



## Grenades thrown at convoy in Khowst

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

The paratroopers are nearing Forward Operating Base Salerno, their home for the past six months. They are less than a mile from post, on a road that they and their fellow Geronimos have traveled almost every day.

They are so close that their minds start to wander and think of clearing their weapons, and the hot shower and super supper awaiting them just across a couple more wadis after three days in the field.

Their thoughts of relaxation are quickly shattered by an explosion near one of the HMMWVs.

"I thought that it was an IED (improvised explosive

device)," said Pfc. Jamie Burns, Detachment D. "As I looked out the window I saw a guy cocking back his arm to throw a hand grenade."

Burns and several other members of the convoy opened fire on the Afghan, ensuring that he would never throw a hand grenade or anything else ever again.

The fact that Burns, the driver of his vehicle, was able to shoot at the attacker was just luck. That morning his vehicle had broken down and he was being



IRF Soldiers, Staff Sgt. Keith Schmidt (left to right) Spc. Bryan Williams and Spc. Gerald Brown, pull security outside a suspected compound.

towed back to the FOB.

"I am glad the vehicle broke down," said Sgt. James Duffy. "If they hadn't shot when they did, I just know that second grenade was heading for my vehicle."

Duffy isn't the only one who feels lucky. The first grenade hit the beam that separates the driver seat from the troop area on the HMMWV and fell onto the road. The Afghan picked it up and threw it again before it exploded in the air and injured two Battery B, 377<sup>th</sup> Parachute Field Artillery Regiment Soldiers.

"It was all luck that the

injuries were not worse," said Staff Sgt. Kelly Marlow, Bat. B's 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon sergeant. "If the guy would have thrown it just a second sooner, or a second later the grenade would have landed in the vehicle on the first throw."

If this would have happened one of the five artillerymen in the vehicle could have been seriously injured. As it was, shrapnel hit Sgt. David Parker in the hand and Pvt. Allen Tufts, II, on the check.

"It happened so quickly, 30 to 40 seconds and all the

See **GRENADE** page 5



Task force Soldiers take a bead on a suspected compound as 1st Sgt. Robert Levis, Bat. B, calls in a situation report.

## Salerno Happenings

### The VFW Wants YOU

Join the Veterans of Foreign Wars and you are joining an organization that lobbied for hardship pay, sent hundreds of thousands of care packages to soldiers and provided prepaid telephone cards to Soldiers. A membership drive for the VFW is taking place on FOB Salerno until May 25. A free introductory membership is offered, as well as an annual (\$35) or lifetime membership (\$245). Stop by the ALOC and see Cpt. Aram Donigian for more details.

### Mailing Address

All non-501st personnel on the FOB check the mailing address on your letters and packages. If TF 1-501st PIR is in your mailing address, your mail will be forwarded to Alaska when the Geronimos leave. Notify all family and friends to stop using TF 1-501st PIR.

## The World

### Elmendorf Airmen take Glacier Plunge

A day of four wheeling on Knik Glacier took a turn for the worst Sunday for seven Elmendorf Air Force Base Airmen and one family member. As they were heading back to the main road, one of their four vehicles dropped nose first into a crevasse, the two riders were submerged in the glacier water up to their shoulders. Four total slipped into the icy water. The seven spent an unscheduled night shivering in the woods. In the morning the four were treated for hypothermia. To make matters worse, when the airmen went back to where they had left the four-wheeler it was gone.

### Man Beheaded for Being American

Nick Berg, a missing civilian contractor, was beheaded Saturday in Baghdad. The al Qaeda members that killed him claim they did it because they were angered by coalition abuses of Iraqi prisoners. The video showing the execution bore the title "Abu Musag al-Zarqawi shown slaughtering an American," referring to an associate of Usama bin Laden believed to be behind a wave of suicide bombings in Iraq and the assassination of a U.S. diplomat in Jordan in 2002.

Berg, who was not affiliated with any coalition agency, had been warned to leave Iraq but refused according to a U.S. official.

## FOB faces

What mom's words of wisdom do you live by?



*When you get older, you'll understand why I'm right. And she was right.*  
Spc. Brian Randolph  
Headquarters Co., Mortar Platoon

*Always wear clean underwear. Cause you never know who might see them.*

1st Lt. Eric Swiger  
Headquarters Co., BAF ALOC



*Know you can do better in life. Prove it.*

Spc. Adam Burris  
Co. A, 528th Engineer Battalion



*If you are not remembered, you never really existed.*

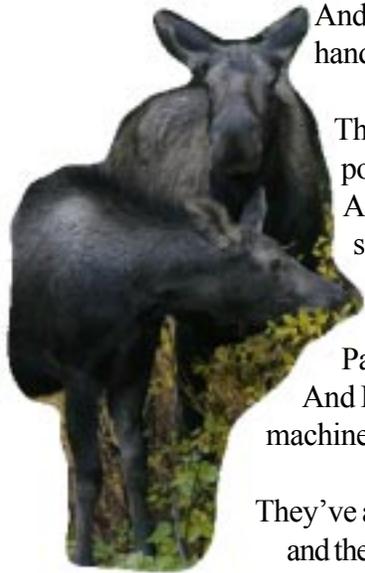
Spc. Serjio Cerda  
Headquarters Co., Medical Platoon



# Geronimo Pride

By TFA

The weather's getting hotter here  
in dusty ol' Afghanistan,  
And I'm thinking of my frontier home  
in a much, much cooler land,  
The kings are running on Ship Creek now,  
and the moose are starting to graze,  
And though my mind is on the task at  
hand, my heart's in another place.



The halibut are feeding and a 400  
pounder was caught in Kachemak Bay,  
And Salerno grub is alright, but I'd love  
some deep fried halibut today.  
The snow's melting at Alyeska, but  
there's still some up in Hatcher's  
Pass,  
And I wouldn't mind one ride on my snow  
machine before all that's there is grass.

They've already run the Iditarod,  
and the Alaskan Browns are coming out of  
winter's rest,  
And though I miss those wild woods,  
I'll stay focused here, continuing to do my best.  
Oh, it's just another summer  
that I won't spend fishing on the beautiful Kenai,  
And that rod and reel that I bought last year,  
well . . . now I'm wondering why.

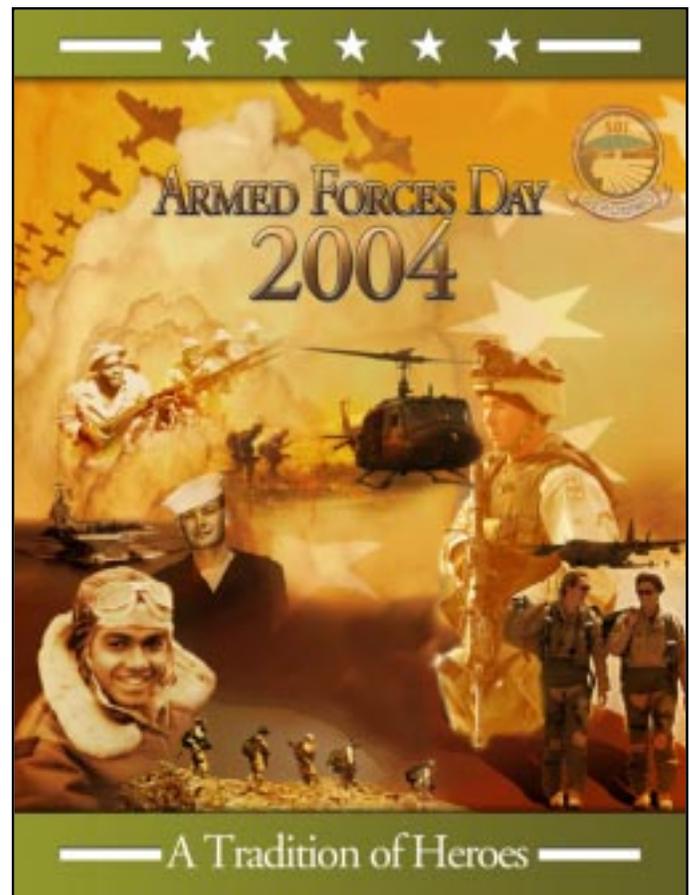
I miss the Sleeping Lady, Knik Arm,  
Denali, and the land of the midnight sun,  
But my duty brought me to the desert sand  
and there's still a job to be done.  
I'm proud to be a Geronimo paratrooper,  
AIRBORNE and "elite" as some might say,  
And I know the price of freedom  
and why I am serving in this land so far away.

The freedom that is never clearer  
than when felt in an Alaskan breeze,  
Defines the sort of nation  
that I hope my children will grow up to see.

A land where evil men  
who use fear and terror to do my family harm,  
Will be brought to justice and destroyed  
because I took up arms.

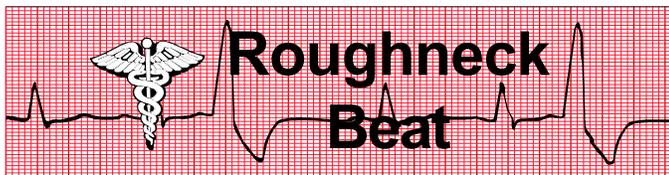
We have brothers and sisters elsewhere,  
fighting this same tough fight,  
And though we might pay with our lives,  
our actions are just and right.  
For America is still the last best hope  
for man, woman, and child,  
So I'd rather be here serving  
than back home hunting elk in the wild.

I am a man of action,  
like my father and grandfather before me,  
And I choose to serve  
with the brave today who stand for liberty.  
So, yes, I miss my family,  
my mountains, the streams, and the skies of blue,  
But God made me to be a Geronimo,  
and it's an honor to serve with you!



**Saturday, May 15**

# 325th grows to meet FOB needs



by 1st Lt. Jason Potts  
325th FST

Hi all you Salerno brothers and sisters! This is Lt. Potts your friendly 325th Forward Surgical Team triage officer.

I know some of you have met me already by either being a patient, SPC Riley, or one of the Vulture medics, SFC Thomas & SSG Moyers. I would just like to update everyone on what we have been doing here for the past two months.

We have been fairly busy with sick call, which runs from 0400 to 0600 zulu. We have seen approximately 600 patients during sick call hours and have treated about 90 traumas.

Those numbers do not reflect the people we treat at the gate or other medical missions we do with the school.

If you did not already know the FST is going to expand and move to the Class 1 yard to support the growing needs of the FOB. As you know, the FOB is growing in leaps and bounds.

We are constantly getting new faces in almost every day as evidence by the long lines at the DFAC and the cold showers.

Now I wouldn't be much of a medical person if I didn't add something about preventive medicine into this story so here it goes. Wash your hands and wash them often, especially when you visit the DFAC for the gourmet food.

Also encourage all the new folks to the FOB to do the same. I have been noticing a lot of people lately bypassing the hand washing station while in line for chow.

I know you all say I don't wash my hands while I am in the field why should I have to do it now? Have any of you heard of the "Salerno crud"? I thought so. Not washing your hands is a good way

to spread that bug or any new ones that all the new faces are bringing to Salerno with them.

If you get the "crud" or anything else you may get to pay me a visit and really get to know me and my 18 gauge needle. So please wash your hands and if you want to meet me that bad just stop by and say hi.

There is one more issue I feel compelled to mention before this portion of the Geronimo is complete, hydration. The hottest part of the year is not even here yet and some of the days have already felt like its about two degrees cooler than

the surface of the sun!

In this heat you need to be drinking about 6-8 bottles of water a day, and that's if you are not doing anything. If you start

feeling like you are thirsty you are already dehydrated.

Thirst is one of the last indicators for hydration.

If you are out on missions and are consuming large amounts of water you need to ensure you are replacing your electrolytes. How do you get

electrolytes you ask?

Well first you need to eat all of your MRE. They have enough salt, potassium, and calcium to keep you going to complete the mission. If you don't feel so inclined to eat all your MRE or even portions of it you should have some sort of beverage mix with you. Alternating two canteens of water with one canteen of Gatorade is usually a good way to stay hydrated and still stay alert.

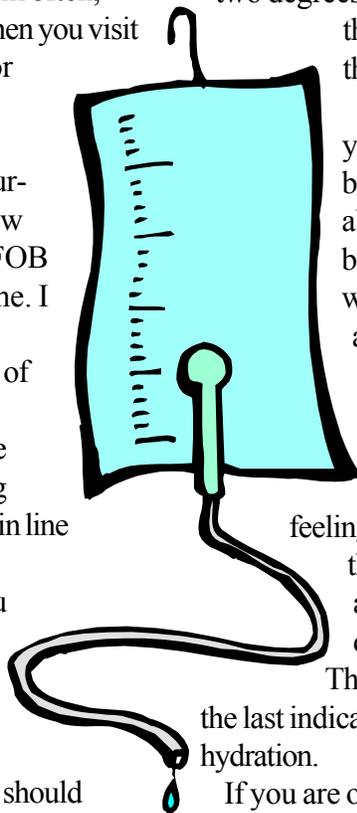
If you get dehydrated to the point you are confused, having heat cramps, nausea, or pass out you will be coming to see me for a visit and I will ensure that you get to meet my friend the 18 gauge IV and I may even let you have two.

Stay hydrated so you can stay alert and stay alive!

For all the loved ones back home reading this with nothing better to do, I would like to say hello to you also. We here at the FST are here doing our best to ensure your loved ones are getting the best care possible and want to send them all back safe and sound to you.

For the most part I think our doctors went to medical school but I haven't seen their credentials. They seem to know what they are doing, but you never know.

But, in all seriousness we have an excellent group of medical professionals and I would definitely place my life in their hands any day.



## Grenade: Cont. from page 1

shooting was done,” said Marlow.

He said the convoy personnel quickly set up a 360-degree security perimeter, while the scouts from Headquarters Company cordoned off the compound where the attacker’s accomplice had run into.

“We put them (the 105-mm howitzers) in a direct fire mode,” said Marlow. “That way anything we could see, we could fire at.”

On Salerno, the immediate reaction force was alerted as well as the 377th Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron. The Marine UH-1 Huey Gunships and AH-1 Cobras were quickly sky borne, giving the task force

eyes above the contact site. The IRF, consisting of 2nd platoon, Det. D and 1st platoon, Company B, rolled out the gate and were soon on the scene to assist in security and searching.

Before entering the suspected compounds the task force civil affairs team broadcast a message in Pashto, the local dialect, over their loudspeakers for everyone inside to come out with their hands on their head. With everyone out of the compounds, the local Afghan police went in and searched for



Col. William Garrett, Task Force Warrior commander, awards the Purple Heart to Pvt. Allen Tufts, II, for injuries received during the grenade attack. Sgt. David Parker waits for his Purple Heart. Task Force Warrior Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe (left) was on hand to congratulate the Geronimos during the ceremony May 1.



Pfc. Jamie Burns rests against his vehicle as Spc. Stephen Runel mans the .50 cal machine gun. U.S Soldiers and Afghan police investigate the contact site in the background.

anyone hiding, prior to U.S. Soldiers entering the structures.

No one was found hiding, but hand grenades with spoons similar to that dropped by the attacker were located inside one

compound. Although the attack occurred in a area with several buildings, none of the locals said they recognized the dead man.

Marlow knows that a situation like this is unavoidable, a local standing on the roadside with a hand grenade or a bomb is going to be difficult to stop, but the target won't be as easy next time.

“Our guys weren’t lackadaisical, or else the attacker would have gotten off the second grenade,” said Marlow. “But, this is an eye opener for all of us. It shows us that we have to remain alert at all times, keep an eye on those close to our vehicles and that we are not safe until we are back on Salerno.”

## Top 10 confiscated items

When heading home, or mailing items back to the states be aware of what is not authorized. The following is the top 10 items that customs has confiscated.

1. Bottles of flammable liquids (lighter fluid and rubbing alcohol).
2. Multiple copies of

counterfeit CDs/DVDs or other trademark items. A single copy of one title is OK.

3. Destructive devices including loose ammunition/casings from expended rounds. Do not carry a loaded weapon onto the aircraft. Use the amnesty box.

4. Untreated animal fur (pelts, coats and hats).

5. Drugs, alcohol or drug paraphernalia (including water pipes, bongs, hookahs).

6. Untreated wood.
7. Unpolished rocks or loose soil. Knock loose soil off boots and equipment.
8. Pornography



9. Switch blades and locally made Russian bayonets.
10. Lithium batteries (in bulk must be in a container marked "HAZMAT").



The Geronimos dug into their duffel bags and donned their coveted maroon berets for a ceremony May 1. Combat Infantryman Badges were awarded to 506 troopers, while 39 medics were awarded their Combat Medical Badges. COUNTER CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Spc. Daniel McKinlay watches as Staff Sgt. David Ralston pins on his CIB. Sgt. First Class David Powell, Company B first sergeant, pins the CIB on Spc. Justin Pruitt. Soldiers of Detachment D stand proud after getting their CIBs. Col. William Garrett, Task Force Warrior commander, awards SSG Blake B. Constantine with his second CIB. Constantine along with Staff Sgt. Eric Dooling (second from right) and Sgt. Michael Wahn, were among the eight Geronimos who received their second CIB during the ceremony May 1.



# COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE





Clockwise from above: Headquarters Company Soldiers stand tall with their CIBs. Spc. David Howard has his badge pinned on by Sgt. Kevin Binger. After the company commander and first sergeant were awarded their CIB, squad leaders had theirs pinned, and they then fastened the badge to their squad members' uniform. As 1st. Lt. James Estes pins on Staff Sgt. Jack Hensley's CIB, Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Williams shares a joke with his fellow paratroopers. Cpt. Jason Condrey, Company C commander pins the CIB on Sgt. First Class Brian Adams. The CIB and CMB were awarded to Soldiers in infantry or medical MOS and must satisfactorily perform his duty while assigned or attached to an infantry, ranger, or special forces unit of brigade, regiment, or smaller size during any time that the unit is engaged in active ground combat. The CIB was approved in August 1943 to recognize a highly proficient, tough, hard, and aggressive infantry. The CMB was created March 1945 to recognize medical aidmen who shared the same hazards and hardships of ground combat with the infantrymen.

**PHOTOS BY  
STAFF SGT.  
JEFF TROTH**





## ASK MSG NORDSTROM

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

Dear MSG Nordstrom,  
I noticed that in the last issue of "The Geronimo" you used the same reply ("3 MREs a day") twice. Does this have something to do with a bad experience you had while serving in the Korean Conflict or is it a sign of Alzheimer's?

Signed, Smarty Pants

Dear Smarty,  
Just be glad you're not eating 3 MREs a day!  
MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,  
Just wanted to compliment KBR on the steaks lately! The grilled taste is awesome! And I love the "eggs to order." KBR = Kooking Boyz Rock!  
Signed, Fat Boy

Dear FB,  
Good to hear a compliment every now and then. I agree KBR is doing a great job with chow and the steaks have really improved! Now, if they'll

just let me start making their coffee, the "Green Door Café" will be a 5 star establishment!

MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,  
How would you suggest fighting the black lung disease?  
Signed, Smoking on the Stoops

Dear Smokey,  
Best way to fight it is with a cup of my famous coffee – stop by the TOC for a cup – we'll enjoy it while smoking another great cigar!  
MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,  
I noticed that Geronimo 6 had a nasty cut on his leg. Was he involved with the contact that the battery had?  
Signed, Curious Minds

Dear Curious George,  
You didn't hear it from me but I heard it had something to do with some late night OER counseling with Miss Salerno. Something about concertina between the tents that Geronimo 5 had laid for an extra ring of protection.  
MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,  
Have you noticed that the S4 looks a lot like Biff from "Back to the Future"

and that he's really getting "HUGE" since he got here? Does the S4 get a special "protein shake?"

Signed, Small Supply Guy

Hello McFly,  
Yes, CPT "Biff", I mean the S4, is getting bigger. I think it's all of the pent up energy he compiled while working as Rear D CDR. He seriously loves it here – and he loves doing his 2 a days! He's an example to us all.

MSG N

Dear MSG Nordstrom,  
I heard that a snake was killed in the showers last week. Was it the ever elusive "Fat Cobra" that I've heard so much about?

Signed, Showering with Snakes

Dear SWS,  
No, it was not that slippery, slithering Fat Cobra – he remains on the loose! However, the snake that was killed was a Saw Scaled Viper, very aggressive with extremely toxic venom – even more dangerous than a Fat Cobra. Be careful and see the picture below!

MSG N



## AWARDS

How many of the following awards and what it takes to earn them can you locate in the puzzle?

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| AAM            | MARKSMANSHIP   |
| ABOVE & BEYOND | MEDAL OF HONOR |
| AIR ASSAULT    | MSM            |
| ARCOM          | PATHFINDER     |
| BRONZE STAR    | PURPLE HEART   |
| DUTY           | SILVER STAR    |
| CIB            | OVERSEAS       |
| COMBAT MEDIC   | V DEVICE       |
| GWOT           | WINGS          |