

BASTOGNE

February 2013 Volume 3, Issue 1

Magazine

Bastogne Returns
to Afghanistan



Guide Afghans, Fight Alongside Afghanistan, Win with Afghans



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BASTOGNE Magazine - Jan 2013



Torkham Gate ...

A lone Afghan Border Policeman looks to the mountains of Pakistan through the Khyber Pass.



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U.S. Army Pfc. Sterling Davis, an infantryman with 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, stands on a rock wall in Nangalam, Afghanistan providing security for his fellow Soldiers supporting an Afghan National Army resupply mission Dec. 26th. Davis is a native of Killeen, Texas. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Jon Heinrich, CT 1-101 Public Affairs)



1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, Bastogne

Everyday our Soldiers stand guard, in austere locations around the world. Let your Soldier know that you are thinking about them today.



Shaneeka Davis That's my hubby ! =))

Thursday at 11:54pm



Cameo Caccitolo Drenth I think about my son and pray for him and all the other soldiers every day. God Bless them all!

Thursday at 11:55pm via mobile



Sandie Foreman I miss my son and I am proud of my son ..beyond any words can describe...

Yesterday at 12:05am



Karen Hamilton Thank you to every soldier who is giving of them selves for all of us, be careful and come home safely.

Yesterday at 12:09am



Connie Etling-Stout Pray for my son as I do all our soldiers. Hooah!! Miss him so much.

Yesterday at 12:13am via mobile



Tom Bateman Prayers daily for my nephew.

Yesterday at 12:27am via mobile



Karol H. Spencer I am grateful for each soldier's service and for their family's sacrifice. Thank you all.

Yesterday at 12:42am



Tamra Hamrick Thinking about my soldier every minute of every day...love & miss you SPC Garlow!!! :) XOXOXOXO

Yesterday at 1:18am



Regina Johnson Thank You and may GOD continue to keep you safe.....

Yesterday at 1:20am



Joan Bagniewski thinking about and missing my soldier son so often ...

Yesterday at 1:24am



Judith Laughlin Thank you Bastogne!

Yesterday at 1:49am



Sean McCauley Thank you for all you do to protect our liberty. You are in our prayers.

Yesterday at 2:35am via mobile



Jackie Fobar We miss our son David very much, always thinking of u David.

Yesterday at 2:39am via mobile



Darlene Smith Looking at my son standing tall, standing proud- what's a mother to do but cry!

Yesterday at 2:44am



See Pictures of your Soldiers at:
facebook.com/101bastogne





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To the Families of Bastogne,

Greetings from Afghanistan! It is hard to believe that we are already almost three months into our deployment; the time here has flown by as we have started our mission of advising, assisting and enabling the Afghan National Security Forces.

Ours is a mission that is filled with opportunities and potential. We are all encouraged to see the rising level of professionalism and competence with our Afghan partners. We have much work to do while we are here, but the signs of progress are in front of us every day.

In December, I had a meeting with a district governor in the southwest portion of Nangarhar Province. During this meeting, he said something that really caught my attention. He mentioned to me that if you look at Afghan history over the last thousand years, there has never been a period of such development and growth as there has been in the last twelve years. He pointed out that the development in Afghanistan over the last twelve years has been remarkable in terms of schools, roads, health care, access to technology and many other ways. He said that Afghans realized these gains would never have been made without the support of the United States and its Army. He ended by thanking me for all that American Soldiers had done for this country.

I greatly appreciated his comments and a few weeks later saw a Washington Post column by David Ignatius entitled "*The changing face of Afghanistan*," which detailed the progress to a much greater extent. I encourage you to search for this article and read about the changes that Afghanistan has seen in the last 12 years.

As Americans, we tend to have a positive view of the work of our Soldiers but the expression of gratitude from the District Governor was meaningful because it answered the question of many Soldiers: "Are we making a difference?" The answer to this question is definitely "Yes." The people of Afghanistan see it every day. As Soldiers, we don't serve to be recognized but it feels pretty good when our efforts are appreciated.

I would like to close this column with a thought about you, our Bastogne Families, the foundation of our success. Without your support, we would not be able to make such a difference in Afghanistan. We are all aware of the many sacrifices made by the families at home when Soldiers deploy. On behalf of all of the Bastogne Brigade, please accept my deepest thanks for your untiring support and dedication—it truly is critical for us to accomplish our mission.

COL JP McGee
Bastogne 6

Bastogne 7

Greetings to all, from the Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan Provinces (N2K). The first thing I would like to say is Happy New Year to all of the Soldiers, Families and Friends of the Bastogne Team.

We have been in charge now for over 45 days and I can confidently say that Combined Team Bastogne is doing a great job. Currently, we have nearly 1900 Bastogne Soldiers spread out over 5,000 sq. miles. Our Soldiers are busy advising Afghans, conducting patrols with our Afghan counterparts, securing and supporting our Forward Operating Bases (FOBs)/Combat Outposts (COPs), and conducting convoys to bring supplies, food, water, parts and mail to all of the units in our area.

As I make my rounds conducting battlefield circulation, I get the opportunity to see the hard work and dedication that the Bastogne Brigade is known for. All of our Soldiers are working hard and staying busy. Most of our Soldiers are working in more than one job so the days and nights go by fast. The typical day for one of our Soldiers consists of doing their jobs, getting a workout at the gym, getting some well-deserved rest, and preparing for the next day's work.

One thing about being in a deployed environment is remembering that, first and foremost, we are U.S. Army Soldiers. Every Soldier is expected to maintain their military bearing, physical fitness, and perform at the highest level of proficiency each and every day. From what I am seeing, Bastogne Soldiers are more than meeting that challenge.

By now, every location and every unit in the Bastogne Brigade has conducted their deployment patching ceremony. As you look through the photos that our Soldiers send home and those on our social media sites, you should be noticing that our Soldiers are wearing the "Screaming Eagle" on both shoulders. This is a symbol of achievement and entry into a brotherhood. By becoming a Double Eagle, you join a brotherhood of Soldiers that dates back to Belgium in 1944. You stand side by side with our brothers who fought in Vietnam, Haiti, Kuwait, and Iraq. For this, I congratulate each and every one of our Soldiers.

Now, I want to address the numerous rumors running around out there about Soldiers possible coming home early. At this time, I want to be perfectly clear when I tell you that everything the brigade is doing right now is in the planning phase and has not been approved by higher headquarters. I will make you a promise: when the brigade makes the decision to start sending Soldiers home, we will alert the Ft. Campbell rear detachment leadership to make the official announcement.

In closing I would like to say thanks to all the Family members, Friends and supporters of Combined Team Bastogne currently serving in Afghanistan. We really appreciate how you have supported us via care packages, letters, cards, emails and Facebook posts. We try hard to share as many pictures as we can of your loved ones, so thank you for understanding that we can't get pictures of everyone, but we do try.

CSM Thomas Eppler
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Above: The Combined US/Afghan Color Guard retire the colors Dec. 5 during the Transfer of Authority ceremony from 4th BCT, 4th Infantry Division to the 201st Afghan National Army Corps here. - photo: Sgt. 1st Class Chrystal Drummond

The BASTOGNE Brigade, now a Security Force Advise and Assist Brigade, returns to the Nangarhar, Nuristan and Kunar (N2K) region

By U.S. Army Sgt. Jon Heinrich
Task Force 1-101 PAO

U.S. Army Soldiers with 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division from Fort Carson, Colo., stood in formation Dec. 5 as their brigade transferred authority to 201st Afghan National Army Corps, which will be supported by the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division from Ft. Campbell, Ky.

Also in separate formations were U.S. Army Soldiers from 1st BCT, ANA Soldiers with 201st ANA Corps, Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan Border Police.

"The 201st Afghan National Army Corps has fought insurgent forces alongside coalition forces," said the master of ceremonies. "The Corps headquarters oversees the efforts of its four brigades to secure the people of the eastern zone of Afghanistan.

"In conjunction with the Afghan Uniformed Police, the Afghan Border Police and the local district and provincial leaders of the region, elements of this 1st Brigade assumed responsibility of the Laghman Province upon the departure of the 1st Squadron of the 13th United States Cavalry," the MC added.

"Combined Team Bastogne will assume the role of advisor and mentor to the Kandak Brigade and leadership of the 201st

Corps during today's ceremony," continued the MC.

"This relationship is symbolic of the continuing International Security Assistance Force commitment to success of government and security forces in Afghanistan, and acknowledges the capabilities of this tactically and technically proficient fighting force of the Afghan National Security Forces."

During the ceremony Col. J.P. McGee, Commander of 1st BCT, and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas W. Eppler, Command Sergeant Major of 1st BCT, uncased the brigade and regimental colors, signifying that the unit arrived and assumed responsibility for current operations here.

Maj. Gen. William C. Mayville Jr., Commanding General of the 1st Infantry Division, spoke to the ceremony attendees.

"Today, the Afghan National Army's 201st Corps becomes battle space owners to those provinces north of Kabul in Regional Command East," said Mayville. "This is a great accomplishment. The Afghan National Army's 201st Corps is ready and able to take charge of their Area of Responsibilities.

"To be assured, they'll have two capable units from the coalition standing ready to assist them: 1st Brigade of the 101st, Taskforce Bastogne, and 4th Brigade of 1st Cavalry Division, Taskforce Longknife," Mayville added. "Their role will be to advise and assist the Afghan Coalitions lead in defense of their battle-space."

After the ceremony, the ANA commanders conducted a press conference on Jalalabad Airfield, and a reception was held near the dining facility. ♣

Locked and Loaded

CT Kunar trains ANA to teach weapon skills to their Soldiers.

By U.S. Army Sgt. Jon Heinrich
Task Force 1-101 PAO

A specially trained brigade from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division has been training their Afghan National Army counterparts since arriving to Combat Outpost Honakar-Miracle last month.

The unit, officially designated Security Force Advisory and Assistance Team Heavy Metal, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, recently taught the Afghan noncommissioned officers from the 6-1 Kandak basic skills involving the M2 .50 caliber machine gun and the M240B machine gun.

The training consisted of instruction on "disassembly, assembly, general function, loading, clearing, modified for the ANA to give them a better understanding of all the weapons," said Sgt. Jason Sabin, a member of Team Heavy Metal.

Sabin also said they instruct the ANA in other areas such as map reading, mortars, preventive maintenance checks and services for their vehicles and other maintenance activities.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Canada, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the training, said that during the previous week the team had facilitated land navigation training and followed by machine gun training this week. In the next week, the team plans to conduct mortar and forward observer training before beginning the cycle all over again.

"The overall goal that we're looking for with the machine gun training, and all the other courses that are going on, is we want to develop a program so that we're able to, by the time we leave here, teach their senior NCOs the step-by-step (process) so that they're able to impart that information onto their lower guys and keep the cycle going," Canada said.

"Basically, we're trying to make sure we can share our knowledge with them, and they can have the same kind of understanding when they train their soldiers so that they can be just as effective," said Sabin.

Sabin explained that teaching the Afghan noncommissioned officers the ability to train their own soldiers will give their counterparts the ability to strengthen the NCO channels within the ANA ranks.

The instructors first demonstrated the disassembly, reassembly and functions check of each weapon, followed by each ANA soldier going through and completing the tasks themselves.

Sabin complimented the ANA on how quickly they picked up on the class, saying that every soldier was a first-time "go" on each process of the weapon systems. It was the first time each of them had handled the weapons.

The instructors had to use an interpreter to help teach their ANA counterparts the different steps and parts of each weapon, but found that it was easier to do than they thought it would be.

"It's really not that difficult," said Sabin. "It's just a matter of putting (everything) in terms everyone understands. The hard part is that some of our words don't translate easily, so you have to come



Sgt. Jason Sabin, a member of Security Force Advisory and Assistance Team 6, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. The class was given to Afghan National Army soldiers to instruct them on basic weapon skills so they could in turn teach their fellow soldiers what they learned. Photo - Sgt. Jon Heinrich

up with a different way to describe what you're trying to say.

"And we have really good translators," added Sabin. "Some of these translators have been doing this for a while with other units so they're pretty good about it."

"I feel the training was good today," said Canada. "Whenever we started getting them going on stuff, we'll go through it. As soon as some of their NCOs start picking it up, the guys that are in the class, they'll start jumping in and correcting dudes that are making mistakes, which is good because that's what we're looking for is for them to be teaching their own."

Canada stated that not only do they give classes to the ANA, but they go out on missions with them, as well.

Sabin said that the majority of the ANA Soldiers they were training were from the heavy weapons platoon.

"Most of them were around the rank of E5. [We are] trying to train the trainers basically. We're basically instructing them so they can take it back and disseminate it."

Canada said he's looking forward to the day when they are no longer giving classes but watching as their counterparts begin teaching the classes themselves.

"I want to, if we can get enough of them trained well enough in the next three, four, five months, just to completely hand it over to them," Canada said. "Then we can sit in and watch them teach the class. And if there's anything that needs to get addressed, we can address it with that instructor afterwards." ♣

Torkham Gate

The Gateway to Pakistan

By Sgt. Jon Heinrich

Torkham Gate is one of Afghanistan's busiest gates along the country's border with Pakistan.

Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, were recently joined on a mission to the gate by the brigade's command sergeant major.

"The purpose of the mission was essentially to go down and meet with key leaders at Torkham Gate," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brandon Blaska, the platoon leader, "also to give the command sergeant major an overview of what the point of entry looks like, how many

vehicles come through per day, infrastructure they have down there; as well as, if any key leaders were around, to interview some of those gentlemen."

Afghan Customs Police (ACP), Afghan Border Police (ABP) and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) control the gate, which is located a few hundred meters from Forward Operating Base Torkham.

"There are essentially three different agencies," said Blaska. "You've got the ACP, you've got the ABP and you've got NDS that physically does the interrogations; they find shady guys off the walkway, they'll bring them in, ask them questions and if they check out, they'll let them on their way."

According to Blaska, the ABP is responsible for the traffic along the road.

A Brief History of the Torkham Gate

Torkham Gate is a border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan right on the Durand Line border. It connects Nangarhar province of Afghanistan with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. It is the busiest port of entry between the two countries, serving as a major transporting, shipping, and receiving site.

The Durand Line refers to the 2,640 kilometers (1,640 mi) long porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was established after an 1893 agreement between Mortimer Durand of British India and Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan for fixing the limit of their respective spheres of influence. The single-page

Durand Line Agreement, which contains seven short articles was signed by Durand and Abdur Rahman Khan, agreeing not to exercise interference beyond the frontier Durand Line.

A joint British-Afghan demarcation survey took place starting from 1894, covering some 800 miles of the border. The resulting line later established the "Great Game" buffer zone between British and Russian interests in the region. The Durand Line cuts through the Pashtun tribal areas, dividing ethnic Pashtuns and Baloch who live on both sides of the border. It demarcates Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of western Pakistan from the eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan. From a geopolitical and geostrategic perspective, it has been described as one of the most dangerous borders in the world. Although shown on maps as the western international border of Pakistan, it remains unrecognized by the Government of Afghanistan.

“They have checkpoints all along the road, they check out vehicles and direct them to where they need to be in order to control traffic,” he said. “The ACP controls the physical walkway, and deal with pedestrians coming through, pushcarts, etc.”

Blaska also mentioned that the Afghan Customs Department at the gate is the head office for customs officials. The ACD is managed by the brokers for the agency and the inspectors that check out each individual vehicle going through the gate.

“It’s a myriad of different agencies working together,” Blaska said.

“Also, from a security stand-point, (the gate is an opportunity) to interdict anything trying to be smuggled from Pakistan into Afghanistan: men, weapons, equipment that the insurgents are trying to bring across. So that’s the role of the security forces there,” said Blaska.

Blaska went on to say that, aside from the security reasons, the gate also serves as a location for the collection of revenue that is dispersed between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Transportation. ♣



The crest of the Afghan Customs Department painted on the wall of the customs station at Torkham Gate. Photo - Sgt. Jon Heinrich



Spc. Kyle M. Harris, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, provides area security from a position overlooking Torkham Gate. Harris is a native of Greenville, Ohio.



Delta Company
Torkham Base



y, 1-327th IN,
se, December



WHY WE SERVE:



Yakima native serves for love of country

By U.S. Army Sgt. Jon Heinrich
Task Force 1-101 PAO

When it comes to joining the military, the decision can be easier for some than it is for others.

For U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Dollar, a native to Yakima, Wash., the decision wasn't too hard at all.

"I joined the Army because I wanted to get out of the town that I was in, and, you know, I was trying to look at something for a career to kind of help me advance my education," Dollar said.

A single Soldier, Dollar stated that most of his relatives are back home in Yakima, with his dad and sister living in Modesto, Calif.

Dollar joined the Army July 2003 and is a gunnery sergeant with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky. He is currently working with 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment (No Slack), 1st

BCT at FOB Joyce, Afghanistan, as a mortarman.

"I just love what I do, the camaraderie, and taking care of Soldiers. I got in, and got myself into a role and a position that I like and I've just been sticking with it ever since."

Dollar attended basic training at Fort Sill, Okla., and since then has been stationed at 2nd Bn., 82nd FAR, 3rd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas, and as a recruiter for Seattle Battalion, 6th Brigade U.S. Army Recruiting Command, before arriving to his current battalion in December 2011.

Dollar also mentioned that although he was selected to be a recruiter, he still enjoyed his job and bringing Soldiers into the Army.

"A lot of them, I definitely targeted probably the younger kids, but I wanted to show them there's a way to get a better education and just not do the same things in the same town that you were doing, and show them that it was a good way," he said. "I made a good decision and I just wanted to pass it on."

Even though he is no longer a recruiter, Dollar says he uses the tools he learned as a recruiter to convince Soldiers to stay in the Army.

"Well it's just, you know, everything I do on a daily basis: trying to take care of your Soldiers, trying to teach them and show them how to advance their career, maybe help them with their careers and just show them a good time, show them that this is good; these help take care of your families and if this is what you like to do, then do it," he said.

"I like this battalion, it's a nice battalion, I have fun with it," he said. "I would have no problem staying with the battalion, but at the same time I don't mind moving either. I don't mind travelling and getting some more knowledge and just, you know, meeting new faces and going out there and seeing new places."

"I'm gonna do at least 20 years, but someday when I'm a sergeant major maybe I'll do more," said Dollar. "I'm staying Army, I'm a lifer." ♣

The Geography of Combined Team Bastogne



Staff Sgt. Christopher Dollar, a native of Yakima, Wash., loads a 120mm illumination mortar round during outgoing fire training Dec. 2, 2012, at FOB Joyce, Afghanistan. Dollar is a gunnery sergeant and is currently a mortar crewmember at FOB Joyce. Photo by - Sgt. Jon Heinrich



Kunar Province borders with Nangarhar Province to the south, Nuristan Province to the north, Laghman Province to the west and has a border with Pakistan in the east. Almost 90% of the province is mountainous or semi mountainous terrain, while the rest of the area is made up of relatively flat land. The province is dominated by the lower Hindu Kush Mountains which form the Kunar River Valley. The Kunar River flows south into Nangarhar. The mountains, river and narrow valleys with steep sides serve as formidable natural obstacles and have impacted all movement through the province throughout history. Even in the early 21st century movement on foot, with pack animals or with motorized vehicles is extremely limited and channeled due to the significant geographic restrictions.

Nuristān Province is embedded south of the Hindu Kush valleys. Its administrative center is Parun and the province was formerly known as Kafirstan ("land of the unbelievers") until the inhabitants were converted to Islam in 1896, and thence the region has become known as Nuristan ("Land of Light"). The province was formed in 1989 and officially established in 2001 from the northern parts of Laghman Province and Kunar Province. Located on the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush Mountains in the north-eastern part of the country, Nuristan spans the basins of the Alingâr, Pech, Landai Sin, and Kunar rivers. It is bordered on the north by Badakhshan Province, on the south by Laghman and Kunar provinces, on the west by Panjshir Province, and on the east by Pakistan.

Nangarhar Province is home to the city of Jalalabad, the largest city in the N2K region, and it is the region's cultural and political hub. Nangarhar has an abundance of agricultural and mineral resources. Large swaths of farm land are irrigated by water from a major dam and canal structure that runs west to east from Jalalabad to Ghanikhel. The population of the province is just over 1.3 million people, consisting mostly of ethnic Pashtuns. Nangarhar shares a border with neighboring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. The two regions share very close ties, with significant travel and commerce in both directions.



And the Soldiers Say ...

After 45 days, how is your deployment going so far?



Spc. Kristopher Carroll

HHC, 1-327th Infantry Regiment

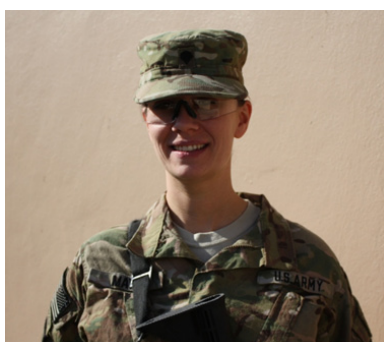
"The deployment has been good, but I miss the good home cooked meals."



Staff Sgt. Carlos Torres

2-17th CAV, 101 CAB

"So far so good, pretty short so far but there's still a mission out here. We have things to do."



Spc. Vikki Mays

Charlie Company, 426th BSB

"It's been pretty uneventful, a few booms here and there, but nothing that's rattled anybody."



Spc. Dylan Roos

426th BSB, 1BCT PSD Medic

"I think it's great. I love my job on the PSD. The only place I haven't seen yet is Honikar-Miracle and I'm sure we'll be getting there soon."



Capt. Melanie Shafer

HHC, 426th BSB commander

"It's been great, a little slow, but it's been good. I miss family the most, and the holidays, but I'm real happy to be here."

For the Health of the Force



Pfc. Demetrius Roberson, a preventive medicine medic with Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, pours water into a measuring cup to begin testing its quality Dec. 17 on Forward Operating Base Fenty. Preventive medicine medics routinely check water, food and other hazards around FOBs to prevent disease and bodily injuries and ensure the health and safety of Soldiers. Photo - Sgt. Jon Heinrich

By U.S. Army Sgt. Jon Heinrich
Task Force 1-101 PAO

When Soldiers deploy, they have a lot to think about in order to stay safe so they can return home to their Families.

Preventive medicine medics assist Soldiers by ensuring their health and safety is not at risk so the Soldiers themselves have less to worry about.

Army Pfc. Demetrius Roberson, a preventive medicine medic with Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, works daily to prevent disease and bodily injuries to Soldiers on Forward Operating Base Fenty and on other FOBs and Combat Outposts across the country.

Roberson says the quality of the water on and around the FOBs, the food and workers at dining facilities, fuel points, hazardous waste sites and animal are some of the things he inspects.

"The overall cleanliness of the FOB, we check for animals, feral dogs and cats, we also help trap and get rid of those to help prevent rabies," Roberson stated.

"Also, we look at barber shops, hazardous waste, burn pits, troop living space, pretty much we do a full thorough inspection of the whole FOB just to make sure everyone's not stressed out," he added.

"We do a lot of water testing. Any water-borne diseases can definitely put you out for a few days to a few months," Roberson stated.

"We do a lot of vector surveillance with mosquitoes, flies, sand flies; it's a lot different than the states where a small bite from a mosquito you're perfectly fine, but here it can give you malaria," he said.

Roberson said that some strains of malaria can stay in your body from one to six years, and that Soldiers need to be taking the Doxycycline given to them to help prevent catching the disease.

"Rabies is a very important thing to know about because once you start showing the symptoms – headache, hyper-salivation, fever chills – you're pretty much going to die," he said. "We usually tell people the first 72 hours you have contact with an animal you definitely want to go to the aids station and get checked out."

Since he can't always go out on missions with Soldiers or be at a particular FOB 24/7, Roberson said measures have been taken to aid in the process of looking out for the safety and health of Soldiers by creating field sanitation teams for the units.

"We assign FSTs," he said. "Normally it's a medic. They go through a 40-hour course. We train them on the simple tools that you can do as an FST member."

He stated that the course isn't just for medics, but noncommissioned officers in any military occupational specialty can be trained as an FST.

"They just talk to someone in their unit and anytime we have a class put your name on the list and come to the course," said Roberson.

Roberson also said that Soldiers don't always have to wait to be informed if something is (or isn't) safe, but they can always check with their preventive medicine medic if they have questions or doubts.

"Just ask questions," he said. "Sometimes it's really that simple. Most people, they think about it not being that important, but something small can become a huge issue." ♣



Spreading the Holiday Spirit

Story By Sgt. 1st Class John D. Brown

For Soldiers serving on forward operating bases and combat outposts across Afghanistan, receiving packages from home during the holiday season can turn a good day into the best day of the deployment.

With that thought in mind, Albuquerque, N.M., native Maj. Eric Meyners, brigade chaplain, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, began gathering boxes and packages from people and organizations across the United States in order to provide a little extra holiday spirit during the deployment.

"As a chaplain, one of the roles I end up with is being designated receiver of the good will of the American people," said Meyners.

Meyners received a large number of gift boxes from the city of Palm Springs, Fla., which gave him an idea. Meyners decided to forward the holiday packages to the outlying outposts to ensure every Soldier was aware of the support they were getting from the American public.

"I believe the greatest benefit is for our Soldiers to be reminded that there are lots of people in our country who support the service that they have volunteered to provide," said Meyners.

Holt, Mo., native Sgt. Amanda Olmeda, a chaplain assistant, 1st Brigade, 101st Abn. Div., began receiving packages in early November.

"Being a chaplain assistant, you receive a lot of stuff from the states, from people who want to give something back to our Soldiers," she said.

Meyners said that packages supporting our Soldiers can come from anywhere.

"Schools, churches, scout troops, mothers, fathers, grandmothers and children. In other words, people that we all know, from communities all across the United States," Meyners said.

Once the packages were received at FOB Fenty, the hard work really begins. Spc. Rodney Wall, the company mail handler for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade, 101st Abn. Div. was tasked with facilitating the movement of the 70 pound holiday boxes to their final destination.

As the company mail handler, Wall, a native of Hutchinson, Kan., usually begins his day by picking up the unit mail from the central mail facility on FOB Fenty. But when it came time to distribute the holiday packages for the brigade chaplain, Wall had to change his routine.

Over the course of four days and six trips around Jalalabad Airfield, Olmeda and Wall moved an estimated 2,100 pounds of holiday cheer to the mail distribution facility where the packages were palletized and prepared for distribution across the Kunar and Nangarhar provinces.

Wall was excited about helping to send these much needed packages to the outlying locations.



Spc. Rodney Wall and Sgt. Amanda Olmeda, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, label shipments of holiday goodies for distribution to outlying locations across the Kunar and Nangarhar provinces of eastern Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Charles A. Porter)

"This sort of activity is important because Soldiers in remote locations are forced to do without a lot of the comforts of home," he said. "These packages are one way to get supplies, and/or gifts, to these Soldiers that they would otherwise not have the opportunity to get for themselves."

Meyners worked with the units at each of the outlying outposts to designate a representative who would receive the boxes and distribute them to the Soldiers throughout the holidays.

"Soldiers love to know that strangers are thinking of them and that the things they are doing are appreciated," said Meyners.

As for Wall, "These care packages serve as a morale mission first and foremost. It shows the Soldiers that they have not been forgotten and it gives them something from to help keep their spirits up." ♣

Faces from the Field



Clockwise from top right
Staff Sgt. Nathan Kovacs,
2nd 320th Field Artillery Regi-
ment; Capt Hall Wang, CT Ku-
nar; 2LT Brian M. Orr, TF Task-
master, HHC XO; PFC Jack
Lueders, a medic at FOB Shin-
war; Capt. Brandon Newkirk,
CT Kunar, ACo. Commander





A Minute for Health

A monthly Columnne that will address preventative medicine issues associated with life here in Afghanistan.

Humans aren't the only mammals that are trying to stay warm as the cold weather approaches. As the temperature drops, rats and mice are in a frantic search of a warm place to spend the winter. They've realized that we offer their three basic needs: food, shelter, and water. More specifically, your living quarters and work areas provide the essential requirements for a winter spent in comfort.

This is why rats are an extreme threat to our health. They consume a large amount of food and contaminate far more with their urine, feces, and hair. Each year, 20% of the world's food is either eaten or contaminated by rats and mice, but the biggest problems rodents present are the diseases and infections they are associated with. A few examples would be typhus, jaundice, pulmonary fever, and rat bite fever.

Rats are also vectors for bubonic plague, Hantavirus; they transport mites, ticks, and fleas. Inhaling the urine and feces left by rodents has even been linked to asthma. Rats are active at night and are rarely seen in the day, except when their population is excessively high. It's imperative that you are constantly looking for the signs that rodents are getting into your living areas.

The rats can fit through tight spaces. Rats have very soft bones and if they can get their heads through a whole or an opening in your living quarters, their whole body can fit. Rats are very persistent as well. Once they smell food in your room and gain access, they will come back night after night and you can put their name on the door beside yours because you now have new roommates.

Preventing this problem is simple. Keep the area around your B-hut, building and room free of trash and debris and ensure that vegetation around your living quarters is kept low and manageable. If you kill one, it is imperative that you dispose of it properly because fleas and mites are most likely attached to the carcass. Once you kill the rat, the fleas, ticks and lice that the rat was providing shelter for, are now in search of a new warm blooded host to latch on to. If you see rats or mice, or even signs that they have been in your living quarters or office area, you should report that information immediately through your chain of command to ensure that measures can be taken to prevent your little friends from getting into other living areas.

Pfc. Roberson, Demetrius M.
Charlie Company, 426th Brigade Support Battalion



The Shepherd's Musings

The day after TOA about ten boxes from the City of Palm Beach arrived addressed to me, CH (MAJ) Eric Meyners. Each weighed about 65 pounds and was filled with 20 individual Christmas packages. At the time I thought, "No problem, we can distribute these pretty easily."

The next day an additional thirty or so boxes arrived, the following day boxes of stockings began arriving. Needless to say as more and more boxes arrived I became more and more concerned about the Religious Support Team's (RST's) ability to adequately distribute these Christmas packages.

As these boxes were arriving I was learning of the constrained living conditions in most of the outlying Forward Operating Bases (FOB's). SGT Amanda Olmeda, the CT Bastogne Chaplain's Assistant, diligently worked to determine Soldiers at each location that would be willing to serve as Santa Claus, receiving Christmas boxes and distributing them.

After exploring the multiple options for movement she determined that re-addressing them and placing them in the mail system was the most efficient way to get them to their destination. With help from the Public Affairs Office the boxes were sent out to the ten outlying locations. This was complete by 19 December. On 23 December she and a couple of elves delivered stockings to Soldiers living on FOB Fenty. I continue to be amazed at the generosity that the American People direct towards their Soldiers.

In this Christmas Season I am grateful that I could be a part sharing the good will of the American People with the Soldiers of the Bastogne Brigade. I pray that your Christmas Season was as blessed as mine.

That's all for now,

CH (MAJ) Eric Meyners
The Shepherd of Bastogne

Bastogne History: December 22, 1944



1130 HOURS ON DECEMBER 22, 1944, four Germans, a major, a captain and two enlisted men, came up the road to Bastogne from Remoifosse carrying a large white flag. They were met on the road by Technical Sergeant Oswald Y. Butler and Staff Sergeant Carl E. Dickinson of Company F, 327th Glider infantry, and Private First Class Ernest D. Premetz of the 327th Medical Detachment.

The men took the Germans to the house where Lieutenant Leslie E. Smith of Weapons Platoon, Company F, 327th Infantry, had his command post. Leaving the two German enlisted men at the command post, Smith blindfolded the two officers and led them over the hill to the command post of Captain James F. Adams, commanding officer of Company F. Adams called 2d Battalion headquarters in Marvie, Battalion called Regiment in Bastogne, and the 327th Headquarters called the 101st Division, relaying the word that some Germans had come in with surrender terms. The rumor quickly spread around the front that the enemy had had enough and that a party had arrived to arrange a surrender.

Major Alvin Jones took the terms to General McAuliffe and Lieutenant Colonel Ned D. Moore who was acting Chief of Staff. The paper called for the surrender of the Bastogne garrison and threatened its complete destruction otherwise.³ It appealed to the "Well known American humanity" to save the people of Bastogne from further suffering. The Americans were to have two hours in which to consider. The two enemy officers would have to be released by 1400 but another hour would pass before the Germans would resume their attack.

Colonel Harper, commanding the 327th, went with Jones to Division Headquarters. The two German officers were left with Captain Adams. Members of the staff were grouped around General McAuliffe when Harper and Jones arrived.⁵ McAuliffe asked someone what the paper contained and was told that it requested a surrender.

He laughed and said, "Aw, nuts!" It really seemed funny to him at the time. He figured he was giving the Germans "one hell of a beating" and that all of his men knew it. The demand was all out of line with the existing situation.⁶

But McAuliffe realized that some kind of reply had to be made and he sat down to think it over. Pencil in hand, he sat there pondering for a few minutes and then he remarked, "Well, I don't know what to tell them." He asked the staff what they thought and Colonel Kinnard, his G-3 replied, "That first remark of yours would be hard to beat."

General McAuliffe didn't understand immediately what

Kinnard was referring to. Kinnard reminded him, "You said 'Nuts!'" That drew applause all around. All members of the staff agreed with much enthusiasm and because of their approval McAuliffe decided to send that message back to the Germans.⁷

Then he called Colonel Harper in and asked him how he would reply to the message. Harper thought for a minute but before he could compose anything General McAuliffe gave him the paper on which he had written his one-word reply and asked, "Will you see that it's delivered?" "I will deliver it myself," answered Harper. "It will be a lot of fun." McAuliffe told him not to go into the German lines.⁸

Colonel Harper returned to the command post of Company F. The two Germans were standing in the wood blindfolded and under guard. Harper said, "I have the American commander's reply."

The German captain asked, "Is it written or verbal?" "It is written," said Harper.

And then he said to the German major, "I will stick it in your hand."

The German captain translated the message. The major then asked, "Is the reply negative or affirmative? If it is the latter I will negotiate further."

All of this time the Germans were acting in an upstage and patronizing manner. Colonel Harper was beginning to lose his temper. He said, "The reply is decidedly not affirmative." Then he added, "If you continue this foolish attack your losses will be tremendous." The major nodded his head.

Harper put the two officers in the jeep and took them back to the main road where the German privates were waiting with the white flag.

He then removed the blindfold and said to them, speaking through the German captain, "If you don't understand what 'Nuts' means, in plain English it is the same as 'Go to hell.' And I will tell you something else if you continue to attack we will kill every goddam German that tries to break into this city."

The German major and captain saluted very stiffly. The captain said, "We will kill many Americans. This is war." It was then 1350.

"On your way, Bud," said Colonel Harper, "and good luck to you."

From "Bastogne: The First Eight Days"
by COLONEL S.L.A. Marshall



For 87 years, the Harlem Globetrotters have been traveling the world with their special form of entertainment. On November 29th, the Globetrotters made their way to FOB Fenty to visit American Soldiers serving in Afghanistan. Lt. Col. Schwind and Command Sgt. Maj. Veney, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) helped host the event.

