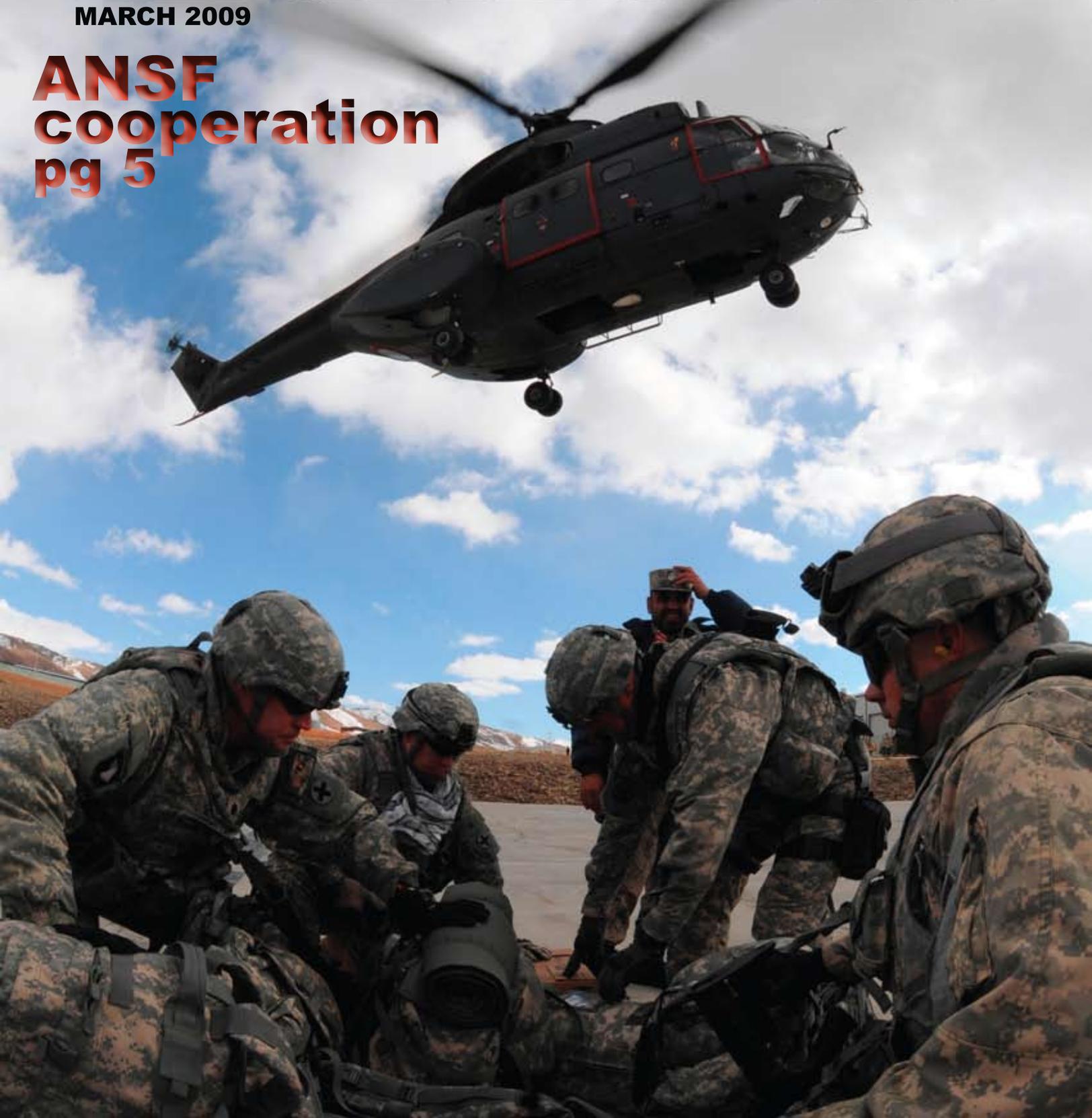


**NATO force modernization sets sights on future**

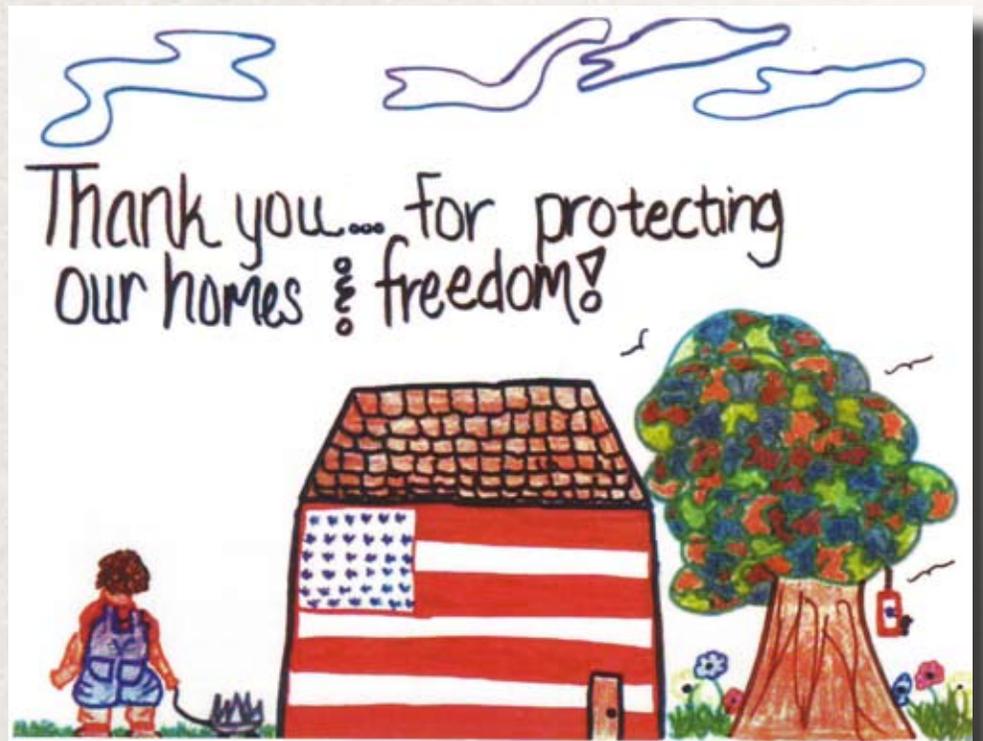
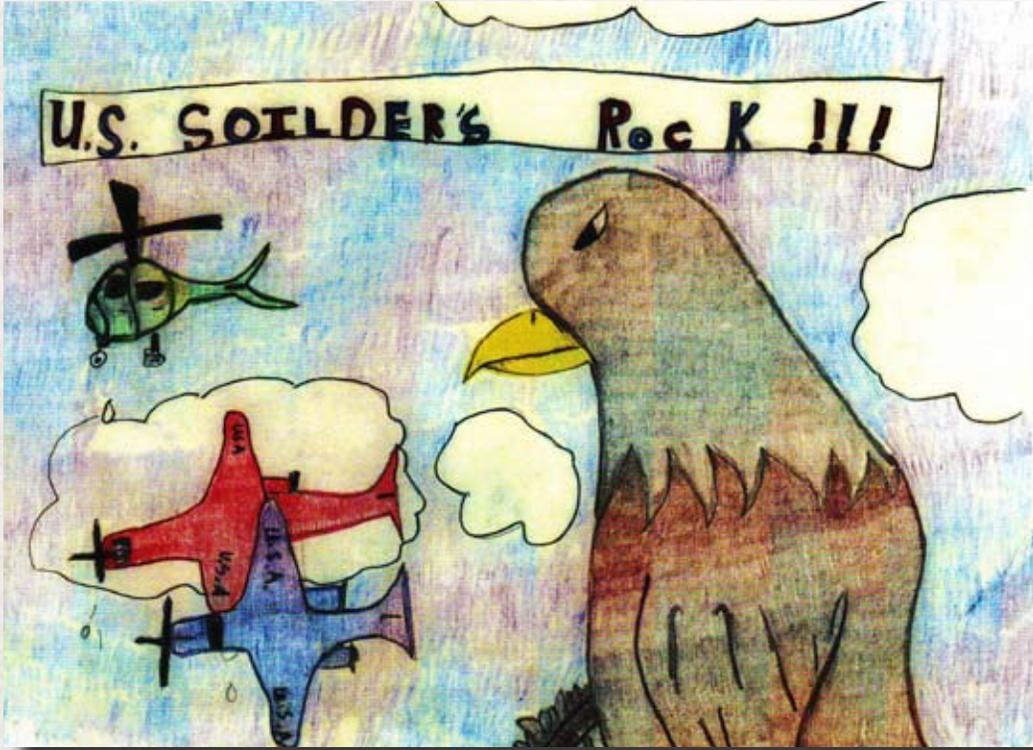
# **FREEDOM WATCH** **AFGHANISTAN**

**MARCH 2009**

**ANSF  
cooperation  
pg 5**



from the kids



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Soldiers ready for action



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Afghan National Army soldiers receive new weapons and training as part of NATO force modernization



## Norwegians repair vital Afghan well

Courtesy Article by ISAF

KABUL, Afghanistan (Feb. 07) - Clean water is one of the main foundations of every civilization. People need water for drinking, cooking and cleaning; something that many western countries take for granted.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers along with the Norwegian Support Element and the Norwegian Operational Mentor and Liaison Team repaired a broken well in Mazar-e-Sharif, Feb. 4.

“We came here to do repairs on the valves and weld the pipes,” said 1st Lt. Kenny Hansen, Transport Officer. “The way it is now, I hope everybody can go to the well, fill their buckets and go to their house to boil and drink their water,” he added.

The well broke approximately three weeks ago, forcing over 800 local Afghan families from two of the

well’s surrounding villages to drink out of a small local river, which is unsanitary.

An 18-year-old Afghan man, who spoke English, said that he and all of the villagers are thankful for ISAF and appreciate the Norwegians for repairing their well and giving them clean drinking water.

“The well is very important to us because the water that we use is not mineral water and it is very bad for us and the children,” he said. “We are very glad to have ISAF here and they are truly trying to help my people, and this water supply



Courtesy Photo by ISAF

International Security Assistance Force soldiers with the Norwegian Support Element and the Norwegian Operational Mentor and Liaison Team repair a broken well in Mazar-e-Sharif, Feb. 4.

is very important to us, we appreciate it.”

Lieutenant Hansen said he is glad the Afghans in the village will have clean water for everyday use.

## German forces provide jobs to local Afghans

Courtesy Article by ISAF

KABUL, Afghanistan (Feb. 06) - The German armed forces employ approximately 400 local Afghan nationals everyday on Forward Support Base (FSB) Camp Marmal, helping to keep the base going and boost the local economy.

The Afghan workers provide construction work, interpretation, vehicle repair, furniture moving, cleaning and other odd jobs.

“We need them, otherwise we would need more soldiers,” said Capt. Lars Hogenkamp, German Field Administration Office manager and native of Jever, Germany.



Courtesy Photo by ISAF

Camp Marmal, Afghanistan - A Local Afghan does construction work, Feb. 3. The German Armed Forces employ approximately 400 local Afghan nationals on Forward Support Base (FSB) Camp Marmal, helping to keep the base going and boost the local economy.

“They do a good job and are great workers. They are on time and are very reliable. They want to know everything and they learn fast.”

One of the Afghan construction workers said he and all of his colleagues are grateful for their jobs on base.

“We are all very happy working here, the money is good,” said the worker. “There are a lot of workers in Mazar-e-Sharif who need jobs. I would like to thank ISAF for giving the poor people jobs. I hope our country and economy will get better.

“We have economy problems from three decades of war and we have lost everything,” he added. “We just want a job, so we can have money and provide food to our children.”

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

# Recycling program starts at Laghman outpost

Story by Spc. Brandon Sandefur

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 09) — A recycling program aimed to improve air quality and reduce trash began recently at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, in Laghman province, Afghanistan.

Army Capt. Ryan Burrus, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander for 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry of the Illinois National Guard, got the idea to start a recycling program the moment he stepped onto FOB Mehtar Lam and noticed the amount of trash, general waste and increased level of pollution.

“I then began to brainstorm to see how we could limit the trash on the FOB and burn only trash and not things that could be recycled,” said Burrus, St. Louis, Mo. native.

Upon his initial assessment, Burrus began to formulate a plan on how to incorporate recycling into the daily routine.

“I got with the FOB carpenter, who is a National Guard Soldier and a union carpenter on the civilian side, the Field Sanitation Team and the battalion surgeon to brainstorm ideas,” Burrus said. “The carpenter rebuilt the trash bins out-

side of the dining facility and made receptacles for plastic, cans and trash.”

Many things had to happen for the recycling program to begin, though. Separation of trash and constructing labelled bins for where things went was one of the first steps to get the program started. Afghans on the FOB also took part in the program. The field sanitation team along with the interpreters made stencils for plastic, cans, paper and trash in English and Pashto to paint onto the trash bins.

In addition, the battalion surgeon and Burrus experimented with what it actually took to burn up all the trash in the trash pit. The incinerator on the FOB was not being actively used so to reduce smoke from the burn pit they began using the incinerator to burn trash.

“The air quality is much better on the FOB now verses when we first arrived here,” Burrus said. “There is almost no visible smoke in the air now and people can actually run around the track here.”

Along with Burrus, Sgt. 1st Class Donald Holland, Kellogg Brown Root and the FOB Carpenter are building trash points that will eventually be put up to ensure trash and recyclable materi-

als are separated all over the FOB.

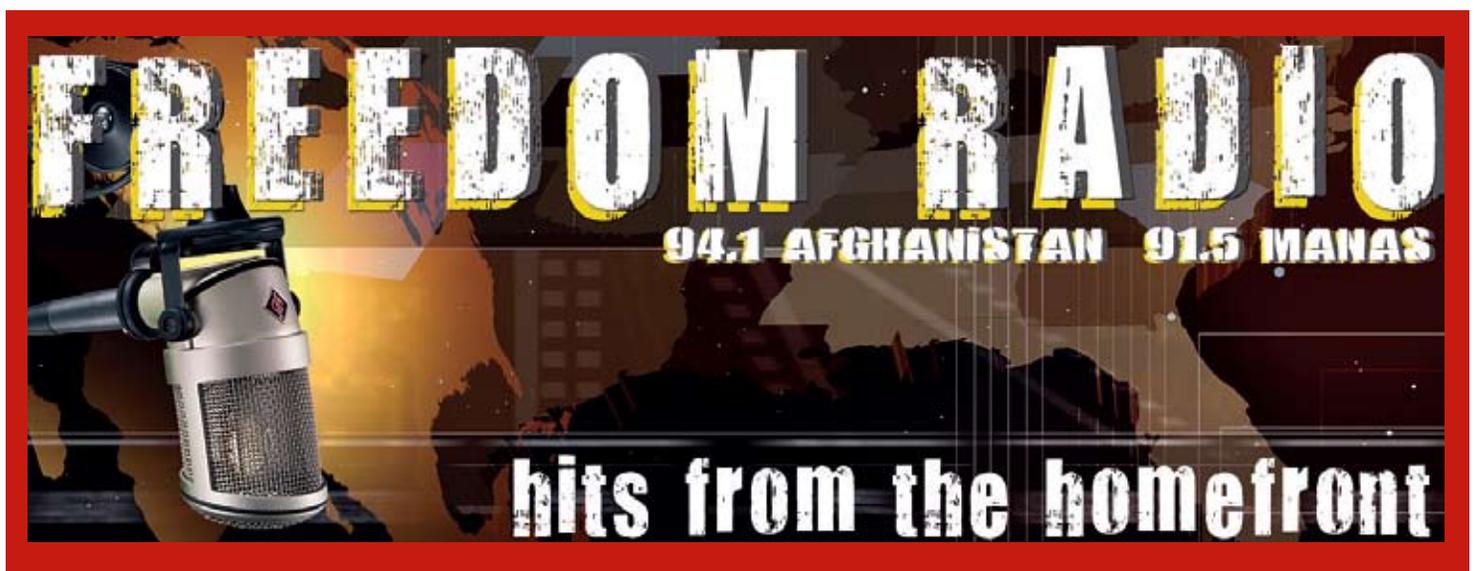
There is a noticeable difference in the air quality and the cleanliness of the FOB. The trash at the trash pit has greatly reduced and you see a good number of Soldiers, Marines and Airmen running on the track.

Burrus explained how the FOB has improved to 30 percent of recycling material versus the zero percent they were at before.

“We’re headed in the right direction and we can’t go 100 percent in a day,” Burrus said. “I hope that everyone gets with the message on the importance of recycling,” said Burrus.

The recycling efforts are paying off on the FOB with hopes for continued success.

“One of my duties here is the FOB Mayor, so making the FOB better is an important part of that,” said Burrus. Things like building Hesco barriers, running constantia wire and constructing guard towers are important, but finding ways to limit the amount of trash on a FOB improves the FOB quality and keeps it operational for a longer period of time.”



## Afghan prison guards receive training in Panjshir



*Tech Sgt. Charles Lambe of the PRT Panjshir security forces and Master Sgt. Blue Rowe of the PRT Panjshir civil affairs team instruct Dashtak Prison confinement guards in riot control.*

*Story and Photo By Maj. Kimberly Garbett  
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs*

PANJSHIR VALLEY, Afghanistan -- Approximately 25 of Panjshir Valley Ministry of Justice's confinement guards and district training officers from four of Panjshir's seven districts crowded in the Dashtak Prison to partner with the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team security forces members in cell extraction techniques and riot control training and drills, Thursday, Jan. 29.

The Dashtak Prison is the only prison in Panjshir Valley and is filled to capacity, holding approximately 54 prisoners.

"The first step in how to quell a riot," said Tech. Sgt. Charles Lambe, Panjshir PRT security forces NCOIC. "You need to have teams with members trained and roles pre-determined and rehearsed before a riot commences."

If your team knows what they are doing, the chance for success increases, added Senior Airmen Wade Lamb, Panjshir PRT security forces member.

"This is the first time a PRT has partnered with the prison guards and trainers at Dashtak," said Master Sgt. Blue Rowe, Panjshir PRT civil-military affairs NCOIC.

"It's obvious the guards have had some prior training, but what

they lack is equipment necessary to do the job," said Lambe.

"They also do not have a prison for women, nor a juvenile detention facility, which is something the PMJ hopes to work on developing; plans," said Rowe.

The goal in partnering with the Dashtak prison guards is to provide needed training, be a liaison and ultimately, be good neighbors, said Rowe.

Qurban Muhammed, Dashtak Prison lead training officer, said, he is thrilled to have the PRT and US Forces here for training. It will prove extremely valuable and successful.

Abdul Habib, training officer for the Paryan detaining facility, mentioned he is "grateful for the PRT coming to train them at Dashtak District so that we can do our best to improve our methods, training and techniques at our facilities in each of our districts around the province; it allows us to increase our security and governance abilities across the Panjshir Province."

According to Mr. Tom Kelsey, Panjshir PRT director, "They continue to lead the way in Afghanistan"

# Afghans hold N2KL Joint Security Conference

Story and Photo by Maj. Chevelle Thomas, 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 6) — Members of the Afghan government, security leadership and International Security Assistance Forces from Nangarhar, Nuristan, Konar and Laghman met at the Nangarhar governor's compound Feb. 2, to conduct the N2KL Joint Security Conference.

The purpose was to create a forum where leaders across all provinces could gather monthly to share information and ideas on how to improve security in N2KL.

"It is my goal to use this session to kick start and help work on the government's priorities and develop better cooperation as we build and empower the regions new Operational Coordination Center-Regional," said U.S. Army Col John Spiszer, Task Force Duke, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division commander.

The OCC-R is standing up in Jalalabad and will be commanded by Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Zia.

While talking about security in N2KL, the Konar governor stressed the impor-

ance of bringing additional troops into the area to protect the more than 250 miles of border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The TF Duke commander also spoke about the new 700 US Soldiers partnering with ANSF, mostly in the Konar border areas.

"We listened to Governor Wahidi's concerns and recommendations, and the new forces will focus on interdiction of the border," said Spiszer.

In addition to ISAF increases, the local ANSF is also growing in number. All four provincial governors and security leadership emphasized this need.

"Shortage of personnel will create some delays in reacting to specific missions or threats," said Col. Mohammed Avzal, ANA Brigade commander.

The governors also spoke of the people's tolerance of enemy activity.

"We need to create an environment where the people do not let the insurgency use their [homes and villages] to attack the Coalition Forces. To support government projects, we need to ask the people where their priorities are," said Jumaluddin Badr, Nuristan Provincial governor. "We must not undermine the

power of the people and the Afghan government. If we fulfill our promise then security will come."

Most of the leadership seem to echo the theme that where development comes security is improved dramatically.

"I am requesting all of the respective governors help us with roads, clinics and schools for things along the border. I think that if the people have access to those services, it will decrease security concerns down to 50 percent," said Brig. Gen. Mohammad Zaman Mamuzai, Afghan Border Police commander.

ISAF utilizes the Commander's Emergency Response Program to assist the people with economic development as a part of its overall counterinsurgency plan to transform the environment.

Many considered the conference to be a great success and a testament to the positive relationship between Afghan and ISAF leadership.

"The government and the Coalition should have close relationships that provide jobs, support education, pay special attention to intelligence, rule of law, and increases in ABP and ANA soldiers," Gul Agha Sherzai, Nangarhar province said.



BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 6) — Nangarhar Governor, Agha Sherzai along with members of the Afghan National Army, Afghan Border Police and the Afghan Uniform Police discuss and listen to various topics on how to improve security within N2KL.

## Ceremony marks 20th anniversary of Soviet exit

By Air Force Capt. Dustin Hart  
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO, Nangarhar PRT

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Feb. 19) -- The Nangarhar Provincial governor hosted more than 200 guests during a celebration marking the 20th anniversary of the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan, Feb. 14 at his palace in Jalalabad.

Governor Gul Agha Sherzai celebrated the event with approximately 200 people, including Afghan government officials, former Afghan Mujahedeen commanders and Coalition forces partners.

Governor Sherzai spoke of the bravery of the Afghan fighters during their nine-year war with the Soviet Union and added thanks to the United States and international partners for their assistance in defeating the Soviets. The governor also spoke of the role Mujahedeen play in Afghanistan's future.

"We Mujahedeen have to be united and work together now for the bright future of all Afghan people," he said.

In addition to Sherzai, several other government officials including Provincial Council Chairman Fazel Hadi Muslimyar, shared stories from the war and thanked the U.S. government for helping the Afghan people during the difficult period.

The Soviet-Afghan War began in 1979 when Soviet troops invaded the country to install a new pro-Soviet leader and put down a growing uprising against Communist rule. When the last forces departed Afghanistan on Feb. 15, 1989, almost 15,000 Soviets and more than 1 million Afghans had been killed.

It's important for a nation to take time to remember the sacrifices made, blood spilled, and lives lost by its warriors, said Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Cabosky, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction

Team commander.

"Despite facing overwhelming odds, the Afghan people showed their incredible strength by forcing the Soviet superpower out of Afghanistan," he said. "They continue to show the same strength and dedication today in their fight for a safe, stable and free nation and a brighter future for their children."

Getting the opportunity to share in the celebration was an incredible experience, said Michael Sears, the Department of State representative to the PRT.

"Celebrating the anniversary alongside the Mujahedeen heroes who defeated the Soviet occupation was an honor," said Sears. "Few people on Earth did more to bring down the Soviet Union—one of the most vicious governments in history—than these Afghan veterans."

The U.S. assisted Afghanistan in their struggle against the Soviets because of the shared ideal of freedom, he added.

## Afghan contractors meet, bid on Jabal Saraj Power Plant project

By Capt. Jonathan Merrill  
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 19) — The Minister of Water and Energy, Hamyoon Kohastani, Task Force Gladiator Civil Affairs Team and Afghan engineer, Anwar Siawash, met with more than 30 local contractors interested in bidding on the refurbishment of the Jabal Saraj Power Plant, Feb. 15, in Charikar, Jabal Saraj District, Parwan province.

The Jabal Saraj Power Plant's turbine generators have dropped electrical output dramatically after more than 90 years of use.

This facility represents one of the United States' early investments in Af-

ghanistan, said Col. Scott A. Spellmon, TF Warrior's commander. TF Warrior is the headquarters for TF Gladiator.

"Constructed by American A.C. Jewitt from 1911-1918, the turbines and materials for this hydro-electric plant were hauled over the Hindu Kush Mountains by elephant carts. Today, its two general electric turbines still provide electrical power to the people of Jabul Saraj. We are excited and proud to restore this power plant to its original capacity," Spellmon said.

Over the course of three hours, Kohastani and Siawash explained expectations, answered questions and led a brief tour of the plant, said Army Capt. Bonitto Housen, TF Gladiator

Civil Affairs Team leader, who helped coordinate the pre-bid meeting.

Siawash, who works with TF Gladiator as an engineer and cultural advisor, described the meeting as a success.

"There was a very good turnout, and this prevents any misunderstandings between the contractors and TF Gladiator of what we expect for the refurbishment of this power plant," he said.

Local contractor, Abau Shkoor, commented as he left the power plant grounds, "This will be a great benefit for our country and our people...to have local companies bid on and rehabilitate this power plant."

# Army Engineers teach contractors to build school

Story By Spc. Brandon Sandefur  
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 13) —Members of the Army's Corps of Engineers recently taught, mentored and monitored local Afghan contractors to ensure the construction of a new school in the Laghman province of Afghanistan will last through the harsh climate for years to come.

Bill Stratton and Bill Martin, both natives of Kennewick, Wash., recently assisted Afghan contractors on a project called the Center of Excellence, which is a school for 5 through 15-year-olds. The project was done by Afghan contractors after some instruction to show them the proper way to build a lasting building.

"We mentor the contractor on bricklaying and how to do a basic design for a building," Stratton said. "We had a bricklaying class here at [Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam]; we had a practical exercise and we visited the jobsite,"

Stratton said. "We also assisted them in the basics of bricklaying and masonry work."

Some of the basics Martin and Stratton taught the Afghan contractors, in addition to laying the brick, was how to mix the mortar. Teaching them how to do things a different way from how they've been doing it in the past was a challenge, but it was necessary to get them to do quality construction.

"We taught them how to mix mortar, the difference between mortar for stone versus mortar for brick," Stratton said. "They did not know there was a difference before we showed them, so they now have better quality in their construction."

The students were taught through being shown how to do it right and shown what happens when you do it wrong so they learn to trust the skills and knowledge of the teachers.

"I made some mistakes in the prac-

tical exercise to show them what not to do," Stratton said. "They've learned these bricklaying skills from their father so it's hard to get them to switch to the ideas of a total stranger."

Stratton has a lot of experience in Afghanistan teaching his skills. This is his 5th trip to the country and he notes that the quality of construction he sees has improved greatly.

"The quality of work on my first deployment to Mehtar Lam was pretty poor," Stratton said. "Statements of work didn't hold the contractor to the standards they now do. The quality of construction is much better now and statements of work are 15-20 pages with detailed explanation of the work to be done and the technical requirements."

Teaching Afghan contractors to do this is important to the stabilization so they can eventually do it on their own. With help from the Army's Corps of Engineers they are well on their way.

## Konar province improves health care with polio vaccinations

Story by Navy Lt. j.g. James Dietle  
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO, Konar PRT

KONAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Jan. 25) — With the help of the Konar Provincial Reconstruction Team, the government of Konar province began an extensive vaccination drive targeting polio.

Although vaccinations of the polio virus are common and have been very successful throughout established nations, Konar's developing health services, road quality, and regional conflicts have all created an environment that makes it challenging to administer the vaccine.

The Konar PRT has used millions from the Commanders Emergency Response Program to build and enhance infrastructure, which is a step to getting better health care, said Capt. George Hupp, Konar PRT Civil Affairs.

The oral polio vaccine was provided by Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health.

"These vaccinations will prohibit the people from several diseases that can be life threatening. Not only have we worked on this with roads, but we have also contributed money to attaining medical ambulances for servicing the people on a more

routine basis," Hupp said.

Several ambulances were provided by groups including Aide Medicale Internationale (AMI) and PRT Konar.

However, the ambulances of the local government are limited by the infrastructure. Modern health care professionals are also difficult to train in this area. These factors have slowed the implementation of vaccination programs until now.

With plans to contract pack animals to reach remote areas, volunteers are aiming to distribute the vaccine to the most secluded areas in the province.

"Where we cannot go we will take animals and walk" stated Sayeed Wahidi, Konar Provisional Governor.

"The vaccine should reach over 130,000 children across the province," said Doctor Sayed Ameer Fatimi, Konar's Public Health Minister.

Local officials are hoping this will be enough to vaccinate every child under the age of five across the region in two months.

"This will only be the beginning, as I plan to get children and adults more vaccinations for more diseases such as hepatitis and tuberculosis," said Fatimi.

# Village receives new place of worship mosque opens in Kapisa province



*Kapisa Governor Abu Baker, Deputy Governor Haji Safi, and Provincial Council Chairman Dr. Monawar cut the ribbon during a celebration on Feb. 6 for the opening of a new mosque in Landokhel Village, Tagab District, Kapisa Province.*

*Story and Photo by  
1st Lt. Lory Stevens  
Task Force Warrior Public Affairs*

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 6)— Governor Khuweja Abubaker, Tagab District Police Chief Colonel Zarawar, local officials, elders and a crowd of approximately 50 Afghans gathered in Landokhel Village of Tag Ab District, Kapisa Province, on Feb. 6 for a ribbon cutting ceremony at a recently refurbished mosque.

“The mosque was refurbished by

French Task Force Tiger at the request of the village elders,” said Kapisa and Parwan PRT Civil Affairs Staff Sgt. Felipe Perez, explaining how villagers desired a place to study the true and peaceful Islam without the influence of the insurgency which uses Islam for their own purposes.

The mosque will serve approximately 400 local villagers in the Tagab Valley.

French ground forces, the Afghan Police and Army, the US PRT, and

every local Afghan leader was present in a unified show of support behind the mosque opening.

“We are gathered in a place of peace and worship to show the enemies of Afghanistan that the people will not be deterred from providing a safe and secure future for our children,” said Governor Abu Baker.

Prayer rugs were passed out to approximately 40 local nationals in attendance.

## 2-2 trains ANA soldiers for future missions



Story and Photos by  
Tech Sgt. Jill LaVoie  
2-2 INF, 3rd BCT, 1st ID,  
PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 22)—Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, are improving the Afghan National Army's ability to respond to enemy activities through various joint training exercises at Combat Outpost Pegasus.

Delta company Soldiers are training local ANA soldiers on basic infantry tactics, including basic rifle marksmanship, first aid, building clearing and how to react to enemy contact.

"I requested this training because it's good for the soldiers. Many forget some of the skills because they don't have the opportunity to train that often," said Afghan Army Capt. Abul Salami, a company commander from 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 205th Corps.

Most of the soldiers have received about five months of training prior to the basic rifleman marksmanship class, but for some it was their first training experience.

"Many of them displayed infantryman skills, such as a good sight picture and sight alignment – essential keys to being a skilled marksman," said Staff Sgt. Jeffery Adams, a

platoon sergeant.

Today's training was more than improving our allies' infantry skills. It was about the next step for the Afghan military, he added.

"We give them the initial training and teach their NCOs and leaders how to do it," Adams said. "Eventually they will be able to train themselves without having to be guided by us."

The overall goal for the training is so the ANA soldiers won't need the assistance of U.S. forces.

"It's the end state. We are training the ANA so they can defend themselves and [be able to handle enemy activities better]," said 1st Lt. David Ochs, of Charlottesville, Va. "We are training them to replace us."

Though the construction on their post hasn't begun yet, the ANA remain motivated and willing to receive the advanced training.

"These guys are extremely motivated and live in harsh conditions – worse than our Soldiers. The least we can do is give them some good training and help them be at a better state of readiness," said Capt. Michael Soyka, Company D commander. "Training of the ANA is the most important mission we have out here. It gets them ready to take our job and let this country stand on its own."

*Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division instruct ANA Soldiers on basic rifle marksmanship. The instruction the ANA Soldiers are receiving will allow them to respond to enemy activity better.*

## Czech PRT trains farmers in Logar province to harvest greater yields, greater profits

*Courtesy Story*

POL-E ALAM, Afghanistan (Feb. 21)— The Czech Republic-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar province has launched a new project with the aim of supporting local agricultural cooperatives.

The one-week training will help them in gaining high profits and sharing ideas and information.

In Logar Province, more than 50 agricultural cooperatives were established in recent years. The coalitions of farmers present many advantages for its members, as easier gaining a bank credit or the state loan. Nevertheless, not all of them are well known about all those possibilities. The one-week marketing training will help them in the process of offer and distribution their traditional

as well as new products. “The agriculture in Logar has been affected by many problems. For example, we miss seeds in good quality, water for irrigation, but also education and marketing skills,” Hadji Ghulam, one of the participants said. “The cooperatives are good way for us – in the group of more people we are stronger and we can sell our products more effectively. I believe this training will help us to share the information and to get known more about the management of our cooperatives.”

The project is 225 farmers from all Logar cooperatives, who will be trained by three Afghan experts and share the knowledge with their fellows. Therefore, the impact of project will reach more than 6’200 people from whole province. The

training includes the issues of marketing, management and the basics of accounting.

The agriculture development is one of the Czech PRT’s priorities, while it presents the main livelihood manner in Logar. The most of farmsteadings are still based on the family principles, but cooperatives are more and more common. They produce mainly fruits, vegetables and wheat, which are sold to Kabul, Pakistan or to Middle East countries.

The Czech PRT consisting of nine civilian experts and 275 soldiers assists the people of Logar from March 2008. Support of education, health, water and irrigation projects and good governance and justice are the priorities of the Czech PRT besides agriculture projects.

## Task Force Duke promotes Afghan rule of law in N2KL

*Story by Pfc. Charles Wolfe  
3rd BCT, 1st ID, Public Affairs Office*

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 19) — As part of an effort to improve governance and promote legal awareness throughout Afghanistan, legal personnel from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, are encouraging recognition of a court system and a universal set of laws.

Reports of legal disputes in the district have nearly ceased, however, illegal activities continue. The apparent deficiency prompted Abdul Qayoum, Nangarhar’s provincial prosecutor, to ask the brigade’s legal team for assistance.

“Part of our responsibility as Task Force Duke’s legal team is to promote the Rule of Law throughout N2KL

[Nangarhar, Nuristan, Konar, and Laghman provinces],” said Capt. Michael Vincent, TF Duke’s Deputy Judge Advocate.

Afghan Rule of Law dictates crimes and punishments, but also requires action within a system some natives may question. Instead, many Afghans turn to “pashtunwali,” a system of tribal law.

“The Afghan people, particularly at the tribal level, are holding onto the system of settling disputes of all kinds through the tribal elder system. They view it as quicker and more enforceable than what they perceive the formal system can do,” Vincent said.

However, because of the many tribal differences, the lack of a universal legal system can lead to deliberation over appropriate punishments.

“It’s kind of a law that’s been developed over years in that tribe, so there’s vast differences from tribe to tribe and region to region,” said Master Sgt. Timothy Conner, TF Duke, senior paralegal.

Communication efforts across the country as the brigade tries to educate Afghans about using their legal system. The 1st Inf. Div. Soldiers employ a number of outlets to get publicity for their cause including advertisements, news article, and word of mouth.

The publications, meetings, and programs are part of a large effort to bridge the government to its constituents, allowing the citizens of Afghanistan to solve their disputes in a peaceful fashion.

The goal is to give Afghans confidence in their government’s ability to enforce society’s laws, Vincent said.

# Guryak truck bridge fosters brotherhood in Konar



*Officials from the Konar Government are the first to drive a truck over the Guryak Truck Bridge, Feb. 17.*

*Story and Photo by Navy Lt. j.g. James Dietle, 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO*

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 20) — The official opening of the 280 meter Guryak Truck Bridge, connecting the districts of Noor Gul and Khas Kunar, took place, Feb. 17.

Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi, governor of Konar province, has been working with the Konar Provincial Reconstruction Team for the past year to complete the truck bridge for Konar province.

District governors, village elders, and Governor Wahidi worked through a process called the Provisional Development Council to build the \$1.7 million bridge.

Traditionally, Afghans conduct Shuras, a community meeting, to discuss common interests. In Konar province the PDC is a formalized version of the successful Shura process.

Over a year ago, the PDC agreed on

the need for a truck bridge and asked PRT Konar to help them reach their goal. With the Guryak Truck Bridge officially opened, all their work has paid off.

Governor Wahidi stated during the ceremony, “The reason reconstruction is going so well in Konar is because the PDC gets everyone’s input. If everyone is in agreement, there isn’t a problem.”

The Konar River provides water for the local people and irrigation for their crops. However, it also forms a substantial barrier dividing the Konar River Valley into east and west.

The bridge allows Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army personnel to quickly respond in the area. Many of the same transportation problems that face villagers also face Afghan Security Forces in the region.

The situation in Konar is unique. The Pakistan and Afghanistan border is very

close to the river, which forms a natural division between groups of villages, said Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Jeremiah Vandermark, PRT Konar engineering staff. Some would say that the villages on the eastern side of the river have more in common with Pakistan than with their Konar brothers. This bridge allows the people of Konar to unite together to form a more cohesive government.

More than 200 villagers from surrounding areas came to see the opening ceremony. Governor Wahidi and other government officials were joined by members from PRT Konar to give speeches and to cut the ribbon officially opening the bridge to traffic. A ceremonial truck displaying the colors of Afghanistan took the government officials of Konar across the bridge to officially open it for public use.

# Soldiers save infant girl

By: Pfc. Christina Sindors

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 4) – A joint effort between Soldiers with the Afghan National Police Mentor Team out of Forward Operating Base Wilderness and the Salerno Combat Support Hospital saved the life of a 9-month old Afghan girl from Paktya province.

On a mission to a village in the Gerda Serai District, Paktya province, the Soldiers of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Currahee and the Wilderness PMT were approached by an older man who begged for medical help for his granddaughter. The man was from a nearby village and the medics informed him to bring the girl to their base and they would provide the medical attention.

Three weeks later, the man brought his severely burned 9-month old Afghan granddaughter to the base. Illinois National Guard medic, Sgt. Benjamin Sleaford, attached to Troop C, and Sgt. Dylan McGee, and Soldier with Troop C, took the girl to the base aid station for evaluation.

“As we began examining her, we were shocked,” said Sleaford, a Geneseo, Ill. native. “She had severe burns over most of her skin from the buttocks down to the soles of her feet. At first we thought she had 3rd degree burns and might lose toes or even her legs.”

The mother informed the Soldiers that the little girl had rolled into a cooking fire and that she had taken the girl to an Afghan medical clinic near their home. Her burns had been soaked in iodine and a thin layer of gauze was wrapped around her feet.



*A 9-month old Afghan girl receives emergency medical treatment for serious burns at the Salerno Combat Support Hospital, Khost province, after being Medevaced from FOB Wilderness, Paktya province.*

The medics carefully began to cut the gauze and clothing out of the burns as they tried to clean up the wounds. They evaluated her burns and immediately sent photos to the Salerno Combat Support Hospital in Khost province, for consult.

“We cleaned and treated her as well as we could,” said Sleaford. “But we’re just an aid station, we don’t really have the means to treat the kind of burns she had. She needed to go to a hospital.”

The Soldiers on FOB Wilderness took to the little girl immediately and began gathering money, food, baby wipes and supplies to give the family to help care for the girl.

“She was in a lot of pain and the only real thing we had to give her was children’s Tylenol,” said McGee, a Louisville, Ill. native. “We tried to make her as comfortable as possible, but she was hurting.”

Task Force Currahee headquarters was contacted and soon a MEDEVAC transported the girl, some of her family to FOB Salerno, Khost province to the Salerno CSH located there.

The staff at the hospital had already received photos of the little girl’s burns and the condition she was in, and immediately set up a treatment regimen.

She received skin grafts to the bottom of her feet, and after a more thorough inspection, the doctors were relieved to find only 2nd degree burns. She received several baths and a thorough debridement, where the charred skin was removed or washed away.

After the girl left FOB Wilderness, Spc. Jenna Seward, a medic with Company C, 801st Brigade Support Battalion, who works at the hospital, passed on updates and information to her husband, Spc. Christopher Seward, also a medic stationed

at FOB Wilderness. Seward and her husband kept the Soldiers at FOB Wilderness updated on the little girl’s condition.

A week after the girl was MEDEVACed, Sleaford and McGee, stopped by the hospital to check on her. They held her, talked to her attending doctors and nurses, and were greatly relieved that the burns were not as bad as they had originally believed they were.

The little girl, although bright-eyed and doing well, will still face recovery time at the hospital, and then routine checkups will be scheduled for the girl at the FOB Wilderness Aid Station.

# Airman's deployment cultivates progress



Photo by Air Force Capt. Stacie Shafran

Air Force Capt. Don Moss, Provincial Reconstruction Team Paktya's intelligence officer, attended the Paktya Women's and Children's Day celebration at the Director of Human Rights compound in Gardez.

Story by Air Force Capt. Stacie Shafran  
Paktya Provincial Reconstruction Team

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 4) – For an intelligence officer with a passion for Middle Eastern culture, being deployed as part of a provincial reconstruction team is the experience of a lifetime.

Air Force Capt. Don Moss, from Scott Air Force Base's Air Mobility Command, Air Intelligence Squadron, Ill., is the chief of PRT Paktya's intelligence section. His primary job is identifying and training his team about IEDs and other threats to the unit.

The forward operating base he is located just outside of Gardez City in Paktya province, approximately 45 miles from the Pakistan border.

Moss is optimistic about the progress he and his team can bring to Paktya.

He has cultivated a stronger relationship between the PRT and the Mulwi or senior religious leaders of the province. The team meets regularly with the them

to discuss security challenges and this effort has been rewarded through several instances where threats have been identified.

"Meeting with the Mulwi is an extremely positive experience and we're all looking forward to fostering this relationship and using it to benefit the lives of the people in Paktya," said Moss.

Moss has also been a driving force in the Paktya District government outreach program, which extends Afghan governance throughout the province by facilitating key leader engagements between provincial, district and village level leaders in remote districts.

"Paktya's rural areas and the areas least visited are those most at risk from the enemies of Afghanistan," Moss said.

PRTs have become an integral part of the long-term strategy to transform Afghanistan. The Paktya PRT is focused on projects such as road construction that will connect people to the provincial infrastructure, foster relationships between

districts and increase trade.

"Afghan lives and governance are getting better because of the U.S. military members serving in Afghanistan. On a day-to-day basis, there are people all over Paktya who are experiencing positive events that were foreign to them in the past under Taliban and Soviet rule," Moss said.

As a graduate of the Arabic Special Projects Course at the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey, Calif., Moss understands the importance of being able to communicate with the people his team works closest to. In an effort to increase cultural understanding between PRT members and the locals, Moss created a Pashto language course for his colleagues.

"The ability to communicate is essential for this team and truly enhances our relationship with villagers throughout the province. We are fortunate to have so many opportunities to meet the unique people of Afghanistan," Moss said.

# Cav. Scouts take on tough mission

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. David Hopkins 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 13) — Cavalry Scouts of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd

Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, along with the Afghan National Army, perform regular missions along the unpaved roadways in the Konar province of northeastern Afghanistan.

“We do about 20 to 25 missions a month,” said Army Capt. Paul Roberts, HHT commander, an Alton, Okla., native. “We do Combat

Logistics Patrol over watch, night patrols, route recon.”

Recently, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Soldiers conducted a CLP over watch at one of the most frequently attacked locations along the main road running through their area of operations. They were called on to guard a convoy of supply trucks and military vehicles as they passed through the dangerous stretch to transport supplies to out posts in the region.

“CLP over watch missions are the hardest. They require the most combat power and there are a lot of moving parts,” Roberts said.

The location the scouts were watching has been attacked several times over the preceding months, including a large attack on a convoy last October wounding four American service members in a close-range ambush.

During the latest mission, the scouts sat on a plateau along the river where they have a vantage point along the road, while a group of Afghan Na-

tional Army soldiers headed up a mountainside to set up a position with a view from above.

As they scan the road, the valley and the hillsides, they watch cars and trucks, children playing in the small village, goat herders or any other movement for possible threat. They use binoculars, laser range-finders and the naked eye, and they watch and wait for the convoy to come through.

The scouts saw some suspicious signs along the road and on the mountain ridges, but the mission went off without incident. The supplies were delivered and no shots were fired. This is not always the case for the cavalry scouts. They are frequently attacked and have to counterattack. However, the scouts are well trained for such attacks and for the mission, and they are gaining experience with every operation they perform.

“I’m really proud of my guys,” Roberts said. “They’ve been doing exactly what I expect of Cavalry scouts. They are out there all the time doing a tough job.”

The scouts’ leadership has many hopes for the future of their troop, but their main hope is for the Afghan National Security Forces.

“My biggest hope for the future of the unit is for the ANSF guys,” Roberts said. “My hope is that all the ANSF guys get better and take on more responsibility, extending the face of the government, take the fight to the bad guys. Until then we’ll be there doing our job.”

# Soldiers join together for self-help MWR project

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Derek L. Kuhn

40th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 13) – An all-volunteer construction crew enhanced the living conditions at Forward Operating Base Lightning by constructing a Morale, Welfare and Recreation center made entirely of unwanted, recycled or unused material.

The new MWR center, which took approximately 30 days to construct, is comprised of three separate connex rooms with a wooden deck connecting the three rooms.

“If you got lemons then you make lemonade’ has been for the most part mastered,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John Prayer, FOB Lightning Command Sergeant Major.

Funds, however, were virtually nonexistent. Army Lt. Col. Jerome Harms, Senior Surgical Nurse with Afghan Regional Security Integration Command-East, turned to the FOB Lightning community and sought volunteers. The community responded overwhelmingly.

The sign-in room houses eight computers and has the capacity to expand to a 16-computer room.

The phone room has four phone lines that allow service members to speak with friends and family. The room has the capacity to add two more phone lines, with the possibility of adding standing phone booths.

The third room is a game room containing a pool table and a



*Members of the Forward Operating Base Lightning community enjoy a game of billiards at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center. The MWR center is run entirely by volunteers.*

stereo system. The material used to construct the center was obtained from across the base.

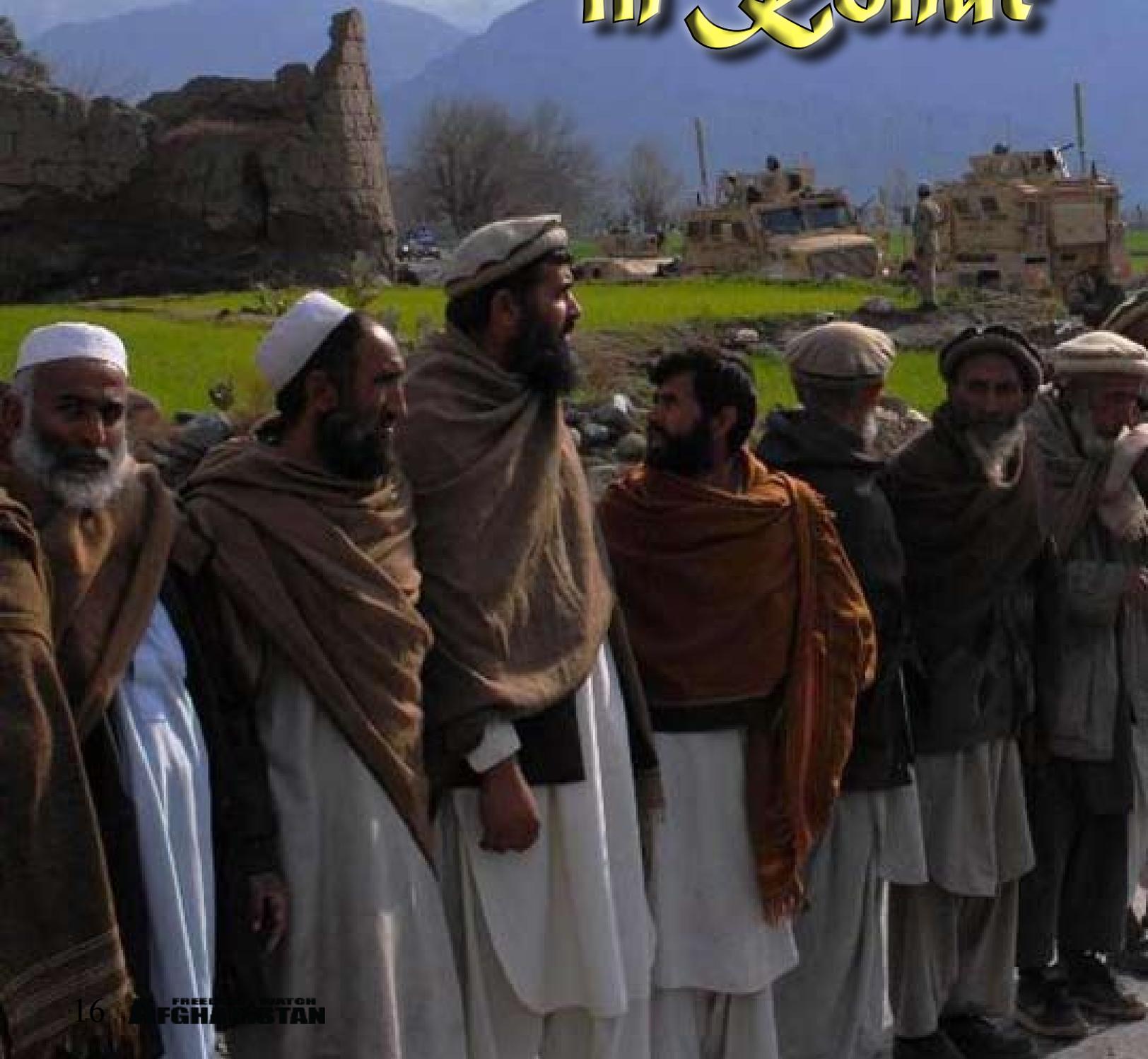
Items used for the project included unused, recycled or unwanted material from around the FOB.

The volunteers of this group dedicated a very large amount of their personal time toward the project, said Harms. The project also promoted team unity and will continue to encourage a more family-like atmosphere, he added.

Before the project started, the FOB Lightning community had been without Internet access or phone lines for around two months.



# Road opening paves way to success in Konar



*Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. David Hopkins  
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO*

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 15) --International Security Assistance Forces announced the opening of an improved road and the closing of a combat outpost in two separate ceremonies on Feb. 5 in the Konar province of Afghanistan.

After more than two years of construction on the road in the Deywagal valley, with the combined efforts of the Unique Builders Construction Company, Konar Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Provincial district governments, the road was built totaling \$3.9 million.

Navy Cmdr. Murray Tynch, PRT Konar commanding officer, spoke of the benefits of the new road and how it will allow the ability to provide security and basic medical care to remote areas of the province. Tynch also emphasized how the road will decrease the risk of Improvised Explosive Devices on these routes and improve trade in and out of the rural areas.

The 11 kilometer road is ready for traffic and the Combat Outpost Seray, which provided security for the road construction crew, is no longer necessary, showing progress in the region.

"In the past you were only dreaming of the road," Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi, Governor of Konar province, said. "Now we see it and drive on it. We have all sacrificed for the road and paid a high price. We paid this price for access to schools, hospitals and markets."

The original idea of improving the road began when 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, was in the area for Operation Enduring Freedom Seven in 2006, and has come full circle now that they are back to see the completion of the project. The unit saw the need for development in the area and spoke with elders about what they wanted and needed. The road and COP were the result.

"We saw that it was an isolated valley and seemed to be very poor," 1-32 Inf. Army

Command Sgt. Maj. James Carabello said. "When we met with the elders they said they wanted two things: A new road and security by coalition forces during the construction. That valley has a great deal of potential and we came through on our promise."

The opening of the road is important because it will allow the Afghan people the ability to take a larger role in their future and allow them to better access to markets and commerce.

"Through the road we are providing the people access to the government," Carabello said. "This is a great success for the people of Afghanistan. It will also allow them to get to markets easier."

Now that the road going through the valley is complete COP Seray is no longer necessary in the area for protection and is being closed down.

"This was a huge success," Maj. Kendall Clarke, executive officer for 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, said. "We can hand over the road to the Afghan government and they will have to continue with security in that area, allowing us to focus on other areas."

The completion of the road through the Deywagal valley is not the end of road work in the province and COP Seray will not go to waste. The UBCC will take over the outpost and will use it as they continue roadwork in the province.

"The UBCC will continue construction to connect the road to the Korengal Valley," Clarke said. "Then what was a six-hour drive will only take 30 minutes."

ISAF is turning over direct security of the valley to the Afghan government, but 1-32 Inf., who has just returned to the Konar province, will continue to have a presence in the province.

"We will be turning over security of the road in that area to the government, but 1-32 Inf. will continue giving support throughout the Konar province," said Clarke. "They will still be there to help as they continue making progress in the province."

# Contractors teach Afghan Soldiers

Story and Photo by  
Pfc. Derek L. Kuhn  
40th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 12) – Contractors from Military Professional Resources Inc. have designed an eight-week course to teach Afghan National Army soldiers how to drive, maintain and affectively utilize up-armored humvees and light tactical vehicles in combat.

The first five weeks of training consist of familiarization and driving. At the end of this period, the ANA have one of their soldiers administer a driving exam to the trainees.

The next three weeks are composed of military procedures and maneuvers. The training culminates with a convoy live-fire exercise which involves live rounds being fired while maneuvering the vehicles.

The instructors want to give the ANA the capability to be self-sufficient on the battlefield, said Gregory Grant, a team leader for one of the MPRI training teams.

Grant's teammate concurred.

"It is so the ANA can provide better support for their country," said Ted Tasker, an instructor for MPRI. "We are building their fire support weapons systems, which are the vehicles with weapons mounted on them. A modern army is better equipped to support themselves."

Some have observed the Afghan soldier's quick learning tempo.

"They are really good when they get their hands on the equipment," said Grant.

Some attribute the ANA soldiers' quick absorption of the curriculum to their attitude.

"All of the soldiers enjoy the training," said Assnatullah Nezey,

ANA Sgt. First Class.

"They are very excited about the training and new equipment fielding," said Tasker.

However, Afghan soldiers credit their instructors.

"We have received very good training," said Nezey. "The mentors have very good participation with us."

The instructors use demonstration as their primary teaching tool.

"The most effective teaching technique with the ANA is demonstration because of the cultural and language barrier," said Grant.

Tasker believes the real benefits will be realized after the students return to their units.

"One of the biggest challenges we face is the language barrier," said Tasker. "But that is why I think the guys going back are going to take it back to their units and they'll probably be more effective [teachers] because they speak the language and it is always easier to have your boss teach you."

Because of the training, Nezey and his comrades have received, the Afghan sergeant is optimistic about his country's future.

"If the [entire] ANA gets training like we do here, we'll have a very secure country," said Nezey. "We will have good future."

The instructors enjoy reflecting on the impact of their present actions.

"It's rewarding," said Tasker. "It is an historical opportunity for our team to come out here and assist the Afghan government in providing security for their country."

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (February 02) – An Afghan National Army soldier familiarizes himself with a turret in an up-armored humvees. ANA soldiers are receiving training on how to use the up-armored humvees by Military Professional Resources Inc. at Forward Operating Base Thunder.

# Clinic gives ‘Hope’ to Afghan village children

Story and photo by Air Force Capt. Dustin Hart, 3rd BCT, 1st ID, Nangarhar PRT

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (Feb. 8) —Mina Wali, an Afghan-American woman who has lived in the United States for 28 years, returned to Afghanistan four years ago to help bring a brighter future to the people here.

Through her hard work, close relationships with the local villagers of Sham Shapur and her relentless fund-raising efforts, she has personally brought education and healthcare to the rural village.

In 2006, an Afghan school, Hope of Mother, was completed and now educates approximately 400 students, more than half being females. And on Feb. 4, two Hope of Mother schoolgirls helped cut the ribbon signifying the



(From left) Surkh Rod District Subgovernor Said Ali Akbar, Army Maj. Gary Knoer, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team Civil Affairs team leader, and Mina Wali, director of Hope of Mother, cut the ribbon signifying the completion of the basic healthcare facility. Wali raised the funds and constructed the Hope of Mother school and clinic with the support of the Surkh Rod government and local villagers.



Courtesy Photo

Mina Wali presents a notebook to a student for scoring the highest exam grade in his class, while Air Force Capt. Dustin Hart, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, watches on. The Hope of Mother school educates more than 400 students.

completion of the Hope of Mother clinic in Nangarhar’s Surkh Rod District.

“My hope and desire for everyone in this village was to make [these two facilities] a reality,” Wali said, during the clinic ribbon-cutting ceremony. “Now that desire has been met, and I couldn’t be happier.”

During the ceremony, Said Ali Akbar, Surkh Rod sub-governor, thanked Wali for showing the “lamp of education” to the people of his district.

“I’m proud to be part of the health and education movement taking place here and it’s my honor to be here today for this event,” Akbar said. “Now, it is our responsibility to take care of this building as if it is our own.”

With the completion of the new clinic, students and villagers will have access to immediate basic healthcare.

Although the funding for Hope of Mother projects comes from Wali’s international fund-raising efforts, the Nan-

garhar Provincial Reconstruction Team assists with reconstruction projects, such as drinking wells, in Sham Shapur, and provides school supplies to the Hope of Mother students, while developing a relationship with the school and village.

“Mina and the people of this village show the true Afghan spirit,” said Maj. Gary Knoer, Nangarhar PRT Civil Affairs team leader. “This clinic was Mina’s dream that she shared with the village. Through the hard work of the villagers and assistance from their government, this became a reality.”

Wali also credited the recent successes to the dedication of the local villagers.

“All reconstruction you see here is the work of these villagers,” she said. “These people volunteered their expertise to do this work.

“I want to prove to the international community that these villages are safe for this type of reconstruction. It’s the people that make these places safe.”

# On Chosin ground...

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. David Hopkins 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 04) —1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, officially took over responsibility of a region along the Pakistan border in northeastern Afghanistan in a traditional uncasing ceremony on February 4.

1-32 Inf., nicknamed Chosin Battalion after the Chosin Valley in Korea, is taking over the region from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, who has conducted counterinsurgency operations in the area since June of 2008.

“The battalion has a great history in the Army and a great history right here in the Konar province and Afghanistan,” Army Col. John Spiszer, 3rd BCT, 1st ID commander, said. “They are ready to go and I have great confidence in them.”

The territory 1-32 Inf. is taking over is not unfamiliar to the battalion. They were deployed in the region during Operation Enduring Freedom VII and spent 16 months in operations in the province.

“[Bringing us back to this spot] was one of the smartest decisions our leaders have done,” Army Command Sgt. Maj. James Carabello, 1-32 Inf. command sergeant major from North Andover, Mass., said. “We are familiar with the area, we have relationships with the people, with the government and with the elders. The people remember us. The people who walk around on the streets remember us and that it important to our success.”

The 1-26 Inf. units will be moving to a different area where their skills will be better utilized in the overall mission.

“They [1-26 Inf.] did a phenomenal job here over the past six months,” Maj. Kendall Clark, executive officer for 1-26 said about the outgoing units.

1-32 Inf. will take over where 1-26 Inf. left off as they continue to put pressure on the enemy and their movements and activities in the region.

“We hope to integrate quickly with Task Force Duke and have success along the border,” Army Lt. Col Mark O’Donnell, 1-32 Inf. commander from Carlisle, Penn., said. “We want to be able to deny enemy routes, deny them access to their safe havens, force them out of our AO; we want to make movement hard on them.”

The leadership of 1-32 Inf. sees the progress that has been made since they redeployed from the area at the end of their last deployment, and they are ready to create more progress.

“The units that followed us took a lot of our efforts, energies and plans for the people and have taken that forward,” Carabello said. The people’s lives are better. They have a new road and more construction. We have seen a tremendous amount of growth.”

Even though 1-32 Inf. is familiar with the region and the work done over the past they needed to be brought up to speed on the specifics of recent operations through a Relief in Place, which is a process that includes the outgoing unit

doing hands-on training with the incoming unit.

“The relief in place started in mid-January and we are continuing to work with them until we pull out of the area and let them take over,” Clark said.

1-32 Inf. is happy to be back in the



LTC Mark O’Donnell, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment Commander and Command Sgt. Maj. James Carabello, 1-32 Inf. Command sergeant major, stand in the Nawa Pass with their Afghan and Pakistani counterparts.

region and is ready to help the people.

“This is one of the most beautiful places I’ve been,” Carabello said. “The people are very cordial. We respect them and I believe they respect us. We provide a glimmer of hope so they can provide food for their families. I love this place and am happy to be back.”

# Ready for action

Story by Staff Sgt. David Hopkins 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 9) – CH-47 Chinook helicopters thundered up the Nawa Pass toward the Pakistan border as OH-58Delta Kiowa Warrior helicopters provided protective over-watch along ridgelines that overlook a designated landing zone. Near this ridgeline, Delta



Company heavy weapons platoon with the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, TF Spartan, secured the landing zone, prepared for potential insurgents, who had ambushed both Pakistan Military and Afghan Border Police positions. As the aircraft landed, members of 1-32 Inf. leapt from the aircraft and began a short, steep climb to the nearest ridgeline. This ridgeline is significant – marking the Durand Line, the official demarcation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Waiting there for 1-32 Inf. were members of the Pakistani Bajour Rifles – the Pakistani security element that provides over-watch along the Pakistan side of the border.

Success in counter insurgency requires an ability to cooperate, partner, and integrate with many different entities.

During the early morning of 6 February senior leaders from 1-32 Infantry, the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Border Police met with Pakistani Military officials at the Nawa Pass Border Facility. This location denotes the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and is located along a contentious region of Pakistan known as the Federally Administered Tribal Area, or FATA, which has long been considered a safe haven for senior Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders. This region along the eastern border of the Konar Province has been the focus of coalition forces since 2003, and has become the responsibil-

ity of 1-32 Inf., who is responding to Hamid Karzai's request to bolster the coalition presence along this historically porous border area. The Nawa Pass, one of many passes along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, connects two distinct, yet inextricably linked countries together through a mutual fight against an adaptive and increasingly brazen enemy. The mission is to forge a partnership that facilitates open communication, shared intelligence, and mutually supportive operations between the two countries. Insurgents frequently use the international border to their advantage, escaping to Pakistan when coalition operations threaten sanctuary in Afghanistan, then retreating to Afghanistan on those occasions when the PAKMIL conduct operations in the FATA. Rarely, though, has there been a coordinated effort between the PAKMIL and coalition forces to prevent this freedom of movement.

As part of the meeting, Lt. Col. Mark O'Donnell, Chosin commander, reinforced that the Pakistan Military, the Afghan National Security Forces and Coalition Forces all have the same goals: To interdict insurgent movement and maintain a safe and secure environment for the citizens of their respective countries.

"If we work separately and independently of each other, we will fail," noted Major Zia, commander of troops in the Nawa Pass. "But if we fight as one, the insurgents cannot win."

O'Donnell assured both Pakistan and Afghan officials they shared a common vision for defeating insurgents and denying sanctuary in this region. Contact information was exchanged between leaders, and all expressed a commitment to improve effectiveness through partnership.

The rapport developed during key leader engagements such as these are crucial to military operations. Meetings like the one at Nawa Pass show that Coalition Forces will fight the war on terrorism together. The success of 1-32 Inf. in Afghanistan will be measured by the success of these partnerships.

Chosin battalion will conduct operations in Eastern Kunar Province, Afghanistan. In the conduct of this mission, which includes 140 kilometers of contentious border area between Pakistan and Afghanistan, 1-32 Inf. has been detached from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Div. and has been re-attached to 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. This is the battalion's second deployment in the volatile Kunar Province. The Chosin Battalion deployed there during Operation Enduring Freedom VII from March 2006 until June 2007, during which time they achieved an effective partnership with the populace in their areas of operation. The importance of building new relationships and connecting with old ones will be as important as ever as 1-32 Inf. partners with Afghan and PAKMIL forces to defeat enemy forces.

# Soldiers equipped

By Pv2. Cody Thompson  
40th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 23) – Located inside of the Joint Task Force Paladin Complex, the Rapid Equipping Force offers innovative tactical equipment and technologies.

The REF is comprised of Soldiers working with contractors to provide equipment in limited quantities to units for specific capability shortfalls. This increases Soldier's safety and combat effectiveness on the battlefield.

“The REF is allowing me to take logistics to the next level,” said El Hadji Ndiaye, REF contract logistics analyst, whose previous experience as an Army logistics specialist helps to push the logistics envelope. “What we do is important because it creates an impact on how we fight the war by inserting new technology that’s extremely useful to the war fighter in a very short time frame.”

REF, headquartered out of Fort Belvoir, Va., is part of the Army logistics organization which consists of operations, intelligence, requirement validations, acquisition and technology management.

However, REF isn’t under the same constraints as a regular logistics unit. Something that would take logistics eight or nine months to create only takes the REF eight or nine weeks, said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Manley, REF operations non-commissioned officer in charge.

The REF’s origin began in 2002 when Col. Bruce Jette, REF founder met with Gen. John Keane, Army Vice Chief of Staff at the time, and discussed the possibility of using robots instead of Soldiers to search caves in Afghanistan.

Jette developed a remote controlled robot using commercial technology and brought it to Afghanistan, where it was hailed as a success. Unlike the Central Issuing Facility and the Rapid Fielding Initiative, REF specializes in rapidly fielding specific equipment from government or commercial off-the-shelf purchases.

According to the REF’s official website, [www.ref.army.mil](http://www.ref.army.mil), Soldiers first have to go through a 10-Liner form, similar to an Operational Needs Statement, to acquire equipment.

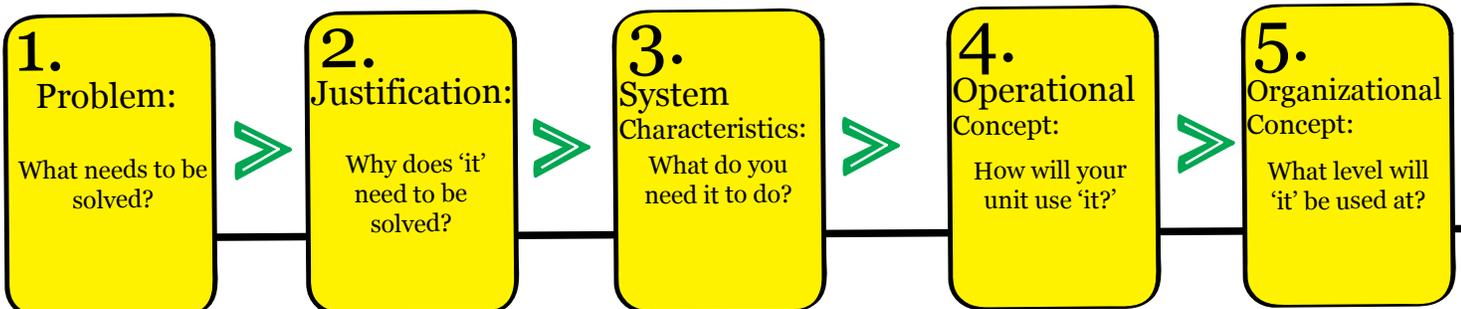
“The process begins and ends with the Soldier,” said Manley.



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly D. Cole

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Manley, operations non-commissioned officer in charge, Rapid Equipping Force, and Christopher Boddy, civilian contractor, STS International, set up the thermal imaging targeting device system, Feb. 7.

## REF 10-Liner



# for success by REF



The REF equips Soldiers through the feedback that REF receives from units. They can further refine solutions geared toward increasing Soldier combat effectiveness and safety.

Once REF has a proven concept, equipment is either created or modified, if the complexity isn't too great. It generally takes three to eight months for the gaining unit to receive the equipment, although future technology inserts take about one to two years to implement.

Dr. Dan Kingsley, REF managing theater engineer contractor, who has a doctorate in robotics from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, said the contractors provide in-theater engineering support with advice and gather requirements.

REF equips Soldiers and units with counter-improvised explosive devices, forward operating base security systems, camera systems, individual Soldier systems, personal protection and lightweight equipment.

Flight medics of the 1-168 General Support Aviation Battalion units utilize a small, compact hands-free ventilation system provided by the REF.

As recent as a month ago, this piece of equipment was used in sav-

ing a Soldier's life.

"We used it on a patient that required ventilation and had complications through the intubation. My partner successfully navigated the tube down the patient's trachea on the first attempt and proceeded to apply a rapid sequence of intubation, and once tapered, we transferred him to the emergency room," said Army Sgt. Ruben Higgins, flight medic, Company C, 1-168 General Support Aviation Battalion.

REF equipment is purchased through REF funds, not unit funds. The only cost to the unit is to provide feedback on the equipment.

An assessment is conducted after the issuing equipment has been used in a combat environment to gauge if it should be transitioned Army wide.

"REF equipment is very useful. I like the idea that they're encouraging companies to let us use some of this stuff to try and get improvements for it," said Sgt. Christopher P. Thompson, 2nd team leader, 2nd platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, Korngal Valley Contingency Operating Base, Afghanistan.

"The future of the REF looks bright and if one piece of REF equipment saves one Soldier's life, then we've done our job," said Manley. "Anywhere there's a Soldier deployed, the REF will be there."

## process



# NATO weapons modernize ANA

Story and Photos by Pfc. Derek Kuhn  
40th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 23) - Coalition Forces are outfitting the Afghan National Army by providing hundreds of weapons and dozens of up-armored humvees through the NATO Force Modernization Project.

The ANA 203rd Thunder Corps will receive hundreds of weapons including M-16 rifles, M-249 squad automatic weapon, M-203 grenade launchers and M-240B machine gun. They will also receive approximately 40 up-armored humvees by the time the fielding is complete.

“The program is intended to help modernize the 203rd Thunder Corps force,” said Army Lt. Col. David Viggers, coordinator for 203rd Thunder Corps’ up-armored humvees and NATO weapons issue. “We are trying to bring them up to our standard. Then, they’ll be better suited to accomplish the mission here.”

The AK-47 assault rifle is currently the firearm issued to most ANA soldiers, but a few have started fielding the more accurate M-16 rifle.

Coalition forces are assisting ANA soldiers by training the trainers and helping to develop training regiments for the other Afghan soldiers.

So far the transition between weapons has been smooth.

“They are receiving the new equipment quite well,” said Viggers. “From most of the soldiers I have talked with, once

they get to know the M-16 rifle, they learn to accept it and like its capabilities.”

Some of the ANA soldiers have already become proficient with the M-16 rifle.

“We have some really good shooters here,” said Viggers.

The Afghan soldiers are learning to drive and maneuver the up-armored humvees.

The most lauded feature of the up-armored humvees is its capability to withstand most IEDs.

“They appreciate the added protection the up-armored humvees bring,” said Viggers.

“The drivers are picking the training up pretty quickly.”

However, the force modernization program does not accept all applicants.

Soldiers are hand-selected and receive a battery of medical exams, said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Denise Grechas, surgeon medical mentor for the 203rd Thunder Corps.

Exams include blood pressure, heartbeat, vision and a visual search for any physical deficiencies. Immediately following the exams, the selected soldiers receive a few rounds of immunizations. The medical in-processing can take up to two days.

The soldiers who pass, are then tracked in the medical system and begin training shortly thereafter.

If a soldier has poor eyesight, a pair of glasses is ordered for him.

Grechas believes getting glasses for the soldiers is an added benefit of the fielding program. Obviously, the ANA soldiers need to see where to shoot and drive, but the glasses help them in daily life as well, said Grechas.

Once the medical exams are completed, ANA soldiers begin their training. However, medical care is not forgotten. Health and sanitation is of paramount concern, which is why the 203rd Thunder Corps has produced picture pamphlets on sanitation.

A healthy corps is integral for its effectiveness, said Grechas.

A safe and stable Afghanistan is a goal of the 203rd Thunder Corps and the Coalition forces involved in this program.

“I think it will be rewarding to see them take a step forward as far as the modernization of their military and [to see] the effect it’s going to have on the Afghan population if we can help secure the country quicker,” said Viggers.



An Afghan National Army soldier aims his M-16 rifle at a target on a range at Forward Operating Base Thunder. The ANA are receiving weapons as part of the NATO force modernization project.

# Human Terrain Teams building friendships and future

By Cpl. John Zumer  
40th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 23) - Coalition forces have been quite successful over the last seven years on the battlefields of Afghanistan. True and lasting success, however, lies in winning the hearts and minds of Afghans, and the recent implementation of Human Terrain Teams is a large building block for ultimate victory.

HTTs were developed in 2005 in response to identified gaps in commander's and staff's understanding of the local population and culture, and its impact on operational decisions. Their mission is to provide field commanders with the relevant social and cultural understanding necessary to meet daily operational requirements. They fall under the Human Terrain System framework. Whereas HTTs operate in the field, HTSs are analytical teams attached to divisional staffs, and largely analyze field data and other information.

It is the first time that social science research, analysis and advising has been done systematically, and at the operational level.

"Much can be accomplished by approaching things from a social rather than a security problem," said Jim Emery, lead social scientist of an HTT attached to Task Force Warrior. Department of Defense contracted social scientists join military officers, analysts and researchers in the composition of an HTT.

Five pilot teams were created at the program's beginning. Four went to Iraq, and the fifth was attached to Task Force Fury in Khowst province, Afghanistan, in Jan. 2007. HTTs only embed with U.S. Army units, and while normally attached at BCT levels, they also provide general support for entire task forces.

These efforts directed on the social level have already yielded many successes.

HTTs have already accounted for a reduction in kinetic operations in one Afghan province, according to Col. Scott A. Spellmon, brigade commander, Task Force Warrior. Problems in Kapisa province had been tied to the difficulty in understanding numerous local dynamics. The population was mixed with Pashtun and Tajik peoples, a fact which can be problematic, said Spellmon. Tensions in the air were reduced when the HTT talked with local elders. Emery feels the success has yielded an even-greater reward.

"One of the measurable qualities in Kapisa is that you have people coming forward now with information," he said.

The ANA and police forces are taking much more prominent roles, and as far as Emery is concerned, success is largely measured by the respect and cooperation of villagers.

"If you provide hope for the future, then you provide viable alternatives," said Emery.

The HTT process of defeating the enemy is neither quick or trouble-free, however. "Sometimes it takes 6 to 8 months



Courtesy Photo  
HTT member Chris Fritz talks with Afghan children on a recent mission to Nijrab District in Kapisa province. Regular interaction with villagers, recognition of tribal customs and cultures and establishment of personal friendships is the cornerstone of the HTT program

to build that trusting relationship," said Larry Rice, research manager of the HTT. Non-verbal cues that reinforce the verbal message are also vital to success in changing the theater and forging relationships, added Rice, citing body language of Coalition forces that can be interpreted differently by Afghans.

Spellmon wishes the HTT concept had arrived even sooner, considering the visible successes. "I would have loved to have had this team in our train-up prior to coming to Afghanistan," he said. The combat training centers, where HTT also provides information and guidance on what to expect in-theater, are great in providing a deeper understanding of the Afghan people, he added.

Despite the many HTT successes, there remain present and future challenges. The size of Afghanistan coupled with few HTTs limits the amount of time spent in villages, but the absence of their own logistical assets can also be stifling. Quality time spent by the HTT in villages is the most pressing need, however. "Just going out on a postcard run and not really talking to people does us no good," said Emery.

Coalition forces also need a better mission understanding, which requires the building of friendships. Time spent on the ground in days, not minutes, is vital in building friendships, said Rice.

"People tire of being asked what they need, the United States going away, and then nothing changes," said Emery.

Negative and inaccurate stereotypes of Muslims and Afghans also need to be overcome. "Tribes don't always behave as co-ops in either Afghanistan or Iraq, and that has to be taken into account," said Josh Foust, senior analyst for the HTT. "Differences and the way they're handled matter," he added.

Friendship, honor, loyalty, good manners, hospitality, respect for elders and love of children are hallmarks of Afghan life, and an appreciation of those traits will ultimately determine success for Coalition forces.

"The main goal in Afghanistan is security, stability, and prosperity," said Emery, "but you have to establish good personal relationships first."

# ANA law: one step closer to stability

Story and Photos by Pfc. Derek Kuhn  
40th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 24) – With a willingness to learn and a do-it-yourself attitude, the soldiers of the 203rd Thunder Corps, Afghan National Army are blazing a trail toward self-sufficient security and judicial sovereignty.

The Operation Coordination Center-Regional program has allowed the 203rd Thunder Corps to surpass other areas of Afghanistan in the rule of law and coordination among all law-enforcement entities.

Servicemembers participating in the program act as mentors to the developing ANA and have accelerated the growth of the skills of their Afghan counterparts.

Currently underway is the development and implementation of the Afghanistan Uniform Code of Military Justice.

“We have worked in [place] a new UCMJ,” said Air Force Col. Alisa James, Command Staff Judge Advocate for Regional Command-East, 2nd Air Force. “We are trying cases and getting the publicity down-range to the battalions, so they know that they are under scrutiny.”

The word is getting out and that accountability makes the ANA a stronger army.

James oversaw the completion of a new courthouse and jail for the ANA, which has given the Afghan soldiers a greater sense of purpose and pride.

“We are very lucky to have these buildings,” said ANA Brig. Gen. Saueed Khaulullah, regional judge. “We are doing great here, because of our facilities.”

However, the new facilities are not what drive the Afghan soldiers’ growing confidence.

Many credit the guidance they have

received from their mentors, especially from the 503rd Military Police Battalion deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C.

“We are very grateful for having the mentors here, because they give us very good training,” said an ANA soldier. “The training we have received will allow us to handle any difficulties in the future on our own. We are more disciplined now and we are getting better every day.”

The Afghan MPs have received instruction on combat movement drills, how to properly patrol a perimeter, and other basics, said Army Sgt. 1st Class Fuller Mitchell, 503rd MP Bn. Armorer NCO.

The 203rd Corps’ confidence stems from the sense of purpose their mentors display on a daily basis.

“It’s important to help the ANA be independent to get some systems in place to establish them,” said Mitchell.

Emphasis is placed on letting the ANA work through whatever issues they have and the mentors acting only in a counselor’s role.

The MP mentors have also set a goal. They want the ANA to run their own MP school here. The mentors are able to step back and look at what they and their students have accomplished.

“(The progress) is very gratifying,” said James. “It makes us all feel wonderful to have the 203rd Thunder Corps ANA have the first judicial center in Afghanistan.”

Still, there are drills to complete and tactics to learn.

The 203rd Thunder Corps ANA is motivated and wants to accomplish the mission on their own, said Mitch-

ell.

So with eyes set on the future, and their noses to the grindstone, the soldiers of 203rd Thunder Corps ANA foresee a prosperous future for their country with the help of servicemembers and the OCC-R.

“We feel great [about the future],” said Khaulullah. “We have the assistance of a strong country, so we feel good about the future of our country.”



An ANA Military Police soldier inspects a pistol during a changing of the guard formation at Forward Operating Base Thunder. The ANA MPs are training with the 503rd Military Police Battalion on police procedures.

# Servicemembers volunteer to provide humanitarian assistance



*Spc. Bruce Petersen, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, and Air Force Capt. Bryne Main, Logistics officer, load school supplies for an upcoming humanitarian assistance mission.*

*Story and Photo by Pfc. Derek Kuhn  
40th Public Affairs Detachment*

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 24) – Service members from Forward Operating Base Lightning and Afghan National Army have come together to provide humanitarian assistance to local villagers.

Through donations from various websites, churches and the Boy Scouts of America, FOB Lightning volunteers put together humanitarian assistance packages consisting of food, winter clothing, toys, school supplies and shoes for Afghans.

Many volunteers said they helped because it was the right thing to do.

“We are trying to help people anyway we can,” said Army Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Magnum, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division command sergeant major. “Whether we’re mentoring the ANA or giving them aid, it is part of being an American. It is what we do; we help people.”

Others echoed Magnum’s sentiments.

“It makes you feel that you are part of something bigger than yourself,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Joan De Jesus, a service-member at FOB Lightning. “It makes me proud to be in the military; prouder to be an American.”

Volunteers recounted the plight of some of the children and how it has im-

pacted them.

“It defies belief of what they don’t have,” said Army Col. Kevin Hulett, ARCAC logistics mentor with the Illinois National Guard. “There are kids around our FOB with no shoes, no socks in two or three inches of snow sticking their hands through concertina wire and grates saying, ‘gimme something, gimme chocolate.’ They have less than the homeless people back at home.”

When the humanitarian assistance packages are delivered, the children show their gratitude.

“The children are elated,” said Hulett. “They are all smiles. A bag of pencils, a bag of crayons, a little notebook or a Hot Wheels car are a treasured item to these children.”

Magnum described it as “Christmas every time.”

The humanitarian assistance mission has a tactical effect on the overall counter-insurgency mission.

“The insurgents are trying to spread the word that we are the bad guys and we are trying to show the Afghans that we are good guys,” Magnum said. “I think this is one good way to show it.”

“It helps us with our mission,” said Hulett. “It’s so they know we aren’t just a kinetic force. We are here to help their Army, help their police force and help them.”

Some believe the humanitarian aid gives the Afghans something to hope for.

“We’re trying to give these people some hope,” said De Jesus. “[We are trying] to help make that light at the end of the tunnel brighter.”

The act of volunteering brought all parties together in the spirit of humanity.

“It is a camaraderie thing,” said Hulett. “Everyone from all the forces is having a good time.”



# photos from the field



Photo by Sgt. Michael Armstrong, 40th PAD  
An ANA Soldier adjusts the front sight post on his M16A2 rifle during a qualification range at FOB Lightning



Photo By Staff Sgt. David Hopkins, 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO  
Pfc. Henry Gardner, infantryman with C Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, connects a large container to a crane for removal at Combat Outpost Seray, Feb. 6. The COP is being closed after the road opening in the valley, signifying a successful mission and the end of their job in the area.



Story by Staff Sgt. David Hopkins 3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO  
A Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 1st ID, HMMWV sits on a plateau overlooking a patrol route



*Photo by Pfc. Derek Kuhn, 40th Public Affairs Detachment*

*An ANA Soldier gives his 'thumbs-up' for the NATO force modernization project. Recently, the ANA began training with the new weapons at FOB Thunder.*



# photos from the field



*Photo by Pfc. Derek Kuhn, 40th PAD  
Afghan National Army Soldiers get familiarized with an up-armored High  
Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle.*



*Photo by Staff Sgt. David Hopkins  
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO  
Equipment and gear sits in piles at Combat Out-  
post Seray in the mountains above the Deywagal  
valley on Feb. 6, as Soldiers pack and load trucks.*



*Photo by Pfc. Derek Kuhn 40th Public Affairs Detachment  
Afghan National Army Soldiers inspect a target after firing a few rounds at a range on Forward Operating Base Thunder. The ANA is receiving weapons as part of the NATO force modernization project.*



*Courtesy Photo  
Army Sgt. Sean MacDermott, a crew chief with Task Force Eagle, mans a .50-caliber machine gun, while aboard a CH-47 Chinook helicopter enroute to Forward Operating Base Shank, Logar province, Afghanistan, February 11. MacDermott is assigned to Company B 2/38 based out of Peoria, Ill.*

# Mental health clinic for Servicemembers opens at Bagram

Story by Spc. Boris Shiloff  
40th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (Feb. 23) - Servicemembers in Afghanistan now have a place to turn to for help with the toughest aspects of their deployment when they need it most.

The Bagram Freedom Restoration Center is the first mental health clinic in Afghanistan. The center's main goal is to give servicemembers skills they can use to cope with combat stress and the rigors of a deployment and return them to duty quickly.

"We are tapping into things that [servicemembers] possibly already know," said Tech. Sgt. Mirabel Meekins, the clinic's operations non-commissioned officer in charge, "or offering them new skills and techniques they can use at the Forward Operating Base or Combat Outpost, or after they separate from the military."

The clinic hosts a three to five-day structured program covering many gen-

eral topics, including anger management, common task training, post-traumatic stress disorder awareness and warrior resiliency.

The program has a common standard outline for all servicemembers enrolled, but can also be tailored to the specific needs of the individual servicemember. The skills and information the servicemember receives from the clinic helps throughout the deployment, but can last long past that.

The center's focus on quickly returning a servicemember to duty is one of the key aspects of the program. Prior to the Bagram Freedom Restoration Center, servicemembers in Afghanistan had only two options to address mental health issues.

One option was for the servicemember to spend a few days of rest and relaxation or light duty at their respective FOB, and then return to duty. The other option was to be evaluated at BAF, and if further treatment was needed, the ser-

vicemember was sent to Germany or the U.S. for additional care.

"This fills that in-between gap of people that need a little bit more, but they don't need the whole enchilada," explains Air Force Col. David Geyer, Task Force Med commander.

The program takes many of the components of similar programs in Iraq, and tailors them to the Afghanistan area of responsibility.

Six staff members, a mixture of Air Force and Army mental health and occupational therapy professionals, comprise the staff that serves at the clinic. The clinic is staffed 24 hours a day and all members of the staff are involved in helping the servicemember get back to duty.

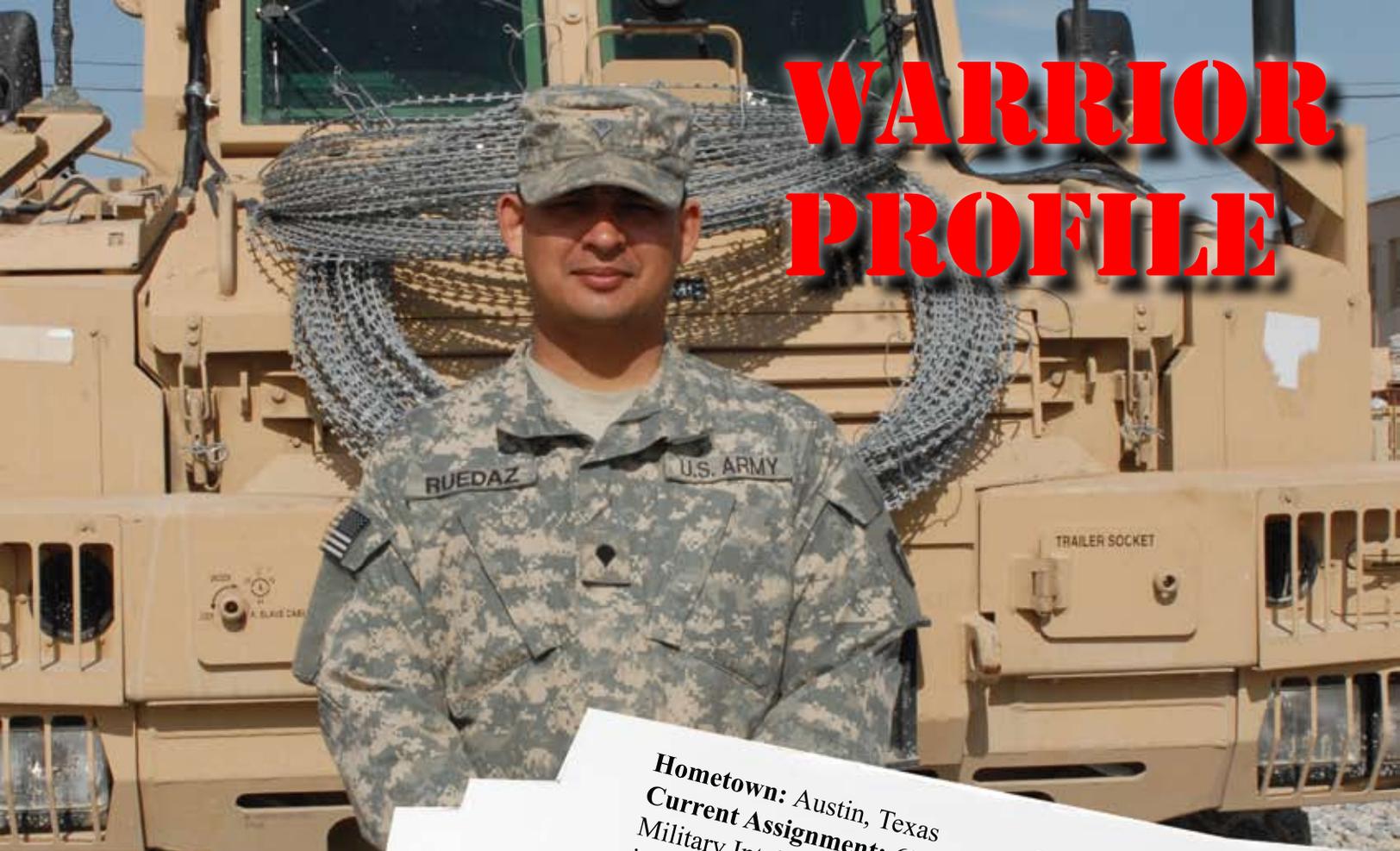
"We're really pleased to have this center," said Geyer. "We're looking forward to the ability to provide the same kind of service that other servicemembers have had the benefit of in the Iraqi theater."



Photo by Spc. Boris Shiloff

Senior Airman Jessica Osgood teaches a class on warrior resiliency at the Bagram Freedom Restoration Center. Osgood is a mental health technician at the Bagram Freedom Restoration Center, the first mental health rehabilitation clinic for servicemembers to open in Afghanistan.

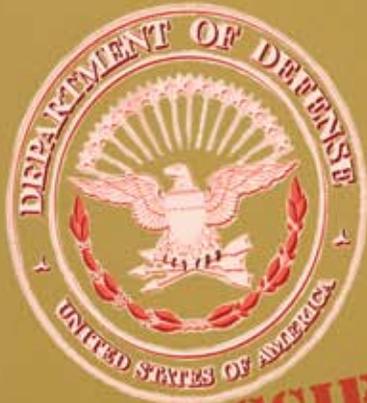
# WARRIOR PROFILE



**SPC. ERNESTO RUEDAZ**

**Hometown:** Austin, Texas  
**Current Assignment:** 636th Military Intelligence Battalion, Bagram Air Field  
**Deployed from:** 636th MI BN, Camp Mabry, Texas  
**Number of times deployed:** Deployed once to Kosovo from 2005 to 2006  
**Best part of deployment:** Seeing the country and talking to the locals

**Goals while deployed:** Get in shape and learn Spanish  
**How do you spend your free time:** Reading, movies and playing basketball  
**Plans upon return:** Finish associates degree in applied science



**UNCLASSIFIED**



# Unit Spotlight

**Name of Unit: Task Force Palehorse (7-17 Cavalry Squadron)**

**Mission:** On order, Task Force Palehorse conducts attack, reconnaissance, security, air assault, and air movement operations in support of Task Force Duke/OCF to disrupt enemy operations and enable enduring security and development in the N2KL region.

**Unit History:** Task Force Palehorse deployed to Jalalabad Airfield, Afghanistan in December 2008. This is the first

combat tour for 7-17 CAV since being reactivated at Fort Campbell, KY, on 10 April 2006. The Squadron previously earned a Presidential Unit Citation and four Valorous Unit Awards during the Vietnam War before being deactivated at Fort Hood, Texas, on 16 July 1986.

**Interesting Unit Facts:** Task Force Palehorse consists of 36 aircraft including Kiowa Warrior, Apache Longbow,

Blackhawk, and Chinook helicopters as well as Hunter UAVs, which all play a role in providing recon, security, air movement, air assault, and air MEDEVAC support throughout the N2KL region of Afghanistan. Additionally, Task Force Palehorse is part of the first Combat Aviation Brigade (159th CAB) to field and deploy with the new UH-60M and CH-47F model aircraft.

*Would you like to have your unit in the spotlight? If so, email the 40th PAD at [freedomwatch@swa.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@swa.army.mil). Please include your unit's name, mission, history and any interesting facts.*