

# WATCH

FREEDOM  
AFGHANISTAN



MAY 2012





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# FREEDOM WATCH

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U.S. Army Maj. Gen. William C. Mayville Jr., and U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Charles V. Sasser Jr., the command team of Combined Joint Task Force-1 and the 1st Infantry Division, unfurl their division's campaign colors during a transfer of authority ceremony on Bagram Airfield April 19. In the ceremony, the 1st Infantry Division replaced the 1st Cavalry Division as the command authority for Regional Command-East. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Roland Hale, RC-East PAO)



# Trash to treasure: Afghans use skills to enhance DFAC

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

Art comes in various forms. It can be drawn, written, musically produced, acted or shown in many other ways. Service members and civilians who eat at the Koele Dining Facility may see Afghan-made art displayed throughout the building.

Afghan workers use recycled styrofoam material to beautify and enhance the Koele DFAC all year long. They construct holiday art displays along with everyday items that make the DFAC a more attractive place to dine.

The workers' jobs range from serving food, dining room maintenance, kitchen detail and cooking, but they also take extra pride in the art displays.

"It makes them feel good to see their work around the facilities," said Frederick Church, a native of Riverside, Calif., and the food service senior supervisor at Koele. "I gave them the basic idea, but the craftsmanship and attention to detail is what they take pride in."

Mujib Ulahman, a skill labor worker, is one of the main contributors to the art displays seen at Koele.

Ulahman holds a degree in journalism, but has loved decorating since his childhood days.

"I went to school to learn how to decorate flowers as a child," Ulahman said. When Mr. Church asked me to do some decorations for the holidays last year, I was more than happy to do so."

Shahagha, a skill labor worker, works on the art displays at Koele. Shahagha enjoys drawing portraits of art in his spare time.



Shahagha, a skill labor worker, paints an art logo display at Koele Dining Facility March 27. The display is made out of recycled Styrofoam material. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Terrance D. Rhodes, RC-East PAO)



Shahagha, an Afghan dining facility worker, prepares an Easter egg display March 27. Shahagha and other Afghan workers construct, paint and display artwork for the Koele dining facility. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Terrance D. Rhodes, RC-East PAO)

"It comes naturally for me," said Shahagha. "I enjoy painting portraits of things I see around me."

Some of Ulahman's and Shahagha's favorite displays are the military service logos that are found in the Checo Room at Koele.

The room was dedicated to U.S. Army Sgt. Steven Checo in 2002, but Ulahman and Shahagha redesigned the art displays for the room, said Church.

Building the art displays has raised morale in the working community and given the Afghan workers a chance to show their talents.

"The morale of the DFAC has increased because [the Afghans] feel like they are a part of something bigger," said Church. "They feel like part of the solution and not the problem."

It has also created strong bonds between the Afghan and American workers.

"I feel that we are not only co-workers but we are friends, and friendships last forever," said Ulahman.





Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond Chandler listens to a question from a Soldier during a question and answer session at the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation clamshell on Bagram Airfield April 2. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)

# Sergeant Major of the Army visits Bagram

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

The highest-ranking enlisted Soldier in the U.S. Army, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond Chandler, visited Bagram Airfield this week to take stock of his Soldiers' morale and collect feedback to take back to Washington D.C.

As the "eyes and ears" of the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Raymond Odierno, Chandler's job is to serve as a spokesman and address issues for all enlisted Soldiers and officers.

"I'm here to hear what's on your mind, and to take what you think and how you feel back to the Pentagon, so that the senior leadership of our Army and the Department of Defense can make informed decisions," Chandler said.

Chandler spoke for 20 minutes, emphasizing the Army's policy against hazing and sexual abuse, which he said are two things that are eroding the confidence American citizens have in their military.

"I'll be quite honest with you - we suck!" he declared. "Because if we have one incident of sexual assault in our Army, we've failed. Last year, we had 1,691 reported cases of sexual assault in the Army. The year before that we had 1,695 - so over the last two years we've reduced the reported amount of sexual assaults by four. That's not very good. As a matter of fact, that's horrible."

After his speech, Chandler answered questions from Soldiers on a wide range of subjects:

On health care benefits:

"The Army has a certain budget, health care benefits, and pay compensation make up 42 percent of that budget. Tricare For Life has not increased in cost since 1996, but health care costs have increased. Total military compensation has gone up 42 percent. As a member of the nation, I think we all should be willing to pay our fair share."

On the high pay of civilian contractors:

"We are eliminating a lot of contractors and cutting a lot of contracts so the amount of contractors you see around is going to continue to go down," he said.

On a proposed new uniform:

"We're going to go to a different pattern somewhere in the future - after October we'll have a decision on what pattern that is. We've gone for softer velcro so the collar stays down, and we've gone to a 15 degree-angle pocket [on the sleeves] so you can get into it with your IOTV and plate carriers on, and we've gone away from the velcro," he said.

He said other adjustments will include buttons on the sleeves and pants, the elimination of the drawstring in the pants, losing the knee and elbow pad pockets and new sizes for smaller Soldiers.


On the new physical fitness test:

"The rower is a better measurement of your core strength and reduces injuries compared to the sit-up. As a culture, we're comfortable with the 2-mile run because we've been doing it for 30 years, but the 1.5-mile run is a better measurement of what we're looking for. You build endurance by doing the tasks that you're going to be performing routinely. We'll have a decision [on the new PT test] sometime in April, and we'll go from there."

The question that garnered the loudest applause was, "Does the draw down also affect officers that are not in regulation as far as height and weight?"

"If we get anybody in the Army, regardless of whether they're an officer or an enlisted person, who isn't within standards then we have an obligation to get them within standards or get them out of the service," Chandler answered.

"Do you feel there's a double standard in the Army? Well, there is not," he continued. "There may be a failure to enforce standards, but there is not a double standard. We're going to work to break that stigma down - because it's a concern for general Odierno and I."

"I will tell you that because I'm the Sergeant Major of the Army, I expect you to hold me accountable to do what's right, and I know general Odierno expects the same thing from his officers corps. You have to trust leaders that they're doing what's right. We just have to enforce the standards that we already have." 



# Big Red One takes control

By Sgt. Roland Hale  
RC-East PAO

The 1st Infantry Division, known famously as the “Big Red One,” took charge of military operations in eastern Afghanistan April 19 in a ceremony on Bagram Airfield.

In the ceremony, the division assumed command authority of Regional Command-East from the 1st Cavalry Division. The latter is returning to Fort Hood, Texas, after a successful year-long tour here.

Operating as Combined Joint Task Force-1, the 1st Infantry Division will command and control operations throughout RC-East, an area roughly the size of Virginia including 14 provinces, 7.5 million Afghans and 450 km of a mountainous Pakistan border.

Building on the success of their predecessors, CJTF-1 will continue to work hand-in-hand with the Afghan government and Afghan National Security Forces to bring security, development and governance to the region.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. William C. Mayville, Jr., commanding general of the 1st Inf. Div. and CJTF-1, gave a brief address during the ceremony.

“Our mission over the next year is to maintain the momentum of this campaign, relentlessly pursuing insurgent networks, assisting Afghan efforts to assert sovereignty along the border, and accelerating the development of the



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. William C. Mayville Jr., commanding general of Combined Task Force-1 and the 1st Infantry Division, gives a speech at a transfer of authority ceremony on Bagram Airfield, April 19. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Roland Hale, RC-East PAO)

ANSF,” said Mayville.

To tackle this mission, CJTF-1 wields a joint fighting force of more than 32,000 coalition troops. Their arsenal includes five U.S. brigade combat teams, as well as troops from nine NATO



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. William C. Mayville Jr., commanding general of Combined Task Force-1 and the 1st Infantry Division, shakes hands with U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn after giving a speech at a transfer of authority ceremony on Bagram Airfield, April 19. Allyn, the outgoing CJTF-1 and 1st Cavalry Division commander, transferred authority of Regional Command-East to Mayville after his unit's year-long tour. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Roland Hale, RC-East PAO)





# ol in eastern Afghanistan

countries.

Perhaps the division's most important joint-endavour, however, is its partnership with the ANSF.

"The Afghan security forces are growing and maturing at a rapid rate," said Mayville. "Governance, combined with the growing security environment, has limited the Taliban's ability to exert their negative influence.


"Still, we know this is a tough fight. But it is a fight we will win due to our strong partnership with our Afghan security forces."

In addition to its military partnership with the ANSF, Mayville's CJTF-1 team will work closely with civilian agencies to promote the possibility of long-term success in the region.

U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson, the coordinating director for development and economic affairs in Kabul, attended the ceremony and gave a brief interview about the future of the civilian-military partnership in RC-East.

"The model [civilian-military] integration here is unlike any we've seen before," he said.

"The military's strides in security, along with its joint work with [Provincial Reconstruction Teams], has given us the ability to focus on governance and development here," he said.

"We've contributed a lot Afghanistan in the last 10 years," said Olson. "Now the challenge is to make sure the Afghan people have the capacity to continue these successes and projects after 2014." 



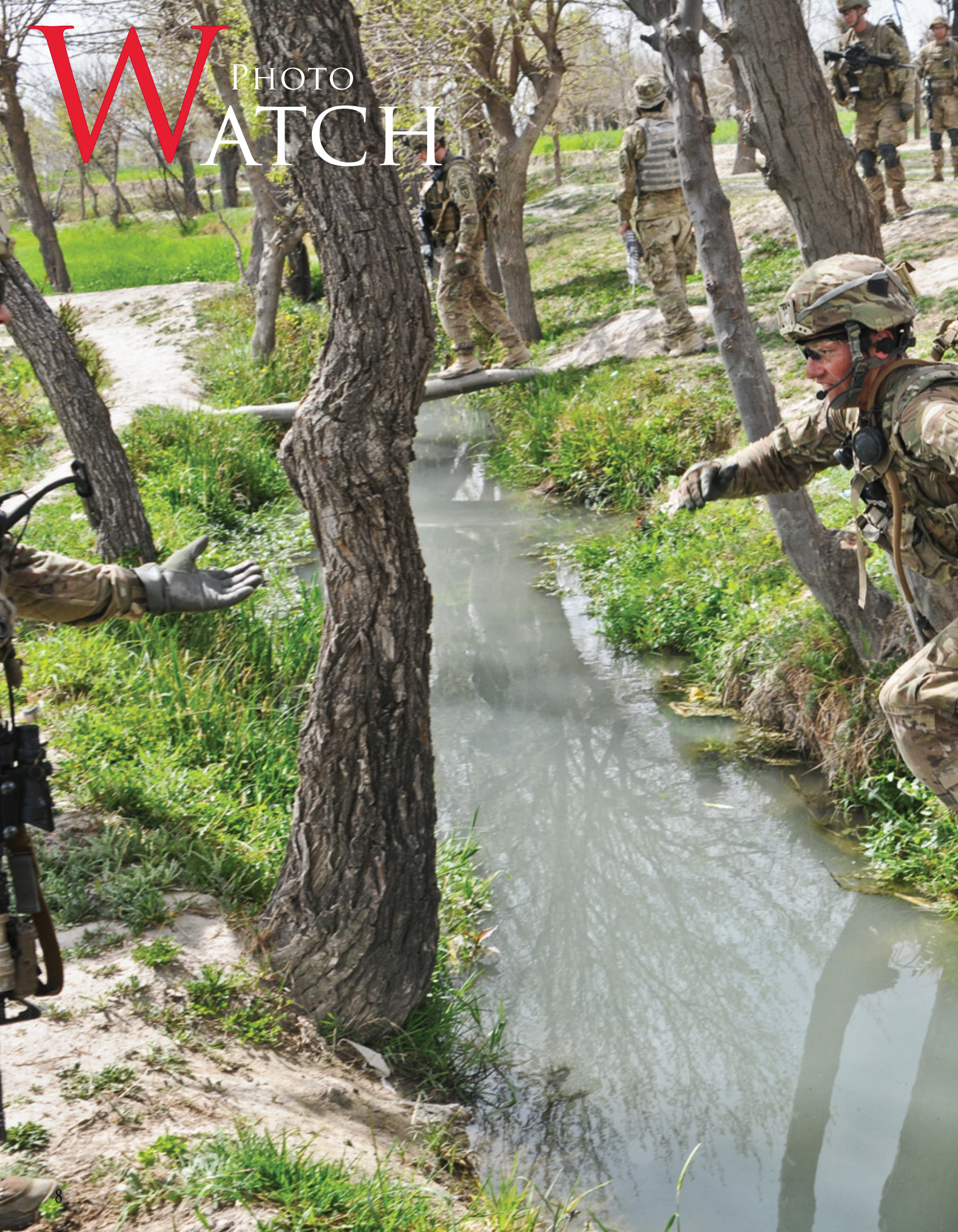
U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, gives a speech after transferring authority of Regional Command-East to the 1st Infantry Division in a ceremony on Bagram Airfield April 19. "I am extremely proud of the progress we made during our year together," he said, "and I am sure you will continue to make great strides after we leave." (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Roland Hale, RC-East PAO)



U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia T. Vimoto, the senior enlisted Soldier of the 1st Cavalry Division, cases his unit's colors after a successful year-long tour in Afghanistan at a ceremony on Bagram Airfield, April 19. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Roland Hale, RC-East PAO)



# W PHOTO WATCH







*U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Andy Short, a native of Odessa, Texas, and squad leader assigned to 3rd Platoon, A Company, leaps over an irrigation canal near the village of Gorcheek during Operation Nowruz (New Year), March 30. Apache Company is part of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jason Epperson, TF Spartan PAO)*



# A new day, a new partner

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

As the sun rises on Forward Operating Base Lightning, silhouettes of trucks and Soldiers are seen preparing a convoy for a resupply mission throughout Paktya Province.

As the darkness gives way to the light, Afghan National Army Soldiers with their Coalition counterparts emerge from the silhouettes and greet the approaching day with a sense of urgency, purpose and teamwork not only appropriate for a new day in Afghanistan, but also for the long mission ahead.

Regional Logistics Support Command-Southeast distribution company conducted a partnership resupply convoy with 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan March 29.

Since Fox Company is already doing resupply missions, it made sense to pair RLSC-SE up with Fox Company to improve the tactics, techniques and procedures of their combat logistics patrols, said U.S. Army Capt. Randal Myers, a native of Columbus, Kan., and the senior mentor for RLSC-SE.

Soldiers from the RLSC-SE distribution company took part in Fox Company's predawn mission brief, mission rehearsals, pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections before setting out on a resupply mission to Combat Outposts Zormat and Rahmen Kheyl.

"We want to learn something from this training. We have a very good mentorship with Capt. Myers and the [NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan]. We are very happy to be working with Coalition Forces. I expect my Soldiers to learn how to conduct a proper convoy, run the missions and resupply the



Afghan National Army Col. Dur Muhammad, the Regional Logistics Support Command-Southeast Commander, instructs ANA Soldiers during a react to improvised explosive device training conducted by U.S. Soldiers from Fox Company, 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan at Forward Operating Base Gardez March 29. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)

brigades. I want my Soldiers to be strong in front of the enemy," said ANA Col. Dur Muhammad, RLSC-SE Commander.

Any free time during the resupply mission was spent training.

"We received training on vehicle maintenance, IED [improvised explosive device] reaction, security, towing a broke vehicle, first aid and air support. When Coalition Forces leave Afghanistan, it's going to be our job to do these things. We are learning the best possible ways to do them," said ANA Sgt. 1st Class Syed Mugtaba, a truck driver with RLSC-SE distribution company.

An after action review was conducted at each stop along the route allowing ANA leadership and Soldiers an opportunity to ask questions and further learn.

U.S. Army Master Sgt. Kenneth Hood, the senior noncommissioned officer mentor for the RLSC-SE, reflected on the partnership after an AAR conducted during a scheduled stop at FOB Gardez.

"The RLSC-SE commander is taking charge, briefing his lieutenants on what they should be doing and how they should be doing it," said Hood, a native of Columbus, Ohio. "I believe this is a good start for RLSC-SE; this is one of the first partnership convoys done in awhile. This partnership is going to make this part of the region better during the spring of offensive."

This is the first partnered mission between Fox Company and the RLSC-SE distribution company, but it's something that the Fox Company commander intends on continuing.

"I actually sought them out; I knew



Afghan National Army Soldiers from the Regional Logistics Support Command-Southeast distribution company and U.S. Soldiers from Fox Company, 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan stop to clear their weapons at Combat Outpost Zormat during a partnered resupply convoy March 29. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)



# Partnership in Afghanistan



*Afghan National Army Soldiers from the Regional Logistics Support Command-Southeast distribution company and U.S. Soldiers from Fox Company, 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan gather in the early morning at Forward Operating Base Lightning for a mission brief March 29. Fox Company conducted a partnered resupply convoy with the RLSC-SE distribution company. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)*

there was a logistical unit on FOB Thunder. Our infantry brothers are partnered with ANA infantry units I just think it's smart that we partner with the ANA logistic units as well," said U.S. Army Capt. Ryan Steuer, commander of Fox Co., 3rd Bn., 509th Inf. Regt., TF Spartan.

"[ANA Soldiers] responded well; it seemed like they loved being part of our convoy. From what I understand, today was supposed to be their day off but they had their heads held high the entire time. Enthusiastic and excited," said Steuer, a native of Miamisburg, Ohio.

A final AAR was conducted in which a certificate was presented to Col. Muhammed, who in turn expressed his gratitude to all the U.S. Soldiers present who participated in the day's mission.


Afterwards, ANA Sgt. 1st Class Mulaoolah Jan, a maintenance sergeant with RLSC-SE distribution company, reflected on the day's events.

"For four years I have been serving my country in the

[Afghan] Army. I was in a combat kandak, now I am in a combat logistics kandak and this was my first time in a supply convoy. It was a good experience, I enjoyed it," Jan said.

"We have done a lot of missions and have had some problems. Today we have learned a lot of things that will improve our own convoys, and we will get better and better. We have learned how to prepare a convoy, how to tow a damaged truck, how to react to IED's, and how to run a convoy," Jan added. "Some of our Soldiers are new; they didn't know the techniques of a proper convoy and they have learned a lot today."

As the sun began to set on the day, Soldiers started to load into their trucks for the final leg of the mission.

"We have the responsibility to resupply five provinces and Gardez. We don't have problems handling attacks and ambushes; it's the discovering of IED's that cause us problems," Jan said. "All of today's training was very useful, thank you to the Coalition Forces. Our partnership is a good partnership." 



*A civilian CH-46 helicopter transports a 155mm M777 howitzer from Forward Operating Base Salerno to Combat Outpost Chamkani March 28. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Eric-James Estrada, TF Spartan PAO)*





# The sky is the limit for artillery on the move

By U.S. Army Spc. Eric-James Estrada  
TF Spartan PAO

Paratroopers from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Spartan coordinated the transportation of an 155mm M777 howitzer on Forward Operating Base Salerno to Combat Outpost Chamkani March 27.

The move was conducted to upgrade the capability of indirect fire support for members of the 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, TF Spartan, based in Paktya Province.

Riggers from the 725th Brigade Support Battalion, TF Spartan, provided the expertise to ensure the weapon system could be moved safely, using a civilian-contracted CH-46 helicopter.

The 155mm M777 howitzer has a weight close to 10,000 pounds and a length of roughly 35 feet. U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Michael Strate, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div., TF Spartan, from International Falls, Minn., said the howitzer isn't a typical gun that can be re-placed at an arms room.

"We were out there because that is our equipment and even though it may be a tough piece of artillery, it also is delicate," Strate said. "I believe that it needed special attention to ensure the howitzer would be emplaced without any damage and be ready to fire."

The mission also gave the Soldiers of 377th PFAR and 725th BSB an opportunity to execute live training that they have been tested and drilled on time again through instruction according to Strate.

While Soldiers of 377th PFAR were there to ensure the safety and proper loading of their equipment, the paratroopers from the 725th BSB were there to handle the rigging of the howitzer.

"We use [725th] BSB because when we're back at home station, they're the riggers," said U.S. Army Sgt. Mark Barber, a motor transport operator, a native of Lake Jackson, Texas, with 377th PFAR. "They're the ones that go through this. They're all sling load qualified. They're very familiar with the proper way of rigging these systems to help it to fly safely whenever we maneuver it and they pretty much run the [hot landing zone] for that reason."



Paratroopers from Task Force Spartan Steel and Task Force Centurion work together to sling load a 155mm M777 howitzer. The 155mm M777 howitzer was transported to Combat Outpost Chamkani from Forward Operating Base Salerno March 28. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Eric-James Estrada, TF Spartan PAO)



A 155mm M777 howitzer belonging to the 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Task Force Spartan, hangs suspend in air as it begins its flight to Combat Outpost Chamkani from Forward Operating Base Salerno March 28. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Eric-James Estrada, TF Spartan PAO)



# ANA declares day of the NCO

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

Nowruz, the Afghan New Year, is a day of celebration and new beginnings. What better way to bring in 1391 than with an inaugural ceremony inducting Afghan National Army Soldiers into the corps of noncommissioned officers.

The Afghan National Army's 203rd "Thunder" Corps held a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Thunder that inducted 80 ANA Soldiers into the noncommissioned officer corps on Nowruz March 20.

"This is the first time the ANA has celebrated the induction of Soldiers into the NCO corps; no other corps has had this type of celebration," said the 203rd Corps ANA Command Sgt. Maj. Habibullah Chamkani. "I am very happy to have this ceremony, especially on Nowruz."

In honor of this inaugural event, the 203rd Corps declared March 20 the day of the NCO at FOB Thunder.

The 80 ANA Soldiers were selected for promotion based on eligibility requirements, attendance at the Team Leader Course held at FOB Thunder, and their demonstrated ability to lead Soldiers.

These Soldiers have been selected, trained and promoted to the position of noncommissioned officer, but their journey does not end here, said Tactical Command Two Command Sgt. Maj. David Livesay.

In his address to the recently promoted NCO's, Livesay said, "My [U.S.] Army is 236 years old; your [Afghan] Army is about eight years old. When I was here eight years ago as an embedded trainer, those Soldiers did not have the opportunities that you have today. I couldn't send any of my ANA Soldiers to military schools to further their education. We didn't have the



203rd Corps Afghan National Army Command Sgt. Maj. Habibullah Chamkani pins the rank of sergeant on an ANA Soldier during an inaugural ceremony inducting ANA Soldiers into the corps of noncommissioned officers held at Forward Operating Base Thunder March 20. In honor of this inaugural event, the 203rd Corps declared March 20 the day of the NCO at FOB Thunder. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)

equipment, the facilities, the weapons, the uniforms, the boots that you have today. They didn't have the opportunity to go to the literacy school.


"As the ANA continues to grow in both capacity and capabilities, it's vital that the NCOs continue to lead, train and care for their Soldiers," Livesay said. "As NCOs this is the mission I give to you. You will discharge carefully and diligently the duties, responsibilities, traditions and standards of the noncommissioned officer."

Livesay continued to say, "You will be responsible for the actions of those placed under your care. As a noncommissioned officer you are required to observe and follow all lawful orders and directions given by your superiors. You are charged to enforce good order and discipline within your units and to correct conditions that are detrimental to the readiness of your unit. In doing so, you will fulfill your obligation as a leader and thereby confirm your status as a noncommissioned officer in the Afghan National Army."

Chamkani led the 80 ANA Soldiers in the reciting of the Afghan National Army noncommissioned officer's creed, followed by the pinning on of the new rank to each of the newly promoted Soldiers.

"NCO's are very important in the ANA, when officers make plans it's the NCO's who implement those plans and lead Soldiers on the battlefield," said Chamkani.

"I am proud of my NCO's; this ceremony was a major event for the 203rd Corps. I have been here for five years and we haven't had a ceremony like this before," said Chamkani.

Newly promoted ANA Sgt. Mohammad Wali said, "I am very happy and today was a good thing for the NCO Corps. This was the first time the 203rd Corps had an induction and it's had a positive impact on the entire NCO corps." 



Afghan National Army Soldiers applaud during a ceremony inducting ANA Soldiers into the corps of noncommissioned officers held at Forward Operating Base Thunder March 20. 203rd ANA Corps declared it the day of the NCO at FOB Thunder. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)







U.S. Army Brig. Gen. John W. Charlton, the 1st Cavalry Division Deputy Commanding General for Afghan National Security Forces-Development, and 203rd Corps Afghan National Army Command Sgt. Maj. Habibullah Chamkani cut a cake in celebration of an inaugural ceremony inducting ANA Soldiers into the corps of noncommissioned officers at Forward Operating Base Thunder March 20. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Richard D. Sherba, RC-East PAO)





# IT'S REALLY WINDY!

The dusty “winds of 120 days” in Afghanistan can reach 100+ MPH

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- Long sleeves



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SrA Kelli Naramore



# Afghan reintegration program works toward stability

By Sarah M. Rivette  
RC-East PAO

The path to peace in Afghanistan is paved with hard work and compromise.

The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program knows that very well as it is the program, which in less than two years, has reintegrated nearly 3,900 former fighters across the country in return for a promise to never return to the insurgency.

As of March 19, there were 371 formal reintegrees in the 14 provinces overseen by Regional Command-East since the program's inception in July 2010.

Laghman Province has reintegrated 223 former fighters, with more than 100 in the first half of March 2012 alone. The success, in part, can be attributed to the efforts of Gov. Mohammad Iqbal Azizi and the Provincial Peace Committee.

"We had many challenges in the past, lack of trust to provide their security, safety and job opportunities were the main ones and to some point still are," said Azizi. "Every day we do our best to improve the process and really help those who join the process. At the end, I want to tell you that this process has been very successful in Laghman and we will continue to make it even more successful in the future."

The Afghan-led program has three phases: outreach, demobilization and consolidation. During the outreach phase, an insurgent would approach a member of the Provincial Peace Council and Joint Secretariat team to begin the vetting process. A questionnaire regarding the individuals fighting history is compiled and sent through an extensive process to verify the individual's identity, their affiliation with an insurgent group and eligibility for the program.

Once the application for reintegration has been vetted at the provincial level, the application must be approved by the local community and police force before being forwarded to the national level. Community endorsement is key, said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dwyke Bidjou, RC-East reintegration planner, because the community assumes responsibility for the individual once they are reintegrated.

"In the end, the village makes sure the reintegree will walk the straight and narrow," he said. "In return, there are community incentives provided, like job training or well construction, which the entire village can take advantage of."

The program in Laghman, Kunar and Nangarhar are fully Afghan-led, said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Donald Gates, RC-East reintegration officer. The other provinces are in different phases of being able to execute the program independently, he said.

"The Provincial Peace Council and Afghan National Security Forces have been trained to execute the program and are ready to do so, but we are assisting them through the first large




*Reintegrees' weapons are ceremoniously displayed during a Reintegration Ceremony in Laghman Province March 12. The heavy weapons are handed over to the Afghan Ministry of Defense and the rifles and pistols are returned to the reintegrees. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)*

ceremony so they are able to gain that experience and then do it for themselves," Gates said.

As Coalition Forces prepare to transition out of Afghanistan, setting the Afghans up for success with the program is a top priority, said Bidjou.

"In the last year, we've seen a renewed focus in the east, and that will continue over the next year," said Bidjou. "We leveraged the winter months to push reintegration negotiations in the villages with the efforts of the Afghans and Coalition support. That way, when the spring offensive begins, we will see large numbers of fighters laying down their weapons."

One reintegree, a former enemy commander, who was welcomed back into his community March 12, encouraged others to join the peace process after decades of war.

"The motive behind turning in our weapons and joining the peace process is that we are all tired of fighting, we don't want fighting anymore, we want peace and want more development, progress and stability in our communities," said Mohammad Zaman. "My advice to others still fighting is that they should put down their weapons, join the peace process and take part in rebuilding our country. We all together should rebuild our country. I think we had enough fights in our country in the last 10 to 15 years, and no one benefited from it. It brought nothing but destruction." 





# Captain Torres: Silver Star awardee

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

U.S. Army Capt. Ivan Torres, a Soldier who finds calm in the chaos of combat, was awarded a Silver Star for placing himself in the line of fire to save his squad members and protect wounded Afghan National Army Soldiers.

Torres, a native of Killeen, Texas, and commander of the 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters Services Company at Combat Outpost Red Hill, was involved in a fire fight last fall, while leading a company of U.S. and Afghan Soldiers during Operation Thunderdome, a mission to clear Taliban insurgents from the Qowl-e Her Valley in western Parwan Province. Before the operation, the area was known as a Taliban stronghold.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Daniel Allyn, Regional Command-East and Combined Joint Task Force-1 commander presented Torres with the award March 18, and praised him for his quick thinking and ability to maintain composure in a situation that could have ended badly for Coalition Forces.

"At the end of the day, he lived up to the legacy that is the 1st Cavalry Division," Allyn said.

Torres and his company of about 85 Soldiers ran into trouble as they were making their way south on the main road through the village of Khoshkak. Khoshkak is considered the most forested and steeply-sloped village in Qowl-e Her, and this is

where a large Taliban force ambushed them.

Information gathered before the start of the operation led Torres and his planners to believe that if the Taliban were to strike, they would most likely wait until night, and enemy strength would be anywhere from 50 to 80 at most. Instead, they met a force that was twice that size and dug into several defensive strongpoints on three dominating mountain ridgelines. When the Taliban opened fire, at about 7:30 a.m., there was total chaos.

"After maybe 15 seconds of the first shot being fired, the tree line essentially evaporated," Torres said. "We had obviously walked into a kill zone."

Within minutes, one ANA Soldier lay dead and several Taliban were killed. Pinned down by withering Taliban machine gun and sniper fire, punctuated with rocket-propelled grenades and mortars, Torres' lead platoon became isolated south of the main element.

What happened over the next eight hours earned Torres the U.S. military's third highest combat decoration for valor, and four of his fellow Soldiers Bronze Stars.

As Taliban fighters maneuvered into hand grenade range, Torres ran to the front and organized the first of three counterattacks. Pulling together five of his men—three Army specialists, a medic and a linguist—he made his way toward the cut off platoon. Running into the open, with bullets and rounds coming from three different directions, they reached the isolated platoon of 20 U.S. and ANA Soldiers about 500 yards away. Their only protection was a clump of trees and a fast-moving stream between themselves and the Taliban. Here they set up a defensive position and began the first counterattack.

Using close-air support, they took out a mortar and RPG team, killing eight insurgents and driving them back onto the mountainside. Another Taliban squad maneuvered on their position and was repelled. Three more fighters were killed.

Torres initially wanted to pull his platoon back to the main element, but realized that by drawing so much Taliban fire they were acting as an effective decoy. Running back through the kill zone to reach his main element, he worked with his ANSF commander to organize the second counterattack, this time planning to cross the stream with a small force to surprise the enemy. Instead, they got pinned down out in the open.

Risking his life, Torres ordered



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Daniel Allyn, Regional Command East and 1st Cavalry Division commander, awards the Silver Star Medal to U.S. Army Capt. Ivan Torres, an infantry commander from Killeen, Texas, assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division's Headquarters Services Company at Combat Outpost Red Hill in Parwan Province, March 18. Torres was awarded for his actions during Operation Thunderdome, a combat operation conducted in the Qowl-e Her Valley Sept. 21, 2011. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Steele, RC-East PAO)





U.S. Army Soldiers from Headquarters Services Company, 1st Cavalry Division, engage in a fire fight in the village of Khoshkak in the Qowl-e Her Valley of Shinwari district. The unit, led by U.S. Army Capt. Ioan Torres, was ambushed by heavily armed Taliban fighters Sept. 21, 2011. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Lawree Washington, Joint Combat Camera-Afghanistan)

his men to run back 100 meters to join some Afghan Soldiers while he went in the opposite direction with only his M4 rifle to attack a Taliban machine gun nest. He was immediately hit by RPG fire and knocked down, though he says he has no recollection of it. Meanwhile, two ANA Soldiers were wounded.

Torres ran to their aid and put himself in the direct line of enemy fire to protect them while they were dragged out of the kill zone. He then again ran to get medical supplies that saved the wounded Soldiers' lives.

"Rounds literally whizzed by the head," Torres said. "We had so many close or near misses that I'm actually surprised that we walked out with the casualties that we did."

Aside from the two ANA Soldiers, only one U.S. Soldier was seriously wounded in the battle.

Torres led the final counterattack that drove Taliban forces from a casualty collection point, eventually allowing a helicopter to land and evacuate the wounded.

When the dust settled, 45 insurgents had been killed in the operation, including a senior Taliban commander and two team leaders.

"We ended up chasing them all out the valley," Torres said. "[The battle] was the turning tide."

The Taliban have since tried to re-seed themselves back into the community, he says, but have so far been unsuccessful.

"Our hope was that if the village elders saw a large commitment from Coalition Forces it would encourage the fence sitters to stand up to the Taliban," Torres said. "Evidently it worked."

After receiving the Silver Star, Torres was asked why he would risk his own life, even after his platoon sergeant at one point begged him to stay behind. He replied, "I'd been in combat actions before. Most of my guys hadn't. I figured it was the right thing to do."

Torres, a 13-year Army veteran who has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan twice, admits that combat has become ingrained in his DNA to the point where it feels completely natural to him.

"It's kind of like I'm in the moment," he says. "For many people it's chaotic, but for me it makes sense. I'm able to focus."

His executive officer, U.S. Army 1st Lt. Mark Mayor, of Kenosha, Wis., agrees.

"His leadership is very direct, very clear," Mayor said. "He doesn't freak out under fire."

Torres' deployment ends in April, and he will move on to his next assignment in January. But no matter what happens for the rest of his Army career, Sept. 21, 2011 will be a day he'll never forget.

"That day for us that were on the ground, it will be burned in our memory forever," he said. 🇺🇸



# U.S. Soldiers save boy's li

By U.S. Army Maj. Joseph Buccino  
TF Blackhawk PAO

Once in a while, an event occurs that develops the human perspective of warfare into the mission in Afghanistan. The Soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Task Force Blackhawk, participated in such a life-changing set of events from March 14 through March 25.

On the afternoon of March 14, Soldiers from "Blackjack" company responded to a blast in Kushamond District in the qalat of Saduzi. An improvised explosive device, stored for a planned attack on Coalition Forces and Afghan National Security Forces operating within the district, detonated prematurely.

Upon arriving at the scene, the Soldiers realized that the detonation killed four children who appeared to be playing in the area and may have unwittingly engaged the trigger device. They did not know it, but one child, Saduzi's eight-year-old son Matten, survived the blast.

Within minutes, a man named Sultan who lives in a neighboring qalat, carried the severely injured Matten to Combat Outpost Kushamond. U.S. Army Sgt. Anthony Merino from Basstrop, Texas, senior medic for the company, reacted

immediately, treating the surviving child at the entry control point.

"I assessed and stabilized the patient while we called in a medical evacuation," said Merino. "He was losing his airway. Had we not been able to treat him when we did, his wounds would certainly have been fatal."

The boy was prepared for movement on an aircraft. U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Torres from Amarillo, Texas and U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Cody Sandstrom, along with Sultan, escorted the boy from Kushamond to the Sharana Medical Treatment Facility and then to the Craig Joint-Theater Hospital at Bagram Airfield.

Torres, Sandstrom and Sultan remained with Matten in Bagram for 10 days while surgery was performed on his multiple facial lacerations.

According to U.S. Air Force Maj. Bradley S. Putty, CJ-TH deputy-commander for clinical services, a complex procedure was performed to remove a ball bearing from the boy's eye socket. Additional surgeries were performed on both sets of eyelids.

"The boy's eyes were injured beyond repair and a follow-up surgery was performed to implant prosthetic eyes," Putty said.

Craig hospital staff noticed the boy's clothes and shoes were destroyed by the blast, so they donated new clothes, sneakers and toys.

"This was a deliberate outreach effort," Putty said. "This child was a victim of this war."

On March 24, the boy was released from the hospital and flown to FOB Sharana and the next day he was flown back onto COP Kushamond with Torres, Sandstrom and Sultan.

He was greeted on the COP by Adam Khan, a representative from the office of the Kushamond District sub-governor, and U.S. Army Capt. Giles Wright, the commander of Company B.

"Matten was stable and in excellent spirits and even offered a few jokes," Wright said. "It was evident; he was a child willing to live for the future of Afghanistan."

Although blind for life and severely scarred, Matten is grateful for his life. Matten has since been escorted to his village by Adam Khan, who has accepted guardianship and responsibility for the boy on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Afghan Uniform Police intend to maintain persistent watch over him and the villagers have vowed to protect the boy. Matten's father, Sudazi, is believed to be hiding outside of Paktika Province and is currently a wanted individual.

All those involved were greatly moved by the boy's spirit and the humanity of the event.

"It demonstrated the human side of this conflict," Torres said. "The compassion of the American Soldiers here and [at] Bagram and of the local villagers really showed the pain of all of this."



U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Torres, rifle section leader with 3rd Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Task Force Blackhawk, Sultan, a villager from Kushamond District, Paktika Province; and U.S. Army Pfc. Cody Sandstrom, 3rd Bn., 66th Arm. Reg., 172nd Inf. Bde., TF Blackhawk; stand with Matten, an eight-year-old boy who was blinded and whose face was severely damaged by an improvised explosive device March 14. The group escorted him to the Craig Joint-Theater Hospital at Bagram Airfield where they remained with him for 10 days until his release. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. David Barnes, TF Blackhawk PAO)



# Life in Kushamond district



*U.S. Army Sgt. Anthony Merino, senior medic and Capt. Giles Wright, commander for B Company, 3rd Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Task Force Blackhawk, pose for a picture on Combat Outpost Kushamond, Paktika Province, with Matten, an eight-year-old Afghan boy whose face was severely damaged and blinded by an improvised explosive device. Merino saved Matten's life and he is now being cared for by officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. David Barnes, TF Blackhawk PAO)*



# The future of Super FOB

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

After years of planning and logistic challenges, the largest base of operations for Afghanistan's growing security force is nearing completion.

Forward Operating Base Super FOB, so named because of the sprawling complex being built there, will eventually host 4,000 Afghan National Army and 400 Coalition Soldiers, who will be advisers and trainers.

Modern steel and stucco buildings line the smoothly paved streets of the 1,150 square meter site, an uncommon appearance in this land where the vast majority of structures are made from mud.

The new additions to the operating base include a sleek dining facility that can seat 1,000 people, with 10 wood-burning stoves being built to cook traditional Afghan cuisine, a power plant with nine giant diesel generators that can crank out 8.1 megawatts of power, enough to sustain a small city, and even a jail house with amenities in each cell.

Building an installation on such a grand scale in a country plagued by the Taliban and the Haqqani Network proved to be just as huge a challenge as one might imagine.

"It has taken a lot of energy," said Simon Jabbour, logistics manager for Nassar Group International, the Lebanese company that won the bid to build the base.

When the construction of Super FOB first started four years ago, there were no Coalition Forces present in the area, and Jabbour and his workers faced challenges with the Afghan government, insurgent groups and tough working conditions which contributed to the lack of progress for the company.



Local Afghans work on the cement foundations for 10 wood-burning stoves that will supplement the dining facility on Forward Operating Base Super FOB March 16. Super FOB is being built by Nassar Group International, a Lebanese company supervised by the Army Corps of Engineers, and will be the largest training and operations base for the Afghan National Army when completed. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)





# B takes shape in Paktika

Jabbour, Pierre Nassar, the owner of NGI and their security teams overcame some daunting difficulties, including being hijacked, blackmailed, trying to get supplies and equipment across the Pakistan border and even being put in jail to keep the project from moving forward.

Many of the materials used in the project, such as the huge power generators and pre-fabricated metal buildings, were too large to air lift to the build site, so dozens of treacherous convoys from Pakistan had to be arranged. To get the materials across the border it meant dealing with insurgent groups and the dangers associated with them.

Today, with a much greater U.S. presence at the FOB and increased ANSF security capabilities, work is going much faster and more smoothly than when they began the project, said Jabbour, noting that the first immigration of ANA Soldiers into the new facility is slated to begin within two months.

To help keep an eye on the four-year project, Jabbour and his team have lived at Super FOB since the beginning.

Deep in the interior of northern Paktika, their living compound, located on the grounds of the build site, is a maze of lived-in shipping containers and cabins heavily fortified with stacks and stacks of sand bags.


"The senior members of the company are here – they live here and don't see their families for years," said U.S. Army Capt. Andrew Littel, Super FOB commander. "That's how important this project is."

"We live here to boost the morale of our employees," said Nassar. "They see us here every day and say, okay, if they can be here so can I."

Another challenge that faces the construction of Super FOB has been the turn-over of the hundreds of Afghan workers employed by NGI, said Jabbour.

"Our work force has turned over three times so far, because they get scared after rocket attacks," he explained. "For so many reasons, you see, this project has not been easy."

It has been a tedious process for Jabbour and his team, but when it's complete it will be the largest ANA hub in Afghanistan, strategically located in the middle of one of the most volatile border regions in the country.

"This is the most dangerous area in west Paktika, and they've built a super fortress here" said Littel. "It's amazing." 



A security guard for Nassar Group International pulls guard duty on their living compound, which is inside the Forward Operating Base Super FOB construction site. In addition to a contingent of a few dozen Lebanese security professionals and site managers, NGI employs hundreds of local Afghan workers in the building of Super FOB. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)





U.S. Army Pfc. Nicholas Richards, a native of Crossville, Ala., and Spc. Chad Mudd, a native of Katy, Texas, with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Task Force Blackhawk, make adjustments to a 60mm M224 mortar at Combat Outpost Zerok March 17. The gunners set up target reference points which save valuable time under fire. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley, RC-East PAO)

## COP Zerok mortar Soldiers prepare for fighting season

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

As warmer temperatures arrive and the mountain snow of the Zerok district starts melting, the mountain passes of Afghanistan are open to insurgent activity. On Combat Outpost Zerok, enemy contact isn't something that Soldiers here just prepare for; it's something they expect.

The mortar Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Task Force Blackhawk, conducted exercises to set up target reference points on COP Zerok March 17.

U.S. Army Sgt. Joseph Petersbrown, a native of Kansas City, Mo., and a gunner, said the reason the TRPs are set up now is so that they can quickly return fire when they take contact.

"We were waiting for good weather, so we could set our TRPs," said Petersbrown.

Mortar Soldiers set up TRPs so they have a known target downrange. They will then adjust fire from that known point until they hit the target, also known as bracketing, said Petersbrown.

With the TRPs in place, the mortars are installed quickly during an attack, which saves valuable time under fire.

"We could be in our beds and get the call and have them (TRPs) set up in three minutes," said Petersbrown.


The quick response time allows them to effectively provide a safer perimeter defense around COP Zerok, also providing mortar support for neighbouring COP Twins and Yankees, added Petersbrown.

Another gunner, U.S. Army Pfc. Nicholas Richards, a native of Crossville, Ala., assisted the team in setting up the TRPs.

"I love what I do, it's fun. We get to shoot a lot," said Richards. "We get to participate in the majority of the fire missions."

All of the mortar Soldiers acknowledge that they truly enjoy their job. For some, they are getting the opportunity to do what they have always wanted to.

U.S. Army Pfc. Ian Soos, a native of Long Grove, Ill., and a gunner, is truly living his dream.

"I've always wanted to be a Soldier. Being out here and doing this is a dream come true," said Soos. "It's a lot better than fireworks." 



# Engineers complete Operation Devil Hammer

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Catrina Dorsey  
RC-East PAO

Soldiers of the 1022nd Vertical Engineer Company, 528th Engineer Battalion of the Louisiana National Guard, have overcome the weather, terrain and the massive scope of the project in making one of Afghanistan's biggest builds a success story.

"We faced many challenges during the winter months, such as snow covering our whole work project site. Sometimes the air compressors were so cold that they wouldn't start," said U.S. Army Spc. Aberon Young, a native of Monroe, La., 1022nd Vertical Eng. Co., 528th Eng. Bn. "I look back at this place and what it used to be when we first got here, and just that look alone tells me that we worked hard and we should feel really good about what we have accomplished."

The operation required more people in order to complete the build-up of nine combat outposts and improve the security conditions of Highway 1, a key artery that brings travelers from southern Afghanistan towards Kabul.

"We recognized a need for additional personnel," said Col. Paul M. Palozzi, commander, 18th Engineer Brigade, Task Force Sword, and a native of Utica, N.Y. "When you bring in additional Soldiers you have to be able to provide them a place to live and operate from, and that required an engineer construction program."

The support came from every part of the 1st Cavalry Division, Combined Joint Task Force-1, including help from 10th Sustainment Brigade, Task Force Muleskinners for logistics and aviation assets from the combat aviation brigades from across Afghanistan. Most of the construction work came from the LANG Soldiers.

"It's exciting, to know that every Soldier that has been doing this [construction] mission comes from the Army National Guard," said Palozzi. "Those Soldiers came to Afghanistan with the expectation that they are going to be doing something important."

When the project first started, Forward Operating Base Arian had only two hard standing buildings. Nearly five months



U.S. Army Spc. Aberon Young, a native of Monroe, La., with 1022nd Vertical Engineer Company, 578th Engineer Battalion, cuts a piece of wood for a new fuel point March 14. The Louisiana National Guard unit has completed several building projects on Forward Operating Base Arian, one of nine forward operating bases that were improved or built from scratch as part of Operation Devil Hammer. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Catrina Dorsey, RC-East PAO)

later, there is a tactical operations centers, morale, welfare and recreation center and a dining facility.

U.S. Army Sgt. Joshua Dickens, a native of Woodworth, La., volunteered to deploy and join the 1022nd Vertical Eng. Co.

"I feel really good about this project because it has helped me and my guys cross-train to learn different military occupational specialties," said Dickens.

The LANG Soldiers have a variety of skills and employment backgrounds; some are engineers, electricians and plumbers in their civilian lives. It added to the combined experience they brought to this project, making building these FOBs a much easier task.

The construction project has not been without the dangers of insurgent activity, poised at disrupting the Soldiers' progress. Highway 1 has been a hot bed of IED activity due to its importance not only to the local population, but as a highly traveled route for Coalition Forces' logistical support.

"The enemy has shown their presence," said Palozzi. "We have been doing this from December through March time-frame, so the [insurgents] had decreased operations because it was cold."

Palozzi added that another enemy was the weather with its cold rain and ice. Through the harsh winter months in Afghanistan, the Soldiers would work for 30-minute stretches before warming themselves by a man-made fire. The weather also affected the air and ground support.

"We had to overcome those challenges by doing what we had to do as Soldiers, to keep the morale up so we could finish what needed to be done," said Young.



Soldiers with 1022nd Vertical Engineer Company, 578th Engineer Battalion, use an excavator to fill Hesco barriers to secure the perimeter on Forward Operating Base Arian March 14. The Louisiana National Guard unit has completed several building projects on FOB Arian as part of Operation Devil Hammer. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Catrina Dorsey, RC-East PAO)





# ISAF troops bring donations to Afghan orphanage

By Sgt. April Campbell  
ISAF PAO

For the International Security Assistance Force service members whose day-to-day mission focuses on the more long-term effort of coordinating and partnering with Afghan leaders, finding an opportunity to have a direct and immediate impact on the Afghan people can offer much-needed energy.

A group of American service members from ISAF headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan found just such an opportunity when they traveled to a nearby orphanage to donate nearly 1,400 pounds of food as well as necessary clothes, school supplies and toys March 30.

The mission was part of a series of volunteer community relations missions coordinated through the ISAF Chaplain's Office. The donations came from a variety of contributors.

"The people here at ISAF headquarters are actually looking to find a way to help the Afghans. They are generous and want to help the Afghan children," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Larry Lovejoy, of Orlando, Fla.

As the ISAF headquarters chaplain, Lovejoy, who is deployed from Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., has personally been on three of the volunteer missions and knows firsthand how much the ISAF service members want to contribute.

"I have a list of people who want to go out and donate," Lovejoy said. "They find joy in being able to help someone."

In addition to donations from ISAF personnel, many items were received from the United States.

While visiting his family on leave, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. David Andino-Aquino spoke to his daughter's Girl Scout troop in Daytona Beach, Fla., about what he does here in Afghanistan.

"Knowing my audience was young, I focused largely on what life is like in Afghanistan and how we are trying to help the Afghans improve. When I showed them the photos I had taken here in Kabul, the children noticed the Afghan children did not have many of the things they took for granted in the United States. They took it upon themselves to bring in school supplies, clothes, shoes and toys," said Andino-Aquino.

After receiving the donations in the mail, Andino-Aquino was able to go with Lovejoy and other ISAF volunteers to the



Marim Zamani, who runs an orphanage in Kabul, received a bit of help from International Security Assistance Force volunteers who donated nearly 1,400 pounds of food as well as much-needed clothes, school supplies and toys March 30. Originally from Takhar Province, Afghanistan, Zamani moved to New York City nearly 30 years ago during the Soviet-Afghan war and returned to Afghanistan in 2002 to start two orphanages, one in Takhar Province and one in Kabul. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. April Campbell, ISAF PAO)



orphanage where the items were distributed along with a collection of goods donated by ISAF personnel.

“Donating to the orphanage really recharged my batteries,” he said. “This was an opportunity to see and directly help some of those we want most to benefit from our efforts here at ISAF, where my day-to-day mission involves facilitating important meetings for the ISAF commander with more senior leaders.”

These efforts did not go unnoticed and were greatly appreciated by orphanage director Marim Zamani. Originally from Takhar Province, Afghanistan, Zamani moved to New York City nearly 30 years ago during the Soviet-Afghan war and returned to Afghanistan in 2002 to start two orphanages, one in Takhar Province and one in Kabul.

“These donations will benefit the children here very much,” Zamani said. “When I put shoes on a small child’s feet and feed her even just one time, that brings me great joy and is very rewarding.”

For U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ardis Finley, deployed from Naval Base San Diego, and other members of the ISAF commander’s personnel security detail who coordinated the movement for the volunteer community relation mission, the experience was no less rewarding.

“It was a great experience to be a part of giving directly to the Afghan children and showing them that we really care about their future and well-being,” Finley said.

Nurturing the future of the nation’s most innocent seemed to remind the ISAF volunteers how that future correlates to the national outlook.

“Through missions like these, we can show the Afghan children how much we care about them and that they are an important part of the country as a whole,” Andino-Aquino said. “Hopefully it will help to make Afghanistan a place where people want to have their children grow up.”



U.S. Air Force Chaplain (Capt.) Larry Lovejoy, deployed from Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., hands a bag of dry food to an Afghan orphanage worker during a donation mission in Kabul, Afghanistan, March 30. The mission was part of a series of volunteer community relations missions coordinated through the International Security Assistance Force Headquarters chaplain’s office. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. April Campbell, ISAF PAO)



U.S. Air Force Chaplain (Capt.) Larry Lovejoy, (right), and U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. David Andino-Aquino, (left), helped donate nearly 1,400 pounds of food as well as much needed clothes, school supplies and toys to an orphanage in Kabul March 30. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. April Campbell, ISAF PAO)





Provincial Governor Mehrabuddin Safi leads his staff in prayer over the tree planting at the Nowruz tree planting ceremony in Mahmud-i-Raqi March 19. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Jay G. Scott, Kapisa PRT PAO)






U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Harrington, Kapisa Provincial Reconstruction Team deputy commander, assists in planting a tree at the Nowruz tree planting ceremony in Mahmud-i-Raqi March 19. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Jay G. Scott, Kapisa PRT PAO)

## Kapisa PRT participates in Nowruz tree planting ceremony

By U.S. Air Force Capt. Jay G. Scott  
Kapisa PRT PAO

Members of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Provincial Reconstruction Team Kapisa joined together on March 19 to plant trees in the Mahmud-i-Raqi as part of the celebration of Nowruz. Nowruz marks the coming of spring and is the beginning of the Afghan New Year, with this year being year 1391. Nowruz is the largest and best known festival in Afghanistan and is celebrated widely throughout the country, said a local participant. Afghans return home and participate in traditional festivities during this time.

Provincial Governor Mehrabuddin Safi opened the ceremony with a speech and a prayer over the planting. Members of the GIRoA and the PRT then began to plant the trees together. In addition to celebrating the New Year, participating in the ceremony helped to develop closer ties with the community, the government of Kapisa and the new rotation of PRT Kapisa. 



Dr. Brian Price, PRT Kapisa Human Terrain System social scientist, assists in planting a tree at the Nowruz tree planting ceremony in Mahmud-i-Raqi March 19. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Jay G. Scott, Kapisa PRT PAO)



# Polish working dogs support

By Polish Army Maj. Julita Mirowska  
TF White Eagle PAO

**M**ilitary Police dogs pay great service to Task Force White Eagle. German Shepherds and Labradors are engaged in counter-narcotics operations and detection of explosives.

The dogs are under the supervision of trained Soldiers who work with them in preparation for missions. In Afghanistan they go on patrols, search civilians and their vehicles to find any traces of explosive materials or narcotics. Military Police dogs have a good reputation among Polish and American Soldiers for their work.

"Bik," a German Shepherd, is a specialist in narcotics detection. He and his handler, Brus, arrived in Afghanistan in September 2011. Despite this being their first time on a mission, they gained enough experience in counter-narcotics operations conducted by the police in different parts of Poland. They also prepared themselves for the International Security Assistance Force mission months in advance.

"I have chosen Bik from more than hundred dogs," said Brus. "It was a friendship from the first sight."

The dogs are trained in the Military Center of Pharmacy and Medical Technology near Warsaw, Poland. They endure numerous exercises to include detection of narcotics and explosive materials, patrols and guard duty. For the ISAF mission, all Polish dogs are equipped with bulletproof, tactical or cooling vests as well as boots and sunglasses.

The handlers are also allowed to take their dogs home during weekends and holidays to strengthen the bonds between them.

"My family and I decided to keep Bik home when he retires from service," Brus said. "I can't imagine that this little hero could spend its retirement in the dog shelter. He proved to be a friend and a brave Soldier. He saved many human lives by finding lots of narcotics and explosives. Keeping him home after his service will be my tribute to him."

Bik, who was unaware of the praises and his bright future, barked happily at him. 

*A Polish military working dog wears special equipment, protective sunglasses and cooling vest while out on missions in support of Task Force White Eagle operations. (Photo by Polish Army Maj. Julita Mirowska, TF White Eagle PAO)*





# Port TF White Eagle mission



*"Bik," a Polish military working dog, checks Soldiers' luggage during a routine inspection. (Photo by Polish Army Maj. Julita Mirowska, TF White Eagle PAO)*



*A Polish military working dog jumps over an obstacle at a Task Force White Eagle training area. (Photo by Polish Army Maj. Julita Mirowska, TF White Eagle PAO)*



# Craig Joint-Theater Hospital transfer systems program

By U.S. Army Capt. Addie Snay  
TF MED-A PAO

Members of Task Force Medical-Afghanistan, Task Force Medical-East, and contractors from the Theater Medical Information Program-Air Force, completed the transition of Craig Joint-Theater Hospital from the Army program Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care system to TMIP-AF, March 15.


TMIP-AF is the Air Force program responsible for supporting the use of the electronic health records by deployed medical units. The data recorded on this application is stored locally and sent securely back to the United States, where it is added to service members' permanent health records. The transfer was driven by the fact that the majority of the hospital staff is Air Force, therefore, the support mission is an Air Force function.

This was a complex migration, requiring prior planning and coordination between multiple units spread across two continents. The planning for this transfer began in 2010.

"This was a historical migration in two ways. Craig hospital is the largest facility ever transitioned between the service support programs and had the shortest outage time of eight hours," said Senior Systems Engineer Richard Radzville, a contractor for TMIP-AF and an Elkridge, Md., native.

"I truly believe that change was needed and I am excited to see the improvements in healthcare we are about to see occur at Craig Joint-Theater Hospital," said U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Maurice Lewis, 455th Medical Information Systems Flight commander and Chicago native.

The change-over was fairly seamless to the point that users have seen little difference, resulting in no delay to patient care. The computers run faster, resulting in more timely documentation of encounters by providers.

"It's not every day a project this big happens and it's not every day one gets to be a part of it," said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Christina Herrera, 455th Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron noncommissioned officer in charge of the Information Systems Help Desk. "The experience I have gained is something I will take with me throughout my career." 



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Armando Ortega, Task Force Medical-Afghanistan information systems technology chief, and Rick Radzville, Theater Medical Information Program – Air Force contractor, review the implementation plan for the transfer of system support services. Craig Joint-Theater Hospital transferred from the Army program Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care system to TMIP-AF March 15. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Martin, 455th Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron)





U.S. Army Warrant Officer Weldon Malbrough Jr., a staff officer deployed to Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, shows a family photo with younger brother, Philip, and twins, Jessica and Jordan. Like Weldon, the twins both enlisted and are also deployed to Afghanistan. U.S. Army Sgt. Jessica Malbrough is a medic with the 4th Infantry Division in Kandahar, and U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jordan Malbrough is a radar operator with the 25th Infantry Division in Khowst Province. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod, TF Devil PAO)

## Louisiana family sends 3 Soldiers to Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Sgt. Mike MacLeod  
TF Devil PAO

U.S. Army Warrant Officer Weldon Malbrough Jr. goes about his business on this dust-choked, dirt-basket-rimmed base in Ghazni Province.

He is one of the many paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division's "Devils in Baggy Pants" 1st Brigade Combat Team.

The 30-year-old force-protection staff officer is also one of three Malbroughs now deployed to Afghanistan. Jordan and Jessica, twins, followed Weldon into the Army, and it was only a matter of time until their deployments overlapped.

It's not the first time Windy, their mother, has worried about more than one child in a warzone. Staff Sgt. Jordan Malbrough enlisted in 2005 and joined Weldon as part of the surge in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2007. Jordan currently serves as an artillery radar operator with the 25th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade at Forward Operating Base Apache in Khowst Province.

In recent years, the idea of Families sending multiple children to the frontlines has become part of the national consciousness thanks in large part to the movie "Saving Private Ryan". Windy has seen the movie, but it's one she has never internalized, with three of her four children deployed to Afghanistan.

"It's something they chose to do. To keep peace with my mind, I try to think happy thoughts," said Windy, who still lives in New Orleans where she raised her children. Her fourth, Philip, works on an offshore oil rig. There is no worry-free time for mom.

"She is such a strong woman," Jessica said.

Whereas Jordan enlisted at 17, Jessica earned a college degree before enlisting. She was interested in an Army program to become a physician assistant or nurse, but it required three years of service. While her brothers pushed her hard to "drop a packet" and become an officer, she chose to enlist as a combat

medic.

"I didn't want to push papers for three years," Jessica said.

Sgt. Jessica Malbrough deployed for the first time with the 4th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade to Kandahar a year ago. During that time, she has worked in the orderly room, provided cultural support on missions to capture insurgent leaders and called in medevac helicopters to evacuate wounded Soldiers.

"In the Army, you meet people and gain experiences that you just can't get anywhere else," she said.

The Malbroughs are a tight-knit family. Both sets of grandparents live within a few blocks.


Being away from home for so long is difficult, Jessica said. It helps that she can call the man she looks up to the most, Weldon or her best friend Jordan. Not only can they relate to her Army service, they're even in the same time zone, which is a big deal when one is literally on the other side of the world from home.

Back home, Windy uses her kids as a conversation piece with patrons of the accounting office that she manages. Most of the time, she feels like she is serving alongside them, she said.

"People just say, 'Wow.' They don't understand how three siblings can be there at the same time," she said. "They all have great love for their country."

People occasionally try to give sympathy to Weldon because they know that, as the oldest, he feels responsible for the welfare of his brother- and sister-in-arms.

Weldon has seen how the Army has shaped his brother, Jordan, into the man he is, and he understands and supports the opportunities that Jessica is pursuing through the military. He and Philip always pushed her to make the most of her talents.

"We all enlisted during a time of war," Weldon said. "We all knew we were going to deploy. It was only a matter of time until they overlapped. I appreciate people's sentiments, but we all took an oath to do what we are doing." 



# W<sup>LEADER</sup>ATCH

# Top ten mistakes leaders make

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

Much of leadership talk is about what leadership does. Yet, there are ample studies that reveal what leadership should not do. In his book, “The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make,” Hans Finzel details the dangers of leadership. These practices will erode a leader’s influence and may cost the high price of losing the position.

**1** The top-down attitude: This comes naturally to most people. They view themselves at the top of an inverted pyramid. Micro-managing and abusive authority are common marks.

**2** Putting paperwork before people work: The more responsibility a leader has often leads to less time for people. Insensitivity, impatience, and isolation are abundant.

**3** The absence of affirmation: People are often not given praise for their team contributions. Kindness and confirmation are missing.

**4** No room for mavericks: Everyone has a different skill set and distinct personality. Unity can be achieved in diversity without seeking uniformity. Some leaders are threatened by those who have “out of the box” thinking.

**5** Dictatorship decision-making: The leader operates by the well-worn statement, “I said it and that settles it.” The work atmosphere devolves into drudgery and denies the value of every individual. Good ideas must be heard and considered.



**6** Dirty delegation: The leader gives an assignment, but refuses to let go. Strings are attached that keep the job from getting done creatively and clearly.


**7** Communication chaos: Leaders must ensure they are connecting and sharing the message. The assumption should be that no one knows. It is better to ensure that the message was shared at least once, than to wonder if given at all. Rumors spread in the midst of uncertain direction.

**8** Missing the clues of the culture: Every organization and institution has a culture that must be studied and understood. Wholesale procedural change for the sake of exerting power may result in the high cost of dissatisfaction, disappointment and departure.

**9** Success without successors: Leaders must prepare the organization/institution for success at their departure. Refusing to acknowledge this fact will keep the leader from finishing well. It will not enable the successor to begin in a healthy manner.

**10** Failure to focus on the future: Leaders must be visionary. The present is passing, so the future must be focused upon. Tomorrow is arriving quicker than anticipated.

Leaders who know what not to do will be helped in knowing what to do.

The power of negative examples can alter the landscape and create positive leadership for generations to come. 





# W NUTRITION WATCH

# Drink water, keep yourself hydrated

By U.S. Air Force Maj. Risa C. Riepma, RD, MA, CDE

**W**ater. We think we know enough about it, but do we really? We drink it on most days, but do we drink enough? Water's importance is often overlooked but in reality, it makes up about 60 percent of our body weight and plays a significant role in how our bodies function.

It warrants a brief overview. Water does more than quench our thirst and provides us something to drink at mealtimes.

Some of its main functions include regulation of body temperature, lubrication of joints, carrying oxygen and nutrients to the cells, helps dissolve minerals and other nutrients making them accessible to the body, helps to prevent constipation, helps to protect body organs and tissues, and moistens tissues in the mouth, eyes and nose.

Water is lost from the body via urine, feces, during perspiration, and through continuous evaporation. It must be continuously replenished.

The amount of water you need depends on a variety of factors, including the climate you live in, physical activity, and whether you're experiencing an illness or have any other health conditions. Water lost during sweating is usually low in mild weather and sedentary conditions.

However, it can be a major source of water and electrolyte

loss for people exercising or laboring in extreme heat and/or humidity such as the weather during the summer months in Afghanistan.

Dehydration is an adverse effect of inadequate water intake and the symptoms of acute dehydration depend on the degree of deficit. The symptoms range from increased thirst, dry mouth, loss of appetite, difficulty concentrating, headache, sleepiness, tingling, numbness and even collapse.

Throughout the day, an average person loses about 2 ½ quarts of water (even more if it is hot and humid outside) so it becomes necessary to replace those losses. Men should consume about 3.7 liters (13 cups) of water daily and women should consume about 2.7 liters (9 cups).

While water is the best choice for fluid replacement, juices, tea, soup, coffee and sports drinks can be counted toward the daily goal. It is important to keep in mind that these fluids have extra calories that can lead to weight gain if consumed excessively.


For example, 4 cups of a standard sports drink has 200 calories. Some foods with high water content are lettuce, watermelons, broccoli, grapefruits, carrots, yogurt, and apples.

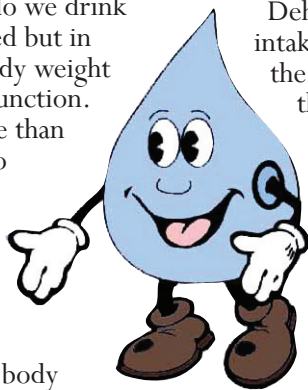
Here are some tips that can help you reach your fluid goals:

- ◆ Instead of a coffee break, take a water break.
- ◆ Keep a bottle of water with you when you are outside or at your desk.
- ◆ If you prefer flavor, add the artificially sweetened packets to your bottled water so that you drink more.
- ◆ Drink water at your mealtimes and in between bites of food.

There are instances during hot temperatures that the body's electrolytes also need to be replaced. If you are exercising vigorously or working outdoors for more than 1 hour and are losing fluid and electrolytes through sweat, it is important to drink fluids that can serve as an electrolyte replacement such as a sports drink.

Drinking water throughout the day is vital to staying on top of fluid requirements. The thirst mechanism is an indicator that dehydration has already set in, so don't wait until you are thirsty to drink water.

A way to gauge how well you are staying hydrated is to observe the color of your urine. Urine should be light in color. The darker the color, the more you are dehydrated, so lift up that bottle or glass and drink some water. 



## Am I Hydrated? Urine Color Chart

1		This urine color chart is a simple tool you can use to assess if you are drinking enough fluids throughout day to stay hydrated.
2		
3		
4		If your urine matches the colors numbered 4 through 8 you are dehydrated and need to drink for more fluid.
5		
6		<b>Be Aware!</b> If you are taking single vitamin supplements or a multivitamin supplement, some of the vitamins in the supplements can change the color of your urine for a few hours, making it bright yellow or discolored.
7		
8		If you are taking a vitamin supplement, you may need to check your hydration status using another tool.





# WEMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ATCH

By U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Eric Dunem  
455th Expeditionary Civil Engineering

With a constant insider threat and a history of attempts and attacks in the Afghanistan theater of operations, this is an all-too-realistic emergency and may be the most dynamic scenario any of us will ever face.

Consider that there may be one or more individuals. The focus is to kill as many as possible, and the shooters probably don't expect to survive. With that said, keeping a clear head and remaining calm is very important for your safety and the safety of others.

There are no set procedures if you are close to the shooter, flight or fight is your decision to make, but here are some things to consider if your workplace or compound is targeted:

- ◆ Drop, cover and determine the direction of the threat. If possible try to quickly move away.

- ◆ If no escape is possible, secure the room you're in, lock or barricade doors and windows by any method available. If you cannot secure your room or tent then consider moving to a facility that can be. Additionally, turn off the lights, TV or radio and stay quiet and calm.

- ◆ One person in the room should call security. Do not hang up until told to do so.

- ◆ If needed, defend yourself with lethal force but know what's in the background.

Research has determined aggressive actions, by even a single individual, are the most effective countermeasure for an active shooter<sup>1</sup>. When the security arrives they'll attempt to stop the shooting as quickly as possible and you don't want to be the target.


Do what security tells you, and answer any questions (i.e. where the shooter is and a description if known).

As the situation calms down, everyone should stay at the scene until told to leave.

## How to react to an active shooter

Service members are trained to deal with combat related stress, however, an attack from within your installation is different. If your installation offers additional training for either response to or recovery from an active shooter incident, take it.

Learn the tactics your organization recommends and the support options available after an incident. Following previous incidents similar to the one at Fort Hood, civilians and service members, should consider and prepare for the possibility of defending yourself from personal attack at all times.

For more information, contact your local Provost Marshals Office, Security Forces, Antiterrorism office or Emergency Management Office. 

Ref: 1. Ron Borsh, Manager of SEALE Police Academy.

## How do I respond to an active shooter?

- Your location and the location of the incident dictate your actions.
- Evacuate:
  - Have an escape route and a plan in mind.
  - Leave your belongings behind.
  - Keep your hands raised.
- Lock down/shelter in place
  - Hide in an area out of the shooter(s) view.
  - Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors if possible.



Homeland  
Security



# W<sup>UNIT</sup> WATCH

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

In the Navy, Sailors often deploy as individual augmentees where they're frequently separated from their unit, this creates situations where they work alone with other branches of service.

Many times these Sailors are the only Navy personnel on whatever combat outpost or forward operating base they are on.

Every service member deals with deployment differently. Separation from family and friends in an environment where they are the only Sailor amongst other branches of service can be stressful enough to cause problems.

That's why the Navy Mobile Care Team is striving to make every Navy Sailor's deployment experience better by interviewing them and using the data to help them get the help they need.

U.S. Navy Cmdr. Barry Adams is the officer in charge of the NMCT. Along with his four-person team the Cisco, Texas native gathers and processes behavioral health data in Afghanistan.

"The primary purpose of the Behavioral Health Needs Assessment survey is simply to collect data from as many Navy individual augmentees as possible," said Adams. "Then we look at that data across time and bring to light trends that have to do with combat stress and behavioral health and the day-to-day living experience during deployment."

When the trends are brought to light by the data, they don't just end up as some random fact on a piece of paper.

"Once we get all that information, we run it up to the Chief of Naval Operations and the Surgeon General," said U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Moses Rivas.

Rivas is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the NMCT and a native of Temecula, Calif.

"The information stays anonymous, but goes to the people who can actually make changes," he said.

The Navy started using the BHNA survey back in 2007 in

## In the same boat: taking care of Navy Individual Augmentees

response to an increasingly large influx of mental health issues, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries.

"In 2006 the Chief of Naval Operations who was Admiral Mike Mullen, formerly the Joint Chief of Staff, put out what he called the Blue-Gold message, which was very much ahead of its time," said Adams. "It identified 13 key elements of care to warfighters including combat stress initiatives and an anti-stigma campaign."

Adams said that the Navy works closely with the Army and the Mental Health Assessment Test and that the Navy built the BHNA around 2006 and implemented it in 2007.

The war in Afghanistan has given the members of the MCT the opportunity to gather more data than in any other time in our history, giving them an accurate picture of the individual augmentee and their behavioral health needs. It also provides them with new tools to fight stress.

U.S. Navy Lt. Stephen E. Haden uses a tool called the Em-wave, which is designed to help train individuals to lower their own stress. An Emwave takes pulse and breathing data and gives immediate feedback to the user. It is used by some Navy Seals to help them to learn to lower their stress while under pressure.

Haden is the Bagram Airfield liaison officer, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, and is an individual augmentee.

"I tried it and it was fun," said the Pearland, Texas native. "It makes me focus on my breathing and focus on relaxing. When I use the tools they have, they work."

Rivas said that deployments can have a way of creating a Groundhog Day effect.

"When you're in the military you see a bunch of different folks, but when you're in your unit you see the same people every day," said Rivas.

Rivas said he enjoys his job tremendously.

"I like that I get to travel, meet new people and interact with them," Rivas said. "We hear what their experience has been; we share our experience as well. It lets them know that we're in the same boat. It lets them know that the Navy hasn't forgotten about them." 🐼



U.S. Navy Lt. Tara Smallidge, research psychologist for the Navy Mobile Care Team and a native of Boston, along with U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Charles Cintron who hails from Carolina, Puerto Rico, go over a survey with a Sailor April 9 at Bagram Airfield. The survey helps the Navy to implement changes to improve the deployment experience of individual augmentees. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley, RC-East PAO).



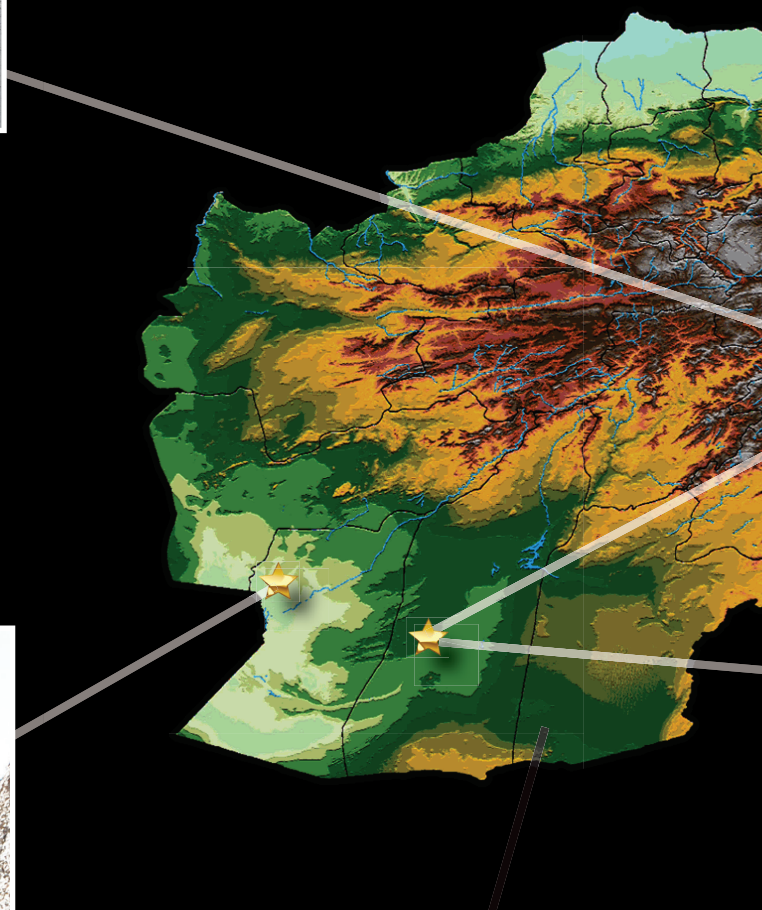
# Goodwill across Afghanistan:



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Adrian "Mohican" Gonzalez from the 1186th Military Police unit assigned to the quick reaction force at Camp Eggers, Kabul, hands a bottle of water to a passing Afghan child during a routine presence patrol mission within the city. The patrols are designed to assure the Afghan population that U.S. and Coalition Forces are in Kabul to provide safety and security in addition to suppressing terrorist threats. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Fahey, NTM-A PAO)



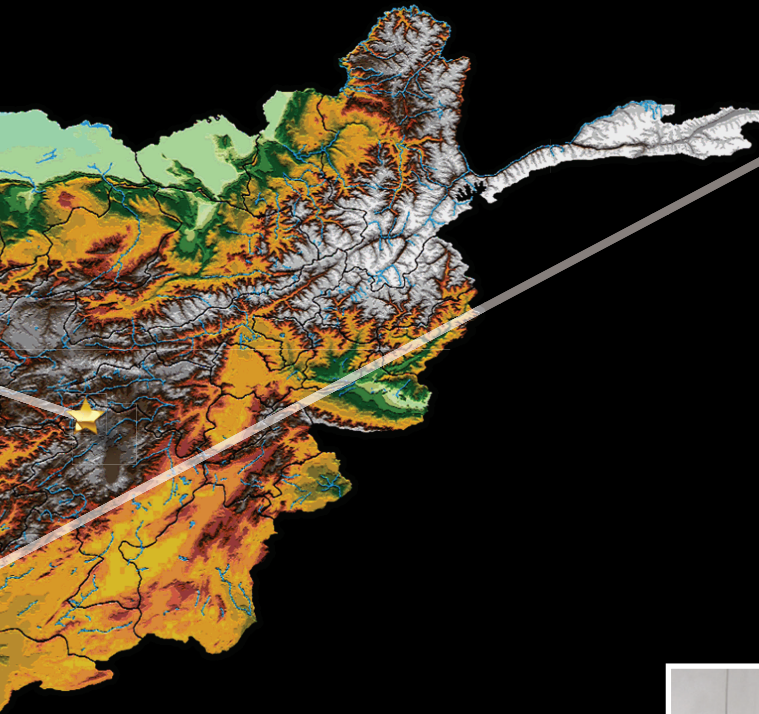
U.S. Navy Cmdr. Thomas Sheppard, commanding officer of Provincial Reconstruction Team Farah, greets Zarar Ahmad Muqbel, "Osmani," Afghanistan minister of counter narcotics, during his visit to Forward Operating Base Farah, Farah Province April 4. The minister and other government officials are in Farah to meet with local and PRT leadership. (Photo by U.S. Navy Lt. j.g. Benjamin Addison, Farah PRT PAO)





# ISAF and ANSF Reach Out

Kandahar Air Wing pilot Ismaeel, Afghan Air Force, receives a visual inspection of his ear drums from Afghan National Army Master Sgt. Rahim, after conducting a hearing test during a training session with ANA and 25th Combat Aviation Brigade medical personnel on Kandahar Airfield March 27. (Photo by U. S. Army Sgt. Daniel Schroeder, 25th CAB PAO)



U.S. Army Sgt. Brittany Deters, with the Female Engagement Team for the 58th Military Police Company coaches female Afghan Uniformed Police who are practicing searching a detainee at Camp Nathan Smith March 28. The FET hosted a day of training for the female AUP in which they were taught techniques of searching a detainee, rule of law and first aid. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ruth Pagán, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, PAO)





# STORY SNAPSHOTS



## Securing

*An Afghan National Army commando from 6th Commando Kandak fires a smoke grenade to mark an insurgent position during a firefight in Gelan district, Ghazni Province March 22. The ANA commandos conduct counterinsurgency operations throughout Afghanistan to provide stability in the region. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Sebastian McCormack, CJSOTF-A PAO)*





## Enjoying

*An audience member gives a thumbs-up during the "BAFs Got Talent!" entertainment show March 17. The show, which featured the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division Band, punctuated the end of a year-long deployment in Afghanistan for many of the Soldiers in attendance. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Bill Steele, RC-East PAO)*



## Giving

*A large group of women and children surround village elders and Afghan National Police officers waiting to receive humanitarian aid donated by Feed My Starving Children, a U.S. non-profit aid organization, and distributed by the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Poseidon, in Bamyan April 7. This is the fourth aid mission coordinated by the 82nd CAB, which has so far distributed blankets, winter clothing and shoes in the area. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, TF Poseidon PAO)*



## Speaking

*Gov. Musa Khan of Ghazni Province thanks Polish troops of Task Force White Eagle, in particular, Battle Group Bravo, 15th Mechanized Brigade, who supported Afghan security forces in southern Ghazni, and welcomes the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Task Force Devil, during a transfer of authority ceremony on Forward Operating Base Warrior April 7. The governor pledged to work side by side with Coalition Forces. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Mike MacLeod, TF Devil PAO)*



## Flying

*Four AH-64D Apache Longbows with Task Force Wolfpack depart from Forward Operating Base Salerno in support of combat operations in Khowst Province March 21. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Erin Dierschow, TF Poseidon PAO)*





## Unloading

*U.S. Army Specialists Redmond Payne, from San Francisco and Cody Grooms, from Pheonix, both members of 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Task Force Blackhawk, unload a shipment of lumber they drove from Forward Operating Base Sharana to Forward Operating Base Super FOB March 15. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)*



## Running

*A group of U.S. Army Soldiers complete the five-mile "Run for Jesus" carrying a huge wooden cross Easter morning on Bagram Airfield April 8. The "Run for Jesus" was the brainchild of Chaplain (Maj.) Stanton Trotter, the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade and Task Force Poseidon chaplain, who is an avid runner. He combined the race with a sunrise service for deployed Soldiers celebrating the religious holiday. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, TF Poseidon PAO)*





## Watching

*A U.S. Army Soldier with 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, Task Force Blackhawk, pulls lookout duty from a rooftop in the village of Yahya Khel, near Combat Outpost Yosef Khel, March 15. The Soldiers were aiding members of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Uniformed Police with building a check point in the village. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)*

## Building

*U.S. Army Soldiers with the 1022nd Vertical Company, 578th Engineer Battalion, walk up a wall to a new fuel point they were building on Forward Operating Base Arian March 15. The Louisiana National Guard unit has completed several building projects on the FOB to include a new dining facility, battalion tactical operations center and living quarters. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Catrina Dorsey, RC-East PAO)*







## Waiting

*An Afghan boy waits patiently with his mother for his turn to be seen by the doctor at the local clinic on Forward Operating Base Ghazni March 15. A medical clinic was established on FOB Ghazni to provide care solely to Afghans in the local area that need medical assistance. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. April Quintanilla, Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team PAO)*



## Searching

*U.S. Marine Cpl. Jesse Kelley, a native of Denver and combat engineer with Charlie Company, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, searches for improvised explosive devices in dried poppy kept in an underground storage compound during Operation Speargun in Urmuz March 28. (Photo by U.S. Marine Sgt. James Mercure, Regimental Combat Team 6 PAO)*



# REACH FOR THE STARS



## EXTEND IN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

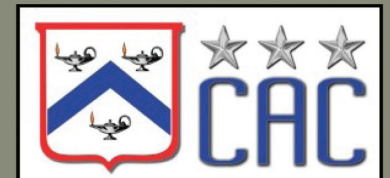


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Au Revoir



Αντίο

do svidaniya



اناما هب يادخد

Na shledanou

Senebti



Mirupafshim

Head aega

ةمال سالاعم

Auf Wiedersehen



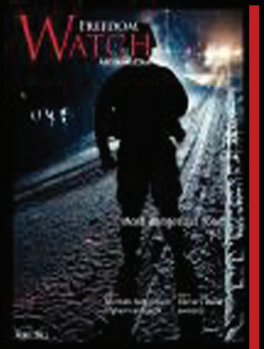
Farvel

Goodbye

From the FWM crew



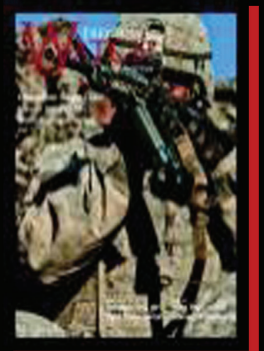
Two issues left  
before




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news







# THE FINAL WATCH

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Caleb Sheffield, a native of Reno, Nev., and the 3rd platoon leader, jokes with an Afghan child in the village of Gorchek during Operation Noaruz (New Year), March 30. Apache Company is part of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, Task Force Spartan. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jason Epperson, TF Spartan PAO)