

SIGNAL STRONG

Keeping Families Connected During Deployments

By Sgt. Bethany Witherington

Forward-deployed service members in Afghanistan are staying in touch with their family, friends and children through a simple yet effective program called United Through Reading. The program keeps families connected by letting the service member read a book or books to whomever he chooses, the reading is recorded and sent home with the book or books, to the specified person, usually a child.

The program is available because the USO is working with UTR to bring the program to forward deployed service members. Personnel attached to and serving in 228th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade have taken advantage of the program, some for the first time and some for the fourth or fifth time.

"I had heard about UTR, but had never participated. I thought I would read to my daughter and dog to have the memories," said TSGT Christian Reyes, JNCC-A Circuit Actions NCOIC. "I was expecting an extended wait time and lots of

restrictions, but it was nothing like that. The best part was that I did not have to produce a book, it was already available."

Since the program was founded in 1989 by Betty J. Mohlenbrock, a teacher, mother and wife of a military flight surgeon, it has helped over half-a-million people stay in touch with their families through their videos. Her plan was to keep military members connected with their families by reading stories on video, a dream come true.

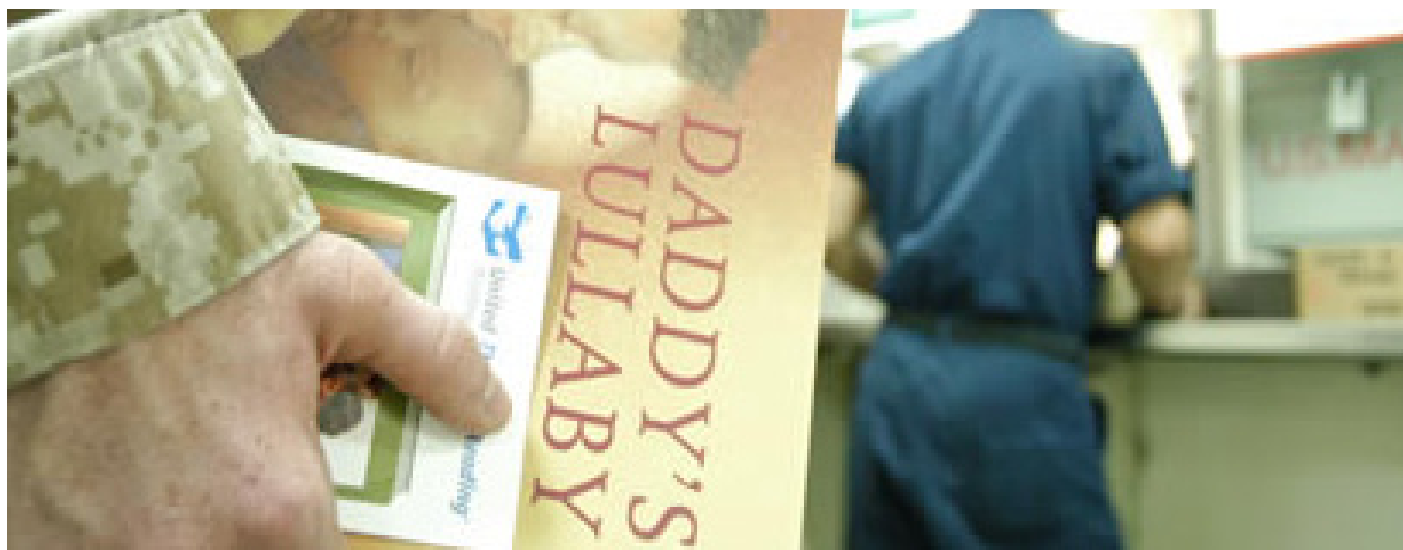
When asked how his daughter reacted to his video, the first time she got a video, Sgt. Stuart Moore, 228th TTSB Chaplain Assistant, said "Amanda told me that Anna waved at the TV over and over and said hey, daddy loves you, which in Anna talk means 'I love you daddy', she broke into a grin watching me. She kept waving at the TV and telling me she loves me."

Although, people react differently when they get a video it is generally a tear jerking reaction to the video. Family and

friends always enjoy getting a video of their loved one serving overseas.

The second time the program was brought to 228th TTSB there were not as many participants, however, some people are holding out for the Christmas recording. There was still a fair amount of participants. Some people came out smiling some people came out of the room with their sunglasses on, even though it was dark outside. The program seems to be just as good for the sender as for the recipient.

Starting in November, the USO will have Christmas books to read to that special someone. If you so choose you can have a book sent over and read it, it will be sent back with the disk, just like the books the USO offers. Service members, deployed, have participated in a program that is offered to help keep family, friends and children connected to the Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Air Force or Coast Guard member, United Through Reading.





Leaders recon with 11th TTSB Preparing for Deployment

Key leaders and personnel from 11th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade and the 56th Expeditionary Signal Battalion(ESB) visited Bagram Airfield in October to perform a mission and area reconnaissance in preparation for their upcoming deployment.

The active duty unit located at Fort Huachuca, Arizona met with the various sections of the 228th TTSB to gather information on: specific mission tasks; challenges to improve; successes to sustain; organization of personnel; movement around the theater and needed

supplies and equipment.

Members of the 11th TTSB spent four days here at Bagram Air Field working with their counterparts gathering real world lessons.

Upon returning home, the key leaders will be able to adjust training plans, section staffing or equipment packing based on what they learned while in Afghanistan.

The 11th TTSB is scheduled to arrive in Afghanistan around the first part of 2011.



11th TTSB Visits Bagram

New Building Constructed at JNCC-A: ~Teamwork solves lack of space problem

By mid-October work in the newly built B-hut at the JNCC-A was complete. The building provides a consolidated workspace for members of the Engineering team. 10 workstations have been set up allowing a total of 20 people to work two different shifts.

The final project was effort of 10 individuals helping on a continued basis with many more offering their as needed. S3 Sgt. Maj. William Bostic, a home construction builder, led the project. Bostic said, the experience was rewarding and provided a much needed de-stresser while working in a deployed environment.



Photos by Bethany Witherington



HERE AT BAGRAM...



Photos by Sgt. Bethany Witherington



Above, Sgt. Stuart Moore sits for a free haircut from Warrant Officer Lewis McMahan. Below, Sgt. Maj. William Bostic pretties himself for his photo.



Top, Sgt. Matthew Muth examines the inside of a fire-fighter aircraft. Middle, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Tony Garland gets invited to have an authentic meal with workers in the PX.

Above, 2nd Lt. Lori Williams concentrates before meeting held at the JNCC-A.

Right, members of the E&I Team proudly stand in front of a back hoe used to install underground cables.

Below, Staff Sgt. Monica Rogers poses in front of the 228th Task Force Spartan sign. Upon completion of the deployment, the sign will be framed and housed at the brigade headquarters located in Spartanburg South Carolina



Photos by Sgt. Bethany Witherington



Left, several cases of barbecue were donated to 228th Soldiers from. Soldiers show their appreciation by taking a photo with the product.



Above, Warrant Officer Lewis McMahon and Master Sgt. Kenneth Porter conduct inventories on newly arrived items.

Left, Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilian display their Infidel koozies

Sunday Chapel Services



Photos by Sgt. Bethany Witherington



Above, Sgt. Wesley Hill and Spc. Gary Colon attend the 1000 Chapel Next morning service.

Left, Staff Sgt. Lorene Littlejohn and Maj. Chris Brown attend the 1500 Gospel Service. This service is held every Sunday at 1500.



ENDURING FAITH CHAPEL

BAGRAM
AFGHANISTAN

Here at Bagram Air Field Sundays are filled with a variety of religious services held at the Enduring Faith Chapel.

Members of the 228th routinely attend a variety of the services offered. In addition to being members of the congregation, many members of the 228th share their talents in singing and dancing with all who attend Sunday services.



Above, Sgt. Michael Rigsby and CH (LTC) Eric Turner participate in the choir during the Chapel Next service.



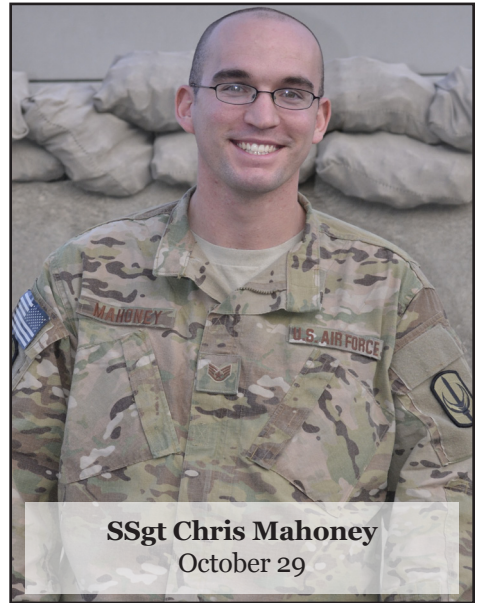
Above, Spc. Tessia Vandiver mimes a religious inspired piece. Left, CH Watties praises those who sang, danced and recited poems during the Music Extravaganza held on 30 August.



SFC Louise Blanchard
October 4



MSgt Chris Reyes
October 3



SSgt Chris Mahoney
October 29



MAJ Dale Goff
October 31

“Birthdays are good for you. Statistics show that the people who have the most live the longest.”
~Reverend Larry Lorenzoni

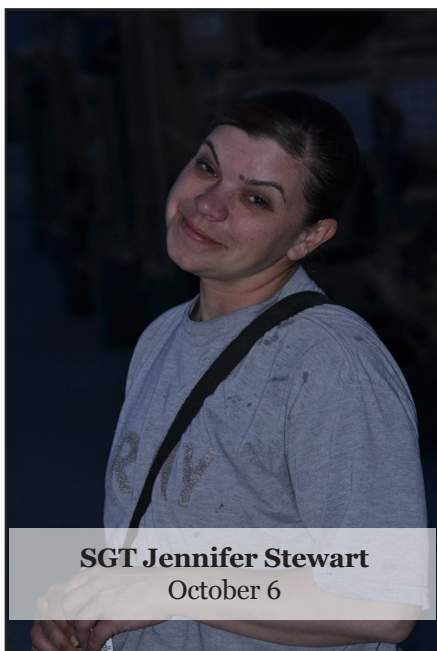
Celebrating October Birthdays



SSG Richard McCall
October 21



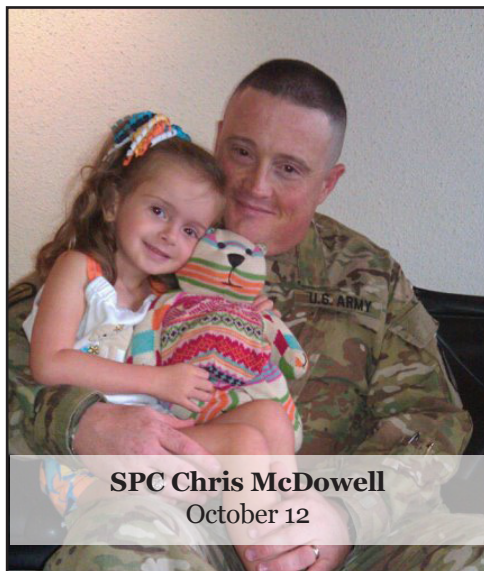
MSG Jenni Allison
October 17



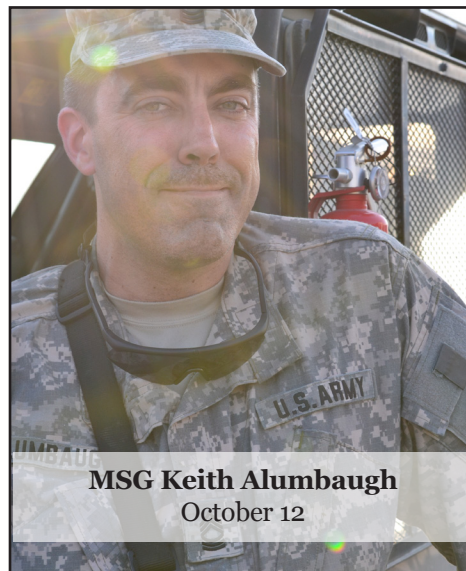
SGT Jennifer Stewart
October 6



SGT Reuben Macfie
October 29



SPC Chris McDowell
October 12



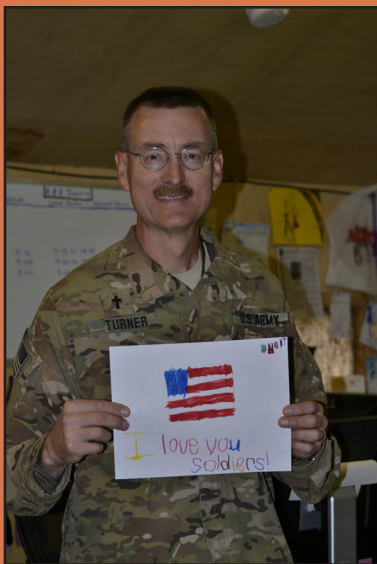
MSG Keith Alumbaugh
October 12

We are very proud of you. You are very brave men and women.

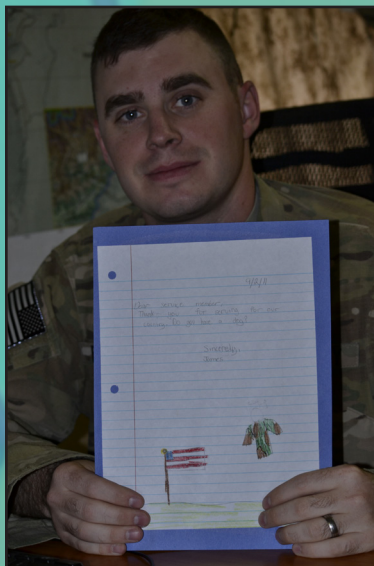


CPT Ryan Purdie

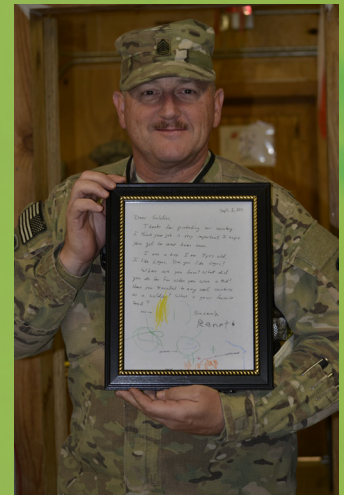
Photos by Capt. Karena Hill



CH (LTC) Eric Turner



SPC Justin Blaine



1SG Kenneth Green

Photos by Capt. Karena Hill

...with love
from Saint
Joseph
Catholic
School



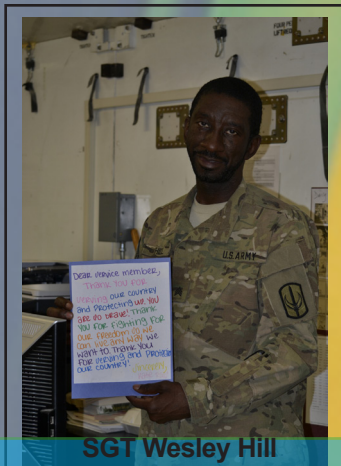
SGT Bethany Witherington



SPC Michael Gendron



CPL Michael Skinner



SGT Wesley Hill



SGT David Middleton



“What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in fight-
it’s the size of the fight in the dog”
~General Dwight D. Eisenhower