



# DESERT DEVIL DISPATCH

Volume I Issue 12

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*April 4, 2003*



**Kandahar mourns  
loss of two of its own.  
See story on Page 2.**

# Thoughts, Prayers With Families of Lost Loved Ones



Col. John Campbell



## Devil Six

Hooah! First of all I want to express condolences to our Air Force and Special Forces communities for their losses the past few weeks.

We all hurt and feel the pain when we lose comrades in arms, eight great Americans here from Kandahar have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

We should all take time to reflect and remember their lives and rest assured that they did not die in vain.

They all loved their jobs and gave selflessly so that others here in Afghanistan and around the world would have better lives. I am also proud of the way everyone at KAF has pulled together and reached out to one another for support during this tough time.

A great time was had by all at the basketball tournament and three-point shoot out. Thanks to CPT Hardy and his crew for setting this great event up and to the AAFES team for providing the prizes.

Congratulations to B Company, 50<sup>th</sup> SIG, for taking top team honors and to Sergeant Conde for winning the shoot out. Upcoming events include a volleyball tourney and a 10k run.

The focus for the news media has been Iraq and rightfully so, but never forget that the job here in Afghanistan remains critical in our fight in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Everyday great young Americans put their lives on the line at several firebases, flying helicopters, and on the numerous mounted and dismounted patrols. Everyday there is enemy contact, and everyday I'm amazed at the perseverance and dedication of all.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families that have lost loved ones here in Afghanistan and also with those in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Stay focused!

## Ambush Near Kandahar Kills 2, Injures 1

by Spc. Jim Wagner  
109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Two U.S. service members were killed and one wounded when their four-vehicle, mounted reconnaissance patrol was ambushed in the vicinity of Geresk at approximately 4 p.m. Saturday.

Sgt. Orlando Morales, A Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, out of Fort Bragg, N.C., and Sgt. Jacob Frazier, 169th Air Support Operations Squadron, 182nd Airlift Wing, Peoria, Ill., died of gunshot wounds in the ambush.

The third member, whose name was withheld to protect his identity, was

treated for multiple gunshot wounds and stabilized by medics from C Company, 307th Logistical Task Force, here.

The servicemember sustained a perforated diaphragm, punctured lung and destroyed kidney.

After the soldier was stabilized, he was flown to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany to recover from the injuries.

Geresk is located in south central Afghanistan in the Helmand Province.

The news comes nearly a week after six airmen from the 41st Expeditionary Rescue Squadron were killed while performing a rescue mission in southern Afghanistan.

## ESPN Launches Pen Pal Program

April 1 marked the start of an e-mail pen pal program between some service members overseas and some of the nation's top pro sports figures.

Household names like Tiger Woods, Roger Clemens, Shaquille O'Neal and Ricky Rudd stand out.

Under ESPN's "Jocks-to-GIs Direct" program, selected service members get the chance to be e-mail pen pals with some of America's greatest pro athletes. Some of their correspondence will also end up on ESPN.com and in ESPN The Magazine.

But for the pen pal program, there's a big catch: The chosen service members

see **ESPN**, page 6

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# A 'Valiant' Ending to the Latest Operation

by Spc. John Slosser  
CJTF-180 Public Affairs Office

Last weekend marked the completion of Operation Valiant Strike with hundreds of 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division soldiers returning from their mission in the Sami Ghar mountains.

The operation ran more than eight days and pitted soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions of the 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment against southern Afghanistan's rough terrain and elements. Their goal was to seek out enemy forces, weapons and tactical intelligence.

"The mission was an overall success," said Lt. Col. Charlie Flynn, 2-504<sup>th</sup> PIR "White Devils" commander. "We've continued to disrupt and deny any enemy activity and have not allowed them to plan and coordinate attacks against our larger bases."

Operation Valiant Strike wasn't the first time these soldiers have been sent out into the Afghan mountains; they've participated in Operations Viper and Mongoose, improving their abilities with

each subsequent operation.

"We get better with every op because we know more about ourselves and more about our enemies," Flynn said. "This type of operation shows our resolve for Afghanistan's government and the Afghan people. It shows that we will not stop; we will continue supporting Afghanistan."

The "Devils" were able to clear the Sami Ghar mountains of a significant amount of weapons and explosives. They found caches covered with hay, buried in orchards, hidden in wells and even placed in piles of manure.

"One compound was like a maze," Guevara said. "We had to leave pieces of paper in certain rooms to designate for everyone the areas we had already cleared, but the locals kept picking up the papers we were leaving behind."

The international mix of weapons and explosives gleaned from the Sami Ghar mountains reflected Afghanistan's history of wars and conflicts. The operation removed more than 170 Rocket propelled grenades, 180 assorted land mines, 20 automatic rifles and machine-

guns, and literally tons of rockets, rifles, launchers with a full range of accessories. Such stockpiles resulted in a handful of locals being taken into custody for questioning.

"We found something major every day," said Capt. Andrew Zieseniss, B Company, 2-504<sup>th</sup> PIR commander. "There were compounds that resembled arms rooms on the inside — full of explosives and weapons systems."

"Our battalion actually got its largest find since we've been in country — four truckloads worth in one cache alone," said Zieseniss. "Most of the locals seemed extremely pleased when we cleared their village or detained any of the bad guys. They seemed relieved, like they felt safer."

Bravo Company's fire support officer also reinforced the importance of ridding the region of so many weapons.

"Finding all the caches made the walking worth while; we had our (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) guys take care of all the mines and ordnance we found," said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Jeff Pickler B Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> 504<sup>th</sup> PIR, fire support officer. "They had some pretty big booms out there, but I'll remember Valiant Strike more than any other operation I've been on for it's positive feedback. The villagers were out waving and smiling in the streets at us and saying 'hi.' It's a good feeling. That is definitely one of our main reasons for being here."

The soldiers returning from Valiant Strike were eager to enjoy some warm chow and catch up on a little rest, but one SAW gunner was quick to emphasize the importance of continuing operations like Valiant Strike.

"We're always ready to go out; we know it's serious every time we leave the wire. It's our job," said Spc. Robert Monroe B Company, 3-504<sup>th</sup> PIR. "I believe our mission (in Afghanistan) is very important, we are not only taking out the terrorist threat to those around the world, we are making the country better, we are sharing our democracy and helping to improve their way of life."



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jim Wagner

82<sup>nd</sup> paratroopers empty a room of rocket-propelled grenades and take inventory. According to officials, "literally tons" of munitions and weapons were confiscated during Operation Valiant Strike, which ended Sunday.

## A Different Perspective on Combat Patrols: Airborne on the Ground

by Spc. John Slosser  
 CJTF-180 Public Affairs Office

Although Operation Valiant Strike, which finished during the weekend, utilized a series of helicopter air assaults, the meticulous searching and clearing of villages required the paratroopers to do a grueling amount of good old fashioned ruck-marching.

Several of the soldiers mentioned some of the conditions that contributed to the total experience while patrolling through the Sami Ghar mountain range.

"The days were pretty warm but the nights kept getting colder and colder," said 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Brian Severino B Company, 3-504<sup>th</sup> PIR first sergeant. "We always say 'travel light, freeze at night.'

"Well, we froze those last few nights," he added with a laugh.

"I was starting to smell pretty bad, especially at night while I was trying to sleep in my bivey sack" said one paratrooper after explaining how much he sweated during the operation.

"It's the weight on your back and the rocks you walk up and around," said Pfc. Erick Guevara from B Company, 2-504<sup>th</sup> PIR. "The first day was nothing more than crossing rivers and rucking with wet feet, with your knee pads falling down because they were so soaked.

"You're constantly drinking to stay hydrated, but still always a little thirsty because you're trying to conserve water," he said.

Despite the uncomfortable conditions, Guevara mentioned



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jim Wagner

Paratroopers get a rare break during a compound search.

the lighter side of combat patrols.

"When we're hiking through the valleys you can hear so much in the distance," Guevara said. "Funny stuff like donkeys yelling and kids playing. It was the nicest right after it rained out there, when the clouds started to lift and there was no dust and the mountains were all clear and visible."

The soldiers had a few interesting encounters with Sami Ghar's remote people.

"We jokingly asked a bunch of the local kids if they were headed off to school and a small boy turned to us and surprised all of us by saying 'yes, I am going to school,'" said Capt. Andrew Zieseniss, B-co 2<sup>nd</sup> 504<sup>th</sup> PIR commander. "The soldiers inquired 'well, uh, aren't you going to be late?' and the boy casually replied, 'no, I have time' and continued on his way to class," said Zieseniss.

Many of the soldiers commented on how friendly the villagers were, citing examples of warm greetings and how the locals were constantly offering tea to the men.

All in all the "Devils" seem to look back on the operation with a little optimism.

"I think we were pretty successful out there," said Zieseniss. "We found more stuff than I thought we would find and, up to this date, we're lucky — no one in our unit got hurt."

## CA Soldiers Teach English to Afghan Children

Story by Spc. Karlene Hemerlyfluck  
 109th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

**Deh Rawod**, Afghanistan - Local Afghan Teens gather outside the gate rain or shine to learn English from Soldiers of the Civil Affairs Team-A 11. Classes are held in a dried up waterway outside the fire base gates in Deh Rawod.

"At first I was not sure about getting involved, but when I see the continued interest and the excitement on the children's faces when they make progress in their studies, makes it all worth it." Said Spc William E.J. Carter, 450<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, Airborne, Riverdale, MD, CAT-A 11.

In Nov 2002, local Afghan teens started approaching the guards at the

gate asking questions about the army and the United States. The guards enjoyed talking to the teen boys but could not have the continued distractions so the CAT-A 11 team was called upon to assist in answering and dealing with the curious teens. "The boys were interested in learning English and finding out more about a country they have only heard bad things about through the Taliban and Al-Qaeda." Said Carter

Lt. Bradford Adams and his CAT-A 11 team are quite busy holding bidders conferences and doing assessments among other tasks expected of a CA team but thought it would be great to do something more. Adams decided to host a 1 hour English class every Tuesday and Friday for the interested teens. Classes are held for the 10 to 15 boys outside

the Deh Rawod Compound. The class level was based upon the knowledge that the afghan teens had already acquired in their prior schooling. "We just found out what they knew and started from the student who knew the least" said Carter.

"LT Adams tends to go above and beyond the call of duty and enjoys getting socially involved with the local afghan children. It is his way of learning more about the culture and the language on a more personal level. Starting the English classes is just one example, of his dedication to the mission." says Sgt Roger C. Kersey, 450<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs, Battalion, Airborne Riverdale, MD, and CAT-A 11.

see **ENGLISH**, 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)*

# Last Bridgehead: 82<sup>nd</sup> in European Campaign

by Robert Anzuoni

82nd Airborne Division Museum Director

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

After participating in bitter fighting for nearly a month in the Rhineland, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division was relieved and sent to base camps near Reims, France, to rest, re-equip, and train for its next mission.

During March 1945, intense training was conducted to include jumping from the new Curtis C-46 Commando and firing the 57mm recoilless rifle. On Mar. 30, Major Gen. James M. Gavin, division commander, received orders to move the 82<sup>nd</sup> to the Rhine River near Cologne, Germany.

Movement of the division began Apr. 2 and by Apr. 4 relief of the 86<sup>th</sup> Division in the vicinity of Cologne was complete. The 82<sup>nd</sup> occupied 32 miles of



Courtesy photo

German prisoners of war along the Rhine River - April, 1945

riverfront along the Rhine. Patrols across the Rhine began on the night of Apr. 4-5. A Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment crossed the Rhine on the evening of Apr. 5-6 and captured the town of Hitdorf.

Eighty enemy prisoners were taken and 150 enemy soldiers were killed during the intense fighting. A Company received the Presidential Unit Citation for its action at Hitdorf. Through April, the division continued patrolling its sector of the Rhine and conducted occupation duty in Cologne.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> was relieved of its occupation of Cologne on Apr. 25 and began movement north to Bleckede the following day.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> was attached to the British 2nd Army which had the mission of crossing the Elbe River and racing to the Baltic Sea to block possible Soviet advances into Denmark. The 82<sup>nd</sup> was chosen to establish the last bridgehead of WWII in Europe.

During the evening of Apr. 28-29, elements of the division reconnaissance platoon crossed the Elbe and conducted patrols. Early in the morning of Apr. 30,

the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the 505<sup>th</sup> PIR conducted an assault crossing of the Elbe River in canvas boats with support from B Company, 307<sup>th</sup> Airborne Engineer Battalion.

As the paratroopers began the 400-yard crossing, it began to snow. A large number of enemy troops were dug in on the opposite shore, but the assault met little resistance.

Later in the day, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 505<sup>th</sup> PIR arrived and was ferried across the river by LVT-4 Buffalos of the British 4<sup>th</sup> Royals. More than 2,000 artillery rounds were fired in support of the crossing and 588 prisoners were taken.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions, 504<sup>th</sup> PIR, crossed the Elbe on May 1 by a pontoon bridge constructed earlier that day by engineers and advanced eastward nine miles.

The attack continued on May 2 with the 325<sup>th</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment and 504<sup>th</sup> PIR reaching their objectives by 8:15 a.m. The 2-35<sup>th</sup> GIR advanced toward Ludwigslust.

*(The series continues in the Apr. 11 edition of the Desert Devil Dispatch)*



Courtesy photo

An 82nd paratrooper adds a personal touch to a German road sign near Ludwigslust, Germany - May, 1945.

**ENGLISH**, from page 4



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Karlene Hemerlyfluck

**Spc. William Carter, 450th Civil Affairs Battalion, conducts a class with local Afghans.**

The students bring their old school books from the previous Afghanistan school sessions and work from them. The children are taught to read and write the English Alphabet and numeric system.

Students are asked to draw and color pictures of their own creations and from that they are taught the name of the objects, colors and how to correctly spell and pronounce them in English.

Darigul age 16 student "I want to learn English so I can help my country. I know the American people are friendly people. I want to learn from them". Darigul's favorite part of the class is the book work.

The work book consists of math, art and spelling. The class is assigned 2 to 3 pages of homework and then at the

next class the student review and correct any problems they may have encountered. The classes move on to the next level when Adams and Carter feel the students are ready. We are very serious about these classes and do not want to just put a few words of English in their head. They want to learn it and we have the power to teach it." Said Carter.

Noor Mohammad is a 13 year old student says "I want to learn English. I want to help my country grow. I want to go to college and help with the education by becoming a school principal."

"The children will begin school again this week but if these teens are willing to continue their miles of travel for our English classes we will be more than enthusiastic in continuation of teaching them" said Carter.

**ESPN**, page 5

must guard the athlete's address like a military secret.

"We're setting up a special mailbox for each of the athletes," said John Papanek, editor in chief and senior vice president of ESPN The Magazine and one of the driving forces behind creating the program.

So far, ESPN has firm commitments from 17 people.

"We can't set up a pen pal for every single GI," Papanek noted. "We made it clear that we're going to be selecting GIs from the many that applied to be pen pals with the athletes."

Papanek said that a series of 'chats' with athletes will be available on the ESPN Web site for service members not selected as pen pals. And there's another feature called "buzz chats," he noted. "We'll invite all members of the military stationed overseas to talk about topics in sports news, like the opening of baseball season, (the NCAA basketball) Final Four or (upcoming) NBA and NHL playoffs."

Service members can apply to become an athlete's pen pal at <http://sports.espn.go.com/chat/sportsnation/story?page=JTGD-030322>. Pen pal correspondence is at <http://sports.espn.go.com/chat/sportsnation/jockstogis/index>.

(Story courtesy Rudi Williams, Armed Press Service)



**You might be Airborne if ...**



*your kids call their mother "Household 6."*

*- quinman*



**Pvt. Murpy's Law**  
by Mark Baker