

FREEDOM WATCH AFGHANISTAN

SEPTEMBER 2009



**Moving
Forward:**
Election gives
voice to
Afghans
pg. 2



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HEADQUARTERS, COMBINED/JOINT TASK FORCE (CJTF)-82
BAGRAM AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09354

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

CJTF-82-CG

21 AUG 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR All Personnel Assigned within Regional Command East, Afghanistan

SUBJECT: Observance on Ramadan in Regional Command East

1. As the beginning of Ramadan approaches, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the observance of Ramadan for all of our Muslim Service Members, Coalition Partners, Contractors and Civilians. Ramadan is a period of great significance in the annual calendar of the Islamic faith. It is incumbent on each of us to be aware of the impact Ramadan has on our Muslim team members as well as on the Afghan people with whom we partner and strive to protect.

2. I charge each member of Regional Command East to be especially sensitive to the Islamic cultural practices that are observed throughout Ramadan. During this religious period, Muslims gather five times a day for prayer, fast from dawn to sunset, work from 0800-1300 hrs, and attend activities at Mosques. Serving or consuming food, drink or tobacco products in the presence of Muslims may be offensive and should be avoided between dawn and sunset. Those participating in Ramadan will likely be more tired as the month progresses. Being aware of these issues as you interact with and operate around Afghan people demonstrates our understanding of Afghan cultural practices and enables you to find greater success in your mission.

3. As guests in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, we are not expected to fast during Ramadan, but I do expect everyone to respect the significance of the season and refrain from doing anything that would hinder our strong partnership with the Afghan government and people. I also encourage you to find ways to celebrate the holy month with our Afghan partners and ask American Muslim Service Members and Civilians, where appropriate to find ways to share any unique Ramadan traditions you might have with those you work with and among.

4. As members of our own Muslim community gather on the Forward Operating Bases throughout Regional Command East to observe Ramadan, we pray that your commitment to the disciplines of Ramadan is met with the blessings of God in your life. I charge leaders at all levels to support our Muslim team members in their observance of Ramadan by adjusting dinning hours to the maximum extent practicable and being sensitive to the physical limitations that may arise through the practice of fasting.

5. My thanks to all of you for your contribution to the success of our mission and to the security of Afghanistan.


Curtis M. Scaparrotti
Major General, US Army
Commanding

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Freedom Watch magazine is a monthly publication of the 40th PAD and Combined Joint Task Force 82.

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Freedom Watch, a U.S. Department of Defense publication, is published the first Monday of every month by the 40th PAD located at building 815-F Dragon Village at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 15,000 copies per month. In accordance with DoD Instruction 5120.4, this DoD magazine is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas. Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government or the Department of Defense.

All submissions are subject to editing by the 40th PAD, which can be reached at DSN 318-481-6367 or via email at freedomwatch@swa.army.mil.

Cover Photo by Spc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th PAD

An Afghan National Army soldier points ahead, indicating a desire to see his country move forward after the recent election.

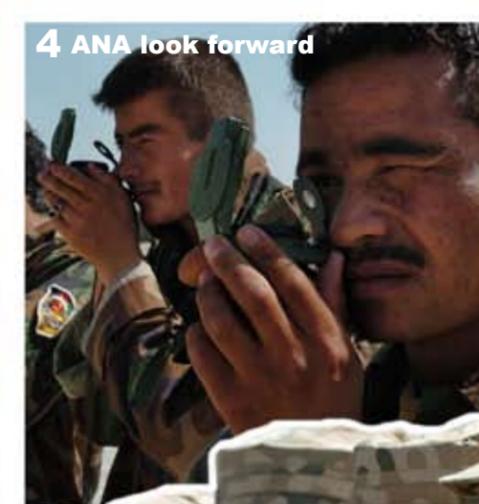
Check out the *Freedom Watch* online at:

www.CJTF82.com

14 Freedom Radio



4 ANA look forward



16

Polish honored by Prime Minister



6

ANP train for elections

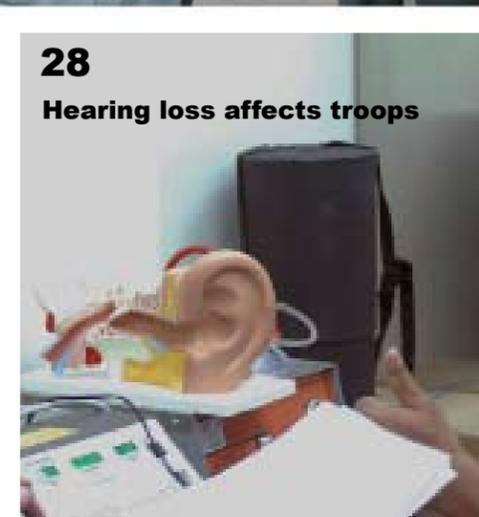


18 Paratroopers run for charity



28

Hearing loss affects troops



AFGHAN ELECTION

GIVES VOTERS A VOICE



Story by Pfc. Melissa Stewart
3rd BCT, 10 Mtn. Div. PAO

Photo by Spc. Matthew Thompson, 5th MPAD

For only the second time in their history, the people of Afghanistan participated freely in a democratic election process, Aug. 20.

Afghan National Security Forces successfully secured approximately 6,500 polling sites across the country with 69 polling sites in Logar province.

“We take voting for granted in the states,” said 2nd Lt. Dan Jendrich, Personal Security Detail platoon leader with 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain

Division. “I think it is a good thing to have in this country. I like seeing how many people are out there, taking ownership for their country and security so people can come out and vote.”

ANSF took the lead in securing and maintaining safety at the polling sites, International Security Assistance Forces, including Soldiers from Task Force Spartan were circling the outlining areas of the polling sites throughout Logar province.

“Our job was to provide outer

security as the Afghan people moved to the voting poles,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek Smith, 118th Military Police Company. “It looked like there was a good turnout, and ANP were doing a good job interacting with the locals.”

ISAF was geared for possible violence and, although American troops provided merely an outer cordon of security, forces were ready to step in and provide sound back up if enemy voter opposition became too volatile for ANSF to handle.

An Afghan National Police officer points out the direction of recent rocket attacks for 2nd Lt. Dan Jendrich, the personal security detail platoon leader with 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, Aug. 20. International Security Assistance Forces assisted Afghan National Security Forces during the elections by providing a quick reaction force.

Soldiers with 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division and the Afghan National Army gather information from locals outside of the Pul E Alum district during a quick reaction force mission, Aug. 20. International Security Assistance Forces and Afghan National Security Forces provided security during the elections.

“I think what the enemy has been trying to do in the last couple of days is harass the people in order to intimidate them and get them not to vote,” Lt. Col. George Pitt, commander, 3rd BSTB, said to a group of Afghans who had just finished casting their ballots. “It is a testament to all of you coming out and actually standing up to the enemy.”

“I want to help my country, I want to choose my president because we want a good Afghanistan,” said Farha Dullah, a local voter.

The locals were so dedicated to electing their future leaders, locals with vehicles drove back and forth from polling sites so their neighbors had a chance to vote.

“In every country people have a right to vote and choose a president they want,” said Afghan National Police Major Abdul Mktin, who also voted. “This time there will be more changes.”

There was an escalation of violence across Task Force Areas of Operations. Although few polling sites were attacked, ISAF troops weathered an increase of attacks during election day.

“Everybody was supportive and glad to have us there,” said Jendrich “They have a complete understanding of what needs to happen, and a willingness to continue forward. It’s good to help enable the people, but today they did this themselves.”



Photo by Spc. Matthew Thompson, 5th MPAD



ANA TRAIN FOR 'STEEL RAIN

AN ANA SOLDIER WITH THE 4TH KANDAK COVERS HIS EARS AS A FELLOW ANA SOLDIER FIRES A D-30 122MM HOWITZER DURING A LIVE-FIRE EXERCISE AT FOB KALAGUSH, IN NURISTAN PROVINCE, AUG. 2. THE TRAINING MARKED THE FIRST TIME ANA'S 4TH KANDAK FORWARD OBSERVERS CALLED IN AN ARTILLERY STRIKE FOR AFGHAN ARTILLERYMAN.

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

A 46-pound artillery round explodes into the hills surrounding Forward Operating Base Kalagush, in Afghanistan's Nuristan province, as a group of Afghan National Army forward observers watch patiently, consulting their maps.

Into his radio, an ANA forward observer says, "right 500 meters."

The Fire Direction Control center, staffed by ANA officers from the 4th Kandak, enters the new data into their computers and relay updated coordinates to the artillerymen waiting to fire. Within moments the 7,000 pound

D-30 122mm Howitzer blasts another round. This time it's a direct hit.

Marine 1st Lt. Steve Murello, with an Embedded Training Team, looks at the results. "Good," he says.

According to Murello, the cloud of smoke growing in the distance marked the first time the ANA's 4th Kandak forward observers, FDC personnel and artillerymen worked together to conduct live-fire training, Aug. 2.

"Most of the guys, when they come out of school, are trained for just direct fire. They're not trained

to work with forward observers or the FDC, so if they can't see it, they can't shoot it," Gunnery Sgt. Enrique Munoz said. "But, by incorporating the forward observers and the FDC, now the gun-line doesn't need to have eyes on...it's all done for them."

Starting with such basic techniques as reading a map and compass, and moving into more advanced methods such as using the newly developed Afghan Field Artillery Computer, ETT members were able to step back and allow

ANA officers to run the training.

But, the day's events did not come easy at times.

Accustomed to training separately, forward observers and the FDC had a series of communication breakdowns, which left the gun-line's D-30 Howitzer silent for long stretches of time.

Although occasionally frustrated, the ANA teams eventually worked through the breakdowns, and the forward observers successfully helped the artillery pound round after round into the hills using their cannon, left behind by the retreating Soviet Union in the 1980's, and older than many of the

men firing it.

"It was some good training," said Murello. "Overall they did very well."

"This shows that my Soldiers can fight for our country," said ANA 1st Sgt. Roohullah Shirzi. "If (the enemy) tries to hurt our people, then we will be able to destroy them."

ETT 4-4 is nearing completion of their nine month deployment to Afghanistan. Their replacements, fellow Okinawa, Japan, based 3rd Marine Division troops, will continue to help the emerging Afghan military.

"By incorporating the forward observers and the FDC, now the gun-line doesn't need to have eyes on...it's all done for them."

--Gunnery Sgt. Enrique Munoz

Freedom isn't free: ANP train to secure elections



Two members of the Afghan National Police in Kunar province practice search techniques at the Manogai Police Station in Kunar province, July 15. The Afghan policemen were learning techniques from U.S. forces, which they shared with their fellow officers in preparation for the national elections, Aug. 20.

Story and Photos by Spc. Eugene H. Cushing, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. PAO

Afghan National Police in the Kunar province, and U.S. Army Military Police assigned to Task Force Mountain Warrior, recently conducted election-focused training to keep the area secure during the August elections.

RIGHT: Cpl. Nicholas E. Cox, of Indianapolis, demonstrates the proper use of an intravenous bag to officers of ANP members during training conducted at the Manogai Police Station in Kunar province, July 15. Cox's unit has been conducting training throughout the province to ensure the ANP is prepared for the coming national elections.



ABOVE: Sgt. Christopher C. Silva, of Boston, discusses training opportunities with Afghan National Police Maj. Sali Mohammed, operations officer for the Shigal district police station, July 15, at the Manogai Police Station in Kunar province. Silva's unit has been conducting several meetings throughout Kunar province to ensure the ANP are able to provide security during the August elections.

1st Lt. Michael T. Nicholson, the platoon leader for 2nd platoon, 984th Military Police Company, 759th Military Police Battalion, led his unit in focused district partnership training with the police force at the Manogai Police Station, July 14-15.

Nicholson, of Burnsville, Minn., said the training goal was to ensure the ANP stations were able to effectively operate on their own.

Sgt. Christopher C. Silva, of Boston, a squad leader with 2nd platoon, said the mission consisted of two days of meetings and training with the ANP. The first day involved meeting with the police chief and his officers, and assessing the station's armament, personnel and facilities.

"The second day we finished the assessment and started training for the elections," he said.

According to Silva, the training included conducting personnel and vehicle searches, reacting to improvised explosive devices, setting up and operating checkpoints, reacting to small arms fire, searching buildings, first aid, emergency response, crowd control and force protection.

The reason behind the training was to help ensure the Afghan people are as prepared as possible to run their own elections, Silva added.

Afghan National Police Maj. Sali Mohammed, the operations officer for the Shigal district police station, said the training was highly beneficial.

Mohammed explained that the Afghan police officers attending the training were going to take what they learned



ABOVE: A Soldier assigned to the 984th Military Police Company, 759th Military Police Battalion, assigned to Task Force Mountain Warrior, shares first aid techniques with ANP members during a meeting at the Shigal District center in the Kunar province.

back to their individual police stations and train the rest of their units.

Cpl. Marcus R. Bennett, of Thermopolis, Wy., a team leader assigned to 2nd platoon, had spent a lot of time on the road as a military policeman before coming to Afghanistan and was able to share some of his experience with his Afghan counterparts.

Bennett said he taught the Afghan Police how to search for weapons, explosives, drugs and other potentially dangerous items.

"I enjoyed working with the Afghans," he said. "That was the first time I got to get out and teach them."

Nicholson described the Afghan police his platoon worked with as motivated and willing to learn.

"They're very friendly," he said. "They share everything they know. They're willing to try the stuff we teach them so it's been very positive."

Mobile, agile, lethal

Lighter equipment aids Soldiers in mission



TOP: Sgt. Dustin M. Kaminiski and Staff Sgt. Johnny L. Bates test the lighter gear while patrolling a small village in the Kunar province, Afghanistan, July 7.

LEFT: Pfc. Alexander Bishop maintains his guard before moving through a small village and heading up the mountains with his new combat equipment.

Story and Photos by Spc. Eugene H. Cushing
4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. PAO

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, assigned to Task Force Mountain Warrior, were among the first Soldiers to receive new equipment intended to lighten their load and increase mobility during missions.

The equipment issue included new individual body armor, boots suited to the mountainous terrain, and other equipment such as lighter sleeping systems and knee pads.

1st Sgt. Mark A. Eckstrom, of Frazier Park, Calif., and the first sergeant for Company A, 2nd Bn., 12th Inf. Reg., said the difference between the new and old equipment is remarkable.

Eckstrom said the new equipment provides greater freedom of movement in addition to being lighter, thus allowing Soldiers to maneuver more easily in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan.

Pvt. Mark A. Haas, of Omaha, Neb., a gunner assigned to Co. A, received the new equipment before deploying to Af-

“Without the equipment, we still would have been doing the same missions. It lets them get to the fight a little bit easier.”

--Sgt. Dustin M. Kaminiski, Company A, 2nd Bn., 12th Inf. Reg.

ghanistan. He liked the boots included in the issue because they are better suited for the terrain of Afghanistan.

“They have a better grip, and form to the rocks a lot better,” he said. “You don’t get as many blisters.”

Sgt. Dustin M. Kaminiski, of Chicago, a team leader for Co. A, said the new equipment allows full range of motion and doesn’t restrict movement or circulation.

“It’s lighter,” he said. “It helps you breathe easier.”

The team leader went on to say the plate-carrier came with pouches specifically designed for the different types of ammunition that Soldiers use depending on their job in the unit.

“It allows you to be more agile, and also allows you to place your pouches so you’re not all bunched up,” he said.

Eckstrom felt the new equipment has given his Soldiers a definite advantage.

“Without the equipment, we still would have been doing the same missions,” he said. “It lets them get to the fight a little bit easier.”

Bird’s eye view from CROWS nest

Story and Photo by
Pfc. Cody A. Thompson, 40th PAD

The next generation of common remotely operated weapons stations offers an updated version with more options to potentially protect Service Members and defeat insurgents across Afghanistan.

Located on top of mine resistant, ambush protected vehicles, the CROWS II allows for safer travels by enabling the gunner to sit inside the vehicle, which reduces potential casualties in vehicle rollovers.

“Fact is, we won’t have as many people killed in rollover,” said Capt. Timothy Ashcraft, a Corpus Christi, Texas, native, and the Chief of Training with the Combined Joint Task Force-82.

The implementation of the CROWS II system doesn’t change the need for basic Soldier safety, which includes buckling the seatbelt.

“With the CROWS II, if everyone inside wears their seatbelts we could reduce the amount of casualties caused in vehicle rollovers by a lot,” said Michael Hudock, an Athens, Ga., native, and mine resistant ambush protected vehicle instructor with

Navistar Defense.

For Staff Sgt. Robert Martuszewski, the division master gunner with Combined Joint Task Force-82, gunner safety is a personal issue.

“I had a buddy die when he was thrown from the turret when his vehicle hit an IED (improvised explosive device),” recalls the Baltimore native. “Now if the vehicle rolls over, he (the gunner) won’t get crushed or thrown from the vehicle.”

With the gunner protected from vehicle rollovers, he can concentrate his focus on eliminating enemy targets.

Once a gunner locates a target, he can utilize the laser range function of the CROWS II to track the enemy and accurately engage the target.

CROWS II feature an assortment of weapons, including an M-2 .50-caliber machine gun, M-240 machine gun, MK-19 automatic grenade launcher and the M-249 squad automatic weapon.

The next generation of CROWS includes updates that will assist in the overall operation of the station.

“The new generation of CROWS includes advanced optics (and) a more user friendly control interface, which allows you to do more inside the vehicle,” said Martuszewski.

The system also has body heat locators that can find insurgents day or night.

“The system has night and day thermals, and with 90 percent ballistics accuracy, the gunner system is truly amazing,” said Sgt. 1st Class Andre Jones, a Jacksonville, Vt., native, and field service representative with Crew Served Weapons.

CROWS II are not entirely dependent upon an electronic source for control, which gives service members more options in emergencies.

“In case you lose electronic capabilities, the gunner can undo the lock clutches and manually operate the gun,” said Jones. “So, you still need to conduct your head spacing and timing checks prior to the mission.”

CROWS marks significant increases in safety and security for troops on the frontlines, but the main difference maker will always be the Soldier.



A Soldier looks into the monitoring of the next generation of common remotely operated weapons station, July 31, on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. CROWS II enables service members to attack insurgents from inside a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle.



Spc. Joshua Vazquez helps Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Gaines, 165th Airlift Wing, Georgia Air National Guard, move a pallet onto a C-130 Hercules cargo bay at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, July 30. The duo was loading the Hercules for an airdrop mission. Vazquez, who serves with the 612th Port Master Detachment, is deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C., and hails from El Centro, Calif. Gaines, is deployed from Savannah, Ga.

Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Jung, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing PAO

Backin' that ammo up!

Story by Air Force Capt. David Faggard, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing PAO

Nothing ever goes by the book, but this is a classic example of airpower supporting ground forces – primarily the Afghanistan National Army – with close air support and air-drop capabilities.

The day could be like any other day, but the calls came in – Coalition forces, engaged with the enemy on the ground, were running low on ammunition and needed a re-supply.

Like a swarm of bees overhead looking to sting, U.S. Army AH-64 Apache helicopters, deployed from the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade of the 101st Airborne, from Fort Campbell, Ky., and U.S. Air Force A-10 Warthogs deployed, from Moody Air Force Base, Ga., weren't going to let anything happen to their allies fighting on the ground.

Capt. Matthew Clementz, one of the Apache gunship pilots that day with Task Force Attack, said that between his

Apaches and the A-10 Warthogs, they cleared the way of insurgents for the airdrop and that there was "good interaction with each other."

In classic fashion, a workhorse of modern warfare was ready to assist. Lumbering over enemy terrain, the C-130 Hercules and crew assigned to the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron at Bagram Air Field had the ammunition destined for the Afghans fighting for their lives on the ground.

At the controls of the 25-year-old airplane was U.S. Air Force Capt. D.J. Spisso, deployed from the 165th Airlift Wing, out of Savannah, Ga., and he knew this mission would be different.

The success of the mission rested in the hands of an aircrew comprised of active-duty, National Guard and Reserve Airmen from various units in the U.S., including Schenectady, N.Y., Savannah,

Ga., Little Rock, Ark., Saint Joseph's, Mo., and Mansfield, Ohio.

"This was a complete team effort," Spisso said. "It was difficult terrain, communications were scarce and we made it. It was a good drop."

Making the drop right on target is important when the good guys are in need, according to Spisso, who is also employed as a civilian pilot when not on active duty.

"It's something you feel good about helping Coalition partners in need," he said. "Coalition members coming together for a common good," the Citadel graduate said. "That's just what happened. We're willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done."

Fortunately for the Afghan soldiers on the ground fighting the enemy, the Air Force's commitment to Total Force and joint operations paid off, and the 'Herdrivers' hit their mark.

The future is now!

Kherwar area sees progress

"This time is the time of opportunities. Let's take these opportunities now and build a future for our children. I am telling you now let's work together, shoulder to shoulder."

*--Attiqullah Lodin,
Logar Provincial Governor*



Soldiers and Afghan National Security Forces, pull security side by side, during a Mega Shura, or large meeting, at the Kherwar district center, July 27. Logar Provincial Governor Attiqullah Lodin spoke at the shura and discussed plans to build more schools and hospitals, as well as pave roads throughout the district.



Logar Provincial Governor Attiqullah Lodin, (center in white) listens to complaints of local elders of Kherwar district during a Mega Shura, or large meeting, July 27, at the Kherwar district center. Lodin also discussed plans to build dirt roads, schools and hospitals.

Provincial Governor Attiqullah Lodin, speaks to local elders at the Kherwar district center during a Mega Shura, or large meeting, July 27.

Capt. Jose Vasquez, commander, Cherokee Troop, 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, greets local elders as they arrive at the Mega Shura, or large meeting, at the Kherwar district center, July 27. During the shura, local elders voiced their concerns about the district.

Local elders of Kherwar district voice their opinions during a Mega Shura, or large meeting, at the Kherwar district center, July 27.

Story and Photos by Spc. Jaime' D. De Leon
TF Spartan PAO

Logar Provincial Governor Attiqullah Lodin spoke with the sub-governor and local elders about plans to bring a stronger government presence to the district, July 27, during a Mega Shura, or a large meeting, at the Kherwar District Center.

However, Lodin doesn't plan on changing Kherwar on his own. He hopes to gain the support of all the people of Kherwar, while continuing to work with the International Security Assistance Forces.

"This time is the time of opportunities," Lodin said. "Let's take these opportunities now and build a future for our children. I am telling you now let's work together, shoulder to shoulder."

Part of Lodin's plan for Kherwar involves upgrading the infrastructure.

Kherwar currently has dirt roads and a district center made of metal containers and mud-huts.

"Kherwar is far from Logar and government," Lodin said. "If you're driving on dirt, it takes three to four hours to get to Logar. When we get the roads paved, it will take 20 minutes."

His plans for building do not merely end with the building of roads.

"We can build hospitals for our wives and our children," Lodin said, adding that he also hopes to build more schools.

However, roads and buildings can't change everything. Fighting between ISAF troops and local insurgents, as well as locals fighting with each other, has also been a problem.

"If people are having problems, have

them come to me," Lodin said. "Let's solve problems with talking, not guns and fighting."

Lodin doesn't want to give up on his countrymen who are currently fighting. He wants to join them all together in the effort to improve Afghanistan.

"Tell the people who are fighting to throw down their weapons and come join us," said Lodin. "I promise I will not harm them."

Lodin also made a point of letting the people of Kherwar know that ISAF is part of the solution, not a part of the problem. In a crowd of men who are old enough to remember the Russian invasion, Lodin made sure to make a clear distinction between the former Soviet superpower and the current foreign forces.

"The Russians were here to colonize and make us part of their kingdom," Lodin said. "ISAF is here as our guest, to help us. They left their brothers and sisters and children far away."

Lodin also reiterated the fact that the Soldiers came to help and not hurt the people of Kherwar.

With so many plans for the future, the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, currently occupying Combat Outpost Cherokee, has no plans to leave anytime soon. With Kherwar's security improving, the unit will maintain a presence to ensure the progress made at the Shura does not disappear.

Before ISAF Troops moved into the

Kherwar district there was some apprehension from both locals and Soldiers. The locals were scared to work with troops out of fear for enemy retaliation and Service Members were worried about starting missions because of the reputation that preceded it.

"We believed that Kherwar was the ultimate boogey man, but things are starting to change here, now that we have started to focus more on the area," said Lt. Col. Thomas Gukeisen, Task Force Iron Titan commander.

"We're executing projects, we've conducted security operations to increase security in Kherwar, and today we had between 53 and 58 elders from the Kherwar bowl," said Col. David B. Haight, Task Force Spartan commander.

"This leadership was willing to come in here and talk to this group (of elders) in this area with a sense of security. That couldn't have happened 90 days ago."

With the Afghan elections around the corner, the reassurances of ISAF troops and the local government help to bolster the people of Afghanistan.

"I feel very proud, coming down here to meet the brave people of Kherwar," Lodin said. "The first time I came to Kherwar (as the governor), people came to me with their problems. I'm glad they came to me, I want to help. The people of Kherwar have the right to voice their complaints, and I am here to back them up," Lodin concluded.



Shaib Dad Hamdard reaches out across Nuristan province, Afghanistan, on Kalagush Radio, Aug. 3. The International Security Assistance Forces funded station offers the people of the remote mountain area a variety of news and entertainment programs.



A Kalagush Radio DJ prepares the Nuristan province, Afghanistan radio station for broadcast, Aug. 3. The International Security Assistance Forces funded station offers the people of the remote mountain area a variety of news and entertainment programs.

FREEDOM RADIO

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

When Shaib Dad Hamdard was growing up in Afghanistan's Nuristan province he dreamed of being a voice to his people.

Now, with the turn of a dial and the flick of the switch, he's on air at Kalagush Radio, reaching out across the remote mountain province.

Today's topic: the need for woman's equality.

"With this I can educate my people," the 24-year-old station manager said, motioning to the microphone. "I can provide a voice to them."

Broadcasting into areas so isolated that many residents may only travel as far as the neighbouring village in their lifetimes, Kalagush Radio is "a live existence of the [outside] world," said Hamdard.

For 12-hours a day the Nuristani radio station offers news and entertainment programs tailored to the remote mountain people.

Although the news stories are not always positive, they are always honest. They of-

fer a balanced look at issues affecting area residents, and follow the station's "don't take any sides" philosophy.

But the news is only one part of the station's programming. DJs offer a variety of music, history, education, religious and social commentary shows as well.

According to Hamdard, one of the Kalagush Radio's most popular shows is a daily music program that allows listeners to phone in requests. Thousands of people attempt to call the hour-long show every day, but only a few hundred get through.

"We think of the needs of the local people, and what they want," said Ham-

dard, remarking on the station's success.

Although funded by International Security Assistance Forces, the people of Kalagush Radio insist they decide what is put on the air.

"Of course it is funded by the coalition forces, but I have total control over the programs. The programs are not limited to any specific groups," said Hamdard.

Now with the success of the radio station, ISAF forces are working with Kalagush Radio to expand the broadcast to 24 hours a day. They're also planning on hiring several new journalists for the station, including an Afghan woman who, according to the station's crew, will offer a voice to a silent majority.

Polish Prime Minister Honors Afghan Efforts

Story by Polish Captain Katarzyna Szal and Bogumiła Piekut



Photo by Polish Warrant Officer Robert Suchy

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk speaks with several Polish soldiers during his visit to Forward Operating Base Ghazni, Afghanistan, on Poland's Armed Forces Day, Aug. 15. Tusk was also accompanied by the operational commander of Polish Land Forces, Gen. Bronisław Kwiatkowski.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, along with Gen. Bronisław Kwiatkowski, the operational commander of Polish Land Forces, met with Polish and American Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Ghazni, Afghanistan, on Poland's Armed Forces Day, Aug. 15.

"I pay homage for courage, sacrifice and heroism of all Polish soldiers here in Afghanistan," said Tusk, ad-

ressing the Polish soldiers in a speech.

Tusk made sure he emphasized how proud all Polish citizens are of their soldiers serving in Afghanistan. He also paid respect to Capt. Daniel Amboziński, who was killed in Afghanistan a few days before.

"Polish soldiers risk their own

lives, so future Poles and Polish soldiers will not have to pay this price by Vistula River," said Tusk, referring to the famous river that flows through half of Poland.

“Polish soldiers risk their own lives, so future Poles and Polish soldiers will not have to pay this price by Vistula River.”

--Donald Tusk, Polish Prime Minister

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, along with the operational commander of Polish Land Forces, Gen. Bronisław Kwiatkowski, shakes the hand of a Polish soldier during a ceremony for Poland's Armed Forces Day at Forward Operating Base Ghazni, Afghanistan, Aug. 15. During the ceremony Tusk thanked Polish and U.S. Soldiers for their service, and let them know how proud all Polish citizens were of the Soldiers serving in Afghanistan.



Photo by Polish Warrant Officer Robert Suchy

THE LONGEST DISTANCE RAN BY A MAN IN ONE HOUR IS 13 MILES, 197 YARDS. THE RECORD FOR WOMEN IS 11 MILES, 697 YARDS.

**according to
www.strange-facts.info*

ALL-AMERICANS STRIDE, STRIVE TO AID OTHERS

Story and Photos by Spc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th PAD

RUNNING ON A TREADMILL BURNS SLIGHTLY LESS CALORIES THAN RUNNING OUTSIDE OR ON AN INDOOR TRACK. TO COMPENSATE FOR THE CALORIE DIFFERENCE, RAISE THE TREADMILL'S INCLINE BY 1 PERCENT.

**according to www.medicine.net*

IT'S 6 A.M. AND SCORES OF PARATROOPERS CAN BE SEEN PUSHING THEMSELVES TO THEIR LIMITS ON DISNEY DRIVE. THE RISING TEMPERATURES, ELEVATION AND MENTAL AND PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION ARE BARRIERS EACH PARATROOPER MUST ENDURE AND OVERCOME AS THEY RUN BAGRAM AIR FIELD'S MAIN THOROUGHFARE.

Maj. Anthony Clemente, future operations officer for CJTF-82, runs the perimeter of Bagram Air Field, Aug. 14. Clemente and about 100 others have increased their physical fitness while running for charity.

In a show of 82nd Airborne Division's pride and generosity, many Paratroopers are running laps around BAF's perimeter to raise money for charity.

Known as the Combined Joint Task Force-82 Perimeter Run Challenge, the event recognizes the first 10 individual runners or teams of four to complete 82 laps around the perimeter with a donation to a charity of choice.

The first 10 winners were to originally receive \$82 for their charity of choice. However, additional donations should bolster the event's total from \$820 to \$2278.

Each lap measures 7.9 miles and has many hills, which increases the difficulty of each lap in the already

thin air.

According to the event's mastermind, Maj. Anthony Clemente, future operations officer for CJTF-82, prior to the 82nd Airborne Division's arrival CJTF-101 had a completed laps tracker, but he wanted to better organize it and promote fitness throughout CJTF-82.

What better way to motivate someone than to let them know they have the opportunity to help others?

"If you can't motivate yourself to do it for personal fitness," said Clemente, an Oswego, N.Y., native, "then perhaps doing it for a good cause will [motivate you]."

Clemente said the idea for adding the charitable donations was inspired by his father. A retired Navy officer

who served for 30 years, Clemente's father lost his fight against lymphoma and liver cancer.

The reception to the added incentive has been positive. More than 100 runners have signed up to date, with more joining daily.

Sgt. Maj. Shannon Cromartie, CJTF-82 communications sergeant major, said she is a major proponent for the event and enjoys the challenge of it.

"I like running," said Cromartie, a Houston native. "Charity is always a good thing and helps provide extra motivation."

Such motivation has spread and many in the communications section have joined the challenge as a group.

"I've always been a runner, but I



Did you know?

WOMEN WERE FIRST ALLOWED TO RUN IN THE BOSTON MARATHON IN 1972.

*according to www.bostonmarathon.com

A Soldier runs part of the 7.9 mile perimeter of Bagram Air Field, Aug. 14. Recently, about 100 Soldiers have undertaken the CJTF-82 Perimeter Run Challenge.

haven't done a lot of running in the last three or four years," said Maj. Paul Sparks, CJTF-82 communications network operations officer. "We started the challenge as a group and it has been great for camaraderie."

"You always try to give something back," said Sparks, a Crete, Ill., native. "[It is great to] do good things for good people."

Though the charitable aspect may inspire more Soldiers to run the perimeter, the benefits aren't mutually exclusive.

Maj. Michael Binetti, future operations officer for CJTF-82 and fellow participant, described Clemente as "down to his fighting weight," referring to Clemente's fitness suc-

cess since beginning the challenge.

Clemente doesn't focus on individual accomplishments. Rather, he compiles the statistics of all the runners with a spreadsheet. According to that spreadsheet, 5,806 miles have been logged and 882,000 calories burned. To put the number of calories burned in perspective, they equal about 1,634 McDonald's Big Mac sandwiches, 4,410 Krispy Kreme original glazed doughnuts, or 245 pounds.

Binetti, not one to lose himself in the details, summarizes the spirit of the challenge.

"Get out and run," said the Ridgely Park, N.J., native. "Run for the cause; run for your fitness."

Maj. Anthony Clemente, future operations officer for Combined Joint Task Force-82, runs the 7.9 mile perimeter of Bagram Air Field, Aug. 14. Clemente, a native of Oswego, N.Y., helped organize a charity run challenge where the first 10 runners or teams of runners to complete 82 laps around BAF's perimeter will earn more than \$2,200 for various charities.

Photos *from the Field*



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Moeller, 5th MPAD

Soldiers with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division fire a 120mm mortar at the hills surrounding Forward Operating Base Kalagush, Aug. 2. The Task Force Mountain Warrior Soldiers have been increasing operations in their area in order to disrupt insurgents before the country's second national elections, scheduled for the end of August.



Photo by 1st Lt. Lory Stevens, TF Warrior PAO

Two Afghan National Army soldiers pose for a picture at Combat Outpost Belda, in Kapisa province, Aug. 7. Three companies of ANA, supported by 500 French marines serving with ISAF, and Coalition force elements, conducted a large operation, Aug. 6-8. The operation was conducted to deny the enemy safe haven and contribute to election security.



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Moeller, 5th MPAD

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Torres-Cortes attempts to speak with an Afghan by pointing to a phrase on his language translation card while patrolling Nuristan province, Aug. 7. U.S. Service Members are issued the cards, which offer basic phrases in Afghanistan's native languages, as well as pictures, before deploying to Afghanistan. The patrol was part of an operation where Afghan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Forces teamed up to disrupt insurgent activity before the nation's second national elections, scheduled for late August.



Photo by Pfc. Andrya Hill, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div., PAO

Paratroopers from the 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, watch as a CH-47 Chinook helicopter begins its descent during a dust storm at Forward Operating Base Kushamond, Afghanistan, July 17, in preparation for an air-assault mission.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Smith, 55th Signal Company

Spc. Jonathan Araiza uses a mine detector during a mission with ANP to search for weapon caches in Khost province, July 24. Araiza is deployed with Company A, 425th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

Photos

from the Field



Photo by Spc. Evan D. Marcy, 55th Signal Company

Soldiers with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 18th Fires Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C., fire 155mm rounds using an M777 Howitzer weapons system, July 6, on Forward Operating Base Bostick, Afghanistan. The Soldiers were registering targets so they will have a more accurate and faster response time when providing fire support.



Photo by Sgt. Aubree Rundle, TF Pegasus PAO

A CH-47F Chinook helicopter from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Aviation Regiment, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade sling loads a M777 Light-weight Towed Howitzer to Forward Operating Base in Spin Buldak, southeastern, Afghanistan. The Howitzer is one of many being relocated to Spin Buldak in support of Bravo Battery, 3rd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Reg, 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Lewis, Wash. The Stryker brigade's recent arrival to southern Afghanistan continues the build up of U.S. forces in support of the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan people.



Paratroopers from 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, exit a CH-47 Chinook Helicopter during an air-assault mission to search the area of Khost province, Afghanistan, during Operation Champion Sword, July 29. Operation Champion Sword is a joint operation involving Afghan National Security Forces and International Security Assistance Forces.

Photo by Spc. Matthew Freire, 55th Signal Company

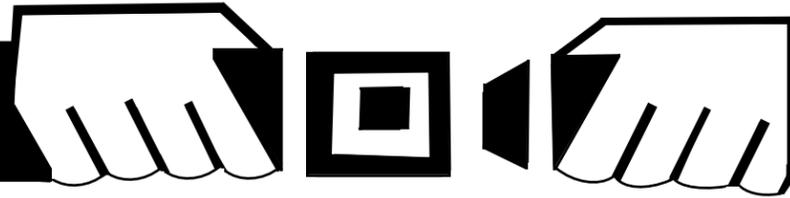


Sgt. 1st Class Lance Amsden, platoon sergeant for the 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, watches as CH-47 Chinook Helicopters land during a dust storm at Forward Operating Base Kushamond, Afghanistan, July 17, during preparation for an air-assault mission.

Photo by Pfc. Andrya Hill, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div., PAO

DON'T BE A DUMMY!

BUCKLE YOUR



SEATBELT

Story by Abdo Zacheus, CJTF-82 Ground Safety

We frequently stop Service Members for not wearing their seatbelts. The excuses we get vary from “I’ll need to get out of the vehicle fast if we’re ambushed” to “my seatbelt restricts my movement.” Some other good ones are “wearing a seatbelt is like planning for an accident,” or “if my time is up, I guess it’s up” (it’s funny, however, that you’ll never see them without their body armor). And the old reliable “wearing a seatbelt just isn’t cool.” As a Ground Safety Manager for Combined Joint Task Force-82 and the 82nd Airborne Division, I’ve seen too many reports of dead Soldiers who would likely be alive today if they’d worn their seatbelts.

In Fiscal Year 07 CJTF-82 had three fatalities due to rollovers and in FY 08 we have had one rollover fatality. So far in FY 09 the CJTF-82 has had one rollover fatality and one permanent disability (brain injury). How do Soldiers develop this mindset of not wanting to wear seatbelts? For starters, they pick up bad habits from leaders who say it’s okay to not wear seatbelts. What kind of message is sent when a leader tells their Soldiers to wear seatbelts, but doesn’t enforce the rule or wear one of his own?

Here’s an example. A former squad leader once told me I shouldn’t wear my seatbelt because he knew someone that would’ve been killed if they’d been wearing theirs. That person was speeding and lost control of his car, which ran off the road and hit a telephone pole. He was ejected



Even dummies know that seatbelts can prevent serious injury or death during an automobile accident. It’s quick, painless and can even save the lives of others. So don’t be a dummy and buckle up before going anywhere!

from the car and survived, but his neck was cut all the way across. A doctor told him that if he’d been wearing his seatbelt, he would’ve been killed when the car hit the pole.

When you break it down, this guy was extremely lucky. His car rolled one time, he was ejected at 80 mph, and his head was almost cut off. His body barely missed hitting two trees and the telephone pole, and he just happened to land

in an area where he could survive. The chances of surviving that accident were very low with or without a seatbelt. Although that driver survived without his seatbelt, statistics prove you have a much greater chance of living through an accident if you wear yours.

The Soldiers detailed in the following accidents probably would have survived if they’d worn their seatbelts. Keep in mind that most of these acci-



When not wearing a seatbelt, a person’s head may smash into the windshield during a vehicle accident. In such instances, death, brain damage and other injuries can occur.

dents occurred in theater, where the enemy, not accidents, is typically seen as the biggest threat.

The reason for wearing seatbelts is addressed in Army Regulation 600-55 (23 Aug 07) 11-2 c (6), which states “the senior occupant is the senior ranking individual present or in the case of a combat vehicle, the vehicle commander (VC) is responsible for the overall safety of the occupants. The senior occupant/VC will wear installed restraint systems and enforce the requirement for passengers to wear occupant restraint devices at all times. CJTF-82 General Order Number 1 further states that “seat belts, when available, will be worn when traveling in all vehicles.” CJTF-82 PAM 600-2.1 additionally states that “restraining devices (lap belts and shoulder belt when so equipped) when riding in any vehicle, on or off duty, are mandatory.”

There are many more accidents like these mentioned in the Combat Readiness and Safety Center database at <https://safety.army.mil/#>. In nearly every case the occupants would have survived if they had worn their seatbelts. Your fellow Soldiers and your family are counting on you to do everything possible to survive the enemy and other accidents. Buckle up and stay alive. Don’t let an excuse for not wearing your seatbelt keep you from making it home.

• **A Soldier lost control of his humvee while traveling 70 mph. The vehicle rolled three times off a 20-foot embankment. The driver had been wearing his seatbelt and walked away, but his passenger was killed. The passenger was not wearing a seatbelt.**

• **A Soldier lost control of his 5-ton truck on an icy highway. Both Soldiers were killed when the truck ran off the highway. Neither Soldier was wearing his seatbelt.**

• **A humvee was cut off by a civilian truck and subsequently**

collided with the vehicle. The passenger, a lieutenant colonel, was not wearing his seatbelt and was killed. The driver wore his seatbelt and survived.

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Ear aches:

Hearing loss is serious issue for troops



Air Force Col. Joseph Brennan, the Ear, Nose, and Throat doctor at the Staff Sgt. Heathe N. Craig Joint Theater Hospital, Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, demonstrates how the portable hearing test machine works with the help of Air Force Staff Sgt. Lee Adams, an Ear, Nose, and Throat Technician.

Story and Photo by Spc. Opal Hood, 5th MPAD

When gearing up for a mission in Afghanistan, a Service Member wouldn't forget their helmet, gloves, weapon, eye protection or body armor. But what about hearing protection?

According to Air Force Staff Sgt. Lee Adams, an Ear, Nose and Throat technician at Bagram Air Field, more than 50 percent of the patients seen in the ENT walk-in clinics are there for hearing related issues.

Air Force Col. Joseph A. Brennan, the ENT doctor here said, "The first question I ask a patient who comes in with a hearing complaint is, 'Were you wearing hearing protection?' Since I arrived here in May, I have not had one Service Member answer yes to that question."

Deployed Service Members are exposed to many combat dangers. According to Brennan, many troops do not use hearing protection because they feel the hearing protection affects their job performance.

"I was in Iraq in '04 and '05 in Fallujah with the Marines and the Army's 1st Infantry Division, and we just couldn't get folks to wear their hearing protection," said

Brennan.

"We understand. It is like the old Army helmets, Soldiers were complaining they couldn't shoot with them. So even though they offered better protection, which as a doctor is what I care about, the fight is most important," he added.

While in Iraq, Brennan said hearing loss was a big problem there, like it is today in Afghanistan.

A common problem is blown out ear drums, which can heal on their own. A hole in an ear drum is considered a conductive form of hearing loss, meaning sound is not reaching the nerve in the ear that allows people to hear.

"In Iraq in 2004, there was a Soldier who was in two IED blasts. The second explosion really blew out his ear drums, and he could not hear a thing," said Brennan. "The Soldier's sergeant and his fellow Soldiers were on a roof top in a fire fight. The bullets were buzzing by his head. His sergeant had to tackle him to get him out of the line of fire, because

the Soldier could not hear his comrades yelling for him to take cover."

With IEDs being the number one problem for forces in Afghanistan, it's no surprise that IEDs are the main reason for hearing loss. Service Members need to protect themselves, and new technology is being developed to help in the fight against hearing loss.

"The best kind of ear plug the military is actually working on at the Air Force research lab on Wright- Patterson Air Force base in Ohio, is called active hearing protection," Brennan said. "A person would wear this device on the inside or outside of their ear. For instance, if you were walking through the woods this ear plug would amplify the sounds around you, but the moment the noise level reached a harmful level the ear plug would protect your ear and eliminate the sound, essentially plugging your ears."

Hearing protection is important to a Service Member's safety. Military personnel should wear proper hearing protection while they can still hear the warnings.

Lt. Col. Todd Heares Australian Army

Hometown: Canberra, Australia

Current Assignment: Joint Task Force Paladin

Title: Future operations officer

MOS: Combat Engineer

Job Description: Helps plan and coordinate future operations for JTF Paladin

Best Part of Deployment: Working with Afghans and the great people at JTF Paladin

Deployed Goals: Better understanding the counter IED operations

How He Spends his Free Time: Not much free time, socializes when able

Plans Upon Return: To take wife and three kids to Fiji on holiday.



WARRIOR PROFILE

Staff Sgt. Henrietta Rich U.S. Army

Hometown: Austin, Texas

Current Assignment: 636 Military Intelligence Battalion

Title: Supply NCO

MOS: Supply Specialist

Job Description: Distributes supplies and support to teams at outlying FOBs

Best Part of Deployment: Helping support the war-fighters

Deployed Goals: To complete the mission with 100 percent of equipment accounted for

How She Spends her Free Time: Working out, Crochet, and reading

Plans Upon Return: To take a trip to Florida with her daughter





Unit Spotlight

Joint Expeditionary Forensics Facility, JEFF 5

Branch of Service: Army/Joint Service

Unit History: Originated in Iraq in support of sniper investigations.

Interesting Unit Facts: It is the only non-improvised explosive device focused forensics facility currently in Afghanistan. The

JEFF5 is a crime lab, staffed with contractors who have previous law enforcement experience. The unit is headed by a Criminal Investigations Department Agent. The JEFF 5 began operations here in January with additional units to arrive shortly.

Commanded by: Chief Warrant Officer Sergio A. Gamino

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.