



# Trident Dispatch

## A Word from the PRT Commander

Family and friends of Team Trident,

In this first month of being Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) – Khost, your Warriors have conducted over 25 missions to project sites and Key Leader Engagements with local officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, also known as GIROA (Jie-row-uh). That is a good measure of the following eight months of operations, so when your Warrior mentions they are tired or forgot to call/e-mail because they have been super-busy, chances are they were...and then some.

Our new home is Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno and overall is much better than most had expected. The Dining Facilities provide us with a variety of warm meals, laundry is returned within 24-hrs, the indoor gym is huge, and being a major FOB, Salerno receives mail rather quick. My wife has sent three packages, each taking less than seven days to arrive. Even in this first month of

deployment, it is apparent who received a care package during “mail call” by the extra bounce in their step and smile on their face. *Hint, hint...*

The weather is reaching up into the 70s here in the “Khost Bowl” and projected to get warmer and more humid as we look to the coming summer months; a Texas summer is a good comparison. Throughout those warm months, your Warrior will be even warmer beneath 55 pounds of head and body protection in addition to their weapons and ammunition required on every mission beyond FOB Salerno.

Some may be wondering what a Provincial Reconstruction Team does. Our mission is to assist in extending the authority of GIROA throughout the province in order to make a more stable and secure environment through the areas of governance, development, and agriculture. Another way to put that is we are here to assist Afghanistan in becoming a nation where terrorists can no longer operate to plan/carry out attacks

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**CDR Mitch Albin**



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## News: PRT Khost welcomes new commander

*Story by SPC Eric-James Estrada*

KHOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team welcomed a new commander at Forward Operating Base Salerno during a transfer of authority ceremony March 14.

U.S. Navy Commander and Texas native, Mitchell Albin, officially took command of the Khost PRT from U.S. Navy Cmdr. Bradley Brewer, born and raised in western Ohio.

As the new commander of the PRT, Albin inherits a team that consist of military officers, diplomats and subject matter experts working to support reconstruction efforts in unstable regions. Its common purpose is to empower local governments to oversee their citizens more effectively.

The outgoing commander extended his appreciation to members of Task Force Spartan for their support and leadership in the short time they worked together.

“I would like to thank all of Spartan Brigade for their support these past few months. Although we only worked together for a short time, I have nothing short of the highest respect for the leadership and staff,” said Brewer. He added his admiration for his team and the great professionalism they showed while in Afghanistan.

“For my departing team, I’m humbled by the professionalism and leadership displayed by the diverse collection of warriors that I have had the privilege of serving alongside for the past fifteen months,” Brewer added.

*(NEWS—continued on page 4)*



**Interesting Facts about Afghanistan**

**Geography**

*Area:* 652,230 sq. km. (251,827 sq. mi.); slightly smaller than Texas.

*Cities:* Capital--Kabul. Other cities--Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Konduz.

*Terrain:* Landlocked; mostly mountains and desert.

*Climate:* Dry, with cold winters and hot summers.

**US/AFGHAN RELATIONS**

After the fall of the Taliban, the U.S. supported the emergence of a broad-based government, representative of all Afghans, and actively encouraged a UN role in the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The U.S. has made a long-term commitment to help Afghanistan rebuild itself after years of war. The international community currently provide resources and expertise to Afghanistan in a variety of areas, including humanitarian relief and assistance, capacity-building, security needs, counter-narcotic programs, and infrastructure projects.

**“There are many things I want us to accomplish as *Team Trident*, but none take priority over returning every one of our Warriors home safe to the families and friends who have already sacrificed too much.” - CDR Albin**

**Information from the SGM**

I want to thank all of you for allowing me the opportunity to serve with your Warriors. I consider it a great honor and privilege to work and train alongside each and every one of them. Your Warriors play a vital role in the success of our units’ mission.

You should be proud of each and every one of your Soldiers and Sailors on this team, they are professionals at what they do, it showed during our training to deploy here, and now it shows while we conduct our day to day business here on FOB Salerno.

I know the sacrifice that each and every one of you makes every day while your loved ones are gone, and it shows that the true heroes of this War are the families and friends back home that support their warriors. Again thank you for your support, and be safe.

V/R SGM Fillippini



**SGM Elliott Fillippini**



**A Word from the PRT Commander**

*(PRT Commander—continued from page 1)*

against the United States and our allies. After trying to explain this concept to my four children while at home for Christmas, one drew a picture of me driving a tank that shot out presents. Though not exactly on target, it may be closer to the view most Americans and Afghans have based on previous years of PRT projects: spending American tax dollars to dig water wells, building schools, and other construction projects in order to improve governance and development. This Team is continuing the shift of mission from being a provider to becoming an enabler: providing less tangible projects, and focusing on sponsoring more skills-based training and mentoring.

There are many things I want us to accomplish as Team Trident, but none take priority over returning every one of our Warriors home safe to the families and friends who have already sacrificed too much. It is an honor to lead this Team and I will apply all 18 years of leadership the Navy has instilled in me to ensure I accomplish that. Please keep our Warriors in your thoughts and prayers, because y’all are definitely in ours.



*CDR Mitch Albin is a Surface Warfare Officer in the US Navy. Sea-duty assignments include USS BRISCOE (DD 977), USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73), USS CHOSIN (CG 65), and USS CROMMELIN (FFG 37). Other assignments include Surface Warfare Officer’s School Command, Commander Naval Surface Group – Middle Pacific, and the National War College. CDR & Mrs. Albin reside in Manassas, VA with their four children.*

# Using Technology to *Stay in Touch*

CAMP ATTERBURY, IN— Prior to departing for Afghanistan, MAJ Jonathan Freyer was honored to speak to his son's fifth grade class via the Internet using the software program called Skype.

Major Freyer said, "It was great using technology in such a meaningful manner. I deeply respect the administration, teachers and parents of Brookfield Elementary for offering me the opportunity to speak to their children about my military experiences using the Internet. I am moved by the amount of respect and sincere appreciation the community has for the active military members serving overseas and the veterans living in our community."

Prior to the online video conference with the students, Major Freyer received an e-mail from the teacher with a list of 25 questions from his son's class that he answered during the online conference.

The questions included:

- Are you sad to leave home?
- What was the best part of training?
- Do you lift weights?
- How many push ups can you do?
- What is it like in the military?

When asked by one student, "What is the main reason you are going to Afghanistan?", Major Freyer responded, "The main reason I am going to Afghanistan is to help bring peace to a nation that has been at war for over 40 years. In the 1980s, the Afghan people fought the Soviet Union and in the 1990s, they fought a Civil War against each other. The United States deployed forces to Afghanistan in 2001 because the Afghan leadership at that time provided a safe haven to the enemy that planned and implemented the September 11, 2001 attack on America."

On a recent key leader engagement with a local district governor, Freyer was proud to hear from the elderly leader that one of his fondest memories was having an American teacher when he was in elementary school. During the late 1940s, this teacher taught English to the local Afghan children and was a dear friend to the district governor's father. Major Freyer thanked the district governor for his service to his community and informed him that someday he hoped to bring his family back to Afghanistan so that they could meet the governor's family. The governor smiled and agreed that this could only occur when Afghanistan becomes more stable and secure.

Major Freyer lives in Brookfield, Wisconsin with his wife Jacqueline and his three kids—Robert Steven (11), Kennedy Alexis (9) and Tillman Alexander (7). MAJ Freyer is honored to serve his country in the military and has enjoyed his service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as a member of the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team. He has also served as a Civil Affairs officer in Iraq and Kosovo.



*Tillman, Kennedy and Robert, MAJ Freyer's children, patiently await the start of the online video conference while playing with the "military teddy-bears" that he sent to them. MAJ Freyer will continue to use "Skype" to keep in touch with his family while he is deployed and will continue to visit with Brookfield Elementary students via the Internet throughout his deployment.*



## ADT—Encasing their Colors

KHOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan – United States Air Force Col. Shane Halbrook, Commander, and U.S. Army Sgt Maj. Daniel Jensen, Sergeant Major, case the colors of the Indiana Guard's 4-19<sup>th</sup> Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) at Forward Operating Base Salerno. The ADT mission in select provinces of International Security Assistance Force Regional Command-East will now fall under the command of their respective Provincial Reconstruction Teams, Mar. 21. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Kaitlyn Ashby, 4-19 ADT Public Affairs)

News: PRT Khost welcomes new commander

(NEWS—continued from page 1)

The incoming commander expressed his appreciation to those in attendance and reminded them of the continued mission Team Trident is dedicated to accomplish.

“Thank you for honoring my team with your presence at today’s ceremony,” said Albin. “This transfer of authority has less to do with me assuming command and more with Team Trident taking charge of the PRT to continue influencing positive governance and development with our Afghan partners.”

The changing of responsibility also brought about a new found experience for the outgoing senior enlisted adviser. “It was an incredible experience working and serving with all five branches [of the U.S. military] and I’ll cherish this time with them for the rest of my career,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. James Jenkins III, outgoing Khost PRT sergeant major, from Yazoo City, Miss.

U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Elliott Fillippini, the new senior enlisted adviser for the

PRT, hailing from Bristol, Conn., said, “I’m looking forward to our mission and I’m glad to take over. The outgoing team left us in great hands and we have a great incoming team.”

The Khost PRT is part of Task Force Spartan, the brigade task force responsible for the provinces of Khost and Paktya, in Regional Command-East.



Young Afghan boys observing the key leader engagement between the village elder and the Civil Affairs team chief.



Elements of Team Trident crossing a wadi (river) during a mission with other Coalition teams and the Afghan Uniformed Police in Khost Province.



PRT members eating with the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) at their compound in Khost.



U.S. Navy CDR Mitch Albin, a Texas native, acknowledges his responsibility as commander of the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team, Task Force Spartan, in a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Salerno, March 14.



We’re on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/PRT-Khost-Afghanistan/316163393331>



## Visit from the Indiana Adjutant General

KHOST, AFGHANISTAN - MG R. Martin Umbarger, the Adjutant General for the State of Indiana, and CSM James Brown, Command Sergeant Major for the State of Indiana, visit with members of the Indiana Guard's 4-19<sup>th</sup> Agribusiness Development Team on Forward Operating Base Salerno on 3 Apr. (Photo by U.S. Army MAJ Julie Irwin)



(From left to right – MSG Christopher Baldwin, SSG Paul Hellmich, SPC Joseph Turner, SGT Austin Kunert, CSM James Brown, SGT Nelson Redmon, MG R. Martin Umbarger, MAJ Cris Fink, CPT Rikki Salyers, CPT Brian Foster, MAJ Mary Shaw, CSM Daniel Jensen, CPT Marc Blue and LTC Paul South)



Local Afghan worker hired to build a school.



PRT Warrior scanning his assigned sector.

## MISSION PICTURES

*from Afghanistan*



The PRT Security Force (SECFOR) element engaging with the local Afghan children.





**Question of the Month**

What is the most unique thing that you have seen while serving in Afghanistan?



“The most unique thing that I have seen is when my Civil Affairs team was returning to base after a long mission and I saw a man and a little girl leading a goat away from the bazaar. That in of itself is not unique—but the goat was painted pink and green. It was the brightest pink and green goat I have ever seen.”

- SGT Erick Crawford



“The most interesting thing that I have seen while serving in Afghanistan is a Soldier riding an up-armored bicycle with an M-4 Rifle mount on the front.”

- LTJG Meaghan O’Connell

“The turning of riverbeds into roads.”

- Andrew Steele  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Field Program Officer



“The most interesting thing that I have seen in Afghanistan is the number and size of the mine fields. I find it amazing that this is a normal part of living in Afghanistan. Also, the countryside is very beautiful from a distance and I almost forget where I am when viewing it.”

- ETC Scott Berg



“The most unique thing that I have seen while serving in Afghanistan is the way information is shared on the system and the teamwork that links all of the different units together. It truly is awesome.”

- IS1 Mague Romei



“The most unique thing that I have seen is local drivers who cut in front of me within a car length causing me to tactically maneuver my vehicle within a split second. Afghanistan is definitely a place where defensive driving is a must needed skill.”

- SPC Jaime Daniel Garcia