



The Bark



2nd BN 27TH IN REGT WOLFHOOUNDS

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MAJ Khan of the ANA stands watch at a polling site in Paktika province on Election Day.

Wolfhounds Witness History

By PFC Hennigan, HHC

First we brought security and safety; then we registered 10.5 million first-time voters; then, through our presence, we gave them self-confidence; then an estimated 80% of a brave people took the risks and voted for their president. Never before has there been a free election in the history of Afghanistan. A UN spokesman in Kabul termed the turnout as "massive".

It's tiring work – building a country. But like most labor that produces something worthwhile, it's satisfying work. You, the Wolfhounds of the 2nd BN 27th IN, have brought about a most fundamental change. Following the election President Bush said: "Just three years ago, women were being executed (**History** continued on page 2)

Bastards Take to the Streets

By: SPC Lobins, B Company

The past operation began with Bravo Company's (also known as the "Bastards") first and second platoons moving into position to begin securing our western area of operation from Sharan to Khushamand on August 24th. In an effort to supplement local national police with the resources necessary to maintain peace during the time period prior as well as through the elections the Bastards began patrolling regularly. Through a dominant presence supported by Governor Mengal, the local populous was assured that coalition forces were readily available and would provide the security necessary to make the election process operate as smoothly as possible.

(**Bastards** continued on page 3)

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History

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in the sports stadium. Today they're voting for a leader of a free country".

As reported by the Associated Press, Lt. Gen. Barno said, regarding the election: "This turning point spells the end of more than two decades of the rule of the gun in this nation and confirms the bright hope of all the Afghan people in a democratic future centered on the rule of law". There can be no more meaningful change in the course of a country's history.

You have just put in place that all-important foundation upon which will rest the new Afghanistan. The first free Afghanistan, the first democratic Afghanistan. ...of the people, by the people... You gave the people of Afghanistan the right to vote, you gave them the beginning of self-government. In doing this work you have used many tools: shovels, gifts of pens and paper, candy, well-digging equipment, pumps, generators, M16's, mortars, M4's, SAWs, Apaches, grenades, bombs, rockets, charm, persuasiveness, insistence, psychology, determination, understanding, courage, brains and brawn.

These are a people ready for democracy. In an article written by Oliver North he said, of the Afghanistan people: "... rejoicing that their U.S. liberators have given power to their voices. ...They showed their appreciation by trekking to one of the 4,800 polling sites located in public buildings or mountain rest areas. In some places, there was over a foot of snow on the ground. Voters turned out in the early morning, well before the polls opened, and waited up to three or four (**History** continued on page 6)



MAJ Wilson discusses election security with some local leaders.

Commanders Forum

By LTC Piatt

This month the Wolfhounds played a critical role in bringing democracy to Afghanistan.

When we arrived almost seven months ago most thought the idea of elections in Paktika Province was a bridge too far. We never did. Knowing that the task was considered impossible to most was all the motivation we needed to accomplish the mission.

We have taken the fight to the enemy and the peace to the people. We never did one without the other. We have a long way to go but we must also reflect on what our contributions mean to this country. Many Wolfhounds were wounded and Wesley R. Wells paid the ultimate sacrifice; their sacrifice has made a difference.

Many people are satisfied with just reading history—we make it. Your names will be forever tied to the course of events we created here. Afghanistan has taken a step towards lasting peace. Without you this simply could not have happened. Places like Neka, Bermel, Terwa, Gayan and Sharona now join the legacy of places like Mindanao and (**Commander** continued on page 3)

Commander

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Siberia where the Wolfhounds changed the course of history.

I see a significant fight ahead for the Wolfhounds; one that we are ready for. It is our turn as Americans to fight and win our nations wars. The Global War on Terrorism is our war and the price our generation must pay for the liberty of future generations of American citizens.

We came here to win a war, not just an election. And we will. Let us move forward now with "NO FEAR!"

NF6



Prescription for Stress

By SPC Robeck, S-3

According to several "studies," combat environments can become stressful. Of course, we know this all too well. Many of those same studies also look into the most effective ways to relieve stress. While many of the hundreds of strategies for relieving or reducing stress are not conducive to the setting in which we find ourselves, there are some that we can utilize. After a month of research, I've found nine things we can do to help rid ourselves, or at least decrease the amount, of stress. Keep in mind though, that not all of these techniques will be effective for everyone. The key is to find the one or two that work best for you.

(Stress continued on page 4)



Bastards

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The first signs of unrest began with an improvised explosive device remotely detonated directly behind one of first platoon's cargo HMMWV's on the morning of September 8th. Just minutes after leaving the gates of the Sharona firebase the convoy was hit by the I.E.D. resulting in the injury of PFC Janahi who took a blast of the shrapnel to the lower jaw. He was immediately evacuated via helicopter to Bagram. According to SPC Ojindes Miranda the platoon "reacted very well in overcoming the confusion of an I.E.D. attack."

Operations quickly resumed with the need for a strong presence in the Khayr Kot and Khushamand regions.

Second platoon lead movement southwest securing what Bravo company soldiers referred to as the "sand castle", a large compound formerly used by the Russians and Taliban which contained ample room for a battalion sized element. The burden of securing the sand castle, maintaining observation points against rocket attacks, as well as keeping a moving presence south through Bakkhel, Mamurkhel, and Khushamand was shouldered by the soldiers of first and second platoon.

"We did an outstanding job with the limited number of soldiers we had to complete the mission", says SSG Culotta.

Third platoon replaced the soldiers from second and immediately went to work picking up where their predecessors left off. With a day long sandstorm and poor visibility beginning the day before elections the company stepped up to meet the challenge of providing immediate response to any incidents in the area of operation. After the voter sites were established and the ballots delivered the mission shifted from being the main effort to supporting local police and Arbakai as they took on the task of providing the primary means of security.

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Bastards (Continued from page 3)

As winter looms on the horizon the general consensus among the soldiers was that this was the time for anti-coalition forces to strike. Throughout the day a steady moving stream of patrols maintained the dominant presence of security.

Bravo company's dedicated effort keeping a constant presence and the ability to respond quickly and decisively in the months prior to the election came to fruition as the day passed without serious incident.

Stress

(Continued from page 3)

1. Orange juice. Any fruit juice for that matter. Researchers at the University of Alabama fed rats 200 milligrams of Vitamin C a day and found that it nearly stopped the secretion of stress hormones. Two 8 ounce servings of OJ a day gives you all the Vitamin C you require.

2. Find one of the more playful dogs we have, and spend some time with man's best friend. According to research at the State University of New York at Buffalo, being around a pet provides more stress relief than being around a two-legged friend. Caffeine-loaded as a group, their feelings of stress subsided.

3. If you're a Caffeine addict, don't drink your coffee alone. Researchers discovered that when stressed-out men consume caffeine alone, they remain nervous and jittery. But when they got caffeine-loaded as a group, stress subsided.

4. Shake it out. When you're facing one of those one time do or die situations, shake out your fingers, relieving the tension in your forearms, hands, and wrists and shifting your focus to the task at hand.

5. Listen to music at work. Not just any music though. Listen to the blandest music you can find. According to a study at Pennsylvania's Wilkes University, "Muzak" (elevator music) lowers your stress levels at work, while also reducing the risk

of the common cold. I knew Celine Dion had a purpose.

6. Run fast. Bike hard. Punch the heavy bag (no, not your mother-in-law). A University of Missouri at Columbia study found that just 33 minutes of high-intensity exercise helps lower stress levels more than working out at a moderate pace. What's more, the benefits last as long as 90 minutes afterward.

7. Meditate. Researchers at West Virginia University found that 35 participants who underwent "meditation" saw a 44 percent reduction in psychological distress over 3 months. Just sit quietly for 10 minutes a day and focus on your breathing.

8. Give up the butts. Researchers found that nicotine suppresses serotonin. It also triggers the release of the chemical dopamine, which stimulates pleasure centers in the brain. The problem: Dopamine levels soon drop, leaving the body craving more.

9. Count backward by 13's. Start from a different number every time, and the difficulty of computing the sequence distracts the mind from the stress. (**Stress** continued on page 7)

Holidays in O-E

By SGT Gentry, A Company

Holidays in Afghanistan are not the joyous and happy times that should be associated with the season. Time apart from family, friends and civilization as a whole put a damper on the Holiday Spirit. No one really wants to see the people they work with day in and day out on Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Here are some ways to brighten up these dismal times, despite the lack of a such comforts as a home cooked meals.

We are about to come upon Halloween; while nothing can compare to Waikiki, that doesn't mean everyone needs to forget about the Holiday. There are plenty of activities to do right here on our own firebase. First thing you need to think about is your costume. (**Holidays** continued on page 5)

Holidays (Continued from page 4)
You may ask, “where the hell do I get a Halloween costume in this place?”



With a little improvisation and creativity, a costume can be easily made. I have heard of some interesting ideas already. A black silk weight top and bottom and a Balaclava create a great Ninja Costume. Just don't let the 1SG's see this or they will start yelling something about some standard or regulation that states you can't wear under garments as outer garments. If it so happens that the combined height of you platoon sergeant and platoon leader is that of one of your squad leaders, consider stacking the PL and PSG in the Squad Leader's DCU's, don't worry if the one on bottom runs out of air he can stick his head out the fly at anytime. So if you are feeling down on Halloween, head out in your costume, and go Trick or Treating to various hooches.

Remember your Chain of Command has an Open Door Policy, and remember your K-pot makes an excellent basket to carry your treats.

So if you are down about anything this holiday season, simply use your imagination to make it feel like home. Missing your Christmas tree? Next time you leave the wire grab one or two (two: if your 1SG never leaves the wire). Grab some Chemlights from supply and decorate your tree; now you have festive tree. I think the snow we haven't seen in Hawaii for the last few years will be taken care of this year. So enjoy your Holidays and be safe trick or

treating. Everyone is looking forward to seeing your ingenuity.

Taste of the Hard Life

By SPC Cooper, Scouts

The sun rising. The air once hot and comfortable. The seconds of hate in our hearts. The now shivering, almost convulsing shaking of seeing our breath crystallizing on the mountain peaks ahead. We see with our still dreaming eyes. The stretching of our cold crusty bodies. Growling, yawning. Wiping our eyes freshly crusted with the condensation of our restless souls. With an hour and a half till we head out of the wire in our cold frozen coffins. We sit up. Confused. Wondering if we really woke from our peaceful dreams full of love and comfort. We roll up the gear, pack our current homes and belonging on our mobile RV's. The roaring of the trucks waking the nearby sleeping dogs. Our stomachs empty. The shaving and brushing of our teeth. The cigarette, calming. The sun rising over the foggy mountains, soothing. The warmth of the watch cap on our heads. The opening of our delicious MRE. The laughter.

Smoke pouring from the heaters with the stink that would choke a dead dog. Each squad with a quarter trash bag full already. About five cigarettes gone. The BUB. The mission. Radio checks. The sweat frozen flak from the mission sixteen hours before. The rack, gloves go on. The most uncomfortable seats you have ever sat in. Claustrophobia. From neutral to drive. The brake goes down. Foot smashes the pedal to the floor, five miles an hour you creep to the formation in order. Bumping down the driveway. The HESCO, the wire. The rocks, the sand. The exhaust, the fog. The frozen gunner all wrapped up like a mummy. The FRAGO. Heading north, heading south. More confusion. The traffic. The kids, begging. Grown men watching. No women in sight. (**Hard Life** continued on page 6)

Hard Life

(Continued from page 5)

Little girls and boys hiding, dodging our over-confident and hateful stare. Dogs barking. The feces of small animals and humans smashed to the soles of our boots. The radios beeping, screeching orders. Reacting. The perimeter. Dismount. Crowd control. The sight of poverty, disease, pain. The laughter of children, flocking like a pack of seagulls on a barge of waste. The questions. The intelligence. Where does it lead us? Right back to the beginning. The mission, the FRAGO. One less pack and a half of cigarettes. Everyday, every hour, every minute, every second of our life.

History


(Continued from page 2)

hours to cast that historic ballot. Many citizens marked the dignity of the occasion by donning their best clothes and waiting in lines that stretched for nearly two miles."

True, others contributed their share but let no one misunderstand, let there be no confusion about this: without the U.S. Military, and our tool box, there would have been no election possible. There would be no free Afghanistan.

Wolfhounds have consecrated the ground upon which this foundation is built, we have shed our blood. We draw strength and courage from such men, the men who are our brothers.

The job certainly is not over, we have more work ahead of us than is behind us. Your skills, your reputation kept the enemy out of the game on election day. But, they haven't gone away. Maybe they are a bit more demoralized, maybe a bit more frustrated, certainly less confident. But, they are probably not yet ready to leave the field. We are prepared to give them further instruction, to show them tools and skills they have not yet seen. Often good construction begins with demolition, to clear the ground and get rid of the rot. If

necessary we will demolish more, before we build more. MH 



2-27 soldiers walk through the bazaar in Yahyakhel with the late Dr. Satar in the days leading up to the election.

When I Think of Afghanistan

By SSG Wistoski, Scouts

So many things come to mind when I think about Afghanistan, the rugged beauty, the unforgiving temperatures, and of cores the intriguing people. I grew up in the southwest surrounded by both the Apache and the Navajo Indian reservations so I thought I knew and understood rural or for that matter nomadic culture. The Kuchi (nomadic) people of Afghanistan have shed new light on the matter. I have never in my life seen a poorer group of people in my life. However, with that financial poverty comes the freedom of the true nomad. It is amazing to travel through a valley that was empty only

days before and now has an entire village of tents complete with camels, donkeys, dogs and children. Then only a few days later just as fast as the wind shifts they're gone. (Continued on page 7)



Afghanistan (Continued from page 6)



SSG Wistoski with a group of local Afghan children in Sharona.

One of the missions we routinely conduct is Humanitarian Assistant (HA) Nomads. With that mission, we get to see and spend time with the children. Children have a wonderful way of making the best of the world around them. The world around these children could be coming apart at the seams, but they can still look at you and smile in that wonderful way that breaks through that wall we've been building around ourselves. Reminding us that we are still human and there is still innocence in this place.

The past HA mission there was a little girl about two or three years old. She was absolutely precious. She was very petite, much like my youngest daughter Ashlynn. It was all I could do not to pick her up and just hold her. Missions like the one that day when we can bring some comfort to people who truly need it, especially the children, make this (our year here) worth it.



Stress

(Continued from page 4)

10. Practice acupressure. Apply pressure between the tendons on the underside of the forearm, two thumb widths down from the wrist. Hold pressure for one minute.

All in all, there are quite a few things that can be done to relieve stress. After being here for as long as we have, everyone should have a few good ideas as to what works for them. Just remember though, not all of these will work for everyone. If you can't find anything that works for you, just take some extra personal time in the shower.

BR 

Bark Staff	
SPC Robeck - BR	
PFC Hennigan - MH	



Patch worn by 2nd Battalion
Wolfhound Medics in
Vietnam