Incoming commander, Col. John Spiszer and incoming Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Orosz unveil the 3rd BCT, 1st ID colors symbolizing the assumption of command.

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3-1 conducts transfer of Authority ceremony in Afghanistan(Photo by Staff Sgt. Adora)

3rd BCT, 1st ID Magazine

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The sound of gunshots broke the silence on July 13 at Forward Operating Base Khogyani, Afghanistan, as the rifle team rendered a gun salute in honor of their fallen comrade. The American flag wavered in the wind beside a pair of empty boots that no one would ever be able to fill, those of a great leader, husband, father and friend, Sgt. Douglas J. Bull, a combat engineer with Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

“I’d like to try and remember Sgt. Bull for the animated, spirited, unique individual that he became known for,” Spc. Dean Gannon, a fellow Soldier said while paying tribute to Bull during his memorial.

“I give a resounding heart-felt thank you for the many gifts of insight and tear-inducing laughs. There will only ever be one Sgt. Bull it’s just a shame you left us so soon.”

Sgt. Bull was conducting a route clearing mission in the Konar province of Afghanistan when he was killed by an improvised explosive device, July 8. He is survived by his wife Tera, daughter Arianna, son Jaden, and parents Christopher Bull and Mary Rambus.

“It was enlightening to hear a young man like you express how deeply you cared for your family. I know that you are their hero,” Spc. Anthony Slaughter, STB, A.co. Soldier said to his fallen comrade during the memorial. “I didn’t realize it then but I realize it now, how special every single moment with your family was to you. They love you and so do I.”

Sgt. Bull, a 29 year-old native of Wilkes Barre, Pa., joined the Army in February 1999. His first assignment was with the 54th Engineer Battalion in Bamberg, Germany, where, during a previous deployment to Iraq in 2005, he helped develop the current doctrine used today for route clearing missions.

When he arrived to 3-1 in November 2007, his leadership skills and engineer expertise were put to work and proved an asset to his newly established company.

While serving with the unit in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Sgt. Bull was called to perform one of the toughest engineer missions, in one of the most dangerous areas in Afghanistan. Despite the risks he embraced the challenge and courageously led his crew into the combat zone.

“I remember that when I spoke with Sgt. Bull about being in the route clearance platoon he stepped up and took this mission with pride.” Capt. Brian Corbin, Bulls’ company commander, said.

“I can’t remember Sgt. Bull without a smile on his face. He was always positive about his missions, portrayed a can-do attitude and cared deeply for his Soldiers and fellow Aces,” Corbin continued.

At the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Ca. Bull was named Hero of the Battle for his hard work and dedication, but those who knew him well remember him more for his positive outlook and humorous nature.

“Through all the tasks that were placed on you, you always maintained your sense of humor, and had fun performing your job, I want to say thank you,” Slaughter said.

“You made being a squad leader fun and exciting, you performed exceptionally and it reflected how good our team could be.”

Sgt. Bull’s memory will not go unforgotten as the unit continues on with the mission Sgt. Bull helped begin. “It was an honor to serve with you then and it is an honor to serve with you watching over me now,” Slaughter said.

Through choked-up words Slaughter ended his tribute with a prayer.

“By the way Lord, thank you for putting another angel around us named Sgt. Douglas John Bull, amen.”
A tip from a local Afghan lead to the discovery of a weapons cache near Khogyani, Afghanistan, and may have saved the lives of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Soldiers.

On July 6, Special Troops Battalion of 3rd BCT 1st ID received a tip that there were rockets pointed at their Forward Operating Base, FOB Kogioni, in the Nangarhar Province of northeastern Afghanistan. “They received a tip from the local and acted on it with a combined force of Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police,” Lt. Col. Patrick Daniel, Special Troops Battalion commander, said. “The tip said we would find rockets pointed at the FOB. We went there and found 107mm rockets.”

Alpha Co. 2nd Plt. found two rockets pointed at the FOB, which were ready to be fired by a timing device.

The Soldiers didn’t end their search for artillery with the discovery of the rockets. They scoured the mountainous region in search of other explosive devices that could endanger Soldiers or innocent civilians. After a continued search, a cache of mortars was discovered the following day.

The find, which was a combined coalition effort, showed the Soldiers there is a real threat here in the Area of Operation.

“This discovery; open the eye of the Soldier and let them know that it is a real threat out there aimed again us and our allies, it also helped with the relationship between them and our supporting forces, Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan Security Giraud (ASG),” 1st Sgt. Jerry Dozier, A Co. STB first sergeant, said.

The Soldiers and locals are excited about finding the caches and feel it’s a good start to their deployment time in Afghanistan.

“The Soldiers were very excited because it was early in the mission and it was a good success to start on,” Daniel said. “It created some momentum for the Soldiers and the local tribal leaders.”

The nature of the way the caches were discovered has a big payoff for the relationship between allied troops and the locals.

“Receiving tips from the locals plays big in how the relationship between U.S. forces and the locals have developed in the peace keeping effort that we are trying to establish,” Dozier said, “and also it helps build the work teams relationship that we need to survive.

It builds trust between the Soldier and the locals, which makes going outside the wire on a mission a little more painless, knowing that we have that type of relationship out there, and it also helps us to maneuver around their city.”

Even though the discovery of the caches was a big success for the Soldiers, this is only the beginning of the deployment and the search for more will be continuing for months to come.

“Searching for weapons caches, is always a never ending mission,” Dozier said.

“This effort reduces the casualties for us and help greatly reduces the enemy’s ability to use them again us.”

1-6, making some noise

Pvt. Class John Hayes, an Alpha Battery, 1-6 Field Artillery Cannon Crew Member, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke pulls the lanyard while conducting direct fire calibration during Cannon Crew Certification at Forward Operating Base Goshta July 11, 2008 with the mountains of Nangarhar in the backdrop. The certification was conducted in preparation of A/1-6 FA's assumption of fire support duties in the Nangarhar Province.
Big Red One unveils its colors in Northeastern Afghanistan

Distinguished guests sat under an Afghan canopy of intricate patterns. The onlookers came from all parts of the world, representing various organizations. Their diverse attire created a pattern within itself as they gathered at the Kandihar Terminal, Afghanistan, to witness the transfer of authority between the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, July 24.

When the 173d paratroopers set foot on Afghanistan soil 15 months ago, 3rd BCT, 1st ID was just re-activating at Fort Hood, TX. Throughout this past deployment 173d has fought for reform in Afghanistan while 3-1 has trained to take their place.

“We understand that while the Dukes have been handed a difficult mission, we are well trained and capable,” Col. John Spiszer, Task Force Duke commander, said. “The task is important to our nation, to Afghanistan, to the people of N2KL [Northeastern Region of Afghanistan], and to each other. We look forward to the challenges ahead and will continue the work of Task Force Bayonet.”

Sgt. Major of the Army, Kenneth Preston, was also in attendance at the ceremony. He came to Afghanistan to assist the Afghan Sgt. Major of the Army, Sgt. Major of the Army Rashan Safi, in building an Afghan NCO Corps. Despite his busy schedule he stopped by to attend the TOA and talk with the Big Red One Soldiers about the mission ahead.

“The Army’s been asked to do a tough mission and of course we’ve asked [3-1] to also do a tough mission. I’m very proud of all of them and what they’re going to do and accomplish over the next 15 months,” Preston said. “I’m very confident that this brigade, and the Soldiers and the leadership are going to do a phenomenal job over the course of their deployment.”

The unveiling of the Big Red One colors symbolized the beginning of Task Force Duke’s command over the Northeastern area of Afghanistan. As the light infantry brigade picks up where the 173d left off, they plan to build upon the foundation laid by the paratroopers during their time in Afghanistan.

“My intent is to continue on the same path that the 173d Airborne Task Force Bayonet did, and to continue making improvements, carrying the ball the next ten yards so to speak, because they’ve got a good plan and a good strategy that they’ve been executing,” Spiszer said.

The paratroopers are now headed home to their families in Europe after executing a mission of sacrifice and perseverance.

“Thanks to the magnificent paratroopers of the 173rd and Task Force Bayonet for their blood, sweat and tears, fighting for a noble cause. Never before have I known such a brave group of Soldiers,” Col. Charles Preysler, Task Force Bayonet Commander said. “Their tenacity and resolve, while fighting in some of the toughest terrain on earth, is humbling to me as leader. I am in awe of their accomplishments and am proud to have walked the same ground they have.”

Photos and Story By Staff Sgt. Adora Medina
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

It’s not going to be easy

“No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great. Duty First!”

Col. John Spiszer

By Col. John Spiszer
3rd BCT, 1st ID, Commander

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, or Task Force Duke has been deployed now for about a month and we have experienced a taste of what we are in for during the deployment and have started getting into a groove as far as our daily operations. This is not an easy job, but it is also nothing that we cannot handle.

The Brigade has hit the ground running from the time we arrived in Afghanistan, but we did not just fall into our Area of Operations without receiving all the lessons and necessary training from our counterparts, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. The 173rd worked hard before they redeployed to pass along all of the tremendous experience they gained over the duration of their 15-month deployment, and our Soldiers took everything in before taking over responsibility for our new Areas of Operation—the Nangarhar, Nuristan, Kunar and Laghman Provinces of northeastern Afghanistan.

The Brigade is now based out of Jalalabad, known as Forward Operating Base Fenty and sits astride the ancient invasion and trade route from India to the west—along the Khyber Pass and the main road to Pakistan.

The Brigade has changed and grown since leaving Fort Hood. Our 2-2 Infantry, Ramrods, are in Kandahar, working for Regional Command South, while we have taken on several new units in our area of operation, which include Aviation (2-17 CAV), Armor (3-103 AR organized as Infantry), Military Police, Engineers, Artillery, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and an Agro-business Development Team, as well as experts from the State Department, USAID, DEA, USDA, and others. We have established a tremendous team well suited to conducting counterinsurgency operations.

The Brigade Soldiers are already excelling in all areas, including our security, governance, and development lines of operations. If the enemy here wants to fight we can give him the fight of his life. If the local government needs our help and support, we do that by helping to build the capacity of this nation to govern itself, something they have lacked since 1979. Finally, we are also spending hundreds of millions of dollars creating a better future by building roads, schools, and a host of other infrastructure projects throughout our AO. The multi-faceted nature of our mission is absolutely incredible and shows what truly amazing people we have in our country that have chosen to serve and be Soldiers in a time of war.

And while we are doing all these things it is a war and unfortunately, to date, five of our Duke Soldiers have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Please pray for them and their loved ones: 2nd Lt. Michael Girdano, A/3-1 STB; Sgt. Douglas Bull, A/3-1 STB; SPC William Mulvihill, HHC/3-1 STB; Pfc. John Badie, A/3-1 STB; and Pvt. Jair Garcia, C/6-4 CAV. These American heroes paid the price to keep our country and their comrades safe while trying to help the people of Afghanistan. We have also had 11 Soldiers wounded, three of whom have returned home.

Your Soldiers are all working long, hard hours, but they are performing as I expected—magnificently. I encourage all of them to take what opportunities they can to contact you all back home and would ask you to do the same. Contact with you all, who we are fighting for, helps keep all of us motivated and I am sure it reassures you as well. All the care packages and knowledge that you all back there are thinking of us and taking care of each other, makes all of our jobs easier and our days go faster.

No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great.
Duty First!
3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Rear Detachment conducted training at the Oveta Culp Center in order to prepare for its Soldier and Family Member responsibilities and sacred duties while the unit is deployed to Afghanistan.

The sacred duties include the care of causalities and families, and honoring our fallen, according to Col. John M. Spiszer, 3rd BCT commander.

“The training focused on ensuring key leaders across the Brigade Rear Detachment understood the Casualty Assistance Response Team concept and execution plan,” Maj. Gregory V. Stokes, 3rd BCT Rear Detachment commander, said.

During the training two Gold Star Family Members talked to the group about their personal experiences while dealing with the CARE Teams.

“The death and pain that you feel when they show up at your door is just horrific,” Ursula Pirtle, Board Vice President for Helping Unite Gold Star Survivors, said. “You are holding on to hope. You see two people and you want them to say they are missing or they are injured, not that they are dead.”

Pirtle lost her husband, Spc. James H. Pirtle, during Operation Iraqi Freedom I in 2003. He was killed in action when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his Bradley Fighting Vehicle in Iraq.

“In order for you as rear detachment leaders to be able to help grieving family members you must understand two things,” Pirtle said. “First, you have to have an open mind, and secondly, you have to have an open heart. Everything that is planned is turned upside down. Questions come to mind. How am I going to raise my family without him?”

Pirtle even stressed how a person’s everyday character and demeanor changes when dealing with death and grief.

“They may not be as pleasant to you as you desire. They lash out. Some will refuse to cry in front of others. They are going to be different and they will need you as a Gold Star representative to be understanding,” Pirtle added.

In order to prepare for the training, Family Life Consultants did some scenarios on how a command support team makes a visit to a home after the family notification process.

“Making sure everyone understood who was supposed to go into the home and when was the appropriate time to do so,” Marion Gilbert, Family Readiness Support Assistant, said.

The compassion and gravity of dealing with military families who have paid the ultimate sacrifice was continuously emphasized throughout the training. Overall, many of the Rear Detachment members felt they had gained new perspectives from the days teachings.

“Seeing and participating in a real world depiction and scenario training so close to the Duke Brigade leaving for Afghanistan was a very sobering experience and an interpretation of what reality may soon be for the Duke Family,” Sgt. 1st Class John Simon, 3rd BCT Rear Detachment Casualty Assistant Center noncommissioned officer-in-charge, said.
We’ve been deployed for about a month now. How do you think you are doing? Are you maximizing your time with your counterpart and learning everything you can possibly learn? I certainly hope so because this can and will save lives if you listen to your counterparts that have done this for the past fifteen months. Did you remember to write your parents or significant other to let them know you are deployed? I mentioned this in an earlier article so this is your reminder.

We have had a few non-battle injuries (NBIs) that were probably preventable. One Soldier is missing the tip of his finger after slamming it in the door up an uparmored HMMWV. Take your time and slow down. Everyone needs to remember this deployment is a marathon and I want everyone to finish, so slow down. Through repetition and day in and day out missions you will get faster. The other NBIs were medical related and those can’t be helped when your body doesn’t function as designed. Focus on the mission and each step to prevent non-battle injuries.

Negligent discharges have occurred in the first few weeks of the deployment. Leaders are reminded that the CJTF 101 standards require you to clear your Soldiers’ weapons after conducting a patrol. The standards also require two sets of eyes to inspect weapon chambers, something we have been teaching and hopefully practicing since the brigade stood up on 19 April 2007.

There is no hurry in clearing your weapon. A key step in clearing weapons that I see leaders and Soldiers missing is the unloading step prior to clearing. The weapon must first be unloaded before it can be cleared. I want to remind everyone to review the standards in the CJTF 101 standards book, Appendix H, that outlines the proper steps for unloading and clearing weapons. If you follow the steps you can’t go wrong. This is serious business and requires leader involvement.

Wear your seat belts!! Seatbelts will save lives. When you trained in the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer prior to deployment you wore your seatbelts. One of the reasons for the trainer is to instill in each and every one of you some confidence that seat belts work. It takes leaders checking and inspecting to making Soldiers and other leaders do the right thing. I don’t know what Soldiers are thinking. Maybe they think they can get out of the vehicle quicker after the IED strike. You can’t outrun the speed of light so wear your seatbelt! Maybe Soldiers are concerned when they roll-over in a creek or some other water source they will drown. If your seat belt is on you can rest assure you are upside down and can generally get out of the vehicle with plenty of time. Without the seatbelt, you will not know which way you are and panic will consume you and you will not make it. Wear your seatbelt!

The last thing I will talk about is uniforms. We are still United States Army Soldiers and part of the Greatest Army ever assembled. I am so proud I want to wear my uniform proudly and show the world how professional I am. The Army of the Vietnam War time frame had its problems with uniforms because of the great number of Soldiers who were drafted and didn’t care. If I had a choice in this hot environment, I would much rather wear shorts and t-shirts all the time. But guess what? It is not up to me, so when I correct you or your leaders correct you, I want you to know that I understand you are hot and not very comfortable because of your duty and the uniform you are wearing. Wear the uniform as it was intended! We don’t have an exemption for AR 670-1 or CJTF 101 standards.

Remember this is a marathon and I want you to finish with me. Take your time and analyze the battlefield. Use what time you have or I hope you used the time we had to gain as much knowledge from your counterpart about your new back yard. Oh yeah, call or write your parents or significant other and let them know how you are doing. This is important!
Field Artillery Soldiers man the gun line

From a distance the barrels of the howitzers can be seen above the barriers surrounding a remote Centaur Forward Operating Base in the Nuristan Province. The weapons are ready to fire at a second’s notice, providing fire support to the immediate area.

The Centaurs of Higher Headquarters Battalion, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, are responsible for manning the gun line twenty-four hours a day. Two artillery teams work around the clock, maintaining the weapons, while waiting for fire missions to come down.

“I work on the gun line, and the mission is pretty much to support any troops outside of the wire with our cannon fire,” Pfc. Eric Coates said. “We’re thoroughly trained and we can do any mission that they send down to us. It’ll be accurate that’s for sure.”

The long hours spent on the gun line can seem tiresome, but the Centaurs stay alert and ready to take immediate action. Pfc. Jackie Noah, a 1-6 Soldier, recalls the very first fire mission the Centaurs completed during their deployment to Afghanistan.

“We were providing security for our fellow Soldiers, and keeping the enemies’ heads down, making sure [Coalition forces] made it out alive,” Noah said. “It feels good to let you know that you’re helping the people that are forward of our position and doing everything we can to help our fellow Soldiers.”

Many challenges come with the mission, for
some, on the gun line, it’s adjusting to the long hours. Others say the restricted environment takes some getting used to, but mainly, the Soldiers just miss their families.

To cope with these challenges, the artillery Soldiers have found creative ways to pass the time. Some are musicians, some are artists and some are writers. Regardless of the hobby, they all manage to come together to throw around the football, hit golf balls into a mosquito net, and swing at a punching bag made of sandbags, rocks and tape.

“Well for anybody that’s coming to Afghanistan make sure you bring a hobby with you because the mountains start closing in on you after a while,” Thomas Brooks, 1-6 Soldier, said jokingly. “It gets pretty small so you have to keep yourself occupied. Just keep an open mind and just trust everybody that’s around you.”

Concerning the remainder of the deployment, the Soldiers believe things will only improve as time goes on. Staff Sgt. Anthony Salyer, one of the howitzer section chiefs, is grateful to work with such a dedicated team.

“They’re excellent with team work. They’re always looking for ways to help out each other, they’re always looking for ways to help out the team, and the mission. They’re just a good group of guys, very willing to work, always wanting to learn new things,” Salyer said. “It’s only going to get better with this group of guys. It’s going to be a cake walk. Friendships are going to build stronger and we’re going to work better as a team and get the mission done.”
3-1 Unveils colors

Col. John Spiszer, 3-1 commander prepares to unveil the colors.

Afghan National Army and 3-1 Soldiers standing in formation awaiting color unveiling.

3-1 Color Guard is marching in at the opening of the unveiling ceremony.

1st ID commander addresses 3-1 and ANA Soldiers during the ceremony.
201st BSB mission accomplished

Sgt. 1st Class Keith Jordan of the 201st BSB is conducting a pre-mission briefing in front of Alpha and Charlie Companies. During the company briefing, Jordan ensures his Soldiers that the mission will be a success.

Story By Sgt. Charles Brice
102D MPAD, 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

The provisions and supplies the remote fire bases rely on to do their daily missions don’t get delivered through the mail or through the express service. 201st Brigade Support Battalion performs missions regularly to get the supplies out, and like the mailman, they can’t be stopped by rain, sleet or snow.

Companies of the 201st BSB put their lives on the line everyday in order to make sure supplies are delivered to fire bases throughout the area of operation in the Nuristan Province. Outfitted with numerous military vehicles, jingle trucks and air support, Alpha and Charlie companies travel throughout the area of operation to deliver supplies.

“The Soldiers on the ground need those beans and bullets to conduct their missions,” said 1st Sgt. Lloyd Moore of the 201st BSB. “If nobody wants the mission, my Soldiers will take the initiative and complete the job, no matter what, because that’s what they do to get supplies throughout the area of operations: take the initiative.”

While conducting his convoy brief, Sgt. 1st Class Keith Jordan, platoon leader of Alpha Company, 201st BSB reinsures his company the mission is going to be a success. While pacing back-and-forth in front of his Soldiers and scanning through his order of operation, Jordan explains the order of things to come and what he expects from everyone before, during and after the mission.

The convoy briefing is standard procedure for Alpha Company before any mission. This is to make sure all things are to Army standard before a mission is conducted, to prevent any unwanted mishaps during the operation.

For many of the Soldiers of alpha company, this is their first deployment and they are new to conducting supply runs in hostile areas.

“I was very nervous this morning,” said Private Katie Vallejo of Alpha Company after completing her first mission. “This is my first convoy out and the way up there was a little rocky.”

When the Soldiers go out on a mission they are always prepared for the worst and are accompanied by medics from Charlie Company BSB. The medics support the mission in case there are any emergencies, according Spc. Heather Smith a medic from Charlie Company.

Also, Alpha Company Pvt. Jason Davis mentioned, how being in a situation like the recent mission he participated in can put anybody on the edge when you have to drive in a hostile area. The convoy was a 12-hour long journey for the Soldiers of the 201st BSB. The mission was extended due to bad weather.

“The convoy was set to be a one day mission, but it turned out to be a bit longer than we expected,” said Jordan. “We did what we had to do to make our deadline.”

“My mission was to push supply, mainly fuel, out to fire bases in our area of operation,” said Jordan. “We had all the air support and coverage we needed to make it through the mission.”

However, obstacles such as weather often interfere with the mission, but the Soldiers of BSB find a way to make it happen and complete the mission. Things of this nature happen all the time when missions do not go according to plan.

The Soldiers of BSB are trained and ready to take on the missions that require someone that knows how to get the job done no matter what, said Moore. Moore said, “If it’s a mission that is employed with obstacles we will find other means of delivery, because they are highly motivated Soldiers and they will get the job done anywhere, anyplace, at anytime.”
The story is told of former Auburn University coaching great, Ralph "Shug" Jordan, who once asked an alumnus player, Mike Kolen, then playing linebacker for the Miami Dolphins, to give him a little help with recruiting. Kolen said he would, but asked, "What are you looking for?" Coach Jordan said, "Well, Mike, you know, there's a guy, you knock him down, he just stays down." Mike said, "We don't want him, do we coach?" Coach Jordan answered, "No, Mike, we don't want him! But there's the guy, you knock him down and he gets up, but you knock him down once more and he stays down." Mike said, "We don't want him either, right, coach?" Coach said, "No. But Mike - there's a third guy, you knock him down, he gets up. You knock him down again, he gets up again. Knock him down one more time, he gets up one more time." Mike said, excitedly, "That's the guy we want, isn't it?" Coach Jordan answered. "No, Mike, we don't want him either. Mike, I want you to find me that guy who's knocking everybody down!"

Sometimes, there are things in life which threaten to "knock us down." We're cruising along, minding our own business, when all of a sudden, as Emeril might say, "Bam!" something comes along to upset the apple cart. What can we do when the dog bites, when the bee stings, when we're feeling bad...? First, we can recognize, along with Dr. Robert Schuller, that tough times don't last but tough people do. When challenges come up in life, it may seem like we're hopelessly stuck in a situation that will never end. In reality, we can find hope in the fact that difficult times tend to be relatively short-lived in the eternal scheme of things. Ancient wisdom offers us a helpful phrase when things seem to be going haywire in life: "This too shall pass..." When we look beyond the momentary hassles with which we're confronted, life tends to become a much happier endeavor.

What else can we do when life throws us a curve ball? We can become what the late philosopher and spiritualist, Henri Nouwen, once called "wounded healers." Nouwen believed that we are most able to help others in life if we ourselves have experienced some element of struggle or challenge along the way. James 1:2 says, "Consider it pure joy...whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance." The "truth-in-advertising" clause is that most of us wouldn't deliberately go out looking for problems in life. But it's encouraging to know that when problems find us, and they invariably do, we can put those struggles to some good use and become "wounded healers."

As we continue on through our time of deployment – Soldiers in Theater and Family members and friends back home – may we be strengthened in the knowledge that first "...weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning," (Psalm 30:5) – tough times don't last but tough people do; and, second, our troubles are never in vain if we allow them to transform us into "wounded healers," people who help others out of our own sometimes challenging experiences. Rick Warren, author of the multi-million seller, "The Purpose Driven Life" has said, "God never wastes a hurt..." May it be so with us during the coming month, for the duration of the deployment, and on into eternity. Stay blessed!
Fort Knox team makes visit to 3-1

A Fort Knox community team talked with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division June 10 about what awaits them when they return from Afghanistan and make the move to the home of the Gold Vault in late 2009.

The purpose of their visit was to inform Soldiers and Family Members of the possibilities at Fort Knox; ease the transition from Fort Hood; provide information on housing, child care facilities and sports programs according to Col Mark D. Needham, Fort Knox Garrison Commander and team leader.

To do this several community representatives also came: Elizabethtown mayor, Hardin County Schools superintendent, and representatives from Army Community Services, Child Care Services, Family Housing, Elizabethtown Community and Technical College; Western Kentucky University, and others.

“The community is very supportive and they paid their own dime to come here and talk to Soldiers, welcome them and tell them what they are about, especially married Soldiers who have to make an informed decision,” Needham said. “Army leadership chose to move 3rd BCT after the deployment because of the schools and the kids. Schools start around Aug 4th," he said.

“The brief was very informative,” Spc Garrett Williams Campbell, a military police in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion said. “They gave pretty much every piece of information that you could ask for on your family, housing, children activities, etc.”

“I wanted to get information on everything to share with those members of my squad that were unable to go because they were attending Soldier Readiness Processing,” Campbell said. “My cousin was stationed there and he liked it. So it got me all excited about going there. It has a lot of activities to do their like hiking, mountain climbing and fishing. My hobbies surround a lot of outdoor activities and this would be really fun for me.”

Fort Knox also caters to outdoor sportsmen who enjoy hunting and fishing. “We raise our own trout. We throw them food and come spring time we release them. We also have bass and catfish, and hunting is done over four different weekends,” Needham said.

“Fort Knox has [more than] 109 acres including training and recreational areas, 3,000 family housing units and building more and more dedicated units for our junior and senior enlisted. 3rd BCT, 1st ID is expected to arrive in 2009 and they will have all new and renovated facilities,” Needham said.

“Our training areas are light infantry centric,” Needham said. “We do a lot of platoon on platoon training. There is not a lot of maneuver space for tanks but for infantry we are good. We have the best maneuver sites. They are used 300 days of the year by special operations guys and they were built by Hollywood special effects guys. The tunnels, sewers, railroads, bridges, water towers were all built Hollywood style. The gasoline station even blows up and catches on fire.”

He also talked about the simulated village called Camp Anaconda, which is designed for Middle Eastern training and how the priority for training will be primarily the BCT because most of the other units are administrative based that will be on Fort Knox. For example Human Resource Command, U.S. Army Acces-sions Command.
In the rural, mountainous province of Nuristan, acute or primary medical care has been nearly nonexistent for the poor local population in the past. Local Afghans have long been without a reasonable means to cure and prevent disease, treat wounds or receive medications. A multivitamin, something simply attained in the United States, is a distant afterthought in Nuristan. The Soldiers of the 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment’s medical platoon offer a chance to change this traditional deficiency.

“We are really making a difference here,” Sgt. 1st Class Adrian Davenport, 6-4 Cav. Medical Platoon Sergeant, said. “The Soldiers are starting to recognize the locals and when they see the kids at the gate they all wave.” Armed with bandages, ibuprofen and various balms and creams, the 6-4 medics open a morning sick call for local nationals of every age and gender. The clinic starts with a short screening process, where a medic determines who can be given simple drugs, like aspirin or vitamins, and who needs more attention.

The platoon’s work goes beyond the scope of just health care. By offering free medical services to resident Afghans, the Soldiers build a relationship with locals, thus adding to the positive and progressive work of the U.S. Army in Afghanistan. The Soldiers are reaching out to the locals in the area and the children are taking notice.

“The children go home and tell their little friends about it, and the next morning we have an abundance of kids outside,” Davenport said.

The medics work together with the 126th Forward Surgical Team, who can provide surgical care to Soldiers and locals in need. The Soldiers begin the local national sick call at around 9:30 a.m. everyday. The locals appreciate the medial help, but they get more from the 6-4 than medicine.

“They all appreciate the care we provide,” Cpt. Amanda Cuda, family physician for 6-4 said, “but I don’t know if the kids like the medial treatment or the toys and candy more.”

Afghanistan’s mountains provide challenging and dangerous terrain for military forces in the country, but the presence of insurgents in the region require the Soldiers to be there to protect the Afghan people and bring stability to the region. Unfortunately for enemy forces in northeastern Afghanistan’s Kunar province, 1st Battalion 26th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division are well prepared for the mission.

“I’m confident in our ability to accomplish our mission and we’re prepared for battle here,” Pfc. Rashaun McDowell said.

The unit took military authority of the Kunar province on July 30 and already has undertaken numerous tasks and missions to provide security and stability for the Afghan people in the province. Insurgent activity is prevalent in the area, but Task Force Spader is working to stop them.

The unit conducts patrols daily in addition to indirect fire missions and aviation operations. All these are necessary to keep the Soldiers and the Kunar residents safe.

“We are here to keep the Afghan people safe and each other safe,” McDowell said.

Dismounted patrols, or foot patrols, are conducted through the mountain ranges in the area, due to the steep, rugged terrain. Some of the mountains the Soldier are traversing on these patrols rise to more than 10,000 feet, putting operations literally in the clouds.

The many small villages throughout the province are also patrolled to make sure the residents are safe and to seek out possible enemy forces in the area. In addition, the Soldiers also interact with the locals to show them they are there to help and build relations.
FOB Fenty Chapel Schedule

Protestant Services
Prayer-borne Ops Daily 0330Z / 0800L
Traditional Protestant (Beginning July 8) Sun 0430Z / 0900L
Contemporary Protestant Sun 0630Z / 1100L
Gospel Sun 1400Z / 1830L
Bible Study Wed 1400Z / 1830L
Point of contact CH (CPT) Hart

Roman Catholic Services
Mass (English) Sun 1030Z / 1500L
Mass (Español) Sun 1230Z / 1700L
Weekday Mass (Beginning July 9) M-F 0700Z / 1130L

Confession / Reconciliation By Appointment
Point of contact CH (MAJ) Steve George

Latter Day Saints
Worship Sun 0800Z / 1230L
The FOB Fenty Chapel remains open for personal prayer, worship, and meditation for all faith traditions.

For more information, contact Chapel Office at 318 831-2222 or 831-2223.

“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up as with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” - Isaiah 40:31

Package Guide Lines

★ The package you are trying to send has to be less than 70 pounds and shorter than 130 inches.

★ Furs, stones, TA-50 can not be sent.

★ Before being sent make sure the package has the normal recipient address and return address written on it.

★ Before being sent off the box must be opened for inspection and you must select the service you want to send the package by (insured, certified, etc).

★ Registered mail is the best service for high value items.

★ Technical Inspection requires you to empty the box to make sure contraband and non-mailable items stay here. Items that can not be sent are given back to the customer.

★ 13 ounces or less is free mail to the continental U.S. and Hawaii, as well as inter-theater mail.