



KBC INSIDER



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NEWSLETTER OF THE KABUL BASE CLUSTER INSTALLATION COMMAND

AUGUST 2010



196th MEB assumes command of Kabul Base Cluster

Justice for Afghanistan:
JTF-435 performs detention operations

1-101st FA opens new school

Mongolians provide security, training

KBC INSIDER

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Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs Office
196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 HEADQUARTERS TASK FORCE RUSHMORE
 KABUL BASE CLUSTER
 UNITED STATES FORCES-AFGHANISTAN
 CAMP PHOENIX, AFGHANISTAN
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July 24, 2010

Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors of the Kabul Base Cluster,

I want to thank each and every one of you for your selfless service and sacrifice in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. All of you have an important role in supporting the counterinsurgency strategy here in the Regional Command - Capital area of responsibility, and you have been executing your mission to the highest standards of the U.S. military.

Whether in a combat arms role, a training and mentoring role or a service support role, each of you are a critical link to ensuring the success of the mission and providing the Afghan people with the best opportunity to provide security, development and improved governance for themselves.

As the commander of Task Force Rushmore, my staff and I are dedicated toward providing the best quality-of-life and sustainment support for you, the servicemember, so you can focus on conducting your mission. The mission of Task Force Rushmore and the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade is to provide the Kabul Base Cluster (KBC) with the guidance, policy and sustainment support it needs to be successful.

We have personnel working to support 11 military installations in garrison support, human resources, resource management, public works, emergency services, training, plans and mobilization, information management and logistics. We are here to help resolve any issues and provide answers to questions.

I thank you again for your continuous efforts to bring peace and freedom to a country that has been without it for the past 30 years. I know you will serve with pride and distinction and leave this country in a better state than when you arrived. Your willingness and resolve to serve others is a proud tradition you carry on from the men and women who have provided the very freedom in which we defend today.

One Team!



THEODORE D. JOHNSON
 Brigadier General, USA
 Commander

PHOTO FRONT



COIN CLASS (left): U.S. Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, International Security Assistance Force, speaks to U.S. and NATO forces at the Counterinsurgency Training Center-Afghanistan, July 13, 2010, at Camp Julien in Kabul, Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Bradley Lail)

AIR LEADERSHIP (below): Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Roy speaks with Airmen stationed at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan, June 24, 2010, about their mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Army photo by Rebecca C. Linder)



GUAM LIBERATION: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Castro, Guam Embedded Training Team 4, Guam Army National Guard, speaks with Brig. Gen. Theodore Johnson, Task Force Rushmore commander, during a celebration of Guam's 66th anniversary of their liberation day July 21, 2010, at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Nedved)

SHOWTIME: Rachel Maddow interviews International Security Assistance Force Command Sgt. Maj. Michael T. Hall on "The Rachel Maddow Show" broadcasts live from Camp Phoenix July 8, 2010. Maddow and Hall discussed the future of the Afghan war in regards to the expected drawdown of American forces in July of 2011. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)

Sergeant Major of the Army visits Soldiers across KBC



By Sgt. Rebecca Linder
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston visited Soldiers July 7 stationed at Camp Phoenix in Kabul. While in country, Preston traveled around Kabul visiting Soldiers throughout the Kabul Base Cluster.

“When senior leaders show up in theater, it shows the Soldiers that high-ranking servicemembers care about them and the mission the Soldiers are doing is important,” said Master Sgt. Todd Mettler, a member of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard.

Preston updated Soldiers on the number of active duty, National Guard and Reserve Soldiers serving in the war and where. He also talked to Soldiers about deployment cycles, dwell time and the five dimensions of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness: being physically, spiritually, socially, emotionally and mentally fit.

“Dwell time can mean the difference between a family life that is tolerable and one that is not in good shape,” said Mettler, Department of Emergency Services noncommissioned officer in

charge. “The Army is starting to realize how important family life is and that the dynamic has changed since World War II and Vietnam,” added the husband and father of four.

After speaking with the Soldiers, Preston opened up the room for any questions or concerns the Soldiers had. Soldiers expressed their questions and concerns about living conditions, promotions, bonuses, deployments and upcoming changes of the war in Afghanistan.

When the questions were through, Preston asked for 10 volunteers to come up to the front of the room and recite the

Soldier’s Creed from memory. After the 10 were finished saying it, they received a coin from Preston.

“Senior leaders at every level, like Preston, make decisions that affect the Soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq, and visiting with the Soldiers is one of the only ways they can get the pulse of the troops on the ground,” said Mettler.

“When senior leaders show up in theater, it shows the Soldiers that high-ranking servicemembers care about them and the mission the Soldiers are doing is important.”

— Master Sgt. Todd Mettler

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PASSING THE TORCH

Task Force Phoenix gives way to new Kabul Base Cluster Installation Command

By Capt. Anthony Deiss
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – For years, Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix (CJTF-P) has helped to provide operational and basic life-support services for servicemembers serving in the Regional Command – Capital (RC-C) area of responsibility. In April, CJTF-P was officially disbanded and has passed this torch onto the new Kabul Base Cluster (KBC) Installation Command.

At the helm of the KBC is Task Force Rushmore, lead by the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard. The 196th assumed command on June 26 and has begun to provide policy, guidance and sustainment support for 11 military bases throughout Kabul.

These areas of support pertain to garrison command functions, force protection and security, information management systems, logistics sustainment, resource management and public works projects.

The 196th's goal is to provide the best and most efficient services needed for base life-support for the nearly 9,000 U.S. and coalition forces stationed across the capital.

“Right now the best thing we can do to help win this war is to support those fighting it,” said Brig. Gen. Theodore Johnson, Task Force Rushmore commander. “If our Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors don't have the proper

Brig. Gen. Theodore Johnson (right) and Command Sgt. Maj. Darwin Rahder unveil the colors of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, in a transfer of authority ceremony June 26, 2010. The 196th assumed command of the Kabul Base Cluster in Kabul, Afghanistan, from the 38th Infantry Division, Indiana Army National Guard. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)





196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Soldiers Maj. Jeffrey Koepke, operations officer (left), and Lt. Col. Tim Butts, officer in charge, both with the Joint Receiving, Staging and Onward Integration section for Task Force Rushmore, discuss rifle range operations on June 25, 2010, outside Kabul, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Anthony Deiss)

security, training, equipment and facilities, they can't be successful."

For the better part of the Afghanistan war, CJTF-P has had the mission to help train and mentor Afghan National Army (ANA) and Police (ANP) throughout RC-C. Based at Camp Phoenix, the CJTF-P command sustained this mission with a number of U.S. and coalition forces stationed at a variety of bases throughout the city. With great success, the CJTF-P trained thousands of ANA and ANP forces.

In recent years, CJTF-P has seen their mission change with commands such as NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) and Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) assuming more of the mentoring and training of ANA and ANP forces. CJTF-P began overseeing more of the daily, life-support services for bases that were quickly growing throughout Kabul.

With these bases having

varying levels of support, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A) leaders quickly realized the need for a single command to provide oversight and sustainment support for the growing number of military installations.

"Many of the bases within the Kabul Base Cluster were operating independently and

had varying levels of support," said Johnson. "To set the conditions for future success, these bases needed a single command to be responsible for security, logistical and administrative requirements."

The new KBC command will have oversight on procedures to cover master expansion plans, billeting plans, tracking plans for contracted services, force protection improvement plans and improved supply procedures and efficiencies for the entire KBC.

Much like its name, the cluster of bases brings its own unique set of challenges and requirements: varying in size, number of forces, infrastructure development and operational control. What makes the National Guard well suited for such an undertaking is the number of civilian skill sets it brings to the KBC mission.

With civilian employment in city administration, civil engineering and government, the 196th brings practical experience in operating cities or government agencies back home – which is an advantage in operating bases that function much in the same way.

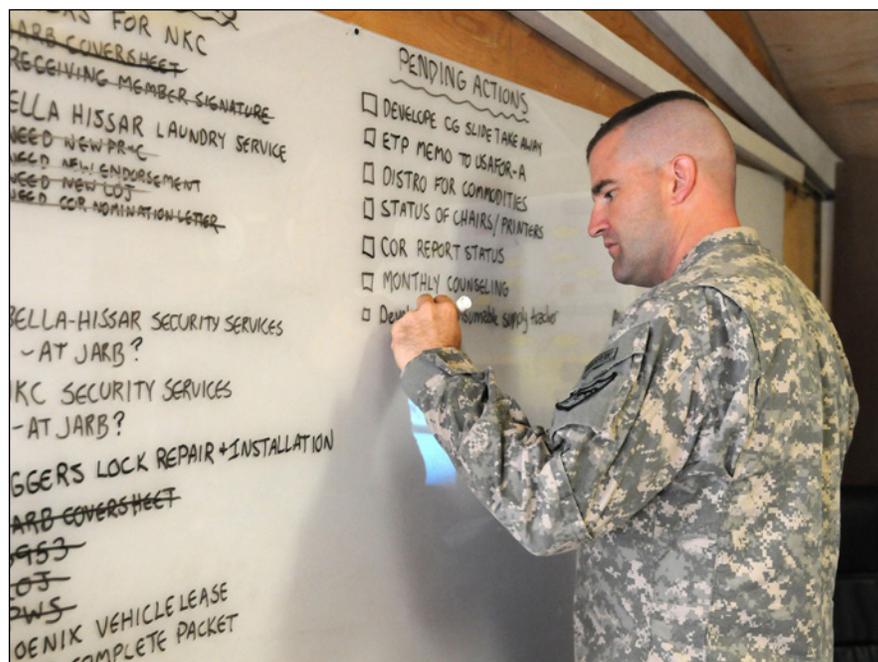
"The base camps need

services that you find in cities; emergency services for firefighting; public works for adequate living and working spaces; resource management for new construction and maintenance projects," said Maj. Jason Kettwig, a city administrator in Milbank, S.D. "We have a lot of people in the unit with the kind of experience needed for this mission."

Kettwig, a logistics officer for the 196th, says planning is critical to ensuring synergy amongst the different bases.

"The bases, as with many municipalities, rely on detailed master plans that provide a road map for ensuring essential services are well thought out, and can handle any expansion or growth improvements," said Kettwig. "Directorates need coordination and prioritization so they do not hinder the objectives of other departments."

"We have a tremendous responsibility with this mission," said Johnson. "We are supporting servicemembers that our leadership is relying on to execute the counterinsurgency strategy. It is imperative we help build the foundation for the KBC and set the conditions for future success."



196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Soldier Maj. Peter Jerzak, director of Resource Management for Task Force Rushmore, writes down a list of tasks for the Kabul Base Cluster on July 3, 2010, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)

JUSTICE FOR AFGHANISTAN

JTF-435 performs headquarters operations on Camp Phoenix

By Senior Airman William A. O'Brien
Joint Task Force 435 Public Affairs

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – Joint Task Force 435, headquartered here, is responsible for U.S. detention operations in Afghanistan and provides leadership for the Detention Facility in Parwan. The command was established Sept. 18, 2009, by the Secretary of Defense.

The detention mission includes ensuring safe, secure, humane care and custody of detainees consistent with international law. Additionally, JTF-435 oversees the detainee review process, implements programs for the peaceful reintegration of detainees into society and coordinates with other agencies and partners for the promotion of the rule of law in Afghanistan.

“Our headquarters develops orders for all of our subordinate element organizations to conduct detention operations, biometric enrollments, theater intelligence interrogations, legal operations, reintegration of detainees and detainee releases,” said Navy Capt. Scott Stearney, JTF-435 chief of staff. “We also interface and integrate with the government of Afghanistan ministries, either at the ministerial or deputy ministerial level.”

Since its establishment, JTF-435 has moved its headquarters three times, which can be disruptive to the workflow, but Stearney said just two months after the move here, Camp Phoenix already feels like home.

JTF-435 is commanded by Navy Vice Adm. Robert Harward, and includes three deputy commanders; each has a different area of expertise. Army Brig. Gen. Mark Martins is deputy commander; Michael Gottlieb is the civilian deputy; and Afghan National Army Brig. Gen. Mohebur Rahman serves the task force as the commander, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for Oversight of Detention and Reintegration and the JTF-435 Afghan deputy commander. The task force is comprised of U.S. servicemembers from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and civilian representatives, as well as coalition and Afghan partners.

“It’s important for us to have civilian and Afghan representation in our task force because much of what we do involves a partnership between the government of Afghanistan, (Department of Defense) and (Department of State).” Stearney said. “We are developing a capacity to transition to the Afghan government, so we need an Afghan deputy. We also need to work well with the civilian side, like International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. Without a civilian deputy, we would be missing a big part of what is required to do our mission.”



Gen. David Petraeus, International Security Assistance Force commander, and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry speak with Vice Adm. Robert Harward, Joint Task Force 435 commander, and other officials in a conference July 24, 2010 at Camp Phoenix in Kabul. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)

JTF-435 will receive an additional 42 Afghan partners to the staff during the next few months. Ultimately, the command will become a Combined Joint Interagency Task Force, which will include other coalition, Afghan and U.S. organizations, such as the Afghan Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Justice, the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Department of Justice.

“Last August, before the Secretary of Defense even signed the official letter, we started looking at what it would take to run this organization,” Stearney said. “(The U.S. is) going to leave here sometime in the future and, whenever that may be, we’ve only done our job if we’ve been able to develop within the Afghan government the ability to assume responsibility for the DFIP mission in a just and humane way.”

The desired end state of the cooperative endeavors between the U.S. and Afghanistan is self-sustaining Afghan national detention facilities and rule of law institutions that are compliant with Afghan and international law.

“We look forward to great teamwork here at Camp Phoenix,” Stearney said. “Because we can’t achieve anything here in Afghanistan or within the military without teamwork from all services, the organization and the installation, and we would like to thank Camp Phoenix for all their support.”

LITTLE OUTPOST, BIG MISSION

Camp keeps eyes on Kabul



Story and photos by Capt. Anthony Deiss
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP BALA HISSAR, Afghanistan – What was once the site of a fifth century Afghan citadel overlooking Kabul, is now home to a small contingent of Afghan and U.S. military personnel who keep a modern-day eye on the capital.

Camp Bala Hissar, named after the ancient fortress it's located near, is home to a Persistent Surveillance System (PSS) – a floating aerostat (or blimp) with high-tech camera equipment – designed to better protect the people of Kabul and Afghan National Security Forces security operations.

Although the base is small, it has an important role in providing security for the city, says 2nd Lt. Lucas Scheibe, Camp Bala Hissar officer in charge.

“The aerostat provides surveillance for security forces operating throughout the city,” said Scheibe, member of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard.

The system, suspended by a helium-filled balloon, tethered hundreds of feet in the air, provides high-resolution imagery and video, and when used with surveillance data from other security systems, helps security officials better anticipate threats around the city.

“The aerostat is able to rotate 360 degrees and provide immediate coverage,” said Scheibe of Brookings, S.D. “If there is ever an incident, we can help to identify the location and report it to the local Afghan security forces so they can directly respond.”

The PSS has the capability to survey and closely monitor activity throughout the city and detect any possible enemy activities using high-definition, infrared and thermal imaging technology.

According to an ISAF press release, surveillance systems such as this have an impressive safety record and successful history of integrating with security systems to combat threats in eastern Afghanistan since early 2004. The Bala Hissar system has been in use in Kabul since 2009, and plans are underway to launch a new aerostat in the coming months.

Bala Hissar has a number of civilian and military personnel who keep the aerostat operating. With nearly a 100 security, operations and transportation personnel supporting the mission, Scheibe says improving Soldier quality-of-life is a base priority.

“Improving the base water infrastructure, dining facility, internet connectivity and fitness center are all important to long-term stability for the base,” he said. “Keeping everyone happy keeps them focused on the mission.”

Scheibe added fostering relationships with Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel, who provide an additional layer of security for the camp, is also important for future stability.

“Meeting with the commander of the 6th Kandak Battalion and his company commanders to have dinner and talk security is important



ABOVE: The Persistent Surveillance System at Bala Hissar is a floating aerostat (or blimp) with high-tech camera equipment designed to better protect the people of Kabul and enhance Afghan National Security Forces security operations in the Afghan capital.

MIDDLE: 2nd Lt. Lucas Scheibe (left) and Sgt. 1st Class Michael Weyrich, members of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade discuss security for Camp Bala Hissar in Kabul, Afghanistan, on July 14, 2010.

BELOW: Soldiers of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade 2nd Lt. Lucas Scheibe, camp officer in charge (left), and Staff Sgt. Robert Schmidt, security force noncommissioned officer, visit before a convoy operation at Camp Bala Hissar in Kabul, Afghanistan, on July 14, 2010. In the distance is the remnants of a fifth century Afghan citadel which overlooks the city.

in building relationships and improving camp security,” said Scheibe. “This site has a long, military history of protecting the city, and together with the ANA, we are continuing that history.”

FUTURE FOUNDATIONS

1-101 FA open school alongside village elders



By 2nd Lt. Jordan Breau
Task Force Kabul

KABUL, Afghanistan- Lt. Col. James Hally, commander of the 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment and the Deputy Minister of Education of Afghanistan, Mohammad Sediq Pattman stood alongside the village elders of Ali Khail on June 16 to cut the ceremonial ribbon to officially open the school for students of the Deh Sabz region.

“We are very grateful and thankful for the U.S. for helping us build this school,” said Pattman. “This school wouldn’t have happened without the assistance of the United States Army. The people of the United States of America gave us this school and it’s our duty for us to take advantage of this gift,” said Pattman to the crowd of villagers.

The people of Ali Khail have been waiting on a hard structured school since 1993 when the school was initially going to be built. The school’s construction was halted because of the strong Taliban influence in the village. The Taliban has since loosened its grip on the area, allowing the school to be built without interruption.

“This school will improve the lives of the children in this village and begin to change the future generations of this country,” said Pattman.

Prior to the construction of the school, the Afghan children were

Lt. Col. James Hally, commander, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard, shakes hands with a village elder at the opening of the Ali Khail school, north of Kabul, June 16, 2010. Hally facilitated the construction of the \$200,000 school. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael Hardy)



Lt. Col. James Hally, commander, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment, helps Deputy Minister of Education Mohammad Sediq Pattman cut the ribbon to officially open the Ali Khail School, June 16, 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael Hardy)

receiving their education inside tents without desks and chairs. Now that the temperature is heating up in Afghanistan, the school could not have come at a better time.

“Education is the answer to peace and prosperity for Afghanistan,” said Hally. “Every school or education facility that we can assist in constructing will have an immediate and enduring impact on the future of Afghanistan.”

“This school will improve the lives of the children in this village and begin to change the future generations of this country,”

**Mohammad Sediq Pattman,
Deputy Minister of Education
of Afghanistan**

Grades K-12 will be in session until November then the students will break until March. The school is broken into three gender segregated shifts, two of the shifts are for male students and one shift is for female students.

“Education is the foundation in building Afghanistan,” said Pattman. “Most of this country’s people are uneducated and ignorant. It is schools that will improve the lives and open the minds of the Afghan people.”

CAMP EGGERS BSG

Base support group works to sustain troops

**By Sgt. Matthew Nedved
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs**

CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan – For U.S and coalition forces stationed in Kabul, executing their mission to support the counterinsurgency strategy is a key to future stability and security for the nation’s capital. Ensuring they have what they need to do the job is a key for members of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard.

One of the main efforts for this support comes from the 196th’s base support group (BSG) at Camp Eggers. From administration and logistical support to building oversight, maintenance and service contracts; these Soldiers provide support for tenant units on the camp in multiple areas; .

The 16-member BSG team is working with military forces, local Afghan workers and civilian contractors to facilitate daily operations on Camp Eggers. They also work closely with the other camps within the KBC to help sustain their on-going missions.

“One thing we are looking to do is take contracts throughout the KBC and streamline them into one master contract – in order to make it more cost efficient,” said Lt. Col. Todd Goldammer, BSG Eggers officer in charge.

One challenge for the Camp Eggers staff is addressing the vast number of personnel on camp. With the base originally configured to support a population of approximately 1,300, finding room to accommodate more than 2,000 people currently there, with the existing infrastructure, presents a bigger challenge.

“There is a constant flow of people in and out of this little facility – we have two major roads and it looks like New York City on a busy day when things are active,” said Goldammer, of Sioux Falls, S.D. “It’s a lot of moving parts, everybody is going everywhere and we need to make sure it’s managed effectively.”

Although Camp Eggers is located in a heavily populated area of Kabul with a large amount of traffic, access to the camp is very restricted and heavily guarded. There are many levels of force protection from private security contractors to U.S. and coalition forces. Goldammer says this is important for peace of mind for troops stationed there. Although the force protection is strong, he says there is still room for improvement.

“I want to improve base force protection measures because of the increase in troop living and working spaces. We need these things to ensure our service members have the best protection possible,” said Goldammer.

Another challenge the Eggers team is working on is finding room in the confined camp area. There is a steady flow of new troops arriving on the Eggers compound. With little office space and limited living areas; Soldiers are living three to an area in order to make room for everyone with some sleeping in tents or other temporary facilities.

“We are still seeing a surge of new residents coming in here. We are trying to build as quickly as we can to accommodate them,” Goldammer said. “Having the right amount of space is important to the service members, so it’s important to us and getting it in place as soon as we can.”

Currently, 10 building contracts on Eggers are underway, with another 15 more waiting to begin.

One of the main goals for Camp Eggers is to expand the facility in order to expand the mission, such as facilities to teach the local Afghans to read and write. Also, a larger area would mean more space for the tenants to work and sleep.

“More office space would make things more comfortable for all of the tenants. We are looking at spaces for more gyms, but that means we are taking away from something else,” Goldammer said. “Our goal by the time we leave is that the camp will be built-up and more comfortable for the tenants, along with improved force protection, more defenses and smoother access in for visitors.”

The BSG is also hoping to start integrating the local Afghan workers and the Afghan National Army alongside U.S. and coalition forces – providing them with better training and a full understanding of their job when they are ready to take over base responsibilities when American forces leave.

“Trying to stand up the Afghan forces and train them so they can protect their country and take over – that is the main mission here in Afghanistan and for us,” said Goldammer.

MONGOLIAN CONNECTION

Expeditionary task force provides continued support to NATO

By Sgt. Matthew Nedved
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs



Members of the Mongolian Armed Forces perform drill and ceremony on their national holiday, Naadam, July 11, 2010 at Camp Eggers, Afghanistan. Naadam is the holiday which commemorates the 1921 revolution when Mongolia declared itself a free country. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Nedved)

CAMP EGGERS, Afghanistan – The war in Afghanistan is one not only fought by the U.S. military, but rather by a coalition of forces from many countries. One partner nation that has been here since the beginning of supporting the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is the Mongolian Expeditionary Task Force (METF).

The METF has been supporting the ISAF mission since 2003, and in December 2009, became one of the top 20 troop-contributing nations to the war effort. Currently, there are approximately 150 Mongolians supporting the Kabul Base Cluster mission by providing base security and training for the Afghan National Army in mobile field artillery techniques.

“We are working with the United States, coalition forces and civilian security companies and it has been a great experience and opportunity for our Soldiers to work with such a diverse group of people,” said Lt. Col. Dugarragchaa Dagva, METF commander.

The main effort for the Mongolian’s mission comes in providing fixed site security at Camp Eggers in Kabul. They conduct security patrols, provide perimeter security, and also have a platoon standing by as a rapid reaction force.

“Security is very important. It allows all of the missions here on Eggers to be conducted under the security we provide. Camp Eggers residents can sleep well knowing we are here,” said Capt. Bat-Erdene, operations officer, Mongolian forces.

Another mission for the METF is training the Afghan National Army (ANA) in a variety of weaponry at the Kabul Military Training Center. The Mongolians focus mainly on

Members of the Mongolian Armed Forces display knife fighting skills for a crowd of observers on their national holiday, Naadam, July 11, 2010 at Camp Eggers, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Nedved)

mobile artillery training, but also train the ANA on the SPG-9 rifle, 82 mm mortars and the 122 mm Howitzer.

The Soldiers of Mongolia recently celebrated Naadam on July 11–13 – the national Mongolian holiday that commemorates the 1921 revolution when Mongolia declared itself a free country.

Naadam is also referred to as the three games of men. Each day of the festival there is a different competition held; wrestling, horse racing and archery. Other activities include military parades and martial art displays.

“The military began celebrating this more than a hundred years ago, allowing Soldiers to train for battle. The festivities were opened by an address from the President of Mongolia and a military parade,” said Erdene. “This is a good opportunity to share our Mongolian culture here at Camp Eggers with the other countries that we serve with.”

The Mongolian Armed Forces have distinguished themselves in every theater they have served in and are continuing to develop their capacity to take on more roles and responsibility each time they deploy. Nearly a decade ago, the Mongolian Armed Forces answered the call for additional troops in Afghanistan. Today they are one of the key players for ISAF.

“I feel honored to serve here. Being part the Coalition is very important to Mongolia,” said Erdene. “This continues our relationship with other nations in our Mongolian peace keeping efforts,” said Erdene.



A members of the Mongolian Armed Forces snaps a wood board in two, during a martial arts display on their national holiday, Naadam, July 11, 2010, at Camp Eggers, Afghanistan. The festival is filled with sporting events and an array of performances. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Nedved)



BUILDING RELATIONS

South Carolina National Guard unit works with Afghans to improve infrastructure

Sgt. 1st Class Kristopher Alvey, civil military operations (CMO) noncommissioned officer of the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery, South Carolina Army National Guard, plays with local Afghan children June 27, 2010, outside of Walayatee school in Afghanistan. Alvey and other members of the CMO are building bonds with Afghan citizens while managing the construction processes of schools and other building infrastructure around the Kabul area. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)



By Sgt. Rebecca Linder
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — While healing hearts and minds of the Afghanistan people is the ultimate goal, Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery are doing that and more. The Soldiers are building constructive relationships with the Afghan people by improving infrastructure in the city of Kabul.

Members of the civil military operations (CMO) section within the 1-178th strive to continue the counterinsurgency principle by supervising the reconstruction process of schools and other infrastructure projects.

The Georgetown based, South Carolina Army National Guard unit has been stationed at Camp Phoenix in Kabul for more than four months and has worked on several projects throughout the city to help extinguish the struggles Afghan citizens face on a day-to-day basis. The CMO has completed several projects, is currently tasked with more developments, and has future goals of continuing to

enhance living conditions throughout the area.

Past projects include security lighting improvements at Kabul University, village water and sanitation upgrades, and construction of a vehicle bridge between two villages to improve economic opportunities, said Capt. Kevin McClure, assistant CMO leader.

With villages, schools and roads in need of more improvements, McClure and the CMO continue to coordinate projects around Kabul to reduce problems in the area.

One of the most significant problems in Afghanistan is the education of the people. Children trying to get an education struggle because of limited resources.

Throughout Kabul, school population's range from 3,000 to 9,000 students. Because of the overcrowding, students must attend school in shifts. Most sit on the floor or sit two to three at a desk and only go for three to four hours each day in a small classroom of 40 to 50 students.

"The overcrowding makes it hard for the Afghan children to receive the education they should be getting," said McClure. "With

newer and bigger schools, desks, chairs and chalk boards, the children will have a better learning environment.”

The CMO is currently managing the construction of eight schools in the Kabul area that will positively affect numerous children getting an education in the Afghanistan school system.

“We have been collaborating with United States Forces – Afghanistan and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to improve future designs of schools so they are safe and earthquake resistant,” said McClure.

Another project the CMO section continues to oversee is the Kabul University lighting project to enhance the security around the campus. Old, rusted and inoperable lights are being replaced with new automated photocell-sensor lights.

“Students who attend the university are now able to conveniently sit outside at night with light and feel safe studying, instead of having to go back to their dorms every night,” said McClure.

With these and more current projects underway, including a new bridge, a boundary wall at a school and the installation of four new water wells in a remote village, the 1-178th will continue to help the Afghan citizens live a better, more convenient standard of living.

The CMO has accomplished a number of reconstruction assignments, enhanced education and economic opportunities and overall continues to improve the Afghan way of life.

“The giving hearts of the CMO are helping to heal the Afghan hearts and minds one at a time,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kris Alvey, CMO noncommissioned officer. “It is rewarding and gratifying to see the joy we bring to the Afghan people.”



Maj. Robert Spafford (left), civil military operations (CMO) officer in charge of the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery, South Carolina Army National Guard, shakes hands with Said Dawood Agha, the elder of Walayatee Village, after talking about the school’s construction process June 27, 2010, outside of Kabul as Khesraw Safi (middle), an interpreter, looks on. Walayatee, one of eight schools the CMO oversees construction, will have twelve classrooms and is expected to be finished in two months. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)



Capt. Chris G. Neeley shakes hands with students June 27, 2010, at Kabul University after visiting with them about the effects of the new security lights around the campus. Neeley and other members of the civil military operation section of the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery, South Carolina Army National Guard, have improved partnerships with Afghan citizens throughout the Kabul area. (U.S. Army photo by Rebecca Linder)

Lt. Col. Todd Wasmund (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Brunwald salute the colors of the 1st Battalion, 17th Field Artillery during an uncasing ceremony on July 9, 2010 on Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)



1-17th Field Artillery uncase colors

By Capt. Anthony Deiss
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan — Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 17th Field Artillery uncased their colors during a ceremony July 9 at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan, to signal the beginning of their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In an area known as ‘Patriot Square,’ the unit’s leadership unfurled its red and gold colors and numerous campaign streamers – as a row of U.S. and coalition flags hung in the distance – reinforcing the significance of their mission to help bring security and stability for the Afghan people.

During the 1-17th’s deployment, the battalion will support the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan, with the tasking to help train and mentor the Afghan National Army. The unit will have Soldiers dispersed across Afghanistan serving under a variety of Regional Commands including North, East, South and Capital.

Nearly a third of the unit’s 350 members will be stationed throughout the Kabul Base Cluster, with the majority at Camp Dubbs.

“We are here to train the Afghan National Army in basic soldier and leader skills and develop their ability to secure their own country,” said Lt. Col. Todd Wasmund, commander. “The mission is valuable and our Soldiers are excited to be a part of the strategic main effort for OEF.”

Wasmund said his Soldiers are well prepared, and even though they will not be raining steel upon the enemy, they still bring skills to the mission distinctive of any artillery Soldier.

“Even though this is not the traditional mission of a field artillery battalion, these Soldiers bring with them professional standards, a war-fighting capability and experience,” he said. “More than half of the unit has seen combat, and all are well trained.”

The 1-17th is assigned to the 75th Fires Brigade, 1st Infantry Division of Fort Sill, Okla. They are expected to be mobilized for one year.

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