

February 11, 2008

# Freedom Watch

AFGHANISTAN



82nd unit wins award ■ Rebuilding ■ FOB Kutschbach



## DOD

### Famed 'Screaming Eagles' Prepare for Afghanistan Deployment

By Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

**FORT CAMPBELL, Ky.** - Cold drizzle and hot metal rained upon the ground here as a group of 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) soldiers honed their mortar and howitzer targeting skills in preparation for deployment to Afghanistan in April.

Forward observer Army Spc. Daniel L. Howes wiped raindrops from his eyes by the second-story window of a wooden training structure as he watched 81 mm and 120 mm mortar shells and 105 mm howitzer rounds explode hundreds of yards away. The St. Paul, Minn., native quickly radioed adjusting-fire instructions to colleagues manning the mortars.

Howes is among about 3,800 4th Brigade Combat Team soldiers from Fort Campbell preparing to deploy to eastern Afghanistan this spring.

"I'm here to protect my country and that is what I will do," said Howes, a Headquarters and Headquarters Company soldier, who sports a combat patch from a previous duty tour in Iraq.

The 4th Brigade Combat Team, part of the 506th Infantry Regiment, can trace its lineage to the World War II unit that helped lift the German siege of Bastogne, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge, said Army Maj. Patrick R. Seiber, public affairs officer for 4th BCT.

An HBO miniseries, titled "Band of Brothers," highlights the World War II exploits of several members of the 101st Division, from the landings at Normandy to the capture of Adolf Hitler's Berchtesgaden vacation home.

The 101st Division is nicknamed the "Screaming Eagles." Its headquarters also will deploy to Afghanistan to relieve the 82nd Airborne Division's command element, Seiber said.

The division's 1st, 2nd and 3rd brigade combat teams currently are deployed in Iraq.

"We look forward to doing a good job in Afghanistan," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Troy D. Albert, an automated fire-support specialist with 4th Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, as he deftly channeled range-related message traffic.

"I'm basically the AT&T of field artillery," Albert, the Baton Rouge, La., native said. "My military job is exciting, different and never the same."

Army Lt. Col. Tom W. O'Steen, commander of 1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, was on hand to watch the training exercise. The two-day exercise involved fixed, and rotary-wing aircraft, and mortar and artillery fire-support assets, O'Steen explained.

"It integrates all of those assets that they're going to use in Afghanistan," he said. "This is the capstone exercise for our preparations for deployment."

"Deployments are always difficult and involve competing interests," O'Steen said. "You're trying to focus on the mission you're getting ready to do, but you also have to keep your mind on getting your family ready for an extended separation," he said. "I think we've done a good job on giving the soldiers and the leaders time off to get their families ready."

According to O'Steen, it is also important to communicate with soldiers and their families prior to deployments. His wife is the leader of his unit's family readiness group.

"The families are as interested in where we're going as we are," O'Steen said.

He said he recently provided a briefing for his soldiers' families in which he showed them where the unit will be in Afghanistan and how families can obtain support and communicate with their deployed loved ones.

Back in the exercise's command center, Army Sgt. 1st Class John F. Kohne, a Headquarters and Headquarters Company fire support noncommissioned officer, said he was pleased by the way his soldiers performed.

"It's going pretty well," Kohne, a two-year Iraq veteran and San Diego native, said. "The rounds are accurate, the men are maintaining good morale and we're getting a lot of steel down range."

Army Pvt. Trevor A. Lauritson, a supply clerk with the 4-320th Field Artillery, has been in the Army just eight months. He provided his thoughts about going to Afghanistan. "I'm pretty excited. I've never been deployed," said Lauritson, who hails from Sacramento, Calif.

Fighting terrorists overseas prevents battling them at home, Lauritson said. "I think that if there wasn't a war overseas, then there'd be a war here."



### Commander

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Air Force Staff Sgt.

Ian Carrier

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Air Force Staff Sgt.

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### Staff Writer

Senior Airman

Stephen Ocenosak

Visit the CJTF-82 Web site at  
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*Freedom Watch* is a weekly publication of  
Combined Joint Task Force-82.

CJTF-82 Commander Army Maj. Gen.

David M. Rodriguez

RC East Public Affairs Officer Army Lt.

Col. David A. Accetta

*Freedom Watch*, a Department of Defense  
publication, is published each Monday by  
the American Forces Network – Afghani-  
stan Print Section, Bldg. 415, Room 205 at  
Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Printed circu-  
lation is 5,000 copies per week.

In accordance with DoD Instruction  
5120.4, this DoD newspaper 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.

Deadline for submissions is noon local  
each Friday. All submissions are subject  
to editing by the AFN-A Print Section.  
We can be reached at DSN 318-431-3338  
or by email at [freedomwatch@swa.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@swa.army.mil)  
mil or [ian.carrier@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:ian.carrier@afghan.swa.army.mil)

**Cover:** An Afghan National Army sol-  
dier helps a young Afghan boy try on a  
new pair of gloves. ANA soldiers, along  
with Afghan National Police and Co-  
alition forces, stopped in several vil-  
lages in the Shahidi Hasas District of  
Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan, dur-  
ing a multi-day security patrol to bring  
peace to an area that was a former in-  
surgent stronghold. (U.S. Army photo)

**Back cover:** A young Afghan child  
smiles and winks for the camera at the  
Kapisa Orphanage, Kapisa Province, Af-  
ghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Cpt. Eliza-  
beth A. Casebeer)

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# ANA, ANP bring security to Oruzgan province

*Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs*

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Afghan National Army's 1st Company, 201st Kandak and Afghan National Police, advised by Coalition forces, conducted a security patrol in the Shahidi Hasas District of Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan.

During the multi-day operation, Afghan National Security Forces visited the villages of Pasaw and Doane, conducted shuras with village elders and met with residents of the southern Afghan villages in the Sakar River Valley. [The Afghan shura serves as a forum for women in the community to discuss their concerns and issues].

"This is one of many operations the ANA and ANP conducted in the district to bring peace to an area that was a former insurgent stronghold," a Coalition soldier said.

Prior to recent operations, insurgents controlled the area and drove families from their homes. Afghan National Security Forces increased security operations in the area in December and January to remove insurgents from their safe havens and return the district to government control. As a result, villagers and businesses

are moving back into the area and more than 25 new shops have opened in the district's bazaar.

"The insurgents forced us from our homes so they could fight from our village," a village elder explained. "We are happy that we can move back into our homes. The village is now a safe place for our families."

Village elders welcomed friendly forces into their homes and conducted a shura. During the meeting, the elders expressed their gratitude to the coalition forces for removing insurgents from their homes before winter.

ANSF and Coalition soldiers also provided medical check-ups for many of the residents and gave jackets, gloves and other winter clothing items for the more than 150 children.

"We are extremely grateful for the help you have given us," one of the elders said.

Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army soldiers told the elders they will continue to provide security and conduct operations in the area throughout the winter. They also assured villagers the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is committed to their safety and to meeting the needs of all Afghan people.



An Afghan National Police officer hands out gloves to children during a visit to the Shahidi Hasas District of Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan, Jan. 21. ANP, along with Afghan National Army and Coalition forces, conducted a security patrol to bring peace to an area that was a former insurgent stronghold. (U.S. Army photo)

# Second unit in 82nd history wins coveted award

By Spc. Micah E. Clare  
4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan** - The dedication and commitment to excellence shown by one deployed unit paid off this year when they became the second 82nd Airborne Division artillery battery to win the Knox Award, given yearly to the Army's best battery.

The award, named after Revolutionary War hero Maj. Gen. Henry Knox, the first Chief of Artillery for the U.S. Army, was awarded to Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, last month in acknowledgment of their accomplishments leading up to, and during, their current deployment in southeastern Afghanistan.

"From everything we've been through since our crunched, pre-deployment training timeline, to our results out here in the battlefield, we've been doing a lot of artillery functions a lot of batteries don't get to do," said Army 1st Lt. Christian Throckmorton, platoon leader for 4th Platoon. "We're actually doing the missions we've trained for, air assaults, calling for fire side-by-side with the infantry and conducting many forward combat operations."

In the year prior to their deployment, Btry. B participated in three major training events: one in Florida with Joint Special Operations Command, cadet training at West Point Military Academy in New



Airborne artillerymen from Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, hold their ears while firing a 105mm howitzer at Firebase Wilderness in Paktia Province, Afghanistan. Battery B recently won the Army's prestigious Knox Award, given to the Army's best battery. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Markowski)

York and a rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., explained Army Capt. Mike Garry, the battery commander.

Shortly before deployment, they were asked to reorganize and change certification from the 105mm, M119 howitzers to the larger 155mm, M198 system in anticipation for a changing mission in Afghanistan. When they arrived, however, they were required to reorganize and recertify back to the M119s, Garry said.

So far, while occupying an area of over 1,000 miles and encompassing four different Afghan provinces, the battery has provided fire support to four major operations for 4th BCT's maneuver units: the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment. During these operations, Btry. B artillerymen fired over 3,000 105mm rounds and were responsible for a combined battle damage of over 100 enemy fighters.

"We've had to establish a lot of trust with the line companies," said Army Staff Sgt. Gregory Funk, a 4th Platoon section chief. "They've really gotten used to how we operate and even fought for us to come with them at one point when they found out that an (unfamiliar artillery unit) would be supporting them."

Providing reliable and consistent artillery support to maneuvering units wasn't the only factor that went into the award nomination process, said Garry.

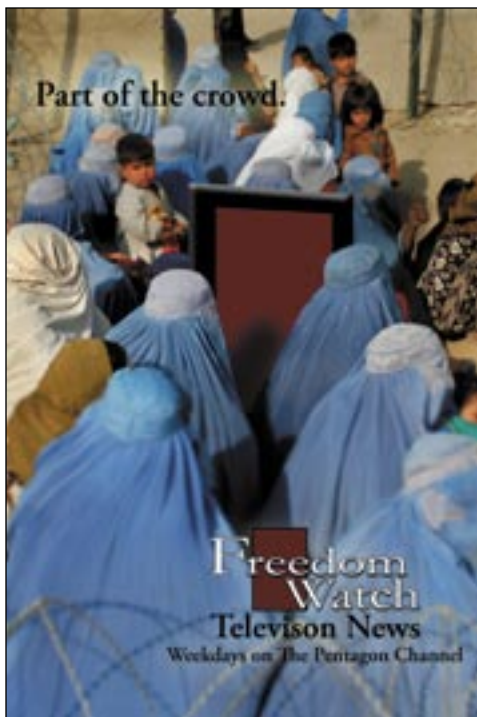
"Not only have these guys done their jobs and what was asked of them, but they always exceed the standards set for them," he explained.

Five members have been recommended for the Bronze Star and all members for the Combat Action Badge, he stated.

"When standards are established, we're required to go above that," said Funk. "That attitude leaks over into everything we do. You can't be lazy when you're in the business of shooting rounds in close support of troops. Sometimes it's tedious, but to be as accurate as we need to be, attention to detail is absolutely necessary."

Even though the battery was stood up less than a year before deploying, winning the award shows what motivated paratroopers can accomplish. "They will be a model to all other 82nd artillerymen," said Garry.

"Despite how new they are...Battery B has exemplified the terms agile, lethal and accurate," said Garry. "We're looking forward to providing the most timely and lethal fire support anywhere in Afghanistan throughout the rest of our time here."



# ANP, Coalition soldiers bring smiles to children in Kandahar

*Courtesy of Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs*

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** – Afghan National Police and Coalition forces visited dozens of children and distributed more than 500 lbs. of humanitarian items to the village of Sarposh, Khakrez District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan.

During the visit to the small, remote village in the northwest portion of the province, police and Soldiers handed out winter jackets, shoes, beans, flour and rice.

ANP officers and Soldiers spent time talking with the children, and exchanged a few words in Pashto and English. The 13-year-old son of the village elder explained that most of the village adults were working in the fields planting wheat.

"This is an excellent op-

portunity to show the children that we are concerned for their health, welfare and well being," said an ANP officer. "They spoke with us extensively about their thoughts on education, change in the district and what they would like to see in their future."

"These children are very intelligent and articulate," explained an ANP officer. "Many attend school three days a week to learn math, chemistry and Pashto."

"ANSF missions such as this greatly improve the health and welfare of villagers who live in remote locations. It also allows them to build stronger relationships with the villagers," explained a Coalition Soldier. "Actions like today build confidence with villagers that the ANSF and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan will provide for their needs."



Children from the village of Sarposh received items from Afghan National Police and Coalition Soldiers. The combined team visited dozens of families and distributed more than 500 lbs. of humanitarian items in the remote village in Khakrez District, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. During the visit, the police and soldiers distributed winter jackets, shoes, beans, flour and rice to the families. (Photo by Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan)



## America Supports You: Award Recognizes Troops' Morale, Efforts

**By Samantha L. Quigley**  
*American Forces Press Service*

**WASHINGTON** – People in uniform, who go out of their way to boost the morale of fellow troops, could be rewarded for their positive attitude and hard work, thanks to a group dedicated to keeping members of the armed forces connected and entertained.

"The SemperComm Award is designed to recognize and honor those servicemembers who are making personal contributions to boost the morale of their fellow men and women," organization officials said in a recent news release.

Up to three awardees will be chosen from all nominations received by Feb. 29. Any servicemember, including those serving in the Coast Guard, combatant commands and field commands, can nominate someone.

The judges, four retired military officers, will base their decisions on actions the nominees took to boost the morale of fellow servicemembers, the remoteness and size of the base where the nominee is stationed, and their desire to go above and beyond the call of duty.

Winners will be honored at the SemperComm Foundation's annual gala May 22 in Arlington, Va.

SemperComm is dedicated to supplying morale-boosting communications and entertainment equipment, software and services to small, remote U.S. military bases overseas.

It's also a supporter of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and companies with servicemembers and their families serving at home and abroad.

For more information on the SemperComm Award, contact Alix Anne Hornig at 703-923-7610 or at [ahornig@sempercomm.org](mailto:ahornig@sempercomm.org).

# 82nd prepares Andar ANP as leaders in security

By Spc. Micah E. Clare  
4th BCT Public Affairs

**ANDAR DISTRICT, Afghanistan-** One 82nd Airborne Division company could have decided to take things easy after an extremely busy 12 months. After all, they only had three more months until redeploying to Fort Bragg, N.C.

Instead, Paratroopers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team are making sure that all accomplishments during the past year in Ghazni Province's Andar District won't go to waste.

Since their arrival last January, Andar has been transformed. Once it was an area of dirt paths controlled by various Taliban shadow governments and riddled with improvised explosive devices. Now Andar is a safe, growing district with paved roads regularly patrolled by the Afghan National Police, said Army Capt. Matt Hagerman, effects coordinator for 2-508.

"IEDs, indirect and direct fire attacks are at an all-time low," Hagerman said. "Jingle truck [cargo trucks used by Afghan nationals] drivers no longer have to worry about being hijacked, and (district council meeting) attendance is up. Overall, the entire area of operations is becoming more developed. New roads are being paved, the flow of commerce is booming and more medical and educational facilities are available to all."

Most importantly, the ANP and the local government have gained the people's trust.

"The enemy no longer has freedom of maneuver here," said Army 1st Lt. Aaron Childers, a platoon leader from Co. A, operating out of Four Corners Outpost in central Andar. "It's to the point now where villagers are calling the ANP commander whenever the enemy comes to their village."

The police stationed in the three towns of Sini, Miri and Sadar Kala now have a reputation of being ethical, tactical and professional, Childers explained.

"They've finally received the right combination of leadership, training and equipment here that's transformed them into what they are now," said Childers.

While each branch of the Afghan National Security Forces has an important role to play in Afghanistan's security, the



**An Afghan National Police officer guards a checkpoint, checking cars as they pass through for contraband weapons or bombs along a newly paved road in Andar District in Ghazni, Afghanistan, Jan. 1, 2008. Behind him are Paratroopers from the 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Micah E. Clare)**

main players for sustained local security are the ANP, Childers stated. They have an involved and intimate knowledge of the people, the area, the enemy, and are the ones passing that knowledge to their partner Coalition units.

But the 2-508's responsibility as caretaker for Andar's forces is changing hands in spring, a potentially difficult time to pass over a district known for being an ideal insurgent haven.

"Andar's improvements have been some of the best in the country," Hagerman said. "Just because there's a new unit coming in, the improvements aren't going to change, they'll continue."

In an effort to provide a seamless transition to the 101st Airborne Division unit, members of company A took it upon themselves to create a two-month course of specialized training for the Andar's police force.

"We want to hand-off a police force who knows what they're doing and also knows what will be expected of them," said Childers, who wrote the training schedule. "Last year, we were handed a police force who didn't know what to do and we spent months trying to figure out how to get them going. We don't want all that work going to waste; the 101st shouldn't have to start over from scratch."

Company A squad and platoon leaders

will conduct daily training sessions covering standardized marksmanship, radio communications, small and large group tactics, escalation of force procedures and first aid, Childers stated.

"Everything they need for the training is provided by us, including ammo, fuel and food," he said. "All they have to do is show up."

While all ANSF forces are initially trained by Coalition Embedded Training Teams at special training centers like the one in nearby Gardez, training doesn't just stop when they leave the ETTs' care.

"It's then the responsibility of the units to work with, continually train and evaluate (the ANSF), just like we train our own guys in garrison," Childers said. "We're trying to take the foundation the embedded training teams instilled and improve on it in the field."

Childers hopes the training will help the Andar ANP and the 101st Airborne Division to hit the enemy hard in the spring.

"We want them to be unified, on the same page and fighting as a team," said Childers. "In spring, there's no reason for the police force to be merely reacting to the enemy. Instead, they'll be trained and ready to proactively pursue the enemy, which will provide continued security for Andar."

# Starting from the ground

Afghans learn construction skills to rebuild Afghanistan

Story and photos by Army 1st  
Task Force Pacemaker Public



## FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHAR

Task Force Pacemaker conducted a skill labor workshop, aiding Afghan workers in learning basic construction skills, aiding Afghan workers in constantly expanding Afghan construction skills.

The skill labor workshop was led by Staff Sergeant Class Clay Wait, Support Platoon, 585th Engineer Battalion. The workshop increased the construction skills of 10 skilled Afghans nominated by local provincial leaders.

The seven-day course consisted of learning basic carpentry uses and basic carpentry. The event culminated in the groups of 10 and each group building a tent. Other than as they constructed their sheds. At the end of the tools they used during their classes and the workshop.

Asadullah, 18, a student at the skill labor workshop, has experience in carpentry and mixing concrete. He met the standards of mixing concrete and placing it. He was recognized as an excellent student in his group. He shed his group built. He plans to make a difference in his community.

Qassem, 22, was another student at the skill labor workshop.

"I think that this skill labor workshop was a great experience for Afghanistan," said Qassem. "It was amazing to see the results on the roof."

This is the second skill labor workshop conducted by Task Force Pacemaker. The purpose of the workshops are to teach Afghan workers construction skills, specifically carpentry and masonry. The meals, tools and materials financed through the Sustainment Response Program Funds.



# d up

1st Lt. Kenya Virginia Saenz  
Public Affairs

ANA, Afghanistan - Army engineers from a labor workshop late January, they taught workers in becoming more marketable in the construction industry.

Army 1st Lt. Grayson Pranin and Sgt. 1st Class Engineer Company, from Fort Lewis, Wash., provided knowledge of 50 unskilled and partially-trained Afghan government and Afghan contractors. Lectures in job safety, tools and their proper use. The students being divided into groups. The groups competed against each other. At the end of the course, the students received a certificate of training.

The labor workshop said that he has some experience. He said the class taught him American carpentry. Asadullah was in the group and was rewarded by keeping the tool shed. The tool shed a carpenter shop for his local community.

The skill labor workshop.

The workshop is important for the development of Afghanistan. It is important to build the tool shed, especially the truss-rod.

The workshop held by the task force this year. The purpose is to train Afghan contractors and their laborers construction tasks. The workshop course includes carpentry through the U.S. Commander's Emergency Response Program.



**TOP LEFT:** Army 1st Lt. Jeffrey Mullin (right) from 585th Engineer Company, part of Task Force Pacemaker from Fort Lewis, Wash., lends a hand to his platoon as they build B-huts as part of the Forward Operating Base Sharana expansion project.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** 50 Afghans from Paktika Province learn how to use the tools and safety equipment that was issued to them at the skills workshop at Forward Operating Base Sharana.

**ABOVE:** Spc. Jennifer Sims teaches a group of Afghans basic carpentry skills at Forward Operating Base Sharana.

**RIGHT:** Afghans from Paktika Province steady a wall for the tool shed they built as part of a lesson learned at the Skill Labor Workshop at FOB Sharana Jan. 22. The workshop teaches Afghans construction techniques to rebuild their war torn country.



# Nangarhar Province JPCC blazes trail in emergency services

By Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Jacob Caldwell  
173rd ABCT Public Affairs

**NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan** – Every week Nangarhar law enforcement representatives and Task Force Raptor Soldiers meet at the Joint Provincial Coordination Center in Jalalabad, to exchange information and discuss how they can better serve the citizens of the province.

The JPCC is a model in eastern Afghanistan for synchronizing the efforts of the U.S. forces, Afghan National Police, Afghan Border Police, Afghan National Army and emergency responders.

While the successes of the JPCC are numerous, the highest profile program so far has been the implementation of a 9-1-1 type emergency number. The 1-0-0 number in Jalalabad has virtually the same services, offering quick access to emergency responders 24-hours a day.

“They dial three numbers and they can talk to the ANP,” said Army 1st Lt. Jeff Reed, JPCC officer in charge, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion.

“If they need to talk to anyone or if there is anything going on, from this center



**Afghan National Police Maj. Abdul Gadim, of the ANP's Criminal Investigative Department, fields an emergency call Jan. 24 from the 1-0-0 number at the Nangarhar Joint Provincial Coordination Center in Jalalabad. After fielding the call, emergency responders are dispatched if needed. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Gregory Argentieri)**

they can dispatch fire trucks, ambulances, police patrols or they can ask questions,” said Reed.

The JPCC averages 25 to 50 calls on

the 1-0-0 number per day. Some days that number surpasses 100. For now, the majority of the calls are to check and see if the number actually works.

The program is yet another step forward in the progress of Afghanistan, according to Army Lt. Col. Jeffrey Milhorn, 173rd Special Troops Battalion and TF Raptor commander.

“The people are now securing themselves,” said Milhorn. “They now have a communications network established that they can tie back to the JPCC immediately and get a relatively rapid response.”

As with any new program, there were obstacles to overcome, according to Army Staff Sgt. Michael Roth, JPCC noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

“The initial problems were dealing with the different phone carriers, Roshan, AWCC, etc. Now there's a line for everybody regardless of the phone carrier that's being used,” said Roth, assigned to HHC, 173rd STB.

ANP Maj. Abdul Gadim said he's impressed with the success of the program.

“It's great. If there's a problem we can jump on it and help the people,” he said.



**The Nangarhar Joint Provincial Coordination Center is located with the Nangarhar Police Headquarters. Task Force Bayonet Soldiers, Afghan National Army and Afghan Border Policemen also have personnel on site in order to quickly respond to emergencies in Nangarhar Province. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Gregory Argentieri)**

# FOB Kutschbach dedicated in Tag Ab Valley

Story and photos by Senior Airman James Bolinger  
Combined Joint Task Force - 82 Public Affairs



A Special Forces Soldier relates memories of his friend, Army Staff Sgt. Patrick Kutschbach, during a base dedication ceremony in Tag Ab Valley, Jan. 28. Forward Operating Base Pathfinder was renamed FOB Kutschbach in honor of Kutschbach who was killed Nov. 10, 2007, in Tag Ab while fighting insurgent forces.

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** - Army Staff Sgt. Patrick Kutschbach was killed Nov. 10, 2007, during a small-arms engagement in Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa Province. He was the first servicemember assigned to Forward Operating Base Pathfinder to be killed. The base was renamed FOB Kutschbach in his honor Jan. 28.

FOB Kutschbach is in the heart of Taliban territory and servicemembers there engage the enemy nearly every day.

"All fire bases and forward operating bases are named after fallen comrades. Since Staff Sgt. Kutschbach was the first KIA based out of the new fire base, we chose him," said Army Lt. Col. James P. Leary, commander, 82nd Airborne Division, Division Special Troops Battalion.

Kutschbach was a special operations junior weapons sergeant whose favorite color was Pittsburgh Steelers gold.

"I remember I got up one night to check my e-mail and there was Pat with his Steelers towel watching the game," said one of Kutschbach's team members.

Kutschbach was killed near sundown during the second engagement of the day for his team. He was the turret gunner for the trail vehicle in his convoy when he was shot.

"He was hit by one of the first rounds of the engagement," said another of Kutschbach's teammates. "It was a lucky shot since

the sun was nearly down."

During the ceremony to rename FOB Kutschbach, several of his team members related memories of their friend.

"There is no way that anybody didn't get along with Pat," said one of his teammates. "He was a straight-up kind of guy. He didn't sugar-coat anything. If you were going to get into it with somebody, you wanted him there."

According to his friends, Kutschbach's laugh was one of a kind, he had a knack for cracking jokes, and the only thing he loved more than soldiering was his wife and son.

"Pat was one of those special people who could take control of just about any situation with a few words and his signature laugh," said one of his friends.

This was Kutschbach's first long deployment and according to his friends it was evident he missed his family.

"While playing catch one day in Afghanistan I asked Pat about his plans after the Army and after Afghanistan," said one of his teammates. "I asked him if he was ready to live back in the states again. He said, 'Bo, I am so ready to live back in the states. All I want to do is drive my son to baseball practice and maybe stick around and coach him too.'"

"The one thing that helps bring solace to (our team) is that he passed away doing what he truly loved and believed in," said the sergeant's team leader.

Kutschbach didn't give his life in vain.

"We are making slow progress here in Tag Ab," said one of his friends. "Things are going well it's just going to take awhile."

The name of FOB Pathfinder may have changed, but its mission is still counterinsurgency and training Afghan National Security Forces. Kutschbach was on a counterinsurgency mission when he was killed.

"Counterinsurgency is the main mission of us here," said Leary. "We find and defeat the insurgency while helping the Afghan people and supporting Afghanistan's democratic government."

When Kutschbach was killed in November 2007, FOB Pathfinder was a bare-bones installation without electricity or a kitchen. FOB Kutschbach is slowly growing and now has both electricity and a place for Soldiers to get a hot meal.

"I am sure that each and every one of (Pat's) family will smile knowing that Pat will continue to live in the hearts and minds of family and friends," said one of his teammates.

"I am going to miss Pat's wild grin and the one of a kind laugh," said one of his friends, holding back tears. "I will never forget you brother."



Soldiers assigned to Forward Operating Base Kutschbach stand in formation during a base dedication ceremony. FOB Pathfinder was renamed FOB Kutschbach in honor of Staff Sgt. Patrick Kutschbach, the first Servicemember assigned to the base to be killed in action. Kutschbach is survived by his wife and son.

# Pope Airman works with provincial reconstructive team in Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. Cassandra Locke  
43rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

**POPE AIR FORCE BASE, N.C. (AFPN)** - A Pope Air Force Base Airman made an impact on working relationships with key leaders in Afghanistan almost a year into his tour with a provincial reconstruction team.

Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Ricci, from Pope's 43rd Operations Support Squadron, is deployed as commander of a multiservice NATO International Security Assistance Force PRT in Mehtar Lam, Afghanistan, 50 miles east of Kabul.

His team has helped five districts of Laghman Province using information operations, development and reconstruction projects.

"(Colonel Ricci) is in one of the toughest command billets in Afghanistan," said Col. Michael Thornton, the 43rd Operations Group commander.

"The experience of participating in a multiservice, interagency team has been simply phenomenal," Colonel Ricci said. "This is the venture of a lifetime in which I've experienced the terror of being attacked (including one of my Soldiers dying from an improvised explosive device) as well as the pure satisfaction of helping people in dire need."

The PRT has achieved benchmarks which set Laghman on the path to an independent and secure province; 28,800 newspapers distributed, installation of the first four anti-IED billboards and a media-based anti-IED campaign that resulted in



**Lt. Col. Robert Ricci speaks to elders at a shura as part of his duties leading the Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan. Lt. Col. Ricci is assigned to the 43rd Operations Support Squadron at Pope Air Force Base, N.C. (U.S. Air Force photo)**

75 percent of all IEDs turned in or discovered by locals.

There are two events that will remain with him and define what his team has accomplished.

First is the U.S. PRT interagency strategy developed in June 2007. The strategy is detailed to the point of defining specified tasks to PRT components with regard to security, governance, reconstruction and information operations.

The second is the subnational counsel activities in August 2007 for the Provincial Development Plan. The plan defines activities and projects in a prioritized manner and established a long-term vision for

governance and reconstruction.

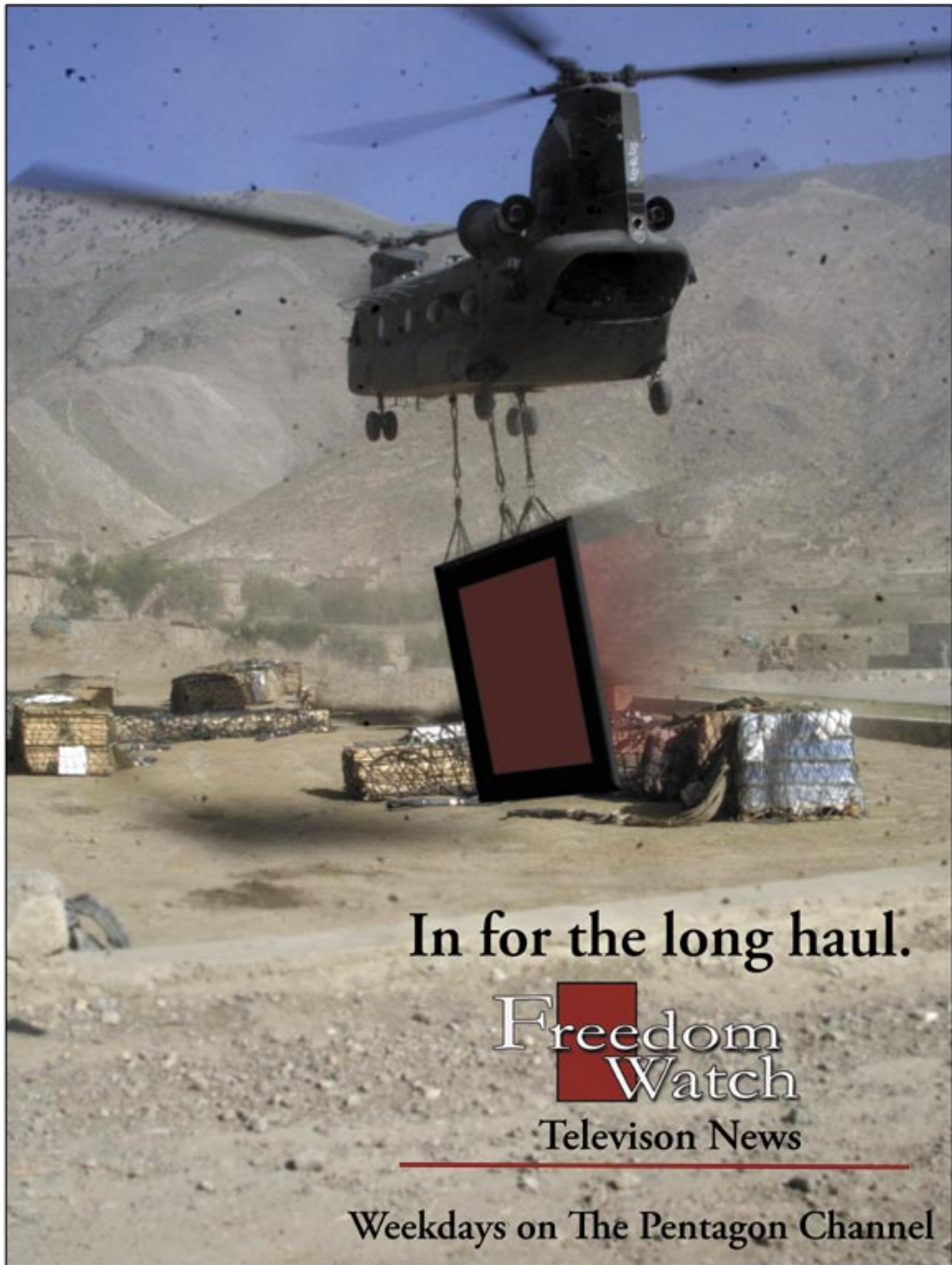
During the past year, Colonel Ricci led more than 280 ground assault convoys reducing the risks for his team in the most IED intensive province in Afghanistan.

He planned missions, prepared battle drills and ordered mitigation measures such as road clearing packages, electronic warfare burns and surveillance along the routes they traveled.

The PRT spearheaded a shura at Qal'eh Najil engaging more than 200 village elders from three major valleys known for anti-government support. The colonel said this was key to winning the hearts and minds of local Afghan leaders and citizens.



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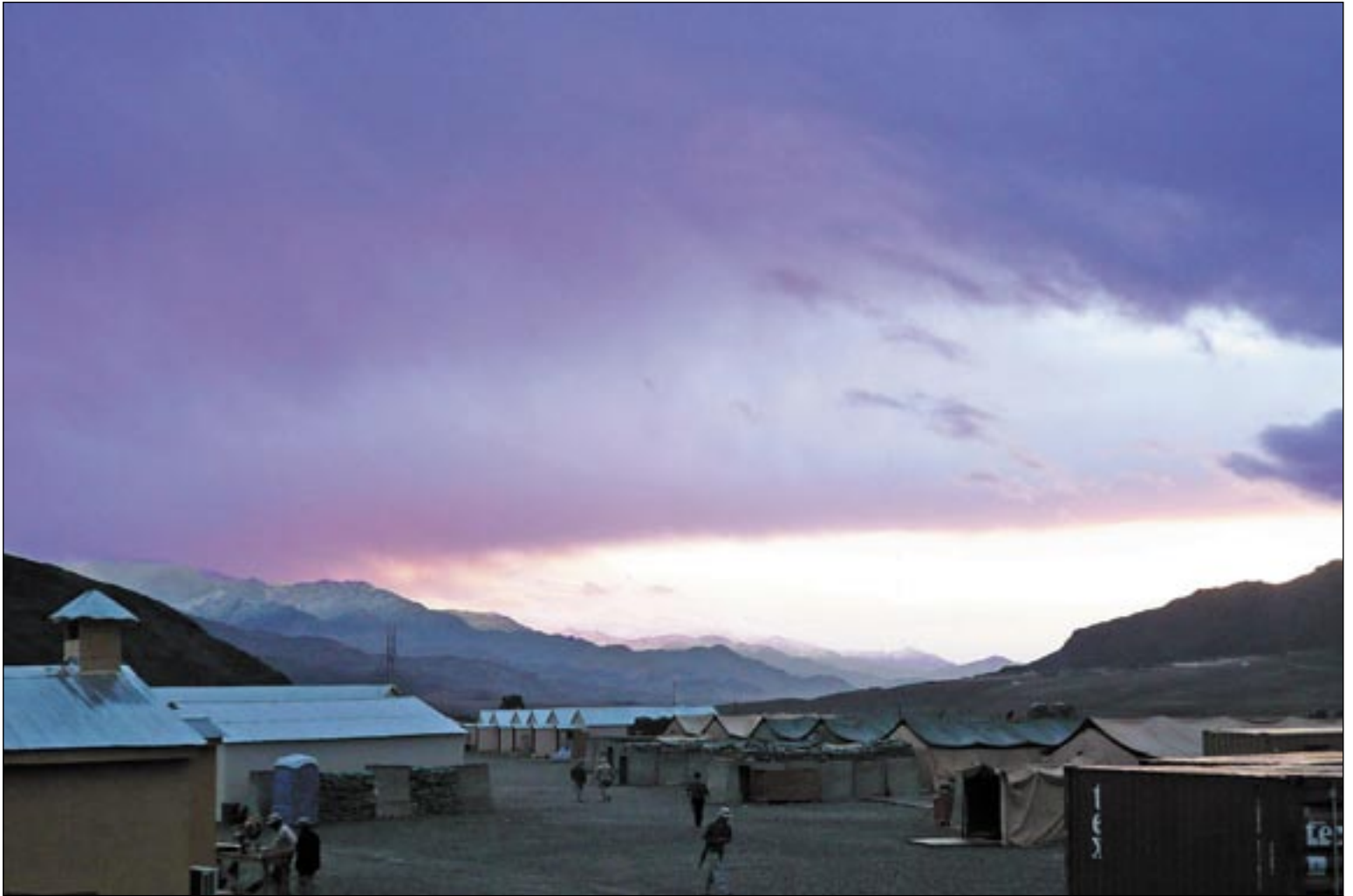
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## Photos From the Field



Soldiers operating at Forward Operating Base Kalagush, in eastern Afghanistan, enjoy a scenic view in Nuristan Province. (Photo by U.S. Army Captain McDonald Roberts)



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**Children smile for the camera at the Kapisa Orphanage.** (U.S. Army photo by Cpt. Elizabeth A. Casebeer)



**Marine Maj. John Jay Antonelli helps spread good will to children in Greshk, Helmand Province, Afghanistan.** (photo courtesy of Romanian photographer Florin Ghioca)



February 11, 2008

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