

March 10, 2008

Freedom Watch

AFGHANISTAN



Marines



Building a Bomb



Reconstruction

DOD

America Supports You: Command makes difference with Victory Boxes

By Ed White

Special to American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – An Air Force Space Command major and two staff sergeants stationed at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., are proving that just three servicemembers can affect people halfway around the world.

Air Force Maj. Jason Gross and Air Force Staff Sgt's. Rosalia and Billie Burgan are making a huge difference in the lives of Iraqi and Afghan families through the Texas-based Victory Boxes project. The program encourages Americans to send care packages to servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan who have volunteered to distribute the contents to local citizens.

"Along with setting up displays where people can come and pick up boxes, we also attend group meetings such as the newcomer's group at the Broadmoor Hotel," said Rosalia. "We brief the members about the program and give out boxes.

"Local community organizations get involved as well," she said. "The Pikes Peak Library staff supported the program. They gathered school supplies, shoes and clothes."

An e-mail from a Soldier, who got his unit involved in the project perhaps provides the best answer as to why these three Airmen got involved in this program.

"I explained the program to my Soldiers and they understood, as well as I do, that amidst all this turmoil there are still good, kind people who have not been tarnished by this war," the Soldier said in his e-mail. "Your 'e-boxes' have stretched out far beyond what I think you intended them to.

"You've shown Soldiers that war is not all about destruction, but also rebuilding," he added. "Not just about tearing down an enemy, but also giving hope to the future generations. Above all, you've allowed us to keep our humanity, which is something that is easily lost here."

Gross has seen both sides of this effort. He became a volunteer while in Iraq, receiving some of the packages and distributing them to local communities. The reactions of the

Iraqis inspired him to want to do more.

"I really enjoyed putting a smile on the faces of the children," he said. "It made me homesick for my own family, but in a good way -- reminding me of the important things in life."

Upon his return, he contacted Mary Margaret Halleck, the founder of the Victory Boxes program, and began working closely with her to get more people from the command and the local area involved.

"This effort is such a worthwhile thing," said Gross. "You can't believe the look on people's faces when they get something that is going to make their life a little bit better. This is the other side of the battle, winning the hearts and minds of the people of Iraq and Afghanistan."

The in-theater volunteers are not all front-line servicemembers. They're chaplains, medical personnel, civil affairs and supply folks. People at all levels and in all services are getting involved.

The Victory Boxes program started because Halleck's stepson was deployed to the war zone and, in his communications to her, he described the true poverty he saw. She put together some care packages for him to distribute and sent them off. Her stepson came home, but she realized the need was still there, and it inspired her to start Victory Boxes in mid-2005.

That action inspired others like the Airmen serving in Colorado who have proven that person-to-person contact counts in the rebuilding efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Victory Boxes is a supporter of "America Supports You," a Department of Defense program connecting citizens and companies with servicemembers and their families serving overseas.

(Ed White works at Air Force Space Command - Public Affairs.)



Maj. Jason Gross (third from left), Air Force Space Command, command lead for upgraded early warning, and a security detail prepare to deliver victory boxes to a local school in Iraq. (Courtesy photo)

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COVER: Airman 1st Class Ryan
Thompson, 455th Expeditionary Main-
tenance Squadron, aligns strakes with
lugs on a GBU-38 bomb. Thompson's
home unit is the 52nd Equipment Main-
tenance Squadron, Spangdahlem Air
Base, Germany. (U.S. Air Force photo by
Master Sgt Demetrius Lester)

BACK COVER: Brig. Gen. Khatool
Mohammadzai, Afghan National Army,
Dr. Husn Banu Ghazanfar, Ministry of
Women's Affairs and Army Brig. Gen.
Rodney Anderson, deputy commanding
general Combined Joint Task Force-82
Support, cut the cake at the Internation-
al Women's Day celebration held here
March 3. Hundreds came to the festivi-
ties and acknowledged women's con-
tributions to peace and security. (U.S.
Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius
Lester)

Freedom Watch

Mar. 10, 2008

- 4 From the halls of Montezuma
General discusses Marine deployment to Afghanistan
- 5 Show them the money
Ten Eastern Afghanistan provinces awarded \$9 million
- 6 Getting in on the act
Afghan women participate in medical outreach
- 8 Anarchist's cookbook
How to make a bomb
- 10 Help is on the way
More than 300 Afghans receive medical, humanitarian aid
- 11 Surprise, surprise
Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team provides needed equipment to medical clinic
- 12 And the winner is...
Warrior of the Week



5



8



11

General discusses Marine deployment to Afghanistan

By John J. Kruzel

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Nearly a third of the 3,200 Marines scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan next month will be stationed in NATO's Southern and Western Regional Commands to train Afghan National Security Forces to face upcoming threats, a top U.S. military official said.

The bulk of the 1,000 inbound Marines will be stationed at Regional Command-South, part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force, and a "little bit" of the unit will deploy to Regional Command-West, said Army Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 82, based at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

"That was the commander of ISAF's request and desire, and I think it was mainly focused on what he thought was the biggest threat this coming spring," Rodriguez told reporters during a Pentagon news conference.

Regional Command-South, where an additional 2,200 Marines will land next month, assists counterinsurgency operations and controls task forces in the provinces of Uruzgan, Helmand,

Kandahar and Zabul. Regional Command West includes Herat Province, a swath of land along Afghanistan's border with Iran.

Rodriguez, who commands NATO's Regional Command-East and the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, acknowledged that insurgent activity tends to increase in spring months as weather in Afghanistan moderates. The general said, however, that he does not characterize the rise in enemy attacks as an "offensive."

"We're expecting the same type of things that (insurgents) did last year," he said. "They will try to attack the Afghan Security Forces and the Afghan government leadership by both (improvised explosive devices and car bombs), as well as suicide bombers."

Rodriguez noted that such tactics have proven counterproductive in his area of operations, where civilians have responded to attacks by turning against insurgent perpetrators and toward the Afghan government. But he conceded that military officials expect such attacks will continue to pose a threat in Afghanistan.

Asked if an influx of weapons or support was flowing into Afghanistan

from Iran, the general said, "We've seen a little bit of that. It's really been militarily insignificant, but we're always on the lookout for that."

The briefing provided further clarity on how the additional 3,200 Marines will be distributed in Afghanistan. The Department of Defense's announcement of the decision to send the additional Marines noted that President Bush approved the deployment as recommended by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates.

"This one-time deployment involves approximately 3,200 personnel and will enable commanders in Afghanistan to enhance the training of Afghan National Security Forces to build on the military successes of 2007, and to expand the gains of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force mission," the Department of Defense announcement stated.

The roughly 2,200 Marines to aid counterinsurgency operations are with 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The Marine trainers are with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, based at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, at Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Coalition forces disrupt Taliban network operations in Helmand

Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Coalition forces conducted two operations to disrupt Taliban leadership networks in Helmand Province.

Coalition forces searched compounds in the Kajaki District, targeting a Taliban leader responsible for conducting anti-government operations in the area. A number of insurgents were killed during the operations when they employed small-arms and hand-grenades against Coalition forces.

"While Coalition forces searched a building during one operation, armed assailants, who were barricaded in separate rooms, engaged them with small-arms fire and hand grenades," said Army Maj. Chris Belcher, a Coalition forces spokesman.

"The assailants were killed when Coalition forces responded in self-defense. A search of the site after the exchange revealed a dead female and child in one of the rooms the assailants used," he said.

"We would like to express our condolences to the family, friends and loved ones of the deceased woman and child," said Belcher. "It's a deplorable, yet common tactic of insurgents to place innocent women and children in harm's way."

Two individuals, suspected to have ties to Taliban insurgents were detained. They will be questioned on their involvement in Taliban operations and other extremist activities.

AK-47s and ammunition were also recovered and destroyed to prevent their use by extremist forces.

Ten Afghanistan provinces awarded \$9 million

Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics recently awarded 13 provinces in Afghanistan, 10 within Regional Command-East, with \$9 million worth of aid.

The provinces were awarded aid for superior performance in the fight against poppy cultivation with a program named the Good Performers Initiative.

Selected communities in provinces that are recognized as poppy-free and have pledged to continue to oppose drug use, production and trafficking, began receiving aid from the program.

This incentive program

was improved, offering an expanded and better funded GPI for development projects. The improvements involve giving up to \$50,000 directly to provincial governors for use in development projects, according to a press report in Afghanistan on Aug. 29, 2007.

In order to begin new projects, the governor's office, provincial council and local provisional reconstruction teams are required to jointly approve each project. The organizations select officials to implement and supervise large and medium-sized projects, of more than \$50,000, which are covered in the development plans.

One example of the improvement in eastern Afghanistan is the dramatic

decrease in poppy cultivation in Nuristan Province.

According to the U.N.'s Afghanistan Opium Winter Rapid Assessment Survey, Nuristan Province saw a 1,516 hectare, or 3,745 acres, decline in poppy cultivation between 2006 and 2007 making it poppy-free and eligible for financial incentives.

The type of projects range from donations of farm machinery and planting orchards, to construction of canals, hospitals, dorms, stadiums and vocational schools.

Many projects are agricultural. Panjshir Province is spending almost \$400,000 on farm machinery. Wardak Province is building 115 greenhouses worth a total

of almost \$1 million.

Some provinces chose to use the money for other needs. Khowst Province is building a school, while Paktika Province is building a hostel at a cost of nearly \$1 million.

Kapisa Province held a ground-breaking ceremony for a sports stadium Feb. 21. An award of \$500,000 was allocated for the stadium, which will take 10 months to complete, according to Afghan Gen. Khodaidad, Afghanistan's acting counter-narcotics minister.

The 10 RC-E provinces to receive funding for development projects are: Logar, Paktya, Panjshir, Wardak, Ghazni, Paktika, Khowst, Parwan, Bamyan and Nuristan.

Helmand villagers receive humanitarian assistance

Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Afghan National Security Forces, assisted by Coalition forces, provided medical and humanitarian assistance for villagers from Now Zad and Qaleh-ye-Gaz in Abazah, Musa Qaleh, Helmand Province, Feb. 13.

ANSF and Coalition forces arrived at the remote village to see many smiling children. Medical personnel cared for approximately 250 men, women and children. A continuing positive trend throughout Afghanistan is the increasing number of women seeking medical treatment from Afghan and Coalition forces medical personnel.

"We were surprised to see so many women being treated because historically, village elders and husbands don't allow their women to come out of their compounds," said an ANSF Soldier.

"This is a strong indication of trust for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and ANSF."

"Allah has answered my prayers for the medicine you have brought," said one villager.

Another part of the operation gave children an oral hygiene class. As the soldiers distributed the products and taught the class, the children cheered.

"Thank you for coming to our village because a lot of us are unable to afford

to see a doctor," said another villager.

In addition to medical assistance, the ANSF handed out two bundles of blankets, 200 pairs of shoes, 100 sweaters and 300 pairs of socks and gloves.

"These supplies were needed," said a Coalition Soldier. "Unfortunately, you could see children out in the cold with no shoes. The population was very pleased by [the] supply of warm clothing."

Members of the ANSF held a shura to conclude the visit. Villagers expressed concern over their future job opportunities. In response to this concern, the ANSF said they would discuss the matter with the district manager. They reminded the villagers that the aid they receive is in direct response to their request for help from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

This information provided the villagers with proof that their provincial communication system works.



Afghan women participate in medical outreach

*Courtesy of Combined
Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs*

Afghan women increasingly participated in Village Medical Outreach programs supported by Afghan National Army soldiers and Coalition forces in recent months. Historically, when the combined medical teams set up a VMO to treat basic medical maladies, the treatment was often disproportionate, with most of the patients being men and children.

Over the last two months, ANSF and Coalition medics witnessed a noticeable increase in the number of women attending VMOs and Coalition clinics.

“We are experiencing a continuous upward trend in female attendance at VMOs,” said a Civil Affairs team leader. “This is a significant change from when we arrived in July.”

Late February, near Gereshk, Helmand Province, a medical team treated approximately 500 Afghans during a VMO. A significant number of women attended and exposed their faces, indicating a lack of insurgent influence, said a Coalition forces team leader.



Afghan women have been participating in and attending Coalition clinics with more frequency and in increasing numbers. This shows their increased confidence in Afghan National Security Forces and Coalition forces. (U.S. Army photo by Army Staff Sgt. Marie Schult)

This shift is important because women bring the smaller children and infants for treatment, said a Coalition forces medic in Farah. If the women don't come in, the children are overlooked.

“The increased willingness of people to interact and accept help from

their local government and Coalition forces demonstrates their confidence in the ability of the legitimate Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to improve their quality of life,” said Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman, a Coalition forces spokesperson.

Times, they are changing...



Fifteen girls learn physics in Khas Oruzgan, Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan, Feb. 23. Afghan National Security Forces, assisted by Coalition forces, conducted an assessment for future assistance operations there. Based on the assessment, several teachers' groups requested ANSF make a plea to the Minister of Education for more teachers and basic school supplies like stationary and textbooks from kindergarten to 10th grade. “The teacher told us that most of the girls will only finish through the 10th grade then they will get married and end up staying right in the same little village,” said a Coalition soldier. “But without someone putting in the effort to educate them, their choices will be limited and the villagers want more for their daughters.” During the next school year, starting in March, elders expect up to 150 students to attend school.

(U.S. Army photo)

Soldiers teach Afghan National Police first aid

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Matthew Clifton
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Two combat medics spent time teaching Afghan National Police officers one of the most important Soldier skills; first aid.

Sgt. 1st Class Maurice Wells, Joint Forces Headquarters, Arizona Army National Guard, and Spc. Richard L. Bacher, 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, N.Y. Army National Guard, teach a bi-weekly first-aid class to about 20 Afghan National Police officers from Logar Province.

The class is similar to the first-aid class U.S. Soldiers go through. The subjects taught include checking a casualty's airway, breathing and circulation and first-aid for bleeding. Also covered are how to check for wounds, treat shock, apply field dressings and tourniquets, treat a sucking chest wound, splint a fracture and treat head wounds.

"Teaching this stuff is challenging because we have to take the same curriculum we use and modify it so the ANP understand," said Wells. "For example, we use the 'A, B, and C's of first aid to explain searching for an airway, breathing and circulation.

"Our guys [U.S. Soldiers] understand that, but the ANP have no idea what 'A, B or C' stands for, so we have to modify things."

One method the instructors use to help the ANP grasp the importance of their lesson is to use real-life events as vignettes in their class.

"Because these guys have to drive around in the back of their trucks, a lot of the injuries we see come from when they flip their truck and fall out," Bacher said. "So whenever we present an injury scenario, we'll put it in the context of a fellow policeman being thrown out of the back of his truck."

The high illiteracy rate among the Afghans comes into play as well, and since the ANP cannot take notes, hands-on training becomes paramount, Wells said. Their inability to read and write has not affected their willingness to learn, he added.

"These guys are super-attentive, and when we do our hands-on portion of the class you can really tell they have paid attention," Bacher said. "It's not perfect, but they are progressing well."

One issue Wells and Bacher realized, is that the ANP tend to rush a casualty to the hospital without trying to administer first-aid themselves. The instructors are hoping these classes will curb that tendency.

At the end of each class, Wells and Bacher review what was taught and familiarize the policemen with the first-aid equipment they will receive, as well as, the equipment their U.S. counterparts carry.

"We're working on getting these guys the same equipment (U.S. Soldiers) are using, but of course that takes time," Bacher said. "Until then, we try to teach them how



Spc. Richard L. Bacher, medic, 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, N.Y. Army National Guard, helps a student find his radial pulse during a first-aid class given to Afghan National Police of the Logar Province Feb. 20, at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan.

to be improvisational by using sticks for splints or pieces of their shirt for cravats."

Wells and Bacher share visibly positive attitude towards their students, and the same feeling is present in the ANP observers who will take over the class.

"This class is very important because our police don't have much experience with first-aid and they need to know how to stop bleeding, treat fractures and things like that," said 3rd Basic Officer Jamil Ala Mi, an ANP observer who will be taking over the class. "The students pay very good attention and will be able to take these lessons back to their districts."

The ANP students give Wells an appreciation for the Afghan's willingness to learn, as well as a new gratitude for the level of first-aid education that is given to U.S. Soldiers.

"When you're trying to teach these guys the things we have been taught since our first day of basic training, it makes you realize just how much life-saving knowledge each of our Soldiers has," Wells said. "The most significant things these ANP can learn is when they save a life, they are helping to make Afghanistan a better place."

How to build a bomb

by Tech. Sgt. James Law

455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

“Some people think you open a box and there is a bomb ready to be loaded on an aircraft,” said Tech. Sgt. Erick Chrostowski, the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron munitions production supervisor here.

“There is more to it than that,” he said. “The initial steps of the process are identifying and obtaining and storing the assets essential to build the variations of bombs needed to support different mission requirements.”

Once a specific bomb is requested, the assets are moved from storage to the munitions assembly conveyer pad, where individual pieces collectively become a bomb.

The basic elements of the Guided Bomb Unit-38s are the Mark-82,500-pound bomb body, warhead, fuzes, fins and front ends.

“There are different types of front ends for (various) bombs,” said Senior Airman Collin Dillingham, a conventional maintenance crew member on the assembly team. “There are bombs that penetrate the ground before blowing up, there are bombs that hit the ground and blow up and there are bombs that blow up above the ground.”

Just as there are different front ends for different objectives, there are different fins with different purposes.

“There are dumb fins that don’t move like the classic cartoon bomb, and there are the smart fins that drive or guide the bomb,” Dillingham said.

The Airmen assembling the GBU-38s are given a safety briefing before dividing into teams.

“We have 10,000 pounds of net explosive weight on the pad right now,” Chrostowski said. “If you see anybody running, try to keep up.”

The final statement gets the Airmen’s attention as intended. They go to work, swiftly, yet vigilantly building the bombs.

The first team loads the body onto a trolley system where assembly begins. One team affixes the front end on while another installs the fuzes. Once this phase is complete, the bomb slides down the rail system to the team building and installing the fins and guidance control system. The last stage before loading the bombs on a trailer to deliver to the flightline is a complete inspection performed by Chrostowski.

“There is job satisfaction when we watch weapon systems video and see our bombs do what they were supposed to, whether it is assisting troops-in-combat or hitting a high-value target,” Chrostowski said.

The munitions built by the 455th EMXS Airmen include 20 mm and 30 mm cannon ammunition, anti-threat countermeasures, laser-guided bombs and joint direct attack munitions, which are global positioning system-aided weapons.

The munitions will be employed by F-15E Strike Eagles and A-10 Thunderbolt IIs.

Members of the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron assemble bombs during the night. From left to right: Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeremy Woodruff from the 375th Logistic Readiness Squadron, Scott Air Force Base, Ill., Airman 1st Class Zack Demeter from the 52nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany and Tech. Sgt. Ben Walker from the 4th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)





Airman 1st Class Jedediah McClain, a 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, paints fuse settings on bombs for identification by loaders and pilots. McClain's home unit is the 4th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)



Guided Bomb Unit 38s all lined up and ready to go. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)



Airman 1st Class Aaron McSwain (left), and Airman 1st Class Zack Demeter, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, reset umbilic connectors on the fins for GBU 38 bombs. McSwain and Demeter are from the 52nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

More than 300 Afghans receive medical, humanitarian assistance

Courtesy of Combined
Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs

More than 300 Afghans received medical treatment and humanitarian aid from the Afghan National Police and Coalition forces in Arghandab District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, Feb. 25.

This mission was in response to a visit in early February by the Afghan National Army. ANA attended a community development council where Afghans raised concerns about the poor economy and absence of health care resulting, in part, from a harsh winter.

Medics treated villagers for cold and flu symptoms, malnutrition and one case of leishmaniasis, an infection or disease caused by parasitic protozoans. A significant number of eye infections were referred to the local clinic.



An Afghan National Army soldier distributes coal to one of many people in the Arghandab District, Kandahar Province. More than 300 citizens received medical and humanitarian aid from the ANA and Coalition forces. This mission was in response to a visit in early February where the villagers expressed a need for assistance to make it through the winter. (Courtesy photo)



An Afghan National Army soldier talks to a village elder during a visit to the Arghandab District, Kandahar Province. More than 300 citizens received medical and humanitarian aid from the ANA and Coalition forces. This mission was in response to a visit in early February where the villagers expressed a need for assistance to make it through the winter. (Courtesy photo)

Showing increased confidence in the ANA, a number of women received medical exams and treatment. Normally, patients are men and children with very few female participants.

“The Kuchis are typically nomads and are facing hard times because of the winter,” said Army Capt. Vanessa Bowman, a Coalition spokesperson. “They live off of the land and many of their animals died this winter from exposure.”

The combined force handed out rice, beans, tea and sugar to assist the Kuchis. Some children and adults displayed signs of malnutrition during the medical exams.

“I have been two days without food and this aid that you brought us today is very helpful,” said Gul Mohammad, an Afghan who received aid.

“The food supplied in the humanitarian-aid package will mitigate the risk of malnutrition and help this community get through the rest of the winter,” Bowman said.

Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team provides needed equipment to medical clinic

Story and photo by Spc. Gregory Argentieri
173rd ABCT Public Affairs

The Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team donated two laptop computers and a motorcycle to the Nangaresh Medical Clinic in eastern Afghanistan.

The PRT secured the money through the Commander's Emergency Response Program to make a small investment that will go a long way in bringing the Nangaresh Clinic into the 21st century.

"The Nangaresh Clinic is the only healthcare clinic in the Nurgaram District area, and it supports villages all the way north to the Dow Ab District," said Army Capt. Matthew G. Hathorn, Civil Affairs officer. "What we did is provided a couple of laptop computers and a motorcycle so that they can facilitate their immunization and inoculation program."

One of the clinic's doctors was very grateful to the PRT.

"Today, we are happy because you gentlemen brought us a motorcycle and two computers," said Dr. John Mohammad, Nangaresh Clinic physician in charge. "We go into different areas to help the poor people, and right now it's very difficult for us to get there, so this will be good for the people."

The motorcycle will allow Mohammad to help people up in Titen, Waterloo and the Shegal Valley,

where there are only single-track roads.

"Sometimes trucks can't get to these places," said Hathorn. "Supporting a health clinic isn't just Americans helping Afghans; its Americans helping Afghans help themselves." said Hathorn.

"Anything we can do to help build their infrastructure, upgrade their systems and provide support to their own nation means that an American Soldier doesn't have to do it," said Hathorn.

"Reaching out and helping Afghans build a basic medical infrastructure not only helps civilians, it increases the confidence Afghans have in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan," said Lt. Cmdr. William C. Ashby, PRT physician assistant and medical officer.

"We gave them impor-

tant equipment that's going to enable them to reach more people, serve more villagers and build confidence in the locals in their own infrastructure," said Ashby, a Fredericksburg, Va., native.

"The motorcycle will enable the clinic to expand their vaccination program," he said. "A gentleman routinely travels into the surrounding mountains, walking to far flung villages, to perform vaccinations. The motorcycle will enable him to get there quicker, move farther, see more people and have more villagers protected healthwise by vaccination."

The two laptop computers will enable clinic physicians to create an electronic database to keep track of patients. The new system is an improvement on the old-fashioned pencil and paper method, which

the clinic's workers were using.

"It's like any clinic in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world," said Ashby.

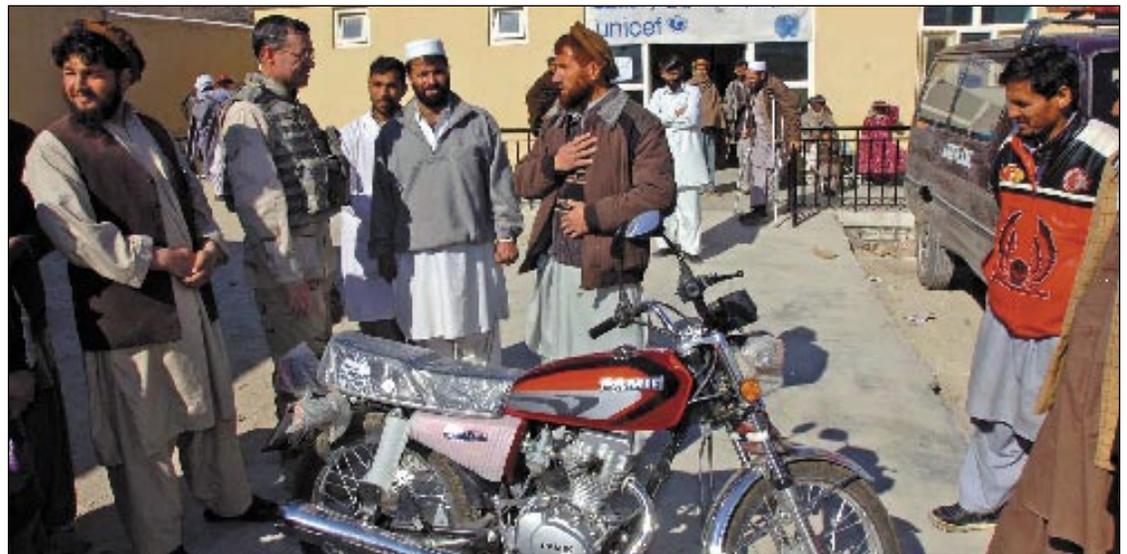
"It will be easy for physicians to track disease trends and patient demographics," he said.

"I know how to use a computer a little, but (the PRT members are) going to give me a class to help me better use it," said Mohammad.

"We have a very close relationship with the people of this clinic," said Ashby.

"I work from time to time with the doctors, and they have come here and seen patients with us," he said.

"Our job is not to come here and see all the patients in Afghanistan, we can't do that. What we're doing, medically speaking, is helping (Afghans) help themselves," Ashby said.



Lt. Cmdr. William C. Ashby presents a motorcycle to the Nangaresh Medical Clinic in eastern Afghanistan. Afghan Dr. John Mohammad, Nangaresh Clinic physician in charge, used to walk up into the mountains in the surrounding villages and vaccinate the children. He will now use the motorcycle.

Warrior of the Week

By Tech. Sgt. James Law
455 Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

For one Airman assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Squadron here, the news that he was selected as the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Warrior of the Week came as a surprise.

“I had no idea there was an award, much less that I had been selected for it,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Barger, a communication-computer systems control craftsman deployed here from the 54th Combat Communications Squadron, Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

The Warrior of the Week is a program used to recognize Airmen who display outstanding professionalism and work ethic in a wartime environment.

Barger was nominated for the award by Air Force Capt. Chris Yates, 455th EMSS communication flight commander.

“Andy is one of my best Airmen and displays an on-the-job expertise you would expect from a senior person,” said Yates. “He’s always up for a challenge and sets high standards for those around him.”

Barger is one of the technical control specialists responsible for ensuring Airmen on the east side of the base have both unclassified but Sensitive Internet Protocol Router Network, or NIPRNet, and Secret Internet Protocol Router Network, or SIPRNet, capabilities. His daily tasks vary from troubleshooting a network server to performing field maintenance.

“There’s a lot of information communicated through the network essential to operations conducted here,” said Barger. “I definitely feel what I do directly contributes to our mission.”

The Overland Park, Kan. native was majoring in Secondary Education at Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kan., when he decided to enlist in the Air Force.

“I joined because of 9-11,” said Barger. “I knew we were going to do something and I wanted to do my part.”

In doing his part, Barger has deployed three times since enlisting six years ago.

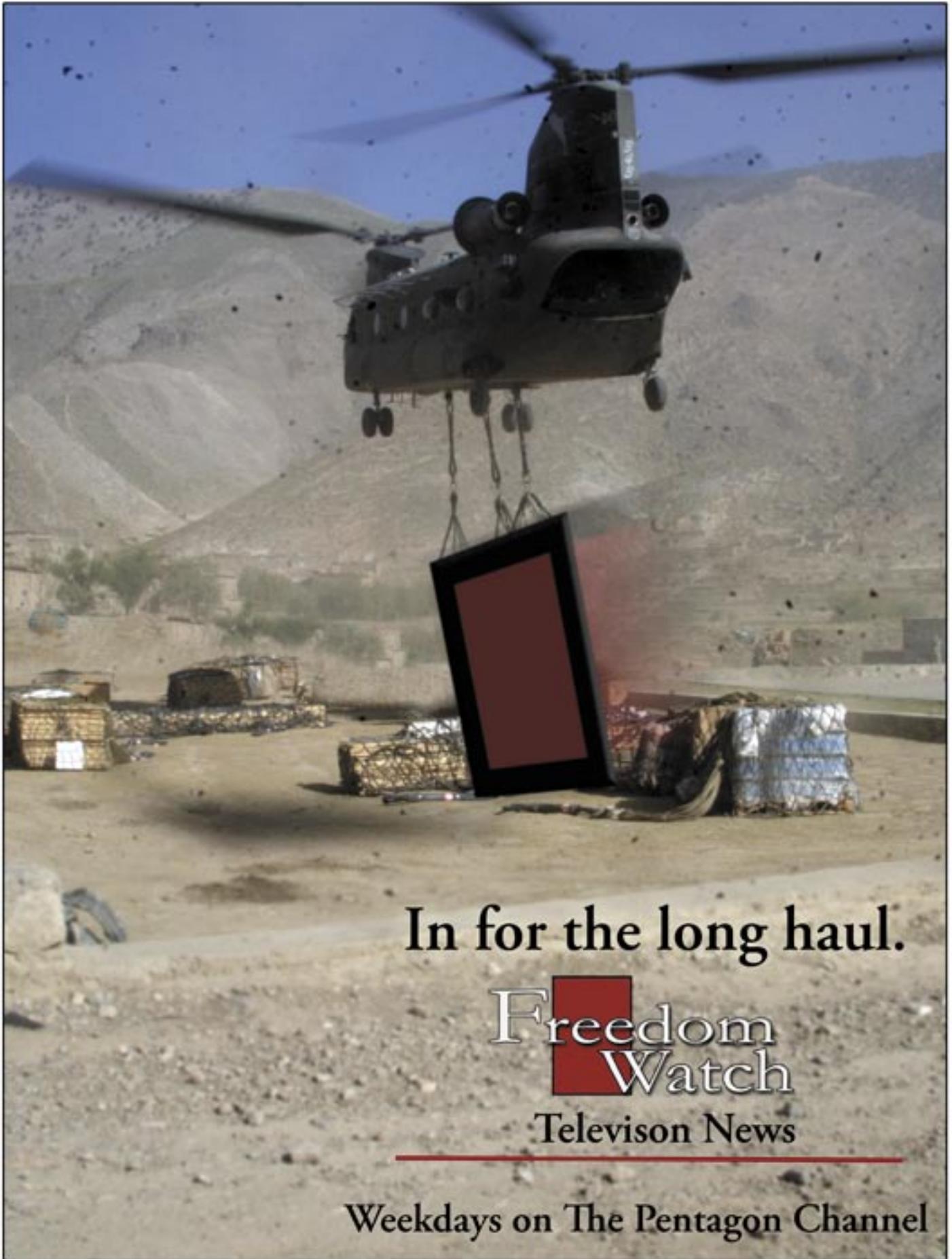
“I have had a lot of fun going all over the world, meeting awesome people and being a part of something bigger than myself,” Barger said.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Barger, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Squadron, Network Infrastructure supervisor, replaces a card on a Promina 800, which groups all services for satellite links. Barger was recently named Warrior of the Week for his outstanding work in communications. Barger’s home unit is the 54th Combat Communications Squadron, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)



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Sunrise photo from the Khakrez District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. Gary Ropers)



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Soldiers from B Co., Division Special Troops Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, Forward Operating Base Morales Frasier, Tag Ab District, Kapisa Province, Afghanistan, ask members of the French Mentor Team if they need any assistance after Afghan National Army soldiers were ambushed in the villages along main supply route Vermont Dec. 28. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Johnny R. Aragon)



Two CH-47 Chinooks arrive at the landing zone at Forward Operating Base Morales Frasier to pick up Soldiers from B Co., Division Special Troops Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, and airlift them into Surobi District, Afghanistan, to protect a CH-47 that emergency landed there on Jan. 20. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Johnny R. Aragon)



March 3, 2008

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