

SINDOLU

TASK FORCE GUAM - CHAMORRI

July 2013

Supporting the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) goal of enabling an accountable Afghan-led security force

Driving forward

Battalion continues mission responsibilities

By SGT EDDIE SIGUENZA

Guam Army National Guard

CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan -- Just seventy-five days into the Guam Army National Guard's historic Operation Enduring Freedom mission, and the pace has been arduous.

More than 2,000 missions completed. More than 25,000 miles logged. More than 8,000 man-hours produced in about three months, more hours than the past two years gearing up for this mission.

Amidst all this, we will never forget the unfortunate deaths of two of our brothers of the Guam Guard's 1-294th Infantry Regiment within a month of arriving in theatre.

"We knew it was a possibility and we are deeply saddened, although we want to slow down and take a breather, it just seems like the pace just keeps picking up," said Maj. Rick Flores, commander, Charlie Company, 1-294th. "We're busier than the company we relieved (in April). It's the summer season now. So, there's definitely more activity."

When Guam sent its roughly 600-member battalion to support OEF once again, it set precedence: This is the first time in its history it has mobilized a battalion-sized element. The Guam Guard has previously

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Professionals

Command Sgt. Maj. Mel Hennegan weighs in on our mission while commending Soldiers, Page 2

Mind, body and soul

Chaplain (Captain) Ronaldo Pascua advises Task Force Guam on the constant use of Personal Protective Equipment. They're not just for the outer body, Page 4

Liberation Days



It's July. It's time for Guam's biggest celebration. But this month is also time to honor America as well as Afghanistan, Page 6

Sindalus of the CNMI

Almost two dozen Soldiers from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are making history for Guam's neighbor, Page 8



MAIN PHOTO - Driver Spc. Bryan Muna and tactical commander Sgt. 1st Class Peter Crisostomo, members of Echo Company, en route to Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan.

MIDDLE LEFT: Sgt. 1st Class Steve Villagomez, battalion motor sergeant, performs maintenance on a tactical vehicle at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

BOTTOM LEFT: Spc. Ricarte Soliva, left, and Pfc. Elbert Espayos run a guardian angel mission for a civilian. They're members of Alpha Company.

BOTTOM MIDDLE: Staff Sgt. Charles Chiguina, left, convoy

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Photo Captions

commander for Charlie Company, 1-294th Infantry Regiment, and members of his team show their unity prior to a June 22 mission at Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan. Shown: Chiguina, Sgt. Kevin Flores, Spc. Adrian Ojeda, Spc. Joshua Mendiola, Sgt. Gregory Garcia and Pfc. Kevin Dunn.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Spc. Zachary Naputi, a gunner for Guam's Headquarters-Headquarters Company, keeps a keen eye on the road leading to Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan.

TOP RIGHT: Spc. Ewy Malaca, a driver for Alpha Company, assures her vehicle's mirrors are clean prior to a June 25 mission.

CHAMORRI: Task Force Guam

Since relieving Task Force Centurion in April, Task Force Guam – Chamorri assists the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A)'s goal of supporting the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in enabling an accountable Afghan-led security no later than Dec. 31, 2014.

Per NTM-A information and mission site:



At the April 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government decided to expand the ISAF mission to oversee higher-level training for the Afghan National Army, and training and mentoring for the Afghan National Police.

NTM-A was established November 2009 to bring together NATO and national training efforts in this regard.

NTM-A's purpose is to enable the Afghans to protect their people by, with, and through the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Contributing Nations

NATO Countries:

Albania, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.

Non-NATO Countries:

Australia, Finland, Jordan, Korea, Mongolia and Singapore.

Professionalism, from the top to the bottom

My duties take me to various places in Afghanistan. I have met our Foxtrot Soldiers at Kandahar (RSC-South), Bravo boys at Leatherneck (RSC-South West) our Delta brothers at Camp Stone (RSC-West), and I recently paid a visit to the Ayuyus of Alpha Company at Camp Spann (RSC-North) and Forward Operating Base (FOB) Kunduz.

I'm concentrated in Kabul, at Camp Eggers and Camp Phoenix, site of HHC, Charlie and Echo companies and part of Echo Company at Bagram Air Field (RSC-East).

In my travels, I continuously meet military and civilian leaders who praise Task Force Guam for so many outstanding reasons. I tell you this: We all share in our successes. I commend every Soldier and noncommissioned officer for your professionalism, bravery and dedication. But I need everyone to continue this effort, for we're not in our home stretch. Technically, we've just begun becoming the 1-294th Infantry Regiment.

The praises and gratitudes tell me one thing: Task Force Guam is the real deal.

Our accomplishments so far are the result of good leadership and positive mentorship. Throughout the battalion, morale is high. I'm confident of my subordinate leadership in place. A lot is placed upon my first sergeants and senior enlistees. You set the tone for the praises others have given. Continue mission. We're about three months into our mission. We're constantly being tested and challenged and our NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan leaders are relying on us for an abundance of missions, and the need for the 1-294th In-



Command
Sgt. Maj.
Mel
Hennegan

Task Force
Guam
Command
Sergeant
Major

fantry Regiment hasn't stopped.

We're also testing ourselves. By now we've settled into our mission responsibilities. The excitement -- the adrenaline rush -- when we first arrived in country is over. We're past the training stages. We're now into real missions and understand the lay of the land. We're out there as guardian angels, personal security, quick response forces and so on.

What we've trained for, this is it.

We don't have time to break down and lose focus on the things that got us here. All the training leading up to this have made us professionals. I challenge all of you to remain professional throughout the remainder of this tour. Stay focused!

We've reached July. This is the month of Ramadan. Muslims refrain from certain things like consuming food, drinking liquids and smoking. In some interpretations they also refrain from swearing. We are guests in this country, so we will abide by their culture. I am relying on my senior leaders, especially those who have been here before, to make this a priority throughout the units.

We will all respect our hosts.

We will not smoke in front of them. We will scrutinize what we eat and drink, and where we do it. We will not provoke their religious practices. We will honor them for what they believe.

However, we will not let our guard down. This time frame is one of the worst for American and coalition forces. Violence escalates leading up to Ramadan and shortly afterward. Everyone must remain vigilant. This is not the time to be complacent. You will stay alert.

A lot of you are being relied upon for more than what was expected. I have Soldiers who run multiple missions daily. I have Soldiers who have taken it upon themselves to build upon or destroy the aftermath of our preceding unit, to make living conditions better. I have NCOs who wear two hats, others who wear one Kevlar that never comes off. Your sacrifices, your continuous effort is well observed. I'm aware of what you're doing and won't forget.

Lastly, I caution everyone on one important matter. The commander and I had to make a tough decision recently to adjust our game plan. Some of our Soldiers lost focus about weapon safety. We're fortunate that no one has suffered severely for this.

The commander and I take this seriously. This will not be tolerated. It's unbearable to lose any of you through the cause of war, yet to tell your family and loved ones that we lost you because of your irresponsibility is far worse. This cannot happen, and the commander and I have made an inarguable statement.

Take your weapon seriously. Check your buddy as well. This is everyone's responsibility.

Task Force Guam continues mission

-- Continued from Page 1

supported OEF in Afghanistan, Africa and Southern Philippines, but has never committed more than a company-sized unit.

This round, there are multiple companies. Guam Guardsmen are dispersed throughout all Afghanistan, covering thousands of square miles, with a mission of providing security forces, guardian angels and personal security detachments. Its overall mission is to support the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan's (NTM-A) effort establishing an Afghan-led security force.

"Soldiers of the 1-294th Infantry Regiment are making an impressive contribution to the overall effort of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan," Task Force Guam commander Lt. Col. Michael Tougher said. "I am extremely proud of each and every one of them."

The Guam Guard officially relieved Task Force Centurion Prime, 1-167th Infantry, Fourth Alabama, in early May. It commenced mission as Task Force Guam - Chamorri.

In early June, Guam forces provided personal security for U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel's executive leadership. Hagel met Afghan Minister of Defense Bismillah Khan Mohammadi (www.defense.gov) in that duration. Charlie Company Soldiers, led by non-commissioned officer in charge, Staff Sgt. Mike Palacios, escorted top enlisted advisors to places around Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, and Bagram Air Field.

Palacios' personal security detachment regularly escorts command staff from NTM-A and Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A). Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes, NTM-A and CSTC-A command sergeant major, commended the group, stating, "They've been professional Soldiers from the start. They know how to do their jobs and I'm lucky to have them."

Across the board, the 1-294th Soldiers continue escorting military and civilian dignitaries in both tactical and



non-tactical vehicles. These dignitaries contribute to the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) support. Their efforts, with Guam's assistance, are enabling the ANSF to assume the lead for combat operations throughout Afghanistan.

"This is a tribute to the determination of the people of Afghanistan to take responsibility for their country's future," Hagel stated. "This achievement keeps us and our coalition partners on track to bring our combat mission to a close next year

and transition to a non-combat, train, advise, and assist mission that will help ensure Afghans can sustain security into the future."

Several of Guam's units are stationed throughout Kabul, the country's capital. Flores leads a company with a very high operational tempo. They run missions every day -- sometimes more than a dozen per day -- making attempts to get together for unit cohesion difficult.

"We're in the capital. We're in the heart of Afghanistan," Flores said. "It's a busy place."

Sadly, the Guam Guard lost two members May 16 when an improvised explosive device killed Sgt. Eugene M. Agnon and Spc. Dwayne W. Flores. They were Guam's 22nd and 23rd OEF casualties since 2003.

The Guam Guardsmen have become a more united group as a result. Their commitment and determination to perform the mission has become more resolute.

"The guys have been great. They're much more resilient now," added Flores. They're not just more alert, they've adjusted to the situation and developed better TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures). With the disasters we normally get back home, our guys know how to bounce back."

Flores also credits the support given by families on Guam. Families send care packages and gifts, and various associations are also donating items to lift Soldiers' morale.

"What's keeping up the motivation of the guys are care packages," said Flores. "Little things like that make a big difference. Look at my first sergeant. He's stocked up."

Guam is still months away from returning to its Pacific home. The Guam Guardsmen continue their mission to support Afghan security forces. Even though 75 days have passed, no one is counting the days remaining.

"All Soldiers from every company take this mission seriously and perform professionally," Flores said. "Although it is dangerous, they continue to do their mission. That is a reflection of their courage."

Donning Your *Relationship* Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

By: Chaplain (CPT) Ronaldo Pascua



(TOP LEFT) Chaplain dismounts out of vehicles at Camp Blackhorse (TOP-RIGHT) Soldier photographed in the sunset, walking by tents at RC-North, FOB Kunduz.

At the beginning of our deployment, we were instructed by the battalion commander not to get lazy or complacent when going out on missions. He directed the leaders to ensure that everyone wear the required Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE, even when riding in the tactical vehicles. Sometimes, soldiers may be tempted to take off their gloves, eye protection or helmet because it is hot and uncomfortable. It would be foolish for a soldier to think that wearing their body armor, a helmet or little things like gloves and glasses will not make a difference.

Soldiers have already discovered that by wearing something as small

as their protective eyewear, their eyesight was saved from the permanent damage of heat exposure or shrapnel. Every piece of our protective equipment is important to minimizing the risk of bodily injury or even death.

As we continue on the road through the first couple of months of our deployment, for those of us in a relationship with a spouse or significant other, I do not want us to get lazy or complacent when it comes to protecting our relationships. In my years as a chaplain on active duty orders, I am not surprised to find that hurt, infidelity, and divorce are likely results for those who do not protect their

relationships during deployments. Something as innocent as being “just friends” with the opposite sex may not seem like a big deal, but how many extramarital affairs do you know began that way? Many couples in a good relationship thought they were immune to marriage problems.

Steve Pringle, the executive director of Diakonos Counseling, says, “Infidelity boils down to two powerful factors that influence both men and women to stray. First is a lack of maturity, which shows itself in immediate gratification and strong self-centeredness with a lack of forward thinking. Second is an inability to overcome hurt feelings

that result when emotional needs are not being met. The hurt spouse either intentionally or accidentally comes in contact with someone who begins to meet these needs, and the spouse allows “feel good” moods to control what he or she thinks or does. These “feel good” moods often have the power to override the commonsense voice that warns us, “No, don’t do that.” One piece of personal protective equipment we must put on for our relationships is the body armor that protects our heart. That is, understanding your partner’s heart.

Do you know if your spouse’s needs are being met?

Have you communicated your unmet needs to your spouse?

This requires open and honest communication, then coming up with creative ways to meet those needs.

Another piece of protective equipment to put on is our helmet. That is, guarding our minds. A simple

rule is, not to have friends of the opposite sex to “hang out” with alone, even for coffee or shopping. It may be harmless, but it may open the door for a relationship to start later on. Again, this may not seem like a big deal, but long deployments can create loneliness and that increases the potential for extra-marital affairs. Just avoid the situation.

Be committed to wearing your Relationship PPE during this mission. By meeting each other’s emotional needs and guarding your minds, your marriage will grow stronger. This may take a lot of work, but your marriage is well worth preserving through difficult times such as a deployment.



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Liberation Days

Guam: 69 years



This July 21, Guam will celebrate its 69th anniversary of its freedom from Japanese oppression during World War II. It wasn't until this day in 1944 when Marine and Army National Guard units stormed Guam's shores in Asan and Agat to liberate the island. Japan's imperial forces occupied Guam from 1941-1944.

For multiple years, Guam elects a Liberation Day queen as a sign of peace and freedom from the tyranny imposed by the Japanese during The War. This year, Ealani N. Lobaton of Santa Rita was chosen for the honor.

Coincidentally, July 21 marks the 32nd birthday of the Guam National Guard. Its command headquarters was first established July 21, 1981, with 32 original charter members. The organization's authorized strength has grown to more than 1,700 members between its Army and Air Guard commands.

The Guam National Guard celebrates its birthday in October to not hamper any Liberation Day events.

On Guam, Sinajana mayor Robert Hoffman serves as leader of Liberation Day festivities. Events have already begun, leading to the commemorative fireworks display July 21 at Tiyan. The fireworks display follows the annual Liberation Day Parade, one of the island's main yearly attractions, slated for Marine Drive.

Of course, the Liberation Day Carnival started last month.

America: July 4th



On this day in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress, setting the 13 colonies on the road to freedom as a sovereign nation. As always, this most American of holidays will be marked by parades, fireworks and backyard barbecues across the country.

Fourth of July Facts

(From the U.S. Census Bureau)

2.5 million

In July 1776, the estimated number of people living in the newly independent nation. Source: Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970.

316.2 million

The nation's estimated population on this July Fourth.

56

Numbers of signers to the Declaration of Independence. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman and Robert R. Livingston comprised the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration. Jefferson, regarded as the strongest and most eloquent writer, wrote most of the document.

\$218.2 million

The value of fireworks imported from China in 2012, the bulk of all U.S. fireworks imported (\$227.3 million). U.S. exports of fireworks, by comparison, came to just \$11.7 million, with Israel purchasing more than any other country.

Afghanistan: fighting for freedom every day



Afghanistan celebrates Liberation Day to remember the day that the last soldier from the Soviet Union left the country. The Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan Feb. 15, 1989.

However, Afghans celebrate National Day every August 19 to honor their independence from the United Kingdom's control over Afghan foreign affairs in 1919 (source: <http://www.wikipedia.com>).

But every day, the people of Afghanistan celebrate a different form of independence: the people fight for freedom from Taliban oppression and other terrorism that have tainted the country in recent years. In mid-June, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) assumed control of its country's security, taking over for U.S.-led coalition forces. This event is called Milestone 2013.

The Afghanistan Liberation Day is celebrated as a political holiday, featuring speeches on television from the Afghan President and government to stimulate national feelings.

Many Afghans also view the day as a religious holiday, because the end of the Soviet occupation also resulted in the end of secular ideas from the Marxist government. The new Afghan government installed the Sharia law as the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan Liberation Day was declared a holiday in 2005 and has been officially celebrated since 2007.

Members of Security Force 1, Alpha Company, 1-294th Infantry Regiment, form for a meeting outside their tents June 29 at Forward Operating Base Kunduz, Afghanistan.



UNIT SPOTLIGHT

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HHC: Home of the heavy-hitting Hilitais

Until mission's end, we will feature a unit of Task Force Guam and a wrap up of Soldiers' accomplishments.

This month:
Headquarters-
Headquarters Company.

HHC Commander, Capt. Gene Guerrero

Three months down and six to go.

July marks HHC's third month in country and our fifth month away from home. July also marks the United States of America's 237th year as an independent and free nation as well as Guam's 69th year of our liberation.

The road to war was not easy, but with continuous hard work, dedication to duty, and unwavering professionalism, the Hilitai warriors became well-trained and combat-ready Soldiers with a lot to offer during our Overseas Contingency Operations. Our mission is three-fold: to conduct Security Force operations, Guardian Angel operations, and Personal Security Detail.

HHC provides direct support to the NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan (NTM-A) and the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) through this three-fold mission.

To date, the Hilitai warriors have conducted more than 400 missions, which included protecting more than 2,000 NTM-A military service members, civilians, and contractors; worked for more than 2,100 hours; and drove almost 9,000 miles. It goes without saying that although the

Chamorro Soldiers are extremely busy, they continue to remain vigilant, resilient and dedicated to accomplishing our mission.

Every day that we feel tired, the Soldiers remind themselves of our two brothers-in-arms who paid the ultimate sacrifice on May 16. It is their display of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage that inspires the men and women of HHC on a daily basis. We dedicate each day of duty to them by continuing the fight for liberty and freedom.

The road ahead is still a long one, but we are definitely counting down the days. The everyday care packages that our Soldiers receive from their loved ones serve as motivation and a reminder that we have something and someone to fight for.

We truly miss home, and we pray daily for the safety of our loved ones as they too are going through a difficult time. We wholeheartedly appreciate all that our Family Readiness Group does for its Soldiers and we can't wait to finish our mission to be able to come home and enjoy together the freedoms and liberties that we all fight for.

Un Dangkulu na Si Yu'os Ma'ase. May God Bless the islands of Guam and the CNMI, and May God Bless the United States of America.

"Maseha Ngai'an yan Manu ... Anytime, Anywhere!

HHC First Sergeant, 1st Sgt. John Johnson

do good for the people of Afghanistan. They will amaze you with a new level of maturity, discipline, and respect when they return home. It is also extremely satisfying to hear from other coalition forces of the typical professionalism exhibited by your Soldiers.

It has been quite an experience supporting the people of Afghanistan as they work toward establishing a strong, productive government. In spite of the violence that is experienced almost daily, we see the Afghan people stepping forward and taking control, specifically as they take the lead in combat operations.

The passing of Sgt. Eugene Aguon and Spc. Dwayne Flores was especially difficult for our unit. But we know that we must continue to honor their service by remembering why we're

here; by continuing to serve our people and our country. We shall never forget them and the sacrifices they made for Good to prevail.

No one ever rises to low expectations. Your Soldiers remain a ready fighting force, acknowledging that they all rely on each other as a team. They maintain readiness to perform their duties with no room for doubt, laziness, or second guessing.

There is no tolerance for those who come unprepared or unmotivated, and so far, your Soldiers have fit the bill.

Please continue to keep them in your prayers, remain proud of them, and continue the strong level of support as they will not be able to do it without you.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Palabras

Things said by Soldiers in and around Afghanistan:

"Since the day I got here." -- A Charlie Company squad leader, when asked if he's ready to go home.

"It's like Marine Drive, just with a billion more people." -- An HHC driver, on his crowded routes around the city of Kabul.

"You got to eat early to get the good flavors, otherwise you'll get something like peppermint chocolate chip." -- An Alpha Company senior NCO, on the once-a-week serving of ice cream.

"Yes there's a problem. We're almost out of rice and Spam." -- A Charlie Company Soldier to his platoon sergeant.



"It's the next best thing to eating at a fiesta." -- An Alpha Company Soldier, after receiving a care package from his family.

"Facebook, Facebook, and Facebook." -- An HHC Soldier, when asked three ways he communicates with his family.

facebook

"Don't thought. Just think." -- A Delta Company platoon sergeant.

"The problem isn't these things are too big. It's the roads are too small." -- An Echo Company driver, on his 18,000-pound tactical vehicle.

"A surfboard?" -- A Canadian Soldier, about what the Guam patch resembles.

"Now I really want to go home." -- An HHC officer, after his San Antonio Spurs lost to the Miami Heat in the NBA finals.

"Not every cloud you see is a sign of a storm." -- A Delta Company platoon leader.



Hafa adai, from the great country of Afghanistan!

I would like to start off by saying that your Soldiers have been doing an amazing job here at Camp Phoenix and their spirits remain high! It's been such a privilege to lead this young group of Soldiers who want to

Sindalu Soldiers of the CNMI

Historic march for Northern Mariana Island citizens in Afghanistan

By SGT EDDIE SIGUENZA

Guam Army National Guard

CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan – Far, far away, there is a league of islands praising its sons and daughters for something never done before.

Sixteen Soldiers from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), members of the Guam Army National Guard's 1-294th Infantry Regiment, embarked on a historic quest four months ago. Just as the Guam Guard makes history on its Operation Enduring Freedom mission, so do these 16, for another purpose.

They're among roughly 600 island warriors dispersed throughout Afghanistan, supporting the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan's role in training, advising and assisting Afghan security forces. Yet, they come from an even smaller population, from the CNMI islands of Saipan and Tinian.

"We are all Guam National Guardsmen. We eat, sleep and fight together," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mel Hennegan, Task Force Guam's command sergeant major. "We're all a part of the battalion no matter where we're from."

The islanders' history with the Guam National Guard began after a 2009 recruiting program in the Northern Mariana Islands. In 2010, about 25 CNMI citizens enlisted into the Guam Guard. They maintain residence in the CNMI, but take an approximately 30-minute flight to Guam for monthly training.

Of those 25, 16 are now in Afghanistan, each making their first active duty deployments. The majority are in their 20s; one is an officer. Task Force Guam mobilized in March, but didn't land on Afghan soil until April.

"This is something very honorable for them. They're taking it upon themselves to seek a better life," said 1st Lt. Joey Togawa, executive officer, Charlie Company, Task Force Guam and San Vicente, Saipan resident. "All of them want to do the right thing out here. Not just for the people here, but for their families at home."

Togawa joins 13 others from Saipan. Two Guardsmen – Spcs. Hainy Borja and Ken "Mojo" Mojica – are from Tinian, an island with a population of about 3,000. Togawa was born on Guam but moved permanently to Saipan for his civilian employment.

Not all CNMI residents deployed. Some remained as members of other Guam Guard units, including logistics, communication and the 721st Army Band.

To add to this group's history, there's a father-daughter combination aboard. Spc. Ivan Igitol and his daughter, Brittney, also a specialist, are united in heart but separated in distance. Ivan runs missions out of Camp Eggers, while Brittney is based at Kandahar, approximately 300 miles away.

"The way we see it, we're from the CNMI but we're part of the Guam Guard. We carry the (Guam) patch," said Igitol, 48, of Matuis, Saipan. "We know we represent Guam, but we're representing the CNMI as well. Guam will always be a part of us."

The senior Igitol serves as a mission coordinator. He tracks Soldier movement for Task Force Guam throughout Afghanistan.

The 16 Soldiers form the largest group of reservists to ever deploy from the CNMI. Of them, four are women: Spc. Tiffany Santos, Spc. Rita Taitano, Spc. Delorina Rabauliman and the younger Igitol.

Fifteen islands make up the CNMI, but only three – Saipan, Tinian and Rota – are permanently inhabited. Based on the 2010 census, the Commonwealth has a population of 53,883. In comparison, the software company Microsoft employs about 91,000 worldwide, almost 60,000 just in the United States.

The Northern Mariana Islands, Guam included, were corner-



TOP: Tinian resident Pfc. Ken Mojica.

RIGHT: Spc. Nathaniel Mateo.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Spc. Ivan Igitol and "Greg."

BOTTOM: Spc. Rita Taitano.

stones of this Pacific region during World War II. Japan's occupation of the islands brought U.S. forces to this region. The U.S. recaptured Guam July 21, 1944, then regained Saipan and Tinian days later. Tinian provided the launching point for the famous Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945.

"We're out here doing what we have to do. We're going to get the mission done and go back home," said Spc. Nathaniel Mateo, 22, of Garapan, Saipan. "We just have to do our missions right. Just do what we've learned."

Mateo is a driver for Charlie Company. He's already run countless missions in a short time. On his driving experiences throughout Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, Mateo explained, "It's crowded, crowded, crowded. They don't have traffic like this back home."

As historic as this is, says Togawa, the group isn't concerned so much about that. They're concentrating on the mission at hand. They understand the dangers of this deployment and are fulfilling their responsibilities accordingly.

"Our Soldiers know they need to stay focused out here," Togawa said. "I have a lot of respect for them for their sacrifices. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves, and make a difference for their island. They could be sitting at home and going nowhere."

Right now, they're marching into history.



Foxtrot Company



Echo Company

Two members of Echo Company, 1-294th Infantry Regiment, completed a 26-day mission at Camp Blackhorse, performing guardian angels for five civilian contractors.

Sgt. Ricky San Nicolas, fire team leader, and Pfc. John Garcia, a rifleman, protected the principals who were Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) instructors training the Afghan National Army (ANA).

San Nicolas has experience with GA missions so he says this is “nothing new” to him. The only difference was the number of principals he was assigned. For Garcia, this was a whole new experience considering it’s his first deployment. He states, “it was kind of nerve-racking because there were only two of us and five principals, so we always had to be on our toes.”

Other than that, it was a good experience for him. San Nicolas and Garcia were presented Certificates of Appreciation for their outstanding efforts and professionalism at Camp Blackhorse.



At left: Sgt. Ricky San Nicolas, fire team leader, and Pfc. John Garcia (top), a rifleman, don their Certificates of Appreciation.

Delta Company



Charlie Company



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Bravo Company



Alpha Company



PHOTO OF THE MONTH

GUARDIAN ANGELS? -- *It's a dirty job, but someone from Guam's got to do it. Spc. Jacob. T. Penaflor, a grenadier for Security Forces I, Alpha Company, 1-294th Infantry Regiment, and Sgt. 1st Class Celso M. Leonen, SF I platoon sergeant, appear as guardian angels for portable potties at Forward Operating Base Kunduz, Kunduz City, Afghanistan. Actually, the Guam Guardsmen were standing by for Command Sgt. Maj. Mel Hennegan, Task Force Guam command sergeant major, who was leaving Kunduz back to Camp Phoenix. They were enjoying the shade provided by the portals during FOB Kunduz's 95-degree weather.*



* NOTE -- Chamorris, if you have a photo you'd like to include for Photo of the Month, send it to your Public Affairs staff:
Capt. Gordon Guerrero, PAO, gordon.d.guerrero@afghan.swa.army.mil,
or Sgt. Eddie Siguenza, Public Affairs NCOIC, edward.i.siguenza@afghan.swa.army.mil. Good luck!



Visit our Task Force Guam - Chamorri site on Facebook for frequent updates.

Families are welcomed to visit the 1-294th Infantry Regiment's Facebook family page.

facebook.com/groups.chamorri#!/groups/chamorri

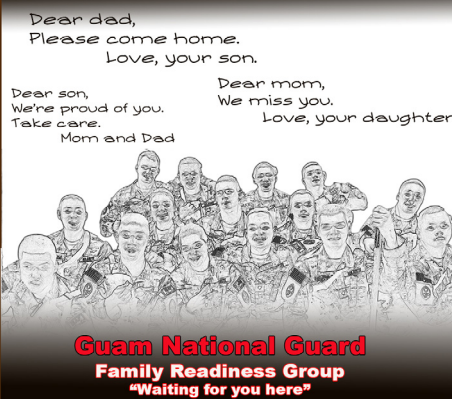
? What's the number ?

4,975

Distance, in miles

from Guam to Afghanistan

(<http://www.distancefromto.net>)



Guam National Guard
Family Readiness Group
"Waiting for you here"



WEAPONS SAFETY!

TREAT every weapon as if it is loaded.
HANDLE every weapon with care.
IDENTIFY the target before you fire.
NEVER point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.
KEEP the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

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