

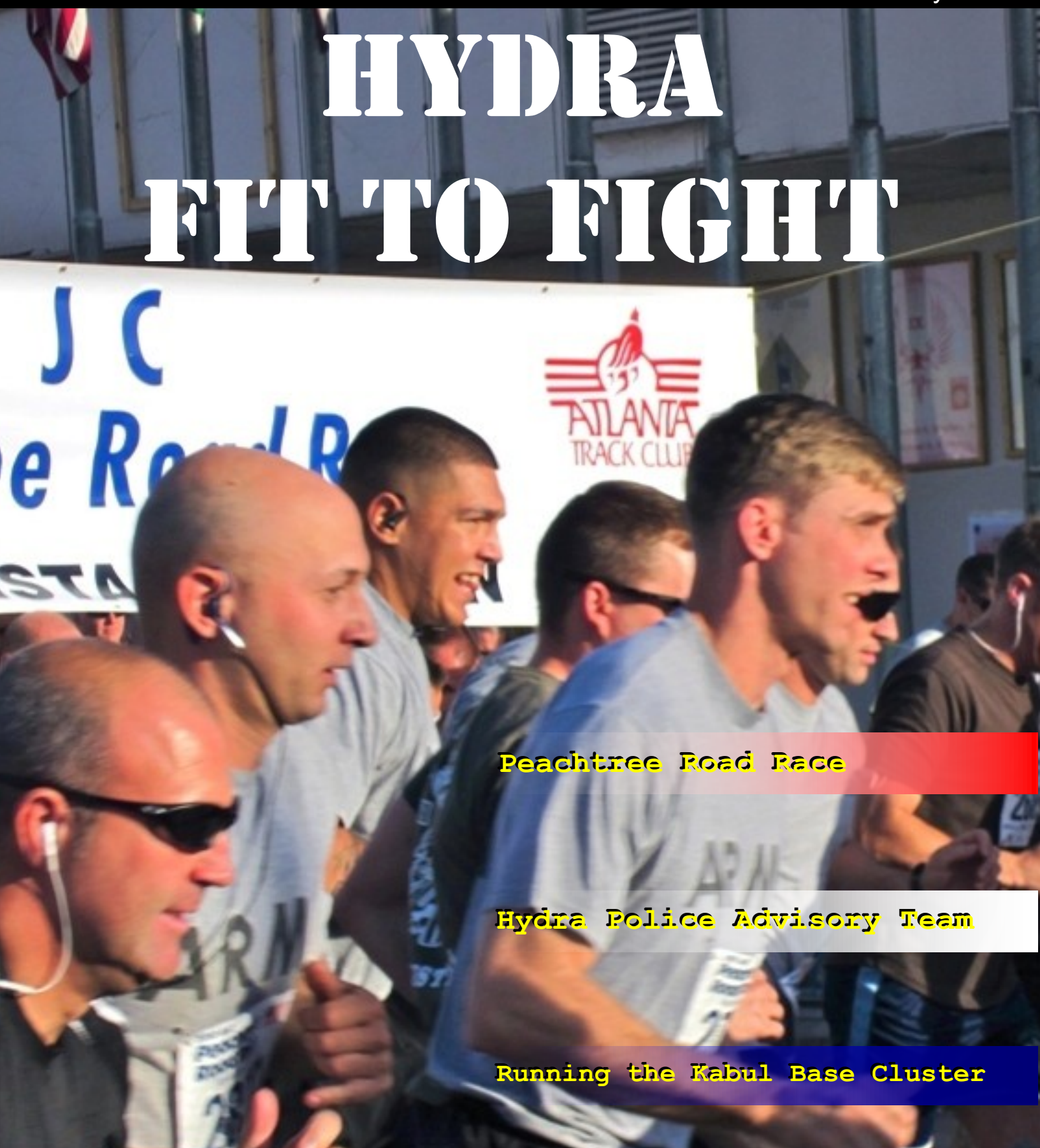


HYDRA HERALD



VOL 1 - Issue 3 NEWSLETTER OF THE KABUL BASE CLUSTER June/July 2012

HYDRA FIT TO FIGHT



Peachtree Road Race

Hydra Police Advisory Team

Running the Kabul Base Cluster

Hydra Herald

VOL 1. - Issue 3 - June/July 2012

Task Force Hydra Public Affairs Office

Kabul Base Cluster

Col. Andy L. Hall
Commander

Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Smiley
Command Sergeant Major

Cpt. Jacqueline R. Wren
Public Affairs Officer/Editor

Cpt. Todd Uebele
Assistant Editor/Journalist

Master Sgt. Janet J. Hill
Assistant Editor/Journalist

Master Sgt. Frances K. Richardson
Assistant Editor/Journalist

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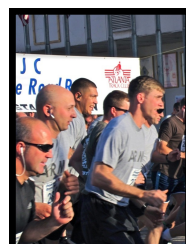
Ready...Dodgeball!



Task Force Hydra and Kabul Police Improve Partner to Security



The Mayor of Kabul On The Cover



Racers begin their run in the Peach Tree 10k Race held on Camp Phoenix, Kabul on the 4th of July.

Running the Kabul Base Cluster

By Master Sgt. Janet J. Hill



Lt. Col. Kevin T. Daniels, the officer in charge of Camp Blackhorse, takes time to discuss issues with several contractors on camp.

KABUL, Afghanistan — Members of the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, “Task Force Hydra,” an Army National Guard unit out of Columbus, Georgia, are focused in the areas of resource management, human resources, public works, emergency services, information management, plans, training and mobilization and logistics for each of its 8 camps within the Kabul Base Cluster (KBC).

Camp Black Horse is one TF Hydra Camp Support Groups (CSG) run under the leadership of TF Commander, Col. Andy Hall, which consists of seven soldiers who are trained in multiple positions to rotate the many duties involved in running a camp with a small group.

Camp Blackhorse is more of a coalition support base with over 300 Canadian Forces along US Airmen and Marines with various Coalition Forces such as Jordanian, Portuguese, French, and Croatians that provide mentorship to the Afghan National Army, as well as the Canadian Quick Reactionary Force.

The purpose of the CSG on Camp Black Horse is to make sure that meals are available in the dining facility, which on any given day serves around twenty one hundred people. They also oversee camp security which is manned by contract security personnel.

“Basically what we do is make sure that the camp functions. We make sure that we provide what you need to do your job. You can get up in the morning and have hot water, and lights. You have a meal in the DFAC, and you can go out the gate, and when you come back in there is a hot lunch waiting on you, and in the evening time, we have a MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) set up for you. We have new pool tables, ping pong tables, movies, play station 3, everything we thought you needed just to get away from the everyday Monday dealings with the ANA (Afghan National Army),” said Lt. Col. Kevin T. Daniels, the officer in charge of Camp Blackhorse.

The daily operations consist of billeting, movement in and out of

the camp, construction and helping the different coalition forces with badging, medical, personnel accountability, and fuel.

“My biggest goal was to make sure everyone here understood that we are customer service because that is what BOS-I (Base Operating Support-Integrator) does. We are out talking to guys saying ‘hey what’s going on, what’s this’,” said Daniels.

Outside of its daily camp obligations the camp leadership participates in the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) which they have used to build schools and an over-bridge in the surrounding community so that local students will be safe when they have to cross the highway.

They are also responsible for providing support the interpreter village which is located out in the ANA area and has 123 interpreters

“The footprint we are leaving here is everything we have done here inside Camp Blackhorse, which is about 16 different projects, and what we have done to modernize interpreter village and bring it on line,” said Daniels.

Sgt. Ronneil A. Brown, the camps transportation noncommissioned officer, volunteered to be on the fire brigade and is the Deputy Chief. Brown had experience outside the military as a fire fighter.

“I love it, it’s exciting. We were able to build the fire brigade from the ground up,” said Brown.

“The fire department is one of our biggest successes out of our volunteer piece. We have the largest fire dept in this region. It’s a combination of US, coalition, and contractors,” said Daniels. “Those guys really took ownership. It’s amazing to see all those different people come together for one common cause.”

When it comes to making sure the camp is run properly and that everyone is taken care of, the CSG goes beyond what is expected of them, “Some things we do because it’s the right thing to do,” said Daniels.



Sgt. Ronneil A. Brown is the Deputy Chief of the Camp Blackhorse fire brigade, the largest volunteer fire brigade in the Kabul Region.

PHYSICAL FITNESS = STAYING FIT



Chief Warrant Officer Valerie Thomas(right), and Sgt. 1st Class Deborah Martin, of the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, "Task Force Hydra," speed walk during the Peachtree 10K Road Race, that was held on the Fourth of July, on Camp Phoenix. (U.S. Army Photo by Master Sgt. Janet J. Hill, 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, "Task Force Hydra" Public Affairs)

By Master Sgt. Janet J. Hill

KABUL, Afghanistan — The 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, "Task Force Hydra," a National Guard unit out of Fort Benning, Georgia, knows the importance of staying in shape and what it takes to maintain their physical fitness.

They know the military requires them to take the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) at least once annually, but they also know the importance of staying fit to stay healthy while deployed. TF Hydra Soldiers have made physical fitness a way of life while in Afghanistan to maintain their health and to feel good about themselves. The camp noncommissioned officer in charge of base support functions at Camp Julien, Master Sgt. John Conley Jr., makes sure that all of his Soldiers take the time to work out daily in order to stay physically fit. As a result, the soldiers have lost a combined total of 150 pounds. When Conley was asked why it is so important that his guys stay fit, he replied, "A strong body makes a strong mind, and it keeps their minds off of a lot of other things that may be going on. It reduces the stress of being overseas and helps maintain fitness."

Spec. Joseph R. Harmon, an operations specialist on Camp Julien, took the initiative and decided to do something about his weight. He lost more than 90 pounds, the most of any TF Hydra soldier. Harmon does cardio twice daily, eats smaller food portions, and limits fatty foods in order to stay fit and healthy.

When it comes to working out, Chief War-

rant Officer 4 Leroy Lott, the brigade maintenance officer, is 59 years old and works out one to two times daily to stay in shape. Lott knows the importance of staying in shape for when he retires. "I do physical fitness for my own health and when I retire I want to still be active. I think it's important that when you start something that you continue with it. The main reason I have been able to stay in the military for as long as I have is because I continued with my PT regiment and always try to do some physical fitness," said Lott.

Lott knows that he is not able to work out at the same level that he once could but he is adjusting to

the changes in his body and continues a steady workout. He believes that cardio is definitely an important part of his workout. When it comes to taking his APFT, he always strives to do more than passing.

Master Sgt. Joshua Winchester, the operations noncommissioned officer in charge, challenged himself to complete 500 miles by participating in the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness 500 Mile club, where the goal is to reach 500 miles on either the elliptical, treadmill, or stationary bike. Winchester reached the 500 mile goal in two and a half months, and then decided to challenge himself to reach a thousand miles, but still did not stop.

Winchester is now at 1,156 miles and still going. "I did not stop because I enjoy the running as it helps relieve stress, and sets a good mood for the body. I mean that it gets all the blood flowing, and makes for a better energized day," said Winchester, who works out twice a day. "What I get out of it is a great feeling inside, as well as I know it will help the heart, lungs, and waistline. It really benefits the overall fitness and mental toughness," said Winchester.

Soldiers do not have to go the gym or run on the track to work out here in Afghanistan. When it comes to staying fit, some just tap into their resources. The Camp Bala Hissar team plays basketball, volleyball, and some attend a Jujitsu class that is taught by Maj. David N. Chartier, the Camp's officer in charge.

Maj. David Chartier, of the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, "Task Force Hydra," a National Guard unit out of Ft. Benning, GA., the officer in charge at Camp Bala Hissar, enjoys a friendly game of basketball with Command Sergeant Maj. John Smiley and Maj. James Vanemburgh, also of the 648th MEB when they visit his camp. (Courtesy photo)



Commander's Corner

Col. Andy L. Hall



We're in the home stretch here in Kabul. The Soldiers of Task Force Hydra have perfected their routines, established relationships and have found outlets that make the time away from home bearable and in many cases enjoyable. I spoke before we left Georgia about be-

ing in the tunnel right before a big football game and being ready to run onto the field. Well now it's the fourth quarter, we've played a tough and winning game thus far but this last stretch is crucial to the win and the legacy we leave behind.

I am proud of the diversity of our team; we have members from all over Georgia and as far away as Mongolia. Our team has transformed and grown along the way and recently we welcomed a short term merge with members from the Wisconsin and Missouri National Guards.

It's always great to be able to grow your team and capabilities, but in this case, the partnership that has been made between our three states has forged some long term professional relationships and friendships. When we return to the states we will always share the Task Force Hydra bond.

One constant that remains, is our team's common goal of being adapt-

able to the many missions that we have been tasked to perform. From our mission of base support, to police advisory and governance and security of the city, TF Hydra Soldiers have answered every challenge with "we can do it."

I can confidently say we have represented Georgia and the Guard as a whole in a professional manner and I am proud to be a member of this team. Lastly, I enjoy sending back good news of how our Soldiers are doing here, and I am glad to announce the Soldiers have kept me to my word of sending back Soldiers who are more physically and mentally fit than when we left.

Our Soldiers have lost a combined weight of over 2000 pounds so far and they are continuing to show the same amount of dedication to their physical fitness as they do to our ability to complete the mission here. You can be proud of the 648th Soldiers for what they are doing on and off the battlefield.



Col. Andy Hall mixes sawdust, shredded paper and water into a mix that is used to make fuel donuts, which are handed out the locals so they have something to burn in the winter to keep warm and do their cooking.

Command Sergeant Major's Corner

Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Smiley



Deployments are difficult enough if you are in great shape, it can be overwhelming when you aren't. A Soldier's combat load can be as heavy as 72 pounds, combine that with a harsh environment and you have a demanding task just to get from one point on the map to another. This is why the Army puts so much focus on units developing "quality" physical fitness programs.

Seems to me, anything worth having requires lots of dedication and hard work. This is especially true when referring to being physically fit over a long period of time. It is a life struggle for most of us to maintain something we took for granted when we were young. I am now 48 years old with 30 plus years in the military and have to admit, it is getting harder each year both mentally and physically. There are a few Soldiers my age who effortlessly maintain a great diet accompanied by a solid workout routine. I have never been on an overweight program, but it is far from easy for me.

Have you ever stood in line for ice cream and sucked your stomach in to

look thinner? I always feel like I am being watched and the guy looks up at me strangely when I ask for the second scoop. If I am reading his face correctly, he is silently saying, "Really"?

Like many others, I enjoy eating the worst things on the menu. I must fight the urge to order these items each and every time I eat out. The desert menu is the worst for you, and jumps out at me like a 3D movie. I do cave in often and have to run a little longer the next morning to get rid of the "Ben and Jerry" hangover. I never feel guilty while eating it, but when the last spoonful is gone, I often wonder if it was worth the calories.

My generation didn't have the energy drinks and the video games kids enjoy today. There was no internet and only three channels on the television, so

we stayed outside as much as possible. My water didn't have a name and often came from a garden hose, not a bottle. We played one game after the other until the sun went down and I would hear my mother yelling for me to come inside (I always answered the third time). This lifestyle made the physical requirements of the military easy for me when I entered at the age of 17. Many young men and women these days can't enlist in the military due to being overweight and or not being fit enough to serve. Thank goodness for sports programs out there in our schools and recreational departments. Even if a kid doesn't get a scholarship or a professional career, this serves as a platform for physical fitness.



Command Sgt. Maj. John Smiley discusses Task Force Hydra with Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel, ISAF Command Sgt. Maj.

Chaplain's Corner



Discipline drives mental, physical, and spiritual fitness. As Soldiers and their Families progress through a deployment, habits and schedules greatly influence future developments. Fitness derives from regular practice of skills and muscles. Success results when a balanced plan integrates all three components of fitness.

Repetition, variation, and playfulness all play significant roles in overall fitness. Regular habits build recognition of patterns and expose changes or dangers. A habitual process makes it easier to make quick decisions. Systematically reviewing vocabulary cards helps one to add new words and comprehension when studying a new language. Variation contributes also to the building of mental fitness. Different languages have unique idioms, forms of grammar, and different ways of pronounc-

ing letters. Learning these variations can build one's mental flexibility. Playing games or practicing using one's less dominant hand also achieves this goal. A game like Scrabble builds vocabulary, for example. I almost doubled my typing speed by playing a video game called "Letter Invaders."

These factors also contribute to physical and spiritual fitness. The more time an individual devotes to working out at the gym in a regular schedule of exercises, the stronger they will become. "The Seed Principle," a class I teach at Camp Phoenix, emphasizes that reaching a desired result requires contributing appropriate effort and dedicating necessary time, in other words, planting the right seeds to obtain the harvest one wants. Prayer, meditation and reflection (either thought or written) all can help one remember the "right seeds to plant."

Regular habits build necessary discipline needed to acquire fitness. Variation in what we do builds the flexibility we need when we face change. Playfulness introduces joy into the growing process. As you draw closer to reunion, work on including all three factors in your plans for mental, physical, and spiritual fitness.

HAPPY 4th OF JULY!



Task Force Hydra Soldiers enjoy a 4th of July Concert.



The Hot Dog Eating Contest was one of many events soldiers got to experience on the 4th of July.

500 Participate in Kabul Shadow Peachtree Road Race

By Capt. Jacqueline R. Wren

KABUL, Afghanistan — Over 500 U.S. military members, Coalition Forces and civilians participated in a Peachtree Road Race today here at Camp Phoenix.

The parent race, which is sponsored by the Atlanta Constitution Journal and Atlanta Track Club, is an annual event taking place on the city's Peachtree Street every Independence Day and boasts the largest participation for any 10K in the world.

The 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's morale, welfare and recreation committee, lead by 1st Lt. Samantha Frazier, organized the event in conjunction with several other Fourth of July events taking place in the nine bases the unit governs within the Kabul region. The Georgia Army National Guard unit based in Columbus hosted the event as a part of its mission to provide base and camp support of installations within the capital.

The Soldiers of the 648th MEB were



The 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, along with other participants from U.S., Bulgaria, Canada, France, Romania and Poland, at the start point of the Peachtree Road Race, where they are shadowing an annual event that takes place in Atlanta every Independence Day and boasts the largest participation for any 10K in the world.

happy to share the Georgia tradition with participants from Bulgaria, Canada,

France, Romania and Poland. Over 70 participants were from Georgia and several were veterans of running the race back in Atlanta.

"I've run the race three times back home, and this was like running the whole race up Cardiac Hill because of the 6000 feet altitude," said 648th MEB member, Capt. Patrick Brewer, referencing the famous incline at mile three of the parent race.

The Kabul race differed from the Atlanta race in several other ways. The course consisted of four laps around the camp in a dryer climate and a temperature of 75 at the race's start. "It was nice to hold the race here because it gave the Georgia Soldiers a piece of home," said Frazier. "Many would be running the race at home so it was good to have it here."

Back in Georgia, Maj. Josie Hobbs a member of the 648th MEB currently working in the rear detachment of the unit was a part of the Kabul race by starting the clock along with them at Atlanta's official start line, ten hours before the start of the race there.

The Kabul race winner was Ryan Hawkins of Glen Hope, Pa.



Second place winner, Amelia Tilden of Boise, Idaho, leads a pack of participants along the 10K race route.

REVISED CONSTRUCTION PLAN AND BASE CLOSURE RESULTS IN SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS

By Master Sgt. Frances Richardson

KABUL, Afghanistan – Despite the existing contracts and the construction plans that were in place, Camp Julien’s Base Support Group, run by members 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Task Force Hydra, a Georgia Army National Guard unit from Columbus, was able to save well over a million dollars by revising the camp’s construction plan and using assets from the recently closed Camp Dubs, its adjoining base, when it closed to U.S. military activity in early July.

The Dubs base-closure requirement, meant Camp Julien, one of eight bases in the Kabul Base Cluster commanded by TF Hydra, already in need of expansion and repair, would have to absorb some of the personnel moving from Camp Dubs.

Camp Julien’s long list of improvements (power grid revision, kitchen fire-hood installation, ventilation system update, billet expansion, barrier renovation, etc.)

would cost an estimated 1.6 million dollars.

Fortunately members of the Julien BSG, led by Maj. Ken Napier, were able to revise the construction plan by identifying and recovering items no longer used by Dubs and by re-analyzing the required contracted work. For example, the power grid, consisting of generators, was due for revision. Instead of a complete overhaul, Camp Julien was able to use back-up generators moved from Dubs, which resulted in a cost avoidance of almost 700 thousand dollars and an increase of power in select areas on the camp.

Camp Julien also developed a plan to conserve water by removing all self-service washers and dryers saving approximately twenty thousand gallons of water per day, which expanded the water storage capacity to sixty-seven thousand gallons pro-

viding the camp a three-day supply of water.

1st Lt. Russell J. Christopher, a member of TF Hydra’s Julien BSG, said, “Coalition service members and contractors of both camps made the process much easier by volunteering their free time to assist in moving off of Camp Dubs.”

Task Force Hydra, the senior U.S. operational task force in Kabul, provides contract management and oversight on all of its camps and has the great responsibility of finding the most cost effective ways to operate. The revisions to the construction contracts along with everyone on the camp assisting with the move made the consolidation of the two camps a less costly event.

Staff Sgt. James Adams, also a member of the Julien team, commented, “It was a timely process; but, we got it completed and we’ve moved on to the next challenge.”





Photo courtesy 20th Century Fox

READY...DODGEBALL!!

"I sure do like pumpkins, Cotton." – Pepper Brooks

By CPT Todd Uebele

KABUL, Afghanistan — We had our very own Dodgeball Tournament at Camp Phoenix. The night before they actually showed the movie "Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story" in the main square. The tournament itself was very similar to the movie. Strange teams, even stranger costumes and lots of loud music.

One difference was that our tournament was double elimination, instead of single elimination like the movie. That worked in our favor, as we lost the first match. Well, we got a by for the first round, but then we lost our first real match. We did ok in the exhibition games they had in between.

Matches were scheduled for seven minutes each, but were over well before the time was up. The longest lasted three and a half minutes.

The shortest, thirty-eight seconds. Our second match we won by default – the other team never showed up. We played some more exhibition games instead and those went really well.

By "winning" the second round, we advanced to the quarter finals. The match itself lasted almost three minutes, but in the end we lost out. No Cinderella story for us. Still, it was a lot of fun – a good way to unwind and let off some steam.

Even though we only played two "match" games, we probably played 8-10 games total. Some games we did well, others... not so much. All the games were fun and gave us all something to talk about the next day.

We may even challenge some of the air force guys to a weekly match. It was a scene straight out of the movie, but no wrenches for us.

Although, I am proud to say we would give Pete LaFleur's gang a run for their money. We just need to remember the five D's of dodgeball: "Dodge," "Duck," "Dip," "Dive," and..."Dodge."

It's a metaphor. But that actually happened.



The refs discuss the rules with the players before the championship match.
(Courtesy photo)

Around the KBC



Master Sgt. Mary Sanders shows off a cake baked for the Army's 237th Birthday on June 14th, 2012.



Sgt. 1st Class Scaggs poses with students during a school supply drop by Camp Julien



Command Sgt. Maj. Smiley and other Task Force Sgts. Maj meet with recent graduates from the Afghan National Army Sergeants Major Academy.



Maj. Gen. William Rapp addresses the troops at Camp Phoenix before his Change of Command Ceremony.



Outdoor Legends pay a visit to Camp Black Horse.



Lt. Col. Todd Perkins and Sgt. Maj Timothy Jones visit a local schoolhouse.



TASK FORCE HYDRA PARTNERS WITH KABUL POLICE TO IMPROVE CITY ENTRY POINTS

By Capt. Jacqueline R. Wren



Soldiers from the 1186th Military Police Company demonstrate how to properly search an individual to Kabul City Gates noncommissioned officers during recent training at the City Gates Kandak Headquarters.

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan Uniformed Police noncommissioned officers operating the City Gates recently received training from U.S. Soldiers at the City Gates headquarters to improve operations at entry points into the city.

The leaders invited to participate in the training will take what they've learned in the two-day training back to their posts and teach their subordinate officers. The City Gates Kandak is comprised of nine entry points into the city that are manned by police departments. Since there are not many highways in Afghanistan these police officer's responsibilities are paramount to keeping the insurgent effort from entering the Kabul city limits.

The instruction included properly conducting searches of people and vehicles, identifying improvised explosive devices and proper use of equipment and how to set up an effective entry control point.

Task Force Hydra, the senior U.S. operational task force in Kabul, conducted the training as a part of its Police Advisory Team (PAT) mission. The unit, which is commanded by the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Headquarters, a Georgia Army National Guard unit out of Columbus has the task to advise, assist and mentor the 30 police districts, their special tactical units, and the 14,000 police responsible for law enforcement and security for the capital city of Kabul and its 5 million residents.

Task Force Hydra PAT team is made up of a supervisory element lead by Lt. Col. Andre Edison, a Missouri Guardsman and a former policeman, members of Wisconsin National Guard, and the 1186th Military Police Company, an Oregon Army National Guard unit serving with Task Force Hydra.

"We bring a lot of law enforcement experience to this mission," said Edison about the PAT team. "Because of our background, we have added to Task Force Hydra's ability to impact the officers' training. As the security in the capital city of Kabul increases the government becomes more legitimate."

The City Gates leader training was held as a part of the second and last phase in the process the PAT has implemented to improve the operations of the City Gates posts and Police District. The first phase included conducting assessments of the 30 police districts and City gate posts within the Kabul Province. The current phase is to address their opportunities to improve equipment, supplies, training and capabilities that were discovered during the assessments.

"The goal is for Kabul Province police to be more able to keep insurgents out of the Kabul Area," Edison said. "This training is targeted at the NCO level and they are eager to learn."

The partnership between the Kabul City Police Chief and the PAT team is imperative to the success of events like these. The City Gates commander was on hand to observe the training and was welcoming of the professionalism the U.S. Soldiers shared with his officers.

"The impact has been very positive," said Col. Deen Mohammed Sanjani. "They have never had such training and I believe it will make them more professional."

Sanjani also spoke highly of the relationship he has built with Lt. Col. Edison over the last month of overseeing training.

"He is now my brother and my friend," said Sanjani.

At the completion of training each officer was presented with a certificate of completion. In a brief presentation where each officer raised their certificate above their head with pride, each officer was congratulated by the trainers they had worked with for the time of the training.

The success of the training will be measured through the improvements that are made at the City Gates throughout the Kabul, but Edison is hopeful.

"I don't think there is a long road ahead for these officers," said Edison "They understand the importance of what they're doing, and I'm surprised by the amount of courage they display while learning how to improve."



Soldiers from the Task Force Hydra's Police Advisory Team and the 1186th Military Police Company with the Kabul City Gates police officers who completed the two-day training that took place at the City Gates Kandak Headquarters for noncommissioned officers.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game



Staff Sgt. Randall Eichelberger plays umpire during one of the Kabul Softball League's most exciting games.

By Cpt. Jacqueline Wren

Kabul, Afghanistan — Softball was the word at Camp Phoenix this Spring and Summer. Members of HHC, 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and the Camp Phoenix Morale Welfare and Recreation team came together to take on the large undertaking of creating an intramural softball league on the camp.

The members collaborated to create a program that promoted team building and stress relief away from the daily pressure of the mission. Additionally organized team sports are a named activity in the Army's MWR program and MWR activities supports the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness initiative. Team-sports are the competition that warriors live for within the parameters of inter-service team building.

Why softball? It is a large-team based competitive activity with a low-risk of injury and a part of the Army tradition of intramural sports. American GIs have taken gloves and bats with them to every corner of the globe since the games inception.

And so the Kabul League Softball was created. With Maj. John Roscoe as the Commissioner and Sgt. 1st Class. Deborah Martin as the President of the league, eight teams were formed to include US Forces from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines along with Coalition Forces from Canada and France and civilians. Weekly games were played that would eventually entertain over 400 spectators over a five week period.

Though the Bagrami Champions ended the season as Champions as a Result of the Fourth of July championship game, fun was had by all who participated in the season and a Camp Phoenix tradition has begun.

KABUL LEAGUE



The Mayor of Kabul

By CPT Todd Uebele

Kabul, Afghanistan — Kabul is a city of roughly five million people. However, that is a very recent number. Just a few short years ago, there were only about a million and a half people. The tremendous growth has resulted in both opportunities and challenges for the city and its government.

Last month, we had a visit from the Mayor of Kabul, Mr. Nawandish. He and Col. Andy Hall have been working together, not only to bring improvements to the security of the city, but also for economic and visual improvements to Kabul.

The Mayor spoke on the challenges the city faces and his priorities/methods for fixing them. He admitted it was slow going, but is committed to making things happen. However, even slow progress is progress.

Mr. Nawandish not only has to essentially rebuild a city that's been dealing with war for decades. He has to worry about a rapidly growing population and an insurgency that is seeking to blow things up and kill people in "spectacular" attacks that will garner worldwide media attention.

He definitely has his work cut out for him. But he is also definitely committed and that is what the city needs: committed people to make things happen. He laid out his plan for us and told us what he is doing to implement it, as well as shared what has already been accomplished.

One of his biggest goals, as well as biggest challenges is fighting corruption. Equally big is increasing the sanitation for the city.



Mr. Nawandish, the Mayor of Kabul address U.S. and Coalition troops in the DFAC of Camp Phoenix

With the rapidly growing population, there is a very real risk of population outgrowing sanitation facilities.

Mr. Nawandish has already started projects to remove waste from the city, but stated a master plan for drainage and sanitation is needed. He also wants to standardize the landfills and increase the number of recycling facilities for the city.

Another one of his goals is to provide more greenery for the city. Kabul used to be well known for its variety and abundance of plant life. Mr. Nawandish stated the city would need to plant over two million trees. He has rebuilt nine parks already and is looking to rebuild twenty-one more.

They mayor did not sugar coat the issues he is having in implementing his goals. However, he has a good vision for the city, as well as the will to carry it out.



Mr. Nawandish poses for a photo with Col. Andy Hall, TF Hydra Commander

Updating the Afghan Fleet



It's a success you might never hear about, operating quietly in the challenging environment of Afghanistan. But, as its mission draws to a close, the Automotive Management Services Company's vehicle management and training programs, conducted throughout Afghanistan over the past 6 years, have made a positive difference in the quality of life for many Afghans.

The plan to create a sustainable network of quality workshops that would continue to operate long after the withdrawal of Coalition forces started back in 2006. As part of Operation Enduring Freedom, AMS, an international company based in Dubai, established management facilities in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar and Gardez to support the Afghan National Police. These facilities were constructed, equipped, staffed, and managed, by AMS along with the US and other members of the Coalition.

Since then, the Afghanistan Technical Equipment Maintenance Program has increased the number of trained local civilian mechanics from 300 in 2006, to over 1,400 in 2012. These mechanics currently maintain a fleet of over 28,000 vehicles, with plans to increase this

number to 34,000 by 2014.

Once the seeds were sown, potential mechanics were from local communities and trained them at all levels of maintenance and repairs, from the basics of vehicle systems to advanced levels of management. The trainees fulfilled their commitments and embraced the opportunity to learn useful skills that in turn contributed to the betterment of their lives, those of their families, and their communities.

One of AMS' leading trainers, Bob Parsons, from Detroit, Michigan, is a key member of the team. A Master Technician by trade, and an expert in Train the Trainer programs, Bob delivers multiple sessions to students on a daily basis. "These people want to work, they just need the opportunity," Bob confirms when questioned about his Afghan students' abilities. "The Afghans are hard workers and are hungry to learn."

Major Koehler of the US Army, mentor for the Transportation Division of the contract, recently observed, 'Some of the technical management work that the Afghans are doing is equal to the highest levels of craftsmanship anywhere', a true testament to the skills of both the trainers and students.

COL (Ret.) Mark Kulungowski, Executive Vice President of AMS, recognizes that the level of commitment that the local Afghans show in learning a trade is outstanding, "These are the true Afghans who want a better future for their families and country."

As 2014 draws closer, foundations have now firmly been laid for a more sustainable future for the fleet of Afghan National Police vehicles. The Afghan trainees of the past are now the Afghan trainers of the future, fully equipped and ready to train the next generation of mechanics. While the A-Temp operations are just a small part of a much larger effort to improve the lives of all Afghans, it is making positive contributions far greater than its modest size.

Article Courtesy AMS

Task Force Hydra Public Affairs Team

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Captain Jacqueline R. Wren

318-237-8023

jacqueline.r.wren@afghan.swa.army.mil

Master Sgt. Janet J. Hill

318-237-8026

janet.j.jill@afghan.swa.army.mil

Master Sgt. Frances K. Richardson

318-237-8026

frances.k.richardson@afghan.swa.army.mil