

The **Reserve** **National Guard**

MAY ■ 2007

**STRYKERS
IN THE ARNG**

**MEET GENERAL
H. STEVEN BLUM**

**ON PATROL IN
AFGHANISTAN**

**THIRD ARMY TRAINS
TAJIK NCOs**

PROJECT HANDCLASP

**MILITARY CELEBRATES
WOMEN'S HISTORY**

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Photojournalist Paul Avallone spent two weeks embedded with 1st Cav, North Dakota National Guard at FOB Naray, going on numerous patrols with the 3rd Platoon, capturing them in action.

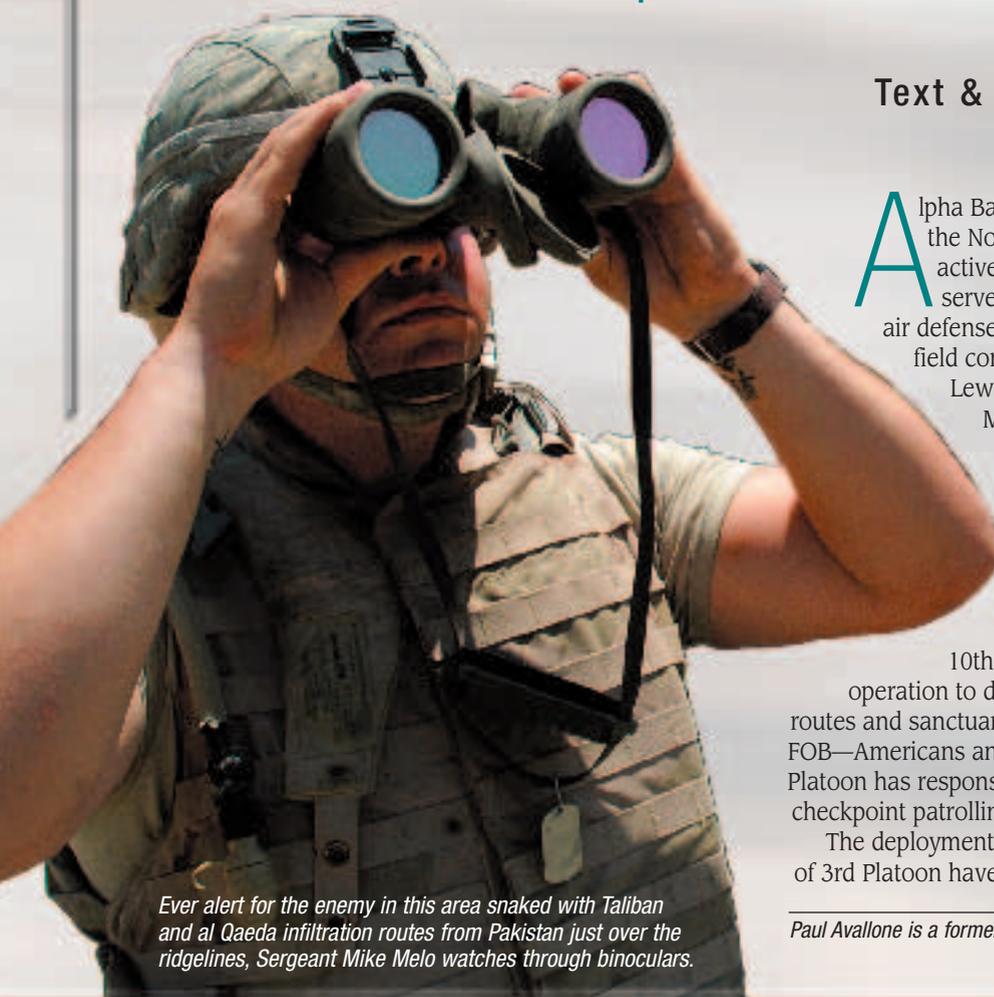
Text & Photos by Paul Avallone

Alpha Battery of the 1st-188th Air Defense Artillery of the North Dakota National Guard was mobilized for active duty December 4, 2005 with the mission to serve in Afghanistan. Because there is no need for air defense in that conflict, the battery first retrained as field combat Military Police for nearly months at Fort Lewis, Wash., then it deployed to Afghanistan in March 2006, with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Platoons working from different rural forward operating bases (FOBs).

By the end of June, 3rd Platoon had moved to the mountainous northeast along the Pakistan border to a small FOB near the village of Naray, in the Kunar province. The FOB is the hub of the 10th Mountain Division's 1st Cavalry Squadron's operation to deny the Taliban and al Qaeda infiltration routes and sanctuaries in the area. As a part of the 500-man FOB—Americans and Afghan National Army included — 3rd Platoon has responsibility for road and convoy security and checkpoint patrolling.

The deployment has not been without its price. Four soldiers of 3rd Platoon have given their all, and paid the ultimate price.

Paul Avallone is a former Green Beret who served in Afghanistan in 2002-2003.



Ever alert for the enemy in this area snaked with Taliban and al Qaeda infiltration routes from Pakistan just over the ridgelines, Sergeant Mike Melo watches through binoculars.

ON PATROL IN AFGHANISTAN





CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE:

1. Set to depart the FOB, turret gunner Specialist Joe Nasset dons his Individual Body Army System. Heavy, uncomfortable and hot in the daily 100+ degrees of the Afghan summer — but also a possible lifesaver — the IBAS is required to be worn anytime outside the FOB — or, as the guys say, “outside the wire.”

2. An over-the-driver’s-shoulder view mid-convoy of the two vehicles ahead as the patrol makes its way into the mountains.

3. All foot and vehicle traffic is stopped at the checkpoint, and Sergeant Matthew Condrey checks the individual travelers against photographs of known enemy insurgents.

4. A medic with the platoon, Specialist Justina Bilby, Minot, ND, one of three women of 3rd Platoon, expects no special treatment and is on patrol with the guys.

5. View up into the turret from inside the Humvee of Specialist Mike Phaneuf, East Grand Forks, MN, manning the 50 cal. machine gun during convoy movement.

6. Specialist Robert Shannon mans the MK-19 grenade launcher as security during a road checkpoint patrol near the town of Dukalam, a common river crossing for insurgents coming from Pakistan— seen in the background, where the houses are.

