

Coalition Forces provide fuel for progress

FREEDOM WATCH **AFGHANISTAN**

April 2009

**Artilleryman
follows in
brother's
footsteps
pg 13**



from the kids



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Cover photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Moeller, 5th MPAD Members of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment, 18th Fires Brigade (Airborne), fire the 9,900 lb M-777 Howitzer Artillery Cannon at Forward Operating Base Bostick, March 17.

Women's Resource Center brings hope to Nangarhar

Story and Photo by Air Force Capt. Dustin Hart
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

The Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team joined provincial leadership March 7 for a ground-breaking celebration to mark the beginning of construction on a Women's Resource Center in Jalalabad.

The 10,000 square-meter facility will include a two-story, 12-room building and a surrounding privacy wall that will allow the women to meet and exchange ideas in a secure, private location.

"We requested the PRT's assistance on this project, and now it has been funded," said Nangarhar Governor Gul Agha Sherzai at the ceremony. "This is going to be a great place for all the women of Nangarhar."

The facility, which will cost approximately \$275,000, should take seven months to complete. In addition to offering a gathering location for women, the resource center will offer educational and technical training classes.

"I can't express the happiness this project will bring the women of Nangarhar," said Sheela Barburi, director of Women's Affairs for the province. "The resource center will allow women to get training and make different products they can sell to make money and support their families."

A facility that offers these types of services doesn't currently exist in the province, which made supporting it a priority for the PRT, said Air Force 2nd Lt. Steven Klenke, Nangarhar PRT engineer and native of Farmington Hills, Mich.

"This facility will be exclusively used to meet the needs of the women in Nangarhar," said Klenke, who is deployed from Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. "It's a very exciting project to be a part of and an honor to work with the Department of Women's Affairs to create the center."

Air Force Lt. Col. Steven Cabosky, Nangarhar PRT commander from Newton Falls, Ohio, echoed the sentiment that the center



Nangarhar Governor Gul Agha Sherzai congratulates Sheela Barburi, Nangarhar Women's Affairs director, after she placed a ceremonial stone at the Women's Resource Center construction site March 7. The center will provide educational and technical training courses for women and is being funded by the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team.

would be a valuable addition for the province.

"The United States strongly supports equal rights for all women," Cabosky said. "While there is work to be done here in Afghanistan, this facility is definitely a step in the right direction."

The Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team is responsible for assisting the provincial, district and local governments in Nangarhar Province with their governance, security and reconstruction efforts. The team is currently working on more than 55 projects worth approximately \$74.1 million in the province.

1st ID Soldiers uncover weapons caches

Story by Tech. Sgt. Jill Lavoie
3rd BCT, 1st ID, PAO

During a recent mission to disrupt enemy movement, Soldiers in southern Afghanistan found five caches containing weapons, documents and medical supplies.

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Soldiers knew the area they were operating in was used for Taliban movement and storage of supplies.

“Something we looked into based on intelligence,” said Staff Sgt. Joshua Rodriguez, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, platoon sergeant. “We were told the [militants use] karez [water] system to store weapons and supplies.”

After inspecting for traps, Co. B. lowered Spc. Andrew West, and Spc. Chad Schadewald, into the karez system. When the 5th hole was reached, he spotted munitions and feed bags full

of supplies.

“At first we were worried it was booby trapped and didn’t want to get blown up, but once it was cleared, we were pretty excited,” said West.

Additional caches and enemy sleeping quarters were found upon clearing other sections of the karez system. Armed with this information, Co. D. began searching compounds in their area.

“We knew bad guys were in the area, and intended to have a look around, but knowing that another company had found something made us even more motivated to find something,” said Capt. Michael Soyka, Co. D. commander.

Upon entering a village with only three people in it, D. Co. began searching compounds. In the last room they were going to search, Spc. Jeffery Strouse noticed a hallway going underground that led to a small bunker.

“I kneeled down and saw plastic

tubing,” Strouse said. “I called [Spc. Chad Vough] and he kneeled down and we realized they were weapons.”

At the same time, fellow company Soldiers were finding medical supplies in a different compound in the same village.

“It’s getting harder and harder for them to find weapons, so each individual cache find, small or large, puts a hurt on them,” Rodriguez said. “This is the largest cache find for this battalion during this deployment.”

This find is especially important before the spring fighting season, as it takes weapons, medicine and other items required to fight out of the Taliban’s hands.

“The types of things we found are the things they use to hurt us,” Schadewald said. “If they were to use it against us, we would take casualties. We prevented casualties today.”

FOB Sharana units transfer authority

Courtesy Story and Photo

The 168th Engineer Brigade, Task Force Storm, of Vicksburg, Miss., accepted the reins of responsibility from the 420th Engineer Brigade, Task Force Castle during a Transfer-of-Authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Sharana, March 1.

During the ceremony, Brig. Gen. Paul E. Crandall, TF Castle commander, said “although the differences in languages, nationalities, cultures, components and service branches made the experience complex, the common dedication to human dignity, freedom, and the pursuit of prosperity based upon mutual respect, hard work and faith in human kind has unified us.”

Brig. Gen. Earnest L. Harrington Jr., commander of TF Storm, thanked Crandall and the Soldiers of the 420th Engi-

neer Brigade for its hospitality and support during TF Storm’s preparation for the new mission.

“We are ready and willing,” Harrington said. “Our task is to create a learning organization that is sufficiently flexible and versatile to achieve certainty in these uncertain times. It is a privilege to serve with the CJTF-101 and support the BCTs within this JAO [Joint Area of Operation].”

Task Force Storm’s mission is to provide freedom of movement through route clearance

operations, construction and design, mine clearing and civil assistance.



Brig. Gen. Earnest L. Harrington, commander of 168th Engineer Brigade, Task Force Storm and Command Sgt. Maj. Gary R. Iverson, command sergeant major for TF Storm, unfurl the brigade colors during transfer-of-authority ceremony.

Panjshir's International Women's Day Celebration

Story and Photo by Air Force Capt. Stacie N. Shafran, PRT, Panjshir

With burkas and families set aside for a few hours, nearly 125 Afghan women and girls relaxed, enjoyed one another's company and shared their culture during an International Women's Day celebration at the Astana Guesthouse in Bazarak District, March 8.

The event, organized by the Panjshir Director of Women's Affairs, featured a series of guest speakers who highlighted economic, political and social challenges as well as accomplishments of the valley's women.

"Panjshir has very smart women," said Deputy Governor Abdul Kabiri. "They are working beside the men for the development of society."

One of the most popular presenters, a former 17-year Afghan judge named Rahila, received recognition as 'Panjshir's Woman of the Year.'

During her passionate speech, Rahila focused her thoughts on the Afghan education system. "We tend

to pay more attention to boys, valuing them more than the girls, who are often uneducated," she said. "Women are half of the society. They can participate in whatever they want."

The judge acknowledged that during the majority of her career, men were displeased with her role as a judge. "Don't be discouraged," she said. "One day your daughters can be like me."

Rahila distributed educational materials to the women and girls and talked to as many as she could before the event ended.

Another guest speaker, Tech. Sgt. Dawn Allison-Hess, the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team's intelligence officer and representative of the PRT's women's affairs section, shared a similarity between Afghan and American women.

"The reason I can stand before you as a woman serving in the U.S. military is because of the hard work, sacrifice and dedication of countless women who came before me," said Allison-Hess, who's deployed from Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas.

"I am grateful for their dedication, as I know your daughters and granddaughters will be grateful to you for selflessly striving to secure their futures."

Following the speeches, the women and girls conversed with one another and feasted on a traditional Afghan lunch of pilau, a rice dish made with raisins and carrots, meat and vegetables.

"This was an opportunity of a lifetime to meet with the women who influence the lives of Panjshir," said Air Force Maj. Valerie Trump, the PRT's nurse practitioner, who is deployed from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

"The female judge and the doctors impressed me the most because of their hearts and their powerful minds. It was a proud day for me to be a part of their celebration. I believe the Panjshir women are the key to affecting change in their families, and ultimately, this will improve the quality of life here."



Women and girls from Panjshir's valley attended the March 8 International Women's Day celebration in Bazarak District. A majority of the women wore burkas to the event, and once inside the Astana Guesthouse wore traditional head scarves. Following the speeches, the audience feasted on a traditional Afghan lunch of pilau, a rice dish made with raisins and carrots, and conversed with one another.

ANP securing Bagram area

Story and Photo by 1st Lt. Lory Stevens
Task Force Warrior PAO

In the 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and Task Force Warrior area of operations, the Afghan National Police are showing much improved capability, on-point reaction, and professionalism due in large part to their strong leadership, joint operations with coalition forces, and continued training.

Whenever an incident occurs outside Bagram Air Field, the Afghan National Police are immediately called to check out the situation. On March 4, 2009, an incident just outside the perimeter of the base demonstrated the ANP's capacity to react swiftly and accurately to security threats in the area.

"The Bagram ANP saw something wrong, they approached it and stopped it, responding very well," said Task Force Gladiator Operations Officer, Maj. Luis Ortiz, referring to a Suicide Vehicle Borne IED attack outside the perimeter of Bagram Air Field.

Khalid, who is in charge of Bagram ANP working outside an entry control point for the base, believes the attacker may have been targeting a Coalition convoy.

"When the vehicle failed to stop for a search, my men followed the car," reported Khalid, who explained how the attacker carrying explosives abandoned the vehicle before it detonated and injured three civilian contractors. The driver, who was carrying explosives was killed as he ran away from the vehicle and ANP.

Task Force Gladiator, comprised



The Bagram ANP responded first to the March 4 attack outside Bagram Air Field when a vehicle exploded near an entry control point. A driver failed to stop at the ANP vehicle check-point, and when pursued by ANP abandoned the vehicle before it detonated. The driver was also carrying explosives which detonated as he ran from the vehicle. The ANP's reaction in chasing the suicide bomber prevented any military or Afghan civilian casualties.

of the 101st Division Special Troops Battalion out of Fort Campbell, Ky., conducts almost all patrols with ANP as they work to secure the province of Parwan.

Although there are other ANP that Task Force Gladiator works and trains with, such as in Charikar and Salang, the Bagram ANP work daily with TF Gladiator to secure the Bagram area.

"It doesn't matter what time of day it is, if there is a patrol then the ANP are always out there working along-

side us," said Ortiz.

Lt. Brent Dalton, 1st Platoon Leader, A Co., 101st DSTB, said, "The ANP in Kohe Sofi District also do a great job with security for people who live there."

"They assist us with numerous humanitarian assistance drops, and they make sure the aid is evenly distributed amongst the villages and effectively settle any personal feuds," Dalton said.

New district center to stimulate development

Story and Photo by
Spc. Matthew Thompson
5th MPAD

More than a hundred local nationals from Khoshi, Logar province gathered March 4 in a courtyard for the long-awaited opening of the new district center.

The center, which is the backbone of governance within each district, will serve as a city hall for the villagers and as an office for the deputy governor.

“This catapults the Afghan’s and Alliance’s mission ahead tremendously by stimulating economic, governmental and infrastructure development,” said Lt. Col. Dan Goldthorpe, commander of 3rd Squadron, 71st Calvary Regiment.

Around the walls and on the street of the village, Afghan National Police and U.S. Soldiers stood watch on foot and in vehicles, ensuring there would be no disruptions.

The previous center was in dire shape. It had missing windows, no electricity and no furniture. Now it has a new multiple room facility powered by solar panels and generators.

This was also the first time the governor, Lt. Gen. Attiqullah Lodeen, had visited the area. The Afghans in this district rarely see guests, particularly high-ranking



Lt. Gen. Attiqullah Lodeen, the governor of Logar, and other government officials tour Khoshi District, Logar province, March 4. Lodeen was in Khoshi to open a new district center for the region.

“Be patient, have faith in your government, work with them and your life will get better.”

--Lt. Col. Dan Goldthorpe

government officials. The locals listened intently, applauded and cheered as the governor spoke.

“It was like the president coming to visit,” Goldthorpe said. “The governor did an excellent job of connecting to the people.”

Government officials representing every branch of the governor’s cabinet spoke of how they were

working to make the people’s lives better. The officials also stressed the point there will be someone for them to turn to should they need help.

“That was a great message for the people,” added Goldthorpe. “Be patient, have faith in your government, work with them and your life will get better.”

A green ribbon adorned

with colorful decorations was hung across the doorway of the new district center. Governor Lodeen made the first cut with a pair of scissors, which were then passed to Goldthorpe, who also cut the ribbon.

The severed piece of ribbon was held aloft to the cheers and applause of the assembled locals and guests.

Truck-load of goods enrich Afghan lives



1st Lt. Andrew Keel, 3rd Platoon Leader from Madison, Conn., gives a pair of sandals to a local Afghan children. Bravo Company delivered more than 200 pairs of shoes to the village.

“It’s mostly for the kids. That’s what you have to look forward to. It’s the future. We’re building rapport with the next generation.”

--Spc. Kyle Drake, 3rd BCT, 1st ID

Photo by Spc. Michael Duffek

Story by Tech. Sgt. Jill LaVoie,
3rd BCT PAO

Soldiers deployed in southern Afghanistan recently distributed a truckload of humanitarian assistance items to a local village.

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division passed out more than 200 pairs of children’s and adult shoes, more than 50 blankets, about a dozen radios, stuffed animals, small toys, soccer balls, school supplies, and several hundred pounds of rice, flour and beans.

“Soldiers also gave out personal trinkets, like pens, pencils and candy they received from home,” said Spc. Kyle Drake, 3rd BCT, 1st ID, from Philadelphia, Pa.

The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment’s Bravo company brought a trailer-full of supplies in an effort to assist the village.

“We first and foremost want to enrich the lives of the citizens of this village and secondly, we want to illustrate to the Afghan people, the level of American dedication and concern,” 1st Lt. Andrew Keel, 3rd Platoon Leader from Madison, Conn., said.

During the distribution, village elders expressed their gratitude.

“Mullah Mirza Jan appeared and

conveyed his deepest gratitude for the supplies,” said Keel. “Habi Bullah Jan [a village elder] also offered his thanks and ensured that the gesture would not be soon forgotten.”

However, the ones most

excited were the children.

“It’s mostly for the kids,” Drake, said. “That’s what you have to look forward to. It’s the future. We’re building rapport with the next generation.”



Photo by Spc. Michael Duffek

Afghan youths sit in a circle as they wait for a village elder to size them for shoes. In addition to shoes, Bravo Company brought soccer balls, footballs and other toys for the youths.

Casualty care under fire training



ANA soldiers train to save lives

► Story and Photos Staff Sgt. David Hopkins, 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., PAO

The Soldiers of Company C, 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, trained four Afghan National Army soldiers in Tactical Combat Casualty Care Under Fire in northeastern Afghanistan.

After six weeks of combat medical training the soldiers graduated in a small ceremony on Feb. 28, at Forward Operating Base Fenty and are ready to take their training to the field.

“They went through everything our medics go through in the states,” said 2nd Lt. Victor Lopez, treatment platoon leader from Tucson, Ariz. “Tactical Combat Casualty Care Under Fire is the basic doctrine of what we are teaching in the states.”

The training involved classroom and hands-on instruction, using the most realistic and up-to-date techniques the U.S. Army uses on their own Soldiers, developing them into life-saving experts.

“We didn’t hold anything back,” Lopez said. “We put them through the best available training with the latest techniques and we’ve seen these guys grow from stu-

Afghan National Army soldiers place an International Security Assistance Forces Soldier in an ambulance after stabilizing him during a medical training exercise at FOB Fenty in northeastern Afghanistan.

dents to subject matter experts.”

The training was new to the ANA soldiers and was difficult at times, but they managed to successfully make it through.

“The toughest part is learning to stabilize our friends in the kill zone and then carrying them out to safety,” Quamuddin Sabbilnd, graduating ANA soldier, said. “We have to stop the bleeding right away or they can die. It is very difficult, but we did it.”

The training culminated in a group exercise for the soldiers. They were faced with a battlefield problem involving two casualties in a hostile area and they had to quickly assess the situation, secure the area and save the lives of the U.S. Soldiers who were playing the part of wounded.

“They were put through the paces as if they were in combat and got hit, moving in tactical formation, coming under fire and then reacting to the casualties’ wounds,”



ANA soldiers load a role-player simulating a wounded Soldier on to a stretcher. They treated the Soldier for simulated injuries and then transported him from the area in an ambulance.

“They were put through the paces as if they were in combat. They quickly found the casualties, moved them from the kill zone and treated them. We’re proud of our Soldiers, but even more proud of these four [ANA] soldiers here today.”

-- Lt. Col. Bradley White

said Lt. Col. Bradley White, 201st BSB commander from Council Bluffs, Iowa. “They quickly found the casualties, moved them from the kill zone and treated them. We’re proud of our Soldiers, but even more proud of these four [ANA] soldiers here today.”

The 201st BSB medical command and the 5th Kandak command consider this first training circuit a success and high hopes for the future of the program.

“Our first four soldiers [to go through the training] will train more ANA soldiers and we will be witness to other ceremonies like this,” said ANA Lt. Col. Abdul Qauoom Gurbaz, 5th Kandak commander. “We have 10 more soldiers ready to get medical training so we hope the U.S. doctors will train them as well as they trained these four soldiers.”

The hope is that the program will continue to teach ANA soldiers to save lives after the 201st BSB redeploys and is replaced by other medical teams.

“This program was presented to us when we got here and we developed it,” Lopez said. “This was our first group of four to go through. I hope that when we leave we’ll pass this on and the next unit will be able to expand on it.”



An Afghan National Army soldier carries a Soldier during the International Security Assistance Forces Tactical Combat Casualty Care Under Fire program final exercise on Feb. 28, at Forward Operating Base Fenty in northeastern Afghanistan. Four ANA soldiers graduated from the program following the exercise.

As of early 2009, the ANA has approximately 80,000 soldiers.

Cornhuskers improve

► Story and Photos by Capt. Michael Greenberger

► 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

As the noon sun crept toward the mountains west of Janquadam, children ran from all corners of the village, greeting the group of Soldiers from the 28th Forward Agri-business Development Team, Feb. 28.

On this warm day, the team was on a mission to help a blind farmer develop his fields and build a new vineyard to eventually grow grapes in. The ADT, a National Guard unit deployed from Nebraska, has come to Afghanistan to assist, teach, train and educate the farmers on better farming techniques and introduce the farmers to grasses and alfalfa for better animal health.

After exchanging greetings with locals, the guardsmen set to work measuring and marking the field for the new vineyard as well as taking soil samples.

While the Soldiers worked, children swarmed all around them offering home-made sling shots for a dollar each. Some troops paid the children for their wares, while others offered up whatever they could – candy, gum, pens and gloves.

Soon, smiling children played in the



Spc. Aaron Closson, 28th Forward Agri-business Development Team, keeps a watchful eye on the road while providing security on a mission to help a local Afghan farmer, Feb. 28.

Afghan vineyard





1st Lt. Josh Kohout, 28th Forward Agri-business Development Team, chats with local children while on a mission to help a local Afghan farmer.



Sgt. 1st Class Eldon R. Kuntzelman, 28th Forward Agri-business Development Team, talks with curious children while on a mission to mark and measure a local farmer's field for the future planting of a vineyard, Feb. 28.

field and some even assisted the Soldiers in their tasks.

No strangers to this village, Soldiers from the 28th have visited several times before.

“On previous missions we assessed the farmer’s fields,” said Sgt. 1st Class Eldon R. Kuntzelman. “Then we got a letter of agreement from the land owner and later presented our plan to him.”

“Marking and measuring the field was our primary mission,” said 1st Lt. Eric Sattelberg, Agricultural team chief. “Our goal on every mission is to improve relations with the locals. In the long run, this type of mission will strengthen the bond between Afghanistan and the U.S. because they know that we are here to help grow this nation rather than destroy it.”

The 28th has more plans for Janquadam including installing grain storage bins, planting fruit and nut trees, working with animal health, water management, training and education in tractor maintenance, setting up green houses and underground storage for vegetables.

The future of ADT operations is simple, explained Sattelberg – grow this nation into a thriving country of different fruits and vegetables. “The goal is a continuation of the projects from one ADT rotation to the next,” said Sattelberg.

“Several teams are either on the ground or being identified for a potential rotation. We are here doing one field at a time through demonstration farms as well as with other projects.”

The demonstration crops afford the farmers an opportunity to learn a variety of methods for growing crops and then allow the local farmers to try different techniques for growing crops in their own fields.

About half the unit has been deployed before and all of the 52-member team volunteered for the deployment. The 28th works in four provinces – Bamyan, Panjshir, Parwan and Kapisa. Four other ADTs operate across Afghanistan with more on the way.

After the work was done the children shared more than sling shots and gum with the group of agricultural specialists – they shared themselves. They talked, they gave high-fives and they smiled and laughed...a precious commodity in a time of war. As the troops left, the children followed them out of the village with one collective question – when would they be back?

“The locals are becoming very familiar with the ADT and our mission since we have conducted numerous missions to the same locations,” said Sattelberg. “We are respectful toward the locals and I think as long as we continue to respect them, they will continue to welcome us in their village.”

Artilleryman follows brother into military service

Story and Photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Moeller,
5th MPAD

Pfc. Ottis Harris loves his job.

“I get to blow stuff up all day,” the artilleryman joked.

A member of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment, 18th Fires Brigade, Harris’ time at Forward Operating Base Bostick in Afghanistan has taught him much more than just how to send rounds downrange.

Harris always dreamed of being a Soldier.

“I always wanted to join the Army,” the 27-year-old Arkansas native said. “I guess me being the youngest, my mom wanted to keep me away from it.”

It was Harris’ brother Fredrick, who eventually inspired him to pursue his dream 11 months ago.

One of the first Marines to enter Iraq in 2003, Fredrick, a 10-year veteran of the Corps, was medically retired after an explosion from a rocket propelled grenade caused a severe back injury.

“I guess just by me being so close to him, that I’m doing this for him,” Harris said thoughtfully.

Now Harris is a member of a team responsible for firing the 9,900 pound

M-777 Howitzer Artillery Cannon.

“I’m the guy who puts the powder in, so it’s kind of an easy job,” Harris said, about firing 105 pound rounds up to 18 miles. “I want to learn more about being a [section] chief, that way when we get back, I can show the new guys what I have learned.”

Harris’ hard work has not gone unnoticed by his teammates.

“Truth is,” Harris’ section chief, Army Staff Sgt. Jean Gabard said, laughing, “he is one of the cockiest Soldiers I have ever had, but in a good way.”

“Once anything comes up, you’ll see him start going at [it], and it spreads throughout the whole section,” Gabard added. “He’s contagious.”

Harris has learned a lot since arriving in Afghanistan last January.

“It’s so different from back home,” Harris said. “You have good running water there, enough food there, then you come here, and you see that they don’t have any of that, and you kind of feel sorry for them.”

“We’re trying to make it better for them,” he added. “Not just shooting downrange at targets, but to let them know that while we’re here, we’re going to protect them.”

Although Afghanistan can be tough, Harris feels he can always turn to his teammates, whom he described as “like no others.”

“I used to have a problem talking to people about anything,” Harris said seriously. “But knowing that you got guys to your left and your right that will come up and ask, and actually care about you, and want to know how things are going back home, and with you, and you can be honest with them, that means everything.”

According to Harris, the Army has given him a lot, and he hopes to give some back, “I definitely want to do 20 years,” he said.

While in the Army, Harris plans to pursue a degree in business management, once again following in his brother Fredrick’s footsteps, who now owns several successful businesses.

Pfc. Ottis Harris really does love his job.

“You don’t find too many people who wake up and put on this uniform, and can actually say that they serve their country,” he said. “For me it’s a blessing, knowing that people depend on you to help them when they’re in need of help, it makes you stick your chest out a little bit further.”



Pfc. Ottis Harris’ team fires the 9,900 lb M-777 Howitzer Artillery Cannon at Forward Operating Base Bostick March 17. Harris is an artilleryman with Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment, 18th Fires Brigade (Airborne), from Fort Bragg, N.C.

Blood in, Blood out:

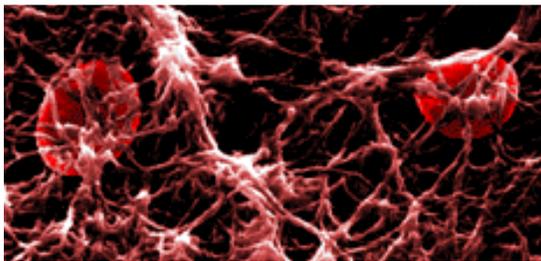
Platelets form clot between life, death

► Story and Photos by Pfc. Derek L. Kuhn

► 40th PAD



A laboratory technician for the 440th Blood Support Detachment ensures all equipment is functioning properly as Sgt. Mark Poczobut, a laboratory non-commissioned officer for the 440th BSD and a Poultney, Vt., native, donates blood platelets. Blood platelets donated at Bagram Air Field provide many patients with the highly perishable blood component.



Service members at Bagram Air Field may not be on the front lines, but their life-saving actions still make them heroes.

With the assistance of the 440th Blood Support Detachment at the Craig Joint Theater Hospital, service members are providing life to trauma patients by donating the most perishable of blood's three main components—blood platelets.

Blood platelets have a maximum shelf-life of a week, so unlike whole blood, all sources must be obtained within the immediate area.

“We have at least one person a day donating platelets to maintain our inventory,” said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Karen Oliveira, a lab technician for the 440th BSD and a Dallas native. “But we get more patients in the summer, so we need more donors in the summer.”

Blood platelet donating 101

Story by Pfc. Derek Kuhn
40th PAD

Blood platelets, along with plasma and red blood cells form whole blood. However, blood platelets are only useable for about a week, meaning only the freshest of sources

will suffice.

Blood platelets form clots which stop bleeding and allow one's tissue to heal.

There are many types of patients that need blood platelets such as trauma, burn, cancer, aplastic anemia and other immune deficient patients.

The process of obtaining blood platelets from a donor involves a machine that withdraws whole blood. Once the whole blood is in the machine,

an anticoagulant is introduced (to prevent clotting). Then, a centrifuge separates the three blood components. Afterwards, the machine reintroduces the other two components into the donor's body.

During the reintroduction, donors may experience chills and even a slight tingling in their extremities. The side effects are caused by the blood cooling to room temperature and the introduction of the anticoagulants.

While a donor may only donate whole

When extra donors are needed, the 440th BSD turns to a list of willing donors. The potential donors are contacted via email or telephone and arrangements for the donation are made.

All willing donors must pass a prescreening process at least two weeks before they are able to donate. The prescreening involves obtaining vital signs, answering a questionnaire and drawing blood to see if one is qualified to donate.

If no discrepancies are found, the service members are put on the donor roster.

Before potential donors are allowed to donate, they are screened once again to ensure only the highest quality blood platelets are used. The use of only the best samples adds to the importance of having more donors.

“There is always a need of having people come in and donate,” said Oliveira. “We have to draw and culture them [the blood platelets] to ensure that there aren’t any contaminations. We try to give the safest and purest sample to patients needing it.”

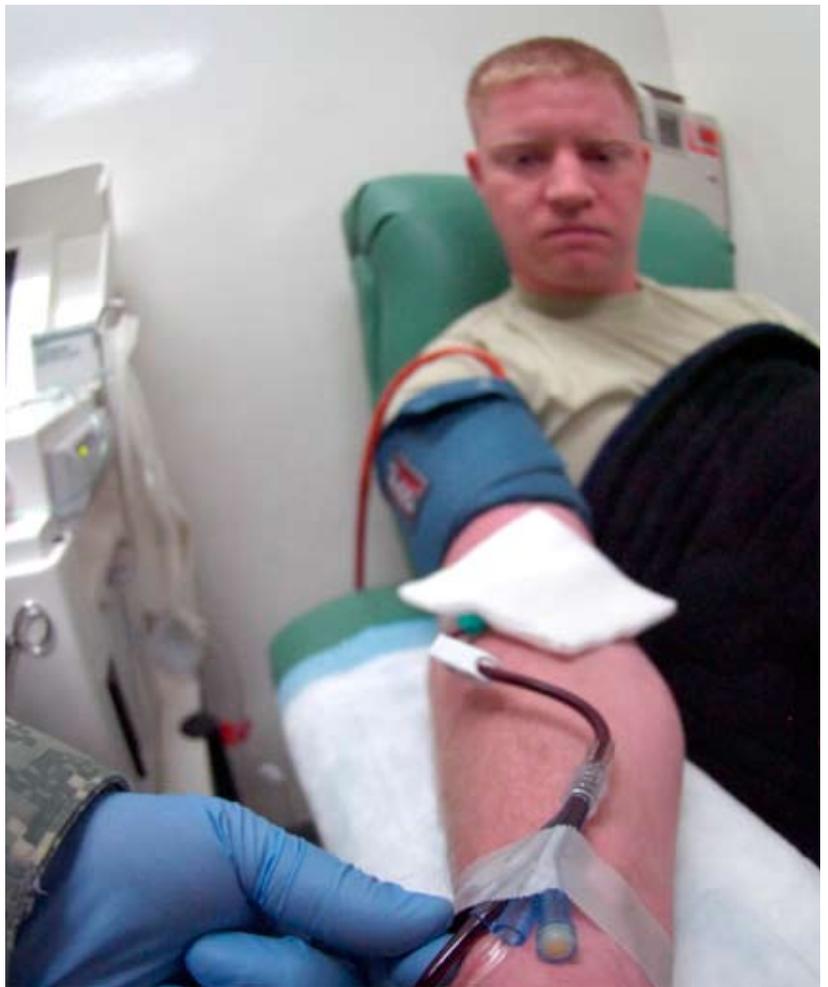
Many service members pull double duty at the military hospital and regularly donate blood platelets. One such Soldier is Sgt. Mark Poczobut, a laboratory non-commissioned officer for the 440th BSD and a Poultney, Vt., native. He said donating blood platelets fills him with a sense of pride.

“It makes me feel good,” said Poczobut. “Even though we are not out on the front lines it makes me feel like I am helping out those Soldiers who are out on the front lines.”

Poczobut described the actual donating process as being relaxed and uneventful.

“The needle feels like a bee sting when it is going into your arm,” said Poczobut. “After a minute or two, you completely forget that the needle is inside your arm. It [the needle] is even covered up by gauze so you don’t even see it. You sit in a chair for a few hours and you do what they tell you.”

What the 440th BSD suggests during the two hour process is to relax through a variety of entertaining endeavors, including listening to music or reading a book. They



Sgt. Mark Poczobut, a laboratory non-commissioned officer for the 440th Blood Support Detachment, relaxes as he donates blood platelets. Blood platelets are essential for clotting.

also show movies for the donor’s viewing pleasure.

“We have a large collection of movies that service members have donated,” said Oliveira.

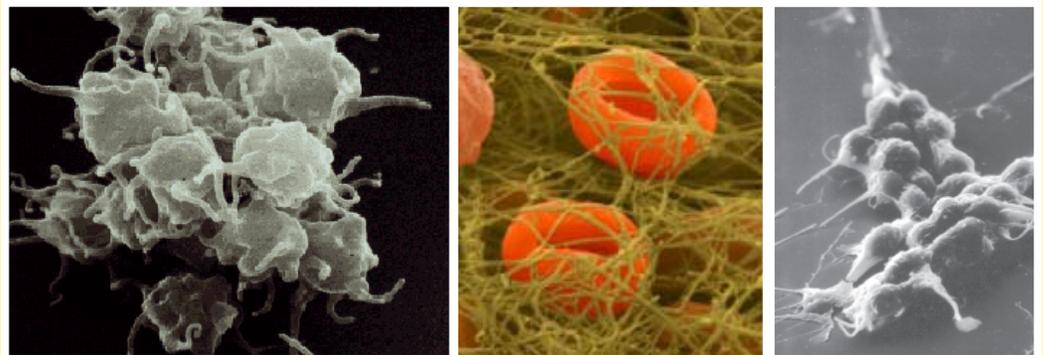
Entertainment aside, many consider the experience of donating and assisting the donors gratifying.

“It is a rewarding experience in itself,” said Oliveira. “You are behind the scenes but you are contributing to what’s going on in theater. Trauma patients come in from other areas of theater and we provide platelets for them.”

blood once every few months, blood platelet donors may donate once every two weeks.

Unlike whole blood donation, blood platelet donors do not experience any fatigue or dizziness afterwards.

With a single donation, donors can provide enough platelets for two to three adult doses, or 12 small doses for babies and young children.



Blood platelets (pictured above) plug gaps in the skin.

Fuel: Afghan dignitaries recently gathered to open a \$14.5 million fuels facility that was three years in the making.

ANA drives progress

Afghan Assistant Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Jawhari, chief of acquisition, technology and logistics, along with other ANA officials inaugurated Afghanistan's newest Class III fuels depot Feb. 28 at Khuja Rawash in Kabul.

"Today we've unlocked the key to sustaining our military," said General Jawhari. "We appreciate the commitment of the coalition to the success and independence of Afghanistan."

The previous fuels facility, known as Khair-Khana, was a primitive Soviet-era facility built around 1977, featuring a manual, gravity-fed system without electricity or pumps.

Not only was it an outdated facility

Story and Photos by Air Force Maj. Carie A. Parker,
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

The primitive fuels facility, known as Khair-Khana, was a manual Soviet-era, gravity-fed system without electricity or pumps.



with an inadequate distribution capacity, it was environmentally unsound and unsafe for operators. There was also no scientific way to determine fuel levels on trucks or within storage tanks.

Recognizing this, members of the 755th Air Expeditionary Group, Logistics Embedded Training Team, took on the challenge of transitioning to a modern facility when the project started in 2006.

“We wanted to build an organic capability here because you can contract all day but there’s a security risk involved,” said Lt. Col. Jennifer Murphy, 755th AEG Log-ETT Deputy Senior Advisor, Afghan National Security Forces. “With the ANA running their facility there’s more care taken in safeguarding the resources.”

A steep learning curve came with the new facility. The ANA soldiers not only moved to a new location, but they were catapulted into a new era. Previously, worn plastic tubing was stretched from refueling trucks to a rusty 55-gallon drum where a rubber-gloved inspector caught the unfiltered fuel in a clear glass coffee mug.

The inspector would raise the mug to the light looking for sediment. No sediment? Then, “the fuel must be pure!” The process was inaccurate and risky to workers and the environment.

The new 28-acre distribution facility not only increased fuel storage capacity by 500 percent, but also boasts a filtration system within its tanks. On top of that, the project also delivered dozens of \$200,000 bulk fuel delivery trucks with a system to filter the



Diesel and aviation fuel-fill stands, with built-in retail distribution capability, stand ready to service the Afghanistan National Army following the inauguration of the Khujá Rawash Class III Fuels Depot in Kabul.

“Today we’ve unlocked the key to sustaining our military. We appreciate the commitment of the coalition to the success and independence of Afghanistan.”

--Lt. Gen. Jawhari



will allow us to support our army by providing units with a better quality fuel more rapidly,” said Col. Mahtabudin, ANA Class III Fuels Depot commander. “This is significant for the progress and development

5,000 gallons they transport.

A laboratory was built to evaluate fuel quality, and the modern pump house also has systems to determine fuel tank levels and temperature. Central controls allow operators to accurately transfer fuel with the touch of a button. There’s also a scale to precisely weigh trucks delivering fuel.

“This facility

of Afghanistan.”

The joint team transformed the fuel supply chain, cutting processing time from 10 days to one hour, which increased distribution 200 percent.

“This fuel facility has come a long way from the former facility,” Lt. Col. Joe Biggers, Log-ETT Senior Advisor, GS-G4, stated at the inauguration. “It is helping to modernize the ANA fuel distribution process.”

The ANA handles fuel requisition, storage and distribution for the army and ministry of defense. The fuels depot will store and dispense aviation fuel, diesel, motor gasoline, propane and wood to keep the ANA moving.

According to the mentor team, it’s the first time Afghans have supplied their own air corps, and the goal is to have the ANA fuels program self-sufficient by June 2010.

“Our goal is to minimize misuse of fuel, putting true teeth behind the sup-



Afghan Assistant Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Jawhari, chief of acquisition, technology and logistics, speaks to a crowd of Afghanistan National Army soldiers and U.S. military members at the Feb. 28 inauguration of the Khujja Rawash Class III Fuels Depot in Kabul.

Afghanistan National Army Lt. Col. Ghulan Mohadeen, deputy commander of the Class III Fuels Depot, with a formation of ANA soldiers, awaits the arrival of Afghan Assistant Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Jawhari, chief of acquisition, technology and logistics. The ANA hosted an inauguration of the Khujja Rawash Class III Fuels Depot in Kabul on Feb. 28.

ply discipline,” said Senior Master Sgt Chetan Sawhney, 755th AEG Log-ETT superintendent and lead advisor of the ANA fuels branch.

That isn’t the only goal of the Log-ETT Airmen. Gainful employment of the almost 500 area residents the facility may employ is another hope.

“We want to keep these workers from becoming insurgents,” said Sawhney.

The advisory team of five people has made a significant investment in Afghanistan. As an example, Tech. Sgt. Brett Rudish and Staff Sgt. Jason King realized early that even though

the facility was slated to store high-octane aviation fuel and kerosene, the service had no need for the varieties. An estimated \$2.1 million in fuels inventory was saved as a result of their observations. The elimination of the unnecessary fuels freed up two of the facility’s 10 underground storage tanks for diesel and aviation fuel.

Other members of the team were Tech. Sgt. Marty Phillips and Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Hicks.

Meanwhile, a new crew has arrived to pick up where the outbound team left off. Their focus will be on a secondary fuels depot at Pol-e-Charki, just a few miles away. The facility is under construction and should open this summer.



“Our goal is to minimize misuse of fuel, putting true teeth behind the supply discipline,”

--Senior Master Sgt. Chetan Sawhney



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Blogging up-and-running in Army circles



By Sgt. John P. Zumer, 40th PAD

No one can explain the value and experience of Army service better than a Soldier. To help tell their stories, a venue has been created for Soldiers who wish to blog about their life and daily experiences, their careers within the Army, and their interests and Families. It's called Armystrongstories.com, and the Internet link is <http://www.armystrongstories.com>.

Soldiers have the right to blog and are encouraged to become part of the Armystrongstories.com community of bloggers. They can become registered by e-mailing a request for information on the program to blog@armystrongstories.com.

Soldiers can tell their stories to others potentially interested in the Army. The target audience will be young people considering Army service, future Soldiers, their Families and friends, community leaders, educators, and others. The intention is to provide insight on the many aspects of Army service. Soldiers of any rank, MOS or component have the opportunity to become part of Armystrongstories.com.

Blogging is very important to the Army's future, and Soldiers are encouraged to blog via Armystrongstories.com or elsewhere. New media technology has enabled anyone, anywhere to send messages to audiences of millions, unconstrained by borders. It has already been embraced not only by Soldiers, but also by the media and our enemies. A number of senior leaders, including Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, have been proactive about this challenge, knowing that when Soldiers blog, they:

- * Tell the untold stories not found in mainstream media
- * Are able to tackle common misperceptions about the Army
- * Give potential recruits an authentic, unfiltered look at Army life
- * Proactively address messaging and new media information technologies
- * Build a better understanding of Army service among Army constituencies

Armystrongstories.com operates under Operations Security (OPSEC) guidelines for Soldier blogging. The Army respects every Soldier's Constitutional rights through Army Regulation 530-1, while also adhering to OPSEC battlefield considerations. Everyone plays a role in maintaining OPSEC, just as in previous wars. Although Soldiers must register their blog with their commanding officer, this does not suggest every post/update needs to be monitored or approved by an immediate supervisor.

The future of the Army and Nation relies on attracting outstanding volunteers to military service, and Soldier blogging will play a key role in getting a positive message out. Bloggers must practice OPSEC when posting messages, and commanders are entrusted with communicating this to subordinates. Soldiers who are aware and encouraged to participate are more likely to approach these new media opportunities with calculated risk, which, after all, is what the Army wants and hopes.

Editor's Note:

This story was inspired by an email sent by Lt. Gen. Ben Freakley to Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, commanding officer of the 101st Airborne Division and CJTF-101. The message contained is the intellectual property of Lt. Gen. Freakley, and has been modified by Freedom Watch Afghanistan only for purposes of space and readability.

Lifting right; Step toward being fit in the fight

► By Sgt. John P. Zumer

► 40th PAD

“No pain, no gain.”

The saying has been around so long many accept it as Gospel. As far as Maj. Michael Hobson is concerned, nothing could be further from the truth.

“If you’ve got pain, don’t try to push through it,” said Hobson, Air Force physical therapist assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron, Craig Joint Theater Hospital, at Bagram Air Field.

Hobson treats up to 25 patients daily for all types of muscle-related injuries, and his patients are stationed across theater. The larger volume of patients limits the amount of time Hobson can spend with each, but one theme has become evident over time. Whether the injured body part was a back, foot, or knee, there



Photo by Pfc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th PAD

Sgt. 1st Class Perry Frison, a liaison noncommissioned officer for U.S. Army Central Command and a Selma, Ala., native, takes a breather between sets of dumbbell flies at a gym at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Controlling the weight being lifted in an exercise helps reduce the risk of injury.



Photo by Pfc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th PAD

Sgt 1st Class Ismael Gonzalez, S-1 noncommissioned officer in charge, Task Force Warrior and an Eagle Pass, Texas, native, prepares to perform shoulder shrugs. Servicemembers can reduce the risk of injury during exercise by maintaining proper posture throughout any movement.

Lift with your legs, not with your back!

It's not a matter of how much you lift, but rather how you lift it. Olympic weightlifters exhibit the best lifting technique. Besides being very efficient, their lifting style permits lifting of heavy loads on a daily basis with little to no back pain occurring. These people have a low incidence of back injuries.

Guidelines:

- *Stay in your "Power Position" by keeping your back slightly bowed-in*
- *Look directly ahead while lifting*
- *Keep the object being lifted as close as possible to your body*
- *When turning, pivot with your feet; don't turn your waist*

“Get a mentor who knows how to lift; for any lifting, keep the shoulder blades back,”

--Air Force Maj. Michael Hobson, physical therapist, 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron

was usually a common denominator; the majority of injuries were preventable, said Hobson.

Injuries are typically fitness or job related. The fitness ones are usually attributable to what Hobson refers to as “testosterone denial,” or Servicemembers lifting too much weight improperly. Push-ups and dips performed incorrectly may lead to injuries. Back and rotator cuff injuries are also common. And while biceps tears and triceps ruptures at BAF are the most Hobson has seen in his 16 years of physical therapy, one injury stands alone in numbers treated.

“Labrums (a ligament around the shoulder joint) are the #1 tear here,” said Hobson.

Air Force Master Sgt. Kimberly Scalberg agrees, and readily confirms that many of the injuries seen like labrum tears need never happen in the first place.

“A lot of things are preventable with better posture, flexibility and strengthening,” said Scalberg, a physical therapy technician with 20 years of experience and also assigned to the 455th EMDOS.

In fact, overall wellness and injury avoidance can be improved by incorporating greater amounts of stretching into one’s fitness regimen.

“A lot of people overlook the flexibility component. A good combination of all three is needed,” said Scalberg.

The solution for avoiding the majority of weight-lifting injuries remains a simple one. “Get a mentor who knows how to lift,” said Hobson. And more importantly, “for any lifting, keep the shoulder blades back,” he said

One back injury that surfaces far too frequently is tied to Individual Body Armor, which in many cases exceeds 30 pounds.

“The IBA is getting these guys in the way they’re putting it on,” said Hobson.

Depending on the field environment and tactical situation, due diligence and care may not be possible in putting the IBA on. But when time does exist beforehand, Hobson maintains there are a few safeguards available.

Ideally, a buddy system is needed in putting on the IBA, said Hobson. If that’s not an option, try to keep the shoulder blades back and use the legs to position the IBA onto a platform or table before putting it on the rest of the way, he said.

Even though injury prevention is still the paramount concern, a painful experience after an injury isn’t entirely hopeless provided action is taken quickly.

“If I can see you within one or two days of initial back pain, I can help you,” said Hobson. The danger is that young Servicemembers often delay treatment thinking youth and continued exercise will help to work the kinks or pain out. Such an attitude is usually a recipe for future problems, so the sooner treatment can be obtained, the better.

“It takes 10 years for some of these injuries to materialize,” said Hobson.

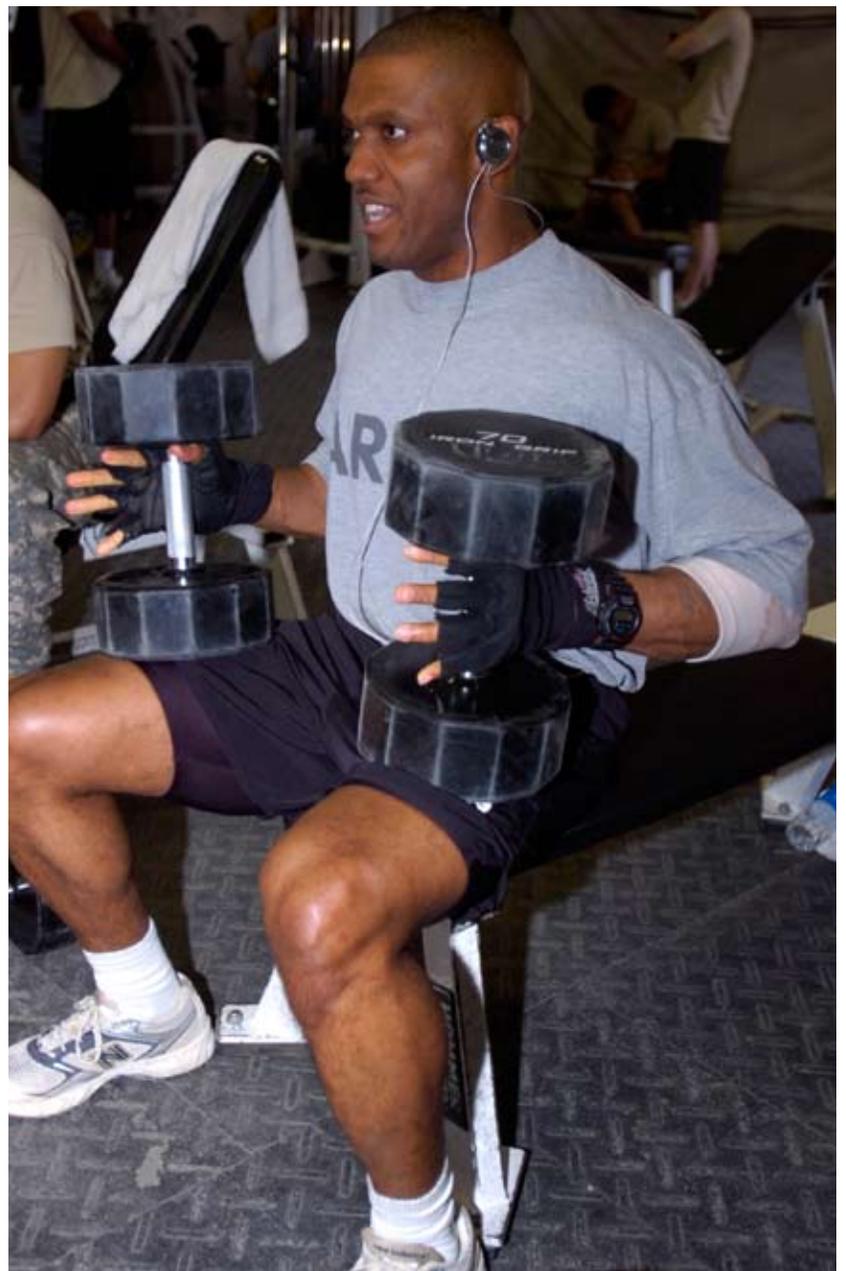


Photo by Pfc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th PAD

Sgt. 1st Class Marrio Williams, a battle noncommissioned officer for Task Force Warrior and a Chicago, Ill., native, prepares to perform a few dumbbell flies. Proper technique helps prevent any long-term damage to the body.

Dog-gone good at sniffing out IEDs

Story and Photos by Spc. Matthew Thompson
5th MPAD

She takes a few steps forward and then glances over her shoulder. A few meters up the road she stops and lies down on the ground.

Her name is Lady and she is a German shepherd trained to sniff out explosive devices and their components. Her handler is Sgt. Stephen Netzley, a scout with 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Altimur.

"I know the discomfort of not knowing if there is an IED out there while patrolling the roads," said Netzley, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the K-9 section at FOB Altimur. "Now I have a chance to make the roads safer."

The 2-year-old German shepherd and Netzley have been working together for six months, which includes the month and a half long training they went through at Vohne Liche Kennels, in Peru, Ind.

"Learning how to work with a K-9 is challenging, but once you learn how to do it, it becomes easier," Netzley said.

The pair works together as a team helping each other. "She'll pick up a scent, and if I know or see something, I'll lead her to it or she'll lead me to it, and I'll watch her reaction," Netzley said. "Through training, she has learned how to determine where the odor is coming from."

Netzley and Lady work with the route clearance patrol and the counter IED teams.

"They help us a lot because they can pinpoint exactly where something is," said Army Cpl. Adam Kodras, a member of the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment counter IED team. "They'll find the secondary IED, caches or anything that you wouldn't normally see with the naked eye."

When Lady finds something and it is confirmed positive, her reward is a tennis ball and lots of petting. But more importantly, the K-9s are saving lives.

"We're happy to know that we are going to save people," said Kodras. "We've probably saved a humvee full of Soldiers with what the dogs have helped us find."

"I like being a scout but being a dog handler gives me a better opportunity to ensure all of my battle buddies are safe," Netzley added.



Sgt. Stephen Netzley, a K-9 handler with 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, and his dog, Lady search for explosive devices during a route clearance patrol, March 9. The Houston, Texas, native and Lady assisted the explosive ordnance disposal team during the mission.





S.M.A.R.T. AFGHANS CARE FOR THEIR OWN

Story and Photos by Pvt. Melissa Stewart
3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., PAO

Afghan soldiers are saving lives on the battlefield thanks to some valuable training from 10th Mountain Division medics.

Charlie Company, 710th Brigade Support Battalion, Task Force Spartan, 10th Mtn. Div., medics trained soldiers and medics from the 5th Kandak Support Battalion, Afghan National Army, in tactical field medicine in the Spartan Medical Afghan National Army Readiness Training program.

Although many of the medics attending the program have had prior medical training, the ANA had no standard first aid training for their soldiers. According to Army Sgt. Amanda Marion, medical training non-commissioned officer in charge, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, the goal of the program is to provide basic combat life saver training for ANA soldiers and more advanced training for medics and doctors.

“The U.S. has learned a great deal in the course of our conflict about battlefield trauma and the things which injure and kill Soldiers most on the battle field,” said Army Maj. Matthew Pantsari, 710th BSB surgeon. “We’ve been able to use that knowledge and share it with them.”

The classes are conducted with

See *SMART* on pg. 29



Air Force Master Sgt. Todd Davis, from the Kapisa/Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team civil engineer and pay agent, hands out pens to local children at a gravel crushing plant construction site near Mahmood Raqi, Afghanistan, March 14. More than a dozen Soldiers, Airmen and two civilian translators from the PRT at Bagram Air Field convoyed to several construction sites to monitor progress made by local contractors hired to improve local infrastructure.



Civil engineer sets 'sites' on future of Afghanistan

*Story and Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Lake
455th Air Expeditionary Wing*

Master Sgt. Todd Davis has his 'sites' on Afghanistan's future.

With his notepad, digital camera, and 65-pounds of body armor, the civil engineer assigned to the Kapisa/Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team at Bagram Air Field talks with a local foreman about progress on Masab High School near the city of Mahmood Raqi.

The foreman reassures the 13-year Air Force veteran that the two-week-old construction project is on schedule and the workers are proud they are improving the infrastructure in their community.

"Is the contractor giving you the tools you need? Do your workers get enough water to drink while they are working?" Davis asks as he takes notes from the PRT team's translator, "Alemi," who interprets the foreman's answers.

After a 10-minute discussion with the foreman, Davis and a small group of PRT members walk around the site and talk with some of the workers digging the school's foundation.

Davis pulls out his digital camera and documents the progress made at the site since his last visit on March 7.

"There are so many different projects that I have to re-familiarize myself with each project," Davis explained. "I sit down once a week and review my project folders to get up to speed on what's going on before the



Sgt. Bradley Yingling, Kapisa/Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team squad leader, provides security beside a convoy as Soldiers and Airman check a nearby bridge for damage and potential booby traps. The various construction projects contracted by U.S. and coalition forces aim to improve the country's infrastructure while also providing jobs for local residents.

next visit."

The Kapisa/Parwan PRT is one of six Air Force-led teams within Afghanistan.

Currently the team is working on 58 projects, which include building schools, roads, bridges and medical clinics in nearby neighborhoods.

For Davis, that means traveling outside the wire several times per week.

"I've been on roughly 40 missions since I got here in November," said the Troy, Ill., native.

After making a similar site visit to a gravel-crushing plant, the team stops to inspect a bridge that had been booby trapped with mines a month before.

"This is where we found them," Davis said as he sloshed through a small stream running beneath the small concrete bridge. "The detonation wires still hadn't been connected, so we got to it before [insurgents]

could use them."

But Davis, who also served as a turret gunner on this particular mission, has become familiar with life outside the comforts of a main base.

In 2008, he deployed to Iraq as a RED HORSE engineer at Forward Operating Base Hammer, building an Iraqi Army training school for civil engineers dubbed the "Village of Hope." As soon as the school was up and running, Davis took on the role of course instructor for several months.

"The difference between the work here and the work in Iraq is that in Iraq, we did all the handiwork," he said. "Here, we provide quality assurance for local workers to make sure our government gets what it pays for."

Over the past year, U.S. and Coalition forces have contributed nearly \$7 million toward construction projects and employment of local workers in the two northeastern provinces.

Davis admits that work has not been

easy.

In addition to security concerns, some projects have been complicated by cultural differences, local bureaucracy and lack of experience with precision tools.

But the seasoned CE veteran deployed here from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., said it's an opportunity to share his knowledge in construction.

"It can be challenging sometimes dealing with issues that some projects expose, but we're changing our tactics to ensure stricter contractor accountability," explained Davis, who is also the team's payment agent for contractors.

He remains confident the work he and his team are doing here is making a difference.

"My main goal is to make sure these contractors are doing quality work versus quantity," he said. "We want the projects to be built the best way possible so they are safe and provide a long-term benefit to the Afghan people."



Two 5th Kandak Support Battalion, Afghan National Army soldiers perform the tactical field care they have learned during their training in the Spartan Medical Afghan National Army Readiness Training Program, run by Charlie Company, 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 10th Mountain Division. The soldiers had to work as if they were under fire in this simulated training exercise.

SMART continued from pg. 25

interpreters who speak either Dari or Pashtu. The ANA soldiers go through a six-day course that includes a wide variety of medical training, starting with basic hygiene and disease prevention and moving on to tactical treatment of casualties. Afghan medics and doctors continue training and learn more in-depth treatment methods.

“They have learned preventative medicine on the battle field; simple things like hand hygiene and dental hygiene; things that contribute to disease and non-battle injuries,” said Pantsari. “As the week progressed we went into field care; if a soldier is injured, the type of care that’s appropriate at the point of injury. Then

we transitioned to tactical field care. We take that care one step beyond to a level one or two treatment facility.”

In the final training lane, soldiers performed what they had learned in a simulated “treatment under-fire” situation while they were observed by instructors. First they had to retrieve a casualty from a vehicle that had been damaged in combat. They were taught that all they can do with a casualty under fire was to apply a tourniquet.

The soldiers then carried the casualty to a “secure location” where medics could perform tactical field care, including basic treatment of injuries and administering an intravenous tube. Soldiers had to work quickly, just like they were in

a real combat situation. Finally they had to evacuate the casualty to a level one or two treatment center, where medics and doctors gave further treatment to the casualty.

The SMART program has not only provided ANA with standardized first aid training, but it has also helped build working relationships and close friendships.

“One of the most heartwarming things that has come out of training is the close friendships that have been formed between the Spartans and the 5th Kandak,” said Pantsari. “We have enjoyed many cups of tea, many games of cards after the training was done. It’s developing more than just a collegial relationship, it’s a friendship.”

ARMY, AIR FORCE PREVAIL IN



Story and Photos by
Pfc. Kimberly D. Cole, 40th PAD

Fourteen Servicemembers representing the Army, Air Force, and Navy gathered here March 25 to compete in NCO and junior enlisted divisions for the 2009 Joint Servicemember competition.

Coming out on top for the NCO group was Air Force Staff Sgt. Dean Martinez, operations staff non-commissioned officer, 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.

Martinez said although the physical part of the competition was not a “piece of cake,” the toughest part for him was the board, because he had only a week to prepare.

“The weapons portion was less of a worry because of my background in security,” said Martinez. “I am very familiar with the mechanics of the weapons.”

Weapons also seemed to be a breeze for the junior-enlisted winner, Pfc. Chris Baker, broadcast journalist, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mtn. Div., Public Affairs Office.

“It’s an honor to get (this award),” Baker said. “It’s good to have friendly competition between the services.”

The services were well-represented with Air Force Senior Airman Steven Doty, public affairs journalist, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing PAO taking second place and Spc. Andrew Hein, gunner, 45th Sustainment Brigade, securing third place in the junior-enlisted division. For

Pfc. Chris Baker, a broadcast journalist, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., PAO, assembles his M16 as part of the 2009 Joint Servicemember of the Year competition at BAF on Mar. 25.

SERVICEMEMBER COMPETITION

the NCO group, second place honors went to Staff Sgt. Patrick Laughlin, brigade aviation NCO, Task Force Spartan. Third place was taken by Staff. Sgt. Ebony Blancaneax-Williams, equal opportunity advisor, Task Force Lightning.

The day began with an orientation at 5 a.m., followed by an eight-mile run. Competition testing began after the run and personal hygiene were completed.

The Servicemembers were tested on their Code of Conduct knowledge and Combined Joint Task Force-101 history. The contestants then moved on to a Common Task Training hands-on exam. This consisted of handling weapons and first-aid lanes, where participants were tested on their lifesaving skills.

The final test before the formal board was an orienteering course, similar to land navigation.

Deciding how many points to award per area and what to actually test on was not an easy task, said Master Sgt. Michael Crawley, future operations non-commissioned officer, CJTF-101, who put the competition together.

"I talked to all the seniors (NCOs) across the four services to find a way to average what each service does everyday and find the best at it," Crawley said.

Doty said he had a lot of support in the training process leading up to the competition.

"The physical aspect was quite different from the way I have become accustomed to, so with the help of fellow Airmen in the Force Protection flight, I was able to train on a daily basis," Doty said.

Doty and Martinez also reached across service lines to get a better picture of what to expect.

Doty said, "Staff Sgt. Martinez and I knew this was an Army-based challenge; therefore, we sought assistance from the Army to gain a better perspective of what they would be looking for."

Martinez was enthusiastic about competing with other services.

"As an NCO, I think it's vital to have joint competitions downrange, so we have communication and are all on the same page," Martinez said.

When Martinez was asked what's next on the agenda for him, he said, "I'm going to get Iron Eagle-certified."



Staff Sgt. Patrick Laughlin, brigade aviation non-commissioned officer, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., finishes assembling his rifle as part of the 2009 Joint Servicemember of the Year competition.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Dean Martinez, operations staff non-commissioned officer, 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, won the NCO division of the 2009 Joint Servicemember of the Year competition at BAF on Mar. 25.



photos from the field



An Afghan National Army Soldier from the 6th Kandak looks out over a remote river valley from an Afghan National Police outpost in Konar Province, Afghanistan, March 19. Alliance forces have been mentoring ANA and ANP members on military and civil operations to help quell violent extremists in the region.

Photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Moeller



Members of the Kapisa/Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team pass local villagers on the way to their first objective of the day - the Masab High School construction site.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Lake



Photo by Capt. Kamil Sztalkoper
 Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, fire the M777A2 155mm towed howitzer in support of Operation Pech Taw. Operation Pech Taw is a joint mission involving elements of the 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. and Afghan National Security Forces in the provinces of Logar and Wardak.



During an assessment of the Dashte De Wat Basic Health Clinic in Panjshir province's Khenj District, Doctor Mahbullah, speaks with Master Sgt. Blue Rowe, left, deployed from 426th Civil Affairs Battalion, and members of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Photo by Air Force Capt. Stacie Shafran



photos from the field



U.S. Army Soldiers from 1-40th Cavalry, Task Force Spartan, conduct a Combat Life Saver class in Zornat, Afghanistan on March 14.

Photo by Pfc. Fleites Enoch, 55th Signal Company (Combat Camera)



A U.S. Army Soldier from a Embedded Transition Team and Afghanistan National Police hands out candy to Afghan children in Zormat, Afghanistan on March 12.

Photo by Pfc. Fleites Enoch, 55th Signal Company (Combat Camera)



Photo by Pfc. Fleites Enoch, 55th Signal Company (Combat Camera)

U.S. Army Soldiers from the 1-1 KANDAK 203rd Embedded Transition Team, 1-40th Cavalry and Afghanistan National Police search possible insurgents in Zormat, Afghanistan on March 6.

U.S., Latvian Soldiers partner to lead first OMLT in RC-East

Story and Photos by Sgt. Matthew C. Moeller,
5th MPAD

In Regional Command-East, a group of Michigan National Guardsman and Latvian Soldiers recently formed the command's first multi-national training group, known as the Observer, Mentor, Liaison Team at Forward Operating Base Bostick in Konar province, Afghanistan.

The mentoring and advising of the Afghan National Army is usually lead by the U.S. Military's Embedded Training Teams. An OMLT, pronounced omelet, differs from an ETT because it is multinational, and can vary in its size and purpose.

The idea for the combined OMLT with Latvia stemmed from the National Guard's State Partnership for Peace Program, a concept designed to pair guardsman from different states with former Cold War adversaries.

"The state of Michigan and Latvia have been working together since 1995," said Capt. Dan Voss, OMLT team member and Michigan National Guardsman from the 119th Field Artillery Battalion. "We've done training together in the past, they have come to Michigan for two-weeks during our [annual training] and it always went well, so the idea for an OMLT started getting kicked around."

For three months the Guardsman trained with their Latvian army counterparts, including training at the U.S. Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany.

"We did joint tactical and technical training," said Voss.

"That way we will all be on the same page, not just an American way or a Latvian way, but an OMLT way."

The combined team arrived at FOB Bostick in November, where they absorbed members of the existing ETT, made up of active duty service members from the Army and Navy.

According to the former ETT commander and current OMLT U.S. team leader Army Maj. Jim Hickman, OMLTs and ETTs both seek to guide the ANA, but the current OMLT is able to provide better support for the area.

"Most ETTs are 16-20 people," he said. "We're 47, so we're able to cover down on a lot more."

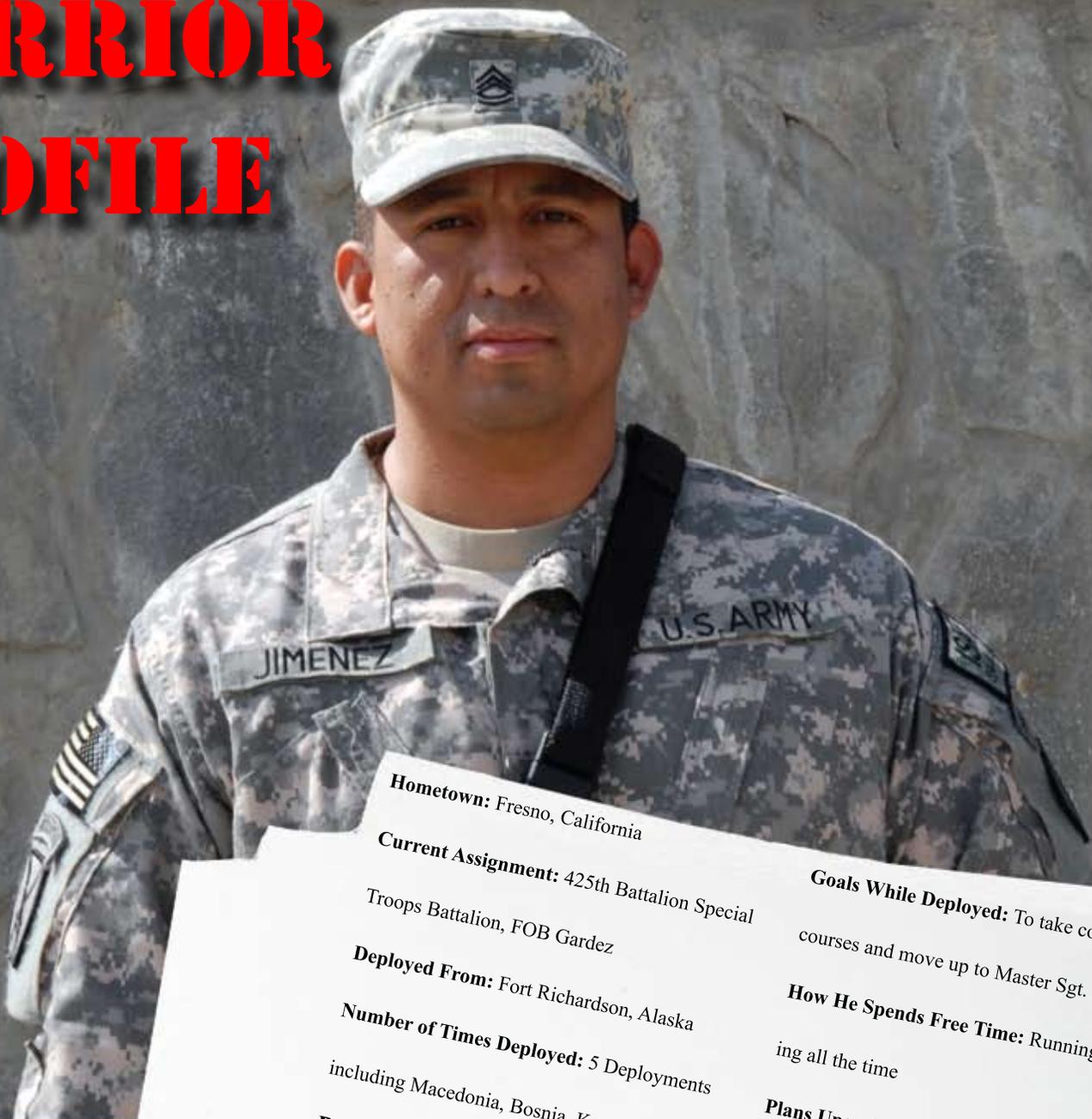
The team is helping establish the 6th Kandak, a battalion sized unit covering some of Afghanistan's most remote and hostile areas along the border with Pakistan. It not only mentors the ANA Soldiers on combat skills, but also administrative tasks, such as establishing supply and training programs.

"We are here to support the ANA in their development, so that one day they can take over all security for their country," said Latvian army Maj. Juris Abolins, leading Latvian officer in the OMLT. Once they [accomplish this], then I am done, and I can go home."

Latvian Army Cpl. Deniss Makarous, from the combined U.S., Latvian Observer, Mentor, Liaison Team, shows an Afghan National Army soldier how to use a sniper rifle at Observation Post Bari Alai near the village of Nishagam, in Konar province, Afghanistan, March 18.



WARRIOR PROFILE



SFC Antonio Jimenez

Hometown: Fresno, California

Current Assignment: 425th Battalion Special Troops Battalion, FOB Gardez

Deployed From: Fort Richardson, Alaska

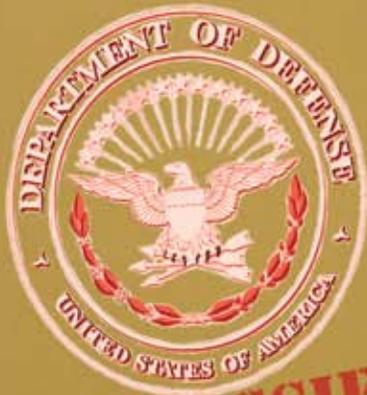
Number of Times Deployed: 5 Deployments including Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq.

Best Part of Deployment: Conducting live, real-world missions

Goals While Deployed: To take college courses and move up to Master Sgt.

How He Spends Free Time: Running, working all the time

Plans Upon Return: Take a month off and enjoy Alaska



UNCLASSIFIED



Unit Spotlight

Name of Unit: 440th Medical Detachment (Blood Support)

Mission: On order, the 440th Blood Support Detachment (BSD) provides blood collection, manufacturing, storage and distribution throughout the Afghan Theater of Operation in support of all US and coalition forces.

Unit history: The 440th BSD deployed to Afghanistan in May 2008 and immediately began split-based operations in Bagram Airfield and Kandahar Airfield. The 440th BSD has provided a blood support team for

the Afghan Theater of Operation on a rotational basis with other Blood Support Detachments since the unit's activation in 2002.

Interesting Unit Facts: In October 2008, the 440th BSD became the first unit to provide Deglycerolized Red Blood Cells to the Afghanistan Theater. This capability allows the BSD to store large quantities of frozen blood and then use a deglycerolizing process to thaw the blood for use.

The 440th BSD also became the first Blood Support Detachment to be augmented with a team of Navy Laboratory Technicians. Currently, the Afghanistan Theater is the only theater to incorporate a truly "Tri-Service" medical laboratory environment. The laboratory at the Craig Joint Theater Hospital is comprised of Air Force, Army and Navy laboratory technicians working together as a team to accomplish the mission.

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