



The Pacemaker



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Dear Pacemaker Families & Friends,

It's nice to receive the recognition that this Task Force deserves for the monumental effort on the Kandahar to Tarin Kowt Road. The commanding general, Major General Kamiya, and his Command Sergeant Major, CSM Savusa visited the road project last week and they were simply amazed at the effort and determination of our Pacemakers. He quickly noted that we have the dirtiest Soldiers in Afghanistan and one of the hardest jobs which keeps our Soldiers at work seven days a week. The general took his time looking around FOB Pacemaker, created by A/864 from the bleak Afghani desert, then visited the road crew. After watching borrow pit operations and road work, we gathered the crews on site, lead by Captain Stan Wiechnik the commander of C/926 and 1LT Pat Sullivan of A/864. MG Kamiya said a few words and presented the largest coins of excellence I've ever seen.



Pacemaker 6 & Cougar 6 are proud to show off hard working Pacemaker soldiers on the road to MG Kamiya; Photo by PFC Goodsell

Another surprise was to have the lead element of the unit that will replace us in March 2006 visiting. It's great that they'll have an opportunity to see what we're doing now to get an idea of how they can best prepare for their deployment. I'm sure we'll have a strong transition with them in the Spring to ensure they have a launching platform for a full year of success.

As we prepare for the completion of the road, we're also planning for a ribbon-cutting ceremony. It should be an event that will make the news in the United States because of the people attending. Frankly, if only the Pacemaker Family attended it would be a great event because the Soldiers who worked on the vehicles, pushed the dirt, hauled the fill, placed the culverts, provided medical support, cleared the road of IEDs, ensured communication, cooked and served the meals, led the units, and provided the supplies would be there. Each Soldier made a significant impact and I'll be sure to recognize their efforts.

It won't be long until we have a unit change in the Task Force. B/864 will rejoin TF Pacemaker and C/926th will join TF Wildcat. We'll be happy to get the Bulldogs back but sad to see the Cougars depart. They've made this whole road possible.

Finally, I want to thank the Soldiers of A/864th for making our own chapel at FOB Pacemaker. During our first service we packed the chapel and had a great event. I think we'll have to cut the back off the structure to make room for more. I'm sure as soon

as CH Gibson gets back it will be standing room only! Our vertical platoons have really blessed the whole Task Force.

Set the Pace!

LTC Paul Paolozzi Pacemaker 6

Pacemaker Families,

Hello family! What have you been doing during this long and hot summer? Usually I find that the summer months are never long enough. This year it seems somebody added too many extra days and it just won't end fast enough! I am willing to pay the person who can shorten the summer for us. This is one place where we are looking forward to the winter. Perhaps that sounds selfish, but I can explain. What happens during the winter months? We will be packing our bags to head home. Kodiak Soldiers should leave in January, Cougars Soldiers are next in February, and Pacemakers and Roughnecks hit the road in March. Now can you see why we hope the winter comes quickly!



CSM Savusa & CSM Lewis talk during the commanding general's visit; Photo by PFC Daniel Goodsell

As you have been hearing, the road is coming along really well. The Soldiers working in the south hope to link up with those soldiers in the north next week. This is going to be a great day for the Pacemaker family. The entire Pacemaker team should be very proud of this enormous contribution to the success of our nation's war on terrorism. The road that your soldiers and you have built will give hope to a group of people who thought no one apart from the Taliban cared about them. Your Soldiers have shown Afghans that they are not alone in their struggle for freedom and peace; that we want to see them succeed as much as they do. We are not conquerors but partners helping to strengthen the budding nation.

Many ask me what they can do for us during the next months of our deployment. My answer is to just ask you to continue with the support you've given already. Continue to take care of the kids for us. Knowing our families are safe and sound at home is something we will never be able to repay you for. Continue to take care of yourselves. Just so that you know, we love you no matter what. We have not said thank you enough for all the care packages and mail you have sent so here goes one more time: THANK YOU, THANK YOU, and THANK YOU!

OK family! Now that I've said that, start thinking Thanksgiving and Christmas! Sometimes mail is slow, and no one will get off the hook by saying they didn't get me anything because they didn't think of it early enough! Now I'm sure you know in time. You all continue to have fun and stay safe. It is time to send the kids back to school. Be safe!

PACEMAKER 7

B/864th: BULLDOG UPDATE

By 1LT Matthew Schwind

The month of July and this first part of August have involved the full spectrum of engineering operations for the Bulldogs. As you know we are now based out of Orgun-E, which is southwest of Salerno. We are close to 8,000 feet here and the weather is actually cooler as temperatures only rise to the mid-90s, not the 110s like we saw in Salerno. We are staying extremely busy as the Sharana –



CPT Burlin Emery re-enlists ISG Eugene Russell; Photo by 1LT Schwind

OE road construction continues.

We have been augmented with another platoon from Task Force Wildcat. Heavy Equipment Platoon has been a great asset for us as bringing much needed 5-ton dump trucks and other pieces of heavy construction equipment. Led by 2LT Richard Star and SSG Marion Adams, they have been putting the gravel cap on our road, which requires a lot of precision and expertise. Their help and execution has been outstanding over the past month.

Bravo Earth Moving Platoon led by 2LT Jonathan Colledge and SSG Pearson has made great progress with the bulk of the cut and fill operations on their shoulders. In just over a month's time, we have completed 12 kilometers of finished grade road, with only gravel cap left to construct. The terrain here



SPC Matthew Howard and SPC Andrew Pauley fixing a grader on the road; Photo by SSG Davenport

is very challenging though. Experienced operators like CPL Derek Reudiger (hydraulic excavator) and SPC Milton Lozano (scraper) have said that this is some of the most difficult terrain that they have ever operated on. Many parts of the existing road were in a large river bed that flooded every time it rained. It took good dozer, grader, and roller operating by soldiers like PFC Westin, PFC Hevi, and PV2 Banks to make the road a success.



SPC Vinnie Hogan, SPC Cedric Minor, and SPC Joseph Franklin stand proudly after re-enlisting for hefty bonuses; Photo by 1LT Matthew Schwind

And a success it is! Local nationals love the fact that they can drive faster than 2 MPH on a flat, solid road. The commander of the task force here at Orgun-E stated that he was amazed at the job we have been doing. He said "what took me 12 hours to drive in March, I can now drive in 2 ½ hours".

Don't let the vertical platoons fool you. They have been working hard also. As they wait for materials to build culverts out on the road, 2nd Platoon continues to make outstanding FOB improvements here at Orgun-E. Since we have been here, 2nd Platoon has built a maintenance B-hut, a communications building, and are currently working on a large scale roof. With good leadership from the NCO's like SSG's Wendt, Esau, and Richter, vertical projects have been a success here on the FOB. 1st Platoon has been busy too. Some of them recently arrived here from Salerno, and they started work on a concrete maintenance pad right away. The rest of 1st Platoon was left at Salerno to finish the high priority AM2 matting mission to improve the C-130 landing strip there.



SPC Raymond Shalhoub manning the .50 caliber machine gun; Photo by 1LT Matthew Schwind

Now we cannot forget about maintenance. Without their consistent ability to fix vehicles on the spot under difficult odds, we would not have been able to operate equipment on the road. Soldiers like SPC Pauley, SPC Larkins, and SPC Fay have been vital to the main Bulldog effort here.

Even though we are busy we still try and make time to keep in touch with you all at home as often as we can. There is an MWR room here where we can call home or check email via the internet. We have enjoyed the recent surge of mail that we received and we thank you all for your generosity. We hope you all are doing well back in the rear as we continue on here!

BULLDOGS FOR LIFE!

A/864th "Greetings From FOB Pacemaker"

By 1LT Sara Cullen

Showers, good food, a MWR with satellite, a few phones and internet computers, and a charming little chapel make it so that you would not even recognize FOB Pacemaker from a couple weeks prior. Gravel comes in every day reducing the amount of moon dust swirling around the FOB (although not eliminating it) and water trucks flow in daily allowing for showers for all of the soldiers living on FOB Pacemaker as well as for good road construction.

Alpha Company "Animals" have been hard at work improving FOB Pacemaker making it a habitable place for soldiers of Task Force Pacemaker. Both First and Second Platoons have built countless tent floors and erected sleep tents, TOC tents, and chow hall tents. The MWR tent was constructed by Second Platoon with computer and phone desks, benches, a TV and DVD entertainment center, and book shelves. This tent is now home to long lines and lots of Soldiers waiting for the opportunity to get in touch with loved ones. The gym was constructed by First Platoon



*Soldiers enjoying a comedy show outside the chapel at FOB Pacemaker;
Photo by 1LT Sara Cullen*

with home-made dip bars and inclined sit-up benches as well as a few pieces of equipment brought from the states. Fully equipped with a sunshade and padded floors the gym is also a hotspot

where many Soldiers can be found at lunch and during the evening hours. The chapel was constructed and designed by First Platoon Soldiers, even the intricate details are in place in the form of holy water basins and traditional church pews. The chapel stands in the center of the FOB and is always the first thing to be noticed and praised by our many visitors.

Outside of FOB Pacemaker the construction of the T-TK road continues with the first shift of EM Soldiers hitting the road at about 0500 in the morning and finishing up just before dusk. Despite breakdowns, Soldiers heading out on leave, and the move from FOB Ripley to FOB Pacemaker, EM continues to average about 450 meters of completed road a day, quite a feat given the goat trail they started with! To supplement the Soldiers on leave the vertical platoons have given up a few soldiers to receive training on horizontal equipment allowing EM to run every piece of operational equipment. It has certainly become a complete



*Promotion Ceremony for SSG Nydegger, SSG Schools, SGT Duran, and SPC Drevenstadt; CPT Suito and SGT Broihahn promoting SSG Schools
Photo by 2LT Shai-Lin Ynacay*

company effort to support the road in order to meet the September 15th deadline. The vertical platoons and headquarters Soldiers work with the Afghan National Army (ANA) to provide security for our hard working road crews. And no one can forget the maintenance role in keeping the road moving forward. From sending out contact trucks to the jobsite to get the equipment rolling again, to working into the night to make sure that the equipment is ready first thing in the morning, our maintenance section has been putting forth a tremendous effort to keep the road moving forward.

The hours are often long and Soldiers miss their families back home but morale remains high in Alpha Company. A nice break came a few days ago in the form of a comedy show that was scheduled at the last minute allowing soldiers to be pulled away from work a couple hours early. Five comedians were flown in and spent a little more than an hour entertaining our troops. It was great to see soldiers with belly laughs and large smiles; humor from home was certainly welcome at FOB Pacemaker.

ANIMALS SET THE PACE!



*SGT Broihahn putting the door on the FOB Pacemaker chapel
Photo by 2LT Shai-Lin Ynacay*

A/391st

"Support Platoon Keeps on Truckin' "

By CPT Paul Schultz

In July A/391st was asked to stand up a new platoon to assist the Task Force Pacemaker in its transportation and logistical needs. The Roughnecks eagerly accepted the challenge of creating, training, and providing command and control for the new platoon. Although the majority of the Soldiers and leadership come from A/391st, Support Platoon boasts membership



SFC Charles Horrell issues guidance while PFC Jose Rivera, SSG Jarrod Boyd, SGT Mark Guffey and other Support Platoon Soldiers attentively listen; Photo by 1LT Laura Walker

from every company in the Task Force. After an intensive week of training the platoon was ready to hit the road. And that they did!

To say that the Support Platoon has been busy would be a huge understatement. In the past few weeks they have already executed 42 convoys logging over 1150 miles. So far they have helped C/864, C/926, and 5th MST move to new FOBs. You name it, they've hauled it; repair parts, construction materials, vehicles, heavy equipment, generators, and even people.

Being on the road definitely has its disadvantages. 2LT Wendell Ainslie, the support platoon leader, says the hardest part of being in support platoon is, "sleeping in a different place every night while living out of your rucksack." He does admit that, "being away from the comforts of hot showers, good meals, and a bed make it that much sweeter when you do get back." The platoon calls Kandahar Airfield home.

Being on the road is nothing new to the Support Platoon Sergeant, SFC Charles Horrell. He spent eight months running logistical support convoys during Operation Iraqi Freedom-1 for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. SFC Horrell, who is a Vietnam War, Desert Storm, OIF1, and now an OEF6 veteran, simply sums up the mission as, "making sure supplies and equipment get where they need to be."



CPT David Boeke and ISG John Brown pin SSG rank on SSG Joseph Dwan during his promotion on August 9th; Photo Taken by SFC Michael "Spandex" Ford

He is also quick to point out that driving conditions in Afghanistan are much tougher and more physically exhausting than in Iraq. When asked to sum up the Support Platoon experience he sums it up with one word, "Outstanding!"

From all the Roughnecks we wish you well back home; you are in our thoughts as we continue to do great things out here. Set the pace!



Support Platoon soldiers getting ready to head out on one of their numerous convoys; Photos by SPC Carl Surret & 1LT Laura Walker



HSC "Another Two Weeks Down"

By 1LT James Sakai

It has been another two weeks in Afghanistan and as usual everyone continues to stay busy. HSC started the month of August with a focus on safety. On August 2nd operations ceased at every location in order to conduct a safety day stand-down. Classes were given throughout the taskforce going over safety procedures for equipment, weapons, and many other things. Overall the day was a success and helped make everyone safer in all daily operations.

In different news SSG Harold Pharis, NCOIC of the Battalion Aid Station continues to make a name for



Rock Soldiers form up for Safety Day at Forward Operating Base Tiger;
Photo by 2LT Justin Groza



SGT Christopher Olsen works with local nationals;
Photo by CPT Greg Parranto

himself at Charlie Med, the field hospital on KAF. Working with the doctors and medics of Charlie Med, SSG Pharis see patients of all types; local nationals and American soldiers. He also does all medical re-supply operations for the forward operating bases and when his medics come through KAF for various reasons he makes sure



SFC Al Woodberry and SPC Zachary Breitenstein Work the BBQ;
1LT James Sakai

they get plenty of training at Charlie Med as well. SSG Pharis is doing an excellent job and if you ever talk to anyone at the hospital they only have good things to say about him.

Operations elsewhere continue as normal. The cooks and medics provide first class service out at the FOB's. EQ continues to help push the road closer and closer to completion while the mechanics make sure their equipment is working. Staff has been very busy as of late as they continue to work issues on the road and start planning future missions as the completion of the road is almost upon us. Lastly we had several re-enlistments this month to include SGT Wendy Diestra, SPC Sheila Childs, and SGT Eric Jackson. Until next time— take care!

ROCK 5 OUT

Did you know...?

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE

About 40% of the population in Afghanistan speaks Farsi or Dari. It is most prominent in the provinces of Herat, Hazarajat, Balkh, Ghor, Ghazni, Budaksham, Panjsher, and Galcha-Pamir Mountains and Kabul regions. There are a variety of dialects: DARI (AFGHAN FARSI, HERATI, TAJIKI, KABULI). Dari is taught in schools and radio broadcasts are promoting standardized pronunciation of the language based on traditional diction and phonetic characteristics. Differences in dialect between Iran and Afghanistan cause some difficulty in comprehension. Most Afghan dialects are in fact closer to Persian than Iranian dialects. Dari or Afghan Farsi is written in Arabic script. It is the National language, spoken by both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.

Facts from:

<http://www.afghan-network.net/Culture/buzkashi.html>

Pacemakers in the news

⇒ <http://www.defendamerica.mil/articles/aug2005/a0803051a3.html>

⇒ <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1456434/posts>

⇒ http://www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/Stories/08_05/2.htm

C/864th— Kodiaks Set the Pace!

By CPT Kim Gage

Fellow Pacemakers, Families, and Friends,

So...this is life as a *Pacemaker*. I wake each morning thrilled and energized because I'm surrounded by Soldiers from all around the planet who are dedicated towards accomplishing a common goal – to help rebuild Afghanistan in some of the harshest weather conditions and some of the most difficult terrain on earth. I could have never asked for a better group of Soldiers to share this experience with. The Soldiers here with us at Construction Base Kodiak include C/864th Engineer Soldiers (Alaska), A/391st Heavy Equipment Operators and Route Clearance Soldiers (South Carolina), EQ/HSC/864th Engineer Soldiers (Washington), and Soldiers from the 298th Engineer Detachment (Hawaii).

We've been at Construction Base Kodiak for about three weeks now enjoying the more simple things in life after each long day on the road. As we first set off to establish this new camp climbing north, I was amazed to see how this team skillfully and wholeheartedly embraced each task

assigned to them. The road construction pushing ahead north never faltered as the Soldiers managed to construct a 130-Soldier camp with water, electricity, tents, and even a gym in the middle of an Afghan mountainside. It was like watching a professional football team move onto a field, execute an offensive play, and then score a touchdown! I'm certainly proud of each one of the Soldiers here at Construction Base Kodiak, our Soldiers back at FOB Tiger, as well as our hard chargers back at Kandahar Airfield – and I trust that you are just as proud of them.



SPC Grafstrom and SPC Weidler performing a original hit duet during the Kodiak Talent Show; Photo by CPT Kim Gage



1LT Duggan providing medical aid to a young boy in the village of El Bak during a MEDCAP with the Kodiaks; Photo by CPT Kim Gage



Team Kodiak Soldiers at our home away from home at Construction Base Kodiak before they move out on the road; Photo by CPT Kim Gage

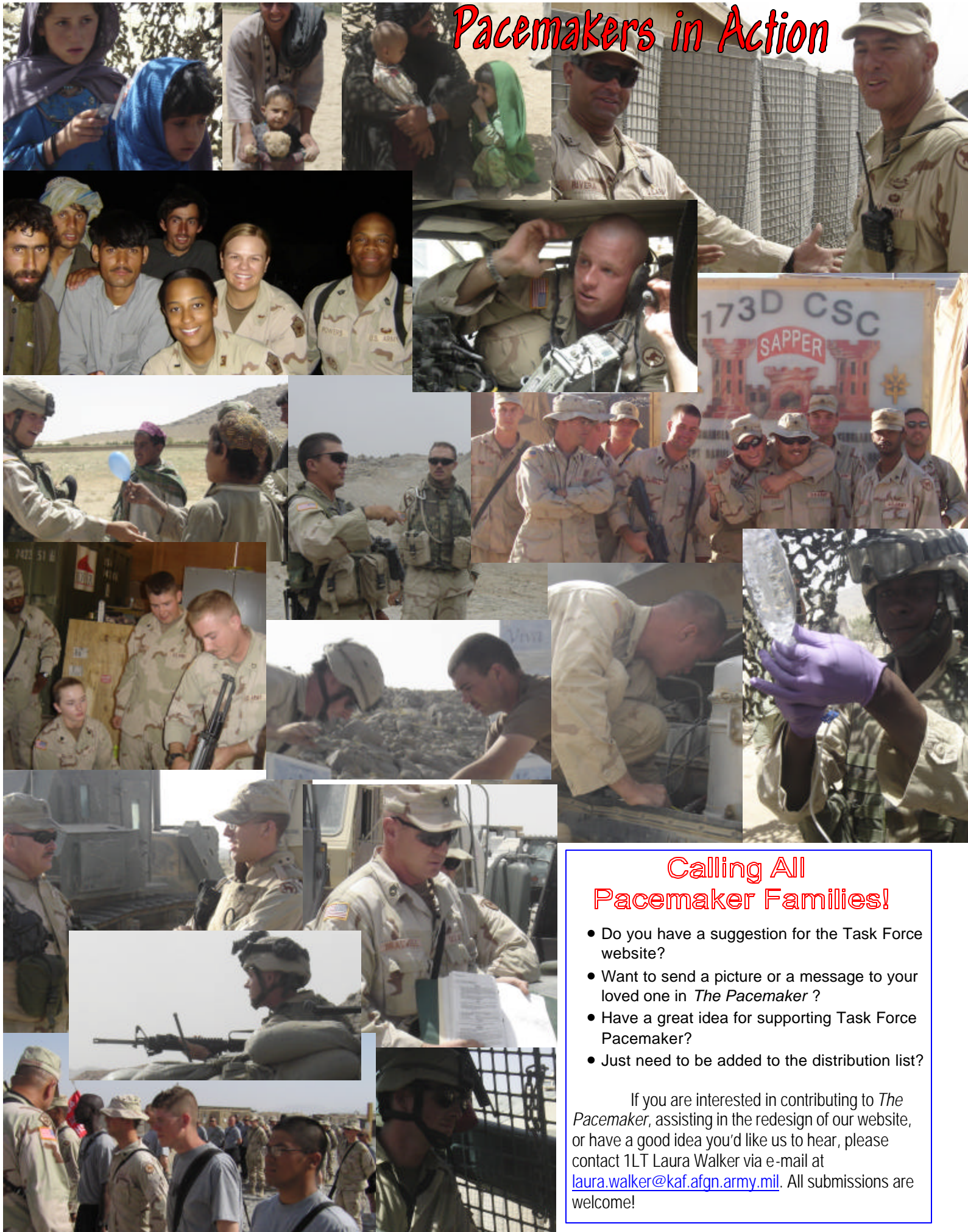
Soon, we'll be meeting up with our Pacemaker brethren (C/926 and A/864th Engineers) at our midpoint along the Tarin Kowt Road. Every Soldier who gets to see the "finish line" at the midpoint seems to get instantly rejuvenated, turns into the *Energizer Bunny* and wants to keep *going and going and going*...but there's only so much daylight in each day. Out of ten years with the military, I can honestly say that I've never seen this much motivation before...but I guess that this is life as a *Pacemaker*. Take care of yourselves and keep all of the Pacemaker fan mail coming. And for the folks back in Alaska, as well as the rest of the Kodiaks, am looking forward to seeing all of you this January!

KODIAK 6 OUT



CPT Kim Gage saying farewell to soldiers of A/391st: Well done! ; Photo by 1LT Isaac Carson

Pacemakers in Action



Calling All Pacemaker Families!

- Do you have a suggestion for the Task Force website?
- Want to send a picture or a message to your loved one in *The Pacemaker* ?
- Have a great idea for supporting Task Force Pacemaker?
- Just need to be added to the distribution list?

If you are interested in contributing to *The Pacemaker*, assisting in the redesign of our website, or have a good idea you'd like us to hear, please contact 1LT Laura Walker via e-mail at laura.walker@kaf.afgn.army.mil. All submissions are welcome!