

THE ROUND-UP

Black Jack News and Information



Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan



BLACK JACK

Winter Edition

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Black Jack



Happy Holidays,

Over the last month you may have noticed a large number of the Black Jack formation returning to Fort Hood. Before Christmas we were able to send about 450 members of the Brigade home from Afghanistan. Being able to send people home early from deployment was a great opportunity made possible by years of hardwork by the Afghan forces and the Coalition forces in Afghanistan. We were happy to see some of our Troopers return home to their families, especially during this time of year.



have done a great job of providing security for the forces here and will remain until relieved by other elements. Stay in contact with your FRG and Task Force Pershing cadre so you are updated when your Soldier is coming home.

There are great changes coming to the brigade combat team in the future. Some have already started to occur. That includes the addition of 1-9 Cavalry who will convert to a combined arms battalion in the future. The 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion will also be undergoing a transfor-

mation as the Black Jack Brigade welcomes back the 8th Engineer Battalion, which will replace the 2BSTB.

It's a great time of year during all of the celebrations to show thanks for all the great blessings over the past year. So, those of you at home please take time to safely celebrate with your families and know the rest of the Black Jack team will be joining you at Fort Hood again soon. We will be celebrating the Holidays here in Afghanistan, and wish every Soldier and Family member in the brigade a Happy New Year.

Black Jack,

Bob Whittle

Col. Robert Whittle, Jr.



Black Jack



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Members of the 2nd "Spartan" Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, stand in formation during the Spartan's Change of Responsibility Ceremony on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Oct. 18, 2013. The ceremony honored U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Chepenik as he relinquished responsibility as the Spartan's senior enlisted advisor. Chepenik will retire next year after 30 years of active Army service. U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Roderick Jones from Flint, Mich. replaced Chepenik as the Spartan's command sergeant major.

'Spartan' CSM begins, ends career with same unit

Story and Photos by: Sgt. Quentin Johnson

2/1 CAV Public Affairs Office

Stepping down from your last position of responsibility before retiring is a proud moment for most, but for U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Chepenik it's more – monumental, nostalgic and bittersweet.

Chepenik relinquished responsibility as the senior enlisted advisor for the 2nd "Spartan" Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, at Bagram Air Field, Oct. 18, 2013, in preparation for his 30-year retirement next year.

U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Roderick Jones from Flint, Mich., replaces Chepenik as the Spartan's command sergeant major. Roderick's previous assignment was with the 249th Engineer Battalion, Fort Belvoir, Va.

Chepenik said he began his career almost 30 years ago, serving with 2nd BCT's, 8th Brigade Engineer Battalion, and will now retire from the same brigade. A change in life from a career he labels as a "journey and unforgettable experience".

"I acknowledge my time has come to an end. I began my journey in 1984 and the experiences I have had along the way will never leave me," added Chepenik.

He said his experiences led him to be a better person and leader; one he hopes has left a positive impact on those he met throughout his career.

"I have had the privilege of meeting individuals from around the world," added Chepenik. "I just hope I have impacted the lives of those Soldiers whom I have led throughout my tenure."

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Archie Herndon, Spartan commander, said Chepenik's impact on soldiers and friends throughout his career couldn't be overstated.

"Few have had the impact on soldiers that [Chepenik] has had, for as long as he has had it," said Herndon. "He did everything possible to care for our nation's treasure, our sons and daughters."

Herndon said Chepenik cared because he stayed true to the

philosophy – the Army is our family and we train and care for it first.

Chepenik said he was proud to have served and finish his career with such an amazing group of soldiers, and let each know he will not forget them.

"[Spartan soldiers] are an amazing group of soldiers and leaders that will forever be my family," said Chepenik. "Whether it's an e-mail, phone call or 'hello' in passing, the Spartan team will always be in my heart."

Herndon closed with a resolution of thanks and gratitude towards Chepenik, saying "Phil, thank you for everything you did for the Spartans, and your exceptional service. I look forward to our continued friendship, and a report on life after the Army; Godspeed brother."

U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Chepenik, then command sergeant major of 2nd "Spartan" Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, hands off an 1840 Cavalry Saber to Lt. Col. Archie Herndon, Spartan commander, signifying Chepenik's relinquishment of responsibility as the Spartan senior enlisted advisor during the Spartan's Change of Responsibility Ceremony on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Oct. 18, 2013. Chepenik will retire next year after 30 years of active Army service.



Black Jack



'Red Dragons' accept new area of operation

Story and Photos by: Sgt. Quentin Johnson

2/1 CAV Public Affairs

Soldiers with the 3rd "Red Dragon" Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, let their presence be known in a new town outside of Bagram Airfield, Oct. 13, 2013.

Red Dragon assumed responsibility for a new area of operation – the town of Qal'eh-ye Nasro – from the U.S. Air Force this month in order to continue assisting the Afghan National Security Forces with presence patrols and assisting with overall partnership security, said Lt. Col. Phil Brooks, Red Dragon commander.

The patrol was an opportunity to integrate with the population of a rather contested village and demonstrate goodwill to the people, added Brooks.

"We went in with good intentions, and discussed current and future events with the village elders," said Brooks.

The Afghan National Police Chief led as Brooks met with the Malik and village elder who were thankful for the visit, he said. They were welcoming and ready to discuss issues concerning each party.

"We (Brooks and village leaders) discussed the benefits Bagram Airfield provides for the townspeople, and overall security concerns in and around BAF," explained Brooks. "Overall, the discussion went well."

Although talks went well, Brooks cautioned that when entering a new area, especially one deemed dangerous, security and communication plays a large role in executing a successful patrol.

"The ANP leading us into the village [definitely] helped in our success as well as the training and experience coming from my Soldiers," said



Soldiers with 3rd "Red Dragon" Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, conduct a presence patrol in Qal'eh-ye Nasro, Afghanistan, Oct. 13, 2013. The town is a newly-appointed area of operations the Red Dragons will work throughout in order to build and solidify relationships with the local populace.

Brooks.

Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Turegano, a platoon sergeant for Red Dragon's Alpha Battery, said that the Red Dragon Soldiers' training and commitment to any mission helped lead them safely through a possibly hostile area.

"We expected the villagers to be reserved, and despite what incidents may have occurred; my men kept their composure," said Turegano, who hails from Oakland, Calif. "Regardless of any situation we are in, the Soldiers stay vigilant and ready to react, which is part of their training."

The overall atmosphere during the patrol and meeting was smooth, he added. This was a good transition for a first-time meeting, and will bode well for future interactions between the Red Dragons and locals while conducting presence patrols in the area.



Black Jack



'Black Jack' support platoon makes sling loading look easy

Story and Photo by: **Sgt. Quentin Johnson**

2/1 Cav Public Affairs Office



Pfc. Kolton Roofe, from Cortez, Colo., and an ammunitions specialist with Alpha Company, 15th "Gamblers" Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, connects a sling to the base of an Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter during a sling load operation on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Oct. 11, 2013. A. Co. has several sling load teams that rotate schedules to complete more than 25 sling operations a month.

In a late October evening, a small sling load crew braces themselves atop a cargo cage while an Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter hovers above them as they begin to connect the load.

The description above describes a scene from a sling load operation conducted at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Oct. 11, by members of Company A., 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

More than 20 Soldiers make up A. Co.'s supply platoon which is divided into three, 6-8 man teams labeled "sling teams". One of these teams is now tasked with supporting the American Consulate missions in Herat, said Sgt. 1st Class Alvin Porch, Co. A's supply platoon sergeant.

Supply platoon provides direct support for Black Jack, but supports other units through warehouse activities, ammunition supply point operations and base distribution; however their primary mission is sling load operations, said Porch.

"Our missions vary, but the majority involves sling load operations. We average around 25 loads a month at various times and locations," added Porch, who hails from Columbus, Ga.

Sling teams schedules are rotated due to time constraints and last-minute operational needs, ensuring all Soldiers are given proper downtime, he said. Downtime affords sling teams rest so they are always prepared for strenuous sling operations during any given circumstance.

"Sling loading may look easy, but it is very stressful," said Porch. "Hours of operation vary; last-minute tasks and other setbacks all have an effect on operation."

Porch defines setbacks as multiple variables hindering or possibly stopping operations to include: misplaced or incomplete paperwork (load inspection or hazardous material), weather, safety hazards (i.e. debris on landing zone, electrical shock, falls, moving parts), aircraft malfunctions, or improper sling harness configuration.

Unaffected by any setback, Porch said his teams are the best at what they do, all being fully trained and always prepared.

"They (supply platoon) are the best platoon in theater, keeping an average sling success rate around 96 percent," said Porch. "They are competent, quick to react, great at being flexible with last-minute tasks and well trained."

All Soldiers in the platoon are sling load qualified, having been through various training environments, with four of the Soldiers additionally certified to inspect and sign off on cargo loads, which vary from 400 – 700 pounds in mass, added Porch.

"Each Soldier is versatile enough to handle any position regardless if that position be hook-up man, grounding the helicopters or acting as safeties," exclaimed Porch.

Team success also comes from team cohesion, said Sgt. Jason Starkweather, an ammunitions specialist, team leader and certified sling load inspector with Co. A.

"We are a strong platoon, our communication is great and we help each other get through missions," said Starkweather from Trinity, N.C. "We maintain 100 percent accountability of our people and equipment, also mentoring a Soldier who may feel uncomfortable with their current ability during an operation."

Operations don't stop for this group as they were tasked two hours before the sling operation. The last-minute distribution mission was completed less than an hour after sling operations ended, proving once again, his team can handle anything, said Porch.



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Gambler medics volunteer to save lives

Story and Photos by: **Staff Sgt. Johnathan Hoover**

2/1 Cav Public Affairs Office



Capt. Steve Scuba from Washington, the brigade nurse with Charlie Company, 15th "Gamblers" Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, evaluates a simulated casualty for further injuries during "back wall" medic training in Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan, Sept. 14, 2013.

From time to time, everyone likes to have a little help and the flight medics of Task Force Fighting Eagles are getting just that.

Six soldiers from Charlie Company, 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team "Gamblers," 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, volunteered for training to become back wall medics to assist the flight medics during an air medical evacuation missions under TF Fighting Eagles.

For approximately two weeks, Soldiers will train alongside flight medics to prepare them for real world scenarios so they can proficiently perform duties treating our casualties.

"Casualties that could be U.S., Coalition Forces and/or Afghan National Army," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class James Crawwell, Headquarters Medical Platoon Sergeant, Charlie Company, 2nd General Support Battalion, 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, TF Fighting Eagles.

A back wall medic is a combat medic who has been assigned to a medical evacuation unit, said Staff Sgt. DJ Anderson of Rocklin, Calif., a back wall medic instructor for 2-1 GSAB. The back wall medics will go through additional training to assist them in aviation missions.

Anderson added, the back wall medic gets its name from the position of where they are in the aircraft.

The U.S. Army came up with this program to assist and provide better care for casualties, Anderson said.

It's a great opportunity to help a great crew of people to continue what they are doing here every day, said Capt. Steve Scuba, the brigade nurse assigned to the Gamblers, of Washington, D.C. "It's a really important and critical mission here in Regional Command-South."

"I already had a little bit of skill set having flown in Iraq with patient transports," said Scuba.

Spc. Marisol Landin, a combat medic assigned to the Gamblers, said

medics are always training in different techniques and medicine always changes so they are always going to be learning something new.

"This isn't exactly something that comes around more than once or twice in a lifetime, so I thought it would be a good idea to go ahead and try it," said Landin a native of Jacksonville, Texas.

Being a flight medic is a complete different world from being a ground medic, said Sgt. Krystal Arney, a back wall medic instructor with 2-1 GSAB, from Lakeside, Calif.

"You lose your sense of hearing, it's a confined working space and you have more equipment to use than you normally have on the ground. And there are different things you have to think about when trying to get the patient to the hospital," added Arney.

Arney said they are trying to get the ground medics used to working in an environment where they are unable to verbally communicate with each other. Most of the time, flight medics use hand signals.

For Scuba and his five crew members, this is really new to them even though he had flown patient transports in Iraq.

"The group is doing great," said Anderson. "We are doing trauma lanes today and I'm impressed with what I'm seeing."

"After seeing their skill level, we have some pretty competent people that know what they are doing," said Arney. "Some of the things we do are a little different than the ground units, so we are going to continue to train them a little more to the way we do things."

It's amazing training, added Scuba, and They try to make it as realistic as possible.

"The training was very well thought out and I feel like I'm a lot more prepared," said Landin. "It was really good to go over some of the stuff that we have been trained on before."

Landin added, it works as a refresher and preparation for what they will be doing in the future.

"Being a medic is what I wanted to do, it's something that I wouldn't give up and I don't regret anything that I have done thus far," said Landin.

Crawwell said of the ground medics, "they will be integrated into the unit and become part of the crew."

"They're a great group of people and we look forward to working with them," said Scuba.

Spc. Christina Garcia from Union, Mo., a combat medic with Charlie Company, 15th "Gamblers" Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, prepares a simulated casualty for intravenous fluids during back wall medic training on Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan, Sept. 14, 2013.





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KEEPING AMERICANS SAFE

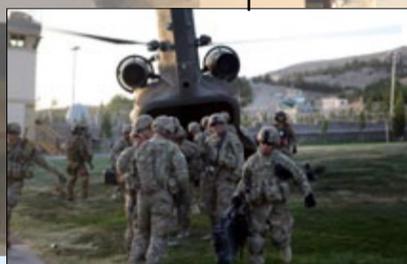
One unit's expedition to secure the American Consulate in Herat

A timeline of Delta "Maddogs" Company's, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, mission



Oct. 15, 2013:
The last of the "Maddogs" return to BAF safely

JULY - AUGUST 2013:
Training begins and procedures are set in place for any mission that may occur



Sept. 13 - Oct. 14 2013:
"Maddogs" set off to secure the consulate, Sept. 13. From arrival, Soldiers broke into action providing security, performing battle drills, conducting re-enlistments, assisting securing sites during visits to Afghan National Army rebuild sites and





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Medics with 4th "Dark Horse" Squadron, 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, provide first aid to a simulated casualty during a Black Jack contingency operations exercise at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Nov. 12, 2013.

'Black Jack' units sync, complete contingency exercise

Story and Photos by: Sgt. Quentin Johnson
2/1 Cav Public Affairs

Readiness response theater assistance teams from the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, conducted a contingency operations synchronization exercise at Bagram Airfield, Nov. 12, 2013.

The teams – Delta Company, 1st "Black Knights" Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, and Bravo Troop, 4th "Dark Horse" Squadron, 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment – utilized the exercise for preparation in response to contingency operations throughout Afghanistan.

"Rehearsals such as these help our Soldiers stay fresh on operations," said U.S. Army Capt. Anthony Leon, tactical commander for Dark Horse's portion of the exercise. "It reinforced notification procedures, security, communication and casualty care."

Upon arrival to the exercise scene, Dark Horse troops established communications and treated simulated casualties, Leon added. Keeping constant communications with higher echelons to prepare for a battle hand off with Delta Company.

The Black Knights' portion of the exercise was twofold – set up a security perimeter for a second known threat on the battlefield, while keeping civilians at bay, and assisting the explosive ordnance disposal unit assigned to Black Jack while they assess the new threat, said 1st Lt. Brodey Gibson, Delta Company's executive officer.

"In addition to maintaining security and performing inner cordon, Black Knights controlled the lanes with the EOD while they performed their tactical duties," added Gibson from San Antonio, Texas.

Gibson said his troops learned valuable, new skills and concepts during the exercise. While they had never trained on some of the tactics involved, the exercise helped the Black Knights response team discover areas they need to work in and become more proficient at.

Leon agreed, saying troops may have learning curves to break through with exercises such as this one. Making mistakes is good during training so those mistakes are not made during a real operation.

"The exercise helps Soldiers discover some of their bad habits so we can mitigate them," said Leon from Milwaukee, Wis.

Gibson is having his Soldiers continue to train on the new concepts learned during the exercise, and regarded the errors as a part of learning while commenting "There is always room for improvement".

Overall, Leon and Gibson both said the exercise went well and their Soldiers are better prepared for future contingency operations.

Soldiers with Delta Company, 1st "Black Knights" Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, set up a mortar tube for security operations training during a Black Jack contingency operations exercise at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Nov. 12, 2013.



Black Jack



'Black Jack' unit ministry teams host conference

Story and Photos by: Sgt. Quentin Johnson

2/1 Cav Public Affairs

As providers – meeting Soldiers' needs spiritually and emotionally – chaplains and their assistants can become weary, needing an opportunity to gather together, rest and recharge, said U.S. Army Chaplain (Maj.) Warren Haggray, brigade chaplain, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat team, 1st Cavalry division, Fort Hood, Texas.

Black Jack's chaplaincy did just that by conducting a Unit Ministry Team Conference at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Dec. 11 and 12, 2013, for all chaplains and assistants in the brigade, said Haggray.

Events of the conference included: dinner with U.S. Army Col. Robert Whittle Jr., Black Jack commander, an evening welcome session among the UMTs, morning session discussions and topical studies, a session with Chaplain (Col.) Matthew Goff, chaplain for International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, Afghanistan and III Corps, Fort Hood, chaplain, and teambuilding activities, he said.

Haggray said the conference not only helped UMTs relax but learn about future changes and the effects those changes will have on the chaplaincy and being prepared to support the families.

"We discussed many programs the chaplaincy offers, any changes to programs, re-integration and transition when we return home, but most importantly, the challenges we will be facing," added Haggray.

The challenges Haggray spoke of are support for Soldiers who may find it difficult to adjust to relationships and their environment upon redeploying.

He said sessions helped prepare the UMTs for the adjustment period upon return as well as improving themselves from lessons learned.

Spc. Johnnie Underwood, a native of Darien, Ga. and a chaplain's assistant with the 15th Brigade Support Battalion, Black Jack, agreed with Haggray, explaining how the conference provided an understanding for new issues arising in the chaplaincy, adjusting to new climates (social environments) when back home, new rules that may come into place in the chaplaincy and looking forward to the future.

Underwood said, he was thankful for the opportunity to relax and enjoy the company of other UMTs from the brigade.

"It was good to see everyone since (UMTs) are at various locations throughout Afghanistan. We have a pretty good group of Soldiers and stay in close contact with each other... we are a family," added Underwood.

As a "family" the UMTs partook in teambuilding events such as pingpong, billiards and foosball.

"The games were fun, we enjoyed each other's company and had some laughs," said Haggray.

Haggray said a future conference has not been planned but upon return stateside, monthly corps and brigade level UMT meetings will continue.



U.S. Army Spc. Johnnie Underwood (right) and Pfc. Frank Jackson (left), both chaplain's assistants with 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, play foosball as a form of teambuilding during Black Jack's Unit Ministry Team Conference at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Dec. 12, 2013.



U.S. Army Chaplain (Col.) Matthew Goff, chaplain for International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, Afghanistan and III Corps, Fort Hood, Texas, addresses chaplains and their assistants with 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, on current and upcoming changes to the chaplaincy during Black Jack's Unit Ministry Team Conference on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Dec. 12, 2013.



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National Guard celebrates 377 years of service, camaraderie and esprit de corps with physically challenging competition

Story and Photos by: Sgt. Quentin Johnson
2/1 Cav Public Affairs



A U.S. Army National Guardsman with the 850th Transportation Company, Clarksdale, Miss., performs a tire flip during the U.S. National Guard 5-kilometer race and Minuteman Challenge on Bagram Airfield, Dec. 14, 2013. The race and challenge concluded a three-day National Guard 377th Birthday celebration hosted by the Ohio Army National Guard's 437th Military Police Battalion and National Guard Affairs – Afghanistan.



U.S. Army Maj. William Coryell, operations officer, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, performs sit-ups during the U.S. National Guard 5-kilometer race and Minuteman Challenge on Bagram Airfield, Dec. 14, 2013. Coryell was on team "Black Jack Command Group". The race and challenge concluded a three-day National Guard 377th Birthday celebration hosted by the Ohio Army National Guard's 437th Military Police Battalion and National Guard Affairs – Afghanistan.

Since Dec. 13, 1636, early American settlers who formed militias, some who became minutemen – a highly mobile, elite force of the military, would come together as volunteers to form the U.S. National Guard, protecting their land and homes.

Once again Guardsmen came together with teamwork and esprit de corps during the U.S. National Guard 5-kilometer race and Minuteman Challenge on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Dec. 14, 2013.

It concluded the Guard's three-day, 377th birthday celebration, which consisted of a leadership dinner, a breakfast with Soldiers and Airmen, a cake cutting, a reenlistment ceremony, a race and the Minuteman Challenge, said U.S. Army Maj. Eric Luca, from Cleveland and an information officer for the 437th Military Police Battalion, Ohio Army National Guard. The U.S. National Guard Affairs – Afghanistan hosted the event and the 437th MP Bn. sponsored it.

The five-man team challenge was open to all U.S. servicemembers and civilians on BAF, said U.S. Guardsman Master Sgt. Edward LeDoux, senior career counselor/enlisted advisor for National Guard Affairs – Afghanistan. It consisted of six team events including: a 5-kilometer race, situps, pullups, ammo can squats, tires flips and burpees – a leg and chest endurance exercise.

Twenty teams competed, scoring points for final placing in the race and complete team repetitions at each of the five other events, added Luca.

Teams, some mixed with different servicemembers from different units, relied on each other for support and energy to complete each challenge, which was the basis for the challenge itself, said LeDoux.

"It was more than celebrating the Guard's birthday, but a chance to give back to the BAF community," said Luca.

"(The Guard) opened the challenge to everyone. We are one team with one fight," explained LeDoux. "It's an opportunity to bring together servicemembers who are spread across the U.S. to celebrate with healthy competition, building esprit de corps and teamwork while having fun."

For the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, it did just that, as three teams from the brigade were represented at the challenge, bringing their competitive spirits with them, said Lt. Col. Mark Huhtanen, Black Jack deputy commander.

"It was fun and challenging, with the different events playing to different peoples strengths," added Huhtanen.

Huhtanen remarked on what he felt was the most important part of the challenge – remembering military heritage.

"It was great to celebrate the National Guard's birthday, after all Guard is an important part of our heritage," said Huhtanen. "The challenge brought servicemembers together, which brought out the Warrior Ethos and Army Values."

LeDoux said he was pleased overall with the challenge that took almost 40 U.S. servicemembers and months of planning to incorporate it on BAF. His hopes are high another challenge will take place in the states for next year's birthday celebration of the Guard.

A special thanks to the five committees that contributed to the overall setup of the challenge: National Guard Affairs - Afghanistan, 210th MP Co. from N.C., 198th Signal Group from Del., 437th MP Bn., 181st Field Artillery Bn. from Tenn. and the National Guard Military History Detachment, said LeDoux.

Winner of the challenge was team "Sappers In", five members from the 130th Engineer Brigade, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, with a score of more than 1500 points.



U.S. Army Spc. Christopher Bishop, a cavalry scout with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, performs ammo can squats during the U.S. National Guard 5-kilometer race and Minuteman Challenge on Bagram Airfield, Dec. 14, 2013. Bishop was on team "Black Jack Enlisted". The race and challenge concluded a three-day National Guard 377th Birthday celebration hosted by the Ohio Army National Guard's 437th Military Police Battalion and National Guard Affairs – Afghanistan.



U.S. Army Lt. Col. Mark Huhtanen, deputy commanding officer, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, performs a pullup during the U.S. National Guard 5-kilometer race and Minuteman Challenge on Bagram Airfield, Dec. 14, 2013. Huhtanen was on team "Black Jack Command Group". The race and challenge concluded a three-day National Guard 377th Birthday celebration hosted by the Ohio Army National Guard's 437th Military Police Battalion and National Guard Affairs – Afghanistan.



Black Jack



Czech army trains nonlethal



Soldiers of the Czech Republic Army practice firing the Fabrique Nacional 303 during non-lethal weapons training Dec. 14, 2013, at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The training was provided by members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

Story and Photos by: Staff Sgt. Johnathan Hoover
2/1 Cav Public Affairs

The U.S. Army is re-emphasizing the use of nonlethal weapons and the other countries are taking notice.

The Czech Republic army took part in training on the implementation and proper use of nonlethal weapons, provided by members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, for the first time Dec. 14, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

It is useful to take part in this training, said Czech Republic army 1st Lt. Marek Krajcik, liaison officer for the Czech Republic army. Unfortunately, we have never had this type of training, he said.

"This is our first training mission with an international security force," said Miles Sonn, a law enforcement professional contracted to 2nd BCT. "This is the first time they are using this weapon system."

Sonn, of Brooklyn, N.Y., added that even though this was the first time the Czech army has used this weapon system, they are very positive, professional and believe in the weapon.

Their leader believes this training is very beneficial for them to have as additional option other than lethal alternatives, said Sonn.

"From my point of view, it's the best solution to solve the crucial issue of how to handle crowds and things of that nature," Krajcik said.

"They were trained on the Fabrique Nacional 303 com-

pressed air launcher," said Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Stephens, a native of Nitro, W.Va. This weapon provides the capability to save lives and get people to comply, making it safer for everyone.

"They [Czech army] caught on quickly, learned the weapon system and are accurate with their shots," said Stephens.

Stephens, the brigade provost marshal officer for 2nd BCT, expressed, even though they are classed as nonlethal, the weapon still has the capability to be lethal if used incorrectly.

"Proper training on the minimum-safe distance for engagement will significantly reduce the risk of fatality when employing the weapon," said Stephens. "Training on how and when to utilize the weapon will give the commander another tool to use."

"We are going the extra mile to train soldiers to ensure that we do not cause any collateral damage," Sonn said.

Sonn added, "I think this is going to have a great effect and minimize casualties."

"This training is important to soldiers so they are capable of engaging the enemy and minimizing fatal effects," said Stephens. "When used effectively by a well-trained and disciplined unit, it can be a combat multiplier."

Sonn said the soldiers are professional enough and mature enough to understand the difference when a situation may arise in crowd control of how to implement the weapon.

Krajcik said they are planning on using the nonlethal weapons in future operations.

Stephens and Sonn said they have received other requests from various units to train them on nonlethal weapons.



Miles Sonn of Brooklyn, N.Y., law enforcement specialist contractor for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, watches as a Soldier from the Czech Republic Army operates the Fabrique Nacional 303 during non-lethal weapons training Dec. 14, 2013, at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The FN 303 is a non-lethal weapon system.



Black Jack



'Black Jack' basketball buzzer beater wins championship

Story and Photos by: Staff Sgt. Johnathan Hoover
2/1 Cav Public Affairs

Members of Team Mamba were crowned champions of a basketball tournament held at the Clamshell Gym on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Oct. 25, 2013. During a grueling doubleheader, they defeated team Red Dragons 36-33 in overtime and team Get Money 43-36 at the end of regulation in the championship.

In the first game against the Red Dragons, Mamba got off to a good start and led by 12 points to end the first half.

In the second half of play, Team Mamba was plagued by turnovers, allowing the Red Dragons to claw back into the game with a score of 31-31 at the end of regulation play, sending the game into overtime.

"We turned the ball over because we got reckless," said Spc. Ricardo Berry, coach of team Mamba from Washington, D.C. "They went to a full-court pressure defense and switched to a half-court trap which caused us some problems."

"It happened quite a bit during the tournament, we would get a large lead and the other team would quickly chip away at it," added Sgt. 1st Class Rodolfo Llamas, shooting guard and intelligence noncommissioned officer-in-charge, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

Llamas, from Yuma, Ariz., said, "Our team stopped doing what got us the lead and the other team never let up. They wanted to beat us."

"I can't say enough of about what the team did as a whole. They did a great job keeping us in the game and getting us to overtime," said Berry, assigned to HHC, 2nd BCT.

In the overtime session, the Red Dragons took a quick lead and led by one point with 23 seconds remaining.

There wasn't a set play for what was going to happen, said Llamas.

"I was actually trying to get a two-pointer but they left him (Heinonen) open. I passed him the ball and it was quite a moment," said Llamas.

Capt. Erich Heinonen received the pass and would connect on a 3-pointer from the top of the key with three seconds left in overtime to put Mamba up by one.

"I knew there wasn't a lot of time left on the clock," said Heinonen, a power forward and brigade administrative law attorney assigned to HHC, 2nd BCT. "I was confident in the shot, had a good look and I took it."

Berry, assigned to HHC, 2nd BCT, said of the shot, "it felt like everything was in slow motion when the ball left his hand until it went through the bottom of the net."

"That shot is considered as 'the shot heard across Bagram,'" said Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Felix from Long Island, N.Y. and the center for team Mamba. "It was a big shot that sent us to the championship game."

Team Red Dragon, who pushed Mamba to the limit, were also comprised of Soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd BCT, and the United States Air Forces' 455th Air Expeditionary Wing.

Team Mamba advanced to the championship game to play team Get Money, 30- minutes later.

Mamba led by 13 points early in the second half of play and looked to cruise to an easy victory before turnovers again cost Mamba, allowing Get Money to cash in on some easy buckets and cutting the lead to three points with less than three minutes remaining.

"I called a timeout and let the guys know that we can win this game. We had to continue to play the way we were playing when we built the lead," said Berry.

Heinonen added, "Coach would give us some instruction but we all

knew what we needed to do to win."

"We rose to the challenge and played like we were supposed to," said Felix.

Get Money had no choice but to foul as time was running out, putting Mamba on the free throw line for most of the remaining time.

"I think that's what separated us from the other teams. We didn't have the most athletic, fastest or biggest team, but we would hit free throws, especially at the end of the game," said Llamas.

Berry said of the team, they came together throughout the tournament, improving each game and he couldn't be prouder of them.

"We won and put 1st Cav. on the map, said Felix, assigned to HHC, 2nd BCT.

"It was an honor to play with these guys, especially overseas. Doing something outside of Soldiering to get our minds off being away," said Llamas.

Felix said, "I appreciate all the support that we received from our co-workers. It was a great experience."



Army Pfc. Maurice Gaddy from Fayetteville, N.C., and a cavalry scout assigned to 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, attempts a turnaround jumper against team Get Money during the championship game held at the Clamshell Gym on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Oct. 25, 2013.



Black Jack



The Chaplain's Corner

OUR HATS ARE OFF TO OUR SPOUSES, CHILDREN AND LOVED ONES

While we've been away from Fort Hood, Texas for some time now; we all think of our families and loved ones on a daily basis. As Soldiers, we are extremely proud of the roles we are called upon to perform in providing for and sustaining freedoms in our nation and abroad. Many people around the world have been blessed by the generosity and kindness of Americans.

The responsibility of Soldiering and serving while honorable; does not come without sacrifice. One of the toughest sacrifices many of our Soldiers face is that of being separated from family and loved ones. As the Brigade Chaplain, one of the things I enjoy most often is taking advantage of the opportunity to ask our Soldiers about what's going on with their families and loved one at home.

When I ask about the family, most often the report is preceded by a grim or a huge smile then I receive the good news. Just recently I talked to one of your Soldiers who experience the birth of their first child. As he told me about the size of the child and how she had grown so much in a short period of time, he simply could not stop smiling.

Approximately a month ago, on another occasion, I had a conversation with one of our female Soldiers who mentioned that her husband was her hero. She mentioned that he get the kids up, feeds

them and then gets them off to school on time each morning. She further bragged that he was holding down a job while taking care of multiple kids. She stated, "He even makes sure the kids receive gifts with her name on them on a regular basis."

While families around the world face challenges, it is so very refreshing to talk with Soldiers who speak so proudly of their spouses who are holding down the forts at home.

Just a few days ago, I had a conversation with one of our officers who expressed how happy he was to have the support of a loving and dedicated spouse at home. He mentioned that even though they have four children, she takes care of them on a daily basis with no complaints. He mentioned that he could not do what she does on a daily basis.

There are many heroes here in Afghanistan and we are rightfully proud of them. In a very different way however, there are many heroes back home who support the work we do here daily.

Military spouses are a special breed of people who willingly accept the responsibilities of running the home and overseeing all of the myriad of tasks that need to be done over the course of our deployment.

Our hats are off to you military spouses, children and loved ones for all you do to support our nation by supporting us.

OUR HATS ARE OFF TO YOU!

Chaplain (Maj.) Warren Haggray

Warren Haggray



Black Jack



WINTER Safety

Written By: Art Powell
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

Narrative:

Our Army conducts operations worldwide and because of that, there is a need to be aware of climate issues, both hot and cold, which affect Soldiers.

In cold weather locations, approximately 130 cases of frostbite per year have been reported in our Army for each of the past five years.

Frostbite accounts for the largest number of cold weather related injuries to Soldiers each year.

Frostbite isn't the only cold weather threat, wind chill has been described as 'One of the gravest dangers of winter weather' according to the National Weather Service.

Mission effectiveness could be impacted by not understanding how to manage weather related issues.

Key Messages:

- Incidents of frostbite involving Soldiers have remained steady for the past five years at approximately 130 cases per year, according to information from the Thermal and Mountain Medicine Division, U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, Natick, Mass.
- Frostbite accounts for the largest number of cold injuries to Soldiers each year, five times higher than trench foot, according to 'Prevention and Management of Cold Weather Related Injuries,' Technical Bulletin Medical 508, April 2005.
- Soldiers need to be aware that man-made wind caused by riding in open vehicles or exposure to propeller/rotary-generated wind increases the risk of frostbite.
- Wet skin increases the risk of frostbite to Soldiers, Families and Civilians.
- Wind chill can be a threat even during periods of low wind velocity

Talking points:

Soldiers should understand the acronym C-O-L-D. C: Keep it clean; O: Avoid overheating; L: Wear clothing loose and in layers; D: Keep clothing dry.

The frostbite incidence rate is higher for African-Americans and young, enlisted Soldiers.

Tools for avoiding frostbite involve simple yet effective countermeasures. It requires leaders follow a systematic risk assessment before conducting cold weather operations to identify potential hazards and plan accordingly.

Soldiers and leaders must understand the proper use of clothing to avoid cold related injury.

Other tools to reduce cold related injuries involve proper diet, importance of hydration and avoiding prolonged exposure to cold without opportunities to warm.

Tips:

Understand how cold weather related issues can impact mission readiness or effectiveness.

Soldiers and leaders need to understand how to operate in cold weather and take the necessary steps to reduce cold weather related injuries.

Battle buddies must monitor each other for symptoms of cold related issues such as frostbite and wind chill.



Black Jack



Black Jack



Holiday Shout-outs



"I wish my family-Kathleen, Avery, Austin, all the Black Jack Soldiers, and family members a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays," - Col. Whittle, HHC BDE



"I want to say Happy Holidays to my battle buddies, the Soldiers and families back at Fort Hood. I will see you soon," - Spc. Woods, 3-82nd FA Regt.



"I want to say hello to all our family and friends! Happy Holidays to everyone," - Chaplain (Maj.) Haggray, HHC BDE



"I want to wish my family and friends a Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas," - Warrant Officer 1 Johnson, HHC BDE



"I want to say hi and I love you to my wife and daughters. Happy Holidays everyone," - Staff Sgt. Anderson, 3-82 FA Regt.



"I want to give a holiday shout-out to my wife and two boys, I love you and miss you. See you soon," - Spc. Robinson, 3-82 FA Regt.



"I wish my family - Diana, Michelle, and friends a Happy Holidays," - Staff Sgt. Adcox, HHC BDE



"I want to say hi to my husband, James, and father, Calvin, Happy Holidays," - Staff Sgt. Osborne, 3-82 FA Regt.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. **HOLIDAY**



"The greatness of a COMMUNITY is most accurately MEASURED BY the COMPASSIONATE ACTIONS of its members... a HEART of grace and a SOUL generated by LOVE." Coretta Scott King