

Duke



Dispatch

Vol. 13



Remembering 9/11

UAS supports
TF Duke operations

September 2011

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Photos from operations of Task Force Duke taken between August 15-Sept. 11. Top Left: Photo by Sgt. Tobey White, Top Right: U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Sandra Welch, Middle Left: Staff Sgt. Ben Navratil, Middle Right: Sgt. Joseph Watson Bottom Left: Sgt. Joseph Watson



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Cover photo- U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Tell Wilson, a native of Scobey, Mont., the platoon leader for 2nd Plt, Troop A, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke looks on as his Soldiers man a traffic control point in Bargay village Sep. 2. The TCP was meant to interdict and discourage insurgents from moving through the area, as well as stop the smuggling of weapons. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ben K. Navratil, TF Duke public affairs.)

Commander's Corner

By Col. Chris Toner
TF Duke Commander

Five years ago when I was serving as a battalion commander in Paktika Province, chances are you could ask any American to explain the reasons we are in Afghanistan and they would probably say, “to get Osama Bin Laden,” or “to find and kill terrorists to keep them from attacking the United States.” Since Bin Laden is no longer a factor, some skeptics say we achieved our major objective and that it is time to come home.

My answer to why we are here is simple. Our mission may have started with Bin Laden but it certainly is much bigger than him. It is bigger than merely killing insurgents who meander back and forth along a porous border to conduct attacks in a continued effort to destabilize this nation. It is about building a strong Afghanistan that will never again become a safe harbor used by radical groups to conduct acts of international terrorism.

With nearly 25 months in Afghanistan at both the battalion and brigade level, I can attest, from my perspective, that we

have made significant strides in this effort. The quality and equipping of our Afghan Security Force partners in 2006-2007 pale in comparison to what I see here today. Back then we planned and led the vast majority of the security operations. The Afghan Army was poorly-trained, and the police were all but hated by the locals. When it came to governance, it was U.S. forces that led most of the efforts.

That has changed dramatically. Afghan Security Forces are planning and leading operations independently every day. The police have gone from being despised to being a respected and competent force. Best of all, the government is connecting with its citizens and developing solutions to solve their collective problems. The dark days of Taliban rule is not far from their memories, and the progress that has been made since they were ousted gives Afghans reason to believe in a bright future.

I believe Afghanistan has the capacity to achieve its goals of strong security and a strong, legitimate government. A strong Afghanistan is one able to secure its citizens, deny sanctuary to extremist



groups, and not allow itself to be used as a platform to project terrorist forces into the U.S. and the rest of the world. A strong Afghanistan means a safer United States, a safer world. Helping build this strong Afghanistan is why we are here.

Before closing I must acknowledge another Task Force Duke Fallen Hero. Spc. Joshua Seals from Co. B, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment, Oklahoma Army National Guard, gave the ultimate sacrifice Aug. 16 while supporting our fight- a fight that began Sept. 11, 2001. My heart goes out to his Family and all those affected by the passing of this dedicated warrior.

Duty First! 🇺🇸

Voice of the CSM

By CSM Drew Pumarejo
TF Duke Command Sgt. Maj.

It's hard to believe that 10 years have passed since the tragedies of 9/11. As we remember those brave Americans and others who died that day, it's easy to get sentimental about lives lost and Families left with a void never to be filled. We can take comfort, however, knowing that our efforts against radicals here in eastern Afghanistan will go a long way in preventing similar tragedies in the future.

Many Soldiers came into the Army because of 9/11, or because of what it represented. It's also true that 9/11 means different things to different people. As I've said before, regardless of why Soldiers serve, we all realize that two undeniable truths remain in 2011. First, the enemy still exists and is a threat to us here and across the world, and that lasting success will be influenced significantly by the

efforts of a highly trained and motivated U.S. military.

I know first-hand that none of us are immune from hostilities or injury. As volunteers who willingly signed up for the military life, we know that none of us has complete control over when or where the enemy will strike. This war also lacks clearly defined front lines or an enemy that wears recognizable uniforms- we fight against an unconventional foe.

How do we ensure we do what has to be done at the moment of truth? It all starts with a good foundation of training constantly reinforced by noncommissioned officers, training others to do the right thing. Think about the little things that need to become instinctive, like remaining aware of your surroundings, moving swiftly and alerting others of suspicious people or activities. Most importantly, remember that your Personal Protective Equipment



is designed to save lives and avoid preventable injuries. Be sure to wear it!

Remember, certainly, those innocent people who died on 9/11 at the hands of criminals like those we face in Operation Enduring Freedom. Let us move forward knowing that we best honor their lives and memories by remaining vigilant, prepared and committed to our fellow Soldiers and mission.

“No Mission Too Difficult...No Sacrifice Too Great...Duty First!” 🇺🇸

Chaplain's Word

By Chaplain (Maj.) Mike Nishimura,
TF Duke Chaplain

On Sep. 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by ruthless terrorists. The day changed our country forever, and we have been at war ever since. For some, life has changed dramatically; for others, not as much. Some still mourn or live in constant fear.

The terrorists killed nearly 3,000 innocent people that day. Out of the courage and depth of goodwill many Americans stepped up and answered the call to duty, with many volunteering for military service. Many of you have seen combat, and even lost comrades in the battle against terrorists. President George W. Bush said on the first anniversary of this attack: “The enemies who struck us are determined. They will not be stopped by a sense of decency or conscience, but they will be stopped.”

This long war requires patience, courage and resolve. We have to be successful. We don't have a choice. U.S. efforts in

Afghanistan and Iraq have brought hope to people who have known nothing but despair. That light of freedom was brought to them by the dedication of Soldiers such as you.

Let us remember the courage and commitment demonstrated on 9/11 and since. Remember it as not just a day of horror, but also one of honor. And remember also those who have continued to answer that same call to duty around the world, so that our country can be free, safe, and that we can inspire others to live in peace.

Since 9/11, we have seen signs of hope and restoration and signs of God's people listening, trusting, and relying on His word as they live their lives. We don't know God's timeline for the future, but we can trust God's unending love and long history of providing for His people. It's hard not knowing God's future plan, but it is good to know that He does have a plan and that His plan is for good!

That doesn't mean we'll never suffer. In fact, it's amid strife that we find compas-



sionate responses, loving acts of kindness, prayer, images of hope and God's presence. On this anniversary of 9/11, we can move forward — looking to the future with hope, while still remembering those past feelings. But those feelings can be washed in God's love and care. For surely we know that God has a plan for us!

Dear God, we pray for the Families who lost loved ones on 9/11. Comfort them and continue to guide them. Help us all remember our feelings from that day, but help us also to move on to the hopeful future you provide. Thank you for your unending love and faithfulness. Amen. 🇺🇸

Cavalry platoon sets up TCP

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Ben Navratil
TF Duke, PAO

Soldiers from the Afghan National Army and 2nd Platoon, Troop A, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, set up a traffic control point along a road in the small farming village of Bargay Sep. 2.

“Our main mission is to interdict any insurgent activity in the area, and the smuggling of weapons or improvised explosive device-making materials,” said 2nd Plt. Leader, U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Tell Wilson, a native of Scobey, Mont.

The Soldiers placed the TCP along a short stretch of road running alongside the edge of a cliff, with pomegranate trees above and wheat fields below. Meanwhile, the ANA Soldiers set up a separate control point further along the road.

“Normally, our vehicles set up in the middle, and the ANA set up well to the front and rear of our TCP,” said Wilson, “

He said the spot was selected for this

TCP in part because an IED had struck his convoy about a week earlier in the same area, causing minor damage to one of his vehicles.

There was no sign of violence on this rainy Friday, however, and the Soldiers' main company was a trio of boys selling pomegranates, and some shepherds leading their flocks down the road.

Still, the mission was successful, as it allowed the U.S. and Afghan Soldiers to maintain a presence in the area, which will discourage insurgent activity, said Wilson. 🇺🇸

A U.S. Army Soldier pulls security at a traffic control point in Bargay village, Sep. 2. The TCP was set up by the Soldiers of 2nd Plt., Troop A, 6th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt., 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, to search vehicles passing through.



Eyes in the skies:

UAS team supports TF Duke Operations

We have reports of the Afghan National Army sitting on an improvised explosive device at this location,” says a voice over the radio in a cramped control shelter Aug 25. “Can you give me an ETA?”

“Roger,” replies one of the unmanned aerial system operators listening in. “We’re 22 kilometers out. It’ll be 10 mikes.” That conversation wouldn’t be out of place in a fast paced spy thriller. But for the UAS Platoon of Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, a conversation such as this, between UAS operators and their crew chief, happens on a regular basis at Forward Operating Base Sharana.

The UAS Shadow is a remotely controlled aircraft with a camera attached that provides commanders with reconnaissance and surveillance without putting any soldiers in harm’s way, said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Percell Hunter, the UAS platoon leader for Company B, STB, and a native of Newport News, Va.

In addition to its reconnaissance capabilities, the system can also point out targets to ground troops with a laser, and carry a communications relay package that allows two groups who are out of line-of-sight from each other to communicate, an ability of great importance in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan, where TF Duke is operating. It does this by flying between the two groups and bouncing the transmission from group one to the Shadow to the other group, Hunter said.

“It [also] gives commanders a chance to see what they normally can’t,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael Mikrut, the UAS platoon sergeant and a native of Chicago. “The UAS Shadow provides them with a situational awareness they would not normally have.”

Being part of the UAS crew means having to juggle a lot of different tasks; for that reason, operators have to be able to multitask, said U.S. Army Sgt. Alex Keehn, a UAS operator with the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade, 34th Infantry Division of the Minnesota National Guard, and a native of Rochester, Minn.

“There is so much you have to be aware of when you fly a UAS,” Keehn said. “You have to be aware of wind speed, temperature, humidity and other aircraft in the area.”

Keehn’s unit deployed in July to augment the TF Duke UAS team, he said.

Communication plays a big part in the completion of successful UAS missions, said U.S. Army Sgt. Bill Parris, a UAS main-

Story and photos by Sgt. Tobey White,
TF Duke, PAO

tainer with Company B, STB and a native of Pickens, S.C. UAS maintainers are responsible for performing maintenance and preflight checks on the aircraft, and help the operators when the UAS is airborne. “You have to have situational awareness of air traffic or changes in wind speed because the UAS operators can’t see everything,” he explained.

For Parris, the conversation between operator and maintainer is like a ping pong game. With helicopters and other aircraft using the same air space, the maintainer-operator conversation isn’t the only important one, said Mikrut.

“There are a lot of airspace communications,” Mikrut said. “Sometimes the airspace you are flying in gets taken away because another aircraft needs it more. You have to be quick to respond in those situations.”

To prepare for deployment, the UAS team undertook several flight operations training exercises, Hunter said. In these operations they endeavored to prepare their maintainers, who work on the aircraft, and operators, who fly the aircraft, to do their job without needing someone looking over their shoulder.

The training they received at their home-base of Fort Knox has benefited them in Afghanistan, Parris said. However, they have received several new soldiers, since arriving in country, who did not have the chance to train with the unit.

“It’s kind of a trial by fire [when new Soldiers arrive during deployment,]” Parris said. “They just have to get in there and do it. While deployed they have plenty of opportunity to train and learn their job.”

The environment of eastern Afghanistan has many differences compared to Fort Knox that the crew has to be aware of when flying, Mikrut said. For starters, they are at an altitude of 7,300 feet and the air density is different than it would be at sea level, or even Fort Knox. This makes take-offs and landings more complicated.

Being aware of these differences is important and knowing what to do in any conditions can mean the difference between landing a bird safely or losing it, Mikrut said. ▀



Above Left: Spc. Joshua Caldwell, a maintainer for the 1st Bde, 34th Inf. Div., BSTB, Minnesota National Guard, and a native of Redwing, Minn., checks the belt on a Unmanned Aerial Systems launcher during his preflight inspections at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Afghanistan Aug. 25.

Above Right Pfc. Brandon Mcelhinney, a maintainer with B Co., STB, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke from Las Vegas, Nev., fixes a rudder on an Unmanned Aerial System Shadow before a launch at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Aug. 24.

Middle Right: Sgt. Alex Keehn, a unmanned aerial system shadow operator with the 1st Bde, 34th Inf. Div., BSTB, Minnesota National Guard, attached to Task Force Duke, and a native of Rochester, Minn., flies a UAS Shadow during a mission on Aug. 25 at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Afghanistan.

Below: An Unmanned Aerial System Shadow launches at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Afghanistan Aug. 26, by B Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke.



2-2 Soldiers on patrol

Photo story by Sgt. Joseph Watson,
TF Duke, PAO

Top: U.S. Army Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Ramrod, pull security during a dismounted foot patrol in Bande Sarde, Afghanistan on August 16, 2011.

Below: U.S. Army Soldiers from Company A 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Ramrod, pull security during a dismounted foot patrol in Bande Sarde, Afghanistan on August 16. The soldiers searched targeted qalats and looked for Taliban insurgents during the patrol.



Above: U.S. Army Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat, 1st Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Ramrod, pull security during a dismounted foot patrol in Deh Yak, Afghanistan on August 21.

Right: U.S. Army Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Task Force Ramrod, pull security after being fired upon by insurgents during a dismounted foot patrol in Deh Yak, Afghanistan on August 21.



Above U.S. Army Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Ramrod, prepare to enter a qalat after dismounting from their vehicles in Bande Sarde, Afghanistan on August 16, 2011.

10 years later, TF Duke Soldiers continue mission sparked by 9/11

Story by Staff Sgt. John Zumer,
TF Duke, PAO

Ten years after the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001, some New Yorkers with close ties to the tragedy now wear a military uniform.

They chose to do their part on the front lines, honor the memory of fallen Americans, and fight against terrorism overseas.

U.S. Army Spc. Jose Vallejo, an infantryman with the Focus Targeting Force, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, grew up in Queens, N.Y. He remembers the September morning 10 years ago when terrorists struck his hometown.

“It was a pretty scary moment, not knowing what to think,” said Vallejo.

“That was one of the greatest influences. I felt we had to do something. It was like the whole city froze. I wanted to have something to do with stopping any more terrorism,” said Vallejo.

Another Queens native, U.S. Army Sgt. Leonel Vazquez, a communications specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, was a plumber on Long Island when the planes struck the Twin Towers.

“I remember saying what a beautiful day it was,” said Vazquez, noting the stark

contrast between the day’s weather and the events unfolding mere miles away.

“9/11 was one of the main reasons I joined,” said Vazquez.

After the horrific events of that day, Vazquez spent considerable time with his Army recruiter about Army options.

Ultimately, he decided to answer the call and put on a military uniform.

U.S. Army Spc. Justin Wiggin, an infantryman with 1st Infantry Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and a native of Smithtown, N.Y., has a similar story to tell.

Wiggin was in the 5th grade at the time. His school had been dismissed because of the attacks, and when he was picked up by his parents, he heard the news on their car radio.

“I couldn’t really understand what was going on,” said Wiggin.

Being so young at the time, he didn’t think about a future in the military. But as he approached the end of high school, thoughts about joining the military became more prevalent. His grandfather had served previously, and the tragedy of 9/11 had remained in the back of his mind.

“It became more of a viable option, and I wanted to do my part,” said Wiggin.

The mastermind behind those attacks,



Spc. Jose Vallejo, an infantryman with the Focus Targeting Force of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, poses outside the brigade headquarters.

Osama bin Laden, was killed last May in a U.S. strike against his compound in Pakistan. His death has brought a sense of closure to some of those affected, but their mission here continues.

“We still have to continue what we’re doing over here,” said Vazquez, concerned about leaving before the job is done and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan being fully capable of providing security for its people.

As for Bin Laden, Vazquez said “he was just a figurehead now, anyway.”

Vallejo was also reluctant to gloat or get too excited over the news.

“Had it been earlier it would have had a greater impact on me,” he said. “He’s just a symbol now.”

Still, there was one thing to be grateful for now that the manhunt for Bin Laden finally came to an end.

“I am happy because I know many Families who lost loved ones when the towers hit,” said Vallejo.

After ten years of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, it is tempting to think that all service members look upon Bin Laden’s death as an early ticket home. Some feel there’s a final chapter to be written.

“Now we just have to go on and finish the fight, and complete the mission,” said Wiggin. 🇺🇸



Photos by Staff Sgt. Ben Navratil
U.S. Army Sgt. Leonel Vazquez, a communications specialist with the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, adjusts a satellite antenna at his battalion headquarters Aug. 18.



Photos by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Sandra Welch

Left: An OH-58D Kiowa helicopter flies overhead as U.S. Army Pfc. Nicholas Cristiano, a Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team security forces Soldier from Everett, Mass., participates in an officially sanctioned satellite running of the Army 10-Miler at Camp Clark, Sept. 2. More than 100 servicemembers participated in the run.

Below Left: A runner grabs water during an officially sanctioned satellite running of the Army 10-Miler at Camp Clark, Sept. 2. The official Army 10-Miler is scheduled for Oct. 9 in Washington, D.C.

Below Right: Deployed Soldiers sprint to the finish line during an officially sanctioned satellite running of the Army 10-Miler at Camp Clark, Sept. 2. The official Army 10-Miler is scheduled for Oct. 9 in Washington, D.C.



Camp Clark hosts Army 10-Miler satellite run

Story by Staff Sgt. Ben Navratil,
TF Duke, PAO

Camp Clark played host to an officially sanctioned satellite running of the Army 10-Miler Sep. 2.

The 10-mile footrace was open to all Soldiers attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, whose 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, is headquartered on Camp Clark.

But running the four laps was only half the work for the team that organized the event.

“[Organizing] a race of this magnitude is very tricky,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. John Whitaker, a Salt Lake City native and the medical platoon leader for Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 6th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt., who assisted in setting up the event, “because you have to balance it against the ongoing operations, which take precedence.” The date of the race actually had to be moved up at the last minute from a later date in September, due to operational considerations.

But this did nothing to lessen the interest of the participants, said Whitaker, who had to limit the amount of personnel coming to Camp Clark, in order to be able accommodate them on the track and during the required overnight stay there.

“A lot of people are interested in running,” said Whitaker, “not just because it’s a great race, but because it’s the Army 10-Miler, and it’s got that prestige behind it.”

That prestige would have been lacking, though, without U.S.

Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Timothy Haley from Weston, Mass, the 6th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt.’s squadron surgeon, who wanted to do something bigger than the typical, shorter “fun-runs” that are often held downrange.

“We’ve done some smaller 5-K races,” said Haley, “but nothing on this scale. I think this is probably the first (race of this size) in this area.”

He reached out to the organizers of the official Army 10-Miler, an annual event held in Washington, D.C., who offered him the opportunity to hold an official satellite event in Afghanistan.

He said Camp Clark was selected due to their heavy interest shown, and because they had a good facility to run the race, on a two and a half mile track on the adjacent Afghan National Army compound, Camp Parsa.

More than 100 Soldiers from TF Duke’s area of operations, which covers Khowst and Paktya provinces in eastern Afghanistan, participated in the race, which began at dawn.

As they charged around the two-and-a-half mile track, the runners were watched over by a team of OH-58D Kiowa helicopters.

Video and photos taken at the Camp Clark event will be shown on the video monitors at the 27th annual Army 10-Miler, which will be held on Oct. 9.

“It was great,” said Whitaker, after finishing the run. “We had (helicopters) flying around over head buzzing the racers, and half-way through the race they [test-fired] rockets.” 🇺🇸

Warriors' spotlight:

Solid intel the main racket for TF Duke's 'Dot Mafia'

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. John Zumer, TF Duke, PAO

They're far removed from their nickname as far as reputation and moral code is concerned. But for three young U.S. Army warrant officers known as the "Dot Mafia" and attached to the Fort Knox, Ky.-based 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, their devotion to Family, loyalty and each other would make even Don Corleone proud. More importantly, their combined expertise has been instrumental in protecting fellow Soldiers and local

civilians in TF Duke's area of operations. James Ross, an all-source intelligence technician from Seattle, Chris Sherrett, a human intelligence technician from Orlando, Fla., and Norman Rosentreter, also an all-source intelligence technician from Waco, Texas, all became warrant officers within the last two years. As holders of the Warrant Officer 1 rank, with its lone uniform square or "Dot" reflecting their grade, they can frequently be the brunt of jokes by senior warrant officers, which naturally

comes with the territory for officers new to the corps. All kidding aside, however, the three readily show the necessary seriousness toward their duties in the remote provinces of Khowst, Paktya and Ghazni. "A lot of what we've been able to do has prevented the enemy from having any major successes in our area," said Ross.

What they do is furnish TF Duke leaders with assessments of battlefield threats and how to mitigate them. More specifically, human intelligence technicians are primarily responsible for supervising and conducting information collection operations, while all-source intelligence technicians coordinate and participate in the analysis, processing and distribution of strategic and tactical intelligence.

Having such timely, comprehensive and accurate intelligence allows commanders to then weigh relevant factors before making tactical decisions.

For Ross and his fellow warrant officers, stationed at Forward Operating Base Salerno, their crucial intelligence mission is quickly summed up in just a few short words.

"We determine where the enemy is and what they're trying to do," said Ross.

All three arrived at Fort Knox in the latter half of 2010, while the 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. was away for a month of pre-deployment training at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

"Missing out on NTC put us behind the power curve," said Sherrett.

With seven previous deployments spread among the three, however, the former enlisted soldiers with their intelligence backgrounds were quick studies in their roles in making a brigade intelligence section function effectively.

Ross' present deployment is a case of déjà vu. He was stationed at FOB Salerno in 2007 during his first trip to Afghanistan. Because of that experience, said Ross, he's much more familiar with the area, targets of opportunity, and the personalities of the enemy he confronts daily.

"I think we're doing well," said Ross, of his combined efforts with Sherrett and

Rosentreter. The intelligence obtained and processed by Ross and his team, and taken into consideration by their superiors, has been instrumental in seeing more than 1,000 enemy fighters killed or captured by TF Duke soldiers since their arrival last January.

Seeing new aspects of the intelligence field, and on the job training that can't be taught in a classroom, have yielded other benefits for the three warrant officers, besides the paramount one of removing dangerous criminals from the battlefield.

"It's been a tremendous learning experience, [being] exposed to things I never could have imagined," said Rosentreter.

Sherrett echoed the sentiment.

"I'm glad to have deployed as a warrant officer; we're going to take this deployment in a combat environment as the foundation of our career," he said.

Combat environment aside, the three can usually be found spending their limited free time together, usually by playing cards and going to the gym.

Sherrett, who has two children with his wife Alina, and Rosentreter, a father of two with wife Geri, credit Family as instrumental in maintaining a positive deployment outlook.

"I couldn't continue to deploy without the Family support system I have, and if I didn't have it, it would really impact my work," said Sherrett.

Even more telling and helpful, is that Geri and Alina are friends, and help each other and their respective Families while the 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. is away.

The Soldiers converse with their wives 3-4 times weekly via Skype or the telephone, which they say does much to bridge the miles. And even though their deployment is more than halfway done, and it's tempting to look forward to their homecoming, all three know much work remains.

It's important work, doing their best to ensure that battlefield threats are stopped in their tracks, before comrades or innocent civilians are seriously injured. But hearing the three warrant officers tell it, the daily tasks of gathering and processing crucial intelligence information remains much more than just a three-man job, and is made possible only through some very special people.

"We just have an exceptionally talented group of Soldiers working with us," said Ross. ▀



Reenlistment qualified

The Army has been an ever changing career for most and the new fiscal year has more changes in store. The troop reduction of 49,000 Soldiers is still the goal, with retention being the main focus of the end strength management. Army Career Counselors aren't issued crystal balls, but there are some ways to avoid a scramble to get reenlistment qualified.

The first thing to avoid a delay is be willing to reenlist for what the Army needs in order to stay with the team. It is every Career Counselor's goal to match the Soldiers wants and desires with the Army's needs. With troop reduction in full effect we will not be able to do this with all Soldiers. Some will have to reenlist to stay and get that special assignment or MOS later. Be willing to act quickly, as the new fiscal year may have certain opportunities that only last for short periods of time.

It is the goal of Duke Retention to pay as many tax free bonuses as possible while we can while still in theater. All the Warriors that took advantage of the DEIP at Fort Knox, and have an ETS in March, will need to reenlist prior to redeployment in order to avoid the 90 day no option ETS window. Last but not least, check with your Career Counselor and set a goal of where you want to end up in the future. They can provide the most updated information about reenlistment opportunities and transition.

As an active Army Career Counselor I have always enjoyed getting the best assignments, bonuses, and incentives for my Soldiers that they qualified for. Fiscal year 2012 has more disappointing news for most Soldiers that lack the ability of being prepared for change. Today's Army is more demanding than that of a decade ago, now days you have to be war hardened and well educated.

Stay Safe, and Stay Strong. Army Strong. 🇺🇸

Apply listening skills

Everyone begins their military career in one place or another; some choose to stay for 20 or more years, while others stay for only a few.

However long one chooses to stay in the military really doesn't matter. What matters is that we serve with honor. Serving with honor as a leader or as a Soldier you must be able to listen. While we are three quarters of the way complete with our mission in Afghanistan, we must take into account issues that may arise at home or on the battlefield.

We must listen to one another effectively to ensure we do not become complacent. Leaders, listen to your Soldiers and get to know them. Soldiers, listen to your leaders. It's up to each and every one of us that don the uniform daily to ensure we provide an ear that is effective and will provide not only proper feedback, but dignity and respect with that feedback.

As always, remain vigilant in the fight against sexual harassment and assault, and by no means refuse to listen! 🇺🇸

By Staff Sgt. Ronald Williams, Jr.,
6-4 Cav, Career Counselor

Reenlistments: July 15- August 15

Spc. Travis Allphin
Staff Sgt. Jarrod Canada
Spc. Christian Crockett
Sgt. Stacey Dehne
Sgt. Matthew Driscoll
Spc. Guillernmo Gomez
Spc. Brandon Mcwhorter

Spc. Nicholas Holder
Sgt. Alexandria Kenny
Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Kenrick
Staff Sgt. Robert Schmidt
Spc. Jonelle Strother
Spc. Jason Umfleet
Sgt. Brian Vaughn

Purpleheart

Recipients: Aug. 15-Sept. 15

Spc. Randen Allison
A Co., 1-279th In.

Staff Sgt. Nicholas Bunch
A Trp., 6-4 CAV.

Cpl. James Calhoun
D Co, 1-26 In.

Spc. Raymond Dilworth
HHC, 1-26 In.

Pfc. Perry Freeman
HHC Co., 1-26 In.

Spc. Travis Kechely
ADT

Sgt. Phillip Kennedy
B Co., 2-2 In.

Pfc. Jason Liedtke
A Co., STB

Staff Sgt. Joshua
Plessmosley
HHC, 1-26 In

Sgt. Michael Rodriguez
HHC Co., 1-26 In.

Staff Sgt. Anthony Roszko
A Co., 2-2 In.

Pfc. Alan Smith
D Co., 1-26 In.

Pfc. Shawn Smith
D Co., 6-4 CAV

Staff Sgt. Yobani Yanes
B Co., 1-26 In.

Barrackslawyer

As our unit gets closer to redeployment, we will start shipping back our containers. While everyone knows you cannot put items which will violate customs in those military containers, many soldiers do not know that they can ship some personal items in those containers, at the discretion of their commander. Whenever the military moves your personal items, including contractors who pack and ship household goods, the military claims system applies. When in situations involving issues with your household goods, Soldiers have the option to either pursue the claim through the carrier's claims process or the military claims process but not both. If you use the military claims process, you have 70 days to get the initial pink form in and a total of two years to submit all the documentation.

When preparing to ship your personal property, every Soldier should start to document the current condition of their property along with keeping receipts. This can become important when trying to establish that some of your property was damaged or when asserting the age of the property. Most personal property tends to depreciate over time so the best method of being able to best preserve the value and ensure you are compensated accordingly is to keep documentation concerning that property and its condition including any modifications which would tend to either increase or decrease the value.

For all property shipped with unit containers, I would do the following: I would take pictures of that personal property to document its current condition and have someone else be able to make a statement that they saw the item in that condition as it was packed as well as making sure to document both the make and model of the item along with a serial number (if available on the DD Form 1750, Packing List. I would also make a note of when you estimate you purchased each item along with its approximate value at purchase. When it is unpacked, check out its condition, hopefully in the presence of the person who saw you pack the item and its previous condition at that time. This will allow you to show that it was the shipping of the property, not your personal actions, which caused you this loss. Submit the claim with all documentation as soon as possible to the US Army Claims office located at the Fort Knox Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, (502) 624-6913. This includes getting estimates for how much it would cost to fix the item. Do not throw out damaged items.

For those of us whom are deployed, if your items are destroyed through enemy action, the US Army claims service is there for you. First, you need to prove the item was there and it was reasonable for you to possess under the circumstances. Second, keep your damaged items and get statements from your fellow Soldiers to document the incident happened and that your item was damaged from being there. Lastly, you need to show the value of the item. However, you need to understand that the value of an item, especially electronics, can sometimes depreciate rapidly so the Army will not pay for a new laptop. They will typically pay for either the item to be repaired or for the depreciated value of the item, whichever is less. 🇺🇸

By Staff Sgt. Marvin Kauger,
paralegal NCOIC

Safety Corner:

As we prepare for the upcoming winter season leaders need to ensure Soldiers are prepared for the harsh weather that Afghanistan is bound to deal us. While there's no substitute for actual driving experience in winter conditions, here are some tips for winter conditions:

Be prepared: Before you set out in winter weather, ensure your vehicle is properly equipped and maintained.

Slow down: Driving too fast is the No. 1 winter driving error. Slippery roads make every mistake happen faster and more dramatically.

Look ahead: Winter drivers need to use their eyes more effectively, not only should you be aware of road ice and other slippery conditions, but you should also maintain a safe interval between you and the vehicle ahead of you (Minimal of 100 meters). Also, look ahead and get ready for corners and other obstacles before you arrive at them.

Brake before you enter a turn: Smoothly apply your brakes before you reach a corner and then release the brakes and use all the grip of the vehicle to corner. Then, once you are through the turn, accelerate out. If you enter a corner with too much speed, you will lose grip.

Learn how to control a skid: This is best learned and practiced on a driving course. If you find yourself skidding, you have to go against your natural tendencies. Turn into the skid. You also need to accelerate. That last piece of advice seems to freak people out the most. People don't think about accelerating to control the vehicle. However, many over steer skids can be controlled and a disaster averted simply by releasing the brake and gently accelerating. This transfers the weight from the front to the rear wheels, which allows you to steer into the direction of the skid, gain control of the vehicle and continue safely on your way. Be careful not to over-accelerate or the tires may spin and you will over steer and slide out of the turn. In an under steer skid (when your vehicle refuses to turn and is sliding), once again it's important not to react instinctively by over-correcting the steering wheel, by braking or by doing both simultaneously. Under steering is usually caused by entering a corner too quickly and then turning. To turn the vehicle effectively, your wheels need grip. If you react to an under steer skid by turning more, you're only asking for more grip, which is unavailable. The same is true if you brake. In an under steer skid, carefully adjust your steering wheel until you regain some grip at the front wheels. Once grip is restored, gently and precisely add steering. Of course, this requires room to maneuver, but if you adhere to point No. 3 above, you should have plenty of room.

Mastering control of your vehicle in snow and other winter driving conditions comes with proper driving techniques and experience. Always remember to go slow in the snow and don't think that just because it may be four wheel drive that snow and ice won't be an issue.

Safety First! 🇺🇸

World News Highlights

New York

9/11
On the tenth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks of 2001, the world gears up to remember those who lost their lives in the attacks.

India

9 people killed
At least nine people were killed in New Delhi, India, after a bomb inside a briefcase exploded on Wednesday, Sept. 7, outside the Delhi High Court. Around 61 people were injured in the blast. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack and authorities have launched an investigation into the explosion.



East Coast

Hurricane Irene
Hurricane Irene set down in North Carolina as a category 1 hurricane, Aug. 27. The storm traveled north along the east coast for 3 days affecting people as far north as New Hampshire. Irene caused at least 20 deaths across eight states and damages from the torrential rains and storm surge are expected to top \$1 billion. Power outages as a result of the storm affected more than 4 million people.

Philippines

Mammoth Crocodile
A 21-foot-long, 2,370-pound saltwater crocodile was caught by authorities in the Philippines, Sept. 6. It is thought to be the largest of its kind now in captivity. Hunters had been attempting to capture the mammoth croc for 21 days. It took a team of 30 men to finally bring it down.

IN MEMORIAM



SPC Joshua M. Seals
April 10, 1990 - Aug. 16, 2011
Co. B, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment
Task Force Duke

U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ericka Hall, Provincial Reconstruction Team-Khowst, greets children arriving to a medical screening outreach mission in Khoni Kaur, Khowst Province, Afghanistan, Sep. 5. The event was made possible by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan which partnered doctors from its Ministry of Health with medical specialists from PRT-K. The goal was to check for and detect minor illnesses, which if left undetected or untreated might provide future complications. Photo by Staff Sgt. John Zumer

