force Vanguard.

U.S. Army Capt. Alan Sawyer, commander of Co. A, and a native of Columbus, Ga., has been in command for 18 months and could not be more proud of his company. "Ten years from now, the Soldiers of this company will be able to look back on this deployment and proudly

know that our company spearheaded sustainment and retrograde operations in the TF Vanguard AO (area of operation) and beyond," he said. "We will be proud of our flexibility and adaptability as a unit in order to successfully complete our mission above and beyond the standard."

Company B, conducted maintenance services on 4,461 pieces of rolling stock and equipment for the unit's that operated in the Vanguard area of responsibility. The Soldiers supported 79 different unit's and completed 2,803 work orders during the deployment and were also active in advising and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces by providing maintenance training on weapons, vehicles, and equipment. Co. B also completed a major project of building a new motor pool and moving their operations to support the downsizing of FOB Shank.

This diverse company was always willing to take on a new challenge in order to support the battalion and the brigade.

"We never said no," said U.S. Army Capt. Christopher Barchet, of Clifton, Va., and the Co. B commander. "There were more than just a few significant challenges along the way and we found the best approach was to face the challenges head on."

The medical company, Co. C, provided medical care for all the Soldiers in the brigade. The medical professionals of Co. C saw patients on a daily basis and conducted incoming and outgoing medical evacuations of Soldiers in need of emergency treatment. They worked around the clock to provide wounded, injured, and sick Soldiers the best care possible. Working along with a forward surgical team, they helped save many lives.

The Maintain Battalion also created standards and procedures for reduction and retrograde operations in theater. With the construction of the Joint Reduction Yard on FOB Shank, the Maintain Battalion created a one-stop shop where materials can be sorted, returned to the supply chain for consumption or demilitarized and removed from theater. This was a huge undertaking and the success is credited to the joint effort from U.S. Army, Navy, and Department of the Army Civilian personnel. The processes and procedures implemented by the maintenance battalion will help set the standards and guidelines for reduction operations theater-wide as Coalition Forces prepare to leave Afghanistan.

"The Soldiers in this battalion never backed down from their mission and pushed hard until the end," said Swartz. "I could not have asked for a better group of Leaders and Soldiers, and I hope they will look back on their accomplishments with a sense of pride for years to come."



703rd Brigade Support Battalion "Maintain"

703rd Brigade Support Battalion ends successful deployment

By U.S. Army Sgt. Sarah Bailey

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



U.S. Army Soldiers with Company A, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, sling load a container to a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, Oct. 15, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. Soldiers with Co. A have conducted many sling load operations to support combat ground units and logistic operations during their nine-month deployment in eastern Afghanistan.



U.S. Army Sgt. Jessica Hornes, a native of Apopka, Fla., and a combat medic with 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, observes an Afghan National Army medic with the 4th Brigade, 203rd Corps, during medical skills training, June 23, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. The medical training enables ANA soldiers to increase their ability to treat and save lives.



U.S. Army Soldiers with 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, or Task Force Maintain, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, form up before their end of tour awards ceremony, Oct. 24, 2013, on Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. The 'Maintainers' completed a successful nine-month tour, conducting maintenance, logistic, retrograde, transportation and medical operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in eastern Afghanistan.

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

A TRIBUTE TO FALLEN VANGUARD HEROES

SGT. 1ST CLASS FORREST W. ROBERTSON, 35, OF WESTMORELAND, KAN., DIED NOV. 3, IN PUL-E-ALAM, AFGHANISTAN, OF WOUNDS SUSTAINED WHEN ENEMY FORCES ATTACKED HIS UNIT WITH SMALL ARMS FIRE. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE 6TH SQUADRON, 8TH CAVALRY REGIMENT, 4TH BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.



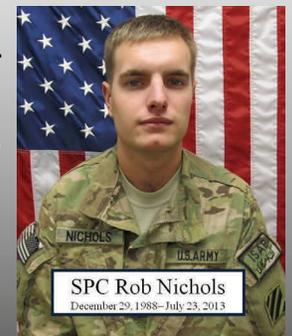
SPC. JAMES T. WICKLIFF, 22, OF EDMOND, OKLA., DIED SEPT. 20 AT BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, OF INJURIES SUSTAINED WHEN AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE DETONATED NEAR HIS DISMOUNTED PATROL DURING COMBAT OPERATIONS IN PUL-E-ALAM, AFGHANISTAN ON AUG. 12. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO 6TH SQUADRON, 8TH CAVALRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, FORT STEWART, GA.

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.

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

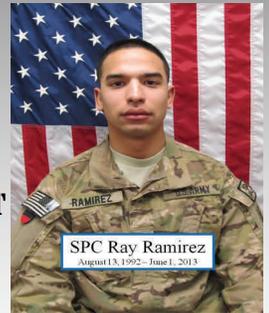
A TRIBUTE TO FALLEN VANGUARD HEROES



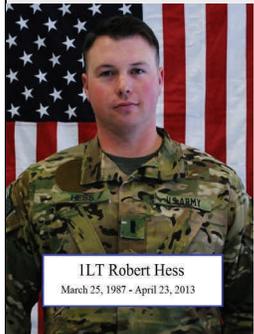
1LT Jonam Russell
January 5, 1988 - July 23, 2013

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.

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



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

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.



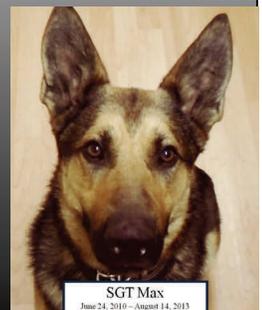
CPT Aaron Blanchard
April 2, 1981 - April 23, 2013



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

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 nine time zones with very little sleep. I have also had very little downtime or time off in nine 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.

“Ready or Not, Here We Come!” Part II

(Continued on the next page)



“The God Squad”

SSG Andre Gambrell

TF Vanguard Brigade Chaplain's Assistant

Chaplain (MAJ) David Trogdon

TF Vanguard Brigade Chaplain

“Ready or Not, Here We Come!” Part II

I need to talk but I may not want to talk to you. Combat stress is totally normal and the best way for me to get rid of it is to talk it out. If I don't talk it out then the stress may come out in negative ways such as, sleeplessness, nightmares, anger, or alcohol abuse. I may not feel comfortable talking to you because I may not want you to worry, think I am crazy or I may feel you won't understand. Encourage me to talk to you, my buddies, friends, family members or to anyone I feel may understand or care. The best help for combat stress is not medication but conversation. I need to talk.

I may be a little testy. During my deployment to Afghanistan, I have lived with the reality of life and death every day. My world has been a FOB or small COP with its constant missions, rocket attacks and me just trying to survive. I may not have patience for the small stuff. My “stupid meter” likely maxed out months ago. I may get angry when others get bothered or upset over things that really don't matter. I may not care about some of the things you think I should because it is not life and death. Please be patient. I will be okay once I get used to being back in the real world.

I may have some trouble. While a certain level of combat stress is very normal, there may come times when my stress seems overwhelming to the point where I need help. If my stress is hurting me, my marriage, my family, my career or I seem to struggle just doing life, then please encourage me to get the help I need. Chaplains, who have complete confidentiality, are available 24 hours a day and most of them have deployed just like me or with me. Behavior Health counselors, Military Family Life Consultants (counselors), ACS, my Chain of Command and Military One Source programs are all resources which are readily available. If you feel there is any danger to me, yourself or anyone else, get help immediately!!!!

I am counting the days until I redeploy from this awful place and I am looking forward to being reunited with you more than you know. Be patient with me, don't think I am crazy, try to understand how I feel and give me some time. Most likely, I will be just fine. If not, then help me get the help I need. Until then, see you soon because, **“Ready or Not, Here I Come!”**

Chaplain (Major) David Trogdon
TF Vanguard Brigade Chaplain



Spc. Amanda Dwyer reads her vows to her husband, Sgt. Jonathan Dwyer both with 4-3 BSTB, Oct. 13, 2013, on FOB Shank. during their vow renewals with Chaplain (Capt.) Travis Hairston, their battalion chaplain.

Medical Minute

Breast Cancer 101

Breast cancer is the most common cancer and the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths in women. It is estimated that in 2013, there will be over 230,000 new cases of breast cancer and an estimated 40,000 people will die of this disease in the United States. Although both men and women can develop breast cancer, it is most common in middle age and older women. Some risk factors of breast cancer include increasing age, family history of breast cancer, having certain genetic predispositions, early age of menarche, later onset of menopause, and obesity.

Since the 1970s however, more women are surviving breast cancer secondary to the increase in awareness and improved screening techniques. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force is currently recommending screening mammograms every 2 years in women aged 50 to 74.

Breast cancer screening can be started at an earlier age especially if the woman has a strong family history of breast cancer; has a personal history of breast cancer; or had radiation to the chest for a previous malignancy. Some breast findings that should prompt a woman to seek medical help include breast lumps, nipple discharge, and changes in color and texture of the overlying skin.

The treatment for breast cancer depends on the stage of the cancer, the responsiveness of the cancer to estrogen, and the patient's overall health. The team of physicians that are involved in the care of the patient with breast cancer include the general surgeon, medical oncologist, and radiation oncologist.

MAJ Esther Tan

Brigade Surgeon, 4IBCT, 3ID

www.cancer.net

www.cancer.org

www5.komen.org

www.nationalbreastcancer.org

Breast mass discovered by patient or by screening mammogram

Further imaging to confirm breast mass (mammogram, ultrasound, breast MRI)

Biopsy to confirm diagnosis of cancer and staging of cancer

Tissue read by pathologist and assessed for responsiveness to estrogen

Surgery performed by General Surgeon (mastectomy or lumpectomy, sentinel lymph node dissection, axillary lymph node dissection if needed)

Medical oncologist assess candidacy for chemotherapy and/or anti-hormonal therapy. Participation in clinical trials is offered

Radiation oncologist assess for candidacy for radiation

Safety First

Open letter to Vanguard Soldiers:

We're Going Home! For the last nine months you've been cooped up, living in a tent with other Soldiers. You've been told when to eat and when to sleep. You've been given limited choices on what you can eat and drink. If you were lucky enough to drive a vehicle, it was a military vehicle, Gator, or beat up old pick-up truck with the steering wheel on the wrong side. Before you could drive, you had to wear the proper protective equipment, and you were inspected by an NCO or an officer. You were limited to 10 MPH on the FOB. There were speed bumps everywhere. It seemed like everywhere you turned there is an officer or NCO watching your every move. Your life has been under constant supervision.

In a few weeks, most of that will end! You will taste freedom for the first time in a long while. You will be able to drink alcohol (if you are 21). You will be able to drive your own car or ride a motorcycle. No one will be there constantly telling you what to do or looking over your shoulder. It will be just like heaven! Or so you think...

What you won't understand or don't want to understand is that the first few weeks back home are some of the most dangerous times for you and your buddies. You just survived IEDs, RPGs, small arms fire, rockets, and mortars. Some of you will think you are invincible. Some of you already think that now.

(Continued on next page)

PLAN FOR THE 3 Fs

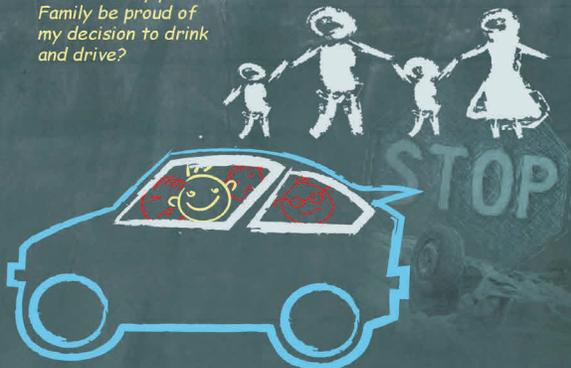
Family, Friends, Future

When you start planning your evening, keep your 3 Fs at the forefront of your mind. Ask yourself the tough questions.

• Would my parents and Family be proud of my decision to drink and drive?

• Will my Friends support me if I kill someone while driving intoxicated?

• Can my career and my Future in the Army recover from a DUI arrest?



Make a plan

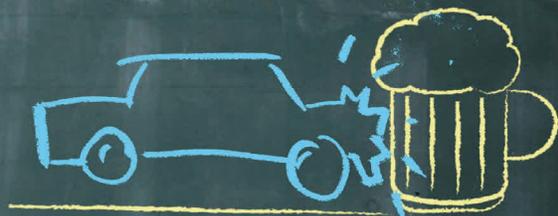
- Designate a driver
- Carry extra money for cab fare
- Carry the unit phone roster
- Find a reputable designated driver service to drive you and your car home
- Start a designated driver program in your unit

Find more information at: <https://safety.army.mil/povmotorcyclesafety/>

References:
www.drinkinganddriving.org/
www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/drinkinganddriving

ALCOHOL AND ACCIDENTS

WHEN F IS NOT A FAILING GRADE



HALF OF ALL OFF-DUTY ARMY VEHICLE FATALITIES ARE ATTRIBUTED TO INDISCIPLINE.

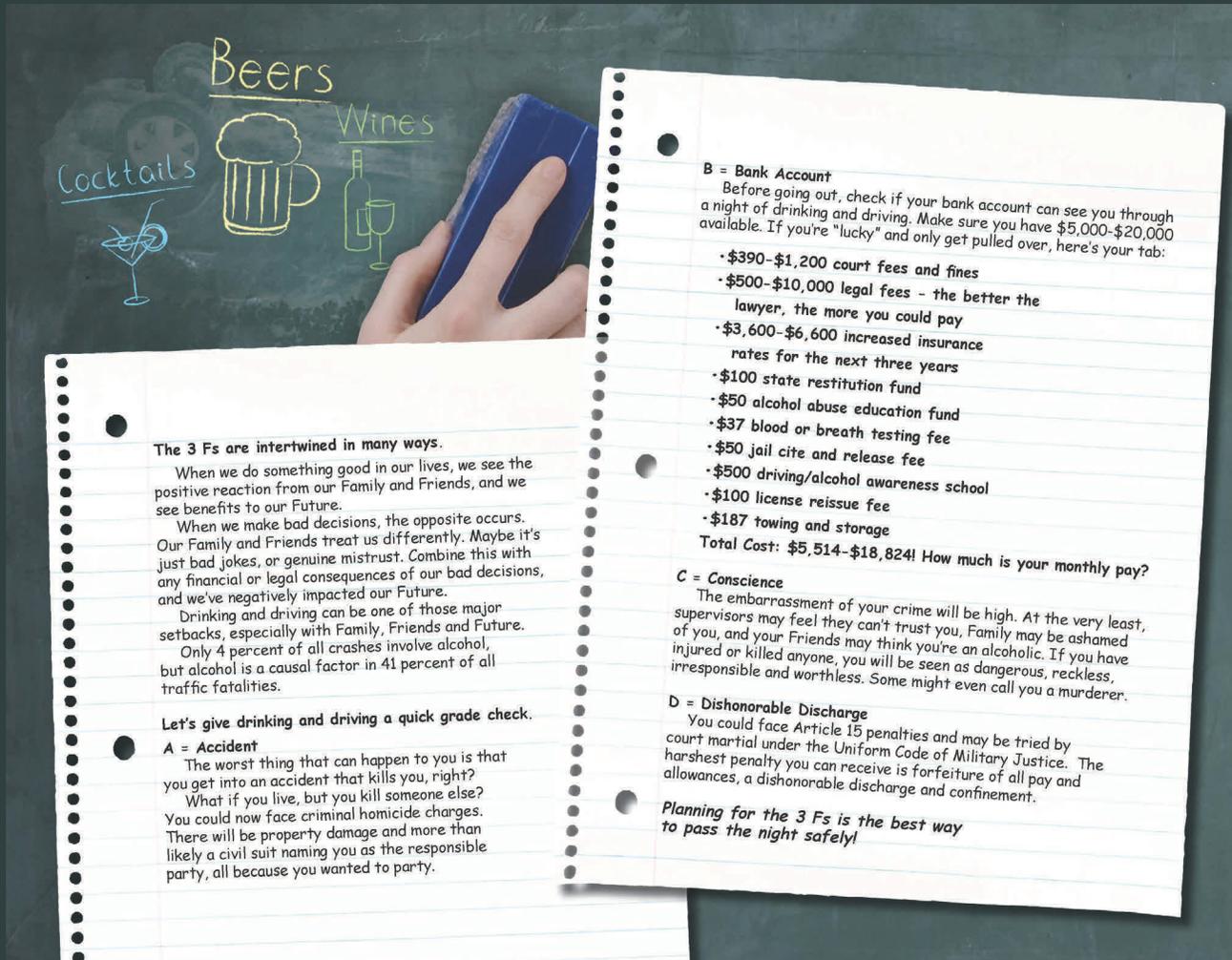
While driving or riding, you should never drink alcohol. This one act of indiscipline can be the difference between living and dying.

In school, getting an A was always great, and an F meant failure. Sometimes, however, if we prepare for the F, we can survive.

Three Fs you should always think about before drinking are Family, Friends and Future.



Safety First



The 3 Fs are intertwined in many ways.

When we do something good in our lives, we see the positive reaction from our Family and Friends, and we see benefits to our Future.

When we make bad decisions, the opposite occurs. Our Family and Friends treat us differently. Maybe it's just bad jokes, or genuine mistrust. Combine this with any financial or legal consequences of our bad decisions, and we've negatively impacted our Future.

Drinking and driving can be one of those major setbacks, especially with Family, Friends and Future.

Only 4 percent of all crashes involve alcohol, but alcohol is a causal factor in 41 percent of all traffic fatalities.

Let's give drinking and driving a quick grade check.

A = Accident

The worst thing that can happen to you is that you get into an accident that kills you, right?

What if you live, but you kill someone else? You could now face criminal homicide charges. There will be property damage and more than likely a civil suit naming you as the responsible party, all because you wanted to party.

B = Bank Account

Before going out, check if your bank account can see you through a night of drinking and driving. Make sure you have \$5,000-\$20,000 available. If you're "lucky" and only get pulled over, here's your tab:

- \$390-\$1,200 court fees and fines
- \$500-\$10,000 legal fees - the better the lawyer, the more you could pay
- \$3,600-\$6,600 increased insurance rates for the next three years
- \$100 state restitution fund
- \$50 alcohol abuse education fund
- \$37 blood or breath testing fee
- \$50 jail cite and release fee
- \$500 driving/alcohol awareness school
- \$100 license reissue fee
- \$187 towing and storage

Total Cost: \$5,514-\$18,824! How much is your monthly pay?

C = Conscience

The embarrassment of your crime will be high. At the very least, supervisors may feel they can't trust you, Family may be ashamed of you, and your Friends may think you're an alcoholic. If you have injured or killed anyone, you will be seen as dangerous, reckless, irresponsible and worthless. Some might even call you a murderer.

D = Dishonorable Discharge

You could face Article 15 penalties and may be tried by court martial under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The harshest penalty you can receive is forfeiture of all pay and allowances, a dishonorable discharge and confinement.

Planning for the 3 Fs is the best way to pass the night safely!

I won't bore you with the statistics; you've probably heard them a thousand times. I will tell you that most of you will have a little extra money to spend. You will want to buy that fast car, truck, or motorcycle you've been looking at for a while. Then you will just have to push that car or bike to the limit. You will probably go to the club, or a bar, and drink way too much alcohol in an attempt to make up for not having a drink in over nine months. If you don't get alcohol poisoning, you may think about getting behind the wheel of your new car or bike, drunk.. DON'T!

Your squad leader, platoon sergeant, or platoon leader won't be around to tell you or your buddies that what you are doing is stupid. You will be on your own and have to make

your own choices. You will also have to suffer the consequences of the choices you make on your own.

I'm not trying to scare you, just trying to get you to think. Go ahead and buy that fast car, truck, or motorcycle. Have a drink or two (if you are 21). Just don't get behind the wheel of that car afterwards. Let your hair down and have fun! Just don't overdo it. Take it easy. Have a solid plan. Have a solid back-up plan. Don't ruin your career, end your life, or end the life of someone else in the course of having fun.

CW4 Kelvin Miller

Brigade Safety Officer, 4IBCT, 3ID



Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database

What is it?

The Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID) is the Department of Defense's system of record for all reported incidents of sexual assault involving Armed Forces members.

What has the Army done?

In 2007, the U.S. Army's created the Sexual Assault Data Management System (SADMS) to collect information on reported sexual assault incidents involving Army service members. The Army has uploaded case data from SADMS into DSAID monthly since August 2012. As of Oct. 1, 2013, DSAID is now the Army's official system of record for reported sexual assault incidents involving Army service members. Designated Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) will now enter sexual assault case information directly into DSAID.

Why is this important to the Army?

DSAID is a simple but powerful tool that streamlines reporting and enhances sexual assault case management capabilities across the Department of Defense. DSAID allows users to generate reports and review case status. It provides SARCs an improved ability to provide comprehensive and standardized victim case management. Ongoing tracking of referral services allows SARCs to assess response efforts and better manage cases by accessing cases electronically, identifying cases for review and follow-up, and facilitating case management meetings. Additionally, DSAID allows SARCs to record victim requests to convert cases from restricted to unrestricted, and it generates Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Kit expiration notifications for restricted cases.

Also new for the Army's SHARP program:

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Oct. 16, 2013) -- In 2009, the Army's secretary directed the creation of 15 slots for "special victim prosecutors." Last summer, that number grew to 24. These Army lawyers enhance the prosecution of offenders with increased expertise, unique training, and specialization.

There are anywhere between 400 and 500 unit trial counselors across the Army. These are the lawyers at brigade level and above who prosecute offenders at courts-martial on behalf of their commanders. These Army lawyers are expected to prosecute any offense in their unit, including thefts, physical violence, malingering and even murder, said Lt. Col. Alexander N. Pickands, deputy, Trial Counsel Assistance Program.

Many of these lawyers, however, may be on their first stint as a prosecutor, Pickands said.

"Those trial counsel have anywhere between zero and 18 to 24 months being a prosecutor -- which isn't a great deal," he said.

The Army's special victim prosecutors, or SVPs, managed by the Trial Council Assistance Program, augment the sometimes limited expertise of unit trial counselors in prosecuting a more narrow range of crimes, including sexual assault, child abuse, child sexual exploitation, and serious domestic violence.

"They differ from the trial counsel in that all the SVPs are much more senior and experienced; they are nominated for the positions, and then they go through specialized training in addition to that," Pickands said.

The Army's cadre of SVPs don't serve particular installations or commands, as do unit trial counselors. Instead, they serve regions that may have multiple Army installations and commands.

Your Brigade SHARP Sexual Assault Response Coordinator is:

SFC Matthew D. Smith

<http://www.stewart.army.mil/sharp/default.asp>

Equal Opportunity

About Native American Heritage Month

Information courtesy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior

What started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the U.S., has resulted in a whole month being designated for that purpose. One of the very proponents of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, N.Y. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the "First Americans" and for three years they adopted such a day. In 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting in Lawrence, Kans., formally approved a plan concerning American Indian Day. It directed its president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, to call upon the country to observe such a day. Coolidge issued a proclamation on Sept. 28, 1915, which declared the second Saturday of each May as an American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as citizens.

The year before this proclamation was issued, Red Fox James, a Blackfoot Indian, rode horseback from state to state seeking approval for a day to honor Indians. On December 14, 1915, he presented the endorsements of 24 state governments at the White House. There is no record, however, of such a national day being proclaimed.

The first American Indian Day in a state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. Several states celebrate the fourth Friday in September. In Illinois, for example, legislators enacted such a day in 1919. Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day, but it continues to be a day we observe without any recognition as a national legal holiday.

In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations, under variants on the name (including "Native American Heritage Month" and "National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month") have been issued each year since 1994.

National Native American Heritage Month



<http://www.stewart.army.mil/eoa/default.asp>

**Your Brigade Equal Opportunity Advisor is
SFC James Ward**

VANGUARD VOICE

Vanguards with a mortar platoon of 3-7 IN BN Cottonbalers load a mortar to fire in support of Afghan forces during Operation Shaheen II, in the Tangi Valley, Afghanistan. Our Soldiers are committed to the prosperous future of Afghanistan.

The Task Force Vanguard Public Affairs Team

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