MOUNTAIN Warrior Weekly

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On The Prowl With Triple Deuce

Story by Spc. Timothy S. Melzow
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
and Photos by
Terry Boyd of Stars and Stripes

Spc. Barry Josey and Spc. Mario Davis keep a "scouts eye" out for possible threats.

Anti-Coalition Militia (ACM) think they can outwit and out run the American military by heading into the mountains of Afghanistan. These terrorists think that sanctuary is in the mountains, and that cold weather and rugged terrain will hinder the US Army from bringing them down to justice. They have another thing coming. Armed with the latest night vision equipment, water-proof gortex cold weather gear, and state of the art assault rifles, the 2nd Battalion of the 22nd Infantry Regiment, (Triple Deuce) from Fort Drum, NY., along with scores of other combat units, are hunting down and uprooting the terrorists at their source. Operation Mountain Resolve is one of the largest operations to take place since the beginning. The mission took place in the Hindu Kush Mountains of northeastern Afghanistan, in the Kunar and Nuristan Provinces near the Pakistani border. This operation is even larger than the extremely effective Operation Anaconda that took place in October 2001.

Triple Deuce, the 10th Military Police Company, and the 3rd of the 6th Field Artillery Battalion (3-6th), all participated in this operation. The units left Kandahar Air Field and headed to Bagram Air Field joining up with the 2nd of the 87th Infantry Battalion (2-87).

On the night of November 6th, a flight of CH-47 Chinook helicopters loaded

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PFC Rabich (1-87), CH (CPT) Tad Majkut (1 BDE), SPC Cunningham (3-6 FA), and CH (CPT) Ken Godwin (1-87). Picture taken during rocket attack at Orgun-E.

A Soldier's Journey

By SPC Bryce D. Cunningham
3-6 Field Artillery Chaplain Assistant

Helicopter engines starting up, emitting that ever familiar whistle. The rotor blades beginning to circulate, sounding off that loud, but important, whoop, whoop, whoop. The wind whooshes around like a blustery morning in Oklahoma. The smooth rumble is humming in my ears, I'm buckled in, ready for lift off and ready for yet another journey across Afghanistan full of memorable experiences.

Memorable experiences fill the days of deployment giving me memories that I will take with me wherever I go to share with family members, to swap with old Army buddies, and to tell outlandish stories to my grandchildren. Stories I will remember sitting on my porch swing making me crack a smile, utter a chuckle or slip a tear down my cheek. And through the smile and tears I will always

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Defense Department Introduces Global War on Terrorism Medals

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26, 2004 – Military members serving at home and abroad in the war on terrorism will now be recognized for that service. Defense officials announced today the final approval of two new medals and their criteria.

Individuals who have deployed to operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom will be awarded the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal will be awarded to those who served in airport security operations in the United States following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks or who supported operations Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle or Iraqi Freedom.

"These medals recognize the significant contributions members of the armed forces bring to bear in combating terrorism in all forms throughout the world - - for both current and future operations," stated a DoD news release.

Individuals can receive both medals if they meet the individual criteria, officials said.

To be awarded the expeditionary medal, individuals must have been deployed outside the United States for OEF or OIF for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days. The time requirement is not needed if the individual engaged in combat, was wounded or killed in action, or was medically evacuated for any reason, officials said.

The area of eligibility encompasses the U.S. Central Command area, excluding the lower Horn of Africa; Middle East; eastern Turkey; Philippines; Diego Garcia; and all air spaces above the land and adjacent water areas, according to the release.

Each day aircrew members fly sorties into designated areas counts as one day of deployment toward the 30- or 60-day requirement.

Individuals engaged in actual combat may be eligible for battle stars on the expeditionary medal. Only a combatant commander can initiate a request for a battle star, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the approving authority for them, the release states.

Personnel eligible to receive the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal must have participated or support operations on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Service medal eligibility dates run from Sept. 27, 2001, until May 31, 2002, for individuals who served in airport security operations.

The same 30- or 60-day requirements apply to the service medal as to the expeditionary medal.

"Each military department will prescribe appropriate regulations for processing awarding and wearing of the medals and ribbons for their service members, to include application procedures for veterans, retirees, and next-of-kin," the DoD release stated.

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Kandahar Fire Department Tip of the Week

Open fires (e.g., bon fires, camp fires, controlled burning) are not permitted unless approved by the 451 AEG/CEF Base Fire Chief. Approved open fires will be located no closer than 50 feet from any structure and constantly attended by a competent person until they are totally extinguished. Fire extinguishers, garden hoses, buckets of water, or fire trucks must be available at the burn site.

In case of fire or emergency, contact the KAF fire department hotline at ***841-1225***

Submitted by ***TSgt Dean Case, Assistant Fire Chief***

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remember the courage, pride, love and the strength of every soldier.

On my trip across the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan visiting the different firebases, I chatted with some fine Americans fighting for their country. They all had their own stories and as the new face in town, I was fortunate to hear a story or two.

One soldier shared the first time he was in a firefight. Only being 18 years old, straight out of high school, he had never encountered such a spectacle. At first, he dove for cover and remained there. He watched as his buddies returned fire. He knew he couldn't hide behind a rock forever, so joining his buddies in danger, he returned fire until the enemy fled.

An artilleryman told me about rockets exploding all around the camp. He said it was all so fast and confusing; the radio springing to life with all kinds of chatter, rounding up his gun section, throwing on his 'battle rattle', getting the howitzer in a posture to fire and sending that first 105mm round down range. Sure he had fear but he had a job to do.

I talked with a soldier who was folding with care and precision Old Glory to send home to his father, a Vietnam veteran. He had just taken it down and he told me, "I had a grandfather in WW II and a father in Vietnam. I idolized them growing up. And now, here I am, defending my country just like they did. Never thought I would be like them. My dad is going to love this flag!"

A medic told me of his time at the firebases. He said when local children come in for medical attention it's his favorite time. Not that he enjoys that these children are hurt or sick but that he can help them with a splint, medicine for their cold or just a smile. He said, "The greatest satisfaction is seeing them smile when they leave. It's then I know I've done something to help."

Every soldier has loved ones at home. And those loved ones send care packages and cards that we are all so thankful for. The brightest moment in the day is definitely mail call. Seeing the look in a soldier's eye is priceless when he receives a card from his wife that also contains a coloring from his two-year-old daughter. Sure the coloring isn't inside the lines but it's beautiful. The tears well up but are hidden. Happiness fills his heart and for a moment he's not in Afghanistan.

I was walking around one day and saw a basketball game in progress. A squad of infantry guys was playing a little 3-on-3. I watched the players struggle with the game but the level of play wasn't what was important but the friendships being built. I watched the high-fives, heard the laughs, and watched 6 guys have some fun.

What fascinates me the most is the strength of soldiers. Not necessarily physical but their inner strength. Most days, soldiers tell me they feel like they are in the movie Groundhog Day. And I confess I feel the same way some days. But everyday we press on.

Many soldiers have been on tough missions up in high altitudes, snow, bad weather, freezing cold, etc. They keep putting one foot in front of the other. They have to, not only for themselves but also for their buddies to their left and right, who are walking the miles, and braving the same conditions right along with them. They do it for their little ones at home, their families and the America they're proud of.

My trip took me many places and now the rotor blades are winding down. The whistle of the engines is dying down and I'm stepping off that helicopter having returned from my journey. And one day I'll be leaving Afghanistan to arrive back home in Fort Drum. I'll step off that plane completing my trip and head home to see my loved ones. I'll always remember 'The Stan' and the memories it has given me. Most of all, I'll remember the soldiers and their stories of courage, pride, love and strength.

Things You Need to know Before You Go!!!

With the upcoming transition of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan approaching soon, many soldiers are making preparations for the trip home by mailing most of their personal belongings home and making last minute plans to ensure a swift and easy move back to the states.

In the midst of all the chaos of packing and taping and mailing and packing some more there are some things that soldiers need to know, before you go. Sgt. Ronald F. Wilson, Asst. NCOIC of Customs at Kandahar Air Field is one of three Customs agents that every soldier on base will have to see at one time or another before they leave for the states and he passes on some information that will make the Customs check experience a little easier.

Restricted Items:

-Narcotics
-Animal Parts (Ivory, Unlined Fur)
-Monetary Value (> $10,000)
-No War Trophies (enemy paraphernalia)
-Switchblades
-Swords
-NO PORNOGRAPHY
-No Rocks or Soil
-No Ammo (Blank/Spent/Dummy)

* All Passengers should have their bags ready ½ hour prior to scheduled showtime.
* Vehicles must be power sprayed inside-out and underneath thoroughly incl. all filters.
* Items traveling with vehicles must be inspected during vehicle inspection.
* No Benchmade or Gerber knives as carry-on. THEY MUST BE PACKED!!
* Be prepared to dump all bags once arriving at Customs.

Complying with these guidelines will ensure a quick and easy Customs experience and make sure that you make your scheduled flight.

For further information you can contact either Sgt. Wilson, Pfc. Stephen D. Wirth, customs agent or Master Sgt. Donna Thomas, NCOIC of Customs with the 274th Military Police Co. of the Washington D.C. National Guard.

Contact Customs @ (318) 841-1425

World News

U.S. Search for Bin Laden Gathers Steam

By KATHERINE PFLEGER SHRADER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is rounding up and questioning the relatives of fugitive al-Qaida leaders to generate information on the possible whereabouts of Osama bin Laden and his top deputies. This tactic helped lead to Saddam Hussein's capture.

On Saturday, Pentagon and Pakistani officials denied an Iranian state radio report that bin Laden had been captured "a long time ago" in Pakistan's border region with Afghanistan.

But some U.S. officials do say they have been able to extract useful information from Afghan and Pakistani relatives and friends of al-Qaida fugitives, providing hints on the possible whereabouts of the organization's leaders.

So far, the information the U.S. has received is unconfirmed and does not mean the terrorist leader's location has been pinned down or his capture is imminent. U.S. officials caution that rumors of significant progress are overstated.

With the weather improving in Afghanistan, the U.S. military has sent troops and technology to the country to aid the search and to give forces on the ground more opportunity to track down bin Laden. He is the United States' most wanted terrorist for his leadership in planning the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Rounding up relatives for questioning helped bring about the Dec. 13 capture of Saddam, the former Iraqi leader. U.S. officials hope the tactic could lead to information on the whereabouts of bin Laden and his top deputies, especially when combined with information from spy satellites, communication intercepts and prisoner interrogations.

U.S. military officials have said they are planning a spring offensive in Afghanistan in the hopes of capturing bin Laden,

former Taliban leader Mullah Omar and their associates.

Meanwhile, American commanders in Afghanistan have expressed new optimism about finding bin Laden. Late last month, U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty said the military believes it could seize bin Laden this year, perhaps within months.

Other U.S. officials try to temper such optimism.

In a sign of an increased focus on the Afghan-Pakistani border, Pakistani rapid reaction forces have been deployed to selected areas in the region, a mountainous landscape that runs 2,000 miles from the Himalayas in Pakistan's northern territories to the desert of southwestern Baluchistan.

Pakistani officials told The Associated Press on Friday that satellite telephone intercepts from last year indicated al-Qaida members were hiding near the border. Two intelligence officials said participants discussed a man called "Shaikh" - a code name for bin Laden.

"Some people who were speaking in Arabic have been heard saying Shaikh is in good health," one of the intelligence officials said.

A U.S. defense official, also speaking on the condition of anonymity, said that Pakistani forces have killed or captured more al-Qaida members than any other U.S. ally. "We continue to aggressively pursue the remnants of al-Qaida and the Taliban," the official said.

Aristide Flees Haiti; Judge Claims Power

By PAISLEY DODDS and IAN JAMES
Associated Press Writers

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Haiti's beleaguered President Jean-Bertrand Aristide resigned and flew into exile Sunday. Gunfire crackled throughout the capital as it fell into chaos, and the United States said international peacekeepers - including Americans - would be deployed soon.

The head of Haiti's supreme court said he was taking charge.

A key rebel leader, meanwhile, said he would be sending his forces to the capital soon "to give security to the people."

U.N. diplomats said key Security Council members would begin to talk Sunday about a resolution to authorize an international force for Haiti, which erupted into violence three weeks ago when rebels began driving police from towns and cities in the north.

Though not aligned with rebels, the political opposition had pushed for Aristide to leave for the good of Haiti's 8 million people, angered by poverty, corruption and crime. The uprising - only the most recent violence in this Caribbean nation - killed at least 100 people.

Prime Minister Yvon Neptune told a press conference that Aristide resigned to "prevent bloodshed."

At the same news conference, U.S. Ambassador James Foley insisted the United States had not asked Aristide to resign. France, Haiti's former colonial power, had suggested that Aristide step down.

"President (Jean-Bertrand) Aristide made a decision for the good of the Haitian people," Foley said. "International military forces including U.S. forces will be rapidly arriving in Haiti to begin to restore a sense of security."

There were conflicting reports on where Aristide was headed. A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said South Africa was the country most often mentioned. Seretary of State Colin Powell conferred on Saturday with South African President Thabo Mbeki about the situation.

Radio reports on the island of Antigua said

Aristide's jet had refueled there en route to South Africa, but officials in Johannesburg said there had been no recent contact with Aristide nor an offer of asylum.

Powell also spoke by telephone with the foreign ministers of Argentina, France, Jamaica and Panama. The official declined to discuss details of the conversations.

Other reports said Aristide would go to Morocco, Taiwan or Panama. But officials in Taiwan said there were no plans to shelter the ousted Haitian leader, and Morocco said he was not welcome. Panamanian officials would not address the issue.

Three hours after Aristide's departure, Supreme Court Justice Boniface Alexandre declared at a news conference that he was taking over as called for by the constitution. He urged calm.

"The task will not be an easy one," Alexandre, a former jurist in his 60s with a reputation for honesty. "Haiti is in crisis. ... It needs all its sons and daughters. No one should take justice into their own hands."

Despite Alexandre's declaration that he was in charge, the Haitian constitution calls for parliament to approve him as leader and the legislature has not met since early this year when lawmakers' terms expired.

Port-au-Prince was in chaos Sunday as news emerged of the president's departure.

Angry Aristide supporters roamed the streets armed with old rifles, pistols, machetes and sticks. Some fired wildly into crowds on the Champs de Mars, the main square in front of the National Palace. Looters pillaged supermarkets and pharmacies.

Foley said he was confident leaders of the popular rebellion that helped force Aristide's departure would lay down arms. "I do think we saw a certain willingness on their part to allow an orderly transition," he said.

Half the country is in the hands of the rebels, including former soldiers of the army that Aristide disbanded during a political career tainted by alleged fraud.

On Saturday, the United States urged Aristide supporters to cease looting and robbing in Port-au-Prince and rebel fighters to halt their march toward the capital.

THE SPORTS

Spurs, Without Duncan, Beat Nuggets

By T.A. BADGER
Associated Press Writer

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tony Parker picked up the slack for the injured Tim Duncan on Saturday night, scoring a season-high 29 points to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 117-92 victory over the Denver Nuggets.

Parker had 14 points in the third quarter, when the Spurs used a 15-6 run late in the period to break open what had been a close game. Parker made three 3-pointers in the third, and finished 4-for-4 behind the arc.

San Antonio's defense frustrated Denver in the fourth, limiting the Nuggets to only six field goals.

Rasho Nesterovic added 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Spurs, while Malik Rose and Kevin Willis each had 17 points. The output was a season high for Willis, whose 14 minutes were the most he played since November.

Rose and Willis filled in admirably for Duncan, who was placed on the injured list Saturday, two days after he injured his leg in a loss to Dallas. He is averaging a team-leading 23.2 points and 13 rebounds in 54 games.

The team says Duncan has an irritation of the left patellofemoral joint, where the thigh bone meets the knee. His condition will be reevaluated next week.

The Spurs did not immediately replace Duncan on the active roster. If

the team activated another player, he would have to sit out at least five games.

Carmelo Anthony led Denver with 26 points, 20 in the first half. Earl Boykins contributed 15 points, and Jon Barry and Rodney White each had 10.

Without its first option on the floor, San Antonio spread out its offense and pushed the ball in transition from the start.

A 15-footer by Nesterovic gave the Spurs a 19-9 lead late in the first before Anthony found his range. He scored 12 of his 14 first-quarter points late in the period as Denver cut the Spurs' lead to five.

Boykins made his first five shots in the second, including a 3-pointer that pulled the Nuggets to 46-45 with 2:59 left in the half. He had 14 points in the second.

The Spurs ended the period with a 7-2 run capped by Ginobili penetrating and feeding Nesterovic for a dunk with 3.9 seconds remaining.

Notes:@The Spurs record without Duncan in lineup is 2-3 this season and 8-11 in his seven-year career. ... Jason Hart, activated Friday after San Antonio released Ron Mercer, scored two points in four minutes. ... A third-quarter jumper by Anthony made him Denver's all-time rookie scoring leader. He broke the record of 1,205 points set by Laphonso Ellis in 1992-93. ... Anthony is averaging 27.3 ppg in 11 games in February.

THE SPORTS

An All-American Final: Woods Vs. Love

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

CARLSBAD, Calif. (AP) — Davis Love III survived an exhausting day of clutch shots and stunning conclusions Saturday, beating Darren Clarke in 21 holes to reach the finals of the Match Play Championship and earn another crack at Tiger Woods.

Woods won his 11th consecutive match with no shortage of drama, making birdies on his final two holes to finally put away pesky Stephen Leaney of Australia, 2 and 1, and reach the finals for the third time in five tries.

But the day belonged to Love.

First, he watch Phil Mickelson gamble away his chances by trying to go for the par-5 18th green in two with the match tied. Lefty missed by 50 yards and wound up with a bogey, allowing Love to advance to the semifinals.

Then, Love rallied from 2 down with two holes to play against Clarke. After winning the 17th with a par, he took the same risk as Mickelson - a 3-wood from 271 yards - and it paid off, setting up a two-putt birdie to force extra holes.

Love won on the third playoff hole, the par-3 16th, where earlier his three-putt nearly cost him the match.

He stuffed it into 10 feet and made the putt.

It took six years, but the Accenture Match Play Championship finally got the 36-hole final everyone wanted. Woods (No. 1) and Love (No. 3) are the highest two seeds to play for the $1.2 million prize.

"It's like Duke in the East," Love said. "You know you're going to play them in the final game."

Woods, who earlier beat Padraig Harrington, goes into the final match having gone 64 holes without trailing. The last time he faced a deficit was on the 16th hole of his opening match against John Rollins.

He was one swing away from going home Wednesday.

Now, Woods faces a player with 18 victories, including a major, but a player he has routinely beaten in the past. He beat Love in the semifinals four years ago, 5 and 4.

"An unbelievable talent," Woods said of Love. "You step up there and you know you've got your hands full playing against someone like that."

Woods had his hands full with Leaney, the U.S. Open runner-up.

Leaney hung around long enough for the pressure to start building, and he caught Woods with a 25-foot birdie putt on the 13th hole that squared the match.

Under such pressure, though, Woods was at his best.

He got up-and-down for par from 90 yards on the 14th, making a 6-footer to avoid going 1 down. Then, he made a 4-foot par putt on the next hole to stay even.

His best putt was for birdie, a 12-footer on the 13th after Leaney hit a brilliant bunker shot for a conceded par. Woods' putt sneaked in the left side, and he raised his putter and twice pumped his fist, the most emotion he had shown all week.

"I knew if I could somehow bury that putt, I could grab the momentum back," Woods said. "On top of that, it would give me a little bit of cushion with two holes to go."

He closed him out on the next hole when Leaney hit into the left bunker and blasted out to 15 feet. Woods hit a 7-iron that landed 4 feet behind the hole and stopped 12 feet away. He made that for a 2-and-1 victory.

HEADLINERS

Cops Caught Issuing Tickets As a Contest

PORTERDALE, Ga. (AP) — A contest between two police officers in a small Georgia town to see which one could issue the most traffic tickets was stopped by a judge who overheard the apparent winner talking about it, the mayor said.

Part-time Porterdale police officers Erin Cox and Frank Jackson wrote about 150 tickets in January, which was significantly higher than in previous months, Mayor Paul Oeland said.

Some tickets were for minor offenses including not reporting an address change to the state or having defective equipment on a vehicle, it was first reported in The Covington News.

The contest was revealed when City Court Judge C. David Strickland overheard the officers talking about it recently. Oeland said "Jackson indicated he had won the contest."

"I think it was sort of bragging rights," said Oeland, a lawyer. "They would make a traffic stop for a legitimate reason and then try to find anything else they could possibly write a ticket for."

The mayor added: "It is not anything that we as a city support."

Both officers were asked to resign by Friday by City Manager Tom Fox, Oeland said. They have been with the department less than a year, he said.

Neither could be reached Friday. There was no answer at the police department.

Driver Calls 911 As Police Pursue Him

MARYVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — It may be right to call 911 to report someone's chasing you on the highway - but not if it's a sheriff's deputy in pursuit.

Kevin Richard Vowell, 31, of Maryville placed such a call to emergency dispatchers during a high speed chase on U.S. 411 early Sunday morning, Blount County sheriff's spokeswoman Marian O'Briant said.

The incident began when a deputy noticed Vowell driving erratically and signaled for him to stop. Vowell pulled over but then spun his pickup truck around and fled down the highway, with three patrol cars in pursuit.

Vowell then dialed 911 and reported he was being chased but would not stop until he got to Vonore.

"The dispatcher advised him to stop, telling him, 'You're only making it worse,'" O'Briant said.

Police said that after Vowell struck a mailbox and then rammed a cruiser. With a supervisor's permission, one deputy ended the chase by bumping the truck and sending it off the highway. Vowell was treated for minor injuries at the University of Tennessee Medical Center before he was taken to the Blount jail.

Vowell was charged with vehicular assault, drunken driving, felony reckless endangerment and felony evading arrest.

Man With Bad Fake Mustache Robs Bank

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The man needed a shave and a make-up artist. A man wearing a fake mustache that might have been made from construction paper Friday robbed a Bank of Albuquerque branch of an undisclosed amount of money.

Implying he had a gun, the man took money from two tellers and then fled.

The FBI was looking for the man described as being in his late 20s or early 30s, about 5-foot-6 in height and weighing about 160 pounds. He had a beard of several days growth and was possibly wearing contact lenses that made his eyes "noticeably" blue, the FBI said.

He also was wearing a tan baseball cap with some type of logo, a dark shirt, dark flannel jacket and blue jeans.

The FBI said the man is also considered a suspect in the robbery of a Compass Bank in Albuquerque on Feb. 13.

Garbage Truck Stopped With 2 Tons of Pot

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz. (AP) — A garbage truck was stopped carrying more than two tons of marijuana north of Huachuca City, a Department of Public Safety official said. The truck had been driving erratically late Tuesday, said DPS Sgt. Steve Tritz. "It got my attention," Tritz said. "He was driving slow and failing to signal."

The driver, who identified himself as 28-year-old Brian Rivera Martinez, said he didn't know how to drive the truck. When a drug-sniffing dog arrived, it alerted authorities to possible narcotics. DPS officers found 4,112 pounds of marijuana bundled in the area where trash would be carried. Martinez and passenger, Michael Trejo Duran Sr., 38, were arrested on suspicion of transporting and possessing marijuana for sale.

Spc. Chris Ingersol with 2-22 keeps watch while manning a 50 cal. in the turret of an up-armor humvee while on patrol

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with soldiers, landed in a muddy cornfield under the shroud of darkness, the soldiers exited the aircraft, and quickly set up perimeter security. After the aircraft departed, the (2-22) infantry moved several kilometers away from the landing zone and set up a patrol base, and settled in for the night. At first light, Alpha Company, 2-22 scaled the high walls of a mountain to look for the enemy. 2-22, in the sight of all the locals, moved to push the Anti-Coalition Militia members (ACM) out of their caves and safe houses into choke points where Task Force Warrior, the command element, placed other units to capture or eliminate the ACMs that moved through the area. As the day progressed, Triple Deuce scoured over 6 kilometers. As thick dark clouds rolled overhead in the valley, the sun sets beneath the mountain's edge and with it the temperature. Alpha Company was thoroughly soaked by a downpour that only added to the bone numbing chill in the air. Using their night vision goggles, (NVG) the soldiers insured that the perimeter was secure at their patrol base. They took turns on guard throughout the night so that other soldiers could get some much-needed sleep. As daylight wandered in on the valley, the soldiers patiently awaited the sun's warmth to dry out and get moving toward their objective.

Day 2 was frigid after a night of rain. So PFC Timothy Ward, Alpha Company's line medic from Albuquerque, NM, checked all of the soldiers' feet and insured that everyone had dry socks before the company ventured on towards its next choke point. Ward carries more equipment than the average infantryman; he carries essential medical supplies for cuts, abrasions, and dehydration.

"I will do whatever it takes to take care of my troops, even if it means carrying a heavier ruck." said Ward.

After a moving another 5 kilometers in the treacherous terrain, Alpha Company setup a patrol base for the night, and began perimeter security. As the sun went down behind the mountains, they hunkered down for the bitter night's chill that descended upon them. Luckily, the rain that pounded them the night before left them to stand guard undrenched.

The soldiers awakened on day 3 to the booming sounds of Bravo Company, Triple Deuce's lead element, clearing caves with explosives. Caves were demolished to prevent the enemy from using them as caches, hideouts, or ambush points. Alpha Company started moving through the valley. After moving 12 physical kilometers, the map only showed that Alpha Company had moved 6 kilometers in distance toward their objective. The vast mountainous terrain had been the reason for the slow progression towards their objective.

Day 4, At first light, Alpha Company moved out and trekked about 5 kilometers before the company stopped to investigate some structures high on a mountain. It was a small village that encircled the mountain top. To get to this village the soldiers had to cross the river on the valley floor to the base of the mountain where there was a crude set of stairs. Sergeant Major Vincent Camacho, Command Sergeant Major of Triple Deuce, from the island of Saipan, assembled a team to climb the steps; 1400 meters to the village. The remaining soldiers patiently awaited the return of the others. Before nightfall, Sergeant Major Camacho returned with the team. The village elders told them some Anti-Coalition Militia forces were just there several days ago but had left. Alpha Company moved out in the full moon's light that fell upon the valley. The night's chill was felt in every step on the way to the patrol base. After moving 3 kilometers, the company settled into yet another patrol base.

The night's silence was shattered by the sound of Specter gun ships unleashing it's arsenal on Anti-Coalition Militia on the opposite side of the mountain, north of Alpha Company's position. The sounds of bullets and cannon shells flying through the air and exploding lasted twenty minutes. Then as quickly as it started, silence returned and lasted through the rest of the night.

Editor's Note: This is part one of a two-part story. See next issue for part two.

WHY I'M PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN

By Sara Sloane

When I was assigned this essay, I recalled reading an article in a recent National Geographic magazine on the troubled land of Afghanistan. The article made me realize how proud I am to be an American and a citizen of a country that is helping to bring hope to a land that is lost in chaos.

Afghanistan is a country where no one questions when a woman dies in childbirth, where a fourth of the children die before reaching age five, and where many people are starving. This is a country whose ethnic groups have never been able to live peacefully among each other and allow each other the freedom to practice what they believe in. Our government is trying to make a difference in this country and our soldiers are working hard to bring peace and bring hope to this desperate land. As an American citizen, I am proud of our soldiers and those Americans who work for organizations like Save The Children and Doctors Without Borders who are helping in the effort.

In Afghanistan, you can't just take a walk in the countryside without the risk of one of the millions of land mines that have been buried there exploding beneath you. The reality of life in Afghanistan is so opposite of what we experience every day in this country. The Afghan people can't openly speak their minds or publish their opinions without risk. I am proud to be an American because our ideals and morals have bound us together as a people and have allowed us, despite our differences, to achieve a Constitution and a Bill of Rights that protect us and guarantee us freedoms that the people of Afghanistan can only hope for someday.

Our country is wealthy and strong and we experience a quality of life here that most people in other countries would do anything to have. For the most part, Americans want to share their gifts and help others experience freedom and peace in places of hate and suffering. Where it seems little humanity exists at all, the United States can be proud to be a symbol of hope.

Sara Sloan is an eigth grader from Pennsylvania.. If there is any doubt in our heart as to why we are here, It is made clear by the words of this young American....

The Sec. Of Defense Visits KAF

Donald Rumsfeld, Gen. Barno, Gen. Austin and the Ambassador walk on the flight line towards the terminal building.

Rumsfeld shakes hands with SFC Cruz.

Rumsfeld is presented with "The Last Ridge" by Sgt. Maj. Grippe.

KANDAHAR WEEKLY FORECAST

	Mon Mar 01	Tues Mar 02	Wed Mar 03	Thur Mar 04	Fri Mar 05	Sat Mar 06	Sun Mar 07
	Mostly Sunny	Partly Sunny	DUST Partly Cloudy With Dust And Haze	DUST Partly Cloudy With Dust And Haze	Partly Cloudy Windy And Dusty	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny
HIGH	73	75	79	75	80	83	86
LOW	41	43	46	43	49	50	52
SUNRISE	0204	0202	0201	0200	0207	0158	0157
SUNSET	1335	1336	1336	1337	1332	1338	1339

KANDAHAR COMBAT WEATHER TEAM

Mountain Warrior Weekly is always accepting comments and suggestions as to how we can improve your newspaper. If you have comments or suggestions, or simply just want to be added to our emailing list, email the staff at *Kandaharpresscenter@yahoo.com*