

THE SOUND OF THE GUNS: USMC VOLUNTEERS

FREEDOM WATCH **AFGHANISTAN**

Nov. 3, 2008



Bamyan province

Jewel of
Afghanistan

pg. 6

from the kids



THANK
YOU
Troops FOR
SAVING our
Lives



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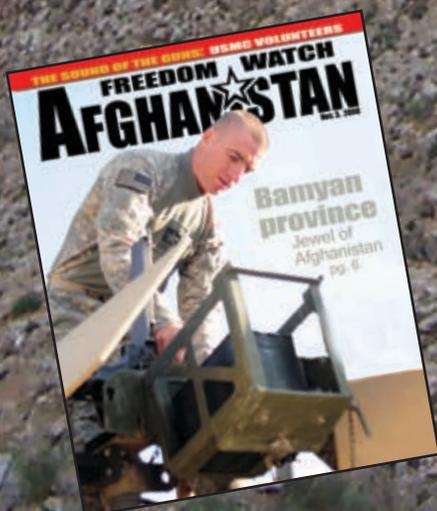
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Spc. Heath Chesnut, Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team at FOB Kala Gush, prepares an M-2 for a mission to evaluate a local construction project. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Kristina Barrett)

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Forward Surgical Team, advanced care in the field



Making contributions

Approximately 130 soldiers from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1st Mechanized Infantry Battalion, 1st Mechanized



Infantry Coy, 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade, have been deployed since July 10 to the International Security Assistance Force Headquarters in Kabul.

“We want to make a contribution in building democracy in Afghanistan,” said Capt. Vasil Mitevski, a Macedonian engineer officer. “We are an infantry unit, but we are here for peace keeping operations in Afghanistan.”

The soldiers conduct mechanized and foot patrols around the city of Kabul.

They also provide a quick reaction force, a general security platoon, and security to the front and back gates of Camp ISAF.

Mitevski said the Macedonian deployment to Afghanistan has been going smooth and has been successful.

“We are happy because we are a small army and from a small nation,” Mitevski said. “We have a lot of volunteers from Macedonia who want to come.”

Taliban bosses killed

Coalition and Afghan forces killed dozens of militants, including two Taliban commanders, in two days of fighting in Afghanistan, military officials reported.

In the battle, Coalition troops killed at least 55 militants Oct. 22 in the Deh Rawood district of Oruzgan province, in the south-central part of the country, officials said.

Coalition forces later identified Taliban commander Sharif Agha and 14 others near a river bed in a remote area of a known insurgent compound, noting that Agha was a known leader in

bombings in the Helmand and Oruzgan provinces. Coalition and Afghan forces were patrolling the area when they were attacked by a large group of militants with small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire.

The troops responded with small-arms, rocket-propelled grenade, heavy-weapons and supporting fires, killing 55 militants.

The troops called in close air support, which killed Agha and others in a precision air strike.

No Coalition, Afghan or civilian casualties were reported.

Landing accident

A Navy P-3 Orion airplane overshot the runway while landing at Bagram Air Field Oct. 21, injuring one crew member and destroying the airplane, military officials reported.



The entire crew survived, though the one U.S. crew member suffered a broken ankle and was treated at Craig Joint Theater Hospital on Bagram.

The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Mistaken identity

Military officials reported that Coalition forces may have mistakenly killed and injured Afghan National Army soldiers in the Khowst province.

As a Coalition convoy was returning from a previous operation, troops were involved in multiple engagements in which Afghan soldiers were killed and injured, officials said.

Initial reports from troops on the ground indicate that this may be a case of mistaken identity on both sides, they said.

Coalition forces are coordinating with the Afghan government and the

Afghan National Army for a joint investigation into this incident, officials said.

Terrorists targeted

Coalition forces detained four suspected militants in operations targeting the Taliban and al-Qaida terrorist networks in Konar and Ghazni provinces.

Coalition forces seized weapons and detained three suspected militants while searching a compound in an operation targeting an al-Qaida associated sub-commander suspected of facilitating the movement of foreign fighters into Afghanistan.

The forces searched the compound without incident, finding multiple AK-47 assault rifles, a shotgun and other military style equipment.

A second operation targeted a Taliban subcommander believed to coordinate and direct roadside-bomb attacks in the region. The targeted militant is known to facilitate the movement of foreign fighters into Afghanistan, officials said. Coalition forces detained one suspected militant during the operation.



Commander killed

Coalition forces identified one of three militants killed in an Oct. 20 air strike in Helmand province as Taliban commander Mullah Ghafar.

Ghafar was responsible for conducting ambushes and attacks on checkpoints and coalition convoys in Farah, Nimruz and Helmand provinces. Coalition forces positively identified Ghafar entering a vehicle and traveling south on a road through Helmand province and called for close air support. Ghafar was killed and two other militants were wounded by precision air strikes.

U.S. support brings growth to Kabul school

Combined Task Force Phoenix

Afghan children are benefiting and thriving thanks to sustained efforts by a U.S. task force and a program helping to expand and improve their schools.

A new addition to a Kabul school was opened in a ceremony including Afghan officials, school faculty and U.S. military officials, as well as local contractors who completed the work.

“This is the greatest day of my life,” said Rabia Abdullah, principal of the Tajwar Sultana Girls School. “I feel as though I am the mother of all these children. We used to teach them in tents, and now we have a school.”

The school is located within the Afghan capital’s Police District 4 in a village known as Kololah Pushta. More than 4,000 students, mostly girls, attend classes there in three shifts each day. The curriculum includes primary school in the morning, high school in the midday and middle school in the afternoon.

Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, based at Camp Phoenix, has been investing U.S. funds in Afghan school and community construction and rehabilitation projects through the Commander’s Emergency Response Program as part of its mission to support the government of Afghanistan and its people.

The task force’s primary mission is to train and mentor the



U.S. Army photo by Capt. Robert Romano
Afghan girls and boys show their delight at the opening of a new wing at the Tajwar Sultana Girls School in Kabul.

Afghan army and police, but it also supports efforts to build infrastructure and communities as part of the larger effort to assist Afghanistan.

With an investment of \$185,000 through CERP and under the task force’s supervision, Afghan contractors built a new 10-classroom school that opened in April.

Medical engagements provide more than health care

By Army 1st Lt. Lory Stevens
Task Force Warrior

Government officials and the medical team assigned to the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team coordinated with local leaders in two districts to augment health care services to 563 Afghans.

A representative from the Directorate of Women’s Affairs and two Afghan National Police officers accompanied the PRT medical team to Estayca Village in Rokha district for a medical engagement Oct. 14. Inaccessible by road, the isolated Afghan village lacks basic medical services.

Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Glenn Little, chief medical officer, coordinated in advance to have local manpower waiting near the Panjshir River to transport medical supplies across the footbridge and trail leading to the village.

“Coordination with village elders can



U.S. Army photo
Air Force Staff Sgt. Janine Duschka, a medic for the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, looks on while an interpreter explains medication dosages to a girl during the medical engagement.

be the most difficult aspect of conducting these engagements, but serves as a critical task in ensuring a successful outcome,” Little said.

The PRT’s role is not to meet all the needs of the Afghans, but rather to support the local elders as they take the lead providing essential services to people in their villages, he explained.

Working with the village elders, the team set up temporary treatment facilities. The team provided routine treatment for 202 patients and provided two referrals for Afghans requesting to be seen at the Egyptian hospital at Bagram.

“The village elder suffers from suspected carpal tunnel syndrome, and another adult male presented with varicose veins,” Little reported.

During nine medical engagements over the past six months, the PRT medical team has built a relationship in which villagers trust them and have confidence to seek out care.

“It is notable in the conservative posture of Panjshir to have two women request my services,” said Little, a male health care provider.

In addition to the medical screenings and treatment, the PRT medical team also provided school supplies, hygiene kits and stuffed animals to the children.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Keith Brown
Capt. (Dr.) James Arnold shows medical professionals from the Zabul province how to make "strong food," a vitamin enriched high calories food supplement used to combat malnutrition.



RCMP photo by Supt. Joe McAllister
A member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police patrols the area as Afghan children look on.

Canadian mounties share skills with Afghan Police

International Security Assistance Force - Afghanistan

Docs put PRT's 'strong food' to test

By Staff Sgt. Tammie Moore
U.S. Air Force Central Command

It might be hard to imagine something as sweet as the center of a peanut butter cup saving lives. But thanks to the ingenuity of the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team medical staff, a four-week regiment of their tasty "strong food" has brought hundreds of malnourished Afghan children back to health.

The PRT members introduced "strong food," known locally as Qavi Ghiza, to the Shajoy hospital two months ago. The area's public health administration staff has been using the low-cost and locally produced food supplement to treat more than 400 malnourished children.

"This program has been going very well and giving positive results; people know about it," said Dr. Zamarai Sultan, Public Health Administration nutrition officer. "It is going to be even more successful in the future."

Dr. Sultan has monitored the "strong food" program in Shajoy closely. In a patient sampling of 60 children, 78 percent have shown positive growth. The doctor said he

has seen most patients gain 1 to 1.5 kilograms a week while taking the vitamin enriched and calorie heavy supplement.

"People from this area are very poor," Dr. Sultan said. "They don't have enough money for their baby's special food. As long as we have this kind of program it's going to succeed. Now people know this good thing about the 'strong food,' that is why more patients come in and get this food."

The success of "strong food" in the Shajoy area and a positive backing by Dr. Sultan provided Capt. (Dr.) James Arnold the momentum he needed to expand the program.

"Giving this program to Dr. Sultan has actually been the biggest help to us because he is well invested in it," Arnold said. "He is a nutritionist; he deals with the malnourishment problem for the entire Zabul province."

Dr. Sultan is grateful for the effort the PRT put into launching the "strong food" program.

"This is a very active team," he said. "They have really wanted to work and it has been seen."

The security of Afghanistan is dependant on an effective police force. The police spend more time with people in their communities, and are more familiar with the region than other national security forces.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are helping the Afghan people achieve a peaceful and secure country through the training of the Afghan National Police and official government security details.

"The police are key to a stable government," acting RCMP contingent commander Joe McAllister said. "If the police are a trustworthy force, then the people will trust their security to the government and not turn to the Taliban. If the police can improve their image in the community, then it will help improve the government's image."

More than 300 police and other government forces have gone through training with the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team since they started the program in the spring of 2007.

"What we're trying to do is supplement the existing training they're getting at the regional training centers," McAllister said. "We've assigned a couple of officers to the centers to do a gap assessment. Eight weeks is not enough time to train a police officer. We give training to supplement what they already know."

The Canadian police train the ANP on such topics as combat shooting, advanced first aid, and IED awareness.

Local leaders see problem, solution for water issues

By Spc. Mary Gonzalez
American Forces Press Service

People in the rural villages surrounding Bagram Airfield - a former Soviet air base in eastern Afghanistan now being used as headquarters for Coalition operations in Afghanistan - have been upset about an enigma surrounding an important creek for some time.

Coyote Creek, as it is known on the base, enters the base on the west side of the flightline and then flows through to the east side. Or at least it used to.

Six years of dirt and silt have built up on the west end of the creek, causing severe flooding to the western villages, and droughts in the villages on the east side.

Many of the local citizens thought this was done purposely by Coalition forces to choke off their main water source.

So on Oct. 25, officials from the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Mine Action Center invited village elders onto the base to inspect the creek and see the progress that has been made to amend the problem.

Australian Maj. David Bergman, MAC officer in charge, said village elders were



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mary Gonzalez
Local Afghan leaders and Australian Maj. David Bergman discuss solutions for water issues surrounding Coyote Creek.

able to see for themselves that the creek had silted up from a long-term blockage to the drain that goes under the runway.

“We saw approximately five feet of dirt that is blocking the creek head,” he said. “And what that means is no water can actually enter in the creek and flow through.”

This a concern not only for the local residents, but also for the base, Bergman said. When the west village floods, so does that part of Bagram Air Field and some of its roads and housing.

To eliminate the problem, the MAC burned down the dense plant growth around the creek within the base so the area can be cleared of hidden mines left over from the former Soviet occupation as the first step in solving the problem.

“Then we are going to use our demining excavators, which are up-armored, to actually go along the creekline and take out as much silt as we can to allow the water to flow from the western side of the creek through the tunnel under the runway,” Bergman said.

While at the base, the village elders saw various places along the creek where the silt and debris had severely narrowed the creek bed or blocked its path.

“From their standpoint, I feel the visit helped them understand and know that we are here to help in whatever capacity we can,” said Army Sgt. 1st Class Jayson Blunck, MAC operations non-commissioned officer.

Letters to the Editor

Contact info

I really like all the stories about the different units and their missions. How do I get my unit some coverage?

- S.G., FOB Kala Gush

Either send us an e-mail at freedomwatch.swa.army.mil or give us a call at DSN 431-4458. We are always looking for missions to cover. In addition, we want to recognize the people who perform the mission by highlighting them and their unit.

Idea time

I have an idea that could possibly work for the Freedom Watch magazine. Maybe you guys could have a special

edition for each service. It could be like a series; one week you feature Air Force, Army the next, and so on. Then you could have one week focusing on Coalition forces. I know the news section would probably still have to include all forces, but this could still be done with the features section.

- K.S., Bagram

Giving a weekly salute to our different branches is a great idea. However, we rely heavily on stories from the field being submitted to us and don't always have such a variety. Perhaps some time in the future as we receive more submissions from all branches, we'll be able to make this to happen.

Have your say - email the editor at freedomwatch@swa.army.mil

Submissions will be edited for content and length. Authors will be identified by initials only

BAMYAN PROVINCE – JEWEL OF AFGHANISTAN

Story and photos by
U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Leslie Pratt

In the center of Afghanistan along the ancient Silk Road lies one of the world's more fascinating regions, Bamyan province. Wildly rich in beauty and rural heritage, Bamyan lies at the crossroads of history, culture and politics. Bamyan and the Hazarajat Region survive a stunning past and welcome an equally promising future.

The dramatic backdrop for Bamyan City is the many Buddha statues carved into glowing red cliffs more than 1500 years ago by several thousand hermit Buddhist monks. The artisans carved their meager existence and homes into tiny caves precariously perched into a seemingly endless sandstone cliff face.

Considered the source of idol worship, countless treasures of humanity including historic massive Buddha figures in the area were violently destroyed by Taliban forces in 2001 prior to the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. Thousands of Hazara tribe members lost their lives during the 8-year stranglehold by the Taliban and many more were forced into refugee camps and starvation.

The Shiite Muslim Hazara minorities are a proud people of Chinese Mongol descent. No strangers to deprivation and suffering, the Hazara are collectively determined to rebound and rebuild. They struggle to exist in the remote foothills of the Hindu Kush mountains which dominate the region's skyline,

and mark the Hazara's existence.

As the Bamyan province emerges from a horrific dark period, the light of hope and humanity shines again. Helping are more than 100 New Zealand Defense Force personnel who play the defining role in keeping Bamyan one of the safest provinces in the country. The innovative New Zealand "Kiwis" are teamed with help from the Singapore Army and the US Army to oversee various developmental programs and provide security assistance.

The province is under the attentive and caring eye of the nation's first female governor, Dr. Habiba Sarabi, considered by many to be one of Afghanistan's more progressive visionary leaders. Together, the Coalition and dedicated governmental partners forge ahead.

Challenges include staggering infant mortality rates, low life expectancy, harsh climate, and a fledgling economy. Opportunities include abundant water, geological resources, tourism appeal, and steadily improving infrastructure.

Despite the obstacles, Bamyan defies the odds and represents a radiant example of success in Afghan security and governance. Bamyan province and the Hazara are once again upholding an ancient legacy of resilience and fortitude – on all accounts, a benchmark region to watch.





ADVANCED CARE IN THE FIELD

By U.S. Army Spc. Casey Ware
3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Div.

A cramped plywood hut houses the operating room and medical clinic for the 772nd Forward Surgical Team at Forward Operating Base Fenty. It's here the FST performs life-saving operations such as amputations and bone graphs. In addition they perform sustaining treatment on injured coalition forces soldiers as well as local nationals – sometimes all in less than a 24-hour period.

Due to the poor economic state of the country, many Afghan civilians can not afford the expensive medical care they need. A simple broken bone left untreated can result in bone infection, loss of limb and possibly death.

Four days a week the clinic provides care to Afghans who have been referred to them by the Jalalabad Public Health Hospital. In this program, U.S. Forces and International Security Assistance Forces teamed up with the Nangahar Province Minister of Health to help give medical aid to people who would otherwise suffer due to economic circumstances.

“The care we give the local nationals is very important because the people can't afford it,” said Staff Sgt. Justin Steffans, ward master at the Advanced Trauma Life Support and Intensive Care Recovery Clinic. “Although at times it is very minimal, it's more than they could afford elsewhere.”

Enaytullah is an Afghan national who has been receiving treatment for a bone infection. Twice a month for five months, Enaytullah travels an hour and a half over mountain terrain on crutches to be seen. After five months of treatment to eradicate his infection, the 772nd were able to remove soft bone from his pelvic bone and fill in the deteriorated hole in his shin.

“By helping these people, it shows them that we are here to help,” Steffans said.

Immediately following the bone graph on Enaytullah, the call came in to do what they are here to do – four Coalition Force casualties were headed their way.

“Our sole mission here is trauma support to the war so when U.S. and Coalition Forces soldiers, local nationals or detainees are injured that comes first and the program clinic stops. We'll see them again, but not today,” Steffans said.



MARCHING TO THE SOUND OF THE GUNS

By **U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Steve Cushman**
Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Afghanistan

When it was announced that more Marines were needed to support Task Force 2d Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment in Afghanistan, close to 300 Marines raised their hands and volunteered.

Anxious to join the fight, these Marines deployed as combat replacements to fill in for the combat losses suffered by TF 2/7 since it arrived here in early April.

Of those who “stepped forward,” only 150 were selected. Surprisingly, many of the volunteers had just returned from serving in Iraq. Upon hearing these Marines had cut their post-deployment leave short, senior leaders were awestruck to see so many Marines come forward to support their fellow warriors in combat.

“This is what Marines do; they answer the call when needed,” said Sgt. Maj. Matthew B. Brookshire of TF 2/7, now part of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Afghanistan. “It was humbling to see so many volunteers. It is truly inspiring, and it speaks tremendously of their character and courage.”

The first group of combat replacements landed here at the Bastion flight line on Sept. 11. The date serves as a constant reminder of the atrocious and horrific attacks that took place on U.S. soil seven years ago.

Fresh from a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the combat replacements are supporting TF 2/7 in its mission to conduct counterinsurgency and full spectrum operations with an emphasis on police mentoring of the Afghan National Police. A reinforced infantry battalion of approximately 1,000 Marines, TF 2/7 is currently operating throughout the Helmand and Farah provinces – an area estimated as large as Vermont.

Brookshire offered thanks to the senior leadership at 1st Marine Division.

“Credit for getting the Marines here goes to the 1st MarDiv staff,” Brookshire said. “Everything we have needed, they have found a way to make it happen. Their support has been outstanding.”

Assembled from various units within 1st Marine Division, the combat replacements had only a short time to prepare for this deployment. The Marines of 2/4 had just returned to California a few months ago.

“We came back from a deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit in mid-July,” said Sgt. Sean R. Patereau, a machine

gunner from 2/4. “We weren’t scheduled to return from block leave until Aug. 21, but most of us were back by the 18th to deploy to Afghanistan.”

“Marines march to the ‘sound of the guns,’” said Lt. Col. Rick Hall, commander, TF 2/7, noting that he was thoroughly impressed by the caliber of Marines joining his task force and absolutely floored by the number of Marines who had volunteered to join his unit.

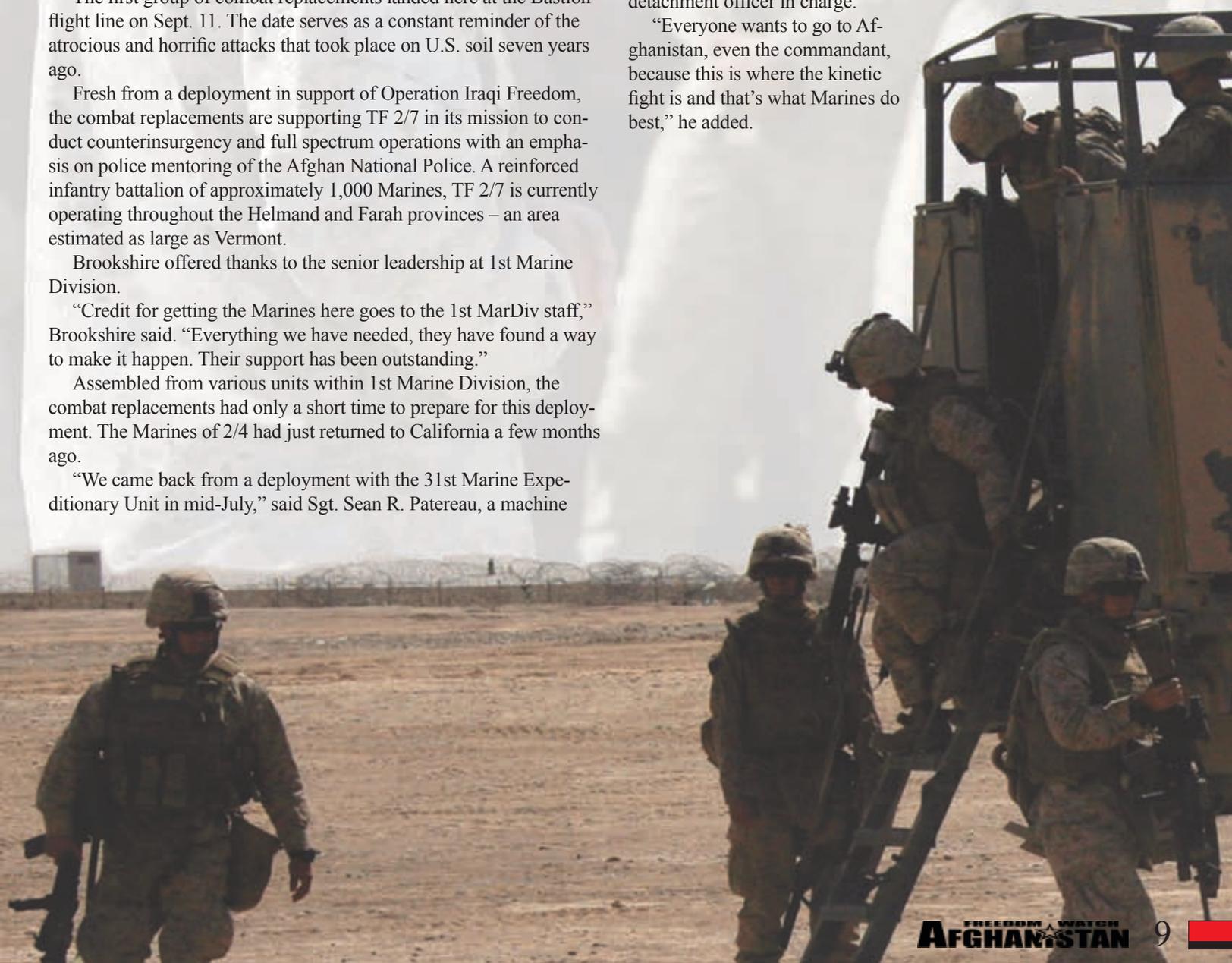
Many of the Marines said they volunteered because the battalion needed help and Marines go where they are needed. One Marine even volunteered because his childhood friend serves with TF 2/7.

“Sgt. Alvin M. Klauson, Jr., and I grew up in the same neighborhood. We lived five houses apart, and went to the same high school,” said Cpl. James D. Shymanik, an assaultman from 2/4. “I came out here to help him.”

The majority of the Marines, however, said the reason they volunteered for this deployment was the chance to fight.

“Nobody joins the Marine Corps for college benefits, or because you make a lot of money. It doesn’t matter if they’re a rifleman or an aviation tech, people become Marines because they want to go out and fight the war,” said Capt. James D. Searels, the combat replacement detachment officer in charge.

“Everyone wants to go to Afghanistan, even the commandant, because this is where the kinetic fight is and that’s what Marines do best,” he added.





WARRIOR PROFILE

Rank\Name: Master Sgt. Derek Fromenthal

Country, Branch of Service : U.S. Air Force

Hometown: New Orleans

Deployed Unit and Job Title: Combined Air Power Transition Force, J6 Communications Superintendent

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, camping, and sports

Quote from Supervisor: "MSgt Fromenthal is the most motivated, competent, enthusiastic, and downright pleasant individual I've worked with in over 22 years in the Air Force! From convoys to VIP comms, Fro does it all. There's nothing he can't handle. In less than a few weeks, he's moved our programs forward by many months. I'm very fortunate to

have him on board because he's definitely got my 6."

-- Maj Charles Kaiser, CAPTF Director of Communications

Times deployed: Twice, Baghdad, Iraq last summer and Kabul, Afghanistan currently for 179 days.

Best thing about deployment: Knowing that my efforts are going toward building the Afghan National Air Corps.

Free time activities: Going to the gym and studying for the promotion test.

Plans upon return: Personal -- vacation time with my wife and kids, fishing, camping. Professional -- pickup where I left off leading the Mission Systems flight and continue to be a leader in the 5th Combat Communications Group.



Introduction to Afghanistan

BACKGROUND

Ahmad Shah Durrani unified the Pash-tun tribes and founded Afghanistan in 1747. The country served as a buffer between the British and Russian empires until it won independence from notional British control in 1919. An experiment in democracy ended in a 1973 coup and a 1978 Communist counter-coup. The Soviet Union invaded in 1979 to support the tottering Afghan Communist regime, touching off a long and destructive war. The USSR withdrew in 1989 under relentless pressure by internationally supported anti-Communist mujahedin rebels. A series of subsequent civil wars saw Kabul finally fall in 1996 to the Taliban, a hard-line Pakistani-sponsored movement that emerged in 1994 to end the country's civil war and anarchy. Following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a U.S., Allied, and anti-Taliban Northern Alliance military action toppled the Taliban for sheltering Osama Bin Ladin. The U.N.-sponsored Bonn Conference in 2001 established a process for political reconstruction that included the adoption of a new constitution, a presidential election in 2004, and National Assembly elections in 2005.

In December 2004, Hamid Karzai became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan and the National Assembly was inaugurated the following December. Despite gains toward building a stable central government, a resurgent Taliban and continuing provincial instability remain serious challenges for the Afghan Government.

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 647,500 sq km (slightly smaller than Texas)
Border countries: China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
Climate: Arid to semiarid; cold winters and hot summers
Terrain: Mostly rugged mountains; plains in north and southwest
Natural resources: Natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones
Natural hazards: Damaging earthquakes occur in Hindu Kush mountains; flooding; droughts
Environmental issues: Limited natural fresh water resources; inadequate supplies of potable water; soil degradation; overgrazing; deforestation

Phrases

Do you speak English?
Englisi yawd dawri?

Do you need help?
Shoma ba komak zaroorat dawrayn?

Who's in charge?
Awmer kis?

Is it far?
Door as?

Who?
Ki?

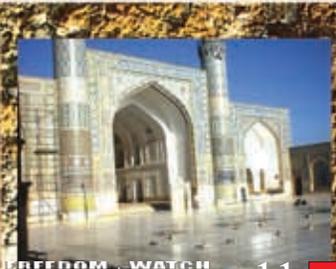
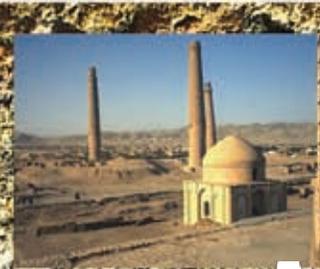
What?
Chi?

Which direction?
Kodawm taraf?

How many?
Chand taw?

Where?
Kojaw?

C
U
L
T
U
R
E





photos from the field



Task Force 2/7 Marines conduct range weapons training at Camp Bastion in the Helmand province. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Steve Cushman)



Army Maj. Paresh Patel, 1-26 medical officer, performs a routine check-up on a local Afghan girl in the Konar province. (Courtesy photo)



Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Hoskie Attson, explosive ordnance disposal technician, Company E, Task Force 2d Battalion, uncovers the components of an IED near Patrol Base Wishton in the Sangin District. The EOD Marines assigned to Echo Company have responded to more than 100 IEDs during their six months of operating in the Sangin area. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Steve Cushman)



Spc. Andrew Taylor, Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team Security Forces, joins a member of the Afghan National Police in providing overwatch protection during a mission to evaluate a road project on the way to Baliq. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Kristina Barrett)



Canadian army Warrant Officer Merlin Longaphie inspects communication equipment. Longaphie is a member of the Canadian Operational Mentor Liaison Team. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech Sgt. Laura Smith)



UNIT SPOTLIGHT

Name of Unit: Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team

Country, branch of service: Joint team composed of U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, Department of State, U.S. Agency of International Development, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Department of Agriculture

Unit mission: Plan and execute stability missions to employ information operations, public affairs, reconstruction projects, election monitoring, and humanitarian assistance to support strategic objectives.

Unit deployed from: The team was assembled from various units all over the world to include Japan and Europe.

Unit history: PRTs have operated in Afghanistan since December 2002; there are currently 26 ISAF PRTs across

the country. Based at Forward Operating Base Lagman, PRT Qalat was formed in April 2004. In February 2008, PRT Qalat became the Zabul PRT to reflect the team's mission throughout the province

Interesting unit facts:

Working closely with GIROA officials, we can show the population that the local government was put in place to help them with security, reconstruction, healthcare and daily challenges. To say our mission is rewarding is an understatement -- nothing can describe the joy a child feels when he's given school supplies or toys; what a husband and father feels when he can take home food to support his family; or what a widow feels when she's learned a skill that will bring money to her household.