



Victory Sustained

Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan

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Backpacks for Afghanistan

Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Like this boy from a village in Deh Chopan district, many children in Afghanistan do not have the resources to attend school. A program called Backpacks for Afghanistan, coordinated by the 649th Regional Support Group, aims to combat the country's less than 30 percent literacy rate by collecting materials from donators and providing school supply kits to teachers and students.

Preparing Afghan pupils with paper, pencils

■ BY STAFF SGT. MARCOS ALICES
Victory Sustained Editor

In a country where education was once outlawed for many children by the Taliban, U.S. forces work to help rebuild Afghanistan's education system that has been devastated from 25 years of war and an unstable government.

Units spread throughout the region are doing their part for the betterment of Afghanistan. U.S. forces are building schools for boys and girls as they attempt to reestablish the education system. The 649th Regional Support Group located here is working with the local community to provide school supplies for teachers and students in the Kandahar province.

"There is nothing more rewarding than watching a child learn," said 2nd Lt. Shaela Bresnan, Backpacks for Afghanistan program coordinator, from Indianola, Iowa.

"Unfortunately, children here lack the opportunities to educate themselves. Even when they have access to a school that they are able to attend, they do not have the physical resources to get the most out of their education."

Backpacks for Afghanistan is a program started by the 649th Regional Support Group meant to meet the needs of students and teachers. Local students will receive backpacks with five pencils, three pens, two colored pencils, one pencil sharpener, two erasers, two notebooks and two folders. A kit will also be available for teachers. It will provide them with classroom equipment such as world maps, construction paper and small chalk boards.

"When I was a little boy, if someone had given me a pen instead of a gun, this country would be a better place," said Afghan Col. Haji Toor Jan, Afghanistan National Police

security commander of civil affairs.

The 649th RSG has set a goal to collect 5,000 backpacks and 200 teacher kits in six months. The program started early August. The RSG will work with coalition forces and Afghan forces to distribute the supplies.

"We hope to reach as many students as possible within the Kandahar, Afghanistan area," said Bresnan.

Coalition troops in the southern region of Afghanistan build and repair schools in local villages. The 649th RSG will supply every student attending these new and refurbished schools. Afghan forces will also distribute school supplies to areas where no coalition forces are present.

"If you change the life of a child, you change the world," said Sgt. 1st Class Elaine Holten, Backpacks for Afghanistan organizer from Bonifay, Fla.

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The Commander's Corner



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

We are now just short of three months from our scheduled departure from Afghanistan. There's an old Chinese saying which

states, "May you live in interesting times." As the 1st ESC for the 1st war of the 21st century, we live in interesting times, to be sure. Soon, we will be replaced by the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC). During that same timeframe, the 45th Sustainment Brigade, 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion and 100th Brigade Support Battalion will also be replaced by fresh units. We can look back at all we've accomplished and be extremely proud. However, at the same time, there is much left to do and a decision on sending additional forces to Afghanistan is pending.

Whether your job involves operating in convoys, performing

foot patrols, flying an aircraft or operating on a large forward operating base or airfield, you must apply effective tactics, techniques and procedures as well as adequate safety measures to help preserve combat power and assure mission-accomplishment. It's too easy to sink into a false sense of security, and begin to cut corners on operational or safety procedures. Continued vigilance is necessary to prevent unneeded casualties.

A large aspect of our mission in Afghanistan was the enhancement of sustainment operations to expand logistical support to a growing US force. You have deserved and won praise from our higher headquarters for your con-

tinuing and painstaking efforts to improve the battlefield for the war fighter.

Members of the 143d ESC and its subordinate units have laid the foundation for continued sustainment support to an expanded U.S. military Afghanistan mission. I ask that you remember where we came from, where we are and how we got there. With that in mind, I urge you to facilitate a seamless transition with our successors. As you build processes, procedures and relationships, make sure you document them well, while archiving them in a location easily accessible to the 135th ESC, 82nd SB and any additional incoming partner units.

Sustaining victory!

The CSM Message to the Troops

Leaders at all levels, now is the time to start working on end of tour NCO evaluation reports (NCOER). With proper preparation this task is easy and painless. The time to evaluate your NCO's performance is not when you sit down to write the NCOER, but throughout the initial counseling, a face-to-face discussion of duties and responsibilities, where goals and objectives are set. The process continues during the rating period through quarterly counseling, which provides periodic assessments of the NCO's performance.

Quarterly counseling is a great tool for completing NCOERs, but it takes dedication from the rater and NCO to ensure it is done. Raters have the obligation

to conduct quarterly sessions, it provides the raters the opportunity to guide and mentor the rated NCO, adjusting duties and responsibilities, restating goals and objectives, allowing the rated NCO the chance to receive a performance assessment, and, if necessary, the opportunity to adjust or refocus.

Raters who do not take the time necessary to conduct quarterly counseling are cheating the rated NCO of valuable feedback and mentoring. Counseling Soldiers on job performance is not always easy; it's a skill that leaders must learn, and when done right it can make a profound difference to

the career of a young or junior NCO. Raters not taking the time to counsel their Soldiers are only doing half the evaluation and cheat the Soldier.

Counseling sessions not only provides the rater a starting point for filling out an NCOER, but invaluable documentation that validates ratings. When sitting down to complete the NCOER, you can't remember everything your Soldier did during the rating period, so recruit the help of the rated NCO. NCOs help your raters; record significant events and accomplishments.

NCOERs are used in the promotion selection process to identify the best qualified NCO. The NCOER rating chain must fill out these reports honestly; no one

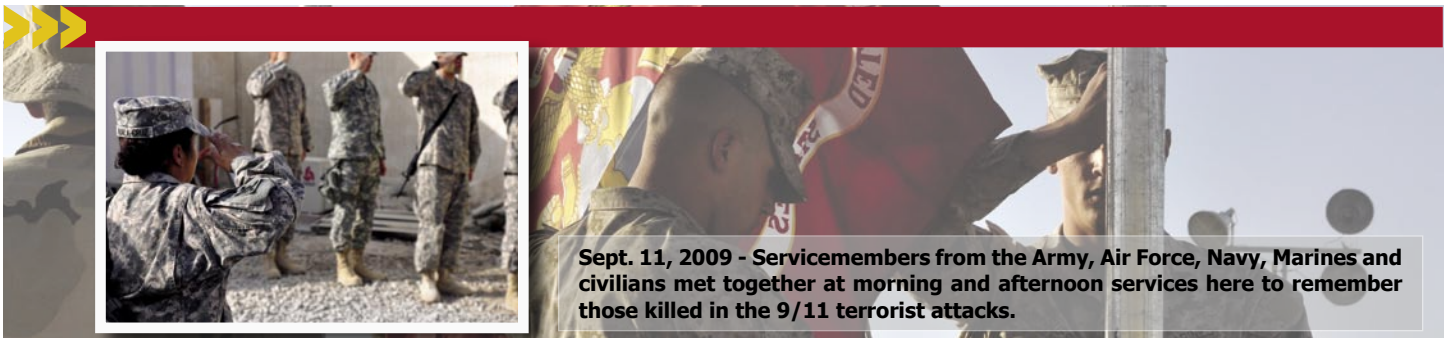


Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Schultz
Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan Command Sergeant Major

benefits from an inflated NCOER, not the Soldier or the Army.

Raters and senior raters, take the time to truthfully complete an NCOER. The evaluation report is an important document, treat it as such.

Army Strong!



Sept. 11, 2009 - Servicemembers from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and civilians met together at morning and afternoon services here to remember those killed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

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The Public Affairs office is located next to Bldg 515.

Medical company's supplies pilfered

■ **BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG**
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

Soldiers of the newly arrived 575th Aerial Support Medical Company discovered at Kandahar Airfield Oct. 1 that roughly two million dollars worth of their company's medical equipment had been stolen in transit.

The six overseas shipping containers left Fort Lewis, Wash. in June and were delivered to the 575th ASMC here where they discovered the contents of four containers were missing.

When opened, one or two of the containers held pallets of radio antennas not belonging to the unit, and the other containers were empty. One of the empty containers had once held troops' personal items, such as mementos, electronics and military-issued gear.

"Even though all my Soldiers

took a huge hit, you can't see it when they do their jobs," said Capt. Constantine Voyevodka, the 575th ASMC company commander.

Scheduled to open their clinic Oct. 15, the approximately 80 Soldiers of the 575th ASMC deployed with two missions. Primarily they plan to use their clinic to support American troops from units that do not have medical assets, currently about 50 percent of troops on KAF.

A secondary undertaking is to send teams forward to provide medical support to forward operating bases and military locations throughout Regional Command-South.

"For now we can still support Kandahar Airfield like we need to," said Voyevodka.

Besides medical equipment they still have, the company



Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Capt. Constantine Voyevodka, the 575th Aerial Support Medical Company commander, points to marks he believes were made when the roof of this shipping container was replaced after being removed in order to pilfer Army medical supplies.

hopes to use supplies from a medical equipment warehouse next door, as well as acquire medical materiel being transferred from Iraq due to the troop drawdown. The command

surgeon from the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan has already pledged support to help the 575th ASMC replace supplies they need to accomplish their mission.

New KAF housing for servicemembers

■ **BY STAFF SGT. CRAIG RADER**
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

From the food servicemembers eat to the equipment they use every day, the Defence Logistics Agency provides them with everything they need to continue the war fight.

"I think a lot of people don't think about where the food comes from at the dining facilities," said Navy Capt. Robert Marcinek, Commander of DLA in Afghanistan. "But we have that responsibility."

Not only are they responsible for the food but the DLA also handles almost every item that gets delivered to servicemembers all around the world.

"There is a saying that if a Soldier, Airmen, Sailor, or Marine eats it, wears it, or uses it to maintain equipment," said Marcinek, "chances are good that DLA provided that item."

The big project for DLA right now is

to get better housing for the servicemembers in Afghanistan, said Army Maj. Robert Wojciechowski, the Operations Officer for DLA in Kandahar. Currently, DLA is constructing more than 17,000 relocatable buildings in Afghanistan, with 3,000 in Kandahar.

"Right now we have Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and Sailors living in tents," said Wojciechowski, "and the RLB will be an increase in the living conditions and quality of life for them."

The RLBs are planned to start housing servicemembers in the next two weeks, said Wojciechowski. The RLBs will be able to house nearly 7,000 servicemembers on Kandahar Air Field.

With all the challenges of being deployed, servicemembers won't have to worry about being properly equipped and sustained to continue their missions.



Staff Sgt. Craig Rader | 22ND MPAD

Workers lay the foundation for new relocatable buildings inbound for Kandahar Airfield. The RLBs will house nearly 7,000 servicemembers when complete.

"The bottom line is that we provide the war fighter with all the material and equipment that they need to sustain the fight," said Marcinek.



Sgt. Jenni D. Heisz, 826 Ordnance Company ammunitions specialist from Boscobel, Wis., checks to see what JR the goat is eating. Although visitors to the ammunition supply point might think that Rod and JR are cute and friendly, these goats are not pets. The U.S. military owns the goat duo, and they work for a living. According to Army regulation DA PAM 385-64, ammunition and explosives safety standards, animals may be used as vegetation control. Dry grass and weeds pose a fire hazard at the ASP, and the goats do their part by eating the foliage.

Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Chaplain assistant MOS reaches 100 yrs.

■ BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG

Victory Sustained Staff Writer

The role of the U. S. Army chaplain assistant can be traced back to the American Civil War. Officially, the military occupational specialty now identified as 56M began in 1909 when the Chief of Staff of the Army authorized that each chaplain have one enlisted Soldier assigned to him as an aid. One hundred years later, chaplain assistants still fill a crucial need by supporting their assigned chaplain in a broad range of areas, from secretarial work to physical protection.

Chaplain assistants for the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan, Sgt. Lindsay A. Canterbury and Spc. Joshua A. Sennett, fill a time-honored role in the Army while deployed to Kandahar Airfield.

"Chaplain Assistants do a myriad of things that multiply the time the chaplain has to give to Soldiers," said Chaplain (Col.) Stanley Puckett, the JSC-A command chaplain.

Canterbury, a reservist from Tampa, Fla. on her second deployment, serves with the 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command, which leads the JSC-A. She enlisted for a challenge and decided to pursue being a chaplain assistant when an Army recruiter showed her a video of the MOS.

"I saw a weapon, body guard and someone that was able to work with Soldiers on a day to day basis," said Canterbury. "It sounded like a pretty good job description, and has [proven] to be."

The seven week training at the U.S. Army Chaplain School and Center at Fort Jackson, S. C., is broken down into five stages: religious support and operations, support in a unit setting, preparing for deployment, support during deployment and support during troop

transition stages.

"It is a challenge," said Canterbury. "But it's a very rewarding challenge."

Sennett, a guardsman from Linneus, Maine, enlisted after 9/11 and was willing to serve in any role. Now on his first deployment, he works for the 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion, a JSC-A element.

"In the home environment, a 56M will usually work at the skill level for their rank," said Canterbury. "In an overseas environment, more is expected of you and just providing religious support is not enough for this MOS."



Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Spc. Joshua A. Sennett, a 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion chaplain assistant from Linneus, Maine, volunteers to play the guitar every Sunday for a church service at Fraise Chapel.

Besides providing clerical and administrative support for his chaplain, Sennett regularly supports two to five church services every Sunday. He has even facilitated services for coalition forces. Sennett counsels troops in emergency situations until the chaplain arrives.

"If someone comes and knocks on the door, I keep him in a calm frame of mind," said Sennett.

As part of religious support teams, both Canterbury and Sennett travel with chaplains to forward operating bases throughout Southern Afghanistan, where the chaplains hold services and counsel troops who do not receive religious support on a regular basis. Since

chaplains do not carry a weapon, Canterbury and Sennett act as bodyguards.

"I try to keep a positive outlook on life, so that it will show as my expression for others to see," said Canterbury. "It's not so easy to do when you have to go through your own life situations."

While deployed, Canterbury and the rest of her RST produces, coordinates and executes standard operating procedures for new teams arriving at KAF.

"[Canterbury] was very welcoming," said Chaplain (Maj.) Martine Bellanger, a Canadian pastoral associate. "She's very responsible and wanted to make sure we had everything we needed."

Canterbury supports a weekly coalition chaplains' meeting and Canadian prayer service, and helps provide anything the Canadian RST needs regarding mass. She supplies the coalition team with everything from prayer books to microphones.

"I enjoy working with the opportunity to serve in a multi-faceted role," said Sennett. "One day I'll be doing office administration. The second day, I'll be briefing a command, and the third day in the field with a bunch of infantry guys."

Sennett and Chaplain (Capt.) Earl Weigelt, personally contribute to the overall mission here by meeting and praying with JSC-A troops before they leave on convoy missions, said Sennett.

"They know we are praying for them while they are on the road traveling," said Sennett. "I think it gives them a sense of security."

As RSTs continue to travel throughout Afghanistan providing spiritual and emotional support to troops during Operation Enduring Freedom, Canterbury and Sennett maintain their essential roles in a longstanding, vital MOS.



Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Besides aiding American chaplains here, Sgt. Lindsay A. Canterbury, a 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command chaplain assistant from Tampa, Fla., supports a weekly coalition chaplains' meeting and a Canadian prayer service.

Chaplain ministers to Soldiers, prisoners

■ **BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG**
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

Remote Forward Operating Base Baylough lies nestled beneath the mountains. During an evening in late May, the Soldiers attending a small service held by a visiting chaplain heard an explosion and felt the small, recreational building shaking. Believing they were under attack, the troops ran out of the service, wielding their weapons and ready to fight.

An Army reservist from Leesburg, Fla., Chaplain (Capt.) Dmitri V. Kostyunin from the 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command has spent much of his first deployment traveling to small FOBs around Afghanistan, serving Soldiers without regular religious support.

When Kostyunin was 20 yrs. old, he felt a call from God to become a minister or missionary, to preach and evangelize people, he said.

Kostyunin and his wife, Elena, were born in Archnagelsk, Russia, and in 1999 moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where he attended seminary. After working as a church youth minister in Virginia, Kostyunin was commissioned into the Army as a chaplain and became a U.S. citizen in 2007.

“A chaplain is a person who helps people spiritually, regardless of religion,” explained Kostyunin. “I like working with different groups, nationalities, races and religions from around the world.”

In the United States, Kostyunin works as a chaplain for the Federal Bureau of Prisons. He works at a Florida complex containing four facilities: two correctional institutions and two penitentiaries. Kostyunin is assigned to one of

the penitentiaries.

“It’s not called ‘prison’ anymore,” he said. “It’s called ‘correctional facility,’ because we’re here to help them change, to correct them emotionally, mentally and spiritually.”

At the penitentiary, Kostyunin has many diverse duties. His chaplain responsibilities include counseling and giving spiritual guidance to inmates, authorizing emergency calls home and monitoring chapel facilities. Kostyunin is also responsible for major religious holidays. He identifies inmates practicing that particular faith, gives them the holiday off and schedules a ceremonial meal, usually after a service.

“Jesus said that, ‘I was in prison, and you visited me,’” said Kostyunin. “People in prison are outcasts. It’s a privilege to work for the United States Army, but what about people who were neglected at one point by society?”

Some inmates, like Muslims and Jews, have specific food requirements. Kostyunin screens inmates to decide if they are eligible for a diet program.

Kostyunin supervises five orderlies and also contractors when needed. Contractors are usually ordained and hold a license to perform a specific service, he said. An example would be a Jewish Rabbi, contracted for two hours each Saturday to perform a religious service for Jewish inmates. Kostyunin also preaches on Sunday and leads Bible studies during the week.

“I do feel that I make a difference,” he said. “Although I didn’t know it until I left for this deployment.”



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Capt. Dmitri V. Kostyunin, a 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command chaplain, baptizes Sgt. 1st Class Katherine K. Klaffka Oct. 4 outside the Fraise Chapel here.

Before Kostyunin left, prisoners encircled him and prayed for his safety while deployed.

One inmate said to him, “When you came, you shook my hand. Nobody else shakes my hand in prison.”

Shaking hands was natural for Kostyunin but meant a great deal to others.

“He sees your heart, not what’s on the outside,” said Master Sgt. Johnny Wise Jr., the 143d ESC Operations Sergeant/ Battle NCO (Night), who has known Kostyunin since the first day the chaplain reported to duty in the Army. “That’s what made him so special to me.”

Kostyunin also strives to affect

people positively while he serves as a deployed chaplain for the 143d ESC.

Mainly, he counsels Soldiers, but he also performs services and leads Bible studies. He says many Soldiers are brought to him by their noncommissioned officers for a suicide evaluation.

“That’s the hardest part of being a chaplain,” he said. “I’m responsible for the life of these Soldiers. I’m praying that God will give me wisdom.”

Kostyunin also gives critical event debriefings to troops, which take place after a traumatic experience like losing a comrade in combat.

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Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Afghan National Army soldiers pass out writing tablets to children in the Deh Chopan district. Many children in Afghanistan lack basic school supplies and resources.

Backpacks

Continued from page 1

In a society where the literacy rate is less than 30 percent of the population, all Afghan citizens have the opportunity to attend school. Coalition forces continue to develop programs to improve the current education system.

“The program is very good for our [Afghanistan’s] future,” said Toor Jan. “Our people will one day have doctors, pilots and engineers. This will be our future.”

Backpacks for Afghanistan allows everyone to participate in building a future for generations. Many organizations, churches and schools in the U.S. have already donated.



Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Capt. Jeff Whitten, the 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion headquarters and headquarters company commander, shows an Afghan National Army soldier how to reassemble an M-16 rifle during rifle training. Whitten, along with Staff Sgt. Kyle Roy, a 286th CSSB HHC operations noncommissioned officer, trained ANA soldiers Sept. 5 and 6 at ANA Camp Hero near the base here.

286th CSSB mentors ANA soldiers

■ **BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG**
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

U.S. Soldiers from the Maine National Guard’s 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion trained Afghan National Army soldiers on the basic functions of M-16 rifles Sept. 5 and 6 at ANA Camp Hero, Kandahar province.

Many ANA soldiers have previously used AK-47 rifles, but learn to use the M-16 because of its accuracy. The rifle training is part of an ongoing coalition effort to mentor the 286th CSSB’s Afghan equivalent, a combat service support battalion called Kandak Five, located at Camp Hero.

“[The M-16] will make a good weapon if we keep it clean,” said Kandak Five Sgt. Malim Abdul Ghani Kalamyar, a training participant. “It will help us.”

During the first training day, the American troops stressed basic safety rules, like keeping weapons pointed at the ground, before moving on to the basic functions of the M-16.

The instructors explained through an interpreter how the weapon fires and then demonstrated how to break down the weapon and finally put it back together.

“If you watch them [ANA soldiers] first thing Saturday morning compared to in the afternoon, they come out of their shell a little bit,” said U.S. Capt. Jeff Whitten, the 286th CSSB headquarters and headquarters company commander from Enfield, Maine. “We get them to do a little competition breaking the weapon apart. We get them to cheer for each other.”

The second day, the 286th CSSB Soldiers

started by reviewing the previous day’s lesson material, and then explaining fundamental firing techniques: aim, breath and trigger squeeze.



Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

An Afghan National Army soldier competes with other soldiers Oct. 6 to see who can break down and put an M-16 rifle back together the fastest.

“The good thing is they like to talk with their hands as much as I do, so I can kind of pick up on that,” said U.S. Staff Sgt. Kyle Roy, the main mentor and a 286th CSSB HHC operations noncommissioned officer from Burnham, Maine.

For more interaction, they moved outside where the ANA soldiers practiced elementary firing positions and then performed dime drills.

As part of these drills, a dime is placed on the end of the muzzle. The troop must squeeze the trigger and keep the weapon steady, without shaking the dime off the barrel.

On day three, Canadian forces who mentor daily at Camp Hero take the Kandak troops to the nearby firing range to put into practice their newly-acquired M-16 training.

“Currently we are working on a plan to implement more [training] based on a Kandak’s need,” said Whitten.

Servicemembers are evaluating a program that would teach Afghan soldiers how to drive wreckers and perform wrecker recovery.

They also plan to eventually bring troops from Kandak Five to the 286th CSSB compound on KAF for hands-on mentorship. For example, maintenance soldiers from the Kandak would work with maintenance Soldiers from the 286th CSSB in their KAF maintenance bay.

“The Americans are very good,” said Kalamyar. “Especially the instructors are very good. We thank them and appreciate them coming here and spending the time with us.”

As kandaks maintain their crucial supply and logistic role for ANA soldiers in war-torn Afghanistan, the 286th CSSB continues to mentor and impart knowledge to troops from Kandak Five.

Optimization plan likely to shift US forces in Afghanistan

■ **BY STAFF SGT. MATT MILLHAM**
ISAF Public Affairs Office

KABUL, Afghanistan – Though U.S. forces in Afghanistan have been bolstered by the addition of 21,000 more troops since the spring, military leaders at the International Security Assistance Force headquarters are trying to decide which forces could – or should – be sent home.

Some of those forces would most likely be replaced by a similar number of troops trained in counterinsurgency operations or other disciplines commanders could better use. A greater number of personnel – mostly civilians at large bases like Bagram and Kandahar – may be removed for good.

Decision makers at the ISAF headquarters hope the moves will make operations in the country more efficient as they remove personnel who don't contribute directly to operations.

"We have a certain mix of forces over here which, in previous strategies, were the right kind of forces to do the mission," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hall, the senior enlisted advisor to Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the new commander of U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan.

"Now we are changing our focus to protect the population versus kill or capture all the insurgents. So that calls for a little bit differ-

ent forces than we had before."

Force optimization, as the plan is called, will take out some forces that aren't "trained, manned and equipped for counterinsurgency, and hopefully bring in forces that are trained manned and equipped to do that kind of mission," Hall said.

ISAF headquarters hasn't yet finished its assessment to determine which troops might be replaced, but some forces are, for obvious reasons, being eyed for an early return.

"We have a transportation company over here (that) doesn't have any trucks," Hall said.

The company isn't going to get any trucks either "because the mission has changed and we don't need them anymore, but they're still here," he added.

That these Soldiers wound up in Afghanistan without trucks or work wasn't their fault. Nevertheless, they count against the cap of 68,000 U.S. troops in the country.

The unit is just one small example of the problems facing commanders as they decide how and where to allocate forces to enact Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal's counter-insurgency strategy.

Hall said the changes aren't likely to impact troops directly involved in combating insurgents and rebuilding the country. Nor will it impact most support troops, those who han-

dle paperwork, logistics and other tasks that directly affect troops in the fight.

The plan will reduce the number of "support organizations that do nothing but support support organizations," Hall said. For the most part, that means Morale Welfare and Recreation activities, he added.

Importantly, the MWR cuts are expected to free up space for military aircraft at places like Bagram and Kandahar as the amount of supplies needed to sustain the force shrinks.

"You know, people are going to get upset that (some MWR is) going to go away, but you know, the front line soldiers, they don't get that stuff and they don't need that stuff," Hall said, noting that he'd recently been on a trip to outlying combat outposts where Soldiers laughed at when asked if they'd care if hamburger restaurants and ice cream shops at the main bases were shut down.

The leadership in Jalalabad has already closed down fast-food joints there, "and they seem to be getting along just fine," Hall said.

The cutbacks will also make it possible to condense the U.S. footprint in Afghanistan and at the same time shorten lines for troops at dining facilities and make it easier for them to get from one place to another as tents and other structures dedicated to third-line support personnel are removed, according to Hall.

>>> **Chaplain** Continued from page 6

"I'm a chaplain first and then an officer, and that is what the Soldiers need," he said.

Taking numerous trips by helicopter, he has visited more than ten FOBs, such as Baylough, Mizan, Smart and Cobra.

"I realize that Soldiers are without chaplain coverage for a long time, sometimes two to three months," he said. "Their religious needs haven't been met."

Not only do many FOBs have very basic living conditions, some FOBs are both directly and indirectly attacked several times a week, he said.

Even though Soldiers are mentally ready and physically equipped to fight, they may be stressed.

"It's not just the mission," Kostyunin said. "But also sometimes stress comes from home. Their spouses, families—sometimes a wife will go through a pregnancy by herself and even birth."

Kostyunin endeavors to show Soldiers that he cares about

them and wants to listen. If Soldiers are performing work or guard duties, he stops by and speaks with them.

"[Kostyunin] can connect with anybody," said Wise. "You can have the worse attitude, and he'll come by and, 'Snap!' You change. He has that gift of the right thing to say."

That night at FOB Baylough ended well. After the troops ran out of the service to put on their body armor and respond to the attack, they realized their fellow Soldiers were unconcernedly going about their usual tasks. Apparently, aircraft dropped scheduled bombs very close to the FOB, but leaders forgot about the service and did not warn them.

"All the Soldiers came back to my service, and we finished that evening service with a praise song and a prayer," Kostyunin said. "We all laughed."

Although a chaplain's mission can be dangerous, whether ministering to inmates in a high-security facility in Florida or "FOB-hopping" to visit Soldiers in remote areas of Afghanistan, Kostyunin continues his life of servitude and giving to others.



>>> **With 23 years of experience as an Improvised Explosive Device technician in the British army, ISAF-contracted Chris Lawrie explains that IEDs are often found in culverts to U.S. Soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division attending IED training here June 18.**

Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

US-led program provides Afghanistan humanitarian aid, economic growth



Staff Sgt. Marcos Alices | Victory Sustained

Spc. Antonio V. Charles, a Joint Sustainment Command humanitarian assistance specialist, throws a bag of flour to an Afghan worker at the KAF humanitarian assistance yard.

■ **BY STAFF SGT. MARCOS ALICES**
Victory Sustained Editor

Success in the war in Afghanistan depends on winning the confidence of the people. U.S. forces attempt to achieve this goal by increasing reconstruction activities and changing the way U.S. troops interact with the Afghan population.

Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan is reaching out to the community as they establish only the second humanitarian assistance yard in Afghanistan.

"The military version of the Red Cross [...] we are providing needed supplies to communities around the region," said Spc. Antonio V. Charles, a JSC-A humanitarian assistance specialist from Newark, N.J.

The program started in 2005 at Bagram Airfield. The yard's purpose is to provide timely disaster and emergency relief to local Afghan communities. Poverty, famine, droughts and years of war have created a need for such a fa-

cility. It is a storage and distribution center for humanitarian aid supplies such as food, clothing, school and medical supplies, and certain household items.

"[The humanitarian assistance yard] will allow many Afghan families whose homes have been destroyed or damaged to stay put and rebuild instead of evacuate," said Sgt 1st Class Corey L. Garner, a JSC-A humanitarian assistance noncommissioned officer from Aliceville, Ala. "By staying, they can continue to use local merchants and services and build the community back up, and possibly bring in opportunistic businesses."

The Kandahar Airfield humanitarian assistance yard was initiated early this year in an effort to efficiently distribute supplies. The yard will support the southern and western regions of Afghanistan while the BAF yard supports the northern and eastern regions.

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ISAF CSM urges renewed focus for Afghanistan coalition

■ **BY STAFF SGT. MATT MILLHAM**
ISAF Public Affairs Office

KABUL, Afghanistan -- There's a scene near the end of the movie "A Bridge Too Far" in which British paratroopers, facing off against a better-armed Nazi force, run out of ammo. When it seems they can't hold out any longer, cargo planes buzz overhead and drop crates of supplies.

"Everybody's happy and cheering," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hall, recalling the scene. The paratroopers, the farthest-forward in the biggest airborne assault in history, are relieved – until they open the crates to find nothing but red berets.

The berets were an idea – a notion dreamed up at a headquarters far from the front lines – meant to boost the morale of the paratroopers. The British troops, outgunned, lost the battle.

"They didn't need berets," said Hall, the senior enlisted advisor to the commander of international military forces in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal. "They needed bullets."

The scene, based on one of the final battles of Operation Market Garden in World War II, didn't happen exactly as portrayed in the film, but Hall brings it up to make a point.

"In a way that really happened," he said – in Afghanistan.

Eight years into the war here, U.S. combat troops are still asking for simple things, such as lighter equipment to help them keep up with their enemies. Meanwhile, troops and civilians stationed at major headquarters bases in Kabul, Bagram and Kandahar enjoy many of the comforts of home: Burger joints, cafes, dance parties and shops where one can buy a flat-screen television, then duck in for an hour-long massage.

To Hall these amenities are tangible examples of lost focus.

Instead of flying bullets and food rations to troops at austere combat outposts, some planes and helicopters are instead being used to ferry ice cream and fried chicken to troops far from the front. Troops who should be on patrol to help protect Afghan civilians from insurgents instead get stuck pulling guard duty while their comrades whoop it up at hip-hop night.

He wants to put a stop to it.

Hall recently swung through combat outposts in Afghanistan's east and asked troops what they thought about shutting down the Pizza Huts, Burger Kings and Popeye's Chickens, "and they started to make fun of me," he said. "They said they had everything they need out here and they were here to do a mission, and (all that other stuff) ... didn't really matter to them."

Beyond that, he said, the front-line troops understood that supplying nonessential luxuries to big bases like Bagram and Kandahar made it harder to get essential items to far-flung bases like Combat Outpost Monti.

"It wasn't a matter of I'm suffering and you need to suffer also," he said. "They were talking about what they need to do the mission, and they know that those were distractions."

It is not possible to get indulgences such as ice cream and fast food to the outlying bases, he said. "So if it's not possible out there, I don't need people (who are supposed to be focused on moving supplies around the country) to be distracted worrying about it."

"It's not about suffering," he said. "It's about being efficient."

By cutting back on some of the luxuries and some of the non-essential personnel who provide them, "We won't need to bring in as many supplies, we won't have as much fuel going across the roads," and hopefully "we can get the combat power out to the organizations that are out there protecting people every day," Hall said.

"I mean, we all need to be focused on what we're here for, and that's to protect the population and to support the Soldiers, Sailors or Marines and our coalition forces that are actually out there, actually doing the job."

Reflections by the Chaplain

■ BY MASTER SGT. WARD GROS

Chaplain Assistant NCOIC

While visiting my Australian friend Padre Paddy Sykes, I noticed a flyer on the wall of the Aussie recreation room that read Deployment Tip #8 – Working With Other Pirates. As we near the final months of our deployment I found the advice on the flyer pertinent to our days at Kandahar.

The flyer started with a quote from American Journalist H.L. Menken, “Every normal man must be tempted at times to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats.” The thing to realize about this quote is that even though it’s normal to have such feelings, only those who cling to higher values actually survive them.

Underneath the quote the flyer posted several truths which I will share with you as they all hold true aboard this ship called deployment.

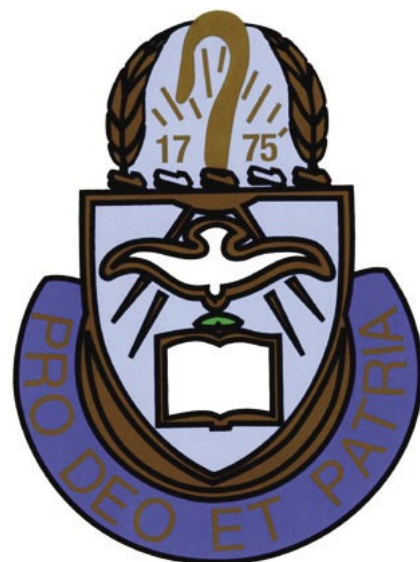
- Forget the idea of ‘personal space’; you’re a pirate darn it.
- Start seeing the funny side of things. Being called a scurvy-sea-dog is not necessarily a bad thing.
- When possible, find a short period of time each day to be alone. Count your pieces of eight or something.
- If you haven’t got anything nice to say about the captain, wait until he’s out of ear-shot. Is ‘putting the hook in’ really helping

though? Maybe some deck sports would be better for morale.

- Don’t make someone walk the plank when a simple lash o’ the whip will do.
- Stop chasing treasure all the time and enjoy the voyage.
- Be flexible. If the wind is blowing from the wrong quarter, change the tack.
- Remember, you don’t have to like everyone and they don’t have to like you. That’s part of the pirate code.

The Australians aren’t the only ones that compare their deployments to voyages out at sea. Remember at the start of our time here in Afghanistan how JAG hoisted their pirate flag, as did G6. Many of us love those Tampa Bay Buccaneers and may have worn bandanas or an eye patch in honor of our team. Others may have enjoyed the Pirates of the Caribbean movies so much they dressed up like pirates for Halloween. Pirates have shared a long history up and down the Florida coast. Part of what makes such dastardly crews so admirable is their stick-to-it-ness, their ability to survive.

As we continue to sail our Expeditionary Crew across uncharted waters much like Ulysses on his Odyssey I am sure that we are bound to hear Sirens, the type that call us into our own traps. Ulysses had his men stuff wax into their ears and have him bound upon the mast of the ship. The songs that the Sirens



sang were so beautiful, yet so deadly. Just as H.L. Mencken’s quote holds truths that each of us may encounter throughout the course of our journey, it is up to each of us to take the high road and look beyond the misery of our day. Simply shout “AARGH” and “BLIMEY” and let the madness go. Your co-workers, family, and friends may consider you strange, but you’ll feel a little bit better blowing off steam. If you were Peter Pan’s nemesis Captain Hook and like that bitter bloke you might hear time ticking in the belly of that hungry crock, ticking away at your patience – at your tolerance, and at your pleasantness. Don’t let time be the downfall of what has been a tough but rewarding year – go the distance, stick it out and you’ll be glad that you made it ashore.

Yard

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The yard here is expected to begin supply distribution Oct 15.

“It [the humanitarian assistance yard] creates a better working relationship with the U.S. and Afghanistan,” said Garner. “It promotes economic growth. It shows that our presence here is far more than just one of conflict but of peace.”

Several U.S. agencies work

closely with local communities. They will identify the needs of the community and submit a request to the humanitarian assistance yard, which will coordinate, transport and deliver items. The yard’s presence here has provided jobs and opportunities for the locals.

Afghans will be hired to help operate the humanitarian assistance yard and will work side by side with Soldiers. All supplies stored in the yard were purchased through local vendors.

It takes more than just gathering supplies to get the yard up and running. The Soldiers working at the yard built it from the ground up. They had to do everything from conducting an initial site survey to coordinating with vendors. The humanitarian assistance yard can be compared to a warehouse. The Soldiers are responsible for maintaining records and keeping track of inventory.

“It is nice to help the people of Afghanistan and show the peo-

ple another side of Americans instead of bullets and guns,” said Pfc. Timothy J. Fiel, a JSC-A humanitarian assistance specialist from El Paso, Texas.

U.S. forces continue to work to rebuild the infrastructure of Afghanistan with programs such as the humanitarian assistance yard. U.S. forces along with their coalition partners will focus on bringing stability to the country, so it can have the ability to deliver basic services to its population.



Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Douglas Carver, the Army chief of chaplains, along with with Sgt. Maj. Tommy L. Marrero, chief of chaplains regimental sergeant major, visited here Sept. 6 and 7, speaking to troops and addressing issues with religious support teams.