

The Geronimo



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

November 28, 2003

Sappers ensure safe celebration

Story and Photos by Staff
Sgt. Jeff Troth

Task Force 1-501st PIR engineers helped build a stronger relationship between the Americans at FOB Salerno and the neighboring town of Khowst.

The Headquarters Company soldiers used their skills to ensure a prayer site was free of mines. Around 20,000 Muslims were expected at the site Tuesday to celebrate Eid-al-Fitr, a time for pray and to eat snack food after Ramadan, a month of daylight fasting.

The Afghanistan Militia Force requested assistance from TF 1-501, in hopes

of stopping any attempt by the anti-coalition militia to disrupt the celebration in order to show that the new government and military could not protect its own people.

“We went to clear the area because of their festival,” said Spc. Antonio Rodriguez, Engineer platoon. “It was a good mission to me, we used the mine detectors a lot, plus we got to help the Afghans.”

The engineers used four teams to clear the area. The first team member walked the site, which was larger than three football fields, and swept it with an AN/



Gunner Spc. Ramone Rodriguez and Pfc. Bryce Standley, both Company C, guard against an anti-coalition militia attack.

PSS-12 mine detector. When a metal object was detected in the ground the area was marked with red spray paint.

This brought into play the second member of the team, who using a probe and their hands cleared away the dirt

to expose what had set off the detector. The majority of the hits turned out to be nails or aluminum – no mines were found.

“Since we didn’t have EOD with us, the plan was to blow any mines we found in place,” Rodriguez said.

The sappers were not the only ones that put themselves in harm’s way to ensure a peaceful celebration. While the engineers were busy clearing the area, soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Company C and 1st Platoon, Detachment D pulled security around the site.

“They did a good job keeping the people away from us, we were able to do our job without worrying



Spc. Ernesto Rojas sweeps for mines while Spc. Antonio Rodriguez probes a possible contact.

See MINES page 3

News briefs

Laundry Days

Laundry drop off procedures have changed. Soldiers are no longer authorized to drop off their own laundry. Due to the increased number of personnel on FOB Salerno laundry will be dropped off with your unit supply the day prior to your unit's day, which is listed below.

Saturday	FSC and Attached Units
Sunday	HQ Company
Monday	Company A
Tuesday	Company B
Wednesday	Company C
Thursday	Detachment D and Battery E

Free Books

Books and magazines are available for your reading enjoyment at the Hard Rock Cafe. Once finished with them bring them back so that others may read them.

If you have any books or magazines you are through with, instead of throwing them away, recycle them at the Hard Rock Cafe. Help out your fellow task force soldiers.

The World

Defense Bill

President Bush signed a \$401.3 billion defense bill, which includes a 4.15% pay rise.

Debris hits space station

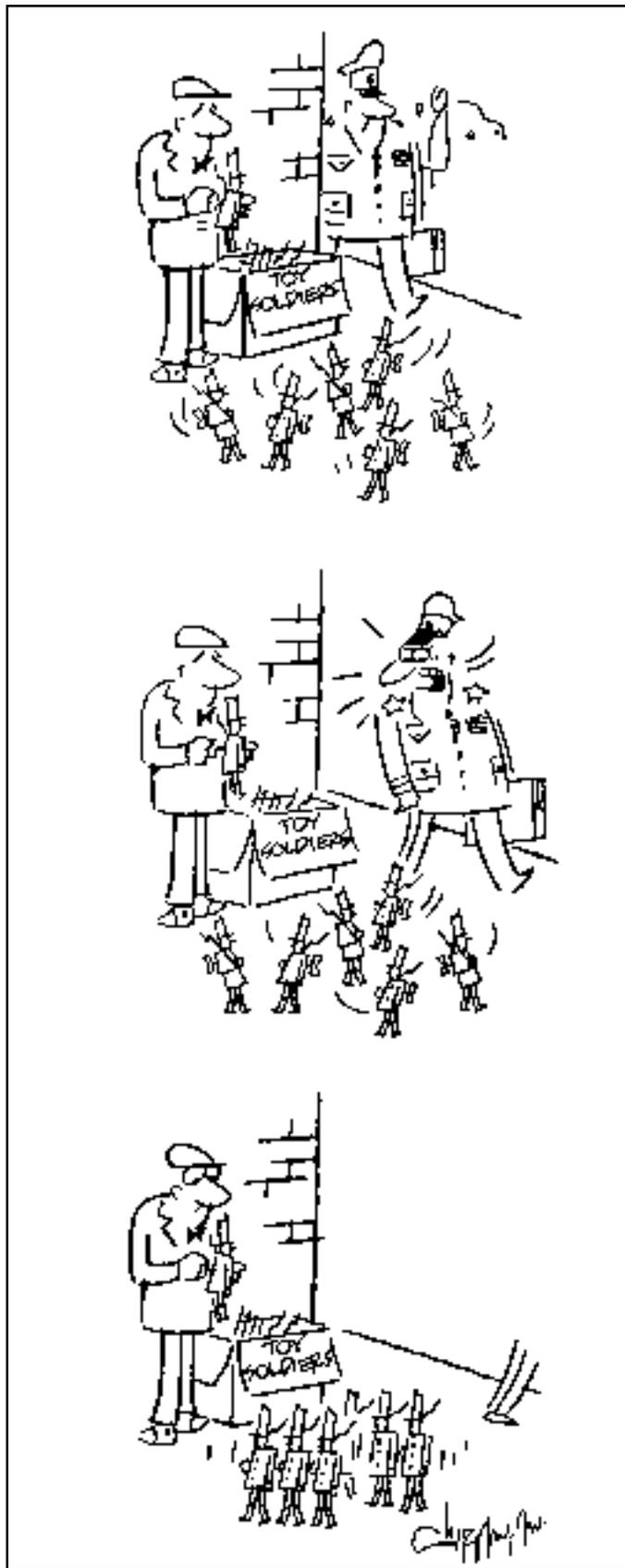
The U.S.-Russian crew of the international space station heard what sounded like a "tin can" being crushed against the outer hull, but Russian space officials said the men were safe and there were no immediate signs of damage.

Tiger pops question

Tiger Woods and his Swedish girlfriend, Elin Nordegren, are engaged. He proposed while in Fancourt, South Africa for the President's Cup.

Dolphins feast on Cowboys

Jay Fiedler and Chris Chambers connect for three touchdown passes and Fiedler ran for another, leading the Miami Dolphins to 40-21 victory over the Dallas Cowboys Thursday.



Always on my mind

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Sharon McBride
U.S. Army Alaska PAO

FORT RICHARDSON — The children of Ursa Minor are as busy as elves doing up care packages for soldiers of the 1-501 Airborne Task Force, which recently departed for Afghanistan.

As a part of the “Adopt-A-Platoon” program that originated at the school, students are creating gift bags, goodies, personal letters and poems and other items that will bring the small comforts of home a little closer to the soldiers while they are in Central Asia.

“The goal is to send something over every one to one-and-half months for the duration of their deployment,” said Lori Patin, Family School Services coordinator.

Out of 250 students who attend Ursa Minor, 40 parents are now in Central Asia participating in Operation Enduring Freedom. And so far, the program has been a great success, not only for the troops but for the children and spouses who have been left behind.

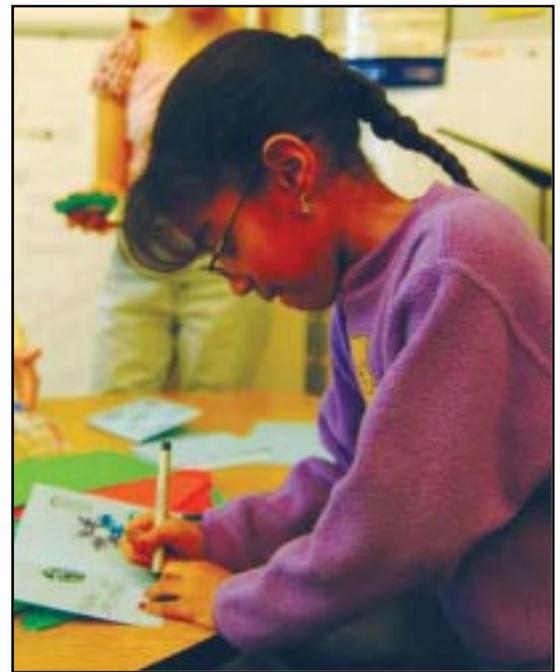
“It’s turned into a great way to talk about the deployment in a positive way, and to assure (the children) that their parents are being taken care of,” said Patin.

Because of the program, more spouses of deployed troops have begun volunteering at the school.

“Some spouses that haven’t been involved with volunteering at the school before are now coming in every day,” said Patin. “It’s making the time go by faster for them.”

Dionne Jones, wife of Sgt. Edward Jones, is one of them.

“This is our first deployment, but



Angela Arroyo along with other children of Ursa Minor Elementary School make Christmas cards for TF 1-501st PIR soldiers in Afghanistan.

this is why he joined the military,” said Jones, adding that she doesn’t mind volunteering at the school because three of their five kids attend Ursa Minor.

“Besides going to college and taking care of the kids, it helps to pass the time,” she said.

Spc. Jesse Enos, Headquarters Company (on ladder) and Pfc. Aaron Jackson, Detachment D, put the finishing touches on the Geronimo crest, which adorns the front of the Task Force 1-501st PIR Tactical Operations Center.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

Mines: Cont. from page 1

about getting shot by the enemy,” Rodriguez said.

For the infantrymen this mission was different than others the Task Force had already done.

“This was a request from the AMF, they set the location, the time and the route,” briefed Company C Commander Capt. Jason Condrey, to his troops before they rolled out the gate. “Assume that the mission has already been compromised.”

This put the soldiers on a heightened sense of aware-

ness for the drive through Khowst and on location.

Luckily nothing occurred and once the engineers completed their job, Condrey handed off the cleared area to the AMF, who guarded it until the Eid-al-Fitr celebration.

“The mission was an absolute success, there were no incidents and we cleared their prayer site for the festival,” Condrey said. “It shows that we are here to help the people and to provide a safe and secure area for them.”



Thanksgiving Day festivities at FOB



The soldiers of Task Force 1-501st PIR spent Thanksgiving Day on the gridiron. Battery E walked away with first place in the flag football competition. Headquarters Company garnered second and 1st Platoon, Company A took third. After the championship game the task force officers defeated the NCOs 14-7. (CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE) The NCOs battle through the officer's offensive line on their way to the QB. Spc. Calvin Lewis and Spc. Adam Loera, Forward Area Refueling Point block a pass intended for 1st Lt. Joe Dutcher, Surgical Hospital. Sgt. Dywane Ford, Battery E, heads for the end zone. Sgt. Kory West, Bat. E, is unable to hold onto the ball as Pfc. Christopher Frazier, Headquarters Company, defends him. During the officer/NCO game, Sgt. First Class Alexander Barnett's run ends as he is touched.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth



(CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE) During the officer/NCO game, Sgt. Tchacka Cain, catches a pass in the end zone. Cpt. Brent Morrow quarterback for the officers. Sgt. Frances Mucci puts corn-on-the-cob in the water. Task Force members chow down on their Thanksgiving Day dinner. Spc. James Yoho slices up turkey. After losing the game, the NCOs serve dinner.



ASK MSG NORDSTROM



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

Dear MSG Nordstrom,

My window for reenlistment has just opened and I was looking to reclass. Everyday I pass by the TOC and I notice you always sitting outside smoking cigars and drinking coffee. How exactly do I reclass for that MOS?

Signed, SPC I Work for a Living

Dear SPC I have too much time on my hands,
DOPUSHUPS!
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,

I haven't been able to sleep since drinking a cup of your coffee at last week's BUB. With

the upcoming mission and planned lack of sleep, I was wondering if I could get your recipe – exactly how many parts turpentine do you use with cups of water?

Sincerely, Sleepless in Salerno

Dear SIS,

I don't use turpentine – it's a special blend of Starbucks that I get at the North Gate Mart, along with these discarded bottles of ammonia I find beside my bunk each morning. Enjoy!

MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,

What is that out of control growth on the BALO's upper lip? I didn't think that officers were authorized to grow mustaches.

Signed, 2LT Baby Face

Dear MEDO,

First of all, you couldn't grow one if you wanted. Give it another 5 years. Secondly, all pilots wear mustaches. Of course, the BALO isn't a pilot, so I'm not too sure either.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Trotter
After dropping off personnel and supplies, CH-47 Chinooks leave FOB Salerno with a HMMWV slung below.

Maybe he's doing it for the Ron Jeremy look-a-like contest that the FST is holding next Thursday night.
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I am having trouble zeroing my PEQ-2 and my CCO. Can you give me some tips?

Sincerely, PFC Lost at the Range

Dear LATR,
I feel your pain; I have the same troubles myself. Pull out a crossbow, however, and I'll get you straight. I wrote the TM on that thing.
MSGN

L S I B A M I A N Q H D A Y Z
D N H E Z K R O K G O D K Y A
D Z O I G O G R A E M R E S B
A A K K N N L J B B R D G A B
B M A G O D E U U E R N G U Z
L L L H M U A A L A H H N H N
A A U A E Z O N G N L A E K N
L L T Z Y D T D D A E R A A S
A A R N M M K O N D A A R N A
L N D I A E H N K T N N Y D R
A D A N N Y O D U Z A O R A H
J A S U E D W A N A A A A H A
R Y A E H A S I A D B R N A D
A Y E A T N T A R O Q O M R D
R N Y T R A B D U R Z A M O E

Afghan cities

How many of the following Afghanistan cities/towns can you locate in the puzzle?

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| Baghlan | Landay |
| Bamian | Meydan |
| Garceyz | Meymaneh |
| Ghazni | Moqor |
| Herat | Orgun |
| Jalalabad | Rudbar |
| Kabul | Sarhadd |
| Kandahar | Shindand |
| Khowst | Tokzar |
| Konduz | Tulak |