



FSC keeps task force operational

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

When people think about war, whether it is the Revolutionary War, World War II or the Global War on Terrorism, they think about the troops on the front line engaging the enemy. Very rarely do images of the support personnel spring to mind.

“When it comes to combat operations most people look at what the line units do,” said 1st Lt. Jin Park,

Forward Support Company commander. “My Soldiers are out there behind the scene making sure that everything runs right.”

When the infantry Soldiers of Task Force 1-501st Parachute Infantry Regiment rolled into the position area for artillery for refit and re-supply, FSC mechanics were there to repair what needed to be fixed. This ranged from broken fuel lines, to loose front differ-

entials to fixing flats on the Afghanistan Militia Force vehicles as well as on HMMWVs.

“The roads in Afghanistan are rougher on the vehicles than most people think,” said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Darrah, FSC direct support shop foreman.

Park’s guys are not only responsible for ensuring that the task force’s ve-



During Operation Avalanche, FSC mechanics work on a HMMWV in the field instead of transporting it back to Salerno.

hicles are ready to carry troops on mission, but also that weapons, night vision goggles and other essential equipment are working properly.

“If the FSC wasn't here, the vehicles and equipment would have to be transported up to BAF (Bagram Air Field),” Darrah said. “Then we would have a lot less vehicles to do missions because we would either be waiting on vehicles to go up there or get back here.”

Besides making sure that the companies’ vehicles and equipment are functioning properly the FSC Soldiers transport the line units to their missions. During Operation Avalanche in December, Soldiers of the task force found out that walking up and down the steep,

rock-strewn Afghanistan hills carrying three or four days of supplies is tough and treacherous.

For the task force’s big mission in January, Operation Blizzard, FMTV drivers were attached to each company. They transported the infantrymen and mortar men within walking distance of their objective and then provided security for rucksacks so that the troops only had to take their assault packs on the missions.

“By being with the same company during Blizzard I felt like I was a member of that unit and that I played a part in their success,” said Pfc. Arthur Davey, an FSC driver. “By being a gunner I was watching their back while they were doing their job.”

See FSC page 7



Spc. Anthony Peak looks for a bolt in his mobile tool room during Operation Blizzard.

Salerno Happenings

Updated Address

Due to an increased threat level the military postal system has requested that we no longer use ranks or OEF in our address. New address:

Name (John Smith)
Unit (Scouts, HHC, TF 1-501st PIR)
APOAE 09354

Voting correction

In the last edition of The Geronimo the website listed to register to vote is not applicable to Soldiers. Soldiers that want to register to vote need to fill out and mail in FPCA 76 (Absentee Voters Registration Form), which can be downloaded at www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefpa.html.

Comedy Show

Get ready for a sidesplitting good time as Butch Bradley and Sam Fidele provide comic relief from duties in the Class I Yard Amphitheatre, 1100 zulu, Feb. 21.

Movies and Games

The Hard Rock Cafe has added several new movies, Playstation 2 games and X-Box games to their library. Stop by and check them out.

The World

Gen. Abizad in Iraq Gun Battle

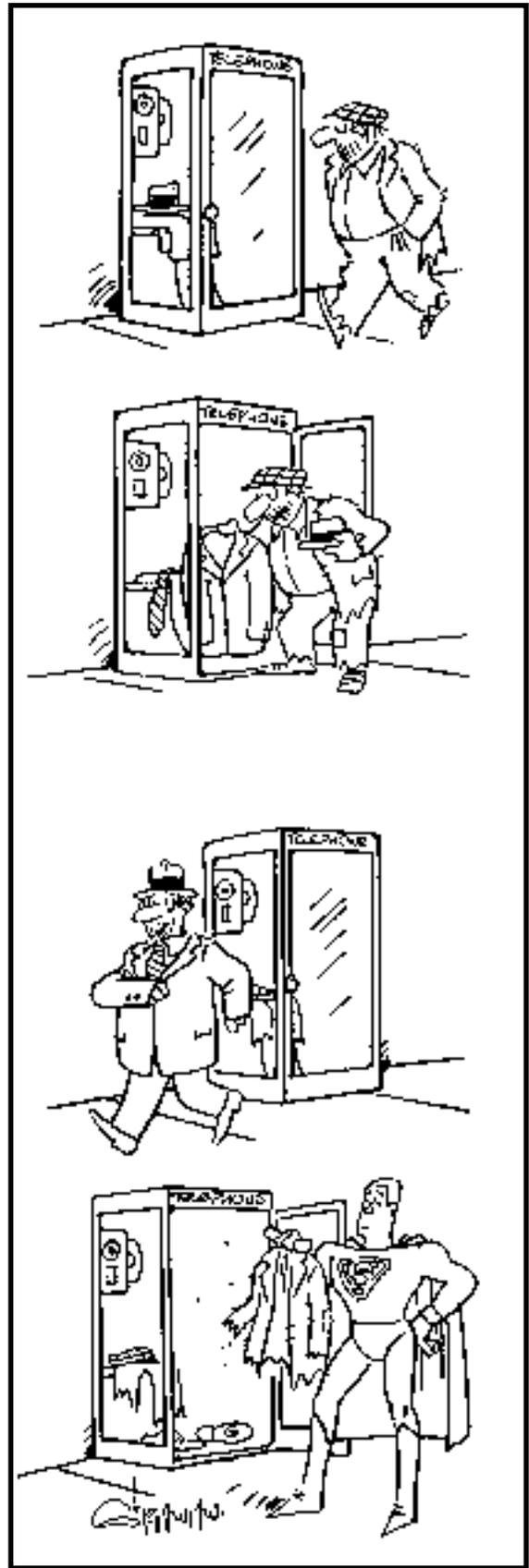
Guerillas launched an attack Thursday on an Iraqi civil defense outpost visited by Gen John Abizad, commander of all U.S. forces in the Middle East. After the general's convoy entered the compound, several explosions occurred at the rear of the compound. The attackers opened up with small arms fire and three RPG rounds from a nearby mosque. U.S. Soldiers returned fire. There were no U.S. injuries from the 6-minute battle.

Scientists Claim to Clone Human Embryos

South Korean researchers say they have cloned a human embryo and extracted stem cells from it in a development experts hope could spark a medical revolution. But the procedure is likely to revive the global controversy over the ethics of human cloning.

Love and Death

A 35-year old French woman married her dead boyfriend Tuesday -- a macabre exchange of vows that required authorization from the French president. Under French law, Christelle Demichel became both bride and widow as a result of the ceremony. The deceased groom, a former policeman identified as Eric, was not present at the ceremony. He was killed by a drunk driver in September 2002.



FOB faces

Who would you like to be your Valentine?



Right now I would take any woman to be mine. I feel really deprived.
Pfc. Christopher Trinidad
Bn Mortars

My Wife Christine, we have the greatest Valentines Days and always make sure to live it up all day.

Spc. George Stepanenko
Bat B, 377th PFAR



Ashanti, cuz she's hot and she's my baby's mama, but she doesn't know it yet!
Cpl. Edgar Guzman
Co. B

Alicia Keys, I love what she writes in her songs and the way she sings. She is a true artist.

Spc. Patrick Nguessan
Bat B, 377th PFAR



My wife is my Valentine because I love her and my son Seth.
Spc. Kenneth Davis
Sapper Plt, HHC

My girlfriend Diana, because she hasn't left me yet!

Pfc. Aaron McMullen
Det. D



Halle Berry, if you've seen "Swordfish" you don't have to ask why.
Spec. Adelnys DeLeon
Co B

The Olsen twins, because they are legal now.

Pfc. Richard Garland
Co. C



Sgt. Shannon A. Hill, be our Valentine. We love you dearly. You've stolen our heart. From Mom, Dad and Sis

We LOVE YOU Capt. Ned! Mom, Dad, Mike, AJ, Allison, Luke, Kenai, Charlie and Gus

Spc. Wasierski, Happy V-day! We miss you! Stay safe! Love, Mom, Natalie, MPT&L, BBC&S

Michelle, Happy Valentine's Day sweetthang. I love you and miss you so much. Love Always Eddie

Dena, Happy Valentine's Day. I love you and miss you very much. Love Donnie

French Maid, Looking forward to ruffling your duster! Love you, Zorro

Pfc. John M. Shannon, I love and miss you more than words can express. Mom

OBL, Please come be our Valentine. We have a special room reserved just for you, that comes with free meals and nice people to talk to all day. TF Geronimo Soldiers

Liz, This is our day. Third time is a charm. I love you. Will

Michele, Happy Valentine's Day. I love you and miss you very much. Love Clinton

Fat Cobra, You sexy beast! Love, Your secret Valentine

Happy Valentine's Day to my son, Tommy Daw. He is my HERO. Happy Valentine's Day to all of the Soldiers of the 501st

Jennifer Lopez, I miss you sweetheart. Why haven't you written or called me lately? Big Daddy, Not Ben

MSG Nordstrom, we love you as much as your guys did when you crossed the Delaware. The S3 guys

Tara, Happy Valentine's Day. Love and miss you. RLTW Mama, Joe



Act in love throughout the year

Faith in the

Word

By Chaplain
(Capt.) James Lee
1/501st PIR Chaplain



Greetings my fellow Geronimos and Salerno-ites! We have finally surpassed a 100 days and will soon be past the halfway mark. Be that as it may, time, missions, and life here at Salerno marches on.

By now, many of you have (or should have!) made arrangements for your wife or sweetheart to receive a Valentine's Day gift. Frankly, I think Valentine's Day is a big racket sponsored by Hallmark, the floral industry, and maybe a chocolate company or two.

The idea that on this one day of the year our truest and deepest feelings of love are to be expressed shortchanges what love is really all about. And while I have made arrangements for my wife and three "Sweethearts"—my three girls that is—to receive a Valentine's Day delivery, I would like to think that every day is an opportunity to express my love to those who are dearest to me.

Now before you think I'm starting to sound sappy, I would challenge you to think about your definition of love. Many equate romantic feelings as being the source of "true love." While feelings are certainly a dynamic of love, they are not the true source.

Unfortunately, feelings can change like the weather and problems occur when we allow our actions to be guided by feelings. Case in point,

many marriages begin to dissolve when either or both partners don't feel that they are in love anymore. Acting on what they feel, many husbands and wives begin to pull apart and the actions they take can ultimately lead to divorce or significant damage to the marriage.

Love however, at least in my definition and experience, is not so much a feeling as it is a choice. There have been many times throughout my marriage when I have not felt "in love" with my wife, but rather than act on my feelings, I have chosen to act out of my commitment to my wife.

As strange as it sounds, when I have acted on love my feelings have usually followed. In actuality, your feelings will follow your actions and not the other way around.

Consider this for a moment, some of you were "forced" to Christmas carol back in December. In fact, many were obviously not at all jovial about their participation in the event. At the end of the evening however, I overheard many that expressed their enjoyment.

Had they been given the choice however, many did not "feel" like Christmas caroling and would not have chosen to do so, but by engaging in the action feelings of enjoyment followed. And so it is in relationships.

When we act on our commitment to those we love, romantic feelings will often follow. I realize not everyone would agree with me in this matter, nor would I expect such, but I would challenge you to try the concept in your relationship.

And while this is a hard concept to employ while deployed, you can still choose how you "act" through your communication with your spouse or sweetheart. You might be surprised at the results!

For God & Country, Chaplain Lee



Chapel Events and Service Schedule:

Monday

Hockey Night at the Chapel (So long as the mail comes!) at 1400 Hours

Wednesday Men of Honor: Group A meets at 1400; Group B meets at 1515

Friday Movie Night at the Chapel at 1400

Saturday Spanish Mass at 1400, Protestant Service at 1500

Sunday Protestant Service at 0400, Catholic Mass (English) at 0500,

LDS Service at 0600, A Bible Study at 1400 (conducted by SPC Hale)

*The chapel is intentionally dedicated Monday-Friday from 0700-0800 for personal prayer, meditation and study.

New vehicles helping against IEDs

By Cpl. Joe Niesen
350th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

FOB RIDGWAY, Iraq
—The U.S. Army has a few new weapons to use in its war against the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices on Iraq's roadways.

The Husky, Meerkat, Buffalo, and RG-31 armored car are now being used by soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division's Task Force Pathfinder. The unit comprises soldiers from a number of active Army, Reserve, and National Guard units attached to the 82nd.

The soldiers, many of whom had never seen the equipment prior to the training they received in theater, have quickly grown fond of the vehicles which were designed both in the United States and South Africa.

"All of our training has been off-the-cuff," said Capt. Michael Biankowski, commander, A Company, 27th Engineers and Task Force Pathfinder.

The soldiers of Pathfinder had to learn everything about the vehicles in theater. The mechanics had to learn how to repair them, the operators how to drive them, and commanders how to use them. For operators, the driving is the easy part; it's learning to operate and interpret the data collected by the sensors while driving that is the challenge.

"Probably the hardest part is the multitasking involved. You have to drive, listen and watch both the screen and the road around you as you drive," said Cpl. Robert Scott, a vehicle operator on the Husky detection vehicle.

The vehicles, primarily designed to detect buried mines, have been searching the roadways for IEDs and other threats to soldiers on convoys and patrols. So far, the equipment has proven effective for a number of reasons, chiefly the detection abilities of the Husky and Meerkat vehicles.

"We've found at least six IEDs in the short time that we have had the vehicles," said 1st Lt. David Moore, a platoon leader with A Company, 27th Engineers, assigned to the Task Force.

Another reason the soldiers in Task Force Pathfinder have taken to the vehicles is the fact that each is heavily armored and designed to resist blasts from both mines and IEDs.

"These vehicles are designed to take a blast," said Pfc. Lester Rhodes, a combat engineer and operator of the RG-31 armored car. "The safety given by these vehicles allows us to focus more energy on finding the rounds. Plus, it (the RG-31) is comfortable, like riding in an armored Cadillac."

The Task Force, since acquiring the equipment, has

attempted to support the entire division's area of responsibility. The vehicles will be handed over to replacing units and remain in theater as long as the threat of IEDs exists.

However, many of the soldiers assigned to Pathfinder said they are hopeful that the equipment will be standard issue for engineering units.

"At first, I thought that it was just another Army toy," said Scott. "After taking them out on missions and finding IEDs, they definitely do the job. They are the best pieces of equipment out there."

A few of the vehicles have already been sent to the combat engineer school at

Fort Leonardwood, Mo., where soldiers are now being trained, according to Biankowski.

The team will continue to provide support to units in the area and prepare to train its replacements. The awkward-looking vehicles will visit various bases and attempt to ensure that at least the routes they cover will be free of IEDs, and soldiers can feel a little safer as they continue to traverse and patrol Iraq's dangerous roads.

"Every round we find is one less that could injure or kill a Soldier," said Sgt. 1st Class Martin Humphreys, a Pathfinder platoon sergeant. "So I'm glad we have this equipment."



Photo by Cpl. Joe Niesen

The Meerkat, a South African designed mine detection vehicle, is just one of the unique vehicles employed by U.S. forces in Iraq to locate and destroy Improvised Explosive Devices



Patriots put Panthers in their place

LEFT: Sgt. Frank Cole (right), who showed up nine hours before kickoff, and Cpt. Aram Donigian cheer as their Patriots score a touchdown in the fourth quarter of Superbowl XXXVIII to put them back on top. BELOW: Patriot fans go wild as the Patriots score a field goal in the final seconds to beat the Panthers 32-29.



During the grand opening of the Civil Military Operations Center in Khowst, Governor Taniwa thanked Lt. Col. Mark Patton, commander of the Provincial Reconstruction Team for the Khowst area. The center will make it easier for Afghans to request U.S. Assistance.



Salerno Snapshots

**PHOTOS BY
STAFF SGT.
JEFF TROTH**



ABOVE: As the 10th Mountain Division (Infantry Light) rock band *Avalanche* belts out the tunes for FOB Salerno personnel a local national is moved to dance. RIGHT: Spc Casey Walker (foreground) plays the guitar while Spc. Benjamin Smith is on bass.





Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

After taking command of Company B, Cpt. Jon Chung (center) gives the guidon back to 1st Sgt. David Powell, Feb. 5. Chung became the commander after serving 15 months as the Task Force S4. Outgoing commander, Cpt. David Hale is now 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Infantry Light) assistant LNO to JTF-180.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

Lt. Gen. David W. Barno takes notes on what Spc. Caleb Miller and Spc. Thomas Bennard, both of Company C, think 25th Infantry Division Soldiers should know prior to deploying to Afghanistan. Barno, the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan was doing a command inspection of FOB Salerno.



The Geronimo is looking for Task Force photos and stories. Bring them to Staff Sgt. Troth at the ALOC.

FSC: Cont. from page 1

This double duty extends past missions. During Avalanche and Blizzard the FSC Soldiers also covered down on other details within the PAA. This freed the line units that came in off mission to recover and have a night without details.

“It sucks having to do the additional jobs of guard, KP and whatever else when you also have your regular work to do,” said Spc. Anthony Peak, an FSC mechanic. “But I am a soldier and will do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission.”

Peak and his fellow mechanics found out during

Blizzard how thin they can be stretched. When the task force was preparing to move from first the PAA of the operation, he was on a detail to take down the concertina wire that encircled the camp. While in the middle of this mission a truck broke down which needed to be fixed prior to the convoy rolling the next day. The mechanics left the wire, fixed the truck and then went back to where they had left

off with the concertina.

“All my guys have a primary MOS, like driver, mechanic, welder and the like,” said Park. “But we are a

multifunctional company and my Soldiers are doing more than their MOS. We are looking for ways to help the task force anyway we can.”



Sgt. Thomas George works under an uparmored HMMWV to replace the fuel line and get it operational for Operation Blizzard.



ASK MSG NORDSTROM

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

the crates of hair gel it ordered?
Signed, Elvis

Dear Elvis,
Figured you'd show up in Afghanistan. No worries on the gel, rumor is the entire Blackfoot company is growing its hair out and that gel will now be standard issue and part of their PCCs/PCIs.
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
Is it normal for your CPT to wear man panties that look like something Austin Powers might wear?
Signed, Scared to Fall Asleep

Dear SFA,
If the Chaplain can wear them, then anyone can. Personally, I like the striped ones, but solid purple or forest green are pretty good too. Just take your malaria pill, and you'll be OK.
MSGN

Dear MSG N,
I keep hearing guys complaining that there is nothing to do here but last FRI I went to the movie at the Chapel, and it was awesome. The sound and picture are great! But there were only 20 people there. Why is that?
Signed, PFC Hangin' at Salerno

Dear HAS,
Well, most people prefer to complain then actually do something. The movie is a good program but I was a little disappointed that Olga didn't show. Also, I

have submitted my own list of favorites to be shown: Band of Brothers (due in to the MWR collection) and Patton (a personal portrayal).
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
Dude, I'm from (sorry can't tell you where I am at), man. Yo, I came in for a day and I saw your column in the crapper man. Dude, you're funny like Jim Carey funny, you know! Anyway, keep up the good work! Hu-wah, dude!
Signed, (Sorry, can't leave the name - secret)

Dear ???,
??? Dude??? Are you really in MY Army?
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I got yelled at for having my black watch cap on with DCUs. I think I am old enough and can make my own decisions on what to wear. I don't need an NCO telling me.
Signed, SPC Intellect

Dear SPC Thinks He Knows It All,
Your first mistake is trying to think, you're working without tools. Second the NCO was not yelling at you, just making an on-the-spot correction. If you need further guidance I'm sure the CSM would be more than happy to give you some close personal attention. If you want to know what the uniform standards are for the FOB check out the board by the entrance to the DFAC.
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I noticed that they were building new steps for the TOC, I was wondering when the wheel chair ramp was being installed for yourself, 1SG Hargett, SFC Thomas, LT Rogers, and LTC Glenn?
Signed, SSG Howoldareyouanyways?

Dear SSG H,
The ramp will be installed as soon as you are potty trained. Us "old" guys will take you any day of the week.
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I heard that the reason you weren't pulling guard at the burning bush was because you had head count at the last supper. Is that true?
Signed, PFC Just Wondering

Dear PFC JW,
No, I wasn't there either. They would't allow a "rebel" like me to sit down with that bunch. Heck, I would have sent Jesus back to get his meal card!
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
Now that CPT Chung is no longer the S4, what is the Task Force going to do with

W	A	C	O	L	V	R	L	I	N	G	E	R	I	E
H	D	E	S	H	O	A	D	E	M	M	E	C	I	E
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E	E	G	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	S	A	W	O	Y

VALENTINES

How many of the following Valentine Day terms can you locate in the puzzle?

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| Always | Heart |
| Arrow | Hugs |
| Be mine | Kisses |
| Candy | Lingerie |
| Card | Love |
| Chocolate | Mojo |
| Cupid | Romance |
| Diamonds | Rose |
| Flowers | Sweetheart |
| Forever | Valentines |