

Official Publication of Task Force Bastogne

BASTOGNE



MAGAZINE

Volume 2, Issue 4

February 2011



Continue your commitment

This deployment has provided me with countless opportunities to observe Soldiers and civilians as they diligently go about their jobs with unwavering focus, commitment, and good morale. This reaffirms the confidence I have in this team and each and every one of you. Thank you for all you have done and will do in the weeks and months ahead.

We are continuing our operations along the border and in the valleys and mountains throughout the winter, allowing the enemy no rest. Those insurgents who did leave will be shocked by the transformed environment which will await them upon their return next spring. The Afghan National Security

Commander's Corner

Forces and Task Force Bastogne had changed the operational dynamic and reduced the problem set throughout the entire battlespace so much so he will be hard-pressed to operate.

As a direct result of our operations, enemy morale continues to plummet. This is not anecdotal—we verified it through battlefield and intelligence reports. Through our joint efforts, we are forcing the Taliban to acknowledge that there is a better way to resolve this war, versus going head-to-head against TF Bastogne.

We know the insurgency will not be defeated by military operations alone. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Agribusiness Development Teams and our U.S. State Department partners work closely with local Afghan government officials on various infrastructure, economic and governance initiatives, assisting in identifying areas where specific, focused development can tackle root causes of instability. The entire Bastogne team has pulled together to work with the Afghan people as they continue down the path of progress.

Our success has not been without cost. We have lost nine more Bastogne heroes in the struggle for freedom in Afghanistan. We will hold their memories dear. Their sacrifice will not be forgotten, nor will our resolve waver as we honor their legacy by continuing to carry on the mission of helping the ANSF secure Nangarhar, Nuristan and Kunar Provinces for the people who live and work here.

To our Families and friends back home, your Soldiers are all working long, hard hours, but they are performing as I expected—magnificently. It is ever-the-more challenging to be away from those we love during the holidays, but the continuous flow of Christmas care packages and letters provided a reassuring comfort. Our deployed Family looks after each other, both on the battlefield and on the forward operating bases. We remain disciplined and vigilant, anticipating our return home.

“Honor and Country”

COL Andrew P. Poppas



Col. Andrew P. Poppas
Task Force Bastogne Commander

Stay focused during the transition

Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen,

As we have entered the New Year, we have approached closer to the end of our rotation. This is a dangerous time because our focuses are in many areas—packing out equipment, receiving Tropic Lightning advanced party personnel, and shifting and transitioning areas of operations to the Afghan National Security Forces. It is more important

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR'S CORNER

than ever for each member of our Task Force to stay focused on the mission all the way to the end. We have a great opportunity to make some outstanding advances in our last couple of months

here due to the turbulence of Environmental and Morale Leave being completed. One of our great commanders said it best: “Our Troops know they will continue to fill a sandbag and improve their foxhole every day until the day they get on a Helicopter to be lifted out of their perimeter.”

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that Task Force Bastogne has in fact set the standard for how a combat brigade task force should fight in today's wars. A lot of you have assisted on rewriting the book on counterinsurgency fights. Through the efforts of our warriors, the Taliban know that there is no place we will not go to roost them out of hiding. On the other hand, the people of Afghanistan understand that we, the Coalition, are indeed not their enemy. You all have continued to change the human perspective in N2K!

While part of the Surge in 2010-2011, we must understand the payment on the backside. It will be natural that we must shrink our presence by turning over both base and AO responsibility to the ANSF. Behind us comes a smaller force, and we must assist TF Bronco of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, by setting the conditions for them to continue the mission in our AO.

We must make every effort to make the transition between TF Bastogne and TF Bronco as seamless as possible. It will be crowded. You will have to give up your homes that you have sweat and bled to hold and improve, and the units relieving you will have different ideas on how they want to accomplish their adopted mission. I ask that all of you provide your replacements with every ounce of assistance possible. Through a professional relief in place, all of you will save lives but may never know it.

I ask that we maintain the positive contact that we have had with the great American public that showed us truly, first-class support throughout our deployment and specifically over the past holiday season. A thank you note or short e-mail goes so very far in showing our gratitude. To the Families and friends of all our TF warriors, I pass on my personal thank you for your support and more importantly, your sacrifices.

To all our wounded warriors throughout Afghanistan, in Germany and all over the United States, we all look forward to seeing you again soon and hope as many of you as humanly possible can meet with us at Fort Campbell when we get off the plane. We sincerely wish each and every one of you can achieve the highest level of recovery possible. To our Fallen Heroes, you will always be a part of our Bastogne Family and will never be forgotten.



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

“Honor and Country”

CSM Kevin R. Benson

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A Winthrop, Minn., native, Capt. Steven J. Weber, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Inf. Regt., receives a Silver Star Medal with Valor Jan. 6 for heroic actions taken during Operation Strong Eagle, an operation that took place in June. Presenting the award is Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force troops in Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Richard Daniels, TF Bastogne Public Affairs)

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Cover Photo: KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Staff Sgt. Lucas A. Kammerer, a squad leader from Nashville, Tenn., assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog, climbs down after searching a cave for weapons during Operation Bulldog Bite in the Pech River Valley in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, Nov. 25. "We're just doing our jobs," Kammerer said. "We're not doing anything extraordinary or anything simple, we're just doing what we do." (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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SUBMISSIONS: Any Soldier or civilian assigned to the 1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division, are eligible to submit stories and photos to the senior editor at: paula.k.taylor@afghan.swa.army.mil. Stories must be written in Associated Press style writing. Photos must have complete outline information, including: full name, job title, unit, hometown and state, and a brief description of what is happening in the photo. For questions about submissions, please contact the 1st BCT Public Affairs Office.

Turning pain into progress

Women's rights movement gains momentum

By Air Force 1st Lt. Nicholas Mercurio

Kunar PRT

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – What amount of suffering would a person have to endure to commit suicide by lighting themselves on fire?

This was the question that came to mind as Nasima Shafiq Sadat, Director of Women's Affairs, Kunar Province, recounted the tales of sorrow of Afghanistan's women to two U.S. service women from the Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunar Female Engagement Team.

"I am a witness to the pain of these women," Sadat said. "Women who are routinely beaten, forbidden to attend school and given away by their fathers to cover gambling debts. Today is for these women."

As she spoke, Sadat gestured toward the crowd of more than 80 women who had descended on the Ministry of Culture and Information, some travelling up to one hour over treacherous roads, to attend the Women's Justice Shura, Nov. 30.

It was a day with two purposes, said Dr. Rafiullah Bidar, Jalalabad Regional Program Manager, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. "First, we want to achieve awareness, especially about the law protecting women from abuse. Second, we want to discuss better implementation of the law in Kunar."

The law Bidar was referring to was passed 15 months previously. It contains 20

specifications of prohibited behavior toward women—from obvious physical abuse to more nuanced, culturally specific prohibitions, banning forced marriages and making it illegal for parents to keep their daughters from attending school.

"I am happy to be here and support the fight for women's rights," said Gov. Fazlullah Wahidi, Kunar Provincial governor. "We have a law and it should be enforced. The women here are fighting so hard for what they believe in."

In a country beset by war, this fight does not call for bombs or bullets, it requires understanding.

"Men and women in Islam are the same; they are equal under Allah," said Imam Naquibullah Mohsin as he spoke of the ways in which women's rights are in harmony with Islam, a difficult task in a fiercely traditional Kunar Province. "Peace will never come to Afghanistan until the violence toward women ceases. The violence is a result of not being educated...if you do not educate yourself, how can you pray to Allah and ask for forgiveness."

The women gathered saw progress made that very day as Wahidi called for a female district sub-governor in Kunar Province, a notion inconceivable a few short months prior. Navy Cmdr. Brian Goss of Annapolis, Md., commander, PRT Kunar, said, "I am excited by the attendance I see here today. Kunar has a strong women's rights movement and we, the PRT,

are proud to support you. Women, wives, sisters, mothers and daughters are the center of any world and we are all better because of you."

For a day born out of sadness, it ended in hope; hope for justice and for a brighter future for all Afghans.

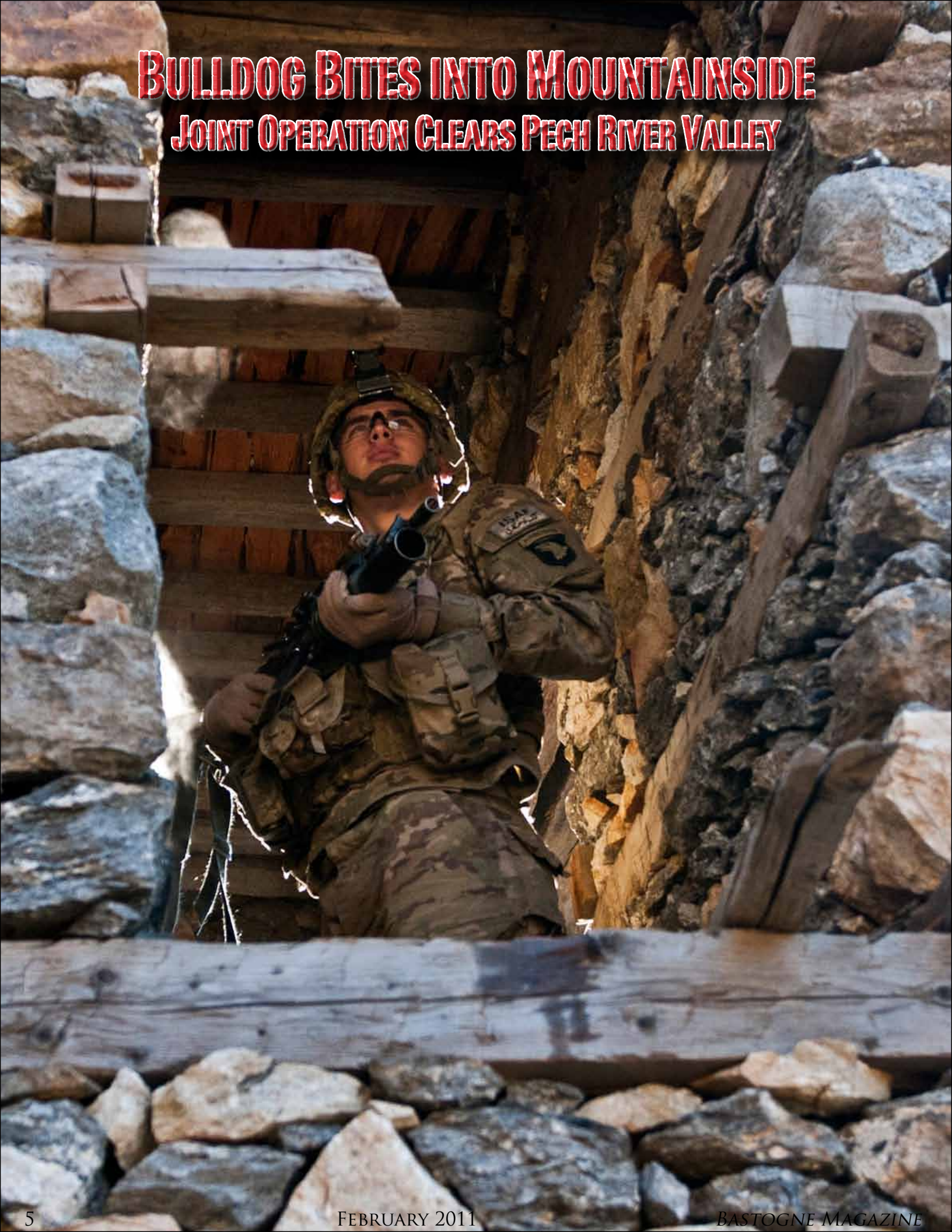
(Facts for this article were contributed by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Kimberley A. Skinner, Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team)

Afghan women listens intently to a speech during the Women's Justice shura Nov. 30, held at the Kunar Province Ministry of Culture and Information. Organized by the Kunar Province Department of Women's Affairs, the shura brought together more than 80 women from across the province to discuss their collective issues and provide education on the 15-month-old legislation which bans violent and oppressive treatment of women. (Photo illustration by Spc. Richard Daniels Jr., Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs)



BULLDOG BITES INTO MOUNTAIN SIDE

JOINT OPERATION CLEARS PECH RIVER VALLEY



KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – On a mountainside plateau, 7,500 feet high in the Taliban-infested Pech River Valley, something moved in the night.

It wasn't the wiry Afghans that reside in the mountains. They know when night falls to retreat to their homes.

It was Staff Sgt. Lucas A. Kammerer with Company B navigating the treacherous terrain in the dead of night.

"There's a myth, I think, amongst us—Coalition Forces and International Security Assistance Forces—that there are some places that we can't go," said Lt. Col. Joseph A. Ryan, Task Force Bulldog commander. "That is absolutely and unequivocally untrue. We can go anywhere we want to go. We have the technology to support it, but most importantly ... our infantrymen are tougher, stronger, more capable and better trained than the enemy is," the Pearl River, N.Y., native added.

Dispelling this myth, Co. B Soldiers joined forces with Afghan National Army soldiers to complete the final phase of Operation Bulldog Bite in the Pech River Valley in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, Nov. 22.

After getting air assaulted onto the high ground, Kammerer and his troops moved out.

"Picture the rockiest, crappiest terrain you can think of at 7,500 feet with 75 pounds on your back taking you down the mountain," said Kammerer, a squad leader from Nashville, Tenn., assigned to Co. B, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog.

As they began the trek down, an AH-64 Apache helicopter screamed overhead and fired a volley of missiles a few hundred yards away.

"About 30 seconds after we landed, the Apaches lit somebody up in the caves we were next to, which is a disconcerting feeling, but it's all part of it," explained Kammerer, as the joint patrol moved toward its first objective.

The area has been a stronghold for quite sometime,

(Left photo) Pfc. Martin L. Hauge, an infantryman from Collegedale, Tenn., assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog, pulls security at a window while his fellow soldiers and Afghan National Army counterparts clear a village during the final phase of Operation Bulldog Bite in the mountains above the Pech River Valley in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, Nov. 23. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Pfc. Thomas A. Kappler, a radio operator from Grand Junction, Colo., assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog, gets a closer look at a village during Operation Bulldog Bite in the Pech River Valley in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, Nov. 23. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

and the Soldiers were finally glad to be up into the same mountains that overlook their combat outpost he said.

"It's frustrating because our base is just south of here, and we get attacked all the time, so we know they're up here," explained Kammerer.

As dawn approached, the separate elements arrived at their objectives. Resting on rocky outcroppings that overlooked tiny villages perched on the mountainside, the Soldiers were sweating and cursing the terrain.

"It was 600 to 700 meters to reach our first objective and the terrain was loose, rocky and steep," said Kammerer. "Our objective was to clear the villages of enemies, caches or weapons."

Silently, the joint patrol moved out and cleared multiple locations at the same time just as the sun was beginning to silhouette the jagged mountains.

"It doesn't matter for us and Coalition Forces about the mountains," said 1st Lt. Asauma Din, an infantry platoon leader from Kabul City, Afghanistan, assigned to 2nd Co., 2nd Inf. Bn., 2nd Brigade, ANA Corps. "We are always going where the enemy is. Our message to them is to come down and turn themselves in and their weapons and we will negotiate. We always approach them peacefully, but if they don't, then we will come get them."

As the Soldiers moved into the villages, they spoke with the locals and searched every possible hiding place for anything suspicious.

"When we started the operation, we joined together to search the houses," said Din. "But we don't want to have the villagers look at us with bad eyes, so before we search,

BULLDOG, Continued From Page 6

we tell them we are here for their security.”

In order for the ANA and U.S. Forces to succeed, they need to let the people know that they are here for them.

“The large majority of people in this area are essentially indifferent to the fighting between us and the insurgent groups,” said Ryan. “They don’t take sides; they live with it and have to deal with it day in and day out. They’re farmers, landowners and ranchers essentially. So we obviously take that into account when we conduct operations such as Bulldog Bite.”

One message operations such as this are trying to send to people is, even if U.S. Forces leave, Afghan National Security Forces will always be here to protect Afghans.

“We use this as an opportunity to talk to the people with our coalition brothers,” said Din, who has wanted to serve in the ANA since childhood. “We can’t let the outsiders influence the people to help the enemy. We want to fight their propaganda and tell them if we lose one soldier, then there will be three more ready to replace him.”

Ryan agreed and stressed that the ANA are getting more proficient each day because of their desire to see their country succeed.

“Though they may not be technologically or organizationally prepared for the job they have down the road, the willingness is there and the heart is there,” said Ryan. “They’re willing to stand side-by-side with us and fight for their country.”

After spending a few hours searching the village and talking to Afghan males, the Soldiers pressed on. For the next two days, they moved at night and appearing in doorways at dawn the ANA and U.S. Soldiers established a rhythm of pulling security, searching and resting.

“I felt pretty exhausted after resting for a few hours, but I kept going,” said Kammerer. “We don’t have a choice. It’s our job over here. That’s why they call us grunts. It’s supposed to suck and it’s supposed to be hard. We’re supposed to be dirty and tired and hungry. That’s the way it’s always been and that’s what we do.”

Carrying essential water, food and clothing on their backs, they had to ration out each



Staff Sgt. Dustin C. Campbell (middle), a squad leader from Knoxville, Tenn., points out a possible egress route to Capt. Sean T. Hinrichs (right), a platoon leader from East Moriches, N.Y., and Sgt. Nathan W. English (left), a forward observer from Mobile, Ala., during the final phase of Operation Bulldog Bite above the Pech River Valley in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, Nov. 23. The Soldiers, attached to Company B, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog, helped Afghan National Army soldiers clear the valley of insurgent activity. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

meal and control their impulse to replenish the hundreds of calories burned during every hour.

Though the work was intense and painstaking, the joint patrol cleared every building on the mountainside taking few breaks.

“I don’t remember where we slept ... it feels like a week ago. Where were we?” said Kammerer. “I remember sleeping for an hour and 52 minutes... but it says to the enemy, ‘Look, we’re not afraid to get up here and walk around and duke it out with you.’ From that aspect, it’s a good thing.”

Ryan echoed those thoughts, but doesn’t underestimate his foe.

“I give the enemy full credit. A lot of cases he’s willing



U.S. and ANA soldiers were easier to deal with than Taliban because they didn't beat the villagers and threaten them into making food for them.

While the meeting was happening inside a house, the vigilantsoldierspeeredintotheshadowsofthemountains.

"They're out there," said Whitfield, "but the enemy couldn't find an opening in our perimeter because of our posture and our ability to provide security."

Throughout the different phases of Bulldog Bite, the enemy has probed the CF and ANA defenses, resulting in minimal casualties. Yet, the overall mission has produced more than 150 insurgents killed, two training camps revealed, multiple weapons caches and an invaluable intangible.

"Confidence," said Whitfield. "It gave our guys confidence because it reminds them that we can go anywhere... The best thing you can have is a confident infantryman, and that's the worst thing for the enemy."

The sun went down and the moon wasn't over the mountains yet. It was dark again and a few house lights spotted the mountainside. Calm blanketed the Pech River Valley and nothing, almost nothing moved except for a joint patrol snaking it's way down to the valley floor back home.

to stand and fight; stand and fight and die, but stand and fight," said Ryan. "I don't take anything away from his capability or his willingness to fight for his cause. But we want what's best for the large majority of the population of Afghans in the Pech. He wants what's best for a very extremely small minority of Islamic fundamentalists that see this area as a potential safe haven down the road."

Taking away the enemies' ability to hide themselves and protect themselves in the craggy mountainside is one of Co. B Soldiers' specialties, said Capt. Thomas Whitfield II, company commander from Kingstree, S.C.

During the third day, Whitfield and his team wanted to talk directly to the village elders to let them know their suspicions of Taliban in the area and to hear their concerns.

"We told them we're not there to disturb their harmony, but if they allow the enemy to use this area as a staging ground or sanctuary, then they'll be responsible for whatever happens," said Whitfield.

The villagers nodded solemnly and added that



A Soldier from Company B, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog takes a short breather on a mountainside at about 7,000 feet as the sun rises over the Pech River Valley in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, Nov. 23. The Soldiers teamed up with members of the Afghan National Army during a monthlong series of operations to clear some of the most dangerous parts of Task Force Bulldog's area of operations. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Nashville native finds his *niche* in Nuristan

By Sgt. 1st Class Paula Taylor

TF Bastogne Public Affairs

The Tennessee native casts an opposing silhouette against the night sky in eastern Afghanistan—standing over 6-foot-tall and weighing over 215 pounds—but this baby-faced good ol’ boy, with his southern drawl and easy-going attitude, is as friendly and hard working as they come.

Since arriving to Task Force Bastogne’s Nuristan Province several months ago, Pfc. Raymond Cecil, a cannon crew member, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, has already made a positive impression on his leaders.

“He’s an extremely motivated, competent and confident Soldier,” said 1st Sgt. Jeremy Barton, Cecil’s senior enlisted advisor for Battery A. “He is very respectful and is always in the thick of things. He is always learning and training and is excelling at his job. I am proud of Cecil and would love to have more Soldiers with his attitude, initiative and ability to learn and retain information.”

And to some, it’s not surprising to hear Cecil, a 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Soldier, is doing so well. After all, he’s the fourth generation in his family to join the military and deploy to war.

Cecil, 21, has known since he was a boy that he wanted to join the military, but his father’s debilitating disease, which snuck up on the family when Cecil was in elementary school, only slowed him down a little.

“When Cecil was in the third grade, his father was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and was in and out of hospitals for treatment,” explained Barton, a Clarksville, Tenn., native.

“It kinda got a little crazy,” said Cecil. “It seemed like we spent almost every night in the [emergency room] or hospital. He has almost kicked the bucket on us a few times. It’s not a fun thing to have



Cannon crewmember, Pfc. Raymond Cecil, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, takes a break from work Dec. 12 on Forward Operating Base Kalagush. Cecil, 21, a Nashville, Tenn., native, is currently deployed in Task Force Bastogne’s Nuristan Province. He is scheduled to redeploy back to Fort Campbell, Ky., with his unit in the spring. (Photo by Sgt. Bill Murray, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division)

happen to someone in your Family—no disease is ever fun on a Family.”

A few years after learning his father had MS, when Cecil was only 12, the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks happened. In response to those attacks, Cecil’s father, who was a regional manager for Waste Management, was asked to assist in the clean-up efforts of the Pentagon in Washington D.C. On his last day on the assignment, he fell from the back of dumpster, landed on a concrete road barrier and broke his back. The injury was the cause of many years of painful surgeries in order to fix his back, and combined with his pre-existing Multiple Sclerosis, he was unable to go back to work.

It only became a matter of time before Cecil decided to drop out of high school and start working full time to help support his Family, and after working only three years in various job positions, he decided it was time to join the military.

“Before I joined the Army I was kinda a Jack-of-all-trades, I guess you would say,” Cecil recounted. “I did construction and home maintenance, detailed cars, worked as a janitor. Hell, there isn’t much good out there for someone that doesn’t have a diploma.”

At 19, he met with an Army recruiter who administered him the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test. He enlisted in the Army Feb. 13, 2009, and left for the Army Preparatory School at Fort Jackson, S.C., June 1, 2009.

After obtaining his GED diploma at Jackson, Cecil shipped out to Fort Sill, Okla., where he completed Basic Training, followed by Advanced Individual Training to be a cannon crew member.

“A cannon crew member wasn’t my first choice,” Cecil said, “but it was that or the infantry when I went to [the Military Entrance Processing Station]. “It’s an okay job, I guess. It’s better than scrubbin’ floors,” Cecil joked.

Just days after completing all his initial training, Cecil, arrived at his first duty assignment with Battery A, 2-320th FAR at Fort Campbell, Ky. A little over a year later, he was sent to the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La., in January 2010, to prepare for war with his fellow Bastogne Bulldogs.

“My Dad was very supportive and happy that I was getting out of my crowd and dead end jobs,” Cecil recalled. “My mother and sister cried and went crazy almost. They didn’t like it at all for about a week or two, but they came around. My parents are both very proud of me. My dad doesn’t worry too much, or at



Cannon crewmember, Pfc. Raymond Cecil, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, raises the elevation on the Howitzer Dec. 12 at Forward Operating Base Kalagush. Cecil, a Nashville, Tenn., native, is currently deployed in eastern Afghanistan’s Nuristan Province. He is scheduled to redeploy back to Fort Campbell, Ky., with his unit in the spring. (Photo by Sgt. Bill Murray, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division)

least that he lets on. My mom cries every time she watches the news, but she still knows that I can handle whatever the Taliban throws at me,” Cecil gibed.

May 26, would come to prove that his father was right for not worrying too much, and that Cecil could, in fact, handle whatever the Taliban threw at him.

“There was a complex attack on our [forward operating base],” said Cecil. “Me and my section fought in an intense battle for a couple of hours. After that, you always feel good about yourself—that you made it out of something like that alive. It really builds trust in yourself, your fellow Soldiers and your leadership. I knew then, I had the best chain of leadership in the Army because they had properly prepared me and the others for just that situation.”

On this deployment, Cecil is responsible for manning an M198 Howitzer as the assistant gunner. He is also a gunner on the 120mm mortar. His job, he said, is to defend his FOB and shoot the cannons to suppress the enemy when Soldiers are under attack on the battlefield.

Although Cecil realizes his mission here and the importance of it all, he still finds time to think about his dreams, goals and of his future.

“Some of my dreams might sound crazy, but I plan on doing every single one of them, because the minimum is never good enough,” Cecil said. “I will climb Mount Everest one day, and when I get home, I plan on doing my first marathon.”

His platoon leader, Capt. William Mayville, a Fayetteville, N.C., native, has no doubt Cecil will do great things and is proud to have him on his team.

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TASKMASTERS SUCCEED IN BUMPER-BUILDING TASK

Courtesy Story

Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs

Two innovative Soldiers assigned to 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, created a new bumper on the mine resistant ambush-protected vehicle.

Sgt. Shawn S. Brunney from Lancaster, Ohio, and Staff Sgt. Jason Christopher Lawson from Maysville, Ky., came up with the first push bumper, now called the Bastogne Bumper, that was utilized during missions along Kunar Highway, a route that is infamous for its steep ravines, hairpinned turns and soaring amount of insurgents.

“On our routes, we take local national trucks with us,” said Brunney. “They tend to break down, and during engagements, we need to be able to move them with quickness so everybody can get out of the kill area. And that was the beginning of everything—as to why we started building these bumpers. That is really the only reason we did it in the first place.”

Before the current Bastogne Bumper was created and perfected, the prototype was damaging the hood, radiator and other parts of the MRAP.

“It was taking forever to get hoods in and our vehicles would be dead lined because of the hoods,” said Lawson.

This was the beginning of what they called the “Jinga Project.”

“So we spent quite a few hours fabricating, figuring out where we could put it, how to attach it, and we found the best possible spot with what we had to work with,” explained Brunney.



Sgt. Shawn S. Brunney from Lancaster, Ohio, and Staff Sgt. Jason Christopher Lawson (standing) from Maysville, Ky., perform an inspection the bumper of a mine resistant ambush-protected vehicle. Brunney and Lawson are assigned to the 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and they are currently stationed in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. The bumper, which the two helped design, allows the MRAP to push vehicles that have been damaged or stalled, without causing damage to the front end of the MRAP. (Photo by Spc. Richard Daniels Jr., Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs)

Brunney and Lawson had the support of their supervisor, Staff Sgt. Glenn Alexander, who allowed them the time to work on this project.

“Their main concern was the Soldiers,” said Alexander. “I am never going to stop someone from protecting our Soldiers; these are my guys on the road.”

Company B’s Service and Recovery Team’s mission is to convoy fuel, food, water, parts and metal to other forward operating bases on a route known as Kunar Highway, which runs between FOB Fenty in Jalalabad and FOB Bostik.

“We ship, we push all of it,” said Brunney. “We are a BSB. Logistics is what we do.”

When the battalion commander of the 3rd Battalion, 401st Army Field Support Brigade visited FOB Fenty, Brunney and Lawson went to him, explaining the bumper they were trying to create for the MRAP

and why.

“The 3rd Battalion commander told us to come to Bagram to meet his [contractors],” said Lawson. “He started pushing the project for us.”

Brandon Cochran, one of the contractors in Bagram, was asked by the 3rd Battalion commander to help these 426th BSB Soldiers take their original push bumper prototype to the perfected bumper that is now being used by U.S. Army units at FOBs throughout Afghanistan.

There were quite a few obstacles to overcome in the fabrication of these bumpers from the original design to the current prototype. Visibility over the bumper was vital to the driver in regards to safety and maneuverability. The attachment of the rocket propelled grenade netting around the bumper had to be resolved. Soldiers needed access to the hood

for preventative maintenance and for possible repairs in the future. The biggest obstacle was where to attach the bumper without affecting the structure of the vehicle or damaging any other parts.

“We came up with a better design that mounts to stronger points so that it would be lifted from the bumper and not damage anything on the vehicle,” said Brunney.

Spc. Adam Tracy, West Undee, Ill., is a gunner in the combat logistics patrols who often travels the dangerous Afghan highway

within the 1st BCT’s battle space. He said he appreciates the new design and what it offers.

“We’ve had to use those bumpers actually quite often now,” said Tracy. “I do think they work very well. You know it adds something to the truck. We are able to use it without actually destroying the truck.”

Alexander is proud of his Soldiers for engineering such a useful device.

“Staff Sergeant Lawson and Sergeant Brunney have had a bunch of generals and command

sergeants major looking at their shop, what they are doing and future projects they are thinking of,” said Alexander. “The nice thing about [Lawson and Brunney] is they don’t do it for the recognition; they don’t think of themselves per se. They think of what it can do for everyone. So it is more for the whole Army then it is for the recognition they get.”

(Facts for this article were contributed by Sharon L. Strickland, 3-401st FSB Public Affairs)

Laghman PRT expands role to western Nuristan

By Air Force Senior Airmen Chanise Epps

Nuristan PRT

NURISTAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Capt. Jyan Bevalian of Sunnyvale, Calif., governance specialist officer for the Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team, visited the Nurgaram District Center to discuss future interactions with district leaders Jan. 2.

The Nuristan PRT visited local leaders to address upcoming changes that will take place. The PRT will hand over the responsibility of governance development within the western valley of Nuristan to the Laghman PRT in the coming weeks.

“Within the last couple of months, the PRT has diligently worked with Nuristan western valleys’ governments in providing long term stability and essential tools necessary for success as they transition from being project-oriented society to a self-help society,” said Bevalian.

While Laghman PRT is expanding into western Nuristan, the Nuristan PRT will move eastward, covering a broader scope of Nuristan government, including provincial level activities in the Nuristan central valley.

“I feel as though making a budget and having a vision for the future has changed their thought process,” said Bevalian. “The leadership will use these tools we’ve taught them and they will progress in the future.”

District stability team leader from the Laghman PRT, Maj. Scott DeJesse of Amarillo, Texas, will take over the responsibility for governance development in the Nurgaram District. He will assist the civil authorities

to developing a three-year budget for the region and will reinforce the efforts of the Nuristan PRT.

“We need to create a definite schedule and work together to meet deadlines in order to keep the budget on a reasonable timeline,” said DeJesse.

The PRTs in Laghman and Nuristan will both expand in the coming weeks to cover more territory. PRTs work with the governments at the district and provincial levels in order to improve the infrastructure capacity and security.



NURISTAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Capt. Jyan Bevalian (far left) of Sunnyvale, Calif., governance specialist officer of the Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team, introduces Maj. Scott DeJesse from Amarillo, Texas, the Laghman PRT district support team leader for the Alingar District, Jan. 2. The Laghman PRT will continue the efforts of the Nuristan PRT in the western valley so the Nuristan PRT can focus effort in the central and eastern valleys. These changes will not affect the future plans for the district leaders. (Photo Air Force Senior Airmen Chanise Epps Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)



A Winthrop, Minn., native, Capt. Steven J. Weber, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Inf. Regt., receives a Silver Star Medal with Valor Jan. 6 for heroic actions taken during Operation Strong Eagle, an operation that took place in June. Presenting the award is Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force troops in Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Richard Daniels, TF Bastogne Public Affairs)

‘NO SLACK’ SOLDIERS FIGHT RELENTLESSLY, REPEL ENEMY INSURGENT ATTACKS

By Sgt. 1st Class Paula Taylor

Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs

Three U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, received awards here, Jan. 6, for valorous conduct during a two-day joint operation with the Afghan National Security Forces in the Kunar Province.

For their actions during Operation Strong Eagle, Capt. Steven J. Weber was awarded the Silver Star with Valor; and Cpl. Joshua M. Frappier and Sgt. 1st Class John T. Howerton were awarded the Bronze Star with Valor.

Presenting the awards during the ceremony held on Forward Operating Base Fenty, was Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force troops in Afghanistan.

The recipients were out on a mission June 27-28 in the village of Daridam, a known sanctuary for Taliban

extremists in the Ghaki Valley, when their unit came under heavy attack by insurgent fighters.

According to his award recommendation, Weber, company commander of HHC, and a Winthrop, Minn., native, was responsible for seizing the village of Daridam. During his mission, Weber and his men were ambushed by three groups of insurgents. He immediately organized his company and personally led them to break initial contact and find a better, more defensible terrain position.

With his rifle platoons pinned down, he organized his engineers and maneuver platoon's vehicles to lay down accurate suppressive and supporting direct fires. He continued to push forward, called in medical evacuations and aerial resupply missions, and kept his men safe and in the fight while dismounted and exposed to enemy contact throughout the morning.

"This was the highlight of my career—leading these men, watching them execute everything I asked of them—it's the best thing I've ever done in my military



Team leader for 1st Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Cpl. Joshua M. Frappier, a St. Petersburg, Fla., native, receives a Silver Star Medal with Valor Jan. 6 for heroic actions taken during Operation Strong Eagle, an operation that took place in June. Presenting the award is Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force troops in Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Richard Daniels, TF Bastogne Public Affairs)



A platoon sergeant in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Inf. Regt., Sgt. 1st Class John T. Howerton, a San Antonio native, receives a Silver Star Medal with Valor Jan. 6 for heroic actions taken during Operation Strong Eagle, an operation that took place in June. Presenting the award is Gen. David Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force troops in Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Richard Daniels, TF Bastogne Public Affairs)

career and probably the best day I'll ever have," said Weber. "Being with these men, leading them, and watching them succeed and accomplish the mission was by far, the best thing I've ever done in my life."

Frappier, a St. Petersburg, Fla., native, and his team began receiving mortar fire, dozens of rocket-propelled grenades, heavy weapons and small-arms fire, during the June operation. Disregarding his own personal safety, he exposed himself numerous times during the first of the complex attacks. As a team leader for 1st Platoon, he maintained control of his team throughout the dismounted movement and placed himself in a position to shield a wounded fellow Soldier from heavy enemy machine gun fire.

"Private [Stephen] Palu is a fellow Soldier and brother," said Frappier. "I did what I was taught. I went out and provided buddy aid for him, patched him up and got him out of there as quickly as possible; he would have done the same thing for me."

Howerton, a San Antonio native, currently serving as a platoon sergeant for Scout Platoon, was tasked to provide area reconnaissance of the town in Marawara District and to interdict enemy forces to facilitate the movement of his battalion's main ground effort. Once in position, he and his platoon members established a tactical overwatch.

On the morning of June 28, Howerton's platoon came under a close-combat attack from a 40-member

insurgent group. Outnumbered 2-to-1, Howerton repositioned his platoon to provide protection to other elements in his unit, while defending his current battle position against unrelenting waves of attacks.

During the fighting, one of his radio telephone operators was shot twice by enemy fire, along with his platoon leader who was knocked 120 meters down the mountainside by gunfire.

"We thought he got shot in the head at first because of the way he had fallen down the mountain," explained Howerton about his platoon leader. "It was so far down, we didn't know how we were going to get down there. I called on Staff Sergeant [Brent] Schneider, a recon and sniper squad leader, and he repositioned some guys to overwatch where [the platoon leader] was at so [the enemy] couldn't get to him. Then we had the helicopters come in and basically circle around over the top of him to make sure [no insurgents] came to get him."

Due to Howerton's arduous actions and cool judgements under extreme and accurate hostile fire, the scout platoon was able to repel the insurgent fighters.

"The biggest thing is that you can't forget the two guys who died on that mountain that day. I feel like everyone is getting awarded for it and talking about the operation. But we can't forget those two guys. I think sometimes we stray away from that, and that's not good."

Panther hauls freight Bastogne Soldiers need

By Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson

210 MPAD

The Soldiers of Troop D, 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment's Distribution Platoon wear many hats.

These troops of Forward Operating Base Connolly, have a wide range of duties. Some days they are on a combat logistical patrol hauling mail and other vital supplies or they may be gearing up to respond to a threat to the base as part of the quick reaction force. They can provide transportation for the explosive ordinance disposal team, work to recover a disabled vehicle or secure a sling-load to a helicopter in support of an air assault mission.

Regardless of the hat they are wearing during day-to-day operations, 2nd Lt. Thomas Csala, Troop D's Distribution Platoon leader from Rising Sun, Md., said his Soldiers stay busy.

"They're a hard working group of individuals," said Csala. "Delta Troop's primary mission is to provide logistical support to the 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, and all its assets, throughout Task Force Panther. My Soldiers face a lot of different challenges, Csala explained. "They handle a lot of responsibilities, not to mention the dangers they face doing the jobs that they do, going out there with the threat of [improvised explosive devices], rocket-propelled grenades and all the other threats."

One of the platoon's main missions is running combat logistical patrols. During the CLPs, the platoon's Soldiers, which include a large number of truck drivers, form a convoy from FOB Connolly to FOB Fenty to deliver and pick up supplies, including mail.

"You can look at it like a post office," Csala said. "We go to the big post office [at FOB Fenty] and get the mail, then push it down to the smaller recipients."

Sgt. Thomas J. Adams, a truck driver with the Distribution Platoon from Lufkin, Texas, said he especially enjoys what he does because it directly affects the other Soldiers on FOB Connolly.

"I like what we do—getting the mail, in particular—because it builds up the morale of the other Soldiers," said Adams, who has been a truck driver nearly four years. "We're here to support the cavalry and infantry guys and do whatever we can to make their missions a little bit easier. That little bit of mail they get, or stuff



Pfc. Joseph Conlon, a truck driver from Anchorage, Alaska, with the Distribution Platoon, Troop D, 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, uses a cargo strap to secure the load in the trailer pulled by a light medium tactical vehicle Nov. 17 at Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan. The Distribution Platoon has hauled over 715 tons of cargo since they arrived here in September. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

from home, really means a lot."

Csala said the Distribution Platoon will typically run between two to three CLPs each week. The convoys make for a long day. Though the trip between the two FOBs is usually only an hour to an hour and a half in length depending on the amount of supplies the platoon is hauling, the loading and unloading time as well as the preparation makes for a much longer mission.

Csala said since the platoon arrived in Afghanistan in September, it has logged almost 10,000 miles on the roads. Additionally, the platoon has hauled more than 715 tons of cargo. Luckily, they admit, their platoon has not had any incidents of IEDs or RPG fire yet.

"You can attribute a lot of that to the Soldiers and

their training,” Csala said. “They’re constantly being vigilant out there on the road.”

When they’re not out on the road hauling freight between FOBs, Csala said his platoon is on stand-by for the QRF.

“We could get a call at any time on the radio saying that something’s happened – someone attacked the FOB or something, and we’ll need to go,” Csala said. “So we always need to maintain a state of readiness.”

He said that the platoon must be mounted up in their trucks in full body armor, with their assigned weapons along with their mounted weapon systems calibrated and ready to roll out of the gate within 15 minutes.

To achieve this, he said his platoon performs constant battle drills.

“Right now, we currently make it in 11 minutes, 45 seconds,” Csala said. “When we started doing it, it took around 25 minutes, but we continue to perfect it.”

They will also be preparing for the next CLP.

“We perform [preventive maintenance checks and services] on our vehicles on a daily basis,” Adams said. “We make sure that no leaks or any other problems have formed overnight.”

“We’re the kind of platoon that doesn’t just focus on the mission that we’re doing, we’re also thinking ahead to the next mission,” Csala said. “We’re trying to make things easier for the next mission.”

But it doesn’t end there for Distribution Platoon. There are also the EOD escorts and recovery missions, not to mention other taskings given to the Soldiers on the base.

“Another one of our missions is to provide an escort for the EOD team and conduct recovery missions,” Csala explained. “If a vehicle get hits by an IED, or whatever the case is, it goes down, we’re tasked to escort the recovery asset, provide a safe hook-up and return to the FOB safely.”

Csala said the Soldiers train constantly on recovering vehicles, keeping current on the latest tactics, techniques and procedures on the subject.

“We’ve had a lot of practice doing it,” Csala said. “At some point, we’ve had to go out and recover a vehicle from every troop so far, but most of our training was conducted prior to deploying here.”

Finally, the Distribution Platoon also distributes ammunition to the squadron.

“Since we’ve been here we’ve issued 179,990 rounds,” Csala said.

So the next time you think you’re busy, think about the Soldiers of distribution platoon. Csala said his Soldiers work tirelessly to haul the supplies that keep the rest of the base going.



Spc. James Cowan, a truck driver from Beersheba Springs, Tenn., with the Distribution Platoon, Troop D, 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, peers out the window of a mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle as he backs the vehicle up Nov. 16 at Forward Operating Base Connolly, Afghanistan. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Staff Sgt. Eric Moenster, a truck driver from Salem, Mo., with the Distribution Platoon, Troop D, 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, provides a ground guide for a mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle as it backs into a staging spot Nov. 16 at Forward Operating Base Connolly, Afghanistan. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Civilian police mentor, Jay Gazani, a Pensacola, Fla., native, teaches Kama police how to conduct thorough vehicle searches in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province, Nov. 29. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Anthony Mutchler, TF Spartan)

DISTRICT'S SECURITY PROMOTES BETTER PARTNERSHIP

By 1st Lt. Robert Moss

TF Spartan

Since the Parliamentary Elections in September, Kama District has been raised to the status of a key terrain district.

A key terrain district is an area where the bulk of the population is concentrated and contains centers of economic productivity, key infrastructure and key commerce routes. Kama District remains one of the safest areas in all of Nangarhar Province, with no attacks or major insurgent influence since mid-2009.

Because it is a KTD, Coalition Forces from 2nd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, are now permanently stationed at the district center, which is known to the Soldiers as Joint Security Station Redtail. The purpose of this partnership is to further develop and mentor their Afghan National Police counterparts on a more permanent basis.

In addition to its organizational Soldiers, 2nd Plt. now has four military police Soldiers from 630th MP Co., along with civilian police mentors

and law enforcement professionals from the U.S.

"By mentoring the ANP, we build a stronger understanding of what being a police officer truly is," said Jason Pumpherey, police mentor and Columbia, S.C., native. "They can ultimately pass on what they have learned to other ANP."

So far, the ANP have been trained on proper weapons safety, community policing and crime scene first-responder techniques.

"Our partnership with the Americans encourages my ANP to learn more about our duty to the citizens of Kama," said Col. Momand, the Kama District chief of police. "With their

help, we can create a safer environment for the people."

The Soldiers remain positive on the progress they are making with their Afghan National Security Force partners, and "They are by far the best we have worked with since the deployment began," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Macer, a 2nd platoon squad leader from Evansville, Ind. "It truly is encouraging to have ANSF that are willing to put in the hard work necessary to complete the mission."

"Our partnership with the Americans encourages my ANP to learn more about our duty to the citizens of Kama."

- Col. Momand, Kama District Chief of Police

Rabies control a priority for Iowa ADT

By Air Force Capt. Peter Shinn
KunarADT

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Nearly every veterinarian in Kunar Province, 35 in all, came to the provincial capital of Asadabad Dec. 13, to attend a daylong conference, organized by the Kunar Provincial Veterinarian and underwritten by the Iowa National Guard's 734th Agribusiness Development Team. The Cooperative Medical Assistance unit at Bagram Air Field also provided support for the event, which focused on animal nutrition, rabies prevention and livestock parasite control.

None of the attendees could remember a larger veterinary conference ever taking place in Kunar Province. The Kunar Province Director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Haji

Mohasal Kahn, gave opening remarks, and a crew from KRTA-TV in Asadabad spent the morning covering the conference.

Maj. Robert Paul, of Sioux Falls, S.D., the veterinary officer for the CMA unit, spoke about the importance of livestock nutrition to animal health. He pointed out modest improvements in the quality of forage fed to livestock, translated into substantial gains in value when they went to market.

"A well-fed head of cattle can weight at least 200 pounds more than a poorly-fed head of cattle," Paul said. "That's more to sell and more money in the owner's pocket."

The Kunar Provincial Veterinarian, Dr. Mohammed Ghalib, gave a presentation on livestock parasite control. He noted that, after poor nutrition, parasites were the single greatest factor contributing to poor weight gain in livestock.

"Parasites are big problem for the farmers, and you must educate them on how to deal with this problem," Ghalib urged the veterinarians.

The ADT's veterinary officer, Maj. Loren Adams of New Liberty, Iowa, discussed rabies prevention and control. Rabies, which is largely under control in the developed world, is a major animal and public health threat in large swaths of Asia and Africa. Rabies is always fatal after the onset of clinical symptoms. According to the Global Alliance for Rabies Control, at least 55,000 people, mostly children, die from rabies each year, and the number may be much higher due to underreporting of the disease. Rabies is endemic to Afghanistan, and when asked by Adams if they had ever personally seen a case of rabies in livestock or humans, every veterinarian at the conference, including Ghalib, said they had.

"I've been a veterinarian in a mixed practice for 25 years in Iowa and never once saw a case of rabies," Adams said. "It goes to show you what a widespread problem it is here that every single one of the veterinarians here has seen it in an animal or a person."

Veterinarians, Adams explained, play a vital role in rabies control and prevention efforts. Not only do they educate their clients and the public at large about rabies, veterinarians also educate health professionals about the disease in many cases. The dog population in developing countries, Adams continued, typically contains the largest reservoir of the rabies virus, so effective rabies control involves trapping, spaying or neutering, vaccinating and

RABIES, See Page 21



Maj. Loren Adams, veterinarian, of New Liberty, Iowa, teaches a group of 35 veterinary professionals from across Afghanistan's Kunar Province about rabies prevention at a continuing education conference organized by Kunar Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Mohammed Ghalib, Dec. 13. (Photo by Air Force Capt. Peter Shinn, Kunar ADT)

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY TAKES CHARGE

I-32 CAV HANDS OFF OBSERVATION POST MACE

By Air Force Capt. Peter Shinn

TF Bastogne Public Affairs

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - The Afghan National Army took an important step toward taking responsibility for the nation's security when they assumed control of Observation Post Mace from the U.S. Army on Dec. 21. ANA soldiers now safeguard the post and surrounding area, in accordance with the way ahead laid out in the Lisbon Plan to transfer security responsibility to Afghan forces.

OP Mace is the northernmost observation post in Afghanistan's Kunar Province, which borders Pakistan. It is the first significant installation in the province for which ANA forces have assumed complete responsibility.

During a brief ceremony, Soldiers from the Troop C, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment lowered the American flag at OP Mace and ANA soldiers from the 1st Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps raised the Afghan flag over the post. But while the ceremony took less than five minutes, preparations for the transfer of authority had taken months.

Most of the Soldiers of Troop C arrived at OP Mace in early May 2010. According to Capt. Mike Gansler, troop commander, his Soldiers immediately began training with their ANA counterparts on patrolling, heavy weapons and combat medical skills. Troop C also worked tirelessly to make OP Mace better and more defensible. They added concertina wire, built earthen walls and improved the facility, all while defending the post from attacks by insurgent forces. Gansler also praised the ANA soldiers and their leadership.

"The ANA commander and his NCOs are doing the right things," Gansler, a St. Louis, native said. "I know they can hold this position. These guys are straight."

ANA Capt. Rohullah is company commander of 4th Coy, 1st Kandak, 2nd

Brigade, 201st Corps. He also expressed confidence in the ability of his soldiers to defend and hold OP Mace.

"We're 100 percent ready to take over this post," Rohullah said. "We're very satisfied with the weapons and equipment we have. We have the same weapons and vehicles that Coalition Forces have."



Afghan National Army Capt. Rohullah, company commander of 4th Coy, 1st Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps, discusses the upcoming transfer of authority to the ANA of Observation Post Mace with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment. The ANA assumed control of OP Mace from the U.S. Army, Dec. 21. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Capt. Peter Shinn, Task Force Bastogne Public Affairs)



A noncommissioned officer with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, prepares to lower the American flag during a transfer of authority ceremony at Observation Post Mace, as U.S. and Afghan National Army Soldiers look on. The ANA assumed control of OP Mace from the U.S. Army, Dec. 21. OP Mace is the northernmost observation post in Afghanistan's Kunar Province, which borders Pakistan. (Photo by Air Force Capt. Peter Shinn, Kunar ADT)



Afghan National Army Capt. Rohullah, company commander of 4th Coy, 1st Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps, prepares for a media interview on the transfer of authority from the U.S. Army to the ANA of Observation Post Mace. The ANA assumed control of OP Mace from the U.S. Army, Dec. 21. (Photo by Air Force Capt. Peter Shinn, Kunar ADT)



Sgt. Michael Lachapelle, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, shares a smile and a handshake with the Afghan National Army sergeant who will replace him on Observation Post Mace in Afghanistan's Kunar Province. The ANA assumed control of OP Mace from the U.S. Army, Dec. 21. OP Mace is the northernmost observation post in Afghanistan's Kunar Province, which borders Pakistan. (Photo by Air Force Capt. Peter Shinn, Kunar ADT)

RABIES, Continued From Page 18
releasing dogs. Veterinarians are central to such programs as well.

“What I want to do in this province is talk to children and adults about rabies; we want to do some education,” Adams said. “And we also want to begin a vaccination program for the dogs, and of course I need the veterinarians for that.”

Adams emphasized that spaying or neutering dogs is also central to rabies control, which is why he

demonstrated neutering surgery on a dog owned by a local Afghan. The veterinarians at the conference crowded around as Adams sedated and cleaned the dog. He quickly neutered the animal and began suturing the surgical incisions, then supervised as an Afghan veterinarian completed the process long before the dog regained consciousness.

For Afghan veterinarian Dr. Bahadr Khan, who practices in the Narang District of Kunar Province,

the entire conference was “very important for Kunar veterinary doctors.” Khan expressed special enthusiasm for Adams’ emphasis on rabies control and prevention.

“Rabies is a problem in all Afghanistan, but it’s an especially big problem for the people of Kunar,” Khan said. “If we can control rabies, we can help the people, the animals and the entire community.”

NATIVE, Continued From Page 10

“Cecil is a go-to guy,” admitted Mayville. “I think that he feels satisfaction from the fact that he is looked up to by his peers and that his superiors look to him to get things done. It is the constant search for that feeling that is what drives him to be the best at whatever it is that he is doing, and once that is complete, move on to the next level.

“He strives to be the best in every discipline of his profession,” Mayville added. “He is head and

shoulders above his peers in terms of performance. He’s an absolute asset to his section and platoon. I wish there were more Soldiers like him.”

As the days of his redeployment draw nearer, Cecil continues to excel within his platoon, but hopes his Family back home in Nashville all know that he’s thinking about them.

“I’ll be home soon,” Cecil promises his Family, “and don’t y’all worry ‘bout me; y’all know I can handle my own.”



CLUB FUNDAMENTALS



“CORE SKILLS FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE” The Bastogne Resiliency Working Group has developed training to improve the performance of Bastogne Soldiers. The two-day strength-based program, called Club Fundamentals, was developed from Bastogne leadership, after action reviews from other brigade combat teams, Army Rangers and from the Army Center for Enhanced Performance. The training began at each battalion headquarters beginning in late January. Club Fundamentals develops the “Complete Warrior” – Mind, Body, Spirit and Social Network (Family and Friends).

Bastogne Soldiers already possess coping mechanisms and wellness tools acquired through military training and experiences, which enable them to be resilient. This training uncovers the skills that each Soldier already possesses and highlights their ability to utilize them for all of life’s challenges.

Club Fundamentals was developed in a response to growing needs of our warriors to break down barriers to care attributed to stigma and how to manage combat stressors. Club Fundamentals was taken from “Soldier Wisdom” and tailored to fit Bastogne culture in a combat environment – by the Bastogne Soldier...for the Bastogne Soldier. Overall Club Fundamentals is a holistic, line-driven program of performance enhancement to be used on the battlefield and continued upon returning to the home front.

The following is a list of the Club Fundamentals training modules: Controlled Response, Mind Tactics, Recharge and Nutrition, Functional Fitness, Purpose, Commo-Check and Guardian.

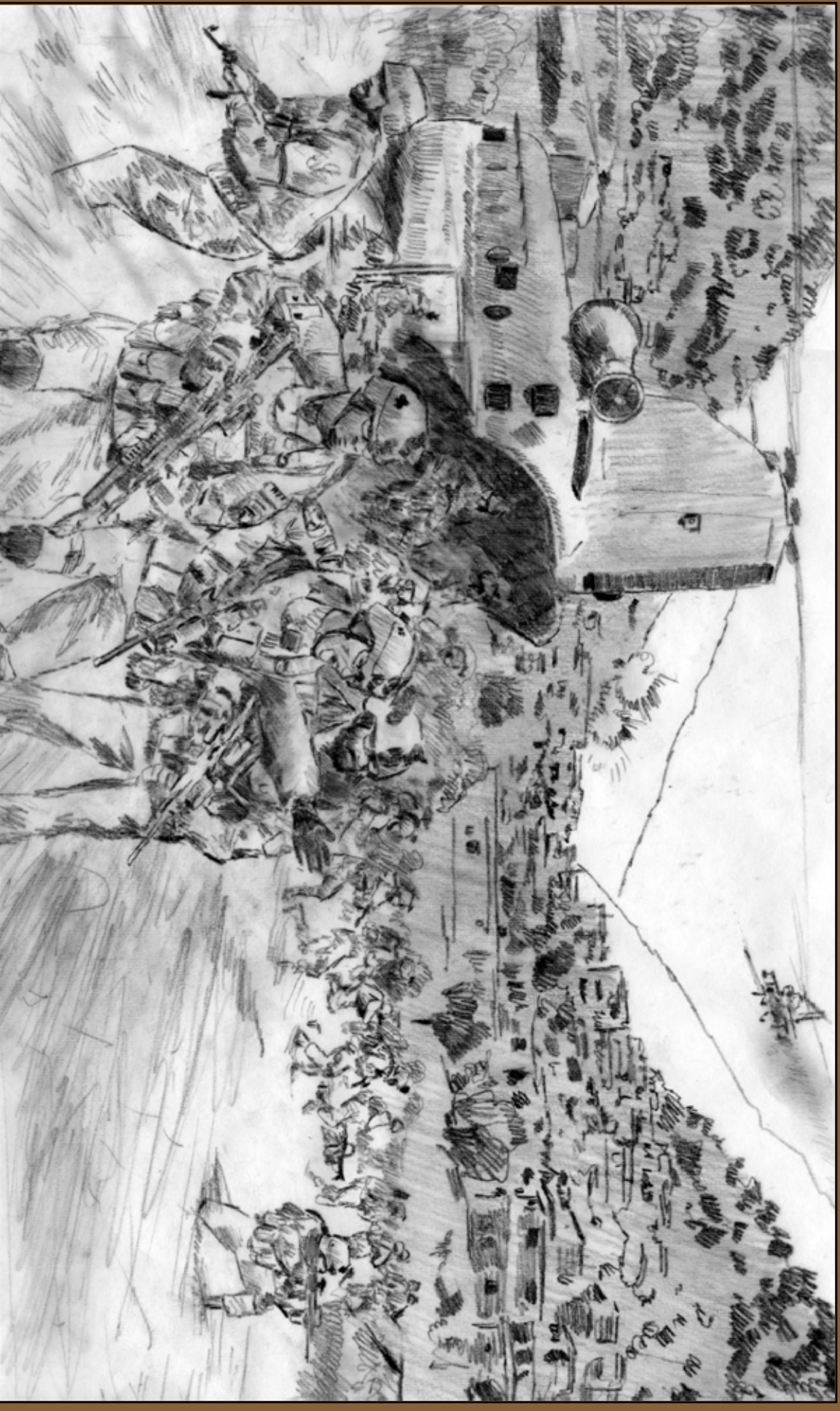
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Prints will be delivered upon redeployment.

*The above picture is a rough sketch of the final painting... more to follow.