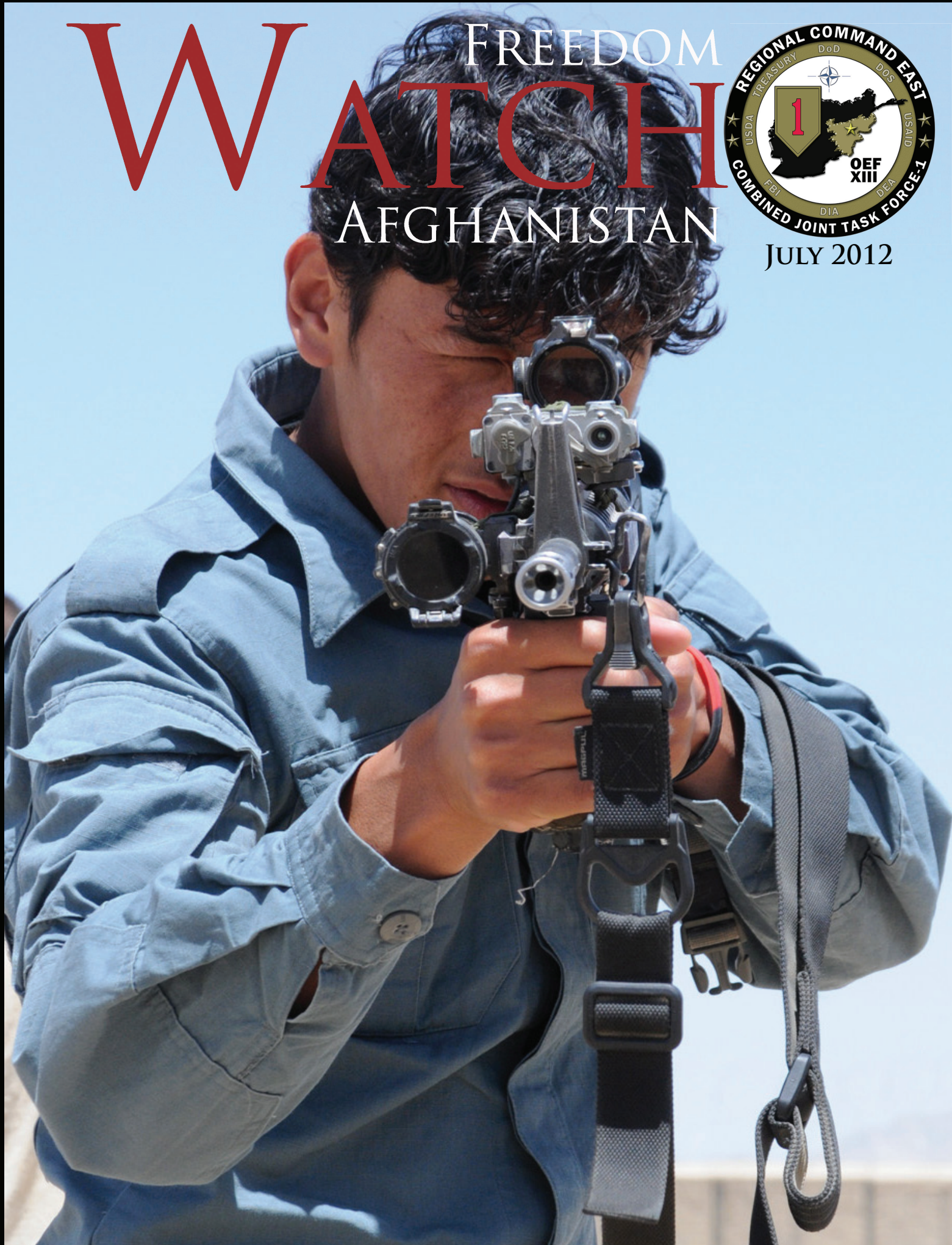


FREEDOM WATCH AFGHANISTAN



JULY 2012



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FREEDOM WATCH

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Afghan National Policeman Friy Dun practices circling a room while keeping his weapon trained on a central focal point during a room clearing class conducted June 4 on Forward Operating Base Warrior. The drill was conducted to keep ANP members from crossing their feet as they walked through a room to clear it because there is a greater chance of tripping themselves if they do. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Andrea Merritt, RC-East PAO)

1 Farewell from RC-East PAO 1

Like all Americans, my relationship with Afghanistan began September 11, 2001. As I watched the Twin Towers crash to the ground, I knew that the country and my life would be forever changed. I learned a lot of new terms that day – “Al Qaeda,” “Taliban,” “Osama Bin Laden” – but the one word I heard repeatedly was one I was already intimately familiar with: freedom. America is a nation founded on the simple, yet unshakable, conviction that all people are born with an inalienable right to live free, to determine their own destiny and pursue happiness, whatever that may mean for them so long as it does not usurp the pursuit of happiness of another.

Fittingly, when U.S. forces deployed to Afghanistan to bring freedom to the Afghan people, public affairs Soldiers chose to name the publication that would carry the Soldiers’ stories “Freedom Watch.” The magazine was to be a record, a watch of freedom rising.

In 2005, it was my honor to come to Afghanistan personally to be a part of our nation’s campaign to root out the tyranny of the Taliban and plant the seeds of freedom for the Afghan people. When I was here that year, U.S. forces were still doing the heavy lifting. We knew that in order to secure the future, the Afghans would have to step up and lead the effort. The Afghan National Army was in place, but it was in a nascent form. The Afghan Uniformed Police was also in place, but it too was not ready to stand and fight without heavy U.S. involvement. The Afghan Border Police was something we knew was needed, but it was not yet formed.

Coming back in 2012, I was amazed and proud to see the fruits of the seeds that so many have helped plant over the last 10 years. The Afghan National Security Forces grew from a fledgling force to one that is ready, willing and able to protect the people of Afghanistan and destroy those who wish them harm.

The story of U.S. Soldiers leading the fight in Afghanistan is coming to an end. A new story is beginning, the story of the heroic efforts of the people of Afghanistan to stand up and secure freedom for themselves. It’s their watch now. It’s sad to see the final issue of the “Freedom Watch” finally here in print, but it highlights yet another step forward toward a free and independent Afghanistan. Those of us who have come and fought in this land so far from our homes can live with the knowledge that we did our best; we carried on the charge of every American Soldier to fight for freedom and justice. Those who have lost loved ones and comrades here can take comfort in the fact that they will forever be remembered by not one, but two, grateful nations.

Sincerely,
Maj. Paul Haverstick
RC-East PAO 1st ID



Goodbye from the editor

In the printing business when a newspaper or magazine is ready to be printed we say, “We’re putting it to bed.” As we put the Freedom Watch to bed for the last time I want to thank everyone who contributed to the magazine and all those who’ve read it.

As an Army journalist, it has been my job to tell the Soldiers’ story. Now as the layout and content editor, it has been my job to make sure the best stories and photos are showcased monthly.

I take what others have written, make a design to best show off their work, and highlight those they’ve written about. We’ve won awards and the Freedom Watch is known as one of the best magazines in the Army, but it would all mean nothing if nobody read it.

As we close the chapter on more than 10 years of publishing please continue to check out the RC-East webpage at <http://www.rc-east.com> for stories and photos about our Coalition partners, Afghans and U.S. Forces.

Once again, thank you, and to all those whose stories and photos we printed, we couldn’t have produced such an award winning and quality magazine without your exceptional talent.

11th Public Affairs Detachment

WATCH AFGHANISTAN

Thank you for letting us
serve you



ANP hone skills for operations

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Andrea Merritt
RC-East PAO

Afghan National Police trained with paratroopers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, in preparation for an upcoming joint mission.

During the training, conducted June 3-4 at Forward Operating Base Warrior, the ANP reviewed first aid, personnel, vehicle searches and room clearing procedures.

"As we prepare to leave, the ANP will pick up security operations and bear the entire burden," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Anthony West, platoon leader for 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 504th PIR. "We just wanted to refresh and keep them sharp on skills as we prepare to launch operations."

Since the subjects of the training were relevant to their job and contained plenty of hands on exercises, the ANP remained engaged throughout the entire training process.

In the first aid block of instruction, the ANP practiced evaluating a casualty, checking for and treating shock, applying splints, and different methods to stop severe bleeding such as tourniquets, pressure dressings and manual pressure.

"There are three types of bleeding – arterial, venous and capillary," explained U.S. Army Sgt. Kevon Campbell, senior line medic for Company A, 1st Battalion, 504th PIR, as he spoke to the class. "Since someone is more likely to die from an arterial bleed, that is what we are going to focus on."

For the personnel and vehicle search training, the paratroopers had the ANP demonstrate how they conduct searches and offered tips on how they could improve.

"The ANP are already good with searches. Their way works for them," West said. "We just observed and gave notes in areas they could refine instead of starting from scratch and trying to teach them our way."



Members of the Afghan National Police practice shooting around a wall in a high-low stack during a room clearing class conducted at Forward Operating Base Warrior June 4. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Andrea Merritt, RC-East PAO)

During the room clearing class, the ANP trained on the proper way to enter a building with emphasis on each team member maintaining focus on their area of the room.

Throughout the class, instructors stressed the importance of communication between team members, muzzle awareness, and maintaining a strong stance.

"They did well. They showed a lot of interest and progressed

throughout the day,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class George Turkovich, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 504th PIR. “Their morale was high and it made coaching easier for us.”

The training gave the paratroopers and ANP the confidence necessary to work together on future operations. The ANP took the tools necessary to perform their jobs effectively when they run operations without Coalition support.

“This was good training for us,” said ANP Sgt. Ahmad Shah. “It is important for us to do these things because it is what we do at our checkpoints. We need Afghanistan not to have weak military or weak police, so it was good for us.”

When 1st Battalion, 504th PIR, returns to Fort Bragg, N.C., later this the summer, the security of the area they occupied in southern Ghazni will be completely in the hands of Afghan National Security Forces.

Although the paratroopers look forward to going home,

they also look forward to the ANSF succeeding in the fight to secure their country.

“I hope to see the ANSF take ownership of security and their country,” Turkovich said. “They will be the ones doing the job in the future and I hope they do the job with pride.”



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Arnolando Garcias-Brochas, a weapons squad leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, assists a member of the Afghan National Police during a room clearing class on Forward Operating Base Warrior June 4. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Andrea Merritt, RC-East PAO)



Afghan National Policeman Mir Habib practices applying a tourniquet on U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class George Turkovich, platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, during training on Forward Operating Base Warrior June 3. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Andrea Merritt, RC-East PAO)

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Dust lights up the rotors of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter as paratroopers with 3rd Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment load for an air assault mission near Combat Outpost Ab Band, Ghazni Province May 23. The unit is part of the 82nd Airborne Divisions 1st Brigade Combat Team, which deployed to the area in March to help bring security to the areas along the countrys main road between Kabul and Kandahar. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Mike MacLeod, TF 1-82 PAO)



Transportation Company controls one o



U.S. Army Sgt. David Fontenot, a native of Opelousas, La., a mission commander for the Louisiana National Guard's 1086th Transportation Company, conducts traffic around his convoy during a brief stop in Kabul. The unit was wrapping up a five-day, 400-mile round-trip convoy from Bagram Air Field to Forward Operating Base Warrior on one of Afghanistan's most dangerous roads, Highway 1. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar
RC-East PAO

They roll like a freight train in the night, 25 enormous vehicles linked by radio waves and a common purpose. Their route: Bagram Air Field to Forward Operating Base Warrior, 200 miles south down one of the most dangerous roads in Afghanistan, Highway 1.

The convoy, conducted by the Louisiana National Guard's 1086th Transportation Company, is led by a gigantic mine resistant ambush protected vehicle, pushing a ponderous mine roller that looks like dozens of giant pallet jack castors attached to a field cultivator.

Five more MRAP vehicles and an armored wrecker travel behind the scout truck. They are spaced between the host nation trucks - freight trucks owned and operated by local Afghans -- that are not covered in thick plating like they are.

The host nation trucks are hired by the U.S. to transport all varieties of cargo: office supplies, food, equipment, ammunition, and tanks of helium for the house-size surveillance dirigibles that the Army floats over many of its bases here.

Moving supplies on such restive ground is treacherous but necessary. After more than a decade, the Coalition effort here is so vast that it can't be fed by air alone. Every convoy is a pulse of lifeblood to the forward operating bases and combat outposts they reach.

It's the 1086's job to ensure all that vital cargo safely reaches the Soldiers in the field.

"We get it done by any means necessary," said Spc. Jonathan Soto, a gunner from Patterson, La. "Whatever stands in our

way we will overcome and complete the mission. We are the cream of the crop."

Each MRAP vehicle is a fortress in and of itself, complete with powerful weapons, life support systems, and the latest surveillance technology. The powerful engines growl like wolves, and the doors open and close with whirrs and hisses like the space ships in movies.

Inside ride a truck commander, a gunner, and a driver who are encased in their own armored plating from head to toe -- shells within a shell. The extreme precautions are vital, as the roads they travel are plagued with the number one threat to Soldiers in this war -- improvised explosive devices.

"It's probably the most dangerous job out there right now," said Spc. Eric Mitchell, a driver from New Orleans. "We're on the road constantly and [insurgents] are blowing them up and shooting at us, and it's not like we can grow wings and fly away from it."

"IEDs are always a worry in the back of your mind," said Sgt. 1st Class Mark Ponthier, a platoon sergeant from Hessmer, La. "But we love the road. It's what we do and we wouldn't have it any other way."

Cramped up and strapped in, the Soldiers of the 1086th Transportation Company will often ride for more than 20 grueling hours in a stretch, under cover of the night as much as possible.

Their path to FOB Warrior takes them over the poverty-stricken streets of Kabul, and through shattered villages that look like post-apocalyptic backgrounds in a Mad Max movie.

Once outside the main urban hubs, however, the countryside seems serene, even picturesque in places, but unless something

of Afghanistan's most dangerous roads

drastic happens, they will remain encapsulated in their machines like astronauts, scanning every square inch around them for any tiny sign of trouble.

An exposed wire next to the road, a patch of freshly turned dirt, metallic glints of light - anything even slightly suspicious could be deadly in this land.

Indeed, once or twice an hour they have to detour the entire caravan around a blast crater from a previous IED, sobering reminders that this is no Sunday joy ride.

Not that they need reminding.

Nine months into their one-year tour, nearly every Soldier in the unit has been in a convoy that was hit by one of the insurgent's bombs.

"We got hit, took small arms fire, and I got my [combat action badge] my first mission out," said Spc. Robin Morgan of Pine Prairie, La. "But I'm doing what I love. We do it for our families so they can enjoy life back home."

"My very first mission out one of our gun trucks got hit ten kilometers outside of [Bagram Air Field]," said truck commander Sgt. Richard Baum of Las Vegas, Nev. "I don't worry, though. This is my fourth deployment so I know what I'm getting in to."

"I've been in two roll-overs, so I have a different type of luck," chuckled Spc. Jonathan Soto, a gunner from Patterson, La., "I'm a little afraid every time we leave, but the Army has trained me and I'm real good at what I do. I have a strong team around me that gives me the confidence to go out there."

The 1086th Transportation Company has taken its share of lumps but the good thing is that, so far, everybody has walked away, said 1st Sgt. Tim Croulet, of Anacoco, La.

"They still don't hesitate to go outside the wire," he said. "These Soldiers do their jobs for all the right reasons."

With 100 days left in-country, the general outlook within the ranks is that there is still cargo that must be delivered, terrorists be damned.

"I don't get scared. I personally like going out on the road," said Spc. Elizabeth Nall, a driver from Krotv Springs, La., "It's better than staying in the barracks. I'm a Soldier and I'm trained to do this stuff."

Even without the added danger of insurgent attacks, Afghan roads are a memorable experience. There is no such thing as an Afghan driver's license, for instance, or an Afghan traffic cop. Traveling is pretty much a free-for-all. "Lanes" are non-existent, and drivers will often make two or three lanes where there should only be one in order to bypass obstacles.

Ideally, the convoy would not stop moving because every minute spent standing still is another minute the enemy can zero in on them.

However, convoys are not immune from getting stuck in traffic, and the HNTs are often not in good repair. One after another of them breaks down during the trip to FOB Warrior. When this happens the entire convoy has to be halted until repairs can be made or the load shifted to a backup truck.

"Our mechanics are like a NASCAR pit crew," said mission commander Sgt. David Fontenot, from Opelousas, La. "They have to jump out and fix whatever the problem is - quick."

It's a nail-biting experience until, finally, the convoy

commander calls out the order to "start pushing" again.

After two nights of methodical trucking the convoy finally pulls into FOB Warrior just as the first pale light is coating the horizon.

Once their cargo is downloaded, the Soldiers of the 1086th wearily sack out on any cot or floor space they can find in the transient tents for the day, and then mount up as it gets dark again to begin the return trip.

The vast majority of the Soldiers on the forward operating base won't ever know they were there - except the shelves of the post exchange will be restocked, or that backhoe they've needed desperately will magically be parked in the motor pool. Once they realize they've been resupplied, there will be no one there to thank.

By that time, the 1086th will be rolling down the road.



U.S. Army Spc. Denise Sonnier, from Crowley, La., a gunner who is serving with the Louisiana National Guard's 1086th Transportation Company, Task Force Muleskinner, studies the screen of her remotely operated weapons system in her Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle as it travels down one of Afghanistan's most dangerous roads, Highway 1 May 19. The unit was on a five-day, 400-mile convoy from Bagram Air Field to Forward Operating Base Warrior as security for more than a dozen Afghan-owned cargo trucks. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Ken Scar, RC-East PAO)

Improvised explosive device

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber
RC-East PAO

Improvised explosives devices are known to be destructive and unforgiving and have caused coalition and Afghan National Security Forces numerous casualties and injuries in their effort to help the people of Afghanistan.

Unlike human beings, IEDs cannot tell the innocent from their intended target. Due to this, many civilians are killed or injured yearly from IEDs.

Caught in the midst of an IED attack in Nangarhar province was a young girl who faced life-threatening wounds to both of her hands, legs and abdomen region. At first, she was treated at a local hospital but when her health was deteriorating, it was obvious she needed better care.

She was airlifted to the Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram to receive advanced care necessary to save her life. Betany Gulalai, 12, arrived at the hospital near death.

"When she first rolled in and I first saw her, I was physically upset about the condition this poor child was in," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Chris Wilhelm, a native of Honolulu, and pediatrician with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing. "She was very malnourished, her wounds were infected and her health was not good."

Getting her back to being a healthy teenage girl was going to require special care by some highly skilled doctors and nurses.

Immediately, they removed all of her previous dressings to examine the extent of her wounds and malnourishment, said Wilhelm.

"We took her back to the operating room, did some corrective surgery, washed out her wounds and redressed them," said Wilhelm.

That was the first step on her road to recovery. However, she was so malnourished

her body would not allow her to eat regularly which provides a critical supplement needed in the healing process, nutrition.

"The main thing we have been doing is nutrition because she can't heal the wounds she has to her abdomen without proper nutrition," said Wilhelm. "So we have to add extra [nutrition]



U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Alisha Acosta, a native of Greeley, Colo., and nurse with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, and U.S. Air Force Capt. Sean Wilson, a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., and physical therapist with the 59th Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Squadron, help Betany Gulalai, 12, move her wheelchair at the Craig Joint Theater Hospital May 28. Gulalai was injured in an improvised explosive device in Nangarhar Province and is on her way to making a full recovery. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber, RC-East PAO)



ce almost claims child's life

to what other food she eats.”

So far, she has had three surgeries and multiple skin grafts to help heal her wounds and get her back to being healthy.

Getting her to exercise and move around can be difficult depending on her level of pain and energy, but the doctors and nurses at CJTH have found a solution, taking her outside.

“When I tell her that she gives me a big smile and is ready to go,” said U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Alisha Acosta, a native of Greeley, Colo., and nurse with the 455th AEW. “She is almost beating me outside with the wheelchair.”

Getting her to move around and exercise rather than stay in bed all day is another important aspect to her recovery.

“Getting her to move her wheelchair, walk using a walker or playing a game helps to build muscle and keeps her moving and healthy,” said Acosta.

Despite the odds, Gulalai is recovering remarkably and daily the staff of CJTH continues to help speed along her recovery.

“The attention the nurses and medical technicians are giving her is why she is getting better,” said Wilhelm. “I see nurses



U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Alisha Acosta, a native of Greeley, Colo., and nurse with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, and U.S. Air Force Capt. Sean Wilson, a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., and physical therapist with the 59th Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Squadron, provide assistance as Betany Gulalai, 12, walks at the Craig Joint Theater Hospital May 28. An improvised explosive device caused multiple wounds to her body. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber, RC-East PAO)

putting her hair up in a braid and stuff like that. That is what makes these children get better, that caring touch.”

Wilhelm also gives Gulalai credit, “She’s a fighter.”

Since Gulalai has been at the hospital, she has been able to enjoy things most Afghanistan children do not ever get a chance to enjoy.

“We introduced her to a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and when we gave her that she fell in love with it,” said Wilhelm.

The impact the doctors and nurses have had on the young girl is not only apparent in her health but in the answers she gives when asked what she is going to do when fully healed and back home.

“When I get better, I want to go back to school and study hard and become a doctor and help my country,” said Gulalai, as she tried hard to answer the questions through the pain. “After being in the hospital and being treated by the doctors, I got this feeling to become a doctor and help others.”

There will be mixed emotions for Gulalai when it comes time to leave.

“I am very thankful for being treated by the doctors because they treat me very well and they are helping me,” said Gulalai. “But I am also excited to get back to home and to see my friends and family.”

U.S. Air Force Capt. Sean Wilson, a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., and physical therapist with the 59th Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Squadron encourages Betany Gulalai to exercise her arms while playing a game at Craig Joint Theater Hospital May 28. Having her move and exercise is an important process in making a full recovery. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Cody Barber, RC-East PAO)





The motto of the U.S. Air Force's pararescue team adorns a deck next to the operations compound of the 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron at Bagram Air Field May 25. Pararescue crews rely on their maintainers to keep their HH-60G Pave Hawks in peak condition so they can fly in support of NATO and Afghan forces at a moments notice. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Raymond Geoffroy, 374th Airlift Wing PAO)

Turning wrenches so that others may live

Story by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Vernon Cunningham
455th Air Expeditionary Wing PAO

"Nothing makes me happier than when I see these blades spin and the helicopter take off," said Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Kopplin, 33rd Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit lead flying helicopter crew chief. "Knowing I worked on it. Knowing that airmen that I lead have worked on it. Knowing that we have done everything that we were supposed to do, by the book, 100 percent. When an aircraft takes off and comes back ... it's a great feeling every time."

Kopplin and the dedicated maintainers of the 33rd EHMU's primary mission is to ensure that Bagram's fleet of HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters are safe, air worthy, and combat ready so their air crew and pararescuemen can go out and perform their rescue missions in support of NATO and Afghan forces in Afghanistan.

For the Bagram Pave Hawk maintainers, the job boils down to a single task.

"On a day-to-day basis, I get aircraft ready to fly," said Senior Airman Hunter Rains, 33rd EHMU rescue crew chief.

"The Pave Hawk is a vessel to take the PJs where they need to be and for the back enders (gunners) to be able to protect those PJs so they are able to get around," said Rains. "Where we come into play is that we get these helicopters ready on a daily basis and make sure the helicopter operates properly."

The helicopter maintainers work a non-stop alert schedule to maintain high mission-capable ratings. They are ready to respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1st Lt. Pelenato Tagoi, 33 EHMU

officer in charge, said one of the biggest benefits of doing rescue helicopter maintenance at Bagram is the opportunity to work alongside U.S. Army and South Korean helicopter maintenance teams.

"Being able to share resources, knowledge and capabilities has increased the overall health of our helicopter units here at Bagram," said Tagoi.

"Without them, there is no mission," said Lt. Col. David R. St. Onge, 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron commander. "Our team is phenomenal. Without a helicopter, we have no mission. We could have the best pilots, the best back enders, the best guardian angels or pararescuemen...but, if there is no helicopter to fly then we would be driving around in trucks."



Maintainers from the 33rd Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit perform routine maintenance on a U.S. Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter at Bagram Airfield May 25. The high operational tempo and austere environment of Afghanistan presents a unique challenge for the maintainers, who work around the clock to keep the Pave Hawks ready to fly. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Raymond Geoffroy, 374th Airlift Wing PAO)

The colonel's sentiments were echoed by the very people who rely on Bagram's rescue helicopters.

"I have to have faith in the maintenance crew," said Staff Sgt. Lucas Gough, 83rd ERQS pararescueman. "We have the best maintenance crew out there for this mission because they are our lifeline. We take off with these HH-60s and if there are any issues in flight, you've got anywhere from six to seven souls on board. These guys have never let us down, and it means a lot."

When the Pave Hawk maintainers get an alert call, they drop everything they are doing and sprint as fast as possible to the flightline to get their aircraft prepared to fly.

"We are pulling plugs, covers, tie-down straps, and cranking APUs so that all our operators and PJ's have to do is jump in the aircraft and set off to go rescue somebody," said Tagoai.

Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Debeaux, 33 EHMU superintendent, has worked as a helicopter crew chief for 20 years, serving 11 years as an HH-60 crew chief. He said the HH-60 maintainers' actions during a scramble are all about saving lives.

"The mindset during a scramble is to not be last," said Debeaux. "The thought is if you get there earlier then maybe you will give the PJ's that extra second to go rescue someone."

"PJ's have this thing they call 'The Golden Hour'," said Debeaux. "The golden hour is the optimal response time from injury to medical treatment. If we take too long to launch an aircraft then that hour is cut down. If we don't get up in a hurry then it could be too late to get that save."

Gough agreed that the rescue mission relies on all the elements coming together quickly.

"Time is life," he said. "It is absolutely critical for us to get off the ground as soon as possible to get to whoever might be wounded out there on the battlefield. We really rely on these maintainers to always be efficient in what they are doing. They always get out there fast and allow us to get off the ground and into the battlefield where we are able to bring guys back."

The maintainers also recognize and respect the symbiotic relationship among the rescue units.

"If we can give the PJ the opportunity to reach that injured person while he is still alive, there is a great chance that he'll live," said Rains.

It takes a special kind of person to work as a Pave Hawk maintainer.

"The teams we bring out here to support the war fighters are those who are the most qualified, trained and experienced ... but, also those who can perform under extreme pressure," said Tagoai. "They have the confidence and courage in the face of danger and adversity to be able to perform their duties effectively in a combat environment."

"It's like running a marathon, but you're doing a sprint without being able to trip or fall down...ever," said Rains. "If anything ever happens to my helicopter and there is some guy out there, then it's on me. I have to get it right or fix what's wrong."

Rains went on to note that the rescue mission which he is supporting strengthens Coalition Forces by denying insurgents the opportunity to take servicemembers permanently out of the fight.

St. Onge said everybody has a part to play in combat rescue, to include all DoD services and Coalition Forces.



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Arquitola, 33rd Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit HH-60G Pave Hawk weapons section expeditor, inspects and cleans a mounted .50-caliber machine gun on a U.S. Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter at Bagram Air Field May 24. Arquitola, a resident of Keaau, Hawaii, is part of a team of crew members that check the HH-60Gs to make sure all parts are in place and secure, and that the weapons systems are serviceable. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeff Nevison)

"Saving lives is the bottom line for combat," he said. "We give those Soldiers the peace of mind to know that if you do get injured, someone is coming to get you and they are going to get there fast."

The maintainers' speed and skill have truly paid off.

They've maintained nearly perfect Pave Hawk mission readiness ratings, giving the PJ's the wings with which they have saved more than 20 lives and transported more than 100 patients to medical centers this year alone.

"It is truly an honor and a privilege for me to lead and serve with some of the finest rescue maintainers in the world who exemplify commitment to duty, courage in the face of danger and adversity, and just a selfless dedication to serve," said Tagoai.

"They truly have answered their nation's call time and time again. They truly live up to their motto: These things we do ... that others may live."

Afghan insurgent: 'I am tired of fighting'

Story by U.S. Navy Lt. j.g. Joe Painter
ISAF PAO

A former Taliban fighter who officially renounced his armed struggle in Chaghcharan district May 28 said his reasoning for leaving the battlefield was because he was tired of fighting.

The former Taliban fighter, who wished to remain anonymous for fear of retribution from the insurgency, officially joined the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program during a ceremony at the governor's compound.

British Maj. Gen. David Hook, director of the International Security Assistance Force reintegration cell, attended the ceremony and noted that one of the reasons the more than 4,600 re-integreees have decided to join APRP is they are worn-out on the battlefield because of the unrelenting military pressure being exerted on them by the Afghanistan National Security Force and ISAF.

The APRP is an Afghan government peace program designed, implemented and executed by Afghans to provide a way for insurgents who want to stop fighting to rejoin their communities with honor and dignity.

Four Taliban commanders, Mawlawi Ahmad Shah, Mawlawi Abdul Karim, Habillah and Mawlawi Ahmad, and nearly 120 of their men committed to renounce violence, sever all ties with the insurgency, and abide by the constitution of Afghanistan.

Mawlawi Ahmad Shah spoke on behalf of the former insurgents and said all those still fighting should renounce violence and join the peace process.

"I urge you to lay down your weapons and try to live a peaceful and normal life," said Shah.

During Shah's speech at the ceremony he thanked the High



Former Taliban fighters hold rifles as they prepare to hand them over to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan during a reintegration ceremony at the provincial governors compound. The re-integreees formally announced their agreement to join the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program during the ceremony. (Photo by U.S. Navy Lt. j.g. Joe Painter, ISAF PAO)


Peace Council members and the Afghan National Army for their guidance and support through their transition from the battlefield back to their communities.

The re-integreees turned in their heavy weapons including rocket launchers, machine guns and various types of unexploded ordnance routinely used for improvised explosive devices as a sign of their commitment to peace and rebuilding in Afghanistan.

Another re-integreee who attended the ceremony said that while he was still opposed to the presence of international forces in his country his decision to join the APRP was based on the timetable for the drawdown of NATO forces by 2014.

"Now that Islamic and un-Islamic countries are standing by us, we should take advantage of this opportunity and build our country," said Aziz Ahmadzai, director of operations for the Joint Secretariat. "We are one of the most fortunate nations to have this opportunity."

Dr. Abdullah Haiwad, Ghor's provincial governor, presented the re-integreees with a copy of the Quran and traditional chapan coats as they handed over their weapons.

Internationally funded, APRP is supported through donations from 12 nations including Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, Netherlands, U.K., Australia, Finland, Estonia, South Korea, and the U.S. Japan is the APRP's largest donor giving \$52 million in 2012. 



Former Taliban fighters line up to handover their rifles to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan during a reintegration ceremony at the provincial governors compound. The re-integreees formally announced their agreement to join the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program during the ceremony. (Photo by U.S. Navy Lt. j.g. Joe Painter, ISAF PAO)

ISAF highlights Afghan women leaders at gender integration discussion

Story by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Kap Kim
ISAF PAO

International Security Assistance Force Commander U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen and NATO's senior civilian representative to Afghanistan Simon Gass hosted a roundtable discussion at ISAF Headquarters June 3.

Female members of the Afghan Parliament, members of the High Peace Council, and prominent members of civil society attended.

"As we look a decade into the future, we should remember that just a decade in the past a meeting like this would've been unimaginable," Allen said. "Now it is the return to the darkness of the Taliban regime that is unimaginable."

During the last 10 years, called the "Decade of Transformation," more Afghan women have re-emerged as prominent members of government, but Allen says that's only the beginning.

"The women of Afghanistan serve as a bulwark against the return to the darkness of the nineties. This esteemed group of leaders, and your sisters who couldn't be here today, willing to step forward, speak out, and stand firmly in defense of your nation, its security, and the possibility of a brighter future for

all Afghans — you are role models with an impact felt both in your country and beyond."

During the NATO Summit in Chicago last month, as the international community and NATO made a commitment to continue to help Afghanistan through 2014 and beyond, gender integration into the Afghan National Security Forces and other women's issues have risen to the forefront of discussions.

For NATO and the international community, continued fiscal, advisory, and training support for upcoming years comes with conditions — conditions of quantifiable improvements and positive progress toward the peace process and in women's issues, according to Gass.

Gass said the re-affirmation of continued support international support for Afghanistan well beyond 2014 is a "strong message" not only to Afghanistan, but to the Taliban and insurgents.


Afghanistan's government re-affirmed their commitment toward the peace process when both upper and lower houses of the Afghan Parliament voted unanimously for the Strategic Partnership Agreement. The agreement clearly states the Afghan's government's wish for both NATO and the international community's continued presence through 2014.

Allen pointed out the increasing numbers of women joining the ranks of the ANSF and civil service.

"By stepping forward to serve, you are strengthening the linkages between the Afghanistan's government and civil society," Allen said.

For Farkhunda Zahra Naderi, a member of the Afghan Parliament (Lower House) and an outspoken advocate for Afghan women's issues, the meeting between members of the Afghanistan government and international community entities such as NATO and ISAF are essential to set a good platform for the future.

After three decades of fighting under non-democratic rule, the role of Afghan women was altered to a point away from their pure culture and history, said Naderi.

"I have said that Afghanistan not only needs building construction, but also mental construction," Naderi said. 



Dr. Monisa Sherzada, Afghanistan's High Peace Councils secretariat, speaks about Afghan women's issues during a discussion hosted by NATO's Senior Civilian Representative to Afghanistan Ambassador Simon Gass and International Security Assistance Force Commander Gen. John R. Allen at ISAF Headquarters June 3. (Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Kap Kim, ISAF PAO)

WARRIOR WATCH



Let my tears be still

Commentary by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Tiffany Evans
RC-East PAO

“Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation,” said President John F. Kennedy during his inaugural address in 1961. “Born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights.

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty. This much we pledge -- and more.”

As in his day, yet again, another generation has taken up the torch of freedom for all. This generation as those past has its heroes, many who gave their lives in support of helping the people of Afghanistan.

This last Warrior Watch is dedicated to all the men and women in uniform who gave the greatest sacrifice in Afghanistan since 2001.

More than 10,157 Afghan National Security Forces alone have died in service to the country along with 3,030 Coalition members as of May 30.

General George S. Patton Jr. once said, “It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived.”

I can’t say I agree whole heartedly with him because I have mourned many fellow Soldiers who I met while covering their units and personally lost two dear friends U.S. Army -Sgt. 1st Class Bradley S. Bohle and Staff Sgt. James P. Hunter.

To this day part of me mourns their passing, but another part is humbled and proud I knew these brave men. When I say my prayers I do thank God for Brad, James and everyone whoever wore a uniform to protect the ones they love.

I ask him to bless these heroes, who have given their lives, while comforting their families, friends and fellow troops and please let us not forget; they have given their all.

Recently I heard a song, “Let my tears be still”, written by Josh Abbott and performed by the Josh Abbott Band. The chorus states, “So don’t you wipe away my tears. I’ve earned them through all the years. Just let ‘em roll down like a stream upon a hill. Let my tears be still.”

We have earned our right to cry rather in loss or remembrance of pain, sorrow and even joy; our memories of them will live on, they’re truly never forgotten.

On May 31, 2004 at Arlington National Cemetery President George W. Bush gave a speech commemorating Memorial Day. I think his words are fitting and describe all the men and women who’ve lost their life in Afghanistan.

“Although the burden of grief can become easier to bear, always there is the memory of another time, and the feeling of sadness over an unfinished life,” Bush said. “Yet, the completeness of a life is not measured in length only. It is measured in the deeds and commitments that give a life its purpose.

“And the commitment of these lives was clear to all: They defended our nation, they liberated the oppressed, they served the cause of peace.”

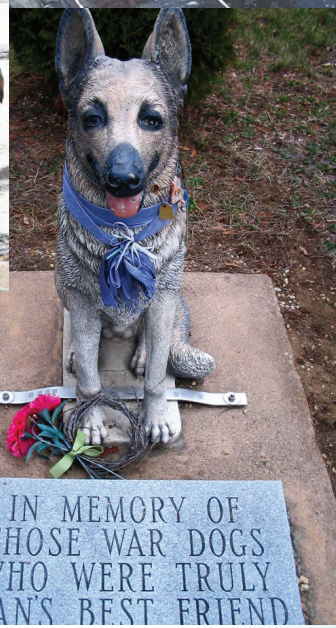
Coalition Deaths By Country

United States: 1992	Finland: 2	Australia: 32	Georgia: 16
United Kingdom: 415	South Korea: 2	Hungary: 7	Turkey: 14
Canada: 158	Lithuania: 1	Czech Republic: 5	Norway: 10
France: 83	Italy: 50	Jordan: 2	New Zealand: 6
Germany: 56	Denmark: 42	Albania: 1	Latvia: 3
Estonia: 9	Poland: 37	Netherlands: 25	Portugal: 2
Sweden: 5	Spain: 34	Romania: 20	Belgium: 1

Paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team pay their respects to U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Walsh, and Pfc. Michael Metcalf, during a memorial on Forward Operating Base Arian April 27. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Mike MacLeod, TF 1-82 PAO)



WHEN YOU GO HOME
TELL THEM OF US
AND SAY
"FOR YOUR TOMORROW,
WE GAVE OUR TODAY."



PRAISE ALL OUR MILITARY WAR
VETERANS WHO SERVED WITH HONOR
IN HARM'S WAY, ON FOREIGN SOIL
-VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS-



Keeping wheels rolling, civilians play key role

Story by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Christopher Marasky
Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunar PAO

When the most advanced Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles roll into Forward Operating Base Wright for repairs, it's not the men and women in uniform who fix them up.

It's a group of civilian men and women headed up by AECOM-CACI Field and Installation Readiness Support Team, or AC FIRST, who do the bulk of the repairs to these advanced military vehicles.

"We're a support team for the FOB, and we'll do anything and everything," said Celestino Marrero, a native of Fayetteville, N.C., and FOB supervisor for AC FIRST. "We can't repair actual battle damage, but we can do just about everything up to that point."

The maintenance shop run by AC FIRST consists of a vehicle maintenance shop, welders, and even a weapon maintenance shop that fixes everything from crew served weapons to M9 pistol side arms.

They are capable of providing service on the vehicles including engine overhauls, drive train work, transmission labor and some supplemental armor issues.

The shop also has field service representatives from most of the major MRAP manufacturers, who specialize in the specific variations of the vehicle that are used in the Kunar Province.

"Basically we help anyone who comes in on a convoy," said Marrero. "We fix them up, get them field mission capable and back out on the road so they can continue their mission."

The biggest customer for the shop is the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team, whose team mechanic U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Bryan Brys, a native of Terre Haute, Ind., is the sole military presence in the maintenance shop.

"They support me with everything that I need," said Brys, a Machinist's Mate 3rd Class, and the mechanic responsible for all of the PRT's vehicles. "There's a lot of things that if I can't handle it myself they'll help me out."

One particular incident involved a dead starter in one of the team's Cougars, just one of the variations of the MRAP. Replacing the starter would have taken Brys five or six days, but with the assistance of the motor pool, the job was completed in only three hours and the vehicle returned to duty the same day.

Vehicles aren't the only area in which the maintenance shop assists the FOB and other military members passing through, as the base houses a weapon repair shop as well.

"As far as our weapons area, that's our biggest concern," said Marrero. "Some of the weapons can jam up or have other issues, and people's lives depend on those, so that's our biggest priority."

The team has a pair of former military members, one Army



Andrew Shepherd, a contractor with AECOM-CACI Field and Installation Readiness Support Team, and native of Vernonia, Ore., works on an M9 pistol at Forward Operating Base Wright. Members of AC FIRST provide maintenance for vehicles and weapons to military members on the FOB. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Christopher Marasky, Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunar PAO)

and one Marine, who work in the weapons maintenance shop. According to Marrero, they excel at fixing all types of weapon systems.


"These guys have been doing what they do for a long time," said Marrero. "They can tear down a complete weapon, repair it, and put it back together and get it back to serviceable."

Being civilians working alongside the military in a combat zone such as the Kunar Province is a rewarding effort.

"I love it, I've been around the military all my life," he said. "Working with the military out here gives you a good feeling in that you're helping out the soldiers. I helped these soldiers stay safe since I made sure that their vehicles were good."

It's an effort that is greatly appreciated by the team, particularly Brys, who says he'd have a difficult time without his civilian counterparts.

"If we didn't have these guys, it'd take us a great deal of time to get things done, such as getting various parts or doing repairs," he said. "Without them there, if I was doing it by myself, it'd take forever."

"Working with the guys is awesome, I could trust them to do anything I need, but we all work as a team," he said. "They're awesome and they do a great job." 



A medevac helicopter takes off following an improvised explosive device strike against an Afghan National Army vehicle May 8. Because of the quick response and treatment by medics from 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment, the two ANA Soldiers who were hit lived. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Christopher McCullough, TF 4-4 PAO)



For infantry medics, training is key to saving lives

*Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Christopher McCullough
TF 4-4 PAO*

Soldiers in Afghanistan go to great lengths to prevent being injured. Sometimes, though, even their best efforts are not enough and an improvised explosive device strikes a vehicle or a Soldier is injured by small arms fire, at which point, combat medics spring into action and apply their training in order to save the Soldier's life, limbs or eyesight.

A combat medic's ability to take action and save lives, in what are often chaotic scenarios, is the culmination of years of instruction that usually begins in their Advanced Individual Training, which follows basic training. The classes for medics include trauma based training such as the BCT3 - brigade combat team trauma training - prior to being sent to their unit, explained Sgt. Michael Hood, senior line medic for Battle Company, 5th Battalion 20th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment. The BCT3 provides instruction on tactical combat casualty care for combat medics assigned to brigade combat teams. The training focuses on controlling bleeding, treating chest wounds and their associated problems, and clearing airway obstructions.


Once at their unit, a medic's training does not stop. In addition to their usual academic training, medics routinely go over their skills by means of mock casualty scenarios, which are designed to create a more realistic situation, explained Hood. Such training prepares them for their annual verification process, called Table 8, which is designed to replicate a battle setting where their medical skills would be needed.

"Table 8 is a skills verification that they do in conjunction with our EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) recertification training where you have to demonstrate all of your skills," said Spc. Michael Henchen another of Battle Company's line medics. "The training involves a team of two medics entering a darkened room where their ability to triage and treat several simulated casualties is tested in a timed exercise, explained Henchen. The key to passing Table 8 is communication," Henchen added.

Yet medics cannot be everywhere all the time, which is why they count on Combat Lifesavers, who are non-medical Soldiers trained to provide advanced first aid and life-saving procedures beyond the level of self-aid or buddy aid.

CLS training is provided to other Soldiers, by the medics themselves, in a week-long class. It is not designed to take the place of medical personnel, explains Hood, but allows Soldiers to provide immediate care to a wounded Soldier's condition until medics arrive. The focus of such training largely centers on what is referred to as MARCHH; Massive bleeding, airway, respiration, circulation, head trauma and head to toe injuries.

"They get the background on (MARCHH) over the first three days and the last two days we ... do a lot of hands on," explained Hood. "The fourth day we do more hands on and the fifth day we do a ... scenario based exercise (that) gets them to do it under pressure."

The training a medic goes through is pretty much nonstop. If they are not training themselves, they are providing it to other non-medical Soldiers. While there may be a lot of training, the medics of Battle Company feel it is worth it in the end when their training enables them to save lives, and at the end of the day that is all that matters. 



ALP students graduate in Kunduz Province

Story by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cassandra Thompson
CJSOTF-A PAO

More than 100 men joined the ranks of the Kunduz Province Afghan Local Police during a graduation ceremony in Nowabad village May 26.

The ceremony concluded a three-week course instructed by Afghan National Army Special Forces Soldiers and Coalition advisers. The course covered basic policing procedures, patrolling, weapons handling, improvised explosive device detection and other skills necessary to help them secure their villages.

In attendance were the district's chief of police, a provincial chief of police representative, district ALP leadership and Coalition representatives.

The graduates received their certificates from the ALP commanders of their respective regions, who emphasized the confidence local leaders have in their ALP's training and readiness.

"Our new graduates get a lot of energy from seeing all the ALP and Coalition support they have," said Arbab Aikal, the ALP commander in Nowabad. "They are really happy and are encouraged to serve their communities."

This show of support was significant because the day before graduation, one student was killed by an unprovoked attack by insurgents on the training camp.

Trainee Abdul Rauf was injured when area insurgents attacked the combat outpost with rocket-propelled grenades. He was put on a medical evacuation by Coalition Forces but died while being treated.

The students, led by ANASF Soldiers, chanted his name at the end of the ceremony to honor his sacrifice.

Recent ALP graduate Ekra Muddin, from Qari Sap, said he looks forward to serving in his village, despite the challenges associated with securing the villages and insurgents attacks.

"I am very happy to join the ALP and serve my country and my society," said Muddin. "I want to help create a more peaceful future for Afghanistan, so when I'm married and have kids, they can go to school, study and feel safe." 🇦🇫



A graduate of the Afghan Local Police training course proudly displays his certificate to the audience during a graduation ceremony in Nowabad village May 26. The three-week course led by Afghan National Army special forces covers weapons handling, improvised explosive device recognition, patrolling and other security measures. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cassandra Thompson, CJSOTF-A PAO)



Graduates of the Afghan Local Police training course chant the name of a fallen comrade during a graduation ceremony in Nowabad village May 26. The three-week course led by Afghan National Army special forces covers weapons handling, improvised explosive device recognition, patrolling and other security measures. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cassandra Thompson, CJSOTF-A PAO)





Afghan National Army medics and Coalition Forces treat the burn wounds of an Afghan toddler who had fallen into a fire pit in Nowabad village May 24. Since the family lives close to the ANA camp, they decided to take the child there for medical treatment. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cassandra Thompson, CJSOTF-A PAO)

Afghan and Coalition medics treat badly burned child

*Story by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cassandra Thompson
CJSOTF-A PAO*

During the afternoon of May 24, an elderly couple pushed a tottering wheelbarrow to the gates of the Afghan National Army special forces outpost in Nowabad village and inside the wheelbarrow lay something that surprised the guards. A 3-year-old girl grimacing in pain lay in the wheelbarrow. She had accidentally fallen into the fire pit her family used for cooking and appeared to be badly burned.

Her family had taken her to a local clinic the day before. However, the treatment she received was inadequate and she cried in pain throughout the night. Since the family lives close to the ANA camp, they decided to take the child there for further medical treatment.

The toddler was wheeled into the compound and ANA medics along with Coalition mentors sprang into action to diagnose and treat her burns.


"When we took the bandages off, we saw that she had second-degree burns on about 38 percent of her body," explained a Coalition medic.

Despite the challenge that lay ahead of them, none of them, especially those that had children themselves, were giving up on helping their newest patient.

After a tense hour of treatment, the staff had stabilized the girl, removed her old dressings, cleaned and re-banded her wounds, and put her to bed. She was finally in less pain.

For the next two days, the medical team took turns at her bedside. Her plight even touched other members of the team, who volunteered to stand watch over her late at night.

"Our team sergeant was adamant that we keep her," said a Coalition medic. "He wanted us to keep her to make sure nothing went wrong. Her family has also been reacting positively. They haven't tried to take her. They seem to trust us and understand that what we're doing is for her best interest."

The girl is expected to experience some scarring, but she will make a full recovery, thanks to the efforts of a team of dedicated medics. 



A paratrooper with the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Brigade, Task Force 4-25, takes a moment to reflect at the memorial of the fallen at Forward Operating Base Salerno May 24. The memorial was put together with a joint effort from Soldiers across the entire brigade. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley, RC-East PAO)



Memorial of the fallen at FOB Salerno

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Eric-James Estrada
TF 4-25 PAO

Servicemembers deployed to Forward Operating Base Salerno dedicated a wall to honor their fallen comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice in support of Operation Enduring Freedom May 24.

Memorial Day, formally known as Decoration Day, originated after the American Civil War to commemorate Union Soldiers who died in the Civil War. By the 20th century, Memorial Day had extended to honor all Americans who have died in all wars while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

At FOB Salerno a wall was constructed to acknowledge the American military units that have deployed to FOB Salerno. The names of the servicemembers, who gave their life while deployed to Afghanistan, were painted below the insignia of the units they served in.

"I determined the best way to honor my fallen was to do what they had asked me to do and that is remembering them on Memorial Day with a smile," said Col. Morris Goins, commander of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, hailing from Southern Pines, N.C. He said that this day is about remembering those who've fallen and reflecting on how they lived their life, not how they died.

In charge of designing and constructing this momentous project was Chief Warrant Officer 2 Paul Curnow, an armament technician assigned to B Company, 725th Battalion Support Brigade, hailing from Butte, Mont.

Curnow said the creation of this memorial is very personal to him, coming from a family with numerous family members

who are veterans.

"This is not only for the personnel here on the wall, but it's for all the people that went before us as well," Curnow said. "The best piece of making all of this is seeing the veterans and even the civilians who arrived here working giving us a pat on the back saying 'good job,' and after hearing all that, it just makes all that much more better."


During Goins' speech, he spoke on how he has grown to have a greater appreciation and understanding of the meaning behind Memorial Day.

"Prior to the global war on terrorism, I did not grasp the full meaning of Memorial Day, but God knows I do now," Goins said. "As a commander I've lost 32 heroes in combat and initially felt sorrow."

The dedication of this memorial so close to the where the fighting is ongoing has found some servicemembers feeling a sense of wonderment and satisfaction.

"I've seen something like this in Bagram, but something out here, right along the border, right where the fight is, I have not seen it. This is pretty amazing," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Patchen, the chaplain assistant assigned to 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry (Airborne), hailing from Casper, Wyo.

Patchen also spoke on his appreciation for the Soldiers who worked so hard to design the memorial and the great service it bestows on the family members who have lost a family member.

"The Soldiers who did this should be proud of themselves," Patchen said. "They did an awesome job. This is for everybody to see and just take a second to pause and think about the fallen. Think about their families." 

ANA conducts Operation Condor 45

Story by French Army 1st Lt. Youri Soime,
French Army PAO

About 400 Afghan Soldiers of 32nd and 33rd Kandaks conducted a search operation in two compounds in Joybar region. It was supported by elements of the French Battle Group (BG) Steel May 19 and 20.

The French support elements were established in the hills of Joybar. Below, the French Road Clearance Detachment scouted the routed and allow for safe infiltration of Afghan Soldiers.

At daybreak, Afghan National Security Forces began reconnaissance and search operations in the compounds of Joybar village. The Afghan Police conducted security checks on locations identified by Task Force LaFayette as having possible insurgent activity. 🇫🇷

Military Battle Group Steel climb a mountain side so they can provide support to the 32nd and 33rd Kandaks and Afghan local police during a search of compounds in Joybar village, north of Tagab Forward Operating Base May 19- 20. (Photo by French Army PAO)



A French sniper team of Battle Group Steel armed with a 12.7 mm PGM during Operation Condor 45 in support of 32nd and 33rd Kandaks and Afghan local police during a search of compounds in Joybar village, north of Tagab Forward Operating Base May 19- 20. (Photo by French Army PAO)



Afghan Soldiers open blocked roads

Story by French Army 1st Lt. Guillaume Epp
French Army PAO

On Nijrab Forward Operating Base, the French detachment route opening trapped (DoIP) of the Task Force La Fayette completed training of Afghan Road Clearance Company in scouting company axis and defeating Improvised Explosive Devices April 23 to May 11.

This was to form the third and last section (Road Clearance Platoon, SPC) of this company. This partnership between France and Afghanistan has focused on three aspects: training on recognitions techniques, knowledge of the specific equipment and implementation operations.

The understanding and awareness of the IED threat and knowledge of operational techniques were elements learned by Afghans.

"They have good equipment and have a real thirst to learn and understand our procedures," said Captain L., the French DoIP commander.

After three weeks of training and the conduction of several combined operations, Operation Falcon 6 was used to assess the skills and knowledges of the Afghan section. This assessment allowed the RCP to be declared operational.

This platoon demonstrates with seriousness and rigor in the technical and tactical skills of road cleaning and displayed its ability to prepare and to take in charge alone a scouting axis operation.

Gen. Mohammad Zaman Waziri, commander of the Afghan 201st corps, notice this during his visit to Nijrab FOB. He



An Afghan National Army Soldier uses a mine detector to help clear a section of road May 9. ANA have been training on how to properly and safely clear roads. (Photo by French Army PAO)

expressed great satisfaction on the Franco-Afghan partnership and on the degree of autonomy achieved by the RCP.

Two sections of the Road Clearance Company have been formed since January 2012. In total, the French Soldiers have trained 80 Afghan Soldiers. The first two sections are already operating in support of Afghan battalions, in Surobi and Kapisa districts.

The end of this formation of this third and final section allows the RCC to be complete and operational in order to carry out missions to open roads for all Afghan units. 🇫🇷



Afghan National Army Soldiers clear a long stretch a road May 9. Two sections of Road Clearance Companies have been formed and trained to help clear roads and also give the reigns to Afghan Soldiers to provide security for their country. (Photo by French Army PAO)

Afghan firefighters respond to fire

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Jacob Marlin
RC-East PAO

The Afghan firefighters on Forward Operating Base Thunder train daily to be ready to respond to fires.

On May 21 smoke and flames from several structure fires on FOB Lightning caught everyone's attention: including the firefighters on FOB Thunder. Afghan Soldiers rushed to aid their Coalition forces counterparts. It was time to put all of their training to the test.

With sirens blaring, the Soldiers of the 203rd Afghan National Army Corps Fire Department rushed from their station to the blaze located just inside the entry control point to the FOB. Immediately they went to work securing the area and setting up to battle the inferno. By the time they arrived, several buildings were already fully engulfed by flames.

As Coalition servicemembers rushed to save what they could, the firefighters positioned water trucks to best fight the fire and prevent it from spreading to nearby buildings and the fuel distribution point.

"When we got to the fire, it was so intense we had to stay back," said ANA Staff Sgt. Lalwazir, driver and firefighter for the 203rd Corps. "We contained the fire until we could get close enough."



Smoke from a fire on Forward Operating Base Lightning drifts into the sky May 21. Afghan firefighters from the 203rd Afghan National Army Corps Fire Department assisted Coalition Forces in extinguishing the blaze. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Jake Marlin, RC-East PAO)

To Lalwazir and the rest of the Afghan firefighters on the scene, it didn't matter what was on fire, it was their job to put it out.

"It doesn't matter if it is civilians, nomads, Afghans or Americans. We are firefighters and we will come to help," says Lalwazir.

When the Afghan Soldiers on FOB Thunder found out structures on FOB Lightning were on fire, many rushed to help. One Soldier who came to the scene was the 203rd ANA Corps Command Sgt. Maj. Habidullah Chamkani.


"I am so proud of my noncommissioned officers and Soldiers who went and fought the fire. They worked shoulder to shoulder with the Americans," said Chamkani.

Afghan firefighters go through training in Kabul before being sent to departments throughout Afghanistan, but their training doesn't stop there. At FOB Thunder, the firefighters go through class room training and even battle controlled fires to ensure they are ready when the call comes.

"We do classes and even fight fires out on the ranges to keep up with our training when we are not working," said ANA Master Sgt. Mirghulam, the NCOIC of the FOB Thunder fire department.

Without the Afghan firefighters battling the fire, all of FOB Lightning could have been destroyed, added Mirghulam.

When the smoke cleared over the FOB, the fire was out, no one was injured, and the fire only destroyed a few buildings. Without the help of the Afghan firefighters on FOB Thunder, it could have been worse.

"I am proud of my Soldiers. It was a testament to their training that they were able to put the fire out," said Mirghulam. 

Firefighters from the 203rd Afghan National Army Corps Fire Department direct water onto a structure fire on Forward Operating Base Lightning May 21. Thirteen firefighters and other Afghan Soldiers from neighboring FOB Thunder rushed to assist Coalition Forces on FOB Lightning to save other buildings. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Jake Marlin, RC-East PAO)



Afghan artillery fires first op

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Charles Crail
TF 172 PAO

Afghan National Army field artillery lit the night sky for the first time ever in eastern Paktika Province last week, as a newly emplaced howitzer battery became tactically operational.

Part of the expanding arsenal of Afghan National Security Forces in eastern Afghanistan, this 122mm D30 battery based at Forward Operation Base Orgun-E fired a training illumination mission to mark their arrival on the front lines.

"We can do a lot with these guns," said Afghan Army Capt. Daswood Shah, speaking of the capabilities this battery brings to Paktika. "We can support our patrols ourselves; we can support our checkpoints. This is an important capability."

Shah is the commander and he swells with pride as he talks about the new battery he commands.

"I am proud to be an Afghan National Army commander," said Shah. "My men and I are very proud to be able to support our infantry in combat."

The pride Shah and his men feel is well deserved. Just one short year ago, none of them had ever worked with a howitzer, not even Shah, he said.

Training in Gardez for the last several months, the battery learned the fundamentals of field artillery employment and certified for tactical operations in late March, Shah said.

After certification, they began moving to their new home in eastern Paktika Province near the border of Pakistan as the next step toward full combat capability.

"This is the second step," said U.S. Army Capt. Sean Grubofski, commander of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade. "The first step was occupying a joint firing point here in Orgun-E and maintaining that firing point."

Grubofski's Soldiers are serving as advisers for the fledgling Afghan battery, he said.



Afghan National Army Soldier Mufti Mohammad verifies grid coordinates in the fire direction center for a nighttime artillery mission at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E. The recently emplaced howitzer battery is the first ever to be tactically employed in Paktika Province and adds an important enabler capacity for Afghan National Security Forces in this volatile border Province. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Charles Crail, TF 172 PAO)

They train together daily, both on the guns and in their fire direction centers, which occupy adjacent sides of the same room.

"The next step is tactically employing fires as an enabler for maneuver operations," said Grubofski.



operational rounds in Paktika

The night illumination mission served as an important milestone for the Afghan gunners, said Grubofski.

“It’s a confidence builder, not only for the battery, but for the Kandak as well,” he said. “It displays both their accuracy and their high level of technical proficiency.”

The biggest hurdle left to overcome, the advisers agreed, is the speed at which the Afghan Soldiers calculate the fire missions and deliver rounds on their targets. All of this will come as they gain more experience, Grubofski said.

Grubofski said that given the level of skill displayed by the Afghan battery, independent ANSF fire support could be a reality in the next nine months.

“Currently they are effective with advisers,” said Grubofski. “Over the next nine-month period they will become effective in a partnered capacity. The final step is unilateral operations.”

Shah said he sees his role, and the role of his battery, as an important step towards peace in Afghanistan.

“I will be the proudest when we are done with the war,” Shah

said. “We have been fighting for three decades. My dream is the day we will no longer have to fight and can begin to rebuild our country.”



An Afghan National Army forward observer prepares to call in coordinates for a nighttime artillery mission at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E. The recently emplaced howitzer battery is the first ever to be tactically employed in Paktika Province and adds an important enabler capacity for Afghan National Security Forces in this volatile border province. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Charles Crail, TF 172 PAO)



The muzzle flash of a Afghan National Army D30 howitzer illuminates the night sky as the first tactically operational rounds are fired in support of Afghan forces, here. The recently emplaced howitzer battery is the first ever to be tactically employed in Paktika Province and adds an important enabler capacity for Afghan National Security Forces in this volatile border province. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Charles Crail, TF 172 PAO)

US-Afghan partnership leads to aircraft maintenance improvements

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon
TF 1-82 PAO

Your average story about a U.S.-Afghan partnership involves a foot patrol with the infantry through some dangerous territory.

Because of the terrain in eastern Afghanistan, helicopters are critical for troop and supply transportation. When Americans head home, we'll take our air support with us, leaving Afghan forces to continue the aerial mission themselves.

This partnership isn't about guts-and-glory battles with the Taliban, but about battles that won't take place once the United States is gone unless the country's helicopter maintenance programs progress to self-sufficiency.

The 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade hasn't had much opportunity to partner with Afghan forces. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Darryl Gerow, 122nd Aviation Support Battalion commander, a former special operations pilot and 160th SOAR company commander, sought colleagues working with federal police forces who frequently use helicopters to see what he could do to improve Afghan aviation assets.

"They have helicopters that need to be fixed, and we have helicopters that need to be fixed, so we thought 'let's put a program together, see if they're receptive to it, and make something more enduring,'" said Gerow, a Middletown, N.Y., native.

They partnered with the Afghan Special Missions Wing, formerly known as the Air Interdiction Unit, a special federal police unit operating under the Ministry of the Interior.

"This is day one of what we hope to be an enduring process, going forward and partnering with Afghan helicopter maintainers."

According to a May 13, 2010 Air Force news article, the SMW is a U.S. Army-mentored counternarcotics aviation unit stationed at Kabul International Airport, which provides support to a variety of ground units with its fleet of Mi-17 helicopters. The Afghan-only Mi-17 crews regularly conduct training and operational missions in support of the MOI, the Afghan National Police and other counternarcotics forces around Afghanistan.

The U.S. Army's 122nd ASB provides mechanic support to the 82nd CAB's nearly 200 airframes, tearing apart and reassembling helicopters in record time to maintain a constant aviation presence over the Regional Command-East battlefield.

Afghan maintainers currently operate under an old Soviet



U.S. Army Spc. Israel Vela, a native of Houston and an aviation mechanic with 122nd Aviation Support Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, wipes hydraulic fluid from the side of a CH-47D June 9. Vela, U.S. Army Spc. Jessie Wentworth, of Hesperia, Calif., and Afghan Sgt. Said Iqbal, an aviation mechanic from the Afghan Ministry of the Interior Special Missions Wing worked together during a new U.S.-Afghan partnership training program designed to share U.S. aircraft maintenance techniques and safety practices with Afghan counterparts. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, TF 1-82 PAO)

maintenance model, which means "everyone does everything." They lack the specialized shops Americans use- a system which allows each section to focus knowledge on a specific piece of the aircraft, coming together to accomplish the large project much faster.

"One of the things we show them is how we set up our shops, our maintenance, our avionics, and our production control to give them that exposure," said Gerow. "The other thing it gets them is exposure to just tools, processes, how we work, and how they might be able to adapt that to their own aircraft."

Americans and Afghans swarm a U.S.-built CH-47 Chinook. The aircraft is different from the Russian-made Mi-17 the Afghans operate, but they catch on quickly.

"We showed them the engine, then we went for a break, and when we came back they were already on the other one, and they were doing a pretty good job, said U.S. Army Spc. Israel Vela, of Houston. "Basically, we just supervised them from that point on. They catch on quick. They kept on saying it was too easy. They could probably fix anything."

"Even though they're different aircraft, sheet metal is sheet metal, avionics are avion-

ics, hydraulics are hydraulics," said Gerow. "So they might be different airframes, but what makes a helicopter fly is all the same."

The hope is Afghan maintainers can take back some of the safety measures they learn on the aircraft and apply it to their own equipment.

"We came here to learn new techniques," said Afghan Lt. Col. Abdulsatar Noori, the SMW maintenance unit commander, via a translator. "We haven't seen anything like this before, so we're trying to learn a new way of doing things."

In the hydraulics shop, Noori learns to make a hydraulic line, then test it under 3,000 pounds of pressure to check his work. As U.S. Army Sgt. Joseph Carr, of Pensacola, Fla., shows the senior commander the process, the group looks impressed. They talk excitedly between one another, pointing first at the testing bench, then the hydraulic line in Carr's hand. The impression is they may have just solved a problem in their own shop.

"What we learn here, absolutely, we can use these things," said Noori. "This is what we hope to use in the future. We can think, 'OK, we've done this before' when we take it over there. We learn new ways of doing things, and we can apply



U.S. Army Sgt. Christopher Burr, of Virginia Beach, Va., and Pvt. Felix Reyes, of Chicago, both of the 122nd Aviation Support Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, remove an auxiliary fuel tank from a CH-47 Chinook helicopter with the help of Afghan 1st Lt. Asif Wahidi and Afghan 1st Lt. Mohammed-Ullah Kohdamani from the Afghan Ministry of the Interior Special Missions Wing June 9. The U.S.-Afghan partnership is part of a program designed to share aviation maintenance techniques and safety procedures between the two units. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, TF 1-82 PAO)

them because the basic techniques are similar.”


Beyond technical knowledge, both the Afghans and Americans enjoy working with and meeting each other. They were a bit weary of each other early in the morning, but by lunch time, troops from both countries are working side-by-side.

“It was fun teaching and I like to learn,” said Vela. “It’s a two-way street. These guys have 20 or 30 years of experience. It’s actually a little intimidating. I’m only two years in the making. They learn, I learn, they teach, I’ll teach, and everyone benefits.”

For the 122nd’s Afghan partners, the opportunity is a point of pride to show off their knowledge and learn to apply their skills in new ways.

“If I work here for one more day, I don’t need any more help; I can install an remove an engine on a Chinook aircraft easily,” said Afghan Sgt. Said Igbal, an SMW mechanic. “Next time I want to work on removing and installing rotor blades, work on transmissions, and go deeper and learn more about this aircraft. It is all so interesting.”

The hope is to continue the program, establishing a training schedule and milestones, then pass it off to the 101st CAB when the 82nd leaves in about three months.

“My goal is to get the ball rolling on an initial partnership program, and turn the blueprint over to the 101st when they hit the ground,” said Gerow. “Right from day one, they’ll have nine months to make a more enduring program, process, educational tools, and partnership effort.” 



U.S. Army Spc. William Yarbrough, a native of Macon, Ga., with 122nd Aviation Support Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, shows 1st Lt. Abdul Sami Bakhshi a fiber optic camera used to inspect the interior of aircraft engine components June 9. Yarbrough was one of several demonstrators assisting in a joint U.S.-Afghan partnership with the Afghan Ministry of the Interior Special Missions Wing designed to share aviation maintenance and safety techniques. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, TF 1-82 PAO)

Dog Company stands strong with ANA

Story by Spc. Eric-James Estrada
TF 4-25 PAO

U.S. Army paratroopers and members of the Afghan National Army were attacked near a bazaar outside the village of Kharashi as they returned to Combat Outpost Zormat after completing a joint patrol.

For the paratroopers of 3rd Platoon, Dog Company, 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 3-509, leaving COP Zormat was a day like any other patrol outside the wire, where the possibility of an insurgent attack is always a high risk factor.

Afghan National Army soldiers joined the paratroopers on this patrol with the objective to move throughout the surrounding villages of Kalian, Omar Kala and Kharashi to gather biometric data on the local villagers and check out an area where insurgents were killed days before by an Apache helicopter.

While on patrol, the paratroopers and the ANA stopped and investigated the site where four insurgents were killed a few days prior. They were spotted planting improvised-explosive devices in a road near the villages of Omar Kala and Kalian.

As the day was ending and night was looming, the patrol came to a close and the paratroopers and ANA soldiers were within 600 feet of the COP. Immediately and without warning, they took fire as they passed by the bazaar in the village of Kharashi, taking two rounds of effective fire from the North, North West. Immediately, members of the ANA returned fire. At the same time the patrol was fired on with three rounds from a rocket propelled grenade from the bazaar.

As the firing had ceased, and 3rd Platoon began preparing to move back safely to the COP, they looked around and discovered that the ANA had already returned to the COP.

"They need a little more discipline when they return fire,"



Members of the Afghan National Army conduct security with 3rd Platoon, Dog Company, 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 3-509, during an attack outside Combat Outpost Zormat May 30. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Eric-James Estrada, TF 4-25 PAO)

said U.S. Army Spc. Kellam Tougias, a gunner with 3rd Platoon, hailing from Springfield, Mass., adding that there are many challenges when it comes to the formation of a new army.

Once the firefight stopped, the paratroopers began to move back to COP Zormat.

Platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, U.S. Army 1st Lt. Alan Saylor, hailing from Lexington, Ky., spoke on the ANA's performance as one of continual growth. He said he sees needed improvements in formations and order of movements, but that they are continually learning. "Their initiative has definitely increased as far as taking the initiative and taking the lead," said Saylor.

The paratroopers of TF 3-509 are part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, TF 4-25, from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The members of third platoon have established themselves time and again as hard chargers ready for action and able to overcome any obstacle.

Saylor commented on his platoon's proven ability to adjust the mission to the ever changing tasks of the battlefield, whether it's leading the mission or training the ANA in preparation for them taking charge of their country.

"They [3rd Platoon] are capable of transitioning from taking the lead to assisting in training and follow on and support as they continue to show significant pride for their unit and company," said Saylor.

"We're 3rd Platoon, Dog Company. We perform the best everyday any day of the week," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jacob Heeren, a squad leader with 3rd Platoon, hailing from Bloomfield, Iowa, who has been with the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division since the brigade stood up in 2005. "You want the best, you call third." 🇺🇸

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Fernando Gonzalez, platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon, Dog Company, 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment, hailing from El Paso, Texas, directs the movements of his platoon outside Combat Outpost Zormat May 30. Dog Company is part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, Task Force 4-25. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Eric-James Estrada, TF 4-25 PAO)





What to do for a Building or Tent

FIRE

What you should know:

- How will you get out?
- Where's Fire Extinguisher?
- Does it work?
- Who's your Fire Warden?

What you should do:

- Yell or sound the alarm
- Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep
- If it's bigger than you
Stay Low, Get out!



TSgt. Eric Dunemn

Bagram Emergency Management

Prepare, Plan, Stay Informed

www.ready.army.gov or www.beready.af.mil

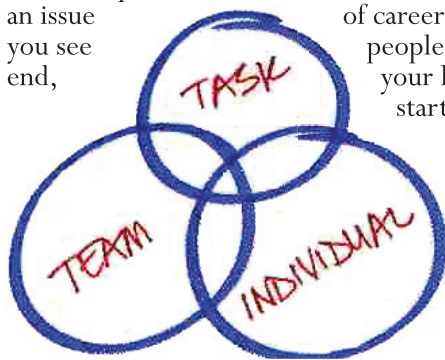


W^{LEADER}ATCH Engaged Leadership

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

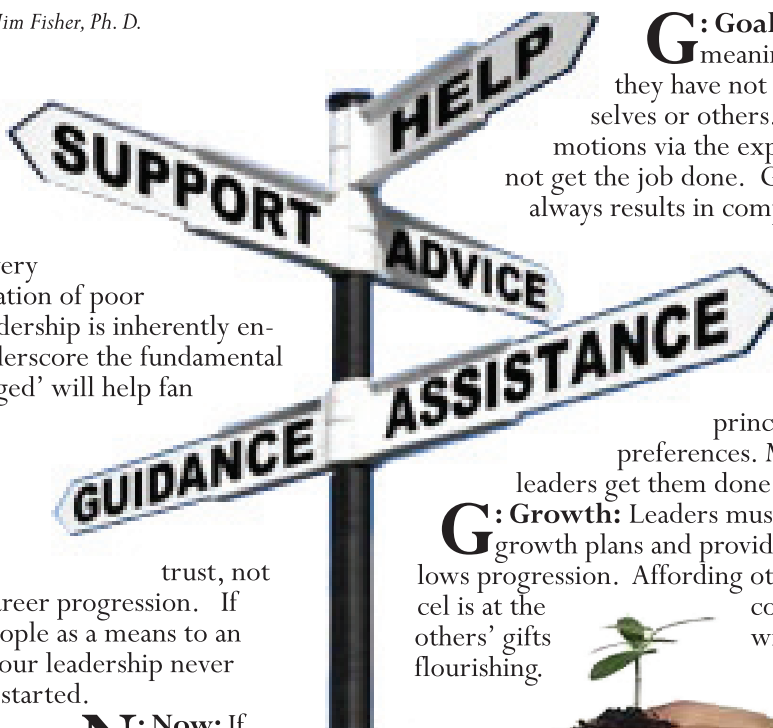
The term “Engaged Leadership” is a term that is gaining attention and usage. At its core, it emphasizes leadership that is purposefully involved in the lives of subordinates. The very existence of the term is an implication of poor leadership. Any valid claim to leadership is inherently engaged. This concept stands to underscore the fundamental truth. Reviewing the word “engaged” will help fan the fame of leading others.

E: Essential: Leaders who are not engaged are simply not leading, no matter what position they hold. Leadership is a sacred trust, not an issue of career progression. If you see end, people as a means to an end, your leadership never started.



as an entitlement will lead to self-centeredness and professional ruin.

N: Now: If leaders do not lead in the present, the opportunity for influence will pass. Positions are temporarily granted with the expectation of results. Viewing such roles



G: Goals: Leaders often avoid meaningful interaction because they have not developed goals for themselves or others. Simply going through the motions via the expected words or visits will not get the job done. Going along to get along always results in compromise.

A: Act: The best of goals are useless if not acted upon. Principles must be planned and performed. Articulated, but ignored principles devolve into optional preferences. Many have good intentions; leaders get them done.

G: Growth: Leaders must design professional growth plans and provide an environment that allows progression. Affording others the opportunity to excel is at the core of leading. Jealousy of others’ gifts will only hinder your own flourishing.



E: Events: Leaders must take the time to know important event dates. Recording and recognizing birthdays, wedding anniversaries, years of service, etc., will greatly enhance a leader’s impact. People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

D: Determined: Leaders must be determined in their role and responsibilities. Challenges are regular experiences for those who dare lead. The committed leader is resolved to make things better for those under his/her charge. Real success ensures that your successor is set to succeed.

Leadership is not a duty hours-only occupation. Claiming to be a professional through the reciting of a creed is only words; it must be seen by consistent example. If leadership is not engaged, it is not authentic, no matter the person or position.



W^{NUTRITION}ATCH

By U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Denise Campbell
Nutritional Medicine Flight Commander

A growing trend in nutrition and dietary guidelines over the last few years has been toward a plant-based diet. The term “plant-based diet” does not have a formal definition, but generally refers to an eating pattern dominated by plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans and whole grains, where meat and poultry take a back seat role. This trend has been supported by various organizations including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), as well as recognition of the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) Diet by US News as the “#1 in Best Overall Diets.” A plant-based eating pattern is not just a fad; it can improve health and reduce the risk of developing some cancers as well as obesity, diabetes and hypertension. This eating pattern is in direct contrast to the typical American eating pattern, but the transition to filling your plate with colorful plant foods has never been easier.

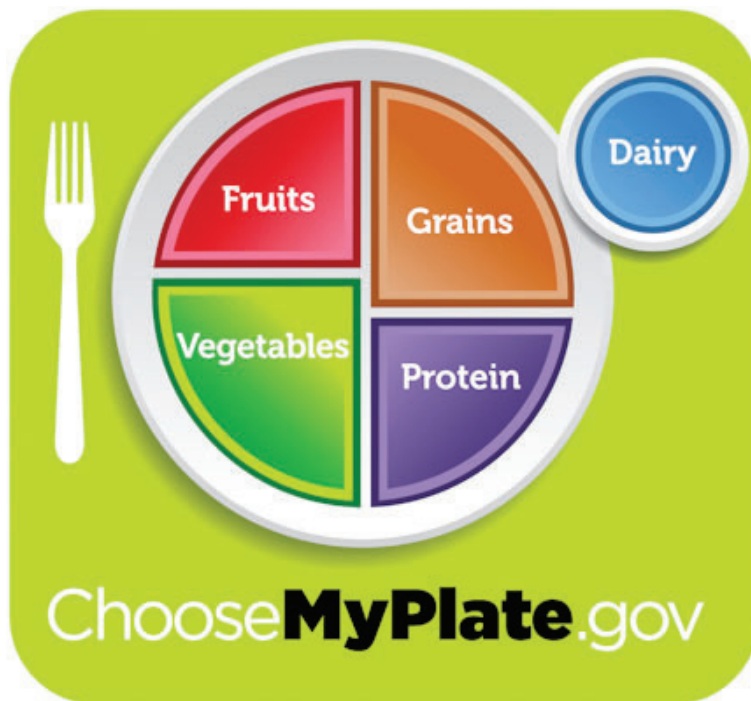
One year ago this month, the USDA released MyPlate, which is a visual depiction of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. MyPlate replaced the short-lived MyPyramid that debuted in 2005. MyPlate takes the guesswork out of eating; no longer do you have to ask yourself how many servings of each food group you should have daily or what portion counts as a serving. MyPlate can be followed just as easily eating a home cooked meal as it can be done in a restaurant or in the DFAC downrange.

The idea behind MyPlate is to make YOUR plate look like MyPlate at each meal. MyPlate advocates making half your plate fruits and vegetables, one quarter of your plate whole grains and the last quarter protein foods. Dairy is included as well as a beverage in the graphic.

Recent research shows that Americans only meet 50 percent of recommended needs for fiber - 21 to 25 grams per day for women and 30 to 38 grams per day for men. Fiber is only found in plant foods, so filling half of your plate with fruits and vegetables as well as choosing plant-based sources of protein, such as beans, nuts, and seeds will help meet these recommendations. Fiber has many health benefits such as increased feeling of fullness after meals, blood sugar control, reduced cholesterol and digestive regularity.



Following a Plant-Based Eating Pattern with MyPlate



An easy way to begin following a plant-based diet is to dedicate one day per week as a “meatless day;” you may have heard of “Meatless Monday” in the past, but any day of the week will do. If that seems like a big change, start with a few meatless meals per week.

What does a plant-based MyPlate eating pattern look like? Here are a few good examples:

- Make a vegetarian sloppy joe with 1 cup of cooked lentils vs. 3 ounces of lean ground beef. The lentils provide 15g of fiber and 1g of total fat instead of 0g of fiber and 10g of total fat in the lean ground beef. Although there are slightly more calories in the beans than lean ground beef in the portions mentioned above, the beans offer many more health benefits. Use a whole wheat bun and grilled vegetables to round out your meal.

- Double the vegetables and decrease the amount of spaghetti by half when serving yourself at the pasta bar. One cup of cooked spaghetti noodles is 220 calories and 3g of fiber versus one cup of mixed vegetables is 67 calories and 6g of fiber. Double the vegetables and you will double the fiber and the color!

- Start your day with two eggs scrambled with one slice of 100% whole wheat toast and a large fruit salad instead of a biscuit with gravy and two sausage links. The first meal provides 420 calories, 9g fiber and 14g fat compared to 565 calories, 1g of fiber and 36g of fat.

To find the nutrient content of your favorite foods and compare different foods side-by-side, visit the SuperTracker at www.choosemyplate.gov. Take a look at your plate at each meal- it is time to give fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains the spotlight they deserve and let the meat be the side-show in order to improve health and follow the MyPlate eating pattern! 🍴

W^{UNIT} WATCH

CJTF Paladin hosts robot repair course for ANSF

Story by U.S. Navy Lt. j.g. Andrew Carleen
TF Paladin PAO

Members of Combined Joint Task Force Paladin are spearheading a training class on robot repair for members of the Afghan National Civil Order Police here.

This first class, which was attended by three ANCOP students and lasted for three days, was intended to provide a foundation of knowledge to allow the Afghan National Security Forces to conduct basic maintenance on the explosive ordnance disposal robots that the coalition has provided them.

"You are going to have someone come and say that the robot isn't moving forward," said Sgt. First Class David M. Furtado, a trainer with Combined Joint Task Force Paladin, during the class. "You will have to know then that the problem is the driving and how to fix it."

Manuals translated into Dari and Pashtu were put together as training aids for the students to familiarize them with the basic components, tools, and troubleshooting for the robot.

"Basically, this is a repair class," said Furtado. "It's something that will help them to be self-sustaining following the transition."

During the class, the students were taken through a series of hypothetical problems for which they had to demonstrate where to go in the manual to fix the issues and then go through and correct the problem.

"They should be able to diagnose, troubleshoot and repair to get that robot functional and back out in the battle space," said Furtado.

The robot is key for the ANSF in the counter-IED fight as it allows for remote interrogation of explosive devices.

"The robot keeps them away from the bang," said Furtado. "It's a force protection measure for them."

The students were challenged during the course by a number of problems. They were expected to take apart the robot, identify the problem, and replace the faulty component.

"Interactive is the best way to learn," said Furtado. "The ability to get your hands in there and have the equipment, have the parts, is really the best way to do it."

The course has come with its challenges as well. Logistical challenges, the language barrier, and different ways of learning all caused issues that had to be overcome.

"A major challenge is that there is no set tool kit or repair parts," said Furtado. "Getting the tools to fix the robot and keep them in the fight can be a challenge."

You also have different ways of learning, said Furtado. Using the manual isn't always intuitive so conveying that process can

be a challenge.

Despite the challenges the ANCOP students were able to take a lot away from the course.

"I was very impressed with how they tackled the problems that they were presented," said Furtado.

By giving the ANSF some practical experience in robot repair, CJTF Paladin hopes to help them develop organic repair capability for the equipment the coalition is providing them.

"This is the type of stuff that's going to help us draw down," said Furtado. "The more self-reliant the ANSF are, the better off both the Afghans and the coalition are."

CJTF Paladin is responsible for counter-IED operations and training in theatre.



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class David M. Furtado and students from the Afghanistan National Civil Order Police test a counter-improvised explosive device robot as a part of a robot repair course given by Combined Joint Task Force Paladin. The course was intended to develop an organic robot-repair capability for the Afghan National Security Forces. (Photo by U.S. Navy Lt.j.g. Andrew Carleen, TF Paladin PAO)



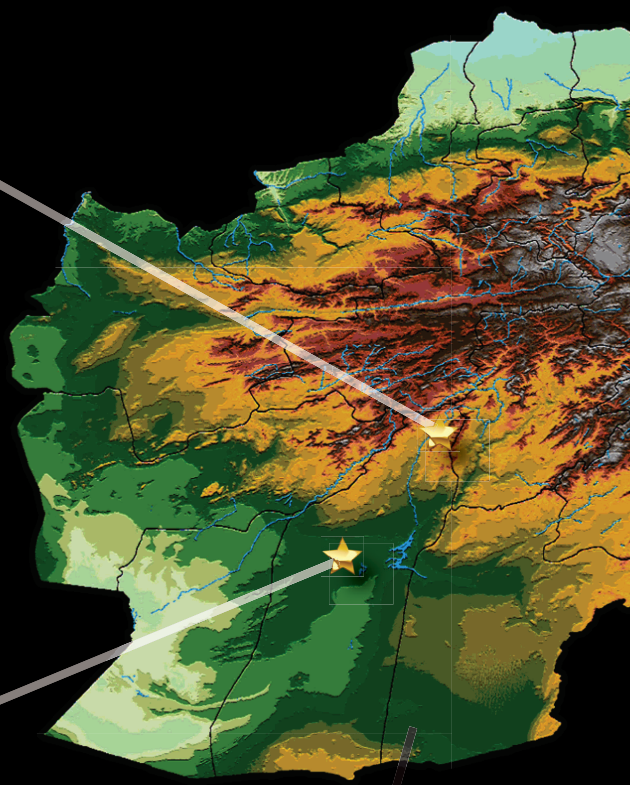
**FIND OUT WHY THEY SERVE
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Goodwill across Afghanistan:



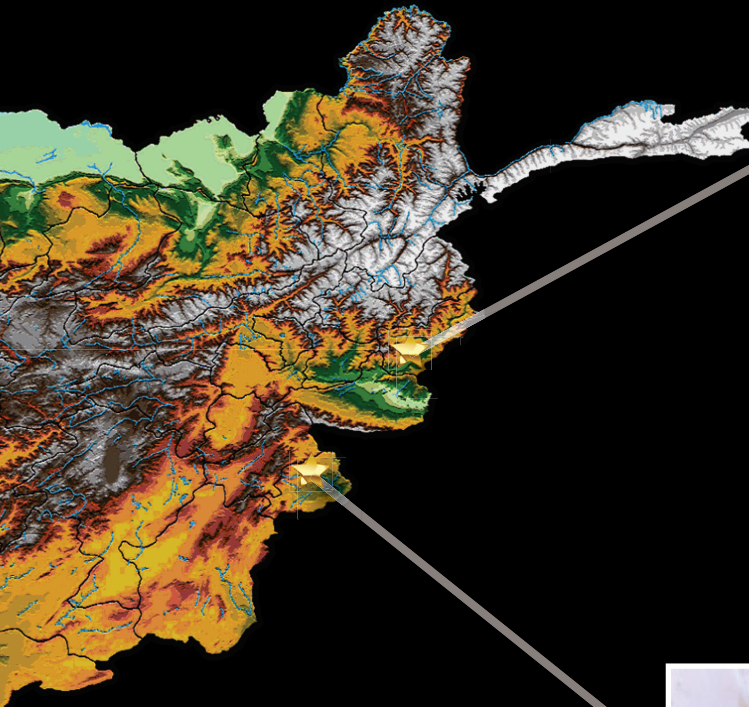
Afghan National Army Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade, 215th Corps, deliver food and cooking oils to the people of Girishk May 5. With trucks loaded with rice, beans, sugar, chai and cooking oil, the men of 3rd Brigade hoped for a healthy turn out of local residents, but what happened was simply unexpected. An estimated 2,500 local people came to receive the kind gifting and provided an ecstatic welcome to the Soldiers. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Frank Thompson, 350th PAO)



Towuz, a Local Afghan national child, rests on a stretcher as U.S. Navy Corpsmen with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6 work to close a wound on his leg on Forward Operating Base Jackson, Helmand Province May 28. Towuz cut open his leg when he fell off the back of a truck while riding through the Sangin Bazaar. (Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Logan Pierce, 1st Marine Division, Combat Camera)

ISAF and ANSF Reach Out

Afghan Uniformed Police distributes school supplies during a patrol in Shamair village in Kunar Province May 29. U.S. Soldiers and AUP deliver school supplies and meet with school key leaders. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Lawree Washington, Joint Combat Camera Afghanistan)



U.S. Army Spc. Spencer Smith, a native of Auburn, Calif., and a medic with Team Delaware, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Brigade, Task Force 4-25, evaluates a local villager who complained of chest pain in the Tani district May 28. Smith performs minor medical treatment as a courtesy to the villagers who have to travel many miles to the nearest medical facility. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. William Begley, RC-East PAO)



STORY SNAPSHOTS



Watching

A Coalition Forces Soldier scans the area nearby while providing over watch for Afghan National Army commandos from the 3rd Commando Kandak in Maiwand district, Kandahar Province May 25. Coalition Forces are currently conducting combat operations in the Kandahar Province to disrupt insurgent safe havens and promote security in the area. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Martine Cuaron, CJSOTF-A PAO)



Bumping

U.S. Army Pfc. Jake Vawter, a native of Bakersfield, Calif., fire support specialist, assigned to 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, pounds fists with children near Tore Obeh village June 8. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Frank Inman, RC-East PAO)



Inspecting

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Norma Garza, a pilot assigned to Company A, Vultures, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, conducts a pre-flight inspection on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter as the sun rises May 2. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Joe Armas, TF 1-1 PAO)

Helping

U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman Third Class Larry Thompson, right, helps U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kevin Cyrus, both with Police Advisor Team 3-2, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, out of a canal in Sangin, Helmand Province May 21. The team patrolled to maintain security in the area. (Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Sean Searfus, Regional Command Southwest PAO)



Preparing

A pilot assigned to the 104th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron prepares a U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II for a mission at Bagram Air Field May 27. Affectionately called the "Warthog," the A-10 is a specialized ground-attack aircraft which provides close air support to ground forces operating in Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Raymond Geoffroy, 374th Airlift Wing PAO)



Searching

An Afghan Soldier inspects a mosque while a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division, 1st Brigade Combat Team, pulls security outside in Ghazni Province May 29 . Whenever possible, Afghan Soldiers do the searching, particularly in culturally-sensitive situations. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod, TF 1-82 PAO)



Sticking

Afghan kids make faces during 381st Military Police patrol, Parwan Province May 19. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Gustavo Olgiati, Joint Combat Camera Afghanistan)



Stopping

U.S. Army Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, cordon off a road after a route clearance patrol locates an improvised explosive device near Shin Kay village May 31. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Andrea Merritt, RC-East PAO)



Riding

Local Afghan children watch Marines with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6 as they patrol in Sangin, Helmand Province May 31. The Marines conducted the patrol to survey the location of a future Afghan Local Police station. (Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Logan Pierce, 1st Marine Division, Combat Camera)



Prepping

U.S. Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Maj. Chris Bay instructs an Afghan National Army EOD student how to properly layer C4 at the Kabul Military Training Centers demolition range May 29. Advisers from NATO Training Mission Afghanistan's Counter Improvised Explosive Device division led the controlled detonation of 15 pieces of confiscated unexploded ordnance to help train Afghan EOD students and aide the ANA in safely disposing dangerous ordnance. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Fahy, NATO PAO)



Kneeling

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jeremy Szulborski with Police Advisory Team 2, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6 takes a knee during a security halt on a patrol in Kajaki, Helmand Province May 21. Marines conducted the patrol to maintain a positive presence in the area. (Photo by U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Andrew J. Good, Regional Command Southwest PAO)

Shoulder to Shoulder

I WILL NEVER QUIT ON LIFE



Prevent Army Suicides
Reach Out ★ Talk ★ Listen

Talk to your Chain of Command, Chaplain, or Behavioral Health Professional
or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

www.militaryonesource.com

www.preventsuicide.army.mil

Congratulations, Graduates!



Congratulations to our warrior graduates! If you would like pictures of the May 26th graduation ceremony stop by the Education Center.

Thank you again to everyone for supporting our student warriors and making this graduation ceremony a complete success.

Take advantage of your military education benefits today and become a part of Bagram's next graduating class! Pursuing a degree isn't always easy, which is why the Education Center is here to help you every step of the way.

Counseling

All **Active Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard on Active Duty Orders**, who wish to start using Tuition Assistance, you need to set up a GoArmyEd (GAE) account. Visit goarmyed.com and click on "New User". Create your account by following the prompted steps.

After you have created your account, login and start the TA tutorial. Finish steps 1 – 6 and come into the Education Center to activate your GAE account. If you have any questions or problems while setting up your account please visit the Education Center and a counselor will assist you.

All **Active Air Force, AF Reserve, and Air Guard**, you will need an initial TA briefing prior to using your TA. If you wish to complete this with us, please bring a copy of your orders along with your CAC card to the Education Center.

Testing

Due to the Test Examiner's R&R, there will be limited testing from the 4th of July through the 14th. Please contact our Administrative Assistant, Leo Chen, for testing inquiries during that time period.

****CLEP Testing will no longer be available In-Theatre as of Oct. 1, 2012. If you are interested in completing a CLEP Exam make sure you do so on or before Sept. 30, 2012.**

Air Force News

There is a new Air Force Test Control Officer, TSgt Gabriel Portillo-Ramos. If you need to schedule a time for your CDC, 5 & 7 Level, PME, or any Air Force testing, please contact him at DSN 481-9797 or Cell 079-716-2473 or by email at 455EFSS.TCOTestingOffice@bgab.afcent.af.mil.



University of Maryland University College Europe

Our summer session is right around the corner, and what better way to beat the heat than sitting in an air-conditioned classroom and earning college credits! Check the current schedule at www.ed.umuc.edu > current schedule > Bagram. The Summer Session promises to be an educational highlight with special classes like Intro to Statistics, Principles of Accounting II, Principles of Microeconomics, and Elements of Nutrition.

Are you redeploying? No problem! Please contact the UMUC Field Rep for information on how to transfer to our Stateside or Asian division...it's quick and easy. With UMUC, you can continue your education anywhere in the world!

Central Texas College

CTC offers courses leading to Associate's degrees in several career and technical fields including: Criminal Justice, Applied Management/Military Science, General Studies, Business Management, and Computer Science. CTC also offers Microsoft Certification courses. Courses begin every month. Many 8 week online Vo-Tech courses are also available—for a complete list of courses available in June and July, please stop by the Education Center.

CTC is always seeking instructors to teach on base Criminal Justice, Applied Management/Military Science, and EMT-B Certification courses.



ERAU has an ongoing need for qualified adjunct faculty to teach courses at our Afghanistan sites. This opportunity is open to military, DOD civilians and contractors. Having a Master's degree in the discipline you plan to teach and complementary experience in the field is required. Desired disciplines include: Aeronautical Science, Aviation Maintenance, Logistics, Safety, and related Management fields.

If you are interested, please contact Chris Urdzik at urdzick@erau.edu, or Diana Kurzka.



Location:

We are in the main PX area across from Koele DFAC

Hours and Operation:

Counseling, Testing:
0800 - 2000 Daily
School Representatives:
0800 - 2000 Daily
Learning Center/Computer Lab
0800 - 0200 Daily

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THE FINAL WATCH

Afghan Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal student Sgt. Zahidullah Khairkhwa adjusts an MMP30 EOD robot while wearing a bomb suit during a training exercise at the Kabul Military Training Center May 27. Afghan EOD students demonstrated their skills during a graded practical exercise in which they were tasked to render safe a command wire improvised explosive device while ensuring maximum safety and minimum damage to property. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Chris Fahey, NTM-A PAO)