



KBC INSIDER



VOL. 1 - ISSUE 2

NEWSLETTER OF THE KABUL BASE CLUSTER INSTALLATION COMMAND

SEPTEMBER 2010



PARTNERSHIP OF HOPE

Coalition cooperation brings needed supplies to flood victims

TAKING THE LONG TRAIL

1-186th BSB provides sustainment support for KBC troops

REMEMBER THE ALAMO

1-178th CSG improves camp services

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Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs Office
196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

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RAMADAN: Awareness & Understanding

THE PRACTICE OF RAMADAN

Celebrates the month in which the Qur'an (the holy book of Islam) was revealed to Muhammad.

Celebration includes: fasting, repentance, increased prayer, increased charity.

Fasting is from dawn (one half hour before sunup) to dusk (one half hour after sundown).

Ends with the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr: day of celebration and gratitude.

Ramadan is a month of fasting.

Physical abstentions and intensification of acts of worship are a means toward attaining the spiritual objectives of self-purification and improvement.

Essentially a month of training used to discipline/prepare oneself for the remainder of the year.

Be considerate of and supportive to the Muslims around you.

TRAVEL (TO/FROM) AND WORKING IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

Holiday jams (to Muslim countries) begin a week before end of Ramadan till three days after Eid.

Congestion occurs on flights to and from the Gulf area during second half of Ramadan (people visiting Makkah).

Traffic jams are common before Iftar... sometimes grid-locked, working hours in some companies end earlier during Ramadan; please plan accordingly.

Being in a Muslim country during Ramadan is a great experience...there should not be any worries.

WORKING WITH MUSLIM COLLEAGUES

Ramadan Etiquette

Try to avoid the following for your Muslim colleagues:

Meetings which include lunch.

Meetings extending after 5 p.m.

Department parties (or social events) during Ramadan.

Be understanding that it is the most special month in a Muslim's calendar.

It is common to take vacation during the last week of Ramadan.

Eid Day is a day off, especially for those with family.

Greeting colleagues saying: "Ramadan Mubarak" (Blessed Ramadan) is a very nice way to cross into a new culture.

—If invited to share Iftar, try to make it...it will be fun!

THINGS TO DO

Be courteous and congratulate Muslim counterparts.

Send cards and give gifts during Eid. This is their season for gift giving.

Could give Ramadan gifts.

Gifts of fruit dates for them to eat at the end of the day. These are traditionally eaten to break a Ramadan fast each day.

Other gifts could include space heaters for schools or mosques. Toys for kids are usually received very well.

Do not make faces due to the lack of hygiene. Foul breath is admired during Ramadan. No shower or deodorant is required.

Be cautious when driving. In the day fasting drivers may not be as alert. At night traffic will be heavy.

THINGS NOT TO DO

Don't serve food, drink, or offer tobacco to adult and elder Afghan citizens between dawn and sunset. (Can serve candies and chocolates to children.)

Don't eat, drink, chew gum or tobacco in the presence of Afghans (or other Muslims) during the day.

Don't enter mosques, or holy Islamic places, or prevent Afghan citizens from participating in Ramadan prayers, unless it is an absolute operational requirement.

Don't plan meetings with Afghans in the afternoon unless the issue is urgent.

Don't perceive Afghan citizen's unwillingness to converse or participate as a sign of a negative attitude toward the international military forces.

The practice of "restraint" during Ramadan requires those participating to cease all non-essential movement, conversations, eating and drinking in order to fully reflect on their own faith.



Regional Support Command-Capital receives new incoming commander

CAMP PHOENIX – Colonel Robert E. Wicks Jr. assumed command of the Regional Support Command-Capital (RSC-C) Aug. 28 from Maj. Robert Firman during a change of command ceremony on Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The mission of the RSC-C is to support the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in the areas of training, fielding, and equipping new units, as well as sustaining the fielded force in the Kabul province and capital region. Established just last fall, the unit is growing and has become an O-6 level command.

“My goal as RSC-Capital commander is to build something strong and lasting in Afghanistan and to optimize our momentum on the progress already made,” Wicks stated speaking to the multinational audience. “As partners, we share a common goal to build capability and ultimately a lasting security.”

Since its inception in 2009, the RSCs around the country have been the main effort in the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Force Command-Afghanistan mission to build and sustain the ANSF. Despite its small geographic area, the capital region has more than 30 percent of all ANSF in the entire country, including more than 80,000 Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police forces.

Col. Wicks comes to the RSC-C command position from 13th Air Force as the director of Space Forces for Pacific Air Forces at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

Firman served in the RSC-C command position for the past six months and will return to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to work for U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

“The opportunity to work directly with professionals in the Afghan National Security Forces has been very rewarding,” said Firman. “I was also lucky to have had the opportunity to work with the best team in Afghanistan. Being part of the RSC team has been the highlight of my career.”

During the ceremony, both Wicks and Firman expressed that RSC-C is committed to working with the ANSF to help create an enduring capacity and capability for the ANA and ANP. While its efforts are focused in and around Kabul, they feel RSC-C’s impact is felt throughout the entire nation of Afghanistan.



Incoming commander of the Regional Support Command-Capital, Col. Robert E. Wicks Jr., receives the unit flag from Brig. Gen. John J. McGuiness, deputy commander for Regional Support, in a change of command ceremony Aug. 28, 2010, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)



Outgoing commander of the Regional Support Command-Capital, Maj. Robert A. Firman, wishes his team farewell in a change of command ceremony at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan Aug. 28, 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)

New maintenance shop to provide enhanced support for Camp Eggers

Story and photos by Sgt. Donally Kranz
Camp Eggers BSG Unit Public Affairs Representative

CAMP EGGERS – A new maintenance shop on Camp Eggers will provide enhanced vehicle maintenance and repair services for U.S. and coalition forces stationed here. The new Pine Tree Maintenance Shop, dedicated by senior camp leadership and members of the 1136th Transportation Company, Maine Army National Guard, was unveiled in a ribbon cutting ceremony July 31.

“This brand new facility will expand our operational capabilities,” said Capt. Peter Carter, commander of the 1136th.

The 1136th provides force protection for Camp Eggers while their maintenance section provides tactical vehicle maintenance support. The new facility will provide the mechanics with the space they need to provide better maintenance support.

“This project has provided us with an area exclusive to maintenance and motor pool operations,” said 1st Sgt. Craig Bailey, senior noncommissioned officer for the 1136th. “This will make our work flow smoother and more conducive to maintenance.”

“This is a great project,” said Lt. Col. Todd Goldammer, Camp Eggers Base Support Group (BSG) officer in charge. “Now the Soldiers have a better environment to work in.”

The 1136th’s motor sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Gilman Thibeault, will lead the first maintenance section in the new shop. The maintenance crew consists of two clerk and seven mechanics, who currently work an average of 600 hours a week repairing tactical vehicles.

“The new facility should increase efficiencies in the shop,” said Thibeault.

“This facility was started before all of us arrived on Camp Eggers,” said Col. Michael Wehr, director of CJ Engineering. “Yet we are here today, and those in the future will get to reap the benefits of someone else’s vision.”

The Pine Tree Maintenance Shop is just one of many base improvement projects on Camp Eggers. The Camp Eggers BSG continues to upgrade the base’s infrastructure to enhance operations as it continues to grow. The camp has 29 building construction and remodeling projects in the works. Seven of those are currently underway with another 22 projects in the preplanning phase and ready to begin.



Senior leaders from Camp Eggers prepare to cut a ceremonial ribbon with members of the 1136th Transportation Company, Maine Army National Guard, during the Pine Tree Maintenance Shop dedication July 31, 2010, at Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan.



Soldiers from the 1136th Transportation Company’s Maintenance Section, Maine Army National Guard, hold the sign to their new facility, the Pine Tree Maintenance Shop, during the ribbon cutting ceremony July 31, 2010, at Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan. The shop name, which was picked by a vote among the Camp Eggers Base Support Group and 1136th personnel, links both Maine and South Dakota Soldiers together with pine trees indigenous to both states. (From left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Gilman Thibeault, Spc. Johnathon Dionne, Sgt. Earl Davis, Sgt. Frank Harriman, Sgt. Michelle Michaud and Spc. Bradley Randall.

Airman welcomed to first deployment by father

By Air Force Senior Airman William A. O'Brien

KABUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – Coming off an Air Force C-130 at Kabul International Airport (KAIA) Aug. 15, it seemed like the end of a long journey to Afghanistan for an exhausted communication specialist arriving on his first deployment. But as he walked up to his luggage he noticed a familiar person waiting to greet him, his dad, who is also deployed to Afghanistan.

Senior Master Sgt. George Curnutt, Joint Task Force 435th J-2 superintendent, who is in the last weeks of his final deployment, took part in the convoy to KAIA to pick up several newly arriving JTF-435th Airmen after learning his son would be on the same flight.

Although the younger Curnutt will be assigned to ISAF, the trip to KAIA gave him a chance to surprise his son, Airman 1st Class Shane Curnutt as he arrived for his first deployment from Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

“I was surprised to see him here,” said Airman Curnutt, a network operations technician. “I knew he was stationed close to here, but he never even mentioned being here when I arrived.”

Although this will be Airman Curnutt’s first trip here in the military, Senior Master Sgt. Curnutt who is deployed from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, said his son is well traveled and has been here before.

“He’s been to Afghanistan before,” explained the 20-year veteran. “He came and spent six months over in Bagram, Manas and Kuwait already when he worked for the Army Air Force Exchange Service.”

However, Senior Master Sgt. Curnutt said knowing his son had experience coming over here as an affiliate of AAFES, he tailored the advice he gave him to help with things that he may not have encountered over here with AAFES.

“He’s already done this (travel) before,” explained the senior master sergeant. “So being that he’s a world traveler already, I didn’t have to give him a whole lot of advice. It was more along the lines of things he needs to bring and what he can expect when he arrives and that kind of stuff to relieve the anxiety.”

“He’s been able to give me a lot of advice and kind of ease my worries,” the Airman added. “I had unanswered questions and wasn’t sure who to



Senior Master Sgt. George Curnutt, Joint Task Force 435th J-2 superintendent, left, stands with Airman 1st Class Shane Curnutt, as he welcomes his son at Kabul International Airport for his first deployment to Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo JTF 435th Public Affairs)

turn to and he’s been able to put my mind at ease when it comes to things like that.” The senior noncommissioned officer said his son compares favorably to him, but is like the newer, improved model.

“We are the same in many ways,” said Senior Master Sgt. Curnutt. “He joined the Air Force at the same age that I did. He’s like I was at age 21 only better. So he’s kind of like me, version 2.0.”

Senior Master Sgt. Curnutt said he has many feelings about his son joining the military and coming to Afghanistan. Airman Curnutt on the other hand, is just happy to be here.

“I heard about him deploying from his mom,” Senior Master Sgt. Curnutt said. “But, when I found out he was enlisting I was way more shocked than I was to hear about this. But I’m proud of him. Not simply because he’s deployed. I’m proud of him for what he’s doing, for his country, both here and in America, but at the same time I’m worried about him because he is over here.”

“Deployment is a little bit surreal,” Airman Curnutt said. “I’m glad to be here and it’s really just a relief to have all the traveling out of the way.”



ISAF senior NCO visits servicemembers

CAMP PHOENIX – The senior noncommissioned officer for the International Security Assistance Force, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael T. Hall, visited servicemembers stationed at Camp Phoenix Aug. 9 to discuss on-going operations and troop morale and welfare in the Kabul Base Cluster.

Hall said it's important to conduct battlefield-circulation tours such as this and to assess the troops' mission from their perspective.

"It's very gratifying to listen to Soldiers and leaders talk about their mission or any concerns they might have," said Hall. "It's important to hear it from them."

Hall spent the day visiting with troops of all ranks from the lower enlisted to officers; many of them from units who perform a range of missions from logistical support to detainee operations to installation management.

"Now, more than ever, I see the resolve and commitment of U.S. servicemembers to winning the war in Afghanistan," said Hall. "They are performing tough missions and working very hard toward success."

Hall also expressed how important it is for the troops to know the leadership is here for them.

"They are telling me up front what's on their minds and how

International Security Assistance Force Command Sgt. Maj. Michael T. Hall, left, shakes hands with 1st Sgt. Jay Goldhorn, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, Aug. 9, 2010, during a visit to Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Hall visited with Goldhorn and other servicemembers from Camp Phoenix. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)

their mission is going," he said. "Taking care of Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors is a top priority."

Many of the servicemembers here also expressed an appreciation for Hall's visit.

"It's good for troop morale to have someone at Command Sgt. Maj. Hall's level come here and ask us questions about what we do and how we are doing," said Spc. Jory Rogers, Aberdeen, S.D., computer technician for the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Hall took time to meet each of us. He sat down with us for a few minutes to talk and find out

how things were going for us so far," added Sgt. Barry Turner, Sioux Falls, S.D., a human resources specialist with the 196th. "It shows that he is willing to take time out of his busy schedule to personally meet with Soldiers and find out firsthand how things are going within his command."

"It's good for troop morale to have someone at Command Sgt. Maj. Hall's level come here and ask us questions about what we do and how we are doing."

– Spc. Jory Rogers

Afghan police get involved in humanitarian assistance



Staff Sgt. McLane from the 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery, Massachusetts Army National Guard, assists Afghan National Policemen with the unloading of the \$20,000 dollars of donated medical supplies at a local clinic in Estalef, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. John Coyne)

By Staff Sgt. Ryan McLane

1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment

KABUL – Developing the creditability of the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army is essential to overall mission success. This success is built not only through training and mentoring, but also by ensuring legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people. A way to win this trust is through medical drops and other humanitarian assistance.

1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment, Police Mentor Team 4 (PMT 4), led by 2nd Lt. John Coyne, Staff Sgt. Dan Bertrand and Staff Sgt. Ryan McLane, linked up with their Afghan police counterparts in the Estalef police district to drop more than \$20,000 worth of much needed medical supplies to two local clinics Aug. 1.

“Seeing the children emulate the U.S. Soldiers and their policemen made me hopeful for their future,” said Bertrand. “The police are essential to the development of this country and not just for fighting, but for building the community as a whole.”

The team visited the central medical clinic in Estalef, one that provides care for more than 4,000 people a month. Places like this form lynchpins of the team’s community policing efforts. Health

care providers and a slew of interested Afghan children surrounded PMT 4 and the Afghan National Police as they handed supplies to local civilian lifesavers.

“This is what we need to start doing more,” said Estalef Police Chief Lt. Col. Mohammad Hasam. “Opportunities like this show the people that the police want to be as involved in the community as possible.”

Brockton, Mass., resident Pfc. Douglas Castro, the team’s medic, stood watch as the medication was unloaded, ensuring the appropriate supplies made their way to the right hands. Already a local celebrity of sorts for rendering care to area civilians and police, Castro was instrumental as the team’s medical expert, ensuring that all medications were stored and inventoried correctly.

“Donating medical supplies are one of the best ways we can help the people of Afghanistan,” said Castro. “There was a lot of positive feedback from the villagers, as they came down to see what we were doing. It felt pretty good to provide them the supplies they needed.”

As the supplies were being distributed, Spc. Jared Lucas of East



“Donating medical supplies are one of the best ways we can help the people of Afghanistan. There was a lot of positive feedback from the villagers, as they came down to see what we were doing. It felt pretty good to provide them the supplies they needed.”

— Pfc. Douglas Castro

Freetown, Mass., said, “This is one of the best things we’ve done since we’ve been here.”

Westfield’s Staff Sgt. Armand Hunter pulled security from their Humvee turrets in the heavily wooded area overlooking the famed mountains hiding Estalef. The veterinarian clinic, adjacent to the medical clinic, sees an average of 60-80 local farm animals per month. Both clinics received much needed aid to help fulfill their mission of providing care to families living in this outlying district.

Gan Mohammad, the head nurse of the Estalef medical clinic said the supplies he received will help support basic medical care

Staff Sgt. Ryan McLane, left, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery, Massachusetts Army National Guard, speaks with a group, comprised of village elders and medical staff at the medical drop at a local clinic in Estalef, north of Kabul, Aug. 1, 2010. Police Mentor Team 4 in conjunction with the Afghan National Police facilitated \$20,000 of medical supplies to the clinic. (U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Jordan Breau)

for three months. Antibiotics, IV fluid and pediatric milk are essential for a clinic that serves as a first stop for patients that can’t make the 60 kilometer trip to Kabul.

“This is the perfect season for these medications,” said Mohammad.

“We are very busy. The people appreciate it,” said Mir Matiullah, village elder of Go Araw village. “It is most needed. The supplies will be used and we will make sure it is distributed fairly to everyone who needs it.”

Estalef is known as a vacation spot for Kabul residents trying to escape the big city or score some of the area’s famous pottery, but locally, the district is made mostly of farmers who rely on the earth and their animals to survive.

Dr. Abdul Rasol, the lead veterinarian, was assigned to this area to try and improve animal care and by proxy, the local food supply. Having served in this capacity in four other Afghan provinces, Abdull Rasol said while stacking multi-vitamins intended for cows, “This is all useful to us” he said. “Antibiotics, vaccines, parasite medication, these are important medications for the work we do here.”



Spc. Steven Griggs, a truck driver for Alpha Company, 1-186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, poses for a picture in front of his Rhino Runner Aug. 10, 2010, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Griggs and other members from Alpha Company's truck platoon move servicemembers and civilians with the Rhino Runners safely to destinations throughout Kabul.

TAKING THE LONG TRAIL

Vermont Army National Guard unit provides sustainment support for troops throughout Kabul

Story and photos by Sgt. Rebecca Linder
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

With nearly 9,000 U.S. and coalition forces stationed throughout Kabul, Afghanistan, providing general sustainment support to the warfighters here is one job that requires detailed coordination and execution.

Known as Task Force Long Trail, the 186th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) of the Vermont Army National Guard, is providing this support to troops on 11 military installations in the capital known as the Kabul Base Cluster (KBC), and is doing so in a variety of ways.

“Task Force Long Trail supports the KBC with transportation, medical, maintenance and all classes of supply to fully enable U.S. and coalition forces to accomplish their mission,” said Lt. Col. Andrew Harris, battalion commander.

Based out of Camp Phoenix, the 1-186th has about 270 Soldiers divided among its Headquarters, Alpha, Bravo and Charlie companies, all with a common goal to provide quality-sustainment support.

TRANSPORTATION — ALPHA COMPANY

“You call, we haul” is the motto of Alpha Company, from Berlin, Vt., this company provides the transportation, supply, fuel and water elements for the battalion.

If troops and cargo need to be transported somewhere in the capital, this platoon can get it there. On a daily basis, the truck platoon is responsible for transporting personnel using their Rhino Runners — up-armored buses, used to move servicemembers and civilians to different camps around the KBC. To date, the unit has moved more than 14,000 troops.

“We function as a secure ‘taxi’ for the KBC,” said 1st Lt. Laura Cook, company executive officer. “Non-tactical vehicles are not the safest way of traveling; by providing Rhino-



Sgt. Nathian Foster, a vehicle mechanic for Bravo Company, 1-186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, works on a Humvee Aug. 10, 2010, in the maintenance shop at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Members of Bravo Co. have completed more than 2,000 jobs in five months supporting all camps in the Kabul Base Cluster.



Staff Sgt. Peter Rawling, center, convoy commander for Alpha Company, 1-186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, provides a convoy brief Aug. 10, 2010, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan before the movement team heads out on a mission to deliver personnel and supplies. Alpha Company's truck platoon has moved more than 14,000 passengers in the first five months of their deployment.

bus transportation, personnel are able to travel more safely around Kabul."

"Our Soldiers are out on the road at least once, if not twice a day," said Capt. Christopher Day, company commander.

"Even with the increase in recent enemy threats, we have conducted these moves driving respectfully and courteously among Afghan motorists in order to support the counterinsurgency mission."

After arriving at their destination, servicemembers throughout the KBC needing commodities can request them through Alpha Company's supply platoon. The supply platoon manages a number of

warehouses where personnel can order and receive office supplies or durable goods from pens and paper to refrigerators and televisions.

The supply platoon also manages the distribution of ammunition to all U.S. and coalition forces.

"The Camp Phoenix ammunition supply point has run efficiently and smoothly under Alpha Company's Soldier's supervision," added Day.

Alpha Company also provides an additional capability for the KBC, the means to take dirty water and make it clean. Stationed at Camp Bala Hissar, several Soldiers from the fuel and water platoon purify water using a Tactical Water Purification System, turning dirty well-water into clean water used for cooking and bathing.

"All in all I am proud of the accomplishments of Alpha Company," said Day. "We have done more with less people and we are continually finding ways to improve our operations."

MAINTENANCE — BRAVO COMPANY

Although Alpha Co. may be the work horse for the battalion, nothing gets moved or fixed without the support of Bravo Company. With more than 2,000 job orders completed in five months, this Winooski, Vt., unit provides vehicle maintenance and equipment repair, as well as support for electronics, fabrication, armament and recovery operations for the KBC.

"We have a lot of experienced experts that get the job done right," said 1st Lt. Dustin Sigler, company commander. "As maintenance for the entire KBC, vehicles and other equipment needing to get fixed come in and we need to get the job done quickly in order to get them



back on the road.”

This company of about 50 people is completing a job and work load originally designed for 90. However, they aren't missing a beat, making sure U.S. and coalition forces have maintained equipment to perform their mission.

“We stay very busy,” said Sigler. “The automotive process is very smooth; it is set up like a Jiffy Lube back home. Someone comes in and tells us what is wrong; we fill out the paperwork, fix the problem, and send them on their way.”

The maintenance unit also installs electronic force protection and communication equipment into tactical vehicles keeping servicemembers safer while operating them.

“Whenever we need something fixed on our vehicles, we get it in there and they take care of our problem quick,” said Sgt. Thomas Ascher, security-

force noncommissioned officer, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard. “The job gets done fast and they get it done right the first time so we can drive on with our mission.”

It's not just vehicles Bravo Co. keeps operating in tip-top shape. Servicemembers in combat carry a weapon everywhere to be prepared for any attack they might encounter from the enemy. Soldiers from Bravo Co. service weapons to ensure they are working properly to perform the mission.

“We have two Soldiers that are very good at fixing weapons,” said Sigler. “They also give primary marksmanship instruction classes to servicemembers who need it.”

“Safety is very important to us, and we always make sure the servicemembers have the equipment they need to get their mission accomplished safely,”

Lt. Col. Thomas Essex, left, a general medical officer with Charlie Company, 1-186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, looks at 1-178th Field Artillery, South Carolina Army National Guard member, Sgt. Sloan Holley's throat during a checkup Aug. 10, 2010, at the troop medical clinic at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Essex and other members of Charlie Company provide medical care for servicemembers stationed on Camp Phoenix and other camps throughout the Kabul Base Cluster.



Sgt. Kris Maxham, a supply sergeant with Alpha Company of the 1-186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, cuts open a box of binders to restock the supply at the Self Service Supply Center (SSSC) Aug. 10, 2010, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. The SSSC is one of three warehouses Alpha Company manages.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kent Samson, left, and Master Sgt. Michael Sanchez, both members of the support operations section (SPD), 1-186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, work together to complete an order form Aug. 9, 2010, in their SPO shop at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan.



said Sgt. Nathian Foster, vehicle mechanic. “It is rewarding to us when we know they come back safe after being out on a mission.”

MEDICAL — CHARLIE COMPANY

While keeping vehicles and equipment in excellent operating condition is important, keeping servicemembers at their optimal performance level is equally significant. This responsibility falls to Charlie Company of Winooski, Vt.

These medical professionals operate the troop medical clinic (TMC) at Camp Phoenix and are responsible for a range of services from routine sick-call appointments to providing mission support for personal security details and convoy movement requests. Personnel here also help coordinate medical evacuation support of injured troops and provide 24-hour emergency treatment if

needed.

“The overall mission of the battalion is to support the KBC, while Charlie Med. is more specific to medical support for the camps,” said 1st Lt. Leo Spahr, executive officer.

The company has a treatment platoon which consists of medics, physician’s assistants, pharmacy and dental technicians, responsible for operating the Camp Phoenix TMC. This level-two clinic has laboratory and X-ray access and is able to provide additional services including physical therapy and optometry for patients.

“Most camps have a level-one clinic, so if a servicemember needs a higher level of service, they are referred here and we can treat their needs,” said 1st Lt. Martin Silverstrim, TMC officer in charge. “We preserve the fighting strength; we have to keep people healthy so they can fight.”

“We are here to support and force health protection,” said Spahr. “The Soldiers are providing health care for the troops and the coalition forces so those people can go out and enforce the main mission of counterinsurgency.”

SUPPORT OPERATIONS AND HHC

With all the transportation, maintenance and medical assets the 186th provides for troops, making sure all of the services are coordinated throughout KBC falls to the battalion’s support operations (SPO) section from Northfield, Vt.

“It’s all about support. As a BSB we normally support just a brigade, but here we think of the KBC as one big brigade to support,” said Master Sgt. Michael Sanchez, SPO noncommissioned officer in charge. “Without the SPO, all 11 camps would be responsible for their own supplies.”

Each class of supply – food, fuel, ammo – has its own manager that coordinates with contacts at camps throughout the KBC to verify numbers of supplies that are needed at each camp. Once numbers are verified, personnel in the SPO shop complete the ordering process, arrange transportation for the commodities and track the arrival of the supplies.

“We keep a close relationship with senior personnel, base support groups and the department of logistics at other camps around the KBC to ensure accurate reporting so we can maintain a sustainable supply for the camps,” said Capt. Matthew Bottino, deputy support operations officer. “We are the one-stop shop; everyone comes to us to get the supplies they need.”

“It’s all about support,” said Sanchez. “Without the SPO there wouldn’t be a one-stop shop.”

Afghan National Army Soldiers along with Afghan National Police stack supplies for flood victims during a humanitarian aid drop in the Mosahi District, south of Kabul on Aug. 15, 2010.



A PARTNERSHIP OF HOPE

Afghan flood victims receive aid through coalition cooperation

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

It was a partnership to provide hope for flood victims in the Mosahi district, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug. 15 as Afghan and coalition forces delivered humanitarian aid to displaced families.

“We lost everything in the flood,” said one local man. “With the help of the government and military, we have hope for our future and can begin to rebuild.”

Members of the Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), U.S. military and Turkish forces participated in the relief effort to procure and deliver food, clothing, tents, blankets and stoves to 150 families. The supplies were delivered in response to recent flooding caused by heavy rains that breached the banks of a local river, effecting more than 600 people.

“We are here to help the displaced families who are in need,” said Sgt. Walirahman Rahmani, ANA Soldier. “It’s a joint event. We have American and other forces from NATO here helping the Afghans.”



Kabul Provincial Governor Zebiullah Mucaddidi (far left) shakes hands with Capt. Warnie Gick thanking him and other members of the 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard, for their support during a humanitarian aid drop to flood victims in the Mosahi district, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Aug. 15, 2010.

“We lost everything in the flood. With the help of the government and military, we have hope for our future and can begin to rebuild.”

“This humanitarian relief effort was a true partnership between the Afghan Security Forces, the U.S. and Turkish forces,” said Capt. Benjamin Mailhot, civil military operations officer from 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment (1-101st FA), Massachusetts Army National Guard. “I think it’s outstanding the level of cooperation we have with our Afghan partners to put this relief package together.”

The Kabul Provincial Governor Zebiullah Mucaddidi was also on hand to meet with local village elders and assisted in passing out relief supplies. The Afghan government, along with the village elders, helped to identify the families that were the most in need of receiving aid.

“We are making sure the humanitarian aid goes to the needy families,” said Khawani Hussainkhil, a local village elder.

According to Mailhot, of Belmont, Mass., the 1-101st was able to use Commanders Emergency Response Program funds, or CERP, to quickly procure aid for the families affected by the flood. The CERP gives U.S. military commanders the ability to quickly buy needed supplies for emergencies or projects that benefit the Afghan people.

After the request for support came from the Turkish military, which provides oversight for the Regional Command – Capital area, the 1-101st was able to procure and deliver the supplies within several days of the flooding.

The Mosahi humanitarian aid drop is the largest the 1-101st has supported since being in Afghanistan and they hope they will be able to provide future support for the people of this area.

“We are hoping to have a continued presence in this region and provide future projects that support the people,” said Mailhot. “Wells and bridges are just a few examples of things the people need.”

“It feels good to be out here working with the ANA, ANP and Turkish military helping the people,” said Staff Sgt. Anthony Farese, Peabody, Mass., of Alpha Battery, 1-101st. “That’s why we are here – to help the people.”

“We are thankful for their cooperation with the Afghan people,” said Hussainkhil. “I as a representative of the villagers am personally thankful for the assistance, and the people – who this support goes to – are also thankful.”



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Albert Price, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard, along with assistance from an Afghan National Army Soldier, help to load supplies for flood victims during a humanitarian aid drop in the Mosahi district, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Aug. 15, 2010.



One hundred and fifty families displaced by flooding wait to receive humanitarian aid from Afghan, U.S. and coalition forces in Mosahi district, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Aug. 15, 2010.

REMEMBER THE ALAMO

Camp support group provides services for residents

By Capt. Anthony Deiss
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP ALAMO – In America, people remember the Texas Alamo as a heroic struggle against impossible odds — a place where men made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. In Afghanistan, there is a camp which bears the same name and spirit for the scores of Afghan Soldiers that camp personnel train to provide the same freedoms for Afghan people.

Camp Alamo, located in the nation's capital of Kabul, is home to the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTTC) Advisory Group, an assemblage of more than 1,000 U.S., coalition, and civilian contractors who provide mentorship, training and logistical support to the Afghan National Army (ANA).

However, without garrison support, this collection of mentors and trainers would be about as helpless as the Alamo defenders cut-off from supplies and re-enforcements in the battle's final days. They may not be remembered to the likes of David Crockett or Jim Bowie, but Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery, South Carolina Army National Guard, are sustaining the fight for these Alamo residents.

Serving as a Camp Support Group (CSG) for the Kabul Base Cluster, the 1-178th has the mission of providing life-support and sustainment operations for Camp Alamo.

"We are focused on living conditions, security and management of Camp Alamo," said Capt. Chris Turner, Camp Alamo mayor from the 1-178th. "We are also responsible for the selection and performance management of all service contracts for the camp."

Under the direction of Turner, of Summerville, S.C., a small mayor's cell team is responsible for the ever expanding camp that supports coalition forces from the United Kingdom, France, Mongolia, Romania, Australia, Greece, Germany, Turkey and Italy, as well as U.S. Army Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, and detachments of the 95th and 1st Army Divisions. The CSG also supports a number of U.S. Sailors, Marines and Airmen with various military specialties.

Sgt. 1st Class Roger Cantley of Andrews, S.C., Staff Sgt. Tony Grant of Pawley's Island, S.C., and Staff Sgt. Jack Hart of Canonsburg, Penn., round out the CSG mayor cell team. Turner said the camp has grown quickly in the short time the team has been here, and the team continues to meet the needs of camp

"The command group has been successful in meeting the challenges of enlarging the camp's capacity from a population of 300 to nearly 1,000 people in the six months since we arrived."

— Capt. Chris Turner



Camp Support Group Alamo (left to right): Sgt. 1st Class Roger Cantley, Capt. Chris Turner, Staff Sgt. Tony Grant and Staff Sgt. Jack Hart.

(Courtesy photo by I-178th FA)

Pfc. Ryan Damaska, a fire support specialist from C Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, ensures proper body position and goes over the four fundamentals of shooting an M16 rifle with Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldiers before qualifying at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) April 25, 2010. The Camp Alamo Camp Support Group supports Soldiers like Damaska providing him with basic life-support services after returning from training ANA forces at the KMTC. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Blair Neelands)



residents and improve services.

“The command group has been successful in meeting the challenges of enlarging the camp’s capacity from a population of 300 to nearly 1,000 people in the six months since we arrived,” said Turner. “We’ve also facilitated a seamless transition between vital logistical service providers – KBR and Fluor – while continuing to operate efficiently and meet the needs of the ever evolving KMTC Advisory Group.”

Turner said much of the team’s focus is dedicated to improving the working conditions and quality of life of Camp Alamo residents both military and civilian. Through their commitment and hard work, dozens of major projects have been completed and many more to be undertaken.

“As the team moves into the second half of their deployment, we continue to initiate and oversee several million dollar projects to include construction of buildings that will house close to 200 personnel, improvement and expansion of service facilities, and upgrades to morale, welfare, and recreational conveniences,” said Turner.

While the battle for the Texas Alamo will continue to symbolize liberty and freedom for Americans, only time will tell what Afghanistan’s Camp Alamo will come to symbolize for its people. One thing that no historian will be able to deny, however, is the support and improvements made by the few members of the 1-178th; giving its residents the best service possible in this moment of history.



Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Hampton of the United States Army Marksmanship Unit from Fort Benning, Ga., aids an Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldier on the range at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) June 5, 2010. The Camp Alamo Camp Support Group supports units like Hamptons to sustain basic life-support services when they return each day from training ANA forces at the KMTC. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Blair Neelands)

MASS CASUALTY

Medical team provides guidance, training for Kabul Base Cluster

By Sgt. Rebecca Linder
and Capt. Anthony Deiss
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

Proper health of servicemembers stationed throughout Kabul is vital to keeping U.S. and coalition forces mission ready in the Afghan capital. Soldiers from the Task Force Rushmore Brigade Surgeon Cell of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, are ensuring that health by providing guidance and support to troop medical clinics (TMC) throughout the Kabul Base Cluster (KBC).

With nearly 9,000 U.S. and coalition forces stationed throughout the KBC, providing adequate medical support to 11 different bases is no easy operation. Coordination, planning and training are all key factors to comprehensive care.

According to Col. Jeffrey Anderson, 196th brigade surgeon, "the medical section's main responsibility is to identify TMC capabilities, coordinate the right medical assets in the appropriate areas, plan for medical emergencies and train to react to those emergencies," he said

"It's a big job for the 196th to make sure certain medical services are provided to all personnel throughout the KBC," added Anderson, of Hill City, S.D. "Some bases have more medical support than others, and it's our responsibility to make sure the bases with less



Spc. Lance Schumann, combat medic for Charlie Company, 186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, responds to a chest wound on a medical training mannequin during a mass-casualty exercise July 25, 2010, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Schumann, is one of several medics who work at the troop medical clinic at Camp Phoenix, ensuring the proper health of servicemembers on camp. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)

capabilities still get the support they need when they need it."

"Just as Task Force Rushmore as a whole provides operational guidance and sustainment support for the KBC, the medical section strives to ensure optimal health among servicemembers by keeping

providers, supplies and other medical assets distributed efficiently," added Capt. Regan Norgaard, medical operations officer in charge.

Although coordination and guidance with the TMCs goes a long way to providing sufficient medical support, preventative

care is still the best prescription for medical readiness.

This preventative care starts with the medical section obtaining data from the TMCs around the KBC and analyzing it. Everything from diseases to non-battle injuries are tracked, and according to Norgaard, it's

this analysis that helps them to follow trends and find sources of illnesses. Specific guidance and countermeasures can then be communicated to the various command groups within the KBC.

However, analysis alone cannot mitigate the impact of a real-life emergency. Analysis must guide appropriate training and battle drills.

Making sure the TMCs are ready and prepared to respond to any medical emergency or incident at anytime was a recent focus for the task force medical section. Although Kabul is relatively safe, camps throughout the city are still susceptible to attack. To be ready for these attacks, battle-drill training is necessary.

The Brigade Surgeon Cell, along with the 186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, and Base Defense Operations Center personnel from the 1st Battalion, 178th Field Artillery, South Carolina Army National Guard, organized a mass casualty (MASCAL) response exercise on Camp Phoenix in late July to evaluate medical personnel and first responders here.

The battle drill involved the whole base, but was directed toward the TMC and base defense personnel. Norgaard and other members of the section applied ‘moulage’ to medical training mannequins and real-life personnel – replicating injuries that might occur subsequent to an actual attack.

While medical and base defense personnel responded to the simulated attack, Anderson and Norgaard observed the event and provided feedback to the medics and providers at the TMC to help improve the MASCAL response plan.

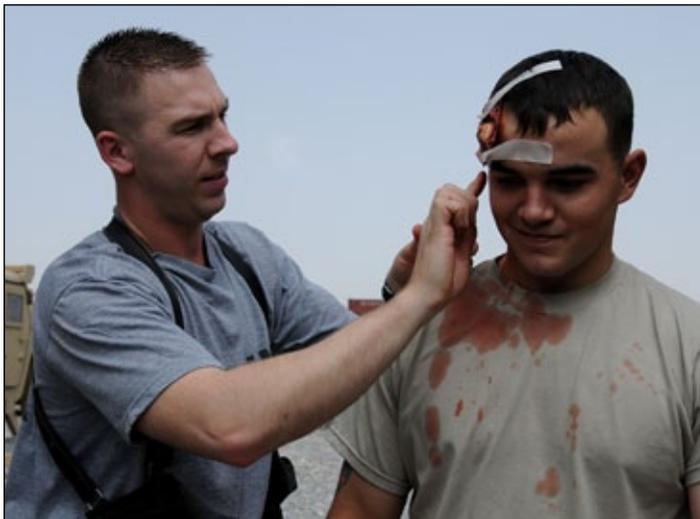
“Serving as objective observer controllers of the MASCAL event; our observations gave an unbiased opinion of what went



ABOVE: Task Force Rushmore Brigade Surgeon Cell members Capt. Regan Norgaard, left, Col. Jeffrey Anderson, center, and Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Hintz evaluate the Camp Phoenix Troop Medical Clinic on their reaction time, treatment of patients and accessing areas for improvement during a mass-casualty exercise July 25, 2010.

BELOW: 1st. Lt. Kenneth Stevens, left, a registered nurse with Charlie Company, 1-186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard, and Capt. Marjorie Whitehead, physicians assistant, 1-178th Field Artillery, South Carolina Army National Guard, work together to treat a ‘patient’ during a mass-casualty exercise, July 25, 2010, at Camp Phoenix. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)





Capt. Regan Norgaard, left, puts fake blood on a Soldier, who simulated a 'wounded person' during a mass-casualty exercise July 25, 2010, on Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Norgaard and other members from the Task Force Rushmore Brigade Surgeon Cell of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Dakota Army National Guard, prepared casualties for the exercise and then observed medical personnel during the scenario and at the troop medical clinic to access their response measures. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rebecca Linder)

right and also areas of possible improvement," said Norgaard, of Brookings, S.D. "These battle drills are an integral part of helping to shape the medical battlefield in preparation for an actual event."

For the 196th medical section, protecting their own doesn't come without protecting those they are here to serve – the Afghan people – and being ready to communicate with the local Afghans is part of being ready for any medical situation that may arise on or off base.

Recently, the medical section hired Dr. Hamidullah Hamdard, an Afghan interpreter who is also a physician.

"A doctor of medicine as an interpreter opens a variety of avenues," said Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Hintz, medical section noncommissioned officer in charge.

"As a doctor and translator, Hamdard holds a wealth of knowledge as a physician," continued Hintz, of Watertown, S.D. "He acts as a force multiplier with regards to our commitment to the treatment and disposition of local Afghans who receive emergency treatment on Camp Phoenix."

"The Rules of Entitlement limit what U.S. military medical professionals can do when caring for Afghan civilians," said Anderson. "In matters of possible loss of life, limb or eyesight, we are of course able to evaluate and provide emergency care and stabilization. However, if further definitive evaluation and treatment is required, Hamidullah works alongside camp providers to facilitate referral to the nearest appropriate medical facility."

"We help the patients get where they need to go," said Hamidullah. "The providers and I may not be able to treat them directly, but we can help ensure that they get to the right local Afghan facility. There are NATO mentoring teams working with local hospitals so they can improve the healthcare and treatments of the Afghan citizens."

With this combination of partnership, coordination and training; the Task Force Rushmore Brigade Surgeon Cell looks to be providing the right dose of medicine for those who need it.

Medical professionals train with sexual assault kits

By Sgt. Rebecca Linder
Task Force Rushmore Public Affairs

CAMP PHOENIX – It doesn't occur often, but when a servicemember is sexually assaulted in a combat zone, physical evidence needs to be collected quickly and carefully. Military medical professionals stationed here took a class Aug. 15 to better understand how to perform a sexual assault forensic exam to help provide accurate information to the court system for the victim and the suspect.

"Any sexual assault is traumatic," said Capt. Laura Woodson, physicians assistant, 186th Brigade Support Battalion, Vermont Army National Guard. "As a provider I feel that we should make every effort to give reassurance and support for the patient."

"Someone who is trained will understand all levels of care that need to be provided to the sexually assaulted patient," said Lt. Cmdr. Cynthia Ferguson, instructor, Joint Combat Casualty Research Team at Bagram Airfield (BAF).

The providers were taught to use the Sexual Assault Evidence Collection kit when performing an exam. It includes a guide to complete certain procedures during the process and also contains a variety of envelopes to collect evidence to help validate the case.

"It's very important to understand the process of how to correctly conduct a sexual assault forensic exam," said Ferguson. "Also, it is just as important to correctly and ethically testify as an expert witness in a court of law because the examiner should be an objective person that collects the evidence so the courts can help decide whether the suspect is guilty or not."

"It is important as a provider to be able to promptly and properly care for the patient," said Woodson. "Any error in evidence collection could compromise the prosecution of the case."

Before providers were equipped with the kit and trained, sexually assaulted patients had to go to BAF, a 30-minute flight from Camp Phoenix, to collect the evidence. Now that the providers here are trained, they can collect evidence from patients and suspects in a timely manner to get the best results.

"The more people we train, the more our troops are able to understand the sexual assault examination process, so that personnel can be alleviated of fear and anxiety when coming forward to report a sexual assault and that their examiners are not their to judge them," said Ferguson.

"Persons who have been sexually assaulted should feel more comfortable knowing that someone who is trained is collecting the evidence from them," said Ferguson. "On the other hand, suspects who feel they are innocent should also feel more comfortable, so providers can collect results to help prove the suspect is not guilty."

SAFETY WARNING

REGARDING WEAPONS PURCHASED IN AFGHANISTAN

**DO NOT FIRE THESE
TYPES OF WEAPONS**



CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1. Because firearms are inherently dangerous, weapons purchased in the United States are subject to stringent regulations which control the materials, process and people involved in the manufacturing of weapons.
2. Weapons sold in Afghanistan are not subject to the same regulations as weapons sold in the United States. Consequently, you do not know the quality of the materials used or the process followed to manufacture or assemble the weapon.
3. Even if the weapon is a genuine antique, there is no way to know the history of the weapon or how it has been used or misused in the past.
4. By purchasing this weapon and shipping it to the United States, you are responsible for injuries that result from firing the weapon. Do not under any circumstances give this weapon to a family member, friend or loved one without specifically warning them not to fire the weapon.
5. If you choose to ignore this warning, please have this firearm examined by a certified gunsmith prior to firing it to ensure it is both functional and safe.

SOCIAL MEDIA

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE LOGGING IN

The Internet has fundamentally changed the way the military communicates in the 21st century. Increasingly, individuals are looking to the web and social networking sites to communicate with family, friends and the world.

Social media is an excellent way to stay in touch with those you care about back home and to share with them your experiences. However, all military personnel have a responsibility to know the risks and rewards of using social media. Those who wear the military uniform must always remember to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, and be cognizant of others on the web who wish to exploit the information you share and use it to cause harm.

Read the following DOs and DON'Ts to help protect yourself, your families and your fellow servicemembers.

DOs

- DO use social networking sites to communicate the military story; you are our best spokesperson.
- DO be cognizant of how you represent yourself; reconsider posting comments that reflect poorly on the organization.
- DO keep your tone professional.
- DO ensure content posted is appropriate to good order and discipline to the military.
- DO treat social media sites like the newspaper. If you don't want to see it in print, don't say it!
- DO protect classified, sensitive, or need-to-know information and report violations.
- DO remember violators of Operational Security (OPSEC) may be subject to UCMJ action.
- DO make it more difficult for an adversary to identify and exploit vulnerabilities.
- DO mitigate the risk of using social media by educating servicemembers, not by stopping the dialogue.



twitter

flickr

facebook

YouTube

Blogger

DON'Ts

- DON'T post inappropriate statements. Users have the right to voice their opinions. However, they do not have the right to post vulgar or obscene comments that degrade morale or unit cohesion.
- DON'T post distasteful photos or video that depict any form of obscenity.
- DON'T post sensitive or classified information that could compromise OPSEC. Release of this information could result in lost lives:
 - Policies, Rules of Engagement and Rules of Force
 - Vulnerabilities of defensive dispositions, capabilities of units, weapons systems
 - Doctrine for using various weapons
 - New weapons available, or are being employed
 - Unit strength, exact numbers or composition
 - Troop movements: dates, times and locations
- DON'T post any photos or videos that could compromise OPSEC: Entry Control Points, Vehicle Battle Damage, Sensitive Communication or Force Protection Equipment.
- DON'T post personally identifiable information: information to distinguish or track your identity, employment history, home address, exact school your kids go to.