



LOUISIANA DRUG GUARD

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The Counterdrug Task Force Newsletter of the Louisiana National Guard

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Tour of duty - Afghanistan

Two members of the La. Counter Drug Task Force returned to their task force assignments after a lengthy deployment to the Middle East. Chief Master Sgt. John Harris and Master Sgt. Perry Jackson, both members of the 122nd ASOS Louisiana Air National Guard, left the comfort of their lives and mobilized to help with the War on Terror. They left the states in January 2003 and flew to Bagram AB in Afghanistan. Once there, Jackson and Chief found life as they knew it to be drastically altered. Almost immediately they were forward deployed as terminal attack controller supporting Army Special Forces - Alpha teams.

Because Close Air Support was the popular means of fire support in theater, we were the ones telling the teams where to go and when to strike. "We would call in strikes," said Jackson, "and cue the team on where to move and when". And

according to Jackson, that was the easy part. The hard part was rucking all of the equipment around, necessary to do the job. "Imagine carrying at least one radio, and in many cases two, spare batteries, Infra-Red pointers, spotting scopes, laser range finders, GPS equipment, a side arm, a long rifle with scopes, holographic sites, more IR pointers, lights, and 400 rounds of ammo, a couple of satellite antennas, a thermal imager, radar transponders, stobes, grenades, flares, food, and water." said Chief. "You get over 100 lbs. real quick. Lug that around for a few hours at 10,000 ft going up and down hills, and you'll wish you did that little extra PT back home."

To determine the next course of action, patrols were necessary. "We were always doing patrols, he said. "Teams would go out anywhere from 10 to 100 miles to gather intelligence, develop a plan, and then we would request the overhead air support coverage for the mission." These patrols took them up and down isolated and desolate terrain. "What I missed most about the states were the paved roads," stated Jackson. "Over there the roads were horrible. They had huge ruts, mud and holes. Occasionally you would find a decent road. For a whole country to have two main roads, you can imagine how bad the roads were. Sometimes it would take us 3 hours to go 30 miles."

After a long bumpy day on the job, they would return to their living quarters, called safe houses. These houses could be anything from a mud hut to a modern styled house with a concrete driveway. "If you could picture a square made out of mud with walls 20-feet high, this is what my quarters were like," said Jackson. "It was a mud compound with a courtyard in the middle and rooms in each corner." "Where I was located, I worked with an operation detachment, the smallest team level for Special Forces," he explained. "The group was about 12 guys that I worked with, at any given time." Next door to Jack-

son was another compound a few hundred meters away, the 82nd Airborne, "so they had quite a few people around," he said. And when it came to chow, "The food wasn't that bad, helicopters would bring us supplies and we would do the cooking ourselves."

The worst situations occurred when you least expected it. "Convoys would get ambushed all the time over there, and you were never fully prepared for it," said Chief. The Forward Air Controllers, in nearly every case, were the communications link for the team, the coordination element with the operations centers in the rear, and the guy who could deliver the heavy firepower when it was needed. All in all, Jackson stated there was never a time he didn't feel like he was a target. "The enemy would shoot rockets at us all the time," he explained. "Sometimes they would close within a few hundred meters during the firefight." During the firefights, the Forward Air Controllers were also the ones who called in the MEDEVAC helicopters to remove the wounded. "This was new for us since it falls outside of the things we are trained for back at home station," said Chief. "I definitely have a different viewpoint on how we should be conducting training from now on. There is the by-the-book way and the way it is done in the real world. We need to expand our training for the real world."

And now that Jackson is back from his tour of duty, he is once again actively involved with the war on drugs. He is assigned to the Slidell Police Department. "One thing I had to get used to, since being back, is not being as actively involved with whatever is going on," said Jackson about his working with armed police officers. "I was used to having two loaded weapons on me at all times." So instead of him being the one protecting others, now others are the ones protecting him. Chief's team is featured in a drug-related story in the current Soldier of Fortune magazine, detailing accounts about a combat mission turned drug seizure that occurred during his deployment.



Chief Master Sgt. John Harris with a member of his team, Jason, while on duty in Afghanistan

story by Suzanne Chaillot

Chief Warrant Officer to retire

It's what we all work for, that twenty year retirement day. One member of the Counter Drug Task Force is getting just that come June 1st. 2004. CW4 Steve Hoskins, A CDTF pilot since 1994, has had an illustrious career in the military:

Indiana ANG/ 01/24/1975 / A Btry 3/139 FA / 13E/ Darlington,IN / Sgt
U.S. Army (Active) 03/06/1979 / HHB 214th FA Bde / 13E/ Ft Sill,OK / Sgt
U.S. Army Flight School 09/1980 / WORWAC / Ft Rucker, AL / Sgt
U.S. Army (Active) 08/21/1981 / A Trp 7/17/ Cav/ 152B/ Ft Hood, TX / CW2
USAR 03/15/1984 / 300th Avn / 152B/ Grand Prairie, TX / CW2
U.S. Army (Active) 10/26/1987 / B 1/14 Avn Reg/ 152BC/FtRucker,AL / CW2
Indiana ANG 12/01/1990 / A 2/138 Avn / 152BC/ Shelbyville,IN / CW3
LA ARNG 08/1991 / Det 1 256th / 152BC / Pineville, LA / CW3
DC ARNG 04/03/1993 / RAID / 152BC / Washington, DC / CW3
LA ARNG 07/27/1994 / RAID / 152BC / New Orleans, LA / CW4
Retire 06/01/2004

His awards include the MSM, ARCOM (4), Ar Achievement, Army Good Conduct, Army Reserve Comp Ach (5), Army Svc, National Def, Armed Fcs Res Mdl, LA Longevity, LA Counterdrug, LA Cold War Victory, Master Army Aviator Badge.
Good luck and congratulations Mr. Hoskins.

That ain't paint

CROWLEY ---The smell of fresh paint has led to the arrest of two Georgia men on drug charges.



It happened Sunday during a traffic stop on I-10, when a deputy with the Acadia Parish Sheriff's

Office smelled fresh paint coming from the bed of a pick-up truck. A closer examination of the vehicle reportedly led to the discovery of 13 kilos of cocaine.

Two men from Georgia have been charged with possession of cocaine with intent to distribute. The cocaine has a street value of nearly \$350,000. *Staff Sgt. Peter Leger supports the Acadia Parish Sheriffs Office.*

Ecstasy stopped enroute

LAFAYETTE--- A Louisiana State Trooper stopped a 2002 BMW, out of Texas on Interstate-10, in St. Martin Parish, for a traffic violation. The occupants of the BMW, the registered owner and driver, and a passenger, are both residents of Texas. They claimed to be traveling from Houston to an undisclosed lo-

cation. A consensual search of the vehicle revealed 15,165 Ecstasy tablets hidden in the trunk. The subjects were arrested; the drugs and vehicle were seized. *Staff Sgt. Leo Davis and Sgt. Nintendo Do support the LSP Bureau of Narcotics in Lafayette.*

Marijuana, weapons, cash seized during search

HOUMA — Sheriff's deputies arrested two local men and recovered more than \$45,000 in marijuana, according to police reports. Agents of the Terrebonne Parish Narcotics Task Force made the arrests and recovered the drugs after executing a search warrant in Houma. Each was charged with possession with the intent to distribute marijuana, transactions involving proceeds from a drug offense, failure to possess a drug-tax stamp and illegally carrying a weapon. A Sheriff's Office report says agents recovered more than 30 pounds of marijuana, a sawed-off shotgun, a

semi-automatic handgun and nearly \$4,000 in cash. The estimated street value of the drugs is about \$45,000. The bulk of the suspected marijuana was allegedly found inside the house. Authorities said most of it was compressed into bricks. Police say agents received consent to search another home, where they recovered three pounds of the marijuana and the shotgun. Authorities say the investigation is ongoing and additional arrests and charges are anticipated. *Tech Sgt. John Fos supports the Terrebonne Parish Narcotics Task Force.*

**Mark your calendar -
The annual CDTF
conference will be held
April 14-16 at the Baton
Rouge Marriott.**

Exercise your writes

The monthly newsletter of the Louisiana Drug Guard is a forum to highlight the achievements of members of the Louisiana Counter Drug Task Force. Send in your stories, comments, drug reduction activities, births, promotions and anything to share with the members of the task force. Contact Tech. Sgt. Suzanne Chaillot at Chaills@gchidta.org, or phone 337-262-6774, fax 337-262-6770