



KAF Runway busiest in the World

■ BY SGT 1ST CLASS JOE CASHION
JSC-A Public Affairs NCOIC

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Situated approximately ten miles south-east of Kandahar City in an area critical to the U.S.-led surge in southern Afghanistan, Kandahar Air Field (KAF) is currently home to the busiest single-runway operation in the world.

With approximately 30,000 air operations per month, the mission of the NATO-supported KAF is to facilitate the arrival and departure of service men and women from a multitude of countries, along with civilian workers, critical life support supplies, ammunition, vehicles and mail – just to name a few.

“We are definitely the busiest single-runway operation in the area of responsibility (AOR), just based on traffic numbers,” said Alex Marsha, Air Traffic

Manager for KAF.

According to David Aker, KAF Approach Chief Controller, those traffic numbers have steadily increased over the past few years.

“In 2008, we managed 189,000 air operations which increased to nearly 350,000 in 2009,” Aker said. “Currently, we are already ahead of last year’s numbers and are on pace to manage 400,000 air operations by the end of the year.”

More than 300 aircraft are based or operate from KAF; from unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), to 747 cargo airplanes, fighter jets, along with nearly 200 military and civilian helicopters, KAF handles a full spectrum of aircraft.

“This airfield is very dynamic for single runway operations,” Marsha said. “It isn’t easy moving around with everything going on.”

For operations involving the Joint Sustainment Command-



Sgt. 1st Class Joe Cashion | Sustaining Freedom
A Canadian C-130 aircraft takes off from Kandahar Air Field on June 10, one of approximately 30,000 missions the single-runway operation will support during the month.

Afghanistan (JSC-A), the busy airfield is vital to mission success, according to Maj. Pat Fleming, Mobility Air officer for JSC-A.

“KAF is a strategic hub which is very important to us not only for the movement of troops but for cargo as well,” said Fleming.

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A View From The Commander's Chair



Brig. Gen. Reynold N. Hoover
JSC-A
Commanding General

This month marks a few milestones worth pointing out. First, we are well past the half-way point in our deployment. Time has gone quickly as we reflect on what we have accomplished since the 135th ESC mobilized in October 2009. Your efforts continue to make a difference as we lead sustainment in Afghanistan. As I watch from my office in the Pentagon while I continue to recover from my broken jaw, I am proud to say "that's my unit and those are our troops from Alabama". The work everyone has done to support Colonel Sheffer and the staff has been nothing short of

outstanding. I am looking forward to rejoining you in a few short weeks and to celebrating the birth of our nation next month, with each of you in Kandahar.

Next, we have surpassed all expectations with regard to receiving 30,000 additional forces and their equipment. As I am sure many of you know, we have crossed the half-way point and remain on or ahead of schedule. This has been no easy feat and has required a concerted team effort from the JSC-A to the sustainment brigades, to the combat sustainment support battalions, and down to the company level. As a direct result of your work, our national strategy in Afghanistan is on track and preparations for upcoming operations continue to move forward. Again, thank you for your hard work.

There is one other milestone worth noting along our expeditionary sustainment journey in Afghanistan. This month the Command surpassed over 5,000 military personnel assigned across the theater. This is an unprecedented milestone that speaks to the complexity of

the toughest logistics fight our nation has ever witnessed. Our service members are serving in Kyrgyzstan, in Qatar, in Kuwait and in

"I will see you all very soon."

— Brig. Gen. Reynold N. Hoover

Afghanistan. We are working side by side with our partners in the Afghan National Army. We are synchronizing with our NATO allies. We are teaming with our UK sustainment

friends. In short, these more than 5,000 military personnel are the face of United States military sustainment operations - a critical enabler for the world's toughest military.

Finally, June 14th marks the Army's 235th birthday. On this birthday we celebrate Army Soldiers, Families, and civilians who are achieving new levels of excellence that is truly Army Strong. As President Obama said in his birthday message to the Army, "your resolve in defense of our Nation and loyalty to your fellow soldiers represent the best of America."

Over the past month we sustained some casualties in the Command ranging from mild to severe. I ask that you keep those who sustained injuries in your thoughts and prayers. These next few months will be difficult and challenging as we focus on our mission, catch a glimpse on the horizon of our re-deployment prepare the 184th ESC for their assumption of our Command, and support the sustainment war fight. Therefore, all of us need to remain vigilant and remember the life you save, the accident you avoid, or the injury you prevent could be your own.

I will see you all very soon.

God bless the service members of our Command and your families and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Command Sgt. Maj. Kinder's Comments

Another month has come and gone and June will be over soon. Personnel within the JSC-A continue to provide outstanding support to our Warriors in the field and you are to be commended for a job well done. Our job is not complete though. We still have quite a ways to go, so now is not the time to become lax or complacent in our day-to-day activities.

I would ask all leaders, as you go about your daily duties, to stop and thank your subordinates for the job they are doing for you each day. A pat on the back goes a long way and I believe is well deserved. Your men and women are doing extraordinary things. Most of their actions to support the service members in the field would probably go unnoticed if not for your diligence.

I would also ask that all NCOs and enlisted personnel take some of the load off your leaders. They are operating in a very stressful environment making decisions on a daily basis that affect service members across the CJOA-A. I am sure your help would be greatly appreciated.

Another group of people that deserve our gratitude and thanks are our family members back home. By far they have the hardest job, taking care of things on the home front and awaiting our return. We could not do our job if not for them. Their actions at home relieve us from the worry so we can go about our duties here.

"A pat on the back goes a long way and I believe is well deserved. Your men and women are doing extraordinary things."

— Command Sgt. Maj. Clark Kinder



CSM Clark Kinder
JSC-A
Command Sergeant Major

This month we will also celebrate Father's Day. Whether fathers are here or back home, it is a day to celebrate the positive influence fathers have had in shaping our lives from youth to adulthood. Be sure to convey your thanks for the parenting, mentoring and values they have provided. I would also ask that you remember the fathers that have fallen in this and other conflicts.

As always, I am proud of each and every one of you. I am ever astonished at the level of professionalism and dedication to duty you have shown while supporting our mission here in Afghanistan. You are, as always, "Sustaining Freedom."

4-401st preps Equipment for OEF Operations

■ BY SGT. JASON C. ADOLPHSON
JSC-A Public Affairs Office

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Mine sweepers, heavy armored transport vehicles, you name it and it can probably be found at Kandahar Airfield. The KAF stock yard that served as a small logistical hub just seven months ago has developed into somewhat of a rolling stock empire to support the troop buildup in Afghanistan.

The 4th Battalion, 401st Army Field Support Brigade has cycled through \$499 billion worth of rolling stock and equipment, fielding operations in the western and southern portions of Afghanistan, since their arrival in November, Lt. Col. Beau Eidt said of his unit's accomplishments.

"After we receive vehicles; we download, inspect, repair and inspect again to make sure all incoming vehicles are fully mission capable," Eidt said. "Then we enhance them with Dukes, IED jammers, secure radios, Boomerangs that tell the direction bullets are coming from [and more]," he explained of the many variants available for modern day tactical vehicles.

The 50-acre compound houses more than 2,000 vehicles at any given time in order to equip entire incoming brigades supporting the surge. For the Soldiers in 401st AFSB, a surge in troops meant a surge in op-



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom

Vehicles and state-of-the-art equipment fill the 50-acre stockyard at Kandahar Airfield.

erations that resulted in the creation of the 4th battalion.

The yard once had two military personnel overseeing a handful of civilians. Now more than 30 servicemembers oversee about 50 DA civilians and 1,400 contractors, Eidt said.

Taking on such a large mission was like "building an airplane while flying it" according to Command Sgt. Maj. Don Richardson, serving in the 4/401st AFSB. "When you're not at 100 percent fill, you pick your priorities for the day and work those first," he said.

Much of the equipment retrograded out of Iraq is flown or shipped to the yard to support

the surge here, which is nearing its peak. Richardson said that means his resilient unit may once again shift their mission to sustainment of equipment in Afghanistan and planning on how to pull it all out once resolutions are made in Afghanistan.

Moreover, Richardson explained the maintenance portion of his job, serving under the U.S. Army Materiel Command, is a constantly evolving process.

"Soldiers serve as a great resource to tell us what works and what doesn't work," Richardson said. "Before there were even up-armored humvees, Sol-

diers were attaching old plates of steel to the sides of their vehicles. Many of their ideas became safe and approved implementations that led to the mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles that are increasing the chances for survival on the battlefield."

After several months of hard work to build the stock yard up, Richardson said now it's just a matter of waiting for the rest of the equipment to roll in for maintenance and distribution. "We'll have it ready for war fighters to pick it up in sunny little Kandahar," said Richardson.

**Joint Sustainment
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"KAF is a strategic hub which is very important to us not only for the movement of troops but for cargo as well. Anything the Soldier needs downrange, we make sure it goes where it needs to go."

— Maj. Pat Fleming, Mobility Air officer

Included among the heavy traffic the runway supports anywhere from 30 to 40 JSC-A logistical (cargo, rations) flights per day.

"Anything the Soldier needs downrange that comes in, we track and make sure it gets to where it needs to go," added Fleming.

Clearly with the surge already underway, KAF air traffic, along with the needs of the Soldiers across the AOR, will increase. Marsha says the single-runway operation can handle it.

"The surge will obviously increase traffic, especially the C-130 and C-17 type aircraft," he says. "But it won't be such a substantial increase so as to interfere with our operations."

Additionally, with so many moving aircraft on a daily basis around KAF, safety of the aircraft, crews and passengers are a top priority, according to Marsha.

"For the level of aircraft going in and out of here, we have a very safe operation," says Marsha. "Our controllers are all prior military or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) so they have a lot of experience. They are very safety-minded. Overall we have a very good safety record here."

For his part, Fleming says without the runway to move supplies and Soldiers around the country it would make the JSC-A mission essentially unattainable.

"It would be next to impossible," he said. "Afghanistan is a land-locked country. Without KAF we would be hard-pressed to support the combat Soldiers forward."

With the help of the runway, Fleming says he takes great pride in "knowing we get the equipment downrange to support the combat fighter."

Marsha echoed a similar sentiment.

"I get the satisfaction to know that we (KAF runway) are the 'tip of the spear' on the Global War on Terror."



MC2 Steven Hoskins | Sustaining Freedom
Staff Sgt. Kelly Pennington (right) and Maj. Christopher Butler move computer equipment into the new Joint Operations Center during the 135th ESCs move from BASE-X tents into wooden buildings in May.

135th moves into new 'Digs'

■ BY MC2 STEVEN HOSKINS
JSC-A Public Affairs Office

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - When the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) assumed Joint Sustainment Command Afghanistan (JSC-A) authority from the 143rd ESC last December, there was one major project left unfinished; construction of new office buildings.

The construction blueprints of solid, wooden buildings to house the 135th were 50 percent complete when the unit arrived in theater. Upon arrival, the 135th moved directly into BASE-X tents and operated from there.

Eventually, the construction project wrapped up in May when the naval con-

struction battalion (CBs) hammered the last nail into the wooden buildings.

Once the buildings were ready for occupation, the Soldiers from 135th ESC began to relocate. As an additional challenge, the unit had to maintain their regular jobs while moving to new buildings simultaneously.

Two trailers of unassembled furniture were delivered to accommodate most of the office spaces.

JSC-A headquarters personnel built all desks and counter spaces throughout their offices. Spc. Floyd Green led the way on that project, showing Soldiers in his section what craftsmanship is all about.

The help desk han-

dled all the communications setup. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Karl Trawick, help desk officer in charge, says his Soldiers really pulled together on the task at hand.

"We installed over 400 computers, 150 phones, 52 printers, 10 video telecomm systems (VTC), with over 4,500 feet of cable being used in wiring the system," said Trawick. "Each system had to be networked and transferred over from the old system."

"Each Building server system had to be built from the ground up. A lot of man hours went into this project."

135th ESC Soldier “making a difference”

■ BY LT. COL. DAN LONOWSKI
JSC-A Public Affairs Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Thousands of coalition servicemembers and contractors attend the Kandahar Bazaar every Saturday to shop for family members, buy a new rug or to simply relax. But for Sgt. Heath Fant, the bazaar means a 5 a.m. wakeup and an action-packed day; anything but relaxing.

“We have to prepare for 7,500 customers that will flood the bazaar in a short amount of time,” the Alabama National Guardsman said. “We have to clear all the vendors, allow them to set up, and inspect all the merchandise brought in.”

Beginning at 6 a.m. every Saturday morning, Fant inspects approximately 700 vendors, workers, their children, and vehicle operators as well as their vehicles and cargo.

“We check for drugs, unauthorized personnel or contraband, anything you can think of. We have found some of each in the past,” Fant said. “We have to deal with those individuals immediately.”

Fant, a member with the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, said the process of inspecting the vendors takes about two hours. The local national vendors are then permitted to begin setting up for the weekly bazaar. The salesmen are given another two hours to set up tables, stands and displays.

Before the public is permitted to enter, bomb-sniffing dogs walk through the bazaar grounds and security personnel recheck many areas. Fant then issues each vendor a case of water that will help sustain them throughout the hours of the bazaar.

“We check them thoroughly,” Fant said. “But we are also teaching them how to run a business. We are giving each local national a chance at being a private business owner.

“We have brought some type of order to the bazaar. It is more like a business.”

At 11 a.m., the doors open to military forces from all NATO countries and to civilian contractors.

Fant, who manages operations for the event, coordinates with security, escorts VIPs, and assists with any problems that may arise.

“When you bring 7,000 to 10,000 people into such a small area, there are going to be issues,” Fant said. “We have a small minority of people who have tried to take advantage of the vendors but most of the time, things run smoothly.”

Fant assisted the Slovakian army engineers in acquiring materials needed for construction of the school. Previously, the school consisted of an outdoor patio.

“The children here deserve a building,” Fant said.



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom

Sgt. Heath Fant (right), 135th ESC, shows former COMKAF commander Malcolm Brecht recently completed offices near the Bazaar in April 2010.

Fant works as the joint personnel services assistant for NATO. He has 15 Afghan employees that help him during the week. The crew cleans along the roads on KAF, makes minor repairs around the base and help keep housing areas clean around the outside. Fant said he treats his employees with respect and attempts to get them to believe in their work.

Under Fant’s supervision, the local national employees have built an office complex with a workshop and supply room. Fant has also helped the workers get new boots and uniforms.

“They have taken ownership in their jobs,” Fant said. “These guys now feel like they are part of a team.”

In addition to the work Fant has done around the base, he has also been instrumental in helping build a new school for children whose fathers work during the bazaar.

Fant said a goal of COMKAF is to enable the children of local nationals to attend school on a daily basis. He said plans are being considered to add a second teacher to assist with full-time education.

To raise money for the school, COMKAF is planning to sell camel rides and open a coffee house. Fant said Afghans will run the businesses and proceeds will go toward computers and other equipment that will allow young students to further their education.

“We are doing something here that will mean a lot to them (Afghan people),” Fant said. “We are making a difference in the lives of young people. Hopefully one day, they will remember what we have done here. We are building something that will be here long after we are gone.”

Sheffer steps up, answers call to lead 135th ESC

■ BY LT. COL. DAN LONOWSKI
JSC-A Public Affairs Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Sustainment operations were flowing smoothly for the Joint Sustainment Command in Afghanistan in mid-April as far as Col. Gary Sheffer was concerned. The deputy commanding officer of the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command continued to advise the commanding general as volcanoes and riots began to shape logistics routes and sustainment plans during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Then, days after logistics' flight paths were closed and JSC-A Soldiers stationed at Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan were put on high alert, the commanding general of the JSC-A, Brig. Gen. Reynold Hoover, was injured in an accident. Sheffer quickly went from chief adviser to role of commander. The Huntsville, Ala native was up to the task.

"I had to step up," Sheffer said. "I quickly went from directing and giving guidance to making the final decision."

Sheffer said he knew Hoover, not only his boss but a long-time friend, had a lot of pressure on him with the day-to-day operations, but the stress level increases immensely.

"I cared about the Soldiers in the JSC-A," Sheffer said of the 5,000 subordinate Soldiers and contractors that fall under his command. "But the stress is so much greater now. I am making



Lt. Col. Dan Lonowski | Sustaining Freedom

The 135th ESC commanding general, Brig. Gen. Reynold Hoover (center), and deputy commander Col. Gary Sheffer (second from right) discuss logistics shortly after landing on an airfield near a forward operating base in Afghanistan. Sheffer has been acting commander of the 135th since mid-April.

direct decisions that affect their lives."

Sheffer said being a member of the unit prior to the deployment has certainly helped. He knew his subordinate commanders and has worked with the 135th ESC staff for the last six months in Afghanistan.

"I have confidence in the staff," the 31-year military vet said. "Col. Butters (Dennis, chief of staff) and Col. Friar (Edward, operations officer) helped pick up the load quite a bit. Both have helped me with their advice."

While working at the Pentagon during his recovery, Hoover said Sheffer has done a superb job.

"He's a great leader with a thorough knowledge of the

JSC-A's vision, mission and objectives," Hoover said.

Sheffer said that Maj. Gen. Timothy McHale, Deputy Commanding General for U.S. Force in Afghanistan, and Brig. Gen. Xavier P. Lobeto, Deputy Commanding General for the 1st Theater Sustainment Command in Kuwait, have both been great sounding boards and have provided valuable feedback. Both serve as higher command for the JSC-A.

The JSC-A staff kept the same goals and priorities that were set months ago according to Sheffer. He said he wasn't looking to change much but as the "kinetic energy increased in the South, the priorities evolved." As coalition counter insurgency operations began to increase

near Kandahar, so have insurgent attacks. Outside factors also began to shape the decision-making process.

"It seemed that almost every morning something else popped up," Sheffer said. "Several factors in a short time were interrupting sustainment operations."

The events Sheffer referred to include a volcanic eruption in Iceland that forced military aircraft to alter their routes, a government overthrow in Kyrgyzstan- U.S. Soldiers fly into the airport there, the departure of the commanding general and finally the unexpected death of a Soldier in theater.

"No organization can take hits without taking a pause" Sheffer said.

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MC2 Steven Hoskins | Sustaining Freedom

Seven Soldiers and Airmen of the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) stand in formation to receive various awards during a ceremony held at Kandahar Airfield on June 11. From left-to-right the Soldiers and Airmen are: Spc. David Bray, Staff Sgt. Shane Lilly, Spc. Jordan Holbrook, Sgt. Edwin Romero, Staff Sgt. Robert Ryan, Tech Sgt. Howard Dunn, and Lt. Col. Jesse Pearson.

Awards Day for 135th ESC Soldiers, Airmen

■ BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JOE CASHION
JSC-A Public Affairs NCOIC

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A total of ten Soldiers and Airmen were presented with various awards for achievement and recognition during an awards ceremony here June 11.

Acting 135th ESC commanding general, Col. Gary Sheffer, presented Certificates of Achievement for their participation in the NCO and Soldier of the Year Competition to Staff Sgt. Shane Lilly and Spc. David Bray. Not present for the ceremony were Staff Sgt. Karl Yeager, Sgt. Daniel Thomason and Spc. Sydnee Scott.

For moving on to a higher level of the NCO and Soldier of the

Year competition, Army Achievement Medals were presented to Sgt. Edwin Romero and Spc. Jordan Holbrook.

Airmen attached to the 135th ESC earned awards upon having completed their tours in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Robert Ryan and Tech Sgt. Howard Dunn were both awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal. Lt. Col. Jesse Pearson was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.



MC2 Steven Hoskins | Sustaining Freedom

Col. Gary Sheffer (left), acting commanding general of the 135th ESC, presents Staff Sgt. Shane Lilly with a Certificate of Achievement during the awards ceremony June 11.

135th Answers the "CALL"

■ BY MC2 STEVEN HOSKINS
JSC-A Public Affairs Office

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – In our nation's history, there have been countless missions for our armed forces and with every mission there is always a lesson to be learned. Many may wonder - what happens to those lessons learned? Are they used to improve future operations?

In short, that answer is yes. Within the Joint Sustainment Command Afghanistan (JSC-A), Lt. Col. Christopher Dolt says compiling "lessons learned" is his job. Dolt, a 1984 West Point graduate, spent the majority of his career as an Army Reservist Multifunctional Logistician.

For this deployment, however, Dolt decided that he wanted a change of pace and a job that could benefit Soldiers in a different way. So Dolt volunteered for a job with the Center for Army

Lesson Learned (CALL), based at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Currently, Dolt serves as a Theater Observation Detachment (TOD) officer with CALL embedded with the JSC-A to cover the lessons learned by the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment

"I think we can see where some improvements have been made."

- Col. Dennis Butters, Chief of Staff

Command.

The members of TOD are to integrate themselves into a unit's operations while simultaneously serving as an advocate for CALL, as well as liaison between the field units and CALL to gather and process lessons learned.

Dolt says he compiles a number of reports to accomplish his mission.

"I send back three types of products to CALL," he said. "First, is a one-page report of lessons learned. Another is a newsletter from the front, similar to a lessons learned, but with more detail. The last would be key leader or commander interviews. We ask key questions in the form of interviews to our leaders in charge and send those interviews back to CALL for them to be published."

"I think it is a very good idea to cover lessons learned," said Col. Dennis Butters, Chief of Staff for the 135th. "If other units can learn from the challenges that we had and overcome them, it will make their transition over here, or anywhere else, much easier."

Butters used the transition between the 143rd ESC and the 135th ESC as an example.

"We can look at the difference between our predecessors (the 143rd) and what we are doing now," he said.

"I think we can see where some improvements have been made with the different challenges we faced."

Units that do not have an embedded TOD can directly input lessons learned via the CALL web page and complete the information. In the request section, include the subject of your submission, and they will put you in contact with the proper analyst at CALL to receive and publish your material.

CALL offers a Lessons Learned course to train a target audience of officers, warrant officers, and NCOs serving at brigade, division, corps, or equivalent levels, with assigned responsibilities for establishing and managing a Lessons Learned Program in their organization and with their subordinate units.

Dolt says while in theater units that do not have a TOD embedded in their units in Afghan theater can contact him for help with reporting lesson learned obtaining information or requesting publication at christopher.dolt@afghan.swa.army.mil.

Why I serve

Spc. Jennifer Torres is a 27D - Paralegal Specialist - with the 135th ESC at Kandahar Airfield. Her hometown is Oxford/Anniston, Alabama.



Torres

"Whenever I think about our service men and women, my next thought is always related to their families. While the service and toil belong to the Soldiers, the dedication and support belong to the families.

I joined the Armed Services for those families. Being a very family-oriented person, I felt like I had to help. The only way I could think of to help was to join. I could have protested and said bring

our Soldiers home. But after 9/11 I knew this was a war that was going to take a while to run its course. So I decided that if I helped to increase the numbers then maybe a service member could have just a little more time with their family.

I love my family very much and like other military families, the dedication and support is now theirs as well."

135th ESC Soldiers train on new M-ATVs

"I think everyone needs this training."

— Sgt. Carlos Mitchell

■ BY MC2 STEVEN HOSKINS
JSC-A Public Affairs Office

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers from the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) received drivers and maintenance repair training on the new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicles (M-ATV) during the week of May 4-9 here.

M-ATVs are armored fighting vehicles developed by the Oshkosh Corporation specifically designed for Afghanistan in order to deflect mines and offer better protection against improvised explosive devices.

Oshkosh developed a three-part training program for Soldiers to learn all aspects of the M-ATV.

The program begins with Operator New Equipment training (OPNET) which is a driver's operator's course. That is followed by field level maintenance training (FLMNET) which covers maintenance for new equipment and wraps up with the delta course for advanced operators. This is for any student that has completed any MRAP operator course after October 24, 2009.

"We cover every inch of M-ATV," said Robert Marcy, M-ATV instructor at Kandahar Airfield. "We go from the classroom setting, power point presentations, as well as hands on to cover all discussion from the classroom."

Marcy says safety is the primary goal of Oshkosh M-ATV training program with no second to that.

"Our job is to make sure our service members, who are serving to protect our families, friends and freedom will be able to operate, and repair the M-ATV with confidence, yet not overconfident," said Marcy.

"I learned a lot about the maintenance



MC2 Steven Hoskins | Sustaining Freedom

Sgt. David Miller, a Wilsonville, Ala., native and Alabama National Guardsman with the 135th ESC, performs maintenance on the new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle (M-ATV) during training on the new vehicles during the week of May 4-9 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Miller is a senior mechanic for the 135th ESC.

aspect of the M-ATV," said Sgt. David W. Miller, senior mechanic in the 135th ESC.

"Everything on the vehicle was easy to do. The course was great and the instructors really covered the entire vehicle".

Miller says the M-ATV is the future of what's coming into theater. His unit received four M-ATVs. Now part of his job is to maintain their M-ATVs keeping them in good working order for the units use and to pass on to units that will follow.

"Driving was like playing Play Station," said Sgt. Carlos Mitchell Training NCO for the 135th. "Driving in pitch black dark, with a navigational computer screen, giving a driver the ability to see what a normal human eye could not. That really shows how technology in the Army has grown."

As training NCO, Sgt. Mitchell says his whole mission is to ensure his unit receives proper training. That's one reason he enrolled in the course to see firsthand what the M-ATV training course is offering his troops.

"The skills and safety training you get from this course were absolutely fantastic," said Mitchell. "My goal now is to ensure everyone from my unit gets this training, whether you are an operator or just a passenger. I think everyone needs this training."



Soldier Spotlight

Spc. Rhondraya Streeter is a Birmingham, Ala., native, serving as a unit mail clerk and administrative specialist with the 135th ESC at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

What do you do in the Army? Here in Afghanistan I am working both as a unit mail clerk and administrative specialist. My primary job in the Army is as



Streeter

an Automated Logistical Specialist. Both of my jobs are important and I hope I help lift the morale of Soldiers.

What has your deployment been like? It definitely has been a memorable deployment. You never know what to expect. **Has anyone else from your family served?** I am

the youngest of four in my family and the first ever to serve.

Sgt. Daniel Thomason is a native of Oneonta, Ala., and currently serves as an NBC NCO with 135th ESC at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

What do you do in the Army? I keep check of everyone's NBC equipment to make sure it is operational. My job is to make sure Soldiers are safe in case of a chemical

attack.

What has your deployment been like? It certainly has been different. I am used to doing other things.

What is your family situation? Several in my family have served, including my grandmother, my great-uncle and my father-in-law. My family worries about me but they support what I do.



Thomason

Venomous Vipers veer around KAF

■ BY HM2 MICHAEL LEONARD

Sustaining Freedom Contributing Writer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – There has been an increase of snake sightings here on Kandahar Airfield. This trend is expected as the snake activity usually increases during the summer months when temperatures are high.

“We catch an average of four vipers a week,” states Mr. Ramon Cardenas, the ATCO pest control manager for KAF. There are many snakes in Afghanistan, but the snake Mr. Cardenas refers to, the Saw Scaled Viper, is the most common poisonous snake encountered here on post.

Due to the toxicity of the venom, Saw Scaled Viper bites can be fatal and should be taken seriously. Adult Saw Scaled Vipers range in size from one to three feet and are dangerous, despite their relatively small size. Mr. Cardenas advises wearing boots at all times while outdoors since it is unlikely the local snakes fangs can penetrate them. He also recommends calling ATCO pest management immediately if a snake is spotted. **MOST IMPORTANTLY:** Do not attempt to pick up, trap, or capture the snake yourself.

Snake bite victims should remain calm and seek immediate medical attention. Bites should be washed with soap and water and bandaged appropriately. Call pest management to catch



the snake. “Do not attempt to suck out the venom and do not place a tourniquet,” stated Navy Lt. Francesca Cimino from the ROLE 3 NATO hospital. “Contact the KAF emergency medical services immediately if the patient has trouble breathing or loses consciousness.”

Cimino also stressed the importance of having pest management bring the snake to the treatment facility, dead or alive, so that it can be identified.

Navy Lt. Graham Danyleyko, also from the ROLE 3, explained, “Without identifying the snake they cannot determine what, if any, antivenin is indicated.” Antivenin is used to counter the effects of the snake venom commonly

injected with a snake bite. The particular antivenin used is dependent on the species of snake. Therefore, it is crucial that the snake is identified for proper medical treatment.

An encounter with a snake does not have to be life or death, a little situational awareness and quick thinking go a long way. Like most animals, snakes will not usually strike unless they are threatened or approached.

Therefore, you should not attempt to handle snakes in any way. Snake control should only be performed by trained professionals. Please contact ATCO pest control if you see a snake. Stay safe Kandahar!

Policing Kandahar City

■ BY PFC. CASEY COLLIER

Sustaining Freedom Contributing Writer

CAMP NATHAN SMITH, Afghanistan - The 97th Military Police Battalion has been stationed at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar City since September last year. Their primary objective is mentoring the Afghan National Police in Kandahar City. This is no small feat when one considers that this is the second largest city in Afghanistan, with more than 800,000 residents in an area roughly the size of Los Angeles.

Although the task is daunting, the battalion has been working with the assistance of civilian organizations trained in mentoring and foreign policy objectives, and when the 97th leaves in July, they intend to leave Kandahar City a better place than when they arrived. In March, Headquarters, Headquarters Detachment, 97th MP Battalion, began mentoring the Provincial Headquarters (PHQ) staff in Kandahar City.

This includes mounted and dismounted patrols, recruiting programs and ministry of interior (administrative) training. 1st Lt. Tommy Sieker, HHD, 97th MP Battalion, a native of Kansas City, Mo. has been with this unit for one year. He currently oversees the administrative mentoring programs at PHQ.

"PHQ has a large staff. Mainly we mentor in logistics, personnel, and finance operations," said Sieker. "We do this with the assistance of CIVPOL, as well as DynCorp representatives to help the ANP with their own systems."

Sieker added, "We are trying to get them to stick to the MOI process. We are showing them what works, and some of the easier ways to do stuff, as well as asset visibility, so they can figure out where they find all



Members of the Afghan National Police stand in formation. Soldiers of the 97th Military Police Battalion stationed at Camp Nathan Smith, Kandahar City, have been mentoring the Provincial Headquarters Staff (PNQ) since their arrival in theater last September.

PFC. Casey Collier
Sustaining Freedom

their equipment."

Progress is achieved through weekly visits to the PHQ compound located in downtown Kandahar City, where the MOI team works directly with the staff there.

"A lot of guys there are senior personnel, so they have been ANP for 20 or 30 years," he said. "So, it is difficult to come right in, having only been in the military for nine years, and mentor a lieutenant colonel. There are difficulties there. However, the ANP we have worked with have been pretty receptive to working with Coalition Forces."

While administrative mentoring speaks to a large part of the work HHD does at the PHQ, they have also made strides in other areas of training. Sgt. Maj. Patrick Quirk, HHD, 97th MP Batt., and ANP Lt. Col. Mohammad Zaher, Commander of Recruiting, PHQ, have developed a police recruiting program with the aim of infusing Kandahar Province with 1,987 well trained ANP by the end of June. The program has been actively recruiting ANP for the last 3 1/2 weeks, and already boasts 855 recruits for May. But, before they can call themselves ANP,

the recruits must first graduate the training program. One of the many ANP training centers is located at CNS and lasts six weeks, containing courses taught both in Dhari and Pashtun. There are 50 students in the current iteration at CNS.

"In my opinion, this is a good program for the security of the city, and with the number of new personnel, I say this is a great program," said Zaher. One of the challenges the ANP were having included a lack of security around the borders of the city, as well as two of the city districts that had seen an increase in violence. "These were our exact problems, and they were solved by this program," said Zaher. "We will deploy troops all around the city to protect the entrances to the city. It will be effective to protect the population of the city."

Quirk says it is not necessarily the way MPs would do it back home, but the ANP has their own way of doing things, and through sitting down with Zaher, he's gotten to know the methods that work best in Southern Afghanistan. One way it works is through constant patrolling, and the ANP have stepped up on that front as well. With their ranks

actively swelling, they are visibly moving from a passive to a more active role in the mentoring process. It is not unusual in Kandahar City these days to see Canadian, U.S., and ANP forces patrolling the same route together. Lt. Mohammad Akbar has been a member of Afghan National Security Forces for 16 years.

"America has come to support us, and Canada has come to support us to push the Taliban back," said Akbar. "It is better working with America and Canada, and Britain, because they are here for us and they support the Afghans. You should all stay here in Afghanistan for a long time. This is my wish." Akbar works with Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Chavez, HHD, 97th MP Batt., to coordinate joint patrols from the PHQ.

"It is a different atmosphere now than when I was in Afghanistan in '04 and '06," said Chavez.

"I've patrolled with ANA [Afghan National Army], ABP [Afghan Border Patrol], and ANP. The ANP was a brand new concept in the latter part of '05/beginning of '06."

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Safety: Soldiers beware of negligent discharges

■ LT. COL. BILL NEPUTE
JSC-A Safety

Negligent discharges have become a common occurrence in Afghanistan. The results of some discharges have done more than damage equipment. Some people like to call it an accidental discharge; but, a weapon doesn't accidentally fire by itself. There is negligence somewhere. When a negligent discharge results in a fatality, it is fratricide.

Therefore, a service member who has a negligent discharge can face punishment for their action. They can be charged with a crime punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Following an investigation, the service member's commander

determines whether punitive action is necessary and, if so, what the punishment will be. The commander has the right to do anything from corrective training to issuing an article 15; and to a summary court-martial to a general court-martial.

Service members can also receive a written reprimand, which could be placed in a permanent file. This could have a lasting effect on a person's career by negatively affecting one's competitiveness

for promotions. While one possible response to a negligent discharge can be corrective training, Soldiers can face penalties of up to three months confinement and forfeiture of two-thirds pay for three months, according to the UCMJ, under Article 134. If there are aggravating circumstances in the incident, such



"It is a leader's responsibility. A negligent discharge can injure or kill another person, damage equipment or place a mission in danger."

— Lt. Col. Bill Nepute, JSC-A Safety

as injury to another party or the discharge places a mission at risk, service members can find themselves in even more trouble. If the Soldier is found to be grossly negligent, not just simply negligent, depending on what happened, then the Soldier could be charged with other offenses. The push for weapons safety is essential. It boils down to the first line supervisor. It is incumbent for everyone to be trained on clearing procedures. Anytime a service member clears a weapon, you are supposed to be supervised. If a supervisor is there during a weapons clearing proce-

dures, you will not have a negligent discharge, because now you have two people clearing the weapon. The atmosphere typically doesn't put us in a position to walk around with loaded weapons.

Even though there is a magazine in your weapon, the weapon is not locked and loaded. The safety reasons for not locking and loading are because when you go into a DFAC or into a PX, someone could accidentally go from safe to fire and accidentally hurt someone. In short, the end to negligent discharges begins with leaders.

It is a leader's responsibility. A negligent discharge can injure or kill another person, damage equipment, or place a mission in danger. It can also result in legal action against a service member. By properly understanding weapon clearing procedures, and adhering to standards, service members can eliminate negligent discharges.

Chaplain's Corner

■ BY MAJ. HENRY D. MCCAIN
KAF Chaplain

Everyone feels afraid at some point -- whether it's a gnawing, anxious feeling or a paralyzing phobia. Any change can prompt feelings of fear.

More than 65 years ago, Franklin Roosevelt died and the new president of the United States went before the Congress.

Stoutly controlling a trace of nervousness as he read from a big, black notebook, Harry Truman first paid eloquent tribute to his pre-

decessor, and added: "Our departed leader never looked backward. He looked forward and moved forward. That is what he would want us to do. That is what America will do...."

"In the difficult days ahead, unquestionably we shall face problems of staggering proportions," Truman added. "However, with the faith of our fathers in our hearts, we do not fear the future."

The apostle Paul found his strength in God. He reminds us that, "I have been in prison frequent-

ly, been flogged severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move.

I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at

sea, and in danger from false brothers.

I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. [God] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more

gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 11:23-12:10).

"Do not be afraid," were the words used by the angel at the tomb.

It is a challenge to confront our fears. We should not fear those who might harm the body, but instead, witness to the truth.

Doc's Advice...

■ BY LT. COL. MIKE FERRIS, M.D.
JSC-A Command Surgeon

In this month's column, I will address three issues that may have a negative impact on your ongoing health while here on KAF: sun exposure, stress, and tobacco.

As we approach the official start of summer, the days are getting longer, and consequently, our skin is getting greater exposure to sunlight. We know now that over exposure to sunlight is harmful to the skin. Ultra-violet radiation can penetrate the superficial layers of the skin and damage the dermis below. This can lead to squamous cell and basal cell cancers as well as malignant melanoma.

Chronic over exposure to the sun also causes premature aging of the skin. This results in wrinkling. In order to protect your skin, wear clothing that

provides adequate coverage. While in your ACUs, wear a boonie hat to increase the amount of protection to your ears and face. While in your PT's, minimize your exposure out of doors, especially between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., when the sun's rays are at their strongest. If your MOS requires prolonged exposure to the sun outdoors, wear a sun screen with UVA and UVB protection.

Deployment in combat zones can certainly cause stress. The mixture of being far from home and family, living in an austere environment, working 12+ hours a day, and sharing your space with multiple roommates can have a negative impact on your outlook on life. Throw in the occasional rocket (or 5), and anyone can feel stressed. All of us need to diffuse the stress before it builds to unhealthy levels. This is

where activities that take our mind off our surroundings, and make us feel better about ourselves, can be a real help. I strongly recommend exercise daily. The physical benefits of a daily workout improve our mental well being too. Make sure that you also have time each day to email friends and family, read a book, watch a DVD, or hang out with friends to help break up the monotony of life on KAF. If at any time you feel as if stress is getting the better of you, please approach a medical provider, the chaplain, a friend, your section leader, or report to Combat Stress for help.

The third and final negative impact on your health is tobacco. Whether smoked or dipped, tobacco products are very unhealthy and are a leading cause of cancer. Smoked tobacco products cause emphysema and heart

disease. The use of tobacco is not an appropriate coping mechanism for the boredom and stress associated with being deployed. If you find that you have developed a tobacco habit while deployed, or if you brought that habit with you to Afghanistan, try to quit. Never stop trying to quit until you are successful. Please see your medical provider and talk to them about strategies and medications available to help tobacco users quit the habit. You will literally add years of healthful living to your life if you do.

Until next time, stay safe and stay well.



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"Since then, it has really progressed a lot," added Chavez, a native of Huntington Beach, Calif.

"In the last months we have seen tremendous progress. It's very hard to wrap your head around," Chavez said.

"The Afghan people have their own way of doing things. With all the wars here, they have to keep fighting back to stay civilized. They want to do it themselves, and they are showing that every day."

Chavez added, "For example, when we take an ANP platoon on patrol now, they actually give us feedback on whether or not they thought it was a good day,

or wasn't."

As far as the future of the mentoring programs between HHD and PHQ are concerned, the 97th will be re-deploying to Fort Riley, Kan. in two months, but the 504th Military Police Battalion from Fort Lewis, Wash. will pick up where the 97th left off.

The faces may change, but the concept stays the same: Brothers and sisters in arms working together to secure Kandahar City, Afghanistan.



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"But losing a Soldier (Cmd. Sgt. Maj. John Laborde died of a heart attack) hurt. We were really hurting."

Sheffer said he tried to keep the unit "focused on priorities" and to keep Soldiers' minds off the negative events taking place.

Hoover, who has kept in daily contact with Sheffer, said he chose Sheffer for this very reason.

"I immediately moved Sheffer to be the deputy commander," said Hoover. This two month assignment has shown that decision to be the right choice."

Sheffer said he feels as though he has done the job filling in for Hoover who is expected to

return to theater in late June. Still, Sheffer misses his boss and long-time friend.

"The general (Hoover) is central to this command," Sheffer said. "We will continue to drive on but we need him back."

In his civilian job, Sheffer works as a senior test engineer with CAS Inc. and medium extended range air defense systems (MEADS) in Huntsville.

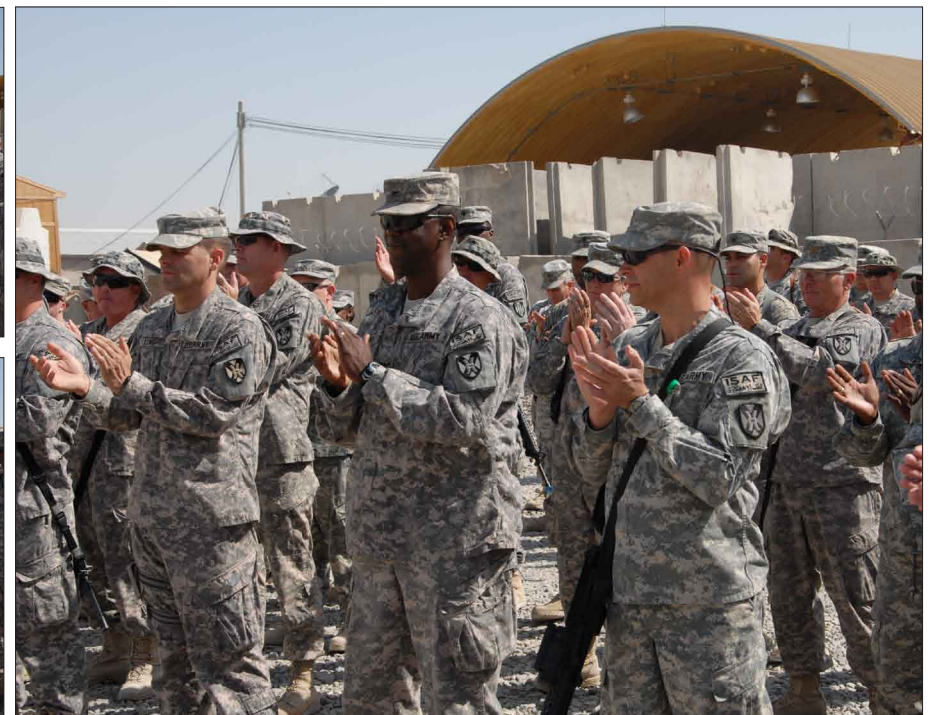
The Alabama National Guardsman said he has enjoyed leading the Soldiers in the JSC-A.

"To see Soldiers out on convoys, to look at what the 82nd and the 43rd (Sustainment Brigades) have accomplished; it is humbling to know that they call me the boss."

135th ESC Memorial Day Dinner



135th Soldiers earn promotions



Down goes the BASE-X

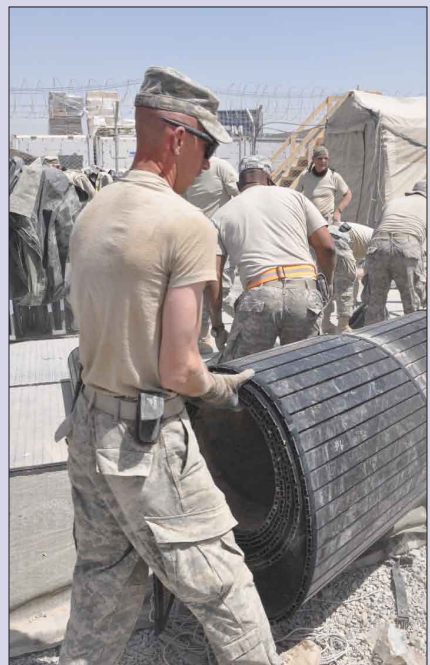


Photo Recon

