



# Combined Task Force Chesapeake

JULY 2013

ISSUE 8

## ***From Partnership to Brotherhood***

*By CPT Marinko Romic (Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina)*



*From left to right: MSG Smriko, 1LT Elezovic, CPT Romic, 1LT Do-muz*

For more than 10 years, the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Maryland National Guard (MDNG) have been training and operating alongside one another as a result of the State Partnership Program (SPP). During the last decade, the MDNG has provided a wide range of support to the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AF BiH) consisting of the exchange of best practices, equipment provision, and training. These resources have significantly enhanced our capabilities, professionalization, modernization, and have furthered our goal to officially being recognized as a NATO country.

The 115th MP BN was the main axis of advance in developing and moving this partnership a step forward dur-

ing multiple personnel exchanges and training events. Whether our Soldiers were located in Bosnia or Maryland, we lived and trained together at the individual, team, and collective levels as brothers in arms. Our forces made it through the intensive training and emerged on the other side as a cohesive unit that resembles much more than a simple partnership. The culmination of our combined efforts was the realization that we would soon join one another in combat in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

In 2012, senior leaders of both the National Guard and AF BiH recognized the successful integration of our forces into the 115th MP BN as a result of our relationships, skills, capabilities, and interoperability. Once the decision was final, we again embarked on an intensive training regimen located in Bosnia, Germany, and the US that focused on the mission essential task mentorship operations with the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP). The Soldiers of the AF BiH performed at a very high level and exceeded the standard throughout the final training period, further demonstrating our value and devotion to the mission.

Since January 2013, AF BiH Soldiers have served shoulder to shoulder with Maryland's Finest in Kandahar City contributing to the safety and security of its people. Not long ago, our country was an international forces consumer, now a short time later, we are providing value and helping those in need. That fact alone is a great source of pride for our Soldiers, and I can say with certainty that we look forward to future contributions to global security and becoming a member of the NATO family.



# CHESAPEAKE 6

LTC ANDREW W. COLLINS, 115<sup>th</sup> MP BN  
BATTALION COMMANDER



**LTC Collins and CPT Romic (BiH) just finish a dismounted combat operation in Deh-e Kuchey Village.**

## Soldiers, Families, and Friends,

Ramadan is only a short week away and will be a key indicator of CTF Chesapeake's success in Kandahar City. Ramadan is a month long period of fasting during the ninth month of the Islamic year, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. During this period, Muslims do not eat food, drink, use tobacco, or engage in intimate relations each day from dawn to sunset. Activity during daylight hours decreases and activity at night increases. This time period has historically marks a period that insurgents attempt to take advantage of, conducting complex attacks and targeting Afghan Security Forces. Soldiers of CTF Chesapeake have made a significant and measurable difference, positively influencing a secure environment in Kandahar City with a population of over 1 million people.

Much of our success comes from the diverse group of Soldiers representing all three components of the Army (Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve), and our international contingent from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Together they bring an immense and dynamic amount of experience from their military and civilian careers, matched with professionalism of the highest caliber.

I specifically want to recognize the accomplishments of our Bosnian partners, who have been a part of every success and hardship we encountered. Shoulder to shoulder, they faced the same challenges and dangers, from securing critical Combat Outposts to conducting dismounted combat patrols. As a partner in the Maryland National Guard's State Partnership Program, these Soldiers are making history as they set the conditions for what right looks like in future conflicts – MANY nations solving WORLD problems.

As always, Combined Task Force Chesapeake Soldiers continue to stay focused and relentless in their efforts to complete the mission and come home safely.

Maryland's Finest! Chesapeake 6 Out!

**COL Radovan (BiH) visits deployed BiH Soldiers assigned to CTF Chesapeake.**



**Combat operations like the one pictured below are effective at disrupting enemy from conducting attacks in Kandahar City.**







# CHESAPEAKE 7

CSM KIMBERLY MENDEZ, 115<sup>th</sup> MP BN  
BATTALION COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



*SFC Hayward after being awarded an Army Achievement medal for her tremendous work during the Saraposa prisoner transfer.*

Independence Day is right around the corner. While family and friends back home will celebrate with fireworks and cookouts, we will continue on with the mission. In 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was signed, our nation was already in the midst of war. This war and many after it were fought to gain and protect our individual rights and liberties; our freedom. Although we will not be with our families this Independence Day, take time to reflect on the role you are playing in preserving freedom at home and the sacrifices of those before us.

## **Congratulations to the Heroes of the Week:**

SGT Vallier	603 <sup>rd</sup> MP Co
SGT Hayward	603 <sup>rd</sup> MP Co
SPC Langdon	603 <sup>rd</sup> MP Co
SPC Reveron	320 <sup>th</sup> MP Co
SPC Debrick	153 <sup>rd</sup> MP Co
SGT Connors	153 <sup>rd</sup> MP Co

Each and every one of these Soldiers and NCOs displayed superior dedication and have proven to be an invaluable asset to the mission of CTF Chesapeake. I want to thank them for their dedication and hard work that they put forth every day. As we continue with the mission here, we have the added task of preparing to go home. As we do I want us to focus on a couple of areas; The first one is NCOERs. Take the time and make the effort to write an accurate assessment of what your NCOs have done. Be fair and do not cut corners. Make sure that your NCOs get the credit they deserve for making CTF Chesapeake a success. Second, keep your Soldiers focused. Complacency sets in towards the end of the deployment. Keep training, and keep enforcing standards, discipline, and respect. Let's finish the way we started.

Chesapeake 7



*SFC Metzger running his 6th M4 Rifle zero range for HHD.*



# Capitol 6

CPT MATTHEW R. STUHR, HHD115<sup>th</sup> MP BN  
COMPANY COMMANDER



*CPT Stuhr and Mr. Stanley Kimaru during the awards presentation following the CTFC Marathon. Mr. Kimaru's team finished in first place.*

Family, Friends, and Soldiers:

As this message is being written, a twenty foot container is being loaded with personal gear and property to be shipped back home— it will not be long now. As we move closer to redeployment, your Soldiers will be heavily focused on our relief in place with the inbound unit, turning in equipment, and preparing for Fort Bliss. As days continue to drop from the calendar, it's only natural for our minds to shift to homecoming and getting a sense for the timeline. I can assure you that planning and execution for our movement is well underway, and I remain confident that it will be a smooth transition not only for our Soldiers, but loved ones as well. One critical aspect of managing the redeployment

process is carefully managing information and limiting speculation. It's a safe assumption that we're all eager to circle a date on the calendar; however, until it's officially released through the chain of command, please do not rely on information obtained through unofficial channels.

On June 22nd, the Combined Task Force Chesapeake, (CTFC) morale, welfare, and recreation Committee (MWRC) executed a well attended (100+ runners) marathon event here on FOB Walton. The planning and coordination was led by SGT Idesha Abramson who leveraged resources and manpower across the battalion and adjacent units, resulting in our most successful event to date. The event promoted Esprit de corps on the FOB, and also provided an opportunity for the Soldiers to decompress using physical fitness as the outlet. The marathon is just one example of countless events the MWRC has conducted the last several months, and their efforts have gone a long way to mitigate risk and promote a positive climate within CTFC. It has truly been an honor to witness, and I sincerely appreciate their efforts.

On an unrelated note, I want to congratulate my friend and colleague, SFC Patrick Metzger and his wife Sabrina on the birth of their new baby girl, Sydney Irene. There are two things I know with absolute certainty; 1. Pat was the happiest man on the planet during the first glimpse of his little girl; 2. He will be holding his baby in front of the formation when we're all dismissed from the armory.

Happy Independence Day,  
CPT Stuhr



*The first place team during the CTFC Marathon Awards ceremony.*





## Capitol 7

SFC PATRICK METZGER, HHD115<sup>th</sup> MP BN  
DETACHMENT FIRST SERGEANT



*Team "Not so top heavy" poses for a group photo following the CTFC Marathon.*

Soldiers and Family Members of the 115<sup>th</sup>

As June comes to a close we are another month closer to return home to our families, friends and loved ones. Our time here in Afghanistan is getting short. Now is the time that we need to remind our Soldiers to stay focused and continue the mission like it was day one. Every Soldier can stand proud of the work that they have accomplished and the work they are continuing to do. Even with the temperatures being above 100 degrees on a daily basis, Soldiers are continuing to accomplish the mission and care for each other.

With July 4<sup>th</sup> just around the corner and we can celebrate another year of independence for the United State of America. Even with July 4<sup>th</sup> being the day of independence for the USA we can also celebrate independence with the Afghan people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Time will only tell just how far people of Afghanistan will go with their freedom. I feel honored to have been able to serve my county and help the people of Afghanistan obtain their freedom.

Last but not least, I want to thank the members of the Female Engagement Team (FET) for all the hard work and support that they provide the 115<sup>th</sup> MP BN over the last several months. I was an honor to meet and work with these fine Soldiers. I wish them all the success in their military careers. To all the family, friends and loved ones please continue to support your deployed Soldier. I know that this is a hard experience for everyone, but the end is near and your Soldier will be home soon. If there is anything I can do to assist anyone please don't hesitate to ask.

Until next month,

SFC Patrick Metzger

Capitol 7



LTC Collins presents SPC Holland with a certificate of achievement during the CTFC Marathon awards ceremony. The protective services detail (PSD) finished third overall.



## 603<sup>rd</sup> MP Company 'Dark Knights'

### *End of an Era*



*Soldiers teach AUP how to search a person under arrest*

This last month, 6-1, 603<sup>rd</sup> MP CO went to PSS3, and conducted training with the AUP there on recognizing IED components, and some basic weapon handling. Then they returned to base. This simple mission, delayed for more than a week because of operational considerations, was a final step for the 603<sup>rd</sup>, and the last step for a long line of units. It was the final PMT mission to the Police Sub-Stations of Kandahar City.

Police Mentorship Training, or PMT, has been THE signature mission of the Military Police Corps in Afghanistan. The PMT mis-

sion has been all encompassing. Company after Company of Soldiers deployed to Kandahar City have lived with the AUP, trained them, patrolled with them, fought with them, and now finally, bid a last farewell to the Afghan Police Officers who will carry the future of the people of Afghanistan, and in doing so, taken one of the final steps to the end of our military adventure, as a unit and as a nation in Afghanistan.

May history remember them kindly.



*SPC Karly Peek provides first aid to an AUP during a PSS visit*





## SFAT 1st GARRISON 'ANZIO'



*MAJ Wenzel and SGM Castilleja present SGT Bandy with a certificate.*

June saw a major shift in focus as we transitioned from advising the AUP to training with National Defense Services, or NDS, personnel. We developed a slate of essential classes to cover with the NDS such as first aid, thorough vehicle search methods, weapons maintenance, marksmanship, and CIED awareness. Our goal was to train their trainers and combine their existing knowledge of these subjects with the training we've received while mobilized as a team. We got their trainers on board with our classes and still remained engaged with the NDS platoons who came through our classes, just because we enjoyed teaching them. Each platoon's training culminated with a trip to the firing range at Camp Hero where we helped refine their shooting fundamentals.

Early in the month, one of our enlisted soldiers was promoted to Sergeant and the team celebrated in style. SGT Bandy was honored with an induction ceremony on the "boomdock" at Shurandam where he and newly promoted 603<sup>rd</sup> MP SECFOR SGT Cheatum recited the NCO creed and then "received congratulations" from the rest of the team. It was a great time and both SGTs are already great leaders for the team.

In short order, our team will be ending our mission and returning home. We want to take this opportunity to thank the 115<sup>th</sup> MP BN for their support on our missions, the 603<sup>rd</sup> MP CO for their help and hospitality on their COP, our linguists for bridging the language gap between us and our counterparts, our Law Enforcement Professionals, and many others who helped us succeed in our mission as security force advisors. From the people contracted to keep our COP clean to those who approved movement on our more than 150 combat missions as a team, this was much more than twelve guys from Texas doing this job. Thank you all and be safe.



*SGT Bandy is re-pinned.*

*Written by: SGT Evan Bandy,  
Team PAO Representative*



# 139th MP Company 'Warlords'



Hello from Afghanistan!

This unit has been away from home and deployed for the past 5 months. As the warm weather gets hotter, Soldiers and Families get closer to the best part of a deployment; the units redeployment!

I know most of you are looking at the calendar as each day passes. Rest assured that the next time you read this newsletter; we will be well into double digit days from coming home! I would also like to take this opportunity to address return dates. Some of you may have heard your Soldier discuss when they think they are coming home; please note that no dates or week has

been solidified, and what you hear is only speculation. As dates are solidified, I will immediately distribute that information through the rear detachment leadership and the Family Readiness Group's chain of concern.

I just wanted to remind the families that we have the best military in the world. Our Soldiers are well-trained, heavily equipped with the best war-fighting arsenal ever fielded in modern combat, and led by extremely professional and hard working leaders at all levels. Your Soldiers conduct their missions with honor and pride. Always remember that you are always in your Soldiers thoughts and heart. Without you "our loved ones" we could not conduct our missions on a daily bases.

Thank you to our Family Readiness Group for their enthusiastic support to the Company, reaching out to spouses, children, parents, and loved ones across the country. Your support and encouragement from home, gives strength to our Soldiers, even from half a world away. Packages, letters, and emails make a difference in the lives of our Soldiers.

Thanks to all for your support! Your encouragement makes a difference to our Soldiers everyday!

CPT Eric Ortiz, Commander, Warlord 6

Family and Friends,

The 139th Military Police Company is entering the sixth month of the deployment. During the past month we've witnessed the Afghan security forces taking the lead for security across the country, and ISAF completing its shift from a combat to a support role. This marked the progress we have made.

The Warlords' dedication and awesome performance continues to contribute to the Task Force's mission and by the end of 2014, Afghans will exert security responsibility across the country, and the ISAF mission will be completed.

In the next months we will continue to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces as they continue to take on their security responsibilities. We will continue to provide combat support, as necessary, until our redeployment back to Fort Stewart.

As always, we thank you for your continued support. I hope it brings you a peace of mind to know that your Soldiers are happy, well fed, well housed, and have access to great facilities.

1SG Hermes F. Acevedo, First Sergeant, Warlord 7





# 153rd MP Company 'Griffin'



The 153<sup>rd</sup> MP CO is into its 5<sup>th</sup> month out here at the Russian Silo in Kandahar now. The unit continues to stay quite busy with all of the missions at hand: Key Leader Engagements, advising the Afghan Police, a strong force-protection posture at BP3/Russian Silo, and retrograde operations. Lately, the 153<sup>rd</sup> Soldiers have been facing down the brutal heat (up to 115 degrees) and sand-storms, but we don't let that deter us from completing the mission!



*The Russian Silo which our COP is named after at dusk, towering over the local landscape.*



*A sandstorm is approaching the base quickly – a wall of dust and sand!*

The 153<sup>rd</sup> has had quite a high op-tempo recently, along with the rest of the 115<sup>th</sup> BN, with operations across Kandahar City. The line platoons were running missions non-stop to setup checkpoints with the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) and get Afghan citizens into the SEEK database. The operation was a great success because not only did we get hundreds of new entries into the database, but we caught a couple of bad guys who had criminal connections in Afghanistan! A special shout-out to the mess section should also go here, as they woke up at 0200 to make sure Soldiers had hot meals before they went out to the checkpoints.

As always, the 153<sup>rd</sup> would also like to thank everyone at home, both friends and families, for their support – we couldn't do it without you. One team, one mission!



*SPC Bailey provides security at a checkpoint during Operation Mountain Leopard.*



*SFC Ashby makes friends with a local boy at a checkpoint and teaches him the "fist-bump".*



# 320th MP Company 'Dragons'

## THE FINAL STRETCH



It has come down to the final newsletter. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon would definitely like to thank everyone for all the support along the way. Every Soldier had a particular reason for taking part in this mission with me and I surely believe all the first timers will have a greater appreciation for their families, civilian careers, and most importantly their Country.

During the past month, CPL Tooley and CPL Widmann both advanced to the rank of Sergeant. This is a major step in both of their military careers and is most deserving. There have been multiple incidents during

named operations in which the 320<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company has been specifically recognized by higher of performing exemplarily MP duties in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. SSG Snyder's squad continues to act as a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for the entire Kandahar City. SSG Hartzell's squad is likely the most active squad, as they back up SSG Snyder's quick reaction force (QRF) squad and conduct multiple patrols in and around the Kandahar City.

Soon we will be welcoming several members from the US Army Engineers that will be assisting us in the complete teardown of ACS4, our home for the past 8 months. Our primary job is to provide 24hr heightened awareness base security operations which includes controlling the entry and exit control points on and off our compound. During the past few weeks the beginning phases of planning, coordination, and implementation have begun. Knowing that hard times are just ahead, troops continue to adjust fire with anything we throw their way. Effective immediately, all Soldiers living on ACS4 will definitely feel the impact of limited resources to include: condensed living areas, water conservation efforts, gym and MWR equipment reduction, and the introduction of the MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) is soon to follow as our main source of food- YUM YUM!!!

As we enter the final stretch, leadership constantly reminds Soldiers to ensure their mindset is strictly focused on mission while understanding the importance of avoiding complacency. We will successfully complete our mission and finish here just like we started, STRONG.

**GOD Bless – SFC Swanson---- 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Sergeant (GO Red Sox!!!)**





# Chaplain's Corner



**Chaplain Hopkins and SPC Urban during the Combined Task Force Chesapeake BBQ Event.**

Combined Task Force Chesapeake Religious Support Team has been steadily moving forward well into our sixth month of this deployment. The health and morale of all Soldiers assigned to the 115<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion has remained good, even in the midst of several tragedies that have occurred within our command, and others in and around Kandahar City, Afghanistan.

The Religious Support Team is pleased to announce that we have completed the thirteen week Debt Free Living Seminar hosted by Dave Ramsey. The seminar included two

bonus DVD's that are currently being shown to all Soldiers in attendance. There has been discussion about reviewing several DVDs that ignited an interest during our group talks. The Financial Readiness for each Soldier has been completely changed for the rest of their lives. Each Soldier was introduced to seven baby steps of getting out of debt and remaining debt free. It was great hearing from individuals that have worked this program, and are now enjoying the fruits of their labor.

The Religious Support Team has completed a slide presentation on Veterans Preference in Hiring. This presentation will arm Soldiers with valuable information that provides them job preference due to their Military Service. These benefits are enacted by Congress. CTF Chesapeake RST has started to work with several Soldiers who will be seeking employment after returning from deployment. It has been rewarding to have had an opportunity to share this information. The majority of Soldiers I spoke with were not aware of this entitlement. If you will be seeking employment, start preparing by updating your resumes.

The battalion worship service is every Sunday @ 1030. We are still seeking for individuals that would like to participate with our worship choir. The choir practices every Thursday evening @ 1800 hours. Chaplain Hopkins has been trying to schedule a Bible Study for Mondays @ 1900 hours. The RST will confirm this with the Battalion as soon as possible. The RST team will continue to keep each soldier and family member lifted up in prayer. If you have any concerns or new ideas to share please present your request to SGT Cooper (Chaplain Assistant) or Chaplain (CPT) Baron Hopkins.