

SENTINEL

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Sgt. Adrian Schulte

Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, patrol Naka, Afghanistan, in northern Paktika province during a mission there March 24.

1-508 Inf. troops get to know terrain, residents in Paktika

By Sgt. Adrian Schulte
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan - As the sun rose on a brisk Afghan morning, the paratroopers of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry Regiment loaded their gear and clambered aboard Humvees.

During the patrol, some infantrymen rode inside the trucks while others crowded into the backs of open-bed humvees, exposed to the elements. Before the patrol was over, the troops were exposed to sun, wind, rain, snow and hail.

Their role is clear, patrol the countryside for security and maintain relationships with local leaders. They oversee the Paktika province, a strategically important area in the southeastern part of the country that shares a border with Pakistan.

During a recent patrol, troops from Company A, along with Soldiers from the battalion's mortar and maintenance sections headed from their headquarters at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E north to the villages of Zarok and Naka.

They were looking to make sure the roads are clear and free of enemy activity and to check with the local officials to see where help is needed.

"Once we get up there, we try to work very closely with the government," said Staff Sgt. Timothy Jensen, a squad leader with Company A. "We try to meet with the mayors and police departments to access their abilities."

Their patrol was also about getting the people of the villages used to seeing American Soldiers and so they can learn that they are there to help

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Opinion & Commentary

Schiavo case shows importance of living wills

By Elaine Wilson
Army News Service

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas - The Terri Schiavo saga in Florida both captured and divided the nation as moral and legal questions were raised over the right to live or die.

While people remain at odds over the underlying issues, most are in consensus on one topic - the importance of living wills.

"We've had a huge increase over the past couple of months because of the Schiavo case," said Burton Brasher, Fort Sam Houston Chief of Client Services. "We've probably done more in the past two months than we've done in the past year."

Brasher defines a living will as a legal document that expresses people's personal healthcare wishes when they're unable to.

"If you're incapacitated, a living will provides the doctor with guidance for your continued treatment," Brasher said.

This guidance includes decisions related to extraordinary measures to sustain life, a goal the doctor aims for in the absence of a living will.

"Doctors are trained to do everything they can to preserve life," Brasher said. "But not all people want to live like that, whether due to religious beliefs, personal convictions or financial reasons."

Living wills are particularly important for people heading into risky situations, such as combat or a medical procedure.

"It helps remove uncertainty," Brasher said. "We have a lot of doctors

sending patients over here before surgeries. They recognize the importance of the document. The more a doctor knows, the better he can do his job."

There is no federal standard for living wills so many states have developed their own format. Texas, for example, has two documents, both referred to as living wills. One is a Texas Directive to Physicians and the other is a special Power of Attorney for Healthcare.

"Doctors are trained to do everything they can to preserve life. But not all people want to live like that, whether due to religious beliefs, personal convictions or financial reasons."

- Burton Brasher
Fort Sam Houston, Texas
Chief of Client Services

The first expresses the patient's personal desires in advance, and the other designates a "decision-maker" who would decide on the measures taken to preserve life at a later time. Either document is legally binding, but Brasher said people who have both documents should make sure neither one conflicts with the other.

"Make sure your personal wishes and the person you designate as your decision-maker in the power of attorney are on the same page," he said.

Other states have just one document. And, in some states, organ dona-

tion is included in living wills, while the choice to donate is designated through the driver's license system in others.

Whatever the differences, Brasher recommends a living will based on where people live, whether a resident or not, to remove the "guess work."

"It's best to have one for the state you live in or PCS to so the local doctor has a document he's familiar with," he said.

However, since each state has its own format, the legal office here includes a header that asks for the will to be recognized nationwide.

Another way to avoid potential problems is to update living wills every two to three years so there's recent proof and "less questions raised about whether you still feel the same way as you did when you signed the document," Brasher said.

People also should talk to their healthcare providers, particularly when undergoing a medical procedure.

"Find out the consequences of the procedure beforehand," Brasher said. "That way, you can include specific requests in your living will. For instance, if you don't want a feeding tube you can say so in the directive."

Such a directive can be the difference between a private decision and a national debate.

Any military legal assistance office can prepare living wills free of charge to active-duty military members, family members, retirees and reservists on active duty for 30-plus days.

(Editor's note: Elaine Wilson serves with the Fort Sam Houston Public Information Office.)

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Parwan PRT helps dedicate new schools in Kapisa province

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

TAGAB, Afghanistan - The 1,600 boys and girls in this district in eastern Kapisa province no longer have to get their schooling outside.

Two new schools - one for boys and one for girls - were dedicated March 24 that will teach students in 1st through 6th grades.

Obiadullah, principal of the boys' school, said the village has been looking forward to the buildings for a long time because, previously the students were studying outside in the sun, rain and snow.

"For a long time, we would have liked to have had a school that's in a building, and we are grateful that we have now a beautiful school," he said through an interpreter.

Obiadullah, who like many Afghans only goes by one name, said education is important for both the people

and for the future of Afghanistan itself.

"Education is a stepping stone for everything," he said. "With this facility and the teachers that we have, hopefully the students will become doctors or engineers or something that can help rebuild their country."

Capt. David Venner, the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs team-A leader, represented the PRT at the ceremony. During his speech, Venner spoke of the importance of education and emphasized the importance of supporting the local government.

Venner also lauded the cooperation between the engineers, the ministry of education and the PRT.

"It is this type of cooperation that is going to ensure peace, stability and security for all the people of Afghanistan," he said.

Venner added that educa-



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Capt. David Venner, Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team civil affairs team-A leader, speaks at the grand opening ceremony for two new schools in Tagab, Afghanistan, March 24.

tion is a very high priority for Afghan President Hamid Karzai's administration.

"When the good people of

Afghanistan elected President Karzai in October, they too expressed how important education was to them," he said.

Others who spoke at the ceremony included the Kapisa Provincial Director of Education, Mohammad Arsif Farhat, and a local mullah, who cited passages in the Koran that speak about the importance of education.

Following the ceremony, Venner and Farhat were given tours of the schools. Venner said that building the schools was the easy part, and the hard part is left to the teachers who will work in the buildings.

"They're going to have to work very hard, and very long hours," he said. "With a lot of hard work, doctors, lawyers, engineers and maybe even the next president will one day pass through these doors."

Obiadullah said the schools still needs many things, including desks, chairs and a library, but he said the new buildings are a great start.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Lt. Jin Soo Kim, a member of the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team from South Korea, writes "Korea" on a chalkboard in his native language following the grand opening ceremony for new boys' and girls' schools in Tagab, Afghanistan, March 24.

3-3 Marines conducts Operation Mavericks in Laghman province

By Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Third Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment completed Operation Mavericks in late March, successfully rounding up suspected Anti-Government Militia members and confiscating several weapons and explosives caches in the still snow-covered mountains of Eastern Afghanistan.

Kilo and Lima companies combined their efforts during the battalion operation, simultaneously pursuing several targets they believed were hiding in the Alishang District of Laghman Province. Kilo also worked with Navy Special Operations Forces who shared a third of their objective among the hilltop villages.

Both the Navy SEALs and Marines said pooling their resources was mutually beneficial during Mavericks.

"Working with NAVSOF was great," said 2nd Lt. Michael Poliquin, Kilo Co. platoon commander. "We do business in a very similar manner. We're both very methodical and detail-oriented with mission-accomplishment being the top priority."

Many of the SEALs and Marines, having had experience working with the other service as part of a Marine Expeditionary



Cpl. James L. Yarboro

Corporals Thomas Stickles and John Pollander, both rifleman from Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, provide security on a rooftop while other Marines conduct searches through buildings during Operation Mavericks March 19 in the vicinity of Methar Lam, Afghanistan.

Unit, were able to speak the same operational language, which the Marines said kept the mission focused.

"I've never seen something go as 'according-to-plan' as this did with as many variables as we had," said Capt. Skyler Mallicoat, Kilo company commander.

The Marines were the first Coalition Forces many of the villagers had ever encountered. Dealing with the culture shock and keeping everyone calm was essential to the success of the mission.

"There are some uncertainties on both sides, among the young Marines who have never experienced this culture before and from the Afghans who see us swoop in on these huge machines and walk around with all our gear," explained Sgt. Michael Villanueva, Kilo Co. squad leader.

Things became heated between one of the Marines and a man whose house we needed to search. Afterwards, though, when everything had calmed down the Marine and the Afghan man shook hands.

"I think seeing that, everyone understands we're not here to disrupt anyone's way of life or hurt anyone who isn't out to hurt other people," Villanueva said. "Maybe an Afghan child seeing that will get the right idea about who we are and why we're here instead of believing whatever stories they are told about us."

The Marines distributed humanitarian assistance supplies to the people of the villages after they had finished their search, and set in for a cold, wet night on the mountainside.

Numerous indicators, to include information from sympathetic villagers, gave warning to possible attacks during the night against their position.

The Marines waited, but the enemy never appeared.

"At this point, they know what we bring to the table," said Mallicoat, referring to the enemy's hesitation to engage the Marines. "They know they are a defeated force and they cannot match us."

"We accomplished a lot out there," said Lance Cpl. Rob Gaye, machine gunner with Kilo Co. "When the villagers realized we weren't there to hurt them, they calmed down. If we cause any damage during our operations, we do what we can to fix or replace it. It feels good to be able to do the right things for the people."

"It's all about seeing the broader perspective," added Villanueva. "Once they see that we're focused on making their villages safer, they help us."

America's Battalion continues to dig deeper into territory Coalition Forces have yet to breach as the temperature change draws insurgents back into Eastern Afghanistan from their winter hideouts.



Cpl. Rich Mattingly

A Marine from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment distributes humanitarian assistance to the people of the villages after they had finished their search.

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them, Jensen said.

Near the base, the attitude toward Americans is positive for the most part, but as the paratroopers ventured farther from their stronghold, feelings are mixed.

"For the most part in the Orgune valley that we are in, it seems that everyone likes us and everyone appreciates that we are here," Jensen said. "The people are very receptive and very friendly. You don't get the same warm feeling when you go up to the Zarok and Naka region. Zarok is a little friendlier to us but we have been told to expect that Naka is not."

Some residents in Naka refused humanitarian assistance recently, Jensen said.

"So right now our primary focus is to get up there and show a large presence and show that we are their friends and want to work with them," he said. "Just in my three missions up there, they are getting a lot more receptive to coalition forces and getting accustomed to why are there. We are there to help."

These patrols are key to changing the attitudes in these areas, said 1st Lt. Justin Freeland, a platoon leader in Co. A, 1/508. The troops want to visit these villages as much as possible to further along the process.

The path to the villages was a difficult one, even for the rugged American vehicles. There are roads in Paktika, but due to rough weather recently, many are tracks of mud. Some have been washed out, while others are too narrow for the broad humvees to pass. So, many times the humvees head off the beaten path.

Along the way, the convoy stopped to allow the company to inspect suspicious activity or to await close air support.

On one such stop, troops spotted a couple of men off in the distance with what was thought to have been a rifle. A squad of riflemen dismounted their vehicles, waded through a river and climbed up a hill to investigate. It turned out to



Sgt. Adrian Schulte

A Soldier from Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment crosses a river while inspecting suspicious activity during a patrol March 24.

just be a couple of goat herders.

Treks like this are high adventure for the paratroopers of the 508th - literally. At more than 7,500 feet in some areas, climbing up a hill in full battle gear will exhaust even the most fit infantryman. The troops, who deployed here from

to see what they have and what they need.

After the meeting, the troops mounted up, said goodbye and headed to their final destination of the day, Zarok. As the sun set, the humvees rolled into another police compound and the troops set up their defensive positions for the

are trained, they have their checkpoints, they are getting paid and they are a professional organization that people can look to and use to provide the stability for the region," Freeland said.

After business was finished, a couple more of the Company A troops were invited in for dinner. The mayor, Abdul Mobeen, a humorous man who smiled and laughed as he spoke to the Americans, spent the rest of the evening getting to know some of the Coalition troops - his allies for the coming year.

After sunrise the next morning, as the Red Devils headed out, Mobeen led the convoy to a few places he wants checkpoints established and to a site where the Americans will soon fund a new school.

The patrol then headed back to the U.S. base, slowly and cautiously over the same rough terrain.

The troops rolled in, unpacked, refitted and awaited the next patrol, which for some, was the following day.

"Every patrol makes a difference," Jensen said. "If just our presence deters somebody from setting up a rocket to hit Coalition forces, we have made a difference."

“Every patrol makes a difference. If just our presence deters somebody from setting up a rocket to hit Coalition forces, we have made a difference.”

- Staff Sgt. Timothy Jensen,
1st Bn., 508th Inf. Rgt.

Vicenza, Italy, a much lower altitude, are still getting acclimated to the heights.

"Getting the Soldiers up to a lot of these ridgelines and hilltops - we are running a little bit of a stumbling block," Jensen said.

Once at the first village, Naka, the troops set up security in a police compound while the leaders talked. One squad headed into the town to patrol. While there, they stopped in the local clinic. A medic checked with the Afghan staff

night.

The leaders went to talk to the local mayor and police chief. The village leaders greeted Capt. Jack Kilbride, commander Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1/508 and Freeland with hugs and smiles. The meeting seemed productive as Freeland and Kilbride discussed what they can do to make the mayor's and police chief's job easier.

"I want to get a system in place for the police so that they

Fox Battery named best battery in Army

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Enemy fighters in Afghanistan know Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment is good; now everyone else does, too.

The battery, which is currently deployed to Afghanistan, was recently named the recipient of the 2004 Henry Knox Award as the best active component artillery battery in the U.S. Army.

The annual award is named after Maj. Gen. Henry A. Knox, the first Chief of Field Artillery for the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. A similar award was established in 1924, but was phased out in 1940 as World War II loomed.

The best battery award was reestablished in 2002. Of the 19 winners in the history of the award, six have been units from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Capt. Brendan Raymond, Fox Battery commander, said it was an honor just to represent the 25th Infantry Division and its other field artillery units.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

In a rare instance where the entire battery was in the same place at the same time, the Soldiers of Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment pose for a group photo March 18.

"There are a lot of outstanding units doing a lot of outstanding things, and we were very fortunate to have been selected," he said.

When Fox Battery deployed to Afghanistan, in April 2004, it wasn't even slated to conduct an artillery mission. For the first few months of its deployment, Fox Battery was primarily a mortar battery, supporting infantry operations.

That changed in August when the battery's M198 155mm howitzers arrived from Hawaii. Since then, the big guns have been at FOB

Salerno and forward locations ready to support ground forces or return fire on rocket attacks.

"What we ended up doing is we showed there was a need for it, and ... it was necessary to have artillery," Raymond said. "As we've continued to evolve, we've seen that there's more of a need for it in a low intensity conflict than we every thought before."

Fox's ability to fire accurately at target in excess of 20 miles away has allowed them to shape the battlefield by changing the enemies' thought process. Raymond said that, in

part, is what sets them apart from other units.

Even though the battery is wrapping up its year-long deployment and is preparing to redeploy to Hawaii, it is still very active.

Notice of the award came 10 days after the battery fired more than 40 rounds down-range in response to a rocket attack on FOB Salerno. Since the March 22 attack, the battery has also been firing at previous rocket points of origin to keep any would-be rocket firers on their toes.

"We've been give a great opportunity to perform in combat, and we've sold artillery to maneuver commanders so they want to use us before they put an aircraft in the air, or before they put a Soldier, Marine, Sailor or Airman on the ground," Raymond said.

For the Soldiers of the battery, Raymond said this award quantifies what it is to be a "big gun."

"They've put their hearts and souls into this battery," he said. "They fought with their comrades, they've integrated into so many different types of forces, that to be recognized like this as the best battery, I think it's a tremendous tribute to the Soldiers that really define the battery."

Spc. Michael Matthys, an assistant gunner with Fox Battery from Nashville, Tenn., said it was indeed a good feeling to win the award.

"We've done a lot of hard work out here and it's good to see that we're getting recognition for that," he said.

Matthys, 24, said the award is that much sweeter knowing that the battery has played such a vital role in the war here as well as in the lives off the Afghan people.

"This country, you come over here and it just opens your eyes," Matthys said. "It's hard to believe people actually live like this. For them to live in fear and have an evil regime over them trying to control them, that's just unacceptable."



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Spc. Ontario Smith, a cannon crew member for Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, pulls the lanyard on an M198 155mm howitzer and sends a round down-range during a show of force exercise Jan. 29 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

3/3 infantrymen learn how to call and direct close air support

By Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Bn., 3rd Marine Rgt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Marine small-unit leaders with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines recently polished their skills in effectively employing and "controlling" rotary-wing aircraft during joint close air support drills.

As the Marines continue to hunt down insurgents and maintain security for Afghans in the rugged mountains along the Pakistan border, contact is often made at the small unit level.

Closing with and destroying insurgents who habitually retreat as quickly as they attack is greatly enhanced by calling for fixed or rotary-wing air support.

"This is probably some of the best training they're going to receive outside of basic infantry skills," said Air Force Master Sgt. John Knipe, a joint terminal air controller who has been training America's Battalion Marines and accompanying them on operations around Afghanistan.

"In an infantry squad, you don't have many 'big guns' available to you,"



Cpl. Rich Mattingly

While Air Force Master Sgt. John Knipe, a terminal air controller, looks over his shoulder, Cpl. Brian Moody, a squad leader with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment goes over the steps for calling and directing rotary-wing aircraft during recent close air support training.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

While Air Force Master Sgt. John Knipe, a terminal air controller, listens, 1st Lt. Whitney Foley, executive officer for H and S Co., 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, calls for air during during close air support training at FOB Salerno.

he continued. "If Marines need to pursue or break contact with an enemy, they may not always have the organic fire power to do that.

"Being able to call for and effectively employ fixed and rotary-wing aircraft with the weapons systems they have can save that squad or platoon," Knipe continued.

With two AH-1 Cobra helicopters from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 773 screaming overhead, Marines from Headquarters and Service and Weapons Companies, 3/3 made radio contact with the pilots and then directed them to strike "enemy" targets downrange.

Both companies are largely organized as provisional rifle companies and operate in the Khost area,

"We're having the Marines mark the targets, which the Cobras subsequently engage. We wanted to make this training as realistic for them as possible," said Maj. Gerald Graham, America's Battalion Air Officer.

The Marines fired 40mm smoke grenades and M240G and M2 .50 caliber machine guns while the Cobras engaged and adjusted their fires as directed by the Marines acting as observers.

Firing their 20mm cannons and 2.75 rockets, the Cobras made the range look like a very real battle space after just a few passes.

The Marines each got 10-20 minutes

of "station" time with the pilots, during which time they were coached by Knipe and Graham on everything from radio etiquette to how to adjust fire when multiple aircraft were available to engage a target.

"It's important that they gain the confidence to talk to the aircraft," said Graham. "Now that they see the firepower a section of Cobras can bring to the fight, I think they'll be more willing to take control of a real-world situation where they might need that support."

"It was motivating," said Sgt. Orlando Arocho, Weapons Co. squad leader, after directing an air strike. "Our enemies know the area better than we do and can sometimes move a little faster, but they can't run from a pair of Cobras."

The pilots, stopping over at the range afterward to discuss the training with the Marines, were positive.

"They did well," said Maj. Dave Deep, a Cobra pilot with HMLA 773. "Even the ones who were nervous still called us in quickly and professionally. This will help us immensely in the field."

"Having guys in a squad that won't always have a forward air controller with them will help us all increase our effectiveness," Deep continued.

The valuable training should increase synergy between the air and ground units who operate together in America's Battalion's area of operations concluded Deep.

Khost tribal elders voice support of government

By Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
CTF Thunder Public Affairs Office

KHOST, Afghanistan - Whenever different tribes in Afghanistan congregate in one place the atmosphere is always electrified by the inner emotions of the various tribal members' years of warring and mistrust with their neighbors.

March 31 was different.

About 100 tribal elders from approximately 16 tribes in the Khost Province gathered at the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in Khost to discuss the upcoming parliamentary elections, Afghanistan's new democratic government, reconciliation and security.

After the opening prayer by Abdul Chafar the Minister of Tribal Affairs, Tohir Khan welcomed everyone and thanked them for their support during the Jihad against their former Russian occupiers.

"The successful overthrow of the former Russian occupation followed by the overthrow of the Taliban's oppressive government could not have been done without the cooperation between the Coalition Forces and the local tribesmen," Khan said.

He stressed that the meeting would discuss the needs of each tribal area such as water wells and road improvement but the most important thing that should be taken away from the conference was his message of unity, peace and stability.

"The many tribes in Khost need to put their past behind and come together as



Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter

Tribal elders from around Khost province listen to a speech during a meeting of tribal elders March 31 in Khost, Afghanistan.

one nation to build a better Afghanistan," said Sher Khosti, adviser to Khost Provincial Governor, Merajudin Pathan.

Khosti went on to say that, "The problems and solutions for a better way of life in Afghanistan are not just tribal in nature but national in scope. Tribes should not only help their neighbors but also help their brothers in other

provinces like the flood victims in Ghazni."

Maj. Carl Hollister, commander of the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team, was at the conference of tribal elders as well.

Hollister addressed the recent increase in attacks against the Coalition as well as the local Afghan population.

"I want to talk about the recent attacks along the Border check Points in the

Khost Province where many AQ died," he said. "Three of the dead enemy had their bodies desecrated by AQ. Their bodies were rigged with explosives to use as weapons to be discarded. When will this stop?"

Hollister was referring to those acts that were contrary to what the Koran teaches in the Moslem faith.

"We need your help so that your Afghan brothers lay down their arms and join you for the better future promised by the new Afghanistan," Hollister said

The Coalition is not here to prolong a war that ended with the defeat of the Taliban and Al Qaeda it is here to help build a better Afghanistan.

"At the direction of the Governors office and in accordance with President Karzi's national priority programs we are building schools and roads, repairing mosques, and we just completed the electric grid for Matun," Hollister said. "If you can see that the Al Qaeda only offers death and destruction then you can see that the new Afghanistan is the better choice."

The Tribal Elder's Conference ended on a positive note and the elders left the ministry with a feeling that the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and particularly their province had hope for the future.



Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter

The Minister of Tribal Affairs for Khost Province (left), Mullah Gul Jamal, an elder from Latak, Afghanistan (center), and Sher Khosti, adviser to the Khost Provincial governor, listen during a meeting of village elders March 31 in Khost.

Five inducted into Order of St. Barbara

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Continuing a field artillery tradition, Combined Task Force Thunder inducted five Soldiers into the order of St. Barbara March 19.

Lieutenant Colonel Bobby Mundell, Maj. Duke Davis and Maj. Tony Migos of the CTF Thunder headquarters staff, and Staff Sgt. Robert Flynn and Staff Sgt. Maurice Brittain of Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment were inducted into the prestigious club.

"This is a great recognition of individuals who have made contributions to the field artillery," said Col. Gary H. Cheek, commander of CTF Thunder. "All of these folks represent some enormous contributions."

According to legend, St. Barbara was a woman of incomparable beauty who was beheaded by her own father, Dioscurus, for her belief in Christianity.

As he walked back from the execution, Dioscurus was struck by lightning and his body consumed. It is believed that St. Barbara sent the lightning bolt that struck down Dioscurus, and she came to be regarded as the patron saint offering refuge in the time of danger from thunderstorms, fire and sudden death.

When gun powder made its appearance in the Western world, St. Barbara was invoked for aid against accidents resulting from explosions, and since some of the early artillery pieces often blew up



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

New inductees into the Order of St. Barbara drink the traditional "Artillery Punch" March 19 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

instead of firing their projectiles, St. Barbara became the patroness of artillerymen.

To pay homage to the saint, every year the field artillery inducts a handful of upstanding Soldiers into the Order of St. Barbara - a "traditional brotherhood of stonehurlers, archers, catapulters, rocketeers and gunners."

Cheek said the two NCOs are great trainers of Soldiers and great leaders of field artillerymen in combat operations here in Afghanistan.

"They are ones who have served with distinction for a long time, manning the guns," he said

Cheek credited the three officers with being part of the reason the headquarters - a division artillery headquarters - has been so successful in its mission here in Afghanistan.

Mundell and Davis are both infantry officers,

and Migos is an intelligence officer.

"The three officers are ones that have served in different ways and made different contributions to the field artillery," he said.

Brittain, the fire direction section chief for Fox Battery, said it meant a lot to him as a field artilleryman to be inducted into the order.

He said every artilleryman strives to become a member of the order like every infantryman strives to earn a Combat Infantryman Badge.

"To consider yourself a great artilleryman, this would be the best honor you could receive," he said.

Brittain said when he reflects on his accomplishment, it will mean more to him to know he was inducted into the order while in a combat zone.

To be worthy of this honor an individual must have demonstrated the highest standards of integrity and moral character, displayed an outstanding degree of professional competence and made significant contributions to the U.S. Army Field Artillery.

Following induction, the new members drank a cup of "Artillery Punch."

According to legend, the punch has a medicinal value that cures "what ails you, or ensures that you don't care."

In a pinch, Artillery Punch can be used as a bore cleaner for the cannons, or a lubricant for the breech.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Col. Gary H. Cheek, commander of Combined Task Force Thunder, places a St. Barbara medallion around the neck of Staff Sgt. Maurice Brittain, fire direction section chief for Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, March 19 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

1-508 Inf. medics save Afghan man

By **Spc. Jon H. Arguello**
1st Bn., 508th Inf. Rgt.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan - Medics from Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry Regiment saved the life of an Afghan man who had sustained multiple stab wounds March 21.

The man was treated after a quick decision was made by the company's first sergeant for the medics to intervene in the wounded man's treatment.

Two Afghan men approached the gate of Forward Operating Base SharanA begging for help. After realizing the men were seeking medical assistance for a man who was not getting the necessary aid from the local hospital, 1st Sgt. Charles Werley, allowed the men to retrieve the critically wounded man and bring him inside the base.

"At first it was two guys," said 1st Sgt. Charles Werley. "Then we understood that they were trying to get help for a third man. I told them to bring the man to the base, but I wasn't sure if they would return."

The two men returned with the injured man and three medics immediately began treatment.

The man's injuries were

substantial.

"The man had six stab wounds and a collapsed lung," said Spc. Samuel Wilson. "He almost died twice during treatment."

Wilson, a paramedic and third generation paratrooper, explained the treatment process: "The patient had to be

"It's our job to save lives whether they are American or Afghan."

- Sgt. Glen Bolland,
1st Bn., 508th Inf. Rgt.

chemically paralyzed so he could be treated. We drained one and a half liters of blood from his lung and applied a chest seal. We also inserted a tube into his trachea so the patient could breathe. We sustained his life for two hours until he could be medivaced."

The man was in such poor condition that witnesses to his injuries doubted he would survive even with the medics' treatment.

"He would have definitely died," Werley said. "I'm surprised he survived. Somebody who can go on as long as he did with those types of injuries - all I can say is that he really wanted to live."

Medics have historically played a crucial role in the armed forces. Knowing a medic is there makes Soldiers feel safer and more confident during missions.

However one important role medics play is sometimes overlooked.

Their part in winning hearts

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medics. Seeing them work completely relaxed and calm in a life and death situation demonstrated just how skillful they are."

The medics also see the impact their work can have. "We understand that it is a hearts and minds campaign and every opportunity we get to contribute to that campaign, we will," said Wilson.

But the personal benefits are also rewarding said Sgt. Glen Bolland, a member of the treatment team.

"It's our job to save lives whether they are American or Afghan," said Bolland. "A lot of [medics] come from families with medical backgrounds. We have an appreciation for the personal rewards of our work. It's fulfilling and then some. It's an empowering experience to save someone's life."

As impressive as the medics' performance was, not the Soldiers, or the first sergeant seemed surprised by the poise of the medics.

"We had confidence in our medics already, that's why they're here," said Werley. "I have the ultimate respect for them."

The medics' performance that day may not have surprised anyone, but it is obvious why Soldiers feel better having them around.

Number of anti-Coalition attacks goes up in Afghanistan

By **Gerry J. Gilmore**
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - The number and severity of attacks against Afghan and coalition forces have increased compared to the winter, a coalition spokeswoman noted April 2.

An increase in discoveries of improvised explosive devices in Afghanistan shows "that some in the Taliban or other anti-government insurgents will continue to try to destabilize Afghanistan through violent acts," Navy Lt. Cindy Moore, of Combined Forces Command Afghanistan, told reporters during a press briefing.

Although some former Taliban have decided to stop fighting, "there is still a threat out there capable of IED, car bomb and small unit attacks," Moore observed.

However, she said, coalition forces will continue to aggressively pursue those seeking to destabilize Afghanistan's government.

Coalition forces depend on the assistance of the people of Afghanistan to help rid their country of old, hidden ordnance or pinpoint enemy bombs and suspected insurgents, Moore said.

The coalition "will continue working with the Afghan National Army and the government of Afghanistan to prevent the

loss of innocent lives," Moore vowed.

The people of Afghanistan, she continued, "are the most important and vital part of our effort to create a stable environment within Afghanistan for the upcoming elections."

Afghanistan's enemies "still want to see the Taliban stage some kind of comeback.

However, the political and economic developments in Afghanistan have made it less attractive for al Qaeda and Taliban," Moore said.

The future of Afghanistan lies upon a democratic path that the Afghan people have chosen, she said.