

### Swamp Fox Facts

- Seventy-One Swamp Fox Soldiers have been promoted since Jan. 3.
- The BN has worked more than 880,000 man hours in support of OEF.
- The children of Swamp Fox families are eligible for \$500 grants for every six months of deployment.
- Operation Outreach Afghanistan has collected more than \$20,000 in direct and in-direct donations from back home.

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## Family Tribute Edition!

# Marion's Men

Volume 1, issue 3



June 2010

## S.C. Soldiers Secure Paktika Province

Story by 2 Lt Mark Lazane, USAF

The list of hometowns reads like an I-85/I-26 roadmap: Greenville, Laurens, Spartanburg, Waterloo. Regardless of their individual starting points, they are together as one team here, making a difference in Afghanistan.

The soldiers assigned to the 1/178th Field Artillery B Battery, South Carolina Army National Guard, as well as other South Carolina National Guard personnel who volunteered to augment the 1/178th team, are not here as field artillery specialists. Instead, they're here as a security force element for the Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team.

The PRT's mission in this eastern Afghanistan province is to partner with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in rebuilding their war-torn province. The PRT assists



U.S. Army Sgt. Allen Huey, of Mountville, S.C., provides security during a key leader engagement in Orgun district.

government leaders with development projects, agricultural initia-

tives and mentorship in government affairs.

As members of this special security force, there's not as much mortar fire emanating from their muzzles as there has been on previous deployments, but their mission is equally important.

The soldiers ensure safe travel for civilians from the Department of State, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development as well as fellow sailors, soldiers and airmen as they conduct their operations. "Our job is to go out and provide security for the members of the PRT," said Staff Sgt Jamie Dodd, a truck commander from Greenville, S.C. "We make sure the area is safe before the personnel dismount

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## Deployment. It's A Family Affair.

Story by Capt. Chris G. Neeley, USA

For most Americans, Memorial Day weekend is a time for family cookouts, a trip to the beach, BBQ and the start of summer. However, for deployed Soldiers and their families back home, Memorial Day 2010 was no picnic in the park.

Since January 3 the more than 775 families that make up the Swamp Fox Battalion have known what it's like to experience a holiday without their loved ones. That's because they are separated by a one year deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Military families have always



SFC Fredrick Scruggs and his children.

made incredible sacrifices during times of war. However, after nine years of fighting two simultaneous wars, today's National Guard family is making some of the greatest sacrifices in our Nation's history.

One family that knows all too

well the sacrifices that military families make is the Scruggs family of Greenwood, S.C. Sgt. 1st Class Fred Scruggs has been deployed three times beginning with Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1991. His second deployment occurred fifteen years later with the 101st Airborne Division where he served in Tikrit, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is currently in the middle of his third deployment with the 1-178th Field Artillery Battalion in Afghanistan.

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## The Commander's View...



1/178 FA BN Public Affairs

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Salaam Alekum (Peace be with you),

It is June now and we are rapidly approaching the official half-way point in our deployment. We continue to stay very busy and our Soldiers continue to do a phenomenal job. Thanks to God's grace and your continued prayers, the Soldiers of the Swamp Fox Battalion are safe and our injuries and illnesses remain low. I would ask for your continued prayers for the safety and security of this Battalion.

We are also reaching the point where many of our Soldiers are taking their well deserved two weeks Rest and Recuperation (R&R). Please bear with us as the dates for R&R may shift a little to the left or right due to the troop surge that is taking place. I assure you that our Battalion has no influence over the flight schedule. Please keep this in mind as you make plans for R&R.

The good news for our Soldiers is that due to a recent change in the law, the 15 days R&R leave is now non-chargeable leave! This is a great benefit because at the end of our tour it means our Soldiers will have more paid time off to adjust back to civilian life, and will have the ability to spend more quality time with their families before resuming their civilian occupations.

I strongly encourage each of you to rest and reconnect with your families and friends during R&R. The biggest trap we all fall into is trying to do too much while on R&R. My advice would be to



LTC Ed McInnis climbed Ghar Mtn. with Swamp Fox Soldiers on May 14.

save the Disney World trips and vacations to the Grand Canyon until post-deployment.

I would be remiss not to address Safety during R&R. As someone that has made the trip from here and back to the USA a few times now, I can tell you that it is an absolutely exhausting experience. Many of us have not driven for the past few months, so attempting to drive home after immediately flying back into the US is not a smart move.

Soldiers, allow your spouses or other family members to drive you home. I know most of us Soldiers will also be a little "thirsty" upon arrival

back in the States, and once again fatigue combined with drinking "ice tea" and driving is never a good thing. In my opinion, the operative word during R&R is moderation. Enjoy your leave and come back with your battery charged and ready to close out this tour.

In closing, I wish to convey my deepest thanks and appreciation for the outstanding support we continue to receive from home. Your generosity encourages and inspires us. I especially want to thank everyone for their gracious donations in support of our Humanitarian Assistance efforts. Through your compassion and generosity, you are truly making a difference in the lives of some of the most impoverished people in the world. Your example of love and concern for your fellow man is a great American virtue which makes me proud to be an American Soldier.

True & Tried.

LTC E.M. McInnis



## The Leader's Book by CSM McKenzie

Greetings,

The families of National Guard Soldiers make tremendous sacrifices during a war-time deployment. There's the juggling of family businesses, loss in income, the stress and anxiety that comes with having a loved one serving in a war zone and being thrust into the unfamiliar position of being a single parent responsible for child-care, additional expenses like household repairs and very little rest. It's a daily grind that only ends when their Soldier returns home.

In today's Army there are many programs that are available to ease the burden on military families. These organizations provide assistance, such as family and marital counseling, financial management and planning, and scholarships for children. You can learn more at [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com).

The Family Readiness Group (FRG) is another great source of support during a deployment. The FRG coordinates social events, meetings and conference calls for our Soldiers' families back

home. The FRG is there for you.

At the end of the day there's nothing that can replace a loved one serving overseas in a war zone. My hat goes off to all of our Soldier's families back home and the sacrifices they make for our Country. They are the real heroes!

True & Tried,  
CSM McKenzie



CSM Samuel McKenzie recently visited the Mehrabuddin School located in Darulaman, Kabul, Afghanistan.

## Church Chat with the Chaplain...

Greetings,

During a deployment, it is common for people to focus on the Soldiers who are going into harm's way. We have parades and ceremonies as they leave. We write articles about how heroic these Warriors are and we give them medals and awards for their service. We welcome them home with yellow ribbons and more parades and ceremonies. This is as it should be, because only the bravest and most committed surrender to the call to serve their country. They do it for many different reasons, but in the end, they all serve.

Where are the parades and ceremonies for the spouses and children who are left behind? How do we reward them? Every Warrior who gets on a plane to go overseas deserves our gratitude, but I believe the true heroes are the spouses and children we leave behind. Many of them didn't sign up for a year without their loved one.

I know that my family discussed what it would mean if I joined, but what does a 4 year old know of this decision? How can anyone really know what it's like until their loved one leaves? No wife can prepare for the heartbreak as they



**CH (CPT) Josh White Climbs The Ghar in Kabul,**

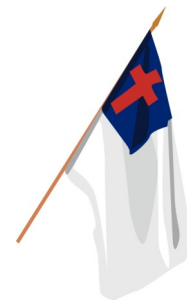
watch their husband get on a bus to leave. No child can prepare for the loneliness as they miss their parent. No spouse can prepare for the day to day struggle of being a single parent, even temporarily. No child can prepare for the emotional trauma that comes with a missing parent. No spouse can prepare for the question, "When will Daddy get home? When will Mommy get home? How many more days?"

I don't believe there is any wife that wants a parade. I don't think there is any husband that wants a medal. I don't think there's any child that cares about a ceremony.

What can we do as Americans? Give them our help, whenever and wherever they need it. Give them our prayers as loudly and fervently as possible. And give them our thanks, heartfelt and as often as possible.

In His bonds,

CH (CPT) Josh White



## S.C. Soldiers *continued...*

from the vehicle."

Though the soldiers are not in their primary specialties while on this tour, there are similarities between their current duties and those involved with the field artillery background. "Coming from a field artillery background, a lot of what I do as a truck commander is the same," said Dodd. "I'm used to running a truck already since I've been deployed a couple times. It's pretty much the same as the job here. You're on the radio a lot, you call up reports, you run the truck. On a field artillery mission, I've got a gunner, a driver and a number one man that I must ensure understand the mission at hand."

"Our knowledge of convoy operations through previous deployments help us take care of anything that happens along the way here," said 19-year U.S. Army veteran Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Jones, the SECFOR platoon sergeant, a native of Greenville, S.C. "We use that knowledge as a guide to lead the engineers, civilians and other PRT members to and from their destinations safely."

The job duties for the soldiers include serving as gunners, drivers, truck commanders and convoy com-



**U.S. Army Master Sgt. Charles Coleman and U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Bryan Hollifield, both from Spartanburg, S.C., provide security during a recent civil affairs mission in Orgun district.**

manders on their mine resistant ambush protected vehicles. "Gunnery are the eyes and ears of the truck," said U.S. Army Spec. Aaron Franklin, a native of Greenville, S.C. who helps load and fire the cannon as the number one man on a typical field artillery team. "We've got the best point of view up here. We've got the lives of everyone in the truck in our hands. We're the first line of protection for our vehicle."

Though SECFOR's mission is to get others to their

missions safely, they help the team be successful in more than one way. "We go out and we're able to secure the area that we're doing our mission," said U.S. Army Spec. Dewayne Blackwell, of Blacksburg, S.C. whose specialty is an all-wheel mechanic, but is serving as an MRAP driver and mine roller operator on this deployment. "We provide those participating in the mission a clear mind because they know that with us watching their back, they can concentrate on the task at hand."

To prepare for this deployment, the soldiers, nicknamed the "Gamecocks," left their families and friends early last fall and headed for training at Ft. Stewart, Ga. and then on to Camp Atterbury, Ind.

At Camp Atterbury, they were introduced to the remaining members of their team, which is made up of Navy, Air Force and soldiers from different Army units. The entire team, consisting of approximately 100 individuals, deployed to Paktika province in February, 2010 after months of vigorous training and team-building exercises.

Upon arrival to Forward Operating Base Sharana, the

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### The Military Wife by Marilyn White (Wife of CH Josh White)

A military wife is someone who endures. She stands proudly beside her husband for the last time as he leaves to do his duty over seas.

She is someone who is brave and able to continue the long days without the one she loves.

She is delicate like a newly blossomed rose, with tender petals and sweet fragrance.

So with head held high, she joins the ranks of those who have gone before her, doing what military wives have done throughout the ages: wait.

## Soldiers on the Rise



Seventy-One Swamp Fox Soldiers have been promoted since the deployment began on Jan. 3, 2010. The newly promoted Soldiers pictured clockwise from the 1200 position include: Sgt. Stuart Ferguson, Capt. Brunson DePass, Staff Sgt. Jamison Ganzy, Staff Sgt. Randall Gas-kins, Staff Sgt. Clifford Hughes and Sgt. Holley Sloan.



## Swamp Fox Soldiers continued...

team was split into two detachments, one to stay at FOB Sharana, not far from the provincial capital, while the other detachment was sent to FOB Ogun to the east.

Though separated geographically, the security force elements are united in purpose: to make sure everyone under their watch comes home safe. "Safety is the definition of success for us," said Jones. "My main goal is to make sure that everyone on this team comes home safe. My guys are doing an excellent job in the SECFOR role for the PRT so far. They know their job and they know it well. They take their job very seriously. Though we like to joke around a little bit to stay loose when we're on base, when it's time to go out and perform, we are all-business."

When they leave here, they will return to the various towns across South Carolina they call



Members of PRT Paktika help carry humanitarian assistance in preparation for Women's Day.

home. In the meantime, they will continue to focus on their mission at hand so they all return home safely together.

### Attention: Parents of Swamp Fox Children!

If your child is age 3 to 12th grade, then they qualify for the *Our Military Kids, Inc.* \$500 per child grant for summer camps, tutoring, reading programs, sports programs, art schools and many more activities. Swamp Fox Battalion families are eligible now! Learn more and apply today at [www.ourmilitarykids.org/files/OMK\\_Army\\_0809.pdf](http://www.ourmilitarykids.org/files/OMK_Army_0809.pdf).

## Deployment. continued...

Scruggs will tell you he “wouldn’t trade his experiences for the world.” However, he will admit that “what I’ve been through and what my family has been through — most Americans can’t even imagine.”

Scruggs also knows a Soldier’s deployment is a family affair. There’s the spouse and children that are left behind. His wife Cheryl and their three children no first hand the sacrifices that are made. “Cheryl has had to endure a lot. There were all the PCS moves that she had to do alone with the children while I was training or serving somewhere. And there were all the times I couldn’t be there to support her. She has made tremendous sacrifices for our country too,” Scruggs said.

“I’m proud of Fred and his military service” said Cheryl. “But it’s very hard on the wives that are left behind. There are times when I wish he wasn’t deployed. I recently broke my arm. I wish Fred was here to change out my earrings.”

Even though Fred is winding down his military career the stress on their family hasn’t been reduced. Their three children have all enlisted in the military and two of them have completed a combined five deployments since 9/11.

Their oldest son Matthew has served in the Guard



**Sgt. 1st Class Fred Scruggs is seen receiving his third combat patch at Camp Phoenix.**

since 2004 and just finished his second deployment to Iraq. The Scruggs’s middle son Daniel has thirteen years of active duty service and just finished his third deployment to Iraq. Their daughter Rebecca just graduated from Advanced Individual Training (AIT) in November 2009 and serves as a medic with the 122nd Engineer Battalion in the Guard.

Scruggs was amazed all three of his children enlisted in the Army. “I was surprised all three of them joined the service after seeing what I went through. The biggest surprise was when my daughter Rebecca enlisted. Then again, I shouldn’t be surprised. It’s who we are” said Scruggs.

Cheryl agrees, “I’m proud of Fred and our children. It’s become such a way of life since we got married. I have faith.” For a military family like the Scruggs family, it all comes down to faith -- faith in God, faith in each other and faith in Country.

## Rapid Response Team a 24/7 Force Story by 1st Lt. Michael Cason

The RRF, also known as Rapid Reaction Force, is a highly versatile, highly mobile unit that is responsible for reacting and responding to emergency situations on Camp Phoenix. The unit is one of few maneuver units on the FOB. While the main mission of the RRF is reacting to emergency and threat situations, the platoon is also responsible for patrolling in and around the Area of Operations, security missions, and aiding in base defense operations.

Due to its highly versatile mission, the unit has to become extremely flexible and able to change missions and tempo at a moment’s notice. Because of this, the soldiers in the platoon have to be highly



**The Swamp Fox Rapid Reaction Force.**

trained and extremely competent.

The RRF maintains a 24 hour a day, seven days a week readiness posture, enabling the RRF to respond to any incident that may arise.



# Photos from the Field

