



1/181st Infantry Regiment

Around the Powder Horn

“Keep Your Powder Dry”



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Volume 12

Kunar PRT Mourns Loss of a “Soldier’s Soldier”

By Capt. Peter Shinn

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WRIGHT, Afghanistan – Comrades and leaders of U.S. Army Spc. Dennis C. Poulin described the fallen warrior as a hero who was committed to his family who always put the needs of others ahead of his own, during a memorial ceremony April 9.

Poulin, a native of Pawtucket, R.I., was a gunner with the Massachusetts National Guard’s Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1/181 Infantry Regiment, assigned to the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team. Poulin died March 31 after suffering injuries from a vehicle accident while conducting a mounted combat patrol near Chowkay, Afghanistan.

U.S. Army Spc. Kirby Williams of Waterbury, Conn., who was Poulin’s closest friend in the unit, spoke at the memorial ceremony. Afterward, Williams reflected on his battle buddy’s life.

“He looked out for everybody. He always put people first,” Williams said. “I’d tell his mom that her son’s a hero. He died for his country and he died doing what he loved.”

U.S. Army Spc. Antonio Richardson, of Brooklyn, N.Y., recalled Poulin’s close bonds with family. Those bonds, Richardson added, extended to Poulin’s comrades in arms.

“He always talking about his son. Whenever he talked about him, his face lit up. He was always about his family,” Richardson said. “We were fortunate enough to be in that same fold; he treated us all like brothers out here, and everyone that was a part of his life was lucky, lucky to be able to say that, and he’s going to be missed.”

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Anthony Couture, of Sterling, Mass., commander of the 1/181, noted Poulin’s deep commitment to both his son and his unit.



Photo by Capt. Peter Shinn
Poulin died March 31 as a result of injuries suffered from a vehicle accident while conducting a mounted combat patrol near Chowkay.

“Dennis really loved his son... and could always be counted on to do the right thing as well as be counted on to carry his load and then some. Dennis will be missed by everyone in the Kunar PRT, and he will always be part of the 1/181.”

U.S. Army Capt. Ryan Oliver, speaking on behalf of Platoon Leader 1st Lt. Brendan Roche, said Roche praised Poulin’s professionalism. “He was a Soldier’s Soldier,” Oliver said. “He was the best battle buddy any of these guys could have asked for.”

The civilian team lead for the PRT, Bert Braun of Silver Springs, Md., emphasized the critical role Poulin played in the PRT’s mission and thanked Poulin’s family for their sacrifice.

“We rely every day on the security force to keep us safe; we couldn’t do anything without them, and this is very tragic,” Braun said. “Spc. Poulin was obviously very well loved here and very much a part of the team and I very much appreciate all he did to keep us safe. We’re very grateful to his family. It’s a terrible loss to all of us.”

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Ed Stallworth of Pensacola, Fla., the PRT’s executive officer, remembered Poulin as “one of those individuals who gave all of himself to make sure that the welfare of others was secure and safe.”

Stallworth also had a message of condolence and gratitude for Poulin’s family. “I just wish that his memory is carried on through his son, and that his family cherishes the fact that he gave all for us, and that we appreciate it, and we’re sorry for their loss.”

Poulin’s awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal and Combat Infantry Badge.✕



Soldiers and Sailors assigned to the Kunar PRT pay final respects during a memorial service April 9 for Spc. Dennis C. Poulin. He died March 31 after suffering injuries from a vehicle accident while conducting a mounted combat patrol.

Firehouse Construction on Camp Dubs Provides Work for Local Afghans

Story by Capt. John Quinn and Spc. Michael Broughey

KABUL, Afghanistan – Julien and Dubs, two U.S.-led camps on the western outskirts of Kabul share many things, from borders to personnel to facilities, but thanks to many eager Afghan workers and a few skilled U.S. service members, Dubs has a fire station of its own.



Photo by Spc. Michael Broughey
Staff Sgt. Ryan Buckert, garrison supply sergeant for Camp Dubs and member of the 1/181 Infantry Regiment, uses his experience as a civilian construction contractor to establish a new multi-use facility to augment the fire station at their sister camp Julien March 29.

Staff Sgt. Ryan Buckert, Garrison Supply NCOIC for Camp Dubs and member of the 1/181, said the new building will house firefighting equipment in the main area and have a large room in the back to be used as a classroom area for training or as a movie theater.

Maj. Mark Kalin, Base Support Group Commander for Julien and Dubs, and executive officer for the 1/181, said the multi-use facility (MUF) will augment coverage against fires on both camps provided by the full-time fire station on Camp Julien.

Buckert said because Camp Dubs didn't have enough space for a full-fledged fire station the project was redesigned as a MUF.

Putting his construction skills to use from his experience as a civilian contractor, Buckert organized the project while providing his expertise in leading the Afghan laborers hired to assist with the daily construction.

Currently Buckert said he also has two Croatian nationals as well as four Afghanistan National Army Department of Public Works members assisting him as well.

"The biggest accomplishment is working with Afghans," Buckert said, adding



Photo by Spc. Michael Broughey
U.S. service members stationed at Camp Dubs, along with ANA soldiers and local Afghan laborers use a forklift to raise and place supports for the roof under view of the historic building known as the Queen's Palace March 29.

that while the local workers are eager, they don't have a lot of construction skills and different Afghans come to help each day.

Buckert said the local workers were provided modern tools, but have not used them before. The equivalent to a master carpenter in Afghanistan is someone who builds mud walls or can use tape measure, not a power saw, he added.

Nonetheless, Afghan workers are meticulous and often made several cuts to a board or piece of wood to ensure it's the correct length for the job, Buckert said, adding he relishes their enthusiasm to learn. >

Coalition Forces Donate Tents for Education

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Barry Loo

PAKTYA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Children in Zormat District will soon be learning underneath a new roof.

Afghan and coalition forces loaded 25 classroom-size tents onto an Afghan National Army (ANA) truck, at Combat Outpost Zormat, Afghanistan, April 10, for distribution to teachers around the district who do not have a building to teach in.

"When the weather is bad, they don't have school," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Tristan Boddicker, a Soldier from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with the Paktya Provincial Reconstruction Team. "Now they can provide education even during inclement weather."

Coalition forces donated the tents to promote education.

"Education is a right for every human being," said Babrik Haqiar, Zormat director of education.

Haqiar came to COP Zormat to receive the tents and coordinate their transfer to the local education center for distribution.

ANA Soldiers helped moved the equipment. "We didn't put on this uniform just to provide security," said ANA Sgt. Rohullah Akhund. "We want to help people and help the children get an education so they can have a better life and have peace."

With the donated tents, the young students in the district will

have more protection from the sun and elements.

Haqiar said that beyond being a basic human right, education will also have a rehabilitative effect on Afghanistan. "It's important for the kids here to go to school so they can rebuild the country," Haqiar said. >



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Barry Loo
Afghan and U.S. personnel load tents onto an ANA truck at Combat Outpost Zormat, Paktya, April 10. Coalition forces donated 25 tents for use as temporary classrooms in the district.

Patrolling Afghanistan



Photo by U.S. Air Force Sr. Airman Courtney Witt
Pfc. Ryan Warner, D Co., Ghazni PRT, secures an area during a visit to Bala Hissar Citadel in Ghazni City by the Hayward-Ghazni Sister City Committee March 29. The goal of the visit was to increase cultural understanding and aid Afghans in future projects such as the Ghazni 2013 Center for Islamic Culture celebration.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Brasier
Sgt. 1st Class Brian Vannote, A Co. platoon sergeant, Kapisa PRT, identifies his target through red smoke prior to engaging with his M4 rifle during reflexive fire training at Forward Operating Base Morales-Frazier, March 31.



Courtesy Photo
Staff Sgt. James Miller looks back during a dismounted combat patrol with fellow members of Khost PRT in April.



Courtesy Photo
Pfc. Jonathan McNamara provides security for fellow members of Laghman PRT during a mission February 9.



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Adrian Cadiz
Sgt. Carl Goss, Zabul PRT, secures an area near a bridge construction site in Zabul. Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were on hand to inspect the progress and quality of several bridges being built in the area.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Adrian Cadiz
Spc. Christopher Keefe, D Co., Zabul PRT, secures an area near a bridge construction site in Zabul March 19. Members from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were on hand to inspect the progress and quality of several bridges being built in the area.

Cell Phones for Soldiers Donates to the 1/181

By Spc. Michael Broughey

KABUL, Afghanistan – Soldiers of the 1/181 spread across Afghanistan in Provincial Reconstruction Teams will soon have access to a prepaid cellular phone to call home thanks to the non-profit organization Cell Phones for Soldiers.

“On April 12th we received 50 phones to be divided among the PRTs,” said Capt. Quentin Carmichael, who oversees civil-military operations for Headquarters and Headquarters Co. and is cousin if the co-founders of Cell Phones for Soldiers: Robbie and Brittany Bergquist, who are 19 and

20 respectively.

“The leadership will then share the phones based on need so Soldiers can sign them out,” Carmichael said, adding each phone sent came with \$100 worth of minutes prepaid by the organization.

“It means a lot to me and Robbie to help,” Brittany said. “We recycle cell phones and purchase pre-paid phone cards for the troops.”

According to the Cell Phones for Soldiers’ web site, unused phones are collected and recycled through a recycling company called Recellular to pay for the minutes. The organization also uses the money to buy calling cards as well, which were received by the 1/181 at a Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment event in February 2010.

“It’s a lot of fun,” Robbie said, during the 1-181 IN’s yellow ribbon ceremony February 2010.

At the time, neither of the Berquists knew Carmichael was deploying to Afghanistan, but they were thrilled to know one of the Soldiers they were supporting was their cousin too. He previously deployed with the 1/182 Infantry to Kosovo in 2005.

The 50 Global Travel Phones by Wireless Traveler are part of Cell Phones for



Courtesy Photo
Robbie and Brittany Bergquist, the founders of Cell Phones for Soldiers, started the organization in their early teens with their own money.

Soldiers’ efforts to not only provide free calling time but also the devices to directly link soldiers to their families while overseas.

The sibling founders were just 12 and 13 when they started the organization with \$21 in 2004. Since then they have collected more than 7.5 million cell phones and provided military personnel with more than 90 million minutes of pre-paid calling cards

For information about the program, visit: <http://cellphonesforsoldiers.com/> ✕



Photo by Spc. Michael Broughey
Capt. Quentin Carmichael shows off the Global Travel Phones donated by his cousins April 18.

Bagram Hosts Satellite Boston Marathon

By Capt. John Quinn

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — An artilleryman born in Kenya was disappointed he added 42 minutes to his overall time in a remote running of the Boston Marathon April 16.

2nd. Lt. Samuel Mwangi, a fire support officer who serves as liaison for the 1-181 at Bagram Air Field, participated in the 26.2-mile race, which began at 3 a.m. local time and finished three laps around the base in 3:52.

The race in Bagram occurred two days before the 115th running of the Boston Marathon, which annually occurs on Patriot’s Day, the third Monday in April, on the holiday in Massachusetts and Maine which commemorates the Battles of Lexington and Concord which occurred April 19, 1775.

While he has not run in the Boston Marathon before, he previously ran 3:10 during at the Myrtle Beach Marathon, in South Carolina in February 2001.

“So in 10 years I have added 42 minutes to my run.” Mwangi said he plans to run more marathons to cut down his time.

Based on time and distance, he ran an average of 6.8 miles/hour April 16 and averaged 8.3 miles/hour in 2001.

“I plan to do at least two marathons every year now - possibly at sea level and in warm locations,” Mwangi said. “My goal is to beat my current time.”

While Mwangi considers this race to be his slowest, especially since he has run a couple of half marathons in about 90 minutes, every 1,000 feet of altitude above sea level, up to 8,000 feet, slows



Photo by Sgt. Christopher Olivo
2nd Lt. Samuel Mwangi completes a remote running of the Boston Marathon two days before the annual race April 16. He finished the 26.2 mile race, which consisted of three laps around the air field, in 3:52.

runtime by one percent.

The route around Bagram also has an average altitude of 7,680 feet, as opposed to the Boston Marathon, which starts around 450 feet in Hopkington, Mass., gradually descends to about 25 aside from the notorious spike - from 150 to 250 feet - at mile 21 on Heartbreak Hill.

Geoffrey Mutai, also of Kenya, finished the Boston Marathon in 2:03:02, which set a new course record April 18. ✕

Fighting the Education War

1-181 Infantry supports the American University of Afghanistan

By 1st Lt. David Denninger

KABUL, Afghanistan — Members of the 1/181 had their spirits revitalized after taking a rare opportunity to interact with local students at the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul March 31.

The visit refreshed my perspective on the war effort and helped me to understand the true value of our service.

Since their arrival in October, members of the 1/181 Infantry have supported efforts to bolster the security of the greater Kabul area by patrolling, especially in the neighborhoods surrounding Camp Phoenix.

Members of the unit met local tribal leaders, distributed winter clothes to shivering children and handed out paper and pencils to nearby schools. As a whole our humanitarian efforts, partnered with Operation Outreach Afghanistan, have been widely successful at addressing the immediate, pressing concerns of the local community.

Nonetheless I questioned the long term value of our efforts. In this place we are not always met with open arms.

Many times, the tribal elder seems too tangled up with internal politics and always wants a little more. The child with a new sweatshirt still stands in raw sewage and the student who didn't receive a pencil, as there are never enough to go around, throws rocks at your back when you turn to leave.

It is a desperately poor and culturally abrasive place. So I asked: where does it all lead? Where is the reform, the initiative, the cultural revolution this place so desperately needs?

On March 31, my questions were answered. As we rolled through the security gate at the American University of Afghanistan, I remember thinking how small and insignificant it was. From the outside, the gym looks like just another warehouse in another of Kabul's many compounds. I couldn't have been more wrong.

As soon as we parked our armored vehicles we were met by an old friend of mine, Matt Trevithick, the executive communications coordinator for the university who invited me.

He strode up and told me, "You guys can relax, this a place where it's ok to let your hair down."

I didn't know it at the time but the statement was as literal as it was figurative. We rounded a corner and saw the main courtyard on campus for the first time. It was landscaped and pristine. Students were strolling across the lawn in between classes, men and women alike.

The women showed their faces and didn't hesitate to talk to us. It was the first time I'd talked to a woman outside the walls of Camp Phoenix, which serves as home to many women who serve in the military or who work as contractors.

Matt showed us the library which boasting more than 10,000 books and at least 15 computer work stations, which was amazing by local standards. Then he showed us some classrooms and told us their history.

The rooms themselves were once used by the Taliban as torture chambers. Now they are using them to educate women in business, education and marketing.

He showed us the row of banners hanging on the wall of the gym, each with names scribbled on them. He explained that each banner is an honor code all students must agree to in order to attend.

Every student from each incoming class signs the banner on their first day. The code includes a pledge to respect each other, regardless of



Photo Courtesy of 2nd Plt., HHC Members of 1/181 IN, including from top left, 1st Lt. David Denninger, Sgt. Major Jeffery Baillargeon, Sgt. Derek Arroyo, Sgt. Jeremy Miller and, from bottom left, Spc. Lito Liloc and Spc. George Laraba, met with Afghan students attending the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul March 31.

tribal affiliation, wealth disparity, or ethnic heritage. It requires an adherence to honest business and academic practices.

Then he showed us the office of Goldman Sachs' "10,000 women" initiative, which manages the program to provide underserved women around the world with a business and management education.

Eventually we spoke to a professor who had served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He talked for a little while about the school, but ensured to thank the members of the 1/181 who visited the school.

"It is because of the level of security you all provide this city that we are able to do all of this," he said.

The university is a world of its own.

Outside the walls the din of the jingle trucks, donkey carts and occasional protesters carries on. But inside there is a new Afghanistan being born. These students will become the next generation of leaders in this country and they are learning to think with an open mind. They are learning the fundamental ethics of business and public administration, and they are graded on the basis of merit alone.

One classroom wall featured an eternal quote by Martin Luther King Jr.: "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that."

The American University of Afghanistan is that light. It is why we, as Soldiers, are here. ✕



Photo Courtesy of 2nd Plt., HHC From left, Spc. Robert Heipt and 1st Lt. David Denninger, both members of 2nd Platoon in HHC 1/181 IN, met with female Afghan students at the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul March 31.

Commander's Corner

It is a good feeling when I attend meetings and see slides that show the 1/181's proposed redeployment timeline. Many joke that we are in the double digits. Everyone has their own way of calculating their countdown. The arrival of the 1/182 Infantry's advance party or main body, the Transfer of Authority from the 1/181 to the 1/182 and other obscure dates that align with the overall plan. I must admit, that I am as excited as everyone else when I think about getting home. But please, I want everyone to take a breath, count to five and set a goal for late July/early August 2011 as the time that we will be back home with our loved ones. We could be home sooner, we could be home later, but due to operational security measures, our Soldiers will not be able to relay the exact dates.

The other day I was discussing an issue with fellow commanders at Camp Phoenix. As I went into details about why a project wasn't going according to schedule, I brought up the differences between "watch time," "calendar time" and "Afghan time." When operating on "Afghan time," nothing ever gets accomplished as planned. Thinking about it, when was the last time something in the military went exactly according to schedule? It is imperative that we stay focused on the mission at hand. Distractions and false expectations will not do anyone any good, at home or here in Afghanistan.

As you may have seen on local or national media, there is a rush of heightened activity throughout the Afghanistan Theater of Operations. We have already seen an increase in the number of Soldiers being injured over the past month, both non-combat, as well as combat related. Please make sure you keep all of our wounded warriors and their families in your thoughts and prayers. Our fallen comrades: Spc. Dennis Poulin, who passed away in late March from injuries suffered in an accident while on patrol, as well as Pfc. Ethan Goncalo, who passed away in December, will always remain in the 1/181 regimental family. We will remember these Soldiers who volunteered to serve our great nation, fully knowing the risks of their profession. These Soldiers would want us to carry on.

Similarly, all of the wounded warriors who have returned home want us to do our part to finish what we started. We can see a difference. Our actions have made a positive impact on the villages and districts throughout Afghanistan. In order to do this, we must remain vigilant and not become complacent. We must pay attention to the details and put forward the extra effort when required. We must do the right thing, and ensure our peers, subordinates and leaders are properly informed. We must maintain situational awareness and develop situational understanding at all times. We must stay focused on the mission at hand. We must continue to support each other, at home or in theater. There are still many challenges ahead. But together, as a unit, as an organization and as a family, we will be able to confront what lies ahead in the final stages of our deployment overseas.

Keep Your Powder Dry!

Lt. Col. Tony Couture, Powder Horn 6



Photo Courtesy of 2nd Plt., HHC

Sgt. Jeremy Miller, of 2nd Platoon in HHC 1/181 IN, played soccer with Afghan students attending the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul March 31.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Matthew Lohr

Spc. Jupiter Rincon, a member of C Co., provides security for fellow members of Khost PRT during a dismounted patrol to a key leader engagement April 6.



LEXINGTON

The 1/181 is credited with two historic battles on April 19. The first occurred 236 years ago when militiamen stood against the British on the Lexington Green in 1775. The second occurred 150 years ago when members of the 6th Massachusetts sustained the first casualties of the Civil War during the Pratt Street Riots in Baltimore in 1861.

