

The

BLACK JACK ROUNDUP



DEPLOYMENT EDITION, VOL 1

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Black Jack 6 sends

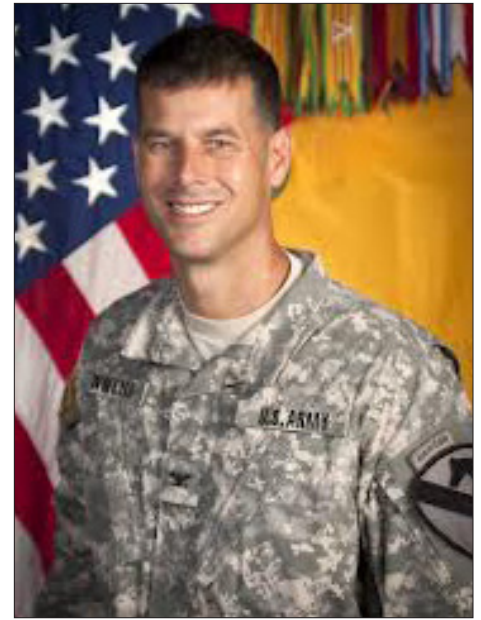
Greetings from Afghanistan!

Dear Black Jack Family,

I want to first congratulate the Troopers of Black Jack for an outstanding performance on our deployment thus far. By now, the overwhelming majority of our Soldiers are in Afghanistan. We are becoming more capable and more ready every day. Our brigade has Soldiers located in three Regional Commands; RC-East, RC-South, and RC-Capital. This could not have been accomplished without the highest levels of professionalism, leadership, and dedication that has become our brigade's hallmark.

I continue to be nothing but impressed by the amazing team this brigade has built. This is due to the outstanding leadership from Soldiers. They are leading the way in both professionalism and commitment to the mission and the team.

None of this could be possible without the tremendous support I have seen from our brigade's Families. Family Readiness Groups around the brigade continue to assist the Soldiers down-range and their Families on the home front. We are honored to serve at such a historic time. I could not be more proud of the Soldiers and Families of this brigade. First Team. Black Jack!



FIRST TEAM!

BLACKJACK!

BLACKJACK 6

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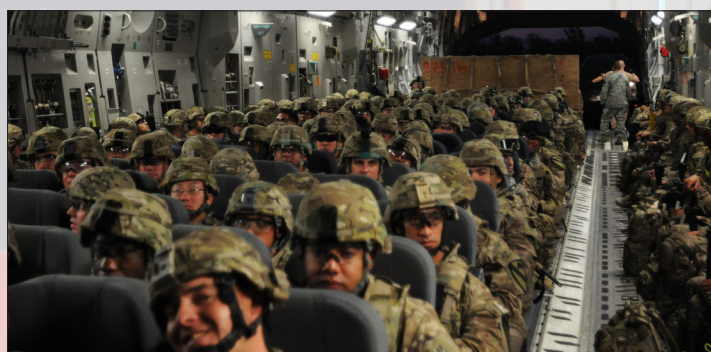
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LEAVING HOME...



...ROAD TO AFGHANISTAN



'Black Jack' physicians balance healthcare needs



Capt. Kristen Koenig (left), a family practitioner attached to 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, assists Capt. Justin Zimmerman, a physical therapist with Black Jack, during a patients' physical therapy in a clinic at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, July 29. Koenig is assigned to Fort Campbell, Ky., but attached to Black Jack providing and helping balance additional healthcare needs during the brigades' deployment.

Story and photos by Sgt. Quentin Johnson
2/1 CAV Public Affairs Office

As the only physician assistant with 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, currently deployed to Bagram Air Field, Capt. La Tasha Gray, treats and cares for hundreds of troops, a challenge she will not have to face alone while in Afghanistan.

Two doctors from different states attached to Black Jack will serve their tour with Gray as brigade health providers, helping maintain the brigade's medical fitness, sharing medical experience and building friendships.

Physicians, Maj. Abigail Lee, a dermatologist assigned to San Antonio Military Medical center (SAMMC), Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and Capt. Kristen Koenig, a family practitioner assigned to Blanchfield Army Community Hospital (BACH), Fort Campbell, Ky., were attached to Black Jack towards the end of April, went through

the brigades' Joint Readiness Training Center rotation in Fort Polk, La., in May and through deployment in July.

Black Jack is currently deployed to Afghanistan to support retrograde operations of both servicemembers in Afghanistan and their equipment.

Although they came from different Army posts and healthcare settings, both Lee and Koenig said their anticipations of the deployment with Black Jack were similar.

"It was no surprise I was deploying. The Army trains us well and I was ready for the new experiences," said Koenig, who hails from Ringoes, N.J.

"I knew I was on the list to deploy. I had deployed to Iraq and was excited about experiencing Afghanistan with 'Black Jack'," explained Lee, who hails from Milwaukee.

From the start, Koenig said she was graciously welcomed into the Black Jack family by her counterparts.

"The medics have welcomed me with their motivation and insightful-

ness," Koenig said.

Lee agreed, stating, "I have been truly overwhelmed by the support and performance of (Black Jack)."

Gray said Lee and Koenig is a welcomed edition to the brigade, and needed source of experience and knowledge.

"It's great having them here. I love having medical doctors around to exchange ideas with and draw from their experiences on more difficult medical cases," Gray explained.

Both Lee and Koenig hope to share their knowledge and ensure sound health care is given to Soldiers who need it.

"There is a potential opportunity to make a real difference while I'm here," stated Lee. "I am always excited to help heal Soldiers."

Koenig said her experience with family medicine is useful, as many health issues deployed Soldiers encounter are the same in states, and she is looking forward to expanding her knowledge while assigned to Black Jack.

"I am looking forward to new experiences including different medical procedures and trauma care, should such a case present itself," said Koenig.

Lee said while gaining new experiences is rewarding, she hopes to pass on some of her knowledge with the staff and facilitate new ideas for the clinic.

"I would like to facilitate some new communication strategies, and start a mentorship program among the medics to help them continuously pursue their future in medicine," said Lee.

Regardless of what the deployment should bring, both Lee and Koenig explained they hope to build lasting professional relationships, and leave behind a positive impact on the brigade upon returning home from their deployment.

SABER PLATOON



Photos by Sgt. Quentin Johnson

The “Saber” Platoon is a group of Soldiers - Personal Security Officers - with a mission to protect and secure brigade leadership, military officials and VIPs during any given task or scenario. The platoon is comprised of various military occupational specialties (MOS), ranks and gender. Highly trained, PSOs are always ready to accomplish their mission.





Mother greets son downrange



Story by Rose L. Thayer
Herald Staff Writer
Photos by Sgt. Quentin Johnson
2/1 CAV Public Affairs Office

When Pfc. Jayden Jones arrived in Afghanistan earlier this month, there was a familiar face waiting to greet him — his mother.

Less than 13 months into his Army career, Jones, 19, deployed to Afghanistan with the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, as his mother, Sgt. 1st Class Ebony Jones was wrapping up her nine months in the country with the division's 4th Brigade Combat Team. The two happened through Bagram Airfield at the same time and were able to reunite — something that impacted both of them, no matter how

brief an interaction.

"I saw a smile and I knew it was my mom," Jayden Jones said during a phone call from Bagram over the weekend.

Ebony Jones said her son is already showing more maturity.

"I'm very proud of him," Ebony Jones said. "He told me he was going to be in the Army since he was 4 years old. I was deployed when he signed up."

The 22-year medic is on her third deployment and has been stationed at Fort Hood for most of her career. Jayden Jones, who also signed up as a medic, said he didn't see the deployments as time away from home, but as part of the Army journey.

"The fact that she got to meet a

lot of people and work a lot of places, that got my attention; that made me want to join the military," he said. "I was joining to serve my country, and never worried about (deployments). I was worried about my mother when I was younger."

Over the years, Ebony Jones has taken on the nickname "Mama Jones," from her soldiers.

"The first time I disciplined one of my soldiers he said I reminded him of his mom. I said, 'Good, because you wouldn't want to disappoint your mom, so don't disappoint me.'"

Ebony Jones will be headed back to Fort Hood in the coming weeks, where she will be reunited with her husband, and keeping up with her son through Facebook, just as they did when she was the one downrange.

She parted ways with Jayden, reminding him to trust the people around him and to keep his head down and his butt up.

"And for God to watch over them and keep it as quiet as it has been for us, and that the same people they leave with are the same ones they come home with," she said.



When Pfc. Jayden Jones, left, arrived in Afghanistan earlier this month, there was a familiar face waiting to greet him — his mother, Sgt. 1st Class Ebony Jones.

Train, Train, Train...



Photos by Sgt. Quentin Johnson



Essential training is key for all Soldiers who come to Afghanistan. Black Jack Soldiers went through a series of training upon arrival including: counter - improvised explosive device training, mine detection, situational awareness training and range proficiency. All knowledge obtained from the classes will help Soldiers during missions or situations they may encounter during their tour.



...and Train More!



Brotherly Bonds



Capt. Matthew N. Mayor, brigade S-3 operations officer with Task Force Lifeline and Capt. Mark E. Mayor, brigade S-2 current operations officer with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division "Black Jack Brigade", both identical twin brothers hailing from Kenosha, Wis., stand side by side during their deployment at Bagram Air Field in Parwan province, Afghanistan, June 28, 2013. Both of their units are working together on security and retrograde missions while downrange.

*Story and photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario,
Task Force Lifeline Public Affairs*

Twin brothers as children normally do everything together; they share each other's dreams as well as plan what they want to be when they grow up, then as adults some slowly grow apart while others maintain their strong brotherly bond.

Capt. Matthew N. Mayor, brigade logistics and operations officer with 101st Sustainment Brigade, Task Force Lifeline and Capt. Mark E. Mayor, brigade intelligence and current operations officer with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division "Black Jack Brigade", identical twin brothers hailing from Kenosha, Wis., have always been very close and inseparable. They were always in the same sports; same college and now both currently serve as captains in the U.S. Army.

"It's like we decided to go ahead

and do it through our ROTC first. We wanted to get a college education and then go ahead and serve. That was probably one of the motivating factors, to do something together," said Matthew. "I couldn't be happier, couldn't be more content, and more inspired to work with this great team that I'm part of, and he's part of, so it's kind of like working for the same organization which is the Army as a whole."

As they sat talking about the choices they have made, Mark reminisced about the month they both went on active duty.

"I remember that very month, when both of us went on active duty July 4th, 2009," said Mark. "That weekend prior we said our goodbyes to the families and we had a pre Fourth of July celebration."

Their military orders took them to Fort Sill, Okla., for Basic Officer Leaders Course. They were both

stationed there together during that time; although, the brothers knew they would eventually go to their separate branch schools.

In the beginning, the twin brothers were a bit hesitant in joining the service. Thoughts of being separated caused a bit of anxiety. But, they knew deep down inside they would be alright in the long run.

"It was difficult, it was challenging, but I'm sure every soldier goes through the same thing. Separation anxiety, family, but eventually you cope, you learn to use the shared media, Facebook, Skype, etc.," said Matthew.

Mark promptly added to his brother's statement, "You quickly adapt and just overcome any feelings of separation and anxiety, so that passed after a few months."

The two commented on the choices they have made and both agree that there are no regrets with the Army lifestyle they chose.

Although the twins are identical with many things in common, there are some differences that have set them apart. They said in jest that Mark has always been the talkative one, while Matthew is the quiet one, the listener.

Mark explained, "A lot of our idiosyncrasy, just the way we are now, comes from our parents and what jobs they had. Like for instance, our father is a psychologist, he's a therapist, so the listening aspect he (Matthew) picked up from him (father)."

He continued talking about his brother by explaining how he cares about what people say and that he has been like that since they were young children.

See BROTHERS pg. 8 —

The Chaplain's Corner

“Let your gentleness be evident to all” (Philippians 4: 5).

According to a survey, the leading complaint husbands hold against their wife is that she has a “bad temper.” Before men commence groaning about their very difficult wife, we should remember that the leading complaint women have against their husband is “bad temper.” It appears as though we’re struggling to control our emotions. Husbands and wives who – by oath – are pledged to love and honor one another are instead opting for disrespect and irrationality. It’s ruining otherwise solid

relationships.

Anger is a common sensation many of us experience regularly, perhaps even daily. It can stem from many things – anger can be the outcome of hurt, embarrassment, miscommunication, shame, guilt and more. Virtually any negative experience can trigger anger; it’s little wonder that couples – whose lives interact with great intensity and intimacy – exchange angry words. Despite their love, couples simply have more opportunities to share negative experiences. We hurt the ones we love.

The remedy for anger is

forgiveness. But before we can reach forgiveness we must first experience gratitude. It’s easier to forgive someone we’re grateful for.

When we’re angry we lose sight of the good qualities of the other person; we vilify them and assume the worst possible motives. Rarely are our angry assumptions in the vicinity of reality; our anger leads to over-reaction.

Our colleagues, friends, family, and especially spouses are gifts from God. Our Lord doesn’t offer inferior products; unwarranted anger therefore ultimately becomes ingratitude directed against Him.

Forgiveness and gratitude toward others are means of thanking God who has been so generous towards us, and no bad temper can survive a heavy dose of thankfulness.

BROTHERS, cont’d from pg. 7 —

As they continued to think back on their upbringing while they were sitting in Bagram, Afghanistan, together they jokingly talked about each other’s strengths and weaknesses, but not in that competitive fashion that you’d typically see between siblings.

As children, they were both in the little league together. Mark was voted MVP (most valuable player) as the pitcher and Matthew was the home run hitter.

“We’re mirror twins, I’m left handed and he’s right handed that’s our major difference between each other physically,” said Mark. “I’ve always been a little better of a pitcher. His (Matthew’s) strong suit is soccer,

he’s always been better at soccer than I was.”

Whether they discuss their jobs in the military or the days on the little league team there is no doubt they share a unique understanding of each other.

The brothers are not from a military family background, but they have a supporting family. They stoically spoke of their mother in how she worries, but they know their mother supports them and is very proud of their military service.

“Our family is very patriotic, very proud, and very supportive and his wife (Mark’s) is very involved as well as my mother, father and our family in

supporting the troops and sending care packages,” said Matthew.

The brothers walked into the military lifestyle not fully knowing what was ahead of them. Mark stated that their views have changed entirely since joining the Army. “After a couple of years you go back to your hometown you don’t feel the same, you’re forever changed by the training, by the new experiences, by the new people you meet, the people that you work with,” Mark said. He added with exuberance, “to be with my twin brother here in Afghanistan, serving in the Army, serving the country that I love, it can’t get any better than that.”

Afghanistan mission central to U.S. family



From left, family members Stephen Bartlett, battalion support operations officer, 401st Army Field Support Brigade, his wife, Denise Bartlett, a contractor with Science Applications International Corps, and their son, Staff Sgt. John Bartlett, master gunner, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division reunite July 1 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

*Story by Sgt. Manda Walters
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Photo by U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Juachon

“Last time I was here, I was a (squad automatic weapon) gunner: a private,” said Staff Sgt. John Bartlett, master gunner with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

A lot has changed since Bartlett deployed to Afghanistan in 2009.

“I used to be told what to do,” Bartlett said. “Now I am making sure the company is set, ready to go, prepared and supported.”

While he works to ensure the support of his company, he is getting some unexpected family support as well.

Bartlett’s parents are in Afghanistan, too.

John Bartlett joined his father, Stephen Bartlett, a civilian battalion support operations officer, 401st Army Field Support Brigade, and his mother, Denise Bartlett, a contractor with Science Applications International Corps, at Bagram Air Field on June 25.

Stephen Bartlett’s retrograde and sustainment mission across Regional Command-East and Regional

Command-North means he has unique insights that can help his son.

“I give him as much information as I can about what is going on to help him better understand,” Stephen Bartlett said. “He sees a lot of things that I do that he didn’t realize — things that are done behind the scenes.”

When it comes to Defense Department civilians and contractors, mission-oriented service members don’t always recognize what these collaborators do behind the scenes.

“I didn’t realize how much it took to get a single vehicle ready until now,” John Bartlett said. “It’s a process.”

His mother runs a repair parts shop, assisted in the MaxxPro vehicle upgrade, and is now responsible for the close-out of Joint Program Office Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles.

She knows this process and sees her son’s better understanding as a testament to his maturity.

“He has grown up,” Denise Bartlett said. “It’s not so much gaining importance, as much as him gaining professionalism and maturity. Back home, he is just our son and our grandkids’ dad. Here he is Staff Sgt. Bartlett.”

Many service members would agree with Stephen Bartlett that being deployed makes you appreciate home even more.

Home for the Bartletts is a 230-acre ranch outside Jonesboro, where they host family gatherings. There, John Bartlett, his seven brothers and sisters, wife and three children can enjoy relaxing activities like skeet shooting, riding horses, fishing, hog hunting and all-terrain vehicle driving.

“It will be a place for everyone to come back to,” Stephen Bartlett said.

For now, the family gathers for dinner at a nearby dining facility before John Bartlett’s company moves out on retrograde missions in Regional Command-East.

Stephen and Denise said they are proud of their son and believe they are fortunate they can provide support to him during his deployment.

Their support means less stress for John Bartlett, a leader of more than 25 soldiers. His parents will keep in touch with his wife back home and keep her informed while he is out on mission.

“My main concern over here is to make sure my company is OK,” the staff sergeant said. “That is all I worry about.”

The Bartletts have more than 35 years of combined military experience, which they put to work in accomplishing their missions in Afghanistan. What makes them unique is their doing so is a family effort.

“You’re here to do a job,” John said. “Do the mission first.”

DEITY

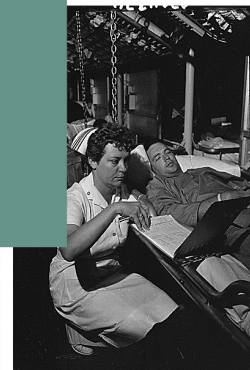


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