

T O M A H A W K

T I M E S

AUGUST 2011

ON GROUND

*THE 1-179 THUNDERBIRDS ARRIVE
AND QUICKLY GET TO WORK*



ON THE COVER:

1-179 Infantry scouts and snipers maneuver down a mountain in Bad Pakh District in Western Laghman Province.

TOMAHAWK TIMES is an interactive monthly newsletter produced by the 1-179 Battalion public affairs office. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily the views of the DoD, Army, Air Force or U.S. State Department. All published information has been reviewed and cleared for public release.

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DISTRIBUTION

This newsletter will be disseminated through several means. For this edition, we will send it out through several email channels and hope to have it hung on the Internet.

We look forward to hearing from you!

FROM THE EDITOR

Good evening families and friends of the 1-179th Infantry Battalion. In an effort to connect our operations here in Afghanistan to you back home, we have created the Tomahawk Times.

First and foremost, we want this publication to answer the many questions you may have about your husband, wife, son, daughter, or friend. Some examples already received from several concerned wives and mothers include:

“Are they feeding you?”

“Do you have a decent place to sleep at night?”

“What is the weather like over there?”

“What do you need and what can we send?”

We imagine that over time, this publication will build a communication bridge that allows all of us to stay in touch. Most importantly, we want to tell you the day to day stories of your family member or friend. We look forward to providing you with the best publication possible.

David Taliaferro
Editor
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PHOTO OF THE MONTH

This month we recognize SPC Anthony Fernandez for his stunning snapshot of sunset in Bad Bakh district.



COMMANDER'S CORNER

Greetings from the mountains of Afghanistan! The 1-179th Infantry Battalion continues to serve in the defense of the communities of Oklahoma and the United States in Laghman Province, Afghanistan.

One full month in for the men and women of the 1-179 Infantry Battalion, and what a month it has been. Each of us can say we have seen and been a part of the effort to change Afghanistan.

Most recently, the buzzword "transition" is in the air. A recent event in the transition process was highlighted by a ceremony, where 1-179th members were key in providing security to the Afghan

government officials, the commanding U.S. division general, and the deputy commander of the International Security Assistance Force. Excellent planning and a strong defense posture with vigilant security ensured a successful ceremony.

We have conducted several missions mentoring the Afghan Uniform Police on improved patrol tactics, attended working groups with government officials to determine development priorities, and finally we have attended community-based councils with citizens to help their government solve important issues.

We are dedicated to mentoring the Afghans and helping them achieve stability.

Finally, we remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service to their country: 1LT Damon Leehan and 2LT Joe Cunningham. Their sacrifice has affected us all and we cherish their memory daily. Our resolve does not waver but is strengthened by their loss and we continue to do the mission set forth as they would want us to. We ask that you continue to keep their families in your thoughts and prayers.

God bless Oklahoma and the United States.

All the best,

Matthew Harsha

Below - LTC Matthew Harsha and the command leadership of the 1-179th



Information Operations UPDATE

By 1LT Eric Hall
S-7 Information Operations Officer

After more than two months of time here in Laghman Province, many significant events have occurred. Through the use of information operations positive stories have been relayed consistently throughout the area.

Forward Operating Base Mehter Lam is also host to a critical piece of equipment - The RIAB (Radio in a Box). Programming for the station is provided by local contractors and the content highlights the success stories of the Thunderbird's contributions throughout the province. In fact, one of



the local contractors has worked so well that he is scheduled to head to the United States for a few weeks of programming training.

In between the multiple calls to prayer, poetry readings and local popular music, the combined efforts of Afghan soldiers and members of the 1-179th light up the air waves. The Thunderbirds have landed.

Radio In A Box (Ree-Ab)

Top: 1LT Eric Hall reads the daily information report and enjoys a cup of Starbucks coffee

Below: SPC Fernandez takes a photo of the Mehter Lam District Center during a vehicle patrol.



Echo Company: Training with the Afghan National Army

By SPC Mallory Malone
*Echo Company - Forward Support
Company*

Soldiers from Echo Company - Forward Support Company for the 1-179th Infantry Battalion have recently been involved in constructing a mechanic training program for the Afghan National Army. The training program is based upon U.S. Army training standards and has so far proven to be extremely valuable for the eager-to-learn Afghan soldiers.

The initial class was small. Many of the learning barriers, mainly language, were immediately evident and took some time to iron out. However, the latest class has increased in size and the program itself is much more streamlined.

"The Afghan soldiers have demonstrated an uncanny ability to retain the information presented in the classes," comments CPT Richard Flurry, Echo Company Commander.

CPT Flurry has been instrumental in not only the development of the mechanic training but has been able to incorporate several members of his company into the program and add their own real world expertise.

Echo Company continues to mentor members of the Afghan Army and plans to achieve sustainable results.



Top: Afghan Army soldier provides security in Mehter Lam district

Right: CPT Richard Flurry and 1SG Johnny Paxson pose for the camera at Camp Shelby

Below: Sunrise over the vehicle maintenance yard at Forward Operating Base Mehter Lam



Soldier Goes

Native by CPT Michael Scanlon
HHC Commander

The native language dialogue erupting on a daily basis here in the civil-military office of Forward Operating Base Mehter Lam is often difficult to understand for U.S. service-members. However, U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Zachary Lewis is one soldier who does have a very clear understanding of the Pahsto language.

Lewis is the one of the senior civil-military office members and in addition to his primary duties of working issues regarding development and governance, he has also been able to pick up another language.

While it may seem like an oversimplified statement to say that Lewis has picked up a language like most people pick up groceries, disturbingly, it's true.

"His ability to comprehend and remember the vocabulary and structure is truly amazing," comments Sergeant First Class Ty Burns.

The language skills often come in handy while Lewis patrols throughout the province.

"At first, Afghans look at me with disbelief when I start speaking their language, but they quickly recover and help me learn new words and phrases," Lewis states.

Lewis continues to improve his language skills and hopes to have a higher level of fluency before the end of his tour. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that Lewis is truly impacting Laghman Province.

TOMAHAWK TIMES 1-179 INFANTRY BATTALION NEWSLETTER - PICTURES SECTION



Top: CW2 Todd Warrington poses awkwardly for the camera

Above Left: Civil affairs team leader 1LT Laura Starin expresses confusion about a training scenario

Above Right: MAJ Casey Reed gives the staff some direction and guidance

Left: CPT John Fagan receives direction from MAJ Casey Reed



Top Left: SGM Steve Smith poses for the camera at FOB Mehter Lam

Top: Staff Sergeant Zachary Lewis inside a UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter

Left: Spc Anthony Fernandez and Spc Sandefur from HHC 1/179 Scouts, enjoy a little down time by playing the guitar near the barracks.

Below: Spc Matthew French with the scout/sniper section in HHC 1/179, watches the sunset while overwatching the valley in





Above: HHC scout team overwatches an objective in Bad Pakh District.

Right: 1LT Eric Hall and CPT David Taliaferro inspect a project built in Mehter Lam city

Below Right: SSG Kelly Steinmeyer awaits take off into Afghanistan.

Below: Scouts pose for a group photo after their long nine day mission in the mountains of Afghanistan.

