



Victory Sustained

Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan

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Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion fuelers, Spc. Dan S. Osborne from Lake Butler, Fla., Pfc. Jeffrey Wiedel from Killeen, Texas and Pfc. Jose L. Garcia from Chicago, Ill., were each awarded the Purple Heart Medal Aug. 3 for injuries sustained when their convoy was ambushed July 29 in one of the largest complex attacks since 2003.

US convoy ambushed, battles insurgents for 9 hours

■ BY SPC ELISEBET FREEBURG
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

Instead of functioning as traditional fuelers, many Army petroleum supply specialists in Afghanistan operate as vehicle gunners and drivers for convoys. Insurgents ambushed a convoy of 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion fuelers July 29 in one of the largest complex attacks since 2003.

The 286th CSSB, a non-combat arms element of the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan, moves supplies and equipment by convoy to forward operating bases, fire bases and combat

outposts throughout Southern Afghanistan.

The convoy was traveling through mountains July 27, crossing between Oruzgan and Kandahar provinces, when Soldiers in the fifth Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, called Gun Truck Five, noticed an Afghan man at the side of the road, filming the convoy with a cell phone. They seized the cell phone which contained footage of insurgents planting roadside bombs.

Two days later, their convoy of 22 vehicles traveled back through the area, passing an Afghan National Army checkpoint

when an ANA soldier flagged down their lead MRAP, Gun Truck One.

“He was trying to stop us,” said Spc. Dana S. Osborne, the Gun Truck One driver from Lake Butler, Fla. “When he stopped us, he pointed to the front of him and made a hand motion of shooting, you know, in front of us.”

After the convoy halted, Gun Truck Three drove to the front, so their interpreter could speak with the ANA soldier. According to the soldier, ANA forces had been battling a battalion-sized element of Taliban fighters for hours by a nearby village.

The convoy’s air support, Kiowa helicopters, scouted the hillside but could not locate the enemy. The ANA soldier indicated the attack was geared toward ANA not American forces.

“We all agreed to continue the mission, because that was our mission,” said Pfc. Jose L. Garcia, the Gun Truck Two gunner from Chicago, Ill.

Since the confiscated cell phone indicated roadside bombs in the area, the Kiowas flew over their proposed route and noticed possible improvised explosive devices. The convoy proceeded cautiously.

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The Commander's Corner



Brig. Gen. Daniel I. Schultz
Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan Commanding General

Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan is supporting the establishment of security, and helping to facilitate improved governance and reconstruction at a critical time in the history of Afghanistan. For only the second time since the fall of

Taliban rule in 2001, Afghan people had an opportunity to head to the polls and vote. Although votes are still being counted and the effort was far from perfect, large numbers of people ventured out to polling station in spite of insurgent threats and coercion to boycott the vote.

Holding an election is a significant undertaking – even in the United States, but I want you to know that all of you had an indirect impact on the electoral efforts in Afghanistan. You enabled the rapid movement and support of combat forces, enabling them to get where they were needed to minimize insurgents' efforts to intimidate or attack innocent citizens. The men and women of JSC-A helped military commanders strategically deploy forces where they could best support the Afghan National Security Forces. Your

work will have a significant impact on the future of this fledgling democracy.

One thing I admire about the men and women of JSC-A is their tenacity when it comes to accomplishing the mission. Many of you are able to think outside the box and find unique solutions to challenges you face. I encourage you to continue in that spirit that makes America a strong nation, but do it safely. We recently lost a valuable Soldier in an accident that involved heavy machinery. We regret this loss to his family, the JSC-A, and our nation.

We must protect the lives of our people – our most precious resource. We must also work toward organizational change aimed at making safety a top priority for all. One prime example of significant risks to our personnel is the recent rash of negligent discharges occurring

within the Command. Such discharges can be lethal, but are also 100 percent preventable. We must all do our part to eliminate unsafe practices.

Finally, I want to thank the members of the 649th Regional Support Group (provisional) for the superb job they've done since taking over the garrison support and reception, staging and onward movement function at KAF. They paved the way and established conditions for the success of their replacements, and will soon transition these functions over to the actual 649th RSG. I hope all the members of JSC-A will join me in welcoming the 649th RSG to KAF and helping them to get situated. Like in so many of our other functional areas, we've endured many growing pains. But as a result, those who arrive after us will be spared such difficulty.

Sustaining Victory!

The CSM Message to the Troops

The end is just over the horizon. As we look back to those days at Fort Lee in November and the time we spent in the snow at Fort Bragg, we have come far as the 143rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command. But, how far have you come as a Soldier?

Many of you have taken the time to improve yourself as a Soldier whether it is physically or mentally. Many Soldiers worked on their education, correspondence courses, Soldier of the Year/NCO Year boards and improved their spiritual fitness.

Several Soldiers have taken the time to improve themselves physically by conducting intense physical fitness sessions. We have only a month until our physical fitness testing begins in October. It's time to get

out of your rack in the morning and run. Do some push-ups throughout the day. If you want to work on your sit-ups, Staff Sgt. Davis Tademay has put together a 30 minute abdominal workout four times a week. You are expected to be ready and capable to take a physical fitness test at the drop of a dime.

As Soldiers, we are expected to maintain a certain appearance. Remember, you not only represent yourself but the U.S. Army. Take pride in being a Soldier and be more than a "60 percent" or "meets standards" Soldier!

As we look forward to returning home, you should also look at setting yourselves up for success by setting a higher standard. You can do this by preparing for the next rank. Take the opportunity to sign up for

NCOES: Warrior Leadership Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Advance Noncommissioned Officer Course and Functional Courses: First Sergeant Course and Battle Staff NCO Course. If you are wearing a stripe or anticipating wearing a stripe, these schools should be on the top of your list. It is an opportunity to catch up or get ahead. Also, look for other schools within your military occupational skill. Perhaps, you are interested in becoming Airborne or Air Assault qualified. These slots will be available to Soldiers who are truly deserving.

The time to improve yourself is now! Do not wait until we are getting ready for our left seat right seat ride to better yourself. We have less than four months left in country; try to use the



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Schultz
Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan Command Sergeant Major

remaining time wisely. Remember, YOUR military career is in YOUR hands, no one else's. Army Strong!

government, including the Department of Defense or JSC-A.

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Courtesy Photo | Victory Sustained

A cement truck lost control and rolled over Aug. 21 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Master Sgt. Joseph Oswald, an Army Reservist from Cincinnati, Ohio, was the first on the scene and rendered first aid to the Afghan driver, who was taken by ambulance to the coalition hospital here.

Soldier's civilian skills save Afghan life

■ BY MAJ. SHELDON SMITH
JSC-A Public Affairs Officer

As U.S. forces are now taking extra precautions to protect the lives of Afghan citizens in southern Afghanistan, an Army Reserve Soldier used his civilian skills to preserve the life of a local truck driver.

Master Sgt. Joseph Oswald, a Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan civil-military oper-

ations noncommissioned officer from Cincinnati, Ohio, was returning from one of the entry points to Kandahar Airfield Aug. 21, when he witnessed a concrete truck lose control and roll over into a ditch on the side of the road.

"I immediately stopped to assist the driver that was trapped inside the crushed cab of the vehicle," Oswald said. "I removed a broken window and

the wind shield to gain access to the trapped driver."

When he got to the driver, Oswald knew exactly what to do based on his extensive civilian and military training.

"I started emergency first aid treatment on the casualty to control the bleeding and prevent shock," Oswald said. "I contacted and provided [emergency responders] with the information they would need for

the crash site and the required equipment they would need to recover the casualty."

Oswald, a Federal Aviation Administration-certified repairman and quality assurance technician at a Cincinnati facility that services airplane engines, rendered immediate medical aid in an effort to stabilize the driver and prevent further injury.

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Coordinated effort protects Afghan voters

■ BY STAFF SGT. MARCOS ALICES
Victory Sustained Editor

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan, Aug. 21, 2009 – As Afghans took to the streets yesterday to exercise their right to vote, authorities here worked together to provide security for polling stations across the province.

The Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police and NATO International Security Assistance Force servicemembers coordinated security for more than 40 polling stations.

"The strong coordination of [Afghan and NATO] forces in Zabul to protect the people allowed them to vote for their favorite candidate," Gov. Mohammad Ashraf Naseri said.

Coordination for most of the election took place at the province's Operations Coordination and Cooperation Center, which serves as the hub of information for the army, the police and National Department of Security's provincial office. All the organizations worked together to draft and implement a security plan, officials said.

During the elections, the center's personnel tracked polling stations and supplies, as well as the movements of election officials,

The international community should continue to support the security, development and the people of Afghanistan.

Gov. Mohammad Ashraf Naseri

watching for events that might disrupt the election process. Despite incidents of small arms fire and mortar and rocket attacks, officials said, the province saw little violence. The polls were scheduled to be open from 7

a.m. to 4 p.m., but many sites extended hours to accommodate voters.

"The international community should continue to support the security, development and the people of Afghanistan," Naseri said. "Without the support of the international community, we will not be able to provide the proper security for the people."

ISAF troops fulfilled the quick-reaction-force role, responsible for being ready at a moment's notice to aid the Afghan army and police. ISAF troops also served as mentors, ensuring that the army and police executed their security plans.

The people of Zabul were happy to go to the polling stations and vote, said Afghanistan National Army Col. Rahmattulla Spaloni, Zabul province commander.

Naseri called the election a momentous event in Afghanistan history that allows the people to show their support for stability and peace.



Staff Sgt. Marcos Alices | Victory Sustained

Australian Maj. David Nathan, the force support unit commander from Melbourne, Australia, coaches his U.S. counterpart Spc. Dawn-Noel P. Dunbar, a Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan ammunition specialist from Christmas, Fla., on how to properly fire the F88 Austeyr, a 5.56 mm assault rifle.

JSC-A, Aussie Soldiers aim, fire with teamwork

■ BY STAFF SGT. MARCOS ALICES
Victory Sustained Editor

The war in Afghanistan is a joint effort between nations to restore the country's stability and peace. U.S. troops have the chance to work and train side by side with their armed forces counterparts in the war against terrorism.

Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan Soldiers provided Australian troops the opportunity to practice firing the F88 Austeyr, a 5.56 mm assault rifle. JSC-A provided support for most of the month of August, which allowed for most of the Australian Soldiers here on Kandahar Airfield the opportunity to fire their weapon.

"Your facilities provide us the opportunity to stay current on our weapons," said Australian Maj. David Nathan, the force support unit commander from Melbourne, Australia.

The Australians had limited access to range facilities here at KAF. JSC-A was willing to help their comrades in arms. They not only provided the Australians access to a range but also range personnel. It was

a chance for JSC-A Soldiers to receive training on how to organize and operate a range by fulfilling range personnel roles.

"We were able to interact with the Australians," said U.S. Staff Sgt. Davis Tademy, the 143d Headquarters and Headquarters Company maintenance noncommissioned officer in charge. "[We] learn their range commands and familiarize ourselves with their weapon."

The Australian troops informed the JSC-A Soldiers about the F88 Austeyr capabilities before heading out to the range. At the end of the day, the Australian Soldiers showed their appreciation for the U.S. Soldiers' help by allowing them to fire the weapon. Each Australian Soldier partnered up with his U.S. counterpart as they coached them on how to properly fire the lighter weapon in comparison to the M-16 assault rifle.

Other differences Soldiers had to overcome were the firearm configuration and two stage trigger. Unlike the M-16 assault rifle, the F88 Austeyr's bolt action and magazine are located behind the trigger. The



Staff Sgt. Marcos Alices | Victory Sustained

Sgt. Gary Scott, the 143d Headquarters and Headquarters Company administration noncommissioned officer in charge from Orlando, Fla., explains and identifies to Australian troops all the hazards and precautions to ensure safety while firing the F88 Austeyr, a 5.56 mm assault rifle.

two stage trigger was something new to many of the Soldiers. The two stage trigger allowed Soldiers to fire semi-automatic by pulling the trigger halfway and fire fully automatic by pulling the trigger all the way to rear.

"Learning a new weapon system is essential to a Soldier, especially with us being in a coalition environment," said U.S. Spc. Dawn-Noel P. Dunbar, a JSC-A ammunition specialist

from Christmas, Fla.

The Australian army tries to fire their weapon once every three months, according to Nathan.

"We will love to have a go on your weapons," said Nathan.

The JSC-A will be open to more chances to work with their coalition partners, according to Tademy. It was an opportunity to build a relationship between two armies fighting together in Afghanistan.

PRT-Zabul helps reconnect Afghans, government

■ BY STAFF SGT. MARCOS ALICES
Victory Sustained Editor

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan — A country's future depends upon the people connecting with the government. Afghanistan has held only its second democratic elections since ousting the Taliban in 2001 and now is trying to rebuild the government's relationship with its people.

Coalition forces provide a helping hand through the use of Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

"[The purpose is] to give hope and a means for a better future to people recovering from war and oppression under a totalitarian regime," said Air Force Lt. Col. Andy Veres, the PRT-Zabul commander from Melbourne, Fla.

PRT-Zabul is located in the heart of Qalat City. The PRT is a civil and military organization that brings reconstruction, development, governance and security to the province. Representatives from the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development work with the PRT to help the Afghans live in a free and democratic country. They work hand and hand with Mohommad Ashraf Naseri, the Zabul province governor, and his staff to improve the lifestyle of the Afghan people throughout the province.

"We [the PRT] try to build the government infrastructure in a small community from the smallest element and up," said Army 1st Sgt. Conrad Gamez, the PRT-Zabul senior enlisted from Melbourne, Fla.

The PRT has more than 20 ongoing projects all through the province. The team works on projects that include everything from building community centers, schools and roads to providing agricultural training. Local unskilled laborers also have the opportunity to attend mechanic, welding or nursing training at the PRT. The nursing program is a year-long course. Each course provides Afghans with marketable skills, according to Air Force Cpt. Rick E. Vermillion, a PRT-Zabul civil engineer from Fillmore, Calif. All the PRT efforts are focused on meeting the governor's priorities outlined in the provincial development plan.



Staff Sgt. Marcos Alices | Victory Sustained

Zabul Gov. Mohammad Ashraf Naseri meets and greets locals during his trip to Sha Joy to discuss issues and concerns with village elders Aug 24. Provincial Reconstruction Team-Zabul provided transportation and security.

"The main thing we are trying to do is boost their economy," said Vermillion. "If we are hiring a local Afghan, he is putting money into his home to feed his family."

An economy is based on the production, exchange, distribution and consumption in an area. The team tries to improve the economy by providing and creating jobs for Afghans. For example, local contractors place bids on construction projects much like how contractors operate in the U.S. The PRT selects contractors based on past performance, capabilities and quality for the best price.

"We are the construction firm," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Eric Field, a PRT-Zabul infrastructure craftsman from Belfast, Maine. "If a large company wanted to build a skyscraper in New York City, we will be the guys to talk to [in order to] build on budget and on time."

The PRT extends its arms in every facet of the provincial government to include the Ministry of Public Health. The team has provided advice and assistance with matters dealing with the health of Zabul's population. The PRT helped to refurbish the provincial hospital and establish programs to improve the locals' lifestyle. Smart Food, a program

for malnourished children, and Clean Water, a process to provide Afghan families chlorine to kill bacteria and parasites in local water, help reconnect the people with their health-care system, according to Air Force Staff Sgt. Paul Herrera-Ramirez, a PRT-Zabul aerospace medical technician.

"We have a great conglomerate of the right people to help make the government self-sufficient," said Gamez.

The PRT is a joint effort between military services. The team is comprised of Airmen, Soldiers, guardsmen and reservists with specialties ranging from infantrymen to civil affairs. All have a sense of achievement and do a job with a level of importance that they may otherwise never do in their life, according to Veres. PRT-Zabul is only one of two U.S.-led teams. The other PRT is located in Farah.

"They have a chance to rebuild a country, renew a way of life and allow a society to fly out from the ashes of 50-plus years of war," said Veres.

PRT-Zabul has been working with the provincial government since December 2004. Over the years, the team has built upon lesson from the past to help further development in the Zabul province.

>>> **Life**
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While caring for the wounded driver, Oswald removed his uniform top and used it to help protect the driver from further injury from the jagged edges of the broken glass. He continued to care for the driver until emergency help arrived some 20 minutes later, then remained at the accident scene helping to direct traffic around the crash site.

As a civilian, Oswald has completed a considerable amount of first-responder training ranging from CPR and fire fighting

courses to emergency medical responder and hazardous materials response training.

As a past environmental, health and safety trainer, Oswald has also provided countless hours of training to more than 1,000 fellow employees on all phase of emergency responses and safety in both the work place and the home.

Through the military, Oswald has received even more valuable training. "On the military side I have completed the [combat lifesaver course] and many other training classes," he said.

Oswald was awarded an Army Achievement Medal in recognition of his efforts that day.



Maj. Sheldon Smith | Victory Sustained

Master Sgt. Joseph Oswald, a Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan civil-military operations noncommissioned officer from Cincinnati, Ohio, is awarded Aug. 21 an Army Achievement Medal by Col. Michael A. Mann, the JSC-A Deputy Commander.



Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Soldiers of the 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion prepare their Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles before leaving on a convoy mission June 25. Convoy preparation includes loading vehicles with ammunition, food and water.

Convoy

Continued from page 1

Pfc. Jeffrey Wiedel, the Gun Truck One gunner from Killeen, Texas, noticed several holes in the ground ahead, and the convoy moved forward, carefully avoiding the suspected IEDs. Soldiers noticed a green cell phone lying in one of the holes.

“We knew it was some kind of decoy or something like that,” said Garcia. “Because they know we got [electronic countermeasures].”

Most military vehicles carry ECM devices to jam radio signals that detonate explosives from a distance. Traditionally, cell phones are used to detonate remote controlled IEDs.

Soon after, a military cargo truck, called a palletized loading system (PLS), and two wreckers in the rear hit roadside bombs almost simultaneously.

The convoy began to receive small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire. Since the damaged trucks could still drive, the convoy continued, pushing through the immediate area of attack, or kill zone. Gun Truck One rounded a bend and arrived at a choke point surrounded by mountains to their right and front. On the left, enemy fire hit them from woods in a dried-up creek bed.

“At that point, Wiedel, the gunner for Gun Truck One, pointed at something up in the mountains,” said Garcia. “I was looking at him, he turned his turret to face forward, and that’s when they blew up.”

The explosion threw Gun Truck One about 15 feet to the side of the trail, blew their weapons out of the gun turret and completely disabled the vehicle and all communication systems.

Gun Truck Two and Four surrounded the disabled vehicle and laid down suppressive fire, while Gun Truck Three rescued the Soldiers.

The injured Soldiers exited Gun Truck One through the driver’s door, the only operable door. A medical evacuation helicopter with Air Force paramedics (PJs) arrived shortly after to evacuate Osborne, Wiedel and Sgt. Mario E. Saenz, the Gun Truck One truck commander. Although in pain, the Gun Truck One assistant gunner, Spc. Alfredo Rodriguez, remained with the convoy to fight the enemy.

“We had rounds flying right by our heads and by our feet—maybe six inches off, everywhere—when we were running to the medevac, and it’s a miracle that nobody got killed,” said Wiedel. “It’s a miracle.”

Osborne and Wiedel had both removed their body armor because of possible injuries. The convoy commander and Gun Truck Three’s truck commander from Vallejo, Calif., 1st Lt. Tamara A. Da Silva, along with Gun Truck Three’s driver, Pfc. Devin Chapman, shielded Osborne and Wiedel with their bodies as they ran to the helicopter. The Gun Truck Three assistant gunner from Osceola, Iowa, Cpl. Robert W. Lewis, carried Saenz.

As the helicopter took off, its occupants smelled fuel. The enemy’s small-arms fire had caused a leak that forced the helicopter to land nearby, said Wiedel.

Still taking enemy contact, the PJs exited the medevac, created a perimeter around the helicopter and laid down suppressive fire. Although wounded, Wiedel asked the pilot for a pistol and joined the PJs while they waited for another medevac.

Available aircraft at Kandahar

Airfield deployed to aid the immobile medevac. Aircraft such as Kiowa, Apache and Blackhawk helicopters constantly circled the area above the disabled medevac, targeting the enemy, said Da Silva.

“You could look up into the sky and see Kiowa pilots in their [physical training uniforms] and their helmet,” Wiedel said. Meanwhile, at Da Silva’s order to not leave anyone behind, Gun Truck Two and Five escorted cargo trucks through the two-mile long kill zone, taking small-arms fire the entire time. One PLS first drove over an IED, and then was hit by a mortar round that ejected the truck commander into the air.

On their third escort trip, Gun Truck Two pulled to the right side of the road, so the PLS trucks could drive past them and up the hill.

“The enemy knew our [tactics, techniques and procedures],” Da Silva said. “They knew what we were going to do.”

When it pulled over, Gun Truck Two detonated an IED. Da Silva believes insurgents observed the convoy doing this procedure at the same location two days previously.

Around a bend in the road, Gun Truck Two was cut off from the rest of the convoy. A Kiowa helicopter periodically flew over the gun truck, dropping hellfire missiles on insurgents that approached the stranded vehicle.

Because of constant gunfire, the Soldiers of Gun Truck Two ran out of weapon lubricant and improvised by using shampoo and lotion out of a hygiene kit to lubricate their .50-caliber machine gun.

At one point, a PLS truck drove around the bend behind them just as a militant fired a rocket-propelled grenade.

“They hit the trailer,” said Garcia, “But the RPG was aimed at us—the disabled vehicle.”

After about 90 minutes, Gun Truck Seven came around the turn to aid Gun Truck Two but stopped 100 meters away, since a secondary IED was spotted near the disabled gun truck. The Soldiers in Gun Truck Two collected sensitive items and ran to Gun Truck Seven.

Gun Truck Five continued to move PLS trucks out of the kill zone. Eventually, the cargo trucks with their long trailers could not fit through the narrow and curved road. Too many disabled vehicles blocked the way. One by one, Gun Truck

Five pulled next to each PLS on the contact side, so each driver could dismount and unhitch their trailer.

“[Gun Truck Five] had bullet holes everywhere,” said Da Silva. “I don’t think I’ll ever see that truck again.”

At the end of the two-mile kill zone, the convoy had established a green zone, an area to regroup. When the enemy started to flank the green zone, an F-18 Hornet dropped two 500 pound bombs on the mountainside.

“People can say, ‘You should have done this. You should have done that,’” said Da Silva. “At the end of the day, when it’s all said and done, all our Soldiers are alive.”

During the nine-hour battle, insurgents fired approximately 14 RPGs along with detonating multiple roadside bombs and pummeling the convoy with small-arms fire. Some insurgents used armor-piercing rounds. Militants fired machine guns and assault rifles from nearby homes, the tree line or from dug-in positions on the mountain ridges. Although the militants were well-covered, many Soldiers recalled the enemy had been close enough to see faces.

After the battle, several Soldiers reported seeing doors in the hillside and speculated hollowed areas in the ground may have held weapon and ammunition caches.

Five Soldiers were evacuated that day, and one Soldier evacuated the following day to receive medical attention. So far, three of them have received the Purple Heart Medal.

Five MRAPs were disabled, and ten PLS trucks had been hit by mortar rounds. One RPG hit a PLS, and two RPGs hit at the rear of Gun Truck Four, taking out its rear tires with shrapnel. Fortunately for the convoy, several IEDs never detonated.

Although they are a support unit Soldiers, the fuelers of the 286th CSSB reacted quickly and successfully battled the militants.

“The way the war is going in Afghanistan,” said Lewis, “At any time, you have to be a 360 degree Soldier.”

Soldiers of the 286th CSSB may be more cautious now when they roll out on a convoy, but they continue to do their jobs and complete their vital mission of delivering troops throughout Afghanistan with equipment and supplies necessary to the fight.

Strong Food, Clean Water improves locals’ lifestyle

■ BY STAFF SGT. MARCOS ALICES
Victory Sustained Editor

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The leading threats to the lives of Afghan children under the age of five are death at birth, diarrhea or starvation. In order to combat these causes, the international community introduced programs to fight malnourishment, and bacteria and parasites in local water.

Strong Food, a program that provides an inexpensive food source for starving children, and Clean Water, a process to provide Afghans a means to clean their local water, are achieving promising results.

“It is a great success,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Paul Herrera-Ramirez, a Provincial Reconstruction Team-Zabul aerospace medical technician from Palm Springs, Calif. “As parents, we all have something in common, our children. We all care about our children’s health.”

Strong Food and Clean Water are ongoing projects to improve the locals’ lifestyle in Zabul province. The Ministry of Public Health with the help of PRT-Zabul – a civil and military organization meant to bring reconstruction, development, governance and security to the province – organized these programs to tackle the most common causes of death among children.

In Afghanistan, one in five children will not see the age of five due to the lack of nourishment and sanitized water. The Ministry of Public Health and PRT-Zabul recognized these problems and sought for solu-

tions that would be effective and sustainable with local resources.

“The best benefit of all is the ingredients can be purchased at the local bazaar,” said Herrera-Ramirez.

Strong Food is a food supplement made up of almonds, sugar, powdered milk, liquid vitamin supplements and vegetable oil. The almonds are ground into a powder and mixed with the rest of the ingredients to create a paste. The paste does not have to be refrigerated and can be stored at room temperature up to four months before spoiling. Currently, Strong Food is prepared and distributed to the districts through the provincial hospital located in Qalat City, the Zabul capital.

Strong Food is an example of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food. RUTF is a type of medical food that can address malnutrition at earlier stages. The medical food’s main purpose is to increase children’s weight and appetite.

“The children love the taste of Strong Food, and the providers see dramatic success,” said Air Force Maj. Elizabeth A. Erickson, the PRT-Zabul senior medical officer from Blaine, Minn.

Medical providers are also using the Clean Water program to help care for their patients. The idea behind the program is to get rid of diarrheal and dysentery diseases caused by bacteria and parasites found in local water. Diarrhea and dysentery are the most common ailments in Zabul. A simple and safe method of local chlorine production makes it possible to serve the needs of more than 5,000 Afghans.

The chlorine production starts



Staff Sgt. Marcos Alices | Victory Sustained

A Provincial hospital worker mixes ground almonds with sugar and powdered milk as he prepares to create a food supplement for starving children to be distribute.

with a hypochlorite generator, solar panels and table salt. The generator converts table salt into a dilute hypochlorite solution that is bottled and distributed to the locals. A tablespoon of the solution in a four-gallon container can kill 99 percent of bacteria. It is harmless if not diluted.

“It’s hard,” said Herrera-Ramirez. “[We are turning] a culture away from a source of

water that they have been using for hundreds of years, but once they learn the benefits of Clean Water, they cling on to the program.”

The Ministry of Public Health with the help of PRT-Zabul is tackling health problems head on with Strong Food and Clean Water. Both programs continue to expand throughout the province.

Slain Tampa police officer remembered in Kandahar

■ BY MAJ. SHELDON SMITH
JSC-A Public Affairs Officer

Colleagues of a Tampa law enforcement officer killed Aug. 19 in the line of duty took time to pay their respects to a fellow police officer, Soldier and friend here.

Several Army Reserve members of the Orlando-based 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command, who also serve as Tampa police officers in their civilian capacity, remembered Cpl. Mike Roberts, who was killed by a heavily-armed homeless man.

“Cpl. Roberts was a friend and a comrade both behind the badge and in the U.S. Army uniform,” said Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Prebich, a Tampa detective from Riverview, Fla. serving as the noncommissioned-officer-in-



Courtesy Photo | Victory Sustained

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Seagraves (left), Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Schultz (Center) and Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Prebich (right) of the Orlando-based 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command display a plaque they prepared for presentation to the family of fallen Tampa police Cpl. Mike Roberts.

charge of the 143d ESC commander’s security detail. “People like Mike Roberts are rare. He was a calm and funny giant that you could always depend on.”

According to Prebich, Roberts held the rank of specialist with the 810th Military Police Company in Tampa. He also served previously in the Air Force as a security forces member.

“He had 11 years with the Tampa Police Department, and was recently promoted to corporal,” Prebich said.

Cpl. Roberts died while confronting a homeless man who, according to Prebich, pulled out an assault rifle and opened fire.

“He was shot through the vest with an AR 15, 5.56 assault rifle,” Prebich said.

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Reflections from the Chaplain Corps

■ BY MASTER SGT. WARD GROS

Chaplain Assistant NCOIC

As those of us in Kandahar know, each death on the battlefield touches us with the pain of loss. Even though we understand the patriotism, valor and selfless service our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines give of themselves it is difficult to explain this to others who are not here. We turn to scriptures like John 15:13 "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." This verse provides perspective as we render a final salute at each ramp ceremony we attend.

There is strength in scripture, sustenance in spirit, and foundation in fellowship. Whatever your faith may be, I encourage you to study the scriptures of your belief, pray, and join others with strong moral foundations. As a Christian I naturally turn to the Bible, especially when dealing with issues of life and death. There I find answers to questions I thought could never be answered. I find wisdom to comfort others. I find guidance that helps me, my fellow soldiers, and the chaplains in my care.

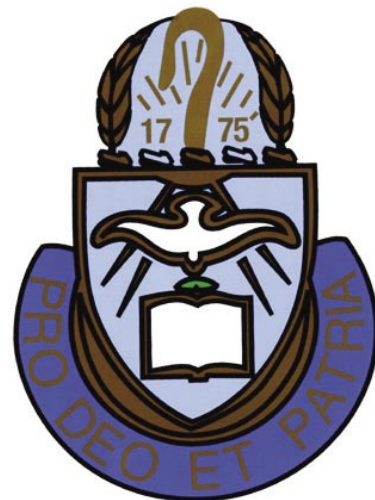
When faced with the pain of another death I turn to the Bible, and read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11. Personally, this scripture often referred to as "God Offers Comfort to All" gives me the strength to be there for others in their time of need while simultaneously consoling me in mine.

Reviewing this scripture, Paul begins with "God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others." Knowing that

our heavenly Father is there for us provides a cornerstone during our grief. "When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." It is through the Father's love for us, that we are able to console others. Now, the aspect of this scripture that I find most rewarding is the dire consequences that Paul addresses. The scripture states, "For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. Even when we are weighed down with troubles it is for your comfort and salvation!" This verse helps me shift my perspective from my own troubles, self-pity, to my relationship with Christ, my salvation; it also makes me acknowledge that the heavier my burden is, the stronger my relationship with Christ can be for when I am weak He is strong.

This scripture is particularly relevant to our situation in Afghanistan as Paul writes, "We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead." This places the focus on the fact that death here on earth is not the end, but only the beginning of a new heavenly relationship with God. This gives me hope for those recently deceased, and hope for my own salvation.

Living in a combat zone, we realize that death is something that we may see if not up close than in the flags that fly at half mast, and



at the ramp and memorial ceremonies. Some may ask how you can live knowing that you are surrounded by death. Paul states that God rescues us from mortal danger and will rescue us again. This gives me strength to continue, and strength to share my faith with others.

The scripture ends giving thanksgiving "for God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety." This resolution to "God Offers Comfort to All" recognizes our friends and family back home who continually pray for us, reminding us that God's love brings us all closer as we are all in his care.

Most days, death is not something we have to worry about, but on the days that we do, on the days that we wrestle with questions like why did this have to happen or why am I here, I find those questions answered in scripture. I hope that this particular scripture helps strengthen you as well.

>>> **Police** Continued from page 7

The Tampa police officers with the 143d ESC collectively decided to dedicate a flag flown over the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan headquarters here to their fallen comrade. They also combined resources to have a plaque made that displays the folded U.S. flag flown here and a certificate of authenticity to be presented to Roberts' wife, Cindy.

This flag was flown during the same hour of Roberts' death, according to Prebich. Upon learning of the officer's death, the men decided to dedicate the flag in his honor.

"The flag is raised every morning by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Segreaves. We are 8.5 hours ahead of the Eastern time zone," Prebich said. "According to reports, Cpl. Roberts was shot at about [10 p.m.] local time in Tampa. This means that the flag was flying during his last moments on this earth...this flag was flying when he passed."

Another ironic part, explained

Prebich, is that the Soldier who raised the flag, Segreaves, from Orlando, Fla., served with Roberts in the 810th MP Company.

"The military tradition of presenting 'The Colors' to a fallen comrade's next of kin is part of the memorial ceremony," said Command Sgt. Major Michael Schultz from Safety Harbor, Fla., the JSC-A senior enlisted.

Military honors are also rendered in the law enforcement community.

"We thought the best way to honor Mike was to fly the U.S. Colors in his honor. We dedicated this flag to him and wanted his family to know that although we weren't there in presence, we were there in spirit," said Schultz.

The suspect, Humberto Delgado Jr., a former police officer and soldier, had four weapons concealed in a shopping cart. Delgado was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army due to a knee and back injury. Police say Delgado was likely on his way to the local Veterans Affairs with his weapons when he was confronted by Roberts. In giving his life, Roberts may have saved many, according to Prebich.



Air Force Maj. J.D. Loftis, the Provincial Reconstruction Team-Zabul public information officer from Murray, Ky., connects with locals in the Pashto language.

"It opens doors," said Loftis. "When I start speaking Pashto people are a lot friendlier."

Loftis spent a year at the Defense Language Institute located in Monterey, Calif. learning Pashto. He is an Air Force regional affairs specialist focused on Southeast Asia.

"Anytime you can connect with people you are improving your credibility and they love the fact that someone has taken the time to learn their language," said Loftis.

He is fine tuning his Pashto skills as he constantly interacts with the locals.