



## NATO Settles Afghan Losses

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

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Throughout history civilians have gotten caught in the cross-fires of war; an occurrence that has not fallen short as NATO forces continue to suppress the Taliban.

Afghans come to Kandahar and other military bases to file claims to compensate for what was lost – a shepherd's sheep, a family's home – and in the worst case scenario, a human life.

Vying for space on the Slovak's cammo-netted break room porch, distressed Afghans share their stories with Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Fliegel, a legal administrator and Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan claims investigator.

"My brother and nephew were killed in an airstrike six months ago," a claimant recently explained to Fliegel.

"What is the value you are claiming?" Fliegel asked with a linguist's assistance. "I know it's hard, but I have to place a number here."

The claimant requested the maximum compensation of \$10,000 for his claim and was told to come back in two weeks after a review of his case. In Afghanistan, one of the world's most impoverished countries, that amount exceeds the salary of an average worker by 20 years.

"We're not going to pay them for fighting Americans and we're not going to pay them for being suicide bombers," Fliegel said between taking claims. "Quite often there is no intel. We pay claims that can be validated and deny the others. Many times there's either no proof of an occurrence, or proof that the Americans did it, and we're not going to pay for everyone else."

Fliegel said every case  
**See *LOSSES* page 4**



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom

**A U.S. interpreter speaks with an Afghan shortly after he enters the base to find out if he is there to file a new claim or check the status of a claims investigation already on file.**

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# A View From The Commander's Chair



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

In the immortal words of Mark Twain, “the rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated.” I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone for your letters, emails, and calls of concerns and well wishes as I recover from my broken jaw. As some of you have pointed out, by breaking my jaw in five places – that’s right, five places – I have definitely over achieved and set a high standard. I am especially grateful for the help and support provided to me by the men and women of the 82nd Sustainment Brigade during those hours following my fall.

While I continue to make progress toward recovery and my eventual return in June to Afghanistan, I have a better appreciation for the medical evacuation process and the treatment provided to our returning wounded warriors. My story pales in comparison to the service members who are at Walter Reed and have sacrificed so much and who have been challenged to recover from their wounds. I met one Soldier with no legs and no arms, whose attitude and outlook on life are unbelievably positive. I spoke to another Soldier who was wounded in the Helmand Province in February during an IED strike that took the life of his battle buddy. I was able to find in my notebook where I attended the ramp ceremony for his friend and was able to share with him the notes I took on that day. Finally, I met a Reserve Soldier from Illinois whose jaw was also wired shut as a result of shrapnel from an RPG that hit the side of his MRAP while serving in Afghanistan. He has become somewhat of a battle buddy for me in that his treatment is two weeks ahead of mine, gives me something to look forward to.

As for me. I expect my wires to be cut on May 17th followed by rubber bands to keep my jaw aligned correctly. ....gives me flashbacks from the days in which I wore braces. Thereafter, I will have some dental work done and some jaw rehabilitation and, if all goes according to plan, I should be returning to duty by mid June. In the meantime, I have become an expert on soups, calorie packed smoothies, sports jells, and milk shakes. Believe me, not the best way to lose weight; although, I have only lost two pounds in the process since my arrival at Walter Reed on April 21st.

As for work: I have been very fortunate that LTG Stevenson, Army G4, has provided me with office space in the Pentagon to stay connected with the great work that you all are doing in my absence. I am grateful for the efforts put forth by Colonel Sheffer, our entire senior staff and that of the men and women of the 135th. Your continued focus on the mission and ability to execute sustainment operations is a testament to the training, preparedness and dedication that has made me proud to serve as your Commanding General.

April, however, did not come and go without losses to our family. Just before my accident we lost Sergeant Randolph Sigley, a Kentucky National Guardsman, from the 2123 Truck Company. At the time of his death, Sergeant Sigley had only been in Afghanistan for about 28 days. We also lost Command Sergeant Major John Laborde, a dedicated Soldier, mentor, and friend from the 649th Regional Support Group. The passing of CSM Laborde coming so close to the end of his tour in Afghanistan was especially shocking. The untimely and unexpected deaths of these two Soldiers saddens me, and they will always be remembered in our hearts and in our prayers.

In closing, thank you again for your get well wishes and your continued efforts toward sustaining the war effort. All of you are integral to the successful execution of our mission. See you soon!

## Command Sgt. Maj. Kinder's Comments

As of the publication of this newsletter, we have officially passed the half way point of our mobilization and deployment. To date, the Joint Sustainment Command has performed in an exceptional manner. This is due to the professionalism and dedication all of you have shown in the performance of your duties. Keep up the great work.

As we begin the next half of our deployment, we must remain focused on the mission, as well as set the conditions for a successful RIP/TOA with the 184th ESC in October. To that end, if you haven't had contact with your counterpart yet, you should start reaching out to find out who they are and how to contact them. We will be sending teams to aid the 184th ESC in their train-up to deployment. Shortly, JSC-A personnel will travel to Mississippi to conduct the 184th ESC's Theater Academic Seminar. In addition, planning and projected participation is also ongoing for their CPS-X and CTE. Each section and branch should be preparing and updating continuity books to aid the 184th ESC upon their arrival in theater.

We celebrated Mother's Day May 9. For most, if not all, mother's shape our lives and enable us to become the persons we are today. They sacrifice much in order to raise us from children to adulthood. They do not stop worrying about our well being after we reach adulthood, but continue to play an important part

in our lives. Let us remember to thank them for their continued sacrifices on our behalf.

Another holiday we will celebrate during our deployment is Memorial Day on the last Monday of the month. Memorial Day is a time to remember those Warriors who have fallen in defense of our nation both past and present. Over the years, unfortunately, too many citizens of our great nation see Memorial Day as a three-day weekend to celebrate the beginning of summer with barbeques and parties. Those of us who serve understand the true meaning of Memorial Day and here in Afghanistan we are reminded of that almost daily. I would ask each of you to take a moment in silent remembrance of our fallen comrades who gave their last measure to insure our freedom.

Finally, I would like to say that I am proud of each and every one of you. You continue to impress me with your performance, dedication to duty and selfless service. You are truly the spirit of our great nation.



CSM Clark Kinder  
JSC-A  
Command Sergeant Major



# Dog Tags a Way for Families to Connect

■ BY LTC DAN LONOWSKI

JSC-A Public Affairs Office

## AFGHANISTAN – “With love from Dad. U.S. Army. Afghanistan. 2010.”

The message is simple. The idea is clever. Each child's face as he or she opens the package will strike a lasting memory.

Soldiers in the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, mothers as well as fathers, had the opportunity to send a dog tag to their child thanks to the caring thoughts of one Soldier's spouse. This wasn't just any dog tag, but one with the above engraved message, either from Dad or Mom.

Debbie Ridgeway, the wife of Sgt. Major Kenneth (Michael) Ridgeway who is deployed with 135th ESC, discovered the “Dog Tags for Kids” Web site when she was browsing the internet about a month ago.

“Debbie is always trying to do something nice for Soldiers,” said the sergeant major, who has been in the Alabama National Guard for 38 years. “She is the driving force behind this project.”

The project to which Ridgeway refers is actually operated by a two-person team, one in California and one in Michigan. The two ladies, who have been featured on Fox News for their selfless generosity, have been in the dog tag industry for six years.

“My brother served in Desert Storm. The only thing he ever asked for was a Mother's Day card [from me] to send to his



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom  
**Serving in Afghanistan, Sgt. 1st Class Marilyn Hoyett places a dogtag into an envelope to mail to her 12-year-old daughter Ciare in Nashville, Tenn.**

wife,” explained Rose Sliepka, who lives in Lancaster, Calif. “Up until then, it never occurred to me that sometimes Soldiers don't have access to everyday items.”

Sliepka, who initiated the program in 2004, has made more than a half million dog tags for different occasions in order to send to troops. Her partner, Berna Novak, answers all e-mails

from her home in Scotts, Mich.

Rose said she heard a story about children who were excited when their father sent them band-aids and sun screen from Iraq. It was then that she realized something simple could be effective. Rose said she has many volunteers who help her package the dog tags that are sent to Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors who can then



send them to their children.

Debbie said Berna and Rose make the process very easy.

“Berna informed me that I could order a batch of the dog tags and she would send them [to my husband],” Debbie said. “Berna was so supportive of all our troops and all the sacrifices that our families make.”

Ridgeway received the dog tags from the company and he handed them out to Soldiers to send to their children.

Debbie said she worked with Leigh Shepherd, the Family Readiness Group coordinator, to get information to families.

The “Dog Tags for Kids” organization is comprised of an all-volunteer workforce. The organization receives donations from charitable companies that help support the troops around the world.

“Our youngest son, who is 30 years old, wears his dog tag proudly,” Debbie said.

For Rose and Berna, hearing each story of children, regardless of age, wearing one of the 530,000 dog tags produced, makes it worth it.

**Joint Sustainment Command - Afghanistan**

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## **LOSSES** Continued from page 1

*“Sometimes, the American troops will write down acknowledgement of the incident and sign it, but they can’t always stop in the middle of a firefight.”*

— Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Fliegel

proceeds with a series of questions – How did this happen? What were they doing at the time? Why were they there? – And then that information has to be backed by documents from both the claimant and military intelligence sources.

“I’m here to claim the loss of two raisin factories, two houses and two people,” another Afghan recently claimed to Fliegel.

“This is not the U.S. They don’t have death certificates or proof of places and times,” Fliegel explained as a complicating factor to his investigations. “Sometimes, the American troops will write down acknowledgement of the incident and sign it, but they can’t always stop in the middle of a firefight. This is a war and people are dying out there.”

Fliegel made it clear that this is not an admission of liability due to the circumstances of war. However, paying claims help quell the temperaments of loss and maintain good graces with the Afghan people.

Claims are divided into two categories: The Commander’s Emergency Relief Program for combat related losses; and the Foreign Claims Act for non-combat related losses. The JSC-A, one of multiple NATO claims providers in Afghanistan, has approved 38 CERP claims and 12 FCA claims in the past six months.



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Fliegel and an Afghan citizen discuss documents pertaining to a bystander’s war-related loss. Fliegel will compare the claimant’s information to military intelligence sources at Kandahar Airfield to determine a decision for paying the claim.



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom Army Chief of Staff George Casey shakes hands with Cpl. Jonothan Rivera, 20th Engineer Battalion, during a visit at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, April 28 to check on the well-being of Soldiers who had been affected by the Fort Hood shootings while processing for their current deployment. Many of the Soldiers said talking about it is the only way to cope and they get through it by leaning on one another for support.

## Casey Visits Fort Hood Shooting Victims at KAF

■ BY LTC DAN LONOWSKI  
JSC-A Public Affairs Office

K A N D A H A R AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. visited Soldiers April 28 to see how victims of the Fort Hood shootings are coping with the tragedy that occurred just months ago. Soldiers who had been shot or had witnessed the shootings were asked to join Casey.

“We know we are physically fit,” Casey told the group. “We want to ensure our Soldiers are mentally resilient as well.”

Casey spoke to Soldiers from various units including the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Com-

mand, 467th Medical Detachment and the 20th Engineer Battalion. Each of these units had members who were shot. The 467th Med. Det., a Wisconsin-based Reserve unit, lost three Soldiers and 20th Eng. Bn., based out of Fort Hood, lost four of the 19 members who were shot.

Casey spent more time listening than talking during the 45-minute session as Soldiers explained how they continue to recover psychologically. Several of the Soldiers explained how the Ft. Hood shootings have made them stronger.

“We still think about it a lot,” Staff Sgt. Dawn Brewer, a counselor with the medical detachment said. “It

has helped us understand what others go through. We are able to better empathize with Soldiers.”

One member of the 20th Eng. Bn told Casey the healing process continues and with each day he and his fellow Soldiers improve.

“We won’t ever forget it,” Sgt. Fernando Perez said. “We felt like we were in the safest place on earth when that happened. Eventually, you have to face it. Slowly, we are moving on.”

Thirteen people died last November when Army Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan opened fire in a Fort Hood medical facility. Hasan is being held in the Bell County Jail in Belton, Tex. where he awaits trial.





Spc. Dianna Aziz | Sustaining Freedom

**82nd Sustainment Brigade public affairs NCOIC, Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Krishna Jackson, discusses a combined action assessment with the Afghan National Army 201st Corp Garrison Support Unit's public affairs team.**

## US Troop Emphasizes Public Affairs Mission to Afghan National Army

■ BY SGT JASON C. ADOLPHSON

*JSC-A Public Affairs Office*

JALALBAD, Afghanistan – For some time now the U.S. military has trained Afghan forces to better hone weapons and tactical procedures. However, in the realm of public affairs the pen is mightier than the sword and that requires an entirely different kind of training.

“Public Affairs is key to communicating to everyone our military’s mission,” explains Navy Mass Communications Specialist 1st Class Krishna Jackson. “We show that it is people just like them who are contributing everyday to keeping our homeland safe. Without PA, no one but those involved would ever know what is going on.”

Jackson, a public affairs specialist serving in 82nd Sustainment Brigade, recently took it upon herself to train with one Afghanistan National Army (ANA) public affairs office (PAO) to make it possible for the ANA to cover many of the same stories as the U.S., but from their point of view.

“These stories can be used to perpetuate positive coverage of the efforts of the Afghan forces to take over the security mission in Afghanistan,” Jackson said. “Winning the support of the local Afghans is a number one priority for ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) because if we have their support then the insurgents can’t operate freely

against them and coalition forces.

“I emphasized to the ANA major and sergeant that it is essential for them to use their skills as communicators to help that mission succeed in their operating area and within their Afghan communities.”

Training with the ANA 201st Corps Garrison Support Unit PAO consisted of camera basics, products, command support, assisting the garrison with communicating positive messages to the villages in the area, working with media and minimum requirements for PAOs.

The initial intent was to assess their abilities, which were at par, Jackson said, but their equipment was not to standard. Since the garrison is relatively new, the support equipment needed is still being provided to the soldiers.

## Deployment changes outlook

■ MCI KRISHNA JACKSON  
COMMENTARY

*82nd Sustainment Brigade PAO*

I have gained respect and understanding for the Afghans, something I did not have when I first came to Afghanistan. Working with them has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life because I have learned

Jackson said she is currently assisting them in acquiring what they need through their supply sources. The Seaford, Del., native, added that her greatest challenge in working with foreign services is the communication barrier.

Jackson had the assistance of a linguist to translate her brief in Dari – one of the two main languages spoken in Afghanistan. Having an experienced linguist ensured everything was understood on both sides.

“I have been learning Dari myself so I could better communicate with them but I am not fluent and I cannot read or write the language,” Jackson said. “More than anything I want to see Afghanistan succeed on its own with its own government. Anything that I can do to contribute to that is worthwhile for me.”

more in the seven months that I have been here about cultural understanding and admiration than I have during my whole life.

The main reason for my apprehension was because I’m a woman and there’s a stigma; a mentality that women are not treated well in this region of the world. I thought I wouldn’t

even be acknowledged much less would I be training and working with my Afghan military counterparts.

I have been treated with nothing but respect and acceptance by the ANA soldiers. The ANA PA team was excited to work with me and they were hopeful to get what they needed to do their job, a job we share a passion for.

# Troops give respective farewell to comrade-in-arms

*“If it isn’t for the good of the Soldiers, he would say we shouldn’t be doing it.”*

— (649th) 1st Sgt. Mark Taylor

■ BY LTC DAN LONOWSKI  
JSC-A Public Affairs Office

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Soldiers and friends gathered at the Boardwalk April 25th to say their final farewell to Command Sgt. Maj. John K. Laborde.

As the United States flag blew gently in the breeze and the afternoon sun beat down, the unmistakable symbol of an Army helmet propped on the butt of an M16 with a pair of combat boots nearby allowed those mourning one last chance to say goodbye. The photos on the table relayed the 31-year career of Laborde, who served as the command sergeant major for the 649th Regional Support Group, an Army Reserve unit out of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

“John was a quiet professional who went about his job each day,” said teary-eyed Command Sgt. Maj. Clark Kinder, the command sergeant major for Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan. “He touched many lives here at KAF.”

“John was about the Soldiers,” the headquarters company 1st Sgt. Mark Taylor said. “If it isn’t for the good of the Soldiers, he



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom  
**Hundreds of Soldiers from all services and various countries gather at the Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, boardwalk April 25 to give their respective farewells to Command Sgt. Maj. John K. Laborde who died of a heart attack while serving in 649th Regional Support Group.**

would say we shouldn’t be doing it.”

Kinder said he and Laborde shared a lot in the four months they spent together at KAF. He said “John’s eyes would brighten when he spoke of his kids and family.”

Laborde began his career with the United States Marines in 1975. He enlisted into the United States Army Reserve in 1985. In 2007, Laborde was assigned as the command sergeant major for the 649th RSG.

“Sergeant Major Laborde was a tireless organizer, especially for ramp ceremonies,” 649th RSG Reverend (Cpt) William Kneemiller said. “His dedication to our fallen warriors was outstanding. John was a Soldier among Soldiers.”

Laborde’s military decorations include, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, The meritorious Service medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the National Defense Ribbon with bronze star, The Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, the Marine Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with silver star, the NATO international Security Assistance Medal, the Navy/Marine Corps Meritorious Unit Commendation and various other ribbons.

The 53-year-old Reinbeck,



**CSM Laborde**

Iowa resident is survived by his wife, Lori, five children and two grandchildren.

Slowly, at the end of the ceremony, Troops waited, and in pairs or in small groups, approached the memorial of John K. Laborde. They saluted, prayed, paid their last respects and cried.





Spc. Dianna Aziz | Sustaining Freedom

**(Above)** A photo of Sgt. Randolph Sigley sits on display as **(right)** 82nd Sustainment Brigade Commanding Officer, Col. John O'Neil and Command Sergeant Major, Sgt. Maj. Barry E. Maieritsch salute the sergeant's ceremonial stand to honor the passing of his life. Sigley's memorial ceremony was held April 20 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.



## 82nd Pays Tribute to 2123rd Trans Soldier

■ BY MC1 KRISHNA JACKSON

*135th ESC Public Affairs Office*

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Soldiers from 82nd Sustainment Brigade (SBDE), 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB) and subordinate units gathered under cloudy skies to mourn the loss of a young Soldier. As if the weather knew the mood of those attending the memorial honoring the memory of Army Sgt. Randolph Sigley April 20, the rain came intermittently like the tears of those who knew him.

"He thought of each and every one of you as his brothers and sisters in arms," said Lt. Col. Leona C. Knight, 424th CSSB commanding officer during Sigley's memorial. "You and I are not average Americans. We are Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and we know Sgt. Sigley in a different light. In a way we have known Sgt. Sigley for two and a half century's for he is a devoted patriot like those before him," she continued with sadness in her voice.

The 28-year-old Lawton, Okla., native started his career in the Marine Corps June 2000 where he deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) as an infantryman. He was honorably discharged from the Marines in August, 2004 and later enlisted in the Kentucky National Guard July 19, 2006.

A close friend of Sigley's shared how they

first met after they both had left the Marine Corps. "The first time I met Randy was in 2005. I had just gotten out of the Marine Corps and yet this guy still intimidated me. I saw a tattoo down his forearm and after that I had to approach him. I asked what he did in the Marine Corps and he said infantry. I showed him a similar tattoo and after that we became great friends," said Sgt. Christopher D. Jarvis, a dispatcher with 2123rd Transportation Company (Trans).

Sgt. Sigley worked as a Motor Transport Operator for 2123rd Trans. The Owensboro, Ky. unit deployed to Afghanistan in February to support OEF.

More than 200 Soldiers from Sigley's company and other units with 82nd SBDE and 524th CSSB came to pay their respects

to Sigley at the foot of his memorial stand; a ceremonial display where his helmet, rifle, boots and dog tags were assembled in his honor. Salutes were rendered by all who approached the stand before they knelt and again when they were done honoring his memory.

During his time in service, Sigley earned the Navy Achievement Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, National Defense Service medal, Army Service Ribbon and the Combat Action Badge.

Born Aug. 23, 1981, Sigley is survived by his mother and sister.

### Toby Keith Rocks Boardwalk



Country sensation Toby Keith, known for the popular hit "American Soldier" sings to thousands of inspired fans at the Boardwalk in Kandahar Airfield, May 6.

# 1st TSC Completes Mission

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

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The 1st Theater Sustainment Command Afghanistan transition team is returning to Fort Bragg, N.C., after spending six months working with 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command; an Alabama-based National Guard unit serving at the helm of Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan.

The embedded team assisted the JSC-A with initiating the buildup of 30,000 troops and supporting operations throughout Afghanistan.

Now that the sustainment command is at full operational capacity, the transition team's officer in charge, Maj. Jason Liggett said the JSC-A was on track to make the mission work but their experience bolstered the transition. The 1st TSC, partly based out of Kuwait, came with a lineage of key knowledge from sustaining a combat presence since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Operational support in Afghanistan included the logistical transport of 100-250 host nation trucks each day, developing contracts for troop living conditions and making air drops of food and fuel to forward operating bases.

Liggett said it was a matter of evaluating current procedures and adding to the existing doctrine.

With the surge increasing operational tempo in



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom

**The 1st TSC Afghanistan Transition Team marches to the head of a formation during a redeployment awards ceremony May 3. The 14-Soldier team completed a six-month mission assisting 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command with reshaping sustainment operations in Afghanistan.**

Afghanistan, the transition team helped assemble the establishment of two sustainment brigades with oversight from the JSC-A – a first in the war's nine year history.

Before the arrival of 135th ESC, 143rd ESC controlled one sustainment brigade for operations in Afghanistan. Now 135th provides oversight of 82nd Sustainment Brigade out of Fort Bragg, N.C., and 43rd SB, based in Fort Carson, Colo., which broadens the JSC-A sustainment mission.

One major move that has come into play is the movement control operations at Chaman Gate; an international border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The gate is used as part of a major supply route by International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan.

"We helped JSC-A further articulate what is coming through the gate," Capt. Matthew Broccious, the 1st

TSC surface mobility officer said. "Now we have higher visibility of what is on the highway and better predictability of shipments coming in."

Other forms of training included more than 70 hours reviewing topics such as streamline orders, how to produce rapid information and movement timelines.

Liggett said the methodology used for the transition was event driven and based on actual events in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

The acting command-

ing general for 135th, Gary Sheffer, said the 1st TSC efforts with JSC-A will have lasting effects. "Everything that has been done, they've been a part of it," Sheffer said while speaking to Soldiers during a formation. "They'll always be a part of it."

JSC-A provides command and control of sustainment units in order to plan, coordinate and support the ongoing combined joint operations area in Afghanistan. JSC-A partners with Afghan National Security Forces in order to develop its sustainment capability.





# Soldier Jumps Six Pay Grades in One Ceremony

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*“We are the sum of everything that we accomplish.”*

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— Maj. Joseph Fleming

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■ BY SGT JASON C. ADOLPHSON

*JSC-A Public Affairs Office*

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — As Soldiers promote throughout their time-and-service they follow a structured succession of ranks. Oddly enough, one Soldier serving in 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command had a promotion ceremony April 16 that went a little something like this:

“Attention to orders!” a Soldier announced before reading aloud. “The secretary of the Army has reposed special trust and confidence in the valor, fidelity and professional excellence of Joseph Fleming. In view of these qualities and his demonstrated leadership potential and dedicated service to the U.S. Army, he is, therefore, promoted from sergeant first class to major.”

Promoting from a senior non-commissioned officer to a field-grade officer is something you don’t hear of every day, but then again, neither is Fleming’s story.

The National Guard Soldier, dipping in and out of the Individual Ready Reserve, has more than 30 years of service under his belt. Fleming enlisted into the Guard in 1979 and transitioned to officer ranks a few years later.

As a captain, in 1995, he served as a company commander in the Louisiana National Guard. After completing a two-year stint in command he returned to IRR status before deciding to join the Alabama National Guard as an enlisted Soldier.

Fleming said there were no positions available in his pay-grade, but considering he was a sergeant before becoming an officer, he could accept an enlisted position. Suddenly, he had returned to his original military occupational specialty as a power plant repairman, serving as a peer alongside the same ranking “Joes” he had once



Sgt. Jason C. Adolphson | Sustaining Freedom

**Maj. Joseph Fleming, a Mobile, Ala., native and Birmingham, Ala., guardsman, is reappointed to commissioned officer status as Maj. Gen. Reynold Hoover, the commanding general of Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan, replaces his sergeant first class rank with major rank during a promotion ceremony April 16 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.**

served with during his original enlistment — and once commanded.

Within two years of accepting a six-year enlistment contract, Fleming received word from the Army Human Resources Command that his officer status, sitting in the IRR, had promoted him from the rank of captain to major.

Fleming said he initially thought he could transition back to being an officer after his contract without any issues.

“I thought I had dual status, but as it turned out, that was no longer in effect,” Fleming said. “They cut my discharge as major from the IRR in 1999. I started seeking out opportunities [to reacquire officer status] but had to finish my enlistment contract with the Alabama National Guard.”

Fleming went on to perform many duties on the enlisted side of the house and started advancing in rank. After the atrocities of 9/11, Fleming was activated from Mobile, Ala., to man his unit’s armory.

The high-speed Soldier promoted to staff

sergeant in 2004 and sergeant first class just two years later — taking on the responsibilities as a first sergeant until 2008.

From about the time Fleming pinned on sergeant first class, he said he applied for a certificate of eligibility to be reappointment as a commissioned officer and had been applying for positions until the 135th agreed to take him on as an officer.

“I was excited that I finally achieved a goal,” Fleming said.

By not returning to the officer ranks for 13 years, Fleming has comrades he trained with in his earlier years who are now lieutenant colonels and colonels. Still, he said he wouldn’t consider one avenue better than the other.

“I was quite content ... it was exciting to work with Soldiers,” Fleming said. “We are what we are — and as my brother-in-law once said — ‘We are the sum of everything that we accomplish.’ My experiences have been enlightening and phenomenal and I wouldn’t trade it for the world.”

# Faces from the Frontline

*StaffSgt. Christopher "Sidewinder" McCormack is a Mobile, Ala., native, serving as a JSC-A Force Safety NCO at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.*



**McCormack**

**What do you do in the Army?** I maintain the continuity of the JSC-A Safety Program. I advise leaders on accident prevention to keep our Soldiers in the fight.

**What has your deployment been like?** My deployment has been outstanding. I have enjoyed every minute of it. The operational tempo was very fast when I got here, which caught me off guard

at first, but now I enjoy working in a fast paced environment.

**Has anyone else from your family served?** I am the first to serve in my family but I have their full support.

They have never been more proud than they are of me serving overseas right now in Afghanistan.

**Is there anything unique about your Army Story?** I joined the Army as a nuclear, biological, chemical specialist. My National Guard unit transitioned to a military police company in 2005 and that's why I trained to reclass as an MP.

*Spc. Tyrone Gardner is a Birmingham, Ala., native, serving as an ammunition specialist in 135th ESC at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.*



**Gardner**

**What do you do in the Army?** I help with maintaining ammunition supply points and make sure all components are in working order. I also package and handle shipments of various ammunitions.

**What has your deployment been like?** It has taught me to appreciate my values, sustain myself in all my duties, and to make a promising start to the

future for many that will follow in my footsteps.

**What is your family situation?** My family situation right now is on one of the highest levels. They have a great deal of respect for me and all that are serving during any deployment.

**Is there anything unique about your Army Story?** One day I will be able to say, I am proud to be one of many people who can change what's in front of me and I will never have to take a second look or have doubts.

## 82nd Aids 1000 Afghan Villagers

■ BY SPC DIANNA AZIZ

*JSC-A Public Affairs Office*

JALALBAD, Afghanistan – Members of the 82nd Sustainment Brigade (SBDE) provided medical assistance to more than 1,000 villagers in Spijamat Village, Afghanistan.

Through its Combined Action program, 82nd Soldiers and civilians spent time in the village to assist local residents. The purpose of the medical operation was to facilitate a partnership between United States Army and Afghan National Army (ANA) forces with the local villages in the vicinity of the village of Gamberi Garrison. The team had a goal of assisting and improving the health conditions and to build rapport in order to help secure a lasting relationship between the Afghan civilians and ANA.

"This type of operation is vital to the success of the counter insurgency mission," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Beeler, 82nd Sustainment Brigade, Civil Affairs (CA).

"It provides the environment and the tools so our ANA partners can fulfill the realizations of a country that is standing on its own two feet," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Beeler, 82nd Sustainment Brigade, Civil Affairs (CA).

The mission created an atmosphere of cooperative training among ANA and local health care providers while demonstrating to the local populace that their government is there to meet



Spc. Dianna Aziz | Sustaining Freedom  
**Capt. Alison Semanoff, 82nd Sustainment Brigade surgeon, provides medical care to a young Afghan child at a village outside Gamberi Garrison, Afghanistan.**

their needs. Additional objectives included engaging key leaders from the area to initiate future public health projects and plan additional public health missions.

From the perspective of Capt. David Lewis, the 405th Civil Affairs Battalion surgeon, this type of event serves as a medical mentoring outreach program.

"I was impressed by the level of professionalism of all parties involved in the mission," Lewis said. "Excellent training and mentoring was provided throughout the day which resulted in top quality care given to the people. It was a

huge success across the board,"

This mission involved many units such as; 82nd SBDE, 405th Civil Affairs, 412th Civil Affairs and 102nd Infantry.

"It's a great feeling to know that you can give the local populous more faith in their government," said Sgt. Danielle Gray, 412th Civil Affairs, in Xilhag, Afghanistan.

Sgt. 1st Class David Finnerty, a platoon sergeant with Alpha Company 1-102 Infantry said the ANA maintained "high security standards and professionalism when dealing with the local Afghan populous."



# Inventive Soldiers Save Army Millions

■ BY MC2 STEVEN HOSKINS  
135th ESC Public Affairs Office

Kandahar, Afghanistan - Soldiers serving in Afghanistan came up with a way to save the Army millions of dollars and bring production time from months to days on a piece of equipment.

When the Soldiers of the 98th Maintenance Company ground support equipment (GSE) fire suppression team arrived in Afghanistan, they realized they could create a more efficient method to repair faulty units.

"When we first got here, we had troops bringing in bottles that needed to be filled," said Warrant Officer 1, Robert A. Davis, of the 98th Maintenance. "Since we had never seen these bottles, I started doing some research." The bottles needed to be filled with various types of suppressant.

"We found out that there was only one group that filled these bottles in-country and it was a civilian group. So we saw the need for a recharge station and [that's when] we started building from the ground up."

There were a lot of moving parts to get this recharge station up and running including the entire GSE section according to Davis. In order to build this recharging unit, tools and fittings had to be fabricated. Davis said the 98th Maintenance (GSE) made all the necessary parts.

Davis was able to do all the



Sgt. Jason Eskridge, a Rolla, Mo., native, serving in 98th Maintenance Company at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, recharges a fire extinguisher that will be placed inside a tactical vehicle for Soldiers to use in case of an emergency. The new procedure of refilling the bottles in country saves months of time and millions of dollars.

MC2 Steven Hoskins  
Sustaining Freedom

***"We found out that there was only one group that filled these bottles in-country and it was a civilian group. So we saw the need for a recharge station and [that's when] we started building from the ground up."***

— Warrant Officer 1 Robert A. Davis

research on what products and parts that were needed to fix the problem. He tracked down all the parts and even worked with vendors to get the products.

Staff Sgt. Robert Steele, Sgt. Jason Eskridge, and Spc. Manuel Espinoza were vital in taking the parts and materials and putting it together according to Davis. They found out the best way to fill the bottles.

The team was also able to put together the first mobile fire suppression recharge in the country.

This enabled them to fly to other locations and fill MATV bottles on-site, which greatly assisted units that could not make it to KAF to the recharge unit. The mobile recharge was designed to recharge a bottle quickly without removing it from the vehicle.

"The mobile unit we set up can get to a unit within 5 to 10 days, which otherwise would have taken months," said Steele, the 98th NCO in charge. "With our mobile unit in place, we can recharge a bottle on location."

"Having the fire suppression system recharge station allows us to ensure the troops that they can drive outside the wire and be protected," Steele said. "Possibly saving a soldier's life is the best part. No more waiting for bottles to be shipped out, and returned, which could take up to 4 to 5 months."

In the first four months of the deployment, the fire suppression system saved the Army over \$1.1million according to Davis.

"I could not be more proud of my Soldiers," Davis said.

## ABSENTEE VOTER ASSISTANCE!

*You came to Afghanistan to serve your country, and your country honors your service. There is another way to serve your country, and it's a right and privilege sacred to all freedom loving people. It is your right to vote. It is a right that you can exercise, as American citizens anywhere, even in Afghanistan.*

*The US Government created the Federal Voter Assistance program (FVAP) as a clearinghouse for voter assistance information. The Web site [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) is the source to access voter registration and absentee ballot requests. When you*

*complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) your local election official will process it and decide what ballot to send you.*

*If your Unit has a designated Voter Assistance Officer, he or she will guide you through the process. If you do not have a Voter Assistance Officer, the FVAP Web site has information which will assist you. If you need additional assistance contact the KAF Legal Center. Please note that if you wish to vote in the November 2010 general election FVAP recommends that you send your FPCA no later than August 15, 2010.*

## Safety: Ground Guiding

■ LTC BILL NEPUTE

*JSC-A Safety*

The ground guide is the vehicle operator's "eyes" when maneuvering equipment in areas of limited visibility. Therefore, ground guiding a vehicle is one task where training and coordination between the two is paramount. When objects or people get into the path of moving equipment, the equipment wins. Unfortunately, when Soldiers move Army equipment, mistakes can be unforgiving.

Needless losses can be prevented by the following these simple steps:

■ Ensure that your drivers understand that they must immediately stop if they lose sight of the ground guide or don't understand a signal.

■ Make sure that everyone understands the basic signals to control vehicle drivers (don't forget about flashlight signals) from Field Manual 21-60, Vi-

sual Signs.

■ Position front ground guides to the left front of vehicles. Never allow a ground guide to walk directly in the vehicle's path. Ground guides and drivers must understand this!

■ When using two ground guides, they must keep visual contact with each other. The front ground guide must stop the vehicle if he or she loses sight of the rear ground guide.

■ Ensure that the ground guide, not the vehicle commander, is in charge of the vehicle. Whenever the vehicle is under the control of a ground guide, the only command that the vehicle commander should issue to the driver is "stop".

The ground guide is an essential component when moving heavy equipment. Soldiers must ensure that their Soldiers understand the basics for ground guiding vehicles. Preventing these accidents will help keep formations Army Safe and Army Strong.

## Words of Advice from IG

■ MAJ STEVEN YARNELL

*JSC-A Inspector General*

Hello from the JSC-A IG desk! From the JSC-A perspective, the tour here in Afghanistan is already past the halfway point. As an Inspector General, I've had the opportunity to meet many fantastic Soldiers from across the Army who are doing an outstanding job and making a difference here in Afghanistan. I salute you!

This month's topic: counseling. The Army requires every leader to counsel subordinate Soldiers. I've had the privilege of observing and learning some fantastic counseling techniques throughout KAF. Units are ensuring their Soldiers are properly counseled in a timely and professional manner. Still, we always have room for improvement.

Ensure your leaders are following the guidance put forth in Field Manual (FM) 6-22, Army Counseling. FM 6-22 is the Army's bible for the proper process for counseling. Counseling is the process used by leaders to review with a subor-

dinate the subordinate's demonstrated performance and potential.

There are three major categories of developmental counseling: 1) Event 2) Performance 3) Professional growth. There are five key attributes as a Leader to become an effective counselor: 1) Purpose 2) Flexibility 3) Respect 4) Communication 5) Support.

Each aspect is very important to know and understand the proper category for the counseling session. If you remember one thing from my topic this month, remember that counseling is not always a negative event. Counseling can and should be used as a positive reinforcing tool as well. A positive counseling statement is a confidence booster for Soldiers and should be used as such. So, in closing, to ensure leaders are developing our future leaders, take counseling serious and remember that it's imperative to let your Soldiers know what they need to work on to become a more proficient member of the team, remember, One Team, One Fight!!

## Doc's Advice ...

■ BY LTC MICHAEL FERRIS, M.D.

*JSC-A Command Surgeon*

In last month's column, I addressed lifestyle issues that are important in maintaining your health while on KAF. I discussed the importance of getting adequate sleep, eating a healthy diet, and exercising regularly. In this month's column, I want to continue that discussion and cover prescription medica-

tions you might be taking, including those for malaria prophylaxis.

Unlike over the counter (OTC) medicines that you may choose to take on your own for a variety of reasons, prescription medications are those that your health care provider wants you to take on a regular, or as needed, basis to treat a specific condition. Since prescription medications may have significant unwanted side effects if used im-

properly, they require a provider's prescription in order to be obtained from the pharmacy. It is important that you follow the directions carefully on the label and take as directed.

Some medical conditions like high blood pressure or high cholesterol require that you take the medication every day. Other conditions, like eczema or mild asthma require medicines to be taken only when needed. It is important that you follow your provider's instructions carefully in order to

derive maximum benefit from the medication.

Your blood pressure or your high cholesterol won't be treated nearly as well if you only take your meds intermittently. Try to establish a daily routine where you take your meds at the same time each day. This way you are more likely to remember to take your medicines consistently. If you are prescribed an antibiotic to treat an infection, make sure you take all of the medicine you are given.

Don't stop early be-

cause you are feeling better. The infection may be incompletely treated, and may recur, if you don't take all of the pills prescribed.

Remember to tell your provider about all medicines you are taking at each sick call visit; this includes OTC meds, as well. This is important because some combinations of medicines have interactions that can produce unwanted side effects.

Until next time, stay safe and well.



# Four sides of suicide

■ BY MSG DENNIS KING  
JSC-A Chaplains Assistant

While in this land, this age of uncertainty, located in this time and in this place, it is a monumental achievement that our commanders are able to orchestrate the symphony of logistics and collaboration with partners who have language barriers and alternate belief systems. Of course, there are a few glitches along the way!!! We have a plan, leadership, hard work and team-work; still it is hard to get a consensus among such a diverse group of citizens from this global community. However, there is one statement in which I truly believe every top commander and higher ranking NCO would agree on without the slightest hint of debate: One life, one Soldier, one coalition partner, one contractor, *one* human being gone because of suicide is too many!

One side of this tragedy is a commander's heartache, and responsibility. In addition, on the commander's side, you have an Army of great professionals: counselors, physicians, mental health workers and yes, chaplains are willing to help.

Another side of suicide comes

with the inability to curb the high rate. Even with the wave of positive literature, directives and training that has been offered to the military community, the high rate of suicides in the Army is beginning to equal and surpass the suicide levels of the Vietnam years. Officials are taking notice and planning more study on the causes and prevention of suicide.

A third side of suicide is the broken hearts of spouses, children, mothers, fathers and loved ones left wondering with real-life pain, dissolution and sometimes guilt. For commanders, this side is where the heartache comes from.

The forth side of suicide - More times than not, you are on the front, facing the enemy. You may not receive a silver star, or even know that you saved a life but a powerful impact comes from your presence. A 2 a.m. conversation on the cell phone may make a difference, not to mention the time spent with a friend may actually change a life and prevent a suicide.

The Soldier who shares his own story of tragedy may save the life of a buddy going through the same dilemma. Staying with a buddy because you sense the least hint of sui-

*The Army alone reported 128 confirmed suicides and an additional 15 suspected suicides in cases under investigation among active-duty Soldiers and activated National Guard and Reserves in 2008. In 2009, this number rose to over 200.*

cide due to questionable actions may also save a life.

The Army alone reported 128 confirmed suicides and an additional 15 suspected suicides in cases under investigation among active-duty soldiers and activated National Guard and Reserves in 2008. In 2009, this number rose to over 200.

Let us ban together as officers, enlisted, brothers and sisters in arms, partners, bud-

dies, and friends or even casual acquaintances. Let us stop this difficult but preventable problem. Watch for signs; faithfully listen to your buddy. Don't be embarrassed to talk about it. Care for each other enough to get evolved. Take your buddy to see a chaplain or health care professional. Each individual has a role to play. As I said in the start; One suicide is one too many.

## Asian Pacific American Heritage



**Proud Asian Pacific American Soldiers perform dances and songs at the Boardwalk May 7.**

## Days of Remembrance: Holocaust Observance



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael M. Fliegel (left) and Lt Col. Martin Riley, both serving in Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan, view displays and observe candles – each representing a million Jews killed in the Holocaust – during a Days of Remembrance Observance April 17 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Ceremonies are conducted throughout the U.S. military during the annual Days of Remembrance, proclaimed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council for a designated one-week period (Sunday to Sunday) each spring between mid-April and Mid-May.



## 135th ESC Spades Tournament



## COMKAF Change of Command





# Photo Recon

