

Tennessee Professor Leaves Classroom for Afghanistan

Written by Sgt. Warren W. Wright, Jr., 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
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PAKTYA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Agri-business Development Teams in Afghanistan are tasked to help rebuild the country's agriculture industry and they need the support of guardsmen with extensive experience in the field to help accomplish their mission.

One of those Soldiers is U.S. Army Sgt. Robert Moore, an agriculture professor at Austin P State University in Clarksville, Tenn., and a lifelong professional in the field.

His military experience dates back to the end of the Vietnam War, where he served in the Army from 1972 to 1975 and was a witness to the fall of Saigon.

As a native of Latvia, Tenn., Moore was set to leave the National Guard in November of 2008. However, once he heard of the opportunity to come to Afghanistan and share his agriculture knowledge, he reenlisted to deploy with the Tenn. ADT.

"He's Mr. Agriculture," said U.S. Army Maj. James W. Thompson, a native of Louisville, Ky., and an engineer advisor for the Tenn. ADT. "He probably knows more about plants, animals, insects, soil and farming than most of us will ever know, combined."

While deployed, Moore continues to work as a professor by teaching a honeybee biology and beekeeping course at Forward Operating Base Gardez to 16 Soldiers on the base. He also teaches online classes to his students back in the states.

"I did it initially to get some of the guys in the ADT involved in college," said Moore. "I understood I wouldn't get paid to teach it, but I thought it would be a worthwhile thing to donate my time to."

"The biggest outcome I want to see come out of it is that if I can get them enrolled in a college course, then hopefully that will motivate many of them to go into another course," said Moore. "The longest journey in the world starts with a single step."

According to Thompson, his passion for education and teaching is an excellent thing. "He wants all the soldiers to have the opportunity to, if not go to college, at least obtain some college level courses."

Moore has the ability to laugh at himself, and even use his life experiences to help educate students.

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“There is one small video clip of him, out working with his bee box; he dropped a piece of the box which caused the swarm to react, and in his effort to get away from it, he turned and backed over the next bee box behind him which he forgot was there,” recalled Thompson.

Moore plans to place the video on his online class, and label the video “Situational Awareness,” not just to get a laugh, but to show students the importance of knowing what is going on around them at all times.

“Sgt. Moore is a complex creature. He’s very intense and he definitely believes in his mission,” Thompson concluded.