

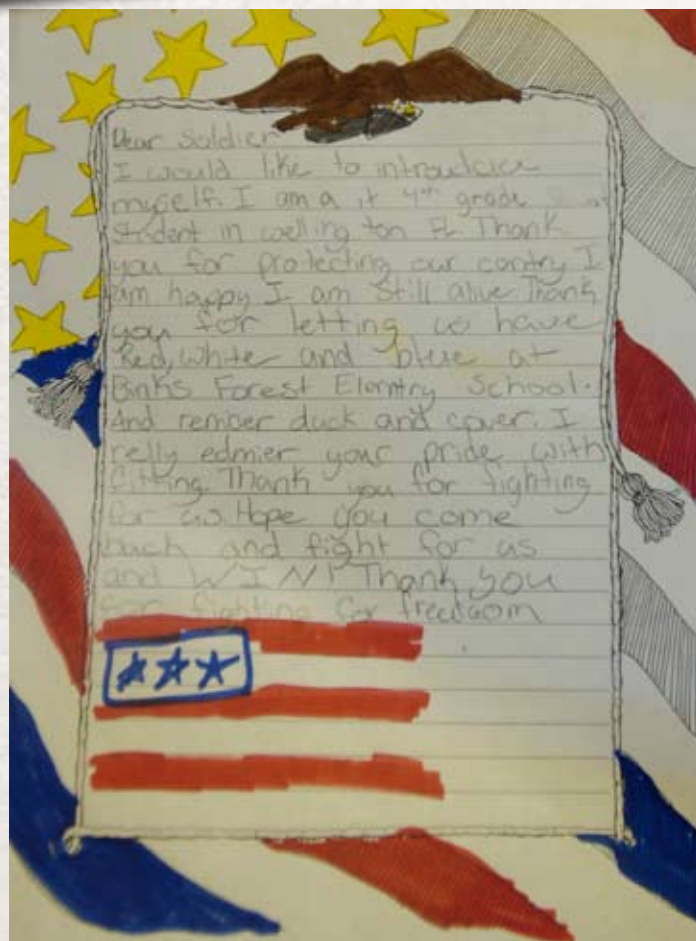
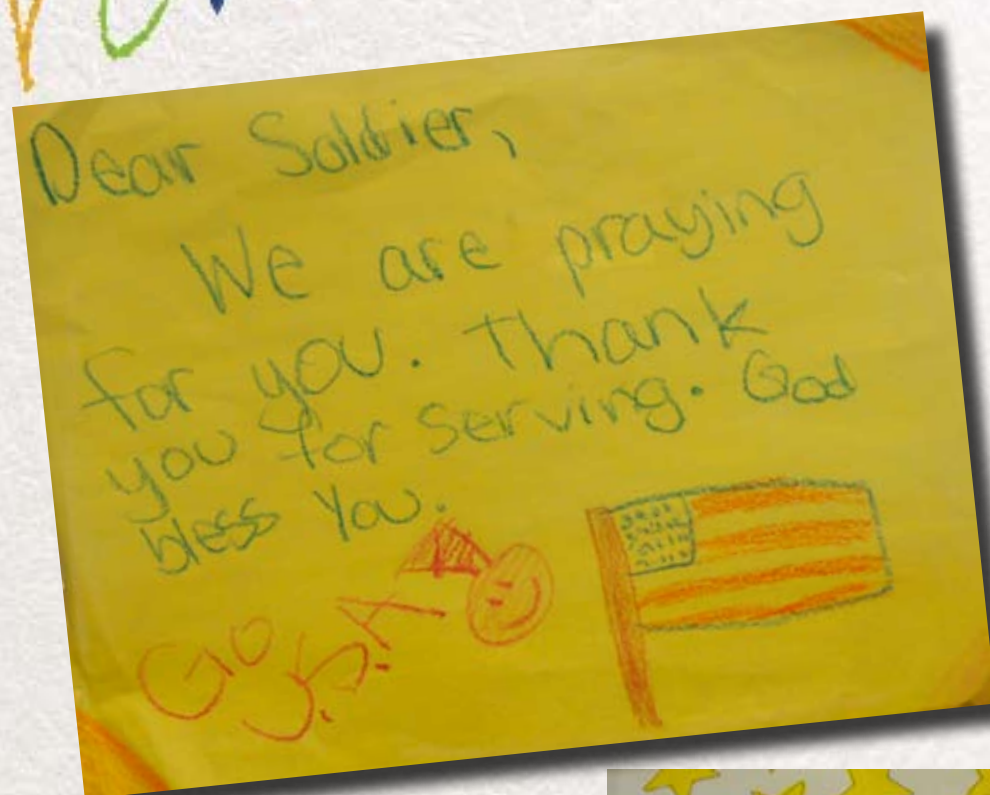
FREEDOM WATCH AFGHANISTAN

DECEMBER 2009



**TF La Fayette,
“We are here!”
pg. 20**

from the kids



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Courtesy Cover Photo

French forces patrol Parwan province during Operation Avalon, Nov. 14.

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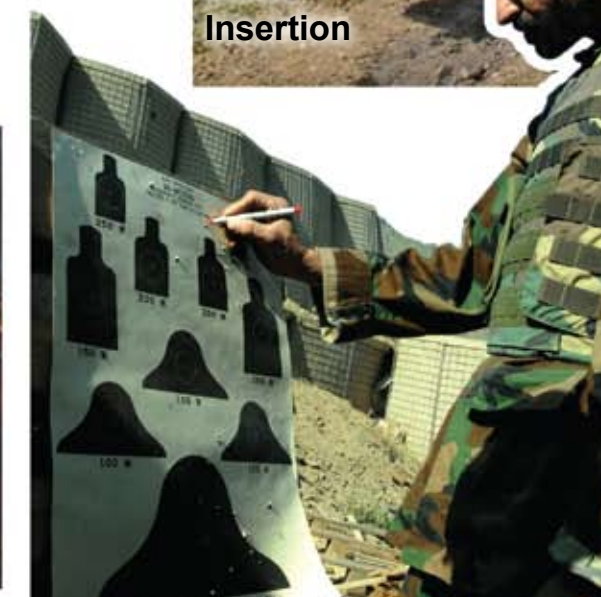
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EAR TO THE GROUND:

GEN. PETRAEUS VISITS LOGAR PROVINCE, HEARS VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Story and Photos by Army Sgt. Jaime' De Leon, TF Spartan PAO



Left: Gen. David Petraeus, commander of United States Central Command, met with U.S. and Afghan soldiers, as well as Baraki Barak Sub-Governor Mohammed Lodin and local businessmen at Combat Outpost Baraki Barak, Oct. 29.



Right: Gen. David Petraeus stops shoppers on the streets of Baraki Barak, Oct. 29. He spoke with them about their satisfaction with their local government and projects still to come.

Gen. David Petraeus, commander of United States Central Command, met with U.S. and Afghan Soldiers, as well as Baraki Barak Sub-Governor Mohammed Lodin and local businessmen at Combat Outpost Baraki Barak, Oct. 30.

Petraeus removed his body armor and made his way out the gate into the bustling marketplace. He shook hands, waved to children and invited shoppers down the block to a local bakery for bread and chai. Once seated, with Lodin standing nearby, Petraeus spoke to several locals about their government.

Baraki Barak's district center, which officially opened the day before Petraeus' visit, was a topic of many discussions.

While sipping chai Petraeus asked, "What do you think of your sub governor? How do you feel about the election?"

Although the Baraki Barak's district center recently opened its doors, the government is eager for citizens to begin using the new center.

"We're trying to give them a positive image of what the government is doing here," said Lodin.

Petraeus made a point of letting the people know how pleased he was with the progress being made in the area.

"The American people have felt privileged to help the people who want to provide for their families," Petraeus said. "We want nothing more than to help the people who reject the extremism that has caused problems here and elsewhere."

Although the new district center is a positive start, the work is not done. The Afghan government is still in its early stages, and extremists still live among

the people of Logar province.

"It's going to take time and it's going to take cooperation," Petraeus said, in reference to ridding Logar of extremism and improving its economy and infrastructure. "It's going to take sweat from the community, not just money from the outside."

"This has to be your work," he added, addressing a local shopkeeper. "We are privileged to help, but as you know, it means more if you build it. We call this sweat equity when you invest your own sweat, your own work."

Before leaving, he made a point of letting the people know he realized many issues were emotionally charged.

"As we used to say in Iraq, 'it's okay to talk ... it's even okay to shout, it's just not okay to shoot,'" Petraeus said.

'Lone Star' farmers survey Afghan markets

Story by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT PAO

Soldiers from the Texas Agri-business Development Team visited downtown Ghazni for a market survey during a recent mission, Oct. 27.

Texas-ADT conducts market surveys on local and imported fruits and vegetables every four to six weeks to gather data on trends and prices while assessing available produce.

A crucial part of these missions is to research what products are acquired locally, what is acquired from other provinces, and what is imported internationally.

"I believe there are products purchased from international vendors that could actually be purchased from local Ghazni farmers," said Spc. James Bak-

er, horticulture specialist assigned to Texas-ADT at Forward Operating Base Ghazni. "Some of the Ghazni city vendors don't know that the same products are available locally. There are international governments who subsidize exports so that they can be sold at a lower price. My concern is that this will keep the Afghan agricultural market destabilized."

The ADT's stated goal for the market surveys is to foster provincial business relationships by promoting agribusiness to help alleviate this issue.

Below: Army Sgt. Major Harlan Hardy, non-commissioned officer in charge, from Marfa, Texas, assigned to the Texas Agri-business Development Team at Forward Operating Base Ghazni, secures the area while members of the ADT perform an assessment of the produce market in Ghazni province, Afghanistan, Oct. 27.



Photo by Tech Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey, Ghazni PRT PAO

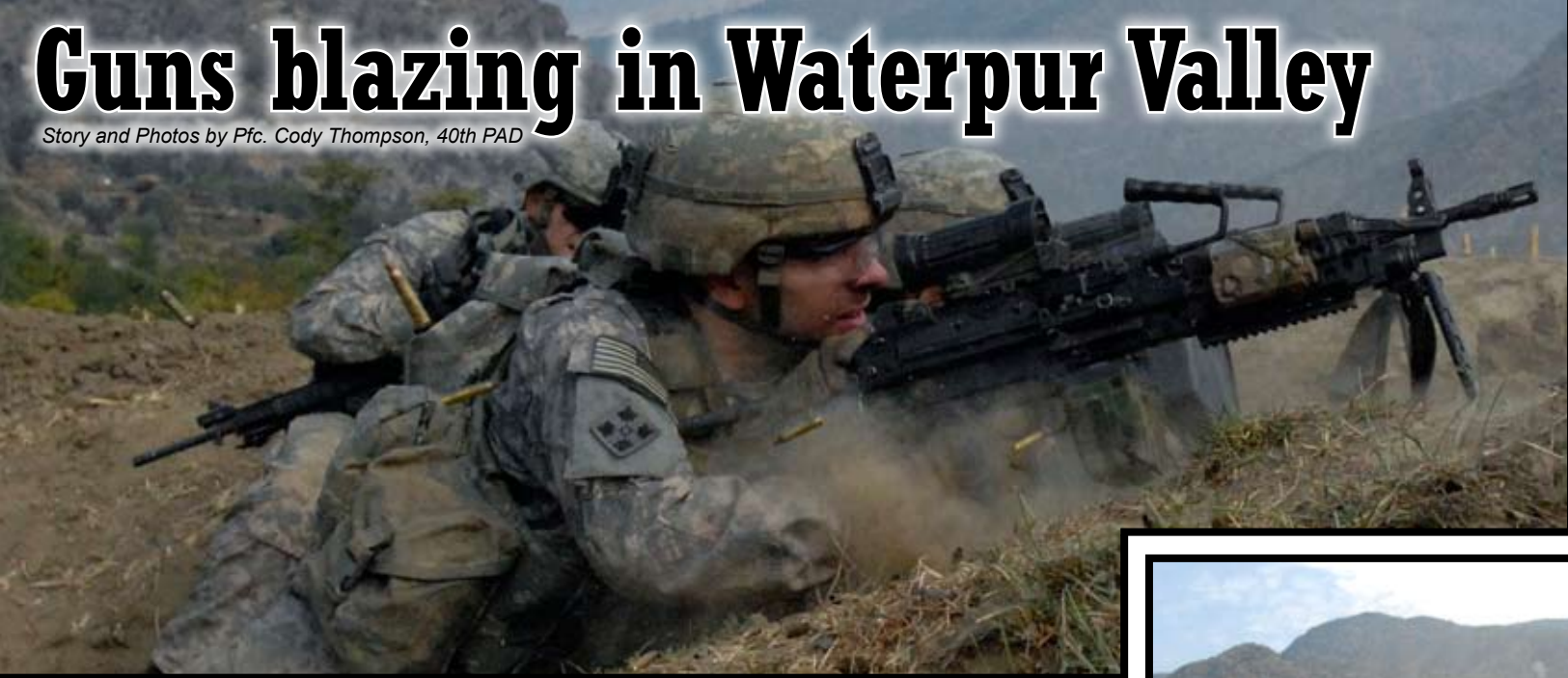


Left: Spc. Alex Baker, horticultural specialist, from Stephenville, Texas, assigned to the Texas Agribusiness Development Team on Forward Operating Base Ghazni, listens as a shopkeeper explains how his onions are grown, bought, and sold in Ghazni province, Oct. 27. The ADT performs assessments in the produce market every four to six weeks to measure trends, prices, and seasonal changes on local and imported fruits and vegetables.

Photo by Tech Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey, Ghazni PRT PAO

Guns blazing in Waterpur Valley

Story and Photos by Pfc. Cody Thompson, 40th PAD



Army Pfc. Chris Johnson, an infantryman with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, 4th Brigade Combat Team, fires his M-249 squad automatic weapon at insurgents during a firefight in Kunar province, Nov. 3.

“Where are they shooting from?” the commanding officer’s voice crackled through a radio from nearby Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, Nov.3.

“Everywhere, but the south!” yelled Army 1st Lt. Eric Bruns, a fire support officer, into the radio as sniper-fire streaked overhead.

On a mission that turned out to be anything but routine, the infantrymen of 3rd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, were ambushed by insurgents while leaving the village of Qatar Kala in Kunar province, Nov. 3.

Before the hail of gunfire began, Spc. Justin Moore cautiously remarked, “This village is no joke. As soon as we leave here, we’ll be shot at.”

Splitting into two squads, the Soldiers headed down separate pathways, one toward the eastern mountains and the other to the southern riverbed.

Moore’s prediction soon turned out to be true. Within minutes of leaving the village, the Soldiers came under attack. The group in the river bed heard the gunshots and sprinted through the creek to support their pinned-down comrades.

“I can’t get shot today, because today’s my daughter’s fourth birthday,” said Army Sgt. Levi Vernon.

Frustration built as the insurgent’s fire turned increasingly effective, as bullets impacted around the Soldiers’ position.

“They’re like ghosts,” said Army Cpl. Casey Liffri. “You never know where they are.”

And then, help came down from the sky. Soon after receiving fire, helicopters from Task Force Palehorse began firing at the insurgents.

After the helicopters received fire, they responded with renewed enthusiasm. A Soldier watching the helicopters as they increased their rate of fire said smiling, “Aw, Palehorse is

mad!”

One by one the pinned-down Soldiers sprinted to their fellow infantrymen at the nearby creek bed, using its steep rock walls for cover, until the insurgents started shooting at them from the other mountainside.

“Move, move, move,” shouted Liffri, as they dashed farther down the creek bed, amid gunfire.

Finally, the Soldiers thought they had escaped the insurgent kill zone. Low on ammo, they waited for resupply, but while waiting they received word that enemy fighters were moving down on them.

Crouching behind a boulder, Army Pvt. Kasey Winborne, one of the unit’s newer Soldiers, and in his first firefight, said, “It was dirty and scary, but I knew that as long as I did what I was told everything would be alright.”

After being resupplied, the Soldiers walked down the mountain ledge, and made it back to their base.

“That was the worst firefight we’ve had in that area,” said Moore.

Although tired and dirty, the platoon’s leader explained why the mission was successful.

“Once we got back we found out that we killed some insurgents,” Army 2nd Lt. Thomas Goodman said, “But, the highlight of the mission was that we all made it back safely, and at the end of the day that’s all that matters.”



Army Pvt. John Stafinski, an infantryman with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, 4th Brigade Combat Team fires his M-249 squad automatic weapon at insurgents during a firefight in Waterpur Valley, Kunar province, Nov. 3.

AERIAL INSERTION IN PARWAN

Story and Photos by Spc. William E. Henry, TF Cyclone PAO



Soldiers move to a landing zone in Surkh-e Parsa district, Parwan province, Nov. 16.

Members of Task Force Cyclone took part in an air insertion mission in western Parwan province, to examine current projects, meet Afghan police members and speak with Afghan civilians, Nov. 16.

More than 40 Service Members from Task Force Gladius, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers technicians and Human Terrain Team members collected information on current operations from the people in Surkh-e Parsa area.

“We were able to assess both the village and the ANP (Afghan National Police) at one time, while also being able to use the engineers to assess the ongoing projects in the area,” 1st Lt. Sam Drzewianowski, a platoon leader with Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division said. “This type of collaborative mission is both efficient and shows a unity among all the elements that can assist the Afghan people.”

Edmund Campbell, Cyclone Human Terrain Team member who interviewed people in the area, said citizens reacted well to the troops’ presence.

“People’s response was good,” Campbell said. “The people were glad to see us...Coalition forces have not been to the area in four months.”

Drzewianowski had similar thoughts on the operation.

“The people were hesitant at first...but they began to tell us all their issues once they became more comfortable,” Drzewianowski said. “They were happy to have Coalition forces in the area of operation and informed us that there have not been any Taliban in the area and (they) have had no problems with violence.”

Tait Nelson, lead brigade engineer for USACE Cyclone, spoke of the importance of being able to physically visit projects and talk with the contractors of the area.

“In remote sites we don’t have the luxury of being on the ground on a daily basis, and we don’t even have the luxury of having some of our outside local engineers to get there consis-

tently to keep up with the construction,” Nelson said. “These missions are unique (in) that we can physically get there and use our USACE engineers to inspect the site and get a handle on where they’re actually at.”

Although the site was isolated and visits by Coalition forces are not frequent, Cyclone team members had a positive outlook on the mission,

“It was a very good visit,” Nelson said. “We got to thoroughly inspect the site and look at everything from the quality of construction of the concrete to the construction of the guard towers (and) how their stone walls are being fabricated.”

The troops from Cyclone were able to accomplish multiple tasks during their time in the area.

This mission will not only benefit the local people with the vital information gathered, it will ultimately increase the co-operation between all elements involved for operations in the future.

“I think it was a very well planned mission and security was adequately set up,” Nelson said. “Everything was done properly and on time.”

“We also learned we can all help each other rather than each Coalition force element working separately,” Drzewianowski said.



Army Pfc. Horatio Jackson, Company B., Special Troops Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, runs toward a helicopter in Surkh-e Parsa District, Parwan province, Nov. 16.



One good turn deserves another

Story and Photos by
Senior Airman Evelyn Chavez
CJTF-82 PAO

Afghan National Army soldiers help each other exit a vehicle during High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle training, Nov. 16.

“Roll-over, roll-over, roll-over!” These words were repeated by Afghan National Army soldiers during their first High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle Egress Assistance Training, Nov. 16.

The 203rd Corps ANA held a HMMWV Egress Assistance Training ribbon cutting ceremony. The ceremony included a demonstration to the 203rd Corps leadership and their coalition partners of the technologically advanced training the ANA soldiers will be receiving in their current Up-Armored HMMWV(UAH) training.

HEAT training is a newly added supplement to the recent training offered to the 203rd Corps ANA soldiers. Presently UAH training is a three-week course that teaches students hand and arm signals, basic driving principles and road rules.

“This was good training for us, the teachers taught us a lot of things during

the three weeks and if something happens we will know what to do,” said an ANA soldier.

HEATs purpose is to train soldiers on the effects of vehicle rollovers and conduct drills that will supply them with skills to react during a vehicle emergency. The ANA also learned how to work as a team by helping each other during HMMWV emergency.

During this training, each student conducted HEAT rollover drills numerous times with each scenario being different. HEAT training not only familiarizes soldiers with procedures but also reinforces

the importance of seat positioning, wearing seatbelts and demonstrates the feeling of disorientation.

“This training is going to benefit the ANA by helping save lives in the event these soldiers encounter dangerous rollovers or dangerous vehicle turnovers as they do in field operations”, said Lt. Col. Jack Parker, operations officer, Combined Joint Task Force-82 Tactical Command Post, which is partnered with the 203rd Corps.

HEAT enables ANA soldiers to better prepare themselves for future vehicle emergencies.



An ANA soldier waits inside the High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle, Nov. 16. The first HMMWV Egress Assistance Training took place at Forward Operating Base Thunder. The purpose of HEAT is to train soldiers on the effects of vehicle rollover and conduct drills that provide the skill and ability to react properly during a vehicle rollover.



Maj. Gen. Abdul Khaliq, ANA 203rd Corp's commander, shakes hands with soldiers during the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the HMMWV training, Nov. 16.



An ANA soldier exits a humvee, Nov 16. The HMMWV Egress Assistance Training took place at FOB Thunder. The purpose of HEAT is to train soldiers on the effects of vehicle rollover, and conduct drills that provide the skills to react properly during a vehicle emergency.



Photo by Tech Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey, Ghazni PRT PAO

An Afghan woman practices crocheting. The women of Khawja Omari District are learning how to crochet as part of a vocational training program.

KNITTING AFGHANS

KHAWJA OMARI WOMEN RECEIVE VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Story by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb
Ghazni PRT PAO

For decades, many women in Afghanistan were practically invisible and not expected to be anything more than housewives and caregivers. Recently, Khawja Omari district women have begun educating themselves and learning new trades.

Polish members of Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team and Humanitarian Assistance for Development of Afghanistan, a local non-governmental organization, created a venue for the women who live in the villages of Deh Duelet and Deh Dunet to learn trades and skills.

The vocational program was created for the women to help build self-esteem while enabling them to contribute to their home budgets, said Katarzyna Wojtusik, a civilian working for the Polish army as the social matters expert for Ghazni PRT.

“When the project started, elders and villagers asked HADAF to increase the number of participants and teachers, so we had to build an annex,” Wojtusik said.

The village elders choose which women attend the program. In order to be considered, the women had to be illiterate, a widow, an orphan or poor.

The original plan for the program involved 160 women, but due to the program’s success it was expanded to accommodate an additional 40 women. Women involved in the program range in ages from 12-40.

The training is conducted five-days-a-week for three hours daily. Two of those hours are dedicated to vocational training and one hour is for literacy.

“The women are taught subjects like health awareness, economics and animal species during the literacy hour,” Wojtusik said. “These courses are designed to assist with even the most basic things like reading prescriptions, shopping in the city or writing letters to their relatives.”

The vocational portion of the program teaches them handicrafts such as crocheting and tailoring. The handicrafts are then sold at bazaars, with the money from the sale going back to the women.

“I also built the program so the women could have fun,” Wojtusik said. “This gives them the opportunity to come together and strengthen relations. The people in small villages aren’t as socially active as we would like to think.”

There are ten schools located in the district. Four of them have boys and girls attending, and two schools are strictly for girls.

“These two villages were chosen for the program because they are very progressive,” Wojtusik said. “The women are treated very well here compared to other districts.”

“It was nice to see girls in school. They were outgoing and not shy like other girls I’ve seen throughout the province,” said Tech. Sgt. Rebecca Corey, combat photographer assigned to the PRT. “They smiled and seemed really happy.”

After checking on the program’s progress, the team was offered local fruit and a chance to socialize with the participants.

One woman holding her small child asked Tech. Sgt. Corey if she had children at home.

“The mother allowed me to hold her baby even though I was wearing my full battle gear and looked like any other Soldier,” Corey said. “She trusted me. I looked at that as a big step in securing confidence between Coalition forces and the Afghan people in the area.”



A woman crochets while holding her young child at the Vocational Center in Khawja Omari, Nov. 1.

Photo by Tech Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey, Ghazni PRT PAO

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD: 2-77 ARTILLERYMEN MAKE AN IMPACT

Story and Photos by Spc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th PAD

It's a day like any other at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam. Soldiers are going about their routines. Some are off and are using their down time to call family and friends. Others are surfing the internet or playing video games to pass the time.

Army Sgt. Carlos Medina is relaxing in his room when his radio breaks the silence. The radio says Medina and his unit are needed; someone, somewhere needs field artillery support.

After receiving the message, Medina leaps into action.

"Fire mission," Medina yells to the other artillerymen of 3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, who live in the rooms adjacent to his quarters. But, there is no need for Medina's shouting because his teammates have already sprung into action.

Word has spread throughout the FOB to all the members of his unit, who are collectively known as the "Misfits." They drop what they are doing. Phones are hung up, video games are paused and computer are turned off as the artillerymen ready themselves for their mission.

The artillerymen have to be ready to go at any time.

"We rotate," said Medina. "Each team has a 24-hour shift, during which we are always on standby."

Having donned their gear, the Soldiers hasten toward the gun line knowing that time is of paramount concern.

"It's a rush," said Medina, a Denver native. "Once we get the call, we are ready to fire in about five minutes."

During those few transition minutes, the "Misfits" don't know exactly what they'll be doing.

"There's an uneasy tension as you run down to the gun line," said Army 1st Lt. Regan Tatford, fire direction officer and platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 2-77 FAR. "The uncertainty of not knowing what the mission is for really gets your adrenaline pumping."

Army Pfc. James Billasano, an artilleryman with 3rd Plt., Alpha Battery, 2-77 FAR, agrees with his teammates and ex-



Soldiers with 3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, fire a M198 155 mm howitzer at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam in Lagham province, Oct. 3.

plained why the initial moments of a fire mission are so frantic.

"We drop whatever we're doing," said the Needville, Texas, native, "because when we get the call, it's game time; someone really needs us--lives can be at stake."

For some of the Fort Carson-based "Misfits," the first minutes are a blur, but they know those fleeting minutes can drag on for the guys calling for support.

"That initial three minutes seem like an eternity to the guys needing our support, because they desperately need it," said Tatford. "The faster we do our job, the faster they can do theirs."

Using the M198 155 mm howitzer, Billasano said they are able to keep forward maneuvering units from getting ambushed at night with illumination rounds as well as provide fire support



***Above:** Army Pfc. James Billasano, an artilleryman with Btry. A, 2nd Btn., 77th Field Artillery Regt., 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., takes a break after a fire mission at FOB Mehtar Lam in Lagham province, Oct. 3. The artillerymen are based out of Fort Carson, Colo., and help support forward maneuvering elements.*



Artilleryman with Btry. A, 2nd Btn., 77th Field Artillery Regt., 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., practice fire drills at night with their M198 155 mm howitzer at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam in Lagham province.

when patrols come into heavy contact.

Often, the enemy is unaware of the artillery until it is too late for them and just in time for the forward Soldiers.

"The enemy could be engaging our guys with RPGs (rocket propelled grenades) or small arms," said Tatford. "If we're called up, they (the enemy) wouldn't know about us until the round impacts."

This quick strike capability is an asset to ground units and has the potential to save Soldiers.

"We save lives," said Medina. "Our job is to give them light to see and to watch their backs and we're having success doing that."

According to Medina, the "Misfits" are able to provide support up to 18 miles away, helping give the forward elements greater freedom to accomplish their missions.

So far they have been successful. The success they've had supporting forward Soldiers has given them confidence in their abilities and trust in the skills of each other.

"It takes about eight guys and everyone has to be in sync for everything to go smoothly," said Billasano. "We trust each other's skills."

That confidence really makes the unit more cohesive and effective. Tatford is proud of this and how his Soldiers have performed their job when they were needed most.

"I'm proud of these guys and what we do," said the Lafayette, La., native. "We have fired several times toward (Combat Outpost) Nagil when the COP was being directly attacked and helped neutralized the enemy there."

Though they may be heroes to the Soldiers they've supported, the "Misfits" remain humble.

"It's rewarding," said Tatford. "It is a great feeling to have someone come on the radio and say, 'thanks, you guys really helped us out.' But it's our job; it's what we signed up to do."

However, Medina is grateful for the opportunity to serve his country.

"I'm proud to be here," said Medina. "I feel like we are making a difference."

That difference is supporting the front lines.

Whether it is neutralizing enemies or lighting the way for Soldiers, the artillerymen of Alpha Battery, 2-77 FAR are always ready to make an impact.

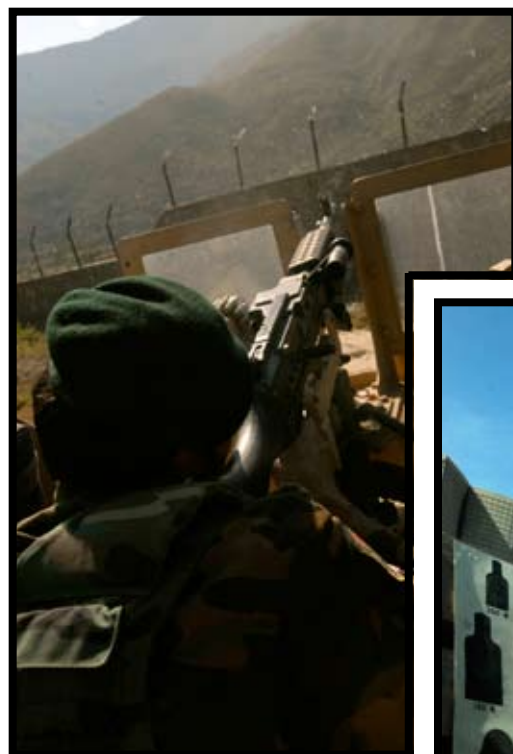
One shot, new skill: ANA train with NATO weapons

Story and Photos by Army Pfc. Cody Thompson, 40th PAD



Above: An Afghan National Army soldier fires a M-16 rifle for the first time during a weapons familiarization range at Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, Kunar province, Nov. 2. After the ANA finished their training, they plan on utilizing the M-16 on missions for the first time.

Right: An ANA soldier fires a turret-mounted M-240 machine gun into the side of a mountain from a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle during a training exercise at Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, Afghanistan, Nov. 2.



Below: An ANA officer critiques a soldier's marksmanship at Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, in Kunar province, Nov. 2. The ANA plans on replacing all their Soviet-era weaponry with NATO-style weapons.



A squad of Afghan National Army soldiers raise their M-16 rifles and take aim at the small paper targets in front of them.

"Fire!," Marine Staff Sgt. Jino Luna, of Embedded Training Team 7-5, shouts. A volley of gunfire erupts across Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, Kunar province, Nov. 2.

"The point of this training was to familiarize the ANA with (NATO-style weapons)," said Luna, a native of Laredo, Texas.

The soldiers spent the day training on the M-16 rifle and M-249 squad automatic weapon. After that, ANA soldiers were afforded the opportunity to fire an M-240B machine gun mounted on the Marines' humvee.

"The training helps with the professional development of our soldiers," said ANA 1st Lt. Islamudin Safi, the squad's executive officer.

With their NATO-style weapons training under their belts, the ANA can better patrol the surrounding Pech River Valley to more efficiently protect their nation from insurgents, explained the ETTs of 7-5.

"If I go on missions, the techniques we're taught will help us keep our country safe," said ANA Pvt. Gulnoor Shahn.

"They handled the training well, and seeing them congratulate each other after hitting their targets is a big morale boost for them," Luna said.

The ANA plans to eventually replace their Soviet-era weaponry with NATO-style weapons.

MPs teach ANP NCO skills

Story and Photos by Army Pfc. Cody Thompson, 40th PAD

Military police officers from the 49th MP Company, 759th MP Battalion, sat down with their Afghan National Police noncommissioned officer counterparts to discuss the duties, responsibilities and importance of NCOs at the Chowkay ANP Station, Kunar province, Nov. 11.

"The point of this training is to familiarize the ANP with the duties of an NCO," explained Army Sgt. Chris Bell, one of the MPs conducting the training.

During the session Bell, a native of Florence, Wis., taught the ANP six categories for reporting suspicious activities. The steps were categorized by the enemy's size, actions, location, distinctive unit features, current time and other important details.

"The person back at the station doesn't see what you see," Bell said to his audience. "That's why it's important for you to teach your Soldiers how to report. If you have details you will know what's happening and we [MPs] can better assist, if you need help."

The next part of the class involved the ANP watching Soldiers outside of the room through a window and reporting what they observed using the six steps they learned.

As Bell completed the first portion of the class, Army Pfc. Jack Schubert began to train the ANP on mission discipline.

"It's important to remember to keep your noise, light, and trash to a minimum when on a mission," the Albany, Ky., native said. "The enemy can hear noise, see light and track your location with trash."

After asking the ANP questions regarding the material he had covered, Schubert left and Bell returned to explain NCO rank details and the responsibilities of each.

"As NCOs you should learn how to delegate authority," Bell said. "This means using your lower enlisted Soldiers for small things, so you can concentrate on the big ones."

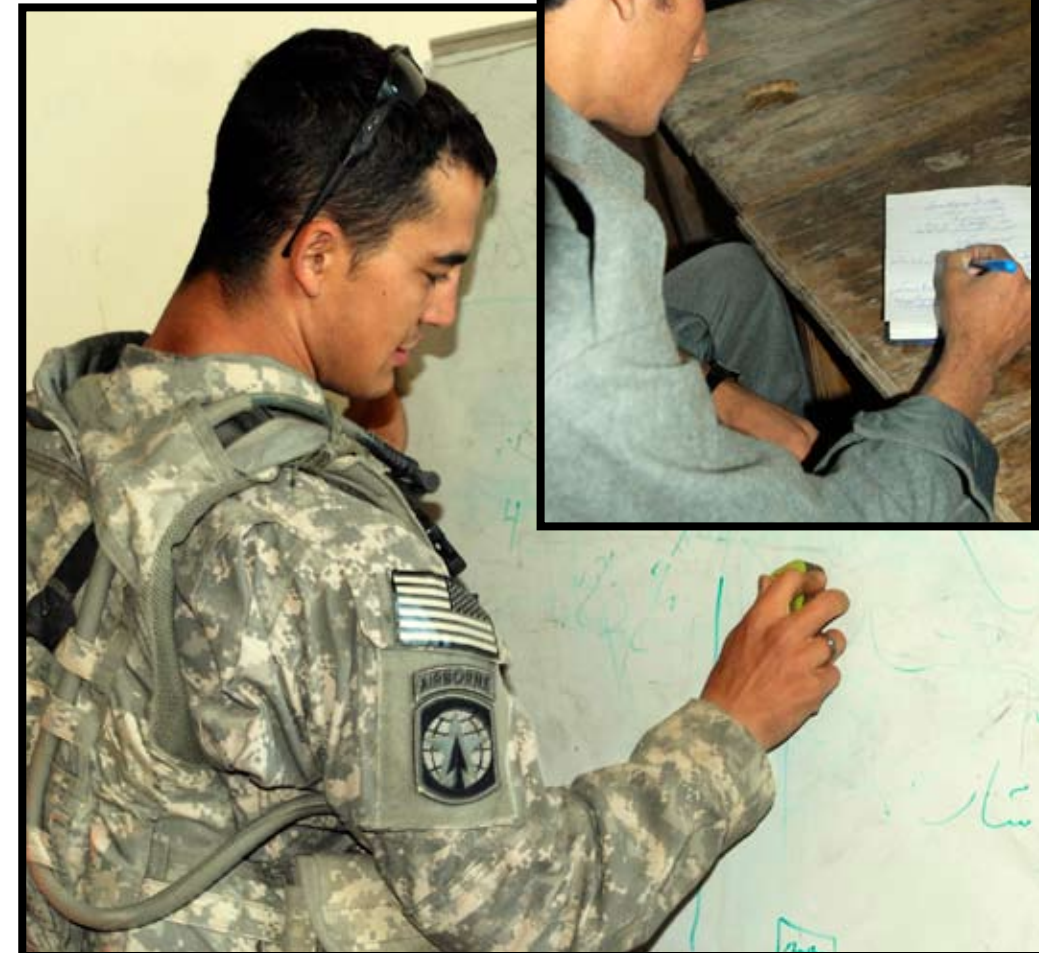
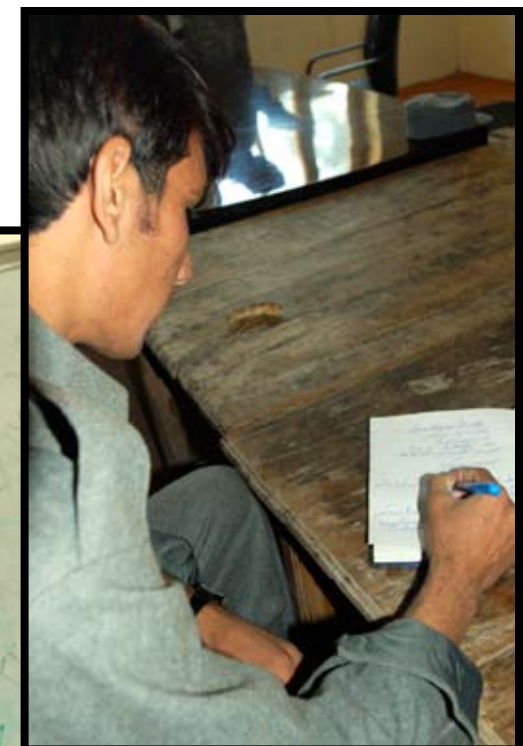
With the training completed, the ANP station's first sergeant addressed his officers on how an NCO should act.

"NCOs should know their rank and do their job," said ANP 1st Sgt. Mohammad Khitab.

The training efforts from the Army MPs continue to assist ANP NCOs to create a safer environment for the surrounding area.

Right: Army Sgt. Chris Bell, a native of Florence, Wis., with the 49th Military Police Company, 759th Military Police Battalion, teaches a noncommissioned officer training class to a group of Afghan National Police officers at the Chowkay ANP Station, Kunar Province, Nov. 11.

Below: An Afghan National Policeman writes his observations during the situational awareness training portion of a noncommissioned officer training class, taught by Soldiers from the 49th Military Police Company, 759th MP Battalion, at the Chowkay Police Station Kunar province, Nov. 11. During this portion, Soldiers stood outside the building while the ANP watched and reported what they observed.



VETS HOLD CLINIC

Story and Photos Army Sgt. Jaime' De Leon, TF Spartan PAO

Local veterinarians of Baraki Barak teamed up with the district's sub-governor, Mohammed Yasin Lodin, Army and Czech Republic soldiers to provide much needed veterinary aid to area livestock at the Baraki Barak District Center, Oct. 25th.

Farmers of all ages attended the veterinarian clinic. Small children tagged along holding ropes tied to the necks of goats big enough to look them in the eyes, while gray bearded men dragged anxious cattle to be vaccinated and examined. The animals were led one at a time to Afghan veterinarians waiting under canopies set up in the grassy common area at the district center.

"At the beginning we didn't have a lot of animals show up," said Army 1st Lt. Erick Malaske, Troop A executive officer, with 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. "But then we told some of the local elders, and they went out and gathered up more people."

The large procession of animals included cows, goats, mules and donkeys.

"We helped 492 animals and over 200 villagers," said Army Staff Sgt. Dwaine Hood, Fire Support noncommissioned officer for Able Troop.

Although 3-71 CAV and Czech soldiers from the Logar Provincial Reconstruction Team provided security and helped direct traffic, the Afghan veterinarians treated livestock with medications bought locally, Hood said.

"Farming and livestock are a huge deal in this area," said Hood. "Many people's whole livelihood is based around their livestock."

"It's important for us to provide for the animals," said Dr. Bashire, a local physician who treats livestock as well as people.

The animals were immunized and treated for an array of ailments.

"Some of the medicine is to increase the animal's appetites," Bashire said.

The treatment of the animals was intended to benefit the farmers and their livestock. But most importantly, the farmers were introduced to local veterinarians, who will be respon-

sible for the medical upkeep of their livestock in the future.

"It shows we care for the local populace and the hard work they do," said Hood, reiterating the fact that many locals depend solely on their livestock for an income.

Although this event was the first of its kind in Baraki Barak, Able Troop hopes it won't be the last this year.

"Our plan is to help as many as we can before the harsh winter," said Hood

Right: A young farmer controls his cow while waiting to see a veterinarian, Oct. 25, at the Baraki Barak District Center. The veterinarians examined nearly 500 animals during the event in hopes of keeping animals healthy through the long winter.

Below: Veterinarians at the Baraki Barak District Center examine cows brought in by a local woman, Oct. 25.



Tough economy sees Army grow force, separate Soldiers

Story by Army Sgt. John P. Zumer, 40th PAD

Money makes the world go round, or so the old saying goes. It certainly helps keep the Army going, purchasing everything from guns to bullets to uniforms. Recent Department of the Army directives regarding force retention and expansion prove once again that federal budget constraints can and will have a profound impact on troop levels.

Two of the biggest issues in today's Army revolve around the policies of increasing the number of troops in uniform and involuntary extension of one's enlistment,

better known as stop loss. A third issue surfacing soon will be involuntary separation of Soldiers.

Many people might not put the three together, but they're linked in significant ways, all emphasizing the Army's efforts to scramble for shrinking federal tax dollars.

For Soldiers already counting down the days to civilian life, the ending of stop loss may be the only issue among the three even relevant. But some regularly involved in staffing the force see it as a wonderful tool under the control of the Soldier, where it should be.

"I like the idea. It puts more control back into the Soldier's hands," said Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Willis, the operations sergeant for the 82nd Airborne Division's retention

THE SOUND OF ARTILLERY:

MARINE CORPS ETT, 2-77 FIELD ARTILLERY STEEL WARRIORS TRAIN ANA

Air Force 2nd Lt. Natassia Cherne, Nuristan PRT PAO

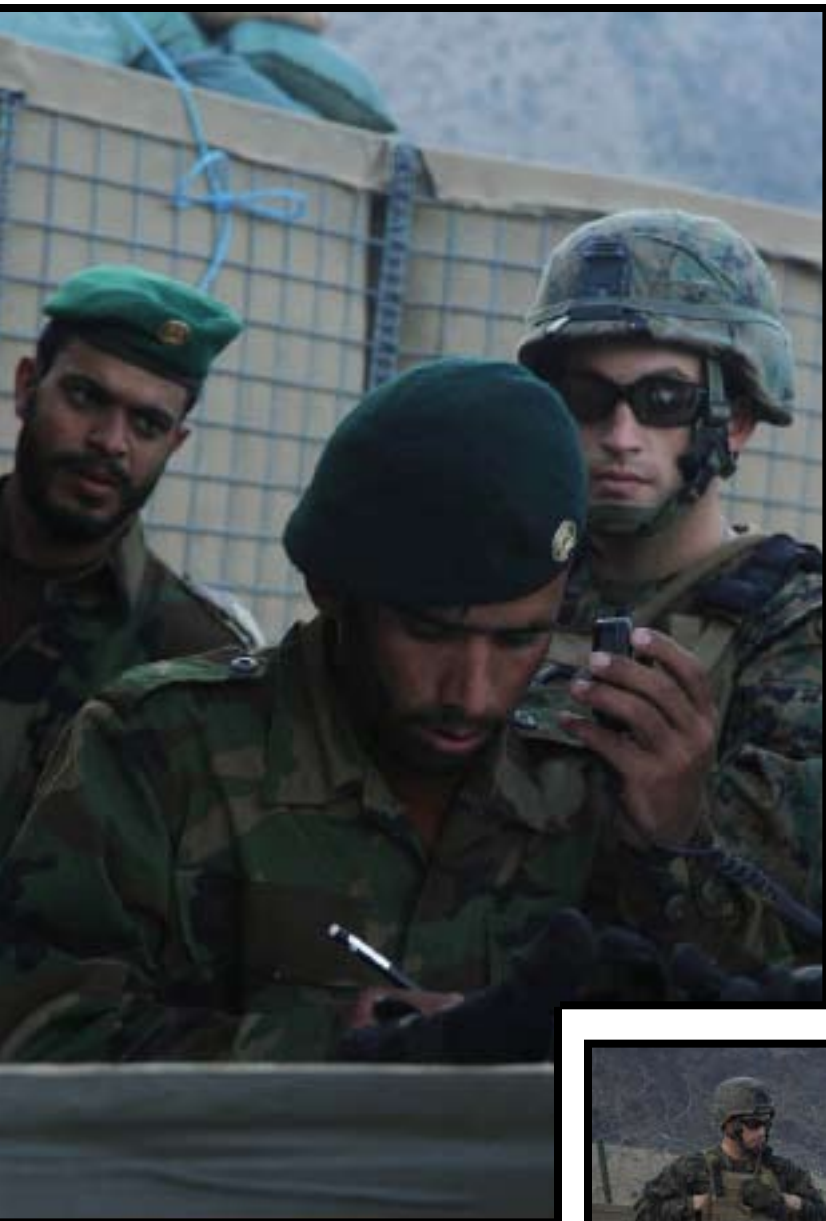


Photo by Senior Airman Ashley Hawkins, Nuristan PRT PAO

Above: Marine Sgt. Joshua Winans watches a member of the ANA verify sector of fire coordinates fire before loading and firing off 122mm artillery shells from a D-30 Howitzer on FOB Kalagush, Nuristan province, Nov. 11.

Right: Marines with Embedded Training Team 5-5 show ANA soldiers how to properly load and fire 122mm Russian artillery shells from a D-30 Howitzer on FOB Kalagush, Nuristan province, Nov. 11.

Forward Operating Base Kalagush's Marine Corps Embedded Training Team 5-5 and Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, Task Force Steel, teamed up to train Afghan National Army soldiers on the D-30 122mm Howitzer, Nov. 11.

"The ANA do artillery training five times a week, along with infantry tactics, and they conduct patrols to show locals they have government presence within their area," said Marine Corps 1st Lt. Bradley Brill, the team's leader and a Sitka, Alaska, native.

The artillerymen were firing at a site used by insurgents to launch attacks on FOB Kalagush. It was the first time the ANA participated in a counter-fire operational mission.

"I have taken it on as my personal mission to ensure these men of the ANA are capable of doing independent firing operations," said Army Lt. Col. Michael Forsyth, 2-77 FAR commander and Mayfield, Ky., native.

The ANA went through a seven-week certification program, similar to the training that Army artillerymen receive to be certified on their weapons.

"If we can't get them operating independently and have them do their job without us, then we're failing our mission," Forsyth said. "Part of our combined action plan for them is to become sound, confident artillerymen and have the ability to secure their nation."

Once the ANA finish the certification process, Marines and Soldiers hope they will be able to do their own firing missions and man their own weapons 24 hours a day, like the Coalition forces on FOB Kalagush do.



Photo by Senior Airman Ashley Hawkins, Nuristan PRT PAO

Ghazni PRT provides medical assistance

Story and Photos by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT PAO

Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team returned to the site of a recent village medical outreach program mission to conduct key leader engagements and reaffirm relationships with the villagers of Slemanji.

The team returned seven days after the original mission was compromised due to insurgent activity.

"We wanted to help the locals understand exactly what happened the week prior," said Army Lt. Col. Kenneth Primus, Ghazni PRT deputy commander. "The VMO (village medical outreach program) was turning out to be a really big success until we started receiving fire."

During the previous mission, PRT corpsmen and civilian doctors provided care for a small portion of the estimated 150 locals who sought medical attention before the village began taking indirect fire.

"It was important they understood that we were the target, not them," said Primus. "The best way for us to protect the civilians at that time was to leave the area and not draw any more fire. We're working with the elders and the ANP (Afghan National Police) on a plan to provide further medical treatment without endangering the very people we're here to help."

The village is between insurgent areas and those areas supportive of the government.

"Slemanji is surrounded by unfriendly villages," said Primus. "The people have not been able to get to the nearby clinics to take care of any basic needs. Insurgents are constantly trying to intimidate them, so as villagers attempt to travel along the roads to go shopping in Ghazni City or go to medical clinics, they are being pulled over in their vehicles and beaten or kidnapped. It is a Pashtu village that has decided to side with the government. They fought to get and keep an Afghan National Police checkpoint there."

"I think we did well with engaging the people," said Army Staff Sgt. Donny Ottaway, Security Forces member assigned to the PRT. "I felt the leaders there understood that we wanted the civilians to be safe and that the only reason the Taliban

were attacking was because of our presence there."

To secure the area, ANP and PRT security force members watched over those conducting patrolling in the bazaar.

"While we were securing the area, I talked to one of the ANP who was there last week," said Ottaway. "I explained to him why we couldn't stay and fight. He said, 'He understood. It was a good 'Joe to Joe' kind of talk.'"

As the team returned to their vehicles, the village was hit again by mortars, rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire. No longer impeded by crowds of innocent civilians, the PRT stayed to fight. After an exchange of small arms fire, two F-15s arrived on the scene to provide close air support. Led by dismounted ANP, the PRT maneuvered two gun trucks driving the enemies from the field.

"Although there weren't as many ANP at the checkpoint this time, when we started taking fire it was still a good team effort," said Ottaway. "They returned fire with their crew served weapons and led the way to maneuver onto the enemy position."

When the PRT was preparing to leave, the ANP shook hands and gave high-fives to the security force members.

"They were really excited about the F-15s that we called," said Ottaway.

Elders from the village also expressed concerns regarding craters along the road connecting Slemanji to the main highway.

"The road to the highway is a paved road that allows people to get to Ghazni City, the clinics, and several other markets," said Primus. "There have been several improvised explosive devices

planted along that highway which created the craters and destroyed the culverts."

The damaged roads in the area add to the difficulties for travel in and out of the area limiting the amount of supplies brought into the village.

Plans are being made to repair the road before winter, when contractors will be unable to work on them.



Above: Afghan National Police and Spc. John Paul Harris, security forces member with Ghazni PRT, watch over the bazaar in Slemanji.

Middle Left: A Soldier pulls security at the bazaar in Slemanji.



Left: Slemanji villagers gather at the bazaar to talk to Ghazni PRT members regarding a recent medical outreach program.



Guarding Bagram

Story and Photos by Spc. William E. Henry, TF Cyclone PAO



Senior Airman Mark Joco, a gunner with the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, watches the perimeter at an entry control point at Bagram Airfield, Oct. 27.

U.S. military and Coalition Servicemembers who enforce security on Bagram Airfield work closely to accomplish a singular mission, to ensure a safe and secure environment.

Task Force Cyclone, the mayoral cell for BAF, coordinates efforts with the U.S. Air Force's 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, Afghan security guards and Task Force Gladius, Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division members to secure the perimeter of BAF.

Since coming into the battle-space, Task Force Cyclone and force protection security workers have improve the efficiency of the operations around the post, said Task Force Cyclone Force Protection officer in charge, Army Lt. Col. David El-

lis, with the 38th Infantry Division based in Indianapolis.

According to Ellis and others with the 455th, the Air Force security team took control of the security last May.

"The way the force protection cells now operate, they are able to process 250 percent more people and vehicles in a day's time than what they could a year ago," said Ellis, a Martinsville, Ind., resident.

According to both Ellis and Air Force Master Sgt. Thad Cooper, from Andrews Air Force Base, Md., and the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of one of the sectors of entry, there are approximately 5,000 people and 600 vehicles processed daily.

Everything that goes in and out of BAF is regulated through entry control points located throughout the perimeter of the base, and guarded by Afghan security guards and 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron.

Cooper, a resident of Waldorf, Md., said the job he and his Airmen do is crucial to safely providing BAF with many things needed to sustain forces here.

"Everything we process here that goes in and out of the base supports everybody. To me that makes what we do worthwhile," said Cooper. "I like doing what I do, it's very enjoyable. The work we do is hard, but it's worth it."

Each entry control point has complex procedures. The force protection team uses advanced equipment to inspect individuals and vehicles to the highest standard, and with timeliness and precision. The team also employs a K-9 unit to help detect any hazardous materials.

The security forces work with other Coalition forces regardless of service branch, said Air Force Staff Sgt. Taylor Jordan, 88th Security Forces Squadron, and a native of Atlantic, Iowa.

"It doesn't matter what type of uniform we might be wearing, we are all in the same fight," said Jordan.

"We work pretty closely with Afghan security, and a lot of them have been here for years. They help in any way possible with the locals," said Senior Airman Mark Joco, a Yokosuka, Japan, native with the 99th Security Forces Squadron out of Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Joco said he takes his work seriously and understands the responsibility he has. "We're the final line of defense, the final denial for those who shouldn't be on this base," said Joco, while manning his .50 cal. machine gun.

Baraki Barak's District Center

Story and Photos by Army Sgt. Jaime De Leon, TF Spartan PAO



Right: The Baraki Barak District Center officially opened in Logar province with a special ceremony, Oct. 27. Sub-Governor Mohammed Lodin cuts the ribbon strung across the entrance way at the new District Center.

The Baraki Barak District Center officially opened in Logar province and was marked by a special ceremony, Oct. 27.

The district center houses offices for the district sub-governor, the local mayor and three judges who handle everything from land disputes to criminal issues, said Ronald Barkley, a representative for the U.S. Department of State currently serving as team leader for the Baraki Barak district.

"We're trying to give them a positive image of what the government is doing here," said Baraki Barak Sub-Governor, Mohammed Lodin.

"The District Center represents government at the lowest level," Barkley said. "The whole idea is for people to experience government at their level." Sometimes it is hard for people in the smaller villages to immediately feel the impact of what their national-level government is doing, Barkley added.

Left: A plaque is placed at the flagpole base, Baraki Barak District Center Oct. 27, officially opening the facility. The district center houses offices for the district sub-governor, the local mayor and three judges who handle everything from land disputes to criminal issues.



The ceremony drew elders from across Baraki Barak. At the end of the ceremony, a plaque was placed at the base of the district's flag pole, which was flying the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's flag. Governor Atiqullah Lodin, Logar's provincial governor, then cut a glimmering green ribbon, strung across the doorway to the facility.

Following the cutting of the ribbon, tours of the new facility were given.

"It's local government at its lowest level, and hopefully, at its best," said Barkley.

Right: A ceremony is held at the Baraki Barak District Center to commemorate its opening.



La Fayette, nous voila!*

*La Fayette, we are here!

Story by French Army 1st Lt. Candice Vernoud, CJTF-82 PAO

At Forward Operating Base Morales Frazier in Kapisa province, Task Force La Fayette commander, French Brig. Gen. Marcel Druart, received his command pennant in the presence of French and coalition troops, symbolizing the activation of Task Force La Fayette, Nov. 2. There to witness the staff activation was French Maj. Gen. Jacques LeChevallier, deputy commander of International Security Assistance Forces Joint Command, and Brig. Gen. Kurt Fuller Regional Command - East deputy commander.

“The purpose of Task Force La Fayette is to encompass all the units deployed on the Afghan soil,” said LeChevallier, the highest French military authority in the theater, “in order to benefit from a large autonomy and esprit de corps provided by competencies, professionalism and the full spectrum of French service-member capabilities that will allow the force to deliver decisive operational effects.”

“French, American and Afghan Soldiers will stand shoulder to shoulder in unity of purpose by bearing the tri-colored flags of our Nations forward until the mission is done in honor of our past and to secure our future,” said Fuller.

No sooner said than done, more than 600 French, American and Afghan soldiers conducted the first major operation orga-

nized by Task Force La Fayette in Kapisa and Surobi provinces, Nov. 14. The objective of this operation was to recon sites for future Afghan police stations and to survey their area of control, from Tagab, along the main route which travels through Kapisa from the north to Surobi.

With support from French and American helicopters, the first element leaving Tagab and the second from Naghlu in Surobi convoyed the length of route and met up at Sherkhel village.

This operation was the last one for Task Force Korrigan, which in anticipation of their redeployment to France, has started their handover of responsibilities to Task Force Black Rock.

Within their first month in Afghanistan, Task Force La Fayette has taken command of the two battalions deployed in Kapisa, the outgoing Task Force Korrigan and the incoming Task Force Black Rock; Task Force Dragon in Sarowbi, Task Force Musketeer, the French army aviation battalion, located in Kaia, and the command and support battalion at Camp Warehouse.

With the help of several battalions making up Task Force La Fayette, as well as a Human Terrain Team and Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kapisa, their mission is to provide the population protection and to help the region’s economic development.

In order to accomplish the mission, the Task Force will support the Afghan forces, notably Kandaks from the Afghan National Army’s 201st and 203rd Corps.

France and the United States have a long, successful bond, originally forged in the trials of the American Revolutionary War. Two hundred and thirty years later, TF La Fayette will continue its vital mission, similarly devoted to helping Afghanistan build a better future through liberty and democratic principles.

All Photos: French forces take part in Operation Avalon. TF La Fayette recently completed a restructuring of French forces in RC-East.



Courtesy Photo from TF La Fayette



Courtesy Photo from TF La Fayette



Courtesy Photo from TF La Fayette



Courtesy Photo from TF La Fayette

Photos *from the Field*



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey, Ghazni PRT PAO

Army Sgt. Christopher Josephson, security forces squad leader for the Texas Agri-business Development Team, pulls security at the University of Ghazni, Ghazni province.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Rebecca F. Corey, Ghazni PRT PAO

Polish soldiers, assigned to Forward Operating Base Ghazni, exit from a UH-60 helicopter after loading casualties during training provided by General Aviation Support Battalion flight medics on FOB Ghazni, Nov. 4.



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT PAO

Spc. Hyrum Robb, Civil Military Operations Center, non-commissioned officer, speaks with a shopkeeper at the bazaar in the district of Qara Bagh.



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Sarah R. Webb, Ghazni PRT PAO

Army Sgt. Samuel Allen, a security forces member assigned to Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team, secures the area while other members survey construction for the new forward operating base in Qara Bagh District.



Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo of Guam visits with Service members from Guam at Bagram Airfield, Nov. 1. "I am interested about how the Soldiers are doing here and how they feel about a possible troop surge," said Bordallo.

Photo by Spc. Derek L. Kuhn, 40th PAD



An Afghan National Army soldier practices maneuvering in a 'ghillie-suit' as part of a sniper training class, hosted by Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division at Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, in Kunar province, Nov. 1. Training classes like this are held by Soldiers, who have been working closely with their ANA counterparts.

Photo by Army Sgt. Matthew Moeller, 5th MPAD

Photos *from the Field*

A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter drops ammunition and water to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, Soldiers following a battle in Kunar province, Nov. 3.



Photo by Army Sgt. Matthew Moeller, 5th MPAD



Afghan National Army soldiers cover their faces as a helicopter from the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, based at Fort Campbell, Ky., blows dust and debris across Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, Kunar province, Nov. 1.

Photo by Army Sgt. Matthew Moeller, 5th MPAD

During a humanitarian aid drop at Turkman village, Parwan province, Army Sgt. Isaac Jones, Kentucky Agri-business Development Team medic, takes a moment to examine a man who complained about hearing problems, Nov. 7.



Photo by Spc. William E. Henry, Task Force Cyclone PAO



Photo by Senior Airman Evelyn Chavez, Combined Joint Task Force-82 PAO

Servicemembers perform a flag detail at Forward Operating Base Lightning, Nov. 2. Servicemembers deployed to FOB Lightning perform the flag detail upon receipt of requests from individuals who want flags flown in Afghanistan.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Hyde, Gardez PRT PAO

U.S. and Afghan National Army 203rd Corps soldiers fire a D-30 Soviet 122 mm towed Howitzer, Paktia province, Oct. 26. U.S. and Romanian soldiers advise the ANA and assist with targeting, trajectory and safety during the training courses scheduled throughout the year.

WINTER WEATHER POSES RISKS FOR VEHICLES

Article by Gary W. Ballew, CJTF-82 Ground Safety Manager

Winter weather while deployed can bring additional hazards to any operation if not appropriately planned for.

Driving during the winter can cause major problems if risks are not recognized and diminished. A little preparation can save you a lot of frustration. In other words, a few minutes of planning may save you a lifetime of pain!

No matter what part of the United States you are from, or what deployed area of operation (AO) you may be in, winter weather can make road conditions unpredictable, and very dangerous. Even in southern locations, where winters are usually mild, unusual freezing temperatures or unexpected snow, ice or rain may present dangerous conditions for drivers.

Before driving a vehicle, please take time to plan and prepare for winter weather. Below are several tips and reminders to assist you while driving in winter conditions. These tips apply to both tactical and non-tactical vehicles:

Winterize your Vehicle:

- Check tire pressure
- Verify lights and blinkers are functional
- Inspect the wipers and wiper fluid to ensure better visibility
- Make sure the battery is fully charged
- Inspect all belts and hoses
- Change the oil, switching to a thinner grade of engine oil for better performance in colder temperatures
- Keep your headlights and tail lights clean; a dirty light can obscure visibility and prevent other drivers from seeing you

Driving in Snow:

- Ensure you have a clear and unobstructed view through all windows.
- Wear your seatbelt, drive slowly and use caution.
- Brake well before you turn a corner.
- If you go into a skid, turn your wheels into the skid and accelerate slightly to regain control of your vehicle. This does not seem natural, so it may help to practice in an empty parking lot or a deserted road before you experience this in traffic.



Courtesy Photo

Reckless driving in winter weather may lead to vehicular accidents like the one pictured above.

- Use turn signals and brakes sooner than usual. This provides other drivers more reaction time.
- Ensure ample distance (more than in normal conditions) exists between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Wear quality sun glasses during daylight hours to prevent snow and sun blindness.

Areas that Require Extra Attention:

- Bridges, Overpasses and Shaded Area (most common areas for Black Ice)
- Intersections (stop-and-go traffic causes slush-like conditions)
- Curves
- Mountain Passes



Pack an Emergency Road Kit and Learn How to Handle Common Emergencies

In case something unintentional occurs during your trip, even short trips, you should have an “emergency” kit located in your vehicle. The kit should contain items to assist you with problems from a flat tire to an overheated engine.

You can create your emergency kit by packaging winter basics, such as a flashlight, tools, air-gauge for your tires, extra oil and antifreeze, blankets, gloves, drinking water, snack food, cell phone, etc. Consolidate these items into a bag or box and store them inside your vehicle.

The above kit items are not all-inclusive. I recommend you attain additional information to get more ideas and customize your own “emergency kit” for each vehicle you own or are responsible for.

Learn How to Change a Flat Tire

Flat tires are a common and inconvenient occurrence. They are no fun to change, especially when it is cold. However, flat tires can be relatively easy to repair, if you have the proper tools and know what to do.

You should ensure your spare tire is properly inflated and is in good condition. In addition, make sure your vehicle has a full set of tools, including a good jack and lug wrench, and that you know how to use both.

Learn How to Jump Start your vehicle

A normal and frequent winter driving problem is a car battery that has lost its power and is no longer able to start your car. If you experience a dead battery, you will need a good set of jumper cables and another vehicle to help “jump” your dead battery.

Drive Carefully

The above list of winter driving tips and techniques are only the tip of the iceberg. Drive carefully and defensively. Other drivers may not be as well-prepared for winter driving as you are.

The Task Force Protector Safety Office requests you spread these tips.

Again, drive defensively because you may not know who is behind the wheel of vehicles around you!



Courtesy Photo

Icy roads present many dangers to motorists. Vehicle operators should exercise greater caution when wintry conditions exist.



Retention continued from pg. 15

team.

“If the Soldier has made plans beyond the Army, it will help him to better prepare,” he said. Willis added that (ending stop loss) easily lets those who want to continue the fight do so by reenlisting.

The biggest news coming down the pike, arguably, for those concerned about dwell time and multiple deployments, is the fact the Army is growing. Simply put, more Soldiers will likely help to spread the burden of overseas deployments more evenly. The Department of Defense announced on July 20 a temporary increase in the size of the Army by 22,000 Soldiers over the next three years. Coupled with the recent expansion to 549,000, this will bring Army end-strength to 571,000. One reason for the 22,000 Soldier increase is the pending elimination of the Army’s stop loss program, beginning with units that deploy on or after

Jan. 1, 2010. The temporary increase is expected to cost \$1.1 billion through fiscal year 2010. More importantly, Congress will provide no additional funding in 2009 or 2010 to help offset the associated manpower, training, and equipping cost for the 22,000 new Soldiers.

How will the Army fund the temporary increase? In part, with the ending of stop loss and commencing the involuntary separation of Soldiers. The elimination of stop loss will be welcome for many Soldiers, but for those in units preparing to deploy, there are still rules that apply. Namely, Soldiers electing not to reenlist are subject to the following:

1) Soldiers who will have at least six months remaining in service prior to their Expiration of Term of Service as of their unit’s latest arrival date will deploy with the unit. These Soldiers will return to home station at least 60 days prior to ETS for transition processing and will separate on their ETS date.

2) Soldiers who will have less than six months remaining in service prior to their ETS as of the unit’s Latest Arrival Date will not deploy with their unit. These Soldiers are subject to involuntary separation from the Army up to three months prior to their contractual ETS date.

3) Soldiers assigned to deploying units who have an ETS prior to their unit’s deployment who do not reenlist will separate on their ETS date.

Soldiers subject to involuntary separation may request an exception based on compassionate reasons. The approval authority for exceptions to policy resides in commanders with General Court Martial Convening Authority, and can’t be further delegated. Soldiers with an approved exception to policy will separate on their contractual ETS date.

Willis believes that while involuntary separation may be unpleasant for some involved, it will also give the Army and commanders a better forecast of what their deploying forces will look like.

“I think it's a good idea,” he said. “I know this is over-simplifying it, but it's like trimming a rose bush. You have to cut away the parts that aren't growing to ensure better health for the (Army) as a whole.”

If you have any retention questions, please call the 82nd Airborne Division’s retention team at DSN 318-431-2099. The Retention Sergeant Major is Sgt. Major Joseph Wolfe. His team consists of Willis and career counselor Sgt. 1st Class Araceli Nava. Other career counselors at Bagram Airfield include Master Sgt. Sheila Sango (45th Sustainment Brigade), Staff Sgt. Kristin Barnes (25th Signal), Sgt. 1st Class Richard Depontee (159th Aviation), and Staff Sergeants Latayna Orama, Charles Cartwright, and Ricky Harris for the Special Forces.

As always, the Combined Joint Task Force-82 reenlistment office will continue to provide every Soldier the best counseling and reenlistment options the Army has to offer.

Editor's Note: The material cited in this article was largely inspired by a recent memorandum from Thomas R. Lamont, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

Master Sgt. Laurent Tihy French Air Force

Hometown: Evreux, France
Title: Administrator for the French unmanned aerial vehicle unit
Number of Times Deployed: Two: First time to Congo, Second to Afghanistan
Best Part of Deployment: Working with the Coalition Forces
How He Spends his Free Time: Lifting weights, running and MWR events
Plans Upon Return: Continue to serve in the French Air Force and see family and friends



WARRIOR PROFILE

Spc. Stephen Snyder U.S. Army



Hometown: Daytona Beach, Fla.
Current Assignment: HHC, Special Troops Battalion, CJTF-82
Title: Training NCOIC
Job Description: Maintains the training calendar
Number of Times Deployed: Once
Best Part of Deployment: Learning detainee operations, training and headquarters duties
How He Spends his Free Time: Taking classes and studying
Plans Upon Return: Cruise to the Bahamas



Unit Spotlight

Mobile Retrograde Team

Branch of Service: United States Air Force

Unit History: MRT has been primarily in the IRAQ CJOA but they sent one team to Afghanistan in late 2007. This team is currently the only team in the Afghanistan Theater performing MRT missions, and is based out of Bagram Air Field under the 45th Sustainment Brigade.

Interesting Unit Facts: The MRT is a seven person team fostering the distribution of excess and frustrated equipment throughout the CJOA to warfighters in need. Afghanistan priorities include reducing the current container detention cost, release of frustrated cargo, and the redistribution of retrograde and excess equipment.

Commanded by: Capt. Christopher Dupuis,
Logistics Readiness Officer

Would you like to have your unit in the spotlight? If so, email the 40th PAD at freedomwatch@swa.army.mil. Please include your unit's name, mission, history and any interesting facts.