

Task Force-Devil looks to August return

Story and photo by

Spc. Jim Wagner

109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Speaking after a ceremony honoring five Purple Heart Medal recipients from the “Blue Devils” of the 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, Wednesday, two of Kandahar’s top coalition task force officials talked about plans for the return of all coalition Task Force-Devil to the United States.

Task Force-Devil deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C., and has been at Kandahar Airfield, plus various fire bases throughout southern Afghanistan since late December.

For the past couple months, speculation has given many different dates for a replace-

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Col. John Campbell, Task Force-Devil commander, talks to soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division Wednesday. Campbell expects the first airborne elements of Task Force-Devil to return to Fort Bragg, N.C., in late July.

Devil commander pins five with Purple Heart

By Spc. Jim Wagner

109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Task Force-Devil’s commander presented five soldiers with Purple Hearts Wednesday, earned for injuries sustained during two recent firefights along the Pakistan border.

Sgt. Konrad Reed, Sgt. David Smith, Pfc. Otis Johnson and Pfc. James Torbet all of 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C. were all part of a quick reaction force responding to a call when they were wounded Apr. 25 outside Fire Base Shkin.

Capt. Gregory Trahan, the QRF’s squad leader, is in the United States recovering from multiple gunshot wounds.

The team’s sixth member, Pfc. Jerod Dennis, died from injuries suffered during the confrontation.

The fifth soldier honored in the ceremony, Sgt. Augusto Alarcon-Gonzales, received his injuries after taking shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade during a Mar. 18 attack at Fire Base Solerno.

All credit the training they’ve received back in the United States for their ability to survive during the attacks.

“When the shooting started, I shot back,” Alarcon-Gonzales said.

“It’s like muscle memory; after two JRTC (Joint Readiness Training Center) rotations and numerous live-fire exercises, it just takes over.”

Col. John Campbell, Task Force-Devil commander, lauded the medal winners for their actions, saying ceremony isn’t the type he necessarily enjoys.

“I don’t like pinning Purple Hearts, no one wants to get one,” he said. “I’d ask you to remember those that didn’t make it and remember their sacrifice.”

Torbet and Johnson, both who were shot in the head (hitting their Kevlars in both cases) during the Shkin firefight, gave their heartfelt agreement to their commander’s comments.

“It’s not really the award I was looking for when I came over here,” Torbet said.

Despite the dangers, Command Sgt. Maj. Steven England, XVIII Airborne Corps command sergeant major, reiterated the U.S. Army’s commitment to remain in the country until the job is done.

“We’re not going to have an ‘Afghanistan II’ in the future,” he said. “We’re going to stay here as long as we have to. I would remind you to always be prepared ... thank you from me and (Lt. Gen. Dan McNeill, U.S. Army commander in Afghanistan) for what you do every day.”

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)

Israel closes West Bank after string of attacks

JERUSALEM — The Israel Defense Forces closed off the West Bank on Sunday after a string of terror attacks killed nine Israelis and prompted Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to postpone a meeting with President Bush at the White House.

The most deadly attack came Sunday morning in Jerusalem as a suicide bomber dressed as an Orthodox Jew and wearing a prayer shawl got on a commuter bus, Israeli police spokesman Gil Kleiman said.

The bomb detonated as the bus entered the center of the city from a suburb of East Jerusalem about 6 a.m. [11 p.m. Saturday EDT], Israeli police said. Sunday is a working day in Israel, and the blast happened at the start of the morning rush hour. Seven passengers and the bomber were killed, and at least 26 others were wounded, Israeli police said.

The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz identified the seven people killed as Shimon Ostinsky, 68; Nellie Perov, 55; Olga Brenner, 52; Marina Tzachivirshvili, 44; Yitzhak Moyial, 64; and Roni Yisraeli, 35, all from the northern Jerusalem neighborhood of Pisgat Ze'ev; and Tawil Ralab, 42, from the Shoafat refugee camp.

Minutes later, a suicide bomber blew himself up about a half-mile away in eastern Jerusalem after being "caught between our road blocks," Kleiman said. No one else was hurt, police said.



'Matrix' sequel No. 2 debut

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — The sci-fi thriller "The Matrix Reloaded" sold \$93.3

million worth of tickets in its first weekend of release across North America — the No. 2 debut of all time behind "Spider-Man," according to studio estimates issued Sunday.

"Spider-Man" opened with \$115 million in 2002. The previous No. 2 slot was held by 2001's "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" with \$90.3 million. While most movies open on a Friday in North America, "The Matrix Reloaded" opened on Thursday, preceded by late screenings on Wednesday.

Its distributor, Warner Bros. Pictures, lumped in Wednesday receipts — estimated by industry observers at about \$5 million — with the Thursday haul of \$42.5 million.

Saudis: Four detainees have links to al-Qaida, attacks

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Four people believed to be linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network have been detained in connection with Monday's attacks in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Interior minister said.

Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz said each had prior knowledge of the bombings.

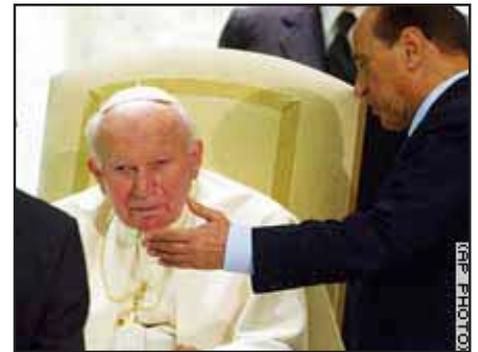
U.S. officials have said they also believe al-Qaida was behind the nearly simultaneous bombings Monday at three residential compounds that killed 25 people, including eight Americans, in addition to the nine suspected bombers.

The prince said three of the nine bombers who participated in the attacks have been identified.

Saudi foreign policy adviser Adel al-Jubeir told CNN that those identified "were part of an al-Qaida cell that we came very close to apprehending."

The bombers who have been identified were among 19 people listed by the Saudi government in a dispatch earlier this month, Abdulaziz said. The dispatch said it was seeking the men — all but two of them Saudi citizens — on suspicion of planning a terrorist incident.

The notice was released after authorities uncovered a cache of weapons and explosives in Riyadh that Saudi officials said was tied to al-Qaida.



Pope John Paul II with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi on eve of pontiff's 83rd birthday

Pope turns 83, canonizes saints

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II celebrated his 83rd birthday Sunday doing what he has done more than any of his predecessors — canonizing saints.

Appearing in better health than a year ago, and speaking with a strong, clear voice, Pope John Paul II presided over the canonization ceremony for four new saints in St. Peter's Square Sunday morning.

The two Poles and two Italians bring to 473 the number of saints canonized by Pope John Paul II, more than the combined 299 saints by all the previous popes since 1588.

John Paul II is the fourth longest serving pope in history. Catholics around the world were able to e-mail birthday wishes to the pope through the Vatican's Web site.

Vatican officials said they were getting an avalanche of messages.

While many birthday cakes have been sent to the pope, the Vatican says he'll only be served a pie made by Polish nuns who attend to his daily needs.

A Milan newspaper Sunday quoted a top Vatican official as confirming reports Pope John Paul II suffers from Parkinson's disease.

The head of the Congregation of Bishops, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, told the newspaper Corriere della Sera that the pontiff's prayers help him cope with the disease. Despite his age and illness, the pope continues to travel extensively. The pontiff goes to Croatia in early June with a day trip later in the month planned for Bosnia. In late August, he will travel to Mongolia with a possible stop in Russia.

Dragon Palace hosts jazz, R&B night

Story and photos by
Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – The sounds of soft jazz and rhythm and blues tunes set the mood for a Saturday evening of pleasant conversation, a few rounds of spades and an atmosphere for troops to kick back and relax after a long duty week.

Saturday nights at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation building usually consist of the standard movie or an event where loud and fast-paced music is usually the main attraction. One soldier decided it was time for a change.

“Most of the MWR events are geared towards the 25 and under generation, so I figured it was time someone did something for the older more laid back folks,” said 1st Lt. Sharon Henry, physician’s assistant, 48th Combat Support Hospital, Fort Meade, Md.

“Since jazz is my favorite type of music and what more people in my age group listen to, I decided it would set the perfect background for a night of relaxation.”

In order to convince people to show up, Henry knew she needed more than jazz and R&B on the agenda.

“We set up tables with cards, board games, dominoes and other things to get



Servicemembers get down to the southern hip hop beat during the hip hop, rythm and blues party Saturday.

troops to come in and enjoy some good old-fashioned jazz,” said Henry. “Drinks, fruit and popcorn supplied by MWR, were some of the other things available that helped with the turnout.”

In addition to snacks and games, MWR

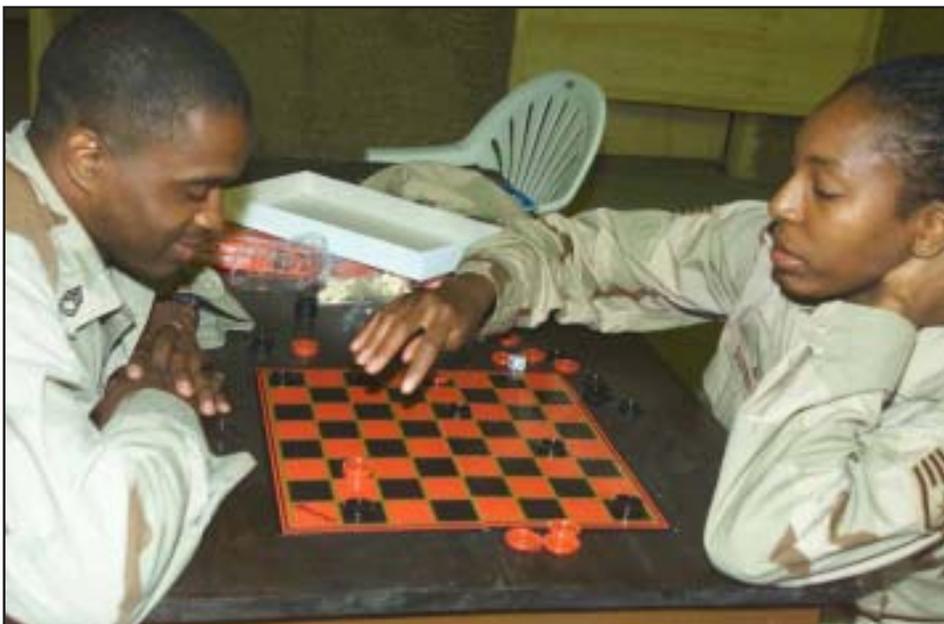
also helped with the advertisement of the event.

“I made up some flyers and posted them as many places as I could, but since I don’t have access to SIPR (Secret Internet Protocol Router Network), (Andrew) Solomon (MWR coordinator) posted the flyers for me on the net so more people could have access to them.”

The event started promptly at 1330Z with the sounds of the saxophone drawing servicemembers into Dragon Palace. One soldier was so inspired by the atmosphere; he decided to compliment the event with some traditional jazz-style, spoken word.

“Without you I am nothing - an empty shell full of darkness ... that is only surpassed by the thought of having you in my life,” read Cpl. Kenneth Campbell, surgical technician, 48th CSH, to the jazz melody in the background.

“Writing poetry is a hobby of mine, and I figured this would be the perfect event to get up and read spoken word,” said Campbell.



Two servicemembers enjoy a game of checkers while smooth jazz tunes play in the background.

JAZZ, from Page 3

"I think this social was a new and different way for some of the older crowd to enjoy themselves," said Campbell. "I think they should do this more often."

At approximately 1630Z, the soft sounds of jazz and R&B started to fade, and it was time to liven things up with some hip hop and reggae as the younger crowd started to arrive.

"The older crowd had their fun with some of their music, but we had to do something for the younger generation as well," said Solomon. "I think it's good that people have all these different tastes and ideas that they want to share with other servicemembers. It brings a good variety to MWR."

Even though the night was a success, Henry said she would have liked to do things a little differently.

"I originally planned this to be an outside event on a Sunday afternoon, with some live entertainment," said Henry. "I wanted it to be Bagram's first jazz fest, but the live band fell through so I had to change my plans."

The other soldiers of the 48th CSH will be redeploying in a couple weeks, but Henry said she would love to see MWR have another jazz event.

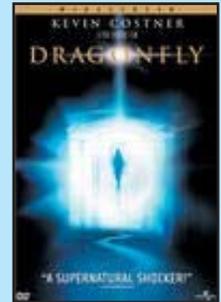
"I may not be here to see it, but there should definitely be more of these," said Henry. "People need a good change of pace sometimes and this is a good way for servicemembers to unwind to a more calm and mellow atmosphere."



Cards, dominoes, board games and the smooth sound of jazz tunes were some of things available to help soldiers relax at the jazz and rhythm and blues social event Saturday night.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "Dragonfly."
A grieving doctor is being contacted by his late wife through his patients near death experiences.



Tomorrow's movie will be "Red Dragon."

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Bagram:	Partly cloudy H: 84F L: 64F	Partly cloudy H: 84F L: 63F
Kandahar:	Clear H: 97F L: 63F	Clear H: 97F L: 61F
Kabul:	Mostly cloudy H: 81F L: 45F	Partly cloudy H: 79F L: 45F
Uzbekistan:	Sunny H: 91F L: 56F	Partly cloudy H: 91F L: 55F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Changing reconstructing hands...

Col. Larry Clayton, 321st Civil Affairs Brigade, from San Antonio, Texas, assumed command of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force from Col. Phil Maughan in Kabul Saturday. About 50 soldiers from the 360th CA Bde. will redeploy today to Columbia, S.C., after serving 9 months in Afghanistan. CA soldiers of the 321st CA Bde. will continue the mission of assisting the Afghan government in reconstruction efforts. (Photos by U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Amy L. Forsythe, CJCMOTF PAO.)

RETURN, from Page 1

ment-in-place by the Army's 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y.

Col. John Campbell, 504th PIR and Task Force-Devil commander, said he wanted to clear the air surrounding the RIP back to Fort Bragg.

"We're working to get back on the six-month timeline," he said. "Best case we'll start flying the Blue Devils in early August; the White Devils we'll start moving out in July."

Since January, Task Force-Devil has participated in several high-profile combat operations based out of Kandahar, including Operations Mongoose, Viper and Valiant Strike. Companies from the task force have also bolstered security at fire bases throughout Afghanistan — places like Solerno, Orgun-E and Shkin, the site of several at-

tacks in recent times.

Because of recent attacks the Blue Devils, scheduled to depart Kandahar soon to provide security at these fire bases on the Pakistan border, were cautioned not to let the imminent return to the States distract them from the mission at hand.

"Don't focus on (the RIP, though) it's hard not to," said Lt. Col. Richard Clarke, 3-504th PIR commander.

"I'm thinking we'll be back the first week of August — give or take a week or two — (but) we can't get complacent now, we can't let our guard down. We have to stay vigilant; even though we're two-thirds of the way done, we have to treat each day as a new day," he added.

Clarke also briefed his soldiers with a timeline once they returned to Fort Bragg. Two or three weeks would be spent moving into the new barracks at the post, followed

by 10-15 days of leave, then expert infantry badge training. In September or October, he expects the battalion to be back on the normal division readiness brigade alert rotation.

Regardless of the timeframe, both commanders praised the Blue Devils for the missions they've done while in Afghanistan.

"You've missed Boy Scouts meetings, teachers' conferences, anniversaries — this nation owes a great debt to you and your families — families whose sacrifice has been as great as yours," Campbell said. Remember the friendships you've made here, the camaraderie — it'll last a lifetime."

Clarke echoed those remarks, saying also, "You don't know how good you are, let me repeat that: you don't know how good you are. Afghanistan is a squad leader training camp, and what you learn here you will bring back with you."



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)



Cindy Parlow, left, now has 61 career goals.

Parlow scores four times in U.S. rout

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Cindy Parlow did everything in a hurry Saturday, scoring four goals in a 13-minute span before rushing off to Atlanta for a WUSA game.

Parlow, who hadn't scored all season, switched from forward to midfielder and led the U.S. women's soccer team past England 6-0 in an exhibition match.

It was the second straight time — and eighth overall — a player has scored four goals in a game for the U.S. team, which is 18-0-2 in its last 20 home games.

"We don't care who scores, how the ball gets in the back of the net, as long as we're on top at the end of the game," Parlow said.

Shannon MacMillan also scored four times in a 6-1 victory over Canada last month.

Parlow now has 61 career goals, becoming the fifth U.S. national team member to reach 60. She and three of her U.S. teammates left for Atlanta shortly after the match for a WUSA game between Parlow's Beat and Brandi Chastain's San Jose CyberRays.

"I was talking trash to Brandi on the bench, telling her my goal-scoring day is not over yet so watch out," Parlow said.

She had two goals in the final four minutes of the first half and added two more in the opening 10 minutes after the break, the last an unassisted shot in the 55th minute.

Parlow left the game a few minutes later to an ovation from the fans at Legion Field.

"Today was a game for her to say, 'Hey, coach, I can play there. You ask me to do something, I'll do it. I just want to be out on the field for us,'" U.S. coach April Heinrichs said.

The United States didn't get its first score until the 30th minute, then got three quick ones.

MacMillan dribbled toward the goal, then pushed the ball to Mia Hamm, who delivered it to the right corner of the net.

It was Hamm's third goal of the season and 139th with the U.S. team. The Selma native played all 90 minutes, with her parents and some friends from her hometown in attendance.

"The fact that I was born here, everybody makes me feel like it's home," Hamm said. "So I wanted to thank them by trying to stay out

there and play a little longer."

About 12 minutes later, Chastain passed it to Hamm, who quickly delivered it to Parlow to make it 2-0.

Goalkeeper Pauline Cope made a one-handed stop of a Julie Foudy shot in the 45th minute off a corner kick. Parlow headed it in off the rebound.

Tiffany Milbrett made it 6-0 with an unassisted score in the 68th minute.

U.S. goalkeeper Siri Mullinix knocked Jody Handley's free kick over the goal in the 77th minute to stop England's best scoring chance.

The United States attempted 19 shots while England had five.

Heinrichs sent in six substitutions to start the second half, but it didn't make much difference.

The United States, which is 7-1-3, will play four more exhibitions. Next up is Ireland June 14 in Salt Lake City.

The United States is considered the front-runner to host the 16-team World Cup in the fall after soccer's governing body, FIFA, decided earlier this month to move the event from China because of the SARS virus.

"We're getting real close right now," Parlow said. "We're not quite where we want to be come the opening game of the World Cup but hopefully we'll get there."

England missed qualifying for the World Cup with a pair of 1-0 losses to France.

Rangers easily defeat Hearts

GLASGOW, Scotland — The Scottish Premier League title will be decided on the final day of the season after Rangers secured a 2-0 win at Hearts on Sunday to draw level with Celtic at the top of the table. The Glasgow rivals go into next Sunday's final round of matches locked together on 94 points from 37 games with an identical goal difference, Rangers having scored one more to head the standings. Georgian striker Shota Arveladze missed a penalty in a tense encounter at Tynecastle, but it did not prove fatal to Rangers' title hopes as Ronald de Boer (65) and substitute Peter Lovenkrands (74) found the net. "Missing the penalty, I wondered if it was going to be our year," Rangers manager Alex McLeish told reporters.

"But then we've come up with a wonderful goal thanks to a great header from Ronald." Third-place Hearts, who are almost assured of a place in next season's UEFA Cup, probably deserved to be ahead at halftime as they knocked the visitors out of their stride with a purposeful pressing game. Mikel Arteta's early shot that shaved the bar was Rangers' best effort, but the visitors were grateful to goalkeeper Stefan Klos for keeping them level at the interval.

SPORTS, from Page 5

The German clawed a powerful Scott Severin free kick over the bar and produced a spell-binding one-handed stop to deny Mark de Vries. The game swung towards Rangers just after the hour mark when De Vries inexplicably handled a corner but Finnish goalkeeper Tepi Moilanen saved Arveladze's spot kick by knocking it on to a post. After Barry Ferguson missed two penalty kicks in a recent match at Dundee, the Rangers fans looked anxious but they did not have long to wait for the opening goal. Hearts surrendered possession in attack and Arveladze skipped down a flank before crossing for De Boer to bullet home a close-range header. Hearts were again exposed when Lovenkrands drilled the second into the net nine minutes later from De Boer's cut-back. "Hearts were in the ascendancy in the first half and Stefan Klos has made a terrific save from De Vries," McLeish added. "That's the kind of save that can win you the game as long as you put your chances in the net." Rangers will be favorites to win the title for the first time since 2000 on Sunday as they have a home game against Dunfermline Athletic, while champions Celtic return from Wednesday's UEFA Cup final against Porto to face Kilmarnock at Rugby Park.

Real Madrid one point behind

MADRID — Real Sociedad took back the top spot in Spain with a 1-0 win over Recreativo Huelva on Sunday but realized it would face a hard title fight when Real Madrid crushed Malaga 5-1 to move up to second.

With four games left to play, Real Sociedad leads the standings with 69 points, followed by Real Madrid on 68.

Deportivo Coruna, the only other side with a chance of winning the league, slipped to third on 66 points after its surprise 2-1 defeat at home to Valencia on Saturday.

A nervous Real Sociedad clinched victory over Recreativo thanks to a long-range effort from Nihat Kahveci after nine minutes and the excellent goalkeeping of Sander Westerveld throughout.

Real Madrid had no such problems beating Malaga as it brushed aside all talk of crisis at the club following their Champions League semifinal defeat by Juventus in midweek.

Fernando Morientes got the opening goal after five minutes, taking a pass from Guti and beating the keeper with a right-footed shot from just inside the area.

Raul made it 2-0 on the quarter-hour and he set up Roberto Carlos for the third four minutes later.

Raul was once again the provider for the fourth, setting up Morientes early in the second half, and Spain's leading international goalscorer scored the fifth himself, after Manu Sanchez had pulled one back for Malaga.

Valencia's victory over Deportivo on Saturday took it up to fourth place overnight and they held on to the final Champions League qualification spot as Celta Vigo suffered a shock 5-0 defeat away to Villarreal.

Celta had Peter Luccin sent off after just 20 minutes and Egyp-

tian striker Mido followed him three minutes later.

Villarreal took time to take advantage but their opening goal from Antonio Guayre on 49 minutes opened the floodgates.

With four games left to play, Valencia is fourth on 56 points, followed by Celta on 54.

Arsenal completes rare FA Cup repeat

CARDIFF, Wales — Arsenal became the first team in 21 years to win The Football Association Cup in consecutive years, beating Southampton 1-0 in the final Saturday.

Robert Pires scored with seven minutes left in the first half, getting his 16th goal of the season off the rebound of a Fredrik Ljungberg shot that was blocked.

Goalkeeper David Seaman, Arsenal's captain because Patrick Vieira is hurt, maintained the lead when he pushed a shot from Brett Ormerod over the crossbar with seven minutes remaining in the game. Gunners defender Ashley Cole then cleared a header from James Beattie off the line in the fifth minute of injury time.

Arsenal's Thierry Henry came close to goals three times, and Saints defenders twice cleared balls off the goal line.

Arsenal, which won the FA Cup for the ninth time, beat Chelsea 2-0 in last year's final. Arsenal also won the Premier League last year but finished second to Manchester United this season.

"What a pleasure it is to win something," Henry said. "To win nothing would've been a massive disappointment."

The previous team to win consecutive FA Cups was Tottenham Hotspur, which beat Manchester United in 1981 and Queen's Park Rangers in 1982, both times in replays following ties.

It was the 122nd FA Cup final and the first played indoors.

"We're happy to inform you that your daughter was shot during the war ... shot by CNN, NBC, and the BBC. She'll be on at five."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support