

1-178th Field
Artillery Battalion
E-letter

Swamp Fox Facts

- Swamp Fox Soldiers have completed more than sixty-one percent of their deployment.
- The 1-178th FA BN was publicly recognized by the University of South Carolina at the celebration honoring the 2010 National Champion Gamecock Baseball Team.
- Capt. Tommy Whitehead is the first BN Soldier to receive the Meritorious Service Medal in Afghanistan.
- The BN Civil Military Operations Cell is currently building five new schools in Kabul Province.

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Special Freedom Edition!



Marion's Men

Volume 1, Issue 4

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Honoring Our Fallen



Sgt. 1st Class Fike and Staff Sgt. Hoover, both of Pennsylvania, were killed in action last month by an insurgent in Zabul Province. At the time of their deaths, both of these brave Senior NCO's were executing the mission they were trained to perform – providing security for their fellow Soldiers on the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team and protecting the innocent people of Afghanistan. Sgt. 1st Class Fike and Staff Sgt. Hoover were members of the 1-110th Infantry Battalion from Pennsylvania. They joined Task Force Swamp Fox in January at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. They were extraordinary Soldiers and exceptional human beings. They are our heroes. They will be missed and remembered forever. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Soldiers Live Out the Golden Rule in AFG

Story by Capt. Chris G. Neeley, PAO, USA

The American Soldier personifies the word volunteer. They volunteer to serve their country through military service. They volunteer to serve in a war. They volunteer to fight and defend freedom for total strangers, both home and abroad.

Here in Afghanistan the Soldiers of the 1-178th Field Artillery Battalion are volunteering their limited spare time to help the Afghan people through charitable outreach. Operation Outreach Afghanistan (OOA) is their volunteer organization of choice to accomplish their good works.

Since taking over Operation Outreach Afghanistan in March from the previous command, Operation Outreach has grown from ten active volunteer soldiers to more than 174 today. That's an increase of more than 1,740%! Additionally, thanks to the Soldiers' family, friends, churches and employers back home; Operation Outreach Afghanistan has collected more than \$35,000 in donated shoes, clothes and school supplies for the Afghan children.

OOA has grown from one twenty foot shipping container full of humanitarian aid to three in just two months.

Swamp Fox Soldiers volunteer their time by attending the weekly OOA meetings on Tuesday evenings, conex work days on Friday at Noon and Humanitarian Assistance (HA) drops. Since March fifty-four OOA volunteers have participated in mounted and dismounted HA drops. Aid drops include the donation of 200 blankets to the Cure Hospital, school supply donations to the Khan High School, Khan Popal School, Mehrabuddin School, Wallayatee School and Familihai Reshkoor School, 170 clothes bags donated to the Hued Khail Village, Medical supplies donated to Kabul University, clothes donated to the Badam Bagh Corrections Center for Women.

For those Soldiers that spend a generous portion of their deployment dedicated to helping others through OOA, they will be eligible for the Military Outstanding Volunteer Medal (MOV). The MOV is a nice reward for those who give



Spec. Brandon Unruh helps deliver soccer equipment and jerseys to students at the Khan High School in Kabul Province.

their best to help improve the lives of the Afghan people. However, the MOV is not the motivator for their service. At the heart of their service is a sincere desire to do unto others as they would want others to do for them. The OOA Soldier volunteers are living out the Golden Rule. It's what they do.

Donations can be mailed to: Chris Neeley, 1-178th FA BN, Camp Phoenix, APO, AE 09320. Items needed include children's clothes, shoes and school supplies.



1/178 FA BN Public Affairs

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CSM Samuel McKenzie (Left) congratulates Capt. Tommy Whitehead (Right) on receiving the Meritorious Service Medal, June 29.

The Commander's View...

Salaam Aleikum (Peace be with you),

As I sit down to write this month's article for the newsletter, I do so with an exceptionally heavy heart. On 11 June 2010, I received a phone call that no Commander ever wants to receive. On this Friday, the Commander from Zabul called to inform me that two of our Soldiers had been killed that morning by a suicide bomber. The Soldiers were on a mission in a bazaar attempting to purchase needed medical supplies for a local hospital when the attack occurred. The attack was carried out by a 13 year old boy dressed in a women's burqua.

After receiving the news, I felt as if someone had kicked me in the stomach. The following Monday, CSM McKenzie, SFC Gardner and I flew down to Zabul to attend the memorial service and visit the SECFOR Soldiers. I went down to Zabul expecting the worse with regard to the morale and demeanor of the Pennsylvania Soldiers. Boy was I mistaken! These great young Soldiers were simply amazing. They had already planned and prepared for the memorial service, and completed all of the difficult tasks associated with accounting for and securing their fallen comrades' personal effects. The memorial service was flawlessly conducted and the Soldiers appropriately honored their fallen brothers.

While we all continue to mourn, grieve and try to come to grips with the loss of these two American heroes, the lessons in dignity, grace and professionalism these Soldiers demonstrated was truly inspirational. I ask that you continue to pray for the families of SFC Robert J. Fike and SSG Bryan A. Hoover. A memorial fund for the 12 year old



LTC Ed McInnis kneels before the Battle Cross at a ceremony honoring fallen Swamp Fox Soldiers Sgt. 1st Class Robert Fike and Staff Sgt. Bryan Hoover.

daughter of SFC Fike has been established:

SFC Robert J. Fike Memorial
C/O First Citizens Bank, Monroeville Office
4010 Monroeville Blvd.
Monroeville, PA 15146

In spite of the tragic loss of our two Soldiers our mission rolls on, and I continue to be overwhelmed by the praise of our Soldiers performance of duty from the Commanders of the units that we support. In addition to our trip to Zabul, CSM McKenzie, Chaplain White and I were able to visit our troops in Nangahar, Laghman, and Nuristan. The Soldiers in the PRT's are working hard and staying very busy; in spite of the long hours, high operational tempo, and dangerous conditions the morale, drive and motivation these men consistently demonstrate is awesome to observe. Needless to say, I am extremely proud of them.

We are still in the phase of our deployment where Soldiers are taking their R&R leave. I would

ask you to be mindful of Operational Security (OPSEC) considerations when using social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. I specifically ask that you do not publish dates, travel times or countdown calendars to ensure that our Soldiers arrive home and return safely from R&R.

In closing, we continue to be blessed with an outpouring of love and support from back home. I assure you this support is greatly appreciated and helps us to deal with the stresses of deployment in a positive manner.

True & Tried!

LTC E.M. McInnis



The Leader's Book by CSM McKenzie

Greetings,

Webster's Dictionary defines freedom as the quality or state of being free; the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action; liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another — independence. It defines liberty as the quality or state of being free; the power to do as one pleases; freedom from physical restraint; freedom from arbitrary or despotic control; the positive enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges; the power of choice.

I believe that freedom and liberty are one in the same. You can't have freedom without liberty and you can't have liberty without freedom. As American's we fought to gain and keep our independence for more than 200 years. Now we are engaged in a long fight for the freedom and liberty of others — the people of Afghanistan.

Our young warriors, throughout history have given their lives for the cause of freedom for those both home and abroad. It's what we do as Americans. It's our cause.

I say to you young warriors, keep up the fight, stay vigilant and never waver in your defense of liberty and freedom for your country and the people of Afghanistan.

Regards,
CSM McKenzie
True and Tried

Church Chat with the Chaplain...

Greetings,

Religious freedom is the cornerstone of who we are as a country. The earliest settlers came partially for religious freedom. We fought a war partially for religious freedom. We hold this right dearer than almost any other.

As a chaplain, it's my responsibility to provide for the free exercise of religion of our Warriors. Being in this country has made me appreciate this freedom more than anything else in my life. You see, there is no freedom of religion in Afghanistan. If you are not Muslim, you are persecuted, arrested, and at times, killed. Can you imagine living in an environment like that? Probably not, because we take our freedom of religion for granted.

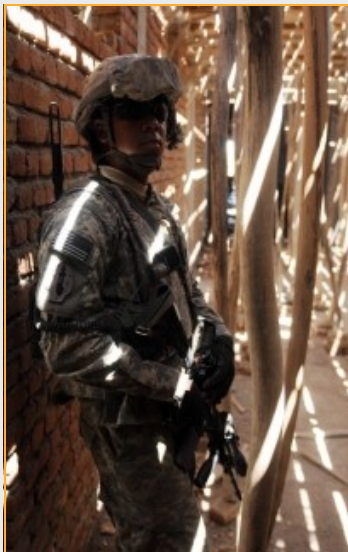
In a way, this is a good thing because it's so much a part of our lives that we don't even think about it. On the downside, it's easy to assume it will always be there. Americans have bled and died for this freedom over the years. Let's honor them by practicing our faith with passion. Let's honor them by making sure we elect leaders who will continue to uphold this liberty. If we don't, we may find one day that it's no longer there.

God bless you
CH Josh White



Chaplain Josh White traveling on-board a U.S. Army helicopter in Afghanistan.

Security — The Main Mission



Parwan Province, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Carl Holloway, a Blythewood, S.C., resident with the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team security element, stands guard during a Jabal-E-Saraj power plant assessment June 15 in Jabal-E-Saraj, Parwan province. The PRT's engineers conducted this mission to collect information on the power plant, a water intake facility and a girls' school, which are currently under construction by the Afghan government with assistance from the PRT team.



Khost Province, U.S. Army Cpl. Shane Rager, Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team infantryman, provides security during a quality assurance check of the new road that extends from the Tani District center to Narizah village, April 5. The new road will provide a safer and more efficient route through the countryside.



Khost Province, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Pringle, Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team infantryman, provides security at the new hospital construction site, April 8. Leaders from the Khost PRT met with Abdul Jabar Naeemi, Khost provincial governor, to discuss progress and future developments on the project.



Parwan Province, U.S. Army Spe. James Moss, Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team security element from Myrtle Beach, S.C., stands guard during a Qal Eh Khojah Girls School assessment in Parwan province, June 10. The PRT's engineers inspect construction sites to ensure contractors are following the statement of work. These assessments are done to ensure contractors follow safety specifications and construction requirements. The PRT has inherited this project from a previous team deployed here. The school's projected completion date is currently December 2010.

See Security — The Main Mission, Pages 5



Citadel Grads and Cadets Meet in Kabul...



Twenty-eight graduates and current cadets of The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, serving in Afghanistan, gathered for a group photo at Kabul International Airport, June 9. **Pictured front row (Left to Right):** Army 1st Lt. Michael Cason, Army Maj. Beau Spafford, Air Force Capt. Robert Gramling, Air Force Brig. Gen. Charlie Lyon, Army Brig. Gen. Wayne Brock, Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Frank McKenzie, Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Mike Regner, Army Spc. Paul Whitten, Army Spc. Youel Hilsman, Army Spc. Jacob Fountain, Army 1st Lt. Matthew McCarty, Army 1st Lt. Brian Flynn, Army 1st Lt. Kevin Medert, Air Force Maj. Brian Hoybach. **Pictured back row (Left to Right):** Navy Lt. Cmdr. Chris Furrider, Army Maj. Grant Martin, Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Campbell, Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Fulton Jones, Civilian Hal Martin, Army Maj. Mark Brown, Army 1st Lt. Isiah Gochett, Army Staff Sgt. Adam Hill, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Matt McNally, Army 1st Lt. Kelly Hasselman, Army Lt. Col. Sammy Phillips, Navy Capt. Geno Paluso, Army Col. Lynn Ashley, Army Lt. Col. Bill Howard.

Soldiers of the Month



Sgt. Sloan Holley (Left of Center) of Calimesa, Calif., 1-178th Field Artillery Battalion, was named non-commissioned officer of the month, July 6, by his Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Ed McInnis (Far Left) of Mount Pleasant, S.C., Command Sgt. Maj. Samuel McKenzie (Right of Center) of Lake City, S.C. and platoon Sgt. 1st Class Homer Gardner, Jr. of Somerset, Pa. at a ceremony at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan. Holley is a medic assigned to the 3rd Platoon, Quick Reaction Force, 1-178th Field Artillery Battalion, South Carolina Army National Guard.



Spec. Shawn Seager (Center) of Belleville, Pa., 1-178th Field Artillery Battalion, was named soldier of the month, July 6, by his Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Ed McInnis (Left) of Mount Pleasant, S.C., Command Sgt. Maj. Samuel McKenzie (Right) of Lake City, S.C., at a ceremony at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan. Seager is the sergeant of the guard, Base Defense Operations Center, 1-178th Field Artillery Battalion, South Carolina Army National Guard.

Security — The Main Mission *continued...*



Nuristan Province, Local boys speak with U.S. Army 1st Lt. Alex Deseta, from Charleston, South Carolina, and members of the Afghanistan national army while members of the Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs team meets with elders of Bar Kut Shomali village to gain information on the Afghanistan government and the various needs of their village. The Nuristan PRT civil affairs team visited the local people with the purpose of developing positive relations the villagers and a better understanding of their government and security forces.

Scout Platoon. A Force Multiplier. Story by 1st Lt. Matthew McCarty, USA

The 1-178th FA BN dismount platoon at Camp Phoenix AFG is composed of 37 soldiers from various units within SC. The platoon carries out a variety of tasks on a daily basis including base security, manning 4 perimeter towers, dismounted presence patrols, both day and night within the local villages and serving as a ready reaction force for the base.

On a typical patrol a section of the platoon and interpreter will travel 3-8 miles around Camp Phoenix. While out we stop and talk to local elders, business owners, and private security guards to build and maintain a good rapport with the local population and gather any intelligence available. A close relationship with the Afghan National Police in our area is also vital in maintaining security for Camp Phoenix and the surrounding villages, there are several ANP stations within our sector which we stop at on a regular basis.

Patrol times and sectors vary daily as to not build



The 1-178th Field Artillery Battalion dismount patrol maneuver through the Hud Kheel Village of Kabul Province.

patterns which would put the patrol at risk. Giving basic medical aid to the local population is also a regular part of the patrols. We see many burns and

cuts, especially on children, which require medical attention the parents are unable to give. The function of dismount patrol for the 1-178th FA BN dismount platoon is physically demanding yet highly rewarding. Getting to work hand in hand with the local population and knowing that we are making a difference in their lives as well as helping to keep the soldiers assigned to Camp Phoenix safe is very gratifying and we will continue to do so with great enthusiasm until we are relieved by the next dismounted patrol unit.

Photos from the Field

