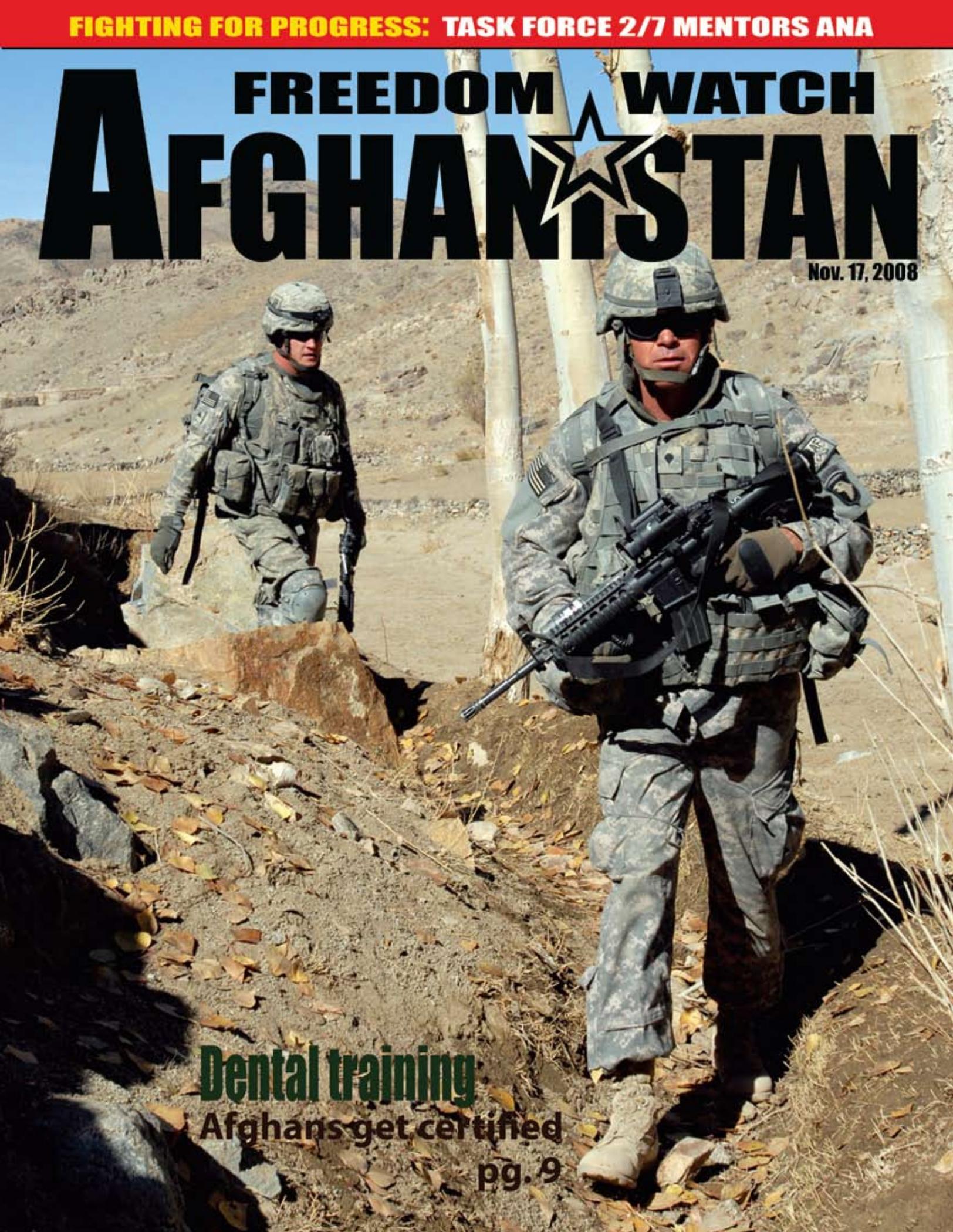


FIGHTING FOR PROGRESS: TASK FORCE 2/7 MENTORS ANA

FREEDOM WATCH AFGHANISTAN

Nov. 17, 2008

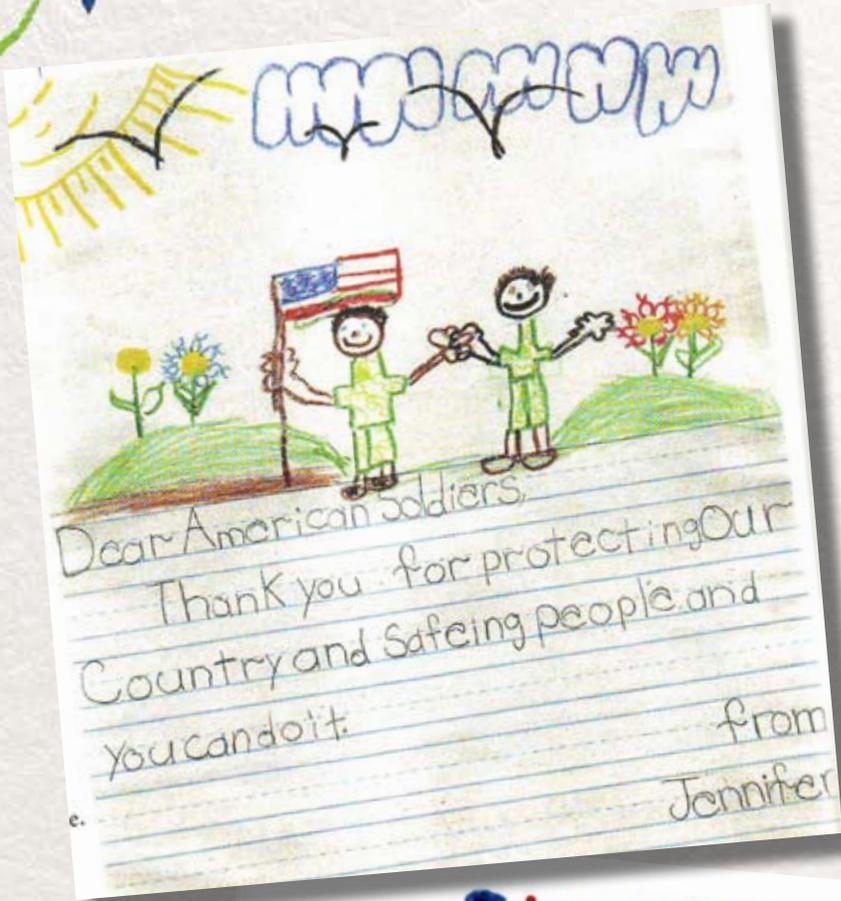


Dental training

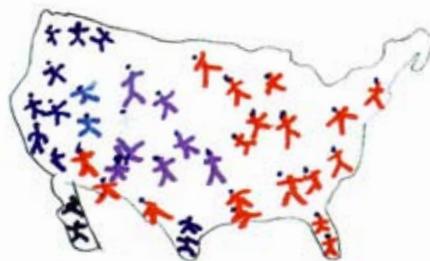
Afghans get certified

pg. 9

from the kids



THANKS!
FOR PROTECTING
OUR COUNTRY!



Freedom Watch Staff

Commander, AFN Afghanistan
Air Force Lt. Col. Leslie Pratt

Superintendent, AFN Afghanistan
Senior Master Sgt. Brent Squires

Editor/Print NCOIC
Tech. Sgt. Kristina Barrett

Assistant Editor
Marine Corps Cpl. Kimberly Crawford

Layout/Design
Air Force Staff Sgt. Marcus McDonald

Layout/Design
Senior Airman George Cloutier

The *Freedom Watch* magazine is a weekly publication of AFN Afghanistan and Combined Joint Task Force 101.

Commander, CJTF-101
Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser

Public Affairs Director, CJTF-101
Army Lt. Col. Rumi Nielson-Green

Freedom Watch, a U.S. Department of Defense publication, is published each Monday by the AFN Afghanistan's Print Section located in Bldg. 415, Room 205 at Bagram Air Field, 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 AFN Print Section staff, which can be reached at DSN 318-431-4458.

Front cover: Two 101st Airborne Division Soldiers follow a goat path while patrolling a valley in eastern Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mary Gonzalez)



Back cover: See unit spotlight on back cover. To submit your unit, e-mail freedomwatch@swa.army.mil.

Contents

Nov. 17, 2008



3

Afghan Army learns SABC skills

4

Soldiers, ANP focus on Jowlzak Valley



6

Marines mentor police in Helmand province

8

Soldier stands out from the crowd



9

Afghan dentists get emergency training



Findings released

Combined Joint Task Force-101 has released unclassified findings of an investigation into the July 13, attack on a U.S. vehicle patrol base in Wanat Village, Kunar province.

Nine U.S. Soldiers died in the attack, fighting off an estimated 200 enemy forces. The report provides facts, findings and recommendations about the incident.

The investigation concluded that the vehicle patrol base perimeter was never breached and the nearby observation post was never lost or overrun. The report also found the preparedness of Soldiers on the scene was high, and despite a complex attack by a large force, the Soldiers actions prevented the enemy from overrunning their positions and ultimately forced the enemy to retreat.

The report also noted the discipline of the 24 Afghan National Army Soldiers stationed at the base who fought alongside the 48 U.S. service members.

Findings in the report recommended the removal of several Wanat government officials. However, the 15-6 investigation provides this as a recommendation only – ultimately Afghanistan is a sovereign nation and the U.S. military neither appoints or removes government officials.

Volunteers visit hospital

International Security Assistance Force's Volunteer Community Relations and Resources' team geared up for a goods distribution mission at the Indira Gandhi Institute of the



Child, Afghanistan's only functioning pediatric hospital.

The volunteer group was made up of servicemembers and civilians of the many different nations that work for the International Assistance Security Force headquarters in Kabul.

The visit also served as a learning experience for those members of the group who had not yet visited the hospital.

The children's hospital distribution followed a recent visit to the hospital by Air Force Chaplain (Maj.) Eric Whitmore, who had an introductory meeting with hospital director Dr. Al-haj Khalilullah.

Petraeus talks security

Gen. David Petraeus, the new commander of U.S. Central Command, met with Afghan Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Wardak and other Afghan officials in Kabul to assess security and ongoing war efforts.



Petraeus was scheduled to meet Afghan leaders as well as top U.S. and NATO military officials, including Gen. David McKiernan, commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.

In September, the international community voted to support the Afghan national army from its current strength of 67,000 to 134,000. The growth of the ANA has been unprecedented, with 26,000 soldiers added to the ranks last year. Plans are in place to expand by 28,000 this year, according to Maj. Gen. Robert Cone, commanding general of Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan.

Wardak said in an Oct. 16, ceremony, "the creation of the ANA

has been the physical manifestation of the new Afghanistan, continually transforming a nation which is determined to take responsibility for its own destiny once again."

CSTC-A reports the ANA is leading more than 60 percent of the combat operations in which they participate.

CENTCOM's area of responsibility is in the Middle East including Egypt and Central Asia, and is the main American presence in many military operations in the ongoing Global War on Terror.

Insurgents killed

Afghan National Security Forces and Coalition Forces killed several insurgents during an extended patrol in Shah Wali Kott District, Kandahar province.

Insurgents ambushed a coalition security patrol using rifles, machine guns, rocket propelled grenades and mortars. ANSF and coalition forces responded with a variety of weapons fire.



Witnesses reported seeing insurgents firing machine guns, rockets and RPGs from the rooftops in the area, as well as mortar teams firing around the ambush site.

Civilians reportedly attempted to leave the area, but the insurgents forced them to remain as they continued to fire.

Kandahar Chief of Police Matulla stated he received reports of several civilians being injured while attempting to leave the area. The causes of their injuries are being investigated.

Coalition reports confirm nine insurgents were killed.

No ANSF or Coalition Forces casualties were reported.



Courtesy photo

Australian Army Pvt. Duncan Stamp, a Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force One carpenter, helps Afghan instructors during a carpentry project at the Trade Training School.

Australians teach Afghans carpentry, trade skills

Story courtesy of ISAF

Australian Army Soldiers with Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force One have been teaching construction skills to Afghans at the Trade Training School in Kamp Holland in Oruzgan province since October.

The Trade Training School, which has been in existence since September 2006, teaches the youth of Tarin Kowt the basics of plumbing, painting, tiling, carpentry and advanced construction.

“This is a really great program. There’s no opportunity for the Afghans to conduct their own training like this and there’s no other vocational school in the area,” Cpl. Michael Cole said. “Unless they have a family member who is a carpenter or plumber, they’re not going to get the training.”

“The more people who learn skills here, the bigger the impact out in town,” Cole added.

The Trade Training School helps provide a more stable economy in addition to helping out the local population. It gives the youth an alternative avenue of education so they can learn a trade and get employed, he said.

“A lot of things are new to them and they’re very enthusiastic and hard workers,” Cole said. “We just hope they keep up that work effort once they leave.”

The Australians are helping the International Security Assistance Force by assisting the Afghan government in extending and exercising its authority and influence across the country and creating the conditions for stabilization and reconstruction.

“It’s good teaching,” said a Trade Training School Afghan instructor. “We want the students to rebuild Afghanistan and help our community.

“I want every Afghan to help ISAF and the Australians to help rebuild Afghanistan and stop all of the terrorism,” added the instructor. “ISAF is here to rebuild Afghanistan and help our people.”

Afghan army learns self-aid, buddy care

By Tech. Sgt. Kristina Barrett
Freedom Watch Afghanistan

Afghan National Army Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade, 38th Field Artillery at FOB Kala Gush are learning self aid and buddy care skills, furthering the knowledge and ability of their unit.

Medics from the Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team teaches a weekly class covering the basics from how to dress a wound to calling in a medical evacuation.

“The ANA are learning the same skills as any coalition military member does,” said Senior Airman Shannon Gruett, PRT medic. “This allows Afghan and Coalition Forces to be on the same level.”

Teaching these skills isn’t without its challenges. Some of the instruction goes against what they’ve learned through years of fighting.

In a classroom scenario, Gruett passes out five cards, each with a different medical emergency, and instructs the class to put them in order of precedence. Initially all of the participants agree the person with the head injury, who is unresponsive and basically beyond help, should receive immediate medical attention. Gruett says this is normal but since the person is beyond help, precious medical supplies should be used on the ones who can be saved.

After the scenario, Gruett explains to the Soldiers why one person should be assisted before another. In addition, she makes clear why some should continue fighting instead of aiding the wounded and why the wounded should continue to fight as well.

“If you have a minor leg wound and you are still able to fight, then go for cover and con-



U.S. Air Force photo by

Tech. Sgt. Kristina Barrett

Senior Airman Shannon Gruett passes out ‘injury’ cards during a self aid and buddy care class. She is instructing Afghan National Army Soldiers on combat life-saving skills as part of their training at FOB Kala Gush, Nuristan province. Gruett is a medic for the Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team.

tinue fighting,” she explained to the class. “If members of the unit are wounded or killed, you must move to a safe place before attending to them or you put yourself in danger too.”

Of the 38 ANA members currently undergoing training at Fob Kala Gush, most are young with no experience of serving in a formal army unit. Because of this, much of the instruction they receive is similar to basic training – small tasks broken down and learned in sequence. However, this doesn’t diminish their willingness to learn.

“The training we are receiving is very important to us and very helpful,” said Commander Mohammad Mazia, 2nd Brigade commander. “This is something we need to learn to make us a regular army unit.”

Although the language barrier is sometimes a problem – some speak Dari, others Pashtu – they don’t hesitate to jump in and translate from one language to another if a Soldier doesn’t understand.

“The language doesn’t matter,” Mazia said. “We will overcome that to learn.”

Soldiers, ANP focus on Jowlzak Valley

By Spc. Scott Davis
Combined Joint Task Force 101

Soldiers and Afghan National Police members recently patrolled the Jowlzak Valley in an effort to combat Taliban resurgence in the isolated area of Parwan province.

Alpha Company, 101st Division Special Troops Battalion, along with ANP, conducted their first air assault mission into Jowlzak Valley.

"There are a few reasons why we started focusing on the valley," said Army Capt. Dan Marques, a native of Corona, Calif. "It's inaccessible to any vehicles which makes it a perfect hiding place for Taliban and because of its isolation, the people don't get as much humanitarian assistance as they could use."

Jowlzak Valley is an isolated area in the mountains of Afghanistan containing six villages with almost no interaction with rest of Afghanistan.

"I think it went really well," said 1st Lt. John Button, 2nd Platoon leader, A Company, 101st DSTB.

The combined forces found very little evidence of Taliban activity and were able to hand out humanitarian assistance including food, water and radios before they departed.

With the company's success, the DSTB decided to visit every village inside the valley. The next mission focused on an even smaller village.

"We were able to get an idea on what these people really need while giving them some basic supplies for now," Marques said. "We want to let these people know that we haven't forgotten about them



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Scott Davis
Soldiers from Alpha Company, 101st Division Special Troop Battalion air assault into a village inside Jowlzak Valley in Parwan province. Afghan National Police searched the village while Soldiers provided security and conducted key-leader engagements.

and we want to help them in any way we can."

The village elder's only request was a road to be built that ran in and out of the village. Right now, villagers have a two-day hike over mountains just to leave the valley.

"The Coalition has had it in the plans to construct a road to the valley for a long time," said Capt. William Coulter, a native of Ft. Payne, Ala., and commander of A Company.

The Parwan Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team are planning to continue this type of effort in the Jowlzak Valley.

"This road project is one of the main Commander's Emergency Relief Program funded projects we have," Coulter said. "Right now these people have limited access to government service, medical care and commercial trades, but when the road project is completed these people will be able to get that care, grow economically and be connected to their government."



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Scott Davis
Gen. David Petraeus visited Bagram Air Field Nov. 6 and met with commanders for an updated assessment of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Petraeus visits Bagram Air Field

By Spc. Scott Davis
Combined Joint Task Force - 101

Commander, U.S. Central Command, Gen. David Petraeus, visited Bagram Air Field on Nov. 6 to talk with commanders and get updates on operations in Afghanistan.

During his first visit to Afghanistan since assuming command, Petraeus talked about the issues coalition forces face.

"Certain parts of Afghanistan have spiraled downward, but there has been continued progress in other areas, and that's the challenge we have to confront," Petraeus said. "Clearly there's additional emphasis, focus and resources required for the Afghan-Pakistan region, and it is a region. These two countries can't be looked at in isolation."

He went on to explain what steps the U.S. is taking to better support coalition operations in Afghanistan.

"The additional forces for Afghanistan have been requested by Gen. McKiernan and he has made his needs known," Petraeus said. "The coalition leaders and leaders at Central Command in the Pentagon have been working on those needs. The United States has already committed an additional U.S. Army Brigade Combat Team. That was made possible by offering one that was headed for a tour in Iraq."

Petraeus also talked about President-elect Sen. Barack Obama, and how Obama and his team will focus on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"There is a process that has already begun at the Pentagon," Petraeus said. "That's the discussion among the transition team members, President-elect Obama, the senior military leadership and the defense leadership. They will discuss objectives, resource requirements and then the relative degrees of risk."

Prepare for holiday mailing:

Post office issues guidelines

By Samantha Quigley
American Forces Press Service

As the holidays approach and military families start thinking about what they're going to send loved ones serving overseas, there are a few dates to keep in mind.

"The earliest deadline is for troops that are serving in the Iraq and Afghanistan area," said Al DeSarro, spokesman for the western region of the U.S. Postal Service.

"We do encourage people to closely follow these deadlines," DeSarro said. "Of course, we make every attempt, even if you miss the deadline, to deliver the mail to our troops."

Priority Mail Flat-Rate boxes are the best value when shipping to and from military members serving at home or anywhere overseas, DeSarro said. The largest flat-rate box costs \$10.95 to ship to or from an APO or FPO address. That's a \$2 discount, and the boxes are free.

The flat-rate boxes come with another bonus. If it will fit in the box and weighs 70 pounds or less, it ships at the established rate.

"We also offer a special military package kit, and this applies even if you want to send to our troops here in the U.S.," DeSarro said. "If you call 1-800-610-8734, they'll send you a free kit of packaging materials - priority mail boxes, tape, labels and stuff that can make your holiday packing much easier."

When shipping any holiday package, there are some basic guidelines to take into consideration, he added.

If a USPS-provided box isn't being used, senders should make sure the box is sturdy. Do not use wrapping paper or string on the outside, and print both the shipping and return addresses clearly.

Contents should be packaged securely and in leak-proof con-

tainers, and consider the customs of the country to ensure the items are appropriate and acceptable.

USPS also suggests including the mailing address, return address and the contents of the box on a slip of paper with the other contents, as a precaution.

Following not only the shipping date guidelines, but also the general packing guidelines can help the USPS deliver packages during the busiest time of the year.

DeSarro urges people to mail as much as they want and as early as they can, noting that officials expect 20 million pounds of mail will be sent to U.S. troops this holiday season.

Holiday mail deadlines

APO TO CONUS

Nov. 19

Parcel Post, Space Available Mail and Parcel Airlift

Dec. 6

Priority packages and First Class letters and cards

CONUS to APO

Nov. 21 Parcel Post and Space Available Mail

Dec. 1 Parcel Airlift

Dec. 4 Priority and First Class

By the numbers

\$10.95 largest flat-rate box

Free military package kit

1-800-610-8734 number to call to get the kit mailed

20 million pounds amount of mail U.S. troops are expected to receive during the holidays

Letters to the Editor

Question about graphics

In a recent issue of Freedom Watch Afghanistan, I noticed a symbol with Arabic writing accompanying a story about Taliban militants being arrested in Ghazni. There was no explanation or detail about that symbol with writing and I'm curious about its meaning.

- J.B. Bagram

We were under an assumption that this image was simply Arabic writing for the word Taliban. We contacted an expert on local culture for confirmation and found it is in fact Arabic writing for the Shahada, which is the first testament of faith or pillar of the Islamic Religion. The Shahada is a revered symbol of Islam. So, our use of the Shahada did not properly depict the message of the story. We sincerely apologize if any readers may have found this inaccurate or inappropriate.

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

Fighting for progress

**By Marine Corps
Cpl. James Mercure**
*Task Force 2d Battalion,
7th Marine Regiment*

When the Marines in the Helmand province aren't busy fighting insurgents, they're spending countless hours patrolling with the Afghan National Police to make them more effective within their own communities.

This has turned out to be a full-time job for the Marines of Task Force 2d Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Afghanistan, as they find themselves constantly engaged in firefights against a relentless enemy.

"Every time the Taliban engages in direct contact with Echo Company Marines, we make sure they pay a heavy price," said 1st Lt. Brandon Schroder, executive officer. "We take the fight to them instead of waiting for it to come to us."

Echo Marines are indeed in a serious fight – one they are committed to winning, according to Schroder.

Throughout their deployment, Echo Company has been responsible for conducting full-spectrum operations in a

vast area of the province. Daily operations include counterinsurgency operations with a focus on mentoring the Afghan National Police.

Although the focus of effort remains centered on helping the Afghan people and strengthening the ANP, increased attacks have resulted in more security patrols as the Marines remain vigilant against a dangerous foe.

"Task Force 2/7 has a lot of challenges, but one the enormous size of our area of operations - more than 28,000 square kilometers or about the size of Vermont," said Lt. Col. Rick Hall, TF 2/7 commanding officer.

"We have delegated a tremendous amount of responsibility down to the squad leader level, and these young Marines and Sailors have proven themselves time and time again," Hall said. "I'm continually amazed and impressed by what they're doing."

As the Marines carry out their duties, they find themselves combating enemy forces in an unfamiliar territory.

Located in one of Afghanistan's most remote and austere areas, the company must conduct patrols in a vast, dry and desolate area.

While Echo Company has left its mark in Afghanistan, the Marines are

equally proud of the significant strides they have made in training the ANP.

As more policemen are trained and serving within their own communities, Echo Marines are confident they will overcome the Taliban threat.

"When we first got here the fighting was really bad, but it's starting to level off," Schroder explained. "The Afghan National Army and the ANP are really coming into their own, both in combat and with day-to-day operations."

"The training programs we have in place are producing quality policemen," he added. "The ANP may be in its infancy, but it's continually moving in the right direction."

Since it deployed to Afghanistan in April, Task Force 2/7 has achieved a significant milestone in bringing peace and prosperity to the Afghan people



Marine Master Sgt. Tanos Chavez, Explosive Ordnance Disposal team chief attached to Echo Company, Task Force 2/7, carefully handles a piece of unexploded ordnance. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Chad Pulliam)

through various civil military operations projects and by laying down the groundwork necessary for follow-on U.S. forces to expand on the progress made throughout Helmand and Farah provinces.

“Bottom line, we want to give the Afghan people liberty,” Hall said. “We want to create a safe and prosperous environment where the people willingly accept the newly-trained Afghan National Police as a legitimate form of

local law enforcement, and to create the conditions where the people take responsibility for their own future.”

Marine Cpl. Clarence Smith, assistant squad leader assigned to Echo Company, Task Force 2/7, kneels during a security halt in the Helmand province. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Chad Pulliam)

By Capt. J. Elaine Hunnicutt

Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team

When the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team in northeastern Afghanistan rolls out the gate to win hearts and minds, they are sometimes faced with challenges.

Once they arrive at their location, there is always one Soldier who breaks the ice. He can be perceived as the biggest, scariest member of the team, but has a heart of gold.

Army Sgt. Michael Darrell, who is part of a security forces element, is referred to as the mayor of Jalalabad by members of his team and as John Cena, the famous wrestler, by the children he meets.

Darrell stands 6 foot 3 inches and is a mountain of a man in comparison to the local Afghans. But he's more than a big man.

"It's not just his physical size that is big; it's his presence, his heart," said Air Force Lt. Col. Paul Donovan, Nangarhar PRT commander.

Darrell helps share the word that Americans are good people through his friendly interactions with the local nationals.

"Darrell has helped the children of Nangarhar province understand that Americans are not bad people," said Staff Sgt. Robert Tracy, security forces squadron leader, "We are caring and want to see Afghanistan succeed."

As a way to give something to the Afghans, Darrell put together a local soccer team made up of select children in the neighborhood surrounding the base.

"Playing soccer with the kids gives me an opportunity to learn Pashtu, the native language, and the kids an opportunity to speak better English," Darrell said. "It also allows me to enjoy some physical activity other than the traditional push ups in a combat zone."

Darrell teaches the kids soccer skills, but there are even bigger lessons he teaches through his interaction on the field.

"I try to teach them manners. I try to teach them the difference between begging and asking for something," Darrell said.

Tracy said by helping young kids and teaching them the difference between right and wrong, he helps establish good relations for the future. Soccer teaches teamwork and respect and helps two cultures understand each other better.

Darrell's mother, Nancy Nicholson, is not surprised by his involvement with the children in Afghanistan. She said most of his free time is spent with children back home as well.

"He has spent countless hours coaching, mentoring and tutoring children at the Midway Boys Club in his hometown of Connellsville, Pa.," she said. "Michael's famous line is, 'I haven't always been a law-abiding citizen, but he feels if he can help anyone by learning from his mistakes, he will.'"

Army Sgt. Michael Darrell attaches netting to soccer goals he and his fellow Soldiers made for local Afghan children. (U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. J. Elaine Hunnicutt)

Afghan Dental Training 101

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

Members of the Zabul Provincial Reconstruction Team united with U.S. Public Health Service officials to offer an emergency dental care certification course to Afghan dental professionals from the province.

In Zabul, many people are forced to either provide for their family's immediate needs or pay for preventative medical care, and unfortunately, many Afghans have never seen a dentist.

"Dental disease is the most common disease in the world today," said Capt. (Dr.) Charles Craft, a dentist with the U.S. Public Health Service. "The World Health Organization has stated there are 6 billion people in the world and 5.2

billion people who have dental disease.

"For most Americans, it's not a problem," he said. "But for most of the developing world, if you have a severe toothache, you are not going to be able to sleep, eat or concentrate; and that affects the quality of your life."

Officials launched the five-week dental care course to enhance the skills of four area non-governmental organization dental professionals. It provided them the ability to establish free field clinics, complete with infection control standards in place, to offer emergency extractions and routine cleanings.

"We put them through pretty fast training, but they already had a background in dentistry," Craft said. "It was just a matter of showing them a few different techniques, emphasizing infec-

tion control, patient care, organization and professional set up. They picked it up quickly. That is the advantage of this type of training. It is something that can be easily taught, easily learned and easily reproduced after we are done, so it's an exciting program."

Craft said he believes the training will translate into Afghan residents receiving better treatment than they've ever had.

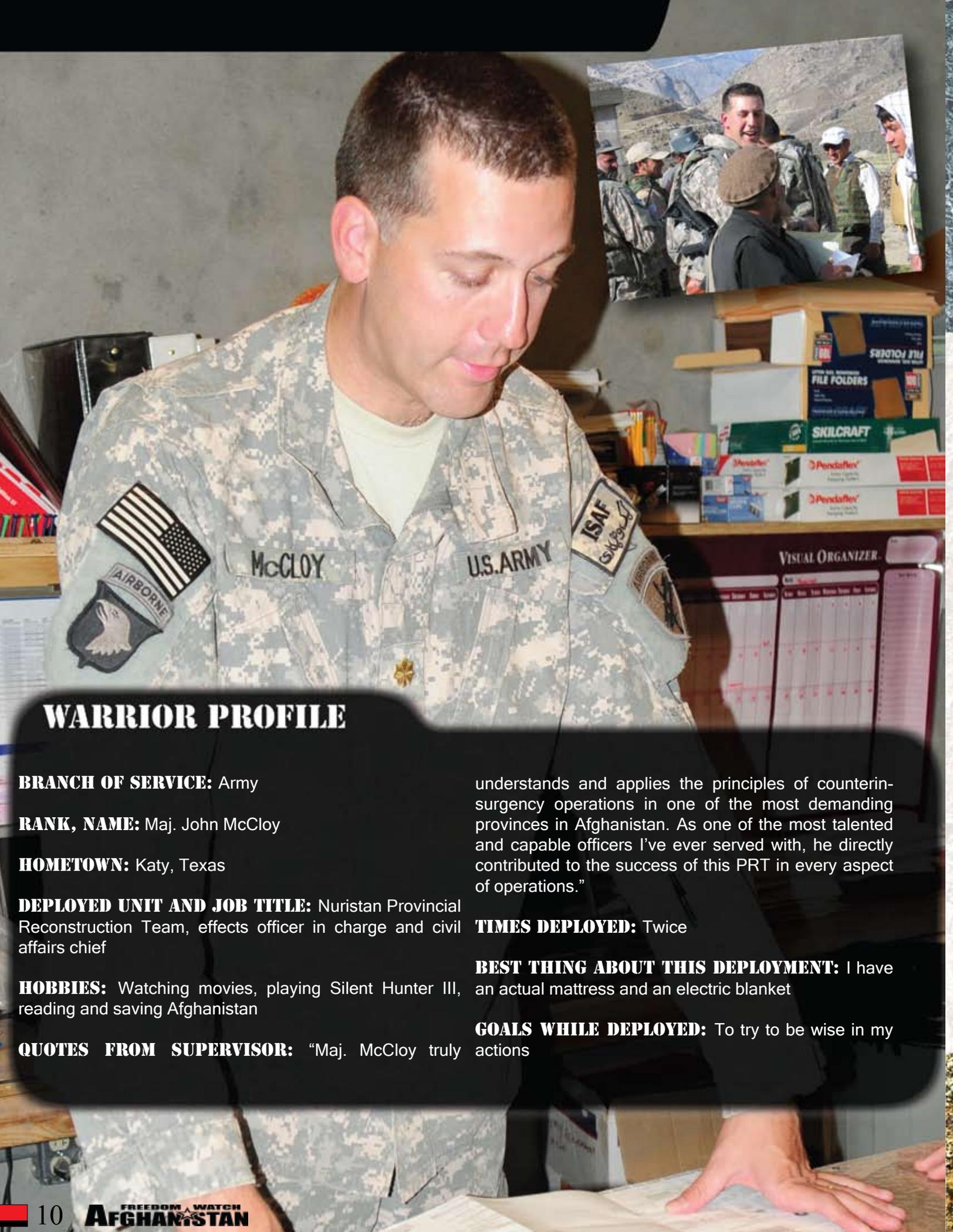
"It's important to bring this because the villagers rarely receive dental care, and when they do, it is not always up to the same standards as in the U.S.," said Staff Sgt. Nestor Albalos, combat medic.

Throughout the course, students saw patients, and Dr. Mohammed Ahmed, a dental course student, noticed how pleased they were.

"They are very happy," he said. "This is a very good program."

Noorullah Agha examines an Afghan boy's teeth during a village dental outreach visit. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Keith Brown)





WARRIOR PROFILE

BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army

RANK, NAME: Maj. John McCloy

HOMETOWN: Katy, Texas

DEPLOYED UNIT AND JOB TITLE: Nuristan Provincial Reconstruction Team, effects officer in charge and civil affairs chief

HOBBIES: Watching movies, playing Silent Hunter III, reading and saving Afghanistan

QUOTES FROM SUPERVISOR: "Maj. McCloy truly

understands and applies the principles of counterinsurgency operations in one of the most demanding provinces in Afghanistan. As one of the most talented and capable officers I've ever served with, he directly contributed to the success of this PRT in every aspect of operations."

TIMES DEPLOYED: Twice

BEST THING ABOUT THIS DEPLOYMENT: I have an actual mattress and an electric blanket

GOALS WHILE DEPLOYED: To try to be wise in my actions



Afghanistan: Demographics

The Demographics of Afghanistan are ethnically and linguistically mixed. This reflects its location astride historic trade and invasion routes leading from Central Asia into South Asia and Southwest Asia.

Afghanistan can be considered a country of minorities, as there is no group serving as a majority. Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group followed by Tajiks, then Hazaras and, Uzbeks as the third largest, followed by the Aimak, Turkmen, Baluch, Nuristani and other small groups.

Pashto and Persian (Dari) are the two official languages. Smaller groups in the country speak more than 70 other languages and numerous dialects.

The term Afghan is historically synonymous with Pashtun and is promoted as a national identity. Often Pashtun are referred to as Afghans while other groups hold to their ethnic name (e.g., Tajiks are known as Tajiks, Turkmen are known as Turkmen, etc.).

Ninety-nine percent of Afghanistan's population adheres to Islam. An estimated 80 percent of the population is Sunni; 19 percent are Shi'a. Islamic religious tradition and codes, together with traditional practices, provide the principal means of

controlling personal conduct and settling legal disputes. Excluding urban populations in the principal cities, most Afghans are divided into tribal and other kinship-based groups.

Population: 32,738,376

Age structure: 0-14 years: 44.6 percent; 15-64 years: 53 percent; 65 years and over: 2.4 percent

Birth rate: 45.82 births per 1,000 people (approximately 4.6 percent)

Death rate: 19.56 deaths per 1,000 population (approximately 2 percent)

Life expectancy at birth: Male, 44.04 years; female, 44.39 years

Total fertility rate: 6.58 children born per woman

Ethnic groups: Pashtun, 42 percent; Tajik, 27 percent; Hazara, 9 percent; Uzbek, 9 percent; Aimak, 4 percent; Turkmen, 3 percent; Baloch 2 percent; other, 4 percent

Religions: Sunni Muslim 80 percent, Shi'a Muslim 19 percent, other 1 percent

Languages: Afghan Persian or Dari (official) 50 percent, Pashto (official) 35 percent, Turkic languages (primarily Uzbek and Turkmen) 11 percent, 30 minor languages (primarily Balochi and Pashai) 4 percent, much bilingualism

Words & Phrases

How old are you?

Tsu kalan yast?

How many children do you have?

Tsumra mashuman lare/larey?

What is your religion?

Pe kum din ye?

Do you speak Pashto?

Pe Pasto pohezhe?

religion
din

age
omer

children
bachyan

death
marg

gender
jins

C
U
L
T
U
R
E





photos from the field



Airman 1st Class Justin Cole, 62nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron crew chief, removes the chinks of an MQ-1 Predator southern Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse)



A soldier with the 205th Afghan National Army Corps, 4th Brigade, stands in formation during a weekly inspection with Brig. Gen. Hamid, 4th Brigade Afghan National Army commanding general. (U.S. Army photo by Cpl. John Rafoss)



Marine Cpl. Benjamin Esparza, assigned to Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, walks through a cornfield on a security patrol through Musa Qal'eh. (U.S. Navy photo by Cory Tepfenhart)



A Talon explosive ordnance disposal robot picks up a piece of simulated unexploded ordnance at Kandahar Air Field. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse)



Master Sgt. James Bradley, 451st Air Expeditionary Group Logistics Flight, Ammo, inspects FMU-143 joint programmable fuses at Kandahar Air Field.. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse)



Unit Spotlight

Name of Unit: Provincial Reconstruction Team Nuristan Aid Station

Branches of service: Air Force, Army and Navy

Mission: The PRT Nuristan Aid Station is responsible for the medical care of all personnel attached to the PRT as well as U.S. contractors, Afghan National Army, Afghan Security Forces and local national workers on this forward operating base. The aid station conducts a local national sick call every Friday, and accept referrals from local clinics for ailments local doctors feel are beyond their capabilities. The medics perform clinic assessments to help determine the needs of local clinics, operate remote village medical outreaches and assist in the security and medical needs of the missions.

Unit history: FOB Kalagush has been established for two years. Previously there was only a joint aid station with the 1/6 Field Artillery, but now two aid stations are in operation.

Most interesting thing about the unit: We work hand-in-hand with the local doctors through a referral system we have set up. We train the ANA medic assigned to the unit on our FOB and conduct combat lifesaver/first responder classes to the unit. With our location being so secluded, we are often brought sick or critically injured locals who have no other option.



Would you get your unit in the spotlight?

If so, email the editor at freedomwatch@swa.army.mil

