

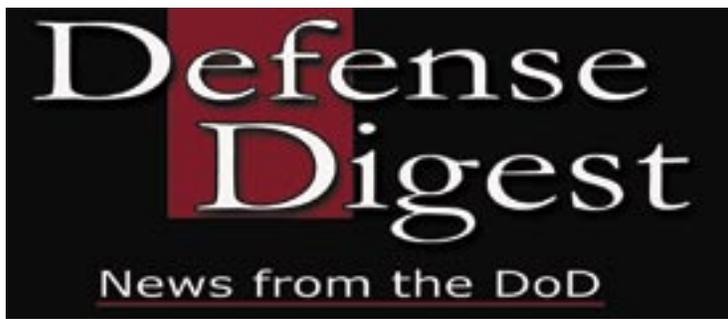
April 7, 2008

Freedom Watch

AFGHANISTAN



Real-Life Hero ■ The Razor's Edge ■ Soldiers on Stage



America Supports You: Navy honors Montel Williams for supporting Sailors, Marines

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – To recognize his continuous support and recognition of Sailors, Marines and their families throughout his 17 years on television, the Navy presented its Superior Public Service Award to Montel Williams in New York, March 19, during the taping of his long-running program's final show.

Navy Capt. Kenneth J. Braithwaite II, a rear admiral selectee and director of Joint Public Affairs Support Element Reserve, presented the award to Williams on behalf of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead. The Superior Public Service Award is the second-highest award presented to civilians by the Department of the Navy.

"Thank you, thank you," said Williams after he was surprised with the award presentation once the show began rolling. "I've tried in the industry to recognize (military servicemembers) and really bring to the forefront what's being sacrificed. I want to thank all of you for what you do." Williams continued to wear the award throughout the final show.

A video message from Roughead, thanking Williams for his dedication and support to all Sailors and Marines, will air in a special segment during the final week of "The Montel Williams Show" before it goes off the air in May.

"It was an honor to be able to award a true patriot like Mr. Williams," Braithwaite said. "This award signifies his genuine gratitude for military service. He has a definite understanding and appreciation of what Sailors and Marines sacrifice, something he knows well from his own military experience."

Williams enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1974, and in 1975

he was selected as the first black Marine to attend the Navy Prep School. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1980 and was commissioned as an intelligence officer, specializing in cryptology.

During annual holiday shows in his television program's long run, Williams has reunited deployed sailors with their families. In 2006, he and a production crew flew to the Navy Central Command/5th Fleet area of responsibility to tour Iraqi oil platforms and meet with deployed Sailors aboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.

His program frequently has featured guests from non-profit organizations that support servicemembers to highlight their efforts. Throughout his 17 years on televisions, Williams continuously shared with audience members and viewers the importance of supporting the military and recognized Sailors' personal sacrifices in service to their country.

Williams' mother and relatives were in the audience for the series finale. To his staff, some of whom had been with the show since the first day, Williams declared that it would be a fun show celebrating their 17 years on television.

"It is very bittersweet today, everybody has worked so hard," said Kwame White, production assistant. "He's a great man. Every day, while at work, I meet someone amazing here who has overcome something, and it has given me such an appreciation for what I have."

Navy Band Northeast, stationed in Newport, R.I., opened the show by playing the program's theme song.

"It was pretty intense and it was fun," Petty Officer 3rd Class Marc Heskett, who was featured on the saxophone, said. "There was a lot of energy in that studio, our performances are not normally televised."

Lt. Carl Gerhard, Navy Band Northeast director, said he was happy to be part of the event. "It feels great to be a part of this day," he said. "This is a very special day for Mr. Williams and it is nice to be here to play, not only to celebrate his long run on television, but to play a tribute to his service as well."

The final episode of "The Montel Williams Show," featuring the Superior Public Service Award presentation, is scheduled to air May 16.

(From a Naval Media Center news release.)



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COVER: Pathfinders from the Task
Force Eagle Assault, 101st Combat
Aviation Brigade wait at the ready while
conducting live fire exercises at Tar-
nack Farm Range at Kandahar, Afghan-
istan. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. George
Welcome)

BACK COVER: Army Spc. Monica
Brown, a medic from the 782nd Brigade
Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat
Team, 82nd Airborne Division, is the
second female since World War II to earn
the Silver Star award for her gallant ac-
tions while in combat. (U.S. Army photo
by Spc. Micah E. Clare)

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Real-life hero: A Soldier's Silver Star story

By Spc. Micah E. Clare

4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Spc. Monica “Doc” Brown, 19, of Lake Jackson, Texas, is the second female Soldier since World War II to be awarded a Silver Star. She was recognized for her gallant actions during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2007.

She was presented her Silver Star by Vice President Dick Cheney during a ceremony here, March 20.

It was dusk on April 25, 2007, when Brown, a medic from the 782nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, was on security patrol in Paktika province, Jani Khail District when her convoy was attacked by insurgents.

“We’d been out for a couple of days,” said Brown, who at the time was attached to the brigade’s 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment’s Troop C. “We had just turned into a wadi [empty river bed] when our gunner yelled at us that the vehicle behind us had hit an improvised explosive device.”

They all looked out of their windows in time to see one of the struck vehicle’s tires flying through the field next to them. Brown had just opened her door to see what was going on when the attack began.

“I saw the smoke from the vehicle when suddenly we started taking small-arms fire from all around us,” she said. “Our gunner starting firing back and my platoon sergeant yelled, ‘Doc, let’s go!’”

Brown and her platoon sergeant, Army Staff Sgt. Jose Santos, exited their vehicle and while under fire, ran the few hundred meters to the site of the downed Humvee.

“Everyone was already out of the burning vehicle,” she said. “But before I got there, I could tell that two of them were injured very seriously.”

In fact, all five of the passengers who had stumbled out were burned and cut.

Two Soldiers, Spc.’s Stanson Smith and Larry Spray, suffered life-threatening injuries.

With help from two less-injured vehicle crewmen, Army Sgt. Zachary Tellier and Spc. Jack Bodani, Brown moved the immobile Soldiers to a relatively safe distance from the burning Humvee.

“Rounds were literally missing her by inches,” said Bodani, who provided suppressive fire as Brown aided the casualties. “We needed to get away from there.”

Attempting to provide proper medical care under heavy fire became impossible, especially when the attackers stepped up efforts to kill the Soldiers.

“Another vehicle had maneuvered to our position to shield us from the rounds exploding in the fire from the Humvee behind us,” Brown said. “We then started taking mortar rounds, but all I could think about were my patients.”

With the vehicles spread out in a crescent formation,

Brown and her casualties were stuck with nowhere to go.

Then Santos arrived with one of the unit’s vehicles and backed it up to their position. Brown began loading the wounded Soldiers inside.

“We went to a more secure location several hundred meters away so we could call in the medical evacuation mission,” Brown said.

She then directed other combat-life-saver-qualified Soldiers to help by holding intravenous bags and assisting her in prepping the casualties for evacuation.

Once the attackers began to retreat, Brown was able to perform more thorough aid procedures before the MEDEVAC helicopter arrived to transport the casualties to safety.

Two hours after the initial attack, everything was over. In the darkness, Brown recalled standing in a field knee-deep in grass, trying to piece together the events which had just taken place.

“Looking back, it was just a blur of noise and movement,” she said. “What just happened? Did I do everything right? It was a hard thing to think about.”

Before joining the Army, Brown said she never pictured herself being in a situation like this.

Originally wanting to be an X-ray technician, she changed her mind when she realized that by becoming a medic, she’d be in the best place to help people.

“At first, I didn’t think I could do it,” she said. “I was afraid of blood. When I saw my first airway-opening operation, I threw up.”

She quickly adjusted to her job, receiving additional training both before and during her deployment to Afghanistan.

“Everything I had done during the attack was done from memory,” she said. “I know with the training I’ve been given, any medic would have done the same in my position.”

“To say she handled herself well would be an understatement,” said Bodani. “It was amazing to see her keep calm and take care of our guys with all that going on around her. Of all the medics we’ve had with us, she was the one I trusted the most.”

“Earning trust with a combat unit is not something easily earned,” said Army Capt. Todd Book, Troop C’s commander at the time of the attack.

“Our regular medic was on leave at the time,” Book said. “Brown showed us that she was very technically proficient at her job.”

“When people I’ve treated come back to me and tell me the difference I was able to make in their life...that’s the best part of this job,” Brown said.

During her rest and recuperation in May 2007, Brown visited Spray in the hospital and met his mother.

“Spray’s mother was so thankful, she hugged me,” said Brown. “That was the moment that made me feel the best about what I did. I just reacted and did my job when the time came. It’s what we train for.”

Both Smith and Spray survived their injuries.

Bridge opens, links village with Kandahar

Story and photo courtesy of
Headquarters ISAF Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan – International Security Assistance Force soldiers joined Ghulam Hadiar, Kandahar City Mayor, and Ahmad Shah Khan, Kandahar Provincial Government counselor, to officially open the Saddaqt Bridge in Kandahar City, March 23.

“This is a great day for the City of Kandahar,” said Captain Marc Comeau, Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team senior project manager, who was responsible for overseeing the project to build the bridge. “I am pleased to have been involved in the construction of this bridge which will improve the daily lives of approximately 33,000 people.”

The Saddaqt Bridge traverses a crucial irrigation canal and links the village of Saddaqt with the city of Kandahar. It now saves local citizens considerable time by reducing the distance travelled from their village into the city.

“The construction of this bridge brings much needed development to Kandahar City,” explained Capt. Comeau. “Previously, the residents had to travel five kilometres to go from their homes to local markets, schools and other commercial businesses. Now, we have a direct link easing the lives of the local population.”



Ghulam Hadiar, Mayor of Kandahar helps Army Capt. Tyler Couture, Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, officially open the Saddaqt Bridge in Kandahar City, March 23.

The project took about three months to complete and employed 30 local craftsmen during its construction.

“It is rewarding to mentor local contractors, improving their capabilities and knowledge,” said Capt. Comeau. “Moreover, it is satisfying to see a project through from conception to completion.”

Korengal Valley villagers help disrupt insurgent attack

Story courtesy of
Headquarters ISAF Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Force troops successfully disrupted attacks on their respective bases with the help of villagers in Kunar Province Mar. 9.

With information provided by Afghan citizens, ANSF and ISAF troops were able to engage an estimated 50 insurgents in nine different locations as they prepared to attack four ISAF and ANSF bases.

ANSF and ISAF engaged the insurgents with small-arms fire, machine guns, mortars and artillery. Helicopters and aircraft were also incorporated into the fight. The insurgents responded with small-arms fire, heavy machine guns, recoilless rifles and mortars.

ISAF commanders on the scene confirmed several enemy killed and wounded.

One Afghan National Army soldier received a minor wound, but was later

returned to duty.

For the first time since ISAF and ANA soldiers have operated in the area, members of a nearby village went to ISAF troops and confirmed the enemy positions, plans for movement and weapons systems of insurgents they had seen in the area.

“Their assistance during the battle is tangible proof of a growing trend of support for the ANA and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the Korengal Valley,” said Maj. Nicholas Sternberg, an ISAF spokesman for the area. “The people of Korengal realize that the insurgents can only bring them pain and suffering and that their government can provide them stability and development, like the multi-million dollar road that is being built there now.”

“The villagers provided real-time information and confirmation on the insurgent activity,” said an ISAF spokesperson. “They also admitted that at least one of their own village members was involved with the insurgents. This increased the ANSF and

ISAF ability to positively identify and engage the insurgents. This is a first for the Korengal Valley.”

ISAF and ANA soldiers returned to the village early the next morning and spoke with the villagers about the previous night’s events. The villagers again reiterated their description of the insurgent activities and showed great relief and appreciation that ISAF Soldiers did not hurt any local civilians despite the large volume of weapon fire during the fight.

A fire near the enemy’s location was started by a rocket from an AH-64 helicopter. The villagers put the fire out and made no complaints about the damage or demands for compensation.

“They understood that the enemy activity near their village was the true cause of the fire and did not attempt to place blame on the ANSF or ISAF,” said an ISAF spokesperson. “With the new found understanding and support of villagers in the Korengal Valley, the enemies of peace in Afghanistan will find that they are no longer welcome anywhere in Kunar Province.”

Afghan school gets new library, science lab for opening day

Courtesy of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan Public Affairs

The first day of school at Jan Qadam Elementary School, Parwan province, was alive with excited children, dignitaries, government officials and Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan soldiers, who dedicated a new library and science lab, March 24.

Just after 9 a.m., the Head of the District Development Council welcomed everyone to the event, noting the importance of the relationship between the school and all those who helped make it a great place to learn. He specifically thanked the children of Calvert City Elementary School, Calvert City, Ky., for their partnership with the Jan Qadam School.

“The partnership between the schools is a community-based initiative between the people and students of Calvert City Elementary School and the Jan Qadam School and community,” said Army Lt. Col. Kenneth Watson, a member of CJSOTF-Afghanistan.

After the speeches and a prayer, the new school library was dedicated to Afghan Gen. Baba Jan, a retired Afghan commander. Jan donated the land to build the school on and the library is filled with books donated by the United States Agency for Interna-



Afghan elementary school children crowd into class during the first day of school at Jan Qadam Elementary School, Parwan Province, March 24. Village elders, Ministry of Education officials and Coalition Soldiers gathered to celebrate the first day of school as well as dedicate the new school library and science lab. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Marie Schult)

tional Development.

The distinguished guests and visitors toured the school and visited the new science lab. It is the only science lab in the Bagram School District, which has 32 schools, including seven high schools.

“School is the factory that produces positive individuals for society,” said Adul Waquel, head of the District Development Council.

Jan Qadam hosts more than 1,200 students who are taught in two shifts.

Village elders passed out backpacks to more than 500 students and Calvert Elementary children donated notebooks, pens, pencils, glue and rulers to their Afghan counterparts.

The partnership with

Calvert Elementary is only just beginning. In addition to the supplies provided, students from a second grade class there wrote letters to the students at the Jan Qadam School. Calvert students were mostly interested in what Afghan children do at home, during their free time.

“My name is Erin, I’m from Calvert, Kentucky,” one of the letters starts out. “I can’t wait to learn about your culture.”

Most of the Calvert students seemed interested in the differences between Afghan children and American children with most listing their favorite sports and after-school activities.

“It bridges cultures and helps educate future generations about other people

who share our world,” said Watson.

“We will pass the translated letters out to the Afghan children and send their replies back to the states,” said a Coalition commander. “Some time in the next few months, students from Calvert will travel to Fort Campbell, Ky., to have a video teleconference with some of the Afghan students.”

“It was a great day for the people of Jan Qadam, the Ministry of Education, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Coalition forces,” said Watson. “It reinforces our ties and commitment to the community and people of Afghanistan and helps foster an enduring relationship.”

Mechanics battle Taliban, snow, terrain to keep vehicles working

By Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Aird
173rd ABCT Public Affairs

Mechanics from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), complete numerous odd jobs beside their average nuts and bolts mechanic work in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

The mechanics are stationed at Forward Operating Base Keating, located in a valley between a junction of two snow-melt fed rivers in the Hindu Kush Mountain Range. Vehicle rollovers, flash floods, road washouts, rock and snow avalanches are just a few of the hazards that make maintaining vehicles a challenge.

During the winter months, both Taliban extremist and Coalition forces are forced to stay near their homes and bases, or battle the elements.

“One of the things about the snow, when it fell, it made things very difficult around here,” said Spc. Larry Gonzales, a 33-year-old construction and vehicle repair mechanic from East Los Angeles.

During winter more than four feet of snow fell in the valley. Combat Outpost Warheit, which over looks FOB Keating, had more than eight feet of snow. The snow made movement extremely difficult.

“Mobile wise, air wise, water wise- everything was freezing up,” explained Gonzales. “The fuel even started to gel.” When the snow receded, Soldiers on FOB Keating were



Spc. Larry Gonzales, a mechanic from California in Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), turns a wrench while working on a radiator damaged by a rocket propelled grenade on Forward Operating Base Keating. (Courtesy photo)



Paratroopers from Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), recover a vehicle out of a river during the summer near Forward Operating Base Keating in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan 2007. The road gave way during a patrol causing the vehicle to roll over. (Courtesy photo)

able to start on projects previously hindered by snow.

Gonzales and Spc. Nathan Bolt-Ray, a mechanic in Bravo Troop, worked on a HUMVEE that was damaged during a previous fire fight Feb. 22.

“We’re replacing the radiator in the HUMVEE,” said Bolt-Ray, who’s originally from California. “The radiator took shrapnel from a RPG (rocket propelled grenade) during a fire fight.”

Bravo Troop, according to Bolt-Ray, has only taken the Troop’s HUMVEE’s out a handful of times. Most of Bravo Troop’s patrols are by foot.

“As you can see by the bullet holes in a lot of these vehicle trunks, they’ve taken quite the beating,” explained Bolt-Ray. “The roads, I guess you can call them that also take their turn beating on the vehicles.”

The two mechanics worked through the day, and by nightfall were able to fix the radiator. Without any more vehicles to fix, the two mechanics went back to their odd jobs around the FOB.

A few days later, the fork lift broke down on the landing zone during an air resupply mission. The two mechanics from California grabbed their tools and went back to work.

The Razor's Edge:

Pathfinders keep sk

Story and photos by Spc. George Welcome
101st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Maintaining combat effectiveness is important for any fighting force. For the Pathfinders of Task Force Eagle Assault, training and preparation during times of calm result in success in combat.

On March 16, the Pathfinders conducted live fire maneuver training on Tarnak Farm Range, a dusty, flat plot of land near Kandahar Airfield. The range, which was once used as a training area for Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, is now used by Coalition forces as a multi-purpose range.

“About twice a week we get to come out to Tarnak,” said Sgt. Nicholas Posatiere, a team leader with the Pathfinders. “We try to throw different scenarios in to change up the training, but our main mission is personnel recovery and downed aircraft recovery. We concentrate on our main mission but also keep up with our common tasks.”

The training consists of three phases of dry runs. The first phase was a react-to-contact right battle drill, where the Soldiers, divided into teams, simulated exiting an aircraft and moving in a tactical formation. They then received simulated fire from the right, take cover and return fire. In lieu of actual gunfire, the Soldiers provided the sound effects, yelling “Bang” repeatedly.

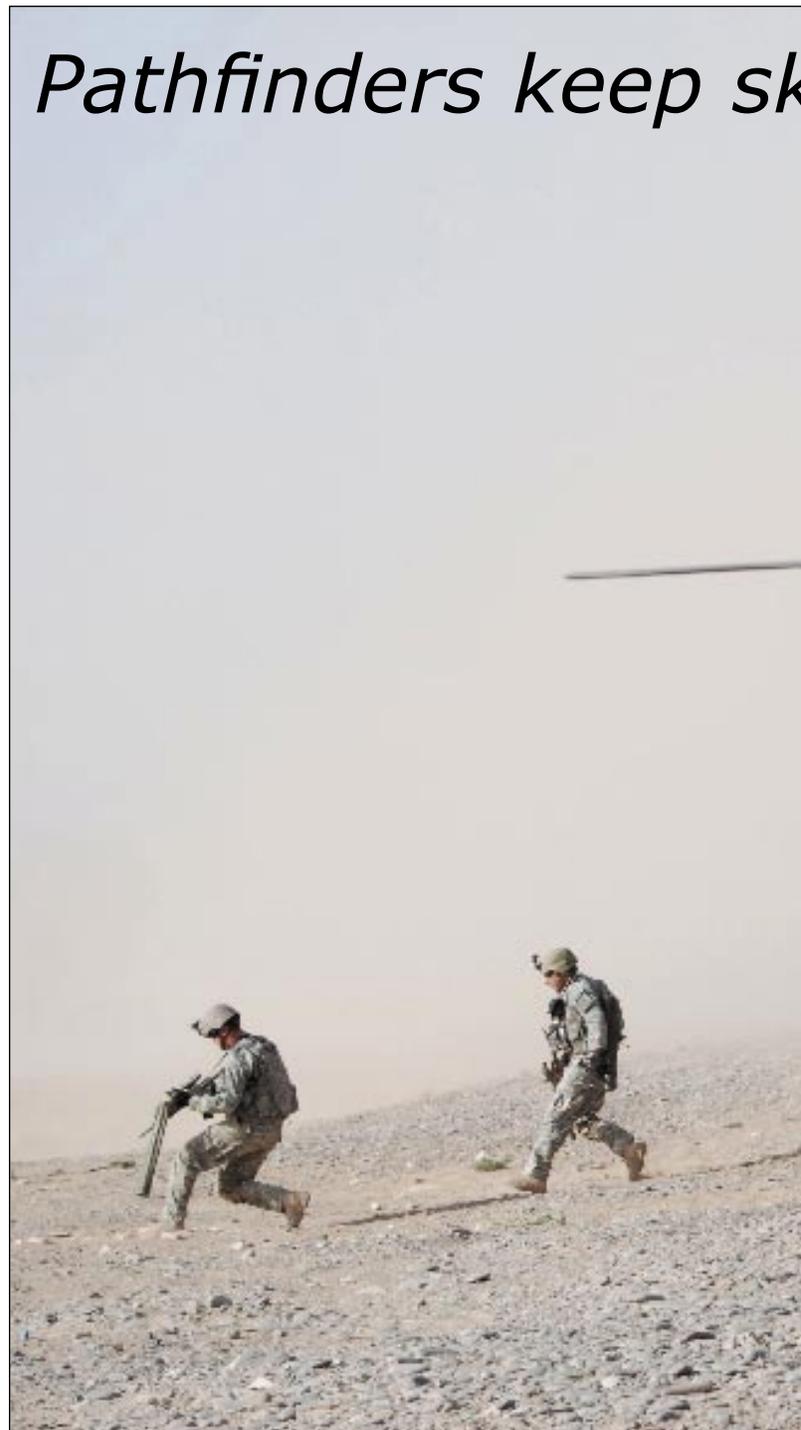
The drill was then repeated from the opposite side, and finally they ran the drill once more, adding a personnel recovery element in which the Pathfinders simulated rescuing an injured pilot, providing medical care and moving the casualty to the designated rally point.

“The purpose of this training is to sustain our combat readiness while utilizing the air support assets we have access to,” said Staff Sgt. Alfred Tello, platoon sergeant for the TF Eagle Assault Pathfinders.

After the drills were conducted a few more times the live fire portion began. A UH-60 Black Hawk landed on a dusty road adjacent to the range to pick up the lead team. As it took off to fly its pattern, the door gunners fired their weapons down range, providing suppressive fire for the ground team. The second team remained in place until the helicopter returned with the lead team.

When the lead team exited the helicopter and moved toward the objective on the debris-laden field, the second team followed behind, arranged in a wedge formation. The Soldiers took simulated fire from the enemy and engaged this time with real rounds. Soldiers engaged the enemy with their modified M4 assault rifles, the M203 rifle, Squad Automatic Weapon and the AT-4 anti-tank rocket launcher. Dust, colored smoke and the sounds of multiple weapons firing filled the air.

“We’ve had the chance to do a couple of live missions since we’ve been here,” said Spc. Martin Stiffer, Pathfinder team



above: Pathfinders of Task Force Eagle assault exit a UH-60 Black Hawk as part of a live fire maneuver on Tarnack Farm Range in Kandahar.

right: A Pathfinder sets up and uses a tactical satellite during a live fire maneuver at Tarnack Farm Range near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

far right: Pathfinders from Task Force Eagle Assault take up a prone position while reacting to contact during a live-fire maneuver range.

member. “While our mission is primarily personnel recovery, we can conduct hasty raids and set up traffic control points.”

Through the painstaking process of simulating combat conditions, the Pathfinders ensure that they will be able to maintain their razor sharp combat edge as an elite unit.

Skills sharp on Tarnak Farm Range



Soldiers in Zormat put the ‘care’ in healthcare

By Spc. Nathan W. Hutchison
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A call came in Feb. 26 at approximately 10 p.m. saying at least one casualty was en route to Forward Operating Base Zormat. Soldiers began scrambling from the moment the call came in, readying equipment and making sure all necessary personnel were aware of the situation.

“I was sleeping and one of the Soldiers came to my door and told me there were going to be some patients coming,” said Army Staff Sgt. Landon B. Powell, medical noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. “I only knew that there had been several people shot so I wasn’t sure on the amount of patients I was going to have.”

Information came about a child who had been shot in the shoulder.

Afghan National Police and Soldiers from Troop B were bringing her to the base for medical attention.

“There was a tribal conflict that resulted in a certain part of the tribe attacking another family in the tribe,” said Army Capt. James E. Chapman, commander, Troop B, 4-73rd CAV. “It resulted in the death of four of the family members and the wounding of the little girl.”

The survivors of the event were the girl and her two younger brothers.

“The girl and her younger brothers had walked three kilometers to get to the district center and then got here, who knows how long after she had been shot,” said Army 1st Lt. Phillip J. Richards, a fire support officer from HHT.

Powell, with assistance from other Soldiers, did a rapid trauma survey on the little girl when she arrived at FOB Zormat. He was surprised when he saw the bullet wound.

“I didn’t know before she got here that she had already been seen by a civilian doctor,” said Powell, a 34-year-old Valdosta, Ga., native. “The civilian doctor, in order to take care of the wound, sewed the bullet inside.”

Powell made the decision to call for a medical evacuation because of the potential danger involved with removing a bullet.

“In Salerno they have X-ray and Magnetic Resonance Imaging capabilities. So, where I was unable to see where the bullet was, they could,” Powell said. “We were mainly in charge of keeping her vitals stable, because in that type of situation you can have internal bleeding and the vitals can drop.”

Soldiers talked to the young girl to keep her calm while waiting for the MEDEVAC helicopter.

“I was telling her that I have a 10-year-old daughter,” Powell said. “She kind of reminded me of her. I guess I’m just kind of emotional, especially with children.”

Powell said these experiences become personal when you have a child.

“The way things happen here, I just thought, that could have been my daughter,” Powell admitted. “It’s easy to get emotionally attached.”

But he said emotional attachment is always a second response when your job is about saving lives.

“Powell is part of a generation of medics whose career has grown under the stress of combat,” Chapman said. “He’s learned to keep a cool head under pressure because of training and real-life situations he has been through.”

The ANP have arrested six individuals, so far, for the murder of the four family members. The local government is working to make the appropriate decision regarding the welfare of the children.

Powell said he has visited the district center several times to check up on the little girl and ensure she is doing OK with her bandages and medication.



Spc. Keith E. Ockander, medic for the aid station at Forward Operating Base Zormat, Headquarters Headquarter Troop, 4th Battalion, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division adds pain medication to the intravenous bag of a young girl who was shot in a tribal dispute Feb. 26 at Forward Operating Base Zormat, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Nathan W. Hutchison)

Determination and ingenuity prevail

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

The 819th Rapid Engineers Deployable Heavy Operations Repair Squadron Engineers accomplished what some initially thought to be improbable with a successful operational check of a water-well drilling rig March 21.

The rig, one of two in the Air Force's inventory, was shipped from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. in September 2007. After reaching a port in Pakistan, the rig was loaded onto a flatbed trailer to be hauled to Bagram Airfield.

En route, the driver got the 34-ton piece of equipment stuck in a tunnel. Air was released from the trailer's tires to back it out, but both the rig and the trailer were damaged. Traveling a different route, using a different trailer, the transport broke, requiring the drilling rig to be transferred to yet another truck and trailer. In the process, the rig came off the trailer and flipped over on its side.

"We were originally told (in October) that it had sustained \$413,000 in damage and that it was not repairable," said Master Sgt. John Moreland, 819th RED HORSE metals technology non-commissioned officer-in-charge.

Moreland stated this estimation was made after a list of damaged parts was compiled and a quote from the manufacturer for replacement costs was obtained.

Moreland reassessed the rig, determined it could

be repaired and requested authorization to fix it.

"Knowing my skills and abilities and knowing the group of people assigned here with me are the reasons I believed we could repair this unit," said Moreland.

"ACC [Air Combat Command] wanted to have a representative from [the manufacturer] to come over and make a technical



Master Sgt. John Moreland, 819th RED HORSE Squadron metals technology, checks the gauges on a water-well digging rig during an operational check March 21. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

assessment to determine what parts they were going to need and if it was repairable," said Moreland.

According to Moreland, the manufacturer was contacted with the request, but was reluctant to send a technician into a potentially hostile environment.

Moreland said without the manufacturer's assessment and not being able to meet the ACC requirement, it appeared the rig was destined to be turned into the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office as scrap metal. But he continued to work the subject with his chain of command who, in turn, kept in contact with

ACC.

Approximately three months after making the request, Moreland received authorization to make whatever repairs possible without spending any money.

Moreland's first action was removing a mast, weighing roughly 12,000-pounds, and determining the best course of action to

make the repairs.

"The one item that was a go or no-go for the repair was the mast," said Moreland. "It was twisted at the top about two and half inches."

The mast is the main drilling component that stands 36 feet high and hoists and lowers the drill pipe and provides the rotational torque required to turn the drill pipe and drill bit.

Moreland used chains, hydraulic tools and construction equipment to manipulate the mast's frame back to specifications.

With the mast repaired, Moreland focused on fabri-

cating and repairing dozens of smaller components required before reassembling the rig.

"Tech. Sgt. [Casey] Kuhn was a huge part, helping me get the thing back together," said Moreland. "We could anticipate what the other person was going to do and what we needed to do."

"I jumped in and started helping at the point when there was a lot of tedious work that was going to be very time consuming for one person," said Kuhn, 819th RED HORSE heavy equipment operator.

Less than seven weeks after starting the repairs and \$80 spent on two bearings, the well digger was ready for an operational check. The RED HORSE Airmen setup the rig and drilled a 71-foot test hole.

"We were able to do all the testing we needed to do in the depth we drilled," said Moreland. "Everything on the rig worked as it was supposed to."

"It's impressive what they've accomplished in such a short period of time," said Capt. Matt Sturtevant, 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group officer-in-charge. "I think a lot of people had given up on this actually coming together, but thanks to the efforts of Master Sgt. Moreland and Tech. Sgt. Kuhn, we're able to deliver and just in time for spring."

The water-well drilling rig will be used to provide water sources to coalition forces at forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan.

Zormat police chief vows reforms

Story and photo by Spc. Nathan W. Hutchison

22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ZORMAT, Afghanistan – A shura was held in Zormat Feb. 25, which discussed the reintegration of the Afghan National Police into the Zormat district.

ANP representatives were present to speak with the district leaders about the reintegration of police into the district after corruption had marred the Zormat ANP in the past.

Zormat District's new Chief of Police, Jani Khail, said he is ready to change the face of the ANP.

"Having their chief of police there talking to the Shura leaders had a big impact," said Army Capt. James E. Chapman, commander, Troop B, 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. "The people in Zormat haven't trusted the ANP in the past. Hopefully, the words of the new police chief will reflect in his troops and they will gain the support of the people."

Khail spoke of the pride he has for his country, his job and his wish to help Zormat progress through stability.

"The ANP for this district just went through intensive training and will treat the people in an Islamic way," said Khail. "If they don't treat you in an Islamic way, I will replace them."

He also spoke about the Taliban's efforts to hinder progress in the district.

"The Taliban are trying to stop construction in Zormat," Khail said. "The only way we can bring more projects to Zormat is for you to be more supportive and communicate with your government."

Many Shura members said they were impressed by the police chief's words and hope this change will bring prosperity and more development to the district.



Jani Khail, Zormat District's new Afghan National Police chief, discusses the expectations and priorities of his policemen, including the reintegration of Afghan National Police to the district, Feb. 25 at the Zormat District Center, Afghanistan.

THE BARISTA BLEND

MONDAY NIGHTS

MANAS

91.5 FM 2000-2300

AFGHANISTAN

94.1 FM 1830-2130



hits you've never heard of...

and some you know by heart

Humanitarian aid brings smiles

By Army Capt. Elizabeth Casebeer
Task Force Cincinnatus Public Affairs

As servicemembers stationed in Afghanistan, the term “Improvised Explosive Devices” has been part of our vocabulary since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001.

Most of us know someone who has been involved in a blast, many of us have experienced it ourselves. But what happens to the children who often happen to get caught up in the attack?

Four-year-old Elmorad, whom the troops have affectionately nicknamed “Elmo,” and six-year-old Parmina, are in the Recovery Ward at the American Hospital at BAF. Elmo, whose little body is covered in blisters and burns, has had several skin grafts and is awaiting more. His bottom lip is so swollen he cannot close it. Bandages cover spots where the skin has yet to heal. But Elmo’s eyes sparkle whenever he receives visitors, who bring everything from coloring books to stuffed animals to Matchbox cars. Elmo’s favorites are the balloons one volunteer, Spc. Karla Tyson, dutifully blows up for him. He also reaches for the small soccer ball and nods his head in appreciation. His older brother, who stays round-the-clock, assisting his brother, smiles as he takes care of his charge. This is his brother’s life for the time being and it might be for a long time afterward.

Parmina is blind due to an IED blast but that has not dampened her spirits. Lying

on her bed in a purple sweatshirt covered in embroidered flowers, she has clear goggles to protect her eyes and is talking and singing a mile a minute. The giggly little girl happily constructs a car out of a set of building toys and makes “vroom” noises and sings to it. She clutches the fuzzy duck a volunteer handed to her and tells her father she loves how soft it is. When it’s time to go, Parmina

says “bye-bye” in perfect English and waves several times, her little hands covered in traditional red dye. Her father is there and points at the stack of gifts Parmina has received and smiles.

These two heartbreaking stories highlight the atrocities of war, and shock all those around with the resolve and good humor the children both seem to have. Both are in obvious pain, but neither child makes a single complaint.

Air Force Capt. Marianne Kehoe is the American Hospital’s chaplain. She serves as the liaison for Senior Master Sgt. Patrick D. Porter, who is responsible for collecting and distributing donations from the folks back home.

“I have some friends in the states, Master Sgt. Barry Haan and Master Sgt. Henry Hayes, who did a toy drive and sent four large boxes of toys,” said Porter.

Other donations came from individuals who volunteer at the hospital or from other sources on BAF.

According to Kehoe, between two and three children are sent to the American Hospital per month. The kids come from outlying Forward Operating Bases or the Egyptian Hospital, also located on BAF.

The children arrive at the American Hospital in bad shape and at the beginning, are usually pretty indifferent to outside stimuli due to their trauma.

“I like seeing their personalities emerge,” said Kehoe. “For example, when Parmina arrived, she was unresponsive and not interactive at all, and now she’s ‘Miss Chatterbox,’ which is wonderful.”

Porter said he got involved with the hospital mission by attending Operation Care meetings.

“Operation Care is a non-profit, non-denominational, private charitable organization comprised of military and civilian volunteers assigned to the Afghanistan Theater of Operations, dedicated to providing goodwill and

welfare to the people of Afghanistan and, especially, to its children,” said Navy Lt. Sara O’Neil, Operation Care’s president.

“At a meeting, someone asked for [a volunteer] to step up and take the program so I grabbed at the chance,” said Porter, who added he works with two Army non-commissioned-officers exclusively: Sgt. Caroline Roman, and Staff Sgt. Randy Merrill.

“Between the three of us, we get teams together on Friday [afternoons] and go to the hospital to meet up with Chaplain Kehoe, who lets us know how many kids we have and what rooms and limitations they may have,” said Porter.

Kehoe said she regularly monitors the status of the patients, because sometimes they are sleeping or not feeling up for visitors.

“I let Master Sgt. Porter know how many kids we have and their conditions so he can prep his volunteers,” said Kehoe, who added visitors often-times have to wear a mask and gloves in order to protect the kids from germs and infection. “I also talk with the nursing staff before the visits to see if there are any special care precautions.”

Porter and his volunteers do not always know what to expect when they arrive, especially if the patient is a new one.

“Most of the kids do not speak English and are somewhat apprehensive the first time they see us but are all smiles at the end,” he said. “Most stay for several weeks, so they see us numerous times.”

“The parents or guardians seem very appreciative of the visit and the opportunity to talk to folks other than the hospital people,” Porter added. “It is an opportunity to give back to people who have nothing. It is awkward at first but you get used to the kids quickly and smiles are the universal language everyone understands.”

Photos From the Field



The Kapisa Civil Affairs Team from the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team accompanied the Kapisa Deputy Governor and the Kapisa Director of Education to the Mahmood Raqi Girls School to participate in an event where they gave backpacks to several of their top students in each class. (U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Pete Hughes)



Have a photo you'd like to see in
Freedom Watch Afghanistan?

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Army Capt. Theodore Knach, chaplain for Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, gives the message during an Easter sunrise service at Camp Eggers in Kabul. Listening to Chaplain Knach are Maj. Gen. Robert Cone, commanding general for CSTC-A, and Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Coleman Jr. (U.S. Navy Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class David M. Votroubek)



Senior Airman Adam Wright stands on the flightline near a Reaper unmanned aircraft. Wright is attached to the 451st Air Expeditionary Group in Kandahar. (Courtesy photo)



April 7, 2008

Freedom Watch

AFGHANISTAN



Real-Life Hero ■ The Razor's Edge ■ Soldiers on Stage