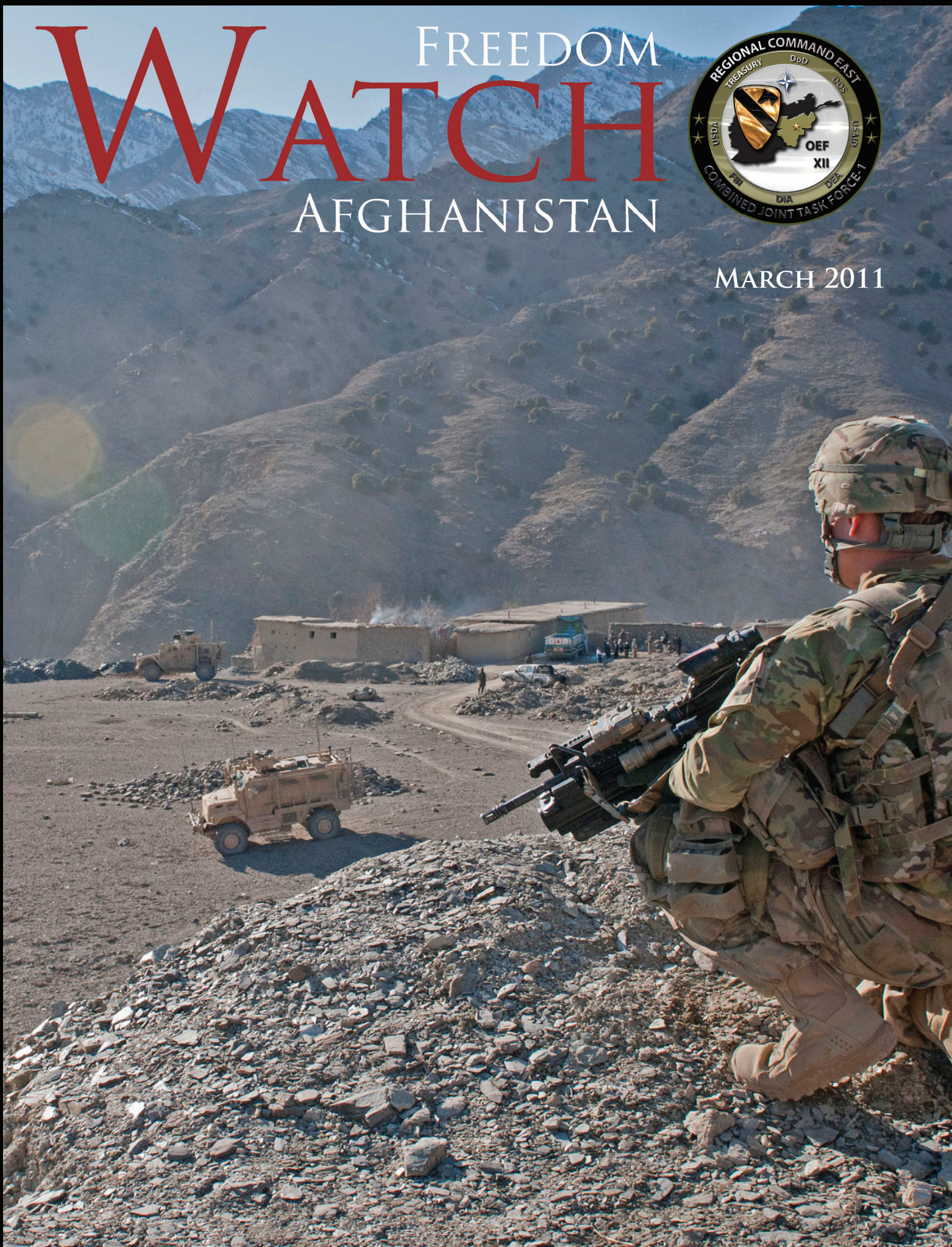


WATCH

FREEDOM
AFGHANISTAN



MARCH 2011



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FREEDOM WATCH

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U.S. Army Sgt. Dennis Geary, a native of Newton, Mass., now with 3rd Platoon, Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, pulls security during a mission in a small village outside the wire of Camp Clark, Feb. 7. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)

Bridge connects northeastern

By U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan
TF Bronco PAO

After more than three years, workers completed construction of Afghanistan's second largest bridge linking northeastern Nangarhar with the rest of the province Jan. 31.

The Lal'pur bridge cost more than \$6.5 million and spans 300 meters over the Kabul River. It will shorten routes by as much as four hours, said Philip Muller, civil engineer from the Army Corps of Engineers embedded with the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"The Lal'pur crossing will bring easy access to the northern agricultural plains between the Kabul and Kunar Rivers, allowing faster movement of agricultural products to the other side of the river and to the export route to Pakistan," said Muller, from Las Cruces, N.M. "The bridge will open shorter access routes

but also a cultural boundary between the progressive urban people of Jalalabad to the rural people living in the outlying areas," said Muller, who has overseen nearly 75 percent of the construction in the last two years.

In the event of a medical emergency, the bridge also enables people to quickly reach Jalalabad, where they can receive care at the central hospital, Muller added.

By modern construction standards, a bridge of this size and scope would not have taken nearly as long, Muller continued. However, at the time this project was conceived, the engineering industry in Afghanistan lacked qualified contractors.

Despite the delays in finding someone competent to undertake the task, the bridge was plagued with problems, said Zaman. Between people disputing the land required for the bridge and contending with the (rise and fall of the) river, the project was regularly delayed.

"We went to the site and discussed the bridge with the people and explained that bridge belongs to them," said Zaman. "The bridge doesn't belong to Coalition Forces or the Afghan government—this bridge is for the Afghan people."

The PRT's local Afghan engineers were able to alleviate the people's concerns regarding land, but little could be done to battle the river, said Muller. The contractor was unable to work during the summer flood season, halting construction for as long as three months each year.

Although the project suffered several delays, the physical construction of the bridge was impressive, said Muller.

"Instead of using a crane, they used a system of levers and pulleys, a system they have used for hundreds of years," said

Muller. "We had to give them the leeway to construct the bridge using methods they are familiar with. I was in awe. Each girder was 30 tons. They hoisted 50 of them into place with zero accidents and no material loss."

The PRT also assisted the contractor by teaching advanced methods and bridge construction techniques to overcome some of the difficulties, added Muller.

"I am very thankful for all the teams that have come here," said Gul Mohmmad, the chief engineer for the contractor.



Philip Muller, a Las Cruces, N.M. native and civil engineer from the Army Corps of Engineers embedded with the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, surveys the Lal'pur bridge with Gul Mohmmad, the chief engineer for the contractor, Dec. 4. The \$6.5 million bridge took more than three years to complete. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Gul Crockett, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team PAO)

to markets in Jalalabad for more people who are currently far from that center."

Prior to the bridge, people had to rely on a hazardous and costly ferry, which was impossible to use during the flood season and claimed lives nearly each year, said Qamar Zaman, an Afghan engineer and Jalalabad native who works for the PRT. The only alternative was to travel more than four hours through three districts before reaching Jalalabad.

"In the past the river served not only as a physical boundary

(Background Photo) A ferry on the Kabul River carries a car October 8, 2011. Prior to completion, travellers had to depend on a hazardous and costly ferry, which was impossible to use during the flood season. (Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team PAO)

(Right) Gul Agha Sherzai, Nangarhar provincial governor, cuts the ribbon officially opening the Lal'pur bridge Jan. 31. The \$6.5-million Lal'pur bridge, connecting northeastern Nangarhar, took more than three years to build. (Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team PAO)

Nangarhar to rest of province

"They always help us. The main thing between the client and the contractor is cooperation and understanding. With it, work can progress but without it work cannot."


Although common in the U.S., the contractor had to be taught how to build a caisson, a structure that enables a dry area to work at the river bed, said Muller.

"They constructed a dyke and causeway, reducing and redirecting the flow of water, enabling them to build a caisson to work on the foundation of the bridge at the river bed," said Muller. "It was our recommendation, and they had to be taught how."

After the project was complete, the last step was a formal ceremony, which was held at the Afghan National Police station adjacent to the bridge. Nangarhar's provincial governor, acting director of public works, Lal'pur district sub-governor, and village elders were among the guests who cut the ribbon, opening the bridge for traffic.

"Congratulations to the people of Lal'pur," said Fazal Rabi, acting director of public works, during the ceremony. "This bridge will be a huge benefit to the people, both economically and culturally."

Although the bridge will help the people of northeastern Nangarhar, the PRT has also gained valuable knowledge through the process, said Muller. Now that the bridge is complete, the PRT must prepare for the next challenge.

"The experience the PRT gained on this project will be put to good use on future bridge projects," stated Muller. 



U.S. Air Force Capt. Rachel Hamlyn, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team senior engineer and Colorado Springs, Colo. native measures the depth of pavement on the Lal'pur bridge Dec. 27. The bridge is nearly 30 meters wide with the capacity to handle two lanes of traffic. (Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Jeff M. Nagan, Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team PAO)



ANA assumes lead at COP Alasay

By French Army 1st Lt. Aurelie Lattès
RC-East PAO

In the heart of Alasay Valley, here in eastern Afghanistan, Afghan Soldiers have assumed security efforts at the combat outpost that bares the same name.

Since the Feb. 2 transfer of COP Alasay to the Afghan National Army, French troops, partnered with 1st Kandak, 3rd ANA Brigade, have continued to move equipment and material from this strategic outpost. This is the second such transfer in the valley since September 2011.

The progression of the 1st Kandak Soldiers allowed for a reorganization of French forces, as the ANA continues to lead partnered and unilateral operations.

Beginning with operation Valley Flood last January, Task Force Lafayette positioned a platoon of French advisors to the outpost to support ANA operations in Kapisa province. This platoon transferred COP Alasay to GIROA forces.

Constructed in March 2009, COP Alasay stood as coalition and Afghan forces conducted multiple operations in the valley to repel insurgent safe havens and serve as a center for Afghan army consolidation.

In March 2009, Operation Dinner Out was the first major operation planned by the ANA in Kapisa. This allowed for the building of COP Shekut and Alasay.

Operation Sunny Days, in April 2009, allowed the construction of an additional combat outpost on the valley's floor. Baptized COP Belda, in memory of a French corporal from the 27th Mountain Infantry Battalion killed during Operation Dinner Out, the outpost was occupied by an ANA company and French military advisors. 🇫🇷



French Operation Mentoring Liaison Team Soldiers check to make sure their subordinates have correctly inventoried and packed their equipment Jan 21. (Photo by French Army Cpl. Faro, TF La Fayette PAO)



As the Soldiers with the French Operation Mentoring Liaison Team prepare to transition their outpost to the Afghan National Army they inventory and pack their equipment Jan. 21. (Photo by French Army Cpl. Faro, TF La Fayette PAO)



An Afghan National Army Soldier lines up the howitzer's sights with the aiming circle during training at Forward Operating Base Gamberi, Jan. 29. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Matthew Thompson, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Georgian MTT trains Afghan artillerymen

By U.S. Army Sgt. Matthew Thompson
RC-East PAO

An Afghan National Army officer shouts commands in Dari as the artillerymen under his command take action. The tube of a Soviet D-30 howitzer rises into the air. A 122-millimeter round is loaded and the command is given to fire. These ANA Soldiers are conducting battle drills under the supervision of a joint French and Georgian artillery mobile training team at Forward Operating Base Gamberi.

"We are assigned to the artillery MTT to teach the Afghans the D-30 and all of the procedures in using it," said Maj. Vasili Veshaguri, the officer in charge of the Georgian artillery MTT.

The Georgian detachment arrived in Afghanistan Nov. 5, and learned how to train the Afghans at the Kabul Military Training Center before heading to FOB Gamberi.

"First of all, the artillery branch is not easy," Veshaguri said. "It's complicated with formulas and calculations. The person has to know the armaments, parts, and advantages and disadvantages of the gun."

The course is four months long culminating in a live-fire exercise where the skills of the entire battery are put to the test. The training begins with the basics of literacy and moved out to the field where the Soldiers conducted crew drills and learned the basics of operating howitzers.

"We start from zero and then build, step-by-step, day-by-day, to improve their knowledge," Veshaguri said.

The battery's training is divided into three parts: the French are training forward observers, or the eyes and ears of artillery, and the Fire Direction Center which covers the calculations and formulas required for indirect fire.

The Georgians are training the ANA in the third leg of the artillery pyramid, the gun-line operations.

"Our group is the backbone and strength of the battery," Veshaguri said.

The Afghan Soldiers' greatest obstacle with the training process is a lack of a common educational background, according to Georgian army Cpl. George Amoev, a section leader with the D-30 battalion.

"Their motivation is so high that we overcome all of the challenges and obstacles," Amoev said. "We have improvements every day."

Amoev, who has experience working with many personnel as a section leader, approaches every situation with a different attitude and patience.

"My keys to success are being patient and explaining until it is clear," Amoev said. 





W^{PHOTO} ATCH

U.S. Army Cpl. William Hopkins, a native of Clovis, Calif., and a spotter with Company F, 2nd Aviation Assault Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade's Pathfinders, looks through the scope of the Barrett .50 Cal. while U.S. Army Sgt. Lucas Cordes, a native of Hillman, Mich., and a sniper team leader with Co. F, 2-82 CAB, waits for the UH-60 Blackhawk to turn around so they can commence an aerial firing platform exercise Jan. 26. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)

‘Aluminum Python’ puts

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Steele
RC-East PAO

The enemy sniper moved silently in the mountain darkness, snake-like, as he stalked the American and Afghan National Army Soldiers, waiting for his opportunity to strike.

His prey: a platoon on a mission dubbed Aluminum Python, a three-day operation to clear insurgents from the Mayl Valley, a center of poppy production located in the mountainous Alisheng district.

The platoon’s target objective: to kill or capture two Taliban operatives believed to be hiding in Pata Tili, a village suspected of providing safe haven for the Taliban.

The sniper had been trailing the Soldiers, many of them with the Oklahoma National Guard’s Company A, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Thunderbird, after they landed by helicopter a few hours earlier on Jan. 28, on a snow-capped plateau a few kilometers east of the village. He was armed with a grenade and an Armscor semi-automatic 22-caliber rifle with suppressor, a weapon known for its quiet stealth.

At about 2:30 a.m., as the assault platoon headed northwest toward the village, it received word that someone was following them.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Craig McCullah, platoon leader for Co. A, 1st Bn., 197th Inf. Regt., 45th IBCT and a native of Topeka, Kan., quickly assembled an ambush team of four Americans and five ANA that broke off from the main unit to hunt down the insurgent. The remainder of the element held fast and took up security positions.

Using thermal imaging technology, McCullah’s team found the man as he lurked nearby. Crossing a ravine to reach higher ground, they spotted his ghostly figure with their night vision goggles about 150 meters away.

Tension mounted as ANA 2nd Lt. Nangyali, commander of Reconnaissance Company, 4th Kandak, and his Soldiers crept closer to their target. Once they were in hearing range, Nangyali shouted out three surrender warnings. They were ignored. As the stalker attempted to escape, he was shot and killed.

“We gave him a tactical call-out, but he didn’t want to play ball,” said McCullah.

A cursory post-battle investigation revealed the true intent of the interloper. On the sniper’s weapon were markings identifying his extremist beliefs.

“He was Taliban, on the watch list of the ANA,” said Nangyali. “He could have caused us a lot of damage.”

After the sniper threat was eliminated, 1st Platoon regrouped and continued their mission. Still under the cover of darkness, they approached Pata Tili to apprehend their high value targets. One is a known bomb maker, financier and facilitator who is suspected in attacks against U.S. and Afghan forces. The other supports insurgents traveling from Pakistan to Kabul. But when they got there, they were both



U.S. Soldiers with Company A, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Thunderbird and the Afghan National Army speak to a resident of Pata Tili village, Jan 30. (Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Steele, RC-East PAO)

gone. The locals said one of them had already fled to Pakistan weeks ago, while the other had recently left for a village nearby.

While some suspected an operational security leak or locals who simply had their ears to the ground, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Matthew Harsha, the battalion commander from Oklahoma City, offered a different reason.

“Because of everything we’ve been doing around here the last



U.S. Soldiers with Company A, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Thunderbird, the Afghan National Army and members of the Community Based Security Solutions police organization climb a steep path above Pata Tili village, Jan 29. (Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Steele, RC-East PAO)

s squeeze on insurgency

couple of months, they all split,” Harsha said. “They’re running scared.”

Over those last couple of months, Soldiers from Combat Outpost Najil, in the Mayl Valley, have made repeated incursions into the area, meeting Taliban resistance each time.

These altercations were particularly violent in the fall, when Taliban fighters hid in cornfields along transit routes and popped up like gophers to fire at the Afghans and Americans.

“What’s weird about this area as opposed to the rest of [Regional Command] East is that they’re not massing to attack,” Harsha said. “They’re just protecting the backs of the valleys. They’re protecting the poppy.”

The plan for Aluminum Python was to drop Soldiers in during wintertime at the eastern end of the valley, which runs in a fold between two mountain chains, and trap any insurgents who tried to escape.

During the next two days, five platoons fanned out over the valley, penetrating deeper into the area than American or Afghan forces have ever gone before. Led by the ANA and members of Community Based Security Solutions, a neighborhood

policing program, they searched villages for illegal weapons and any insurgents who might be hiding.

They didn’t find any, but that shouldn’t be considered a failure, said Oklahoma City native U.S. Army Capt. Jason Taylor, Co. A and operational commander for Aluminum Python.

“In the larger context, it was a sign of success,” he said.

Taylor explained that during his nine months commanding COP Najil, he and his ANA partners have met with national and provincial leaders to establish an Afghan National Police presence in the Mayl Valley and bring community based policing into the mix.

As a result, the police are expanding their presence and influence, and the Taliban in Pakistan don’t like that because they cannot move as freely through the area as they used to. This has changed the dynamics of the security situation in the region, he said, making it much safer.

“Seeing the CBS2, the ANP and the sub-governor, and the ANA out there working together, getting rid of opium, securing the routes, and stopping the killing, is pretty satisfying,” Taylor said. 🇺🇸



U.S. Army Spc. Matthew Odom, Company A, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Thunderbird, a native of Norman, Okla., takes a break from a key leader engagement meeting in Nacha Tili village while residents look on Jan. 29. (Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Steele, RC-East PAO)

Paratroopers rack up productive days in Khowst

By U.S. Army Spc. Ken Scar
RC-East PAO

Soldiers have different ways of marking away their deployment. The paratroopers of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, who are stationed at Camp Clark, tick it off by one mission at a time.

The settlements in the hills and valleys surrounding the base are known insurgent staging areas for trafficking supplies and gathering manpower, so the TF Spartan Soldiers and their Afghan National Army partners make it a point to show up uninvited and often.

"The farther away we get from our gate, the more dangerous it gets," said U.S. Army Sgt. Dennis Geary, a team leader and native of Newton, Mass.

Snow-capped mountains ring the valley and a smooth, newly-paved road carries travellers up into the high country, past bustling markets, gurgling streams and scenic canyons.

But, according to TF Spartan Soldiers, everything looks different through the small, thick windows of a mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle. The vehicles are monsters of armor and firepower, but they are also giant targets for improvised explosive devices.

"I wouldn't say I get scared, but the adrenaline does get pumped," said U.S. Army Pfc. Eric Barrale, MRAP driver and a native of Arnold, Mo.

"Even when you go to the places that are supposed to be main bases for the Haqqani network or the Taliban, the people act nice," said Geary. "They act fine when we're there, helping them out, but on our way back [from one of these places] last time we found two artillery shells hidden off to the side of the road that they had prepped to hit us with on our return."



U.S. Army Sgt. Dennis Geary, a native of Newton, Mass., Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, pulls security during a mission in a small village outside the wire of Camp Clark, Feb. 7. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)

Even with that kind of potential danger, paratroopers in Troop A make it a point to give every Afghan the benefit of the doubt.

"Every time you go [into one of the villages] you have to have an open mind set," said 1st Lt. John Orendorff, a platoon leader with Troop A from Bridgeport, Pa.

As the platoon leader, it is Orendorff's duty to approach village elders, attempt to quell their misgivings, and convince them to cooperate with Coalition Forces. In a war where one of the adversary's main techniques is blending into the populace, reaching out to strangers can be daunting.

"Every time I go out I feel like I could be shaking the hand of my enemy," Orendorff said. "[But we] understand this is the kind of war we are in. It's not all about the traditional conventional army, going out and looking for a fight. It's more about seeing what the populace wants from us and what we can do for them."

It's an exhausting regimen in a rough and hostile land, but the Soldiers of the 1st Sqdn., 40th Cav. Regt., take it in stride. This is, after all, exactly what they signed up for, and in the two months the unit has been in-country, they've thrown a lot of monkey wrenches into the enemy's plans.


"We've stopped a lot of IED's, found a lot of weapons caches, and taken two detainees," said McCracken. "Our biggest victory has been cutting off the [Haqqani network's] supply flow."

Another big success for the unit has been getting the ANA prepared to take over, said Orendorff.

"It's always good to have the ANA out with us. I've been trying to push their leadership to take control of key leader engagements, where I can sit down and just have my interpreter whisper in my ear the whole time, and me not say a word. My goal is to get to where [the ANA] dominate the whole patrol from pre-patrol brief to debrief," he said. "We're getting there."


"We're putting the ANA in the lead," said Geary. "It's what's got to happen—they have to take that step and take over."

One mission, one tick of the deployment clock, one village, one step at a time, Troop A, 1st Sqdn., 40th Cav. Regt., is making it happen. Even though it's dangerous and stressful, there is a certain satisfaction in doing a job that is so important.

"Even when it seems like we're not doing much—it's all the stuff that's unseen that we're doing that's making a difference. Our presence still causes that ripple effect," said Geary. "We're helping them take their country back." 



U.S. Army Sgt. Kyle Pratt, a native of Mechanicsburgh, Pa. and a team leader, Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, gives a local boy a high five during a mission with the Afghan National Army in a small village near Camp Clark, Feb. 7. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)



An Afghan girl holds her sibling and eyes members of the Afghan National Army and the U.S. Army's 3rd Platoon, Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force Spartan, as they do biometric testing on fighting-age males in a small village near Camp Clark, Feb. 7. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)

Third milk collection center

By Filip Moravec
Czech PRT PAO

The provincial Department for Agriculture and Livestock in Logar province and the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team completed the new milk collection center Jan 28.

This center, which started in the village of Jelga, supports local farmers and helps to increase their incomes. Before building the new collection center, it was based in a local shop. Farmers in the dairy cooperative needed a new place and equipment, said Said Wahidullah, head of the Jelga dairy cooperative.

His cooperative consists of some 190 farmers from the village and its surrounding areas. To fix this issue a new building was constructed and equipped with new technologies.

"The conditions were terrible over there. We didn't have any equipment," said Wahidullah. "Now we can store the milk in good conditions and also produce yogurts, butter and cheese. We can also measure the quality of the milk."

By building this new center, the provincial government hopes to increase the income from milk production.

"Thanks to the new building and equipment, we expect an increase in revenues of some 30 to 35 percent," said Khan Shereen from the provincial Department of Agriculture and Livestock.

His expectation is based on the experience from Shikak and Malak Abdullah Jan villages, where two centers were already built in 2009 and 2010.

"Not only incomes, but the total amount of the milk grew as much as 10 liters per person and day. The reason is that the center now has the facilities to store more milk," said Pavel Burian, agriculture advisor with Czech PRT.

Milk collection is based in small centers, where cooperative members bring milk daily and sell one liter for 50 cents. A majority of the centers are based in mud houses and are poorly equipped.

Agriculture is the main source of income for Logar citizens. The lack of technology, equipment and other sources is a serious obstacle to their business. This center is a step towards a better future for the dairy farmers of Logar Province. 🌐



An Afghan member of the dairy cooperative in Kolangar processes milk in the new milk collection center in May 2011. The collection center is the first of three constructed by the Czech Reconstruction Team. (Photo by Martin Svozilek, photojournalist Czech daily)



A child walks through the almost completed milk collection center in Jelga village Jan. 20. The center opened on Jan. 28 and the Jelga villagers now can safely store milk, yogurts, butter and cheese. (Courtesy photo by Czech PRT PAO)

Center completed in Logar



An Afghan standing outside the original milk collection center in the village of Jelga enjoys a cup of milk. A new center opened on Jan. 28 that is expected to increase revenues and milk production for the local dairy cooperative. (Photo by Filip Moravec, Czech PRT PAO)



Villagers from Kolangar, Pol-e Alam District in Logar Province, wait in front of the old building of the milk collection center. People come to the MCC every day in the morning and bring the milk they want to sell. (Photo by Filip Moravec, Czech PRT PAO)



U.S. ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND (Provisional)

RABIES FACT SHEET

Rabies is preventable. Do not approach, feed or handle wild or stray animals. Do not keep pets or mascots while deployed.

You cannot always tell if an animal has rabies. Not all animals infected with rabies appear sick or display abnormal behavior.

If you are bitten or if an animal's saliva contacts your broken skin, eyes or mouth, immediately wash the area with soap and water and seek medical attention.

What is rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system. It is transmitted from infected mammals to humans and, if untreated, is almost always fatal.

How do people get rabies?

People get rabies from contact with a rabid animal. The exposure

is nearly always through a bite, but a rabid animal's saliva if exposed to a person's broken skin, eyes or mouth also can transmit the virus. In developing countries, dogs are the main source of the rabies virus.

Can all animals transmit rabies?

No. Only mammals (warm-blooded animals with fur) carry rabies. Dogs, cats, bats, foxes, skunks, raccoons and jackals are among the most likely to transmit the virus. Small rodents, such as mice and rats, rarely transmit the disease.

How can I tell if an animal has rabies?

Often you cannot. Despite the common belief that rabid animals are easily identified by foaming at the mouth and aggressive behavior, infected animals may not look sick or act strange. All bites or contact with saliva from animals needs to be evaluated by a qualified medical provider in consultation with a veterinarian.

How do I prevent rabies?

Rabies is preventable. Do not approach, feed or handle wild or stray animals. Do not keep pets or mascots while deployed. Seek medical attention immediately if bitten or exposed to animal saliva or other body fluids.

What are the symptoms of rabies?

Early symptoms include irritability, headache, fever and itching or pain at the exposure site. The disease eventually progresses to spasms of the throat and the muscles used for breathing, seizures, paralysis and death. Once symptoms appear, rabies is nearly always fatal.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

The time between exposure and the onset of symptoms—the incubation period—varies but averages two to twelve weeks in humans. In rare cases, symptoms may not appear for over one year.

What should I do if I'm bitten by an animal or exposed to its saliva?

Immediately wash the area thoroughly with soap and water and report to the nearest medical provider. **ALL animal bites** should be evaluated by a health care provider to assess risk of rabies exposure. A physician may order an injection of rabies immune globulin and a series of four or five injections of a rabies vaccine to prevent the disease.

More information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/transmission/index.html>

World Health Organization (WHO) <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/>

USAPHC <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/rabies>

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--- GET TREATMENT ---

TELL A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF:

- ▶ You were bitten by an animal
- ▶ An animal's saliva contacted your broken skin, eyes or mouth

COMMON CARRIERS:

CAT DOG FOX BAT

An infected animal can be wild, a stray, or a local pet

You cannot tell if an animal has rabies

Not all animals with rabies look sick or act strange

RABIES VIRUS
Spreads through the central nervous system to the brain

EFFECT ON BODY

Rabies symptoms may not appear for up to one year following the contact and once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always FATAL.

UNTREATED RABIES IS FATAL

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WARRIOR WATCH



U.S. Air Force Capt. Sean Wilson, a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., a physical therapist with the 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron, teaches a patient some home exercises at the Craig Joint-Theater Hospital, Jan. 23. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)

Getting warriors back in the fight

By U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber
RC-East PAO

Anyone who has traversed the harsh terrains of Afghanistan knows that it can take its toll on the human body and sometimes there are certain pains that just won't go away.

To help get rid of those pains and get servicemembers back into the fight, is a physical therapist with the 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron at Bagram Airfield.

U.S. Air Force Capt. Sean Wilson, a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., is a physical therapist at the Craig Joint-Theater Hospital. He diagnoses and treats individuals with illnesses or injuries.

"Physical therapy is when we try to get people back to a level of functioning where they can accomplish the mission," said Wilson. "That's especially important here in theater for these warriors. They go out on missions and they receive injuries or they have some deficiencies that need to be addressed and I help get them back into the fight."

He treats Coalition Forces personnel, civilians, foreign nationals and sometimes prisoners.

"It's (important) for me to make sure everyone gets the best care possible whoever they are," said Wilson.

When patients arrive they are evaluated, diagnosed and then interventions are used to treat patients.

Interventions include therapeutic exercise, functional training, manual therapy techniques, assistive and adaptive devices, and equipment.

Lower back pain is the most common injury treated because it's caused by numerous reasons such as improvised explosive device blast or carrying heavy gear, said Wilson. They also treat for neck injuries, joint pains, sprains, strains, burns and amputations.

"I do the assessment to figure out what kind of injury they have and I get them immediate intervention," said Wilson. "We then try to lower the pain with manual therapy and then we teach them how to strengthen that particular injury and give them some home exercise programs."

Home exercises allow patients to maintain their fitness and treat their injuries at their duty location. Servicemembers don't have access to a physical therapist on a timely basis and giving them a developed plan helps to make sure they stay healthy, said Wilson.

Being the primary physical therapist on BAF he treats an

average of 60 to 80 patients per week and Wilson knows this couldn't be done without the help of a team effort.

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Lerma Orara, physical therapist technician, 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron and native of Zembales, Philippines helps to make sure the plans that are prescribed to the patients are implemented.

"He sees the patients first and evaluates them," said Orara. "He then prescribes them a treatment plan and I execute the plan."

One of the patients, U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Matthew



U.S. Air Force Capt. Sean Wilson, a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., a physical therapist with the 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron, performs a Grade 5 manipulation on a patient at the Craig Joint-Theater Hospital, Jan. 23. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)

Poupard, a native of Franklinville, N.J., and egress mechanic with the 177th Fighter Wing, went to see the therapist for his lower back pain.

"They did a chiropractor move that popped my back and relieved the pain," said Poupard. "They also stretched it out really well and gave me some exercises and with my back feeling better I can focus more on my work and return to the mission."

Wilson says that about 90 percent of his patients notice an immediate decrease in pain and an increase in function once a treatment is completed.

"I definitely feel like we're making a huge impact," said Wilson. "We are helping out with the overall mission by keeping warriors in the fight." 🐞

Afghan and French forces clear Alasay



Afghan National Army troops engage insurgents from the roof of an unfinished building during Operation Valley Flood Jan. 21. The operation improved security in the Alasay Valley and strengthened the ties between Coalition and Afghan forces. (Photo courtesy of TF Lafayette PAO)

*By French Army 1st Lt. Aurelie Lattès
TF Lafayette PAO*

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade, 201st Corps, Afghan National Army, completed Operation Valley Flood Jan. 25. The operation, supported by Coalition Forces from Task Force La Fayette, aimed to disrupt insurgent networks in Alasay Valley, Kapisa Province.

A total of 800 members of the Afghan National Security Forces and 300 French Soldiers were involved in the operation, with Afghan Infantry units from the 31st and 33rd Kandaks, a Route Clearance Detachment and 200 Afghan National Police leading the operation.

French Battle Groups Musketeer and Tiger provided four backing and support liaison detachments equipped with armoured support vehicles.

To better facilitate operations and coordination, ANA Brig. Gen. Nazar, 3rd Brigade commander, co-located his headquarters with Coalition Forces in Tagab District. This allowed Nazar full oversight of the operation while simultaneously coordinating use of fire support, intelligence and quick response elements from both sides of the combined force.

Despite difficult weather conditions with strong snowfalls, Operation Valley Flood took place over the course of seven days in two phases.

The first phase of the operation was to emplace ANA and Coalition support elements in the area. Sensing the impending operation, insurgents engaged ANA elements with small-arms fire from the safety of local houses.

In a second phase, Afghan forces focused their initial efforts at the mouth of the valley near Tagab and Tartakhel Districts. Once a foothold was established the Afghan force proceeded up the valley to Alasay and Hassanabat Districts as insurgents continued to use local villagers and their homes for cover.

Afghan National Police conducted zone control missions; searching suspicious houses, setting up checkpoints and patrolling while the ANA 3rd Brigade was deployed en masse.

The ANA was met with heavy and repeated insurgent resistance, but they consistently repelled the attacks with the assistance of Coalition artillery and air support.

Upon conclusion of the operation, 20 insurgents were killed and a dozen were injured.

Following the operation, Nazar led a shura with Alasay Valley's elders. He denounced the insurgent's methods of using homes for cover and putting innocent Afghans in danger. He also used the opportunity to explain the objectives of the operation and to reassure the local people. 🇦🇫

ny valley during Operation Valley Flood



A French army sniper fires on an insurgent, who was shooting at Afghan National Army Soldiers during Operation Valley Flood Jan. 20. The operation improved security in the Alasay Valley and strengthened ties between Coalition and Afghan forces. (Photo courtesy of TF Lafayette PAO)



Despite difficult weather conditions, troops from the 31st and 33rd Kandak, Afghan National Army, participated in Operation Valley Flood Jan. 22. In a second phase, Afghan forces focused their initial efforts at the mouth of the valley near Tagab and Tartakhel Districts. Once a foothold was established the Afghan force proceeded up the valley to Alasay and Hassanabat Districts as insurgents continued to use local villagers and their homes for cover. (Photo courtesy of TF Lafayette PAO)

Egyptian hospital provide

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Terrance D. Rhodes
RC-East PAO

Someone once said Egypt was a place flowing with milk and honey, but for the local Afghan people the El Salam Egyptian Field Hospital gives so much more.

The El Salam Egyptian Field Hospital is a part of the Coalition Forces that helps and provide medical care for the people of Afghanistan.

The hospital, operating out of the wooden B-huts that dot the entire base, offers surgery and outpatient care, with specialists in many disciplines, including dentistry, ophthalmology, gynecology and pediatrics.

Since December the hospital has seen over 5,000 patients including Afghans and American civilians.

"We treat and see civilians that work on Bagram and Afghans," said Col Reda AL Shanawany, the Commander of El Salam Egyptian Field Hospital. "If there is something we cannot find a solution on, we will refer all of our patients to Craig Joint Theater Hospital," said Shanawany.

The hospital offers many different kinds of treatment, but more often Afghans are treated for Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B.

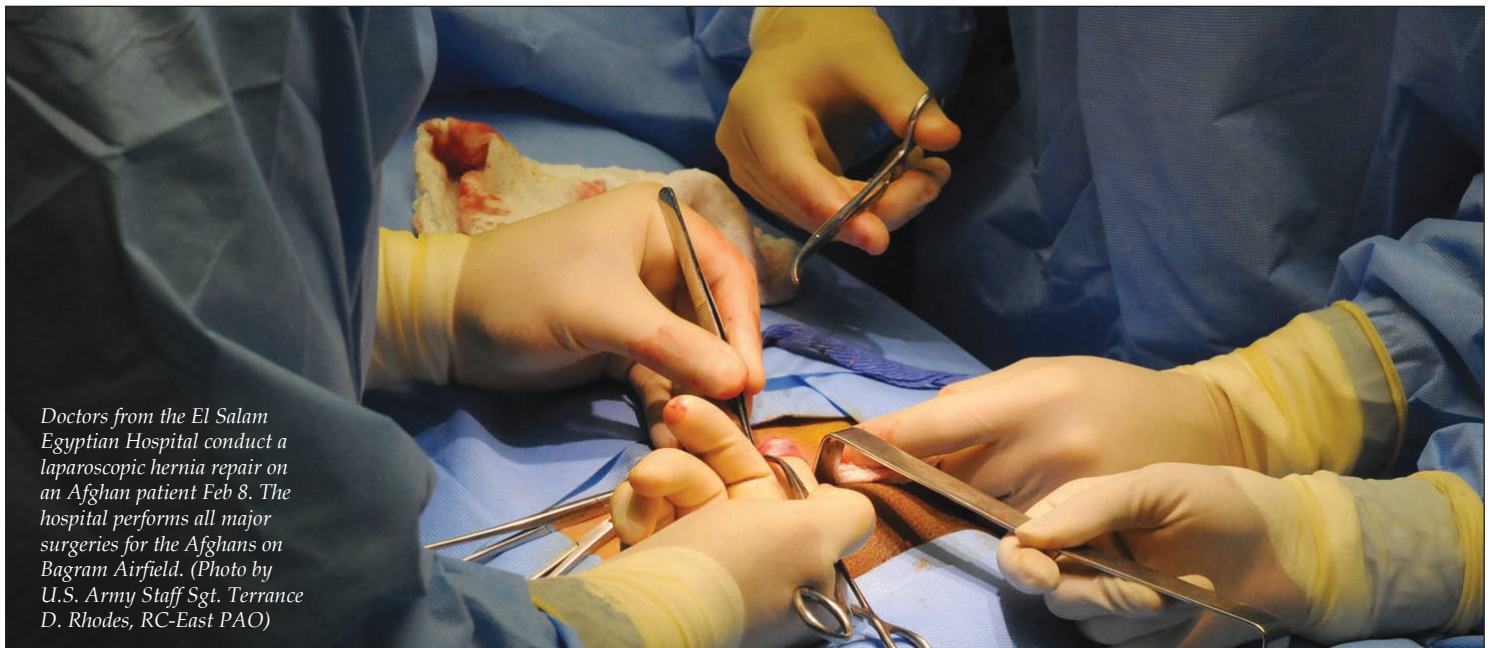
"The two most common cases that we see is TB [Tuberculosis] and Hep B [Hepatitis B]," said Capt. Ahmed Moheb, the Chief

Medical Doctor of the El Salam Egyptian Field Hospital. "People come from a long distance, so I think they need us here to make sure that their getting cured."

Afghans have come from all over the country to this hospital,



Egyptian Army Sgt. Fahar Gamal, a nurse with the El Salam Egyptian Field Hospital, gives a shot to an Afghan baby at Bagram Airfield. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Terrance D. Rhodes, RC-East PAO)



Doctors from the El Salam Egyptian Hospital conduct a laparoscopic hernia repair on an Afghan patient Feb 8. The hospital performs all major surgeries for the Afghans on Bagram Airfield. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Terrance D. Rhodes, RC-East PAO)



es medical care for locals



Local Afghan children listen as they prepare for their medical exams at the El Salam Egyptian Hospital on Bagram Airfield Feb 8. Local Afghans are given access to the hospital facilities for medical aid. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Terrance D. Rhodes, RC-East PAO)

the Egyptians said, but most are from the area.

Some Afghans travel from far distances to receive medical treatment, and some come with no shoes and with little to eat, but once they get to the hospital all of those needs are met.


The staff not only treats all of its patients it feeds them as well.

"Before the Afghan people leave, we always give them food for their trip back home," said Shanawany.

Regardless of how far they may have to travel, Afghans know this hospital will treat them and make sure their needs are taken care of.

"I spend over an hour of walking to get here, so it's refreshing to know that all my needs will get taken care of," said Mohamand Khanagha a patient at the Egyptian Field Hospital.

The Egyptians enjoy taking care of their patients and they want to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

"We want to teach the Afghans how to support themselves to live successfully without us," said Moheb. "In the future I would like for all the Afghan people to be safe and their medical needs met." 



The medical staff at the El Salam Egyptian Field Hospital hand out packages of bates fruit Feb 8. The medical staff provides medical aid and food for the local Afghans. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Terrance D. Rhodes, RC-East PAO)

ROK invests in Afghanistan's future

By U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Fahey
NTM-A PAO

War left the Republic of Korea in rubble and financial disparity. In the decades to follow, the ROK faced constant political and financial ups and downs before realizing their current success as a democratically governed country bolstering the world's 15th-largest economy.

Providing a template to post-war success, the Parwan ROK Provincial Reconstruction Team is working with the Afghan central government in Kabul to enhance the legitimacy of the Afghan government throughout the province.

"The ROK PRT came here to share our development know how and experience," said ROK PRT lead representative Seung-bae Yeo. "By training the Afghans and dispatching our experts to the local government, we are able to pass on what we learned to our Afghan friends."

The ROK PRT is civilian led and composed of three main parts – the Korean National Police, the Korean army and civilian colleagues from the Korea International Cooperation Agency, the equivalent to U.S. Agency For International Development. They focus primarily on projects that support public health, agriculture, education and governance.

Recently they opened a new medical center, Afghan National Police-training center and Korean Educational and Cultural Center in Charikar. The hospital is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed with both Korean and Afghan doctors, nurses, lab technicians and pharmacists providing free treatment to anyone in need.

The KECC provides the local Afghan youth with a rare opportunity to learn professional skills marketable to the current

Afghan business environment.

"Education in the past for Afghans was very low," said ROK PRT ANP interpreter Mohammed Shoib Andrabi. "Now, it's getting higher thanks to the support of Coalition Forces. We must grow more and more in each section – security, our economy and education. These things are very important for our community."

Both Afghan and Korean instructors teach classes in computer skills, hair styling and dressmaking. A childcare class is also open to younger Afghan children and provides basic lessons in math, art, music, social etiquette and attitude.

"In the child care class, I hope to teach the children how to grow and become future college graduates and the leaders of this country," said childcare teacher Jung-eun Lee.

Secondly, the ROK focuses on showing Afghan provincial leaders what a struggling nation can become with focus, hard work and motivation.

"Roughly 150-200 Afghans, mostly from the Parwan district government, have been flown to South Korea, so they can see how developed we are and what a modern Korea is all about," said Yeo.

Adding to the scope and execution of the PRT's advisory mission with the Parwan province's local authorities, they have four delegated experts in cultures, education, economic development, and medical and health issues.

"Those four experts have a great relationship with their Afghan counterparts both in the Parwan provincial government and those who are responsible for each area in Kabul's central government," said Yeo. "It's a trilateral cooperation network. They get together to share and exchange views on how to improve the situation in the medical, education, cultural areas and so on."

The ROK PRT is building new infrastructure and providing millions of dollars worth of support equipment – categories four and five of their mission priorities.

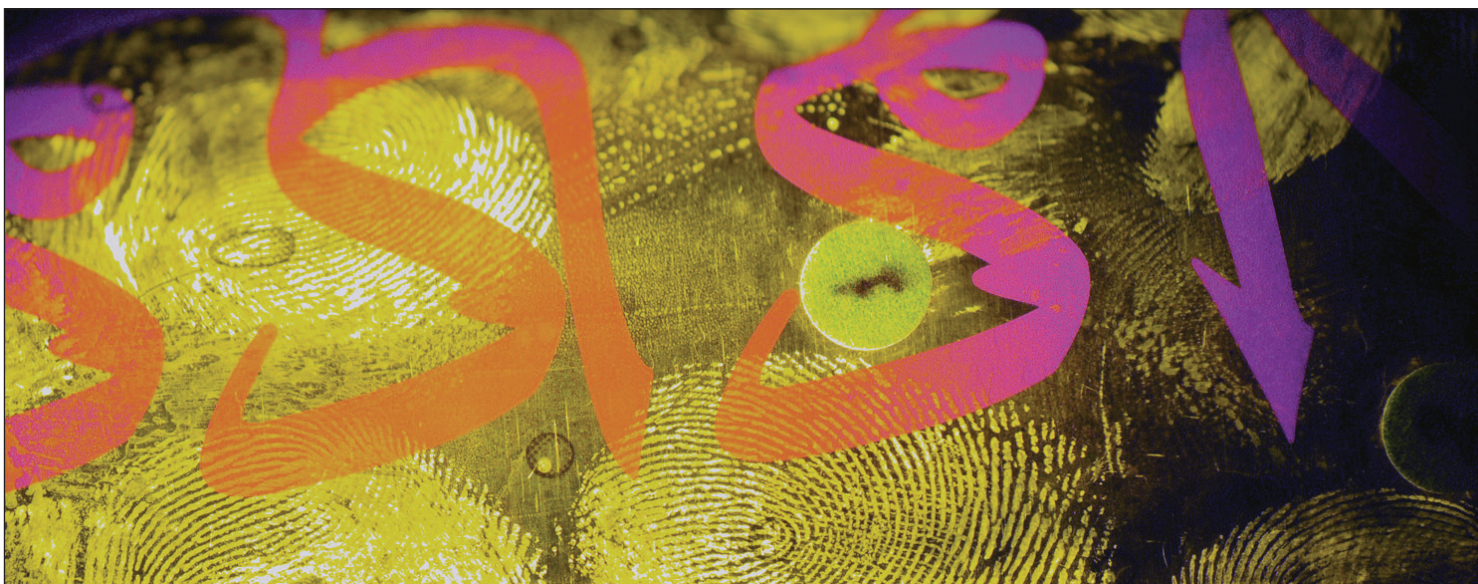
"This year, we will focus on the schools," said Yeo. "We have plans to build five schools, three clinics and seven foot bridges in the surrounding districts. We also have plans to provide the Afghan people with about \$7.5 million worth of equipment to improve the conditions in schools and hospitals."

With the degree of progress and buildup the ROK PRT has accomplished and hopes to continue, security and transition remain at the forefront of their plans. Since they stood up in 2010, the ROK PRT has invested millions of dollars building water supply networks, roads, schools, hospitals, and power lines and have provided thousands of hours of police, vocational, agricultural and governmental training. Their goal, along with the other 37 NATO troop-contributing nations, is to ensure their investment isn't abandoned in 2014.

"When the transition happens," said Andrabi. "I hope we can continue to have good security in Afghanistan, a stable country and education opportunities, especially for the new generation of Afghans."



Afghan National Police students learn Taekwondo from Korean National Police Taekwondo masters at the Parwan Republic of Korea Provincial Reconstruction Team's ANP Training Center Jan. 27. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Fahey)



Fingerprints that were once difficult to see with the naked eye are enhanced using laser technology at the Bagram Expeditionary Forensic Laboratory Jan. 18. The lab also has the technology to identify DNA. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley, RC-East PAO)

Combining forensics labs saves money

By U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley
RC-East PAO

With the Army budget on the verge of extensive cuts in spending and personnel, leaders are searching for and finding new ways to save money, materials and manpower.

The combination of two forensics labs on Bagram Airfield has improved efficiency and effectiveness while saving the tax payers millions in the process.

Task Force Paladin, in an effort to improve the overall productivity of their forensic and evidence exploitation efforts, took the initiative to combine their Complex Explosive Exploitation Cell and the Joint Expeditionary Forensics labs into one facility.

"By combining these facilities we saw a significant increase in our ability to maintain high quality assurance, safety, and to meet international standards for forensics," said U.S. Army Maj. Dorian Hatcher, Theatre Explosive Exploitation officer in charge, Combined Joint Task Force Paladin, and a native of San Antonio.

It is also shaping the way other labs in Kandahar and Camp Leatherneck are being similarly designed.

By co-locating the two facilities they streamlined the process removing paperwork redundancies. They also added an information management system. The weapons technical exploitation analysis tool allows cases to be tracked much more easily, freeing resources to expedite the bio-metric enrollment of perpetrators.

The bio-metric enrollment process logs data of suspects such as fingerprints and DNA.

"If we can find out where the sharks are swimming around, go out and tag those sharks with our bio-metric enrollment process, then we can track them and hopefully find more sharks," said Hatcher.

The labs have the ability to extract and process fingerprints in a variety of ways. They are also capable of processing DNA data as well. Using the latest technology they're catching the enemy.


"In my laboratories we have capabilities of doing firearm examinations and we have a drug chemistry capability as well," said Leroy Keith, chief of the expeditionary forensic laboratory. "We're taking away their ability to hide and finding out who the

individuals are based on the processing of the evidence."

Since co-locating the laboratories, they have saved more than \$6 million. As for efficiency and effectiveness they have also improved dramatically.

"For instance, six weeks prior to the merger we had around 68 cases a week," said Hatcher. "Now we are processing around 181 cases a week out of our Bagram facility. All the while we have maintained a 97 percent conviction rate."

The forensics teams are also learning more about how the enemy functions so they can implement force protection measures.

"Keeping people safe is our primary responsibility," said Hatcher. 



Polish Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mariusz Tratkiewicz, a military policeman, looks at evidence under a microscope at the Bagram Expeditionary Forensic Laboratory Jan. 18. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley, RC-East PAO)



FREEDOM

RADNO

Making History: Bagram becomes garrison base

By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Carlos M. Burger II
RC-East PAO

In history, sometimes the little, unseen events can have a lasting impact.

On Bagram Airfield, history was made quietly and with little fanfare as Installation Management Command installed the first theater garrison command team and transformed Bagram's base operations into a full U.S. Army garrison early February.

The garrison team was brought in to focus solely on the improvement of the daily operations of BAF, said U.S. Army Col. Gary G. Kamauoha, Garrison Commander, U.S. Army Garrison Bagram.

"Until now, no process has existed to engage the installation management professionals in running the bases that provide a home away from home to troops deployed in the operational theatre," Kamauoha said. "That precedent is now changing as the Army looks to IMCOM to actively engage in [base operations] at two major expeditionary bases currently operating: Bagram Airfield and Camp Leatherneck."

The Apia, Samoa, native added that USAG Bagram will be responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of installation and base support services in support of the senior commander and tenant organizations. Such services include providing servicemember programs, facility services, installation support and environmental/energy sustainability.

"The biggest focus is on infrastructure," said USAG Bagram Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald W. Knight. "[One of] our efforts have been making sure people have effect transportation here. We moved the bus stops off of Disney [Road] and added stops at the [passenger] terminal. We also plan to reduce the footprint of non-tactical vehicles."

The duo are dealing with the unique challenges of being the only garrison command in a combat zone and one of those challenges, Kamauoha said, was the improvement of deployed

personnel's living conditions.

"One of the top priorities discussed was the drawdown of the wooden B-huts. We're coming up with ways to get rid of them," Kamauoha said.

"Future B-huts that would be built would be made of steel with dense foam [insulation] for sound deadening and environmental protection," Knight added.

The hardened living structures would provide improved safety and security for personnel on BAF, Knight said the process, while long, has already started.

"The east side move [of personnel] has already begun. We're going to continue to push that effort. It's going to take over a year time frame, maybe longer," Knight said.

Although when servicemembers think of a garrison environment, images of civilian clothes and bowling alleys springs to mind, the sergeant major was adamant on dispelling such ideas.

"Right now, it's business as usual. We're gonna maintain the same postures we have because of the environment we're in," Knight said.

"Bagram Airfield has been identified as one of the enduring bases in Afghanistan. Time will tell, but, if it continues as an enduring installation, it makes sense to move it in that direction," Kamauoha added.

While the team understands they have a huge challenge ahead in organizing and improving Bagram, they both stated the importance of why they are here and the significance of what they are doing.

"It's an honor to be able to come here and stand up the first garrison command team in a combat situation. Normally, these enduring base concepts are done after everyone signs peace accords. To be able to do this while we're still in conflict is a great honor," Knight said.

"It was overwhelming at first, but it's a good challenge. It's an honor and a privilege. 'We're here to serve and do what's right for Bagram and [everyone] who lives here,' Kamauoha added.



U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald W. Knight, who hails from Brunswick, Ga., and Col. Gary G. Kamauoha, a native of Apia, Samoa became the first garrison command team in a combat zone as Bagram Airfield stood up U.S. Army Garrison Bagram in early February. The duo is responsible for the improvement and day-to-day running of base operations. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Carlos M. Burger II, RC-East PAO)



Outreach mission links Afgh

By U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Cammie Quinn
Paktya PRT PAO

Members of the Afghanistan Government travelled to a remote district to address community concerns and reopen a newly reconstructed district center Feb. 1.

Abdul Rahman Mangal, Paktya Province deputy governor, accompanied by Team Paktya military and civilian members, conducted a government-outreach mission to Chamkani District in Paktya Province.

Other Afghan Government members included in the mission included a lower house parliament member, the Afghan Uniform Police chief, National Defense Secretariat chief, Provincial Peace Council chair, Provincial Joint Secretariat Team chair, and a provincial council member.

Government members regularly visit Paktya's districts to provide a voice to Paktya residents through government outreach missions.

Outreach missions link the community to their government, by creating a venue in which villagers express concerns and receive direct answers.

"The government travels throughout the province to listen to the needs and problems of the people," Mangal said. "Paktya citizens are always welcome to come to our office, but we want to go where the people are to hear their concerns."

Development and nation-wide peace are only possible through a secure environment, the leaders said.

Public safety is a top concern for the provincial government. To disrupt anti-government forces, Chamkani Afghan National Security Forces, in partnership with Coalition Forces, partner



Maulawi Khaliqdad, Provincial Peace Council chair, spoke during a shura in Chamkani District in Paktya Province Feb 1. P(Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt Cammie Quinn, Paktya PRT PAO)

han government, community



Said Mohammad, Chamkani district sub governor, receives a map of Paktya Province at a district center ribbon-cutting ceremony in Paktya Province Feb 1. (Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Cammie Quinn, Paktya PRT PAO)

to provide security in the district.

“Security is tied to everything,” General Zolmai, newly-appointed AUP chief, said. “It is not just connected to security personnel, but to all citizens.”

“If you help your brothers, we can have successful security in Paktya,” he added.

With security comes improved opportunities for development, as evident through a ceremony marking the reopening and renovations of the Chamkani District Center.

Anti-government forces attacked the district center in November, leaving the building unusable.

Reconstruction efforts started almost immediately, and in three months, the center reopened for government use.

The quickly-remodeled center demonstrates the strength and resiliency of the Chamkani community and GIRoA interaction, Mangal said.


“We hope this building helps to bring peace and prosperity to Chamkani,” he added.

Members of the PPC and PJST spoke to the audience about achieving and retaining peace.

“Peace is a gift that should be planned for, and implemented by, all people in Paktya,” Maulawi Khaliqdad, PPC chair, said. “We all have the responsibility to make peace, not only for those alive now, but for future generations.”

The government cannot succeed without support from the people, and the people cannot prosper without the support of their leaders, Mangal said.

“We hope you can share all your problems with your leaders,” the deputy governor added. “It’s our job to solve your problems, as you work side-by-side with your own government.”

Team Paktya is dedicated to partnering with the Afghan Government as they work toward a stable, secure Afghanistan. 



A Chamkani District resident takes notes during a government outreach mission in Paktya Province, Feb 1. These missions link the community to their government, by providing a venue in which villagers are invited to openly ask questions and receive direct answers. (Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Cammie Quinn, Paktya PRT PAO)

TF Spartan newest battlefield asset

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jason Epperson
TF Spartan PAO

Women have always played key roles in the military's war history and another chapter is now being written by females in today's military. One such unit with a group of females participating in this change is the paratroopers of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Spartan.

This group is part of a Female Engagement Team, whose main mission is to interact with Afghan women and children.

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jennifer Simmons, the TF Spartan FET officer in charge, has 24 females assigned to cover both Khowst and Paktya provinces in two-woman teams per platoon. She said it's challenging having everyone so spread out.

"It's harder to get everyone here for training and keeping an eye on everyone to make sure they're being used properly or if there are issues that need to be addressed," Simmons said.

Simmons also explains some other challenges FET members face when patrolling.

"The terrain can be a factor," Simmons said. "They may or may not go up hills or just long distances in general. You never know what type of situation you're going to get in, so you need to be able to climb a wall with your full kit. So yes, physical fitness is [necessary]. We are always working on our muscular endurance."

There are advantages the FET members have over their male counterparts. On one team's first mission, their Battle Space Owner mentioned in a Situation Report that the FET members supplied them with the most significant information, Simmons added.

"We can interact with 50 percent of the population that the males cannot even look at, so we have that access," said Simmons. "We can also get that information a woman is willing to share with another woman. We basically gain and get information."

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Chanice Morgan is a FET member attached to the Focus Targeting Force.

"We search for high-value targets," said Morgan, a native of Cincinnati. "When we go into the homes, I have to go in and engage the females. I try to find out things about the person we are looking for."

Another member of the FET, U.S. Army Spc. Shawnte Rollins, said that some of the Afghan women will not want them to leave.

"Sometimes we have to ask politely to leave," Rollins, a native from Elkhart, Indiana said. "They just don't want us to leave. A lot of times we will talk about their health and their family."

She enjoys her job and thinks FETs need to be a permanent part of the Army.

"I love my job," Rollins said. "When I first went through the training I wasn't sure how it was going to work. I believe it's a good idea for the Army to keep it going." 🇺🇸



U.S. Army Pfc. Leslie McDowell and Demeatia Mills, both with 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Spartan, Female Engagement Team demonstrate escaping techniques if captured at Forward Operating Base Salerno Jan 21. (Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Christina Truesdale, Asymmetric Warfare Group)

Medical conference unites, strengthens region

By U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba
RC-East PAO

Medical personnel throughout eastern Afghanistan gathered at Forward Operating Base Thunder to attend the inaugural Eastern Afghanistan Medical Leadership Conference held Jan. 22-23.

The two-day conference, the first of its kind, focused on improving leadership within the eastern Afghanistan medical zone and coordinating medical services among the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, Afghan Border Police and the Ministry of Public Health.

Eastern Afghanistan Regional Medical Commander, ANA Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Sultan Gul Totakhil, hosted the conference. Represented were the kandaks, brigades and corps within the ANA, ANP and ABP, as well as regional civilian medical personnel.

The conference brought medical leadership together to establish an integrated and comprehensive medical region in eastern Afghanistan. Unit representatives gave a presentation on the status of their resources and the challenges facing them.

Totakhil said this conference created opportunities to improve coordination and communication between the units, and allowed members in the field to share experiences and learn from one another.

Totakhil gave one such example.

The ANA's 201st Corps has a specific location within their medical center for patients requiring long-term treatment, and during this conference the ANA's 203rd Corps decided they were going to implement that program and build a location similar to that of the 201st Corps, said Totakhil.

All the representatives are sharing and learning, the military and the civilians, and the communication is leading to good training, said Totakhil.

One of the speakers at the medical conference was Dr. Khan Agha Miakhil, the Provincial Public Health Director for Paktya Province.



Afghan National Army Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Shir Shah Ahmadi, Deputy Surgeon General of Administration for the Ministry of Defence, asks a follow-up question after a presentation given during the Eastern Afghanistan Medical Leadership conference held at Forward Operating Base Thunder Jan. 22-23. The medical conference was the first of its kind in eastern Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)


"Communication is key and making it stronger is the first step," said Miakhil. "Improving communication with our military brothers is a way of learning from their experiences. This conference was used as a venue to share experiences and problems; we explained our problems and solved them through others' experiences and ideas."

The medical conference is the first of many future conferences to be held to improve the coordination of regional healthcare providers, both military and civilian, and to deliver seamless healthcare to the residents of eastern Afghanistan.

Afghan Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Shir Shah Ahmadi, the Deputy Surgeon General of Administration for the Ministry of Defence, was both a speaker and participant at the conference.

"In 2014, Coalition Forces are going to give the security of Afghanistan back to Afghanistan. For that reason, we are trying to strengthen our medical relationships, we need to get ready for it and have good working relationships already in place," said Ahmadi. "Conferences such as this will help us [Afghan medical teams] strengthen communication and be prepared when the security transition takes place."

"This conference gives us a way to build new and fresh communication between the medical units and helps in identifying problems and fixing them."

"Right now is a great opportunity, Coalition Forces are mentoring and training Afghan medical personnel, now is the time to begin these conferences," said Totakhil. "In 2014 the security transition is going to happen and for this reason we [Afghan medical teams] have to have conferences such as this to not only prepare for it, but to enable us [Afghans] to stand on our own two feet." 



Dr. Khan Agha Miakhil, Provincial Public Health Director for Paktya Province, answers a question during a presentation given at the inaugural Eastern Afghanistan Medical Leadership Conference held Jan. 22-23 at Forward Operating Base Thunder. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)

W MEDICAL ATCH out of the Fight

Take Malaria

Commentary by U.S. Army Capt. Luke E. Mease, MD, MPH, MC
RC- East Surgeon Section

Malaria is a serious, often-life threatening illness. It is caused by a parasite and transmitted by mosquitoes.

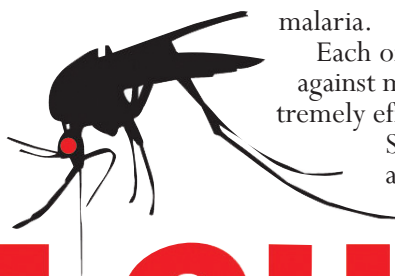
Malaria presents an interesting paradox; the parasite that causes the disease has a complex lifecycle, but preventing malaria is very simple.

The most important step to defeat malaria is to take prescribed anti-malarial drugs.

For most Soldiers this means taking Doxycycline every day and taking Primaquine when they redeploy. Taking anti-malaria prophylaxis is required by regulation.

This provides a chemical barrier against malaria. Soldiers that cannot take Doxycycline may be prescribed a different medication.

In addition, proper wear of permethrin impregnated uniforms, the use of bed nets and military-issued DEET-containing insect repellent provides a physical barrier that protects against



FIGHT THE BITE

malaria.

Each of these measures provides powerful protection against malaria. When used in combination they are extremely effective in preventing malaria.

Summer is the fighting season in Afghanistan, and malaria is no exception. Most cases of malaria in Afghanistan occur then.

Just as important missions still continue during the winter months, Soldiers in Afghanistan continue to become ill with malaria during the cold season.

No Soldier would dream of going on mission without proper equipment just because it is winter.

It would be equally foolish to cease anti-malaria measures just because the temperatures have dropped. Protection against ma-

laria is only effective when used every day.

Malaria sickened 91 U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan in 2011. This is more than any previous year of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Fortunately, no one died, but for these 91 warfighters, this represents weeks of misery; severe fevers, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting and profound weakness.

For their units, these 91 cases represent a battle buddy, squad member or leader lost from mission and unable to perform their duties.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy is this suffering and loss of mission readiness could have been easily prevented.

In almost all of these cases, the servicemember became ill because of a failure to do small, simple things that can prevent malaria, most commonly not taking their Doxycycline.


Malaria is a formidable enemy and has impacted almost every major military undertaking in known history. In 1895, C.H. Melville, a British Army physician said, "The history of malaria in war might almost be taken to be the history of war itself."

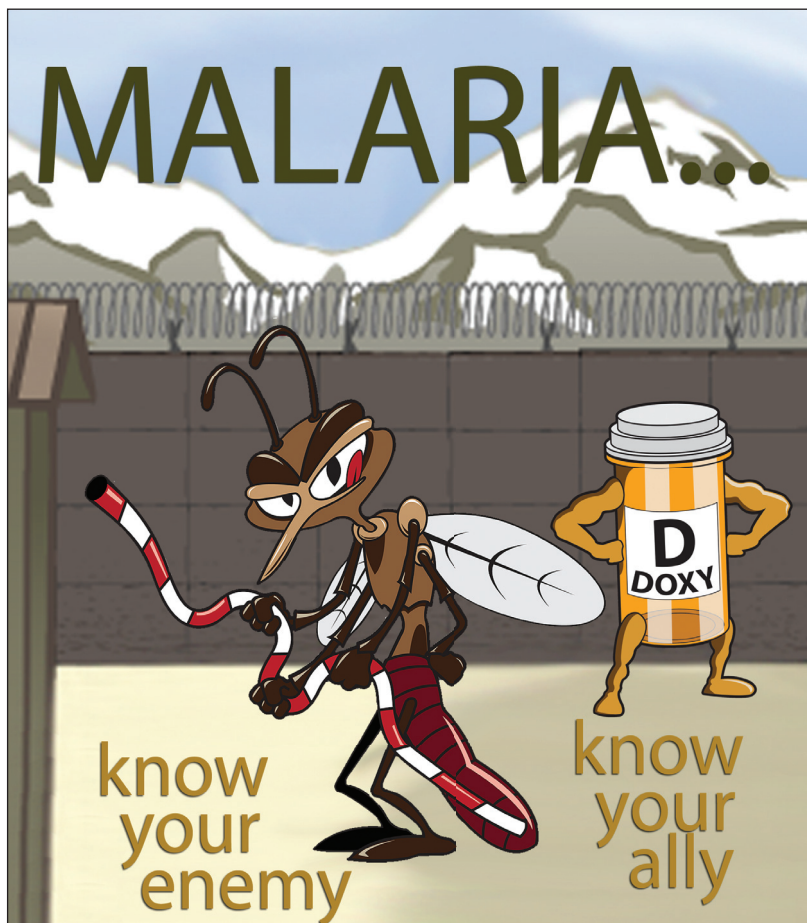
In World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur famously complained that two-thirds of his fighting Soldiers from multiple divisions were incapacitated by malaria. In Vietnam, malaria took thousands of Soldiers out of the fight.

Fortunately, since the days of WWII and Vietnam, tremendous advances have been made in the battle against malaria.

In fact, a variety of scientific discoveries have given the modern warfighter all of the tools that they need to defeat malaria.

There is no reason that 91, or even one Soldier in Afghanistan should get malaria. It's simple. Wear your uniform properly.

Use a bed net, and apply military- issued DEET-containing insect repellent. Take your Doxycycline every day. Take malaria out of the fight. 



Make sure your family is prepared for disaster when your deployed

Preparing for the worst and hoping for the best is something we can all relate to whether military or civilian. Use the knowledge to put an effective plan into place that protects everyone.



W^{LEADER}ATCH types of intelligence

Commentary by U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Jim Fisher, Ph.D.
TF Longhorn

How many times have you heard someone say, “I’m not smart?” As leaders, we must quickly engage such comments. Simply put, everyone is smart.

Sadly, intelligence is usually equated with a standardized test or academic ability, particularly in the classroom.

But don’t we all know people who are more knowledgeable about certain areas of life than we are? Doesn’t that make them smart?

There are different types of knowledge. Thomas Armstrong details this fascinating concept in his book, “Seven Kinds of Smarts: Identifying and Developing Your Many Intelligences.”

Leaders must recognize the unique giftedness of every person. Each individual brings a diverse skill set to the team, which

leaders must understand to use their subordinate’s talents. Refusing to do so will handicap even the best of teams. Let’s look at these different kinds of smart.

Word Smart

Some are able to articulate words in writing and in conversation. They put words together for quality research and do very well on tests that measure word knowledge.

Picture Smart

Some are visually gifted and can envision varying scenes. Such people are involved in photography, architecture, interior design, and other like fields.

Music Smart

Some are inclined towards the writing of notes and lyrics. They are often gifted in playing instruments and vocal ability.

Body Smart

Some have the innate ability to exceed in athletics and understand the working of anatomy. Their physical gifts include strength and endurance, complimented by the necessary discipline.

Logic Smart

Some are able to speak numbers. They understand the basis of numbers in life and are generally engaged in mathematics, science or computers. The ability to reason is the underlying propellant.

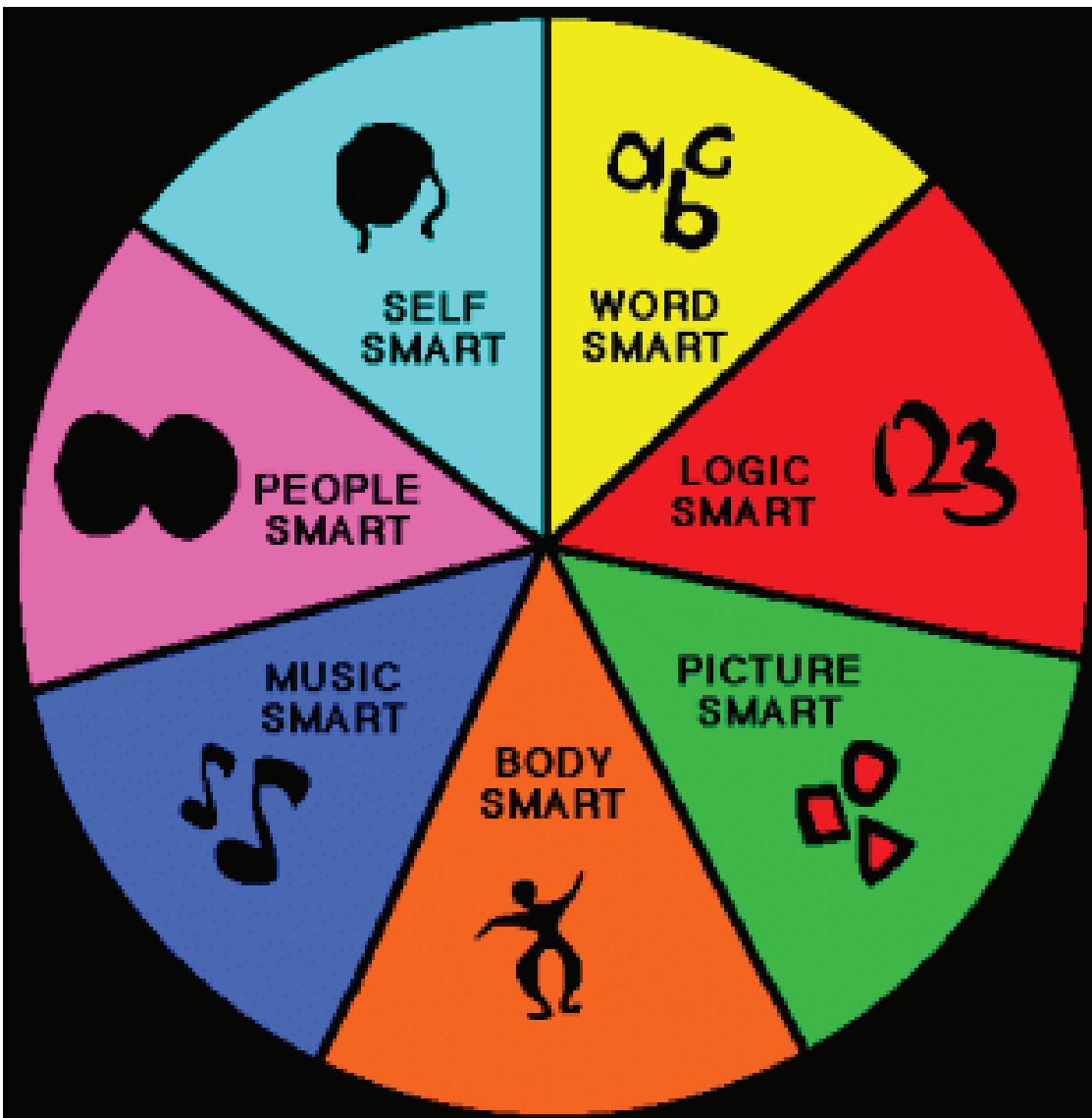
People Smart

Some are gifted with interpersonal skills, readily engaging the facilitation of conversation, communication and teamwork.

Self Smart

Some focus on the inner part of personhood, developing participation in spirituality, wellness, and holistic living.

As leaders, we must recognize the gifts of those we seek to influence and who our team members are. In doing so, we encourage others in taking their rightful place in the mission. When everyone recognizes and respects the varying gifts of others, unity will fuel even the most demanding of tasks. Don’t we all want the best team possible? 🧠



W^{NUTRITION}ATCH

Change your relationship with food

Commentary by Air Force Maj Risa Riepma, RD, MA, CDE

The Webster dictionary defines “diet” as “a regimen of eating and drinking sparingly so as to reduce one's weight.” If you have ever tried to lose weight, you probably have tried one or more diets to shed a few pounds.

Although some individuals have found success in losing weight following a diet and maintaining that weight loss, most have not. The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is not about short-term changes. It's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular exercise and balancing the number of calories you consume with what you burn.

Intuitive eating is an approach that encourages you to create a healthy relationship with food, mind and body.

Have you ever felt like food is controlling you instead of you being in control of your food? One cause of obesity in the U.S. is a lack of control of our physical and emotional feelings that often causes us to turn to food.

The goal of intuitive eating is to gain an understanding of your body's inner cues and how to respond to them appropriately.

While it may sound simple, it can be fairly complex because of the fact that our inner cues for hunger and satiety have been tainted by years of dieting and myths about food.

“Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full” may sound like common sense but many times the culture we have been brought up in has led us to do just the opposite. Infants who have not been yet affected by their eating environment have the best instincts when it comes to eating intuitively. While it is more difficult to re-train our minds to return to better eating habits, it is possible.

The following principles can help:

Reject the dieting mentality. Forget the promises that come from diets promising quick weight loss. A question to ask yourself before starting a new eating pattern is “Is this something I can maintain for the long term?” If the answer is no and

if certain foods have been deemed off limits, it does not support intuitive eating.

Honor your hunger. Listen to your body's signals to eat when you feel hungry and stop when you feel full. Eating slowly can promote this. If you eat fast, chances are by the time your body's signals you're full, you have already overeaten.

Make peace with food. Do away with the list of “good” and “bad” foods. Allow yourself to eat what your body craves in moderation. Proper portions are key and all foods can fit if consumed in the right amounts.

Respect your fullness.

Eat slowly, enjoy your food and stop when you are full. This goes hand in hand with honoring your hunger. Don't feel like you have to be a member of the “Clean Plate Club.”

Honor your feelings

without using food. Find other ways to cope with anxiety, loneliness, boredom and anger such as talking with a friend, taking a walk, reading a book or getting a massage.

Respect

your body. Accept the genetics that have determined your body shape. Your efforts to change your body shape will be futile if your expectations are unrealistic.

Exercise regularly. Get

active and shift your focus to how it feels to move your body, rather than the calorie burning effect of exercise. Choose activities that you enjoy so exercising will be more fun and less work.

Adopting a more intuitive eating style requires trusting your body and letting go of any preconceived ideas you have had about food.

While it may not result in immediate weight loss, it will definitely lead you down a path to a healthier relationship with food, which in time will help you reach a healthy weight. 🍎



W^{CHAPLAIN} ATCH

Restoring your marriage after infidelity

Commentary by Chaplain (Maj.) Eddie Kinley, CJTF-1 Family Life Chaplain

Divorce is never as easy as it seems, it affects and transforms everything in your life. The freedom most people believe they acquire because of divorce is merely a myth. It can shackle your finances and set your earnings in reverse; it can restrict the quality of time with your children; it can lead to depression, anxiety, panic attacks and more.

Does this sound like freedom? There is more freedom in marriage than living single. Before you walk inside an attorney's office determined to sever your marital commitment think twice. The only happy divorce is the one manufactured in Universal Studios.

You can repair the affects of infidelity but it takes time, patience and teamwork. In my 25 years of ministry and couples counseling I have never met a couple who regretted working through the difficulties of infidelity and those who have successfully worked through it report their marriages as stronger, more loving and vibrant than prior to the affair.

If you find yourself trying to make sense of infidelity, understand not all couples can find restoration from infidelity. Some husbands, regardless of how hard they try, cannot get past the humility and shame; on the same note, some wives cannot move beyond the feelings of betrayal and trust. If you are willing to try again at your marriage, here are a few tips that may help.

Find a good marriage counselor who is experienced in affair recovery. You might want to check with your garrison or division family life chaplain who should have great resources for local marriage counselors. Family life chaplains have advanced degrees in counseling and can aide you and your spouse.

However, if you are more comfortable seeking off post counseling make certain you have a good therapist, Tri-care will cover the tab. Make certain you and your spouse are committed to attending marriage counseling; the road may be difficult and very emotional at first, but stay with it and you will yield positive results.

Immediately end the affair. Ending the relationship creates a sense of safety for the betrayed spouse.

All communication and contact must discontinue including

emails, text messages and phone calls. If you work together, the only communication acceptable is strictly professional. If you are serious about reconciliation, your actions must demonstrate your attitude.


Be prepared to answer questions and inquiry. In a study of 1,083 betrayed spouses, those whose other halves were the most honest felt better emotionally and reconciled more completely, the willingness to talk builds trust.

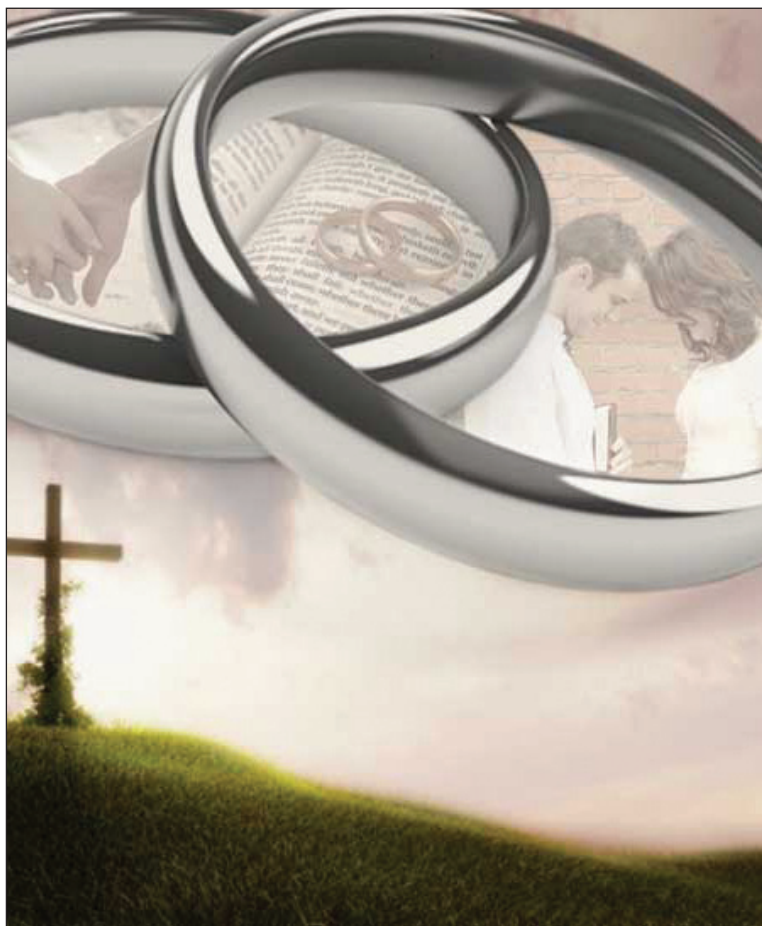
I have met men and women alike who refuse to discuss simple details of the affair to their partner. They sat stubbornly and proud refusing to communicate and answer simple questions. Those marriages never survive. On the other end there comes a time when questions previously answered must stop. If the betrayed spouse has already received a satisfactory answer, asking the same question repeatedly can lead to frustration and increased tension.

You must take the heat, do not try to blame the affair on circumstances, situations, or your spouse. Admit you were wrong without making up excuses. Show your spouse deep remorse and regret. Always apologize and commit yourself to faithfulness as often as possible. The betrayed spouse must feel safe again, by admitting you were wrong takes a bold stand in the right direction.

Do not expect to place a bandage on a mortal wound. The healing process will take time and surgery. It is not a quick fix, so don't expect one. Your partner is experiencing an excess of different emotions. Expect an emotional rollercoaster, it's inevitable. There will be days of anger, tears, rage and forgiveness, be especially patient during this healing process. Physical wounds and broken bones take weeks, even months to heal- the heart is no different.

Regardless of the marital conflict, marriage is an investment. Like all investments, there are times when the market is fruitful and times when the market takes a plunge. When the market takes a dive, they are prepared to

weather the storm, but they never give up because they know brighter days are ahead. Hold on to your marriage in spite of the current market, brighter days are coming. 



WATCH Blackhawks in the air

UNIT

By U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber
RC-East PAO

Walking into the hanger where the 'Cavemen' work might make anyone think they are at a NASCAR pit stop with sounds of clinking metal, impact wrenches, and the hustle of a crew.

Soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, at Forward Operating Base Shank said they run their aircraft maintenance shop like a NASCAR pit stop.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Julio Ascencio, a UH-60 Blackhawk repairman and platoon sergeant, said they get their aircrafts in and out safely and in record time with almost half the force.

"We're supposed to have 26 maintainers - right now we have 15, but we don't let that affect us," said Ascencio, a native of Los Angeles.

The crew, which works on 11 UH-60 Blackhawks, has not let any of the Blackhawks miss a mission due to maintenance problems.

"We haven't missed or dropped a mission yet," said Ascencio. "We accomplish every mission day in and day out with the people we have."

Making sure the aircraft is safe to fly is a rule which all of the mechanics take to heart while performing maintenance.

"It's our responsibility to make sure the birds are up to service and flyable," said Ascencio. "I don't want one of my Soldiers or any other Soldier to go fly in a bird that wasn't inspected or put back together properly."

The mechanics must perform scheduled maintenance, make repairs and complete inspections to keep aircraft in peak operating condition.

U.S. Army Spc. Richard Sanders, a UH-60 crew chief, said his crew takes off the panels and looks throughout everything on the air frame. "We check for anything that is leaking or broken," the native of Tampa, Fla. added.

The aircrafts are inspected for every 40 hours they are flown and also when they reach 120 hours they go into a more in-depth inspection. Usually, the 40 hour inspections take one day and the 120 hour inspections last two to three days, but the team is finishing the inspections in half that time.

"We are doing the 40 hour inspection in half a day and 120 hours in a day if everything is good," said Sanders.

U.S. Army Sgt. Neville Dcunha, a native of Bangalore, India, UH-60 crew chief, said his team likes to keep the aircrafts ready to fly and sometimes this means working in some harsh conditions.

"Rain, snow, cold or hot it doesn't matter what the weather is like, we do the maintenance," said Dcunha. "Not having the aircrafts ready is not a choice."

They have the most flight hours across the board from all the other FOBs and task forces and this wouldn't be accomplished if they didn't make it a team effort, said Ascencio.

"There is no working by yourself," said Ascencio. "As soon as we have an aircraft in the hanger we grab all our tools and go to work as a team. We do it in a fast and in a safe manner and push the aircraft back out, so it's ready to go fly again."

The crew keeps 70 percent of their aircrafts ready to fly to ensure every mission can be completed.

"A lot of people depend on us so we have to make sure that our job is done safely and correctly so we can keep supporting the missions in Afghanistan," said Ascencio. 🇺🇸



U.S. Army Spc. Kim Nicholls, a native of Durham, N.C., and a UH-60 crew chief with the Company B, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, uses her Gerber to tighten screws on UH-60 Blackhawk Jan. 26. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber, 11th Public Affairs Detachment)

Goodwill across Afghanistan:



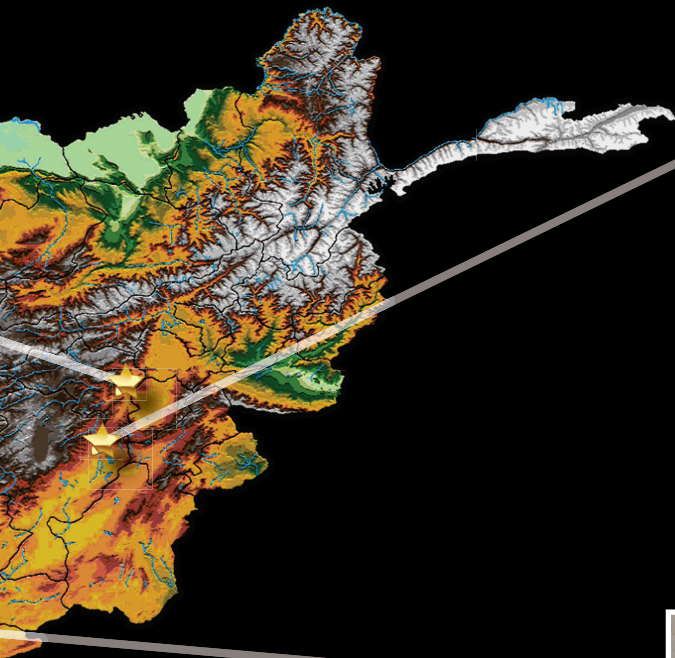
U.S. Air Force Maj. Anthony Graham, the Afghan Command Control Center advisor with the 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Wing, encourages a female student to assume a role of authority during a leadership lesson at Kabul International Airport's Thunder Lab Feb. 20. Graham volunteers his off-duty time to live with and help mentor Afghan air force pilot candidates, which includes some of the first females trained as pilots in Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Nadine Barclay, 438th AEAW PAO)



Capt. Lydia Zellers, Physician Assistant, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Combined Task Force Spartan, displays the contents of a birthing kit to Afghan women gathered at the Huta Clinic, Jan. 25. Soldiers from 3rd BSTB and the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., hosted a series of healthcare and birthing classes for over 40 women in Maiwand district, to decrease infant and maternal mortality rates. (Courtesy photo from 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div PAO)

ISAF and ANSF Reach Out

U.S. Army Maj. George McCommon, from Macon, Ga., a veterinarian assigned to 201st Georgia Agribusiness Development Team 1, Ga. National Guard, teaches a class on animal nutrition to local Afghan farmers, in the Sayed Abad district agricultural center, Wardak province Feb. 11. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Austin Berner, Joint Combat Camera Afghanistan)



Afghan schoolchildren show their new toys they received from Afghan and coalition security forces during a visit in Nalgham, Jan. 15. Zharay district officials, ANSF, and Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Combined Task Forces Spartan participated in the first day of school activities at Nalgham. They hosted an opening ceremony at the school and distributed backpacks, toys and school supplies to approximately 25 children. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Melissa Stewart, 3rd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div PAO)



STORY SNAPSHOTS



Watching

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Novak, from Temple, Texas and Sgt. Aaron Sweeny, from San Diego, Calif., both with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Spartan, watch explosions from a mountain top near Forward Operating Base Salerno during a call for fire exercise Feb. 3. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)



Testing

U.S. Army Sgt. John Kibbe of Ocala, Fla., and an infantryman from the 1st Battalion, 148th Infantry Regiment, looks through the Advanced Combat Optical Gear of an M-4 rifle equipped with thermal optics at the Atlantic Diving Supply Vendor show at the Bagram Clamshell, Feb. 8. The show spotlighted the latest battlefield technologies, operational equipment and logistics solutions. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley, RC-East PAO)



Training

U.S. Army Task Force Poseidon Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Farmer, a native of San Diego, Calif., conducts readiness level training for door gunner duty on a UH-60 Black Hawk. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, TF Poseidon PAO)

Waiting

An AH-64D Apache from Task Force Wolfpack, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, awaits her crew on Forward Operating Base Salerno in Khowst Province Jan 13. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st. Class Eric Pahon, TF Poseidon PAO)



Checking

U.S. Army Spc. Joe Kunsch, a medic from Prescott, Ariz., 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Spartan conducts medical checks on some village children in Khowst province, Jan. 25. Soldiers of TF Spartan used the patrol to show their presence and get to know the locals. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jason. Epperson, TF Spartan PAO)



Rising

The sun rises over Forward Operating Base Gamberi, Feb. 5. (Photo by Rodney Kennedy, G3/5 Adviser)



Pledging

Twenty U.S. Soldiers from 15 different countries take the Oath of Citizenship during a Naturalization Ceremony to become U.S. citizens at Bagram Airfield Feb. 14. The Combined Joint Task Force-1 commanding general, Maj. Gen. Daniel Allyn and Stephen McFarland, Coordinating Director of Rule of Law and Law Enforcement for the U.S. Embassy to Afghanistan took part in the ceremony. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Catrina Dorsey, RC-East PAO)



Sewing

A female Afghan employee sews blankets at a textile factory in Kabul Jan. 17. NATO Training Mission -Afghanistan leadership visited two Afghan women-owned textile businesses that manufacture items for the Afghan National Security Force. NTM-A members had the opportunity to directly see the manufacturing capabilities and how NTM-A is employing the women of Afghanistan by engaging them into the work force. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Andrea Salazar, NTM-A PAO)



Planting

Village elders of Alingar District look on as they attend a class on the planting and upkeep of several fruit yielding trees at the Alingar Agriculture Extension Center, Feb. 1. The Kansas Agri-business Development Team, along with Ismail Dawlatzai, Director of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, worked together with the center to give around 2,400 trees to village elders from Alingar District. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Leslie Goble, TF Thunderbird PAO)



Cordoning

Commandos from the Afghan National Army, 5th Commando Kandak, cordon an area during a shura held in Pul-e Khumri district, Baghlan province Feb. 10. The shura provided an opportunity for the commandos, Afghan Local Police, Afghan National Police and local leaders to work closely together with one another. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Robin Davis, CJSOTF-A PAO)



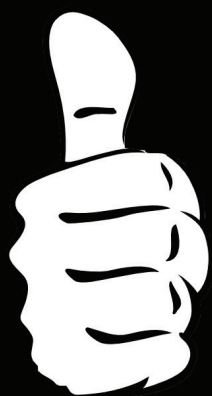
Flying

Staff Sgt. Carlos Gonzales, from El Paso, Texas, a flight engineer instructor assigned to Company B, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and Sgt. Ernesto Gallegos, from Rialto, Calif., a crew chief also assigned to B Company, assist pilots during a run up of a CH-47F Chinook helicopter at Camp Marmal Feb. 16. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Felix Acevedo, 1st ACB, 1st CD PAO)



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Where: Start @ Clamshell



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THE FINAL WATCH



U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Dennehe, a cannon crew member assigned to Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Spartan chats with an Afghan girl in Khowst province, Jan. 25. Soldiers of the TF Spartan were doing a presence patrol in the girls village (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jason Epperson, TF Spartan PAO)