

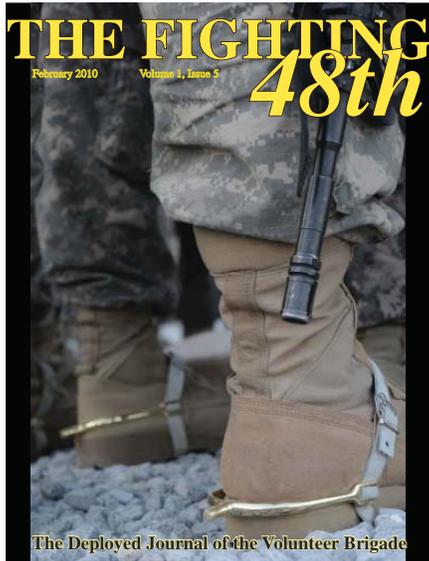
THE FIGHTING *48th*

February 2010

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The Deployed Journal of the Volunteer Brigade

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With the swagger of a cowboy, a 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment Troop wears his awarded spurs as part of the 'Roughriders' New Year's celebration event in Nangarhar. (Photo by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)

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THE FIGHTING 48th

"The Fighting 48th" is the command newsletter of 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. It is produced by the Public Affairs Office on behalf of the 48th IBCT commander and is intended to inform the members of the 48th IBCT of the activities of the brigade and the command messages of the leadership team.

48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Commander

Col. Lee K. Durham

Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael B. Hurndon

THE FIGHTING 48th STAFF

Public Affairs Officer

Capt. David Suttles

Deputy Public Affairs Officer/Editor

MCCS Donald Elliott

Public Affairs NCOIC/Assistant Editor

MCC Rodney Furry

Media Relations/JVB NCO

Staff Sgt. David Bill

Journalists

Sgt. Tracy J. Smith

MC2 Donisha Burns

Spc. Jennifer Eddy

MC3 Jeffrey Richardson

Graphics/Newsletters

Spc. Alexandria Patterson

Commander's Column

As we near the end of our rotation, it's fitting to reflect upon the many accomplishments of the Roughrider team during our time supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. No Soldier should leave this battlefield without feeling a huge sense of satisfaction. The 1-108th Cavalry lead the 48th Brigade into theater as the "tip of the spear" last April. We have endured constant changes of mission since then; changes of philosophy, and changes in location. The only thing that has remained constant throughout the mission was change itself! However, our Troopers have truly embraced the Roughrider motto of "Come What Will" and excelled in every way. Most impressive is the enduring positive attitude and personal discipline that has been instrumental in our success.

When we arrived in Afghanistan, we were initially assigned missions throughout the Afghan Regional Security Integration Command-Central (ARSIC-C). Our squadron took responsibility for over 1,300 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, DOD Civilians and coalition partners from France, Greece and Portugal. Troopers from the 1-108th Cavalry manned six Embedded Training Teams and 10 Police Mentor Teams in addition to operating at over 10 forward operat-



ing bases throughout Central Afghanistan. During this time, our Troopers were forward deployed to some of the most austere and remote locations in the country. We will never forget places like Belda, Al Asay, Shekut, Kutchbach, Morales-Frazier, Uzbini, Fiaz, Konar and countless others. In these places, our

troopers displayed unbelievable courage in the face of a determined enemy under the most challenging conditions imaginable. The bravery and determination of our troopers has had a lasting impact on the security of Afghanistan.

Eventually, the 1-108th was attached to the 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Mountain Warrior. We packed, conducted inventories, moved and finally assumed battle space in Eastern Nangarhar. The huge task of assuming full responsibility for nine districts in the Nangarhar province wasn't nearly enough. Headquarters Troop had the additional responsibility of running FOB Hughie and conducting combined action operations with the Jalalabad garrison support unit. Alpha Troop took command and control of the infamous Torkham Gate on the Pakistan border. Bravo Troop assumed combined action operations over five Districts in Eastern Nangarhar and became a model for combined action as they moved in with the 5th Afghan Border Patrol (ABP) Kandak at their FOB while continuing operations with the 6th ABP Kandak and all district police. Charlie Troop assumed combined

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'Roughriders' ring in the New Year

Story and photos by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT Public Affairs

With the swagger of true Roughriders, 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment Troops rang in the new decade in Stetsons and spurs as they celebrated the heritage of the mounted scout and their redesignation from armor to mounted cavalry.

"Stetsons are not part of the battle uniform like back in the day," Spc. Walter F. Gann of Rome, Ga. said, as he adjusted the blue cord on his wool Stetson. Gann, a chemical specialist with Bravo Troop, 1-108th embedded with the Afghan National Border Police as part of the battalion's mentoring team near the Torkham Border Gate said, "I enjoy being in a cavalry unit, and can't think of a place I would rather be than celebrating 2010 with these guys."

This was the first celebration of its type for the Georgia Army National Guardsmen. Prior to the Afghanistan deployment, and the transition from heavy to cavalry, the 108th Armor Regiment, the 1-108th's previous designation, served in Iraq and was responsible for an area of operations known as the 'Triangle of Death.' Mahmadiyah, Yousifeyah and Lutifeyah were notorious for bomb making cells and heavy insurgent saturation. When the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment ended they left their heavy armor tanks and weaponry behind and took on the redesignation as a reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition squadron before beginning preparations for their next mission- Afghanistan.

"Change is good," Sgt. Kilsung Kang said of the redesignation and the opportunity to serve with the 'Roughriders.' The Duluth, Ga. small business owner was an active duty Soldier for three years, and was given an option of Infantry or Cavalry when he became a Georgia Citizen-Soldier. "You prepare for the way you will fight. Either way, I wanted to stay Army and serve to protect my country, friends and family."

Another first for the Citizen-Soldiers was the induction of select Cavalrymen into the Order of St. George, the canonized name for Nestor of Cappadocia (modern Turkey). As the patron saint of the armor and knights, Squadron Command Sgt. Major, Joseph E. Recker, explained the tradition and privilege of being inducted

into the honored cavalry red and white.

"Nestor of Cappadocia refused to give in to what he felt was wrong. When his king instructed Nestor to destroy churches and Christian writings, he refused and was brutally tortured and punished," Recker said. "His determination is reflected in each of you, and your willingness to do what's necessary and just. It is a privilege to recognize your dedication to service."

Visiting Soldiers in Jalalabad, Torkham and Gamberi, the Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Randall Simmons, presented each of his Troops with the Commander's coin to commemorate their milestones from Pol-e Charkhi near Kabul to battles in the valleys of Allah Say

and Uzbin. What mattered, according to Recker, was their resolve to help the people of Afghanistan stand on their own.

"The Sgt. Major and I always look for the opportunity to tell you how much we appreciate your military service and sacrifice. The holidays are steeped in tradition, and your time away from family and friends has left an impression on the people here," said Simmons. "Your esprit de corps and dedication to each other has created an unbreakable bond that has brought us closer. If I can't be home with my family, my 'Roughrider' family is the next best thing."



Chaplain (Capt.) Shelby U. Grant, of Lawrenceville, Ga., is 'shoed' with his gilded spurs as part of the 'Roughriders' New Year's celebration event at FOB Torkham by fellow 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment. Chaplain (Capt.) Gerald D. Burris (left) of Canton, Ga., 'Roughriders' Commander, Lt. Col. Randall V. Simmons (center) and Command Sgt. Major Joseph E. Recker (right) both of Calhoun, Ga.

action operations in four districts of Central Nangarhar and conducted operations with the 6th ABP Kandak and the district police in their area of operation. Bravo and Charlie Troops partnered with the district sub-governors in their areas to support governance, development and security. Finally, Delta Company assumed their traditional role as the combat service support element for the squadron with forward logistics elements at FOB Hughie, FOB Torkham and combat outpost Bulldog, with the additional responsibility of providing the mayor's cell at FOB Torkham.

As we near the end of our tour in Afghanistan, it is especially encouraging to see how the hard work and aggressive nature of our Troopers has culminated in the unification of the Shinwari tribe in our area of operation. This would not have been possible without the climate of cooperation, hard work and discipline displayed by our units throughout the region. Much of the credit for this recent success goes to the unequalled efforts of Troopers like Sgt. 1st Class Flint Weath-

ers of Bravo Troop. From the first day in our new area of operation, he aggressively worked to improve the ABP and reshape the battlefield. His efforts made it easier for me and Col. Niazy, the ABP Commander, to become good friends and work well together as equal partners. Due to the trust and confidence established between Col. Niazy's team and ours, he quickly agreed to host a Shura with the leaders of the Shinwari tribe. The tribe came together and signed a public pact pledging to fight both the Taliban, and corruption in the Afghan government. This story is far from complete, and will serve to defeat corruption and Taliban forces in this region well into the future.

Through constant change, three things have remained constant. They are discipline, cooperation, and the hard work of the Roughrider family. We've maintained an excellent safety record throughout this deployment thanks to the diligence of our junior leaders. However, the Roughrider family has paid a huge cost during this deployment, and those warriors who paid the ultimate price for

freedom will live forever in our hearts. We will never doubt that our mission was important. The accomplishments of this squadron are directly linked to the success of our national objectives and will certainly ripple outward to have a global impact. It's been an honor to be a part of this team of professionals at this most important time. As we prepare to depart Afghanistan, I am proud of our many accomplishments and feel the future of Afghanistan is brighter because of our efforts.

"Come What Will"



Coalition and Afghan troops host 'contract rodeo' in Nangarhar

Story and photos by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT Public Affairs

Afghanistan National Army and Coalition forces greeted potential contractors for a proposed new Forward Operating Base (FOB) in the Shinwar Province. The proposed FOB was a British fort converted for use during the Soviet occupation more than 30 years ago and will now be used as a modernized hub for the ANA's 2nd Kandak, 201st Corps.

"This meeting is to give potential contractors a walkthrough of the area so they will have a solid overview of the scope of work," said 1st Lt. Fernando E. Roach, 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, contracting officer assigned to 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

More than 135 builder candidates signed on for the open bid for three separate projects; container living spaces for ANA Soldiers and assigned coalition forces, renovation of former Soviet structures and building a wall that will encompass approximately two kilometers.

Fairzahn, a young Afghan law student, accompanied his boss to the grounds to have a first-hand look at the process and to assist in deciphering the bidding guidelines and contractual legal terms. His future plans are greater.

"I will use this as a learning opportunity," the Jalalabad University student said. "My hope is to make a difference in Afghanistan's judicial system and also work to combat corruption."

Civil engineers overseeing the construction process say this is the largest project to date in Nangarhar. The monetary value is great, but the opportunity to foster



U.S. Air Force Capt. Edgar A. Jimenez of Milpitas, Calif., a civil engineer with the U.S. Army's 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, assists one of the more than 135 potential contractors with the sign-in process during a joint Afghan-Coalition contractors' rodeo. Potential Afghan building firms were able to walk about the ruins of a late 1800 era British fort that was later used during the Soviet occupation more than 30 years ago. The upgraded area will be a headquarters for the 2nd Kandak, 201st Corps and will be shared with Coalition partners assigned to train and fight with the Afghan Warriors.

Story continued on page 5

Coalition and Afghan troops cont.

relations within the Afghan National Security Force and Shinwar communities makes the project an investment in Afghanistan's future.

"This is a frontier district with enemy attempting to cross our borders," said Captain Abdul Samad, Weapons COY Commander, 2nd Kandak, 201st Corps. "The people support us; and once we establish our base here, we (the ANSF) can respond to their needs and ensure a secure future of our people."

The Roughriders are offering security alongside their service with ANA partners as a show of unification. But Staff Sgt. Jim Wilson, a scout platoon section leader from Ellijay, Ga. saw the process as a platform for economic solidarity.

"This promotes competition and the need to keep the money in the country," Wilson stated. "Competition brings out the best in most folks; and this will help build their economy and ability to do quality control."

As the FOB infrastructure takes shape improvements outside of the facility's walls will be necessary. Using the current Cash-for-Work program civilian housing and road construction projects will inevitably follow.

Roach, smiling as he answered questions from the crowd, spoke with Samad about the future of the location and the Warriors agreed it was a natural selection.

"With the advent of these projects, and other contracting possibilities, the economy and the security within the district will benefit greatly."



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Fernando E. Roach, 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment contracts officer from Washington, D.C. (right), ANA Weapons COY, 2nd Khandak, 201st Corps Commander, Capt. Abdul Samad, Marine Sgt. William M. Rowe, 3rd Marine Div. Supply NCO and a mentor for the ANA's Weapons COY from Dayton, Ohio (center) and Marine Maj. J.P. McDonough, 3rd Marine Div. and Embedded Training Team officer in charge from St. Louis, Mo. finalize security and processes with U.S. Air Force civil engineers assigned to 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, during the joint Afghan-Coalition contractors' rodeo in the Shinwar District.

American and German Soldiers train Afghan National Army Soldiers

Story and photos by Spc. Jennifer Eddy
48th IBCT Public Affairs

A German and American mentor team gazed proudly across a classroom as they watched their Afghan counterparts take apart and reassemble an M-16 rifle at Camp Shaheen Training Base, Jan. 5.

Staff Sgt. Michael Glover and Sgt. Timothy Drew are assigned to the 5th Logistics Support Team, Foxtrot Company, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment and work closely with 1st Lt. Alexander Baenitz, a German Soldier assigned to Combat Service Support, Operational Mentor Liaison Team. The three men have worked together since July as maintenance mentors for 5th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 209th Corps of the Afghan National Army.

"Our responsibility is to assist the Germans with mentoring the Afghans in small arms and vehicle maintenance," said Drew. "The Germans are thorough and timely in execution. It's been a great learning experience."

Working with other nations gives many 48th Brigade Soldiers an opportunity to learn and grow by broadening their perspectives.

"It's good to have another way to see how to do things," said Drew. "I've

Spc. Demoney V. Cuff of Brigade Support Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team teaches Afghan soldiers how to take apart and reassemble an M16 rifle at Camp Shaheen, Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan, Jan 5.



learned how to overcome language barriers, how to break down and disassemble German weapons, and I've gone to German ranges which are very different from our own."

Coalition partner involvement in ANA mentorship also shows U.S. Soldiers that they are not alone in their efforts toward a self-sustaining, stable Afghanistan.

"It's good that German troops can take on mentoring so the responsibility doesn't lie solely with U.S. troops," said Glover

The feeling is mutual for the German troops. "American training plans are well organized. They are very experienced be-

cause most have previously deployed here and to Iraq," said Baenitz. "They know a lot about improvised explosive devices, Afghan culture, how to work with interpreters and how to work as Soldiers."

If anyone is able to see the benefit of U.S. and Coalition Forces working together, it is the Soldiers and units that they mentor.

"My experiences working with the Germans and Americans the past four and a half years have been really good," said 5th Kandak Commander Capt. Mohamad Gasim Khan. "We exchange ideas and work together to find solutions to problems."

48 Infantry Brigade Combat Team teaches logistics to Afghan Security Forces

Story and photos by Spc. Jennifer Eddy
48th IBCT Public Affairs

Afghan Soldiers and policemen hover over computers at the Operational Coordination Provincial (OCP) while ordering the supplies that fuel the solutions to security problems currently ailing Sar-e Pol Province, Afghanistan.

Before the OCP was established, the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police were functioning here without any interagency coordination, communication or supplies.

“The OCP has proved useful to all security elements,” said OCP Commander Brig. Gen. Samiullah Safie. “It has been 100 percent essential for change. The OCP is the core of the security element within the province.”

Security issues still exist in Sar-e Pol Province, but with the logistical resources and mentorship provided by Police Mentor Team 3, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers, the OCP now has most of the tools it needs to be completely self-sufficient and mission capable.

“They can now order whatever they need from Camp Spann,” said Sgt. Jason C. Parks, PMT 3 logistics mentor. “They no longer have to resort to buying things off the street or wherever else they’ve gone in the past to get what they need.”

In addition to legitimately supplying the ANA and ANP’s demand for more necessary equipment, OCP’s logistical section has been able to streamline, organize and



Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army soldiers huddle around an OCP computer as they review their inventories Dec. 9, 2009. The OCP is the core of the security element in the Sar-e Pol Province.

account for their equipment.

“In the beginning, they were borrowing. They weren’t following any supply system,” added Parks. “Now they are self-sufficient. They understand the correct forms and processes for ordering supplies, and have established property books that track all items by serial number.”

“When we first started working with them, some ANA and ANP units only had 15 rounds of ammo, when they should have had 210 rounds,” said Sgt. Carey M. Jehnson of PMT 3. “Now they have ammo and know how to order more.”

The OCP logistics section is not limited to ordering weapons and ammunition for protection. They are capable of ordering supplies for themselves that will also improve the average Soldier’s health and well-being.

“They assisted us in getting a well, water pump, pipes to transport the water, water heaters, toilets and showers,” said Safie. “The day we received the connex box, they were here and we opened the seal together.”

“We have a lot of equipment now, and our ability to perform our mission is improving,” said Col. Abdul Alim Shahab, OCP Logistics Officer. “Learning is very important, and we’ve learned a lot.”



2nd Lt. Ishmael R. Gant, Police Mentor Team 3 leader, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment of 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team looks over supply property books with Sar-e Pol Province OCP supply officer, Col. Abdul Alim Shahab at the OCP, Dec. 9, 2009.



Supply Officer Col. Abdul Alim Shahab demonstrates how he tracks supplies in OCP’s property books Dec. 9, 2009. The OCP is the core of the security element in the Sar-e Pol Province.

48th IBCT remembers fallen Warriors

Story and photos by MC2 Donisha Burns
48th IBCT Public Affairs

With the sounds of new year celebrations only beginning to fade, service members at Camp Phoenix made time for a solemn moment Jan. 3 to remember their fellow Soldiers who fell in 2009.

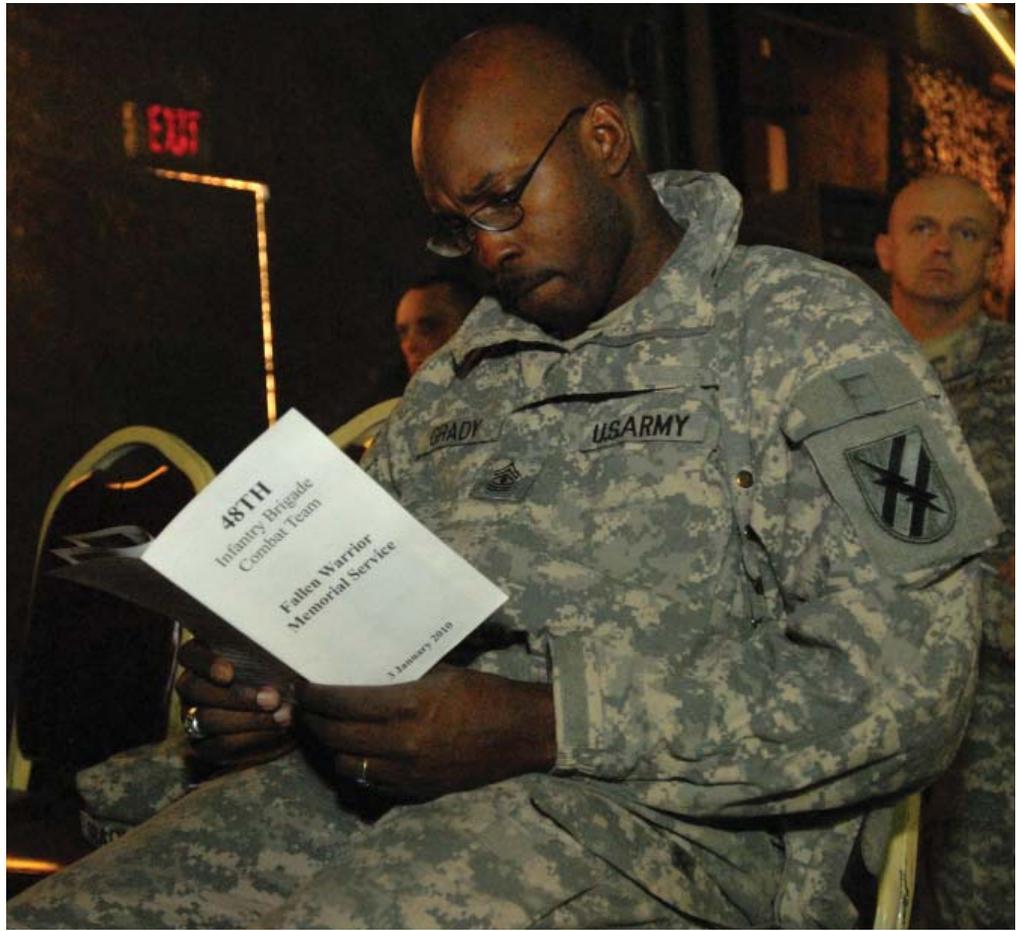
The 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team has lost eight of their Warriors since arriving here last April. The memorial service was held to honor all of the fallen Warriors for their outstanding achievements and efforts in Operation Enduring Freedom.

“There is an emotional attachment when you lose someone. A part of you goes with them,” said Spc. Willie Troutman, one of the attending 48th Brigade Soldiers.

The brigade’s intent is to bring every Soldier here, complete the mission, and for everyone to return home, safe and sound. Many of the deployed Soldiers pull together as a surrogate family. When one of their own are wounded or killed, it affects the mission in a very profound and intangible way.

“We lost a Soldier last year. Our unit took it hard,” said 1st Lt. Andrea Morrison.

Command Sergeant Major Michael Hurndon said, “Leadership is stressing not to get complacent. We are three-quarters of the way through the deployment.



1st Sgt. James Grady of Charlie Company, attends the memorial service at Camp Phoenix, Jan. 3.

Hopefully, we will make it home without another casualty.”

Hurndon added, “As a senior leader, I feel an inherent responsibility for the Soldiers. The sudden loss and departure

of the Warrior is very tough and painful. Honor those fallen Soldiers by our services going forward- gone from our presence, but always in our hearts.”



Chaplain (MAJ) Eduardo DoCampo speaks during a Fallen Warrior service held at Camp Phoenix Jan. 3.



SFC John C. Beale
11FEB1970 - 04JUN2009



SGT Jeffrey Jordan
15FEB1988 - 04JUN2009

Fallen Warriors OEF 2009-2010



MAJ Kevin Jenrette
02SEP1971 - 04JUN2009



1SG John Blair
09OCT1970 - 20JUN2009



SGT Brock Chavers
18JUL1983 - 06JUL2009



SGT Isaac Johnson, Jr.
08DEC1984 - 06JUL2009

*The muffled drums sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more on Life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.
On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents to spread
And glory guards, with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.*



SGT Raymundo Morales
03APR1975 - 21JUL2009

*"Bivouac of the Dead"
by Theodore O'Hara*



SSG Alex French IV
14NOV1977 - 30SEP2009

Warriors Compete for Top Honors

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. David Bill
48th IBCT Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Kevin McMakin, 48th Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, earned the title of Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for 2010, for the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a demanding four-day competition. Specialist Gary Johnson, a combat engineer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 48th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, also earned the title of 48th Brigade Warrior of the Year.

“To be selected as NCO of the Year for the 48th Brigade is a huge honor, one that I do not take lightly. I look forward to representing my fellow Soldiers well at the next level,” said McMakin, a resident of Senoia, Georgia.

Each day of the competition brought different challenges, both physical and mental, for the six NCOs and six enlisted competitors. The challenges were daunting; a written essay discussing leadership philosophy, a personal appearance board, the Army Physical Readiness Test, including pull-ups, and a grueling nine-mile ruck-sack march.

“Training in combat is an essential aspect of sustaining the cutting edge while also executing the warfight. The 2010 48th IBCT NCO and Warrior of the Year competition was to provide the opportunity for our great Warriors to best prepare themselves for the competitive events that also add to their combat ability going forward,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hurndon, Command Sergeant Major, 48th IBCT.

As the competition continued, these outstanding Soldiers demonstrated their military skills as well as their physical capacity to be the best at their profession.

A Soldier’s basic skill to survive in the current combat environment was the focus of events such as map reading, combat life saver skills, weapons proficiency, communications, and even proper personnel search techniques. They were asked to display skill in all of the disciplines while being observed by evaluators who were looking for the slightest mistake in technique or procedure under an unrelenting freezing rain that ruled throughout most of the contest.

On day three, the most severe of the four days, with unyielding bitter cold and snow hardening each competitor, the competition moved to Kabul Military Training Center. KMTC is the principal military training facility in Afghanistan, and graduates thousands of Afghan Soldiers annually, second only to Fort Jackson, South Carolina.



Staff Sgt. Kevin McMakin, HHC 48th IBCT, displays his awarded hardware for earning the title of Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team for 2010.



Specialist Gary Johnson, HHC 48th BSTB, displays his awarded hardware for earning the title of Warrior of the Year for the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team for 2010.

The harsh terrain of KMTC was the perfect location for the nine-mile ruck-sack march. Each contestant carried over 100 pounds of gear and weapons during the event along the extremely rugged route that took them around Gharib Ghar, a mountain with an elevation of well over 7,000 feet.

The event, normally a 12-mile route, was reduced to nine miles due to the ruggedness of the terrain and was considered by all the competitors as the most difficult event of the four days.

The march took a significant physical toll on all of the Warriors. Sgt. Jenna Ellyson, an assistant supply sergeant with Company C, 148th Brigade Support Battalion, showed the ultimate Volunteer spirit as she completed the event even after sustaining a knee injury during the march.

“This was the worst event, considering I walked the last mile and a half with a blown out knee,” Ellyson said.

During the award ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hall, the Command Sergeant Major for ISAF/USFOR-Afghanistan, expressed the importance of the enlisted Soldiers and the junior leaders in this conflict.

“The counterinsurgency fight will be won or lost by our enlisted personnel, our sergeants, and the first line supervisors. It will be the maturity of these leaders that will ultimately make us successful,” he said.

This competition also played out to an audience of Afghan National Army leaders. ANA Sgt. Maj. Shah was very impressed with the professionalism of the competitors and how the competition was organized.

“These types of events are very important for the training of Soldiers and NCOs. It develops both the leadership and the training of those who compete.

We will copy what we have seen here and carry it over to our ANA training,” he said.

“The comprehensive event was also a key component of providing the Afghan National Army Sergeants Major ‘a way’ to assist in enriching their Warriors and NCOs into the future,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Hurndon.

The competitors were tired, but proud of their accomplishments during the competition, and many of them said they would be even more prepared next year.

“I am very honored to be selected as Warrior of the year,” said Johnson, a Statesboro, Ga. resident. “I plan to study everything to get ready for the state competition.”

McMakin and Johnson will compete against selected candidates from the other major commands in the Georgia Army National Guard Soldier and NCO of the Year competition to be held at Ft. Benning, Georgia in mid-March.

2010 Soldier of the Year Competition

Photos by Staff Sgt. David Bill; 48th IBCT Public Affairs



Staff Sgt. Josiah Kimbal, 1-118th FAR pushed himself during the Army Physical Readiness Test, one of the events conducted during the Warrior and NCO of the Year competition for the 48th IBCT at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Soldiers of the 48th IBCT begin the demanding rucksack march around the Gharib Ghar, a mountain east of Kabul, Afghanistan as part of the Warrior and NCO of the Year competition.

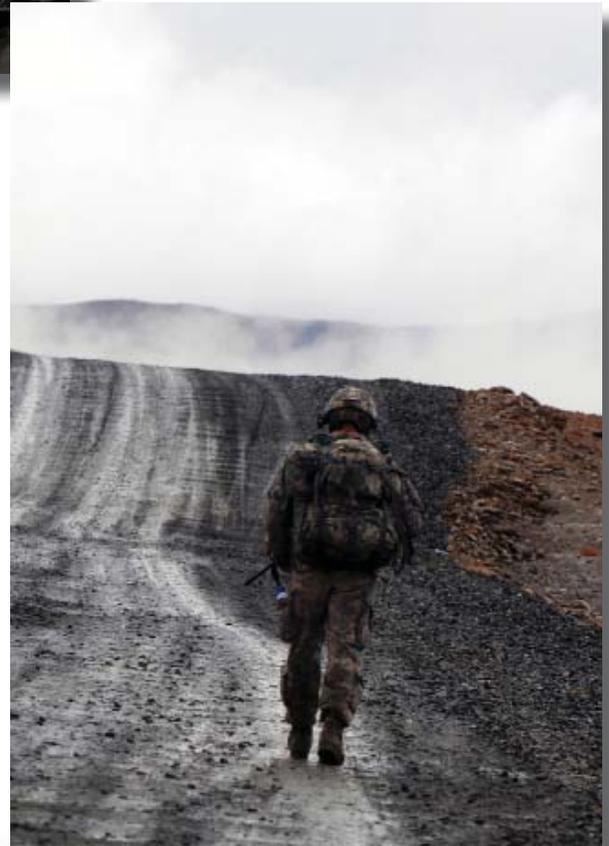


Spc. Merv Vidal, HHC, 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, adjusts the sights on his Advanced Combat Optics scope during the 48th IBCT Warrior of the Year marksmanship competition conducted at the Kabul Military Training Center east of Kabul, Afghanistan.

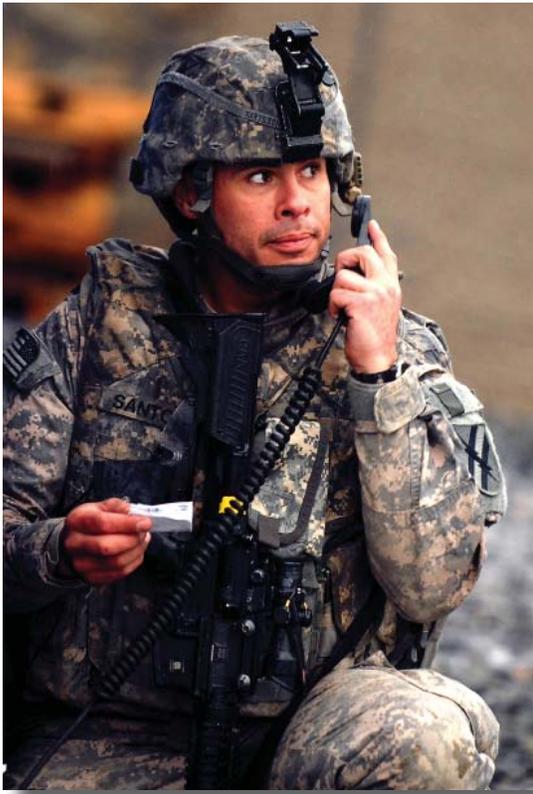


Sgt. Michael Cromer, Newnan, Ga., conducts a personnel search of a local Afghan citizen during the Warrior and NCO of the Year competition conducted at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Sgt. Gabriel Santos, Co. B, 1-121 IN, 48th IBCT, leans forward along a rugged road during the NCO of the Year competition's nine-mile rucksack march held at KMTC, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Competitors do deep knee bends during the stress shoot portion of the marksmanship competition of the Warrior and NCO of the Year competition held at Kabul Military Training Center.



Sgt. Gabriel Santos, Co. B, 1-121 IN, 48th IBCT, contacts his higher headquarters about a simulated unexploded ordnance discovery during the NCO of the Year competition held at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hurndon, Command Sergeant Major, 48 IBCT (right), and Command Sergeant Major Barry Smallwood, Command Sergeant Major, 148 BSB (center), talk with Sergeants Major from the Afghan National Army about the Warrior and NCO of the Year competition conducted at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Runners start the two-mile run during the APFT conducted as part of the Warrior and NCO of the Year competition for the 48th IBCT, currently stationed in Afghanistan.



Afghan Border Police Enlist Tribal Leaders/Maliks to Protect Eastern Border

Story and photos by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT Public Affairs

Afghan Border Police and coalition forces hosted Shinwari tribal elders of the Nangarhar province, Jan. 21, to unite the tribes and obtain their unanimous commitment to defeat the Taliban, corruption and any illegal actions that threaten the Afghan people and their government.

More than 170 Maliks from six districts of the Nangarhar province put aside tribal differences to form the alliance as a community, and bring stability to Afghanistan's eastern border region.

The traditional jirga, organized by the ABP 6th Kandak headquarters in Shinwar, gave the tribes the confidence that their voice would be heard as they addressed concerns. The event sent a powerful and irrefutable message to the Taliban and those allowing corruption in government that tyranny and passive governance would no longer be tolerated.

Lt. Col. Randall V. Simmons, 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, applauded the leaders for their bravery in continuing to fight oppression and dispelled rumors that the military would leave Afghanistan.

"If the whole tribe speaks as one it will be heard and action will be taken. We are here to fight our common enemy and promote a common cause," Simmons reassured. "America has donated its most prized possession, its sons and daughters, to this mission and we will not leave until our mission is complete."

During previous key leader engagements the Roughriders' area of operation, the Maliks voiced common community concerns; security, education, health care and the lack of reliable governance.

Malik Niyaz, an influential tribal elder from the Mohmand Valley, opened the jirga's discussion for his peers and spoke passionately to their common sense of purpose as representatives for the people of their villages.

"Is it only me who dares to speak out? I do not have the power to remove a corrupt governor, but I can expose him and so must you," Niyaz said. "I appeal to you today because I know there are others that know how our people have suffered from mismanaged projects because (government) lines its pockets with money intended for our communities. We must stand together to purge our community of corruption and the thumb of tyranny."

During the open discussions, the chieftains signed the Anti-Taliban Shinwari Pact committing to unification and pledging to resist the Taliban, or any other disruptive factions. Failure to do so would bring dire consequences to any who went against its mandates.

The Shinwari Pact is historic, as the sub-tribes publically pronounced solidarity with their Afghan National Security Force brothers to bring peace to Afghanistan showing the power of co-operation.

ABP Zone One commander, Brig. Gen. Zaman Mamozai, said this willingness to commit to defending their own is a source of personal pride for him as a Muslim and an Afghan. Mamozai invited the Maliks to reinforce their security by empowering their people economically.

In his address, Zaman announced the formation of the ABP, 8th Kandak to be headquartered in the Achin district. The new headquarters will bring jobs and service opportunity to the people of the region.

The Kandak, actively seeking to recruit from the local community, plans to reinforce its service numbers by 500, providing additional jobs for 500 families. Zaman and the Ministry of In-



Lt. Col. Randall V. Simmons, 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment commander, addresses village elders, Jan. 21, during a Shinwari tribal jirga.

terior will also increase each ABP Soldier's pay by roughly 15 percent.

"This is an opportunity for the people of Shinwar to step forward and give new life to the new battalion and keep jobs in the community," Zaman said.

Zaman, a former mujahedeen fighter, reflected on the collapse of governance during the Soviet occupation and subsequent attacks by the Taliban on "Afghanistan's innocents" in the 1990s. Taking ownership of their own security did not mean taking a handout, but a helping hand from partners in the fight.

"Take advantage of coalition force resources to rebuild what we have lost," Zaman encouraged. "The United States was not considered an infidel country when it assisted Pakistan in the development of nuclear technology, so it should not be considered such as they look to help our beloved Afghanistan."

As one of Nangarhar province's three most influential tribes, the signing of the Shinwari Pact will set a precedence for future defense and economic growth planning and implementation for Afghanistan. Yet the outcome must be worth more than the paper it is printed on.

Simmons reiterated the need for action-based solidarity with tough, encouraging talk.

"(Your signature) indicates that your tribe is united and will resist the Taliban or other insurgents at all costs," Simmons stated. "I applaud you for taking responsibility for your own security and stand ready to fight to the end for peace and victory alongside you and our ANSF brothers in arms."

Georgia National Guardsmen open radio stations to give people of Afghanistan their own voice

Story and photos by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith
48th IBCT Public Affairs

In a perfect world, accurate information would be as close as a radio. For a country at war, accurate information is invaluable.

Georgia Army National Guardsmen of 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Mountain Warrior are giving the Shinwari and Muhmandari mountain border villagers of Afghanistan their own voice through the gift of radio.

The two stations, located in the Shinwar and Muhmand Dara provinces, will give outlying villages communication security and counter anti-Taliban propaganda.

Popularly known as the Radio in a Box, the new media program is one of the initiatives of the International Security Assistance Force counterinsurgency process and will belong entirely to the Afghan people.

“It will NOT be a facilitator of military or security mandates,” Afghan Border Police 6th Kandak commander, Col. Niazy said. He punctuated the importance of the mission by stressing how the station’s messaging will embrace the needs of the community. “It will be a powerful tool to give our people a voice- a resource. Our mulahs, district government leaders, or our local shop keepers and villagers will have full access and know that they can come to us in a crisis for honest information.”

The Kandak headquarters is a temporary location for the Shinwar radio station. It was also once the site for Radio Spin Ghar, part of a 2005 independent media opportunity project called Support for Independent Radio Stations in Afghanistan, which was co-sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Both stations are fully funded by the coalition with Afghan National Security Force partners offering security, and employ full-time local Afghan station managers and on-air personalities.

‘The Gate’ (102.1 MHz FM) began airing full-time Jan. 17 at the Torkham forward operating base in Muhmand Dara province near the Afghanistan/Pakistan border.

The Shinwar station (95 MHz FM) celebrated its debut Jan. 21 during the precedent setting anti-Taliban Shinwari Pact jirga. The gathering of some 170 tribal representatives, a first of its kind, was orga-



Afghan Border Police Zone One commander, Brig. Gen. Zaman Mamozai has a first look at the new radio station set-up by Georgia Army National Guardsmen of the 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment at the ABP 6th Kandak headquarters.



Afghan Border Police 6th Kandak commander, Colonel Niazy and Georgia Army National Guard's 1st Squadron Commander, 108th Cavalry Regiment, Lt. Col. Randall V. Simmons prepare to broadcast a message to the people in the Shinwar district's new radio station.

nized by the 6th Kandak ABP and prominent tribal leaders. It was held embracing the strictest traditions of the six district Shinwari tribal councils to denounce Taliban tyranny and passive governance. The jirga gave prominent headsmen and security forces a new media platform to announce their solidarity during the station's first broadcast.

“It brings us together as one community,” Malik Usman said of the opening and the reading of the council’s decision to stand with their uniformed brothers in arms. “We can share information with the people immediately when a crisis is identified and ensure their safety.”

Council elders received gifts of hand-held radios at the conclusion of the jirga. The same radios will also be distributed by ANSF and coalition forces during patrols to outlying villages.

Niazy welcomes the new media as an extension of service to the people and says programming will be by the people. Call-in segments and unique on-air radio talk shows will engage government and village officials.

“The station will have a strict traditional format, from the reading of mourners’ names to public service information and jirga results,” Niazy stated. “They will celebrate with music programs, but we can reinforce their personal security with information.”

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By: *Chaplain (1LT) Leslie Nelson*

The novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, a story of love and war, and probably Charles Dickens' finest work, begins with the statement, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." I think the same is true of our story here in Afghanistan. As Soldiers of the 48th IBCT we are all living a similar story of love and war in one way or another. Dickens' timeless statement fits our situation. We experience the best and worst of times...every day.

As we were preparing to deploy to Afghanistan, there was a pretty even mixture of Soldiers who had been at war and Soldiers who hadn't, but the element of the unknown was still there for everyone. We trained at various places around Georgia and the United States in order to prepare for every situation, but honestly no amount of training could prepare us for living and working in a country 8,000 miles away from home, surrounded by enemies, and longing for loved ones. Yet in the midst of our struggles, what some of us may consider the worst of times, we have developed amazing friendships and found ways to make this one of the best times of our lives as well. I like to joke and say, "Only in Afghanistan!" But it is true. Only in the midst of adversity can we find strength we never knew we had. Only in the midst of the war on terror can we befriend Soldiers from coalition forces as well as our American comrades in arms. Only here can we walk up to state governors and shake their hand, or meet former Miss Americas. And here I find that men and women who previously gave little credence to God are finding more and more opportunities to see His hand moving in their lives.

As I prepare to leave Afghanistan and return to my family, my leaving is bittersweet. I have grown accustomed to seeing the same faces each day and look forward to my daily walks around the FOB and my short trips to see Soldiers on other FOBs. I love seeing God move every week in our numerous worship services, but I love seeing Him move in the lives of our Soldiers outside of church as well. Even though we are all away from our families, we have grown into a family here, with the joys and quarrels that come with families everywhere.

Our Brigade has suffered losses...terrible losses. With those losses we have found that God gives us strength to continue and an extra measure of protection for the next mission. In the midst of loss we have also seen relationships deepen and our faith grow. I am reminded of Paul's word in *Philippians 4:11-13*, "For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

Living, working and serving here has been one of the greatest joys of my life. I thank God every day for choosing me to serve Soldiers as a battalion chaplain and I look forward to seeing the planes filled with 48th IBCT Soldiers arrive at Fort Stewart!



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Senior Chief Kevin Elliott, 48th IBCT Public Affairs

May God Continue to richly bless each of you for the remainder of the deployment! I will miss you!



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Cpt. Jean Paul Laurenceau (left), passes the company guidon to 1st Sgt. Tommy Coffee during a change of command ceremony conducted at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan. Laurenceau, a Lawrenceville, Ga. resident, officially took command of Company C, 48th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Jan. 25. (U.S Army photo by Staff Sgt. David Bill, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)



Spc. Constance Rodgers sings the Star Spangled Banner during the Fallen Warrior service at Camp Phoenix, Jan. 3. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Donisha Burns, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)



ANP Zone 4 Commander, Brig. Gen. Alhaj Zalmay Oryakhil (center), stands with Lt. Col. Reg Neal, Commander, 1-118 FAR (left), and Capt. Patrick Grover after receiving the Georgia Commendation Medal at Zone 4 Headquarters, Jan. 24. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Senior Chief Kevin Elliott, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)

Lt. Col. Thomas Bright, Garrison Commander (left), and Sgt. Maj. Jackie Faulkner, Garrison Command, Sergeant Major, stand next to the updated “Welcome to Camp Phoenix” sign, Jan. 18. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Senior Chief Kevin Elliott, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)



A 1st Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment Soldier speaks with a contracted road construction security worker and the Dih Bala District Police Chief, Lt. Col. Abdul-Muquim (right). The blended forces worked to disarm an improvised explosive device uncovered during a road construction project. The device was successfully detonated by the 764th Explosive Ordnance Team. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tracy J. Smith, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)



Staff Sgt. Kyle Peyton (left), and Staff Sgt. Michael Banister, both with 48th IBCT PSD, stand by an abandoned Russian tank near Gharib Ghar, Dec. 29, 2009. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Senior Chief Kevin Elliott, 48th IBCT Public Affairs)

