

# Duke



# Dispatch

Vol. 16

Operation Duke Blitz  
disrupts Haqqani network

Afghan, coalition partnership  
improves logistics

November 2011



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Photos from operations of Task Force Duke taken between Oct. 15- Nov. 15.  
Top Left: Photo by Sgt. Tobey White,  
Top Right: 2nd Lt. James Hodges,  
Middle Left: Spc. Cody Barbar, Middle  
Right: Sgt. Tobey White Bottom Left:  
Spc. Cody Barbar



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Cover photo- Spc. Matthew Newcomb (left) and U.S. Army Pfc. Brandon Hobgood scan their sectors from a rooftop vantage point in Arezo village, Oct. 31. The Soldiers are members of the Fort Knox, Ky.-based 2nd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and were in Arezo village as part of a humanitarian assistance mission led by Afghan National Army elements, distributing pens, school backpacks, radios and blankets to children and other villagers. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. John Zumer, Task Force Duke Public Affairs)



# Commander's Corner

By Col. Chris Toner  
TF Duke Commander

November is a special month for many Americans. Plans for Thanksgiving celebrations take shape as the month marches on, providing wonderful opportunities to gather with friends and Families to enjoy good food and lasting memories. But for me the more relevant holiday is Veteran's Day, not only because of its greater impact on our American way of life and government, but also for its continued meaning on our mission in eastern Afghanistan.

What actually began as Armistice Day was originally designed to recognize all World War I vets before it was expanded to include all vets (and hence renamed) in 1954. The original Armistice Day marked the official cessation of hostilities between the Allies of WWI and Germany. The agreement, signed at Compiègne, France, consequently went into effect on the "eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month" in 1918. Now known as Veteran's Day, this National observance shares a special history with our 1st In-

fantry Division, the very first U.S. division designated in WWI. Since the Great War, the Big Red One has found itself in combat on many more Veteran's Days, building a historic legacy of battlefield exploits.

After four years of unspeakable bloodshed on battlefields across Europe that finally ended on November 11, 1918, the Big Red One could boast through its inaugural campaign a significant list of contributions toward making things "All quiet on the western front."

It was only a quarter-century later that BRO Soldiers were hammering away on Adolf Hitler's Western Wall, speeding his timely demise and the end of the second World War. And from the jungles of Vietnam and swirling sands of Operation Desert Storm, to Macedonia and a return to Iraq, the 1ID answered whenever America called.

As designated ambassadors for the 1st Division in this part of the world, we now find ourselves in eastern Afghanistan for the second time this century battling the enemies of freedom. We have taken the fight to the Taliban, the Haqqani Network



and countless other criminals who bring only sorrow, death, and destruction to the Afghan people. Our Soldier's bravery and their willingness to meet these challenges head-on is awe inspiring as evidenced by the 126 Purple Hearts awarded to date.

Finally, it's with great sadness that we acknowledge the death of two Soldiers from Task Force Duke: Spc. Sarina Butcher and Sgt. Christopher Gailey, both of Co. F, 1-279 Inf. Bn (Oklahoma Army National Guard). These brave Soldiers truly sacrificed everything to preserve our freedoms and those of the Afghan people. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their loved ones in this difficult time. 🇺🇸

# Voice of the CSM

By CSM Drew Pumarejo  
TF Duke Command Sgt. Maj.

We Americans are lucky. Our country is blessed with material abundance, a constitutional government that facilitates an orderly democracy, and other attributes that allow someone to climb to whatever heights one is willing to work toward. None of those blessings, however, would have been earned without the sacrifices of American veterans. As we celebrate another Veteran's Day, it's only fitting that we recognize the veterans who make our way of life possible.

The formal recognition of the holiday came from a desire to acknowledge the tremendous sacrifices made in "The Great War," or World War One as we now call it. At the time, people around the world felt humanity couldn't possibly endure another bloodletting of such magnitude, so a yearly anniversary to mark the signing of the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918 was set aside.

Who is a veteran? There are some who feel that only someone who has experienced combat or been deployed in the face of the enemy qualifies as one. Nothing could be further from the truth. Looking back to my early time in the Army, back in the days of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, Americans stood vigilant against the communist threat. Without having to fire a bullet or drop a bomb, that vigilance helped bring about the end of communism. Whether one serves honorably for two years or 20, deployed to combat or to merely help keep the peace, we are all veterans. We share a bond with those who served before us, those who serve alongside us, and who will follow...a bond that can never be broken. Our country finds itself engaged in what is likely to be an era of persistent conflict, with no clear end in sight. Unlike earlier wars our country fought, today's enemy doesn't have a standing army, capital city or even wear



a uniform. So as I think about Veteran's Day 2011, it's with some nostalgia and sadness when I realize this will be my last November 11 on active duty. That's okay, because I know that I'm always going to be an American veteran supporting those who came before and after me, fighting and standing for those glorious principles that will always define the United States of America.

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

# Chaplain's Word

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

President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of thanksgiving to be celebrated on Thursday, Nov. 26, 1863. We have celebrated Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday in November ever since. It is one of the most celebrated holidays in the U.S.

The event that most Americans remember as the "First Thanksgiving" was celebrated to give thanks to Native Americans for helping the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony. The assistance of the natives allowed the colony to survive their first brutal winter in New England where over one half of them died. The first Thanksgiving feast lasted three days, providing enough food for 53 pilgrims and 90 Native Americans. The feast consisted of fish and shellfish, wild fowl, venison, berries and fruit, vegetables, grains, corn and squash. The New England colonists were accustomed to regu-

larly celebrating "thanksgivings" (Days of Prayer) expressing their gratitude to God for blessings such as military victory or a harvest.

What does Thanksgiving mean to you? The Christian Scripture declares, "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV). Although it can be a very difficult rule to follow at times, it is important to live our lives with an attitude of gratitude focusing on the positives. Many of us are not able to celebrate this year's Thanksgiving celebration with our families and friends, yet we have many things we can be thankful for. I would like to be thankful for the family and friends I'm going to miss this year. I am grateful that I have such family and friends. I would like to thank God for the protection and blessings He has bestowed upon my family this year. Our son got sideswiped by a driver who ran a red light, but he walked away without any injury. The car got totaled, but



we received more insurance money than we paid for the car. Our son graduated from high school with honors. He started college and is doing very well. Our daughter found a job. My wife continues to have a teaching job. These are only some examples in my family's lives this year that I am grateful for.

Why not spend some time counting your blessings? You may be surprised to see how blessed you are in spite of our challenges during our deployment this year. God bless you as you continue to develop your attitude of gratitude. 🇺🇸

# Afghan women learn life-saving techniques

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Cammie Quinn  
PRT Paktya

Thirteen Afghan women received life-saving training at a provincial women's development center shura held in Paktya province, Nov. 1.

The women learned how to treat burns, lacerations and abrasions from U.S. service members attached to the Paktya Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Nebraska Agribusiness Development Team, both based out of Forward Operating Base Goode.

U.S. Air Force medics Tech Sgt. Rebecca Rose, with the ADT from Coleridge, Neb., and Staff Sgt. April DeLuna, with the PRT from San Antonio, conducted an interactive training program for the women.

During the one-hour course, the medics emphasized proper hygiene techniques, such as hand washing and the use of gloves while treating wounds.

"The women learned the 'cold, clean' method," DeLuna said. "They'd never heard to clean with cold, clean water and

were using alternative methods to treat wounds."

The shura served a secondary purpose also, allowing the women to share stories about their previous home-medical treatments.

"I've used cold potatoes on my children's wounds to stop the burning," one student said. "Potatoes and egg yolk both help to prevent the burn from spreading."

Along with life-saving training, the group also received first-aid medical kits, stocked with bandages, a gauze compress, gloves, antibiotic ointment and other supplies.

The shura was coordinated through Khalema Khazan, the Paktya director of Women's Affairs and the Team Paktya Women's Advocacy Group.

The DOWA is an Afghan ministry-appointed position, with the authority and obligation to raise awareness of concerns and advocate for Afghan women.

"I want a common understanding for every woman to know their rights and freedoms under Islam," Khazan said. "We



U.S. Air Force medics Staff Sgt. April DeLuna, (right) Provincial Reconstruction Team Paktya from San Antonio, and Tech Sgt. Rebecca Rose, Agriculture Development Team from Coleridge, Neb, demonstrate proper arm-bracing techniques at the provincial women's development center, Nov. 1. The medics taught basic first aid skills to 13 women from the province.

have shuras in the women's development center for Paktya women to teach them important skills."

In the past, Khazan has organized town meetings, or 'shuras,' health workshops and media engagements for women in Paktya.

"Education is very important," she added. "Our center is focused on teaching the more than 40,000 women in Paktya." 🇺🇸



# Afghan government, coalition partnership improves logistics

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

It's never easy keeping soldiers equipped and ready for battle, but the growing logistical partnership between the Afghan National Army and coalition forces makes the process of outfitting soldiers easier and more efficient.

For 10 months, the 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, has partnered with the Combat Service Support, 5th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps, ANA, to provide logistical support to Afghan troops throughout Paktya and Khowst provinces.

"We've really moved beyond partnership to more of a mentorship," said U.S. Army Lt.

Col. Dave Brown, of Dover, Del., and commander of the 201st BSB. "It's nice to see the Afghans do for themselves," he added.

Brown appointed U.S. Army Capt. Roger Snead, the 201st BSB's Combined Action officer in charge and a native of Tuscaloosa, Ala., to work hand-in-hand with the kandak to help them develop an efficient logistical operation.

Snead volunteered for the job because he saw a way to make a difference in the war effort.

"I saw this as an opportunity to lead the way for the ANA to be self-sufficient, which would in turn lead us to withdrawing," Snead said.

Snead and his eight-man team meet regularly with the ANA, helping them conduct training and supervise their operations, he said.

For the first time, the Afghan soldiers conducted sling-load



U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dave Brown, the commander of the 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and a native of Dover, Del., eats lunch with his Afghan National Army counterpart, Col. Abdul Sami, commander of Combat Service Support, 5th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps, at Combat Outpost Wilderness, Oct. 18. The two were meeting with the 6th Kandak, 1st Bde, 203rd Corps, to discuss supplies and what troops need to prepare for winter.

training, which consists of hooking supplies underneath a helicopter for the purposes of airlifting them to a specific destination. At the end of the course, the newly-trained soldiers successfully supported ANA missions during Operation Maiwan III, a large-scale joint operation conducted in May.

"There were a limited number of accessible roads during Maiwan III, so our students hooked supplies up to a CH-47 helicopter and helped support the ANA troops in the field," Snead said.

They also taught classes on Ministry of Defense equipment requisition procedures, driving,

first aid, preventative medicine and radio operations.

"Everything we're doing is for the good of Afghanistan and will prepare us for the future," said ANA Col. Abdul Sami, 5th Kandak commander.

The ANA take care of their own missions, Brown explained. They perform their own precombat inspections, brief their own missions and roll out with no coalition support.

"There have been a lot of changes," said Sami. "They've really helped. We now have trained drivers and soldiers who write well."

Though a lot of progress has been made, there remain several challenges that still need to be conquered, Brown said.

"The key to ANA success is logistics and sustainment," Brown added. "The next step is to link the national logistics support down to tactical logistics support to ensure soldiers have what they need to conduct operations." 🏹



U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dave Brown, the commander of the 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, and a native of Dover, Del., talks with his Afghan National Army counterpart, Col. Abdul Sami, commander of Combat Service Support, 5th Kandak, 1st Brigade, 203rd Corps, at Combat Outpost Wilderness Oct. 18.



## ANA, TF Ramrod spread good will in Arezo

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

U.S. Army soldiers joined their Afghan National Army counterparts in a humanitarian assistance mission to Arezo village, Andar district, Oct. 31.

"We are happy with the visit today. The situation is good since the ANA came here," said Noor Ahmad, an Arezo villager.

Items passed out by the ANA and 2nd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke included pens, school backpacks, radios and blankets. Enthusiastic crowds swarmed those passing out the items on tranquil streets, but according to some present, the village hasn't always been so quiet.

"Arezo used to be a completely different town," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Mike Lambert, 2nd Platoon leader and native of Littleton, Colo.

On past visits Lambert said his soldiers had frequently been subjected to small arms fire and improvised explosive devices. The transformation to a more peaceful village, he said, is likely attributable to an increased ANA presence.

The ANA opened a checkpoint in the village in August. Lambert said his soldiers were more than happy to make the Arezo trip that saw many happy children receiving gifts.

"We wanted to help the ANA get out among the people," said Lambert.

U.S. Army Sgt. Matt O'Malley, a military information support operations specialist with the 312th MISO Company, attached to the 2nd Bn., 2nd Inf. Regt., and a native of Long Island, N.Y., said that interacting with villagers is crucial for building greater rapport and understanding.

Such interaction also has spillover effects impacting security, making it crucial for the Afghan government and the military to get out more, he said.

"We had heard that Arezo used to be much more violent, with insurgents frequently passing through. It's become a lot more peaceful with a good relationship between the people and the ANA at the checkpoint," said O'Malley.

Lambert agreed.



Above Left: Afghan National Army Sgt. Ajab Khan, platoon sergeant for the weapons company, 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, talks to an Afghan boy during a humanitarian assistance mission led by the ANA in Arezo village, Oct. 31.

Above Right: U.S. Army soldiers from the Fort Knox, Ky.-based 2nd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke patrol the streets of Arezo village, Oct. 31.

Lower Right: Afghan National Army Sgt. Ajab Khan, platoon sergeant for the weapons company, 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, passes out items to villagers during a humanitarian assistance mission in Arezo village, Oct. 31.

"Having that constant ANA checkpoint here has really helped a lot," he said.

Afghan National Army Sgt. Ajab Khan, a platoon sergeant with the 3rd Kandak, 3rd Brigade, led the ANA contingent in passing out the items. For him, the humanitarian assistance mission boiled down to a couple simple reasons.

"We came here to help the people and show them that we care," he said. 🏹



# Operation Duke Blitz

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

Afghan National Security Forces and coalition forces worked together in Khowst and Paktya Provinces Oct. 13-21 during Operation Duke Blitz, a mission to push Haqqani network insurgents out of the area.

The large-scale operation, part of an even larger operation, spread across two provinces. It was led by the ANSF and supported by several battalions from the Fort Knox, Ky.,-based 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke.

## TF Spader performs the heavy lifting

The main effort of Duke Blitz, dubbed “Operation Nike IV,” was assigned to the 3rd BCT’s 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, TF Spader.

“This operation showed that Afghan forces can extend the reach of their government into the most remote, mountainous areas of Afghanistan to provide security for the populace,” said U.S. Army Maj. Ed Hollis, a native of San Rafael, Calif., and the operations officer for the 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Regt.

“The ANA put a great foot forward in an area that has been controlled by insur-

gents,” said U.S. Army Capt. Joshua Wiles, commander of Company D, 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Regt. “The locals were very receptive to a permanent [Afghan Security Force] presence in the area,” he added.

Insurgent attempts to respond to the Afghan and coalition efforts met little success. One notable failure was an attempted complex attack in Gardez City, Paktya province, Oct 16.

A policeman noticed a suspicious vehicle and signaled for the driver to stop. A bomb inside the vehicle detonated and was followed by attempted suicide attacks. Police killed three suicide bombers before they could detonate their vests. No civilian injuries were reported from the car blast.

The failed Haqqani efforts to lash out at the Afghan and coalition forces didn’t surprise U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jesse Pearson, a Chicago native and commander of the 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Regt.

“This is a center of Haqqani support operations, and that’s why they’re fighting so hard to retain it,” said Pearson. He added that much was learned about the Haqqani network and how they operate in the area.

“[Operation Nike IV] was a very successful operation,” said Pearson. “We

A Soldier with 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, pulls security in Musa Khel during Operation Duke Blitz. (Photo by U.S. Army 2nd Lt. James Hodges)





captured some very important weapons caches and detainees.”

TF Creek sweeps enemy from plains, mountains

Shamsheer, which translated from Dari means “Sword,” is the name of the mission that brought the Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 279th Inf. Regt. to the forefront of the fight. This part of Duke Blitz was aimed at disrupting insurgent freedom of movement and targeting locations associated with insurgent leadership in Zormat district, Paktya province.

Similar to its parent operation, Shamsheer was extremely successful in all respects, said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Chuck Booze, a Norman, Okla., resident and commander of the Oklahoma National Guard’s 1st Bn., 279th Inf., TF Creek. He added that the lingering benefits of moving unhindered into Haqqani network headquarters, while experiencing no harassment, may prove to be the most lasting impact.

“This operation demonstrates the continued development and capabilities of the ANSF in taking the fight to the insurgency,” Booze said.

ANA, Afghan Uniformed Police and several companies of TF Creek soldiers collaborated to remove weapons caches, IEDs and safe havens that had been used by insurgent forces. The efforts were directly responsible for the capture of a known Haqqani subcommander.

Booze echoed the sentiments of fellow Operation Duke Blitz officers, noting the greatest benefits of the related operations may have been the reception offered by local

citizens to the Afghan troops and that reception’s effect upon the Haqqanis. “We continue to see that when Afghan security forces move into an area, the population responds favorably, and the insurgency is powerless to stop them,” he said.

TF Raider sends tremors through Haqqanis

For Troop C of the 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, TF Raider, “Operation Raider Earthquake” began before the sun rose on Oct. 19. Air-lifted by helicopter to the Qalandar area, the troopers moved on to the village of Star Kot.

“In the village itself, we ended up finding some anti-tank mines, grenades, a lot of [machine gun] ammo, three AK-47s and numerous magazines,” said U.S. Army Capt. Mark Snowbarger, an infantryman from Mogadore, Ohio, and the commander of Troop C, 6th Sqdn. 4th Cav. Regt.

Snowbarger credits good intelligence for leading them to the house where the cache was discovered. “The intelligence was very good, and the source was very descriptive,” said Snowbarger, who further explained that, according to villagers, the homeowner had left several days earlier, allegedly for Pakistan.

From there, Troop C moved on to the next objective.

Another cache was discovered in northern Nadir Shah Khot, consisting of eight mortar rounds, recoilless rifle and rocket-propelled grenade rounds and small-arms ammunition.

In addition to praising the performance of his troops, Snowbarger also felt the

ANSF performance was noteworthy, not only by providing security, but in responding to the needs of the people.

“The ANA did a very good job with the outer cordon part of the objective areas,” he said. “[In Starkot] the AUP ... conducted about a 45-minute key leader engagement at the end with village elders, ensuring they knew who to contact for security concerns.”

The cavalry was also there to support the main effort, with Troop A setting a blocking position to the west of TF Spader’s objectives in Musa Khel, said U.S. Army Capt. Dean Carter, the commander of Troop A.

Carter, a native of Oviedo, Fla., said the blocking position prevented any insurgents from fleeing to the west.

“The ANA were in the lead on the blocking position, searching all vehicles and personnel moving through the position. We mentored them in the procedures up front and they took the mission from there,” said Carter.

Insurgents may also find it increasingly more difficult to fund next year’s fighting season, said Carter, due to ANA destruction of almost 30 acres of hashish.

In all, the [overall] operation lasted more than a week, but U.S. Army Maj. Adam Rudy, operations officer for the 6th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. and a native of Tomball, Texas, summed up its success in one simple sentence.

“We got our elements into areas we hadn’t been before and engaged some of the population in these areas,” said Rudy.

*\*Maj. Travis Dettmer and 1st Lt. Paul Jackson contributed to this report.*



Soldiers from Charlie troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, trek along the roads towards another village suspected of having weapon caches and insurgents Nov. 1. The Soldiers visited three villages in the northern part Nadirshakot.



One of the finds the Charlie troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, found on their mission searching for weapon caches and insurgents Nov. 1.

TF Duke re-establishes presence in Nader Shah Kot

Story and photos by Spc. Cody Barber, 11th Public Affairs Detachment

Flying in under the cloak of darkness, Afghan National Security Forces along with Soldiers from C Troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke conducted an air incursion into the mountains of the Nader Shah Kot district in Khowst Province Nov. 1.

The purpose of the operation was to conduct searches for weapon caches and suspected insurgents living in three villages located in the northern part of the district.

The coalition forces navigated through the ankle-breaking terrain during the black of night with the use of night vision goggles before settling down and waiting for daybreak.

At the first light of day, the units descended upon the first village. Instead of the hostility they anticipated, they were greeted with welcoming smiles, chai tea and flatbread.

“As soon as we got to the first house we realized the area was not what intel said it was,” said U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Jason Sager, C Troop First Sergeant, and a native of Richmond, Ind. “The people were friendly and very approachable.”

C Troop and ANSF searched houses in

each village they had intelligence on, and discovered possible improvised explosive device-making material along with small arms weapons in one of the houses they searched.

“The individual was one of the houses we were going to hit,” said Sager. “That individual had more weapons than he was allowed and he also had more ammunition than he was allowed as well as possible IED-making materials so the Afghan Uniform Police confiscated it.”

“Even a small discovery like that can make a big difference in the end,” added U.S. Army Capt. Mark Snowbarger, C Troop Commander, and native of Mogadore, Ohio. “Finding caches takes equipment off the battlefield from the bad guys. If they don’t have their equipment, no coalition forces can be hurt, no ANSF can be hurt and they can’t intimidate the locals.”

The villages the troop visited haven’t seen U.S. or ANSF personnel for approximately three years, so making their presence known and re-establishing contact with the locals in the area was a good thing, said Sager.

“We had intel that [these areas] were supporters of the Taliban but since we have been to the area we have confirmed



Capt. Mark Snowbarger, a native from Mogadore, Oh., assigned to Charlie troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, as the troop commander, sits with Afghan Uniform Police and residents from the local village to enjoy flatbread and chai tea offered from one villages they visited that was suspected to be hostile Nov. 1.

that the reports were wrong,” said Sager. “Letting the people see the ANA and AUP out there working for them is always an important thing.”

As the day and the mission neared completion, the coalition forces heaved on their rucks and set off back to Camp Clark on foot. Even though they didn’t find as much as they anticipated, Snowbarger thought the mission was still a success.

“For me, anytime I can bring my entire troop back to the camp with no injuries [the mission] is a success.” said Snowbarger.



Photo by 2nd Lt. James Hodges  
Soldiers of Co. D, 1st Bn., 26th Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, TF Duke climb a hill in Musa Khel District, Oct. 15. The soldiers were participating in Operation Nike IV, part of a brigade-wide operation to root out the Haqqani network in eastern Afghanistan..



Photo provided by C Trp., 6-4 Cav.  
Pfc. Rion Vest, a medic from Colton, Ore., and a member of 3rd Plt., Troop C, 6th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt., TF Raider climbs a trail in Star Kot village, Qalandar district Oct. 19.



# Warrior's spotlight:

## TF Ramrod Soldier helps others stay connected

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

Sp. Luis Torres has been in the Army for less than three years, but that short amount of time has provided many opportunities for studying what many fellow soldiers value at Forward Operating Base Andar, Ghazni province.

A satellite communication systems operator from San Antonio, Texas, Torres is able to offer assistance to his comrades where they want it most.

"Everybody will say that lodging, chow and mail are the most important things about deployment, but if you don't have Internet they're upset about it," said Torres.

A member of 1st Platoon, Company C, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, Torres is on his first deployment. He joined the Army for the same patriotic reason many others have, but enlisting in his late 30s also provided additional motivation.

"I joined the Army because I wanted to serve my country and because I knew that I could maintain the standard as well as younger soldiers," he said.

His superiors agree.

"He's an outstanding Soldier. Torres is one of those Soldiers who are going to do a job until it's done," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Ebony Likely, a native of Rochester, N.Y., and the telecommunications supervisor for 1st Platoon, Company C.

Being away from his family during the deployment, which remained at Fort Knox, Ky., has presented its challenges for Torres. Married to wife Michelle for 16 years, the couple has four sons and two daughters. Despite the large family and joining the Army later than most, however, Torres is looking for more than just a taste of military life.

"I'm looking to make the Army a career," said Torres.

He's long been interested in signal technology, largely because of its importance in connecting all deployed units across theater. All phone and computer messages are combined into one signal before any message is sent elsewhere. Most days at FOB Andar are spent ensuring those signal capabilities are sent efficiently to all outlying installations.

Signal and technical proficiency aren't his only skills, however. A jack-of-all-trades in carpentry and maintenance, he's frequently

looked upon by leadership to build and fix things, and they say there's a good reason why.

"Give him a task to do and before you even get a chance to follow-up, it's already done," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Renau, a joint network node supervisor for 1st Platoon, Company C and a native of Lynchburg, Va.

Recent special projects assigned to Torres have included modernizing benches used in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center and building a new MWR satellite dish platform that will almost double the amount of internet stations available to soldiers.

He's responsible for two soldiers in his daily duties, and says his job is made easier and more enjoyable because of the teamwork his section has developed.

According to Likely, Torres sets a good example for the younger Soldiers, but his most valuable lesson to those under his supervision may be how to deal with the day-to-day routine of a long deployment.

"Take each day as it comes and be aware of your surroundings," said Torres. "Constantly stay busy, look for ways to improve your surroundings and yourself."

During his free time Torres likes to read horror stories. When he gets together with friends, playing dominos, spades and watching movies help to pass the time. No matter how many off-duty activities he participates in, however, it's easy to think about what's really important, he said.

"Seeing my wife and kids," said Torres, is what he most looks

Other Page: Spc. Luis Torres, a satellite communication systems operator from San Antonio, helps a fellow Soldier position a board being used in the construction of a satellite dish platform at Forward Operating Base Andar, Nov. 3.

Left: Spc. Luis Torres, a member of the Fort Knox, Ky.-based 1st Platoon, Company C, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, is often entrusted with special projects by FOB Andar leadership that take advantage of his additional skills in carpentry and maintenance.

Upper Right: Spc. Luis Torres, a satellite communication systems operator from San Antonio positions a satellite dish for maximum efficiency at Forward Operating Base Andar, Nov. 4.

Lower Right: Spc. Luis Torres, a satellite communication systems operator from San Antonio, hammers a nail into a satellite dish platform being constructed at Forward Operating Base Andar, Nov. 3.

forward to at the end of the deployment, not to mention "a good home-cooked meal." He's grateful to the Family Readiness Group at Fort Knox for the help they've shown his Family during the deployment.

A career in the Army, perhaps with an assignment to a strategic military signal location showcasing his technical skills is his goal, not to mention joining the ranks of non-commissioned officers.

It's a career path that many who know him best say he's well-suited for.

"His leadership and the ability to get things done sets him apart. He'll be a fine addition to the NCO Corps," said Renau. ■



**Reenlistment:** | By Master Sgt. David Burgoon  
Retention NCOIC

The Duke Brigade is preparing to go home. After a long deployment, and very limited reenlistment options, the Duke Warriors are reenlisting for options that are just coming available. Since the first of October, the Brigade has reenlisted over 300 Soldiers for assignments, stabilization and training.

However, there are things Soldiers need to be aware of. This is not the year for procrastination. The Army has limited opportunities as we prepare to draw down and assignments and training will diminish quickly as the year progresses.

Jan. 31 is an important date for Soldiers whose ETS date is before October 2012 when the fiscal year ends. These Soldiers must reenlist prior to 90 days from ETS as has always been the Army standard. However, this year they must also reenlist before Jan. 31 when the Army closes their window of opportunity regardless of their 90 day from ETS mark.

For Duke Soldiers, this is exacerbated by the fact that we will be redeploying and going through reverse SRP at that point. To ensure their eligibility and ability to reenlist, they need to address the issue prior to redeployment.

The same advice holds for all Soldiers who are eligible to reenlist down range where the bonuses are tax free and Soldiers in over strength MOSs can reenlist in their current MOS. Once they are stateside, Soldiers cannot receive the deployed SRB and Soldiers in over strength MOSs must reclassify to stay in the Army.

In today's economy, this is not a time for insecurity. Active component offers many incentives that are crucial to maintaining a secure family and career. Soldiers without solid plans should really consider a short term reenlistment of two years while they work out a solid plan.

For those who can't or won't stay active, the reserve component offers many benefits that smooth the transition to civilian life. Most state and reserve programs carry deployment stabilization and education incentives at state universities. Also, members of the Guard and reserve retain their healthcare benefits.

However, transition opportunities are becoming limited and Soldiers need to act. Many states are limiting their options and openings. In the last couple weeks, Texas, Ohio, Kansas and Michigan have joined Florida and California in severely restricting their openings and training opportunities. Soldiers who have made ETS/Transition their plan, and have not gotten with their Career Counselor to see if they qualify for an opening in the area they are separating to may find themselves severely disappointed. The slot that they thought they wanted may be closed by the time they return stateside and find someone else has secured it.

Bottom line up front, ACT NOW. 🇺🇸

**Perception** | By Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Kretz  
Equal Opportunity NCO

What is not offensive to you may be offensive to someone else; it all depends on that person's perception. Perception can be defined as the process by which we acquire, interpret, select and organize information about the environment that surrounds us.

If you see a group of individuals walking down the street in a big city and they are wearing red or blue clothing, you may consider them members of a gang. This is often considered a stereotype and brought about by a person's perception of the group.

The same goes for members of our unit; when in an establishment such as the Post Exchange or even an off-post establishment like a Wal-Mart, remember that you not only represent yourself but something much greater.

As we return to the United States, remember that what you may not find offensive, someone else may, and if they see you in uniform, they may perceive that not only you but also the Army conducts itself in the same offensive manner. 🇺🇸

**FRG Events** | By Ally Reese  
FRG Leader

November has already started out as one of our busiest months yet. Family Readiness Groups have started on Welcome Home efforts for Single Soldiers and some have also participated in a mock Welcome Home Ceremony to prepare us for our returning flights.

Here are a few important events for November. There will be Family Reintegration Briefings which will give tips for re-connecting your Soldier and children held Nov. 8-9. The next briefing, Preparing to be together will be held on Nov. 10 and will cover the topics of communication and finding your "new normal." On Nov. 17 the briefing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder will be held and will be targeted at helping you understand the signs and symptoms of PTSD and where to find help.

All briefings are held at the Haszard Auditorium and free childcare will be offered through the Child Development Center. Please contact your battalion FRSA for details.

Families are invited to join us at the Duke Dinning Facility on Wednesday, Nov. 23, from 11:00 – Noon for the annual Thanksgiving meal. See your FRSA for pricing and details.

The Blue Star Card Program will also hold a Free Thanksgiving Meal for all cardholders on Sunday, Nov. 20 at 5 p.m. at the Leaders Club.

The annual post Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and Trees for Troops program will be held on Thursday, Dec. 1 at the post Gazebo and Leaders Club parking lot.

Finally, it is very important that your FRG group has your updated contact information on file so that we may inform you about your Soldiers Welcome Home Flight. Please contact your FRG Key Caller or FRG Leader to ensure they have your most up to date information. You will receive Welcome Home information through the Brigade and BN Virtual FRG pages, Facebook, E Army messaging system as well as emails and phone calls. Happy Thanksgiving to you and your Family. 🇺🇸

**Barrackslawyer** | By Staff Sgt. Marvin Kauger,  
Paralegal NCOIC

Our Brigade Legal Office, with the support of others, was able to process 50 passports during our time here in Afghanistan. Capt. Soto, our Legal Assistance Attorney, and I would like to thank the following personnel and offices for helping make sure that mission was accomplished: Sgt 1st Class Sharke, Spc. Humphries, the Task Force Duke Public Affairs office, the TF Duke Topography office, Sgt 1st Class Torres from B Company, Special Troops Battalion and lastly, Spc. Prince Roper with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, STB. Each one of these individuals and offices contributed to the success of the passport mission and without their support, providing tourist and official passports to Duke Brigade Soldiers would not have been possible.

For each Soldier and U.S. Citizen which our office assisted in getting a passport, please make sure to thank those individuals for helping support you. For those Soldiers and Civilians within AO Duke who will not redeploy with the Duke Brigade, you can still get a passport or renew a passport while you are here in theater. The nearest location to do this is the Bagram office. The passport acceptance agent is Sgt. Johnathan Tinner and he can be reached at the following email address: johnathan.t.tinner@afghan.swa.army.mil. If you get in contact with him, he can give you the actual location of his office on Bagram along with the anticipated turn around time. 🇺🇸

*This article is not to be considered as legal advice, as the author is not an attorney. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your legal assistance office. In Afghanistan, that number is 851-0514 and back at Fort Knox, the number is (502) 624-2771.*

**Reenlistments: Sept. 15 - Oct. 15**

Spc. Roberta Adams	Sgt. David Capper	Spc. Robert Fawcett
Spc. Jesus Alvidrezrenteria	Spc. Randy Carey	Sgt. Keith Fewster
Sgt. Anthony Alexander	Sgt. Enedina Cervantes	Spc. Marla Foster
Spc. Travis Ancheta	Spc. Calen Chaney	Spc. Caleb Fortlander
Sgt. Rodger Armstrong	Staff Sgt. Justin Chaney	Spc. Roderic Fuller
Sgt. David Arnold	Spc. Jean Chanudet	Spc. Jonathan Gadson
Spc. George Atwood	Spc. Velkis Charney	Staff Sgt. Shane Garner
Spc. Marco Avilamora	Spc. Ricky Christman	Spc. Adam Gessner
Staff Sgt. Milton Aviles	Spc. Alexander Cline	Spc. Ryan Gibson
Staff Sgt. Lacharn Baker	Spc. Daniel Coelho	Sgt. Heather Goff
Staff Sgt. William Baker	Spc. Brian Colgrove	Spc. Ivon Gonzales
Spc. Matthew Barrick	Spc. Anthony Collado	Spc. Daniel Gonzalez
Sgt. Laquisha Bates	Spc. Benjamin Cooper	Sgt. 1st Class Michael Gossman
Staff Sgt. Ernest Baylor	Spc. Cherrelle Cooper	Sgt. Edward Green
Spc. Joseph Bennett	Spc. Joshua Correa	Spc. Justin Groves
Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett	Spc. William Cox	Staff Sgt. Alexander Gutierrez
Spc. Ashley Benson	Spc. Christopher Craig	Spc. Ian Hansen
Spc. Gordie Bernard	Sgt. Christopher Cromwell	Staff Sgt. Windrell Hayes
Sgt. Michael Bigi	Spc. Jacob Cummnings	Spc. Andrei Helminiak
Spc. Jonathan Black	Spc. Darren Daniels	Spc. Carlos Hernandez
Spc. Mary Blackburn	Sgt. Richard Daniels	Spc. Shawn Heronemus
Sgt. Christopher Bockhol	Sgt. Charles Davenport	Sgt. Nicholas Holycross
Spc. Von Bolante	Sgt. Kenzy Davis	Spc. Holly Horton
Spc. Jesse Bowlen	Sgt. Mark Deleon	Sgt. Eugene Housler
Sgt. 1st Class Rollo Boyd	Sgt. Gregory Dember	Staff Sgt. Alex Howard
Spc. Katrina Brinson	Spc. Mark Douglas	Spc. Farris Howard
Spc. Justin Brown	Spc. Nicholas Dunagan	Sgt. Richard Howard
Spc. Connor Bryan	Staff Sgt. Stephen Dunn	Spc. Robert Howard
Sgt. Brian Bumbury	Spc. David Eagerton	Spc. Keion Hurt
Spc. Gonzales Calloway	Spc. Bryan Elliott	
Staff Sgt. Joanna Cannon	Spc. Daniel Elliott	
Staff Sgt. Jeffery Caplinger	Staff Sgt. Darlene Evans	-Continued page 15

**Safety Corner:** | By Ken Campbell  
Brigade Safety Officer

As we prepare for redeployment I would ask leaders to pay particular attention to weapon's safety. As Soldiers start to prepare for redeployment it's common to get complacent. Both leaders and individual Soldiers have a responsibility to set the example for others and make on-the-spot corrections. Drill home that Soldiers must "THINK" weapon's safety at all times:

- Treat every weapon as if it's loaded.
- Handle every weapon with care.
- Identify the target before you fire.
- Never point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.
- Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

Based on trends across the Task Force during our deployment, the most prevalent mistakes that lead to negligent discharges are improper clearing procedures, incorrect weapon status, failure to keep the weapon on safe and finger off the trigger when there's no intent to fire and lack of muzzle awareness.

In many cases, it's clear the basic fundamentals of weapons handling were ignored. These mistakes are a result of indiscipline, overconfidence and complacency. To date we've had 45 negligent discharges across the TF. Out of those 45 we've had one fatality and four personal injuries, one of which occurred during the Soldier's last 30 days in theater:

In March 2011, a Soldier was attempting to conduct a functions check on his M4 when he discharged one round through his foot. He had just finished cleaning his weapon.

In May 2011, a Soldier was attempting to hand his 9mm off to his buddy in the turret of an MRAP vehicle when he accidentally dropped the weapon causing the weapon to fire and discharge one round into his buddy lower extremities.

On the same day as the incident above, another Soldier was attempting to clean his 9mm when he discharged one round into his leg.

In June 2011, two Soldiers were horse playing when one pulled his 9mm, not aware of the status he pulled the trigger discharging one round into his buddies torso.

In the most recent incident, a Soldier was preparing to clean his M4 in a cleaning facility when he discharged one round, killing another Soldier outside.

These incidents were preventable. Leaders must enforce the standards for weapons safety during the redeployment phase and look out for complacency among Soldiers as they prepare for redeployment. I would ask leaders to ensure no short cuts are taken and constantly remind Soldiers to keep their head in the game. SAFETY FIRST! 🇺🇸



# World News

Highlights

## Pennsylvania

### Head coach fired

Penn State head football coach, Joe Paterno, and the university's president were fired Nov. 9 amid allegations they helped cover up a child sex-abuse scandal involving his former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky. Paterno is being widely critized for knowing about the sexual abuse and failing to do anything about it.



## Thailand

### Flooding causes crises

Thailand battles the worst flooding in 50 years with 373 dead. More than a third of the nation's provinces have been at least partially flooded and concerns are growing over resident's ability to access safe drinking water and sanitation.

## Purpleheart

Recipients: Oct. 15 - Nov. 15

Staff Sgt. Christopher Ackley PRT Khowst	1st Lt. Andrew Docksey PRT Khowst	Spc. Vincent Lehman B Co., 1-26 Inf.	Spc. Mark Nienhuis A Co., BSB	Sgt. 1st Class Frederick Slape E Co., 2-2 Inf.
Pfc. Peter Brown D Co., 1-26 Inf.	Spc. Shane Eads TF Creek	Staff Sgt. Addison Lewis HHC, STB	2nd Lt. Nathan Perdue TF Creek	Spc. Jefferson Steenbergen HHC., 2-2 Inf.
Pfc. Anthony Caldwell B Co., 1-26 Inf.	Sgt. David Escamilla D Co., 1-26 Inf.	Staff Sgt. Tomeka Litsey HHC, STB	Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Richards C Trp., 6-4 CAV	Spc. Kevin Summerlin TF Creek
Spc. Joshua Cupp A Co., BSB	Spc. Cecilia Fravel HHC., STB	Pfc. Taylor Malcolm HHC, 1-26 Inf.	Sgt. Dwayne Ross C Trp., 6-4 CAV	Pfc. Ryan Volino D Co., 2-2 Inf.
Cpl. Robert Curry D Co., 2-2 Inf.	Cpt. Bernard Gardner C Co., 1-26 Inf.	Cpl. Michael Malecki HHC, 1-26 Inf.	Staff Sgt. David Safstrom HHC, STB	Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Wildman HHC, 1-26 Inf.
Sgt. Carl Deaderick B Co., 1-26 Inf.	Spc. Benjamin Hall HHC., 1-26 Inf.	Pfc. Matthew McManaman D Co., 2-2 Inf.	1st Sgt. Jason Sager C Trp., 6-4 CAV	Sgt. 1st Class James Young C Co., 1-26 Inf.
Spc. Brett Beniston TF Creek	Spc. Daniel Houston HHC., 1-26 Inf.	Sgt. Daniel Moore D Co., 2-2 Inf.	Spc. Jaston Semple HHC, 2-2 Inf.	

-Continued from pg. 14	Sgt. Julio Luna	Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Mitchell	Staff Sgt. Jim Perry	Spc. Adam Saucier	Sgt. Michael Velasquez
Spc. Roberto Ibarra	Staff Sgt. Kevin Lynch	Sgt. Christopher Petersen	Sgt. Christopher Petersen	Sgt. 1st Class Eric Schenk	Staff Sgt. Ronelle Wallace
Spc. Christian Jacobs	Spc. Brandon Main	Sgt. Keevian Peterson	Sgt. Keevian Peterson	Spc. Joel Sharp	Staff Sgt. Richard Ward
Spc. Elmo Johnson	Spc. Zachary Malone	Spc. Sarah Pickens	Spc. Sarah Pickens	Sgt. Justin Skotnicki	Spc. Randy Wernig
Spc. Skipper Johnson	Sgt. Adam Mandeville	Sgt. Nicholas Radde	Sgt. Nicholas Radde	Spc. Justin Smith	Spc. Mia White
Spc. Charles Jones	Sgt. Troy Mansfield	Sgt. Steven Rea	Sgt. Steven Rea	Spc. Edward Smith	Spc. Matthew Wilbourn
Spc. Jeffrey Jones	Spc. Christopher Maxymuik	Sgt. Brandon Reed	Sgt. Brandon Reed	Spc. Marshall Smith	Spc. Adam Wilkins
Spc. Atif Kashif	Spc. Michael Mayes	Spc. Ethan Renaud	Spc. Ethan Renaud	Sgt. Haqueen Solia	Sgt. Martin Wilkinson
Spc. James Keefer	Sgt. Lucas McCallion	Spc. Courtney Reynolds	Spc. Courtney Reynolds	Spc. Austin Sparks	Staff Sgt. Michael Williams
Sgt. Isaac Kumia	Staff Sgt. Clayton McClanahan	Spc. Robert Riehle	Spc. Robert Riehle	Spc. Orlando Spruill	Spc. Ryan Williams
Spc. Michael Lacy	Sgt. Christopher Maxymuik	Spc. James Riggs	Spc. James Riggs	Spc. Jefferson Steenbergen	Spc. Brett Williamson
Spc. Jackie Langley	Spc. Robert McCubbins	Spc. Sean Ritchie	Spc. Sean Ritchie	Spc. Benjamin Steinkraus	Staff Sgt. Jared Wise
Sgt. Phillip Ledbetter	Spc. Brady McGuire	Sgt. Fiona Rivers	Sgt. Fiona Rivers	Sgt. Mark Stench	Spc. William Wiser
Staff Sgt. Christopher Lenington	Spc. Andrew McGrew	Spc. Chad Robbins	Spc. Chad Robbins	Spc. Joshua St. John	Spc. Alexander Wheeler
Staff Sgt. James Lewis	Sgt. Keith McKenzie	Spc. Jerod Roberts	Spc. Jerod Roberts	Sgt. 1st Class John Taylor	Staff Sgt. Gary Wolford
Sgt. Edwards Leiper	Staff Sgt. Michael McWilliams	Sgt. Gregory Robinson	Sgt. Gregory Robinson	Sgt. David Thompson	Spc. Benjamin Yanez
Spc. Andrew Lima	Spc. Jadan Meaux	Spc. Enrique Rodriguez	Spc. Enrique Rodriguez	Spc. Derek Thramer	Spc. John Yates
Staff Sgt. Alvin Lin	Spc. Courtney Megnin	Spc. Shaquan Royals	Spc. Shaquan Royals	Spc. David Troutman	Sgt. Michael York
Spc. Nicholas Lindsey	Spc. Ryon Miller	Spc. Matthew Ruble	Spc. Matthew Ruble	Spc. Cody Tunstall	
Spc. Tamica Lindsey	Spc. Daniel Miracle	Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Sampson	Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Sampson	Sgt. David Vanbenthuyssen	
Spc. Christopher Logsdon		Staff Sgt. Ulysess Santos	Staff Sgt. Ulysess Santos	Spc. Christopher Vanbuskirk	
Spc. Brandon Lord					
Sgt. Xavier Luckey					

# IN MEMORIAM



**SPC Sarina N. Butcher**  
Nov. 13, 1991 - Nov. 1, 2011  
Company F, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment  
Task Force Duke



**SGT Christopher D. Gailey**  
Sept. 15, 1985 - Nov. 1, 2011  
Company F, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment  
Task Force Duke



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Brook Koch, platoon sergeant for 4th Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Creek and Cleveland, Okla., native, talks with some locals crossing the Pakistan border during Operation Counter Flow. The main intent of the operation was to deny insurgents the freedom to move across the border into Pakistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Cpl. Ruth Howe, Task Force Creek)

