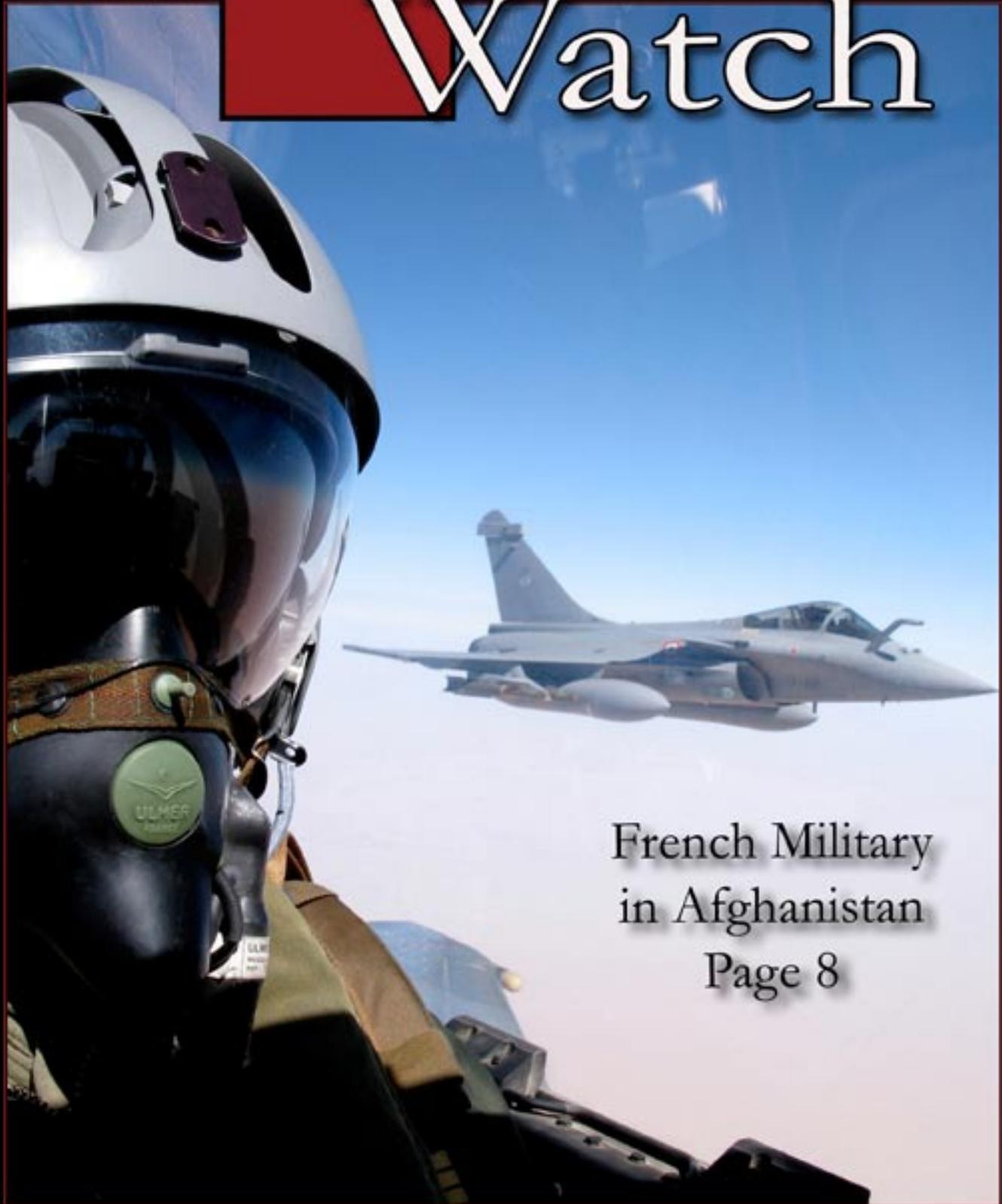


June 2, 2008

Freedom AFGHANISTAN Watch



French Military
in Afghanistan

Page 8

Bush tells Karzai U.S. will help at Paris donor conference

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

President Bush praised Afghan President Hamid Karzai following meetings at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, May 17.

Bush and Karzai held a short media opportunity following the meeting and Bush backed up Karzai's strategy for the way forward in Afghanistan. The president is in the midst of a six-day trip to the Middle East that has taken him to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Bush said he supports Karzai's strategy for the Paris Donor Conference for Afghanistan next month. Afghan officials said

they need \$50 billion to rebuild a nation totally shattered by 30 years of struggle against the Soviet occupation and an internal civil war. Bush said Karzai has taken on "a very tough assignment, which is helping your young democracy survive amidst the threats from the radicals and extremists."

Karzai's strategy stresses the agricultural reality of his nation, Bush said. "His strategy is a smart strategy, and part of his strategy is ... for the world to help Afghanistan's agricultural community grow and prosper, so that they can not only become self-sufficient in (providing their own) food, but become net exporters of crops that people need in order to be able to eat and survive," Bush said.

Bush encouraged the world to respond to Afghanistan's plea, and said the United States will certainly help.

Karzai thanked Bush for his support and the American people for their sacrifices to free Afghanistan.

Karzai, who survived another Taliban assassination attempt in April, said there are unmistakable signs of progress in his country. "For the first time, after 30 years, were able to give diplomas to the graduates of Afghanistan's universities, the medical colleges, economics, law and all that," he said. "That would have not been possible without your help and the help of the rest of the world."

The Afghan president thanked Bush for support at the Paris conference. Hopes are that if Afghans can grow cash crops to feed themselves and others, they will not have to grow opium poppies.

Karzai also said he will be asking at the conference for help on energy resources and irrigation projects.



Courtesy photo

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COVER: Since October 2001, France
has been providing air support to Op-
eration Enduring Freedom and Interna-
tional Security Assistsnce Force opera-
tions. This support has been applied to
the fields of support of ground troops,
of military intelligence, transport and
refuelling. As of mid-March, these air
assets were reinforced by 3 Rafale and
3 Mirage deployed to Kandahar Air
Field. (Courtesy photo) See related story
on page 8.

BACK COVER: Air Force Master
Sgt. Demetrius Lester shakes hands
with some Afghan children. (Courtesy
photo)

Freedom Watch

June 2, 2008

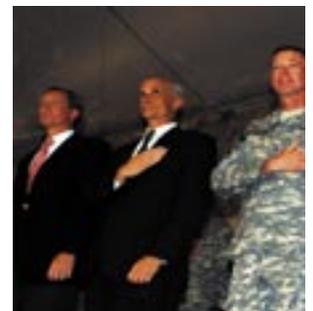
- 4** **Working together, saving lives**
*ISAF, Afghan medics provide medical care
to suicide bombing victims*
- 5** **Search and seizure**
Afghan National Security Forces find weapons cache
- 7** **Finding solutions, solving problems**
*Mentorship, partnership theme at Afghan National Army
Sergeant Major of the Army seminar*
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- 10** **Welcome aboard**
44 servicemembers earn U.S. citizenship on Memorial Day
- 11** **Hungry?**
The food here is simply “Mmm, Mmm, good!”
- 12** **As big as the Boston Marathon...maybe**
Servicemembers ‘trot’ for GWOT



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ISAF, Afghan medics provide medical care to suicide bombing victims



Story and photo courtesy Combined Joint Task Force-101

In the wake of a suicide bomb attack in Delaram, Farah province May 15, International Security Assistance Force and Afghan medics worked together to urgently deliver life saving medical care to the casualties.

Bost civilian hospital in Lashkar Gah, Helmand province, was on standby to receive casualties. Triage teams at the site of the attack allocated the six most severely injured cases to Bost, all requiring surgical treatment. Because time is of the essence in these terrible situations, ISAF offered helicopters to help Afghan authorities quickly evacuate the casualties.

Three local ambulances and their emergency medical teams waited at the helicopter landing site to take the casualties to the hospital. The ISAF forces at Lashkar Gah mobilized their medical team along with 10 field med-

ics from patrol units, and prepared to provide emergency trauma care. Additional troops were made available to assist as necessary.

As the first Chinook helicopter approached, a smoke signal was deployed to show the landing site. Soldiers and Afghan medics worked together to get the casualties loaded into the helicopters within five minutes of landing, for the 15-minute flight to Bost Hospital.

One severely injured casualty needed urgent stabilization before he could be transferred. ISAF and Afghan medics worked together for forty minutes to stabilize him at the facilities at Lashkar Gah before declaring him fit for transfer by local ambulance.

Army Maj. Carrick Richards, head of the Lashkar Gah medical facility, said, "We have well rehearsed emergency procedures to deal with this kind of incident and today showed

how important those drills are. Speed can be lifesaving, and all the teams worked together professionally to get these victims treated as quickly as possible."

Army Sgt. Chantelle Taylor, responsible for organizing the casualty evacuation at Lashkar Gah, had only great remarks towards her Afghan colleagues. "The Afghan medics are very adaptable and are great to work with," she said.

The strong professional ISAF-Afghan relationship has paid off once again. ISAF military spokesman, Army Lt. Col. Robin Matthews said, "Attacks such as this underline how little regard the insurgents have for Afghan lives, and we utterly condemn the targeting of civilians. Coalition forces are working with the Afghan government to bring security to the people, and today's events demonstrate how important our mission here is."

Afghan National Security Forces troops seize weapons cache in Helmand province

Story and photo courtesy Combined Joint Task Force-101

Afghan National Army and police seized more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition and nearly 50 rocket propelled grenades in a planned operation last week.

The operation in Gereshk District was planned and conducted by Afghan National Security Forces, who are being mentored by British troops to develop their capability to conduct independent operations. ANSF mounted a search operation of a house meters from the Afghan National Police compound. British personnel were on standby for support, if needed.

The search of the compound uncovered a cache of 100,000 rounds of ammunition, 47 rocket propelled grenades and 47 rockets. They also found a number of ANP uniforms, which have been used in the past by insurgents to gain access to secure areas.

The success of this operation, once again,

demonstrates the growing capacity of ANSF to plan and execute their own security operations.

“Our mentoring teams are working hard with the Afghan army and police, and operations such as this demonstrate the real progress that they are making,” said Lt. Col. Robin Matthews, British military spokesperson in Helmand province. “This was a professionally planned and executed search and seizure.”

“They have seized a significant amount of ammunition which will have undoubtedly dented the insurgents’ capabilities,” he said. “It’s a very positive sign that ANSF are taking the lead in operations such as this, and demonstrates how much the insurgents are weakened.”



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

Provincial Reconstruction Team members strive to improve Afghan lives

Story and photos by Spc. Paul David Ondik
4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

It may be overlooked and might be far from the mind of the trooper on the line watching his sector.

'It' is the work of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams – Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors – responsible for working with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, to improve the quality of life of Afghan citizens.

Every day, PRTs roll out of bases in Afghanistan with mixed bags of services and skill sets, binded by the necessity of their mission.

"Many would think it would be difficult to coordinate, but since we have unity of effort and a common interest in the welfare of the Afghan people, it isn't," said Army Capt. John Madia, Task Force Currahee fire support officer.

Madia is busy with a wide-array of duties here. However, by his light-hearted demeanor, it would be hard to guess he's working far from his natural element. More often than not, this is the case for troops working in PRTs.

Madia, a West Point graduate and artilleryman, has deployed before. In Iraq he was an artillery platoon leader, yet his platoon fired very little artillery. Instead, they went out on patrol daily, initiating one-on-one contact with citizens who came to know them the way people in a neighborhood get

to know a local police officer patrolling their beat.

Madia became famous for the effect he had on the local children.

the locals on the streets.

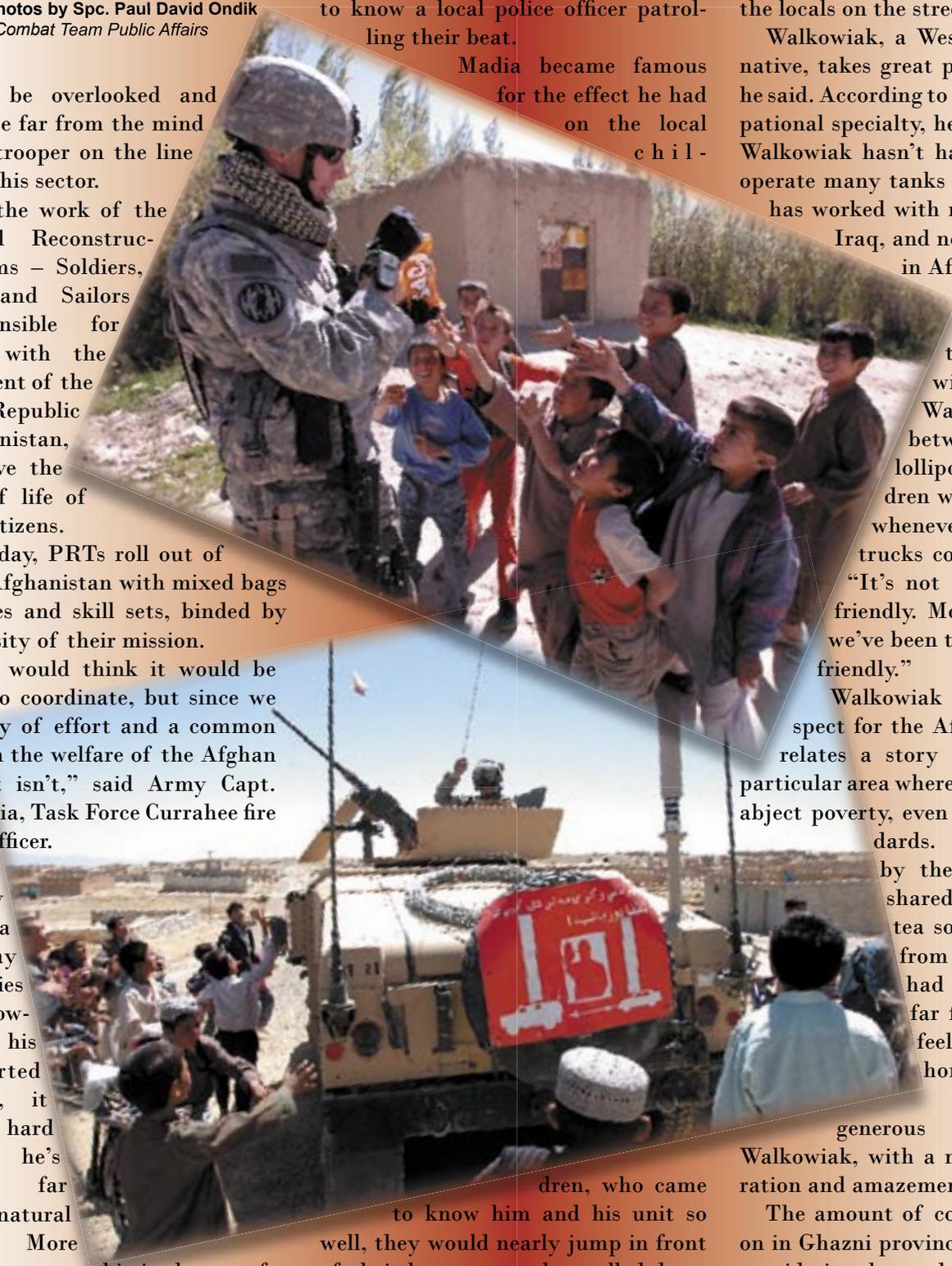
Walkowiak, a West Pittstown, Pa. native, takes great pride in his work, he said. According to his military occupational specialty, he's a tanker. Still, Walkowiak hasn't had the chance to operate many tanks here. Instead, he has worked with military police in Iraq, and now with the PRT in Afghanistan.

"It's good to see the changes that take place with the PRT," Walkowiak said, in between handing out lollipops to the children who come running whenever the team's trucks come within sight. "It's not bad here, pretty friendly. Most of the places we've been to it's been pretty friendly."

Walkowiak has a lot of respect for the Afghan people. He relates a story about visiting a particular area where the people live in abject poverty, even by Afghan standards. He was amazed by the way the locals shared their food and tea so liberally, taking from what little they had to make a man far from his country feel a little more at home.

"They're a very generous people," said Walkowiak, with a mixture of admiration and amazement.

The amount of construction going on in Ghazni province is phenomenal, considering that under Taliban rule the area was considered one of the most underdeveloped areas of the country. The PRT is responsible for helping guide much of this construction. From roads to bridges, and schoolhouses to clinics, the Ghazni PRT works in concert with the Afghan government in an effort to aid in the area's success.



children, who came to know him and his unit so well, they would nearly jump in front of their humvees as they rolled down the east Baghdad alleyways.

Now, in the Ghazni and Wardak provinces of Afghanistan, he has the potential to have a long-lasting effect on another impoverished population.

To generate the effect he desires, Madia relies on Soldiers like Army Sgt. Al Walkowiak, a Pennsylvania National Guardsman, to interact with

Mentorship, partnership theme at Afghan National Army Sergeant Major of the Army Seminar

Story and photo by Army Pfc. Mary Gonzalez
CJTF-101 Public Affairs

Partnership, mentorship and fellowship between military forces were the themes of the third-annual Sergeant Major of the Army Seminar.

The seminar was hosted by the Sergeant Major of the Afghan National Army, Roshan Safi, and sponsored by Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, at Kabul Military Training Compound, May 19-21.

During the seminar, key non-commissioned officers belonging to the ANA, CSTC-A, Coalition forces and International Allied Security Forces gathered to discuss training, housing, pay and the relationship between the ANA and its partner forces.

“This seminar is introducing different issues that some sergeants major aren’t aware of or familiar with, such as new training plans, new types of weapons systems and the new humvees they are about to receive,” said Sgt. Maj. Richard N. Williams, Combined Joint Task Force-101 operations sergeant major.

There are also new incentive programs in the ANA, to include retirement benefits for their officers, said Command Sgt. Maj. Vincent Camacho, CJTF-101 and Regional Command-East command sergeant major. A similar program for NCOs is something he hopes will come about to aid in enlisted retention.

On the second day of the seminar, NCOs attended classes with their mentors, who displayed their knowledge of their new weaponry, such as M-16 rifles and M-240 machine guns.

“Their soldiers are very well prepared on every class,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Donald J. Cooper, of Regional Command-Kabul. “It might as well have been someone from one of our academies. They were on-point and very knowl-

edgeable of everything, from the weight of the weapon to exactly how it works.”

Mentors took great pride in the achievements that their ANA students made as individuals and as a complete fighting force.

“Being a mentor is a really interesting job,” said German Command Sgt. Maj. Andreas Dault. “It was the best decision I made to be a mentor to one of the command sergeants majors. My counterpart has a lot of experience and does what he can to help in the development of the unit.”

Dault said that while progress has been made, the seminar helped to find solutions to issues by bringing everyone together.

“I’ve only been here two months and already I have seen a lot of increasing development, but our small work groups today helped tie everything together,” Dault said. “We are improving the knowledge of safety and education, also improving the rate of literacy among the ANA. Their literacy program is ongoing and increasing.”

Though the ANA is quite young, several U.S. sergeants majors noted how far their NCOs have come. They credited not only their mentorship with CSTC-A and partnership with ISAF RC-E, but their own drive as Soldiers.

“As I look around this country and am able to view the Afghan army, there is not a lack of enthusiasm and there is not a lack of soldiers willing to get out there to protect this country and secure themselves,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur L. Coleman Jr., CSTC-A.

Many believe their capability is developing very fast.

“For their army to be all of five years old, they are moving in the right direction very quickly,” Williams said. “They are doing exactly what needs to be done in order to take the fight to the enemy. They are very well disciplined, interested in learning and want to learn.”



Sergeant Major of the Afghan National Army, Roshan Safi, speaks to fellow sergeants major about issues such as training and the mentorship and partnership between the ANA, Coalition forces, International Security Allied Force and Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan at the ANA Sergeant Major of the Army Seminar at Kabul Military Training Compound, Kabul, Afghanistan, May 19-21.

French military deployment in Afghanistan

Story by French Lt. Col. Bruno Pithois
French liaison officer

Almost 2,200 French soldiers are involved in the operations linked to the Afghan theatre. They work in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Indian Ocean. 1,800 French soldiers take part in the International Security and Assistance Force of NATO, and 400 participate in Operation Enduring Freedom.

The French battalion of Kabul is currently composed of 900 soldiers. The battalion's mission mainly consists of the supervision of areas in the northern districts of the city and the plains of Shamali and Deh Sabz.

This mission splits in several sections:

- The help brought to Afghan security forces for the security of the northwest part of the city.
- The help brought to Afghan security forces for the security of the northern section of ISAF's area of responsibility, in particular around the strategic Kabul-Bagram zone (plains of Shamali and Deh Sabz).
- The security of the force's settlement.

The battalion also contributes to the cleaning of the outskirts of Kabul by collecting and destroying ammunition, shells and mines which constitute a real danger for the population. Thus, every year, 45 tons of ammunition are destroyed by French sappers.

France deployed a field medical group (GMC, groupe médical de campagne) into the Warehouse military camp. This is composed of hospital doctors (surgeons, anesthetists, chemists, ophthalmologists, dentists) and medical teams (emergency doctors). Three operating blocks are at its disposal (scanner, equipment for medical tests, laboratory).

The RCC also has a medical evacuation capacity with the support of two Air Force Caracal EC 725's (UH).

France does its best to permit to the Afghan national

Army's power to grow. 280 French soldiers, officers and of Special Forces, or integrated into about 20 percent of the French strength. Plans of action: Epidote, the Commando

Since February 2003, Epidote operates with 100 French officers. Composed of 40 soldiers, it takes

- The counseling during the initial training (under the command of a French officer (commander) and of general staff's training

- The specialized formation, taught by French instructors (DIO Détachement d'Instruction Opérationnelle, 3 - 4 training courses per year) and administrative

More than 5,000 Afghan officers have been trained during this operation.

In 2002, soldiers of Epidote had trained 10 Afghan battalions (instruction of officers, of sergeants and of both light brigades of the Kabul and Kandahar (Kaboul).

The objective of the participation of French soldiers in six Afghan Special Forces battalions is to train them and American instructors.

By the side of American instructors, French Special Forces have first trained about 100 Afghan Special Forces. The training of Kandaks is organized in 10-month courses.

Each of these sessions lasts 10 months.

The fourth Afghan Special Forces Battalion is currently in Operational mentoring.

French teams have been deployed in the operational support and advise in the field.

French teams have been

deployed into the core

of the Kabul

OL

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Afghanistan

ers take charge of the training of Afghan te Afghan military units. They represent deployed in Afghanistan, through three School and the OMLT.

on has been specialized in the training of care of:

ning of officers (platoon leader, unit com-

y the operational instruction detachment ionnelle) in the fields of intelligence (from nistration for Afghan officers.

been trained since the beginning of the

trained three of the six first infantry bat- non-commissioned officers and soldiers) oul Central Corps (CCK, Corps Central de

ation in the Commando School is to train alions (kandak) with the help of Afghan

structors, French instructors of the Special t a hundred Afghan officers. The trained on instruction sessions of about three sions enables to train 700 Afghan soldiers. al Forces battalion graduated on May 3.

g and liaison teams (OMLT) are embed- nits of the Afghan National Army, which all their missions. Since August 2006, en attached to the 201st Corps, embed- ps headquarters, into its first brigade and adaks (battalions), which make it up. The MT's mission consists of:

advising the Afghan military in order to

enhance training and drill;

- advising the Afghan military on the planning and conduct of operations on the ground, and implementing, to their advantage, the Coalition's air support when the conditions require it;

- favoring links between ANA and ISAF in order to conduct coordinated ac- tions.

The French troops of the 27th Mountain Infantry Brigade are presently arming four OMLTs which are inserted into infantry kandaks, one for an engineers and artillery kandak, and one for a logistical kandak.

France will also deploy one more OMLT in Afghanistan in the next six months. This new team will be attached to the Dutch contingent which is de- ployed in the Uruzgan province in Regional Command-South.

Since October 2001, France has been providing air support to Operation Enduring Freedom and ISAF operations. This support has been applied to the fields in support of ground troops, military intelligence, transport and refuelling.

From mid-March, these air assets were reinforced by aircraft deployed to Kan- dahar Air Field.

The mission of the Navy component of Operation Enduring Freedom (TF 150 and TF 57) consists of controlling the North Indian Ocean's aero maritime space (Red Sea, Arabian Sea), in preventing terrorists from Afghanistan from moving to the Arabian peninsula or the Horn of Africa, in policing illicit traffic (arms, drugs), piracy and robbery and finally in protecting the maritime oil facilities.

The anti-submarine frigate Guépratte and dispatch boat Aviso PM L'Her are in- tegrated into the Task Force 150. France is also involved in the Task Force 57 with its Djibouti-based Atlantique 2 aircraft.

At the April 3, NATO summit in Bucharest, the French President, Nicolas Sar- kozy, announced a French military reinforcement in Afghanistan during the com- ing months. This decision takes place in the Global Strategic Framework adopted by NATO at Bucharest Summit.

The commitment of French units, in RC-E, in the vicinity of units still commit- ted in RC-Capital and French OMLT, guarantees the operational coherence of the French lay out. The new French elements will be able to be supported by logistic support already in place in Kabul.



Courtesy photos



44 SERVICEMEMBERS EARN U.S. CITIZENSHIP ON MEMORIAL DAY

By Tech. Sgt. Kevin Wallace
CJTF-101 Public Affairs

The inscription on the base of the Statue of Liberty beckons “Give me your poor, your tired, your huddled masses longing to be free,” but on this Memorial Day, quite the opposite was true as 44 members of the U.S. military marched forward to become America’s newest citizens.

In the presence of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, U.S. Immigration Service’s acting director Jonathan Scharfen and Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, commander of Combined Joint Task Force-101, 44 service members from 21 countries swore oaths of allegiance and became U.S. citizens.

“On behalf of President Bush and a grateful nation, I say welcome,” said Chertoff to the new U.S. citizens.

With the swearing in of these 44 servicemembers, 312 military men and women have gained citizenship while deployed to Afghanistan since beginning the Global War on Terrorism, said Stacy K. Strong, Deputy District Director of the American Embassy in

Bangkok, Thailand.

According to a May 2008 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service’s fact sheet, USCIS has naturalized more than 39,085 servicemembers since the beginning of the war.

“There is no honor greater than presiding over an oath ceremony and there is no better place to do it than here,” said Chertoff. “You’ve all earned your citizenship through your service. Starting today, America is as much your country as it is mine.”

Under an executive order, legal permanent residents actively serving in the U.S. military, and legal permanent residents who were on active duty on, or after Sept. 11, 2001 and honorably discharged, are immediately eligible to apply for naturalization.

One Soldier expressed his feelings toward becoming a U.S. citizen.

“This feels really great,” said Army Pvt. Mark Paguio, 23. “Bringing closure to the ‘history’ chapter in my life and the beginning of my future.”

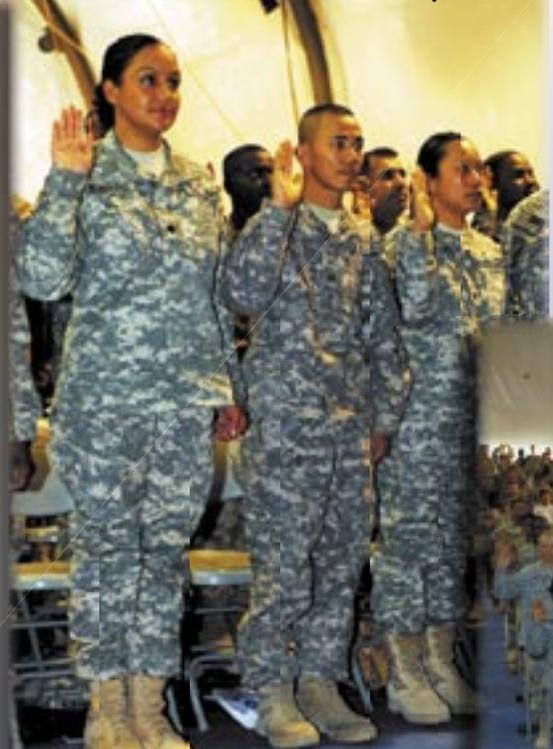
Paguio, a Philippine native, led the other servicemembers in their recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. “Becoming a U.S. citizen has opened many doors,” he said.

In unison, the Soldiers and Marines raised their right hands and

swore to support and defend the Constitution against foreign and domestic enemies, and to bear arms when required by law. For the servicemembers who are all currently serving in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or the International Security Assistance Force, the oath was merely an affirmation of what they have worked so hard to secure.

“This day means everything to me,” said Marine Lance Cpl. Artem Starovoyt, a Ukraine native who now resides in Philadelphia. “I have been out on the front lines doing what I can for my nation, and now I can officially call America home.”

The service members came from the countries of: Jamaica, Columbia, Philippines, Peru, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Australia, Poland, Ghana, Iran, Mexico, El Salvador, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Trinidad and Tobago, Germany, Cuba, Nigeria, St. Vincent-Grenadines and Ukraine.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Christina Sindors



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Christina Sindors



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Scott Davis

The food here is simply “Mmm, Mmm, good”

Story and photos by Air Force Master Sgt. Collen McGee
American Forces Network-Afghanistan

Air Force Staff Sgt. Michelle Cooper walks into her kitchen at 5:30 every morning. She turns on the lights and starts brewing coffee, if someone hasn't beaten her to the pot. Within minutes, Sayeda, one of two local workers, enters the back door of the kitchen, fills the teapot and starts boiling water. It's time to prepare breakfast for the members of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team at Forward Operating Base Lion.

Cooper brings in a DVD/CD player and Sayeda brings the music. Together they prepare the morning meal for American and Afghan members of the team while the sounds of stringed tanboors and sarodes, popular instruments of Afghanistan past and present, fill the kitchen. The Afghan members of the team are interpreters, general workmen and security guards provided by the provincial Governor, Haji Bahlol. All are Afghan citizens and most are from Panjshir.

The music isn't the only mix of old and new in the kitchen. This kitchen has some ancient equipment but in the room are also three new ovens, a steam table and a grill. The new equipment is being installed over the next few weeks, beginning with the steam table and grill.

For Cooper, being a food service specialist is a new experience during this deployment. At her home station of McDill Air Force Base, Fla., she is a lodging technician. At a station as small as FOB Lion, she and Tech. Sgt. MiaFarah Kelly are lodging, Morale Welfare and Recreation and food service specialists all rolled into one. Occasionally, during a convoy or a helicopter arrival, Cooper is also a member of a security team. When that detail is done, she is back in the kitchen with a meal to plan.

“When everyone is home, I feed about 60 people,” said Cooper.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Michelle Cooper and Afghan cook, Sayeda, prepare fresh fruit to accompany the morning meal at Forward Operating Base Lion in northwestern Afghanistan.

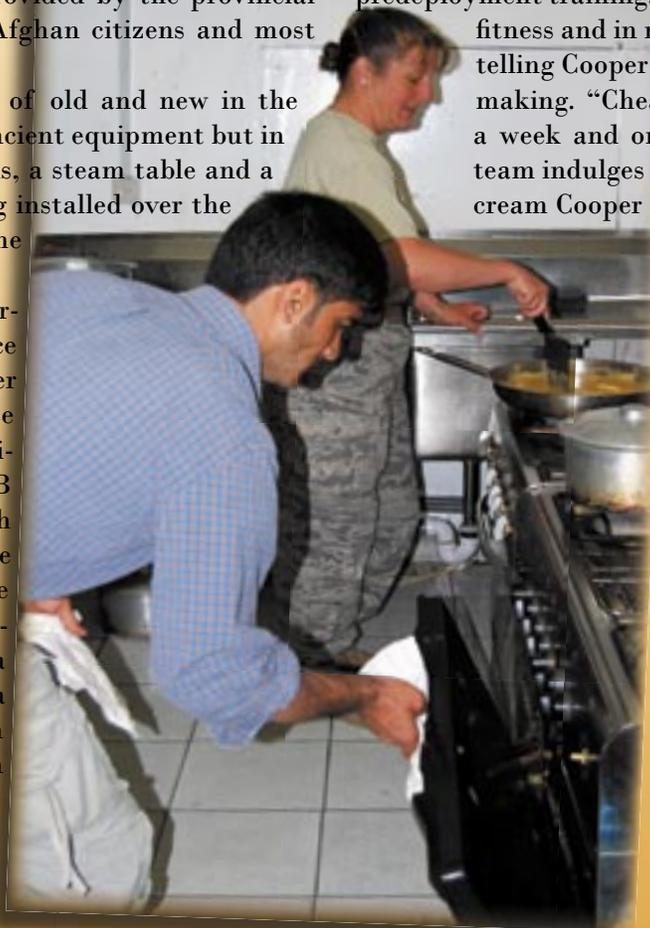
per. “Only about 20 of them actually come in for a hot breakfast. Most of them just grab cereal or have something in their rooms. Many of them are health nuts and really watch what they eat.”

Cooper might be categorized as one of those health nuts as well. Her teammates say she has lost about 40 lbs since predeployment training. The team encourages each other in fitness and in meal choices and can often be heard telling Cooper that they notice the progress she is making. “Cheat days” are allowed but only one a week and only Friday or Saturday. Then, the team indulges in the pies, cookies, cakes or the ice cream Cooper makes available at evening meals.

Everyone eats together when the meal is ready. It's easy for the team to keep tabs on each other, hold each other accountable and give each other a good-natured ribbing when someone gets an ice cream on a non-cheat day.

“We've got it down to a time,” said Cooper about meal preparation. Without the steam table, it isn't possible to hold the food for very long so Cooper and her helpers, Sayeda and Said-Jan, have the meal items ready at the same time. When the food is ready, the meal is served.

See *Mmm, Mmm, Good* page 13



Servicemembers 'trot' for GWOT

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Antony M. C. Joseph
TF Destiny Public Affairs

Drum beats and music resonated in the dusty Afghan air as men and women gathered under the morning sun.

The sounds of the 101st Airborne Division Band became increasingly muffled as thunders of 'whooshing' sounds grew nearer. The sand lifted into a whirlwind as an Apache, Blackhawk and Chinook helicopter simultaneously passed overhead – a signal that meant 'go.' With that, the men and women bolted off and began their 10 kilometer stretch toward the finish line.

More than 700 servicemembers participated in the 'Global War on Terrorism Trot,' a 101st Combat Aviation Brigade-sponsored race held here, May 17.

Running isn't new to servicemembers, nor is commemorative races. However, what made the GWOT Trot unique was servicemembers and contract workers here, and from task forces in Jalalabad, Kandahar, Salerno and many other forward operating bases undertook the race together...separate locations with one overlying theme.

"(The race) is good physical training and a stress reliever

for the Soldiers," said Army Maj. Marc J. Cummins, Task Force Destiny executive officer.

Cummins, who spearheaded the team that organized this year's event, is also a runner and has won similar and longer-distance races in Fort Campbell, Ky., Kuwait and Iraq.

For those with less running experience than himself, Cummins has advice.



“Run it as a race against yourself,” he said, explaining that when members push themselves, they obtain maximum results.

BAF leadership was present and raced among their fellow servicemembers. After the event, one command sergeant major shared his comments on the event.

“(This was a) great event which gave the opportunity for everyone to come out and have some fun, let off some steam, decompress and also reinforce the fact that being combat ready culminates with being physically fit,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Vincent F. Camacho, Combined Joint Task Force-101 command sergeant major, who noted he was pleased with the fellow services turn out and was honored to run with so many of the joint force.

Another participant and the coordinator of the BAF portion of the event, said the organization of the event was a big challenge, but the joy of the participants he competed with made the experience very rewarding.

“I hope that this event continues to grow,” said Chief Warrant Officer Adrian Rushton, a TF Troubleshooter quality control officer.

This was the second-annual GWOT Trot. The command hopes to continue the tradition in years to come.



Improving Lives

Continued from page 6

Army Col. Pete Johnson, commander, Task Force Currahee, applauded the efforts of the Ghazni PRT and their work with Task Force Fury, 82nd Airborne Division, his unit’s predecessors in the region.

“No matter the challenge, the forces working toward the success of the burgeoning democracy never flinched,” Johnson said.

Outside of the half-constructed district center in Kwaji Omarie, the PRT realized they still have a long way to go. There’s no telling when the center will be officially finished to the standards that the engineers know are necessary. Local contractors sweat in the sun to build bridges that connect a maze of dirt streets which are difficult to navigate.

If there is a light at the end of the tunnel, it’s the one that can be found in front of Soldiers like Walkowiak and in the eyes of the Afghan children, who marvel and plead not for the weapon in his hand, but for the pens in his pocket.

Mmm, Mmm, Good

Continued from page 11

Because they all eat together, and her team is small enough, Cooper knows who likes what items and works to accommodate the likes and dislikes of the residents of the FOB. She knows who dislikes fish and what to offer as an alternative and how spicy she can make any dish for the tastes of the team.

“I can personalize,” said Cooper. “The menu is mine. The Air Force has ideas and I take it from there.”

“She knows us, she takes care of us,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Janine Duschka, a medical technician with the team.

Another advantage Cooper sees in cooking for a smaller team is the way they take change in stride.

“Here, they’re not as disappointed if it (the entre) isn’t what’s on the menu because it’s more like cooking for a family,” said Cooper. “We are a family.”

Like many families, Mother’s Day is a special occasion at FOB Lion. Kelly cut fresh roses for all the moms of the PRT and Cooper prepared a special menu that included blackened trout, rib-eye steaks and honey-mustard chicken.

Because the team is made up of both Americans and Afghans, the menu always includes rice or potatoes and a salad at dinner. Once every three weeks, Sayeda and Said-Jan prepare a traditional Afghan meal from supplies in the FOB Lion kitchen. Meals aren’t the only things they help with.

“Sayeda and Said-Jan help me a lot with Dari,” said Cooper. Dari is one of three languages in Afghanistan and the most widely used in the Panjshir area. Cooper and the rest of FOB Lion exchange language lessons and frequent bouts on the volleyball court with the Afghan members of the team.

The next time someone passes the salt at the dinner table, “Tashakur,” or thank-you, is an appropriate response.

Photos From the Field



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Henry Selzer, 173rd ABCT Public Affairs

Spc. Leighton Jones, 24, of Fort Monroe, Virginia (left) holds a piece of steel in place as Sgt. Robert Smith, 39, of, San Antonio, Texas (right) cuts it to the needed size to add to the turret of a vehicle March 31 at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E. Both Soldiers are assigned to Easy Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.



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



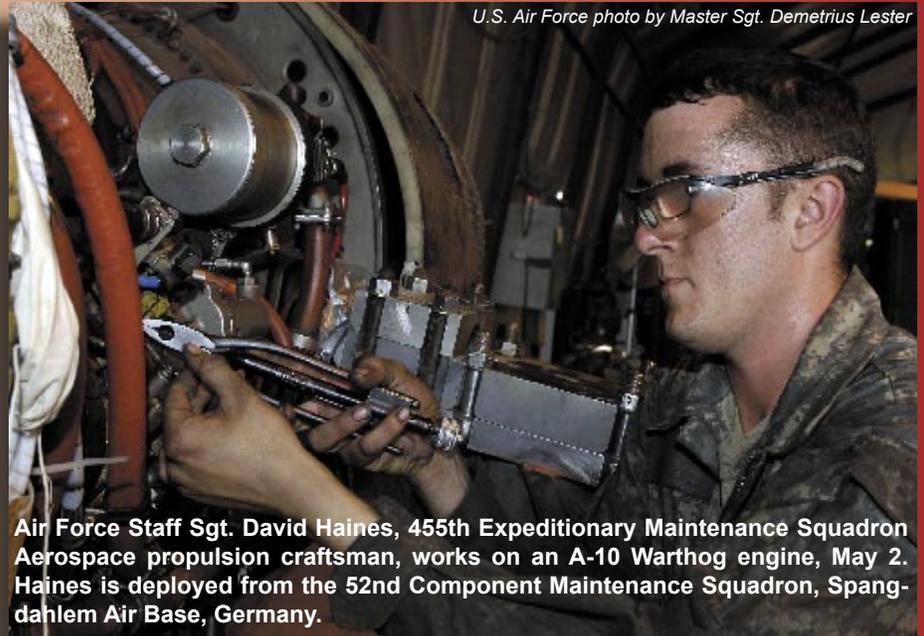
A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter lands during a mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The UH-60 is the primary aircraft used for troop transport on air assault missions during rapid insertion and needs less of a footprint than the Chinook.

U.S. Army photo by Chaplain (MAJ) Darin G. Olson



Army Chaplain (MAJ) Darin G. Olson Task Force Cincinnatus Base Ops Chapel, leads a sunrise Communion service at 7,000 feet up in Panjshir province.

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



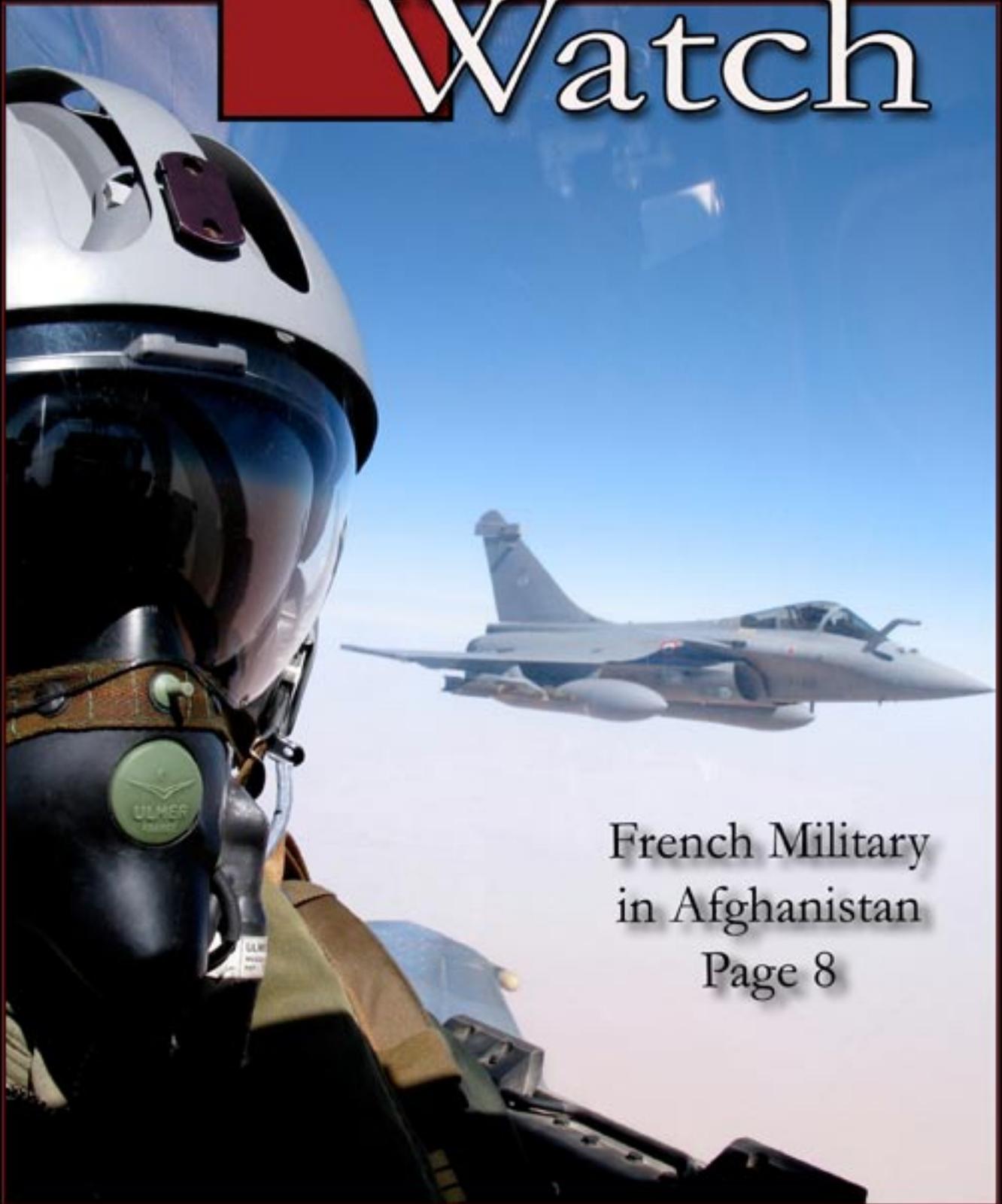
Air Force Staff Sgt. David Haines, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron Aerospace propulsion craftsman, works on an A-10 Warthog engine, May 2. Haines is deployed from the 52nd Component Maintenance Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.



June 2, 2008

Freedom Watch

AFGHANISTAN



French Military
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