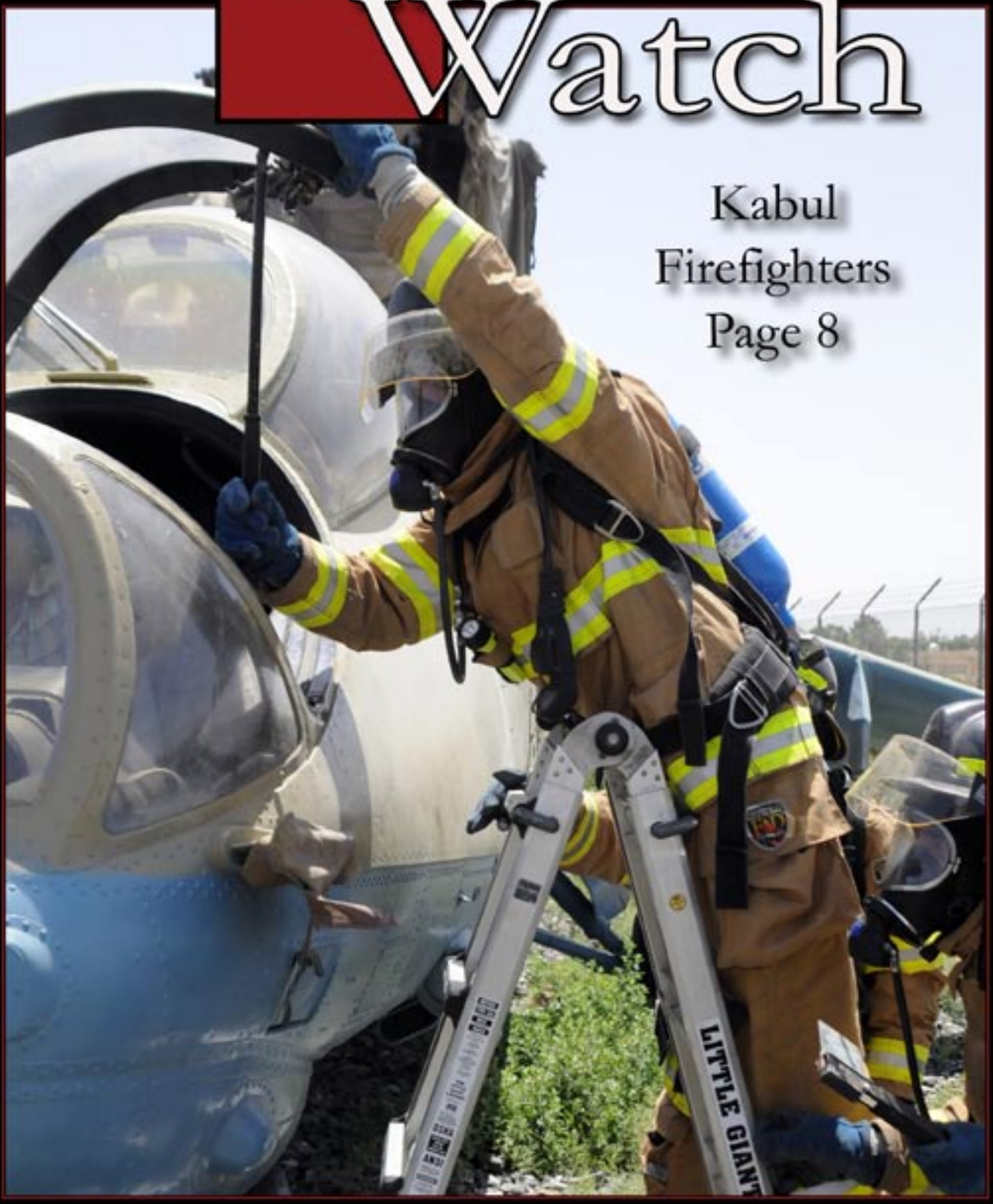
June 16, 2008

AFGHANISTAN Freedom Watch



Kabul Firefighters
Page 8

First Lady Visit ■ Rock Penetrator ■ Polish Military

Defense Digest

News from the DoD

Gates says lack of patience could cost victory

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

U.S. strategic objectives "are within reach" in Afghanistan and Iraq, but a lack of patience could doom those prospects, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said May 22.

Gates spoke to the Second Special Operations Forces International Conference at Tampa, Fla., the home of U.S. Special Operations Command.

Afghanistan and Iraq are the most important battlefields in the fight today, the secretary said, and his priority has been "getting us to a point where our strategic objectives are within reach in those two countries."

America's best opportunity to discredit and deflate the extremist ideology is in Afghanistan and Iraq, Gates said.

"Just as the hollowness of communism was laid bare by the collapse of the Soviet Union, so too would success in those countries strike a decisive blow against the ideological underpinnings of extremist movements," he said.

While not an easy task, it is not impossible, but it will take time, the secretary said. "In congressional testimony a few weeks back, I noted that we are now seeing what the end game in Iraq looks like, with our forces drawing down over time in a series of very complex battlefield rearrangements that slowly cede more responsibility for day-to-day security operations to the Iraqis," he said. "It is a slow process – slower than many would have wished, including myself. But it is necessary if we are to get the end game right."

Experience has shown that patience is necessary, he said.

"Earlier in the war, we tried to turn over provinces and areas to Iraqis before they were ready -- based on overly rosy predictions that didn't necessarily line up with reality," Gates said. "It was a set-up for failure and, in the end, a setback for progress."

The reality is that al-Qaida is a cancer "always looking to metastasize and regenerate," Gates said. Iranian-backed Shiite "special groups" and armed militias still undermine the rule of law in Iraq. The Iraqi government still has a lot to learn about how to deliver basic services and security to its people, he said.

"I fear that frustration over slow progress and dismay over sacrifices already made may result in decisions that are gratifying in the short term but very costly to us in the long term," Gates said. "We're at war in Afghanistan today because of mistakes we made -- I, among others, made -- in the end game of the anti-Soviet war there in the late 1980s. If we get the end game wrong in Iraq, I predict the consequences will be significantly worse."

The best force against a shadowy terrorist enemy is a group of men and women called "the silent professionals," the secretary said. Special operators understand the fight and know they are engaged in "prolonged, messy engagements where tactical success does not necessarily yield strategic success; where cultural knowledge and language skills often mean a great deal more than raw fire power; where victory ultimately is not measured by how well we do the job but how well we can train and empower other nations to defend themselves," he said.

The number of American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan will gradually decline, Gates said, but that doesn't mean the special operations missions in those countries will end.

"Even as our regular troops reduce their presence and are replaced by Iraqis, special operations force levels will remain fairly constant and be the connective tissue of the overall mission," he said. "They will be in Iraq and Afghanistan for an extended period of time -- as a force to hunt and kill terrorists, and also as a force to help train Iraqis and Afghans."

At its heart, the fight against extremists also must include eliminating local and popular support for sectarian militias and terrorists by bringing economic development and by bringing people into the political process, Gates said.

"In that respect, Iraq has been a crucible for learning what we have to do elsewhere to destroy terrorist networks while promoting development and good governance – to reduce the risk of attack while also altering the human landscape so that extremists cannot gain a foothold in the first place," he said.

In this effort, the special operations mission is leaking into American conventional forces, he said.

"Many of these...skills and tasks used to be the province of special operators, but are now a core mission for the regular forces as a whole," he said. "One of the things we are trying to do in the U.S. military is better integrate and reconcile those roles and missions."

The special operations conference attracted attendees from more than 70 nations.

"The United States has special operators in more than 60 countries today, in an arc that sweeps from Mindanao to Mosul and beyond," the secretary said. "Working alongside partners from many of the nations represented tonight, they are carrying out their duties with honor and courage under some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable.

"Across the Middle East and across the globe," he continued, "special operators under many flags will continue their mission: to go where others cannot or will not go, to partner with and train our friends to defend themselves, and to hunt down terrorists relentlessly and without reservation."

Editor's Correction: In the June 9 issue of Freedom Watch Magazine the "Engineers rebuild Afghan Border Police checkpoint" story was accredited to Army Spc. Paul David Ondik. The story accreditation should have read "Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Aird."

Freedom Watch Staff

Commander
Air Force Lt. Col.
Thomas Davis
Superintendent
Air Force Master Sgt.
Collen McGee
Print NCOIC
Air Force Staff Sgt.
Ian Carrier
Editor-in-Chief
Air Force Staff Sgt.
Stephen Ocenosak
Assistant Editor
Air Force Staff Sgt.
Marc Nickens

Visit the CJTF-101 Web site at
www.cjtf101.com

Freedom Watch is a weekly publication of Combined Joint Task Force-101 and American Forces Network.
CJTF-101 Commander Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser
RC East Public Affairs Officer Army Lt. Col. Rumi Nielson-Green

Freedom Watch, a Department of Defense publication, is published each Monday by the American Forces Network – Afghanistan Print Section, Bldg. 415, Room 205 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 5,000 copies per week.

In accordance with DoD Instruction 5120.4, this DoD magazine is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government or the Department of Defense.

Deadline for submissions is noon local each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the AFN-A Print Section. We can be reached at DSN 318-431-3338. Visit our website at www.defenselink.mil/afn-afghanistan.

COVER: Afghan National Army Air Corps firefighters simulate rescuing the gunner of an Mi-35 attack helicopter during a training exercise, June 2. *(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Carrier)* **See related story on page 8.**

BACK COVER: An Afghan child eats some chocolate given to her by Polish soldiers who provided humanitrian aid to the Kuchi nomadic tribe near Sharana, May 28. *(Polish Combat Cameraman W.O. Rafał Derda)*

Freedom Watch

June 16, 2008

4 **Remembering the fallen**
Task Force 2/7 dedicates camp after Medal of Honor Recipient

5 **Showing Appreciation**
First Lady visits troops at Bagram Afghanistan

7 **ANA taking the lead**
Afghan National Army, Sky Soldiers lauch Operation Rock Penetrator

8 **We didn't start the fire**
Afghan National Army Air Corps firefighters conduct training

10 **Hearts and Minds**
Polish military provides humanitarian aid in Sharana

11 **Warrior of Generations**
From one warzone to another: A personal tale

12 **Giving Back**
Tiger opens arms for troops, families at AT&T National

4

8

10

Task Force 2/7 dedicates camp after Medal of Honor recipient

By Marine Cpl. Ray Lewis
Combat Correspondent, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division

Marines now have a place to call their own.

On May 11, Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division dedicated its camp in Afghanistan as Camp Barber, in honor of Marine Col. William E. Barber, a Medal of Honor recipient serving with 2/7 during the Korean War.

Photo courtesy www.medalofhonor.com

"We're proud of our heritage; we're proud of being Marines," said Battalion Sgt. Maj. Matthew B. Brookshire, adding the camp was named after an outstanding and well-deserving Marine from the battalion's heritage.

Barber was a captain when he earned the Medal of Honor - the nation's highest military award for combat heroism. He led his company in a desperate five-day defense of a frozen mountain pass vital to the 1st Marine Division's breakout to the sea, according to his award citation.

Though wounded, and while fighting sub-zero temperatures against overwhelming odds, he refused evacuation and remained in command.

His actions merited the Medal of Honor presented to him by President Harry S. Truman at the White House on August 20, 1952. He passed away April 19, 2002.

In his honor, the Marines unveiled a marquee that dons the camp's heroic name. It rests at the camp's front entrance, which also features an American flag and a Marine Corps flag that are raised each morning at dawn and lowered at dusk.

Task Force Commanders, Marine Lt. Col. Richard Hall and Brookshire, presided over the dedication ceremony, which reflected the pride and ownership of the Marine Corps.

"It's one of those motivating things," Brookshire said. "It adds the Marine flavor to the overall camp itself. We fly our flags high here, as you can see."

Marine Lt. Gen. Samuel T. Helland, commander of Marine Corps Forces Central Command and commanding general of 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, was the ceremony's guest speaker.

The MARCENT commander highlighted the ceremony when he combat meritoriously promoted Marine Cpl. Peter R. Villanueva of Weapons Company, and Lance Cpl.'s Jason L. Claunch and James D. Doherty, both of Company F, to their current ranks.

"I felt honored because here's a general taking his time to promote a lance corporal," said Doherty, who admitted to being a little nervous when the three-star general pinned on his new rank insignia.

Among the first to be promoted here, these Marines joined the "devil dogs" who were promoted, May 1, before the camp's official dedication. The honor of being promoted in combat was also bestowed upon Lance Cpl.'s German A. Hoyos and Mark W. Richardson, Marine Cpl. Brandon W. Dion and Marine Sgt.'s Victor M. Perez, Donald O. Critchlow and Mackenzie P. Thompson.

"It's something big for a Marine to be promoted on a camp just prior to its dedication ceremony," said Headquarters and Service Company, Marine 1st Sgt. James A. Colon. "I want it to be known that they, too, are a part of the Marine Corps' history.

"How often can you say that you were one of the first Marines promoted at Camp Barber?" he asked.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Ray Lewis

First Lady visits troops in Bagram Afghanistan

U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Christina Sinders

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Mark Swart
Combined Joint Task Force-101 Public Affairs

First Lady Laura Bush visited troops at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, June 8 during a brief stop on her third trip to Afghanistan. She gave words of praise and encouragement to service members for their efforts and results in Afghanistan.

"From overseeing hospitals to responding to IEDs, your efforts are critical to our mission in Afghanistan," Bush said. "On behalf of President Bush and a grateful nation, thank you very much for your service to the United States of America. Every day you risk your lives to protect the freedom that we hold so dear."

Bush spoke to a crowd of several hundred in a large hangar and shared a few observations about the signs of progress that she saw in Afghanistan throughout the day. "As you go about your daily duties, you are bringing opportunity and security to the people of Afghanistan," she said.

The First Lady made a number of stops during her one-day visit to the country. She visited locations in Bamyan province, Kabul and Bagram Air Field.

In Bamyan, Bush visited a police training center, where she met a female police trainee. The trainee told Bush that seeing Bamyan's female governor had inspired her to try out for the police force. Bush added that the female police officer's story, as well as observing women in a classroom studying the new Afghanistan constitution, were vivid reminders "of how far this nation has come since the Taliban's reign. Women were not even allowed in school, and there was no democratic constitution to be studied."

She also visited an orphanage in Bamyan and saw a road-construction project.

"All of these encouraging stories and all of these terrific things I saw today have been made possible by your efforts, and the efforts of the U.S. military," Bush said.

Bush then met with a New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team, who greeted her with a traditional war dance, complete with spears and war paint. "I can only imagine what the Secret Service thought, but their performance truly highlights the international makeup of security forces here in Afghanistan."

Bush is enroute to Paris later this week where she plans to address an international conference for Afghanistan reconstruction.

Before closing, Bush took the time to thank military families for their sacrifices in support of the Afghanistan mission, telling service members "when you e-mail or call them tonight, give them our love, and tell them I know what the burden of worry is on your family members, and I understand it, and I thank them."

She then spent several minutes greeting, shaking hands and taking pictures with servicemembers before moving on to her next destination.

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, commander of Combined Joint Task Force – 101 and International Security Assistance Force Regional Command-East, described Bush to the cheering crowd during her introduction as "someone who has been and advocate to you and has been a friend of military families for a long time."

U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Christina Sinders

Small steps lead from war to water

Story and photos by Air Force Master Sgt. Collen McGee *AFN-Afghanistan*

Headlines around the world proclaim a crisis when it comes to the availability and price of basic food items. As prices rise, the poorest areas are always the hardest hit. In a small farming village, high above the main valley of the Panjshir province of Afghanistan, the local community development council, representing about 300 families, meets with members of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team to find a way to increase the growing season and fight the war against hunger.

These people are no strangers to battle. They were the only Afghan people to repel the Russians and the first to rise against the Taliban.

"The Taliban puts a lot of pressure, and they were about to do that here," said an elder. "If we hadn't done that (fought them), they would have this area too."

"These people were the first to fight against them," he added.

The village elder said they lost 56 men from the village during that fight. He told the PRT members he lost his son during the first fight against the Taliban and Al Qaida. The fighting destroyed much in the area over the past 20 years.

"Now it is time to heal," the elder said.

"Healing takes time and it is one step at a time for progress," said Jeremy Richart, the PRT member representing USAID.

In this valley, progress is slow but it is there. A road, rough and narrow, finally reaches the top of a hill above 11 other small villages. Every roof has a small solar panel on top. The elder reaches up, turns a switch and shows how the electricity is used. The lights provide a means for villagers to read and study.

"They share the vision of agriculture and education as a priority for the valley and this village," said the elder echoing the goals voiced by the provincial governor at a meeting in another community.

Some schools are built now and the children attend in four-hour shifts. Even girls go to school, for at least a little while, in this province. That is a huge step for this tradition-bound nation.

The next step is what the PRT came to discuss with the community leaders. In this rugged terrain of ravines, with seasonal snow melt and tiny springs of fresh water, water conservation is the biggest hurdle on the path to self sufficiency.

"In about 15 days, we will have no more water," the elder said to the PRT.

The lack of water makes the growing season very short in this high valley and limits the amount of wheat they can grow here.

"How long does your harvested wheat supply last?" asks Greg Schlenz, a member of the PRT representing the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Until November, is the answer.

"The beginning of the rough winter weather," notes Richart with concern. After the wheat is gone, villagers have to buy flour. A bag of flour costs almost as much as the average teacher makes in a month here.

But the elders and community development council members have a proposal. Talk turns to the possibility of building a reservoir to better manage snow melt and the small spring higher in the ravine above the village.

When the snowmelt ends; the ability to irrigate ends. A small spring, yielding a tiny amount of water equal to the gently arching flow from a common green garden hose, is barely able to provide drinking water to the families in the village and their livestock.

"These people are the most needy as far as agriculture; wheat, trees and fruit," said Schlenz.

Water management could make it possible to plant a second crop during the growing season. This high valley could plant corn, like the lower villages, once the wheat is harvested. It is another step in the healing of both the land and the people.

Soon the indoor conversation ends and the elders lead the PRT on a walk up the ravine to show where the spring comes out of the mountain and where they think a reservoir can be built.

Along the way are mulberry trees, a traditional crop here, and some young fruit trees given to the community through the anti-narcotics Good Governance Fund. Schlenz stops to take photos of the well-cared-for sapling trees. Farther up the path, other trees in the orchard are suffering from the effects of tent caterpillars.

"Has the Provincial Agricultural Department spray program reached here yet?" Schlenz asks the elders.

"No," they answer.

See *War to Water* page 13

Afghan National Army, Sky Soldiers launch Operation Rock Penetrator

Story and photos by Spc. Gregory J. Argentieri
173rd Airborne Brigade Public Affairs

Afghan National Army soldiers and paratroopers from Able Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment air assaulted into the Narang Valley on the evening of May 16, for a scheduled 24-hour mission in Kunar province, Afghanistan.

A part of Operation Rock Penetrator, the ANA soldiers took the lead role in this mission, which was to search and clear Bidal Village, designated Objective Grappa, while Able Co. Soldiers secured over-watch positions.

Under the moonlight, approximately 150 U.S. and Afghan soldiers flew into Kunar's Narang Valley aboard Chinook and Blackhawk helicopters. The Soldiers, under the protection of Apache attack helicopters, were safely delivered from Camp Wright in Asadabad to five separate landing zones.

First platoon Soldiers were tasked with being the support element for the ANA soldiers. The paratroopers exited the Blackhawk helicopters in tall wheat fields west of Bidal Village.

Burdened with heavy equipment, the 'Sky Soldiers' began moving upward with the help of their night vision devices. After several hours of climbing high stone terraces and crossing dangerous terrain with 10-15 foot drop offs, 1st platoon arrived at their position.

"We've had reports that rebels have been moving through this village, intimidating people and keeping weapons and supplies there, so they can take them up into the Korengal and Shuryak Valleys," said Army 1st Lt. Jason P. Levay, platoon leader for 1st Platoon. "I know this is not a peaceful area."

At first light, from beneath camouflage netting, the paratroopers watched as ANA soldiers began moving in the valley toward Objective Grappa. The ANA soldiers made their way through a mostly dry river bed and proceeded to search one side of the village and then the other looking for weapon caches, contraband and insurgent safe-havens.

"While the ANA were clearing a house, they found two anti-personnel mines and some explosives," said Army Staff Sgt. Daniel C. Metcalfe, 25, from Rochester, N.Y., acting platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon. "We arrested the guy, and airlifted him out of there later on that day."

In the afternoon, after the ANA soldiers finished their search, an element of 1st platoon Soldiers led by Levay, climbed back down the mountainside and met up with the ANA soldiers in one of the village compounds.

Levay conducted a key-leader engagement with some village elders. He stressed the importance of working with the Afghan government and Able Co. Soldiers, saying it was the way to foster local community development and economic prosperity throughout Afghanistan.

"We made some progress with some good key leader engagements getting them closer to the Coalition side of the house," said Metcalfe.

Later in the evening, acting on intelligence that stated there were more enemy fighters in the area, the mission was extended 24 hours. Helicopters arrived and flew the Soldiers to 2nd platoon's position, where they were re-supplied.

Throughout the next 24 hours, Able Co., with the help of close-air support, had several sightings of the enemy. They fired artillery, mortars and dropped bombs on the enemy positions.

In the afternoon, a maneuver element of ANA soldiers and an element from 2nd platoon were sent to investigate and search several suspicious looking structures one kilometer away on the mountainside. On the way back, the ANA soldiers were fired on from a nearby mountain. The enemy fired approximately 50 rounds from a machine gun. No one was injured and Able Co. paratroopers fired mortars at the enemy's location, eliminating the threat.

Despite the inherent dangers of conducting missions along the border with U.S. forces, Maj. Atiqullah, 40, from Kabul, 1st Company commander with 1st Kandak, 2nd Brigade, remains firmly resolved to continue the mission of helping to secure his country.

"I like this type of mission and would love to go clear all the villages and fight with any enemies," said Atiqullah.

The love of their job was also apparent in the Able Co. Soldiers.

"We had the insurgents pretty confused because they couldn't figure out if we were still in the village or if we had left the village," said Metcalfe. "All in all, it was a pretty good success out there. It's what we do, and it was a pretty good feeling coming back."

Afghan National Army Air Co

rps firefighters conduct training

Story and photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Ian Carrier
AFN Afghanistan

Firefighters of the Afghan National Army Air Corps conducted a training exercise in Kabul, Afghanistan, June 2.

What makes this particular exercise unique is that it was the first time the ANAAC firemen planned and executed a training session independent of their U.S. Air Force mentors.

This group of firemen was also the first group to graduate from the three-and-one-half month training course established by the U.S. Air Force. The school is modeled after the technical school at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. The goal of the school is to have the Afghans training their own firemen without American assistance, according to Air Force Master Sgt. Mike Marascia, Air Corps Advisory Group Fire Protection Mentor. After Marascia leaves, training will be turned over to three Afghan instructors, two from the Ministry of Defense and one civilian.

The scenario for today's training exercise was two fold. The firemen reacted to a simulated fire on a Mi-35 HIND attack helicopter. First, they were to extinguish the fire, then rescue the pilot and gunner from the aircraft.

Water from a pumper truck suppressed the fire as a second fireman dismounted with a hose. Once the blaze was extinguished, other firemen rushed to the helicopter to extract the occupants. The men reacted with speed and precision to accomplish their task.

After the exercise, the Fire Chief addressed his men.

"The training was excellent," said Afghan Major Razzuddin, ANAAC. "It was very quick, the men were motivated. If this was real, the fire would have been put out, and the pilots saved."

Razzuddin, a 23-year military veteran, continued to say that there were some minor problems, such as the inability to spray from the truck while it was moving, but the exercise went very well.

"We are the rescuers of the people, facilities and buildings. We must be ready to serve the Afghan people," said Razzuddin.

"As you guys become more advanced, I expect to see you perform that way," said Marascia, addressing the firefighters. "You guys just graduated. I expect a certain level of knowledge and professionalism."

Marascia continued by encouraging all the firemen to wear their badge, saying he expected them all to be wearing them by the end of the week.

"You have earned them, you should be proud of them," he said.

"A lot of our men and women from all branches have contributed here to get the Afghans on their feet," said Marascia after the debriefing. "The Afghans are motivated, dedicated people. It's an honor to serve with them."

Afghan Sgt. Zaki, ANAAC Fireman, expressed his personal pride in his profession.

"This is our job, we have to serve our Air Corps and our country," he said. "I must continue being a firefighter. I like it, it's my favorite job. Thank you, sergeant Mike."

Polish military provides humanitarian aid in Sharana

Story by Cpt Krzysztof Pauszek
Polish Military International Security Assistance Force Public Affairs
Photos by W.O. Rafał Derda
Polish Combat Camera

Polish military soldiers provided humanitrian aid to the Kuchi nomadic tribe near Sharana May 28. For most of the tribe, this was the first time they have been seen by qualified medical personnel. Aid given to the tribe included 200 liters of bottled water, 80 medical-hygienic kits, clothes, shoes, blankets, tools and tent-repair materials.

The success of the operation was encouraging to many of the Polish soldiers, who recently arrived in Afghanistan.

Security Forces protect combat resources

Story and photos by Air Force Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

They're on the flightline, at entry-control points and along the perimeter. Sometimes, they're not seen at all.

They are Security Forces.

While the exact numbers are classified, members of the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron are located throughout Afghanistan helping fight the Global War on Terror.

They provide flightline security, mission support, perform tactical security missions, and secure aircraft, cargo and passengers with Fly Away Security Teams -- the largest in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

"We limit the enemies' resources and capabilities by securing areas so our members and Coalition forces can do their missions," said Air Force Capt. Pedro Jimenez, 455th ESFS operations officer, deployed from the 824th Security Forces Squadron, Moody Air Force Base, Ga. "The enemies see a deterrent when they see us all over the place, so they don't damage aircraft, people or sabotage missions."

When a new team is brought together for any amount of time, it takes time to gel. But the members of 455th ESFS, who are deployed from various locations for six-month rotations, make it happen without hesitation because everyone understands their respective role in supporting the mission.

"We are essentially protecting over $3 billion worth of combat assets," said Air Force Master Sgt. Donnie Bolton, 455th ESFS operations superintendent, deployed from the 824th SFS. These assets are essential to the 455th AEW mission of providing expeditionary combat operations and expeditionary combat support to U.S. and Coalition forces operating in Afghanistan.

While vulnerable to mortar and rocket attacks, as well as improvised explosive devices and indirect fire, not one team member hesitates to do their job knowing it's essential to effectively accomplishing the mission.

"By crippling the bad guys, which is our job, we protect the number one asset, the people who accomplish the mission of fighting terror and building peace for the people of Afghanistan," Bolton said.

Tiger opens arms for troops, families at AT&T National

Story and photos by Tim Hipps
FMWRC Public Affairs

Tiger Woods' support of U.S. troops will be on worldwide display, July 2-6, during the AT&T National at Congressional Country Club.

Like last year, tournament host Woods donated 30,000 tickets for servicemembers and their families to attend the AT&T National. Military personnel again will play alongside Tiger in the Earl Woods Memorial Pro-Am on July 2.

For that day, a new twist was added to this year's event. Nike donated golf equipment to troops in the United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Iraq, Germany, Japan and aboard the U.S.S. Harry S. Truman. The Pentagon Channel will film servicemembers making ceremonial first shots in those locations and the balls will be returned to the U.S.

Twenty-five children who have parents serving abroad will join Tiger at Congressional CC for ceremonial first shots with those same golf balls.

"We feel that the shot and these golf balls are our way of thanking these families for the support that they really provide us," Congressional Country Club president Bret Hart said during AT&T National media day on May 27. "We feel it will be a great way really to honor them as well."

Woods seconded that sentiment.

"I think that people don't realize the dedication of our men and women," said Woods, an Army brat who seemingly could not say "thank you" enough to the troops. "I grew up in a military household. I understand. I understand what it takes. I witnessed it. I have been around the guys all my life. From infantrymen to Special Forces, I've been around all that. I know what it takes.

"They don't get enough thanks, and we're here to do that. There are people here who really do miss them, really appreciate what they're doing."

Most Army ITT/ITR offices within a 150-mile radius of Washington have the free tickets available on a first-come, first-served basis. The tickets

will be limited to two per person each day for play on Wednesday through Friday for active-duty, Reserve, National Guard, retired and civilian Department of Defense personnel.

For more information about the ticket distribution, e-mail your questions to militarytickets@attnational.org.

The AT&T National also will offer military personnel a one-time 10 percent discount at all on-course merchandise locations. A valid U.S. military identification card must be presented at time of purchase. That discount does not apply to purchases made at the Congressional Golf Shop adjacent to the clubhouse.

Patrons who purchase tickets on the AT&T National Web site can make a donation to one of the following military charities: Fisher House Foundation, Military Officers Association of America Scholarship Fund, National Military Family Association, Our Military Kids or the Yellow Ribbon Fund.

Technical Sgt. Britt Bare, 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron power production craftsman, won the Tiger Woods signed driver for the Afghanistan region of the AT&T National military appreciation outreach. Bare has been at Bagram Air Field for five months.

"Thanks Tiger, and thank you to America Supports You," he said in appreciation for his contest winnings.

The ball he signed will be sent back to the U.S. to be used in the AT&T National opening ceremonies.

U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Stephen Ocenosak

War to Water

Continued from page 6

"It is coming," said Schlenz. Schlenz is working on an Intergrated Pest Management program to help battle the caterpillars that can encase entire fruit trees with cocoons and fibrous web-like threads, destroying the crop. Schlenz explained the tent caterpillars here are similar to the ones in the US that threatened to destroy fruit orchards. Controlling their destructive path is a new program vital to helping increase the fruit and nut tree yields here.

The group travels higher and the ravine narrows. Small waterfalls are found at periodic intervals as the snow melt and spring water mix and tumble over boulders in the water's path. The scenery is bright with flowers and an occasional cow resting in the shade. The air is clear and the atmosphere is peaceful.

The elders show the PRT a place where the walls of the ravine are narrow and create a deep sided area. For ease of building, it looks like a good place to stop up the water in a reservoir. But ease isn't the only thing that needs to be considered. Ease is also in the eye of the beholder. This project would require heavy stones and cement to be hand carried and hand placed. The type of heavy machinery Americans are used to using wouldn't make it up the switchbacks in the rough road that doesn't yet reach this spot.

"If the dam fails, the amount of water in the reservoir would come crashing into the village," Schlenz told the elders. After a little more visiting, the PRT team agrees to do some research on the idea of a reservoir and to return with the team's engineers to look more closely at the best way to build it.

"They are getting the idea," said Schlenz. "A reservoir is a good way to manage water." But he also knows that to prevent future disaster, the project must be researched first.

The war with bullets and rockets might be something fought on the other side of the mountains that make up Panjshir's valley walls, but the fight for progress here is just as fierce. The American led PRT brings the tools to win the fight and help the local people progress to self sufficiency one step at a time.

Photos From the Field

Courtesy photo

Chief Master Sgt. Joseph McArthur, deployed here from the 911th Airlift Wing, Pittsburgh, Pa., poses with his son, Senior Airman Mike Creegan, deployed here from Hurlburt Airfield, Fla. , McArthur is the superintendant of the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, and Creegan is an AC-130 Gunship crew chief.

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

freedomwatch@swa.army.mil

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

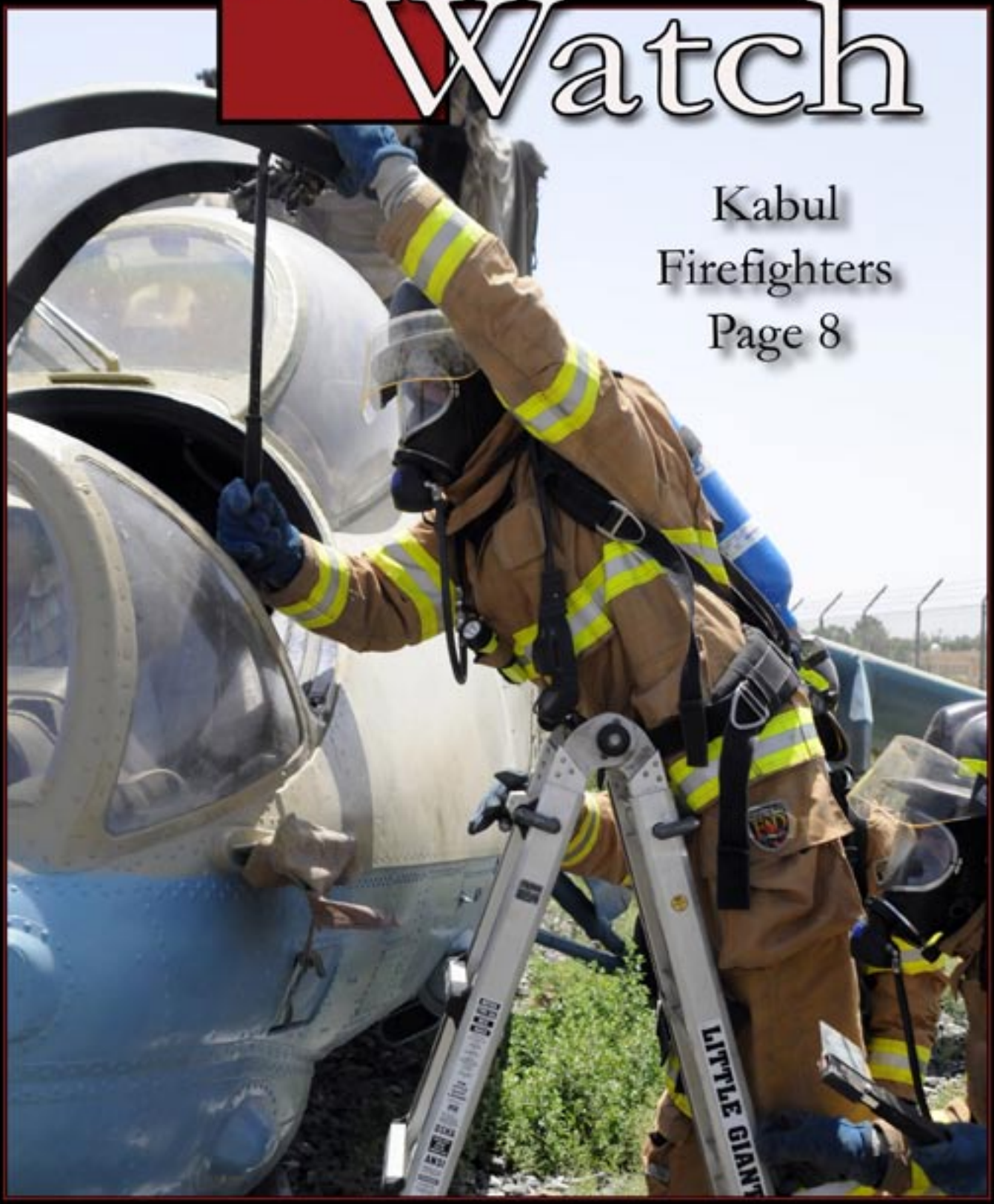
Waiting their turn, local Afghan villagers look through a window during a recent medical engagement by the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team.

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

Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Watts, 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron, pavements and equipment operator, joint cuts the flightline with a routerprepare the flightline for sealant to minimize foreign objects and debris. Watts is deployed from 30th CES, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

June 16, 2008

AFGHANISTAN Freedom Watch



Kabul Firefighters

Page 8

First Lady Visit ■ Rock Penetrator ■ Polish Military