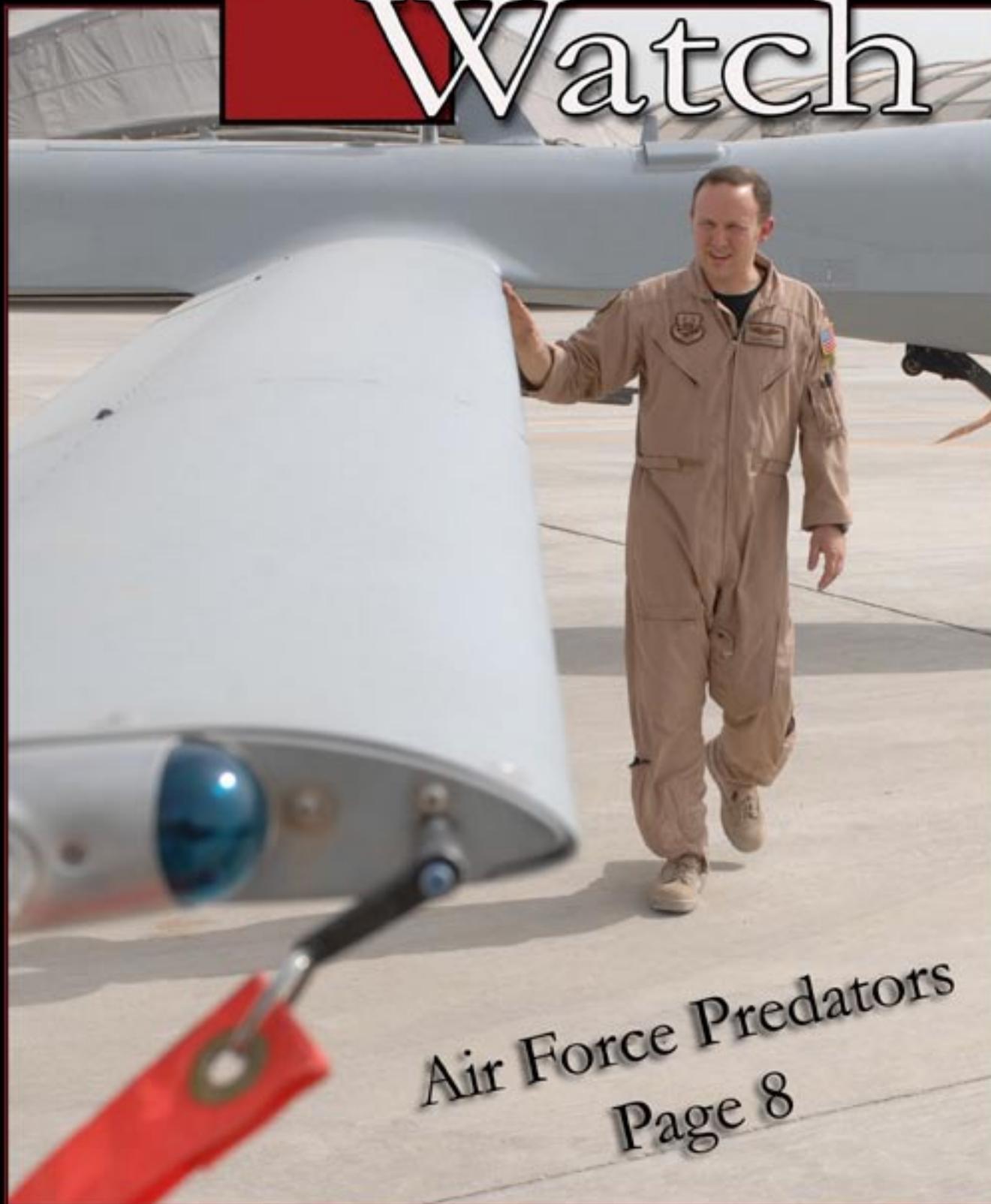


May 5, 2008

# Freedom AFGHANISTAN Watch



*Air Force Predators  
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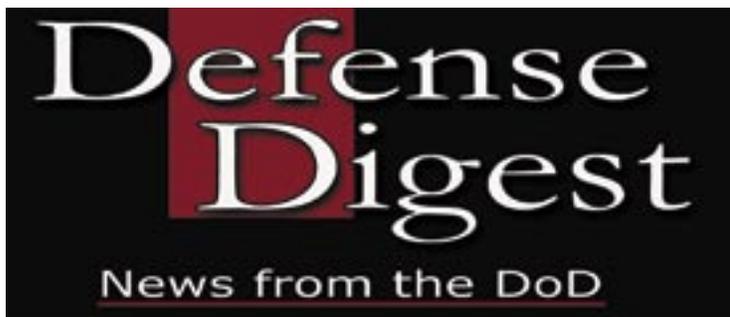
Commandos



Bird of Prey



Open Wide



# Commander sees progress in Afghan Army, Police

By Fred W. Baker III  
*American Forces Press Service*

**The Afghan National Army is growing, and the police force is nearly through its rank and pay reforms, helping eventually to put in place competent, professional security forces across the country, a senior commander there said today.**

“Once the people realize what a professional, non-corrupt police force looks like, they want some of that,” said Army Brig. Gen. Andrew Twomey, deputy commander of Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, based at Camp Eggers in Kabul.

His organization’s mission is to train, advise and develop the Afghan security forces, both police and army.

The agency’s first challenge was, historically, the Afghan people do not have experience with a competent, professional police force, Twomey said. Before, there were armed militias, tribal groups or, during the Soviet occupation, an arm of an occupying force oppressing the people, he said.

“The whole concept of how people think policemen should behave is warped by those decades,” Twomey said.

After the defeat of the Taliban, a large number of people were brought into the police simply by the Afghan government converting the militias.

“[They] were essentially told, ‘You are no longer a militia any more. Here’s a police uniform. Here’s a weapon. You’re now a policeman,’” Twomey said. “That program did provide some local security, but it did not give them the same sort of ethics and norms and professional behavior that we would want out of a police force.”

Also, the general said, a long history and culture of corruption had to be addressed in the system. The policemen were underpaid and the structure of the force was not well disciplined.

“There was left over an acceptance of the fact that policemen were supposed to ... get money from individuals. So that led to policemen setting up illegal roadblocks, taxing individuals for passage,” Twomey said.

He said that although there were once 75,000 policemen

on the books, they were neither reliable nor trustworthy.

The first step was to reform the pay system, followed by rank reform that matched both the police force and army. In many instances, because of an over-inflated rank system, some would be reduced in rank, but raised in pay. Once the forces start getting paid a livable wage, about \$100 monthly for patrolmen, then standards can be enforced, Twomey said.

“Now you’re getting paid a living wage. Now we’re going to hold you to a standard. And we’re not going to tolerate corrupt behavior,” Twomey said.

In many districts, the policemen weren’t trained, wrong leadership was in place and there were no standards or discipline, Twomey said. To remedy the need for district-wide training, Twomey’s group began building and training special police units -- almost a paramilitary organization -- called the Afghan National Civil Order Police. These battalion-sized organizations are given extra training, extra pay and embedded U.S. forces as supervisors.

With that core of top-notch forces, officials are now going to every district in the country and replacing their local forces temporarily to train them.

It’s a program called “focused district development,” where all local police are removed from a district and taken for eight weeks of training. They are then reinserted in the district with a police mentor team. Each of the police districts in Afghanistan was assessed and prioritized. It will take about five years to train the more than 350 districts.

“The first reaction was ‘Don’t do this. We’re afraid of these new people,’” Twomey said. “Then about two weeks later we started getting phone calls from the leadership saying, ‘We don’t want our old police back. ... We like these new guys.’”

“We’re now into the second cycle, and we think it’s getting a lot of good traction in the public and, as well as, good results on the ground,” he said.

In the army, Twomey said, Afghan units are increasingly taking the lead and are capable of combat. Plans are to build the army to 80,000, or 14 brigades, and a commando brigade. This month, Afghanistan has just under 60,000 soldiers in the force. They will have 70,000 trained by early fall, and plan to have a full complement of 80,000 soldiers by the summer of 2009, Twomey said.

Within the army’s ranks, leaders are starting to see a non-commissioned officer corps take shape, he said. They have built the military education system, to including basic training and NCO development schools. Commissioned officers have a candidate school and a four-year military academy that will graduate its first class this winter, Twomey said.

Twomey’s command now is receiving about 1,000 additional U.S. Marines to help with police training in the South and West of Afghanistan.

“They will provide a tremendous boost to our police training efforts, and we think they’ll set the conditions for developing governance in a very critical part of the country,” Twomey said.

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**COVER:** Air Force Maj. Lichen Purs-  
ley, 62nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance  
Squadron commander, performs  
a pre-flight inspection on an MQ-1  
Predator before a combat mission in Af-  
ghanistan. The unit's primary role is to  
launch and recover Predators support-  
ing Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S.  
Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius  
Lester) See related story on page 8.

**BACK COVER:** Afghan children  
wait to be seen by Navy Lt. Tammy Felk-  
er, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion, Women's  
Health Clinic officer in charge, during a  
Veterinary and Medical Outreach near  
Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa province, April 19.  
(U.S. Army photo by Capt. Elizabeth Case-  
beer) See related story on page 10.

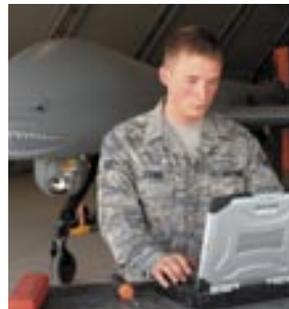
# Freedom Watch

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11

# Commandos initiated through operation

Courtesy Combined Joint Task Force-101 Public Affairs

**Afghan National Army Commando students captured an insurgent and thwarted an insurgent attack, in Kapisa Province, April 21.**

Members of the 207th Commando Kandak performed a number of nighttime air assault missions, resulting in the capture of one insurgent, numerous small weapons caches and Improvised Explosive Device materials.

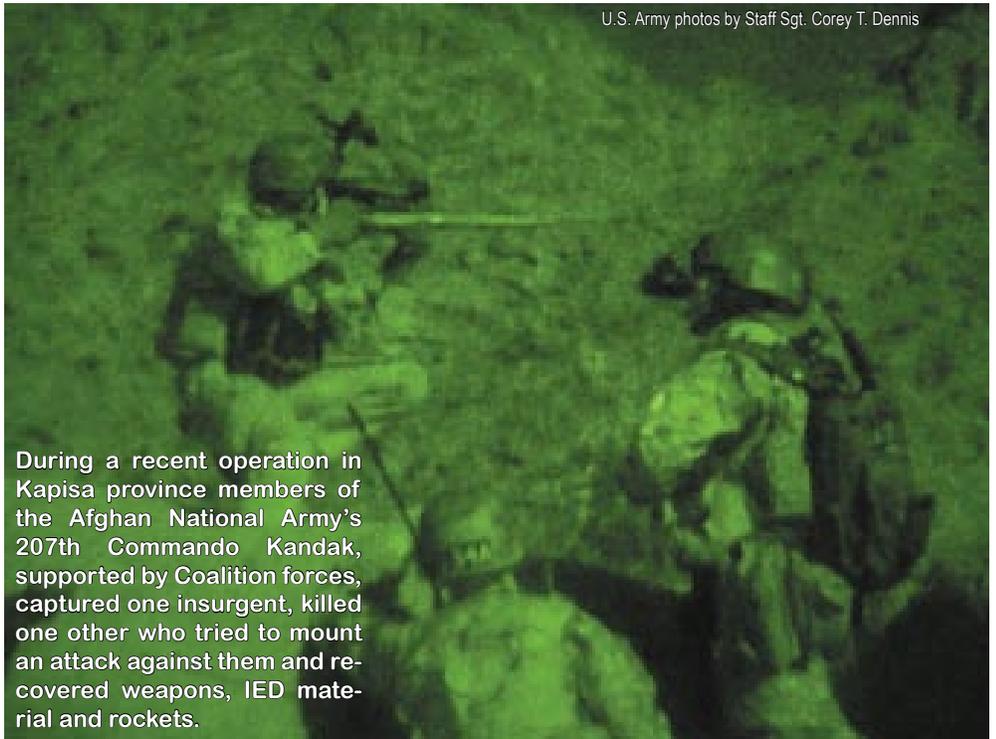
“The Company air assaulted into the target area, occupied blocking positions and cleared the objective utilizing speed, surprise and violence of action,” said the Coalition team leader in charge of the commando training.

Prior to graduation, the commandos trained for, planned and executed their own mission to demonstrate their ability to perform competently in combat.

“There is continual improvement due to the growing capability of the commando training company, the Afghan cadre, as well as the attention that the program receives from key leaders in the Afghan National Army and the Ministry of Defense,” said a U.S. Special Forces commander.

“We do this for the people of Afghanistan, and my Commandos did well during training and working with [Coalition forces],” said the 207th Kandak first sergeant, after the mission.

Next, the commandos will graduate



U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Corey T. Dennis

During a recent operation in Kapisa province members of the Afghan National Army’s 207th Commando Kandak, supported by Coalition forces, captured one insurgent, killed one other who tried to mount an attack against them and recovered weapons, IED material and rockets.

training and perform strategic strikes against insurgents, with the support of Coalition forces.

“The capabilities of the commando force enhance the security of the Afghan people, thus creating the opportunity for stability operations,” said the U.S. Special Forces commander. This will create an atmosphere for other organizations to initiate development projects, such as the opening of schools and government offices.



# Airborne Soldier awarded Bronze Star for valor

Story and photos by  
Army Pfc. Christina Sindera  
RC-East Public Affairs

A Bronze Star with “V” device for valor was awarded to Army Sgt. Ryan P. Inabnet, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 1-91 Cavalry Squadron, at Fire Base Naray, Kunar Province, April 24.

Brig. Gen. Mark Milley, Combined Joint Task Force-101 deputy commanding general of operations, awarded the medal to Inabnet and presented him with a coin for excellence.

Inabnet was recognized for his actions in combat July 27, 2007, when he saved more than a dozen Soldier’s lives during an operation in Kunar Prov-

ince. The Quick Reaction Team he was on was called to reinforce International Security Assistance Forces engaged in combat with insurgents.

“We first set out after receiving word that four ISAF soldiers were injured and two of them were serious,” said Inabnet, a wheeled vehicle mechanic. “Once we arrived, we got the four injured in the vehicles and dropped them off at the MEDEVAC site.”

Shortly afterward, Inabnet provided first aid to a wounded Soldier from his QRT.

“Once we had all the equipment and personnel, we started to head back,” said Inabnet. “That’s when we started taking [rocket propelled grenades] and small-arms fire.”

As the group tried to break contact with the insurgents, several Soldiers were wounded and put into Inabnet’s vehicle.

“My main goal was to get these guys back to the helicopter landing zone so they could survive,” said Inabnet. “I ended up staying up for hours until we got all our guys back inside the [for-

ward operating base]. That day will be with me for a long time. I would like to thank the Lord above and all my brothers who were in that fight with me,” he said.

The Bronze Star is the ninth highest medal and is awarded for heroic, meritorious achievement or service. However, a Bronze Star for valor has a “V” device attached to the ribbon and is only awarded for heroic and brave actions in combat, making it the fourth highest medal that can be awarded.



# '487' more than just paint

Story and photos by James D'Angina  
*455 Air Expeditionary Wing History*

Airmen from the 335th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron at Bagram Air Field are making history daily as the "Chiefs" from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., take the fight to the enemy forces in combat operations throughout Afghanistan.

But one of the squadron's aircraft, F-15E Strike Eagle #89-0487, or "487" for short, carries with it a unique distinction in air combat history, it is the only F-15E in the Air Force inventory to be credited with an air-to-air kill.

The historic fighter deployed in 1991 for Operation Desert Shield/Storm, and has seen multiple deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq supporting Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

The aircraft, delivered to the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB in 1989, was assigned to the 335th EFS Fighter Squadron, a unit with a long and decorated history with more than 370 air-to-air kills to its credit.

One of the most unique air-to-air kills credited to the squadron took place Feb. 14, 1991 during Operation Desert Storm. Air Force Captains Richard T. Bennett, pilot, and Daniel B. Bakke, weapon systems operator, scored the first and only air-to-air kill for an F-15E Strike Eagle.

A Special Forces team made an urgent call to an E-3 Airborne Warning and Con-

trol System Sentry requesting assistance with three Iraqi Mi-24 HIND helicopter gunships in the area. The AWACS contacted Bennett and Bakke who were already airborne leading a flight of F-15Es during a Scud combat air patrol mission.

Bennett brought "487" up to full military power-top speed without the use of afterburners. After breaking through the weather, the crew had to deal with Iraqi anti-aircraft artillery batteries. The crew picked up the three Mi-24 HIND helicopters on their target pod and observed that they were offloading troops at different points in an attempt to surround the Special Forces team.

The Strike Eagle crew decided to take out the lead helicopter with a Guided Bomb Unit-10 while the helicopter was on the ground. If the HIND should take back off, the bomb would at least affect the troops in the immediate area. The crew fired the GBU-10 just as the helicopter picked up into a hover. The weapon systems officer kept lasing the target even though their radar showed the helicopter at 100 knots and gaining altitude.

Bennett felt they had missed the target and began to



The green star on Aircraft #89-0487 represents an air-to-air victory achieved during Operation Desert Storm.

ready an AIM-9 Sidewinder for a second shot. The crew then observed a flash of light; the explosion nearly vaporized the Iraqi helicopter gunship.

The Special Forces team estimated that the helicopter was at least 245 meters off the ground when it disintegrated in mid air. The other Mi-24 gunships fled, giving the Special Forces team a chance to move back to a secure location to be extracted.

Today, "487" is still assigned to the same squadron it made history with in 1991. It's the Chiefs' flagship and still has a small green star adorned on the aircraft's port side representing that moment in the squadron's history. Alongside the prominent green star are current mission markings symbolizing strafing and air strikes flown against enemy forces.

Pilots and weapon system officers from the Chiefs are continuing to make history with the squadron's F-15E Strike Eagles, to include "487," fighting terror and building peace throughout Afghanistan.



# Airmen provide Afghan National Police training

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

Approximately one dozen Afghan National Police, from several districts, gathered in the Processing Coordination Center at the Parwan Provincial ANP Headquarters in the Charikar district to receive training April 22.

Airmen filling in-lieu-of taskings, assigned to the Bagram Police Technical Advisory Team, provided training focused on community policing and conducting field interviews.

“The purpose of this training is to test and assess the level of knowledge they have with community policing and the field interview process,” said Tech. Sgt. Christopher Padron, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of Bagram PTAT.

Padron said one goal of the training was to provide the attendees with a different perspective about interacting with the people.



Tech. Sgt. Christopher Padron and Senior Airman Mark Ostrander stand with members of the Afghan National Police at the Parwan Provincial ANP Headquarters.

“All too often, they have to respond to suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices,” said Padron. “The field interview is not always done because of hostile acts.”

The training covered how to approach a person, the distance between the officer and the subject, known as the reactionary gap, and information gathering.

Abdul Rahim, the training officer for the Salang district ANP, said the information he will take away from the training is how to talk to people when they go out to the villages.

“The ANP is the eye of the people,” said Rahim. “We need to have



U.S. Air Force photos by Master Sgt. Andy Dunaway

Senior Airman Mark Ostrander shakes hands with a young boy during a foot patrol in the Parwan Province April 22.

good habits and good contact with the people.”

Rahim explained he thought the training was helpful and wanted to take what he learned back to his district to teach the younger soldiers.

After the classroom instruction, members of the ANP, Bagram PTAT and Parwan Police Mentoring Team jointly patrolled the bazaar, interacting with local merchants.

“This gives us the opportunity to develop a relationship with the ANP and for each of us to gain a better understanding of what they encounter, as well as, for them to see how we operate,” said Padron.

The Bagram PRT has completed more than \$18 million worth of construction projects, delivered more than 80 tons of humanitarian aid and provided mentorship for provincial and district leaders and the Afghan National Police.



An Afghan National Police officer answers a question during a training class conducted by the Bagram Police Technical Advisory Team, Provincial Reconstruction Team at the Parwan Provincial ANP Headquarters in the Charikar district April 22.

# Predators of the Mount

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

In an environment where the enemy conceals themselves among civilians and mountainous terrain, the 62nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron provides the warfighter real-time intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data to fight the enemy. The weapon of choice: MQ-1 Predator.

The 62nd ERS performs this operation jointly with Airmen at Creech Air Force Base, Nev.

“We are called an LRE, or launch and recovery element, and the (personnel) back in the states are the MCE, or the mission control element,” said Air Force Maj. Lichen Pursley, 62nd ERS commander.

Pursley explained this meant the 62nd ERS is responsible for piloting the unmanned aerial vehicles during take-off and landing on the flightline in Afghanistan. The pilots and sensor operators at Creech AFB remotely

take control of the aircraft once it has reached altitude.

“It takes about 45 minutes to get to altitude,” said Pursley. “During that time, instead of just looking off into space, we are working with the Joint Defense Operation Center here to provide base defense.”

Pursley explained the majority of the work done for the JDOC is performing route scans. The data provides increased reliability of intelligence and real-time definition of the surrounding area.

The 62nd ERS also provides support for the JDOC when they are performing missions in the local areas. Pursley said they recently gathered intelligence on an area where a large cache of rockets were hidden and

watched as a team raided the location and removed the ordnance.

“We can provide raid support where we are talking to the guys on the ground and telling them, ‘Hey, a light just came on, they might hear you coming’ or ‘Someone just



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester

Airman 1st Class Troy Spence, 62nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron crew chief, looks over technical orders on his laptop while performing maintenance on an MQ-1 Predator.



An MQ-1 Predator returns from a combat mission in Afghanistan. The Predator gives planners and commanders a great advantage

# tains

U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester



Airman 1st Class Troy Spence inspects an MQ-1 Predator during routine maintenance in Afghanistan.

left the building' and tell them which direction he is heading," said Pursley.

In addition to providing overhead intelligence, the Predator carries laser-guided AGM-114 Hellfire missiles and can provide close air support when needed.

The Airmen keeping these aircraft ready for whatever objective they are tasked with are the total force maintainers deployed from Creech AFB.

"These aircraft are very reliable; a lot of our maintenance is schedule driven," said Air Force Maj. James Hood, 62nd ERS maintenance officer-in-charge.

Airman 1st Class Troy Spence, 62nd ERS crew chief, explained the bulk of maintenance performed is routine engine tune-ups, overhauls and replacements.

"We do a 360-hour and 720-hour inspection," said Spence.

"That's where we'll pull apart the motor, clean it and replace a few parts."

Spence explained the life of the motors

on the Predator is 1,080 hours.

"At 1,080 (hours) we send it back; those engines are no good to us," said Spence.

Over the last four months, the ERS flew more than 460 combat missions, totaling over 8,500 flying hours, providing commanders and planners real-time "eyes-in-the-sky" information.

Whether the Predator is following an operation or high-value target for a long period of time or executing a strike, the 62nd ERS Airmen provide a force-multiplying capability to ground forces engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom.



by providing real-time "eyes-in-the-sky" information which translates to immediate support to ground forces in harms way.

# CF treat Afghans near Tag Ab during medical outreach

Story and photo by Army Capt. Elizabeth Casebeer  
Task Force Cincinnatus Public Affairs

Several hundred citizens from a village near Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa province, swarmed a makeshift hospital, hosted by Task Force Gladiator servicemembers, April 19, during a village medical outreach.

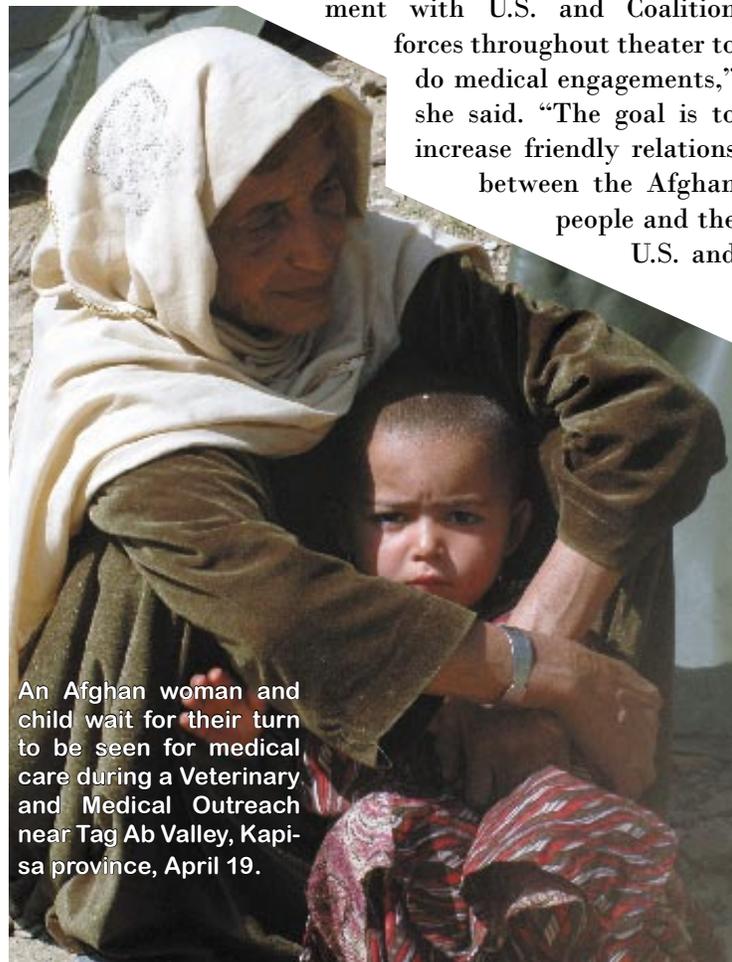
The event's primary goal was to connect Afghans living near Tag Ab to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through humanitarian-aid operations, with the assistance of village elders and Afghan National Police.

Upon arrival at the site, ANP and Coalition forces set up a small tent and made a wall with ponchos to segregate the women's section from the men's.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams run many medical outreaches but few employ female health providers due to the types of missions the PRTs conduct.

"That is one of the reasons Cooperative Medical Assistance, now [called] Task Force MED Medical Augmentation Team, was created," said Navy Lt. Tammy Felker, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion, Women's Health Clinic officer in charge.

"We are an agile unit that can augment with U.S. and Coalition forces throughout theater to do medical engagements," she said. "The goal is to increase friendly relations between the Afghan people and the U.S. and



An Afghan woman and child wait for their turn to be seen for medical care during a Veterinary and Medical Outreach near Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa province, April 19.

Coalition forces."

After the makeshift hospital was set up, a few women and children began to trickle in. But before long, there was a long line of women and girls waiting to be seen at the clinic.

"When twenty plus people are waiting for care, our focus is to try to treat them all," said Felker. "The [ultimate] goal is to let them know we care."

Felker and other providers were only able to treat six people at a time due to the size of the work area but provided medical care to nearly 160 women and children.

The patients all came on foot, and all the adult women, save the elderly, arrived in Chadri, an Afghan style of Burqa.

The children received doses of de-worming medication and multi vitamins. The anti-worm tonic has a similar consistency to Pepto-Bismol but is an off-white color, and helps protect children from undercooked meat.

According to Felker, eating undercooked meat, handling livestock and other animals, and the lack of water and soap, greatly contribute to the chances of contracting worms. The de-worming medication is designed to eradicate worms inside the body, but it is not a foolproof measure, as it is easy to contract the worms again.

In addition to any medications needed for an individual, each patient, even those not displaying any symptoms, received a small bottle of lotion and chapstick. Children also received a toy, until the supply was depleted.

Chapstick is one of the most sought-after items, said Army Pfc. Rebecca Ploharz, Task Force Med medic. The elements and high wind in the mountains cause painful chapping and chapstick alleviates that problem.

There are some patients who come in with serious medical issues. Felker was able to diagnose and treat some of them. One little girl came in with Leishmaniasis on her face. Leishmaniasis is a disease caused by infected sand fleas.

Some of the more pressing issues were too complicated for a field hospital and doctors gave patients referrals to hospitals.

The most common problems were female-exclusive, including problems with previous and current pregnancies and back pain.

"The women's and children clinic is so important because, often times, it is the first time many of the women and children are seeing a medical provider," said Felker, who hopes Afghanistan's medical system will continue to grow.

Felker said she takes a special pride in assisting the locals, but her ultimate wish is that more female Afghan doctors will be available throughout the country.

"It is important that the children of Afghanistan see women in professional roles," she said.

# More than a filling...

Story and photo by  
Marine Cpl. Alex C. Guerra  
24th MEU Public Affairs

With a patient list numbering thousands and only one dental officer, the Role 3 Dental Clinic in Kandahar province was overwhelmed.

One of the two International Security Assistance Force dentists left there abruptly for a family emergency, leaving one dental officer to care for more than 9,000 patients and no idea where to start.

The dental clinic needed help, and without hesitation, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Combat Logistics Battalion 24 commanding officer offered his two dental officers and staff.

"The clinic was hurting for dentists," said Marine Lt. Col. Ricky F. Brown, the logistics battalion's commander. "The MEU stepped up and offered to help out our allies."

The two Navy dental officers were excited at the opportunity to lend a helping hand.

"When the hospital came and asked for our help, we jumped at the opportunity to see more patients," said Navy Lt. Gregory C. Hohl, dental officer-in-charge, CLB-24, 24th MEU.

"We want to be here," said Navy Lt. Adam M. Firestone, dental officer, CLB-24, 24th MEU. "How many dentists can say they treated patients from all the different countries you can imagine?"

Hohl and Firestone's presence provided much needed relief to the standing medical forces.

"Having the MEU here really helped fill the void," said Capt. Luis A. DaSilva, dental clinic officer-in-charge, Health Services Support, Canadian Army. "The (24th MEU) commanding officer was more than accommodating. It's great to have them along."

Furnished with a portable dental system, allowing dentists to perform almost any definitive treatment, both officers were more than prepared to take on such an abundant number of patients.



"With the MEU (and 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment), we were expected to care for 3,500 Marines and Sailors," said Hohl, an Easton, Pa. native. "Now we provide care for nationalities from different countries. They can receive the same treatment you and I get back at home, just in a different environment."

The officers easily transitioned from working with Marines to working side by side with Coalition members.

"It's great working with the Americans, they just slotted right in," said DaSilva, an Edmonton, Alberta native. "They were cooperative and friendly when we asked for assistance."

Although the officers and staff were able to work hand-in-hand with each other, adjusting to the patients had its challenges.

"We see different patients everyday who don't speak English, and we have to communicate through an interpreter, who speaks only a little English himself, to translate," said Firestone, a Lafayette, Ind., native. "Usually, I have them point to what tooth hurts just to double check."

Ensuring proper oral hygiene while deployed does have unique challenges.

"Back at home, I have the luxuries of various equipment, over here, we have to make do with what we have," said Firestone. "I no longer have an electric chair to work in, now I'm cleaning teeth from a lawn chair."

"We learned to make due and adapt," said Hohl. "It's great working here. We can still do pretty much anything we

need to."

Nonetheless, the problems and obstacles both officers initially faced now seem small in comparison to the rewards they reap from their work.

"Helping our allies is a great thing," said Hohl. "We're looking to help mentor local Afghans in the near future. This part of the world doesn't receive much dental care, but having two dentists here really helps us to expand humanitarian assistance."

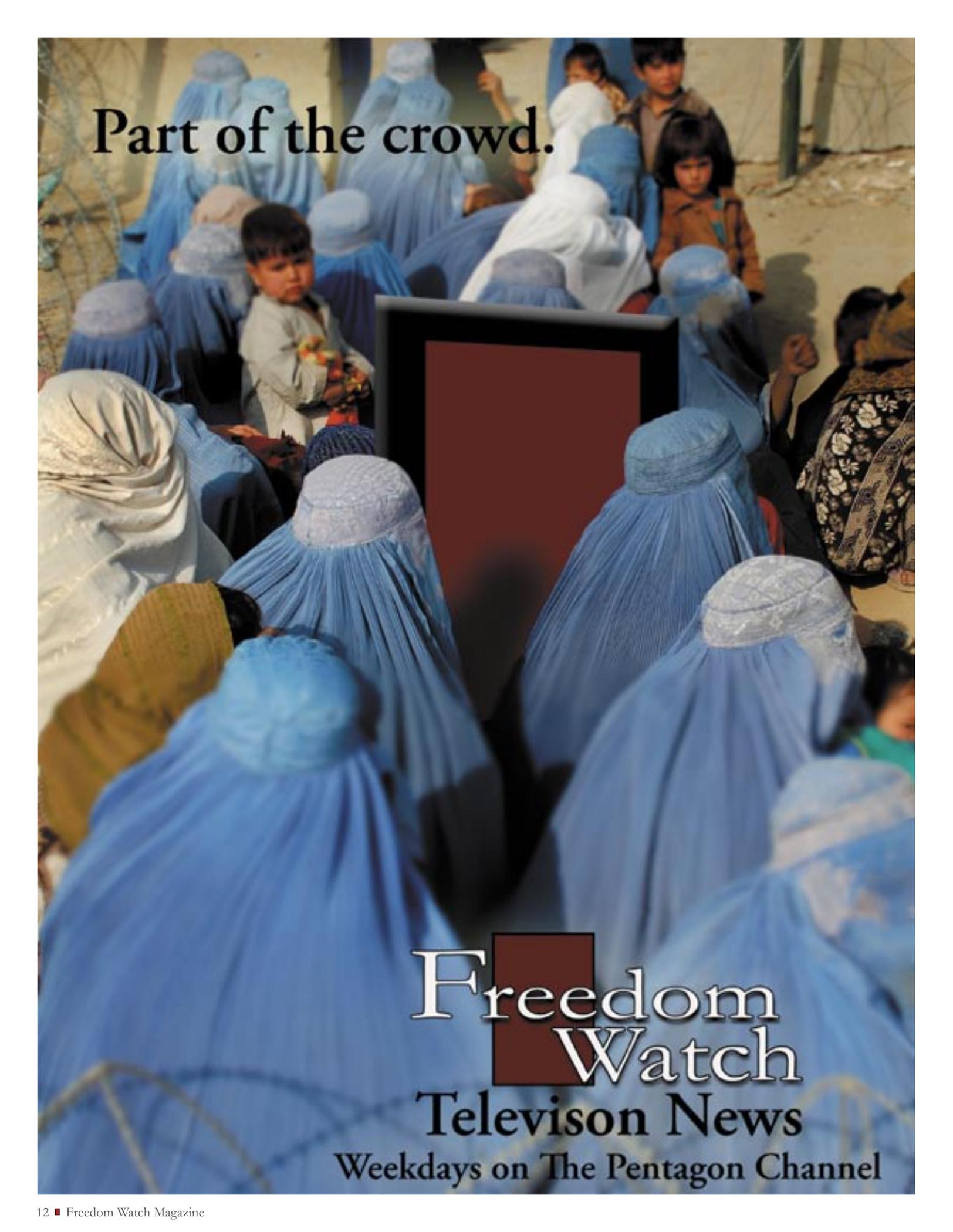
"The people here are very thankful for our work," said Firestone. "Whenever I call my wife (who is also a dentist) about the patients we've seen, mine are always way more interesting."

Despite the heavy workload and long hours, the officers remain humble about their role for NATO.

"I'm more thankful that Role 3 is here, and having us helps them with their work load," said Firestone. "I read books about dentistry in the wild west; dentists going to different towns, set up shop on a porch and start pulling teeth. Being here I feel like that. You can drop me anywhere and I can start doing my thing."

Both dentists are thankful to fill in and know that their work contributes to the mission at hand.

"Our goal is to make sure that not one Marine gets pulled off the line, or medically evacuated because of dental readiness," said Hohl. "We are here to help everyone, to include our allies and local population, by making sure that our Marines are healthy and stay in the fight."

A photograph showing a group of people, primarily women in blue burqas and children, gathered around a television set. The scene is outdoors in a dusty, possibly urban or refugee camp environment. The television screen is dark, and the people appear to be watching or interacting with it. The text 'Part of the crowd.' is overlaid in the upper left corner.

Part of the crowd.

Freedom  
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# Bagram PRT hosts women's affairs meeting

By Air Force Capt. Toni Tones  
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

**E**ducation, employment and security were the top themes addressed by eight influential Afghan women during a women's affair seminar, hosted by the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Business owners, government leaders, educators, multi-media and non-governmental organization representatives from Kabul, Kapisa and Parwan provinces met with Suzie Schwartz, wife of Gen. Norton Schwartz, U.S. Transportation Command commander, and openly discussed women's affairs in Afghanistan.

"Kate," a Kabul multi-media representative, who lived in the U.S. and recently returned to Afghanistan, stated that health is the primary concern with education being secondary.

"There are 85,000 widows trying to do everything for their families, but there is no money," said Kate. "What can they do if they can't feed themselves and their children?"

"Mary," another Kabul multi-media representative, who has lived in Afghanistan her entire life, disagreed stating security is the primary concern for Afghan women.

"Where there's no security, there is no education, no health and no employment," said Mary. "The Afghan women are used by politicians to get foreign aid money, but our conditions have not improved."

"Jan," an up-and-coming non-governmental organization representative echoes both women's comments, but says all three are equally important and must be addressed.

"It's circular--education, employment and security--each problem feeds itself," said Jan.

"If you have no work, you can't get medicine. If you have no education, you can't get work. Without security, you can't have anything. We (Afghanistan) have bad neighbors, and if the United States leaves, we won't have any security."

In 2001, the Taliban were removed from power as a result of U.S.-led operations.

"Three issues resulted from the Taliban era – terrorism, narcotics and

women's rights," said Mary. "Since then, measures have been taken to decrease terrorism and narcotics, but very little change has occurred for women's rights."

"Lots of promises were made--to include some by the U.S.," added "Sally," a refugee and women's issues advocate who lived in the United States. "Among them was the promise

to free Afghan women....that's a big statement. There was an expectation of political and social liberation. Yes, we now have representation in parliament and other governmental agencies, but there's been little change in the economic and education arenas. There needs to be a dramatic change in agenda by the international community."

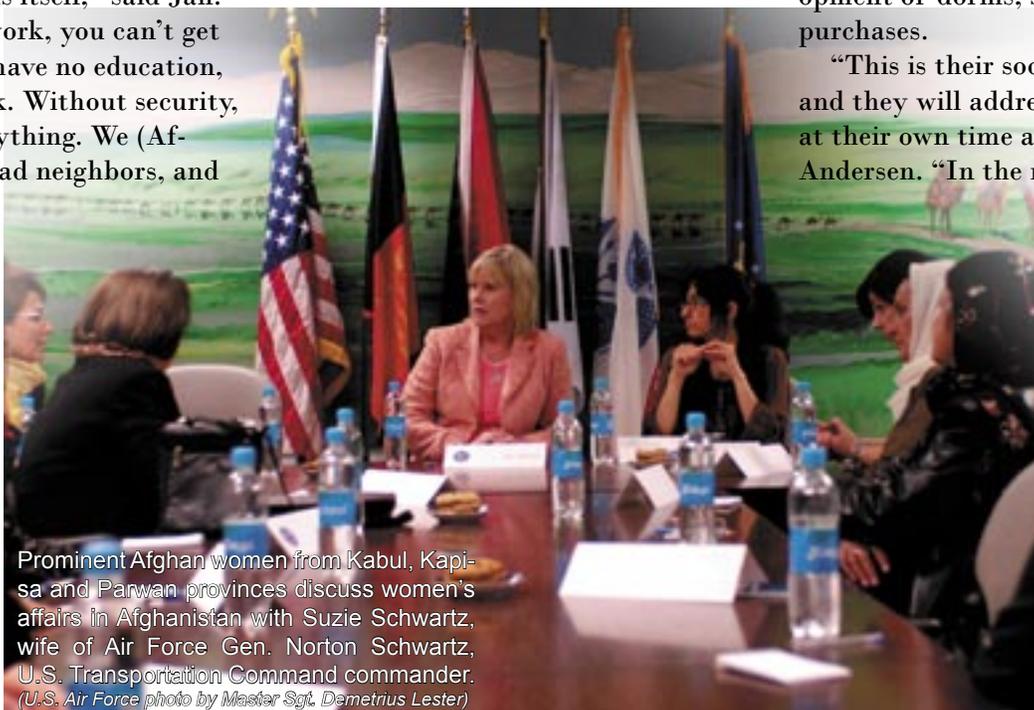
Although Afghanistan is a male-dominated society, the women are tired of the conflict and want to see change, said Army Lt. Col. Bill Andersen, Bagram PRT commander.

"I spoke to the governors of Parwan and Kapisa provinces about my plans to be personally involved in women's affairs and it seemed to be well accepted," said Andersen. "My team will ensure female contractors have the opportunity compete for projects, female entrepreneurs have access to small business opportunities and females have the opportunity to get an education through the development of dorms, schools and book purchases.

"This is their society and culture, and they will address these issues at their own time and pace," added Andersen. "In the meantime, we are

here to help facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment for all Afghans."

*Editor's Note: Names of the Afghan women have been changed to protect their identity.*



Prominent Afghan women from Kabul, Kapisa and Parwan provinces discuss women's affairs in Afghanistan with Suzie Schwartz, wife of Air Force Gen. Norton Schwartz, U.S. Transportation Command commander. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

## Photos From the Field

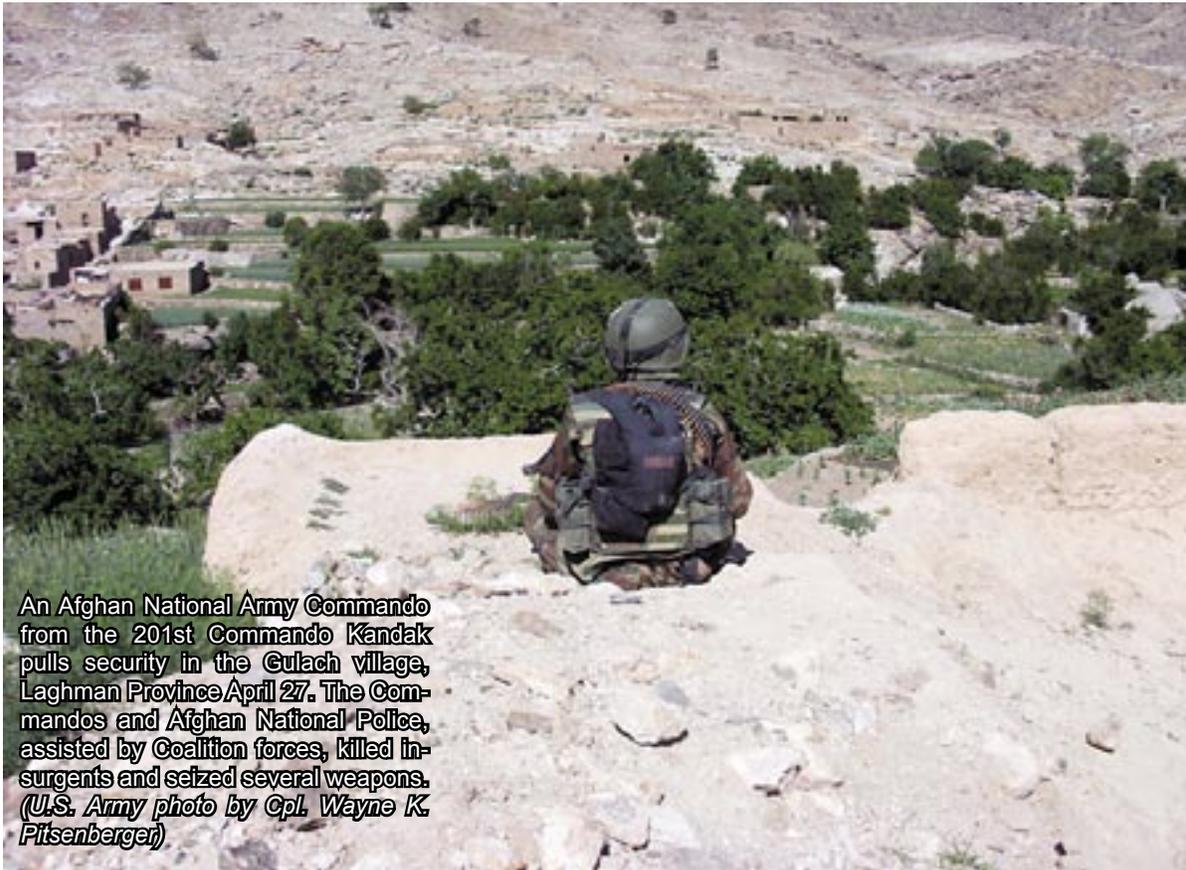


The Department of the Navy Superior Public Service Award (DON SPSA) is presented to Montel Williams March 19 in New York for his continuous support and recognition of service members and their families throughout his 17 years on television. Rear Adm. (sel) Kenneth J. Braithwaite, Director, Joint Public Affairs Support Element-Reserve, presented the award to Williams on behalf of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead during the taping of the series finale. The Superior Public Service Award is the second highest award presented to civilians by the Department of the Navy. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Mark Duehmig)



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An Afghan National Army Commando from the 201st Commando Kandak pulls security in the Gulach village, Laghman Province April 27. The Commandos and Afghan National Police, assisted by Coalition forces, killed insurgents and seized several weapons. (U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Wayne K. Pitsenberger)



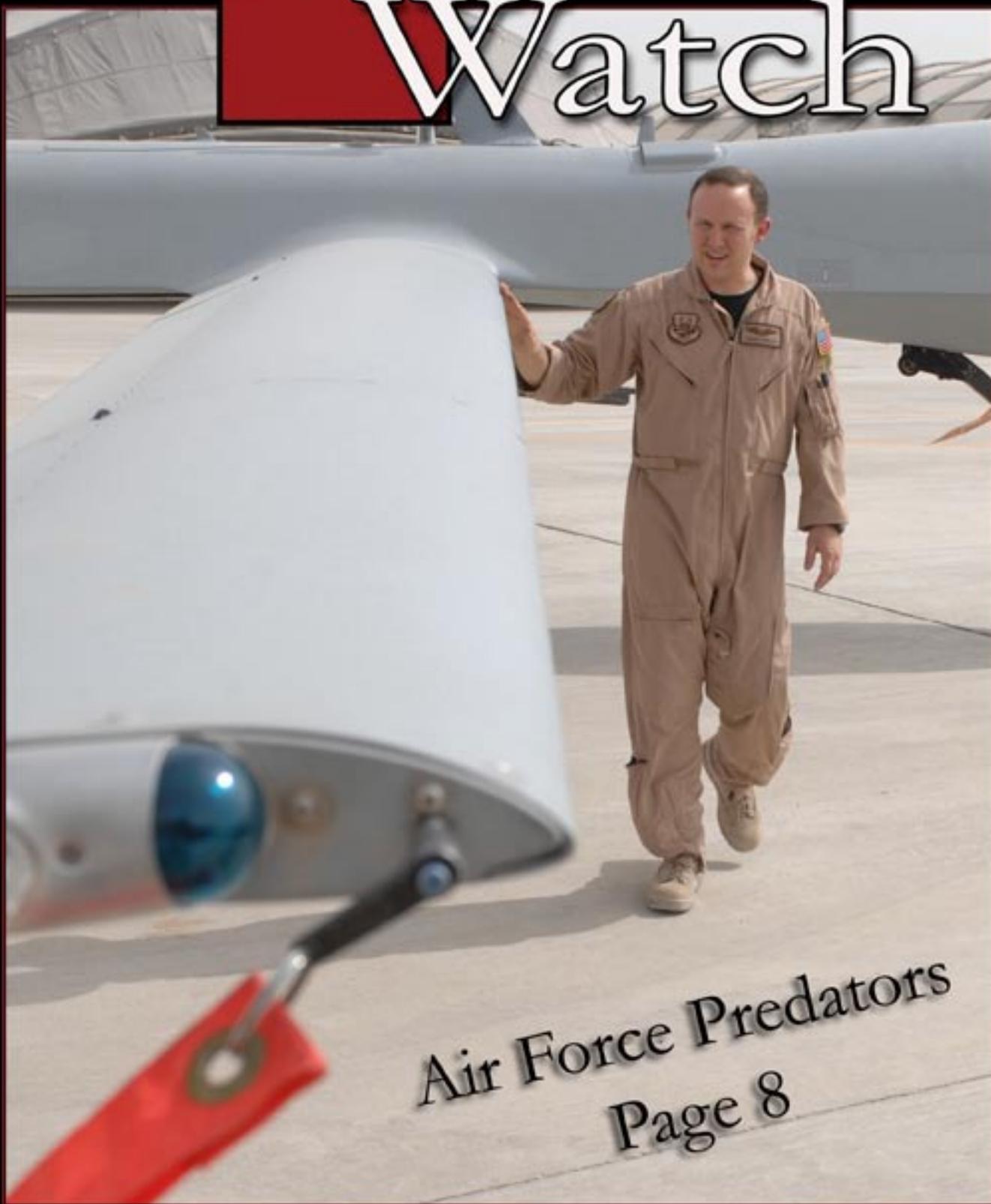
Soldiers from the 1st ABP, Embedded Training Team, Task Force Phoenix conduct a live fire training exercise for Afghan soldiers in the Konar Province, Afghanistan on Feb. 12. The Exercise marked the graduation of this class of ANA. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Derek Niccolson)



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Bird of Prey



Open Wide