

DRAGOON Magazine

January 2013



Vol. 1, Issue 2



CTF 4-2

Commander

Col. Michael Getchell

Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Oscar Vinson

Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Edzel Butac

Public Affairs NCOIC

Staff Sgt. Tiffany Monnett

Photojournalist

Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth

Broadcast Journalist

Sgt. Kyle Burns



For more on the brigade please visit:



<http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/4SBCT-2ID>



<http://www.facebook.com/4SBCT2ID>



<http://www.lewis-mcchord.army.mil/4SBCT2ID>

Any story suggestions or questions can be sent to the PAO at edzel.l.butac@afghan.swa.army.mil or the PAO NCOIC at tiffany.m.monnett@afghan.saw.army.mil

This publication is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of this publication are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, 2nd Infantry Division, or the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Editorial content is prepared, edited, and provided by the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office.



Inside this issue:

Commander comments	4
Command Sergeant Major comments	5
1/205 Security Force Assistance Team	6
Deployed couples relies on battlefield travel	8
Manchu	10
IBCT transfers responsibility of Joint Border Coordination Center	12
Rosser	14
Fallen infantryman memorialized by CTF 4-2	16
Tomahawk	18
Fallen combat engineer remembered by CTF 4-2	20
Viking	22
Field Artillery Soldiers receive CABs, medic receives CMB	24
PRT Farah hosts United Through Reading read-a-thon on FOB Farah	25
Blackhawk	26
Forge	28
Chaplain's Corner	31
Memorial Page	

On the cover:



**Security by 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment
FARAH DISTRICT, Afghanistan**

U.S. Navy photo by HMC Josh Ives

Spc. Kaleb Propst, security force team member for Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Farah, talks with a group of Farahi boys during a key leader engagement with the Director of Labor and Social Affairs in Farah City, Jan. 17.

For more photos, visit the PRT Farah Facebook page:
<http://www.facebook.com/PRTFRH>



DRAGOON 6

Col. Michael Getchell



Happy New Year to all Raiders and Raider Families!

Another busy month passed for Combined Task Force 4-2 in Southern Afghanistan. We continue to work well with our Afghan counterparts. Each day our Afghan partners increasingly demonstrate their Readiness when their nation calls. Today they are in the lead for security operations while we work to advance their lead to the next step, security force independence. This means CTF 4-2 will transition from our assistance role to more of an advisory one. This significant step in the war could not have been accomplished without the incredible sacrifices of our Soldiers, Coalition partners, Afghan partners, the citizens of Afghanistan, and you - our Families. With this change, CTF 4-2 will focus on downsizing our smaller bases and transferring them to our Afghan partners while we consoli-

date on larger bases to overwatch their operations. As we embark on this new phase of our operation we face new challenges and difficulties. Disciplined Raiders are Ready to attack these challenges as we attack all challenges through our Expertise and our Accountability to the legacy of those Soldiers and Families that have given so much of themselves to this mission.

Raider Soldiers both deployed and at home, continue to serve with distinction. We face a variety of missions. We are Informed with a task, purpose, and endstate for these missions which leads to Disciplined mission accomplishment by Experts. Raiders are building bonds and friendships with our Afghan and coalition partners, as well as our partners at JBLM including the 7th Infantry Division, I Corps, and surrounding communities of JBLM, especially Lakewood. As 2013 pro-



gresses and as the governments of our two nations broker the future of Afghanistan, we are thankful to be in a position to positively shape a successful outcome. Thank you for your unwavering support. We look forward to all Raiders returning home in 2013 - To that Objective!

Dragoon 6



DRAGOON 7

Command Sgt. Maj. Oscar Vinson



Families and friends of the Raider Brigade,

Hello and Happy New Year. I hope your Holidays were peaceful and this letter finds you well.

The Soldiers of Combined Task Force 4-2 have been keeping busy here in Afghanistan. With the Holiday's over, we have been focusing our efforts on training and operations. During the last month, we've conducted many route clearance missions, combat patrols and multiple training events with our Afghan partners. We have worked and will continue to work with the Afghan National Security Forces to ensure they are able to lead independent operations when we are no longer here.

The progress being made in the province is undeniable and your Soldiers have had a lasting impact on these communities.

Having spent some time with your

Soldiers at the various Forward Operating Bases and Combat Outposts in our area of operations, I can confidently say that the Raider Brigade has the best trained and professional Soldiers in Regional Command-South. I have seen the camaraderie grow within our units over the last several months and am consistently impressed with the pride and patriotism our Soldiers display. You should be just as proud of what your men and women are doing out here as myself and COL Getchell are.

Your Soldiers are staying positive and looking forward to the months ahead as we transition to a more advisory type role in accordance with President Obama's guidance. Things will change as we begin this transition. Please continue to stay positive and supportive; your Soldiers are ready for the challenges



ahead.

May God bless you and your loved ones throughout this new year.

Dragoon 7



1/205 Security Force Assistance Team

By the time many of you read this, the SFAT team will have been deployed for just over three months. Since our arrival, the original SFAT team has grown significantly with the addition of three teams from the Texas Army National Guard. From the start, we hit the ground running and have kept busy.

We have worked hard from the start advising and supporting the Afghan National Security Forces, and every day they have been getting closer to taking the lead in independent operations, taking responsibility for creating and maintaining a secure Afghanistan. Our Afghan partners have demonstrated they are ready to take the lead, as they have planned several operations and are improving everyday. Our work is difficult but rewarding as we continue to build the capabilities of the Afghan National Army. We remain highly motivated and optimistic about our role as advisers, trainers, and partners to Afghan security forces. Bridging the cultural divide that separates us from the Afghans has its challenges, but in several recent operations, Afghan National Security Forces have formed the main effort.

The 1/205th SFAT Team, led

by LTC Brad J. Herman, has conducted classes teaching its Afghan counterparts basic Soldier skills such as map reading and land navigation. 2/105th SFAT team, led by LTC Gary W. King, has focused on a train the trainer course for Afghan Army medics. The course will enable the Afghan Army to train its own Soldiers on first aid instead of relying on Coalition Forces. 3/105th SFAT, led by MAJ David Fagergren, is based in the Arghandab River Valley and has trained the Afghan Officers in operational planning and conducted a live fire exercise with mortars. 4/105th SFAT, led by MAJ Mike Singleton, has been training Afghan Artillerymen. The mission is complicated with older Russian equipment, but the team is well on its way to standing up a functional Artillery Battery. With an operational Artillery Battery, the Afghan Army will be able to provide its own fire support and will not be dependent upon coalition forces. 5/105th SFAT, led by CPT Eric Zepeda, has its hands full training Supply and Maintenance Personnel. They were recently visited by the Regional Command South Commander, MG Abrams for a tour of the Afghan Army's logis-

tics and maintenance facilities. 6/105th SFAT, led by LTC Floyd Sheldon, has helped their counterparts establish a combined Tactical Operation Center to better coordinate operations and a light fighter course focused on basic infantry skills. 1/205th MP Company advisors, led by MAJ Brian Hamilton, uses the skills of its team members, many of whom are police officers in their civilian jobs, to training a combination of Police and Combat skills to the Afghan Army Military Policemen.

Even in the short time we have been here, we can see we are making a difference. Nevertheless, we can recognize that Afghan National Security Forces will benefit greatly from further advising and mentoring through the rest of our deployment. Once our mission is complete, I am confident they will be operating at a significantly increased level of proficiency and the Afghan National Army will be well on its way to independence.

While here, we have been fortunate enough to celebrate the numerous promotions throughout the SFAT. We will continue to do our best to keep you informed through the Family Readiness Group, and through our FaceBook page.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/4SBCT2IDSFAAT>







Deployed couple relies on battlefield travel

Spc. Brendon Brown and Spc. Stacia Brown spend time together during a visit Dec. 26, here. Brendon, a member of the Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) commander's personal security detachment, and Stacia, a preventative medicine specialist, are deployed to Afghanistan together in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photo by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth/ CTF 4-2 PAO

Story by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth
CTF 4-2 Public Affairs Office

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MASUM GHAR, Afghanistan – On Dec. 26, Spc. Brendon Brown stepped off his Stryker at Combat Outpost Talukan, looking for a familiar face.

After talking to a few soldiers on the COP, he made his way to a group of parked Strykers.

Out of one of the top hatches of a Mobile Gun System Stryker popped a petite redhead. She diligently climbed off the Stryker and into the arms of Brown, her husband.

If it weren't for him being on the Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) commander's personal security detachment, Brown might never have seen his

wife, Spc. Stacia Brown, a preventative medicine specialist, during the deployment, he said.

The couple, who married in Sept. 2010, met in an airport in Korea when they were on their way to their first duty stations after graduating from Advanced Individual Training, which is where soldiers learn their specific military jobs.

Since being married, this is their first deployment together.

Being able to see each other during deployment is a welcomed experience for both soldiers.

"It definitely gives me something to look forward to," said Brendon, explaining that the chances he gets to talk to his wife remind him he's still a husband, not just a soldier.

Stacia said her reaction when she gets to see her husband is always the

same.

"I see him and I always jump on him almost every single time," said Stacia. "It's kind of overwhelming."

Two months into the deployment, the couple has been able to see each other at least once a month, but there is never a guarantee that that pattern will continue throughout the next seven months.

Having each other in the same time zone is comforting for the couple, however, that means they are both in a combat zone as well.

"I think it makes it a little bit worse than him being home, because he's in immediate danger too and knowing that kind of makes it a little more stressful," said Stacia.

Brendon said he feels a similar worry about his spouse.

"It's stressful knowing she's in a

danger zone, and I'm not there to make sure she's OK and protect her like a husband's supposed to," he said.

In preparation for the deployment, the Browns had to leave behind their only son, Gauge, with Stacia's family.

Gauge was born prematurely nearly a year after Brendon and Stacia married. Now, a year later, they both missed their son's first birthday, Dec. 21. In an effort to cope, they lean on each other for support and do whatever they can to stay close.

The Browns said they try to talk every night, whether it is through video chat or email.

Communicating daily is one of the pieces of advice Stacia gives to other couples who are deployed, but not in the same area.

"Stay focused, but definitely take advantage of your amenities," she said. "If you do have the Internet, you know, whenever you do have your time to yourself, do check it because you are on the same time and everything."

"Even if he's not on, I always leave him a message letting him know that I'm OK and he does the same thing too," she added.

Communication is one of Brendon's top three things he said are needed for dual military couples deployed together. The other two things are trust and understanding.

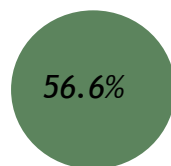
The Browns have a good understanding, said Brendon.

"It's the understanding that we have something that takes priority over our marriage right now and that's our job," he said.

That advice resonates for at least four couples in Brendon's company alone who are toughing out a deployment whether they're on the same base as their spouse or in different provinces.

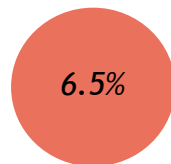
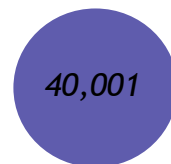
Dual-military couples

Facts and Figures



Percent of DOD's active duty members who are married

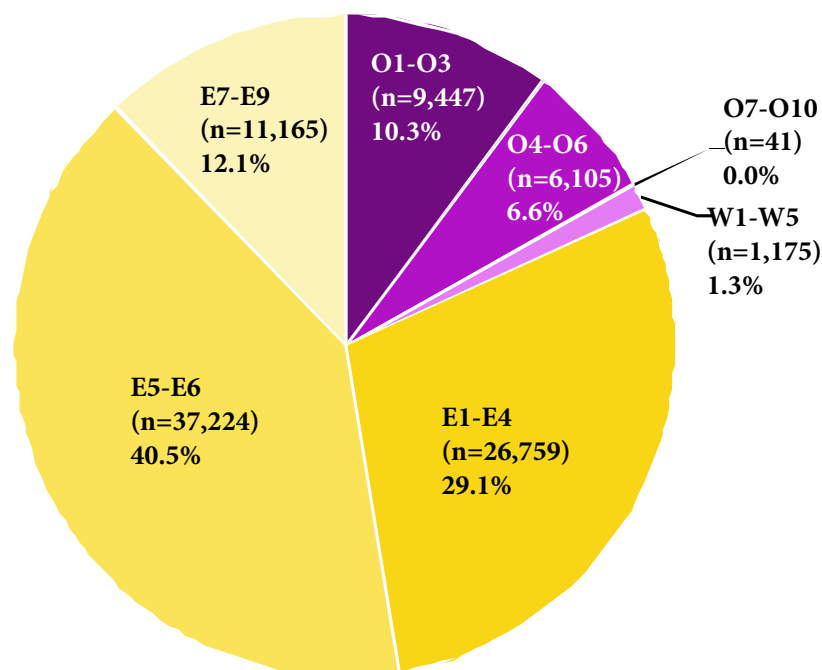
Number of DOD's active duty members in dual-military marriages with children



Percent of DOD's active duty members in dual-military marriages

Air Force has the *highest* number of dual military couples

Active Duty Members in Dual-Military Marriages by Pay Grade



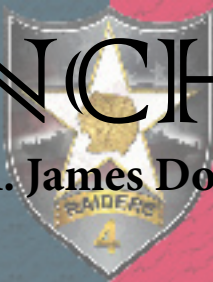
Note: Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Numbers based on 2011 DOD Demographics report



MANCHU 6

Lt. Col. James Dooghan



The Manchu Family welcomes 2013 with the battalion/task force deployed to the Horn of Panjwa'i (Panjwa'i District, Kandahar Province, Southern Afghanistan) with hopes for another year filled with many blessings. We have faced and overcome many challenges in 2012 together, and we can all look back with pride and satisfaction for all that we have accomplished as a Manchu Family.

CSM Young and I were able to visit each and every Manchu guard tower, outpost, checkpoint, command post, and Forward Operating Base in the Panjwa'i on Christmas Day and extend your thanks and gratitude for their sacrifice and dedication. Our Christmas meals at each location were incredibly delicious (thanks to the efforts of our cooks), and our Soldiers had the opportunity to enjoy turkey, ham, prime rib, lobster tails, candied yams, stuffing, mashed potatoes, collard greens, deviled eggs, shrimp cocktail, and a myriad of desserts. You can be rest assured that your loved ones ate very well and those in austere locations were given the opportunity to rotate for Christmas supper.

The cold weather has quickly descended in southern Afghanistan, but just as quickly our Manchu Soldiers and leaders have made incredible advances in our mission in the short time here. We have already made a visible connection with our Afghan partners through patrols, tactical and medical training, staff

training, and other bonding events as we work together to transition security responsibilities completely to our Afghan partners. "Peacemakers", our Manchu Security Force Advise and Assistance Team (SFAAT), have worked diligently with our 2d Kandak (battalion) Afghan partners towards this independence. Every company also properly selected trustworthy leaders and Soldiers to form security elements to protect SFAAT units across Southern Afghanistan. "Able" Company has effectively partnered with their Afghan security force partners and they have also provided life saving medical support to local nationals who were injured near their base, resulting in grateful Afghan family members. "Blow-Torch" Company has systematically improved their three temporary abodes by strengthening fighting positions, living areas and most importantly their cooking space – the space has afforded motivated Soldiers to concoct interesting recipes while living away from home cooking! "Comanche" Company managed to find themselves in the spotlight in the first two months in Zangabad (Z-Bad) with several visits from distinguishing leaders; to include the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Undersecretary of the Army and Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. Our gracious visitors presented coins, CIBs, CABs and CMBs during their visit and we were able to showcase their professionalism during a Counter-IED

demonstration to General Dempsey. "Dawg" Company dispersed their force and supported the Brigade from eight separate locations; another testament to their exemplary skills and dedication to mission. "Havoc" Company continued to represent, as the largest formation in Combined Task Force Manchu, with critical mortars registration, complex mapping of personalities in Panjwa'i, rapid creation of an effective Tactical Operations Center (TOC), traditional reconnaissance missions in the extreme cold and early morning fog by our scout platoon, timely and effective religious support by our Religious Support Team, and the full range of life support undertakings for those who reside on Z-Bad. We are grateful for our "Liger" Team, a.k.a. Manchu Logistical Support Team (LST), for executing the monumental task (but not impossible for Liger) of retrograding truckloads of equipment in preparation for future asset reductions in theater. "Breacher" 2d Platoon, 38 Engineer Company continued to demonstrate their utmost dedication to mission and secured countless miles of roads for our forces, Afghan forces, and for the Afghan civilians.

December 2012 marked the minimum of 30 days of deployment in Afghanistan for all of our Manchus. With this milestone, each company hosted a Combat Patch Ceremony and presented Soldiers with the 2nd Infantry Division Combat Patch.



Photos have been posted on the “4th Battalion, 9th Infantry (Manchu)” Facebook page and the wearing the 2nd Infantry Division combat patch further connects us to the thousands of combat veterans that have honorably served in combat with this unit.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our Manchu Families for their continued support. I cannot overstate

the exponential lift in morale each supportive letter, picture that recalls a moment in time or informs of a new memory, or care package that surround us with items that bring us home...even if it is for a moment. Please reach out to those who have redeployed to the United States for various reasons and thank them for their heroic efforts. CSM Young

and I are full of pride for our Manchu Soldiers and we look forward to their continued meaningful contributions here in Afghanistan in 2013. Keep Up The Support, Keep Up The Prayers, Keep Up The Fire (KUTF)!

LTC James K. Dooghan
Manchu 6
Combined Task Force 4-9



IBCT transfers responsibility of Joint Border Coordination Center

Story by 1st Lt. Veronica Aguila
117th MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan – Soldiers with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team officially transferred responsibility for operations at the Joint Border Coordination Center to the 208th Army Liaison Team at Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, Jan. 7.

Ceremony attendees included representatives from the Pakistan military, the Afghan Border Police and

International Security Assistance Forces.

Throughout their nine-month tour under the command of Col. John Burke, director of the JBCC, the team was charged with facilitating cross-border coordination and communication, intelligence sharing and promoting complementary operations between ISAF, PAKMIL and Afghan National Security Forces.

Guest speaker U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Robert “Abe” Abrams, the Regional Command-South commander, commented on the accomplish-

ments of the outgoing 18-soldier team from New York Army National Guard’s 27th IBCT and the critical and unique JBCC mission.

“With all the obstacles and challenges presented to this JBCC team there were numerous opportunities taken advantage of and I know Col. Burke and his team have passed along many hard earned lessons to the new team,” said Abrams. “Perhaps the most important of all is the cohesion built on trust, mutual respect, transparency, and improving collaborations with our ANSF and



Photo by 1st Lt. Veronica Aguila/117th MPAD

Representatives from the Afghan Border Police, Pakistan army and U.S. Army render honors to their respective nations flags during the Joint Border Coordination Center transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, Jan. 7, 2012. The 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from New York Army National Guard relinquished authority to the 208th Army Liaison Team.

PAKMIL representatives all in the border security zone.”

One of only two JBCCs in Afghanistan, the soldiers worked to build better cooperation and trust amongst the three partnered forces within the border security zone in Regional Command-South and Regional Command-Southwest which extends approximately 1,300 kilometers from Nimruz Province to the southern border of Paktika Province in eastern Afghanistan.

Their goal, to achieve better security for the population of Afghanistan and Pakistan, is accomplished through positive communication with their partners by countering cross-border illicit activities, deconflicting near-border operations and enhancing ACPAK border relations.

“To the 27th team I say well done. I congratulate you on an outstanding deployment in support of such a critical strategic base,” Abrams said.

According to the JBCC leadership the biggest strides were made through communication with their partners and an understanding and awareness of their partners’ culture and differences.

“It is important to remember that our organization has three sovereign countries that all have their own agendas. The question is, how do you find out where those agendas are aligned and work on improving those areas,” said U.S. Army Capt. Nathan Iglesias, chief intelligence officer, JBCC.

“Finding out what ones agenda is requires trust and time,” he continued. “Progress is a very slow and delicate process. It is something that we were not prepared to have the patience for. It was something we had to learn.”

Some of the JBCC team’s note-



Photo by 1st Lt. Veronica Aguila/117th MPAD

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Robert “Abe” Abrams (second from right), the Regional Command-South commander, U.S. Army Col. John Burke (third from right), outgoing director of the Joint Border Coordination Center, and U.S. Army Col. Richard Alonso Holtorf, Army liaison chief, 208th Army Liaison Team, pose for a group photos with representatives from the Afghan Border Police and Pakistan army during the JBCC transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, Jan. 7, 2012. The 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from New York Army National Guard relinquished authority to the 208th Army Liaison Team.

worthy successes were the reestablishment of the border flag meetings after a significant time lapse and the creation of tactical level coordination and intelligence sharing meetings.

“These are the necessary ingredients for trust and to move forward. I believe the organization is moving in the direction we want,” said Iglesias.

Stepping outside of their strategic level mission, the team used their additional skills as National Guard soldiers to help to bring new resources to Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak. In addition, some of their volunteer efforts included training local Afghan teachers on new techniques to improve their classroom engagement, and assisting with school supply drives for the local children.

“It absolutely made sense to build relationships [and] demonstrate to the Afghans liaison officers that we work with here that our passion for

the Afghan people is more than just lip service,” said Iglesias about the volunteer work.

Soldiers also taught Afghan language instruction classes which encouraged interaction amongst soldiers of all levels and the ANSF and PAKMIL representatives which resulted in un-planned cultural sharing and stronger partnership.

This partnership was one of the strengths noted by Abrams during the ceremony.

“The strength of the JBCC is found within the unity of all three parties,” said Abrams. “Through the strength of our partnership and continued growth we will prevail.”

Abrams recognized the challenge for the incoming 208th Army Liaison Team to continue building the trust and cooperation amongst all the stakeholders of the border security zone.

The incoming 208th ALT is commanded by Col. Richard M. Alonso Holtorf, Army liaison chief.

ROSSIER (6)

Lt. Col. Chad Sundem



To all the Rock Family and Friends,

Your unwavering, dedicated and overwhelming support of all of us makes an incredible difference and we couldn't be luckier or more grateful for your support.

This New Year was significant as we closed all our forces here and welcomed the Fierce Team forward. Additionally we want to thank CPT Adam Patten for his work back at JBLM and know that CPT Dallas Henry will continue the mission.

The Rosser Team continues to make enormous strides across our area of operations and improvements in security and governance are vivid everywhere. The mission, demanding and challenging, continues toward success as your Soldiers earn the praise, admiration, and respect of all the organizations and Afghan partners working towards a better tomorrow.

We extend our prayers to the family of SGT David Chambers. His loss hurt all of us deeply, but also strengthened our bond and our commitment to each other. We promise to hold his memory close as we finish the mission.

Today, we stand humble and proud as the Rock of the Marne.

Tomorrow, Let 'Em Come!

CSM Michael Bartlett and LTC Chad Sundem







Photo by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth/ CTF 4-2 PAO

Fallen infantryman memorialized by CTF 4-2

Story by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth
CTF 4-2 Public Affairs Office

COMBAT OUTPOST SPERWAN GHAR, Afghanistan – In Company B, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, Sgt. David Chambers was the example of leadership for soldiers including Sgt. Adam Taylor.

“Dave, you constantly pushed myself and others in this company to strive for greatness, and make your company the best it could be,” said Taylor. “You were my best friend, my brother, and my family, just like you were to everyone here today.”

Soldiers of Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) remembered Chambers during a memorial ceremony Jan. 20, here.

Chambers died Jan. 16 in an im-

provoked explosive device attack in the Kandahar province of Afghanistan.

A Hampton, Va., native, he joined the military May 2009. His first duty station was Vilseck, Germany, where he served with 2nd Cavalry Regiment for two years and deployed with the unit to Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011.

After redeploying, he transferred duty stations to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., where he joined 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment. Chambers had a noticeable impact on the unit, said his company commander, Capt. Matthew Boise.

“Sgt. Chambers had one of those rare personalities that resonates across the entire company,” said Boise. “Look around and you’ll find

a part of David in every platoon in this company.”

“Although he’s no longer with us, Sgt. Chambers’ mark will forever be stamped on all that we do, therefore his memory will indeed help carry us forward to the objective,” Boise explained.

The soldiers of B Co. will continue their mission in Afghanistan and honor Chambers’ memory, but it will have nothing to do with validation, said Lt. Col. Chad Sundem, the battalion commander of 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment.

“Some people are going to tell us that we must go out and finish the mission in order to validate Sgt. Chambers’ service and his ultimate sacrifice,” said Sundem. “Of course we’re going to finish the mission,



Photo by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth/ CTF 4-2 PAO

Following final roll call, 1st Sgt. Thomas Andor places the identification tags of Sgt. David Chambers on the stand during a memorial ceremony for Chambers Jan. 20, at Forward Operating Base Sperwan Ghar.



Photo by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth/ CTF 4-2 PAO

(From right to left) Staff Sgt. Alejandro Cisneros, Sgt. Kyle Chattin, and Sgt. Adam Taylor pay their final respects to their friend, Sgt. David Chambers, during a memorial ceremony for Chambers Jan. 20, at Forward Operating Base Sperwan Ghar.

but Sgt. Chambers, he doesn't need anything validated. He already was everything anyone would ever want in a son, a friend, a peer, a soldier, and a leader."

Chambers' squad leader, Staff Sgt. Alejandro Cisneros, said Chambers was an inspiration to everyone of what a leader looked like and what a leader did.

"He loved what he did and he loved the guys around him, and in turn, everyone around him loved him," said Cisneros. "He was not only a great infantryman, or a great American, he was a great human being with a beautiful soul."

Sgt. Kyle Chattin, a friend of Chambers, spoke to his fallen comrade during the memorial about a deeper meaning to everything that happens in life.

"We had never even heard of Panjwa'i, but for your whole life it was there on a map for you to find and ponder and finally go to. All of us in this line of work know a place like that, it's there waiting for all of us. But you went to yours and it claimed you," he said.

However, Chattin said he found consolation in one thing.

"I'm comforted now only by the

thought of your disposition towards our chosen profession. You knew the score, you knew it may come, and you never wavered. You lived and worked with a dedication to excellence. You pursued it relentlessly, and that was obvious to all lucky enough to know you," he said.

For Chattin and the men of B Co., they lost a vital member of their team.

"The men in this company were made better each and every day by the work you did. Maybe that's what makes this so hard, because there's simply no way to fill a void as large as the one we are left with now," said Chattin.

Taylor, himself, said he would feel a void.

"My home won't be like my home without you brother," Taylor said.

During the memorial, Chattin shared an ode from Laurence Binyon's poem, "For the Fallen."

***They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eyes,
steady and aglow.***

***They were staunch to the end
against odds uncounted,***

They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,

We will remember them.

"For us, you will never grow old, Dave. You'll always be the finest friend, brother, and infantryman I have ever known," said Chattin.

Chambers' awards include the Bronze Star Medal, two Purple Heart Medals, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with three Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one campaign star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, two Overseas Ribbons, NATO Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Driver and mechanic w/ driver-wheeled vehicles badge.

Chambers is survived by his mother, father and brother.

TOMAHAWK 6

Lt. Col. Thomas Feltey



Greetings Tomahawk families and friends!

I thought I would take the opportunity to write you an update on how we've been doing this month. Our Task Force, already sizeable and diverse between Blackfoot, Crazyhorse and Huron Companies bolstered by multiple Security Force Assistance Teams of the Texas National Guard and a detachment of the Albanian Special Operations Forces, has grown even larger with the arrival of Assault Battery from 2-12 Field Artillery Battalion. I am pleased to welcome them to the Tomahawk Task Force, and I am confident they are going to make a significant contribution in our mission. While we made the most of the holiday season with several celebrations and religious services here on FOB Spin Boldak, the pace of that mission has not slowed down, and has even accelerated. Our efforts advising and supporting the Afghan National Security Forces are starting to pay off, demonstrated by several successful operations in which they are forming the main effort, such as in Southern Strike V. Nevertheless our mission here is not yet complete, and it is clear that our continued efforts are more important than ever. Every day of hard work on our part in support of our Afghan partners is one step further toward a secure

Afghanistan, sustained and protected independently by Afghan National Security Forces.

On the homefront, supporting us in our mission are the Tomahawk Ready Reserve, Family Readiness Group and volunteers, all of whose importance cannot be understated. Just as we have

been achieving success here, their success was apparent through the holiday season; it can be a very difficult time for a family with a deployed soldier, but through their hard work we made it through. I cannot emphasize enough the value and importance of the buddy system, and the role it can play in overcoming obstacles both on the battlefield and at home. We pledge that we will continue to keep you informed on how things are going here through the Family Readiness Group, Monthly Newsletter and our Facebook page.

Based on how our mission is progressing here and the strong support we are receiving from home, I am confident that when the time comes for us to leave Afghanistan and return to JBLM, we will come home with the knowledge that in accomplishing our mission, we have made a significant contribution to a safer and more secure Afghanistan.



Tomahawks Win!!

Tomahawk 6 and 7





Fallen combat engineer remembered by CTF 4-2

Soldiers and friends gather to say goodbye to their engineer brother

Story and photos by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth
CTF 4-2 Public Affairs Office

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ZANGABAD, Afghanistan – When Pfc. Matthew Jones first met Pfc. Markie Sims in Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., it was laughter from the start.

The two combat engineers ended up in same squad in 2nd Platoon, 38th Engineer Company, where they grew close as friends and eventually like brothers, Jones said.

“We were together so often that everyone would refer to me as Sims and he would be Jones,” he said. When that happened, Jones said Sims would look at him and say “Sims, come one. We got to go.”

However, now Jones is just Jones as he and other Soldiers of Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) said their final goodbyes to Pfc. Markie Sims during a memorial ceremony Jan. 4, here.

Sims was killed during combat operations Dec. 29 in the Panjwa’i District of Afghanistan.

The Citra, Fla., native, joined the Army in November of 2011.

After graduating BCT and Ad-

vanced Individual Training, he was assigned to 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. in March of 2012.

As a member of 2nd Plt., he fell under the leadership of 1st Lt. Matthew Morgan.

During the memorial, Morgan shared that Sims had recently married and that he and his new bride were expecting a son this spring.

“I’m saddened by the prospect of his son growing up not knowing his father or what sort of man he was, but I have to hope that those who knew Pfc. Sims well will be able to impress that knowledge upon his son. And that as he grows up, he will always look up to his dad, even though he is no longer with us here,” said Morgan.

In addition to being a husband and soon-to-be father, Sims was an exemplary engineer, said Lt. Col. James Dooghan, the commander of 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment.

“He was a fitting member of a brave band of warriors completely dedicated to making every movement on routes safer for (International Security Assistance Force, Afghan National Security Force),

and Afghan civilians alike,” Dooghan said.

Sims died doing his job and friends like Jones said they would not forget him.

“I will never forget the days I was lucky enough to spend with a man as great as him,” Jones said. “Nothing will ever be the same with my brother gone from this world, but I know that he is in a better place now watching over us all.”

Leaders, including Dooghan, said that Sims would live on through the people he touched in his life.

“Without question, Pfc. Sims passed from us much too soon, but he lived his life to the fullest and he very much impacted everyone he made contact with,” said Dooghan. “He will be remembered as a loving husband, an honorable son, a professional Soldier, a valiant warrior and a role model for other young Soldiers.”

His awards include the National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medal.

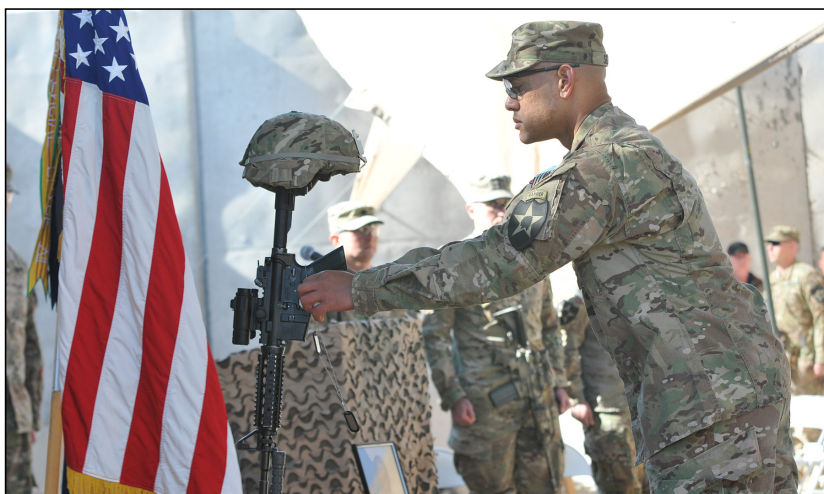
Sims is survived by his wife.





Capt. Jefferson Mason and 1st Sgt. Riley Seau, commander and first sergeant of 38th Engineer Company, Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) touch the identification tags of Pfc. Markie Sims in remembrance during the memorial service for Sims Jan. 4, at Forward Operating Base Zangabad, Afghanistan. Sims, a combat engineer and Citra, Fla., native, died Dec. 29 during combat operations in the Panjwa'i District of Afghanistan.

First Lt. Matthew Morgan, a platoon leader with 38th Engineer Company, Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) speaks during the memorial service for his Soldier, Pfc. Markie Sims, Jan. 4, at Forward Operating Base Zangabad, Afghanistan.



First Sgt. Riley Seau, the first sergeant of 38th Engineer Company, Combined Task Force 4-2 (4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division) hangs the identification tags of Pfc. Markie Sims onto a stand during the memorial service for Sims Jan. 4, at Forward Operating Base Zangabad, Afghanistan.

VIKING (6)

Lt. Col. William Downing



To the Soldiers, families, and friends of Task Force Viking,

With our deployment well into the month of January, I can say with much pride that Task Force Viking Soldiers have established a new standard across our area of operations and are making daily gains towards mission accomplishment.

It is truly motivating to see the feeling of achievement in our young Soldiers' eyes as they begin to realize they've become part of a very small population (less than 1% of the American public) that has volunteered, deployed, and fought for America. As CSM Kerns and I travel throughout the area of operations, we continue

to emphasize the honor of knowing that what we do as Soldiers, will echo throughout the rest of our lives as Americans. Whether Angry Vikings for three years, five years, 20, or more, one day when we are old and gray (but still angry), we will have the satisfaction of knowing that we were part of that select group.

The unique trust, loyalty, and cohesion that can only come from Soldiers enduring hardship together are the most powerful characteristics a TEAM can have. Your Soldiers have demonstrated these and more no matter the day, no matter the discomforts and no matter the difficulty. As I've said before, CSM Kerns and I are truly honored to serve alongside the Soldiers of this Angry Task Force.

May God bless Task Force Viking, its families, and the United States of America.

Stay Angry,



LTC Will Downing



CSM Robert Kerns
(the original Angry Viking)



Field artillery Soldiers receive CABs, medic receives CMB

Story by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth
CTF 4-2 Public Affairs Office

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FARAH, Afghanistan – On Nov. 4, Soldiers of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment received a call over their radios that a key-leader engagement in the Farah Province they were providing security for had ended.

However, that would only be the beginning of the events for that day and would end with 12 soldiers earning Combat Action Badges and one soldier earning his Combat Medic Badge.

Moments after the meeting was over, Spc. Michael Jones, a cannon crew member with the Battery's personal security detachment from Belleville, Ill., heard a sound he described as a smacking sound, like a rock hitting another rock.

An unknown man had thrown a grenade over a wall of the compound. Luckily, most of the men in Jones' squad were behind a vehicle.

"You could feel the shockwave and everything right into your

chest," Jones said. "In that moment, you realized this is real."

Jones' first reaction was to check

Kurtz, a medic attached to B Battery, was in a vehicle when the incident happened. After the PSD cleared the area, Kurtz was called on to help the man who had been wounded by the grenade.

What he saw on his way to help the man was a grisly sight.

"I was looking around I saw the guy scooting across the ground, trying to get inside the building," Kurtz

said. "He was leaving trails of blood from both his legs, a big puddle. It went all the way to the building, maybe about a hundred feet."

He then followed the attendees of the meeting into a nearby building where they placed the wounded man into a small, closet-like room.

The Afghan man had shrapnel wounds to his lower legs and back, according to Kurtz.

In his nearly two and a half years as a medic, Kurtz said he had never really treated anyone in a situation like one he found himself in that day.

"I deal with the consequences later; I really can't freak out," Kurtz explained. "If I freak out, the pa-

See CAB pg. 24...



Photo by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth/ CTF 4-2 PAO



Photo by Sgt. Kimberly Hackbarth/ CTF 4-2 PAO

himself and those around him for any injuries caused by the blast. He found all the U.S. soldiers around him were shaken, but unharmed.

"Unfortunately it exploded with a local national standing right over top of it," Jones explained. "But (Spc. Nkelo Kurtz) ran in, did a great job (and) actually saved the guy's life."



...CAB from pg. 23

tient's going to freak out."

Kurtz applied tourniquets to the man's legs to prevent any further blood loss and applied a chest seal.

"I've done so many drills of the same thing over and over and over again that I just saw it as another drill," Kurtz said.

While the medic worked on the wounded Afghan, Jones and his squad were also doing what had been drilled into their heads since basic training.

"When everything happened, the training immediately kicked in,"

said Jones, explaining that as a senior specialist and having a leadership position, he now saw and understood all the things that his noncommissioned officers before him would repetitiously pound into his head were not in vain. "So when it does happen, you don't think about it, you just react and go."

For Kurtz, he was surprised to learn he was receiving his CMB.

According to Army regulation, "The sole criteria that qualifies medical personnel for award of the CMB is to be assigned to or attached to an infantry unit engaged in active

ground combat."

The same regulation also states that in order to qualify for a CAB, a soldier must perform his or her "assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized and must be personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement."

The soldiers' quick reactions that day saved a man's life and reflected how all of the training they had conducted until that point had paid off.

PRT Farah hosts United Through Reading read-a-thon on FOB Farah

Story by Lt. j.g. Matthew Stroup
PRT Farah Public Affairs Office

Forward Operating Base Farah, Afghanistan – More than twenty soldiers and sailors from Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Farah participated in a read-a-thon through the United Through Reading program on FOB Farah here, Jan. 18.

Soldiers and sailors from the PRT and other units on FOB Farah volunteered their time to read books to their loved ones and to students at Birch Elementary school in Idaho during a short operational pause. The read-a-thon's goal was to raise awareness of the United Through Reading Program, connect deployed service members with their families and develop a love of reading for children who received books on DVD. PRT Farah is in its third month of a deployment in western Afghanistan where they train, advise and assist Afghan government leaders at the municipal, district, and provincial level.

United Through Reading enables deployed parents to share their love

and support with their children by reading books aloud on DVD. Service members can also read to younger siblings, nieces, nephews, and other extended family members as well as to other children whom they mentor.

U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Jennifer Kleve is the command's United Through Reading coordinator and organized the read-a-thon for all service members on base. In addition to reading to family members, the read-a-thon provides an opportunity for service members without children to read to students at Birch Elementary, a school that the command partnered with in Idaho.

"One way we've tried to encourage UTR participation is by partnering with a school," said Kleve. "Many people don't participate because they don't have kids, but there are plenty of elementary school students who would love to have someone read them a book. This is a great chance to do just that."

U.S. Navy Cmdr. Louis McCray, commanding officer of PRT Farah

fully supports the program and recognizes its benefits to service members and their families.

"Personal fortitude is a big part of our command philosophy, and United Through Reading supports the strong family connections that foster personal growth and fortitude. We all know that reading to children in their developmental years is of great benefit, and this program not only helps to connect deployed families, but it helps children grow as well," said McCray.

"Military commands love this program," said Sally Ann Zoll, Ed. D., chief executive officer of United Through Reading. "It minimizes deployment miles and helps military personnel parent from afar. The reassurance of seeing the deployed service member and having them talk to their children provides immense relief to the child and the spouse at home. The morale of the whole family is boosted."

Through United Through Reading deployed parents get a chance to share their love and support and

See FARAH pg. 30...



BLACKHAWK 6

Lt. Col. Charles Lombardo



Blackhawk Team,

Happy New Year to the entire Blackhawk family! This marks the second deployed newsletter for Combined Task Force Blackhawk and I want to start by thanking you for your unwavering support, it is the greatest gift we could have received. As we take this time to reflect on the past year filled with preparation and hard work, we venture into 2013 with enthusiasm, encouragement, and tenacity, the likes of which are already seen daily in our current operations. The Squadron has made great strides in our winter operations in Zabul Province. Our dedicated team of leaders is committed to preserving the substantial progress that has been made during the past decade in assuring rights and freedoms for the people of this country. The troopers have been doing a phenomenal job working hand-in-hand with our Afghan partners to pass them the baton in providing security for local citizens. With each day the troops have stepped up to the plate as new challenges are overcome and opportunities fulfilled. I was able to spend Christmas at FOB

Sweeney with Aztec CO 2-23, our infantry brothers in arms, and we were able to enjoy a good meal and distribute the mountain of care packages that poured in. During this season of the year it was clear those Soldiers were especially grateful for all of your supportive notes and packages from home.

As we enter this next phase of deployment we must step up in taking care of each other to maintain our commitment and support in our Blackhawk family. Post-holiday blues especially when separated from loved ones can be trying but that is why our Troopers are such a strong team, for they have each other here and you back home to lean on. It is a privilege to be part of such a united network and be able to count on family and friends alike to stay focused and balanced in the ebb and flow of deployment life. Once more I remind you all to participate in the FRG meeting coming up on the __th as it allows family members to connect in sharing their concerns and questions.

I have nothing but praise for our Trooper performance as we continue to make huge strides after just two months of boots on the ground.



Blackhawks! Animo Et Fide.

**LTC Charles T. Lombardo
"Blackhawk 6"**





FORGE 6

Lt. Col. Scot Doboszenski



To the Forge Families, Friends, and Soldiers,

The Command Sergeant Major and I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year. We hope your holidays were filled with joy and happiness. We are quickly approaching 100 days, since our departure from Washington and the Forge Soldiers are doing extremely well supporting the mission and taking care of one another. We had some holiday diversions to break-up the everyday grind by playing some friendly basketball, exchanging Secret Santa gifts, and opening care packages from families and friends. Although our hearts were with our friends and families back home, we could not have asked for a better extended family to spend the season with.

The CSM and I are immensely proud to serve with the best Brigade Support Battalion in the Army. The

Forge Battalion continues to meet every new mission as an essential part of the Combined Task Force 4-2 mission. Some additional missions we have picked up include: detainee transfers, liaisons for the Warrior Recovery Center, brigade mail operations and reception operations, as well as, the most honorable mission – dignified transfer of our Fallen Hero's. The Forge Soldiers portray their discipline, dedication, and professionalism every day.

As we look to operations in Afghanistan coming to a close December 2014, marking a historical moment in our nation's history, the Forge Battalion is proud to support these efforts. It is an exciting and continuously turbulent time, rest assured we will continue to server honorably. Our morale remains

high and the Soldiers are finding ways to make the best of all situations while completing the mission and staying safe. There have had many promotions, awards, and well deserved pats on the back. One of great significance is, SGT Eric George being awarded the Combat Medic Badge for his actions in saving the life of PFC Casey Wacasey, 1-38 IN, while in contact. The CSM and I enjoy seeing firsthand how the Battalion continues to grow and exceed the high expectations.

In closing, thank you for your support and dedication, your encouragement and your sacrifices in support of our extraordinary Soldiers and great nation. We would not be where we are now without the support you provide us from the home front. It is because of you, your efforts, and your sacrifices that we remain a Battalion of such strength and inspiration.

Forge 6 and Forge 7

“Mend the Broken Sword”







U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Matthew Stroup

Capt. Jacob Estrada, security force commander for Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Farah, reads a book to his children as part of a United Through Reading Read-a-thon sponsored by the PRT on FOB Farah, Jan. 18. Participants in the program were encouraged to read to children in their families or to students at Birch Elementary in Idaho, to promote childhood literacy. United Through Reading is a non-profit organization that enables deployed service members to share their love and support with their children by reading books aloud on DVD. PRT Farah's mission is to train, advise, and assist Afghan government leaders at the municipal, district, and provincial levels in Farah province Afghanistan. Their civil military team is comprised of members of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

...FARAH from pg. 23

children receive essential communication and literacy skills. While in the past, military personnel have been able to write letters, e-mail and send audio cassettes, United Through Reading offers children a chance to see their parent's face, listen to their voice and read along as their parent reads them a children's story. It also allows them to spend as much time with the deployed parent as they wish by watching the DVD over and over again.

U.S. Army Capt. Jacob Estrada, security force commander for the PRT, took the opportunity to read

to his girls during the read-athon. "United Through Reading is a great way for me to connect with my three daughters. When not deployed or in the field training I read with them every night as part of the bedtime routine. While I can't be there to read with them right now United Through Reading fills in some of the gap."

"Deployment doesn't only affect those who have volunteered for service. It affects hundreds of thousands of children as well," said Zoll. "Our goal is to lessen the strain of separation and increase bonding through the positive, educational

experience that reading aloud provides."

Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah currently deployed to western Afghanistan and trains, advises, and assists Afghan government leaders at the municipal, district, and provincial level in Farah province, Afghanistan. Their civil-military team is comprised of members of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). For more information about the PRT follow their team on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PRT-FRH.

Chaplain's Corner

Chap. (Maj.) Jim Combs



Photo by Sgt. Kyle Burns/ CTF-4-2 PAO

It is inevitable that on some days you will wake up on the wrong side of the bed. Maybe it will be the realization that you once again face another long day of challenges, after another long week of challenges, after another long month of challenges. And as the sun rises, you slide out of bed and indulge yourself in a day of grumbling, complaining, and trying to rally the support of others in acknowledging “just how bad you have it!”

The challenges of deployment can have this effect on Soldiers, as well as our Family members. As we face

the frustrations of another holiday away from Family, another missed birthday, another wedding anniversary spent apart, broken clothes dryers at home, misbehaving kids, and long, long days...it may become increasingly difficult to find your happy place. But, before embracing sorrow as your companion, consider the following suggestion from artist and activist Angela Rose: “Happiness begins when we stop complaining about the troubles we have and say thanks to God for the troubles we don’t have.”

For in the big mystery of life, we

will all experience trouble. And the trials faced by some today will undeniably be far worse in comparison to that of others. But in the ebb and flow of joy and sorrow, we will ALL experience the occasional flood of sorrow. At these times, don’t allow yourself to drown in the great deluge. But rather ride the waves on cherished memories of yesterday, practice patience as you go with the flow, and never lose hope that you will once again find the peace and joy of a happy day without rain. Praying for God’s blessings from Afghanistan!



OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM 2012-2013 IN LOVING MEMORY



*Staff Sgt. Rayvon Battle, Jr.
Nov. 13, 2012
38th Eng. Co.*



*Staff Sgt. Wesley Williams
Dec. 10, 2012
B Co., 1-38 IN*



*Pfc. Markie Sims
Dec. 29, 2012
38th Eng. Co.*



*Sgt. David Chambers
Jan. 16, 2013
B Co., 1-38 IN*