

The Geronimo



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Task Force 1-501st PIR, FOB Salerno, Afghanistan

November 21, 2003

Task Force's first combat mission

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

Task Force 1-501 PIR came under attack Nov. 10 when two trucks contracted to transport equipment from Bagram Air Field to FOB Salerno were hijacked. The enemy showed their ferocious might by firing RPG rounds at one of the containers.

Casualties from the attack were a Christmas wreath, five razors and 14 of 24 Coca Colas that Chap. (Capt.) Brad Lee had squirreled away for the deployment.

"It's a miracle that not one but two RPG rounds hit, but in essence did little or no damage," said Lee. "That is the hand of God at work."

Although the outcome of this attack is humorous, the soldiers who had gear in the eight hijacked containers con-

sider themselves lucky and know that the damage could have been worse.

The two tricons connected to the one struck by the RPG held the tools and diagnostic equipment for the Forward Support Company's maintenance support team.

"If there would have been catastrophic loss, where our stuff wasn't salvageable, our mission here would have been obsolete," said Sgt. First Class Kevin Kanke, MST team leader. "Until our equipment was replaced we wouldn't have been able to do anything for the task force."

To help ensure that the Coke was the only casualty, the recovery of the hijacked containers was planned and executed as a combat mission. The trucks were 65 kilometers west of FOB Salerno on a stretch of road within a valley where the enemy could

have been laying in wait on a nearby ridge line with another RPG round ready to fire at the recovery team.

To help prevent this, when the recov-



In the early morning hours, soldiers receive a final brief before loading trucks for their recover mission of the connexes.

ery team moved out Nov. 14 they were not alone.

Detachment D set up control points on the road north and south of the connexes with their armored HM-MWVs. Platoons from Company A and Headquarters Company off-loaded their vehicles and ascended to the high ground overlooking the valley.

"We were pulling security on the ridges around the site so that the engineers and recovery team could come in and do their job without interference from the ACM (Anti-Coalition Militia)," said Sgt. First Class Darrell Daniels, 2nd platoon sergeant, Co. A.

The infantrymen's security mission was twofold – they not only provided security for the recovery team, but also security for the task force's convoy coming from Bagram. The convoy brought the remainder of the

See **RECOVERY** page 4



Company A soldiers head to the high ground to pull security for the team working on the road below to recover the connexes.

News briefs

Zip Code Change

The zip code for FOB Salerno has changed to 09354. Our mail will flow through Bagram and delivery to the camp will be every 5-7 days, instead of 7-10.

Mail already sent will still be delivered.

Mail Call

The 300th Adjutant General Postal Company will be on FOB Salerno Nov. 22.

They are only set up to take cash for the mailing of your packages. Boxes must be open for the postal clerks to verify that there are no weapons being mailed home. The 300th will have a limited number of boxes with them, so bring your on box.

Hard Rock Café

The Hard Rock has DVD and VHS movies for rental. ID is required for movies leaving the Café.

A fund is being established to purchase more DVDs. See SSG Troth at the Hard Rock or the ALOC to drop off your donation or movie preference.

Geronimo Library

There is a professional reading library in the ALOC. Some of the titles are: We were soldiers once... and young; Platoon Leader; The Forgotten Soldier; and The Killer Angels. See Capt. Donigian to sign them out.

Turkey Bowl

Teams hit the gridiron Thursday to test their mettle in a Thanksgiving Turkey Bowl. Come out and cheer the teams on. Keep your eyes open for flyers for the location and time of the games.

Chapel Services

Protestant Services	Saturday	1500
	Sunday	0400
Catholic	Sunday	0500
Latter Day Saints	Sunday	0600
Men of Honor	Wednesday	1500
Prayer/Meditation Hour	Mon-Fri	0700

VFW

Anyone interested in joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars stop by the ALOC for an application.



Photo by SFC Ned Longoria

Sgt. First Class Scott Lesch is reenlisted by Lt. Col. Harry C. Glenn III in front of an Apache helicopter at FOB Salerno, Nov. 18. Other reenlistees that day were Sgt First Class Ned Longoria, Staff Sgt. Damon Geist and Sgt. Roderick Fenison.



"By George, you're right! I was supposed to hit him on the knee."

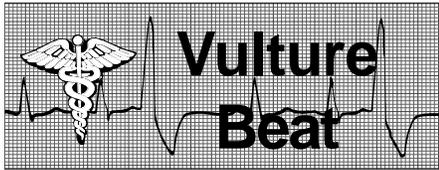
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The Geronimo can also be found at: www.usarak.army.mil/1501.

Questions or comments should be directed to: 1/501st Public Affairs Office. DNV 318-580-3067.

Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Harry C. Glenn III
Editor Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

Vulture medicine is alive and well



By Dr. (Lt. Col.) Robert Ladd
TF 1-501 Surgeon

Greetings fellow Geronimos. As I sit in my lounge chair soaking up the warm sun and working on my farmer's tan, eating chocolate from home, my tent mates racked out for an afternoon siesta, I am reminded that "War is Hell".

I am comforted though by the fact that vulture medicine is alive and well. The Battalion Aid Station is up and running with ongoing improvements. Training plans are being formalized. Local EMS plans are being put in place and we've had incredible support from our local Forward Surgical Team. Life is good.

As I contemplate what to write I am reminded by what my mother told me prior to deployment- Make sure you always wear clean underwear. I think she would have a nightmare around an infantry unit.

I've learned there are many different levels of "clean". For instance just because one side may

be dirty doesn't mean the other side is. Also the Army did a great service making them brown instead of white.

Of course working in the medical arena I have found that going "commando" is very popular. I don't think this is what my mother had in mind.

Any rate where was I going with all this- oh yes, preventive medicine. Preventive medicine will keep us happy, healthy, and something. I need another chocolate. Now I remember- and prevent that chaffing that occurs after wearing the same clothes too long.

By now I am sure you are waiting with eager anticipation of what you can do to keep the Vulture team happy and well rested.

You can start by taking your weekly mefloquine. Remember "Mefloquine Monday" Sounds like it should be a song. Make it your Monday morning ritual. Mefloquine Tuesday just doesn't sound as good.

This will help keep you from getting malaria, a nasty disease you don't want to take home. It works kind of like birth control pills; you have to take it regularly for it to work well. You don't want to hear those famous words "I only skipped a few days".

Other preventive medicine measures include- and I'm going to sound like your mother now- eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and drink lots of water. This helps to prevent hemorrhoids, rectal fissures, constipation and those clogged toilets we keep having. While our local Colo-rectal surgeon may appreciate this, if you have to visit him your probably in deep

Make sure you wash your hands regularly and cover your mouth as it will help minimize the spread of those disease causing germs we all love so well. Keep your hooch's clean and well aired out. With my tent mates that last bean dinner nearly killed me off, and here I've been worried about RPG rounds. At least I haven't seen any Tali-mice around for awhile.

As I end my rambling remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of, I can't remember, must be a pound of chocolate. Make that dark chocolate. Until next time this is Vulture Medicine out.

Toothbrush PMCS

Proper weekly PMCS of your toothbrush will keep it working (and smelling better) longer.

Debris removed from your teeth from brushing them builds up on your toothbrush. Water coming out of a faucet is strong enough to knock the particles loose. But, simply pouring water out of a bottle (as we must do here) will not get your toothbrush entirely clean.

Once a week, put your toothbrush inside a partially filled water bottle and shake it up. The agitation will do the job and keep your toothbrush fresher longer.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

The battalion aid station is open for patients. Sick call is 0300 to 0500 hours.

Recovery: Cont. from page 1

task force assets to FOB Salerno.

Besides the troops on the ground, an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle made a couple of passes over the area and saw no enemy. Other aircraft, manned and armed, were on standby to provide air sup-

port if needed.

With the high ground secured the engineers moved in to survey the containers. Each truck held three 7-ft tricons and a 20-foot connex. One truck had been driven off the road and lost its load, with the large

connex landing on its roof and the three smaller ones landing on their doors. The containers on the second truck were held in place by metal bars, while the trucks front tire set inches away from the top of a 10-foot wall.

After pulling the truck

away from the edge, Task Force members attempted to start the truck, in hopes of driving it and its containers back to the FOB Salerno.

When all attempts failed, soldiers formed human chains and emptied the contents of the eight containers into the back of military and civilian trucks for transportation back to FOB Salerno.

So as not to give the enemy anything to use, EOD personnel used C4 explosive to destroy the four containers that had been damaged when they rolled off the truck. The remaining eight containers will be recovered and brought back to FOB Salerno.



One of the high jacked trucks sits on the edge of a 10-foot wall ready to topple over. Scorch marks from the two RPG rounds that killed the chaplain's Coke can be seen on the tricon.

SNAFU ALPHA

By PFC Brady Monroe Salli
M240B gunner "volunteered" poet

Away from Alaska to Afghanistan we go
We play in the sand instead of the snow
The flight was long, our bodies cramped to hell
160 plus Geronimos, one bad smell
In the desert and mountains is where we
Then return to Salerno, home crap home
The privates they work, all sweaty and
smelly
NCOs point their fingers, and fill their
bellies
3rd Plt. Works through the night to protect
ourselves
CPT Brown waits till we sleep, to build
his shelves
LT Peterson has formed the master plan
Train instead of sleep, he thinks we are in
Vietnam
SFC Adams, we beg of you please
Take the medication for your invisible lats disease
The squad leaders work with Joe, as they pull guard
SSG Rivera just mopes around, being platoon sergeant

must be hard

SSG Reed plays with his blowgun all the time
SSG Childers benches 300, using only his jawline
SSG Hipolito is the most high-speed ranger I've met
He's like a box of chocolates, you never know what
personality you'll get

PFC Ververkennis likes to stutter, PFC Salli likes to
whine

I'm sorry to report our first casualty, SSG Clark's
receding hairline

SSG Sarten looks at us, like we're all a bunch
of chumps

SGT Mathews won't fix his gap, so he
whistles when he jumps

The showers are cold, the chow is
inconsistent

Before SSG White joined the Army he
was Monty Burns assistant

Then there's SPC Barber, who thinks
he can cut hair

SGT Herbert used to be will's cousin on
Fresh Prince of Bel Air

Now I must end this poem of mine

But be assured I'll mention your husband next time
Please don't feel the need to give me any credit
Around of applause for CPT Condrey
Who spent an hour to edit.





Photo by SFC Ned Longoria

Task Force 1-501st PIR members take a break before starting off on their second day of convoying from Bagram Air Field to FOB Salerno, to show their American pride.

Sanitarian engineers solve problems

By Spc. Kelly Hunt,
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan, – In a country torn apart by war, it's hard to find documentation on anything, let alone information regarding the health issues that face Afghanistan today.

So instead of becoming archeologists and trying to dig up the lost records, sanitation engineers stationed at Bagram Air Base decided to collect data and create their own records, starting with testing the country's water supplies.

"When I first got here I was overwhelmed," said 2nd Lt. Quentin Lightbourn, Coalition Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force. The engineers began by asking local people questions, and "we started from there," he said.

Describing the sanitation engineer's role as being "a problem solver," Lightbourn

said sanitation engineers usually work on military issues dealing with U.S. soldiers, but that this is a different mission.

"For civil affairs, I'm investigating the health problems that are accruing in Afghanistan," he said. "We're trying to determine what's making these people sick. That's what my concern is — public health."

With no documentation or records of public health, troops were unsure what they were up against.

"The country's been worn and torn, (and) everything that's been recorded has been lost or destroyed by the Russians or (the) Taliban, so basically what we're trying to do is create a standard," said

Lightbourn. "We're generating all this data that's been lost."

Starting over means getting down to the very basics. For this team, it meant collecting samples to generate records.

'We're trying to determine what's making these people sick,'
- Lightbourn

"We started off by recording everything we do," said Lightbourn. "Our goal is to travel across the countryside and get

water samples." This task is easier said than done. There are an enormous amount of water supplies that need to be tested, and in their time here, sanitation engineers have managed to collect nearly 200 samples from various areas throughout the country.

What they have found so

far is that nearly 60 percent of the water samples collected have been fairly clean, which means the big problem lies somewhere else. Troops began planning their next move.

"Another aspect is the habits (of) the people as far as dealing with sanitation," said Lightbourn. "When I do our (civil affairs) missions, I look around to see what's different about this village from the next."

Lightbourn and his team work hand-in-hand with the medical teams in Bagram to collect information on the various diseases in the country and in what villages each disease thrives in. The information will supplement the sanitation investigation.

"Treatment of the water is important, but what's most important is education," he said. "War is over now; it's time to start living."



ASK MSG NORDSTROM

If you have a question for MSG Nordstrom, drop it off at the ALOC.

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
Since you were there for the invention of the wheel and the light bulb, I figured you might know how the poop sled came into existence.
Signed, PV2 Stinkypants

Stinkypants,
I sincerely appreciate this question despite the subtle sarcasm. I would like to take this opportunity to educate all Salerno troopers on a wonderful TTP that will help us all during the next 9 months: prep the objective and set the conditions prior to launching your main assault.

And don't forget your responsibilities with consolidation and reorganization. Remember, you can never be too thorough! The sled works for me!
MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I've heard a rumor that one of our senior NCOs had quite an interesting career prior to joining the Army. I also heard that he's been known to drift through the FOB, popping in unexpectedly into tents, showers, etc. How does someone like this rise to the top in a profession as respected as ours?
Respectfully, SFC Standards

Standards,
I know what you're talking about. Brother, all I can say, is some people will do anything to get to get promoted. If this guy even thinks about popping his head into my tent or shower, oh boy, will he get a thing or two coming his way!

MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I have been admiring CPT Dyrenforths goggles. They make him look so intimidating – almost super hero like! Where can I get a pair?
Respectfully, Batman Wanna Be

BWB,
Dude, you've got issues. I know they were an RFI item but I don't suggest wearing them 24/7. I do suggest you stay away from the mortar tents late at night. I hear that's when super heroes come out and play.

MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I'm feeling a little self-conscious about the guards at the latrines. I mean that's always been my happy place and my time for me. Now I know that someone is going check out how I conducted business after I leave. Isn't this an infraction on my privacy rights?
Sincerely, 2LT Happy

LT Happy,
Sir, if you only knew what things the TOC gets to see with its mighty camera. Don't complain. Start cleaning up your stinking mess and stay out of the bushes at night!
MSG N



History of Afghanistan

Afghanistan's recent history is characterized by war and civil unrest. The Soviet Union invaded in 1979, but was forced to withdraw 10 years later by anti-Communist mujahidin forces supplied and trained by the US, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and others.

Fighting subsequently continued among the various mujahidin factions, giving rise to a state of warlordism that eventually spawned the Taliban. Backed by foreign sponsors, the Taliban developed as a political force and eventually seized power.

The Taliban were able to capture most of the country, aside from Northern Alliance strongholds primarily in the north-east, until US and allied military action in support of the opposition following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks forced the groups downfall.

In late 2001, major leaders from the Afghan opposition groups and diaspora met in Bonn, Germany and agreed on a plan for the formulation of a new government structure that resulted in the inauguration of Hamid Karzai as Chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority on Dec. 22, 2001.

The AIA held a nationwide Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) in June 2002, and Karzai was elected President by secret ballot of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.



TF 1-501st PIR

How many of the following soldiers can you locate in the puzzle?

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Bishop (SPC HQ Co) | Kortus (PFC Co C) |
| Bransford (SPC Co A) | Larson (SPC E Bat) |
| Brown (CPT Co C) | Lowry (PFC Co A) |
| Culliton (SPC Co C) | Miller (SPC E Bat) |
| Daw (PFC Co C) | Randolph (SPC HQ Co) |
| Dodds (PFC HQ Co) | Riley (SPC, Co A) |
| Elery (SPC HQ Co) | Rios (SPC Co B) |
| Gibson (SPC 864 ENG) | Salli (PFC Co C) |
| Guzman (CPL Co B) | Theus (PFC E Bat) |
| Ireland (PFC E Bat) | White (SPC HQ Co) |
| Jarzab (SSG HQ Co) | Young (SPC, Co A) |