

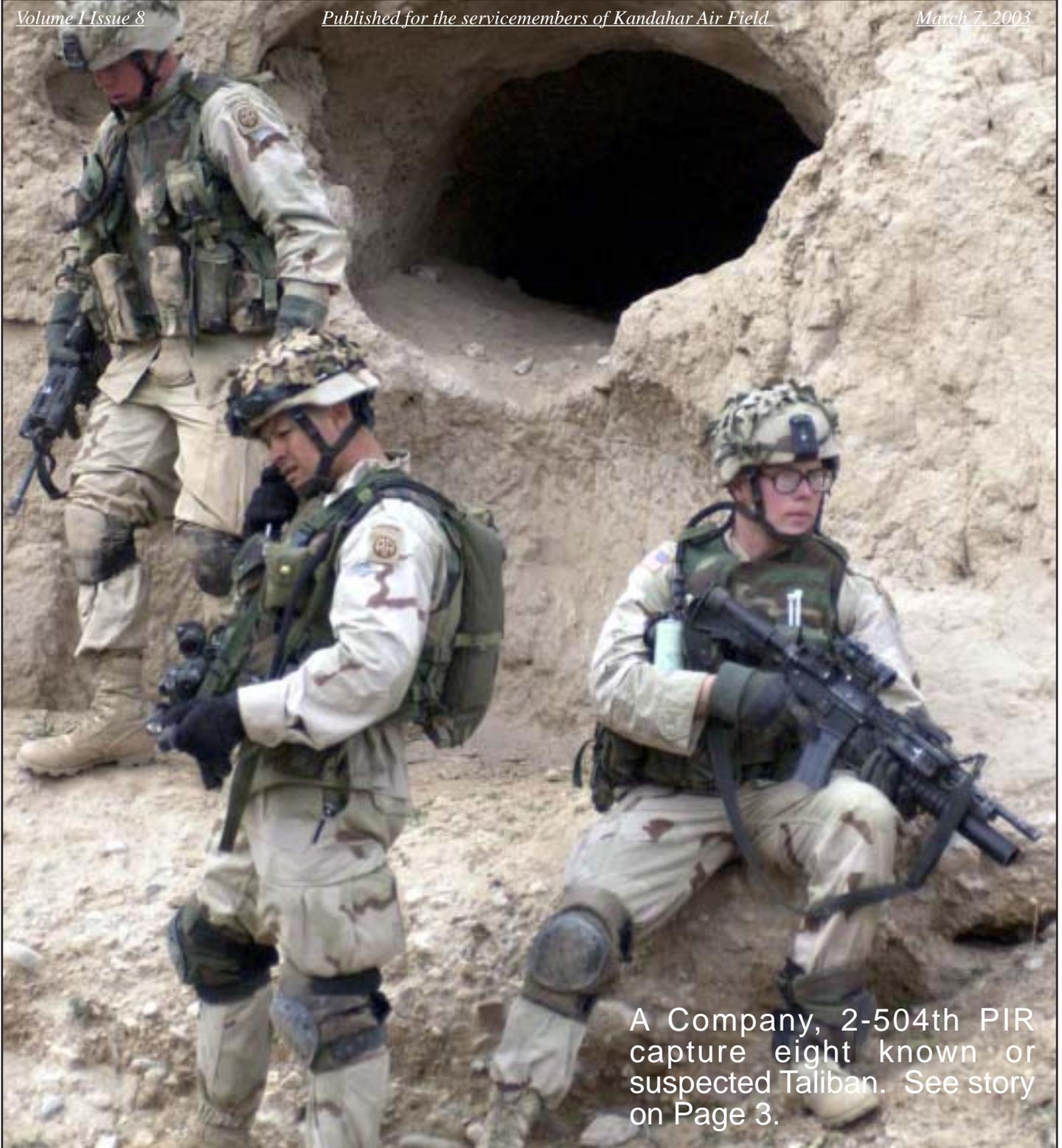


DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

Volume 1 Issue 8

Published for the servicemembers of Kandahar Air Field

March 7, 2003



A Company, 2-504th PIR capture eight known or suspected Taliban. See story on Page 3.

Devils Ready For SMA Tilley Visit



CSM Gary Kalinofski



The Devils have been pretty busy over the past couple of weeks. Everywhere I go I am told how people are so impressed by the way our Task Force is doing. They use words that describe all of you as well-disciplined and standard bearers for all other coalition forces in Afghanistan.

In some places they call you the "Helmet Wearers". I asked several people why they call you that and they say it is because you are always in the proper uniform. While visiting some of our fire bases senior leaders from outside the Task Force made numerous positive comments describing just how impressed they were with the way you conduct yourselves. Whether it is at a fire base or outside of one somewhere in Afghanistan, you are doing exactly what it is our great nation is asking of you.

What impresses me the most is how our junior leaders are taking charge of our young soldiers and getting the job done every single day. Our senior leaders have done a tremendous job preparing them to be the great young leaders we want them to be. Senior leaders from all over the Task Force describe their young leaders as "mature" and dedicated to taking care of soldiers and keeping them informed. What impresses me the most is how our squad leaders consistently do things as squads, whether it is cleaning weapons or just going to the gym to lift or just go to chow together.

The bond you are developing with each other will never be broken providing you keep at it.

This great Task Force will have a visit in the upcoming weeks by the Sergeant Major of the Army. SMA Jack L. Tilley will be in our house soon and frankly I am excited by his visit. He will see what I see when he meets with the great people in this Task Force. He will see for himself what I know already and that is you are the best team I have ever served with in my short 28 years in this great Army. Many of you will have the pleasure of meeting him. I will see to it because I believe that many of you will find out why he was selected to be the senior enlisted soldier for our Army. The best way to describe him is he is a "soldiers" soldier.

He spends much of his time visiting with our soldiers all over the world and listening to what they have to say. He then reports back to the chief of staff of our Army as well as goes before the Congress of the United States and expresses your concerns such as better pay, housing, non-commissioned officer evaluation system and a multitude of other things that effect a better quality of life for soldiers and there families. I look forward to his visit and I know you do, too.

In closing I would once again like to say how very happy I am to serve with you in your ranks. We are a great team and it shows every single day we are here. Take care of each other and please be safe.

Marine Risks Life to Save Lives in PX Fire

Story by *Cpl. Keith Kluwe*
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The Post Exchange was burning down and the people inside didn't even know their building was on fire. The front doors were locked and the Exchange wasn't going to open for a few hours, but one Marine kept pounding on the door until somebody finally answered.

"I told her the building was on fire," said Lance Cpl. Jai L. Le, a ground radio repairman assigned to Marine Air Control Squadron 4 in Okinawa, Japan deployed here to Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. "She told me it wasn't and acted like I was lying to her. I told her it was on fire again and she looked back and saw smoke coming into the room behind her."

Le then ran into the burning building and helped try to put out the fire with fire extinguishers, but was unsuccessful so he made sure the building was empty before he left.

The Air Force fire department here arrived on scene and started looking for volunteers. Le stepped up and volunteered. He relied on training he received as a volunteer firefighter in Louisiana to lead other volunteers with no training.

He directed his small crew of volunteers until the fire was out and the only thing left to do was check the

see **HERO**, page 6

Desert Devil Dispatch falls under the supervision of Task Force Devil.

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Taliban Captured in Operation Viper Search

Story and Photos by Spc. Jim Wagner
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

KALATA, Afghanistan – In a village U.S. Army planners didn't know existed, the 82nd Airborne Division found one of their biggest successes of Operation Viper, capturing eight known or suspected Taliban and a clutch of weapons and ammunition Sunday.

Rerouting their landing zone to the east after finding a village occupying the planned landing zone, C-47 Chinooks unloaded paratroopers from A Company, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd, who immediately set up an assembly point and sent three platoons out on patrol.

No more than two hours later, 2nd Platoon, A Company, had detained the first two Taliban. The results were nothing less than expected for the conclusion of Operation Viper, which started to the west in Baghran Valley two weeks ago and ended in Baghni Valley Monday.

"We didn't have a lot of intel coming (into Baghni Valley), but based on the last couple of weeks of operations in the Baghran Valley, we were expecting Taliban," said 1st Sgt. Jimmy Carabello,



Sgt. Brian Houston, a team leader in A Company, 2-504th PIR, takes down serial numbers for weapons cards. All weapons are sent on to Kandahar Air Field .

A Company first sergeant.

Operation Viper kicked off two weeks ago — a coalition effort to deny sanctuary to Taliban, anti-coalition and Al Qaeda forces in the area — after intel reported forces gathering in the Baghran Valley. According to Carabello, those

initial patrols flushed them out of the valley and into the Baghni Valley. Since then, Taliban forces have been in hiding and trying to regroup.

"They don't want to fight us as a group, so they're blending into the community," Carabello said.

Searching for Taliban forces in a community of Afghans requires the tried-and-true practice of vehicle and compound searches, a time-consuming effort that can take days for a company to complete.

While searching the compounds on the west end of Kalata, paratroopers on the defensive perimeter search vehicles and people walking in the area. At one such area, Alpha Company's second platoon found two AK-47s in a truck with four Afghans.

When asked why they had the automatic weapons, one of the Afghans said they were district police, a vague explanation that "sent up a red flag right away," said Sgt. First Class Robert Mercer, 2nd Platoon, A Company, 2-504th PIR platoon sergeant. All their names were taken down while two were brought in for further questioning at the assembly area. The other two Afghans were released.

Intelligence soon confirmed the four as known Taliban. The two were detained and in a pre-dawn raid, the other two were apprehended at the compound where the truck was parked. Two other suspects were detained as well.

"The mission out here was a huge success," said Staff Sgt. Guillermo Ravelo, A Company, 2-504th PIR fire support sergeant. "Any time you get eight PUCs (persons under control), that's a good thing. The whole thing was a good learning experience."

In all, A Company's three platoons captured eight known or suspected Taliban, who were



Sgt. Trey Economidy, A Company, 2-504th PIR squad leader, binds the hands of a captured Taliban.

see **TALIBAN**, page 6

Airborne History

American parachutists — Devils in Baggy Pants — are less than 100 meters from my outpost line. I can't sleep at night; they pop up from nowhere and we never know when or how they will strike next. Seems like the black-hearted devils are everywhere.....

(Translated from the diary of a dead German officer at Anzio - February 1944)

The Winter War: The 82nd in the Rhineland Campaign

Story by Robert Anzuoni
82nd Airborne Division Historian

(Editor's Note: This is the first in a four-part series.)

On Sept. 17, 1944, the 82nd Airborne Division conducted a parachute and glider assault into Holland, beginning Operation MARKET GARDEN and participation in the Rhineland Campaign.

After being withdrawn to rest camps in France in November, the 82nd deployed to Belgium on Dec. 18 to counter the German offensive in the Ardennes.

Early in January 1945, the 82nd participated in the offensive operation which crushed the German bulge. By the 25th of January, the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign had ended and the 82nd was launching an attack into Germany towards the Siegfried Line and the Roer River. Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin, 82nd commander, described this bitter struggle against enemy and elements as the "Winter War". This action was also the second time the division participated in the Rhineland Campaign.

The 82nd occupied a north-south line from Ambleve to Saint Vith, Belgium, on Jan. 28. The offensive was launched eastward towards a north-south line of Udenbret to Manderfeld, Germany.

The operation would carry the division through the Siegfried Line into Germany. The new objective would encompass the Mertesrott Heights just to the east, which would allow the First Army to advance down ridge lines east to Bonn.

Gavin stated the 82nd was "committed to the attack east of St. Vith, attacking through deep snow over thickly wooded mountains and overrunning a considerable group of German defensive forces in a constant day and night attack lasting for six days.



Photo courtesy of Michel Janssen

Paratroopers and gliders land at the beginning of the "Winter War."

This attack was the most arduous in the division's history and, at its end, probably the most bitterly fought."

At 6 a.m. on Jan. 28, the 82nd launched its attack. The 325th Glider Infantry Regiment (GIR) was positioned on the left flank while the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) was on the right. Both the 505th and 508th PIRs were in reserve. The division was given extra fire power from the 740th Tank Battalion, 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, and 32nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, which were attached for the operation. Battling the intense snow and cold, as well as a still determined enemy, the 82nd advanced forward toward its objectives. By the end of the day, the 325th GIR held the high ground west of Wereth and the 504th had seized Herresbach.

The 82nd continued its attack the following day advancing more than 2,000 yards. The 325th GIR seized Wereth and the high ground to the east. The 505th PIR secured the high ground southwest of Honsfeld. By the end of the day the 508th PIR had taken Holzheim, Medendorf, and the high ground to the southwest of Eimersheid.

(Series continues in the March 14 edition of the DDD.)



You might be Airborne if ...

**you jump out the second story window when you
leave for work.**

— John "Doc" Horton (from partrooper.net)



Around the World

Bin Laden on Afghan Border

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the suspected architect of the September 11 attacks who was arrested on Saturday, has told his captors that he met Osama bin Laden within the last month along the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, it was reported yesterday.

Pakistan's interior minister yesterday said his government had an "arsenal" of new information from its interrogations of Mohammed and that the arrests of more Al Qaeda suspects would follow.

Faisal Saleh Hayat, Pakistan's interior minister, said that Mohammed cooperated with investigators and spoke surprisingly freely.

"The interrogation has been very fruitful," Mr Hayat told the Guardian. "Our arsenal of data and information has most certainly increased because of this." (Courtesy of *The Guardian*)

Bush 'Rushing to War'

Opposition Democrats in the House of Representatives and the Senate have renewed their concerns about U.S.-led military action against Iraq.

Senate minority leader Tom Daschle says an attack on Iraq at this time would be premature. "In our view they are rushing to war, without adequate concern for the ramifications of doing so unilaterally," he said.

Senator Daschle says he is concerned about what he calls an "extraordinary

disintegration of international support" for the U.S. position.

His comments were echoed by House Democratic minority leader Nancy Pelosi. (Courtesy *Voice of America*)

Online Porn Upheld in Court

For the second time, a federal appeals court has ruled that a law meant to keep Internet pornography away from children is unconstitutional.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said Thursday the Child Online Protection Act, which barred Web page operators from posting information inappropriate for minors unless they limited the site to adults, restricted free speech.

The court said that in practice, the law made it too difficult for adults to view material protected by the First Amendment, including many non-pornographic sites. (Courtesy *ABC News*)

Aspirin Reduces Colon Cancer

Two new studies suggest that aspirin—already used to help prevent heart disease and stroke—also can prevent colon and rectal cancers in high-risk patients, though doctors say it's too early to recommend routine aspirin therapy for such cancers.

A study of patients with a history of precancerous growths called polyps found that taking a low-dose baby aspirin once a day reduced the likelihood of new polyps by 19 percent. Nearly all colorectal cancers begin as polyps on the bowel wall.

A second study of colorectal cancer survivors found that taking one adult-dose aspirin a day reduced the likelihood of new polyps by 35 percent. (Courtesy *Chicago Sun-Times*)

Using Pagers to Fraud

The British army major and his wife accused of cheating to win the jackpot in *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* may have considered using vibrating pagers to defraud the TV quiz show, a court was told today. (Courtesy *Stuff.co.nz*)

DOD announces winning Sept. 11 memorial design

The Department of Defense today announced the selection of the Pentagon memorial design by the design selection jury.

The winning design is the so-called "Light Benches" submitted by Julie Beckman and Keith Kaseman of New York.

Design Jury Chairman Terry Riley, the chief curator of design and architecture at the New York Museum of Modern Art, made the announcement at a press briefing today in the Pentagon.

The memorial will be built on a 1.93-acre plot on the Pentagon reservation near the spot where the attack occurred on the building. Washington Headquarters Services and the Pentagon renovation team will supervise construction of the memorial.

Estimated cost to build the memorial is between \$4.9 million and \$7.4 million. Taxpayer funds will not be used for the construction of this project.

The memorial encompasses the entire memorial site and includes 184 benches with the name of each victim engraved into the face of the bench.

The benches are to be comprised of cast, clear, anodized aluminum polyester composite matrix set on an eight-inch concrete pad for stabilization.

Each bench will be positioned according to the age of the victim, progressing from the youngest, age 3, to the oldest, age 71. Each memorial bench will have a glowing light pool set underneath.

The site also will have clusters of trees throughout to provide shading and a more intimate atmosphere. (Story courtesy of *DefenseLINK*)



Pvt. Murphy's Law
by Mark Baker

‘Little Sister’ a Big Disease Problem for Afghans, Army personnel

Story Capt. Cory Campora
791st Preventive Medicine

Sandflies are tiny brownish long-legged and somewhat hairy flies with narrow bodies and narrow pointed wings.

They are sometimes called “Phlebotomine” flies, because they form the subfamily Phlebotominae – a group aptly named due to its blood sucking nature.

Like mosquitoes, only the female takes a blood meal to help develop her eggs. They are poor flyers and usually travel low to the ground in short hops, generally remaining in the vicinity of their breeding area.

Unlike mosquitoes, sandflies do not



require water to breed. Instead they lay their eggs in dark areas where organic material is present; thus, unsanitary living conditions where much rubbish and human waste are present help them to proliferate.

Usually sandflies bite only at night (usually from May to October in Afghanistan) but they may bite during the day if disturbed. While sandfly bites itch and are a nuisance, of greater concern is the potential of disease transmission from a bite.

Some sandflies may carry and transmit parasites which cause Leishmaniasis, a serious disease that can cause disfiguring sores.

Women and children suffer the worst from Leishmaniasis, and it is so prevalent in some areas of Afghanistan that it is known as “Little Sister” because it is almost part of the family.

The World Health Organization estimates that 200,000 people are infected with this parasite in Kabul alone.

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scene for hot spots that still needed to be put out.

“The majority of the people helping out hadn’t had any training,” said Le, a native of Raceland, La. “I don’t have much, but it was enough to know what to do and what not to do.”

While he was fighting the fire, his command was getting a 100% accountability of personnel. Le wasn’t accounted for so his unit began searching the post for him. The last anyone saw of him was at the gym during martial arts training.

A soldier that knew him told him his unit was looking for him.

“They need me over here right now, can you give them a

call and tell them where I am?” said Le. But, “. . . apparently nobody called because my sergeant major showed up and asked me where I had been and what I was doing. . . He just wanted to make sure I was ok.”

Le found out later that he had been fighting the fire for three or four hours, but he didn’t realize that it had been that long.

Le said he “just remembers it happening so quick.”

Le also said he wasn’t trying to be a hero, he just did what he thought should be done, what he figures any Marine would have done.

The other Marines in his unit give him a lot of good natured ribbing, but they are still proud of him.

“The next day I walked into work and somebody said ‘Oh look, the hero is here’,” said Le who is also an unit instructor for the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. “Then they put me in the middle of everyone and played ‘You’re my hero’ by Whitney Houston.”

Le’s non-commissioned officer in charge told him he was being put in for a medal, but didn’t say which one. The medal isn’t as important to Le as lending a helping hand and getting a thank you from it.

“Today I ran into the lady who opened the door and I asked her how she was doing,” said Le. “She said thanks and that she was fine. She told me the girls from the barber shop were fine too.”

TALIBAN, from page 4

detained for further questioning.

Also taken in the village searches were nine weapons – two World War II-era Russian weapons, five AK-47s and two British Enfield .308-caliber rifles – and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition.

All weapons and ammunition are marked and sent up to Kandahar’s intelligence section for further disposition.

The mission’s success in the Baghni Valley was the culmination of the company’s efforts during Operation Viper in the Baghran Valley, said Carabello.

“The guys are seeing the fruits



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jim Wagner

Paratroopers from A Company, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, keep watch while a compound is searched for weapons or Taliban suspects by the rest of the platoon.

of their labor here in the Baghni Valley,” he said. “I’m real proud of what they’ve done here.”