

# W FREEDOM WATCH

AFGHANISTAN

## Combined operation expands security in Chak District

page 4

page 22

Operation HOT  
honors, entertains  
deployed troops

page 26

U.S., Afghan children  
exchange artwork

JULY 2011

# W This month's Watch

- 4| **Combined Operation:** Forces provide security in Chak
- 8| **Training for Security:** Army trains Afghan forces in Kunar

## Gates bids farewell to deployed troops

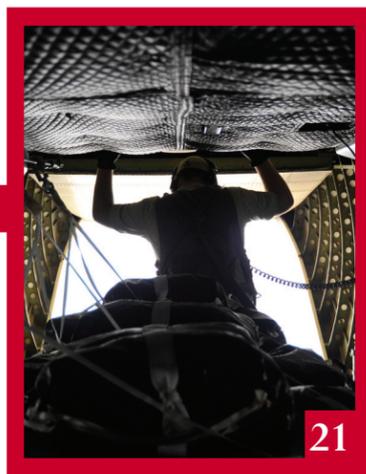
- 10| **Clearing the Pass:** Soldiers, ANSF clear Gwashta Pass
- 12| **New District:** U.S., Afghans work to secure new area
- 14| **CSI:** Afghan police tackle crime scenes
- 15| **Polish Training:** Afghan police learn from Polish forces
- 16| **Watch the Corner:** Police run through simulation
- 17| **Right-Arm Patch:** 1st Cavalry dons combat patch
- 16| **Spartans:** Task Force Slugger pushes into Nerkh

## Supplying special forces

- 22| **Operation HOT:** Cooks, entertainers bring good time to Bagram
- 26| **Art Exchange:** U.S., Afghan children trade art, culture
- 28| **Pickling:** PRT provides food preservation skills
- 29| **Refrigeration:** Cold storage helps Afghan economy
- 31| **Donating:** Operation Care gives people chance to give
- 38| **Air Artillery:** Unit moves big guns

## Panjshir wants you to visit

- 40| **Problem Solving:** Shura addresses problems in Spera
- 44| **Clear the Way:** Afghans overcome resistance in Zardulu Pass



## FREEDOM WATCH

STAFF: 17TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT  
VOL. 7, No. 6

COMMANDER, 17TH PAD  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
CAPT. KENNETH STEWART

MANAGING EDITOR  
STAFF SGT. MICHAEL SPARKS

LAYOUT EDITOR  
STAFF SGT. DAVID HOUSE

ASSOCIATE LAYOUT EDITOR  
SPC. ADAM L. MATHIS

STAFF WRITER  
SGT. DEREK NELSON

DISTRIBUTION  
SPC. JESIAH DIXON

*Freedom Watch* is a monthly RC-East publication of the 17th PAD and Combined Joint Task Force-1.

*Commander, CJTF-1 and Regional Command-East*  
Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn

*Public Affairs Director, CJTF-1 and Regional Command-East*  
Lt. Col. Chad G. Carroll

*Freedom Watch*, a U.S. Department of Defense publication, is published the first Monday of every month by the 17th PAD, located at building 15804A in 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 CJTF-1 Public Affairs Office at DSN 318-481-6367 or email: [freedomwatch@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@afghan.swa.army.mil).

# Departments

- 18| **Warrior Watch:** U.S. Army Spc. Tom Albers
- 24| **Goodwill across Afghanistan**
- 30| **Chaplain Watch:** Staying connected
- 32| **Story snapshots**
- 41| **Nutrition Watch:** Performance supplements
- 42| **Unit Watch:** Bravo Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle
- 44| **Retention Watch**



(Cover photo) U.S. Army Pfc. Aaron S. Mauk, a designated marksman assigned to the personal security detail, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Warrior returns fire as insurgents attacked U.S. and Afghan National Soldiers at the Chak Dam May 16. Mauk and other TF Warrior Soldiers assessed security and economic conditions in Chak during the two-day Operation Compass. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Cooper T. Cash, Task Force Patriot Public Affairs)

# COMBINED OPERATION EXPANDS SECURITY IN CHAK DISTRICT



*Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. Cooper T. Cash  
Task Force Patriot Public Affairs*

As helicopters lifted off the moonlit field, Soldiers blended into the surrounding landscape. Slowly, each infantryman rose to his feet and scanned his sector of fire. As platoon leaders motioned to move out, night-vision optics revealed the flashing infrared lights attached to each Soldier as they formed a single line.

Soldiers of Blackhawk Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Warrior and Afghan National Army troops moved through orchards and farmland toward the Chak District Center, unaware of the fierce enemy opposition they would encounter during the 48-hour Operation Compass, May 15-16.

Continued on page 6

*Afghan National Army Soldiers return fire after insurgents fired rocket propelled grenades and machine guns at U.S. and Afghan troops at the Chak Dam. Task Force Warrior and Afghan troops were assessing security and economic conditions in Chak during the two-day Operation Compass.*



*(Above) U.S. Army Pfc. Alexander Duckett, a rifleman assigned to Blackhawk Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Warrior provides security at the Chak Dam May 16. Duckett, a Omaha, Neb., native and other TF Warrior Soldiers assessed security and economic conditions in Chak during the two-day Operation Compass.*

*(Below) Afghan National Army Soldiers return fire after insurgents fired rocket propelled grenades and machine guns at U.S. and Afghan troops at the Chak Dam May 16. American and Afghan troops were engaged multiple times during the course of the operation.*



Operation Compass was initiated to assess villages and the security of Chak District, which is located in central Wardak Province. Company B previously worked to secure hostile areas in and around the Tangi Valley and recently redirected attention to Chak District.

“We are working to expand the security bubble along Route-1 by pushing further out,” said TF Warrior commander U.S. Army Lt. Col. Thomas S. Rickard.

Afghan National Policemen met TF Warrior and Afghan Soldiers at the district center and immediately began taking up security positions. Soon after the sun climbed over the tall peaks of the Hindu Kush Mountains, the valley erupted with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, rockets, and recoilless rifle fire from insurgent fighters. U.S. and Afghan Soldiers countered with precise small arms and 60mm mortar fire into the lush farmland, where Taliban fighters were concealed.

Rickard, a Columbus, Ga., native, explained that Chak has the second highest population of southern Wardak and is a major economic and cultural center for locals. As a large community center, it is vital that Chak’s residents receive security and support from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, he said.

Gunfire and explosions rang out throughout the first day of the operation. Once they identified Taliban mortar positions, motormen assigned to Company B rained precision fire on them, but mortar sites located in more densely populated areas required a different strategy.

JTACs, or joint terminal attack controllers, are Airmen assigned to Army infantry units who direct aircraft from the front lines. The JTACs relayed coordinates and other information to fighter jets circling high above the battle field. Within minutes, the first 500 pound JDAM, or joint direct attack munition, hit its mark, destroying an enemy qalat.

Fighting continued until after dusk, and then Afghan and U.S. troops regrouped and prepared to move deeper into the valley. Though moving into areas that have had limited GIROA presence is dangerous, it is vital, said Rickard. Pushing into these hostile areas is important because we have to get these key districts under GIROA control, he said.

As the near-full-moon climaxed, U.S. and Afghan Soldiers began their movement south toward the Chak Dam.

Platoon by platoon, the men quietly moved through lush fields, avoiding streets and trails. The occasional shot rang out as insurgents prodded blindly into the darkness trying to get a reaction out of the disciplined warriors.

After crossing the dam, Company B commander U.S. Army Capt. Mark J. Balboni directed his men to take up security positions in a school compound.

As dawn approached, Soldiers rotated between resting and providing security.

Then, just before 8 a.m., a large explosion rattled the concrete area Soldiers sheltered in.

“Most people wake up to the smell of coffee, but we wake to explosions and shrapnel,” said Atlanta native U.S. Army Sgt. Freddy T. Hughley, a combat medic assigned to Blackhawk Company.

Machine-gun fire accompanied the battlefield alarm clock and each Soldier leapt to their feet to take up firing positions around the compound. Civilian activity was absent from the village streets as the fierce battle from the previous day continued throughout the second. U.S. forces dropped three more JDAMs and placed mortars onto enemy positions the last day of the operation.

“Chak seems worse than Tangi so far,” said Omaha, Neb., native U.S. Army Pfc. Alexander Duckett, a rifleman assigned to Co. B. “This place has been everything we expected.”

That night, TF Warrior Soldiers and their ANA counterparts once again assembled and moved through thick vegetation toward an improvised helicopter landing zone. AH-64 Apache Helicopters moved into the area to assist with securing the HLZ, and minutes later CH-47 Chinooks landed. Soldiers moved quickly into the helicopters and, moments later, were on their way back to their combat outpost.

Although the previous two days were filled with immense firefights, TF Warrior Soldiers were able to stave off serious injuries.

With the success of this mission, Co. B is able to build upon it and slowly increase the reach of the GIROA security bubble, said Rickard. 🙏



*Soldiers assigned to Blackhawk Company, move to the Chak Dam. Chak is a major economic center for locals, making security an important issue, said TF Warrior commander U.S. Army Lt. Col. Thomas S. Rickard.*



WE  
WILL NOT  
FAIL

U.S. Army Spc. Joshua M. McLay, an infantry squad designated marksman from Cassville, Mo., assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Cacti, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco, shows Afghan National Army soldiers how to properly sight an M14 rifle during Operation Stone Steps at Nangalam Base in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province May 31.

## Coalition prepares Afghans to secure Kunar Province

Story and photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Mark Burrell, Task Force Bronco Public Affairs

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Cacti, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco traveled by helicopters into the Pech River Valley to train members of the Afghan National Army at Nangalam Base, Kunar Province May 28.

U.S. Army Capt. Weston D. Amaya of Bullard, Texas, an Afghan National Security Forces liaison, assigned to TF Cacti, and his team of Soldiers have the daunting task of training ANA in everything from medicine to security techniques.

The task, dubbed Operation Stone Steps, comes at a critical time and place, Amaya said.

In April, a month after the 101st Airborne Division realigned most of the Pech River Valley bases, including a transfer of

Nangalam Base to Afghan control, the Taliban announced their spring offensive.

"The ANA's ability to really dominate the terrain out here is going to be decisive for them," said Amaya. "I think right now they are doing a very good job at it. Frankly, they've had almost no coalition presence here until Stone Steps began."

Only an hour into their training, .51-caliber dishka machine-gun fire rained down on them from the mountains.

Within minutes, rounds of Afghan artillery pounded the mountains, echoing throughout the valley.

"When we were taking dishka fire, the ANA's use of supporting fire, indirect fire, the observation posts, and adjusting fire was very good," said Amaya.

After more than 30 rounds of artillery and close air support, the insurgent fire halted.

ANA Maj. Mullah Mahbob, an operations officer for 2nd Kandak, 2nd Brigade,

201st ANA Corps, explained this area is more dangerous than other areas because it is an important route for insurgents coming from Pakistan.

Over the past few months, the ANA independently conducted several patrols, successfully clearing the area of many insurgents, said Mahbob.

However, he warned that if his men aren't better trained or equipped, they might not have such success in the future.

This is a warning all too familiar to TF Cacti commander U.S. Army Lt. Col. Colin Tuley.

"Right now, we're not going to let it falter and we're not going to let it fail. I'm not. Not on my watch. I'm going to continue to provide those training wheels," said Tuley. "We're going to be out there every week ... I'm going to keep on being there with them with the training wheels. Yeah, at some point in the future we've got to let them do it alone." ☺



## Secretary thanks servicemembers on farewell tour

Story and photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Luther L. Boothe Jr. Task Force Currahee Public Affairs

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, made his 12th and final trip to Afghanistan, visiting Soldiers from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Currahee at Forward Operating Base Sharana in Afghanistan's Paktika Province June 6.

Secretary Gates, who will retire in June, presented 30 TF Currahee Soldiers with awards ranging from the Bronze Star with a Valor device to the U.S. Army Commendation Medal.

"It somehow seems fitting that (we are) here on June 6th, on D-Day because of the role, the historic role that the 101st played then and has played ever since," said Gates. "The 4th of 101st has made as big a contribution and sacrificed as much, I think, as any unit around. A 15-month tour in Iraq; here in 2008; coming here last August, 17 of your comrades paid the ultimate tribute, made the ultimate sacrifice. And I just wanted to come out here and thank you personally for what you've done, for what you've endured."

After answering questions, Gates looked into the crowd of Currahee Soldiers and paused for a moment before addressing them.

"I really did want to come out here and thank you, one last time, for your service and your sacrifice," said Gates. "Probably more than anybody, except the president himself,

I am responsible for you being here. I am the guy that signed the deployment orders sending you here. That has weighed on me every day that I've had this job for four-and-a-half years. And so I've taken it as my personal responsibility to make sure that you had what you need to accomplish your mission, to come home safe and, if you get hurt, to be (medically evacuated) as quickly as possible and get the best possible care.

"I think about all of you every moment of every day," he continued. "I feel your hardship, your sacrifice and your burden more than you can possibly imagine -- and that of your families as well."

The outgoing Secretary ended the discussion with what left many in the crowd holding back tears.

"I think you're the best America has to offer. My admiration and affection for you is without limit," he said. "And each and every one of you will be in my prayers every day for the rest of my life. Thank you."

The Currahee command team then presented Gates with a plaque and Currahee Battle Flag in appreciation of his visit and for his leadership over the past four-and-a-half years.

"Sir, words would fall far short in describing your service to our nation, but know for your four-and-a-half years as Secretary of Defense, before you stands your great legacy," said U.S. Army Col. Sean M. Jenkins, TF Currahee commander. ☺

(Left) U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates answers questions from Soldiers from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Currahee, during his visit to Forward Operating Base Sharana, Afghanistan, June 6. Gates, who retires at the end of the month, visited TF Currahee on the anniversary of D-Day to personally thank each one of the Soldiers for their service and sacrifice.



Soldiers from "Reapers", the Mortar Platoon, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Red Currahee, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, TF Currahee, clear a cave and secure the area where they will provide indirect fire support during Operation Red Storm. The operation cleared the Gwashta Pass in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, May 23-28 enabling the first convoy from Forward Operating Base Waza Khwah to FOB Sharana in more than two years.

## Red Currahee Reapers, ANSF overcome terrain challenges, open Gwashta Pass

Story and photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Matt Graham  
Task Force Currahee Public Affairs

After months of delays due to bad weather and restructuring of mission priorities, the call finally came down, "The Gwashta Pass mission is a go."

"Reapers," the Soldiers from the Mortar Platoon, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Red Currahee, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, TF Currahee, supported a battalion-sized operation to clear the Gwashta Pass, May 23-28 in Paktika Province.

The mortarmen and a platoon-sized element of Afghan National Security Forces comprised of Afghan National Army soldiers and Afghan Uniformed Police loaded into two CH-47 Chinook helicopters and traveled in the middle of the night to secure more than 20 kilometers of terrain.

"This is a critical mission because it is a significant first step in opening the Gwashta Pass to provide logistical support to (Forward Operating Base) Wazi Khwah," said U.S. Army 1st. Lt. George Kane of Mercer Island, Wash., and mortar platoon leader. "It also lets the people

in the region observe a strong coalition and ANSF presence, which has been absent in the area for quite some time."

The forces cleared the pass of improvised explosive devices and secured it. Once cleared, a convoy of more than 400 U.S. Army and ANSF personnel, traveling in nearly 100 vehicles, moved south to FOB Waza Khwah.

"Opening up those ground lines of communication is important because Forward Operating Base Waza Khwah had been an 'air only' FOB, meaning that supplies could only be brought in and



U.S. Army Pfc. Kruszka from Mortar Platoon, rests after climbing to a mountain top near the area where his platoon secured key terrain. His platoon provided indirect fire support during Operation Red Storm which cleared the Gwashta Pass in Paktika Province.

out with aviation assets," said U.S. Army Capt. Todd Tompkins of Willoughby, Ohio, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn. 506th Inf. Regt., commander.

According to Tompkins, the biggest challenge of this mission was moving through the terrain where reports indicated insurgents placed more than 2,000 IEDs.

"Once we have a clear path to and from FOB Waza Khwah, we can start bringing in new trucks and moving out old ones that no longer work and other equipment that is simply too heavy to be moved by helicopter," said Tompkins. "This is also important for us to be able to transfer these [combat outposts] and FOBs over to ANSF control; we have to be able to bring our vehicles out for them to move theirs in."

The 4th Attack Reconnaissance Bn., 4th Combat Aviation Bde., TF Gambler, 4th Inf. Div., TF Currahee, out of FOB Sharana, provides all military aviation support within the province.

"Gambler is great, and they do an

outstanding job of supporting the Currahees on the ground, but if we can take back some of the logistical responsibility, that will free them up to provide support in other areas," said Tompkins.

TF Red Currahees identified the most dangerous stretch of route Viper that connects FOB Waza Khwah to the closest base to the north.

They then identified key terrain points within that area where Red Currahee Soldiers could provide overwatch and security for the traveling convoys.

The Mortar Platoon was assigned to an area identified as Key Terrain 4 for the duration of the mission, centrally located so their mortar system could reach the north and south ends of the pass.

"The 81 (millimeter) mortar system is an impressive weapon," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Bo Lathrop of Moore, Okla, the platoon sergeant of the Mortar Platoon. "The Reapers have the ability to change the way a battle is going in a matter of minutes because of this weapon."

Throughout the night, the Reapers received instructions over the radio as to

when, where, and how many of which type of round to fire.

Over the five-night period, they fired at all hours, sometimes waking up from a dead sleep. They never missed a single mission.

"It's incredible how quickly the Soldiers can go from trying to eat a meal, or changing out their wet socks for dry ones, to being up on the gun, making adjustments, and hanging rounds in the tube," said Lathrop.

Despite the challenge of such high-tempo operations, the Reapers said they developed a form of internal motivation.

"Our platoon has adopted a motto: 'Beast Mode.' It began early in the deployment when we were attempting to traverse some difficult terrain while conducting a mounted patrol in Yaya Khel," said Kane.

"Ever since, the men have utilized the phrase as a source of collective motivation when facing adversity as a light infantry platoon in combat does on a daily basis."

The phrase can often be heard throughout the day as Soldiers are faced with filling sand bags after staying up all night, or climbing a mountain to get a better vantage point.

The Reapers are tough, and they have to be to do what they do, said Lathrop.

On day one, the Reapers air assaulted into Gwashta, climbed up to their objective, dug in and prepared a hasty mortar pit. They stood there ready for the inevitable call for support.

The first call came in just after night fall, and they continued to hang mortars steadily through the night, firing nearly 20 rounds.

"We fire illumination rounds above where we think the enemy might be. The rounds burn a bright light and are slowly lowered down by a parachute over that area. Even if we do not see any enemy, at least they know we are looking for them," said Kane.

After four nights of firing nearly 100 rounds of high-explosive rounds and two types of illumination rounds, the mission met the criteria necessary for the Reapers to leave.

"Even though we did not get into a direct engagement with the enemy, they knew the Reapers were there waiting with the 81 mm; sometimes, that is enough of a deterrent to keep the bad guys away," said Kane.

The Reapers fulfilled their mission. The convoy made it to FOB Waza Khwah for the first time in more than two years, and all the Soldiers returned to FOB Sharana safely. 🇺🇸

# NEW SECURITY



“... here they are, thrown in the middle of nowhere, living in houses dug out of the ground built with parachutes and post pickets... It’s a whole new world out here.”

-U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Hrodey

*U.S. Army Spc. Joshua Jeans of Waterloo, Iowa, with Company B., Task Force Ironman, observes a traffic control point outside of Joint Combat Outpost Bad Pekh.*

*Story and photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ashlee Lolkus  
Task Force Red Bulls PAO*

In a dusty, hot valley in the center of eastern Afghanistan, U.S. Soldiers and Afghan National Security Forces work to bring security to the province’s newest district.

In an effort to bring the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan into the Bad Pech Valley, a partnered operation began last March to sweep the valley of insurgents, establish a district center, and bring development to the people.

Former Alingar sub-governor Haji Alif Shah, now sub-governor of the new district, said he feels for the people and will be doing his job properly for the new district.

“We need the same things that other districts have,” he said. One of the beginning stages is establishing security in the area. “We need to take care of our military set-up before they can help the people.”

U.S. Army Capt. Kevin Hrodey of Pleasant Hill, Iowa, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, agrees with Shah and meets with the local ANSF leaders on nearly a daily basis to discuss the security situation and other needs.

“I think generally everybody has the same goal,” he said. “Everyone wants to see the district succeed. I think they’ve got the right people in place. A lot of times, it takes a little help and nudging them in the right direction in order to make something work, but everybody has the same goal in mind.”

“Everybody I talk to--locals in the villages--they are happy we are here,” confirmed Hrodey. “Happy that they can finally see some faces of the government, and government just needs a kick start. It can’t be expected to work over night, it’s going to be a process.”

“I heard from the people around here,” Walli said, “that they

think the district center is temporary because we don’t even have a water pump for ourselves and living in tents.”

Shah has heard the sentiments from the people.

“I think a big thing is that no one is used to these types of conditions,” said Hrodey. “They are used to having buildings, but here they are, thrown in the middle of nowhere, living in houses dug out of the ground built with parachutes and post pickets... It’s a whole new world out here. It’s taken them time to adapt and adjust to their new mission, same as us.

“These guys are making do with what they have. They are making do because they believe in it,” said Hrodey.

“For whatever we are responsible for in the area and what we are able to do, we will take care of,” said Shah. “We don’t want the people to question and blame us for not doing something for them.

“The last ten years, there was no security in this area; this

district was away from the provincial center. There has been no construction development, no agricultural development, and no schools. When there is no school or education that is where the security problems come up.”

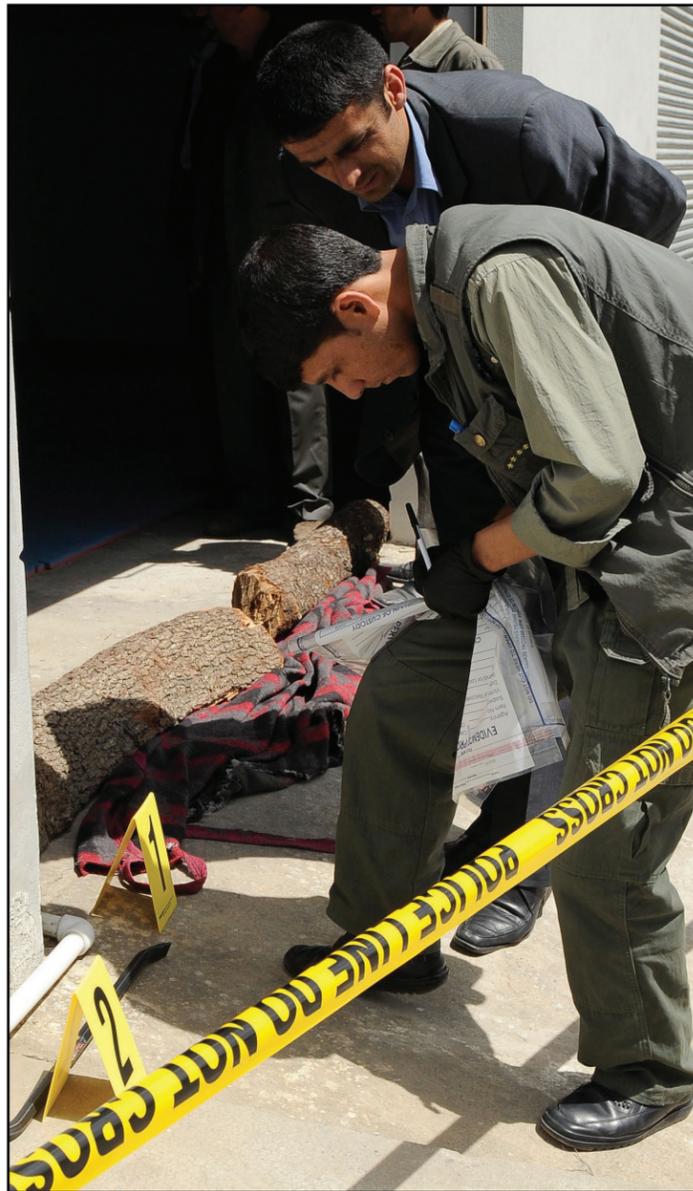
“(The district center is) supposed to have a director of education, director of agriculture, all these different people to build the staff for the sub-governor, and they don’t have that yet. That is a key part that is still missing,” said Hrodey.

Shah said they are working with coalition forces regarding these issues. The largest issues are the basics: roads, electricity, and structures for the district center.

All of these things take time, but the sub-governor, ANSF, and coalition forces continue to work together to make sure eastern Afghanistan’s newest district is taken care of.

“This district will succeed,” Hrodey said, “if they get the people out here and the programs in place.”

# Panjshir ANP first to graduate CSI training



**(Above)** Afghan National Police Capt. Ajab Gul, anti-terrorism chief with Panjshir Police Headquarters, lifts fingerprints from a simulated crime scene during a Crime Scene Investigation class held by law enforcement professionals attached to Panjshir Embedded Training Team in Bazarak Municipality, Panjshir Province.

**(Left)** Afghan National Police members bag evidence and collect fingerprints from a simulated crime scene during a Crime Scene Investigation class May 24. The four-day class, funded by the Task Force Red Bulls rule-of-law office, consisted of Afghan rule-of-law criminal procedures, working a crime scene from the beginning through the prosecution in court, and collecting and preserving evidence to be presented in court.

established specific roles for the investigation, collected biometrics of the witnesses and a victim, and obtained evidence from the crime scenes, including weapons and fingerprints.

The students split up their roles in the investigations to include the photographer, evidence collector, witness interviewer, and sketch artist. The teams used investigation kits provided by the rule-of-law office to accurately pull fingerprints and collect all evidence found.

“For the actual time in class being so short, those in attendance were very eager to learn new investigative skills and how to use the kits,” Brown said. “This is the first investigative training that went a little more in depth into lifting fingerprints, taking better crime scene photographs, and information about ballistics from weapons.”

Following the review and evaluation of the investigations, Afghan National Police Brig. Gen. Qasim Jangalbagh, the Panjshir Provincial Police Chief, passed out certificates.

“I appreciate the instructors for having this crucial training,” said Qasim through an interpreter. “It is very beneficial and I hope for more crimes to be solved with the knowledge of these new skills and resources.”

Three more classes will be held to train more than 60 ANP members. Investigation kits will also be signed out to individual units of the members that attended, including the Criminal Investigation Division, Afghan National Directorate of Security, and counter-narcotic and intelligence units.

“When many of us started as investigators, practical training was never given,” said ANP Deputy Daber of the CID department at the Provincial Headquarters through an interpreter. “Now that we all have had more hands-on practice with professionals, we’re confident that we’ll be able to catch guilty suspects, using the knowledge and kits we obtained from the class.”

Story and photos by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Amber Ashcraft  
Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

More than 20 Afghan National Police members from Panjshir Province were the first to graduate from a crime scene investigation class in Bazarak Municipality May 24.

The Task Force Red Bulls rule-of-law office funded the four-day class and was held by the law enforcement professionals attached to the Panjshir Embedded Training Team.

The class consisted of Afghan rule-of-law criminal procedures, crime scene procedures from the initial investigation through the prosecution in court, and the physical collection and preservation of evidence to be presented in court.

“Before the graduation, we wanted the class to break into teams and work in simulated crime scenes,” said Paul Protzenko of Myrtle Beach, S.C., a law enforcement professional. “We set up a murder/homicide scene and a breaking/entering situation. The teams used investigation kits and got right to work on collecting evidence and evaluating the crime scenes.”

Using the training they learned in the CSI class, the students



Polish Army Sgt. Robert Wasilewski, an instructor with Task Force White Eagle’s 7th Police Mentoring and Liaison Team, teaches combat techniques used in close quarter battle to an Afghan National Policeman from Giro District, Ghazni Province, May 7. (Photo by Polish Army Capt. Dariusz Gruszka, Task Force White Eagle)

## Polish work to improve Afghan police training

Story by Polish Army Maj. Szczepan Gluszcak  
Task Force White Eagle Public Affairs

One of the first signs indicating Afghan National Security Forces are ready to assume responsibility for the security in Ghazni Province is a properly prepared and trained police force.

Task Force White Eagle’s 7th Police

Operational and Liaison Team continually works to improve the Afghan National Police’s capabilities in southern Ghazni.

In Ghazni, before becoming policemen, most cadets attend the Troop Sustainment Site Police Academy in Forward Operational Base Ghazni. After graduating, the policemen are assigned a unit.

After graduation, Polish advisers continue to develop the skills of the new police officers.

“We go on joint patrols and operations,” said Polish Army Capt. Dariusz Gruszka, 7th POMLT commander. “We also organize tactical training to improve ANP officers’ capabilities.”

Operating check points, searching people and vehicles are among the scenarios the policemen practice while training with

Polish advisers.

“We appreciate the commitment of the Polish mentors,” said ANP Maj. Gul Ahmad, Gelan ANP post commander. “We are confident that it helps us to be better prepared to fight the insurgents and provide security for the inhabitants of our district.”

ANP officers were very interested in close combat. Advisers taught the officers the Krav Maga hand-to-hand combat system techniques.

“The simplicity and effectiveness of the movements allows us to quickly prepare police officers to fight in close contact,” said Polish Army Sgt. Robert Wasilewski, an instructor. “New skills will help them in almost every element of their daily routine service: patrols, searching people and vehicles, etc.”

Each summer in Afghanistan, Taliban and criminal groups increase their activity. As a result, The 7th POMLT soldiers increase the number of joint patrols with the Afghans. So far during their operations, they’ve captured four terrorists and seized several weapons caches.



Polish Army Sgt. Robert Wasilewski, an instructor with the 7th Police Mentoring and Liaison Team, teaches close quarter combat skills in a training area on Combat Outpost Giro. (Photo by Polish Army Capt. Dariusz Gruszka, Task Force White Eagle)



# WATCH YOUR LANE

U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Patrick Shoener, a hospital corpsman with 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Fwd.), and a native of North Kingstown, R.I., takes a flanking position against an Afghan Uniformed Police trainee during a Combat Town field exercise held at Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province, June 13. The trainee is a member of the final class of AUP recruits to be trained by the Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest at Camp Leatherneck before Afghans take control of their own training.

## Trainers take Afghan police through threat scenarios

Story and photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Snodgrass, Regional Command Southwest

The last class of Afghan Uniformed Police trainees that Joint Sustainment Academy Southwest will train completed their final field exercise June 13.

The field exercise encompassed everything the AUP class has learned, including vehicle searches, conducting patrols and making arrests.

The instructors for the AUP class are impressed by the progress the Afghan trainees made during their eight-week course, said 1st Lt. Joshua Oresko of Crown Point, Ind., the officer in charge of the class.

"The class has made good progress in everything they've been evaluated on," said Oresko. "Many of the members of the

class have prior experience as police, but the JSAS training makes their certification as Afghan Uniformed Police official."

Oresko also said he was encouraged by the determination of the individuals in the class.

"They've all been dedicated and shown that they want to be here, which goes a long way toward making their training effective."

The final exercise took place at Camp Leatherneck's Combat Town, a mock Afghan village where the class took on various threat scenarios they could encounter as policemen.

"We have 15 local Afghan nationals that we hire to act as villagers and a team of Marines that act as various law breakers to make the training as realistic as possible," said Oresko.

The instructors also employ eight Afghan interpreters and four officers with the Afghan Ministry of the Interior to help with the training and maintain a high order of discipline.

The policemen in the class expressed pride in their completion of the training exercise.

"I came here to serve Afghanistan and to protect the security of Afghanistan," said Mohammad Husani, a team leader in the class. "The whole class is doing this for Afghanistan."

This AUP class will be the last one trained at Leatherneck by JSAS. The next class will be completely under Afghan control and will conduct their own training to help aid the transition of responsibility from coalition forces to Afghan units. ☺

# 1st Cavalry dons combat patch



U.S. Army Spc. Jeremy Gorman, saxophone player for the 1st Cavalry Division Band receives his division combat patch from U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia Vimoto, command sergeant major of RC-East, June 14, while on gate guard duty at Bagram Airfield.

Story and photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Kim Browne Regional Command-East Public Affairs

Eighty nine years after the formal activation of the 1st Cavalry Division, America's First Team chalks up another first.

June 14 marked the United States' Army 236th birthday and this date also set another milestone in the rich tradition and history of the division; the 30 day mark of the first heavy armored division in Afghanistan.

"For some of us, this is the first opportunity to emblazon our right shoulder with a combat patch," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Dan Allyn, commander of Regional Command-East. "For others, the 1st Cavalry Division patch will respectfully replace a patch earned on another battlefield amongst friends and comrades from another time."

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and foreign service members stood at the position of attention and awaited for their section leader to place the biggest patch in the Army on their right shoulder.

"From Luzon to Pusan to Khe Sanh to Baghdad and now Bagram... Every Soldier standing in formation today is now a part of that storied history," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jeremy Siegrist, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion.

The designers of the 1st Cavalry Division patch were the commander of the 7th Cavalry Regiment and his wife, Col. and Mrs. Dorcy in 1921. Seeing a trooper riding his mount at sunset near the 7th Cavalry Headquarters gave the patch its bright yellow color, and the thoroughbred the trooper was riding gave the patch its blue-black outside color. The blue was later replaced by black to symbolize iron and armour. The black stripe, termed a "Sable Bend," represents a "baldric," a standard Army issue belt worn over the right shoulder to the opposite hip - sometimes referred to as a "Sam Browne belt," which a sheath for the trooper's saber or revolver holster.

"Today is the first time the baldric, shield and horse's head will be awarded for combat service in Afghanistan," said Allyn. "Wear it with pride, Cavalry Troopers!"

The First Team also had another first on this day; they celebrated the Army's birthday for the first time in Afghanistan.

The Nation's, the Army's, and the Combined Joint Task Force-1's colors were presented with honors in a ceremony to commence the singing of the "birthday song" for the Army and a traditional cake cutting.

"It was a great honor to be a part of this ceremony," said U. S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Charlie Davis, command sergeant major of Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion. "To be Commander of Troops and lead a unique formation of Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines was an honor." ☺



# Warrior Watch

U.S. Spc.

## Tom Albers

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton  
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

“There is something I need to tell you.” Not the words that any mother wants to hear from her son who is currently deployed to Afghanistan.

This time U.S. Army Spc. Tom Albers, a Troop C, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Redhorse, driver and infantryman from Alton, Iowa, had good news--well it could be viewed as good news.

“I am fine and healthy and not hurt, everything is OK but,” said Albers to his mother over the phone. “I have been shot in the helmet.”

“You were wearing the helmet right,” Albers said was his mother’s response.

The phone call was made from Craig Joint Theater Hospital on Bagram Airfield May 28.

Albers and his team were conducting a dismounted joint presence patrol earlier that day in Parwan Province when the Afghan National Police officers they were teamed with spotted an individual they knew to be associated with insurgent forces. While searching a hillside for the individual, the team came under fire.

“My head cleared the hill...I saw a house on my right and as I was in the middle of saying ‘Hey I got a house over here,’ when I heard the first shot,” said Albers “I felt something hit me in the side of the helmet and was knocked to the ground. It felt like someone had hit me in the head with a wooden baseball bat.”

The team quickly took cover and responded with fire on the building. Albers was momentarily stunned, but after checking himself and realizing he was still alive, he regained his bearings and took up a position to return fire.

“I laid there for what seemed like five minutes, but realized later that it was just a couple of seconds. I thought to myself, ‘Am I dying, no I don’t really think so,’” Albers recapped. “Felt my head, no blood or anything, so I thought ‘okay what just happened to me?’ I was confused, but I turned around and started laying down fire from the direction it had come from.”

Albers and the joint terminal attack controller were on one side of the building while the rest of the team was 50 to 100 meters away on the other side. They were taking heavy fire so they decided to pull back and join the rest of the team.

“I was just getting plinked at, rounds were hitting in a consistent, natural firing rhythm, but I look up at Albers and his position is just getting obliterated, he was covered in dust,” said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Roland of Tacoma, Wash., the 116th Air Support Operations Squadron JTAC, who was attached to Albers’ team that day. “Someone was going full-auto on his position, so I yelled up at him and told him to move.”

At this time Albers and Roland received suppressive fire from

the rest of the group and are able to pull back and regroup with the rest of team who were taking cover behind a building and wall. Albers was in full-auto mode while they bounded and recovered out of the heavy-fire zone.

“It really surprised me, from the moment I thought, ‘OK I am fine and there is no blood running down my face,’ until after we met up with the lieutenant, I don’t really remember anything,” said Albers. “I think that is because I wasn’t thinking, I was reacting, doing what needed to be done: covering fire, moving back, whatever it was. I think that was all because of our training, muscle memory kicked in. It made me think. All that time we spent training wasn’t stupid, it wasn’t pointless, it is needed and it works.”

Everything was done exactly like he was trained and he seemed responsive and aware. The only part that seemed strange to his fellow team member was a question he kept asking.

“Albers did fine, the only thing that was funny is as we fell back, I realized something is little weird with Albers. He keeps asking about his helmet,” said Roland. “It feels like something hit his helmet, he wants me to look at his helmet, I say I don’t care about your helmet, I want you to (watch) to the north because, if we get attacked, they’re going to come from the North.”

Once they got to better cover and regrouped with the rest of the team, air support was called in and the enemy fire subsided slightly so they were able to assess the situation. One of the ANP with the team was severely wounded in the backside by enemy fire, so the medics were called to attend to him. At this time, Albers’ situation was unknown to the team leader. Albers even assisted the medic with the other injured teammate.

“Albers was holding a glove on the butt of the ANP to keep the blood from gushing,” said Roland. “They then packaged him up and took the ANP to be (medically evacuated).”

“At that time, the medic had time to check on Albers and he realizes that he got shot in the helmet,” said Roland. “He passes this on to the lieutenant who decides it is time to pull back.”

The whole time the events are unfolding, Albers can’t seem to shake the fact that he just got shot in the head.

“I was pulling security and just keep thinking to myself, ‘I just got shot in the head,’ I would hear something and move and again think, ‘I just got shot in the head, what just happened,’” said Albers.

The events that day stuck in his mind for days to come, said Albers. They serve as a reminder to stay vigilant. The smile on his face at the hospital, would also serve as a reminder to enjoy everyday, no matter how tough, as well.

The helmet, which will be sent to his house after military officials examine it, will defiantly serve as a good training tool for teaching his Soldiers the importance of proper wear of their protective equipment or at least to make sure and keep their heads down. 🇺🇸

# Task Force Slugger continues push into Nerkh



U.S. Army Capt. Andrew Miller (left), commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division's Task Force Slugger from Baton Rouge, La., gives a mission update to U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Gary J. Volesky (middle right), deputy commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force-1 and 1st Cavalry Division from Spokane, Wash., at a Joint Security Station in the Nerkh Valley of Wardak Province.

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian P. Glass  
Task Force Patriot Public Affairs

Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Slugger, pushed westward into the Nerkh District of Wardak Province, Afghanistan, focusing on security during their latest operation May 23-25.

The three-day operation, based out of a Joint Security Station in Nerkh, emphasized detaining insurgents more than just maintaining security presence the farther west they pushed.

U.S. Army Capt. Andrew Miller of Baton Rouge, La., commander of Company A, led the main offensive effort. Miller knows what it is he wants to accomplish from the operation.

"We're in the middle of a squadron operation now, trying to target some enemies and some specific targets," said Miller. "We have patterns of life on a few different guys (insurgents); and what we're trying to do is, instead of being terrain focused, we're trying to focus on them and detaining them."

Miller, knowing the area they are pushing into is not extremely safe, is happy with how things have turned out so far and applauds the effort of Afghan forces during this operation.

"This whole area, as we've pushed out west, has traditionally been an enemy safe haven; and with us and the ANA (and) ANP (Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police), we've been able to push out (west)," said Miller. "We've found that we have freedom of maneuver. As we secure areas, the ANA (and) ANP can come in and set up checkpoints. We plan on putting more

checkpoints throughout (Nerkh) to keep the bad guys from moving in on the people."

U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Gary J. Volesky of Spokane, Wash., Combined Joint Task Force-1 and 1st Cavalry Division deputy commanding general, checked on the operation while conducting a battlefield circulation to see just what he inherited as 1st Cavalry took regional command in eastern Afghanistan.

"The 1st Cavalry Division just assumed responsibility for Regional Command-East on the 19th of May, so I am out looking at the great units in RC-East and seeing the great work that they have done over their rotation," said Volesky. "So, today we came out with ... Captain Miller in Nerkh to see the great work he has done on disrupting the enemy and making things better in this district.

"I thought the 'Spartans' were doing really well in partnering with their Afghan counterparts," continued Volesky. "That's one of the most critical things we can do during this rotation is to partner and get the capability of the Afghan security forces ready to take the lead, and the Spartans are on the way to doing that."

Volesky came away impressed enough with how the mission is going that he wants to use the Spartan's operation as an example for other task forces.

"I'm going back and telling the commanding general what a great model we have seen here today," said Volesky. "It's clear from the brigade commander all the way down to the squad leader, this task force is locked on and making a difference every day." ☺



Dave Thompson, load master, peers out over the cloud-covered countryside of eastern Afghanistan. He waits for the moment when the pilot gives the signal to release the bundles so they may drop to the ground where they are needed.

## JLOC: Sustaining special operations forces

Story and photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lizette Hart,  
Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan

Running out of food, water, or ammunition can cause a serious dip in morale and safety for the military personnel it affects. When units run out of such commodities, or when there is an emergency, they contact the Joint Logistics Operations Center at Camp Vance.

The JLOC provides sustainment operations for Special Operations Task Force units across Afghanistan by arranging for the delivery of ammunition, food, water, fuel, medical supplies, and other various necessities. The JLOC also indirectly supports coalition forces such as Australia's and the United Arab Emirates' forces by arranging transportation for items they have ordered.

U.S. Army Capt. Jillian Bourque, Group Support Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group, has worked as the JLOC's Operations Officer since the beginning of April 2011. In the handful of weeks since she assumed the position, she coordinated more than 300 air drop delivery missions to various parts of the county.

"Nine drops per day is our average," said Bourque. "We supported the Aussies the other day and dropped two bundles for the UAE."

Not all deliveries are planned. When a unit has an unexpected request or emergency, such as when a building collapses or a unit is engaged in enemy contact and runs out of ammunition, Bourque has roughly six to eight hours to arrange a delivery from beginning to end. She immediately sends requests to the units that supply the items to have them packed in container delivery system boxes so they can be shipped via military or civilian aircraft to the areas they are needed.

"An emergency would be any threat to life or limb," said Bourque. "Let's say they're in a TIC, troops in contact, or they've just been in a TIC; I need to hurry up and get them some supplies."

The supplies are loaded onto an aircraft and then rigged with parachutes that can ultimately serve multiple purposes. The

parachutes are made of a material that can be easily discarded, reused as tarps by the troops or given to the local nationals for a variety of uses.

This type of logistical support system directly supports village stability operations, which are ongoing missions to help the local population stand up against insurgent intimidation and develop local security systems, thus enabling the village leadership to connect with the Afghan government.

"In this counterinsurgency environment in Afghanistan, you cannot survive if you cannot sustain yourself," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ronald Ragin, Deputy Commanding Officer-Support. "We're building capability, but the biggest measure of whether or not we're successful in Afghanistan is asking, 'Can they sustain themselves in this environment?'"

At the end of the day, the delivery of much needed supplies to the troops helps them to assist the local population. The residents are being given the tools they need to support themselves. A key purpose of the VSOs is to build confidence in the Afghan government's influence, capability and capacity, and to encourage its leaders to communicate with the populace through key leader engagements on a regular basis to discuss issues affecting governance, security, and development.

"We're taking an operational element, or a special operations force team and other enablers, and we're putting them in a rural village," said Ragin. "Their whole purpose is to provide a secure environment, connect that village to their government, and develop that area."

Even though she is fairly new to the position and has been spending long days and nights in the office, Bourque is satisfied with the outcome of her work.

Her job is just one of the numerous steps needed to support Afghanistan. She frequently sees the results of the countless hours she spends arranging air drops of supplies to the units that support the VSOs.

"I often receive emails from the guys who receive the supplies," said Bourque. "They're so thankful for food and water and Rip-its, the energy drink." ☺

# OPERATION HOT



*Show brings cajun cooking, entertainment to Soldiers*

*Story by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes  
101st Sustainment Brigade*

A little home cooking went a long way for servicemembers stationed at Bagram Air Field recently as they were treated to the taste of down-home Cajun cuisine and live entertainment.

A team of chefs and entertainers from Houston teamed up for "Operation HOT" (Honoring Our Troops), serving spicy cuisine from the Texas-Louisiana border to feed and entertain the servicemembers stationed at Bagram.

Show promoter and creator Charles Carroll said the group's intent was simple: entertain the finest troops in the world with some of the best talent in the world while bringing them a taste of home.

"It's all about home. It's not just a show, or something we want to do. Our full intent is to touch the hearts of everyone here," he said. "That's why we have taste

from home, that's why we have food from home, and that's why we have talent from home."

Charles said the idea for Operation HOT was conceived three years ago with another chef and a retired general who wanted to travel to Afghanistan and feed the troops.

"The concept kept stalling, and after being invited on the team, I decided this was now on my bucket list," Carroll said. "We recognize that we came here willingly, but that our troops do this for a living. There's a lot that you give us by your sacrifice so we felt it was our turn to come here and give back."

"Operation HOT" featured a diverse range of entertainment, including Jay Leno-impersonator Marcel Forestieri, Hypnotist the Incredible BORIS, and U2 tribute band, "Mysterious Ways."

A highlight of the event was "Bagram's

Iron Chef" competition, featuring two renowned chefs, Rick Moonen and Rick Tramonto, dazzling the crowd with their culinary expertise. The chefs, who were also featured on Bravo TV's, "Top Chef Masters" television program, also competed head-to-head to determine who could prepare a better food dish using content from a Meal Ready to Eat packet.

The troops were not only the honored guest at the event, but also helped provide entertainment. U.S. Army Sgt. Harold Dudley of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls helped kick off the ceremony by singing the National Anthem.

Dudley is often seen walking around BAF and singing to himself. "I haven't got in trouble for it yet, so I guess it's OK," he said.

A native of Des Moines, Iowa, Dudley said he has sung since he was a child and

attended Drake University to study music. He is planning on completing his six-year military commitment and finish his studies in music.

"I think this (Operation HOT) is an awesome program. It's an opportunity to eat something different and hang out (with) people that we normally would not. Plus, it's Cajun food – who wants to pass that up?" he said. ☺

*(Top Left) Chef Rick Tramonto from Food Networks Iron Chef, participates in a cook off on June 12, as a part of Operation HOT (Honoring Our Troops), a program that was put together by a group of entertainers and businessmen to bring a piece of home to deployed troops. (Photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael Sparks, 17th Public Affairs Detachment)*

*(Top Right) Patrick Fleming, a lead vocals and guitar player for the band Mysterious Ways of Austin, Texas, played songs from the band U-2 for servicemembers as a part of Operation HOT.*

*(Bottom Right) Marcel Forestieri, a Jay Leno impersonator, entertains servicemembers and civilians with a stand-up comedy routine.*



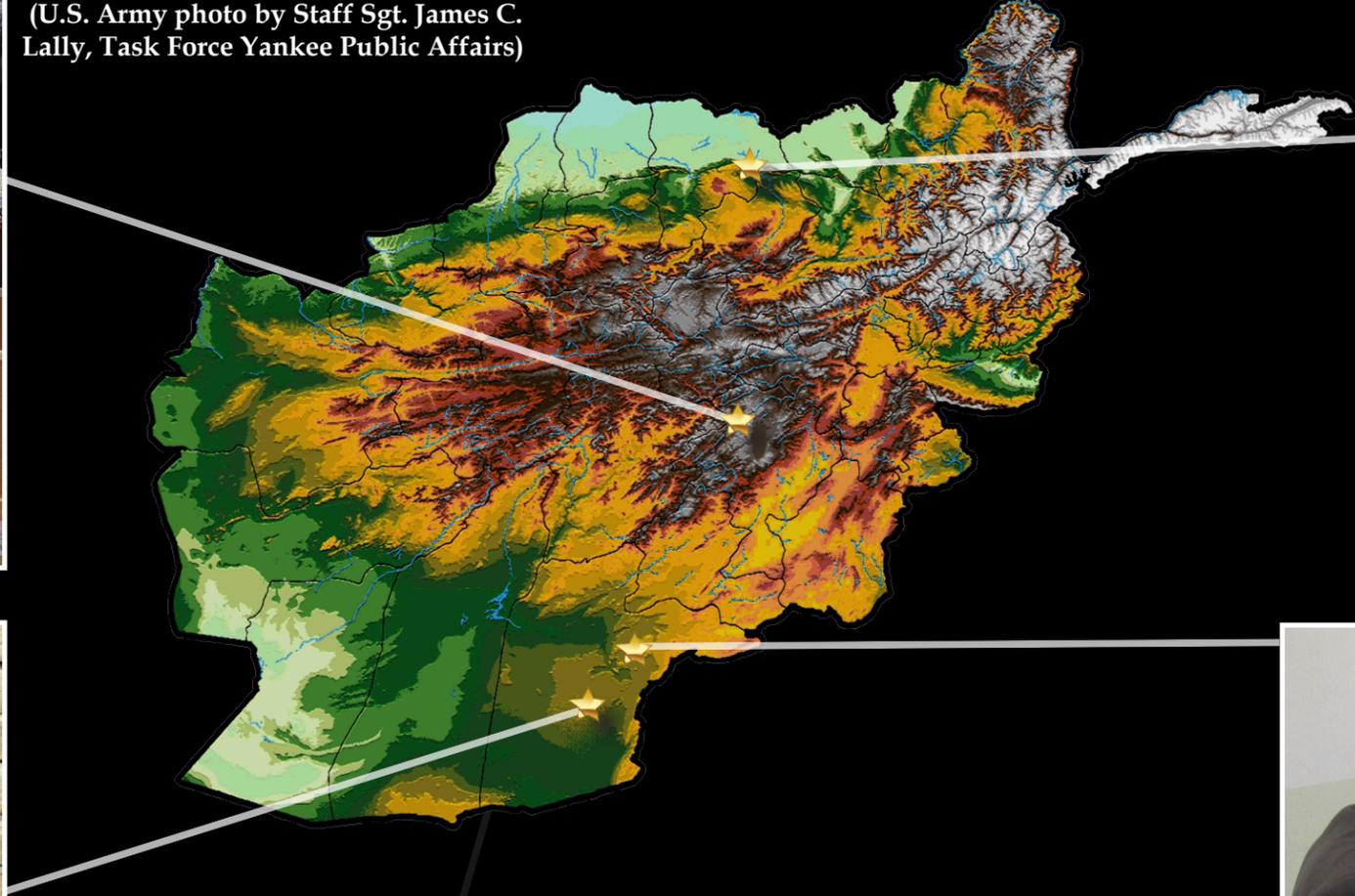
# Goodwill across Afghanistan:

# ISAF and ANSF Reach Out



Servicemembers from the Kabul Base Cluster sort and package donated items for Operation Outreach Afghanistan (OOA) on Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan May 26, 2011. Operation Outreach Afghanistan is a group of deployed U.S. Service Members and Civilians working to bring relief and aid to the Afghan people. They volunteer their off-duty time to help provide commonly needed items to those in need. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James C. Lally, Task Force Yankee Public Affairs)

Polish Army Pfc. Patryk Sawicki, 6nd Polish Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (right), and Polish Army Lt. Radoslaw Lasota, 2nd POMLT, meet with a Shakra-e-Kohn Secondary School student May 22. Afghan National Policemen, International Security Assistance Force POMLT advisers and District Development Team education specialists visited Shakra-e-Kohn Secondary School and Sanayee High School in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)



Two young girls watch U.S. service members walk down the street in front of their Sub-District 9 home June 13. The troops from the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team were conducting an assessment of a 2.6 kilometer road constructed in this area in northern Kandahar City, Afghanistan. The PRT works with the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to improve security and infrastructure capacity in the province. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Richard Simonsen, Provincial Reconstruction Team Kandahar)

Col. Fiaz Mohammed, a medical physician from the Afghan national army's Zafar medical hospital checks the vital signs of a woman from the Kareyz-e-Elyas village. Mohammed was part of the volunteer staff provided by the ANA to give medical service to the villages underserved population, May 20-21. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Dayan Neely, 19th Public Affairs Detachment)



# The Gift of Art



## Afghan students receive art from U.S. kids

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton  
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

Gregory P. Macris, a U.S. State Department foreign service officer currently working with the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team, visited the Number Two City Secondary School in Charikar District, Afghanistan, June 6 to deliver drawings made for the Afghan students by U.S. second graders from Thomas Jefferson Elementary School in his hometown of Falls Church, Va.

"Today International Security Assistance Forces paid a visit to our school to share the knowledge and talents of students in Charikar and students in the U.S.," said Fawzia Hakimi, the Afghan school's principal. "The U.S. student's paintings will encourage our students to work hard."

"I am very thankful for the visiting of ISAF to our school, their assistance is also very useful to us, it will encourage us to study hard and serve for the society," said Sona Sadat, a student at the Afghan school.

The program started with a visit Macris made to Thomas Jefferson Elementary School.

"I visited the class in the states and handed out some supplies," said Macris. "They drew their dogs, their houses and their football teams. The reaction to the art exchange was fantastic."

While visiting with the U.S. students, Macris did more than just ask for drawings, he also talked to them about Afghanistan and taught them a few words in Dari. Macris then brought those pictures with him and shared the pictures and attempts

at writing Dari words with the Afghan students.

The Afghan students drew their own images for the U.S. students, which Macris will deliver when he returns to the states. Macris also taught the Afghan children the English words for the pictures they had drawn.

"This visit not only exchanges the talent of both students, Afghan and U.S., it also encourages both students to know each other's culture and share their culture and information," said Adellah, a teacher at the Afghan school.

The art exchange is part of a much larger idea. Macris hopes to one day build a sister city program, which would involve city officials in both countries talking about everyday issues.

However, after running into officials with a lack of interest in the idea, Macris' had to rethink his strategy.

Macris' daughter, a student at Jefferson, suggested starting a smaller relationship with an art exchange program.

"What I am trying to do is start at the school level or even the classroom level," said Macris. "I am trying to create a link between that school and the girl's school here in Charikar."

Macris hopes this relationship will spread interest in the program and branch out into other parts of the community, making the idea of the sister city program more appealing to city officials. ☺



An Afghan student at Number Two City Secondary School, shows off the drawing she made for students of Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, Falls Church, Va., during a visit from International Security Assistance Forces, June 6.



## Kunar PRT teaches food preservation skills

Story and photos by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Chuck Walker  
Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs

Members of the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team's Female Engagement Team attended the conclusion of a four-day food-preservation workshop at the director of the Department of Women's Affairs compound in Asadabad District, Afghanistan May 25.

Young women learned how to pickle various fruits and vegetables in the FET-sponsored event which U.S. Army Spc. Shannon Drinken, of Rice Lake, Wis., a civil affairs specialist and FET team member, said was a success.



(Above) Instructor Ameena Niyal explains how to use oil when pickling mangos during a food preservation course at the director of the Department of Women's Affairs compound in Asadabad District, May 25. (Left) Sajedah Qahar passes a jar used to crush spices to another student at the director of the Department of Women's Affairs compound in Asadabad District. Qahar was one of 35 young Afghan women who attended a course on pickling fruits and vegetables taught at the compound. The Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team's Female Engagement Team sponsored the four-day course.

"It went very well," said Drinken. "To be able to sit in on the instruction, to see them doing hands-on instruction, it was good. We were able to hear the girls answer questions. We could see that they understood what the instructors were telling them."

Most of the young women who attended the course ranged from 14-17 years old.

Drinken said the goal of courses like these, and the FET in general, is to ensure young women of the province are learning skills that will enable them to improve their quality of life.

"We want to ensure that they are learning something that will help them better provide for their family," said Drinken. "If they learn how to pickle vegetables, that helps the family. Or they can take it to the market and sell it. They're getting something out of the course, something that will help them in the future."

U.S. Army Sgt. Kacie Kremer of Oceanside, Calif., a veterinary technician with the 358th Medical Detachment assigned to the Iowa Army National Guard's 734th Agribusiness Development Team, said it is rewarding to work with women from other cultures and backgrounds.

"It's just amazing seeing them and talking to them, just seeing the diversity in the culture and experiencing the language barrier," said Kremer. "Yet they are so willing to work with us. I think they're as excited as we are. They want to learn."

Drinken said she appreciated her experience of working with the women of Kunar Province by participating with the engagement team.

"Just seeing in their face that something clicks, that they are learning, makes it worthwhile," said Drinken. "Even though there is the language barrier, facial expressions are universal. Knowing that they have learned something that will benefit them in regards to themselves and their family. That makes it rewarding." ☺

## COOL STORAGE



Nevada Agribusiness Development Team Agriculture Specialist Master U.S. Army Sgt. Shane Jensen of Fallon, Nev., holds the ceremonial ribbon while other members of the Nevada ADT cut the ribbon marking the official opening of three cool storage facilities in Jelga Village, Logar Province, Afghanistan. The cool storage facilities will help the villagers financially by keeping harvest items fresh throughout the winter months.

## Afghan villagers adopt refrigeration for crops

Story and photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Eric Ritter  
Nevada Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

It's a cool new concept to the people of the tiny Afghan village of Jelga. The village, located in the province of Logar, recently set the stage for agriculture success with some simple cool-storage cellar projects in their village.

The Nevada Agribusiness Development Team project manager, U.S. Army Master Sgt. Shane Jensen, said cool storage is a very simple concept that is inexpensive, easy to maintain, and about as difficult to install as digging a large hole in a backyard.

"It's basically a walk-in cellar that uses the coolness of the earth to create an atmosphere that will maintain fruits and vegetables longer than other, non-cooling, above-ground storage techniques," said Jensen. "Many villagers use methods that have no cold or cool benefits to maintaining food freshness such as leaving them on a truck or in bins after harvest."

"It can spoil very quickly like that, and that negatively affects the income they receive from the sale," continued Jensen. "They often have to sell it at lower

than market price just to unload it. It also affects their food source during the winter. (Because) ... they no longer have any of the food they harvested, they now have to buy food during the winter. More often than not, the food they're buying is sold to them from an outside source, such as Pakistan, at an astronomically elevated price."

NVADT's Logar District Provincial Agriculture Team Director, U.S. Air Force Col. Bartley O'Toole, said cool storage success is as simple as doing the math.

"Now, they would no longer need to sell off their products at a loss," said O'Toole. "They currently have three cool-storage units. Each holds 40 metric tons of products. If they can live off that each year, they're saving about \$19,000 a year per storage unit."

"A great economy will keep a lot of desperate people from joining the insurgency," said O'Toole. "Creating a more secure Afghanistan through agriculture has been our mission since day one. I think we may ... have just found the formula for that. I think the Afghans are on board with it too." ☺

Story by U.S. Army By Chaplain (MAJ) Eddie Kinley  
CJTF-1 Family Life Chaplain

A few months ago my wife and I flew into Jacksonville, Fla., to visit family. While we waited for our luggage at the Delta carousel, I noticed in the midst of the crowded arrival area a couple warmly embracing. We were tickled watching the wife repeatedly kissing her husband who was visibly embarrassed. Naturally, she was not the least bit concerned with her surroundings; she was simply glad to see her companion.

Weeks later, I found myself embracing my wife at the West Fort Hood gym for the last time until R&R. She did her best to remain strong, but the tears flowed and flowed. This was not our first deployment separation, and it probably will not be our last; nonetheless, it still hurt. Then I noticed my wife was not alone; wives and husbands all over the gym were saying goodbye in the language of tears. A teenage boy caught my attention as we lined up for the buses. He cried deeply as his dad walked off; he was not too ashamed or too proud to express his emotions. I was deeply moved by the love he exhibited toward his dad. When I think about the couple at Jacksonville Airport in comparison to the sacrifices our families make when we deploy, what a difference in contrast. Our spouses and children are the true heroes, and let us always honor them.

Staying connected is the only way to survive the year we spend apart from our families. Many of us have done a good job maintaining a healthy marriage and family in light of the operational tempo. I have watched my children survive two unaccompanied tours in Korea, a six month tour to Kosovo, as well as two deployments. Talking to married couples and Soldiers, I have learned a variety of methods to stay connected. I have also developed a good pattern to keep my marriage healthy while apart.

There are three taskings I have implemented that have kept my marriage strong while deployed. First, remember the little things count. I sent my wife some flowers today. It was not her birthday, not even our anniversary--I sent the flowers just to let her know how much I love her. It's the little things that count the most. You can send an email card for free. There are a myriad of things we can do to demonstrate to our spouse how much we care.

Secondly, I am big on using Skype, like many of you. It is free and easy to download. Now, from the comfort of your room, you can call and see your spouse face to face. What I love about Skype, unlike using the telephone, is that I can tell how my wife is doing by her expressions. I know when she is frustrated, excited, tired, or happy, and that makes all the difference in our conversations. I can talk to her and the children and watch my son's hairstyle change monthly.

Finally, a great tip for keeping your marriage healthy, is to read together. There are a number of great marriage books to keep the spark in your marriage. One of my favorites is John Gottman's "Seven Principles for making your Marriage Work". You can read it individually and discuss it. My wife and I read it, when she was in Iraq, and we loved it. It is filled with fun exercises and questionnaires you will certainly enjoy. "Love and Respect" by Emerson Eggerichs is another great book you can read together. Staying connected is the only way to survive the many months apart.

With temptations lurking around every corner, the only way to maintain a good marriage relationship is to continually invest in your spouse. It will yield great dividends. ☺

### Funny facts about women and men

- The average number of items in a typical woman's bathroom is 437.
- If a man goes on a seven day trip, he'll pack five days worth of clothes and will wear some things twice.
- If a woman goes on a seven day trip she will pack 21 outfits.
- Women keep three different shampoos and two different conditioners in the shower.
- Men who are married tend to have a longer life expectancy than those who are single, but they are the ones who are more willing to die
- What do you call an intelligent man in america? A tourist.
- Men laugh louder, longer and more frequently than women.



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Heidi Lansing distributes Operation Care humanitarian aid packages to an Afghan woman at Bagram Airfield May 29.

## Operation Care volunteers reach out to locals

Story and photo by U.S. Army Spc. James Wilton  
Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs

Service members volunteering with Operation Care distributed more than 150 care packages filled with basic necessity items to Afghans exiting the entry control point near the Egyptian Hospital on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, May 29.

The items in the packages were donated by U.S. humanitarian organizations and personnel stationed on Bagram.

"We know that we aren't going to win the war by kicking down doors," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek Melendez of Philadelphia, Penn., a 1st Cavalry Division, Combined Joint Task Force-1, intelligence sergeant and the assistant director of Operation Care.

"The way we are going to win is through the support of the people, so we provide what little amenities that we can and try to build a stronger relationship with the locals here in Bagram."

Operation Care is dedicated to the welfare of both the people of Afghanistan and International Security Assistance Forces, according to their mission statement. The program is part of a new method being deployed by ISAF to fight the insurgency, more commonly known as Counter Insurgency Operations, or COIN.

Clothing, food, pens, pencils, schoolbooks, and other school supplies are a big part of what the program distributes to the Afghan people. Amidst the poverty stricken families, items like this are often considered to be frivolous, but the children would disagree.

"The kids are more vocal and they will tell you that they don't have things like books," said Melendez. "For them, it means being able to go to school and have the basic supplies and things that they need to just be a student."

The volunteers don't let this request go unheard, and the Afghan children make sure they know how grateful they are.

"They're always happy and excited when we come," said Melendez. "They're always very grateful, saying thanks for the help that we provide to them."

This gratitude, while more than enough payment, is not the only reason the servicemembers take the time out of their day to contribute to the people of Afghanistan.

"It is a way to give back and help out. I feel that there is a part of Afghanistan that I didn't get to see," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Heidi Lansing of Ely, Iowa, a land management non-commissioned officer with Company B, 334th Brigade Support Battalion, Task Force Archer, a

part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls. "I volunteer in order to do something and help out where I can; it is an aspect of our military jobs that I enjoy."

Selfless service and doing what is right are common themes among the volunteers, but some have more personal reasons.

"I grew up without a lot of things, so for me to be able to give back and not have a kid go to school without a book or spend a winter without a warm coat and the basic necessities that we take for granted, I think it is a good thing to do, giving back to the people," said Melendez. "No matter what country you are in."

The program distributes packages to more than just locals. They also send basic supplies out to service members stationed at remote outposts where supplies are not readily available.

"I think that the packages let the Soldiers know that somebody cares for them," said Lansing. "We put the basics into the packages, what many of the Soldiers without Post Exchanges can't get. So I am pretty sure that they are grateful for what we send them."

Distributions occur every 30 days, but the program needs volunteers throughout the week to prep the items. ☺

# Story Snapshots

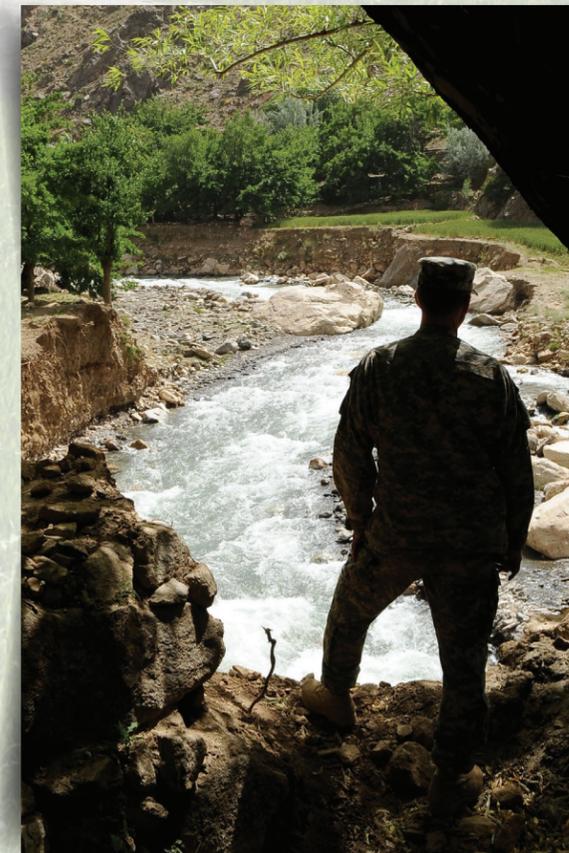
## Fire suppression

A fire suppression for a vehicle undergoes a test at Bagram Air Field. The testing unit was invented by Robert Pietsch, AC First Allied Trades, 401st Army Field Support Brigade, as part of a way to not only rebuild, but to successfully test vehicle fire suppression systems in Afghanistan, saving well over \$400,000 in repairs costs from sending the units back to the United States. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. David House, 17th Public Affairs Detachment)



## Training

Several Afghan air force airmen listen to how to install an M240 gun mount inside the right crew door of a MI-17 helicopter by several airmen assigned to the 438th AEW. They also instructed installation of a 6-foot tube which expels spent rounds outside of the aircraft instead of back inside the cabin which causes safety hazards. (Courtesy photo from 438th Air Expeditionary Wing)



## Water in a dry place

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joseph Blevins, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team commander and Oregonia, Ohio, native, views the river which runs through Dehe Kalan Village in Shutol District, Afghanistan June 1. A cement canal running from the river to four villages downstream is being rebuilt after the previous year's spring floods damaged it. The canal allows the villages to have a consistent flow of irrigation and drinking water. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Amber Ashcraft, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs)

## Towing

A Marine with the Embedded Partnering Team, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), helps Afghan National Army soldiers from the 5th Kandak untangle the tow rope on one of their vehicles during a driving course at Forward Operating Base Delaram, Afghanistan, April 11, 2011. Fifteen ANA soldiers graduated from the latest course during a ceremony at FOB Delaram June 5, 2011. The course consisted of 32 hours of instruction and 105 hours of practical application, which included driving time, vehicle familiarization, preventive maintenance, driving in reverse, towing procedures and convoy fundamentals. (Photo by U.S. Marine Sgt. Rachael Moore, 2nd Marine Logistics Group)



## Canal defense

Spc. Daniel Miller, left, and Spc. Daniel Scott provide security as members of Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul make their way to a canal project site in Zabul province, Afghanistan, June 14. Miller and Scott are assigned to the PRT's security force. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson, Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul)



## Fire for effect

U.S. Army Sgt. Shane Webb, a fire support specialist from Columbus, Ohio, assigned to B Troop, 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco, acquires a target and "calls for fire" at Forward Operating Base Connolly, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, during a training mission June 10. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Hillary Rustine, Task Force Bronco Public Affairs)



## Road repair

Sgt. Dennis W. Ruff from Eureka Springs, Ark., an engineer equipment operator with 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), guides a fellow Marine operating a Tractor Rubber-Tired Articulated Steering Multipurpose vehicle, or TRAM, as it picks up a drainage pipe piece from a trailer June 11, 2011, aboard Forward Operating Base Geronimo, Afghanistan. The engineers are currently repairing two major routes in Marjah for Marines from 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division (Fwd.) who are conducting operations in the area in support of the International Security Assistance Force. (Photo by U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Bruno J. Bego, 2nd Marine Logistics Group)

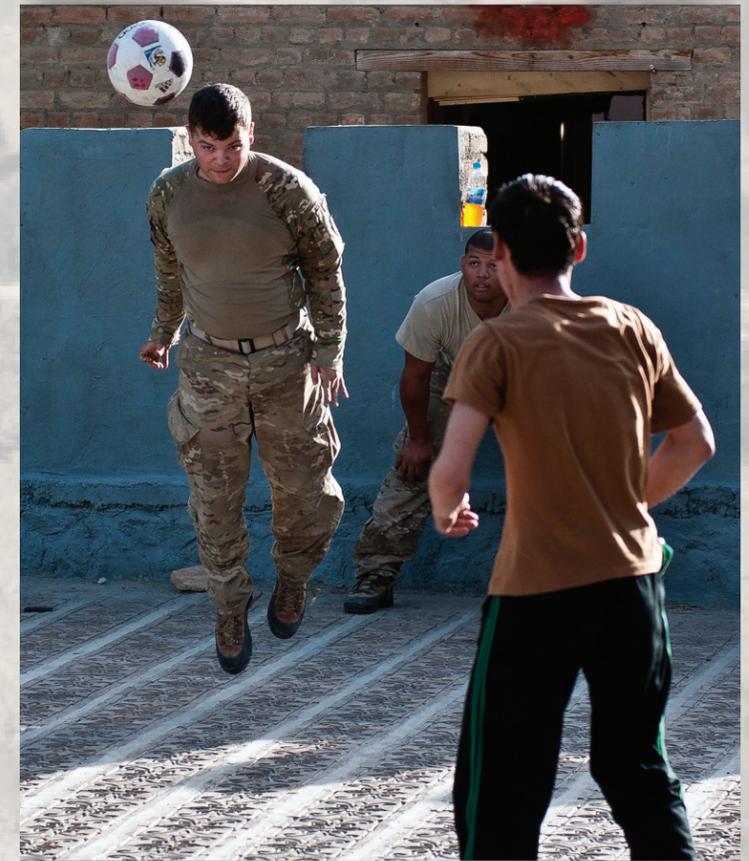


## Up, down

U.S. Army Spc. Andrew Miller, a 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls, fire support specialist, from Humboldt, Iowa, conducts pull-ups at the clamshell gym, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, May 29 during the Memorial Day "Murph" fundraiser. "Murph," consists of a one mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 squats and finishes with another one mile run. On top of that, the whole workout is conducted with 40-plus pounds of body armor. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. James Wilton, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs)

## Head shot

U.S. Army Spc. Joshua M. McLay, an infantry team leader from Cassville, Mo., assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Cacti, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Bronco, heads a soccer ball during a quick game against his Afghan National Army counterparts after training was finished for the day during Operation Stone Steps at Nangalam Base in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province, May 31. The TF Cacti Soldiers used every opportunity to build relationships with the ANA soldiers during the four-day operation. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Mark Burrell, Task Force Bronco Public Affairs)



## Inspection

U.S. Army Spc. Rebecca Evans of Dorrance, Pa., a crew chief assigned to Company A, Task Force Guns, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, performs a last second visual inspection of the outside of an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter prior to the aircraft running up for a maintenance test flight. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Joe Armas 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., PAO)



## Better power

Amir Muhammad completes construction of an aluminum pot at a metal works factory at the Shur Andam Industrial Park in Kandahar City, June 11. The factory hopes to get on the industrial park's electric grid, enabling it to run more of its machinery and hire more workers. The Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team visited the factory to assess the business climate at the industrial park. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Richard Simonsen, Provincial Reconstruction Team Kandahar)

# Officials meet with elders in hostile area



A Zambar village elder speaks with his tribesmen and Doulat Khan Qayoumi, district governor of Sabari, at a shura in Sabari District, June 16. The shura was the first time in years that Zambar citizens met with Afghan government members.

Story and photo by  
U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Ken Scholz  
Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team

The striped, beige turban hung cocked to one side of Doulat Khan Qayoumi's head as he spoke with elders of Zambar Village, Sabari District, for the first time June 16.

Qayoumi, the district governor for Sabari, is a lanky, charismatic man. His easygoing, quirky demeanor helped put local elders at ease during the meeting in an area widely regarded as a haven for insurgents.

"We believe this is the center of the Haqqani network's support in Khowst," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jesse Pearson, pointing to the expanse of rolling hills and fields, punctuated on one side by a sharp perimeter of craggy mountains.

Pearson, a native of Joliet, Ill., is the commander of the

1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke.

The Zambar area, like many of the outlying areas in Khowst Province, is only now becoming open to cooperation with the Afghan government as news of the successes of more developed districts continues to spread.

"I'm here to ensure that this area has two rights. Your rights and the rights you owe your people," said Qayoumi to the elders.

The shura, a first in the area, took place in the shade of a small grove of walnut trees with 11 of the village's elders, alternately listening and speaking to Qayoumi; Col. Nasrah, the Afghan National Army brigade commander for Sabari; and Lt. Roshan, the Afghan National Police commander for the area.

"We know that you are

feeling pressure from the bad guys too," Qayoumi continued. "I don't want to win. The government does not want to win. We want you to win," he said.

Sitting at the far edge of the shura ring and listening was Pearson, U.S. Navy Capt. Steve Deal, Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, from Chesapeake Va., U.S. Army Capt. Steve Baunach, PRT Civil Affairs Team Leader from West Lafayette, Ind., and other coalition and Afghan security forces.

The district governor took the opportunity to ask for feedback from the elders. Opening lines of communication and providing the locals a mechanism to address their concerns was a priority of the meeting.

"I have hope that the next time I come here, there will be 100 people sitting here," said Qayoumi, stressing the

importance of including more community members to help improve the area's security.

"All of us should be aware of what our sons and brothers do," said Nasrah to the villagers, who claimed not to know those who launched attacks on Afghan and coalition forces.

"Where does security come from? It comes from you first," Nasrah said.

He told the elders not to be surprised if they see ANA or ANP patrolling through their villages. They are here to help, he said.

Qayoumi and the Zambar elders agreed to meet again at the district center to discuss their problems.

At the conclusion of the shura, the district governor took down the names and personal information of the elders at the meeting, and promised to work with them to not only improve area security, but also the lives of their people. ☺



Katherine Haddon, Agence France Presse Kabul Bureau Chief, takes a picture at Bambarada Pass in Paryan District, Afghanistan May 28. Haddon, along with more than 20 other international media and tourism experts attended the two-day Panjshir Tourism Development Conference to become familiar with tourism opportunities in the province and network with potential partners.

## After years of war, Panjshir hopes to draw tourists

Story and photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman  
Amber Ashcraft, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction  
Team Public Affairs

International media representatives, tourism experts and Afghan officials made up the more than 50 attendees to the two-day Panjshir Tourism Development Conference May 28 - 29.

Officials held the conference to attract investors and tour operators to Panjshir as a tourism destination, taking advantage of its natural beauty, proximity to the country's capital, and the security, said Bill Martin, Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team director and Arlington, Va., native.

Conference attendees spent part of their first day in Panjshir as tourists themselves, the group traveled south for the mountain-filled scenery centered around the Panjshir River. The group also stopped at a local bazaar and Ahmad Shah Massoud's Tomb.

"This place has great natural beauty with amazing mountains, a beautiful river and fresh air," said Marshall Ferrin, Afghan Investment Support Agency senior investment advisor. "There is a great potential for outdoor activities in Panjshir, and I'm sure our adventurer friends here will see that opportunity."

Throughout the day, the Panjshir PRT escorted the group and spoke with them about their experiences in the province.

"As a PRT, we have spent most of our time and effort building up the basic infrastructure for the province. Now we believe it's time, and it's possible, for the private sector to work with the provincial authorities to develop tourism here. The United States will have a long-term development relationship with Panjshir and Afghanistan; we believe that tourism is a realistic approach to developing the economy of the province further," Martin said.

Deputy Gov. Abdul Rahman Kabiri hosted the group for a traditional Afghan dinner at the governor's compound.

"I believe the most appealing areas for tourism here are the outdoor activities," said Peter Jouvenal, co-owner of Gandamak Lodge in Kabul, Afghanistan and London native. "Fishing, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking- it's all here!"

Since Afghanistan has not had an active tourism industry for more than thirty years, Afghan government officials want to create awareness about tourism's benefits.

"We truly believe we have the capacity of attracting tourists to Panjshir," said Afghanistan Deputy Minister for Tourism Nabi Farahi, through an interpreter. "With support from our international colleagues and the Panjshiris utilizing their resources from the valley, the campaign for developing tourism here will hopefully be a success." ☺

# Shura addresses issues in Spera

Story and photos by  
U.S. Army Spc. Tobey White  
Task Force Duke Public Affairs

Leaders from the Khowst Provincial government and 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, met with elders in Spera, Khowst Province, Afghanistan, to discuss issues in the village May 17.

U.S. Army Col. Chris Toner, commander of 3rd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., TF Duke, and a native of Topeka, Kan., and Khowst Provincial Gov. Abdul Jabbar Naeemi listened as residents of Spera raised awareness on problems they face in their everyday lives.

Spera, located close to the Pakistan border, is in a remote and mountainous area of Afghanistan.

“These shuras bring the provincial government closer to its people,” said U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Ken Scholz, a member of the Khowst Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Due to its remoteness, the area has difficulty getting

good medical care, education and construction, one of the elders said.

They have very little good drinking water and need pipes for plumbing, he said.

A recent bridge over a wadi drew praise from participants and they asked for more projects to increase education and construction in the area.

“Every time I come, you ask for a clinic, a road or a school,” said Naeemi. “This is good because people who want peace want projects.”

The visit gave Naeemi and other officials an opportunity to assess the needs of the district, Naeemi said.

“People work to bring stability and prosperity to the country,” Naeemi said. “Do whatever needs to be done for a bright future.”

Changes have already occurred in the district, he pointed out. There have been 919 new students recruited.

“You’ve taken light into 919 houses,” Naeemi said. “In the future they will be doctors and engineers.”



Members of the Afghan National Police stand prepared for an inspection at a district shura in Spera, Afghanistan, May 17. Abdul Jabbar Naeemi, the governor of Khowst Province, as well as leaders from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, attended the shura to address the needs and issues Spera residents face.



Members of the Afghan National Police stand prepared for an inspection at a district shura in Spera, Afghanistan, May 17. Abdul Jabbar Naeemi, the governor of Khowst Province, as well as leaders from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, attended the shura to address the needs and issues Spera residents face.

# Ergogenic Aids: Worth the Big Bucks?

Story by U.S. Army Major Renee E. Cole, PhD, RD, LD.

# W Nutrition Watch

“Ergogenic aid” is a term used to refer to a dietary supplement claiming to enhance physical performance. Researchers have studied the effect of protein and other nutrients on muscles strength and performance for many years, however there is little evidence to support many of the specific product claims made by for these so-called performance enhancers.

Manufacturers of performance supplements have mastered the skill of advertisement. They add pictures of extreme body builders; include testimonials (opinions) from people supporting their product claim; and use scientific jargon to grab your attention. It is not uncommon to see phrases such as “Harness the power of Tri-Phase Filter Technology”, “Mega-dosed with the most scientifically researched super protein blend”, and “Psychoactive pre-workout matrix ignites white-hot intensity and explosive strength.” What?!

Keep in mind who is writing the ad? There may be faulty or half-truth science highlighted. The website or magazine ad might provide misleading research by noting a study without a citation, a study done on one of the ingredients but not their actual product, or a study the manufacturer paid for but is not published in a scientific peer-reviewed journal to show validity. Just because the company states that their scientists reviewed over 2,000 studies on ingredients added to their product, does not justify the product’s effectiveness or safety.

The manufacture might note an increase in muscle mass when taking their product, but how did they measure the change? Measuring body weight does not differentiate

between muscle, fat, and bone. To measure increased muscle mass a method such as dual energy x-ray absorptometry (DEXA) is required to show a difference in body composition (fat, muscle, bone). Keep in mind, many of these products contain calories and if you consume more than your body needs at that point in time (no matter how healthy it may appear), those calories will be converted to fat. The goal is to balance the calories you burn while trying to build muscle without excess calorie intake from a supplement that may be stored as fat. One hour of weight lifting burns from 200-500 calories depending on your body weight and workout intensity. Don’t forget that most men only need between 2000-2800 calories per day and women need 1600-2300 calories per day if active most days of the week and are not seeking to lose weight. So if you are trying to build muscle, lose weight, and burn fat, some products will make your efforts more difficult.

Many of these products include ingredients (herbals, caffeine, etc) that may have one or more of the following side effects: water retention, muscle cramping, stomach cramping, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, anxiety, irregular heart rate, disrupted sleep pattern, restlessness, blurred vision, nutritional imbalances, seizures, liver damage or kidney failure. And remember, more is not better!

If you are going to choose a product, do your homework before you take a large hit to your wallet. For more information about dietary supplements and ergogenic aids visit the USDA Dietary Supplements webpage.



# W Unit Watch

## Bravo Company

### Task Force Mountain Eagle



(Above) U.S. Army Pfc. Jennifer A. Raulston, of Salt Lake City, and U.S. Army Pfc. Montine J. Roberson-Blue, of San Francisco, aircraft structural repairers with B Company, 277th Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, reinstall a mounting bracket inside a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, June 15. (Below) U.S. Army Pfc. Jon A. Delgado, of Temecula, Calif., an aircraft powertrain repairer with B Company, installs safety wire on to a hub oil tank from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter at Bagram Airfield.

Story and photos by U.S. Army Sgt. Derek J. Nelson  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

From bullet holes to electronic malfunctions, when helicopters need repair beyond the capabilities of forward line units, it's the Soldiers of B Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, who keep the birds in the fight.

Soldiers of B Company, 277th Aviation Support Battalion, TF Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, or "Hangar Rats" as they call themselves, specialize in helicopter maintenance and repair. The unit works on a diverse set of aircraft including the CH-47 Chinook, UH-60 Blackhawk, AH-64 Apache and the OH-58 Kiowa. Most of the repairs



require specialized skills, tools and facilities. It is these specialties that set B Company apart from other units in Regional Command-East.

"We have a three-bay facility each with its own 10-ton overhead crane," said U.S. Army Spc. James B. Henderson, of Azle, Texas, a Chinook Repairer with B Company. "Everything here is much better, because we are the main hub for aviation in Afghanistan."

Much like any mechanical work, there are multiple echelons of available service when a helicopter breaks. When something goes wrong, the first line of assistance are the "line" units located at the forward operating bases. Sometimes these problems can be solved at their level.

The Soldiers of B Company are the final stop for helicopter issues in Afghanistan. As a last resort, parts can be shipped to the United States for servicing. This kind of servicing, however, is the final and most expensive level of care for problems on helicopters.

Most problems that occur on the aircraft can be serviced in the company's shops. They can fabricate new parts when older ones break. When a helicopter is shot, they can patch it. They can fix dents, remove scratches, repair broken parts, and fix many electronic malfunctions.

Since their arrival in Afghanistan last October, the company completed more than 4,600 work orders and expects that number to be well over 6,000 by the time they redeploy in October.

Work orders are rarely a single fix. The work orders that come to the shop usually consist of several parts, which often include a full breakdown of the helicopter. For instance, routine maintenance, or "phasing" of the aircraft is considered one work order, but can take anywhere from one to three weeks.

Phasing is a full overhaul on the aircraft. No part is left uninspected, ensuring the aircraft will be mechanically sound until its next scheduled maintenance period.

These lengthy inspections are vital to the ongoing efforts in Afghanistan. With so much need throughout Afghanistan for aviation support, units cannot afford to have a chopper go down for a mechanical problem that could have been avoided. The team phased 17 Chinooks and Blackhawks since their arrival and shows no signs of slowing.

In addition, the unit sends Soldiers to FOBs to assist line units when needed. These groups, known as maintenance contact teams, assemble and forward deploy to places where their skill sets can



U.S. Army Spc. Paul C. Sale, of Jefferson City, Mo., an aircraft structural repairer with B Company, 277th Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Mountain Eagle, Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, patches sheet metal on a CH-47 Chinook ramp at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, June 15.

help to solve problems at an even lower level.

The company also sends Soldiers to forward arming and refueling points. The troops support nine FARPs throughout RC-East and help refuel helicopters as well as reload them with ammunition. Soldiers at the FARPs loaded more than 11,000 rounds of ball-type ammunition.

"Afghanistan is a very hostile environment and the possibility for damage is great," said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Douglas E. Walters, an aviation

technician with B Company, of Jacksonville, Fla. "We're saving the Army hundreds of millions of dollars by repairing components of the aircraft here and returning them expeditiously to the fight."

The skills, teamwork, and dedication to ongoing contingency operations in Afghanistan truly set the Hangar Rats of the 277th ASB apart in Afghanistan. The attention to detail these Soldiers provide on a daily basis is keeping helicopters safe and effective for service members in the air and on the ground. ☺

# Afghan-led operation clears Zardulu Pass



The 203rd Thunder Corps commander, Afghan Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq and 505th Afghan Uniformed Police commander, Afghan Police Maj. Gen. Gul Nabi Ahmed Zai take questions from local media regarding a successful clearing operation at Zardulu Pass. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Kenneth A. Stewart, 17th Public Affairs Detachment)

Story and photo by U.S. Army Capt. Kenneth A. Stewart  
17th Public Affairs Detachment

A combined Afghan National Security Force team conducted a major operation to clear the Zardulu Pass of insurgent forces.

“The enemy was using this pass as a safe haven,” said Afghan Uniformed Police 505th Zone commander, Maj. Gen. Gul Nabi Ahmed Zai. “The pass was a base of operations from which insurgents pushed out fighters to the rest of the province.”

The fight for the pass was not without cost, two Afghan Soldiers from the Afghan National Army’s 203rd Thunder Corps, 3rd Brigade Route Clearance Team died during the operation.

“The main fighting was conducted by the Afghan National Civil Order Police,” said ANCOB commander, Hajji Kuwari of Baghram. “(Afghan National Security Forces) lost two men, but the enemy was not able to stand against us.”

The Zardulu Pass is important economically to the eastern Afghan province of Ghazni. Insurgent activities along the pass artificially drove up the prices of food throughout the province, but according to Ahmed Zai, operations already had a positive effect.

“The prices of goods in Ghazni have already decreased due to the clearing of the pass,” said Ahmed Zai.

According to Ahmed Zai, the area was also a major source of criminal activity used to finance insurgent operations.

“Insurgent forces were using the Zardulu Pass to extort money from local residents,” said a senior advisor to the Afghan Army’s 203rd Corps, U.S. Army Col. James F. Chisholm of Elizabeth, Pa.

The Zardulu Pass connects geographically isolated residents to markets, hospitals and family members in the city. Its residents are a mixture of ethnic Pashtouns and Hazaras.

The 203rd Thunder Corps commander, Afghan Army Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq pointed out the clearance operation was a national initiative and that did not favor any one ethnic group.

“We will conduct a shura to assure the people that our operations are neutral,” said Khaliq. “The people must know that we are here for all Afghans.”

Khaliq also stressed the essentially Afghan nature of the clearance operation.

“This was an Afghan-led operation conducted with minimal coalition support,” said Khaliq.

Task Force White Eagle commander, Polish Maj. Gen. Slawomir Wojciechowski of Zielona Gora, Poland concurred.

“This operation was selected, planned and executed by Afghan forces,” said Wojciechowski. “They recognized the importance of this place, and we supported them.”

# Get to know the new USAREC

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeff White

How many of us have had a Platoon Sergeant or First Sergeant say to us, “Recruiting was the worst three years of my life; only a fool would volunteer to be a Recruiter.” In their defense, the U.S. Army recruiting Command - or USAREC - of old had that affect on many of the Soldiers who served a tour of duty within its ranks. So why would anyone ever volunteer for recruiting duty? Well, because this isn’t your First Sergeant’s or Sergeant Major’s USAREC anymore.

Recruiting Command, just like other Army units, has had its share of black eyes over the years. It’s been plagued by leadership issues, excessive work hours, pressure to make mission, you name it. Now I will admit, as someone who has spent the last 11 years of his career serving in USAREC, I have not described an organization anyone - to include myself - would volunteer to be a part of. But I believe the sign of any great organization is measured not by its ability to accomplish an assigned mission but by its ability to identify the need for change and successfully implement that change while accomplishing the mission. During the past few years that is exactly what USAREC has done.

So what’s new? Recruiting Command has successfully implemented many new programs focusing on the quality of life of recruiters and their families.

## Commander’s Work Hour Policy:

Gone are 14-hour duty days in recruiting. In 2009 the commanding general implemented a work-hour policy setting duty hours from 0900 to 1700 for all of Recruiting Command.

## Team Recruiting:

Also gone are the days of Recruiters signing for individual missions. The mission is now assigned to the recruiting station and recruiters within each station work as a team to accomplish their assigned mission by focusing on each individual Recruiter’s strengths.

## Leased Family Housing:

One of the unique attributes of Recruiting Command is the ability to be stationed almost anywhere. With that comes assignments to areas of the country with a considerably higher cost of living than others and, although your Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is adjusted by zip code, sometimes it’s simply not enough. The Leased Family Housing initiative is very similar to on post housing: the Army Corps of Engineers inspects and approves your home then contracts with your property management group for your rent and utilities.

## Gym Memberships:

We all know physical fitness is important, but for years in Recruiting Command if you wanted to go to a gym you had to pay for the membership out of your own pocket. Not anymore. All recruiters who are not by a military installation can have a membership to a local gym provided to them free of charge.

## Family and Well-Being Initiatives:

USAREC understands a strong Family makes a strong Recruiter and the Command is consistently improving support to Soldiers and their Families. Each Battalion has a Soldier and Family Support Advocate, who assists Soldiers and Families with

TRICARE and Family Program issues. USAREC also provides assistance with childcare for Soldiers assigned to geographically dispersed units and Spouse employment.

Those are just a few of the changes happening within Recruiting Command, but there are also a few things that haven’t changed,

## Unique Leadership and Training Opportunities:

Being an Army Recruiter will help you develop leadership and interpersonal skills that will benefit you throughout your Army career. Imagine having the opportunity to use your training skills to prepare future Soldiers for Basic Training.

## Special Duty Pay:

Detailed Recruiters receive \$450 per month in Special Duty Pay - \$150 more than you would make as a Drill Sergeant.

## Recruiter Expense Account:

As a Recruiter you will need to spend money on work-related items, such as taking prospects to lunch. To help compensate you for these expenses, Recruiters have authorized expense accounts.

## Favorable Consideration for Centralized Promotion Boards:

As the Army continues to draw down its end strength, competition for promotions will naturally become more competitive and the need to separate yourself from your peers will become more important than ever. A tour of duty with Recruiting Command is one of the best ways to not only separate yourself from your peers but also show the Army you are a versatile Soldier who is capable of operating in any environment.

## Ability to tell your Army story:

As a Recruiter, you are a member of an organization that has some of the toughest qualifications in the Army and if you make the cut, you have the unique opportunity to tell your Army Story to America. You will also play a key role in shaping the Army’s future.

That’s a little bit about today’s Recruiting Command. Is it for you? That’s a question each of you has to answer for yourself.

My name is Sgt. 1st Class Jeff White I am the Division Outreach NCO for the First Cavalry Division. A 79R (professional Recruiter) with more than 11 years experience in recruiting, One of my duties is to assist Soldiers with the information needed to determine whether a recruiting assignment is right for them.

Contact info:.

SFC Jeff A White  
Division Outreach NCO  
First Cavalry Division  
Bagram, Afghanistan  
DSN: 431-2841  
Cell: 079-731-2426  
E-Mail: jeff.a.white@afghan.swa.army.mil

# NATIONAL GUARD AND ARMY RESERVE AFFAIRS

Guard:

army.nationalguard@  
afghan.swa.army.mil

DSN

318-431-4249

Reserve:

army.reserve@  
afghan.swa.army.mil

DSN

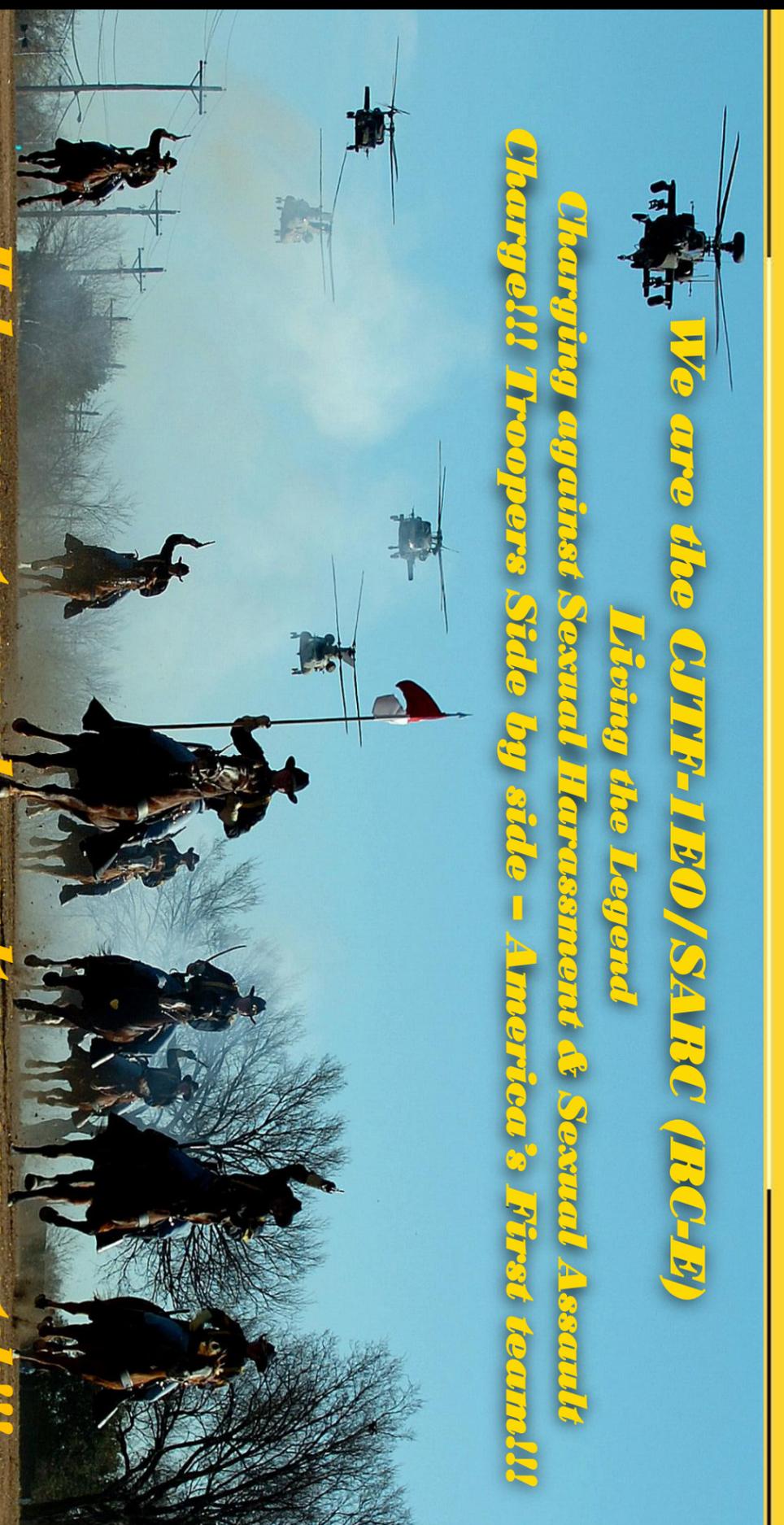
318-431-4255



**Help prevent sexual assault on your watch!!!**

For more information or to report an incident :

Lt Col Charron PM 318-431-2743 or MSG Parks @ 431-2204 D/SARC  
CJTF1 Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response & Prevention (SHARP) Office



**We are the CJTF-1EO/SARC (RC-E)**

*Living the Legend*

**Charging against Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault**

**Charge!!! Troopers Side by side - America's First team!!!**



**Sexual Harassment / Assault  
Response & Prevention (SHARP) Program**



**I AM  
STRONG**  
INTERPRET ACT MOTIVATE

# the final Watch



*Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Task Force Duke, await the delivery of an M119 howitzer to their mountain outpost in Spyan District, Afghanistan. The mission was the first air assault conducted in the battalion's history. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Christopher M. Holden, Task Force Combat Public Affairs)*