



Ready First Combat Team
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division
Covers From 01- 31 March

Ready Press



Photo: Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment conducted gunnery tables during the month of March. Approximately 1500 Soldiers from the Ready Detachment participated in, or supported the exercises.

Photos by : U.S. Army Sgt. Kelsey L. Miller, 1st SBCT PAO

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Ready Press



To the Soldiers and Families of the READY FIRST Brigade



Dear Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team, Family and Friends,

We thank you all for your commitment to the Nation, your service and your sacrifice. We are privileged to lead the Ready First Combat Team. Whether serving in Afghanistan or maintaining readiness at Fort Bliss, we all have a mission to accomplish.

Starting in Afghanistan, we couldn't be more proud of the Soldiers serving across the entire country. From those serving as advisors to those enabling US Forces to accomplish their mission we all have an essential role. Everyone's experience is different within the Brigade. For many, the particular mission itself changes on a daily basis. What doesn't change is the commitment to accomplish what is asked of us, our commitment to each other and our eager anticipation of reunion with our loved ones later this year.

Our Ready Detachment continues to ensure readiness. Units continue to conduct individual through platoon level training. However, they have also focused on ensuring the equipment and individual readiness of Soldiers. The Ready Detachment's mission is to stay ready. We simply don't know when or where the Nation will call us to serve. Their efforts are most evident as the Unmanned Aerial Surveillance Platoon out of the Brigade Engineer Battalion begins their deployment.

We are extremely proud of the way the entire Brigade continues to accomplish all the Nation asks of us. Of course, none of this would be possible without the support of our loved ones. The support of our friends and family lays the foundation for success. The never ending encouragement and love from fellow Soldiers, family and friends sustains your Soldier and provides strength. This is true whether conducting training at Fort Bliss or out on a patrol in Afghanistan. At times, separation can be difficult and everyone copes differently. However, a Soldier is never alone. There is always a battle buddy willing to listen, carry or laugh when needed. If not enough, there are great resources available that the chain of command can help you get in contact with when needed.

We wish you all a wonderful spring and thank you again for your commitment to each other, and service to the Ready First Combat Team and the Nation.

READY FIRST!

IRON SOLDIERS!

CSM EUGENE RUSSELL

CSM, Ready First Combat Team

COL ERIC S. STRONG

Commander, Ready First Combat Team



4-17 IN

Ready First Combat Team

“Truth AND courage!”

And so it begins....

Yet again, history has found the Soldiers of the 17th Infantry Regiment, as the Buffalo Battalion is off to a tremendous start in Afghanistan. Soldiers in both Attack and Courage Companies spend their days patrolling with their partners from the Afghan Army, or securing advisors to the Afghan Army and Police. Baker Company leaders are part of the actual advising team, forging relationships and improving training in the Afghan Army, while two of Baker's platoons continue their service with the Spartan battalion. Hatchet Company continues to serve as both the brains and logistics coordinator for the battalion. We also have welcomed Soldiers to Task Force Buffalo from across the Ready First Brigade such as our engineer platoon from Cata-mounts, and our firing battery from Gunners. Across this diverse task force, every Soldier plays a crucial role in the achievement of mission success. Even with the demands that a deployment brings, the Buffalos of the Fourth Battalion, Seventeenth Infantry Regiment remain ready and highly motivated to complete the mission.

The mission to Train, Advise, and Assist the Afghan National Army and Police Force is well under way with the Buffalo Battalion leading from the front. “Truth and Courage!”

Article by 1LT Tyler A. Lightfoot

From the Home Front—

The new fiscal year has been a busy one for Soldiers and their families in the 4-17 Infantry Battalion, as most of the unit said goodbye to loved ones and stepped off for a nine month deployment to Afghanistan. Despite the absence of most of the battalion, those remaining at Fort Bliss, on rear-detachment, have been hard at work to maintain a level of individual Soldier readiness that meets the standard set by the brigade. Along with individual skills training for Soldiers on rear-detachment, 4-17 IN BN has put a heavy emphasis on the maintenance of its vehicles. Getting vehicles into the motor pool and serviced before the rest of the unit returns from Afghanistan is a tremendous priority for the battalion.

However, while maintenance may be at the forefront of priorities for 4-17 IN BN, it is not the only priority. Keeping Soldiers engaged in their trade has also been a main focus in the beginning of FY17. 4-17 IN Soldiers have received weapons qualification training on the M4 and M9; PMCS and vehicle recovery training; as well as training on how to handle media personnel on, and off of the battlefield. Furthermore, Soldiers in the battalion are continuing to train and maintain their physical readiness by performing PT each morning, and taking an APFT on a monthly basis.



Courage Company Soldiers re-enlist in aircraft they go to work in everyday as SPC Greer, SPC Carillo, SGT Ahlstrom, and SGT Norton "re-up" aboard a UH-60 Blackhawk flight.





6-1 CAV

Ready Press

Task Force Anvil hosted several visitors to Advisory Platform (AP) Lightning, to include the Afghan Minister of Defense and his NATO advisor, Major General Burleson. The purpose of the visit was for the Minister to meet with leaders of the 203rd Corps and some of its soldiers, as well as discuss operational and training objectives for the upcoming year. Members of 6-1 CAV and 1st CD division facilitated this visit. The AP also hosted a visit from Brigadier General Donahoe, one of Resolute Support's senior leaders. General Donahoe came with a group of NATO officers, who have been assisting in advising senior Afghan leadership on operations in the country. We will also soon host the Resolute Support Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Clark. He will be meeting with TF Anvil's senior NCOs to discuss operations and Soldier health and moral.

TF Anvil conducted a patching ceremony recently. This signifies that both units, 1st CD and 6-1 CAV, have been in country for around 30 days, although some have been here for longer. For almost three quarters of TF Anvil's members, this is their first deployment overseas. It was a great chance for the soldiers to take part in the rich tradition and history of the unit, as well as the Army.

The task force has also been honoring one soldier each week with the TF Anvil Hero of the week award. It's awarded to one Soldier who has gone above and beyond the requirements of their everyday duties. The most recent edition is SPC Justin Smoak, who earned the Army Achievement medal for his work in the Task Force operations center. Previously, TF Anvil has honored SPC Kasey Webster, PV2 Vanessa Kidder, PFC Trevor Lynch, SPC Okan Kittelson, SGT Sylvester Buckner, 1LT Santiago Pena, and 1LT Bethany Stapanowich with AAMs for their hard work on AP Lightning.

One event that is always special is the promotion of soldiers, and made even more special when promoting them in a combat zone/environment. It not only speaks to the individual's abilities, but to the trust that their leaders have placed in them. Comanche Troop, 6-1 CAV, recently promoted several of their members. SPCs Jacob Myszenski and Marco Dasilveira promoted to the rank of CPL, and SGT Carlos Lopez promoted to the rank of SSG. TF Anvil appreciates their hard work and dedication to the mission.

Article and Photos Provided by: 6-1 CAV





16 BEB

Ready First Combat Team

"Laissez les bons temps rouler!" or let the good times roll. Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 16th Engineer Battalion held its Mardi Gras themed FRG celebration. Mardi Gras, or "Fat Tuesday", was brought to America in 1699 by early French explorers. That original celebration was quite modest compared to the lavish version of Mardi Gras celebrated in New Orleans or Mobile. The FRG event was held in the Company COF and featured traditional music, multi-colored beads, colorful masks and, of course food. The highlight of any Mardi Gras celebration is the King Cake. The King Cake tradition is thought to have been brought to New Orleans from France in 1870. A King Cake is an oval-shaped delicacy, crossed between a coffee cake and a French pastry. It's decorated in royal colors of PURPLE which signifies "Justice," GREEN for "Faith," and GOLD for "Power." These colors were chosen to resemble a jeweled crown honoring the Wise Men who visited the Christ Child on Epiphany. In the past such things as coins, beans, pecans, or peas were also hidden inside the King Cake. It is also common for a tiny plastic baby to be placed inside the cake. At today's event, each person looks to see if their piece contains the "baby." If so, then that person is named "King" for a day and bound by custom to host the next party and provide the King Cake. On this day, the lucky winner was SPC Washington. HHC 16th BEB Mardi Gras celebration was a huge success. As they say in New Orleans, Soignez vous-autres! Or y'all take care!



Article and Photos by 16th EN BN UPAR SSG Porterfield, Eric





501 BSB

Ready Press

Providers Leading and Providing Logistics to Support Victory

Article and Photos by : *1LT Wilson Cheng, 501st BSB UPAR*

The Change of Command is one of the oldest and most honorable traditions in the United States Army. It represents the formal change from the outgoing commander to the incoming commander. In a change of command ceremony, the most senior officer passes the company guidon from one commander to the next symbolizing the change of authority and responsibilities.

We continue to honor and uphold the Army's tradition of changing and recognizing the outgoing commander's hard work and incoming commander's new vision.

On February 24, 2017, the Providers witnessed CPT Mark A. Moralez take command of Golf Forward Support Company (FSC), 501st Brigade Support Battalion. CPT Moralez and his company will be responsible for providing logistical support to 1st Battalion 36th Infantry Regiment.

The Company Commander is responsible for the overall readiness of the company; it is among the most humbling and honorable responsibilities bestowed upon an Army Officer.

CPT Elizabeth A. Culshaw, the outgoing commander, shared her experiences as a FSC Commander. She articulated how it was humbling to see how hard her Soldiers worked to support the success of the maneuver elements. CPT Culshaw explained that it is very important to have an exceptional relationship with your First Sergeant (1SG) and that it is crucial to verbally communicate and elaborate to create a shared understanding and ensure your intent is understood. Her advice for the future commander is to understand property accountability.

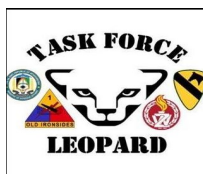
CPT Mark A. Moralez, the incoming commander, shared his experience so far as a FSC Commander. He elaborated that it is a great honor to lead Soldiers and accomplish the mission. His plan for the company is to implement an improved battle rhythm to support daily operations and accomplish his Battalion Commander's intent maintaining overall readiness. Finally, his advice for future commanders is to conduct a thorough change of command inventory, while assuring all shortages are consolidated daily and priced by the Unit Supply Sergeant to save time.



LTC James M. Gallagher, Commander of 501st Brigade Support Battalion, passed the guidon to CPT Mark A. Moralez during Golf Forward Support Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion Change of Command Ceremony. (Above)



CPT Ray Adresses received the company guidon to take command of Bravo Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion in August 1971.



TF Leopard

Ready First Combat Team

Hello friends and family of Task Force Leopard! Greetings from Jalalabad, where the professionals of TF Leopard are working tirelessly to train, advise and assist our Afghan National Police partners. Our team is a melting pot of military and civilian leaders from Fort Bliss, Fort Hood, Texas Army National Guard, and Law Enforcement Professionals and civilians from across the U.S. Our military talent is a stacked deck, with specialties representing the full spectrum of Army branches. Our team of Law Enforcement Professionals (LEPs) have almost 125 years of combined law enforcement experience in agencies such as the Sacramento PD, LAPD, FBI, and police departments in Missouri and Florida.

Our sustainment section employs an unmatched team of logistical, personnel, and financial management experts from Department of the Army and Dyncorp. Last, but not least, the TF Leopard lineup includes a team of Cultural Advisors, aka Linguists or Interpreters, who assist us in managing the language and cultural barriers between us and our 202nd Zone counterparts. We have a great team with great vision, and we're on the path to make a lasting difference in the 202nd Zone.



The home of TF Leopard is the quaint, but adequate, Operating Base Fenty. Our base is not a 5-star resort, but offers all the essentials and life support we need to sustain our operations, while providing a few accommodations - a tiny little PX, a decent dining facility, a few small gyms, a locally run bazaar, a USO facility, and a post office (hint, hint) - to give us a small community feel. We share our home with our security forces, Task Force Buffalo, our aviation task force, Task Force Gunfighter, and a few other military and contracting organizations. All in all, life on Fenty isn't too bad.

We've enjoyed run of good weather with 70s in the day, 50s at night, and lots of sun. However, with summer quickly approaching we're prepping for the hot, muggy "valley weather" of Jalalabad. The area is in full bloom this time of year, as Jalabad is one of Afghanistan's bread baskets that supplies much of the region's agricultural products.

Our primary mission advising the 202d Zone Headquarters of the Afghan National Police is also in full bloom. Charged with supervising and resourcing seven provinces, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Kunar, Kapisa, Laghman, Pajshayr and Parwan, the zone has a span of control over an area about the size of Maryland. If you're interested in seeing what they do, visit <https://www.facebook.com/202ZoneHQShamshad/> to see photos of the zone in action. We interact with our Afghan counterparts a few times a week and a number of us have built strong working relationships to promote progress. It's my honor to serve the great people of TF Leopard, and I send my deepest gratitude for the sacrifices you're making on the home front. LEOPARDS!





1-36 IN

Ready Press

Battalion Executive Officer– Maj Bithorn

Greetings from Afghanistan!! For those of you who have loved ones that departed the United States on our “Torch” flight, next week will mark just two just about two months on ground. Though the sun has started to peek out as of late, we were initially greeted by a weather pattern that would change hourly – consisting of snow, rain, fog, and occasionally a mix of all three. We have been fortunate as of late though, as we wake up met by beautiful snow-capped mountains, clear blue skies, and warming temperatures.

For those of you who I have not met, and to help provide some context, I serve as the Task Force Spartan Executive Officer and have primary oversight of the battalion staff and logistical requirements throughout the task force. The group of Soldiers, Officers, and Non-Commissioned Officers I predominantly work with are in Havoc Company, and spend the most of their time on Bagram Airfield running day-to-day operations and making sure the battalion continues to make progress as planned.

Life on the battalion staff can be thankless at times – days full of memorandums, power point slides, excel documents, and meetings upon meetings – however the men and women that constitute the Task Force Spartan staff are doing absolutely incredible work. Though we are a battalion staff and normally report to a brigade headquarters, our deployed mission structure directs that we report to a division staff. This means that your loved ones are directly coordinating with, briefing, and at times advising Sergeants Major, Lieutenant Colonels, Colonels, and a 2

-Star General. The division staff has stated repeatedly that they are incredibly impressed with the Spartan Staff and are thankful for their daily achievements. I am proud to serve alongside them and count myself lucky to do so.

Another interesting aspect to our mission is the opportunity to serve alongside



the variety of multi-national Soldiers that help to form Task Force Spartan. Daily, your Soldier is working alongside Soldiers from the country of Georgia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Bosnia, and of course, Afghanistan. Additionally, there is a large contingent of US Marines who serve as advisors that help to round out the Task Force. It is incredibly impressive to watch your Soldiers shatter language and cultural barriers daily to help accomplish the mission.

Though the majority of my time is spent with the battalion staff, I do coordinate closely with the company executive officers from Shield, Havoc, Able, Battle, Chosen, and Gryphon Company. As is further illustrated by the portions of this newsletter dedicated to those companies, the men and women staffing our outstations, conducting security operations, and providing

support to Afghan Army and Police are busy, but morale is high. The unique nature of this mission has Soldiers from Task Force Spartan spread out all over the country of Afghanistan performing a variety of missions. Like the battalion staff, our Soldiers across the companies have received praise from all echelons of headquarters for their discipline and dedication to the mission. They are the right men and women for the job, and are making real differences every day!

I want to extend a sincere thank you to each of you making a tremendous sacrifice on the Homefront by allowing your Soldier to serve forward in Afghanistan. I can speak for every leader here by saying that we are not only proud of your deployed Soldier, but also the amazing family members that help to form the Spartan Phalanx. Thank you for what you do!

DEEDS NOT WORDS!

MAJ James C. Bithorn

SPARTAN 5





2-3 FA

Ready First Combat Team

The transfer of responsibility for the 201st ANA Corps Military Advisor Team occurred between the command teams of 3rd Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment and the incoming 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Feb. 2. The ceremony represents the handoff of the mission to advise 201st Afghan National Army Corps from Lt. Col. Todd Hook and his Thunder Squadron to Lt. Col. John Sandor's Task Force Gunner. During the ceremony, the Thunder Squadron colors were cased, signifying the completion of their mission and their transition home. Sandor and Command Sgt. Maj. Willie Murphy then uncased the colors of the Gunner Battalion, assuming the responsibility of the advising mission under new leadership.

"It is with a heavy heart that we transition the responsibility of the Military Advising Team, as Task Force Thunder has truly gained close, personal relationships with our ANA counterparts," Hook said on Thursday. "However, working with Lt. Col. Sandor, Command Sgt. Maj. Murphy, and the rest of the Gunner team, we are happy that such great professionals get to experience what we have. Two teams came together, committed to mission, and worked to ensure a seamless transition."

The advising mission is a major focus in today's Afghanistan. Falling under the Train, Advise and Assist Command – East (TAAC-E), the 201st Corps MAT is focused on helping their Afghan counterparts find Afghan solutions to Afghan problems. Addressing the Task Force Gunner command team and staff, Brig. Gen. Paul T. Calvert, the TAAC-E Commander, referred to the advisors'

relationships with their 201st Corps counterparts as "pacing items," the assets that are critical to mission success.

While named for Sandor's command of 2-3 FA, Task Force Gunner advisory team also consists of soldiers from across the Ready First Brigade, as well as members from 1st Cavalry Division and Poland. "It is comprised of Soldiers, NCOs, Warrant Officers and Officers from 2-3 FA, Ready First SBCT, 1AD, 1 CAV DIV, Contractors and NATO partners all focused on the primary mission train, advise and assist the 201st ANA Corps," Sandor said. According to him, the diversity of the team will help their efforts. "As we cross the cultures, languages and posts in which we all came

from, we look forward to building a relationship that will enhance the ability of the 201st Corps and help them to be able to provide security and support across the country of Afghanistan."

Sandor is confident in his team and looks forward to moving ahead with the 201st Corps. He addressed the Corps' leadership on Thursday: "The team and I look forward to building lasting relationships and a strong bond between our staffs as we work together over the coming months."

The remainder of the Gunner Battalion continues to support the 1AD "Iron Steel" DIVARTY and the Ready Detachment at Fort Bliss, Texas.





Buffalo 6 delivers a motivational speech after Alpha Company's patching ceremony.



Soldiers here in Laghman Province participated in a Polish Soldier Memorial Run.



CSM Russell takes a picture with our Afghan counterparts during a TAA mission here.



1st SBCT Best Warrior Competition

Questions or comments? Email:

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Grab N Go Section opens at DFAC