

# Rakkasan

A bi-monthly magazine for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division  
May-June 2010 Volume 1, Issue 1





# Contents

## Departments

3.....	RAK 6 Remarks
4.....	Chapel Chat
5.....	Stuck on Safety
31.....	Memorials

## Features

6-12.....	The First 100 Days
13-15.....	A Day in the Life of a Military Working Dog
16-17.....	PFC Cody Anderson
21-23.....	Photo Feature - COP Spera

## News

18-19.....	626 Supplying the Fight
20.....	3STB Delivering Humanitarian Aid
24-25.....	Soldiers Recognized for Valor
26.....	Soldier escapes death on birthday, reenlists
27.....	Iron Rakkasans deliver trees to Paktika
28-29.....	Leader Zalzalalah II

# RAKKASAN

"Rakkasan" is a bi-monthly magazine for the deployed Soldiers of Task Force Rakkasan.

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# Commander's Comments

To the Soldiers of TF Rakkasan,  
First off, I want to tell you I'm humbled to be your commander. The fight here in Afghanistan has been tough, sometimes frustrating for me. But every time I go out on battlefield circulation and see you all, I'm deeply inspired about your professionalism, tenacity, dedication, and compassion.

Depending on where you are at, progress is not always visible, so I'm going to spell it out for you. We're kicking Taliban butts all over P2K. The Task Force conducted 204 named operations, killed and captured more JPELs/JELs (high value targets) than any other conventional unit in theater, and conducted 8000 combined combat patrols (more than four times the number of patrols conducted in this time frame last year). I present these statistics to you not as data, but as a testament to how aggressive TF Rakkasan has been in the short four months we've been here. As a direct result of our operations, enemy morale continues to plummet. This is not anecdotal - we verified it through BDA, HUMINT, and several other reporting mediums. I suspect Taliban will seek a better way to resolve this war vice going head-to-head against Task Force Rakkasan. However, as you are already aware, we will not win by merely killing Taliban. Your Herculean efforts in combined action have increased ANSF capacities tenfold. This effort has enabled

ANSF to conduct independent operations in several key areas in the AOR. In addition, we are making great progress in Agriculture, Development, and Governance. Task Force Rakkasan is blessed with some of the most competent civilian teammates from DoS, USDA, and USAID. These selfless civilians are integrated under the command of three Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), Paktika, Paktya, and Khowst, each individually commanded by former squadron commanders from the Navy and Air Force. The teams are stacked with talent. Our civilian teammates live with us and routinely share the same dangers our Troopers face on a daily basis. We could not be successful without them. We also have two of the best Agribusiness Development Teams I have ever worked with - TF Hoosier (Indiana) and TF Thunderbird (Oklahoma). Since P2K is largely dependent on agriculture, the ADTs' brilliant work has contributed immeasurably to the stability of the region. Our mission could not be accomplished without the superb work of our support and combat service support Soldiers. Logistically, our sustainment soldiers from TF Assurgam have moved over 8,000 passengers, 10 million pounds of supplies, and 1,100 pieces of repaired equipment across the battlefield. Meanwhile TF Rak Solid took on the challenging task of Afghan Border Police mentorship

and Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES). Thus far, Rak Solid has trained over 400 soldiers and NCOs from the ABP, AUP, and other ANSF units, and has built key the partnerships necessary for their continued development as professional partners in Afghanistan's growth.

In closing, I want you to know how grateful I am for all you have done in the service of our gallant regiment and great nation. You have carried the weight of our nation's war on your burdened shoulders for many years now. Regardless of how confident I am about our senior leaders across the BCT, my strongest faith remains with our lower enlisted Soldiers and their abilities. Continue to take care of one another, always do what's right to maintain the moral high ground, and hold yourselves and others to high standards. Lastly, if you don't fight for anything, you need to fight for the honor and sacrifice of our fallen heroes. Keep SGT Richardson, PFC Kropat, SPC Hall, SGT Owens, SPC Brown, PFC Barton, and SGT Klusacek in your hearts and say a daily prayer for their families. I have my shortfalls just like anyone else; however, my promise to you is each day I wake up, I will strive to be the best leader and TF Commander I can be. Let Valor Not Fail! Rakkasan! Air Assault!

RAK 6



# Chapel Chat

**By Chaplain (Maj.) Tom Faichney**

As the current Task Force Rakkasan Chaplain I have been asked and, to be candid have asked myself, the following question, “What is the key to success for our current deployment?” On February 14 I began a teaching series in our Protestant worship service on 1 Thessalonians that helped piece together an answer. My sermon that morning focused on faith, love and hope. These three elements wrap together to form a powerful three-strand-chord. This chord connects us to God, binds Rakkasans together, and will provide the foundation for victory during our current combat deployment in Afghanistan.

The first strand is the work of faith. What is faith? From the Christian perspective, faith is composed of knowledge and trust. First, faith indicates knowledge. In order to believe something you must at least know what it is you are trusting in. Knowledge is part of faith. There must be information of the object that you have faith in. Faith is not blind, but rather it is informed. The knowledge of who God is, what he has done have been revealed in Scripture, nature and our own hearts. (Rom 1:16-32) So there is a substance to faith. There is stuff that is known and can be known.

The work of faith is taking that knowledge of God and moving to action. It is important to understand that faith is not a spiritual muscle we use to manipulate circumstances to our personal advantage. Instead faith is trusting God who controls each and every circumstance, even the difficult ones. The work of faith is doing what he calls us to do, particularly in difficult times. You know that he is weaving history into a tapestry, which may look chaotic and broken on one side, but will look glorious on the other.

The second strand is the labor of love. Love enables faith. God’s love provides the basis of our faith. It was this love that brought about our salvation through the labor of the Son. Love is the giving of oneself for another. Labor is more demanding than typical work. It



**(Left) Task Force Rakkasan Chaplain, Maj. Tom Faichney and chaplain's assistant Staff Sgt. Victor Will pose for a photo during battlefiled circulation in Khowst Province.**

involves toil. It causes us to sweat. As we labor in this love we are identifying with the love of God. This is a covenant connection. Rakkasans know that it costs to love. Rakkasans have always given of themselves for one another, as well as for God and Country. Our current deployment is providing opportunities to love.

The final strand is the perseverance of hope. The purpose of 1 Thessalonians is to empower steadfastness in the faith that will lead to success and victory in tough situations. Hope is based on God’s love and related to faith. Hope springs from knowing God’s love today and believing in his promises for tomorrow. This hope inspires perseverance in the hard times and even anticipates ultimate victory which generates peace. Temporal victory may not be realized immediately, perhaps not even in our generation, but it will be realized.

There is no denying that we are in another tough fight, but its in the midst of this fight that we will see the power of faith, love and hope. Rakkasans, as we tie in with this three-strand-chord we will not let valor fail.

# Stuck on Safety

By Skip Stuck  
3rd BCT Safety Officer

*Electrical Safety,  
You Can't Live Like an American In Afghanistan!*



When you leave your tent, room or even a luxurious mud hut nestled away within the picturesque mountain side, are you sure it is going to be their when you return that night? During our last deployment within our command we had nine electrical fires totaling in damage costs close to \$750,000 dollars. Luckily no Soldiers were hurt or suffered an injury while fighting the fires. Only quick thinking vigilance on the part of the Soldiers and the units prevented injuries and total destruction of the base. The average time for the fire to spread within the structures was less than ten minutes.

An electrical fire is the number one internal hazard and threat we will have to deal with during this deployment. As Americans, we have become spoiled and lethargic in electrical and fire safety. When we leave our home in the U.S. an electrical fire is the least of our worries because the electrical wiring and appliances we use are regulated by laws and tested for consumer safety. In Afghanistan the electrical wiring, appliances, and components we use and depend on are not tested for safety or manufactured to set degree of quality or standard. Additionally the competence of the installer's has not been to the highest quality. We have to use these poorly-manufactured electrical items because that is all

we have available to purchase and use.

By following the guidelines below, you will prevent your living and working areas from catching fire:

- **Unplug appliance, power strips, heaters, and power converters when not in use.**
- **Turn off all lights, electrical outlets, air conditioners when not in use.**
- **Ensure every room has a smoke detector, and change the battery every six months.**
- **Daily check to see if the electrical outlets, electrical cables and wiring show signs of slow burning, hot to the touch, or smell of plastic burning.**
- **Regularly clean all outlets and surge protectors for dust and dirt.**
- **Ensure fire extinguishers are position internally and externally for emergencies.**
- **Pack gear, equipment, supplies that are not being used, and place the items in storage containers.**

Bottom-line: you cannot live like an American while deployed. Turn-off, unplug, and daily check all electrical items. Why? You will have an electrical fire and you need to be ready to extinguish it and account for your Soldiers!



# ***The First 100 Days...***

*The Rakkasans took charge of the Paktika, Paktya, Khowst area February 24th, replacing the 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.*

*Since then the Soldiers of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division have been busy with a number of missions ranging from Air Assaults against insurgent strongholds to humanitarian aid distributions for school children.*

*The following pages deliver a brief snapshot by battalion of what the Rakkasans have been up to since taking charge of military operations in the area.*

*Keep in the mind, the Rakkasans never rest. The numbers on the following pages were accurate in early May. They've continued to climb since then.*

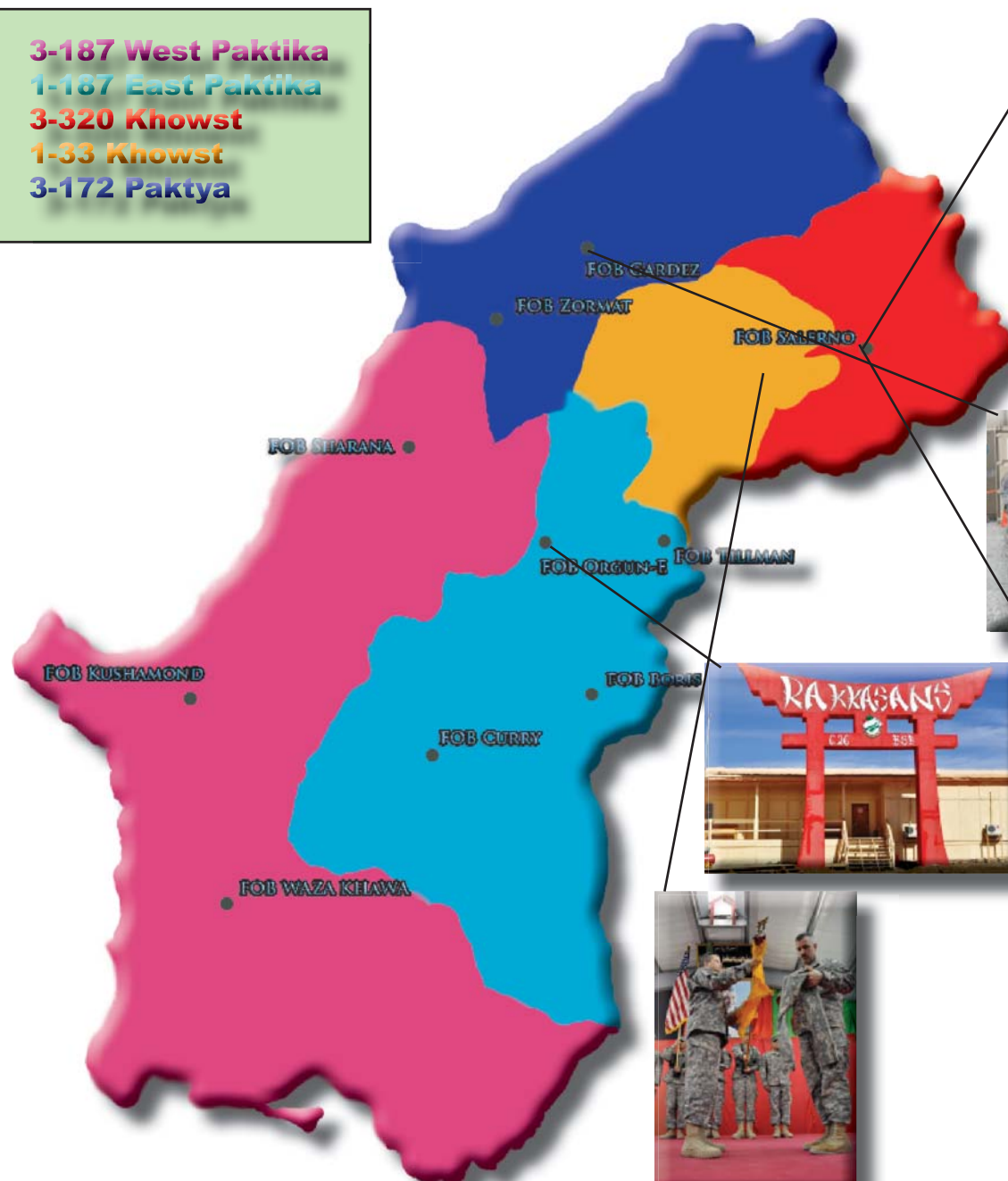
**3-187 West Paktika**

**1-187 East Paktika**

**3-320 Khowst**

**1-33 Khowst**

**3-172 Paktya**



# 626 BSB



- ❑ ANP/AUP/ABP/ANSF trained - 155
- ❑ Training courses offered - 3 (Driver's TNG, Medic's TNG, Mechanic's TNG)
- ❑ New partnership projects started - 1 (Officer Exchange Program: 2 x Staff Officers, 2 x Medical Officers)
- ❑ Convoy Logistics Patrols planned/conducted - 11
- ❑ Flights Requests Supported - 4,537
- ❑ Passengers moved - 7,396
- ❑ Low Cost Low Altitude (supply) drops conducted - 60
- ❑ Container Delivery System drops conducted - 33
- ❑ Gallons of fuel delivered - 7.5 million
- ❑ Pounds of supplies delivered - over 9.7 million
- ❑ Job orders/pieces of equipment fixed - 1059



## MVP - Spc. Richard Salman Senior Convoy Medic, Company C, 626 BSB

On April 28, an M916 flat bed traveling east on Route Jeep struck an improvised explosive device, disabling the vehicle and injuring both the driver and tactical commander.

Salman was the first medic on scene; he extracted the TC from the vehicle and immediately began providing life saving medical care. Salman applied tourniquets

to the injured TC, who had suffered severe ankle fractures. Salman was also notified of the driver's injuries, and requested a medical evacuation. He continued to treat and package the injured TC and coordinated the MEDEVAC for both the driver and TC. His quick reaction and medical expertise undoubtedly saved lives.

(Source: 2nd Lt. April Habib, 626 BSB Unit Public Affairs Representative)





# 3-187

- ❑ Missions conducted - 1295
- ❑ Combined patrols - 1295
- ❑ Air assaults - 5
- ❑ Caches found - 7
- ❑ Improvised Explosive Devices cleared - 56
- ❑ Anti Afghan Forces captured - 11
- ❑ Anti Afghan Forces killed - 10
- ❑ Rounds fired (indirect fire) - 504
- ❑ Shuras\Key Leader Engagements conducted - 237
- ❑ Development projects - 12

(Source: 1st Lt. R.J. Peek, 3-187 Unit Public Affairs Representative)



## MVP - Staff Sgt. Adam Kolar Platoon Sergeant, Company A, 3-187 INF

Kolar sustained wounds after his can and ANSF casualties. This is a direct reflection of SSG Kolar's training ethic and leadership.

That night he denied medical care for himself in order to ensure the timely treatment and safe evacuation of seven casualties.

His platoon has been commended by the 3-101 Brigade Commander in his battle space. To date his platoon is responsible for 12 enemy kills in Yahya Khel.

# 3-320<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery



- ❑ Total number of missions conducted - 173
- ❑ Total number of combined patrols - 124
- ❑ Total number of caches found - 5
- ❑ Total number of air assaults - 14
- ❑ Total number of Improvised Explosive Devices cleared - 158
- ❑ Anti-Afghan Forces Captured - 12
- ❑ Anti Afghan Forces Killed - 11
- ❑ Rounds Fired (Indirect) - 3,203
- ❑ Shuras/Key Leader Engagements conducted - 101
- ❑ Development projects started or completed - 10

Source: Capt. Christopher Rogers, 3-320 Unit Public Affairs Representative

*Editor's Note: Data only provided from A Battery and D 3-187 attachment.*



# 1-187

## MVP - Pfc. Gage Cannon Company B, 1-187 INF

On 20 April 2010, Cannon observed six insurgents about 150 meters from his location. Cannon quickly reported to his sergeant that the enemy has spotted their location and immediately engaged with his MK-48 machine gun, killing three Anti Afghan Forces.

Cannon anticipated all fire commands continuing to suppress the enemy keeping one insurgent pinned down behind a large rock.

When the flanking element reached their position, the single insurgent tried to escape, allowing Cannon to get a clear shot and eliminated another insurgent.

Cannon's situational awareness, quick reactions and ability to tactically employ his weapon system effectively, allowed him to kill four insurgents by himself.

❑ Shuras/Key Leader Engagements: 300

❑ Development Projects Started - 8

❑ Development Projects Completed - 14

❑ Air Assaults - 19

(Source: 1st Lt. Josh Hutton, 1-187 Unit Public Affairs Representative)



# 1-33 Cavalry Regt.



❑ Total number of missions conducted - 230

❑ Total number of combined patrols - 225

❑ Air assaults - 1

❑ Total number of caches found - 4

❑ Improvised explosive devices cleared - 66

❑ Anti Afghan Forces Captured - 4

❑ Anti Afghan Forces killed - 15

❑ Total number of rounds fired (indirect fire) - 1689

❑ Shuras\Key Leader Engagements conducted - 107

❑ Development projects - 20

(Source: 1st Lt. Phuc Dang, 1-33 Unit Public Affairs Representative)



# 3rd Spec. Troops BN



## Training Courses for Afghan National Security Forces

- ❑ 1st class - 134
- ❑ 2nd class - 101
- ❑ Medic Course - 20
- ❑ Squad LDR Course - 31
- ❑ Team LDR Course - 30
- ❑ Maintenance Course - 24

## ❑ Intelligence Course - 14

Shuras\Key Leader Engagements Conducted:

- ❑ Border Flag Meetings - 3
- ❑ Key Leader Engagements - 18
- ❑ Kandak Commander's Conference - 1
- ❑ Staff Assisted Visits to Kandaks - 4

Source: Sgt. Stacey Hector, 3STB Public Affairs Representative

# Running With the Big Dogs...

## A Day in the Life of a Military Working Dog

**By Pfc. Chris McKenna**

*3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT), PAO*

My name is Kelly... and I'm a bitch.

I have a smooth brown and black coat that if seen on your back would send an animal rights activist into frenzy. But, on my back, it just looks good.

I've been up for an hour and I am sitting here in my room thumping my tail against the concrete floor waiting for my attendant to clean house.

After that they'll bring breakfast and they better get it right, or they'll have one moody bitch on their hands.

If you haven't figured it out by now I'm a dog – a Belgian malinois by breed and a military combat tracking dog by trade.

If you come through my kennel at Forward Operating Base Salerno, one thing becomes very obvious; this isn't some Humane Society belly rub where I'm babied and put to sleep when I stop being cute.

Me and the other dogs – three German shepherds and another Belgian malinois – have it made.

With our handlers catering to our every whim, making sure we're happy and healthy, even the most pampered pets have nothing on our lifestyle here.

My living accommodations would make the average deployed Soldier foam at the mouth, not from rabies, but from envy.

Jake, Fibi, Cash, Quincy and I all have our own cribs.  
(Continued on next page)



Above: Sgt. Elizabeth Davis, combat tracking dog handler with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, opens up the door to her dogs kennel prior to training. She is the handler of Kelly, a Belgian malinois.

Left: Sgt. Elizabeth Davis, combat tracking dog handler with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, plays with her dog Kelly after a successful training mission. Davis had Kelly find a tennis ball by tracking its trail.





(Continued from page 13)

We have cages, but they're only for when our handlers clean our main rooms - spacious suites consisting of 20-square-foot indoor rest area and an outdoor patio where I can keep an eye on the rest of the world. Carpet would be nice, but concrete is easier to clean.

What's that? My handler! She's got my leash! Oh, this is only going to mean one thing - time to get my exercise on!

Sergeant Elizabeth Davis, my handler, knows what I like.

The leash says it all, I'm going outside. Is it time to work, or time to play? I vote play!

Either way, she always makes sure I am taken care of and has been doing so for a while. She keeps me happy and in return, I do the same for her. Obviously we're best friends.

My handler guides me out of my room and out to the back where she starts waving her finger at me to be quiet. I'll oblige here for now because... BALL! BALL! GIVE ME THE BALL!

We usually start training after lunch each day.

One of the other handlers emphasized exactly what I was thinking. Just listen to her:

"We try to train every day, but sometimes things get in the way," said Sgt. Heather Cutshall, combat tracking dog handler with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

"Yet regardless of what gets in the way, we always try to get some-

thing in."

Well, I guess it is sometimes all about work too. Our daily training regimens usually consists of exercises in dealing with our specialties as well as obedience training.

As a trained combat tracker the majority of my time training is spent following trails of scent so that I can find my target which, outside of training, would be a person. For now though, it's a tennis ball.

Since our handlers are people, they're pretty predictable. They usually take the ball outside first and walk around with it. Sometimes Elizabeth tries to get tricky and take the ball through ditches and around buildings, but she doesn't fool me. In training, I know the ball is like a hiding person, and I have to find it to have done my job.

In a real life situation I would gain the scent from an area where the people thought to be fleeing once were. I might get the scent from the remains of an Improvised Explosive Device. I might even get it from a half eaten sandwich my quarry left behind.

While missions are always going to be the top priority, Elizabeth says it is important to ensure we dogs are acclimated to our environment properly.

When I'm not on missions, training or doing what these people call "obedience," my handler feels it's important to take me on walks throughout the FOB. I agree -a change of scenery is always welcome.

Elizabeth says the walks are to get me accustomed to the increasing Afghan temperatures, especially since acclimating to the area is essential for me to succeed in combat operations. And, while some of my peers may become startled at the occasional incoming mortar round or rocket on the FOB, it doesn't really bother me.

Even Elizabeth recognizes how laid back I am.

"Every day is different," Davis said. "One day we had a mortar round drop about 50 meters behind the kennels and all the



dogs were going crazy, but Kelly was calm, she just acknowledged it.”

Once, I overheard her telling a reporter the only time I’ve been edgy was an instance in Sabari District when we were caught with our team outside a combat outpost in between enemy and coalition crossfire. I remember exactly what she said: I “stayed calm until the tracer rounds started to close in.”

Luckily nobody was injured and we were able to move on with the mission.

What my handler doesn’t realize is that I wasn’t startled; I was just trying to protect her. I mean, it took me a long time to get my handler trained to this point.

She knows what I like and that makes me comfortable here. I know that when I do something my handler likes, I am going to get rewarded.

Last week I heard Cutshall say that a good bond between the dogs and their handlers is of upmost importance, as it provides the basis for our success. She says “that a good bond usually takes around six months to form,” but I insist a good bond really only takes as long as getting the handler to figure out what I like.

According to all of our people, once a good bond forms, many of us working dogs become what they call “handler driven,” meaning we’ll completely feed off the praise and rewards they give us.

What they don’t realize is it’s not us feeding off of them – it’s actually quite the opposite. Just ask Master-At-Arms Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Foster, Cash’s handler.

The other day Matt bragged to the reporter about us. “The dog will always pay attention to the handler. The dogs feel like they are there to please the handler – it comes from the trust gained with training together for such a long time.” I know he’s proud of us, so I take that as a compliment. He really knows his stuff too, because he came all the way to Afghanistan from the Navy Air Force Atsugi Japan, canine security detachment.

One thing is clear to me in my 63 years (9 people years) - bond or not, with a day’s rest after missions and Kelly’s constant affection, I’m treated well. It doesn’t matter if my handler thinks she’s in charge because when the day is over, I’m not the one cleaning up my own mess. Even so, we still make a good team.

Don’t feel sorry for me because I’m a dog. Just remember next time you crawl into your not-so-cozy bed in your oh-so-small room, that I’m out here in Afghanistan, living the dream. I got everything a dog could ask for – a caring handler who is also my personal servant, as much food as I could want and a guarantee that the type of tasks I’m asked to do at work all depend on if I feel up to them or not.

So go ahead and fall back to your two-legged lifestyle and keep taking care of yourself. I’m about to go back to my room and make another mess, which I know my handler is going to clean up for me later. Oh, and when you see me out on the battlefield, or flying in a Blackhawk, don’t hate me because I’m beautiful. Remember Elizabeth and I are here to keep you safe.





# Former Marine, 'American Idol' cont

By Maj. S. Justin Platt  
3rd BCT, Public Affairs Officer

Join the Marines and see the world? Check. Enlist in the Army to serve with the famous Rakkasan Brigade from the 101st Airborne Division? Check. Sing on American Idol? Check. Have a mother who's a movie star? Check.

Almost unbelievable, these events are part of the life story of Pfc. Cody Anderson, 25, a communications equipment operator for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, stationed at Forward Operating Base Salerno,

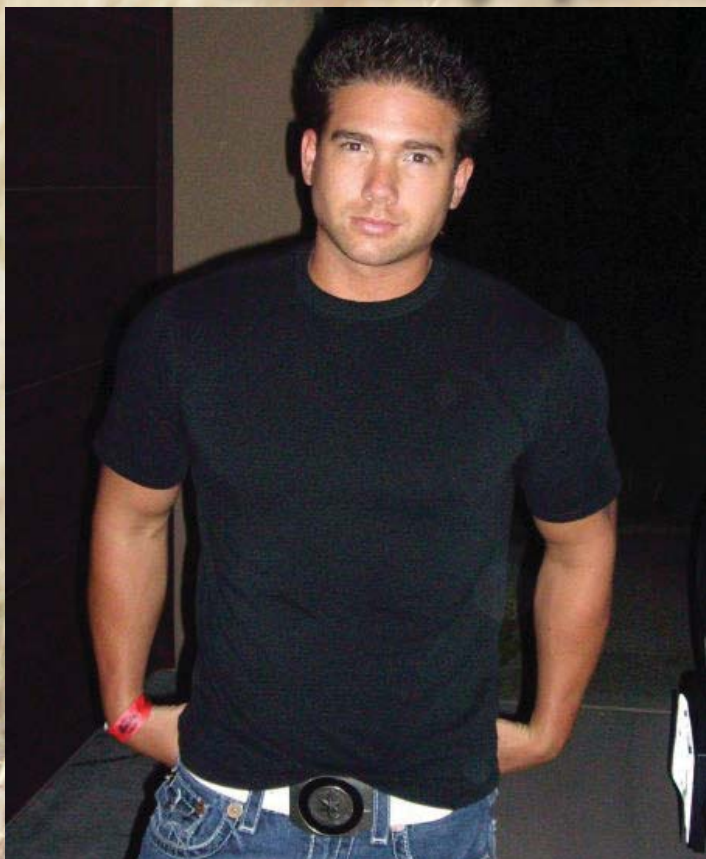
Afghanistan.

As a member of the operations section for the brigade tactical operations center, Anderson's primary duties include operating a variety of secure radio systems and managing information from the computer system that keeps Task Force Rakkasan up-to-date with the latest tactical information. But that's just his day job.

Besides his skills in the TOC, he also has other talents that reach far beyond typical ideas many people have of Soldiers.

He learned to sing at an early age, a credit to the creativity of his family when he was growing up in Hemet, California, just north of San Diego.

**"I feel like every person should serve their country, and so I little lifestyle just so I can be here and contribute to t**



Pfc. Cody Anderson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, poses for a photo during his briefs stint as an American Idol contestant during the show's eighth season. Anderson now service as a communications equipment operator at Forward Operating Base Salerno.

"I love to sing. I come from a very talented family. My mom was an actress, and my dad sings - my siblings [too]," said Anderson. It's no surprise that he's also a recording artist.

"A buddy and I came out with a CD about six years ago while I was going to school. It wasn't too big, but it did pretty well. I was into acoustic pop, you know, just me and a buddy and a guitar. We used to do little gigs and shows around Salt Lake [City]," he said. The CD, titled "The Assumptions That Will Fail Us," was inspired by the duo's challenges in "dealing with new emotions and new relationships, stuff we hadn't dealt with before," Anderson said. "We were both getting over heartaches at 19 years old, so that phrase had to go along with love and relationships."

In July 2008, Anderson and his sister Jenna Anderson competed on American Idol, season eight, when the show conducted auditions in Salt Lake City. They were eliminated, said Anderson.

"I believe we did good, but as far as I know we were not featured on the televised episode. We weren't featured guests, but my parents called me up screaming one day that they had seen us [on television]," he said. "I had already been kicked off, so I really wasn't excited," he added. But since his mother had been on television before, her joy was understandable.

His mother, Dana (Kimmell) Anderson became known while starring in the 1982 horror film "Friday

# *Anderson sings new tune in Afghanistan*

the 13th, Part 3", as the person who killed Jason.

Though he's a talented singer with an actress as a mother, he decided to forgo a career as a performer to join the military.

His desire to serve his country was so strong he joined the Marines at 17, while still in high school. When he was medically discharged from the Ma-

**gave up my cozy  
his cause."**

rines after two and a half years, he said, he knew his military service wasn't complete.

"My obligation to the nation wasn't fulfilled yet, so since the Marines weren't accepting the prior service back, I tried for the Army. I had nothing against the Army and I was Infantry in the Marines and I wanted to be Infantry again," he said.

Between his service in the Marines and joining the Army, Anderson enrolled at LDS Business College in Salt Lake City, but transferred to Brigham Young University after a year.

He stayed in school for while but the call to return to military service was hard to ignore.

"It was really itching me that I needed to fulfill my obligation, and I kind of left before I finished. But I'm going to go back and finish," said Anderson, indicating that he has about three more semesters to go before completing his bachelor's degree.

He plans to return to school at Utah Valley University to study History, with an emphasis on American military history, he said.

His parents have been very supportive of his second



**Pfc. Cody Anderson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, poses outside his Forward Operating Base Salerno work place. Anderson is a former Marine, recording artist and American Idol contestant.**

military career as an infantryman, a fact that gives him strength as he reflects on his accomplishments so far. Anderson doesn't regret his time in the Marine Corps, but sees his new job here with Task Force Rakkasan as a challenge he readily accepts.

"I never deployed with the Marine Corps, so that's one of the reasons I'm [in Afghanistan] right now. I still had a sense of duty that I needed to fulfil. I'm very grateful to be here. I feel like every person should serve their country, and so I gave up my cozy little lifestyle just so I can be here and contribute to this cause," he said.



# NEITHER RAIN NOR

**By Pfc. Chris McKenna**

*3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., PAO*

It can be a turbulent ride when safety is never a given and a bright sunny day can abruptly shift under clouds of smoke and fire, but supplying the fight for some Soldiers is a way of life.

Bouncing around in the back of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle for hours on end, sharp pain creeping through their joints, the logistician-warriors drive forward knowing their mission is more vital than their discomfort.

By moving supplies to the various Forward Operating Bases and Combat Outposts, Company A, 626th Brigade Support Battalion Soldiers provide logistical support to the brigade that allows each and every unit to function.

“The main focus is to deliver various class supplies to FOB Orgun-E and supporting other units in both Areas of Operation Iron and Leader,” said 1st Lt. Brandon Ballantyne, 1st Platoon leader for Company A.

In moving all of these materials via convoy, the Soldiers of A. Co., are freeing up air assets.

“Afghanistan is very air-centric,” said Ballantyne. “We help free up a lot of space for air movement when we push out our convoys.”

Without the supplies being delivered, the other operating bases would not be functional. Without functional bases; there would be no possibility for success, said Ballantyne

“Without us delivering, they can’t operate,” said Spc. Robert

# ...SLEET NOR IEDS...

Spaeth, gunner with Company A. “Without us bringing the bulk fuel, the other units wouldn’t be able to fuel their trucks and complete their own missions.”

Having to travel through the Shekay Ghar Pass on every push to FOB Orgun-E, danger lurks at every bend in the road.

Fortunately, most of the dangers are avoided as the platoon rolls out on each mission following a Route Clearance Platoon.

With security measures in place, preparing rigorously for each convoy during the days prior and following their guided Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, they still haven’t avoided all the dangers.

“It was on March 2nd, and it was the only time we’ve been hit,” Ballantyne said. “It was a small [Improvised Explosive Device] that didn’t cause any serious injury.”

The only minor injury was that of Ballantyne’s gunner, Spc. Spaeth, who was knocked unconscious for a few seconds.

“It knocked me out and caused me to fall out of the turret,” Spaeth said. “But as soon as I regained consciousness I hopped right back up on the gun.”

In spite of the danger, the mission must always go on, and the Soldiers of Company A, know the importance of their logistical support to the overall success of the operation.

“It’s pretty simple,”

Spaeth said. “Without us, other places wouldn’t be able to operate. We bring them everything they need.”





# 3 STB Connects With Locals



Sgt. Stacy Hector, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Special Troops Battalion, spends time with a group of female students at the Road-e-Ahmad High School in Qadar Khail village, Paktya Province during a shura and ANSF school supply distribution April 15. The event was the battalion's second engagement at the school in three days.

**By Staff Sgt. Jimmy Norris**

*3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., PAO*

Twice in three days Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division alongside their Afghan National Security Forces partners conducted shuras and delivered school supplies at a Paktya high school.

The first event took place April 13 when members of the 3rd Special Troops Battalion accompanied by Afghan Border Police and Afghan National Police went to Road-e-Ahmad High School in Qadar Khail village to conduct a shura with students, teachers and other villagers.

The shura, said 3STB operations officer Maj. Mike Peeler, was held for the purpose of gaining support for the government of Afghanistan and recruiting for ANSF.

Following the shura, ANSF personnel distributed school supplies as well as radios, soccer balls, hygiene kits, and children's shoes and toys.

"ABP and ANP [personnel] took the lead in all aspects in front of the villagers and students," said 3STB commander Lt. Col. Paul Sarat. "We appeared as observers only. This seems to be the way ahead."

According to Peeler, 3STB personnel had believed the school was male only. Upon arrival, they learned

the school had 50 female students.

While the battalion was able to distribute generic supplies to the girls, there was nothing "female specific" for them.

To rectify the oversight, 3STB and ANSF conducted a second event at the school April 15.

This event, which included female Soldiers from the 3rd BCT Provost Marshal and Engineer sections, was held for the female students who had been overlooked on the previous event, said Sarat.

"One of the reasons we had this second event was because Lt. Col. Sarat had heard that one little girl cried the first time and so he insisted on the second 'female focused' event," Peeler said.

According to Peeler, Ahmad Abad district officials sent between 50 and 75 girls from other schools to participate.

While 3rd BCT personnel appeared only as observers in during the first event, Peeler said, this time they were invited to participate.

At the end of the event, students presented veils to four female Soldiers.

"The entire event was truly inspirational with all the girls interacting with the female Soldiers," said 3rd BCT Provost Marshal Capt. Jill Glasenapp. Glasenapp was one of the four Soldiers awarded veils. "It was amazing seeing all the smiles, colors and true happiness."

# PHOTO FEATURE COP SPERA

By Sgt. Jeffrey Alexander  
*55th Combat Camera*

As a combat photographer, my job requires me to travel often. I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to see life on the largest of bases and the smallest of outpost. Most recently, I spent two weeks at Combat Outpost Spera documenting the daily operations of U.S. Army Soldiers from A Troop, 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment; about 20 Soldiers and a company of their Afghan National Army counterparts tasked with protecting a small section of the Afghan border.



Soldiers from A Troop, 1st Sqn, 33rd Cav. and the Afghan National Army patrol the Spera Sub-District, Khowst Province, Mar. 8.



1st Lt. Paul Corcoran, A Troop, 1st Sqn 33rd Cav., briefs Afghan National Army Soldiers before patrolling the Spera Sub-District, Khowst Province, Mar. 8.



Soldiers from A Troop, 1st Sqn, 33rd Cav. leave Combat Outpost Spera to patrol Khowst Province, Mar. 11.



**Spc. Curtis Rowe, A Troop, 1-33 Cav., puts up a camouflage net at COP Spera Mar. 7**



The living quarters at Spera are roughly the size of a B-hut. With 20 guys cramped in a small room without heat or air, it smells exactly the way you'd think it would. There's no running water and the shower consists of a bag connected to a tube that first must be heated in a coffee maker.

There is no cook. Whoever isn't on patrol during the day makes chow with whatever's available. Somewhere between 12-hour patrols, filling sandbags and two guard shifts a night, the Soldiers of Spera find downtime clean their weapons and watch movies. The patrols are grueling. The mountainous terrain is unforgiving and enemy contact is highly likely. Stumbling, falling and tripping are inevitable.

There's no doubt in my mind that the Soldiers of Apache live

rougher lives than most of us. The amazing thing is, even without the amenities that many of us take for granted, they're reluctant to leave. In fact, they like it there. The work is hard and the camaraderie is strong. To them the cramped living quarters are "cozy", the shower "works great", and a hot meal is a fitting reward after 12-hour patrol.

The truth is I like going to places like these because it helps a "fob-bit" like myself to put things in perspective. After leaving Spera, my complaints about the chow hall become minuscule, personal problems become slightly less important and my desire for personal comfort becomes completely irrelevant. I'm glad there are Soldiers like Apache Troop and places like COP Spera to remind us that our deployment, jobs and living conditions really aren't all that bad.



**An Afghan National Army Soldier rests during a patrol through the Spera Sub-District, Mar. 8.**



**Soldiers from A Troop, 1-33 Cav., patrol through the Spera Sub-District Mar. 8.**



**(Above) A Soldier from A Troop, 1-33 Cav. Regiment, provides security for a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter at COP Spera, Mar. 17. (Right) Pfc. Alexander Roper A Troop, 1-33 Cav., provides security while on patrol with Afghan National Army Soldiers in the Spera Sub-District, Mar. 8.**





(Top left) Soldiers from A Troop, 1-33 Cav., fill sandbags at Combat Outpost Spera Mar. 7. (Bottom Left) Pfc. Edgar Maldonado of A Troop, 1-33 Cav., patrols Spera, Mar. 17. (Top Right) Spc. Cory Obitts and Pfc. Edgar Maldonado of A Troop, 1-33 Cav., conduct personal hygiene at COP Spera. (Center Right) Afghan Soldiers provide security during a halt while on patrol in Spera, Mar. 17. (Bottom Right) Pfc. Ryan Whalen and Pfc. Alexander Roper, A Troop, 1-33 Cav. watch a movie at COP Spera, Mar. 11.





Lt. Gen. David Rodriguez, commander, International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, and Col. Viet Luong, commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, pose at Forward Operating Base Salerno, May 12, with a group of Soldiers who received awards for valor. Three Bronze Star Medal's and eight Army Commendation Medals, all with "V" Devices were awarded.

## LETTING VALOR NOT FAIL 11 RAKKASANS RECOGNIZED WITH 'V' DEVICES

By Pfc. Chris McKenna

*3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. PAO*

Many Soldiers have received Bronze Stars and Army Commendation Medals, but relatively few know the

pride that comes with adding the small metal "V" to the ribbon – a device that denotes the award was presented for acts of valor.

On May 12, 11 more Soldiers learned what it felt like to have their courage publicly recognized when they received awards with "V" Devices at a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Salerno, where U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Rodriguez, commander for International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, was on hand to present awards.

Among those awards were three Bronze Star Medals, eight Army Commendation Medals - all with the "V" Device - and two Purple Heart Medals.



### Cpl. Shelton Woolever Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment



On March 18, Woolever's mounted element encountered a complex enemy attack in Musa Khel Village, Paktika Province.

Despite thick smoke and holding a complete disregard for his own injuries, Woolever identified the wounded leg a fellow Soldier had suffered during a rocket propelled grenade blast and applied pressure and a tourniquet to the wound.

Denying self treatment, Woolever dismounted his vehicle and moved 15 meters to his sergeant's vehicle where he called for indirect fire to suppress the enemy. He moved back to the injured Soldier and continued to provide medical aid until the medical evacuation helicopter arrived.

"I think it's an honor to be awarded the Bronze Star, but I think that other Soldiers, like ... the one who was hurt, deserves it a whole lot more than I do," Woolever said.

### Pfc. Michael Ranger Company D, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment



On Feb., 25 Ranger's platoon was engaged by enemy forces as they were responding to an event as the Quick Reaction Force.

Ranger's vehicle moved directly in front of an insurgent safe house, exposing him to continuous enemy fire.

Ranger placed accurate fire on the building, causing the enemy to shift their fire off of another platoon. This transformed what was a potentially catastrophic engagement into a tactical information operation victory for combined forces.

His fire resulted in two enemy insurgents killed in action and two more detained.

"It's a great honor receiving the Bronze Star, something I thought I'd never see in my service," Ranger said. "It's a direct result of my [noncommissioned officer], my officers, and the training they instilled in us."

### Staff Sgt. Philip Burchfield Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment



On March 18, 2010, Burchfield's mounted element encountered a complex enemy ambush in the Musa Khel Village,

Paktika Province, Afghanistan.

In complete darkness, Burchfield moved 15 meters on foot while receive a barrage of enemy gunfire to the lead truck where he began to coordinate an effective triage.

Once the wounded Soldier was stabilized and the enemy attack was disrupted, Burchfield moved his platoon back to their outpost.

"It means a lot, but I think there are other Soldiers out there who deserve it a lot more," Burchfield said about his award. "If any other Soldier was in my position, they would have done the same thing."



## Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device

- ☐ Lt. Col. Stephen Lutsky, 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment commander
- ☐ 1st Lt. Charles Davis, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment
- ☐ Staff Sgt. Jesse Johnston, Company A., 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment
- ☐ Sgt. Andrew Nelson, Company C., 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment
- ☐ Spc. Robert Brennan, Company C., 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment
- ☐ Spc. Tyler Garvin, Company C., 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment
- ☐ Spc. Vincent Kelly, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment
- ☐ Spc. Samuel Keefer, Company A., 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment

# Soldier escapes death on birthday, reenlists



Colonel Viet Luong, commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, re-enlists Sgt. Brandon Bougades, from White Sulphur, W. Va., team leader with Troop C., 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, after he was injured in combat. The re-enlistment occurred at the Forward Operating Base Salerno Hospital, on Bougades birthday, the same day he was wounded in action.

## By 3rd BCT PAO

When U.S. Army Sgt. Brandon Bougades, C Troop, 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment told his reenlistment noncommissioned officer "Let's get this done before something happens" during a May 6 conversation, he had no way of knowing how prophetic his statement would be.

The White Sulfur, W.Va., native had spoken with U.S. Army Sgt 1st Class Robert Waller, Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, about adding another six years to his time in the Army.

To make the event special, he scheduled his reenlistment ceremony for May 7, also his 28th birthday.

Just hours prior to the appointed time as predicted,

something did happen.

"I told you so," Bougades would later say as Waller, from Jeffersonville, Ind., walked into Forward Operating Base Salerno's combat support hospital's room where Bougades laid in a bed receiving treatment for his wounds.

While on patrol east of Camp Clark in Khowst province, Bougades' vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

Bougades received wounds to his lower extremities and was rushed by helicopter to the CSH at FOB Salerno.

This is the third time Bougades has been wounded in combat — something he's seemed to take in stride. His first complaint to medical personnel wasn't about pain, but about the reenlistment appointment that he might miss.

"You can ask the med-

ics," Bougades said. "From the second I came in I told them, I got to reenlist. I'm supposed to do that today. I still want to."

The leaders at FOB Salerno rushed to make it happen, with U.S. Army Col. Viet Luong, 3rd Brigade Combat Team commander of the 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky., taking the lead in the bedside ceremony.

"Being here to do this is the ultimate honor for me," Luong told Bougades during the ceremony. "You know what I think of you. I've got 6,000 Soldiers and I could have picked you up out of a line-up because of my admiration for your leadership, and I've told you that before."

"I love this job," Bougades said. "I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I don't want to be doing anything else."

# IRON RAKKASANS DELIVER TREES TO PAKTIKA

**By 1st Lt. RJ Peek**  
*3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Regt.*

Over the past few years a devastating drought has plagued western Paktika province, leaving the land dry and unstable. Heavy deforestation in the area has increased the problems and insurgent disruptions of government projects have nearly brought the province to its knees.

There is some good news, however. Over the past two weeks, the Paktika Provincial government has struck back with a project to help counter the looming disaster.

The Paktika Provincial government, along with the Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team, purchased and distributed tree saplings to land owners throughout the province.

These trees will be equally distributed and planted throughout the region in order to allow the root systems to hold the soil in place and bring more stability to the soil.

As an added benefit, the Paktika government soon plans to distribute fruit trees giving the population a chance to produce their own food while simultaneously improving the soil.

Staff Sgt. Derek Dosedel, 3rd Battalion, 187 Infantry Regiment's liaison to the PRT's reconstruction and agricultural projects said he was excited

about the arrival of the saplings.

"The distribution of these erosion prevention trees is a testament to the Paktika government's concern for the problems and needs of the people," he said. "It is a great step forward towards re-establishing the entire province as a fertile and arable land."

Recipients of the tree saplings attended an agricultural course. This course, organized and led by the Paktika government and taught by the district agricultural representative, instructed the farmers on the proper planting and nurturing of the trees in order to maximize yields.

They were also taught how to properly draw the seeds from the future fruits in order to plant and grow additional trees.

Afghan National Security Forces escorted the trees to their respective district for distribution as well as providing security for the class and distribution process to prevent thievery and corruption



Residents of western Paktika stand in line for saplings handed out by Afghan National Security forces and members of the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment during a tree distribution.



# Operation Le Connecting t



Captain Momand Ashaullah, 3rd Battalion, Kandak 2, ANA commander, addresses the local populous in Pirkoti Village, Paktika Province, Afghanistan, prior to handing out hand cranked radios March 27.



(Upper Right) Captain Momand Ashaullah, 3rd Battalion, Kandak 2, ANA commander, speaks with a local in Pirkoti Village, Paktika Province, Afghanistan, March 26.

(Middle Right) Staff Sgt. Arin Wilson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, information engagement non-commissioned officer in charge, and Soldiers with the Orgun branch of the Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team, sit and meet with village elders in Pirkoti, Paktika Province, Afghanistan March 26.

(Lower Right) Afghan National Army Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, Kandak 2, and Soldiers with the Orgun branch of the Paktika Reconstruction Team, conduct a presence patrol through Pirkoti Village, Paktika Province, Afghanistan, March 26.



# Leader Zalzalalah II : the ANA to the people

**By Pfc. Chris McKenna**  
*3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., PAO*

Soldiers with the Afghan National Army, partnered with Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and Soldiers with the Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team, conducted Operation Leader Zalzalalah II March 23-28.

The ANA and PRT went through the Paktika province village's of Pirkoti and Bibycott, conducting an area reconnaissance, presence patrols, key leader engagements and gathering intelligence from the locals while the 1-187th INF Soldiers provided security.

"While we were there the people told us what they feel their needs are," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Arin Wilson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-187 INF. Wilson leads the unit's information gathering efforts.

While at first stand-offish with the Soldiers, the people in Pirkoti eventually warmed up and told the PRT about their needs for a bigger medical clinic, paved roads and a bigger school.

"The area hasn't had a big American presence," said Spc. Brabham Garrick, 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery Regiment, PRT security. "The kids were both scared and interested at the same time, while I feel the adults were happy to see us for the most part."

This is the first assessment of Pirkoti and Wilson said the PRT gained a lot of information gained to help determine where the priorities for development.

ANA Capt. Momand Ashaquallah, commander of 3rd Battalion, 2nd Kandak, 203rd Corps, said one of the most important strides toward progress would be to provide the people of Pirkoti with both jobs and projects."

Two and three years ago these people weren't interested in anything; now they are asking for things," Ashaquallah said. "They understand that the coalition

has done a lot of projects through Orgun, and they would like to get projects for themselves."

It was an important point for the ANA not to make any promises that can't be guaranteed as to the people of Afghanistan, "a word is a man's bond."

Ashaquallah said it is extremely important in circumstances such as in Pirkoti to be close to the people.

"If you are close with them, then you can understand what they truly want. And they can understand what can actually be provided for them," Ashaquallah said.

The last time the ANA were in the Pirkoti area was roughly eight months ago, and the changes between now and then are drastic said Ashaquallah.

"Before when we came the people were completely stand-offish with us," Ashaquallah said. "Over the past day's we have been here, they have warmed up and begun to accept us."

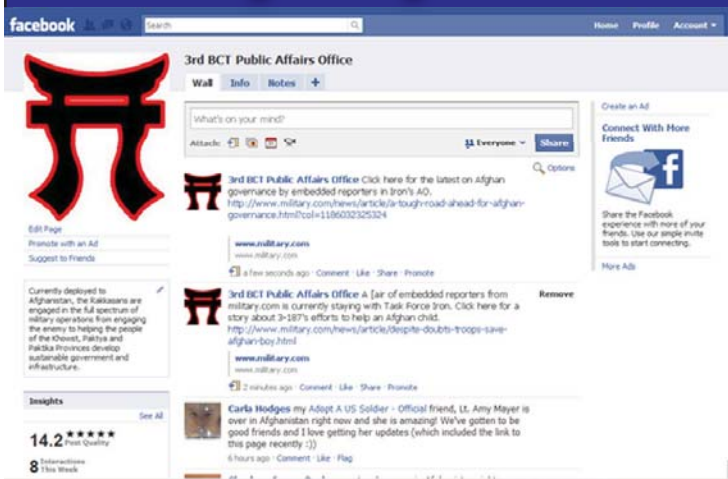
Ashaquallah said that the more the people see a military presence, the more they will trust the military.



**Specialist Charlie Johnson,** with the Orgun Branch of the Paktika Province Provincial Reconstruction Team, walks in the wady during a presence patrol in Pirkoti Village, Paktika Province, Afghanistan, March 26.



# Keep up with the Rakkasans



Find photos and links to almost everything the Public Affairs Office and its embedded reporters produce on our Facebook Page.  
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/3rd-BCT-Public-Affairs-Office/317563029214>

## Successful air assault eliminates three insurgents

Written by Bryan Media Center Saturday, 13 May 2012 07:38



PAKISTAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - U.S. Army Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Airborne Division Air Assault, and Afghan National Army Soldiers watch an Afghan National Police checkpoint in Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Jason Alexander)

PAKISTAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Afghan National Security Forces and Soldiers with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 1st Airborne Division (Air Assault), conducted an air assault operation into Karabineh village, Afghanistan, killing three insurgents and recovering multiple munitions, May 10.

The combined forces air assaulted into the village during the late morning hours and immediately came into enemy contact. After confirmation of insurgent activity, and just 16 minutes after the operation began, three insurgents were dead.

"This mission was a devastating blow to enemy forces who seek to destabilize the region and capabilities of this cell, which we believe consisted of 10 (militant)

the village by the combined forces leading to the confiscation of several grenade rounds, hand grenades and detainment of three militants, multiple munitions.

the village, blocking positions and detainment and tactical questioning

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Find our press releases on the Combined Joint Task Force 82 Web site at [www.cjtf82.com](http://www.cjtf82.com).



Find short news stories and other video content on our YouTube channel  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/3BCTPAO#p/a>.

Not seeing enough of your unit?  
 Contact your unit public affairs representative.

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Keep an eye out for the next issue of Rakkasan magazine.

# In Memory of our fallen Rakkasans



**Sgt. Vince Owens**  
F CO, 626 BSB  
KIA 1 MARCH, 2010



**Pfc. Jason Kropat**  
C CO, 1-187 INF REGT  
KIA 8 MARCH, 2010



**Sgt. Jonathon Richardson**  
C CO, 1-187 INF REGT  
KIA 8 MARCH, 2010



**Pfc. Jonathon Hall**  
HHC, 3-187 INF REGT  
KIA 8 APRIL, 2010



**Spc. Jeremy Brown**  
HHC, 1-187 INF REGT  
KIA 9 MAY, 2010



**Pfc. Christopher Barton**  
C TROOP, 1-33 CAV REGT  
KIA 24 MAY, 2010



**Sgt. Erick Klusacek**  
B TROOP, 1-33 CAV REGT  
KIA 8 JUNE, 2010

Let valor

Not Fail

