

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF TASK FORCE BASTOGNE

BASTOGNE



MAGAZINE

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1
AUGUST 2010



AIRBORNE



BASTOGNE

Assisting the Afghan cause

June 1st marked a significant event in the history of this Brigade Combat Team and Task Force. That day, we accepted responsibility of the Bastogne Area of Operations, which covers the Nuristan, Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman provinces. We took this AO over from a task force that made huge accomplishments but made some heavy sacrifices as well. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

We embarked on this mission well before we uncased the colors here. We have built strong, swift and lethal companies; intelligent, adaptive staffs; and competent, resilient support elements. Our equipment has already been proven superior; we arrived ready and able to take on the job at hand.

A Word From The Commander

Our first two months have been eventful and trying. Eighteen Bastogne Heroes have been lost; these American Heroes made the ultimate sacrifice to keep our country and their comrades safe while trying to help the people of Afghanistan. Their sacrifice will not be forgotten. It's now up to us to carry on where they left us, making our area of operations safer for the Afghan people.

I can see how our training has already begun to pay significant dividends. As we work with The Afghan National Security Forces removing the threat of insurgents, the Afghan people increasingly feel more confident and empowered to deal with the enemy themselves. The ANSF have already taken great strides to achieve these ends; as mentioned before, we must never forget that it is the Afghans who will defeat those who want nothing more than to bring terror and tyranny back to the people.

Our primary objectives for this deployment remain unchanged: to work shoulder to shoulder with the Afghan Army and Police forces as they provide security to the Afghan people and to assist the Afghan government in providing the essential services, governance tools, and economic stability to the region. Remember, everything we do here is important, and everything we do makes a difference in the lives of our fellow Soldiers and to the Afghan people.

Finally, I want to let everyone – Soldiers, families and civilians – know how proud I am of you. The nation has called and you have answered the challenge. Stay focused and keep up your spirits through the good times and the hard. We will execute our mission always and meet the challenges head on with the courage and dedication that runs through Task Force Bastogne.

Bastogne! Air Assault!



Col. Andrew P. Poppas
Task Force Bastogne Commander

Stay vigilant for the mission ahead

Task Force Bastogne Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Family and Friends,

As we initially assumed our Area of Operation in North Eastern

A WORD FROM THE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

Afghanistan I want all to know that I was truly inspired by the transition we conducted with our Brothers and Sisters of the Mountain Warrior BDE, 4th BCT, 4th Infantry Division based out of FT.

Carson, CO. They truly set us up for success as they passed off all the knowledge and contacts developed over their incredibly difficult yet rewarding and successful year in N2KL (AO Bastogne).

Your extremely hard work and mission focus made the transition seamless. Our promise to the People, Leaders, and Afghanistan Security Forces in AO Bastogne is that we will continue to work towards a terrorist free community that allows the citizens of Afghanistan to live free of tyranny and allow them and their families to prosper.

It is critical that all Warriors of TF Bastogne stay vigilant as we work toward successfully completing our mission. The Leaders and Warriors in our TF are nothing less than incredible! You are truly “the next great generation”. You all amaze me on a daily basis and I am more than humbled to serve and fight beside each and every one of you.

Our mission has inherent risks to the health and welfare of each Warrior, but we have a seasoned group of JR and SR Leaders that know how to mitigate the dangers that may confront us. Our Nation has truly supplied us with the very best individual protection as well as weapons and vehicles that are available anywhere in the world. Rest assured, our taxpayers have our complete thanks for what they collectively supplied us, especially during extremely difficult economic times back home.

I want to especially thank the supporters around the United States who continually send us care packages and notes of appreciation. They all make a difference and we will be forever grateful. Please feel free to send or give me the contact information of those that support us so that I can send a personal note of thanks.

To our Loved Ones that support us, your job is more difficult than ours and we appreciate all that you do during our absence to keep our Military Families strong and running smoothly. I ask that you all do your best to maintain solid communication with family and friends.

It is my Honor to be the Command Sergeant Major of such an outstanding organization and I pledge to support every member of our Task Force.

“Honor and Country”

CSM Kevin R. Benson



Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin R. Benson
Task Force Bastogne Command Sergeant Major

A RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY

HONOR AND COUNTRY

BASTOGNE



TF BASTOGNE COMMANDER:
COL. ANDREW P. POPPAS

TF BASTOGNE COMMAND SGT. MAJOR:
CSM KEVIN R. BENSON

TF BASTOGNE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER:
MAJ. MARY J. CONSTANTINO

TF BASTOGNE PAO NCOIC:
MASTER SGT. MATHEW S. OSBORN

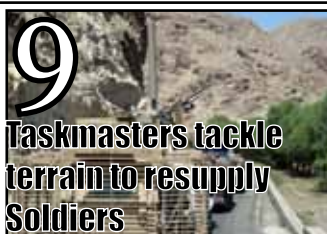
EDITOR:
SPC. RICHARD A. DANIELS JR.

BM IS PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY THE TASK
FORCE BASTOGNE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE,
HHC, 1BCT, 101 ABN, FSC/PAO, FOB FENTY,
AFGHANISTAN, APO AE 09310. DSN 831-6410.

BM IS AN AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. IT IS DISTRIBUTED
FREE TO MEMBERS OF TASK FORCE BASTOGNE.

CONTENTS OF BM ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE
OFFICIAL VIEWS OF, OR ENDORSED BY THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT OR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE
ARMY.

EDITORIAL CONTENT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE TASK FORCE BASTOGNE PUBLIC AF-
FAIRS OFFICE.



9
Taskmasters tackle
terrain to resupply
Soldiers



11
Locals complete
first Afghan ran NGO
Course

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 Nuristan PRT clears path for local village

5 Afghan Judges continue their legal education

6 Chaplain's corner

8 A war-torn Afghan village in need

12 Leaders hold commander's conference

13 Progress in the Pech River Valley

15 There's potential for "Hope" Radio in
Jalalabad

16 Strengthening the border

16 TF Spartan dominates NCO, Soldier Board

18 Calling for mortar
missions over Marawara

19 Clinic helps Soldiers
recover from blasts

21 Fallen Heroes



12
Hit the Mark

Nuristan PRT clears path for local village

By: Staff Sgt. Steven R. Doty

*Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team
Public Affairs*



U.S. Private 1st Class David Reaves, Provincial Reconstruction Team security forces Soldier, from Heartsville, S.C., ascends a hill during a security patrol and engineer assessment in Kautiak village Nuristan Province May 20.



U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Aaron Killingbeck, Provincial Reconstruction Team engineer assistant, from New Castle, Ind., speaks with local workers about the progress of a new footpath during a security patrol and engineer assessment in Kautiak village.



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Aaron Bunting, Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs team, from Elverson, Pa, crosses a creek during a security patrol and assessment in Kautiak village, Nuristan Province May 20.



Members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team complete the end of their security patrol and engineer assessment.

Afghan Judges continue their legal education

By: U.S. Army Spc. Richard Daniels Jr.

Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs

Supreme Court justices from four of Afghanistan's eastern provinces gathered for the first time at the Jalalabad Courthouse to further their knowledge in law.

Judge Advocate Generals, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Bastogne, used this opportunity to distribute much needed legal books on the penal code during the Continuing Legal Education session June 5 – June 10.

"A Continuing Legal Education for the judges of the Nangarhar, Nuristan, Kunar and Laghman provinces, it is a program to help judges and lawyers to keep up to date on the latest changes to the law," said Capt. Hana Rollins of Woodbridge, Va., judge advocate rule of law attorney. "It ensures that they understand what is going on and still be relevant to anything that might have happened since they went to law school because there are always constant changes in the legal field."

Some of the topics reviewed in the CLE were the Afghanistan penal code, criminal traffic laws, civil procedures, violence against women, deeds, land disputes and how to conduct a fair trial.

"We need stability and security in Afghanistan," said Supreme Court Judge, Rawofi. "To have justice we need professionals, like judges, to keep getting continuing legal education."

Getting the judges together proved to be a difficult task for the JAG, but they were determined to provide a fair trial for the people of Afghanistan.

"What we were trying to do was have a conference

of each province, but because the Supreme Court justices have very busy schedules, it's hard to get them to come down and do this often," said Rollins. "This was the first one of its kind where we had all [the judges] come to one location and then have the top people instruct [them]."



Maj. Scott E. Linger, Brigade Judge Advocate, Task Force Bastogne, hands an Afghan judge a certificate of completion. Supreme Courts Justices gathered at the Jalalabad Courthouse for the Continuing Legal Education session.

Though this program is new to judicial leaders in Afghanistan, it is the mirror image of a program conducted in the United States.

"In the U.S., the American Bar Association also has a Continuing Legal Education session, this is the Afghanistan version of that," said Rollins. "In this event, this is the first time we had Supreme Court justices instruct the judges. We invited 50 judges including

five defense attorneys from Jalalabad, 20 from Nangarhar, 10 from Kunar, 10 from Laghman and five from Nuristan. Four additional students came from the Supreme Court voluntarily, they are probably future judges."

The court still faces a continual threat of corruption. One of the major threats is various figureheads using bribes to lighten or omit a sentence.

"Some sub-governors are interfering with our decisions," said Kunar Judge Ansarullah Mawlawizada. "This should not be allowed. When a Judge does not agree with a sub-governor that judge is reassigned to a new district, if we remove a Judge because he is bad, we should prosecute him."

Judicial members stressed the importance of practicing law throughout the conference. Without it, the judges feared that there would be little to no improvements for a better Afghanistan.

"We should not be afraid of any insurgents, we should just apply the law and defend Afghanistan against the enemies of Afghanistan," said Deputy

Governor Mohammad Alam Ishaqzai. “To have peace in Afghanistan, we must apply the law.”

Though the results of JAG’s endeavour may not show immediately, Rollins believes the session has much promise for the country.

“If you can get a good group of judges who are willing to go back, who are motivated, excited about doing their job, and then going out and conducting fair public trials that will spread like wild fire. You just have to keep pushing it to make sure they will carry it out. So I think it was very successful but the benefits for Afghanistan will be long term.”

Getting judges excited about doing their jobs depends upon their security. Judges often find themselves faced with a choice; uphold the law and face political harass-

ment, or become influenced by corrupted officials and let the unjust go free.

“I am concerned for safety for Judges. If Judges are not safe, how can we apply the law?” said Mawlawizada. “We are scared for our safety while traveling to our districts and offices.”

Developing judges with the courage to conduct fair trials also plays into one of TF Bastogne’s ultimate goals.

“Our goal is to try to get public trials to avoid corruption; you can’t pay a judge off when the whole public is listening to the facts of the case,” said Rollins. Our goal is to make them to make it public so we can step out of the picture and let the Afghans take care of their own judicial system.”

“We are not trying to influence their decision but let the people hear it so it is a fair public trial to minimize corruption,” said Rollins.



Kunar Judge Ansarullah Mawlawizada speaks to 50 judges about some of the complications of corrupt government mixed with law. Supreme Courts Justices gathered at the Jalalabad Courthouse for the Continuing Legal Education session.

Servicemembers should maintain their pace

You may not know this, but I am a marathon runner. In learning to run marathons, I’ve found that in order to finish, I must focus on completing the race.

I must keep on course and be motivated. Likewise, in order to complete our mission in Afghanistan we must be motivated,

CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

physically strong and focused on the finish line.

In running and finishing a marathon, the most important thing is to maintain a steady pace. We’ve been here about three months, and we still have nine months to go. The key to a marathon is to pace yourself. The question is, “how do you pace yourself?”

As for me, I am doing this deployment with God. I encourage you to maintain your pace in whatever way is natural to you. Perhaps it’s your faith. Maybe it’s workouts in the gym.

However you maintain it, let’s make our families and country proud of us. Already, I am proud of each brave warrior as we continue to be focused and run the race to finish our course.



Chaplain (Maj.) Moon Kim
Task Force Bastogne Chaplain



THE HEAT IS ON

Greetings Bastogne Soldiers,

The “Heat is On” here in N2KL and as summer hits, the daily high temperatures are typically over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Be aware that even Soldiers who are acclimatized to the heat can develop heat exhaustion or have a heat stroke. Be sure to “Beat the Heat” by staying hydrated, eating right, avoid getting sunburned, and avoiding stimulants/weight loss supplements. We are all at increased risk due to the body armor trapping heat close to our bodies. Beware, if you have had a prior heat injury or have the sickle cell trait, you are at a much higher risk for heat illness. Benjamin Franklin coined a phrase that, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” and this cannot be overemphasized with heat injuries. If you are engaging in vigorous work or conducting battlefield patrols you need to be drinking no less than 1 quart of water per hour. Protect yourself with proper planning – work at times other than midday, adhere to work rest cycles, and when possible develop cooling systems such as iced sheets for quick cooling. Once your body is experiencing heat exhaustion your combat effectiveness decreases dramatically. Take immediate cooling actions including if you or your battle buddy experiences the following signs and symptoms: 1) Dizziness, 2) Headache, 3) Nausea, 4) Weakness or fatigue, or 5) Muscle cramps, 6) Altered mental status, a sign of heat stroke, is very concerning and requires a MEDEVAC. For more information concerning Heat Injury or MEDEVAC procedures contact the Bastogne Surgeon’s Cell at (N) 831-6504.

Air Assault!

Photo by: Staff Sgt. Michele A. Desrochers, USAF

A war-torn Afghan village in need

40ID ADT, ANSF, TF No Slack come to their aid

By: U.S. Army 1st Lt. Robert C. J. Parry

40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team

A specialized team of Soldiers from the California Army National Guard's 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team joined with the Afghan Border Police and Task Force No Slack to bring relief supplies to the people of Daridam Village in eastern Afghanistan's Marawara District, Kunar province.

The supplies arrived after a violent battle between the Taliban and a combined team of Afghan National Army forces and 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment Soldiers. The battle saw a large force of insurgents defeated and fleeing the village, leaving the residents shaken and in need of assistance.

Following a shura with Marawara District sub-governor Pacha and Daridam village elders, ADT Soldiers accompanied by Afghan Border Police went to the village and began efforts to reinforce the local economy, which is almost entirely agriculture-based.

The 40th ID ADT First Sergeant, 1st Sgt. John A. Hanson of Salinas, Calif., led a team to a field expedient repair of a pipe, which is the residents' only source of water. Meanwhile, U.S. Army Sgt. Scott Flynn, of Redwood City, Calif., and U.S. Army Sgt. Jason Stevens, of Lynchburg, Va., led a group of ABP and Soldiers on a patrol inside the village to assess the health of the local livestock population and to talk to residents about their needs and concerns.

Flynn and Stevens found that the livestock suffer from malnutrition and parasites, both of which are common throughout the province. They also assessed a local watershed area, which is subject to periodic flooding causing damage to the crops, and began developing an initial plan to control the problem.

"The people of Daridam have obviously been through a lot after having their village occupied by the Taliban," said Sgt. Flynn, an ADT agronomist who works with the U.S. Forest Service from Northern California. "We were able to talk to a few villagers during our patrol, and they are mainly concerned about putting their lives back together and getting to planting. Our work will help them do that," he said.

Before the ADT departed, the ABP and Soldiers delivered agriculture supplies to the villagers to ensure

they can maximize the productivity of their fields and livestock as they recover from the battle. Among the supplies, were high-quality animal feed, anti-parasitic medication, nutritional supplements, high-quality seed, and tools they will need for the work, such as pick-axes and shovels, so that the villagers can re-plant fields damaged in the fighting.

"Daridam is one of the better areas of Kunar prov-

ince in terms of its agriculture capabilities," said Sgt. Stevens who works in civilian life as a horticulturalist with Thomas Jefferson's Monticello estate in Virginia. "The supplies we delivered will help them recover more quickly, and strengthen their village to resist the Taliban's influence."

In addition to the supplies delivered, the ADT has coordinated with contractors for additional repairs to irrigation systems. The Afghan Veterinarians Association will also go to Daridam to vaccinate livestock against diseases and implement a program, which will set the villagers up in a self-sufficient poultry business giving them additional strength to resist the Taliban on their own.



U.S. Army Lt. Col. Joel B. Vowell, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment commander, takes a minute to discuss operations with the local Afghan National Army commander at the Marawara District Center after a Shura held to discuss security in the area.



Task Force Taskmaster delivers much needed supplies through a mountain pass on a road known as Main Supply Route California in eastern Afghanistan that runs between Forward Operating Base Fenty in Jalalabad and FOB Bostick, in the north near Nari July 6.

Taskmasters tackle terrain to resupply Soldiers

By: U.S. Army 1st Lt. Emily K. Baker
426th BSB, Company B Executive Officer

There is a road in eastern Afghanistan that runs between Forward Operating Base Fenty, in Jalalabad, and FOB Bostick, in the north near Nari. For the Soldiers of the 426th Brigade Support Battalion, Task Force Taskmasters, this is the most treacherous stretch of road any of them have ever experienced.

They know the route as Main Supply Route California. A route plagued by improvised explosive devices, small arms fire from hostile insurgents, route washouts and switchbacks that require hours to travel a short distance. The 100-mile route is essentially Afghanistan's version of the Wild West.

"It is a long and arduous journey that lasts for multiple hours," says 1st Lt. Jon Downes of Granville, Ohio, Transportation Platoon Leader for Company A

and the Officer in Charge of the operation. He pairs up with his noncommissioned officer in charge, Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Waters of Carlsbad, N.M., to lead his troops through some of the most dangerous terrain in Afghanistan.

The logistic Soldiers tackle this infamous route once a week to resupply members of the 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Bandit, located at FOB Bostick. They provide critical supplies needed to continue their mission in Regional Command-East, known as the Bastogne Overwatch Combat Logistics Patrol.

"It is a worthwhile mission to support Bandit in their fight against the insurgency with needed supplies," said Downes, "Our Soldiers are performing extremely well."

Soldiers from each company in the 426th BSB participate in weekly Combat Logistics Patrols, including

drivers and gunners from Company A, recovery support Soldiers from Company B, medics from Company C and security elements from Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

“It is essentially a combination of all the companies, so it really is a battalion-wide effort,” says Downes. “Even elements from HHC Brigade, such as the Combat Observation Lasing Team, participate.”

The primary mode of transportation for supplies is via “jingle” trucks, driven by local nationals and supplied by Afghan companies. They dubbed the name “jingle trucks” due to the ornate decorations found on the trucks that are believed to ward off evil spirits.

Taskmaster Soldiers are not alone in their endeavor to navigate this route. The Afghan National Army also participates in the CLPs with their American counterparts.

“We jointly run our missions with the ANA, and they do everything from providing security to transporting supplies,” says Downes.

However dangerous this mission may be, the battle-hardened logistics Soldiers are not intimidated by the perils of MSR California.

“We fight each other tooth and nail on who gets to go out on the road,” said Sgt. Adam Allen of Idaho Falls, Idaho, Company B recovery support Soldier.

“It is one of the worst routes we’ve been on in our entire career, because of the terrain and the

enemy,” says Staff Sgt. Jason Lawson of Maysville, Ky., NCOIC of Company B’s Service and Recovery section.



Two Afghans watch as Task Force Taskmaster delivers much needed supplies on a route known as Main Supply Route California in eastern Afghanistan that runs between Forward Operating Base Fenty, in Jalalabad, and FOB Bostick, in the north near Nari July 6.

Route Stetson is a particularly difficult stretch of the journey and rarely traveled during the day due to the large amount of enemy activity.

“As soon as you get on Stetson, you enter the Dab Valley. That’s where we face everything from vehicle roll-overs, small arms fire, IEDs, and anything else you can imagine,” says Lawson.

The name Stetson brings to mind images of cowboys from the American wild west, making their way through a new frontier. For the Task-

masters, the new frontier is the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan and their efforts to tame it are evident in their day-to-day operations. The Bastogne Overwatch CLPs are essential in continuing to bring the fight to the enemy’s front door.



Task Force Taskmaster delivers much needed supplies on a road known as Main Supply Route California in eastern Afghanistan that runs between Forward Operating Base Fenty, in Jalalabad, and FOB Bostick, in the north near Nari July 6.



Locals complete first Afghan-ran NCO course

By: Spc. Richard Daniels Jr.

Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs

Fifty-one men stood smiling, waiting for the certificates that would recognize them as the first graduates of a border police course administered entirely by Afghans.

After four months of classes and more than two weeks of testing, June 7 was a proud day for those graduating from the Afghan Border Police's Noncommissioned Officer Course at Zone 1, East ABP Headquarters in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

"Today is a very important day for the new NCOs as well as the ABP," said Maj. Adam C. Reichart, of Smithville, Mo., an advisor from 205th Military Police Battalion, Task Force Bastogne. "These classes were all ABP run and well put together."

All of the young Afghan men volunteered and tested to become border police officers, some with a high school freshmen education, some high school graduates and others with college education or degrees. One volunteer had an advantage when it came to the ABP's teachings.

"The classes were not hard for me because I am from a militia family," said Sgt. Shari Fullah, age 26, who achieved the highest honors in the class. "My father, my uncle, all of them, they are military. But the guys who come from a civilian [background], it's a little hard for them."

The graduating NCOs were trained in subjects such as police tactics, improvised explosive devices, criminal tactics, police operations and logistics from instructors handpicked by the ABP.

"I am happy to work as a teacher for the military for 31 years," said Maj. Malang Jan, an instructor at the NCO course. "I have a lot of experience and enjoy my job."

About 15 months ago the ABP didn't have any matching uni-

forms. That was until the Embedded Transition Team stepped in and provided the ABP with uniforms similar to the ones worn by the Army and the Air Force. The new uniforms display a professionalism encouraging more people to join.

"I wanted to go to the Afghan National Army, but I joined the ABP because they have a good uniform," said Fullah. Some of his family members also have a career in the ABP, one an instructor and the other a Soldier, Fullah said.

One of the hardships the border police face is constant attacks against their outposts. As a result, the ABP often see more combat than any other Afghan National Security Force entity.

Reichart concluded his commencement speech with advice for the NCOs.

"You are going to be going to units that are involved with ambushes, fighting, smuggling in a very busy time of the year," said Reichart. "You need to listen to the trainers, those people already trained in those areas as well as the Soldiers who have already been in the area. They have some great experience," he said.

"You need to work together to form a good team. You have learned a lot of things in the past several months. You are now leaders in your unit. Don't take this great responsibility lightly," said Reichart. "Soldiers and future leaders will look to you to guide them and lead them the right way."

The ABP are responsible for securing a 5,529 kilometer border, international airports, administering Afghanistan's customs regulations and the immigration process. The new graduates expressed eagerness to start their jobs.

"If you ask the NCOs where they want to go, they say they want to go to the border, they want to fight the enemy, they are ready to serve Afghanistan," said Jan.

Leaders hold Commander's Conference

By: Spc. Richard Daniels Jr.

Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs

The room quieted as the commander of Task Force Bastogne sat down to give the area of operation's key leaders his plans for helping the Afghan locals.

The once-a-month meeting at the brigade headquarters in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province came as no surprise to the TF Bastogne leaders commanded by Col. Andrew P. Poppas, giving his staff a chance to focus on solely on the battle space.

TF Bastogne has been training back at Fort Campbell to prepare for the Afghanistan deployment for nearly a year and a half. Both leaders and Soldiers worked long hours to execute the plans to create a better Afghan future.

"The commander's conference was set up to bring all the commanders together, share lessons learned, best practices while also providing Col. Poppas each commander's 30-day assessment and way ahead for each battle space owner," said Maj. Andrew P. McCormick of Fountain, Colo., plans officer in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Bastogne.



Task Force Bastogne's key leaders discuss the progress within the area of operations.

During the conference, several leaders presented informative briefings to the commanders. The conference also brought the opportunity to practice a team building social.

"It is rare for all the TF Bastogne leaders to be in one location," said McCormick. "This gave them the opportunity to see and interact with different battle space owners that they often plan operations with or accompany in operations with but do not get the opportunity to discuss things in a face-to-face

environment."

During his initial remarks, Poppas emphasized the need for the commander's conference and stressed Task Force Bastogne's role in Afghanistan.

"We have got one year to make a marked difference," he said. "If we don't set the conditions for a long term, stable Afghanistan, we don't take the problem sets that face us now, reducing doubts, ones that can be taken care of by the Afghans alone. The long-term future is a dismal one," said Poppas.



By: Sgt. Gary A. Witte

300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Scout Platoon, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry

Division, train the Afghan National Army at a firing range on Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam May 16. The Connecticut National Guard unit conducts missions and weekly training with the ANA unit in eastern Afghanistan's Laghman province. The International Security

Hit the mark



Assistance Forces training is run for the ANA noncommissioned officers so they can teach the classes to their own men.



Progress in the Pech River Valley

By: Capt. Jonathan J. Springer
FSO, 1-327th IN REG

After having spent nearly two months in the Pech River Valley, the Soldiers remain eager and hungry to go after an enemy that remains “ghost like” among the mountain-sides.

Many within the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment – over 800 strong and a part of the “Bastogne” Brigade, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) – are finding out that this part of Afghanistan is different than others... and much more convoluted than Iraq ever was.

The 1-327th, or “Task Force Bulldog” as they are known, operates in a very complex environment. The Pech River Valley – the Bulldogs current area of operations – is a forbidden land and a very rural area in the remote Kunar Province of north-eastern Afghanistan where the insurgent base remains strong despite the efforts of the Afghan Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

The “Pech” is comprised of about 100,000 people spread across three districts – Chapadara, Manogai, and Watapur. Daily life for the locals revolves around farming, raising livestock, and fighting to stay alive.

“Our daily focus is on combat operations that aim to increase an ever-elusive ‘security’ for the population that farms and lives in this rural area. This means, in basic terms, that we fight – everyday,” said Lt. Col. Joseph A. Ryan, battalion commander for the 1-327th Inf. Reg from Fort Campbell, Ky.

Ryan, who has seen this part of Afghanistan many times before, mainly with the 75th Ranger Regiment, seems to have a keen understanding of how the Pech River Valley works.

“It’s my unscientific estimate that a good 90-95% of the population in the Pech River Valley is ‘indifferent’ at best to their government’s efforts and the coalition’s efforts to secure peace in the valley. Now, this is not entirely unexpected, nor is it a bad thing. These are the survivalists; people who’ve grown up in a war-torn country for their entire lives. They know nothing but war,” said Ryan.

He continued, “The remaining 5-10% of the population falls into one of three categories. One group plays



1st Lt. Hugh Lewis, a platoon leader with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment out of Fort Campbell, Ky, talks to local leaders in the Pech River Valley about Operation Crop Diversification in late June.

both sides – I call them the ‘entrepreneurs.’ They are willing to take what they deem is acceptable risk to make money or gain influence by engaging the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the coalition on one hand, and the enemy on the other. As you might imagine, this can be a lucrative – or a dangerous – undertaking.”

Another group, Ryan said, is very similar to the first, but different in the fact that it has chosen a side to support. Some will aid coalition forces by passing intelligence to Soldiers, or by actively supporting GIROA’s efforts to gain a foothold in the area, while others will support the enemy and their efforts. He said the trick is finding out who is who.

“The final group, in my opinion, is comprised of those hard-line insurgents who believe in their jihad and see the implementation of a democratic GIROA with support from the United States as a fate worse than death. These are the same people who provided sanctuary to Al Qaida and those who facilitated the World Trade Center attacks in 2001,” said Ryan.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH AGRICULTURAL DIVERSITY

For Task Force Bulldog, the majority of each day is spent engaging with the population, spending time actively learning about the local villagers’ concerns with security in the Pech River Valley. Another focus area during engagement with the population is development – trying to determine priorities for various

projects that will help stimulate the local economy.

Throughout the month of June and early on into July, Task Force Bulldog has focused a vast majority of their time and effort on an operation aimed at improving the lives of farmers by providing an alternative means of growing crops in the valley.

This operation, dubbed “Operation Crop Diversification”, is one that has been met with wary but open arms by many in the Pech. The concept is a simple one: give local farmers the opportunity to grow a variety of crops other than corn, through the help of GIRoA, in order to develop an agri-business in the province and, as a side but important benefit, limiting attacks on civilians, ANSF, and Coalition Forces.

“We already know that Anti-Afghanistan Forces use corn fields to cover and conceal their movement to ambush sites used against US and ANSF forces. Unfortunately, when one of these ambushes takes place, it puts innocent people’s lives in danger – and we are trying to stop that with this operation,” said Cpt. Jonathan Peterson, company commander for Charlie Company, 1-327th Inf. Reg from Fort Campbell, Ky.

Operation Crop Diversification’s primary focus is giving farmers the opportunity to grow alternative crops, which can lead to economic development in the area - something that the Pech River Valley and many parts of the country, can benefit from.

“Growing different crops can have a stimulating effect on the economy - villages are volunteering to be a part of the program because they understand it is a good thing for the Pech River Valley, but some villages remain hesitant to participate because growing and harvesting corn is a major staple of their way of life here,” added Peterson.

As with all things in a Counterinsurgency, there is risk involved. However, the operation will remain a top priority for the battalion and GIRoA for many months, and it will continue past harvest season and into the winter. Peterson is confident that this GIRoA-led operation will be a success, and remains hopeful that it will continue to future growing seasons.

PUSHING THROUGH THE SADNESS

Though the battalion has seen much success with ‘Operation Crop Diversification’ and other efforts within the Pech, the Bulldogs have also experienced sadness and setback, most recently, towards the latter part of June.

During a routine patrol that was escorting Ryan to a meeting in nearby Asadabad, insurgents attacked his personal security detachment in the morning hours on June 25th. Rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire were shot at Ryan’s men, with some striking their hardened vehicles and also targeting the Soldiers on patrol.

The Bulldogs fought back by engaging the enemy with their organic weapon systems, but after suppressing the enemy and the smoke had cleared, two Soldiers were killed, and four others were wounded in the attack.

“Sadly, we lost two Soldiers killed in action, Spc. Blair Thompson and Spc. Jared Plunk, on that day. It is my personal charter to honor their memory by ensuring we accomplish our mission,” noted Ryan.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Only one road that runs through the Pech River Valley, leaders within the 1-327th recognize the significance of this road, known in the Task Force as “Route Rhode Island”, and understand the impact it has on the locals’ way of life in the Pech.

“The terrain is very mountainous and forbidding here; valleys are narrow and there is but one road leading into or out of the East-West running Pech River Valley from Asadabad, the provincial capital city of Kunar,” said Ryan.

He continued, “We are on that road every day, because it is ‘peace’ on the road, and, in military parlance, ‘freedom of movement’ along that road shows the people that their government can protect them. The enemy knows that they can find us on that same road, so we are always ready.”

The 1-327th Inf. Reg. is deployed at a crucial time in the war in Afghanistan – a time where a battle of wills, along with the hearts and minds of the people, are at stake. There is a reason why the battalion’s motto is, “Above the Rest!” ... and Soldiers within the unit take that motto to heart day in and day out.

“After over 40 days, I couldn’t be more proud of these Soldiers. They are truly heroes and perform their work with a calm, professional demeanor. They aim only to help build Afghanistan into an environment where its’ people can live a life that barely, if at all, just begins to approach so many of those things we take for granted in the United States,” said Ryan.

There's potential for "Hope" Radio in Jalalabad

By: 2nd Lt. Michael Kellogg
2-320th FAR Public Affairs

Hella (Hope) Radio 101.1 FM out of Forward Operating Base Hughie in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province will be getting a makeover in the upcoming weeks. On June 27, Maj. Shireen Aqu and I sat down with DJs Abduljamil and Ahmand Khalid to discuss the future of Hella-R.

"The plan is to inform and educate the local population with informative local, national and world wide news coverage," said Maj. Shireen Aqu, Afghan National Army Public Affairs Officer.

Before the new makeover, Hella-R only played traditional music with minimal news coverage. Now the locals will be able to tune in and get up to date news along with a behind the scenes of the Afghanistan National Army. Starting next month, Hella-R plans to implement a Call-in line for the locals to voice their opinions and make song request.

For the population in general, radio has traditionally been the voice of authority. A call-in radio show will give the locals a chance to voice their opinions and ask questions. While community based radio has a tremendous potential to contribute to Afghanistan's development, there is a need to create awareness and provide orientation on ways to use community-based media to support a combined ANA and Coalition forces' efforts to secure and support democracy. Aqu is planning to embed himself with the ANA field units to get personal interviews with the ANA Soldiers.

He said, "We want to inform the people of Jalalabad, that the ANA does not take you away from your religion and that all ANA Soldiers have time for prayer as well as practice their Muslim faith."

He believes this will eliminate the false theory that if you join the ANA, you lose your Muslim faith and that you will have no time to pray. In the end, we "Hope" our low-cost means of communication to the local population will pay big dividends.



2nd Lt. Michael Kellogg and DJ Abdulmil will implement a new look beginning next month for Hella-R 101.1 FM Radio Station at Forward Operating Base Hughie in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province June 27.



2nd Lt. Michael Kellogg, 2nd battalion, 320th Field Artillery Public Affairs, and Maj. Shireen Aqa work together with 101.1 DJs Abduljamil and Ahmad Hahamid on the plans on the implementation of local and worldwide news coverage for the people of Jalalabad at Forward Operating Base Hughie in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province June 27.

TF Spartan dominates NCO, Soldier Boards

By: 1st Lt. Lindsey Pawlowski

Executive Officer, Charlie Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion



Sgt. Jonathan Clark

On June 30, two Soldiers of the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Spartan became the Brigade Non-Commissioned Officer and Soldier of the Quarter.

Sgt. Jonathan Clark and Spc. Natasha Miller, stationed out of Fort Campbell, Ky., competed at the board held at Forward Operating Base Fenty.

The boards consisted of a vigorous two-day evaluation featuring a 3.5 mile timed run, an M4 Carbine iron sites qualification range, a written test on common Soldier tasks, an essay on countering improvised explosive devices, evacuating a casualty and giving an IV. The final evaluation was the board conducted by the Brigade Command Sgt. Maj., Kevin Benson and other First Sergeants from across the brigade.

Just being able to compete in the brigade board is an achievement in itself. First, their immediate supervisor recommends them and later nominates them as

a company representative to attend the board. As the winners of the battalion board, they then moved on to compete in the brigade board. Sgt. Clark, a Signal Support Systems Specialist from Headquarters Platoon, was extremely excited upon hearing the board results. "I was happy to meet my goal of becoming NCO of the Quarter. It was one of my best achievements since arriving to the 1st STB," said Clark. "I wanted to see where my military knowledge ranked among my peers."



Spc. Natasha Miller

A Nodal Network Systems Operator-Maintainer from the Company C, 2nd Platoon, Spc. Miller's hard work and dedication to succeed was evident in her performance at the board. Spc. Miller said, "Sometimes you have to do what you need to do, so that when it comes time to do what you want to do, you can." As the winners of the Brigade Board of the Quarter, Clark and Miller will represent 1st Brigade as they compete for the 101st Airborne Division NCO and Soldier of the Year which will be held this coming August.

Cavalry Soldiers Maintain Zero

By: U.S. Army Spc. Albert L. Kelley

300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



U.S. Army Pvt. Ed B. Krevit II, of Midland, Texas, a rifleman with the assault squad, 1st Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Bandit, takes careful aim while zeroing his weapon at Forward Operating Base Bostick, June 17.



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class David Richardson, of Ft. Myers, Fla., a Platoon Sergeant with the 1st Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Bandit, takes aim at a 25 meter target at Forward Operating Base Bostick, June 17.



U.S. Army Spc. Karl S. Woods, of Waterford, Conn., a driver with the assault squad, 1st Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron 32nd Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Bandit, assists a fellow Soldier zeroing his weapon, June 17.



U.S. Army Pvt. Kenneth M. Shipley, of Redding, Calif., a saw gunner with the assault squad, 1st Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Bandit, zero's his weapon at Forward Operating Base Bostick, June 17.



MRAP DOORS, HATCHES & RAMP INJURY PREVENTION



PURPOSE: To assist in preventing future injuries to any Bastogne Warrior or Civilian assigned or attached to Task Force Bastogne. With Engaged Leadership reiterating the following safety tips and all individuals maintaining a good Situational Awareness around the vehicles, these injuries can be prevented. The doors, hatches and ramps are very unforgiving when they close on fingers, hands, arms or legs.

- 1. Always maintain Situational Awareness as to where you are placing you extremities.**
- 2. Always verify that the areas around a door, hatch or ramps are clear before closing.**
- 3. Whether in the open or closed position, doors and hatches must be latched or locked.**
- 4. Use good crew coordination when opening and closing any door, hatch or ramp.**
- 5. Do not grab a door or hatch by the rim, always use the hand holds that are provided.**
- 6. Always, use caution when attempting to open or close them if the vehicle is on an incline.**

The “Lack of Situational Awareness” can be permanent.

Calling for mortar missions over Marawara

By: Spc. Albert L. Kelley

300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



U.S. Army Pfc. Larry W. Reed, of Quincy, Fla., an infantryman with the Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, prepares ammunition while providing security at Helicopter Landing Zone Hawk high above the Marawara District in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, July 4.



U.S. Army Pfc. Roy A. Arney II, of Sault Ste Marie, Mich., a radio telephone operator obtains a grid using a GPS for a mortar fire mission above the Marawara District in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province on July 5.



KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Pvt. Michael L. Stephenson, of Bell, Fla., an indirect fire infantryman with the Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, adjust the sights of his 81mm mortar system at Helicopter Landing Zone Hawk high above the Marawara District in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, July 5.



U.S. Army Pfc. Frank K. Copass, of Thompkinsville, Ky., a radio telephone operator with the Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, mans an automatic grenade launcher while pulling security above Helicopter Landing Zone Hawk above the Marawara District in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, July 6.



U.S. Army Pfc. Alex L. Kentner of Mountain View, Mo., a scout observer and U.S. Army Pfc. Roy A. Arney II, of Sault Ste Marie, Mich., a radio telephone operator, observe mortar fire and call in adjustments at Helicopter Landing Zone Hawk high above the Marawara District in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, July 5.

Clinic helps Soldiers recover from blasts

Evaluations and treatments could lower potential risks to future health

By: Spc. Richard Daniels Jr.

Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs

Task Force Bastogne opened Regional Command East's third operational Mild Traumatic Brain Injury clinic at Forward Operating Base Fenty mid-June.

During missions, many Soldiers have experienced the impact of Improvised Explosive Devices. The explosions may leave them with minor scrapes but the effect they have on soldier's brains can be quite severe.

The results of the explosions are usually an m-TBI or concussion - an injury caused by a blow or jolt to the head that briefly renders one unconscious or causes confusion. Acknowledging the severity of traumatic brain injury, Task Force Bastogne has followed the lead of two other clinics in Afghanistan to treat mild brain injuries and lower potential risks to their future health.

"The risks can vary depending on the circumstances of the injury," said Maj. Jose R. Rafols, 626th Brigade Support Battalion, Task Force Rakkasans, m-TBI clinic officer in charge.

"The soldier could incur serious neurological deficits and even death - unchecked cerebral bleeds can cause sudden neurological changes and if untreated or undetected can lead to permanent cognitive and memory changes."

Rafols of Miami, Fla. wants to warn Soldiers of the potential hazards of such injuries.

"The other risk involved with m-TBI is that 'multiple' exposures to significant blast events cause cumulative damage to the brain, much [like] what is seen with career boxers, football players and race-car drivers," he said.

"The Soldier's ability to rebound from a concussion due to a blast event is degraded when he or she is exposed to multiple IED blasts in a short timeline," said Rafols. "The short term picture is that soldiers are unable to perform multiple tasks or complex tasks due to their inability to concentrate. The long-term picture is that multiple exposures to significant blast events can increase the likelihood of seizures, Alzheimer's

disease, and Parkinson's disease."

Soldiers who experience an m-TBI undergo evaluations and treatment that assess the post-blast event as an evolving injury, which can sometimes be subtle while other times it has profound cognitive, vestibular and physical symptoms.

One such assessment is the Military Acute Concussion Evaluation.

Combat medics or corpsmen,

usually the first responders post-blast, usually perform MACE. Patients evaluated with MACE are those who have been within 50 meters of a blast, hit their head or were in a vehicle accident. However, MACE is unable to determine everything in regards to m-TBI, but it is still an important tool for first responders and offers a glimpse into the post-concussed casualty's neuro-cognitive profile.

"Right now there are three [occupational therapists] in country," said Maj. Priscilla Bejarano, Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, m-TBI clinic officer in charge.

"All of us have been sent here to start a pilot m-TBI program. There are comprehensive practice guidelines that are put out by the Joint Theater Trauma System.

What they have come up with, based on the research... the injuries that these guys are sustaining to their head has some commonalities with football players or other people that might have had a brain injury, but we have some other things that go on with that," said Bejarano of San Antonio, Texas.

"We have the kinetic injury, the blast itself and how it changes the atmospheric pressure. So there can be some other factors that affect it."

The m-TBI clinics utilize a variety of activities for Soldiers that are held for more than 24 hours. The activities address cognition, memory, balance, coordination, proprioception (the ability to unconsciously perceive movement and spatial orientation), and the ability to perform their jobs.

One activity that is mandatory for every Soldier is 24 hours of rest.

The risks can vary depending on the circumstances of the injury.

“One activity that is mandatory for every Soldier is 24 hours of rest,” said Sgt. Raymond M. Borrego of Miami, Fla., Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, m-TBI clinic non-commissioned officer in charge.

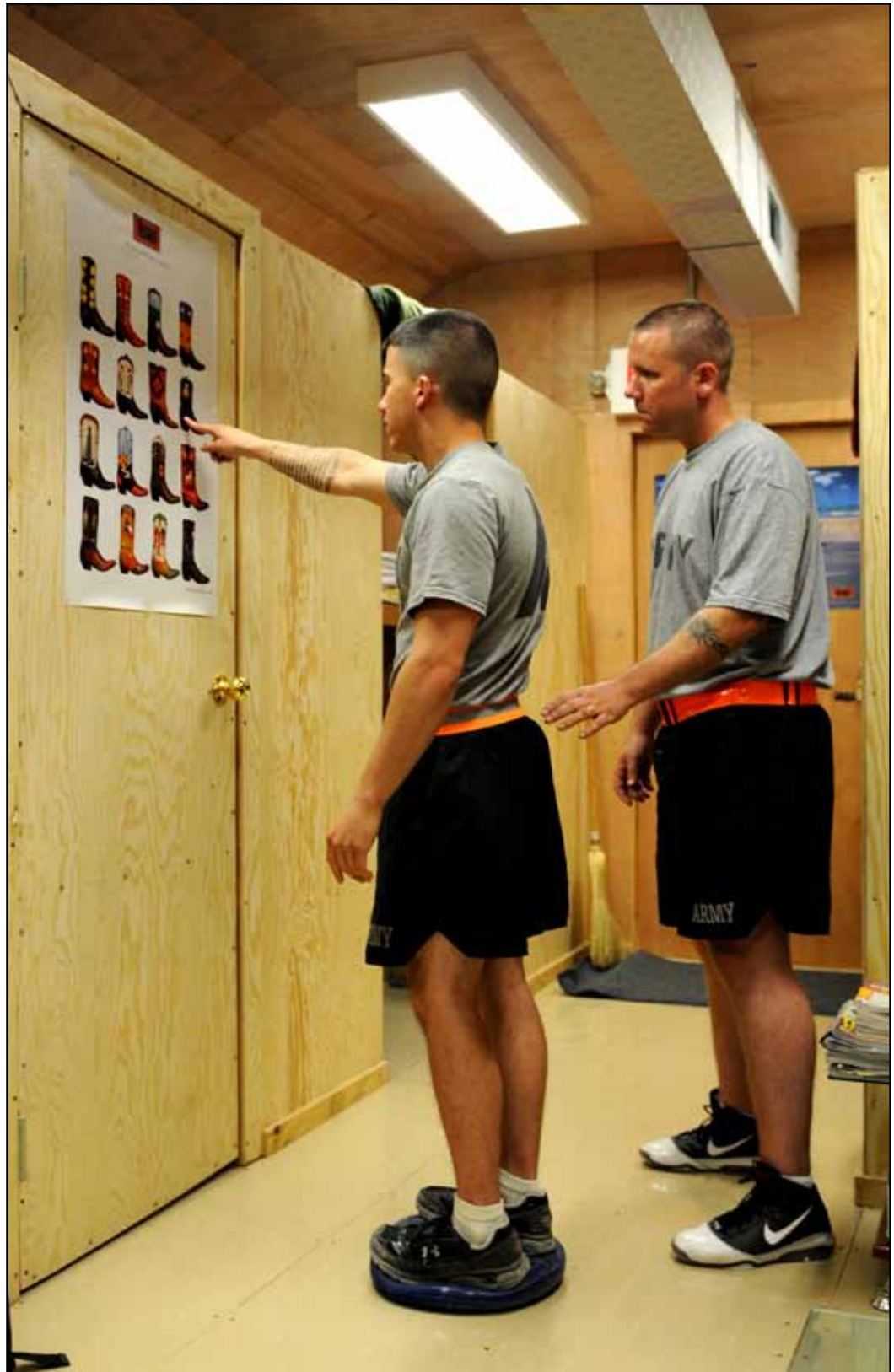
“That gives the brain adequate time to readjust to the event that just happened and to make sure [that] they are recovering from the event that has happened. We also engage with our patients within their own hobbies and habits and such,” said Borrego. “You cannot ask someone who is not interested or does not like basketball to participate in a basketball-oriented type of game. They are not going to perform well and they are not going to enjoy it.”

Another tool that the clinics use is the Nintendo Wii. The clinic uses games in Wii-Fit to help Soldiers regain their balance and help in sequencing and memory tasks. Other activities used include card, video games and activities that stress balance and coordination. The staff also educates the patient about the effects of post-blast trauma to help them understand what they are going through.

The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, supported by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, focuses on specialized treatment of traumatic brain injuries.

They have partnered with combat medic, physician assistants, medical doctors, occupational therapist and physical therapists to gain a better understanding. Cur-

rently, the studies are in their infancy. The information gathered and used thus far in these programs has resulted in over 95 percent of Soldiers returning to duty.

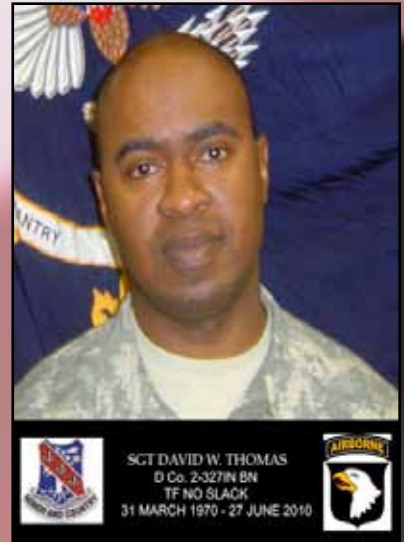


Spc. Michael Ossa of Newark, Ohio, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog points to the boots on the wall while Sgt. Raymond M. Borrego of Miami, Fla., Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, m-TBI clinic non-commissioned officer in charge, assists him keep his balance on the balancing ball July 1.

Bastogne's Fallen Heroes



AS OF JULY 10, 2010



BASTOGNE RETENTION TEAM

The Retention team has arrived in Afghanistan and has hit the tarmac running. Since we have arrived we have reenlisted countless Soldiers. All Counselors have been actively engaging Soldiers stationed in various locations around the country. We have also had the opportunity to coordinate reenlistment ceremonies with VIP guests. We take great pleasure in reenlisting Bastogne's finest. The best option we currently have is current station stabilization where Soldiers are guaranteed up to 12 months on Ft Campbell upon return from deployment. Soldiers can elect to take advantage of the school incentive along with this option where they can take up to 16 credit hours with their unit commander's approval.

We are looking forward to the start of FY11 where we will begin the year with reenlisting 101 Bastogne Soldiers. We are expecting this to be a momentous event. As we face the challenges of deployment we are dedicated to taking care of the Soldiers and ensuring that they have a voice in what takes place in their careers. Soldiers are encouraged to talk to their Career Counselor or their Retention NCO about their careers. That is the best way to receive any new information about their MOS or to see if they qualify for any special assignments. We wish everyone a safe and happy deployment!



Stay with Team Bastogne!!

