

# FREEDOM WATCH

OCTOBER 2010

AFGHANISTAN



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Whitney Hughes, TF Wolverine PAO, 86th Inf. BCT

**Adopting  
a Cause  
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# FREEDOM WATCH

STAFF/ 304TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT  
VOL. 6, NO. 10

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The *Freedom Watch* is a monthly publication of the 304th PAD and Combined Joint Task Force 101.

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*Freedom Watch*, a U.S. Department of Defense publication, is published the first Monday of every month by the 304th PAD located at building 815-F Dragon Village at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 20,000 copies per month. In accordance with DoD Instruction 5120.4, this DoD magazine is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas. Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government or the Department of Defense.

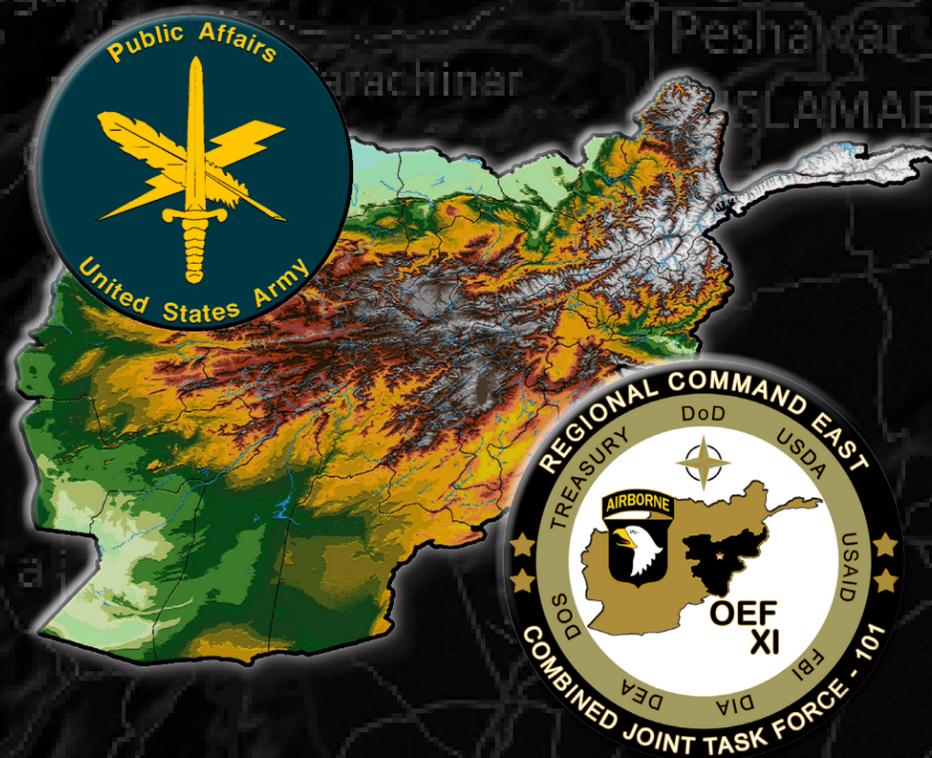
All submissions are subject to editing by the 304th PAD and the CJTF-101 Public Affairs Office, which can be reached at DSN 318-481-6367 or [freedomwatch@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@afghan.swa.army.mil)

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(Cover Photo) Spc. Robin Veazey, a medic attached to the Bamyán Embedded Training Team, poses with the child who "adopted" her for the day at the Samar Orphanage during a visit Aug. 26. Veazey, stationed out of Colchester, Vt., and members of the Bamyán Embedded Training Team and New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team visited the orphanage to hand out toys and clothes as part of a three-year ongoing effort to support the orphanage.

# CMT Keeps Soldiers Supplied

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Brent C. Powell, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division

Like busy bees buzzing in and out of a hive full of honey, a swarm of helicopters are constantly swooping in and out of the landing zone at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Khowst Province.

Instead of carrying pollen to the hive, they carry bellies full of cargo and supplies to FOBs all over Afghanistan's rugged and mountainous landscape.

And just like helper bees in the hive, a special team of Soldiers are working non-stop to load and attach a vast array of cargo to the busy choppers, ensuring Soldiers in the field have the supplies they need.

The Soldiers are from the cargo management team, Company A, 626th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. They are among a select few who do aerial resupply missions on a daily basis. It's a challenging task that keeps them buzzing.

In fact, for the month of July, the cargo management team was responsible for loading 1,129,052 pounds of cargo. That figure is just over the team's monthly average of 1 million pounds.

"It's definitely a lot of work," said Army Sgt. Bradley A. Denno, noncommissioned officer in charge of the cargo management team and a native of Detroit, assigned to Co. A, 626th BSB, 3rd Bde., 101st Airborne Div. "It's nonstop action from the time we get here until we leave."

The team is broken into two shifts with two Soldiers working together on each one. Together, they send supplies and equipment to nearly 30 FOBs and combat outposts.

"Our mission here is to move supplies and equipment out to support the Soldiers in the field," said Denno. "We supply all the forward operating bases in Regional Command-East's area of operation with food, mail, ammunition, weapons, repair parts and construction materials. We load pretty much anything they could possibly need or

use."

Although the team occasionally loads military CH-47 Chinooks, they spend the majority of their time loading large, white, civilian-owned and operated, Mi-18 helicopters they call "jingle birds."

Because the jingle birds are limited to carrying only 4,000 pounds at a time, they usually have to make multiple trips to a FOB and back to transport all the needed supplies and equipment.

"Once a bird lands, we try to have it loaded and back in the air within 20 minutes," said Denno. "That's not always possible, but that's our goal."

When the wheels of a helicopter touch down, the team moves into action. Using a forklift, the team will usually put between four to six pallets on each aircraft depending on the weight. However, sometimes the team has to load the birds the hard way – by hand.

"It's a difficult and physically demanding job," said Army Pvt. William W. Foote, cargo management specialist and Klamath Falls, Ore., native, attached to Co. A, 626th BSB, 3rd Bde., 101st Airborne Div. "But we are going to accomplish the mission no matter what."

Although a majority of the helos are loaded by forklift or by hand, those aren't the only methods the team uses to get supplies out; occasionally they use a special method called sling-loading.

Sling-loading involves using netting, ropes and hooks to attach cargo to the bottom of the helicopters. In order to pick-up the supplies, the helos hover above them while a Soldier standing below attaches the load. The team conducted more than 70 sling-loads during the month of July.

"We will sling-load anything that won't fit inside the birds," said Denno. "Some of the common sling-loads we do are fuel bladders, artillery pieces, generators and construction supplies. As long as the load meets the weight requirements, we will find a way to get it on the bird."

"I have a great team out here, and I'm very lucky," said Army Sgt. Patricia A. Oconnell, NCO in

charge of FOB Sharana's helicopter landing zone, assigned to Co. A, 626th BSB, 3rd Bde., 101st Airborne Div., from Clarksville, Tenn. "Everyone is well-versed and skilled in not only their specific job, but they are also capable of doing every job out here."

Although the mission keeps the Rakkasans busy, they all seem to find something they like about it.

"One of the things I like most about the job is the Soldiers I work with," said Foote. "They are really good at what they do, and I've learned a lot from my NCOs."

No matter the challenge ahead, the Soldiers of the cargo management team stand ready to meet it head on.

"This job takes a lot of dedication and devotion to the mission as well as patience," said Denno. "My team works hard and gives everything they have to support the troops outside the wire, making sure they have what they need to sustain the fight. It's a mission we've been working hard on since we got here, and it's a mission we will continue to work hard on until we leave." 🇺🇸

Army Sgt. Patricia A. Oconnell, a native of Clarksville, Tenn., and assigned to Company A, 626th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, prepares to attach a 500-gallon collapsible fuel bladder to the bottom of a helicopter at Forward Operating Base Sharana Aug. 7. Oconnell is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the helicopter landing zone.

# The Backbone of the ANA

## PART 1: THE BATTLE COURSE

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Spencer Case, 304th PAD

*Editors note: This will be the first of a three-part series detailing the training of the Afghan National Army noncommissioned officer corps at Forward Operating Base Thunder. This piece focuses on the Battle Course.*

While the Afghan National Army's efforts to boost troop levels have been well publicized, the story of the ANA's noncommissioned officer corps is unfolding quietly in the background.

In early August, the ANA reached its goal of 134,000 soldiers two months ahead of schedule and spurred mass media interest in the institution's future. British army Color Sgt. Ronnie Docherty, who oversees NCO training at Forward Operating Base Thunder, an ANA installation in Paktya Province, said the less-discussed strength of the ANA's NCO corps is just as important as its strength in numbers.

"NCOs are the mainstay of any army," said Docherty, a member of the Mobile Education Training Team at FOB Lightning. "If you don't have a good NCO corps, the army will not function."

When Docherty, of Clydebank, Scotland, arrived six months ago, the ANA faced a shortage of 17,000 NCOs, he said. Since that time, Docherty and his team have overseen the training of about 1,600 new ANA NCOs. These NCOs will serve in various units throughout the ANA's 203rd Thunder Corps, which operates primarily in south-eastern Afghanistan in the Paktya, Paktika, Khowst and Ghazni Provinces. Similar NCO training centers are run in other regions of Afghanistan such as Kabul, Herat and Helmand Provinces.

"It will take longer until the whole NCO thing is sorted," said Docherty,

whose home unit is Company C, 6th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland. "Slowly, but surely we're getting there."

"Getting there" will depend largely on the efforts of individual Afghan NCOs like ANA Sgt. Namiatullah Zahim, one of about 60 ANA NCOs in the current six-week cycle of the battle course at FOB Thunder.

Like the U.S. Army's Advanced Leader Course (formerly the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course), the Battle Course prepares NCOs for their roles as squad leaders. Unlike ALC, the course includes things like literacy and human rights education.

"The course is very interesting, and I like it," said Zahim, a 38-year-old with a gray-tinged black beard, who hails from Said Karem District, Paktya Province.

Like most Afghans, his life is not untouched by the conflicts of the last 30 years. In the 1980s, Zahim studied at a military academy in Kabul, but did not finish with a degree because of events related to the Russian invasion, he said. Still, with a high school education, he is better off than most, as his instructors have noticed. During his first week of class, which was taught primarily by civilians rather than military instructors, one of the civilians teaching the course made him deputy to the instructor.

In 2004, Zahim enlisted in the ANA for mainly altruistic motives, he said.

"My aim when I joined the ANA was to help my country and become a helper to my people," he said.

Early in his military career, Zahim deployed to Zabul Province, Kalat district, where he gained experience doing foot patrols. His experience there solidified his trust of the ANA as an institution, he said.

"When you're doing a mission it depends on the people; some people trust us, some people don't," he said. "Most people, however, trust us. We are ANA; we are not stealing or doing things like that."

After gaining his stripes doing foot patrols, Zahim was transferred to a unit in Khowst Province where he works as a supply sergeant for the 203rd Thunder Corps. When his captain asked him if there were any NCOs who wanted to enroll in the battle course, Zahim volunteered.

Through Ramadan, which began Aug. 11, near the beginning of the battle course, Zahim and his colleagues trained to a very unusual schedule. He would get up at 2 a.m. to eat suhoor - a meal consumed early in the morning as Muslims may not eat during the day during Ramadan - and then again at 4 a.m. for prayer.

Accountability formation began at 7 a.m. and instruction began in earnest by 8 a.m., in a classroom with only an Afghan flag on its otherwise bare walls. The classroom is connected to a makeshift prayer

**"When you're doing a mission it depends on the people; some people trust us, some people don't. Most people, however, trust us ... We need more troops for ANA in Afghanistan, and we will finish this crisis."** -Afghan National Army Sgt. Namiatullah Zahim

room with prayer rugs laid out for prayer time.

Given the demands of fasting for Ramadan, the classes often let out as early as 11 or 11:30 a.m. However, learning usually continues after class has let out.

"Some of them are trying very hard to work," Zahim said of his

fellow students. "When they are in their B-huts [after class has let out] they are still practicing. I can see there is a positive change in them."

Now four weeks into the course, Zahim said he has learned much.

"I have learned squad-level attacks and platoon-level attacks," he said. "Also, I've learned a num-

ber of different techniques for conducting a patrol and how to set up a hasty perimeter."

While the future of the ANA remains uncertain, Zahim remains confident.

"We need more troops for ANA in Afghanistan, and we will finish this crisis," he said. ☺



*Afghan National Army Sgt. Namiatullah Zahim, one of about 60 ANA soldiers in the current cycle of the Battle Course at Forward Operating Base Thunder, Paktya Province, leads a squad of Afghan soldiers at the training grounds near the FOB Aug. 22. The prospects for political freedom in Afghanistan depend on the success of institutions like the ANA's noncommissioned officer corps. While the future of the ANA remains uncertain, Zahim remains confident.*

# Combat Outpost Badel

Story and photo by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A Witte, 300th MPAD

Combat Outpost Badel lacks many things, but enemy fire isn't one of them.

The primitive hilltop base in Kunar Province overlooks broad valley floors, yet exists in the shadows of larger mountains and the hostility of insurgents who would tear it down.

Army 1st Lt. Rob L. Schenker of Long Island, N.Y., said the enemy attacks the outpost an average of seven times a week. Quiet days or evenings often erupt with automatic weapons fire and the explosive crash of mortar rounds.

"We find ways to fight the boredom," he said. "The enemy helps us with that."

Schenker, who commands 1st Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Battalion, Task Force No Slack, said the fights are common enough that nearby residents sometimes don't even bother to take cover.

An Afghan National Army platoon made up of soldiers from the 6th Kandak share the responsibility of guarding the base, which sits near the opening of the Narang Valley. This territory connects the area with the infamous Korengal Valley and its crop of insurgent fighters.

International Security Assistance Forces and the ANA placed the base here to help stem the flow of this enemy activity southward into the more populated Kunar Valley.

"It's pretty much the tip of the spear," Schenker said.

## Living a combat lifestyle

Forget the Internet. Forget running water. The Soldiers at COP Badel are happy to finally have electricity here.

There are no phone lines at the outpost, no televisions and no dining facilities. The closest thing to a recreation area contains a few pieces of weight equipment and a lifting bench protected by sandbags. Flies are a constant annoyance.

Most of the troops here live in crowded bunkers constructed from sandbags or dirt-filled Hesco barriers. At the end of July, Army engineers ran electricity to the bunkers and added lights and air conditioning inside – creating a huge morale boost for the Soldiers.

Spc. Andrew L. Barnett of Lake Mary, Fla., described daily life prior to the arrival of air conditioners as "hardcore camping meets a two-way shooting range."

Meals here are either pre-packaged rations or food cooked by the Soldiers themselves over hand-made fires. Occasionally, the meals are rounded out by fresh fruit brought from nearby COP Fortress.

Despite the lack of comforts, many of the Soldiers said they would rather be stationed at COP Badel than a more populated base elsewhere. Here, they can concentrate on their jobs without the distractions that can come with a large military post.

"Time goes by a lot quicker," Army Pfc. Stephen B. Millington of Lake George, N.Y., said. "We're always busy."

Millington, a 22-year-old ammo bearer, said 1st Platoon has a wide variety of experience, with its members coming from places such as Mississippi, California and Mexico. He said they spend much of their time joking about each other's background.

"It's a place where you better like your battle buddy ... you live literally almost on top of each other," he said. "As much as we tend to disagree, when it's time to work, we work well together."

Barnett, a former military firefighter who now works as a gunner,

**"It's a place where you better like your battle buddy ... you live literally almost on top of each other."**

-Army Pfc. Stephen B. Millington, 1st Plt., Co. B, 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. Bn., TF No Slack

described their unit as "easygoing, but aggressive" that have learned to deal with the combination of long stretches of boredom and intense firefights.

"All in all, we've got a pretty good group," he said. "Everyone knows their jobs ... you definitely get to know the guys to your left and right."

Their platoon is not the only one that serves at COP Badel. In order for 1st platoon to experience an occasional shower and online contact with their friends and families, the other platoons from Company B temporarily switch out with them and run the base for a few days.

"It's really not that bad," Barnett said. "It could always be worse."

## Vigilance pays dividends

The Soldiers at COP Badel stand a constant guard against the enemy. In addition to concrete watchtowers, they use heavily armored vehicles and remote cameras to monitor activity around the base.

The post also serves as a staging area for large-scale operations against insurgents in the Narang Valley. And when the unit isn't dealing with firefights, it often goes into the community and works with the local government to strengthen its ties with residents.

"They have a very challenging problem set," Army Capt. Ryan A. McLaughlin of Tuscaloosa, Ala., the commander of Company B, said of his Soldiers.

Upgrades to the base defenses are a constant effort. Since the enemy can shoot at Soldiers from any number of hidden positions

on the nearby mountainside, the unit has added numerous sandbag barriers in a variety of locations.

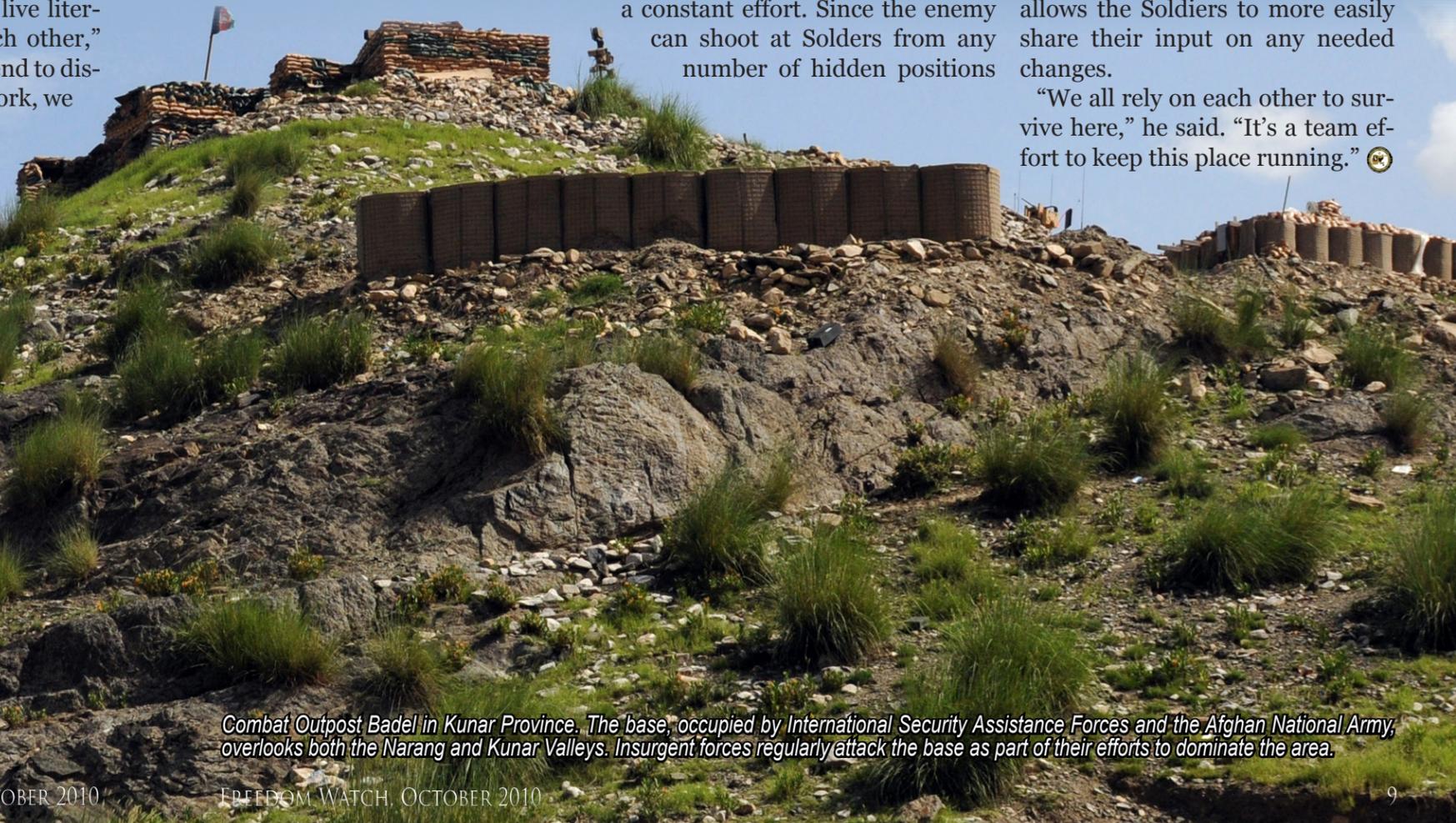
"We try to make it so we have places to go, no matter where they're firing from," Army Cpl. Luke W. Starkey of Neals Corner, Ohio, said.

The U.S. Soldiers are required to wear all their protective gear anytime they make the steep hike up or down the hill. Of course, since those Soldiers have less cover on the rock-strewn hillside, they have fewer choices when the shooting starts, Starkey said.

"You can run up or run down," he said with a smile.

Starkey, who serves as a team leader, said the fact their platoon is responsible for its own security allows the Soldiers to more easily share their input on any needed changes.

"We all rely on each other to survive here," he said. "It's a team effort to keep this place running." 🇺🇸



Combat Outpost Badel in Kunar Province. The base, occupied by International Security Assistance Forces and the Afghan National Army, overlooks both the Narang and Kunar Valleys. Insurgent forces regularly attack the base as part of their efforts to dominate the area.

# Adopting a Cause

Story and photos by Army Staff Sgt. Whitney Hughes  
TF Wolverine PAO, 86th Inf. BCT



Spc. Robin Veazey barely had the door of the silver truck open before it was surrounded by a mob of smiling faces. Her boot hit the ground, then she looked down to see her hand clutched in the grasp of a raven-haired girl whose smile beamed up at her. Veazey had been “adopted,” and for the rest of the day their bond was unbroken.

Veazey, a medic stationed out of Colchester, Vt., is attached to the Bamyán Embedded Training Team. She was one of the ETT and New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team members who visited the Samar Orphanage Aug. 26.

The orphanage, which is home to about 65 children ranging in age from 3 months to 15 years old, has been adopted as an unofficial project by the U.S. and Kiwi Soldiers since they arrived in Bamyán Province about six months ago.

“I’m not going to lie, that was the best day I’ve had in

Afghanistan so far,” said Veazey, who is also a mother of two.

While it was Veazey’s first trip to the orphanage, the ETT and PRT Soldiers have visited about once every other week for the past six months. They picked up the project from their predecessors who had been involved with the project for about a year.

Although most of their involvement has been unofficial, during this recent rotation they were able to use \$7,000 of their small project fund to help improve the quality of life for the Afghan children by building them a kitchen and new toilets, according to New Zealand Army Maj. George Tweedy, the development officer for the PRT.

That’s not all the PRT Soldiers have done. In the last six months, they have donated their free time to build a shelter for the orphanage generator, build a wall for

*See CAUSE: page 12*



(left) Spc. Robin Veazey, a medic stationed out of Colchester, Vt., and attached to the Bamyán Embedded Training Team, talks with the child who “adopted” her for the day at the Samar Orphanage during a visit Aug. 26. Veazey and members of the Bamyán Embedded Training Team and New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team visited the orphanage to hand out toys and clothes as part of a three-year ongoing effort to support the orphanage. (above) Veazey tries to score a goal on a child at the Samar Orphanage during her visit.



Army Lt. Col. Fred Cost, the officer in charge of the Commander's Emergency Response Program, looks through his English to Dari translation book as "his buddy" Quorbin looks over his shoulder Aug. 26. Cost, from North East, Md., and members of the Bamyan Embedded Training Team and New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team visited the orphanage to hand out toys and clothes as part of a three-year ongoing effort to support the orphanage.

the playground, rewire the entire compound, fix windows and add carpets.

"It's good to see the kids as well, but at the end of the day, handing them out a few books, pens and pencils isn't really going to improve their life," said Tweedy. "Getting them a new kitchen, getting them new shelves, getting them new toilets and doing wiring for them, repairing a generator for them and doing some of the infrastructure stuff – that's going to have a real impact on their lives."

In addition to their official efforts, donated time and skills, the Soldiers' families and humanitarian groups provide support through their donations. When the Soldiers showed up for their Aug. 26 visit, they had three pick-up truck beds loaded mostly with clothes

and shoes for the children.

"Originally my bed was built up to put footlockers underneath it," said Army Lt. Col. Fred Cost, the officer in charge of the Commander's Emergency Response Program.

Now, that space is used for donations to the orphans. "The whole underside of my bed was filled up," said Cost.

But it is not all work and no play for the kids or the Soldiers. During weekly visits, like the one Aug. 26, the Soldiers hand out stuffed animals, yo-yos, and other toys. Most importantly though, they spend time playing and interacting with the children, especially with their adopted pals.

Like Veazey, the first time Cost went to the orphan-



New Zealand Army Maj. George Tweedy, the development officer for the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team, blows a toy helicopter's rotors to show a boy at the Samar Orphanage how it works Aug. 26. Tweedy, of Kohinui, New Zealand, and members of the PRT and U.S. Bamyan Embedded Training Team visited the orphanage to hand out toys and clothes as part of a three-year ongoing effort to support the orphanage.

age he was adopted by a young boy named Quorbin who latched on to him four months ago when he first came to the orphanage. Without skipping a beat, Quorbin found Cost again and was at his side all day. The two spent the day tossing a football and breaking down the language barrier, with Cost flipping through his Dari to English handbook, and Quorbin looking over his shoulder.

"At first I thought it was going to break my heart, because I have two little ones back home. But they are all so positive, they all want to shake hands and say 'hi,'" said Cost.

At first, many of the Soldiers shared Cost's apprehensions, envisioning a mob of despondent malnourished faces. But the moment a person arrives at the Samar Orphanage, those grim images are shattered by a crowd of ear-to-ear smiles; and it is apparent that with some hard work and a lot of affection, a few Soldiers have made a large impact. 🌍

"At first I thought it was going to break my heart, because I have two little ones back home. But they are all so positive, they all want to shake hands and say 'hi.'"

- Army Lt. Col. Fred Cost, the officer in charge of the Commander's Emergency Response Program,



Army Staff Sgt. Ashley McKeon, a member of the security force for the Kentucky Agribusiness Development Team, shows a girl at the Samar Orphanage how to color in the new coloring book she just received Aug. 26. McKeon, and members of the Bamyan Embedded Training Team and New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team visited the orphanage to hand out toys and clothes as part of a three-year ongoing effort to support the orphanage.

# Treating Their Own

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Spencer Case, 304th PAD

Doctors at Afghan National Army hospitals don't normally do pediatrics cases, but in extreme cases they will provide services to injured children and other civilians who have nowhere else to go.

Such emergencies put stress on doctors and patients alike. The doctors, who haven't specialized in pedi-

atric care, are understandably nervous about treating children, said Air Force Maj. James G. Olanda, a certified registered nurse and anesthetist who mentors Afghan doctors at the ANA-run Paktya Regional Medical Hospital at Forward Operating Base Thunder.

Patients, on the other hand, are often threatened

with reprisals from the Taliban for colluding with the government, said Olanda, a member of the FOB Lightning Medical Embedded Training Team.

Those apprehensions aside, the incidents provide opportunities for the ANA to show goodwill. In two recent emergencies doctors at the Paktya Regional Medical Hospital accepted the opportunity and provided treatment to injured children.

The first occurred on Aug. 30 in Paktika Province when a child not yet three years old wandered outside while his father was breaking stone. He suffered a severe laceration of the foot, probably caused by a fragment of rock. Within hours of the injury, the child's father took him to the closest coalition forces base, FOB Tillman, to receive treatment. The two were then transported by priority medical evacuation on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to Paktya Regional Medical Hospital and arrived at about 10 p.m.

The Afghan doctors X-rayed and sutured the child's foot using an "undermining" technique of loosening the skin from the underlying tissue so it can be stretched over the wound.

"They (the Afghans) did a very good job—especially with the closure," said Olanda, a resident of Cincinnati, who was present in the emergency room when the child was being treated.

The second emergency began at approximately 10 a.m. Sept. 18, the day of the parliamentary elections, when insurgents in Kharwar district, Ghazni Province began a firefight with coalition forces personnel. During the crossfire, a mortar landed on a house. An 8-year old suffered a penetrating shrapnel wound to the head and his 12-year-old cousin sustained less serious shrapnel wounds to the lower extremities.

The father of the younger and more seriously injured boy survived unscathed. After providing what care he could, he brought the two boys to Combat Outpost Kharwar for help. That afternoon, Army Brig. Gen. Stephen Townsend, deputy commander of Combined Joint Task Force-101, visited COP Kharwar to attend election security briefings. While he was at a nearby polling center to observe the elections first-hand, he learned of the incident through an interpreter.

A medical evacuation request was being placed to take the two injured children to a higher care center.

Townsend decided to transport the patients on his Black Hawk along with his staff to save time.

"It just so happened that we were going anyway, so we decided to take them along with us," Townsend said. "We've done this kind of thing before."

At about 4:40 p.m., Townsend's helicopter touched down on the helipad near Paktya Regional Medical Hospital. The father of the younger boy was pleasantly surprised by the level of concern the U.S. and Afghan military personnel showed them.

"I am very glad and appreciate that the Americans have taken care of my son," said the injured boy's father, whose name must be withheld for security reasons. "I did not expect we would go to the medical facility by helicopter."

Air Force physician Maj. (Dr.) Robert Sarlay Jr., a colleague of Olanda's in the FOB Lightning METT and a native of Dayton, Ohio, mentored the Afghan physicians who provided care to the younger child in the emergency room.

Although doctors were able to stabilize the child's condition to a "stable but guarded" level, the child needed to be examined by a neurologist. For this, a patient

transfer was needed. Traditionally, hospital-to-hospital communication has been one of the biggest hiccups of the developing Afghan system, said Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) David V. Gill, the FOB Lightning METT commander. Fortunately this time, the system showed signs of progress.

"We had good communications with our counterparts at the Military National Hospital in Kabul and the hospital commander (at Paktya Regional Medical Hospital) communicated well with his counterpart at the Military National Hospital," said Gill, a Fairhope, Ala., resident.

Olanda, speaking of the Afghan doctors, said, "They were (initially) very hesitant to take the patient because pediatrics is a whole different field than adult medical care."

The activities of the doctors and coalition partners and the extra work they provided is likely to have a long term effect.

"For them to reach out to help—the family benefits but, indirectly, the government is shown to be helping," said Sarlay. 🇺🇸

***"I am very glad and appreciate that the Americans have taken care of my son. I did not expect we would go to the medical facility by helicopter."***

***Father of injured son, name withheld for security***



Afghan medical professionals at the Afghan National Army-run Paktya Regional Medical Hospital at Forward Operating Base Thunder, suture a foot laceration on an Afghan child Aug. 30. The child, who suffered a severe laceration of the foot, was the hospital's first pediatric patient in months and a special challenge for the Afghan medical professionals who were inexperienced in pediatric care.



# An End to Drugs in Afghanistan

Story and photo by Lance Cpl. Andrew Johnston,  
Regimental Combat Team-7, 1st Marine Division PAO

**“We need to grow legal crops and grow our own wheat and produce so we can invest here. This is the only way for us to get rid of the fact that we have to rely on other countries. This is the only way to make our country safe and secure.”**

-Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Haji Muhammad Neazie, 2nd Kandak, 9th Brigade commander

*A member of the Afghan Uniformed Police burns a pile of seized material used in the production of heroin during an anti-drug summit at Forward Operating Base Sher Wali in Marjah, Helmand Province Sept. 5.*

Afghans declared an end to drug production in northern Marjah during an anti-drug summit at Forward Operating Base Sher Wali, Helmand Province Sept. 5.

Afghan officials said the event will go down in Afghan history as one of the largest groups of people to gather to tackle issues brought on by the illicit drug trade.

Hours before the event, Afghan men, women and children throughout northern Marjah gathered outside the base's front gate for the historic turning point that ultimately unified a plan for all farmers to give up the growth of illicit plants like opium in the area.

According to the U.S. Department of State, an estimated 85 percent of Afghans are dependent on agriculture and related agribusinesses for their livelihoods.

Unfortunately, for farmers in Afghanistan, their agricultural growth selection is heavily influenced by the Taliban, who practically force them to grow illicit crops.

The same study by the State Department found that Afghanistan produced a record opium poppy crop in 2007 supplying 93 percent of the world's opium. The numbers slowly declined each year after 2007. They also concluded that the Taliban controls 96 percent of the territory where poppy is grown, making it a difficult choice for farmers who want to embrace new government policies and keep their families safe at the same time.

The overall consensus of the 1,000 Afghans in attendance was “enough is enough.”

One by one highly respected village elders and Afghan officials took turns denouncing the growth of illegal plants and anything to do with them.

Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Haji Muhammad Neazie, commanding officer for 2nd Kandak, 9th Brigade, wanted the people of Marjah to know that the “government is on their side,” stressing that almost all of their problems revolve around the growth of illicit plants. Neazi also explained that because almost

all farmland is used to grow poppy and no one sees those profits, the economic infrastructure is eating itself from the inside out.

“We need to grow legal crops and grow our own wheat and produce so we can invest here,” said Neazie, pointing out that the majority of their consumables are imported. “This is the only way for us to get rid of the fact that we have to rely on other countries. This is the only way to make our country safe and secure.”

Neazie also talked about how taking advantage of every opportunity they have available to them now will help them sustain a suitable standard of living and set them up for success in the future.

Haji Sadoo Khan, a respected village elder, agreed with Neazie and warned that those who stray from the newly implemented laws will find themselves behind bars.

“We have a lot of friends, brothers and cousins spending time in prison and I am sure they are tired of it,” said Khan. “Unfortunately for them, they were involved in illegal drugs. This too, will soon be your fate if you continue to grow these crops.”

Marine Lt. Col. James Fullwood, commanding officer of 2nd Kandak, 9th Bde., took time to address the crowd and explained to them that his Marines are here to help, not harm, but at the same time stand up to those who want to prevent peace and prosperity.

A ritualistic burning of seized drugs and paraphernalia concluded the event, symbolizing a new chapter for the people of Marjah.

As torches were lit the crowd erupted, chanting “no more illegal drugs, no more illegal plants!”

“All of the problems we have in this province, all of the bad situations and security problems, all of the bad people and enemies are a result of illegal drugs,” said Afghan Uniformed Police Lt. Dawood, commanding officer for AUP in northern Marjah. “Now is the time to stand together and stop being weak. Band together and stop growing the drugs and stop those who you see growing it!”

# Afghan Elections Successful

Story by Army Sgt. Spencer Case, 304th PAD

U.S. and Afghan military leaders in Regional Command East said the Sept. 18 Afghan parliamentary elections were conducted more peacefully than the Western media had anticipated.

The leaders credited better coordination among coalition forces and Afghan National Security Forces not only for the ineffectiveness of insurgent attacks, but also for the high voter turnout, which they saw as a sign the Afghan people are placing more confidence in the government.

“U.S. newspapers said today would be the most violent day in Afghan history, ever. I think they’re already wrong,” said Army Maj. Gen. John F. Campbell, the commander of Combined Joint Task Force-101, the unit that is the current battle space owner of RC-East, shortly after 10 a.m. Sept. 18.

Campbell was the highest-ranking U.S. officer to visit the Operation Coordination Center-Regional at Forward Operating Base Thunder in Paktya Province.

Much like a disaster management center in the U.S., the OCCR unified all government and coalition forces agencies into a single team to respond to reports of violence, fraud and other problems.

The command center was a flurry of activity as calls with the latest developments came in from government agencies and civilians throughout five provinces in southeastern Afghanistan: Paktya, Paktika, Khowst, Logar and Ghazni.

As predicted, the morning brought a spike in insurgent activity after a relative lull. However, the attacks were limited to small arms fire, rocket attacks and improvised explosive devices; no reports of suicide bombs came in. Moreover, ANSF, working with some coalition support, quickly suppressed most of the attacks.

Most of the attacks fizzled out by late morning; however, a few continued. A group of about 150 insurgents continued to put up heavy resistance in Ajiristan dis-

trict, Ghazni Province, well into the afternoon, though the polls remained open. Insurgents also lobbed a grenade over a wall near the Muhammad Daud School polling center in Matun district, Khowst Province, injuring three civilians.

Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq, commander of the 203rd Thunder Corps, which conducts military operations in those provinces, credited the success to the post-Ramadan “cleaning” operations

***“There has been a significant decrease in violent acts compared to last election [the Aug. 20, 2009, presidential election] and it’s all due to the cooperation of all the entities in the ANSF and civilian entities,”***

- Army Lt. Col. Michael Kelley, senior OCCR advisor, FOB Thunder

Thunder, said, “There has been a significant decrease in violent acts compared to last election [the Aug. 20, 2009, presidential election] and it’s all due to the cooperation of all the entities in the ANSF and civilian entities, the ‘whole government approach’ to problems in Afghanistan.”

Insurgents also tried to undermine the election by producing at least 5,000 fraudulent ballots, said Kelley, a Newnan, Ga., resident. Many of these ballots have been recovered by ANSF; those ballots that remain are “obvious frauds,” and therefore are little threat to the process.

Kelley added that the dusty weather, which made it hazardous for aircraft to fly, was among the most serious impediments to the election. Weather-related logistical problems delayed the delivery of ballots to several districts in the region, but by afternoon, all of the nearly 700 polling areas were operational.

He added that the ANSF and coalition partners will continue to conduct operations until all of the ballots can be transported to Kabul, where they will be safe from insurgent tampering. ☺

tions conducted Sept. 12 - 15, which were aimed at removing insurgents and inspiring public confidence. Khaliq said he believed the operations depleted their stockpiles of ammunition and made it difficult for insurgents to organize their operations.

Army Lt. Col. Michael Kelley, the senior advisor at the OCCR at FOB



# The Raven

## Providing a Bird's Eye View of the Battlefield

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Brent C. Powell, 3rd Bde., 101st Airborne Div. PAO

Today’s battlefield is constantly changing, and keeping track of all the moving parts and pieces can be challenging to any commander.

Fortunately, modern technology allows commanders to keep a sharp eye on their battle space, monitor enemy movement and conduct effective planning to combat insurgent forces.

One of the technological tools in the commander’s arsenal is the RQ-11B Raven.

It is a small, hand-launched, remote-controlled, remotely piloted aircraft that can provide live, up-to-the-minute battlefield intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance using photos and video.

Its capabilities allow the commander to quickly put eyes on the enemy forces and track their movements.

Recently, Soldiers from Task Force Leader’s 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment took the opportunity to fly the Raven and check its functionality during training operations at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Khowst Province.

“The Raven is a great asset for ground commanders,” said Army Sgt. Justin Miller, infantry team leader, Raven operator and native of West Palm Beach, Fla., assigned to Company A, 1st Bn., 187th Inf. Regt. “It is an aerial reconnaissance tool that commanders at the company level can use when other surveillance assets are not available to them.”

The Raven was developed for the U.S. military and first introduced in 1999. Since its introduction, it has undergone several changes, but its overall function and abilities remain the same.

It is launched by hand, thrown into the air like a model airplane. It’s powered by a small electric motor and propeller and is capable of flying up to 6.2 miles from its launch site. It can reach altitudes up to 1,000 feet and speeds of 28 to 60 mph.

Weighing just more than four pounds, it carries a payload of small, color-video cameras as well as an infrared night-vision camera that can capture still photos and video during daylight hours or complete darkness.

The Raven is also versatile. It can be remotely controlled from an operator’s ground station or flown completely autonomously by pre-programming GPS waypoints into its navigation system.

Although there are numerous remote piloted aircrafts in use by today’s military, Miller says the small RPA has several advantages over its larger counterparts.

One advantage is its ability to get into the air quickly.

“We can usually have the Raven in the air within 15 minutes,” said Miller. “It’s really light and very portable. It can even be put into an assault pack and taken on patrols if necessary,” Miller said.

The unit has used the Raven on

several occasions since arriving in Afghanistan, and have in fact been successful in locating enemy forces.

“I have flown the Raven on six missions so far,” said Spc. Marcos Nino, Raven operator and communications specialist from Dallas, assigned to Co. A, 1st Bn., 187th Inf. Regt. “When we were at Forward Operating Base Boris, we came under a mortar attack, so we launched the Raven to try and find the enemy. When I got the Raven in the air, I was able to spot several insurgents running from the area and trying to hide.”

A single Raven costs about \$35,000, with the total system costing nearly \$250,000.

Although that may seem expensive to some, Miller says it’s worth every penny.

“These are definitely worth the cost,” he said. “To have an asset like this available to the ground commander is invaluable. It gives him up-to-the-minute information on enemy movement without having to commit troops to reconnaissance patrols, needlessly putting them in harm’s way.”

Once the Raven has completed its mission, it lands itself by auto-piloting to a predefined landing point and then gliding to the ground.

“I really enjoy using these on missions,” said Nino. “They are fun to fly, and they are so quiet the enemy can’t see them or hear them. However, we can see the enemy, and that gives us a big advantage.” ☺

# PRT Engineers Turn Lights On

Story by Air Force 1st Lt. Amy Abbott  
Kunar PRT PAO

Four years ago children sat sprawled on the ground under a tree in the village of Lahor Dag, intently listening to their headmaster in a makeshift school. Shortly after, The United Nations Children Fund brought them a tent for a classroom.

Today, the finishing touches are being made on a two story brick and mortar school that will offer classrooms, furniture, offices and something many of the students do not have at home – electricity.

Lahor Dag is one of 13 schools currently under contract by the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team, each one using solar panels to provide the students with electricity.

“The schools are important to help expose the kids to different kinds of things,” said Brandon Toliver, an engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, assigned to the Kunar PRT. “For some of these children, the concept of having power where you can just flip the switch is such a fairy tale to them it will take something like this, where they can actually see it and say, ‘Wow, so this is what we learned about in science class.’”

Implementing solar-panel generated electricity is a cost-efficient option in this area. The panels are less expensive to purchase here than in the U.S. and the energy is renewable. Another feasible alternative is to use a generator to provide power for the schools, fuel costs and maintenance issues become a problem.

“Electricity is very important in every place [and] without electricity there is no work possible because it is an essential part of life,” said Taj Safi, the head engineer for one of the groups of schools being built, which are categorized as bundles. “In factories, the machines could not run without (having electricity), but if we use generators it costs too much and many people could not afford it.”

“Solar panels ended up being an easier solution for everybody,” added Toliver, who is from Pittsburgh, and graduated from the Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering.

Though easier in some ways, installing electricity in a province where many villagers still live by candlelight presents its own unique set of challenges. There

are very few electricians here and the contractors who do not already have electrical engineers on staff are required to bring one in.

“The way the contract works is (the construction company) has to use a majority of local labor,” explained Toliver. “So if I own a company and I hire a whole bunch of local laborers who do not have electricity in their homes and have not done any type of real safe wiring before, that’s the biggest challenge. But the reward is to have them be involved; just getting them that knowledge is helping them.”

The electrical laborers get training from both the PRT engineers as well as the site supervisors. The most common issue is the laborers are not used to running

their wires through the wall and instead, connect everything directly to the power source. They do not use panel boxes or breakers.

“They’re not really thinking about the overall scheme of things,” said Toliver. “It’s very dangerous.”

Wiring of this kind can often cause fires or get people electrocuted. Another struggle, Toliver explained, is getting the workers to understand that specific wires can only handle a maximum amount of voltage.

The engineers conduct quality assurance and control checks on the schools a minimum of every three weeks to ensure the projects are built to an acceptable standard so the Afghan people will have a safe and efficient structure. They also supplement their quality checks by reviewing photographs submitted by the contractor.

Further challenges are teaching equipment maintenance and the importance of regular upkeep. This was a valuable lesson learned the hard way at the Badad Kalay School where the system ultimately failed because the school maintenance did not know how to sustain the solar panels.

“In addition to proper installation, it is just as vital to properly educate future occupants of the schools about the necessary maintenance of solar panels,” Toliver said. “Fortunately, the knowledge from the Badad Kalay project is being applied to the school bundles to ensure these types of issues are less likely to occur.”

Though the engineers are doing their part to help,

**“Electricity is very important in every place [and] without electricity there is no work possible because it is an essential part of life.”**

-Taj Safi, the project engineer

“For some of these children, the concept of having power where you can just flip the switch is such a fairy tale to them it will take something like this, where they can actually see it and say, ‘Wow, so this is what we learned about in science class.’”

-Brandon Toliver, an engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers

they emphasize to the villages that the long-term effects of these projects, like the future of Afghanistan, lies in the hands of the Afghan people. The hope is that in the end, the solar panel installation and maintenance techniques the laborers learn will illuminate not just the children’s classrooms, but eventually shed light on a whole village.

“After fitting [solar systems] in these schools, the electrical workers will be able to fit these systems in the local sector and utilize the sunlight for electricity and earn more money this way,” said Safi.

In the Lahor Dag School, classes have already started in the building with eager students sitting on the floor, even though the roof has not been finished.

“The children are excited, and as the construction gets closer to being finished it becomes more difficult to keep them away,” said Toliver. “They’re very hungry for knowledge.”

Soon the project will be complete, and 12 more schools will soon follow. Yet as the engineers continue to rotate in and out, this group will always know they have left a light on for the children of Kunar. ☺

Members of the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team inspect the Lahor Dag School Aug. 12. The school is the next one scheduled to open in the province and will be equipped with solar panels for electricity.



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Nathan Lipscomb, Kunar PRT PAO



# REMEMBERING 9 / 1 1

*Members of the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team hung more than 60 American flags from tactical vehicles here Sept. 11 in remembrance of 9/11. The date was declared Patriot's Day Sept. 4, 2002, and is now honored every year.*

Photo by Senior Airman Julianne M. Showalter,  
Khowst PRT PAO

# Goodwill Across Afghanistan:

# ISAF and ANSF Reach Out



Photo by Army Pfc. Roy Mercon, TF Wolverine/PAO

Army Capt. Terrance McIntosh, a civil affairs officer from Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 172nd Cavalry Regiment, distributes much needed supplies to the village of Bashikal in Parwan Province during a humanitarian aid mission Aug. 25. The village was recently affected by damaging floods and with the locals observing the holy month of Ramadan, the aid, which included bags of rice and cooking oil, provided a huge boost in morale for the villagers.

Army Master Sgt. Chad Rhinehart of Washington, N.J., the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team's civil affairs noncommissioned officer in charge, hands out notebooks to students who attend the Kur Petab boys middle school in Khenj District Aug. 23. The notebooks were donated by numerous friends and family members of the Panjshir PRT.

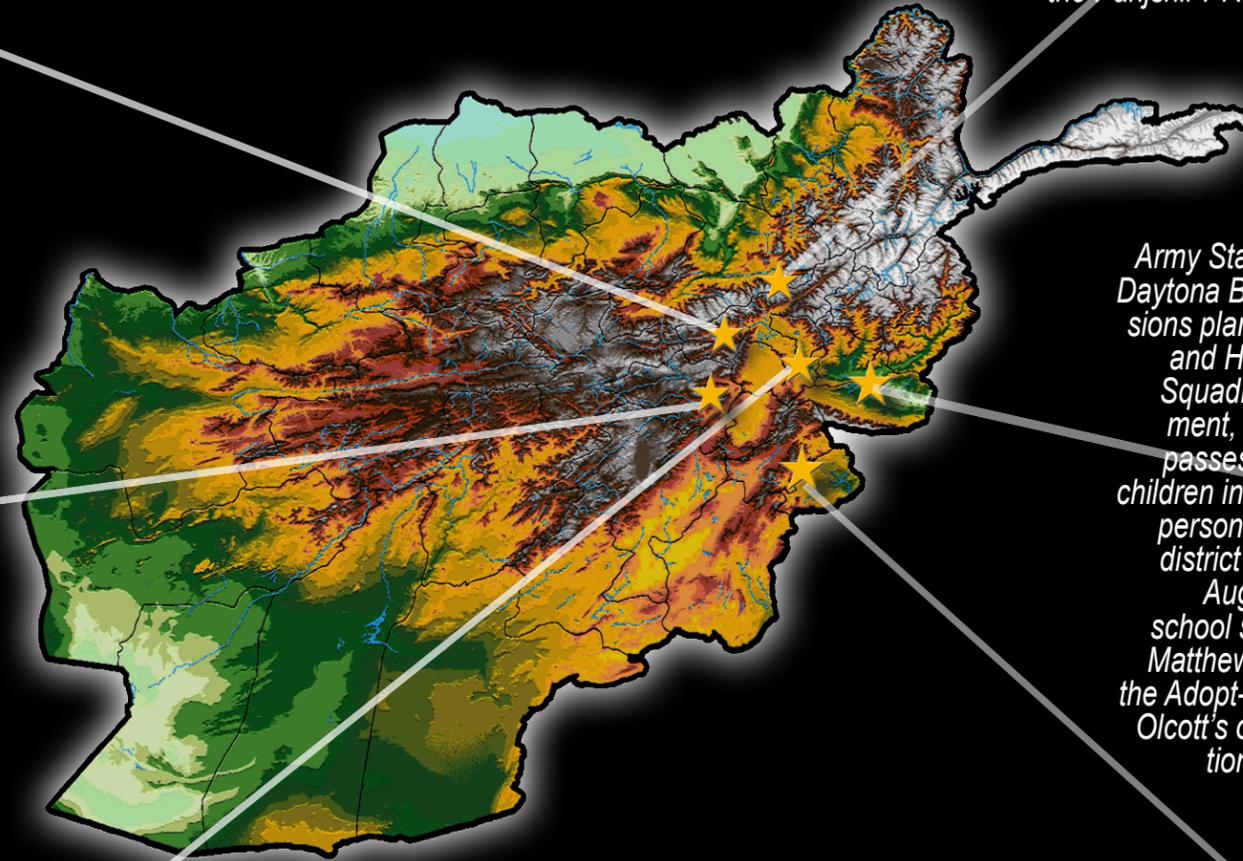


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Sean M. White, Panjshir PRT



Photo by Spc. Theodore Schmidt, Joint Combat Camera Afghanistan

Military Police Soldiers attached to Legion Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, hand out toys to Afghan children at the Nerkh District Center, Combat Outpost Nerkh, Wardak Province Aug. 2.



Army Staff Sgt. Nicole Olcott, of Daytona Beach, Fla., a flight missions planner with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Lighthorse, passes out school supplies to children in an internally displaced persons camp in the Beshood district of Nangarhar Province Aug. 14. The two boxes of school supplies came from the Matthew Freeman Foundation, the Adopt-A-Soldier program and Olcott's own nonprofit organization, Operation New Start.



Photo by Spc. Albert L. Kelley, 300th MPAD



Photo by Army Capt. Anthony Deiss, 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Army Staff Sgt. Joshua Smith, squad leader for Police Mentor Team 7, Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery, Vermont Army National Guard, grabs a bundle of clothing for a child from the Shohadayi Salehin village, Sept. 6, in Kabul, Afghanistan, during a humanitarian aid drop for needy school kids in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods. The VARNG unit partnered with Afghan National Police to help hand out school supplies and demonstrate a goodwill initiative for the people they are helping to protect.

Army Cpl. Jerome Halaszynski, a McKeesport, Pa., resident and a member of the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team security element, hands a chest to one of the teachers at the Khowst City Children of Hope Orphanage Aug. 22. Some of the older children and teachers helped unload the chests that will be given to children living at the facility to store personal items at the end of their beds.



Photo by Senior Airman Julianne M. Showalter, Khowst PRT/PAO

# Making the Connection

Story and photo by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte  
300th MPAD

International Security Assistance Forces in Kunar Province are helping streamline the way Afghans connect with their government.

Community development councils provide village representatives a way to vote on needed infrastructure projects and then request the improvements from their District Development Authorities.

In the Norgul, Chowkay and Narang districts, ISAF is working with the government to establish a smaller number of CDCs to cover larger areas said Army Capt. Ryan A McLaughlin of Tuscaloosa, Ala.

"It was a question of efficiency, really," he said.

McLaughlin, who commands Company B, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, said establishing a CDC for each village can sometimes create an unwieldy number of organizations for district subgovernors to deal with.

Army 1st Lt. Rob L. Schenker of Long Island, N.Y., whose 1st Platoon is responsible for the Narang district, grouped 48 major villages into four CDCs and is meeting with each to get them started.

During an Aug. 24 meeting at the Narang District

Center, Schenker talked with village elders and District Sub-Governor Goger Wall about the need to start assembling a list of projects based on what residents in their community want.

"You are the voice of the people," he said to the elders. "You gentlemen are the most important part of the government of Narang."

A second meeting the next day saw Schenker speaking to more than a half-dozen representatives from the village of Qalawana. He plans to meet with each group in September, then again every two weeks.

Two projects have already been previously approved for the district, the building of a retaining wall and the funding of a summer school program for area youth, Schenker said. Future projects for the area will be handled under the new councils.

McLaughlin noted the CDC and DDA system provides not only a way for village elders to participate in local government, but it also allows the public to know what's being done on their behalf.

"It's not a closed-door process between one elder and the government," he said. 



Army 1st Lt. Rob L. Schenker of Long Island, N.Y., listens to a gathering of elders at the Narang District Center in Kunar Province Aug. 24. Schenker is working with the elders to form four community development councils within the district to ensure villages get a say in the types of improvement projects built on their behalf.

# Kapisa Women's Shelter

Story by Air Force Capt. Kirsten Udd  
Kapisa PRT PAO

Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team's female engagement team met with the director of the Kapisa Women's Shelter Aug. 29 to assess the needs of the shelter and the local women.

The team, lead by Air Force 1st Lt. Amanda Huffman of Fresno, Calif., inspected the living quarters and classroom.

"I really enjoyed seeing the positive effects that a PRT project had on the women in this community. Continuing to support programs like this should be our top priority," said Huffman.

Built in 2008 by the PRT, the shelter provides services to 12 resident women and four children daily and is designed to be a place of refuge for local women. Few men at all, and no western men, are allowed inside and photography is prohibited.

"These women are like my family, when they cry, I cry. They are like my children. That is why I take good care of them," said the director, Azima Kohistani.

Because divorce and separation are not accepted in the Afghan culture, an increasing number of women seek asylum at facilities like this one, leaving their

husbands or arranged marriages to save their children from abusive or opium-addicted fathers. In an effort to reunite families and ease tensions within the community, the shelter offers marriage counseling and, with the PRT's assistance, is working toward providing substance abuse and drug education classes.

Kohistani went on to explain that a major issue facing local families is opium addiction. "As an example, we had a woman come in and complain that her husband was addicted to opium, and he wanted to addict their 16-year-old son," she said. "We can't cure the family without curing the father."

The shelter is interested in creating an addiction center to combat the opium problem in the area. Funded primarily by the local government, the shelter raises additional money through the sale of beaded jewelry created in the classroom by the women and children who call it home.

The PRT supports projects like this to enable the government to care for, educate, employ and protect its people by providing mentorship and construction of basic infrastructure. 



Air Force 1st Lt. Amanda Huffman, Azima Kohistani, director of the Kapisa Women's Shelter, Air Force Capt. Kirsten Udd and Army Capt. Pamela Parker stand outside the Kapisa Women's Shelter in Mahmood Raqi, Kapisa Province. Huffman, Udd and Parker are with Provincial Reconstruction Team Kapisa's female engagement team and work to help Afghan women with health, safety, education, employment, marriage and child care issues. The PRT's mission is to stabilize the region by enabling local governments to care for, educate, employ and protect their people through the construction of basic infrastructure and mentorship.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joe Laws, Kapisa PRT PAO

# A New Perspective



***“I wanted to tell them, instead of paying 400,000 Afghanis to kill me, give that money to the villages instead.”***

***-Hamidi Gulstani, Ghazni Provincial Council member***

*Story and photo by Air Force 1st Lt. Katherine Roling  
Ghazni PRT PAO*

*Hamidi Gulistani is one of four female Ghazni Provincial Council members on a 19-member council, the only elected body of officials in Ghazni. She was selected to participate in a Department of State professional exchange program called the International Visitors Leadership Program which introduces current and emerging foreign leaders to American experiences with issues such as democracy, governance, law enforcement and provision of administrative services. Gulistani sat down with the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team Aug. 31 and told them what she learned during her three-week trip in July to the U.S.*

An elected female Provincial Council member from Qarah Bagh district, Ghazni Province, spoke to Department of State and Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team members at Forward Operating Base Ghazni Aug. 31 about her trip to the U.S.

Hamidi Gulistani visited six different U.S. cities during a three-week period in July to take part in a DoS professional exchange program called the International Visitors Leadership Program, which introduces current and emerging foreign leaders to American experiences with issues such as democracy, governance and law enforcement.

Participants must be nominated by an American Foreign Service officer. So far, four other Afghan leaders from Ghazni have been selected.

During her time in the U.S., Gulistani said she learned several things.

“In the U.S., I saw a lot of transparency in organizations and departments,” Gulistani said through an interpreter. “Business cards and websites added transparency to the organizations I met.”

Women’s rights were also different between the two countries, and she felt Afghan women had more constitutional rights than American women.

“There are fewer women in executive positions with the organizations in the U.S.A., at least with the [non-governmental organizations] I met,” she said. “I only saw one female in a high level position, and she was a judge. And there weren’t many female U.S. senators.”

In Afghanistan, Gulistani mentioned, it is obligatory for 25 percent of parliamentary members to be women.

Another thing she noticed was the scenery. In all the pictures she had seen of the U.S., she was only familiar with the cities and large populations. The time she spent traveling between different cities, including Washington, D.C., Salt Lake City, Chicago, Freeport, Ill., Albany, N.Y., and New York City changed that image for her.

“I thought the U.S. would be more industrial, but it was very green,” she said.

As a group, the foreign leaders were able to talk about their provinces, share information and even pray together.

Gulistani visited an American mosque, where she met a mullah from Kandahar. She explained how security was in Ghazni, and he was sad to hear that her

province was still experiencing insurgent activities like threats and improved explosive devices.

While meeting different people and watching them at work, Gulistani was impressed with the work ethic of most Americans, commenting on the intensity of their focus.

“When it was time to work, there was no time for joking around,” she laughed.

But the strangest thing, she mentioned, was how Americans laugh, smile and hug a lot.

“They’re very supportive. It seemed like one brotherhood, even between non-religious and religious people, or even between families and non-families.”

The nature of American hospitality was still very different than that of Afghan hospitality, she noted.

“I noticed that most Americans just say ‘hi’ and then go, but I also learned that American families want to support Afghan families.”

With humanitarian aid an active topic, she asked the PRT to help deliver items to the people.

“The humanitarian aid organizations that I met said they have stuff to give Afghans, but they can’t get it to the people. They need the PRT’s help,” she said.

The PRT asked Gulistani if she had brought back any souvenirs

from her three-week trip.

“I brought a lot of stuff from Ghazni like flags, carpets and scarves in a big suitcase,” she said. “But I brought back double the amount of souvenirs that I left with.”

Gulistani’s voice became more somber when she brought up corruption in the government and what the IVLP team taught the participants.

“I’ve learned how to fight against corruption,” she said. “They taught me how to fight it.”

Upon returning to Afghanistan, she faced several challenges. Some of the men on the provincial council, the only body of officials elected by the Afghan people in Ghazni, called her an American spy for visiting the U.S.

In addition to derision from some of her fellow male colleagues, she told the PRT that someone from the Taliban had put 400,000 Afghanis on her head to scare her into quitting her job as a female PC member.

“I wanted to tell them, instead of paying 400,000 Afghanis to kill me, give that money to the villages instead,” she said.

The PRT asked if she was scared after that threat.

She said no, shaking her head. “I am not scared.”



# STORY

## SNAPSHOTS

### Battling Insurgents in Kunar



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte, 300th MPAD

**Spc. Brandon R. Romero of Los Alamos, N.M., and Army Staff Sgt. Glenn K. Luce of Midwest City, Okla., with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, open fire on a nearby building during an Aug. 18 attack against troops visiting the village of Spinkay in Kunar Province. One U.S. Army Soldier was wounded during the insurgent attack, which included the use of mortars, small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades against International Security Assistance Forces and Afghan National Security Forces.**

### ISAF Return to Site of Enemy Attack

**Army 1st Lt. James D. Horne, a platoon leader with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, shakes hands with a resident of Lar Sholtan, Kunar Province Aug. 21. Two months previously, a female suicide bomber killed two Soldiers with the unit and seriously wounded two other Soldiers, three Afghan police officers and at least five children in the village. This marked the first visit to the community by International Security Assistance Forces since the attack.**



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte, 300th MPAD

### TF Bulldog Soldiers Aid Villagers

**Army Sgt. Adam Morris, a medic with 412th Civil Affairs Battalion, on patrol with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Bulldog, treats a wound for a child after his father asked the passing patrol for medical assistance in the Shilotay Village in Kunar Province Aug. 25.**



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Okan Scott, 300th MPAD

## Vermont Firefighter Trains ANP



Photo by Army Pfc. Roy Mercon, TF Wolverine PAO

*Spc. Travis Hale, a combat engineer for Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, instructs an Afghan National Police officer in the use of a fire hose during a practical exercise in Bamiyan City, Bamiyan Province Aug. 9. Hale, a volunteer firefighter for his hometown of Jericho, Vt., is in Bamiyan to train the ANP on how to use and maintain their equipment.*

## Czech PRT Improving Afghan Lives

*Employers of the milk collection center in Malak Abdullah Jan village, Logar Province, clean the milk tank used for pasteurization Sept. 9. Local Afghan farmers and families bring the milk from their cows to the collection center, built by the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team. The dairy stores the milk so it doesn't go sour, allowing Afghans to sell more and earn a better living.*



Photo courtesy of Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team

## The Future of Ghazni Province



Photo by Air Force 1st Lt. Katherine Rolling, Ghazni PRT PAO

*Ghazni Provincial Governor, Musa Khan, speaks to U.S. Department of State and Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team members Aug. 21 about his vision for the province and future events at the Governor's Compound in Ghazni City. DOS members and the Ghazni PRT discussed issues about large-scale projects, changes in government personnel and a future governor's conference. The governor said the conference's main subjects will be elections and the new American battalion that is coming. He also mentioned that the committee for the 2013 Center for Islamic Culture event in Ghazni City is making progress and there are 23 big projects planned to aid in city construction, including an Expo Center, a museum, two bus stations, a women's marketplace.*

## Panjshir PRT Paves the Road Ahead



Photo by Air Force 1st Lt. Holly Hess, Panjshir PRT PAO

*Afghan contractors lay fresh asphalt on section three of the main road running through the Panjshir Province. The Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team and U.S. Agency for International Development teamed up to pave the road in order to connect remote areas of Panjshir.*

## Historic Fort Provides Protection



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte, 300th MPAD

*Army Pfc. Andrew L. Hefner, a gunner with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, Task Force No Slack, test fires a .50 caliber machine gun at Observation Post Coleman. The post is a historical fort that provides over watch for Combat Outpost Monti in Kunar Province.*

## Afghan Forces Receive Improved Protection



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte, 300th MPAD

*Afghan Soldiers with the 6th Kandak survey the territory around Combat Outpost Badel in Kunar Province Aug. 23. International Security Assistance Forces with Task Force Bastogne are constantly working on ways to help improve the defenses of Afghan bases, observation posts and checkpoints.*

## Providing Three Hot Meals a Day

*Army Pvt. Clayton C. Hilderbrand, a Ceres, Va., native and a food service specialist from 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, stirs noodles while preparing dinner for Soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base Tillman, Paktika Province, Sept. 10. "We only have three of us feeding between 120 to 140 people," he said. "Lack of personnel is one of the hardest parts of the job. We are constantly multitasking to make sure everything gets done. I love working with my team. Everybody here is willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission."*



Photo by Spc. Luther L. Boothe Jr., TF Currahee PAO

## Combined Action Ops in Ghazni



Photo by Spc. Lorenzo Ware, Joint Combat Camera Afghanistan

*Soldiers from Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky., along with Afghan National Army soldiers prepare to search the Tut Village, Andar district, Ghazni Province Aug. 8. The mission was part of Operation Tabar V out of Forward Operating Base Sharana.*

## Currahees Sling Load Supplies



*Army Pvt. Philip C. Brosch, a Houston native and motor-transport operator and helicopter landing zone specialist from 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, braces himself as he prepares to hook up a supply container to a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E, Paktika Province Sept. 10. The terrain and danger involved with combat logistic patrols has made sling loading supplies the preferred method of transporting equipment throughout Afghanistan.*

Photo by Spc. Luther L. Boothe Jr., TF Currahee PAO

## Raising HIV Awareness in Paktika



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester, Paktika PRT PAO

*Army Maj. Charles Pastor, 372nd Engineer Brigade surgeon, points to a slide during a presentation on HIV to Afghan medical workers at Sharana Hospital Sept. 2. The goal of the class was to increase Afghan medical providers' capacity to properly treat patients suffering from the disease, with the hopes of lowering patient morbidity and mortality over time. The lecture was part of an ongoing series of medical discussions with Paktika medical providers to increase medical capacity in the province.*

## ISAF, ANA Conduct Joint Air Assault



Photo by Army Sgt. Charles Espie, TF Wolverine PAO

*Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 172nd Cavalry Regiment, 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, patrol a ravine in Koh-e Safi district village, Parwan Province Sept. 8. Troop C supported Afghan National Army Soldiers who led the joint air assault and search operations to disrupt insurgent activities prior to the Sept. 18 parliamentary elections.*

# Get the rest of the story

[CJTF101.COM](http://CJTF101.COM)

# Afghanistan's Minute Men

Story by Senior Airman Nathanael Callon, Zabul PRT PAO

When their village asked for protection against insurgents in Shah Joy district, Zabul Province, 26 men answered the call Sept. 16.

The men volunteered to participate in a program that trains and arms villagers, called Arbakai, or the commerce stability program. The villagers will partner with Afghan National Security Forces to safeguard the bazaar by operating security checkpoints at each entrance.

During a ceremony held at Forward Operating Base Varner, Shah Joy District Chief Abdul Qayum addressed the men, thanking them for taking the first step towards helping to stabilize the community.

"As you embark on your new roles, remember that you will serve your people and your country with honor and dignity," Qayum said.

Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul worked with district officials and Mohammed Ullah, the commander of Arbakai in Shah Joy, to start the project.

"This is the first of its kind here in Zabul Province," said Army Capt. Maxwell Pappas, Shah Joy's district support leader for the PRT. "Understanding your surroundings is vital to counterinsurgency, and these men know their district better than anyone."

Some of Ullah's men have fought as part of the Mujahedeen against the Soviet Union in the 1980s and against the Taliban in the 1990s.

Mohammed Ullah seemed confident that his men can do the job.

"They are very capable and they

are willing to lay down their life for the safety of their families," Ullah said, who himself was a member of the mujahadeen.

When the Taliban gained power in Kabul in 1996, many of the mujahadeen were forced to lay down their arms or to flee to northern provinces of Afghanistan to fight in the Northern Alliance under the command of ousted Defense Min-

**"I am from Shah Joy; I know the people of Shah Joy; I know the needs of Shah Joy and my men are all the same. This is our home."**

- Mohammed Ullah, commander of Arbakai in Shah Joy

ister Ahmad Shah Massoud. This shift in power left southern provinces like Zabul vulnerable to negative insurgent influence.

"These men are dedicated to their families and tribes. They came to me, willing to fight against the opposition again," Ullah said about some of his veteran fighters.

The members of the Shah Joy Arbakai have a unique and powerful advantage that many of the Afghan National Security Forces lack.

"I am from Shah Joy; I know the people of Shah Joy; I know the needs of Shah Joy and my men are all the same," Ullah said. "This is our home."

Arbakai was traditionally used as a community security force that answered to tribal elders alone. In Shah Joy, the Arbakai is responsible to the Interior Ministry. Though the structure is different, the concept is the same.

When a person comes to Ullah to join Arbakai, two or three elders must come and account for the man's character before he can become a member.

"My men would serve in the ANSF, but they have a higher responsibility to themselves, their families and their tribes," Ullah said. "It would take them from Shah Joy."

Arbakai enables these men to serve and defend their own villages and district. Each man goes through two months of training in order to receive a weapon and a red arm band, which denotes the men as members of Arbakai.

"The Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army come from all over Afghanistan. This is not their home, so they cannot know it inside and out," Ullah said.

Ullah hopes that more men will join the cause. After the local elders see that the bazaar is more secure, they will be more willing to stand up against the insurgency, Ullah added.

"We already have plans for another five checkpoints in Khajer Khel, a few kilometers from the bazaar area," Ullah said. "When they see that we are capable to protect the people, we will be able to expand our operations to every village." 

## Promoting Truth With Commando Radio

Story and Photo by Tech. Sgt. Gloria Wilson, Afghan Media Operations Center

If information is power, then the Afghan National Army Commandos became more powerful as their radio station at Camp Morehead in Kabul celebrated the opening of a new facility and increased coverage area with a ribbon cutting ceremony Sept. 1.

The radio station, known as Commando Radio, 95.1FM, is operated by Commandos trained in Afghan Information Dissemination Operations, or AIDO. It provides a variety of services to its listeners to include popular music, weather information, radio dramas and updates on Commando operations.

"The most important aspect of Commando Radio is that all the information it provides is truthful," said the Army Special Operations Captain responsible for training commandos in AIDO. "Afghans can count on Commando Radio to always provide the truth, thus increasing the credibility of the commandos. For example, if insurgents attack and kill civilians, our DJs can instantly put out a news spot letting the public know what actually happened versus the lies the enemy try to tell. Commando Radio's value lies in its ability to quickly publicize the truth in an effort to counter enemy propaganda."

The important messages that are put out on Commando Radio can only be heard if people are tuned in. The staff understands that people will tune in if the radio station seeks to improve and educate, which they have done successfully.

Thanks to newly installed equipment and a new facility, the station's coverage has increased from 25 percent of Kabul to all of it. The radio station also has two full-time skilled DJs catering to its listeners, so the fan base keeps growing. The new facility has a studio for its two DJs, a conference room and office space—a big difference from the one-room facility that Kabul's Commando Radio operated from before.

The new building is the first ever dedicated for a

Commando Radio station and it has solidified Camp Morehead's radio station as the most developed and professional Commando Radio in existence—making it an example for the other three Commando Radios stations, located in Kandahar, Helmand and Herat Provinces.

"We've received feedback that our radio station is one of the top five in Kabul, but we can do better than that," said the Commando Radio station manager in Kabul. "People are excited about Commandos; everyone knows who they are and that they have a radio station with great programming that also informs people about this elite force."

In addition to disseminating information, the station also gathers it. There were 100 to 150 calls that occurred before the move and they continue to increase. Although many times the calls are to request songs, other calls have provided information that has aided in the safety and security of the people.

"We have asked people, via the radio, to let us know if there are IEDs [improvised explosive devices] on roads so the proper authorities can be notified," said the station manager. "We let them know that they have the ability to prevent people from getting hurt. If we receive information about upcoming attacks we can warn people away from that area until it's safe. The Commandos are here to help, but they can't do it alone and the radio station is a way for the people to have their voice heard."

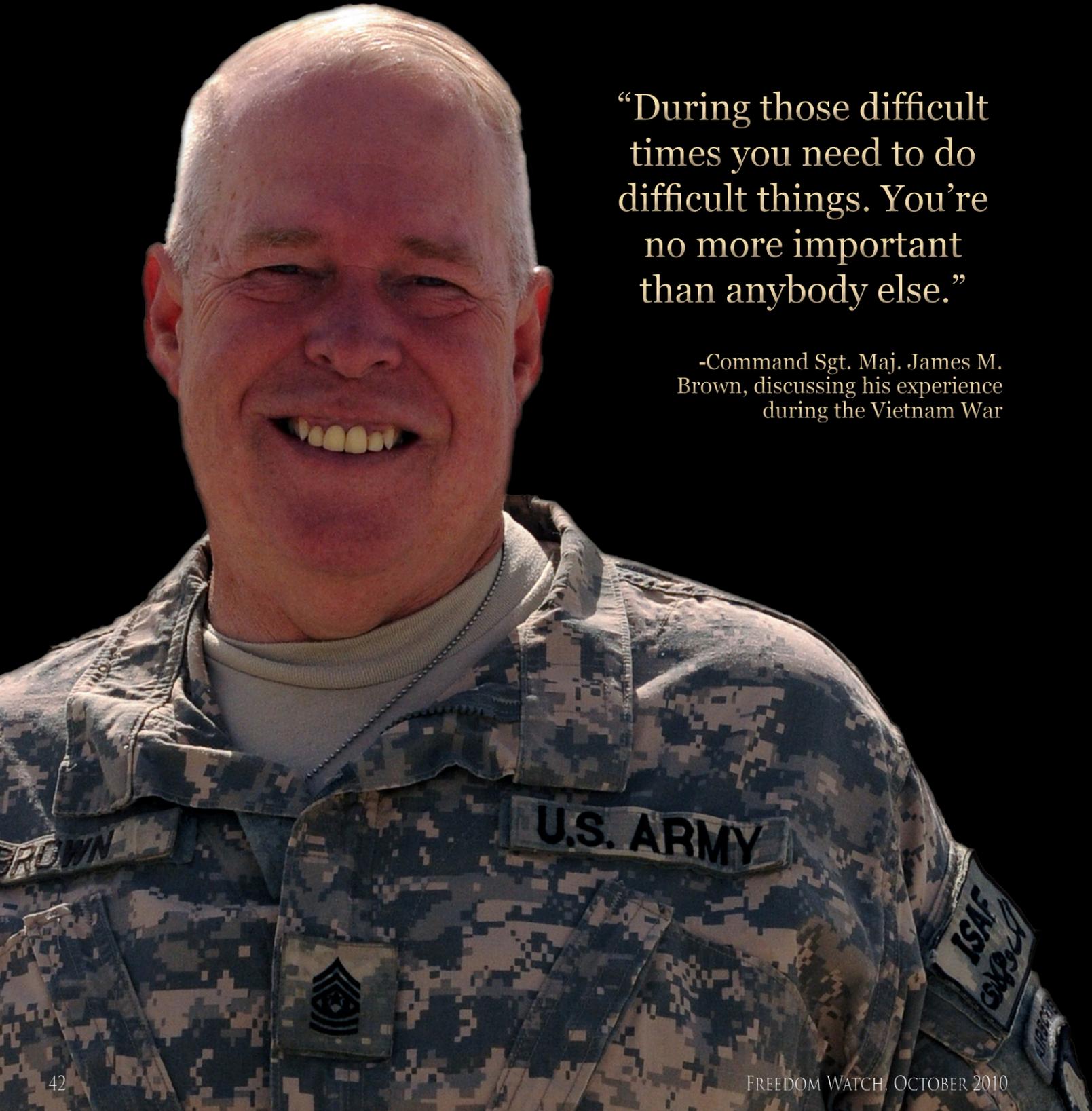
Currently listeners can call and tune in from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day, except Fridays when the hours are 8:30-11:30 a.m. Based on the feedback that the radio station is always seeking, they are looking into 24-hour, seven days-a-week broadcasting in an effort to become even more popular. Fans can also look forward to potential live interviews with local leaders and incentives for tuning in like radio contests.

"They have set the standard at Camp Morehead for the rest of the Commando Kandaks," said the Army Special Operations captain. "They are moving in the right direction and it will only get better from here." 

A U.S. Army Special Operations Soldier removes an antenna from the top of Camp Morehead's previous Commando Radio station facility Aug. 30. The radio station moved locations in order to expand workspace and coverage as it grows to meet the needs of the Afghan public.

# WARRIOR PROFILER

Story and photo by Army Sgt. Spencer Case, 304th PAD



“During those difficult times you need to do difficult things. You’re no more important than anybody else.”

-Command Sgt. Maj. James M. Brown, discussing his experience during the Vietnam War

Having served with the 101st Airborne Division in two wars in a career spanning more than four decades, Command Sgt. Maj. James M. Brown brings a unique perspective to the current conflict in Afghanistan.

Brown, who hails from Indianapolis, grew up in Los Angeles in a “patriotic, old-fashion family” of southern extraction. As part of his heritage, he retains his admiration for confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

During the Vietnam War, Brown joined the Army and completed basic training and noncommissioned officers’ training successively before gaining any field experience. Those who went through this process were called “Shake ‘n Bake” sergeants because of how quickly they got their stripes. After completing his training, Brown deployed to Vietnam from 1969 to 1971, where he served as a squad leader in the infantry under the 101st Airborne Division.

Brown spoke candidly of the courage and sacrifice that the Vietnam War required.

“During those difficult times you need to do difficult things,” he said. “You’re no more important than anybody else.”

Following his service in Vietnam, Brown remained in the inactive reserve and the National Guard, never serving far from the Indianapolis area. In the civilian world, he worked in the transportation business and eventually came to own an Indiana transportation company that includes buses and limousines for the airport and city. He continued to ascend the enlisted ranks in a number of units until, in 2002, he became the 38th Infantry Div. command sergeant major.

In 2006, Brown became the Indiana state command sergeant major working for the state adjutant general. Units in the state had done 70 deployments since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and Brown felt uncomfortable being in a position where he was sending others to war while he remained behind.

“My feeling is, ‘don’t ask others to do things you wouldn’t do yourself,’” he said.

So when the opportunity to volunteer for his current deployment to Afghanistan arose, Brown left behind his wife, Cheryl, six children and eight grandchildren. He said though it has been difficult, his wife understood of his sense of obligation.

Brown and the other Indiana Guardsmen arrived at Forward Operating Base Lightning, Paktya Prov-

ince, in mid-February, replacing the Tennessee National Guard Soldiers who preceded them. Brown and a few other Indiana National Guardsmen are completing their tour in Afghanistan as a part of a perennially deployed partnership unit, which currently goes by the moniker “Regional Corps Training Team II.”

Brown’s part of this involves mentoring the NCOs in the Afghan National Army’s 203rd Thunder Corps.

“My job is to help 30-year-olds think like 50-year-olds,” Brown said of his assignment, adding that it sometimes requires “The patience of Job.”

One anecdote he related demonstrates the cultural differences. He spoke to an Afghan supply sergeant who was staggered by the idea that he’d need to order 1,500 bars of soap several weeks in advance of the course’s beginning for several hundred soldiers. Hard for him to grasp, having come from a small village, he had never imagined dealing with bars of soap in such quantities.

Others might be discouraged by such challenges, but Brown, a self-described student of history, is able to put them in perspective.

“Washington couldn’t get shoes for the Soldiers at Valley Forge because the Continental Congress would not give him the money.” And that, Brown noted, was after inheriting military habits from the Prussians, who already had a good grasp of long-term planning. The Afghans, on the other hand, have fought for thousands of years only at the squad-level and have never had to deal with large-scale issues of supply and demand.

As for the rapid build-up of the ANA that is happening now, Brown points out that the U.S. was in a similar spot during World War I, World War II and the Korean War. The U.S. needed to field an Army quickly and had several different kinds of programs. He didn’t need to mention his own experience as a “Shake ‘n Bake” sergeant, but could have.

Nor has the symmetry of his own career been lost on him, he said.

“Going into a unit with a historical reputation was a pleasure ... coming back and serving with that same unit years later - wearing the [screaming eagle] patch on both shoulders - is an honor,” Brown said. “They were a great outfit then, and they remain a great outfit today.”

# Safety Watch

## Winter Driving

Story by Army Capt. Ron McKimmy, CJTF-101 (Safety)

With the changing of the seasons comes changing driving conditions. Winter weather in Afghanistan brings unique driving conditions that all drivers must know and understand to keep themselves and others safe. The easiest thing to do when driving conditions turn for the worse is too not drive at all. When we were at home in the states that may work, but here in theater, it is not an option.

Because we must drive on ice, in snow or winter weather conditions, there are several things we can do to help make winter driving in Afghanistan safer. It is important to remember that each vehicle is different and as such requires special consideration to its particular operating techniques. These are the basic facts that every winter driver must understand.

- Speed:** Stopping distances increase the faster you are going. Use care when accelerating on snow or ice, reduce your speed, and slow down to avoid slipping or sliding. Remember, if there is ice and snow, take it slow.

- Distance:** Increase distances between you and other vehicles on the road. Give yourself space to react if you need too. It will take extra time and extra distance to bring your vehicle to a safe stop on slick and snowy roads. Leaving extra room between you and the vehicle in front of you will give you that extra time to avoid a collision.

- Brake:** Do not wait to apply the brakes. Early braking will increase your safety zone. Remember to brake early, brake slowly, brake correctly and never slam on the brakes. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you are unsure if you have anti-lock brakes, check the operator's manual. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal. If done correctly, this should give you plenty of distance to stop.

- Control:** When driving on ice and snow, gradually turn the wheel, slow and steady steering is best. This allows the best traction for the tires. Try to avoid abrupt steering maneuvers. Sudden movements can cause your vehicle to slide. When accelerating or merging into traffic, take it slow.

- Vision:** If you can't see, you can't react. Drive defensively. Be aware of what's going on around you. Drivers need to check not only where they are going, but also what is on each side and behind the vehicle. A clean windshield, side and rear windows and mirrors will allow you to see. Seeing where the other vehicles are located and what they are doing will alert you to potential problems quicker, and give you the extra time to react safely.

Here are some additional things to remember that can help you drive safely when winter weather strikes.

- Check the road conditions** in your area (your local S2 section weather forecast) and stay tuned to local AFN news broadcasts for more information on road-way and weather conditions.

- Remove snow and ice** from your vehicle before you drive, making sure the headlights and taillights are visible. Keep your lights and windshield clean.

- Turn on your lights** to increase your visibility to other motorists when the tactical situation permits.

- Approach bridges, shaded spots, overpasses and turns slowly.**

- Use non-freezing windshield washer liquid.**

- Use snow tires and/or chains.**

- Give yourself extra time** to reach your destination.

- Roads in Afghanistan** are narrower than the states, and snow removal equipment is a rare sight. Don't pass large construction equipment and jingle trucks. These drivers have limited visibility, and you are likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.

- Be especially careful** on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.

- Use low gears** to keep traction, especially on hills.

- Do not assume** your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads. Four-wheel drive does not mean four-wheel stop.

- Make sure** your vehicle is prepared and that you know how to handle road conditions by doing your Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS). 

# New Net Armor Proves Its Worth

Story by Army 1st Lt. R.J. Peek,  
3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Regt., 101st Airborne Div.

When 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, began using new Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected all-terrain vehicles, they also made the switch from bar cage armor to net armor.

When the first few trucks moved into circulation with the net armor, many Soldiers were concerned about its effectiveness, but the nets were combat tested Sept. 19, and Soldiers approved.

Army 1st Lt. Matthew Ward from Herndon, Va., platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, B Company, 3rd Bn., 187th Inf. Regt., confessed he was skeptical about the nets.

"I just didn't think the thin net would be able to safeguard the vehicle and the Soldiers from a rocket-propelled grenade."

While conducting a patrol along a highly traveled road in eastern Ghazni, insurgents initiated an ambush from close range.

Less than 100 meters away, insurgents fired a volley of RPG rounds, followed by a series of machine gun fire and then another RPG.

The Soldiers of 2nd Plt., B Co., returned fire and moved their trucks forward out of the ambush. From their new position, the Soldiers continued to fire, forcing the enemy to break off the attack and flee. What amazed the Soldiers, and the leaders, was the trucks had taken three direct hits by insurgent RPGs and none had penetrated the trucks.

"The worst effect of the insurgents' RPG fire was that I got my bell rung a bit," said Army Pfc. Joseph Sweat from Smithville, Tenn. Sweat was driving one of the trucks that was hit.

"The RPGs detonated at the nets, failing to penetrate the vehicle's armor," said Army Staff Sgt. Cameron Erisman from Hiram, Ga.

"It turns out, the nets did exactly (what they were advertised to do)," added Ward. "All of the Soldiers whose vehicles were hit by RPGs are alive today and still in the fight." 

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# PHOTOS

*From the Field*

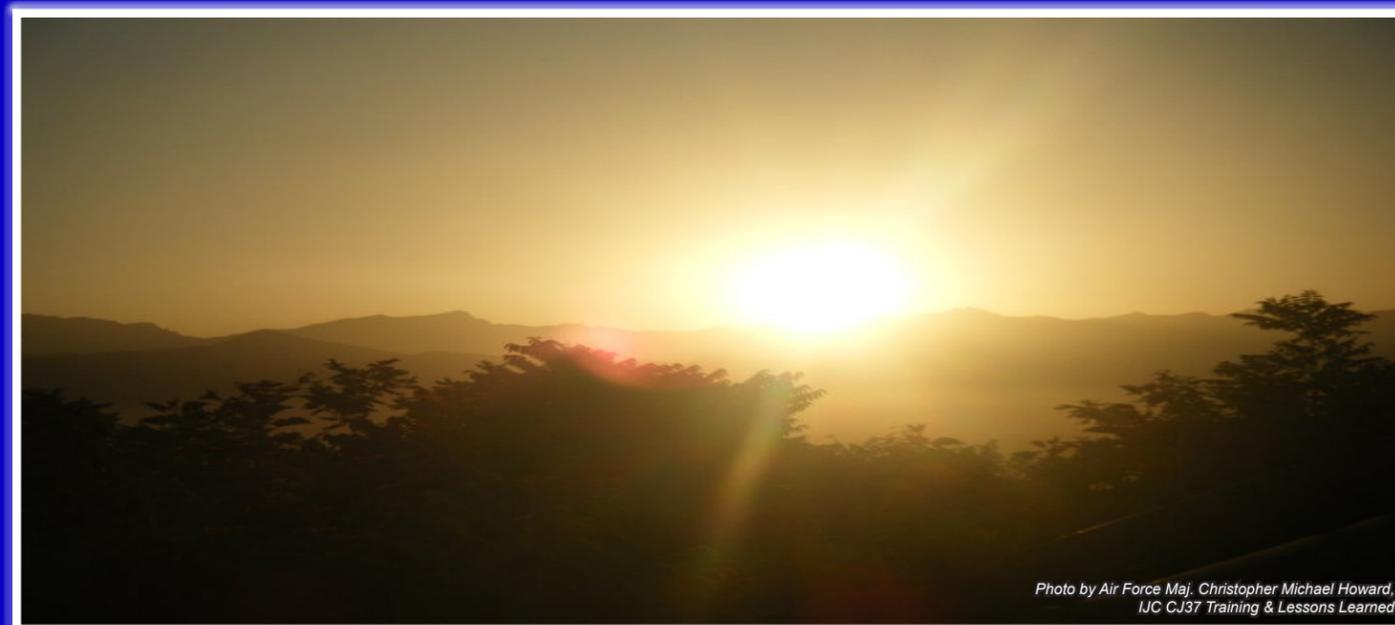


Photo by Air Force Maj. Christopher Michael Howard,  
IJC CJ37 Training & Lessons Learned

*A Sunrise over the Intercontinental Hotel, Kabul in early June.*



*Air Force Col. (and South Carolina Senator) Lindsey Graham visits the Joint Expeditionary Forensic Facility 5 on Bagram Airfield. JEFF 5 is one of three non-IED forensic labs in Afghanistan. Their capabilities are latent fingerprint processing, DNA analysis, firearm and tool mark examinations and forensic photography.*

Photo by Lloyd "Todd" Combs III,  
Joint Expeditionary Forensic Facility 5 Lab Manager

**Your photo could be featured next month! Entries need to include Who, When, Where, and What, also your Branch, Rank, Full Name, Job Title, Unit and FOB.**

# Afghan Elections

## Page 18



Safiullah Faqery, an Afghan voter, holds up his finger marked with ink Sept. 18 to signify that he voted in Afghanistan's parliamentary elections, the country's first Afghan-led elections. Faqery and several other Afghan men standing in a group outside an Afghan National Police headquarters building in Paktya Province said they were happy to have the opportunity to vote. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Whitney Hughes, 86th Inf. BCT PAO