

PHOENIX RISING

**TASK FORCE PHOENIX
NEWSLETTER**

ALMOST HOME TF PHOENIX CELEBRATES IN JUNE



*“I am so clever that sometimes
I don't understand a single word of what I am saying.”*



Task Force Phoenix Commander's Corner

Dear Phoenix Family and Friends,

A few years ago I had the distinct privilege to serve as the 10th CAB Rear Detachment Commander while the unit was deployed to Iraq. I will always remember from that time that the summer months appeared to be the toughest for the Families at home. Being the entertainment committee for the out of school kids combined with 8-9 months as a single parent just wore the spouses out. In early summer, redeployment was still a vague distant light at the end of a year-long tunnel and 4 months seemed like an awfully long time.

Today as a deployed commander, I get to see the other side of 8-9 months of 14 hour days, 7 days a week. I get to see the struggles of interpersonal conflict in working with the same people day in and day out in 100+ degree heat and in very challenging work conditions.

I can tell you that I do believe that we are all enduring one of the more difficult parts of this deployment right now on both sides of the Atlantic. I am also convinced that adversity shows and builds character. I re-learn that lesson every day from our Soldiers here in Afghanistan. No one said building character is easy or fun but I am certainly proud of our team of Soldiers in Afghanistan and of our Families back home as they push through this tough period. I encourage everyone to maintain focus and keep up positive communications with each other and our loved ones. We'll all be attending redeployment briefings before you know it.

This month, we bid a sad farewell to MAJ Ed Miller (AKA PHOENIX 5). MAJ Miller was a critical member of the TF Phoenix Command Team from the start of our preparations for Afghanistan. His fingerprints were on every successful initiative this task force has achieved in the past 19 months. Following a short stint on 10th Mountain Division Staff, Ed, Angela and the boys will be headed to Ft. Leavenworth Kansas for Intermediate Level Education (ILE). Ed will be sorely missed.

This month we welcome 15 Soldiers from 3-2 GSAB (Korea), 126th AVN (USARNG), as well as Soldiers from Honduras to our ranks. We are thankful to have them and look forward to working with them as we all continue to execute this very important mission.

“FEEL THE BURN”
LTC Dennis J. McKernan

“This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.”



CSM Corner

Greetings once again from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan:

Time continues to pass quickly and it's really hard to believe we are three-fourths of the way through our tour. The weather thus far has been hot - yesterday 110 degrees. The daily flight schedule continues and our maintainers are doing a fantastic job keeping our aircraft flying. Continue to fight the complacency monster and enforce the basic standards. Let's look at safety concerns within your own footprint. We have had too many negligent discharges which could be labeled both safety and indiscipline. One is too many. I need all leaders to be vigilant - not only in enforcing standards - but by being brutal in ensuring a safe environment for our troops.

I would like to welcome the newest members to the NCO Corps:

SGT Rojas, Jose - Executioners
SGT Hankinson, Patrick - Executioners
SGT Green, Luanthony - Executioners
SGT Zbindenbrassard, Thomas - Dukes
SGT Vansant, Nicholas - Hooligans
I also would like to congratulate TF Phoenix's NCO and Soldier of the Month:
SGT Brackbill, Robert - Executioners
SPC Farnsworth, Shawn - Dukes

We are blessed with the best and the bravest in our ranks and your support of both our deployed troops and our Families at home is a pivotal factor in their success. Don't ever forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of our great country. God bless America. Born of Fire!

**CSM Ron Dvorsky
Command Sergeant Major
Task Force Phoenix**

"Dogs have owners. Cats have staff."

TF Phoenix provide humanitarian aid to Afghan girls school



By U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

A small Afghan town, tucked away in the Salang Mountains between two of Afghanistan's most populated cities, bustled when a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter – crewed by Company A, 1st Battalion, 169th General Support Aviation Regiment, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division - touched down and unloaded Soldiers so they could provide humanitarian aid to the local Salang Girls School June 11.

The Phoenix Soldiers secured their ground positions as massive aircraft blades tossed large brown plumes of dirt into the air around them.

As the dirt settled, Soldiers made their way to the school, distributed supplies and spoke with the school administrators.

U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Jamie Latham, Company E, TF Phoenix distribution platoon leader, was the officer-in-charge of the female engagement team.

“When we arrived at the school, the school administrators were welcoming and elated to see the group,” said Latham, of Bethlehem, Pa., “The people (of Salang) are very eager to learn and improve their own education. With the aid of our interpreter, we handed out book bags full with pencils, pens, notebooks, and other school supplies ... to kindergarten through seventh graders. Afterward, we visited the classrooms and interacted with the children that we were able to help.”

Latham asked the girls about their educational goals for their future.

“Many of the students expressed interest in becoming doctors, lawyers or policewomen,” said Latham, “School supplies and continued support of the education system will help create more beneficial members of society.”

TF Phoenix Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Hearon agreed.

“I wanted to give much needed supplies to the female students who have very little,” said Hearon, a native of

“Everyone has a photographic memory. Some don't have film.”

Sgt. Brian MacConaghy provides protection for Chaplain (Capt.) Hearon and the female interpreter on the female engagement team.



Greenville, S.C., “To help ensure they have a brighter future with more opportunities by enabling them to obtain a better education.”

Hearon said school supplies and electricity are things many people take for granted on a day-to-day basis. While the school in Salang Valley has a shortage of both of these commodities, the locals are not deterred from pursuing their dreams of a better educated generation.

The male TF Phoenix Soldiers on the mission watched from outside the room as the school supplies were distributed. U.S. Army Sgt. Brian MacConaghy, chaplain assistant, watched the event from the hallway.

“The (children) seemed very receptive and thankful,” said MacConaghy, of Madison Heights, Mich., “You could see by the looks on the girls’ faces — as they received items — that this was a rare occasion for them.”

MacConaghy said even though he could not interact with the students, he felt rewarded to provide aid to those in need.

“My goal for the deployment was to do my part to leave a positive impact on the people of Afghanistan,” said MacConaghy, “Through this mission, I was able to accomplish that by utilizing outside resources to collect supplies that would be used to enhance the Afghan females’ education which would help them achieve their career goals.”

The group said they feel accomplished knowing they helped people in need in Regional Command – East and hope to do so again before redeploying stateside.

“I used to think I was indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.”

Winning Hearts and Minds

Providing Afghan Girls the Tools
Needed to Achieve their Dreams



The entire team that made the mission possible – TF Phoenix, TF Red Horse, and the Salang girl’s school administration.



Ready to hand out the school supplies.



School officials obliged and allowed me to take their photo.



TF Phoenix Soldiers hike to the boy’s school to check on how they are fairing.

“Shin: Device for finding furniture in the dark.”



Chaplain Hearon speaks with a local Afghan man after the team completed their mission at the girl's school.



2LT Latham puts a book bag of supplies onto a first grader's back.



Chaplain Hearon hands out candy to local Afghan boys.

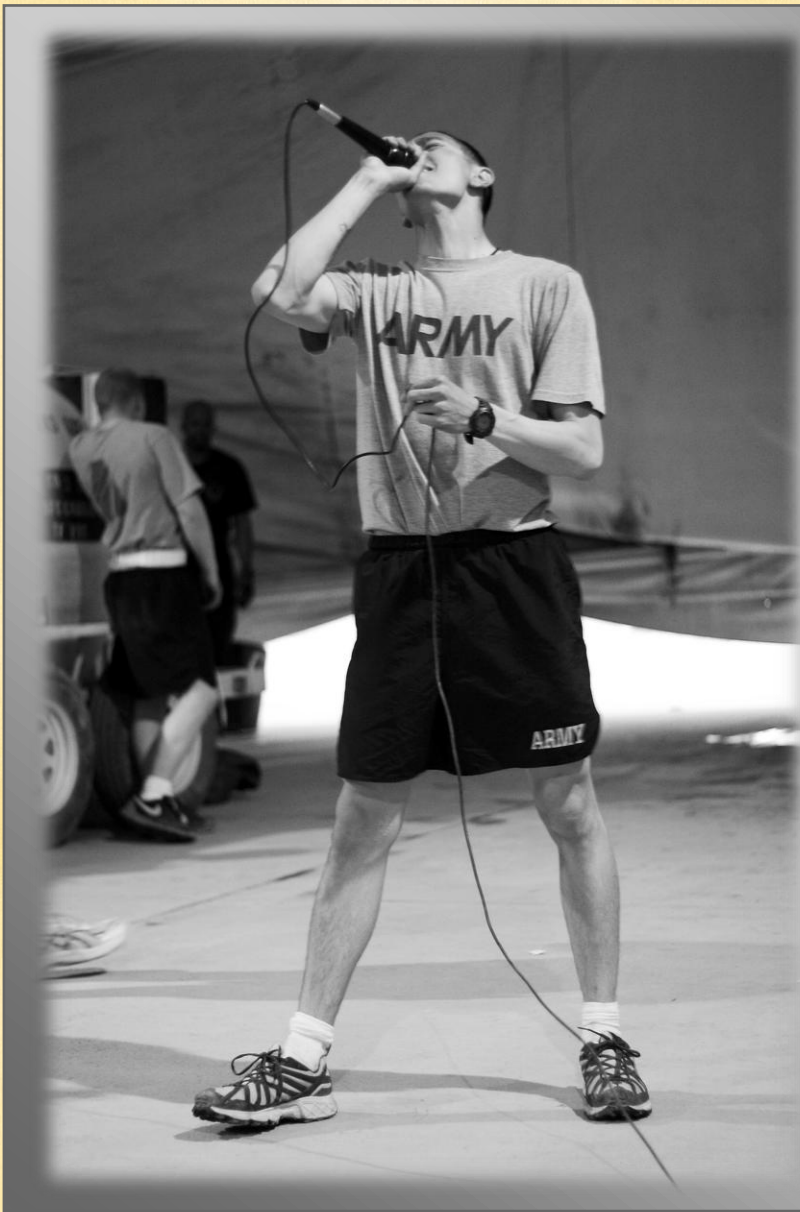


Chaplain Hearon speaks with Salang locals through a male interpreter June 11.

“You know you are getting old when the candles cost more than the cake.”

Task Force Phoenix Holds an “Almost Home” Organizational Day

By U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown



Soldiers in Task Force Phoenix were given the opportunity to unwind during their organizational day on Bagram Airfield June 19.

Food kicked off the event. Barbequed steaks, hamburgers and ribs along with cakes and other goodies were offered with a plethora of condiments. A vast variety of drinks were chilled in ice. It was a delectable treat for the Soldiers in attendance.

A little after the food started getting served, the Soldiers were able to participate in many events in that evening. Soldiers dunked their commanders in the dunk tank, took part in a weight lifting and horse shoe competitions, had sumo wrestling competitions and were even given the opportunity to enjoy singing karaoke. Even LTC McKernan sang a karaoke song and blessed everyone with a jig.

Soldiers from all over TF Phoenix enjoyed three hours together laughing and forgetting – even if just for a few moments – that they are in Afghanistan away from their Families and loved ones. It was a welcome break to all of those who could attend the organizational day.

I extend a big “Thank you” to all of those who made the event possible.

“I started out with nothing. I still have most of it.”







Headquarters and Headquarters Company

By Sgt. Amanda Brown

To say our Soldiers in the S-1 shop have been busy is an understatement. Every single day SPC Zuluaga, SPC Gonzalez, SPC Kotelnicki and our newest member from the Army Reserves SPC Reid work fervently on their tasks. The hottest one right now is, of course, awards!! Just when they feel like they are making some progress in unburying their desk from the awards folders – more stacks of reviewed awards comes walking through the door. Our Soldiers, however endless their job feels at any given time, always have a smile on their face and a joke up their sleeve. It is no wonder why Soldiers from around Task Force Phoenix like to drop in just to say, “Hi.”

There was a welcome break on Father’s Day when Task Force Phoenix held the “Almost Home” organizational day June 19th. All of the Soldiers in the S-1 shop enjoyed the food and conversation time during the event. SPC Kotelnicki and SPC Zuluaga even got up to sing karaoke to, “Don’t Cha” by The Pussycat Dolls. By the next day, a video of them singing was up on YouTube and they were the rock stars of the battalion.

SPC Zuluaga and SPC Gonzalez were especially busy through the month of June. Both of them went to the promotion board June 27th. They went in there with the training, knowledge and experience necessary to walk away from the board of their leaders as promotable Soldiers.

Congratulations SPC Zuluaga and SPC Gonzalez! You both deserved to pass the board!

SSG Gerhardt is still on his much deserved leave, but will be back to S-1 very soon. CPT Moore, who recently returned from her leave, has taken back the reigns with little discrepancy. She now is the acting commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Company until CPT Thomas returns from his leave. If CPT Moore was not busy before she took over this position – which she was *always* running before – she is now moving faster than the speed of light!

Suffice it to say, S-1 is doing very well and continues to push forward into the final months of our deployment here on Bagram Airfield. We appreciate everything the Families back home do for us – even if it is simple gesture – like making us smile.



“It’s kind of fun to do the impossible.”

A Company

Second Platoon Reports

By CPT Kyle Wilhelm

June has come and gone in a hurry as the Archangels successfully complete an extraordinary amount of missions. Yet another chapter in our deployment has come to an end and leaves us all with one simple, yet very welcomed question, “Where did the time go?” The sometimes painful abundance of work and mission sets has the added bonus of allowing the time to go by pretty quick. With any luck the remaining months in Afghanistan will pass just as quickly and we’ll be home with our Families and loved ones in no time at all!

The passing of this month brought with it several noteworthy accomplishments within the second platoon Archangel ranks. CW2 Andrew Whitten passed his Pilot in Command (PC) ride this month and now holds the enviable title of PC. Additionally, the former WO1 Clint Young was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) Clint Young! Both of these accomplishments mark



a significant achievement in the lives and careers of these two outstanding pilots; their contributions to Alpha Company are irreplaceable. Additionally, I have had the tremendous honor of being promoted to the rank of Captain. These accomplishments and more continually serve as a constant reminder of how great it is to be a part of this unit. I, for one, could not imagine it possible to serve with a better, more professional, group of Soldiers and am extremely proud to be an Archangel.

“Women are meant to be loved, not to be understood.”

C Company

Preparing for Home

By ISG Tim Clay

Hello to all the Blue Max Families and friends.

We are moving along here, into the warmer months of this deployment; thankfully the heat is not overwhelming. We are also experiencing winds and dust that are keeping us from flying. We are, however, still able to begin planning our exit from this deployment and have begun doing so, even in the beginning stages. We are focusing some of our efforts on the move home, but still maintaining vigilance in our daily missions. It is encouraging to know that we are close to coming home, and I feel certain that you all feel the same. The Soldiers have been performing in an outstanding professional manner, and I know that they will continue to do so despite the adversity we face. None of these things

are possible without the support of the Families and friends who support us so well. Thanks to Mrs. Wojasinski and Mrs. Bachmeyer for continuing the outstanding projects and support from the Family Readiness Group. The Blue Max team and I genuinely appreciate the time, effort and energy that you put into the program, and we are proud to have such caring and supportive people watching over us. Thank you, sincerely.

With all that is going on and has gone on already, the team is still striving forward, taking care of themselves and more importantly, taking care of each other. We have been able to move forward from setbacks, and the reason is clear: Your support of your loved ones, and the whole Blue Max Family, keeps us going. I thank you for all that you do. Take care. Talk to you again, soon.



*“He who runs behind truck is exhausted;
he who runs in front of truck is tired.”*

C Company Warlords

Under New Command

By *CPT Kristen Beyer*

Greetings from Afghanistan!

I am Kristen Beyer, the new commander of C Company, 2-10 AVN, Task Force Phoenix. James Polk and I changed command on June 10th, 2011. I am coming to the task force from 10th Mountain Division headquarters, where I worked in the Aviation shop. I'm very excited to be the commander of C Company and will do my best to take care of your Soldiers both here in Afghanistan and at home in Fort Drum, New York. Regrettably, I won't be back at Fort Drum to meet everyone until we redeploy this fall, so I wanted to write a letter of introduction to all the Families about myself as well as the incoming platoon leader, Sarah Brisson, who is replacing Kristin Yampaglia.

I have been in the 10th Mountain Division since July 2006 after graduating flight school. I deployed to Afghanistan to meet 3-10th GSAB about halfway through their deployment and was a platoon leader in A Company, 3-10 for about a year and a half, until I moved to battalion staff. After that, I moved to the MEDEVAC Company, where I was a MEDEVAC team leader for another year and a half, including 10th CAB's deployment to Iraq. I spent the year at home attending the Aviation Captain's Career Course at Fort Rucker, Alabama before deploying to Kandahar, Afghanistan with division staff.

I was born in Tucson, Arizona, where I lived most of my life, and also lived in Walnut Creek, California before going to West Point and joining the military. My significant other is CW3 Jesse Edwards, who is in A Company, 3-10, TF Phoenix. We live in Clayton, New York (when we're not deployed). Jesse's son, Matthew, who will be five in September, is a big part of our lives.

My goals for the rest of the deployment are to continue to make this company a team, to get to know each Soldier well, and to maintain good contact with the Families so you've got as good of information as I can give you. I want to make sure Families are as well taken care of as the single Soldiers are as well. After we return, I am looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible. I've got a few fun ideas in the works for the company for the next year, so you'll hear more about them as that time gets near!

1LT Kristin Yampaglia got promoted and departed from C Company on July 1st and CPT Sarah Brisson took over as the new platoon leader. Sarah comes to us from D Company, 3-10, TF Phoenix as the former shops platoon leader. Kristin will be taking her place as the new shops platoon leader in D Company. We're sad to see Kristin go, but are looking forward to having another new face in the company! Sarah's husband, Mike, is a section leader in the MEDEVAC Company at Bagram. They live in Black River with their "baby," their 130lb Greater Swiss Mountain Dog, Deycon.

We look forward to meeting everyone upon our return, and thank you all for your hard work and support you provide your Soldiers while we are away. We absolutely cannot do this without you!

"A rich man's joke is always funny."

C Company

A true story of how the soldiers of 2nd Platoon C/3-10 portray the idealism of DUSTOFF on one of the most critical missions of this deployment

By Sgt. Damian Schwab

At the end of May, the lead crew at Orgun-E – which consisted of CW2 Soria, LT Renneisen, SGT Matier, and SSG Marcel - responded to the site of a helicopter crash. Due to their rapid response and critical skill set, the crews that day were nothing short of heroes. CW2 Soria and LT Renneisen guided the aircraft safely into a rugged and uneven two wheel landing inside the valley adjacent to the crash site. Once positioned, SGT Matier and SSG Marcel egresses the aircraft, and battled the rough terrain to respond to the crash site. Due to the uneven terrain SGT Matier returned to the helicopter while SSG Marcel continued on to the downed aircraft site. SSG Marcel performed rescue extraction of the pilots without regard for his own safety and immediately started life saving procedures to both pilots. Due to the terrain, the patients could not be moved by foot. SGT Matier flawlessly started hoist operations at a hover held by the pilots of over 125 feet above the valley floor. SSG Marcel repositioned the patients and prepped them for extraction by hoist. Between SGT Matier and SSG Marcel, they performed three combat hoist iterations to rescue both pilots and then to extract SSG Marcel from the crash site. En-route, SGT Matier and SSG Marcel continued life saving measures all the way to the FST at Orgun-E. The unhesitating response, combat experience and expertise of the crew that day, resulted in the saving of an American life, and the fulfillment of what C/3-10 AVN is all about -

DUSTOFF!

“When all else fails, stop using ‘all else.’”

D Company

Keeping Smiles on their Faces

By SFC James Kyne



Hello everyone,

Since 1SG Snyder is currently enjoying a well deserved R&R leave, I have been given the daunting task of writing the newsletter this month.

D Company continues to evolve and adapt to every challenge that we are handed. The Soldiers have welcomed the Reservists from 7-158th with open arms. The Soldiers are learning from each other by sharing experiences and by continually working side-by-side to accomplish the mission. It is my hope that we instill them with the know-how and lessons learned to create a smooth transition from the 10th Mountain to the 82nd later this year.

Task Force Phoenix had their almost home organizational day activities on the 19th of June. From what I experienced, most of the D Co Soldiers thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to get a break from the rigors of 24 hour operations. The Soldiers participated in the various events, which included horseshoes, a bench press competition, and karaoke. The Soldiers took advantage of the opportunity to ensure that the Commander's time in the dunk tank was spent getting wet. Another attraction that was very popular was the sumo suits. It was truly amazing to see how much fun our Soldiers had while taking turns suiting up and battling it out to the applause of everyone around. Truly, it was one of the best days of the deployment.

Currently, everyone is gearing up for change of command inventories. The platoons are in high gear preparing to lay out all of their equipment while continually maintaining the Task Force's aircraft. I am hoping that everything will go smoothly.

I am looking forward to July, which is shaping up to a very interesting transition time for the D Company Soldiers and NCOs.

Until next time, enjoy counting down the days with us until we all get back home to you.

"We must laugh at man to avoid crying for him."

E Company

Greetings to all!

Well this month we are busy with the change of command between CPT Tim Davis (outgoing commander) and CPT Joni Floyd (incoming commander). The Soldiers of Echo Company are working hard to make it a smooth transition ensuring inventories, documents, and Soldier qualifications are up-dated and complete. This will be the first female commander that Echo Company has had since its inception in 2005. We will be making history in Echo Company and the Soldiers and I are looking forward to it.

I want to let all of you know back home that all of your Soldiers are thinking of you and as time goes on our hearts grow fonder the longer we are away. The anticipation is starting to build a bit now as we focus on transitioning into the redeployment phase of the

deployment. Before you know it we will be home again and enjoying of the much needed time together with our loved ones and friends. I want to thank all of you back in the states for your support and commitment to your Soldiers and their way of life. Behind every Soldier is a foundation of support from family and friends that makes a world of difference in the morale and spirit of our Soldiers. Thank you.

Last month I said goodbye to CPT Davis as our commander and this month I would like to welcome our new commander CPT Floyd and her family. All of us Executioners look forward to serving with you throughout your command and we will do our best to make your job an easier one. CPT Floyd, you are being given a great organization filled with professional Soldiers and I know that you will not be disappointed. Welcome Executioner Six! Executioners!



~ The Rock! The Diamond! Executioner Seven!

*“The sum of intelligence on the planet is a constant;
the population is growing.”*

Bagram Humor



6.14.11- Do you remember when bunk beds were cool? I do. It was about the same time I thought the movie Fern Gully was cool. I was 6, and with some bed sheets I could make a kick butt fort out of mine that would rival the security of an old Russian airfield in Afghanistan. Years later, I ended up here at BAF and was able to reignite my childhood connection with the bunk bed! Except the only difference is now my bunk bed is made out of re-purposed railroad ties and I feel the need to get a tetanus shot the more nights I sleep in it.



6.6.11- Right now, you may be thinking... *Is homie really complaining about having a Pizza Hut on base... in Afghanistan? He can't actually EXPECT this!* Meanwhile, stock footage of troops sleeping on the muddy ground in 110 degree Vietnam heat rolls through your head. Am I actually complaining about it? Seriously? You bet your hand-tossed butt I am.

It's because three 12" pizzas (think paper plate sized) comes to a grand total of 47.00 freakin' dollars. You can get a used iPod for \$47, and all this is - is BREAD AND SAUCE. By the way, if you ever decide to dip into your savings and spring for a personal pepperoni, order it, then run every errand you could possibly think of: Write a personal letter to everyone you know back home, have a little mid-morning discussion with your buddy, get a drink from the Green Bean coffee shop, and smoke a pack of L&Ms with the Europeans out front. Done? Yeah, your pizza isn't.



Acquiring a dog may be the only opportunity a human ever has to choose a relative.”

JULY, 2011

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*“Warning:
Humor may be
hazardous to
your illness.”*

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PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Spc. Brandi Briolat, of D Company, managed to publish the July D Company newsletter before the E Company Executioners – who hold the record for always submitting their newsletter first. Congrats Briolat...you did what no one thought possible!